
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

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Chapter #1

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THE WORLD IS ON FIRE:
AND ARE YOU LAUGHING?
YOU ARE DEEP IN THE DARK.
WILL YOU NOT ASK FOR LIGHT?

FOR BEHOLD YOUR BODY --
A PAINTED PUPPET, A TOY,
JOINTED AND SICK AND FULL OF FALSE IMAGINATIONS,
A SHADOW THAT SHIFTS AND FADES.

HOW FRAIL IT IS!
FRAIL AND PESTILENT,
IT SICKENS, FESTERS AND DIES.
LIKE EVERY LIVING THING
IN THE END IT SICKENS AND DIES.

BEHOLD THESE WHITENED BONES,

THE HOLLOW SHELLS AND HUSKS OF A DYING SUMMER.
AND ARE YOU LAUGHING?

YOU ARE A HOUSE OF BONES,
FLESH AND BLOOD FOR PLASTER.
PRIDE LIVES IN YOU,
AND HYPOCRISY, DECAY AND DEATH.

THE GLORIOUS CHARIOTS OF KINGS SHATTER.
SO ALSO THE BODY TURNS TO DUST.
BUT THE SPIRIT OF PURITY IS CHANGELESS
AND SO THE PURE INSTRUCT THE PURE.

THE IGNORANT MAN IS AN OX.
HE GROWS IN SIZE, NOT IN WISDOM.

The most fundamental question before Gautama the Buddha was, "What is wisdom?" And the same is true for everyone. Down the ages the sages have been asking, "What is wisdom?" If it can be answered by you, authentically rooted in your own experience, it brings a transformation of life.

You can repeat the definitions of wisdom given by others, but they won't help you. You will be repeating them without understanding them, and that is one of the pitfalls to be avoided on the path. Never repeat what you have not experienced yourself. Avoid knowledge, only then can you grow in wisdom.

Knowledge is something borrowed from others, wisdom grows in you. Wisdom is inner, knowledge outer. Knowledge comes from the outside, clings to your surface, gives you great pride and keeps you closed, far far away from understanding. Understanding cannot be studied; nobody can teach it to you. You have to be a light unto yourself. You have to seek and search within your own being, because it is already there at the very core. If you dive deep you will find it. You will have to learn how to dive within yourself -- not in the scriptures, but within your own existence.

The taste of your own existence is wisdom. Wisdom is experience, not information.

Buddha renounced the world; it is reported in all the scriptures, but the report is not given in the true context. It is reported that the Buddha renounced the world because he was against the world -- because unless you renounce the world you cannot gain the eternal, the other world, the other shore. This is giving a totally false interpretation to Buddha's great renunciation.

He certainly renounced the world, but not to gain anything in the other. If there is any motive in your renunciation, it is not radical enough, it is not a revolution. It is again the same old business, the same old bargaining mind; it is based in desire and desire is the world. The world does not consist of things, the world consists of motives, desires, ambitions.

If you renounce the world to gain something, whatsoever it is -- nirvana, enlightenment, moksha, freedom, truth or God, whatsoever it is -- if you renounce the world to gain something, it is not renunciation.

Hence I will not say that Buddha renounced the world to attain something. The very idea of attaining something IS the world. The very idea of attaining something is to live in imagination, is to live in the future. And a man of understanding lives in the present, not in the future. A man of understanding does not really renounce the world -- the world simply

falls from him, the world simply becomes irrelevant; it loses meaning. His insight is such that he can see through and through the falsity of all desire -- not to attain something, but seeing the futility of desire, desiring ceases. That is true renunciation.

That's what Buddha did. In fact to say he did it is not right. Language creates so many problems. When you start talking about the buddhas, language is not an adequate vehicle; it becomes very inadequate. To say Buddha renounced the world is not exactly the truth. It will be better if we say the world disappeared from his vision. It was not an act but a happening.

When he became aware, alert, watchful, a witness, when he saw the absurdity of desire, desire ceased on its own. It is not an act. How can you go on desiring if you see the absurdity of it? You will not try to pass through a wall. Seeing that it is a wall, you will not try to pass through it. If you are still trying to pass through a wall, hitting it hard with your head, that simply shows your eyes are closed. And you are not seeing it as a wall -- somewhere you are imagining that it is a door. You are hoping to get through it. The moment you see it as a wall the transformation has happened.

To understand is enough -- there is no need to practice it. People practice only because they don't understand.

Many come to me and ask, "Give us a certain discipline to practice." For centuries they have been given disciplines to practice. I give you no discipline -- because you can practice a discipline, you can become very skillful, you can become very artful, crafty; still deep down you will remain the same person, because it is not a question of practicing a discipline.

The question is of SEEING, the question is of understanding your life, its unconscious motives. The question is to understand the darkness in which you are living. And the miracle is that if you can understand the darkness in which you are living, suddenly there is light, because understanding is light.

Buddha has been very much misunderstood, not only by his enemies but by his friends too -- in fact by friends more than by enemies. The enemies can be forgiven, but the friends cannot be forgiven.

Millions have followed him for these twenty-five centuries with a wrong understanding. Their very first step is wrong. The Buddhist monk has not been able to understand what Buddha is really pointing at. He has completely forgotten the moon which the finger of Buddha is pointing at. He is clinging to the finger, he is worshipping the finger, he has become obsessed with the finger. He has completely forgotten that the finger is only a means to point at the moon. Forget the finger and look at the moon. You cannot look at the moon if you cannot forget the finger.

Thousands and thousands of commentaries have been written on these beautiful sutras. But if the first step is wrong then everything goes wrong. The first wrong step all the commentaries have taken is saying that Buddha renounced the world. It is not true. The world simply fell; it ceased to have any meaning for him.

The night he moved away from his palace to the mountains, when he was crossing the boundary of his kingdom, his charioteer tried to persuade him, tried to convince him to go back to the palace.

The charioteer was an old man, he had known Buddha from his very childhood; he was almost of the same age as Buddha's father. He said, "What are you doing? This is sheer madness. Have you gone insane or what? Look back!"

It was a full-moon night and his marble palace was looking so beautiful. In the full moon the white marble of his palace was a joy to see. People used to come from faraway places just to have a glimpse of Buddha's palace in the full moon, just as people go to see the Taj Mahal.

White marble has a tremendous beauty when the moon is full. There is some synchronicity between the full moon and white marble, a certain harmony, a rhythm, a communion.

The charioteer said, "Look back at least once at your beautiful palace. Nobody has such a beautiful palace."

Buddha looked back and told the old man, "I don't see any palace there but only great fire. The palace is on fire, only flames. Simply leave me and go back; if you see the palace, go back to the palace. I don't see any palace there -- because death is arriving every moment, and I don't see any palace there because all palaces disappear sooner or later. In this world everything is momentary and I am in search of the eternal. Seeing the momentariness of this world I can no longer befool myself."

These are his exact words, "I cannot befool myself anymore."

Not that he is renouncing the world! What can he do? If you see something as rubbish, if you see that the stones that you have carried all along are not real diamonds, what are you going to do with them? It will not need great courage to drop them, to throw them away; it will not need great intelligence to get rid of them. They will immediately fall from your hands. You were not clinging to those stones but to the idea that they were diamonds. You were clinging to your fallacy, your illusion.

Buddha has not renounced the world, he has renounced his illusions about it. And that too is a happening, not an act. When renunciation comes as a happening it has a tremendous beauty, because there is no motive in it. It is not a means to gain something else. It is total. You are finished with desiring, you are finished with future, you are finished with power, money, prestige, because you have seen the futility of it all.

Seeing is transformation. Remember this as the very fundamental; then these sutras will have a totally different meaning to you. The meaning depends on the context. If you place these sutras in a wrong context they will have a different meaning, and that's what has happened to Buddha.

I repeat: he has been misunderstood more than anybody else in the world. And the reason is that he is one of the most profound masters of the world. His insight is so deep that it is bound to be misunderstood.

Jesus speaks to the common masses in parables, in simple language. He is not a philosopher; he is not very educated or cultured either. He is a son of the earth. He had been working for years with his father as a carpenter -- carrying wood from the forest, cutting wood, helping the old man.

Buddha is a totally different kind of person. He is not a son of the earth, he is a prince. He has never mixed with the crowds, he does not know their language. He speaks a language which can be understood only by the very sophisticated. He tried hard to bring it to the level of the masses, but it is almost impossible. And it is not only a question of language either.

Jesus talks about prayer, which is simple to understand, because prayer is a duality and the whole world consists of dualities. Prayer is a duality because it is a dialogue between you and an imaginary God, but still a dialogue. In prayer you are again desiring, asking to be forgiven for your sins, to be rewarded. Your prayer is a demand; you are a beggar when you are praying. And the prayer is based on the idea of God, and God is nothing but a projection of the human mind. God is anthropocentric. The Bible says God created man in his own image. The truth is just the contrary: man has created God in his own image. Your God simply represents you, your ambitions, your ideals. Your God is a projection of your mind. It is easy to talk about God, and it is easy to be understood when you talk about God; it is easy to talk about prayer, and easy to be understood when you talk about prayer, because

everybody is living on that plane.

Buddha talks about meditation, not about prayer. Prayer has no place in his vision. Buddha never talks about God because he knows perfectly well that God has been manufactured by man either out of fear or out of greed; that God is the greatest desire of man and it is because of God that man remains in bondage, never becomes a light unto himself, always remains a beggar, dependent, a slave.

Buddha wants you to become emperors, not beggars. He wants you to be free of all projections -- God, paradise, the other world, all are included in your projections. Buddha wants you to get rid of mind itself, because that is what meditation is all about: entering into the world of no-mind. This is something very subtle, of immense depth; it is not easy to be understood.

Once Buddha was gone, great misunderstanding arose around him. The day he died his followers became divided into thirty-six sects. And what was the reason for their division, and so soon? The reason was that everybody was trying to impose his interpretation on Buddha, and of course they all had their own interpretations.

I am not interpreting Buddha at all because I am not a Buddhist, I am not a follower. I have experienced the same truth as Gautama the Buddha, so when I am speaking on Buddha it is as if I am speaking on myself. It is not a commentary, it is not an interpretation. Buddha is just an excuse to speak to you, a beautiful excuse to communicate my own realization to you. Let it be remembered that it is my own experience that I am talking about. I am using Buddha as a peg to hang my own understanding and experience on. And I love the man, I am in immense love with this man, because nobody else has ever touched such depths and such heights as Gautama the Buddha. He remains the Everest, the highest peak human consciousness has ever reached.

Be very meditative while you are listening to these sutras; that is the only way to understand them. Not analysis, not thinking, not a logical approach, but a meditative silent listening, JUST listening. And truth has a mystery about it: if you can listen silently you will see whether it is true or not, it will be a vision. Immediately. It will strike your heart if it is truth, something will start vibrating in your heart, your heart will immediately respond. It is not a question of the mind.

When you are listening meditatively you are not listening from the mind at all. Of course the words are very ancient -- twenty-five centuries have passed -- Buddha speaks in the language of his day. Don't be deceived by the language, don't be distracted by his language. It is natural because there is a gap of twenty-five centuries between you and him. He can't speak the language that you understand. That's why I am talking about him, on him -- to give you a new version, a twentieth-century version of the same experience, of the same understanding, of the same transformation.

The first sutra:

THE WORLD IS ON FIRE....

What does Buddha mean by fire? He means anguish. What Soren Kierkegaard means by anguish, anxiety, despair, misery, that's what Buddha means by fire. It is a symbol. Everybody is on fire because everybody is divided, split, schizophrenic. Everybody is on fire because there is great anxiety in the world; the anxiety of "whether I am going to make it this time or not." There is great anguish in every heart -- the anguish of not knowing oneself, the

anguish of not knowing from where we are coming and to where we are going, and who we are and what this life is all about. What is the meaning of life? -- this is our anguish, our agony.

Life seems to be so futile, so utterly meaningless, a mechanical repetition. You go on doing the same things again and again -- for what? The anguish is that man feels very accidental; there seems to be no significance. And man cannot live without experiencing some significance, without experiencing that he contributes something meaningful to the world, that he is needed by existence, that he is not just a useless phenomenon, that he is not accidental, that he is required, that he is fulfilling something tremendously significant. Unless one comes to feel it, one remains on fire.

The existentialist thinkers have made many words well-known. One of those words is 'anguish'; anguish is spiritual agony. It is not that everybody feels it; people are so dull, so stupid, so mediocre. Then they will not feel the anguish, they will go on doing small things their whole lives and they will die. They will live and they will die not knowing what life really was.

In fact when people are dying they become aware for the first time that they have been alive; in contrast to death they become alert: "I have missed an opportunity." That is the pain of death. It has nothing to do with death directly but only indirectly. When one is dying one feels great pain; the pain has nothing to do with death. The pain is: "I was alive and now all is finished and I could not do anything meaningful. I was not creative, I was not conscious, I lived mechanically, I lived like a somnambulist, a sleepwalker."

The mediocre mind goes on living without being worried. He seems to be happier than the intelligent person; he laughs, he goes to the club and to the movies, he has a thousand and one occupations, and he is very busy without any business. The more intelligent you are, the more sensitive you are, the more you will feel that this life -- the way you are living it -- is not the right way, is not the right life; something is wrong in it.

The unintelligent person lives like driftwood; he becomes so much concerned with sightseeing that he forgets all about the ultimate, he forgets all about the goal, he forgets all about the journey. He becomes too absorbed in sightseeing. He is curious but his curiosity is superfluous. He never inquires, because inquiry needs guts, inquiry is risky. Inquiry means you will be facing great problems, you will be coming across ultimate problems, and who knows whether you will be able to solve them or not? He remains only curious. The curious person is the stupid person; his curiosity keeps him occupied, his curiosity keeps him engaged, so he never becomes aware of the real problems.

Marty and his wife Louise sat at the bar of a Chicago hotel. Marty pointed to a striking blonde sitting at the other end and said, "That's a hooker."

"I don't believe it," said Louise.

"I will show you," said Marty. He walked over and chatted with the blonde -- five minutes later they were in his room.

"How much?" asked Marty.

"Fifty bucks."

"I will give you twenty."

"Forget it," said the prostitute as she walked out the door.

A few minutes later Marty rejoined his spouse at the bar. The call girl walked over and tapped him on the shoulder. "You see," she said, "that's what you get for twenty dollars."

The stupid mind remains curious about such things, about others -- who is who, and they never ask, "Who am I?" They never ask the real question for the simple reason that the real question will take them on an arduous journey. They may have to drop many many things on the way: their prejudices, their ideologies, their philosophies, their religions, their churches -- because if you really want to know who you are, you have to drop being a Christian or a Hindu or a Mohammedan, you have to drop being a communist or a fascist. If you really want to know who you are you have to forget all about your being white or black, Indian or American, Chinese or Japanese, because these are just accidental things. They don't constitute your essence.

Your soul is neither Christian nor Hindu nor Mohammedan; your soul is not even male or female. Your innermost center is beyond all concepts. All that has been told to you, all that has become your identity, has to be dropped. To raise the real question means to pass through an identity crisis; you will have to forget all about what you think you are.

And there is going to be an interval, a gap when you will not know who you are -- and that is a painful experience.

The Zen people say: Before one meditates, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. When one goes deep in meditation, mountains are no longer mountains and rivers are no longer rivers. That is a great crisis when mountains are no longer mountains and rivers are no longer rivers. You are passing through an identity crisis. The old is lost and the new has not been found. You have left the old shore and the new shore is not even visible. And the Zen people say: When the meditation is complete, when you have entered into no-mind, mountains are again mountains and rivers are again rivers; of course on a totally different plane, but things are again things. Everything settles again, crystallizes again, but now with a difference.

First others had told you that mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers, now YOU know -- and that makes the real difference. Information is never transformation.

Buddha says: THE WORLD IS ON FIRE! Fortunate are those who can understand it, not only intellectually but existentially. Can't you see your life is nothing but anguish? Now there are two ways to get rid of this anguish, this fire; one is to become so involved in meaningless things that you can forget your anguish, so that the anguish cannot raise its head because you are so occupied: the whole day occupied with money, power, prestige, running after shadows, and when you come back home you are so utterly tired that you fall asleep. And then too you remain engaged in your dreams. Dreams are nothing but reflections of your day; the same game continues in your sleep.

People pass their whole lives in this way. People cannot sit silently even for a few minutes. And the whole Buddhist approach is that unless you are capable of sitting silently for hours together, doing nothing, just being, you will never know who you are and you will never go beyond your anguish. So the first way is to become occupied, involved in anything, whatsoever it is, the only purpose being that you can keep the ultimate question of your life repressed. There is no time.

People come to me, I tell them to meditate. They say, "But we don't have any time." And these are the same people who are sitting for hours in the movies and they have time. And these are the same people who go to the Rotary Club and just go on doing stupid things. These are the same people whom you will find in the hotels, at football matches; these are the same people who will be playing cards and chess, and if you ask them they will say, "We are playing just to kill time." Time is killing you and you think you are killing time. Nobody has ever been able to kill time: time kills everybody.

And when you tell them to meditate the immediate response is, "But where is the time to meditate?" And it is not that they are consciously saying it; it is a very unconscious reaction. It is not that they are deceiving, they are deceived. It is not that they are just trying to deceive you by saying, "I don't have any time," they really feel, they think, that they don't have any time.

THE WORLD IS ON FIRE:
AND ARE YOU LAUGHING?

The world is on fire and you are playing cards?... and you are playing chess? The world is on fire and you are reading a detective novel? The world is on fire and you are gossiping? The world is on fire and you are going to a movie? And remember YOU ARE the world Buddha is talking about.

But sometimes it happens... Soren Kierkegaard has a beautiful parable. He says: once in a circus it happened that suddenly the tent of the circus started burning. Somebody may have thrown a lit cigarette or... nobody knows what happened but the tent was on fire. The clown of the circus came to announce it; he announced that "The tent is on fire!" and people laughed. They thought, "He is playing a trick on us." And they clapped and applauded the clown and the clown was shocked.

He said, "I'm not joking. The tent IS on fire." And people clapped more and laughed more. The clown was at a loss as to what to do! He started beating his chest and saying, "Believe me! THE TENT IS ON FIRE, YOU ARE IN DANGER!"

But nobody believed him; people continued laughing. And many were burned.

This is not a parable: this is reality. Buddhas have been calling to you that the world is on fire, but you think they may be just taking things too seriously.

"My beautiful foxy lady," whispered the suave dude, "you are the only chick for me. I dig you, I am crazy about you, I am nuts about you. I can't make it through the night without your love."

"Hey, wait a minute," protested the bashful girl. "I don't want to get serious."

"Hell, baby," he queried, "who's serious?"

Nobody seems to be serious. Everybody is clowning, everybody is laughing -- or at least pretending to laugh, at least pretending to be happy, at least bragging about his pleasures, the joys of life, and maybe not only deceiving others but being deceived by his own bragging. One may start believing in one's own lies: then they start appearing almost like truths.

Buddha is saying: ARE YOU LAUGHING? AND THE WORLD IS ON FIRE!
Certainly it shows only one thing:

YOU ARE DEEP IN THE DARK.
WILL YOU NOT ASK FOR LIGHT?

This is ancient language. Now, since Sigmund Freud, we can translate darkness as unconsciousness and light as consciousness. That will be easier to understand, because when you talk about darkness and light it looks poetic, and Buddha is very scientific though he is full of poetry. But his poetry is not mere poetry, it has a great science in it, great alchemy in it. His poetry is because of his experience, but his poetry is not just to entertain you. His

poetry is out of his grace, his very being is poetic, but his message is scientific, as scientific as it can be. He is talking about the unconscious and the conscious.

He says you are deep in the dark if you are not aware that the world is on fire, that people are living in anguish -- and they may not even be aware of it. That way the anguish is doubled or multiplied, because if you are aware of your anguish you can get out of it. When the house is on fire and you are asleep, the danger is far more. If the house is on fire and you are awake, the danger is far less -- you can escape, you can get out of the house. Neighbors can help you to come out, you can make a phone call to the fire department. You can do something! At least you can jump out of the window. But if you are asleep then things are more difficult.

YOU ARE DEEP IN THE DARK. Buddha says: Looking at you it seems you are not conscious at all, you are living an unconscious life. Now it is a psychological truth. The whole contemporary psychology, whether Freudian or non-Freudian, Adlerian or Jungian, ALL the schools of modern psychology agree upon one thing: that only a very small part of man is conscious, a very tiny part. The major part of his being is unconscious, is in darkness; you see only the tip of the iceberg, the rest is in darkness. And from that dark continent which is your unconscious come all the motives, desires, instincts, urges -- and the conscious has to follow them. The conscious is only a servant, it is not a master; it is in the service of the unconscious. The unconscious becomes angry and the conscious follows suit; the unconscious becomes full of a sexual urge and the conscious follows it. And the conscious has become very clever in rationalizing. It rationalizes everything. The conscious believes that it is the master and the unconscious laughs at it.

Just watch yourself. If you are angry you never say, "I was angry because of my unconsciousness." You say, "I was angry because anger was needed. I was deliberately angry. I HAD to be angry; otherwise people would start taking advantage of me. And the person had to be punished, he had to be taught a lesson. I was angry because I WANTED to be."

This is rationalization. You were angry because you could not be otherwise; you were not the master of the situation. It was not within your hands to choose to be angry -- or not to be angry. You were driven by anger and it came from some basement of your being. It came like a cloud, it came like great smoke and you were blinded by it. You were surrounded by the cloud and you drifted with it, but later on just to save your face, your ego, your pride, you start rationalizing. You say, "I did it." You have NOT done it: you were FORCED to do it. Watch your sexual desire, watch your greed, watch your anger, and you will be convinced of what Buddha is saying.

A burly truck driver sauntered into a tavern in a mean mood, obviously looking for a fight.

"Everybody on this side of the bar is a no-good, dirty bum!" he shouted. "Anybody want to make something of it just stand up!" Nobody stood up.

"Everybody on this side of the bar is a faggot! A fairy!" No one moved, then suddenly a man stood up.

"You wanna fight?" snarled the truck driver.

"No," lisped the man, "it's just that I'm on the wrong side of the bar."

That's how the mind goes on playing the game -- rationalizing everything.

The psychiatrist was telling his patient, "It took us three years, but now you are cured. This is your last treatment."

"Thanks, Doc," said the patient. "But before I leave, kiss me."

"I tell you that you're cured. You are a healthy person again."

"I know, Doc, but kiss me."

"You don't understand. I got rid of all those crazy ideas. You are cured."

"Sure," his patient persisted, "but just kiss me."

"Kiss you? I shouldn't even be on the couch with you!"

Now, the psychiatrist and the patient, the helpers and the helped, the guide and the guided are all in the same boat.

Unless you can find a buddha you will be following some other blind person. Unless you are with a man like Buddha, Jesus, Zarathustra, Lao Tzu, you will be with people who are just like you. That is one of the greatest calamities that is happening to the modern mind, to the modern man. The spiritual guides have disappeared -- long ago they disappeared. They were replaced first by the priests. Now the priests are being replaced by the psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, psychologists. The priests were blind, now the psychiatrists, the psychoanalysts are blind. They don't know what they are doing, they don't know where they are. They go on helping people and they are unconscious, sometimes even more than the patient. They are insane, sometimes more so than the patient, but they are professional experts, they have studied, they are full of information. They know everything about light without ever having experienced any light. They know everything about what integration is, but it is only ABOUT -- they don't have any inner integration. Their own beings are in fragments, falling apart.

One can be helped only by a buddha, by one who is awakened, because only the awakened can wake those who are fast asleep. If you are asleep and your psychoanalyst is asleep, who is going to wake you up?

In the ancient days people searched far and wide for a buddha; they traveled thousands of miles just in search of a master. Not that they were not aware of many knowledgeable people who knew all about the Vedas and the Upanishads and the Gitas and the Korans and the Bibles; they knew about the scholars, but they had a clear-cut distinction between one who knows on his own authority and one who knows on the authority of the scripture. They never followed the man who had no authentic experience of his own, who had not encountered his self, who was not a flame. And it takes time to search.

You will come across hundreds of masters; ninety-nine point nine percent will be pseudo, false coins. But the only way to seek and search is to go on seeking and searching and whenever you come across a pseudo master, watch! Is what he is saying wisdom or knowledge? Is what he is saying his own or is it within quotes? And it is not very difficult; just a little patience is needed and you will know the pseudo as pseudo.

Harold started hitchhiking and in just a few moments he was picked up by Eleanor, a luscious-looking librarian.

"Would you like a cigarette?" he asked.

"No, thanks," she replied. "I don't smoke!"

They rode in silence for a short time and Harold said, "I know a nice bar up the road here; would you like to stop and have a drink?"

"Thank you, no," said Eleanor. "I don't drink!"

Ten minutes later, Harold took a wild shot and said, "Why don't we stop at the next motel and make love?"

She said, "Alright!"

They stopped, made it like mad for two solid hours, and then were back driving in her car.

"Say, I'm curious," said Harold. "When I asked you to have a smoke, you said no. When I offered to buy you a drink, you turned me down. Yet you went to the motel with me. How come?"

"Well," said the librarian, "I always practice what I preach. I tell my Sunday school that you don't have to smoke or drink to have a good time!"

You will come across such preachers everywhere who practice what they preach, but what they preach is not their own experience; what they preach is all borrowed. It may look like wisdom but it is not. And you cannot avoid it. You will have to knock on many doors before you find the right one. That's the only way, that's how things are. And it is good to knock on many doors because knowing many pseudo masters, slowly slowly you will become aware of what it is to be a real master. By knowing the false you will become capable of knowing the real. To know the false as false is a great step towards the real.

THE WORLD IS ON FIRE: AND ARE YOU LAUGHING? YOU ARE DEEP IN THE DARK. WILL YOU NOT ASK FOR LIGHT? And to ask for light is to ask for meditation.

Modern psychology has still not arrived at that point; it is still entangled with analysis. Analysis cannot bring light in. You can go on analyzing darkness for years, for lives, for centuries; by analyzing darkness you will not arrive at light. How can you arrive at light by analyzing darkness? You will have to find someone who knows how to create light -- that has nothing to do with darkness! When the light is created, darkness disappears, darkness is no longer found. But vice versa is not true: don't start pushing away darkness in order to attain to light -- you will be wasting your life, your energy, your opportunity. Don't fight with darkness! Psychoanalysis is still fighting with darkness, with disease.

And that is the difference between religion and psychoanalysis. Religion is a positive effort to create light; psychoanalysis is a negative effort to dispel darkness -- at the most it can help you to be normally abnormal, that's all. At the most it can help you to adjust to a society which itself is ill. It can help you to be in working condition again. That's all the society needs and requires of you, that you should be a good doctor or a good engineer or a good stationmaster or a good clerk or a good collector. That's all that society asks; society is not concerned with your inner health, with your wholeness. Society wants you to be a perfect machine.

And if you are doing the work given to you well, efficiently, that's enough. Society is not at all interested in your transformation; on the contrary, it is very much afraid of your transformation, because if you become transformed society will not be so easily able to oppress, exploit you. It will not be so easy to enslave you. If you become transformed, if you become full of light, you will be rebellious. Light brings rebellion.

Darkness is very helpful for those who have vested interests because darkness never allows you to escape out of your prison. When you are in the dark you can be convinced that it is not a prison, that it is your house or even that it is a temple of God.

But when there is light nobody can deceive you. You will be able to see that you have been forced to live in a prison cell. And once you have seen that you have been forced to live in a prison cell, you are going to do everything possible to get out of it. Society is very much

afraid of buddhas -- hence the crucifixion of Jesus, the poisoning of Socrates, the murder of Mansoor. Many attempts were made on Gautam Buddha's life.

It is strange that man has always been against those who could have helped humanity; you have been against those who would have taken you to the heights of life and consciousness, those who would have helped you to be fulfilled. Why have you been against these people? You are part of a great slave system -- the state, the society, the church. You function as a Christian, as a Hindu, as a Mohammedan; these are names of slaveries, beautiful labels on ugly things.

A really religious person is neither Hindu nor Mohammedan nor Christian -- he cannot be! He is simply a human being. His religion has no adjective to it, he is simply religious. Seek light! And the only way to seek light is to learn how to meditate, how to be aware, how to be more watchful.

Buddha's way was VIPASSANA -- vipassana means witnessing. And he found one of the greatest devices ever: the device of watching your breath, just watching your breath. Breathing is such a simple and natural phenomenon and it is there twenty-four hours a day. You need not make any effort. If you repeat a mantra then you will have to make an effort, you will have to force yourself. If you say, "Ram, Ram, Ram," you will have to continuously strain yourself. And you are bound to forget many times. Moreover, the word 'Ram' is again something of the mind, and anything of the mind can never lead you beyond the mind.

Buddha discovered a totally different angle: just watch your breath -- the breath coming in, the breath going out. There are four points to be watched. Sitting silently just start seeing the breath, feeling the breath. The breath going in is the first point. Then for a moment when the breath is in it stops -- a very small moment it is -- for a split second it stops; that is the second point to watch. Then the breath turns and goes out; this is the third point to watch. Then again when the breath is completely out, for a split second it stops; that is the fourth point to watch. Then the breath starts coming in again... this is the circle of breath.

If you can watch all these four points you will be surprised, amazed at the miracle of such a simple process -- because mind is not involved. Watching is not a quality of the mind; watching is the quality of the soul, of consciousness; watching is not a mental process at all. When you watch, the mind stops, ceases to be. Yes, in the beginning many times you will forget and the mind will come in and start playing its old games. But whenever you remember that you had forgotten, there is no need to feel repentant, guilty -- just go back to watching, again and again go back to watching your breath. Slowly slowly, less and less mind interferes.

And when you can watch your breath for forty-eight minutes as a continuum, you will become enlightened. You will be surprised -- just forty-eight minutes -- because you will think that it is not very difficult... just forty-eight minutes! It is very difficult. Forty-eight seconds and you will have fallen victim to the mind many times. Try it with a watch in front of you; in the beginning you cannot be watchful for sixty seconds. In just sixty seconds, that is one minute, you will fall asleep many times, you will forget all about watching -- the watch and the watching will both be forgotten. Some idea will take you far far away; then suddenly you will realize... you will look at the watch and ten seconds have passed. For ten seconds you were not watching. But slowly slowly -- it is a knack; it is not a practice, it is a knack -- slowly slowly you imbibe it, because those few moments when you are watchful are of such exquisite beauty, of such tremendous joy, of such incredible ecstasy, that once you have tasted those few moments you would like to come back again and again -- not for any other motive, just for the sheer joy of being there, present to the breath.

Remember, it is not the same process as is done in yoga. In yoga the process is called PRANAYAM; it is a totally different process, in fact just the opposite of what Buddha calls vipassana. In pranayam you take deep breaths, you fill your chest with more and more air, more and more oxygen; then you empty your chest as totally as possible of all carbon dioxide. It is a physical exercise -- good for the body but it has nothing to do with vipassana. In vipassana you are not to change the rhythm of your natural breath, you are not to take long, deep breaths, you are not to exhale in any way differently than you ordinarily do. Let it be absolutely normal and natural. Your whole consciousness has to be on one point; watching.

And if you can watch your breath then you can start watching other things too. Walking you can watch that you are walking, eating you can watch that you are eating, and ultimately, finally, you can watch that you are sleeping. The day you can watch that you are sleeping you are transported into another world. The body goes on sleeping and inside a light goes on burning brightly. Your watchfulness remains undisturbed, then twenty-four hours a day there is an undercurrent of watching. You go on doing things... for the outside world nothing has changed, but for you everything has changed.

A Zen master was carrying water from the well and a devotee who had heard about him and had traveled far to see him asked him, "Where can I see so-and-so, the master of this monastery?" He thought this man must be a servant, carrying water from the well -- you cannot find a buddha carrying water from the well, you cannot find a buddha cleaning the floor.

The master laughed and he said, "I am the person you are seeking."

The devotee could not believe it. He said, "I have heard much about you but I cannot conceive you carrying water from the well."

The master said, "But that's what I used to do before I became enlightened. Carrying water from the well, chopping wood -- that's what I used to do before and that's what I continue to do. I am very proficient in these two things: carrying water from the well and chopping wood. Come with me; my next thing is going to be chopping wood -- watch me!"

The man said, "But then what is the difference? Before enlightenment you used to do these two things, after enlightenment you are doing the same two things -- then what is the difference?"

The master laughed, he said, "The difference is inner: before, I was doing everything in sleep, now I am doing everything consciously. That's the difference: activities are the same, but I am no longer the same. The world is the same, but I am not the same. And because I am no longer the same, for me the world is also no longer the same."

The transformation has to be inner. This is real renunciation: the old world is gone because the old being is gone.

FOR BEHOLD YOUR BODY --
A PAINTED PUPPET, A TOY,
JOINTED AND SICK AND FULL OF FALSE IMAGININGS,
A SHADOW THAT SHIFTS AND FADES.

Buddha says, don't be too much attached to the body, don't get identified with the body, beware! That is a bondage. Live in the body, use the body, but be alert -- it is not you.

FOR BEHOLD YOUR BODY.... If you want to create light in yourself, this is the

beginning: BEHOLD YOUR BODY -- A PAINTED PUPPET, A TOY, JOINTED AND SICK AND FULL OF FALSE IMAGININGS, A SHADOW THAT SHIFTS AND FADES.

How many people have lived on the earth? And they have all faded away, dust unto dust, they have all disappeared -- as if they had never existed at all. And the same is going to happen to you, to everybody. Today you are here, tomorrow you are gone. And then it is only in a few people's memories that you will live for a few days; they will remember you -- just a memory, a picture in their minds. And then those people will die and even the memory will fade away. After two thousand years, do you think there will be anybody who will know that you had ever existed? It is just a shadow, momentary; even though the moment lasts for seventy years, eighty years, it doesn't matter.

Buddha says truth is eternal, and whatsoever is not eternal is a dream -- beware of the dreams! And your mind is also part of your body; that's why he says beware of false imaginings. Your mind goes on giving you false ideas; it says, "Look how healthy I am, how strong I am, look how beautiful I am." It goes on deceiving you, it goes on telling you that death always happens to others, not to you. Nobody is an exception. And the mind is such a deceiver, so cunning, so crafty that it can make you believe anything. It can make you believe in money, and you will have to leave all your money when you go. But you cling to money, people are ready to die for money.

In fact, that's how many people die: their whole lives are spent accumulating money; they sell their lives just to accumulate a few pieces of gold. That gold will remain here and you will be gone, and the gold has no attachment to you. It is you who have created all kinds of attachments.

And the mind always goes on creating a future; it goes on saying to you, "What has not happened yet is going to happen tomorrow -- wait!" It keeps you hoping, it keeps you trying in new ways, in new pastures. If this woman has not satisfied you then the mind says, "It is because this woman is such -- find another!" And this will go on and on. If this man is not satisfactory, the mind says, "It is because this man is wrong." But the mind never allows you to see the fact that no man, no woman, can ever satisfy anybody. Satisfaction is not possible in this world. Contentment is possible only when you move into your state of being, when you become a no-mind. Contentment is the flavor of no-mind.

And when you can manage, mind gives you fantasies, foolish, stupid, absurd. But mind is a great seducer....

Muriel and Tina were discussing their recent experiences over cocktails.

"Say," asked Muriel, "how did you make out with that eccentric millionaire you met yesterday?"

"He gave me five hundred dollars," said Tina. "That screwball wanted to make it in a coffin."

"No kidding!" exclaimed Muriel. "I'll bet that shook you up?"

"Yeah, but not as much as the six pall-bearers."

The mind can seduce you into anything, into any stupid thing. And once anything gets into your mind, it tortures you, it haunts you. You have to do it -- it seems that is the only way to get rid of it. But before you get rid of it, mind gives you another idea. Mind is very inventive as far as imagination is concerned. Mind can go on inexhaustibly creating new ideas for you; that's what has been happening for centuries, for lives. You have lived in this world for so many lives repeating the same kinds of things again and again, maybe a little bit different but the things are the same... and still you go on hoping.

Buddha says beware of the false imaginings; the body is a shadow, you have to leave it one day. You are not it.

HOW FRAIL IT IS!
FRAIL AND PESTILENT,
IT SICKENS, FESTERS AND DIES.
LIKE EVERY LIVING THING
IN THE END IT SICKENS AND DIES.

Remember death, never forget it for a single moment! Because of this insistence, many people have thought Buddha is death-obsessed; he is not. You may be life-obsessed but he is not death-obsessed. He is simply bringing everything to a balance.

He says, as much as you are involved in life you have to remember death too, then there will be a balance, an equilibrium. He used to send his disciples, his sannyasins, to watch whenever a dead body was being burned: "Just go, sit there, meditate and watch and remember this is going to happen to your body too."

Death has to be meditated upon; otherwise life can go on giving you false hopes. If you remember death, life cannot deceive you anymore. Death will keep you alert.

Buddha is not death-obsessed, but he has come to know one thing: that it is only by becoming aware of death that one gets rid of the obsession with the body, the obsession with food, the obsession with sex, the obsession with money, the obsession with the world. You have to live in life, but let there be a consciousness, constantly, that this life is slipping out of your hands and death is coming closer every moment. That will not allow you to be a victim of false desires and false hopes.

BEHOLD THESE WHITENED BONES,
THE HOLLOW SHELLS AND HUSKS OF A DYING SUMMER.
AND ARE YOU LAUGHING?

YOU ARE A HOUSE OF BONES,
FLESH AND BLOOD FOR PLASTER.
PRIDE LIVES IN YOU,
AND HYPOCRISY, DECAY AND DEATH.

That's why people don't want to watch their lives. They don't want to go deeper into their beings because what they find is not soul, God, freedom, light. What they find in the beginning is ego, hypocrisy, decay and death. Yes, if you enter inside, first you will find these things. They are the first layers. But if you go on moving in spite of death, ego, decay, hypocrisy -- you go on moving courageously, then soon things start changing. Instead of death you start entering into eternal life, into life that is timeless; and instead of ego you come across your real self, your supreme self; and instead of death you come across immortality. But one has to go deeper.

The first penetration will make you afraid, you will become scared -- darkness all around and death. And people escape from that first layer. They become so afraid that they never try again.

The great English philosopher, David Hume, has written, "Reading again and again in the scriptures, 'Know thyself,' one day I tried. I closed my eyes and tried to go in. What I found was darkness, many many crazy thoughts, imagination, memory, desires, so many things

crowding around, much noise and turmoil, but I could not find any immortal self." Just one day he tried, and that was that -- as if one becomes a buddha in one day. And not even one day, it must have been one hour or half an hour -- not twenty-four hours. Even a man of such keen intelligence as David Hume could not see a small point: who is the watcher?

He said, "I found memories, ideas, and so on and so forth, many things, but I did not find any self." You see the absurdity of the statement? Who has found the ideas and the imagination and the memory? Who is this witness? That is the self! It is SO simple. You cannot be the idea; you are seeing the idea -- how can you be it? The seer can never be the seen, the watcher can never be the watched, the subject cannot be the object. But even a man like David Hume thinks that there is no soul, there is no self, and all these buddhas have been talking nonsense. And he never tried again. The experience must have been ugly, it IS ugly in the beginning; hence you need a master so that you don't escape from the first layer of your being.

THE GLORIOUS CHARIOTS OF KINGS SHATTER.
SO ALSO THE BODY TURNS TO DUST.
BUT THE SPIRIT OF PURITY IS CHANGELESS
AND SO THE PURE INSTRUCT THE PURE.

If you go on diving deeper and deeper into your being you will come to a pure consciousness which is changeless, timeless, deathless. This is what has been taught by the buddhas to the potential buddhas: AND SO THE PURE INSTRUCT THE PURE. It can be understood only in deep purity of the heart; it cannot be understood by the cunning mind, it can be understood only by the innocent heart. The buddhas can be understood only through the heart, through love, not through logic.

THE IGNORANT MAN IS AN OX.
HE GROWS IN SIZE, NOT IN WISDOM.

Man is born only as a potential. If you don't develop your potential, if you don't grow spiritually, you are just like an ox. The body will go on becoming bigger and bigger, but that is not growth. Growing old is not growing up, growing physically is not growing spiritually. And unless you grow spiritually you are wasting a precious opportunity.

Man is the only being on the earth who can attain to buddhahood. Elephants and lions and tigers can't become buddhas. Only man can become a buddha, only man can become a thousand-petaled lotus, only man can release the fragrance called God.

Don't waste a single moment in anything else. Do the necessary things, the essential things, but pour more and more energy into watchfulness, awareness. Wake up!

Unless you become a buddha you have not lived at all, because you will not know the great poetry of life, the great music of existence. You will not know the celestial celebration that goes on and on, you will not know the dance of the stars. It is for you to become part of this celebration. This bliss is for you! All these flowers and all these songs and all these stars are for you. You are entitled to miracles -- but grow up, wake up!
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #2

Chapter title: The heart has no questions

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO BREAK MY HEART?

Yes, Somendra. It is a thankless job, but it has to be done. Man exists on three planes: the head -- the world of thoughts, the thinking process -- the most superficial plane. Below it is the heart -- the world of feelings, emotions, sentiments -- a little deeper than thought, but not the deepest. And the third is the realm of being -- no thought, no feeling -- you simply are.

My work starts by destroying the thinking process first -- obviously, because that is where you are. I have to hammer your head mercilessly. Once your energy has moved from the head to the heart, I start breaking your heart too. First I use your heart as a temptation: I tell you to move from the head to the heart. It is just to give you a goal which is not very far away, because a too distant goal cannot appeal to you. If it is too far away it appears impossible; the goal has to be within your grasp.

Rooted in the mind, the world of being is very very far away; it looks almost nonexistent. Hence the heart is a midway place, a resting place; it is not the goal. One day you have to be ready to leave it too, but before that I use it as a temptation for you.

I talk about love and the beauty and the ecstasy of feeling... it is only a device so that you can move from the head to the heart. Once you have moved from the head to the heart, then I start hammering on your heart too. Then I have to help you to get rid of the feelings -- because feelings are as stupid as thoughts.

Logic is stupid, love is not less stupid -- sometimes even more! Logic is a game, love too is a game, and you have to be aware of all the games that you are capable of playing. Logic deceives, love does too. One has to rise to the heights or dive to the depths where logic and love both disappear. They are two sides of the same coin: on the one side is your head, on the other side is your heart.

The philosopher deals with the head, the poet with the heart, but the mystic is beyond both. The mystic is transcendental; he is pure being, just consciousness, neither thought nor feeling.

Hence, Somendra, I have to break your heart. I have destroyed your mind -- the first step has been taken. The second step is harder, because the heart is closer to being than the head. It is very easy to see the rubbish of the head; it is very difficult to see the rubbish of the heart. The head reflects nothing of the being; hence to disidentify yourself from the head is not such a great problem. It is easy to see that the thoughts are separate from you; it is very difficult to see that the feelings are different from you. They are so close and they reflect something of your being. Feelings are more attuned with your being; hence the possibility of being deceived by them.

The greater work starts when you start disidentifying yourself from your heart. The heart is not your soul; certainly it is better than the head. And why is it better? It is better only because it is closer to the being, but even though it is closer there is still a distance. Closeness is also a distance. You have to fall still deeper. You have to come to a point, to a center, from where you can see thoughts and feelings all separate from you, where you become just a mirror.

That moment is the moment of enlightenment; you become a buddha. Less than that will not help, less than that is not worthwhile.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IF HEAVEN AND HELL ARE ON THE SAME PLANE, ONLY DIVIDED BY A
TATTERED FENCE, WHY IS THE POSITIVE SIDE OF THE MIND SUPPOSED TO BE
BETTER THAN THE NEGATIVE?

Saguna, it is the same question put in a different way: mind is negative, heart is positive. The language of the mind is rooted in no; the mind immensely enjoys saying no. The more you can say no, the more you are thought to be a great thinker.

There is a beautiful story by Turgenev, THE FOOL.

Once in a town there was a man who was condemned by the whole crowd as the greatest idiot who had ever lived. Obviously he was continuously in difficulty. Whatsoever he would say, people would start laughing, even if he was saying something beautiful, true. But because it was known that he was an idiot, people would think that whatsoever he did and said was idiotic. He might be quoting sages but still people would laugh at him.

He went to a wise old man and told him that he felt like committing suicide, that he could not live anymore. "This constant condemnation is too much -- I cannot bear it any longer. Either help me out of it, or I am going to kill myself."

The old wise man laughed. He said, "There is not much of a problem, don't be worried. Do only one thing, and come after seven days -- start saying no to everything. Start questioning each and everything. If somebody says, 'Look -- look at the sunset, how beautiful it is!' ask immediately, 'Where is there any beauty? I don't see any -- prove it! What is beauty? There is no beauty in the world, it is all nonsense!' Insist on proofs; say, 'Prove where beauty is. Let me see it, let me touch it! Give me a definition.' If somebody says, 'The music is ecstatic,' immediately jump into it and ask, 'What is ecstasy? What is music? Define your terms clearly. I don't believe in any ecstasy. It is all foolishness, all illusion. And music is nothing but noise.'

"Do this with everything, and after seven days come to me. Be negative, ask questions --

questions which cannot be answered: What is beauty? What is love? What is ecstasy? What is life? What is death? What is God?"

After seven days the idiot came to the wise man -- followed by many many people. He was garlanded and beautifully dressed. The wise man asked, "What happened?"

And the idiot said, "It was magic! Now the whole city thinks that I am the wisest man in the world. Everybody thinks I am a great philosopher, a great thinker. And I have silenced everybody, people have become afraid of me. In my presence they remain silent, because whatsoever they say, I immediately turn it into a question and I become absolutely negative. Your trick worked!"

And the wise man asked, "Who are these people who are following you?"

He said, "These are my disciples -- they want to learn from me what wisdom is!"

This is how it is: the mind lives in the no, it is a no-sayer; its nourishment comes from saying no to each and everything. The mind is basically atheistic, negative. There is nothing like a positive mind.

The heart is positive; just as mind says no, the heart says yes. Of course, it is better to say yes than to say no, because one cannot really live by saying no. The more you say no, the more you become shrunken, closed. The more you say no, the less alive you are. People may think you are a great thinker, but you are shrinking and dying; slowly you are committing suicide.

If you say no to love, you are less than you were before; if you say no to beauty, you are less than you were before. And if you go on saying no to each and everything, chunk by chunk you are disappearing. Ultimately a very empty life is left -- meaningless, with no significance, with no joy, with no dance, with no celebration.

That's what has happened to the modern mind, to the modern man. The modern man has said more no's than ever before. Hence the question: What is the meaning of life? Why are we alive at all? Why go on living? We have said no to God, we have said no to the beyond, we have said no to all for which man has lived down the ages. We have proved to our heart's content that all the values man has lived for are worthless -- but now we are in difficulty, in deep anguish. Life has become more and more impossible for us. We go on living only because we are cowards; otherwise we have destroyed all the reasons to live. We go on living because we cannot commit suicide; we are afraid of death, hence we go on living. We live out of fear, not out of love.

It is better to be positive, because the more positive you are, the more you are moving towards the heart. The heart knows no negative language. The heart never asks, "What is beauty?" It enjoys it, and in enjoying it, it knows what it is. It cannot define it, it cannot explain itself, because the experience is such that it is inexplicable, inexpressible. Language is not adequate enough, no symbols help. The heart knows what love is, but don't ask. The mind knows only questions and the heart knows only answers. The mind goes on asking but it cannot answer.

Hence philosophy has no answers... questions and questions and questions. Each question becomes, slowly slowly, a thousand and one questions. The heart has no questions -- it is one of the mysteries of life -- it has all the answers. But the mind will not listen to the heart; there is no communion between the two, no communication, because the heart knows only the language of silence. No other language is known by the heart, no other language is understood by the heart -- and the mind knows nothing of silence. The mind is all noise: a tale told by an idiot, full of fury and noise, signifying nothing.

The heart knows what significance is. The heart knows the glory of life, the tremendous joy of sheer existence. The heart is capable of celebrating, but it never asks. Hence the mind thinks the heart is blind. The mind is full of doubts, the heart is full of trust; they are polar opposites.

That's why it is said that it is better to be positive than to be negative. But remember: the positive is joined with the negative, two sides of the same phenomenon.

I am not here to teach you the ways of the heart. Yes, I use them, but only as a device: to bring you out of your mind I use the heart as a vehicle; to take you to the other shore I use the heart as a boat. Once you have reached the other shore, the boat has to be left behind; you are not expected to carry the boat on your head.

The goal is to go beyond duality. The goal is to go beyond no and yes both, because your yes can have meaning only in the context of no; it cannot be free of the no. If it is free of the no, what meaning will it have? Your yes can exist only with the no, remember; and your no can also exist only with the yes. They are polar opposites, but they help each other in a subtle way. There is a conspiracy: they are holding hands, they are supporting each other, because they cannot exist separately. Yes has meaning only because of the no; no has meaning only because of the yes. And you have to go beyond this conspiracy, you have to go beyond this duality.

Saguna, it is the same question as Somendra's only asked in a different way, from a different angle. But it is not a new question, it is not a different question; it is the same question verbalized differently.

I am not teaching you the positive way of living, I am not teaching you the negative way of living: I am teaching you the way of transcendence. All dualities have to be dropped: the duality of mind and heart, the duality of matter and mind, the duality of thinking and emotion, the duality of the positive and the negative, the duality of male and female, yin and yang, the duality of day and night, summer and winter, life and death... all dualities. Duality as such has to be dropped, because you are beyond duality.

The moment you start moving away from both yes and no, you will have your first glimpses of the ultimate. Hence the ultimate remains absolutely inexpressible; you cannot say no, you cannot say yes.

Gautama the Buddha never said no to God, never said yes to God. He seems to be the only person in the whole history of man who is neither an atheist nor a theist. This is unique, something immensely valuable. He is a pioneer; he is breaking into a new dimension, he is a breakthrough.

People were continuously asking, as they have always asked, "Does God exist?" and they expected a categorical answer, yes or no. They were very puzzled by Buddha, because he would never answer clearly whether God exists or not. On the contrary, he would divert the question into something else; he might start talking about something else. And his impact and his magnetism were such that you would forget all about what you had come to ask him; you would remember only later on that he deceived you. You had asked about God and he didn't say a single word about it.

Many thought, "He does not believe in God and that's why he keeps silent about God, because he is afraid that if he says no then religious people will leave him." Many thought, "He knows God is, but he does not say so because he does not want the atheists to leave him." And many thought, "Because he knows nothing, he is utterly ignorant, that's why he remains silent about the most fundamental question." But they were all wrong.

He was silent because God means something which is transcendental; yes is irrelevant as

much as no is irrelevant. Nothing can be said about God; to be silent about him is the only right answer. He was REALLY answering. Very few, rare people understood him.

Once a man came. He touched Buddha's feet and asked him, "Does God exist?" -- the perennial question.

Buddha said -- that was always his way, it will show you his method -- he said, "When I was young I used to love horses very much." Now, the man is asking about God, and he starts talking about horses! But he was a sweet talker... the man became interested in horses, and Buddha said, "I came across four kinds of horses. One is the most stupid and stubborn kind: you beat the horse, still he would not budge. Many people are like that. The second kind is: you beat him and he would move, but he would move only if you beat him, if you whip him. Many people are like that. And the third kind you need not beat -- you simply show him the whip and that's enough; if he knows you have the whip in your hand, that's enough. And I have also come across very rare horses: even the whip is not needed -- just the shadow of the whip is enough."

And then he closed his eyes and sat silently. The man also closed his eyes and sat in silence with Buddha.

Buddha's chief disciple, Ananda, was present; he was watching the whole thing. He could see that the man had asked about God, and Ananda was also curious about what Buddha was going to say -- and he started talking about horses! Ananda was not happy about it: "This is no way, this is devious, this is cheating the person. He is asking about God and you talk about horses!" He made it a point, "When this man is gone I am going to ask. This is too much! If he talks about God, at least you can talk about meditation, but not about horses! If you don't want to talk about God, talk about meditation, talk about silence, but something relevant. Talk about desirelessness, or at least you can say, 'God is indefinable. Nothing can be said about God, but I can show you the way so you can also experience it.' That would be right, compassionate. But what kind of a joke is this -- you talk about horses?"

But more than that, he was puzzled when Buddha closed his eyes and the man also followed. And there was such great silence, so solid, so substantial, almost tangible; you could have touched it, you could have felt the texture of it. Ananda was not a very silent man, but even he was moved by these two men facing each other sitting in such a tremendous silence. He could see Buddha's face and he could see the face of the man becoming transformed just before his eyes. A grace descended, a great peace arose.

And then after an hour or so the man opened his eyes, touched Buddha's feet in deep gratitude, thanked him and went away.

Ananda asked Buddha, "It is incomprehensible to me: he asks about God and you talk about horses. But I know you, I have heard you doing this to many people -- but more than that I am puzzled about what transpired between the two of you. I know you, so it was not a great puzzle for me that you closed your eyes and you became silent. I know that it is more difficult for you to talk than to be in silence -- silence is natural to you, spontaneous to you -- but what happened to the other man? I could see that he was becoming silent and after a few minutes he was in such a deep silence -- as if he had lived with you for years. Even I have not known such silence! And then what happened in that silence? What communion happened? What communication happened? What transpired? For what was he grateful? Why did he thank you so much?"

Buddha said, "There are four kinds of horses -- you are the first kind, Ananda, and he is the fourth! Just the shadow of the whip is enough, he understood. And I was not talking about

horses, I was talking about God; but God cannot be talked about directly. And I was not talking about horses, I was talking about meditation. But I knew the man -- he is also a lover of horses. When I saw him coming on his horse I knew it immediately: he had such a rare kind of horse, only a lover of horses could choose such a horse. That's why I talked about horses -- that was the language he could understand, and he understood it. And when I closed my eyes he saw the shadow of the whip. He closed his eyes -- he understood that the ultimate cannot be talked about, but you can be silent about it, utterly silent about it, and in silence it is known. It is a transcendental experience: it is beyond mind and beyond heart, it is beyond yes and beyond no, it is beyond negative, beyond positive."

But if you are going to choose between the negative and the positive, then I will say: choose the positive -- because it is easier to slip out of the yes than to slip out of the no -- because no does not have much space in it; it is a dark dark prison cell. Yes is wider; it is more open, more vulnerable. To move from no you will find it very difficult: you don't have much space, you are enclosed in it from every side, and all the doors and all the windows are closed. No is a closed space.

To live in the negative is the most stupid thing a man can do, but millions are living in the negative. Modern man particularly is living in the negative. He is repeating the story of Turgenev, *THE FOOL*, because living in the negative he feels great, his ego feels very satisfied. Ego is a prison cell created by the bricks of no's; negativity is its food.

So if you have to choose, Saguna, between the negative and the positive, choose the positive. At least you will have a little wider scope; a few windows and doors will be open, the wind and the sun and the rain will be available to you. You will have a few glimpses of the open sky outside and the stars and the moon. And sometimes the fragrance of flowers will start coming to you, and sometimes you will be thrilled by the joy of just being alive. And it is easier to move from the yes to the beyond.

From the no come to the yes, and from the yes go to the beyond. The beyond is neither positive nor negative -- and the beyond is God, and the beyond is enlightenment.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO I FEEL SO MUCH PAIN IN LETTING GO OF THE THINGS THAT ARE
CAUSING ME MISERY?

Deva Akal, the things that are causing you misery must be giving you some pleasure too; otherwise the question does not arise. If they were pure misery you would have dropped them. But in life, nothing is pure; everything is mixed with its opposite. Everything carries its opposite in its womb.

What you call misery, analyze it, penetrate into it, and you will see that it has something which you would like to have. Maybe it is not yet real, maybe it is only a hope, maybe it is only a promise for tomorrow, but you will cling to the misery, you will cling to the pain, in the hope that tomorrow something that you have always desired and longed for is going to happen.

You suffer misery in the hope of pleasure. If it is pure misery it is impossible to cling to it. Just watch, be more alert about your misery. For example, you are feeling jealous. It creates misery. But look around -- there must be something positive in it. It also gives you

some ego, some sense of your being separate from others, some sense of superiority. Your jealousy at least pretends to be love. If you don't feel jealous you will think maybe you don't love anymore. And you are clinging to jealousy because you would like to cling to your love -- at least your idea of love. If your woman or your man goes with somebody else and you don't feel jealous at all, you will immediately become conscious that you no longer love. Otherwise, for centuries you have been told that lovers are jealous. Jealousy has become an intrinsic part of your love: without jealousy your love dies; only with jealousy can your so-called love live. If you want your love you will have to accept your jealousy and the misery that is created by it.

And your mind is very cunning and very clever in finding rationalizations. It will say, "It is natural to feel jealous." And it appears natural because everybody else is doing the same. Your mind will say, "It is natural to feel hurt when your lover leaves you. Because you have loved so much, how can you avoid the hurt, the wound, when your lover leaves you?"

In fact, you are enjoying your wound too, in a very subtle and unconscious way. Your wound is giving you an idea that you are a great lover, that you loved so much, that you loved so deeply, that your love was so profound, that you are shattered because your lover has left you. Even if you are not shattered you will pretend to be shattered -- you will believe in your own lie. You will behave as if you are in great misery, you will cry and weep, and your tears may not be true at all, but just to console yourself that you are a great lover, you have to cry and weep.

Just watch every kind of misery: either it has some pleasure in it which you are not ready to lose, or it has some hope in it which goes on dangling in front of you like a carrot. And it looks so close, just by the corner, and you have traveled so long and now the goal is so close, why drop it? You will find some rationalization in it, some hypocrisy in it.

Just a few days ago a sannyasin wrote to me that her man has left her and she is not feeling miserable -- what is wrong with her? "Why am I not feeling miserable? Am I too hard, rocklike? I don't feel any misery," she wrote to me. And she is miserable because she is not feeling misery! She was expecting to be shattered. "On the contrary," she wrote, "I can confess that I am feeling happy -- and that makes me very sad. What kind of love is this? I am feeling happy, unburdened; a great load has disappeared from my being." She asked me, "Beloved Master, is it normal? Am I alright or is something basically wrong with me?"

Nothing is wrong with her, she is absolutely right. In fact, when lovers, after a long long togetherness and all the misery that is bound to happen when you are together, leave each other, it is a relief. But it is against the ego to confess it, that it is a relief. For a few days at least you will move with a long face, with tears flowing from your eyes -- phony, but this is the idea that has prevailed in the world.

If somebody dies and you don't feel sad you will start feeling that something is certainly wrong with you. How can you avoid sadness when somebody has died? -- because we have been told it is natural, it is normal, and everybody wants to be natural and normal. It is not normal, it is only average. It is not natural, it is only a long long cultivated habit; otherwise there is nothing to weep and cry about.

Death destroys nothing. The body is dust and falls into dust, and the consciousness has two possibilities: if it still has desires then it will move into another womb, or if all the desires have disappeared then it will move into the womb of God, into eternity. Nothing is destroyed. The body again becomes part of the earth, goes into rest, and the soul moves into the universal consciousness or moves into another body.

But you cry and weep and you carry your sadness for many days. It is just a formality, or

if it is not a formality then there is every possibility that you never loved the man who has died and now you are feeling repentant; you never loved the man totally and now there is no more time. Now the man has disappeared, now he will never be available. Maybe you had quarreled with your husband and he died in the night in his sleep. Now you will say that you are crying because he has died, but really you are crying because you have not even been able to ask his forgiveness, you have not even been able to say a goodbye. The quarrel will hang over you like a cloud forever.

If a man lives moment to moment in totality, then there is never any repentance, no guilt. If you have loved totally, there is no question. One day if the lover leaves that simply means, "Now our ways are parting. We can say goodbye, we can be thankful to each other. We shared so much, we loved so much, we have enriched each other's lives so much -- what is there to cry and weep about and why be miserable?"

But people are so entangled in their rationality that they can't see beyond their rationalizations. And they always rationalize everything; even things which are obviously simple become very complicated.

"I am in love with my horse," said Andrew to the psychiatrist.

"That's nothing," replied the shrink. "A lot of people love animals. My wife and I have a dog that we love very much."

"Ah, but doctor, it is a physical attraction that I feel towards my horse!"

"Hmm!" said the analyst. "What kind of horse is it? Male or female?"

"Female, of course!" said Andrew. "What do you think I am -- queer?"

You ask me, Akal, "Why do I feel so much pain in letting go of the things that are causing me misery?"

You are not yet convinced that they are causing you misery. I am saying that they are causing you misery, you are not yet convinced. And it is not a question of MY saying it. The basic thing is: YOU will have to understand, "These are the things which are causing me misery," and you will have to see that there are investments in your misery. If you want those investments you will have to learn to live with the misery; if you want to drop the misery, you will have to drop those investments too.

Have you watched it, observed it? -- if you talk about your misery to people, they give great sympathy to you. Everybody is sympathetic to the miserable man. Now, if you love getting sympathy from people you cannot drop your misery; that is your investment.

The miserable husband comes home, the wife is loving, sympathetic. The more miserable he is, the more his children are considerate of him; the more miserable he is, the more his friends are friendly towards him. Everybody takes care of him. The moment he starts becoming happy they withdraw their sympathy, of course -- a happy person needs no sympathy. The more happy he is, the more he finds that nobody cares about him. It is as if everybody becomes suddenly hard, frozen. Now, how can you drop your misery?

You will have to drop this desire for attention, this desire for getting sympathy from people. In fact, it is very ugly to desire sympathy from people -- it makes you a beggar. And remember, sympathy is not love; they are obliging you, they are fulfilling a kind of duty -- it is not love. They may not like you, but still they will sympathize with you. This is etiquette, culture, civilization, formality -- but you are living on false things. Your misery is real and what you are getting in the bargain is false. Of course, if you become happy, if you drop your miseries, it will be a radical change in your life-style; things may start changing.

Once a woman came to me, the woman of one of the richest men in India, and she told me, "I want to meditate, but my husband is against it."

I asked her, "Why is your husband against meditation?"

She said, "He says, 'The way you are, I love you. I don't know what will happen after meditation. If you start meditating you are bound to change; then I don't know whether I will be able to love you or not, because you will be another person.'"

I said to the woman, "Your husband has a point there -- certainly things will be different. You will be more free, more independent. You will be more joyous, and your husband will have to learn to live with a new woman. He may not like you that way, he may start feeling inferior. Right now he is superior to you."

That's why down the ages man has not allowed women to meditate, to participate in deep religious experiences. Man has not allowed women to read the Vedas, the Upanishads, the great scriptures of the world. In many religions the women are not allowed to enter into the mosque or the synagogue. In Jainism it is said that you cannot be liberated from the body of a woman; first you will have to be born as a man, then only can you be liberated. From the body of a woman there is no way to God.

Why? Why this fear? The reason is very psychological: man has always been afraid of women becoming happier than him, more peaceful than him, more attuned, more integrated than him -- because once they are more integrated, more attuned to their beings and to the being of the whole, more in harmony with existence, more in accord.... And women can attain to harmony more easily than men, remember. For certain biological reasons, a woman is more capable of going into meditation than a man is. The male energy is aggressive, violent, outgoing, extrovert, and the female energy is introvert, passive, ingoing.

Hence what Jainism says is absolutely wrong -- not only absolutely wrong: just the opposite may be the truth. It is easier to enter into God through the body of a woman than through the body of a man. The woman's body is more harmonious, the man's body is not so harmonious. The woman's body is more balanced, more rounded; that's why she looks so beautiful. Her body is less tense, more relaxed.

Mothers become aware after a few months' pregnancy whether it is a male child or a female child in their womb, because the male child starts parading and doing things inside the womb, kicking... he cannot be at rest. You can watch small girls -- they are perfectly happy sitting in a corner with their dolls. And the boys? -- they can't sit.

Just a few days ago a little boy took sannyas. I had to ask him, "Can you be silent for one minute so I can explain your name to your mother?" But he was not even able to be silent for one minute. Small girls come for sannyas; when I say to them, "Close your eyes and sit silently," they sit so beautifully; they can sit for hours. When small boys come and I say to them, "Close your eyes," they have to clench their eyes! They are afraid that if they don't do too much they will open. They are so curious about what is happening, what is going on outside.

When small girls take sannyas they look at me. And the boys? -- they look at Krishna Bharti and his camera! They are all over the place! I am putting a mala on them and they are looking at people to see what the response is. "Are people laughing, enjoying, watching?" They are great performers! And a great curiosity keeps them constantly tense.

While on their honeymoon, Kit and Netty bought a talkative parrot and took it back to their hotel room. As they made love the bird kept up a running commentary. Finally Kit flung a bath towel over the cage and said, "If you don't shut up I am sending you to the zoo!"

Getting ready to leave the following morning, they could not close a bulging suitcase and decided one of them would stand on it while the other attempted to fasten it.

"Darling," said Kit, "you get on top and I will try."

That didn't work. So he said, "Now I will get on top and you try."

That didn't work either.

"Look," said Kit, "let us both get on top and try."

The parrot yanked away the towel and said, "Zoo or no zoo, this I've gotta see!"

The parrot must have been a male!

I told the woman, "Your husband is right: before you enter on the path of meditation you have to consider it, because there are dangers ahead."

She didn't listen to me; she started meditating. Now she is divorced. She came to see me after a few years and said, "You were right. The more silent I became, the more my husband became furious at me. He was never so violent -- something strange started happening," she told me. "The more silent and quiet I was becoming, the more aggressive he was becoming." His whole male chauvinist mind was at stake. He wanted to destroy the peace and the silence that was happening to the woman so he could still remain superior. And because it could not happen the way he wanted, he divorced the woman.

It is a very strange world! If you become peaceful your relationship with people will change, because you are a different person. If your relationship was because of your misery it may disappear.

I used to have a friend. He was a professor in the same university where I was a professor; he was a great social worker. In India, what to do with the widows is still a problem. Nobody wants to marry them, and widows are not in favor of marrying either; that seems like a sin. And this professor was determined to marry a widow. He was not concerned whether he was in love with the woman or not -- that was secondary, irrelevant -- his only interest was that she should be a widow. And he persuaded her slowly slowly, and she was ready.

I told the man, "Before you take the plunge, consider it for at least three days -- go into isolation. Are you in love with the woman, or is it just a great social service that you are doing?" Marrying a widow in India is thought to be something very revolutionary, something radical. "Are you just trying to prove that you are a revolutionary? If you are trying to prove that you are a revolutionary, then you are bound for trouble -- because the moment you are married she will no longer be a widow and your whole interest will be gone."

He didn't listen to me. He got married... and after six months he told me, "You were right." He cried. He said, "I could not see the point: I was in love with her widowhood, not with her for herself, and now certainly she is no longer a widow."

So I said, "You do one thing -- commit suicide! Make her a widow again and give somebody else a chance to be a revolutionary! What else can you do?"

Man's mind is so stupid, so unconscious. Buddha says it is in deep sleep, slumber, snoring.

Akal, you cannot let go of things that are causing you misery because you have not yet seen the investments, you have not yet looked deeply into them. You have not seen that there is some pleasure you are deriving out of your misery. You will have to drop both -- and then there is no problem. In fact, misery and pleasure can only be dropped together. And then

arises bliss.

Bliss is not pleasure, bliss is not even happiness. Happiness is always bound together with unhappiness and pleasure is always bound together with pain. Dropping both.... You want to drop misery so that you can be happy -- that is an absolutely wrong approach. You will have to drop both. Seeing that they are together, one drops them; you cannot choose one part.

In life, everything has an organic unity. Pain and pleasure are not two things. Really, if we make a more scientific language, we will drop these words: pain and pleasure. We will make one word: painpleasure, happinessunhappiness, daynight, lifedeath. These are one word because they are NEVER separable.

And you want to choose one part: you want to have only the roses and not the thorns, you want only the day and not the night, you want only love and not hate. This is not going to happen -- this is not the way things are. You will have to drop both, and then arises a totally different world: the world of bliss.

Bliss is absolute peace, undisturbedness, neither disturbed by pain nor disturbed by pleasure.

To celebrate their fortieth anniversary, Seymour and Rose went back to the same second-floor hotel room where they had spent their honeymoon.

"Now," said Seymour, "just like that first night, let us undress, get in opposite corners of the room, turn off the lights, then run to each other and embrace."

They undressed, went to opposite corners, switched off the lights and ran towards each other. But their sense of direction was dulled by forty years, so Seymour missed Rose and he went right through the window. He landed on the lawn in a daze.

Seymour tapped on the lobby window to get the clerk's attention. "I fell down from upstairs," he said. "I am naked and I gotta get back to my room."

"It's okay," said the clerk. "Nobody will see you."

"Are you crazy? I gotta walk through the lobby and I am all naked!"

"Nobody can see you," repeated the clerk. "Everybody is upstairs trying to get some old lady off a doorknob!"

People are so foolish! Not only the younger ones -- the older you get, the more foolish you become. The more experienced you are, it seems the more stupidity you accumulate through life. It really rarely happens that a person starts watching, observing his own life and his own life patterns.

See what your misery is, what desires are causing it, and why you are clinging to those desires. And it is not for the first time that you are clinging to those desires; this has been the pattern of your whole life and you have not arrived anywhere. You go on in circles, you never come to any real growth. You remain childish, stupid. And you are born with the intelligence that can make you a buddha, but it is lost in unnecessary things.

A farmer who had only two impotent old bulls bought a new, young, vigorous bull. Immediately the stud began mounting one cow after another in the pasture. After watching this for an hour, one of the ancient bulls started pawing the ground and snorting.

"What's the matter?" asked the other. "You getting young ideas?"

"No," said the first bull, "but I don't want that young fellow to think I am one of the cows."

So even in their old age people go on carrying their egos. They have to pretend, they have

to pose, and their whole life is nothing but a long long story of misery. Still they defend it. Rather than being ready to change it, they are very defensive.

Akal, drop all defensiveness, drop all armors. Start watching how you live your day-to-day life, moment to moment. And whatsoever you are doing, go into its details. You need not go to a psychoanalyst, you can analyze each pattern of your life yourself -- it is such a simple process! Just watch and you will be able to see what is happening, what has been happening. You have been choosing -- and that has been the problem -- you have been choosing one part against the other, and they are both together.

Buddha says: Attain to choiceless awareness -- don't choose at all. Just watch and be aware without choosing, and you will attain to bliss, you will attain to the lotus paradise.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHO AM I?

Narayano, it is a question to be made a meditation. It is not a question to be asked, it is a question to be contemplated -- because nobody can answer it for you and nobody's answer can become your answer. This is one of those questions which is not really a question but a mystery.

Yes, you can go on asking the scholars, and some stupid scholar will say, "You are God, you are soul, you are this and you are that, you are eternal consciousness, immortal being." But do you think those words are going to have any meaning for you? They will be empty words. This is not a question to be asked, this is a question to be entered into.

Raman Maharshi made it his only meditation; that is the only meditation that he gave to his disciples -- a very potent method. Just sitting silently, first ask verbally, "Who am I?" And then slowly slowly, let the words disappear and only a feeling remain, "Who am I?" -- just a feeling. And finally let the feeling also disappear... a nonverbalized, nonemotionalized question mark. Not that you are asking, "Who am I?" but you have become the question mark itself. Sitting silently, remaining this question mark, you will enter into your being, you will know.

Knowing does not happen through scriptures, it cannot be taught. I know the answer, but my answer is MY answer; it cannot become your answer. You can repeat it like a parrot, you can believe in it, but it will not transform you. No information ever brings any transformation.

To ask this question is wrong: to contemplate this question is right. I cannot answer who you are, but I can say only this: start asking you own being, "Who am I?" and your mind will start supplying you with many answers. If you are a Christian it will give Christian answers, if you are a Hindu it will give Hindu answers, if you are a Buddhist it will give Buddhist answers. All those answers are false. So go on saying, "NETI, NETI -- neither this nor that." Go on saying, "This is not the answer." Whatever answer is supplied by the mind is deceptive -- beware!

When you have destroyed all the answers given by the mind and the mind is empty and has no answers to give anymore, the answer will arise in you. When the mind ceases, the answer arises. It will not be in words, it will be an experience.

Don't ask me, Narayano, ask yourself. Sit silently whenever you can find time.

But you must be asking others this question. People go on, from one master to another

master, asking the same questions, receiving the same answers. The question remains in its place; the answers make no difference. You must have asked this question of many people -- your search is long. You have been to all the ashrams and they have all supplied you with answers, and still you are not satisfied. When are you going to see the point, that no answer given by the outside can ever be satisfactory, it cannot give you contentment?

Drop this question. Don't ask it, because if you ask somebody, there are people who are going to answer. There are people who live on your questions -- the pundits, the priests, the scholars, the professors -- their whole business is to go on supplying answers to your questions. And can't you see the point, that no answer ever becomes your answer?

It is time, start asking yourself. At least this question, "Who am I?" has to be asked in the deepest recesses of your being. You have to resound with this question. It has to vibrate in you, pulsate in your blood, in your cells. It has to become a question mark in your very soul.

And when the mind is silent, you will know. Not that some answer will be received by you in words, not that you will be able to write it down in your notebook that "This is the answer," not that you will be able to tell anybody that "This is the answer." If you can tell anybody, it is not the answer. If you can write it down in a notebook, it is not the answer. When the real answer happens, it is so existential that it is inexpressible. To ask others is stupid. To ask oneself is wise.

The circus had finished its final performance in the country town when one of its zebras took sick. The local veterinarian suggested rest for the beast, so the circus owner made arrangements to board it at a nearby farm.

The zebra took to the new life by meeting all the animals of the barnyard. He came across a chicken and asked, "I am a zebra, who are you?"

"I am a chicken," said the chicken.

"What do you do?" asked the zebra.

"I scratch around and lay eggs."

The zebra walked up to a cow. "I am a zebra. Who are you?"

"I am a cow," said the cow.

"What do you do?" asked the zebra.

"I graze in the field and give milk."

The zebra met a bull next. "I am a zebra," he said. "Who are you?"

"I am a bull."

"And what do you do?" asked the zebra.

"What do I do!" snorted the bull. "Why, you silly looking ass -- take off your pajamas and I will show you!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #3

Chapter title: What you desire you will become

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VAINLY I SOUGHT THE BUILDER OF MY HOUSE
THROUGH COUNTLESS LIVES.
I COULD NOT FIND HIM....
HOW HARD IT IS TO TREAD LIFE AFTER LIFE!

BUT NOW I SEE YOU, O BUILDER!
AND NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU BUILD MY HOUSE.
I HAVE SNAPPED THE RAFTERS,
SPLIT THE RIDGEPOLE
AND BEATEN OUT DESIRE.
AND NOW MY MIND IS FREE.

THERE ARE NO FISH IN THE LAKE.
THE LONG-LEGGED CRANES STAND IN THE WATER.

SAD IS THE MAN WHO IN HIS YOUTH
LIVED LOOSELY AND SQUANDERED HIS FORTUNE --

SAD IS A BROKEN BOW,
AND SADLY IS HE SIGHING
AFTER ALL THAT HAS ARISEN AND PASSED AWAY.

Gautama the Buddha is the greatest breakthrough that humanity has known up to now. Time should not be divided by the name of Jesus Christ; it should be divided by the name of Gautam Buddha. We should divide history before Buddha and after Buddha, not before Christ and after Christ, because Christ is not a breakthrough; he is a continuity. He represents the past in its tremendous beauty and grandeur. He is the very essence of the whole search of man before him. He is the fragrance of all the past endeavors of man to know God, but he is not a breakthrough. In the real sense of the word he is not a rebel. Buddha is, but Jesus looks more rebellious than Buddha for the simple reason that Jesus' rebellion is visible and Buddha's rebellion is invisible.

You will need great insight to understand what Buddha has contributed to human consciousness, to human evolution, to human growth. Man would not have been the same if there had been no Buddha. Man would have been the same if there had been no Christ, no Krishna; there would not have been much difference. Remove Buddha and something of tremendous importance is lost; but his rebellion is very invisible, very subtle.

Before Buddha, the search -- the religious search -- was fundamentally a concern with God: a God who is outside, a God who is somewhere above in the heavens. The religious search was also concerned with an object of desire, as much as the worldly search was. The worldly man sought money, power, prestige, and the otherworldly man was seeking God,

heaven, eternity, truth. But one thing was common: both were looking outside themselves, both were extroverts. Remember this word, because this is going to help you understand Buddha.

Before Buddha, the religious search was not concerned with the within but with the without; it was extrovert, and when the religious search is extrovert it is not really religious. Religion begins only with introversion, when you start diving deeply within yourself.

People had looked for centuries for God: Who is the builder of the universe? Who is the creator of the universe? And there are many who are still living in a pre-Buddha time, who are still asking such questions: Who is the creator of the world? When did he create the world? There are some stupid people who have even determined the day, the date and the year when God created the world. There are Christian theologians who say that exactly four thousand and four years before Jesus Christ -- Monday, 1st January! -- God created the world or started creating the world, and he finished the job in six days. Only one thing is true about it: that he must have finished the job in six days, because you can see the mess the world is in -- it is a six-day job! And since then he has not been heard about. On the seventh day he rested, and since then he has been resting....

Maybe Friedrich Nietzsche is right, that he is not resting -- he is dead! He has not shown any concern. Then what happened to his creation? It seems to be completely forgotten. But Christians say, "No, he has not forgotten. Look! He sent Jesus Christ, his only begotten son, to save the world. He is still interested." That is the only interest Christians say he has shown, in sending Jesus Christ... but the world is not saved. If that was the purpose of sending Jesus Christ to the world, then Jesus has failed and through him God has failed -- the world is the same. And what kind of concern was this -- that his messenger was crucified and he could not do anything?

There are many who are still living in this pre-Buddha worldview.

Buddha changed the whole religious dimension, he gave it such a beautiful turn: he asked REAL questions. He was not a metaphysician, he never asked a metaphysical question; to him metaphysics was all rubbish. He was the first psychologist the world had known, because he based his religion not on philosophy but on psychology. Psychology in its original meaning means the science of the soul, the science of the within.

He didn't ask: Who created the world? He asked: Why am I here? Who am I? Who is creating me? And it is not a question of the past -- "Who created me?" -- we are constantly being created. Our life is not like a thing created once and for all; it is not an object. It is a growing phenomenon, it is a river flowing. Each moment it is passing through new territory. "Who is creating this life, this energy, this mind, this body, this consciousness, that I am?" His question is totally different. He is transforming religion from extroversion into introversion.

The extrovert religion prays to God; the introvert religion meditates. Prayer is extrovert; it is addressed to some invisible God. He may be there, he may not be there -- you can't be sure or certain; doubt is bound to persist. Hence every prayer is rooted somewhere in doubt, in fear, in uncertainty, in greed.

Meditation is rooted in fearlessness, in greedlessness. Meditation is not begging anything from anybody, it is not addressed to anybody. Meditation is a state of inner silence. Prayer is still noise, you are still talking -- talking to a God who may not be there. Then it is insane, neurotic; you are behaving in a mad way. Mad people go on talking; they don't bother much whether there is anybody to listen to them or not. That is a sure sign that they are mad -- they imagine that somebody is there; not only that, they can almost see the other. Their

visualization is great, their imagination is very substantial. They are capable of changing shadows into substance, imagination into realities, fiction into facts. To you they seem to be involved in a monologue; to themselves they are involved in a dialogue. You cannot see who is present there -- they are alone -- but they see that somebody is there.

It is because of this fact that psychoanalysis is very cautious about religion, because the religious person behaves just like the neurotic. And there are many psychoanalysts who think that religion is nothing but a mass neurosis -- and they have a point: the extrovert religion is a mass neurosis.

But psychoanalysts have not yet become aware of Buddha. Buddha will give them a new insight into religion, into true religion. There is no prayer, no God. Meditation is not a dialogue, or even a monologue -- meditation is pure silence.

People ask me, "What should the object of meditation be?" They are asking a wrong question, but I can understand why they are asking it. They have lived in the religions of prayer, and prayer cannot be without somebody there to pray to. Prayer needs an object of worship; prayer is a dependence. The worshipper is not independent; he is dependent on the object of his worship and he is afraid also.

But the meditator has no object. Meditation does not mean to meditate upon something. The English word 'meditation' gives a wrong connotation; in English there is no word to translate the Buddhist word DHYANA. In fact, in no other language of the world is there a word which is absolutely synonymous with dhyana. It is because of this fact that when Buddhism reached China they could not translate it into Chinese; hence dhyana became CH'AN -- it is the same word. The Sanskrit word is dhyana, but Buddha used Pali, another language, the language that was understood by the people amongst whom he lived. In Pali, dhyana becomes JHANA; from jhana, in Chinese it became ch'an, and from ch'an, in Japanese it became ZEN. Chinese had no equivalent, the Japanese had no equivalent. In fact, no other language has any equivalent because no other language has given birth to a man like Buddha. And without a Buddha it is impossible to give this new meaning, this new vision, this new dimension.

In English, 'meditation' means meditating upon something; but then it is thinking, at the most contemplation -- it is not meditation. Meditation means BEING meditative, silent, peaceful, with no thoughts in the mind, a consciousness without content. That is the true meaning of meditation: a pure consciousness, a mirror reflecting nothing. When a mirror is not reflecting anything, it is meditation.

Buddha turned the whole religious quest from metaphysics into a great psychology, because he asked: What are the causes of my life and my death? He is not concerned with the universe. He says: We should start from the beginning, and anything, to have a real significance in life, has to be concerned with me MYSELF: who am I and why am I? What are the causes that go on creating me?

His first sutra is:

VAINLY I SOUGHT THE BUILDER OF MY HOUSE
THROUGH COUNTLESS LIVES.

He is saying, "I have been seeking and searching for God for countless lives. It was all in vain, it was futile. I could not find any God, because in fact God is not a person and you cannot find him. God is not a 'he'."

Now there is great controversy whether God is a he or a she. He is neither. And if you

insist that we have to choose between these two words, 'he' and 'she', I will suggest that 'she' is far better because she contains he, but he does not contain she. But in truth, God is not a person at all; hence the question of whether he is he or she is irrelevant.

God is a quality, not an object. God is not God but godliness -- and godliness has to be found first within yourself. Unless you have a taste of it in your own being you will not be able to see it anywhere else. Once you have tasted it, once you have become drunk on the divine, then you will see it in the trees -- in the green of the trees, in the red of the trees, in the gold of the trees. You will see it in the sun, in the moon, in the stars. You will be able to see it in the animals, birds, people, rivers, mountains. The whole existence will reflect your understanding, will become a mirror to you. You will be able to see your own face everywhere. We can see only that which we are, we cannot see that which we are not.

This is Buddha's great contribution: he dropped prayer, he dropped the idea of God, and he gave a new approach -- that new approach is meditation.

He says: VAINLY I SOUGHT THE BUILDER OF MY HOUSE THROUGH COUNTLESS LIVES. I COULD NOT FIND HIM.... Not because something was lacking in his effort, not because his effort was partial and not total, no. He was not that kind of man: his effort was so total that it could not have been more total. It was because of his total effort that he came to this great understanding, that he came to this great realization.

He went to all kinds of teachers and whatsoever a teacher told him to do, he did it with such passion, intensity, that no teacher was ever able to find any fault with him. And whatever task was given to him, he always fulfilled it. And it happened with so many teachers that finally they said to him, "This is all that we know, and we cannot say that you have not followed us. You have followed so totally that there is no question about your sincerity and your search, but more than this we don't know. You will have to go and find some other master -- this is all that we know. We are sorry that we could not help you more. And if any time you can find something more than this, remember us, and if we are still alive, convey your new realization to us."

This happens very rarely. It is always easy to find fault with the disciple, and if the disciple is at fault, then certainly the master, the so-called master, is at ease. A real disciple is a danger to the pseudo master, because with a real disciple his pseudoness is exposed sooner or later. It is because of the pseudo disciples that pseudo masters live. And there are so many pseudo seekers... just curiosity, they are seeking just out of curiosity; it is not existential. It is very rare to find a disciple like Buddha, because if you find a disciple like Buddha, sooner or later, either you will be proved right through his transformation, or you will be proved pseudo. But you cannot blame him, because he will put his total energies into the effort.

Buddha tried every possible way. He went to all the known and not-so-known teachers who were alive in the country, and from everywhere he came back empty-handed. Finally he decided, "There is something wrong in asking others, there is something basically wrong in going behind others, following others. It is better, it is time, that I should dive deep within myself, that I should seek and search alone." And that's how meditation was born.

Buddha dropped all extrovert efforts, became totally introverted, his whole energy turning in. He started tuning himself to his innermost core. God cannot be found outside you, because there is no God who can ever be outside you. God is the ultimate fragrance of your consciousness. When your consciousness opens like a lotus, the fragrance that is released is God -- better to call it godliness.

God is not a noun but a verb. Let this sink deeply into your heart: that God is not a noun but a verb. In fact, the whole existence is a verb. Change all your nouns into verbs and you

will be on the right track, because everything is alive and flowing -- how can you call it a noun? A noun gives a fixed idea. A noun is always dead and a verb is always alive.

And God is alive. He is alive in you, he is alive in me, he is alive in the birds. Wherever life is, God is; God is synonymous with life.

VAINLY I SOUGHT THE BUILDER OF MY HOUSE THROUGH COUNTLESS LIVES. It was a misunderstanding and, unfortunately, a misunderstanding which still persists. Rather than searching for their own selves, people go on searching for God. They will not find God, and meanwhile they are missing the opportunity of finding themselves.

The very word 'God' has created trouble. Start using 'godliness', 'divineness', 'love'. Drop that God! The word 'God' looks like a dead rock: no flow, no movement, no growth. Let your God become a river.

Remember Herman Hesse's Siddhartha: he learned the deepest realms of meditation by living on the shore of a river, seeing the river in different moods, in different seasons. In the summer it was so thin, like a silver line, and in the rains it was so overflowed. And sometimes it was so silent and so musical, and sometimes it looked so angry, in a rage; sometimes it was so compassionate, and sometimes it was so cruel. Just sitting on the bank of the river, slowly slowly he became aware of the great life of the river, its emotions, its moods....

The first thing my own father taught me -- and the only thing that he ever taught me -- was a love for the small river that flows by the side of my town. He taught me just this -- swimming in the river. That's all that he ever taught me, but I am tremendously grateful to him because that brought so many changes in my life. Exactly like Siddhartha, I fell in love with the river. Whenever I think of my birthplace I don't remember anything except the river.

The day my father died I only remembered the first day he brought me to the riverbank to teach me swimming. My whole childhood was spent in a close love affair with the river. It was my daily routine to be with the river for at least five to eight hours. From three o'clock in the morning I would be with the river; the sky would be full of stars and the stars reflecting in the river. And it is a beautiful river; its water is so sweet that people have named it Shakkar -- SHAKKAR means sugar. It is a beautiful phenomenon.

I have seen it in the darkness of the night with the stars, dancing its course towards the ocean. I have seen it with the early rising sun. I have seen it in the full moon. I have seen it with the sunset. I have seen it sitting by its bank alone or with friends, playing on the flute, dancing on its bank, meditating on its bank, rowing a boat in it or swimming across it. In the rains, in the winter, in the summer....

I can understand Herman Hesse's Siddhartha and his experience with the river. It happened with me: so much transpired, because slowly slowly, the whole existence became a river to me. It lost its solidity; it became liquid, fluid.

And I am immensely grateful to my father. He never taught me mathematics, language, grammar, geography, history. He was never much concerned about my education. He had ten children... and I had seen it happen many times: people would ask, "In what class is your son studying?" -- and he would have to ask somebody because he would not know. He was never concerned with any other education. The only education that he gave to me was a communion with the river. He himself was in deep love with the river.

Whenever you are in love with flowing things, moving things, you have a different vision of life. Modern man lives with asphalt roads, cement and concrete buildings. These are nouns, remember, these are not verbs. The skyscrapers don't go on growing; the road remains the same whether it is night or day, whether it is a full-moon night or a night absolutely dark.

It doesn't matter to the asphalt road, it does not matter to the cement and concrete buildings.

Man has created a world of nouns and he has become engaged in his own world. He has forgotten the world of the trees, the world of the rivers, the world of the mountains and the stars. THERE they don't know of any nouns, they have not heard about nouns; they know only verbs. Everything is a process.

God is not a thing but a process. But words can mislead you. This word 'God' has misled millions of people. It gives you an idea, a very childish idea of course, but once it settles in you, you carry it your whole life. You have an idea of God: some very ancient-looking man with a long white beard, sitting on a golden throne up in the skies, ruling, ordering, commanding the whole world. And whoever disobeys him has to suffer much -- a very dictatorial father. He has not yet forgiven Adam and Eve because they disobeyed him.

In the Garden of Eden there were two trees: one was known as the tree of knowledge and the other as the tree of life. God had said, "Don't eat from these two trees." But children are children -- if you prevent them from doing something they are bound to do it. The serpent is not needed; that is just a strategy, an ancient strategy of man, to throw the responsibility on somebody else. It was Eve herself who became curious.

They disobeyed God and God became afraid: "Now they have eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge -- soon they will find the other tree and they will eat the fruit of life, and then they will become as eternal as gods." And he became very jealous, because once they had eaten from the tree of knowledge, they would be able to find the tree of life; it would not be long. Soon they would find it. They had become wise enough, and a wise man is bound to seek and search for immortality. Being afraid that they would become like gods, God threw them out of the Garden of Eden and closed the doors. Now there are naked swords preventing the re-entry of man into paradise.

This is a very childish concept of God, anthropocentric. But millions of people are still living with this idea of God. It is a sheer misunderstanding. Children can be forgiven, but you cannot be forgiven.

Old Lindley sat down at the doctor's desk.

"What is your problem?" asked the physician.

"Well, Doc, after the first, I am very tired. After the second, I feel all in. After the third, my heart begins to pound. After the fourth, I break out in a cold sweat. And after the fifth, I am so exhausted I feel I could die!"

"Incredible!" said the M.D. "How old are you?"

"Seventy-six."

"Well, at seventy-six, don't you think you should stop after the first?"

"But Doctor," exclaimed old Lindley, "how can I stop after the first when I live on the fifth?"

Words can be very deceptive -- and the word 'God' has deceived millions. Buddha is the first to recognize this fallacy. Hence I say we should divide history by Buddha, not by Christ -- before Buddha, after Buddha -- because he brings such a total and new vision to humanity. He brings a new idea of God: the idea of godliness. With Buddha, humanity becomes mature; it drops its childhood concepts.

I COULD NOT FIND HIM...

Of course there was no possibility of finding him. Nobody has ever found God; many

have found godliness but nobody has ever found God.

HOW HARD IT IS TO TREAD LIFE AFTER LIFE!

And Buddha says: Without knowing who I am, without knowing the significance of life, without knowing the meaning, the goal and the destiny... HOW HARD IT IS TO TREAD LIFE AFTER LIFE. It is hard, it is tiring, it is boring, it is a burden.

Socrates says: A life unexamined is not worth living. Buddha would have agreed with him. Yes, a life unexamined is not worth living, because a life unexamined is not a life at all. It is only carrying a load, dragging -- dragging somehow towards your death. Your feet won't have a dance to them and your heart will not have a song in it. You will be utterly fruitless, impotent, futile. And the more intelligent you are, the more sensitive you are, the more clearly you can see the point.

And Buddha was one of the most sensitive men who has ever walked on the earth.

BUT NOW I SEE YOU, O BUILDER!
AND NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU BUILD MY HOUSE.

This is one of the most important sutras. Meditate over it, ponder over it, because it has been misunderstood also.

When Buddha says: BUT NOW I SEE YOU, O BUILDER! many have thought that he means he has seen God. That is a total misunderstanding. He is not talking about God. When he says: BUT NOW I SEE YOU, O BUILDER! AND NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU BUILD MY HOUSE... he is not talking about God, he is talking about desire. His word is TANHA; tanha means unconscious desire. He says, "It is because of my own unconscious desiring that I have been creating these lives. Nobody else is responsible." He takes the whole responsibility on his own shoulders. This is the beginning of a really religious man; you are no longer throwing responsibility on others -- fate, God, this and that.

In that sense, Marx is as immature as any other so-called saint, and so is Freud -- because they all agree on one point. Marx says: Man is in suffering because of the economic structure of society. The responsibility is thrown on the economic structure of society. Hegel says: Man is suffering because of a wrong history, a wrong past. This is throwing responsibility on the god named "History." And for Hegel, history was almost God: he used to write History with a capital H -- for him history is the most determining factor. And to Freud, the unconscious is responsible. What can you do? You are utterly helpless.

All these people are saying that you are utterly helpless, you cannot do anything; you have to be the way you are, this is the only way you can be. You are a victim of great forces, against which you cannot win.

Buddha says: You can be victorious, but take the responsibility upon your own shoulders. It is your own desiring mind that has been creating your lives. This wheel of life and death is your own creation. When for the first time you realize this, you are shocked, shaken -- shaken to the very roots. But slowly slowly, you start seeing a great freedom in it. You start rejoicing that, "If I am responsible, then there is a possibility for me to change the whole pattern."

BUT NOW I SEE YOU, O BUILDER! AND NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU BUILD MY HOUSE. He is saying, "Now I see that it is desiring, constant desiring -- for this, for that, for money, power, prestige, God, paradise, nirvana..." It is desiring, always desiring, projecting yourself into the future, that is creating your wheel of life and death. And you are

crushed between these two rocks: life and death. You have to be free from life and death.

That is Buddha's meaning of nirvana: to be free from life and death, to be free from desire. The moment you are free from all desires... remember, I repeat, ALL desires. The so-called religious, spiritual desires are included in it, nothing is excluded. All desires have to be dropped because every desire brings frustration, misery, boredom. If you succeed it brings boredom; if you fail it brings despair. If you are after money there are only two possibilities: either you will fail or you will succeed. If you succeed you will be bored with money.

All rich people are bored with money. In fact, that's how a rich person is known to be really rich -- if he is bored with his money, if he does not know what to do with it. If he is still hankering for more money he is not yet rich enough. If you succeed, you are bored, because the money is there but there is no fulfillment with it. All those illusions that you had carried for so long -- those illusions for which you had suffered so much, struggled so much, staked so much.... Your whole life has gone down the drain because of those dreams that when you have money you will be fulfilled. But when you have it you suddenly see the pointlessness of it: the money is there but you are as poor as ever -- in fact more so, because, in contrast to the money, you can see your poverty more clearly.

There is a story by Leo Tolstoy:

A poor tailor had this habit for thirty years of purchasing one lottery ticket every month, and for thirty years it had become a routine. Each month he would purchase a lottery ticket. He never won the lottery, he even stopped thinking of ever getting it, but it had become an old ritual: every month, in the first week he would purchase a ticket.

But one day it happened: a big Rolls Royce suddenly stopped in front of the poor tailor's house. A man walked up with a big bag. The poor tailor could not believe his eyes, because never had a Rolls Royce stopped before his house... and this rich-looking man! And the man said, "Rejoice! You have won the lottery -- here are one million rubles."

The man was overjoyed. He locked his shop, threw the key into the well -- because now he would never need this shop, he would never open this shop again. One million rubles is more than enough for ten lives!

But within a year that one million rubles was gone. He purchased the biggest cars, beautiful houses, the costliest prostitutes, the best food, the best clothes. He lived like the czar, utterly oblivious of the fact that the money was running out of his hands. After one year all was finished. And not only was it finished, but he had been a healthy man, young, and in one year he had aged at least ten years and he had become weak and ill -- all those prostitutes and alcohol and too much rich food. He was weak, ill, old, and he had to jump into the well to search for the key!

People had to pull him out -- he was almost drowning -- but he found the key and he opened his shop again. The whole year had been like a long long nightmare. And he said, "Enough is enough! I will never ask for money again."

But just out of old habit he started purchasing one ticket every month again. And after one year the same car stopped... he said, "My God! do I have to go through all that again?"

If you have money, you will know the misery of it; if you don't have money, you know the misery of not having it. Either way you suffer. Desire brings suffering -- success or no success, desire brings suffering. But you go on desiring in the hope that it may not be so with you.

Remember, life allows no exceptions: its rules are universally valid. Whatsoever is true

for me is true for you, whatsoever is true for Buddha is true for you. Truth is the same! You cannot bribe truth, you cannot persuade truth to be a little different for you. Truth is neutral; it is not a respecter of persons. It is like gravitation: it does not care whether you are rich or poor, famous or notorious, known or unknown. If you go against the law of gravitation you will have a few fractures. Gravitation will not consider that you are the president or the prime minister of a country, or a beggar; it makes no distinctions. And the same is true about inner laws.

Buddha discovered one of the most fundamental laws: that desire is always frustrating. Even though you succeed in achieving your goal, you will be frustrated.

It is because of this that America is now the most frustrated country in the world. They have succeeded: they have created affluence, they have created richness -- about which humanity has been dreaming for centuries -- and they are more frustrated than the Indians. And India is poor, starving, yet India is not in such frustration as America is. And the reason is, when you are poor and starving you can hope that tomorrow things will be better, but when you are rich and you have all that you can imagine, you can't hope. Tomorrow can't be better -- it is already better! Seeing that you have all that you need, what more can happen tomorrow? At the most you will have a little more money -- but if this much money cannot help, a little more is not going to help. You have two cars -- you may have four; you have two houses -- you may have four: the changes are going to be only quantitative, and quantitative changes are not real changes.

The poor person thinks, "There will be qualitative changes when I am rich." He can hope, and through hope he can desire.

Hence I say again and again that before this world can become really religious it has to become very rich. It is not an accident that Buddha was the son of a king. All the twenty-four TIRTHANKARAS of the Jainas were kings, and all the AVATARAS of the Hindus -- Rama and Krishna... were kings. It can't be just coincidence. Why only kings? Why have beggars and poor people not become buddhas? The reason is simple: the poor person can still hope, the rich person has no hope.

When hope disappears, desire is seen in its nudity. Hope keeps on hiding desire in beautiful garments.

BUT NOW I SEE YOU, O BUILDER! AND NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU BUILD MY HOUSE. Buddha says... this is his first statement after his enlightenment. The moment he became enlightened, the morning he became enlightened, with the last star disappearing, this was his first utterance, tremendously pregnant. He looked at the sky; the sun had not yet risen and the last star had just disappeared. He was as empty as the outer sky. And this was his first declaration to existence -- not to anyone in particular. He simply said, uttered -- as if talking to himself or thinking aloud: **BUT NOW I SEE YOU, O BUILDER! AND NEVER AGAIN SHALL YOU BUILD MY HOUSE.**

He says, "I have seen the secret of desire. It is desire that has been creating new bodies, new minds for me, new bodymind mechanisms for me -- and I have seen it. Now it will not be possible for it to create any more trouble for me."

The moment you see the cause of your trouble, the trouble disappears -- and the cause too. Seeing is transformation. To know is to be liberated.

I HAVE SNAPPED THE RAFTERS,
SPLIT THE RIDGEPOLE
AND BEATEN OUT DESIRE.
AND NOW MY MIND IS FREE.

What are the rafters and what does he mean by the ridgepole? These are his metaphors. By rafters he means the past and the memories. The past tries to persist, the past goes on perpetuating itself. Yesterday you were angry, the day before yesterday you were angry, and so on and so forth. Now that anger is waiting in you just for an excuse to explode. The past perpetuates itself. And if you cannot find an excuse you will be angry without any excuse. You will create an excuse, you will invent one -- you will have to, because the anger that you have been going through every day is waiting for its time. It is like tea-time, and your body starts asking for tea. A little tannin is needed... or a little nicotine.

This is happening to Krishna Prem! Just a few weeks ago Laxmi was after him: "Stop smoking!" He was smoking too much. And finally he stopped; with great will he forced himself and stopped. Since that time he has not been in good shape. He became ill, for weeks he remained ill, weak. Now he has come out of his illness. He had to take many medicines and treatments. Now he gets angry at any slight excuse, or no excuse.

Just the other day he asked me, "Beloved Master, what should I do?"
I said, "Smoke! And don't listen to Laxmi again!"

An old habit... now the body needs a certain quantity of nicotine; if it is not there then uneasiness is created. And there is nothing unspiritual in nicotine, remember; nicotine is as spiritual as anything else.

If you have been doing something for a long time you become habituated, and once you become habituated to a certain thing, it forces you to do it again and again. Buddha calls it "the rafters of desire": the past tries to perpetuate itself.

He says: I HAVE SNAPPED THE RAFTERS. I am finished with the past! I am disconnected from my past, I am no longer continuous with my past. I have SPLIT THE RIDGEPOLE. By "ridgepole" he means the future. Desire has these two dimensions: it comes from the past and it goes to the future, it never stays in the present. The present becomes a death to desire.

Hence all meditations are nothing but efforts to bring you to the present. When you live in the present moment, with no past hanging around you, with no future projection, you are free from life and death, you are free from body and mind. You are free -- simply free -- you are freedom.

Buddha says: And this is how I have BEATEN OUT DESIRE. AND NOW MY MIND IS FREE.

THERE ARE NO FISH IN THE LAKE.
THE LONG-LEGGED CRANES STAND IN THE WATER.

A beautiful metaphor, very pictorial: THE LONG-LEGGED CRANES STAND IN THE WATER. Very still they stand, very silent, unmoving, because if they move, ripples are created in the water and those ripples make the fish afraid. The cranes stand absolutely still, like yogis, unmoving, as if they are not there. If there are no ripples in the water, the fish can come close to the cranes and they can catch hold of the fish.

Buddha says: Now a revolution has happened.... THERE ARE NO FISH IN THE LAKE. By "fish" he means desires: My consciousness is free of desires.

THE LONG-LEGGED CRANES STAND IN THE WATER. But because I am alive -- I will not be coming back again into the body, but this body has its own momentum, this mind has its own momentum -- it will have to finish its momentum. So the body is there, the mind

is there, like long-legged cranes standing in the water, although there are no fish anymore.

Buddha is saying: I am here in the world, but without desire, so the world is not in me. I will not be coming back again because there is no reason to come back: there is no desire to fulfill. All desires have been known to be futile.

The world is nothing but an opportunity to fulfill your unfulfilled desires. You are sent back again and again to the world by the universal law -- AES DHAMMO SANANTANO. This is the universal law. Buddha says again and again that if you desire you will be thrown back into the world. Whatsoever you desire you will become; what you become depends on your desires. If your desires are such that they can be fulfilled only in the life of a dog, then you will become a dog. If your desires are such that they can be fulfilled only in the life of an elephant, you will become an elephant. It depends on your desires: your desires create the mold of your bodymind mechanism. It is our desiring that has created us. If you are a man, it is your desire; if you are a woman, it is your desire. You may have forgotten about it....

I have been experimenting in many many ways. I have looked into many people's past lives, and in the beginning I was very much surprised. The most surprising thing was this -- that if somebody is a man in this life, he was a woman in his past life, and vice versa: if somebody is a woman in this life she was a man in the past life. I was puzzled -- why? Then slowly slowly, it became clear to me that man thinks that women are enjoying more than men, and more so now, after the research of Masters and Johnson -- because women have multiple orgasms! Man has a single orgasm and then he is finished for at least twenty-four hours, and a woman can have multiple orgasms -- many orgasms within seconds.

Now many men must be feeling very much frustrated about being men; they may not say so directly, because of their male egos. But it is going to happen. In the coming twenty-five years this is going to happen more and more, that many men will decide to become women -- now it can be done scientifically too -- and many women will decide to become men. In fact, they are trying in every possible way: they are behaving like men, they want to do everything the way man is doing it; they want to compete with him in politics, in the marketplace -- everywhere. They want all the opportunities, because man is enjoying so much. And man thinks that women are enjoying so much: "I have to fight the whole world and the woman simply rests at home!"

This has been happening in the past also, but not scientifically -- naturally. Everybody thinks the other is enjoying. And this idea of multiple orgasms! And also the idea has come that women have two types of orgasm and man has only one type of orgasm. The woman can have vaginal orgasm and clitoral orgasm. Man is so poor! And the woman's orgasm is more total -- her whole body becomes involved in it -- man's orgasm is local. Poor man!

A pretty coed had been receiving obscene phone calls from the same man for months. She was beginning to enjoy it. One night she picked up the phone and it was him again.

"I am gonna come over there, throw you down on the bed, rip off your clothes, spread your legs, and shove something into you that you will never forget!"

"Come on over!" said the girl.

"What?" answered a surprised voice.

"I am serious! You turn me on!"

Twenty minutes later the phone nut was in her apartment. Within five minutes they had their clothes off and within ten seconds the guy was all finished. To add insult to injury, he rolled over and went to sleep on the poor frustrated girl.

An hour later he got up, dressed and headed for the door.

"I will say one thing for you," snapped the coed, "you give great phone!"

Man starts feeling that the woman is enjoying more, and the woman feels the same. It is always so. Even kings think that beggars are more happy: no worry, no anxiety; they can sleep so soundly, so deeply. And it is very difficult for kings to sleep. Beggars don't have food, but they have great appetites; and kings have food but no appetites. Beggars are thinking that kings are enjoying such beautiful palaces, such great food, so many beautiful women, and everything that one can desire. But they don't know that kings can't enjoy food -- their appetites have disappeared long before the food appeared. Yes, they have marble palaces, but they cannot sleep. Their life is a nightmare, constant anxiety, anguish, fear. The king thinks the beggars are in a far better situation: nothing to worry about. Nobody can steal anything from them, nobody can attack them. They don't need bodyguards, they don't need any defense; they can sleep on the road.

Everybody is jealous of everybody else, and that's how it goes on changing. If you are a man, you must have been a woman in your past life; if you are a woman, you must have been a man. You started desiring the other and then the desire has brought a new mechanism for you.

Buddha says it is desire, not God, which has to be looked into, which has to be examined, which has to be observed.

SAD IS THE MAN WHO IN HIS YOUTH
LIVED LOOSELY AND SQUANDERED HIS FORTUNE....

And Buddha says: Beware! Time is passing fast, life is slipping out of your fingers; soon it will be gone. Before it is gone, do something to get rid of desire.

SAD IS THE MAN WHO IN HIS YOUTH LIVED LOOSELY AND SQUANDERED HIS FORTUNE.... What is fortune for Buddha? -- this opportunity, this great opportunity to be aware of desire and its futility, this great opportunity to get rid of desire. This is the great fortune! And sad is the man who has spent his youth loosely, unconsciously, and squandered his fortune. What to say about old people? Even in old age people are repeating the same stupid games.

Ninety-year-old Parker went to a bordello and was so great in bed that the prostitute said, "Old man, if you can do it again, it's on the house!"

"Okay," said Parker, "but if you don't mind, I'd like to take a fifteen-minute nap."

"Okay."

"And while I'm sleeping I'd like you to hold my ding dong!"

She agreed. When he woke up, Parker gave another great performance. So the girl said, "Look, if you can handle it, I'll give you another one for free!"

He agreed. "Okay, but I gotta take another fifteen-minute nap and while I'm sleeping, you have to hold my knob!"

Parker woke up later and once again performed like a teenager. "Say, Pop," said the hooker, "I can understand why you want to take a fifteen-minute nap, but why did you want me to hold your ding dong?"

"Well," said the old man, "the last place I went to, somebody stole my wallet!"

A ninety-year-old man... but the same stupidities! Young people can be forgiven --

although Buddha is not ready to forgive them -- but they can be forgiven; they don't have much experience of life. But even old people, even on their deathbed, at the moment of death, they are still thinking of stupid things and desires. Somebody is thinking of money, somebody is thinking of sex, somebody is thinking of becoming famous -- even on their deathbed! They are completely unaware that they have wasted a fortune.

SAD IS THE MAN WHO IN HIS YOUTH LIVED LOOSELY AND SQUANDERED HIS FORTUNE.... And almost everybody in the world today IS living loosely. By "living loosely" Buddha means that living unconsciously, we go on wasting opportunities which could become great moments of understanding. I am not saying escape from the world; I am not saying escape from anywhere -- but certainly you have to be there with more awareness.

When a recently bought rooster died after only three weeks on the job, Farmer Foster was determined that its replacement would last much longer. So before putting the new rooster to work, Foster dosed it heavily with vitamins and pep pills. The instant the bird was released, it charged into the hen coop and serviced every one of the hens. Then it flew into the adjoining coop and proceeded to do the same for the geese.

Farmer Foster went back to the house, shaking his head and muttering, "He will never last out the day."

Around sunset, Foster was crossing the yard, and there lay the rooster, legs aloft, flat on its back, with two hungry buzzards slowly circling above.

"Damn it!" groaned Foster. "Now I have got to buy me another new rooster!"

The rooster opened one eye, winked, and pointed at the nearing buzzards, saying, "Shhh!"

Be a little more alert than the rooster!

Man is man only when he becomes aware of what he is doing. Otherwise a few are roosters and a few are bulls and a few are horses -- in the form of men. A few are money-mad, a few are sex maniacs, a few are power-hungry. These are all ill people and they have suffered for many lives, but it has become such a settled pattern with them that they go on moving in circles.

SAD IS A BROKEN BOW,
AND SADLY IS HE SIGHING
AFTER ALL THAT HAS ARISEN AND HAS PASSED AWAY.

The day is not far away when you will see that you are just a broken bow. The day is not far away when you will breathe your last, and then you will sigh and weep and cry deep within yourself, because you will know that whatsoever you have been doing has been all just a dream, writing on water. You have lived with shadows; you have not gained any substance in your life. You have wasted a great opportunity in which you could have become a buddha.

Unless you become a Buddha or a Krishna or a Christ, remember that you are wasting a great treasure bestowed upon you by existence. You have not earned it, you don't deserve it. It is a pure gift, a gift of love. Please don't waste it....

Enough for today.

Chapter #4
Chapter title: Morning has broken

14 October 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN I AM DEAD, AM I REALLY DEAD? I WANT TO BE REALLY CONVINCED
THAT DEATH IS ETERNAL SLEEP.

Ram Jethmalani, death is the greatest illusion. It has never happened, it can't happen in the very nature of things. Yes, there is something which creates the illusion: death is a disconnection between the body and the soul but only a disconnection; neither the body dies nor the soul. The body cannot die because it is already dead; it belongs to the world of matter. How can a dead thing die? And the soul cannot die because it belongs to the world of eternity, God -- it is life itself. How can life die?

Both are together in us. This connection becomes disconnected; the soul becomes unplugged from the body -- that's all that death is, what we call death. The body moves back to matter, to the earth; and the soul, if it still has desires, longings, starts seeking another womb, another opportunity to fulfill them. Or if the soul is finished with all desires, with all longings, then there is no longer any possibility of its coming back into a bodily form -- then it moves into eternal consciousness.

Moving into eternal consciousness is a very paradoxical phenomenon: one is not and yet one is. A dewdrop slipping into the ocean is no more, in a sense -- as a dewdrop it is no more; the boundary that made it a dewdrop has disappeared. But in another sense it is more than it has ever been: it has become the very ocean, its boundary has expanded to infinity, its boundary has exploded into the unbounded.

A man like Buddha becomes the universal consciousness, yet -- and this is the paradox -- his individuality is not lost, his consciousness is not lost.

So, Ram, I cannot say that death is eternal sleep -- on the contrary, it is eternal awakening. Poets have been telling you down the ages: Death is eternal sleep -- don't be afraid. They themselves know not, they are simply giving you consolation. But what can the difference be between real death and eternal sleep? Have you ever thought about it? If sleep is eternal it is death. If it is never going to be broken then where is the difference? A corpse and an eternally asleep man are exactly the same. If the sleep is going to be forever and forever, it is death.

The primitive people are far closer to the truth: they say that sleep is a small death. They are right, because for a few hours you become completely oblivious to the world, to others, to yourself, to your body. You become completely disconnected for a few hours, then you are

reconnected again. It is a small death. Sleep is a small death but not vice versa: death is not eternal sleep; if it were then what would the difference be, Ram?

If you simply want to console yourself that, "I will be eternally asleep in death," that's another matter. But the truth is not to console you; truth is as it is. The truth is that death has two possibilities. If you die with longing, desiring, then it brings you back into another body, because without a body you cannot make any effort to fulfill your desires. Without the body you cannot eat food, you cannot make love; without the body you cannot become the prime minister of a country -- without the body it is impossible to do anything. The body is the vehicle for doing things; gaining, journeying, reaching, arriving. Without the body you simply are; it is a state of being. With the body you are always becoming: becoming this, becoming that, richer, more famous, more successful. Without the body all becoming ceases. Becoming is another name for desiring, so if a person dies with a deep, deep desire to become something he will be born again into another body. That is one alternative.

The second is: if you have understood the futility of desire, the utter stupidity of desire, if you have seen it through and through -- that no desire can ever be fulfilled, that it promises and it promises greatly but it never delivers the goods, that all desires are deceptive, that it is because of our unintelligence that we go on being victims of desires; if you have seen it through and through and you die with no projection in the mind, with no seed of desire, then all seeds are burned. It is because of this that Patanjali has called the ultimate state of samadhi, NIRBEEJ samadhi, seedless samadhi -- if you can die with all the seeds burned, there will be no sprout anymore, there will be no other births.

Then where do you go? You don't fall asleep. In fact to attain to a state of seedless samadhi one has to be absolutely awake, one has to be a buddha, because the seeds of desire are burned only in the fire of awakening. So if you die without any desire, you die in utter awareness, you see death happening. And remember again, by "death" I mean you see the disconnection happening -- slowly slowly, the soul is becoming separate from the body. Slowly slowly, it is becoming uprooted from the body, it is becoming freer from the prison. And one moment comes when you are totally free from the prison, outside the prison cell called the bodymind mechanism.

Then you remain eternally awake. Then you remain in the universe, diffused in the ocean of life, but eternally awake. It is not a state of sleep.

You ask me, "When I am dead, am I really dead?" Ram Jethmalani, the real YOU will not be dead, but Ram Jethmalani is going to be dead, because Ram Jethmalani is nothing but the name of the combination of soul and body; it is the name of the identity. We feel identified with our bodies; we think we are our bodies, our minds. Remember, mind is only a part of the body, the subtle part, the invisible part. If we are identified with the bodymind mechanism, then certainly this identification is going to die.

Ram Jethmalani is bound to die, but there is something in Ram Jethmalani which is not going to die. You have to become aware of it. And the only way to become aware of it is to be more meditative, to be more of a witness. Start watching your body, start watching your mind; don't get involved, remain aloof, distant, cool. Just as one sits on the bank of a river and watches the river flow by. You don't say, "I am the river." So it is with the body, watch it. Become more and more of a witness. And as witnessing grows and becomes integrated, you will be able to see Ram Jethmalani disappearing even before death.

In meditation the ego dies, the ego disappears. Once the ego has disappeared, once you have seen yourself as an egoless entity, then there is no death for you.

We can say it in another way: it is the ego that creates the illusion of death. And ego itself

is false, hence death too is false. We cling to the false, that's why we have to suffer from death.

Sannyas means to become disidentified from the bodymind mechanism -- becoming a witness, a seer, a watcher on the hill. And as you become a seer, a watcher, the hill rises higher and higher, and the dark, dark valley is left behind. You go on seeing the valley for the time being; then, slowly slowly, it becomes so distant you can't see it, you can't hear any noise from the valley, and a moment comes at the ultimate peak of the hill when the valley no longer exists for you. Then although alive, in a sense you are dead. Ashtavakra, one of the greatest seers of this country, says: The sannyasin is one who is dead even while he is alive. But the person who is dead while he is alive will be alive when he is dead.

You also ask me, "I want to be really convinced that death is eternal sleep."

Ram, convictions can't help much, because conviction means somebody else silencing your doubts, repressing your doubts, somebody else becoming an authority for you. Maybe logically he is more argumentative, maybe he has a great rational mind and he can convince you that there is no death, and you may be silenced and your doubts may be silenced. But even the doubts that have been silenced will come back again, sooner or later, because they have not disappeared -- they have only been repressed by logical arguments.

Convictions don't help much; doubts persist as an undercurrent. One is a convinced Christian, another is a convinced Hindu. And I have seen all kinds of people -- they are all full of doubts, all of them -- Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans. In fact the more full of doubt a person is, the more stubborn he is, the more he tries to believe, because those doubts are painful. He says, "I strongly believe in the Gita, in the Koran, in the Bible. I am a staunch Catholic."

Why do you need to be a staunch Catholic? For what? You must be suffering from great doubts. If you don't have any doubts you don't have any beliefs either. Doubts are the diseases and beliefs are the medicines, but all beliefs are allopathic medicines -- they repress, they are all poisons. All beliefs are poisonous. Yes, for the time being they can give you a feeling that now there is no problem, but soon the doubts will assert themselves; they will wait for the right time. They will explode with great urgency one day. They will erupt like a volcano; they will take revenge. Because you have repressed them they have gathered too much energy. One day, in some weak moment, when you are off guard, they will take revenge. Your so-called saints are all suffering from great doubts.

No, I cannot give you any conviction; I don't trust convictions, beliefs. But, Ram, I can invite you to come along with me, I can help you to see. Why be convinced? There is no need.

I have seen and I can help you to see, and only your own seeing is going to be of any value. I have realized: I can help you to realize. I have traveled the path: I can take your hand in my hand, I can take you, slowly slowly, to the highest peak of meditative experience. Your own experience will be a real transformation; then doubts can never come back again. And when YOU have known, you will be surprised that all the poets who have been telling you that death is sleep, deep sleep, eternal sleep, have been telling you lies -- consoling lies, beautiful lies, helpful lies, but lies ARE lies, and the help can only be momentary.

It is like when you are too worried, too tense and you take to alcohol. Yes, for a few hours you will forget all your worries and all your tensions, but the alcohol cannot take your worries away forever; it cannot solve them. And while you are drowned in alcohol those worries are growing, becoming stronger; you are giving them time to grow. And when you are back the next morning with a hangover and a headache added to the worries, you will be

surprised; they are bigger than when you had left them.

Then it becomes a pattern of life: become again and again intoxicated so you can forget -- but again and again you have to face your life. This is not an intelligent way to live.

I am against all intoxicants, against all drugs. They don't help; they only help you to postpone problems. I would like to really solve your problems. I have solved mine, and the problems are the same, more or less. I can bring you closer to me so you can feel my heart and you can see through my eyes and you can feel what has happened. And that feeling, that taste, will become a magnetic pull on you.

It is not a conviction, it is not a belief -- it creates trust. And once trust is created the journey has started. I know, Ram, you need great help. I have looked into your eyes -- just once you have been here and just once I have looked into your eyes -- they look very sad. You must be carrying great anguish inside yourself.

On the outside you are a successful man, the topmost criminal advocate in this country. On the outside you are successful in every way -- a member of the parliament, president of the lawyers association of India -- but deep down I have seen, just a passing glimpse, that you are sitting on a volcano. I have seen great anguish in your eyes, great tears just waiting to flow from your eyes. You are not in any way blissful.

I can make you blissful -- why ask for convictions? -- I can give you the real experience. My whole effort here is not to give beliefs to people but experiences, not to help them superficially but really to transform them. I am absolutely available to you. And you cannot escape me for long.

Ram is also my advocate and he enjoys telling people that "I am God's advocate." But to be my advocate is to be in danger; sooner or later you will be trapped. Maybe that's why I have chosen you as my advocate, so that you can come closer to me. My ways are devious.

A great love has arisen in you for me. Now, that love is the first flower of the spring; much more is on the way.

But remember, my whole approach is that of existential experience. I don't want you to be believers, I would like you to experience on your own; I don't want to convince you. What I am saying is my experience: there is no death. I am not saying to you, "Believe that there is no death." I am simply expressing, sharing my experience that there is no death. It is a challenge! It is not an effort to convince you, it is a challenge to come and explore. You are welcome. Think of me as your home!

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE FELT A DEEP SADNESS ALL DAY LONG STEMMING FROM YOUR REMARKS TODAY ABOUT PSYCHOANALYSIS AND RECALLING YOUR JOKES OVER THE YEARS ABOUT PSYCHIATRISTS. IN MY OWN LIFE I HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH ENCOUNTERING A FEW RARE AND WISE PSYCHIATRISTS, PSYCHOLOGISTS -- ONE OF WHOM LED ME TO YOU. THESE PEOPLE PROVIDED -- AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE -- AN OASIS FOR ME IN AN OTHERWISE BARREN DESERT IN THE WEST. IT IS NOT SO MUCH THEIR PROFESSION AS THE LEVEL OF THEIR BEING THAT ATTRACTS ME. WHY DO YOU HIT THIS PROFESSION SO HARD? AND HOW CAN I TRUST MYSELF AND MY EXPERIENCE WHEN IT CONFLICTS WITH WHAT YOU SAY? I FEEL CAUGHT IN A PARADOX.

Prem Sarjana, I hit people only when I love them, I don't waste my hits on unnecessary people, on unworthy people. Psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, are my targets. I am throwing my net to catch hold of as many as possible.

It is said of Jesus:

One day, early in the morning, he came to the lake; two brothers, both fishermen, were throwing their net into the lake to catch fish.

Jesus puts his hand on one of the brothers; he looks back, looks into those eyes of Jesus which are far deeper than the lake, far more silent than the lake and far more beautiful.... He understands only the lake; his whole life he has been working on the lake, fishing. Looking into the eyes of Jesus, for the first time he becomes aware that this is possible, that eyes can be so beautiful and can have such depth and such clarity and such blueness and such vastness. He is immensely attracted -- he is a simple fisherman -- and Jesus says to him, "Enough is enough, you have been catching fish your whole life, now come and follow me: I will teach you the art of how to catch men."

And the fisherman followed Jesus, became one of his apostles.

I am interested, immensely interested, in catching all kinds of psychologists, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, for the simple reason that they have the greatest potential. They can become the right soil for the new man to arrive; they are free of all religious nonsense, they are free from all political stupidity. They are the freest men in a way. Now there is only one thing left with them, a thin barrier: they have made psychoanalysis their religion, they have created their own trinity -- Freud, Adler, Jung. They have created their own Bible, their own theology, now they are caught in it... it happens.

When you have lived for centuries in prisons, even if you are allowed freedom you will soon enter into another prison because that has become your habit. You cannot live without chains. They have broken all the chains but they have now created new chains of their own making, and when you make your own chains, handmade, homemade, you are more attached to them.

Who bothers about what Buddha said? Twenty-five centuries have passed. Who cares what Jesus said or did not say? In fact they have receded so far that nobody is really obsessed with them, except a few people -- who are not contemporaries, who are still living twenty centuries back.

But when you create your own chains and your own prisons... and psychoanalysis is the latest religion -- it is very much easier to fall a victim to psychoanalysis, to Sigmund Freud than to Jesus Christ; it is easier to believe in Marx than in Mohammed, than in Mahavira, than in Manu, than in Moses, because he is so close to us, he speaks such a contemporary language. And that's what has happened to the communists. The Kremlin has become their Kaaba, their Kashi, their Kailash; they also have their own trinity -- Marx, Engels, Lenin; they have their own Bible -- DAS KAPITAL. They have their own apostles -- Stalin, Mao, Castro, Tito. And the same is happening to psychoanalysis, it has become a new religion.

I hit psychoanalysts, Sarjana, because I love them. I am really interested in them. I would like them to come and experience me, and to come and to know what is happening here. And many have heard the call; out of all the professions, psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, have received me the most deeply, the most profoundly. Hundreds of them have come and become sannyasins.

And certainly I go on joking about them; those jokes are also my love affair. That's how I show my love, my interest.

You say, "I have felt a deep sadness all day long stemming from your remarks today about psychoanalysis and recalling your jokes over the years about psychiatrists."

You seem to have made a religion out of psychoanalysis yourself, that's why you feel sad; otherwise you would have enjoyed the jokes, you would have loved them. They are so true.

Psychiatrists are crazy people, I mean beautiful people. Whenever I say that somebody is crazy, I am appreciating them. You have to learn my language. Whenever I say that somebody is crazy I mean that somebody is valuable. To be normal is not a very great thing; to be normal is to be average. That is a condemnation, that somebody is just normal; that means he has nothing in him, he is just hollow.

Don't feel sad, I am not against psychoanalysis -- although I would like psychoanalysts to go beyond it. It has to be a stepping-stone. And whenever I see somebody clinging to a stepping-stone I hit him hard to show him that there is something beyond.

And you say, "In my own life I have been blessed with encountering a few rare and wise psychiatrists, psychologists -- one of whom led me to you."

You may have -- there are a few people who are really intelligent, knowledgeable. But you don't understand the meaning of the word 'wisdom'. It is impossible to find a wise psychoanalyst; if he were wise he would have already become a sannyasin, he would not be a psychoanalyst any longer. And they can be of great help; and particularly in the West where masters don't exist, a psychoanalyst is the only possibility of gaining any help, a pure substitute for a master -- because the master means one who is enlightened, one who has arrived, one who no longer has any problems to solve, any desires to be fulfilled -- one who is already fulfilled.

It is very difficult to find a master in the West. The next best is the psychiatrist, the psychoanalyst. But remember, he is only the next best. And when I say it is difficult to find masters in the West I mean that the Western tradition has fallen into the hands of the priests. For two thousand years the priests have not allowed masters to survive, to exist; or even if, in spite of them, a person became enlightened, he had to go into hiding. He could not declare his enlightenment, he could not share his enlightenment, or he had to share it in such a way that the priests didn't become aware of what he was doing.

So two things Western enlightened people have been doing: one was pretending to be part of the church, using the language of the church and pouring their enlightenment into it, because that was one of the ways not to get into conflict with the church and the state; that's what was done by Meister Eckhart, Saint Francis, Jacob Bohme and others. They remained part of the church. It was just a device to survive and to share something. And they used the language of the church which is very unfitting. They could not be so free as Zen masters or Sufi masters; they could not express themselves totally; they had to force their experience into Christian jargon, which was dull, dead. Or those who were not ready to compromise had to go into hiding, they had to go underground; that's how alchemy was born. Alchemists were not chemists; alchemists were not really trying to transform base metals into gold, that was just a device to hide behind.

The alchemists were real masters but they pretended to be alchemists, and if you had seen them from the outside you would have seen them concerned with base metals and gold and silver. And many experiments were going on, but deep inside the real experiment was going on. Transforming unconsciousness into consciousness -- that is the real transformation of base metal into gold. Gold represents consciousness, enlightenment.

So this happened in the West. The priests were so powerful and the priests were in such a conspiracy with the state that either they burned people like Joan of Arc, who was a mystic -- they killed many mystics -- or forced mystics to go underground, or forced them to speak the language of the church.

Hence in the West masters almost disappeared, and now from the East, particularly from India, there are many many so-called masters roaming all over the West -- Mahesh Yogi, Muktananda, etcetera, etcetera. I call them "etceteranandas." These are all pseudo people, because a master waits for the disciple to come to him; there is no need for the master to go anywhere. If he has real magnetism he will attract people from the farthest corners of the world. If you don't have any magnetism in you then you will have to go and sell whatsoever you can to foolish people. So now the whole West is full of these pseudo masters.

It is better, Sarjana, to be with a psychiatrist than to be with a Muktananda, because the psychiatrist is at least moving in the right direction. He has not arrived yet but he is moving in the right direction. You can find a few very intelligent people in that profession. But wisdom is totally different: wisdom means enlightenment, wisdom means one who has known himself.

But I can understand your difficulty: being in the desert of the West, an oasis becomes of tremendous importance, and that's why you become very sad if I hit psychoanalysts. But without hitting them it is impossible to wake them up. I can understand your difficulty. But now that you are here, part of a buddhahfield, you should get rid of your psychoanalysts and psychiatrists. Say goodbye to them; thank them for all that they have done for you, but say goodbye to them. In the West you were helpless and that was the only possibility of getting any help.

"It was deep in the woods back yonder," began old Herbie, the guide. "I was plodding along minding my own business when suddenly a huge bear sneaked up behind me. He pinned my arms to my sides and started to squeeze the breath out of me. My gun fell out of my hands. First thing you know, the bear had stooped down, picked up the gun, and was pressing it against my back."

"What did you do?" gasped the tenderfoot.

Old Herbie sighed, "What could I do? I married his daughter!"

In the West what else could you do? Helpless.... But now that you are here don't feel sad if I hit psychoanalysts.

You say, "It is not so much their profession as the level of their being that attracts me."

You don't know what you are saying. What level of being are you talking about? I have seen hundreds of psychoanalysts -- the commune is full of them, we have more psychiatrists than psychiatric patients. What level of being? There are not many levels of being in the first place.

There are only two planes: either you are enlightened, or you are unenlightened. Do you think there are many many planes so that one man is ten percent enlightened, another is twenty percent enlightened, another is thirty percent enlightened? No, either it is one hundred percent or it is zero -- zero percent or one hundred percent.

You must have been attracted -- that much I can understand -- but your attraction is more because of you than because of the level of the person to whom you became attracted.

The West is suffering from many mental illnesses; it is better to suffer from mental illnesses than to suffer from physical ones, it is at least something higher. It is better to be

rich and frustrated than to be poor and starving. I have known both poverty and richness, and to be frank with you I must say, to be rich is better, because the rich person suffers from rich illnesses; the poor person suffers from poor illnesses. The poor person is concerned with the body, the rich person is concerned with the mind.

And the psychiatrist, the psychoanalyst, can provide you with many consolations, many adjustments. And, certainly, when you are disturbed anybody who looks undisturbed, who looks very wise in his advice, who goes on analyzing your dreams, looks as if he has a different level of being. It is not so.

All that psychoanalysis is doing is helping people to become adjusted. The Western modern mind has become very maladjusted -- it is a good sign, it is the sign of a crisis, an identity crisis. All the old values have become invalid, new values are needed. The past has become irrelevant; we have succeeded so much in the West that we cannot live with the values which were created when people were poor, remember it.

A poor society needs different values, a rich society needs different values. When a poor society succeeds in becoming rich it becomes maladjusted, because it goes on teaching the old values which are no longer relevant, and it lives in the new society which is rich.

So people's minds are in a mess. What has been told to them by the priest, by the school, by the college and the university, belongs to the past. And the society has moved from there. It is as if you are taught the mechanism of a bullock cart and you have a car; you will be maladjusted, because you know the mechanism of a bullock cart and you have a Mercedes Benz. You are at a loss; your knowledge is irrelevant, but you cling to your knowledge because that is all that you know. That's what is happening.

People were told for centuries to be ambitious, to have all kinds of riches, to succeed in the world. Now it has all happened! Now to tell people to be rich, to be successful, is utterly futile. They will laugh at you, they will say, "What nonsense are you talking about!"

Hence the hippies. In the East they cannot happen; old values are still relevant -- people know about bullock carts and people have bullock carts. They fit perfectly well. But Western technology, Western science, Western affluence, has gone far ahead of the Western mind and attitudes. So everybody is at a loss. A person's knowledge does not fit with the situation he lives in. He cannot drop the knowledge because by dropping the knowledge he becomes almost ignorant. And there is no other knowledge available.

The function of the psychiatrist is to help these maladjusted people to become adjusted again. This is not very revolutionary work; it is antirevolutionary, it is reactionary. That's why I hit psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis has to herald the new age! And on the contrary, what it is doing is helping people to become adjusted to the old, rotten society, which is dying. Psychoanalysis has to help people towards the new man who is soon to arrive on the horizon. That's my effort here.

My work is multidimensional. It is not only religious, it is not only educational, it is not only psychological, it is not only artistic -- it has all the dimensions; because the new man will be a multidimensional man. And psychoanalysis is helping the old, rotten society to survive better than it would survive without the help of psychoanalysis.

Priests, rabbis, and ministers often face anxieties, fears, and frustrations. This was the case with Father Flannagan. The demands of his parish overwhelmed him. He feared lest he might face a complete mental breakdown. So he consulted a psychiatrist. The doctor encouraged him to lay aside his ecclesiastical vestments, then don civilian clothes, red tie, striped shirt, overalls, go out to a tavern and mingle with common people who frequent such

places. There, incognito, he might readily overcome his frustrations. He accepted the prescription, changed his garments, and made his first trip to the tavern.

As he sat at a table a go-go girl came tripping up to him to take his order.

Said she, "Have I not seen you before? Your face looks familiar."

A bit embarrassed he answered, "No, indeed, you have never seen me before. This is the first time I have ever been in this tavern."

Finding the treatment encouraging, he returned to the tavern a second time. The same go-go girl rushed over to him to take his order. This time she said, "I am sure that I have seen you some place."

More embarrassed, but still convinced that he was unrecognized, he exclaimed, "Of course you have never seen me before. This is only the second time I have ever come to this tavern."

Some time later he visited the tavern for a third time. Immediately the little go-go girl ran to him with a big smile saying, "Now I know who you are! You are Father Flannagan from the church on Dublin Street!"

The shock of this recognition almost floored him, but the little girl tapped him on the shoulder with these sympathetic assurances: "Don't fret, Father Flannagan! I am Sister Elizabeth from Saint Theresa Convent. I go to the same psychiatrist!"

The old ideas about life, the old morality, the old ideas of sin and repentance, all have become irrelevant. The old priesthood is absolutely maladjusted, and the people who live according to old religious ideas are feeling out of place. And the new people are also feeling out of place, hence the gap between the generations -- it has never been so big as it is today.

Parents can't understand children, children can't understand parents. They speak different languages, there is no communication; a China Wall has come between parents and children.

All the old cherished values, cherished for centuries and centuries, look stupid. Things that we thought were spiritual are no longer spiritual. The world needs a new spirituality and a new kind of religiousness.

I hit psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, more than any other profession for the simple reason that they are the ones who can understand what I am doing here. And if they understand rightly they will serve the future and not the past. They will help you to become more harmonious with yourself rather than become adjusted to an ill society which is just on its deathbed.

That is where my work differs: I don't help you to become adjusted to society. This society is bound to die, it is doomed to die, and the sooner it happens, the better, because it has become ugly. To go on carrying this rotten corpse does not allow people to live rightly. They have to take care of the corpse which stinks, and there are so many corpses in your house that there is no space for you to live.

We have to get rid of the past. Up to now neither Freudian nor Adlerian nor Jungian psychology has been of any help; it has become part of the establishment. As priests have been doing in the past, psychoanalysts are now doing the same: helping people to compromise with society, helping people to be normal. Normality is not health! Health is very rebellious, and psychoanalysis is not yet courageous enough to be rebellious. Hence I hit it -- because I know the potential; it can become rebellious.

Once psychoanalysis becomes rebellious it will help the new man to arrive sooner, it will help the first real revolution in the world. Up to now all the revolutions were very tiny, pseudo, superficial, because the real revolution can happen only in the psyche of man, not in

the social structure or the economic structure. A real revolution has nothing to do with politics; it has something to do with the spirituality of man.

We have to create a new spirituality, a new vision.

You say, Sarjana, "In my own life I have been blessed with encountering a few rare and wise psychiatrists, psychologists -- one of whom led me to you."

But where is he? Now it is your duty to lead him to me. Pay him in the same coin! What is he doing there? He should be here! He must have read, he must have heard about me, but that is not the way to know me. The only way to know me is to be a sannyasin, is to be part of my energy field, to vibrate with me, to pulsate with me, to synchronize with me. Now this is your duty, you owe this to him. Help him to come here; he may be afraid to come himself.

Just the other day I received a letter from Hari Chetana in Germany saying that on the radio a very famous psychologist was asked by a woman, "It is now six years since my son went to Poona and there seems to be no possibility that he will ever come back. What do you say about it?"

And the famous doctor said, "I have heard much about Poona, I have read also. You need not be worried -- your son is in the right place."

But hearing about me and reading about me while I am alive here.... And the distance between Berlin and Poona is nothing. Within hours you can be here -- he has never come here.

These people know only one way of becoming acquainted with anything -- and that is reading, studying. These people are knowledgeable people, but not wise.

We are helpless. We cannot do anything about Buddha -- we have to read him because he is no longer present. But how many times, reading Buddha and his beautiful sutras, has not the idea arisen in millions of hearts, "How fortunate it would have been if we had been alive in the time of Buddha." Or reading the beautiful words of Jesus has not the idea occurred to you that, "How tremendously blessed were those people who followed Jesus while he was alive, walked with him, talked with him, dined with him, wined with him"? Reading about Krishna have you not heard the distant, distant call of his flute? Have you not felt a little sad that now there is no possibility of encountering this beautiful man?

But when buddhas are alive you don't use that opportunity. You may have been alive when Jesus was there -- he may have passed through your village and you may not have gone to see him. You may have been alive while Buddha walked on the earth and you may not have ever encountered him. You may have been alive while Krishna was playing on his flute and a few courageous people were dancing around him; you may have passed and you may have thought, "These people are crazy and this man has hypnotized them with his music" -- and you would have thought yourself very sane.

But now you cry and weep and you feel sad.

Sarjana, help your psychiatrists, your psychoanalysts to come here. Tell them a buddha is alive, a christ is back on the earth -- tell them!

And this is not only a message for Sarjana, this is for all of you. Jesus says: Go on the rooftops and shout so that people can hear. I say to you also: shout from the rooftops; help as many people as you can to come here, because right now the water is available, the water is flowing. It can quench the thirst of millions, but they will have to come to the river and they will have to bow down to the river; only then can they receive the gift.

Don't feel sad, feel happy that you are here. And I am going to hit again and again, so you have to become accustomed to my ways. I hit people only when I see great potential in them.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM OBSESSED WITH FOOD. I EAT TOO MUCH AND HAVE GAINED ENORMOUS WEIGHT. CAN YOU HELP ME TO REDUCE MY WEIGHT?

Sangito, this is strange, coming to me from California just to reduce your weight. In California there are far more facilities available to reduce weight. I know it because I had to send Mulla Nasruddin to California. The problem was the same.

When Mulla Nasruddin reached California, he was directed by our sannyasins there to this ultimate weight-losing program. It took four days and was guaranteed to take off fifty pounds or your money would be refunded.

He entered the building and was told to enter the first door to his left and to undress there. He did so and then from a second door in the room entered a beautiful blonde woman, naked but for a sign around her neck. It read, "If you catch me, you can make love to me!"

Nasruddin felt the passion rise within him. The room was fairly small, but the lady was agile, and it took him twenty minutes to catch her. After his love-making, Nasruddin showered and left, eagerly awaiting the next day.

On the second day, he was directed to another room, a bit larger than the first. There a beautiful redhead, naked except for the sign, greeted him. The chase lasted for almost forty minutes.

On the third day, it was another, larger room, and a beautiful brunette! After almost an hour, he caught her too.

Throughout the three days, Nasruddin had kept an account of his weight loss -- twenty-eight pounds to date.

On the fourth day, he envisioned perhaps a bevy of beauties. He was directed to the top floor. He climbed the stairs, removed his clothes and waited. There was a click behind him as the door was locked, and out of his left eye he caught sight of a huge gorilla coming his way with a sign around its neck which read, "If I catch you I'm going to make love to you!"

Sangito, you need not come from California to Poona! But one thing is certain: people become obsessed with food only when they lose the capacity to love. It is an indication that you have forgotten the language of love. If you are in love you never become obsessed with food. Obsession with food is a symptom that you don't know how to love. How it happens has to be understood.

The first acquaintance of the child with the world is the mother's breast. That is his first introduction to the world, his entry into the world -- his first relationship is with the breast of the mother. And the breast becomes the symbol for him of two things: food and love.

Whenever the mother is loving, the breast is available; and whenever the mother is unloving, the breast is not available. Food and love become associated; a deep conditioned reflex happens. It becomes so unconsciously rooted that you repeat it your whole life. If the child knows that the mother loves him he will not drink too much, because he KNOWS, he is secure; whenever he needs the mother her breast will be available.

If the child is insecure and feels that next time the mother may not be available, he will start drinking too much, eating too much.

Now, you can see the point: whenever love is there, there is security and a kind of

fulfillment, and the child never becomes obsessed with food. If love is not there, there is insecurity, fear, and a kind of emptiness, and the child stuffs that emptiness with food.

In the West, weight is becoming more and more of a problem for the simple reason that mothers are not ready to give their breasts to their children. Of course the breast loses its shape; and the fear that the breasts will lose their shape and make the woman look old has gripped the mind of women in the West so deeply that they are afraid to give their breasts to their children. And they are creating an obsession about food in the child unknowingly, unconsciously. The child will become obsessed with food, he will eat too much. Eating will become his substitute for love.

Sangito, you will have to learn love. There is no other way to reduce your weight. All other programs can help you a little bit, but sooner or later you will gain weight again because the basic root cause remains the same. You can diet, you can run, swim, exercise, but how long can you diet? Sooner or later you will be fed up with dieting and your mind will become more and more obsessed with eating. Now you will eat in your fantasy, in your dreams, and your mind will convince you that this is not the right way to live. You can't eat this, you can't eat that, and somehow if you ask the doctors, all the good things have to be avoided.

A child was talking to his mother, "You say God is very wise. I don't believe it."
The mother said, "But why don't you believe it?"

He said, "If he was wise, he would have put more vitamins in ice cream. He puts vitamins in things which are uneatable, and things which are really worth eating are dangerous."

How long will you avoid ice cream? The temptation will be such that it will be unavoidable. So you can lose weight for a few days and then you will eat too much, you will take revenge. And you may gain more weight than you had lost by dieting. This is the pattern of millions of people, particularly in the West.

In the East people are starving. You can see a few fat people in Bombay, in Delhi, in Calcutta, but that's all. If you go to the real India, eighty percent of the people in India are starving. There is no question of gaining more weight, they don't have enough weight. They are suffering from malnutrition. Yes, sometimes you will find villagers with big bellies and thin bodies, because they are eating food which is not nourishing, unbalanced, and they eat only when it is available. So when it is available they eat too much.

There are millions of people in India who eat only once a day because they can't afford to eat twice. So to keep their bodies together for twenty-four hours they eat anything, whatsoever is available; sometimes they have to eat the roots of trees.

So the problem is not in the East, the problem is in the West where enough food is available and people have completely forgotten that food grows on trees. Children know that food grows in the fridges. You go to the fridge any time and food is available.

I have heard about a woman who must have been suffering like Sangito. She went to her psychiatrist and asked him his advice -- what to do? He pondered over the problem and gave her a picture, a picture of a naked woman, such an ugly fat woman, disgusting, nauseating, sickening -- just to see it was enough to become afraid of food. And he told the woman, "Stick it inside your fridge so that whenever you open it you will see this picture -- this will remind you of what is going to happen to you."

So she sticks in the picture of the naked woman. The psychiatrist has also given her

another picture of a beautiful young woman with a very proportionate body, a world beauty, and has told her, "Stick this in too, so you can compare. If you don't eat too much you will be like this woman, if you eat too much you will be like that one."

Immediately, from the next day, the woman starts losing weight. But a miracle happens: her husband starts gaining weight. The woman is puzzled. She says, "What is the matter?"

He says, "Since you have put that beautiful naked woman inside the fridge, I go again and again to see the picture. And when I see the picture I see the food too, and the flavor and the smell... and I say, 'Why not take a cake or some ice cream or something?' I am eating too much because of your pictures."

In the West the child grows with the idea that food is somehow miraculously produced by the fridges and it is always available, twenty-four hours a day; any time he can go and eat. And mothers have taken their breasts away and mothers are not available much either. The husbands go to work and the mothers go to so many committees -- they belong to the liberation movement, and consciousness-raising committees -- and they have so many charity shows going on and they have to sell tickets and collect the charity funds... they are not available. The father is gone, the mother is gone; the child is left with the fridge and with no love.

Sangito, just understand the root cause of it: love is missing somewhere in your life. I will not take your obsession with food as a real problem, it is a symptom. Love is the real problem -- love more. And if you love more, you will be loved more. And it is not yet too late; you can find a woman. And all women are mothers, and all men are always like children. So any woman will do, because she will function like a mother. And each man needs a mother his whole life, he needs mothering, and each woman needs children. Even the husband is only the oldest child, that's all. And if you cannot find one, you can come to me -- I always have many applications with me; women searching for men, men searching for women. And I fix anybody with anybody! I don't believe in astrology, I believe only in accidents.

Mulla Nasruddin awoke one morning and looked at the clock. It was five minutes to five. Unable to go back to sleep, he went to the front door to get his newspaper. On the front page he saw the date: May 5th.

"Oh, fifth day, fifth month, five minutes before five," he thought. "Today will be my lucky day!"

He decided to go to the horse races, so he got dressed and went to the corner to wait for the bus. Soon it came -- it had the number five, and Nasruddin noticed when he boarded that there were three other passengers, the driver and himself -- five in all.

He arrived at the track and waited for the fifth race. He bet five hundred rupees on number five to win -- his horse came in fifth!

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #5

Chapter title: Love knows nothing of duty

15 October 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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LOVE YOURSELF AND WATCH --
TODAY, TOMORROW, ALWAYS.

FIRST ESTABLISH YOURSELF IN THE WAY,
THEN TEACH,
AND SO DEFEAT SORROW.

TO STRAIGHTEN THE CROOKED
YOU MUST FIRST DO A HARDER THING --
STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF.

YOU ARE YOUR ONLY MASTER.
WHO ELSE?
SUBDUE YOURSELF,
AND DISCOVER YOUR MASTER.

WILLFULLY YOU HAVE FED
YOUR OWN MISCHIEF.
SOON IT WILL CRUSH YOU
AS THE DIAMOND CRUSHES STONE.

BY YOUR OWN FOLLY
YOU WILL BE BROUGHT AS LOW
AS YOUR WORST ENEMY WISHES.
SO THE CREEPER CHOKES THE TREE.

HOW HARD IT IS TO SERVE YOURSELF,
HOW EASY TO LOSE YOURSELF
IN MISCHIEF AND FOLLY.

THE KATTHAKA REED DIES WHEN IT BEARS FRUIT.
SO THE FOOL,
SCORNING THE TEACHINGS OF THE AWAKENED,
SPURNING THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE LAW,
PERISHES WHEN HIS FOLLY FLOWERS.

We begin with one of the most profound sutras of Gautama the Buddha:

LOVE YOURSELF....

Just the opposite has been taught to you by all the traditions of the world, all the civilizations, all the cultures, all the churches. They say: Love others, don't love yourself. And there is a certain cunning strategy behind their teaching.

Love is the nourishment for the soul. Just as food is to the body, so love is to the soul. Without food the body is weak, without love the soul is weak. And no state, no church, no vested interest, has ever wanted people to have strong souls, because a person with spiritual energy is bound to be rebellious.

Love makes you rebellious, revolutionary. Love gives you wings to soar high. Love gives you insight into things, so that nobody can deceive you, exploit you, oppress you. And the priests and the politicians survive only on your blood -- they survive only on exploitation. They are parasites, all the priests and all the politicians.

To make you spiritually weak they have found a sure method, one hundred percent guaranteed, and that is to teach you not to love yourself -- because if a man cannot love himself he cannot love anybody else either. The teaching is very tricky. They say: Love others -- because they know if you cannot love yourself you cannot love at all. But they go on saying: Love others, love humanity, love God, love nature, love your wife, your husband, your children, your parents, but don't love yourself -- because to love oneself is selfish according to them.

And they condemn self-love as they condemn nothing else -- and they have made their teaching look very logical. They say: If you love yourself you will become an egoist, if you love yourself you will become narcissistic. It is not true. A man who loves himself finds that there is no ego in him. It is by loving others without loving yourself, trying to love others, that the ego arises.

The missionaries, the social reformers, the social servants, have the greatest egos in the world -- naturally, because they think themselves to be superior human beings. They are not ordinary -- ordinary people love themselves -- they love others, they love great ideals, they love God. And all their love is false, because all their love is without any roots.

A man who loves himself takes the first step towards real love.

It is like throwing a pebble into a silent lake: the first circular ripples will arise around the pebble, very close to the pebble, naturally -- where else can they arise? And then they will go on spreading; they will reach the farthest shore. If you stop those ripples arising close to the pebble, there will be no other ripples at all. Then you cannot hope to create ripples reaching to the farthest shores; it is impossible.

And the priests and the politicians became aware of the phenomenon: stop people loving themselves and you have destroyed their capacity to love. Now whatsoever they think is love will be only pseudo. It may be duty, but not love -- and duty is a four-letter dirty word. Parents are fulfilling their duties towards their children, and then in return children will fulfill their duties towards their parents. The wife is dutiful towards her husband and the husband is dutiful towards his wife. Where is love?

Love knows nothing of duty. Duty is a burden, a formality. Love is a joy, a sharing; love is informal. The lover never feels that he has done enough; the lover always feels that more was possible. The lover never feels, "I have obliged the other." On the contrary, he feels, "Because my love has been received, I am obliged. The other has obliged me by receiving my gift, by not rejecting it." The man of duty thinks, "I am higher, spiritual, extraordinary. Look how I serve people!"

These servants of the people are the most pseudo people in the world, and the most

mischievous too. If we can get rid of the public servants, humanity will be unburdened, will feel very light, will be able to dance again, sing again.

But for centuries your roots have been cut, poisoned. You have been made afraid of ever being in love with yourself, which is the first step of love and the first experience. A man who loves himself respects himself, and a man who loves himself and respects himself respects others too, because he knows, "Just as I am, so are others. Just as I enjoy love, respect, dignity, so do others." He becomes aware that we are not different; as far as the fundamentals are concerned, we are one. We are under the same law: AES DHAMMO SANANTANO.

Buddha says: We live under the same eternal law. In the details we may be a little bit different from each other -- which brings variety, which is beautiful -- but in the foundations we are part of one nature.

The man who loves himself enjoys the love so much, becomes so blissful, that the love starts overflowing, it starts reaching others. It HAS to reach! If you live love, you have to share it. You cannot go on loving yourself forever, because one thing will become absolutely clear to you: that if loving one person, yourself, is so tremendously ecstatic and beautiful, how much more ecstasy is waiting for you if you start sharing your love with many many people!

Slowly the ripples start reaching farther and farther. You love other people, then you start loving animals, birds, trees, rocks. You can fill the whole universe with your love. A single person is enough to fill the whole universe with love, just as a single pebble can fill the whole lake with ripples -- a small pebble.

Only a Buddha can say: LOVE YOURSELF.... No priest, no politician, can agree with it, because this is destroying their whole edifice, their whole structure of exploitation. If a man is not allowed to love himself, his spirit, his soul, becomes weaker and weaker every day. His body may grow but he has no inner growth, because he has no inner nourishment. He remains a body almost without a soul or with only a potentiality, a possibility, of a soul. The soul remains a seed, and it will remain a seed if you cannot find the right soil of love for it. And you will not find it if you follow the stupid idea: "Don't love yourself."

I also teach my sannyasins to love themselves first; it has nothing to do with ego. In fact, love is such a light that the darkness of the ego cannot exist in it at all. If you love others, if your love is focused on others, you will live in darkness.

Turn your light towards yourself first, become a light unto yourself first. Let the light dispel your inner darkness, your inner weakness. Let love make you a tremendous power, a spiritual force. And once your soul is powerful you know you are not going to die, you are immortal, you are eternal.

Love gives you the first insight into eternity; love is the only experience that transcends time. That's why lovers are not afraid of death: love knows no death. A single moment of love is more than a whole eternity. But love has to begin from the very beginning. Love has to start with this first step: LOVE YOURSELF....

Don't condemn yourself. You have been condemned so much, and you have accepted all that condemnation. Now you go on doing harm to yourself. Nobody thinks himself worthy enough, nobody thinks himself a beautiful creation of God; nobody thinks that he is needed at all.

These are poisonous ideas, but you have been poisoned. You have been poisoned with your mother's milk -- and this has been your whole past. Humanity has lived under a dark dark cloud of self-condemnation. If you condemn yourself, how can you grow? How can you

ever become mature? And if you condemn yourself, how can you worship existence? If you cannot worship existence in you, you will become incapable of worshipping existence in others; it will be impossible. You can become part of the whole only if you have great respect for the God that resides within you.

You are a host, God is your guest. By loving yourself you will know this: that God has chosen you to be a vehicle. In choosing you to be a vehicle he has already respected you, loved you. In creating you he has shown his love for you. He has not made you accidentally; he has made you with a certain destiny, with a certain potential, with a certain glory that you have to attain. Yes, God has created man in his own image.

Man has to become a god. Unless man becomes a god there is going to be no fulfillment, no contentment. But how can you become a god? Your priests say that you are a sinner. Your priests say that you are doomed, that you are bound to go to hell. And they make you very much afraid of loving yourself.

This is their trick: to cut the very root of love. And they are very cunning people, the most cunning profession in the world is that of the priest; then he says: Love others. Now it is going to be plastic, synthetic, a pretension, a performance.

They say: Now love humanity, your mother country, your motherland, life, existence, God. Big words, but utterly meaningless. Have you ever come across humanity? You always come across human beings -- and you have condemned the first human being that you came across, that is you. You have not respected yourself, not loved yourself. Now your whole life will be wasted in condemning others.

That's why people are such great fault-finders. They find fault with themselves -- how can they avoid finding the same faults in others? In fact, they will find them and they will magnify them, they will make them as big as possible. That seems to be the only saving device; somehow, to save face, you have to do it. That's why there is so much criticism and such a lack of love.

I say this is one of the most profound sutras of Buddha, and only an awakened person can give you such an insight.

He says: LOVE YOURSELF.... This can become the foundation of a radical transformation. Don't be afraid of loving yourself. Love totally, and you will be surprised: the day you can get rid of all self-condemnation, self-disrespect, the day you can get rid of the idea of original sin, the day you can think of yourself as worthy and loved by God, will be a day of great blessing. From that day onwards you will start seeing people in their true light, and you will have compassion. And it will not be a cultivated compassion; it will be a natural, spontaneous flow.

And a person who loves himself can easily become meditative, because meditation means being with yourself. If you hate yourself -- as you do, as you have been told to do, and you have been following it religiously -- if you hate yourself, how can you be with yourself? And meditation is nothing but enjoying your beautiful aloneness, celebrating yourself; that's what meditation is all about.

Meditation is not a relationship; the other is not needed at all, one is enough unto oneself. One is bathed in one's own glory, bathed in one's own light. One is simply joyous because one is alive, because one is.

The greatest miracle in the world is that you are, that I am. To BE is the greatest miracle, and meditation opens the doors of this great miracle. But only a man who loves himself can meditate; otherwise you are always escaping from yourself, avoiding yourself. Who wants to look at an ugly face and who wants to penetrate into an ugly being? Who wants to go deep

into one's own mud, into one's own darkness? Who wants to enter into the hell that you think you are? You want to keep this whole thing covered up with beautiful flowers and you want always to escape from yourself.

Hence people are seeking company continuously. They can't be with themselves; they want to be with others. People are seeking any type of company; if they can avoid the company of themselves anything will do. They will sit in a movie house for three hours seeing something utterly stupid. They will read a detective novel for hours, wasting their time. They will read the same newspaper again and again just to keep themselves engaged. They will play cards and chess just to kill time -- as if they have too much time!

We don't have too much time; we don't have time enough to grow, to be, to rejoice. But this is one of the basic problems created by a wrong upbringing: you avoid yourself.

People are sitting before their TV's glued to their chairs, for four, five, even six hours. The average American is watching TV five hours per day, and this disease is going to spread all over the world. And what are you seeing and what are you getting? Burning your eyes... because TV is the first thing in the world in which you have to look at the very source of the light. Ordinarily you never look at the light itself -- you look at lighted objects. You don't look at the sun; you look at the rose -- the sun is shining on the rose. You look at the green trees, you look at people's faces. You don't look at the electric bulb itself; you look at the painting on the wall. You will not be able to see the painting if the light is not there, but you don't look directly at the source of light because that burns the very delicate mechanism of your eye.

Now in TV you are looking directly at the source of the light. A movie is far better than TV, because at least you are not looking directly at the source of light. TV is creating so many diseases, now they are suspecting that even cancer may be one of those diseases caused by TV. And a few more new diseases are bound to be discovered soon, because the generation that is looking at TV for five, six hours per day is growing up.

But this has always been so; even if the TV were not there, there are other things. The problem is the same: how to avoid oneself, because one feels so ugly. And who has made you so ugly? -- your so-called religious people, your popes, your SHANKARACHARYAS. They are responsible for distorting your faces and they have succeeded. They have made everybody ugly.

Each child is born beautiful, and then we start distorting his beauty, crippling him in many ways, paralyzing him in many ways, distorting his proportion, making him unbalanced. Sooner or later he becomes so disgusted with himself that he is ready to be with anybody. He may go to a prostitute just to avoid himself.

LOVE YOURSELF..., says Buddha. And this can transform the whole world. It can destroy the whole ugly past. It can herald a new age, it can be the beginning of a new humanity.

Hence my insistence on love -- but love begins with you yourself, then it can go on spreading. It goes on spreading of its own accord; you need not do anything to spread it.

LOVE YOURSELF..., says Buddha. And then immediately he adds: AND WATCH.... That is meditation, that is Buddha's name for meditation. But the first requirement is to love yourself, and then watch. If you don't love yourself and start watching, you may feel like committing suicide.

Many Buddhists feel like committing suicide because they don't pay attention to the first part of the sutra, they immediately jump to the second: watch yourself. In fact, I have never come across a single commentary on THE DHAMMAPADA, on these sutras of the Buddha,

which has paid any attention to the first part: LOVE YOURSELF.

Socrates says: Know thyself, Buddha says: Love thyself. And Buddha is far more true, because unless you love yourself you will never know yourself -- knowing comes only later on, love prepares the ground. Love is the possibility of knowing oneself, love is the right way to know oneself.

I was staying once with a Buddhist monk, Jagdish Kashyap; he is now dead. He was a good man. We were talking about THE DHAMMAPADA and we came across this sutra, and he started talking about watching, as if he had not read the first part at all. No traditional Buddhist ever pays any attention to the first part; he simply bypasses it.

I said to Bhikshu Jagdish Kashyap, "Wait! You are overlooking something very essential. Watching is the second step and you are making it the first step, and it cannot be the first step."

Then he read the sutra again and he said with mystified eyes, "I have been reading THE DHAMMAPADA my whole life and I must have read this sutra millions of times -- it is my everyday morning prayer to go through THE DHAMMAPADA, I can repeat it simply from memory, but I have never thought that 'Love yourself' is the first part of meditation and watching is the second part."

And this is the case with millions of Buddhists all over the world, and this is the case with neo-Buddhists also -- because in the West Buddhism is now spreading.

The time for Buddha has come in the West. Now the West is ready to understand Buddha, and the same mistake is being made there too. Nobody thinks that "Love yourself" has to be the foundation of knowing yourself, of watching yourself... because unless you love yourself you cannot face yourself, you will avoid. Your watching may itself be a way of avoiding yourself.

First:

LOVE YOURSELF AND WATCH --
TODAY, TOMORROW, ALWAYS.

Create loving energy around yourself. Love your body, love your mind. Love your whole mechanism, your whole organism. By "love" is meant: accept it as it is, don't try to repress. We repress only when we hate something, we repress only when we are against something. Don't repress, because if you repress, how are you going to watch? And we cannot look eye-to-eye at the enemy; we can look only in the eyes of our beloved. If you are not a lover of yourself you will not be able to look into your own eyes, into your own face, into your own reality.

Watching is meditation, Buddha's name for meditation. 'Watch' is Buddha's watchword. He says: Be aware, be alert, don't be unconscious. Don't behave in a sleepy way. Don't go on functioning like a machine, like a robot. That's how people are functioning.

Mike had just moved into his apartment and decided he should get acquainted with his across-the-hall neighbor. When the door was opened he was delightfully surprised to see a beautiful young blonde bulging out of a skimpy see-through negligee.

Mike looked her squarely in the eye and ad-libbed: "Hi! I am your new sugar across the hall -- can I borrow a cup of neighbor?"

People ARE living unconsciously: they are not aware of what they are saying, what they are doing -- they are not watchful. People go on guessing, not seeing; they don't have any insight, they can't have. Insight arises only through great watchfulness: then you can see even with closed eyes. Right now you can't see even with open eyes. You guess, you infer, you impose, you project.

Grace lay on the psychiatrist's couch.

"Close your eyes and relax," said the shrink, "and I will try an experiment."

He took a leather key case from his pocket, flipped it open and shook the keys. "What did that sound remind you of?" he asked.

"Sex," she whispered.

Then he closed his key case and touched it to the girl's upturned palm. Her body stiffened. "And that?" asked the psychiatrist.

"Sex," Grace murmured nervously.

"Now open your eyes," instructed the doctor, "and tell me why what I did was sexually evocative to you."

Hesitantly, her eyelids flickered open. Grace saw the key case in the psychiatrist's hand and blushed scarlet.

"Well -- er -- to begin with," she stammered, "I thought that first sound was your zipper opening...."

Your mind is constantly projecting -- projecting itself. Your mind is constantly interfering with reality, giving it a color, shape and form which is not its own. Your mind never allows you to see that which is; it allows you to see only that which it WANTS to see.

Just twenty years ago, scientists used to think that our eyes, ears, nose and our other senses, AND the mind, were nothing but openings to reality, bridges to reality. But within twenty years -- the last twenty years -- the whole understanding has changed. Now they say our senses and the mind are not really openings to reality but guards against it. Only two percent of reality ever gets through these guards into you; ninety-eight percent of reality is kept outside. And the two percent that reaches you and your being is no longer the same; it has to pass through so many barriers, it has to conform to so many mind things, that by the time it reaches you it is no longer itself.

Meditation means putting the mind aside so that it no longer interferes with reality and you can see things as they are. Why does the mind interfere at all? -- because the mind is created by society. It is society's agent within you; it is not in your service, remember! It is your mind but it is not in your service; it is in a conspiracy against you. It has been conditioned by society; society has implanted many things in it. It is YOUR mind, but it no longer functions as a servant to you; it functions as a servant to society.

If you are a Christian then it functions as an agent of the Christian church, if you are a Hindu then your mind is Hindu, if you are a Buddhist your mind is Buddhist. And reality is neither Christian nor Hindu nor Buddhist; reality is simply as it is. And you have to put these minds aside: the communist mind, the fascist mind, the Catholic mind, the Protestant mind....

There are three thousand religions on the earth -- big religions and small religions and very small sects and sects within sects -- three thousand in all. So there exist three thousand minds, types of mind -- and reality is one, and God is one, and truth is one!

Meditation means: put the mind aside and watch. The first step -- LOVE YOURSELF --

will help you tremendously. By loving yourself you will have destroyed much that society has implanted within you. You will have become freer from the society and its conditioning.

And the second step is: watch -- just watch. Buddha does not say what has to be watched -- everything! Walking, watch your walking. Eating, watch your eating. Taking a shower, watch the water, the cold water falling on you, the touch of the water, the coldness, the shiver that goes through your spine -- watch everything, TODAY, TOMORROW, ALWAYS.

A moment finally comes when you can watch even your sleep. That is the ultimate in watching. The body goes to sleep and there is still a watcher awake, silently watching the body fast asleep. That is the ultimate in watching. Right now just the opposite is the case: your BODY is awake but you are asleep. Then YOU will be awake and your body will be asleep. The body needs rest but your consciousness needs no sleep. Your consciousness IS consciousness; it is alertness, that is its very nature.

The body tires because the body lives under the law of gravitation; it is gravitation that makes you tired. That's why running fast you will be tired soon, going upstairs you will be tired soon, because the gravitation pulls you downwards. In fact, to stand is tiring, to sit is tiring. When you lie down flat, horizontal, only then is there a little rest for the body, because now you are in tune with the law of gravitation. When you are standing, vertical, you are against the law; the blood is going towards the head, against the law, the heart has to pump hard.

So when you have a heart attack the doctors suggest a long rest period: just lie down horizontal -- Snoopy-style! That will keep you in tune with gravitation, otherwise gravitation is tiring. But consciousness does not function under the law of gravitation; hence it never gets tired. Gravitation has no power over consciousness; it is not a rock, it has no weight. It functions under a totally different law: the law of grace, or, as it is known in the East, the law of levitation. Gravitation means pulling downwards, levitation means pulling upwards. The body is continuously being pulled downwards. That's why finally it will have to lie down in the grave; that will be the real rest for it -- dust unto dust. The body has returned back to its source, the turmoil has ceased, now there is no conflict. The atoms of your body will have real rest only in the grave.

The soul soars higher and higher. As you become more watchful you start having wings -- then the whole sky is yours. Man is a meeting of the earth and the sky, of body and soul.

FIRST ESTABLISH YOURSELF IN THE WAY,
THEN TEACH,
AND SO DEFEAT SORROW.

Each sutra is pregnant with great meaning. First Buddha says: LOVE YOURSELF AND WATCH.... And immediately he reminds his disciples: FIRST ESTABLISH YOURSELF IN THE WAY....

He says: Mind you, don't start teaching what I am telling you. The mind plays so many games, and the ultimate game is the game of becoming a teacher. It is difficult, arduous, to transform yourself; it is very easy to teach others. It is difficult to be a disciple, it is very easy to be a teacher -- because the disciple has to surrender and the teacher can keep all his ego. In fact, he can have more ego because so many people are surrendering to him. Unless he has become established in the way -- that means he has attained to love and to watchfulness -- unless he has come to that clarity of consciousness which makes one a buddha, he should not teach.

FIRST ESTABLISH YOURSELF IN THE WAY, THEN TEACH, AND SO DEFEAT SORROW. Otherwise this happens: listening to a buddha, his beautiful teachings, you become so full of the teachings that a great desire arises to teach others. You forget completely that first you have to practice before you can preach. That's how it is happening all over the world.

Once I was taken to a Christian college, one of the biggest in India, where they create missionaries, ministers, priests, etcetera. I was a little puzzled: how can you create priests, ministers, missionaries in a college? That is impossible. The principal was very much interested in me; he invited me. He said, "Come and see!"

It was a six-year course, and I looked around the college, a big campus -- seven hundred people were getting ready to become priests, preachers, teachers -- I looked around, went into many classes, and what I saw was really hilarious. It was so ridiculous.

In one class the teacher was telling the students, "When you give this sermon, this is how you have to stand, and when you come to this point, this is how you have to raise your hand, these are the gestures you make, this is how you have to close your eyes -- as if you have gone into a deep deep meditation...." As if -- don't forget the "as if." They were learning like actors.

In Poona there is a film institute where they prepare actors; that I can understand -- acting can be taught. Even there I have never heard that film institutes have created great actors, but one can understand that acting can be taught, even though great actors have not been created by film institutes. Even there it fails.

Actors are also born like poets, because acting is poetry, it is art; you have to have an inborn spirit. Not everybody can be an actor, because one has to get so much involved in the act, so deeply involved, that one forgets that one is separate. One has to lose one's identity in the acting, one has to become one's part; one has to forget everything about oneself. This is no ordinary feat. One can think that acting can be taught -- but how can you teach people to become masters?

Taking leave of the principal I told him one story:

"I have heard -- it must have happened in some college like yours -- the teacher was telling the students, 'When you talk about paradise, heaven, smile a heavenly smile, your eyes full of joy and light, and look upwards towards heaven. And for a moment become silent and just let people see how joyous, full of light and joy you are.'

"A student raised his hand and he said, 'That's right, but when we are talking about hell, what to do?'

"The teacher said, 'Then just as you are will do -- just stand as you are. You need not do anything else, just be yourself, that's all, and that will show them what hell is.'"

Teaching people to become masters is such an absurdity. Jesus did not learn in any college. It is fortunate that such colleges did not exist in those days; otherwise they might have destroyed Jesus. Buddha never went to any religious institution to learn. Religion has to be lived, because that is the only way to learn it.

Buddha says: AND SO DEFEAT SORROW.

Love, watch, become an enlightened person -- then teaching will be simple, then it will start flowing from you. You will be teaching by your walk, by your sitting, by your silence, by your talking. You will be continuously teaching in every possible way.

To live with a master is to be constantly showered by his teaching. Whatsoever he is

doing, his way of doing has a totally different fragrance: it is IN the world but not OF the world.

TO STRAIGHTEN THE CROOKED
YOU MUST FIRST DO A HARDER THING --
STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF.

It is easy to look at people's faults. One loves to see people's faults, because that helps and strengthens your ego: "I am far superior." It is very difficult to see one's own faults; only a man who loves himself can see them.

Don't listen to others, what they say about you. See yourself, who you are, where you are, what your faults are. And the miracle is: seeing a fault through your own awareness dissolves it. You need not make any effort to dissolve it; the very awareness is enough. It starts melting like ice in the hot sun. But it is very difficult to see one's own faults, because you never look at yourself; you are constantly extroverted, looking at others.

The shapely new stenographer gave a piece of paper to the company auditor, saying, "Here is that report you wanted, Mr. Berry."
"My name is Mr. Perry!" he corrected. "You must have been talking to the head bookkeeper who can't pronounce his P's right. Did he say anything about me?"
"Only that when it comes to meaningless details, you are a regular brick!"

It is certainly difficult, because you have to turn your whole consciousness towards yourself. And we have become so extroverted, we have been MADE so extrovert, that introversion seems to be almost impossible. We are paralyzed; we can look only at others. Even if we want to look at ourselves we have to look in a mirror. Then the image in the mirror becomes the other.

One has to learn to look at oneself with closed eyes, to watch silently. And don't carry any a priori prejudices. Many people have told you, "These are your faults." Don't carry those ideas within you, otherwise you will find them -- because thought is very inventive. Put aside all that has been told about you. Remember only one thing: unless you know it on your own authority, it has no value, no meaning. So go without any prejudice -- for or against. Just go in total openness and see. And if you love and if you know how to watch, you will come across the most mysterious phenomenon: seeing a fault is dissolving it. That is Buddha's great secret: knowing that you are doing something wrong is enough; you can't do it anymore.

Socrates says: Knowledge is virtue. He can be understood only in the light of Buddha. He was misunderstood very much in Greece, because Greece has produced great philosophers but not great buddhas. There are only four names from Greece which can be counted among the buddhas: Socrates, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Plotinus. And there are thousands of names of great philosophers. The Greek tragedy is that there are so many philosophers and so few buddhas.

Socrates was saying something immensely valuable, but it was out of context. There was no atmosphere in which it could be understood. He was speaking the truth: knowledge is virtue. If you KNOW something is wrong it disappears; if you know something is right you start behaving accordingly.

That's what Jesus means when he says: Truth liberates. It is enough to know the truth, and

liberation happens of its own accord. It is not that first you have to know and then you have to practice. Knowing is enough: it transforms your conscience, and once conscience is transformed, your character follows suit like a shadow.

YOU ARE YOUR ONLY MASTER.
WHO ELSE?
SUBDUE YOURSELF,
AND DISCOVER YOUR MASTER.

Buddha says the outer master is nothing but a reflection of the inner. To be with an outer master is for a certain purpose -- so that the inner master starts getting synchronized with the outer. The outer is just a provocation, a challenge, but the real function of the master is to help you discover your own master.

The real master never makes dependents of his followers and disciples; he helps them to be independent, to be free. He never gives them a certain pattern of life; he only gives them hints of how to attain light of their own. He helps them to be themselves; he does not impose his personality on his disciples.

This is the criterion by which to judge whether the master is real or pseudo. If somebody is trying to impose his personality on you, his ideas on you, his character on you, his morality on you, his principles on you, beware! Avoid such a man as quickly as possible. He is dangerous, he is destructive. He may look very loving to you, but his love is poisonous. He may be very sweet, but his sweetness is nothing but sugarcoated poison.

The real master is one who helps you to be yourself, who helps you to be free -- even free of himself.

The Zen people say: If you meet the Buddha on the way, kill him! And they worship Buddha, and still they say: If you meet the Buddha on the way, kill him! They are simply saying what Buddha himself has said. Buddha insisted his whole life: Don't follow -- understand. Imbibe my spirit, but don't follow my character. You will have your own character, which is going to be unique, because there has never been another individual who is like you and no other individual will ever be who can be like you. You are unique.

Don't become imitators. But that's what happens: people become parrots. They repeat what their masters say, they imitate how their masters live.

Reid was very fond of his male parrot. The parrot had become despondent and after all sorts of experiments to snap him out of it, Reid decided that his feathered friend needed some sex.

Reid found a beautiful female parrot in a pet shop and paid fifty dollars to have his bird serviced.

The female was delivered to Reid's house and placed in the male parrot's cage. Instantly the male let out a terrifying scream and began tearing the female's feathers out.

"What are you doing?" screeched the female.

"For fifty bucks, baby," shouted the male, "I want you nude!"

He may be simply imitating his master! Don't be a parrot, don't imitate. Be authentic to yourself, be true to yourself.

YOU ARE YOUR ONLY MASTER. WHO ELSE? SUBDUE YOURSELF. When Buddha says, SUBDUE YOURSELF, he does not mean repress yourself. The translation is not exactly what he means. And there is a difficulty in translating him, because Buddha uses

the word 'self' in the sense of ego. He is not a believer in the self. He says any sense of self is nothing but a subtle form of ego.

And when he says, "Subdue yourself," he simply means: look deeply into the idea of your ego -- and it will be gone, it will disappear. It is a false phenomenon. The idea that "I am separate from existence," is a false idea, totally false. It needs only a right perception and it will be dissolved. And the moment ego disappears, you can discover your own master.

When the ego is not there, who is there? -- a pure consciousness, a pure awareness, with no center to it, with no content either. There are no thoughts and no center, just a pure consciousness -- a consciousness without any center and without any circumference. That consciousness is nirvana, enlightenment; you have come to your own master. From then onward you need not ask anybody. Even if you want to ask you cannot: all questions have evaporated, all problems have evaporated.

This state of no-problem, no-question, is the state of bliss, of peace, of truth, of freedom.

WILLFULLY YOU HAVE FED
YOUR OWN MISCHIEF.
SOON IT WILL CRUSH YOU
AS THE DIAMOND CRUSHES STONE.

And remember: whatsoever you have been doing, nobody else is responsible for it. WILLFULLY YOU HAVE FED YOUR OWN MISCHIEF. It is your own will, it is out of your own choice, that you have been doing things which are finally destructive to you. In the beginning they may not appear so; in the end you will come to know that you have killed yourself, poisoned yourself, slowly slowly. And because it was such a slow process, you could not become aware. To become aware of slow processes, great watchfulness is needed.

I have heard about an experiment:

A scientist threw a frog into boiling water. Naturally the frog immediately jumped out of the water -- instantly, he didn't lose a single moment; it was a question of life and death. He really jumped high, as he had never jumped before.

Then the scientist put the frog into another bucket of water of the same temperature as the frog's body. The frog was very happy, was resting at the bottom. And then the scientist started heating the water so slowly that it took twenty-four hours for the water to come to the boiling-point. The frog never jumped out of it. He could not become aware -- the process was so slow, the increase in heat was so slow that it needed a buddha's awareness. You can't expect it from a frog -- you can't expect it from people!

The frog died. The water was boiling, the frog was boiling, but he wouldn't jump out of it. Twenty-four hours was enough; he became accustomed to the slow increase. It was warming up so slowly that he could never discriminate that the water was being heated up.

That's what is happening in your life: you go on doing mischief, you go on doing wrong things, in the hope that by wrong means you can reach the right end. This is one of the great fallacies, a universal fallacy, that means and ends are not joined together, that wrong means can help you to reach a right end. The fallacy is so prevalent that nobody thinks of it as a fallacy.

It is impossible to reach the right end by wrong means. Wrong means are bound to lead you to wrong ends, but then it is too late. By the time you reach, it is too late -- the process cannot be reversed. The whole time has been wasted -- and you may have become

accustomed meanwhile to wrong means. You may go on perpetuating those wrong means your whole life. Others may say that this is wrong and you may even agree with them intellectually, but intellectual agreement never brings any change. Unless you existentially feel, "Something is wrong and I am poisoning myself," you will not be able to snap out of it.

And we are so clever at rationalizations that we go on doing mischief, thinking that it is not mischief, convincing ourselves that this is not mischief. And we are so skillful with words, with logic, with arguments, that we can prove to others, "This is not mischief, I am doing something great."

Joseph Stalin killed millions of people in Russia, and with a very clean conscience; he was never disturbed that he was killing millions of people. In fact, no other person has killed so many people. But he was working for the great idea of equality, communism, a classless society. Those ideas are great, but they are simply IDEAS and just for ideas, abstract ideas, abstractions, he was killing real people.

And the people who were killed were not rich people, they were poor people -- poor people who were very much attached to their small pieces of land; they did not want the land to become collective. They were killed. And the beauty is -- or the irony -- that Stalin was thinking he was killing them for their own sake, because "Unless the land belongs to the state, unless a dictatorship of the proletariat is ushered in, the poor people cannot be helped." And it was the poor people who were too attached to their small things!

In Russia there were not many rich people. It was almost like India; very few rich people, and ninety-eight percent poor people. But poor people have their own attachments -- more so because they don't have much -- a small piece of land, an old cow, a bullock cart, a few hens. And they are very much afraid because this is all they have.

There is a story told:

A communist was asking a farmer, "Do you believe in communism or not?"

He said, "Yes, I believe in communism!"

The communist leader asked, "If you had two cars, would you give one to somebody who had none?"

He said, "Yes, absolutely yes!"

"And if you had two houses, would you be willing to give one house to somebody who had none?"

He said, "Absolutely!"

And then the communist leader asked, "If you had two cows, would you give one to the person who had none?"

He said, "No, absolutely no!"

The communist leader said, "But this seems to be absurd -- up to now you are saying, 'Yes, yes, yes!' Why suddenly no?"

He said, "I don't have two cars, I don't have two houses -- but I have two cows!"

When you don't have, what is the problem? You can give everything when you don't have it. You can give the moon, you can give the sun to anybody who wants them, but when it comes to real problems then it is difficult.

Poor people were killed, but Joseph Stalin slept well. He was never disturbed because "I am killing so many people." And the communist ideology was also a good rationalization for him, because communism believes there is no soul: consciousness is only a by-product of matter, an epiphenomenon. So when you kill a person you are not killing anybody -- there is nobody inside; a man is just matter.

This was a great help for the murderer, Joseph Stalin. If there is nobody inside, you are not committing any crime, and when YOU die YOU will die: there is not going to be any afterlife and there is not going to be any Judgment Day.

People can create philosophies, rationalizations, arguments, for doing all kinds of mischief. And people are ready to believe anything that helps them to continue as they are.

Holding a butterfly in his palm, Basil walked into a cocktail lounge.
"See this butterfly?" he shouted. "If somebody will tell me how much this butterfly weighs, I will bestow all my charm on him."
"Shut up, you bum," shouted a man at the bar. "It weighs a hundred pounds."
"Ah, sweetheart, you win!"

If you want to do something, then anything can be accepted if it helps your desire, your wishes.

Lars came home early one afternoon and found his wife lying naked on the bed breathing heavily.

"June, what is the matter?" he asked.

"I think I am having a heart attack," she gasped.

Quickly, Lars rushed downstairs to phone a doctor when his son came rushing in and exclaimed, "Daddy! There is a naked man in the front closet!"

Lars opened the closet door and found his best friend cowering there.

"For God's sake, Emil!" screamed Lars. "June is having a heart attack and here you are sneaking around scaring the children!"

When you want to believe in anything, you can invent all kinds of ideas. Watch how you defend your mischief, how you defend your wrongs, your faults.

BY YOUR OWN FOLLY
YOU WILL BE BROUGHT AS LOW
AS YOUR WORST ENEMY WISHES.
SO THE CREEPER CHOKES THE TREE.

When the creeper starts moving up a tree, the tree feels very good; it is very ego-fulfilling that the creeper needs the tree. Whenever you are needed you feel good. The tree knows, "I am strong and the creeper has to depend on me." The tree wants the creepers, more and more creepers, to go round and round the tree, to have its support. It may think it is doing a great public service, or it may think that it is a great lover and the creepers are beloveds. Creepers are female and the trees are all male chauvinists! But sooner or later the creepers are going to suffocate the tree, to choke the tree -- but then it will be too late.

Beware, be watchful of every step: TODAY, TOMORROW, ALWAYS. Don't lose a single moment in unawareness, because in unawareness you are bound to do some mischief -- and all mischief is going to rebound on you, sooner or later.

Morgan, aged eighty-six, was talking to his doctor. "About four weeks ago," he said, "I picked up an eighteen-year-old girl, took her to a motel, and we made love all night. Three weeks ago, I met a twenty-year-old, double-parked in front of her house, and we did it for three hours. Just last week, I grabbed a seventeen-year-old, took her to the park and we have

been making love for six straight days."

"My goodness!" gasped the doctor. "Picking up all these strange girls, I hope you are using some precautions."

"Oh, sure," said the old man. "I give them a phony name and address."

Eighty-six years old, remember! And what precautions is he taking? He is giving a phony name and a phony address.

If you have persisted in your follies your whole life, even dying you will die full of your follies. Hence, don't postpone till tomorrow -- one never knows whether tomorrow will come or not. Start being watchful from this very moment.

HOW HARD IT IS TO SERVE YOURSELF,
HOW EASY TO LOSE YOURSELF
IN MISCHIEF AND FOLLY.

HOW HARD IT IS TO SERVE YOURSELF.... What does Buddha mean by it? He means how hard it is to be aware -- because that is the only true service to yourself. Unless you love yourself immensely you will not go on that arduous journey of being watchful. You can be watchful only if you love yourself so tremendously that you don't want to commit any folly, any mischief, that you don't want to bring any misery on yourself.

Be selfish -- because if you are selfish you will be altruistic. First get rooted into your own being, and then you will be of help to others. But you have been told that if you are selfish that is bad. "Be unselfish, be altruistic! Help others, serve others, and forget yourself!"

A mother was telling her small boy, "It is our duty to serve others. God has made you to serve others."

The boy thought for a moment and then said, "I can understand that -- that God has made me to serve others -- but why has God made others? To serve me? But this seems to be ridiculous! He makes me to serve others, makes others to serve me? Why can't I serve myself and they serve themselves? It will be more simple, less complicated."

You have been told to serve others -- and you serve them, but what service can you do for them? In the name of service you do all kinds of wrong things to people. You are bound to do wrong things because you are not alert enough....

THE KATTHAKA REED DIES WHEN IT BEARS FRUIT.

There is a certain reed, the KATTHAKA reed, in India, which dies when it bears fruit.

SO THE FOOL,
SCORNING THE TEACHINGS OF THE AWAKENED,
SPURNING THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE LAW,
PERISHES WHEN HIS FOLLY FLOWERS.

It takes a little time for the seed to grow and become a sprout, and the sprout to grow and become a tree. And the tree also takes time, the right season, to grow flowers, and then fruits come. It takes time. When you sow the seeds you don't see the flowers or the fruits.

Be watchful when you are sowing your seeds, because once sown you will have to suffer

the consequences. Whatsoever you sow you will have to reap. It is just that the time gap creates illusions in people's minds. They think they can escape, that they can sow wrong seeds and reap the right crops. That is impossible -- that is against the eternal law.

And these are the people -- "the fools" Buddha calls them -- who scorn the teachings of the awakened, who laugh and ridicule the buddhas, because the buddhas seem to be enemies to them. They know that if buddhas are right then their whole life is wrong, and that is too much for them to accept. They know that if buddhas are right then they are utterly stupid, utterly idiotic, and that is too much for their egos to accept, too humiliating. Hence it is better to crucify a Jesus, poison a Socrates, stone a Buddha, than to listen to them.

SCORNING THE TEACHINGS OF THE AWAKENED, SPURNING THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE LAW.... And those who listen to the buddhas and follow the law, the ultimate law of life -- the law of love and the law of meditation -- those who follow, they are being laughed at. People ridicule them. People think that they are mad, insane. People try in every possible way to pull them away from the right path, because their very presence hurts them.

When a single person starts meditating, all the nonmeditators are against him. He is doing something which raises questions about their life-style, and if by meditation he becomes more peaceful and more blissful, then of course they become more and more suspicious of their life-style, more and more doubtful -- and nobody wants to live in doubt. And it is easier to kill the person, to destroy the person, than to destroy your doubts. It is easier to remove the buddha, to murder the buddha, than to become conscious.

Christians have never been able to explain why Jesus was crucified, and they have found all kinds of wrong interpretations. They think he was being crucified for the sins of humanity. Utterly stupid! If you commit a sin, YOU will suffer. Why Jesus Christ? Why this poor man? What has he done? Christians say Jesus was crucified because Adam and Eve committed the original sin. Why not crucify Adam and Eve? What has this poor carpenter's son done? He is utterly innocent, he has not committed any sin.

And then they say -- and they have to find new, and more, explanations, because no explanation satisfies -- he has chosen to be crucified himself, as a sacrifice to save humanity. But humanity is not saved yet, two thousand years have passed. So one thing is certain: his sacrifice was futile.

But all these explanations are wrong. The real thing is that a man who is enlightened is bound to be crucified, killed, murdered, by those who have invested deeply in unconsciousness.

Buddha reminds you that you can scorn the teachings of the awakened and spurn those who follow the law, but remember: THE KATTHAKA REED DIES WHEN IT BEARS FRUIT. SO THE FOOL... PERISHES WHEN HIS FOLLY FLOWERS. It will not be too long. Soon you will see the fruits of your own actions and then you will cry and weep, but then it will be too late.

Beware! And do two simple things -- in fact simple, but they look arduous, because we have been brought up with absolutely wrong conditionings. The first is: LOVE YOURSELF. And the second is: WATCH -- TODAY, TOMORROW, ALWAYS. Enough for today.

Chapter #6
Chapter title: Christ: the last Christian

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES AND THERE IS NO ONE THERE. WHERE ARE YOU?

Anand Bhavo, the dewdrop has disappeared into the ocean... now forget the dewdrop and look at the ocean. If you go on searching for the dewdrop, you will miss the ocean; you will remain preoccupied with the dewdrop, you will not be able to see the vastness that has happened. The dewdrop disappearing into the ocean in a sense is no more, but in another sense it is for the first time -- now it has become the ocean.

Looking into my eyes, don't try to search for a person; you will not find any person there. The person has disappeared; now there is a presence. Presence is infinite; a person has a definition -- a boundary, a certain name, form, a label. Presence is simply presence. The flower is no more, it has become the fragrance. You can hold the flower in your hand, but you cannot hold fragrance in your hand. To experience fragrance hands are not needed at all. That's how you should come close to me: you should be more sensitive towards the presence, synchronize with my presence.

And the only way to synchronize with my presence is for you also to dissolve your person and become a presence. Only two presences can meet and mingle and merge. If you are a person then there is no possibility of melting and merging with me. You remain a rock and I am a river -- how are you going to melt and merge with me?

You also become a presence -- that's my whole teaching, my whole message. Let the person die, let the flower disappear, because the person is nothing but a mask. The presence is your essence. The presence is what is meant by godliness. There is no God, only godliness; but because we are persons we imagine God also as a person.

Our attitude towards ourselves is bound to reflect in our other attitudes too; our attitude towards existence is bound to be part of our attitude towards ourselves.

You are still searching in my eyes for a person -- certainly there is none. Hence you can become afraid, scared, because you will see emptiness, nothingness.

There are three stages of being with me. One stage is that of a student who thinks about me as a person. He never looks into my eyes, he never tries to penetrate my being, he remains concerned with the superficial, the formal, my body, my words. He remains an outsider, curious, desirous to know more about me, longing for more and more knowledge, information. But there is an infinite distance between me and him. He will gather a little information about the mysteries of life and will leave. He will become more knowledgeable,

more egoistic; in fact he will leave more sick than he had come, more burdened than he had come -- burdened by knowledge.

He will not have any taste of my wisdom. He can't understand wisdom; he understands only knowledge, he understands only that which can be expressed through words, theories, logic. He will be unable to see the beyond. He has to be pitied. He comes and goes empty-handed. He comes to the river and goes back home thirsty. He thinks he has gained much, but all that he has gathered are crumbs fallen from the table while he could have been my guest -- he remained a beggar.

The second stage is that of a disciple -- who comes a little bit closer, becomes aware of something mysterious, starts feeling, moves from the world of thinking to the world of feeling, slips from the head to the heart. He will be able to hear not only the words but the poetry hidden behind them. He will be able to hear not only the words, but the silence contained in those words.

Of course he will see the superficial too, but he will be able to understand that that's not all -- something more is there. He will not be exactly conscious of it, but an unconscious intuitive feeling is bound to be there. If he lingers here a little longer then that feeling will become more solid, more substantial. First it will be only a shadow, a glimpse, a vision that happens once in a while and then is lost, as when clouds disappear and for a moment you see the sun, and again there are clouds and the sun is no more.

The student never sees the sun, he only sees the clouds. The disciple, once in a while, is touched by the beyond, moved by the beyond. The student lives in the head, the disciple lives in the heart. But just to remain a disciple is not enough either -- better than being a student, far better, far superior, but not enough. One step more -- and that is the step of being a devotee.

A devotee is one who neither thinks about the master, nor feels about the master, but starts synchronizing with his being; neither from the head nor from the heart, but from the very core of his existence. He starts pulsating, he starts living in the same rhythm, he breathes the way the master breathes. His heart dances with the beat of the master's heart. He loses himself, he is no longer an outsider.

The student is absolutely an outsider, the devotee absolutely an insider, and the disciple is in between. The disciple is in the middle, on the way. If he is courageous he will become a devotee, if he is a coward he will fall back and become a student. The student is at ease, because he is not aware at all of the real; the devotee is at ease because he is in tune with the real. The greatest difficulty is that of the disciple; he is in between, pulled apart in two directions. He will have to decide sooner or later either to be a student or to be a devotee; one cannot prolong the state of being a disciple for long, because it is a state of anguish, it is a state of tension.

The student is relaxed because he is unconscious, the devotee is relaxed because he is conscious, but the disciple is vague -- vaguely conscious, vaguely unconscious, the disciple lives in the world of twilight, neither day nor night, neither here nor there, in a kind of limbo.

Anand Bhavo, you are in the state of being a disciple. Yes, glimpses have started showering on you -- now be courageous, move a little closer. Don't only look into my eyes, but be my eyes. Don't be a spectator, become a participant, get involved, committed. Don't look at me as somebody separate from you. The time has come: become inseparable, so attuned that you don't have any identity of your own. I don't have any identity of my own. And when you also lose your identity we are two zeros coming closer and closer and closer, and in a sudden flash of thunder the two zeros are no more two, they have become one.

That orgasmic experience of oneness is the first experience of godliness. The first experience of godliness happens in being utterly one with the master.

The master is only a device, remember, he is only a window to the divine. Come closer and closer to the window and the window disappears and the frame of the window disappears and the whole sky opens up with all its stars.

And then you will be able to see me in the eyes of my sannyasins and in the song of the birds and in the green and red and gold of the trees and in the stars and in the rivers -- you will be able to see me everywhere.

Ramakrishna was dying, one of the greatest modern masters. He was suffering from cancer of the throat. It had become impossible for him to eat anything, even to drink water was impossible. For the last three days of his life he could not eat or drink anything.

Vivekananda fell at his feet and said, "If you ask God, just for the asking -- the miracle is bound to happen. Why don't you ask him to take this cancer away? At least you can say, 'Allow me to eat and drink.'"

Ramakrishna said, "If you say so, I will do it. I never thought of it. Your idea is good. I will try."

He closed his eyes. Tears started flowing from his closed eyes, his face became full of light. All the anguish of the cancer, all the pain -- intolerable was the pain -- suddenly disappeared. He opened his eyes. Vivekananda was very happy, the other disciples were very happy, that something had happened, something miraculous. But they were not aware of what it was, they thought God had taken the cancer away, or at least had allowed Ramakrishna to eat and drink. But that was not the real miracle.

Ramakrishna opened his eyes, he was ecstatic; for a few moments he could not utter a single word. Then he said, "Vivekananda, you are a fool! You suggest such stupid things to me, and you know that I am a simple man, a villager, so I accept. I said to God, 'I can't eat, can't drink -- why can't you allow me at least to eat and drink?'

"And he said, 'Ramakrishna, have you gone crazy? Now you can eat from the mouths of your disciples, now you can drink from others' throats -- why do you cling to your own throat?' And that released me from my body. That's why I cried in joy. Yes, that's true! -- all throats are mine. I can eat, I can drink from others' throats."

When he was dying, his wife Sharda asked him, "What am I to do when you die?" because death was so imminent and so certain. In India when the husband dies, the wife has to drop all her ornaments. In Bengal particularly, the wife has never to use any colored clothes, she can only use white, no ornaments. Sharda asked, "What am I to do? Should I wear white and no ornaments when you are gone?"

Ramakrishna said, "But I am not going anywhere! I will be here! You will be able to see me in the eyes of those who love me. You will be able to feel me in the wind, in the rain, in the sun. A bird on the wing and suddenly you will remember me, and I am there! A beautiful sunset and you will remember me and I am there! You are not going to become a widow; you are married to me forever and forever. This marriage is not of time, it is of eternity."

He is talking about the marriage between a devotee and a master. Sharda was a devotee, not only his wife -- that was secondary. And that's how it happened. Ramakrishna died, Sharda never even wept; she continued her way of life as if Ramakrishna was still alive.

Every night she would prepare the bed for Ramakrishna, as she used to prepare it before. She would put up the mosquito net and she would tell Ramakrishna, "Now you go to sleep, it is already too late." She would prepare the food that he used to like, she would bring the

THALI, would sit by his side and tell Ramakrishna, "Look what I have prepared for you."

People used to think that she had gone mad. No, she was not mad. People were mad. She had understood the point. When she was dying, her last words were... she told all the disciples that had started loving her as their master, in the absence of Ramakrishna -- they started crying and weeping -- she said, "Wait, what are you doing? Have you forgotten what Ramakrishna told me? That he was not going anywhere? I am not going anywhere either. Feel blissful, feel happy that I am also getting free of the body. Rejoice because now I can melt into Ramakrishna, into his universality."

This is the state of the devotee. But to be a disciple is no mean achievement. It is a necessary step towards being a devotee.

Anand Bhavo, one step more -- then you will not say, "I am looking into your eyes," you will say, "I am looking through your eyes." Then you become my eyes, then you are not standing outside, you stand inside me and you start looking at existence as I look at it. And then a great transformation, a great transcendence, a great revelation....

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU TALK SO OFTEN OF WONDER AND OF LOVE. HOW IS BEING IN A STATE OF AWE AND CHILDLIKE INNOCENCE RELATED TO BEING IN A STATE OF LOVE?

Anand Nur, wonder and awe are the greatest spiritual qualities. Wonder means you function from a state of not knowing. The knowledgeable person never feels wonder; he is incapable of feeling wonder because he thinks he already knows. He knows all the stupid answers, he may know the whole ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA; hence every question is already answered in his mind. When a question is such that there is no answer to it, that it is unanswerable; not only today, but forever; not that it is unknown, but it is unknowable -- when one encounters the unknowable, unanswerable, one experiences wonder. One is in a state of awe, as if the heart stops beating, as if you don't breathe for a moment.

The experience of wonder is such that everything stops. The whole world stops; time stops, mind stops, the ego stops. For a moment you are again a child, wondering about the butterflies and the flowers and the trees and the pebbles on the shore, and the seashells -- wondering about each and everything, you are a child again.

And when you can wonder and can feel the immense beauty of existence which can only be felt in awe, when suddenly you are possessed by existence, overwhelmed, you can dance, you can celebrate that moment, you can say "Aha!" and you don't know anything else to say, no word, just an exclamation point...!

The knowledgeable person lives with a question mark and the man of awe and wonder lives with an exclamation mark. Everything is so tremendously deep and profound that it is impossible to know it. Knowledge is impossible. When this is experienced then your whole energy takes a jump, a quantum leap, from the mind to the heart, from knowing to feeling. When there is no possibility of knowing, your energy does not move in that direction anymore.

When you have realized that there is no possibility of knowing, that the mystery is going to remain a mystery, that it cannot be demystified, your energy starts moving in a new

direction -- the direction of the heart. That's why I say love is related to wonder and awe, to childlike innocence. When you are not obsessed with knowledge you become loving. Knowledgeable people are not loving, heady people are not loving; even if they love, they only think that they love. Their love also comes via their heads. And passing through the head, love loses all its beauty, it becomes ugly. The heady people are calculating; arithmetic is their way.

Love is jumping into a dangerously alive existence with no calculation. The head says, "Think before you jump," and the heart says, "Jump before you think." Their ways are diametrically opposite.

The knowledgeable person becomes less and less loving. He may talk about love, he may write treatises about love, he may be conferred Ph.D.s, D.Litt.s for his theses on love, but he knows nothing of love. He has not experienced it! It is a subject that he has been studying, it is not an affair that he is living.

You ask me, Nur, "Beloved Master, you talk so often of wonder and of love...."

Yes, I always talk about wonder and love together, because they are two sides of the same coin. And you will have to learn to start from wonder because the society has already made you knowledgeable. The school, the college, the university -- the society has created a great mechanism to make you knowledgeable. And the more you are stuffed with knowledge, the less and less your love energy flows. There are so many blocks created by knowledge, so many rocks in the path of love, and there exists no institution in the world where you are helped to be loving, where your love is nourished.

That's my idea of a real university, that's what I want to create here. Of course it will remain unrecognized by the government, it will be unrecognized by other universities. And I can understand -- if they recognize it, that will be a surprise to me. Their not recognizing it is really recognizing it -- recognizing that it is a totally different kind of institution, where people are not made knowledgeable but loving.

Humanity has lived with knowledge for centuries, and has lived in a very ugly way. D.H. Lawrence once proposed that if for one hundred years all the universities and colleges and schools were closed, humanity would be benefited immensely.

I agree with him totally. These two persons, Friedrich Nietzsche and D.H. Lawrence, are beautiful people. It was unfortunate that they were born in the West; hence they were not aware of Lao Tzu, of Chuang Tzu, of Buddha, of Bodhidharma, of Rinzai, of Basho, of Kabir, of Meera. It is unfortunate that they knew only the Jewish and the Christian tradition. And they were very much offended by the whole Jewish and Christian approach towards life. It is very superficial.

Friedrich Nietzsche used to sign himself, "Anti-Christ, Friedrich Nietzsche." First he would write "Anti-Christ." He was not really anti-Christ -- anti-Christian of course, because in one of his saner moments he said that the first and the last Christian was crucified -- he was Jesus Christ, the first and the last.

But in his name something absolutely false is existing, and the day Christ was denied by the Jews they became false. Since that ugly day they have not lived truly. How can you live beautifully if you reject your own climaxes? What Moses had started, a beautiful phenomenon, came to a climax in Jesus Christ, and the Jews rejected Jesus Christ. That very day they rejected their own flowering, their own fragrance. Since that day they have not been living rightly.

And the people who followed Jesus have created something absolutely against Jesus. If he comes back he will be nauseated, disgusted, seeing the Vatican and the pope and all that

goes on in the name of Christ. My own feeling is... somebody was asking me, "Jesus promised to come back again -- will he come back?"

I told him, "If he comes back this time, you will not need to crucify him -- he will commit suicide himself! Just seeing the Christians will be enough -- enough to commit suicide. Hence my feeling is that he is not going to come. Once is enough, twice will be too much."

But these two men, Nietzsche and Lawrence, were immensely misunderstood in the West. They also provided reasons for being misunderstood; they were helpless, they were groping in the dark. Of course their direction was right; had they been in the East they would have become buddhas. They had the potential -- great potential, great insight. I agree with them on many points.

D.H. Lawrence was very much against your so-called education -- it is not education, it is mis-education. Real education can only be based on love, not on knowledge. Real education cannot be utilitarian, real education cannot be of the marketplace. Not that real education will not give you knowledge; first, real education will prepare your heart, your love, and then whatever knowledge is needed to pass through life will be given to you, but that will be secondary. And it will never be overpowering; it will not be more valuable than love.

And whenever there is a possibility of any conflict between love and knowledge, real education will help you to be ready to drop your knowledge and move with your love; it will give you courage, it will give you adventure. It will give you space to live, accepting all risks, insecurities; it will help you to be ready to sacrifice yourself if love demands it. It will put love not only above knowledge but even above life, because life is meaningless without love. Love without life is still meaningful; even if your body dies it makes no difference to your love energy. It continues, it is eternal, it is not a time phenomenon.

To have a loving heart, you need a little less calculating head. To be capable of loving you need to be capable of wondering. That's why, Nur, I always say that awe and childlike innocence are deeply related with the energy called love. In fact they are different names for the same thing.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU SPOKE TODAY ABOUT NOT DOING WRONG. WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG?

Prem Murti, hitherto right and wrong have been decided by all the religions as if they were fixed entities; do this, don't do that, this is sin, that is virtue. That is not a right approach to reality, because what is right today may be wrong tomorrow, what was wrong yesterday may be right today.

Life is a flux, it is constant movement, it is change. Except change, everything else changes. So I cannot give you fixed ideas about what is right and what is wrong. I cannot do that harm to you. All the old religions have done that; maybe it was needed because humanity was in a very immature state. But now man has come of age. Small children have to be told don't do this....

A small boy was asked by the teacher in school -- it was his first day -- "What is your name?"

He said, "Don't Johnny."

The teacher was puzzled, he said, "Don't Johnny? Never heard such a name before."

He said, "This is my name, because whatever I do my mother says, 'Don't Johnny!' This MUST be my name."

He had been told so many times, "Don't, Johnny! Don't, Johnny!" that he thinks it is his name.

But it can be forgiven as far as children are concerned because you cannot go into deep explanations; you cannot explain to them the reasons, the motives. You have to give them simple instructions, clear-cut; otherwise they will not be able to follow.

Humanity was also in such a state for centuries, but now all those commandments look very stupid. They were relevant one day, they are no longer relevant; they are corpses we are carrying. They don't work anymore, they don't help anybody -- they hinder everybody.

So don't ask me, Prem Murti, what is right and what is wrong -- it depends. All I can say to you, all I would like you to be aware of is: any act done in awareness is right and any act done in unawareness is wrong. The act does not matter as far as I am concerned, my approach is concerned, my philosophy of life is concerned; the act does not matter, what matters is your consciousness. Are you acting unconsciously or consciously?

So the real question is something within you, not what you do but who you are. I change the whole emphasis from the objective to the subjective, from the outer to the inner. If you are doing it consciously you are right -- and that has always been the approach of the enlightened ones.

A great master, Nagarjuna, was asked by a great thief.... The thief was well known over the whole kingdom and he was so clever, so intelligent that he had never been caught. Everybody knew -- he had even stolen from the king's treasury, many times -- but they were unable to catch him. He was very elusive, a master artist.

He asked Nagarjuna, "Can you help me? Can I get rid of my stealing? Can I also become as silent and blissful as you are?" It happened in a certain context.

Nagarjuna was the greatest alchemist that the East has given birth to. He used to live naked, with just a begging bowl, a wooden begging bowl, but kings worshipped him, queens worshipped him. He came to the capital and the queen touched his feet and said, "I feel very much offended by your wooden bowl. You are a master of masters; hundreds of kings and queens are your followers. I have prepared a golden bowl for you, studded with beautiful diamonds, emeralds. Please don't reject it -- it will wound me very much, it will hurt me very much. For three years great artists have been working on it, now it is ready."

She was afraid that Nagarjuna might say, "I cannot touch gold, I have renounced the world." But Nagarjuna did not say anything like that; he said, "Okay! You can keep my begging bowl, give me the golden one."

Even the queen was a little shocked. She was thinking that Nagarjuna would say, "I cannot accept it." She wanted him to accept it, but still, deep in her unconscious somewhere was the old Indian tradition that the awakened one has to live in poverty, in discomfort, as if discomfort and poverty have something spiritual in them. There is nothing spiritual in them.

Nagarjuna said okay. He didn't even look at the golden bowl. He went away. The thief saw Nagarjuna moving outside the capital, because he was staying in a ruined temple on the other bank of the river. The thief said, "Such a precious thing I have never seen -- so many diamonds, so many emeralds, so much gold. I have seen many beautiful things in my life but never such a thing, and how did this naked man get hold of it, and how is he going to protect

it? Anybody will be able to take it away from him, so why not me?"

The thief followed Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna heard his footsteps, he knew somebody was coming behind him. Nagarjuna reached the temple. The temple was an absolute ruin, no roof, no doors; just a few walls were left. He went inside a room without a roof, without a door, without windows.

The thief said, "How is he going to protect such a precious thing? It is only a question of hours." He sat outside the window, hiding behind a wall.

Nagarjuna threw the bowl outside the window. The thief was very much puzzled. The bowl fell just near his feet. He was puzzled: "What has this man done?" He could not believe his eyes, he was also shocked. He stood up -- even though he was a thief, he was a master thief and he had some dignity. He thanked Nagarjuna. He said, "Sir, I have to show my gratitude. But you are a rare man -- throwing out such a precious thing as if it is nothing. Can I come inside and touch your feet?"

Nagarjuna said, "Come in! In fact I have thrown the bowl out so that you could come in."

The thief could not understand what he was saying; he came in, he looked at Nagarjuna -- his silence, his peace, his bliss -- he was overwhelmed. He said, "I feel jealous of you. I have never come across a man like you. Compared to you, all others are subhuman beings. How integrated you are! How gone beyond the world! Is there any possibility for me too one day to attain such integration, such individuality, such compassion and such nonattachment to things?"

Nagarjuna said, "It is possible. It is everybody's potential."

But the thief said, "Wait! Let me tell you one thing. I have been many times to many saints and they all know me and they say, 'First you stop stealing, then anything else is possible. Without stopping stealing you cannot grow spiritually.' So please don't make that condition because that I cannot do. It is impossible. I have tried and I have failed many times. It seems that is my nature -- I have to go on stealing, so don't mention that. Let me tell you first so you don't make it a condition."

Nagarjuna said, "That simply shows you have never seen a saint before. Those must have all been ex-thieves; otherwise why should they be worried about your stealing? Go on stealing and do everything as skillfully as possible. It is good to be a master of any art."

The thief was shocked even more: "What kind of man is this?" And he said, "Then what do you suggest? What is right, what is wrong?"

He said, "I don't say anything is right or anything is wrong. Do one thing: if you want to steal, steal -- but steal consciously. Go tonight, enter into the house very alert, open the doors, the locks, but very consciously. And then if you can steal, steal, but remain conscious. And report to me after seven days."

After seven days the thief came, bowed down, touched Nagarjuna's feet and said, "Now initiate me into sannyas."

Nagarjuna said, "Why? What about your stealing?"

He said, "You are a cunning fellow! I tried my best: if I am conscious, I cannot steal; if I steal I am unconscious. I can steal only when I am unconscious. When I am conscious the whole thing seems so stupid, so meaningless. What am I doing? For what? Tomorrow I may die. And why do I go on accumulating wealth? I have more than I need; even for generations it is enough. It looks so meaningless that I stop immediately. For seven days I have entered into houses and come out empty-handed. And to be conscious is so beautiful. I have tasted it for the first time, and it is just a small taste -- now I can conceive how much you must be enjoying, how much you must be celebrating. Now I know that you are the real king -- naked,

but you are the real king. Now I know that you have real gold and we are playing with false gold."

The thief became a disciple of Nagarjuna and attained to buddhahood.

I cannot say to you what is right or wrong. I can say only one thing to you: be conscious -- that is right. Don't be unconscious because that is wrong. And then whatsoever you do in consciousness is right.

But people are living in unconsciousness. And let me tell you: in unconsciousness you may think you are doing something right, but it can't be right. Out of unconsciousness, virtue cannot flower; it may appear virtuous but it can't be. Deep down it will still be something wrong. If you are unconscious and you give money to a poor man, watch: your ego is strengthened. This is sin.

You are unconscious and you go on serving poor people, ill people; you open a hospital or a school -- but whatsoever you do gives you a very subtle ego, a pious ego. And a pious ego means pious poison -- but poison is poison! And pure pious poison is far more dangerous because it is unadulterated; it is pure poison. Hence ordinary people suffer from a very gross ego, it is adulterated.

I have heard:

Mulla Nasruddin wanted to commit suicide. He went to the druggist, purchased a big quantity of poison, drank it, and waited in his bed the whole night: "Now I am going to die, now I am going to die." He opened his eyes again and looked at the clock: "Twelve... two... four... six.... And the children are getting ready, and the wife is preparing the breakfast -- and I have not died yet? Or have I died and become just a ghost? What is the matter?" He pinched himself and he felt the pain; he said, "No, I am still in my body."

He ran to the druggist; he said, "What kind of poison have you given me? Such a quantity should have killed at least ten people, and I drank it all and I'm still alive."

The druggist said, "What can I do -- in India you cannot find anything pure. Everything is adulterated, from milk to poison. What can I do?"

The ordinary ego is adulterated with many other things. But the religious ego, the ego of a saint, of a mahatma, of a sage, is unadulterated -- it is pure poison. Just a drop of it is enough.

So if you do good things unconsciously, they are going to create more ego in you. And only on the surface will they appear good; they will be harmful to the people to whom you are being good. Never be a do-gooder, avoid it. More mischief has been done by your public servants, missionaries, social reformers, than by anybody else.

The most fundamental thing is to be conscious and then act, and then whatsoever you do is going to be right. But people are unconscious.

"No, I will not go to the movies with you!" said Jackie. "I know your kind! As soon as we are seated, you will start fiddling with my blouse buttons with one hand and tugging at my skirt with the other, getting ready to take liberties!"

"No, I would not," protested Patrick. "The people sitting behind us could see what I was up to."

"Yes, that's true," said Jackie, "so maybe we had better get there early and find seats in the last row."

What you want to do, and what you say, and what you really do, are totally different things. You may be doing something which you never wanted to do, you may not be doing something which you always wanted to do. You live a schizophrenic life, divided into the unconscious and the conscious. And out of this schizophrenia whatsoever happens is wrong.

Biff was the strong, silent type. He walked into the school cafeteria, ordered coffee, and winked at the waitress, a sensuous blue-eyed senior. She smiled.

"Want to go riding?" he asked.

"Sure, I will be ready in five minutes."

So they got in the car and he drove out on the highway. He took off down a road, then he drove down a lane. The lane came to a dead end and he stopped the car and cut the motor off.

Turning to her, he uttered his first speech, "Well, how about it?"

The waitress nodded.

"Okay," she said, "you have out-talked me!"

Just watch what you are doing, why you are doing it, what you are saying, why you are saying it. Just go on watching your acts, your thoughts, and slowly slowly, a great consciousness arises in you. And then you can see all the games that you have been playing with others, and not only with others but with yourself too.

The patient, whose history card a doctor was filling out, said she was a spinster. So, when he came to the space for listing number of children, he automatically put down "none."

"But, Doctor," she said, "I have a thirteen-year-old daughter!"

"I thought you told me you were an old maid?"

"I am," she replied. "But I am not a stubborn old maid."

Whatsoever the conscious goes on pretending, the unconscious is the real source of your acts, and unless the unconscious disappears totally from your being, you can't do right. Only one tenth of your being is conscious, nine tenths are unconscious. The unconscious is almost a continent underneath a shallow layer of water you call consciousness. The unconscious motivates you. The conscious only finds rationalizations for doing what the unconscious wants to do. The conscious is at the service of the unconscious; this is a wrong situation. Let the unconscious be at the service of the conscious -- and you become a sannyasin.

That is what sannyas is all about: making consciousness more and more the center of your being, and transforming more and more chunks of unconsciousness into consciousness, bringing more and more light into the inner darkness.

A day comes when you are full of light; your whole being is conscious. Not even a corner of your being has any darkness about it -- all is known and experienced through and through. You are well acquainted with yourself, totally acquainted with yourself; then whatsoever you do, Prem Murti, is right. Right is the flowering of consciousness, and wrong the flowering of unconsciousness.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE THE INDIANS UNABLE TO SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?

Sandesh, they have a long past, a very long past, longer than any other country, longer

than any other race. And the longer the past, the more prejudiced you are. The American is the least prejudiced in the world because he does not have a long past, only three hundred years old. It is nothing compared to the past of India.

Ten thousand years are absolutely certain historically, but India existed before that. In fact those who have gone deep into research, they say Indian culture has existed for at least ninety thousand years or more. Such a long past makes a country very old, utterly old. Its mind becomes settled and stagnant, it cannot accept anything new, it is very difficult.

What is easy for the American is very difficult for the Indian. The Indian thinks he knows already; he is so well informed, at least about spirituality, that he does not feel that he has to come to me. He never comes here, but without coming here he goes on expressing his opinions about me. It is natural in an ancient, old, dead culture. And it is a very repressive past that India has gone through; it does not allow freedom.

Freedom has never been the goal of Indian culture but obedience: obedience to the society, obedience to religion, obedience to the scriptures. And India has this idea that all that was beautiful has already happened, the golden age has already happened. Now man is not evolving, progressing -- but declining. This is something to be understood.

In the West the idea is that man is evolving higher and higher, evolution is happening, there is great progress happening. The golden age is in the future for the West.

For the East, particularly for India, the golden age has already passed thousands of years ago; we are on a decline. We are not moving towards the peak, we are moving towards the valley. More and more darkness will surround us, more and more death; man will become more and more ugly.

Hence when I speak of a new humanity the West can understand me; the Indian mind simply feels at a loss -- what am I talking about? "A new humanity, a golden age in the future? It has already passed, it is history. We are not going to attain any golden age in the future; there is only death, man is doomed."

India has accepted this idea that the future is nothing but death, the future holds no hope. And I bring a new hope to you. I give you a new promise, I herald a new humanity. Hence it falls on deaf ears; it is so much against their conditioning, they cannot bridge the gap, and it is a very very repressive conditioning.

India has repressed all that is natural; it has gone into its unconscious, it is there boiling within. And I am talking about expressing, and India believes in repression. India believes in repression -- sex, love, body, all that is natural. And I believe in expression, creativity. I am speaking a non-Indian language.

Hence this strange phenomenon that I am living in India but I am not part of India at all. This small community of my sannyasins is a world community -- it is not an Indian ashram, it is a world commune. This small commune represents the whole of humanity, not of the past but of the future.

So I am bound to be misunderstood, misinterpreted, condemned, hindered in every possible way. There are twenty-five cases against me in the courts. The government goes on inventing any kind of case against me -- a man who never leaves his room.... What crimes can I commit? Twenty-five cases against a man who never leaves his room! Just think -- if I were moving outside, they would have invented at least one thousand cases against me.

They have to be forgiven for the simple reason that they cannot understand; in their own minds they are doing something very right. They think of me as a destructive force, and in a way they are right: I am here to destroy the whole conditioning whether it is Indian or German or Jewish, whether it is Christian or Mohammedan or Buddhist.

My work consists of destroying the conditioning and making man free of all conditioning. This happens every day -- not only to Indians, to others too.

A new sannyasin, Jacob, has written a letter to me. He is a Jew, so he is very much offended by the Jewish jokes. Now you cannot even understand humor, you become serious even about that, so what to say about serious matters? He has become a sannyasin but deep down the Jew is there, ready to be offended. I am going to offend EVERYBODY.

I offend Germans as much as I can, I offend Jews, I offend Indians, I offend Mohammedans.... I will offend everybody, because that's my whole work -- to clean you of all the shit that you have been carrying all along. And it hurts because you think it is something very valuable that you are carrying.

Now the Indian mind is the most sexual in the world, the most sexual because the most repressed. The Indian goes on seeing things which are not there; he projects or he invents or he tries hard to find something.

The woman phoned down to the hotel manager. "I'm up here in room 5110," she shouted angrily, "and I want you to know there is a man walking around in the room across the way with not one stitch of clothes on and his shades are up."

"I will send the house detective up right away, madam," said the manager.

The detective entered the woman's room, peered across the way, and said, "You're right, madam, the man hasn't any clothes on, but his window sill covers him from the waist down no matter where he is in his room."

"Indeed?" yelped the lady. "Stand on the bed! Stand on the bed!"

The lady must have been Indian. But Indians are everywhere; they are not only in India, they are not confined to India, remember. Wherever repressive people are, there are Indians. They can be in England, they can be in Italy, they can be in Spain, they can be anywhere. The Indian mind represents the repressive mind.

The woman was calling collect.

"Would you repeat the name, please?" said the telephone operator.

"Yes, Alice. A-L-I-C-E. A as in 'adultery', L as in 'lust', I as in 'incest', C as in 'copulation', E as in 'erotic'...."

Now, what to say about this woman? She must be carrying a monster within herself.

And that is the situation in India: everybody has repressed so much, there is so much pus inside the soul, that when they hear or read about me they feel hurt. The hurt comes because they are carrying wounds within themselves. And it always hurts if you go to the surgeon: he has to squeeze the pus out of your wounds, only then can the wounds heal. And I am a surgeon, my compassion does not allow me to leave you as you are. Whatsoever the cost to me, whatsoever the risk to me, I am determined to expose your wounds to you -- because once you know your wounds, once your wounds are exposed, brought to the surface, they immediately start healing. And India carries great wounds: it is not only physically poor today, it is spiritually poor too. And when I say this it hurts the most, because that is the only shelter for the Indian ego that, "We are spiritual people." And my own experience is that there is no spirituality left.

Yes, once in a while a buddha has happened in India -- and more buddhas have happened in India than anywhere else, it is true -- but the Indian masses, the crowd, is not spiritual, not

at all. In fact because of this phenomenon of the buddhas, the Indian masses have become hypocrites. They have heard great teachings -- they cannot follow those teachings, because to follow them needs great effort. They cannot follow but they can pretend; that is cheap and easy. So Indians have become pseudo.

Larson took Charlotte for a drive way out in the country and parked the car in a desolate stretch.

"If you try to molest me," said Charlotte, "I will scream!"

"What good would that do?" asked Larson. "There isn't a soul around for miles."

"I know," said Charlotte, "but I want to satisfy my conscience before I start having a good time."

Indians also want to have a good time, but first they want to satisfy their conscience, so they are screaming at me. But slowly slowly, the sensitive, the intelligent Indians are coming closer to me. It takes time, but the most sensitive people are bound to become part of my buddhafield.

And Indians suffer from an inferiority complex because for one thousand years they have been slaves.

Rabindranath was never praised in India -- condemned, criticized as much as possible because he was a very life-affirmative person. He even had the courage to criticize Buddha in his own way. He was against the whole negative tradition of India.

In one of his poems he says:

After twelve years Buddha comes back home -- he has become enlightened. He has thousands of followers; naturally he remembers his wife, his child, his old father, and he wants to help them. He wants to share what he has attained, so he comes back to his palace. Yashodhara, his wife, whom he had deserted twelve years before, is naturally very angry.

For twelve years she has been accumulating anger, but an Indian wife, even if she is angry, cannot show her anger to her husband, at least not in those days. But in a very vicarious way... she asks one question of Buddha. It is not an historical thing, it is a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, his own invention but it shows his attitude and approach.

Yashodhara asks Buddha, "Just one question I have to ask you: for twelve years I have waited to ask you this question. You have become enlightened: was it impossible to become enlightened living in the world, in the house with me? Just one question I want to ask you: was it absolutely necessary to escape from the world, was it not possible here in the house? Am I more powerful than your consciousness? Was the temptation more than the search for truth?"

And Rabindranath says Buddha bows down his head and stands silently, says nothing. But that says everything -- now Buddha knows it could have happened in the house too. There was no need to desert the wife and the child and the old father and the family and the people; there was no need. Now he knows! Now he knows that enlightenment has nothing to do with the mountains and the forests; it can happen anywhere.

Rabindranath in another of his poems says, "I don't want NOT to be born again. I pray to God: Give me your world again and again and again! It is so beautiful, it is such a gift -- I am grateful!"

Now these are very anti-Indian attitudes, the whole hankering of India has been how to get rid of life; it is life-negative. Rabindranath is very life-affirmative; he loves life and loves

it tremendously. He was condemned very much.

But when he got the Nobel Prize, then the whole country was just full of praise. But he refused to go to the gatherings, to the meetings, which were arranged to praise him. He said, "This is not praise for me -- you are praising the Nobel Prize. You can take the certificate and the medal and garland it and do whatsoever you want -- I am not going to come!"

He got the Nobel Prize for the book GITANJALI -- offering of songs -- which he had written twenty years before. In India nobody praised it because it is very life-affirmative, but once the Nobel Prize was given for GITANJALI, GITANJALI was the greatest thing that had happened to India. Then the same people started praising it.

India suffers from a great inferiority complex; for one thousand years it has been a slave. So don't be worried, I know how things are going to happen.

First, more and more intelligent, sensitive, alert Western people are bound to come to me. Once they are here, more and more, in thousands, Indians are going to follow suit -- that is because of an historical accident one thousand years old.

Whatsoever is done by the West, India becomes suspicious that it must be right. First it reacts: "How can it be right?" because it goes against its tradition. Then, slowly slowly, it HAS to compromise. So I am not worried about it, not at all. Let the seekers come from every nook and corner of the earth and sooner or later you will find India also coming closer and closer to me.

But they are always late in everything. They have been missing the train for five thousand years -- that has become their habit. They can't be pioneers, they have forgotten how to be pioneers. They can only be followers.

And this work is pioneer work, something immensely new is being tried here. India WILL listen to it, at least I hope so. But you need not be worried about it.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
FOR SOME YEARS I HAVE BEEN PRACTICING STANDING ON MY HEAD. IT IS SOMETIMES GOOD TO SEE THE WORLD UPSIDE-DOWN! NOW, HOWEVER, A SWAMI IN THE CENTERING GROUP HAS TOLD ME THAT YOU HAVE SAID IT IS NOT GOOD TO STAND ON ONE'S HEAD. NOW I'M WONDERING WHY THIS MAY BE SO. WHAT IS WRONG WITH STANDING ON MY HEAD?
PLEASE EXPLAIN THIS TO ME.

Anand Vibhu, nothing is wrong with standing on your head -- you will just become more stupid AND more respectable, more unintelligent and more holy. There are advantages and there are disadvantages. If you want to be intelligent, then please stand on your feet. If God had intended that man should stand on his head, he would have made you in a different way.

I also tried it once in my childhood, but I looked so silly standing on my head -- and, moreover, I fell asleep and because of sleeping, I fell down and had my neck strained for at least two weeks -- so I decided that this couldn't be what God wants me to do.

But, Vibhu, if you have been trying it long enough, now it cannot do any more harm. And some time it may come in handy too.

I have heard:

Sigmund Freud died and was sent to hell -- where else? When he arrived the Devil

greeted him -- obviously.

"Welcome," said the Devil. "Here you will have one of three irrevocable choices about where you will spend eternity. Come on!"

The first room was filled with people who were carrying large stones up a steep hill only to see them fall back to the bottom -- to where they had to return and start the whole process again.

Freud was then shown the second room. It was filled with typewriters. Thousands of people were clattering away, each with a Devil's assistant behind him. Whenever a mistake was made, the assistant would slap the person on the back.

Freud was becoming extremely apprehensive.

The final room was filled with human feces, up to the necks of the thousands of people there. Each person had a cup of coffee which he or she was sipping, just above the dung.

"Well," said the Devil, "which room do you choose?"

Freud thought for a second, realizing that in the third room, at least there was no physical work, and he enjoyed coffee too.

"Okay, I will take the third room."

He waded into the feces and waited for someone to bring him his cup. Just as he heard the large door slam behind him he heard an assistant shout, "Alright, everybody! Coffee break is over! Everyone back standing on their heads!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #7

Chapter title: You are the source

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MISCHIEF IS YOURS.
SORROW IS YOURS.
BUT VIRTUE ALSO IS YOURS.
AND PURITY.

YOU ARE THE SOURCE
OF ALL PURITY AND ALL IMPURITY.

NO ONE PURIFIES ANOTHER.

NEVER NEGLECT YOUR WORK
FOR ANOTHER'S,
HOWEVER GREAT HIS NEED.

YOUR WORK IS TO DISCOVER YOUR WORK
AND THEN WITH ALL YOUR HEART
TO GIVE YOURSELF TO IT.

Man can either be in hell or in heaven -- it is his choice. Hell and heaven are not geographical; they are not places outside you but spaces within you -- and both alternatives exist in each individual. Man is like a ladder: you can go up, you can go down; it is the same ladder. Just change the direction and you start moving upwards. It is the same energy that becomes hell and that becomes heaven. Just a deep understanding is needed of your energies, of your possibilities, of your potential.

Heaven or hell are not when you die: they are possibilities right now. In this very moment one can be in hell or heaven -- and you may be in hell and your neighbor may be in heaven. And one moment you will be in hell and another moment you will be in heaven. Just observe closely: the climate goes on changing around you. Sometimes it is very cloudy and everything looks dark and dismal, and sometimes it is so sunny, and so beautiful, so joyous.

But the mistake, the greatest mistake a man can commit, is to think that the climate is created by outside forces. It is not created by outside forces; it is your inner decision, your inner will. It is your choice. It happens on the outside, but it arises from the deepest core of your being. It needs very alert watchfulness to see this point. Once you have seen it you need not live in hell at all. Why should you choose hell once this is understood -- that it is your choice?

But for centuries man has been trying to find excuses, rationalizations, pseudo causes, outside himself, for a certain reason: it feels very bad that you are the creator of all your miseries. First the miseries are there, and second, the very idea that "I am the creator of all these miseries" hurts even more than the miseries themselves. To avoid this hurt, to avoid this wound, to avoid this great responsibility, man has been finding a thousand and one ways.

In the past we created the idea of God: that HE determines, that everything is preordained, predetermined, that a child is born absolutely determined. God determines what he is going to be; he is not free, he has no freedom. If there is no freedom, there can be no responsibility; if there is freedom, then there is responsibility. They come together, they are inseparable. Man was ready to gain his freedom, but he was very much afraid to accept the responsibility. Even at the cost of losing freedom he wanted to be absolutely without responsibility. At least he could say, "It is not my will that I am suffering. What can I do? I am helpless! God has preordained it." Or fate, KISMET....

And the religions which don't believe in God and don't believe in fate either, they had to find some other explanations, but it is the same thing. They have found the theory of reincarnation, the theory of karma: your past lives determine your present life. Again you are helpless! Now nothing can be done about your past lives; there is no possibility of changing them. You cannot undo them, so one has to simply accept whatsoever is the case. If you are miserable, you are miserable -- accept it.

It is because of this acceptance that the East has remained poor, starved, ill. If you accept that whatsoever is happening is happening because of your past karmas, then it has to

happen; there is no way to avoid it. Even utterly stupid ideas arose out of it, and they look very logical if you accept the basic premise.

In India there is a Jaina sect, Terapanth; Acharya Tulsi is its head. This Jaina sect says that if somebody falls in a well, don't help him to get out. You will be surprised -- how can one say this? You are standing there, the man is crying, shouting for help, but this sect says, "Don't help him, because he is suffering for his past karma. Don't interfere. If you interfere and pull him out he will have to fall in again, so you will not have really been a help. On the contrary, you will have delayed the process which would have been completed by now. And by interfering in his life and his karma YOU are creating a certain karma for yourself, because to interfere in somebody's life, to disturb his process, his growth, is a sin."

Hence the followers of this sect don't help anybody in any way. To help is a sin, to serve is a sin. It looks very absurd, but if you accept their premise then it is not absurd. The premise accepted, it appears the logical conclusion of it.

Absurd philosophies have arisen, just for one single reason: how to avoid responsibility? Throw it on somebody else's shoulders! It may be God, fate, the theory of karma, or, if you are not religious, if you are a materialistic person, then you can throw it on history, as Hegel did -- history is responsible. It is again the same game -- just the name changes, the label changes. It is no longer the past, now it is called history -- not individual karma but the karma of society is decisive; the individual is helpless. In fact, according to Hegel the individual is a fiction; only the society exists and history is the determining factor.

And millions and millions of years have passed! How can you fight with it? What can you do about it? You are utterly helpless! All that can be done is: accept it, be part of it. Whatsoever is the case -- misery or bliss -- you are not responsible. How can you be responsible for the whole history -- from the very beginning, if there was any beginning?

Karl Marx says it is not history but the economic structure of the society. Sigmund Freud says it is not the economic structure of the society but the unconscious structure of your psyche -- unconscious! You cannot do anything about it, it is beyond you. You are conscious and it is unconscious; there is no bridge. You are utterly unaware of it. The enemy goes on functioning from such dark corners inside you and there is no possibility of bringing any light to it. At the most we can analyze, understand the situation, and be adjusted to it.

All these philosophies, psychologies, sociologies, are inventions of man to avoid one single phenomenon: the phenomenon of responsibility.

A real religious person is born the moment you accept your responsibility for yourself, the moment you say, "Whatsoever I am is my choice -- not of the past but of the present. It is my choice of this moment, and if I want to change it I am absolutely free to change it. Nobody can hinder me -- no social force, no state, no history, no economics, no unconscious, can hinder me. If I am determined to change it, I can change it."

Yes, in the beginning the responsibility looks like a heavy, heavy weight; it feels good to throw the responsibility on somebody else. At least you can enjoy this much, that "I am not responsible." You can enjoy that you are just a victim, helpless. In the beginning to accept responsibility for yourself totally, unconditionally, IS heavy. It creates despair, anguish, anxiety, but only in the beginning. Once it is accepted, slowly slowly you become aware of the great potential and the great freedom that it brings.

If I am responsible for my misery, that also means, automatically, that I am responsible for my bliss. If I am responsible for my misery, I can stop it immediately. Let me repeat the word 'immediately' -- not even for a single moment does one have to wait. It is not a question of changing your past lives, it is not a question of changing the whole society, it is not a

question of bringing the dictatorship of the proletariat, and it is not a question of going into years and years of psychoanalysis. It is a simple question of accepting the responsibility that "Whosoever I am, I have created my climate, my being."

Man is born only as a potential. He can become a thorn for himself and for others, he can also become a flower for himself and for others. And remember, whatsoever you are for others you are for yourself too, and whatsoever you are for yourself you are for others too. If you are a flower to yourself, your fragrance is bound to be released; it will reach others. If you are a thorn to yourself, how can you be a flower to others?

This is one of the greatest contributions of Gautama the Buddha to the world: he makes the individual absolutely, categorically, irrevocably responsible. Very courageous people accepted it, only rare individuals accepted it. Cowards always want to escape from responsibility.

The people who followed Buddha became disciples and devotees. The people for whom Buddha became the master were a rare kind of people: really courageous, ready to risk all, ready to accept the anguish of being reborn... because this is a rebirth! Dropping all these philosophies which make somebody else, XYZ, responsible for your being -- it is a rebirth. Accepting the whole responsibility of your being, whatsoever you are -- good, bad, sinner, saint -- means you have taken a great quantum leap. But soon the responsibility turns into freedom. Such a great liberation happens through it!

The same type of people are gathering around me again. I am not here for cowards. Cowards have many other places in the world, many people to help them -- to help them to remain cowards forever. I exist here only for the courageous, the adventurous: people who are ready to risk and risk all, people who are ready to get involved, committed, people who are ready to stake everything for liberation, for transformation, for attaining the ultimate truth.

The sutras of today are very pregnant, small statements. That's exactly what a sutra means. A sutra means an essential statement, with no elaboration, with no explanation, with no decoration -- just the bare, naked core of it. It was needed in those days, because people had to remember these sutras. Hence they had to be very condensed, they had to be telegraphic, so people could remember for centuries, because they would go from one generation to another just as part of people's memories. Books were not in existence, printing had not come into existence. People had to remember; hence the device of the sutra. A sutra means a maxim, just the very essential core, but if you remember it you can always decode it.

And that's what I am doing here: decoding these sutras for you.

A man had three daughters. One day a friend came to see him and during the conversation asked what the daughters' names were.

The father said that the eldest was called S.C., the middle one, M.C., and the youngest, D.C.

"What does all that mean?" the friend asked.

The father replied, "The eldest, S.C., was born out of 'sheer curiosity'; the middle one, M.C., by 'mutual consent'; and the youngest, D.C., by 'damn carelessness'."

Just watch your life -- more or less it is damn carelessness, it is D.C.! Whatsoever you are, you are accidentally, like driftwood. You have not chosen to be whatsoever you are; you have not taken a conscious decision about it, you have not willed it so. You have just been at the mercy of the winds. Just look at your whole life, how things have been happening to you.

Just accidents!

A woman meets you and you fall in love, because she has a beautiful nose. Now the nose is determining your life! Or she has blond hair or a beautiful shape. Just watch what is determining your behavior, your future! Now, the color of her hair or the way the woman walks or the way she sings or the color of her eyes -- are these the things that can determine your love? -- because your love is going to change your life! But that's how things happen.

Since the invention of the car things have changed, because the area of accidents has become very big. Otherwise people used to fall in love in their own neighborhood; now the range is bigger. Now young people have their own cars: within hours they can reach hundreds of miles away. In the past, people used to fall in love within the neighborhood -- somebody living next door or somebody living in the same house. The car has changed the whole pattern of people's lives, their love affairs!

Now, what kind of humanity is this which is determined by such superficial things? But that's how it is, and it is better to see it as it is.

People have become more intelligent -- if not intelligent, at least more intellectual, more educated, more cultured, more sophisticated -- but their basic style of life is still the same: unconscious, accidental. People don't live out of their essence, they simply depend on accidental circumstances. And not only the little people, but the people you think are geniuses, even they behave in very stupid ways.

The twentieth-century physicist, Niels Bohr, made great contributions to the world when he detailed the structure and function of atoms, and laid the groundwork for the theory of quantum mechanics. He was a scientist's scientist.

One day an American colleague visited Bohr in his Danish homeland. The American found a good luck charm above the desk -- an up-ended horseshoe hanging on the wall.

"Surely you don't believe the horseshoe will bring you good luck, do you, Professor Bohr?" asked the astonished visitor. "After all, we are level-headed scientists!"

"I believe no such thing, my good friend, not at all. I am scarcely likely to believe in such foolish nonsense," the Scandinavian reassured him. "However, I am told that a horseshoe will bring you good luck whether you believe in it or not."

Now, a man like Niels Bohr, one of the geniuses of this century, still behaving in the same way, the same unconscious way as the common people have always been behaving! It seems education makes no difference, science makes no difference, civilization makes no difference. Man goes on living and repeating the old patterns.

And the greatest and the oldest pattern is: not to accept responsibility for yourself. And avoiding responsibility is avoiding the birth of your soul. And you can always find excuses to avoid that birth... because every birth is going to be painful, and the greater the birth, the greater the pain.

People shirk their responsibility, they shrink away from their responsibility. Whenever a point comes to respond spontaneously, they are at a loss. They search in their memories, in their past, how to react. And remember: reaction is not response. Reaction means you are repeating an old pattern. You are not aware of the present situation, you are not responding to it. You are responding to some other situation which is no longer there.

Life goes on changing and your patterns become fixed, because mind is a machine. The mind cannot change by itself. Unless you become very conscious and start using your mind consciously, the mind goes on giving you ready-made formulas. They may have been

effective in some other situations, but they are not relevant forever -- because life is never the same even for two consecutive moments.

A responsible person is one who is alert, watchful, and never acts out of his past but acts out of his present awareness. Otherwise you will always be out-of-date. That's how people are -- always out-of-date. They go on giving answers to questions which are not being asked. They go on doing things which are a sheer wastage of time and energy -- because the situation does not demand them.

Now man has become scientifically very capable, but psychologically he is not mature enough. And the technology and all its powers in the hands of immature people is very dangerous. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are going to be repeated again and again. It is like giving a small child a naked sword to play with: either he is going to harm himself or somebody else. It is bound to happen; the harm is almost inevitable.

And that's what has happened to the modern world. Scientifically we have a great technology which can change the whole face of the earth and finally the whole face of the universe, but psychologically we are immature. Psychologically we are centuries behind -- there is a gap of centuries between our science and our minds!

Ponder over Niels Bohr's reaction again. He says, "I have been told that it is going to be a blessing whether you believe in it or not." He is living a superstitious life!

Yes, it is okay for a primitive man, but for Niels Bohr, one of the most sophisticated minds, who has contributed greatly to modern knowledge, who is in the same category as Albert Einstein, Eddington, Edison, and others... a man of great intellect, functioning like a small child, a primitive man, functioning very childishly!

And let me remind you again: just as there is a great difference between reaction and response, so there is a great difference between being childlike and being childish. Don't be childish. Yes, childlike innocence is beautiful, but childish superstitiousness is ugly.

And remember what kind of excuses you go on finding for your life, because if you go on finding excuses for the way your life is, it is going to remain the way it is. It will never be changed, because nobody else can do it for you.

The streetwalker tried to peddle her wares to a man on Park Avenue.
"I won't for three reasons," he replied. "I promised my wife, and I also promised my mother, that I would not fool around with strange women."
"What's your third excuse?" asked the prostitute.
"I just had a piece!" he said.

Just look at your irrational reasons -- stupid, if you are a little more observant; otherwise they look alright.

Buddha says:

MISCHIEF IS YOURS.

The first thing to note: Buddha does not call it sin, he calls it mischief -- mistake, error, but not sin. In fact, in Buddha's vision there is nothing like sin. To call something a sin is to condemn it, and not only is it condemning the act, it is condemning the person too. The word 'sin' is very loaded. Buddha uses the word 'mischief' -- the change is great. If you call it a sin, then you have to be punished for it. Then you are a sinner, then you will have to suffer sometime in the future.

The future was created by the priests, for a certain reason. In life we see many sinners flourishing: they are famous, they are powerful, they are rich. In fact, to be a president or to be a prime minister of a country, you have to be very immoral. You have to commit all kinds of immoral things, only then can you reach the highest post. It is not easy to reach there: you have to compete, by wrong means or right means.

In politics there is nothing wrong or right: everything is right which gives you results. Use all kinds of ladders to reach the highest post, and once you have reached, nobody is going to remember what you have done on the way. Once you are in power, people simply forget all about what you have done to them. Not only that -- you can rewrite the whole history! That's what Joseph Stalin did, Adolf Hitler did.

Joseph Stalin wrote the whole history of the Russian Revolution again: all the names that he was against were dropped. Trotsky, who was a far more prominent figure in the revolution than Stalin, was totally dropped; he was even removed from pictures. Stalin was in power for a long period: he changed the whole history, he made a new history -- invented!

Once he died, the same was done to him by Khrushchev -- he changed the history again. Even Stalin's body which was preserved like Lenin's was removed from its place, because his body was lying next to Lenin's. HE had only changed pictures and words! Khrushchev removed Stalin's body. People spat on his dead body. It was removed to a far corner, a place where nobody would ever go.

I have heard that somebody had suggested, "Why don't you send it to Israel?"

Khrushchev said, "I am afraid, because it is said that once a man was resurrected there after three days. I can send his body anywhere, but not to Israel. Who knows -- if he comes back...? Just the idea!" ... Because for thirty years Khrushchev was just wagging his tail before Stalin. For thirty years he was just like a dog, not more than that! After Stalin's death, when he became powerful, he took revenge.

Somebody asked him at a conference, "If you are so much against Stalin, why didn't you assert it when he was alive? For thirty years you were with him -- there is not even a single case on record that you argued with him or said anything against him or even discussed anything. You were always a yes-sayer. How do you explain it, your thirty years' association with Stalin? If he was wrong, then you were wrong!" Somebody shouted this from the back of the conference hall.

Khrushchev stood silent for a single moment, then he said, "Just please stand up and say who you are!" Nobody stood up, and he said, "Now do you see? This is my answer! You cannot stand and say your name before me; that was the same situation with me in those days. I can kill you -- he could have killed me!"
And the same was done to Khrushchev.

That's how it has been going on. In power politics you don't think of right or wrong means. In politics there is nothing right, nothing wrong: whatsoever succeeds is right and whatsoever fails is wrong. And the situation is the same in the marketplace. If you succeed in accumulating money, you are right.

The priests became aware of the problem. The problem was: sinners succeed in life -- then how to explain it? If sinners are to be punished, what kind of punishment is this? In fact, the saints seem to be punished and the sinners seem to be rewarded. How to explain this? The future life was the only way to escape the problem.

The priests invented this idea that hell and heaven are after life. In this life the sinner can

succeed, but in the next he will have to suffer, after death he will have to suffer. And the saint may suffer in this life, but after death he will be rewarded: he will be taken to paradise. Now, nobody knows anything about the next life, whether it is or is not. Nobody has ever come back from there; nobody has ever reported what it is like, what is happening there. But it was a good device; it helped priests to console people.

Buddha never uses the word 'sin', because it is condemnatory. He has such a deep respect for humanity! No other master has ever shown such respect for humanity as Buddha. And it is difficult to show respect for humanity, really difficult, because humanity behaves in such stupid ways. Only an enlightened master can still show respect for humanity, in spite of all that humanity goes on doing.

Buddha uses the word 'mischief'; it does not condemn you. It simply says that you have chosen a wrong way. And he says: MISCHIEF IS YOURS. It is not predetermined by God, by fate, or by anybody else -- it is YOURS. And the sorrow that follows mischief -- or, more accurately, the sorrow that simultaneously happens with mischief, is also yours. There is no god who punishes you, there is no need, because if there is a god -- again an invention of the priests -- if there is a god as a judge... judges can be bribed.

And the priests have been telling people, "Pray to God, praise the Lord, and you will be forgiven." What is praise? It is a kind of bribery!

Hence, in a country like India where people have been praising God for centuries, bribery is very simple. Nobody thinks it is wrong -- it is something religious! If even God can be bribed, what about the poor policeman! If even God can be bribed and persuaded to do things in your favor, what about the poor magistrate? And if God is not wrong, why should the magistrate be thought wrong?

In the East, bribery is not thought wrong; it is a Western concept that bribery is wrong. In the East it is just a simple thing, it has always been done. The priests are nothing but agents between you and God: they take bribes from you, and on your behalf they plead with God. Of course, in things like bribery, agents were needed because to give a bribe directly you will feel afraid. The person may not feel right; he may be offended, his sense of dignity may be offended. He may feel hurt, thinking, "What do you think of me? That you can purchase me?" Or, even if he wants to take it, he may say no, he may deny it. He may say, "I never take any bribes." His sense of pious ego may take possession of his being. An agent is needed, a go-between who knows both the parties so you need not encounter the person directly. Everywhere agents are needed.

Priests have been agents between man and God. "You commit sin? Don't be worried," priests say. "Just give the right amount of bribes and you will be forgiven. And God is very compassionate." If you don't bribe, then of course you have to suffer.

Buddha removed God completely. He removed God because he wanted to remove the priest. Unless God is removed the priest cannot be removed; he is just a shadow of God, a by-product. God is his invention! Hence the whole priesthood of India was against Buddha, because he was destroying their very trade, he was revealing their very trade secret, he was cutting their very roots.

And India has the longest, the oldest priesthood in the world: the brahmins. For ten thousand years they have been exploiting people. They have lived on exploitation, they have not done anything else. They have not toiled, they have not worked. Their whole function has been just to act as a go-between.

Buddha was really cutting the very roots of the priesthood, the whole establishment that goes with it, and the exploitation in the name of religion. He says:

MISCHIEF IS YOURS.
SORROW IS YOURS.

There is no God to give you punishment, each act of mischief intrinsically brings sorrow to you. If you put your hand in the fire you will be burned. Not that a judge is needed to declare that now you have to be punished by the decree of God or the decree of the judge; you have to be punished because you have put your hand in the fire. There is no need for anybody to declare any judgment. The moment you put your hand in the fire you are burned -- immediately, instantly! In Buddha's vision, the action brings its own result; no judge is needed.

"How did this accident happen?" asked the doctor.

"Well," explained the patient, "I was making love to my girl on the living-room rug when, all of a sudden, the chandelier came crashing down on us."

"Fortunately you have only sustained some minor lacerations on your buttocks," the doctor said. "I think you are a very lucky man."

"You said it, Doc," explained the man. "A minute sooner and it could have fractured my skull!"

It all depends on you! MISCHIEF IS YOURS. SORROW IS YOURS.

BUT VIRTUE ALSO IS YOURS.
AND PURITY.

So don't be sad. In fact, feel joyous. Buddha is giving you total freedom... you can choose. If you are in love with sorrow, that's your choice. Then don't complain. You have chosen it yourself; enjoy it if you want to enjoy it. It is all up to you.

The bride returned from her honeymoon and was relating her experience to her best friend. "And how was the first night?" her friend asked in anticipation.

"Oh, it was horrible!" said the bride. "All night -- up and down, in and out, up and down, in and out. Never get a room next to the elevator!"

Your whole life is your choice: you can be in hell, you can be in heaven. And heaven and hell are not far away from each other. In fact, there is not even a fence between the two, there is no division; they merge and melt into each other. You can easily move from one space to the other.

And people have tried all kinds of things, but nothing succeeds. People have tried alcohol and drugs and people have tried prayers, religious rituals -- nothing works. Maybe for a moment, or for a few hours, mescaline or LSD can take you away from your present misery, but in fact they don't take you away -- they simply make you unaware of it.

Only one thing has been successful and that is becoming more conscious, accepting that it is your responsibility; if you are in misery, then looking at it and finding out how you have chosen it and why you have chosen it. And seeing that it is your choice is enough: if you still want the advantages that come with it...

Yes, there are a few advantages; that's why people choose misery. Nobody wants misery,

but there are a few advantages that come with misery. Everybody wants bliss, but there are a few disadvantages -- at least they look like disadvantages from your standpoint. That's why people want bliss but don't choose it, people don't want misery but choose it.

Misery gives you a sense of the ego. Misery separates you from existence, defines you. Bliss is a merger, a melting. Your definitions disappear, your ego is found no more. So those who want to feel "I am," they have to choose misery, there is no other way. The 'I' feeds on misery; you may not like misery but you like the ego, and that is the subtle motive for choosing misery. You like bliss, but you don't want to melt.

It happens many times: people come to me and they say.... And the same was happening with Buddha: many times he was asked the same question -- and maybe it is the same people who asked him and now they are asking me! He was asked many times, "You say bliss will be there when we have disappeared. But if we are not there, what is the point of attaining bliss? If I am not there to enjoy it, what is the point?"

The same people come to me and ask, "If I disappear, then I don't see the point. Even if there is bliss, if I am not, who is going to experience it?" And logically it appears that their argument is valid -- but only logically, not existentially.

Bliss is not an experience. It is not that there is bliss and you are experiencing it. When you disappear YOU are bliss; there is no need for anybody to experience it -- you become it. You vacate... and bliss starts arising in you. You are blocking it, you are the only barrier.

You have to look deeply into it; only then will Buddha's sutra be clear to you.

MISCHIEF IS YOURS. SORROW IS YOURS. BUT VIRTUE ALSO IS YOURS. AND PURITY. And what does he mean by purity? Is not virtue purity? No; hence he has to mention it separately. Purity means a state which is beyond both good and bad, misery and bliss -- beyond both.

There is a transcendent state; it is peace. Buddha calls it nirvana: cessation of all states, good and bad both, day and night both. One simply IS: that is purity. No experience, nothing is happening, no content, a pure subjectivity, an eternal silence: that is purity.

MISCHIEF IS YOURS. SORROW IS YOURS. Virtue is yours, bliss is yours, and beyond all is purity, buddhahood, awakening, transcendence. That is also yours.

YOU ARE THE SOURCE
OF ALL PURITY AND ALL IMPURITY.

This is his continuous insistence, that: YOU ARE THE SOURCE.... He wants you to be reminded again and again that: YOU ARE THE SOURCE.... You come into the world as a pure potential, a multidimensional potential. You can become anything. You can be a sinner, you can be a saint. You can be Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, or you can be a Buddha or a Jesus. You bring all kinds of potential with you; you can choose whatsoever you want to be. You are not born ready-made; you come only as an infinite possibility, opportunity.

An occasion to grow, that's what life is -- a space to grow. But you can grow in many ways, diametrically opposite ways. Adolf Hitler can become Gautama the Buddha; Gautam Siddhartha could have become Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler is not born as Adolf Hitler.

We are born tabula rasa, a clean slate; nothing is written on it. It is later on that we start writing. Then one becomes the Bhagavadgita, the Bible, the Talmud, the Upanishads, and another becomes a book of pornography. And it is the same clean paper on which pornography is printed and on which the Bhagavadgita is printed, and it is the same ink that is used for both and it is the same press too. But vast differences! How vast is the difference

between Adolf Hitler and Gautam Buddha! And both came with the same opportunity, but the choice was different.

Remind yourself again and again that: **YOU ARE THE SOURCE OF ALL PURITY AND ALL IMPURITY.** Once this is accepted, a great authenticity arises in you.

Frederick II of Prussia, also known as Frederick the Great, instituted social reforms and improvements throughout his country. One day he unexpectedly visited a prison to inspect the facilities. The head jailer was dismayed to be asked to show the king through the jail itself to see the conditions personally.

As Frederick proceeded through the jail, the convicted men came running up to him, pleading innocence and begging for pardons. The king listened to all, and walked on. He became surrounded by men claiming they were not guilty.

One man, however, stayed in his corner. The king was surprised. "You there!" he called. "Why are you here?"

"Robbery, Your Majesty," stated the prisoner.

"And are you guilty?" asked Frederick.

"Entirely guilty, Your Majesty. I richly deserve my punishment."

The king parted the throng with his walking-stick and pointed it at the jailer. "Warden," he said, "release this guilty wretch at once. I will not have him here in jail where by example he will corrupt all the splendid, innocent people who occupy it."

The moment you take responsibility totally, it is a great redemption, it is freedom. You are suddenly out of the jail -- just by taking the responsibility. It is difficult to accept, very difficult, hard to accept, that "I am responsible"; it hurts the ego. But there is no other way.

NO ONE PURIFIES ANOTHER.

This is the way Buddha drops the whole priesthood. If nobody can purify you, if nobody can purify another, then the whole function of the priesthood disappears.

The greatest priesthood in the world now is the Catholic priesthood. And do you see the reason why? -- because for twenty centuries they have been claiming that salvation is through Jesus. That is the basic root of the Catholic priesthood; it depends on it. If somehow it can be proved that Jesus cannot be the salvation of anybody else, then the whole Catholic church will become irrelevant.

The church is relevant, the pope is relevant, only because of the claim in the name of Jesus that "Jesus purifies," that "Jesus saves." And the pope represents Jesus: he is the representative of Jesus on earth, of God on earth. God is invisible; Jesus is no longer on the earth, but he has left his representatives and they have direct connections -- they can dial at any moment. They can recommend you or they can put your name on the blacklist.

Buddha says: **NO ONE PURIFIES ANOTHER.** You have done mischief to yourself -- now only you can undo it. Why bring somebody else into it? If Jesus has not been the cause of your mischiefs, how can he be the cause of saving you from those mischiefs?

Buddha says: buddhas can only point the way -- but you have to walk. They can't walk for you; nobody can carry you to paradise. You are men, you are not sheep! But the Christian idea is that Jesus is the shepherd and you are the sheep. And the Christian idea is that the more lost you are, the better are the chances that Jesus will carry you on his shoulders to the ultimate home.

This is all invention! Jesus can only save himself, and by saving himself he can show you the path to saving yourself, but he cannot save you.

This is where Buddha stands out from all other religions. He was really very very aware not to give any chance to any kind of priesthood to arise behind him -- because priests are the greatest enemies of religion. And the priests are not bridges between you and God; on the contrary, they are the walls.

An elderly Jewish gentleman climbed into a railway carriage and soon struck up a conversation with the other passenger in the compartment, who explained that he was a Catholic country priest.

"And after being a country priest, vot you become in your church?" asked the Jew.

"Well, it is just possible I could be moved into a town parish."

"And after zat?"

"Oh, no! I will never be placed higher than that."

"But if you are very good in your job vot you can become?" persisted the Jew.

"Well, I could become a monsignor."

"And after zat?"

"If I was very, very lucky I could become a bishop."

"And zen?"

"Archbishop."

"And after zat?"

"Well, a cardinal in Rome."

"So vot next?"

"From the cardinals the pope is elected."

"Oh, the pope. Vot after him?"

"What! There is no higher than the pope. He is God's priest on earth!"

"So vot about Jesus Christ?"

"No, that's blasphemy! No one can become Christ!"

"Oh!" said the Jew, "'cos vun of our fellows made it."

It is not blasphemy -- everyone can become a christ, because christ is a state of consciousness; it has nothing to do with Jesus. Christ is equivalent to buddha. Buddha has nothing to do with Gautam Siddhartha -- anybody can become a buddha. Whosoever becomes awakened is a buddha and whosoever is awakened, is crowned by the glory of awakening, is christ. Christ means the crowned one. One who has come home and is crowned with the glory of becoming one with God is a christ.

YOU can be a christ.

There have been many christs before Jesus Christ and there will be many more. In fact, ultimately, each individual has to reach to the state of christhood. It is not blasphemy -- but the priest has to call it a blasphemy. He cannot allow you to become a christ, because if you become a christ, the priest is not needed anymore. Even the idea that you can become the christ means you have gone far away from the clutches of the priesthood. The very idea is dangerous to the priesthood; that's why it is blasphemy.

But Buddha says: NO ONE PURIFIES ANOTHER.

NEVER NEGLECT YOUR WORK....

Hence, don't depend on anybody else saving you -- only your own work on yourself can.

NEVER NEGLECT YOUR WORK.... It is arduous to transform yourself from wrong patterns to right patterns, and from right patterns to transcendence. It is a great, arduous pilgrimage, it is an uphill task. Don't go on believing and deceiving yourself that somebody is going to come: the messiah will come and will deliver you from your sins and from your bondage. This is just a hope, a wish-fulfillment. And people have been waiting for the messiah and the messiah never comes.

Not that there have not been messiahs -- there have been: a Buddha, a Krishna, a Zarathustra, a Jesus, a Mohammed, a Moses. These are all christos, all buddhas! But nobody can purify you -- unless you take the decision, unless you become committed to transforming yourself.

Don't wait for any shortcut -- you can't cheat existence. Nobody can carry you on his shoulders; you have to go to the ultimate peak on your own. NEVER NEGLECT YOUR WORK....

FOR ANOTHER'S,
HOWEVER GREAT HIS NEED.

And Buddha says: There are needy people all around. There are ill people, there are poor people, there are paralyzed people and blind and deaf and lame. If you start serving all these people you will forget the real work. That's what has happened to the Christian missionary. He runs the school, the hospital, he serves the poor people, and of course he is very much respected for that, but he is neglecting the real work.

Buddha is not saying don't serve anybody; he is saying don't serve at the cost of your work. If you can serve people without disturbing your real work on yourself, it's okay; by the side you can do it. But in fact it is not possible -- you don't have that much energy. First you have to pour your whole energy, total energy, into self-growth.

Once you have become a grown-up, mature, alert, aware, then you can serve people and only then -- because then you will have something to share: love, compassion. Then you will have something to really help them: understanding, wisdom. Right now what can you do? Right now you yourself are in such a mess that if you serve somebody you are bound to create more mess for him.

And that's what the missionaries have been doing to the world -- they create more mischief, more mess. They think they are doing great work, holy work -- it is not possible! Unless you are holy your work cannot be holy. Actions are not decided by actions themselves but by the source from where they arise.

Buddha says: NEVER NEGLECT YOUR WORK.... Buddha is saying exactly what I say to you. I say to you: First be selfish, utterly selfish. That is one of the criticisms of my work: people criticize me because I am making people selfish. I am telling them to meditate, to grow, and forget all about the world. And the world is in trouble: there are poor people and there are miserable people, and great public servants are needed. And I am teaching people just to sit silently and meditate, or dance and rejoice.

But that's what Buddha was saying. That's what the awakened people have always been saying to the world. First become enlightened, be full of light, then do whatsoever happens through that light. If service comes easy to you, good. If you want to teach people, good. If you want to help the ill, the old, good. But right now you yourself are blind, you yourself are in a dark night of the soul. What can you do with your service? What are you going to give to

people? You don't have anything -- you are empty, hollow.

NEVER NEGLECT YOUR WORK FOR ANOTHER'S, HOWEVER GREAT HIS NEED. Listen to Buddha's words: However great his need, never neglect your own work. There is something very fundamental involved in it: you can help others only if you have helped yourself first.

Once I was sitting on the bank of a river and a man started drowning. He shouted for help. I ran, but by the time I reached close to the river to jump, another man who was closer, just near the bank, had already jumped. So I stopped myself; there was no need. But then the other man started drowning -- I had to save both!

I asked the second man, "Why did you jump if you don't know how to swim?"

He said, "I completely forgot! The moment I heard him shout, 'Save me!' -- I completely forgot that I don't know how to swim. I simply jumped, it was a mechanical response."

This is not the way to help! I said, "If I had not been here, you both would have drowned! There was every possibility of the other person reaching the shore alone, without you.... Because you don't know how to swim and you would have caught hold of the other person and you both would have depended on each other, there is more possibility that you both would have drowned. And you created unnecessary trouble for me -- first I had to save you, because you were closer to the bank, and that man had to wait a little longer."

But this is happening in life every day: you start helping others without ever becoming aware that you yourself are in need.

Be altruistic only when your own self is fulfilled. Selfishness and unselfishness are not opposite to each other. A really selfish person is bound to become unselfish one day, because the really selfish person is one who comes to discover his inner self. A really selfish person cannot be interested in money, cannot be interested in power, cannot be interested in prestige. If he is really selfish, his first interest will be: "Who am I?" The people who are interested in money and power and prestige don't know real selfishness.

I also teach you real, authentic selfishness, because my own observation is: out of it arises altruistic love. They are not opposite. When one is fulfilled, one starts overflowing with compassion.

YOUR WORK IS TO DISCOVER YOUR WORK....

And the first thing is -- the first step of your work is -- to discover your work.

AND THEN WITH ALL YOUR HEART
TO GIVE YOURSELF TO IT.

What does Buddha mean when he says: YOUR WORK IS TO DISCOVER YOUR WORK...? A very mysterious statement, but only apparently so; otherwise simple, logical.

There are two kinds of people in the world. Just as biologically there are males and females, so spiritually there are also males and females. The biological male may not be spiritually a male, remember. There is no inevitability of them coinciding; sometimes they coincide, sometimes not. A biological female is not necessarily a spiritual female.

A man may find that deep within himself he is more feminine than masculine: more soft, more vulnerable, more receptive, more like a womb: less aggressive, less active. A woman

may find deep down that she is not receptive, she is aggressive.

Just as there are males and females biologically and spiritually, so the spiritual path can be divided into two: the male path and the female path, the yin and the yang. This is the basic division. The whole of nature is divided into two: the negative and the positive, matter and mind, the earth and the sky. The whole of nature depends on this dialectic, on this duality -- and we are part of it right now. When you become enlightened you will go beyond it -- then there is no dialectic, then there is no duality, then you attain to one -- but before you attain to one you will have to find out what work is going to suit you.

I call these two types of work: love and meditation. Love is the feminine way and meditation is the masculine way. Meditation means the capacity to be absolutely alone, and love means the capacity to be absolutely together. Love means rejoicing relatedness; meditation means rejoicing solitude, aloneness. Both do the same work, because on both the paths the ego disappears. If you are really in love you have to drop your ego; otherwise love will not be possible. If you want to go deep into meditation you will have to leave the ego behind; otherwise you will not be alone. The ego will be there and the duality will remain: the being and the ego, consciousness and mind.

You will have to drop the mind if you want to go into meditation, and you will have to drop the mind if you want to go into love.

So the basic mechanism is the same, but the directions are different. The meditator goes inwards; he is introvert, he seeks interiority. And the lover goes outwards; he is extrovert, he seeks the being of the other. In love, the other becomes the mirror in which you find your face, your original face. In meditation, you need not have any mirror; you simply go into yourself and you find yourself, your reflection is not needed. These are the two basic types of work.

Buddha says: **YOUR WORK IS TO DISCOVER YOUR WORK.** The first thing is to discover exactly what type of person you are. Mahavira, Buddha, Lao Tzu, these are meditation types, meditative people. But Jesus, Chaitanya, Kabir, these are love types; they need a dialogue with existence. In meditation there is no prayer because there is no other; in prayer there is a dialogue of I and thou.

Whether God exists or not is irrelevant. Patanjali has said God is only a device for the love type, the person who cannot find himself without creating a mirror; then God is just the greatest mirror you can create. Whether God exists or not is not the point at all. Patanjali says it is a device: a device for prayer. The real thing is prayer, not God, remember it: the real thing is prayer, not God. The real thing is love, not the beloved.

If you can love, if you can pray, it doesn't matter whether God exists or not, whether your prayer is heard or not. Praying itself is transforming; heard, not heard, is beside the point. In deep prayer you dissolve your ego. But for prayer you need an excuse: whom to pray to? You need an excuse; hence God, the hypothesis of God. It is a hypothesis, remember; it is not really there.

There is no person like God sitting somewhere above in the sky listening to everybody's prayer. If there was such a person he would have gone mad long ago -- so many many people, millions of people on the earth.... And now scientists say there are at least fifty thousand earths in the universe, all populated. Now millions and millions of prayers are arising every day, and God is one. Poor God! And so many worshippers!

When I used to travel in this country -- for fifteen years I was traveling and traveling, twenty-one days per month traveling -- I was in a difficulty. The greatest difficulty was the

Indian attitude towards saints. They would come and they would massage your feet, and I was tired of those massages!

Once it happened I was coming from Udaipur. The train was stopping at some station; it must have been twelve o'clock at night. After a seven-day camp I was feeling very tired, and a man entered into my compartment and started massaging my feet. I said, "You will do a great service to me if you stop all this nonsense. Simply get out of the room!"

He said, "You go to sleep, don't prevent me! I have been waiting for the whole year so that when the train comes here to my station and you come back from your Udaipur camp, I could massage your feet, I could serve you."

I said, "How long is this train going to stay here?"

He said, "Don't be worried! It stays here for two hours, because from here the engine changes and the route changes, so you can go to sleep."

I said, "How can I go to sleep?"

And he was really doing such hard work -- something like Rolfing! I asked him, "Where did you learn Rolfing?"

He said, "I have waited for one year!"

I said, "That I understand." So he was taking revenge!

Finally I got tired, so tired that I had to call the police to remove that man. Now he was very angry. He said, "No saint has ever done this!"

I said, "I am not a saint!"

But that is not the point: first he projects the saint, then he can serve him. He really wants to serve some holy man; whether the holy man is holy or not is not the point.

I said, "I am even ready to be a sinner if you will leave me alone!"

Just think of God! That day I started thinking of God, what must be happening to him. The praying... millions of people praying. And there are millions of people already in heaven -- they must be doing Rolfing on him! He must be constantly escaping, running away.

I have heard:

In the beginning God used to live on M.G. Road in Poona, but then people started troubling him too much. Day and night they would knock on his door -- complaints and complaints: "Do this, do that. Tomorrow we need rains," somebody would say. And then somebody else would come; he would say, "Tomorrow no rains, because I am doing my laundry tomorrow."

He started feeling that he would go crazy! He asked his advisors. They said, "You can move to the Himalayas."

He said, "That is not going to help very much, because I can see into the future: soon..." because in the world of God time goes fast. For us it is centuries, for God it is moments.

Just the other day I was reading a story. A male dinosaur was in great love with a female dinosaur. For ten thousand years he waited to say to her, "I love you." Then for ten thousand years he courted her. Then for ten thousand years he said all the sweet things that lovers say to their beloveds. This way thirty thousand years passed. And then one day he said, "Darling, it is time: should we make love?"

And do you know what the female dinosaur said? She said, "I am having my decade!"

If this is so in the world of dinosaurs, what to say about God? Time scales are different.

God said, "You don't know -- soon a man named Hillary, helped by another man,

Tenzing, will reach Everest. And once one man reaches there, then it is finished! Then buses will soon be coming and helicopters and airplanes, and hotels will open up and restaurants and I will again be on M.G. Road! That won't help."

Somebody suggested, "Then why don't you move to the moon?"

He said, "That is not going to help either. Just a few years more" -- that means a few moments more -- "and another man will walk on the moon. And if they find any trace of me anywhere, the whole world will rush towards me."

Then one advisor came close to him, whispered something in his ear, and God became really happy and said, "This is right!"

The man whispered, "Then why don't you hide in man himself?"

God said, "That's right! There, it is very very rare that people look. Once in a while, few and far between -- a Buddha, a Jesus will look in. Otherwise nobody looks in. And the people who look in are not dangerous. The deeper they go inwards, the more peaceful they become. By the time they reach to the center they have lost all language, so they can't complain and they can't pray! By the time they reach me they will melt into me and I will melt into them."

And since then God has been residing in man. This is a secret I should not have told you. At least do me one favor -- don't tell it to anybody else!

YOUR WORK IS TO DISCOVER YOUR WORK. The first thing is to decide whether you feel joy being alone. For example, Chetana is sitting here. Vivek always asks me, "Chetana remains alone and she looks so happy. What is the secret?" She is a meditative type! Vivek is unable to understand that one can live totally alone. Now Chetana's whole work is doing my laundry; that is her meditation. She never goes out, not even to eat in the canteen. She brings her food... as if not interested in anybody at all.

If you can enjoy this aloneness, then your path is meditation. But if you feel that whenever you relate with people, when you are with people, you feel joy, cheerfulness, bouncing, you feel more alive, then certainly love is your path.

Watch, and you will find it is not very difficult to decide what your path is. Once you have found your work, then Buddha says: **WITH ALL YOUR HEART TO GIVE YOURSELF TO IT.** Then don't wait a single moment and don't withhold any energy from it. Get involved totally, absolutely -- because transformation is possible only when you are boiling at the one-hundred-degree point, not lukewarm. Being lukewarm won't do; you have to boil at a hundred degrees. You have to be totally in your work. First find out, take time.

The function of the master is to help you to find out what your real work is, what your type is. If you cannot find out, take the help of a master. Take the help of the master to find out what exactly is meditation and love. He will show you the path, but then you have to follow and you have to follow totally. You cannot follow it in fragments, in parts; you have to go utterly into it. Then transformation is possible instantly. In a single moment one can become a buddha or a christ.

And remember, it is only you who can do this miracle, nobody else can do it for you. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #8

Chapter title: A little taste of buddhahood

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE EXPERIENCED THE FRAGRANCE AND THE NECTAR OF THE BUDDHAFIELD WHILE I HAVE BEEN HERE. HOW DO WE KEEP THIS WITH US WHILST WE ARE AWAY, ESPECIALLY IN THE MIDST OF ANTI-BUDDHAFIELD FORCES?

Jagdeesh Bharti, to experience the presence of the divine is to be transformed so essentially that even if you want to lose it, you cannot lose it. It becomes part of your being, and more so when you are surrounded by anti-buddhafield forces. It will crystallize there. The contrast is always helpful. The contrast cannot destroy it; it becomes a challenge, it is an opportunity. Never think of it as a calamity.

I send my sannyasins to the farthest corners of the earth; that is a device, because when they go away, far away from me, they start relying more on their own awareness -- they have to. They start being more spontaneous -- they have to. They become more responsible, and each moment they have to be alert, watchful, because there are so many things to destroy their treasure. The very existence of the anti-forces becomes a constant challenge for them. It helps integration.

So you need not be worried; the fragrance will remain with you. The nectar is already a part of your being. And while you are in Chicago you will find yourself closer to me than you can be here, because here there are so many sannyasins, you are lost in the many. There you will be alone and you can relate to me more directly, more intimately. And the physical distance makes no difference at all. Love knows no distance. Then Chicago becomes a suburb of Poona. And whenever you close your eyes, you will find me there. The right way to see me is to see me with closed eyes. With open eyes you can see only the physical part of me, with closed eyes you can see the real me.

A great Indian mystic, Paltu, has said something very strange; nobody else has ever said it. He has said: Only those who are blind will be able to understand me, only those who are blind will be able to see me -- who I am. A very strange statement when you think of other statements made by other mystics. For example, Jesus says: Those who have ears, hear me! Those who have eyes, see me!

Paltu says: Only the blind ones can see me. He means, "I can be seen only with closed eyes." When your eyes are open your energy is moving in an extrovert way. And I am not there. You can find me only when your eyes are closed; then in the deepest core of your being, at the innermost shrine you will find me. That's how the disciple always finds the

master.

And that's how the disciple, in one sense becomes absolutely devoted to the master, and in another sense becomes absolutely free of the master. Because when you have found the master within yourself, then there is no dependence on the outer master; then the outer master was just a reflection of the inner. Hence people go on seeing in me what they want to see, they go on projecting.

There are three kinds of meditators in the world. The first kind meditates with open eyes. There are methods of meditation which can be done only with open eyes. With open eyes you relate with nature, the physical manifestation of God, with all its beauties, all its rejoicings, the birds singing and the trees flowering and the stars. With open eyes you can see the manifest God; hence there are a few techniques of meditation which have to be done with open eyes.

And there are a few techniques which have to be done with closed eyes. Then you see the unmanifest God, which is far more important, because the manifestation is momentary and the unmanifested is eternal. I am here in the body; this is a momentary phenomenon. Tomorrow I may not be here in the physical body.

My sannyasins have to learn it -- whether they are in Poona or Chicago they have to learn to connect with me, to contact me with closed eyes. Then I am forever; then whenever they close their eyes they will be surrounded by me. It will not be a form, it will not be a face, it will be simply fragrance; it will not be a flower but only fragrance. You can catch hold of a flower but you cannot catch hold of fragrance. You can experience it but there is no way to keep it in your fist. You cannot touch it, but you can be moved, tremendously moved by it, transformed by it, transmuted by it.

And there are a few meditations which are done with half-closed and half-open eyes; Buddha particularly insisted on doing your meditation with eyes half-closed and half-open. Why? His path is the middle path in everything. He is a very consistent man. He says: Be exactly in the middle, because if you are outside with open eyes you may become attached to the manifest world; if you are with closed eyes you may become attached to the unmanifest world. But with half-open and half-closed eyes you will remain detached from both. You will be just a watcher, in the middle. On one side the existence of nature, on the other side the existence of God, and you simply standing in the middle -- that too is a way to meditate.

My own suggestion is: first meditate with open eyes; second, meditate with half-open and half-closed eyes; third, meditate with closed eyes. Slowly slowly, move into the unknown and the unknowable.

Jagdeesh Bharti, you say, "I have tasted the fragrance and the nectar of the buddhafiield while I have been here."

My effort is to make this whole earth a buddhafiield, so wherever my sannyasins are there is a mini-buddhafiield. And now that you are one of my sannyasins, you will function there as a vehicle for me. Allow me to function through you and a mini-buddhafiield will be created. Slowly slowly, each of my sannyasins has to become a buddhafiield, he has to carry around himself the aroma of enlightenment, of love, of prayer. He has to create a small climate that follows him wherever he goes. He has to remain in that small atmosphere of his own; wherever he goes it follows him like a shadow.

Soon we are going to fill the whole earth with many many sannyasins, and wherever a sannyasin is, there is an oasis. And a single sannyasin can trigger the process, and many more souls can be ignited, can be made aflame. And this is going to happen with you.

I have seen in you a great potential, you can become a true vehicle for me, you can be a

hollow bamboo and I can sing the song. Now spread the fragrance and the nectar that you have tasted -- what else can we give to our friends? What else can we give to our lovers, beloveds, our wives, husbands, children, parents? What more is there to give or what is more precious than to give them a little taste of buddhahood?

Whatsoever you have tasted here, share it and by sharing it will go on growing. In the inner world the economics is totally different from the outer. In the outer, if you share you lose; whatsoever you give is lost to you. In the inner world whatsoever you cling to is lost, whatsoever you share is yours forever; not only is it yours forever but it is multiplied. Give more and you will have more.

Go with great joy, you are carrying a treasure with you. You are a messenger and you are carrying a message which is immensely needed by humanity today. It has always been needed, but never so much as today.

Man has never been in such anguish before, man has never been in such despair before, man has never felt so meaningless before. He needs people whose presence can make him feel again at ease, relaxed, whose presence can give him hope again that meaning is possible, that life can be lived in a totally new way, that there are new ways of life, new altitudes of life, that one need not remain empty. Then one can have a new kind of fullness which does not come by money, by power, by prestige, but comes only through a meditative awareness, a loving awareness.

Go as my messenger, spread whatsoever you have tasted here to as many people as possible, and you will see: the more you spread the message, the more deep-rooted you will become in it. You will not lose contact; don't be worried at all. I will be coming with you, following you. You will find me always very close to you. Yes, sometimes you can chitchat with me, and if sometimes the idea arises to have a little dialogue with me, don't feel that it is crazy. Let the dialogue happen and you will be surprised that your questions are answered in the same way that I am answering them here. They will be answered from the deepest recesses of your own being. They will be answered by your own center; the questions come from the circumference and the answers come from the center. In the beginning it will look as if I am answering you, but sooner or later you will discover that they are being answered by your own real self.

The master represents only your real self; he speaks to you only to provoke the sleeping center of your being. Once the center is awake the master becomes silent with the disciple.

There is a Sufi story about Bahauddin, one of the great Sufi mystics.

He was living with his disciples, a few hundred disciples, in the desert. A few travelers passing by thought just out of curiosity to see what was happening, so they went to the monastery and asked permission. They wanted just to see what was happening and they could not believe their eyes: hundreds of people were looking crazy. Somebody was dancing, somebody was shouting, somebody was talking to the sky, and it was all chaos. They said, "This man, Bahauddin, seems to be insane and he has gathered all kinds of insane people here. What is going on?" And Bahauddin was sitting just in the middle of it all.

They went away to their destination. When they were coming back, again out of curiosity they thought, "What is happening now? We should go and see." They went there. Bahauddin was still sitting in the same place and all the disciples who had been shouting and looking crazy just a few months before were all sitting in silence, as if no one was there. The monastery was so quiet, so utterly quiet.

Now they were even more puzzled: "What has happened? Where has all that insanity

gone?" Not a single word was uttered by Bahauddin, not a question was asked by the disciples. The spectators remained there for a few minutes and then they went away.

After a few years they were again passing by and they said, "Now let us see what is happening." They went there; Bahauddin was still sitting in the middle and there was not a single disciple around; the whole monastery was empty. Now they could not contain their curiosity, more so because Bahauddin was alone. They thought, "Why not ask him?"

So they asked. "When we first came a few years ago," they said, "all hell was loose, and we thought that you were mad and your followers were mad. What was happening at that time?"

Bahauddin said, "Catharsis. They were throwing out the insanities that they had gathered in many many lives because of you people, because of a repressive society, because of an insane society. I was allowing them to throw it out, to get rid of it."

The people asked, "Then what happened? When we came back they were all silent!"

Bahauddin said, "They threw out all that was inside and nothing was left; they became sane. Hence they were sitting in silence."

Those people said, "We can understand these two things. But what has happened now? Where have they gone?"

Bahauddin said, "Now they have gone to spread the message. Now there is no more for them to do. They have tasted the nectar; now they have gone to the farthest corners of the earth to bring more crazy people. And next time when you come you will again find the same thing happening: crazy people throwing out all their craziness."

Jagdeesh is a professor of psychology in Chicago. Go there and bring as many insane people as you can. Help my work. And to help my work is to be with me, to help my work is real intimacy with me. And I will be constantly watching you.

Remember, wherever you are, that I am with you. And soon it will not just be an idea, it will become a reality; it IS a reality -- you just have to discover it. And the anti-buddhafield forces are going to help you immensely. Because of these anti-buddhafield forces you will become more crystallized, you will become more centered, more rooted.

This is part of the process of growth, to send you again and again into the marketplace.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU TALK SO MUCH ABOUT THE WITNESS, BUT WHAT IS THE WITNESS AND
WHAT IS THE JUDGE? HOW CAN WE TELL WHICH IS WHICH -- THE WITNESS OR
THE JUDGE?

Deva Bhumika, it is very simple; the distinction is very clear. It is impossible to be confused about it. The judge is always judging, saying, "This is good, this is not good. This is virtue, this is sin. This is moral, this is immoral. This should be and this should not be." The judge is continuously judging. A thought passes in the mind and immediately the judge says, "This is not good to have such a thought, this is a bad thought, evil." Or the judge says, "This is a beautiful thought, cherish it, nourish it, treasure it; it is very precious."

The judge is always making judgments, for or against. It has a priori ideas of what is right and what is wrong. The judge is given to you by the society; hence there are different judges in you. A Christian has a different judge from a Hindu.

I have heard:

A woman went swimming in the sea, went too far, was drowned and was pulled out of the sea by the guards. They made every effort to revive her but it was too late, so they had to leave her body there and they went to the nearest phone to inform their office that a woman had died. It happened somewhere on the French coast.

When they came back they were surprised; a Frenchman was making love to the dead woman. They said, "What are you doing? Are you mad or something -- the woman is dead!"

The Frenchman said, "My God, I thought she was Catholic!"

Now a Catholic woman is not expected to enjoy or to move or shriek with joy or to shout "Alleluia!" No, not at all. She has to lie down there absolutely dead. Only bad women make any kind of movement, good women never. They simply lie there, they simply suffer.

A Catholic has a different conscience, hence a different judge. A Hindu has a different conscience, hence a different judge. The Jaina has a different conscience, hence a different judge. And the conscience is created by the society, the judge is in the service of the society. From their very childhood we start teaching children what is right and what is wrong. And by and by they imbibe it, they imitate it, it becomes part of their conditioning.

The judge is in the service of the society in which you have been brought up; hence there are as many judges as there are cultures, societies, religions, ideologies.

But the witness is one; there is not any difference between a Christian and a Hindu and a Buddhist. The witness is one. The witness is not given to you by the society; it is the awakening of your soul, it is awareness. What is meant by being a witness is that you don't condemn, you don't appreciate either. You don't evaluate at all -- you don't say anything, you simply see.

A thought passes inside your mind; you simply see it, mirrorlike. You don't say good, bad; you don't label it. You simply see it is coming in, it is in front of you, it is going out. You don't make any comment about what it is. A witness is a pure mirrorlike consciousness; judges are different but the witness is one. If the Christian becomes a witness he will be the same as the Hindu when he becomes a witness.

That's why Buddha and Jesus and Moses and Mohammed are not different; they are witnesses. But the Mohammedan, the Christian, the Buddhist, the Jew, they are different. They live through the ideology given by the society, and the society has its own interests. You can be given very stupid ideas and you will carry those ideas your whole life. Unless you make great efforts to awaken yourself you will remain enclosed in your ideologies; they will dominate you. This is a social strategy to dominate you. Not only have they placed the policeman outside, and the magistrate and the government; inside they have also interfered with your being, inside the society has also trespassed on you.

The judge simply shows the trespass of the society. If we are to create a better humanity we have to stop creating judges. We have to help people to be conscious. Don't give conscience to people, just give them consciousness. And their consciousness about their lives has to be decisive; then they have to act out of their own awareness, not by given commandments, not by rules given by others. That is the way of slavery. That's how we have existed up to now.

My effort here is to help you to drop your conscience; that's why all the religions are against me. It is natural. On one point they agree. In India, the Christians, the Hindus, the Jainas, the Buddhists, the Mohammedans, they are all agreeing on one point: that I am a dangerous man, that people should be prevented from approaching me, that great barriers

should be created so that nobody can come under my influence, because to them it seems an evil influence.

Just the other day I saw one Italian magazine with my picture on the front cover -- I loved it -- my picture with two horns. That's how I must be appearing to the pope of the Vatican, that's how I appear to the SHANKARACHARYAS, that's how I appear to the Jaina monks. It is natural; I appear to them to be the most dangerous person. And the reason? -- because whatsoever they have created I am trying to destroy, because to me they have created only bondage for you. They have created chains for you, subtle prison cells for you. The conscience is the most subtle slavery.

Live through consciousness, not through conscience. Be so alert that you can take responsibility for your own life. Witnessing is totally different from being a judge; witnessing is simple. You come before the mirror; whether you are beautiful or ugly the mirror makes no comment. It simply mirrors you, that's all, whatsoever you are, with no comment, with no judgment. It does not say, "You are ugly -- get lost!" or, "You are beautiful -- remain here a little longer. I enjoy you, I enjoy your company." A witness becomes a mirror, he goes on watching.

And the miracle is, if you can watch your mind without becoming a judge, you will go beyond mind very soon. It is your judgments which create entanglements with the mind. One thing you like and you cling to it, another thing you dislike and you want to push it away. You become entangled, you get involved with the mind, you become identified with the mind. And you don't know what truth is and you don't know what good is and you don't know what beauty is. All that you know is borrowed, all that you know is what the society has told you.

And societies have been repeating for centuries, and go on repeating the same things. Society is not enlightened; there has not yet been an enlightened society, only enlightened individuals.

You can become enlightened by becoming more conscious, more of a witness. Be less of a judge and you will be surprised that when you become a witness and you don't judge yourself, you stop judging others too. And that makes you more human, more compassionate, more understanding. The man who judges himself continuously is bound to judge others too. Even more -- he will be cruel, he will be hard on others. If he condemns himself for something, he will condemn others even more; he will always be looking for faults. He will never be able to see the glory of your being; he will become too concerned with trifles, with trivia. He will become too concerned with your small acts.

If he finds a Buddha sipping tea, he will become more concerned about the tea than about the Buddha. He will say, "Buddha, and sipping tea?" You will be surprised, there are people, for example Mahatma Gandhi -- he was against tea.... "It is a sin!" It was a sin in his ashram. If somebody was found drinking tea a great fuss was made about it. Once he himself went on a three-day fast to purify himself because one of his disciples had been drinking tea. He punished himself -- that is a very subtle and cunning way to punish somebody.

Just think: if you do something and I go on a fast for three days, that will be a great torture for you; you will not be able to sleep those three days; it will be heavy on you. You will think again and again, "Why did I do such a thing? The master is suffering!"

And he is purifying himself. Why? -- because he said, "If I was really pure then no disciple could do anything which is wrong. How can a disciple do anything wrong if the master is absolutely pure?" That was his arithmetic. So he would punish himself. Punishing himself was a kind of masochism, but it worked; it works better than punishing others --

because the people who have gathered around such a person love him; that's why they have gathered around him. Now for such a small thing... but he created a great clamor about tea and about smoking.

In his ashram nobody could smoke, nobody could drink tea, what to say about wine? If he had met Jesus he would have condemned him immediately; he would have gone on a fast for at least three months to purify himself and to help Jesus, because he used to drink wine. The best wine was always created by Christian monasteries; in their cellars they have the oldest wine, the best.

Now this must have been inconceivable to Mahatma Gandhi -- a man like Jesus drinking wine? But Buddhists have been drinking tea down the ages and there is no problem. In fact in Japan they have made it a great ceremony. They drink tea so meditatively that each Zen monastery has a special temple. Yes, it is called a temple where they go to drink tea.

You can't enter the temple with shoes on. You can't talk in the temple where you drink tea. There is a special process and the whole thing is so meditative that the guests will come silently and they will sit in a meditative posture. The host, usually a woman, will prepare tea, and the aroma of the tea, and the samovar and the sound and the music of it.... And everybody will be silently sitting and listening to the sound of the samovar, and everybody will be smelling the beautiful perfume of the tea. And they are getting ready; as the tea is getting ready they are getting ready, becoming more silent, more quiet.

Then the tea is served in beautiful, very aesthetic cups and saucers, specially made, handmade, so they can be unique. And then people will drink tea -- not as people do on railway stations: one sip and then they look back at the train, then another and then they look back at the train, somehow they have to swallow it and run to catch the train, otherwise the train may be gone -- not like that. Sitting silently for hours, sipping tea slowly. There is no hurry. It is a meditation.

Now, I would say that Zen people are really doing something more beautiful than Mahatma Gandhi. The real art is to transform the mundane into the sacred. That is the touch of a master. He touches dust and it becomes gold. Now tea is transformed into prayer. This is beauty, this is alchemy; now tea-drinking becomes a witnessing, a watchfulness.

But if you are prejudiced against something... and everybody is prejudiced; the whole world is prejudiced in one way or another. And I am here to destroy all your prejudices. All that has been implanted in you has to be taken out; you have to be made pure again, pure like a child, innocent, not knowing what is wrong and what is right, just witnessing.

Out of that witnessing a response arises -- a response which is total because your whole heart is behind it, a response which is total because it is your own response, not a repetition of somebody else's teachings; a response which you will never regret, a response which will not make you feel guilty, that "I have done something wrong," which will not make you feel egoistic, that "I have done something great." A response is a simple response, it neither makes you feel inferior nor superior. It is simply the requirement of the moment. It comes out of your witnessing and it is finished. It leaves no trace behind.

The witnessing soul is like the sky. The birds fly in the sky but they don't leave any footprints. That's what Buddha says, that the man who is awakened lives in such a way that he leaves no footprints. He is without wounds and without scars; he never looks back -- there is no point. He has lived that moment so totally that what is the need to look back again and again? He never looks ahead, he never looks back, he lives in the moment.

Judgment comes from the past, and witnessing is a present consciousness. Witnessing is now and here, and judgment is somewhere else in the past. Whenever you judge anything, try

a small experiment: try to find out who has given you this idea. And if you go deeply into it, you will be surprised: you can even hear your mother saying it, or your father, or your teacher in school. You can hear their voices still there resounding in your memory, but it is not yours. And whatsoever is not yours is ugly; and whatsoever is yours is beautiful, it has grace.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO YOU TELL SO MANY JOKES ABOUT THE JEWS?

Sanatano, Jews have a sense of humor as nobody else has. For example, Hindus have no jokes, not a single joke which can be called Hindu. All the jokes that Indians tell to each other come from the West. India has lost the sense of humor; it has become too serious.

Jews could not become too serious for the simple reason that for centuries their lives have been of great suffering. It is humor that helped them to survive. They had to create a great sense of humor.

India has lived in a lukewarm way. It has not suffered much, nobody has tortured it much, nobody was bent upon destroying it. It never needed a sense of humor to save itself from seriousness; on the contrary, because life has been simple, without much suffering and pain, people have become serious.

Jews have the best jokes in the world. You will be surprised, but this is my observation: it is their sense of humor that has saved them; otherwise they would have been destroyed long ago. They had to create a great sense of humor; even in the concentration camps of Adolf Hitler they were joking. That was their way of remaining alive. And I love jokes, hence I love Jews too.

Two Jews met each other for the first time.

"Where are you from?" asked one.

"Miami Beach, Florida," answered the other. "Where are you from?"

"Lincoln, Nebraska," answered the first. "What's the population of Miami Beach?"

"Oh, about a hundred thousand people."

"And how many Jews are there?"

"About ninety thousand."

"And what do they do for a living?"

"Oh, they are doctors, lawyers, judges, accountants, retired wealthy men, bankers, etcetera."

"And tell me about the other ten thousand people? What do they do?"

"They are policemen, carpenters, laborers, etcetera. So now you tell me about Lincoln, Nebraska. What's the population there?"

"About three hundred thousand people."

"And how many of them are our people?"

"I guess there are about five thousand Jews."

"Wow!" said the other, "How come you need so many servants?"

Jews are intelligent people, they snatch away more Nobel Prizes than anybody else. That intelligence is also there because they have suffered long, and they always have to find new ways to survive.

Intelligence arises when it is challenged; intelligence arises, becomes sharpened, when it is used. If it is not used it gathers dust. When it is not used, when there is no need to use it, it

dies. It is as if you don't use your legs for years -- you will lose them, you will not be able to walk again. It is as if you keep your eyes closed for three years, you will lose your eyesight.

Thieves have better eyesight than anybody else; naturally, because they have to look in the dark into other people's houses. Maybe they have entered into the house for the first time: they don't know where the door is and where the wall is and how the furniture is arranged -- still they have to walk silently. They start getting better eyesight than anybody. You will not find a thief with glasses; at least I have not found one yet. So whenever you see a person without glasses, beware! Who knows? Keep watch.

A man with eyeglasses, you need not worry about him. He cannot even find his own things; how can he find your things? -- impossible. He cannot find things in his own house.

Jews have really lived a long long, arduous life because of the Christians. The whole idea is absurd, because once Jesus was crucified, the Jews did not need to be tortured for ever and ever. And the Jews you are torturing did not crucify Jesus; those people are gone. But that's how foolish prejudices continue, and Christians particularly go on and on repeating the same thing.

The sin that was committed by Adam and Eve is still heavy on them. Now if Adam and Eve committed it, they will suffer for it. Why are you worried? You have not committed it. But they think it is in your blood; it has come to you because you are in the same chain, in the same continuity. This is absurd, utterly absurd.

Buddha had a son, Mahavira had a daughter; the daughter must have given birth to a few children -- where are they? Mahavira is not carried by his descendants. Where are Zarathustra's sons or daughters? Zarathustra is not carried by his sons and daughters. Everyone lives his own life and dies his own death. Everyone is unique.

Remember, the body comes from the parents but not the soul. And it is so with Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve are not carried by blood cells. It is utterly stupid to torture Jews for something that happened two thousand years ago. But it continues. In a way it has been a blessing in disguise: it is a curse but it has given Jews a sharpness, a brilliance, an intelligence, a sense of humor. They can laugh even when they are facing death.

I have heard that in the concentration camps they survived not on food, because the food was not enough -- they survived on jokes. Even going into the oven, into the gas chamber, they were going telling jokes to each other, laughing. A beautiful people!

Christians don't joke about their bishops, popes; Hindus never joke against their mahatmas, impossible. Jews joke even about their rabbis; they joke more about rabbis than about anybody else. That shows intimacy, that shows love and respect, remember. That shows that the rabbi is not something of an outsider, he is an insider.

There was a function in a Jewish community. They were raising money for the synagogue -- the synagogue was in bad condition -- so they had sold tickets for a lottery. And now the day had come when the first three prizes were going to be distributed.

A man was called and it was declared that he had got the third prize -- a Lincoln Continental. The beautiful car was there on the stage. That was the third prize.

Then the man was called who had got the second prize -- he was given just a big cake. He was hoping that he might be given an airplane or something. The third prize was a Lincoln Continental and the second prize was a cake! He said to the man who was distributing the prizes, "Are you mad?"

But the man said, "You don't understand. The cake was prepared by the rabbi's wife herself."

The man was so angry he said, "Fuck the rabbi's wife!"
And the man said, "But that is the first prize."

Only Jews can joke this way; that shows intimacy, that shows respect, love. The rabbi is part of the community.

Three men were hurt in an airplane crash in Africa and were recuperating in a Moroccan hospital. In Morocco they allow the shepherds to bring their flocks into town to graze -- which helps to keep the grass short.

Confined to their hospital rooms for several months, one day, one of the three, a Christian, looked out of the window. There was a flock of sheep enjoying lunch.

The Christian pointed to a plump ewe and exclaimed, "I wish that one was Elizabeth Taylor!"

The second, who was a Mohammedan, said, "I wish that was Raquel Welch!"

And the third, who was a Jew, said, "I just wish it was dark."

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU ONCE SAID THAT ACTING IS THE MOST SPIRITUAL OF PROFESSIONS, AND
NOW WE HAVE A THEATER GROUP. CAN YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT
ACTING?

Krishna Prem, acting is certainly the most spiritual of professions for the simple reason that the actor has to be in a paradox: he has to become identified with the act he is performing, and yet remain a watcher.

If he is acting as Hamlet he has to become absolutely involved in being a Hamlet, he has to forget himself totally in his act, and yet at the deepest core of his being he has to remain a spectator, a watcher. If he really becomes absolutely identified with Hamlet, then there is bound to be trouble.

In India the most popular scripture of the Hindus is the RAMAYANA, the story of Rama. It is played all over the country every year; it has been played for thousands of years and every village has its own small theater group to play RAMLEELA. In RAMLEELA, Rama, one of the characters, is the incarnation of God, and Ravana, his opposite, the incarnation of the Devil. The fight is between light and darkness; it is a parable.

Rama gets married to Sita, one of the most beautiful women of those days. In those days marriages were not arranged; they were called SWAYAMVARAS. Swayamvar means the woman was free to choose, and particularly the women from royal families used to make conditions. Those people who fulfilled these conditions would be entitled to be chosen.

The condition that Sita made was that anybody who could break the great bow of Shiva with his bare hands would be chosen. Now the bow of Shiva was of such strength and made of such steel that nobody could even bend it with his bare hands, what to say about breaking it into pieces?

All the princes of the country had gathered. Rama came too, and Ravana also. Ravana was the king of Sri Lanka, and there was great fear in the camp of Sita's father because they did not want Ravana to win the contest. And there was every possibility that he would because he was the strongest man in those days. He was also a devotee of Shiva, and his

devotion was such that once Shiva had appeared to him and told him, "You can ask anything and I will give it to you."

Ravana had ten heads, a beautiful metaphor, ten faces; everybody has. Who can have only one single face? -- only a buddha, the original face; otherwise everybody has many faces. You need one face with your wife, another face with your mistress. You can't function with the same face with them both. You need one face with your servant, another face with your boss. If the servant and the boss are both present, when you look to the left, at the servant, you show him one face, and when you look to the right, at your boss, you show him another face; you start smiling and wagging your tail.

It was said that Ravana had ten faces. He asked Shiva, "Give me this blessing that if one of my heads is cut off, immediately another will grow and I will always have ten heads, never less than that." And Shiva had blessed him; such a devotee of Shiva and such a powerful man that you could not cut off his head -- it would immediately grow again. There was fear, great fear of his power. He might win the contest.

And Janaka, the father of Sita, was really in great anxiety. Something had to be done, so a conspiracy was made. When all the princes and the kings had gathered and the contest was going to happen and the bow was brought, a false messenger came running to Ravana and said, "What are you doing here? Your country is on fire. Sri Lanka is burning!"

So he rushed immediately to Sri Lanka. Meanwhile Rama won the contest and was married to Sita. This is the story.

Now, in a village it happened: the play was being played, and when the messenger comes and says to Ravana, "Your country is on fire!" he said, "Let it be. I don't care. This time I'm going to win Sita. Enough is enough!"

In fact, this man had always loved the woman who was acting as Sita, deep down in his heart. He completely forgot the play; he became utterly identified. It became a reality. He rose... now it was not Shiva's real bow, just one a village carpenter had made. He broke it into many pieces and threw it away before anybody could prevent him. Then he said to Janaka, "Now, where is Sita?"

Now, what to do with such a man? And the whole audience was simply shocked. He was finishing the whole story, because now there could be no more to it. The whole story depends on Ravana being avoided, Rama getting married, and then the struggle when Ravana steals Sita, and the war and the whole thing happens. But if Ravana marries Sita, then it is all finished within two minutes -- and it is just the beginning, the first scene. And the man who had become Ravana was the strongest man in the village, naturally, and Rama was just a boy. He could crush Rama at any moment!

For a moment there was utter silence. But Janaka, the father of Sita, was an old man, an experienced man; he had played the role many times. He said, "It seems that my servants have brought the wrong bow. This is not the real bow, drop the curtain and bring the real bow!" The curtain was dropped... ten people had to carry Ravana out, but he was shouting and people could hear him saying, "Where is Sita? This time I am not going to lose!"

Somehow tranquilizers were given to him, he was put to sleep -- otherwise he might have come back again and created trouble -- and another man had to play the role. He became too much identified. He forgot that this was just a play.

The real actor has to live a paradox: he has to act as if he is what he is acting, and yet deep down he knows that "I am not this." That's why I say acting is the most spiritual of professions.

The really spiritual person transforms his whole life into acting. Then this whole earth is just a stage, and all the people are nothing but actors, and we are enacting a play. Then if you are a beggar you play your act as beautifully as you can, and if you are the king you play your act as beautifully as you can. But deep down the beggar knows, "I am not it," and the king too knows, "I am not it."

If the beggar and the king both know that "What I am doing and acting is just acting; it is not me, not my reality," then both are arriving at the very center of their being, what I call witnessing. Then they are performing certain acts and witnessing too.

So, Krishna Prem, acting is certainly the most spiritual profession, and all spiritual persons are nothing but actors. The whole earth is their stage, and the whole of life is nothing but a drama enacted.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IT SEEMS THAT NOBODY UNDERSTANDS ME EXCEPT YOU. I HAVE BEEN TO
THE PSYCHOANALYSTS, BUT THEY ALSO SEEM NOT TO UNDERSTAND ME.
WHY AND HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO UNDERSTAND ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE?

Gatha, the most fundamental secret is that I never try to understand them at all. I simply look at them, I love them, I accept them as they are. The very effort of understanding the other person is to reduce him into an object of inquiry; it is immoral. He becomes an object. And to reduce a person to an object is the most ugly thing you can do to anybody. Who are you to understand the other? Understand yourself, because there the object and the subject are one; the observer and the observed are one. There the knower and the known are one.

But how can you know the other? You can love and through love this miracle happens. If you love the other, great understanding arises on its own. Not that you try to understand the other: you simply love the other as he is, with no judgment.

The psychoanalyst cannot understand you, Gatha, because he has his own judgments. Before you start saying anything he has already judged you by the way you walk in, the way you sit in the chair. He is watching you, he has learned all these strategies, the body language; he has already reduced you to an object. He will not allow love to happen; he is already far away, an inquirer, a scientific inquirer. You are a guinea pig; he is insulting you, offending you.

It is said that a psychoanalyst is a person who looks at others when a beautiful woman comes in. He does not look at the beautiful woman, he looks at others -- how they are feeling about the beautiful woman, what they are thinking about the beautiful woman. His whole interest is to penetrate the mystery of people, why and how.... He wants to reduce everything to manipulatable knowledge.

And the moment you lie down on the couch of a psychoanalyst, he is reducing you to less than human. In fact, when you lie down on the couch, you lose much. Lying down on the couch is a good posture for sleep, you become more prone to unconsciousness; you become defenseless, vulnerable. And the psychiatrist or the psychoanalyst stands behind a curtain so that his presence does not keep you alert. He wants you to become as unalert as possible so in your unalertness you can blurt out many things which you would not have said to anybody else. He wants to poke into your unconscious; he wants to unlock you. He is treating you as if you are a machine.

And then immediately he labels this as an inferiority complex, that as schizophrenia, this as neurosis, that as psychosis. You are removed; now he will treat the label that he has given to you -- he does not relate to the person, he relates to the labels. He cannot understand you. In fact he does not even understand himself, and the first requirement to understand anybody in this world is to understand yourself.

If you understand yourself you will never try to understand anybody. You will love, you will accept, and your acceptance and love will be unconditional. My love for you is unconditional, I make no condition. I don't give you a certain discipline to follow; I want you to be yourself, totally yourself. I give you absolute freedom to be yourself. I support you in every possible way, so that you can be independent.

The psychoanalyst is not really making you independent; he makes you more and more dependent so the psychoanalysis goes on being prolonged for years and years. And when you get tired of one psychoanalyst you have to go to another. It becomes your style of life, going from one psychoanalyst to another.

And these psychoanalysts are in the same misery as you are; they are not different people, they can't be, because only one thing makes the difference -- that is love, and that is missing. Only one thing transforms a person and that is meditation, and that is missing.

Sigmund Freud knew nothing of meditation; all was intellectual analysis. He was really afraid of meditation, afraid of falling into some uncharted sea, unfathomable.

Analysis is within your hands; it is a mind thing. The psychoanalyst is in the same boat as you are.

A disillusioned man finds his way to a psychiatrist. When he is called in, he explains, "Everybody neglects me. It is as if I'm not there at all, as if I'm the air, they just don't notice me, they...."

The psychiatrist stands up, walks gently to the door and opens it saying, "Next patient, please!"

He is not different from you. Knowledgeable he certainly is, but wise he is not. He suffers from the same problems, the same anger, jealousy, possessiveness, as you suffer. Even the greatest of psychoanalysts, like Reich, one of the greatest of this century.... His wife has written in her memoirs about Reich that he talked so much of how to get rid of jealousy, he talked so much of freedom in sex. And as far as he himself was concerned he moved with many women, but he never allowed his wife to have any freedom. He was so suspicious and so possessive that he would open all the letters written to his wife. And he would keep an eye on her; he would tell the children to keep a note of who came when he was not at home.

Now this man talked about getting rid of jealousy, possessiveness, and he was really a great intellectual, but as far as his own life was concerned, he behaved in the same way. And many are the followers of Reich who will go on repeating him, never knowing the real person.

The wife of a well-known psychoanalyst was entertaining a number of guests one evening.

At one point during the party her ten-year-old son flitted into the room, arrayed in a strapless black evening gown, his lips covered with lipstick, high-heeled suede shoes on his feet, and a feathered hat on his head.

Quite naturally, the woman was stunned.

"Rodney!" she cried. "You naughty, naughty boy! Go upstairs and remove your father's clothes before he comes in and catches you!"

They cannot understand you. In fact, nobody can understand you except an enlightened person, a Buddha, a Jesus, a Lao Tzu -- but not Freud, Jung, Adler, they cannot understand. They don't have that light in their being yet; they cannot shower that light on you. They are not really authentic people; they are as inauthentic as you are, and as foolish and as stupid as you are.

During a beautiful walk in the Himalayas a father who was a famous psychoanalyst suddenly hears his son scream as he falls into a deep ravine.

"Johnny!" he cries desperately. "Don't move, I'll get a rope to pull you out!"

A few hours later he returns with a rope. Throwing it down he cries, "Johnny boy, grab the rope."

"Daddy, I've got no hands anymore," was the answer from deep down.

"Use your teeth, bite strongly on the rope and I'll pull you up."

Slowly slowly, meter by meter, Johnny is pulled up. When only the last few meters remain the father calls, "Johnny, is everything alright?"

"Yeeeeeeeeeeeeehhhhhhh!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #9

Chapter title: Entering the stream

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DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD
IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS,
OUTSIDE THE LAW.

ARISE AND WATCH.
FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY
THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND.

FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE.
FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY

THROUGH THIS WORLD AND ON BEYOND!

FOR CONSIDER THE WORLD --
A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE.
SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS,
AND DEATH SHALL OVERLOOK YOU.

COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD,
A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS,
A TRAP FOR FOOLS.
BUT HE WHO SEES GOES FREE.

AS THE MOON SLIPS FROM BEHIND A CLOUD
AND SHINES,
SO THE MASTER COMES OUT FROM BEHIND HIS IGNORANCE
AND SHINES.

THIS WORLD IS IN DARKNESS.
HOW FEW HAVE EYES TO SEE!
HOW FEW THE BIRDS
WHO ESCAPE THE NET AND FLY TO HEAVEN!

SWANS RISE AND FLY TOWARDS THE SUN.
WHAT MAGIC!
SO DO THE PURE CONQUER THE ARMIES OF ILLUSION
AND RISE AND FLY.

IF YOU SCOFF AT HEAVEN
AND VIOLATE THE LAW,
IF YOUR WORDS ARE LIES,
WHERE WILL YOUR MISCHIEF END?

THE FOOL LAUGHS AT GENEROSITY.
THE MISER CANNOT ENTER HEAVEN.
BUT THE MASTER FINDS JOY IN GIVING
AND HAPPINESS IS HIS REWARD.

AND MORE --
FOR GREATER THAN ALL THE JOYS
OF HEAVEN AND OF EARTH,
GREATER STILL THAN DOMINION
OVER ALL THE WORLDS,
IS THE JOY OF REACHING THE STREAM.

The first sutra:

DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD
IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS,
OUTSIDE THE LAW.

It is one of the most misinterpreted sutras of Buddha. For centuries the Buddhists have

believed that Buddha is saying, "Renounce the world," that Buddha is against the world, that he is a life-denier, that he would like everybody to become an escapist. But that is not the meaning of the sutra; the sutra has a totally different meaning.

The sutra says: **DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW.** It does not say: Do not live in the world. It says: live in the world, but do not live in distraction and false dreams. Live in the world, but do not live outside the eternal law of life and existence. Live in the world, but be not of it. Live in the world, but do not let the world live in you.

If it had been understood the way I understand it, the whole history of Buddhism would have been totally different, and not only the history of Buddhism but the whole face of humanity would have been totally different. Because the sutra was understood as **AGAINST** the world, the Buddhists became life-negative. They became more interested in dying than in living. They became more interested in suicide -- slow suicide, gradual suicide. Suicide became their goal. This is a perversion -- a perversion of a great master and his great words.

The words are clear: **DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW.** Live in the world without distraction, without dreams, and in communion with the law. His expression is a little negative. His expression is always a little negative, for a certain reason. Rather than speaking in an affirmative way, Buddha always says the same thing in a negative way. The reason is that when you affirm something it becomes so definite, so solid, that people tend to follow it blindly; hence Buddha uses the negative expression. That way he gives you freedom to analyze, to meditate, to find out on your own. He never says what is, he always says what is not; he defines through the negative. It is a beautiful device for those who can understand, but for those who cannot understand, it is a dangerous device because they will become victims of negativity.

And Buddha had to choose the negative way of expression, because for centuries before him religion was always expressed in the affirmative way, and the affirmative way had become a burden on people's being. He changed the whole religious expression. He would not say: God is; he would only say: You become absolutely empty and then see what is. This is just indicating a way very vaguely, so you cannot cling to it. Otherwise people are clingers: they will fall upon anything and they will possess it.

Buddha is elusive, you cannot catch hold of him. He says: Be empty and see. He says: Let there be no mind and then see. He never defines exactly what will happen when there is no mind. He knows that if he says what will happen when there is no mind, you will start desiring it. And to desire it is never to achieve it, because desiring is a process of the mind.

For example, if Buddha says, just like the Upanishads say, that when there is no mind there will be great bliss... now listening to this, a great desire for bliss is bound to arise. But desire is mind, even the desire for bliss. If, just like the Upanishads, Buddha says: If you drop the mind you will find God, freedom, absolute freedom -- immediately the desire enters from the back door: "How to find this eternity, this deathlessness, this joy, this God? How to attain to paradise?"

Now it will be impossible to drop the mind. The mind has taken a new form, a new desire, new garments, but it is the same old mind. First it was desiring money, power, prestige; now it desires God, samadhi, enlightenment, bliss, truth, freedom. The objects have changed -- but the mind is not in the objects; the mind is in the process of desiring.

Hence Buddha never gives you any object to desire; he takes away all objects. This can be done only through **VIA NEGATIVA**. And he leaves you in an emptiness... but that emptiness is not real emptiness. Just the contrary: it is fullness, it is plenitude, it is

overflowing with bliss, with God, with love. But Buddha will never say that, about that he is very conscious -- because for centuries the affirmative has been a distraction for people.

Millions of people in the East have become desirous of the other world, the other shore -- so much so that the very desire for the other shore became their hindrance. To destroy that hindrance, to remove that obstacle, Buddha uses the negative way.

But man is such a fool! The masters move very cautiously, they take every step very cautiously, because man is such a fool. They take every precaution not even to use any word which can be misinterpreted -- but all words can be misinterpreted! Man is so unconscious that to expect that he will understand rightly is to expect too much from him. He is bound to misunderstand; in unconsciousness, misunderstanding is the only possibility.

The Upanishads were right, but they were misunderstood because of their affirmative approach. People became very indulgent: "If life is God, then indulge in God as much as possible!" This is a logical conclusion: "If existence is God, then eat, drink and be merry! If to be is to be divine, then enjoy life, then let your life be a merry-go-round. All is divine. The Upanishads say: SARVAM KHALVIDAM BRAHMA -- all is God. If all is God, then why not accumulate as much money as you can? -- because money is God!"

You see how our unconscious mind goes on distorting: "If all is God, then why not have more power, more prestige? Then why not go on great ego trips? If all is God, then ego too is God!" The Upanishads say: AHAM BRAHMASMI -- I am God. And when it is heard in deep unconsciousness, we understand the Upanishads are saying the ego is God, because to us 'I' and 'ego' are synonymous. The Upanishads are misunderstood because of their affirmation, their total affirmation.

And Buddha is misunderstood because of his negation, total negation. He moved the pendulum to the other extreme; just to avoid the pitfalls that he had seen on the path of affirmation he moved to the other extreme. He used only negative expressions. DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW. He could have said, in a more positive way: LIVE in the world, without distractions, without dreams. LIVE in the world, in accordance with the ultimate law. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- LIVE in accordance with the eternal law. But that is not his choice. He had seen the affirmative becoming an imprisonment and it was a necessity to destroy the affirmative. You can destroy the affirmative, and for the time being, while the master is alive, people will understand his negative approach because he is there to explain it to you. But when he is gone, then? The negative becomes your imprisonment.

Hindu sannyasins are caught in the affirmative and Buddhist BHIKKHUS are caught in the negative.

My effort here is to help you understand both, and to understand your capacity to misunderstand. And be alert; otherwise each word is going to create something else, something that was never meant.

A performing octopus could play the piano, the zither, and the piccolo. His trainer wanted him to add the bagpipes to his accomplishments, so he placed the Scottish instrument in the octopus' room. Hours passed, but no bagpipe music was heard.

The trainer was disturbed. The next morning he anxiously asked the eight-tentacled creature, "Have you learned to play that thing yet?"

"PLAY it?" replied the octopus. "I have been trying to LAY it all night!"

The octopus can be forgiven -- YOU cannot be forgiven. But men behave in the same

way, as unconsciously as possible. Even if they become conscious sometimes, their consciousness is also mixed with unconsciousness. Even if they are alert, their alertness is not pure. Even if they are watchful, their watchfulness has something wrong in it.

McBride and Kavanaugh were in a cafeteria sitting near the WATCH YOUR HAT AND OVERCOAT sign. McBride kept turning every minute, nearly choking on his food, to look at his overcoat.

Kavanaugh continued eating, paying no attention to his own coat on the hook. But McBride's constant twisting began to irritate him. "You dope!" he said. "Stop watching our overcoats!"

"I am just watching mine," said McBride. "Yours has been gone for half an hour!"

Man's state is that of a mess, of chaos! Great work is needed to make you really alert. And the first sutra is the beginning of that great work: DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS....

Your mind is continuously creating distractions. Just watch your mind, and you will understand what Buddha is saying. It never allows you to sit silently even for a few moments. If you sit silently it says, "Why not listen to the radio? The newspaper must have come, your post may have arrived. Why not go to the movie? Why not watch TV?" If you are in the shop your mind says, "Go home, rest -- you are tired." If you are at home your mind says, "What you are doing here, wasting your time? Go to the shop -- you could have earned something!"

The mind never allows you to be where you are, it never allows you to see things as they are. It is always taking you somewhere else, either into the past or into the future; it never allows you to be in the present. Either it drags you into memories -- which are nothing but footprints on the sands of time -- or it drags you into the future: great projections, great expectations, desires, goals.... And you become so much involved with them -- as if they have some reality! And the reality is slipping out of your hands while you are engaged in all these trips into the past, into the future.

The mind never allows you and will never allow you to see that which is; it always takes you to that which is not.

Edith was complaining to her friend, Rose, that her husband never showed any interest in making love. He would just sit every night and watch television. Rose suggested that she make herself more appealing and somehow tantalize him.

So the next night Edith put on her most bewitching perfume and dressed herself in nothing but shoes, hat, gloves, and handbag. She went into the living room and casually strolled around. Her husband kept his eyes glued on the TV set. She coughed, and he finally looked up at her.

"Oh, are you going out?" he asked.

"Of course!" she said sarcastically.

"Great," he replied, "because I was hoping you could mail this letter for me."

He is not there. He is not seeing the woman, he is not seeing that she is naked. He is not there at all! Nobody is -- everybody is somewhere else.

It is said by the ancient Sufis that God wants to meet you, and wherever he thinks you should be he comes, but he never finds you there. You are always somewhere else. He comes in the present -- you are in the past, you are in the future. He knows only one time: now, and

only one place: here. But you are never here and you are never now; you are always there and you are always then. The meeting is impossible. He knows no other time than the present and no other place than this. He lives in thisness, suchness. Buddha's word is TATHATA -- he lives in suchness, tathata.

One of the names of Buddha is TATHAGATA -- one who lives in suchness, one who has become free from all the distractions of the mind. And the miracle is that the mind consists only of distraction, so once you are free of all distractions there is no mind left. In the present there is no mind. In the present there is only consciousness, awareness, watchfulness.

Live in the world, but not through the mind. Don't let the past or the future stand between you and reality. And if you can manage the state of no-mind even for a few moments -- that's what meditation is all about -- you will be surprised: suddenly you are in rhythm with existence. You will know what Buddha calls AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- the eternal law. You will pulsate with it, vibrate with it. You will be just a wave in the great ocean of the law. You will be in such attunement, in such at-onement, in such deep harmony and accord, that the whole sky will start showering flowers on you, the whole existence will rejoice with you.

This is paradise: paradise is the state of no-mind. Buddha calls it the lotus paradise, because your consciousness opens up like a lotus in the early morning sun and there is great fragrance, great beauty, and there is great grace.

But remember, he does not mean renounce the world, as all the commentators down the ages have said. He is saying: Renounce the mind -- MIND is the world! Renounce distractions and renounce dreams -- because if you live in dreams you cannot see the reality. Your eyes are covered with the dust of dreams, layer upon layer. There are dreams and dreams and dreams, and you are surrounded by so many dreams that you cannot see what reality is. And your priests go on helping you to create new dreams, your psychologists go on helping you to create new dreams. If they take away one dream they immediately replace it with another.

This is the whole foundation of the science of hypnosis: man can be persuaded to believe in something absolutely false. Hypnosis shows the capacity of man to fall into such dreams, into such unrealities that on the surface it looks unbelievable.

Have you seen a hypnotist perform? If he says to a person, "You are not a man but a dog," the man believes it -- if he has been hypnotized rightly, if he has been hypnotized into deep sleep. Hypnosis means created sleep, deliberately created sleep. If he has been hypnotized rightly and told that he is not a man but a dog, he starts barking like a dog! He may never have done it before, but he can do it immediately. He believes it, and the moment you believe something you become it. Of course, your belief is false and your becoming is false.

Psychologists are becoming aware that almost ninety percent of diseases are only beliefs. My own understanding is that as they go deeper into it, they will find that almost ninety-nine percent of diseases are beliefs. Maybe it was a real disease the first time, but then you started believing in it, you started projecting it, you started repeating it, rehearsing it, practicing it. And slowly slowly, it became a reality for you.

Go into an insane asylum sometime and watch people. They are the same people as you, just a little ahead of you -- the difference is only of degrees. You may be below the boiling point, maybe ninety-nine degrees, and they may have gone beyond -- one hundred and one degrees -- just a two-degree difference or a one-degree difference.

Insane people go on living in their own worlds; they create their own worlds, they believe

in their own worlds. They believe in them so much that you cannot pull them out of their dreams. Their dreams have become realities -- that is their insanity.

I have heard about one man who became mad and started thinking that he had died. Now the whole psychological department of that mental institute was after him to pull him out of the idea that he was dead. It was a challenge for them, it was also something new -- they had never come across such a case.

They tried everything but it was impossible, because mad people may be mad but they are as logical as you are. They have their own logic, their own rationality; they have a great capacity to rationalize everything that they are doing.

Finally, a great psychologist was called from the outside to help. The great psychologist came; he talked to the man and he asked him one single question. He asked, "Do you believe that dead men can bleed?"

He said, "No, never! How can dead men bleed? Once one is dead... it is impossible for a corpse to bleed."

Then the psychologist said, "Come along with me!" He took him to the mirror; he pricked his hand with a sharp instrument -- blood started coming out. He said, "Look! So this proves that you are still alive!"

The madman laughed and he said, "This only proves that my statement was wrong -- dead men DO bleed!"

It becomes so impossible to pull them out! And the same is the case with you. As far as buddhas are concerned, the same is the case with you. To pull you outside your minds, to help you to climb out of your dreams -- it is really difficult.

Hypnosis tries one method, but that is not the method of the buddhas. It gives you another dream, maybe a better one -- a little more sophisticated, a little less dangerous, less harmful, more beneficial -- but a dream is still a dream. Whether you dream of poison or of nectar does not really make much difference; at least it makes no difference to the man who has become awakened.

Ordinarily it will make a difference: a man who believes that he is drinking poison will always remain ill; the man who thinks that he is drinking nectar will always look healthy, joyful. Yes, in the ordinary way there is a difference. Hence hypnosis has a limited utility: if you cannot be pulled out of your dreams, at least you can be helped to move from nightmares to sweet dreams. That's the function of hypnosis.

After being troubled with recurring headaches for which her doctor could not find the cause, Jean decided to consult a hypnotist. Amazingly enough, after two treatments the headaches disappeared. Her husband, Ben, was intrigued and asked how the cure had been effected.

Jean said, "Well, all I had to do was to put my hand over my forehead and repeat several times, 'I have no headache, I have no headache.'"

Some months later Ben was aware that he was losing interest in the physical side of marriage and decided to consult the same hypnotist for help. He did so, and the result was amazing.

Jean was ecstatic and asked how it had been accomplished, but Ben refused to tell her. Finally one night, Jean noticed that Ben was staying in the bathroom for an inordinate length of time before coming to bed.

She tiptoed to the bathroom door and peeped through the keyhole. He had one hand over his forehead and his lips were moving. Putting her ear to the keyhole, she heard him murmuring, "She is not my wife, she is not my wife...."

Now, this is creating a new conditioning. You are going from one prison into another -- maybe a better prison with more facilities, but a prison is a prison, after all. And the buddhas want you to be free of all prisons.

DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW.

ARISE AND WATCH.
FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY
THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND.

You can see how Buddha has been misunderstood. You will not find Buddhist bhikkhus joyful, not at all. They are very sad, somber, living almost hopelessly, in despair. They can't find anything to be joyful about, because from the very beginning they have gone on a wrong track.

Buddha says: ARISE AND WATCH. How to get out of the mind and its distractions and dreams? ARISE AND WATCH. Wake up and watch! Watch your mind -- what it goes on doing to you, how it plays games with you, how it goes on and on creating new illusions, new hopes for you. Buddha is not saying become hopeless, he is not saying fall into despair -- because that is again a mind strategy: the despair, the anguish, the anxiety.

Escape is again a mind game. You are worldly; the mind says, "There is nothing in the world. Listen to the buddhas. Escape from the world, go to the Himalayan caves, and everything will be perfectly right. In this world nothing can ever be right." Now the mind is giving you a new projection, a new project.

Buddha says: Don't follow the mind -- detach yourself from the mind. See the mind separate from yourself: playing around, creating new games -- alluring ones, enchanting ones in which you can be caught again.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY.... And if you are really following the awakened ones you will follow joyfully, because a man without distractions and dreams is naturally joyful. Not that he has something to be joyful about, not that he has attained great money, power, prestige, or the power to do miracles -- the power to walk on water and cure the blind people and help the dead to be alive again. No, he has no reason to be joyful. But just because all the distractions of the mind have disappeared, the energy involved in the distractions is released -- that energy is joy.

William Blake is right. He says: Energy is delight. William Blake has many beautiful insights. He is one of the greatest poets the West has produced. Just a few steps more and he would have been an enlightened person. These two poets -- Walt Whitman and William Blake -- they could have been RISHIS, seers. Just a few steps, maybe only one step, a little jump... but they had come very close to the boundary of realization.

William Blake says: Energy is delight. He is right -- this is a great revelation. It can't be said without experiencing it somehow, in howsoever small a measure.

Your joy is always caused from the outside. You have won a lottery and you are joyful; you have purchased a house that, for many years, you have been longing for -- and you are happy; you have found the woman that you had desired and you are happy. But these are momentary happinesses. After two or three days the house will be old, and after a few days

the woman will look ordinary. How long can one remain interested in a woman or in a man? Because these are superficial attractions, sooner or later the reality will be revealed.

The Nazi leader, Goring, was seated next to a fine blonde Aryan FRAULEIN at a very important state dinner. During dessert he began feeling her leg under the table. As his hand moved up her thigh he heard a hoarse masculine whisper, "Don't be surprised when you get to my balls -- I am Secret Agent X-7."

What things appear to be from the outside is one thing; what you will find inside is totally different. You may have fallen in love with a secret agent! Everybody is in for a surprise.

When you fall in love with a woman, she is a totally different kind of person. When you are married to her, to your surprise, she is no longer the same person. Sometimes you suspect: what has happened? Has she deceived you? But she is also in the same situation. She is worried: where has that beautiful man disappeared to?

There are old stories of frogs becoming beautiful princes. In my own experience just the opposite happens: you bring home beautiful princes and overnight, in the morning, you find there is a frog! Princes disappear and become frogs -- all princes, unconditionally. Those stories have some truth in them. If frogs can become princes, why not vice versa? Nobody has ever seen a frog becoming a prince, and everybody has seen many princes becoming frogs!

ARISE AND WATCH. The essential core of Buddha's message is awareness, mindfulness. Look at your own mind. Don't get involved with it, remain unidentified. That's what he means when he says: Watch. And as you watch you will become more and more awake and your life will start having a new kind of joy, which has nothing to do with the outside; it wells up within your being.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY.... If you are rightly following the way of the awakened ones -- Jesus, Buddha, Mahavira, Mohammed, it does not make any difference -- then one sure sign is that you will be joyful for no reason at all. You will be just joyful, naturally. If that thing is missing, remember, you have misunderstood. You have gone onto some wrong track, you have misinterpreted.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND. And look at the Buddhist bhikkhus -- they are miserable! I have known many, I have known very famous ones -- miserable! There is no dance in their feet and no song in their hearts. They are deserts: nothing grows in their being, nothing is green in their life. I have never come across a Buddhist monk who has flowers in his heart, lotuses blooming, birds singing -- nothing of the sort, just an empty desert.

And the reason is, Buddha's negative expression has become his way of life; he has become caught in negativity. How can he be joyous? Joy does not fit with his interpretation of Buddha. And the words are so clear -- but you read only that which you want to read and you see only that which you want to see. You don't read, you don't see that which goes against your prejudices. Such clear words, and yet great misunderstanding has arisen.

Buddhist monks are the saddest people in the world -- long faces. It is bound to happen because they have become escapists.

And Buddha says: FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND. He does not forget this world. He says: THROUGH THIS WORLD.... If he is in favor of renouncing the world, then what is the point of saying: THROUGH THIS WORLD...? He is not saying renounce the world: renounce the mind and the world is

renounced. You live in the world and yet you remain untouched by it. And a great joy arises in you, a great laughter, a great love. And you will be able to carry this love, this joy, this dance, to the other shore, because it is something that is happening inside you; it is not dependent on outside causes, it is not caused by anything.

Remember, one of the fundamentals of life is: that which depends on outside causes will be taken away from you sooner or later. At least one thing is absolutely certain: you will not be able to carry it with you into death. But that which is independent of outside causes, that which is caused in the innermost core of your being, in your own interiority, nobody can take it away. You cannot be robbed of it, it cannot be stolen -- even death cannot destroy it.

The body will be destroyed, but not the song. The body will be gone, but not the dance. The dance, the song, the joy, will move into the universal song, into the universal joy, into the universal ocean of consciousness, of truth, of godliness.

FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE.
FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY.

He repeats it again, because he wants to emphasize it. He must be alert that his way of expressing things negatively could create a great misunderstanding. People could become sad, and the moment you are sad you have fallen out of tune with existence.

FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE. And what is the way of virtue for Buddha? He does not give any details, he does not give you ten commandments. He gives you the eleventh commandment, and the eleventh is enough. If you fulfill the eleventh then you can forget all about the ten, because in following that one, the eleventh, all ten are contained.

That eleventh commandment is meditation. Meditate. That is what is missing in the Jewish-Christian ten commandments: nothing is said about meditation. Everything else is included in them; those are consequences, not causes. That cause is missing. Virtue without meditation is an imposition, a forced imposition. Virtue without meditation is repressive. Virtue without meditation is pseudo. Virtue without meditation is just a facade: you can deceive others, but how can you deceive yourself?

With meditation there arises a totally different kind of virtue: a natural virtue, a spontaneous virtue. Whenever Buddha says: FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE, he means meditate: arise, awake, watch. These are his words for meditation because if you are alert you cannot do anything that is wrong. Not that you will have to prevent yourself from doing it; even if you want to do it you cannot. Sin becomes impossible if you are alert. Then virtue is the only possibility. Then whatsoever you do is virtuous.

Out of meditation the flowers of virtue arise, bloom. Their fragrance is released to the winds, into the infinity of existence. Buddha gives you only one commandment: awareness. You can call it meditation, you can call it watchfulness. His own word is SAMMASATI -- RIGHT awareness. He insists each time he mentions awareness that it should be of the right kind, because he knows there is a possibility of a wrong kind of awareness too.

What is wrong awareness? People can be aware of others' acts, of others' faults: they can be very keenly aware -- in fact they are. It is so easy to see everybody else's faults in the world. That is a wrong kind of awareness; that is not your business at all. Who are you and why should you be worried?

Right awareness is awareness of one's own being in its totality: all that is good and all that is bad. But as you become aware, the bad starts disappearing -- just as when you bring light into the room, the darkness disappears. When light is in the room, darkness cannot exist

there. Sin is darkness, forgetfulness, unconsciousness.

FOR CONSIDER THE WORLD --
A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE.
SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS,
AND DEATH SHALL OVERLOOK YOU.

One thing which is unique to Buddha is that that he never says "Believe." He never says, "You simply have to follow what I am saying." No, that is not his approach. He is very much against believing. He invites you to consider. He says: FOR CONSIDER THE WORLD -- A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE. He says: Not because I am saying it is it a bubble, a mirage, do you have to believe it. You consider it yourself. If it is a truth, your consideration will show it to you. What is the point, what is the need, of believing?

Religious priests go on telling people: Believe there is God. Believe there is paradise. Believe that your good acts will be rewarded and your bad acts will be punished, that there is heaven and hell -- believe! No priest ever says "Consider." No priest ever wants you to be independent. Only a buddha, an awakened one, can say to you "Consider" -- because he respects you. He knows you are deeply asleep, but your sleep is full of the potential of waking up. Today you are asleep, tomorrow you may be awake. Today you are not a buddha, tomorrow you may be a buddha. Your potential is there. You can go on neglecting it for lives together, but one day or another it is going to happen.

A buddha has tremendous respect for people; hence he can never say "Believe." Belief means that the person who is saying it has no respect for you, he does not trust your intelligence enough. Buddha trusts your intelligence. He provokes it, he challenges it, he invites you. It is an invitation.

CONSIDER THE WORLD -- A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE. He says: I considered it and I found it only a bubble, a mirage, a deception, an illusion. I have lived in the illusion, believing that it was true. You are also living in the illusion believing that it is true, but consider. Give it a little more time. See a little more intensely, concentratedly. Try to penetrate its secret, and you will be surprised: just a pinprick and the bubble is gone, just a little more alertness and there is no mirage... it disappears.

Gurdjieff, one of the buddhas of this century, used to give a certain meditation to his disciples which is very significant. He used to say to his disciples, "If you can remember in a dream that 'This is a dream,' then you are on the very threshold of transformation."

But it is very difficult to remember in a dream that it is a dream. When you are in a dream you believe that it is the truth. And every night you are in a dream, and every morning you come back and you see and you know that it was all false. And again when you fall asleep the dream is there and you start believing in it again, as if you never learned anything. But how to remember?

He created a small device. He would give this device to a few advanced disciples: that in the daytime... because you cannot do anything while you are asleep and in a dream. The preparation has to be done in the daytime; then you have a little bit of awareness. He used to tell them, "As many times as you can manage -- brushing your teeth in the morning -- just put your left hand on your head and say, 'This is all dream.' Walking on the street, put your left hand again on your head and say, 'This is all dream.' Let your left hand and the putting of it on your head become associated with the idea that 'This is all dream.'

"Repeated many times, whenever you put your left hand on your head, immediately the idea

will come: 'This is all dream.' Or whenever you say, 'This is all dream,' automatically your left hand will go on your head. This has to be practiced for at least three to nine months in the daytime.

"And then," Gurdjieff used to say, "one day suddenly in a dream you will see it happen: the dream is there, and you put your hand on your head, your left hand, and suddenly you say, 'This is all dream.' And the moment you say it the dream disappears, you are fully awake. The dream cannot exist if you know that it is a dream."

And that is a great experience when it happens -- you can try it. When it really happens, that one night your hand goes to your head while you are asleep, while you are dreaming, and suddenly the idea comes that "This is all dream...." And you are immediately fully awake and you find your hand on your head. It has become so associated; it is like a conditioned reflex. But one thing has become clear: if you can remember, "This is all dream," the dream disappears. The dream can only disappear by your remembering that this is a dream; reality cannot disappear. You can go on remembering, "This is all dream," but you know all the time this is not so. Philosophically you can go on repeating, "This is all dream," and you can be very cunning philosophically.

Once it happened:

A great philosopher came to the court of a king. He said, "This whole world is a dream."

The king was a crazy type of person; he said, "Then wait."

He had a mad elephant. He told his whole court to watch. The mad elephant was brought into the courtyard of the palace and the poor philosopher was left alone with the mad elephant. The mad elephant started chasing him, and the philosopher started crying, "Save me! He will kill me -- save me!" He was crying and weeping. And the mad elephant took him and threw him at least thirty feet away. He fell on the ground -- so many bones fractured -- crying and weeping.

Then he was brought back to the court and the king said, "What now? What do you say about the elephant? Is that too a dream, MAYA, illusion?"

But philosophers are cunning people. He said, "Yes, it was a dream -- a bad dream, a nightmare."

And the king said, "What about the fractures?"

He said, "That too is a dream."

"Then why were you crying?"

He said, "I was crying in the dream, and I was crying and shouting -- I remember perfectly well -- 'Save me!' But it was all a dream."

Now this is cunningness -- but man can find cunning rationalizations for everything. The philosopher knows it was not a dream: the elephant was far too real, and he was shaken, afraid, and death was so close that he had forgotten all his philosophy. But back again in the safe court and the mad elephant gone, although he was fractured all over and it was painful, his philosophy was back again, his ego was back.

Reality is reality -- you cannot make it disappear by remembering that it is a dream. But if something is a dream, just by remembering that it is a dream, it disappears.

Buddha says: FOR CONSIDER THE WORLD.... What world? Does he mean the rocks and the mountains and the rivers and the stars? No, not at all. He means the world that you have been creating in your mind -- your mind world is a bubble, a mirage.

SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS,
AND DEATH SHALL OVERLOOK YOU.

If you can see the truth as it is, without your mind coming in between, you will not die; death will be impotent in encountering you. Death will come, but it can't take anything away from you, because you have already dropped all those dreams which death can destroy. Death can destroy only the mind. Consider it. Death cannot destroy your body, death cannot destroy your soul; death can only destroy the mind. The mind is a mirage, but the man who has dropped his mind himself, voluntarily... nothing is left for death to destroy.

COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD,
A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS,
A TRAP FOR FOOLS.

Buddha calls those people kings who have intelligence, understanding. He does not call a person a king who has much money, a great kingdom -- no. Buddha calls a man a king, an emperor, who has conquered himself, who has conquered his foolishness, his unconsciousness, who has been able to dissipate all illusions. He is the real king: he has entered into the kingdom of God. Again he invites: COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD, A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS....

As far as kings are concerned, the knowers are concerned, the wise ones are concerned, it is just a painted chariot; it is not a real chariot. It is just a painting. But a painting can be done so beautifully -- the painting can be three-dimensional -- that it can give you all the appearances of being real. But a painting is a painting, it is not real. It is real as a painting, but it is not the chariot. It cannot take you anywhere, you cannot ride in it.

The world is A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS, A TRAP FOR FOOLS. It is because of our unintelligence, unawareness, that we become trapped in it.

The seventy-year-old groom and the twenty-five-year-old bride caused raised eyebrows when they checked in at a hotel. Next morning, he came down early into the dining room, and ordered ham and eggs. From his smile and twinkling eyes, it was obvious that he was extremely happy.

After a while the bride came down. Her face was drawn, voice weak, complexion pale. She ordered toast and coffee. The waitress said, "Honey, I don't understand a young bride looking worn out, with an old man for a husband."

"He double-crossed me," replied the young bride. "He told me he had saved up for sixty years, and I thought he was talking about money!"

Beware of your mind! It can give you great illusions. It can make things appear as they are not and it can help you to see things as they are not. The mind is very inventive. The mind has only one power -- that of dreaming. In the daytime it dreams -- then it dreams through words, language; and in the night it dreams -- then it dreams in pictures.

And there are two types of people: a few people dream in black and white and a few people dream in technicolor. The people who dream in technicolor can become poets, painters, sculptors; they can be very artistic. They need not depend on drugs; their minds supply mescaline and LSD. Their body chemistry is enough to create psychedelic trips for them. But there are other people who only dream in black and white. Those people are

scientists, businessmen, bankers -- calculative people -- mathematicians. But whether you dream in black and white or in color it does not matter -- a dream is a dream.

Beware of dreams! And watch your dreams day in, day out, because they are continuously there. You can watch them, and by watching them you will become unidentified with them, you will become a mirror reflecting them. And this brings great freedom. Freedom from dreams is freedom from the world.

COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD, A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS, A TRAP FOR FOOLS. It is the same world: for the meditators, for the kings, it is a painted chariot. Buddha is not saying anything against the world -- simply describing its truth. And for the fools it is a trap. It depends on you.

They had been married that afternoon in Minneapolis and journeyed to the city of Saint Paul, where they had a room at a downtown hotel. Night had fallen. The bride had already donned the beautiful silken nightie reserved for this occasion and was lounging voluptuously upon the bed. For over an hour now, the groom, still fully dressed, had been gazing out the open window into the darkness.

Impatiently Gladys addressed him: "Why don't you undress, dear, and come to bed?" "Never mind me," he replied. "Go ahead and go to sleep. My mother told me this would be the most wonderful night I would ever see, and I don't want to miss a single minute of it!"

Now, how are you going to interpret the buddhas? In the world of your unconsciousness everything is distorted. You impose your ideas, you color, you distort. You manage to believe in whatsoever you want to believe; otherwise it is a simple fact.

If you look at the world, if you look at yourself, if you look at people, if you look at your life, your past, it will not be very difficult to find that ninety-nine percent of it is just dreaming; only one percent is true. And because of this ninety-nine percent of dreaming you are not able to find that one percent. And only that one percent is substantial, all else is shadow. That one percent is truth, all else is untruth. That one percent can save you, can become the boat to the other shore.

AS THE MOON SLIPS FROM BEHIND A CLOUD
AND SHINES,
SO THE MASTER COMES OUT FROM BEHIND HIS IGNORANCE
AND SHINES.

What is Buddha's idea of ignorance? -- not the lack of information but the lack of attentiveness. This sutra also has created great trouble, because the Buddhist bhikkhu thinks that to come out of ignorance he has to become very knowledgeable. So he ponders over the scriptures for years, he goes on repeating scriptures upon scriptures... and there are many scriptures. In fact, Buddhism is the richest religion in that sense.

Buddhism has nearly sixty thousand scriptures. Christianity is very poor -- just the Bible; Mohammedanism is very poor -- just the Koran. Buddhism has so many scriptures that one can go on wasting many lives pondering over them. And yet that is not Buddha's meaning.

When he says: ... THE MASTER COMES OUT FROM BEHIND HIS IGNORANCE AND SHINES, he is saying, it is not a question of gaining more information, it is a question of becoming more conscious, more alert, more attentive. But these people -- the pundits, the scholars -- they can always find reasons, proofs, arguments, to support themselves. All their arguments are stupid!

Once I was staying with a Buddhist monk. He was reading LANKAVATAR SUTRA, one of the very famous Buddhist scriptures. I asked him how long he had been reading it.

He said, "For twenty years this has been my everyday practice. I cannot live without it; this is my food, my nourishment. This is my soul."

I asked him, "But you don't seem yet to have become a buddha. I don't see light in your eyes, any silence around you. I can't smell any fragrance. Twenty years you have been trying to dispel ignorance by knowledge! And LANKAVATAR SUTRA is a beautiful scripture, but it is like a painted lamp: you can go on worshipping the painted lamp for twenty years or twenty centuries -- it is not going to dispel darkness. A real lamp is needed. One has to become conscious inside."

But he started arguing, giving so many reasons. His first argument was this... which is absurd to all outsiders, but this is how it happens. The insiders think this is a great argument. He had two disciples with him. They said, "Right! This is a beautiful argument!"

The first sutra says that those who read this sutra are bound to become liberated. He said, "Look! The sutra itself says that 'Those who read this sutra are bound to become liberated!'" I said, "This is foolish! It is like..."

I have heard:

Mulla Nasruddin one day declared in the marketplace, "My wife is the most beautiful woman in the world." People gathered; they knew his woman, his wife, perfectly well -- she was an ordinary, homely woman -- and here he is declaring that she is the most beautiful woman in the world.

They said, "Mulla, who has given you this information?"

He said, "Who else? -- my wife herself! Just last night she told me."

Now, quoting the sutra itself in its favor... scholars are cunning people. In Indian scriptures this is always done: first they will praise the book, so much so that they say if you read it once you will be liberated; even a single word of it heard is enough for liberation. Now they are persuading your greed, seducing your greed! They will relate old stories saying, "One man who heard this sutra on his deathbed went directly to heaven. Another, who was ill, heard this sutra and became healthy. Another, who was poor, heard this sutra and became rich. This sutra is so precious that it gives both in this world and the other!"

Every sutra, every scripture, starts this way. This is nothing but salesmanship and rationalization.

The husband wired home that he had been able to wind up his business trip a day early and would be home on Thursday. When he walked into his apartment, however, he found his wife in bed with another man.

Furious, he picked up his bag and stormed out. He met his mother-in-law on the street, told her what had happened, and announced that he was filing suit for divorce in the morning. "Give my daughter a chance to explain before you take any action," the older woman pleaded. Reluctantly he agreed.

An hour later, his mother-in-law phoned the husband at his club. "I knew my daughter would have an explanation," she said, with a note of triumph in her voice. "She did not receive your telegram!"

The mind is very cunning. Unless you are really watchful you are bound to be trapped by it.

THIS WORLD IS IN DARKNESS.
HOW FEW HAVE EYES TO SEE!
HOW FEW THE BIRDS
WHO ESCAPE THE NET AND FLY TO HEAVEN!

Very rare! It is very rare to find a man who has eyes to see, and very rare is the man who has got back his wings and can fly to the ultimate.

THIS WORLD IS IN DARKNESS -- and the darkness is created by our unconsciousness. It is not part of the world, it is projected by us.

HOW FEW HAVE EYES TO SEE! It is really very rare; hence in the old days people used to travel far and wide to seek somebody who had eyes. They would knock on many doors before they came upon the right door. They would listen to many teachers before they found a master. And once they had found a master, that was the end of their journey. Then they would become involved, committed; then they would devote their whole life and their whole energy to the work.

Again something like that is happening in the world: people have started looking for masters. And when you look for masters, remember, out of one hundred, ninety-nine will be false. And the false will appeal to you more than the real one, because the false will speak your language and the false will try to convince you, to argue. The false will quote scriptures, the false will console you. They will try to convince you, they will give you beliefs. And the real is going to be hard.

Many people knocked on George Gurdjieff's door, and then escaped from the man because he seemed to be so cruel. He was immensely compassionate, but because of his compassion he had to be hard; otherwise people could not be awakened.

When you want to wake a man up, you don't go to sing a lullaby by his side. You have to shake him, you have to throw ice-cold water into his eyes -- and of course it looks cruel. He may be having sweet dreams, and you are throwing cold water into his eyes!

A real master is hard. A real master is always watching for the right moment to hit you, to hammer you. And he is trying to find the weakest point in you so that you can be exposed easily -- exposed to yourself -- because if you are not alert to your own weaknesses, to your own limitations, you cannot grow.

A real master gives you growth, gives you wings, but takes away many things. He takes away all the rocks hanging around your neck, although you think they are diamonds, great diamonds. He takes your chains away, although you think they are your securities. He takes away all your conceptions, beliefs -- and you think those beliefs and conceptions are great knowledge; you have been bragging about them. He takes away many things from you which you have always cherished and thought were great treasures. He looks hard. And he gives you something of which you have had no taste up to now. He gives you something very unknown and takes away all that is known to you. He looks cruel.

Many people come to me. Very few courageous ones are going to stay with me. The cowards will escape. They will find many rationalizations.

One coward wrote a letter to me yesterday. I will not tell you his name, because he is new and it is not right to hit him so hard immediately! He wrote a long letter saying, "You talk about freedom, you talk about love, you talk about how to get rid of churches, beliefs, rituals.

I want to become a sannyasin, but I don't want to wear orange, because this is a ritual and this is again a bondage. This is again fettering me, this is again a chain."

He does not know what it is, because one can know sannyas only by entering into it. No outsider can know what it is, and no insider can explain it to the outsider. It is not explainable. No lover can explain about love to somebody who has never loved. No man who has eyes can explain to the blind man what light is.

What he is really trying to do is to protect his ego, but he is not aware of that. Sannyas is dropping your ego. Yes, by dropping your ego you become free. Freedom means egolessness. "And the orange clothes and the mala and meditation," he says, "these are the three fetters you are giving to your sannyasins." These are not fetters; these are just indications from the sannyasin that he is ready to take the plunge into the unknown. A simple gesture that he belongs to me, a simple gesture that now, if I want to do something to him, he is ready.

Orange has no other meaning. It is just a statement from your side that you are even ready to look crazy for me, that's all! It is a love affair, and if you are not even capable of looking crazy for me, then it will be difficult -- because later on more and more surrender will be needed.

And ultimately, when you drop your mind, it will look like insanity. In the beginning it looks like insanity; ultimately it proves to be the only sanity in the world. But that is only later on, when the mind is dropped.

Now the mala around your neck with my picture -- it makes you look silly! It is not a fetter, it is simply your readiness. You say, "Okay, if you say this has to be done, I am ready to do it."

And if you think even meditation is a chain, a prison, then why do you want to become a sannyasin at all? The man seems to be very clever in his foolishness. A long letter... and he concludes the letter saying, "If whatsoever I say is right you need not answer. If what I say is wrong, then too there is no need to answer."

Then why write it to me? Why waste my time? Reading the whole letter! If it is right, please don't write to me; if it is wrong, what is the need of writing to me? If you know already that you are right, there is no need to be here, and if you know that you are wrong, then take a jump! Then seek and search for that which is right.

Yes, I am all for freedom, but by freedom I don't mean what you mean. You mean freedom of your ego and I mean freedom FROM the ego. That's how things go on being continuously distorted.

SWANS RISE AND FLY TOWARDS THE SUN.
WHAT MAGIC!
SO DO THE PURE CONQUER THE ARMIES OF ILLUSION
AND RISE AND FLY.

Be ready! Kabir's statement is worth remembering. He says: HANSA UR CHAL VA DESH: O great swan, let us fly to our real land.

The swan is a symbol of purity in the East, because it is so white. And the swan is also the symbol of purity because it lives in the deepest mountains in the Himalayas, it drinks the purest of water.

There is a lake in the Himalayas, Mansarovar. It must be the most pure water in the world, because the air is absolutely unpolluted. Rarely does a man reach there. Very rarely, once every few years, a man reaches there; the journey is long, arduous, dangerous. Swans live on that lake. Only when it is too cold and the lake becomes frozen do they come to the

plains; otherwise they remain there, that is their original land. Once the winter is gone, they start flying back to the Himalayas.

The swan is a symbol that this world is not our home, this muddy pool of water is not our real home. We belong to some other world: the world of the Himalayas, of virgin peaks, of the purest of lakes. We belong to Mansarovar. Don't forget. Don't become too much involved in the muddy water of this pool. Remember, go on remembering, your real home.

Buddha also uses the same symbol: SWANS RISE AND FLY TOWARDS THE SUN. WHAT MAGIC! SO DO THE PURE CONQUER THE ARMIES OF ILLUSION AND RISE AND FLY.

IF YOU SCOFF AT HEAVEN
AND VIOLATE THE LAW,
IF YOUR WORDS ARE LIES,
WHERE WILL YOUR MISCHIEF END?

Beware of yourself!

THE FOOL LAUGHS AT GENEROSITY.
THE MISER CANNOT ENTER HEAVEN.
BUT THE MASTER FINDS JOY IN GIVING
AND HAPPINESS IS HIS REWARD.

Don't be a miser! Share your love, share your joy, share your dance. This is the way of my sannyasins, and this is what Buddha wanted, but his followers never followed him.

AND MORE --
FOR GREATER THAN ALL THE JOYS
OF HEAVEN AND OF EARTH,
GREATER STILL THAN DOMINION
OVER ALL THE WORLDS,
IS THE JOY OF REACHING THE STREAM.

That is a Buddhist expression: REACHING THE STREAM. Buddha says: Coming to a master is reaching the stream, getting involved with the master is entering the stream. And once you have entered the stream you can relax, you can go with the stream. The stream is already going to the ocean.

Be part of a master and your journey, your real journey, has started. Now you are on your way towards the ultimate ocean, the ocean of joy, of peace, of silence, of truth. What other religions call God, Buddha calls nirvana: the ocean of enlightenment.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #10

Chapter title: This mad, mad game

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN I EXPECT YOU TO USE A PRECISION SCALPEL WITH MUCH SUBTLETY,
YOU USE A SLEDGEHAMMER. WHEN I EXPECT YOU TO USE A
SLEDGEHAMMER, YOU KISS ME. I GIVE UP!

Amitabh, God functions in a very mysterious way; it is never according to your expectations. And I am not here as a person but only as a vehicle. I simply allow God to function through me; I am not doing anything at all. Things are happening, but they are not being done. I am just as much a spectator as anybody else.

I am also surprised, just like you. When you expect a sledgehammer, I also expect one. And when I see the kiss happening I say, "Gosh! What is he up to?" But I have also given up.

You are on the right track. When so many times you expect something and just the opposite happens, slowly slowly you learn a great secret: that expectation is not the way to be with the divine; it is the barrier, not the bridge. Expect, and you will be frustrated. Don't expect and simply wait... then whatsoever happens has tremendous beauty. Be ready to be surprised, constantly ready to be surprised.

Each moment brings new surprises to the one who has no expectations, who comes with an absolutely open mind. Then incredible things start happening. Even if you had wanted them you could not have expected them; you could not have found yourself worthy enough to expect them.

When you feel that you are unworthy, suddenly great love showers from the divine. You were thinking you would be punished, you were thinking you would be judged, condemned. That's not the way of God: there is no judgment and there is no condemnation. There is no hell, all is heaven -- and all the way to heaven it is heaven. You just need a totally different way of looking at things.

Look with clean, clear eyes, with not even a slight expectation lurking somewhere. Then each moment is a mystery, a revelation. And slowly slowly, you will come upon the second secret -- this is the first secret, when one says, "I give up."

The second secret is: suddenly you see that the sledgehammer is also a kiss and the kiss is also a sledgehammer. Then opposites lose their opposition, they become complementaries. If a sledgehammer is used, that too is because of love, for no other reason. It IS a kiss! Those who understand, those who are ready to surrender, to trust, know it is a kiss. And a kiss is also a sledgehammer, because to be kissed by God is to be transformed -- to be crushed, killed, resurrected. Sledgehammer or kiss, there is no difference: that is the second secret.

And once these two secrets are fulfilled, there is no more to discipleship. One has arrived home. You have fulfilled half the journey by saying, "I give up." Now please don't forget it.

The mind tends to forget. The mind is very much attached to its old patterns. It goes on

again and again slipping and falling back. It is easier to fall back because it is downhill. It is difficult to remain with the understanding that happens once in a while because it is an uphill task.

It is one thing to see the sun, it is another thing to remain filled with its light twenty-four hours a day. Yes, there are moments when windows open and everything is clear and transparent, but those moments will be gone. Soon they will be only memories, just dry flowers with no perfume, just ruins of something. And slowly slowly, as the experience recedes into your memory, you start being doubtful about whether it ever happened or you just imagined it. Was it really so? And once that suspicion, that doubt, arises, you have lost contact with something great, something of the unknown -- you have lost track of it.

This is a great moment, the moment of giving up. It means no more expectations from now on. And when there is no expectation there is no possibility of frustration. Expectation is the mother of all frustrations; expectation gone, frustration disappears. And when there is no frustration in your life, life really becomes a bed of roses. Then God is a constant blessing; he goes on raining his grace, his beauty on you.

I am here only to be a medium, just like a window. Don't be attached to the frame of the window; look at the sky that the window makes available. The stars and the sun and the moon, they don't belong to the window. What I am giving to you does not belong to me; there is no one inside to whom they can belong. I possess nothing, but that is the greatest possession in the world -- nothing -- because when you are nothing, a nobody, you are God. When you are nobody, for the first time the whole can flow through you.

What I do here with my disciples is not my doing; I simply allow something to happen. I don't know what is going to happen, I don't know what I am going to say, I don't know what is going on -- why you are here, why I am here. But something mysterious is happening. I am here, you are here, and between the master and the disciple something transpires which belongs neither to the disciple nor to the master.

It is a mad, mad game in which a third party is involved which is invisible. Yes, I call this disciple/master game a mad game -- M stands for master, A for and, D for disciple!

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
LOVE IS A SECRET. WHY?

Ganesh Giri, love is certainly a secret, but not an ordinary secret -- an extraordinary secret. And its extraordinariness consists in its being an open secret. Everybody knows it and yet nobody knows it; hence I call it the open secret. Everybody knows it in his deepest heart, but nobody knows it in his head. It is a totally different kind of knowing. It is NOT knowledge. You cannot learn about it, you can only live it. Living is knowing. It is not something that scriptures can give to you; nobody can give it to you. Only you are capable of conferring this gift upon yourself; it is your responsibility. You can KNOW it, but knowing is intuitive.

This word 'intuition' is beautiful. You know the other word, 'tuition'; tuition means somebody else is giving it to you. Intuition means nobody is giving it to you; it is growing within yourself. And because it is not given to you by somebody else, it cannot be put into words.

Language is needed when we are talking to each other. Language is not needed when

something is growing in your consciousness, because there is no dialogue. It grows in silence, it blooms in silence; hence when you try to put it into words it escapes. Its very climate is silence. It can't be brought into language; it can't be reduced to theories, concepts, ideologies. That's why it is an open secret: knowing is possible, knowledge is impossible.

Saint Augustine is reported to have said once.... Somebody asked him, "What is love?" He said, "Love is like time."

The questioner was puzzled. He said, "Okay, then -- what is time?"

Augustine said, "You misunderstood me. I meant it is like time because everybody knows what time is, but if somebody asks you what it is, you can't answer."

Can you answer what time is? And you KNOW -- it is not that you don't know -- but knowing seems to be so deep that it cannot be brought to the surface. Or if you try to bring it to the surface it becomes so distorted that it is no longer the same. In the depth it is a diamond; the moment you bring it to the surface it turns out to be an ordinary pebble. And because you know it is a diamond, you cannot use the pebble to represent it.

Love is one of the most mysterious phenomena in existence -- next to God. That's why love is closer to God than anything else. If you can understand love, if you can be love -- because that is the only way to understand it -- you will become aware of the presence of God, immediately, instantly! The moment of love is the moment of the experience of God. Suddenly he is everywhere.

Once your eyes are full of love you have the capacity to see into the trees, to see into the rocks, to their very innermost core, and find God there. Then he is everywhere. All that is needed is a loving heart.

And the problem with modern man is that we have forgotten the language of silence, we have forgotten the way of the heart. We have completely forgotten that there is a life which can be lived through the heart. We are much too hung up in the head, and because we are so much in the head we cannot make any sense out of love. It becomes more and more problematic. It becomes such a problem that there are many people who deny it just as they deny God. They say, "There is no God -- it is fiction; and there is no love either -- that too is only a fiction."

They would like to reduce love to pure chemistry; they would like to reduce love to something physiological, hormonal, concerned with your glands and their secretions. Yes, that too is part of love, but the most superficial part -- the chemistry, the physiology. They are its circumference but not the center. The center is elusive, mercurial; you cannot grasp it with your hand or with your head. It slips out, it escapes your fist. You can have it only with an open hand -- I call it the open secret.

Never make love a question.

You ask me, "Why? Why is love a secret?" There is no why: it is so. Why are the trees green? Small children sometimes ask, "Why are the trees green and why is the rose red?" How are you going to explain to them? If you are foolish enough -- that means if you are scientific enough -- you will try to explain to them that it is because of chlorophyll that the trees are green. But the child can ask, "But why does the chlorophyll make them green and why is the chlorophyll green?" The question remains the same, you have simply pushed it a little further back.

D.H. Lawrence is right. A child asked him, "Why are the trees green?" He said, "They are green because they are green." And the child rejoiced immensely in the answer. He said, "This is the right answer! I have been asking many people; they say foolish things. This I can

understand. Yes, they are green because they are green!"

Love is a secret because it is a secret. But it is an open secret -- that much I would like to add -- it is an open secret. It is available! Nobody is guarding it. It is not locked in the temples, it is not locked somewhere in the libraries, it is not locked in some underground treasure. It is an open secret! It is in the rain and in the wind and in the sun. It is just for you to be open and allow it to happen to you. Don't make a question out of it.

Never make a question out of life. Let life remain a mystery, don't try to change it into a problem. That is one of the greatest mistakes we can make, and we have been making it continuously. First we make a question out of something which is a mystery, and then the question cannot be answered. Then the only resort is to deny the whole thing.

Make God a question and then sooner or later a Friedrich Nietzsche is bound to arrive and say, "God is dead." In fact, God died the day you put a question mark on him; he cannot live with a question mark. The question mark shows doubt, and God can live only with trust. The question mark shows doubt, and love can only be felt in trust.

Ganesh Giri, feel it, don't think about it. It is not a question to be solved by philosophy: it is a mystery to be understood by the poet, by the musician, by the actor. Love is not part of the territory of philosophy but part of the territory of poetry.

But poets can only give you glimpses; they cannot give you the experience of it. They can allure you, they can persuade you to go on a great pilgrimage, but they cannot deliver love to you -- it is not a thing to be delivered -- but they can make you enchanted with the mystery of love.

I am not a philosopher; I am very close to the poets -- but poets can also give you only a glimpse. Mystics can help you to experience it; I am a mystic, I can help you to experience it, but the way to experience is not to be intellectually concerned about it. You have to be more sensitive.

Love is herenow. This whole place is full of love -- this is a temple of love.

That's why I am condemned all over the world, criticized, because the whole of human history has been a history of war, violence. The whole human past has been ugly, inhuman, uncivilized, primitive, animalistic. And all the societies that have existed up to now have tried to kill love and the very possibility of love in you, because only if love is killed can you then be reduced to a machine -- a machine which can kill, a machine which can function efficiently without creating any problems, a machine which will be obedient, a machine which will not rebel against any kind of slavery, oppression, exploitation. The priests, the politicians, all have wanted you to be machines, not men, and for centuries they have been in power because you were ready to be reduced to machines.

The only phenomenon that can bring you back to your real nature, that can revive you again into humanity, into human beings, is love. The whole human past has been against love. Yes, to write about love was allowed, but love itself was not allowed. In very cunning ways it was destroyed, killed, uprooted. And there is a great need that man should know what love is, because without love the soul remains unnourished, starved. What food is to the body, love is to the soul. Without love you can't have a very alive soul. Without love your potential will remain a potential; it will never become actual.

This is a temple of love. I am creating a situation here where you can start melting, where you can again start becoming warm, where you can start playing, where you can again be cheerful.

I am not here to create more soldiers in the world, but sannyasins. All the past societies were soldier-oriented. I see the future as sannyasin-oriented. The sannyasin is just the

opposite of the soldier, exactly the opposite. The society that has lived up to now, rooted in the soldier, has really outlived its time. It is dying, it is going to die, and it is good that it should die. But before it dies we have to revive a few people as sannyasins; they will be the heralds of a new world, a new age.

But love cannot be taught, it can only be caught. I am love, my people here are love.

Ganesh Giri, what are you doing here? Melt, mix, drop your head! Become as headless as my people are, and you will know what love is. But still it will not become knowledge, it will remain a deep knowing. But that's enough -- that is nourishing. That's enough because that is transforming. That's enough because that opens the door to the divine.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUSNESS?

Consciousness means living with a witness; unconsciousness means living without a witness. When you are walking on the road, you can walk consciously -- that's what Buddha says one should do -- you are alert, deep down you are aware that you are walking; you are conscious of each movement. You are conscious of the birds singing in the trees, the early morning sun coming through the trees, the rays touching you, the warmth, the fresh air, the fragrance of newly opening flowers. A dog starts barking, a train passes by, you are breathing... you are watching everything. You are not excluding anything out of your alertness; you are taking everything in. The breath goes in, the breath goes out... you are watching everything that is happening.

It is not concentration, because in concentration you focus on one thing and you forget everything else. When you are concentrating you will not listen to the humming of the bees or to the singing of the birds; you will only see what you are concentrating upon. Concentration is narrowing down your consciousness to a point. It is good in archery: you have a target and you have to see only the target and you have to forget everything else.

In MAHABHARATA, one of the ancient scriptures of this country, this story occurs:

Drona, a great archer, is teaching his disciples archery. Arjuna wins finally, for the simple reason that his concentration is the most acute.

A bird is sitting on a tree, and Drona tells all his disciples to take their bows and arrows, focus on the bird, and get ready to shoot it. Then he comes close to each disciple and whispers a question in his ear, "What are you seeing?"

One disciple says, "I see many trees and the bird and the eyes of the bird."

Drona moves to another disciple. He says, "I see only one tree and the bird sitting on it and his eyes."

He moves to the third. He says, "I see only the bird."

He moves to the fourth. He says, "I see only the two eyes of the bird." And Drona had said that the right eye has to be penetrated; that is the target.

Then he comes finally to Arjuna and he asks him. Arjuna says, "I see only the right eye of the bird and nothing else."

In a sense Arjuna is the most concentrated, but he has become unconscious of the whole -- just a pinpoint of consciousness.

When I talk about consciousness it is not the consciousness that is needed in archery. I am

talking about a totally different phenomenon: a diffused consciousness, not concentrated, because concentration is tiring, tense, and sooner or later you will fall into unconsciousness. Anything tiring cannot be carried for long.

Consciousness has to be relaxed; it has to be equivalent to opening. You are simply open to all that is happening. I am talking to you, and the train is passing by, and the distant call of a cuckoo... and you are aware of it all. You are open to all the dimensions of your being. You are simply open and vulnerable, alert, not asleep.

This is consciousness, and its opposite is unconsciousness. You are not open at all, you are closed. You are in a kind of sleep -- a metaphysical sleep. All the buddhas down the ages have been fighting the metaphysical sleep.

George got drunk in a bar one night, and as he staggered home he tried to figure how he could hide his not very sober condition from his wife. He decided he would go home and read, since whoever heard of a drunken man being able to read a book? And he laughed at his own cleverness. He thought it would be good to read the Bible!

He made it home and went into the den. A few minutes later his wife called out to him, "What are you doing in there at this hour?"

"Oh, just reading, darling -- reading the Bible," he nonchalantly replied.

Knowing reading was not one of his late evening pursuits -- and certainly nobody had ever thought that he would read the Bible -- she got up and peeked in. "You idiot!" she cried. "Close that suitcase and get to bed!"

When you are drunk, whatsoever you do is going to be like that.

I have heard:

Mulla Nasruddin got so drunk that there was a fight with another drunkard, and he had wounds and scratches all over his face.

He came home in the middle of the night, looked into the mirror and thought, "Now, tomorrow morning is going to be difficult!" How is he going to hide these wounds and these scratches? His wife is bound to know and she will say, "You got drunk again and you have been fighting again!" How to hide it?

A great idea occurred to him. He searched in the medicine chest, found some ointment. He put it on his wounds and scratches, was very happy, pleased with himself that by morning things would not be so bad... and went to sleep.

Early in the morning when he was still in bed, his wife shouted from the bathroom, "Who has put ointment on the mirror?"

Of course a drunken man, a drunkard, looking into the mirror thinks that that is his face. It is natural; if you are unconscious, whatsoever you do is bound to be wrong.

And there is a great metaphysical drunkenness. From many many lives it has become a great weight on you. You have lived unconsciously for so long that the effort to live consciously even for a few minutes seems to be too much.

You love, it is unconscious, and it becomes jealousy, possessiveness. It is no longer love, because love cannot be unconscious. You make friends only to create enemies. You earn money to be happy, but by the time you have earned enough money you are only deeply tense, anxiety-ridden, and there is no joy in it. You run after power, fame, and one day, if you make hard efforts, you certainly succeed. You become famous, but then you realize the fact that by becoming famous nothing has been achieved. Everybody knows you, that's all.

Everybody knows your name, but how is that going to make you happy? You have power, but what are you going to do with the power?

In the hands of an unconscious man everything turns sour, bitter, poisonous, everything turns stupid. Give him some intelligent advice and it is bound to fall into wrong hands.

The young lady who was about to get married talked with her mother about the birds and the bees. In this conversation her mother told her that she did not have to take off everything when she went to bed on her honeymoon.

When they returned, the groom asked his mother-in-law, "Is there any insanity in this family?"

"No, why?"

"Well, your daughter slept in her hat all during our honeymoon!"

People are bound to do something stupid. And that's what they have done to the statements of all the buddhas. They write commentaries, great scholarship, but what comes out is stupid. Libraries are full of it, universities are full of it. All rubbish! But people are sacrificing their whole lives for that, and they are not doing the first necessary thing.

You cannot be wise unless you become conscious, unless you break this old habit of functioning in an unconscious way. You have to de-automatize yourself.

Simple things can do the trick. For example, you always walk in a hurry. Start walking slowly. You will have to be alert; the moment you lose alertness you will start again in a hurried way. These are small devices: walk slowly -- because to walk slowly you will have to remain conscious. Once you lose consciousness, immediately the old habit will grab you and you will be in a hurry.

If you smoke cigarettes, make it a very slow process, so slow that it becomes de-automatized. Otherwise, people are not smoking cigarettes -- cigarettes are smoking people! They are not conscious of what they are doing. In a very unconscious way they put their hands into their pockets, take out the packet, the cigarette and the matchbox. They are going through all these motions but they are not alert. They may be thinking a thousand and one things. In fact, when they are more unconscious they tend to smoke more. When they are more in anxiety, tension... worried, they tend to smoke more; that helps them to keep a face as if they are relaxed.

Make it a slow process. Take the cigarette packet out of your pocket as slowly as possible, as consciously as possible. Slowing down the processes is very helpful. Then hold the packet in your hand, look at it, smell it, feel its texture. Then open it very slowly, as if you have all the time in the world. Then take a cigarette out, look at the cigarette from all sides. Then put it in your mouth... wait! Then take the matchbox -- again go through those same slow movements. Then start smoking so slowly... take the smoke in very slowly, let it out very slowly.

And you will be surprised: if you were smoking twenty-four cigarettes per day you will be smoking only six at the most; it will be reduced to one-fourth. And slowly slowly, only two, one, and one day suddenly you will find the whole thing so stupid! Still you can go on carrying the cigarette packet in your pocket for a few days, just in case -- but it is finished, de-automatized.

This is one of Buddha's great contributions to the psychology of man: the process of de-automatization, slowing down everything.

Buddha used to say to his disciples, "Walk as slowly as possible, eat as slowly as

possible. Chew each bite forty times and go on counting inside: one, two, three, four, five -- forty times. When the food is no longer solid, it is almost liquid...." He used to say, "Don't eat, but drink." That means make it so liquid that you don't eat it, you have to drink it. And he helped thousands of people to become conscious.

You are unconscious, although you believe you are conscious.... That is like seeing a dream in which you think you are walking in the marketplace. You are awake in your dream, but your awakeness in a dream is only part of the dream -- you are unconscious.

It hurts to accept that "I am unconscious," but the first act of being conscious is to accept that "I am unconscious." The very acceptance triggers a process in you.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DOES LOVE ONLY HAPPEN WHEN IT WANTS OR IS THERE SOMETHING WE DO,
LET DOWN, OPEN UP, TO ALLOW IT?

Madhuma, positively, nothing can be done; negatively, much can be done. You will have to learn what negative action is. Lao Tzu calls it WU-WEI: doing without doing, action without action, effort without effort. It is one of the most significant things to learn. We know how to do things; that is a positive, aggressive, masculine way.

There is another approach, more subtle, more graceful, more feminine: to be in a state of let-go, to be in a state of surrender, and to allow existence to flow through you. That is doing through nondoing. In a sense it is negative, because you are not doing anything.

Sitting silently, doing nothing, the spring comes and the grass grows by itself.

This is the secret of real meditation: sit silently, do nothing. Wait.... Wait patiently. Wait in deep trust that the existence cares about you, that whenever you are ready and ripe you will be filled with love, that love will overflow you. The spring comes... that means there is a season to everything. You cannot have it before its time, you have to attain to a certain maturity.

And the greatest maturity is attained by learning the action which is basically inaction, the doing which is not doing at all but a state of nondoing. You remain available; if God calls you, you are ready. You are listening -- that is real prayer. When you say something to God, that is not real prayer; you have moved into action, you have become aggressive.

The real prayer is when you listen to God, you become all ears. You simply listen from every pore of your being; your every cell is just waiting: "If he calls, I will be ready. If he needs me, he will find me available." You remain unoccupied so that you can be available. You remain without thoughts so that you can hear him without distortion.

A maid who seemed to enjoy her work gave notice one day without warning.
"Why do you wish to leave?" the lady of the house asked her. "Is anything wrong?"
"I just can't stand the suspense in this house a minute more," the maid replied.
"Suspense? What do you mean?"
"It is the sign over my bed that says, 'Watch ye, for ye know not when the master cometh.'"

That statement, that beautiful statement -- "Watch ye, for ye know not when the master cometh" -- is one of the greatest sayings of Jesus Christ. But to the poor, unconscious maid it has a different meaning, altogether different -- a very distorted meaning, a meaning that SHE has given to it.

That's what goes on happening to you: God calls you, the spring comes, but finds you so much occupied that the grass cannot grow by itself; he finds you so much burdened, so full of yourself, that he cannot enter into you -- he finds you without any space. And he needs great space. You have to be utterly spacious, you have to be absolutely empty -- only then can God descend in you.

And love is nothing but God approaching closer and closer to you. The rays of God -- that's what love is.

You ask me, "Does love only happen when it wants?"

There is no question of God wanting -- he is ALWAYS ready to happen to you -- just YOU are not ready. And what is needed on your part is not aggressive action; what is needed on your part is to become feminine, receptive, passive. Allow him in: he is knocking on your doors.

Jesus says: Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and ye shall find it. Knock, and the doors shall be opened unto you.

I say to you: He is knocking on your doors -- please leave them open. He is seeking you and you are hiding. He is asking, but you are not responding.

It is not only that man seeks God -- in fact, God is seeking man continuously. But he never finds you, because you are never now, you are never here. You are always gone somewhere else.

Mulla Nasruddin was talking to one of his friends.

The friend said, "How was your night last night?"

Mulla said, "It was a beautiful night! I dreamed that I had gone to the Taj Mahal Hotel, and I have never tasted such delicious food in my life. I enjoyed my night, my dream. I can still feel the flavor of the food, I still feel the joy. Those dreams are still around me."

The friend said, "That's nothing! That's why I asked how your night was, because last night I dreamed that I was on a boat at sea and Sophia Loren was with me -- naked, absolutely naked!"

Mulla suddenly became angry and he said, "What kind of friend are you? Why didn't you ask me to come?"

The friend said, "I did phone. Your wife said you had gone to the Taj Mahal Hotel!"

You are never at home. God goes on calling you, you are always somewhere else: the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Oberoi, the Blue Diamond... somewhere else. You are never found at home. Whenever he comes you are not there -- because God knows only the present time; he has no idea of the past and no idea of the future. Now is the only reality for him, and you are absolutely unaware of the now.

You enjoy, you reminisce with great joy... your old days, your childhood, your youth. You are always going backwards, into your memories, or you are always moving into "not yet," the future, and imagining, projecting. But you are never now.

The small gap between the past and the future is the only real time. It does not belong to your time, it belongs to eternity. It is only through that moment that God can penetrate you. It is only through that moment that love happens, the spring comes. The spring is always now, here; it is never then or there.

Love is the closeness of God felt in the heart. Be available, Madhuma. Allow. Be open and vulnerable. Don't live with armor around yourself. It is your armor, your safety and security arrangements, it is your strategies that are destroying you. Be innocent, be authentic,

be true, whosoever you are. Then you will be able to see that which is, to know that which is. And seeing that which is creates love, releases your love energy.

In the ancient Hebrew the word for God simply means "that which is." It is a code word; it stands for reality itself.

But man goes on distorting scriptures, words, language, everything. Because of your preoccupation, your prejudices, your concepts, your knowledge, you remain ignorant.

It was their honeymoon night and the bride put on a sheer nightgown and crawled into bed -- only to discover that her husband was about to go to sleep on the couch.

"George," she called out, "aren't you going to make love to me?"

"I can't, honey," he replied, "because it is Lent."

"Why, that's awful!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears. "To whom and for how long?"

The preoccupied mind can't see what is, can't hear what is, can't feel what is. The preoccupied mind lives in its own world. Buddha calls that world the real problem: the world that is created by your mind. Renounce that world, renounce the mind! And, Madhuma, you will be overflowing with love and overflowing with God, overflowed. And it is an inexhaustible source; you can go on sharing it, but you cannot exhaust it. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- so is the ultimate, inexhaustible law, the law of the universe.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DID YOU SAY TODAY THAT THE PATH OF MEDITATION WAS FOR SPIRITUALLY MASCULINE PEOPLE? I AM CONFUSED AS BUDDHA, LAO TZU AND ALL THESE PEOPLE SEEM TO BE MORE FEMININE. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

Anand Dharmen, you are right and yet wrong. You are right because Buddha and Lao Tzu ARE feminine, but they are feminine when they have attained to the ultimate peak of meditation -- at the peak they are feminine. At the peak everybody is feminine, only God is masculine. At the peak only God is "he," everybody is a she.

There is a beautiful story about a great woman mystic of India, Meera. She was really a mad devotee, a mad BHAKTA, in tremendous love and ecstasy with God. She was a queen, but she started dancing on the streets. The family disowned her. The family tried to poison her -- the family itself -- because it was a disgrace for the royal family. The husband was feeling embarrassed, very much embarrassed, and particularly so in those days. And the story belongs to one of the most traditional parts of this country, Rajasthan, where for centuries nobody had seen women's faces; they were covered, always covered. Even the husband might not have been able to recognize his wife in the daylight, because they were meeting only in the night, in darkness.

In those days, in such a stupid climate, in such a milieu, the queen started dancing on the streets! Crowds would gather, and she was so drunk with the divine that her sari would slip down, her face would be exposed, her hands would be exposed. And the family was obviously very much perturbed.

But she sang beautiful songs, the most beautiful ever sung in the whole world, because they came from her very heart. They were not composed, they were spontaneous outpourings.

She was a devotee of Krishna, she loved Krishna. She told her husband, "Don't go on

believing that you are my husband -- my husband is Krishna. You are not my husband, only a poor substitute."

The king was very angry. He expelled her from the kingdom; she was not allowed to enter the territory. She went to Mathura, the place of Krishna. Krishna had died thousands of years before, but for her he was as alive as ever. That is the mystery of love: it transcends the barriers of time and space. Krishna was not just an idea to her, he was a reality. She talked to him, she slept with him, she hugged him, kissed him. Nobody else could see Krishna, but she was absolutely aware of him.

Krishna represented to her the very spirit of existence, what Buddha calls dhamma, the law. That is the masculine formation, the masculine expression: the law. Meera calls Krishna "my beloved" -- not law but love; that is the feminine heart.

She reached Mathura; there is one of the greatest temples of Krishna. And the head priest of that temple had taken a vow that he would not see any woman in his life; for thirty years he had not seen a woman. No woman was allowed to enter into the temple and he had never left the temple.

When Meera reached there, she danced at the gate of the temple. The guards became so enchanted, magnetized, that they forgot to prevent her. She entered into the temple; she was the first woman after thirty years to enter the temple.

The head priest was worshipping Krishna. When he saw Meera he could not believe his eyes. He was mad. He shouted at her, "Get out of here! Woman, get out of here! Don't you know that no woman is allowed here?"

Meera laughed and said, "As far as I know, I know that except God everybody is a woman -- you too! After thirty years of worshipping Krishna, do you think you are still a male?"

It opened the eyes of the head priest; he fell at the feet of Meera. He said, "Nobody has said such a thing ever before, but I can see it, I can feel it -- it is the truth."

At the highest peak, whether you follow the path of love or meditation, you become feminine. So you are right, Dharmen, that Buddha and Lao Tzu, all these people seem to be feminine, because you know them only when they have reached the highest peak. But you don't know their path, you don't know their journey. Their journey was masculine, it was not feminine.

Another story will help you:

A king was very much interested in the ideas of Moses; Moses was alive. The king said to the court painter, "Go and paint an absolutely realistic painting of Moses as he is. I would like his picture to always be in my bedroom."

The painter went. It took six months for him to do a really realistic painting. But when he came back with the painting, the king was puzzled, the whole court was puzzled, because the face of Moses looked like that of a murderer, that of a thief, that of a criminal.

He said, "You say this is the painting you have done in six months? The face looks like Moses, but it can't be Moses' face. I know the man, I have seen him with my own eyes! Yes, the outer lines are exactly like his face, but the gesture, the expression, it is not that of Moses!"

The painter said, "But you have told me to be very realistic, so I have not created any fiction around him. As he is I have painted him; this is just an exact replica. Now I am not responsible. If you find any difficulty in it, you ask Moses."

The painter, the king, the court, they all traveled. They went to Moses, the painting was brought to him and the king asked, "Sir, I have known you for years -- you are the most graceful man I have ever seen in the world. There may never be such a graceful man again... and this is the painting! My painter is a great painter, there is no doubt about it. He has never made any fault like this. He has painted my father, my mother, and thousands of other paintings -- he has painted me. And he is absolutely exact, whatsoever he has done. But with this painting we are not satisfied -- not only not satisfied, I am angry at him. Your face looks like that of a murderer, a thief or a criminal."

Moses said, "You are both right. Now, looking at me, you will see grace. But your painter has painted with such acuteness that he has caught my whole life in the painting. Yes, for the first time I am confessing: once I killed a man. I am a murderer. I have never told this to anybody else. And I have been, in my past, all the things that your painter has painted; they have left their subtle marks on my face. You cannot see them because you don't have the eyes which your painter has. So your painter is right: he has depicted my whole history. It is not only my present face but all the faces that have been there before. And you are also right, because it does not correspond to my present face -- but I have to agree with your painter."

It is a very significant story. At the peak a person is transformed, but on the path he may have been a totally different person.

Yes, I did say that the path of meditation was for spiritually masculine people. In India, the Buddhists and the Jainas have followed the path of meditation. All the twenty-four TIRTHANKARAS, the great masters of the Jainas, were warriors. They belonged to the KSHATRIYA caste, the caste of the warriors; they were not brahmins. Buddha himself was not a brahmin; he was a kshatriya, a warrior. These warriors followed the path of meditation; they were as masculine as possible. Their whole training was that of the warrior. But at the ultimate peak they certainly were transformed: they became feminine. You can't find a more feminine man than Buddha. They became so feminine, they became so soft, so vulnerable, so beautiful, so graceful, so rounded -- they lost all the corners, all roughness. They became like lotus flowers -- the East has painted them without mustaches, without beards.

Have you ever seen a statue or a painting of Buddha with a beard and mustache? Not that some hormones were lacking in him, not that he could not grow a beard. I know him perfectly well -- he had a beautiful beard! But we have left it out because it does not represent his inner reality. His inner reality has become so feminine that we had to make his face according to the inner. The inner cannot be painted; it can only be painted symbolically. That's why Rama, Krishna, Mahavira, Buddha, none of them is painted with a beard, a mustache, no.

And one thing more: nobody is painted as bald. And I know perfectly well, they were all bald! But women don't go bald, hence the mustache and the beard have been taken away, and instead hair has been added to their baldness -- the same hair maybe, take it away from the beard and put it on the head.

So your question, Dharmen, is right in a way, and yet not right. The man on the path is one thing, and the same man at the peak is a totally different person, transformed, transmuted.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM SEVENTY YEARS OLD, AND IT FEELS EMBARRASSING TO BE STILL

LONGING FOR SEX. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Jagat Narayan, the first thing is to accept your longing. Don't reject it, don't deny it, don't repress it. It is because of repression that it continues; in your youth you must have repressed it too much.

Once it happened:

I was in New Delhi and a young monk was brought to me; he must have been not more than thirty-five. He was living a life of absolute celibacy. He told me, "It is only a question of a few more years that I have to fight with my sexual desire. Can you tell me," he asked me, "exactly how many more years it will take? I am thirty-five. I am getting a little bit tired of fighting, fighting. Up to now I have succeeded -- now how many more years?"

I said, "It is better if you don't ask me, because the real problem is still ahead of you. The real problem has not happened yet; it happens at the age of forty-two."

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Right now you are young, full of energy, strength -- you can repress your sexual desire. But after forty-two you will become weak; slowly slowly, every day you will become weaker. YOU will become weak, but the repressed sexual desire, accumulated for years, will be very strong. The energy that is repressing it will be weaker and the energy that is repressed will become stronger every day. The real problem starts after forty-two."

He said, "Nobody has ever said that to me. People say that by the time you reach forty-five, if you can manage to keep yourself celibate, the problem disappears."

I said, "They don't know at all, they don't know the ways of energy. The repressor will become weak, but the repressed never becomes weak, because the repressed accumulates."

After ten years, when he must have been forty-five, he came to see me again. I was in Amritsar. He touched my feet, cried, and he said, "You are right. Now I am on the verge of breaking down. Now the urge is so intense, as it has never been, and I am not in a situation to fight. I am tired, defeated, weak. You were right, but I didn't listen to you. And all the people who have been telling me that after forty-five the problem disappears, either were deceiving me or they were deceiving themselves or they were utterly ignorant, unaware of how energies function."

Jagat Narayan, you must have repressed. That's how people are brought up, particularly in India: the religious person is one who represses all his natural desires. Now you are seventy and it really looks embarrassing to still be so childish. The older you grow, the more embarrassing it will become, but the more persistent it will be. Twenty-four hours of your day will become obsessed with sex. And this is what has been done to you by your society: the society has created a kind of split in you, you have become divided from your own nature.

Even now it is not too late. Don't be worried and don't feel embarrassed. Why? If God has given you sex and the longing for it then it is perfectly right, it is divine. YOU have not created it -- why do YOU feel embarrassed? It is instinctive.

If you really want to feel embarrassed, feel embarrassed because you are a Hindu and for seventy years you allowed foolish people to dominate you, stupid priests to dominate you. Feel embarrassed that you were not intelligent enough to get out of the prison in which you were accidentally born. But don't feel embarrassed about sex and the longing for it -- that is natural. Being Hindu is not natural, being Mohammedan is not natural. Feel embarrassed that for seventy years you have been doing such harm to your own nature.

Accept your sexuality, say yes to it -- because only by saying yes to it is there a possibility of going beyond it. Yes is the stepping-stone. Without yes you cannot reach the other shore; the yes becomes the boat.

But my feeling is that you are still saying no. Be less of a Hindu, be less of a fanatic, be less of an idealist. Be a little more realistic.

Tony's wife passed away and he was almost inconsolable. At the cemetery he collapsed with grief. In the car riding back home, his whole frame shook with wild sobs.

"Now, now, Tony, my boy," soothed his friend. "It's really not so bad. I know it is tough now, but in six months maybe you find another beautiful bambina and before you know, you get married again."

Tony turned to him in rage. "Six months!" he shouted. "What I gonna do tonight?"

You laugh at Tony, but he is more natural. He is not embarrassed about it, he accepts it.

Jagat Narayan, even though you are seventy years old, your sex, because it has remained somehow unfulfilled, is not seventy years old but seventy years young! Now there is going to be difficulty: you are seventy years old and your sex is seventy years young. But if you accept it, if you embrace it, if you take it naturally, still it is not too late.

In the East we have a saying: Even if you come back home when the sun is setting, it is not too late....

Eighty-five-year-old Will Jones hobbled down to the local bar to have a cold one and shoot the breeze with his friends. Mr. Jones was the talk of the town, as he had recently married a beautiful nineteen-year-old girl. Several of the boys bought the old man a drink in an effort to get him to tell about his wedding night. Sure enough, the old rascal fell right into their plans.

"My youngest son carried me in and lifted me on the bed with my young bride. We spent the night together and then my three other sons carried me off the bed."

The men scratched their heads and asked the old boy why it took his three sons to take him off when it only took his youngest boy to put him on.

Proudly he replied, "I fought them!"

Jagat Narayan, gather courage! Don't feel embarrassed. At least deep down accept it, even though you may not be able to move into a sexual relationship. The very acceptance -- total, I mean, less than that won't do -- if you accept totally, even that very acceptance will heal the wound. There may be no need to actually move into a sexual relationship. That may be even dangerous; that may create more problems for you than it will solve.

I have heard:

One Friday afternoon a couple appeared before a justice of the peace in a small town and had a marriage ceremony performed. The man must have been nearabout eighty and the girl was only twenty-two. They then drove to a motel and checked in for their honeymoon. They had a lively evening together.

The next morning the groom raised the window shade just to take a look outside, pulled it down again and went back to bed.

The next morning, Sunday, this performance was repeated. The groom raised the shade, looked out for a moment, then pulled it down and went back to his bride.

On the third morning, as he raised the shade, he flew up with it.

So it can be dangerous! Don't blame me that I am telling you to find a bambina, no! You may be too old for it. But nobody is too old to accept something that he has been denying. Drop condemning it -- respect your nature.

And my own observation is, the moment you accept something totally, the very acceptance brings a revolution, a radical change. It is your energy -- accept it. It will make you stronger. Reject it, it keeps you weak. Fighting with your own energy is dissipating it. And fighting with your sex will take so much of your time and so much of your energy -- then when are you going to look at God who is knocking on your door?

Stop fighting, stop fighting absolutely. Start respecting. Drop condemnation. Nothing is sin -- not sex at least. It is a natural phenomenon. If people are allowed to live it naturally, then at the age of fourteen they will become flooded with it. But in an unnatural society they will be flooded before their time.

Do you know? In America the boys and girls are becoming sexually mature earlier than anywhere else. In every other country the boys become sexually mature at fourteen; in America, at thirteen or twelve they become sexually mature. There is too much sex around in the movies, on the TV, everywhere.

A small boy -- must have been six or seven -- was sitting on the steps of his house and crying big tears.

An old man came by and he asked, "My son, why are you crying?" He wanted to help the boy. He sat by his side, wiped his tears with his handkerchief and asked, "Why are you crying? What has happened?"

The little boy said, "I am crying because I can't do what other boys are doing."
And the old man started crying!

The little boy was surprised. He said, "Pop, why are YOU crying?"

He said, "I can't do what the other boys are doing either. Our problems are the same."

In America people are becoming sexually obsessed before their age. That is ugly, that is ill, that is premature. In India the opposite happens: people remain sexually interested even when they are seventy, eighty, ninety. They may not say so -- Jagat Narayan, you are at least authentic, courageous, to say it is so -- but they remain obsessed with it.

In a natural society, children will become sexually overflooded at fourteen -- a beautiful energy -- and by the time they are forty-two the energy will disappear suddenly, as it appeared at the age of fourteen. If a person lives naturally, without the interference of the priests.... Priests who are against sex or priests who are for sex -- avoid both! If a man lives naturally, then between fourteen and forty-two his sex energy will give him tremendous joy, great experience of ecstasy, first glimpses of God and samadhi. And by the time it disappears it will leave you ripe, mature, centered, rooted.

Right now you can do only one thing: accept it totally, absorb it. It is not too late, although the sun is setting. If you can come home, if you can become natural and spontaneous about yourself, authentic, true, at least to yourself, you will be able to face God with a smile on your face. You will be able to enter death dancing, singing.

And a death that can be welcomed with dance and song is not death at all. It becomes the door to the deathless, it leads you into immortality.

Enough for today.