
Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Talks on Zen

Talks given from 01/07/77 am to 10/07/77 am

English Discourse series

10 Chapters

Year published:

Originally tape title "Path of Paradox".

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #1

Chapter title: Now Sit Down and Listen

1 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707010

ShortTitle: PARAD301

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 103 mins

THE MASTER BANKEI'S TALKS WERE ATTENDED NOT ONLY BY ZEN STUDENTS BUT BY PERSONS OF ALL RANKS AND SECTS. HE NEVER QUOTED SUTRAS NOR INDULGED IN SCHOLASTIC DISSERTATIONS. INSTEAD, HIS WORDS WERE SPOKEN DIRECTLY FROM HIS HEART TO THE HEARTS OF HIS LISTENERS.

HIS LARGE AUDIENCES ANGERED A PRIEST OF THE NICHIREN SECT BECAUSE THE ADHERENTS HAD LEFT TO HEAR ABOUT ZEN. THE SELF-CENTERED NICHIREN PRIEST CAME TO THE TEMPLE, DETERMINED TO DEBATE WITH BANKEI.

"HEY, ZEN TEACHER!" HE CALLED OUT. "WAIT A MINUTE. WHOEVER RESPECTS YOU WILL OBEY WHAT YOU SAY, BUT A MAN LIKE MYSELF DOES NOT RESPECT YOU. CAN YOU MAKE ME OBEY YOU?"

"COME UP BESIDE ME AND I WILL SHOW YOU," SAID BANKEI.

PROUDLY THE PRIEST PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD TO THE TEACHER.

BANKEI SMILED. "COME OVER TO MY LEFT SIDE."

THE PRIEST OBEYED.

"NO," SAID BANKEI, "WE MAY TALK BETTER IF YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT SIDE. STEP OVER HERE."

THE PRIEST STEPPED PROUDLY OVER TO THE RIGHT.

"YOU SEE," OBSERVED BANKEI, "YOU ARE OBEYING ME AND I THINK YOU ARE A VERY GENTLE PERSON. NOW SIT DOWN AND LISTEN."

An ancient parable...

ONCE UPON A TIME AN ANGEL WAS GOING back to heaven after fulfilling the errand for which he had been sent to the earth. It was a dark night, no moon in the skies, not even stars. The earth was enveloped by dark clouds. But the moment the angel was just entering into those dark clouds, he saw a miracle happening just beneath him. He saw a forest full of light. He was puzzled. He had been to this part many times, he was well-acquainted with the earth. He had never seen such a thing before. And the light was no ordinary light. It had the quality of bliss, blessing in it.

Just seeing that light, the angel felt more blissful than he had ever felt before, not even in the company of the gods, not even in heaven had he seen such a luminous phenomenon.

The light was arising out of a small mango grove and was spreading all over the forest. And it was so powerful that he could see the foliage of the trees, the flowers of the trees, and the small lake just by the side of the grove. He became intrigued. He descended back to the earth.

As he was descending he was surprised even more. There was a soundless sound permeating the whole atmosphere -- the soundless sound that is known in the East as PRANAVA, OMKAR -- as if the whole forest was chanting 'om'.

It was such a benediction. And not only that; more surprises were waiting for him. The moment he descended near the grove, he felt a fragrance absolutely unknown, unheard-of, even in heaven. This was nothing earthly. It was not even heavenly. It was beyond.

He entered the grove. He could not figure it out -- what is happening there? Another surprise: a man was just sitting there under an ancient old tree, meditating. Then things were not so difficult to understand.

So he thought, "This man has become a Buddha. This man has come home... the light, the fragrance, the sound, are coming out of this man." As he came closer to this man, more and more he was filled by his presence. The whole forest was agog -- a new vibe, a new life. He could see trees blooming out of season. And there was such silence, absolute silence. And in that absolute silence there was that soundless sound. The WHOLE forest -- the trees and the lake and the mountains -- all chanting. He fell into the feet of this man, opened his third eye -- this angel -- and tried to see what he was doing inside.

It is said that angels have the capacity to look into human minds. They can find out what thoughts are moving there. But the more he tried, the more he felt it was impossible -- there was no thought moving inside. There was utter emptiness, just nothingness. He started feeling afraid. He knows the nothingness of the sky, he knows the infinity of the sky, but this was deeper than that. It had a depth unknown to him. It was abysmal. He started feeling afraid he may get lost into it, he may not be able to return back.

But the attraction was too much. He was ready even to get lost. He tried hard, he pulled himself deeper and deeper into this silence. He ran inside this man's consciousness, but he could not find a single iota of thought. So he could not figure out what this man was doing.

He came out, turned himself into a man, bowed down, touched the feet of this man, and said, "Sir, please come out of your samadhi and enlighten me as to what is happening inside, because I don't see a single thought. Even gods are so full of thoughts! What has happened to you? You have become so utterly silent, even dead bodies are not so utterly silent! -- the old thoughts go on like old dust floating in the mind -- even if the man is dead the thoughts continue for a time. The mind goes on clicking just out of old habit. What has happened to you? You are alive!"

The man looked at the angel, didn't say a single word, but smiled. That smile was like an

infection, hypnotic. And the angel felt the pull of the smile. That smile was transforming, that smile was a great challenge, that smile was a provocation, that smile was a seduction. That smile invited him to the inner world of this man. And again the man closed his eyes, but somehow the angel also felt to close his eyes. He had got the hint.

The man had said, "I cannot tell you what it is, but I can show you the way. Just sit like me, just be like me. You have looked into my emptiness, just be empty. Only by being is there a way to understanding."

And he had not uttered a single word, but that smile was his sermon. He had said all that is contained in the Vedas and the Koran and the Bible and Dhammapada and Gita. He had said all without saying a single word. He had said that which cannot be said.

And the angel closed his eyes, sat in silence, and started disappearing.

That's what happens around a Master. You need not obey a Master. You have just to be around, available, that's all. His presence is enough to create the seduction.

The presence of the Master is seductive. It has no commandment. It does not say to you "Do this," and "Don't do that." Those who talk like that, they are not Masters. They may be teachers at the most. A Master never says "Do this," and "Don't do that." A Master is not concerned with your actions at all. His concern is deeper, his concern is with your being.

A Master is catching... like measles. In his presence you start catching a different vibe -- if you are available, if you are ready to listen, if you are ready to look -- then things start moving on their own. That is the meaning of a Master.

What is the difference between a teacher and a Master? A teacher teaches you, he has a doctrine, he has a philosophy. He argues, discusses, proves. A Master is himself the proof. He does not argue, he does not propose any philosophy, he does not give you any ethos. He has no commandments. He does not create any should, he does not give you any ideals. In fact, he takes all ideals away. He does not give you a scripture. He teaches you how to burn all scriptures, how to be free of the word, how to be free of theory -- because once you are free of the word and the theory and the scripture, you are free to be. Otherwise, thoughts go on clamouring within, thoughts go on clouding within. And thoughts go on distracting you from your center.

A thought is a distraction, any thought -- the worldly, the other-worldly. Thought as such is a distraction, it takes you away from yourself. A thought leads you into the world of dreams, illusions, abstractions. It does not allow you to see and feel and be. The whole work of a Master is to help you drop off your mind. And all commandments go into the mind, become your memories.

So a Master has no message as far as your action is concerned. A Master certainly has a message as far as your being is concerned. He teaches you what to be. And he teaches you in a thousand and one ways.

A great Zen Master was asked by one of his disciples, "I have been with you three years and you have not taught me anything, sir. When is my teaching going to start?"

The Master laughed and he said, "What are you saying? For three years continuously, day in, day out, I have been teaching you. When you bring my tea in the morning, have I not thanked you? When you come and bow down, have I not touched your head? When I go for a morning walk and you come and follow me, have you not been seeing how I walk? Have you not observed that my feet don't touch the earth? -- they are six inches above it. Have you not looked in these three years into my eyes? -- these eyes are those of a drunkard. What ELSE

do you want? What teaching are you talking about? I have been teaching day in, day out, year in, year out. Sometimes you must have entered into my room when I was asleep, have you not seen me? how a Buddha relaxes? -- like a small child. What else do you want? You are waiting for words? Then go to a teacher."

A Master is basically a presence. Even if he speaks, he speaks only to lead you towards the wordless. Even if he talks, he talks you out of language. He tries to talk so that you can be led into a world of no-thought. A Master's teaching is a no-teaching. He does not propose any ideas so that you can cling to them. A Master is utterly destructive; a Master creates a chaos. He drives you insane as far as your mind is concerned -- because when the mind has been driven insane, it stops... and suddenly a new consciousness arises.

SO THE FIRST THING TO BE UNDERSTOOD: A Master creates trust, not obedience. A Master NEVER asks for obedience. And if somebody asks for obedience, escape from that person. He is in search of a slave. He will kill you, he will destroy your freedom, he will condition your mind. He will give you a pattern to live by. He will not make you available to gods; he will not make you a god -- a god means freedom, absolute freedom. Obedience is slavery; obedience is a beautiful name for slavery. Whosoever creates obedience in you is dangerous, is your enemy. A Master does not create obedience, he creates trust -- and that is a totally different thing, altogether different.

What is trust? It is a feeling, it has nothing to do with your believing. Trust is a feeling. Trust is a feeling that this man has entered somewhere, we don't know where... this man has moved into some new dimension, we don't know what. A feeling that this man has wings into the unknown, a feeling that it will be good to go with this man on this pilgrimage.

A Master creates trust in you so that you can gather courage. By seeing him, by being with him, by being available to his vibrations, his pulsations, by and by you gather courage -- not obedience but courage. An obedient person is a dull person. An obedient person becomes unintelligent, he becomes dependent. He always looks for the order; he always waits -- somebody has to tell him what to do. No, a Master cannot make you a cripple, he cannot give you crutches to lean upon.

When you come to a Master you already have too many crutches. He takes them away. He helps you to stand on your feet. A Master creates you as you should be in your authenticity. A Master helps you only to be yourself and nothing else. So the Master cannot have a pattern and cannot have a general statement. To each individual it is going to happen in a different way.

First thing: obedience is part of politics, not of religion. The priest asks for obedience, the politician asks for obedience: "Follow me, obey me! Never do anything against my commandment. Remain always confined to the territory that I am giving to you, never go beyond it." He is destroying your very soul. That's what priests have done down the ages, they have killed people! People are no more alive. Somebody is a Muslim and somebody is a Hindu and somebody is a Sikh and somebody is a Jain and somebody is a Buddhist and somebody is a Christian -- but where are real people? These are all plastic names. Where are religious people?

Where is Nanak? You can find the Sikh, but where is Nanak? You can find the Christian, but where is Jesus? And you can find Buddhists, but where is Buddha? So many religious people and not a single religious person will you find. Crowds clamouring around temples and gurudwaras and churches and mosques, but all slaves -- slaves of the dead past.

A Master frees you from the past, because a Master frees you from your memory. A Master does not give you anything to learn: he proposes a course of unlearning. He says, "Unlearn whatsoever you have learned. Drop it, it is all dust. Clean your mirror completely of all dust. When the mirror is clean, God is reflected. If your mirror carries too much of the scripture, God will not be reflected."

A Hindu cannot see God. How can a Hindu see God? Just by being a Hindu he is creating a hindrance. How can a Mohammedan see God? Just being a Mohammedan he is creating a wall between himself and God. At least when you go to God don't carry labels, categories. At least when you go to God, go nude and naked. Go just as a human being, just as pure being, a mirror ready to reflect... ready to reflect whatsoever is the case. Don't go on projecting an idea.

The Hindu looks for the Hindu God, the Christian looks for the Christian God. And when you are looking for a God you are carrying an idea inside you. And any idea inside does not allow you to fall into DHYAN, SAMADHI, meditation. All ideas have to be dropped. The mind has to cease for God to be. When you are not, God is.

A Master teaches you how to become absent. His presence by and by teaches you to become absent. Have you not observed one tremendously important phenomenon? -- that God's way of being present in the world is His absence. He is not present by being present. God is present by being absent. That is His way of being present in the world. You cannot pinpoint: here is God. And wherever you can pinpoint, He is not. He is everywhere and nowhere. You cannot locate, you cannot say "in the north, or in the south, or in this temple, or in that mosque" -- you cannot pinpoint God. If you pinpoint, it will be something else, not God -- a statue, a scripture, a tradition, a morality, but not religion, not God. God is everywhere! His way of presence is to be absent, and this is what a Master teaches you. HIS presence is also a way of being absent.

A Master has disappeared, he is no more -- there is only utter nothingness in him. If you go inside a Master, you will find the same thing that was found by the angel in the parable. That man sitting in the mango grove had become a Buddha.

Buddha is not a proper name. It has nothing to do with Gautam Siddhartha. Gautam Siddhartha is one of the Buddhas. Christ is a Buddha too; so is Mahavir, so is Krishna, so is Nanak, so is Kabir, so is Rabiya, so is Meera, so is Mohammed.

One day a Zen Master came into the garden, and one monk was cleaning old leaves, dead leaves from the garden. The Zen Master asked the monk, who was his disciple, "What are you doing?"

The disciple said, "Sir, cleaning."

And the Master asked a very strange question: "Cleaning? Are you doing it before Buddha or after Buddha?"

Now Buddha is already ancient -- twenty-five centuries have passed, this question is utter nonsense. But Zen Masters enjoy nonsense very much. Zen is the sense of non-sense. If it had been asked of you, you would have been puzzled. But the disciple knew his Master. He had lived with him, he knew what kind of questions he used to ask. Each question is a situation, each question is a hint -- the more absurd, the more potential, because you cannot answer it through the mind. Now mind will simply feel boggled down. "You are cleaning," the Master says, "but tell me: before Buddha or after Buddha?"

And the disciple laughed, and he said, "Both, sir -- before and after."

The Master patted him and said, "Right." He went away.

Another gardener, another disciple who was working in the garden watering plants was very much puzzled. He was a new man around. He asked the disciple, "I don't follow. What followed between you and the Master? I was listening very attentively. The Master's question was absurd, and your answer was even more so. What do you mean when you say 'before and after Buddha'?"

And the disciple said, "It is after Buddha because many Buddhas have happened in the past, many. And it is before Buddha because many will be happening in the future. It is always in the middle. In the past there have been many Buddhas. In the future there will be many Buddhas. I am just standing in the middle and cleaning the ground -- cleaning for Buddhas to come, cleaning up all the dirt that the old Buddhas have left, and preparing ground for the new Buddhas to come."

That's what a Master does -- exactly, **PRECISELY** -- creates a cleanliness from all the past Buddhas, because people cling, people cling to the dead word, to the dead letter, and much dirt is created. A Master cleans your mind of the past, of the impact of the past, and he prepares your mirror for the future.

And it is not only that Buddhas are going to happen in the future -- you are also going to become a Buddha some day or other. It is only a question of time, and it depends on you. If you decide to become Buddha this moment, nobody is barring your path. Only decision is missing, only a commitment to Buddhahood is missing. Nobody is hindering, nobody is standing on your way. There is **NO** block. You are just clinging to the past, and you don't leave the past. Otherwise, you are free to move into the world. **THIS** very moment you can become a Buddha.

A Zen sutra says: **THIS VERY EARTH IS THE LOTUS LAND, THIS VERY BODY THE BUDDHA.**

EACH body is a lotus land, and each body is a temple of a possible Buddha, of a potential Buddha. Buddha is not a particular name for Gautam Buddha. **ALL** those who have become aware, they are all called Buddhas.

When Gautam Buddha himself became enlightened, a man came to him. He could not trust his eyes -- such grace, such feminine grace, such beauty! He asked the Buddha, "Who are you? Ate you a god who has descended from heaven? I have never seen such beauty, such other-worldly beauty, such unearthly beauty."

And Buddha said, "No, I am not a god."

Then the man said, "Then who are you? Are you a saint?"

And Buddha said, "No, I am not a saint."

The man was puzzled. He said, "Then who are you?"

And Buddha said such a profound thing. He said, "I am aware. I am neither a god nor a saint -- I am just aware."

Buddhahood is even higher than being a god. Buddhahood is very much higher than being a saint. The saint is constantly fighting with his sinner. The saint has not yet come home; he is yet in the battlefield. He is still fighting. The saint cannot relax, the saint cannot go on a holiday. Twenty-four hours he has to keep watch, because all that he has repressed inside is ready; any moment of weakness and it will take over. Sex he has repressed? -- then

sex is there waiting, waiting for the right moment when the saint is a little relaxed, not fighting so hard, then it can jump upon him. Greed, anger, jealousy, possessiveness -- all are waiting there. A saint is in a constant state of turmoil. A saint cannot be relaxed. How can a warrior be relaxed? He always has to be watchful; the enemy is always around.

That's why your so-called saints are so tense, afraid of small things -- afraid because they know that if they give a little relaxation, then they will have to give more. They have repressed half of their being. That half of their being is ready to rebel. That half of their being is getting very, very insane within themselves.

A saint lives an almost hysterical life. There is no peace. A saint lives an almost insane life, nightmarish. Whatsoever you repress goes on taking revenge. It comes up again and again, and with vengeance.

Buddha is right when he says, "I am not a saint." And Buddha says, "I am not a god either." Why? Because a god is one who is still hankering for pleasure. Remember, the ultimate goal is not heaven -- not at least in the East.

There are two kinds of religions: heaven-oriented religions -- Christianity, Islam, Judaism. They don't go higher than heaven. Heaven is the goal. Heaven means a state of constant pleasure, joy. It is against hell; it is still part of the duality -- heaven and hell. Hell is all misery and heaven is all pleasure. It is imaginary because you cannot separate misery from pleasure, and you cannot separate pleasure from misery. It is impossible.

To every pleasure clings its counterpart -- misery. It is impossible to separate them because they are not separate. You CANNOT take success away from failure. Failure just follows success. It is like the valley and the mountain. You cannot create mountains without creating valleys, and you cannot create valleys without creating mountains -- they go together. Exactly like that, every pleasure has its misery and every misery has its pleasure. Heaven and hell are imaginary; you cannot separate them. It is impossible.

Just think: if in heaven there is only success, then there will be no pleasure, because there will be nobody who is failing. How can there be pleasure and success when nobody fails? When you cannot fail by the very nature of things, how can you be happy when you succeed? Impossible. The pleasure derived out of success comes from the possibility of failure. If nobody is poor in heaven, then nobody can be rich. The pleasure of being rich is derived from many people around you who are poor, AND the possibility that you can also be poor some day. That very fear gives you pleasure. If all are happy then nobody can be happy.

And if only happiness happens, then sooner or later you will get bored with it. If this heaven of your so-called saints exists anywhere, it will be utterly boring. Just think of your saints sitting in heaven -- how long have they been there? The same pleasure, the same pleasure.... They cannot even have a change just for the sake of a change; they cannot even have that. They must all be hankering to enter hell -- anyhow. They must be hankering to come back to earth. That's what many old scriptures say: that gods hanker to become men again. There are stories that sometimes a few gods enter the world in disguise and become men to have a taste, a different taste.

Buddha proposes a totally new vision. He says: No heaven, no hell. Sinners go to hell, but there has never been a sinner who was perfect. A sinner cannot be perfect. Even sinners have many saintlinesses in them.

You can go and watch criminals. Sometimes it happens that criminals, amongst themselves, are more friendly, more honest than the so-called good citizens, respectable people. You can trust a thief if you give him some money. If he borrows some money from you, you can trust a smuggler, but you cannot trust a politician. The smuggler will fulfill his

promise, but not the politician.

There has never been a man who was a perfect criminal, a perfect sinner, so how can you throw a man into hell unless he is a perfect sinner? Something good is always there. Man is a combination of good and bad. And there has never been a perfect saint, cannot be. Impossible.

Then what is the difference between a saint and a sinner? The difference is very simple. The difference is that the sinner represses his saint and the saint represses his sinner. That's why ALL sinners go on desiring how to become saints, and all saints deep down long to become sinners. If you go into your saints' dreams you will be very much puzzled. Their dreams are very sexual, very worldly. And if you go into the dreams of a sinner you will be surprised -- in dream he thinks that he has renounced the world, is meditating, has become a sannyasin, is going to become a Buddha.

Sinners dream beautiful dreams. Dreams are substitutes. Whatever you are doing in your day -- and not doing in the day -- will come in the night. A balance has to be created by life. That's why your saints are very much afraid of sleep.

Buddha says, "I am not a saint, I am not a sinner, I am not even a god." Then who are you? Buddha says, "I am just aware. I am awareness."

This is the definition of a Buddha. You learn from a Master that which cannot be learned in any other way, that which cannot be taught in any other way, than by trusting, by loving, by being in the presence.

A Master does not order you to do anything, but his presence orders you. His very presence creates a subtle obedience, a subtle discipline -- not enforced, not at all managed, manipulated. A Master is not a manipulator. It is very silent. You never come to know when you have started following him. You cannot demark the line when you fell in love with him, and when things started happening to you.

ZEN SAYS: Zen is like looking for the spectacles that are sitting on your nose already.

Sometimes it happens to people when they are in a hurry -- they have to catch a train or something -- and they start looking for their spectacles. And they are looking through the spectacles themselves. The spectacles are sitting on their noses. But they are in such a hurry they have forgotten.

Zen says: Buddhahood is not somewhere far away. You are just sitting on top of it. YOU ARE IT! So there is NO need to go anywhere; you just have to become a little alert about who you are. IT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED! Nothing has to be achieved, nothing has to be practised! Only one thing: you have to become a little more alert about who you are.

Zen teaches, therefore, not by words. Zen teaches, therefore, not by goals. Zen teaches by direct pointing. It hits you directly. It creates a situation, it creates a device.

A man came to a Zen Master and asked, "I would like to become a Buddha." And the Master hit him hard.

The man was puzzled. He went out and asked some old disciple, "What kind of man is this? I asked such a simple question and he got so angry. He hit me hard! My cheek is still burning. Is it wrong to ask how to become a Buddha? This man seems to be very cruel and violent!"

And the disciple laughed. He said, "You don't understand his compassion. It is out of his

compassion that he has hit you hard. And he is old, ninety years old; just think of his hand -- it will be burning more than your cheek! You are young. Think of his compassion, you fool! Go back!"

But the man asked, "But what is the message in it?"

And the disciple said. "The message is simple. If a Buddha comes and asks how to become a Buddha, what else is there to do? You can hit him and make him aware that you are it What nonsense you are talking about!"

If a rosebush starts trying to become a rosebush, it will go mad. It is ALREADY the rosebush. You may have forgotten. Zen says you are in a state of slumber, you have forgotten who you are, that's all. Nothing has to be done, just a remembrance. That's what Nanak calls SURATI, Kabir calls SURATI -- just a remembrance. You have only to REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE!

So Zen teaches not by words, not by scriptures, not by theories, but by direct pointing, by engaging us in a game in which the only answer is a new level of consciousness.

Listen to this story and you will understand how Zen creates situations. Zen is very psychological. The problem is psychological -- you have simply forgotten; it is not that you have gone anywhere. You have fallen asleep. Zen functions as an alarm. It hits you, hits at the heart, makes you awake. Listen to this beautiful parable:

A young man, who had a bitter disappointment in life, went to a remote monastery and said to the Master, "I am disillusioned with life and wish to attain enlightenment to be freed from these sufferings. But I have no capacity for sticking long at anything. I could never do long years of meditation and study and austerity. I would relapse and be drawn back to the world again, painful though I know it to be. Is there any short way for people like me?"

"There is," said the Master, "if you are really determined. Tell me, what have you studied? What have you concentrated on most in your life?"

"Why, nothing really. We were rich and I did not have to work. I suppose the thing I was really interested in was chess; I spent most of my time at that."

The Master thought for a moment and then said to his attendant, "Call such-and-such a monk, and tell him to bring a chess board and men."

But the attendant said, "Sir, that monk does not know how to play chess."

The Master said, "Don't be worried. You simply call him."

The monk came with the board and the Master set up the men. He sent for a sword and showed it to the two. "Oh monk," he said, "you have vowed obedience to me as your Master, and now I require it of you. You will play a game of chess with this youth, and if you lose I shall cut off your head with this sword."

And the man does not know much about chess. Maybe he can recognize the chessboard, or maybe he has played once or twice when he was young. But to put this man against this young, rich man, who has never done anything but play chess, is simply a death warrant.

And then the Master says, "You have surrendered to me, and you have told me I can do anything I want with your life or with your death. Now the moment has come. If you lose I shall cut off your head with this sword."

And a naked sword is there in the hands of the Master, and he is standing just close by. "But I promise that if you die by my hand, you will be born in paradise. If you win, I shall cut off the head of this man. Chess is the only thing he has ever tried hard at, and if he loses he deserves to lose his head also."

They looked at the Master's face and saw that he meant it: he would cut off the head of

the loser.

They began to play. With the opening moves the youth felt the sweat trickling down to his heels as he played for his life. The chessboard became the whole world; he was entirely concentrated on it. At first he had somewhat the worst of it, but then the other made an inferior move and he seized his chance to launch a strong attack. As his opponent's position crumbled, he looked covertly at him. He saw a face of intelligence and sincerity, worn with years of austerity and effort.

The other was a beggar -- a BHIKKHU -- his eyes were silent and calm. He was not disturbed even by the idea of death. He was playing because of the Master's request, and he had surrendered himself so there was no problem in it. Even if paradise were not promised, then too, he would have to follow. He was playing calm and quiet. His eyes were very silent and very intelligent -- and the young man is winning! and the monk's moves are going all wrong!

The young man looked at the monk -- the grace, the austerity, the beauty, the silence, the intelligence. He thought of his own worthless life, and a wave of compassion came over him. He decided: "To let this man die is unnecessary. If I die, nothing is lost to the earth. I am a stupid man, I have wasted my life, I have nothing. This man has worked hard, disciplined his life, has lived a life of austerity, a life of meditation and prayer. If he is killed that will be a loss."

Great compassion arose in him. He deliberately made a blunder and then another blunder, ruining his position and leaving himself defenseless.

The Master suddenly leant forward and upset the board. The two contestants sat stupefied. "There is no winner and no loser," said the Master slowly. "There is no need to fall here. Only two things are required, " and he turned to the young man, "complete concentration and compassion. You have today learned them both. You were completely concentrated on the game, but then in that concentration you could feel compassion and sacrifice your life for it. Now, stay here a few months and pursue our training in this spirit and your enlightenment is sure."

He did so and got it.

A tremendously beautiful story. The Master created a situation and showed the whole path. This is DIRECT -- showing the path. He showed all that can be shown! There are only two things -- meditation and compassion. Meditation means being utterly absorbed into something, totally absorbed into something, completely lost. If you are dancing and only the dance remains and the dancer is forgotten, then it is meditation. If you are gambling and only gambling remains and the gambler disappears, then it is meditation. It can be any activity. Meditation is not averse to any activity. Meditation requires only one thing: be absorbed in it totally, whatsoever it is.

If you are a thief and you are going to steal, and while stealing if you get absorbed utterly and totally, it is meditation. Who you are, what you do, does not matter! For Zen all that matters is totality, utter concentration, absorbed, lost, drunk into it. So much so that you are not standing behind aloof. This is the fundamental -- meditation. And then a natural outflow of it, a natural by-product -- compassion. Compassion cannot be practised. It comes as a shadow to meditation.

Now, this is the whole Buddha dharma, this is ALL. And this Master, whose name is not known, must have been a great deviser. Through the game of chess he expressed the whole Buddha dharma. He expressed all the fundamentals, all that is needed. No more is needed.

This is enough for your whole journey. Means and ends -- all are included in this small situation.

And now the young man knows that it has happened, he has had a taste of it. It has already happened, it is no more a theory. It is already an experience. He had seen it happen. He had never thought of anybody in his life. He had never had any glimpse of compassion. It was absolutely unknown, unfamiliar. But it happened.

His own life was at stake. First he became afraid and started perspiring, must have become nervous and started playing. Because of that nervousness and fear he must have made wrong moves. So it was just accidental that the monk was winning. There was no possibility of his winning. It must have been because of the nervousness of the youth that the monk was winning. But, by and by, he must have calmed down. And then, he started moving rightly. And the monk started losing.

A moment came when the youth was absolutely certain: "I am going to win. One move more and the game is finished, and the monk is finished." In that moment, naturally, he looked at the face of this poor monk. And he has not done anything wrong. Why should he lose his life? And at that moment he saw the calmness, the quality, the different quality, the tranquillity, the equilibrium, the peace, even in front of death -- and he was overwhelmed. And something that he had never seen arising in his heart arose. Something vibrated in him, a new song was born, a new insight. And such a great insight that he was ready to lose his life for this beggar who did not mean anything to him.

What happened? How this miracle? How come?

The miracle happened through a basic science, a fundamental. He became concentrated, he became absorbed, he became utterly lost. His ego disappeared. When you are completely lost into anything, ego disappears. That's all that there is to meditation, that's all meditation is about: disappearance of the ego. It may be music, it may be dance, it may be archery, it may be wrestling, it may be anything. Do whatsoever you like and create meditative energy around it. If you are a housewife, cooking can be your meditation. If you are a shopkeeper, then your customers are your meditation.

That's why I don't tell my sannyasins to leave the world. Transform the world -- why leave it? Bring meditation into the world. Wherever you are, start living on a different plane of consciousness. And you will come to see, by and by, compassion arising in you. And when compassion arises, from where will it come? It comes through your passion.

The word is beautiful; 'compassion' is a beautiful word. It is made of 'passion'. Compassion gains energy out of passion. All the energy that has been moving into passion starts moving into compassion. Once the bridge of meditation is created, passion starts being transfigured into compassion. All that you have been fighting, there was no need to fight -- it can be transformed. All that you have always thought wrong, is not wrong! It only needs a bridge to be transformed. God never gives any wrong thing to anybody. How can He? He gives only all that is right. Just the right use has to be learned.

I had a garden once -- an old man, but REALLY a gardener, utterly absorbed. I had chosen him only because he was so meditative in his work. He would not see day, he would not see night. Even sometimes in the middle of the night I saw him with the plants. He was not paid that much for that work, but he was around his plants continuously. He had great compassion. Just his work was such an absorption for him. Compassion arose. He had no other life. He was not concerned with anything, he was not interested in anything. His whole world was the plants. The plants were the only people he lived with.

Even weeds he would not throw away. Weeds! He would pluck the weeds -- but very carefully, very lovingly. They are plants too. And he would put those weeds around rosebushes, underneath, close to the roots of the rosebushes.

I asked him, "What are you doing?"

He said, "Weeds carry great energy. There is no need to throw them, and they are people too. They have to be taken out, otherwise my roses will be spoiled. I have to take them, but I give them beautiful goodbyes. This is their graveyard. And I put them close to the roots of the roses. They will become roses sooner or later. They become manure. I transform them, I don't kill them."

That's art, that's skill. That's what Zen is. Zen doesn't say to you, "Fight with your sex, fight with your passion and lust!" It says: "There is no need to fight, create the bridge." And the lust becomes love, passion becomes compassion. It is desire itself, freed from objects, that becomes desirelessness.

THIS VERY WORLD, THE LOTUS LAND.

THIS VERY BODY, THE BUDDHA.

Zen does not solve the problems, it dissolves them.

Once a great Western philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, was asked what he did with philosophy. This was his answer too: "I don't solve problems, I dissolve them." And he had some quality of Zen in him. He was the only Western philosopher of modern times who had something of Zen.

Once he was asked, "What is your aim in philosophy?"

He said: "To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle."

That's exactly the definition of Zen: to show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle. The way is there!

You must have seen it happen many times. Sometimes a butterfly enters into a room. She knows she has entered by the door; she knows there is an entry, so she knows tacitly that by the same door she can go out. But then she starts moving to the window, goes on struggling with the glass. And the more she struggles with the closed window, the more nervous she becomes. The more nervous she becomes, the more unconscious, afraid of death, afraid of being always caught in this room forever. She loses consciousness! In that unconscious state she starts fighting more, even with the walls. And the door is there! And the door has been there. And she knows tacitly. How can she forget? It seems a miracle. She has come by the door. Why does she not get out by it?

The same door that brings you into the world takes you out of it. Remember, it is the same door! On one side is written 'Entrance', on the other side is written 'Exit'. It is the SAME door. These are two sides of the same door. Passion brings you into the world, passion takes you out of it. Desire brings you into the world, desire takes you out of it. Greed brings you into the world, greed takes you out of it. Never fight! The lower is not only the entrance, the lower is the exit too.

This is something to be understood. Let it sink in your heart Never fight! Never create any conflict! Otherwise you will create anguish, otherwise you will become more miserable. That's what has happened to you. People are miserable just like the butterfly. Listen to this story:

Zen Master, Shen Tsan, gained his enlightenment through Pai Chang. He then returned to the monastery in which he had been ordained by his 'first teacher', the monk who had brought him up from childhood and who, at that time, was a very old man....

Remember: he was just a teacher, not a Master. So Shen Tsan had not achieved his enlightenment through him. He had to go to some other Master, to Pai Chang. When he attained enlightenment he came back to his old teacher. He was a compassionate man, a kind man. He had brought up Shen Tsan from his very childhood. He was almost like a father.

One day Shen Tsan was helping his old teacher to bathe. While washing the old man's back, he said to him, "This is such a fine temple, but the Buddha in it is not at all holy!" His old teacher then turned round and looked at him, whereupon Shen Tsan commented, "THOUGH THE BUDDHA IS NOT HOLY, HE CAN STILL RADIATE THE LIGHT."

The old man felt a little embarrassed, but he didn't say anything. This was absolutely new: "This young man has got something new now since he has come back. His quality has changed. And sometimes he utters statements which can mean much, which may not mean anything. He may have just learned them somewhere. Or, who knows whether he has had some insight, some satori?" The old man watched and waited.

Again, one day, while the old man was reading a sutra near a paper-covered window, a bee tried desperately, with all its strength, to fly out of the room through the paper but was unable to get through.

Shen Tsan, seeing this, said, "The world is so vast and wide that you may easily set yourself free in it. Why, then, do you foolishly bore into the old, rotten paper?"

Now, this is very meaningful. It has two meanings. The old man is reading his old book, and the bee is trying to get out by the paper-covered window -- in Japan they make paper curtains. And Shen Tsan says, "The world is so vast and wide that you may easily set yourself free in it. Why, then, do you foolishly bore into the old, rotten paper?" And he sang a GATHA:

"While the empty door is open wide
How foolish is to try to get out
By thrusting against the window!
Alas! How can you
Raise your head above the slough
By putting your nose against the old, rotten paper
For a hundred years?"

And the old man is getting to be nearabout a hundred years old. Now this is too much.

Hearing this remark, the old man laid down his book and said to Shen Tsan, "For quite a few times now, you have made unusual remarks. From whom did you gain your knowledge while you were away from home?"

Shen Tsan replied, "I have reached the state of peaceful rest through the grace of Master Pai Chang. Now I have come back home to pay my debt of gratitude to you."

The old teacher then prepared a great festival in his young disciple's honour, summoned the monks in the monastery to the assembly hall, and besought Shen Tsan to preach the dharma to all. Whereupon Shen Tsan ascended to the high seat, and, following the tradition of Pai Chang, preached as follows:

"Singularly radiating is the wondrous
Light Free from the bondage of matter and the senses.
Not binding by words and letters
The Essence is nakedly exposed in its pure eternity.
Never defiled is the Mind-nature;
It exists in perfection from the very beginning.
By merely casting away your delusions
The Suchness of Buddhahood is realized."

Listening to these words, seeing his own disciple illumined, feeling for the first time who he had become, the old man touched the feet of his own disciple. And when he was bowing down and touching the feet of his own disciple, he became enlightened, the insight opened.

Yes, the door is always open. Zen does not preach anything new to you; it simply makes you aware that the door is open. And you have entered by the same door! This is simply foolish to go on seeking how to get out of it.

People come to me and they ask -- particularly Indians -- they ask, "How to get out of this samsara, this world?" And I ask them, "How did you enter? First tell me that." Unless it is known how you entered, it is very difficult to get out of it -- because the way in is the way out!

Zen leaves everything as it is, but with what profound difference! It leaves things as they are. It does not change anything, it simply changes your awareness of things. But perhaps for the first time we come to see them as they are. It does not change a single bit... the room remains the same. The window remains paper-covered. The door remains as it has always been -- open. Just the bee becomes aware that the door is open and there is no need to try, there is no need to make any effort and hard struggle.

Zen says: Take it easy. Everything is available. All has been made available from the very beginning. Nothing is missing, except one thing: that you don't look around. See, your anger can be transformed into GREAT love. Your greed can become sharing. Your very possessiveness becomes one day renunciation. So Zen has no condemnation. Zen simply says, find an alive Master and be in his presence. Sit silently by his side -- his door is open. Your door is also open. The only difference is: he knows his door is open, you don't know that your door is open. Looking through him -- his door, his openness, his inner space -- one day, suddenly the recognition arises that "My OWN door is open and has been open always!" Zen says: Nothing has been hidden from the very beginning.

What happens with a Master when you are in his presence?

WHEN WATER IS SCOOPED UP IN THE HANDS,
THE MOON IS REFLECTED IN THEM.
WHEN FLOWERS ARE HANDLED
THE SCENT SOAKS INTO THE ROBE...

WHEN FLOWERS ARE HANDLED, THE SCENT SOAKS INTO THE ROBE.... When you come around an enlightened person, something of his enlightenment soaks your robes, something of his perfume you start carrying with you. It is a pulsation, a vibration -- but eyes are needed.

That angel could see the luminous grove underneath him. If you were passing by the grove you may not have seen, because that luminosity needs some opening in you. The angel heard PRANAVA -- the soundless sound, OMKAR -- the whole forest singing a song, celebrating something. "Something of tremendous importance has happened. Trees have bloomed out of season!" He could see, but you may have passed by the grove and you may not have seen -- because to see such things, great trust is needed. To see such things, openness is needed. To see and hear such things you have to throw your garbage that you go on carrying in your head.

My feeling is that EACH of you here has passed many times around such groves -- sometimes a Buddha, sometimes a Mansoor, sometimes an Ali, and sometimes a Ramakrishna, a Raman, sometimes a Mahavir, a Zarathustra. You have passed! It is impossible that down the ages you have never come across a luminous grove -- you must have done. The greater possibility is that not only once, but many times you may have come across a luminous grove -- but you have missed. Don't miss this time!

And this Guru Purnima Day is the day of all the Buddhas, all those who have become aware. In their remembrance, become aware. The grove is here in front of you. You can see that luminous light. It is here! You can hear that celestial sound; that music is happening. And you can be soaked into my fragrance. It depends on you -- how much you are ready to take, how much you are willing to take, how much you are going to be with me, how deeply.

You can come here just to hear my words; then you will miss the real message. You can come here full of your nonsense, your argumentativeness; then you will not be able to hear what I am trying to convey. You can come here as Mohammedans, Hindus, Jains, and you will miss me -- but only you will be responsible, nobody else.

Try to understand your responsibility towards yourself. Enough you have been stumbling in darkness! When light becomes available, don't miss the opportunity. Take the jump....

There is a famous statement of Jalaluddin Rumi: "I died as mineral and became a plant. I died as plant and rose to animal. I died as animal and I was a man. Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?"

And that is the fear that comes when you come around a Master -- the fear of dying. But listen to this Rumi's statement: "Why should I fear? When was I less by dying? I died as a plant and became an animal. I died as an animal and became a man."

When you die in your Master as a man, you become divine. A Master is a death and a resurrection. This day of Guru Purnima is a day of death and resurrection. It is no ordinary day -- it is very symbolic. If you come to me, you come only in one way: if you come to die in me. And you will not be less by your dying -- you will be more, you will be infinitely more. You will be losing nothing and you will be gaining all.

This death into a Master is what makes a man a disciple. It is no ordinary relationship; it is the only extraordinary relationship in the world. All other relationships are ordinary. All other relationships are part of the world. Only this relationship is not part of the world -- it takes you beyond. It is a golden bridge from the visible to the invisible, from the material to the divine, from the known to the unknown, from death to deathlessness. But... you will have to die first.

To be with a Master is to carry your cross on your shoulders. That's why only very

courageous people can become disciples. I am not here for students, I am not interested in students at all. I am only interested in disciples, those who are courageous enough to go unto this eternal voyage.

Three things you need: one -- listening in the mind; second -- pondering in the heart; third -- practising in the body.

Listen in the mind. When you are listening to me -- THESE WORDS ARE NOT MINE, these are the words of all the Buddhas. These words have nothing to do with me. I am no more here. I am functioning only as a hollow bamboo. These words are of all the Buddhas -- past, present and future, too. Because the message is the same, it is always the same, it is an eternal message -- SANATAN DHARMA. It is an eternal message.

Listen in the mind without argument. If you are arguing with me, you will miss. And I am not at a loss when you miss. I don't lose anything. If you miss, you miss. Listen in the mind with no argument. And I am not saying believe what I am saying. Don't misunderstand me. I am not saying believe. Just no argument, there is no need to believe. Just first listen silently like a mirror.

When you come before a mirror, the mirror does not believe in you, but the mirror reflects you perfectly as you are. The mirror has no attitude about you, good or bad, beautiful or ugly -- no, no attitude. The mirror does not argue. It simply reflects. Listening in the mind means: listen to what I am saying. There is NO hurry to believe. And there is NO hurry to disbelieve. That's what I mean: don't listen with argumentation. Simply listen.

Second: ponder in the heart. Listen, and let it sink into the heart. Don't be in a hurry to think about it. If you think in a hurry, it will remain in the head. Let it first go deep. Sleep over it, let it soak, let it go a little deeper. Let it settle in the heart. There, ponder over, in the heart. Then don't be in a hurry to practise it. Let it soak a little deeper. Let it reach into the body, into your GUTS, and then it becomes a practice of its own accord.

These are three stages of being with a Master.

Now the story, today's story. It is a simple but beautiful story.

THE MASTER BANKEI'S TALKS WERE ATTENDED NOT ONLY BY ZEN STUDENTS BUT BY PERSONS OF ALL RANKS AND SECTS. HE NEVER QUOTED SUTRAS NOR INDULGED IN SCHOLASTIC DISSERTATIONS. INSTEAD, HIS WORDS WERE SPOKEN DIRECTLY FROM HIS HEART TO THE HEARTS OF HIS LISTENERS.

A MASTER ALWAYS SPEAKS FROM THE HEART TO the heart. He does not speak from the head to the head. From the head to the head there is no communication, ever. Head to head, there is always fight, debate; there is always conflict. Only from heart to heart is there communion, communication. Only heart-to-heart is understanding possible.

So, many come to me, but only a few understand. Many will come to me, and only a few will gain. Those few will be those who hear from the heart. These words are not coming to you from the head. My head is utterly empty. I am not speaking because I want to create a system, or a philosophy, or a religion. I am speaking because something that has happened to me, I want to share it with you. It is a sharing.

HIS LARGE AUDIENCES ANGERED A PRIEST OF THE NICHIREN SECT BECAUSE THE ADHERENTS HAD LEFT TO HEAR ABOUT ZEN.

Priests are always in trouble. They are always angered. Whenever a Master arises, wherever, the priests are always angry, because when somebody starts speaking from the heart, the people who live in the head start losing their customers. Naturally, the priest is in business, he becomes very much angered.

You will find millions of people angry with me. And a miracle! The Mohammedan priest is angry, the Hindu priest is angry, the Buddhist priest is angry, the Jain priest is angry, the Christian priest is angry. This is a miracle! At least on one thing they agree: that I am wrong. That is their only agreement. Otherwise they don't agree on anything. Why should they be so much angered? -- because whenever the real coin is there, the pseudo-coin starts feeling embarrassed.

HIS LARGE AUDIENCES ANGERED A PRIEST OF THE NICHIREN SECT BECAUSE THE ADHERENTS HAD LEFT TO HEAR ABOUT ZEN. THE SELF-CENTERED NICHIREN PRIEST CAME TO THE TEMPLE, DETERMINED TO DEBATE WITH BANKEI.

Now you cannot debate with a Master. It is impossible. He has no ego. How can you debate with a Master? You have the ego, hence the idea of debate -- debate is a kind of wrestling, a very sophisticated wrestling, fighting. It is nothing but violence in a very civilized form.

"HEY, ZEN MASTER!" HE CALLED OUT. "WAIT A MINUTE. WHOEVER RESPECTS YOU WILL OBEY WHAT YOU SAY, BUT A MAN LIKE MYSELF DOES NOT RESPECT YOU. CAN YOU MAKE ME OBEY YOU?"

"COME UP BESIDE ME AND I WILL SHOW YOU," SAID BANKEI.

Now, a Master is more interested in showing than in saying anything. He makes gestures to convey. With great love he must have said, "Come up beside me, come up close. Come up just on my level." That is the meaning of 'beside me'.

The priest is angered. He says, "Hey, Zen Master! Wait a minute." And the Master is speaking, and just in the middle he has interfered. "Whoever respects you will obey what you say, that's okay. But I don't respect you. Can you make me obey too?"

Now the Master does not argue. He creates a situation, he devises a method. It is immediate, not a single moment is lost. He responds.

"COME UP BESIDE ME AND I WILL SHOW YOU," SAID BANKEI.
PROUDLY THE PRIEST PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD TO THE TEACHER.
BANKEI SMILED....

When a Master smiles at you, beware. He has thrown the trap, you will be caught sooner or later. People are caught in smiles.

BANKEI SMILED. "COME OVER TO MY LEFT SIDE," HE SAID....

So polite, so courteous. And Zen Masters are not like that at all. But in the beginning every Master is very courteous, very polite. Once you are caught he starts beating you, because only then will you understand his compassion.

"COME OVER TO MY LEFT SIDE."

And the priest is completely unaware of what is happening. Because he had never thought! He was waiting for an argument. He had come ready, prepared. He must have been rehearsing for many days and many nights. He must have prepared his whole talk -- what it is he is going to say to the Zen Master, and how he is going to argue against him. Now he is completely unaware, he is preoccupied. Preoccupation creates unawareness. He is preoccupied, he must be inside his mind, thinking, "Now I am going to say this, and he will say that, and I will counter him with that." He is completely unaware that the Master has already started working. He is unconscious.

BANKEI SMILED. "COME OVER TO MY LEFT SIDE."

THE PRIEST OBEYED.

"NO," SAID BANKEI, "WE MAY TALK BETTER IF YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT SIDE. STEP OVER HERE."

THE PRIEST STEPPED PROUDLY OVER TO THE RIGHT.

"YOU SEE," OBSERVED BANKEI, "YOU ARE OBEYING ME AND I THINK YOU ARE A VERY GENTLE PERSON..."

"... I say to you come to the left, you come to the left. I say to you come to the right and you come to the right. What else is needed...?"

"NOW SIT DOWN AND LISTEN."

In fact, nothing more is needed. Zen is so obvious. It is just like this: Come to my left side, come to my right side. The priest has not thought that he is obeying. That's the beauty of a Master. He never orders you and you start obeying him. He never tells you what to do, and you start doing things that he would like you to do. That's the beauty of a Master. That is his non-violent message. His each gesture, his smile, the raising of his hand, start creating something in you. He is tremendous energy -- that energy starts vibrating in you, moving you, changing you, transforming you, transporting you into another world.

Bankei has shown a very simple fact, that Zen has no commandments, Zen is very obvious. It is like if I say, "This is the door, please get out by this rather than getting OUT by the wall." What are you going to do? Will you try to get out by the wall just to disobey me? Then you will be simply stupid and you will be hurt.

Zen says truth is so simple and so obvious; we need not force anybody to follow. It is just like showing him: "This is the door, sir, and this is the wall. Now it is up to you. If you want to get out you can get out by the door, but if you want to struggle, you can try through the wall -- and get hurt in your head! This is up to you."

Exactly like that, real religion is very simple. It has no complexity. It is very easy. You simply need a little intelligence.

That's why Bankei says, "YOU ARE OBEYING ME AND I THINK YOU ARE A VERY GENTLE PERSON..." What else is needed? Belief is not needed -- just gentleness, alertness, intelligence is needed.

Whenever I see an intelligent person, I know he is going to be with me. Whenever I see intelligence anywhere, I suddenly know my potential sannyasin has arrived. An intelligent person cannot escape from here. Only unintelligent people, dullards, those who have very thick heads, those who are really very mediocre -- only they can escape. If you have a little intelligence, just a ray, that will do. I am here to change it into the whole source of light. Just

a ray you will need, at least in the beginning, to begin with.

Bankei says, "You see, you have already obeyed, and I have not ordered. I don't order my disciples, I don't require their respect. If they respect, that is another thing. If they follow, that is their decision. They are not in any way obliged to follow. If they surrender, that is of their own accord, that is their joy. And I think you are a very gentle person, you are obeying me. Now sit down and listen."

SIMPLE IS RELIGION. Don't make it complicated. Don't spin theories around it, and don't make it unnecessarily arduous. The ego wants difficult things. The ego is not interested in simple things. When I say to you, "This very moment you can become Buddhas!" something inside you says, "How is it possible? So simple? So easy?" You would like something very difficult, so it can become a challenge for your ego. God is not a challenge: God is a love affair. God is not the Everest you have to climb: God is the abyss -- you have nowhere to climb, you can simply take the jump **THIS** moment. And you will disappear.

God is not a staircase that you have to move slowly on step by step. God is a quantum leap. You can fall into God just as you fall in love. It is easy. Take it easy. And the moment you start listening to easy truths, simple truths, ego starts disappearing. Ego is always interested in difficult things. Go to the moon -- ego says, "Yes, this appeals. This I'm going to buy. Yes, let us go to the moon."

Now there is a man in America, Timothy Leary. Just now he has been released from jail. First he was selling the idea to people that drugs are the door to samadhi. Hence he was jailed. Now after six years in jail he has come out. Now he is selling another idea, even more foolish. The idea is that he is preparing a trip to the moon. He has started selling tickets. And the same foolish people who were going into drugs to attain God will now go to the moon -- maybe God is there.

If you go to the moon, you go nowhere. You will remain the same. If you take a drug, you don't change. You will remain the same, you may become even worse. Illusions can't help. But man is always in search of some illusion, a faraway goal, so he can manage a mental trip, a projection. So he can start thinking of the future and forget the present.

Hence the insistence of all the Buddhas: **THIS** very moment all is possible -- you need not wait for a single moment, there is no need to postpone! Take life easy, take life simply -- life is God. Be absorbed in life. Life is the very shrine. Through life you will know that which is hidden in it.

Never be against life, never fight with life. Go with life, flow with life. Go with the river of life... and the river is going already to the ocean.

One who attains to this let-go with life is a **SROTAAPANNA** -- Buddha has called him. He has entered the stream, now there is no worry. I call the man 'sannyasin' who has entered the stream. Now there is no worry, now nothing has to be attained -- he has relaxed. And whenever God chooses, it will happen. He is not even hankering for it. He is calm and quiet; he has equilibrium, tranquillity; he has no desire and no tension and no anxiety. He is not asking to be somebody else -- he is happy as he is.

That tremendous contentment is what sannyas is. And you can celebrate Guru Poornima only if you are a sannyasin.

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #2

Chapter title: Only One Exists

2 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707020

ShortTitle: PARAD302

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 101 mins

The first question:

IS RELIGION REALLY THAT SIMPLE THAT EVEN I CAN UNDERSTAND?

YES, SHEELA -- EVEN YOU. But when I say religion is simple, I don't mean in the sense of easy. I mean in the sense of uncomplicated. Life is uncomplicated, existence is not complex. All complexity is brought into it by the mind. Thinking is complex; how can non-thinking be complex? When there is not a thought left in the mind, how can it be other than simple? When the mirror is absolutely empty, what complexity can be there?

Religion is simple, not in the sense of easy but in the sense of uncomplicated. Philosophy is complex, very complex. But religion comes to the simple heart; it is not a mind effort, it is not philosophizing. In fact, the philosopher finds it very difficult, almost impossible, to become religious. The more intellectual you are, the more difficult. But the difficulty comes from you. You bring the difficulty. You have a very very difficult mind, so your mind is reflected in reality. You bring the disease.

The birds and the trees and the sun and the moon -- everything is absolutely simple. If you are simple, suddenly there is a meeting: the simple meets with the simple. The complex cannot meet with the simple, the complex can meet only with the complex. So if you are simple, suddenly everything is simple. Everything is just an open secret available to everybody.

You ask: IS RELIGION REALLY THAT SIMPLE THAT EVEN I CAN UNDERSTAND?

But the word 'understand' is not right. Religion cannot be understood -- that's how complexity comes in. Religion can be lived but not understood. That's how you bring the complex mind in. If you start trying to understand, the very effort to understand will make it impossible to understand.

A centipede was walking -- one hundred legs -- and a small rabbit was hiding in a bush.

And the rabbit asked, "Uncle, I am always perplexed how you manage -- one hundred legs? -- which one first, which one second, which one third, and so on and so forth? And you never get puzzled? I would like to understand. You tell me something about it."

And the centipede had never felt any puzzle before. He had been walking and walking. He had, in fact, never looked down. He had never counted his legs. For the first time he started to understand it. He became paralyzed, he fell down. He started crying and he said to the rabbit, "You fool! You have destroyed my simplicity! Now it will never be possible for me to walk rightly!"

The mind has entered. To walk is simple, but how do you manage? In fact you don't manage, God manages. Understanding means you start trying to manage. How do you breathe? Have you ever watched it? Forget the centipede -- how do you breathe? How do you manage? -- such a complex process of taking air in, then analyzing air into its elements, then just choosing the oxygen throwing the carbon dioxide out: then the oxygen going into your blood, purifying the blood, again coming back to the lungs, bringing all the rubbish from the blood circulation, throwing it out again -- how do you manage? And you manage it even when you are fast asleep.

God manages, the whole manages. How do you transform bread into blood? And you have been doing that perfectly well -- at least, up to now you have been doing that. I don't know about tomorrow. How have you been capable of managing such a mystery?

You have heard about the miracles of Jesus, that he turned stones into bread -- that's nothing. You turn bread into blood every day. To turn stone into bread is not that difficult; to turn dead bread into alive blood is far more difficult, a far greater miracle. And you do it EVERY moment! Once you have swallowed you forget all about it; God takes care of it. When I say "God takes care of it," I mean nobody is taking care of it -- the whole.

So if you bring this word 'understanding' then there will be complexity. You can live, you can be religious -- please stop understanding!

Zen people have a special way of saying the same thing. They say: A reddish yellow cow passes by a window. The head and horns and the four legs go past. Why does NOT the tail too?

The tail is stuck -- that seems to be very strange. The whole cow has passed -- head, horns and four legs -- everything has passed; just the small tail is caught somewhere and cannot pass through. Zen says you are suffering from this same tail.

What is this tail that remains behind?

Dogen says:

In this world,
The cow's tail, that should come
Out from the window,
Always remains behind
Unless we pull it like mad.

The cow's tail is all that we cannot understand, and yet we try to understand. The cow's tail is the effort to comprehend the incomprehensible. The cow's tail is the effort to demystify existence.

That's what you mean when you say 'understand'. What do you mean by the word

'understand'? -- demystifying existence, making existence a clear thing, a syllogism. And it is not a syllogism, it is a song; you cannot reduce it to a syllogism. It is not a problem of arithmetic, it is not even a riddle -- it is a KOAN. There is no solution to it. It is a mystery, it cannot be solved.

The whole is incomprehensible. When you try to comprehend it, the tail grows, and then you are caught. It is intellect -- which is a small tail. You can pass into God very easily, but the tail will stick. Horns, head, legs, everything will pass into God VERY easily, there is no problem about it. But the tail inside you, wagging in the head, that will remain stuck behind. It won't allow you to go. That's why heady people find it very difficult to enter into religion. People of the heart easily enter on the path.

It is the desire to comprehend the incomprehensible; it is the desire to demystify the ultimate mystery.

The ultimate belongs to the whole, and a part of it -- the intellect -- wants to understand it. The whole can be understood by the whole, not by the part. The like can be understood by the like. Intellect is a VERY small part, a very tiny part, but pretending to be the dictator.

Intellect has become very dictatorial. It says: "First, I have to understand everything. If I don't understand, then it is not. If God is not understood by me, then God cannot be. God can exist only if I allow. Love can be only if I allow." If something is mysterious, the intellect says, "No, it is not." It is better to say "It is not" than to accept the mystery and lose your control and your dictatorial grip on existence. The intellect is the ego -- this is the tail, very small, but gets caught.

So, Sheela, don't grow a tail. If you have a tail, then it will be difficult to get into religion. And I have not seen the tail in Sheela up to now, unless she is hiding it somewhere.

The intellect can solve every problem, except THE problem. The intellect has answers for everything except for God, except for life, except for the total. There it suddenly falls very short; there it is impotent. Before the omnipotent the intellect is impotent.

So if you don't want to understand, there is no problem -- YOU WILL understand. If you WANT to understand, you will miss. Let me repeat it: if you don't want to understand, you WILL understand -- it is simple. If you want to understand, it is very complex, you will miss it.

The second question:

I AM GROPING IN DARKNESS. OSHO, CAN'T YOU TAKE ME OUT OF IT?

I DON'T SEE ANY DARKNESS ANYWHERE. Only you are keeping your eyes closed; the darkness exists not. It is your creation. The sun is everywhere, the light is everywhere, it is full noontide. But you go on clutching your eyes shut, you go on keeping your eyes shut -- hence the darkness. Now, nobody can force your eyes to open. There are a few things you will have to do yourself.

If you want to sneeze, you will have to sneeze -- I cannot do that for you. If you want to blow your nose, you will have to do it yourself -- I cannot do that for you. There are a few things you will have to do for yourself. This is one of the most fundamental things in life, and it is good that you have to do it yourself. Otherwise, even in your freedom you will be a slave. If I bring you out of your darkness, or anybody else, that light won't be much of a light. You will be imprisoned in that light -- you have not come of your own accord, you have not flowered of your own accord.

Have you not watched sometimes? Small children try to open a bud forcefully. The bud CAN be opened. but then it is not a flower. Even when it is open it is not a flower; something is missing; something of great significance is missing. The soul is missing. The flower has soul when it flowers on its own, then it has life. When you force it, you destroy it. All that is beautiful in life can only HAPPEN, it cannot be done.

There is a very beautiful anecdote about a Zen Master, Joshu:

One day, Joshu fell down in the snow and called out, "Help me up! Help me up!"

A disciple of Joshu came along and lay down beside him.

Joshu laughed, got up, and said to the disciple, "Right! Perfectly right! That's what I am doing to you too."

Joshu has fallen in the snow, and he shouts, "Help me up! Help me up!" Now there is no NEED! If you have fallen, you can get up; if you can fall, you can get up. The same energy that makes you fall can make you get up. The person who CANNOT get up, cannot even fall. The same energy that takes you astray can bring you home. The person who cannot come home cannot be astray either, because ENERGY IS needed.

The same energy that makes you a sinner can make you a saint. In fact, to be a sinner is more complex, more difficult, more arduous. To be a saint is not so complex, so arduous. And to be religious is not arduous at all. It is the same energy! You are keeping your eyes shut and you are investing much energy in keeping them shut. The same energy that is keeping them shut, relaxed, will help them open.

The disciple is a real disciple. He understands Joshu perfectly well. He knows that he has created a situation, he has fallen knowingly. Maybe the disciple was passing and Joshu has fallen -- it is a situation -- and he calls, "Help me up! Help me up!" And the disciple comes and lies down by his side himself. He does not help him at all. What is he doing?

He is not trying to help him at all, he's simply sympathizing. He is saying, "What can be done? Okay, I am your disciple, I will lie by your side. What else can I do?"

A Master sympathizes with you, he has compassion. What else can he do? He cannot hold your hand -- a real Master will not -- because to hold your hand is to keep you always dependent. To bring you out forcibly is to keep you inside still. The moment the Master leaves your hand you will go back to your old world, to your old mind. It was not yet finished, it was still clinging inside you.

A real Master helps without helping. Try to see the point -- a real Master helps without helping. His help is very indirect, he never comes immediately to help you. He comes in very subtle ways. He surrounds you like a very fragile breeze, not like a strong wind. He surrounds you like an aura, invisible. He helps you, certainly, but never against you. He helps you only as far as you are ready to go, never a step more. He never pushes you violently, because anything done violently will be lost sooner or later.

That which you have not grown of your own accord you will lose. You cannot possess that which you have not grown in your being of your own accord. You become the possessor only of your own growth. I can even give you the truth, and you will throw it, because you will not recognize it. I can force you awake, but you will fall asleep the moment I am gone, and you will curse me and you will be angry at me, because you were still enjoying your dreams. You were enjoying sweet dreams, and here comes a man and wakes you up.

Sometimes you have observed it yourself. You have to catch a train early -- five o'clock or four o'clock in the morning -- and you tell somebody to wake you up at four o'clock, and

he does. And you are angry! And you don't like the idea at all, and it is YOUR idea. And you feel as if he is your enemy.

I have heard about Immanuel Kant, one German philosopher, that he was very addicted to time. He almost moved like the hand of a clock, exactly on time, everything -- not a minute here, not a minute there. Early, five o'clock in the morning, he used to get up his whole life. He had a servant; the servant had to drag him out of his bed, sometimes even beat him -- he had given that much power to the servant. He told him, "Even if you have to beat me, you beat! And I will give you a good fight, but you HAVE to wake me! Don't listen to what I say early in the morning. I will scold you and shout at you, and I will threaten you that I will fire you today, but you don't bother. Whatsoever I say, you go on listening, but you drag me out."

He became so much dependent on this servant, that the servant almost became the master and the master became the servant. Sometimes the servant would leave him. He tried to find many servants but nobody would suit, because how to beat your master early at five o'clock? Even if says, "Beat me!" the servant would be afraid. The old servant had to be brought again and again.

But how does it happen? You may be enjoying a good, cozy dream; it is cold, and it is so cozy and warm under the blanket. Yes, you had decided before that you would get up, but now...? You feel like turning again and falling into sleep.

Nobody can be awakened before his time, and SHOULD NOT BE.

And there is no problem, just try to understand WHY YOU KEEP YOUR EYES CLOSED. Rather than asking me to force them open, try to understand why you keep them closed. Try to understand what dreams you have still to dream. Have you not dreamed enough? Have you not dreamed really more than enough? For millions of lives you have been dreaming. Nothing have you achieved out of all that dreaming. You remain empty, hollow. Still you go on filling yourself, stuffing yourself with new dreams, with new desires, with new ambitions. There is every possibility that now you are dreaming about enlightenment, hence you have asked the question of me.

You have dreamed many dreams. Now a new dream has arisen in your mind -- to become a Buddha, to attain enlightenment. This is again a dream! If you have really finished with all your dreaming, then who is keeping you asleep? Open your eyes! In fact, there will be no need even to open your eyes. Once you have understood that you have dreamed all the dreams possible, eyes will open! There will be no need even to open them, because there will be nobody closing them.

Just look at my fist: if I have to keep my fist as a fist, I have to keep holding it, clenching it. The moment I drop holding, it starts opening of its own accord. To be open is natural, to be closed is unnatural. To remain closed you have to put much energy into it. To open, NO energy is needed.

This is something very strange: to remain miserable you need to put much energy into it. To remain happy, you don't need any energy at all. Happiness is free, free of cost; misery you need to earn. If you want to be miserable, much effort will be needed to remain miserable. It is such an unnatural state. A fist is an unnatural thing; the open hand is a natural thing. The open hand needs no energy, otherwise you will be very tired -- the whole day the hand is open, by the evening you will feel dead tired. You will say, "The whole day I had to keep my hand open and I am feeling very tired." One day keep your fist closed the whole day, and by the evening you will feel really tired. The hand open is natural.

An open heart is a natural phenomenon; an open being is just natural. A closed being is a very unnatural thing, very artificial; you have to put all your energy into it. This is my observation of thousands of people: that they give their whole energy to keeping themselves miserable. To remain in hell is a great investment. It is not easy, it is very difficult. You need to be very strong to be in hell very stubborn, adamant. This word 'adamant' is good; it comes from 'diamond'. You have to be as hard as a diamond, only then can you remain in hell. Otherwise nobody is barring your path. You relax and you enter into heaven -- relaxation is the door.

You say: I AM GROPING IN DARKNESS. Relax. And the moment you relax your eyes start opening, just as a bud opens and becomes a flower, just as a fist no more kept as a fist starts opening and becomes the open hand.

I am not here to force it. I am here to make it clear to you how it happens. I can talk about the process of it, I cannot do it for you. Understood, it will happen. Don't hope in wrong directions. I don't promise you anything. I simply promise one thing: that whatsoever has happened to me, I will make it obvious to you. Then you have to follow.

Buddha has said: Buddhas only indicate the path, but you have to go, you have to follow the path.

The third question:

AFTER BEING ENLIGHTENED, HOW IS MEDITATION NECESSARY?

Who has told you that after being enlightened meditation is necessary? Meditation remains, but it is not necessary -- it becomes natural. Before enlightenment it is necessary, after enlightenment it is just like breathing. It is, there. It is natural, it is spontaneous.

Enlightenment means exactly that: when meditation has become natural. You are meditative -- not that you sit sometimes in meditation, not that you have a few hours of meditation every day -- your whole time is meditative. You move in meditation, you walk in meditation, you sit in meditation, you eat in meditation, you love in meditation, you do your businesses in meditation. Your whole life becomes surrounded by a new kind of energy. It is not NECESSARY, it is simply natural.

Parinirvana has sent me a small anecdote -- is relevant to this question.

There was a man sitting on a small planet. Every day at six o'clock he ordered fondly for the sun to rise and the sun rose. And at six o'clock he ordered 'set' and the sun set. After a while, the sun knew her lesson and from then on the man was only sitting there and watching.

Nobody has learned any lesson. Even without ordering the sun would have arisen at six o'clock.

If you simply go on living silently, even meditation is not needed; even before enlightenment it is not needed. If you go on living a healthy, heartfelt life -- not much worried about the past and not much desirous of the future -- if you just go on living the life moment to moment as it comes, even BEFORE enlightenment meditation is not necessary. The meditation will start happening. Just as the sun rises in the morning, you need not order it; and in the evening the sun sets, you need not order it.

The man was ordering every day at six o'clock for the sun to rise and every evening at six o'clock to set. And then after a few days he thought, "Now the sun must have learned the

lesson " So he sat silently, watched, and the sun rose! and he watched, and the sun set! So the man was very happy, his work was done -- the sun had learned the lesson.

All meditations are like that. Life itself is continuously moving towards meditation, no other extra effort is needed. Extra effort is needed because your life is not moving at all, because you have been taught utterly nonsensical notions. Because of those wrong notions you have created many blocks in yourself, and life is no more flowing, you are no more a river -- you have become dirty, closed ponds. Hence, meditation is needed.

Meditation is needed because you have become unnatural. If you live a natural life... and by 'natural' I mean: live the moment as it is -- don't try to put any should on it, don't try to transform it into anything else. Just accept the moment as it is. When angry, be angry and accept it; and don't create an ideal of not being angry. And when the anger has passed, don't repent. There is nothing to repent about -- it was so! When in love, love, and don't think how love should be. Don't consult love manuals, just let love flow naturally.

I have heard about a great warrior in Japan, a samurai, a very famous swordsman:

One night when he came tired after the whole day's fight in the fields and he was just going to fall into bed, he saw a rat. And the rat was looking at him ferociously! The samurai tried to kill the rat with his sword. He was one of the best swordsmen known, but somehow he missed. He hit many times, he broke his sword, and he could not kill the rat. He became really afraid: "The rat seems to be very mysterious. This is no ordinary rat!" He started, perspiring -- he had never perspired. He had been a fighter his whole life and now a rat had defeated him.

He ran out, asked his wife what to do. The wife said, "You are a fool! You need not kill a rat. Have you ever heard of anybody killing a rat by a sword? You just take our cat inside." And the cat was brought inside. It was no ordinary cat, it was the great warrior's cat. She was also trained in many things; she was one of the most famous rat-catchers.

She came with all her art, with all her skill. She tried, but the rat was really extraordinary. He jumped exactly into her eyes! And the cat escaped out. She had never seen such a rat -- attacking the cat?! And she was also trembling like the warrior. The warrior said, "This is too much!"

Then the king's cat was called. She was a master cat, very well-known all over the country; of course, she was the king's cat. The king's cat came and she was also defeated by the rat. She went in, tried hard, used all her skill, but the rat was just too much.

Then the king's cat suggested a cat she knew who was not famous at all. "You have tried with famous cats, now you try with an ordinary one... just ordinary, plain ordinary."

The warrior said, "But what can a plain, ordinary cat do?"

The king's cat said, "You just try. I know this cat. She is so ordinary, she does not know a thing. The whole day she sleeps. But there is one thing about her: cats know, the whole country's cats know that she is very mysterious. The mysterious thing is that she knows nothing about rats, rat-catching, the art, the technique, the methodology, the philosophy -- she knows nothing; she has never been to any school or college or university. She is a plain, ordinary cat, but rats are so afraid of her! Wherever she sleeps... no rat ever enters that house! Just her presence is enough. And she goes on sleeping, and nobody knows when she kills and how she kills.

"Once I went to that cat and I asked, 'What is your art?' She simply looked at me, and she had no words to say, and she closed her eyes and went to sleep. And I woke her again and asked,

'What is your art?'

"She said, 'I don't know. I am a cat, that's enough. A cat is a cat and IS MEANT to catch a rat. What art? What nonsense are you talking about?'"

The cat was brought, and the samurai was not very hopeful because she was really very ordinary, just like any vagabond cat.

She came in, and without any skill she simply went in, caught hold of the rat and brought it out.

All the cats gathered together and asked her, "What is your art?"

And she said, "I don't know any art. I am a cat! Is not that enough?"

That's what I mean by being natural. Meditation will happen if you are natural -- even before enlightenment. Meditation is your natural blooming; meditation is not something like an art, skill, performance. No, not at all. You need not go to any school to learn it. But you have been spoiled. Rats have been around you too much, and you have become afraid of the rats -- not only afraid, you have started learning how to catch these rats. You have become very skillful, artificial; you know the know-how and that is your trouble. Your knowledge is your trouble.

Otherwise there is no need! Kabir never meditated -- went on spinning his things and became enlightened. What happened? A natural man, doing his thing with total heart, absorbed in doing his thing -- attained.

So remember, you have to learn meditation because you have learned a few wrong things. To destroy that wrong learning you will need learning. It is as if you have got a thorn in your foot and you need another thorn to take it out. The other thorn is as much a thorn as the first one, but it helps. Meditation is just like a thorn, because you have become artificial and that artificiality has gone deep into your being. Meditation takes it out; it is medicinal.

Do you know? -- 'medicine' and 'meditation' come from the same root. It is medicinal. When somebody is ill we give him medicine. Do you think medicine gives him health? Then you are wrong. Medicine simply destroys his illness. No medicine has yet been invented which can give you health. Health is beyond medicine, and beyond meditation too. The medicine simply destroys the disease. Once the disease is destroyed, once the thorn has been taken out, your inner health starts blooming again.

Only the artificial has to be destroyed. Naturally, for the artificial, something artificial is needed. To destroy something false you will need another thing which is false. You cannot destroy the false by the real, they will not meet. How can you destroy the false by the real? So ALL techniques of meditation are as fictitious as your other fictions -- all fictitious! They help, they certainly help; they help you out of your fiction. But the day you are out of your fictions, suddenly you realize, "Meditation was not even necessary before I became enlightened." It had become necessary because of the society, because of the conditionings, because of too many teachings, because you had lost your nature, your Tao.

So there is no question of "After enlightenment, how is meditation necessary?" Not at all. One forgets what meditation is, because one knows no moments of non-meditation at all. One lives in meditation, one's life is meditation.

But sometimes it has happened: you will sometimes find a Buddha also sitting with closed eyes. You will sometimes find a Meera still worshipping Krishna. So the problem arises in the mind: "What is Buddha doing?"

It is known about Christ that many times he would tell his disciples, "You wait here and I will go into the mountains to meditate." What is Jesus doing when he says he is going to meditate? He need not meditate at all. What does he want to go there for? He simply wants to get rid of the crowd. That meditation is just a trick. He simply wants to be alone. Tired.... Tired of the enemies and tired of the friends. Tired of those who are against him and tired of those who are his followers. Tired, simply tired.

It is almost like a doctor who has been working the whole day in the hospital with ill people, a thousand and one kinds of illness, and he wants to go home and rest. It is like that.

A Jesus or a Buddha is continuously with ill people, because there are only ill people left in the world. He also needs a little rest.

What should Buddha meditate for? But sometimes he sits with closed eyes under the Bo tree -- still, after Buddhahood. Just wants a few moments purely for himself. That beauty of aloneness, that benediction of aloneness -- for a few seconds he wants to forget all the troubles of all kinds of people, that's all. Again he is fresh, again the energy is flowing, again he is ready -- again to help people, again to invite people, again to provoke people.

Long ago in China, Zen Master Obaku, who had reached the highest peak of spiritual attainment, was yet seen constantly worshipping the Buddha with great devotion.

Struck by a doubt, a disciple asked, "Are you asking something of the Buddha, or seeking something concerned with the truth?"

The Master replied, "I have nothing to ask of the Buddha or to seek about the truth."

The disciple asked again, "Then why do you worship?"

The Master said, "I simply worship."

Now this is a strange statement. He says, "I simply worship." It is pure gratitude. It has nothing to do with meditation, prayer. He is not there to ask anything -- all is already given. Now, when ALL is already given, you feel a tremendous gratitude -- such gratitude that you cannot pay anything back; you don't have anything. You can serve your father in his old age and in some way you can pay for all that he has done for you when you were a child. You can respect your mother, look after her in her old age, and pay her in some way. But what can you do for a Master? Because all the coins that you know are of this world -- he has given you something of the other world, and you don't have any coins of the other world. What will you do with a Master? Utterly helpless, you cannot show your gratitude in any other way.

Obaku is right, he says, "I simply worship. I have nothing to ask the Buddha any more. He has already given me, but how can I forget him?"

My own feeling is that Obaku, wherever he is, must be worshipping still. It is eternal gratitude.

Another disciple of Buddha, Manjusri, became enlightened. When he became enlightened, Buddha said to him, "Now you go away from me. Now you have the word yourself. The message has become alive in you. Go and spread it!"

So Manjusri had to go, but with tears in his eyes. Somebody asked, "Why are you crying? You have become enlightened yourself, so what is this clinging to Buddha?"

He said, "Who is clinging to Buddha? But just to see him, just to be close to him, just to be near him, and just to bow down whenever one passes him.... I was passing him almost one thousand times a day, and each time I was bowing. What else can I do? Now I will be far away."

So somebody reported to Buddha that Manjusri was crying. Buddha called him and he said, "You can bow down from anywhere." And it is said Manjusri lived for twenty years, but every day -- morning, evening, afternoon, whenever he had time, he would bow down in the direction Buddha was moving. Wherever Buddha was moving he would bow down.

His disciples would say, "You are a Buddha now in your own right! Why do you go on doing this thing?"

And he would say, "How can I stop doing it? It has become so natural."

It is simple gratitude, for no reason at all. There are a few things which are done for no reason at all. Not all things are done for reasons only. It is impossible not to thank your Master even when you have become enlightened.

A monk asked Hyakujo Yekai, another Zen Master, "What is the most miraculous event in the world?"

Hyakujo answered, "I sit here all by myself. This is the most miraculous event in the world. I SIT HERE ALL BY MYSELF."

But this is meditation! this is prayer, this is worship! Call it anything you want to call it, but this is the only thing after enlightenment: "I sit here all by myself."

The fifth question:

WHY CAN'T ONE RELIGION UNDERSTAND AN OTHER RELIGION'S APPROACH TO REALITY? WHY IS THERE SO MUCH CONFLICT AND MISUNDERSTANDING?

THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN A Buddha and a Christ, no misunderstanding between a Mahavir and a Krishna, no misunderstanding between a Zarathustra and a Mohammed. These are religious people.

There is misunderstanding between Mohammedans and Hindus and Jains and Christians, but these are not religious people. These are just pseudo-religious; they believe they are religious but they are not religious. How can there be misunderstanding when religion has arisen in your heart? Religion makes you so free of all kinds OF opinions. How can there be any misunderstanding? You can misunderstand when you carry an opinion in your mind. When all opinions have been dropped and the mind has attained to silence, how can there be any conflict, misunderstanding?

A Buddha sitting, and by his side a Christ sitting there be any argument? No possibility. How can two silences argue? Yes, if YOU are sitting by the side of a Buddha there is the possibility of every kind of argument. But Buddha sitting by the side of Christ, there is no question of argumentation. They have nothing to propose, they have nothing to state. They will look into each other's eyes and will see the infinity -- two mirrors facing each other will reflect each other in millionfold ways, but nothing else will arise.

But with people who think they are religious and are not there are misunderstandings; they are understandable. If they are not, that will be mysterious, because we speak in languages.

Islam has one language, Christianity has another language, and misunderstanding is bound to be there because those languages are very different -- the metaphors are different, the symbology is different.

For example, no Buddhist uses the word 'God'. Christians use the word 'God'; that is the very center of their whole religion. Now, there is bound to be misunderstanding. Christians think Buddhists are atheists, and Buddhists think Christians are just anthropomorphic -- thinking of God in man's image, just projections. But this happens in ordinary day-to-day life also. Even when you speak the same language, you are misunderstood.

Language is not a very good vehicle for communication. Listen to a few stories.

The first divorce case in Calcutta had some funny sidelights. The attorney for the complainant put his client on the stand and asked him, "Now, as I understand it, every night when you returned from work, instead of having your wife alone and waiting for you, you found a different man hiding in the closet?"

"Yes, that's right."

"And this, of course, caused you untold anguish and unhappiness, did it not?"

"Of course it did," came the hurt reply. "I never had any room to hang up my clothes!"

People have their own ways of understanding. Words have their own meanings for each person. ALL language is very, very personal.

A husband brings home a monkey and two rabbits to the one room in which he and his wife live. She looks dismayed. "What will they eat?"

"The same food as we do," says the husband.

"Where will they sleep?"

"At the foot of the bed."

"What about the smell?" she protests.

"They'll get used to it," he answered, "as I did."

You watch it, and you will find these misunderstandings everywhere. Morning till evening, you watch, and you will find a thousand and one places where people speaking the same language and talking about the ordinary reality go on misunderstanding each other, go on making words mean something very personal.

The farm woman boarded the bus with nine children and refused to pay fares for any of them.

"These three are seven," she said, "these three are five, and these three are two years old."

The bus driver looked at her in astonishment. "You mean to tell me you get three every time?"

"Shucks, no. Sometimes we don't get any."

Language conveys and yet does not convey. What to say about the other reality -- which nobody knows, and about which those who know keep silent? Those who know go on saying that nothing can be said about it. But for the people who have not known, some maps have to be drawn, some words have to be created, some structures have to be made, some guidelines have to be given. Those guidelines are what Hinduism is, Islam is, Christianity is. Different people have drawn them in different ways.

For example, if five persons are sent into a forest to describe the forest and they come back, do you think they will bring the same message and the same picture from the same forest? No, the painter will bring a painting, and the poet will bring a song. And the biologist

will bring something else, the chemist something else again, and the woodcutter still something else again. And they will all be coming from the same forest, they will be visiting the same place, maybe together. But, still, when they bring their message it will be different.

Buddha and Mohammed and Christ enter into the same purity, into the same luminosity, but when they come back Buddha speaks in his way -- a king's son has his own ways of speaking. Christ speaks in his own way -- a carpenter's son has his own way of speaking. They are utterly different. A carpenter's son has to speak the carpenter's language. That's why Jesus' language is very very earthly and very powerful.

Buddha's language is very abstract; only a few people can understand Buddha's language -- very sophisticated, very cultured, very educated. Jesus is uneducated, never been to any school, knows only the way people, ordinary people talk in ordinary life. But that's the beauty of his language -- very forceful. The more cultured language becomes, the more far away it is from life. It can be understood only by great scholars. But Jesus' language can be understood by any -- a labourer, a farmer, a fisherman. Hence Christianity's appeal all over the world for all the poor people.

Rich people don't become interested in Christianity. Rich people can have their own sophistication. With somebody else. Buddha is beautiful.

And you see, the miracle is happening! In the East where people are poor, people are becoming Christians. In the West where people have become rich, they are becoming Buddhists. Buddha is becoming more important than Christ in America. Sooner or later, America will belong to Buddha, not to Christ, because now people have come to a cultured state where Buddha's language is more appealing.

In India Buddhism has disappeared! India lost that class; India became poor. When Buddha walked on this earth, twenty-five centuries ago, India was the most rich, affluent country in the world -- the golden bird. The country was very very cultured. Many universities were functioning, many colleges, many schools. And to talk about philosophy was a very common thing.

It is said that when Shankara entered a town to have a discussion with Mandan Mishra, he inquired at the well outside the town, "How will I know where the house of Mandan Mishra is?" -- the philosopher whom he was going to challenge to a debate.

And the girls on the well giggled and laughed. They said, "You don't worry, you go -- wherever you find parrots reciting the Upanishads you will know this is Mandan Mishra's house."

And that was actually the case. Even parrots were reciting sutras from the Upanishads. Even the gate guard talked in such a refined way that Shankara was a little puzzled, became a little afraid. And when they discussed, Mandan Mishra's wife, Bharti, presided over the discussion. Even women were tremendously cultured, educated. His wife presided over these two philosophers' discussion.

Things were totally different -- then Buddhism flowered. Now things are very much down. The appeal of Buddhism cannot be very deep today in India. Christianity is more appealing. Christ speaks the language of the proletariat.

Have you not watched many things happening in the world? Communism is a by-product of Christianity. Nothing like communism has happened in India. Great religions were born -- Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism -- but nothing like communism happened out of them. They lived in the skies. Communism happened through Christianity -- it is a poor man's religion.

But in America, Christianity is losing ground. The moment you become very rich, the moment you start feeling great things and start thinking great ideas, and great music appeals

to you and great dance and great art, naturally Buddha becomes important again. Hence the appeal of Zen.

People speak THEIR language and they understand THEIR language. Different religions speak different languages on different planes. They speak about the One, they speak about the same, but the speakers are different. And when the hearers catch hold of those words from Buddha, Christ, Mahavir, they can't see the similarity. They are so dissimilar -- the language is so different that they cannot see the unity in it. That's why there is much misunderstanding. There is no way to create understanding without becoming religious yourself.

If you meditate, if you become silent, if you attain a few glimpses of no-mind, all misunderstanding will disappear. Suddenly you will see all is one, only one exists -- in millions of forms -- but only one exists.

The sixth question:

I AM TIRED OF MY WIFE. DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS? WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Who is not tired? You think you are alone? And do you think your wife is not tired of you? Wives are tired of husbands husbands are tired of wives. But even if you change your wife nothing will change. You will become tired of another woman, that's all. If you change your husband, nothing will change; you will become tired of another husband. Yes, for a few days there will be a thrill, there will be a sensation of the new, of the novel. But the new finally becomes old, and the moment anything new becomes old you become tired.

So there are three layers of this tiredness: one, you become tired of your wife but you are not tired of woman. Second layer: you become so tired of so many wives that you become tired of woman. But you are still not tired of the mind that goes on hankering for the new. The third layer: you become so tired of changing so many times to the new and again it becomes old that you become tired of the mind. And when you become tired of the mind, then the moment of great discovery has arrived.

Otherwise, you can change very easily. Why go on getting tired of a wife? Get tired of somebody else. Even changing miseries helps a little. You will be in another misery, but at least it will be new, and for a few days there will be hope. For a few days you will think, "Now things are going to be good again." But the honeymoon will be over faster than the first honeymoon, because now you have become more understanding. If the first honeymoon was for three weeks, the second will be of two weeks, and the third will be one week, and so on and so forth.

Try to see the mind. The mind is in constant hankering for the new. And it cannot be satisfied because everything new automatically becomes old. So wherever you are you will always be dissatisfied. Why not get tired of this mind itself?

It happens in many ways but we don't watch it. Up to now in the history of man people were forced to live with one woman, with one man. They were tired of husbands and they were tired of wives, but they were not tired of women and not tired of men. Buddha became tired of women because he had many women available -- and the best. There was no further go. He become tired of all women, he became tired of women as such.

That's what is happening in America today. People are changing like anything -- it is a fashion. Just as you change the model of your car every year or every six months, you change

your wife or your husband. But then what is happening, do you know? People are getting tired of woman herself, of man himself. And then a very strange thing is happening: people are turning gay -- homosexuals, lesbians.

Where will it land? When man becomes tired of woman as such there are two possibilities. If he moves in the right direction he will become tired of mind, and will start moving in meditations, prayer, religion. If he moves in the wrong direction he will become tired of women and will become interested in men -- will become homosexual.

Homosexuality is on the increase in the West. And then one day you will become tired of homosexuality too. Then move towards animals -- that people have done. And then...? Then there is only one thing left: create machines and make love to machines. That, too, people are doing and people have done. There are plastic women available in America. You can make love to a plastic woman. And when you make love she behaves almost as if she is real. Her nipples become erect -- a plastic thing, but managed mechanically. Maybe you have to plug it in.

This is moving into wrong directions, from one wrong to another wrong. This is not going to lead anywhere. And the ultimate end is suicide. One day you become so tired of everything that you commit suicide. That too is happening. Many more people are committing suicide today than ever before. And you will be surprised: more in the West, less in the East. It should not be so -- the East is so poor, so much in suffering -- if people commit suicide here, that looks logical. But people are not committing suicide here; people are committing suicide in the West where affluence has happened, where everything is available.

But BECAUSE everything is available, people have got ted up with everything! When things are not available you can hope. When things are available, hope disappears. Now there is no hope. You have the best car, the best yacht, the best woman, the best man, the best house -- another house in the hills, another on the sea beach. Now what to do? Where to go? Suddenly you feel tired of the whole thing, of the whole business of life. Commit suicide! Life seems meaningless.

This is a wrong direction. And the situation is such that you can move rightly too. If you move rightly you become a sannyasin; if you move wrongly, you become a suicide. Sannyas and suicide both come out of the same situation. Sannyas means seeing into this mind: that it gets tired of everything, so why not get tired of it and drop it? Why not drop the SOURCE itself? Why go on carrying the source? Drop the source itself! Cut the root! That's what meditation is all about.

But I don't know whether you really want to cut the root, or whether you want to change your wife. If you want to change your wife, I have a suggestion.

I have heard about a company "Homebreakers Limited". I have seen an advertisement, I will read it to you:

Dear Friend:

This chain was started in the hope of bringing happiness to all tired businessmen. Unlike most chains, it does not require money. Simply send a copy of this to five male friends, then bundle up your wife and send her to the fellow whose name heads the list. When your name reaches the top of the list, you will receive 15,186 women and some should be corks. Have faith. Don't break the chain. One man broke it and got his wife back.

If you REALLY are interested in changing your life into a different dimension of joy, of non-boredom, then changing the wife won't help; You will get another woman. They come in

all shapes and sizes -- but the reality is the same! They look different from far away, and so is the case with men, remember. They look different from far away. The closer you come, the less difference. The more close, the more difference has gone. The day the woman is yours, suddenly you say, "She is after all a woman," and "He is after all a man."

This you have been doing for many millions of lives. This is what we call in India the wheel of life and death -- the wheel of desire. And you know it! You have known it in many ways. You were hankering for a car and now the car is in your porch, and the day it arrives in your porch, suddenly all joy is gone. What to do now? Yes, it is there. One day, two days, three days, you enjoy the thrill of the new, then it becomes old. Then find another car. But you never find the mind that goes on creating trouble for you -- the source of all anguish.

The mind is never satisfied with that which is. This is the source of discontent. The mind is always asking for that which is not. Look at the absurdity. The mind always asks for THAT WHICH IS NOT, and is always dissatisfied with THAT WHICH IS. Now, how can you be happy with this mind? Wherever you are you will be unhappy. Unhappiness follows mind like a shadow.

So rather than going on changing things, see into the whole phenomenon of it. And if you really want to change, drop this mind. And with the dropping of the mind, each moment is such a joy and such a contentment.

Yes, it will be very very difficult for you to believe, but let me say it, let it be on record: If you drop the mind you will be simply surprised, you are again in love -- even with your own wife. With the mind dropped, one becomes love. It is not a question of wife, husband, this and that. One is simply love, one flows in love. No more will she be your wife, certainly; no more will you be her husband. These are ugly things, these should not happen in a better world.

With a better consciousness these things should disappear. To reduce a woman to a wife is ugly! It is immoral! To reduce a man to a husband is ugly and immoral. This is confining, this is defining. This is making a phenomenon very limited. A woman is a mystery, so is a man. Don't call her YOUR wife; she is not yours. And she is not a wife. A wife is a function! That is not her totality; she is many more things. She is not finished by being a wife. She may be a painter, she may be a singer, she may be a dancer. She may be a thousand and one things! Why call her just a wife? 'Wife' is just a function.

You also are not just a husband. You are many more things. 'Husband' is just a function, and a very ugly word at that. You call the farmers, their farming, 'husbandry'. Why? 'Husband' comes from 'husbandry'. In old times people used to think that man is the farmer and woman is the field -- very ugly words. So man is farming in the field of woman.

You are not the farmer, she is not the field; otherwise, the farmer becomes the owner and the field becomes the property. Then you can sell your property. That's what people have done down the ages -- the woman has been thought of as property. Woman is not property, and if you reduce woman to property she will take revenge. And they have taken, and they have taken very perfectly! If you reduce a woman to being just a property, she will reduce you to being just a hen-pecked servant, not even a husband. That's what she has done. Your so-called brave men are brave only outside; when they come home they are just like tiny mice!

Somebody was saying to Mulla Nasruddin, "Why are you so afraid of your wife?" because he was leaving the party early. It was not early, it was midnight, but others were staying and dancing and drinking and doing things and he wanted to leave. Somebody said,

"Why do you want to leave the party so early? Why are you so afraid of your wife? Are you a man or a mouse?"

And Mulla said, "I am a man -- because my wife is afraid of mice!"

That's how things have happened. They have taken a subtle revenge. Of course, their way is very feminine; they have not taken revenge directly. Women function in a very subtle way -- indirectly. They call you master -- SWAMI -- they touch your feet, and you know perfectly well and everybody knows who is the master and who is touching the feet.

This is an ugly state of affairs. If you get tired, it is natural. Get out of it. But I'm not saying leave your wife. Drop the idea that she is your wife, and drop the idea that you are her husband. Be friends -- that's MORE than enough! And be meditative, drop the mind. And suddenly you will see life has started flowing again.

The sixth question:

BOTH I AND MY BROTHER-IN-LAW ENJOYED THE LECTURE TODAY. BUT I MYSELF ENJOYED THE LECTURE WITH FULL MIND AND MY BROTHER-IN-LAW SAYS HE ENJOYED THE LECTURE AS A WITNESS. I FEEL THAT HE IS A FOOL AND THAT I AM CLEVER. KINDLY CLARIFY.

ONE WHO THINKS THAT HE IS CLEVER IS A FOOL. But I don't know about your brother-in-law, what he thinks. This is about you. He may be thinking that you are a fool, then you are both in the same boat. Brothers-in-law are.

Never think about the other as a fool. That shows intelligence, when you don't think about the other as a fool. Nobody is. There are different expressions of intelligence, yes; but nobody is a fool. Maybe the way the other's intelligence functions is different from yours.

Somebody is very intelligent in mathematics, and somebody is very intelligent in poetry. Now, the man who is intelligent in mathematics, thinks the poet is a fool. And in a way he is right, because in mathematics the man is not very intelligent. But the poet thinks the mathematician is a fool. In a way he is also right, because the mathematician cannot compose two lines of poetry -- so what kind of intelligence is this, just calculation, calculation? Create something! -- that shows intelligence.

People ARE intelligent in different, different ways. I have never come across a fool. And if you come across a fool, just try to find out: he must have somewhere some kind of intelligence which is not yet known by you. Sometimes a very very foolish person has his own intelligence.

I used to know, when I was a student in the university, a man who lived outside the university campus, and was thought to be very foolish, stupid -- a perfect idiot. He was SO idiotic, that if you gave him a ten-rupee note and one single ANNA, he would take the anna and reject the note. I became friendly with him, just in the search, because I wanted to see -- there must be some intelligence in this man too.

When I became friendly, after many many months I inquired, "Why, can't you see that this is a ten-rupee note somebody is giving you? And you choose a one anna piece and you reject the ten-rupee note?"

He said, "Am I a fool? If I receive the ten-rupee note then nobody will offer ever! Finished with one ten-rupee note -- and this is my business! People offer me, and they enjoy. Let them enjoy! I always choose the smaller coin. Am I a fool?"

And I understood. He was a very intelligent man. Now he was fooling the whole campus, even professors. Very intelligent people would go just to have a joke: "How foolish he is!"

Intelligence has different ways of asserting itself. Never think for a single moment that anybody can be a fool -- because only God exists, so how can anybody be a fool? And if you are too much interested in the word itself, then think only that you are fool -- that will lead you towards more wisdom.

The last question:

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT POLITICS AND RELIGION ARE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE?

Because they are. It is not a question of my opinion -- they are, because politics is an ego trip and religion is dropping of the ego. The politician cannot be religious, and the religious person cannot be a politician.

It is absolutely so, it is categorically so. The politician is always trying to have more power. For what? -- to enhance his ego, to show to the world that "I am somebody." And the religious person has dropped that whole stupid business. HE KNOWS HE IS SOMEBODY, so what is the point of saying or showing to anybody? He KNOWS! The politician pretends; the religious person knows. He has come inside his own being, and he has known the King of kings -- the Master of masters there. So what is the POINT now? Striving for a bigger chair and a higher post -- what is the point? You cannot make him higher than he has known himself inside.

If you make Buddha the president of India, that won't help. That will not increase him, that will decrease him. Buddha won't be a Buddha then, he will be a very ordinary man.

A religious man has come to see his own infinite treasure, so he does not long for any power trip. It may be the money trip or the power trip or the prestige trip, but they are all politics. There are only two directions in life: religion and politics. And either you are in one or you are in the other. If you are not a religious man then you are, by necessity, a politician. You may not be actually in politics, but you are a politician. And politics can assert itself in many ways. You may be a politician with your wife: you are the dominator and she is the dominated. Or you may be a politician with your children: you are the dictator and they have to follow your orders, they have to be obedient to you. Or you may be a politician in your office: you are the boss and everyone has to be a slave. Or you may be thinking of gathering much money so you come to the top through money, but the idea is the same. Or, you may even be renouncing the world just to think that you come at the top of all the mahatmas -- you become the greatest mahatma. But it is again the same: you are a politician.

If you renounce the world, if you become naked and move on the streets with the idea that "Now no saint can compete with me. Now, I have come to the top!" you are a politician. Maybe a naked politician, a religious politician, if you want it to be said that way, but a politician is a politician!

I have heard:

Nikita Khrushchev went to his tailor with a bolt of expensive cloth especially woven for him. He asked the tailor to make up a three-piece suit. After measuring the portly, vodka-guzzling Red czar, the tailor said he would not have enough cloth for a vest.

Khrushchev grumpily decided against ordering the suit and took the cloth with him on a

visit to Belgrade. There he tried a Yugoslav tailor who measured him and found he could make a stylish suit including a vest. Khrushchev, puzzled, asked why the Russian tailor could not cut the cloth to make a vest.

"In Moscow you are a bigger man than you are here," the Belgrade tailor replied.

"In Moscow you are a bigger man than here... in Belgrade, who bothers about you?"

Your presidents are great men when they are in power. When they are not in power, then? Your prime ministers are great when they are in power. When they are not in power, then? Then the same dogs who used to wag their tails, start barking -- the SAME dogs, the same people.

You can find it: the same dogs who have been wagging their tails around Indira now are barking at her. The dogs are the same. They have just changed a little. Mm? -- rather than wagging their tails, they bark. Now they are wagging their tails at

Morarji. But beware, Morarji, these are the same people! Sooner or later they will bark at you. This goes on. This drama goes on.

Richard Nixon's tapes have revealed a lot about the man we never knew. Here is a conversation that was supposed to have taken place with Bob Haldeman.

"Bob, I realize that some day I'm going to pass on," said the former President to his aide. "I would like you to find a nice burial place for me."

Two weeks later, Haldeman returned and said, "Mr. President, I have found just the spot. It is on a hill overlooking a beautiful stream. And the sun hits it during the day almost as if you were being spotlighted."

"Sounds good," said Nixon. "How much?"

"Four hundred thousand dollars."

"What? Four hundred thousand dollars!" cried Nixon. "I'm only gonna be there three days!"

Just like Jesus! Every politician, when he is in power, thinks that he is God. Says Nixon, "I'm only gonna be there three days! And for three days, four hundred thousand dollars? Foolish! This is too much."

Power gives you the feeling that you are great. But this feeling comes only to the person who is not great. Power is needed only by the not-greats. If you are really great -- and by really great I mean if you have come home inside yourself, if you have come in tune with your being -- then no need to add anything to you. You are already there. And then, suddenly, it is not that you are great and others are not great. The moment you know you are great, the whole existence becomes great -- even a dog is a god then.

Buddha is reported to have said: "When I became enlightened, the whole existence became enlightened. Everything became enlightened the same moment!" That is the vision of a really great man. The really great man sees only gods and goddesses around. Everywhere existence is great for him.

So there are two types of greatness: one type, the political type -- you become great by making others small. This is an ugly kind, ill kind, neurotic. Then there is another kind of greatness: you become great, and suddenly the whole existence becomes great. With you, everything becomes divine. That is religion. And they don't meet, and they can't meet.

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #3

Chapter title: Take no Thought for the Morrow

3 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707030

ShortTitle: PARAD303

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 102 mins

WHILE VISITING GASAN, A UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASKED "HAVE YOU EVER READ THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE?"

"NO, READ IT TO ME," SAID GASAN.

THE STUDENT OPENED THE BIBLE AND READ FROM ST. MATTHEW: "AND WHY TAKE YE THOUGHT FOR RAIMENT? CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD, HOW THEY GROW. THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN, AND YET I SAY UNTO YOU THAT EVEN SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY WAS NOT ARRAYED LIKE ONE OF THESE.... TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW, FOR THE MORROW SHALL TAKE THOUGHT FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF."

GASAN SAID: "WHOEVER UTTERED THOSE WORDS I CONSIDER AN ENLIGHTENED MAN."

THE STUDENT CONTINUED READING: "ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU, SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND, KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU. FOR EVERYONE THAT ASKETH RECEIVETH, AND HE THAT SEEKETH FINDETH, AND TO HIM THAT KNOCKETH, IT SHALL BE OPENED."

GASAN REMARKED: "THAT IS EXCELLENT. WHOEVER SAID THAT IS NOT FAR FROM BUDDHAHOOD."

A SHAGGY GOD STORY:

A great seeker of truth travelled around the world searching for the Master. He finally efforts, struggles, claws. and crawls through many many hardships -- this is after all a shaggy god story -- to the top of the Himalayas, and there in a cave he finds an ancient Wise Man. The seeker manages piteously to whisper his question with his last drop of strength:

"Tell me, oh Wise Man, what is the secret of life?"

"TAT-TVAM-ASI: Thou art That," chirps the sage immediately.

"Thou art That?" says the seeker, suddenly renewed by massive indignation. "What kind of a crummy answer is that? Here I go all over the stupid globe looking for the Answer. I find you, the kingpin in this game, and you tell me gibberish like that? That's it? I've had it! I'm going to find out MYSELF what it is all about."

So the seeker spins around and starts tromping down the mountain. He spends the next twenty-five years of his life studying Sufism, Zen, Shakti, Bhakti, Gyana and Prana Yoga; the Kabbalah, the Koran, the Bible, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Tao Te Ching... and whatnot... you name it... and learns seventeen martial arts, hangs around with every Teacher

worth his capital 'T'; takes every mind control, actualization and transpersonal psychology seminar invented; meditates, levitates and fulminates for godawful months on end; and finally after receiving mucho acknowledgement from his peers that he is one high and mighty dude, hikes back into the mountains and confronts the old sage again.

"Come on, I am in the club now," says the seeker; "I have studied these terrifically enlightening things. I am a guru myself, finally. You can tell me -- I mean the REAL straight-dope-low-down about the secret of life -- I am one of the gang now. How about it?"

The sage giggles, looks him straight between the eyes, and blithers, "TAT-TVAM-ASI: Thou art That."

The seeker digs it, but his mind won't quit and it is howling mad. "Cripes!" his mind has him say aloud. "That's ridiculous. That's the same drivel you told me twenty-five years ago!"

The sage looks at him nonplussed: "SO? the truth does not change in twenty-five years."

The truth does not change in twenty-five years, the truth does not change in twenty-five thousand years, the truth does not change in twenty-five million years. The truth does not change. The truth is one.

Thousands are the expressions for it, but truth is one. Many are the fingers pointing at the moon, but the moon is one. Don't get lost in the fingers, don't get too much attached to the fingers. Look at the message and forget the medium.

Mediums are many, truth is not many. Metaphors are many, truth is not many. Truth is one, eternal, timeless, transcendental. About truth this thing has to be understood very deeply. This understanding will liberate you from being a Christian, from being a Hindu, from being a Jain, from being a Buddhist, from being a Mohammedan. This understanding will make you religious for the first time.

Religion is not confined to any mediums. Many, many efforts have been made -- it is not confined to any effort to express it. All that is expressed is something totally different from the metaphors, the parables, the words, the language, in which it is expressed. Remember the essential and forget the non-essential. Buddha, Mahavir, Krishna, Christ, Mohammed -- they all say the same thing, obviously in different ways. They are different people so they speak different languages. They are differently brought up, their metaphors are different. But how can they speak different truths? Truth is one.

Look! -- even science is one. There is no Hindu chemistry and there is no Christian mathematics. The truths of science are one. If the truth is one about matter, why should it be otherwise about consciousness? When the truth is one about the periphery, why should it be different as far as the center is concerned? The center is one, the peripheries can be different from each other. The periphery is big enough to be divided. The center is not even big enough to be divided, the center is indivisible. Yes, there is a possibility of there being a Christian mathematics and a Hindu mathematics, but there is no possibility of there being a Christian religion and a Hindu religion -- because mathematics exists on the periphery; it is the world of the superficial.

Religion is at the very core of reality, the center of the cyclone. It is one! We can look at it with different eyes, and we can have different glasses on our eyes -- different coloured glasses. We can have different mind constructs, ideologies to interpret it. But that which is being interpreted is the one. Religion is one. Religions are not religion but just sects. Religions are just ways to point at THE religion -- fingers pointing to the moon. Let it sink deep into you.

Just the other day there was a question from Divya that "When you speak on Buddha, it

seems Buddha is a Zen Master. When you speak on Mahavir, it seems Mahavir is a Zen Master. When you speak on Christ, it seems Christ is a Zen Master. When you speak on somebody else, it looks like he is the Zen Master."

Yes, they are all Zen Masters, because Zen is not a religion. Zen is the ESSENTIAL core of all religions. Zen means DHYAN. The Sanskrit root for Zen is DHYAN. Then DHYAN became in Pali, ZAN. Then in China it became CHAN, and then in Japan it became Zen. But the root is DHYAN. DHYAN is the essential thing. Dhyana means a state of thoughtless awareness, when all thoughts disappear and you look into reality without any hindrance, when all dust has been dropped and the mirror reflects perfectly -- as is the case -- that which is reflected without any interpretation on your part. That's what Zen is!

Divya IS right. And you may be puzzled many times that I go on speaking on Tilopa, Mohammed, Mahavir, Krishna, Christ. But I go on saying the same thing. These are just different excuses to bring you home. If you don't listen, if you don't understand the way Buddha speaks, I will speak the way Mohammed speaks. If you don't understand that, I will speak the way Tilopa speaks. I have infinite hope that in some way, some day, some metaphor will hit you, and will open your heart.

This sword? -- good. If this is not going to kill you, then another sword. I am not attached to swords. My whole effort is how to annihilate you. Any sword will do. I am not interested that you should be killed only by this sword: Buddha's sword or Mahavir's, or Christ's -- any sword will do, any temple will do. The prayer has to arise, the meditateness has to happen.

So the first thing before we try to enter this beautiful story: many are the lies -- only lies can be many, truth cannot be many. How can there be two truths? Either they will agree with each other, then they will become one; or they will disagree with each other, then only one can be true, or maybe both are false, but both cannot be true. Truth cannot be two.

Opinions are many. Opinions are lies, man-invented lies. For example, we are sitting here, one thousand persons sitting here. If you think, you are one thousand. Everybody thinks in his own way; everybody will have his own thoughts, will spin his own dreams. But if you are all silent, nobody is thinking, then there are not one thousand persons sitting here: there is simply one silence, one zero -- big zero -- and all have dissolved into it.

When you meditate, the ego disappears. With the ego all the distinctions, differences, disappear. If you all are meditative here, in this moment, then here there is nobody. Only one prevails -- the unknown -- only God prevails. You disappear, you lose your boundaries, you melt, you merge in the ocean. When you are thinking, you are separate. When you are thinking, you create noise, you create a boundary around you, you are fenced off against the other. When you are thinking, you are for something and against something. Thinking always creates pros and cons.

When you are thinking, you are a Hindu or a Mohammedan. When you are not thinking, who are you? -- Hindu or Mohammedan? You cannot say. If you say Hindu, you are still thinking. If you say Mohammedan, you are still thinking. When you are not thinking, you are nobody. Only God is. You are a hollow bamboo, a flute, and the song is God's not yours.

Lies are many, because lies are inventions of man. You can go on inventing them. That's why people are interested so much in lies, because lies give thrill -- they are new. Truth is never new, it is the ancientmost -- the same, the same, the same.... Truth is boring. Lies are very, very intriguing; lies are very interesting. Hence you love fiction, hence you go to the movies. Life is all around! You don't see this life -- you go to a movie, you pay for it. For three hours you are lost in a fictitious world, unreal, but you enjoy it. Why are you enjoying it? It is new.

But truth is always the same. In fact to call it old is not right either, because it has never been new so how can it be old? Anything that is new will become old, anything that is old must have been new some time or other. Only the new becomes old. Truth is neither. That's what we mean in India when we say truth is SANATANA -- eternal -- neither new nor old. As old as anything and as new as anything, but basically neither.

Only a very, very intelligent person can listen to truth. The stupid mind hankers for fictions, gossip -- not for the gospel. The stupid mind is interested in gossiping. There is thrill! Something new is happening! You read the newspaper in the morning. You don't read the Gita any more, you don't read the Bible any more, you don't read Dhammapada. You read the newspaper; the newspaper is the world of lies -- the world of the politician, the world of fictions. You enjoy the newspaper tremendously, because you have the feeling that something new may have happened, something new is possible.

I have heard that once a journalist died and went directly to heaven. He was a journalist and a big name, and he didn't bother whether he was entitled to go to heaven or not. He simply knocked on the door -- and all the great doors in the world were always open to him: prime ministers', presidents', and all the VIPs'.

He knocked at the door. St. Peter opened the door, inquired who he was, and he said, "Don't you know me? Have you never heard my name? Don't you read the newspapers?"

St. Peter said, "No, newspapers don't come here. And we have our full quota of journalists in heaven -- twelve -- we have the quota fixed. Even those twelve are useless, because there is no news here! It is just a formality. They are here, but no newspaper is published. There is nothing to publish. For news to happen, mad people are needed."

George Bernard Shaw has said, "When a dog bites a man it is not news; when a man bites a dog, it is news." A dog biting a man? What news is this? This ordinary. But a man biting a dog becomes news. Only mad people create news. So if you want real news you have to go to mad cities -- New Delhi, Peking, Moscow, Washington, London -- there you find news all around. News, and news and news!

So he said, "Please, you go to the other place, to hell. There they need many newspeople -- great journalists are needed and respected there, and much happens there. Here nothing happens! It is always the same. Nothing changes here, it is eternally the same. Silence prevails, absolute calm prevails. No gossiping, no fighting, no war, no murder, no rape -- nothing happens. Things are here as if they are not."

But the journalist was intent. He said, "Twelve you have. Just give me twenty-four hours' time. I will persuade somebody to go to the other place, and then you can manage for me. I want to be here."

St. Peter took pity on him and gave him twenty-four hours to persuade somebody.

He spread the news -- he was a journalist -- he immediately entered and started talking to people: "A new paper, a very new paper, is being published in hell, and on a good salary, big house, big car, big staff, editors, news editors are needed." He spread the news.

After twenty-four hours when he came back to St. Peter, St. Peter closed the door and said, "Don't try to get out. All the twelve have escaped!"

But then the journalist became a little suspicious. He said, "All the twelve have gone? I was thinking one or two at the most. All the twelve have gone? Then let me go out. Then there must be something in it."

He himself has created the news. It is a lie, he knows, but when you tell lies to people many times, by and by you start believing it yourself. Lies have a tendency to become truths, just repetition is needed.

That's what Adolf Hitler says in his autobiography, MEIN KAMPF. That is the only distinction he makes between truth and a lie: a lie is just the truth told for the first time; and a truth is a lie told many times. That is the only distinction he makes. And he knows well, he did it well himself.

You can go ON repeating a lie again and again and again, and sooner or later people will start believing it. When they hear it again and again, the impact... it creates a groove in their minds. And when many people start believing, you will start believing yourself, because you live according to people.

"If so many people are believing, there must be something in it," said the journalist. "I want to go, I don't want to be here. And I have looked into your heaven -- it is useless. Nothing is happening here and nothing will ever happen here."

SO REMAIN IN A STATE WHERE NOTHING HAPPENS, is what DHYAN is, meditation is. Meditation is heaven.

Buddha talks about it, Jesus talks about it, Zarathustra talks about it, Lao Tzu talks about it. And they are talking about the SAME phenomenon. It is the same energy, the same kind of experience.

That's why Divya IS right. When I am talking, I am talking about the same thing again and again. These are different excuses. I use them like jumping boards. If any one message hits you, ALL messages have hit you. If you can understand Buddha, you have understood ALL -- Mahavir, Krishna, Christ -- all. If you understand Christ, you have understood all.

A single enlightened person understood and you have understood all... the whole past of all the enlightened people! Not only that, but the whole future too. All the Buddhas that have happened and all the Buddhas that will happen are contained in one understanding of a single Buddha.

So remember, truth is not an opinion. It is not knowledge. Knowledge changes, knowledge accumulates, new facts are discovered. Knowledge cannot remain the same. So truth is not knowledge. Science changes every day, you know.

Just a few years ago, something was thought to be the truth, now it is no more thought to be the truth. Newton's truths are no more truths. Einstein has destroyed the world of Newton completely. Einstein's truths will not remain truths very long. They are being destroyed already. In three hundred years of science, at least thirty times the structure of science has changed. The structure changes every day because new facts are discovered. And there is no end to it. Knowledge is accumulative.

When a new fact is discovered, you have to change the old theory. And it may be that you have discovered the new fact because of the old theory. But then the new fact has to be accommodated and the theory has to be changed. Science goes on changing.

Now scientists say, "We will never arrive at any absolute truth. All is hypothetical." By 'hypothetical' they mean it is true because it works, and it is true as long as it works. When something else works better, that will be truth. So truth is utilitarian in the scientific world.

But in religion, truth is not knowledge, not opinion. It does not depend on facts. TRUTH IS KNOWING, SEEING, BEING. Truth has nothing to do with the object, truth has something to do with your subjectivity. It has nothing to do with seeing something outside there as an object. It has something to do with the very quality of your seeing, of your

perception, of your vision. That's why in India, we call philosophy DARSHAN. DARSHAN means the capacity to see.

WHAT you see is the world of science; HOW you see is the world of art. And when seeing is pure -- of the object and of the how too, when seeing is pure of science and art both -- it is religion. Let me repeat it so you follow it rightly.

When you look at an object, say you look at a tree, your whole consciousness is directed at the tree as an object. The very word 'object' means that which obstructs you. It is standing there against you, outside you. The arrow is looking at the tree, you have forgotten yourself.

A scientist at work completely forgets himself, he has to. In fact, that is a fundamental of science, that the scientist should not interfere, that he should not bring any values, that he should not bring any judgements, that he should not bring any preferences -- likes and dislikes -- he should be a detached observer, just detached. He should be almost nil there, just an observer. And whatsoever the fact is, he should note it down as it is. It is objective.

Then comes a poet, or a painter, or a singer, and looks at the tree. He is also looking at the tree, but he brings something else -- he is no more a detached observer. He is a lover; he has an aesthetic quality to his vision. He is searching for beauty. He has a certain leaning towards beauty; knowingly, unknowingly, he is looking for beauty. He will see beauty in the same tree where a scientist will see only chemicals. The scientist will see only colours, but the painter will see something different -- not just colours, but the pattern, the gestalt of colours, the poetry of colours. The scientist will simply measure the weight of the tree, or the height. The poet is not concerned with the height or the measurement; he is concerned with the spirit of the tree, not the outer skin of the tree but the inner being -- the very spirit of the tree. The poet treats the tree as a person, as an end unto itself.

The scientist looks with utilitarian eyes; the poet looks with aesthetic eyes -- he brings a methodology of how to look at the tree. There are ways, poetic ways, of looking at the tree; only then does the tree reveal its beauty and its mystery. When a religious person looks at the tree, he is neither concerned with the object of the tree, nor with the beauty of the tree. He is more concerned with his capacity to see. He is more concerned with the question: "What is this which reflects the tree inside me? Who is this subject? Who am I?"

Scientists ask: "Who is obstructing my path?" And the religious person asks: "Who am I who is being obstructed by the tree?" The question takes a total turn -- a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. Between the religious person and the scientist stands the artist -- in the middle. The artist is a bridge: the artist has something of the scientist and something of the mystic. He is half-half. That's why artists are very tense people -- they are pulled in two directions. Artists go insane very easily. He is constantly dragged into two opposite, diametrically opposite directions -- something of the subject and something of the object. And he is at ease nowhere.

The scientist is at ease with the object; the religious person is at ease with his subjectivity. Truth is not an object, truth is not a fact; it is a realization. And when truth happens, it happens in toto.

Another thing to be understood, then this story will be very simple and you will love it and you will be able to meditate your path into it.

Facts come one by one. You can never be certain that you have known all the facts. New ways of looking, new instruments, new devices, and you may come to know new facts about the old thing. Facts are endless, they come only in part, in serial form -- one comes, then another comes. They are standing in a queue. Gradually they come. Yes, Newton knew some facts, Einstein knows more, Heisenberg even more, and so on and so forth. Your children will

know more than you know about the factual world. Their children will know even more. That's why when a person goes to study science, he thinks his parents are foolish. Naturally, because HE knows more.

Knowledge goes on increasing. And there is no end to it, and it is never conclusive. There comes no moment when you can say, "Now, THIS IS the conclusion."

Truth happens in toto, as a totality. SUDDENLY, IT IS THERE, in all its being. Not that first you know a little bit of God, then a little bit more, then a little bit more -- no. It is like lightning. The whole is revealed. That is the meaning of the word 'revelation'.

Facts are discovered by and by truth is revealed. It comes total, it is conclusive. That's why truth creates trust; doubt simply disappears. The conclusion has arrived.

The truth that religious people are talking about -- Buddha and Jesus -- is a realization. And another thing: this realization is not something new that you have attained today. It is something that has been there always, that was there but that you had not looked into. You were keeping your back to it. So realization is nothing but a recognition.

I have heard a Zen story:

One day Hyakujo was out taking a walk with his Master Baso when a flock of wild geese flew overhead.

"What are they?" Baso asked.

"They are wild geese."

"Where are they flying?"

"They have already flown away, Master."

At this point in the game, Baso suddenly grabbed Hyakujo's nose and twisted it until, overcome by pain, Hyakujo cried out, "Oh, oh!"

"You say they have flown away," said Baso, "but really they have been here from the very beginning."

Where can they fly away to? Where? There is nowhere to go, they have been always here, and they are here. There is no other space than the here, and there is no other time than the now.

Baso is a great Master. Hyakujo himself became a great Master. This story must have happened before he became a Master himself. The wild geese flying, naturally, Baso asks, "Where have they gone? Where are they now?" And the disciple answers, "They have flown away."

Now a turn in the story. Zen Masters use any device. He twisted the nose of his disciple until, overcome by pain, Hyakujo cried out, "Oh, oh!"

"You say they have flown away," said Baso, "but really they have been here from the very beginning. And they ARE here! And they will be here. Nothing can go out of existence and nothing can come into existence. Everything simply is!"

Existence is simultaneous. We are sitting here. In the sky, the sun is there and the clouds. And beyond the sun, stars and stars and stars -- no end. There are stars whose light takes millions of years to reach the earth. There are stars whose light has not reached yet since the earth came into existence. And there are stars whose light may never reach the earth, because they are so far away. But we all exist simultaneously. At this moment those stars are in existence as we are in existence.

The world is simultaneous, it is not a sequence. Things are not standing in a queue. We are ALL together. WHERE can anybody go?

When Raman Maharshi was dying, somebody cried and said, "Bhagwan, are you leaving US?"

He opened his eyes and he said, "Where? but where can I go? I will be here. You be at ease. Where can I go?"

Ramakrishna was dying and his wife started crying, naturally. And Ramakrishna said, "Stop crying! Have you not heard me? Have you not seen me? Has your being with me just been meaningless? Look at me! Where can I go? I will be here."

Everything is. All that you need to know truth is that you should not be preoccupied. That's what meditation is all about. If you are also herenow, with no thoughts roaming in your mind... because THOUGHTS take you astray. They either take you into the past or they take you into the future. They don't allow you the present. They close the door. Your eyes become clouded, your mirror becomes too heavy with dust. Then it reflects nothing. When there are no thoughts in the mind, truth is. Or let me say it in another way: when the mind is not, truth is.

Mind is the barrier. Mind dropped, truth is revealed, recognized. Now you can see the difference. Knowledge is through mind, and truth is through no-mind. Knowledge is memory; truth is disappearance of memory, mind and all.

A monk asked Ummon -- Ummon is one of the very few Zen Masters whose each statement is a diamond -- "What are the activities of a Buddha?"

Ummon answered, "I have not the slightest idea" -- and he was a Buddha himself, a fully awakened man. And he says, "I have not the slightest idea."

The monk then said, "Why haven't you any idea?"

Ummon replied, "I just want to keep my no-idea."

A tremendously beautiful statement: "I just want to keep my no-idea" -- because to be in the no-idea one is in truth. When there is no thought, you are truth; when there is thought, you are again clouded, you have lost the track.

Another time a seeker came to Ummon, and he was walking in the garden. And the seeker said, "Sir, you know so much. I am always puzzled at how much you know!"

Ummon laughed uproariously and said, "Know? What are you talking about? I don't know a thing. I am one of the most ignorant persons in the world."

The man said, "Why are you saying that? Is not knowledge good? "

Ummon said, "Knowledge may be good, but ignorance is very intimate."

Ignorance is very intimate. Knowledge may be good -- knowledge can be good or bad, but is never intimate. It is something alien, something foreign, you gather it from the outside. It is never intimate. But not-knowing is very intimate.

Watch! Knowledge is always borrowed: not-knowing is your nature. And that which comes out of your innermost nature IS yours. It is very intimate, you can depend on it. That which comes from the outside is not dependable, it is not reliable. At the most you can use it, but you will never become enlightened.

Enlightenment is to fall into such intimacy with your core, that not even a small curtain of thought divides you.

Jalaluddin Rumi, a Sufi mystic, has said: "Sell your cleverness and sell all your knowledge and buy bewilderment. Cleverness is mere opinion, bewilderment is intuition. One comes to God through being bewildered."

Attain to the eyes of wonder, of ignorance, of innocence; attain to the eyes of intimacy. Not knowing, you are tremendously valuable; knowing, you are just ordinary.

Mind functions through logic, reason, mathematics, argument, proof. Existence has no proof. Existence never tries to prove anything, it is simply there. It is just there. If you are available you will know it, if you are preoccupied you will not know it.

It happened:

A lady of the upper classes gets visited by a renowned professor of philosophy. He looks with great interest at the parrot which the lady keeps.

"What is that?" he asks, pointing at two strings dangling from each of the parrot's legs.

"Oh," she says, "this is a very intelligent animal. If I pull one string he starts reciting Shakespeare. If I pull the other he starts singing Kalidas."

The professor wrinkles his forehead, thinks for some time, and says, "And what happens if you pull both strings at once?"

At that the parrot shouts, "Then I hit the bloody bottom, you damn fool!"

Now this type of a question can be asked only by a professor, and that, too, a professor of philosophy -- preoccupied with why? what? how? Continuously questioning, questioning, questioning, never looking at the reality as it is, never looking at simple facts; making great complexities out of simple facts. A philosopher cannot be at ease with simple things, he needs problems. When there are problems he is at ease. He is at home. When there is no problem, he is very restless. Then he does not know what to do.

Darshan is not philosophy. Darshan is very very anti-philosophical. DARSHAN means the capacity to see, not the capacity to think. They are utterly different! Thinking has nothing to do with seeing. Seeing is attained only when thinking is dropped.

A few things about thinking: one, it is cumulative, it goes on increasing; it is non-conclusive; there is no end ever coming, so no trust is possible through knowledge. Whatsoever you know, more can be known. And how can you decide right now when more is possible to know? So a man of knowledge remains always in doubt, skeptical. That is the destiny of knowledge itself. And the more you know, the more doubtful you will become, because the more you know, the more you see that more can be known. And there seems to be no end. You can go on and on and on. Life is short. That's why through knowledge no transformation ever happens. One goes on accumulating facts, accumulating facts, and one dies... dies out of the very burden of facts. But no realization ever happens.

Hence, religion says: Be courageous to drop knowledge and buy bewilderment, buy wonder. It is through the eyes of wonder that God is recognized. Those wondering eyes are the eyes of a child, of innocence.

Second: knowledge is limitative -- it is linear. Existence is simultaneous. Knowledge is always partial, never total; it cannot be. You know only so much, so it divides: the known and the unknown -- and existence is one, undivided. There is no boundary between the known and the unknown, it is all one. All boundaries are man-created. So knowledge is limitative and truth is unlimited, infinite, beginningless, endless. Knowledge begins and ends,

but truth never begins and never ends.

So to know truth, knowledge can't be the right medium. It is limitative also, because knowledge creates a clinging to the past. All knowledge is of the past. Whatsoever you know has already past. When knowledge is there too much, you become imprisoned in the past, a prisoner of the past. You don't look at the reality that is facing you, you always go roundabout, via the past. You cannot see things as they are, confronting you, encountering you. You don't have any immediate insight into things; you always look through your expertise. Expertise is past, dead, gone.

In knowledge death rules over life. In knowing life rules over death. It is to put things completely upside down.

Third: knowledge is discordant, because it creates a division in your being -- mind becomes separate from the heart, thinking becomes separate from the feeling, and you remain divided. A man of knowledge, by and by, loses all his capacities TO FEEL, and he is losing something tremendously valuable.

God never comes just as a thought. More closely He comes as a feeling, as a love affair. God never comes like a syllogism, He comes like a song. God never comes like arithmetic. He comes sometimes as tears, sometimes as laughter; more so as tears and as laughter. So a person who becomes too much confined in the head loses track of his heart, cannot cry, cannot laugh, cannot dance. He becomes a cripple, he becomes paralyzed. So knowledge is discordant.

Fourth: knowledge is delusive, because it keeps you continuously absorbed into abstractions, which are not realities. You don't know love, you think about love. 'Love' is not the real thing, it is just a word. You don't try to find God; you just go on thinking about the word 'God'. The word 'God' is not God, it is just a label. You can go on thinking about food, and that is not going to satisfy your hunger. You can go on reading a great cookery book, but that is not going to fulfil your hunger either. People go on reading the Bible, Dhammapada, the Gita, and they think something is going to happen. They will waste their whole lives. Their hunger will remain there, their thirst will remain unquenched.

Knowledge is delusive. It creates dreams and delusions, abstractions.

And fifth: knowledge is impotent and wasteful. It is very impotent. It is as if a person is trying to carry the whole ocean in a small spoon -- runs again, fills the spoon, comes home, goes back, fills the spoon, comes home.... It is impotent, IT IS wasteful; it is not going to happen. Knowledge cannot happen because you go on gathering parts -- spoonful parts of the great ocean.

Religion has a totally different approach. Religion says if you want the ocean, go and drown yourself in the ocean, become the ocean. You cannot bring it home, your home will not be able to contain it. Your head is too small. It is good as far as it goes, but you are stretching it beyond its limitations. It is good for the marketplace, it is good for day-to-day usual activities, but to know the eternal... to know that from where we come, and to know that from where everything has come, and to know that where we all are going in again -- it is not possible for the small head. It is very small, very very small. You are creating a great burden for the head.

And people are really burdened by the head. Their heads have become too heavy. Their whole life has become confined to their heads. They don't live anywhere else, they live in their heads. Cerebral -- that's what they have become, and they have lost all joy, all celebration. And they have lost all the qualities of love, of feeling, of the heart. They are no more part of this great jubilation that goes on and on around -- the cuckoo singing, and the

flowers blooming, and the birds flying in the sky, and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the roaring ocean and the sands and the mountains. Are you part of this existence? Or are you just confined in your head? And you go thinking dead, dull words.

When thinking is freed from all these five diseases of the mind, then there is no more thinking as such. It becomes knowing -- WU in Chinese, SATORI in Japanese, SAMADHI in Sanskrit. And to attain to WU, SATORI, or SAMADHI is to become enlightened.

Now this story:

WHILE VISITING GASAN, A UNIVERSITY STUDENT ASKED: "HAVE YOU EVER READ THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE?"

NOW THIS IS A FOOLISH QUESTION to ask an enlightened person. But a student is a student. He knows only books, he does not know anything else. He asked Gasan, "HAVE YOU EVER READ THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE?"

He must have been a Christian, obviously. Gasan has not read the Christian Bible. When you have read the real Bible you need not bother about the Christian Bible. When you have read the real song you need not bother about the Bhagavad Gita. These are just faraway echoes of the real. Yes, something is echoed in Bhagavad Gita, and something is echoed in the Bible, and something is echoed in the Koran. But if you have seen the real, who bothers about photographs? If you have seen me, then who bothers about a line-sketch? It doesn't matter.

Gasan has known the truth, DIRECT. He has experienced it, he has become it. Now to ask Gasan, "Have you read the Christian Bible?" is a foolish question. But all questions are foolish when it comes to asking an enlightened person -- all questions are foolish. Before an enlightened person you can simply bow down. What questions are there? What can you ask? Whatsoever you ask will belong to your mind. Naturally, we go on asking the things that go on crowding in our minds.

The student is a Christian, is a university student, and he must be thinking as all religious people, so-called religious people, think. Christians never read Dhammapada, Buddhists never read the Bible, Hindus never read the Koran, Mohammedans never read the Gita. And they go on believing: "What can there be better?" And they go on believing that the Koran is the last statement, or the Gita is the last statement; everything else is ordinary.

The same must have been the idea of this Christian student. Christians are very full of such bullshit. They think Christ is the only begotten Son of God. Sheer nonsense! Everybody is the ONLY begotten Son of God, because God is the father of all. And not only man, but the trees and the rocks too, belong to God as much as Jesus does. God is everybody's father. And that's what Jesus was trying to say, but man is so foolish.

Jesus goes on saying in his statements -- at least fifty percent of the time he says, "I am the Son of Man," and fifty times he says, "I am the Son of God." Why does he go on repeating these two things again and again: Son of Man and Son of God? He wants to create a synthesis. He is saying every Son of Man is a Son of God -- just like me. Just as I am the Son of Man and yet the Son of God -- SO are you! So is everybody: TAT-TVAM-ASI -- Thou art That.

But this Christian student has come to ask Gasan, "Have you read the Christian Bible?" He must be thinking, "He will be surprised!" Or maybe he was thinking that he would be antagonistic. Maybe he would try to argue against the Bible because he is a Buddhist.

"NO," SAID GASAN, "READ IT TO ME."

"But you can read it to me. I will listen."

A man of understanding is always available; whatsoever the message you bring, he is available. He has no prejudice and he has no pride. A man of such an enlightened consciousness as Gasan says, "Yes, you read it. I will listen to it." There is NOTHING any more to know! He knows the ultimate, but this humbleness is part of enlightenment. He is ready to learn. He KNOWS ALL. There is nothing left to learn any more, but a man of understanding is always open.

In Zen they have a special statement about it. They call it 'the beginner's mind'. They say the Zen person always keeps the beginner's mind, he never becomes an expert. He is always at the beginning of everything. He remains always a disciple -- even a Master. He is ready to learn, he is not closed, he is always vulnerable, he is open. Any message you bring, he is not saying from the very beginning that "I know all. No need to read the Bible to me. You take your Bible back home." No, he says, you can read it."

This is the beginner's mind. This phrase, 'beginner's mind', is of great importance. Have you not watched it? When you start doing something, just in the beginning, there is such joy. You start learning to drive -- there is such joy. But after a month when you have learned, all joy disappears. It is boring, it is just a routine. Then you go on driving. You don't hear the humming sound of the engine, you don't feel the air passing through, you don't see the rhythmic functioning of the car. You don't see anything. You don't see the trees and the birds and the sun -- nothing, no more. In the beginning, for a few days, it was such a honeymoon -- a honeymoon with the car.

And so are all our experiences. In the beginning everything seems to be so beautiful! You fall in love with a woman, and everything is tremendously beautiful, incredible. And after a few weeks everything is gone, finished. You have come to a dead end, you are looking for another woman or another man. What happens? You lose the beginner's mind.

The beginner's mind is an innocent mind, the beginner's mind is an ignorant mind. The beginner's mind means: you know you don't know. Because you know you don't know, you are ready to learn, available, open. Whatsoever happens you are very, very curious to know everything, you are intrigued with every moment of it -- every bite of it and you are intrigued. There is great joy. Soon you become an expert. The day you become an expert, knowing dies and knowledge starts being gathered.

So a real man of knowing is always a 'beginner's mind'. He never becomes an expert, he remains learning.

"NO," SAID GASAN, "READ IT TO ME."

THE STUDENT OPENED THE BIBLE AND READ FROM ST. MATTHEW: "AND WHY TAKE YE THOUGHT FOR RAIMENT? CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD, HOW THEY GROW. THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN, AND YET I SAY UNTO YOU THAT EVEN SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY WAS NOT ARRAYED LIKE ONE OF THESE.... TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW, FOR THE MORROW SHALL TAKE THOUGHT FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF."

ONE OF THE GREATEST STATEMENTS EVER MADE by Jesus, or ever made by anybody else. Has incredible meaning and significance.

"AND WHY TAKE YE THOUGHT FOR RAIMENT?"

Jesus is going with his disciples to a town. And, naturally, disciples are always worried -- as everybody else is worried in the world: "Where will we get shelter? Will we be able to stay overnight in this village? Where will we get food? Is somebody going to offer a few clothes for us?" Dusty, dirty, travelling, they are coming to a village, and they don't know what is going to happen, because more often than not the villagers don't receive them well. They throw them out. They are angry at Jesus and his revolutionary statements. Orthodox people don't want to hear such rebellious statements, and Jesus is rebellion, fire.

Buddha is very cool, Jesus is not so cool. You cannot imagine Buddha taking a whip and going into a temple and beating people with the whip. Jesus did that. Buddha is very cool. Buddha is old, Jesus is very young -- he died when he was only thirty-three. You can forgive Jesus, he was very young, the blood was hot. He was very angry at the world, the way things were going.

Buddha was eighty-two when he died. Buddha was forty when he became enlightened. Revolution, those fiery words, had gone down the Ganges; more coolness had entered into his being. The old age brings something new, which is always missed by the young people. Young people may be beautiful, but they are hot. When an old person is really alert, aware, conscious, he is beautiful and he has something which youth always misses: the grace that old age brings. And when grace and beauty meet, this is a great synthesis.

Christ is different, he is very young, very rebellious, very revolutionary, has great ideas to change the world. People are angry -- that's why they crucified him.

Now the disciples must have been worried: "What is going to happen in the next village?" They are tired and hungry. And Jesus says to them... they have not said anything; they are just walking, tired, exhausted, worried. Jesus says to them: "And why take ye thought for raiment? Why do you think continuously about security, safety, bread and butter, and clothes and shelter? Why?"

They are passing by the side of a field and he says, "Consider the lilies of the field... can't you see these lilies in the field? Poor lilies, but how beautiful! How do they grow? If some universal force protects them, why won't that force protect you? If the universal force has not forsaken them, why should it withdraw from you? These small flowers of lilies, they are flowering, growing, they are not afraid. And you are conscious flowers -- God's greatest creation on the earth -- why should you be worried?"

"THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN, AND YET I SAY UNTO YOU THAT EVEN SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY WAS NOT ARRAYED LIKE ONE OF THESE...."

Solomon was the greatest emperor of the Jews, the greatest name in Jewish history. And Jesus says: "I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Yes, he had beautiful clothes, very costly, studded with diamonds valuable stones and gold, but still.... Look, consider these flowers of lilies. And I say unto you that even Solomon was not so beautiful as these poor flowers are."

What is the difference? Solomon was trying on his own. He was pushing the river, and these flowers are just floating with the river wherever it takes them. Look! the trust of the flowers, of the lilies -- they trust God! Except for man, the whole existence trusts. Trees grow, birds sing, flowers come and go, the sun moves, stars go on spinning, everything is in

deep trust. If you look around you will find every stone prayerful, every tree prayerful, every river prayerful, every ocean praying. The whole existence is a temple -- except for man. Something has gone wrong with man. Man is trying to be on his own. That's where misery starts from, worry enters.

"TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW..."

Says Jesus, "Don't think of tomorrow." Don't bring future in. The moment you bring future in, you go astray from God. God is present, future is just fantasy. Future is just your mind, future exists not. Don't bring future in, just drop the future. Live this moment in its totality... Like the lilies in the field, or the stars in the night, or the rivers, or the mountains. Live this moment in utter dedication, in total trust -- and God is available. And God is security, there is no other security. And God is safety, there is no other safety. And God is raiment, there is no other raiment. And God is shelter, there is no other shelter.

"... FOR THE MORROW SHALL TAKE THOUGHT FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF."

Don't be worried for tomorrow, when it comes the one who has been taking care up to now will take care then too.

This is the ultimate statement of a spiritual being. There is no higher spirituality than this -- to live in God in utter surrender, no private hankering, no private desire to be somebody, something, no ego trip. He has been taking care. He will take care. One simply remains in a let-go.

LET-GO is very basic to Zen. That's why Gasan said:

WHOEVER UTTERED THOSE WORDS I CONSIDER AN ENLIGHTENED MAN."

WHOEVER uttered those words I consider an enlightened man." Gasan says, "I don't know this man, who this man is. Who this Jesus is I don't know. I don't know anything about him. I have never heard of him. But WHOEVER -- these words can come ONLY from an enlightened source! They teach the utter in let-go, the ultimate, the last word!"

This is surrender. This is putting your ego aside. Just living the way God wants you to live. If He brings you to success, it is His success; if He brings you to failure, it is His failure. If He keeps you alive, good; if He kills you, good. You don't have any opinion of your own, you don't judge. You don't show your liking and disliking. This is prayer.

But what do you do with prayer, do you know? You go to the temple and you show your desires. You say to God: "Do this this way! If you do this this way, I will pray to you and I will do many good things for you. If you don't do this this way, I will be angry."

Whenever you pray, you demand. Your very demand destroys the quality of the prayer. It is no more prayer. Prayer can only mean: "I am here, surrendered to you, do whatsoever you like. And whatsoever you do is good. Whatsoever you do -- unconditionally -- is good!"

I have heard about a Sufi mystic who used to pray every morning, every evening, and would say to God, "I am so grateful, Lord. You take so much care of me. I always feel surprised. There are millions and millions of people. How do you remember me? And you take care of me so beautifully. Flawless is your care about me."

One day it happened: the mystic and his disciples passed a town and nobody gave them

any bread. People were against Sufism. another day, another day -- for three days continuously they had no food. The disciples were very very angry. And then they heard on the third day in the morning the Master praying to God the same way: "Lord, how much care you take of me! I wonder how you manage. Millions of people in the world and you go on pouring your love towards me, continuously, so flawlessly, not even once have you forgotten me."

One disciple could not bear it any more. He said, "Stop all this nonsense! Three days we have been hungry, three days we have not been given shelter, three days we have slept under the trees in the wild forest, it was dangerous, so to whom are you giving your thanks?"

And the Master said, "But He always gives whatsoever I need. This is what I needed for three days! -- to remain hungry, to remain without shelter. This is what was needed, because He ALWAYS gives that which is needed! Or, you can say it the other way: whatsoever happens is exactly that which is needed. I am thankful. These three days of hunger have taught me much more than anything else in my life. These three days of hunger have shown me much more than anything in my life.

"These three days of insult, humiliation, danger... and I was watching: Can I trust Him still? Yes, I can trust Him still. Even if He keeps me hungry for thirty years, I will trust Him still.' My trust is unconditional -- that's what He has shown me. And I am happy! I am happy because I have this trust. My prayer has remained uncorrupted."

When you really pray, you simply say one thing: "Help me to surrender to you. Don't allow me to think of the morrow, or the yesterday. Don't let me go on thinking about the past which is no more, and don't allow me to think of the future which is not yet -- the present is enough, you are enough, and you take care. I am part of you and I will float with you."

GASAN SAID: "WHOEVER UTTERED THESE WORDS I CONSIDER AN ENLIGHTENED MAN."
THE STUDENT CONTINUED READING: "ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU, SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND, KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU. FOR EVERYONE THAT ASKETH RECEIVETH, AND HE THAT SEEKETH FINDETH, AND TO HIM THAT KNOCKETH, IT SHALL BE OPENED."

GASAN REMARKED: "THAT'S EXCELLENT. WHOEVER SAID THAT IS NOT FAR FROM BUDDHAHOOD."

NOW YOU WILL BE PUZZLED. First he said: WHOSOEVER UTTERED THESE WORDS I CONSIDER AN ENLIGHTENED MAN." In the next he says: "THAT'S EXCELLENT. WHOEVER SAID THAT IS NOT FAR FROM BUDDHAHOOD."

Something has to be understood.

Not every enlightened person is a Buddha, although every Buddha is an enlightened person. A Buddha means a Master. An enlightened person means one who has arrived himself, but he may not be able to help others. That is a totally different quality, a different skill. Many people can come to the truth, but then they have no skill to spread the truth to people -- they are not Masters, they are enlightened people.

In all traditions that distinction exists. In the Buddha dharma, the distinction is made between the ARHAT... ARHAT means one who has arrived himself. Now his journey is finished, there is nowhere to go. He has come home. But he never bothers to help others; that does not happen to him. That is not his way, that is not natural to him. Nothing is wrong! Nothing is being condemned in it -- that's how it is.

You went into a forest and you saw a beautiful sunset, and you enjoyed it, but you don't

paint it. That's how it happens to you. But somebody else is there who paints it and brings the painting back, hack to the marketplace, and shows it to people: "See, I have been there. Such a beautiful sunrise, or sunset. Such a beautiful forest." He brings a message for people.

Somebody may make a song and bring the song to the world. Somebody may bring just the silence, will not say a single word to anybody, will feel that to say anything may be destroying the whole beauty of it -- because words can't say it.

Arhat means: one who has attained.

One who has attained and tries to help others to attain is called a bodhisattva. The difference is: arhat is one who has attained to the ultimate in meditation. Buddha is one who has attained the ultimate in meditation -- now a great compassion arises in him and he goes on spreading it. Now there is no need! For forty-two years Buddha was travelling from one village to another, from one town to another. There was no need! He could have sat under his Bodhi Tree and disappeared there. There was no need to take all this trouble upon himself. There was no need to knock on so many doors. His own gain is not going to be any more! But a great compassion arose in him. That compassion makes a Buddha.

Jains also have two words. One is kewali. Kewali means one who has attained. And the second is teerthankara -- one who has attained, and not only attained but who comes back and creates a boat. Has gone to the other shore, but his compassion brings him back to this shore. Makes a GHAT, creates a boat, invites people, and says, "I know the other shore, you come on. Come on with me." And starts taking people to the other shore. He is a TEERTHANKARA. Thousands of KEWALI, thousands of ARHATS, and only one Buddha or one TEERTHANKARA. Out of millions of people one person becomes enlightened, and out of thousands of enlightened persons, one person becomes a Master. Hence the distinction.

Hearing the second statement...

THE STUDENT CONTINUED READING: "ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN YOU, SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND, KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU. FOR EVERYONE THAT ASKETH RECEIVETH, AND HE THAT SEEKETH FINDETH, AND TO HIM THAT KNOCKETH, IT SHALL BE OPENED."

GASAN REMARKED: "THAT'S EXCELLENT. WHOEVER SAID THAT IS NOT FAR FROM BUDDHAHOOD."

Two things. The first was a simple statement of let-go. The second is a provocation, a challenge for others.

"ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU..."

Now Buddhahood is entering. Now Jesus is becoming a Master. First, he has simply stated a truth: "CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD.... They think not of the morrow, they remain in utter let-go." The second statement is a challenge to the disciples. The first statement is simply indicating, a finger to the moon. The second statement says, "Now, come on! Get ready for the journey."

"ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU, SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND..."

Now he becomes a Master, and to whomsoever he is talking, they become disciples. That's why Gasan said, "WHOEVER SAID THAT IS NOT FAR FROM BUDDHAHOOD." BUT why doesn't he say he is a Buddha? Why did he say "not FAR FROM BUDDHAHOOD"? Because this statement is half, that's why.

Jesus MUST have made the full statement. It is missing in the gospel. This is half the statement. It happens many times. When I say something to you, it will not be possible for you to relate it exactly the way I have said it. If you go home and talk to your wife, much will be missing and much you will add of your own -- it will be a distortion. And the people who were listening, those poor disciples of Jesus, they had no tape recording arrangements. They had no copybooks with them to take notes they were not even educated people. They simply carried it in their memory. And after Jesus was gone, then they started writing whatsoever they had heard. A few wrote themselves, a few must have told somebody else to write it down because they could not write -- very simple folk, simple people. Much has been missed.

Buddha's statements are more perfect than Jesus', because Jesus had not THAT quality of disciples around him. Krishna's statement is almost perfect, but Jesus was not so fortunate. His disciples were very ordinary people so much is missing.

That's why Gasan says... he is not saying anything about Jesus, he is simply saying this statement is half. He has not said it so directly, but he has said it.

"THAT IS EXCELLENT," he says, "very good! WHOEVER SAID THAT IS NOT FAR FROM BUDDHAHOOD."

"... is coming very close to Buddhahood, but something is missing. He is not yet a Buddha." Remember, this is not said about Jesus, because Gasan knows nothing about Jesus. He knows nothing about the Bible.

I tell you Jesus is a Buddha, as perfect a Buddha as any Buddha ever. Gasan is simply talking about THIS statement -- remember it. He has no idea who this Jesus is; that's why he never mentions the name. He says, "Whosoever said...." Very careful he is. The old man is really careful, he says, "Whosoever...."

But this statement is half. Why is it half? It has to be understood.

THE RELIGIOUS ENDEAVOUR HAS TWO SIDES TO IT. One is: seek -- without seeking you will never find. And the other is: stop seeking -- if you go on seeking you will never find. These are two paradoxical statements. First, seek; otherwise you will never find. You have to start seeking. Then, if you continue seeking and seeking and seeking, you get involved into seeking, then you will never find. One day the seeking has to be started another day it has to be dropped too.

It is like a ladder. You go from one storey of the house to another by a ladder. You cannot go without a ladder. You have to climb the ladder, but if you remain clinging to the ladder then too you will be clinging in the middle, you will not go beyond it. Climb the ladder, but a moment comes when you have to leave the ladder.

Seeking is a ladder. It is like a raft, a boat. You go in the boat, you sit in the boat, you go to the other side, then you leave the boat.

This statement is half. Seek, certainly; otherwise you will never find. But as certainly as this, one day you will have to drop your seeking too, because finally seeking becomes the tail. Then that becomes your tension and anguish and anxiety: "I have not found God yet!"

Then you become worried about God. You drop the worry about the raiment and the shelter and the bread and security, and then one day you become worried: "I have not found God yet!" Then you are again trembling, afraid. "When am I going to find God?" You become too much preoccupied.

A day arises when you have dropped all other seeking. First drop all other seekings so that all your seeking energy pours into one seeking -- seeking for God. Then when you have dropped all other seekings -- money, power, prestige, and you have only one idea left, drop that too, shatter that too. Sit silently, forget all about God. God was a trick to help you drop the world. When the world is dropped, drop God too. Then suddenly, you are a God yourself.

That's why Gasan says, "Very close he is to Buddha... just close, coming close, but not yet a perfect Buddha." This statement of Gasan is about the statement of Jesus -- not about Jesus.

This understanding of Gasan -- he does not know anything about Jesus, he has never read the Bible -- but just listening to these two sentences he has understood the whole thing. How did it happen? He KNOWS what reality is, he has the taste of it. Then just a small description about it and he knows.

If you come to an enlightened person, he knows you immediately -- whether anything of meditation has ever happened to you, whether any glimpse, any ray of light has ever entered into you -- he knows it immediately. It is THERE in your eyes. It is there, the way you walk; it is there, the way you sit; it is there in every gesture. You need not tell him. All your worries, your whole mind is all around you, clamouring around you.

When you come to an enlightened person, just the very way you enter the room and sit before him, or you touch his feet, or you just say hello, is enough. Your 'hello' carries you, in toto. HE KNOWS THE TASTE! He will immediately recognize.

Just two small statements and Gasan recognizes. There is no need to know the whole Bible. He himself has tasted it, he knows. Only a man who has tasted can make such statements.

"CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD, HOW THEY GROW. THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN, AND YET I SAY UNTO YOU THAT EVEN SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY WAS NOT ARRAYED LIKE ONE OF THESE.... TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW, FOR THE MORROW SHALL TAKE THOUGHT FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF."

And, "ASK AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU, SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND, KNOCK AND IT SHALL BE OPENED UNTO YOU. FOR EVERYONE THAT ASKETH RECEIVETH, AND HE THAT SEEKETH FINDETH, AND TO HIM THAT KNOCKETH, IT SHALL BE OPENED."

In these two statements, the whole of religion is contained. If you can meditate on these two small statements, the vast sky of all Buddhahood becomes available to you. You need not read a thousand and one books. A small statement meditated upon, absorbed, digested, is enough to transform you.

These statements of Buddha or Jesus or Mahavir or Krishna, Mohammed, are seeds. Let them sink into your heart and sooner or later they will start sprouting. And sooner or later you will be full of great flowers, and you will be full of a fragrance that is not of this world. Only when that fragrance has come to you will you know what the seers of the Upanishads are saying; you will know what Lao Tzu means in the TAO TE CHING; you will know what the Koran is; and you will be able to enter into the world of the Vedas -- never before it.

So the last thing today I would like to say to you is: One never comes to truth by reading books. One comes to truth first, and then one recognizes it in books. Books become then

witnesses. It is not that first you study the Vedas and become a great scholar of the Vedas, and then you will know truth. No, first you enter your innermost core, know the truth, and then all the Vedas will come as witnesses to you. They will be standing there as certificates to you, and not only the Vedas: the Bible and the Koran and the Gita and the Dhammapada -- EVERY statement of every enlightened person, of every Buddha in the world, will support you.

If only the Vedas support you and the Koran does not support you, something is wrong. Then you have not yet arrived. If only Jains support you and Christians not, then something is wrong. You have not yet arrived -- because whenever somebody arrives -- REALLY arrives -- all the Buddhas, the whole world of the knowers, supports you.

The ignorant people may be against you, that is not the point. The people who don't know, they can be forgiven. But the Koran and the Bible and the Dhammapada will be with you. You will have the blessings of all the Buddhas. You will become again a vehicle for them to enter into the world of ignorance, to enter into this darkness of humanity. Each Buddha again represents all the Buddhas.

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #4

Chapter title: Therapy is a Function of Love

4 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707040

ShortTitle: PARAD304

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 104 mins

THE FIRST question:

HOW CAN I WORK AS A THERAPIST IN AN EGOLESS WAY? WHAT SHOULD I DO?

THERAPY IS BASICALLY A FUNCTION OF LOVE, and love flows only when there is no ego. You can help the other only to the extent that you are non-egoistic. The moment the ego enters, the other becomes defensive. The ego is aggressive; it creates an automatic urge in the other to be defensive. Love is non-aggressive. It helps the other to remain vulnerable, open, non-defensive. Hence, without love there is no therapy.

Therapy is a function of love. So with ego, you can't help. You may even destroy the other. In the name of help you may hinder his growth. But Western psychology is caught up in a mess.

The first thing Western psychology still thinks in terms of a healthy ego. And ego can

never be healthy. It is a contradiction in terms. Ego as such is ill. Ego can never be healthy. Ego is always leading you towards more and more illness. But Western psychology thinks -- the whole Western mind has been -- that people are suffering from weak egos. People are not suffering from weak egos; people are suffering from too much of egoism.

But if the society is male-mind-oriented, aggression-oriented, if the only desire of the society is how to conquer all, then naturally you have to drop all that is feminine in you. You have to drop half of your being into oblivion -- and you have to live with the other half. The other half can never be healthy because health comes through wholeness. The feminine has to be accepted... the feminine is egolessness, the feminine is receptivity, the feminine is love.

A really healthy person is one who is utterly balanced between the male and the female. In fact, he is one whose maleness has been cut, destroyed by his femaleness, who has transcended both, who is neither male nor female -- who simply is. You cannot categorize him. This man is whole, and this man is healthy. And to such a man, in the East, we have always looked as the Master.

In the East we have not created anything parallel to the psychotherapist. The East has created the Master, the West has created the psychotherapist. When people are mentally disturbed, they go to the psychiatrist in the West; in the East, they go to a Master. The Master's function is utterly different. He does not help you to attain to a stronger ego. In fact, he makes you feel that the ego that you have is already too much. Drop it! Let it go!

Once the ego is dropped, suddenly you are one and whole and flowing. And there is no block and no hindrance.

In the West also, sooner or later, psychotherapy will have to understand the ultimate psychology -- the psychology of the Buddhas. Before I enter into it, I would like to say a few things about the ego -- how this mechanism functions, what exactly it is.

A child is born. A child is like an uninflated balloon. The balloon is there, it can be inflated, it can carry much air. But right now there is no air in it. Then, by and by, we inflate the balloon. This balloon is the symbol of the ego. From the first year to the seventh year the child exists almost egolessly. He exists in tune with existence, he has no separation, no clearcut boundaries. He does not know who he is, he does not compare, he does not fight. He lives in utter relaxation -- that's the beauty of a child. That's why the eyes of a child are so innocent; no tension floats there, no anguish has arisen, no fear.

Anguish arises only when your boundaries have become very clearcut. With the boundaries you are separate; when you are separate you are in danger. Separation brings danger. When you start feeling that "I am myself and nobody else!" then death starts hovering around you -- because this is a false idea. You are not yourself: you are part of the whole. You are not an island. The ego gives the idea that you are an island. You are not an island; you are involved with the whole of existence. You are not separate, so how can there be death? That's why a child is deathless -- he can go and play with a snake. He has no concept of death, he is so utterly innocent. From where does this fearlessness of the child come?

It comes because there is no division yet; he lives an undivided life, a life of unison, unity. That's why later on we go on thinking with nostalgia how beautiful those days, those few years, were. They continue to remain the golden age -- the poetry of those days, the dance, the joy, the celebration -- that goes on hovering around you for your whole life. As if the best happened first, and since then you have been falling and falling and falling.

Because of this basic mechanism, all the religions carry the parable of 'The Fall'. The Fall

presupposes that we were higher first; we were higher and then we became lower. This doesn't seem to be a very good evolution. It is involution! First you were in a golden age -- so say the Hindus, so say the Christians, so say all the religions of the world: that the real golden age passed in the past. Now more and more gloomy days are coming -- Kaliyuga, the Dark Age -- more and more dark it will be. From where does this parable of the Fall come? It comes from the deep experience of every man. It is very fundamental.

The child was really happy. He had known no responsibility, he had known no division, he had known no separation. He was egoless. The balloon was there, potentially ready. You can put hot air into it at any moment. And we start putting hot air in -- the moment the child is born we start putting hot air into it. The moment you start putting hot air in, the child starts becoming more and more of an individual.

All small children look alike. Why do they look alike? They don't have many distinctions. Their faces don't yet have characteristics, they don't have any persona. They are almost alike, similar. That's why all children look beautiful. They have not yet grown a specific character, distinction, a personality. Without this personality they are utterly in existence, one with it. There is a harmony.

But that harmony will be broken sooner or later. We will start preparing them for the world. We will start telling them what their names are. We will start telling them who they are -- Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans. We will tell them whether they are boys or girls. We will start enforcing ideas on them and conditioning them and preparing them for the world. We will send them to school and to college and, by and by, we will train them.

Our WHOLE education consists of a subtle training in the ego; that's why the education is so competitive. It depends on ambition create ambition! Tell the child, "You have to come first in the class. You have to top the college; you have to attain to the gold medal in the university. These are the ways you have to learn how to be the first in line. Then your whole life you will have to work it out. First learn the map, and then your whole life work it out. Wherever you are, go on trying to be the first in line."

Great anxiety is created, great anguish is created. Neurosis is created out of it.

From the first to the seventh year the child remains like an uninflated balloon. From the seventh to the fourteenth the adolescent starts gaining air. That's why adolescents are difficult, always ready to say 'no' and always ready to fight and always ready to rebel. Down the ages it has been so, it is nothing new in this age. Down the ages adolescence has been the age of problems. The ego has started functioning. The adolescent says, "I would like my own way, I want to do my thing! Right or wrong is not the question -- my thing I want to do!"

We create it: we repress it also. We create it so that the child can fight in the world with others. But the child starts fighting with the parents too! There is a problem. The parents don't want the child to bring his ego against them, but where is he going to practise? -- they are the closest. So there is a contradiction in the mechanism. They want him to be against the whole world: "Go and compete with everybody! Be a warrior and show your mettle and show your spine -- show that you are somebody!" But the child starts learning at home. Naturally, everything has to be started at home. He says 'no' to the mother, 'no' to the father. The father says, "Don't smoke!" and he will smoke. And the father says, "Don't go to the movie!" and he will go.

Now we are poisoning. When you poison somebody, you cannot trust that he will throw his poison only at the outside world and he will not throw his poison at you. Adolescence is the most troubled time -- because the adolescent hovers between two oppositions, between two polarities. He knows The childhood has just been there and it was so beautiful. He has

not yet left it absolutely. He can still penetrate, sometimes he goes into it. Sometimes an adolescent becomes again a child -- playing with his toys, running after a butterfly, collecting sea-shells on the beach -- he slips back. Then he is again beautiful. Then he comes back because he has to go to school and he has to learn mathematics and geography and history; and he has to compete and the examination is coming close. He goes on moving between these two territories; hence he becomes very anxious, uncertain of himself.

Up to the seventh year he was very certain, there was no problem. Now the problem is arising: the ego is coming up, the balloon starts taking shape -- not very perfect, but the balloon starts taking shape. Now you can see one adolescent becoming different from another.

Adolescents insist on their differences. If you put all the children into one dress, they won't like it -- then they lose their separation. They want their own dress. They want everything of their own. They want their own room with a nameplate. They start signing their names on their books -- the signature has come into being.

Character appears with adolescence. And almost always, if you watch an adolescent rightly, you can write his whole future. The character starts forming, the fundamentals start surfacing -- what the boy is going to become. All possibilities are there, but a few possibilities start becoming actual, and a few possibilities, by and by, shrink and die away. Whether the child will become a musician or a poet or a painter or a politician or a mystic -- adolescence is the age when you can judge. Before that it is impossible to judge because the balloon has no shape, the air has not entered yet. And with adolescence a great effort to be free from all patterns, disciplines....

FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO THE TWENTY-EIGHTH year is the third stage of the balloon or the ego -- youth inflated to the full. With the fourteenth year a kind of fullness enters into life because one becomes sexually mature. Nothing gives more air to the ego than sex. Without sexual maturity you remain lacking something. Your parents have something -- they can produce children, you cannot. You feel impotent. By the age of fourteen, a boy is no more a boy -- at least he does not think that he is a boy. Inside he starts thinking of himself as the man, a grown-up man. And boys start taking more air; more flavour of the ego enters. With sexual maturity ego comes to its full bloom. The balloon is inflated to the full, personality arises clear and loud.

In adolescence you could have looked deeply and found personality, but on the face of youth you need not look deeply -- it is written all over the face. With adolescence there was a little rebellious spirit, but with youth there is revolution. He is ready to destroy anything. He becomes destructive, because it is only through destruction that he can show that he is somebody. He is against ALL rules, regulations; he does not want to believe in anything. He does not want to believe in any tradition, in any religion. He wants to say 'no' to father. 'no' to mother. Not only that: he wants to say 'no' to God, 'no' to the church, 'no' to the Bible, 'no' to the Gita. He wants to say 'NO' with his whole heart. The ego has come in a perfect way.

This third stage gives him the feeling "I am me and nobody else!" Ego at its full peak. At this time the youth is always ready to fight, to explode. Aggression, violence, competition, ambition, revolution -- all enter into his blood and bones.

The fourth stage is from the twenty-eighth to the fifty-sixth year -- middle age -- inflated beyond the natural capacity. The balloon is inflated beyond the natural capacity. The natural capacity is attained by the twenty-eighth year; that's how far the balloon can go. Between twenty-eight and fifty-six it starts getting beyond the limit of the balloon. Hypertension

arises. These are the most difficult days.

Up to twenty-eight you were taught to inflate the ego more and more, so you go on inflating. It has become a habitual thing. For twenty-eight years you have been practising only one thing -- through education, through teaching, through conditioning -- inflate the ego. Now it has become a routine: you go on inflating without thinking at all that there is a limited capacity to the balloon. You go on pushing more and more air in -- hypertension arises. So it is somewhere between twenty-eight and fifty-six that you start getting high blood pressure, heart attacks. It is somewhere between these two ages that you have to consult the psychotherapist, that you start becoming shaky, that things don't seem to go the right way, as you had expected them to go, as they were at least appearing to go up to twenty-eight. Now they are no longer going the right way. Everything seems to go wrong.

You are succeeding in life; you have money, you have prestige, respectability, but somehow you are disappearing in it. You are losing your being, your peace, your rest. A restlessness, a great restlessness, a feverishness arises. These are the most difficult days. These are the days when a person becomes physically, mentally ill. Anxiety arises, anguish arises, psychosis and all kinds of neurosis enter into your being. This is the fourth stage.

The fifth stage is from fifty-six to one hundred and twelve, the ultimate expansion. Just on the verge, any moment, of exploding. You are ready, just a puff more and you will explode. No more inflation is possible. This is the time when a person starts hoping that now death should be coming, starts thinking about death. Not only starts thinking, but having a kind of hope that "Death will come and relieve me of all this burden."

Then the sixth stage: the balloon explodes.

Out of the sixth there are two possibilities -- the seventh stage has two possibilities -- the Eastern and the Western. The Western possibility is: you die, and you are reborn again as an uninflated balloon in some womb. Death is the seventh possibility if Western psychology is allowed its full say. If there is nothing like religion, then out of the sixth the seventh is born automatically. You die here, you know only one way of being, you are again born in a womb -- again an uninflated balloon -- and you start the same circle, the same repetition, the same rut.

This is what, in India, we call the samsara -- the world. Each death brings you back to life again, and again you start the same game! And the game has been played millions of times! And you go on playing, you go on playing... the same again and again. Those who are perceptive and intelligent, they become alert. They see the whole futility of it. What is the point? Why go on repeating like a wheel? Why this wheel of birth and death?

Then there is another possibility and that is the Eastern possibility: either you die -- you explode and you are born; or you don't die -- you don't explode. Seeing the whole absurdity of the ego, you yourself relax, you puncture it. That's what I call sannyas -- you puncture the balloon. The air goes out of it, the balloon shrinks back; it becomes like it was when you were a child.

This is the second childhood: you have become twice-born. Not in some other womb, not in some other life -- herenow. You have dropped out of the wheel. That's why we say the saint is again like a small child. The circle is complete. No womb is needed for him: he has become a womb unto himself. Again he is innocent. Again trees are colourful, again the sun is a joy. Again everything is celebration. God walks on the earth again. He is in paradise. He has not gone anywhere! He has simply dropped that balloon that was creating the whole trouble.

This is the birth of a new consciousness; not of a new body, but of a new soul -- the birth

of a new being; not of a new mechanism, not of a new house, but the DWELLER has changed. This is transformation.

Now, these two possibilities are there at the ultimate stage. But if you have been brought up continuously in the Western way, in the materialistic way, in the egoistic way, then it will be difficult for the other alternative suddenly to happen.

So in the East we have been doing a very strange paradoxical thing. In the East we do one thing: we go on helping the newcomer to become egoistic, and by the side we go on helping him to remember that ego is not the goal -- a good game, but one has to come out of it. We teach the ego, certainly, but simultaneously we also teach egolessness. We give him both the wings, so it remains always possible for him to change the direction whenever he wants. At whatsoever point he wants to change the direction, he can change the direction. Any moment the balloon can be punctured. We teach him the art of puncturing it too.

In the West you have only been taught one thing -- how to go on pumping more air into the balloon. And if sometimes punctures happen automatically, you have been taught how to mend them. Your psychology is nothing but... it is like a garage. The car is not functioning well, you go to the garage, and the garage mechanic maintains it back to its normality. He brings it back to its old functioning order.

The psychotherapist's couch is like a garage for you. When -- ever some puncture starts appearing in your life pattern, you immediately rush to the psychotherapist, so that he can cover the puncture and again you can go on pumping air in it.

The Eastern way, the psychology of the Buddhas, is that whenever the puncture happens, feel happy. Help it, it is good! Let this balloon go! But remember, that does not mean that we want nobody to grow into ego. First you have to grow into ego -- that's a natural part of growth.

So if you ask me, my suggestion is: up to the age of fifty-six... that is the middle age if we take the life span from one to one hundred and twelve years of age. That's what yogis say the natural age of man is: one hundred and twelve years. Each man is capable of living at least that long if things go right. If life energy moves in the right direction, one hundred and twelve years has been fixed by the yogis down the ages as the natural limit of life. If we die before then something has gone wrong -- either in the body or in the mind, or in the food, or in the society, something has gone wrong. We have not completed the natural course. So fifty-six is just the middle line. That's why Hindus say that after fifty you start thinking of sannyas, of renunciation. And by seventy-five, thinking won't do: you take the jump.

But we prepare from the very beginning. We say: Have a strong ego, and also have a different kind of strength which is not of the ego, so that when the ego becomes too much you can drop it too. Let your being also be strong, just as your ego is strong. Strong being is needed to drop the strong ego.

In the West you have been taught only to grow in strength as far as the ego is concerned. Then the ego becomes too strong and you are too impotent and you cannot do anything with it, you cannot drop it.

For example: you have been taught how to think, but you have not been taught how to stop thinking. So thinking becomes very very skillful, very logical, rational, very focussed, concentrated. Then one day you want to stop it but you cannot stop -- your being is very very impotent. You have put your whole energy into thinking and being has remained without energy. Now the slave that you have trained becomes the master. It is as if you have been continuously feeding the slave and starving the master. By and by, the slave comes to know

that you are nothing. Why should he allow you on the throne? He throws you off the throne and sits on the throne, and you cannot do anything.

You have watched it many times. In the night you want to go to sleep and the thoughts continue. And you say to them, "Please, stop!" But they don't stop, they don't hear at all, they don't bother about you. They go on and on and on.

Good to teach thinking, but it is FAR better to teach how not to think too! so that thinking remains a slave and the being remains the master. Good to have an ego, otherwise in life you will not have any spine. You will be crushed by anybody. If you don't have any ego in life, you will remain a non entity, yoU will be exploited, oppressed, tortured. Anybody, any Adolf Hitler will become your shepherd, and you will be a sheep. No, that's not good. You should be taught the ego, but simultaneously, far MORE important and significant is to teach you so that any moment you want to disconnect yourself from the ego you can disconnect. Any moment you want to puncture the ego you can puncture. Any moment you want to put the balloon away, you can put the balloon away.

The outer journey needs the ego, the inner journey needs egolessness. When you are fighting, the ego is needed. The soldier needs the ego, but the saint needs egolessness. And life is not all fight. If life is all fight, then it is meaningless. There are joyous moments which don't come through fight, which come through relaxation. Ego never allows you to relax; it keeps you continuously tense. Hence, the stress destroys you -- the body, mind, everything is destroyed by the stress and the strain.

You ask me: HOW CAN I WORK AS A THERAPIST IN AN EGOLESS WAY?

In the East our approach is that the therapist has not to work at all. The therapist becomes just a vehicle for God's energy. He has just to be available like a hollow bamboo so God can pass through him. The healer has to become just a passage.

The patient is a man -- in Eastern eyes -- who has lost his contact with God. He has become too egoistic and he has lost his contact with God. He has created such a China Wall around himself that he no more knows what God is, he no more knows what the totality is. He's utterly disconnected from the roots, from the very source of life. That's why he is ill -- mentally, physically or any other way. Illness means that he has lost track of the source. The healer, the therapist in the East, is expected to connect him to the source again. He has lost the source, but you have the connection still.

You hold the hand of the person. He is hidden behind a wall. Let him be hiding behind the wall. Even if you can hold his hand through a hole in the wall... if he can trust you -- he cannot trust a God, he does not know what God means. That word has become meaningless to him. But he can trust the therapist, he can hold the hand of the therapist. The therapist is empty, just in tune with God, and the energy starts flowing. And that energy is so vital, so rejuvenating, that sooner or later it destroys those China Walls around the patient, he has a glimpse of egolessness. That glimpse makes him healthy and whole, nothing else makes him healthy and whole.

So if the therapist himself is an egoist, then it is impossible. Both are prisoners. Their prisons are different, but they cannot be of much help.

My whole approach about therapy is that the therapist has to become instrumental to God. I'm not saying don't know the know-how. Know the know-how! -- but make that know-how available to God. Let Him use it. Learn psychotherapy, learn all kinds of therapies. Know whatsoever is possible to know, but don't cling to it. Put it there, let God be available through

you. Let God through all your know-how, let God flow through all your know-how. Let Him be the source of healing and therapy. That's what love is.

Love relaxes the other. Love gives trust to the other. Love showers on the other, heals his wounds.

The second question is concerned with the first:

IS PSYCHIC HEALTH POSSIBLE APART FROM A RELIGIOUS VIEW OF THE WORLD?

No. Only partially is it possible. Man has three planes of his being: the body, the mind and the soul. The mind is just in between, it is a bridge. Half consists of the body, half consists of the soul. So if you drop the religious dimension completely, the mind can never be whole; it will always be half, something will be missing.

That's what Carl Gustav Jung came to know at the latter stage of his life. He must have treated thousands of patients. In the end he asserted, "This has been my observation: that the age of forty-two seems to be bringing something new in the life of man. Just as at the age of fourteen sex enters, so at the age of forty-two religion has to enter. All people who suffer after forty-two are suffering somehow or other from the lack of the religious dimension." That is Jung's observation. They need somehow to contact God again. They may not know about it, but their basic problem is there. And it HAS to be there.

Life has two parts: birth and death. When you are young you are too full of birth, you are close to birth. You don't bother about death. When you start moving closer to death, one day you cross the boundary of birth and you enter into the boundary of death. Then you start thinking of death. And there is no other way to solve the fear of death except through religion. And if you cannot solve it, it goes on shaking you, trembling you; it goes on gnawing your heart. It becomes a wound. You can avoid it, you may not look at it. You can remain occupied in a thousand and one things. You may not think about it consciously, but unconsciously the death is coming closer, and your whole life starts losing meaning.

In the middle of life a day comes when suddenly death becomes significant. The moment you recognize that death is significant, you have to recognize the religious dimension. Religion exists because of death.

Materialism would be perfectly okay if there were no death; there would have been no need for religion. If there were only birth and no death, then materialism would have been all, then Charvarka, Epicurus, Karl Marx -- these people would have been the Buddhas. Then there is nothing else. If there is only birth, then who bothers? If you are going to live here forever, who bothers about the quality of life, or about something deeper? Then it is enough to go on enjoying! Then "Eat, drink, be merry" is the only sutra. No other Vedas, no other Bible, is needed.

But death comes. And because death comes, Buddha becomes important, Mahavir becomes important, Christ becomes important. They give you a vision that goes beyond death, that surpasses death, that conquers death. Religion is nothing but a door to settle terms with death.

Mind cannot be REALLY healthy without the religious view of the world. It will be a lop-sided view. You are not only the body, so only to think in material terms will not be satisfying to you. And you are not only the mind, so just psychological health won't do. You have a spirit too, and the spirit is at the center. That is your very core. If that remains

suffocated, if that remains starved, somehow or other that suffocation, that starvation, will take effect in the psychology, in the physiology too. It will come from the source, oozing like a poison, and you will go on doing everything, and still you will find something is missing, something of DEEP significance is missing.

That's what Western materialism has come to. Everything is available there, but meaning is lost, significance is lost, glory is lost, dignity is lost. The soul is missing. Jesus says: "And what can you gain even if you gain the whole world and lose your soul?"

The third question:

WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ANY PROOF FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE?

Why should I? If God Himself is not willing to give any proof, then why should I?

God remains unproved for a certain reason. Everybody has to prove Him by his own experience. If God becomes proved, He will no more be a God. If God is proved just as a stone is proved, then He will not be a God.

God is a potentiality, a possibility. God is a promise. If God can be proved herenow, and I can put God on a table and you can all inspect and dissect and do things with Him, He will not be a God any more. He will become a thing. Anything proved becomes a thing. God is not a thing. God cannot be proved.

But I am not saying that you cannot prove -- everybody can prove for his own heart's desire! But nobody can prove for anybody else. You have to go on a pilgrimage on your own. God is proved to me! Only God is for me -- you are not, neither are these trees. Only God is. Only the formless is, and you are all forms of it. But that is proved for me. It can become a proved experience for you too. But it cannot be borrowed, I cannot give it to you. And that will not satisfy.

Each time, each single individual has to prove God again and again. That is the promise. And when you prove on your own, when you come to encounter God on your own, when you have the feel on your own, He is proved. And still He does not become a thing, He does not become objective. He remains your subjectivity, your innermost experience. God remains private, God can never be made public.

Buddha knew, so did Ramakrishna, so did Raman -- they could not drag Him to the marketplace. How many BHAKTAS, how many devotees have known Him?! They could not persuade Him that "One day at least, come to the marketplace and let people see you. That will be good, then they will all become religious." But God has not listened to that. God knows far better. that will be the end of religion. Once god becomes a public phenomenon, that will be the end.

You don't worship any object. You CAN'T worship any object! Object has to be USED, not worshipped. If god is proved like any other object, then you will USE Him! You will put Him to a thousand and one uses. You will say "Now do this! Now do that! Now create petrol out of water! Make bread out of stones!" You will put Him to use, and you will be very angry and complaining and always shouting at Him and screaming. Strikes and protests and GHERAO and all those things you will do.

God is not a proved thing because God is not a thing. Only things can be proved. I can prove that this is a stone in my hand. How can I prove that there is love in my eyes for you? Love is not a stone, it cannot be proved. Only those who are available to me will know it. Only those who are ready to go with me without any proof, not asking for any proof in the

beginning, who are ready to trust -- they will know. If you ask, "First, give us the proof, then we are coming," then it is impossible.

I am making available to you the door from where God becomes a proved phenomenon, but God never becomes a public phenomenon. It remains private. You can go inside and you can see, and you can feel, and you can be, but when you come outside, you are again dumb. You will be as dumb as I am. You will not be able to say anything about Him. You can say a thousand and one things, but nothing will be really, exactly about Him. It will be roundabout.

I can talk about the way I reached. I can sing songs about the beautiful way and the trees on the path, and the flowers and the birds that sing there, but that is not talking about God. I can talk about the bliss that has been attained through God, but that too is not talking about God. I can say what joy and what peace has come to me, but that too is talking about something else, not about God.

There is no way to pinpoint Him. He remains elusive. He is very mercurial.

And, moreover, to prove God is utterly useless; because just by proving it, nobody is going to become religious. Religion comes out of trust, not out of proof. Let it be understood as deeply as possible.

Religion comes out of absurd trust, irrational trust. It does not come out of proof. Proof means your reason has been satisfied. When your reason has been satisfied you cannot go beyond reason. And religion is the effort to go beyond reason, to go beyond mind, to go beyond intellect. So proof is not possible. Then what do these people go on doing -- Buddhas and Christs and Mohammeds? They go on alluring you, they go on seducing you, towards something which is absurd. They go on selling something for which no proof exists. A few courageous people purchase, buy that idea, and take a jump. In that very jump God is proved! But before the jump, there is no way to prove Him. You will have to taste Him on your own.

I was reading R. H. Blyth. He was a great poet, and even more than that, he had a great understanding about beauty. A very aesthetic soul, and very perceptive, particularly about Zen and Zen poetry -- haiku -- he was one of the most authoritative persons in the world.

He writes: "I have been asked many questions in my life about poetry, religion, life, and I have given precisely the same number of answers, but I have never, I repeat, never satisfied a single interlocutor." He says, "Thousands of times the questions have been asked and I have answered them as skillfully as possible, but never, I repeat, never was a single questioner satisfied. Why was this?" One thinks, "Why was this?"

"Because all questioning is a way of avoiding the real answer, which, as Zen tells us, is really known already. Every man is enlightened, but he wishes he was not. Every man knows he must love his enemies, and sell all he has and give it to the poor, but he does not wish to know it... so he asks questions."

That I loved. People ask questions because they want to avoid.

God is available very very close by but you ask for the proof. This is a way to avoid. You say, "Unless the proof is given, how can I go into it?" Now you have a perfect reason not to move into it. You have rationalized your fear into a question.

God is... without any proof. God is self-evident. Only God is self-evident. Everything needs proof, God needs no proof. God means the whole! What is the need to prove this whole? Particulars need proofs. This tree needs to be proved, this pillar needs to be proved, this man needs to be proved. But the whole, the totality, need not be proved. And the totality cannot be proved.

You can prove a floating cloud in the sky; it has particularity, it has a definition, a boundary. But you cannot prove the sky itself. All that exists, exists in the sky, and the sky remains untouched, unknown, unseen. Has anybody ever seen the sky? Has anybody ever encountered the sky? Clouds, of course, things -- of course. But all exist in this space. And that space cannot be proved.

God is the total space -- the totality of all time, space, things, people, the past, the present, the future, the actual, the potential -- God is the ultimate totality of all. It cannot be proved. It is simply THERE! It is just there!

That's why Jesus says, "Knock and the door shall be opened unto you." But you say, "Before I knock, first prove -- is God inside?" You are standing at the door and Jesus says, "Knock and the door shall be opened unto you." And Rabiya goes even one step further. She says, "Why are you waiting here? Look! The door is open!"

But you say, "How can I look unless it is proved? Why should I look? First give me the proof that God exists, then I will look."

Blyth seems to be right: people ask questions so that they can avoid. They know the answer, but they are afraid to go into it. It will change their whole life. That much they don't want to put at stake.

The fourth question:

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF ORIGINAL REALIZATION, OR THE ORIGINAL FACE ZEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

ZEN HAS ITS OWN WAYS OF TALKING about the ultimate reality, or God. The original face is what God is. The original face means the face of you when you had no definition, when you had no body, no contours, no localization. The original face means your formless reality, when you were not even born, when not even your father or your father's father was born.

Original face means the source energy, the absolute source energy, the original energy beyond which we cannot go -- beyond which there is no way to go. Original face means: drop all the masks, drop all the names and the forms, and just go on looking into yourself and try to find out that one thing that you have not created, that the society has not created, that is not a belief system, that has nothing to do with your mind. Go on looking, go on looking... one day you stumble upon the fact of witnessing -- that is the only thing that you have not created, and that is the only thing beyond which you cannot go. Let me repeat it, it is significant. WITNESSING IS THE ONLY THING IN YOU BEYOND WHICH YOU CANNOT GO. You cannot witness the witness.

How can you witness the witness? You can witness the body -- it becomes certain that you are not the body. You can close your eyes and you can see your body, the body is there. Your head has a slight headache, your legs have gone numb. So one thing is certain -- you are separate from this numbness of the leg, otherwise how will you know? The knower has to be separate from the known. One thing is certain: that you are not the head or the headache. You are this consciousness that is knowing it.

Then go deeper. The body is not you. Thoughts are floating in the mind -- a constant traffic. One thought comes, another thought comes, and they go on rushing in and out. Are you these thoughts? How can you be? Then who is this watcher? These thoughts are like guests and you are the host. So another layer has been broken. You are not these thoughts,

you cannot be these thoughts. You are this witness who goes on seeing.

A thought arises, anger is coming up. Somebody has insulted you and you feel angry -- a thought arises, a smoke of anger arises. Who is this who knows that the anger is coming in? And then it subsides too! One moment it was not there, one moment it was there, again it is gone. Now who is this who is witnessing? This is you! But can you witness this witness? There is no way. If you can witness that witness, then the one that is witnessing will be you -- not the witnessed one, but the witnessing one.

This is ultimately irreducible. Now you cannot go beyond it. This is the origin. What Hindus call sakshin, the witness, Zen people call the original face. That's what other religions call God. God is your original face.

Listen to this parable:

A nervous man, addicted to ghost stories, reads a well-written one late at night. He gets the notion that the ghost he has been reading about is in the house. He barricades the door, he trembles with fear, and is in danger of a heart attack. In a way he knows it is all illusion, only something he has been reading about. This is his 'original realization', which is never quite lost. But in practice he accepts the ghost, and this affects him physically. Every creak of the furniture and gust of wind reinforces his belief in the ghost.

From the point of view of original realization, there is nothing which needs to be done, as the ghost has no existence. From the point of view of practical reality, to free himself from the fear which oppresses him, he must adopt a discipline of restraining his mind from thoughts based on acceptance of the ghost's existence, and return to his original realization. But if he should regard this regimen as a sort of spell to kill the ghost, he is again asserting its existence and obscuring original realization.

Even to say that the object of the practice is to free him from the ghost is not to the point -- there has never been a ghost. The practice of realization is its own end. The furniture creaks and the wind blows, but the house is ever at peace.

Now this is a beautiful story, and you must have observed it sometime yourself late in the night reading a ghost story or a detective novel or something. And you KNOW, basically you know, fundamentally you know, that this is just fiction. But you have got involved into it. A ghost story, if well-written, can give you so much fear.

You want to go to the bathroom and you cannot go. And you KNOW -- it is not that you don't know -- you know that this is foolish. But a practical difficulty has arisen. You have always been going to the same bathroom in the middle of the night and there has never been a problem. Now.... And can you say that you don't know? You have been reading the ghost story, and you know that this ghost, who seems to be there in the bathroom, is NOT there!

If you can understand this story, you will have understood the WHOLE standpoint of Zen. The ego is the ghost. It is not there. And you KNOW it! But a practical difficulty is there. You know it and yet... the wind comes and there is noise, dead leaves in the garden are being thrown here and there by the wind, and you feel... or you imagine somebody's footsteps. A rat runs into the bathroom... something falls... the very shock of it! And you are alone in the house... and the ghost story in your hand... and you are under its impact! And now the bladder is bursting! And you cannot go to the bathroom.

And you know it all the time -- that these are dead leaves, that the wind has always been blowing them THIS way. And you know that rat -- he sometimes does things in the bathroom. But who knows...? perhaps...? This perhaps gives reality to something which is

just a phantom of your imagination.

Now, you can go to a Master, or you can recite a mantra, you can start chanting "Ram, Ram, Ram" to help you. Now the first ghost is false, the second ghost is also false. Now you are calling God, "Help me!" and reciting a mantra because the bladder is bursting and you have to go. You need some way to get rid of this ghost. You have heard that the name of Ram is very potential. You have heard stories. Now all those stories become credible. You have heard somebody was passing through a cemetery and a ghost started following him, and he said "Ram, Ram, Ram" thrice -- and the ghost was gone and he could pass through the cemetery without any trouble.

Now all those stories... now your mind is in a turmoil! You start repeating "Ram, Ram, Ram." You have to go, so you will find some way or other. The bladder is bursting, so you say "Ram, Ram, Ram" -- shaking, trembling, half believing, half not-believing. You go into the bathroom. Ram helps.

In fact there is no ghost, so there is no need for Ram to help you. But Ram helps. And you are very very happy that Ram has been helpful to you. So this mantra is potential. NOW one ghost is dropped, another ghost is there. Now you will become attached to this name "Ram". Now whenever you are afraid you will start chanting "Ram".

From one foolishness to another foolishness... from one falsity to another falsity.

This is the approach of Zen: rather than substituting your ghosts, please see the fact that there is no ghost in the first place! Then there is no need to become dependent on any mantra, and no need to become dependent on any God, and no need to become dependent on anybody whatsoever. Just see that the disease that you think is there is NOT there, so the medicine IS NOT needed.

Seeing into the fact that you ARE your originality STILL -- right now, this very moment, you are gods and goddesses -- seeing this, the ghost story that you have been reading for millions of lives simply disappears leaving no trace behind. This is what Zen people call the original face, or, the original realization.

The fifth question:

I AM VERY MUCH IMPRESSED BY WHAT YOU SAY AND WANT TO DONATE QUITE A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF MONEY TO YOUR WORK. BUT I WANT TO GIVE THE MONEY DIRECTLY TO YOU. IS THIS POSSIBLE?

DON'T BE IN SUCH A HURRY. Money is great. Impressions come and go -- money remains. Impressions are not so substantial, money is substantial. If you listen to my advice, don't donate -- because tomorrow you may repent. My feeling is that you will repent. This is all hypnosis. You got hypnotized. Wait! Give it time, and soon you will understand what I am saying.

Money is not what is needed here. I require your life! Less than that won't do. I require you, your being. Money you can keep -- don't keep yourself. Then you have understood some thing.

But the way the question is formulated shows you have not understood me at all. Otherwise, why this hankering to come and give the money directly to me? Do you want to show how -- much money you are giving? Then you have not understood. Then you want somehow... as if you are obliging me! You want to be appreciated? You will not get any

appreciation from me.

If you want to give out of your love -- good. But don't brag about it. No need even to talk about it. Don't even wait for a thankyou. In fact, if we accept money from you, you should be thankful to me. We could have rejected. I am not obliged, you are obliged! You should thank us that we helped you to unburden yourself. You have long been carrying this load -- a substantial load -- and we help you to put it down. Laxmi helps people!

But there is no need to bring your money to me. Bring to me your mind. I am interested in that. And unless mind is dropped, money is not dropped. If you can donate a substantial amount. you must be having thousandfold more.

People have too much, and they just give a little bit and they think they are doing something great. That is not sharing. That is very tricky and cunning.

Listen to this beautiful anecdote:

Belle de L'Amour was the most beautiful and exotic courtesan in France under the Empire. When the King had finished with her, she set up shop in a fashionable part of Paris, and charged one thousand francs a night.

The cadets of St. Cyr had heard many stories of her voluptuous charms and passionate nature, and the conversations in the barrack rooms often ended on the note of what any one of them would do if he won the national lottery.

"Lottery?" cried a bright recruit. "That gives me an idea." It was there and then agreed among them that every cadet should pay one franc, and as there were a thousand of them that would just be the courtesan's fee. Then they would hold a raffle and the lucky winner should spend a night with the lady.

Thus it was that young Dupont, the son of a noble house appeared before the lady. When she saw a boy of nineteen she went to send him away, hut when she saw the thousand francs she changed her mind.

The following morning, pulling a transparent silk slip over her voluptuous body, she sat up and asked how such a youth came by so much money, and he told her the whole story. Her romantic French heart was deeply moved. "Ah, mon petit cheri, quel sentiment!" she cried, and said in the circumstances she felt she ought to give him his money back.

The idea thrilled the youth, and as he departed he kissed her and held out his hand. She reached for her jewelled purse and gave him a franc!

HIS money!

What do you call substantial? You must be a miser.

In the first place, when misers become impressed they start thinking about giving money. Mm? that is the indication of a miser, because that's all that he thinks is valuable. It is a miser's mind! If you are REALLY interested in what I am saying, you will think of something more significant than money.

Why did you come to think about money? That must be the most precious thing in your life. Naturally, when you become impressed by somebody you think, "I should give him the most precious thing." But money is not precious!

And, know well, I am not averse to money. It is SO ordinary that there is no need even to be averse to it. Money is a utility. By giving money you will not be giving your heart. It may be a way of saving your heart. Then you can think that "Look, I have given that much money." That may be a trick to befool yourself. Give your heart! And if by giving your heart your money also comes as a shadow, that is another matter. Then it will never be substantial.

You may give your whole -- all that you have -- even then you will not call it substantial.

Only the heart is substantial, nothing else. So if you want to give me anything directly bring your heart. I am ready to take it any moment. But not less than that. Less than that -- anything is not worth it. Don't trouble yourself carrying that much of a load to me. You call unload in the office....

The sixth question:

I HAVE BEEN THINKING AND THINKING FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS NOW OF BEING INITIATED INTO SANNYAS BUT SOMEHOW IT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAPPEN. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT IT?

You are plain lazy. Meditate on this:

In the southern part of Arkansas, where the natives take life easy, a man and his wife were one day sitting on the porch when a funeral procession passed the house.

The man was comfortably seated in a chair which was tilted back on its hind legs against the side of the house, and he was engaged in whittling a piece of wood. As the procession proceeded he said, "I reckon ole man Simpson's havin' about the biggest funeral that's ever been held around here, Caroline -- would you like to see?"

"A purty good-sized one, is it, Bud?" queried the wife, making no effort to move.

"You betcher," Bud answered.

"I certainly would like to see it," said the woman, "It's a shame I ain't facin' that way."

For three years thinking about being initiated...? For three years thinking about sannyas? For what are you waiting? Just plain lazy, cannot take any decisive attitude. Cannot act! You must be a driftwood, accidental.

Become essential! By remaining accidental, one never arrives anywhere. And when I say "Become non-accidental," I mean take some decisions. And sannyas is one of the great decisions in life, it is a turning-point. It is a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. It will change the very quality of your life, of your being. It will change your whole world. It will never be the same again.

What are you waiting for? If you are happy the way you are, then drop the idea. Be decisive! Then drop the idea! If you are perfectly happy, then why bother? Why think about it at all?

I am not saying to become a sannyasin, remember. I am simply saying "Be decisive." Remaining three years in indecisiveness is destructive. Either decide this way or that. If you are feeling good as you are, if you are feeling right as you are, if you are living your life perfectly happily, then why bother about sannyas? Forget all about it!

But you must not be happy. You can't be happy. That's why the idea is arising. The way you have lived up to now has not been the right way. You know it! Then for three years just to think about.... You will become more and more dull as the time passes. Three years you have been indecisive; four years you will be indecisive, five years you will be indecisive. The more you remain indecisive, the more difficult decision will become -- because you are learning a process of remaining indecisive. Either TAKE IT! or forget about it! There is no NEED to remain hanging in limbo.

Three tortoises find a bottle of whiskey in the desert, but they don't have the opener with them. They decide that the youngest one has to go off to the nearest oasis to fetch a

corkscrew. "But don't touch the whiskey," he says before taking off. So the two tortoises wait patiently.

Ten years pass, then twenty years, and there is no sign of the friend or the corkscrew. "He probably has lost his way. Let's break the bottle," the two say.

At that moment the young one appears from behind a hill shouting, "If you start cheating, I won't be going at all!"

So how long are you going to be hiding behind your hill? Either go, or simply say you don't want to go.

And this is one of the problems for many people. They simply leave it to circumstances to decide. And even when you are not deciding, something is being decided. Even not to decide is a kind of decision, remember.

For example, you are suffering from a disease and the doctor says, "Get operated on," and you say, "I am trying to decide whether to get operated on or not." But while you are not getting operated on, you are deciding not to get operated on. Those days are passing and the disease is increasing. If you decide not to get operated on, don't say, "I am not deciding." If you remain indecisive, it is a kind of decision in favour of the disease, against the operation.

During these three years you have been thinking about sannyas, three years you have been there without sannyas -- this was a kind of decision, a negative decision.

Just watch! If being a non-sannyasin feels good, it is perfectly good. With all my blessings, remain a non-sannyasin. I am here only to help you to be more blissful. I am not interested in anything else. If you can be happy without sannyas, then that is the way to be.

But then don't create this anxiety in your head. You will not be happy, you can't be happy. Hence the idea comes again and again to become a sannyasin, to be initiated. And if the idea is coming, then be man enough -- have a little courage! ALWAYS MOVE WITH A POSITIVE DECISION. That is how one grows into integrity. Never remain in the hands of circumstances; otherwise one becomes, by and by, very lousy.

Either you have understood that your way of life, your style of life, has been meaningless, or you have not understood. If you have not understood, then try to understand; there is no question of decision right now. If you have understood, then take the jump.

It happened:

A captain of artillery, a sergeant and a bombardier were arguing about the act of love. The captain declared it was ninety percent pleasure and ten percent work. The sergeant said it was ten percent pleasure and ninety percent work. The bombardier, who was scared of both, said it was fifty percent work, fifty percent pleasure.

They decided to ask the first person who came along, and it happened to be a humble gunner. In answer to the question he said, "Of course, it's a hundred percent pleasure. If it wasn't you lot would make us gunners do it for you!"

Either your life is a pleasant life... even if it is sixty percent pleasure, even if it is fifty-one percent happiness, remain in it. No need to get out of it, because if you get out of something which was fifty-one percent happiness, then the other will be only forty-nine percent. And sooner or later you will start repenting about it; you will have taken a wrong decision.

But I have seen people coming to me and they say, "Ninety percent I have decided to take sannyas, only ten percent the mind is wavering." But do you want to decide for the ten percent? If you don't take it, then you are deciding in favour of the minority. Decide at least

in favour of the majority.

I know you cannot be total. How can you be total? Totality will come one day after you have reached to your very innermost core. You will be total in your actions. Then there is no question of minority and majority. Then there is no choice, then there are no alternatives. The obvious is obvious and one does it without any choice. Then there is great freedom -- freedom from choosing. Otherwise, choice always creates anxiety.

But right now you cannot be total. So I will suggest that if the major part of your being is ready for sannyas, take the jump. The minor part of the mind can go on rationalizing. The minor part can go on playing tricks and tactics and strategies on you. It can go on arguing -- it WILL GO ON arguing to the very end, till you take the jump. As long as the hope is there that you may remain with the minor, the minor will try to persuade you.

But look into its arguments -- they are all absurd. You have lived your past, you have not lived your future. This much is certain. Future is open, past is closed. Past you know, future you don't know. If you remain the same as you have lived up to now you will be simply repeating the past. And past you know! -- so what is going to be new by repeating it?

Even if sometimes you go astray, my own suggestion is: be courageous and go astray, but don't repeat the past! At least something new will be possible, some new pasture of being and life will be possible. And if you miss it and you don't get anywhere, you can always come back to the past. The past is always there waiting for you -- it is a junkyard. It never grows, it never goes anywhere, it is just sitting there. You can always come back to it. It is a dead thing, it is a corpse -- the corpse will not run!

You can always go back to your past, it is always there. But don't destroy your future, and don't decide always according to the past. The past tends to capture your future too. The past becomes dictatorial for the future too. It says, "Just be the same as you have been up to now."

Little Bobby Bratwell, caught in mischief for the tenth time one day, was asked by his mother, "How do you expect to get into heaven?"

The lad thought a minute, then replied, "Well, I'll just run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until Saint Peter says, 'For heaven's sake, Bobby, come in or stay out!'"

And the last question:

WHAT IS PREOCCUPATION?

PREOCCUPATION IS PREJUDICE, preoccupation is pride, preoccupation is past. Preoccupation means you come loaded in the moment, you don't see the case that is there. You look through coloured eyes.

For example, if you are hearing me here, and you are hearing through a curtain -- you have your beliefs, you have your ideas, you have your conditionings, your teachers, your parents, your society, your religion, your church are all standing there -- and you hear me through that clamour, then you are preoccupied and you will not be able to hear me. You will not be able to hear what is being said, you will hear something else. You will create your own thing through your interpretation. You will miss me.

A preoccupied mind is a dull mind. A preoccupied mind is a borrowed mind.

Unoccupied, mind is fresh, intelligent, radiant. Hence, one of the bases of all meditations is to remain unoccupied. When you listen, listen; when you see, just see -- and remain in the

present. If you can remain in the present, God is not far away. He is around the corner. He has always been there waiting for you. But you are so preoccupied. Listen to these two stories:

A man in a country hotel, a commercial traveller, rang down to the reception desk and said, "Send up a nice whore."

The proprietor's wife was very angry and told her husband to go up and throw the man out. But he refused because he did not want to lose a good customer, and he said that the request was natural and harmless. The wife said, "If you won't, I will," and off she went upstairs.

There was a fearful racket for about twenty minutes, after which the traveller came down and said, "I suppose that's all you can get in country towns -- but she was a tough old bitch! I damn near had to rape her!"

This is preoccupied mind. One is waiting for the whore -- now his whole mind has a certain concept. He will look through that concept. Or to this story:

A man was travelling to Manchester with his family by train. Since their compartment was a non-smoker, he went next door to smoke a cigar. The only other occupant was a rather dejected young man gazing moodily out of the window. Harry offered him a cigar.

"No, thank you," said the young man, "I don't smoke."

When Harry had finished with his newspaper, he asked the young man whether he would like to read it.

"No, thank you," he replied. "I don't read."

Still hoping to cheer up his travelling companion, Harry offered to buy him a drink.

"No, thank you" came the refrain. "I don't drink."

Refusing to admit defeat, Harry tried again. "Young man, I admire your principles. I'd like you to come and meet my wife and daughter in the next compartment."

"No, thank you. I don't screw either."

This is a preoccupied mind. You have a certain idea of the world, and you go on believing that that idea is the truth about the world. People miss because of their preoccupations.

Once you drop all preoccupations, a great emptiness arises in you. That great emptiness is what meditation is all about. That great emptiness, where no thought flickers, where you are purely available to whatsoever is the case, is satori, is samadhi.

Don't be a Christian, and don't be a Hindu, and don't be a good man, and don't be a bad man -- don't carry ideas inside you.

Don't carry scriptures, burn your scriptures. BURN ALL the tapes inside your head! And suddenly you will find the benediction I call God, the blessing I call God, the ecstasy I call God.

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #5

Chapter title: A Master Echoes You

5 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707050

ShortTitle: PARAD305

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 97 mins

A MONK ASKS, "WHAT IS THE BUDDHA?"
TOSU (THE MASTER) ANSWERS, "THE BUDDHA."
MONK: "WHAT IS THE TAO?"
TOSU: "THE TAO."
MONK: "WHAT IS ZEN?"
TOSU: "ZEN."

TRUTH CANNOT BE SAID, BUT ONE CANNOT be silent about it either. Truth cannot be said because words are inadequate. You cannot be silent about it either, because silence is also inadequate. Words are noisy, true; they make much fuss, much noise and say nothing. Silence is just the absence of noise. If the positive noise cannot say anything, how can the absence say anything? Silence is just absence. If even the positive is impotent, how can the negative be potent?

The second thing has to be understood very well, because there have been many schools and many philosophers who think that truth cannot be said; so they keep silence. But you cannot say it even through silence. Silence may show only that are inadequate, that's all. But the silence cannot be enough. And there is a danger: the silence may be sheer ignorance. Too many words create one danger -- the man becomes a parrot, a pundit, or a professor. Silence can create a sort of humbug. There are people who keep silent, and others think that they must have come to know because they are silent.

Once a man came to me -- many years have passed since then -- and he said, "I have been to Baba Muktananda Paramhansa. I asked a few very fundamental questions, and he kept silent -- he is a great man, he knows."

The same day, I was leaving for another town, so I told the man, "You come with me, and for three days you be silent with me. And I will see." I gave him orange clothes; he was my first sannyasin -- a bogus, humbug sannyasin. And I told him, "For three days you will be Baba Chuktananda Paramhansa."

He said, "Never heard of this name, Chuktananda."

I told him, "I also have not heard it. I have just coined it this very moment. 'Chukta' means one who has paid all his debts. You are free, utterly free. Your world has come to an end."

And he asked me, "Then what have I to do?"

I told him, "You have nothing to do at all. You keep silent, you simply sit. All that is needed I will do. If somebody asks you something, you can make any gesture, or you can close your eyes, or you can look upwards or downwards whatsoever you feel. But don't utter

a word."

And in three days the whole town was worshipping him. In the night he was allowed -- when everybody had left -- he could talk to me. He would hold my legs and he would say, "Osho, what are you doing? I feel so embarrassed when people touch my feet," he would say. "And so many people! What has gone wrong? How do you manage it?"

Once they came to know that he had attained and he keeps silence -- that's enough to convince people. People are so foolish. Either they are deceived by words or they are deceived by silence -- but they are deceived either way.

There is a famous Zen story. I would like to tell it to you.

A monk called himself the 'Master of Silence'. He was actually a fraud and had no genuine understanding. To sell his humbug Zen, he had two eloquent attendant monks to answer questions for him; but he himself never uttered a word, as if to show his inscrutable 'silent Zen'.

One day, during the absence of his two attendants, a pilgrim monk came to him and asked: "Master, what is the Buddha?" Not knowing what to do or to answer, in his confusion he could only look desperately round in all directions -- east and west, here and there -- for his missing mouthpieces.

The pilgrim monk, apparently satisfied, then asked him: "What is the dharma, sir?" He could not answer this question either, so he first looked up at the ceiling and then down at the floor, calling for help from heaven and hell.

Again the monk asked: "What is Zen?" Now the Master of Silence could do nothing but close his eyes.

Finally the monk asked: "What is blessing?" In desperation, the Master of Silence helplessly spread his hands to the questioner as a sign of surrender.

But the pilgrim was very pleased and satisfied with this interview. He left the 'Master' and set out again on his journey.

On the road the pilgrim met the attendant monks on the way home, and began telling them enthusiastically what an enlightened being this Master of silence was.

He said: "I asked him what Buddha is. He immediately turned his face to the east and then to the west, implying that human beings are always looking for Buddha here and there, but actually Buddha is not to be found either in the east or in the west.

I then asked him what the dharma is. In answer to this question he looked up and down, meaning that the truth of dharma is a totality of equalness, there being no discrimination between high and low, while both purity and impurity can be found therein.

In answering my question as to what Zen was, he simply closed his eyes and said nothing. That was a clue to the famous saying:

'If one can close his eyes and sleep soundly
in the deep recesses of the cloudy mountains
he is a great monk indeed.'

Finally, in answering my last question, 'What is the blessing?' he stretched out his arms and showed both his hands to me. This implied that he was stretching out his helping hands to guide sentient beings with his blessings. Oh, what an enlightened Zen Master! How profound is his teaching!"

When the attendant monks returned, the 'Master of Silence' scolded them thus: "Where have you been all this time? A while ago I was embarrassed to death, and almost ruined, by an inquisitive pilgrim!"

The same happened to Baba Chuktananda Paramhansa. People would ask, he would sit silently, he would look here and there, or up or down, or would close his eyes, and I would explain to them what he meant. And in those three days, by and by, I became secondary; Chuktananda became more important, I was just an interpreter. And people found great peace showering from Chuktananda.

People are stupid! Either they start clinging to the word, to the letter, or, if somehow they drop the word, the letter, they start clinging to the opposite.

But truth is neither in words nor in silence. Truth is a transcendence. Truth is a transcendence of duality. Silence is part of the dual game of the mind. Mind is not only words. remember. Between two words there is a small gap where mind is silent. Mind is both -- words and silence crisscrossing. Each word is followed by silence, and each silence is followed by a word.

When you are thinking, one thought comes, then a gap. Otherwise one thought will be overlapped by another, there will be a great confusion -- the gap is needed. Then comes another thought. It is just like when you stand on the road watching traffic. One car passes by, then a gap passes! You don't see the gap because you can't see the gap. One car passes by, then a gap passes, and then another car. If there is no gap, there will be a clash between two cars, there will be an accident. The gap is always there. The gap is as much part of the traffic as the cars.

Exactly the same is the case with mind. Words, noise, so-called silence, are both parts of the mind.

There is another kind of silence which has nothing to do with mind. That silence is not absence of noise, it is presence of the unknowable -- a totally different quality: not the absence of noise, but the presence of God, or the presence of the whole. That silence is not a dead silence; that silence is very much alive, vibrating, full of joy, showering bliss all around, overflowing with love. And you can see the difference.

When a person is simply silent in the sense of no word, absence, you will see dullness. You will see a kind of sleep surrounding him. You will see a kind of stupidity, a torpor. This kind of man will not be intelligent. You can find this kind of paramhansa in many places in India. To be a humbug mahatma is so easy. You don't have to do much. Even if you can keep silent -- at least in the daytime -- that will do. Not a big practice, a small thing.

Silence that is absence is dull; silence that is presence of the Divine, God, truth, Tao, or whatsoever name you like, has a totally different quality to it. It blooms, it blooms in a thousand and one flowers. It has a fragrance, it is young, it is fresh; it is not dull and dead. It is not the silence of the cemetery. It is the silence where life is happening, but happening very silently.

So remember this difference: words cannot say anything about truth, neither can your so-called silence. Your silence is also yours. The plane of your silence and the plane of your words is not different -- they belong to the same plane.

Truth can be understood only when you transform, transfigure your plane of being, when you attain to a new kind of consciousness, a new awareness.

WE GO ON MOVING ON THE SAME PLANE. Sometimes we play the game of words, sometimes we start playing the game of silence. Sometimes we play the game of being worldly, sometimes we start playing the game of being other-worldly. Sometimes we play the game of the marketplace, and sometimes the game of the church and the temple -- but the

plane remains the same. We don't move a single inch. Your monastery and your marketplace both belong to the same world.

You live on one plane. Unless this plane moves towards a higher altitude, you can do whatsoever you like but nothing will change. An angry person can pray, but his prayer will be out of anger; an angry person can love, but his love will be full of anger. An angry person can do many things, but wherever, whatsoever he is doing, anger will be present -- maybe sometimes obvious, sometimes not so obvious. A violent person can try to be non-violent. Then in his non-violence there will be violence, he will be very violently non-violent. He will be very aggressive about it; he will become obsessed with non-violence.

Remember, it is not a question of changing from one polarity to another polarity on the same plane. The question is of changing from one plane to another.

A few years ago the dons of the Philosophy faculty at Cambridge decided to make the final examination consist of only one compulsory question, which read as follows:

"Is this a question?"

To everyone's surprise one candidate got up, handed in a sheet of paper and walked out two minutes after the examination had begun.

When the results were announced he had come first. He had written: "If that is a question, THIS IS AN ANSWER."

Yes, that's the exact answer -- on the same plane. But neither is the question a question, nor is the answer an answer.

This is what we are doing. Be very watchful. It is very human to be caught in the polarity.

Yes, truth cannot be uttered in words, but it cannot be uttered through silence either. Then what is one supposed to do?

Zen has a very, very special approach about it. It uses words in a nonsense way -- it uses words without any meaning. It uses words not as they should be used. It uses words in an absurd way.

Somebody asks: "What is a Buddha?"

And Tosu says: "A Buddha."

Now this is a tautology; you are not saying anything. The man is asking "What is a Buddha?" And you say, "A Buddha is a Buddha." You have not added anything, you have simply repeated.

Language is to add something, to define something, to propound something, to make something more clear, to help in some way. You have not helped! You have thrown the questioner towards himself.

He asks, "What is Buddha?" and you say, "Buddha." What are you doing? You have shocked the whole mind process. For a moment the questioner will be at a loss -- what to do? If you had said something meaningful... then thinking starts. Then he can think about it. A meaningful assertion leads to much thinking. He can think about what you have said. If you had kept silent... he can guess. Thinking starts again. He will guess, "What do you mean by your silence?" In fact, there is more possibility of guesswork when you are silent than when you say something. When you say something, at least you give him a direction. When you don't say anything, all directions are kept open. He can run around every place and think whatsoever he wants to think -- you give him freedom. Either way, you help him to think;

either way, his mind starts weaving and spinning.

What does Tosu mean when he says, "Buddha"? He simply shocks you. It is a full point. He does not help you to think any more, in any way. He does not give you any opportunity to go into thinking. The very shock... for a moment everything stops. In that stop the vision is possible. And that stop is of great significance.

If you ask the philosophers they will say, "This is a tautology, this is not an answer." It is not. It is a tautology, but it can't be helped.

But the technique has to be understood. What is Tosu doing? Tosu is creating a great technique. And after Tosu, Zen Masters have used it tremendously; they even made much improvement on it.

Another Master is asked: "What is a Buddha?"

And he says, "Look! The cypress in the courtyard."

Now that is far better even. When you say, "A Buddha is a Buddha," there is a possibility that the man may go on thinking in the same way as he was thinking before. Or he may think you don't know; or he may think, "Yes, a Buddha is a Buddha." He may not be shocked.

But when a Master shouts: "Look! The cypress tree in the courtyard!" now it is completely irrelevant. He gives you a complete discontinuity with your mind. He shocks you out of your sleep, even for a moment, but to come out of your sleep even for a single moment is to attain a great vision. And in that vision something happens -- your plane is changed. You don't move on the same plane, you jump onto another plane. The altitude is different.

Zen Masters have improved more, by and by. Tosu is the founder of a subtle technique of shocking people; of not using language in the ordinary, usual way; of playing with language in such a way that the language does not give any impetus to thinking. And not using silence, because silence gives impetus to guessing. Using words, but in such a nonsense way that they don't carry any sense -- one thing.

Zen Masters go on improving later on. You ask a Zen Master, "What is a Buddha?" He can hit you! That is far better even than cypress tree in the courtyard'. He can jump upon you, he can take you unawares. You were not waiting for it. He can slap you.

What are these techniques? What is the significance of all these? They look so brute, violent, uncivilized, primitive. They are not. The whole effort is to give you a gap from the polarity -- not to allow you to escape to any polarity of your ordinary mind, to push you somewhere beyond it.

When Rinzai was asked what the essence of Buddhist teaching was, he came right down from his seat and, taking hold of the questioner by the front of his robe, slapped his face, and let him go. The questioner stood there, stupefied.

The bystanders remarked, "Why DON'T YOU BOW?" This woke him from his reverie; and when he was about to make a bow to the Master, he had his first satori.

What happened? A very strange exchange. The person has asked him a question: "What is the essence of Buddhist teaching?" and he gets slapped before a crowd -- must have been Rinzai's disciples. He was not waiting for it. It was so unexpected; that is the beauty of it. When something expected happens, your mind can continue in the routine way.

Now if this man goes again to Rinzai and asks the same question again and gets slapped, there will be nothing in it. He will be expecting it. A Master of the qualities of Rinzai or Tosu

will not slap you again; he will find another way. He may bow down and touch your feet.

A Zen Master has to remain unexpected. Once you know his answers, they are no longer answers; once you know something beforehand, the mind starts weaving its patterns around it -- it already knows. The mind can only be shocked and taken out of its reverie by something absolutely unexpected. This is the technique: the unexpected. And the unexpected helps. The expected keeps you where you are; the unexpected jogs you out of your reverie.

But even the slapping has not helped. Rinzai slapped this man, he was stupefied; he must have become scared, he must have been very shocked. But he was still not out of it, he was still clinging to the same plane. He may have been getting angry, or he may have been thinking to hit back. And then somebody from the crowd -- must have been a man of great understanding -- somebody in the crowd said, "Why don't you bow?" Now this is even more unexpected. Somebody hits you, slaps you, and you have to bow to him!

But the one who said, "Why don't you bow?" is showing great insight. He is saying, "The Master has been so compassionate towards you. There was no reason for him to do so much -- to come down, to take you by your collar and hit you and slap you. There was no need! Out of compassion he has done so much for you, and what are you doing standing there like a fool? At least you can bow down, at least you should be thankful!"

This is even more unexpected -- that somebody hits you and you have to be thankful. But the man understood. He must have looked in that moment at Rinzai -- that compassionate man, those compassionate eyes, that love -- in that one moment he must have seen the Buddha standing before him, the very personification of enlightenment. He must have had a glimpse, a window must have opened, something must have clicked. Yes, he understood: "This man has not hit you out of anger, out of aggression. He is not your enemy, he is your friend. It is out of compassion that he has hit you." Once this glimpse dawned on him, he bowed down. In that very bowing, he had his first satori.

ZEN HAS BROUGHT INTO THE WORLD sudden techniques of enlightenment. And the base of all of them is: hold the other in an unexpected moment; do anything, but bring an unexpected moment, for which the man concerned has no answer in the past, no guess is possible, for which the past is absolutely meaningless. The past cannot supply any answer, the memory is impotent -- that is the meaning when I say 'the unexpected' -- when you cannot find in your memory something that can become the answer to 'why?'

Why is Tosu saying this? You have asked: "What is Buddha?" Such a significant question, one of the most significant questions. He has asked all the three significant questions that can be asked. First:

"WHAT IS THE BUDDHA?"

That is the goal, the very goal of life: to become enlightened, to come to a point of utter freedom, utter knowing, insight, consciousness, deathlessness. He has asked the goal:

"WHAT IS THE BUDDHA?"

Second, he has asked:

"WHAT IS THE TAO?"

Tao means the way. First, the goal; then the way to the goal. And then third, he asks:

"WHAT IS ZEN?"

Zen means the method. The method, the way, the goal -- that's all. These three questions are the ONLY relevant questions to be asked by an intelligent man. The whole of religion is nothing but an answer to these three questions: the goal, the way, the method.

The method brings you to the way, the way brings you to the goal. The method helps to keep you on the way, and the way leads you to the goal. This is the whole science of religion.

Religion can be defined in three categories: the methodology, the way, and the goal. The questioner has asked the most relevant questions that can be asked, and here come answers which are absolutely irrelevant.

"WHAT IS THE BUDDHA?"

And Tosu says: "THE BUDDHA!"

He's not answering your question, he is throwing you back to yourself. He's saying that to define one word by another word is to fall into an infinite regress. Try to understand this.

You cannot define one unknown by another unknown... or can you? The other is as much unknown... For example, if he says, "Buddha is enlightenment," it doesn't solve anything. The person will ask, "What is enlightenment?" And he can define it by some other word, but nothing is solved. The person will ask, "What is that?" You can go on from A to XYZ, nothing is defined. Each word leads to another word which is as much undefined as the first one. This is an infinite regress.

That's where we are caught -- in the infinite regress. Because we cannot go to the very end of questioning, that's why we are not aware of it. Somebody asks, "What is love?" and you answer -- NOT knowing the fact that the terms that you are using in defining love are themselves indefinable. So what is the point? I ask you, "Where does A live?" You say, "Just by the side of B," and I am as puzzled as before, because I don't know where B lives. So I ask you, "Where does B live?" and you say, "Just by the side of C -- he is a neighbour of C." You are answering me, but I don't know where this C lives! So you go on, it is a vicious circle. You answer my question by another puzzle. It is not going to help. How can it help? I don't know A, I don't know B, I don't know C. Rather than helping me you are putting me into a mess.

In the beginning there was only one question: "Where does A live?" Now there are three thousand questions: "Where does B live? Where does C live...?" You are confusing me, you have not helped. And when Tosu says, "Buddha is Buddha." He is trying to not confuse you any more. You are confused already. He says, "A is A." What does he mean? What is his indicator?

He is saying, "Buddha can be known but cannot be explained." He is saying, "I cannot say anything about Buddha, but I can show you how to be a Buddha. A Buddha is a Buddha. When you have become a Buddha you will know. There is no other way to know. If you are not a Buddha, whatsoever you know will not be to the point -- will NEVER be to the point."

So the tautology is of tremendous significance. It may not have any meaning, but it has great significance. The significance has to be seen. Tosu says, "A Buddha is a Buddha." He does not help you to think any more about Buddha. He simply brings you to a full stop. He says, "Halt! Don't go into words because one word leads to another, and then there is no end

to it." Words are like Indians -- they don't believe in birth control. One word goes on giving birth to another and another and another, it goes on. And soon you will be in such a mess, in such a crowd of words, that you will forget what your original question was.

Bertrand Russell has written in his autobiography: "When I was young and I went to the university to study philosophy, I had gone with the idea that I would get at least a few answers to the basic questions of life." At the age of ninety he remembers that he had been in the university, not only as a student but as a professor and as a great philosopher -- he was one of the most popular philosophers of this century -- and finally he says: "Only one thing can I say about philosophy and that is: it never answers a single question. It simply creates new questions instead of old -- far more complex, far more mysterious."

When a man comes to philosophy, he comes with very innocent questions. Philosophy does not answer. Philosophy simply makes him more cunning in answering questions. He becomes more articulate. He questions in a more logical way, that's all.

Philosophy has not solved a single question down the ages. That's what Tosu means when he says: "A Buddha is a Buddha. Don't go into philosophy!" -- that is what he is saying. "If I answer you that Buddha is this or that, the journey starts -- the journey to no end. You will become a great philosopher. So you better stop at the first step! Don't go into it! One leads into another, and then there is no way to stop. And then to come back home is a long journey again. It is better not to go on this journey. Stop herenow!" That's what Tosu means when he says, "A Buddha is a Buddha, Tao is Tao, Zen is Zen." He's saying, "STOP verbalizing! Drop this game of language!" But he is not silent.

He could have been silent and simply indicated: "Drop this game of language; keep silent." That would not have been to the point either -- because you can keep silent and the mind goes on inside, chattering. In fact, when you are sitting silent it chatters more than ever, because when you are talking to people you throw the energy out, you go on catharting. But when you are not talking to anybody, the mind goes on accumulating energy, and goes on moving inside more madly.

Just by sitting silently, nothing is going to happen. Trees are silent, rocks are silent -- they don't know what truth is. A different kind of silence is needed -- a silence that arises out of the understanding of the futility of the word AND the negative part of the word -- the silence. When language and silence both are dropped, there arises a totally new kind of silence: a tranquillity, a peace -- but alive, vibrant, pulsating with life. A silence which has a dance in it, a silence which is more like a song than like the silence of the cemetery. A silence which has a melody, a silence which has a celestial music in it. A silence which speaks -- not in words, but speaks all the same. A silence which is creative, which is not just the absence of noise. Try to understand it.

You can go to the doctor. He can check you, he can check you all over -- a thorough checkup, and he can say you are not ill; but that doesn't mean that you have well-being. You may not be ill, but to have well-being is a totally different thing. Not to be ill is negative; it simply says you don't have TB, you don't have cancer, you don't have this and that, your blood pressure is okay, your heart is functioning well -- everything is okay. You don't have any disease. But NOT to have any disease is NOT to have health! Health is a totally different thing. Health is a positive phenomenon, the PRESENCE of something. Health is as positive as disease.

Disease is the presence of TB or cancer. Health too is a presence -- of a new experience of well-being. You are so full of joy that you are ready to burst, that you are ready to bloom. Health is not just the absence of disease; it is something positive in its own right.

So is the real silence -- it is not just the absence of noise. That's why Tosu could not be silent; he had to say something. But he had to say it in such a way that the saying became a showing.

Let me repeat it: Truth cannot be said, but can be shown. These words used by Tosu are meaningless; these words used by Tosu are NOT used as words but as shouts! just to hit the other's mind to a halt. They show something. He is saying, "Don't ask questions. Let religion be your quest, not a question. Let religion be your experience, not an explanation. If you really want to know what Buddha is, I AM HERE! Look! Buddha is Buddha. I am here. Look into me, and look into yourself -- you are also a Buddha."

IN INDIA THERE HAVE BEEN THREE TRADITIONS. One is the Hindu tradition, the most ancient tradition. The Hindu tradition says God descends -- that is the meaning of the word AVATAR -- God comes from above. Just as God descended on Jesus when he was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan; God descended like a white dove, entered Jesus. He comes from above -- that is the meaning of AVATAR -- coming from above. This is one tradition, the most ancient tradition.

The second tradition, which is almost as ancient -- or, maybe, a few think even more ancient -- that is Jainism. That has a totally different outlook. Jainism says God does not descend from above, God rises from below; it is a growth. In Jainism there is no concept of AVATAR. It is not that it comes from the sky, it grows out of the earth like a tree -- TEERTHANKAR. Man becomes God by growing, evolving; going higher and higher and higher. One day man becomes God when he has reached to the ultimate.

In Hinduism, one day God becomes man, when He has reached to the lowest.

Buddhism is the third tradition, and to me, far superior to the other two. It has a third approach. It says everybody is a Buddha; God neither comes down nor goes up. Everybody is already a Buddha, only recognition is needed. Buddha is already there! YOU ARE BUDDHAS! YOU may have forgotten, that's okay, but that does not make you non-Buddhas. You are Gods! You may have forgotten YOURself who you are, that's true, but by forgetting you don't become somebody else -- you remain the same.

So in Buddhism the significant word is: BUDDHANUSMRITI -- remembrance of one's own Buddhahood. One has not to go up, there is no up to go to. And Buddhism is very scientific. There is really no up to go to -- up and down are all relative terms -- there is no up and no down. And there is no down from where to grow upwards. We are already there! We exist at the goal; we have already arrived. We just go on thinking that we have not yet arrived and we have to reach somewhere. So just a recognition....

Hence the Zen insistence to awaken you by shocks. A Buddha is thinking that he is not a Buddha -- what to do? Rather than explaining to him, giving him great philosophy and theology, it is better to hit him hard so he awakens! In that moment of awakening is satori.

People feel very puzzled as to how satori is attained so fast. It is attained so fast because you are already in it. It is not something to be achieved in time, with effort; no effort is needed. It is as if a man has fallen asleep and he has forgotten his name -- as you all forget in your sleep. Then somebody comes and shouts, "Ram! What are you doing here? Get up -- the sun has risen!" He opens his eyes, and he is Ram again. And just a moment before, he was under a thousand and one dreams -- floating, moving, going in a thousand directions, dreaming impossible things. And suddenly a shout, "Ram! Get up -- the sun has risen!" and Ram opens his eyes.

Exactly like that is satori.

In olden times the T'ang Emperor, Koso, asked of a sage who was practising the Way in the mountains:
"You are always living in the depths of the mountains.
What happiness is there in such places?"

To which the man of the mountains replied in a verse
"What is there in the mountains?
In the mountains the white clouds are many.
But this is something you have to enjoy by coming yourself.
I cannot bring them here and present them to you."

There are a few things which cannot be given to you by anybody else. You have to go there. I can talk to you about the white clouds in the Himalayas, the virgin peaks of the Himalayas, the crystal clear lake of the Himalayas, but those will be just words. They may stir a few dreams in you, but that is not of any significance. You have to go to those peaks, you have to be under those white clouds.

I have heard about a poet, a great poet, who went to the sea beach. His beloved was ill in the hospital and he had not slept the whole night; he had been sitting by her side. By the morning she had fallen asleep, and he had gone to the beach just to have a little fresh air.

It was a beautiful morning. It was tremendously beautiful -- the sun was rising, and the smell of the beach, and the freshness of the morning, and the roaring waves. And he became so thrilled that he thought he would take some beauty of this morning to his beloved who was dying in the hospital. "She will also be happy. Let this be a gift. She is to depart soon."

He did something foolish, which only poets can do. He ran home, brought a beautiful box, opened the box on the sea beach, closed it, locked it. Yes, sunrays were dancing in the box, and the breeze was passing through the box, and the smell too, and the birds' songs were also there in the air. He closed all of them in a box and he rushed to the hospital. He was thrilled with the very idea that he had brought a chunk of the morning.

He awakens his beloved, puts the box by her side, opens it, and there is nothing -- no sunrays, no fragrance of a morning beach, no songs of the birds, no fresh air. The box is empty.

SO ARE ALL WORDS... empty. The word 'God' is as empty as that box. The word 'Buddha' is as empty as that box. That's what Tosu is saying when he says, "Buddha is a Buddha." A sea beach is a sea beach -- you have to go there. A mountain is a mountain, you have to go there. You cannot buy these things in the market. Nobody else can deliver them to you. At the most, Masters can create a thirst; at the most, Masters can create dreams in your eyes so that you start the journey. But nobody can give It to you.

A very ancient Buddhist parable -- this is from the Lotus Sutra:

A nobleman's son wanders away as a child and becomes a homeless vagrant. In time he forgets that he ever had a home, but one day without thinking he comes to the gate of his lord's house. He has not the faintest notion that he was born there, but stands at the gate imploring pity for his wretchedness. The noble sees him from within and recognizes his long-lost son even after all those years, but when he calls him to come in, the miserable

beggar is frightened and will not.

The beggar even tried to escape. And the noble -- his father was very much afraid he may be lost again. "How to persuade him to come in? How to persuade him that this is your house, you need not be afraid -- that I am your father?" He must have been very wise.

He sends a servant to persuade the beggar, saying, "We need a servant in the house. Would you like to have the job?"

The beggar is ready for that. Some small work is given, he is taken back as the humblest servant in the household, and then little by little promoted, until finally he again resumes his name. When the house and its wealth and treasure all become his.

That's the whole function of a Master -- to create a thirst, a great desire, a longing to know the truth, and then to help you, by and by, to understand that the truth is not somewhere far away from you, it resides in you. But you will not be ready to hear it so directly. You will be as frightened as the beggar. If the master of the house had told him immediately, "You are my son," he would have escaped. He would have thought, "There is some trap in it." How can he be the son of this rich man? He is a beggar.

The master was really, very very wise. Slowly, slowly he persuades. On the way to becoming a Buddha you have to be persuaded very, very slowly. The Master initiates you, you become a sannyasin, a BHIKKHU, this and that; then, by and by, you start having mini-satoris, then bigger satoris, then samadhis. You go on being promoted. One day, suddenly, you know that all this has been just a trick. What you have become finally, you have always been. But the Master has to be very persuasive, seductive.

The Master is not giving you anything. There is nothing to give. He is simply giving you something that you already have. Rather than saying that the Master gives you something, in fact, he takes many things away from you. He takes those things which you don't have and you think that you have, and he gives you those things which you have but you think that you don't have.

The whole function of the Master is just to bring you home -- which you had never left in the first place.

THERE IS A FAMOUS ZEN SAYING you must have heard. It is said that before we study Zen, the mountains are mountains and the rivers are rivers. While we are studying Zen, however, the mountains are no longer mountains and the rivers are no longer rivers. But then, when our study of Zen is completed, the mountains are once again mountains, and the rivers are once again rivers.

When a Zen Master explained this to one of his students, the student exclaimed, "Well, if that is true, then there is no difference between the ordinary man and the enlightened man. Because before you go into Zen, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. Then you study Zen and mountains are no more mountains, and rivers are no more rivers. And then when the study is complete and you have come home, rivers are again rivers and mountains are again mountains."

The question is relevant.

The disciple asks, "Sir, if this is so, then there is no difference between the ordinary man and the enlightened man."

And the Master says, "There is none."

There is no difference, except one -- that the enlightened man knows that there is no

difference, and the unenlightened man thinks there is.

Somebody asked Buddha, "What is enlightenment?"

And Buddha said, "It exists only in the minds of the unenlightened."

A tremendous saying! You rarely come across such a Kohinoor-like saying: "It exists only in the minds of the unenlightened." They create it. They first think they are unenlightened, hence they create an ideal of enlightenment.

The enlightened person simply has come home, and he knows the mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers, and they have always been mountains and they have always been rivers. Not for a single moment has anything ever changed; everything has been as it should be; everything is perfect. There cannot be any more perfection in existence than as it is. The existence is utterly perfect! You are perfect, as you are. There is nothing to be added, there is nothing to be improved upon. But to say this to somebody does not make much sense. Slowly, slowly the Master has to persuade.

A MONK ASKS, "WHAT IS THE BUDDHA?" and
TOSU (THE MASTER) ANSWERS, "THE BUDDHA."

Like a hammer! He is saying, "Don't ask nonsense questions. You are That -- TAT-TVAM-ASI: Thou art That." But he is not even saying that, because once you use "Thou art That -- TAT-TVAM-ASI," philosophy starts. Then he starts thinking "Who am I?" and "Who is That?" and "How am I That?" and questions.... And there is no end to it. Tosu simply stops the whole thing then and there.

In Zen they say the Master is like a sword. He cuts. He strikes so deeply that in a single stroke he cuts you into two pieces.

The Monk asks: "WHAT IS THE TAO?"

And Tosu says: "The TAO."

And the monk asks: "WHAT IS 2EN?"

And Tosu says: "2EN."

Either the monk will have a little satori through Tosu, or he will be completely frustrated that "This man is mad!" What is Tosu doing? Tosu is simply echoing! What else can be done? You go to the mountains and you sing a song, and the mountains echo it.

In Matheran there is a place, Echo Point. Once I went there with a few friends. You shout and the mountains shout back. Somebody started barking like a dog and the mountains started barking. I told the man, "If you are to do something, why not sing a beautiful song? Why are you barking? Why give so much trouble to the mountains?" He started singing a song, and the mountains started singing a song.

Life is an echo point. A Master echoes you, a Master is a mirror. The Master simply shows you who you are, that's all. He simply gives you your face. He simply reflects, echoes.

The disciple asks: "WHAT IS THE BUDDHA?"

And the Master says: "THE BUDDHA."

You go to a mountain and you inquire, "What is the Buddha?" and you will hear "... the Buddha." You will not hear the whole question repeated. Reason? Those first two words will be lost, overlapped. When you say, "What is the Buddha?" the mountain repeats the whole

thing, "What is the Buddha?" but there will be a gap -- a time gap, a slight time gap. Because of that time gap, when you are able to hear -- when you have completed your question and you are able to hear -- you will not hear the whole question repeated: "What is the Buddha?" You will hear "The Buddha."

It is very significant. A Master reflects, mirrors. A Master simply gives you back again and again. A master does not improve upon you. He does not give you a should, because all shoulds create guilt. A Master does not give you any ideal, because all ideals create tension, anguish. A Master never says, "This is bad and that is good." He never creates values, because all values create splits. A Master never teaches judgement, he teaches you to live without judging, without condemning, without saying good or bad. Let life flow as it is.

Listen to this beautiful parable and you will understand the mirrorlike quality of a Master. This is one of the most famous Zen stories about the great Zen Master Hakuin when he was at Shoinji temple.

A girl among the congregation became pregnant. Her severe father bullied her for the name of the lover, and in the end, thinking that if she said so she might escape punishment, she told him: "It is that Zen Master Hakuin."

The father said no more, but when the time came and the child was born he at once took it to him and threw the baby down. "It seems that this is your child." And he piled on every insult and sneer at the disgrace of the affair.

The Zen Master only said: "OH, IS THAT SO?" and took the baby up into his arms. Thereafter, during rainy days and stormy nights he would go out to beg milk from the neighbouring houses. Wherever he went he took the baby, wrapped in the sleeve of his ragged robe.

Now he, who had been regarded as a living Buddha, worshipped as a Shakyamuni, had fallen indeed. Many of the disciples who had flocked to him turned against him and left him. The Master still said not a word.

Meantime the mother found she could not bear the agony of separation from her child and, further, began to be afraid of the consequences in the next life of what she had done. She confessed the name of the real father of the child. Her own father, rigid in his conception of virtue, became almost mad with fear. He rushed to Hakuin and prostrated himself, begging over and over again for forgiveness.

The Zen Master this time too said only: "OH, IS THAT SO?" and gave him the child back.

Both times the same thing: "OH, IS THAT SO?" The first time the father throws the child on Hakuin and says, "This is your child," Hakuin does not say yes or no, he does not protest. He simply accepts. He says, "Oh, is that so?" And after months... and you can understand his difficulties: the small child, and the town has turned against him. Begging for himself has become difficult, and to beg for the child is even more difficult, and he has to take care of the child. But not for a single moment does he utter anything against it. This is acceptance -- tathata -- this is suchness. Whatsoever life brings is okay, absolutely okay.

And when the father comes back and snatches the child, and says, "Excuse me", and asks forgiveness: "It was wrong and you are not the father of the child -- there is somebody else who is the father of the child, forgive me," Hakuin says, "Oh, is that so?" and gives the child back. Not a single comment.

This is the mirror-like quality. Nothing is good, nothing is bad -- all is divine. This is Buddha's message. A Master reflects in his each act.

That's why sometimes you will find a Master very contradictory. You will find me contradictory many times. I say one thing to one person, and I say exactly the opposite to another. And sometimes both have brought the same problem! The problem may look the same as far as it is formulated in the same language, but it can't be the same, because the questioners are different. They have different pasts, different orientations, different miseries, different pains, different anxieties, different parents, different societies, different conditionings. The question may look, on the surface, exactly the same, but it can't be the same. No two persons can ask the same question, so for no two persons will the same answer be the right answer. It will depend.

When you stand before a mirror it reflects your face. When you go away, the face disappears. Somebody else comes, the mirror reflects that face. Once it moves, that face is gone; the mirror is empty again. You don't say to the mirror, "You are very very inconsistent. Sometimes you show one face, sometimes you show another face." Photographs are more consistent! That's true. A photograph is very very consistent, it remains the same. But a photograph is dead. It has a very limited capacity. Once exposed, it is finished. The mirror is infinite. You can go on exposing it to millions of people, and it remains there, a perfect mirror, and goes on reflecting.

A real Master is bound to be inconsistent; only teachers are consistent. Only very mediocre minds are consistent. When the mind becomes cosmic, it is as inconsistent as God itself, it is as paradoxical as God itself. Hence, I call Zen the Path of Paradox.

A monk asked Joshu, "What is the Buddha?"

"The one in the Hall."

The monk said, "The one in the Hall is a statue, a lump of mud!"

Joshu said, "That is so."

"Then what is the Buddha?" the monk asked again.

"The one in the Hall."

Now this is strange. He agrees with him that that is just a statue, a lump of mud; he says, "That's right." And when the man asks again, "Then what is Buddha?" he says, "The one in the Hall."

What does Joshu mean by this? He means that until you drop asking "What is the Buddha?" you are searching for a statue. As long as you go on asking "What is the Buddha?" you are asking something objective. That's why he says, "That in the temple, that is Buddha." If you go on asking "What is the Buddha?" you want an objective answer -- and Buddha is your subjectivity.

So he agrees with the man, "Yes, you are right. The thing inside the temple is not a real Buddha. It is a mud statue." Naturally the man must have felt hopeful -- "Now some other answer will be coming." He asked, "Then tell me what is Buddha?" Now he was not expecting that he would say the same again. And he had agreed that that is just a statue, a mud statue. Again he says, "The one in the temple." Why? Because if you go on asking for the objective, you are asking for something dead.

The reality is subjective. God is subjective. It is your innermost core, it is your interiority. You cannot ask a question like that. You have to go inwards to know "What IS a Buddha?" And when you start moving inwards you are moving on Tao. And when you start moving on

Tao, you start using DHYAN, meditation, Zen. Zen is the method to go in; Tao is the way that leads you to the innermost core; and the innermost core is Buddha. You are a Buddha.

SO THE FIRST THING is to accept life as it is. Accepting it, desires disappear; accepting it as it is, tensions disappear, discontent disappears; accepting it as it is, one starts feeling very joyful and for NO reason at all. When joy has a reason, it is not going to last long. When joy is without any reason, it is going to be there forever.

There are two ways a man can be. A man can either move towards having more things -- then he goes against Buddha, against Tao, against Zen. The man who is too much concerned with having more is the worldly man. And the man who says whatsoever is, is good; who relaxes; who is not worried about having more money, more power, more prestige, more respectability; who relaxes into TATHATA, suchness, isness -- he becomes a religious person. He starts moving in.

If you are thinking to have more, you will move out. When you are concerned with having, you will be moving out; when you are no more concerned with having, you will move in towards being. And being is Buddha.

It happened about a very famous Zen woman, her name was Rengetsu.... Very few women have attained to the Zen ultimate. This one is one of those rare women.

She was on a pilgrimage, and she came to a village at sunset and begged for lodging for the night, but the villagers slammed their doors. They were against Zen. Zen is so revolutionary, so utterly rebellious, that it is very difficult to accept it. By accepting it you are going to be transformed; by accepting it you will be passing through a fire, you will never be the same again.

So traditional people have always been against ALL that is true in religion. Tradition is all that is untrue in religion. So those must have been traditional Buddhists in the town, and they didn't allow this woman to stay in the town; they threw her out. It was a cold night, and the old woman with no lodging... and hungry. She had to make a cherry tree in the fields her shelter. It was really cold, and she could not sleep well. And it was dangerous too -- wild animals and all.

At midnight she awoke -- because of too much cold -- and saw, as it were, in the spring night sky, the fully opened cherry blossoms laughing to the misty moon. Overcome with the beauty, she got up and made a reverence in the direction of the village....

This is what TATHATA IS.

Overcome with the beauty, she got up and made a reverence in the direction of the village:

Through their kindness in refusing me lodging I found myself beneath the blossoms on the night of this misty moon.

She feels grateful. With great gratitude she thanks those people who refused her lodging, otherwise she would be sleeping under an ordinary roof, and she would have missed this blessing -- these cherry blossoms, and this whispering with the misty moon, and this silence of the night, this utter silence of the night. She is not angry, she accepts it. Not only accepts it, welcomes it -- she feels grateful.

A man becomes a Buddha the moment he accepts all that life brings with gratitude. He is

on the Way, he is on Tao; and he IS becoming meditative.

Mind is the technique to go out. That's why you are trained in your universities and colleges and schools for mind. Mind is the technique to go out, to have many more things -- to have bigger houses, to have much property, to have political power, to have money. Mind is the way to go out and conquer the world.

Meditation is just the reverse process. It is nothing but no-mind. That is what Zen is. You go in, you stop thinking, because what is the point? There is no need to think. To conquer the inner, thinking is not needed. To conquer the outer, thinking is needed. Thinking is instrumental for the outer.

So Zen, or DHYAN, or meditation, is nothing but a non-thinking consciousness. There is no need! If there is no desire, who bothers to think? for what to think? You watch. Whenever you are too full of desire you think too much. When there is not much desire, thinking disappears of its own accord. People ask me how NOT to think? That is not the point. How NOT TO DESIRE is the point.

Desire creates thoughts, desire brings ideas, dreams, and then you have to manage, and you have to plan, and you have to work them out, and you have to move methodically -- then thinking comes.

Just create a desire. A car passes by, and let there be a desire in you that "I would like to have this car." And then you will see many thoughts coming: "How to possess it? How to arrange for the money? What to do? -- to do business? or to steal, or what? Or go the American way: just take it on installments?" One then needs thoughts, because without thinking you will never have this car.

Watch, whenever desire arises, it brings in its wake many thoughts. When there is no desire, suddenly, what is the point of thinking? There is no need. The wavering disappears, the stirred mind is no more stirred.

Then, mind has another kind of function; then it becomes simply receptive. A bird starts singing -- you hear, but you don't even say that this is beautiful. There is no point in saying it. It is beautiful! What is the point of saying it? Then an aeroplane passes by and the noise, and you know it, and you hear it -- and you hear it more than anybody else, because other people are so much engrossed in their thoughts. The plane passes by, they can't hear. Their ears are plugged with their thoughts; their minds are plugged with their thoughts. The wool of thoughts is too much, it makes them insensitive.

But when a man has no thoughts, he is utterly sensitive. He sees the beauty, he looks around, he hears more, he smells more, he touches more, he loves more. Everything is more! Look at the paradox: when you want more, everything is always less, always less than you want. When you don't want anything, everything is too MUCH! Unbearably too much! A SMALL thing becomes so much. And you enjoy such ordinary things -- chopping wood carrying water from the well, holding the hand of a friend, or just seeing the cherry tree bloom, whisperings from the misty moon.

Life is immense, and each moment it comes with a thousand and one gifts for you. But you are so much engaged preoccupied with your desiring mind. You are so full of your thoughts you refuse all those gifts. God comes: you go on refusing.

To enter in means to understand the ways of desire. When you have understood that the desire creates turmoil, you stop desiring. When the desire is not there, thinking disappears. This is Zen.

When you are in Zen you have started moving on the path -- the Way, Tao. And when you are on the path, Buddhahood is not far away. It can happen sometimes in a single instant,

because it depends on your intensity. It is not a question of it being ten miles, or twenty miles, or twenty thousand miles. It depends on your intensity.

People of intense understanding can reach to Buddhahood in a single step. Just the winking of the eye. It depends how TOTAL your intensity is, how thirsty you are, how ready you are to stake all. If you can stake all, then in a single moment... the gestalt changes. You are no more the ordinary man, you are a Buddha.

But if the intensity is not total -- partial, only lukewarm -- then you can take ages. Thousands of lives you can go on and on and on and the Buddhahood remains far away. So remember it: it depends on intensity how long the way will be.

Zen is meditation, Tao is the Way, and Buddhahood is your ultimate nature. If you can move totally in meditation, then this very moment -- the transformation.

Listen to this small exchange again. Now you will be able to go into it more deeply.

A MONK ASKS, "WHAT IS THE BUDDHA?"
TOSU (THE MASTER) ANSWERS, "THE BUDDHA."
MONK: "WHAT IS TAO?"
TOSU: "THE TAO."
MONK: "WHAT IS ZEN?"
TOSU: "ZEN."

The Master simply reflects, mirrors, throws the disciple back to himself again and again. If the disciple had really been a seeker, not just curious, he would have attained.

It is enough to look into the eyes of a Master. It is enough to hear the echo that comes from his heart. It is enough to be in contact with that fire that Buddhahood brings to a man. It is enough to come close to one who has attained. He is like a flame. When you come close, there comes a moment of closeness... the flame jumps into you and becomes your flame. The Master does not lose anything, and you gain all.

It is just like when you bring a candle, an unlit candle, to a lit candle. Watch what happens. Exactly that happens when a disciple comes to a Master. Just closeness, intimacy. The whole art of discipleship is of being intimate, coming closer, dropping your defenses, armours, dropping your will and your ego, and coming closer and closer and closer. And suddenly... one moment you were unlit, another moment you are lit. And it is so sudden, it is not a gradual thing. It is not that first you are lit a little bit, then a little more lit, no. It is so sudden. Suddenly, like a quantum leap, you are no more the old man... the new has arrived, absolutely discontinuous with the old. In fact, nothing more is needed.

If you can find a Master whom you can love, if you can find a Master with whom you can feel intimate, with whom you can be defenseless, with whom you can be vulnerable, from whom you don't have any secret, you don't want to have any secret, with whom you are ready to die, with whom you are ready to go anywhere he is going -- you don't care, wherever he is going is your goal -- if that trust is there, that is enough. Things will start happening on their own, because you are already Buddhas; just a recognition is needed. If you come close to a Master and his heart reflects you, you will see that your face is Buddha's face, that your state of no-mind is Zen, and that when you are moving inwards you are in Tao.

And there is no other way to explain what Buddha is, what Tao is, what Zen is.

Yes, it cannot be said through words -- words are inadequate; it cannot be said through silence -- silence is very negative. Zen chooses the middle way. It uses words in such a way that they create silence. It is a great device. Great art is needed to use words in such a way

that they create silence, that the ultimate impact brings silence, not more words.

That's what I go on doing every morning with you. I go on throwing a thousand and one words at you. But the effort is not to give you words, the effort is just the contrary. The effort is to shatter the words which are already there in your mind. I throw words to shatter your words. Once they have negated each other, they both will fall down -- and there will be a silence, a totally new kind of silence you have never known. It is not the gap between two words, no. It is the presence of God, it is Buddhahood.

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Grace is Being Herenow

6 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707060

ShortTitle: PARAD306

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 106 mins

The first question:

HOW MAY I LIVE GRACEFULLY IN TIME? IN MY TIMES?

GRACE COMES OUT OF ETERNITY. GRACE is never a part of time. Time creates hurry, time creates tension, time creates anxiety. The more you are conscious of time, the more neurotic you will be. Time is a neurosis. When you are not conscious of time at all, when there is no past and no future, when time is irrelevant to you, when you are just herenow, grace arises.

Grace is part of the eternal. Grace is a quality of God -- and God is not in time. In time is mind, in time is ego, in time is misery, hell. The way of the meditator is how to go beyond time, how to drop time, how to become oblivious of time. I don't mean the clock time, I mean the psychological time. Clock time is perfectly okay, utilitarian. If you have to catch a train, you have to remember the clock time. But that is not a problem. That doesn't create anxiety, that doesn't destroy your grace. The clock is perfectly okay in its own way. But when you become entangled in psychological time, then you lose grace.

What is psychological time? To live in the past is psycho-logical time. And then out of it arises another problem: one starts living in the future. Past starts projecting itself into the future. You had some experience yesterday, you would like to have it again tomorrow. You had some experience yesterday that you did not like, and you don't want to have it again tomorrow. The tomorrow comes out of the modifications of yesterday. It is a refined version of yesterday, of all your yesterdays.

What are you hoping for in your life in the future? What are you going to do tomorrow, or the next year, or the next life? Sometime look into it -- what are you going to do? And you will find your whole past clamouring to be repeated -- in a better way, of course. Some depressing moments have to be dropped, some dark corners have to be made light, some ugly states are not to be repeated again, some faults not to be committed -- AND some joys have to be strengthened, prolonged, made more joyful.

Your future has been chosen from the past, so in these two you are entangled. Either you are entangled in the past, thinking of that which is no more, or thinking of that which is not yet. And meanwhile you are missing the present. And the present is part of eternity. The present is not part of time at all.

Be herenow and grace comes of its own accord.

Whenever you are herenow, suddenly you will find tremendous grace, harmony, equilibrium, a melody in your being, a tranquility -- and a tranquility that has not been forced from the outside, a tranquility that is not part of any discipline, a tranquility that is not quiescence, a tranquility that is not a kind of managed stillness. If it is still managed, then it is not yet herenow. If by effort you have been keeping it there, then it is already past. Or, if by great desire you are holding it there, then it is already in the future. Only when there is no effort to maintain it, no desire to support it, unsupported by you, un-maintained, unmanaged by you, uncontrolled by you... it is simply there. It surrounds you like spontaneity, silence, benediction... then there is grace.

Grace has nothing to do with any time in particular.

HOW MAY I LIVE GRACEFULLY IN TIME?

Drop time-consciousness. Live in time, chronological time, but drop psychological time. Don't hanker for the future. ALL that you need is available; nothing more is needed to be happy. Nothing more is needed to be in heaven. Heaven is just standing in front of you. Heaven is where you are. So don't think that something else has to happen, THEN you will be happy. That is a way of postponing. Nothing is going to happen -- all has already happened. God is already the case.

Start enjoying the God that is available to you. Drop psychological time and grace will enter in you.

HOW MAY I LIVE GRACEFULLY IN TIME? IN MY TIMES?

There are no 'my times'. The time that is destroying your grace is the same -- always the same, and the same for everybody. It has no East, no West; it has no past, no future. The time that is disturbing you is the same disease -- the disease of not being herenow. What should be done?

In fact, to ask the question that way is to ask a wrong question. Whatsoever you do will come out of the psychological mind, because you will do it to create grace. There will be a motive. So try to understand. Nothing can I can be done about it. Only understanding, just understand! No need to do anything positively for grace. Only one thing is needed to understand why you are missing grace -- WHY YOU ARE MISSING; not HOW TO ATTAIN.

The difference is tremendous. If you ask rightly, you ask, "Why am I miserable? Why am I missing it?" If you ask a wrong question, you ask, "How to attain it? How to become

blissful?" You have moved wrongly. And they look almost the same. Linguistically they look almost the same -- 'why' and 'how' -- they look as if they are two aspects of the same coin. They are not.

When you ask "How?" you are asking for the future. Then rather than looking into the situation in which you are, you are creating a desire, an ideal, a goal -- and that's what psychological time is. You will be caught in the trap again. Now you will start looking "How to create grace?" And whatsoever you create will not be grace. At the most it can be just a pseudo-coin; at the most it can be just a face, a mask. It cannot be true; it cannot be authentic -- because the authentic CANNOT be created by the mind. The authentic can only be ALLOWED by the mind, but it cannot be CREATED by the mind. The authentic comes on its own -- you just give way, you don't stand in the way.

So ask WHY you are not graceful -- and look into the causes, and you will find the basic cause is psychological time. The basic cause is: always being entangled with the non-existential, so the past and the future go on pulling you into two separate dimensions. Hence grace disappears, you are pulled apart. How can you be graceful?

Seeing it, looking into the fact, you start laughing -- then don't be pulled! There is nobody ELSE really who is pulling you. You are allowing it. It is your own doing. When you see that "It is I who am allowing this-psychological mind to function, not only allowing but supporting it, pouring my energy into it" -- seeing the fact that this is destroying your benediction, your blessing, your bliss, you pull your hands away, you don't support it any more. That's all. Without being supported by you it starts shattering, falling. Once it has disappeared there is grace.

Grace is absence of time: grace is presence of eternity.

The second question:

IS SOMETHING ESSENTIALLY MISSING IN WESTERN PSYCHOTHERAPIES?

IT IS NOT ONLY THAT SOMETHING ESSENTIALLY IS missing in Western psychotherapies -- THE ESSENTIAL is missing! The Western psychotherapies are still objective, from the outside. They have not yet come to the point where meditation becomes the MOST important thing in psychotherapy. They are still looking from the outside -- they are looking at the behaviour.

Behaviour is the outermost expression of your psychology, but it is not the source. It is the outcome, the by-product. The Western psychotherapies are still pruning the leaves of a tree. By pruning the leaves of a tree you cannot destroy the tree. They have not yet reached to the roots; those roots are hidden underground. They are looking aboveground. When you look at the tree you tend to forget the roots -- they are not visible, they are not obvious. Roots are not so foolish as to be obvious; roots are not so foolish as to be there, very apparent. They are hiding themselves; they are the secret source of the tree. The secret source has to remain at the most secret place so nobody approaches it easily. Exactly the same is the case with man.

Western psychology still goes on thinking about the leaves and the branches and the foliage, and the OUTER expression of psychology. But from where it all arises -- the source, the innermost core of it -- is still not tapped, it remains untouched.

When a psychology starts entering into the subjectivity of humanity, it becomes a technique of meditation. Then it is no more concerned with the behaviour, it is no more

concerned with the act, it is no more concerned with the symptoms. It is more concerned with the very source of it all. And by changing the source, all is changed. Without changing the source, you can go on changing everything and nothing basically is ever changed.

Without changing the source, all is just patchwork. Somebody becomes ill -- mentally ill -- what does it show? It simply shows that some root in that man's being is rotten; somewhere in the source there is poison. You patch him up; you do something on the surface. You analyze his behaviour and his dreams, and you try to understand his problem objectively, from the outside. You watch and you try to patch up. Yes, it can be done. The illness can be stopped from one point, but sooner or later it will assert itself from another point, because the source poison has not been changed yet. Only the symptom has been treated, not the disease itself.

The same goes on in medicine too. You have a headache? They will give you aspro. Aspro is not a cure, it simply makes you unaware of the symptom. The aspro does not destroy the headache; it simply does not allow you to know about it. It confuses you. The headache remains there but you are no more aware of it. It creates a kind of oblivion.

But why in the first place was the headache there? Ordinary medicine does not bother about it. If you go to a doctor he is not going to be bothered why in the first place you have the headache. You have the headache! -- the problem is simple for him: "The symptom is there, take this medicine -- some drug, some chemical -- and that symptom will disappear." The headache may disappear and you may have a disturbed stomach the next day; another symptom has come up.

Man is one; man is a totality -- an organic unity. you can push a problem from one side, it will assert itself from another side. It may take time to come to the other side, to travel to that point, but it is bound to come. And then pushed from that side it moves to another side... and man has many sides. It goes on being pushed from one corner to another.

Out of all this you become more and more ill rather than healthy. And sometimes it happens that a very small disease becomes a big disease. For example, if the headache is not allowed, and the stomachache is not allowed, and the backache is not allowed, and NO ache is ever allowed... immediately the ache comes and you take something and you stop it. If for years together you go on with this repression -- this is repression -- then one day ALL that disease gathers together, asserts itself in a more organized way. It can become cancer. All that has gathered together and now it asserts itself almost like an explosion.

Why for cancer have we not yet been able to find a drug? Maybe cancer is an expression of all the repressed diseases of man. We know how to repress single diseases up to now; now this is not a single disease, this is a very collective attack. It is a total attack -- ALL the diseases have gone together, joined hands together. They have made an army... and they attack you. That's why drugs are failing; there seems to be no possibility right now that any drug will be found.

Cancer is a new disease. It does not exist in primitive societies. Why? -- it has to be asked why it does not exist in primitive societies. Because the primitive man does not repress, there is no need. It is a REBELLION of your very system. If you don't repress, there is no need for any rebellion. Small things happen and go.

The religious attitude is to look, not for the symptom but for the source. That's what I call 'The Psychology of the Buddhas'. If you have a headache, that is not your illness, that is not your disease. In fact, that is a signal from your body that something is going wrong in the source -- run to the source! Find out what is going wrong. The head is simply giving you a signal, a danger signal, an alarm that "Listen to the body. Something is going wrong. You are

doing something which is not right, which is destroying the harmony of the body. Don't do it any more! otherwise the headache will go on reminding you."

The headache is not the disease, and the headache is not your enemy -- it is your friend. It is in your service. It is very, very essential for your existence that the body should make you alert when something goes wrong. Rather than changing that wrong, you simply put the alarm off -- you take an aspro. This is absurd. And this is what is happening in medicine and this is what is happening in psychotherapies -- symptomatic treatment.

That's why the essential is missing. The essential is: look into the source. Next time you have a headache try a small meditative technique, just experimentally, then you can go on to bigger diseases and bigger symptoms.

When you have a headache just try a small experiment. Sit silently and watch it, look into it -- not as if you are looking at an enemy, no. If you are looking at it as your enemy, you will not be able to look rightly. You will avoid -- nobody looks at the enemy directly; one avoids, one tends to avoid. Look at it as your friend. It is your friend; it is in your service. It is saying, "Something is wrong -- look into it." Just sit silently and look into the headache with no idea of stopping it, with no desire that it should disappear, no conflict, no fight, no antagonism. Just look into it, into what it is.

Watch, so if there is some inner message, the headache can give it to you. It has a coded message. And if you look silently you will be surprised. If you look silently three things will happen. First: the more you look into it, the more severe it will become. And then you will be a little puzzled: "How is it going to help if it is becoming more severe?" It is becoming more severe because you have been avoiding it. It was there but you were avoiding it; you were already repressing -- even without the aspro you were repressing it. When you look into it, repression disappears. The headache will come to its natural severity. Then you are hearing it with unplugged ears, no wool around your ears. It will be very severe.

First thing: it will become severe. If it is becoming severe, you can be satisfied that you are looking rightly. If it does not become severe, then you are not looking yet; you are still avoiding. Look into it -- it becomes severe. That is the first indication that yes, it is in your vision.

The second thing will be that it will become more pin-pointed; it will not be spread over a bigger space. First you were thinking, "It is my whole head aching." Now you will see it is not the whole head, it is just a small spot. That is also an indication that now you are gazing more deeply into it. The spread feeling of the ache is a trick -- that is a way to avoid it. If it is in one point then it will be more severe. So you create an illusion that it is the whole head which is aching. Spread all over the head, then it is not so intense at any point. These are tricks that we go on playing.

Look into it and the second step will be that it comes to be smaller and smaller and smaller. And a moment comes when it is just the very point of a needle -- very sharp, immensely sharp, very painful. You have never seen such pain in the head. But very much confined to a small spot. Go on looking into it.

And then the third and the most important thing happens. If you go on looking at this point when it is very severe and confined and concentrated at one point, you will see many times that it disappears. When your gaze is perfect it will disappear. And when it disappears you will have the glimpse of where it is coming from -- what the cause is. When the effect disappears you will see the cause. It will happen many times. Again it will be there. Your gaze is no more that alert, that concentrated, that attentive -- it will come back. Whenever your gaze is REALLY there. it will disappear; and when it disappears, hidden behind it is the

cause. And you will be surprised your mind is ready to reveal what the cause is.

A thousand and one causes there can be. There are different causes. The same alarm is given because the alarm system is simple. There are not many alarm systems in your body. For different causes the same alarm is given. You may have been angry lately and you have not expressed it. Suddenly, like a revelation, it will be standing there. You will see all your anger that you have been carrying, carrying... like pus inside you. Now this is too much, and that anger wants to be released. It needs a catharsis. Cathart! -- and immediately you will see the headache has disappeared. And there was no need for the aspro, no need for any treatment.

And when the anger has disappeared, a totally different quality of well-being will arise in you that can never arise out of the aspro. Aspro represses -- anger remains hidden inside you, violence goes on raging inside you. You only keep the alarm shut, that's all. Nothing changes, only the alarm is no more there.

This goes on and on, and it becomes more and more accumulated. It may give you ulcers, it may give you tuberculosis -- one day it can give you cancer. When a great quantity gathers, there are qualitative changes. There is a certain limit for the body to tolerate anything, beyond that limit it starts feeling ill. So is the case with mind. And never think of body and mind as two separate things; they are not. Man is body-mind, psychosomatic.

Now there are two psychologies in the West: psychologies which don't bother much about the body, and psychologies which don't bother much about the mind -- psychologies rooted in the body and psychologies rooted in the mind -- the old Cartesian dichotomy continues. A real psychology will not be in any way leaning either towards the mind or towards the body; it will take the totality of man as one unity.

Man is psychosomatic; man is body-mind together. Body is nothing but mind expressed outwardly, and mind is nothing but body unexpressed in the deeper source of your being. Both are poles of one energy. The one energy vibrates, pulsates, affects both. So the psychology cannot be Pavlovian or Skinnerian. The psychology cannot be a behaviouristic psychology, and the psychology cannot be just Freudian or Jungian; they are half half. And the half-truth is sometimes far worse than the whole untruth. The whole untruth is at least whole. The half-truth is more dangerous -- and Western psychotherapies are caught up in it. Half are caught up with the body, half are caught up with the mind.

Descartes goes on reigning yet; he still remains the father of Western philosophy. He should be dethroned, the sooner the better. Any dichotomy in man, any division, any split in man, is dangerous because man exists as one organic unit, man exists as one dance. And everything is interconnected, nothing is separate. And man should not be treated locally. When the head is ill, it is not only the head that is ill -- it is the whole system that is ill. The head is simply giving the symptom. When the stomach is ill, it is not only the stomach that is ill; it is always the whole system that is ill. So the WHOLE system has to be treated, and the whole patient has to be taken care of. No local treatment, no local medication, no local psychotherapy, is going to help. The very idea is dangerous.

But this is how the Western scientific mind has been functioning for three hundred years. If you have something wrong, they are ready to remove it immediately. They don't bother that the question is never of the part -- the question is of the whole. If something is wrong they are ready to remove it. If your teeth are wrong, they are ready to remove the teeth. If your tonsils are giving you trouble, they are ready to remove the tonsils. But tonsils don't exist in a vacuum. If something is wrong with the tonsils, something must be wrong somewhere else too. By removing the tonsils you will simply put the alarm off. Now the

illness will have to find some other alarm somewhere else.

Don't treat man in parts. That is very disrespectful. Treat man as whole, respect man as whole. And that is true as far as medicine goes and as far as psychotherapies go.

But the MOST essential that is missing is meditation. Psychology has still not stumbled upon the interiority of man. The interiormost source, the inner emptiness of man, has not yet been penetrated. It cannot be penetrated by scientific methods -- that's the trouble.

And if you have decided beforehand that the only true methods ARE scientific methods, then there is no possibility to enter this inner emptiness. Then your very methodology prevents this; then you are in a prejudice -- you are not open. You say, "We will only go as far as scientific methodology allows." But scientific methodology can only go as far as the OBJECT is concerned. The subject remains away from it; it cannot go there. By its very nature it cannot penetrate your innermost core; it can only go on touching the surface.

So if you think that this methodology cannot be changed and there is no other methodology -- that this IS the only methodology and this is the only scientific methodology -- then Western psychotherapy is fore-doomed.

For the object a different method is needed; for the subject a different method is needed. For the object, thinking is needed; for the subject, no-thinking is needed -- just the opposite is needed. It is as if you are trying to smell with your eyes. You cannot smell with your eyes. Nothing is wrong with the eyes; eyes are perfect. But if you want to smell a roseflower you have to bring it close to your nostrils, not to your eyes or to your ears. If you want to listen to music you have to bring it to your ears, not to your nose. If somebody insists that "I will hear the music through the nose," then he will not hear the music. And naturally he will say, "There exists no music because I cannot hear it." His VERY approach, his very bias, prevents him from hearing it.

Thought is object-oriented. No-thought is subject-oriented. If you want to go outwards, if you want to think about others, you will have to think. If you want to go inwards you will have to drop thinking. There is no other, so thinking is not needed. There only you ARE, SO only silence is needed, non-thinking is needed. Mind can be dropped, you can be there without the mind. Knowledge can be dropped, you need not carry it there; it is unnecessary luggage. It won't allow you to enter inside. You will have to completely unburden yourself of all your knowledge.

And remember, I am not saying that the objective approach is wrong. I am saying the objective approach is not very essential. I'm not saying it is wrong -- it is perfectly good as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough, and it cannot go to the innermost core.

That is what is missing -- the most essential is missing!

The Western psychotherapies have still not stumbled upon meditation. Nothing like VIPASSANA has happened yet. Unless it happens the soul will be missing, and Western psychotherapy will remain just a dead body, a corpse. It will not breathe, it will not be alive.

The third question:

IS IT POSSIBLE TO BELIEVE THAT ONE HAS JUST ATTAINED BUDDHAHOOD? AND IS IT POSSIBLE JUST TO BELIEVE LIKE THAT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE EGO? AND IF IT IS POSSIBLE, THEN HOW TO AVOID IT?

IT IS VERY MUCH POSSIBLE. Many times your ego will I deceive you. It will say, "You have arrived, you have attained." By saying that it will prevent you from attaining,

because when you have attained there is no need to make any more effort. When you have already attained, then what is the point of going on troubling yourself? That is the last trap ego throws at you.

First it says, "It is foolish to try to attain Buddhahood. It does not happen in the very nature of things. It is all nonsense, fiction. Don't be mystified by these words!" First the ego will say, "It is impossible. It has never happened and it is not going to happen." But if you don't listen and you go on and on, the ego will try many other ways to distract you.

The last will be: one day, seeing that now you don't listen, the ego can say to you, "Now look! You have had it, it has happened. This is satori, this is samadhi. You have become a Buddha." This has to be encountered by every seeker.

The real enemy is not outside you, and the real distraction never comes from the outside -- it comes from the inside. Buddha has said, "The enemy is within, and the friend is within -- both are within you." If you listen to the enemy, the ego, it will go on befooling you, deluding you.

Naturally, there is nothing much more than Buddhahood. If the ego can feel that "I have attained" then you are at the top of the world. Even an Alexander is nothing before you. The richest man is just poor before you; the most powerful man is nothing, helpless before you. You have become omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent -- you have become a god. The ego can do that. And it will do! Unless you are very, very alert.

And when it starts playing such tricks on you, you will tend to accept it because it is so sweet. It is so beautiful to accept these ideas. Knowing well that nothing has happened -- because how can you befool yourself? -- knowing well that nothing has happened, still you will tend to become a victim.

Two old men meet on a corner.

First old man: "Where have you been for the past eight weeks?"

Second old man: "In jail."

First old man: "You in jail? How come?"

Second old man: "Well, about eight weeks ago I was standing on a corner, and this beautiful young girl rushes up with a policeman and says, 'He's the man, officer. He's the one who attacked me.' I tell you, I felt so flattered, I admitted it."

It is possible. A man of eighty, if a beautiful girl rushes up with a policeman and says, "This man has attacked me," can feel flattered. It is worth going to jail for a few weeks. He could not say no.

When the idea is thrown at you from your ego that you have attained, it is so charming, it is so hypnotizing, it is so attractive, it is incomparably attractive. And knowing well somewhere deep down -- how can you not know? -- knowing well, perfectly, that it has not happened! You are just the same, with the same anger, with the same jealousy, with the same possessiveness, with ALL the nonsense that has been there -- it is still there. But still you would like to accept it.

Then you ask me: AND IF IT CAN HAPPEN LIKE THAT, THEN HOW TO AVOID IT?

The only way to know, the only way to judge whether it has really happened or is just an ego trap, is that when it really happens you don't have the feeling of attainment at all. When it

REALLY happens you don't feel that you have attained. You don't feel that you have arrived, that you have achieved. There is no trace of achievement at all -- because WHO can achieve it? In the very process of achieving it you have disappeared, so who call claim it? Who can say, "I have come, I have attained"? The 'I' is no more!

This is the only criterion: when you really attain, there is no feeling of attainment at all. There is NOBODY to attain it and nobody to claim it. There is immense silence. All that garbage of attainment -- of attaining this and attaining that -- has all disappeared. The whole crowd has gone. You are left utterly in silence. Not even for a single moment does the idea arise: "Now I have attained!"

And you know it has happened, but there is no feeling of attainment. Let me repeat: You know it has happened. But remember, it is a happening -- because you don't find yourself at all! You are not there! It HAS happened! You are empty, you are absent; you look in all directions and you don't find yourself at all. You are nowhere to be found. That old guy has disappeared without leaving a trace. You KNOW it! It has happened, but there is no feeling of attainment.

Attainment is an ego feeling; achievement is the desire of the ego. So remember the difference between a happening and an achieving. Ego is the achiever. So if any trace of achievement lingers in you, and any feeling of attainment comes to you, and you start feeling strong, worthy, great -- then you can be certain you have missed again.

When it really happens, there is no claimant left. One simply is it. Not that you become Buddha -- suddenly you understand you are not, only Buddha is. It brings great humbleness. There is no assertion.

The fourth question:

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ETHICS -- LYING, CHEATING, STEALING, IDLE GOSSIP, BEGGING, TRYING TO BUM OFF OTHERS WHO DO WORK? MOST RELIGIONS HAVE A CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL. DOES RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ENLIGHTENMENT? I THINK "IF YOU DON'T WORK, YOU DON'T EAT" IS A VERY GOOD MOTTO. PLEASE ENLIGHTEN ME.

THE FIRST THING: Righteous conduct has nothing to do with enlightenment. Of course, enlightenment has much to do with righteous conduct.

You don't go to enlightenment through righteous conduct; you come to righteous conduct through enlightenment. Righteous conduct first and then enlightenment is putting things upside down. It is putting the cart before the bullocks. The inner must happen first! then the outer follows it like a shadow. Consciousness must happen first, then conscience arises out of it naturally.

If you do it the other way round, you will miss. You will become a righteous person but you will not be a right person. You will become very very righteous, moralistic, puritanical, this and that -- but ALL this will be nothing but decorations for your ego, new medals for the ego, new certificates for the ego. You can become a saint by righteous conduct, but you cannot become a Buddha. You can become a saint, but you cannot become a Christ -- and the difference is tremendous. Try to understand it.

Character is imposed from the outside; it is a conditioning. It is a kind of enforced slavery. You are not really free in it. You have to do certain things because if you do them

you are paid well. It brings a good payoff. If you don't do those things, you suffer, you lose respect, you lose respectability. You become a criminal.

A cunning person, a clever person, would not like to lose respect in the society; so all those who are clever and cunning, they will become righteous. Naturally, they will have double-binds in their minds; they will not be one piece. On the surface they will show that they are righteous, and from the backdoor they will go on doing all that they always wanted to. They will have two faces, at least. One face, the public face, to show to others; another, the private face, to live with. They will be hypocrites.

Imposed character brings hypocrisy in the world. Imposed character brings a split in people; they become schizophrenic. They do something and they say something else, and they pretend something else still. Their life loses grace because they are not one; their life loses harmony. There is no accord, there is constant discord.

So your so-called religions, which have insisted too much on the moral code, have not been able to make a better world. They have been able only to create a hypocritical world, a very ugly world. You can see it, there is no need to say it. You can see it all around -- a very ugly world, very false, pseudo, pretentious.

And the man who pretends... and he cannot do anything else -- unless he has attained to inner consciousness, he can only pretend; he cannot do anything else. All that he is trying to do he will have to follow -- Moses' commandments he will follow, Jesus' commandments he will follow, or Buddha's commandments. But they are not his own experience. He has not experienced that way himself. All his morality is borrowed from others. He is an imitator, it is not authentic.

That which has not arisen in your own consciousness is never going to make you free; you will be imprisoned. And you will be so much entangled in all that split that it will be difficult ever to feel happy.

Now see what happens. Your morality says one thing. For example, the morality says: "Stick to your woman. If you are married, stick to your woman, love her, be responsible." Perfectly okay. If you LOVE her, there is no need to say 'stick to her' -- you will stick anyway. But if you don't love her, then the problem arises. If the love has disappeared... and love disappears; in this life nothing is permanent. I'm not saying that in the first place there was no love -- there may have been but now it has disappeared. As it has entered one day, it has gone one day. Now what to do?

If you stick to your righteousness, to all the codes and the rules that have been given to you, you will be untrue to yourself, untrue to the woman. You will go on making gestures to her as if you love her. And deep down you will be very very angry, raging. Deep down you would like to kill this woman. You feel at least that if she dies it will be good, it will be a blessing. Something... you will be waiting for some disaster to happen.

But you are righteous and you believe in a certain way of life, and you have to love her. How can you love anybody if the love has disappeared? You can pretend. And when you pretend, you are killing your own love energy and you are destroying the other's possibilities. She will never be satisfied by your pretensions; you will never be satisfied by your pretensions. Then one day or other you are going to fall in love with some other woman.

Now more misery will enter -- you will have to keep it a hidden fact. Now a secrecy. Now you have two lives, and you have to hide from your wife about this woman, and you have to hide about your wife from this woman. You will have to start living in two worlds, and you will become more and more untrue. And one untruth leads to many other untruths -- you will become a mess! And sooner or later you will be caught. It is impossible not to be

caught, one is bound to be caught.

Deep down you will feel miserable because you are doing something wrong. If you don't do the wrong you feel miserable, because you don't love this woman. If you do the right you feel miserable. If you do the wrong you feel miserable -- you are trapped either way. This kind of righteousness is a trap it keeps people miserable.

My own approach is totally radical. My approach is: I don't give you any commandments. I trust in you more than in any commandments that can be given to you. I would like to give you consciousness, not commandments -- not conscience but consciousness! I would like you to become more and more aware about your life, and I would like you to become more and more authentic about this awareness -- so that you remain one piece whatsoever happens. And whatsoever you want to do, you have to do it responsibly. And remember, my word 'responsibility' does not mean responsibility towards somebody else, no. When I say you have to do it responsibly, I mean you have to be responsible to your consciousness, that's all.

Nobody is responsible for anybody else here. How can I be responsible for you? How can you be responsible for me? I am responsible for whatsoever I am doing -- and I have to do it, and I have to do it with all my heart and all my being. So whatsoever it is, I accept it and I go with it, and I don't go on playing false games. This is honesty.

I don't call that honesty which says "Honesty is the best policy." How can honesty be a policy? A policy is in the very nature of dishonesty. Honesty is not a policy! -- honesty is a rebellious way of life. It has no politics and no policy in it.

This is what I call a really righteous person, a right person. He moves according to his inner consciousness, and wherever it leads he is ready to accept the consequences. He does not hide, he does not try to pretend. He lives a life of unity. He's not many persons, he is one; he is not a crowd. He really has a unity inside him; he is not poly-psychic. Otherwise, the righteous is the most dangerous and the most false man in the world. Even criminals are sometimes more innocent than your so-called righteous people.

That's what Jesus means when he says that "The righteousness of the righteous is not enough" -- a tremendously important saying: The righteousness of the righteous is not enough. It is lacking, something is missing in it -- the soul is missing.

A monk said to Master Seppo, "I have shaved my head, put on black clothes, received the vows -- why am I not to be considered a Buddha?"

Seppo said, "There is nothing better than an absence of goodness."

Meditate over it. Seppo says, "There is nothing better than an absence of goodness." What does he mean? He is not against goodness but this IDEA that "I have done this, I have done that, now what is missing? Why am I not a Buddha? Why should I not be considered a Buddha?"

When the first Zen Master entered China, the emperor had come to see him. And the emperor had done many righteous acts. He had made many Buddhist temples, thousands of Buddha statues he had spread all over the country. He was converting the whole country to Buddhism. Millions of monks he was feeding; he had been maintaining many monasteries. Thousands of scholars were translating works from Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. He had put all his treasures at the service of Buddhism. Naturally, he was feeling very good, obviously -- he was on a great ego trip.

And when Bodhidharma came, he received Bodhidharma and said, "Sir, I have done this

and I have done that, and I have done this, and I am doing this -- what will be my merit?"

And that Bodhidharma looked ferociously into his eyes and said, "Nothing, sir, no merit at all. You will fall into the seventh hell."

The emperor could not believe it, because ALL other monks and Buddhists... many had come before. This was the first Zen Master. Many had come before. China was already converted, the country had almost become a Buddhist country. Many had come and everybody had praised him like anything; and everybody had said that "This Emperor Wu is the greatest man in the world." He was almost respected just next to Buddha. He had done so much, and people were praising him like anything. Books were written in praise of him, poetry was written in praise of him, songs were sung in praise of him. Buddhist monks, Buddhist scholars, pundits -- they were all bowing down to this emperor.

And here comes this Bodhidharma and he says, "No merit, sir -- not only that: you will fall into the seventh hell. Drop this idea that you have done anything, otherwise you are in danger!"

Why? Because to feel that you are doing something good simply means that doing is coming out of the ego -- and ego is the door to hell. The righteous person is the egoistic person, one of the most egoistic persons. And he has much to be egoistic about. He has a reason to be egoistic. He can show the good acts that he has done.

Then the Emperor Wu asked, "Then what is virtue? Then what is merit? What is PUNYA?"

And again, like a bolt, Bodhidharma said, "Emptiness... just emptiness."

Wu again tried to understand and he said, "So you say emptiness is holy?" Again from the backdoor he brings his idea, "So emptiness is holy?"

And Bodhidharma shouted, "You stop this nonsense! There is nothing holy in it! Emptiness is simply empty! What holiness? There is nothing holy in it! Emptiness is simply empty."

Now this was too much, shouting at the emperor. And the emperor said, "Now this man is not for me." And Bodhidharma turned, went back to the mountains. But the emperor meditated over it. How can you forget such a man? The man continued to haunt him, he became like a nightmare.

"Why has he shattered my beliefs?" This man was living in a dream palace, that he was going to the seventh heaven and even Buddha may be ready to receive him at the door. This man had shattered all his dreams. And this man looked very authentic. The emperor knew all kinds of flatterers, they were all around him, the whole court was full of them; and he had known all those so-called mahatmas who had come before this man. And now he could see the difference -- this man had a fire, an authenticity. This man was REALLY of a totally different quality, belonged to some other dimension.

He thought again and again, and the more and more he thought, the more and more he felt that this Bodhidharma seemed to be right. But he could not gather courage to invite him again. Then when he was dying -- after seven years -- on his deathbed, he could not postpone it any longer. He told the people around him, "Rush immediately and find out where Bodhidharma is, because that seems to be the only man I have come across, the only real man. A man of so much virtue that he says there is no virtue in it. A man so righteous that he does not believe in righteousness. A man so enlightened that even virtue is a fetter. You go! I am dying and I feel he may be right, that I will go to the seventh hell. It was all an ego trip."

But it was too late. When the people reached Bodhidharma, the emperor was already dead. Before his death he told his people, "On my grave write something from Bodhidharma."

I could not write it in my heart, but at least let it be engraved on my grave." On his grave still this whole dialogue is written:

Wu asks, "What will my merit be?"

And Bodhidharma says, "Nothing. There is no merit in it, and you will fall into the seventh hell."

"Then what is virtue?"

And Bodhidharma says, "Emptiness."

"And what is holy in emptiness?"

And Bodhidharma says, "There is nothing holy. Emptiness is simply emptiness."

My own feeling is that if even for a single moment before death this man Wu understood it, that was enough. One moment of real understanding is enough... more than enough, more than thousands of lives of righteous living. That's what Jesus means when he says, "Righteousness is not enough, something more is needed." Conscience is just the outer shell: consciousness is needed.

SO, I DON'T THINK MUCH OF ETHICS. Not that I am against it. I don't think much of it because it has not made man ethical at all. And I don't think much of righteous acts, because they are not basically righteous -- they are pretensions. First and foremost is meditation, everything else follows. First you should go to your innermost core. Forget about all else -- the relationship, the social world and all that. First you should go to your innermost core, get rooted there and let your life arise from there. And I know you will be moral, and without being moralistic.

Now these are two different things. To be moral is one thing, to be moralistic is another. The moralistic person is an ugly person; the moralistic is not moral, just bragging about it. I have heard:

A country convert, full of zeal, offered himself for service in his first prayer meeting remarks.

"I'm ready to do anything the Lord asks me," said he, "so long as it's honourable."

Now this is a moralistic person. Even with God he will have to choose. He says, "I am ready to do anything the Lord asks me, so long as it is honourable." Even with God he will choose what is honourable and what is not honourable. A moralistic person keeps an eye to judge everybody -- even God. A moralistic person is on a trip to condemn everybody. And a moralistic person is not moral because he loves: he is moral because he is afraid. His morality is out of fear, the hell, the punishment. Or maybe out of greed -- the reward in heaven and paradise.

Gil Hodges turned down a steak dinner on a plane because it was Friday. A teammate, also a Catholic, advised him to have the steak, saying, "There's an automatic dispensation when you're on a plane and they're serving only that."

Hodges hedged, "That might be, but we're a little too close to headquarters up here," he said.

Just the fear... just fear keeps people moral. But fear is immoral, so how on an immoral

attitude -- the attitude of fear and greed -- can morality have its structure raised? It is making a house on sands.

A moral person is unafraid and ungreedy. If you ask me my definition of morality, I will say: a man who has no fear and no greed. Now if you think of this definition, then your so-called righteous people will not be righteous at all, because they are ONLY greedy and afraid. If somebody comes and declares to the world and convinces everybody that there is no hell, out of your one hundred moralistic people, ninety-nine will immediately rush into sin. Fear has disappeared. And if somebody comes and says, "There is no paradise either. and you are not going to be rewarded; sinners and saints -- all are alike once they have died," then the remaining one percent will also fall into sin.

There is a story about Jesus. It is not related in the Bible but in Sufi sources.

Jesus comes to a town and he sees a few people sitting on a veranda, very sad -- crying, weeping, beating their chests. He asks, "What has happened to you? What wrong has happened to you? Who has created this state? Who has made you so miserable?"

And they say, "Nobody. We are afraid of hell. We are religious people, and we are afraid of all the sins that we have committed. We are asking for forgiveness."

Jesus moves ahead. He comes across another group, sitting in a garden, very sad -- not weeping, not crying, but very sad, very dull, almost stagnant life energies. He asks, "What has happened to you? Why do you look so stupefied?"

And they say, "We are worried whether we are going to make it or not -- the paradise, Firdaus -- whether we will be able to make it or not! The very anxiety paralyzes us. If we miss, then...? We don't do anything wrong! we keep away from anything that can have any connection with wrong, but still the mind goes on being worried whether we are going to make it, whether we will be able to enter paradise. That very greed is making us very sad, anxious, paralyzed."

These are the two kinds of religious people in the world.

Another parable:

A Sufi mystic woman, Rabiya, was found one day running in the marketplace, shouting like a lunatic. In one hand she had a torch, a burning torch. In another hand she had a pot full of water.

So somebody inquired, "Rabiya, what has happened to you? What are you doing? Where are you going? And why this torch and the pot with water?"

She said, "I am going to drown hell with this water, and I am going to burn paradise with this torch. Only then can the world be religious, never before it."

The moral person is the one who has no fear and no greed. But fear and greed disappear only when the mind disappears. They are the two wheels of the mind. The mind-cart moves on these two wheels; hence, those who know, they say morality is a by-product -- the real thing is meditation.

And then when you do one thing wrong, you have to find a thousand and one explanations why you had to do it. You rationalize, you try to protect yourself against the fear. You do a small thing and you make it look very big. You just give some help to some beggar and you make it look very big, as if you have done something very great. Or you do something wrong, and then you make it look very small. And you try to find reasons why you

had to do it. It was not really that you wanted to do it, but the circumstances were like that. The situation was such that you had to do it.

This constant rationalizing in the mind makes you more and more foggy, dim and dull. And, by and by, you lose all proportion; you don't see things as they are. Magnifying one thing, making it look very big, and on the other hand trying to make things look very small, you lose all perspective. Then you can't see things as they are in their real size and shape. Your world becomes a very very illusory world.

The husband wired home that he had been able to wind up his business trip a day early and would be home on Wednesday. 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 do anything," 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, a note of triumph in her voice, "She didn't receive your telegram!"

That's how things go on. We go on finding some foolish kind of explanations why we did this and why we didn't do that. These foolish explanations are keeping your mind clouded. Don't start by being moral; start by being meditative. And you will be surprised that morality comes without any effort on your part to bring it. And when it comes without any effort, it has a beauty of its own. It is so natural.

Then you don't brag, then you don't hanker for any paradise. You did the right thing because that's how you enjoyed doing it. There is no more profit in it, there is no more motive in it -- it is unmotivated. You do the right thing because that is the way you enjoy doing it. You don't do the wrong thing, because that is the way you don't enjoy doing it. It is simple! You don't become righteous. You become more and more joyful that's all. You become more and more celebrating, and you don't feel that you are obliging everybody in the world. And you don't feel that others are not so righteous as you are, and you don't need any God to give you any more rewards for it. The right act is its own reward. To ask for any other reward simply means you have not known yet what the right act is.

When you love, the very rightness of it gives you joy. When you share, the very rightness of it gives you great peace, silence, delight. When you steal, the very wrongness of it makes you feel hellish. When you cheat, the very wrongness of it brings your energies low, you feel depressed. There is no need for any heaven and hell in the future; each act brings its own hell, and each act brings its own heaven. And you go on moving between these two -- a thousand and one times in one day.

You do something good and you are happy, and you do something bad and you are unhappy. And I am not saying that there is any outer criterion to judge it by. If you understand me rightly, there is only one inner criterion: whatsoever you feel good doing, whatsoever you feel joyful doing, is right; and whatsoever you feel miserable doing, is not right. If you can see that point, then your life will have morality and no moralism. You will not be a puritan.

Enter into your own being and others disappear. Then your morality is not a consideration for others, it is just an outpouring of your inner being. You are moral because you are happy

that way. The morality is your poetry, your song. It is your fragrance.

One time, the old Zen Master, D. T. Suzuki, gave a talk on Zen in Tokyo. He spoke of the silence, the emptiness, the nothingness, and all the rest, together with the deep wisdom that comes from satori. When he had finished, one of his audience rose to his feet and, not without a touch of irritation exclaimed, "But Dr. Suzuki, what about society? What about other people? What about the other?"

Suzuki looked at the man with a smile and remarked, "But there is no other."

There is no other, and there is no self. That is the illumination that comes through meditation. You disappear and the other disappears immediately, because the other exists only as a counterpart to 'I'. 'I' creates 'thou'; the self creates the other. When the self disappears in meditation, the other disappears also. Then there is a natural flow. In that natural flow everything is right of its own accord -- not that you have to put it right again and again, not that you have to be very very careful and considerate and concerned. It creates no anxiety, it follows you like your shadow wherever you go. That morality is religion.

So, let me repeat:

DOES RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ENLIGHTENMENT?

Nothing at all, but enlightenment has much to do with righteous conduct.

AND THE LAST POINT IN THE QUESTION: I THINK IF YOU DON'T WORK YOU DON'T EAT" IS A VERY GOOD MOTTO.

Very moralistic, but not very good. Shows your miserliness, shows your money-mindedness, shows your very very hard heart. Good, at a very low level.

If you are thinking only of the other, it looks good: why should he eat if he does not work? But you are not thinking about yourself at all. Can't you be generous enough to share with somebody who is not working? Why should you be so miserly? Why should work be a condition?

I know it has been a condition in the past, because the past has been very poor. It has nothing to do with morality; it is just because of the poverty of the past that such mottoes became important. They were necessary evils, they have nothing important about them. It was just a necessity. People were poor in the world, and somebody not working was a heavy burden. All people working, then too there was not enough food, not enough clothes, not enough shelter. Life has been very miserable. Out of that misery these mottoes were created. They have nothing to do with morality; they are just part of the past economics of poverty. They have nothing to do with religion either.

But in the future, when more and more technology will make it possible for more and more people to be free of work, then...? Will this motto work: "If you don't work you don't eat"? In fact, we will have to reverse the motto completely. We may even have to say: "If you work you don't eat!" You can't have both. If you want to work you can work, but then you don't eat -- because more work will not be possible. Once technology takes over, the lazy person will become the ideal hero; the one who does not work at all will be appreciated, because he will not ask and he will not demand from the society, "I need work!" He will say, "I am happy without work."

But there are going to be millions of people who will not be able to relax and they will demand work. They will say, "Work is a must. We cannot sit. What should we do?" You know -- what do you do on holiday? You become so tired of not doing anything at all, you become so bored, that you start hankering for Monday to come. You start thinking about what you are going to do tomorrow in the office.

When you are not doing anything, when you are unoccupied, you feel it very very difficult to tackle that emptiness, because you are not meditative. Only a meditative person can relax into unoccupiedness. The future belongs to meditators not to workers. In the future, sooner or later -- after this century -- it is going to happen that this motto will become one of the ugliest mottoes. And anybody demanding work will be thought of as an anti-social element -- because from where to bring the work? To give him work means to create trouble that machine can do better work more cheaply, more easily, more fast, more efficiently -- and the man demands work! From where to find the work? Then there is a possibility we may have to make a motto that if you demand work, if you are too much attached to work, you can have work, but then you cannot eat.

People who will be lazy, people who will be just lousy, people who will be just resting, meditating or playing guitar -- they will be the respected citizens of the world. Then what will happen to your motto?

It has nothing to do with morality, it is just a necessity -- in the past it has been so. But don't try to confuse economics with religion, otherwise all that is beautiful will disappear.

Then how to define work? Buddha, is he a man who works? It will be difficult to define... whether he works or not, whether he is entitled to eat or not? Whether I am entitled to eat or not? It depends on you. If you love me you will say, "Yes, your work is great! It is creativity, this and that." If you don't love me you will say, "This is useless. What is the work in that? You better do some pottery or carpentry. Be creative, do something useful! Teaching people meditation is a useless thing. You are not doing anything and you are teaching other people not to do anything."

What is work? Is Christ entitled to eat or not? Michelangelo? Wagner? Kalidas? Shakespeare? Are they entitled to eat or not? It will depend on how you define work.

If Bodhidharma enters China now, he will be put in jail. He did well -- he entered many hundreds of years ago. Now if he enters Maoist China, he will be put in jail. There are many Buddhist monks and Lao Tzuan monks in jail -- for being lazy, for not doing anything that THEY call creative or useful. This is happening! This has happened in China, this has happened in Russia. Monasteries have been deserted, people have been forced to work.

In the East we have supported the sannyasin for centuries. Why? Because we know that his work is tremendously creative. It is not creative on the surface, but what Buddha is doing just by being here is tremendously significant. But that depends on your interpretation. Otherwise Buddha is just lousy. His work is not visible; it is not there like an object that can be seen and looked at and judged. It is very mysterious. It is there for those who are ready to fall en rapport with him. They know that what he has done nobody has ever done.

Work in itself is not a value. And remember, the active people have been the most dangerous in the world. The inactive people have been the least harmful, because even to be harmful one has to be very active. The inactive people have not harmed anybody. If Adolf Hitler had been inactive, a little lazy and lousy, the world would have been better. But he was not. He was a great worker. If Mussolini and Stalin had been a little less active people, the world would have been far better.

Just think -- Tamerlaine and Genghis Khan and Nadir Shah and Alexander and Napoleon

-- these are the really active people. They have created the whole history. It is not history -- it is hysteria. They have created this whole neurosis that we call history.

Why do you go on praising work? And remember, I am not saying that one should not work. No, I am not saying that, not at all. But these things should not be raised to moral mottoes. They are economic things; they should belong to their realm. They should not become commandments. They change with circumstances.

It is good to work -- but, again, my emphasis is that you should work from your innermost core. If you feel like doing something, you should do it. You should not be manipulated by others. For example, you should not continue to be a doctor if you want to be a carpenter. By being a doctor you earn more, by being a carpenter you will not earn more, you will remain a beggar. But my insistence is that if that feels good for you, then that is right. Drop it, don't be a doctor -- be a carpenter! Or if you would like to be fisherman on the lake somewhere, you will be even more poor, but if that is what feels more in tune with your being, then that is what has to be done. No other consideration is important.

There are a few people who will not feel like working at all. In a better human world they have to be allowed their lousiness, their laziness. We should be at least that much human. If somebody does not feel like working, then can't we be human and generous enough that he should be allowed? He is not asking for much -- just bread, a shelter.

In a religious world we will appreciate him, we will not condemn him. There is a possibility -- a few people ARE that way, made that way. Don't impose. Rarely are there such people, and if you accept them without any condemnation and you don't make them feel guilty, you are religious, you are righteous, you are really a moral person. There is no need to make them feel guilty. What wrong is there? What is going to happen by all the work that you are doing? Everything disappears into death. And if somebody does not have that feel...

I know one man. I have watched him. He was a student with me... very lazy. Then he became a professor with me, and we lived together. He is very lazy, but I loved that man. He has tremendous qualities. His laziness is not just laziness -- he has a certain grace, a certain beauty. That beauty in itself is so valuable that I would not like to destroy that beauty by putting him into work. Just his being there -- plain lazy -- creates such a pool of energy that whosoever comes close to him feels happy; as if you have passed through a garden where there was much freshness and cool fresh air and the fragrance of flowers.

He is plain lazy. He has never done anything, and he is not going to do anything. What should we do? Should we make him feel guilty? That's what everybody has been doing to him.

When he met me and I allowed him to stay with me, for three months he watched -- whether I would condemn him or not. When I didn't condemn him and when I didn't say anything... because he's so plain lazy that if he is thirsty he will just go on Lying down on the bed. He will wait for me to ask, "Are you thirsty or something?"

When for three months I didn't say a single word to him, and I did everything that I felt was needed to be done for him, after three months he started crying. And he said, "You are the first man who has accepted me. You are the first man who has given me my soul. Nobody has loved me, and everybody has made me feel guilty." And naturally, when the whole world makes you feel guilty, you start feeling guilty. You start feeling a great hate arising in you against yourself.

He flowered in those three months, he bloomed. And out of that blooming, something started happening. He started singing, he started writing poems. Then one day he started playing the guitar. But it came out of the acceptance, that at least one human being accepted

him totally. If he got up at ten o'clock in the morning, I was not going to say to get up at nine-thirty. Ten is perfectly okay! If you feel like that, it is okay. A person should be allowed to be himself.

So I understand what you mean when you say: I THINK "IF YOU DON'T WORK YOU DON'T EAT" IS A VERY GOOD MOTTO. It has been good in a way because the society has been poor, starving. But it is not good for you! You should be able to accept the other's reality as it is without any judgement. And you should be able to give the freedom to the other to be himself without any hindrance. That is real morality. That is to be really religious.

Yes, a few people will remain lazy, but nothing to be worried about. There are lazy men's guides to enlightenment too! Lao Tzu is the highest priest for the lazy man.

Active people do something in the world which is important. Lazy people also do something beautiful in the world which is needed. They create a balance, harmony, equilibrium.

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #7

Chapter title: A Snowflake Dissolving in Pure Air

7 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707070

ShortTitle: PARAD307

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 95 mins

BASSUI WROTE THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES WHO WAS ABOUT TO DIE:

"THE ESSENCE OF YOUR MIND IS NOT BORN, SO IT WILL NEVER DIE. IT IS NOT AN EXISTENCE, WHICH IS PERISHABLE. IT IS NOT AN EMPTINESS, WHICH IS A MERE VOID. IT HAS NEITHER COLOUR NOR FORM. IT ENJOYS NO PLEASURES AND SUFFERS NO PAINS. "I KNOW YOU ARE VERY ILL. LIKE A GOOD ZEN STUDENT, YOU ARE FACING THAT SICKNESS SQUARELY. YOU MAY NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHO IS SUFFERING, BUT QUESTION YOURSELF: WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THIS MIND? THINK ONLY OF THIS. YOU WILL NEED NO MORE. COVET NOTHING. YOUR END WHICH IS ENDLESS IS AS A SNOWFLAKE DISSOLVING IN PURE AIR."

DEATH IS NOT THE ENEMY. It appears to be so because we cling too much to life. The fear of death arises out of the clinging. And because of this clinging we are unable to know what death is. Not only that, we are unable to know what life is too.

The man who is not able to know death will not be able to know life either, because deep down they are two branches of the same tree, If you are afraid of death, basically you will remain -- because it is life that brings death. It is through living that you come to dying.

You would like to become stagnant frozen, so that you don't flow, so that death never happens. You would like to get stuck somewhere on the way, so that you never come to the ocean and disappear.

A man who is afraid of death clings to life too much; but the irony is that even if he clings too much to life, he is not able to see what life is. His clinging to life becomes a barrier to understanding life too. He cannot understand death, he cannot understand life; he remains in a deep misunderstanding, in a great ignorance.

So this is one of the most fundamental things to see: that death is not the enemy. Death cannot be the enemy. In fact, the enemy exists not. The whole existence is one. All is friendly. All is yours, it belongs to you and you belong to it. You are not strangers here.

Existence has given birth to you; existence has mothered you. So when you die, you simply go back to the original source to rest and to be born again.

Death is like a rest. Life is activity: death is rest. And without rest activity is not possible. Life is like the day and death is like the night. And without the night, the day cannot exist on its own. It is night that prepares you for the day, it is night that rejuvenates you, gives you energy back. You move in your deep sleep to the very point where death will lead you.

Every night you go into death -- it is a small death -- hence in the morning you feel so alive. Unfortunate are those people who don't die every night. In the morning they are more tired than they were when they went to bed. They were dreaming, they were still clinging to life in their dreams. They didn't go in a let-go. They didn't allow death to take possession of them and mend many things and give rest, relaxation, new energy. These are the unfortunate people. The fortunate people are those who go into a tremendously deep sleep, a dreamless sleep. In the morning they are again alive, ready to face life in its manifold forms, full of joy, full of response, ready to take any challenge that life proposes.

Death is like the night. Life is yang and death is yin. Life is male, death is female. Life is aggression, ambition -- a great effort to conquer many things. And death is relaxation from all aggression -- an inward journey. One relaxes into oneself. Zen people call it 'the asylum of rest'.

Life is an adventure; you go away from yourself, you go farther and farther away. The farther away you are, the more miserable you become. You go in search of happiness, but the more you search for happiness, the farther you are from it. And you can see it in your own life. This is not a philosophy, this is a simple statement of fact. Everybody goes in search of happiness. But the farther away you go, the more miserable you become.

Life is a search for happiness -- but brings misery. One day you are fed up and tired and bored. That adventure no longer appeals. You relax into yourself, you come back. The closer you come to yourself, the more happy you become. The more you forget about happiness, the more happy you become. The day you stop seeking and searching for happiness, you are happy.

Life is a promise for happiness, but only a promise. It never fulfills. Death fulfills it. Hence, I repeat: death is not the enemy. Death is your home where you come after many many journeys -- tired, frustrated, exhausted -- to seek shelter, to seek rest, to gain again the lost vitality. One thing.

Second thing: life and death are not so much apart as we think. You think life happened the day you were born, and death will happen the day you die. So there is a seventy or eighty or one hundred years' gap. It is not so. Birthing and dying go on together your whole life. The moment you start breathing you start dying too. EACH moment there is life and there is death -- two wheels of the same cart. They go together. They are simultaneous. You cannot put

them so far apart -- seventy years is too much distance. You cannot put them so far apart -- they are there every moment. Every moment something is being born in you and something is dying.

Dying and living are together. In seventy years' time you are finished with this dying and living. You are tired of the game. You would like to go home. You have played with sand castles. You have argued, fought for your sand castles: This is mine and that is thine, and enough is enough! Evening has come and the sun is setting and you want to come home. After seventy years you slip into deep rest. But dying and living continue together. To see it in that light will bring great insight to you. Each moment both are there.

So there is no need to be afraid. It is not that death is going to happen somewhere in the future. The future creates problems: It is going to happen somewhere in the future -- how to protect yourself? How to create Great China Walls against it? What arrangements should be made so it doesn't happen to you, or at least so it can be postponed a little more?

But it is already happening! It is not a question in the future. It has been happening since you have been here. You cannot postpone it, you cannot do anything about it! There is no way to do anything about it. It is the very process of life -- dying is part of the very process of life.

For example, it comes very very prominent and loud and bold when you make love. Naturally, because love gives you the feeling of life. But have you watched? After each love act you become depressed. Relaxed, silent, but a kind of frustration is also there. At the peak of your love you are at the peak of life, and then suddenly you fall into death. Each love act brings life to a peak, and, naturally, gives you a glimpse into the abyss of death that is surrounding it. The valley of death is very clear when the peak of life is very high.

Out of this experience, two types of culture have arisen in the world. One is sex-against, and one is death-against.

The sex-against culture emphasizes more the frustration that follows the sex act. It is more concerned with the valley. It says, "Look, nothing is achieved, only frustration. That was all illusion; that peak, that orgasm, was just illusory, momentary. See what really comes in the end -- just frustration. Again you are flat on the ground. So it was a kind of illusion that you have created, but this is reality."

After each sex act, everybody starts thinking of how to become celibate, how to drop this whole miserable wheel, how to get out of this vicious wheel. The idea of celibacy and BRAHMACHARYA has arisen because of that second part. It is there! People who are sex-against see only it. People who are death-against don't see it. People who are death-against, they simply see the peak, they don't look into the valley. Once the peak is there, they close their eyes and go into sleep. They don't think about the valley. The valley is there, but they have chosen only the peak.

But see, there is a corollary to it. If you only see the peak then you will be very much afraid of death, because you will not have any experience of it. Then death will remain unknown forever. Only when you are dying, then you will come across it. Then it will be too much and too new, and too unfamiliar and unknown, and it will shock you very much.

So the people who are death-against and only see the peak of life, the orgasmic peak of the sex act, will avoid the valley, they will not look into it. Then ultimately, one day, that valley is there. They are very afraid. Hence, in the West, where sex has become more free and people are less sex-against, they are more death-against. They are fighting against death. Somehow death has to be destroyed.

In the East, people are sex-against. They look only into the valley. They don't look at the

peak; they say the peak is just illusory. Because they look into the valley, they have become more and more death-prone, ready to die. In fact, waiting to die; in fact, hoping to die, desiring to die, dreaming to die. In the East the greatest ideal is how to die so utterly that you are never born again. That is the ultimate death.

In the West the idea is how to create a situation where you don't die at all; you go on living -- on and on and on. Both attitudes are lop-sided. Both attitudes create a kind of imbalance in you, and that imbalance is the misery of man.

A real man, an authentic man, will face all; he will not choose. He will not say, "I will see only the valley and I will be oblivious of the peak," or "I will only see the peak and I will remain oblivious of the valley." He will see both as they are. He will not choose.

Not to choose is Zen. To be choiceless is Zen: to see things as they are in their totality -- good and bad, heaven and hell, life and death, day and night, summer and winter -- to see them as they are. Zen is not an either/or philosophy. It does not give you a choice because it says, "If you choose, you will always be afraid of the one that you have not chosen."

See into it: if you choose something, you will remain constantly trapped with that which you have not chosen, because the not-chosen is the rejected, the not-chosen is the repressed. The not-chosen is a hankering to take revenge. The not-chosen is getting ready -- some day, in a weaker moment, it will explode with a vengeance.

So the man who is sex-against is always afraid of the vengeance of sex -- it can explode any moment. And the man who is afraid of death, death-against, is naturally always trembling death is coming. He knows, there is a tacit understanding. Whether you see it or not, it makes no difference. Just not seeing it will not make it disappear. It is there. You know it is there and it is coming. And it is coming closer every moment.

The man who is sex-against will be afraid of sexuality erupting any moment in his consciousness. And the man who is death-against will be afraid of death coming any day and possessing him and destroying him.

Both kinds of people remain fear-oriented; and both kinds of people remain in a fighting state, continuously conflicting. They never come to a calm tranquillity, an equilibrium. Equilibrium is when you don't choose, when you see the fact as it is. Life is not an either/or question, there is nothing to choose. It is all together. By your choice, nothing is changed. By your choice, only you get into a kind of ignorance. That which you choose is part, and that which you are not choosing is also part of reality. The unchosen part of reality will remain hanging around you, waiting to be accepted. It cannot disappear, there is no way for it to disappear. If you love life too much and you don't want to see the fact of death... death is there hanging around like a shadow.

Zen says: See both -- they are one piece, they are together. Seeing them together, without any choice, without any prejudice, you transcend them. Seeing them together, you are no more identified with life and no more identified with death. When you are not identified, you are free, you are liberated.

Identification is what imprisonment is. Let this be understood perfectly, because that is the root cause of all our misery, slavery.

Identification -- this word is very significant. It means you get identified with a part. You become one with one part of life, that part you start thinking of as if it is the whole. Nothing is wrong with the part as such, but the part is the part; it is not the whole. When you start thinking of the part as the whole, partiality arises. When you start claiming for the part as if it is the whole, you are becoming blind to the whole. Now you will be in conflict with reality.

And you cannot win against reality, remember it. You cannot win against reality. It is

impossible. It does not happen, it cannot happen. You can win only WITH reality, never against reality. Victory is with reality. That's why all the great Masters have put so much emphasis on surrender. Surrender means to be with reality. Then victory is certain -- because reality IS going to win. It is always the reality that wins. If you are with it, you will be a winner; if you are against it, you are going to be a loser. And we are all losers, we have been fighting.

We choose a small part and claim that this is the whole. We choose life, we take life out of its basic context -- death -- and we say, "This is me. I am life." Now you are getting into trouble. You will be engaged in this identification. How will you manage death then? -- and it is there, and it is happening every moment, and it is going to take you unawares one day.

You get identified with the body, "I am the body," then there is trouble. You get identified with the mind, "I am the mind," then there is trouble. Getting identified is getting into trouble. Identification is the very stuff ignorance is made of. Once identification is dropped, once you don't get identified with anything, you simply remain a witness -- not saying, "THIS I am" or "THAT I am." You simply remain a witness. You see life as passing, you see death as passing, you see sex as passing, you see frustration, joy, success, failure. You go on seeing; you remain a pure seer. You don't get hooked with anything; you don't claim "I am this." WITHOUT claiming, who are you? Without confining and defining yourself, without giving a limitation to yourself, if you can remain flowing, just seeing, there is liberation. There is great liberation.

Unidentified one is free. Identified, one is engaged.

Zen says: Don't be identified with anything whatsoever. And then, naturally, transcendence happens. You see misery coming and you remain a watcher. You see misery arising, engulfing you, surrounding you like great dark smoke, but you remain a watcher. You see it, you don't judge. You don't say, "This is me," or "This is not me." You don't say anything at all, you remain non-judgemental. You simply see this is the fact, that there is misery.

Then as it had come one day, one day it starts disappearing. Clouds had gathered and now they are disappearing, and there is great sunshine and happiness. You don't get identified with that either. You just see that sunshine has come back, clouds have disappeared. You don't say, "This is me," you don't say, "This is not me." You don't make ANY statement at all about yourself. You simply go on watching.

Many times it will happen -- misery will come, happiness will come -- many times you will succeed, many times you will fail. Many times you will be depressed, and many times you will feel very high. Watching all this duality, by and by you will see that you are beyond all these dual pairs of things.

And so is a pair -- life and death. And so is a pair -- mind and body. And so is a pair -- the world and NIRVANA. ALL are dual pairs. When you can see thoroughly, when you can see transparently, and you don't choose, you are something transcendental -- the witness. That witness is never born and never dies.

Death and life come into that witness' vision, but that witness is eternal. It was there before you were born, and it will be there when you are gone. You have been coming into the world millions of times, and you may yet be coming -- and still you have never come. The world appears in you just like a reflection appears in a mirror. Nothing, in fact, happens to the mirror. Or do you think something happens to the mirror?

You are standing before a mirror and the mirror reflects your face. Do you think something is happening to the mirror? Nothing is happening. You are gone, the mirror is

empty. Somebody else comes before the mirror, the mirror reflects that face -- beautiful or ugly -- it has no choice, it is choiceless. You bring a beautiful rose-flower, it reflects; you bring an ugly thorn, it reflects. You bring a beautiful face, it reflects; you bring an ugly face, it reflects. It has no choice. it does not say, "This is not good and I am not going to reflect," and, "This is very good and I will cling to it. Please don't go away from here. remain here. I am you, you are me." No, the mirror simply reflects.

This mirrorlike quality is what is meant by witnessing. And that's why the mirror remains clean of all impressions. It goes on reflecting, but no impressions are collected on it. This is the state of awareness. This is what meditation is all about.

Watch, see, be alert, but don't choose. And don't get into any part. The part is not the whole. The part is part, and sooner or later the part will go, because the part cannot stay long enough. And when it goes you will be miserable because you will not be willing to leave it; you will cling to it, because you got identified with it. But it will have to go, and you will feel miserable and you will cry and you will weep -- but that is your creation. If you had remained like a mirror there would be no problem. Whatsoever happens, happens. You remain undis-turbed and undistracted.

THIS IS THE VERY ESSENTIAL CORE OF ALL religions. It is not a question of practice, it is not a question of learning concepts, dogmas. It is not a question of reciting sutras. It is a question of insight! And this insight is available to you. There is no need to go to anybody for this insight. You have been carrying it all along. From the very beginning it has been so. It is there, the mirror is there. Just start using it.

Try sometimes and you will be surprised! The same thing that has been disturbing you in the past no more disturbs. Somebody insults you -- you simply watch, you don't get identified with it. You don't say, "He has insulted me." How can he insult YOU? You don't know yourself who you are, how can he know who you are? He cannot insult you. He may have been insulting some image that he carries of you, but that is not you. He may be having some idea about you, and that idea he is insulting. How can he insult YOU? He cannot see you at all.

If you remain alert and watchful, you will be surprised -- the insult came and went and nothing happened inside you, nothing was stirred, The calmness was radiant. No vibration, no wave, not even a ripple arose in you. And you will be tremendously blissful knowing this mirrorlike quality. Then you are becoming integrated.

Then somebody comes and praises you. Try it again. Be watchful. Don't think he is praising you. He may be praising somebody he thinks you are. He may be praising you for some ulterior motives of his own. That is none of your business. You simply see the fact that "this man is praising me." But remain a mirror. Don't swallow it! Don't cling to it! If you swallow it you will be in difficulty. Then ego arises -- with identification, ego.

And then you start expecting that everybody should praise you like this man. Nobody's going to praise you like that. Then there is hurt and misery. And tomorrow this man may not praise you again. His motive may have been fulfilled. Or tomorrow he may start thinking that he was wrong, or tomorrow he may take revenge. Whenever somebody praises you, some day he is going to insult you too -- because he has to take revenge, he has to put things right.

An imbalance arises. When somebody is praising you, he is not feeling really very good; it hurts him to praise you. He has to show you that you are higher than him -- that hurts. He may not show it right now, but he will keep the hurt, the wound, inside. And some day if the opportunity arises he will show you who you are; he will put you in your right place. And

then you will be very much hurt. This man has been praising you so much, and now he hurts you. But he has not done anything. It is you -- you started clinging to the idea that he had put in your mind.

Not getting identified with anything, watching, keeping the mirrorlike quality is what brings one, by and by, closer to enlightenment .

Rinzai was giving a lecture one day on the 'True Man of No Title'. That's what I mean when I say the mirrorlike quality -- the 'True Man of No Title'. There is inside you a True Man of No Title. It is neither man nor woman, neither Hindu nor Mohammedan, neither good nor bad -- it has no titles -- neither educated nor uneducated, neither Eastern nor Western, it has no titles -- neither a saint nor a sinner, it has no titles. And that is the true man inside you.

Rinzai was giving a lecture one day on the 'True Man of No Title'. This was the title of his lecture:

A monk, quite perplexed, went up to him and asked, "What is this True Man of No Title?" Rinzai grabbed him by the neck and yelled, "Speak! Speak!" The monk was dumbfounded and could say nothing. Rinzai let go of him and exclaimed: "What worthless stuff is this True Man of No Title!"

What Rinzai did was to create a situation. The man asked, "What is this True Man of No Title?" Rinzai grabbed him by the neck and shouted, "Speak! Speak!" He has shocked him. In that shock all titles have disappeared. In that shock he is nobody, simply nobody, a mirror. In that shock the mind is no more spinning. In that shock he is simply dumbfounded. Rinzai has created a situation for him to look into this real man of no title, this mirrorlike quality.

But the man missed, he started thinking how to answer. "What is my Master doing to me? Is this the right thing to do to a questioner?" He must have got into thoughts like that. He missed the point. That's why Rinzai exclaimed: "What worthless stuff is this True Man of No Title!"

The moment your mirror starts clinging to something, you become worthless. The moment your mirror is covered and attached to something, it is collecting dust -- you become worthless. The moment the mirror collects no dust, you have immense worth -- you are a god. The only difference between a Buddha and you is this much: that your mirror has collected much dust and Buddha's mirror has become completely clean of all dust. Your thoughts are nothing but dust.

But sometimes you value dust very much. You say, "This is golden dust, this is no ordinary dust. This is pure gold! I have to hold it. I should not allow anybody to rob me of it; it is very valuable."

That's how you have become attached to life. You think it is very valuable. And because you become attached, you think of death as the enemy, the robber. Death is coming and it will rob you of ALL your gold, of all the precious stones that you have carried all along. It will take all the dust off your mirror -- and that's all you have been thinking is YOUR LIFE. Hence, you are afraid.

If you see the point, death is a friend. In fact, a far greater friend than life itself. Why do I say so?

I say so because in life you get attached, you collect dust. Death takes all your attachments and all your dust away. If you can see the point, you will feel tremendously grateful to death. What you cannot do, death does for you. That's why if you can do it, then there is no death for you; then there is no need for death. If a man can clean his consciousness

through meditation, then he will never die.

I'm not saying that he will not die in the body -- that is a natural thing. But he will never come across death. Death happens only to the dust that collects on the mirror. The mirror never dies! The mirror itself is undying. This witnessing is an undying process, it is eternal. The traveller continues; only the clothes become torn and rotten, and they have to be changed. The traveller continues; only dust gathers on the body and you have to take a bath.

But if you start thinking that your dust is you, you will not take any bath. There are people who are very much afraid of taking a shower -- as if they will lose something, something valuable. There are people who are afraid of meditation because meditation is a shower. It takes all the nonsense thoughts that you have collected, accumulated -- all the junk that you go on carrying in your head. And your head is suffering, is very heavy, and you are miserable, but still you go on carrying it thinking that it is valuable.

Death is a great friend, it unburdens you. It unburdens you of all that you have accumulated. Once this unburdening is allowed voluntarily, death becomes samadhi. If you don't allow it voluntarily, then death is not a samadhi, it is a pain. Now see the point. The same thing can be utter pain, and the same thing can be utter joy. It depends on your interpretation -- how you look at things, how you penetrate a certain experience, how deep you go into it.

If you are a clinger, very possessive, then death will be very painful and will be a great anguish. You will suffer. You will not suffer because of death, you will suffer because of your clinging, because of your possessiveness, because of your attachments, because of your greed, and all that.

But if you are not a clinger, you are not very possessive, you are not greedy, you are not egoistic, you are not aggressive, suddenly death's quality has changed. It comes like a fresh breeze of God. It comes and cleanses you. It gives you a great rest much needed. It purifies you. It takes you into the eternal source from where you will rise again. If you go voluntarily into it you will rise in a better form, because you have learned something from the last form. If you don't go voluntarily, then too death will throw you into the furnace, will burn you, but forcibly, and you will come back again into the same form because you have not learned anything.

The student who has not learned anything has to be sent to the same class again and again and again. A Buddha is a person who has learned ALL the possibilities of all forms. He has been a rock, and he learned it. He has been a tree, and he learned it. He has been a tiger, and he learned it. He has been a man and a woman, he learned it. He has been a god and he learned it. And he went on learning and learning and learning.... And one day he has finished all forms. He has gone through all forms -- watching, choicelessly alert, keeping his mirror bright, un-clouded, he has come through all the forms. And he has now come to a point where no more learning is needed. He has learned the lesson. Then he disappears. Then death becomes nirvana. Then he spreads all over existence, then he becomes a fragrance. Then he enters the cosmic form. Now small forms are no more needed. He has learned all that was there in those small forms. All that was contained in those small forms he has decoded. He has become a grown-up. Now there is no need for him to go back to school. He becomes part of the whole. He spreads over the whole. Then he is a song in the heart of the cosmic mind, a blessing, a peace. He does not come any more, he has gone beyond the point of return.

This is the ultimate learning. But one has to go through all the forms. And death brings a great lesson, far greater than life. And death brings a very intense possibility to understand, because life is spread long range -- death comes in a very very potential way in a very short

time. In a single moment it shakes you. If you are not alert you will miss that moment, the moment is very tiny. If you are alert, then that very moment becomes a door into the divine.

ONCE YOU ARE NOT ATTACHED TO DEATH, once you are not afraid of death, death becomes a game, a play.

Listen to this beautiful story:

Almost blind at the age of ninety-six and no longer able to teach or work about the monastery, Zen Master Yamamoto decided it was time to die, so he stopped eating. When asked by his monks why he refused his food, he replied that he had out-lived his usefulness and was only a bother to everybody.

Now ninety-six... it is enough. And the old man thinks that now it is time to die, so he stops eating food. Death is just a rest. It is time to rest. He starts preparing to retire. This is the understanding that is needed.

The disciples told him, "If you die now" -- it was January and very cold -- "when it is so cold, everybody will be uncomfortable at your funeral and you will be an even greater nuisance, so please eat!"

Those were also great people. Mm? -- the reason they give: "Please just think of the cold. You will be dying, it is January and much too cold, and you will be a greater nuisance to all of us. We will have to go to your funeral -- so start eating."

This can happen only in a Zen monastery with a Zen Master and Zen disciples. Nobody is worried about the death. Death is okay. The Master is ready to die, but look at the disciples. Those disciples are also very close to enlightenment. They say, "Stop your nonsense! Right now it is not a good time. Why do you want to create trouble for us? Yes, you are a bother -- ninety-six years old -- but that will be even more bothersome, dying in the middle of January. Please eat!"

So the old man laughed, he resumed eating, but when it became warm again he stopped, and not long after quietly toppled over and died.

Death, too, is then a game, something to be played with. Then you are not afraid. There is nothing to be afraid of. Then you are not even serious. Look at the non-seriousness of the whole thing. Can you think of something like this happening in the West? Impossible! It can only happen in the East where people have accepted life and death both, as they are.

And this can happen only when you know that nobody is going to die -- that's why they could joke with the old man, and the old man laughed. He was not offended. Just think of the disciples saying, "This will be a nuisance, sir, dying in the middle of January. It is so cold and it will be a great bother for all of us to go to the funeral." Just see the point of it, the humour of it -- as if life and death are nothing but jokes, as if the old man is just going to play an act, as if it is not truth!

That's how it is. SIMPLY as if he is going to play an act. "Please don't play it right now, later on you can do it when the days are warmer." The old man laughed, he didn't feel

offended. He must have enjoyed it tremendously. This was a great insight in his disciples. Now they even take death humorously. When you start taking death also humorously, you are a man of understanding. You are, by and by, turning into The Man of No Title, the REAL Man of No Title. When you take death also with humour, you have already gone beyond it. And to go beyond life and death is to go into your reality.

Another anecdote:

When Tozan was dying a monk said to him, "Master, your four elements are out of harmony, but is there anyone who is never ill?"

"There is," said Tozan.

He was very ill. The whole body was just disintegrating. The four elements were no more together. It was a kind of riot inside his body, Elements were trying to get free of each other. Tozan was old and dying, and the disciple asks, "Your four elements are out of harmony, but is there anyone who is never ill?"

"There is," said Tozan.

"Does this one look at YOU?" asked the monk.

"It is my function to look at him," answered Tozan.

"How about when you yourself look at him?" asked the monk.

"At that moment I see no illness," replied Tozan.

In you there are two worlds: the world of birth and death, and the world that is transcendental. Yes, the body can be very ill, and yet there may be no illness in you -- if you don't get attached to illness, if you don't get identified with illness, if you don't start thinking "I am ill." It is only a kind of hypnosis. It has to be learned through many many doors.

When you feel hungry, what do you say? You say, "I am hungry." You are not -- the body is hungry, the organism is hungry. You are just a watcher, you are just seeing that the body is hungry. Then you eat and you feel satisfied, and you say, "Now I am satisfied, fully satisfied." You are not satisfied, because you were not hungry in the first place! First you had seen hunger in the body, now you feel satisfaction in the body -- but you are just a witness. First your mirror was reflecting the hungry man standing in front of you, and now your mirror reflects the satisfied man standing before you -- but the mirror was never hungry and the mirror is not satisfied either.

One day you are healthy, another day you are ill -- the mirror reflects! One day you are young, another day you are old. One day you are loved, another day you are hated. One day appreciated, another day condemned. The mirror goes on reflecting. The function of the mirror is just to reflect whatsoever is the case. But EACH time you get identified.

Stop this identifying yourself with things that are standing in front of you, and suddenly you will see you have never been ill and never been hungry and never been born, and never are you going to die. You are the very source of eternity. You are eternal.

Now this story:

BASSUI WROTE THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES WHO WAS ABOUT TO DIE:

ORDINARILY WHEN YOU WRITE TO SOMEBODY who is about to die, you write

some consolatory things -- you think he will need consolation. And all your consolations are false; all your consolations are lies.

But when a Zen Master writes a letter to somebody who is dying and who has been a disciple to him, he simply states the truth. In fact, when somebody is dying it is time to state the truth, because there may be no more time. At least let him hear the truth before he leaves the world, let him be made alert to what the true fact is. No need to console, because consolations don't help.

Consolations are like lullabies. Yes, good, they make people feel comfortable. They are like tranquillizers. They don't transform you, they only lull you, they only make you dull. They really make you confused, and the reality remains as it is. Your consolations don't change it, they cannot change it. Consolations are toys given to children.

The Zen Master Bassui writes to one of his disciples who is about to die: now this is a great moment. Death is a great moment. It should be used to its total capacity. Death is such a great opportunity, such a creative possibility, that one can be enlightened through it. If you have missed life, okay, but don't miss death. Use the door to look into the divine.

The Master wrote:

"THE ESSENCE OF YOUR MIND IS NOT BORN, SO IT WILL NEVER DIE.... "

The essence of your mind -- that's what I call the mirrorlike quality. That is the very essence of your mind. Why do we call it the fundamental, the essential? Because it persists.

Watch.... You were a child. The first time you opened your eyes, you had no thoughts, but this mirrorlike quality was there. Even at the first moment when you opened your eyes, this mirror-like quality was there. It was not given to you by anybody; you brought it with you. It is essential, it is your nature. The child opens his eyes; he will not be able to see what trees these are: ASHOKAS or pines -- he will not be able to know what trees these are. He will not even be able to know that these are trees. He will not be able to see that they are green, but he will see the greenery. He will not be able to label it as green, and he will not be able to tell that "These are trees, and these are ASHOKAS, and these are pines" -- no.

But everything will be reflected exactly. There will be no language. His vision will be clear. He will have no dust. That's why children are so thrilled by small things -- because every small thing is almost psychedelic to them. They have no barriers, their eyes are clean, the mirror is clear. It reflects the reality as it is.

This quality -- this mirrorlike quality -- is not taught by anybody. It is not conditioned by the society. Language will be taught; you don't bring language with you. If you are born in a Japanese family, you will learn Japanese. If you are born in a French family, you will learn French. Whatsoever is taught you will learn. But the French child and the Japanese child when they first open their eyes are simply mirrors. The Japanese mirror is no more Japanese and the French mirror is no more French. They are simply mirrors. Yes, the Japanese will become Japanese and the French will become French, and a thousand and one things will go on gathering -- the education, the school, the college, the university, religion, church, and things will gather around.

SO ALL that is taught to you is not essential. It has been given from the outside. That which is given to you from the outside is borrowed, is not your nature. That which you have brought with you, utterly with you, nobody has given it to you -- that is essential nature. And that is your soul. To find it in oneself is to find something which is beyond birth and beyond death.

"THE ESSENCE OF YOUR MIND IS NOT BORN," says the Master, "SO IT WILL NEVER DIE."

Only that which is born dies; only that which begins ends. If you have one polarity, the other will follow; but if the first polarity is missing, the other cannot be there. If something is there in you which was not born, which was there even before birth, then it will be there even after death.

This mirrorlike quality has nothing to do with anybody, nobody has given it to you. It is you, your authentic being. This is the real Man of No Title. The mirror is going to learn many things, is going to be conditioned in many ways -- all that will be non-essential. That's why I say if you are a Hindu, you are getting too much attached to the titles. If you are an Indian, again you are getting too much attached to the titles. Remember the real Man of No Title.

And that is the same man! You and I are not separate in that mirrorlike quality. It is the ONE quality! It is what consciousness consists of.

"IT IS NOT AN EXISTENCE, " says the Master, "WHICH IS PERISHABLE. "

This has to be understood: "IT IS NOT AN EXISTENCE, WHICH IS PERISHABLE." It is existence itself!

Existentialists in the West make a distinction between these two words: existent and existence. That distinction is valuable, will be useful here.

We say the tree exists, but we cannot say it exactly the same way about God, that God exists. Why? Because the tree was in non-existence one day and will go into non-existence another day. So the tree exists in a different way than God exists, because He has never been non-existent and He will never be non-existent. We can say that the tree exists because sometimes it disappears out of existence.

The tree is existent -- it can become non-existent God is not an existent, He is existence itself. He cannot become non-existent, there is no way. In fact, to say 'God is' is a repetition because God means exactly what 'is' means. To say 'God is' is not right. 'Tree is' is okay, 'chair is' is okay, 'man is' is okay, because they can disappear into 'is-not'. But 'God is' is not right.

God MEANS 'isness'! So it is a repetition to say 'God is'. It means 'Is is' or 'God God'. It is meaningless, it is a repetition.

The Master says to his disciple:

"IT IS NOT AN EXISTENCE, WHICH IS PERISHABLE."

He means it is not an 'existent'. It has not come into existence, so it cannot go out of it. It is the very existence itself.

You have been here always! and you will be here always. You cannot go anywhere, remember it. So don't be afraid of going anywhere. There is NO WAY to go and there is NOWHERE to go and there is NOBODY to go! Everything simply is. All has been here forever and will be forever. THIS NOW contains the whole eternity -- the whole past and the whole future. The whole existence converges on this moment, herenow. In the cry of this cuckoo are all the cries of all the cuckoos -- past and future. In the listening of you is all the listening of all the people -- past and future. In the saying is all the saying of all those who had anything to say in the past and those who will ever have any-thing to say in the future.

All is.... Nothing goes out of existence. Forms change, certainly; clothes change, certainly; names change, certainly. But this is not your essential being. You go on changing your houses, you go on changing your bodies, you go on changing your minds -- but the essential, the mirrorlike quality, the real Man of No Title remains the same. It cannot change. It has no parts that can be changed, it is imperishable.

"IT IS NOT AN EMPTINESS, WHICH IS A MERE VOID."

Listen again. The Master says, "But don't be in a misunderstanding" -- because when we say it is a Man of No Title, or when I say it is a mirrorlike quality, you may start thinking that the mirror is just empty. The mirror is not just empty, even though it sometimes looks just empty. And you know when there is nobody facing the mirror it is empty. Yes, empty of form, empty of the other, but not empty of itself.

When there is nobody facing the mirror, the mirror is full of its mirrorlike quality, but not empty. In fact, when somebody is facing the mirror, it is not so mirrorlike. That reflection is obstructing its fullness. Something foreign, something from the outside is there. When everything goes and nothing is reflected, the mirror IS NOT simply empty. It doesn't mean a negative emptiness. It is full of its mirrorlike quality. It is just a mirror, a perfect mirror -- MIRRORING NOTHING, but a perfect mirror.

Or look at it in another way. Our minds are too much attached to things; that's why we look at things and then decide. A room is full of furniture and you say, "The room is full of furniture." Then somebody removes the furniture outside and then you say, "The room is empty now." What do you mean?

You are too much attached to the furniture. You only think of the furniture, you never think of the room. Now the room is full of roominess! First it was not so full of roominess -- the furniture was obstructing its roominess. A room means space; the very word 'room' means space.

First there was too much furniture inside; the space was obstructed, destroyed. It was not really full of itself; something foreign was hindering it in many ways. It was not so free. Now the furniture is removed you say it is empty. First you used to say it was full, now you say it is empty. Empty of what? -- empty of furniture. But there is another way of looking at the room -- now it is full of roominess, full of space. Now it is full of itself.

So the Master says, "Don't think that I am saying this essential you is just an empty void, no." First it is full of the furniture -- the thoughts, the memories, the desires, identifications: I am the body, I am the mind, I am Hindu, I am Christian, this and that. It is full of the furniture, garbage. Then one day when you throw this garbage away and you simply remain a choiceless awareness, you can start thinking, or at least misunderstanding, that now it is just a void, there is nothing. In fact, for the first time the mind has full freedom to be itself -- it will bloom. This consciousness will bloom into a lotus.

This is freedom, this is liberation. Liberated of all junk, liberated of all that is alien, liberated of all that is foreign -- the guests have gone, the host is free. When the guests are there the host is not so free. You know it. When guests come you are not so free. The host becomes imprisoned in his own household. He does not have such free movement as he used to. He has to take care of the guests. They may be sleeping; you cannot play your loudspeaker, your radio, your TV, very loudly; you cannot play the music the way you like; you have to keep your children quiet -- the guest is there. You have to adjust to the guest.

When a guest is there, the host becomes secondary and the guest becomes primary. That's

what has happened. Too much full of thoughts and desires, the guests have become very important and the host has become almost secondary, or forgotten -- even forgotten. And the guests have stayed too long. They don't go. They have become permanent members, and the host is almost thrown out of his own house.

So when suddenly guests go, you may feel it is just an empty void. It is not. Buddhism, Zen, both have been very much misunderstood because they talk of shunyata -- emptiness. Shunyata, emptiness, is God for Buddha. But the word creates trouble. People think "Emptiness? Looks very negative." It is not, it is simply an indication that now you are just yourself, empty of all else, empty of the other. Now you are just in tune with your being, just yourself, just your essential Buddhahood is left. It is not empty, it is full. It is perfect -- because it is the source of all.

"IT IS NOT AN EMPTINESS, WHICH IS A MERE VOID. IT HAS NEITHER COLOUR NOR FORM. IT ENJOYS NO PLEASURES AND SUFFERS NO PAINS."

You think you suffer! You have never suffered' You think you enjoy, you have never enjoyed. You have always been just a witness. Suffering has happened, but you have never suffered. Joy has come, but you have never enjoyed. They have been passing phases, climates that come and go, clouds that surround the moon and disappear. But you! -- you remain in yourself, undisturbed, undistracted. There is a Zen saying:

I AM MOVING ALL DAY AND NOT MOVING AT ALL. I AM LIKE THE MOON UNDERNEATH THE WAVES THAT EVER GO ROLLING.

"The waves go on rolling. I am moving all day and not moving at all." Yes, great movement is happening all around, but at your VERY center -- the center of the cyclone -- nothing ever moves. No pain, no pleasure, no happiness, no unhappiness, no heaven, no hell -- you neither gain anything nor do you lose anything. It is always the same! It is absolutely the same. The taste there remains the same. It is eternal.

I AM MOVING ALL DAY AND NOT MOVING AT ALL. I AM LIKE THE MOON UNDERNEATH THE WAVES THAT EVER GO ROLLING.

The waves go on rolling. Have you seen sometimes a moon reflected in the waves in a lake. The waves go on rolling, but what happens to the reflection of the moon? Do you think that reflected moon also moves? First, it is a reflection, so it cannot move. Second, how can the waves move an illusory thing which is not there in the first place? They cannot move it.

Exactly so is the case with you. When pleasure comes and moves, it is a wave, and you are reflected in that wave, and you think your reflection is moving. Your reflection becomes distorted, certainly. You never become distorted! The moon in the sky is never distorted by the waves rolling underneath. But you can see another moon reflected in the lake, and you can feel that maybe the real moon is not affected, but this moon underneath the waves is certainly affected. Waves waver it, waves spread it all over the lake.

But how can you spread a reflection? A reflection in the beginning is not, a reflection exists not. So when you see yourself affected by things happening around you, it is only the reflection of you in the things that seems affected. You, the real moon in the sky, remain the same. But you have forgotten completely who you are. You have completely forgotten that

you are beyond all the things that happen. That nothing happens in your innermost core, that it is always the same.

"I KNOW YOU ARE VERY ILL," WRITES THE MASTER.
"LIKE A GOOD ZEN STUDENT, YOU ARE FACING THAT
SICKNESS SQUARELY."

TO FACE SICKNESS SQUARELY means to go on seeing that you are not it -- that's what it means, to face it squarely, to go on seeing that "I am not it."

"YOU MAY NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHO IS SUFFERING, BUT question yourself..."

Question yourself: Who is suffering? Who is dying? Who has become old? Question, go on questioning, and by and by you will see, "The one who is suffering is not me, the one who has become old is not me, the one who is going to die is not me." And remember, this has not to be supplied; this answer has not to be supplied by your memory -- because you know it, you have heard it, you have read in the Upanishads, you have heard great Masters talking about it. You are not to supply it through the memory, you have just to question. Go on hammering the question inside, "Who is suffering?" Next time you have a headache, ask "Who is suffering?" Next time your legs are getting numb, inquire "Who is getting numb?"

And don't be in a hurry to answer it, because that answer will be false. You can be very wise, you can say, "Yes, I am the soul and this is the body. " But this will be bogus . Let the answer come of its own accord. It should NOT come from the memory, it should come from your being. It should come as an insight; it should not be verbal. It should come as a realization, as a satori, as a glimpse.

Can you feel the difference? When something comes as a memory, you are repeating like a parrot. I have been telling you that you are not your headache. Tomorrow you can try it -- and you sit silently and you question, "Who is suffering?" And from the memory comes the answer: "You are not suffering, you are the transcendental soul, you are the witness." Watch it, this is all from the memory. It is of no value at all. Throw it away!

Let there come an insight, a realization, a sudden clarity, a transparency -- that you see it: "I am not suffering." Remember it: SEEING IS the thing. It is not an answer to be fetched from the memory. It is an insight to be fetched from your deepest core of being. You have to throw the net of questioning. And if you go on throwing the net, and if you are not satisfied by your bogus memory, sooner or later you will catch the fish and that fish makes you free. It liberates. Truth liberates.

"... QUESTION YOURSELF: WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THIS MIND?"

First question: Who is suffering? so that you can see that the suffering is happening around you but not in you. It is closely, very closely happening, but still not at the center. It is happening on the periphery, not at the center. The center is unaffected.

So the first thing is: see where suffering is. Get disidentified from suffering. This question will help you, like a sword, to cut the identification.

Then the next question to ask is: What is the essence of this mind? Who is this who is not suffering?

First inquire: Who is suffering? so the old identity with the body and the illness and the

mind is broken, and then you have come to have a look at your innermost core. Now ask: What is this essential mind?

"THINK ONLY OF THIS."

And this message is to a dying man, remember. The Master is saying, "While you are dying, think only of this. Before death, solve one thing: that you are not suffering. And then when you are entering into death, go on questioning, 'Who is this who is not suffering?'" "Who am I?" as Raman Maharshi used to say: "Who am I?"

Think only of this while death happens, because death will take EVERYTHING away. If only THIS question can be carried into death, if this inquiry can be carried while you are dying, you can attain to samadhi, you can attain to the great fruit of enlightenment .

"THINK ONLY OF THIS. YOU WILL NEED NO MORE."

The Master is right, exactly so it is. You will not need anything more if you can do only two things: disidentification from life and all that life has accumulated around you; and the second, the inquiry -- "Who am I?"

"YOU WILL NEED NO MORE. COVET NOTHING."

Don't even think of enlightenment. Don't even desire Buddhahood. Don't even think of nirvana. COVET NOTHING! because once you start coveting, you lose your essential mind, you lose your contact with the cosmic mind. Desire... and you have fallen. It is through desire that the original fall happens. So don't desire anything.

He knows his disciple perfectly well. He will not desire money, he will not desire prestige and power, he will not desire another birth, he will not desire another life -- that is not the point at all. That is finished with the first question: Get disidentified.

But there is a possibility he may desire Buddhahood. He may start thinking of being born into the highest plane of existence as a Buddha, as an enlightened soul. But then the desire has happened, the desire has entered. Again he has fallen from the original mind. The original mind is intact only when you are not desiring. The moment you desire, you have moved away. You are no more in it, you are again trapped into new journeys, you have gone astray.

"THINK ONLY OF THIS: WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THIS MIND? YOU WILL NEED NO MORE. COVET NOTHING. YOUR END WHICH IS ENDLESS IS AS A SNOWFLAKE DISSOLVING IN THE PURE AIR."

There is nothing to be worried about. You will disappear like a snowflake in pure air. You are not going to die, you are only going to disappear. Yes, you will not be found in the individual form. The form will disappear into the formless -- the snowflake into the pure air. But you will be there and more so. When the river disappears into the ocean, it is not dying -- it is becoming the ocean, it is spreading, it is becoming bigger, huge, enormous, infinite.

Death, if you cling to life, will look like death. If you don't cling to life, death will look like a transformation, a freedom. You are freed from the imprisonment of form, you become formless. Then there is great joy. A man who can die like a snowflake disappearing in the pure air is blessed. There is great ecstasy, great silence and peace, utter joy. There is

celebration in the very heart of your being.

Life has to be used, death has to be used. Everything has to be used to come to this essential mind, because this essential mind IS SATCHIDANANDA -- it is truth, it is consciousness, it is bliss.

IT MAY LOOK SOMETIMES VERY CRAZY that one has to drop all attachments, even attachment to life. It may look very crazy that one has to transform even death into a love affair. It may look very crazy, but life IS crazy, life is a paradox.

John Wheeler has said: "We are talking about things that are absolutely crazy. Can anything that is LESS crazy be right?"

Zen is right because it is utterly crazy. Zen is right because it is so paradoxical. Life is a paradox. Anything that is true to life is going to be a great paradox. Yes, life has to be lived, and death to be died.

Living, penetrate into the deepest core of life. Dying, penetrate again to the deepest core of death. And the deepest core is the same -- it is the essential mind.

'Life' is not a noun, remember; neither is 'death' a noun. 'Life' and 'death' are both verbs. 'Existence' is a verb, it is not a noun. Life is a process, death is a process. And who is being processed? Who is moving in this cart of two wheels? Who is the pilgrim? Who is this that goes on travelling through many forms? That essential mind, that no-mind, that mirrorlike quality, that witnessing has to be found in all the ways and through all the possibilities. Every move in life has to be devoted to that inquiry, to that search, only then does one come home. And without coming home you will remain discontented. You can have much money, you can have much power, but you will remain power-less, and you will remain a beggar.

The day you come to this originality of your being, to this Man of no Title, this ancientmost, the Eternal One. that day you become an emperor. That day ALL is benediction. That day nothing is missing. And that day you will have a good laugh too, because you will see that day that nothing was ever missing -- just you got entangled into reflections. You got entangled with guests and you lost track of the host. Be the host!

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #8

Chapter title: The Great Doubt

8 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707080

ShortTitle: PARAD308

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 93 mins

The first question:

WHY SHOULD SILENCE BE THREATENING?

SILENCE IS GREAT DEATH, THE GREATEST THAT one can pass through. The ordinary death is nothing compared to it, because in the ordinary death you still carry the seed of being reborn. The ordinary death is not real death. One dies really in silence -- that is utter death. Hence the fear. Zen calls it 'The Great Death'.

Why call it death? -- because when you are silent, you are not. You ARE only when you are noisy; you ARE only when the mind is full of garbage; you ARE only when mind is mad. In madness you ARE: in health you disappear.

Neurosis is very substantially needed for the ego to exist. Once the neurosis is gone, the chattering mind disappeared, you are not. Not that nothing is; something is, but you cannot identify yourself with that something. Something unknown, never known before, never even dreamed about, something utterly unfamiliar, something very disconnected from you, discontinuous with you -- hence the fear.

In silence you commit suicide. That's what sannyas is all about.

In India we have the same word for death and for ultimate meditation -- SAMADHI. Samadhi has two meanings: death and the ultimate attainment of super-consciousness. Very significant, indicates two aspects of that ultimate silence. On one hand you die -- as you have always been you will never be again. That old man simply evaporates. It is not modified, it is not continuous in any way. It has nothing to do with the new consciousness that arises in you. The new is ABSOLUTELY new.

So on one hand you die, on the other hand a new kind of life, the life of egolessness, starts. That is not the life of humility, remember. Egolessness has nothing to do with humility or humbleness. Humbleness, humility, are again the ways of the same ego, subtle ways. A REALLY egoless man is neither arrogant nor humble. If you find somebody humble, then he is just standing upside down; it is the same ego doing SHIRSHASAN -- headstand.

Arrogance can become humbleness. But when the ego disappears, it simply disappears leaving no trace behind -- not even of humbleness. Hence the fear. One trembles to take the jump. It is committing suicide.

You ask: WHY SHOULD SILENCE BE THREATENING?

One: it is a death. Second: all that you know about your mind, all that you know about yourself, all that you are identified with, has been given to you by the society. It is borrowed. Your identity is borrowed. You don't know who you are; you only know what others say that you are. In silence, all those opinions will disappear. In silence you will come naked, without any clothes, to your utter loneliness. I call it utter because there is NO why to change it. You can go on playing games of being together with people, but deep down you remain alone. Aloneness is something which cannot be corrupted, it is our very nature.

You can create many illusions around yourself, and you can create safeties and securities, bank balance and love affairs and friendships and families -- I'm not against them. All is good if you know that it is a game. Play it as well as you can, but never be befooled by it. Underneath you remain alone. That aloneness is not changed by your relationships -- not even love changes your aloneness.

So when you are silent, your whole world disappears. Not only do you disappear, your whole world disappears. Your whole world consists of words, opinions, ideas, thoughts. Your

whole world consists of language.

Christians are right when they say, "In the beginning is the Word." In the end, too, is the word. The day the word ends, you have entered again into the source. Language is social; mind is a social product. You are not social: you are individual. And all our security is with society. So the moment you are silent, you start feeling great insecurity arising. You don't know even who you are; you start trembling -- a great nervousness.

In Zen they call it 'The Great Doubt'. It comes to everybody when they reach closer to satori: a great moment of doubt -- because the old is disappearing and the new you cannot even see. All that you have believed in is no more valid, and nothing is yet clear as to what is going to substitute it. You are left in limbo. In that trembling, anguish, anxiety, great doubt, you would like to go back; you would like to cling to the shore that you have left.

But there is no way to go back! Once you have come to the moment of Great Doubt, there is no way to go back. You can only go ahead. Remember this basic dictum of human growth. growth of consciousness: that there is no way ever to go back. Whatsoever you have known, you have known as there is no way to make it unknown again. Wherever you have arrived you have arrived; you cannot escape from it. The only way goes ahead.

All growth points are points of no return. So you can be troubled, you can remain in anguish, you can go crazy, but there is no way to go back. The Master is needed at the moment of the Great Doubt, because there you will be very helpless. You will become again like a small child, helpless.

The child was perfectly okay in the womb, there was no problem for the child. The child was absolutely secure, comfortable. Never again in his life will he be so secure and so comfortable. Those nine months in the womb were the last thing in luxury -- no worry, no responsibility; all warmth, floating, relaxing; not even the effort to breathe for oneself -- the mother was doing all. Then suddenly the child comes out of the womb after nine months. He is absolutely helpless. He will need a mother. He would like to go back to the womb, but that's not possible; that is not possible in the very nature of things. You have left that home, you cannot go back. You will have to seek your home somewhere further ahead. You will have to create a home and warmth and everything again. The mother will be needed, otherwise the human child will die.

Exactly that is the function of the Master; exactly, precisely that is the function of the Master. When you come to the Great Doubt, you are leaving one womb -- the womb that you had created with society, with people, in relationship, you are leaving that womb. You are entering into silence. You are getting into another dimension: the non-linguistic, the non-verbal, the no-mind dimension. You will again become like a child, very helpless -- even more so, because the child's helplessness was more physical and your helplessness will be more of the spiritual. It will be deeper -- the deepest possible.

You will need somebody to give you courage, to push you ahead, to seduce you to move forward, to allure you, to promise you a thousand and one things....

Once you have passed the moment of Great Doubt, the silence is no longer threatening; then it is the very benediction. then it is SATCHITANANDA -- then it is truth, consciousness, bliss. There is nothing higher than it. But BEFORE it, before the last barrier falls down, before you leave your clinging to the past, you will feel almost as if uprooted, as if a tree is being uprooted from its soil where it has become very, very comfortable -- a child is being uprooted from the womb. Exactly the same is going to happen... hence, you feel silence as threatening.

But one has to go through it. It is only through the fire of silence that you become purified

gold. It is only through the fire of silence that mind burns and no-mind becomes a flame in you. It is a blessing if you understand. On one hand it is a crucifixion, on the other hand it is a resurrection.

The second question:

I ALWAYS EITHER FEEL SUPERIOR OR INFERIOR TO PEOPLE. I FEEL ASHAMED OF FEELING THAT WAY AND TRY TO HIDE IT. I WISH I COULD GENUINELY -- NOT PRETEND TO -- FEEL EQUAL TO AND LOVE EVERYONE. WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT?

WHETHER YOU FEEL SUPERIOR OR INFERIOR or equal, the mind remains the same. You still go on thinking in comparison and the misery will continue. You can think yourself superior -- the moment you think yourself superior you are creating possibilities to feel inferior, because somebody somewhere is going to be ahead of you in some way or other. If you think yourself inferior, you are creating the possibilities to feel superior -- in some way, somebody is going to be behind you.

We are standing in a queue, and the queue is not linear: it is a circle. Somebody is always ahead of you and somebody is always behind you. Then naturally the idea arises -- because superiority and inferiority bring ego and misery -- why not feel equal? And you think you are asking for a radical change? No, not at all. To feel equal is the same trap; it is based on the same criterion, the same measurement. Why equal? If you feel equal, you will feel superior, you will feel inferior too. Equality is the SAME measurement, is the same coin; nothing is being changed.

I will not help you to feel equal because that is not changing your illness. It is simply making it comfortable, making it a little more normal, bringing it to normal proportions from the neurotic. But the normal is just as neurotic as the neurotic. It is lukewarm neurosis.

What I would like to see, what I would like you to see is.... Start feeling that there is no possibility of comparison between you and anybody else. Each individual is so unique. I am not saying you are unique -- don't misunderstand me. I am saying EACH individual is unique; comparison is not possible. We can compare two beings only if they are not unique, if they are similar; but we are not similar.

A Jesus is a Jesus and a Buddha is a Buddha. Sometimes a Buddhist comes to me and he asks, "Who is greater -- Jesus or Buddha? Who is greater -- Krishna or Christ? Who is greater -- Mahavir or Mohammed?" We go on using our neurotic criteria even for Buddhas -- "Who is greater?" Can't you see a simple fact, that Buddha has never been repeated again? Never will there anybody like Gautam the Buddha, and never has there been anybody since. He is just unique, he is alone. How can you compare? Mohammed is so different, so unique in his own way. So is Christ. How can you compare?

And I'm not saying that these great souls, Buddha and Christ and Krishna, are unique. I'm saying each individual is unique. God creates only unique individuals. God never repeats. He does not believe in carbon copies. He only believes in the original.

And it is not only so with man! Animals are unique -- you cannot find two cats exactly the same. They have their individuality. you cannot find two ASHOKA trees the same -- they have their individuality. You cannot find two leaves exactly the same, or two pebbles on this big earth exactly the same -- they have their individuality. The individuality is so deep in existence.

Individuality is the very signature of God.

So to think inferior, to think superior, and then to fall into another trap of thinking equal is just irrelevant to the truth of life. The truth is that we are unique -- you are you, I am me, and there is no way to compare. Comparison has to disappear.

Once comparison disappears, compassion arises. Once comparison disappears, you start seeing the tremendous beauty of people all around. Then each existence is so unique, is so utterly precious. A single roseflower -- it has never been before and it will never be again -- don't miss it! Dance with it, sing with it, be with it. It is only for the moment. This morning it has bloomed, by the evening it will be gone and gone forever!

The woman you are in love with has never been on the earth will never be on the earth and will never be again. In fact, the woman that you love is one in the morning, another in the afternoon, and by the night she has changed utterly. It is not only that individuals are individuals, but each single moment has an individuality. You cannot compare even that. You cannot compare your woman in the morning with the woman in the night -- much water has flowed down the Ganges since then.

The flower in the morning was one thing -- with the rising sun, with birds singing, with clouds moving in the sky. And the flower in the night is another thing -- with stars, the sun disappeared, the darkness all around. It is a totally different thing! Each single moment is also unique. The uniqueness of life is multi-dimensional. Individuals are unique, their single moments are unique.

Once you start seeing this uniqueness of existence, then all these foolish ideas of feeling superior, inferior, equal, this and that, disappear. You are not equal either! How can you be equal? If you CAN be equal, then why can't you be superior? and why can't you be inferior? If equality is allowed, then superiority, inferiority, all come from the backdoor. Then you cannot avoid them.

This I call reverence for life. Respect for life helps you to drop all these foolish ideas. It is the ego that needs the idea of equality, superiority, inferiority -- these are the props. Without these the ego cannot exist. Withdraw the props and ego falls flat on the ground and disappears.

The third question:

HOW DO WE REACH THE STATE OF BLESSEDNESS WHEN THE MIND IS EMPTY OF CHATTER, DEFENSES, PLANS AND GAMES, AND GOD IS?

IF YOU ASK HOW, YOU ASK A WRONG QUESTION. The how brings the chatter in; the how, the technique, brings the future in. The how brings the methodology and the mind in. So it is not a question of **HOW DO WE REACH THE STATE OF BLESSEDNESS WHEN THE MIND IS EMPTY OF CHATTER DEFENSES, PLANS AND GAMES, AND GOD IS?** It is not a question of how, it is not a question of technology at all.

Meditation is not a technique.

Once you ask how, you bring ALL that you want to drop. How means it cannot happen right now; the how will need time -- tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, this life or after this life. Because the Hindus created so many techniques for meditation, they had to suppose many lives; it was a necessary corollary. One life was not enough to do Patanjali's Yoga. Many more lives were required; it was a basic requirement -- because it is impossible to conceive of a man doing so many techniques in one life. You need more time. And when you

need more time, you need more mind.

Time and mind are not two things. Mind exists with time. Time is exactly what mind is!

Ask the how and you have brought future in. Ask the how and you have brought postponement. Ask the how and you say, "It cannot be done right now; first I have to prepare and get trained and disciplined and all that, and then I will do it." And then what will you do, and who will do it? Who will be trained by the how? -- the mind itself will be trained. The mind will become skillful, the mind will become very efficient. The mind can become so efficient that it can even pretend that the no-mind has arrived. The mind can manage a kind of stillness and can deceive you that this is what samadhi is.

A stillness that is brought by any technique.... Those techniques can be of many kinds: they can be chemical, they can be drugs; or they can be concerned with your physiology, they can be hormonal; or they can be through breathing -- but that too is chemistry. You can change your inner balance of oxygen and carbon-dioxide and you will find changes happening. You can practise certain postures of the body and that will change your mind too, because mind and body are not two; you are psychosomatic. You are one -- these are two aspects of the same coin, they affect each other.

When you ask how you are bringing in the whole jargon of technique, yoga, mind and all kinds of games. The real understanding does not need any technique; understanding is enough unto itself. And who will do these techniques? -- the mind will do. And if mind is the doer, you cannot get out of the mind. The more the mind becomes a doer, the more strengthened it is. To get out of the mind you cannot take the help of the mind. No, not at all.

YOU ASK: HOW DO WE REACH THE STATE OF BLESSEDNESS...?

And secondly: it is not something which you have to reach. It is already there, it is already the case -- it has happened! It is not somewhere far away that you have to reach. It is not a goal! God is not A GOAL! The moment you make God a goal, you create desire. And from desire God is far away. God is not a goal. It is not something that has to be achieved. It is something that is present there, and you are keeping your eyes shut. It is something that is already there, and you are avoiding! It is not a question of how to reach God; the only question is how not to AVOID, how not to escape, how not to go on pretending that you don't know that God is -- how to be just open.

That which is... one can be open to it, or one can be closed to it. And the best way to remain closed to that which is, is to remain in the future -- somewhere, a faraway goal, distant, in the Himalayas, or somewhere in the seventh heaven, in the skies. It is so far away that you can go on desiring. And with desiring the chatter will exist, the defences will exist, plans and games will exist.

So two things: There is no how in real religion; Zen knows no how. And second: the essential religion knows that God is already the case. There is not even an inch's distinction between you and God. Even to say that God is close is not right, not exactly right -- because closeness, after all, shows a certain distance; closeness is distance. God is not close -- God is you: you are God.

We are already in it just as the fish is in the ocean -- we are in it. Kabir has said: "I laugh very much when I see the fish thirsty in the ocean." We ARE in it. God is... or call it blessedness, or call it samadhi, or you name it... is the ocean in which we are existing. It surrounds us within and without. Only it is.

HOW DO WE REACH THE STATE OF BLESSEDNESS WHEN THE MIND IS EMPTY OF CHATTER, DEFENSES, PLANS AND GAMES, AND GOD IS?

If you start working for the how you start forcing the mind to stop chattering. That can be done; many tricks have been invented down the ages, shortcuts. Transcendental Meditation will do. You can repeat a mantra continuously. If you repeat a mantra it creates a sort of lullaby, it creates a kind of sleep. Beautiful and nice! and I am not against it, because sleep is as much a spiritual activity as any other. A good sleep is very good, but it has nothing to do with samadhi.

If you repeat a single word constantly... any word will do; it need not be a very, very traditionally worshipped sound: AUM, RAM, ALLAH -- any word will do. You can repeat your own name and that will do. Just the whole thing is: repeat it fast so there is no gap between two repetitions -- RAMRAM -- there should not be any gap between the two, so that in the gap nothing can enter. Make the gap smaller and smaller. Let Rams overlap each other, go fast, go madly into it. Go on repeating. It will create a lullaby. The mind will be shut forcibly, because the mind cannot do two things together. If you are repeating a mantra then the mind cannot think; that is not possible -- for the mind to do two things. If you think, you will forget the mantra. If you do the mantra, you will forget thinking. But mantra itself is a kind of thinking -- and a very stupid kind at that. You are thinking it may be valuable, but mantra is very stupid.

The East has suffered very much from the mantra; it turned the whole Eastern consciousness very stupid. That's why the East is not so creative -- not so creative in art, not so creative in science, not so creative in anything -- a kind of dullness, a kind of stupor. And you can see it. A man who has been doing a mantra for a few years, you can see around him a kind of stupidity. You can go around India and you will find many mahatmas who are simply stupid. But their stupidity is worshipped. They have managed one thing: somehow they have forced the mind to be silent; ANYHOW they have forced the mind to be silent.

They have been trying to force the mind into silence through fasting. If you don't give enough food, by and by energy becomes less and less. And when the energy is superfluous, only then does it move into the head, otherwise not -- because the head is a luxury in your body. First other organs have to be taken care of. If there is a conflict between the heart and the head, the body will give to the heart first; the head can wait -- the head is not so essential. If there is a kind of conflict between the stomach and the head, the stomach will get the energy first; the head can wait.

So whenever you give less energy than is needed by your body, than your body needs to consume, naturally the head will not get enough energy. Hence, fasting became one of the tricks down the ages: Fast! Don't give enough energy to the body! When the body is not getting enough, the mind will not get it. When the mind is not getting, there will be no thoughts. But this kind of state is a NEGATIVE stillness, it is not positive. It is not alive, it is not vibrant with the unknown; it is just dull and dead. The man has no energy. The man is really impotent -- DON'T call it BRAHMACHARYA! Don't call it celibacy. If you fast too much, sex energy will disappear; a kind a celibacy will appear -- which is false! because it is simply a lack of energy.

And the same way it happens in the head. If the energy is not enough, the mind will not function. But non-functioning of the mind is not the thing! The mind SHOULD function perfectly, should hum like a perfect car, and still should not spin and weave unnecessary thoughts. The mind should remain alive and creative, and yet should be capable of moving

into silence when-ever it wants to. That's mastery. When you want to think, you can think; when you don't want to think, you can go into non-thinking. A real Master is one who can do both.

There are two kinds of slaves in the world: the ordinary man who cannot go into non-thinking, who constantly thinks -- he is a slave of the mind. Then there is another kind who forces the mind into not thinking by depriving it of energy, aliveness, opportunity, challenge, struggle -- deprives it of all possibilities. But then this man cannot think. If some situation arises he will be simply dumb. I am not for this dumbness. Then what to do?

MY WHOLE APPROACH IS NON-TECHNICAL. You have to watch your chattering. Don't be in a hurry to stop it, just watch it. Watch all the defenses that are there. Don't be judgemental, don't say they are not needed. And don't stop playing games -- go on playing, but become more and more watchful. Bring a new consciousness which goes on watching everything that is happening to you -- inside and outside. You are playing a game? -- play it. Nothing is wrong in the game. Play it perfectly, skillfully, become a good actor, but deep down remain alert. Know perfectly well that you are playing -- a mirrorlike reflectiveness inside.

Let the mind chatter... you be watchful. It is not going to be easy; mantra is easy. It is going to be arduous, it is going to be hard, because you will forget again and again. The chattering mind is so much that you will be lost into it again and again. But nothing to be worried about. The moment you remember, come back, again start looking at it.

And don't feel guilt that you missed, and don't feel con-demned, and don't start feeling frustrated. This is natural. For lives together we have trained the mind to think. Now you will have to watch this whole mechanism functioning as you have trained it.

Watching, parallel to the mind something new arises in you. Remember it: parallel to the mind the witnessing arises in you. That witnessing has no chattering in it. It is something HIGHER than the mind. When you repeat a mantra you are using the mind. Nothing parallel arises in you; you are simply forcing the mind. When you watch, something higher than the mind arises -- a watcher on the hills. You are sitting on the top of a hill and you can watch the whole valley. You are not against the valley; the valley is perfectly beautiful as it is -- but you are beyond it.

Let it be repeated: The watcher has nothing to do with the mind. The watcher is something new; the watcher is a new growth in your being. It is not mind forced to be still, it is not mind disciplined to be still. It is something new, an invitation to something new, which is hiding inside you and you have not invited before. Invite the watcher.

First it will be very shy, naturally. Sometimes it will come and again it will disappear. But even if it comes for single moments, those moments are of tremendous value. Even in twenty-four hours, if you can become a watcher for a single moment -- enough that will do -- that will do the miracle. By and by, that watching will start getting rooted in you. Mind will continue on its own plane. There is no need to bother with it. It is perfectly good as it is. Don't be against the poor mind; it has been a great help to you. Without it, you would not have survived. It is the mind that has helped you to survive up to now -- it is a survival measure.

If in the East, particularly in India, you find it so ugly -- poverty, starvation -- can't you see the reason? India has not developed the mind, which is a survival measure. It has been against it, too much against it, very antagonistic towards the mind. And the ultimate result is an ugly society, starving people, poor.

This should not be so. There is no need. Mind can be used, it can be one of the most intricate mysteries of God. I am not against anything, not even against mind. It has to be used in its own way, it has its own plane. Just YOU have to grow above it! You have to find something which is higher than the mind in you. And then you start sitting on that top and from there you watch the mind. You become a great master! When you want that the mind should stop, because you would like to listen to the birds and not to the chattering, you simply say to the mind, "Keep quiet! That's enough. Halt!"... and it halts.

It will be difficult for you right now to understand what I am saying. Exactly like that! You simply say "Halt!" and it halts. You say "Stop!" and it stops. The master has come, the servant listens. DON'T FIGHT with the servant -- bring the master in! The very PRESENCE of the master, and the servant immediately understands.

The witness is the master. You invoke the witness, you invite the witness, you search for the witness, you discover the witness in you. Don't become too much entangled with the mind, otherwise your whole energy will be pouring into that fight, and that becomes a constant inner war. And whenever a person is in conflict with himself... It may be sex that he is in conflict with, it may be thought that he is in conflict with, but WHENEVER you are in conflict with yourself, you are a schizophrenic, you are split in two. And constantly at war with yourself, you are dissipating your energy. It is NOT going to create something new in you, it will simply dissipate you; it will simply make you weaker and weaker and weaker.

I am not in favour of making you weak, so don't fight with the mind. Rise above the mind! There is something which is already there in you, non functioning. Start its functioning. That is what Zen people call the opening of the third eye. It is there, potentially it is there. Even physiologists agree that there is something in the head which is not functioning. And it is a mystery, because why should nature create it?

Nature creates something only when it is needed. There is something in the head, in the brain, which is not functioning. A major part, a very major part is non-functioning. When you bring the witness in, that part starts functioning.

Our situation is like this -- it happened:

A primitive tribe came across an aeroplane -- a small air-craft in the Second World War left by the soldiers. They could not understand what use it could be put to. They knew only bullock-carts, so they used it as a bullock-cart, with four bullocks. And they enjoyed it very much -- it was a beautiful vehicle!

Then somebody with a more intelligent mind started looking inside it -- there were so many gadgets -- and he started thinking, "This cannot be just a bullock-cart because these gadgets are not needed for the bullock-cart." So he started fooling around, and one day, he just accidentally stumbled upon... and the engine started purring. So they started using it as a truck.

Then somebody else one day was fooling around with it -- because for a truck, also, so many things are not needed -- and only then, one day, they discovered that it could fly.

That is exactly the case with the human being: we have been using it as a bullock-cart. Don't fight with the bullock-cart: there are other gadgets -- look for them. You can use it as a truck, but there is no need to be stuck there. You can use it as a flying machine. It can go to the utmost peak of existence.

So fight is not my way. Befriend the mind! Watch it with great friendliness, like a mother watches her own child. Watch the mind with great friendliness, with great love and

compassion. It is YOUR machine! Don't be angry with it. Don't be foolish and don't fight with a mechanism.

HOW DO WE REACH THE STATE OF BLESSEDNESS WHEN THE MIND IS EMPTY OF CHATTER, DEFENSES, PLANS AND GAMES, AND GOD IS?

Whenever you are alert about it, the mind stops chattering. The mind is very, very respectful about awareness. That is the secret.

You sometimes try! The mind is chattering -- do one small thing -- the mind is chattering, you cannot go to sleep, you cannot do anything and it is constantly running there like a mad dog. You just do one thing: you sit silently in the chair, relax your body, and say to the mind, "Okay -- now I will listen. Tell me what you want to say." And for a single moment you will be surprised -- the chattering stops. The moment you say, "I will listen. Okay...." It will be only for a single moment, but you know the secret. What happened when you said, "I will listen"? -- you became aware. And mind is very respectful towards awareness. Wherever awareness is, the master is -- and the slave simply follows.

Yes, soon the mind will start chattering, but then you can watch. The MOMENT YOU lose that listening attitude, the mind will start chattering. If the listening attitude continues, the mind will not chatter. So a miracle happens when you watch: by and by the mind stops chattering of its own accord. And when mind stops of its own accord, there is great beauty, there is great life, radiant, vibrating, pulsating. It is not a dull state.

Buddha is not a dull man. Buddha is not a stupid man. Buddha is not negatively silent -- Buddha is absolutely positively silent. The silence is not just the absence of thoughts -- the silence is the presence of awareness.

The fourth question:

WHAT ABOUT ART AND ENLIGHTENMENT?
WHEN YOU ARE CREATING A POEM, A PAINTING SCULPTURE, MUSIC, YOU CAN FEEL VERY CLOSE TO THE MEDITATIVE STATE. YET, IT IS NOT PURE NOTHING-NESS -- BECAUSE IT HAS AN END, A GOAL. IT ALSO ENHANCES THE EGO. WON'T YOU ULTIMATELY HAVE TO TRANSCEND THIS KIND OF CREATIVITY?

ART DEPENDS ON YOU. If you are pathological, your art will be pathological. If you are enlightened, your art will be enlightened. The art carries your quality.

If you go to Ajanta, Ellora or Khajuraho, you will find a totally different kind of art. If you listen to classical music, you will find a different quality of art. If you listen to modern music, a different kind of art will be found there. If you see Picasso's paintings, they ARE pathological. Something is ill -- something is ill in Picasso and something is ill in the world that Picasso is going to represent in those works of art.

Never keep a Picasso painting in your bedroom, otherwise you will have nightmares. It is very representative of this society. The society is ill, neurotic, but the art depends on you. The art does not descend out of the blue, it comes through the artist, it brings the artist. It makes the artist visible to the world -- that's what art is. That which is hidden in your heart, you bring it into a painting, sculpture, song, dance. You make it available. You open your heart.

But you can open only that which is there. The dance of a Nijinsky cannot be the dance of a Meera. And the philosophy of Nietzsche cannot be the philosophy of a Buddha. It is

BOUND to be diametrically opposite.

The pathological art comes out of inner conflict, tension, ego need. It relaxes you like any catharsis relaxes you. If you are angry and you shout and you hit -- even if you hit a pillow -- that helps. You feel relaxed. Now there are schools in the West which think mad people can be helped through art -- therapy through art. And they are right. If a mad person is given painting to do, if he simply paints, it is going to help, because whatsoever he paints will dissipate his madness. It will come out, it will be thrown out. He will feel unburdened and clean.

But ninety-nine percent of art is like that. It is certain that if Picasso is not allowed to paint, he will go mad. It is certain that if Van Gogh is not allowed to paint he will go mad. He did finally.

Art out of madness, art out of neurosis, art out of pathology, is not real art. Gurdjieff used to divide art into two kinds. He used to call this kind of art subjective, and another kind -- the Taj Mahal, or Khajuraho -- objective, because when you have painted, your work is finished but the painting will live. If you have put in the painting a certain pattern of neurosis, whoever will see the painting and think about the painting and look at the painting will have the feeling of the same kind of illness arising in him -- the same nausea, the same sickness. The painting will become a mandala; it will become a yantra. That's how in the East we have used paintings: as yantras.

A pattern can be created so that if you look at it, it gives silence. A pattern can be created so that if you look at it, it makes you tense. The objective art, Gurdjieff says, is the art which leads people towards silence, towards blissfulness, towards inner harmony, towards grace. And the art that leads people towards pathology, neurosis, perversion, is not really art. You can call it art, but that is a misnomer.

WHAT ABOUT ART AND ENLIGHTENMENT?

Art has nothing to do directly with enlightenment, but enlightenment has much to do with art. When many enlightened people exist in the world, they create a different kind of world, they create different kinds of things, naturally. Zen art has a quality of its own. Watching a Zen painting you become meditative; watching a Zen painting you are transported into another world. Listening to an ancient song like Bhagavad Gita, just listening -- even if you don't understand, even if you don't know the language, the Sanskrit language -- just listening, just the tonality of it, just the timbre of it, just the music, the melody of it, and suddenly you feel great silence arising in you, flowers showering inside you, something opening, something blossoming.

The world needs enlightened art. But that cannot be managed by teaching people how to create more art. That can be managed only if people start moving towards their inner core of being.

Whenever somebody arrives at his innermost core, he is bound to express it. Every enlightened experience is bound to bloom into a thousand and one lotuses. When Buddha became silent, when Buddha arrived home, when he knew who he is, he started speaking -- his words are his expression. When Meera arrived, she started dancing -- her dance is her expression.

EACH enlightened person will find a way to express that which has happened to him, because is PART of that happening that it has to be expressed. You cannot hold it, it overflows. But to different enlightened persons it will happen in different way. Buddha never

danced; that was not his way, that was not HIS thing. He never sang, he never composed poetry -- that was not his thing! But if you watched deeply, the way he walks is poetry, the way he sits is poetry, the way he gestures is dance. Even while sitting under his Bodhi Tree, unmoving, there is a great dance inside. Those who have eyes, they will be able to see it. This is his way of expressing.

So different people arriving will express differently. Somebody may become a painter and somebody may become a singer -- it depends! It depends on what potentiality you are carrying. Your enlightenment will become a rider on that potentiality and will be expressed through it.

But the basic thing is not art -- the basic thing is samadhi. Let there be samadhi first, and then whatsoever you are capable of giving to the world, will be given. Whatsoever you are capable of sharing, will be shared. And there will be no ego arising because you have painted, because you have sung, because you danced -- there will be no ego arising. And there will be no motive in it. There will be no tension behind it. If nobody comes to listen to you, you will not miss. You will remain like a flower, blooming in the deep, dark forest -- nobody passes by, but the fragrance goes on being released to the winds. It does not matter.

The artist hankers to express. To an enlightened person expression is natural, like breathing; there is no hankering. The artist is continuously fighting to pave his way; the artist is motivated; hence, he lives in great tension. It is not just accidental that artists suffer more than anybody else from mind diseases -- too much tension. They have to create, and they have to compete, and they have to prove, and they have to leave a signature in the world -- all ego efforts.

An enlightened person lives without any motive. He simply enjoys it the way it is, and whatsoever happens is good. He is blessed and he goes on blessing. If somebody receives it, good; if nobody comes to receive it, that too is good.

The fifth question:

IF MAN'S EROTIC INSTINCTS WERE LIBERATED, WOULD THEY NOT RUN WILD?

FIRST: WHAT IS WRONG IN BEING WILD? I don't see anything wrong in being wild. To be too much civilized may be dangerous -- a little wildness is good. And in a better world, with more understanding about human nature, we will keep a balance between civilization and wildness.

We have become very lopsided: we have become just civilized. When you become too much civilized you become plastic. The wild roseflower has a beauty -- may not be so permanent as the plastic flower, by the evening it may be gone, gone forever, it was only for the moment, but still it is alive. Look at the wild animals -- they have something -- don't you feel jealous? Don't you feel a radiancy, an aliveness, God more solidly present in them than in you?

So first, I don't see anything wrong in being wild. If your wildness is not destructive to anybody, it is perfectly religious. If your wildness is just your expression of your freedom and it is not in interference with anybody else's freedom, if it is not a trespass on anybody else's life, liberty, it's perfectly good.

In a RIGHT world people should be allowed all kinds of wildness, with only one condition: that their wildness should not be violent to anybody else. They should be given

total freedom. Civilization only has to be negative, it should not be positive. The function of the police and the state has to be negative, it should not be positive. It should not tell you what you should do, it should only tell you what you should not do, that's all. Because we live in a society you cannot be absolutely wild, there are other people. You have to be careful about them too. They are careful about you, they are making compromises for your happiness, you have to make a few compromises for their happiness. But that's all.

The society, the state, the law, should be negative. They should only pinpoint a few things: that which interferes with other people's lives and happiness should not be done. And everything else should be left open.

Second thing: Eros is the root of all that is beautiful in the world. The flowers bloom because of eros, and the cuckoos cry because of eros, and the birds dance and sing because of eros. And all that is great and all that is beautiful is because of eros -- even samadhi is the ultimate flowering of the energy called eros. God is very erotic. You can see it all around, no proof is needed. The whole existence is erotic.

And the day man started thinking against eros, man started falling into a kind of abnormality. Since then man has not been normal. And because eros has been crushed, repressed, man has become more and more destructive -- because creation comes out of eros. Children are born out of eros, so are paintings, so are songs, so is SAMADHI!

Once you are repressive towards eros, afraid of eros, once you don't worship the god of eros, then what are you going to do? ALL creativity is closed you become destructive -- then wars, violence, aggression, competition, money mania, power politics -- they all arise. Man has suffered much because of this stupid attitude about eros. It has given all kinds of perversions.

Somebody is after money. Can't you see the perversion? -- money has become the god. He does not love a woman, he loves money instead. Somebody loves his car, and somebody loves power, respectability. These are perversions of eros, and these are the really dangerous people. They should not be there. Genghis Khan and Tamerlaine and Alexander and Adolf Hitler and Stalin and Mao -- these are the really dangerous people. These are the people who are destructive. Their joy is destruction. And whenever creative energy is not allowed to have its own say, it turns sour, it becomes bitter, it becomes poisonous.

Man has not suffered from eros, no, not at all. Man has suffered from anti-eros. When you are anti-eros, THANATOS -- death -- becomes your god. Death is worshipped. Money is dead, so is politics, so is ego -- all dead things become very, very important. And you worship these dead idols.

You ask me: IF MAN'S EROTIC INSTINCTS WERE LIBERATED, WOULD THEY NOT RUN WILD?

Maybe, if they were immediately given total freedom, for the time being they may run wild. But that will be only transitory -- and the reason is not in eros. The reason will be because for centuries it has been repressed. It is as if a person has been starved for many years. Then you suddenly give him all freedom -- you give him the key to the kitchen. Yes, he is going to be wild for a little while, but what is wrong in it? For a few days he is going to eat too much, but only for a few days. He will become obsessively attached to food. He will drink, eat and dream and desire only food and food -- only food will float in his mind. But the reason is not hunger: the reason is that you have been starving him.

Yes, that's right. And the priests and the popes and the SHANKARACHARYAS they go

on saying that eros cannot be given freedom, otherwise people will become just will. But the reason is not in eros, the reason is in the popes. THEY are the sole cause. They have starved humanity for so long, they have crippled humanity for so long -- and there is a reason why they have crippled the human eros.

If you want to make human beings slaves, the only way is to destroy their eros. A man whose eros is fully alive is a master. A man whose eros is fully flowering does not bother about anything. He will not be ready to go to any war, to any foolish Vietnam or Korea or anywhere. A man who is really in love with life and enjoying it will not bother about becoming the president or the prime minister of a country. The man who is really living his eros will not even go to the church or to the temple, because he has found the real temple of God. Love is his prayer. Then where will these priests be, and the politicians, and the warmongers, and the people who depend on your obsessions? Your energies have to be destroyed, you have to be set in such a way that you start moving in wrong directions. And a person whose eros has been killed becomes very weak.

That's what you do. Have you not seen a bull and an ox? What is the difference? The erotic freedom of the bull has been destroyed, he becomes an ox. An ox is a poor specimen. A bull is something alive, something divine. In India we worship the bull as divine. He is the bodyguard of Shiva -- the bull. Not an ox, remember. An ox would have been far better, more manageable -- but the bull.... Why? The bull is so erotic, such a perfect eros; and such beauty exists with the bull. And look at an ox pulling a bullock-cart -- a slave. If you want people to be slaves, destroy their eros, pervert their erotic instinct. That's why it has been done up to now.

In the future, eros has to become the religion. Love should be the worship, and the only god that can really be God is eros -- because eros is creativity, and we call God the creator.

What is happening to the modern man? What has happened in the past too?

You can only be happy when your eros is fulfilled. But there are a thousand and one barriers and it is never fulfilled. You are put in wrong directions, and you strive hard. One day you become a great rich man, and you wait and wait for that day when you will be the richest man in the world, and one day you become! But then suddenly you feel there is no joy arising out of it. You were waiting in vain. You were moving in a direction where there was no possibility for any joy.

Joy is very simple. If you allow life to flow through you in a natural way, joy is a natural phenomenon. It is spontaneity. It does not wait at the end of your journey -- it is here, it is now.

I have heard an anecdote:

An elderly lady was sitting in her rocking chair knitting, her Persian cat reclining at her feet. Suddenly a fairy appeared and asked the old lady if there was anything she wished.

"Yes," was the reply, "I would like to be a young woman again."

The fairy waved her wand -- and there she stood, a lovely girl of eighteen! "Now," asked the fairy, "is there any other wish you would like granted?"

"Oh, yes, I would like a handsome young man."

Turning to the cat, the fairy waved her wand, in its place rose a fine looking youth.

He looked sadly at the girl and sighed, "Now aren't you sorry you took me to the vet?"

That's what is happening -- humanity is castrated. So you can have money but you will not have joy. You can have power but you will not have joy; you can have respectability but

you will not have joy. Joy arises out of eros.

And the last thing I would like to tell you: It is only through eros that eros is transcended, never otherwise. It is only through eros that one day you transcend it. ANYTHING THAT HAS BEEN LIVED TOTALLY IS ALWAYS TRANSCENDED. Hangups simply mean that you have not lived something totally. So people WHO have not lived their eros, have been afraid, will remain confined to it. Their sex will become cerebral. It may disappear from their bodies but it will remain in their heads -- which is not a right place for it!

People who have lived their sexual lives naturally, with no inhibition and no taboo, one day come to a point where it simply disappears -- not through fight, but through understanding. A transcendence comes, and that is BRAHMACHARYA.

BRAHMACHARYA IS the ultimate fragrance of eros. It is NOT against eros; it is the ultimate fragrance of eros. It is the subtlest eros. One is so much in tune with one's erotic energy that the man does not need the woman and the woman does not need the man. One is so enough unto oneself, one has discovered one's own inner woman by and by. Looking into many women's eyes, one has come to feel one's own inner woman. Looking into many other men's eyes, being with many men, going deep into their being, looking into their mirror, finding oneself, one has found one's inner man.

And remember, man is both woman and man; woman is both man and woman. We carry both inside. There comes a point where our inner woman and inner man meet. In Tantra we call it YOGA NADHA.

You must have seen a tremendously significant statue of Shiva, ARDHARNARISHWAR -- half is man and half is woman. Shiva is depicted half as man and half as woman. That is the ultimate meeting, the real orgasm, the cosmic orgasm. When it has happened one becomes a BRAHMACHARIN, one attains to real celibacy. That is ultimate virginity: no need for the other; the need for the other has disappeared.

The sixth question:

HOW CAN I UNDERSTAND THAT WHICH YOU REALLY WANT TO CONVEY?

There are three ways. One is the most usual and the most superficial -- through the words. It is very fragmentary, and there is more possibility of misunderstanding me than understanding me. Language is not adequate. There are things which go beyond it. But that is the usual. That's what we have been trained for -- we understand only words.

And we know that when I use a word and you hear it, you hear the word but you don't hear my meaning. My meaning is left behind. The word goes like an empty shell and you put your meaning into it. Meaning will be yours.

So that is not the right way. To begin with, okay, but to cling to it is not going to lead you anywhere very deep.

The young vicar and his bride had just undressed and were ready to taste the fruits of love. But before the bride could clamber into the marital bed, he suggested they should kneel down together to pray for strength and guidance.

"Just pray for strength," said the bride, "I'll do the rest."

Meaning comes through you. Meaning is always put by you. Listen to this:

The vicar, out for a Sunday afternoon stroll, saw a little boy playing with something in

the gutter. Coming closer, he saw that it was a little bottle of clear liquid, labelled 'Sulphuric Acid -- H₂SO₄

"You shouldn't be playing with that!" said the vicar. "Give it to me."

"No!" said the little boy. "Get lost! Bleahhhhhhh!" and he stuck out his tongue.

"Tut, tut!" said the vicar. "Children nowadays! Now, give me that nasty stuff like a good boy!"

"No!" said the little boy.

"I know," said the vicar. "I'll get you something nice to play with." And he went home and brought back a bottle of holy water. "This is holy water," he told the little boy. "It has miraculous powers. I'll trade it to you for that bottle you've got, hmmm?"

"No," said the little boy. "That water isn't holy anyway, it is just stupid old water!"

"Oh, no, it isn't!" said the vicar. "I'll tell you how wonderful it is -- why, just the other day I put some of this water on a lady's tummy, and she passed a baby!"

"That's nothing!" scoffed the little boy. "Why, just the other day, I put some of this on a dog's bollocks, and he passed a motorcycle! "

The meaning comes through you, so don't be too much attached to the words. I may have used them, but they become yours. The moment you accumulate them, they are yours.

The second layer is: Not to listen to the words, but to listen to the gestures. Not to listen to the language, but to the gaps -- between the lines. Not to listen to what I am saying only, but to feel me -- through love, through trust. So the first layer is of the head. The second layer is of the heart. The first layer is of thinking, reason, argument; the second layer is of feeling, emotion. The second is far better than the first -- but still, just better, not the ultimate. Because even feeling is all interpretation just like thinking is all interpretation -- on a different level, but still an interpretation. You will interpret.

Feel me -- that's what sannyas is all about, a gesture from your side that you would like to be with me, that you would like to be intimate with me, that you will not defend yourself, that you will be vulnerable to me, that you trust me, that one thing you are ready to do -- that is, you will not protect yourself against me. Sannyas is a surrender. You leave yourself unprotected, unsafe, vulnerable. I can harm you -- that's the risk! That risk has to be taken; that's why courage is needed.

When you are with a Master.... If you can find a Master with whom you can fall in love, then you will be able to understand the message better than through logic, reason, argumentation. But even that is not the ultimate.

The ultimate is through being. First through thinking, second is feeling, third is being. That is the ultimate, what in the East we call SATSANG -- to be just in the presence of a Master, just to be.

Bayazid was with his Master for twelve years -- just sitting by the side! Somebody asked Bayazid, "What has the Master been teaching to you?"

And Bayazid said, "He teaches nothing. He simply says: 'Sit quietly. Be silent. Just be around.' And just being around him I have arrived."

There is a pulsation of being too. Just as there is a thought pulsation, a feeling pulsation, so there is a being pulsation. And the **CLEAREST** perception is of the being.

You start with the head, naturally, but don't get stuck there. Move towards love. If your head helps you towards love, you have used it rightly. Then don't get stuck with the feeling,

don't get stuck there. If you use your heart for your being, you have used it rightly. Then just be here. There is nothing to say and there is nothing to hear. There is something to know, but nothing to say, nothing to hear. There is something to be absorbed -- to be. There is something to fall en rapport with.

And the last question:

OSHO, YOU LOOK VERY CRAZY TO ME.

Thank you

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #9

Chapter title: Look!

9 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707090

ShortTitle: PARAD309

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 107 mins

CHI CH'ANG ASPIRED TO BE THE GREATEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD, SO HE BECAME THE PUPIL OF WEI FEI.

FIRST WEI FEI ORDERED HIM TO LEARN NOT TO BLINK. CHI CH'ANG CREPT UNDER HIS WIFE'S LOOM AND LAY THERE ON HIS BACK STARING WITHOUT BLINKING AT THE TREADLE AS IT RUSHED UP AND DOWN DIRECTLY BEFORE HIS EYES. AFTER TWO YEARS HE HAD REACHED THE POINT OF NOT BLINKING EVEN IF ONE OF HIS EYE-LASHES WAS CAUGHT IN THE TREADLE.

"TO KNOW HOW NOT TO BLINK IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP," SAID WEI FEI, "NEXT YOU MUST LEARN TO LOOK. PRACTISE LOOKING AT THINGS, AND IF THE TIME COMES WHEN WHAT IS MINUTE SEEMS CONSPICUOUS, AND WHAT IS SMALL SEEMS HUGE, VISIT ME ONCE MORE." CHI CH'ANG SEARCHED FOR A TINY INSECT HARDLY VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE, PLACED IT ON A BLADE OF GRASS AND HUNG IT BY TH WINDOW OF HIS STUDY. HE THEN TOOK UP A POSITION AT THE END OF THE ROOM AND SAT THERE DAY AFTER DAY STARING AT THE INSECT. AT FIRST HE COULD HARDLY SEE IT, BUT AFTER TEN DAYS HE BEGAN TO FANCY THAT IT WAS SLIGHTLY BIGGER.

FOR THREE YEARS HE HARDLY LEFT HIS STUDY. THEN ONE DAY HE PERCEIVED THAT THE INSECT BY THE WINDOW WAS AS BIG AS A HORSE. "I'VE DONE IT!" HE EXCLAIMED.

THIS TIME THE TEACHER WAS SUFFICIENTLY IMPRESSED TO SAY, "WELL DONE!"

CHI CH'ANG SOON BECAME A MASTER OF ARCHERY, AND NO FEAT OF BOWMANSHIP NOW SEEMED BEYOND HIS POWERS. HE SEEMED CLOSE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HIS AMBITION, BUT WITH AN UNPLEASANT JOLT HE REALIZED THAT ONE OBSTACLE REMAINED: SO LONG AS THE MASTER WEI FEI LIVED, CHI CH'ANG COULD NEVER CALL HIMSELF THE GREATEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD.

WALKING THROUGH THE FIELDS ONE DAY, CHI CH'ANG CAUGHT SIGHT OF WEI FEI FAR IN THE DISTANCE. WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION HE RAISED HIS BOW, FIXED AN

ARROW, AND TOOK AIM. HIS OLD MASTER, HOWEVER, HAD SENSED WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND IN A FLASH HAD ALSO NOTCHED AN ARROW. BOTH MEN FIRED AT THE SAME MOMENT. THEIR ARROWS COLLIDED HALF WAY AND FELL TOGETHER TO THE GROUND. THE STRANGE DUEL CONTINUED UNTIL THE MASTER'S QUIVER WAS EMPTY BUT ONE ARROW STILL REMAINED WITH THE PUPIL. "NOW IS MY CHANCE!" MUTTERED CHI CH'ANG WHO IMMEDIATELY AIMED THE FINAL ARROW. SEEING THIS, WEI FEI BROKE OFF A TWIG FROM A THORN-BUSH BESIDE HIM, AND AS THE ARROW SPED TOWARDS HIS HEART HE FLICKED THE POINT SHARPLY WITH THE TIP OF ONE OF THE THORNS AND BROUGHT IT TO THE GROUND AT HIS FEET.

"MY FRIEND," SAID WEI FEI, "I HAVE NOW, AS YOU REALIZE, TRANSMITTED TO YOU ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF ARCHERY THAT I POSSESS. IF YOU WISH TO DELVE FURTHER INTO THESE MYSTERIES YOU MUST SEEK THE AGED MASTER KAN YING. COMPARED TO HIS SKILL OUR BOWMANSHIP IS AS THE PUNY FUMBLING OF CHILDREN.

AFTER MONTHS OF ARDUOUS CLIMBING, CHI CH'ANG REACHED THE CAVE WHERE DWELT KAN YING AND ANNOUNCED TO THE OLD MAN, "I HAVE COME TO FIND OUT IF I AM AS GREAT AN ARCHER AS I BELIEVE." AND WITHOUT WAITING FOR A REPLY HE NOTCHED AN ARROW, AIMED AT A FLOCK OF MIGRATING BIRDS, AND BROUGHT DOWN FIVE BIRDS ALL AT ONCE.

THE OLD MAN SMILED AND SAID, "BUT THIS IS MERE SHOOTING WITH BOW AND ARROW. HAVE YOU NOT YET LEARNED TO SHOOT WITHOUT SHOOTING? COME WITH ME."

CHI CH'ANG FOLLOWED HIM IN SILENCE TO THE EDGE OF A GREAT CLIFF. WHEN HE GLANCED DOWN HIS EYES BECAME BLURRED AND HIS HEAD BEGAN TO SPIN. MEANWHILE THE MASTER KAN YING RAN LIGHTLY ON TO A NARROW LEDGE WHICH JUTTED STRAIGHT OUT OVER THE PRECIPICE, AND TURNING ROUND SAID, "NOW SHOW ME YOUR REAL SKILL. COME HERE WHERE I AM STANDING AND LET ME SEE YOUR BOWMANSHIP."

WHEN CHI CH'ANG STEPPED ON THE LEDGE IT BEGAN TO SWAY SLIGHTLY TO AND FRO. HE TRIED TO NOTCH AN ARROW, BUT SOON HE FELT THAT HE WAS GOING TO LOSE HIS BALANCE. HE LAY DOWN ON THE LEDGE CLUTCHING ITS EDGES FIRMLY WITH HIS FINGERS. HIS LEGS SHOOK AND THE PERSPIRATION FLOWED FROM HIS WHOLE BODY. THE OLD MAN LAUGHED, REACHED OUT HIS HAND AND HELPED CHI CH'ANG DOWN. JUMPING ON TO IT HIMSELF HE SAID, "ALLOW ME, SIR, TO SHOW YOU WHAT ARCHERY REALLY IS."

"WHAT ABOUT YOUR BOW?" ASKED CHI CH'ANG.

"MY BOW?" SAID THE OLD MAN LAUGHING. "SO LONG AS ONE REQUIRES BOW AND ARROW ONE IS STILL AT THE PERIPHERY OF THE ART. REAL ARCHERY DISPENSES WITH BOTH BOW AND ARROW."

DIRECTLY ABOVE THEIR HEADS A SINGLE KITE WAS WHEELING IN THE SKY. THE HERMIT LOOKED UP AT IT AND CHI CH'ANG FOLLOWED HIS GAZE. SO HIGH WAS THE BIRD THAT EVEN TO HIS SHARP EYES IT LOOKED LIKE A SMALL SESAME SEED. KAN YING NOTCHED AN INVISIBLE ARROW ON AN INCORPOREAL BOW, DREW THE STRING TO ITS FULL EXTENSION, AND RELEASED IT. THE NEXT MOMENT THE KITE STOPPED FLAPPING ITS WINGS AND FELL LIKE A STONE TO THE GROUND.

FOR NINE YEARS CHI CH'ANG STAYED IN THE MOUNTAINS WITH THE OLD HERMIT. WHAT DISCIPLINES HE UNDERWENT DURING THIS TIME NONE EVER KNEW.

WHEN IN THE TENTH YEAR HE RETURNED HOME, ALL WERE AMAZED AT THE CHANGE IN HIM. HIS FORMER RESOLUTE AND ARROGANT COUNTENANCE HAD DISAPPEARED; IN ITS PLACE HAD COME THE LOOK OF A SIMPLETON. HIS OLD TEACHER, WEI FEI, CAME TO VISIT HIM AND SAID AFTER A SINGLE GLANCE, "NOW I SEE THAT YOU HAVE INDEED BECOME AN EXPERT! SUCH AS I ARE NO LONGER WORTHY EVER TO TOUCH YOUR FEET."

THE INHABITANTS OF HIS CITY HAILED CHI CH'ANG AS THE GREATEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD AND IMPATIENTLY AWAITED THE WONDERFUL FEATS WHICH HE WOULD NOT DOUBT SOON DISPLAY. BUT CHI CH'ANG DID NOTHING TO SATISFY THEIR EXPECTATIONS. THE GREAT POPLAR BOW WHICH HE HAD TAKEN WITH HIM ON HIS JOURNEY HE EVIDENTLY HAD LEFT BEHIND. WHEN SOMEONE ASKED HIM TO EXPLAIN HE ANSWERED IN A LANGUID TONE, "THE ULTIMATE STAGE OF ACTIVITY IS INACTIVITY; THE ULTIMATE STAGE OF SPEAKING IS TO REFRAIN FROM SPEECH; THE ULTIMATE IN SHOOTING IS NOT

TO SHOOT."

CHI CH'ANG GREW OLD. MORE AND MORE HE SEEMED TO HAVE ENTERED THE STATE IN WHICH BOTH MIND AND BODY LOOK NO LONGER TO THINGS OUTSIDE, BUT EXIST BY THEMSELVES IN RESTFUL AND ELEGANT SIMPLICITY. HIS STOLID FACE DIVESTED ITSELF OF EVERY VESTIGE OF EXPRESSION; NO OUTSIDE FORCE COULD DISTURB HIS COMPLETE IMPASSIVENESS.

IT WAS RARE NOW FOR HIM TO SPEAK, AND PRESENTLY ONE COULD NO LONGER TELL WHETHER OR NOT HE STILL BREATHED. IN THE EVENING OF HIS LIFE HE NO LONGER KNEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'THIS' AND 'THAT'. THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF SENSORY IMPRESSIONS NO LONGER CONCERNED HIM; FOR ALL HE CARED, HIS EYE MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN EAR, HIS EAR A NOSE, HIS NOSE A MOUTH.

OF HIS LAST YEAR, THE STORY IS TOLD THAT ONE DAY HE VISITED A FRIEND'S HOUSE AND SAW LYING ON A TABLE A VAGUELY FAMILIAR UTENSIL WHOSE NAME HE COULD, HOWEVER, NOT RECALL. HE TURNED TO HIS FRIEND AND SAID, "PRAY TELL ME: THAT OBJECT ON YOUR TABLE -- WHAT IS IT CALLED, AND FOR WHAT IS IT USED?"

THE FRIEND STAMMERED OUT IN AN AWE-STRUCK TONE, "OH, MASTER. YOU MUST INDEED BE THE GREATEST MASTER OF ALL TIMES. ONLY SO CAN YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE BOW -- BOTH ITS NAME AND ITS USE!"

IT WAS SAID THAT FOR SOME TIME AFTER THIS IN THE CITY, PAINTERS THREW AWAY THEIR BRUSHES, MUSICIANS BROKE THE STRINGS OF THEIR INSTRUMENTS, AND CARPENTERS WERE ASHAMED TO BE SEEN WITH THEIR RULES.

A man of the people one day asks Master Ikkyu: "Master, will you write for me some maxims of high wisdom?"

Ikkyu took up a brush and wrote the word "LOOK."

"Is that all?" said the man, "Won't you add a few more words?"

Ikkyu then wrote twice: "LOOK, LOOK."

"All the same," said the disappointed man, "I don't see much depth or subtlety in what you have written there."

Ikkyu then wrote the same word three times.

Slightly irritated, the man said: "After all, what does this word 'LOOK' mean?"

And Ikkyu replied, "LOOK means LOOK."

THIS ONE WORD 'LOOK' CONTAINS THE WHOLE MESSAGE OF ZEN. Fra Giovanni in A.D. 1513 said: "The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within reach, is joy. There is a radiance and glory in the darkness, could we. but see, and to see we have only to look. I beseech you to look!"

The word 'look' is exactly the whole substance of Zen. How to look contains all religion. How to look with pure eyes, so much so that there comes a unity in looking where the object and the subject both disappear and only pure look remains. In that purity of looking -- nobody looking at and nobody looking at anything -- in that purity of look, DARSHAN, in that vision, truth is known.

Zen people talk about Three Pillars of Zen. These are the three pillars -- they prepare you for the look. First is: no-form. Second is: no-mind. Third is: no-soul.

This will look strange, particularly because people who are accustomed to so-called religion know it almost as a cliché -- that man has three existences: the physical, the psychological and the spiritual. And the politician and the priest and the professors go on talking about the health, the balance, between the physical and the psychological and the spiritual.

Zen says: No-mind means no psychology; no-form means no body, no matter; and no-soul means no spirit, no self. Zen says: The physical is the gross ego -- ego number one. The psychological is a little more subtle, less gross, but still the ego -- ego number two. And the so-called spiritual is the subtlest ego -- ego number three. But they are all egos. And all these three egos make one egoist, create one egoist.

It is Zen which goes to the deepest root of the illness called man. It says: Unless a person comes to see that the form is illusory, that the thought is illusory, not only that, but that the person believed, inferred, to be behind the mind, the self, is also illusory... when all these three have been known, looked into, and found lacking in substantiality, there arises the LOOK. That look gives you that which is real -- that which is.

These are the Three Pillars of Zen.

No-form means ALL the forms in the world are fluid, in a flux. The child is becoming young, and the young man is becoming old, and the old man is dying, and the dying is getting ready to be born again. One form constantly changes into another form. It is a flux of forms. NO form is substantial, because no form abides. All forms come and go; they are dreams, bubbles -- soap bubbles. They are there one moment and another moment they are not there. Their existence is momentary. They are made of the stuff dreams are made of.

The real is that which remains forever and forever. The real is that which is timeless. Forms are not real because they don't abide. Look into the forms. When Ikkyu said, "LOOK" -- the first LOOK means look into the grossest ego -- ego number one. The Master Ikkyu was indicating a great maxim -- the greatest. When he said the first LOOK and wrote the word LOOK, he was saying, "Look into the body, into the form; you are not that -- and it is not real. Substance is very non-substantial, illusory, magical. "

The first look is to look into ego number one. Once you have understood that the form goes on changing, you cannot become attached to the form, you cannot get identified with the form. How can you be identified with that which comes and goes? In the morning, it is light; in the night, it is dark. You are sitting in your room. Comes morning and the room becomes full of rays and there is light. And comes afternoon, and comes evening; it is becoming dark and the sun disappears and the room becomes dark. It is night and it is utterly dark.

You cannot say, "I was the morning," or "I was the afternoon," or "I was the evening," or "I am the night." You cannot say. You are the watcher, the looker. Morning comes and goes, evening comes and goes. You go on watching.

Childhood is a morning, youth is the afternoon, old age is the evening, and then the dark night -- death. And so on... the wheel moves.

But who are YOU? LOOK!

The first look of Ikkyu means look into the form, the grossest. Learn from there. Once you have looked into the grossest and the ego number one has disappeared, you will be able to see into the second -- the psychological. You can see your body is just a fluid, a flux, constantly changing. So is your mind! Thoughts are moving so fast. Not for a single moment does the thought remain. It comes and goes. How can you be these thoughts? These thoughts are just like moving clouds in the sky, the traffic on the road. You are the watcher. Look...!

The second time when Ikkyu said, "LOOK, LOOK," he meant look into ego number two, the psychological. If you look deeply you will come to know you are not the mind. No-form, no-mind.

Then remains the subtlest kind of ego -- ego number three. You start thinking that you are a soul, a self. That too is false. Look into that too! And you will be surprised that when you look into yourself, you find vast emptiness and nothing else. Even the self is not found. The

guests have disappeared, and suddenly you see that even the host is no more there. The guest and the host were all ghosts; they have all disappeared. Silence remains, utter silence, no sound -- neither of the guest nor of the host. All dialogue has stopped, all turmoil disappeared. There is utter emptiness, nothingness.

This is looking into the third, when Ikkyu said, "LOOK, LOOK. LOOK" -- the third ego, the subtlest, the hardest and the most difficult to look into.

There are people, the so-called materialists, who say the gross is the real. They stop there, they don't go beyond that -- the Charvakas, the Marxists, the communists. They stop at the first door, they never go beyond it. There are idealists who go a little deeper. They say the form is not true, but the mind is truth; matter is not true, but mind is true. They believe in mind against matter; they stop at the second. Then there are the spiritualists; they go a little deeper still. They say even the mind is not true. Only the self, the soul, the ATMAN, is true.

Zen goes the farthest, the deepest. Nobody has penetrated so deeply into the mystery of human being as Buddha did. Buddha says: Even the self, even the soul, the ATMAN, is not true. It is the LAST trace of ego, the very very last, but still it is the last trace of the ego. The very idea that "I am" is a persistence, a shadow of the old ego. When you look into this too, the self also disappears. And when all have gone, what is left? Only a pure look. This is very difficult to understand unless you go into it existentially. Only the pure look -- because then it becomes illogical. How can there be pure look if there is nobody to look? But that's how it is.

It IS paradoxical. In language it is difficult to say what remains. Only pure look remains -- there is NOBODY who is looking! There is nobody at whom you are looking. The looked at and the looker, both have disappeared; the subject and object both have disappeared. There is just pure look. A silence, but a very alive silence. No way to define it indefinable. You cannot even say this is the self -- just a witnessing. a SAKSHIN.

But to use the word 'witness' can create trouble, because the moment we use the word 'witness' we start thinking somebody is there who is witnessing. So Buddha says: No witness! Only witnessing. No looker! only look. No meditator! only meditation. No one who has attained to samadhi, but only pure samadhi. This is difficult because we have been brought up in a certain structure of language.

When somebody is running we say there are two things: the runner and the running. Buddha says there is only running, there is no runner. The runner is just an inference. Buddha says there is only action, activity; there is no actor. When you say the tree is growing, you believe -- tacitly -- that the tree is one thing and growing is another. Buddha says there is only growing, there is no tree. When the river is flowing, you say the river is flowing. Buddha says there is only flowing. Where is the river?

Buddha believes in verbs and our languages are rooted in nouns. That creates trouble. Buddha says existence is a verb. It is a process. There are no things at all! All are processes.

I am talking to you, but there is no talker. And you are listening to me, but there is no listener. If you can understand that existentially, only then will you be able to understand what Buddha means when he says that even the third ego disappears.

RIGHT NOW, let it be an existential experience. Is there a listener or is there only listening? If you look backwards, if you try to recapitulate, the listener comes in. The listener is a memory. If you start thinking about it, certainly you will find the listener there, because the listener is the memory. But when you are listening there is only listening, there is no listener. When you are running, there is only running. When you have come to a point where you stop, sit under a tree to rest, and then you look backwards in the memory -- you find a runner. The runner is a memory creation. It was not in the actual, in the existential. It is just

that in the memory traces have been left of many acts. How to join those acts into one? Those beads of separate acts have to be joined, otherwise it will be difficult for you to remember. So you create a thread. You thread those beads with an idea of the runner -- that becomes your ego.

There are individual atomic acts, and there is nothing joining them. That is what modern physics has come to. The modern physicists' standpoint about existence is exactly Buddhist, very close to Buddha. Modern physics also says there are only atomic existences. And those atomic existences are also not in any way substantial; they are just energy fields, not matter -- just energy fields. And there is constant change. Nothing abides. Everything is in a flux.

These three pillars destroy your whole structure of the ego. This is a very negative kind of trinity. Christianity has a trinity: God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And Hindus have the concept of TRIMURTI: the three faces of God -- Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh. But they are all positive things.

This Zen approach towards reality is utterly negative. These are the three pillars: no-form, no-mind, no-soul. When you have looked through everything and found "No. No. No." then what is left? That which is left is indefinable. That which is left is truth. Buddha keeps silent about it. It cannot be said. The moment you say it, you falsify it.

This state -- when you have come to know no-form, no-mind, no-self -- is called wu in Chinese, samadhi in Sanskrit, satori in Japanese. A few characteristics of samadhi, then you will be able to go into this tremendously beautiful story.

THERE ARE SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMADHI. First is: oneness, at-one-ment. Duality disappears. The division between the known and the knower disappears. Fusion arises, confusion disappears. There are no longer two. But remember: the moment Buddha says there are no longer two, he is not saying there is one. He keeps utter silence about the one. He says to say only there are not two -- because the moment you say one, you bring the two again. One is meaningless without the two. Not two -- that's all.

The runner and the running are not there. You and I are not there. The speaker and the listener are not there.

Existence is an organic unity. There is no duality in it. It is all oneness, but Buddha never calls it one. He is very careful. He avoids all kinds of logical pitfalls. He is very, very alert not to fall into any logical fallacy. He will not say existence is one, because what will you mean by one if there are not two? The figure one is meaningful only with the figure two. Without the figure two, one will not mean anything at all.

If we say God is light, it can only be meaningful if darkness exists. Then the Devil becomes darkness. Without the context of the Devil and darkness, what will it mean -- "God is light"? It will not mean anything. Buddha simply says God is neither light nor darkness. God is not two. Truth is not two.

That is the first experience of samadhi, that by and by the twoness of life disappears.

Why is the twoness created? It is created by these three egos. When I see THIS body as my body, then YOUR body becomes YOUR body. When I become attached to my form, YOUR form becomes alien -- the other. The moment I see my body not as my body, the moment I see myself as formless, then the other also disappears. With the self disappears the other. Without the 'I', the 'thou' cannot exist. They exist together in a pair.

So the first characteristic of samadhi is: twoness in life disappears. A great harmony arises. It is ALL one -- that is the meaning of fusion. Confusion arises because of the two. Then there is a clash, a continuous clash.

The second characteristic of samadhi is: 'orgasmicness' -- blissfulness, beatitude. Unless you come to this utter annihilation of all the egos, you will never be happy, you will never be blissful. Misery is a by-product of the ego. And because there are three egos, there are three kinds of misery: the physical misery, the psychological misery, and the spiritual misery.

You may not have heard of the third kind -- the spiritual misery. You may not have even thought about it as misery. But look: a man is poor and he wants to be rich. He is miserable. Everybody knows he is miserable. And if you go to a religious priest he will say, "Don't be greedy. Money is just dirt, don't bother about it. Blessed are the poor. You be contented with whatsoever you have." But then the man starts trying to become a better musician, or a better poet, or a better painter. You will not be so much against him as you were when he was very greedy for money. If he was very greedy for politics and power and this and that, everybody would have condemned him. But now if he wants to try to create a better painting, better art, write better poetry, nobody will be so much against him. But he will be in misery again. Now the misery will be more psychological. He wants to become a Shakespeare.

It is the same game played on another plane. First he wanted to become a Rockefeller, now he wants to become a Shakespeare -- but the becoming is there. If you go to a perceptive man, he will say this is the same greed asserting itself on another plane, on a deeper plane. Drop it. This is meaningless. Even if you become a Shakespeare, nothing is attained. Shakespeare is as miserable as you are. Even if you create great works of art you will not be blissful. You can go and see great painters and musicians, and they are not blissful.

So, you become Christ or Buddha -- that is going to help. You become a Krishna. It is THERE that bliss exists! And then a person starts trying to become a Christ, or a Buddha.... This is creating spiritual misery. It is the same misery. Now it has penetrated even deeper, now it has gone to the third ego level -- the spiritual. Now nobody will condemn you -- unless you come across a Buddha, nobody will condemn you! They will say you are a spiritual man. If you are crying and weeping and suffering because you want to attain to God, and you want to attain to samadhi and moksha and nirvana, who is going to condemn you? People will WORSHIP YOU. They will say, "Look, what a great spiritual man is here! He does not hanker for money, he does not bother for fame. He simply cries and weeps for God. Here is a spiritual man."

These are your so-called saints. But if you look deeply you will find they are spiritually miserable. Now, the problem is the same. First you wanted to become a Rockefeller, then you wanted to become a Shakespeare, now you want to become Buddha. But YOU WANT TO BECOME! Becoming persists. TANHA -- becoming -- persists. The desire to be somebody else continues. Now you want to become God! Nothing has changed.

There are three kinds of misery because there are three kinds of ego. When all the egos have been dropped, when there is no point in any desire left, when ALL your desires have failed.... Let me repeat it. In spirituality, in religion, only one who has utterly failed succeeds.

It will look like a paradox. To fail UTTERLY with desire is to enter into the real world. As long as you have some hope to succeed somewhere, you will never enter the reality. Then your hope will go on dragging you away and away. The man who is not worried to become anything -- not even Buddha....

Just the other day I was reading about a man who has been meditating for many years -- almost fifty years. And he has become very, very old.

He came to a Master and said to the Master, "Fifty years! Don't you think it is long enough? I have been meditating and meditating. Why have I not become a Buddha yet?"

The Master laughed and he said, "Now that explains why you have not become a Buddha yet -- because you want to become. Hence you go on missing. Now it explains everything!"

If you want to become a Buddha you will never become, because a Buddha is one who has dropped all kinds of becoming, who is utterly happy in this moment -- for no reason at all. He has nowhere to go, no goal to attain, no target. He has dropped the whole desiring mind with all its layers -- layer upon layer.

The mind is like the onion: one layer, the physical; another layer, the psychological; another layer, the spiritual. One who has thrown all those layers, one who has peeled his onion utterly, and has come to the innermost core.... And do you know what the innermost core IS? It is empty. If you go on peeling the onion, finally you come to nothingness. Only nothingness is left in your hands. In the nothingness there is orgasmicness, there is bliss.

With becoming there is misery. If you want to become something you will be in pain, misery, anguish, anxiety. If you understand that there is nothing to become... you are already that. Whatsoever you are, you are! There is no way to improve upon it. There is no need to improve upon it. As you ARE IS PERFECTLY OKAY. Your VERY ordinariness is utterly extraordinary. To realize this is to come to blessings. Then the whole existence starts showering blessings on you. It has been showering always, but because you were too much concerned with your own desires and becomings, you were not available to it, you were not open to it.

The third characteristic of samadhi is: illumination -- great inner transparency, light and clarity.

When all these egos disappear, all curtains disappear from your eyes, look becomes pure, innocent, transparency is attained. Then you simply see! And truth is so obvious. It is not hidden. It is not hiding somewhere, it is not avoiding you. It is not on some other planet -- it is just in front of your nose. But your eyes are closed. When your eyes open and you have the transparency and the clarity to see... the obvious! Truth is the obvious.

And the fourth characteristic of samadhi is: rest, relaxation.

How can you rest with this constant hankering to become something! How is rest possible? You will remain tense. Rest is possible only when all goal-orientation has been dropped; when the achieving mind functions no more in you, there is rest, there is relaxation.

Thought is mind in motion. No-thought is mind at rest. Samadhi is witnessing of both -- transcendence. You have been running after things -- you have seen that and the misery of it. Then you stopped, and you have seen the beauty of it, the rest, the relaxation. You have seen both, and the one who has seen both suddenly transcends both.

There is a relaxation which is no ordinary relaxation. You know some kind of relaxation: when you feel exhausted, you relax. But that relaxation is very rest-less. It is not cessation of becoming, it is just tiredness. You have been working, the whole day; in the night you have to fall into sleep -- but your sleep will remain restless. You will have many dreams and nightmares. And in sleep also you will continue to move; your mind will still go on spinning and weaving a thousand and one dreams.

Ordinarily, what rest we know is just the other side of restlessness -- tiredness, exhaustion.

There is a new kind of relaxation. When you have seen the tiredness of desire and you have seen the rest of desirelessness, a totally new kind of relaxation arises. THEN YOU ARE RELAXED BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT. YOU are relaxed because there is NOBODY to get tense! The very complex has disappeared. How can you be tense? There is nobody. You

cannot create a knot inside you because you are not! You have simply disappeared. It is an emptiness inside you. You cannot create knots in emptiness.

The fifth characteristic of samadhi is: awareness -- consciousness, seeing, knowing, witnessing; the fourth state the Hindus call TURIYA. This is what Ikkyu means when he says, "LOOK, LOOK, LOOK." And when he is asked, "What do you mean by 'LOOK'?" He says, "LOOK means LOOK."

Have eyes open. Be alert, be mindful. See things as they are. Don't create fictions, don't project.

You go to the movies.... Sometimes try one experiment. Sometimes try an experiment with a projector in your home. You have to put the screen at a certain distance from the projector, then the projected pictures are clear. Then start bringing the screen closer to the projector. Soon they start becoming blurred, they are no more clear. You cannot make any distinction as to what is what, which is which. Bring it still closer. Now it is impossible to make any sense out of which is the tree and which is the man and which is the dog and which is the car. All are diffused. Bring it still closer... the closer you bring it, the more distinctions are lost. Then there comes a point when the screen has come very close to the projector: there is only white light left. Black shadows have disappeared... pure white light. When the beam leaves the projector, it is pure white light. the farther it goes, then it divides into black and white. A certain distance is needed to see the pictures clearly.

In awareness, exactly this happens. When you become very very alert, you start looking very closely at reality, and distinctions start disappearing. Trees are no more trees and rivers are no more rivers and mountains are no more mountains. ALL starts melting into one. Then you become even more aware. And the more clearly you see into things... the screen comes even closer. Then there is only pure white light -- all the divisions have disappeared. That is what is called awareness. Then all the illusions of life are no more valid, there is only pure light -- the light of awareness.

The sixth characteristic of samadhi is: deathlessness, timelessness, eternity. When you are not, how can you die? When there is no ego in you, how can you die?

Many people used to ask Buddha in his lifetime, thousands of times the question has been asked: "What will happen to you, Sir, when you die?" And Buddha always smiles and he says, "There is nobody to die." But he makes it clear that "I am not saying that I am immortal. There is not nobody to be immortal either."

Now our stupidity is such that first we think we will die, because the ego is there and we are afraid whether we will be able to keep it, protect it, or not. Then comes somebody who knows. And he says, "Nothing dies." Then we project another falsity: we start thinking we are immortal. But the basic error remains the same. First we were thinking "we are going to die" -- WE WERE and we were going to die. Still WE ARE -- now we are not going to die.

Buddha says: "I am not going to die because I am not. It is not that I am immortal. There is nobody to die, and there is nobody to be immortal. There is no self, so how is death possible?"

This is a totally different standpoint! This is the difference between Vedanta and Buddha. This is the difference between Shankara and Buddha. And Buddha's insight IS FAR MORE penetrating than Shankara's. Shankara goes on saying, "You are immortal because the soul is immortal. It cannot die -- it is deathless." Buddha also says that you will not die, but he never says that you are immortal. He says, "You will never die because you cannot die -- in the first

place you are not."

To see it -- that "I am not" -- is to drop both mortality and immortality. Time disappears. What is your immortality? It will be just an extension of time, more and more duration. What will it be? Seventy years you are going to live -- seven hundred years? seven million years? but it will be just duration. What is your eternity? Nothing but a desire to cling, a desire to remain always. For what? Just a blind desire to cling to existence? Just a blind desire, a blind lust for life?

Buddha says: "Why are you concerned with mortality and immortality?" Deep down, those who say they will die and those who say they will never die, both are the same, because both believe in the ego.

The Charvakas, the materialists, say, "We will die"; and the so-called spiritualists say, "We will not die." But BOTH are concerned with the ego.

Buddha brings a new breeze into the human mind, into human consciousness. He says: "You will not die -- not because you are immortal -- but because you ARE NOT! " See the point of it! the radical change, the basic revolution of it! Deathlessness is part of the phenomenon of samadhi.

And the seventh is: infinity. Space disappears. You are nowhere and yet everywhere. You are nobody and yet everybody.

These are the seven characteristics of samadhi. And this is what happened to this archer who wanted to become the greatest archer in the world. The story does not say what he learned in those nine years when he was with the old man in the mountains. This is what he learned -- SAMADHI he learned. That's why I started with samadhi, so that you become aware of what he learned there, because that is the real point in the story.

The whole story revolves upon one word: SAMADHI -- WU SATORI.

Now the story:

CHI CH'ANG ASPIRED TO BE THE GREATEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD.

THAT'S WHAT EVERYBODY IS ASPIRING TO -- to be the greatest in the world. Archer, painter, poet, politician, or you name it, but that is what mind aspires to: to be the greatest in the world.

Mind is an ego trip. The mind wants to stand in front of all. In fact, it IS NOT possible. Hence, mind ultimately leads into frustration. It is not possible to be first in the line because there is no line; we are standing in a circle. There is always somebody who is ahead of you. There will always be somebody who is ahead of you. You cannot come to a point where you are the first man. Even those who become presidents and prime ministers and kings -- even they are never the first. In fact, the moment they start feeling they are the first, they become aware of how impotent and helpless they are.

We are not standing in a queue, we are moving in a circle. Somebody is behind you, somebody is ahead of you. In fact, if you look deep, the one who is behind you is also ahead of you. If you see the whole circle, the man who is standing behind you, from the other end he is ahead of you. And the man who is standing in front of you, from the other end is behind you. It is a circle.

Life moves in circles, it is not linear. EVERYTHING moves in circles! Let this sink into your heart. Whenever you are thinking about any problem in life, always remain circular. It is not linear. The stars move in a circle, the earth moves in a circle, the seasons move in a circle.

Childhood, youth, old age, move in a circle. Everything moves in a circle. Linear movement is a mind construct, imaginary. In fact there are new mathematicians, new geometries -- non-Euclidean geometries -- which believe that you cannot draw a simple straight line. That's not possible. A straight line is impossible to draw, because we ARE on a globe -- the earth is round.

You can draw a straight line just in front of you on this floor. But it will not be really straight. If you go on drawing it from both the ends, one day it will become a circle around the earth. So when it was looking straight it was only a fragment of the big circle, it was an arc -- an incomplete circle, that's all. It was not straight. Straight lines cannot be drawn.

Because straight lines don't exist, Albert Einstein had to propound a very absurd thing: that space is curved. Straight lines can't exist, so space has to be curved. Even space -- which means nothingness -- is curved, it is not straight. It is very difficult to conceive how nothingness can be curved. Something can be curved, but how can nothingness be curved? Nothing is nothing! How will the curve arise out of nothing? But Einstein is right. He says that when nothing exists as a straight line, then we cannot even conceive space as a straight line. It is curved.

Everything is a curve... so nobody ever comes to be the first. In fact, those who think they have come to be the first are the most frustrated men in the world. That's why Buddha left his empire, became a beggar, recognizing the fact that "I seem to all apparent purposes to be the first, but I am not."

This man, CHI CH'ANG, ASPIRED TO BE THE GREATEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD. SO HE BECAME THE PUPIL OF WEI FEI.
FIRST WEI FEI ORDERED HIM TO LEARN NOT TO BLINK.

Concentration is the first necessity for anybody who has any kind of ambition. Concentration is the way to ambition. This man was ambitious. The Master said, "Okay. The first thing to learn is not to blink."

CHI CH'ANG CREPT UNDER HIS WIFE'S LOOM AND LAY THERE ON HIS BACK STARING WITHOUT BLINKING AT THE TREADLE AS IT RUSHED UP AND DOWN DIRECTLY BEFORE HIS EYES. AFTER TWO YEARS HE HAD REACHED THE POINT OF NOT BLINKING EVEN IF ONE OF HIS EYE-LASHES WAS CAUGHT IN THE TREADLE.

He attained to concentration.

"TO KNOW HOW NOT TO BLINK IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP," SAID WEI FEI....

The Master said, "Good, but this is only the first step."

"... NEXT YOU MUST LEARN TO LOOK. PRACTISE LOOKING AT THINGS, AND IF THE TIME COMES WHEN WHAT IS MINUTE SEEMS CONSPICUOUS, AND WHAT IS SMALL SEEMS HUGE, VISIT ME ONCE MORE."

Now the second step is to look into things so penetratingly that even the small starts looking big.

It depends how penetratingly you look, how deeply you look into things. If you look indifferently, even the Himalayas is a small thing. It is relative. If you look very very deeply,

even a small particle is bigger than the Himalayas. It depends on the proportion: how deeply you look. The atomic becomes cosmic if the LOOK IS cosmic; and the cosmic becomes atomic if the look is atomic.

Ordinarily we look very indifferently. We go on missing. God is everywhere! From every tree He has been calling you, and from every rock He has been inviting you. In every river are His sermons, but you are indifferent. You don't know how to look so you go on missing. He is in the minutest, in the smallest, but you go on missing. It is not because He is not there that you are missing -- you miss only because you don't know how to look.

The Master said "Now learn to look. Practise looking at things and if the time comes when you start seeing the small as the huge come back."

CHI CH'ANG SEARCHED FOR A TINY INSECT HARDLY VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE, PLACED IT ON A BLADE OF GRASS AND HUNG IT BY THE WINDOW OF HIS STUDY. HE THEN TOOK UP A POSITION AT THE END OF THE ROOM AND SAT THERE DAY AFTER DAY STARING AT THE INSECT. AT FIRST HE COULD HARDLY SEE IT, BUT AFTER TEN DAYS HE BEGAN TO FANCY THAT IT WAS SLIGHTLY BIGGER.

FOR THREE YEARS HE HARDLY LEFT HIS STUDY. THEN ONE DAY HE PERCEIVED THAT THE INSECT BY THE WINDOW WAS AS BIG AS A HORSE. "I'VE DONE IT!" HE EXCLAIMED. THIS TIME THE TEACHER WAS SUFFICIENTLY IMPRESSED TO SAY, "WELL DONE!"

Because this man has done something valuable: he has transformed the size of a small insect just by looking at it constantly. Now the cosmic can be found in the atomic. And that is one of the basic lessons in archery. You have to see the small as huge only then will your target never be missed -- only then will you become an archer.

In Zen archery has been used for centuries as a technique for meditation. It is because it needs almost the same qualities as meditation needs. First: a non-blinking eye. Second: the capacity to look into things so deeply that the things start changing their size; their size starts depending on your look.

CHI CH'ANG SOON BECAME A MASTER OF ARCHERY, AND NO FEAT OF BOWMANSHIP NOW SEEMED BEYOND HIS POWERS. HE SEEMED CLOSE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HIS AMBITION, BUT WITH AN UNPLEASANT JOLT HE REALIZED THAT ONE OBSTACLE REMAINED: SO LONG AS THE MASTER WEI FEI LIVED, CHI CH'ANG COULD NEVER CALL HIMSELF THE GREATEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD.

That's what always happens to ambition. When you are nearing to the end, suddenly you recognize that one thing is very basically missing -- somebody is still ahead of you. And ambition is very violent. Even if it is your Master, you can kill him. Ambition is violence. An ambitious man can never be non-violent. An ambitious man can never love. Not even his own Master is safe! An ambitious man is a dangerous man. Ambition is poison. It poisons you.

Now this archer recognized the fact that "I have become the greatest archer, but only one problem remains -- the Master is alive. I can never claim to be the first as long as he is alive." A natural conclusion: kill him.

Ambition kills. You have been killing, everybody has been killing, because there is ambition. In direct ways, in indirect ways, everybody is a murderer -- because everybody is ambitious. Only non-ambition is non-violent.

So let it be remembered always: you cannot become non-violent if there is still ambition -- any kind of ambition will never allow you compassion. How can you be compassionate if there is ambition? You have still to fight, still to make your way. And when there is ambition,

all means are right. Who bothers about the means? The end is the thing!

WALKING THROUGH THE FIELDS ONE DAY, CHI CH'ANG CAUGHT SIGHT OF WEI FEI FAR IN THE DISTANCE.

He saw the old man. And this is his Master, and he has been teaching him all these years.

WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION HE RAISED HIS BOW, FIXED AN ARROW, AND TOOK AIM. HIS OLD MASTER, HOWEVER, HAD SENSED WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND IN A FLASH HAD ALSO NOTCHED AN ARROW.

He must have noticed it from the day this man had come to him, because an ambitious man is never a disciple. An ambitious man is never surrendered. His surrender is just technical; his surrender is not of the heart.

The Master must have known it! "Sooner or later he will go against me. Sooner or later his ambition will create the idea in his mind to destroy me." So the Master must have been alert. All Masters have always been alert about ambitious disciples.

There is every possibility that Judas was the most ambitious disciple of Jesus. He had reasons to be. He was the most learned, the most scholarly, the most rational, and he used to think that he was even more intelligent than Jesus. He used to argue with Jesus. And if you listen to his arguments, sometimes you will feel convinced by him rather than by Jesus, because Jesus is not argumentative. He had his own reasons, but those reasons are very subtle. Only when you have eyes can you see, otherwise not. Judas' reasons are very apparent, very familiar.

One day a woman came and poured very very valuable perfume on Jesus' feet. Judas was there and he didn't miss the opportunity. He said, "Look, you should have prevented her! This is wastage! It was so valuable that the whole town could have been invited to a feast, and people are poor." His argument was exactly that of a socialist or a communist. Judas is a socialist. He says, "The whole village could have eaten well. They could have enjoyed. You should have prevented her! What is this nonsense?"

And what does Jesus say? Jesus says, "The poor people will always be here when I am gone. You can serve them when I am gone."

Now this is not very appealing -- or do you think it is very appealing? It doesn't seem very appealing. Seems to be a very impotent argument: "I will be gone soon, so let her do whatsoever she wants to do. Poor people will always be here."

On the surface Judas seems to be more solid. If votes are asked for, Judas is going to win. But Jesus' point is from a totally different plane. He is saying, "These things don't matter. Even if you give a feast to the whole village, that is not going to help much. But to prevent this woman, who had come with such prayer in her heart, would have destroyed a great possibility of growth. To say no to her, to stop her, would have been very very destructive. She is delicate, she is fragile."

It is not the perfume that Jesus is looking at. He is looking at the heart of the woman. But the head never looks at the heart. The head has its own reasons.

Buddha's disciple, Devadatta, betrayed him. He was one of the most intelligent people around him. He was one of his cousin-brothers. He was from a royal family as Buddha himself was. He betrayed Buddha.

Mahavir's own son-in-law betrayed him. He was the most educated, cultured person around Mahavir. Why? Ambitious people. That son-in-law of Mahavir had the ambition to become the greatest teacher in the world, and Mahavir was standing in the way. As long as Mahavir was alive it was difficult.

Devadatta had the ambition to become the greatest Buddha of the world, and as long as Gautam Buddha was alive it was difficult. Devadatta tried to kill Buddha in many ways; he made many attempts on his life. Ambition is poisonous. It makes people blind.

THEIR ARROWS COLLIDED HALF WAY AND FELL TOGETHER TO THE GROUND. THE STRANGE DUEL CONTINUED UNTIL THE MASTER'S QUIVER WAS EMPTY BUT ONE ARROW STILL REMAINED WITH THE PUPIL.

This is symbolic. The Master is old, the pupil is young. The Master is already getting ready to die.

"NOW IS MY CHANCE!" MUTTERED CHI CH'ANG WHO IMMEDIATELY AIMED THE FINAL ARROW. SEEING THIS, WEI FEI BROKE OFF A TWIG FROM A THORN-BUSH BESIDE HIM, AND AS THE ARROW SPED TOWARDS HIS HEART HE FLICKED THE POINT SHARPLY WITH THE TIP OF ONE OF THE THORNS AND BROUGHT IT TO THE GROUND AT HIS FEET.

This was the last trick the Master had not yet taught. Every Master has to be careful to keep at least one thing secret.

But now he said, "MY FRIEND..."

Listen to the word. He says, "My friend." What does he mean? He is saying, "I am no more your Master. You are no more my disciple. Now forgive me. Now forget me! Now I declare you my friend, and I have taught you all that I know -- even the last trick. You have seen it and you know it."

"I HAVE NOW, AS YOU REALIZE, TRANSMITTED TO YOU ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF ARCHERY THAT I POSSESS. IF YOU WISH TO DELVE FURTHER INTO THESE MYSTERIES YOU MUST SEEK THE AGED MASTER KAN YING. COMPARED TO HIS SKILL OUR BOWMANSHIP IS AS THE PUNY FUMBLING OF CHILDREN."

Now, even if he was going to kill his Master, the Master sends him on another journey. The Master sends him to his own Master, the old man in the mountains. He says, "What we know is just childish. I am not yet myself the greatest archer in the world. You can please forgive me. If you really want to become the greatest archer in the world, now you go to another. My own Master is still alive. Compared to his art we don't know anything."

AFTER MONTHS OF ARDUOUS CLIMBING, CHI CH'ANG REACHED THE CAVE WHERE DWELT KAN YING AND ANNOUNCED TO THE OLD MAN, "I HAVE COME TO FIND OUT IF I AM AS GREAT AN ARCHER AS I BELIEVE." AND WITHOUT WAITING FOR A REPLY HE NOTCHED AN ARROW, AIMED AT A FLOCK OF MIGRATING BIRDS, AND BROUGHT DOWN FIVE BIRDS ALL AT ONCE.

THE OLD MAN SMILED AND SAID, "BUT THIS IS MERE SHOOTING WITH BOW AND ARROW. HAVE YOU NOT YET LEARNED TO SHOOT WITHOUT SHOOTING? COME WITH ME."

THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TECHNICIAN and an artist. The technician knows all the technique, but that is not enough. You can know all about how to paint, yet you don't become a Michelangelo. You can know all about music and how to create it, yet you don't become a Beethoven. Knowledge of the technique is needed, but is not all -- is necessary, but not enough. The real transcendence comes only when the technique is forgotten, when the technique is no more needed, when you can work without the technique. That is the meaning of it.

"BUT THIS IS MERE SHOOTING WITH BOW AND ARROW."

Good, as far as it goes -- with bow and arrow -- but this is nothing.

"HAVE YOU NOT YET LEARNED TO SHOOT WITHOUT SHOOTING?"

If you meditate with a technique, it is mere shooting with bow and arrow. The day you drop all techniques of meditation, and meditation flows without any techniques and without any methods, it is real shooting. When the meditation becomes perfect, meditation disappears. That is the point of perfection -- when you don't need it.

When love becomes perfect, you forget the word 'love'. When you have really arrived and you have become happy, you don't know that you are happy. How can you know that you are happy? Only an unhappy person can know that he is happy. It is known only in comparison, by contrast.

If you create music on an instrument, you don't know yet that there is a music that is already overflowing in existence, and it needs no instrument to create it. It needs only an open heart to hear it. In fact, when music is created by an instrument, something of the music that surrounds, that vibrates all over existence is reflected in it. That's all. SOMETHING of it is reflected in it -- it is an echo, a far distant echo. Even THAT satisfies so much, so what to say about the real music? That real music, in India we call ANAHAT NAD -- unstruck, not created by striking an instrument, not created by pulling wires, striking, by making any effort, but by becoming so utterly silent that one hears it.

That is what Zen people call 'the sound of one hand clapping.' All other sounds are created sounds, struck -- two hands clapping. But when two hands are clapping, the sound is momentary. It will be there for a moment, it will cohere there for a moment, and then it is gone. But there is an eternal music -- the celestial music Pythagoreans talk about, the music of the stars -- which has to be heard. There is no need to create it. It is already there. It has been there. It is the very nature of existence itself.

The Master said then, "COME WITH ME."

CHI CH'ANG FOLLOWED HIM IN SILENCE TO THE EDGE OF A GREAT DIFF. WHEN HE GLANCED DOWN HIS EYES BECAME BLURRED AND HIS HEAD BEGAN TO SPIN.

A great edge overlooking a cliff... abysmal, and he must have felt sickness, nausea arising in his stomach. He must have become afraid.

When you are afraid, how can you be an archer? When death still affects you, how can you be a perfect archer? When fear is there, trembling is there. And if trembling is there, how your aim be perfect? Maybe ordinary people will not see the quiver in your hand when you are shooting the arrow, but you cannot avoid the eyes of one who knows. He will see the

quiver in your hand, the trembling. If your heart is trembling.... What is happening there standing on that cliff is nothing new; only death has been brought to be an obvious fact confronting him. The man has become afraid. He must have been afraid of death always.

In fact, the mind is always afraid of death, and the ambitious mind more so. The ambitious mind is very much afraid of death. The fear is: Is it going to happen that I will be able to do it before death comes? Will I manage? Will I succeed before death comes, or am I going to fail? The ambitious man is MORE afraid of death than the non-ambitious man. The non-ambitious man has nothing to lose. If death comes... okay. He was not fulfilling any ambition here, so death cannot take anything away from him.

The old Master must have looked. Those old eyes are penetrating. Those ancient eyes must have seen the trembling inside of this man. In fact, through ambition we want to prove our ego against death, but nothing can be proved against death. The ego has to go, the ego has to die. It cannot be deathless. You can have as much money as you desire, but you will have to die. You can have as much power as possible, but you will have to die. Nothing can protect you.

... HE GLANCED DOWN HIS EYES BECAME BLURRED AND HIS HEAD BEGAN TO SPIN.
MEANWHILE THE MASTER KAN YING RAN...

Listen:

... RAN LIGHTLY ON TO A NARROW LEDGE WHICH JUTTED STRAIGHT OUT OVER THE
PRECIPICE, AND TURNING ROUND SAID, "NOW SHOW ME YOUR REAL SKILL. COME HERE
WHERE I AM STANDING AND LET ME SEE YOUR BOWMANSHIP."
WHEN CHI CH'ANG STEPPED ON THE LEDGE IT BEGAN TO SWAY SLIGHTLY TO AND FRO.
HE TRIED TO NOTCH AN ARROW, BUT SOON HE FELT THAT HE WAS GOING TO LOSE HIS
BALANCE. HE LAY DOWN ON THE LEDGE CLUTCHING ITS EDGES FIRMLY WITH HIS
FINGERS. HIS LEGS SHOOK AND THE PERSPIRATION FLOWED FROM HIS WHOLE BODY.

Now the old man has reduced him to his reality. All that ego, all that ambition, all that idea of being the greatest archer in the world -- all finished! Just the fear -- and he is trembling like a small child who has got lost.

All our achievements are like that. When you face death, they will all be meaningless. Suddenly you will find you are just the same child you have always been -- afraid, trembling.

THE OLD MAN LAUGHED, REACHED OUT HIS HAND AND HELPED CHI CH'ANG DOWN.
JUMPING ON TO IT HIMSELF HE SAID, "ALLOW ME, SIR, TO SHOW YOU WHAT ARCHERY
REALLY IS."
"WHAT ABOUT YOUR BOW?" ASKED CHI CH'ANG.

Naturally.... If you go to Buddha you will ask, "Sir, how do you meditate? What is your method?" If you go to Jesus, you will ask, "Sir, how do you pray? What is your prayer?" You will be asking absurd questions.

Jesus has nothing to say to God. His prayer is not that of saying something to God. His prayer is only that of listening. And Buddha does not practise any meditation, because all practice is of the mind. The mind has disappeared. Buddha is meditation.

This is difficult for us. Buddha is not DOING meditation, Buddha is meditation.

People come to me. "Osho, do you love us?" they ask. It is difficult for them, because they know only one kind of love -- which has to be done. They don't know another kind, the

real kind. There is love and there is Love! The other kind need not be done, it is simply there.

I don't love you. I AM LOVE. That's a totally different kind. It may not feel very good to your ego, but you don't know the real coin. You know only the false coin. The real love is not a relationship -- it is a state of being.

"WHAT ABOUT YOUR BOW?" ASKED CHI CH'ANG.

"MY BOW?" SAID THE OLD MAN LAUGHING. "SO LONG AS ONE REQUIRES BOW AND ARROW ONE IS STILL AT THE PERIPHERY OF THE ART. REAL ARCHERY DISPENSES WITH BOTH BOW AND ARROW."

Real art always dispenses with the techniques. If you are involved in the techniques, you are on the periphery. Good! Nothing wrong about it. But remember: one has to go beyond them. One has to go beyond all confinements. One has to go beyond all methods. One has to become so spontaneous that no method is needed. Meditation is you. Love is you. God is you.

DIRECTLY ABOVE THEIR HEADS A SINGLE KITE WAS WHEELING IN THE SKY. THE HERMIT LOOKED UP AT IT AND CHI CH'ANG FOLLOWED HIS GAZE. SO HIGH WAS THE BIRD THAT EVEN TO HIS SHARP EYES IT LOOKED LIKE A SMALL SESAME SEED. KAN YING NOTCHED AN INVISIBLE ARROW ON AN INCORPOREAL BOW, DREW THE STRING TO ITS FULL EXTENSION, AND RELEASED IT. THE NEXT MOMENT THE KITE STOPPED FLAPPING ITS WINGS AND FELL LIKE A STONE TO THE GROUND.

It happens. It is not a miracle. If a mind which is totally silent just thinks about anything, it happens. That's why all the old scriptures of the world say one thing that before you attain to samadhi you should drop all kinds of wrong thoughts from your mind, otherwise you can be a danger to humanity.

Now there is the secret of why Patanjali insists so much on first dropping all vices from the mind, why Buddha insists on dropping all wrong ideas from the mind, why Mahavir says to drop violence, drop untruth, drop attachment. Why? Because once you attain to silence, whatsoever arises in your mind will immediately be fulfilled. You can become dangerous. And sometimes it happens....

Sometimes it happens that a person becomes meditative and much danger happens into the world. That happened in the case of Rasputin. He was a meditative man, but not prepared for it. Accidentally he had stumbled upon meditation. He prayed hard, he prayed long for many years, and then he knew. And then he became capable of doing things. Whatsoever he would say, DID happen.

He said to the Czar of Russia.... The wife of the Czar was very much devoted to him, but the Czar was a little reluctant. And Rasputin was afraid that the Czar may throw him out. One day he said to the Czar, "Remember, if I die, your whole kingdom is going to disappear. Only with me can your kingdom stay." And that's how it happened. He was killed and the next thing was the revolution. The whole of the Czar's family was killed -- eighteen members, even the child of two months. All that Rasputin said was fulfilled. He was very prophetic.

It happens sometimes that a man stumbles accidentally on meditation. It is better to move very slowly, very carefully. It is not a miracle! If a man like Kan Ying simply imagines that the kite will fall down, it will fall down -- because we are joined with each other.

What happens when I move my hand? It is a miracle. A thought arises in me to move the hand, and the hand moves. Now the hand is matter and thought is not matter. It is a mystery

for science. It still has not been explained how it happens -- the thought arises and the hand moves. Where is the thought transformed into matter, and how can it be transformed? If the hand can move, then why can't YOUR hand move? If the thought arises in me that "Let your hand move," your hand can also move. And you can try it. And sometimes you will be surprised. It happens....

You are following somebody. Just go on looking at the back of his neck. After two, three minutes, just deep inside say loudly -- inside, not aloud -- but say strongly inside, "Look back at me." And you will be surprised: the person immediately looks back at you. What has happened? The thought has been transferred. The thought jumped, reached to the other person.

A man of the capacity of Kan Ying can easily do it -- just the idea! And the kite is not far away. We are JOINED. We live in an ocean of thought, we are all together. Each affects the other, we are members of each other.

FOR NINE YEARS CHI CH'ANG STAYED IN THE MOUNTAINS WITH THE OLD HERMIT. WHAT DISCIPLINES HE UNDERWENT DURING THIS TIME NONE EVER KNEW. WHEN IN THE TENTH YEAR HE RETURNED HOME ALL WERE AMAZED AT THE CHANGE IN HIM. HIS FORMER RESOLUTE AND ARROGANT COUNTENANCE HAD DISAPPEARED...

ALL THAT Ambitiousness, all that egoistic trip that "I want to become the greatest archer in the world" had disappeared. With this old man, in fact, the self disappeared. All those three egos -- physical, psychological, spiritual -- disappeared. He was no more arrogant, no more humble either.

... IN ITS PLACE HAD COME THE LOOK OF A SIMPLETON.

Like an idiot, a simpleton. As if he has no more any mind. As if he is mindless, or like a child, or like a fool, or like an imbecile. This is the highest state: of being a simpleton. It was exactly like this that it happened to St. Francis of Assisi. He was a simpleton. It is exactly the same case with Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu; and particularly in Tao, this is the highest state: to become a simpleton -- not knowing what is what, not knowing at all. When ALL selves have disappeared, there is utter silence and ignorance. And ignorance is very intimate. One knows nothing. One is not -- how can one know anything?

HIS OLD TEACHER, WEI FEI, CAME TO VISIT HIM AND SAID AFTER A SINGLE GLANCE, "NOW I SEE THAT YOU HAVE INDEED BECOME AN EXPERT! SUCH AS I ARE NO LONGER WORTHY EVER TO TOUCH YOUR FEET. "

THE INHABITANTS OF HIS CITY HAILED CHI CH'ANG AS THE GREATEST ARCHER IN THE WORLD AND IMPATIENTLY AWAITED THE WONDERFUL FEATS WHICH HE WOULD NO DOUBT SOON DISPLAY. BUT CHI CH'ANG DID NOTHING TO SATISFY THEIR EXPECTATIONS.

There was nobody left to satisfy their expectations. He was just a silence now, an emptiness.

THE GREAT POPLAR BOW WHICH HE HAD TAKEN WITH HIM ON HIS JOURNEY HE EVIDENTLY HAD LEFT BEHIND. WHEN SOMEONE ASKED HIM TO EXPLAIN HE ANSWERED IN A LANGUID TONE, "THE ULTIMATE STAGE OF ACTIVITY IS INACTIVITY; THE ULTIMATE STAGE OF SPEAKING IS TO REFRAIN FROM SPEECH; THE ULTIMATE IN SHOOTING IS NOT TO SHOOT."

The ultimate is negative. The positive is the periphery, the negative is the center. The ultimate is like nothingness -- SHUNYATA.

CHI CH'ANG GREW OLD. MORE AND MORE HE SEEMED TO HAVE ENTERED THE STATE IN WHICH BOTH MIND AND BODY LOOK NO LONGER TO THINGS OUTSIDE, BUT EXIST BY THEMSELVES IN RESTFUL AND ELEGANT SIMPLICITY.

Elegant simplicity.... It was not a practised simplicity. It was not a cultivated simplicity. It was elegant, it was natural. The ego had disappeared -- THAT'S WHY THERE IS SIMPLICITY! You can practise simplicity, but then it is just a decoration to the ego.

There are two kinds of simplicity. One simplicity: the so-called MAHATMA, the saint, who practises it. It is a very calculated move, a calculated gesture. It is very cunning, it is not simplicity. It is a facade. Then there is another kind of simplicity: elegant, graceful, spontaneous, uncultivated, natural, is like that of a child, unselfconscious. Hence elegant, hence graceful.

HIS STOLID FACE DIVESTED ITSELF OF EVERY VESTIGE OF EXPRESSION; NO OUTSIDE FORCE COULD DISTURB HIS COMPLETE IMPASSIVENESS. IT WAS RARE NOW FOR HIM TO SPEAK, AND PRESENTLY ONE COULD NO LONGER TELL WHETHER OR NOT HE STILL BREATHED. IN THE EVENING OF HIS LIFE HE NO LONGER KNEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'THIS' AND 'THAT'. THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF SENSORY IMPRESSIONS NO LONGER CONCERNED HIM; FOR ALL HE CARED, HIS EYE MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN EAR, HIS EAR A NOSE, HIS NOSE A MOUTH.

All distinctions disappeared. He knew nothing -- he knew nothing of 'this' and 'that'. One thousand and one things all became one. Everything became merged into everything else. It was one unity, this whole existence, without any distinctions, without any divisions. All pigeonholes, all categories, left behind.

OF HIS LAST YEAR, THE STORY IS TOLD THAT ONE DAY HE VISITED A FRIEND'S HOUSE AND SAW LYING ON A TABLE A VAGUELY FAMILIAR UTENSIL WHOSE NAME HE COULD, HOWEVER, NOT RECALL. HE TURNED TO HIS FRIEND AND SAID, "PRAY TELL ME: THAT OBJECT ON YOUR TABLE -- WHAT IS IT CALLED, AND FOR WHAT IS IT USED?" THE FRIEND STAMMERED OUT IN AN AWE-STRUCK TONE, "OH, MASTER. YOU MUST INDEED BE THE GREATEST MASTER OF ALL TIMES. ONLY SO CAN YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE BOW -- BOTH ITS NAME AND ITS USE!" IT WAS SAID THAT FOR SOME TIME AFTER THIS IN THE CITY, PAINTERS THREW AWAY THEIR BRUSHES, MUSICIANS BROKE THE STRINGS OF THEIR INSTRUMENTS, AND CARPENTERS WERE ASHAMED TO BE SEEN WITH THEIR RULES.

This is what Zen is.

Zen is not a method. Zen is going beyond all methods. Zen is not a way! Zen is dropping all the ways to arrive home. Zen is not a journey -- there is no goal in it. Zen is the disappearance of all journeys and the sudden recognition that you are there already, that you have been there always.

Zen is a sudden illumination, abrupt, not gradual, because gradual means practising, step by step. Zen is sudden. Nothing has to be practised. It is already the case.

That which you are seeking is already within you. The seeker is the sought. You just have to stop seeking and look. Look into your form, and you will not find it. Look into your mind,

and you will not find it. Look into your self, and you will not find it. And when all these three have not been found, you will find who you are!

Zen: The Path of Paradox, Vol 3

Chapter #10

Chapter title: A Song Untouched by Time

10 July 1977 am in Buddha Hall

Archive code: 7707100

ShortTitle: PARAD310

Audio: Yes

Video: No

Length: 104 mins

The first question:

THE CONTEMPORARY IDEAL OF LIVING COMPLETELY WITHIN THE PRESENT MOMENT, NO LESS THAN THE CLASSICAL MYSTICAL NOTION OF LIVING TOTALLY WITHIN THE DIVINE ETERNAL, IS AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT IS INHUMAN. IT RESULTS IN A DISEASED RATHER THAN A GRACEFUL PRESENT. GRACEFUL EXISTENCE INTEGRATES PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE.

THE IDEAL AS SUCH CORRUPTS. Whatsoever the ideal, it is a calamity, it is a great disease to be avoided. It is the ideal that has been driving humanity neurotic. The moment you start thinking in terms of ideals, you are condemned. Then you are always falling short of it, then you are never okay; and guilt arises and you start feeling you are not worthy, that you are worthless. And the moment a man starts thinking he is worthless, he becomes worthless -- because you are that which you think you are. AS A MAN THINKETH, SO HE BECOMES.

All ideals are perfectionist, they demand perfection -- hence they are all inhuman. Man is not perfect. Nothing is perfect. Nothing can be perfect, BECAUSE only in imperfection is there growth. The perfect means the dead; the perfect means the perfectly dead -- the absolutely dead.

So let me say to you: Even God is not perfect, cannot be, otherwise He will be a dead God. Only in imperfection is there a possibility to evolve, to grow. Only in imperfection is there future. Perfection consists only of the past -- then there is no future. If God is perfect, then what is going to happen to Him? Nothing is going to happen. All that had to happen has already happened. All that He was destined to become, He has become -- there is no future. Then the God is a graveyard. Then He is not a tree blooming, and He is not a river flowing.

Even God is not perfect, so how can man be perfect? Everything that lives is imperfect, because life is possible only through imperfection. Imperfection is a great blessing. Feel blessed that you are imperfect. Imperfection means your circle is not complete, something is

still open. You have a future, you have a possibility.

Imperfection is a promise, a hope. Imperfection carries potentiality; all has not yet become actual, something is still in the seed. You can remain excited. Something tremendously new is going to happen to you, something unknown, unfamiliar; something unexpected you can still expect. That's what life is.

So the first thing to be understood is: All ideals are perfectionist. Hence, ALL ideals are inhuman. And all ideals cripple and paralyze you. All ideals create a kind of subtle bondage around you, they imprison you. The really free man has no ideals.

So, to live in the present is not an ideal, remember. If you make an ideal out of it you have missed the point. To live in the present can be rightly translated as: to live without ideals. That is the meaning of living in the present. To live in the present means to live without ideals, to just live herenow and remain open and remain ready -- whatsoever the future brings, remain always welcoming and receptive. don't force the future in a certain way, in a certain direction. Let it happen.

To be in the present is not an ideal. But I understand your question. There are people who have made it an ideal. It happens because we have become so accustomed to transforming everything into a neurosis, so that even if elixir is given to you, you will transform it into poison. You know only one thing: how to transform everything into a poison.

For example, Buddha says: Through desire there is misery -- so if you become desireless, there will be no misery.

Now, this is a simple fact, stating a simple truth. What happened? People started creating a new desire: to be desireless. This is how you transform every truth into falsehood.

Buddha is saying: To be in desire is to be miserable. He is not saying desire about what: desire as such creates misery -- because in desire you start moving from the present, you start thinking of the future. You start thinking of dreams -- you are going to do this, and this is going to happen; and if this happens you will be happy, and if that happens you will be very very miserable. The moment you start dreaming and desiring you have missed contact with life; you disconnected. You are no more living in those moments of desire. Those moments of desiring are death moments. Life has stopped flowing. You are frozen.

Whenever you are in desire you are not alive. Life and desire can't exist together. They are two gestalts, you can have only one at one time. If you move into desire, life disappears; if you are living, desire disappears.

Have you not seen in some psychology books a certain picture of an old woman? And in the same picture, in those same lines, is hidden a beautiful young woman -- both are there. But if you look at the old woman, then you cannot see the young woman. If you look at the young woman, then suddenly the old woman disappears. They are BOTH there in the same lines, but you can see only one at a time. Your gestalt changes. When you are looking at the young face, then those lines are making a new pattern. Because of this pattern, the other pattern cannot be seen. When you start seeing the old woman, the young woman recedes back; because of the old woman's pattern, you cannot see the new woman's pattern. You cannot see both together. Because you cannot see both together, whenever you are with one the other becomes non-existential to you. And you know both are there; still you cannot see.

Exactly the same is the case with desire and life. If you desire, life is no more there; you stop living. The same energy becomes desire, so no more energy is available to live. When you start living, desire disappears because the same energy has become life; you cannot desire any more.

Alive moments are desireless moments. Desireless moments are alive moments. It is a

simple statement about life's patterns, gestalts.

But what happened? People listened to Buddha and they thought, "He must be right. He says. 'With desire there is misery,' So now we will desire desirelessness. How to attain desirelessness.?" Now they are ready to go on another journey of desire. Just the OBJECT of desire has changed. first they were thinking how to have more money, how to have more power, how to go to New Delhi, Washington, London, Moscow; now, their goal has changed -- how to attain NIRVANA, MOKSHA, God, desirelessness.

But the object is there, and with the object the desire is there. They have committed something very absurd. They missed the point. Buddha is not saying to create a new desire. Buddha is simply saying: Understand desire. Look into desire and you will find misery. Once this understanding has penetrated deep into your being, that desire is misery, then the problem has disappeared. Then you don't desire at all. And, when you don't desire, there is desirelessness.

Desirelessness cannot be desired; MOKSHA cannot be desired; God cannot be desired. If you desire, God has become an object of lust. You are again in the same trap -- with a new label, but the disease is the same. Maybe the skin is new, but the wine is old.

The same is happening in the modern world. And this, too, is happening because of Zen. Zen says: Be herenow, because that is the only way to be here -- that is the only way to be. Now is the only moment there is! How can you be in the future? The future is not yet; how can you be in the future? You can only think. That will be just your mind game. How can you be in the past? The past has disappeared. You can only be in the memory -- memory, imagination. But both are non-existential.

To exist means to be herenow. These trees exist, you only pretend. Rocks exist, you only pretend. Stars exist, you only pretend.

Zen has a simple message. It says: See into life -- only the present is true. Future is imagination, past is memory. Memory is nothing but a taped record in the mind. And imagination is nothing but a projection through the memory, a desire coming out of the past -- to have the same pleasures again and again, or to avoid the old sufferings. And meanwhile the present moment is passing by. Life is slipping out of your hands.

Zen is very pragmatic, very existential. The message is very simple: Be here, and be now.

Now, you can create an ideal out of it. You can jump upon the idea. YOU say, "Right! Now I will be here and now. I will try, I will not leave any stone unturned; I will do my best. I will be here and now. I will practise, I will meditate, I will sit in zazen, but I HAVE to be here and now!" Now you are creating an ideal out of a simple fact which was a statement, it was a truism.

You are making an ideal. Now you are going to be in difficulty. Again and again you will find the mind has slipped into the past; again and again you will find the mind has slipped into the future. You will catch hold of it, you will bring it back to the present. Again it is slipping. Again you are bringing it to the present. In fact, your NOW is not now! It is going to happen somewhere in the future when you have practised how to live now! Your present is also not present. The present of your ideal cannot be present. All ideals are in the future.

"How to live in the present?" you are asking. Zen says there IS NO other way to live! And you ask, "How to live?" Zen says THERE IS NO OTHER WAY AT ALL! How are you managing not to live in the present? And you ask, "How to live in the present? Should I meditate, should I do this and that? Should I do a mantra, should I close my eyes? Should I leave my wife and children, because they lead me into the future -- I have to think about them? Should I go to the Himalayas?" But these are all future ideas! "Should I go to the

Himalayas?" -- the Himalayas is in the fu-ture. "Should I attain to satori?" -- this is again the future. Rather than understanding, you immediately create desire.

You ask: THE CONTEMPORARY IDEAL OF LIVING COMPLETELY WITHIN THE PRESENT MOMENT, NO LESS THAN THE CLASSICAL MYSTICAL NOTION OF LIVING TOTALLY WITHIN THE DIVINE ETERNAL, IS AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT IS INHUMAN.

If you make it an ideal, it is inhuman AND impossible. And it will destroy you. All ideals are destructive, and all idealists are the poisoners of humanity. Beware of them!

Live a simple, ordinary life -- a day to day existence. Feeling hungry, eat; feeling sleepy, sleep; feeling loving, love. Don't hanker for anything perfect. Perfection is impossible. And don't start creating a new ideal out of this simple fact.

For example, Zen Masters say, "How marvellous! I carry fuel, I draw water from the well." Now this is a simple statement of a fact. The Master is carrying wood from the forest and he says, "How marvellous! This moment -- this precious moment -- the sun rising, the birds singing, the green all around, the flowers blooming, the fragrance of grass in the air, and I am carrying wood to the ashram. How wonderful! How beautiful this moment, this diamond-like moment!"

Now you can make an ideal out of it. You may not be a woodcutter. You may be a professor in the university. You renounce your post; you say, "I am going to be a woodcutter -- I will go to the forest. I will cut wood and I will carry fuel. And I'm going to feel 'How wonderful!'"

Now you will miss. Now you will go to the forest, you will cut wood, but you will miss the whole point. Cutting wood you will be thinking, "When is it going to happen? It has not happened yet. That feeling has not yet exploded -- How wondrous!" And you are waiting all around, and you look at the sun, and you look at the trees, but they look like ordinary trees, and the sun is ordinary, and the birds -- the same old, stupid birds chattering. And, yes, the grass is green, but so what! -- grass has always been green. You know all the poetry about grass, you are a professor; and you know all the great paintings, so what is new? You look all around and it is not happening. And you go on chopping wood. And you have never chopped wood; you start feeling tired. You look all around and there seems to be no wonder happening. And you say, "How miserable! Nothing is happening! This Zen Master cheated deceived me. What is there to call wondrous?"

No, you miss the point. The Master has not cheated you. He is not saying you should become a woodcutter. Remain a professor! People are as beautiful as trees. Young people are as beautiful as young grass. Go on teaching! Teaching is AS wondrous as carrying fuel. The Master was simply saying that whatsoever you are doing, if you are utterly there, the mind not wavering anywhere else... then suddenly the beauty is there, the benediction is there. The benediction is part of being present.

But don't make an ideal out of it! Thousands of people renounced their homes and became Buddhist monks when Buddha walked and he talked about "How wondrous!" But I don't think they arrived anywhere. They renounced the world, but it was a desire. Buddha had renounced the world for a totally different reason: the desire had been understood. See the point!

Buddha renounced the world seeing the futility of desire. Seeing that desire cannot lead anywhere -- it leads into misery and hell again and again -- seeing it there, seeing the whole

mechanism of it, seeing the repetitious wheel of many lives, seeing that all that you can do you have done, but where is bliss? where is equilibrium? where is that benediction? where is real life?... seeing that not even for a single moment has that happened, he renounced the world.

That renunciation came out of understanding. When he renounced the world and became a Buddha... and naturally he had great grace, great joy around him, great silence, so wherever he moved many people became desirous. They saw this man walking: "So this man has arrived, so THIS is the way to arrive." They are not yet finished with desire. They have created a new desire. Looking at Buddha they have become LUSTFUL for Buddhahood!

It is almost the same. You see a Cadillac car passing by, and a desire arises -- you should own it. It is nothing different! You see a Buddha passing by, and a desire arises -- "Why should not I have this grace? Why should not I have this calm, quiet silence? Why should not I be so joyful as Buddha IS? Why not I?" Desire has arisen. It is the same desire!

Seeing a beautiful woman pass by with somebody else -- somebody else's wife -- and a desire starts lingering inside: "Why should not I have a beautiful wife like that?" It is the same game played on different planes, in different ways. But the trick is the same.

So seeing a Buddha, many people became desirous. And they renounced, but they renounced for a wrong reason. Buddha's renunciation was a natural outgrowth of understanding. Their renunciation is part of the same desire. so it happens many times that they are working hard, but waiting from the corner of the eye: "When is it going to happen?" I have heard these two stories:

A monk said to Master Seijo. "I am told that a Buddha who lived in ancient times sat in meditation for ten cycles of existence and still could not realize the truth of liberation. Why was this so?"

Seijo answered him, "Your question is self-explanatory."

Again, the monk persisted, "Since the Buddha meditated, why couldn't he attain Buddhahood?"

Seijo replied, "Because he was a Buddha."

Now this is an utterly beautiful answer, and true too. Not only beautiful, but true too. Seijo makes a very shocking statement; he says, "Because he was a Buddha!" When you are a Buddha and trying to become a Buddha, you are going to fail. Buddhahood is not a goal, it is a recognition. It is not something that is going to happen in the future; it is not something that you have to prepare for. It is something that is already there -- only recognition is missing! Another story and you will understand better:

An old Zen story tells of a pilgrim who mounted his horse and crossed formidable mountains and swift rivers seeking a famous wise man in order to ask him how to find true enlightenment. After months of searching, the pilgrim located the teacher in a cave. The Master listened to the question and said nothing. The seeker waited.

Finally, after hours of silence, the Master looked at the steed on which the pilgrim had arrived, and asked the pilgrim why he was not looking for a horse instead of enlightenment.

The pilgrim responded that obviously he already had a horse. The Master smiled, and retreated into his cave.

Very indicative! The Master said, "Why don't you search for a horse? Why do you bother

about Buddhahood?" And the man said, "What nonsense are you talking about? The horse is already with me. I have got the horse! Why should I seek it?" And the Master didn't say anything -- he simply smiled and retreated into his cave. Finished! He had given the answer.

You are a Buddha. You cannot search for it. That is the great declaration of all the great religions -- that you are gods and goddesses in disguise, incognito. You have forgotten your own identity, you don't know who you are. Hence all seeking. And sometimes you start seeking that which you are already. Then it is impossible to find... then frustration.

Don't start seeking, just start looking at what is the case. Looking into the reality as it is, is enough. That is the meaning of Zen people when they say "Be herenow" -- look into reality. Nothing is missing, all is already here. Listening to it, please avoid creating an ideal; otherwise your ideal will mislead you.

Second thing. You say: IT RESULTS IN A DISEASED RATHER THAN A GRACEFUL PRESENT.

It does not even result in a diseased present -- because whenever the present is there, it is graceful. It cannot be diseased. That has never happened; it cannot happen in the very nature of things.

The present by its very nature is never ill, never sick. It is always the future which brings the sickness, the nausea, disturbance, distraction. No, if you make an ideal of living in the present, then it will not give you a diseased present; no, it will give you another future. And the future is always ill because the future always creates tension. The future is never relaxation.

The future is there calling you: "Do this, do that. Fulfill me." With great expectations and hopes you move towards it. Naturally, much frustration is going to happen -- because THE FUTURE NEVER COMES, SO it can NEVER be fulfilled. The tomorrow never comes -- so you can hope for tomorrow, but tomorrow when it turns up will be today. and you don't know how to live today, so again you will miss and there will be frustration, more and more. The more you desire, the more you hope, the more you will be frustrated. Hence, the future brings illness, disease.

Remember, with an ideal the present is completely forgotten. It may even be the ideal to live in the present, but any ideal as such distracts you from the present. And it is not going to happen in a diseased present rather than a graceful present, because I have never heard about a diseased present. ALL moments of present are simply graceful.

GRACEFUL EXISTENCE, YOU SAY, INTEGRATES PRESENT, PAST AND FUTURE.

You don't understand. Graceful present does not know anything of past, future or present. How can it integrate them? -- it does not know anything about them. The whole division disappears. When you are in the present, there is no past, no future -- and, of course, when there is no past, no future, how can there be present? Let it be understood! The present can exist only between past and future, just in the middle of it. It is a middle term. Drop past, drop future -- where can you put your present? It disappears.

The REAL present cannot even be called present... it is eternity, it is timelessness.

So don't say that it will be a synthesis -- a graceful integration. Integration of what? The past is not! How can you integrate something which is not? And the future is not! How can you integrate something which is not? And because of the past and the future, the illusion of

the present is created. How can you integrate an illusion? No, they simply disappear, they are not found any more.

And when they are not found, there is grace, because divisions disappear. Conflicts, antagonisms in your being, splits in your being disappear -- suddenly you are harmonious, you are one. You start humming in a unison. A song arises out of you which knows nothing of the past and nothing of the future, and nothing of the present either! A song untouched by time. That's why all the old scriptures say God is beyond time, SAMADHI is beyond time.

The second question:

WHAT IS THE PATH TO ETERNAL LIGHT? CAN AN ALCOHOLIC TAKE SANNYAS? WHAT IS THE POINT IN SANNYAS?

FIRST: WHAT IS THE PATH TO ETERNAL LIGHT? There is no path. Reality is absolutely pathless. If you start seeking for a path, you are looking for a goal. The path presupposes the goal. Without the goal you cannot have a path. The goal presupposes a desiring mind, and the desiring mind is the world -- the world of darkness, misery, hell.

Don't ask about the path. Zen is the pathless path; hence, the paradox.

You ask: WHAT IS THE PATH TO ETERNAL LIGHT?

Let me tell you two anecdotes:

We never leave the Way for a moment, says Zen, and what we can leave is not the Way. Morning and evening, living and dying, we can never go from it an inch or a second. In China was the brilliant Zen Master, Joshu, and one day a monk asked him, "What is it, the Way?"

"Outside the fence there," said Joshu immediately. "The way? Oh yes, there it is, outside the fence."

But from the monk's side, "Why no, that's not what I am asking about, that little way outside the fence." The monk says, "What is it, the Great Way, I mean?"

He means the Great Way of the universe, what you mean by 'the path to eternal light'. He says, "I am not talking about this small way beyond the fence. Don't talk stupidly! I am talking about the Great Way, Tao, Dhamma. I am talking about the Way to God!"

Now Joshu says: "The great way is the one leading to the capital."

The superhighway. Joshu is joking, but with great compassion in it. He is saying, "Don't ask about the Way, because ALL ways lead astray." The way means you are going somewhere else; you are leaving the place where you are -- and God is there! And truth is THERE where you are; and you are going astray, you are going away. And you are asking for a very speedy method to attain to the goal. And the goal you have never missed for a single moment.

Hence they say:

We never leave the Way for a moment. What we can leave is not the Way. Morning and evening, living and dying, we can never go from it an inch or a second.

It is impossible to go away from God. Many people come to me and they ask, "Where to

find God?" And I ask them, "Where have you lost Him? Where did you lose contact? Where?" They look a little puzzled.

You cannot leave God. God is your life. You breathe in Him, your heart beats in Him, your pulse pulsates in Him. You are born in Him and you will die in Him. How can you leave Him? It is impossible to leave God. The moment you leave God you are no more alive -- God is life.

But the word creates the problem. That's why I say it is better to use the word 'Life' with a capital L than 'God', because then you will not ask the foolish question: "What is the Way to Life?" -- mm? -- it will look absurd. You can ask the foolish question: "What is the way to God, eternal light?" And what is happening here? Can't you see everything is eternal? This moment eternity is contained in it? The whole that has been and the whole that will ever be is contained in this moment? What more eternity do you want?

Don't be greedy. And this greed will create trouble for you. It will create eternal anxiety.

You ask: WHAT IS THE PATH TO ETERNAL LIGHT?

There is no darkness! EVEN DARKNESS IS LIGHT; YOU just need to have eyes to see -- even darkness is light. Don't you see the owls in the night seeing perfectly well? They have eyes to see.

There was one Indian mystic, the founder of a system of philosophy, Vashishta. He has many names; Indians give many names to people they love. One name is tremendously significant. That name is: OULUKYA -- The Owl. Looks very strange to call a great mystic The Owl. Another name of Vashishta is: OULUKYA DARSHAN -- the philosophy of The Owl. Why? Why is this man known as The Owl.

He is known as The Owl because even in darkness he could see light; even in the world, God; even in death, the eternal; even in the moment, the infinite; even in the body, the bodiless, even in misery, the blissful. Because he could see so deep, hence the symbolic name: Oulukya -- The Owl.

I love that name. We have given very beautiful names to Buddha, to Mahavir, but nothing to compare -- this is unique: The Owl. Yes, a man of understanding becomes an owl. Even in the negative he can see the positive. Then the world is no more the world, it becomes divine. Then the ordinary is no more the ordinary, it becomes luminous with the extraordinary. Then very ordinary moments are wondrous, mysterious.

So don't look somewhere far away in the distant, and don't ask "What is the path to eternal light?" The eternal light is herenow. Where are you going? If you go anywhere, you will be going away from this eternal light. The eternal light is in YOU! Right this moment you are at the source! This has to be hammered into you as many times as possible -- that you are right now at the very source and you have never left it for a single moment. Just recognize it, just open your eyes and see it!

In ancient India, there was one of Buddha's disciples, Vasubandhu. He was known to be a very very holy man. He was honoured by all for his strict observance of discipline, long hours of prayer, purity and renunciation.

He was a great ascetic -- the greatest amongst Buddha's disciples.

To remove this one-sided view, the patriarch Gayata asked one of the disciples of

Vasubandhu...

... this Gayata was one of the enlightened disciples of Buddha. This Gayata was not as well-known as Vasubandhu, because people become interested in foolish things. Who bothers about enlightenment? If you become enlightened, no newspaper is going to cover it. If you murder somebody, certainly you will be covered. If you become a great ascetic -- if you torture your body, every morning you whip yourself -- then you are going to become headline news.

So Vasubandhu was known very much as the greatest holy man -- and he was not yet enlightened. Gayata was not known; only known to a few people who could understand and who could see. Gayata wanted to remove this one-sided view of Vasubandhu -- this sadistic, masochistic approach towards life. He wanted to make him alert that "You are just doing unnecessary things. God is already there! You need not starve yourself. You can feed yourself -- you will not miss God. God is not against food. You can sleep well and you will not miss God; sleep is perfectly spiritual. And you can wear clothes when it is cold, and you can sit under the shade when it is hot -- and this will be respectful towards the God that is abiding in you. In fact, this is disrespectful when the God wants to come under the shade and you go on standing in the heat because you are an ascetic -- and the God wants to come in! And the God goes on saying 'Vasubandhu, find a shelter.' But how can you find? -- this has become an ego trip. And the God says, 'I'm feeling very hungry, Vasubandhu.' But you say, 'Keep quiet! You Satan, keep quiet! You Devil, don't come in my way and don't disturb me. I am an ascetic and today is my fasting day.'"

Many times you misunderstand God's voice as the Devil's. Always remember: the natural is divine. Never call it devilish. Almost always you call it devilish. The natural is divine; the unnatural is devilish.

Gayata must have watched it happening again and again and he must have become concerned: "This poor man is becoming by and by more famous" -- and the more famous you become, the more difficult it becomes to get down from your trip.

So Gayata asked one of the disciples of Vasubandhu...

Vasubandhu had many disciples. Naturally, whenever you do something strange, something stupid, you will find disciples. If you are very sane, it is very difficult to find disciples, very very difficult. If you do something insane, people become interested, they become intrigued.

He asked one of the disciples of Vasubandhu, "Will he reach Buddhahood by these austerities and earnest discipline?"

The disciple answered, "With such devotion, how could our teacher not attain Buddhahood?"

Gayata said, "Your teacher is far from the Way. However much and however long he does these practices, it is all only an empty fancy."

The disciple asked, "Then by what practice does Your Holiness acquire merit, that you criticize our teacher?"

The patriarch Gayata replied, "I neither seek the Way nor fall into contrary views, neither humbly worship the Buddha nor become proud, neither practise long meditations nor become neglectful, neither fast nor overeat. I am neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, there is no desire in

my mind. THIS IS WHAT IS CALLED THE WAY."

He is saying here plainly that it is not a question of seeking the Way, since we already have it, but that perfection is merely to ALLOW it.

Remember this parable. Gayata says, "I don't go to the extremes, I remain in the middle. I don't fast, I don't eat too much. I don't move to the extreme, to the excess; I remain calm and quiet and cool in the middle. I am not proud, I am not humble." A tremendously beautiful statement: "I am not proud, I am not humble."

The humble man is just the proud man standing upside down. Humbleness is a form of arrogance, upside down, in the reverse order, in the reverse gear -- but it is the same car. The car has not changed. First you want to prove to the world that "I am somebody." Then one day you start proving that "I am nobody." But you are still proving, you still continue proving that "I am nobody."

But the idea that "I am nobody -- humble, dust of your feet" is still a claim, and there is some ego hiding behind it. The humblest person carries the most subtle ego. Watch the so-called humble people -- people who think they are humble -- and you will see a very very subtle ego hiding behind their facade.

Gayata said, "I am neither humble nor proud; I neither practise long meditations nor become neglectful. I am neither satisfied nor dissatisfied -- because there is no desire. so how can I be satisfied or unsatisfied? I am neither contented, nor discontented. I simply go on watching the games of the mind. I have no desire. THIS IS WHAT IS CALLED THE WAY."

If you can fall into this space of watchfulness, you have attained to the Way. And this watchfulness is always there -- you have just to make contact with it.

WHAT IS THE PATH TO ETERNAL LIGHT?

The path is not without, it is within. And it is not a path at all -- it is just awareness.

And the second thing you ask: CAN AN ALCOHOLIC TAKE SANNYAS?

WHY NOT? If powerholics can take, sexoholics can take, egoholics can take, why not alcoholics? These people are more dangerous people. The politician -- the powerholics -- mad, intoxicated with power, he is more dangerous. The alcoholic is not so dangerous. The alcoholic can at the most destroy himself; he is suicidal. But the politician can destroy the whole world; he is murderous. Suicide, in fact, is your freedom. If you want to kill yourself, in a free world nobody should prevent you. Why? If you don't want to live, it is for you to choose and decide; it is your life.

The alcoholic is suicidal; but the egoholic, the powerholics, they are murderous; they are the really dangerous people. And the irony is that politicians again and again say they would like to prohibit alcohol completely. They are the REALLY dangerous people. Have you ever heard of any alcoholic doing anything very wrong in the world's history? What wrong can they do? -- at the most they can fall in a gutter. So it's okay; that is their freedom. Sometimes they can shout in the night -- so what's in it?

But the people who are power-intoxicated, they are dangerous people. Do you know? -- Adolph Hitler was very much against alcohol. He was a mahatma: a non-smoker -- he never smoked, he was against smoking; a non-meateater -- which is very strange -- a vegetarian, a Jain; no alcohol, and very very disciplined. He used to get up in the BRAHMAMUHURTA,

early in the morning, his whole life. Used to go to bed early. You cannot find any fault in his character. His character is perfect -- as perfect as Mahatma Gandhi's. But then what went wrong?

Such a man of character proved to be the most dangerous man in human history. Now, if he had been a little alcoholic things would have been far better. Then he would not have risen to such power. Mm? He would have been in some gutter, he would not have risen to such power. Or if he had been fooling around with women, there would not have been much danger. What is there in it? But because he was such a man of character he led the whole world to a point where it was almost possible to destroy the whole of humanity, the whole past, the whole achievement of human consciousness. Beware of mahatmas!

Nothing wrong.... If you are a politician, I feel a little hesitant to give you sannyas. If you are an alcoholic, nothing much wrong. You can become a sannyasin. Maybe the sannyas will change your life, because an alcoholic is basically a religious man. This has to be understood.

Alcohol has something of the religious in it -- hence the appeal. What is the appeal of alcohol? It makes you forget yourself. It makes you forget your ego -- it makes you forget your misery, anxiety, worry. It takes you away from the world; the world is really hell. It gives you a private door to enter into another world. At least for a few moments, a few hours, you are no more part of this ugly affair; you live in a private fancy. It gives you a dream.

Hence, all the religions are against alcohol because it is competitive. Religion ALSO gives you another door to escape from the world. Religion also makes techniques available to you so that you can drop your ego, but permanently. What alcohol can do only temporarily, religion helps to do permanently. Religion can help you so much that not only is the worry forgotten but dropped. Alcohol is a very temporary measure. Hence the competition.

My own understanding about alcohol is that all the religions have been against it because they see the point: this is the competitor. If people become alcoholics they don't bother about religion; they have found a private technique of their own. Why should they bother about Mahavir and his meditations, and Buddha and his meditations? -- and they take a long time and they are arduous. They have found a shortcut! They go to the pub and it is okay. For those few moments they are Buddhas.

I have heard about a man who was a soldier in the army -- a drunkard. The general called him once, because he was a very good man, loved by everybody, and the general said, "Listen, you are such a good person. You are loved by everybody. Why don't you drop this drinking? If you had dropped this drinking, by now you would have been a captain."

The man laughed; he said, "You are telling me? When I drink I am the general! Who bothers? Captain...? Every night when I am in it, I am the general -- and you are persuading me to be the captain?"

Alcohol is a private door to religion. Not a very good door, very temporary, momentary. But my understanding is that humanity will remain alcoholic till religion becomes its alcohol. Till more and more people come to religion, alcohol is going to remain; alcohol cannot disappear from the world. I am not against alcohol; I am all for bringing people towards religion, towards meditation, prayer. Once they start entering into prayer, once they have the real thing, they will drop alcohol. But the real thing has to happen first.

And I am not saying that first you drop out of your drinking habits. That is not possible. I don't demand anything impossible. I accept your limitations. I have so much respect for you that I respect your limitations. I have no condemnation in me. If you are an alcoholic, I

understand. I feel sorry for you, I feel compassion for you. I know you must be in trouble; you must be in worries, sadness, misery. Life must be getting too much. It must be getting on your nerves. The alcohol gives you a kind of relaxation .

For the moment nothing is wrong. It's okay. But start searching for the real thing, for the real coin -- that's what sannyas is. Start searching for real meditative states when the ego disappears. When the ego disappears you will not need alcohol. For what? My own observation has been this: that people, once they start getting into meditation, find it impossible to drink. By and by, it becomes a great problem for them, because whenever they drink, they lose all that they attain through meditation. Whenever they drink, they forget all the bliss that comes through meditation.

Alcohol is a technique for forgetfulness. If you are miserable it helps you to forget misery. If you are blissful it helps you to forget your blissfulness. So the whole technique, my technique is, first to make you a little more happy. Once you are happy, then it is your choice; I don't bother about it. I don't ask you to drop it. I say, "Now it is your choice." If you become a little happy you will not go for alcohol, because the moment you drink you will forget your happiness. It brings forgetfulness, whatsoever the case is -- happy, unhappy, it brings forgetfulness. Once meditation starts flowering inside you, new spaces, new blissful spaces, it becomes impossible. Then it is for you to choose. When you have the real diamond, I don't think you are going to go for the artificial one.

And you ask me: WHAT IS THE POINT IN SANNYAS?

Exactly the same that you are searching in alcohol. Exactly, precisely the same. But the alcohol can create only an illusion, and sannyas will give you the real thing.

The fourth question:

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO DROP SEX BY GOING THROUGH IT? IT SEEMS MY MIND AND BODY WILL NEVER STOP ASKING FOR IT?

BUT WHY ARE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY TO DROP IT? If you are in such a hurry to drop it, you will never be able to drop it. The very hurry, the very desire to drop it, will not allow you to understand it totally. How can you understand something which you have already decided is wrong, that it has to be dropped? You have already judged, you have not listened! Give a chance to your sexuality.

I have heard Mulla Nasruddin was made a Justice of the Peace. The first case came into court and he heard one party. Then he said, "Wait, now listen to my judgement." The court clerk was puzzled because he had not yet heard the opposite party.

He leaned close to Nasruddin and said, "What are you doing, sir? Judgement? -- you have not heard the other one!"

Nasruddin said, "What do you mean -- the other one? Do you want to confuse me? Now things are clear! And if I hear the other one I am going to be confused. Then judgement will be very difficult."

But will it be a judgement? You have not heard the other party at all. You have heard your so-called saints down the ages -- they are very vocal. Their whole sex energy has become their articulateness against sex -- you have heard them. You have never given a

chance to your own sexuality to have its say. No, this will not be right. You are prejudiced. Why? Who knows? It may not be the thing to be dropped. Then...? Who knows? It may be the right thing to go on carrying it.

Remain open. I'm not saying anything. Remain open. Meditate deeply. While you are making love, let meditateness penetrate your love act. Watch! And forget all the prejudices that you have been brought up with -- all those conditionings against sex make you more sexual than you think sexuality is milking you. It is not sex energy itself which is the problem. It is the anti-sexual mind that creates perversion.

All the religions have been sources of perversion. When I say all the religions, I don't mean Buddha, I don't mean Mahavir, I don't mean Krishna, I don't mean Christ or Mohammed; I mean the followers. They have been the source -- a great source.

And what happened really? They watched Buddha and they saw that sex had disappeared, so they made it a dictum that sex has to disappear. You can only become a Buddha when sex disappears -- they made a dictum, they made it a rule. And this is just putting things in a wrong order. Sex disappears because Buddha has come to his inner source, not the other way round. Not that he has dropped sex and that's why he has become a Buddha. He has become a Buddha, hence sex has disappeared.

But from the outside people watched Buddha and they saw sex had disappeared -- so drop sex if you want to become a Buddha. Buddha is not interested in money, so they thought, "Become disinterested in money if you want to become a Buddha."

But these are all wrong approaches! This is not looking for the cause, but misunderstanding the effect as the cause. The cause is inside Buddhahood. He has become awakened to his inner being. When one becomes awakened to one's inner being, one is so blissful that who bothers about sex? Who begs for small moments of pleasure from somebody else? Who goes begging? When you are the emperor and you have the treasure, the infinite treasure, within yourself, you will not go to ask a woman, you will not go to ask a man, to give you a few moments of pleasure. And you know that she is begging and you are begging -- both are beggars standing before each other with their begging bowls: "You give me a few moments of pleasure, I will give you a few moments of pleasure." And both are beggars! How can beggars give?

But I'm not saying something is wrong in it. While Buddhahood has not yet happened to you, all things will continue. Nothing is wrong. For the moment, don't judge. Judgement is wrong. You become more watchful, more accepting, more relaxed with your energies. Otherwise you will be in the trouble Christian saints have been in down the ages.

I have heard about Jerome, a very famous Christian saint. He was so much against the body that he used to whip his body every day. Blood would flow from his body, and thousands of people would come to see this great austerity. Now both are ill: Jerome is a masochist, and the people who gather together to see this great phenomenon are sadists. They want to torture people, they have a great desire to torture. They cannot, and this man is doing it on his own -- they are very happy watching it. Both are pathological.

Jerome condemned the body as the 'vile body', the 'sack of excrement'. He was tormented in his cave by visions of bebies of girls. He grudgingly permitted marriage, very grudgingly -- because it was the only way of producing virgins. The reason is: virgins -- the most perfect beings on the earth. So it is a necessary evil, that's why he permitted marriage; otherwise, it is a sin.

Another, Clement of Alexandria, wrote: "Every woman should be overwhelmed with

shame at the thought that she is a woman -- because she is the door to hell."

I have always been surprised by these people. If woman is the door to hell, then no woman can enter hell -- the door cannot enter itself. Man can enter through the woman into hell, okay; and what about woman? They must be all in heaven. Naturally! And what about man? If woman is the door to hell, then what about man? -- because these scriptures have been written by men, and all these saints were men. In fact, women have never been so neurotic; that's why you don't hear of many women saints. They have been more normal, they have been more down-to-earth. They have not been so foolish as man has proved. They are more graceful and more round in their being, more rooted in the earth, more centered. Hence, you don't hear about many women like Clement of Alexandria -- you cannot find a parallel woman. No woman has ever said that man is the door to hell.

And it is not that women have never been mystics. No, there was Meera, and there was Rabiya, and there was Lalla in Kashmir -- but they have never said anything like this. On the contrary, Meera said that love is the door to God.

And another saint, Origen, castrated himself. Murderers, suicidal people! All this repression created great pathology in the Christian world.

A nun, Machthild of Magdeburg, felt God's hand fondling her bosom. Now why give God such trouble? But if you avoid men, then you will start creating fantasies. Then you will have to put too much into your fantasies.

Christine Ebner, another woman nun, believed herself with a child by Jesus.

There were monks who dreamed of copulating with the Virgin Mary. And because of great repression, the convents and monasteries became the visiting places of the so-called evil spirits. These demons took the form either of SUCCUBI -- beautiful girls who jumped into the beds of would-be male saints -- or INCUBI -- handsome young men who interrupted the slumber or meditations of the most respectable nuns.

Such pathology arose in Christianity that people started dreaming all kinds of things. And many nuns confessed in the courts that the Devil came in the night and made love to them. They even described the Devil's physiology, what kind of sexual organ he has: forked, so that it enters both the holes.

Pathology, ill people, gone neurotic! And those nuns confessed in the courts that once you have made love to the Devil then no man can ever satisfy you -- he is the greatest lover, he brings such orgasms.

This nonsense happened, not only in Christianity -- it happened all over the world. But Christianity comes to the topmost in it.

Please, don't be against sex, otherwise you will fall into the trap of sex more and more. If you want to get rid of it, you will never get rid of it. Yes, there is a point of transcendence when sex disappears, but it is not that you are against it. It disappears only when you find better blessings arising inside your being. Never before it. The higher has to be found first, then the lower disappears of its own accord.

Let it be a fundamental rule in your life: Never be against the lower -- SEARCH for the higher. NEVER be against the lower, search for the higher. And the moment the higher dawns on you, suddenly you will see that the interest in the lower has disappeared.

You ask: IS IT POSSIBLE, REALLY POSSIBLE, TO DROP SEX BY GOING THROUGH IT?

I'm not saying that. I'm saying that if you go through it you will be able to understand it. Understanding is freedom, understanding liberates.

I'm not against sex, so don't be in a hurry that you have to drop it. If you WANT to drop it, how can you understand it? And if you DON'T understand it, it will never disappear! And when it disappears, it is not that sex is simply cut off from your being, it is not that you become a non-sexual being. When sex disappears, in fact you become more sensuous than ever, because the whole energy is absorbed by your being.

A Buddha is more sensuous than you are. When HE smells, he smells more intensely than you smell. When HE touches, he touches more totally than you touch. When he looks at the flowers, he sees the flowers more beautiful than you can see -- because his whole sexual energy has spread all over his senses. It is no longer localized in the genitals, it has gone all over the body. Hence, Buddha is so beautiful -- the grace, the unearthly grace -- from where is it coming? It is SEX -- transformed, transfigured. It is the same mud that you were decrying and condemning which has become a lotus flower.

So never be against sex; it is going to become your lotus flower. And when sex is really transfigured, then you understand what a great gift sex was from God to you. It is your whole life, it is your whole energy. On the lower planes, on the higher planes -- it is the only energy you have got. So don't carry any antagonism, otherwise you will become repressive. And a man who represses cannot understand. And a man who cannot understand is never transfigured, never transformed.

The last question:

OSHO, PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT IT MEANS TO TAKE SANNYAS. YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MANY UNDERSTANDINGS AND OPENED NEW PATHS FOR ME. AS I LISTEN TO YOU, I LOVE YOUR VOICE. AND ALWAYS YOUR PICTURES GIVE ME A STRENGTH AND A FEELING OF THE FULLNESS OF BEAUTY, THE JOY, THE SORROW OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE, OF YOU AND OF ME. I FEEL YOU ARE MY MASTER AND IN A SENSE MY BELOVED. BUT, YOU SEE, WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS THIS: I FEEL ALSO I RECEIVE ANSWERS FROM THE TREES, THE CLOUDS, THE STONES.... I FEEL YOU ARE THEM... THEY ARE YOU... AND ME ALSO... WE ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER. SO WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND FOR MY EXPERIENCE IS THAT TO TAKE SANNYAS MEANS TO ME TO CHOOSE YOU OVER THE REST OR TO CHOOSE A PART OF THE WHOLE. BUT YET I FEEL YOU ARE THE WHOLE TOO.

I CAN UNDERSTAND. Whenever the idea of taking a jump into the unknown arises, one has to face a thousand and one problems

You ask me: PLEASE EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT IT MEANS TO TAKE SANNYAS.

There is no way to explain it. You can experience it by taking it. It cannot be explained. If I explain it, it is not going to sink into your heart. It is something that you have to taste; it is something existential. It is like love. You cannot explain to a person what love is if he has not known love himself or herself. You can explain and explain, and still nothing will be

explained. The man who has not known love can go on repeating the word 'love' but will not know exactly what it is.

Sannyas is a love affair. And the one who has asked this question, Patricia, is already in love with me. But love creates great anxiety too, because love demands. Love takes you on a journey into the unknown. I would like to explain it to you but I cannot, because the very nature of it prohibits that. You will have to move into it to know about it.

There are two kinds of knowledge in the world. One is what Bertrand Russell calls 'acquaintance'. Sannyas can never be covered by that kind of knowledge. The other is knowing through love. Sannyas can be covered only by that kind of knowing.

Bodhidharma has said there are two doors to truth: one, the outer door; and the other, the inner. The outer door goes on round and round and round, about and about, and never reaches anywhere. That is the way of philosophy. The other door is of religion. It is an inner door; it does not go roundabout, it simply hits the target and disappears into the target. Only it knows.

You will have to experience it And you are on the verge of it already, and I know you cannot escape. There is no way to escape now. You have passed that point from where a person can escape. You are already trapped, Patricia.

You say: YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MANY UNDERSTANDINGS....

Many more are waiting. And the understandings that I have given to you are nothing compared to the understandings that are still waiting for you. I have given that which can be given through the word, now you have to take that which can only be given through silence. Sannyas is a communion in silence.

Buddha came one day with a lotus flower in his hand and sat silently. The monks had gathered to listen -- ten thousand -- and they became puzzled and restless. He would not speak -- he was just sitting and looking at the flower. Minutes passed and the hour passed, and then Mahakashyap, one of his disciples, started laughing loudly, madly.

Buddha looked at Mahakashyap, called him, gave him the flower and told the assembly, "That which can be said through words I have given to you all, and that which cannot be given through words I give to Mahakashyap."

Mahakashyap became the first Zen Master.

What was given to Mahakashyap? Mahakashyap was initiated into something unknown, which is not definable, which cannot be uttered in words; which cannot be explained but which can be understood.

Sannyas is a transference of something beyond words, a transmission beyond scriptures.

Patricia, many understandings have come to you, but they are still all intellectual. Something more..something more vital, something more existential I am carrying for you, and waiting. That can happen only through sannyas.

Sannyas is a gesture from your side that you leave yourself defenseless, that you will not defend, that you will remain vulnerable to me. That even if I am going to kill you, you will be ready to be killed -- with gratitude. That's what sannyas is. Sannyas is trust.

Right now whatsoever you have understood, YOU have understood. You trust yourself. Sannyas is trusting me. If you go on trusting yourself, you can go on to a certain extent, but not beyond that.

YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MANY UNDERSTANDINGS AND OPENED NEW PATHS...

But THE path is still not opened. Paths I have opened. They are small paths outside the fence, and the one that goes to the capital. But THE PATH, THE PATHLESS PATH, has still to be opened -- and that can be opened only when I am allowed to touch your very being. Sannyas is to open your heart to me, with no condition.

AS I LISTEN TO YOUR TAPE, I LOVE YOUR VOICE....

You will have to love my silence too. Voice will convey something, but not all.

AND ALWAYS YOUR PICTURES GIVE ME A STRENGTH AND A FEELING OF THE FULLNESS OF BEAUTY, THE JOY, THE SORROW OF THE WHOLE UNIVERSE, OF YOU AND OF ME.

If the picture is doing that, then why are you going to miss the real? If the picture is doing that, why not enter into the real too? With the picture there is one simple thing: you are the master. You can put my picture anywhere you want, you can hang it on the wall, you can throw it -- you are the master. With the picture you are at ease. That's why when Buddhas are alive, people avoid them; and when they are gone, they worship their statues for millions of years. The same people avoided the alive Buddha and go on worshipping the statue. Why? With the statue you are the master, with a real Buddha you are not.

It happened: a woman came to Picasso and said, "Just the other day I saw your self-portrait in some friend's house. It was really beautiful. I loved it. It was so real I could almost feel you in it. And I loved it so much, I was so fascinated, that I even kissed it."

Picasso said, "And did it kiss you back?"

The woman said, "What are you saying! How can the picture kiss me back?"
So Picasso said, "Then it was not me."

Patricia, you can go on playing with pictures. That is not me! They will not kiss you back. You can go on kissing them.... To be a sannyasin means to allow MY kiss. It is a death kiss -- it sure kills, it never fails.

I FEEL YOU ARE MY MASTER AND IN A SENSE MY BELOVED.

But it is still YOUR feeling; you have not done anything about it still. The feeling won't do. You have to do something very very actual about it. It is just a feeling.

I FEEL YOU ARE MY MASTER...

Then why are you waiting? Then let the Master be the Master and let the disciple be the disciple. Then why go on protecting and defending yourself?

I FEEL YOU ARE MY MASTER AND IN A SENSE MY BELOVED.

Yes, it is still 'in a sense'. Come closer, become a sannyasin and let it be in all senses. Let it be total. You have to surrender to a Master -- not partially. A partial surrender is not a

surrender at all. It has to be total, only then it is.

BUT, YOU SEE, WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS THIS: I FEEL ALSO I RECEIVE ANSWERS FROM THE TREES, THE CLOUDS, THE STONES.... I FEEL YOU ARE THEM... THEY ARE YOU... AND ME ALSO... WE ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER.

True, but the trees won't give you sannyas, and the clouds won't create any trouble for you. I am going to create trouble. With trees it is perfectly okay. In fact, when you get something from the trees it is not really from the trees. First you put something in the trees and then you get it back. It is a game. You put something in the clouds and you get it back. It is your own ego. It is good, it is very poetic.

With me, it is not so. I have something to give to you, and I know that when I really start pouring it, people become afraid; they don't want to have it, because to have it means to disappear utterly into it. It is a death. The resurrection follows it, certainly! But who knows about the resurrection? First the death comes.

I FEEL YOU ARE THEM... THEY ARE YOU... AND ME ALSO... WE ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER.

Patricia, you are a poet. Good! But I would like you to become a mystic. You are too much involved with the feeling. Thinking is the farthest, feeling is closer to home. The philosopher is the farthest, the poet is closer to home; but, still, not exactly at home. Thinking, feeling, being -- to be a sannyasin is to learn the language of being. It goes far beyond feeling. Certainly it goes beyond thinking, and it goes beyond feeling. The head has to disappear, but there comes a moment when the heart also has to disappear. Only then God is.

SO WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND FOR MY EXPERIENCE IS THAT TO TAKE SANNYAS MEANS TO ME TO CHOOSE YOU OVER THE REST, OR TO CHOOSE A PART OF THE WHOLE....

You are looking at it from a very very wrong angle. You don't know what the whole is. I can become the door to the whole. I'm not going to let you cling to me! You have simply to pass through me and go beyond. You are not choosing me against the whole: you are choosing the whole through me! And because right now you cannot go directly to the whole, a Master is needed. It is just like when a small child wants to walk. He has the capacity to walk and one day it will become actual. It is right now potential, he needs the mother's hand. With the mother's hand he starts gaining courage, confidence.

Let my hand be just your mother's hand, or your father's hand. The moment you are ready, I will be the first to withdraw my hand. And I know, as you are hesitating now, then too you will hesitate to leave it. People are always hesitating. First they hesitate to hold the hand because they are afraid their independence will be lost. And they have nothing in the name of independence but just a poor ego. And when I start withdrawing my hand, then they will start crying and weeping and they will say, "Don't leave us!"

But I have to do both. One day I have to hold your hand and one day I have to leave it. The day I feel, "Now you are ready to go into the whole without me," I will be the happiest person in the world to help you to go into it. It is not a question of choosing between the

whole and the part. And because you have a feel for me, you can understand that too.

That's why you say: BUT YET I FEEL YOU ARE THE WHOLE.

But it is still a feeling. Let it become an existential experience. The question is not between choosing the whole and me; the question is between choosing you and me! That is what sannyas brings too. That's what it comes to at the very core of it. Sannyas is a question of choosing between you and me -- between the disciple and Master.

Right now, if you remain clinging to the way you have lived, you will be choosing yourself against me. That will be a poor choice, not a happy choice. You don't have anything to lose except your ignorance. You have nothing to lose but your chains, nothing to lose but your misery.

Don't miss this opportunity. It RARELY becomes available. While it is there, have courage. Take a jump! For me, you are already a sannyasin; for me, it has already happened. You may take a little time, a hesitation, a little thinking, a wavering, but it is going to happen. So don't waste much time unnecessarily. The same energy can become very creative, can give birth to a new being in you.