
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

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BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF MISCHIEF
IS ONE DAY SPENT IN CONTEMPLATION.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF IGNORANCE
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OF THE WAY BEYOND THE WAY.

Gautama the Buddha has raised the most important question for all those who are capable of inquiring into truth, into life, into existence. The most important question of all questions is: What is true happiness? And is there a possibility to achieve it? Is true happiness possible at all, or is all momentary? Is life only a dream, or is there something substantial in it too? Does life begin with birth and end with death, or is there something that transcends birth and death? Because without the eternal there is no possibility of true happiness. With the momentary, happiness will remain fleeting: one moment it is here, the other moment gone, and you are left in great despair and darkness.

That's how it is in ordinary life, in the life of the unawakened. There are moments of bliss and there are moments of misery; it is all mixed, hodge-podge. You cannot keep those moments of happiness that come to you. They come on their own and they disappear on their own; you are not the master. And you cannot avoid the moments of misery; they too have their own persistence. They come on their own and they go on their own; you are simply a victim. And between these two -- happiness and unhappiness -- you are torn apart. You are never left in ease.

This being torn apart into all kinds of dualities.... The duality of happiness and unhappiness is the most fundamental and the most symptomatic, but there are a thousand and one dualities: the duality of love and hate, the duality of life and death, day and night, summer and winter, youth and old age, and so on, so forth. But the fundamental duality, the duality that represents all other dualities, is that of happiness and unhappiness. And you are torn apart, pulled into different, polar opposite directions. You cannot be at ease: you are in a dis-ease.

According to the buddhas man is a dis-ease. Is this dis-ease absolute -- or can it be transcended?

Hence the basic and the most fundamental question is: What is true happiness? Certainly the happiness that we know is not true; it is dream stuff and it always turns into its own opposite. What looks like happiness one moment turns into unhappiness the next.

Happiness turning into unhappiness simply shows that the two are not separate -- maybe two aspects of the same coin. And if you have one side of the coin, the other is always there hidden behind it, waiting for its opportunity to assert -- and you know it. When you are happy, deep down somewhere is the lurking fear that it is not going to last, that sooner or later it will be gone, that the night is descending, that any moment you will be engulfed into darkness, that this light is just imaginary -- it can't help you, it can't take you to the other shore.

Your happiness is not really happiness but only a hidden unhappiness. Your love is not love but only a mask for your hate. Your compassion is nothing but your anger -- cultivated, sophisticated, educated, cultured, civilized, but your compassion is nothing else than anger. Your sensitivity is not real sensitivity but only a mental exercise, a certain attitude and approach practiced.

Remember: the whole humanity is being brought up with the idea that virtue can be practiced, that goodness can be practiced, that one can learn how to be happy, that one can manage to be happy, that it is within your power to create a certain character which brings happiness. And that is all wrong, utterly wrong.

The first thing to be understood about happiness is that it cannot be practiced. It has only to be allowed, because it is not something that you create. Whatsoever YOU create is going to remain something smaller than you, tinier than you. What YOU create cannot be bigger than you. The painting cannot be bigger than the painter himself and the poetry cannot be bigger than the poet. Your song is bound to be something smaller than you.

If you practice happiness you will be always there at the back, with all your stupidities, with all your ego trips, with all your ignorance, with all your chaos of the mind. With this chaotic mind you cannot create a cosmos, you cannot create grace. Grace always descends from the beyond; it has to be received as a gift in tremendous trust, in total surrender. In a state of let-go true happiness happens.

But we have been told to achieve, to be ambitious. Our whole mind has been cultivated to be that of an achiever. The whole education, culture, religion, they all depend on this basic idea that man has to be ambitious; only the ambitious man will be able to attain fulfillment. It has never happened, it will never happen, but so deep is the ignorance that we go on believing in this nonsense.

No ambitious person has ever been happy; in fact, the ambitious person is the unhappiest in the world. But we go on training children to be ambitious: "Be the first, be at the top, and you will be happy!" And have you ever seen anybody at the top AND happy together? Was Alexander happy when he became a world conqueror? He was one of the unhappiest men who has ever lived on the earth. Seeing the blissfulness of Diogenes he became jealous. Becoming jealous of a beggar...?

Diogenes was a beggar; he had nothing, not even a begging bowl. At least Buddha had a begging bowl with him and three robes. Diogenes was naked and with no begging bowl. In the beginning he used to carry a begging bowl; he must have got the idea from the East. He's exactly a man like Buddha, Mahavira -- more like Mahavira. Mahavira also lived naked with no begging bowl; his hands were his begging bowl.

Diogenes was going to the river one day with his begging bowl. He was thirsty, it was hot, and he wanted to drink water. And then on the way, just when he was on the bank, a dog passed him by, running, panting, jumped into the river, had a good bath, drank to his heart's content. The idea arose in Diogenes' mind: "This dog is freer than me -- he does not have to carry a begging bowl. And if he can manage, why can't I manage without a begging bowl? This is my only possession, and I have to keep an eye on it because it can be stolen. Even in the night once or twice I have to feel whether it is still there or gone."

He threw the begging bowl into the river, bowed down to the dog, thanked him for the great message that he had brought for him from God.

This man, who had nothing, created jealousy in Alexander's mind. How miserable he must have been! He confessed to Diogenes that, "If ever again God is giving me birth, I will ask him, 'This time, please don't make me Alexander -- make me Diogenes.'"

Diogenes laughed uproariously, and he called the dog -- because they had become friends by now, they had started living together -- he called the dog and he said, "Look, listen, what nonsense he is talking about! NEXT life he wants to be Diogenes! Why next life? Why postpone? Who knows about the next life? Even the next day is uncertain, the next moment is not certain -- what to say about the next life! If you really want to be a Diogenes, you can be right this moment, herenow. Throw your clothes into the river! Forget all about conquering the world! That is sheer stupidity and you know it.

"And you have confessed that you are miserable, and you have confessed that Diogenes is in

a far better, more blissful state. So why not be a Diogenes right now? Lie down on the bank of the river where I am taking my sunbath! This bank is big enough for both of us."

Alexander could not accept the invitation, of course. He said, "Thank you for your invitation. Right now I cannot do it, but next life...."

Diogenes asked him, "Where are you going? And what will you do even if you have conquered the world?"

Alexander said, "Then I will rest."

Diogenes said, "This seems to be absolutely absurd -- because I am resting right now!"

If Alexander is not happy, if Adolf Hitler is not happy, if Rockefellers and Carnegies are not happy, the people who have all the money of the world, if they are not happy, the people who have all the power in the world, if they are not happy....

Have you watched Jimmy Carter's photographs? All the smile has disappeared now; now those teeth are not showing. He had really a beautiful smile, but where has it all gone? He must have been far happier than he is now. Every day his face is becoming more and more sad; more and more anxiety, anguish, is being shown.

Just this morning I looked in the latest TIME. His face seems to have become too old just within these two years, as if he has aged twenty years. He must be suffering from nightmares. Where are all those hopes that he will be happy when he becomes the president?

Just watch people who have succeeded in the world and you will drop the idea of success. Nothing fails like success. Although you have been told that nothing succeeds like success, I say to you that nothing fails like success. Happiness has nothing to do with success, happiness has nothing to do with ambition, happiness has nothing to do with money, power, prestige. It is a totally different dimension.

Happiness has something to do with your consciousness, not with your character. Let me remind you. Character is again cultivation. You can become a saint and still you will not be happy, if your sainthood is nothing but a practiced sainthood. And that's how people become saints, Catholics, Jainas, Hindus. How do they become saints? They practice inch by inch, in detail, when to get up, what to eat, what not to eat, when to go to bed....

These people even come here sometimes and ask me why I don't give a certain discipline to my sannyasins. I give them consciousness, not character. I don't believe in character at all. My trust is in consciousness. If a person becomes more conscious, naturally his character is transformed. But that transformation is totally different: it is not managed by the mind -- it is natural, it is spontaneous. And whenever your character is natural and spontaneous it has a beauty of its own; otherwise you can go on changing... you can drop your anger, but where will you drop it? You will have to drop it within your own unconscious. You can change one side of your life, but whatsoever you throw in will start expressing itself from some other corner. It is bound to be so. You can block a stream with a rock; it will start flowing from somewhere else -- you cannot destroy it. Anger is there because you are unconscious, greed is there because you are unconscious, possessiveness and jealousy are there because you are unconscious.

So I am not interested in changing your anger; that will be like pruning leaves of a tree and hoping that the tree will disappear one day. It is not going to be so; on the contrary, the more you prune the tree the thicker will be the foliage.

Hence your so-called saints are the unholy persons in the world, pretenders, pseudo. Yes, if you look from the outside they look very holy -- too much holy, saccharin, too sweet, sickeningly sweet, nauseating. You can only go and pay your respect to them and escape.

You can't live with your saints even for twenty-four hours -- they will bore you to death! The closer you are to them, the more puzzled, perplexed, confused you will be, because you will start seeing that from one side they have forced anger: it has entered into another side of their life.

Ordinary people are angry once in a while, and their anger is very fleeting, very momentary. Then again they are laughing, again they are friendly; they don't carry wounds too long. But your so-called saints, their anger becomes almost a permanent affair; they are simply angry, not at anything in particular. They have repressed anger so much that now they are simply angry, in a state of rage. Their eyes will show, their noses will show, their faces will show, their very way of life will show....

Lu Ting ate at a Greek restaurant because Papadopoulos, the owner, made really good fried rice. Each evening he would come in he would order "fried lice."

This always caused Papadopoulos to fall down with laughter. Sometimes he would have two or three friends standing nearby just to hear Lu Ting order his "fried lice."

Eventually the Chinese's pride was so hurt that he took a special diction lesson just to be able to say "fried rice" correctly.

The next time he went to the restaurant he said very plainly, "Fried rice, please."

Unable to believe his ears, Papadopoulos asked, "What did you say?"

Lu Ting shouted, "You heard what I said, you fluckin' Gleek!"

It won't make much difference -- from "fried lice" now it is "fluckin' Gleek"! You close one door, another immediately opens. This is not the way of transformation.

To change your character is easy; the real work consists in changing your consciousness, in becoming conscious -- more conscious, more intensely and passionately conscious. When you are conscious it is impossible to be angry, it is impossible to be greedy, it is impossible to be jealous, it is impossible to be ambitious.

And when all anger, greed, ambition, jealousy, possessiveness, lust, disappear, the energy involved in them is released. That energy becomes your bliss. Now it is not coming from outside; now it is happening inside your being, in your innermost recesses of being.

And when this energy is available you become a receptive field, you become a magnetic field. You attract the beyond -- you can call it "God." Buddha never calls it "God," he calls it "the beyond"; that is his name for God. When you become a magnetic field, when all the energy that is unnecessarily being wasted by you in your unconsciousness gathers, pools inside you, when you become a lake of energy, you start attracting the stars, you start attracting the beyond, you start attracting God himself.

And the meeting of your consciousness with the beyond is the point of bliss, true happiness. It knows nothing of unhappiness, it is pure happiness. It knows nothing of death, it is pure life. It knows nothing of darkness, it is pure light, and to know it is the goal. Gautama the Buddha went in search of this and one day, after six years' struggle, he attained to it.

You can also attain to it, but let me remind you: by saying that you can attain to it I am not creating a desire to attain it. I am simply stating a fact: that if you become a pool of immense energy, undistracted by any worldly thing, it happens. It is more a happening than a doing. And it is better to call it bliss than happiness, because happiness gives you the feeling as if it is something similar to that which you know as happiness. What you know as happiness is nothing but a relative state.

Benson went to Krantz's clothing store to buy himself a suit. He found just the style he wanted, so he took the jacket off the hanger and tried it on.

Krantz came up to him. "Yes, sir. It looks wonderful on you."
"It may look wonderful," said Benson, "but it fits terrible. The shoulders pinch."
"Put on the pants," said Krantz. "They are so tight, you will forget all about the shoulders!"

One day I saw Mulla Nasruddin walking on the road in great despair, almost ready to burst out crying. I asked him, "What is the matter? Why are you so miserable?"

He said, "My shoes are very small -- I need two sizes bigger -- and they hurt like hell."

I said, "Nasruddin, then why don't you change them?"

He said, "That I cannot do."

I asked him, "Why can't you? You have the money."

He said, "I have the money, but there is much more involved in it. The whole day I suffer from these shoes, and when in the evening I go home, I throw these shoes away and I fall on my bed... it is such a relief, as if one has come to paradise! And that is the only joy in my life! I cannot change these shoes -- in twenty-four hours that is the only moment of joy. If I change these shoes, that moment will also disappear. Then there is nothing left."

What you call happiness is just a question of relativity. What buddhas call happiness is something absolute.

An Englishman, a Frenchman, and a Russian were trying to define true happiness.

"True happiness," said the Englishman, "is when you return home tired after work and find a gin and tonic waiting for you."

"You English have no romance," countered the Frenchman. "True happiness is when you go on a business trip, find a pretty girl who entertains you, and then you part without regrets."

"You are both wrong," concluded the Russian. "Real true happiness is when you are home in bed at four o'clock in the morning and there is a hammering at the front door and there stand members of the secret police who say to you, 'Igor Zhvkovski, you are under arrest,' and you are able to reply, 'Sorry, Igor Zhvkovski lives next door!'"

Your happiness is a relative phenomenon. What Buddha calls happiness is something absolute, unrelated to anybody else. It is not in comparison with somebody else; it is simply yours, it is inner. And it is a happening: the beyond descending in you, the ocean falling into the dewdrop. And when the ocean falls in the dewdrop, the dewdrop disappears, its boundaries disappear. It becomes as unbounded as the ocean itself; it becomes oceanic.

Bliss is an oceanic state... when you disappear as an ego, bounded, small, and become huge, enormous, as huge and enormous as the universe itself.

The sutras:

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF MISCHIEF
IS ONE DAY SPENT IN CONTEMPLATION.

As far as Buddha is concerned whatsoever you are doing is mischief. Why? Even if you are doing some religious ritual it is mischief. Even if you are doing something that you think is public service it is mischief. In fact, the public servants are the greatest mischievous people in the world. If the public servants disappear from the world, the world will be a far better

place to live in. The social reformers and the political revolutionaries and the religious missionaries, these are the real mischief-mongers. They don't allow you to live in peace, they go on dragging you from one stupidity into another. Of course they keep you occupied -- that is their attraction.

You are afraid of being unoccupied because whenever you are unoccupied you have to face yourself, and that you want to avoid, because you have repressed so many uglinesses in you that to look inside is to look into hell. You don't want to look in. You are continuously escaping from yourself, so any escape is good.

Somebody says, "Become a public servant. Let service be your motto!" and you say, "Okay, so I will serve people." Whether they want to be served or not, that is not the point. Even if they don't want to be served you have to serve them against themselves. Whether they want your truth or not, that is not the point. It has to be given, it has to be forced down their throats!

That has been done by the religious people: at the point of the sword people have been converted from one religion to another religion -- against their will! They don't want to go to paradise, at least not to YOUR paradise, but you are bent upon sending them to paradise -- your compassion is such that you are ready to kill them or be killed!

A missionary was teaching in a small school and he was saying that every Christian child should make it a point that at least one act of public service should be done per week. One small boy asked, "For example, what kind of things should we do?"

The missionary gave a few examples. He said, "For example, some old woman wants to cross the street and the traffic is too much -- hold her hand, help her to cross the street." And so on, so forth.

Next Sunday he inquired, "How many of you did some act of public service?"

Three boys -- the strongest and the biggest in the class -- stood up. They said, "We did one act of public service."

The missionary was very happy. "So you say...." He asked the first boy, "What did you do?"

He said, "I helped an old woman, a very old woman, to cross the street."

He patted the boy and he said, "You are a good boy. Go on doing such good acts." He asked the next boy, "What did you do?"

He said, "I also helped a very old woman to cross the street."

The missionary was a little puzzled that both could find two very old women, but there are many old women -- it is possible. He patted the second boy also, but not so heartily. With a little suspicion he said, "Good. Go on doing."

Then he asked the third.

The third said, "I also helped a very very old woman to cross the street."

Now it was too much! Such a coincidence can't be, that three very very old women wanted to cross the street. And he asked, "What day, what time?" It was the same day and the same time and the same street! So he said, "You please explain -- how could you find three such very very old women?"

They said, "They were not three -- it was only one woman, very very old. We all three helped her."

He said, "That too is good, but were three persons needed?"

They said, "Three? Although she was old, she made so much fuss because she never wanted to go to the other side! But we DID manage. When one has to do some public act,

some public service, one has to do it. She was shouting and cursing and calling the policeman, but we were determined to do it and we did it!"

As far as Buddha is concerned, whatsoever you are doing is mischief because whatsoever you are doing is done out of unconsciousness. His definition of mischief is: any act done unconsciously. And any act done consciously is virtue.

Your life is almost a vicious circle: one mischief leads to another and that one leads to still another. Mischiefs grow out of mischiefs -- only mischiefs can grow out of mischiefs. And you go on living and moving in circles and you don't know what else to do. You do good -- at least you think you are doing good -- but the good never happens; otherwise the world would have been overflowing with good.

So many people are doing good -- parents doing good to children, and where are the good children? Husbands are doing good to wives -- and wives are really after husbands to transform them, to change them, to make them saints. But where are those husbands and where are those wives and where are those children? Everybody is trying to do good according to his own idea -- and he himself is living in deep darkness.

But the idea that "I am doing good" helps your ego to be strengthened, although you go on moving in the same circle -- because intelligence is needed to be original, to do something new. You know only a few things, a few tricks, and the older you get, the more difficult it becomes to learn new things.

They say you can't teach new tricks to old dogs....

Kramanakis immigrated to New York. He got a job through relatives who taught him to say "Apple pie and coffee" in English so he could order in a restaurant. The next day, Kramanakis walked into a diner.

"What'll you have?" asked the waitress.

"Apple-a pie anna coffee," said the immigrant.

Since that was all he could say he was forced to eat apple pie and coffee every day for a month. When he complained to his cousins, they taught him to say "ham sandwich."

Armed with the new addition to his vocabulary he said to the waitress, "Ham sandwich."

"White or rye?" asked the girl.

"Apple-a pie anna coffee," said the Greek.

Just watch your life: "Apple-a pie anna coffee, apple-a pie anna coffee...." You go on doing, repeating, the same thing, every day, day in, day out, year in, year out. Your whole life is a very small circle: the same anger, the same greed, the same fight, the same words, the same reasons, the same motives. Is this the way to grow? Is this the way to become conscious? Is this the way to know your original face? Are you hoping that moving in these small circles continuously, mechanically, robotlike, you will attain to bliss?

Drop all such hopes!

Rabbi Glucksman was seated next to a Baptist minister on a flight to New York. The stewardess approached them and said, "May I serve you a cocktail?"

"I will take a whisky sour," said the rabbi.

"And you, Reverend?" asked the hostess.

"Young lady," said the clergyman, "before I let liquor touch my lips I would just as soon commit adultery."

"Miss," said Rabbi Glucksman, "as long as there is a choice, I will have what he is having."

Not only do you go on moving in the same small circles, you repeat, you imitate other people and their stupidities. You are constantly repeating, you are constantly looking around at what is being done by whom. You don't live a life from within; you are imitators. Your whole interest is exhibition: how to show that you are better than others, how to show that you are richer than others, how to show that you are more intelligent than others. In fact, it is only the unintelligent person who ever compares himself with others. The really intelligent never compares, because each individual is unique and comparison is impossible.

Mrs. Zimmer hired an interior designer to have the house redecorated.

"Alright," said the decorator, "how would you like it done? Modern?"

"Me, modern? No!" said Mrs. Zimmer.

"How about French?"

"French? Where would I come to a French house?"

"Perhaps Italian Provincial?"

"God forbid!"

"Well, madam, what period do you want?"

"What period? I want my friends to walk in, take one look, and drop dead, period!"

People are living just to impress. They must be really very poor inside, because only people suffering from inferiority complex want to impress others. A really superior person never compares himself with anybody else. He knows he is incomparable; not only that, he knows others are also as incomparable as he is. He is neither superior nor inferior.

This tremendous revolution is possible only by one secret key, and that is becoming more alert. The more alert you are, the less you repeat. The more alert you are, you find new ways of doing things, you find new styles of living your life. The more alert you are, the more creative you are, and only creative people know what happiness is. What you create is not the point -- just being creative. It may be poetry, it may be music, it may be sculpture, it can be anything, but just the process of being creative brings you to the point where you meet God.

All the religions of the world say God is the creator. If he is really the creator, then the only way to meet him will be to become a creator in some measure. Of course you can't be a creator like God, but you can be a small creator in your own way. When the poet is creating, when the painter is creating, in those moments of creativity they are one with God. Those are the moments when they know what God is. But poets and painters and sculptors are only in those heights for moments, only for moments do they know those plenitudes.

The mystic, the buddha, the master, lives on that height twenty-four hours a day, because his creativity is subtle; his creativity is not visible, his creativity is invisible. He creates consciousness. First he creates consciousness in himself, then he starts creating consciousness in others.

That's how the master and the disciple gather together, that's how a buddhafield is created. That's how thousands of seekers surround a buddha... because he creates something that cannot be seen but can only be felt by those in whom the buddha has penetrated, in whose heart he has stirred something dormant and has made it dynamic. A buddha creates consciousness first in himself and then in those who are ready and available and trusting and surrendered.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF MISCHIEF IS ONE DAY SPENT IN

CONTEMPLATION. 'Contemplation' is not the right word; but that is a problem, how to translate Eastern insight into Western languages. Contemplation means thinking of one subject concentratedly. That is not what Buddha means when he uses the word DHYANA. Dhyana means a state of no-mind, a state of no-thought; it is just the opposite of contemplation. Contemplation cannot be the right word to translate it. But I can understand the problem, the difficulty of the translators -- there are no other words. Dhyana is one of those words which cannot be translated.

It was very intelligent of Chinese translators that they left the word unchanged. Dhyana became CH'AN in China; they never translated it. It took a little different form because dhyana is Sanskrit. Buddha used not Sanskrit but a local language of Bihar, Pali. In Pali dhyana is JHAN; in Chinese it became ch'an, left untranslated because Chinese translators came to understand that it cannot be translated; better to describe it rather than translate it. And so it happened in Japan: when it reached Japan, ch'an became Zen; first jhan and then ch'an and then Zen -- but it was left untranslated.

The best thing will be for Western languages also to leave a few words untranslated, because you don't have any equivalent, and whatsoever words you have, have their own connotations.

Dhyana is not contemplation; contemplation is the purest form of thinking. Dhyana is going beyond thought, beyond the purest even, coming to a state where all thought ceases. You are utterly conscious, but there is no content to your consciousness.

Buddha says: BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF MISCHIEF IS ONE DAY SPENT IN CONTEMPLATION. Just one day is enough; if a person can remain in dhyana for twenty-four hours that's enough -- he will become a buddha. But it is immensely difficult to remain twenty-four hours in dhyana.

Mahavira has said: Even if one can remain for forty-eight minutes -- and my calculation is also exactly the same -- if one can remain in a state of no-mind continuously for forty-eight minutes, that's enough to become enlightened.

But the ordinary mind cannot remain alert even for a few seconds, what to say of minutes! You try: just sit silently, keep a watch close by, and you will be surprised that even seconds are not without thoughts. Only once in a while for a split second there is no thought. But the moment you see there is no thought, this thought arises: you say, "Aha!" -- finished! You say, "There is no thought!" and the mind has played a trick upon you, it has come from the back door. And if you listen silently you will see the mind laughing -- it has deceived you! No-thought is still a thought, the idea of no-thought is still a thought.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF IGNORANCE
IS ONE DAY SPENT IN REFLECTION.

By "ignorance" Buddha does not mean absence of knowledge. Because the knowledgeable person is not the goal, so ignorance has to be understood in a new way -- with Buddha's meaning, with his color, with his fragrance. We call a person ignorant because he is uneducated: he cannot read, he cannot write, he does not know the three R's, he is not informed at all, he is very primitive. We call him ignorant. And we call him, the man who has a B.S., M.S., Ph.D.... and you know the meaning? B.S. means bullshit, M.S. means more of same, Ph.D. means piled high and deep. We call that man a man of knowledge. These are the people who fill our universities. And if you really want to see their faces, go and attend some convocation. Then you will see all the buffoons parading in black gowns, in strange hats....

These people are thought to be knowledgeable.

When Buddha says "ignorant" he simply means a person who does not know himself. It is not a question of becoming more informed or less informed, educated or uneducated. Kabir is not ignorant although he is uneducated. Kabir has said: MASI KAGAD CHHUYO NAHIN -- I have never touched paper or ink. And that is how it is: he never touched paper or ink, he was not able to read or write.

When somebody asked Kabir, "You can't read -- you have not read the Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, and all the great scriptures?" Kabir laughed and said, "LIKHA-LIKHI KI HAI NAHIN -- the truth has nothing to do with the scriptures because it has never been written and cannot be written. It is not written anywhere! It is unexpressed, so what is the point of reading the scriptures? The scriptures themselves say: I have heard that it cannot be expressed. Then what is the point?"

But Kabir is not ignorant. Buddha will recognize Kabir as a buddha. Kabir IS a buddha, so is Farid, so is Raidas, so is Mohammed, so is Christ. Christ is also absolutely uneducated; Mohammed is also absolutely uneducated, uninformed.

Then ignorance has a totally different meaning: not absence of the so-called knowledge but absence of self-knowledge. Not knowing oneself is ignorance. Then you can know all: you can become a walking ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, but that won't help. If you know yourself, then you are a man of wisdom.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF IGNORANCE IS ONE DAY SPENT IN REFLECTION. And reflection has to be understood literally. Again, in English reflection has the meaning of contemplation, thinking. Buddha means literally reflection -- as the moon is reflected in the lake, your face is reflected in a mirror. Be so silent, without any waves, without even a ripple; let your consciousness become a lake, utterly silent, undisturbed, so that the whole sky, the whole firmament, can be reflected in you. Being in a state of no-mind you become a mirror, you start reflecting that which is.

And that's what God is... this total existence with its immense beauty and benediction. If you are a mirror, it will be reflected in you, and that will make you wise, that will make you a master, that will make you the awakened one.

But people go on believing what others have said. Beliefs are not going to help you. Beliefs are poisonous; they keep you blind. Because of your beliefs you never inquire on your own. And your beliefs are false, they are not really trust; a belief can only be superficial. You can believe in the Gita or the Koran or the Bible, but deep down the doubt persists; it is not so easy to uproot the doubt.

The doubt is uprooted only when YOU know. How can it be uprooted if Jesus knows? How can it be uprooted if Mohammed knows? He MAY know, but who knows whether he is right or wrong, and who knows that he is not deceived, and who knows he's not deceiving others? What guarantee is there? What is the proof that Buddha is right? Except that Buddha says, "I have attained," there is no other proof. But that is going in circles, that is the question itself: How to believe that Buddha is right? And we have only one proof: Buddha says, "I have arrived." But how to believe that what he says is right?

Deep down the doubt will persist; your belief will be only a cover-up. It is like you have a wound oozing with pus, stinking, and you cover it with roses -- but deep down in the roses the pus is accumulating. The roses will not be able to transform it. They can hide it for a few moments, their fragrance may not let others know the stink that is arising out of the wound, but how long...? Sooner or later they will be stinking too! Rather than roses changing your pus, your pus will change the roses. And that's what happens: belief never transforms your

doubt, your doubt transforms your belief itself.

The young rabbi finally decided that he must talk to the richest member of his congregation, no matter how much it hurt.

"Why," asked the rabbi, "must you fall asleep when I am preaching?"

"Let me explain something," answered the millionaire. "Would I fall asleep if I did not trust you?"

That's what has happened to millions of people: they have fallen asleep because they trust; there is no need to be awake. Buddha knows -- what is the need for you to be awake? Christ knows -- it is enough for you to be a Christian, there is no need to be a Christ.

But I say to you: unless you are a Christ nothing is going to happen. By being a Christian you are simply deceiving yourself and others, and you are wasting precious time, because in the same time you can become Christ himself. Don't remain satisfied by being Christians or Hindus or Jainas or Buddhists. Become a Buddha, become a Christ, become a Mohammed, become a Mahavira! Less than that is not going to help, less than that is not liberation.

And that is possible through reflection. If you become a no-mind, the whole that surrounds you will be reflected in you. And when YOU will know, then only you will know, and that knowing disperses all doubts. When all doubts have gone within your heart, all darkness disappeared and you are full of light, then life has been lived, life has been known. That is bliss. The beyond has reached to you, you have reached the beyond. Now God is within you and you are within God.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF IDLENESS
IS ONE DAY SPENT IN DETERMINATION.

Again there is some possibility of misunderstanding because of the translation. Buddha does not mean by "determination" what is meant in English by the word. He means decisiveness, not determination. Determination gives you a feeling of will, willpower. Determination gives you the idea of deciding through the mind. Decisiveness is a totally different phenomenon: it is of the heart. Not that you have decided by the mind, but your heart feels a kind of commitment -- it is a love affair.

In love you don't determine. You don't say to your woman that, "I have determined to love you." Or do you say it? If you say to some woman, "I have pulled all my energy together; I have created a great determination in myself that I am going to love you," that woman will never see you again... because love and determination means love is false. Love has a decisiveness about it, a commitment, an involvement, but not determination. It has no will; in fact, even if you want to determine against it you cannot. It is a mad, mad thing.

So is religion: it is not a question of determination, it is a question of falling in love with this tremendous beauty of existence. It is falling in love with this mysterious world.

BETTER TO LIVE ONE DAY WONDERING
HOW ALL THINGS ARISE AND PASS AWAY.

If you can wonder you are going to fall into love. Each child is born wondering... and we destroy his wonder sooner or later. By the time a child is four we have killed, massacred his wonder. And the method that we use to kill his wonder is: we start stuffing him with

information.

D.H. Lawrence, one of the great men of insight of this age, was walking in a garden with a small child. And as small children ask, the child asked, "Can you tell me one thing -- why the trees are green?"

Now such questions can be asked only either by children or by mystics, either by children or by buddhas. What kind of question is this? You will never ask it, because it will look so foolish to ask why trees are green. And in fact you already know why they are green; you know, because it is chlorophyll that makes them green.

D.H. Lawrence also knew about chlorophyll. He could have said it to the child, and children are very easily trusting.... If you say, "It is because of this," they will say, "Okay." And in fact, they don't much care about the answer; by the time you are answering them they have become interested in some other question. They are intrigued by something else -- a butterfly, a flower, a cloud floating in the sky. They have already bypassed the question.

When a child asks he does not ask to be answered, remember. When a child asks he is simply talking out loud to himself, he is thinking out loud, he is wondering out loud, that's all. When he says, "Why are the trees green?" he is not saying it inside, he is thinking aloud. It is not really a question. He is puzzled by the mystery, he is wondering WHY the trees are green, he is not waiting for any answer; it is pure wonder, he is intrigued.

D.H. Lawrence is a great poet, a great novelist -- almost on the verge of being a mystic. Had he been in India, had he been in the East, he would have become a buddha. About these two persons I feel very certain they would have become buddhas if they had been in the East: Friedrich Nietzsche and D.H. Lawrence. About these two persons I feel absolutely certain. They were so much on the verge, just one step more....

Lawrence looked at the trees, stood there in silence with closed eyes for a few seconds, then told the child, "The trees are green because they are green." And the child was satisfied. But Lawrence continued to think, "What kind of answer is this that I have given to the child? -- the trees are green because they are green. It is a tautology. It is illogical!" But it is tremendously significant. Lawrence is saying that life is a mystery to be lived, a reality to be experienced, not a question to be answered, not a problem to be solved. It is so.

That's how Buddha used to say it to his disciples: his word is TATHATA, suchness. If you had asked him the same thing he would have said, "Such is the case. Trees are green... it is so." Nothing more can be said about it -- because the more said, the more you become informed, knowledgeable, the less is the possibility to know. "It is so" -- it does not close the door to you, it simply opens the door of the mystery.

Buddha says: BETTER TO LIVE ONE DAY WONDERING HOW ALL THINGS ARISE AND PASS AWAY. If you can attain again your childhood wonder you will be my sannyasins. I am not here to help you to know more, I am here to help you to WONDER more. And the only way to wonder more is to take away all your knowledge. Your knowledge is a disturbance in your wondering. It does not allow you to wonder, because before you wonder it immediately supplies you with an answer. It is because of scientific knowledge that man has lost his immense quality, his great quality of wonder. And that is the greatest treasure a man has got. No animal wonders; it is only man who is given the gift to wonder.

Real religion is rooted in wondering and real religion helps you to wonder more and more and more. A moment comes in the life of the mystic when he becomes simply wonder. Each

small thing fills him with tremendous wonder... a pebble on the shore, a seashell, the cry of a distant cuckoo, a lonely star in the evening, ANYTHING... a child giggling, a woman crying tears of joy, anything... just the wind passing through the pine trees, the sound of running water, anything... and he is full of wonder. God comes to him as wonder, God comes to him as mystery.

If you sit by the side of a mystic, don't sit to learn more from him. Sit to drop all knowledge. Sit by the side of a mystic to be filled by his wonder, to become a child again. Jesus says: Unless you are born again you shall not enter into my kingdom of God. Again he says: Unless you are like small children you will not enter into my kingdom of God. He is talking about the same wonder.

BETTER TO LIVE ONE HOUR SEEING
THE ONE LIFE BEYOND THE WAY.

Each sutra is so tremendously significant! Meditate on each word. And Buddha is progressing very slowly so that you can absorb the spirit. First he says: dhyana, a state of no-mind. Then he says: the mirrorlike quality of your consciousness, which is a by-product of dhyana. Then he says: decisiveness -- a love affair, your heart falling in tune with existence. Then he says: wondering. And now he says: seeing.

The eyes that can see grow in wonder -- not in knowledge, not through scripture, but through innocence. Become mystified with existence!

Our whole education is based on demystifying existence. The pedagogue believes that one day we will have destroyed the whole mystery of existence because we will have gathered all the answers for all the questions. This is the most irreligious belief there is -- and your education creates irreligion. Your education, even if it is called religious education, is not religious because it demystifies existence, it supplies you with answers.

Real religion takes away all the answers, makes your questions bigger and bigger, and finally transforms your questions into wonder, into a quest. And in wonder, if you can live in wonder, you will attain to that insight, those eyes, which can see.

This seeing has been called in the East DARSHAN -- seeing with innocence, looking with innocence. Then just a nazunia flower by the side of the hedge is enough... and you are transported into another world. Then you will dance when the clouds are raining, you will dance in the rain and you will know something of buddhahood. Then you will dance in the full-moon night and you will know something of buddhahood. Then you will dance around a rosebush because the roses have bloomed, and you will know something of buddhahood. Your life will become a constant singing, dancing, celebration.

BETTER TO LIVE ONE HOUR SEEING THE ONE LIFE BEYOND THE WAY. Then one hour is enough, there is no need to live for millions and millions of lives, because it is not a question of length, how long you live. The West is too much concerned with length. Make people live longer: a hundred years, a hundred and fifty years, two hundred years, three hundred years. And it is possible, because there are a few people who live....

In the Kashmir valley there is a small tribe: they live very easily up to a hundred and fifty. And in Russia there are many people who have gone beyond a hundred and fifty. There are a few people who are a hundred and eighty and one person who is two hundred years old. Now scientists are continuously searching: what are the secrets? Why do these people live so long? What do they eat? What do they drink? What is their pattern of life? Why do they live so long? And sooner or later they will find the secrets and man will live three hundred years,

four hundred years, five hundred years. You are very fortunate that they have not found the secrets yet! Just think of yourself living three hundred years -- seventy is enough to make one fed up with life!

And remember, suicide is not allowed yet anywhere. To commit suicide is the greatest crime, if you are caught before committing it. Of course if you have committed, then it is finished; nobody can catch hold of you. They cannot punish your ghost! Just think of yourself living seven hundred years.... Within seventy years all is finished -- life is so futile. To live for seven hundred years will be sheer torture and they won't allow you to die.

Now there are many people hanging between life and death, particularly in America and in Europe -- more in America. They are not alive, because they cannot move, they cannot do anything, they cannot even think, they cannot eat. Everything is being done by others; they are just lying down on the beds, on oxygen. They may not even have their own heart -- maybe a plastic heart pumping their blood. They may not have kidneys; machines may be doing their work.

Now, these people are called alive! They are neither alive nor dead -- and it is better to be this way or that. Hanging in between, they are in a kind of limbo. But the West is very much interested, mind as such is very much interested, in lengthening life. But those who know, they are not interested in long life; they are interested in intensifying life, in making it more intense, total.

That's why Buddha says: BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF MISCHIEF IS ONE DAY SPENT IN dhyana. BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF IGNORANCE IS ONE DAY SPENT IN mirrorlike REFLECTION. BETTER TO LIVE ONE DAY WONDERING HOW ALL THINGS ARISE AND PASS AWAY. BETTER TO LIVE ONE HOUR SEEING THE ONE LIFE BEYOND THE WAY.

If you can allow wonder to happen, then sooner or later out of your wonder will grow eyes, new eyes -- not these eyes which can see only objects but eyes which can see the invisible, that life which is beyond. Call it divine life, eternal life, or whatsoever name you prefer.

BETTER TO LIVE ONE MOMENT....

See, Buddha is going continuously to make it shorter and shorter: from a hundred years to one moment.

BETTER TO LIVE ONE MOMENT IN THE MOMENT
OF THE WAY BEYOND THE WAY.

It is enough to live in a single moment, but totally herenow -- no past, no future -- your whole energy diving deep in the herenow is enough to have the taste of God, to have the taste of truth: truth which is of the way and yet beyond the way.

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal law. If one can live in wonder, seeing, totally in the moment, one has come home. Bliss happens, descends, you are overflowed with bliss and benediction. It is not your creation, it comes as a gift from the beyond.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #2

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CAN INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY BE CREATIVE?

Anand Savita, intellect is something pseudo, something false. It is a substitute for intelligence. Intelligence is a totally different phenomenon -- the real thing.

Intelligence needs tremendous courage, intelligence needs an adventurous life. Intelligence needs that you are always going into the unknown, into the uncharted sea. Then intelligence grows, it becomes sharpened. It grows only when it encounters the unknown every moment. People are afraid of the unknown, people feel insecure with the unknown. They don't want to go beyond the familiar. Hence they have created a false, plastic substitute for intelligence -- they call it intellect.

Intellect is only a mental game; it cannot be creative. Intellect is imaginative, but not creative. Intelligence is creative. Intelligence creates because intelligence makes you capable of participating with God. God is the source of all creativity. You can be creative only when you are EN RAPPORT with God, when you are rooted in the very existence, when you are part of divine energy. You cannot be creative on your own; you can be creative only as a medium of God.

When the poet creates he is only a medium, a hollow bamboo on the lips of God. And suddenly the hollow bamboo is no longer a hollow bamboo -- it becomes a flute. The emptiness of the bamboo becomes full of song, dance, celebration.

Creativity means you have to disappear, you have to allow God to be, you have to get out of the way. Intellect is egoistic; intelligence is humble, egoless. The difference is subtle; because both the words come from the same root, hence one can easily be deceived. Beware, be alert! Intellect is not intelligence. Intelligence is creative, intellect is only a pretender. In the name of creativity it goes on producing rubbish.

You can go and look in the universities and see what kind of creative work goes on there. Thousands of treatises are being written; Ph.D.s, D.Phil.s, D.Litt.s, great degrees are

conferred on people. Nobody ever comes to know what happens to their Ph.D. theses; they go on becoming rubbish heaps in the libraries. Nobody ever reads them, nobody is ever inspired by them. Yes, a few people read them; they are the same type of people who are going to write another thesis. The would-be Ph.D.s will be of course reading them.

But your universities don't create Shakespeares, Miltons, Dostoevskys, Tolstoys, Rabindranaths, Kahlil Gibrans. Your universities create just junk, utterly useless. This is intellectual activity that goes on in the universities. Intelligence creates a Picasso, a Van Gogh, a Mozart, a Beethoven.

Intelligence is a totally different dimension. It has nothing to do with the head; it has something to do with the heart. Intellect is in the head; intelligence is a state of heart-wakefulness. When your heart is awake, when your heart is dancing in deep gratitude, when your heart is in tune with existence, in harmony with existence, out of that harmony is creativity.

Savita, there is no possibility of any intellectual creativity. It can produce rubbish, it is productive; it can manufacture, but it cannot create. And what is the difference between manufacturing and creating? Manufacturing is a mechanical activity. Computers can do it -- they are already doing it, and doing it in a far more efficient way than you can hope from man. Intelligence creates, it does not manufacture.

Manufacturing means a repetitive exercise; what has already been done, you go on doing again and again. Creativity means bringing the new into existence, making a way for the unknown to penetrate the known, making a way for the sky to come to the earth.

When there is a Beethoven or a Michelangelo or a Kalidas, the skies open, flowers shower from the beyond. I am not telling you anything about Buddha, Christ, Krishna, Mahavira, Zarathustra, Mohammed, for a certain reason: because what THEY create is so subtle that you will not be able to catch hold of it. What Michelangelo creates is gross; what Van Gogh creates can be seen, is visible. What a buddha creates is absolutely invisible. It needs a totally different kind of receptivity to understand.

To understand a buddha you have to be intelligent. Not only that Buddha's creation is of tremendous intelligence, but it is so superb, it is so supramental, that even to understand it you will have to be intelligent. Intellect won't help even in understanding.

Only two kinds of people create: the poets and the mystics. The poets create in the gross world and the mystics create in the subtle world. The poets create in the outer world: a painting, a poem, a song, music, a dance; and the mystic creates in the inner world. The poet's creativity is objective and the mystic's creativity is subjective, totally of the interior. First you have to understand the poet, only then can you understand one day -- at least HOPE to understand one day -- the mystic. The mystic is the highest flower of creativity. But you may not see anything that the mystic is doing.

Buddha has never painted a single picture, has never taken the brush in his hands, has not composed a single poem, has not sung a single song, nobody has ever seen him dancing. If you watch him he is just sitting silently; his whole being is silence. Yes, a grace surrounds him, a grace of infinite beauty, of exquisite beauty, but you will need to be very vulnerable to feel it. You will have to be very open, not argumentative. You cannot be a spectator with a buddha; you have to be a participant, because it is a mystery to be participated in. Then you will see what he is creating. He is creating consciousness, and consciousness is the purest form, the highest form possible, of God's expression.

A song is beautiful, a dance is beautiful, because something of the divine is present in it. But in a buddha the whole of God is present. That's why we have called Buddha "Bhagwan,"

we have called Mahavira "Bhagwan" -- the whole of God is present.

But students won't be able to see it. Disciples will be able to decipher a little bit, and devotees will be able to drink out of it.

Intellectual activity can make you experts in certain things, useful, efficient. But intellect is a groping in the dark; it has no eyes, because it is not yet meditative. Intellect is borrowed, it has no insight of its own.

The subject was lovemaking. For weeks Arthur had successfully answered all the questions asked him on the television quiz show. He was now eligible for the jackpot prize of one hundred thousand dollars. For this one question he was allowed to call an expert. Arthur of course chose a world-famous professor of sexology from France.

The jackpot question was, "If you had been king during the first fifty years of the Assyrian empire, which three parts of your bride's anatomy would you have been expected to kiss on your wedding night?"

The first two answers came quickly. Arthur replied, "Her lips and her neck."

Now, stumped for the answer to the third part of the question, Arthur turned frantically to his expert. The Frenchman threw up his hands and groaned, "Alors, mon ami, do not ask me. I have been wrong twice already."

The expert, the knowledgeable, the intellectual, has no insight of his own. He depends on borrowed knowledge, on tradition, on convention. He carries libraries in his head, a great burden, but he has no vision. He knows much without knowing anything at all.

And because life is not the same ever -- it is constantly changing, moment to moment it is new -- the expert always lags behind, his response is always inadequate. He can only react, he cannot respond, because he is not spontaneous. He has already arrived to conclusions; he is carrying ready-made answers -- and the questions that life raises are always new.

Moreover, life is not a logical phenomenon. And the intellectual lives through logic; hence he never fits with life and life never fits with him. Of course life is not at a loss; the intellectual himself is at a loss. He is always feeling like an outsider -- not that life has expelled him; he himself has decided to remain outside life. If you cling too much to logic you will never be able to be part of the living process that this existence is.

Life is more than logic: life is paradox, life is mystery.

Gannaway and O'Casey arranged to fight a duel with pistols. Gannaway was quite fat, and when he saw his lean adversary facing him he objected. "Debar!" he said, "I am twice as large as he is, so I ought to stand twice as far away from him as he is from me."

Absolutely logical, but how can you do it?

"Be aisy now," replied his second. "I will soon put that right." And taking a piece of chalk from his pocket he drew two lines down the fat man's coat leaving a space between them.

"Now," he said, turning to O'Casey, "fire away, and remember that any hits outside that chalk line don't count."

Perfectly mathematical, perfectly logical -- but life is not so logical, life is not so mathematical. And people go on living in their intellects very logically. Logic gives them a feeling as if they know, but it is a big "as if," and one tends to forget it completely. Whatsoever you go on doing through intellect, it is only inference. It is not an experience of truth, but just an inference based on your logic -- and your logic is your invention.

Cudahy, grogged to the gills, stood watching the Saint Patrick's Day parade. Unconsciously he dropped his lit cigarette into an old mattress that was lying at the curb.

Just then the grey-haired members of the Women's Nursing Corps came strutting by. At the same time, the smoldering mattress began giving off a dreadful smell.

Cudahy sniffed a couple of times and declared to a nearby cop, "Officer, they are marching those nurses too fast!"

Intellect may arrive at certain inferences, but intellect is an unconscious phenomenon. You are almost behaving sleepily.

Intelligence is awakening, and unless you are fully awake, whatsoever you decide is bound to be wrong somewhere or other. It is bound to be so, it is doomed to be wrong, because it is a conclusion arrived at by an unconscious mind.

To bring intelligence into activity you don't need more information, you need more meditation. You need to become more silent, you need to become more thoughtless. You need to become less mind and more heart. You need to become aware of the magic that surrounds you: magic that is life, magic that is God, magic that is in the green trees and the red flowers, magic that is in people's eyes. Magic is happening everywhere! All is miraculous, but because of your intellect you remain closed inside yourself, clinging to your stupid conclusions arrived at in unconsciousness or given to you by others who are as unconscious as you are.

Savita, intelligence is certainly creative because intelligence brings your totality into functioning -- not only a part, a small part, the head. Intelligence vibrates your whole being; each cell of your being, each fiber of your life starts dancing, and falls in a subtle harmony with the total.

That's what creativity is: to pulsate in absolute harmony with the total. That's how one becomes a Buddha, Christ, Zarathustra. These are the real creative people.

Something like this is happening right now, here. If you are a disciple you will be able to feel something of it. If you are a devotee you will be able to drink out of this source that has become available to you. And then creativity will come to you, things will start happening on their own. Your heart will start pouring songs of joy, your hands will start transforming things. You will touch mud and it will become a lotus. You will be able to become an alchemist. But it is possible only through great awakening of intelligence, great awakening of the heart.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
EVERYONE WANTS TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED. WHY? "FIRST SIGHT OF LOVE,
LAST SIGHT OF WISDOM." IS IT TRUE?

Bal Krishna Bharti, love is prayer groping towards God. Love is poetry born out of the sheer joy of being. Love is song, dance, celebration: a song of gratitude, a dance of thankfulness, celebration for no reason at all... for this tremendous gift that goes on showering on us, for this whole universe, from the dust to the divine. Love is not what you understand it to be, hence the question.

You ask, "Everyone wants to love and to be loved. Why?"

Because love is religion at its highest; love is the suprememost religion. Love is the

search for God -- of course, an unconscious search in the beginning, stumbling, groping in the dark. The direction may not be right, but the intention is absolutely right.

Love is not the ordinary thing that you understand by it; it is not just a biological attraction between a man and a woman. It is that too, but that is only the beginning, just the first step. Even there, if you look deep down, it is not really an attraction between man and woman, it is an attraction between masculine energy and feminine energy. It is not an attraction between A and B; far deeper mysteries are involved even in ordinary love affairs.

Hence nobody can define love. Thousands of definitions have been tried -- all have failed. Love remains indefinable, very elusive, very mercurial. The more you want to grasp of it, the more difficult it becomes, the farther away it goes. You cannot catch hold of it, you cannot manage to know what exactly it is, you cannot control it. Love remains unknowable. Man wants to know, because knowledge gives power. You would like to be powerful over love, but that is impossible; love is far bigger than you. You cannot possess it, you can only be possessed by it. Hence those people who want to possess love never come to know anything of it.

Only those who are courageous enough, only those who are gamblers, who can risk their very life and be possessed by some unknown energy, are able to know what love is.

Love is the first step towards God -- hence it appears mad to those who are hung up in their heads. And because people don't understand the whole mystery of love, because they try to understand it through the mind.... It can be understood only through the heart. Remember: all that is great is available to the heart. The heart is the door to all great values of life, to all ultimate values, and the head is only a useful mechanism, a gadget -- good in the marketplace but utterly useless in a temple. And love is a temple, it is not a marketplace. If you drive love into the marketplace it is reduced into ugly sexuality.

That's what people have done: rather than raising love to God, they have reduced love into ugly, animalistic sexuality. And the strange thing is, the same people -- the priests, the politicians, the puritans -- the same people who have reduced love into an ugly phenomenon, are against sex, are enemies of sex. And they are the people who have destroyed a tremendously potential power!

Love is a lotus hidden in the mud. The lotus is born out of mud, but you don't condemn the lotus because it is born out of mud; you don't call the lotus muddy, you don't call the lotus dirty. Love is born out of sex, and then prayer is born out of love, and then God is born out of prayer. Higher and higher and higher one goes on soaring.

But the priests and the puritans have reduced the whole phenomenon into sexuality. And once love becomes sex it becomes ugly, one starts feeling guilty about it. And it is because of that guilt that this saying, this proverb: First sight of love, last sight of wisdom.... If you ask me, I will change it a little bit. I will say: First sight of love, first sight of wisdom.

But it depends how you look at it. If you look at the potential of it, at the highest possibility that it can reach, then love becomes a ladder. If you look only at the mud and you are utterly blind to the future of the mud, then certainly love becomes something ugly and great antagonism arises in you. But to be antagonistic to love is to be antagonistic to God.

On returning from his honeymoon, Michael phoned his father at the office.

"Good to hear from you, son. Tell me, how is married life?"

"Dad, I am really upset. I think I married a nun."

"A nun?" asked the startled father. "What do you mean?"

"Ah, you know, Dad, none in the morning and none at night."

"Oh, that!" groaned the older man. "Come for dinner Saturday and I will introduce you to the mother superior."

Once love is reduced to sexuality only, of course then the first sight of love is the last sight of wisdom. But it depends on you: why reduce it to sexuality? Why not change the baser metal into gold? Why not learn the alchemy of love? That's what I am teaching here.

And the priests, who don't know anything about love -- because they have never loved, they have renounced the world of love -- they go on making great systems of thought against it.

The priest stood before a hushed crowd of attentive villagers and spoke to them, "You must not use-a the pill."

A lovely signorina stepped forward and said, "Look, you no play-a the game, you no make-a the rules!"

These are the people who don't play the game but they make the rules. For centuries the priests have been making rules. It is the priesthood all over the world that has condemned a great potential source, in fact the only source, of energy. Once it is condemned, you are condemned; your whole life will become meaningless. Once sex energy is not allowed to grow to its natural heights you are going to live a miserable life.

Bal Krishna Bharti, love is the greatest gift of God. Learn the art of it. Learn the song of it, the celebration of it. It is an absolute need: just as the body cannot survive without food, the soul cannot survive without love. Love is the nourishment of the soul, it is the beginning of all that is great, it is the door of the divine.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I KNOW THAT GOD IS LOVE, BUT THEN WHY AM I SO AFRAID OF HIM?

Sudharma, you don't know that God is love. You have heard me saying again and again that God is love; hence you have started repeating it. It is parrotlike. I KNOW God is love, hence it is impossible to be afraid of God. How can you be afraid of love?

Fear and love cannot exist together; their coexistence is impossible. In fact, it is the same energy that becomes fear that becomes love. If it becomes fear, there is no more energy available to become love; if it becomes love, fear disappears. It is the same energy! The same energy in a chaotic state is called fear; and when it becomes a cosmos, when it is in deep accord, it is called love. You still don't know that God is love.

You say, "I know that God is love...."

You have heard, but you don't know. This is information as far as you are concerned; it is not yet knowing, it is not your own authentic experience. And remember always that unless something becomes your own authentic experience, it is not going to transform you; hence the problem.

You say, "I know that God is love, but then why am I so afraid of him?"

You are bound to be afraid of him because you don't KNOW that God is love. You have been told by the priests for centuries that God is constantly watching you, that God wants you to be this way and not that way, that these are the ten commandments of God, follow them. And if you don't follow them, God has prepared for you a great hell. The father preparing

hellfire for his own children? -- impossible, even to conceive.

The priests have made God so ugly just to dominate people, because people can be dominated only through fear. Remember this: the whole trade secret of the priests, Hindu, Christian, Mohammedan, Jaina, Buddhist -- their philosophies differ but their trade secret is the same. That trade secret is: always keep people afraid, trembling. If people are afraid, they are ready to submit. If people are afraid, they are ready to be slaves. If people are afraid, they cannot gather courage to rebel. Fear keeps them impotent; fear is a psychological process of castration. For centuries it has been done: fear has been the greatest weapon in the hands of the priests and they have used it very liberally.

The Goldbergs' son, Jake, refused to take school seriously. He never did homework and was constantly playing hooky.

The principal suggested they send him to a Yeshiva. The Goldbergs did, but after a few weeks he was expelled.

The Goldbergs knew that Catholic parochial schools were very strict, so they decided to send Jake to one. They enrolled him in Christ-the-King School for Boys, and warned their son to behave and to do his lessons, because this was his last chance. If he was thrown out now he would be sent to a school for delinquents.

After a week of parochial school, Jake came home with terrific grades. Miraculously he had been converted into a well-behaved, serious student.

"How come you changed all of a sudden?" asked Goldberg.

"Well," he answered, "when I saw some man hanging on a cross in every room, I figured I had better not be a wise guy anymore."

Make people afraid, keep them always trembling. Let them know that God is dictatorial, a very angry God, jealous, and is absolutely unable to forgive if you disobey. Disobedience is the greatest sin in the eyes of the priests; hence Adam and Eve were expelled. They had not done much of a sin. What had they really done? Nothing much to talk about, but priests have been talking about it for centuries. And God was so angry that not only Adam and Eve were thrown out of the Garden of Eden, paradise -- with them the whole humanity!

You are suffering because Adam and Eve disobeyed. You have not done anything wrong; you are suffering for their sin because you are descendants. The sin is so great -- not only the persons are punished, but for thousands and thousands of years their descendants have to be punished too.

And what was the sin really? Why is so much fuss made about it? It was so innocent, it was so natural, that I cannot conceive how Adam and Eve could have avoided it. If anybody is responsible for it, God himself is responsible. There were millions of trees in the Garden of Eden and there was only one tree which God did not want Adam and Eve to eat from -- only one tree, the forbidden. And the reason why it was forbidden also seems to be very ugly. The reason is: if you eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, you will become like God and God is very jealous. Look at the reason why the tree was prohibited. The reason is that if you eat from the tree, from this tree, the tree of knowledge, you will become immortal, like gods. You will know as much as God knows -- and that is intolerable! So God has protected that tree especially for himself -- he must be eating from the tree of knowledge -- and prohibited Adam and Eve.

Now this is exactly what every father goes on doing. He smokes and he prohibits the children: "Don't smoke -- this is bad. This is bad for you!" But because the father looks so

beautiful smoking, the children become enchanted. They would also like to be like the father -- and he looks so manly when he is puffing on his cigar, he looks so proud! He never looks so proud as when he is puffing on his cigar, resting in his chair, reading the newspaper. The children become attracted. When the father is not there they also sit on the same chair, spread the same newspaper, although they cannot read, and start puffing. And it gives them great joy because it gives them great ego.

In fact, to prohibit is to invite. To say to children, "Don't do it!" is to ask for trouble.

I used to live with a family. There was a problem: the father was a smoker, a chainsmoker -- a very well-known professor in a university. And he was afraid: he asked me, "What to do?"

I said, "Do one thing...." He had only one son growing up and he was afraid that sooner or later the son would start smoking. I said, "If you listen to me, the best way is to give the son cigarettes, offer him the cigarettes yourself and tell him to smoke as much as he wants."

He said, "What are you saying? Are you mad or are you joking?"

I said, "Then leave it to me -- I will manage it."

I offered the son a cigarette. He said, "But you don't smoke."

I said, "That is another matter -- don't you worry about me. But YOU learn! It is one of the most beautiful things in life!"

He again asked, "But then why don't you smoke?"

I said, "You leave me out of it -- I am not a very intelligent person. Look at your father! And if I am stupid, are you going to be stupid?"

I had great difficulty in convincing him because the question he was again and again asking was, "You tell me to smoke, but why don't YOU smoke?"

I said, "You try, then you will know!"

So he tried, and he knew, and he threw the cigarette. And he said, "Now I know why you don't smoke. Then why did you insist? Then why did you try to convince me? It is nauseating, sickening!" He coughed and tears came to his eyes -- and that was that, and it was finished.

And I told his father never to say to the child, "Don't smoke."

Remember the ancient story of Adam and Eve. If I had been God I would have taken Adam and Eve to the tree of knowledge and would have forced them to eat to the point that they should have started vomiting, and that would have been the end of the whole story. But God told them not to eat from this tree. That was an invitation -- no serpent is needed.

The serpent is an invention of the priests so that God can be avoided; the responsibility can be thrown on the poor serpent. The serpent is simply poor; the serpent has nothing to do with it, the serpent is absolutely innocent. Have you ever seen any serpent persuading any woman for anything? And why should the serpent be interested? If he wanted to eat, nobody was prohibiting him. Why should he seduce Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge? What is he going to gain if Eve and Adam become knowledgeable? No, the serpent is an invention so that the responsibility can be thrown on him.

But if you go deep into the story it is simple: God is responsible. First you force an order on people, and just your forcing creates a resistance in them, creates a great urge to disobey. Then disobedience is sin; the greatest sin is disobedience. And then you have to create hell and all kinds of punishments, and you have to keep people afraid.

The story was invented by the priests to make man afraid. The priests never wanted man

to become intelligent, because intelligent people are dangerous -- dangerous to the status quo, to the establishment, dangerous to the vested interests. The priests wanted the people to remain utterly ignorant, unintelligent. For centuries they did not allow people to read scriptures. In many religions women are still not allowed.

And still a very deep conspiracy goes on. The conspiracy is that all the scriptures are in languages which are dead; nobody understands them, only the priests. Priests remained powerful for centuries because they were the only ones knowing. The scriptures were in ancient Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin -- ancient languages which are no longer spoken. There is even suspicion that there are a few languages which were never spoken. For example, Sanskrit seems to be one of the languages which has never been a spoken language. It has always been the language of the scholars, not of the people; of the pundits, not of the masses.

In India there were two languages: one was called Prakrit; PRAKRIT means "the natural," that which is spoken by the people. And Sanskrit literally means "the refined," "the aristocratic," which is spoken only by the scholars and academicians in the universities. All the great scriptures were written in Sanskrit.

It was left to Mahavira and Buddha to speak for the first time in the language of the people -- and the brahmins of India have never been able to forgive these two persons for that sin. To speak in the language of the people means the power of the priests is gone. If people become knowers, if they know what is written in the scriptures, they will not be so easily befooled. In fact, you can worship the Vedas only if you don't understand them. If you understand them, ninety-nine percent is just rubbish. One percent is pure gold, certainly, but ninety-nine percent is pure rubbish. But if you don't understand them, all is gold. In darkness, anything can be given to you with the words, "It is gold -- worship it!" And for centuries the Vedas have been worshipped.

Priests wanted you to worship the scriptures, not to understand them -- because if you understand the scriptures, sooner or later, one thing is going to become clear to you: that the scripture is not the real source. Sooner or later, you are bound to stumble upon the truth that, "Krishna is speaking from a meditative state, Christ is speaking from a meditative state. What he is speaking is secondary -- from where he is speaking is primary. Unless I reach to that state of consciousness I will not be able to understand the words, because those words in themselves are empty; the meaning can only come through experience." Scriptures were prohibited; it was a sin.... Only the brahmins, the priests, the highest caste, were allowed to read them -- all over the world.

The conspiracy still continues. Still the prayers are done in dead languages, you don't know what you are saying. How can you feel anything when you don't know what you are saying? How can it come out of your feeling and out of your heart? Your prayer becomes just like a gramophone record: "His Master's Voice" -- a repetition. And you hope that by repeating dead rituals you will arrive somewhere. You will simply waste your life.

And then great fear arises: "I don't know from where I come, who I am, where I am going. All around is darkness and darkness, infinite darkness, and not a single light in life." Then you have to go to the priest and bow down to him. You have to ask for guidance.

This is the trade secret: keep people afraid. And you can keep people afraid only if you keep them ignorant. Let them remain trembling, then they will always be ready to touch your feet, ready to obey you -- because you represent God, and disobeying you is dangerous, very dangerous. They will be thrown in hell for eternity.

Greenberg, shabbily dressed and carrying two paper bags, was stopped by a customs inspector.

"What have you got in those bags?" the official asked.

"I got twenty-five thousand dollars here, which I am bringing to Israel to donate."

"C'mon," sneered the official, "you don't look like you got the price of a meal; how could you be donating twenty-five thousand dollars to the state of Israel?"

"Well, you see, I had a job in a men's room, and when the men came in I said to them, "Give to help Israel or I will cut off your balls."

"Alright, so you got twenty-five thousand dollars in one bag, but what is in the other bag?"

"Some men did not want to donate."

That's what priests have been doing: destroying your guts, destroying your courage, destroying your self-respect, destroying your self-trust.

Sudharma, you say, "I know that God is love, but then why am I so afraid of him?" You are still surrounded by the nonsense that priests have stuffed your head with; you are full of that rubbish. It takes time to get rid of it, it really takes a long time, because it has been going on for centuries. It has been such a long long, ugly history that it is a rare phenomenon to find a person who can escape out of it.

My whole effort here is to help you to escape out of it. I am against the whole business of priesthood. I want you to stand face-to-face with God without any priests, without any priesthood. God is yours, you are God's; there is no need of any mediator. The function of the master is not to become a mediator between you and God. Just the contrary: the function of the master is to withdraw all that comes in between you and God. He himself at the last point withdraws; between you and your God he stands no more. He stands only to a certain extent, while other things are being removed. When everything else is removed, he removes himself; that is the last thing the master does.

And the moment the master removes himself, he no longer stands between you and God, that is the moment you know that the whole existence is love. It is the stuff called love that the universe is made of.

Jesus says: God is love. I say to you: Love is God. When Jesus says: God is love, it is possible God may be many more things too; love is only one attribute. When I say: Love is God, I say love is the ONLY quality. There is nothing else in God except love; in fact it is another name of love. You can drop the name "God," nothing will be lost. Let love be your God.

But you will have to get rid of the priests. You will have to get rid of your so-called religions, churches, temples, rituals, scriptures. There is much garbage which has to be got rid of. It is a great work, because you have been told that this is very precious. The garbage has been imposed upon you as if it is gold and, because it has been told to you so many times, you have become conditioned.

People become conditioned to seeing certain things. When there is a certain conditioning, you look at things through that conditioning and it appears like that.

Two men were sitting under a tree; one was a Hindu, another was a Mohammedan. Birds were singing, it was a beautiful spring morning. They both listened for a time, then the Hindu said, "Can you hear? All the birds are resounding the sound aum. I can hear it. I have been practicing aum for thirty years, and now I have become capable of deciphering it very easily. All the birds are resounding with the same sound: the soundless sound, the ancient sound of

the Hindus, OMKAR."

The Mohammedan laughed and he said, "Nonsense! I have also been practicing my prayers. The birds are not saying aum, they are saying AMIN."

Mohammedan prayers, Christian prayers, end with amin; Christians call it AMEN, Mohammedans call it amin. Hindu prayers end with aum. There is certainly a truth somewhere, partially expressed by all the three. When the mind becomes absolutely silent a certain sound is heard. If you are a Hindu you will interpret it as aum, if you are a Mohammedan as amin, if you are a Christian as amen, but nobody can say for certain what it is. In fact it can be interpreted in so many ways -- it is your interpretation that is imposed on it.

If you ask a real mystic, one who is neither Hindu nor Mohammedan nor Christian, he will say, "Sit silently by my side and listen. There is no need to interpret it at all, because whatsoever we say about it will be our imposition, it will be our idea imposed on the sound. Just listen, sit silently -- I am listening to it, you also listen. I know it, you will know it. There is no need to say anything about it."

It is said, once it happened:

A great mystic, Farid, met Kabir, another great mystic. For two days they sat silently together. Yes, sometimes they laughed, giggled for no reason at all, and sometimes they hugged each other and kissed, but not a single word was spoken. Almost a thousand people had gathered -- the disciples of both -- with great expectations that something will be communicated, and nobody wanted to miss such a great opportunity. Kabir saying something to Farid is bound to be something rare, or Farid saying something to Kabir is bound to be something which is only heard once in a century.

But two days passed, and the disciples became fed up and bored. And the more they were bored, the more the mystics were giggling and laughing and hugging and kissing. And then the time of departure came; Farid had to leave. Kabir went out of the town to give him a farewell, just to say goodbye. They again hugged, they again giggled, and then they departed.

The disciples of Farid followed Farid and the disciples of Kabir followed Kabir back home. When they were alone they asked, the disciples of Farid asked, "What went wrong? You are continuously talking to us -- what happened? Why did you become dumb? For two days why didn't you speak, and what is all this giggling?"

Farid said, "There was no need to say anything, because I am hearing the same thing that he is hearing, I am seeing the same thing that he is seeing, so what is the point of saying anything to him? It would have been absolutely foolish on my part. When I can see he is hearing the same, seeing the same, being the same, we are encountering the same reality, what is the point of saying it?"

Then they asked, "Then why did you giggle?"

And he said, "We giggled because of you, because you were getting so bored! We were laughing at you. You had come to hear us talk -- you were foolish, you missed a great opportunity. Two masters were there, utterly silent; two pools of silent energy, two doors open simultaneously to God -- and you missed. And you wanted some words, some noise. You could have sat in silence, you could have become part of our silence. You could have fallen EN RAPPORT with us. You didn't do that -- you were bored, you were fed up, you were yawning. And just seeing you we giggled, we laughed at what kind of fools we have gathered!"

Nothing can be said; when you know, there is no way to express it. But if you want to express, then the word that comes closest to God is 'love'. Even that is just approximate, but very close. And the word 'God' has become associated with wrong people, with wrong notions. In fact, many people feel offended the moment you utter the word 'God'. I have no attachment to that word; you can drop it.

But remember love; I cannot tell you to drop that, because without love you will never reach God. Without God you can love, and God is bound to come in whether you know or not, whether you believe in God or not. Belief is not a requirement: love is an absolute necessity, a must. Sudharma, you have heard me say God is love. Experience it, and then all fear will disappear. And start dropping the priests and the centuries of wrong conditioning. They have made you afraid.

In fact, priests are the enemies of God, because the more people are afraid of God, the less is the possibility of their knowing God ever -- because fear is a wall, not a bridge. Love is a bridge, not a wall. Of course, fear helps the priests to live and exploit you, but it deprives you of God. Priests are in the service of the Devil. If there is somebody like a Devil, then priests are in HIS service; they are not in the service of God.

That's why so many religions are there, yet the earth remains irreligious, utterly irreligious; so many temples and so many churches and mosques, and yet you don't see the fragrance of religion. You don't see people's faces full of grace, their eyes full of silence, their feet dancing, their lives showing that God is. They may say that they believe in God, but their life says something else, totally different. Their life shows absolute irreligiousness; dishonesty, inauthenticity, insincerity, hate, anger, greed -- nothing of prayer, nothing of love, nothing of compassion, nothing of meditateness.

Sudharma, meditate, love -- and forget the priests, drive them out of your being. You are suffering from hang-ups.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A PESSIMIST?

Shivananda, a pessimist is an optimist who has become frustrated with his optimism. He hoped too much and failed, he dreamed too much and could not achieve anything substantial.

The pessimist is an optimist standing on his head; they are not different fellows -- that's what I want to make clear to you. Unless you have been an optimist you can never be a pessimist. First you have to become an optimist.

And each child is brought up with great optimism. All parents think that they have great children. Ask any mother: she thinks she has the unique child; the most superior, rare, incomparable. Each mother brags about the child. Parents bring up children with great optimism that they are going to be Alexander the Greats or Jesus Christs or Gautam Buddhas.

But slowly slowly life proves just the contrary. Slowly slowly, the child becomes aware of his ordinariness. He becomes aware that these great dreams, that these great ambitions, cannot be fulfilled. And by the time one is coming closer to forty, forty-two, pessimism starts settling -- gloom, darkness....

Now medical science is aware that most heart attacks happen nearabout forty to forty-four, between those four years. Most people go mad between those four years, forty to

forty-four. Psychologists, psychoanalysts, are aware that that is the most dangerous time. If you can remain sane beyond forty-four, that means you will remain sane. But many people fall flat.

And don't think that if you are sane even beyond forty-four... that does not mean that you are very intelligent. It may only be that you are very dull and it takes a long time for you to understand. It may only be that you are very insensitive. It may only be that you are foolhardy, that you don't listen to life, what life is saying, that you go on hoping.

But sooner or later, a person starts feeling that life has gone down the drain. Optimism turns sour and becomes pessimism. Optimism, that hopefulness, turns upside-down; a hopelessness settles in. Then everything looks dark and dismal. First you used to count the roses, now you start counting the thorns. First you used to say, "How beautiful this roseflower and what a miracle! It grows amongst thousands of thorns." You were poetic, you had some aesthetic sense; you still believed that life is going to be a fulfillment.

But soon the day comes when the roses start fading away and you start counting the thorns, and you cannot believe in the roses anymore. You start saying, "It is impossible! The rose must be a dream, the rose must be MAYA, illusion, hallucination. How is it possible amongst thousands of thorns, how is a rose possible?" It looks contradictory, it looks illogical, it cannot happen in the nature of things. You start counting nights; before, you used to count days.

The optimist says, "There are two days, and between two days just a small night to rest." And the pessimist counts the nights; he says, "There are two long nights -- nightmares, ugly dreams, tortures -- and just a small day sandwiched between the two." Life is the same: you can count the days or you can count the nights. If you count the days you are an optimist, if you count the nights you are a pessimist, but there is really no difference.

The optimist can become a pessimist, the pessimist can become an optimist. They are not contraries; they are two points on the same spectrum.

One has to go beyond both, Shivananda. A sannyasin has to go beyond both -- neither hope nor hopelessness. No need to count days, no need to count nights. Be a watcher! No need to count thorns, no need to count roses. Be a watcher....

I don't teach you optimism. In the West it is very fashionable nowadays; it is called "positive thinking." That is a new name for optimism; the old name has become a little too out of fashion, out-of-date. The new name is positive thinking. I don't teach you positive thinking, because positive thinking carries the negative in its wake.

I teach you transcendence -- neither positive nor negative. Be a watcher: witness both. When there is day, witness the day, and when there is night, witness the night -- and don't get identified with either. You are neither the day nor the night; you are the transcendental consciousness. Become more and more centered there in that transcendence.

True religion is not positive, nor is it negative. It is neither via negativa nor via positiva; it is via transcendence.

One September morning after Labor Day, Levin and Ostrow met for lunch. They had not seen each other for several months.

"I have just lived through a summer I never thought I would see," said Levin. "June was a disaster -- never have I seen a June like that. When July came, I realized that June was terrific, because with July I went right into the cellar. July was so bad...."

"For heaven's sake!" interrupted Ostrow. "Why are you coming to me with these piddling matters? You wanna hear real trouble? I got it. Yesterday my only son came home, told me

he is gonna marry another fella. My boy is a homosexual! What could be worse than that?"
"I will tell you," said Levin, "August!"

Just wait! There are people who are continuously looking for the negative -- and if you look for the negative you will find it, because the negative is there in the same proportion as the positive. If you look for the positive, you will find the positive. But by finding the positive you cannot destroy the negative; the negative is there, side by side. They are always together like negative and positive poles of electricity. You can't have electricity with one pole, you will need both.

Life needs both: thorns and roses, days and nights, happiness/unhappiness, birth/death.

Be a witness to it all and you will know something that is beyond birth, beyond death; something that is beyond darkness and beyond light; something that is beyond happiness, beyond unhappiness. Buddha has called it peace, nirvana.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I CANNOT TRUST ANYBODY. WHY?

Sargam, I will just tell you a story. Meditate over it.

The hired boy gets the youngest girl in the farmer's family to go out into the hayloft with him. She comes back and tells her sister, "Say, the hired boy sure knows some good tricks!"

The sister goes out to the hayloft too, and comes back saying the same, followed by the mother, and finally the farmer himself who has heard his wife's remark that, "The hired boy certainly knows some tricks."

When the boy sees the farmer coming, he thinks fast and begins doing cartwheels and acrobatic tricks all over the walls of the barn. The farmer watches him and then goes back and tells his assembled wife and daughters, "Guess you are right. That boy sure knows some fancy tricks."

"God almighty!" cry the wife and daughters. "Did he fuck you too?"

Sargam, meditate over it. If you can't trust anybody that means you must be deceiving others. It is not a question of others, it is a question of you. You must be deceiving, and if you are deceiving, how can you trust? You can trust only if you allow others to trust you.

It is better to be deceived than to deceive, because if you deceive, you lose the greatest treasure of your life: you lose the capacity to trust. And let me repeat: the capacity to trust is the greatest treasure of life, because without it neither love is possible, nor prayer is possible, nor God is possible.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #3

Chapter title: Be quick to do good

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BE QUICK TO DO GOOD.
IF YOU ARE SLOW,
THE MIND, DELIGHTING IN MISCHIEF,
WILL CATCH YOU.

TURN AWAY FROM MISCHIEF.
AGAIN AND AGAIN, TURN AWAY,
BEFORE SORROW BEFALLS YOU.

SET YOUR HEART ON DOING GOOD.
DO IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN,
AND YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH JOY.

A FOOL IS HAPPY
UNTIL HIS MISCHIEF TURNS AGAINST HIM.
AND A GOOD MAN MAY SUFFER
UNTIL HIS GOODNESS FLOWERS.

DO NOT MAKE LIGHT OF YOUR FAILINGS,
SAYING, "WHAT ARE THEY TO ME?"
A JUG FILLS DROP BY DROP.
SO THE FOOL BECOMES BRIMFUL OF FOLLY.

DO NOT BELITTLE YOUR VIRTUES,
SAYING, "THEY ARE NOTHING."
A JUG FILLS DROP BY DROP.
SO THE WISE MAN BECOMES BRIMFUL OF VIRTUE.

Once I was staying in Varanasi. A professor of the Hindu university came to see me. He asked me, "Do you believe in hell?"

I said, "I don't need to believe in hell, because hell IS. Belief is needed when you don't see something as existent. Hell is so existential, hell is so much, so much present, there is no need to believe in it."

He said, "Where is it?"

I told him, "You live in it! You are born in it, you breathe in it, you will die in it -- if you don't make great effort to get out of it."

Man is oblivious of the hell because he is born in it. It is all over the place; he is surrounded by it. Like a fish in the ocean, man lives in hell. The fish also never becomes aware of the ocean unless she is thrown out of the ocean by some accident or is caught by

someone. Once separated from the ocean, for the first time the fish comes to know that she has been in the ocean all along.

Unless you know something of paradise you will never become aware that you have been living in hell -- not only living in hell but creating it, helping it to be there, feeding it, strengthening it. You are its creator and you live in the world you create, and you can't live in any other world. The only place to live is the place that you create around yourself. And that which you create around yourself first has to exist at the center of your being; only then can it become the circumference.

The hell exists first at the center of your being, then it spreads, becomes a circumference. First it exists in you, as you, then it becomes your relationship, your world.

Hell is not something geographical; it is something psychological. Hell is another name of a diseased mind, of a mind in anguish, turmoil, of a mind suffering nightmares, of a mind living basically in unconsciousness. The unconscious mind is what hell is all about, and the conscious mind is going beyond the hell.

Don't believe in the old children's stories that hell is somewhere else; that too is a strategy of the mind to postpone. The mind always tries to postpone; it uses all methods, ways, and means to postpone things. It says, "Yes, hell is deep down below the earth, far far away. You need not worry -- it happens only after death. Right now, there is no question about it, no need to waste time about it. At the time of death, you can decide where to go. If you remember God you will go into heaven, if you don't remember God you will go into hell."

And then you are living as if hell is somewhere else. It is herenow. ALL is herenow, hell and heaven both.

A buddha lives in heaven. He walks along with you, he sits amidst you. He lives on this earth, in this very body, but for him it is a totally different experience. This very body the buddha, this very earth the lotus paradise -- that is HIS experience. That is the experience of all the buddhas, of all the awakened ones.

But for you it is just a dream, a fiction, a mythology. For you: this very body the hell, this very earth the fire of hell. You can't see the lotus paradise -- you don't have the eyes to see it. Those eyes have to be created; those eyes are not given by birth. Only the potential is there; you have to grow them, you have to endeavor to achieve them, you have to become them. The seed is there but you have to find the right soil. And the basic strategy of the mind is to keep you deluded, to tell you that hell and heaven are all beyond, somewhere else.

The function of the master is to bring you here and now again and again. The mind tries to slip. There are two possibilities for the mind to get away from the herenow: either to move in the past, in the memories -- the golden past and those golden days of Rama and Krishna, those beautiful days -- or to move into the future, into some utopia, when there will be a classless society on the earth or there will be a paradise somewhere far away beyond the clouds. But it keeps you away from the present moment. And the present moment is the only reality there is; there is no other moment. It is always present.

The past is no more, the future not yet. Whatsoever is, is the present. And mind takes you away from it in a thousand and one ways. It is always going on trips. The mind can only exist either in the past or in the future; the mind cannot exist in the present. Let this sink deep in your heart: the mind cannot exist in the present. If you are utterly herenow, the mind disappears and with the disappearance of the mind, there is no hell.

The disappearance of the mind is what paradise is: to live in the present, without the mind. It does not mean to live in the present absentmindedly. When I say "without the mind" I don't mean absentmindedly -- just the contrary! To live consciously is to live without mind,

to live without thoughts, but with great alertness. And you can live with great alertness only when thoughts have been dropped, because the energy involved in the thoughts is released, is available. You become overflowing with energy. Then you have a tremendous vitality, intensity, passion. Your life is not lukewarm; your life is such a flame that just to be for a single moment is enough. A single moment of that conscious intensity is longer than eternity itself.

These sutras of Buddha are simple but immensely helpful for the seeker.

BE QUICK TO DO GOOD.

Mind will tell you continuously, "Postpone it. There is always tomorrow. Why be in such a hurry? You can do it tomorrow." And the tomorrow never comes. The person who postpones any good act for tomorrow is postponing it forever; he will never be able to do it. If you postpone it today, you are learning a habit of postponing. Today you say, "Tomorrow." You are creating a pattern of life, a style of life. Tomorrow will come as today again and the habit will say, "We will do it tomorrow."

I have heard an ancient parable:

A man worshipped God for many many years, and one day God appeared to him.

He asked only for one thing. He said, "Give me something -- that's why I have been worshipping you -- something which can fulfill all my wishes. Whatsoever I ask should be fulfilled, immediately."

God gave him a seashell, a beautiful seashell, and he said, 'You ask anything from this seashell and immediately, instantly, it will be fulfilled.'

He tried -- it was so. He was immensely happy. He asked for a big palace and it was there. He asked for beautiful women and they were there, and he asked for good food and it was there. Since that day he lived in absolute luxury.

But one day everything got disturbed. A sannyasin, a wandering monk, stayed with the man. The wandering monk said to him, "I have heard about your secret, but that is nothing. I have also worshipped God, far longer than you, and you are a householder, I am a monk -- of course he was more gracious to me. He has also given me a big seashell. Look at this seashell. This is double the size of your seashell."

It was. And the monk said, "Whatsoever you ask, the seashell gives you double. If you ask for one palace it makes two palaces for you. It always gives you double."

Man's greed is such that the man became greedy. Now one seashell was enough; he could have asked twice or thrice, there was no problem. But a greedy man is blind -- greed IS blind. He became infatuated.

He told the monk, "You are a monk, you have renounced the world, give your seashell to me and you can have my small seashell. For your purposes that is enough. I am a householder."

So the seashells were exchanged. Early in the morning, after taking the bath, the man worshipped and asked the seashell to give him one lakh rupees. The seashell said, "Why one lakh? I can give you two lakhs!"

The man was immensely happy. He said, "Good, give me two lakhs."

The seashell said, "Why two lakhs? I can give you four lakhs."

Now the man was a little puzzled, disturbed. He said, "Okay, give me four lakhs."

The seashell said, "I will give you eight lakhs."

And so on, so forth it went on -- but nothing was given! Promises and promises... and whatsoever he asked, the promise was doubled. He rushed to catch hold of the monk because in the morning, early morning, he was to leave. He had already left....

This is a beautiful parable. That's how mind functions: the seashell of the monk -- tricky. It always goes on giving you great promises, but tomorrow, not today. And tomorrow never comes. And, slowly slowly, hoping becomes your very life, just hoping and waiting. And death comes... and no hope is ever fulfilled.

Mind is very much afraid of doing good. Why is mind afraid of doing good? For two reasons. One: to do good is nonnourishing to the mind; mind is nourished by doing evil, by doing bad. For example, if you say no, mind is strengthened; if you say yes, mind is not strengthened. Hence mind is never interested in saying yes to anything. Mind is basically atheistic. It enjoys saying no; no is its power. Negativity is its food; it eats negativity. Positivity is its death.

Try to say no and you start feeling powerful. Whenever you say no, whenever you can manage to say no, you feel powerful. Whenever you have to say yes you feel humiliated, as if something has been done against yourself. To say a total yes is to destroy the mind totally, and to remain in a total no is to remain in the mind, in the ego.

The ego is another name of the mind. The ego is the center of the mind; nonego is the center of your being. At the very core of being there is no idea of "I"; but in the center of the mind, I, I, I... The only noise that goes on is that of the ego. The more you say no, the more you can feel your ego. "No" defines your ego.

Watch -- and you will see the facticity of what I am saying. I am not propounding any theory; it is a simple statement of a fact of life. Observe -- it is not a question of believing or not believing -- observe and you will know. Say yes, feel yes, and suddenly there is no ego.

The greatest good is saying yes to existence and life. That's what religion is. And the greatest no is saying no to God, to life, to existence; that gives you great power, but power to the ego.

In fact, the ego is so cunning, the mind is so clever, that even religious people are deceived by it. Religious people go on saying no to life. They try to say yes to God, but the mind persuades them, "How can you say yes to God unless and until you have said no to life? Say no to life!"

That's how the idea of renunciation arose: "Say no to your wife, your husband, your children. Say no to your family, say no to your society, say no to the world. Turn your back towards the world and escape into the Himalayas. Only then can you say yes to God."

The cunning mind goes on deceiving even the so-called religious. Even the so-called saints and mahatmas are nothing but playthings in the hands of the ego. Ego is very subtle, very cunning; clever are its ways. Unless you are very intelligent you will not be able to get out of its clutches. You will get out from one point and it will catch hold of you from another point. You will throw it from the front door, it will come from the back door.

The so-called saint feels greatly satisfied as far as the ego is concerned: he is a saint, he is holy; "holier-than-thou" is written all over his face. You will not find greater egoists anywhere than you will find in the monasteries. The popes and the SHANKARACHARYAS, the priests, those who have renounced everything, naturally they feel great, egoistic. They have renounced the world -- what have YOU done? They have renounced money, power, prestige. But all this renunciation is nothing but a very clever game of the mind.

The truly religious person is one who says yes to life because life is God's, who says yes

to the earth because the earth is part of heaven, who says yes to the body because the body is only a shelter for the soul. And a beautiful shelter it is, a beautiful home it is, a beautiful servant it is. The really religious person knows how to say yes to all. His yes brings transcendence, his yes brings egolessness, his yes brings a state of no-mind.

Look at it from another angle: if you say no, mind has immediately much to do. If you say no, you will have to find arguments to support your no. No means arguments, no means logic. The more you say no, the more you have to be argumentative. If you say yes, there is no need for any argument. Yes is a full stop; no is only a beginning of a logical process. The person who says no becomes more and more argumentative. The person who knows how to say yes to life, love, existence, becomes less and less argumentative.

And to be less and less argumentative is to be more harmonious; to be more and more argumentative is to be more and more quarrelsome, violent. Argument simply means your mind is in a discord; no argument means the mind has attained a deep harmony. And out of that deep harmony is good; out of inner discord is evil. You do bad because you are divided. Whenever you are undivided, good starts happening through you; not that you have to do it -- it starts happening.

Buddha says: BE QUICK TO DO GOOD.

Why "be quick" -- do it immediately? Mind will say, "Tomorrow. Wait. Let us think about it." And thinking never comes to any conclusion, remember; thinking has never come to any conclusion. Ten thousand years of philosophizing and there is not a single conclusion in philosophy. They have not arrived at any truth; they are still continuing. The same arguments go on being repeated in different forms and different ways, and philosophy goes on moving in a vicious circle. The philosopher remains inconclusive, and to remain inconclusive your whole life means not to live at all.

Life is possible only out of decisiveness, out of commitment, involvement; otherwise you are always a spectator, you never participate in anything. How can you participate unless logically you prove to yourself, to your heart's content, that this is so?

It is said about Immanuel Kant, a great philosopher, that a woman had asked him that she would be immensely happy if he would accept her as his wife. She had to gather much courage to ask this, because Immanuel Kant was not a romantic person at all, very unromantic, absolutely unromantic. His life was not a life of spontaneity; he is an example of a mechanical life. His whole life he followed a certain routine religiously.

At ten o'clock in the night he would go to bed; that means exactly ten, not one minute before, not one minute after. His servant... he had only one servant. Who else would agree to live with such a person? -- only a servant. His family deserted him; he was so mechanical, such a drain, such a drag on the whole family. The servant used to simply tell him the time -- not "Now go to sleep"; he would simply come and declare, "It is ten o'clock," and that was it. He would jump immediately into his bed. Even if there were visitors, he would not even say goodbye to them. He would go into the bed, under his blanket, and the servant would declare to the visitors, "Now you go please. He has gone to sleep."

At exactly five o'clock he had to be dragged out of the bed. Sometimes it was too cold and he was too tired, but the routine had to be followed -- even if he was ill, the routine had to be followed. The servant was told that maybe sometimes he will feel weak, tempted to sleep a little longer, but he is not to listen. He has to be dragged out, even against his will. Even if he is saying, "No, I want to sleep," the servant has to pull him out. It sometimes used to be a fight, a quarrel. The servant had to beat him to bring him out of the bed -- that was his

duty.

The woman must have been rare! -- but you can always find crazy people everywhere. She must have been crazy to fall in love with this man. This man was not a man but a machine. And do you know what Immanuel Kant did? He listened to her and he said, "I will think it over." And he thought for three years! -- all the pros and all the cons. He wrote a long long treatise, what are the advantages of being married and what are the disadvantages. And finally he arrived at a very poor conclusion, almost not a conclusion at all. There was one point more in favor, and that was the point that by being married you will know what marriage is -- good or bad -- that you will know. That much is more in favor.

So he went, knocked on the woman's door. The father opened the door and asked, "Why have you come?"

He said, "I have decided, because one point more is in favor. There are three hundred points in all: three hundred against, three hundred and one for -- so I have decided to marry."

The father laughed. He said, "It is too late. She is already married -- and not only married, she has a child too! You came a little late."

But that's how philosophers function. I even wonder that he could reach a conclusion within three years. It is a miracle -- philosophers never come to any conclusion. It must have been a very nonphilosophic moment in which he arrived at the conclusion.

Ten thousand years of history is enough proof: philosophy remains inconclusive. Philosophy knows only how to question -- no answers. Each answer in its turn becomes ten more questions.

The mind is very happy to argue, to think. The mind is very unhappy to conclude, because once you conclude, mind is not needed. Conclusion means the death of the mind. If you have concluded about the ultimate truth, the mind has to commit suicide.

The mind is very much afraid of saying yes and the mind is very much afraid of doing good, because the good can be done only in a state of egolessness. The good is a by-product of a state of no-mind. Try to understand it -- and when I say try to understand it I am not saying try to think it over. I am simply saying, listen from the heart, with a loving heart.

These sutras can be understood only by the heart. They have come out of the greatest heart that has lived on the earth, and they can be understood only by the heart.

BE QUICK TO DO GOOD. The mind is always quick in doing bad. If you want to be angry the mind never says, "Tomorrow," it says, "Do it right now." If you want to donate, if you want to give something to a poor man, the mind says, "Wait! First inquire whether he is really poor or he has a bank balance. And first look... he looks so healthy, why give to him?"

Mind is miserly in sharing anything; sharing is very difficult for the mind. It hoards, it collects; it becomes, slowly slowly, a junkyard. It can't leave anything -- useful, useless, it goes on collecting. Who knows, whatsoever is useless today may become useful tomorrow.

To do good means to share, to love, to serve, to be compassionate. And these are things which the miserly mind cannot do. But it will not say, "I don't want to do it," because that will not be very diplomatic. The diplomatic way is "tomorrow" -- postpone. Mind is a bureaucrat, and not an ordinary bureaucrat but a Russian bureaucrat.

I have heard:

At a disarmament conference in Geneva, an American delegate, stretching his legs under the table, accidentally bumped the knee of a Russian lady interpreter sitting directly across from him. He smiled an apology.

The lady neither spoke nor smiled. She turned to the communist diplomat next to her and asked him something. The diplomat turned to his superior and whispered something to him. The chief then got up, left the table and went to the phone center. The meeting was recessed.

Two and a half hours later it was resumed. The ranking diplomat returned to the table, spoke to his assistant, who whispered something to the lady interpreter, who looked across at the American delegate and said, "Your place or mine?"

This is direct from the Kremlin! This is how bureaucracy works, and this is how mind functions. It says, "Wait, let me think it over." And then it goes on and on to no end, and meanwhile it keeps promising you, "Wait! Tomorrow you can do it."

But see: the same mind when it is a question of doing something wrong never tells you to postpone. It says, "Do it right now. Who knows about tomorrow? This man has insulted you -- hit him back, hit him hard! If a brick is thrown at you, answer with a rock!"

Gurdjieff remembers that when his grandfather was dying -- he was only nine years old -- the grandfather called him. He loved the boy very much and he told the boy, "I don't have much to give to you, but departing from the world I would like to give you something. I can only give you one piece of advice that has helped me; it was given to me by my father, and he was also dying when he gave it to me. I am dying. You are too young, you may not be able to understand it right now, but remember, a day will come when you will understand. Whenever you find yourself capable of following my advice, follow it, and you will never be in misery. You can avoid the hell of life."

And what was the advice? Just this sutra -- not exactly in these words. He said to Gurdjieff, "Remember one thing: if you want to do any bad thing, postpone it for tomorrow; and if you want to do something good, do it immediately -- because postponement is a way of not doing. And bad has not to be done, and good has to be done. For example," the old man said, "if somebody insults you and you feel angry, enraged, tell him that you will come after twenty-four hours and answer him."

Gurdjieff remembers, "That advice transformed my whole life. Although I was too young, only nine years old, I tried it just out of curiosity. Some boy would insult me or would hurt me or would say something nasty, and I would remember my old dying grandfather and I would tell the boy, 'I will have to wait; I have promised an old man. After twenty-four hours I will answer you.'

"And it always happened," Gurdjieff remembers, "that either I would come to conclude that he was right, that whatsoever he had said LOOKED nasty but it was true about me.... He was saying, 'You are a thief,' and that is true, I am a thief. He was saying, 'You are insincere,' and that is true -- I am insincere." So he would go and thank the boy: "You pointed out something true about me. You brought up a true facet of my being which was not clear to me. You made me more conscious about myself. I am immensely grateful."

Or, after twenty-four hours' thinking, he would come to conclude that, "That man or that boy is absolutely wrong. It has nothing to do with me." Then there is no point in answer-ing; he would not go back to the boy. If something is utterly wrong, why become enraged? This is a big world, millions of people are there; you cannot go answering everybody, otherwise your whole life will be wasted. And there is no need either.

This is half of the story. If you can postpone the bad for tomorrow you will be able to do the good immediately. And you will never repent -- because if you do bad immediately, you will repent tomorrow; if you do good today you will never repent, there is no question of repentance. This is a simple secret of transforming the hell that you live in into a lotus

paradise.

BE QUICK TO DO GOOD.
IF YOU ARE SLOW,
THE MIND, DELIGHTING IN MISCHIEF,
WILL CATCH YOU.

Don't be slow, be quick because mind is very quick; it moves faster than anything else. It moves faster than light! Physicists say nothing moves faster than light and of course, it seems impossible to move faster than light. Light moves one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles in one second -- in one second! But physicists have no idea of the mind yet. They don't yet have such sophisticated instruments to measure the speed of the mind.

Mind moves faster than light. You have to be VERY alert, otherwise mind is bound to ditch you somewhere. Before you become alert, mind will have already taken you somewhere far away. Mind is always ready to go on a trip, because it is only in trips that it feels alive.

Meditation simply means sitting silently, doing nothing, not even thinking... and the mind disappears. Because you are not on any trip, the mind is no longer needed. Mind is a guide for great journeys. If you are going somewhere, mind is very happy; in your going somewhere the mind can feel enhanced. But if you are not going anywhere, just sitting silently, doing nothing, the mind feels very sad.

And it will happen almost always to meditators that when the mind feels sad, it starts creating boredom for you; that is a strategy of the mind. The mind is saying, "Come on! Let us go somewhere, let us do something. Why are you sitting? Just sitting doing nothing brings boredom!"

It is a trick of the mind! Otherwise, just sitting doing nothing will bring you more freshness. That's the experience of all the awakened ones -- but not yours. This is MY experience. In my room, what am I doing? Sitting silently, doing nothing... spring comes and the grass grows by itself. Nothing has to be done really -- the grass grows by itself. Life goes on by itself, life flows on by itself. You need not push the river.

But in the beginning mind will create boredom; boredom is the mind's trick. The mind is saying, "Look, if you don't follow me you will feel bored. If you don't follow me you will feel utterly meaningless. If you don't follow me you won't have anything to enjoy. Come, come with me and I will take you to great entertainments."

Mind is always bribing you by entertainments: put on the radio, put on the TV, go to the movie or at least to the club, gossip -- do something. Boredom is a punishment from the mind to you if you are not doing anything. And the greatest problem for the meditator is boredom.

But if you can sit absolutely unconcerned about boredom -- let the boredom be there -- if you don't get disturbed by the boredom, within three to nine months' time the boredom will disappear. And instead of boredom there will come such a bubbling joy, such freshness, that you have never known before. And it is not entertainment because there is nothing: you are simply sitting in an absolute void. And out of that void, the plenitude, out of that void, a new kind of fulfillment....

BE QUICK TO DO GOOD. IF YOU ARE SLOW, THE MIND, DELIGHTING IN MISCHIEF, WILL CATCH YOU. The mind delights in mischief. Why? -- because that is the only way it can live. They say that you cannot write a story about a really good man because there will be nothing to write. A story can be written only about a bad man. It is not accidental that Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus, are not even mentioned in your history books. No ancient history mentions them. Why? There is nothing to mention! They never killed

anybody, they never did any nuisance; they were \as if they were not. They were so good as if they never existed!

One of the names of Buddha is 'Tathagata'. TATHAGATA means: coming like a breeze, going like a breeze -- thus came, thus gone -- without disturbing anything, not even a dead leaf. A silent breeze slowly coming with no footsteps and then disappearing. Neither does the coming create any noise nor the going. It is as if you have drawn a line in water; you have not even made it and it has disappeared. It is like birds flying in the sky: they don't leave any footprints.

But history is full of Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Nadirshah, Alexander, Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong. If you do more mischief there is more possibility of your name remaining in history. If you really want to be part of history, if you want to create history, do mischief. Politicians will remain in history because they are the greatest mischief-mongers.

Mind is constantly in search of mischief; any opportunity and it cannot miss it. Even if there is no opportunity it will try to create an opportunity.

A doorbell rings at a whorehouse. The madam opens the door and sees a man there with no arms or legs.

"What are you doing at a place like this?" asks the madam.

The cripple looks at her and says, "I rang the doorbell, didn't I?"

No hands, no legs, but still he is ready to go to the whorehouse!

Berquist hid in the closet when Frank, the husband of his girlfriend, returned unexpectedly. While hanging up his coat, Frank spotted the Swede's balls between other garments.

"What the hell are those?" he asked his wife.

"Oh... eh... Christmas bells," she replied.

"Let us hear their peal," said the husband. He gave them a terrific whack with his fist.

A voice gasped, "Yingle, yangle! You sonofabitch!"

Just look at people's lives. Watch yourself, watch others. Become a watcher, and you will be surprised: everybody is in search of some opportunity. And opportunities are there. People are waiting only for opportunities. If they are not doing some evil, that does not mean that they are good people; it may only be that the opportunity is missing. That is my own observation.

When a politician is not in power he is a very good man, a public servant, humble; always ready to bow down and touch your feet; open hospitals and schools. And once he is in power, he is not even ready to recognize you and all that public service disappears. Once he is in power, he has opportunity; now he will do things that he always wanted to do but could not.

This has happened in this country in such a crystal-clear way as it has not happened anywhere else. Before independence, just thirty years ago, all these politicians who have become a nuisance to the country were great public servants, great servants of the country, freedom-fighters. They sacrificed much, they lived simple, humble, poor lives, for the freedom of the country. Their lives were an example to be followed, they were ideals; they were worshipped by the people.

And then came power -- and within seconds the whole thing changed. They became power-hungry, they became power-possessed. Their faces changed, their masks disappeared.

Now the opportunity was there.

Lord Acton has said: Power corrupts. I agree and I don't agree. Yes, superficially it seems that power corrupts, but if you go deep into its analysis it is not power that corrupts -- the person has been corrupted always. Power only gives opportunity; power cannot corrupt. If you are corrupted, then power gives you an opportunity to do that which you always wanted to do but were not able to do.

People think it is money that corrupts people. No, money simply gives opportunity. Poor people look so good; it is not so. Just let them become rich and then see... all their goodness disappears. In fact the newly rich people are far more dangerous than those who are born rich, because those who are born rich are accustomed to riches.

It is said about a prime minister of a king that he accumulated much wealth illegally, behind the king's back; that he became the richest man in the country. Then the king came to know about it.

He called the prime minister and he said, "You have served me well so I cannot punish you because of your services and your devotion, but you have been cheating and you have been accumulating illegal wealth. I will not punish you -- you please resign and leave my country and go wherever you want to go."

The prime minister said, "Before I leave I would like to suggest one thing. Now I have all that I need, in fact more than I need, if you appoint another man your prime minister, he will have to accumulate wealth again. He will harm you more. Now I need not harm you at all."

And it is said the king understood the point. He didn't throw the man out. He said, "That's right, you have already done whatsoever you could, so why bring a new person? And he will go through the whole process again, that is true."

Let a poor man become rich and then see what happens: all his simplicity is gone, all his humbleness is gone.

A man had a talking dog. One day when he was thirsty he went into a bar with his dog and made a bet with the bartender that if his dog could talk he would get a free beer.

The bartender agreed, knowing that there was no such thing as a talking dog. He asked the dog what kind of beer his master liked.

"Budweiser," replied the dog, and the startled bartender paid up with the beer.

Then the three of them -- the man, the bartender, and the dog -- got caught up in an animated conversation. The dog ate peanuts while the men drank. At one point the bartender said that he had a headache but had run out of aspirins.

"Does your dog run errands?" he asked.

"Sure," replied the man. So the bartender gave the dog five dollars and sent him off to the store for some aspirins.

The dog didn't come back. The men waited and waited but as no dog came, his owner went out looking for him. He walked the city until he spied the dog in a dark back alley humping another dog.

"My God!" exclaimed the owner. "What the hell are you doing? This is the first time you have ever done this kind of thing!"

"I know," panted the still humping dog. "I have always wanted to, but I have never had the money before!"

It is not power that corrupts. Power brings your corrupted unconscious to the surface,

power brings your intrinsic evil into action. Power exposes you, power does not corrupt you. Power is a good thing in a way: it exposes people. It is like an X-ray: it shows your reality, your naked truth.

THE MIND, DELIGHTING IN MISCHIEF, WILL CATCH YOU. Remember it: the mind is very quick. If you don't do good IMMEDIATELY -- the moment the idea of good arises in you, if you don't do it immediately, the mind is going to deceive you, to take you astray, to convince you to do something else.

Feingold immigrated to America and after many years of hard work became a very wealthy man. Now on his deathbed, with his wife Sarah standing by, he started to dispose of his worldly possessions.

"My Cadillac with the pushbutton-motorcycle-cop-detector I leave to my son, Sam."

"Better you should leave it to Joe," said his wife. "He is a better driver."

"Alright," he whispered. "My Rolls Royce I bequeath to my daughter, Linda."

"You better give it to your nephew, Willie," Sarah interrupted. "He is a very conservative driver."

"Alright, give it to Willie. My twelve-cylinder Jaguar I give to my niece, Sally."

"Personally, I think Judy should get it."

Feingold raised his head and shouted, "Sarah, please! Who is dying, you or me?"

If you wait, the mind is going to give you suggestions, "Do this, do that." Do the good immediately -- why wait? And who knows? -- the next moment will never come; this may be the last moment. Act as if this is going to be the last moment! Act with that urgency, because death can overtake you any moment. Don't listen to the mind. Mind can go on and on postponing things and, before mind allows you to do anything, death may have knocked you down. Do good, because doing good immediately brings joy.

TURN AWAY FROM MISCHIEF.
AGAIN AND AGAIN, TURN AWAY,
BEFORE SORROW BEFALLS YOU.

Because if you do mischief, sorrow is going to follow you like a shadow. It is not that there is a God sitting somewhere who punishes you when you do something wrong; the wrong itself is the punishment, it carries its punishment intrinsically.

That's the whole idea behind the theory of karma. There is no need for any God to judge, to punish, to reward. And just think: if there was a God to judge every person and every person's every act and then dispose accordingly -- punishments to a few, rewards to others -- that kind of God would have gone mad long ago!

No, there is no God disposing rewards and punishments -- that idea is childish. There is a law, not a God, a law like gravitation. If you don't walk rightly, if you are too much drunk, you are bound to fall somewhere. Not that God orders, "Fall!" -- the law of gravitation is enough. If you don't walk rightly you are bound to fall. The law of gravitation takes care of it. If you walk alert, consciously, you don't suffer.

Exactly like that, karma is a scientific law: the law of action. Whatsoever you do has its intrinsic reward or punishment. When you are angry, it is not that you will suffer in your next life. When you are angry, WHILE you are angry, you are suffering; there is no need for another life to give you punishment. While you are angry you are in a fire, you are poisoning

your whole body, you are poisoning your whole system.

Anger is poison.

It may hurt the other, it may not -- it depends on the other -- but it is going to hurt you, certainly.

If you insult a buddha it is not going to hurt him, but before you can insult a buddha you will have to go through much inner turmoil.

A man came and spat on Buddha's face. Buddha wiped his face and asked the man, "Do you want to say something more, or is this all?"

Ananda, his disciple, became furious, naturally. This man comes, Buddha has not done anything to this man, and he spits on the master. Inconceivable! Ananda said to Buddha, "Bhagwan, just give me permission so that I can show this man. He needs to be punished!"

Buddha said, "Ananda, you have become a sannyasin, but you go on forgetting it. And that poor man has suffered already too much. Just look at his face, look at his eyes, bloodshot. Look at his body, trembling. And before spitting on me, do you think he would have been celebrating and dancing and singing? The whole night he has not slept; the whole night he was in an insane state. Spitting on me is just the outcome of that insanity. Feel compassion for the poor man. What more punishment? Is it not enough? And what harm has he done to me? I just had to wipe it. It's so simple. And don't you get agitated, otherwise you are behaving foolishly. For his wrong, you are punishing yourself -- this is foolishness!"

See the point -- of tremendous significance. Buddha says, "HE has done something wrong. Why are YOU punishing yourself, Ananda? I can see you are boiling! If I were not here to prevent you, you would kill this man! You are getting insane in the same way he was insane."

That man listened to this whole dialogue. He was puzzled, perplexed; he was not expecting Buddha to behave in such a way. He was thinking he would be furious, angry; that's what he wanted. Failing in it he felt very humiliated. It was so unexpected, the compassion and the love that Buddha showed.

And Buddha said to him, "Go home, take a good rest. You are looking tired, you have punished yourself enough. Forget all about spitting -- it has not harmed me. How can it harm me? And this body is made of dust. Sooner or later, it will fall into dust and people will be walking on it, spitting on it, and all kinds of things will happen on this body. People will defecate, urinate.... You have not just done anything very dangerous. Go home, take a good rest."

The man went home. For the first time he was absolutely puzzled: so unexpected was the response of Buddha, he could not understand it. He cried, he wept. He came back by the evening, he fell at Buddha's feet, and he said, "Forgive me!"

Buddha said, "There is no question of me forgiving you, because I was not angry in the first place. How can I forgive you? But it is good -- you look more calm and quiet. I am happy. I cannot forgive you, sorry, because I was not angry in the first place. But I am happy, tremendously happy, seeing that you have become reconciled, seeing that you have attained to a harmonious state, seeing that you are sane again. Go happily, and remember it: never do such acts again, because that's how you go on creating hell for yourself."

TURN AWAY FROM MISCHIEF. AGAIN AND AGAIN, TURN AWAY, BEFORE SORROW BEFALLS YOU. Many many times the mind will suggest to you, "Do this, do that." Many many times you are bound to forget. Many many times you will not be able to

remember what Buddha has said, what I am saying to you. So you will have to remember again and again. Slowly slowly the remembrance will settle, will become a light in your being. Then you will not be expected to remember; it will be simply there. It will fall on your path as a beam of light. It will show you the way; it will help you to avoid the pitfalls. And once remembering settles deep inside you and mischief becomes impossible, evil becomes impossible, and good becomes natural, spontaneous, you have entered into the lotus paradise.

It is not somewhere else -- it is here. It is a change of your attitude, of your vision. Nothing else changes in the world, everything remains the same, but you are no longer the same. Not that you are transported to another world -- the same world continues, but your vision is no longer the same. You look at the same things in a new way, with a new style. That style is sannyas, that way is sannyas.

SET YOUR HEART ON DOING GOOD.
DO IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN,
AND YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH JOY.

Shift your consciousness from the head to the heart. Mind wants to do mischief, it lives out of mischief; and the heart wants to do good, it lives, nourishes through it.

SET YOUR HEART ON DOING GOOD. Notice the difference! Now he is not saying set your MIND on doing good. Mind cannot be set on doing good; even if you try to do good through the mind you will do evil, you will do bad. It is not within the capacity of the mind to do good.

You can see it happening all over the world. The scientists wanted to do good; that's why they worked for years, researched, and found the source of atomic energy. Albert Einstein wanted to do good. He wrote a letter to the American president, Roosevelt, saying that "Now atomic energy is available and atomic bombs can be made. And just by making atom bombs America will be so powerful that there will be no need to fight. Just the power will be enough -- enemies will become so afraid that Hitler and Tojo and Mussolini will surrender on their own accord."

This is what a logical mind thinks. But life does not follow logic, life does not follow mind. Albert Einstein repented his whole life, because deep down he felt he was responsible for Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He had written the letter... and the politicians immediately jumped on the discovery. And once the power reached into the politicians' hands, they didn't care; then they would not listen to Albert Einstein. Then who cares? -- now the power is in their hands.

And do you know, in fact, those who specialize in war matters say that Nagasaki and Hiroshima were not needed at all. Japan was going to surrender within a week; it was only a question of one week more. And if you had tolerated the war for years, what was the hurry? But America wanted to show its power to the world.

Politicians are very juvenile, childish. In fact, if a person is not juvenile and childish he will not be a politician in the first place. When you have something, you want to show it to the world; otherwise what is the point of having it? One hundred thousand people were killed in Hiroshima within five seconds, for no other reason than to show the world that America has the atom bomb.

Albert Einstein lived and died in deep repentance. When he was dying somebody asked, "If God is going to give you another chance, what are you going to do, what are you are

going to be? Would you again be a scientist, a physicist, so that you can continue your incomplete work?"

Einstein opened his eyes and said, "No, never! Rather than being a physicist I would like to be a plumber. Enough is enough!"

Science is a mind endeavor, mind effort; hence science has created great power. But the power is turning against man himself. Science has destroyed the whole ecology, it has destroyed the whole planet. It is destroying man -- and in the name of good! And scientists think they are great servants of humanity, they are helping humanity to grow, evolve, to become more and more powerful. They are simply creating a situation in which this planet will become almost impossible to live on. They are creating a situation where the whole humanity can commit suicide. They can destroy this whole planet... because the whole effort is out of the mind.

We need science which is rooted in the heart and not in the mind. We need a totally different kind of science which is rooted in meditation and not in concentration. We need a totally new quality to science: the quality of religion.

Unless science has the flavor of religion, meditateness, love, unless it arises out of the heart, it is not going to become a blessing to humanity or to the world. It is going to be a curse -- notwithstanding what the scientists think they are doing. They think they are doing great work, great humanitarian work. They are sacrificing their lives for the sake of humanity. And I am not saying that they are insincere people -- they are sincere people, but their orientation is wrong.

Buddha immediately changes the word. First he uses the word 'mind'. Now he says: SET YOUR HEART ON DOING GOOD. DO IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN, AND YOU WILL BE FILLED WITH JOY.

Joy is a by-product just as sorrow is a by-product. Sorrow follows like a shadow when you do something wrong and joy follows like a shadow when you do something good. Let these be the criteria. If you are in misery, remember -- you must be doing something wrong.

But people are very cunning, their minds are very cunning. If you are in misery the mind says, "Others are doing wrong to you, that's why you are in misery." It is not so -- NOBODY can make you miserable. Yes, they can kill you, but nobody can make you miserable. You can kill me but you cannot make me miserable. I will die in the same blissful state in which I am living. There will be no difference at all. You can poison me but you cannot poison my consciousness. You can destroy the body -- which is going to be destroyed anyway sooner or later -- but you cannot destroy ME. That is beyond destruction.

Nobody can make you miserable and nobody can make you blissful. It all depends on you, it depends totally on you. You are responsible for your misery and you are responsible for your joy. Take this responsibility, accept this responsibility. To accept this responsibility totally, one hundred percent, is to become a religious person, is to be initiated into what I call religion.

The politician always throws the responsibility on the other and the religious person takes the responsibility totally upon his own shoulders.

A FOOL IS HAPPY
UNTIL HIS MISCHIEF TURNS AGAINST HIM.
AND A GOOD MAN MAY SUFFER
UNTIL HIS GOODNESS FLOWERS.

To remind you, Buddha says that sometimes you may see a mischievous person very happy, and vice versa: sometimes you may see a good man very unhappy. But don't be deceived by the appearances. A FOOL IS HAPPY UNTIL HIS MISCHIEF TURNS AGAINST HIM.

It takes a little time. If you sow the seeds, it will take a little time for them to grow and bring fruit. Evil may taste sweet in the beginning but always proves to be poisonous in the end. And the good act may not appear so sweet in the beginning because it takes time for it to flower, it takes a little time for it to release its fragrance, but in the end it is always sweet.

Buddha has said: If you see a mischievous person happy, just wait a little; soon, sooner or later, you will see that he has dug a grave for himself. And if you find a good man in misery, don't be worried: it is just the uphill task. When you are moving uphill it is a little difficult, arduous; you perspire, you feel tired, but once you have reached the top you can relax and rest.

But fools go on thinking that they are happy because of their mischief. You will be surprised to know that people are very unintelligent in looking into the deep causes of their lives.

In a primitive tribe in Africa, even up to now it is believed that the birth of a child has nothing to do with lovemaking, with intercourse -- because the gap is nine months. For centuries they have been giving birth to children, but they have not connected the cause and effect yet. They think the child is born because of God's grace or the religious ritual that the priest has done on their behalf. When they came to know for the first time that the whole world thinks differently, they laughed; they thought the whole world foolish. What does lovemaking have to do with childbirth? -- because every time you make love you don't get a child.

It looks logical! And you make love today and the child comes after nine months -- and those primitive people don't have any calendar yet, any clock; they cannot count time. Nine months is incalculable; they don't know how much time has passed, so they have never been able to connect cause with effect.

And this is the situation about evil and its absolutely inevitable result, sorrow. You may do evil today, and it is very good and everything looks beautiful, and you can't see any bad thing resulting out of it. And deep down you know all these buddhas are wrong -- where is the law of karma?

Many times people come to me and they say, "We see that evil people are prosperous. Why? And we also see that good people are suffering. Why? That is proof enough that there is no God, that is proof enough that there is no law of karma. That is proof enough that might is right, whosoever is powerful is right." It is not so. Just one needs a little patience. But fools have their own logic -- foolishness has its own logic, remember.

Gilligan, Frizzoli and Lieberman were telling how they were mistaken for great men.

The Irishman said, "I was walking along the street and a fella yelled, 'Hello, Saint Patrick!'"

The Italian said, "That's nothing. I was standing on a corner, a man passed and said, 'Hello, Mussolini!'"

"That's nothing," said the Jew. "As I walked across the park this morning, a policeman yelled at me, 'Jesus Christ, get off the grass!'"

The fool has his own logic. In fact the fool may be more logical -- at least appear more

logical -- than the wise man, because the wise man will be paradoxical.

Buddha says: Remember that it takes a little time for seeds to grow into sprouts, become trees. Wait for the spring, and then the flowers come.

A FOOL IS HAPPY UNTIL HIS MISCHIEF TURNS AGAINST HIM. It always turns against the fool, it is BOUND to turn. It is a natural law, it cannot be avoided, you cannot escape it.

Zimmerman, on a business trip to Tokyo, was having lunch with a Japanese friend. "You Americans don't know how to make love," said the Oriental. "In Japan we go to bed with wife, begin to make love; after a few minutes we stop, get up for cup of hot tea. Then go back to bed, make love for ten minutes, then get up and have a bowl of rice. Then make love some more, get up, take bath together. Then we finally finish the act."

Two weeks later, back in Brooklyn, Zimmerman got into bed with his wife and began making love to her. Suddenly he stopped and said, "Let us have a glass of tea."

"Are you crazy?" she said.

"Come on," he insisted. Soon they were back in bed and after a little while he stopped and said, "Now we are gonna have a pastrami sandwich."

"Are you nuts?" exclaimed his spouse.

They got back into bed and after a few minutes Zimmerman said, "Now we are gonna take a bath together."

When they finished the Jewish couple went back to the bedroom and wound up their lovemaking.

"Well," said Zimmerman, "what did you think of that?"

"Wonderful," replied his wife. "But where did you learn to screw like a Jap?"

You can go on believing that you are very wise but if you are a fool, you are a fool. Your belief is going to be destroyed sooner or later by life itself. Life knows no exceptions. And this is one of the most fundamental laws. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal law: that the evil person is bound to suffer sooner or later, and it is going to be sooner rather than later; and the good man is going to be blessed by all the blessings of existence.

DO NOT MAKE LIGHT OF YOUR FAILINGS,
SAYING, "WHAT ARE THEY TO ME?"
A JUG FILLS DROP BY DROP.
SO THE FOOL BECOMES BRIMFUL OF FOLLY.

Don't make light of your failings. Don't say, "This is a small thing. Just a small thing can't be of much consequence." But drop by drop you can create the whole ocean! The ocean is nothing but an accumulation of drops, so you have to be aware in each single act; in all the details of your life you have to be alert and aware.

DO NOT BELITTLE YOUR VIRTUES,
SAYING, "THEY ARE NOTHING."
A JUG FILLS DROP BY DROP.
SO THE WISE MAN BECOMES BRIMFUL OF VIRTUE.

Remember, life consists of small things, there are no big things. Small things accumulated become big things. A single act may not look very significant either as evil or as

good. A single smile may not look very significant, but a single smile is part of a long process. A single flower is not the garland, certainly, but there will be no garland if there are not single flowers put together.

Do not belittle your failures, do not belittle your good acts. Each and every act is significant: if it is bad you are going to suffer; if it is good you are going to enjoy life. And to enjoy life is the only way to know that God is. It is only in blissfulness that the proof comes that God is. There is no logical proof for God, but when you are overflowing with joy, when you can dance with joy, in that dance a gratitude arises on its own accord. A thankfulness, a prayer, is born, and in that prayer you are reborn. In that prayer not only are you reborn, God is born too.

Life consists of small things, and you have to transform each small thing through your awareness, watchfulness, alertness, into a beautiful act. Then ordinary things can become extraordinary.

A Zen monk was asked, "What did you use to do before you became enlightened?"

He said, "I used to chop wood and carry water from the well."

And then he was asked, "What do you do now you have become enlightened?"

He said, "I chop wood and carry water from the well."

The questioner was puzzled. He said, "There seems to be no difference then."

The master said, "The difference is in me. The difference is not in my acts, the difference is in me -- but because I have changed, all my acts have changed. Their significance has changed: the prose has become poetry, the stones have become sermons, and matter has completely disappeared. Now there is only God and nothing else. Life now is liberation to me, it is nirvana."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #4

Chapter title: Truth is very simple

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT DOES ENLIGHTENMENT FEEL LIKE?

Prem Geetam, enlightenment is not a thought nor a feeling. In fact, enlightenment is not an experience at all. When all experiences have disappeared and the mirror of consciousness is left without any content, utterly empty; no object to see, to think about, to feel; when there is no content around you; the pure witness remains -- that is the state of enlightenment.

It is difficult, almost impossible, to describe it. If you say it feels blissful, it gives a wrong meaning to it -- because bliss is something contrary to misery and enlightenment is not contrary to anything. It is not even silence, because silence has meaning only when there is sound; without the contrast of sound there is no experience of silence. And there is no sound, there is no noise. It is not the experience of one, because what can "one" mean when only one is left? One can have meaning only in comparison with the other, with many. It is not light because it is not darkness. It is not sweet because it is not bitter.

No human word is adequate to express it, because all human words are rooted in duality... and enlightenment is a transcendence; all duality left behind.

That's why Buddha says it is SHUNYA. When he says it is shunya, void, emptiness, he does not mean that it is emptiness; he simply means it is empty of all content.

For example, a room can be called empty if all furniture has been removed, not a single thing is left inside -- you will call the room empty. It is empty of all that it used to contain before, but it is also full -- full of emptiness, full of roominess, full of itself. But nothing can be said about its fullness, its plenitude, because human language has no word for it. We have been trying for centuries to call it God, to call it nirvana, to call it moksha, but all words somehow fail.

It is difficult to translate something from prose to poetry, more difficult to translate from poetry to prose, because prose is on a lower level, poetry is on a higher level. It is difficult to translate from one language to another language, although all languages exist on the same plane. Why is it difficult to translate? -- because there are subtle nuances to words. Those nuances are lost in translating, and those are the real things.

This is impossible: to translate something for which no word exists, to translate something that is transcendental into the languages which belong to the world of duality. It is like talking about light with a blind man; talking about beautiful music to one who cannot hear, who is deaf; talking to a person who is suffering from fever and whose taste is lost about "sweet." The taste of sweetness is meaningless; he has lost all taste. But a little bit is possible because he used to taste before; he can remember.

But you cannot even remember when you used to taste God; you have completely forgotten the taste. Maybe in your mother's womb there was some experience similar -- maybe not exactly the same, but similar.

I cannot tell you what it feels like, but I can show you the way. I can push you into the abyss... that is the only possibility. You can also taste it, and then you will become as dumb as I am, you will become as dumb as all the buddhas have been.

Just try to see the point of translating.

Rabindranath was given the Nobel Prize for his book GITANJALI. He had written it in his own mother tongue, Bengali. It has a different beauty in Bengali. Bengali has a music to it; it is one of the most beautiful languages in the world. It has a certain flavor of the heart. Its very constitution is poetic, it is MADE of poetry, the language itself. Hence GITANJALI in its original form is an altogether different experience.

Rabindranath himself translated it into English, but he felt very miserable. For years he tried. He knew English perfectly well, but he could see the difference -- the difference was vast. While the original was somewhere on Everest, the translation was just on the plains; the difference was vast. In translation something was lost, something which was really precious.

He asked a very famous Englishman, C.F. Andrews, to help him. Andrews was enchanted with the beauty of the book, because he knew nothing of the original. That's why you are enchanted with the words of buddhas, because you don't know anything of the original. If you knew anything of the original then the words of the buddhas would look just rubbish compared to the original; compared to those virgin peaks of the Himalayas the words will look mundane, of the marketplace. They ARE of the marketplace, they are meant for the marketplace.

Andrews was enchanted. Rabindranath said, "But I have shown you the book to help me."

Andrews suggested only four corrections; they were grammatical. Each language has its own grammar. He said, "These four words you change; they are a little bit grammatically wrong."

Rabindranath immediately changed those words. Then he went to England. In a poets' gathering -- a great English poet, Yeats, had called a gathering of the poets, the critics, and the people who love poetry, to listen to Rabindranath's GITANJALI -- Rabindranath read the poetry. They were all fascinated; it was something superb, something rarely known in the West, because it has the same quality as the Upanishads. If you have read Kahlil Gibran... it has the same quality.

But Yeats stood up and said, "Everything is perfectly right except that in four places something is wrong."

Those were exactly the four words that were suggested by C.F. Andrews.

Rabindranath said, "I am puzzled, surprised, I cannot believe it. These are the words suggested by C.F. Andrews. They are more grammatical. My own originals were these...."

Yeats said, "Your original words are right. Although they are not grammatical they have poetry in them, a flow. These words suggested by Andrews are grammatically right" -- Andrews had the mind of a schoolmaster -- "but they are like rocks in the path of a stream; they don't help the flow. You be UNgrammatical, because poetry can afford to be nongrammatical, but poetry cannot afford not to be flowing. The flow has to be maintained; the greater the flow, the better the poetry."

Even in the ordinary world, from one language to another language, it is such a problem....

"Name?" queried the immigration official.

"Sneeze," replied the Chinese proudly.

The official looked at him: "Is that your Chinese name?" he asked. "Sneeze?"

"No, American name."

"Then, let us have your native name."

"Ah Choo."

Now "Ah Choo" becomes "Sneeze"....

In ordinary languages, too, translation is a very difficult phenomenon, one of the most difficult arts; and the greater the poetry, the more difficult it is. The greatest poetry remains untranslated.

But to talk about enlightenment is impossible, for so many reasons: no content which can

be talked about; nobody as an ego to feel, to say, to describe. The object disappears, and with the object the subject disappears, remember, because they are part of a duality -- object and subject -- they are together. If there is no object, the subject disappears immediately. That's why Buddha says it is a state of ANATTA, a state of no ego, of no I. No content, no watcher... then what is left? The whole is left, the total is left! But that total can only be pointed at, not described, not defined.

And my whole effort here is to help you towards that existential state. But don't ask how it feels. There is nobody to feel it, there is nothing to feel it; there is nothing to be felt either. An absolute silence... and a silence which is not in contrast to sound. A pure love, but a love that knows nothing of hate. Fullness, but a fullness which is utterly empty. That's how words become useless, and mystics' statements look very paradoxical.

Ludwig Wittgenstein has said: Nothing should be said if the experience is inexpressible -- if it cannot be said then it should not be said. But that too is a problem. The mystic cannot agree, I cannot agree. It cannot be said, yet efforts have to be made. No effort is going to do justice to the experience -- all those who have known have been perfectly aware -- but still efforts have been made, efforts not really to describe it but efforts to create a longing in you.

And the real longing arises not because of the master's words, but because of the master himself, his presence. If you are in love with the master then his presence starts opening some unknown doors in you. Once in a while a window suddenly opens and you have a glimpse. Once in a while you are transported into other worlds, into other dimensions. The master's presence has to be tasted -- that is the taste of enlightenment. The master's presence has to be allowed to sink deep into you; that is the only way to know something of it.

Jesus says: Eat me. The last night, when he is saying goodbye to his disciples, he breaks the bread and says, "This is me. Eat me, digest me. And whenever you eat, and whenever you break bread, remember." And then he offers wine to his disciples and says, "This is my blood -- drink me, and whenever you drink wine, remember me."

Yes, it is a nourishment of the soul, hence the bread; and yes, it is wine, because it intoxicates you with the divine.

Come closer to me, Geetam! Drop your armor, drop your defenses. Drop your mind. Forget yourself more and more so that you can come closer and closer. In that intimacy something is bound to transpire.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE TRIED MY WHOLE LIFE TO LIVE A RELIGIOUS LIFE, BUT THEN WHY AM I STILL MISERABLE?

Nand Kishor, the religious life cannot be tried. Whatsoever you have been doing in the name of religion must have been something else. Religion is not an effort, it is a consciousness. It is not a practice, it is awareness. It is not a cultivation; you cannot cultivate it -- religious life has nothing to do with character.

Character can be cultivated. Character is moral; even an irreligious person can cultivate it. In fact irreligious people have more character than the so-called religious, because the religious person goes on believing that he can bribe God, or at least he can bribe the priest of God, and he will find some way to enter into paradise. But the irreligious has to be responsible for his life himself, towards himself. There is no God, no priest, nobody that he is

answerable to; he is answerable to himself only. He has more character.

Religion has nothing to do with character. In fact, the really religious person is absolutely characterless. But try to understand the word 'characterless'; it does not mean without character, it means with FLUID character. He lives moment to moment, responding to new situations, new challenges, with no ready-made answers.

The so-called man of character has ready-made answers. He never bothers what is the challenge, he goes on responding in the old, learned ways. Hence he is always falling short and that is his misery. He is never in tune with existence; he cannot be, because he is more interested in keeping his character than in being in tune with existence. What was right yesterday may not be right today, and what is right this moment may not be right the next moment. And the man of character has fixed ideas of what is right and what is wrong; his fixation is the problem.

Nand Kishor, that must be keeping you miserable. You are not flexible, you cannot be. The so-called man of character is absolutely inflexible. He is like dry wood. He is not like a green tree which moves with the wind, dances with the wind, bows down to let the wind pass and then stands back.

The real religious man is like a green tree -- in fact, more like green grass. That's how Lao Tzu defines the religious man: he is like the grass. Let the wind come, and the grass bows down, falls on the earth, is not in any way fighting with the wind. Why fight it? We are part of one organic unity; the wind is not our enemy. The grass bows down; the wind is gone and the grass is back again dancing. The wind has been a help, it has taken all the dust away. The grass is greener, fresher, it enjoyed the whole play with the wind.

But a big tree, egoistic, stiff, rigid, unable to bow down, will fall in the strong wind and will not be able to get back again; it is bound to be miserable. A man of character is always miserable. His only happiness is that he is a man of character, that's all. And what does character have to do with religion? You may eat something, you may not eat something; you may drink something, you may not drink something else; you may smoke, you may not smoke.... Such trivia is thought to be of immense value! And you practice it -- and what do you mean by practicing it?

Nand Kishor, it must be a repression -- and a man who represses is bound to be miserable, because all that he has repressed is struggling within him to come back, to be powerful again. And even though you have repressed it, it goes on pulling your strings from the unconscious. It will keep you always in a state of conflict, inner turmoil; a civil war continues inside you. You will remain tense, anxious, worried, and always afraid -- because you know the enemy is there -- that you have repressed and the enemy is trying every moment to take revenge. And there is a point beyond which you cannot repress any more because you cannot contain any more; there is a limit to everything. Then all that you have repressed explodes, like pus oozing out of you.

This is what we have been told is the state of a religious man -- this repressive character.

My approach is totally different. I don't say that you can practice religion and I don't say that religion has anything to do with this ordinary, moralistic, puritanical ideology.

An unshaven, bedraggled panhandler, with bloodshot eyes and teeth half gone, asked Hogan for a dime. "Do you drink, smoke, or gamble?" asked the Irishman.

"Mister," said the bum, "I don't touch a drop, or smoke the filthy weed, or bother with evil gambling."

"Okay," said Hogan. "If you will come home with me I will give you a dollar."

As they entered the house, Mrs. Hogan took her husband aside and hissed, "How dare you bring that terrible-looking specimen into our home!" "Darling," said Hogan, "I just wanted you to see what a man looks like who does not drink, smoke or gamble."

These people are not religious people.

You say, Nand Kishor, "I have tried my whole life to live a religious life."

You have wasted your life! Don't waste it any more. Religion is not something to be tried. What do you know of religion?

Except in deep meditation, one never comes across religion. It is not written in the Gita and it is not written in the Koran. It is not written anywhere -- because it cannot be written. What is written is morality. What is written is, "You should do this, you should not do that" -- "shoulds" and "should nots." Religion has nothing to do with all that.

Religion is basically the science of creating consciousness in you. Become more meditative, become more conscious. Out of that consciousness a very flexible, spontaneous character is born, which changes every day with the situation, which is not attached to the past, which is not like something ready-made. On the contrary, it is a responsibility -- a moment-to-moment capacity to respond to reality. It is mirrorlike; it reflects whatsoever is the case, and out of that reflection, action is born. That action is religious action.

You don't know anything about religion, Nand Kishor. How can you practice it? And you say, "Why am I still miserable?"

Whatever you have practiced, you must have practiced with greed, to attain something. You must be waiting that great happiness is going to shower on you, that God is going to reward you, that you will be made the richest man in the world or the president of a country, or you will become very famous -- a great saint, something like that. You have not loved religion, you have been using religion as a means to some other end; otherwise this question never arises.

A religious person cannot say, "Why am I still miserable?" because he knows, "If I am miserable, that means I am not religious."

Misery is a by-product of being unconscious. If you are conscious, misery disappears. Not that it is a reward; it is just a simple outcome of consciousness. Bring a light, a lamp, into the house, and the darkness disappears. It is not a reward from God -- not that he sees that you have brought the light, now you have to be rewarded and the darkness has to be removed. No, it is the natural law: AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal law. Bring light and darkness disappears, because darkness has no existence of its own; it is only absence of light.

Misery is absence of consciousness. So it is impossible to be conscious AND miserable; nobody has ever been able to do it up to now. If you can do it, you will be doing something historical, something unheard of, something incomprehensible. You will be doing a miracle which no buddha has ever been able to do. You cannot do it either; it is impossible, it is not in the nature of things. How can you keep the darkness, too, with the light burning in your room? You can keep the darkness, then you have to put out the light; you cannot keep them both together, no coexistence is possible.

If you are miserable, that simply shows you have not understood what religion is and you have been trying something else in the name of religion. You have been trying to be a moralist, a puritan. You have been trying to create a character. Why? For what? Because character is praised, because the society respects character. It is an ego trip -- very subtle, but

an ego trip all the same.

And ego creates misery. Your so-called saints are all miserable. I have come across thousands of your saints -- Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist, Mohammedan, Christian -- and they are all miserable. They are all hoping to be rewarded after death.

Real religion is instant: here you become conscious and immediately misery disappears. You need not wait for the other life, you need not wait for tomorrow even.

And that's what Buddha means when he says: Be quick in doing good. The greatest good is to be conscious -- because all other goods are born out of it. Being conscious is the source of all goodness, all virtue.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN I HEAR YOU SPEAK ON LOVE AND MEDITATION, OR SEX AND DEATH, SAYING THEY ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME ENERGY, SOMETHING IN ME KNOWS IT IS TRUE. BUT, ALTHOUGH DRAWN BY BOTH ASPECTS, I FEEL MYSELF HUNG UP ON THE IDEA THAT I CAN ONLY APPROACH ONE SIDE AT A TIME. IS THERE ACTUALLY A WAY TO BE AT THE MEETING POINT OF THESE POLARITIES WHERE THEY CAN BE FELT AS ONE?

Prem Asang, the beginning has to be always from one side, from one aspect; in the beginning you cannot manage to enter from both the doors. If a temple has two doors you cannot enter simultaneously from both the doors.

How will you manage it? But there is no need either to enter from both doors simultaneously; one door is enough. By entering by one door you have reached the inner shrine. The people who have entered from the other door, they have also reached to the same inner shrine. The meeting happens in the innermost experience.

Whether you enter from love or from meditation it does not matter -- you reach to the same point. The same point of egolessness is arrived at through love or through meditation. The same point of mind disappearing is arrived at by love and by meditation, and the same point of going beyond time is reached by both. The ultimate result is the same, so you need not worry.

You are not to enter from both doors. If you try to enter from both doors you will not be able to enter even from one, because one step you will take in one door, then you will rush to the other; one step you will take in the other door and you will rush back to the first one. And you will be running between these doors OUTSIDE the temple. But this is absurd, there is no need!

If the person entering from the door of love was missing something that the person entering from the door of meditation is gaining, or vice versa, then there would have been a problem -- but they both reach to the same point. From both polarities they come to the same middle... and the middle point is the point of transcendence.

Don't be worried that you can only approach one side at a time. You reach to the innermost shrine, then all the sides are yours. Love, and you will know what meditation is; meditate, and you will know what love is.

Love is for those whose energy is naturally extrovert, and meditation is for those whose energy is naturally introvert. Meditation means being with yourself in utter joy, enjoying your aloneness. Love means being with the other, enjoying the togetherness. Meditation is like

playing on the flute solo; love is like two instruments playing together in deep rhythm -- flute with the tabla. It is a JUGALBANDI -- it is a communion between two instruments going together hand in hand, dancing together.

There are people who will find it easier to come to themselves through the other; it is a little longer way, love is a little longer way, remember, but immensely beautiful, because on the way there are beautiful trees and flowers and birds. Meditation is the shortest way possible because you don't go anywhere; you simply close your eyes and dive deep within your own being -- where you already are.

Love is coming to yourself through the other, via the other; meditation is coming to yourself directly, immediately. But it is a little dry because there is no path -- there are no trees on the path, no birds, no sunrise, no sunset, no moon, no stars. It has a beauty of its own: the beauty of the desert. Have you been to the desert? The silence, the eternal silence of the desert... sands spreading unto eternity... a purity, a cleanliness. Yes, those are the beauties of meditation.

It depends on you: there are desert lovers. Many Christian mystics have gone to the desert and have attained to God in the desert. Going to the desert is only symbolic of going into meditation.

You have to watch yourself, whatsoever appeals to you. In the ultimate reckoning both are the same but on the way both are different -- different songs, different music, different taste. But people are different.

There are two types of people: the masculine and the feminine. The feminine type will find it easier to move through love. And remember: by 'feminine' I don't mean the female; a man can be a feminine type. Chaitanya was a feminine type, just like Meera; there is no difference in their type. Meera is female, Chaitanya is male, but their type is the same; both are the feminine type, both moved through love. Both needed Krishna; only through Krishna they could reach themselves.

And in the same way, by 'masculine' I don't mean the male. Mahavira and the great woman mystic of Kashmir, Lalla, both are exactly the same -- both are masculine types. Mahavira lived naked, Lalla also lived naked. She is the only woman mystic who has lived naked. Both were the same type, the meditative type.

The male type will find it easier to go into himself directly; the feminine type will find it easier to move through the other. Neither is higher or lower because both reach to the same.

So, Asang, just watch, find out your own type, and move accordingly. And don't be worried that you cannot manage both aspects together; nobody has ever managed. Yes, a few people have tried, but they have all failed; nobody has ever succeeded.

Of course, there is one way... if you want to know both the ways. Then the only possible way was tried by Ramakrishna: first you enter by one aspect, one door, reach to the innermost shrine, then come back out and go in again from the other door. That is good as far as scientific experimentation is concerned, just to be certain whether the other also reaches the same place or not. Ramakrishna tried all the religions possible.

And once you have reached the inside shrine, things are easier. If it took you years to reach from the first door, from the second door it will take only days, because in fact you have already reached the goal; you are simply trying the other way, whether it also reaches there or not.

If you are doing some experiments like Ramakrishna, Asang, then it is perfectly okay. But then too even Ramakrishna could not enter two doors together, simultaneously; it is impossible. First you enter one, reach, experience; then, if you are interested.... In fact,

nobody cares then. Why? For what? You have arrived -- and you can see people arriving from the other door also; there is no need for you yourself to go and experiment.

You will meet there Meera and Mahavira, both sitting together. You will meet there Lao Tzu and Krishna and Mohammed and Christ sitting together... sipping tea and gossiping! What else is left?

But if you are interested, if you want to really inquire whether the other way also comes to the same place, you will have to come out and move through the other way. And the other way will be easier now because your consciousness is already inside; only your body will be coming out. And you can move through the other and you can see....

Ramakrishna did one great experiment: he proved, existentially, that all religions are equal. It has been said before too, but nobody has proved it existentially; it was a logical inference. But Ramakrishna went, practically, into every possible method and reached again and again to the same state.

Ramakrishna heralds a new vision, Ramakrishna begins a new phase. After Ramakrishna, in fact, there should not be so many religions -- even if the variety is beautiful, the antagonism should disappear; the Hindu should not be fighting with the Mohammedan -- because this man Ramakrishna has arrived to the same experience from all the religions.

Asang, if you are interested in doing some experiment like Ramakrishna, then it is okay; otherwise there is no need to be worried. Enter from one door and you have entered from all the doors.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN YOU SPOKE ABOUT GOOD, EVIL, AND THEIR RESULTANT KARMAS,
WERE YOU SAYING THAT CONSCIOUS ACTS ARE INTRINSICALLY BLISSFUL
AND UNCONSCIOUS ACTS INTRINSICALLY PAINFUL, OR IS THERE SOMETHING
MORE TO IT? ALSO, DOES IT FOLLOW THAT ALL BLISS IS A RESULT OF
CONSCIOUSNESS AND ALL SUFFERING THE RESULT OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS?

Prem Vidya, there is nothing more to it. It is a simple phenomenon: consciousness is intrinsically blissful. Bliss is not a result; it is inbuilt in consciousness. It does not come from the outside; it flowers inside consciousness. It is the fragrance of the flowering consciousness. When the rose of consciousness opens, the fragrance is bliss.

And when your being closes in unconsciousness, that dead and stale air, that stink, that darkness, is misery. That too is intrinsic, because now the fresh air cannot flow through you; your doors, your windows, are all closed. Now the sunrays cannot reach inside you. You are not available to rain, to wind, to sun. You have become isolated from existence. You have become a monad, windowless. You have become encapsulated, completely closed into your own self, into your own ego. You have disconnected yourself from this immensely beautiful, blissful existence; hence, misery. It is not really a result; it is unconsciousness itself, another name for it.

And people ARE living unconsciously, but they don't see it. They go on saying they are living in misery and they want not to live in misery, but they always throw the responsibility on something else, somebody else. Either it is fate or it is the society, the economic structure, the state, the church, the wife, the husband, the mother -- but always somebody else.

Religion starts in your life when you take the responsibility on yourself. To take the

responsibility for your misery is the beginning of change, because even to accept that "I am responsible for whatsoever I am," is the beginning of consciousness. You are coming out of a state of drunkenness in which you have lived for centuries.

Poteen is an Irish illegal brew that can burn holes in steel plate. After a pint of it Flaherty saw so many animals in his room that he put a sign on his house, FLAHERTY'S ZOO.

The local sergeant went to reason with him and was no sooner in than he was offered a glass of the Mountain Dew. When the policeman staggered out thirty minutes later he raised his hand for silence, although there was nobody. "Ish alright, men. The worst is over. He sold me half the elephants."

You are living in a state of drunkenness. You don't need alcohol -- alcohol is circulating in your blood already. You don't need marijuana, LSD, mescaline, no -- you are already stuffed with it. You are born unconscious! But because everybody else is like you, you never become aware of it.

Only when awakening starts happening in you, then you become aware, comparatively, that up to now you have lived in a kind of sleep, that you have been a sleepwalker, a somnambulist, that whatsoever you have done up to now has been done unconsciously. And because you were doing things unconsciously and moving blindly in life, like driftwood, with no sense of direction, with no idea where you are going, with no idea who you are, how can you hope to be blissful? You can only be miserable, more or less.

When you are a little less miserable you call it happiness. It is not really happiness, but a little less misery than the normal. When it is a little too much you enter into anguish. But these are all degrees of your misery, sometimes less, sometimes more, but you have not known happiness yet. Yes, you have known pleasure....

Pleasure is when you forget your misery. Misery remains -- you forget your misery. You go to the movie, you become so much focused on the movie, you become so much involved in the story, that you forget yourself, that for two, three hours you are as if you are not. But outside the movie house you are back to your routine self and to your routine misery.

The stupidity is that because of your unconsciousness you suffer, and when you want to avoid your suffering you drink alcohol so that you can forget your suffering. It is because of unconsciousness that you are miserable; then you try to become more unconscious so that you need not know that you are miserable. This way you go on deeper and deeper into the unconscious. And these states of coma you think are very very great. These are just blank spaces when you become fast asleep, so totally unaware that you cannot remember that you are miserable.

And in these unconscious states, created by chemicals, you can believe that you are having some happiness, you can imagine; it depends all on your imagination. Many people have experimented with LSD -- the most evolved psychedelic up to now. And the result of many experiments is that people who are hoping that they will attain to great bliss come out reporting that they reached paradise and they saw angels and light and color and had beautiful poetic experiences. And the people who go into the experiment with the idea that this is wrong, that this cannot give bliss, that it is bound to give misery, come back reporting that they have been in hell and they have suffered much -- they have suffered hellfire.

The reason is clear: whatsoever you imagine starts looking real under the impact of LSD. If you are against it, if you believe that it is evil, you will come across evil. It simply magnifies your imagination, whatsoever the imagination. If it is dark and black, then you fall

into a black hole.

If it is beautiful then, like Aldous Huxley, because he believed that LSD is the latest religious discovery, that LSD can take people to ecstasy, to samadhi.... What Buddha attained after six years and Mahavira attained after twelve years, and Kabir and Nanak etcetera, after years of struggle with the unconsciousness to become conscious, can be attained through LSD very easily -- just a very small quantity of LSD has to be taken.

He believed that sooner or later we will refine LSD more and more and we will create the ultimate psychedelic he called SOMA, in remembrance of the old Vedas -- because in the Vedas it is said that the seers used to drink a certain juice called SOMA RASO, and that juice used to bridge them to God. Huxley says in the future the ultimate psychedelic will be soma. You can inject it yourself into your body and you will be transported into paradise.

Now this is sheer foolishness! This is all nonsense. But Huxley is a sincere man. What he is saying is not false; he has experienced it through LSD, because he believed in it. It is his belief projected, it is his imagination magnified.

Another person of the same integrity, Rahner, who is against LSD and against all psychedelic trips, came with just the opposite report: that LSD takes you to hell, that it throws you into hellfire, that it creates such tortures that you cannot imagine -- even Adolf Hitler could not have dreamed about them. And he is also sincere. Both are right because both have been deceived by their own minds.

Man is already unconscious; now these people are trying to make him even more unconscious, as if this much unconsciousness is not enough!

Vidya, as far as buddhas are concerned, as far as I am concerned, consciousness cannot be attained by any chemical. Unconsciousness can be produced by chemicals, because unconsciousness is a very gross, lower phenomenon. Consciousness is the highest peak of growth, of opening, of coming home; it is not possible through the chemicals. It is possible only if you go on sharpening your intelligence; if you go on working on your witnessing soul; if you become more and more a witness of all that you do, of all that you think, of all that you feel. If you are miserable -- as everybody is -- then remember, it simply shows you are unconscious.

Don't fight with misery; that won't help. You can push misery from here and there; it will remain. Don't throw responsibility on others. Don't say, "Because of this wife I am miserable; if I change the wife I will not be miserable." You can go on changing -- no woman of this world is going to make you blissful. If you think, "The husband is the cause of my misery," you can change....

In America people are changing very fast, but misery is growing, not lessening. You can count a person's misery by knowing how many divorces he has gone through. The more divorces the more miserable he becomes, because the more divorces, the more hopeless he becomes.

In a country like India you can hope. You cannot divorce easily; the major part of the country cannot even conceive of divorce. The only possible way to get rid of your wife is to hope for another life -- even then one never knows! You may become too much hooked to each other that in other lives you also may continue. And particularly women go on praying in the temples, "Give me the same husband again -- for a hundred lives!" And if their prayers are fulfilled then there is no hope. But at least one can postpone: "After death.... This life is finished, nothing can be done. Now this woman or this man is my fate." So accept it and console yourself. Remain contented. Hope for the best and expect the worst!

But in India people seem to be more at ease because they know: "This woman is creating

trouble." At least this much is a great consolation: "This man is creating trouble." But in America even that hope is not possible -- people have changed their husbands and wives so many times.

I have heard:

A man and a woman were sitting taking their breakfast and their children were playing in the garden -- and then a fight broke out among the children.

The wife said, "Look! Your children and my children have ganged together and they are beating our children!"

One boy, a small boy, was bragging about his daddy, and he was saying, "He is the greatest daddy possible."

The other boy said, "That's nothing! He has been my daddy before. I know him -- we have discarded him. He is very old-fashioned, out of date; you have got a secondhand daddy!"

I have heard about one man who changed his wife eight times, hoping that this time he would find a better woman who will not create misery, but each time he was surprised to know that he had found the same kind of woman again.

In fact, if the chooser is the same how can you choose something different? You fall in love with the same kind of woman again and again, because YOU remain the same. Your state of consciousness or unconsciousness remains the same, your MIND is the same. Who is going to choose? You fall in love with a certain kind of woman -- who walks this way, who has a certain kind of nose and a certain kind of voice and face and figure. A certain type of woman -- a certain type of psychology she has -- and you become attracted towards her. When you come closer and live together you find misery. You divorce. Again you start looking. But you are the same person -- you will again find the same kind of woman. How can you find another kind of woman? You will not be interested in another kind. The same kind of woman will attract you, will fascinate you, and again you will be in the same trap. Only the name changes, the trap remains the same.

Don't throw your responsibility on others; that's what keeps you miserable. Take the responsibility on yourself. Remember always, "I am responsible for my life. Nobody else is responsible. So if I am miserable then I have to look into my own consciousness; something is wrong with me, hence I create misery around me."

This is the beginning, a great beginning, the first seed of transformation. You are already becoming conscious if you take the responsibility on your own shoulders. You are already becoming conscious; the first ray has happened.

Yes, Vidya: consciousness is intrinsically blissful and unconsciousness, intrinsically miserable. There is nothing more to it; it is very simple.

Laws of life are always very simple. Truth is always very simple. Truth is not occult, truth is not esoteric. Truth is very obvious -- and because it is very obvious, that's why people don't see it. People go on missing the obvious, people go on missing the simple, because they think truth must be very complex. Hence they go on looking for something complex -- and truth is not complex. They go on looking far away -- and truth is very close by. They go on looking into mysteries, into mystic, occult, esoteric teachings.

And there are people who go on exploiting because they know there are people who cannot be satisfied with simple truth. They write rubbish but in such a way that it looks very

occult. They write in such a way that you cannot really understand what they are writing. And people think that if they cannot understand then there must be some great mystery in it.

Truth is very simple, and because it is very simple you don't look at it. You will have to learn, you will have to become aware, of the simplicity and obviousness of truth. There is nothing more to it. It is simply this: consciousness is bliss, unconsciousness is misery.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT COMMUNISM?

Raja, I don't think about such things -- in fact, I don't think at all! I am certainly interested in communes, but not in communism. The moment something becomes an "ism" it becomes dangerous. The idea of a commune is beautiful: people living together in a nonpossessive way, neither possessing things nor possessing persons; people living together, creating together, celebrating together, and still allowing each one his own space; people creating a certain climate of meditateness, of love, and living in that climate.

I am certainly interested in the idea of the commune -- it simply means where communion is possible. In the world there is no communion possible. Even communication is not possible, what to say about communion! Communication means a dialogue between two minds -- even that is not possible -- and communion means a meeting of two hearts. Where communion is possible, there exists a commune.

The idea of the family is rotten now. It has worked, it has done its work, it is finished. There is no future for the family. In fact, the family has been one of the causes of calamity. The family makes you identified with a very small group -- the mother, the father, the brother, the sister -- a very small group becomes your whole world. A man needs to grow more variety.

A commune means more variety: not just your father but many uncles, not just your mother but many aunts. A commune means the children will have more people to learn about, more people to love, more people to become accustomed to. They will become richer.

Psychologists say that when a child lives with the mother and the father, the small unit of the family, he knows the mother as the representative of all womanhood and the father as the representative of all manhood -- which is wrong, utterly wrong. His father does not represent all the types and his mother does not represent all the types either. And he becomes slowly slowly focused on the mother; the mother becomes womanhood incarnate.

Now there will be trouble! His whole life he will be searching for his mother in his wife and he will not find her -- and that creates misery. No wife will be a mother to him, and that will be his deep search, unconscious search, because he knows only one woman. That is his idea of a real woman, how a woman should be. And the girl will always be looking for the father, and no husband will be a father to her.

This fixation is creating great psychological tension and anxiety in the world. A commune means you will not be so much fixed. You look at our little Siddhartha! For days he disappears from the mother; he lives with other sannyasins for days together. He has many friends, grown-up friends; women, men. He comes back to the ashram very late in the night -- two o'clock. So busy! Laxmi called him and asked him, "Siddhartha, this is too much -- two o'clock! You have to be in by eleven."

He said, "Is this a rule only for me or for all? Is this rule applicable to grown-ups too?"

Now, this is maturity! He is becoming grown-up! And he said, "A few days I have to stay with others too -- they invite me!" Now he is living with many families. He will become aware that his mother is not the only woman in the world; there are many other women. He will become acquainted with many facets of womanhood. His idea of woman will be richer, and there is more possibility that he will be contented with a wife than otherwise. He knows many uncles and fathers. His vision of man is not linear, it is multidimensional; it is bound to be multidimensional.

I am interested in the idea of the commune because a commune will help people to get rid of many psychological hang-ups which our upbringing has been giving to us. The upbringing is so rotten, so old-fashioned! For five thousand years there has been no change. Everything else has changed -- from the bullock cart we have come to the jet plane -- but as far as human life is concerned the same old rotten family remains. With man we are very orthodox; hence we have better machines but not better human beings. We have better EVERYTHING -- just man is not better; and the reason is that about man we are very orthodox and conventional.

A commune will change the idea of the family; it will make the family very flexible.

Just a few days ago, Bipin came from America and he said, "Strange! -- after just one year I am coming and all the couples have changed! And I used to think of a few couples that they were permanent couples -- for example, Satya and Chaitanya, Sheela and Chinmaya. Even the permanent ones that I used to think would remain, even they are no longer there! New combinations of people have happened." He was asking, "What is our Beloved Master doing?"

I am not doing anything -- this is not MY work! This is bound to happen in a commune. People will become more flexible, more available to each other, more loving, relate more, be less possessive.

I am certainly interested in the idea of a commune, but not in communism. Communism is ugly. Communism is a great epidemic. The sooner it disappears from the world, the better. It has destroyed great values -- the greatest value of freedom has been destroyed. And communism is antireligious.

If communism continues there is no hope for buddhas to be born; it won't allow it. If Gautam Buddha were born in Soviet Russia he would be forced to live in a mental asylum. This is not a good prospect! Even Jesus Christ will find himself in more difficulty. They will not crucify him, certainly not, but they will put him in a mental asylum. He will be declared neurotic or psychotic because he hears voices; he talks with the Devil and God. This is neurosis, this is absolutely a madman! He will be given electric shocks, remember, not crucified anymore.

If Jesus is planning to come back I want him to be aware of the situation. This time they won't kill you, they will keep you alive, but they will inject you with chemicals, they will give you electric shocks, insulin shocks, and if you are still dangerous they will give you tranquilizers, they will make you very very sleepy. They can force you to live almost in a coma, to vegetate, which will be far more ugly than to crucify a man.

When you crucify a man you cannot humiliate him. He can keep his pride, he can keep his head high: "Okay, you crucify me, so you crucify me -- but you are not forcing me to change my spirit or my ideas or my vision of life. I am ready to sacrifice."

One can die with dignity -- Socrates died with dignity, Jesus died with dignity -- but in Soviet Russia, if Socrates is born, or Jesus, or Buddha, no dignity will be available. In fact nobody will ever hear about them. They will be forced to live in a mental asylum. Doctors will take care of them, and nobody will ever hear what they wanted to say, what their

message was.

Two Russian workers were walking along side by side. Their heads were bent low and their faces were sad and drawn. They were not talking to each other. Suddenly one of the Russians spat on the ground and the other immediately did the same. "That's enough!" said one to the other. "If we continue, they will think we are discussing politics."

I have heard another story:

In Russia the communists were conducting a purge. An old gypsy was brought before the commissar. "How long," asked the commissar, "have you been in the party?"

"Many years, commissar."

"And your father?"

"Ah, he was a member too, and my grandfather and my great-grandfather."

"Now listen," said the commissar dubiously, "back in those days there was no party."

"Ah, that didn't make any difference," replied the gypsy. "We were stealing anyway!"

Communism is a violent, forced state of affairs. It is transforming the whole country into a concentration camp. It is not allowing people any freedom to be themselves; it is reducing them into numbers. It is destructive of individuality -- and I am all for individuality and the freedom of the individual, because if the freedom of the individual disappears, then there is no possibility of inquiring into the reality of God. And that is the whole purpose of life.

The real destiny of life can only be fulfilled when you know that God is, within and without. He is your consciousness and he is this universe.

I am against communism, but I am all for communes.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #5

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AS THE RICH MERCHANT WITH FEW SERVANTS
SHUNS A DANGEROUS ROAD
AND THE MAN WHO LOVES LIFE SHUNS POISON,
BEWARE THE DANGERS OF FOLLY AND MISCHIEF.

FOR AN UNWOUNDED HAND MAY HANDLE POISON.
THE INNOCENT COME TO NO HARM.

BUT AS DUST THROWN AGAINST THE WIND,
MISCHIEF IS BLOWN BACK IN THE FACE
OF THE FOOL WHO WRONGS THE PURE AND HARMLESS.

SOME ARE REBORN IN HELL,
SOME IN THIS WORLD,
THE GOOD IN HEAVEN.
BUT THE PURE ARE NOT BORN AT ALL.

NOWHERE!
NOT IN THE SKY,
NOR IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA,
NOR DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS,
CAN YOU HIDE FROM YOUR OWN MISCHIEF.

NOT IN THE SKY,
NOR IN THE MIDST OF THE OCEAN,
NOR DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS,
NOWHERE

CAN YOU HIDE FROM YOUR OWN DEATH.

Life is not given ready-made -- not to humanity at least. That is the dignity of human beings, and the danger too. All other animals are born ready-made, preprogrammed. Their whole life is a simple unfoldment of something built-in. They need not live their lives consciously; their life is unconscious, it is mechanical. It can't be good, it can't be bad; it simply is. You cannot call a tree a sinner or a saint, and you cannot call a tiger or cat virtuous or full of vice. Those words are meaningless as far as existence below humanity is concerned. They become immensely significant referred to man.

Man has a special situation. He is born like all other animals, with a difference -- a difference that really makes a difference. The difference is of tremendous value to understand, because one may go on avoiding it and to avoid it is to avoid your true life. There is every possibility to remain oblivious of it, because it seems more convenient and more comfortable not to be reminded of it. To be reminded of it means a great challenge: a challenge to adventure into the unknown, into that which is not preprogrammed.

God is not a built-in possibility; it is an open opportunity. It can happen, it may not happen. It all depends on you -- how you live, how much consciousness you bring to your life, how nonmechanical you become.

Millions of people don't want to be reminded of this dimension at all; hence their antagonism against Buddha, Christ, Socrates. These people -- Buddha, Christ, Socrates -- goad you, they don't allow you to sleep comfortably. They bring the point again and again to your awareness that this is not the right way to live, that you are missing life. This is not human life that you are living, this is animal life.

And sometimes you can fall even below animals. No animal can become a Genghis Khan or Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin, because animals have no choice. They can't become Buddhas, they can't become Genghis Khans either. They remain whatsoever they are; they

can't move anywhere else. They have a life already arranged; they will simply follow the course.

Their life is like a movie: when you see it for the first time you are immensely interested, curious what is going to happen next but in fact, nothing is going to happen -- the film is already preprogrammed. Next time you don't feel so interested because you know already what is going to happen next. The third time you are bored, and if you are forced to see it a fourth time you will rebel, and if you have to see it a fifth time you may go mad. The same film.... Because now you know everything is already there, nothing is happening; the film is simply repeating a certain course.

Animals are like films -- already made, unfolding whatsoever is built-in. Man lives in a world of choice; hence man has to decide what life he wants to live. He can fall below the animals, he can rise above the angels. He can exist accidentally or he can exist with a decisiveness.

It is through decisiveness that the soul is born. If you exist accidentally, like driftwood, you live without a soul; your life is not much of a life. It is pseudo, it is lukewarm; it has no intensity; it has no flame; it has no light. You cannot experience the truth. Living accidentally, knowing the truth is impossible. One has to be so decisive, so committed, so consciously involved with life, so intensely adventurous, that all is at stake every moment. One has to be creative -- not only unfolding, but creative.

This is man's privilege, his prerogative, and also his danger. Very few people will choose the life of choice, commitment, involvement, because it is dangerous, because the sea is uncharted and you don't have any map. You have a very small boat and the sea is very stormy and who knows whether the other shore exists or not? Why leave the shelter on this shore? Remain here.

Buddha says millions of people simply go up and down on this shore, running hither and thither, just creating an appearance as if their life is a pilgrimage -- and they are simply running up and down on the same shore. It is not a pilgrimage; it is mere occupation, befooling others and befooling yourself.

The pilgrimage begins when you leave this shore, its shelter, its security, its convenience, its comfort, its respectability, power, prestige. You leave your small boat at the mercy of the storms, at the mercy of the ocean, trusting that if this shore exists the other MUST exist, because one shore cannot exist....

With this trust -- moving towards the other shore, risking all -- real life begins. And real life is religious life. Real life is what I mean by sannyas. Life lived consciously is the only life; life lived unconsciously is mere existence. Animals only exist, they don't live; only man can live. But all men don't live either; only a few buddhas, a few awakened ones.

Become alert to what you are doing with your life. Are you really moving consciously, with a sense of direction -- taking each step deliberately, in full awareness of why, to where? Or are you just imitating others? If they are running, you are running; if they are after money, you are after money; if they are after power, you are after power. Are you just imitators? Then your life will be imitation. Are you simply following others? Then your life will be a carbon copy. You will never know your original face.

And your original face is the face of God. But that original face has to be discovered with tremendous effort. With great risk one can actualize what is just a seed in you, one can make actual what is only potential. And then man is infinite; otherwise man is very small, ugly.

A life lived unconsciously cannot be beautiful, a life lived unconsciously cannot have freedom. And without freedom, how can there be any beauty? Beauty is a shadow of

freedom. A life lived unconsciously can only be mediocre, mundane, superficial. Only with consciousness does your life start deepening; it attains a new dimension, the dimension of depth. And the dimension of depth is the dimension of the divine.

God is not somewhere else, but in your own depths, in your own ultimate depths. Truth is not to be found somewhere else; it has to be searched and looked for withinwards. Truth is not something of the mind; otherwise it would have been very easy to attain it. Mind is a machine.

The great Western philosopher, the father of Western philosophy, Aristotle, defines man as a rational being, but his definition cannot be applicable to the millions. It is not even applicable to himself, because he is not a buddha. A very clever man, very logical, but without any consciousness. He lived his own life as unconsciously as anyone can live. He had two wives, and he writes in his book that women have less teeth than men. Having two wives he could have counted any time -- but this was a superstition, very prevalent in Greece in those days. The male chauvinist mind cannot allow women to have anything equal to men, not even teeth! He never bothered to count -- what kind of rationality is this?

In fact, unless you are conscious, you can't be rational either. To live rationally means to live consciously, to live meditatively. And the moment you can live meditatively, you cannot only live rationally, you can live suprarationally -- because life is not only reason, life is far more than that. Reason is only one of its dimensions, and life is multidimensional.

Life plus consciousness, and you start becoming a buddha. Existence plus consciousness, and you start attaining life. Consciousness is the whole chemistry, the alchemy. Life plus consciousness, and you are entering into the temple of God. Existence plus consciousness, and you enter into the temple of life. But if you live without consciousness you don't have life, you don't have God. If you have life you cannot miss God for long, because life is the first ray of God.

But people merely exist, they vegetate; they think they are already alive. This belief prevents them from creating life. When you are born, you are born only as an opportunity, as a space where life can grow. But it is not inevitable -- and it is good that it is not inevitable. If it was inevitable, man would have been a machine as all other animals are.

It is tremendously significant to remember that existence has bestowed on you a great gift, and the gift is that you are born as a tabula rasa, nothing is written on you -- you are born as a clean slate. Now you have to write something on it. You can write something imitating others, borrowed; you can write Vedas on it, Gitas, Korans, Bibles, but you will miss the whole thing. You destroyed a great opportunity.

You have to write your own song -- not the song of Krishna and not the song of Christ, but your OWN song! You have to sing your own heart, only then will you be fulfilled. But people are simply repeating like parrots; hence they become very knowledgeable and still remain foolish, still remain ignorant.

Saint Augustine divides humanity into two categories; those categories are significant. The first category he calls "knowledgeable ignorance." There are people who know too much and yet know nothing; their knowledge is all borrowed. Nothing has arisen in them, nothing has happened to them; they are simply repeating others. They may be very clever in repeating it, very efficient in repeating it, but they are functioning like computers. They are not yet human beings; humanity is not yet born in them. Their knowledge knows nothing, it is a pretension.

The universities are full of such people, and the world respects these people very much because knowledge is power. They know, that is the prevalent idea, and they are powerful.

And in a certain sense the idea is true: a man who knows physics is more powerful than the man who does not know, but as far as his own life is concerned he is as ignorant as anybody else. There is no difference between the villager and the university professor as far as self-knowing is concerned -- and that is the real treasure.

There is knowledge which knows not, and, Augustine says, there is also an ignorance which knows. What is the ignorance he is talking about, that knows? The ignorance of the innocent. The innocent person has cleaned his mind completely of all borrowed knowledge.

Meditation is nothing but a device to clean the mind, to give a shower to your inner being, so that all the dust, the so-called knowledge, is taken away and you are left clean, fresh, young. This is what Jesus says: Unless you are born again you will not enter into my kingdom of God.

This is what in the East we used to call the phenomenon of the DWIJ -- twice-born. All brahmins are not dwij, but all dwijas are brahmins. All brahmins are not twice-born, but all twice-borns are brahmins. Christ is a brahmin, Mohammed is a brahmin. The brahmin is one who has known Brahman, one who has known the ultimate life, but the secret is, you will have to be born again.

What does it mean? It means you will have to die to your knowledge -- borrowed, imitative, mechanical -- and you will have to be again innocent as you were when you were born the first time. But the first childhood is bound to be lost; nobody can protect it. It is in the nature of things that the first childhood will be lost. But the second childhood can be attained, and with the second childhood starts life. Before that you were merely existing. With the second birth you are entering into the real mystery of that which is.

Let me remind you: don't take life for granted. It has to be created, and it can be created only by choosing freely, by choosing on your own. Yes, there is a possibility you may go astray, there is a possibility you may commit errors, mistakes. But nothing to be worried about -- mistakes and errors and going astray, they are all part of growth. It is only by committing mistakes that one learns, it is only by going astray that one comes back to the right path.

Those who never go astray remain impotent. Those who never commit any mistake because of fear, they never do anything -- because if you do, there is a possibility you may commit some mistake. Afraid of committing mistakes, they never do anything. But without doing anything, how can you grow? You will remain hollow, you will not get any crystallization, you will not have any soul. You will be dead, you will be a corpse -- walking, breathing, talking, but you will be a corpse because you will not have the taste of life eternal.

The first thing to be remembered is that we are not yet born. One birth happens through the parents, through the mother. The second birth happens when you are in intimate relationship with a master, with a buddha. The second birth happens in a buddhafield: the buddha becomes the womb. The master is the womb for the disciple. The disciple enters into the womb of the master, disappears into the master and is born again.

It is through this new birth that you start being conscious. You believe that you are conscious... because you can come back every evening to your home from the office, so you think you are conscious. Because you can do certain things, you think you are conscious. Now there are robots, machine-men, which can do all the things that you are doing.

Now there is a possibility that soon there will be planes -- they are already in existence, not yet used; soon they will be used -- which will not have any pilots, and there will be trains without any drivers. Theoretically they are possible now. The machine will do it all. Then you will be very much surprised: you have been doing these things and you were thinking

that you are conscious because you do these things. By doing a certain thing one does not become conscious.

Consciousness is doing a thing with a new flavor. Doing it, in itself, is not consciousness, but doing it with a witness inside; watching, observing, knowing that you are doing it -- that is consciousness, and that is rebirth.

Bryant caught a tiny fish which suddenly began to speak. "I am really an elf and if you release me I will grant you and your wife any three wishes."

So the Irishman released the fish, rushed home and told his wife. The couple were anxious to get to town and look at things to wish for, so the wife decided to make a quick dinner out of a can of beans. But she could not find the can opener and said, "I wish I had a can opener." Kazam! She had a can opener.

"You wasted one wish on that stupid can opener," screamed Bryant. "I wish it was up your ass!"

And the sad part of the story is that they had to use the third and last wish to get it out again.

This is the way you are living, this is the way the whole humanity is living: not knowing what you are saying, not knowing what you are doing, not knowing at all -- just haphazardly stumbling, groping. And this continues from the beginning to the very end.

Your whole life becomes a grammar of unconsciousness, a language of unconsciousness. And through this language, the layer of this language, you look at life -- and everything is misinterpreted, distorted.

Business partners Slutsky and Gross were fishing in a small rowboat on a lake in the Catskills. Suddenly a storm came up, the boat capsized, and while Slutsky began to swim, Gross floundered and sputtered helplessly. He was sinking.

"Say," said Slutsky, swimming away, "can you float alone?"

"I am drowning," sputtered Gross, "and he is talking business!"

The old language, "Can you float a loan?" -- the language of business. He understands only one language. Now, even in such a situation, what is said to him will be understood the way he can understand. We don't understand what is said; we understand what we can understand. We don't understand what we see; we see only what we can see.

Old man Bernstein lay dying. The entire family had gathered around the deathbed. In a soft, feeble voice, he inquired, "Is Sol here?"

"Yes, Papa," said his eldest son.

"Is Lester here?"

"Yes, Dad!" answered the boy.

"Is Eli here?"

"I am right here!" said the youngest son.

"If you are all here," said Bernstein, "who is minding the store?"

And now he is dying -- the last moments! Even at the moment of death he is thinking of who is minding the store.

From birth to death you go on living, groping in darkness with no light -- and you could

have created the light. You cannot find it in the scriptures; nobody can hand it to you. It is not purchased or sold; it is nontransferable. But you can create it -- you can put all your energies together. You can start living consciously from this very moment.

For example, you are listening to me. You can listen in a sleepy way... because you are here, and I am uttering a few words, and you have ears and your ears function, so those words strike your eardrums and some noise is made -- and of course you hear. But this is not listening, it is only hearing. It is not listening.

Listening means you are alert, watchful, on your toes, drinking with no mind to distort; with no inner noise, with no chattering, utterly silent; not sleepy, very wakeful, very awake; as if your house is on fire, as if everything can be taken away any moment and this is no time to sleep. When your house is on fire you cannot sleep -- or can you? When your house is on fire you cannot be sleepy; you will be alert, very alert.

The first statement that Buddha made after he left his palace was, "My house is on fire. Now I cannot live anymore in unconsciousness." There was nobody except his charioteer. The old man looked at the palace; he didn't see any flames there, the house was not on fire. He thought, "The prince has gone crazy!" He was an old man, an old servant, of the same age as Buddha's father. He had seen Buddha from the first day he was born; Buddha used to respect the old man.

The old man said, "What nonsense you are talking! Al-though my eyes are becoming weak, I am becoming old, but I don't see any flames. The house is perfectly okay, there is no fire!"

Buddha said, "Yes, I see -- you may not see -- my house is on fire, because each and every moment death is possible. Now I cannot remain in this sleepy state anymore."

The old man shrugged his shoulders. He said, "You are saying just insane things!"

When he had to leave Buddha in the forest and they said goodbye, the old man was crying and he said, "Listen to me -- I am just like your father. Where are you going? Have you gone nuts? Such a beautiful palace, such a beautiful wife, so much comfort, so much luxury! Where are you going?"

Buddha said, "I am going in search of consciousness." He didn't say, "I am going in search of God," because how can you talk about God if you are not even conscious? The real seeker goes in search of consciousness, not in search of God. If you start your search for God, that is going to remain an unconscious search -- because you have heard priests talking about God a greed has arisen in your mind for God.

The real seeker, the real sannyasin, has nothing to do with God. His whole effort, his single effort, his one-pointed effort, his concentrated effort, is to become more conscious -- how to be so intensely conscious that you become full of light, that your whole mind is a flame of light burning bright, that the torch of your mind is burning from both the ends simultaneously. In that light one knows naturally that God is.

God is not to be searched for; what is to be searched for is consciousness. Unconscious people can believe in God, but their belief in God is just like their belief in money. They believe in notes, they believe in God, they believe in stone statues, they believe in dead scriptures. They can only believe, remember: only unconscious people believe.

The conscious person knows, feels, experiences. He does not believe in God: he lives in God, he breathes in God, his heart beats in God. It is not a question of belief.

You don't believe in the sun when you see the sun rise. You don't ask people, "Do you believe in the sun?" If you ask, they will laugh at you. You don't believe in the moon when the moon is full in the night; you never ask anybody. There are not believers in the moon and

nonbelievers. It is your experience; there is no need to believe or disbelieve.

Exactly like that, in consciousness you have eyes to see God, you have eyes to see the truth of existence. Then it is no longer a question of belief -- it is your experience, existential experience. A conscious person knows, an unconscious person believes.

Why are you a Hindu, why are you a Mohammedan, why are you a Jaina, and why are you a Christian? All beliefs! -- and the priest lives on your unconsciousness. He goes on giving you more and more beliefs -- moral beliefs, beliefs that if you do this you will be rewarded, if you do that you will be punished, belief in hell, belief in heaven. He goes on piling up more and more beliefs. You are drowning in beliefs! Your beliefs have become so heavy on you, like the Himalayas on your chest; they don't allow you to live.

The first step towards consciousness is to discard all beliefs. Don't be a Hindu, don't be a Mohammedan, don't be a Christian... because I tell you the way to become a christ! Why be a Christian? And I tell you the way to become a buddha -- why be satisfied by being a Buddhist? Why be satisfied with plastic flowers when the real roses can be grown, when you can become a garden of roses? You purchase a few plastic flowers from the market and you go on worshipping those plastic flowers. What you call them -- Christian, Mohammedan, Hindu -- does not matter; if they are borrowed they are plastic. The real flower has to be grown within your being; it has to blossom there.

Those who have known, they say -- and I vouch for them, I am a witness -- that when your consciousness opens up in its totality it is a one-thousand-petaled lotus, a golden lotus, gold with perfume. It is the ultimate miracle. And unless that is attained, don't rest. Each moment lost is a great loss.

The sutras:

AS THE RICH MERCHANT WITH FEW SERVANTS
SHUNS A DANGEROUS ROAD
AND THE MAN WHO LOVES LIFE SHUNS POISON,
BEWARE THE DANGERS OF FOLLY AND MISCHIEF.

Buddha is saying that if you are a merchant with a great treasure and you are coming home from a long long journey of business -- doing business in many many places you have gathered great treasure and you are coming back home and you have only a few servants with you -- you will avoid dangerous roads where robbers can rob you, where you can be killed, where your treasure can be taken away from you.

Man has been on a long pilgrimage. You are not new on the earth, you are very ancient pilgrims. And all these lives you have gathered much treasure inside you -- even YOU may not be aware of it. You have learned much... you are not conscious, you don't know what treasures you are carrying within yourself. Because you are unconscious you are continuously moving on dangerous roads where you can be robbed -- where you ARE robbed, robbed every day. The person who is not aware, one who is asleep, you can rob him; he will not even give you a fight.

And the robbers are not outside, the robbers are within you. Anger, hatred, greed, jealousy, possessiveness, these are the robbers, and in the unconscious mind they go on robbing you. How much has anger robbed you of? Look back! How much has your anger destroyed? But you don't even calculate! You don't even look back to have an insight into what you have been doing to yourself. How much has your lust exploited you? But you go on doing the same things again and again! The same anger which you have always experienced

as poison, which you know perfectly well is only destructive -- and each time you have been in it you have repented later on -- you have decided, you have promised to yourself many times, not to go into it again. And again and again you go on forgetting your promises given to yourself.

A man was saying to his friend, "Last night I went to see a Jewish porno movie, and it was quite an experience."

The friend asked, "What could a dirty Jewish movie be like?"

The man said, "It only lasted ten minutes: one minute of sex and nine minutes of guilt."

Just watch your life and you will find it: one minute of anger and how many minutes of guilt? One minute of lust and how many minutes of guilt, or how many hours, or how many days?

Brotsky was in Puerto Rico for a business convention. One night, in front of his hotel, he was hailed seductively by a beautiful prostitute. "Hello, Americano," she said. "You wanna buy what I am selling?"

Brotsky went with her. Ten days later, at home in New York, he found that he had caught gonorrhea.

The next year, in front of the same hotel, he was hailed by the same girl again. "Hello, Americano. You wanna buy what I am selling?"

"Sure," he said, "What is it this time -- cancer?"

If you look at your life you will see it is moving in circles. You go on doing the same stupid things, the same stupid things, and you have done them so many times. When are you going to wake up? And again you become intrigued with the same stupidity, again and again you are caught in the SAME net. Your life has not many new things.

You just watch your life for three months, make notes for three months, and then you will be surprised: this is all that you have been repeating again and again. And unless you become awake you are going to repeat the same your whole life -- and not only your whole life, you are going to repeat it in many many lives to come.

Harry, who grew up in Philadelphia, was making his first visit to England.

One night he spotted a ravishing young redhead in a pub, walked over to her and stated conversationally, "You know, I come from the other side...."

"Let's go right to my flat," she exclaimed. "This I gotta see!"

You get it? Again and again.... "This I gotta see!" You become again and again intrigued. You may have known many women, and again another woman, and you are ready to be foolish again. Your life is repetitive -- you don't even make new mistakes!

Be a little creative. If you are interested in making mistakes, at least make new mistakes. If you can make it a point that "I will make only new mistakes," soon they will be finished -- because how many new mistakes are there? One day you will simply find that there are no more new mistakes left, and you cannot make any because you have decided not to repeat.

Once should be enough -- but why is it not enough? The reason is that while you are making that mistake you are not there; you are even doing it unconsciously. If you can do a mistake consciously, totally alert, with full awareness, absolute presence, you will not repeat

it again.

A man of intelligence is bound to commit mistakes, but one mistake only once, then he is finished with it. He has known and understood it. But people remain immature.

Two little colored boys met on the street.

"I am five years old. How old are you?"

"I dunno."

"Do you ever think of women?"

"Naw."

"Then you is four!"

Now, this is how age, maturity, is measured, weighed.

Maturity means becoming more conscious; there is no other way to become mature. I am not saying don't commit mistakes, because that will not help. I am not saying avoid mistakes, no. I am saying whatsoever you want to do, do it, but do it very consciously. Bring your full being in it, so once done you can decide whether it is worth doing again or it is utter nonsense, useless; so once done you know whether it is a real diamond or just a colored stone.

If it is a real diamond, go after it, dig deep -- you may be close to a treasure. And if it is just a colored stone, forget all about it. Don't carry colored stones; they become a weight and they make your journey more and more difficult. When you want to go uphill you need to be weightless. And the journey towards consciousness is an uphill journey.

AS THE RICH MERCHANT WITH FEW SERVANTS SHUNS A DANGEROUS ROAD AND THE MAN WHO LOVES LIFE SHUNS POISON, BEWARE THE DANGERS OF FOLLY AND MISCHIEF. Beware means be aware. Beware is a combination of two words: be aware. Be aware OF THE DANGERS OF FOLLY AND MISCHIEF. They are two sides of the same coin: folly and mischief. Folly means unconsciousness -- and out of unconsciousness only mischief is born.

FOR AN UNWOUNDED HAND MAY HANDLE POISON.
THE INNOCENT COME TO NO HARM.

If you become aware of folly and mischief.... Remember, Buddha is not saying avoid; he is saying beware.

Lao Tzu says: A man of wisdom walks as if at each step there is danger. A man of wisdom walks as if in cold winter he is crossing a frozen stream, that is what Lao Tzu says. Yes, exactly, it is so: the man of wisdom walks alert. Each step is full of dangers, because your mind can any moment assert.

Your mind is very ancient, its habits are very deeply ingrained, implanted. Just a little unawareness and the mind is bound to catch hold of you, and it will drag you into some mischief. It lives on mischief. It is bound to drag you into something which you will repent later on. But repentance does not help, it is a sheer waste of time. First you waste time in doing a mistake and then you waste time in repenting.

One man once came to me, a very rich man. He had a lifelong habit of becoming angry so easily that just a slight provocation was enough, or if there was no provocation he would create it, he would imagine something. And he had suffered much because of it: his wife left

him, his children deserted him, no servant could stay with him for long. He was living a very isolated life. He had all, but was very poor in a way because he had nobody to love him or to receive his love.

He asked me, "How can I get rid of anger? I have decided many times, I have taken vows before great saints that I will not be angry again, but again and again, when the situation arises I forget all about the vow. It comes, and it comes in such a floodlike manner that I am simply taken over by it. What should I do? I have come to you. Please help me to decide so that I can get rid of it."

I said, "You do one thing. The first thing is: drop repenting. The second thing is: never vow again against anger."

He said, "What are you saying? Then my life will be ruined!"

I said, "You have been taking vows and you have been repenting -- has it helped in any way?"

He had to concede that it had not helped. Then I said, "Why not try what I am saying? -- because my own understanding is that repentance is not against anger; it is in fact a way of the ego to settle you back in the old position."

When you become angry and later on you remember, your ego feels hurt that, "I have again committed the same stupidity." Now this wounded ego wants to be healed; you have fallen in your own eyes. Your wounded ego says, "Go to the temple or to some saint. Take a vow that, 'Now I will never do such a thing again.'" Taking a vow the ego feels good: "Look how religious I am." Taking a vow before a saint and before a gathering you feel tremendously strengthened in your ego: "Look, I have decided!" The wound is again healed.

You are back in the old situation again: again the ego is enthroned. You will make the same mistake again sooner or later, and now you have learned a way to heal the wounds. Repentance is a way, taking vows is a way.

So the first thing I told the man was, "Stop repenting -- it is wasting time! Gone is gone, past is past. It is finished. You need not worry about it. You start afresh -- don't repent. Rather than repenting, my suggestion is: you go home and BE angry -- the first thing to do -- be angry and be CONSCIOUSLY angry. While you are angry, remain alert that you are angry, know what you are doing: that you are throwing things, that you are throwing abuses. Be alert!"

The next day he came. He said, "It is impossible! Either I can be angry or I can be alert. If I am alert I cannot be angry; if I am angry I cannot be alert. You have given me an impossible task!"

I said, "Now it is for you to decide: if you want to be angry, forget alertness; if you do not want to be angry, then be alert. No repentance, no taking of vows anymore. A simple method!"

All the awakened ones have been teaching the simple method.

Somebody asked Mahavira, "Who is a real saint and who is a sinner?"

Maybe the questioner wanted a ready-made answer that is given in the scriptures, but people like Mahavira speak out of their own being. What he said is tremendously beautiful. The definition that he has given is unique, unique in the whole history of humanity. He said, "ASUTTA MUNI -- one who is awake, he is the saint. And SUTTA AMUNI -- one who is asleep is the sinner."

Simple, but tremendously significant! Wakefulness is the only saintliness there is, and

sleepiness, unconsciousness, is the only sin there is; all other sins are born out of it. Cut the root, cut the very root! Don't go on pruning the leaves.

FOR AN UNWOUNDED HAND MAY HANDLE POISON. And then, when you are aware, alert, watchful, then there is no problem. Then you are like an unwounded hand, you can handle poison. What does it mean?

Let me remind you of a situation that happened in Jesus' life. He took a whip and entered into the great temple of Jerusalem. A whip in the hand of Jesus...? This is the meaning of what Buddha is saying: an unwounded hand can handle poison. Yes, Jesus can handle a whip, no problem; the whip cannot overpower him. He remains alert, his consciousness is such.

The great temple of Jerusalem had become a place of robbers; subtle robbery was going on. There were moneychangers inside the temple and they were exploiting the whole country. Jesus alone entered the temple and upturned their boards -- the boards of the moneychangers -- threw their money around and created such turmoil that the moneychangers escaped outside the temple. They were many and Jesus was alone, but he was in such a fury, in such a fire!

Now, this has been a problem for the Christians: how to explain it? -- because their whole effort is to prove that Jesus is a dove, a symbol of peace. How can he take a whip in his hands? How can he be so angry, so enraged, that he upturned the boards of the moneychangers and threw the moneychangers outside the temple? And he must have been afire; otherwise, he was alone -- he could have been caught hold of. His energy must have been in a storm; they could not face him. The priests and the business people and the moneychangers all escaped outside shouting, "This man has gone mad!"

Christians avoid this story. There is no need to avoid it if you understand this sutra of Buddha: FOR AN UNWOUNDED HAND MAY HANDLE POISON. THE INNOCENT COME TO NO HARM. Jesus is so innocent! He is not angry; it is his compassion. He is not violent, he is not destructive; it is his love. The whip in his hand is the whip in the hands of love, compassion.

This is why in the East we have Krishna, who can fight in the war even though he has promised not to fight. He forgets all about his promise. People think that he is very diplomatic, political; he is not. That promise was given in a certain moment; now that moment is no longer applicable -- the situation has changed. He is not an opportunist, he is not political at all. He is simply honest, sincere, responsible to the situation that is present. It was so in that moment when he promised that he would not enter into war; it is no longer so, the situation has changed. He enters war with no repentance; he never repented for it. There is no need to repent.

A man of awareness acts out of his awareness, hence there is no repentance; his action is total. And one of the beauties of the total action is that it does not create karma; it does not create anything; it doesn't leave any trace on you. It is like writing on water: you have not even finished... it is gone. It is not even writing in sand, because that may remain for a few hours if the wind does not come -- it is writing on water.

If you go to Hindu temples you will find Rama with the bow and arrow in his hand. Now it has been a problem for the so-called Gandhians to explain it; for Mahatma Gandhi it was a problem. If Rama had a spinning wheel in his hand it would have been okay -- but the bow and the arrow? Gandhi tried to avoid it. He was repeating Rama's name every day; that was the last name on his lips when he died. When he was shot dead, the last words that came to

his lips were, "Hey Ram! Oh Ram!" But how did he manage? What about that bow and arrow? He never encountered the problem honestly, sincerely -- because Rama fought the war, must have killed many people, certainly killed Ravana. What about this violence?

This sutra will explain: FOR AN UNWOUNDED HAND MAY HANDLE POISON. THE INNOCENT COME TO NO HARM. If you can be totally alert, then there is no problem. You can handle poison; then the poison will function as a medicine. In the hands of the wise, poison becomes medicine; in the hands of the fools, even medicine, even nectar, is bound to become poison.

THE INNOCENT COME TO NO HARM. If you function out of innocence -- not out of knowledgeability but out of childlike innocence -- then you can never come to any harm, because it leaves no trace. You remain free of your actions. You live totally and yet no action burdens you.

BUT AS DUST THROWN AGAINST THE WIND,
MISCHIEF IS BLOWN BACK IN THE FACE
OF THE FOOL WHO WRONGS THE PURE AND HARMLESS.

Remember, if you function out of unawareness, then your whole life will be DUST THROWN AGAINST THE WIND. It comes back into your own eyes. It is spitting at the sky -- it falls on your own face.

You suffer not because of others, you suffer because of your own foolish actions. And what is a foolish action? Action which arises out of an unconscious state of mind.

BUT AS THE DUST THROWN AGAINST THE WIND, MISCHIEF IS BLOWN BACK IN THE FACE OF THE FOOL WHO WRONGS THE PURE AND HARMLESS. And the outcome is even more dangerous for the fool if his mischief and his wrong is against the pure and the harmless. If you are fighting with another fool there is not much problem: he spits on you, you spit on him. Your spit comes back to you, his spit goes back to him; everything is equalized. You harm him, your harm comes back to you; he harms you, his harm goes back to him.

But when you harm or do mischief to somebody innocent, then you are really in trouble because your mischief will come back to you a thousandfold. The innocent person will not do any mischief to you; he will simply re-echo, he will simply reflect, he will be a mirror. If you are ugly, your ugliness will be shown -- and of course, the purer the mirror, the more clearly your ugliness will be shown.

And the mind has a great desire to harm the innocent. It is afraid to harm the mischievous because the mischievous can prove too much. The innocent seems to be SO innocent that you are tempted to harm him. The innocent seems to be so vulnerable, so delicate, that you think there is no problem: you can do anything to him, he will not even reply. Hence Jesus is crucified, Socrates is poisoned, Buddha is stoned.

Remember, there is a great temptation to harm the innocent, because you know he will not return it in the same coin. But the trouble is, HE will not return it in the same coin, but the whole existence takes revenge on his behalf. Because HE is not going to take revenge, the whole existence takes his side. Existence is always on the side of the awakened one. You are bound to suffer much, although Jesus is ready to forgive you. The last words of Jesus were: Father, forgive all these people because they know not what they are doing. This is his response. But existence cannot forgive you.

Existence follows a very exact law: mischief is bound to create mischief for you, and

misery, if you create it for others, is bound to rebound on you. And if it is done against the harmless, against the wise, against the buddhas, then in a thousandfold way you will suffer.

SOME ARE REBORN IN HELL,
SOME IN THIS WORLD,
THE GOOD IN HEAVEN.
BUT THE PURE ARE NOT BORN AT ALL.

Hell and heaven are not geographical, remember it. It is just a metaphor to explain something psychological. Hell is the state of the mind which is in deep misery -- of course, created by your own doings. All the dust that you have been throwing against the wind falling on yourself, that is hell -- all the wrong that you have been doing to people coming back to you. You have to reap the crop because you had sown the seeds. If you sow seeds of poison you will have to reap poison. It is so simple: AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal law.

Nobody can be exempted from it, there is nobody who can be an exception -- although everybody thinks, "I may be an exception, I may find some way to get out of it." Certainly you can find ways to get out of human laws, you can find ways to get out of any law, because man-made laws are man-made laws; they can be broken. And you can find intelligent people who can show you how to bypass them. But eternal laws, natural laws, cannot be broken; if you break them you are bound to suffer. That suffering is hell.

Whenever you go against the law of life you are in hell, and whenever you go in tune with the law you are in heaven. Heaven means a state of joy. And whenever you are in a limbo, neither here nor there, neither against nor for, in a state of lethargy, in a state of indecision, just hanging in between, then you are in this world. In the Buddhist scriptures this world is called MADHYALOK -- the middle state between heaven and hell.

There are three kinds of people in the world: a few who are in heaven, many who are in the middle, and many more who are in hell. And in fact these are not three kinds of people because each person goes through all these three states every day. In the morning you may be in heaven, by the afternoon you are in limbo, by the evening, coming home, you are in hell. You go on changing, shifting. These are psychological states.

To go beyond all these three is called nirvana, is called buddhahood, is called moksha. If you can go beyond all the three -- that means if you can go beyond all mind -- then you are not only in tune with the law.... If you are in tune with the law you are in heaven, if you are against the law you are in hell. If you are indecisive, half-half, fifty-fifty, you are in the middle world, this world. But if you become one with the law, you are no longer separate -- not even in tune, because in tune you are separate. If you become one with the law: if you drop your ego and mind totally; if you become immersed in the eternal law; if you become the ocean, your dewdrop disappears in the ocean and becomes it, then you are born no more. Then there is no birth, no death. Then this whole wheel of birth and death stops. Then you are one with the cosmos, then you are God.

This is the ultimate that has to be attained, this is the ultimate that man is capable of attaining, but also capable of missing. Unless great effort is made with great skill and intelligence, you will not be able to attain it.

NOWHERE!
NOT IN THE SKY,
NOR IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA,

NOR DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS,
CAN YOU HIDE FROM YOUR OWN MISCHIEF.

Remember: there is no way to hide from your mischief. So don't go on befooling yourself that you will find some way: that you will go to the Ganges and take a dip in the Ganges and all your sins will be washed away. Don't deceive yourself -- the Ganges cannot do that. Don't think that you will go to Kaaba and you will do HAJ, the great pilgrimage, and you will become a HAJI -- the man who has been to Kaaba -- and then all sins are taken away from you, God has forgiven you. Don't think that by doing a certain ritual -- YAGNA, HAVAN -- you will be freed from your mischiefs. Nothing is going to help.

NOWHERE! Buddha says, NOT IN THE SKY, NOR IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA, NOR DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS, CAN YOU HIDE FROM YOUR OWN MISCHIEF. It will follow you like your shadow, it will torture you wherever you go. It is better not to do it -- but you can avoid doing it only if you become conscious, otherwise you are bound to do it.

NOT IN THE SKY,
NOR IN THE MIDST OF THE OCEAN,
NOR DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS,
NOWHERE

CAN YOU HIDE FROM YOUR OWN DEATH.

Mischief is bound to bring its own punishment just as certainly as birth is bound to bring its own death. You cannot avoid death, you cannot avoid the outcome of your deeds. So don't think in these terms, because all that time wasted in avoiding, hiding, is simply wasted. All that energy can be put into one effort: of becoming aware, of becoming meditative. That is going to help.

A man was going to the Ganges. He went to Ramakrishna, he was a follower of Ramakrishna. He asked Ramakrishna, "Paramahansadeva, I am going to the Ganges -- bless me. Do you think all my sins will be washed away?"

Ramakrishna said, "Yes, certainly, because the Ganges is so pure; whosoever dives deep into it becomes as pure as the Ganges. But there is a problem that you have to remember."

The man said, "What is that problem? You just tell me, I will remember."

Ramakrishna said, "Have you seen the great trees that stand on the banks of the Ganges?" He said, "Yes, I have seen."

Ramakrishna said, "Do you know what is the purpose of those trees?"

He said, "That I have never heard and it is not written in the scriptures. What is the purpose of those trees? You tell me."

Ramakrishna said, "The purpose of those trees is that when you dive in the Ganges, your sins have to leave you because of the power of the Ganges. Those sins sit on the top of those tall trees. When you come back out of the Ganges, they jump upon you again! So it is really futile. If you want to go you can go, but avoid one thing: if you dive in the Ganges, don't come out! Then be gone forever; otherwise those sins won't leave you. And they will take revenge, they will jump upon you with vengeance."

And this is literally true. The religious people, the so-called religious people, think that

they can do a certain ritual and the sin is finished, and they are free to do the sin again! And once you know the trick how to finish it, why bother? You can go on doing as many sins as you can -- the Ganges is always there. And now there is no need to go to the Ganges either: you can bring the Ganges in pipes to your home, so every day, early morning or evening, you take a bath. Evening will be better, so the whole day's sins are finished and you are as pure as a lotus flower.

Buddha says nothing can help you. There is nowhere to hide from two things: the result of your deeds and death. They are going to happen.

Then what should we do? Become conscious, and in becoming conscious both disappear. In becoming conscious your actions automatically go through a transformation. The conscious man cannot do anything wrong, and the conscious man comes to know that, "There is no death for my consciousness. The body will die, the mind will die, but not my innermost being. I am eternal. AMRITASYA PUTRAH -- I am the son of eternity, I belong to the eternal existence."

Consciousness brings these two truths home. First it transforms your world by transforming your actions; secondly it transforms your interiority by making you aware that you are eternal. When you know you are eternal, when you know that you have always been and you will always be, all your values of life immediately start changing. Then whatsoever was important yesterday is no longer important, and whatever was never important before becomes important -- because now you think in terms of eternity and not in terms of time.

To think in terms of time is politics: to think in terms of eternity is religion.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Is this the way it is?

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IT SEEMS TO ME THAT BEING HERE WITH YOU MEANS TO LET GO OF EVERYTHING -- NOT ONLY THE MISERY, FEAR, SADNESS AND THE SO-CALLED NEGATIVE SPACES, BUT ALSO THE HAPPY, LOVING, FLOWING FEELINGS, THE SO-CALLED POSITIVE SPACES THAT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MY GOAL. BELOVED MASTER, IS THIS THE WAY IT IS?

Anand Hareesh, the positive and the negative, the night and the day, the summer and the winter, birth and death -- they are not separate. If you want to let go of one, you will have to allow the other also to go.

That is one of the greatest dilemmas: people want the positive to remain with them -- but if the positive remains, the negative remains as its shadow. The positive will not have any meaning without the negative. If you don't know what darkness is you will not be able to see light at all. If you want to see light you will have to be ready to experience darkness too. You cannot avoid death if you cling to life. It is life that brings death in.

And everybody wants to cling to the positive spaces and everybody wants to avoid the negative spaces. This is impossible -- this is against the eternal law.

If you watch carefully you will see that if the negative is torturing you too much then the positive is only a cover-up. What do you mean when you say that you are happy? You simply mean that "At this moment my unhappiness is covered up." What do you mean when you say that "Now I am relaxed"? It simply means that the tensions have gone deeper into the unconscious; now you are oblivious of them.

But sooner or later they will assert, sooner or later they will have their own time. You cannot remain with the positive forever. The negative and positive always balance each other: you will have as much happiness as you are ready to have unhappiness.

Hence one of the mysteries: the more affluent a society is, the more miserable it is. There is no other country more miserable than America, for the simple reason that America has now the highest peak of happiness; it cannot avoid the lowest depth. The peaks are possible only with valleys -- the higher the peak, the deeper the valley.

In India people feel very satisfied. The reason is they don't know the peaks of happiness; hence they don't know the valleys of unhappiness. They live more or less on neutral ground, neither positive nor negative. This is not true contentment, this is simply absence of positive spaces -- hence the negative spaces are also absent.

America is really in a mental torture, in a great psychological upheaval. No society has ever been in such a state. Individuals, of course, have been.

Gautam Buddha was the son of a king. He had all the joys -- that's why he became aware of the misery of life. It is not accidental that all the twenty-four TIRTHANKARAS of the Jainas were kings. Buddha was a king, Rama and Krishna were kings, all the Hindu AVATARAS were kings. There is something in it, something very fundamental. Why have beggars not become tirthankaras, avataras, buddhas? For the simple reason that they don't know what happiness is -- how can they be aware of the misery of life?

Buddha says: Life is DUKKHA -- pure misery. Only a buddha can say it because he has known the peaks. Knowing the peaks is simultaneously becoming aware of the valleys. If you live intensely, passionately, you will be more aware of death than the person who lives in a lukewarm way, who lives only so-so, who is not intense and passionate in his life. He cannot be very alert about death. The deeper you plunge into life, the greater will be your awareness of death. The positive and the negative continuously balance each other.

The Indians have played a trick upon themselves. They have become neutral: "Don't go to the heights of joy; that is the way to avoid the depths of misery, pain, sorrow." But this is not true revolution. True revolution is not by becoming indifferent, by becoming lukewarm, by living a very very dull life. Real revolution happens through transcendence.

These two words have to be understood because the difference is very delicate and subtle: 'indifference' and 'transcendence'. Indifference simply means you avoid the positive to avoid

the negative. Transcendence means you avoid nothing, neither the positive nor the negative. You live the positive in its totality and you live the negative in its totality, with a new quality -- and that quality is that of a witness. You live totally but at the same time you remain silently alert, aware.

You know happiness surrounds you but you are not it; you know unhappiness surrounds you but you are not it. You know it is day but you are not it, and you know it is night but you are not it. You know now you are alive but you are not it; then when you will be dying you will know you are not it. This is transcendence.

NETI, NETI -- neither this nor that -- is the secret formula of transcendence: neither positive nor negative. But it does not mean NOT to live the positive and the negative. If you avoid living you will become dull, very dull; you will lose all intelligence.

That's the difference between the old sannyas and my new vision of sannyas. The old sannyas teaches you indifference, neutrality: "Don't go to the heights so you need not fall into the depths." Simple mathematics! "Don't be happy, then you will not be unhappy." How can you be unhappy if you have never been happy? "Don't rejoice, then there will be no sorrow, and don't laugh, then tears will not be possible." This is simple mathematics, but not the truth of transcendence, not the truth of real sannyas.

The real sannyas means: laugh deeply, but remember you are not the laughter; and cry and weep deeply, let the tears flow, be total in it, and yet alert, a flame inside watching it all.

Hareesh, you are to transcend, not to renounce. If you renounce you miss the point. And when I say, "Let go!" I simply mean don't cling. I am not saying to you don't try to be happy. Make every possible effort to be happy, joyous, but remember that sadness will follow -- that is natural. Accept it, and when it comes, don't run away from it, don't escape from it. That too is beautiful, part of life, part of growth; without it there is no maturity. Go deep into it.

Joy has something to contribute to your growth, and sorrow too. Joy brings a freshness, the freshness of the morning dew. Joy brings youth, joy brings a dance to your heart. Sadness also brings many gifts but you escape from sadness; hence you never become aware of the gifts. Sadness brings a silence which no joy can ever bring. Joy is always a little noisy; sadness is utterly silent. Joy is always a little shallow; sadness is deep, it has depth. Joy always makes you forget yourself; it is easier to drown yourself in joy, to be intoxicated with joy. It keeps you unconscious. Sadness brings an awareness because you cannot drown yourself in it. You cannot participate, you have to stand outside -- because you don't want it!

The first lessons of witnessing happen in sadness. One learns witnessing in sadness and only then, later on, the same witnessing can be applied to the moments of pleasure. But it is by witnessing that one transcends.

And when I say, "Let go of it all, the positive and the negative," I simply mean don't cling, don't be identified. I am not saying, "Renounce!" Live, and yet live above. Walk on the earth, but no, don't let your feet touch the earth. Yes, there is an art to it.

And that's what sannyas is all about: the art of living in the world without being part of it, the art of living life without being identified with it. That's what real let-go is.

The old sannyas is that of indifference. Exactly that is the word used in the old scriptures: a sannyasin becomes UDASIN -- indifferent to all that is -- VAIRAGYA. He becomes cold and detached. He escapes from the world of duality. He moves into a monastery or into the Himalayan caves, lives alone, lives without joy, without sadness.

A kind of death he lives: he is already in his grave, he lives not. His life is not worth calling life. He has fallen below humanity; he is closer to the animals than to human beings. Hence his search for the caves, forests, jungles, mountains, deserts -- he is afraid of being

with human beings. He wants to fall below human beings, because human beings are bound to be divided by this great polarity, positive and negative, and he is afraid of it.

But the real sannyasin -- the sannyasin of my vision -- lives in the world, in the thick of it, in the dense world. He renounces nothing. He lives life as totally as possible, because if God has given life it means there is something to attain through it. Only by living it can it be attained, only by living it is there something to be learned. Transcendence has to be learned; that is the great gift of life.

If you become more and more conscious, let-go will happen and yet you will be here and now, and more than ever before. You will eat and you will taste more. You will love and you will have deeper orgasmic experiences. You will play and your play will have something of the spiritual in it. Your ordinary life will become sacred.

Only one thing has to be introduced: witnessing.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM FEELING MORE AND MORE THAT THIS LIFE IS SOMETHING MAGICAL. IS THIS HOW YOU SEE LIFE? IS THIS WHAT YOU MEAN BY THE GODLINESS ALL ABOUT US?

Yes, Anand Nur, that's precisely what I mean. By "God" I don't mean a person. By "God" I mean the magic that surrounds you, the mysterious, the miraculous. By "God" I don't mean anybody who created the world, but creation itself. The very process of creativity is God.

Hence you cannot worship God, you cannot pray to God. All prayers are false because they are addressed to a personal God -- and there is no personal God. You cannot relate to God, calling him "father," "mother." He is not a person; relationship is not possible. Then how to worship, how to pray? You will have to learn new ways of praying and worshipping.

To be creative is to worship. To be creative is to participate in the great process of creation -- and participating in creativity is participating in God. For a moment you are transported. When you are painting something you are no longer there; you have become just a creative force. When you are playing music, if you are not just a technician but really a musician, a lover of music, then you disappear -- then the ego is no longer there. At least for those few rare, diamondlike moments, immensely precious, some windows open. You are no longer there, not as an ego.

God is not a person, he is not an ego. And if you want to meet God you will have to be something similar: a non-ego, a nonperson. God is a presence. If you want to have any communion with God you will have to learn how to be just a presence and not a person; alert, fully alert, but without any idea of "I."

And the best way to let this "I" disappear is not through austerities, yoga, fasting -- no. It is through creativity. I teach you the yoga of creativity, because to me that is the only yoga. The word 'yoga' means union; when you are creative you are in a state of union with God. Standing on your head is not going to help much, in fact it is not going to help at all. You can stand on your head for lives -- it will do only one thing: it will make you stupid!

And I am saying a scientific truth, I am not joking; I am very serious about it. If you stand on your head for long periods of time you will become stupid, because your brain consists of a very very delicate nervous system. Those nerves are so thin... they are thinner than hairs. Your small head has millions of nerves; you cannot see them with your naked eyes, they are

so thin. If you stand on your head too long the blood rushes towards your head, and in that flood those nerves are going to be destroyed.

In fact, scientists say man attained to mind, brain, because he stood on two legs -- upright. Animals have not attained to mind yet because they still go on remaining parallel to the earth. Their heads are getting too much blood; hence they cannot grow subtle nervous systems. It is only man who has been able to grow a subtle nervous system which can sustain great consciousness, which can sustain great intelligence.

It is very rare to come across an intelligent, so-called yogi -- I have not come across one yet! The people who distort their bodies and do all kinds of circus tricks and stand on their heads, they may have good bodies -- they can have; so much gymnastics is bound to give you a healthier body, more animallike -- but they don't have intelligence. I have yet to come across a yogi who is really intelligent, and one of the reasons is that their subtle, delicate nervous systems are too much flooded with blood.

You cannot sleep in the night without a pillow. Do you know why? -- because too much blood goes into the head. It keeps your whole nervous system vibrating. You need pillows. Pillows keep the blood flow less towards the head; you can sleep, you can rest, you can relax.

By "yoga" I exactly mean the literal translation: union, communion. When you are painting or playing music or dancing or singing, then you are in a state of yoga.

In my commune, this is going to be the yoga: you have to create. And the more you create, the more you become capable of creating. The more you create, the sharper is your intelligence. The more you create, the more you become available to infinite sources of creativity -- that is, God. The more you create, the more you become a vehicle -- a vehicle for the magic to flow through you.

Yes, Anand Nur, by "God" I mean the magic that surrounds you. Can't you feel the magic that surrounds you every moment -- THIS very moment? The birds making sounds... the trees utterly silent, in a state of meditation... and you all here together with me, from faraway countries... a silence pervading. You are utterly tuned with me, breathing with me, your hearts beating with my heart. Can't you see the magic of the now, of the here, and the beauty of it and the benediction? This is God!

God is not found in the temples and the mosques and the GURUDWARAS and the churches. God is found only in the company of the buddhas, because it is only in the company of the buddhas that you become aware of the magical existence.

The third question:

WHY ARE PEOPLE SO MUCH AGAINST YOU?

Sudheer, they are not so much against me as they are afraid of me. Out of fear they are against, but the root cause is fear. And why are they afraid? -- because they don't understand. It is misunderstanding. It always happens, it is bound to happen; it is nothing new.

I say one thing, they understand something else because their minds are prejudiced. They have been brought up in certain traditions and I am breaking all traditions! They have been brought up to think in certain ways, and my whole effort here is to take you beyond thinking.

People are conventional, conformist, traditional. And to me religion is rebellion -- rebellion against all conventions, against all conformities, against all traditions. Religion is never a tradition, can never be a tradition. Science can be a tradition but religion never.

Science is really a tradition. Withdraw Newton -- for a moment think as though Newton was never born -- then there can be no Albert Einstein. Albert Einstein is possible only if Newton happens first. Science is a tradition, it is a continuum. Withdraw one brick and the whole edifice falls.

But I am possible without there ever being a Christ. I am possible not because there has been a Mahavira or a Patanjali, not because there has been a Buddha or a Confucius or Lao Tzu. Religion is not a continuum; it is an individual phenomenon, it is an individual flowering. You can become awakened even if you are not aware of anybody ever becoming awakened before. You are not related with the past in the same way as science is related.

That's why scientific truths, once discovered, become the property of everybody else. Albert Einstein worked hard for thirteen years to discover the theory of relativity; now you can read all about it within hours -- you need not discover it again. Edison worked for years, at least for three years, to discover the first electric light bulb; now you can go on producing electric light bulbs -- you don't need Edisons to produce them. Ordinary laborers knowing nothing of electricity can do the job -- they ARE doing it.

But religious truths are totally different: you have to discover them again and again. What Buddha discovered does not become universal property. It dies with him, it disappears with him; it is an individual flavor. That is the beauty of religion: that it never becomes a commodity in the marketplace. Hence science can be taught in the schools, colleges, universities; religion cannot be taught. Religion cannot be taught at all; you cannot be informed about religion. You have to discover it on your own.

Yes, you can get the inspiration, but inspiration is not information. You can be inspired by the presence of a buddha, you can become afire. You can attain to a burning longing to be like a buddha, but you will have to discover everything on your own. And you will not be able to give it to your children as a heritage. All that you can give, all that you can impart, is an intense longing for truth, that's all -- but not truth itself.

Hence it is very difficult for the masses to understand what I am saying. It was difficult when Buddha was here, it was difficult when Jesus was here -- it will be difficult always because the masses live according to the past. They are fed, continuously brought up, in traditional ways. They have been told what is right, what is wrong; they have been told whether God exists or not, and they have learned all these things. And they have accumulated so much information that their minds are full of knowledge; they think they already know.

So when anybody comes and brings a new dispensation into the world, when anybody brings a new revelation, when anybody becomes available to God, becomes a vehicle of God, the people are disturbed, their prejudices are shattered. Their old conceptions are not strengthened -- on the contrary, they start feeling, "If this man is right then we have been wrong all along... not only we but our forefathers and their forefathers." This goes against their ego. They would rather cling to their own ego than listen to the truth.

And then because of their prejudices they go on hearing something which is not said. I say one thing, they immediately interpret it according to their own ideas. They don't listen in silence; they listen through all kinds of barriers of thoughts.

For example, there are Jews, Mohammedans, Hindus, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs -- all kinds of people are gathered here. Do you think when I say something the Jew hears the same as the Jaina, the Mohammedan hears the same as the Christian, the Buddhist hears the same as the Hindu? Impossible! The Mohammedan has his own ideas....

For example, if I am talking about rebirth, then the Christian, the Jew and the Mohammedan are a little on guard, unconsciously, because they have been told there is only

one life; they cannot trust that there are many lives. But when I am talking about rebirth the Hindu is happy, absolutely willing. The Buddhist is willing, the Jaina is willing, absolutely willing. There is no problem in their minds. Not that they are agreeing with me -- they are happy because I am agreeing with them! And that's how it is about each single statement.

Words don't have any clear-cut meanings -- they can't have; otherwise each communication will become very scientific. Words have many meanings, many nuances, so when you hear a word you can give it a color of your own. You can hear in your own personal, private way. You have your own private meaning.

When I talk about God, the Buddhist listening here will immediately stop listening, it is absolutely automatic. Automatically he will be turned off. God? -- he has been told that the whole idea is nonsense. And when Buddha has said that the whole idea is nonsense, it has to be so. And not only Buddha -- for twenty-five centuries many other mystics who have attained to the ultimate have been telling him that God is not there. But the Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, the Jew, they are absolutely willing, immensely happy that yes, I am talking about God -- their God! The Jaina and the Buddhist will not be happy; they don't believe in God.

When I talk about the soul, the Jaina will be happy, the Hindu will be happy, the Mohammedan, the Christian, the Jew -- everybody except the Buddhist. He does not believe in the soul either. He says there is no individual entity, everything is a flux. Just as the Ganges goes on changing every moment, just as you cannot step in the same river twice, you cannot meet the same individual again. There is nothing permanent, nothing at all. Except change, everything changes. The Buddhist, the moment I talk about soul or God, stops listening. He says, "This is not for me." Not that he does it consciously -- these are unconscious habits, conditionings.

It is not so much that people are against me; the reality is they don't understand what I am talking about, or they understand something totally different which is not being talked about. They are not aware what I am doing here. They don't come here, they depend on newspapers. Some third-rate journalist comes and reports something -- what can he report about meditation? He has never meditated.

Look at the stupidity of the world! You don't send a journalist to report about a surgeon if he does not know anything about surgery -- or do you? If there is going to be a conference of surgeons, you send somebody who is well acquainted with the world of surgery; only he can report. If physicists are meeting, papers are read and discussed and you send somebody, you have to send an expert who knows what physics is. And modern physics is a very very evolved phenomenon; it needs years of studies. One has to be a physicist. You can't depend on a general journalist who goes on reporting about mediocre politicians and their stupid speeches. You don't send the same type of journalist to report when physicists are talking; you have to send a special person or you have to appoint a physicist to report about the conference, because only he will be able to understand.

It is said that when Albert Einstein was alive, only twelve persons really understood -- all over the world -- what he was talking about. Now, who is going to report about him? Only one of these twelve may be able to report about Albert Einstein and his theory of relativity in such a way that at least some glimpse becomes possible to the common masses.

But when you send a journalist here, you never inquire, you never require that he should be a meditator, that he should know something about meditation, something about yoga, something about Sufism, Zen, Tao, Tantra. No, these are not the requirements.

Any Tom, Harry, Dick is thought to be perfectly capable of reporting about meditation,

about Tantra, about Tao, about Zen, about Sufism. And people depend on his reports, and he has never meditated in his life. He has never had a single moment of meditation. He knows nothing of a state of no-thought. He knows nothing of those intervals, those spaces, where mind disappears, ego disappears, time disappears. How can he understand?

Just by watching people sitting silently, will you be able to understand anything? If somebody is sitting silently with closed eyes...? You can take a picture of the person but you will not be able to take a picture of the inner happening. You can see people dancing, you can see them like Sufis, whirling dervishes; you can see them dancing and you will report that you saw people dancing, jumping -- but how are you going to know their inner world?

You should participate! You should dance yourself. You should have a taste of it. Only then you may be able to report something of it -- only something, not all of it, because all of it is impossible to report, all of it is inexpressible.

And when these people report, who don't understand, their report is only sensational. And then the masses read them, and they read even that report according to their own ideas. Then misunderstanding upon misunderstanding, layers and layers of misunderstanding! I must be the most misunderstood man in this country at this moment.

Carolyn, a curvaceous traveling saleslady, was waiting her turn to register at a motel when she overheard the desk clerk tell Zabroski, the man in front of her, that he had just gotten the last room. She waited for the Pole to leave the desk and then approached him.

"There is not another motel within miles and I am dead tired," she pleaded. "Look -- you don't know me, I don't know you, they don't know us, we don't know them. How's about me spending the night with you?"

"I don't care," said Zabroski.

They went to his room; he took off his clothes and so did she. "Listen," she said, "you don't know me, I don't know you, they don't know us, we don't know them. Let's have a few drinks. I've got a bottle."

After they had gotten a little high, she cuddled up to him and whispered, "You don't know me, I don't know you, they don't know us, we don't know them -- let's have a party."

"Hey," said the Pole, "if I don't know you and you don't know me and they don't know us and we don't know them -- who the hell we gonna invite?"

Now the word 'party' is creating the trouble! The Pole is going to understand according to his idea of a party. Carolyn has something else in her mind -- a real party!

What I am saying is totally different from what is being understood by the outsiders. But that is natural and I accept it. I have no grudge, no complaint about it. It's how it is going to be.

I can be understood only by those who are in deep love, who are in deep trust with me. I can be understood only by those who are ready to put their minds aside. In that state of silence, something from me can stir your heart, can trigger a process of understanding.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHERE DO REBELLION AND SURRENDER MEET?

Prem Rajo, rebellion and surrender meet in the idea of the ego. Drop the ego and simultaneously surrender happens, and rebellion too.

I know what you mean by your question. You mean that rebellion and surrender seem to be polar opposites -- how can they meet? How can one be rebellious AND surrendered? That's your question. That's how mind thinks about rebellion and surrender; through the mind you cannot see them meeting anywhere.

A man who is surrendered will look nonrebellious. A man who is rebellious will always be disobeying -- how can he surrender? He may die, but he will not surrender.

You know only one kind of surrender: the surrender that is forced on you, the surrender that is not done by you but you are made to do it -- at the point of a dagger you are forced to surrender. That is not the surrender I am talking about.

I am talking of a totally different kind of surrender. You are not forced -- you see the ugliness of the ego, you see the misery of the ego, you see the stinking ego, and you use the master as an excuse to drop the ego. The master is always an excuse -- remember.

When you surrender to me you are not surrendering to anybody in particular -- because I am not there as a person. And when you surrender I am not accepting your surrender, remember -- because there is nothing to surrender, just a false idea of the ego.

It is like a man who believes that he is rich and he is not, and he comes to me and he says, "I surrender my whole kingdom to you." I say, "Okay, I accept."

I accept so that you can get rid of this nonsense. You don't have it, so it is not going to create any trouble for me.

Two hippies were resting under a tree. It was a full-moon night, and they were really high. One looked long at the moon and then said, "I would like to purchase it, and I am ready to pay any price."

The other said, "Forget all about it, because I am not going to sell it."

When you surrender your ego you are not surrendering anything which is real, just an idea. If it was really something, then the master would be burdened by so many egos, he would be killed! He would have to carry a Himalaya of egos; it would be impossible for him to live; even to walk, even to breathe. I have one hundred thousand sannyasins in the world -- now, if I have to keep one hundred thousand egos, then Vivek will go mad!

She goes mad about other things she has to arrange. So many presents come to me and she wants to dispose of them immediately, because it becomes a burden on her to go on collecting them and to keep track of where they are and to keep them clean. Now she is very much worried about my fountain pens. She goes on asking every day, "When are you going to distribute these?" -- because it is becoming a problem for her. I think I must have two hundred or more, and I am waiting so that at least I can give one fountain pen to each sannyasin -- I am waiting! Right now it will be a problem for me; whom to give and whom not to give, so I go on telling Vivek, "Wait a little, wait." And I tell many people, "Go on bringing them!" Now Niranjana is going especially to the West to bring as many fountain pens as possible. But if I have to keep all these egos it will be impossible -- Lao Tzu House is too small!

I accept your ego happily because there is no problem in accepting it. You are not giving anything to me, I am not taking anything from you. But you are getting rid of an idea, a fantasy, and your getting rid of it is the point. It is not surrender forced on you; it is surrender out of your own understanding.

And then rebellion happens on its own accord, because a man without the ego is the most rebellious in the world. Again remember: when I use the word 'rebellion' I don't mean it in

the political sense. A man without the ego cannot have any politics. Politics needs great egoists; the whole game of politics is the game of ego, it is an ego trip.

When you are no longer burdened by the ego, when you have been unburdened, when the master has taken your so-called ego away from you, your life will be that of a rebel, of tremendous revolution. You will not be a Hindu and you will not be a Mohammedan and you will not be a Christian and you will not be a Jaina. This is revolution. You will not be a German and you will not be a Japanese and you will not be an Indian. This is revolution. You will not belong to any religion, to any sect, to any society, to any tradition. This is revolution.

And because there is no ego, God can flow through you; great creativity becomes possible. THIS is revolution! And you will live now in a total let-go; in fact God will live through you -- not you. And God cannot be a slave, and God cannot be reduced to any slavery, and you cannot be reduced to any slavery either now.

Prem Rajo, rebellion and surrender certainly meet -- in dropping the ego. But don't just go on trying to understand these things theoretically. Do something existential so that what I am saying becomes your experience -- because only experience liberates.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

I hear the Indians bragging too much about their spirituality. What do You say about it?

Sahajo, Indians have nothing else to brag about! Forgive them, be compassionate to them. They don't have money, they don't have big houses, they don't have big cars, they don't have anything of science, technology. It is very difficult for them to maintain their ego; spirituality is their shelter. And spirituality is a commodity. You can brag about it very easily because nobody can prove that you don't have it, neither can you prove that you have it. It is so invisible that either you accept it or you don't accept it -- but you cannot prove it.

And why particularly, spirituality? It sometimes happens that if you are very greedy you will pretend just the opposite, because that is the only way to hide the greed. If you are a very angry person, you may pretend to be very polite, compassionate, loving, because that is the only way to hide your anger. If you are obsessed with sex, you may start talking about BRAHMACHARYA -- celibacy. The opposite is the way to hide it.

The Indian mind is utterly materialistic, and the only way to hide it is to talk about, brag about, spirituality. Yes, there have been a few people in this country -- a Buddha, a Mahavira, a Patanjali, a Krishna -- who were utterly spiritual. But such people have been everywhere! Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plotinus, in Greece -- the same type of people, the same quality, the same fragrance. Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu, Mencius, in China -- the same perfume. Christ, Eckhart, Francis, Bohme -- the same dimension. Spiritual people have been everywhere; it is nobody's possession. But Indians brag about it, I know.

Sahajo, I can understand your question, because what you see all around is just the opposite. That's why they brag about spirituality. Each Indian thinks that just by being an Indian he is a Buddha. It is not so easy to be a Buddha! And Buddha has nothing to do with being an Indian.

In fact, Buddha was not an Indian, he was a Nepalese. He was born on the border of India and Nepal; in fact, now that part is in Nepal. And the statue of Buddha that you see does not look like a Nepalese, or does it? It is not a true statue. It does not look like Bahadur! Nepalese are closer to Chinese, Tibetans, Japanese -- the Mongol type. Buddha's statue does not look

like a Nepalese, not at all.

The statues were not made at the time of Buddha nor when he died. The statues were made five hundred years later. And you will be surprised to know, they were made in imitation of Alexander the Great. Alexander had come to India by that time, and he had a beautiful face, the Greek features. The statue of the Buddha is Greek! The man himself was Nepalese; the statue is Greek.

And all the scriptures that you read about Buddha are not original. Some have been translated from Tibetan, some from Chinese, some from Japanese. The originals were destroyed by the Hindus -- and now the same Hindus go on proclaiming that they are the inheritors of Buddha. Buddhists were killed by the Indians!

A time came after Buddha's death, after seven or eight hundred years, when all the Buddhists either were killed or they had to escape out of India. India was completely cleaned of Buddhists. Yes, they were killed, burned alive. Those who were fortunate escaped. In a way that was a blessing, because the people who escaped, the monks, they escaped to Tibet, to China. Those who were not too much afraid, they escaped to Tibet -- Tibet was very close. Those who were very much afraid went to China, to Mongolia, to Korea, to Taiwan, they simply never stopped, they went on and on! That's how the whole of Asia was converted to Buddhism. The whole credit goes to the Hindus. And now these same Hindus go on claiming that, "We have given birth to Buddha." Feel ashamed!

But India is poor and very materialistic. Poor people cannot be otherwise; a poor person is bound to be materialistic, grossly materialistic. But then where to feed one's ego? India has nothing else to brag about. Spirituality is a good commodity -- invisible, unprovable. Anybody can say, "I have experienced God." You cannot disprove it. Maybe he is right, maybe he is not right, but it is beyond proof this way or that.

But don't be worried about these stupid people who go on talking about spirituality, not knowing even the ABC of it. Yes, they may know something about the Vedas and the Upanishads. They may have crammed a few sutras, they may repeat them parrotlike, but they don't understand what they are saying -- because their lives belie it.

"Excuse me, sir," said the Indian, "but aren't you the gentleman that fetched my son out of the lake yesterday?"

"Why, yes, I am," said the embarrassed rescuer. "But that's alright -- let's just say nothing more about it."

"Say nothing about it?" shrieked the Indian. "Indeed, man, where is his cap?"

He is not even grateful! He has not come to say thanks to the person that, "You have saved the life of my child." He is worried about the cap....

A Mexican, an Italian and an Indian were discussing what they would do if they awoke one morning to discover that they were millionaires. The Mexican said he would build a bullring.

The Italian said he would hire thirty hookers -- one for each night of the month.

The Indian said he would go to sleep again and see if he could make another million.

If you watch the Indian mind, it IS materialistic. And it is not that it is materialistic only today -- it has always been, because twenty-five centuries ago Buddha was telling people not to be materialists, and he was talking to the Indians. And even before Buddha, almost

twenty-five centuries before Buddha, Parshvanath was telling Indians not to be materialists.

India has given the greatest materialist philosophy to the world: the philosophy of the Charvakas. The Greek philosophy of Epicurus is nothing compared to the philosophy the Charvakas have given to the world. The word CHARVAKA is significant; it comes from CHARUVAK. Charuvak means sweet message, beautiful message. Another name of the philosophy of the Charvakas is LOKAYAT. Lokayat means popular; in which the majority of the people believe.

Maybe it is because of the Indian materialism that a Buddha, a Mahavira, a Parshvanath, a Neminatha, were possible. When people are too materialistic, a few intelligent people are bound to get bored by the whole thing. It becomes nauseating, it becomes sickening! Life works in a very strange way: when the society is materialistic, a few avant-garde people start becoming spiritualists.

Now the West is very materialist, and a great longing for spirituality is arising there. That's why you have come here. You don't see many Indians here. They believe they already know. They believe they have nothing to do -- no more research, no more inquiry. And they have become very cunning. Poor people are bound to become cunning.

Poverty is the root cause of all sins, of all crimes. So they start learning devious ways. They start becoming hypocrites: they say one thing, they do another thing. They start learning how to wear masks. You can see it, not only in the ordinary people, but in the so-called leaders and saints, political and religious. You will not find such hypocrites anywhere else.

An airplane crossing the Atlantic ran into engine trouble. After dumping all the baggage to lighten the load, the pilot informed the passengers that three people would have to jump in order to save the rest.

"We need three volunteers," announced the pilot.

Immediately an Englishman left his seat, shouted, "God save the Queen!" and jumped out.

In a little while a Frenchman got up and said, "Long live France!" and took the plunge.

Five minutes later an Indian politician in pure snow-white, handspun clothes, stood up, screamed, "Long live Mahatma Gandhi!" and threw a Mexican out the door.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WITH THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR DESTRUCTION, HOW CAN WE BE "JOYFUL
AND SERENE"?

Julia Bradley, what else can you do? Time is short -- dance, sing, be joyous! If there were no nuclear destruction possible, no threat, you could have postponed. You could have said, "Tomorrow we will dance." But now there may be no tomorrow; you cannot postpone.

This is for the first time that tomorrow is absolutely doubtful. It has always been doubtful, but this time it is absolutely doubtful. Individually it is always doubtful: tomorrow may never come, even the next breath may not come in. Individually death is always imminent, but this time it is something global, universal. The whole earth may disappear, may explode; not only all human beings, birds, animals, trees, the whole life on earth may be gone.

Now it is up to you, Julia Bradley. You can cry and weep and you can beat your head against the wall; that will not stop nuclear destruction and its threat. In fact it may bring it

closer and faster because sad people, miserable people, are dangerous people. Misery creates destructiveness.

But if the whole humanity can start dancing, rejoicing, feasting -- seeing that the threat is very close by.... The third world war can start any moment. The foolish politicians have enough atomic energy piled up to destroy this earth not only once but seven hundred times. That many atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs, have accumulated that we can kill each person seven hundred times -- although a person dies only once. But politicians don't want to take any chance, so seven hundred times you can be killed. It will not be needed, one time will do -- because we have heard only one story of resurrection; that is Jesus Christ. And even if Jesus Christ is resurrected and everybody is gone, what is he going to do? He will have to commit suicide.

Rejoice! -- because then there is a possibility. If the whole earth can become full of joy it will be less possible to destroy -- because who is going to destroy it? We are the people; it is up to us to decide that we want to live or that we want to commit suicide. If we start a new climate in the world -- of rejoicing, of dancing, of singing, of meditation, of prayer -- and if people become full of bliss, cheerfulness, laughter.... If the world is full of laughter, there is every possibility we can avoid nuclear destruction, because joyous people don't want to destroy, they want to create.

And anyway, Julia Bradley, you are going to die. Whether the whole earth remains or not does not matter. YOU are going to die, that much is certain. How does it matter to you whether the world continues after you or not? If it continues, good; if it does not continue, good. How does it matter to you? You will not be here anymore. As far as you are concerned, death is absolutely certain. Still you love, still you sing, you listen to music, so what difference does it make?

If destruction has become global, we have to make laughter and dancing also global, in the same proportion, to counteract it. Why be sad? And what are you going to gain by sadness? Is it going to help in any way? It may be just a trick of the mind to keep you sad, it may be just a defense. You must be sad; now you are trying to find more and more rationalizations for remaining sad. And this is a beautiful rationalization, that, "What are you talking about? Telling people to dance and sing and rejoice, and the world is on the verge of destruction? Tell people to be sad; tell people to cry and weep and forget all laughter and forget all love!" Is that going to help in any way? It will bring the universal suicide closer.

But somewhere deep down in you there is a sadness that does not want to leave you, and that sadness is trying to find rationalizations.

David came from an orthodox family. One day he announced, "Mama, I am going to marry an Irish girl named Maggie Coyle."

The woman froze in shock. "That's nice, David," she said, "but don't tell your papa. You know he has got a weak heart. And I would not tell your sister, Ida -- remember how strongly she feels about religious questions. And don't mention it to your brother, Louis -- he might give you a bust in the mouth. Me, it is alright you told. I'm gonna commit suicide anyway."

Somewhere deep down you must have a suicidal instinct. You are just finding rationalizations.

Yes, I know the world is facing a danger, but each individual has always faced the danger of death. Still Jesus says: Rejoice and rejoice! And again I say unto you, rejoice! And in fact, Jesus was saying to people, "This world is to be destroyed soon. The Day of Judgment is very

close by." It was never so close as it is now. Jesus was wrong! Twenty centuries have passed, and he was saying to people, "In your very life you will see the Day of Judgment!" His prophecy was not fulfilled.

In fact he was not a prophet, he was a mystic. He was saying these things for a totally different purpose. He was saying, "The Day of Judgment is very close by -- transform yourself! Don't waste time, don't postpone!"

Now the day of universal death is really close by, so, Julia, don't postpone. Rejoice, rejoice, I say unto you again and again, rejoice -- because if you can die rejoicing, you will transcend death, you will go beyond death.

One who can die blissfully never dies, because in death he comes to know immortality.

And if the time is short, then you have to spread this orange laughter all over the world. Then it is time that we should make people more and more joyous. Tell them that death can take over this earth any moment -- the days are numbered -- because the politicians are fools, and the fools have so much power now that it is a sheer miracle that the third world war has not happened yet. It should have happened. Why it has not happened yet is a mystery. Having all these stupid politicians all over the world having all the power.... Just pushing a button and the process can be triggered, and within ten minutes the whole earth will be on fire -- a fire that can melt steel and rock, a fire that will melt everything. The whole earth can explode.

This is good news! You don't have time to waste. Julia, come on -- join the dance! Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #7

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ALL BEINGS TREMBLE BEFORE VIOLENCE.
ALL FEAR DEATH.
ALL LOVE LIFE.

SEE YOURSELF IN OTHERS.
THEN WHOM CAN YOU HURT?
WHAT HARM CAN YOU DO?

HE WHO SEEKS HAPPINESS
BY HURTING THOSE WHO SEEK HAPPINESS

WILL NEVER FIND HAPPINESS.

FOR YOUR BROTHER IS LIKE YOU.
HE WANTS TO BE HAPPY.
NEVER HARM HIM
AND WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS LIFE
YOU TOO WILL FIND HAPPINESS.

NEVER SPEAK HARSH WORDS
FOR THEY WILL REBOUND UPON YOU.
ANGRY WORDS HURT
AND THE HURT REBOUNDS.

LIKE A BROKEN GONG
BE STILL, BE SILENT.
KNOW THE STILLNESS OF FREEDOM
WHERE THERE IS NO MORE STRIVING.

LIKE HERDSMEN DRIVING THEIR COWS INTO THE FIELDS
OLD AGE AND DEATH WILL DRIVE YOU BEFORE THEM.

BUT THE FOOL IN HIS MISCHIEF FORGETS
AND HE LIGHTS THE FIRE
WHEREIN ONE DAY HE MUST BURN.

HE WHO HARMS THE HARMLESS
OR HURTS THE INNOCENT
TEN TIMES SHALL HE FALL --

INTO TORMENT OR INFIRMITY,
INJURY OR DISEASE OR MADNESS,
PERSECUTION OR FEARFUL ACCUSATION,
LOSS OF FAMILY, LOSS OF FORTUNE.

FIRE FROM HEAVEN SHALL STRIKE HIS HOUSE
AND WHEN HIS BODY HAS BEEN STRUCK DOWN
HE SHALL RISE IN HELL.

What is the greatest mystery of existence? It is not life, it is not love -- it is death.

Science tries to understand life; hence remains partial. Life is only a part of the total mystery, and a very tiny part -- superficial, just on the circumference. It has no depth, it is shallow. Hence science remains shallow. It knows much and knows it in great detail, but all its knowing remains superficial -- as if you know the ocean only by its waves and you have never dived deep into it, and you don't know its infinity.

Life is finite, momentary. This moment it is there, the next moment gone. It is a breeze, comes and goes... it does not abide. Hence the claim of science that it knows the truth is not true. It knows only the partial truth, and to claim the partial as the total is one of the absurdities of the scientific approach. What it knows is true, but it is not the whole truth. And the moment you claim that the part is the whole, you falsify even the part.

Love is midway. It is exactly in the middle of life and death. It is half life, half death; hence the fear of love. Unless you are ready to die, you cannot know love -- although by dying you become more alive. It is through death that love resurrects itself again and again. It is by disappearing that it appears again and again.

Love is far more mysterious than life itself, because it has life in it and something more too: life plus death. Fifty percent of love is life, fifty percent is death. And only those who are ready to die will know the life of love. Those who are afraid to die will never enter the mystery of love.

Art explores the world of love. Hence art is far truer than science, goes deeper than science. The vision of the artist contains much more than scientific knowledge can ever contain, although the way of art is totally different from the way of science. It has to be different. Science can be objective because it is peripheral. Art cannot be absolutely objective; it is fifty percent objective, fifty percent subjective. It cannot be free from the observer.

Science tries to be absolutely free from the observer; the observer should not enter in it, should not participate, should remain absolutely neutral, nonparticipant, a spectator. He should not bring himself into it. That is the scientific outlook.

But how can you avoid the knower? If you really want to know, the knower is bound to enter into knowledge.

Now the more perceptive scientists are becoming alert to the phenomenon that it is impossible to be absolutely impartial: the observer is bound to be reflected by his observations. He cannot be a pure spectator. He will interpret, he will theorize, he will create hypotheses and he will move through his hypotheses. He will choose because the details are infinite. He will have to focus.

Who is going to decide where to focus, what to choose, what not to choose, in what direction to move? Because existence is multidimensional and you cannot move in all dimensions simultaneously, you can move only in one dimension, it is bound to be that what you know will be affected by the knower. But this has been the understanding of art from the very beginning.

When the scientist looks at the flower he tries to be just an observer. He simply takes note of what he sees; he does not bring his dreams, his visions into his observation. The poet has more freedom, the painter has more freedom. He moves deep into the phenomenon of the flower. He participates in its mystery, he is not separate; for a few moments he becomes one with it. There are moments when the poet dances with the flower -- in the wind, in the sun, in the rain. There are moments when the poet becomes the flower, when the observer is the observed. There are moments when the poet not only looks at the flower but looks THROUGH the flower, becomes the eyes of the flower. Naturally, he dives deeper than science; he brings far bigger diamonds, far more precious stones.

Poetry, painting, sculpture, music -- they come closer to reality because they are ready to participate. But they are only halfway.

Religion is concerned basically with death. Death contains all: death contains life, death contains love, and something more which neither life can contain nor love can contain. Death is the culmination of all, the crescendo, the highest peak. Life is the base, death is the peak -- love is somewhere in between.

The religious man, the mystic, tries to explore the mystery of death. In exploring the mystery of death, he inevitably comes to know what life is, what love is. Those are not his goals. His goal is to penetrate death, because there seems to be nothing more mysterious than

death. Love has some mystery because of death, and life also has some mystery because of death.

If death disappears there will be no mystery in life. That's why a dead thing has no mystery in it, a corpse has no mystery in it, because it cannot die anymore. You think it has no mystery because life has disappeared? No, it has no mystery because now it cannot die anymore. Death has disappeared, and with death automatically life disappears. Life is only one of the ways of death's expression.

The corpse has no mystery because, with the disappearance of death, love is gone. Just one moment before there was great mystery; now there is nothing. You can only go and bury the dead or burn the dead. The full stop has come. The process has stopped. It is death that keeps the process going on. It is death that keeps you aware of something mysterious, miraculous, magical.

Religion is founded in the search into death, and to understand death is to understand all. To experience death is to experience all, because in the experience of death, you not only experience life at its highest, love at its deepest; in experiencing death you enter into the divine. Death is the door to the divine. Death is the name of the door of God's temple. The meditator dies voluntarily.

There are two kinds of death. One is the ordinary death; everybody dies it. That is not the mystic's death. The ordinary death happens against you; you go into it very reluctantly. You don't want to go into it, you cling to life. You don't become available to it, you don't become open to it. Hence you go on missing the point.

Many times you have died, but each time you died so much obsessed with life that you could not see what death is. Your eyes were focused on life, you were clinging to life. You were snatched away, and the only way to snatch you away is to make you unconscious.

When the surgeon is going to operate on you he makes you unconscious, he gives you anesthesia. That's what death has been doing for centuries, from eternity. If you can't go joyously, dancingly into it, there is a built-in anesthesia: people become unconscious before they die. That's why you don't remember your past lives, because you became so deeply unconscious before you died that the chapter became closed.

If a person can die conscious, alert, he will remember his past life. That's how India discovered that there is not only one life; millions of times you have lived. You are not new, you are very ancient pilgrims. But each time you died reluctantly, unconsciously; hence you forgot everything.

The mystic dies voluntarily. The mystic dies before the actual death; he dies in meditation. Lovers know a little bit of it because fifty percent of love is death. That's why love is very close to meditation. Lovers know something of meditateness; unawares they have stumbled upon it. Lovers know silence, stillness. Lovers know timelessness, but they have stumbled upon it -- it has not been their basic search.

The mystic goes into it very consciously, deliberately. Meditation is total death, voluntary death. One dies into oneself. Before death ever comes the mystic dies. He dies every day. Whenever he meditates he goes into death. He reaches to those heights, those depths, and, slowly slowly, as meditation becomes natural, he starts living death. Then each moment of his life is also a moment of death. Each moment he dies to the past and remains fresh, because the moment you die to the past you become alive to the present.

He dies continuously and remains as fresh as dewdrops or lotus leaves in the early

morning sun. His freshness, his youth, his timelessness, depend on the art of dying. And then when actual death comes he has nothing to fear, because he has known this death thousands of times. He is thrilled, enchanted; he dances! Joyously he wants to die. Death does not create fear in him; on the contrary, a tremendous attraction, a great pull.

And because he dies joyously he dies without becoming unconscious, and he knows the total secret of death. Knowing it, he has the master key that can unlock all the doors. He has the key that can open the door of God.

And now he knows that he is not a separate individual. The very idea of separation was stupid. The very idea of separation was there because he was not aware of death. You think yourself separate as an ego because you don't know what death is. If you know death, the ego will evaporate. And the moment the ego evaporates you start feeling for the whole existence.

That is why Buddha teaches nonviolence. It is not a moral teaching, not like Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi's whole teaching is moral, social, political. It is ordinary; it has no mysticism in it. Buddha's nonviolence is totally different, qualitatively different. When he teaches nonviolence he means there is nobody other than you. To hurt anybody is to hurt yourself. To destroy anything is to destroy yourself. To be against, inimical, antagonistic to anybody is to be against your own being -- because there is only one being that permeates and pervades all.

Buddha never uses the word 'God', but by subtle hints he indicates again and again. This is his way of indicating. His respect for God is so tremendous that he feels to use the word 'God' is to commit a crime. That is my understanding of Buddha. He does not use the word because of deep respect, great reverence. He has been misunderstood -- as it happens always. All the buddhas are misunderstood, because the people who try to understand them have no insight, are blind, deaf.

Buddha has been thought to be an atheist. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Buddha has been thought to be against God. Nothing can be more untrue. Buddha's reverence is such that he cannot assert the word 'God'. To assert the word 'God' is to create a separation; as if "God" is separate from "me." The inseparableness is so much, the unity with God is so much, that even the word cannot be uttered.

That has been a tradition in ancient Israel: for centuries the name of God was not asserted. Only the highest priest of the great temple of Jerusalem was allowed, and that too in absolute aloneness, and that too only once a year. Nobody else was allowed to use the name of God. Only one day, once in a year, the highest priest, the purest, the most pious, the holiest man amongst all the Jews, would enter into the shrine, the innermost shrine of the temple. All the doors would be closed. Thousands of people would gather all around the temple just to be present there while the priest asserts the name of God. Nobody would hear it -- the priest would whisper it.

You cannot shout the name of God; it can only be whispered in silence -- and only once. It was a beautiful tradition. It shows reverence. Otherwise, beautiful words like 'God' become contaminated, become profane. They become ugly.

Even now, Jews, whenever they use the word 'God' or they write the word 'God', spell it differently. They don't use the full spelling G-o-d. They simply use G-d, they leave out the 'o', just to show that, "We are not competent enough to assert the full name." The essential part, the middle core of it, the very soul of it, is left out. And that 'o' is beautiful because it is also the symbol zero. It is not only 'o' but zero too, and zero is the innermost core of God.

Buddha calls it SHUNYATA -- emptiness, void. 'G' and 'd' are just peripheral; it's okay, one can use them, but the innermost core has to be left unexpressed. It is because of

tremendous reverence for God, for existence, that Buddha has never used the word. But hints are there; for the perceptive ones, for the sensitive ones, there are infinite hints. In each sentence there is a hint.

The moment you die consciously, in meditation, God is born -- because you disappear as an ego. Then what is left? A stillness, a tremendously potential stillness, a silence that is pregnant -- pregnant with the whole. When you disappear, boundaries disappear. You melt and merge with everybody else.

The poet, only once in a while, becomes attuned with the flower, attuned with the sunrise, attuned with a bird on the wing. The mystic becomes one with existence forever. He is the flower and he is the cloud and he is the sun and he is the moon and he is the stars. He starts living in a multidimensional way because the whole life is his. He lives in the tree as greenness, and in the rose as redness. He is on the wings of the bird, he is the roar of the lion and he is the waves of the ocean. He is all... how can he be violent? How can he hurt? How can he be destructive?

His whole life becomes a creativity.

The mystic is utterly creative.

The sutras:

ALL BEINGS TREMBLE BEFORE VIOLENCE.
ALL FEAR DEATH.
ALL LOVE LIFE.

Simple statements, but with great meaning.

ALL BEINGS TREMBLE BEFORE VIOLENCE. Even unconscious animals tremble before violence. Even though you may not make them in any way alert that they are being killed, but still, before a sheep is killed, she trembles. Now the scientists have discovered that the same is true about trees. When the woodcutter comes into the garden or into the forest the trees tremble.

Now there are sophisticated instruments like cardiographs, to note the trembling of the heart of the tree, which can make a graph of what is happening to the inside of the tree. Even the entry of the woodcutter into the forest... He has not said anything, he has not yet cut a single branch of the tree, but the trembling arises as if some intuitive source makes the tree alert.

And scientists have watched a miracle: the same woodcutter with his axe on his shoulder may move from the forest. If he has not cut any tree -- if he is just passing by the way, going to some other place -- no tree trembles. It seems as if the intention of the woodcutter -- just the intention, not any act -- is being relayed, broadcast to the trees.

And one thing more they have observed. You may not cut the tree; a hunter may come and kill a tiger -- but all the trees surrounding the place tremble. Even the death of the tiger is enough to make them sad, to make them afraid. What scientists have just now become aware of, within these last three or four years, the mystics have been aware of for centuries.

Buddha says: ALL BEINGS TREMBLE BEFORE VIOLENCE. Violence is something against nature. The religious person cannot be violent -- not that he practices nonviolence, remember. If you practice nonviolence you will become a Gandhian, a phony. The Gandhian is not a religious person. He practices nonviolence, he TRIES to become nonviolent -- he has no understanding. He creates a character, but deep down he has no consciousness which can function as a center of that character.

The mystic first creates the consciousness, then the character follows on its own accord. And the moralist creates the character, but consciousness does not follow the character. Character is a very superficial thing. You can find in this country... there are thousands of people who practice nonviolence, the Jainas particularly.

The Buddhists have forgotten all that Buddha has said. The day Buddhism had to leave India, it left its nonviolence too. Now Buddhists are all meat-eaters -- the Chinese, the Japanese, the Koreans. Of course they have rationalized it. The rationalization is that, "We eat the meat only of those animals who have died a natural death." So in China, in Japan or in Buddhist countries, you will find written on shops' boards, "Here only that meat is served which has been taken from animals who have died a natural death." Now, not so many animals are dying a natural death that they can supply the whole of Asia. But that's enough -- people are cunning.

But in India the Jainas are still practicing nonviolence. But because they practice it, it remains something false, something closer to hypocrisy. It does not transform their being, it does not make them luminous, it does not give them grace and beauty. And in their ordinary life they are as angry, as full of ambition -- or even more so -- than others. And that "more" can be understood; there is a reason.

They have somehow forced themselves to be nonviolent. Now where will their violence go? It will have to find some new ways, new outlets. Because their master, Mahavira, who was a contemporary of Buddha, said to them: Create a consciousness which is followed by nonviolence -- in the same way as Buddha said it. In the same way as Buddhists have misunderstood Buddha, they have found a legal way to get out of it.

"Don't kill," Buddha said. And they say, "We don't kill; we only eat the meat of the animal who has died naturally." This is a legal strategy to get out of it.

Jainas have followed in a routine way, without understanding, the message of Mahavira... because Mahavira said: Don't kill animals, don't cut trees -- he was the first to say: Don't cut trees -- so Jainas have followed it, not understanding the depth and the significance of it, but only as a dead letter. Literally they have followed, so they stopped farming because in farming you will have to cut plants and trees.

They stopped being warriors. Mahavira was born into a warrior race; all twenty-four Jaina TIRTHANKARAS were warriors. Of course it is absolutely certain that the people who became interested in Jaina tirthankaras must have come, at least the majority of them, from the KSHATRIYAS -- the warrior race, the samurai of India. But they could not remain warriors anymore, they had to drop their swords.

They could not be warriors, they could not be farmers, and the brahmins wouldn't allow them to be brahmins. And they were not interested either in being brahmins, because they were not interested in brahmin scriptures -- because those scriptures are full of violence.

In those scriptures animal sacrifice is allowed; not only animal sacrifice but human sacrifice too -- that at the altar of God you can sacrifice human beings. Once in a while, even in these days, this twentieth century, it happens in India: once in a while a child is sacrificed, a man is sacrificed -- even now!

They could not become brahmins, they could not remain kshatriyas, warriors. They would not like to become sudras. To be cobblers was impossible because that is violence, and it was against their ego to become sweepers. Then the only possible way for them was to be business people. So all the Jainas became business people, and their whole repressed violence became their ambition, their greed.

Hence the Jainas' is a small community in India, a very small community, but it manages

and controls the majority of the wealth of the country. It is the richest community. The whole violence became directed towards one thing -- money. You can hurt people by being rich without hurting them in any visible way. You can exploit people. You need not kill them, you need not drink their blood, but you can still exploit them to such an extent that no blood is left in them. That's what happened with the Jainas. That is always going to happen if you try to do the superficial first.

It is as stupid as if I want to invite you for dinner -- I need not invite your shadow, it comes with you. If I invite your shadow, the shadow is not going to come; it cannot come and there is no question of your coming because you are not invited at all.

Character is a shadow phenomenon, consciousness is the center. Character simply reflects consciousness. So these sutras have to be understood not as moral teachings, but as spiritual insights. ALL BEINGS TREMBLE BEFORE VIOLENCE. "All beings" means trees, birds, animals, men....

We are so cunning that we go on saying that man is the master. Animals are created for him to enjoy, trees are created for him. Not only that we make distinctions and differences between man and other animals and other planes of existence, we make differences in humanity too.

For example, Adolf Hitler used to think that the Germans, particularly the Nordics, the purest Germans, are made by God to dominate the whole world. All other races are a little lower than the pure Aryans. So if they don't yield, don't surrender, they can be destroyed.

Jews have always been thinking that they are the chosen people. Hindus have always thought that they are the most pious people, God's own people; God always takes birth in Hindu families, nowhere else. Hindus have always thought that this country, India, is the only sacred country. But this stupidity is nothing special to Hindus; everybody thinks that way.

Mohammedans think that God has given the real and the final dispensation to Mohammed in the Koran. Now there is no need for any master, no need for any Buddha. The Koran is the full stop; evolution has stopped at the Koran. And Mohammedans have the privilege and the responsibility to turn the whole humanity into Mohammedans. And if people resist they have to be killed for their own sake.

And so is the case with Christians, because their Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. And what are all others -- bastards? Only Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, and you can reach heaven only through Jesus -- not through Buddha, not through Krishna, not through Zarathustra. No, Jesus is the ONLY way, the ONLY truth!

So not only in animals and trees have we made a hierarchy, we are trying to make a hierarchy in man too. All men are the same. Yes, there may be superficial differences -- which is good. It will be very sad if those superficial differences disappear. They make life more enchanting; they give life variety, color. They make life a garden, full of different colors and different perfumes. Small differences are beautiful; they have to be cherished, they have not to be destroyed. Man has not to be made into a single kind of humanity. These differences -- of Jews and Hindus and Mohammedans and Christians -- are beautiful. The differences in Chinese and Japanese and Germans and English and French and Italians, are beautiful, but these are superficial things.

At the core, all human beings are equal and the same.

Put two men and a woman on a desert island and this is what surely will happen:

If they are Jewish, the two men will play cards to see who gets the woman.

If they are English, they will discuss the weather and ignore the woman because they are

more interested in each other.

If they are French, the two men will share the woman.

If they are Italian, the woman will kill one of the men.

If they are Eskimos, one of the men will claim the woman and then lend her to the other man.

If they are Americans, they will still be discussing the matter, trying to find a fair and amicable way to settle the problem.

These differences ARE there, and these differences are beautiful and they have to be cherished. They are lovely, they make the earth beautiful; otherwise it will be very boring.

The following ad appeared in the personal column of a London paper: "My husband and I have four sons. Has anyone any suggestions as to how we may have a daughter?"

Letters poured in from all over the world. An American wrote, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

An Irishman sent a bottle of Scotch with instructions to drink the entire contents before retiring.

A German offered his collection of whips.

A Mexican recommended a diet of tacos and refried beans.

An Indian proposed yoga, particularly SHIRSHASANA -- the headstand.

A Frenchman merely wrote, "May I be of service?"

These differences are good, beautiful; they should be helped to grow. But the basic, the fundamental being is the same, not only in human beings but in ALL beings. The tree has a being -- only its body is different from you; and the tiger has a being -- only its body is different from you. The differences are only on the circumference. The center is always the same because the center is one. The name of the center is God.

ALL BEINGS TREMBLE BEFORE VIOLENCE. ALL FEAR DEATH. ALL LOVE LIFE. There is no need to prove these things. These are simple observations of everybody. But a few conclusions can be drawn from them. If ALL beings tremble before violence, then there is something wrong in violence, basically wrong. It is against nature.

Destructiveness is not natural, creativeness is natural. Not violence but compassion is natural, not violence but love. Not anger, not hate, because those are the things that lead to violence, those are the seeds. Love, compassion, sharing, these are natural. And to be natural is to be religious.

ALL FEAR DEATH; hence, do not kill. Rather, help people to know death. Their fear is because of ignorance. They are afraid of death because death is the greatest unknown. There is no way to know death unless you die. Help people to know death through meditation, because that is a way of dying and still remaining alive.

ALL LOVE LIFE; hence, love. Create contexts, spaces, where more love can grow. That's what I am doing here: creating a space where your love energies can flow, where they have no hindrance, no obstructions.

All the societies of the world have been too much war-oriented, hence they have not allowed love -- because if you allow love to flow, war disappears. If you allow love and help love and create contexts for love to grow and happen, it will be impossible for people to fight each other and kill each other.

So from the very beginning we have to give them military training. From the very

beginning children have to be taught hatred. The Hindu is told to hate the Mohammedan, the Mohammedan is told to hate the Hindu. The Christian hates the Jew, the Jew hates the Christian, and so on, so forth. Each nation hates another nation, and in each nation also there are different, small communities which hate each other: Maharashtrians hating Gujaratis, Gujaratis hating Maharashtrians.

India is one country, but the North hates the South, the South hates the North. The Hindi-speaking people hate the non-Hindi-speaking people, and the non-Hindi-speaking people are always against the Hindi-speaking people.

It seems that we have been brought up in such a way that hate has become simple, habitual; we are habituated to it, and love has become almost impossible. With so much hatred, with so many enemies, you are hating almost everybody. How can you love your wife? How can you love your children? How can you love your parents? And then impossible demands are made on you: you are told to love your wife, to love your husband, and you are told to hate everybody else in the world. These are contradictions. Either you can love all or you can hate all; you cannot divide.

The man who hates everybody else cannot love his wife -- it is impossible. He becomes accustomed to hate. Hate flows in his blood, it circulates in his being. If for twenty-three hours in the day you are hating, fighting, struggling, competing, then do you think for one hour back home with your wife you will be loving? Impossible! Those twenty-three hours will continue underneath.

So the policeman becomes a policeman twenty-four hours. Even when he is at home with his wife he behaves as if he is a policeman. The magistrate becomes a magistrate, the clerk becomes a clerk twenty-four hours -- not only in the office, he carries his files in his head. Even while making love to his wife he is calculating, he is doing a thousand and one other things in his mind. He may be in the office or he may be somewhere else....

Just watch when you are making love to your wife, where you are. Are you there? In fact, somebody else is making love to your wife; you are not there -- it is just a mechanical act. And do you think your wife is there? She is also not there. She may be in the kitchen or thinking how to purchase a new fridge -- may already be gone to the supermarket. She may be there; she may not be with you at all.

That's why your love is not satisfying; on the contrary, it leaves you very frustrated. And can you love your children? Impossible! How can you love your parents? -- these are the people who have taught you all kinds of hatreds.

We need a totally different world, a different upbringing, where hate is not taught. This is a very strange world that we have created! Up to now what we have done to humanity is really unbelievable: on the one hand we teach them hate, and on the other hand we go on talking about peace. On the one hand we poison them, and on the other hand we tell them, "You are all brothers." We talk about brotherhood, and we prepare for war; we talk about world peace, and we prepare for war. This is sheer neurosis; this is not sanity! Man hitherto has remained insane, and the reason is a wrong upbringing.

We have not listened to the buddhas yet. Now it is time! We HAVE to listen to buddhas now. If we don't listen, just a few years more and the whole humanity is doomed. We cannot afford anymore not to listen.

ALL LOVE LIFE. Help people to love more. Love yourself. Rejoice in love.

SEE YOURSELF IN OTHERS.
THEN WHOM CAN YOU HURT?
WHAT HARM CAN YOU DO?

See the point: this is not a moral teaching -- this is a spiritual regeneration, a revolution. SEE YOURSELF IN OTHERS. Not philosophically only -- existentially. Put the ego aside and you will be able to see that you are in all, that life is one. THEN WHOM CAN YOU HURT? WHAT HARM CAN YOU DO?

HE WHO SEEKS HAPPINESS
BY HURTING THOSE WHO SEEK HAPPINESS
WILL NEVER FIND HAPPINESS.

If you are trying to seek happiness by hurting those who also are seeking happiness, you cannot find happiness, because you have not even understood the most fundamental thing about life. In such ignorance how can you be happy?

Just see all around, watch with loving eyes, look with egoless mind, and you will see that life is absolutely against destructiveness. Life is creative energy. Even if sometimes people commit suicide, they commit it not in the service of death but in the service of life.

The people who commit suicide are the people who have been in tremendous love with life and feel frustrated, disillusioned. In those moments of disillusionment they go insane. Those people who commit suicide are not against life, remember. Ordinarily that's what is thought about these people, that they are against life. No, they are too much for life; they are so much for life that life cannot fulfill their demands. In utter frustration they commit suicide.

Mulla Nasruddin was so discouraged with life that he decided to commit suicide. One evening he walked out to the country, a loaf of bread tucked under his arm. When he came to a train junction he lay down on the railroad tracks. A peasant passing by was amazed by the strange sight.

"What are you doing," he asked, "lying on these tracks?"

Said the Mulla, "I am going to commit suicide."

"What do you need the bread for?" asked the peasant.

"In this country," said the Mulla, "by the time the train gets here, a man could starve to death."

Nobody wants to die. That means life wants to persist for ever and ever. That means life is in love with eternity. In fact life IS eternal. Death only changes the form, it does not destroy -- but it creates fear because it is the most unknown phenomenon.

Fear disappears only when, in deep meditation, you become acquainted with death; when in deep meditation you know that "I am not the body, not the mind. Then how can there be death?" The body will go into the earth -- dust unto dust -- but your consciousness will persist forever. Then fear disappears. And when fear disappears in you, a great desire arises to help others also so that they can dissipate their fear -- because people living in fear are living in anguish. Their life is a nightmare surrounded by fear.

Life should be surrounded by love, not by fear. It is fear that creates anger. It is fear that ultimately creates violence. Have you watched? Fear is only a feminine form of anger and anger is a masculine form of fear. Fear is a passive form of anger and anger is an active form of fear. So you can change fear into anger very easily, and anger into fear -- very easily.

Sometimes people come to me and they say, "We are feeling very afraid."

I tell them, "You go and beat the pillow and be angry with the pillow."

They say, "What will that do?"

I say, "You just try!" And it becomes a revelation even to them. If they can beat the pillow in real, hot anger, immediately fear disappears, because the same energy turns and becomes active. It was inactive, then it was fear.

Fear is the root cause of hate, anger, violence.

Help people not to be afraid. But how can you help people not to be afraid unless you know what fearlessness is?

HE WHO SEEKS HAPPINESS BY HURTING THOSE WHO SEEK HAPPINESS WILL NEVER FIND HAPPINESS. You can find happiness only if you help others also towards happiness. You cannot find happiness alone; that's what you have been trying. You have been trying to be happy alone and let the others go to hell. You are not so alone; we are joined together with each other. If everybody else is going to hell, you cannot go to heaven, remember.

There is a beautiful parable about Gautam Buddha:

He arrives at the gate of heaven. The doors are flung open for him, great music is there to receive him, and angels with garlands, but Buddha refuses to enter. He says, "I will wait here. Till the last being has entered into heaven I cannot enter."

The angels persuade him that, "This will take eternity... for everybody -- all men, all women, and all elephants, and ants and.... If you are thinking for all beings to enter first, then it will take eternity!"

Buddha says, "It is nothing to be worried about -- I will wait. I can wait, I know how to wait. And I am eternally blissful already -- what more can heaven give to me? There is nothing more than that. So I will wait here, but I cannot enter into heaven unless everybody else has entered."

And the story goes that Buddha is still waiting at the gate; the angels are still trying to persuade him. Again and again they try new arguments, but they have not yet been able to take him in and close the door. And the doors are open and Buddha is waiting....

There can be a thousand and one interpretations of this beautiful parable. Today I would like to remind you of one thing: even if Buddha wants to get in alone, he cannot. He understands that, that's why he is saying: Till the last being has entered, I am not going to enter -- because he understands that it is impossible.

We are all one, we are not separate. It is not possible just for my hand to enter into heaven; even if it enters it will be a dead hand, it will not be really my hand. It is not possible for one of my eyes to enter into heaven and the whole body to remain outside. Either I can enter as a whole being or not at all. That's what Buddha is saying.

Buddha is saying, "I am only a part -- the total is outside. I cannot enter in. I will enter only with the whole."

If you understand this, your approach, your relationship with life, will have a totally different flavor. You will see all are friends, you will befriend life. In that very befriending you will start becoming happy. In that love for all, a great bliss will arise in you.

FOR YOUR BROTHER IS LIKE YOU.
HE WANTS TO BE HAPPY.
NEVER HARM HIM
AND WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS LIFE
YOU TOO WILL FIND HAPPINESS.

This sutra has been misinterpreted for at least twenty-five centuries.

AND WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS LIFE YOU TOO WILL FIND HAPPINESS. This has been interpreted again and again as if it says something about life after death: "When you leave this life, when you leave this body, then you will find happiness" -- as if happiness is something which happens only after death; it cannot happen in life. This has been the way of the Buddhist interpreters.

I am not a Buddhist. The Buddhists have been interpreting it in a life-negative way. My interpretation is totally different. And I say to you that that is exactly what Buddha meant it to be, because I am not just interpreting it in a philosophical way -- this is my experience too. And as far as experience is concerned it can't be different; it is not different from Buddha's experience.

When Buddha says: AND WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS LIFE... he does not mean death. He simply means this way of living this life, this way of stupid living; this way of desires, ambitions, anger, possessions, jealousies -- this foolish way of life. And everybody who is not getting deeper into meditation is living in a foolish way.

Wiznicki and Polacek went to a used car lot to buy a car. They didn't have enough money to buy one but the salesman sold them a camel.

"Does this thing work?" asked Wiznicki.

"Of course," said the salesman. "This camel stops at red lights and goes on green."

Wiznicki and Polacek left on the back of the camel but in twenty minutes they were back without the animal.

"What happened?" asked the salesman.

"Camel do what you say alright," exclaimed Polacek. "We stop at red light, boys in car pull up beside us. One boy yell out, 'Look at those two jerks on the camel!' We got off to see who the two jerks were and camel ran away!"

If you look at your life, if you watch closely, you will see what a fool you are, what a jerk you are!

To live without meditation is to be foolish, because whatsoever you do then is going to be wrong. You cannot do right without meditation because right only grows in the soil of meditation. In the soil of the mind ambitions, desires arise. And when there is ambition there is competition, and when there is competition you are not a friend to others. You are an enemy and others are your enemies. The competitive mind lives in an inimical way, lives in hatred, lives in jealousy; its whole function is out of jealousy. And because of this kind of life man suffers, he remains in misery.

When Buddha says: AND WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS LIFE YOU TOO WILL FIND HAPPINESS... he means if you leave this life of ambition, jealousy, hatred, competition, if you leave this life of the ego, you will find happiness -- immediately, instantly, herenow. It is not a question of after death. It is not a question that after death you will be happy. You can be happy this very moment -- you just have to change your pattern of life.

And the pattern of your life can be changed in two ways: either from the outside, from without -- which is character, which is morality -- or from the inside, from the interiority, from within -- which is religion.

Don't be a moralist. That is not a way of real revolution, it is all hocus-pocus. The moralist is an egoist in a new way. He lives in misery. Only one who has started living from

the center, who enters into one's own subjectivity in deep silence, will have happiness showering on him.

NEVER SPEAK HARSH WORDS
FOR THEY WILL REBOUND UPON YOU.
ANGRY WORDS HURT
AND THE HURT REBOUNDS.

A fundamental of life: whatsoever you do rebounds on you. If you use harsh words, they will rebound. If you hurt people, that will come back to you.

Once I was in Matheran with a few friends. We went to visit a place called Echo Point. One man was with us who started barking like a dog, and all the valleys and the mountains surrounding started barking as if thousands of dogs were there.

I told the man, "Why don't you sing a song? -- because these mountains will only echo it. If you bark like a dog they will become dogs. Why don't you sing a song?"

And the man started singing a song... and we were showered by his beautiful song. From all the valleys and the mountains the song started coming back to us.

I told the people who were present that life is also an Echo Point. It gives you whatsoever you give to it. You have to reap the crop, whatsoever you have sown before. Sowing the seeds of poison, don't hope that you will be reaping a crop of nectar; you will not be able to attain to nectar by the seeds of poison. Poison will bring more poison. Sow the seeds of nectar and reap the crop of nectar.

NEVER SPEAK HARSH WORDS FOR THEY WILL REBOUND UPON YOU. ANGRY WORDS HURT
AND THE HURT REBOUNDS.

LIKE A BROKEN GONG
BE STILL, BE SILENT.
KNOW THE STILLNESS OF FREEDOM
WHERE THERE IS NO MORE STRIVING.

This is the most pregnant sutra of all the sutras of today. This is the secret of meditation, this is what meditation is all about.

LIKE A BROKEN GONG BE STILL, BE SILENT. KNOW THE STILLNESS OF FREEDOM.... What is "the stillness of freedom"? -- freedom from desire. It is desire that creates noise in you. And there is not only one desire in you, there are millions of desires clamoring for attention, asking you, pulling you, pushing you, to follow them. You are falling apart because you are continuously being pulled and pushed in different directions.

KNOW THE STILLNESS OF FREEDOM.... That means freedom from desires. Then there is stillness.

... WHERE THERE IS NO MORE STRIVING. When there is no desire there is no more striving. Where there is no more goal there is no more striving. Where you are no more ambitious for anything -- worldly or otherworldly, material or spiritual -- when you are not ambitious at all, how can there be a noise in your being? All is bound to become silent. This is true silence.

There is another kind of silence too. You can sit in a yoga posture, you can take deep breaths, and you can chant a mantra, and you can force your mind again and again for months, years. If you go on doing such a thing, after years of practice you may attain to a certain stillness which will be forced, artificial. And if you will look deep within yourself you

will find all the noise has become only repressed; it is still there lurking underneath you. It is no longer on the surface, it has gone to the bottom. And that is even more dangerous, because if something is in the conscious, getting rid of it is easy; if something becomes unconscious, then getting rid of it becomes impossible.

Hence psychoanalysis tries to bring everything to the conscious so that you can get rid of it. It brings your dreams, your unconscious messages, to the conscious -- because the only way to get rid of anything is to become fully conscious of it. Then it is up to you to keep it or to throw it, but to remain unconscious is to be a victim. Your strings are pulled from behind the curtain and you don't know who is pulling them. You are just a doll pulled this way and that. You are simply following unconscious desires.

Psychoanalysis brings your repressed desires to the conscious, but it cannot do it totally -- because even the presence of the psychoanalyst is enough to keep you repressed. Only meditation can help you totally, because you are not bringing it to somebody else's notice, you are bringing it in front of your own being. You can be absolutely free. You need not be afraid what the other will think.

The presence of the other is always repressive even though the psychoanalyst says, "Don't be worried, don't be afraid. I am not going to disclose it to anybody -- this will remain a secret with me, this will die with me." Whatsoever he says, his presence is enough to repress, because it is impossible for him not to be judgmental. If you are saying something which goes against his mind you can see in his eyes that the judgment has arisen.

It is because of this that Sigmund Freud used to sit behind a curtain; he never used to face the patient. He was fully aware of the phenomenon that the face, the eyes, the gestures, will show that you are judgmental, that you are judging. And if you are judging, the fear arises and repression happens. But even if you are sitting behind a curtain, the person knows you are there, the other is there -- and the other is repressive.

Hence psychoanalysis helps only partially. And you know perfectly well that your psychoanalyst is as ill as you are, or maybe even more ill than you are. Psychoanalysts themselves go to other psychoanalysts to be psychoanalyzed, because they are suffering from the same problems.

Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung were traveling in a train together, when Jung was still a disciple and had not betrayed the master. Talking about psychoanalysis, Jung suddenly had an idea. He said, "You have psychoanalyzed us all, but you yourself are still unpsychoanalyzed. Would you like some of us to psychoanalyze you? I am ready! If you want, I can function as your psychoanalyst."

Sigmund Freud started trembling, perspiration came to his forehead although it was a cold winter morning. He said, "No, never!"

Jung asked, "Why?"

Sigmund Freud said, "That will destroy my whole prestige."

Jung said, "Then it has destroyed your prestige already. If YOU are afraid, then how can you say in front of us that others should not be afraid -- if even YOU are afraid?"

Sigmund Freud was afraid because he was carrying great repressions. About a few things he was so repressed that it is rare to find a person so repressed. He has done great work in bringing sex into the human consciousness from the repressed world. He has done the greatest service to humanity by destroying the taboo against sex, but he himself had very funny ideas about sex. He was not clear himself about sex, sexuality. He was carrying all

kinds of dead, rotten ideas about sex himself. He was very much afraid of death too. Even the mention of death once or twice had made him go into a faint; just the mention of death and he had fainted, become unconscious.

Now, this is the founder of psychoanalysis -- fainting at the mention of the word 'death' and carrying very stupid, funny ideas about sex. What to say about other psychoanalysts -- they are in the same boat as their patients, and their patients know perfectly well.

No, it is not possible for you to expose yourself totally in front of anybody else. Hence in the East we never developed anything like psychoanalysis -- we developed meditation. That is exposing yourself in front of yourself. That is the only possibility to be utterly true, because there is no fear.

Freedom from desire, freedom from the unconscious, freedom from all kinds of goals, brings a different kind of stillness, a natural stillness that arises within your being, starts overflowing. Even others can feel it; it becomes almost tangible.

LIKE HERDSMEN DRIVING THEIR COWS INTO THE FIELDS
OLD AGE AND DEATH WILL DRIVE YOU BEFORE THEM.

Death is going to come sooner or later. Before death comes, learn how to die in meditation.

BUT THE FOOL IN HIS MISCHIEF FORGETS
AND HE LIGHTS THE FIRE
WHEREIN ONE DAY HE MUST BURN.

The fool goes on creating ditches for himself. You create your own misery, because you act out of unconsciousness, you act out of a noisy, cloudy mind. You don't act out of clarity; your action is not out of spontaneity; your action is not out of meditative silence. It creates fire. You may be thinking you are creating it for others, but everything rebounds on you.

There is no hellfire anywhere else unless you create it. Everybody has to carry his heaven or hell within himself -- it is your own creation.

HE WHO HARMS THE HARMLESS
OR HURTS THE INNOCENT
TEN TIMES SHALL HE FALL --

INTO TORMENT OR INFIRMITY,
INJURY OR DISEASE OR MADNESS,
PERSECUTION OR FEARFUL ACCUSATION,
LOSS OF FAMILY, LOSS OF FORTUNE.

FIRE FROM HEAVEN SHALL STRIKE HIS HOUSE
AND WHEN HIS BODY HAS BEEN STRUCK DOWN
HE SHALL RISE IN HELL.

FIRE FROM HEAVEN SHALL STRIKE HIS HOUSE.... It is not that somebody is sitting there in heaven who punishes you: you spit in the sky and it falls on you, you throw fire in the sky and it falls on you. You go against the current -- that is your whole misery.

Go with nature. Go absolutely in tune with nature, not upcurrent but with the current.

Don't push the river, float with it. And life will be a bliss, and life will be an ecstasy, and life will be a benediction. Otherwise fire will strike your home. AND WHEN HIS BODY HAS BEEN STRUCK DOWN HE SHALL RISE IN HELL. And this happens every day.

When you go to sleep, many of you suffer from nightmares. Many write to me, "What to do about nightmares?" You cannot do anything directly about nightmares; you will have to change your pattern of life. Your nightmares are produced by what you are doing and thinking in the day. Your night is simply a reflection. If your day is beautiful, blissful, loving, you can't have nightmares. And if your day is silent, still, utterly thoughtless, contentless -- absolutely pure, whole, knowing no disturbance -- all dreams will disappear. In the night you will have a dreamless sleep.

The same happens when death comes. When the body falls, immediately either you experience heaven -- if you have lived rightly, mindfully, meditatively -- or you experience hell. These are not geographical places somewhere; these are when you leave the body. The mind left alone goes berserk. The mind left alone, unoccupied, creates something for which you have been sowing the seeds your whole life.

Now psychologists are agreeing with this, slowly slowly, that when a person dies, immediately -- in fact while he is dying -- he is already either entering into a nightmare -- that is hell -- or into a very very beautiful space -- that is paradise.

The third thing is neither hell nor heaven, neither happiness nor unhappiness, but just pure awareness. That is nirvana, that is moksha. There is no word to translate it, because in all the non-Indian religions -- Christianity, Judaism, Islam -- only two words have been talked about: heaven and hell. The third is missing, the highest is missing.

That's why I say these three religions are a little primitive compared to Buddhism. Buddhism reaches to the highest peak -- it transcends heaven and hell too.

One can die in absolute silence -- fully alert, experiencing neither pleasure nor pain. Then he will not be born again. Then he has jumped out of the ugly wheel of life and death. He has become one with the cosmos. To become one with the cosmos is nirvana. He has ceased as an individual being and he has become the whole.

Become still -- not a forced stillness, not a practiced and cultivated stillness -- become still naturally. Understanding the futility of desire, seeing the absolute absurdity of ambition, become still -- through understanding, not through practice.

LIKE A BROKEN GONG BE STILL, BE SILENT. KNOW THE STILLNESS OF FREEDOM WHERE THERE IS NO MORE STRIVING and you have gone into the beyond and you have become the beyond....

This is the goal of sannyas, this is the goal of all religion. This is the essential core of all spirituality. Science only knows the part; art a little more than science. Religion knows the whole.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #8

Chapter title: Meditate a little bit

29 August 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THE SENSE OF SCIENCE LIES IN ITS UTILITY FOR HUMAN NEEDS; IN HELPING TO PROVIDE ENOUGH FOOD, FINDING TREATMENTS AGAINST SICKNESS, CREATING MACHINES TO DELIVER MAN FROM HARD AND STUPID WORK, ETCETERA.
UNTIL NOW I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH SCIENCE, BUT RATHER WITH THE POPULAR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCIENCE: THAT IT CAN DISCOVER THE INTERIOR LAWS OF LIFE.
NOW I HEAR IN YOUR WORDS THAT SCIENCE ITSELF IS A ROOT OF THE MISERIES IN THE WORLD, BECAUSE IT DESTROYS THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE AND HENCE LEADS TO AN ANTIRELIGIOUS ATTITUDE. ARE YOU AGAINST SCIENCE?

Prem Peter, I am not against science, but I am certainly for a different kind of science, with a totally different quality to it. Science as it exists now is very lopsided; it takes account only of the material, it leaves the spiritual out of it -- and that is very dangerous.

If man is only matter, all meaning disappears from life. What meaning can life have if man is only matter? What poetry is possible, what significance, what glory? The idea that man is matter reduces man to a very undignified state. The so-called science takes all the glory of man away from him. That's why there is such a feeling of meaninglessness all over the world.

People are feeling utterly empty. Yes, they have better machines, better technology, better houses, better food, than ever. But all this affluence, all this material progress, is of no value unless you have insight -- something that transcends matter, body, mind -- unless you have a taste of the beyond. And the beyond is denied by science.

Science divides life into two categories: the known and the unknown. Religion divides life into three categories: the known, the unknown and the unknowable. Meaning comes from the unknowable. The known is that which was unknown yesterday, the unknown is that which will become known tomorrow. There is no qualitative difference between the known and the unknown, only a question of time.

The unknowable is qualitatively different from the known/ unknown world. Unknowable means the mystery remains; howsoever deep you go into it, you cannot demystify it. In fact, on the contrary, the deeper you go, the more the mystery deepens. A moment comes in the religious explorer's life when he disappears into the mystery like a dewdrop evaporating in the morning sun. Then only mystery remains. That is the highest peak of fulfillment, of contentment; one has arrived home. You can call it God, nirvana, or whatsoever you like.

I am not against science -- my approach is basically scientific. But science has limitations, and I don't stop where science stops; I go on, I go beyond. Use science, but don't be used by it. It is good to have great technology; certainly it helps man to get rid of stupid work, certainly it helps man to get rid of many kinds of slavery. Technology can help man and animals both. Animals are also tortured; they are suffering very much because we are using them. Machines can replace them, machines can do all the work. Man and animals can both be free.

And I would like a humanity which is totally free from work, because in that state you will start growing -- in aesthetic sense, sensitivity, relaxation, meditation. You will become more artistic and you will become more spiritual because you will have time and energy available.

I am not against science, I am not antiscience at all. I would like the world to have more and more of science, so that man can become available for something higher, for something which a poor man cannot afford.

Religion is the ultimate in luxury. The poor man has to think about bread and butter -- he cannot even manage that. He has to think about a shelter, clothes, children, medicine, and he cannot manage these small things. His whole life is burdened by trivia; he has no space, no time to devote to God. And even if he goes to the temple or to the church, he goes to ask only for material things. His prayer is not true prayer, it is not that of gratitude; it is a demand, a desire. He wants this, he wants that -- and we cannot condemn him, he has to be forgiven. The needs are there and he is constantly under a weight. How can he find a few hours just to sit silently, doing nothing? The mind goes on thinking. He has to think about the tomorrow.

Jesus says: Look at the lilies in the field; they toil not, they don't think of the morrow. And they are far more beautiful than even Solomon, the great king, in all his grandeur, ever was.

True, the lilies toil not and they don't think of the morrow. But can you say it to a poor man? If he does not think of the morrow, then tomorrow is death. He has to prepare for it; he has to think from where he is going to get his food, where he is going to be employed. He has to think. He has children and a wife, he has an old mother and an old father. He cannot be like the lilies of the field. How can he avoid toil, labor, work? -- that will be suicidal.

The lilies are certainly beautiful and I totally agree with Jesus, but Jesus' statement is not yet applicable to the greater part of humanity. Unless humanity becomes very rich, the statement will remain just theoretical; it will not have any practical use.

I would like the world to be richer than it is. I don't believe in poverty and I don't believe that poverty has anything to do with spirituality. Down the ages it has been told that poverty is something spiritual; it was just a consolation.

Just the other day, a French couple wrote a letter to me. They must be new arrivals here, they don't understand me. They must have come with certain prejudices. They were worried, very much worried. They wrote in the letter that, "We don't understand a few things. Why does this ashram look luxurious? This is against spirituality. Why do you drive in a beautiful car? This is against spirituality."

Now, for these three or four days I have been driving in an Impala. It is not a very beautiful car; in America it is the car of the plumbers! But in a sense I am also a plumber -- the plumber of the mind. I fix nuts and bolts. It is a poor man's car. In America, the people who use Chevrolet Impalas, etcetera, their neighborhood is called the Chevrolet neighborhood -- that means poor people's neighborhood.

But this French couple must have the old idea that poverty has something spiritual about

it. Man has lived so long in poverty that he HAD to console himself, otherwise it would have been intolerable. He had to convince himself that poverty is spiritual.

Poverty is not spiritual -- poverty is the source of all crimes.

And I would like to tell the couple that, "If you want to cling to your beliefs and prejudices, this is not the place for you. Please get lost! -- the sooner the better, because you may be corrupted here. Listening to me is dangerous for you."

To me, spirituality has a totally different dimension. It is the ultimate luxury -- when you have all and suddenly you see that, although you have all, deep inside there is a vacuum which has to be filled, an emptiness which has to be transformed into a plenitude. One becomes aware of the inner emptiness only when one has everything on the outside. Science can do that miracle. I love science, because it can create the possibility for religion to happen.

Up to now, religion has not happened on the earth. We have talked about religion but it has not happened; it has not touched the hearts of the millions. Only once in a while a person has been able to become enlightened. In a big garden where millions of bushes and trees are, if only once in a while in thousands of years a flower comes to a tree, you will not call it a garden. You will not be thankful to the gardener. You will not say, "The gardener is great, because look: after one thousand years, out of millions of trees, one tree has again blossomed with one flower." If this happens that simply shows it must have happened in spite of the gardener! Somehow he has forgotten about the tree, somehow he has neglected the tree, somehow the tree has escaped his grip.

Man has lived irreligiously: talking about God, certainly -- going to the church, to the temple, to the mosque -- yet his life showing no flavor of religion.

My vision of religion is totally different. It has nothing to do with poverty. I would like the whole earth to become as rich as paradise -- richer than paradise -- so that people can stop thinking about paradise. Paradise was created by poor people just to console themselves that, "Here we are suffering, but it is not for long. Only a few days more, or a few years, and death will come and we will be transported into paradise." And what a consolation! -- that those who are rich here will be thrown into hell.

Jesus says a camel can pass through the eye of the needle, but the rich man cannot pass through the gate of heaven. What consolation! The poor people must have felt very satisfied, contented, that, "It is only a question of a few days more: then you will be in hellfire and I will sit in the lap of God, with all the luxuries, with all the riches, with all the joys that I am deprived of here and you are enjoying." The idea of paradise seems to be just a revenge.

I would like this earth to be a paradise -- and it cannot happen without science. So how can I be antiscience? Peter, I am not antiscience. But science is not all. Science can create only the circumference; the center has to be that of religion. Science is exterior, religion is interior. And I would like men to be rich on both sides: the exterior should be rich and the interior should be rich. Science cannot make you rich in your inner world; that can be done only by religion.

If science goes on saying there is no inner world, then I am certainly against such statements -- but that is not being against science, just against these particular statements. These statements are stupid, because the people who are making these statements have not known anything of the inner.

Karl Marx says religion is the opium of the people -- and he has never experienced any meditation. His whole life was wasted in the British Museum, thinking, reading, collecting notes, preparing for his great work, DAS KAPITAL. And he was so much into trying to gain more and more knowledge that it happened many times -- he would faint in the British

Museum! He would have to be carried unconscious to his home. And it was almost an everyday thing that he would have to be forced to leave the museum -- because the museum has to close sometime, it cannot remain open for twenty-four hours.

He had never heard about meditation; he knew only thinking and thinking. But still in a way he is right, that the old religiousness has served as a kind of opium. It has helped poor people to remain poor; it has helped them to remain contented as they are, hoping for the best in the next life. In that way he is right. But he is not right if we take into consideration a Buddha, a Zarathustra, a Lao Tzu -- then he is not right. And these are the really religious people, not the masses; the masses know nothing of religion.

I would like you to be enriched by Newton, Edison, Eddington, Rutherford, Einstein; and I would like you also to be enriched by Buddha, Krishna, Christ, Mohammed, so that you can become rich in both the dimensions -- the outer and the inner. Science is good as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough -- and it cannot go. I am not saying that it can go and it does not go. No, it CANNOT go into the interiority of your being. The very methodology of science prevents it from going in. It can go only outwards, it can study only objectively; it cannot go into the subjectivity itself. That is the function of religion.

The society needs science, the society needs religion. And if you ask me what should be the first priority -- science should be the first priority. First the outer, the circumference, then the inner -- because the inner is more subtle, more delicate.

Science can create the space for real religion to exist on the earth.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE THE FRAUDS WORSHIPPED BY PEOPLE, AND PEOPLE LIKE JESUS,
BUDDHA AND SOCRATES CONDEMNED, STONED AND KILLED?

Saroj, the buddhas have always been condemned by the ordinary masses, but the ordinary masses are not responsible for it. They are unconscious. We cannot make them responsible for it. They can't help it -- they are fast asleep. And the buddhas disturb their sleep; the buddhas make every possible effort to wake them up. Nobody wants to be disturbed in one's sleep, and one may be having beautiful dreams, sweet, nice dreams....

People want to remain unconscious. Consciousness is unknown to them and they are naturally afraid of the unknown. With the known they are secure, safe, and everybody else is just like them.

When buddhas happen, they create a great disturbance. They cannot help it, either. When they become awakened they come to know such bliss, such silence, such heights of ecstasy, such orgasmic joy, that it starts overflowing, that great compassion arises in them. They can see people moving, walking in sleep; they start shaking them, shocking them.

So it is an absolutely natural phenomenon. People become angry because you are disturbing their dreams -- their anger can be understood. Buddhas become compassionate -- they cannot help it. When you are blissful, compassion comes as a shadow, it follows you. Out of their compassion, they start waking people up. Naturally there arises a conflict.

And the people simply want not to be disturbed. They don't want awakening, they want opium. It feels very good; at least it keeps them unaware of the real problems of life.

Buddhas know it perfectly well, that trying to wake people up is getting into danger. But it is worth it.... And because they now know they are indestructible -- they have come to

know the eternal in themselves, what can the people do? They can crucify -- let them crucify. The body is going to die anyway. They can torture, but the torture cannot reach to the buddhas. The suffering remains on the outside, it cannot come in. The buddhas remain alert, watchful, witnessing. Everything is outside; nothing can penetrate into their innermost core.

So they don't feel that they should avoid waking people up, disturbing people. The moment they become awakened they rush to the masses. When they were not awakened they went to the forests, to the mountains, to some place where they could be alone. All the buddhas -- Jesus, Mohammed, Mahavira, Gautama -- they all went into solitude. They avoided the masses when they were themselves asleep. But the moment they became awakened, the moment they saw the beauty and the benediction of life, the moment they saw the eternal beauty of existence, they rushed back to the marketplace -- all of them -- to give the message to the people, because the people are starving for spiritual food, although they are not aware that they are not nourished. Their souls are asleep; they are alive but not really alive.

And when buddhas speak to these people they bring a totally new kind of language. People cannot understand it. They can only misunderstand it -- they are bound to misunderstand it, it is so new!

Jacobs went into Levine's clothing store to ask the price of a suit on display in the window.

"You picked the best suit in the place," said Levine, "and to show you that I like to do business with a man who has got such good taste, I am gonna make you a special proposition. I will not ask you one hundred dollars for the suit. I will not ask you ninety. I will not ask you seventy. Sixty dollars is the price for you, my friend."

Jacobs replied, "I won't give you sixty, I won't give you fifty. My offer is forty."
"Sold," said Levine. "That's the way I like to do business -- no chiseling."

People have a certain language -- their language. Buddhas speak a totally different language; it comes from a different plane. People live in fear; buddhas live in freedom. People live in misery; buddhas live in ecstasy. How can they communicate? Communication is impossible.

Lanagan, aged eighty-eight, was on his deathbed and Father Feeney was trying to administer the final blessing.

"Open your eyes," said the father, "we have got to save your immortal soul."

Lanagan opened one eye, closed it, and tried to doze off. He was having a nice sleep. "Come on, now!" cried the priest. "If you don't want to go to confession, at least answer me this: do you renounce the Devil and all his works?"

"Well, I don't know, Father," said Lanagan opening his eyes. "At a time like this it ain't smart to antagonize anybody!"

The people want to be left alone -- don't disturb them. But buddhas are bound to disturb them. If somebody is responsible then buddhas are responsible, because they are conscious people. And I say it on my own authority: if people are against me, the responsibility is mine, not theirs -- they are doing the natural thing. But what can I do? I am also doing the natural thing -- but we exist on different planes.

And this struggle is bound to continue forever.

Three explorers -- a priest, a businessman, and a Sufi -- were passing through a dangerous jungle. As the days went by, the number of hostile wild beasts who circled around them became larger and larger. Eventually they had to take refuge in a tree.

After a council of war they decided that one of them should go for help, since if they stayed as they were, fear, hunger and fatigue would eventually force them to fall into the jaws of the ravenous beasts.

But they could not decide who should go. "Not me," said the priest, "for I am a man of God, and I should stay to comfort whoever is left behind."

"Not me," said the businessman, "because I am paying all the expenses of the trip."

The Sufi said nothing, but suddenly pushed the priest off his branch. He fell to the ground, and immediately a fierce pack of hyenas picked him up, fought off all the other animals, and placed him reverently on the back of the largest of their number. Then, guarding him carefully, they escorted him towards safety.

"A miracle!" cried the businessman. "After your cruelty, divine guidance has intervened to save that good man. I am, from this moment on, converted to a good and holy life."

"Steady on," said the Sufi, "for there is, after all, another explanation."

"What other explanation can there possibly be?" shouted the businessman.

"Simply this: that it takes one to know one," said the Sufi, "and the smallest always recognize their leader and honor him...."

Saroj, you ask me, "Why are the frauds worshipped and buddhas tortured?"

The frauds are understood easily; they speak the same language as the people. The frauds are understood because the frauds are serving people in their sleep, they are offering them opium. The frauds are understood, respected, worshipped, because the frauds are not a disturbance -- not at all.

P.D. Ouspensky has dedicated his great book -- one of the greatest ever written, IN SEARCH OF THE MIRACULOUS -- to his master, George Gurdjieff, with these words: "To my master, George Gurdjieff, who disturbed my sleep forever."

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM AND I NEVER COULD KNOW WHO YOU ARE. ALL I KNOW IS THAT THIS SOMEONE-OR-OTHER LOVES YOU, WHOEVER YOU ARE.
OH, BELOVED MASTER -- YOU ARE SUCH A SWEET APPLE TO EAT IN THE DARK.

Prem Anuradha, one never comes to know who one is. If one comes to know who one is, then he must be wrong -- because this infinite that resides in you is UNKNOWABLE, not unknown. You can go searching into it....

To send you into that adventure, the buddhas have been telling you again and again: Know thyself. Don't misunderstand them -- they have been misunderstood. Because Socrates says: Know thyself, people think they can know; otherwise, why should Socrates say: Know thyself? Socrates is not saying that you CAN know yourself; he is saying try to know thyself. In knowing yourself you will come across the unknowable. The very endeavor to know yourself will bring you to the infinite ocean of life.

You will never know who you are, you will not be able to answer. You will not be able to

say that, "I am A or B or C." Whatever answer you bring is going to be wrong.

When you become silent, utterly silent -- no answer, all answers that you had before have been dissolved and no new answer has come up; not only the answer has not come up, even the question is no longer remembered.... When the question and answer both are not there, in that deep silence, in that stillness, there is a kind of knowing that never becomes knowledge -- a kind of awareness, a kind of light, that enlightens you, yet you cannot inform anybody about it. You cannot even make a theory out of it for yourself. You will be utterly dumb.

Anuradha, this is a beautiful experience. This is how it should be. This is how it feels as you come closer and closer to satori, to samadhi.

You say, "I don't know who I am."

This is the beginning of real knowing. This state of a recognized ignorance is the first step into the temple of God.

You say, "I don't know who I am and I never could know who you are."

That too is true. If you cannot know who you are, how can you know who I am? -- because we are the same, we are one. You are unknowable, I am unknowable; we belong to the same mystery, we are part of the same orgasmic whole.

It is an ecstasy, a bliss. It is a benediction. You can dance in it, you can sing in it, you can overflow with love through it, but it never becomes knowledge. Yes, sometimes it can become a song, a Song of Solomon....

Meditate over the Song of Solomon. It is one of the most beautiful songs ever sung -- and it has not been understood by the Jews and the Christians. In fact, they feel a little embarrassed because it looks so sexual. It certainly looks sexual, because sex is the only possible language that comes closest to the spiritual. It is the sex energy that becomes spiritual energy. So it is perfectly right that the Song of Songs, the Song of Solomon, has such sensuality around it. It is so sensuous, it is incomparably sensuous! Nothing else has ever been written, sung, with such profound sensuality.

But the so-called religious person thinks a religious person has to be absolutely antisense, antisex; he can't be sensate and he can't be sensuous. That is utterly wrong. The religious person is more sensuous than anybody else, because he is more alive. And when you want to express the ultimate, the only possible way is to express it through the deepest human experience -- of sexual orgasm. Ecstasy cannot be expressed in any other way.

We are part of one organic, orgasmic whole. This whole existence is in a deep, sensuous play. Yes, you can feel it, you can taste it, but you cannot know it. Forget all about knowing it! The whole effort is an exercise in utter futility.

It is good, Anuradha, that you understand that you cannot know yourself and you understand that you cannot know me either.

You say, "All I know is that this someone-or-other loves you, whoever you are."

It is a tremendously beautiful experience. Anuradha is simply stating something inexpressible. Difficult it is to express, but she has come very close; she has almost hit the target. Yes, this is how it is felt between a master and a disciple, because it is the greatest love affair there is. Exactly like this it is felt: "All I know is that this someone-or-other loves you, whoever you are."

Only a great love is felt -- love pulsating between the master and the disciple. Slowly slowly, there is neither master nor disciple; only love remains.

And you say, "Oh, Beloved Master -- you are such a sweet apple to eat in the dark."

Yes, love is a taste -- the taste of tao. But Anuradha, why in the dark?

I am reminded:

A rabbi was asked, "Why does a Jewish wife close her eyes when making love?"
The rabbi said, "Heaven forbid she should see her husband having a good time!"

Anuradha, why in the dark? Let me also have a good time! Let me also see it and experience it.

But I can understand why she is saying it. Yes, in the dark you taste more. Because our eyes cannot function, the energy that moves through the eyes becomes available to other senses. In the dark you hear better. If you want to hear music, it is good to listen in the dark; you will hear better. Because the eyes are no longer functioning, the energy becomes available to the ears.

In the dark you will taste better because the energy will move to the tongue, and the eyes are using eighty percent of your energy. When you are eating, if you are seeing, then eighty percent is involved in seeing and only twenty percent is available to the other four senses -- so to each sense nearabout five percent. That's why our other senses have become retarded. We don't taste, we don't hear, we don't touch. If you touch in darkness you will feel more, you will know the texture. And if you hear in darkness, the music will penetrate to the very heart.

Eyes have become very oppressive, very exploitative -- they have become dictatorial. They have absorbed all the energy, which is not their right; it has to be distributed back. Each sense should have at least twenty percent of the energy. Yes, sometimes, when you want to go into one sense very deeply, you can make the whole energy available for it. Close your ears, plug them; close your eyes, blindfold them; close your nose -- and then eat. And you will be surprised: such subtle nuances of taste you have never known before, because the whole hundred percent of your energy is moving through the tongue.

So I understand why Anuradha says, "Oh, Beloved Master -- you are such a sweet apple to eat in the dark."

But, Anuradha, an apple is a dangerous thing! You know what happened to Adam and Eve.... But I am making available to you the same apples, because to me the serpent who seduced Eve to eat the apple was the greatest benefactor of humanity. Without him there would have been no humanity at all. You would not have been here; no Buddha, no Jesus, no Mohammed, no Bahauddin, no Mansoor.... It is all because of the serpent. The serpent is the real founding father of humanity -- the whole credit goes to him. That apple proved of great significance.

I am not prohibiting you from anything -- no prohibition. I am making available to you all the joys of life. Eat them, be nourished by them. I am against the biblical idea of creating inhibitions, repressions, taboos. I am against the very idea of God telling Adam and Eve not to eat from a certain tree. It is against freedom and it is against growth and it is against maturity.

But that's how religions have functioned in the past. These stories are created by the so-called priests. Their whole idea of religion is that of repression, because it is only through repression that man can be reduced to a slave. It is only through repression that man can be exploited, oppressed. It is only through repression that man's intelligence can be destroyed.

Eat all the apples that life makes available to you. Nothing is prohibited -- because it is only through experiences of all kinds that one becomes enriched. And if you are not really rich in experiences -- of good and bad -- you will never become enlightened. Enlightenment is not possible for those who have lived only a poor, saintly life. It is not for those who have

lived only the poor life of a sinner. It is for those who have lived life in its totality, who have known all that is dark and who have known all that is light, who have moved into all the polarities.

A real maturity happens only when you learn how one walks on a tightrope: sometimes leaning to the left just to keep balance, and sometimes leaning to the right just to keep balance. When he feels that he may fall towards the left, he immediately leans towards the right. If he leans too much to the right, to balance it he starts leaning towards the left. Leaning right and left, he keeps himself in the middle.

Don't be a leftist, otherwise you will fall; and don't be a rightist, otherwise you will fall. Be both, and both in such a balance, in such a synthesis, that you can remain walking on the tightrope. Life is a tightrope stretched between two hilltops. Unless you walk with full awareness, sensitivity, intelligence, you will not reach to the other shore.

The buddha is talking of the other shore. The other shore is available only to those who grow in intelligence. Priests want you to remain stupid and buddhas want you to become more and more intelligent. Hence there is a conflict between the priests and the buddhas.

Jesus was crucified not by criminals but by the rabbis, by the priests. Socrates was not poisoned by bad people but by the respectable ones. Why? -- because Socrates was trying to make life available to his disciples in its totality. What was his crime? The crime for which the people of Athens -- the respectable people, the highest strata of the society -- dragged him into the court was that he was corrupting the youth. He was making life available to his disciples in its totality -- and he was condemned as a corrupter of youth.

I am also condemned as a corrupter of youth. It seems humanity has not grown at all; we are moving in circles. If Socrates comes back he will not find it difficult to understand man. He will find it very difficult to understand a car or a radio or a television; it may be really inconceivable for him what these things are, how they function. Ordinary things that you never think about -- electricity -- he will not be able to understand. But he will be absolutely able to understand man, because man has not grown at all. Man is the same -- is doing the same, is behaving in the same foolish way.

People are against me because I am making all the apples available to you. Eat them. Live life in its totality.

And, Anuradha, soon -- the day is not far off -- many of you are going to become enlightened in this life. I can see you moving closer and closer to the point from where the ego disappears.

Now Anuradha is getting into difficulties: her memory is disappearing, she can't remember much. And of course Arup is worried, because Anuradha helps her in writing letters and she cannot remember.... Even to write a single letter she takes at least one hour. But as far as I am concerned, I am immensely happy -- it is Arup's problem! I am immensely happy. The past is disappearing, the memory is becoming totally different. Now more important things are happening which have to be remembered; the ordinary, the mundane, cannot be remembered.

And the ego is disappearing. Anuradha has become almost empty. I say "almost" -- just a little bit is left. Once that little bit is gone, the beyond will start showering on her. The first flowers have started opening, the spring is close by.

Anuradha, feel blessed. The spring is very close by, and I am immensely pleased with you.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

"HE HAS TAMED HIS HORSES...." YES! BUT HOW TO DO IT? WHAT IS THE WAY TO TAME THEM? I EITHER CONTROL, REPRESS AND STOP MYSELF, OR I AM LED BY MY SENSES AND DRIVEN BY MY "ANIMAL." WITH BOTH I FEEL NOT AT EASE AND I CONSTANTLY MOVE FROM ONE SIDE, REPRESSION, TO THE OTHER -- DRIVEN.

HOW TO COME OUT OF THIS TRAP? IS WATCHING AND AWARENESS ALL THERE IS TO DO?

Prem Sohan, do you think watching and awareness is a small thing? You ask me, "Is watching and awareness all there is to do?"

Just do it! -- and you will know that nothing is left to be done anymore. Don't philosophize about it, don't go on thinking about it. Of course, the word 'awareness' does not seem very big. And if you look in the dictionary the meaning is there: it is not so fantastic, it is not that far out.

You know your problems existentially, and you know the solution only intellectually -- that is the problem. You will have to know your solution also existentially. Awareness contains all the religions of the world, all the scriptures of the world, all that has ever been said by all the enlightened people. This simple word contains all; it is like a small key. Don't throw it "... because it is so small -- how can it open the doors, all the doors of the great palace?" It is a master key! And keys are not that big; you don't have to carry them in trucks, you can keep the key in the pocket. It is just a small thing, but it can unlock great doors, many doors. If it is a master key it can unlock all the locks.

Awareness is the key.

You say, "How to tame...? I either control, repress and stop myself, or I am led by my senses and driven by my 'animal'."

Yes, these are the two alternatives if you don't attain to awareness. Either you will repress and control -- which is ugly, which will make you unnatural, which will make you ill at ease with yourself, which will drive you ultimately into a kind of insanity... because you are repressing your own energies, which need to be transformed, not repressed. And energies repressed are dangerous; they will explode.

And your senses have their own aliveness. If you repress them you will become dull, you will become insensitive. You will become insensitive to beauty, to joy, to music, to poetry, to all that has any intrinsic value.

That's why your so-called monks, your mahatmas, your saints, are utterly insensitive. They can't see any beauty anywhere, they can't see any joy anywhere. And if you live with them for a few days you will know they are joy-killers; they will destroy your joy also, they will make you embarrassed if you are happy. They will ask such questions as, "Why are you happy? What is there to be happy about in this life? Life is misery! Why are you laughing and giggling? What is there to laugh about? Crying is okay, tears are accepted -- they are religious. But giggling? -- that is not religious."

Just the other day one person has written to me, "You must be the first enlightened one who is telling jokes." Yes, that is true -- at least I can claim that much originality! Otherwise it is very difficult to claim any originality in this world; there is nothing new under the sun. For millions and millions of years man has existed and thousands and thousands of enlightened people have existed; they have done almost everything that can be done. I was

really searching what to do -- something new! Then I stumbled upon jokes. I said, "This is right!"

If you repress you will become humorless, you will lose all sense of humor. Your saints cannot laugh, and a man who cannot laugh is not a man; he becomes subhuman. Horses don't laugh, buffaloes don't laugh, donkeys don't tell jokes to each other. Laughter is absolutely human; no other animal laughs. And if one morning, just going for a walk, a donkey suddenly starts laughing, you will go crazy! You will not even be able to report to anybody that this has happened; they will think that you are mad.

It is man's privilege to laugh. Laughter has something divine about it; laughter has something which is available only to man. Only man can laugh, because he can sense the absurd, the ridiculous; because he can see through and through, and he can see all around such stupidity pretending to be wise, fools pretending to be intelligent, intellectual -- the intelligentsia.

Never repress. Repression will destroy all that is human in you. And once the human is destroyed you cannot attain to the divine, because humanness is the bridge.

Man is a bridge between the animal and the divine. And the animal is also beautiful because the animal has aliveness. That is exactly the meaning of the word 'animal'. It comes from 'anima' -- aliveness, life, vitality. Your saints become nonvital because they destroy the animal. They don't tame it, they destroy it -- to destroy they find easier.

Taming needs art, it needs great art. To kill a tiger is simple. To ride on the tiger and come back home... it is dangerous and it is arduous and it needs great art. And so is the case with all your senses: they have their own sensitivity, a little intelligence of their own. Have you observed it? -- that your senses have their own intelligence, their own small minds.

You are asleep and a cockroach starts crawling -- what else in India? -- a cockroach starts crawling up your leg, and you remain asleep and the leg simply throws the cockroach away. The leg has its own intelligence, its own built-in alertness; it functions on its own. Your sleep remains undisturbed. You eat -- your stomach must have its own intelligence; otherwise it is a very complicated process to digest, to transform bread into blood. Scientists have not yet been able to do it mechanically. They have not been able to create machines which can transform bread into blood. Your stomach must have an intelligence of its own -- and it does not ask you at all. Once you have taken anything down the throat you forget all about it; now it is up to the stomach to do the whole work. And the work is really complicated, immensely complicated: sorting out different elements, sending those different elements to different parts of the body....

You have wounded your hand. Immediately your hand, your blood circulation, your body starts a healing process. Your mind is not needed at all.

Remember that forcing your senses into some repressed state will take your vitality. You will not be fresh, you will not be young, you will not be flowing. That's what has happened to humanity at large: because of wrong religious teachings, people have become dull, stupid.

There is one woman in Soviet Russia who can read with her fingers -- and not braille; she can read ordinary books with her fingers, with closed eyes, blindfolded. She says that she can see through the fingers. There are people whose fingers are so sensitive, by touching you they will know much about you that even you may not be aware of. Just shaking hands with you they know much about you. Your hand gives them a kind of information: whether it is cold or warm, friendly or unfriendly, or indifferent. A sensitive person, just by shaking hands with you, has already become aware of many things about you, has already known much about you.

Each sense has its beauty and has to contribute to your intelligence. So please, don't repress, don't control.

While rambling along the railroad tracks, Isaac found twenty dollars. He walked a little further and felt his corns pinch. "Feet," he said, "I'm gonna buy you a brand-new pair of shoes."

He continued his walk, but soon felt the hot sun on his forehead. "Old top," promised Isaac, "I'll get you a cool, shady hat."

Just then Isaac's stomach grumbled. "Okay, belly," he said, "I will buy you a fine meal."

Isaac resumed his journey. Five minutes later, he stopped in shock. He looked downward at the front of his pants and hollered, "Hey, big stiff, who told YOU we came into big money?"

Each sense of the body has its own intelligence. No sense has to be curtailed; each sense has to be given freedom joyously. Each sense has to be nourished in its aliveness. Only then will you know that all your senses create an orchestra, a great melody.

But I understand your trouble; this is the trouble of almost everybody in the world. Either you control or you start indulging, and you don't know how to remain exactly in the middle. Indulgence is also destructive. Repression is destructive, indulgence is destructive -- because these are two extremes. One fasts for many days; he is trying to control, repress his hunger, his body's needs. Another eats too much, goes on stuffing.

It is said that Nero used to have four physicians always around him because he was a lover, a mad lover, of food; he was obsessed with food. He would eat too much, and the physicians' work was to help him vomit so that he could eat again. And this he would do many times in the day. Otherwise you can eat only once, if you live in a primitive, aboriginal part of Africa... because for centuries they have eaten only once, and that is enough. If you live in India you will eat twice, if you live in America five times. But Nero was eating sometimes even twenty times a day. Now, this is indulgence, mad indulgence! This is again going to dull your senses. His belly must have been going berserk, his body must have been feeling a kind of insanity.

One has to be in the middle, the golden mean. That is Buddha's teaching.

There is a beautiful story in Buddha's life:

He came to Shravasti, one of the greatest cities of those days. It must have been something like the Paris of India of those days, because its beauty is described so much in the scriptures. And Buddha also must have loved the town very much, because in his forty-two years' teaching he came at least twenty times to Shravasti; that is the most times he ever visited any place. Sarnath he visited only once -- because of the mosquitoes. Sarnath has really big mosquitoes; Poona mosquitoes are nothing, Poonaites are nothing!

When I was staying with a Buddhist monk in Sarnath, we had to sit behind a mosquito net the whole day -- he in his bed, I in mine -- and we had to talk.... I told him, "This is my first and last visit. I am not coming back again to Sarnath."

He said, "Do you know, Buddha himself never visited twice."

I had not known that. I said, "You tell me...."

He said, "Yes, he came here only once -- to Shravasti twenty times, Sarnath only once. What is the reason?" And we joked.

I said, "The reason is clear: he didn't have mosquito nets. In the first place, these

mosquitoes must have tortured him. And these are really monsters, not mosquitoes -- very big ones! Poor Buddha must have escaped!"

He only remained one day there. Shravasti he went to twenty times; he stayed twenty rainy seasons in Shravasti. Now Shravasti has almost disappeared; a small village is thought to be where Shravasti used to be. It was a big city -- ten lakhs of people -- one of the most beautiful in the country.

And the king of Shravasti was Shrona. He must have loved beauty; he made the city so beautiful -- beautiful lakes and roads and palaces. And he invited all kinds of artists, musicians, poets -- his court was full of talented people. He had the most beautiful women around him. He lived in utter luxury. His days were spent moving from one pleasure to another. Naturally, soon he got fed up, tired, wearied.

And then Buddha came. He was feeling so bored with life, this Shrona, that he went to listen to Buddha -- maybe he has something to say. He was feeling so meaningless, so utterly meaningless, that he had started lately to contemplate suicide. Seeing Buddha and his divine beauty, his grace -- and Shrona was a very aesthetic person -- seeing Buddha he immediately fell in love with him.

He didn't go back to his palace. He asked Buddha with folded hands, "Give me sannyas. Initiate me."

Buddha hesitated a little bit because he knew everything about Shrona and his life; it would be difficult for him. He may not have tasted water for years; alcohol was the only thing that he used to drink. He had indulged so much that for a moment Buddha was hesitant.

But Shrona said, "Don't hesitate. I am fed up with my life, I am finished with it! If you don't give me sannyas I will commit suicide -- and that will be your responsibility!"

My own observation is also this: that a man really becomes a sannyasin when he comes to the point where there are only two possibilities: either suicide or sannyas.

Buddha had to initiate him immediately, because he did not want to be responsible for his suicide. But what Buddha had not expected started happening. Shrona became just the opposite of what he had been up to now. Up to now he had been absolutely indulgent in everything, in every possible thing. Now he became a great ascetic, so much so that he started torturing his body, he became a masochist. He would lie down on thorns, he would stand in the hot sun. He would not live as other sannyasins were living -- moderately, balanced, the life of the golden mean. No, he moved to the other extreme. Within six months it was impossible to recognize him, he had become so thin, so dark. He was a beautiful person; he had become ugly. He was starving himself. Buddhist sannyasins used to eat once a day and he used to eat only thrice a week, and that too, so little!

It happens: people can move to the extreme very easily. Mind lives in extremes -- from one extreme one can jump to the other extreme very easily. The most difficult thing is to remain in the middle, because to remain in the middle you will need awareness. Moving from one extreme to the other you don't need awareness. You were unconscious before as an indulgent person, now you are unconscious as a great ascetic. First you were stuffing yourself with food and you were unconscious, now you are starving yourself and you are unconscious.

The man of consciousness stays in the middle: neither too much nor too little. He always gives to the body what is needed, to the mind what is needed. His life has a very very rhythmic quality to it. He responds to his requirements very consciously, responsibly, but he does not go in an insane manner this way or that.

After six months Buddha had to go to him. Shrona had wounds all over the body because he was lying down on thorns. He was stinking because he had stopped taking baths; he

thought that too was luxury....

In India, Jaina monks don't take any baths, they don't clean their teeth, because that is thought to be too materialistic -- you are decorating the body. It is very difficult to talk to Jaina monks. They used to come to me before, but fortunately they no longer come here. It was so difficult to talk to them because their breath smell is simply unbelievable, their body odor is intolerable! But that is thought to be a great renunciation.

Buddha went to see Shrona. He was ill, with wounds all over the body, almost dying. Buddha asked him one question: he said, "Shrona, I have come to ask one question of you. I have heard that when you were a king you used to play beautifully on the sitar. You were a great lover of the sitar and you had practiced your whole life."

Shrona said, "Yes, that is true."

Buddha asked him, "So I have come to ask you one thing: if the strings of the sitar are too loose, will there be any music?"

Shrona said, "No, how can there be any music? If the strings are too loose, music cannot be created."

Buddha said, "Then if the strings are too tight, will there be any music?"

Shrona said, "No, that too is not possible. If the strings are too tight, they will be broken."

Buddha said, "Then tell me, when is music possible?"

Shrona said, "There is a point exactly in the middle when you cannot say the strings are loose and you cannot say the strings are tight. It is a great art to bring the strings to that middle point -- exactly in the middle, neither leaning to this side nor to that; no leaning at all, exactly in the middle."

Buddha stood up and he said, "Shrona, I have nothing else to say. I just came to remind you that life follows the same law. Be in the middle. You have moved from a too loose life to a too tight life. That's why you are not attaining to the music called nirvana, the music called meditation."

Prem Sohan, that exact middle cannot be found without awareness. And don't say, "Is watching and awareness ALL there is to do?"

Yes, it is all. It is more than you need, more than you will ever need. It will fulfill all your needs. It will teach you how not to repress and how not to indulge. It will make you so alert that you will be just a witness. And when one is just a witness of one's senses, one enjoys and yet one remains above. One becomes a lotus leaf, in the water and yet untouched by the water.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM A VERY JEALOUS PERSON, PARTICULARLY AS FAR AS MY WIFE IS CONCERNED. EVEN IF SHE LOOKS AT ANYBODY, I BECOME ENRAGED. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Gyaneshwar, it has nothing to do with your wife. If the wife is not there you will be jealous about something else.

Remember always: don't be too much concerned about outer causes, because causes are not outside you. Outside are only excuses; causes are inside you. You are full of jealousy; the wife simply functions as an excuse. Don't be too much worried about the excuse, because that

is wasting time. Look inside yourself: why are you jealous?

Jealousy means ego, jealousy means unconsciousness. Jealousy means that you have not known even a moment of joy and bliss; you are living in misery. Jealousy is a by-product of misery, ego, unconsciousness.

Forget all about the wife; otherwise you will remain concerned about the wife, and that is a way of escaping from the real cause. The real cause is always inside. And not only about jealousy, remember, about all problems -- greed....

Somebody comes to me and says, "I am very greedy about money. How can I get rid of this greed for money?" It is not a question of money. Greed is greed. If you get rid of money you will become greedy for God; greed will still be there.

The night Jesus was saying goodbye to his disciples, one of the disciples asked him, "Lord, you are leaving us. There is one question, and it is on the minds of all your disciples. In the kingdom of God you will be sitting at the right side of God himself -- obviously, you will be his right hand. And who will be sitting next to you? Amongst us twelve, who will be the second to you? That is the most important thing in our heads. Please say something about it; otherwise, once you are gone it will be impossible for us to decide and we will be quarreling and fighting over it."

Now, this is jealousy. Now, what kind of disciples has Jesus? As far as my observation goes, Jesus was not very fortunate about his disciples. Buddha was far more fortunate. Never in the whole life of Buddha has a disciple asked such a stupid question. And these are the apostles, the twelve apostles -- his messengers to the world!

Remember, if greed is dropped about money, immediately it will take another object, it will become focused on something else. So the first thing to remember: it has nothing to do with your wife, it has something to do with yourself. Forget about the wife completely, keep her out of the problem. She is not the problem, YOU are the problem! Take responsibility, and then things start changing.

If you take the responsibility, if you think, "I am responsible, nobody else," you will not be angry with the wife. You will not be fighting and nagging, you will not be nasty with her. You will start looking deeper and deeper. And in that very search you will become aware. That's what awareness is, that's how one becomes aware.

And when you are fully aware of your jealousy you will be surprised, you are in for a surprise: when you are fully aware of it, it disappears. It simply disappears, not leaving even a trace behind it.

Two men had had enough of the world so they decided to leave their wives, kids and jobs for the peace and quiet of the wilderness. They stopped for supplies at a sporting goods store owned by a wise old man.

"Take this," said the old storekeeper to the renunciates as he handed them a board lined with mink fur, with a small slit cut out in the middle which was also lined with fur.

"No way!" cried the men. "We know what that board is for and I tell you we are through with that kind of thing forever!"

But the wise old man slipped the board into one of the packs while they were not looking, and the men left.

Three years later one of the men returned to the old man's sporting goods store.

"Well, hello!" cried the storekeeper. "Where is your partner?"

"Dead," said the returning survivor.

"What happened?"

"I shot him."

"But why?"

"Well," said the man, "I caught him in bed with my board."

It is not a question of the wife -- even a board will do: "MY board!..." It is a question of the ego, and the ego exists only when you live in an unconsciousness, in a darkness. The ego exists only in the dark night of the soul.

Bring a little light inside. Meditate a little bit. Sit silently, doing nothing, looking inwards. In the beginning you will find only rubbish. Don't be worried -- go on looking. Within three to nine months the rubbish will be gone, and a silence will start dawning on you and a stillness will arise.

In that stillness you will become aware of yourself and of the whole that surrounds you. That state is samadhi, and to know it is to know all, to be it is to be all. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #9

Chapter title: Awake to the law

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HE WHO GOES NAKED,
WITH MATTED HAIR, MUD-BESPATTERED,
WHO FASTS AND SLEEPS ON THE GROUND
AND SMEARS HIS BODY WITH ASHES
AND SITS IN ENDLESS MEDITATION --
SO LONG AS HE IS NOT FREE FROM DOUBTS,
HE WILL NOT FIND FREEDOM.

BUT HE WHO LIVES PURELY AND SELF-ASSURED
IN QUIETNESS AND VIRTUE,
WHO IS WITHOUT HARM OR HURT OR BLAME,
EVEN IF HE WEARS FINE CLOTHES,
SO LONG AS HE ALSO HAS FAITH
HE IS A TRUE SEEKER.

A NOBLE HORSE RARELY

FEELS THE TOUCH OF THE WHIP.
WHO IS THERE IN THIS WORLD AS BLAMELESS?

THEN LIKE A NOBLE HORSE
SMART UNDER THE WHIP,
BURN AND BE SWIFT.
BELIEVE, MEDITATE, SEE.
BE HARMLESS, BE BLAMELESS.
AWAKE TO THE LAW.
AND FROM ALL SORROW FREE YOURSELF.

THE FARMER CHANNELS WATER TO HIS LAND.
THE FLETCHER WHITTLES HIS ARROWS.
THE CARPENTER TURNS HIS WOOD.
AND THE WISE MAN MASTERS HIMSELF.

Gautama the Buddha has no philosophy of life. He is not a philosopher at all. He is a man of insight, he is wise; he knows how to see into life, into reality. He has a way of seeing but not a philosophy of life. He has a way of living but not a philosophy of life.

A philosophy of life is a false substitute -- it is avoiding transformation of your being. You can learn beautiful words, systems of thought, ideologies, and you can become so much engrossed in them that you can forget totally that you don't know even yourself, that you don't know how to see that you are blind, that you have not been able to create light in your heart, that the flame is absent, that you are living in deep darkness; that your life may be very sophisticated, cultured, but it is not true life. You live on the surface; you don't know its depths and its heights. It has both deep valleys and high peaks, but to reach to those depths and those peaks you will have to pass through an alchemical process.

Buddha is an alchemist. He shows you the way how to transform your energies from the lowest to the highest center of functioning, from the mud to the lotus, from the baser metal into gold, from stones into diamonds. He is a scientist of the inner. His approach is utterly scientific, not philosophic at all.

That's why he could not fit with the Indian mind; the Indian mind is too philosophical. The Indian mind has learned too much jargon, it has become very skillful in splitting hairs. Buddha is not concerned at all with all that nonsense. He goes directly to the problem.

The problem is that we are living with a darkness in the heart -- how to transform this darkness into a luminosity? We have the potential, but we don't know how to change it into actuality. Buddha is very pragmatic, very practical, the first man really to be so pragmatic about the inner world, about subjectivity, about interiority. People are very much interested in philosophies of life. If they don't have one they feel as if they are missing something. People are interested in phony words because they cost nothing. You can be a Hindu, you can read the Vedas and the Gita and Upanishads, and you can become very learned. You can become a great parrot, you can become a pundit, a great scholar, you can talk about great things for hours, but your life will remain ordinary -- it will not have any touch of the beyond.

You can be a Mohammedan or a Christian -- there are hundreds of ideologies in the world -- you can be a Catholic or communist. It does not matter what you believe in. What really matters is: are you capable of seeing? Do you have eyes to see the mystery of existence? Do you have the heart to feel the magic of it? Are you open, available, vulnerable to the unknown? And when the unknown calls, are you courageous enough to go into the uncharted sea, not knowing what is going to happen next? Do you have that type of guts?

Goldberg had a vague feeling that something was missing in his life. One night he was particularly depressed and told his wife about his yearning for something.

"But Sam," reassured his wife, "you have everything!"

"I know, I know! But I don't have a philosophy of life -- I want that."

"Sam, what do you want that for? None of the neighbors have one."

But that's really the problem -- the neighbors have. Somebody is a Hindu, somebody is a Mohammedan, somebody is a Christian, somebody is a Jew, somebody is a communist; somebody talks about DAS KAPITAL and somebody about the Gita and somebody about the Koran, and you start feeling as if you are missing something because you cannot talk about great things. You start feeling these people must be knowing all that they are talking about. They know nothing. They are as blind as you are, or maybe they are more blind than you are. At least you are free of the philosophies -- that is one of the basic hindrances in seeing.

The first thing to understand about Buddha and his approach is that he does not want to give you a teaching. He certainly wants to give you a science -- he is not interested at all in making your minds more sophisticated. He wants you to drop the mind. Sophisticated or unsophisticated, mind is a block, it hinders. No-mind is the capacity to see; mind is the capacity to believe, but it is not the capacity to see.

Hence Buddha has given a totally new meaning to meditation. Before him, meditation was concentration in the beginning and contemplation in the end. But concentration and contemplation both are part of the mind; the mind can play these games perfectly well. The mind is very much interested in concentration because through it, it becomes stronger. Concentration is a nourishment. And mind is immensely interested in contemplation too, because through contemplation, finer food, finer nourishment, become available.

If you concentrate you can become a scientist of the objective world; if you contemplate you become a great philosopher. But unless you know what meditation is you will never be a mystic; and without being a mystic, you will miss all -- your whole life will be a sheer wastage.

These sutras are tremendously important. In a few places the translation is not accurate, but on the whole it gives you the essence. Wherever I see it is not accurate I will remind you. Those inaccuracies are bound to happen -- because in the West nobody has talked like Buddha; hence no Western language is capable of translating Buddha accurately, adequately.

Jesus was a buddha, but his way of talking was not that of Buddha. Jesus talked as if he were talking to primary school children -- and that's exactly the case. The people he was talking to were really at a very very beginners' stage. He had to use parables, metaphors. He had to use phrases which are anthropocentric: kingdom of God -- there is no God and there is no kingdom. And Jesus knew it! -- but he had to talk in words which people could understand.

People can understand a king -- then God is the greatest king. But the difference is of quantity, not of quality. Kings have kingdoms; hence God, the greatest king, must have the greatest kingdom. But again the difference is of quantity, not of quality. And because it is not of quality it misses the whole point, it misses the target.

God is not a person but a presence. And God had no kingdom because God is a pervading presence of life, of beauty, of music, of poetry. He is spread all over space; he is not separate from it. He is not the creator, he is the very phenomenon of creativity itself. But Jesus could not talk that way -- Buddha could.

Buddha was talking to a very ancient people, to people who were very well acquainted with higher reaches -- even they were not able to understand. Jesus had to use language which could be understood. And Jesus was a carpenter's son; he himself knew the language of the ordinary people. Buddha came from a royal family, a son of a king -- very sophisticated -- knew all about philosophy and was fed up with it; knew all about beautiful parables, stories, mythologies, and was finished with all that. He had seen through them, that they keep people occupied but they don't transform them. He had discarded all that is nonessential; he talked only about the very essential. He was very telegraphic too: he would not use a single word more than was needed. Unless it was absolutely needed -- only then would he use it.

And of course, he changed the meaning of words; that always happens when a buddha, an awakened person, uses words. He gives new color, new nuances, new meanings to ancient words. Buddha transformed the word 'meditation'. Meditation had always been something of the mind, and Buddha brought a new quality, so totally new, diametrically opposite to the old meaning: he said, meditation means a state of no-mind. It is not concentration, it is not contemplation. It is not thinking, it is not thinking about God. It is not even prayer -- because thinking is of the head, intellectual; prayer is emotional. That is another side of the head, not very far away from it; a different language used by another part of the head.

Now scientists agree about it, that the head has two hemispheres. The left hemisphere speaks the language of intellect, logic, arithmetic; and the right hemisphere speaks the language of emotions, feelings, sentiments. But both are two sides of the same head.

Buddha was the first to indicate this: that concentration, contemplation, belong to one side of the head, the left hemisphere; and prayer, devotion, they belong to the right hemisphere. But both are of the head, and the true seeker has to go beyond the head; he has to transcend the duality of the head, the division of the head. Only when you transcend the division can you come to the one.

Hence, he gives a totally new meaning to meditation, to DHYANA. He makes it mean a state of no-mind. You will constantly have to remember that. Wherever the word 'meditation' is used, remember, Buddha means no-mind.

The second thing: wherever you come across the word 'belief', beware. Buddha never means what you mean by the word 'belief'. His word is SHRADDHA. Shraddha does not mean belief, it does not even mean faith; it means trust, which is a totally different phenomenon.

Shraddha means a state of total trust. Belief is not total trust; doubt remains in it, repressed. Belief is a cover-up. You doubt but you have covered it with a blanket, with belief. You are afraid of the doubt. Doubt disturbs, so you cling to the belief, but the belief can never take you beyond the doubt.

Belief is doubt standing on its head, upside-down, that's all. The doubter doubts, the believer believes, but both are blind. They are in the same boat, maybe sitting back-to-back, but in the same boat. Hence the believer is always afraid of somebody provoking his doubt, and the doubter is always on guard that nobody should convince him of any belief. They both are entangled with each other.

What is trust? Trust is going beyond doubt AND belief. Belief is always in a certain idea; trust is always in that which is -- not in an idea but in existence itself, within and without. And between belief and trust there is another word, 'faith' -- beware of that too. Buddha never means faith when he uses shraddha, and he always uses shraddha. Faith is just in between: belief is in an idea, faith is in a person, and trust is in existence itself. Buddha never wants

you to be faithful because faith creates fanatics, faith creates neurotics.

Just the other night, a young woman came to take sannyas. The way she approached me I became aware that she is neurotic. But I never say no to anybody. Who knows, there is always a possibility -- one can never say -- that the neurotic may become normal. And at least, if she is willing to take sannyas, she has still some sense left; maybe she can be helped.

I could see it was going to be difficult -- the way she came, the way she sat.... And finally, when I called her close to me, she refused to come close. She stood up with raised hands and said, "I am Jesus Christ!" I didn't say anything to her, although I wanted to say, "So, old chap, you are back again! Have you forgotten what happened the last time? Maybe that's why you have come in the form of a woman this time." And declaring that she is Jesus Christ, she walked away.

Faith creates these types of neurotics. Christianity has many neurotic people, because the whole idea depends on faith: "Believe in Jesus Christ, have faith in him! He will deliver you!" -- as if he is responsible for your bondage! He can deliver you only if he has put you in the prison; otherwise, how can he deliver you? He is the savior and you are the saved; he is the shepherd and you are the sheep. Don't you see the indignity involved in it? You become just sheep. All the religions, more or less, have been doing this. If you believe in persons, you will be reduced into sheep -- you will not be human beings. Your humanity is destroyed. You are imprisoned in very subtle, invisible prisons. You cannot see them, they are transparent.

Buddha says: Be a light unto yourself. Don't believe in persons, don't believe in ideologies. And when you don't believe in any ideology, and you don't believe in any person, a great trust explodes, a trust in existence itself -- in the trees, in the rocks, in the people, in the stars, rivers, mountains, in all that is. Of course, the buddhas are part of it, but you don't believe in the Buddha particularly. You simply believe in existence. You believe in the fragrance of a Jesus. But this belief is not rooted in any idea. In fact, it is something subjective, it has nothing to do with any object.

If you believe in Jesus you cannot believe in Krishna. If you believe in Krishna you cannot believe in Mahavira. Naturally, if you believe in one you have to disbelieve in all others. That's how belief divides people. And the whole history is full of blood, murder, crusades. It is full of blood and violence in the name of religion, because you have been told to believe one against all others.

Trust is totally different. If you trust existence... existence implies Jesus as much as Krishna, as Buddha, as Zarathustra. They are all part of it. And you don't believe only in buddhas, you believe in the ordinary people that surround you too; not only people but animals, trees, rocks. It is not a question of what you believe in -- the object becomes irrelevant. You simply have a trusting heart, a great trust that we belong to this existence, we are part of this miraculous existence, that this existence cannot be unfriendly to us. It has given birth to us, and how can the mother be unfriendly?

This is a totally different meaning to trust. It is neither belief nor faith. Remember these two words because they are again and again translated wrongly.

The sutras:

HE WHO GOES NAKED,
WITH MATTED HAIR, MUD-BESPATTERED,
WHO FASTS AND SLEEPS ON THE GROUND
AND SMEARS HIS BODY WITH ASHES
AND SITS IN ENDLESS MEDITATION --

SO LONG AS HE IS NOT FREE FROM DOUBTS,
HE WILL NOT FIND FREEDOM.

These people -- the people who go naked, with matted hair, mud-bespattered, the people who go on long fasts, the people who sleep on uneven ground, or even on thorns, the people who smear their body with ashes -- these people have been thought of down the ages as if they are saints. They are simply masochists, they enjoy torturing themselves. They are very violent people.

The difference between them and Adolf Hitler and Genghis Khan and Nadirshah is only one: Genghis Khan, Nadirshah, Adolf Hitler, they enjoy torturing others, and these so-called saints enjoy torturing themselves -- but both enjoy torture. Now, if you torture others it is condemned, obviously, because "others" include you and you are afraid of being tortured. But if somebody tortures himself it is praised -- it has nothing to do with you; he is torturing himself.

In fact, the people who worship these masochists are sadists. You would like to torture them, but they are such good people, they are doing your job. What you would have liked to do, they are doing themselves. You can go and worship them.

Masochism is a disease: to torture oneself. And sadism is also a disease: to enjoy torturing others. If you are courageous enough, if you can risk... because great risk is there; if you torture others, they will take revenge. Adolf Hitler finally had to commit suicide, and Nadirshah lived his whole life in constant fear and trembling, because he had murdered so many people. He had made so many enemies, he could not trust anybody. He was not even able to sleep well; a slight noise and he would jump up -- and that's how he died.

One night a stray camel entered into the campus where Nadirshah was camping. That stray camel reached near Nadirshah's camp; he heard the noise. It was dark.... He jumped out of his bed, thought that the enemy had arrived, started running, got caught in the rope of the tent, had a heart attack and died.

These people who torture others cannot live peacefully -- it is impossible, because they make so many enemies. But they enjoy torturing.

Now, the best way to torture is to torture yourself; then there is no fear. Nobody is against you; on the contrary, people worship you as a holy person. Now, look at the foolishness! If a person walks naked, what is holy in it? You can go where great religious gatherings happen in India, particularly KUMBHA MELAS, and you can see the naked sadhus, and you will be surprised! -- you don't see any holiness. On the contrary, you will see in their eyes the worst kind of criminals. You can go to the prison and look into the eyes of the murderers, and you will find them more innocent. These people who exhibit themselves naked on the roads are really psychologically ill. In psychological terms they are exhibitionists.

And this is a strange thing, that Hindus have worshipped these exhibitionists for centuries. And the same Hindus are against my sannyasins because they think my sannyasins are going against Hindu culture because they are not wearing proper clothes. You are going against Hindu culture! Your culture has always worshipped the exhibitionists, your culture has always worshipped the perverted people.

Now, a person who spreads thorns and pebbles before he goes to sleep -- that is preparing the bed -- you worship him as holy? He has to be given electric shocks, not flowers, not to be garlanded; he needs psychological treatment. He is perverted. This is not natural! No animal ever does it; even animals are far more normal. Before they go to sleep they will remove the stones and thorns and they will prepare a soft bed for themselves, soft earth, and then they

will go to sleep. Even animals seem to be far more intelligent, far more natural, than your so-called saints.

A person who throws dust on his body is simply being foolish, or maybe he is just an egoist, because this kind of behavior is worshipped in this country. Now, the same type of people raise questions against me: Why am I against saints? I am not against the saints. I am not against Buddha and I am not against Nanak and I am not against Kabir and I am not against Raidas, but I am certainly against these ill people, the exhibitionists, the masochists, the abnormal, the neurotic.... I don't call them saints, they are not! But out of a hundred, ninety-nine percent belong to these categories.

It is only because you have been worshipping them for centuries that you don't ask: What are you doing? And you are angry at me because I am raising questions for the first time -- questions which disturb you. But Buddha also was doing the same, and you were angry at him too.

He says: HE WHO GOES NAKED, WITH MATTED HAIR, MUD-BESPATTERED, WHO FASTS AND SLEEPS ON THE GROUND AND SMEARS HIS BODY WITH ASHES AND SITS IN ENDLESS MEDITATION -- SO LONG AS HE IS NOT FREE FROM DOUBTS, HE WILL NOT FIND FREEDOM. You can go on doing these things for years, your whole life -- you will not arrive anywhere. All these things are just empty rituals you are following because you have been told that this is what holiness is. You are so unintelligent that you cannot even see that: What kind of holiness is this? How can this be holy?

How can smearing your body with dust or ashes be holy? It is simply torturing yourself, because the body breathes.... Do you know that it is not only your nose that keeps you alive, but that there are millions of small doors in the body from where you breathe? You cannot even see them with bare eyes. Just try: paint a person's whole body, leaving his nose, paint it completely so all the holes and the pores of the body are closed. He will die within three hours. He can breathe from the nose -- that won't keep him alive more than three hours.

If all the pores are closed... and that's what is being done by smearing ashes on your body. You are closing the pores of the body. This is a way of torturing yourself, this is starving you of oxygen. And the less oxygen you get, the more stupid you become, because oxygen is one of the most essential nourishments for intelligence.

Without oxygen the mind starts becoming dull. That's why in the night you feel sleep coming to you more easily than in the day, because in the day the air has more oxygen in it and you are breathing more oxygen. That oxygen keeps you alert, awake. In the night the quantity of oxygen in the air falls low, the carbon dioxide is more -- that makes you feel sleepy. By smearing your body with ashes you are trying to reduce the amount of oxygen reaching to your brain cells, you are starving the brain. You will become dull, stupid. And that's why you will rarely see any sharpness, any awareness.

They live like robots. Of course, they follow a certain law that is written in the scriptures and delivered to them by the same kind of stupid people. They follow a certain law without understanding anything, why they are doing it. I have asked many people who smear their bodies with ashes, "Why do you do it?" And they say, "Because it has been done since the beginning -- saints have always been doing it."

I have asked them, "What is the science behind it?" They look puzzled. They say, "Science...?" They are not aware of what they are doing. They are not aware that they are starving their brain cells of oxygen.

And they have many strategies like that: standing on the head for hours -- because of

gravitation so much blood goes into the brain that it destroys the finer nerves of the brain. Your whole intelligence depends on those finer nerves. Or starving yourself -- call it fasting, then it becomes a religious thing. When you starve your body you are also starving your brain, because the brain is the subtlest part of the body.

Now it is scientifically proved that if a few vitamins are missing from the body you will lose intelligence. Sooner or later every child has to be provided with certain vitamins, certain chemicals, and his intelligence can be raised very high. In Soviet Russia they are already doing it. If you starve your body, then naturally your brain is starved. You don't allow the brain the right food, you don't allow the brain the right amount of oxygen... and do you think you will be able to become a great meditator, a buddha? Whom are you trying to befool? But you are following a certain law, a certain ritual, with no understanding about it.

Sir Reginald Farthington was on trial before the High Court of Australia for the crime of molesting an ostrich. "Before passing sentence," announced the judge, "do you have anything to say?"

"Your Honor," said the Englishman, "if I'd known you were going to make such a fuss about it, I'd have married the bloody bird!"

This is the legal mind. This is how the legal mind functions: "I would have married the bloody bird!" It goes from one foolishness to another foolishness.

If you starve your body of the right food, of the right amount of oxygen, problems will arise. And you will go to the same people who are creating problems for you, and they have ready-made prescriptions.

One man came to me, a young man; he was under the spell of Swami Shivananda of Rishikesh.

Shivananda told him, "Live only on milk, because that is the purest food."

Now, if you have seen pictures of Shivananda... one can see that this man has not lived only on milk. He was so fat that even to raise his own hands was difficult for him, they were so heavy. So he had to walk with two people, his hands on their shoulders. This man must be obsessed with food, must be eating too much. He must have been one of the fattest men in India, and he suggested to this young man to live only on milk.

And what was the problem? Why had this young man gone to him? The young man had gone to him to attain BRAHMACHARYA -- celibacy. He had read in the scriptures that unless you are absolutely celibate you cannot reach God. So he asked how to become absolutely celibate; now the suggestion was, "Live only on milk."

Now this is utter nonsense! If you live only on milk you will be more sexual than ever before, because from where are you going to get the milk? From cows or buffaloes. That milk is not created for man; cows' milk is created for bulls, and bulls are the most sexual animals in the world. Cows' milk has more chemicals to make you sexual than anything else in the world. It is the unholiest food.

But who cares? Who thinks about it?

Just because the scripture says it, Shivananda told him, "You live on milk." Now, it is only man, ONLY man, who lives on milk when he is small and just for a few months. Once he has become able to eat and digest solid food he drops the milk and moves to solid food. It is meant for children.

And one of the most important things that is growing in the child is his sexuality. He is

becoming more and more mature and sexual, because the whole biology depends on sex. And after a time the child has to move to solid food. It is only man who continues to drink milk. It is okay in coffee or in tea, but just to live on milk -- it is going to be dangerous.

The young man became more sexual, and weaker. The body became weaker and the mind became more and more obsessed with sex. Again he went to the same saint. The saint said, "It is because you are suffering from TAMAS -- you are suffering from the very lowest kind of energy called tamas, which pulls you downwards."

"What has to be done?" the young man asked.

The saint, the so-called saint, said, "You need not sleep as much as you are sleeping, because sleep creates tamas" -- that too is written in the same scriptures: sleep creates tamas -- "so sleep only five hours."

First the food was taken away. He was starving, because for a fully grown-up person milk is not enough. He needs solid food; he is not a child. And then the milk is coming from cows -- which is meant for bulls, not for men -- so he is becoming more sexual. Now the sleep is reduced. Five hours of sleep for a young man is not right. Yes, for an old man it is perfectly okay; as you become older, less and less sleep is needed, because the body is going to die, it no longer needs to recover. Otherwise, a young man's body recovers itself every day.

For recovery, for regaining lost strength, for recreating the cells that have died yesterday, you need a long sleep -- seven or eight hours, not less than that. Five is not enough. Now he started suffering from sleepiness; the whole day he would be yawning and feeling sleepy.

His father brought him to me and he said, "What is to be done? Now he is again trying to go to Rishikesh, and each time he goes he brings a problem. He was perfectly okay; reading these nonsense books he became interested in becoming BRAHMACHARI -- a celibate -- and then the whole trouble started. Now he cannot read, is losing interest in everything, is becoming obsessed with sex and food and sleep. Now these three are the things he is obsessed with. He is driving himself crazy and the whole family too."

I looked at the young man -- he was really in a mess. But he said, "I am following a great saint."

I asked him, "How do you know that he is a great saint? What is your criterion? Because he repeats the scriptures? How do you know that the scriptures are written by those who know?"

He said to me, "Please don't create doubt in me! I want to remain a believer, because without faith, without belief, there is no deliverance."

I said to him, "You don't need any deliverance. There is no need for any deliverance. You are already delivered! You are already in God! There is no need to search for him. You are part of truth. Just live naturally, sanely, and you will be able to understand the mystery of life. There is no need to become insane. All these ways are driving you insane."

And then one finds some way or other to satisfy the natural needs -- one becomes a hypocrite. Your whole religious training helps you only to become hypocrites. It does not make you holy; it simply makes you pseudo, phony.

You repress something from one side and it starts asserting from the other side.

Fogarty began to drop in at Barney's Bar regularly, and his order was always the same: two martinis. After several weeks of this, Barney asked him why he did not order a double instead.

"It is a sentimental thing," said Fogarty. "A very dear friend of mine died a few weeks ago, and before his death he asked that when I drink I have one for him too."

A week later Fogarty came in and ordered one martini. "What about your dead buddy? Why only one martini today?"
"This is my buddy's drink," came the reply. "I am on the wagon."

You can always find a way. Mind is very cunning, utterly cunning. You cannot get rid of the cunningness of the mind by such stupid things. And if you are doing such stupid things, you can sit long, endlessly, in meditation... nothing is going to happen, because meditation's first requirement is intelligence: awareness of your situation and of what you are doing to yourself and why -- not just following dead scriptures, not just following the so-called saints because the masses call them saints.

SO LONG AS HE IS NOT FREE FROM DOUBTS, HE WILL NOT FIND FREEDOM. What does Buddha mean by this? -- SO LONG AS HE IS NOT FREE FROM DOUBTS.... How does one become free from doubts? You will be surprised: unless you become free from beliefs you cannot become free from doubts. It is belief that creates doubt. For example, if you believe in God then the question arises whether God really exists or not. The doubt cannot come first; first comes the belief.

You are told by your parents, by your society, that there is a God. Because you are told there is a God, one day or other your intelligence asserts and starts asking, "What is the proof? How do we know for certain, for sure, that God really is?" Now doubt is coming....

In Soviet Russia, where they don't teach the children that there is a God, nobody doubts God's existence -- there is no question of doubt. Nobody believes in the first place -- why should they doubt? In India too, if you are born in a Jaina family you never doubt the existence of God. Why? -- because in the Jaina tradition there is no God, no belief. But a Jaina doubts about the existence of the soul, because he is told that there is a soul, invisible -- the body will die but the soul will continue on its journey.

Now the doubts arise: "Where is this soul? What is this soul? Has anybody ever seen it? Has anybody come back to the world after death and said that, 'I am still alive! You can't see me, but I am!'" The Jaina doubts about the soul, not about God.

The Hindu doubts about God, the Mohammedan doubts about God, the Christian, the Jew, they all doubt about God -- because God is their belief. The Jaina and the Buddhist never doubt about God because that is not their belief, but the Jaina doubts about the soul. The Buddhist never doubts about the soul either, because that is not his belief.

Buddha has taken away all the beliefs, so that you need not doubt: no God, no soul, no hell, no heaven, no moksha. Buddha has taken all the beliefs away! See his scientific approach of destroying doubt -- very paradoxical.

Just the opposite has been done by others. Others have also tried to take your doubts away, but their method has been to impose belief on you so that the doubt goes deep into the unconscious, becomes repressed -- you don't see it anymore. It is covered by the belief, but it never dies; on the contrary, it moves deeper into your being and becomes more and more part of your being. All your believers know it perfectly well, that there is doubt in their hearts. At the very core there is doubt; only on the circumference is belief.

Buddha is the first human being in the world who has really tried to destroy doubt. But strange is his way: his way is to take away all the beliefs; then you have taken the very ground in which doubts grow. Be without belief and you will be without doubt. Without belief, without doubt, where can mind remain? Mind needs these two pillars to support it. These are mind's two wings: doubt and belief. This is the duality on which mind feeds and lives. Once belief and doubt both are gone, you have destroyed the very foundation of the

mind.

And to be a no-mind is meditation. Not by sleeping on thorns, not by going naked, not by fasting, not by torturing yourself, but by great understanding of things. From where does doubt come? Go into it, search, and you will find it always comes because of a certain belief.

Now the modern mind can attain to meditation more easily than humanity was ever capable of, for one single reason: that the modern mind is no longer so much burdened by belief. Hence there is not so much doubt either. Nowadays you rarely come across people who are skeptical, people who are full of doubt, people who are atheists -- you rarely come across such people nowadays. In the old days they were many. And the reason is simple: now nobody believes! So if somebody says, "I don't believe in God," you will say, "So what? Who believes? Keep quiet!" Now nobody can argue against God because nobody is arguing FOR the poor man!

This is a very new situation. And your old traditions cannot accept the challenge of this new situation. If you declare that, "I am an atheist," people will say, "So be it. Why brag about it? Why make a fuss about it? Perfectly okay, we are happy -- you be an atheist." Who bothers about the church and who bothers about the temple? Even the people who go, go only as a social formality; even they don't believe.

This is a rare opportunity for the search; it has never been so spacious as it is today. Of course, your old traditional people are very much worried; they think this is the worst kind of age that has ever happened. This is not the worst kind of age -- this is the best, the pinnacle. This is the time, the right time, a ripe time. We can inquire with total hearts into reality, because no belief hinders, and because there is no belief, there is no doubt.

This is freedom. Buddha calls it freedom. SO LONG AS HE IS NOT FREE FROM DOUBTS, HE WILL NOT FIND FREEDOM. "Freedom" means freedom from the mind. Then you are simply in a silence, and in that silence you melt, you merge with the whole. And to melt and merge with the whole is to be holy. Not by fasting, not by torturing, but by becoming one with the whole, one becomes holy.

BUT HE WHO LIVES PURELY AND SELF-ASSURED
IN QUIETNESS AND VIRTUE,
WHO IS WITHOUT HARM OR HURT OR BLAME,
EVEN IF HE WEARS FINE CLOTHES,
SO LONG AS HE HAS FAITH
HE IS A TRUE SEEKER.

BUT HE WHO LIVES PURELY.... What does Buddha mean by "living purely"? He means living innocently, with no belief, with no doubt, living not out of mind but out of meditation. He has his own meaning of purity. He does not mean by "living in purity" rotten, old ideas. Purity does not mean that you should eat food only prepared by a brahmin; purity does not mean that you should eat only when the sun is in the sky; purity does not mean that you should only wear this and you should not wear that.

Purity means living out of no-mind, living spontaneously, moment to moment like a child, innocently -- living from a state of not knowing. All knowledge is cunning, and all knowledge corrupts. Living from a state of not knowing -- that is purity.

Socrates says: I know only one thing, that I know nothing -- this is purity.

Buddha used to tell his disciples, "Please never ask me metaphysical questions, because I don't know. Don't ask about God and don't ask about the soul, and don't ask about heaven and hell." He had a list prepared of eleven questions; those eleven questions contained all the

questions philosophy is full of.

Whenever he would enter a new town, his disciples would go around and tell people, "Please don't ask these eleven questions, because Buddha will not answer these questions. He is interested only in practical questions. Ask about greed and how to get rid of it; ask about anger and how to go beyond it. Ask about possessiveness and how to drop it, ask about transformation. Ask how you can drop the mind and attain to meditation. But don't ask metaphysical questions because they don't help you at all. They create belief, and with belief comes doubt. And divided into belief and doubt you become a schizophrenic, you become zero. You lose your integrity."

BUT HE WHO LIVES PURELY AND SELF-ASSURED.... Now, this word 'self-assured' is also not rightly translated. What Buddha means is one who trusts his own being -- it is not "self-assured." "Self-assured" gives the sense of ego; Buddha means an egoless trust. One who trusts in the whole existence also trusts in himself, because he is part of the whole. He listens to his heart's voice and follows it. Unafraid he goes with his heart. He trusts his intuition. And once you have known the art of how to listen to your intuition, you will be surprised: intellect can err, intuition never errs -- it is infallible. It always directs you in the right course of action.

IN QUIETNESS AND VIRTUE.... "Quietness" means meditation, thoughtlessness, no thought disturbing, the lake of consciousness absolutely without any waves and ripples. And the consequence of such silence is virtue. Virtue is not something practiced by you; you cannot practice virtue. If you practice virtue, on the surface you will wear a mask, but behind the surface you will go on living in your old vicious ways. Of course, you can hide from others, but how can you hide from yourself?

That's what happens to your priests, your so-called saints; their whole life becomes very cunning -- they say one thing, they live a totally different life. They are bound to be so because the virtue is cultivated.

A sociologist was taking a survey based on the sexual proclivities of various national and ethnic groups. He approached an elderly Italian gentleman in a black suit and, after the usual preliminaries, asked him how often he had sexual intercourse.

"Oh, maybe ten, twelve times a year," stated the old fellow.

"But you are Italian and Italians are supposed to be very sexy," came the response.

"Listen, I don't think that is so bad for a sixty-year-old priest who does not own a car!"

Your priests, your saints, your so-called virtuous people, respectable people, they have double lives: on the surface one thing, in the depth totally the opposite of it.

Sister Semolina had lately arrived at the jungle mission. She was under the instruction of Mother Maria, who called her into her office late one afternoon.

"I must go to the capital and I will be away overnight," said Mother Maria. "I want to warn you: if Father Dominique comes to your room tonight do not let him in, no matter what he tells you."

Next day, Mother Maria returned to find Sister Semolina waiting in her office. "I am here to confess," she said tearfully. "Last night I disobeyed your orders. Father Dominique came to my door, and, oh Mother, he was so convincing! He said to me that I was the gateway to heaven and that he had the key to heaven and that if I let him put his key into my locked gate we could be in heaven together."

"That bastard!" exclaimed Mother Maria. "He told me it was Gabriel's horn, and I have been blowing it for fifteen years!"

But this is natural, it has to be so. These jokes are not just jokes, they have great truths in them. It is inevitable because your whole idea of virtue is to impose upon yourself good qualities, praised down the centuries. But if you impose something upon yourself, what are you going to do to your nature? You will become two persons, and the nature is certainly more powerful than anything imposed.

The nature has to be transformed. Character has not to be cultivated; it has to be a by-product of consciousness. That is Buddha's great contribution to the world.

IN QUIETNESS AND VIRTUE.... Virtue comes number two. First comes quietness, meditateness, purity, innocence, trust.

WHO IS WITHOUT HARM OR HURT OR BLAME, EVEN IF HE WEARS FINE CLOTHES, SO LONG AS HE ALSO HAS FAITH HE IS A TRUE SEEKER. Again read instead of "faith," "trust." He who has trust, he is a true seeker. The believer is not a true seeker -- he has already believed! He is phony from the very beginning. If you already believe in God, how can you seek and search? You have killed the quest from the very beginning, you have aborted the quest.

One can go into inquiry only when one has no belief and no doubt. When one is simply open, with no prejudice, no conclusion, no ready-made answers given by others, when one simply goes as a clean slate, as a mirror, then one comes across truth.

Truth can be known only by a mirrorlike mind. A mirrorlike mind is a no-mind. But if you are already a believer you will never know the truth. A Christian cannot know, a Mohammedan cannot know, a Hindu cannot know, a Buddhist cannot know. Unless you drop all these ideologies, unless you put them aside and go into the journey absolutely open, not even a small prejudice lurking somewhere in your mind....

Once a very famous professor, Doctor Bannerji, came to see me. He said that he wanted to prove scientifically the theory of reincarnation, the theory of rebirth. He wanted to prove that the Christians and the Mohammedans and the Jews are wrong, and he wanted to prove it scientifically. He had come to take my support.

I said, "The way you are saying it, the search is unscientific from the very beginning!" He asked, "Why?"

I said, "You have already decided that Mohammedans, Christians, Jews are wrong. You have not entered into the search yet and the decision is already there that Hindus and Jainas and Buddhists are right. And how can you say you want to prove it scientifically? -- how can it be scientific?"

"The first requirement of a scientific mind is not to start with a conclusion. You drop your conclusions. You will have to be perfectly alert that you don't know what the reality is -- then go into it. And then inquire, remaining very impartial. Even if it goes against your theory, let it go; even if it goes against Hinduism, let it go. Truth has to be revealed, not Hinduism to be proved. You are too much of a Hindu," I told him; "you can't be a scientist."

He had come to be with me for two hours -- within twenty minutes he left. He said, "I am in a hurry, I have to go somewhere."

I said, "You are not in any hurry and you are not going anywhere! You had asked for two hours and I have given you two hours -- and you cannot leave this place before two hours are up! You will have to answer me first: What kind of scientific approach is this?"

Of course he was unable. It was so clear, so obvious that in science you don't start with a conclusion -- you start only with a hypothesis: may be, may not be... perhaps. You start with a "perhaps"; the "perhaps" keeps you open.

Buddha cannot mean faith, Buddha cannot mean belief. He means trust -- trusting that if you go without any conclusion you will find. Because the truth is there! It is not something that has to be created, it is already there! Truth does not mean something in heaven; truth means the herenow reality. Whatsoever it is, XYZ, start with a "perhaps," be an inquirer.

And then Buddha says: EVEN IF HE WEARS FINE CLOTHES.... There is no need to be naked, there is no need to renounce, there is no need to go on a fast. The real thing to be renounced is your conclusions, your beliefs, your prejudices.

A NOBLE HORSE RARELY
FEELS THE TOUCH OF THE WHIP.
WHO IS THERE IN THIS WORLD AS BLAMELESS?

Buddha was a prince before he became enlightened, and when he was a prince he really loved horses. He was a lover of horses. In those days, horses were the greatest support in war. And there were lovers of horses: in English, the name Philip simply means a lover of horses -- Buddha was a Philip.

When he became enlightened he remembered the horses many times. In many ways he talks about horses. He says there are four kinds of horses. First, the worst: even if you beat them, the more you beat, the more they become stubborn. They have no aristocracy, no grace, no dignity. You can insult them, you can whip them, you can beat them -- they are very thick-skinned. If they don't want to move, they will not move.

Then the second kind: if you beat them they will move; they have a little dignity, a sense of self-honor. Then the third kind, a little higher: you need not beat them -- just the noise of the whip is enough. And the highest, the fourth: even the noise of the whip is not needed -- only the shadow of the whip is enough.

Buddha says men are also of four kinds. The highest, the most intelligent, the real seekers of truth, only need just the shadow of the whip; just a little hint from the master is enough. They need not be beaten, they need not be forced. A NOBLE HORSE RARELY FEELS THE TOUCH OF THE WHIP. There is no need for the noble horse to feel the touch of the whip -- just the shadow. So there are four kinds of disciples too. The highest kind simply takes the hint. Sometimes not even a word is uttered; the master just looks into your eyes, and that's enough.

That's what happened a few days ago.... A well-known therapist from America, Naomi, took sannyas -- an old woman. I can say she belongs to the fourth: just the shadow of the whip -- I just looked into her eyes -- and that was enough. And she has become mine and I have become hers. Immediately the contact happened, the connection. It cannot be broken now.

Yesterday she wrote a letter, because she is leaving today and she is afraid. In the few days she has been here she has known new depths of being -- she has not been here long, only a few days. She has seen me only once, just for two minutes. She says she has known great depths, subtle experiences have happened; they are very delicate, and she is a little bit afraid. "Going back to the West so soon, in the gross marketplace of the West, will I be able

to continue growing?" She asked me, "Will I be close to you there as I am here? Will I be part of your commune even though I am thousands of miles away?"

Naomi, love knows no distance. You can be thousands of miles away -- if your heart is full of love, if your heart remembers me, you are as close as anybody can be.

My commune is going to spread all over the earth. Wherever you will see a sannyasin, my commune exists there. Wherever you will find a sannyasin, I am there with him. Wherever a sannyasin remembers me I am present to him, far more deeply than I can be physically present -- because I am no longer in my body, just somehow hanging around the body. I am no longer the body. If you love me you will know that I am something totally different from the body; it is a nonphysical phenomenon.

And, Naomi, you can be in contact wherever you are. The moment you close your eyes you will find me inside you. The master becomes part of the disciple. Slowly slowly, the master is no longer outside, he is more and more inside. And it has started happening -- the process is triggered, and it is a process which cannot be stopped; even the gross material world of the West cannot stop it. And you will not be there for long either; soon you will be pulled here. Now this is your home. Wherever you are you will find yourself an outsider.

A NOBLE HORSE RARELY FEELS THE TOUCH OF THE WHIP. WHO IS THERE IN THIS WORLD AS BLAMELESS? Buddha asks. WHO IS THERE IN THIS WORLD AS BLAMELESS? -- that one is capable of becoming a buddha. That one is capable first of becoming a disciple, then becoming a master.

THEN LIKE A NOBLE HORSE
SMART UNDER THE WHIP,
BURN AND BE SWIFT.

Be like a noble horse -- smart, aware, watchful. BURN AND BE SWIFT. If you are aware.... Awareness is fire; it burns all that is wrong in you. It burns your ego. It burns your greed, it burns your possessiveness, it burns your jealousy -- it burns all that is wrong and negative, and it enhances all that is beautiful, graceful, divine.

And when the gross and the ugly are burned, a great sharpness happens to your being, a great swiftness comes to your life, a great intensity and passion, a great totality and wholeness.

BELIEVE, MEDITATE, SEE.

Let me remind you again: don't read "believe," read "trust": Trust, MEDITATE, SEE.

These are the three steps, simple, very simple. The first thing is trust: have a loving trust for all that is, then meditation becomes easy because you can relax. The person who trusts can relax into existence. The person who cannot trust remains tense, remains anxious, afraid. The person who trusts can melt, can disappear, evaporate. He knows that, "Even if I fall into the ocean, I am just a dewdrop..." but he also knows that, "As a dewdrop I will disappear, but I will exist as the ocean. I will not be losing anything; I will be gaining all." Meditation is a dewdrop disappearing in the ocean.

And then there is seeing. That's why I say Buddha has no philosophy but a philosophy -- he has no system of thought but a way, a method, to see.

BE HARMLESS, BE BLAMELESS.

AWAKE TO THE LAW.

Remain in tune with that law of existence. Flow with the river; don't try to go upstream. Let let-go be your fundamental sutra, and then you will be harmless and you will be blameless.

AWAKE TO THE LAW -- AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- awake to the eternal law.

AND FROM ALL SORROW FREE YOURSELF.

Sorrow arises whenever you go against the law of existence, and bliss whenever you go in rhythm with it, dancing with it hand in hand.

THE FARMER CHANNELS WATER TO HIS LAND.
THE FLETCHER WHITTLES HIS ARROWS.
THE CARPENTER TURNS HIS WOOD.
AND THE WISE MAN MASTERS HIMSELF.

This is the way to be wise and to be a master of oneself. Without being a master of oneself, life is empty, vain, meaningless. It can't have any poetry, it can't have any joy, it can't have any ecstasy. And ecstasy, joy, is your birthright -- but you can have it only when you attain to this worth, to this worthiness.

Become aware, trust, start seeing -- drop all beliefs and all doubts, and the goal is not far away. You need not go anywhere. If you can trust, meditate, see, if you can awaken to the eternal law, you are the master -- not the master of anybody else but the master of yourself. And that is the true mastery. Jesus calls it the Kingdom of God.

But you will have to be reborn, you will have to learn a new way of life -- a new way, let me remind you, not a new philosophy. And Buddha is giving you hints. These hints can be used if you listen attentively, intelligently, meditatively.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 4

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Aes dhammo sanantano

31 August 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
HOW CAN I GO TO THE OTHER SHORE WHEN I AM TRYING TO BE HERENOW?
IT IS A MESS IN MY MIND WHEN I THINK OF THAT, BUT SOMEWHERE IN MY
HEART I FEEL A KIND OF REST.

Deva Darpan, "the other shore" is only a metaphor. There is no other shore; this is the only shore there is. To be herenow is to enter the other shore.

We can live in two ways: we can live in time or we can live in eternity. If we live in time, metaphorically that is called "this shore"; if we live in eternity, metaphorically that is called "the other shore." The gate to enter into eternity is herenow. To live in time is to live either in past or in future.

Mind lives in time -- mind IS time. It is always entangled either with the past or with the future -- and both are not. The past is no more, the future not yet, and the mind lives in something that is not. Mind's existence is a very shadowy, pseudo existence; it is just a reflection in the mirror, the moon seen reflected in the lake.

To be herenow means getting out of time. You will have to pull yourself from the past, you will have to be out of the past. You will have to slip out of the past as a snake slips out of the old skin. And you will have to be very alert not to get entangled into the future -- future projections, dreams. If you can avoid past and future you are alert, you are aware.

That's what Buddha means by SAMMASATI -- right awareness. Then you are now and you are here. Where else can you be? That's where you really are!

Even though you go on moving into the past and into the future, all that movement is like a dream. You fall asleep, you remain in your room, but in your dream you can wander all over the earth, or you can go to the planets, to the moon, or to the stars. But in the morning when you wake up you will not find yourself on the moon. You may have been the whole night in your dream on the moon; you are going to wake up in your room. So even when you were walking on the moon, in your dream you were in your room -- really you were in your room.

We are always in the present; there is nowhere else to be. But we can dream, we can imagine, we can revive memories, we can project in the future great illusions... but still we are herenow! The day, the moment, you become aware that you are here and you cannot be anywhere else, that you are now and you cannot be then, you sink into the reality, you go to the depth of reality itself, you change your gear from time to eternity.

The cross in its original sense represented time and eternity. It does not represent simply Jesus' crucifixion; the cross is an older symbol than Jesus. In fact it is only a part of the ancient Eastern symbol, SWASTIKA, just a part of it. The swastika in the East has always represented time and eternity; the cross also represents time. Time is horizontal, it is linear; it moves from one moment to another moment. And the vertical line on the cross represents eternity -- depth, height. In time you swim, in eternity you dive.

Herenow simply means this gap between the past and the future, this small interval. From this small interval you enter into a totally different world -- that is called "the other shore."

Darpan, you need not be puzzled. But sometimes if you catch hold of metaphors too literally you can become very much confused. And I have to use metaphors; there is no other way to express that which cannot really be expressed, to express that about which the only

right course is to be silent. The only possible way is to use metaphors, parables, stories, because they give you indirect hints.

The reality is so delicate and so fragile; it is like a very delicate flower. If you try to catch hold of it directly you destroy it. You cannot hold it in your fist; it is very mercurial. You can only move in a very indirect way, and very subtle has to be your movement -- not even the footsteps should be heard. You can only whisper with reality; you cannot shout and you cannot argue.

That's what a metaphor is: a dialogue which is done in whispers, a dialogue which is done in a poetic way; not prose, not clear-cut, not mathematical -- vague, mysterious. You cannot attack reality; you can only persuade, you can seduce reality. It is a love affair, not a rape.

That's where religion and science are different. Science is a kind of rape on reality. It tries to snatch truth from reality forcibly, violently; hence it destroys the natural equilibrium, the natural balance. It destroys ecology, it destroys the harmony, the accord of existence. It IS a rape, because science speaks in the language of conquest.

Religion is a love affair, it is not a rape. Religion woos reality, persuades, slowly slowly, in a very indirect way. One has to be exquisitely graceful, hence these metaphors.

"The other shore" is a beautiful metaphor, but let me remind you: this is the other shore, this is that. You are not going to change the shore, you are simply going to change your consciousness. The change has not to happen in the outside -- not that you take a boat, a ferry, and you go to the other shore. That will be a change in the outer circumstances. No, you drop the mind and you become consciousness, and the other shore has arrived. You have not moved even a single inch, you may not have done anything at all -- you may have been simply sitting with closed eyes....

That's what Buddha was doing when he reached the other shore. In Bodhgaya he was sitting underneath a tree by the side of the river Niranjana. It was early morning, a beautiful, silent morning, and he opened his eyes. The last star was disappearing from the sky; he saw the last star disappearing, and something inside, in him, also disappeared... the last trace of the ego. The sky became empty, HE became empty, and these two emptinesses met, merged, melted into each other. The sky entered into him, he entered the sky.

On the visible side, on the outside, nothing was changed; everything was exactly the same. The Niranjana continued to flow, the birds must have continued to sing; not even a leaf has fallen from the tree, nothing has changed... and all has changed. Now Buddha is no longer a mind; he has become meditation. He is no longer in thoughts; he has become a pure witness, a SAKSHIN.

This is the other shore I am talking about.

That's why when you think, Darpan, you feel a little confused, but when you don't think about it you also feel a kind of rest. Watch! Confusion must be felt in the head and the rest in the heart. The heart has its own reasons, its own way of understanding things.

When I am talking to you, I am not only talking to your minds -- that is only the superficial part. What is really transpiring between me and you is something of the heart. The mind is being used as a stepping-stone towards the heart, that's all. I am using words as stepping-stones, as means, not as an end in themselves.

That's why these two things are felt by you simultaneously: a confusion in the head and a deep rest in the heart. The heart understands -- the heart understands that this moment, the herenow, is the other shore. But the heart is not very articulate; the head is very articulate. This is one of the dilemmas: the head cannot understand but is very articulate, and the heart can understand but is not very articulate. It understands but its understanding remains silent;

in fact the more it understands, the more silent it becomes. The head understands nothing; in fact the less it understands, the more noisy it is. You have to see this point.

Use the head to reach to the heart, but don't become rooted in the head. Don't stay there! Use it as a stepping-stone, as a ladder, but don't make your house there; otherwise your whole life will be of confusion, anxiety, anguish. Use it, and forget all about it. Enter into the heart and listen to the silent dance of the heart energy. Listen to the relaxed, restful song of the heart, the soundless sound, the one hand clapping.

The heart is very close to the mystery of existence; the head is the farthest away. The head is this shore and the heart is that shore -- but you are already on that shore. The head is simply dreaming things. When you get out of the head you simply get out of something which never existed in the first place.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU CONTINUOUSLY TELL US TO "BE AWARE," TO "BE A WITNESS." BUT CAN
A WITNESSING CONSCIOUSNESS REALLY SING, DANCE AND TASTE LIFE? IS A
WITNESS A MERE SPECTATOR OF LIFE AND NEVER A PARTICIPANT?

Anand Nur, mind is bound to raise this question sooner or later, because mind is very much afraid of your becoming a witness. Why is the mind so much afraid of your becoming a witness? -- because your becoming a witness is the death of the mind.

Mind is a doer, it wants to do things, and witnessing is a state of nondoing. The mind is afraid that, "If you become a witness, I will not be needed anymore." And in a way the mind is right....

Once the witness arises in you the mind has to disappear, just like if you bring light into your room and the darkness has to disappear -- it is inevitable. Mind can exist only if you remain fast asleep, because mind is a state of dreaming and dreams can exist only in sleep.

By becoming a witness you are no longer asleep, you are awake. You become awareness -- so crystal-clear, so young and fresh, so vital and potent. You become a flame -- intense, burning from both the ends -- as if, in that state of intensity, light, consciousness, mind dies, mind commits suicide. Hence the mind is afraid.

And mind will create many problems for you, it will raise many many questions. It will make you hesitate to take the jump into the unknown, it will try to pull you back. It will try to convince you that, "With me is safety, security; with me you are living under a shelter, well guarded. I take every care of you. With me you are efficient, skillful. The moment you leave me, you will have to leave all your knowledge and you will have to leave all your securities, safeties. You will have to drop your armor and you will be going into the unknown. You are unnecessarily taking a risk for no reason at all." And it will try to bring beautiful rationalizations. This is one of the rationalizations which almost always happens to every meditator.

It is not you, Anand Nur, who is asking the question; it is the mind, your enemy, who is putting the questions through you. It is mind who is saying, "Beloved Master, you continuously tell us to 'be aware,' to 'be a witness.' But can a witnessing consciousness really sing, dance and taste life?"

Yes, Anand Nur -- in fact only a witnessing consciousness can really sing, dance and taste life. It will appear like a paradox -- it is! But all that is true is always paradoxical, remember.

If truth is not paradoxical then it is not truth at all, then it is something else.

Paradox is a basic, intrinsic quality of truth -- let it sink into your heart forever! Truth as such is paradoxical. Although all paradoxes are not truths, all truths are paradoxes. The truth has to be a paradox because it has to be both the poles -- the negative and the positive -- and yet a transcendence. It has to be life and death, and plus. By "plus" I mean the transcendence of both -- both and both not. That is the ultimate paradox.

When you are in the mind, how can you sing? The mind creates misery; out of misery there can be no song. When you are in the mind, how can you dance? Yes, you can go through certain empty gestures called dance, but it is not a real dance.

Only a Meera knows a real dance, or a Krishna, or a Chaitanya. These are the people who know real dance. Others know only the technique of dancing, but there is nothing overflowing; their energies are stagnant. People who are living in the mind are living in the ego, and the ego cannot dance. It can make a performance but not a dance.

The real dance happens only when you have become a witness. Then you are so blissful that the very bliss starts overflowing -- that is the dance. The very bliss starts singing; a song arises on its own accord. And only when you are a witness can you taste life.

I can understand your question, Anand Nur. You are worried that by becoming a witness one will become merely a spectator of life. No, to be a spectator is one thing, and to be a witness a totally different thing, qualitatively different.

A spectator is indifferent, he is dull, he is in a kind of sleep. He does not participate in life. He is afraid, he is a coward. He stands by the side of the road and simply goes on seeing others living. That's what you are doing all your life: somebody else acts in a movie and you see. You are a spectator! People are glued to their chairs for hours together before their TVs -- spectators. Somebody else is singing, you are listening. Somebody else is dancing, you are just a spectator. Somebody else is loving and you are just seeing. You are not a participant. Professionals are doing what you should have done on your own.

A witness is not a spectator. Then what is a witness? A witness is one who participates yet remains alert. A witness is in a state of WU-WEI. That is Lao Tzu's word: it means action through inaction. A witness is not one who has escaped from life. He lives in life, lives far more totally, far more passionately, but yet remains deep down a watcher; goes on remembering that, "I am a consciousness."

Try it walking on the road: remember that you are a consciousness. Walking continues -- and a new thing is added, a new richness is added, a new beauty. Something interior is added to the outward act. You become a flame of consciousness, and then the walking has a totally different joy to it; you are on the earth and yet your feet are not touching the earth at all.

That's what Buddha has said: Pass through a river, but don't let the water touch your feet.

That's the meaning of the Eastern symbol of the lotus. You must have seen Buddha's statues, pictures of him sitting on a lotus -- that is a metaphor. A lotus is a flower that lives in the water and yet the water cannot touch it. The lotus does not escape to the Himalayan caves; it lives in the water and yet remains far, far away. Being in the marketplace but not allowing the marketplace to enter into your being, living in the world and yet not of the world -- that is what is meant by a "witnessing consciousness."

That's what I mean by saying to you again and again: Be aware! I am not against action, but your action has to be enlightened by awareness. Those who are against action, they are bound to be repressive -- and all kinds of repression make you pathological, not whole, not healthy.

The monks living in the monasteries, Catholic or Hindu; the monks of the Jainas and the

Buddhists, who have escaped from life -- they are not true sannyasins. They have simply repressed their desires and they have moved away from the world, the world of action. Where can you be a witness if you move away from the world of action? The world of action is the best opportunity to be aware. It gives you a challenge, it remains constantly a challenge.

Either you can fall asleep and become a doer; then you are a worldly man, a dreamer, a victim of illusions -- or you can become a witness and yet go on living in the world; then your action has a different quality to it. It is really action. Those who are not aware, their actions are not real actions but reactions; they only react. Somebody insults you and you react. Insult the Buddha: he does not react -- he acts. Reaction is dependent on the other -- he pushes a button and you are only a victim, a slave; you function like a machine.

The real person, who knows what awareness is, never reacts; he acts out of his own awareness. The action does not come from the other's act; nobody can push his button. If he feels spontaneously that this is right to do, he does it; if he feels nothing is needed, he keeps quiet. He is not repressive; he is always open, expressive. His expression is multidimensional. In song, in poetry, in dance, in love, in prayer, in compassion, he flows.

If you don't become aware, then there are only two possibilities: either you will be repressive or indulgent. Both ways you remain in a bondage.

A nun was raped just outside the monastery. When she was finally found, she was carried inside and the nearby physician was called.

He came, raised his hands and said, "This is work for a plastic surgeon!"

A plastic surgeon was called. When he saw the poor nun he exclaimed, "Oh, my God! What a mess! Where should I start?"

The mother superior replied, "Well, that's easy. First get that smile off her face!"

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS YES? I FIND THAT I HAVE NO REAL UNDERSTANDING OF IT. I HAVE SEEN THAT WHENEVER I SAY YES, THERE IS A HINT OF SURPRISE, AS IF I AM AMAZED THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO SAY NO. MY YES IS ALWAYS INSTEAD OF NO. WHERE IS THE SEAT OF THIS EXPERIENCE, YES...?

Prem Satyamo, yes contains the very essence of all religions. Saying yes to existence is to be religious. Saying no is resistance, saying no is conflict, saying no is egoistic. Saying no is keeping your separation, keeping yourself aloof. Saying yes is merging, melting into the whole. Saying yes is opening up, just like a bud opens and becomes a flower. The no is a closed state of mind; yes is an open flower.

The difference between no and yes is the difference between a dead and an alive person. The person who lives in the no remains encapsulated, remains in a windowless world where the sun and the rain and the wind cannot reach; where God can go on knocking but even the sound of the knock will not reach; where love cannot reach.

The closed person, the person who lives with no, lives in the ego. The greater the ego, the less are the bridges between the person and existence. When the ego is total, the person is completely enclosed by a wall; he lives in a prison of his own creation. He cannot say yes to the moon and he cannot say yes to the trees and he cannot say yes to anything! He has forgotten to say yes, and even if he sometimes says yes, his yes is nothing but a camouflaged

no.

I have heard a story about Joseph Stalin:

Molotov, his foreign minister, phoned him from the UNO. His wife was sitting by his side while he took the phone call. Joseph Stalin said, "No, no, no, yes, no!"

The wife was surprised. Not by the no's, so many no's -- she knew her husband perfectly well, he was a man of no. He was one of the most egoistic men possible. His name is significant: 'stalin' means a man of steel. He was not really a man but a steel man, a machine, a robot. No was just natural to him.

The wife was puzzled that between those four no's there was one yes. She asked him, "Can I ask you one question? I don't want to interfere in your politics and what is going on between you and Molotov and what you are saying. Just one thing... and I have become very curious: did you really say one yes amongst all those four no's, or did I mishear you? Did you really say yes?"

Stalin said, "Yes, I said yes."

The wife asked, "Then one question more: Why did you say yes?"

He said, "When I said three no's, Molotov asked, 'Did you say no?' I said, 'Yes.'"

There are people who can say yes only when it is nothing but a camouflaged no. And there are also people, very rare, who can say no only as a camouflaged yes. These are the buddhas. Yes, sometimes they also say no, but their no is not a negative no; the heart of their no is yes. They are incapable of saying no. If they have to use the word sometimes, in certain circumstances, it really means yes.

A man like Buddha can sometimes be very hard, but he is hard because of his compassion and love. George Gurdjieff was very hard on his disciples just because of his infinite compassion, his total love.

Yes is the very essence of religion, no the very foundation of irreligion. The atheist is not one who does not believe in God; the atheist is one who believes in no. And the theist is not one who believes in God; the theist is one who believes in yes -- because there have been theists like Buddha and Mahavira who do not believe in God, yet where else can you find more religious people? And there are millions of people who believe in God, and their life gives no indication of any religion -- no fragrance. They stink of irreligion, of violence, of hatred, of jealousy, of possessiveness. Flowers of love don't bloom in their life.

Yes is the foundation of a true religious life.

You ask me, "What is yes?"

Yes is dropping of the ego.

Yes is coming out of the mind. Yes is trust.

Just the other day Buddha was talking about trust: Trust, meditate, and see. Yes means trust, and trust is the beginning of meditation. Meditation means relaxing with existence. Unless you trust, unless you can say yes to existence, how can you relax? People cannot relax because they are afraid. People cannot relax because they fear that if they relax they may be cheated. People can relax only with others whom they trust.

With a stranger in your room you may not be able to sleep in the night. Who knows, he may cut your throat. Who knows, he may steal your money and escape. But with your wife or husband you go into deep sleep, you can trust. The child can go with his father or mother anywhere. Even if the father is going into fire, the child can go singing a song, dancing, inquiring, questioning, unafraid, because he knows his hand is in his father's hand.

This trust is yes: knowing that this existence is our mother, that nature is our source -- it can't be against us, it can't be inimical to us. Seeing this, understanding this, trust arises. Then you can say yes. Then you can say "Amen"; that simply means yes.

And the moment you can say yes and you can relax, meditation becomes natural. Without any effort, without any strain, without any tension, you start falling into spaces called meditation... empty of all rubbish and junk, but full of God -- full of godliness rather; empty of the world, but full of something that you had never known before; full of a light which is immaterial, full of fragrance which comes from nowhere, out of the blue. Emptiness yet a plenitude, emptiness and yet a fullness -- not negative.

And when there is meditation, seeing arises, DARSHAN is born -- you become capable of seeing. Your eyes are so clear, so pure; no clouds, no confusion, no thoughts. Your eyes are so perceptive, so penetrating, that you can reach to the deepest core of the mystery of this existence, that you can have a glimpse of the magic that surrounds you, the eternal magic. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO: you can have a look into the inexhaustible law.

Satyamo, you ask, "What is yes? I find that I have no real understanding of it."

Nobody has! Once you have a real understanding of yes, you have all that is needed for the journey to the other shore. Then you are ready to go to the other shore. The yes becomes the boat, and it is capable of crossing all the storms. Howsoever stormy the ocean may be, the boat of yes is capable of reaching the other shore. If you have the boat of yes, then nobody can prevent you from reaching to God.

You say, "I have seen that whenever I say yes, there is a hint of surprise, as if I am amazed that there is no reason to say no."

Yes. Anybody starting saying yes, learning how to say yes, is bound to be surprised again and again. The places where you would have said no before, now you are saying yes. You are bound to be surprised because there is no reason to say no. Why did you say no your whole life? Just watch people, and yourself -- almost ninety-nine percent of no's are just out of the ego; there is no valid reason for them.

The child wants to go and play outside. It is so sunny and the birds are singing and the wind is blowing and the butterflies and the bees are humming... and the child asks the mother, "Can I go out and play in the garden?" She says "No" -- not even thinking, not even listening to what he is really asking for, not even giving him a single thought, a moment's awareness. No simply comes automatically, as if it is built in. She has not thought, she has not looked at the child at all. She is not saying no to what the child has asked because she is going to say no anyway. It has no reference to the child; it has some reference to her power trip.

So many women don't really want to be mothers. They are not even worthy of being mothers, but they want to be mothers, they desire to be mothers, for a totally different reason -- not for motherhood.

Motherhood is a great meditation. Motherhood is one of the greatest arts: you are creating an alive being. The sculptor is nothing compared to the mother, because he will be creating only a marble statue. The painter is nothing, the poet is nothing, the singer is nothing, the musician is nothing, because they will be playing with things, objects. The mother is the greatest poet and the greatest painter and the greatest musician and the greatest sculptor, because she is creating a consciousness -- life itself.

But women are not interested in motherhood, their interest is totally wrong. Although they say that they would like to be mothers, really what they want is power. A woman feels very powerful when she has children -- because man has taken all other power trips from her.

She is not allowed to be in the marketplace, she is not allowed to be in the church, she is not allowed to be in politics. She is not given any opportunity anywhere to have her ego fulfilled; almost ninety percent of opportunities have been taken by the man. The woman has been forced to live in the house; she can have only one power trip -- over her children.

Hence the no. She has not listened, she has not seen the child; she has simply said no. And it is absolutely meaningless! If she had listened there was no reason to say no. This is perfectly right: when the sun is dancing outside, why should the child remain in the house, dark and dismal? And when the wind is blowing outside, the child should also be allowed to dance in the wind. The child should be allowed to dance in the rain too, but the mother rationalizes, "He may catch cold or he may fall ill -- that's why I am saying no." But those are just rationalizations.

In fact, each child has a birthright to dance in the rain, in the wind, in the sun. It gives health, it gives vitality. It brings him closer to nature and closer to God. The mother forces him and takes him to the church or to the temple where he can't see anything, no God at all. And where God is so much alive, so much throbbing, in nature.... The child would like to climb a tree, it is such a challenge -- God is calling him from the tree, from the top of the tree!

All children should be allowed to climb trees, to climb mountains. They should be given all chances to accept all kinds of challenges. They should be helped to move into danger. They should be prepared, not protected; prepared to move into danger -- helped, persuaded, rewarded, to move into danger because a man who knows how to move in danger is bound to stumble upon God sooner or later. But the mother will say no, the father will say no.

For many years a Negro kid had been praying to God to make him white. One morning he woke up and found that his skin WAS white. He got out of bed very excitedly and shouted, "Momma, Momma! Look, I have turned white!"

From the kitchen Momma replied, "Shut up, Tommy, I am getting bored with you. Tell it to your father."

Tom went into the bathroom. "Daddy, Daddy! Look, I am white now."

The father did not even turn his eyes away from the mirror. He said in a tired voice, "Oh Tommy, please, I have no time. Go and tell your sister this nonsense."

Tom was puzzled more and more. He went to his sister. "Mary, Mary, have you seen? God did a miracle -- my skin turned white!"

Mary answered, "Fuck off, man! I'm late, I gotta go."

At this point Tom was quite pissed off, and looking at his watch he said, "Well, I've been white for only five minutes but I already can't stand these fucking niggers anymore!"

No comes easy, no has become our way of life.

You ask me, Satyamo, "I feel surprised, as if amazed that there is no reason to say no."

Yes, there is no reason to say no. And if you can avoid saying mechanical no's, if sometimes there is really a reason to say no, your no will have a positive value; it will not be negative. The man who lives in the climate of yes sometimes may have to say no, but his no will not be negative, it can't be. And vice versa. The person who lives in the climate of no, even if he says yes sometimes, it is not positive, it is not really yes; it is only a disguised no. Its value is negative.

You say, "My yes is always instead of no."

In the beginning it is bound to be so. You have become so habituated to saying no that

your first yes will be instead of no. But that is not the real yes yet, it is only a substitute; it will have something of the no in it, some dirtiness of the no will still cling to this yes. It is as if your cup is dirty and you pour tea into it and your tea also becomes dirty. If your yes is only a substitute for no, if it is instead of no, then it will have some qualities of no still clinging to it. But in the beginning it is bound to be so, so don't be worried about it. Clean your cup a little more!

Start saying yes for no reason at all, just as you have been saying no up to now for no reason at all. It can be one of the most beautiful chantings, far better than repeating "Rama, Rama, Krishna, Krishna, Jesus, Jesus." Far more beautiful and far more significant, far more meaningful, will be to sit silently and repeat meaningfully, consciously, "Yes, yes, yes." It can be a far deeper going mantra than any other can ever be, because Rama and Krishna and Jesus are so far away, they are just stories; you can't really relate with them. The world has changed so much that they can't be more than stories.

I have heard that Jesus came back after eighteen hundred years just to have a look at the world, see how things are going -- hoping that things must have changed by now. Eighteen hundred years of Christianity, thousands and thousands of Christian priests all over the world, thousands of churches -- the world must have changed!

He landed on the bank of Lake Galilee where he had walked once on water. Just by chance a rabbi had come for a morning walk. Jesus wanted to see the rabbi, see who he is, so he walked on the water. The rabbi looked a little puzzled. Jesus came back and said to the rabbi, "Did you see what I have done?"

The rabbi said, "Yes, I have seen. Why didn't you learn to swim like everybody else? Are you crazy or something?"

The world has changed!

I have heard about another rabbi. He had come from America to visit the Holy Land. He was passing Lake Galilee -- he wanted to see the place also -- and he asked the boatman how much it would cost; he would like to have a trip round the lake. "Can you take me to the other shore and back?"

The boatman said, "Fifty dollars."

The rabbi said, "That is too much! I have seen bigger lakes than this and I have never paid more than five dollars. Fifty...?"

The boatman said, "But you don't recognize, rabbi, that this is the place where Our Lord walked on water!"

The rabbi said, "Seeing the cost, anybody would walk on the water! I cannot pay fifty dollars -- and I come from America. That poor carpenter's son, how could he have paid fifty dollars?"

The world has changed. If these people, Jesus and Krishna and Rama, suddenly land now, they will not be recognized, they will be thought crazy. They will look so outlandish, they will look as if they are coming from a film set, out of a movie -- movies like THE TEN COMMANDMENTS! They will not look real.

But yes can be a totally different matter.

"Jesus" you will repeat mechanically, but saying "Yes," really meaning it... bowing down to the earth and saying yes... lying on the earth naked and saying yes to the earth as if the earth is your mother, which it is... swimming in the lake and saying yes to the water, not only

saying it, but feeling it all over, each fiber of your being, each cell of your being pulsating with yes... taking a sunbath and saying yes, not verbally, I mean, but existentially... being in the mood of yes... receiving the sun, welcoming the sun and the sand and the texture of the sand, and the coolness of the wind... welcoming all these gifts of God that go on showering on you -- and you don't even feel grateful.

Yes is gratitude.

No is ugly, ungratefulness.

But in the beginning, Satyamo, it is going to be so: your yes will be only instead of no. But it is a good beginning. Slowly slowly, you will come to a yes which is not instead of no but has its own roots in your being. When that yes has happened to you which has no reference to no -- not that it is not only instead of no but it has no reference to no, it is not the opposite of no, it has no resounding of no at all; you have forgotten the no, only yes exists, as if there is no opposite word to it -- that is the ultimate peak of yes.

In that moment yes becomes prayer, in that moment yes becomes a bridge. The ego disappears, the separation is gone. One feels one with the whole.

You ask me, "Where is the seat of this experience, this yes...?"

The heart is the seat. The seat of no is the head; the seat of yes is the heart. They don't come from the same place, they don't come from the same world. They are utterly different. In the dictionary they belong together, but in existence itself they are utterly different -- different planes, different dimensions.

The last question:

**BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO PEOPLE THINK SO DIFFERENTLY FROM EACH OTHER?**

Govind, thinking can never be the same. Here there are three thousand sannyasins sitting around me -- three thousand sannyasins means three million minds. One sannyasin does not mean one mind -- many, thousands, a crowd. Each person is a crowd, and each person is a different crowd, because each person has been brought up in a different way.

Somebody has been brought up as Christian and somebody as a communist -- how can they think in a similar way? How can they avoid being different? And not only different but antagonistic towards each other? Somebody has been brought up as an Indian and somebody as a Chinese -- how can they think in the same rhythm? Impossible.

Thinking comes from the outside -- upbringing, education, conditioning, culture. And there is no way to put two people in a similar situation -- not even twins think in the same way. There is no way at all to put two people exactly in the same situation. Even twins born in the same family will have different conditionings, because the mother may love one child more than the other; the father may have just the opposite preference. One child may be physically weak, the other may not be; one child may be more or less ill, the other may be healthy. The one child may be interested in games because he is healthy, the other may avoid games because he remains ill. The child who goes to play will have different friends from the child who never goes to the games -- he WILL have different friends -- and so on, so forth. Small differences make so much difference that you cannot imagine.

It is reported that the great Napoleon remained afraid of cats his whole life. He was not afraid of lions but he was afraid of cats. Strange! He was not afraid of anything -- not even of

death -- but in front of a cat he was simply not in his senses. When he was just a six-month-old child, a wild cat jumped on his chest, and he became so frightened and the fear went so deep into his heart, into his unconscious, that he was incapable of overcoming it.

It is said that he was defeated only once in his life, in the last war with Nelson. Nelson brought seventy cats to frighten him. Just in front of the army... the first battalion was of cats! And the moment Napoleon saw seventy cats -- one was enough! -- he lost all intelligence. He started trembling and perspiring.

He told his second in command, "Now I cannot think about the army!" -- and he was defeated. The credit goes to the cats, not to Nelson. Statues have been raised of Nelson and people have forgotten the cats completely. Statues should be raised of the cats; Nelson is not the real conqueror.

Small things... now, how can you avoid such small differences? Impossible. Even in twins it is difficult.

So no two persons can be brought up in the same way; hence the difference in thinking. Differences only disappear when you meditate. If all three thousand sannyasins are in a state of meditation here -- just a silence, no thought -- then there are not three thousand sannyasins at all, because three thousand zeros joined together become one zero. Three thousand zeros are not three thousand zeros -- they become one zero.

And that is what is happening, slowly slowly. The more you become meditative, the more your differences are dropping. This may be the only place on the whole earth where differences are disappearing. Mohammedans and Christians and Hindus and Jainas and Buddhists and Parsis -- they are all together, without even thinking to what religion the other belongs. Swedish and Germans and French and Italians and Chinese and Japanese and English and Americans, all nationalities, and nobody takes any note of it, nobody even thinks about it. This may be the only communion happening on the earth, a real brotherhood.

And the reason is not that I am teaching you to be brothers, learn tolerance.... Remember, those who learn tolerance remain intolerant. The very word 'tolerance' is ugly. The moment you say, "I can tolerate others," that shows intolerance. You may have repressed your intolerance, but it is intolerance. To tolerate others means intolerance -- what else can it mean?

Here, nobody is tolerating anybody. People have simply forgotten the differences, because we are moving out of the mind. My whole effort is to bring you out of the mind. If you remain in the mind, you are different. If you come out of the mind, you are one. Meditation brings a kind of unity which is not a synthesis. I am not interested in synthesizing Hinduism with Christianity and Christianity with Islam and Islam with Buddhism. That is all nonsense.

My effort is totally different: I am trying to bring you out of your mind. When the Christian comes out of his mind he is no longer Christian, and when the Hindu comes out of his mind he is no longer Hindu. It is not a synthesis, it is dropping of the mind. Mind creates all the differences.

You ask me, Govind, "Why do people think so differently from each other?"

They have been brought up differently, they have been conditioned differently. They cannot think as others think -- that is impossible! They cannot interpret the way others interpret. A Jew can read the New Testament, but it will not be the same book -- although it is the same book visibly, it will not be the same book that Christians read, because to the Jew, Jesus is a renegade, Jesus betrayed Judaism. Now that is very deep-rooted. The Christian reading the New Testament is not reading an ordinary book -- it is the holiest of the holy.

Jesus is God's only begotten son.

When the Hindu reads the same book, he reads it indifferently; it doesn't matter much. And he goes on comparing it with the Upanishads and the Gita and finds it poor. Not that it is poor -- he reads the Gita in a different way. That is the Lord's song and this is just a carpenter's son, Jesus -- how can he be compared with Krishna?

Krishna is an incarnation of God, and this man Jesus seems to be an intelligent child. Krishna comes directly from the seventh paradise. Krishna is incomparable, he is the perfect master. Jesus is good; one can say at the most, "a good man." The comparison from the very beginning becomes impossible.

The Jaina reads the Gita, but he cannot read it the way the Hindu reads it. Their eyes are different, their perspectives are different. The Jaina scriptures say that Krishna has fallen into hell because he was the cause of this great war. Arjuna seems to be closer to the heart of a Jaina, because Arjuna was saying, "I don't want to fight, I don't want to kill. What is the point of killing these people? Just for the kingdom? And one day my death will come and that kingdom will be gone, so what is the point? I am going to renounce, I am going to become a monk."

And if he had escaped there is every possibility he may have become a Jaina monk. If you really want to become a monk then the best way is to become a Jaina monk, because that is the worst kind of monk possible. Other monks are so-so; the Jaina monk is really a monk! You cannot improve upon it.

But Krishna persuaded Arjuna not to escape. He must have been a man like me, who said, "This is escape. You are a coward. Live in the world! Fight! -- because you are a warrior, and that is your type. You can't be a monk, that is not in your nature. Follow your nature."

Krishna says to Arjuna, "SWADHARME NIDHANAM SHREYAH PARDHARMO BHAYAWAHAH." Never follow anybody else's idea -- that is very dangerous because you will become imitative. Always follow your own nature, self-nature; only then will you attain to freedom. It is better to die following one's nature than to live following somebody's else's nature, because that will be a pseudo life. To die following one's nature is beautiful, because that death too will be authentic.

Krishna convinced Arjuna -- that is how the whole Gita was born. It is a dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. Arjuna was trying to escape and Krishna was pulling him back into the world -- and finally he succeeded.

Jainas have been very angry -- they missed a good monk. They have thrown Krishna into the seventh hell for a very long period, because he was the cause of millions of people's deaths. India has never known a greater war since. Now, how can a Jaina read the Gita with the same interpretation as the Hindu? Impossible. From the very beginning the mind is prejudiced.

People are bound to think differently, because they are brought up differently, in different religions, through different priests, different schools, different colleges, different universities. They have been fed different ideas, ideologies -- they are bound to think differently. And there is no way to make them think similarly -- impossible.

The only possible way is to bring them out of their minds. Then they slip out of the whole upbringing. Then suddenly there is oneness; then you see with pure eyes, uncontaminated by the culture and the tradition; then you see really as things are, not as you are supposed to see them. You become a pure mirror.

Thinking can never create one world: only meditation can create one world.

Clusky went to confession for the first time in twenty-five years. "Tell me," asked the priest, "did you ever sleep with a woman?"

"Eh, no, Father," replied Clusky.

"Now, son," said the priest, "I will ask you again. Did you ever sleep with a woman?"

"Ah, ey, ah -- no, Father!"

"There is you and me and God listening. I'm going to ask you once more. In the last twenty-five years, have you ever slept with a woman?"

"Well, eh, come to think of it, Father," said Clusky, "I did doze off a time or two!"

Now you see the difference: people listen according to their idea. And it is natural...

Claude was sitting at a sidewalk cafe sipping a glass of wine. Just then his friend Rene came running up to him.

"Claude," he gasped, "I just saw a man going into your house."

"Who is this man, Rene? What did he look like?"

"He was six feet tall and had black hair and a black mustache," reported Rene.

"And did he wear a checked cap with a striped Basque shirt?" asked Claude.

"Yes," agreed Rene. "You have described the man."

"That was only Pierre," he said. "He will make love to anybody!"

Both the persons are thinking differently. Their approach is different, their attitude is different; then the conclusions become different.

Foong, the laundryman, had been in America ten years and kept sending money to his wife in China, telling the bank clerk proudly that his wife had just had a new baby.

"But Mr. Foong," said the clerk, "you have been here in America ten years."

"Yes, yes," says the Chinaman happily. "I got velly good fliends in China."

People are full of different conceptions, philosophies of life, ways of looking at things; hence they are bound to think differently. Thinking makes you different from others, separate from others; thinking is a function of the ego. Nonthinking... suddenly all differences evaporate.

And that's what I teach, and that's what Buddha's whole message is: Become a no-mind. Become pure consciousness, an empty sky with no clouds of thoughts. Then who are you -- Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian? Indian, Japanese, German? Black, white? Man, woman? Who are you? Young, old? Rich, poor? Famous, notorious? WHO ARE YOU? All these differences disappear. You are a pure silence.

That silence is your supreme self. To attain it is to attain nirvana. To attain it is to be available to benediction, to all God's blessings.

Meditate more and more so that you can disappear, so that you can allow God to be. The moment you are not, God is -- and God is one, and you are many. Not only outside are you many, inside also you are many. And when you disappear -- the many disappear from the inside and from the outside -- then these are all waves of the same ocean.

And to know the ocean that is hidden behind all the waves of different shape, color, form, is to know the truth.

And truth liberates.

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the ultimate, the inexhaustible law, that truth

liberates.
Enough for today.