
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

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Chapter #1

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YOU ARE AS THE YELLOW LEAF.
THE MESSENGERS OF DEATH ARE AT HAND.
YOU ARE TO TRAVEL FAR AWAY.
WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU?

YOU ARE THE LAMP
TO LIGHTEN THE WAY.
THEN HURRY, HURRY.

WHEN YOUR LIGHT SHINES
WITHOUT IMPURITY OR DESIRE
YOU WILL COME INTO THE BOUNDLESS COUNTRY.

YOUR LIFE IS FALLING AWAY.
DEATH IS AT HAND.

WHERE WILL YOU REST ON THE WAY?
WHAT HAVE YOU TAKEN WITH YOU?

YOU ARE THE LAMP
TO LIGHTEN THE WAY.
THEN HURRY, HURRY.

WHEN YOUR LIGHT SHINES PURELY
YOU WILL NOT BE BORN
AND YOU WILL NOT DIE.

AS A SILVERSMITH SIFTS DUST FROM SILVER,
REMOVE YOUR OWN IMPURITIES
LITTLE BY LITTLE.

OR AS IRON IS CORRODED BY RUST
YOUR OWN MISCHIEF WILL CONSUME YOU.

NEGLECTED, THE SACRED VERSES RUST.
FOR BEAUTY RUSTS WITHOUT USE
AND UNREPAIRED THE HOUSE FALLS INTO RUIN,
AND THE WATCH, WITHOUT VIGILANCE, FAILS.

IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT
THERE IS IMPURITY AND IMPURITY:
WHEN A WOMAN LACKS DIGNITY,
WHEN A MAN LACKS GENEROSITY.

BUT THE GREATEST IMPURITY IS IGNORANCE.
FREE YOURSELF FROM IT.
BE PURE.

The first myth of man is that he exists. Man is only a possibility. Rarely has man become an actuality. Only once in a while a Gautam Buddha, a Jesus Christ, a Lao Tzu, a Zarathustra -- the names are not many, they can be counted on the fingers. They are the only proof that man is not impossible. But the so-called ordinary humanity is only a myth, a belief in something which is not really there. Unless you become aware of this false phenomenon, you will never become what you were destined to become. You will remain a seed. You will never bloom, you will not be able to release your fragrance.

The name of Gautama the Buddha is sweeter than honey, is more golden than gold itself. Gautama the Buddha is more godly than God himself. In fact there is no other God. God exists only when buddhahood exists. God needs the context of a buddha to exist. Without the space of a buddhafield God is just a theoretical, philosophical idea with no substance in it, just a shadow. Hence don't ask whether God is or is not. That question cannot be answered. God is when there is a buddha, God is not when the buddha is not.

Whenever there is an awakened person, in the context of his awakening God becomes real. This is the only possibility for God to be. To be really a man means to become a space for God to exist in you. Buddha is the most godly man that has ever been born on the earth, and still the most godless too. He never believed in God. Nobody who knows has ever

believed in a God.

All believers are ignorant people -- belief IS ignorance. Buddha never believed, Buddha knew. And when you know, you know; there is no question of belief. Buddha never argued about God, he himself was the proof. There can be no other proof. There are great arguers, speculators, theologians; their whole life they go on talking about God, but all their talk is mere talk, it is sheer nonsense. Even if they meet God, they will argue with him. Argument is their habit, argument has become their occupation, their profession, it has become an escape from their true being. Argument keeps them blind.

A rabbi's son converted to Christianity and the rabbi was totally distraught. God himself came down to earth to console him. "After all," said the Lord, "did not the same thing happen to my son two thousand years ago?"

"Yes," replied the rabbi, "but don't forget, my son was legitimate."

A theologian, a philosopher, a great thinker, even if he comes to encounter God, is bound to argue with him. He can't see him. For seeing, silence is needed, not argument. For seeing, love is needed, not logic. For seeing, scriptures are not needed but a totally different state of mind is needed: a state of mind where thoughts have disappeared, where the mirror of mind reflects nothing, is absolutely pure, not even a ripple of thought. In that silence, in that mirrorlike purity you need not go anywhere else to see God. Wherever you are you will see, because God is not a person, let me repeat again: God is a presence. If God was a person things would have been very easy. We would have caught him, we would have imprisoned him in the temples, in the churches, in the synagogues, in the mosques. If God was a person our scientists would be experimenting on him in their laboratories. Pavlov wouldn't waste his time on dogs, he would experiment on God. And B.F. Skinner would not remain occupied with rats.

Karl Marx actually has said that: Unless God is proved in a scientific experiment, I am not going to believe. Unless God is proved in the lab, I am not going to believe. But a God proved in a lab is not a God at all, cannot be a God. A God caught in the net of arguments will be impotent, utterly dead.

A group of cannibals attacked a mission but found that the missionaries had fled. The old chief was fascinated by a pile of magazines he found, especially one that had pictures of scantily clad women in the advertisements. Whenever he would come to a picture of a woman with very little on, he would tear out the page and eat it.

Finally one of his sons noticed what he was doing and said, "Tell me, dad, is that dehydrated stuff any good?"

But that's what people are doing. When you are pondering over the Bible, the Gita, the Koran, it is all dehydrated stuff. It is not going to nourish you. What is your Christianity and what is your Hinduism, and what is your Mohammedanism? A really religious person cannot be Christian, and cannot be Mohammedan, and cannot be Hindu. Yes, he can be an Ayatollah Khomeini, but not a Mohammedan, not really a religious person. Fanatics, lunatics, obsessed with unnecessary formalities....

What is the difference between a Christian and a Hindu and a Jew? If you look deep down there is no difference; all the difference is formal, and they are obsessed with the formalities. Dehydrated stuff has become much too significant.

The Silversteins sent their son to a highbrow New England boarding school. A few months later he returned home for the Christmas holidays.

"Samela," greeted his mother. "It is so good to see you."

"Mother," he replied, "stop calling me Samela. I'm grown up now and I wish you would refer to me as Samuel."

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Silverstein. "I hope you ate only kosher foods while you were away?"

"Mother, it is ridiculous to still cling to those old-world traditions. I indulged in all types of food, kosher and nonkosher, and you would be better off if you did."

"Well, did you at least go to the synagogue occasionally?"

"Really!" replied the young Silverstein. "Going to a synagogue when you are associating with mostly non-Jews is preposterous. It is unfair to ask it of me."

"Tell me son," said Mrs. Silverstein, "are you still circumcised?"

But these are the differences between Hindus and Mohammedans and Christians and Jews and Jainas. What have we made of religion? We have not listened to the buddhas; we have not understood Moses, Abraham, Jesus, Mahavira, Buddha. We have misunderstood them, and we are living according to our misunderstanding.

These sutras of Buddha will give you an insight, an insight into the heart of an awakened one, how he sees things, how he feels, what is his understanding of the world. But please remember to listen to his words very carefully. Put your minds aside. If you listen through your minds, you will listen to something else, you will misinterpret, you will come in between. The words can't carry the meaning to you if you interfere -- and we are constantly interfering. That's why everybody knows how to hear, but very few people know how to listen.

Hearing is simple, listening is an art. Be a listener for these twenty days, while we will be talking on these tremendously significant sutras of Buddha. They can reveal to you a totally new vision of life.

Margaret got smashed at the company's Christmas office party. The sales manager, Harvey, offered to drive her home. She staggered out to his car, gave him her address and away they drove.

Fifteen minutes later, she leaned over and said, "Harv, you are passionate." Immediately he reached for her thigh. Margaret slapped his face.

They drove in silence, and then....

"Harv, you are passionate," and again he reached for her thigh. Pow! He stopped the car and said, "Look, honey, on the one hand you tell me I am sexy, on the other you whack me across the mouth. Make up your mind!"

Margaret looked at him and slobbered, "Who the hell said you were sexy? All I have been telling you is, my house, you are passing it."

Put your mind aside -- let there be a direct communion between me and you. And I'm not interpreting Gautam Buddha. What he is saying is my own experience too. Hence, in a way I am simply explaining to you my own existential experience. But I love Gautam Buddha, his words are beautiful. It is significant to revive them again and again, to give them life, to let them breathe again. I am not interpreting here, I am simply making myself available to him so that he can say something to you in your language, in the language of the twentieth

century.

Of course his words will be a little old. Twenty-five centuries have passed since he spoke them; much water has gone down the Ganges, much has changed. Life is no longer the same, people are no longer the same. That innocence has disappeared from the world. The world has become very cunning, the world has become very political. The world is no longer religious, no longer innocent, no longer simple. In fact it is impossible now to be in the world and to be simple. It is an almost superhuman task not to be political -- the demands made upon you are so great. I feel deep compassion for you, but this is the only world we have right now and we have to understand this situation, we have to transcend this situation.

Buddha has to be revived, resurrected in such a way that you can recognize him again, and I have been doing the same with Jesus, with Lao Tzu, with Kabir and with other enlightened ones. Their names are different, but their taste is the same. Buddha is reported to have said: You can taste the ocean from anywhere, and you will find the taste always the same, it is everywhere salty. So is the ocean of buddhahood -- the taste is the same. If you can put your mind aside, if you can commune with me heart to heart, not head to head... because head to head there is only collision, no communion.

Don't be political while you are here with me, don't be clever, don't be cunning, because then you will be missing. This is a totally different kind of dialogue, this is not an ordinary dialogue; it is not mundane, it is sacred. Unless you approach these sutras very innocently, you will miss, and you will miss a tremendously significant opportunity.

Kornblum, aged seventy-six, took an unscheduled flight in the Middle East and suddenly found that two big Arabs had also boarded the airplane. One of them said, "Hey, Jew, we want the window seat!" So he gave it to them.

The plane took off and one of the Arabs said, "Go to the back of the plane and get me some coffee!" Kornblum got the coffee and when he came back the other Arab said, "Now I want coffee!"

The old man rushed back and got him some, but by the time he got back the fellow's companion wanted a refill. The two kept him running back and forth for an hour. Finally, Kornblum flopped down in a seat exhausted. One of the Arabs said, "Jew, what do you think of the world?"

"Well, it is in terrible shape," said Kornblum. "In Pakistan, Mohammedans are killing Hindus, in India Hindus are killing Mohammedans. In Ireland, Protestants are killing Catholics. And in airplanes Jews are pissing in Arabs' coffee!"

Yes, the world is in a terrible shape, but for these few days you will be here with me, forget the world. Be dropouts for these few days at least, so we can talk of other worlds, of other visions, because there are mysteries upon mysteries.

The sutras.... The Buddha says:

YOU ARE AS THE YELLOW LEAF.
THE MESSENGERS OF DEATH ARE AT HAND.

There are two things in life which are the most important. The first is birth, and the second is death -- everything else is trivia. The first has already happened, now nothing can be done about it. The second has not happened yet, but can happen any moment. Hence those

who are alert will prepare, they will prepare for death. Nothing can be done about birth, but much can be done about death. But people don't even think about death, they avoid the very subject. It is not thought to be polite to talk about it. Even if they refer to death, they refer to it in roundabout ways. If somebody dies, we don't say that he has died. We say God has called him, that God loved him so much, that whomsoever God loves he calls earlier; that he has gone to heaven, that he has moved to the other world, that he has not died, only the body has fallen back to the earth but the soul, the soul is immortal.

Have you ever heard of anybody going to hell? Everybody goes to heaven. We are so afraid of death, we try to make it as beautiful as possible: we decorate it, we speak beautiful words about it, we try to avoid the fact.

But Buddha insists again and again... his whole life after his enlightenment for forty-two years continuously he was talking, morning, evening, day in, day out, year in, year out, about death. Why? Many people think that he is a pessimist -- he is not. He is neither optimist nor pessimist. He is a realist, he is very pragmatic. He means business, because he knows only one thing is left for you about which something can be done and should be done -- and that is death.

And remember: it is not a simple phenomenon that you die and go to heaven. It is a very complex phenomenon, more complex than life itself.

Mrs. O'Hara, a widow of some five years, went to visit a famous medium, thinking she might contact her late husband, Mike. The medium assured her that every effort would be made and that they would hold a seance that very evening. Several believers gathered around the table, and the medium ordered that the lights be dimmed and that everyone at the table join hands. A hush fell over the room, and the medium called the name Mike O'Hara over and over again.

Suddenly a strange calm seemed to permeate the room and a distant voice, faint at first but growing stronger and stronger, cried, "I am Mike O'Hara. Who is it who calls my spirit forth?"

The medium replied that it was indeed his own wife who called upon him, and that Mrs. O'Hara wished to speak to him. The spirit replied that he would speak to his wife.

"Mike," said Mrs. O'Hara, "are you alright?"

"Yes," he replied. "I am alright."

"Tell me, are you happy there?"

"Yes, I am happy here."

"Are you happier there than you were on earth with me?"

"Yes," replied the spirit, "I am much happier here than I was on earth with you."

Mrs. O'Hara seemed a bit shaken, but she had one last question. "Tell me, my husband, what is it like there? What is heaven really like?"

"Don't be absurd, woman," roared the truthful spirit. "Whatever made you think I was in heaven?"

Even hell will look like heaven in the beginning, because you have created a bigger hell on earth. You are living in such misery, in such hell on earth, of your own creation, that when you enter into hell, if there is any hell, you will find great relief in the beginning. It will be only later on that you come to understand that this is hell. But we talk about everybody who dies -- that he has gone to heaven, that he has become a beloved of God, that God has chosen him, called him forth... ways of avoiding death.

But Buddha talks continuously about death. His first sutra is: YOU ARE AS THE YELLOW LEAF. Yellow leaf represents death. Any moment it is going to fall down. Dust unto dust, any moment and death is going to possess you. Tomorrow may never come, even the next moment is not certain. This is the only moment you can be certain of, next moment you may not be here. What are you doing to prepare for that great journey into the unknown? YOU ARE AS THE YELLOW LEAF. THE MESSENGERS OF DEATH ARE AT HAND.

YOU ARE TO TRAVEL FAR AWAY.

It is a long journey, a long long journey, because whatsoever you know will be left behind: your friends, your family, your money, your power, your prestige, all will be left behind. You will be going all alone, even your body will be left behind. You will not be able to recognize your own face, because you don't know what your original face is. You know only the bodily face, that too you know through the medium of the mirror. You have not encountered your reality, you have not gone into your inner being, you have not seen yourself, you don't know who you are. All the friends gone, family, money, power, prestige, body... will you be able even to recognize that it is you? You will be simply in a chaos. Buddha asks you:

WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU?

Tomorrow is death -- YOU ARE LIKE THE YELLOW LEAF -- next moment is death: WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU? Have you earned anything that you can take with you? If you have not earned anything, then your life has been a sheer wastage. You may have accumulated much wealth, you may have become very famous, but all that is futile. You cannot take it with you. Your degrees, your titles, your awards, all will be left behind. You will be going utterly alone. Is there something which you can take with you?

There is only one thing which you can take with you, and that is true wealth. Buddha calls it meditation, awareness, watchfulness, mindfulness, consciousness. If you become more and more conscious, you can take that consciousness with you. But you are living a very very unconscious life. Your whole life is mechanical, you simply go on repeating. You are not really living, you are being lived by unconscious desires.

Buddha says: Meditation is the only wealth, because you can take it beyond death. In fact he says this is the criterion: if something can be taken beyond death it is true wealth. If it cannot be taken beyond death, it is untrue wealth, it is a deception. And not only that you are deceiving others, you are deceiving yourself. And when death will knock at your door, you will weep, you will cry, but then nothing can be done.

It is said of Alexander the Great that when he was dying, tears were rolling down his cheeks, because the physicians had told him that he had only twenty-four hours at the most; his death was absolutely certain within twenty-four hours. His physician asked, "Why are you crying? You are a brave man."

Alexander said, "I had promised my mother that I would come back home. In twenty-four hours I cannot reach there. At least forty-eight hours are needed, and I am ready to give my whole kingdom to you if you can manage twenty-four hours more for me. I would like to fulfill my promise. I have given my word, and my mother will be waiting for me."

The physician said, "It is impossible. Nothing can be done. In fact twenty-four hours is

also too optimistic a hope. As I see it, things are going down the drain. Within two or three hours you will be gone. Twenty-four hours is the most, more than that is not possible."

And Alexander died within six hours. Before he died, he asked for one thing only.

He said, "When you take me towards the cemetery, let my hands hang outside the casket."

"Why?" asked his generals. "It has never been done, it is not conventional. Why this eccentric idea?"

Alexander said, "For a simple reason. I would like people to know that I am going empty-handed. I am dying like a dog. Let people know. I lived with the idea that I am great, that I am the world conqueror. But all that I have managed to do is waste my life. My whole kingdom is not capable of purchasing even a few minutes for me."

Death is so powerful, but one thing it cannot take away from you, that is meditation. If you can become rooted in your being, alert, conscious, watchful, you will see that you are not the body, and you are not the mind, and you are not the heart. You are simply the witnessing soul, and that witnessing will go with you. Then you can witness even death. That witnessing is the source of all religion. Those who have attained to that source are the enlightened ones, are the buddhas.

In life, whatever you are doing, whatsoever it is, is wrong if it is not leading you towards meditation.

You must have heard about the famous Peter principle. The principle is: If anything can go wrong, it will.

The second principle of Peter is: No matter which way you ride, it is uphill and against the wind.

And the third principle of Peter is: You can't win, you can't break even, you can't even quit the game.

But Peter... I don't know who this Peter is. Nobody knows, so many Peters are petering around the world. But it seems he has not heard about Buddha. Yes, it is true you can't win. It is true, you can't break even. It is true, you can't even quit the game. And all three have been tried, and nothing has succeeded. Capitalism tries to win the game, that is the capitalist approach, the approach of Alexander the Great. Socialism tries to go against the second, that you can't break even. Capitalism has failed, because all Alexanders have failed, and socialism has failed, all Stalins and Maos have failed. And the pseudoreligious person has failed: he tries to quit the game, and that too can't be done.

But there is a fourth thing that only buddhas know. There is no need to quit the game, you can watch it. There is no need to escape, you can be a witness. And that's my approach too. To my sannyasins this is my message: don't be an escapist, because nobody can escape. Where will you escape to? Wherever you go you will be the same, wherever you will go it is the same world. And wherever you go your mind will create the same world again, because the seeds of the world are within you. You can't quit the game, it is true. But you can be a witness of the game, the game of life, you can transcend it. Witnessing is transcendence.

And once in a while you come to know it too. Every person, once in a while, comes to have a little glimpse of witnessing.

Churchill is reported to have said: Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on.

In life, many times you stumble upon the truth, many times you feel a great bliss arising whenever witnessing happens: witnessing a sunset or a bird on the wing, a roseflower opening in the early morning sun, a lotus in the lake. Just witnessing, you are not doing anything about it; you can't do anything about the sunset, you are just seeing it. You have forgotten that you are a doer, you are just a mirror, a pure mirror reflecting. And such joy arises in you, such bliss, such unbounded bliss descends on you, and great silence and great beauty is experienced.

You think that it is because of the sunset that you are feeling so joyous? No, your analysis is wrong. You stumbled upon the truth, but you picked yourself up and continued on. You analyzed wrongly. It is not the sunset, it is not the lotus flower, it is not the beauty of a starry night that gives you silence and peace and bliss; it is witnessing. But because it happened accidentally, you missed it.

Buddha says: do it deliberately, consciously. That's what yoga is all about -- conscious effort, deliberate effort of becoming available to bliss, to silence. Buddha says:

YOU ARE THE LAMP
TO LIGHTEN THE WAY.
THEN HURRY, HURRY.

On the one hand he says: YOU ARE THE YELLOW LEAF. If you are unaware, you are the yellow leaf, you are death. But if you become aware, YOU ARE THE LAMP TO LIGHTEN THE WAY. THEN HURRY, HURRY. Don't waste time, because who knows, there may be no time left -- this may be the only moment. Always remember that this is the last moment. Behave as if this is the last moment. Each night when you go to bed, remember that this is the last time you are going to bed. Who knows, tomorrow morning you may not rise.

If you can exist each moment with such intensity, as if this is the last, great energies will be released in you. You will be so focused, so centered that you will become integrated, that you will be born anew, that you will become a soul, that you will not remain just a body.

WHEN YOUR LIGHT SHINES
WITHOUT IMPURITY OR DESIRE
YOU WILL COME INTO THE BOUNDLESS COUNTRY.

And as your awareness deepens, your light shines forth. We are made of the stuff called light. The whole existence is made of light. Awareness is igniting the fire within you. And once you become aflame desires will be burned in that fire, impurities will be burned in that fire. You will come out of it as pure gold. You will come into the boundless country.

Buddha says there is only one impurity: desire. Hence he uses impurity or desire synonymously; desire is impurity. What is desire? Desire means there is future, desire means there is tomorrow, desire means you are projecting yourself into the next moment, and that is foolish, stupid. This is the only moment you can be certain of. Desire is a way of postponing this moment for something in the future which is not yet, and may never be. Desire is deceiving yourself.

But people go on deceiving, they go on pushing their lives into the future. Today they will say tomorrow, and tomorrow again they will say tomorrow, and they will go on saying this. Many people come to me....

Just a few days ago one old man wrote a letter to me. His young son who is only thirty

wants to take sannyas, and the old man is very angry; he is seventy. He wrote a letter to me that said, "My son is only thirty, so young, and he wants to become a sannyasin. Is it right, is it right of you to give him sannyas at such a young age?"

I inquired of the old man, "I am ready not to give sannyas to your son, if you replace him. You are seventy. What about you?"

And he wrote, "Yes, some day I will also take sannyas, but the time has not come yet."

But how will you manage? Death may come before and if the time has not come even when you are seventy, when is it going to come?

There are ways of postponing; desire is a way of postponing. Today is ugly, miserable; tomorrow you hope. And because of that hope you somehow manage to drag on. It is only a question of today -- tomorrow everything will be alright. It is not going to be so! Tomorrow is going to be born out of your today.

I have heard another principle. Somebody just like Peter, his name is Murphy -- Murphy's maxim. He says: Smile, because tomorrow is going to be worse.

This moment is all. Buddha insists very much: Live in the moment. And desire does not allow you to live in the moment. And you go on repeating the same things, you move in circles. Just watch your life, look back. You have been moving in circles: the same anger, the same sex, the same greed, the same ambition, the same postponement and the same desiring mind. When are you going to wake up?

A bartender at a very posh gentlemen's club was on duty when a distinguished gentleman seated himself at the bar, but made no attempt to order a drink. The bartender inquired what the gentleman would have, but the man replied that he was not drinking because he had tried liquor once and had not liked it.

The bartender hated to see the man just sitting there, so tried offering him a cigar. "No, thank you," was his firm reply. "I tried a cigar once, but I did not like it."

The bartender persisted in trying to make the customer comfortable, so he suggested that perhaps if he stepped into the billiard room he might find a friendly game of cards to sit in on. "Ah no," he replied, "I did gamble once, and did not care for it at all. I will just sit here, if you don't mind. You see, I am waiting for my son."

"Ah," replied the bartender sympathetically, "your only child I assume."

But very few people are so alert. They go on repeating the same things again and again. And not only in one life, in many many lives you have been doing the same things.

Desire means you are dragged out of the moment; that creates a tension, that creates anxiety, that creates hope. And then finally hope turns sour, becomes frustration. Each hope leads you into anguish. Buddha calls it the only impurity. Cut the roots of desire, live in the moment so totally, pull yourself out of the past and don't project yourself into the future. Let this moment be all and all. And your life will have such a purity, such a crystal-clear consciousness that right now you cannot imagine.

In fact, listening to buddhas you start creating new desires: a desire of becoming pure, a desire of becoming a sannyasin some day, a desire of meditating tomorrow. That's how you misinterpret them. Your misinterpretations rarely, very rarely can be of any help, only accidentally. Otherwise, ninety-nine point nine percent, you will go on playing the same stupid game, even in the name of religion.

An old country doctor found his work load too heavy and managed to persuade a young doctor to share his practice. "Just remember, son," cautioned the older man, "these are simple country folk. They don't have much of a way with words, and sometimes they won't be able to describe their symptoms accurately. But just keep your eyes open, and you will be able to diagnose their ailments with no trouble at all."

That very evening the two doctors were called to the aid of a beautiful young girl who lay in a stupor. The older doctor took her pulse while the younger man tried to take her temperature. His efforts only seemed to upset her, and her violent tossing and turning caused him to drop the thermometer. He bent over and picked it up and put it back in his bag.

He waved the older doctor aside and whispered a few words into the young woman's ear. Whatever he said seemed to soothe her and the two men went on their way. When they got in the car, the old doctor demanded to know what the young man had said to the patient.

"I simply told her she would have to cut down on her political activity."

"Now that is ridiculous," exclaimed the old practitioner. "She was practically in a coma, and you thought it was politics? You are a fool!"

"No, sir. I just did what you told me to do. I just kept my eyes open."

"Now what is that supposed to mean?" demanded the irate physician.

"Well, when I bent over to pick up the thermometer, I saw the mayor under the bed."

Yes, once in a while accidentally, you may be able to understand a part of the message. But the part cannot be of much help. An accidental understanding is not liberation. Understanding has to be deliberate and conscious.

Now, this young doctor will do it again and again -- everywhere, wherever he will go, he will look under the bed. You can't hope that you will find mayors everywhere, and he will be at a loss. This time it worked. And sometimes a few wrong things can work. And once they work you become obsessed with them, and you start trying them in every possible way, hoping that they will become your very life-style. They will simply create chaos.

Hence on the path it is absolutely necessary to be a disciple, so that a constant source of light remains available to you; so the master can go on forcing you to see things as they are, and helping you to become deliberately conscious.

It is a long, arduous process, much hammering is needed on your head. You have remained unconscious for so long that unconsciousness has become your second nature, and it has grown so thick, that unless these rocks of unconsciousness are broken, waters of consciousness will not flow in your being. The first thing you can do is, start uprooting the weeds of desire: all kinds of desire, worldly and otherworldly.

That's why Buddha never talks of heaven, never talks about heavenly pleasures, never talks about moksha, nirvana. He never says to his disciples that great bliss is waiting for you, but goes on insisting: be desireless, be alert, be aware. Because if you say to people that great joy is waiting for you if you become desireless, they can try to become desireless, but that too will be only another desire. The desire to be desireless is still a desire, and it is not going to help.

YOUR LIFE IS FALLING AWAY.
DEATH IS AT HAND.
WHERE WILL YOU REST ON THE WAY?
WHAT HAVE YOU TAKEN WITH YOU?

This is Buddha's special way -- he repeats. When for the first time Buddhist sutras were translated into non-Indian languages, the translators were at a loss to understand why he repeats so much. Particularly when he was translated into German, French, English... the translators went on cutting his repetitions. He used to repeat for a certain reason: the reason is your sleepiness. He was not writing, he was communicating. He was talking to disciples, and he knew that you go on missing.

The truth has to be hammered again and again and again. Hence the repetition. The repetition is significant. One time you may miss, a second time you may be able to listen; the second time you may miss, a third time you may be able to listen. And who knows -- there are moments in your being when you are less sleepy, and when you are very sleepy. When you are less sleepy something can penetrate in. When you are very sleepy, densely asleep, then nothing can penetrate.

YOU ARE THE LAMP
TO LIGHTEN THE WAY.
THEN HURRY, HURRY.

WHEN YOUR LIGHT SHINES PURELY
YOU WILL NOT BE BORN
AND YOU WILL NOT DIE.

He says, "Only one thing I can promise you. If you become enlightened, if you become fully alert and aware and conscious, if you dispel all desire and darkness from your being, this much I can promise: you will not die." Of course, if you are not going to be born, how can you die? There will be no birth and no death, and to go beyond birth and death is to go into eternity, is to be immortal. That's what nirvana is, that's what absolute freedom is.

Birth is a bondage, it is a confinement, you are chained into the body. And death again leads you into another birth, it is a vicious circle. Birth leads you into death, death leads you into birth, and you go on moving in a circle. Jump out of the wheel of birth and death.

AS A SILVERSMITH SIFTS DUST FROM SILVER,
REMOVE YOUR OWN IMPURITIES
LITTLE BY LITTLE.

Don't be greedy. Many times it happens, you become spiritually greedy, you start asking too much without any inner capacity to receive it. You start demanding too much -- that too is desire and greed. Don't be greedy, go slow, go steady. Be persistent in your effort but be ready to wait too.

Hope for the best, and expect the worst, so nothing will ever disappoint you, and nothing will ever frustrate you.

OR AS IRON IS CORRODED BY RUST
YOUR OWN MISCHIEF WILL CONSUME YOU.

If you don't listen to the buddhas you will be consumed by your own mischief. The harm that you do to yourself is such that nobody can do it to you; you are the greatest enemy to yourself, right now as you are. Of course you can be the greatest friend too, but you have not tried it.

All that you have done to yourself has been just a constant creation of hell, but you go on doing it, for the simple reason that you never take the responsibility on your own shoulders. You always throw the responsibility on others, on fate, on God, on the society, on the economic structure, on politics, on the state, on this, on that. You go on throwing your responsibility on others. This is a sure way to remain a slave forever. Take the whole responsibility.

When Buddha says, "You will be consumed by your own mischief," he is saying, "Remember that whatsoever happens to you is your own doing. Good or bad, bliss or misery, darkness or light -- whatsoever you reap you have sown, and you are absolutely responsible for it and nobody else."

Giving responsibility to somebody else is becoming a slave. Take the whole responsibility on your own self. In the beginning it is hard, it is a burden, but soon you realize: if you can create hell, you can create heaven too. Just more awareness will be needed. Hell is downhill, no awareness is needed. Heaven is uphill, more and more awareness will be needed. When you move towards the peaks, you will have to be very watchful.

People are watchful of wrong things. If you have money, you are very watchful. You go on constantly looking into your pockets. You look again and again into your suitcase to see whether the money is safe. That's how thieves come to know that you have something. When a person constantly goes on touching his pocket, he himself is inviting thieves. He is making them aware, they are also watching. When you are hiding something, you are inviting people -- it must be precious. Just throw the kohinoor diamond in the garden, and nobody will steal it.

People are very watchful about wrong things, but not watchful about their inner being.

Mulla Nasruddin and his family were walking to the cemetery with the body of his recently departed wife. Suddenly one of the pallbearers tripped on a cobblestone and fell. The casket dropped to the ground and opened. Everyone stood in shock as the dead Mrs. Nasruddin opened her eyes. She was very much alive, the victim of catatonia.

Five years went by and Mrs. Nasruddin passed away, this time a victim of natural causes, but Nasruddin had not forgotten. And on the way to the cemetery as the pallbearers approached the spot where her casket was dropped, he shouted, "For God's sake, watch the cobblestones!"

Even after five years he had not forgotten, but within five seconds you forget. If it is real inner watchfulness even five seconds is too much.

George Gurdjieff used to give to his disciples his pocket watch and would tell them, "Just watch the second hand. If you can manage for sixty seconds, one minute, I will accept you as a disciple. Remember, looking at the second hand, remember that 'I am watching the second hand... I am watching the second hand.' Don't forget it!"

And out of a hundred it was rare that even one or two persons were able to manage for sixty seconds. Sixty seconds... within five seconds the mind goes far away, it starts thinking of other things, it forgets. You try it, keep a watch and try, and you will see within five to seven seconds you have gone into the past, into the future. You are no longer now and here. But about unnecessary things, trivia, you are so careful.

Your mischief is going to consume you. And we are all doing mischief. We think because we are doing with others... that is absolutely wrong. Whatsoever you are doing with others is going to fall upon you, it is going to rebound on you a thousandfold. The world is constantly

throwing things back to you. If you throw flowers, flowers will be coming back. If you throw stones, stones will be coming back. And why are you throwing stones, why are you so violent? Why you are behaving in such a mischievous way? You are thinking, "This is the way to win, this is the way to compete. This is the way to be victorious in the world."

In the first place, out of millions of struggling people one percent will be able to become Alexander the Great. All the remaining ones will fall in great frustration. And secondly, the one who after arduous effort comes to the peak, finds the peak utterly empty, although he will not say so, because that looks silly. You worked so hard, you struggled so much, and then you arrived and became president of a country -- and then telling people that there is nothing here.... You are bound to say, "Aha! I have arrived, what beauty, what joy!" You HAVE to say it, just to save your face.

And people are ready to do anything to win. They can crawl like dogs, they can wag their tails like dogs, they can do anything to win. And ask the winners -- they are utterly empty, but not honest enough to say that nothing has been achieved.

McNellis shuffled home one night in a drunken stupor, carrying the biggest ham Mrs. McNellis had ever seen.

"Now then, out with it," she exclaimed. "Where did you get that ham?"

"Won it at the tavern, drinking with the boys, me darlin'."

"And how did you come to win it, may I ask?" she continued.

"Me love," said McNellis proudly. "It was given to the man with the biggest organ. Everyone at the bar opened up and...."

"Kevin Patrick Michael McNellis!" shrieked his wife. "You don't mean to tell me you took out that thing in front of everybody?"

"Now, darlin'," said the Irishman, "not the whole thing. Just enough to win."

The Buddha says:

NEGLECTED, THE SACRED VERSES RUST.
FOR BEAUTY RUSTS WITHOUT USE
AND UNREPAIRED THE HOUSE FALLS INTO RUIN,
AND THE WATCH, WITHOUT VIGILANCE, FAILS.

IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT
THERE IS IMPURITY AND IMPURITY:
WHEN A WOMAN LACKS DIGNITY,
WHEN A MAN LACKS GENEROSITY.

BUT THE GREATEST IMPURITY IS IGNORANCE.
FREE YOURSELF FROM IT.
BE PURE.

NEGLECTED, THE SACRED VERSES RUST. FOR BEAUTY RUSTS WITHOUT USE. And that's how your great potential for awareness is getting rusted, neglected -- neglected for lives together. You have completely forgotten that you can become a buddha. You have completely forgotten your real nature, your authentic being; much rust has grown around you, and now you think, "This is all that I am."

FOR BEAUTY RUSTS WITHOUT USE AND UNREPAIRED THE HOUSE FALLS INTO RUIN, AND THE WATCH, WITHOUT VIGILANCE, FAILS.

IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT THERE IS IMPURITY AND IMPURITY....

There are all kinds of impurities, but three Buddha specifically mentions. They are significant. First he says: WHEN A WOMAN LACKS DIGNITY, grace, and WHEN A MAN LACKS GENEROSITY, Sharing for sharing's sake. Why does Buddha make this difference? This is tremendously significant. This is part of the psychology of the buddhas.

The feminine mind is basically receptive, and the masculine mind is basically aggressive. The feminine mind is inward-going, and the masculine mind is outward-going. The inward-going mind can grow into grace very easily. Hence the woman has a natural grace, a natural beauty, a natural roundness, a certain sweet aura around her. If she becomes more aware, her grace deepens. If she becomes more aware, she becomes pure grace.

Many times I have been asked why there have been so many men masters, but not so many women masters. The reason is that when the woman becomes enlightened, she becomes so passive, so receptive, that she cannot teach. Teaching means approaching the other. Teaching is in a certain way an outgoing effort. The woman is a womb. You never ask why a woman never becomes a father. The woman becomes the mother, she can't become a father. Her sexual energies are not outgoing, they are ingoing, she has an interiority. And the same is true about her spirituality. The woman becomes the perfect disciple. No man can compete with the woman as far as discipleship is concerned.

Hence it is always the same proportion with Buddha, with Mahavira, with Jesus, with everybody. The woman proves to be the more authentic disciple. When Jesus was crucified all the men disciples escaped. Those twelve apostles, not even a single one.... But the women disciples were there. Even the prostitute, Mary Magdalene, was there; she did not escape, she was ready to risk her life.

Mahavira had forty thousand sannyasins: thirty thousand were women and ten thousand were men. And exactly the same was the proportion with Buddha -- and you can see here. People ask me why I am giving the whole ashram into women's hands. What can I do? They are the best disciples, they know how to say yes, they know how to trust, they know how to be committed totally. Man remains a little skeptical, somewhere deep down the no remains alive. Even if he trusts, he trusts conditionally. The woman trusts unconditionally, her trust is forever. The man trusts intellectually. The woman trusts with her whole body, mind, soul, with her every fiber. Her trust is love not logic.

Hence Buddha says, if a woman is not graceful she is missing something, that is an impurity. The absence of grace in a woman is impurity. It can be forgiven in a man, but not in a woman; and in a man, generosity, sharing, giving -- that is an outgoing phenomenon. If a man is not generous, if he cannot give, then he is not really a man.

That's why there have been so many male masters, because it is generosity, it is giving, it is sharing. The woman can receive, the man can give. The question is not who is the master and who is the disciple. The question is, in whatsoever way you are perfect you are fulfilling your nature. Be a perfect disciple and you will enter into God, be a perfect master and you will enter into God. Perfection is the key. It doesn't matter whether you are a disciple or a master, but be perfect.

And thirdly, and the most important, which has nothing to do with man or woman, which is applicable to both is: BUT THE GREATEST IMPURITY IS IGNORANCE. Not knowing yourself is the greatest impurity. The first two impurities are peripheral, on the circumference; the third and most important is central, is at the very core. Hence it has no male/female division. Man and woman are only different on the circumference, but at the center, consciousness is neither male nor female. Its expressions are male and female but its

purest nature is beyond duality. Not knowing oneself is the greatest impurity.

How are you going to know yourself? Drop desiring and become more conscious. Free yourself from self-ignorance. Be pure. Free yourself from desiring. Be in a state of no desire, alert, conscious, and you have arrived home.

Remember, until you become a buddha you have wasted your life. Buddhahood is your flowering, your fragrance. A tree is fulfilled when it blooms, and a man is fulfilled when he releases the fragrance of buddhahood, when he becomes luminous; then he comes to know who he is. In knowing that, all is known. In knowing that, God is known. In knowing that, truth is achieved -- you become the truth, and truth liberates. Truth is freedom. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #2

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
FROM WHERE DOES FRESHNESS COME?

Prem Naren, it does not come from anywhere; it is always here. Existence is freshness itself. Existence is fresh because it is always now and here. It is not burdened by the past, it does not gather any dust from the past. It is never old.

Time makes no impact on existence. Time does not exist as far as existence is concerned. Time exists only for the mind; it is a mind invention. In fact, time and mind are synonymous. Stop the mind, and time stops.

Jesus is asked by someone, "What will be the most unique thing in your kingdom of God?" And Jesus says, "There shall be time no longer." A very unexpected answer: There shall be time no longer. That will be the most unique thing about the kingdom of God -- because there will be no mind, how can there be time?

Time does not consist, as ordinarily conceived, of three tenses: past, present and future. Time consists only of two tenses: past and future. The present is not part of time; the present is beyond time. And the present is always fresh. Present is part of eternity. Present is the penetration of the eternal into the dreamy world of time, a ray of light into the darkness of mind.

Past is never fresh -- cannot be, obviously. It is always dirty, it is always stinking -- stinking of death, stinking of all that is rotten, stinking of tradition, stinking of corpses. The past is a cemetery. And the future is nothing but a projection of the dead past. And out of the dead past the future cannot be alive -- the dead can only project the dead. What is your future? -- modified past, touched up here and there; a little better, a little more sophisticated, a little more comfortable, but it is the same past. You are hankering to repeat it. Your future has nothing new about it, it cannot have.

Mind cannot conceive of the new. It is impotent as far as the new and the fresh and the young is concerned. It can move only within the small world of the familiar, the known -- and the known is the past. The future is nothing but a desire to repeat it -- in a better way, of course. Hence future is also not fresh. The present is fresh.

Naren, you ask me, "From where does freshness come?"

Freshness never comes and never goes. It is always here, it is always now. YOU be here and now, and you are suddenly fresh, bathed in eternity, showered by something which is timeless. Call it God, call it the kingdom of God, call it nirvana, or whatsoever you want. All those names refer to the same unnameable. All those words try to express the inexpressible.

Just put the human mind aside. And by that I mean, put the past aside and the future, and look. This very moment... and the whole heaven descends upon you. You are overwhelmed. The birds are singing and their songs are fresh; they are not repeating old songs. They have no idea of yesterdays and they are not singing for the future. They are not rehearsing for tomorrows. And the trees are fresh. All is fresh except man.

So don't ask, "From where does freshness come?" Ask, "From where does this dullness come, this staleness, this deadness?" Because this deadness comes and goes. Freshness is always there -- it is the very nature of existence. It is God's presence.

Meditation is nothing but a way, a method, to connect you with the eternal, to take you beyond time, beyond that which is born and dies, to take you beyond all the boundaries, to take you to the inconceivable and the unknowable. And it is not far away; it is as close as it can be. Even to say that it is close is not right, because it is exactly your very being, it is you. Freshness is your soul.

Your mind is boring, utterly boring. Get out of the mind. At least for a few moments every day, put the mind aside, be utterly nude of the mind. And then you will know it is welling up within you -- the freshness you are asking about. From where does it come? It comes from the deepest core of your being -- and it does not really come. Suddenly you find it has always been the case. It has always been there like an undercurrent, underground, hidden behind many many layers of memories, dreams, desires.

Buddha says: Be desireless and know. Be desireless, and you will reach to the realm which is beyond birth and death, and you will enter into the unbounded.

But why is man not going into his own being which is so close? He is ready to go to the moon, he is ready to go anywhere! He is ready to go to the stars, but not into his own being. Why? There must be some deep reason behind it. The reason is: to go within yourself you will have to lose yourself. And one is afraid of losing oneself. One clings, one wants to remain oneself. One does not want to lose one's identity. It is a very poor identity and false too, but still, something is better than nothing. That is our logic.

We don't know who we are, so we cling to the body, to the mind, to whatsoever has been given to us -- the conditioning, Catholic, communist, Hindu, Mohammedan. We cling to all that has been forced upon us, because it gives us a cozy feeling as if we know ourselves: "I am a communist," that becomes my self-knowledge. "I am a Catholic," that becomes my

self-knowledge. "I am an Indian," "I am a German," that becomes my self-knowledge.

You are neither a communist nor a Catholic, neither Indian nor German. Your consciousness cannot be confined to such stupid labels. Your consciousness is so infinite, it cannot be contained in any word. It is as vast as the sky itself.

But you are afraid to go into that vastness. That vastness appears like emptiness, void. And one clings to one's own small, arbitrary identity. Hence the fear of going into oneself.

Buddha says: Know thyself. Socrates says: Know thyself. They all say: Know thyself. All the awakened ones have only one message: Know thyself. We listen and yet we don't listen. We go on moving on the same rotten tracks, we go on living in the same old miserable way. And the reason is, the old, miserable way has one thing to give to you -- the ego.

And if you go in you will have to pay the price. The price is, you will have to lose your ego.

Sweeney met Brecon on the road. "Where are you off to?" he asked.

"I am going to Connemara," replied Brecon.

"You mean you are going to Connemara, God willing?"

"No, I am going to Connemara, God willing or not."

Because of this presumptuous remark Brecon was turned into a frog and kept in a pond for several days. When he had completed his penance Brecon was changed back to his original form. Returning home, he began packing his belongings again.

"Where are you going now?" asked Sweeney.

"I am going to Connemara."

"You mean you are going to Connemara, God willing?"

"No!" shouted Brecon. "I am going to Connemara or back to the frog pond!"

One cannot leave one's ego. It is better to be a frog! One is ready to be anything. We have become rocks. We only appear to be alive -- ninety-nine percent we are dead. Yes, we breathe and we eat and we propagate, but we are not alive.

If you are alive you will not ask the question, "From where does freshness come?" You will know; there will be no need to ask the question. You will experience it moment to moment. It is arising in you.

That's how I feel. That's how all the buddhas have always felt. It does not come from anywhere; it simply wells up within you, and each moment. It is never the same. It is as fresh as dewdrops in the early morning sun. Tremendous is the beauty of it and great is its benediction.

But nothing is without a price. You will have to lose the ego, you will have to lose your idea of who you are. In the first place, it is false. You are not really losing anything, just an idea, a very nonsubstantial idea. But, repeated so often, the idea has become very deeply rooted in you; you have become hypnotized by it.

The ego is nothing but a deep hypnosis. And meditation is the process of dehypnosis. It is the process of bringing you back to that innocent state where you were not yet hypnotized.

Hence, Jesus says again and again: Unless you are like small children you will not enter into my kingdom of God. What does he mean? He means you have to be unconditioned again, you have to be dehypnotized.

Each society hypnotizes you. These societies exist on the strategy of hypnosis. A Hindu means one who has been hypnotized in a certain way, who has been told that the Vedas are written by God and that only the Vedas contain the truth, that the Bibles and the Korans are

all nonsense. If you repeat it for centuries, it starts getting deeper and deeper into your being, it becomes part of you. Then you start repeating it -- you become a gramophone record. Then you function only as "His Master's Voice"; you are no longer really a human being.

All the societies in the past, hitherto, have been dehumanizing human beings. We have not yet been able to create a real civilization. These are all very primitive methods to control people -- ugly, violent, antihuman, but all the societies have done it. There has not been even a single exception.

It is really surprising how once in a while a person has escaped from our imprisoning atmosphere -- how Gautam Siddhartha escaped and became a buddha, how Jesus escaped from the Jews and became a christ, how Saint Francis managed....

The greatest miracle in the world is to be so intelligent that nobody, no society, no state, no church, can hypnotize you.

My work here consists of dehypnotizing you. Hence, all the societies will be against me. Beware of it! To be with me is dangerous -- all the governments will be against you. And this has to be known and accepted. This has to be simply accepted, because this is going to be the case. The more I start working deeply on you.... It is just the beginning of the work: I am preparing the ground from where to take off.

Once the dehypnosis starts functioning within thousands of people, all the societies, all the governments, all the states, all the churches, are going to be against me and my people -- because this has never been done before. This is the greatest rebellion ever tried! This is true revolution.

And if you pass through this revolution you will know from where freshness comes. It comes from your own innermost core. God is not outside you; it is your very center, your very ground. Freshness comes from it, life comes from it, love comes from it, bliss comes from it. All that is significant -- poetry and music -- they all arise from it.

And when the dance comes from within, it has a totally different quality to it: it is spiritual, it is divine.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DOES GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA INSIST THAT LIFE IS ALWAYS MISERY?

Dharmendra, because it is so! Life as you know it IS misery. Buddha is not talking about HIS life, because what do you know about his life? That is not utter misery; that is utter bliss, that is ultimate bliss. But the life that you know IS misery. Does it need any proofs? Have you not observed yourself that it is misery? Do you need a Buddha to remind you?

And even when a buddha reminds you, you don't feel good. You feel offended, as if your life is being condemned. He is not condemning your life -- buddhas never condemn anything. They simply say whatsoever is the case. If you are blind, they say you are blind. If you are dead, they say you are dead. They simply state the fact -- and they state the fact because there is a possibility to go beyond it.

Buddha insists again and again that life is misery because life CAN be tremendous bliss. But unless you understand the first thing you will not understand the second thing.

First you have to be very very aware that your life is misery, so much so that it becomes impossible to live in the old way even for a single moment. When you see your house is on fire, how can you go on living in it? You will run, you will escape from the house! You will

forget all your treasures. You will not carry your cherished items, beautiful paintings, art works, or whatsoever you love. You will forget all about your postal stamps and your picture albums. You will forget even your wife, your husband, your children. You will remember them when you are out of the house.

Buddha used to tell a story:

There was an old man, eighty years old, who became blind in old age. His friends, his physicians, suggested to him that his eyes could be cured, but the old man was a philosopher, a logician, a great scholar. He said, "What do I need eyes for? I have twelve sons -- that means twenty-four eyes; their twelve wives -- that means twenty-four eyes more; my wife -- two eyes more; and so many children of my sons.... I have so many eyes, why do I need eyes for myself? In this house there are at least one hundred eyes; if two eyes are missing it doesn't matter. My needs are looked after."

His logic had a point in it. He silenced his friends and physicians. But one night the house caught fire. Those hundred eyes escaped -- they forgot all about the old man. Yes, they remembered, but they remembered only when they were safe outside. Suddenly they remembered that the old man is in the house. What to do now? And the flames were so big now they could not go in. And the old man was trying to find his way stumbling, getting burned here and there. And then he remembered that his logic was absolute stupidity.

In times of real need only your own eyes can be of help. But it was too late: he died, he was burned alive.

When Buddha insists again and again that life is DUKKHA -- misery, anguish, pain -- he is simply reminding you that your house is on fire and your eyes are still blind. It is time -- prepare! Your eyes can be cured. A way can be found to come out of this fire. You can still save yourself, all is not yet lost. Hence the insistence.

Not that he is a pessimist -- as many people in the West particularly have condemned him, and in the East too. People think that Buddha is a pessimist, saying life is misery. He is not a pessimist -- not a pessimist in the same way as Arthur Schopenhauer is. Schopenhauer is a pessimist: "Life is misery and there is no way to get out of it. You have to suffer it, nothing can be done about it. Man is a helpless victim."

It is said that when Schopenhauer read Gautam Buddha's works for the first time he danced because he thought, "This enlightened man agrees with me!"

Now, no enlightened man can ever agree with those who are not enlightened; it is impossible. Either you agree with them or you don't agree with them, but they never agree with you. They cannot. How can the man who has eyes agree with the man who is blind about light? -- or about darkness even?

Remember one thing: the blind man knows nothing about darkness even, what to say about light! Because to see darkness eyes are needed. You may be thinking that blind people live in darkness -- you are totally wrong. They know nothing of darkness. Because YOU close your eyes and you feel darkness, so you think blind people must be living in darkness -- but they don't have eyes to close. And unless you know light you cannot know darkness; they are two aspects of the same coin. Eyes are needed for both.

Schopenhauer was utterly wrong -- Buddha was not agreeing with him. Of course, Buddha can be interpreted in such a way that he may look like a pessimist philosopher. He is neither a pessimist nor a philosopher. He is not even an optimist -- because pessimism and optimism both belong to the world of the blind.

Hopeless people hope. Blind people think sooner or later they will attain to eyes. In the dark night of your souls you cling to the hope that there must be a dawn. To tolerate the present misery you have to create a certain kind of optimistic attitude so that you can hope for a beautiful tomorrow -- although it never comes. But in hoping, you can tolerate. At least you can dilute your misery a little bit, you can avoid getting too much disturbed by it. You can remain occupied somewhere else. You can keep your eyes closed to the present anguish.

Buddha wants to bring you to the reality of your existence. He is a very earthly man, very pragmatic. He is a realist, he is not an idealist. He has nothing to do with pessimism and nothing to do with optimism. He is simply trying to shake you up. It is a way of hammering on your head. That's why he insists again and again that life is misery.

Watch your life, and you will find proofs and proofs, more than are needed, more proofs than you can manage. In fact, you will see that Buddha's insistence is not as much as it should be, that he is very lenient, very liberal.

Let me remind you about Peter's principles:

His first principle: Anything that begins well ends badly; anything that begins badly ends worse.

His second principle: Negative expectations yield negative results; positive expectations yield negative results.

Whatever you do, this way or that, everything ends in failure, everything ends in frustration. Still you feel offended by Buddha?

Two bums came to rest on the same park bench and struck up a conversation. Eventually they got around to how each of them had come to such dire straits.

One explained, "You are looking at a man who never took a word of advice from any man."

"Isn't that a coincidence?" replied the other. "You are looking at a man who took everybody's advice!"

Do whatsoever you want to do, but you will end in the same way. Everything ends in misery, everything ends in death. People make tremendous effort, but what can you do? -- all your efforts are doomed, because you don't do the fundamental thing that can bring a radical change. You don't create consciousness. That is the only radical transformation of life: from misery to bliss. You do everything else except meditate. You will earn money and you will become more and more powerful and you will have all that the world can provide.

And remember: I am not against the world. And I am not saying don't earn money and I am not saying don't make a beautiful house. But remember: these things in themselves cannot make your life a life of joy. Yes, if you are meditative then a beautiful house will have a totally different quality. A beautiful garden, a pond in your garden....

Mukta has just made a pond by the side of my room, a really beautiful pond with a small waterfall. If YOU are meditative, then it is a tremendously beautiful experience just to see water dancing on the rocks, just to see the rocks, just to feel the texture of the rocks, the moss that will start gathering on them. Then everything is beautiful if inside your heart there is awareness; otherwise everything is ugly.

It is not that a meditative person enters into heaven -- no, heaven enters into a meditative person. Paradise is not a geographical place, it is a psychological experience. A meditative

person can enjoy everything -- only he can enjoy. He is not a renunciate. Only he knows how to taste the beauty of things, how to experience the tremendous presence of existence all around. Because he IS, he knows how to love, how to live.

But your life is going to be one misery after another misery. It will be a long chain of misery.

Berkowitz, a salesman, while driving through the Negev desert, saw an Arab lying on the sand. Berkowitz rushed to the man's side and lifted him up. The Arab whispered, "Water, effendi, water!"

"This is kismet!" exclaimed Berkowitz. "Are you in luck! I happen to have in my suitcase the finest selection of ties you ever saw!"

"No!" wailed the Arab. "Water, water!"

"These ties you could see right now in the King David Hotel -- fifteen dollars apiece. For you, only ten dollars."

"Please, effendi, I need water!"

"Look, you seem like a nice person. I am known all over the Negev as Honest Abbie. Whatever kind of ties you like -- silk, wool, wrap, crepe -- you can have what you want -- eight dollars each!"

"I need water!"

"Alright, you drive a hard bargain. Tell you what, take your pick, two for ten dollars!"

"Please, give me water!"

"Ah, you want water?" said Berkowitz. "Why didn't you say so? All you gotta do is crawl five hundred feet to the sand dune, hang right for a quarter mile. You will come to Poppy's Pyramid Club; he will give you all the water you want."

The Arab slowly crawled to the sand dune, turned right, and with his last remaining strength came to the door of the club. Poppy, the owner, was standing out front.

"Water, water!" begged the Arab.

"You want water? You came to the right place. I got well water, seltzer water, whatever water you want I got inside. The only thing is, you can't go in without a tie."

Buddha is right: in your life, whatsoever you do, you are bound to meet misery. And as time passes, more and more misery, because life starts slipping out of your fingers, death starts overshadowing you. And you become very tense -- life is slipping by and you have not arrived anywhere yet. You start running, you put all that you have at stake... but only death is the culmination of what you call life. How can death be the culmination of life? If death is the culmination of life then life is utterly useless -- not only useless but a very ugly joke played on man. Then God cannot be the creator -- then the Devil must be in charge. And that exactly seems to be the case.

The Old Testament says God created the world in six days. And then? Then it seems the Devil is running it! Since then, God has not been heard of; since then the Devil is in charge.

Your life is a cruel joke, as if some evil force is playing tricks with you. Just like small children torturing some insect, you are being tortured by some unknown force -- as if some unknown force is enjoying your torture, as if God is a sadist!

Buddha is right: your life simply proves not only that YOU are wrong, but it even proves that the God you worship must be wrong. It not only proves YOU wrong, it proves your popes and your shankaracharyas wrong. It proves your so-called religions wrong, because they don't help in changing your quality of life. They don't change your vision, they don't

change your insight. They don't bring more sensitivity and awareness to you so that you can live on a new plane, in a new plenitude, in a new fullness.

Buddha insists for a certain reason. The reason is: if you listen to him and if you become aware that your life IS misery, you are bound to ask him, "Sir, then what should we do?"

Buddha has the way; he can show you the path. He diagnoses your illness, because he has the key which can transform your illness into health, your madness into sanity.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS SO FUNNY ABOUT YOUR DRIVING TO DISCOURSE IN A ROLLS ROYCE?

There is a long story behind it! I was driving... I was coming in an Impala, and people like you started writing letters to me saying that, "This is a plumber's car!"

I told Laxmi, "Change it!" So she bought a Buick -- and people started writing to me that "This is a pimp's car!"

So I told Laxmi, "Change it!" So she was bargaining for a Lincoln Continental. And people wrote to me, "This is good -- this is a president's car!"

I said, "That is worse -- worse than being driven in a plumber's or a pimp's car!" So I told Laxmi, "Now, for a poor man like me, only a Rolls Royce will do!"

Now, please don't make any objection to it... because coming from Lao Tzu to Buddha Hall, a helicopter won't do. Don't create troubles for me!

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I KNOW NOW THAT I AM ALRIGHT JUST AS I AM, BUT HOW CAN I MAKE SURE THAT OTHERS KNOW THAT TOO?

Deva Kamma, I know how you are feeling!

Alan, a real ladies' man, rushed into a Catholic church. He slipped into the confession booth and said, "Father, Father, I just made love to a woman twenty-five times!"

"Are you married?" asked the priest.

"No," said Alan, "and I am Jewish, not Catholic, but I had to tell someone!"

You start telling people! They will think you crazy because this is a very strange world: if you talk about your misery nobody thinks you are crazy. If you start saying that "I am tremendously happy, ecstatic! I am feeling fantastic, just far out!" then people start thinking you are going nuts, something is wrong with you.

Just the other day a letter came to me that "Sarvesh is again going nuts." And all that the poor man was doing was just expressing his ecstasy. Seeing the new commune place he became so ecstatic that people thought that he is going crazy.

In this world to be insane is alright. To be sane is difficult, because the majority consists of insane people. To be sane is really difficult.

Nobody will believe you, Kamma, and people will laugh at you. And it happens: when inside you are feeling a great joy and everything seems to be fitting perfectly well, humming, you want that others should know it. It is a natural by-product -- otherwise buddhas would have remained silent. Why did Gautama the Buddha speak at all? Why did Mahavira speak?

When he was unenlightened he went to the mountains; when he became enlightened he came back to the world. And this has always been the case: people have gone to the mountains, to the forests, to the jungles, in the search for truth. They have gone into silence, but when they attained they rushed back, they have not lost a single moment. They have rushed back to the marketplace to shout from the housetops!

But then there are dangers. The danger is that people will think you are mad. The danger is that they will think you are a nuisance. The danger is that they will think that you can create trouble in the society, because a few others may become interested in your ideas.

It is not accidental that Socrates is killed, Jesus is killed, Mansoor is killed. The society protects itself and its sanity -- its so-called sanity, which is really not sanity at all.

So, Kamma, if you are ready to take the risk, say it to people, don't be afraid. That's the only way they will come to know about it. But remember: then you have to accept joyfully whatsoever they do to you. Then don't throw the responsibility on me -- I am warning you right now. Now start advertising!

Malcolm G. Krebbs was the last of the old diehards who believed in doing business without advertising, and like so many others he found that his philosophy just did not work anymore. So he finally went to an advertising agency, but with great misgivings. Mr. Krebbs just could not manage to understand the principle behind advertising until his account executive explained it to him like this: "Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark -- you know what you are doing, but nobody else does."

And that's how you are feeling, Kamma, right now. You can go on winking in darkness -- nobody will know. Come into the light and wink... and then suffer the consequences!

But my people won't take it badly. They are becoming slowly slowly aware of such phenomena. They will accept you -- but outside the commune there will be trouble for you, so be cautious. MY people will understand. If they can understand me -- this far, far gone guy -- what about you, Kamma? You are just a beginner!

Dugan, a delivery man from near Hyannisport making his first trip to New York, saw the sign CLIMB THE STAIRS AND SAVE FORTY DOLLARS ON A NEW SUIT. The Irishman went up and was immediately shown a number of shoddy garments by Spiegel, the eager salesman. Dugan refused to bite.

Spiegel knew that Zimmer, the boss, was watching him, so he made a special effort with the next number. Spiegel whirled the customer around and around before the mirror crying, "It fits like a glove! You look like a movie star!"

When the Irishman again said no, Zimmer took over, produced one blue serge suit and made the sale in five minutes. As Dugan left, the boss said, "You see how easy it is when you know how? He went for the first suit I showed him."

"Yeah," agreed Spiegel, "but who made him dizzy?"

Here I am making my people so dizzy... you don't worry, you can say anything! But outside the commune be a little cautious. Don't laugh loudly. Don't be so loving, so much hugging and so much kissing....

It almost always happens: the deeper you go, such great joy arises, and with joy, as a by-product, the desire to share. But there is no other way -- you have to share.

Start sharing, first with my crazy people -- that way you will learn the art -- and then if

you feel that you are confident enough, then start sharing with strangers, outsiders; people who have no idea of what meditation is; people who have no idea what it means to go inwards, what it means to know oneself, what it means to be silent, to be empty. They have very strange ideas. They think the empty mind is a Devil's workshop. The empty mind is GOD'S workshop, because meditation means nothing but emptiness.

First start talking to the people who can understand your language, and then shout from the housetops. I am a firm believer in advertising, don't be worried!

A minister who believed firmly in advertising had a sign erected in front of his church which proclaimed: IF YOU ARE TIRED OF SIN, COME IN!

Some enterprising member of his congregation who also believed in advertising, however, scrawled the additional message: "If you are not, call Grandview 9-6001."

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS YOUR FUNCTION HERE AS A MASTER?

Geeto, it is a difficult question, because I have to do so many things -- without doing them, that is the most difficult part of it! I never leave my room, but I have to do many things, conceivable, inconceivable.

But the basic function of the master is to force people out of their unconsciousness. It is a thankless job, because you have to hit them hard -- their ideas, their notions, their middle-class, bourgeois philosophies. All that they have thought is great, all that they have thought is true, you have to go on telling them that it is all nonsense, that it is just bullshit! And of course they feel hurt.

Rizzutti was sitting in the neighborhood bar. Next to him sat McIntyre who had had more than enough beer and was staring at his empty glass.

He turned to Rizzutti and asked, "Say, did you spill a glass of beer on me?"
"Absolutely no!" answered the Italian.

McIntyre turned to the man on his other side. "Mister, did you by any chance throw a glass of beer in my lap?"

"No!" snapped the man.

"Just what I have been suspecting," said the Irishman. "It is an inside job!"

You are as unconscious as that. You don't even know what is happening to you as an inside job! Even that has to be brought to your notice. And you try to escape from seeing any truth, because it will shatter many of your old ideas, and you have become very acquainted, familiar with them. You feel cozy surrounded with your old nonsense.

Whenever you are forced to see a new idea you shiver -- because it is not only a question of seeing one single new idea. Allow one single new idea in your being and you will have to change your total vision, because then you will start seeing that this new concept, this new vision, does not fit with anything old.

I have heard a story about Count Keyserling -- his grandson is here, a sannyasin. Count Keyserling was one of the most famous German thinkers. He traveled far and wide in the East; he was fascinated by the East. The grandson must have something of Count Keyserling

in him, hence he has come to me.

When Count Keyserling was in China, a friend presented him with a beautiful box, two thousand years old, but with a condition which has been fulfilled for two thousand years: that the box's face has to be towards the East. A beautiful piece of art work, a great work of art! With that condition, for two thousand years whosoever had it has followed it.

Count Keyserling went with it. He placed the box in his drawing room facing towards the East, but then the whole drawing room was unbalanced. The box looked odd, so the whole drawing room had to be redone. But then the whole drawing room was no longer fitting with the house! But Count Keyserling was a man of his word -- he changed his whole house... but then the garden was not fitting, so he had to change the garden. And then he became afraid, because when he changed the garden the house was not fitting in the neighborhood. Now, he could not do anything with the neighborhood!

Then he wrote a letter to the friend who has given the box, "Please take this box back -- I don't know how I can fulfill the condition. I will have to change the whole world! Now the neighborhood, then the town, then the district, then the province, then the country.... This is too much!"

If you start seeing just a ray of light, a new light, you will have to change your whole world.

The friend wrote to Count Keyserling, "Don't be worried, that's exactly the message: that even a small box can change your whole world. It is an ancient Taoist symbol; a message is contained in it. You have understood the message."

Allow a single insight of a buddha in you and you will never be the same. That's my function here as a master: to give you something which will not fit with you but which will be so tremendously significant for you that you will be ready to change for it, that you will be ready to risk everything for it.

A zookeeper was headed for the kangaroo cage right around feeding time when, much to his surprise, the kangaroo jumped right over the ten-foot fence and went hopping out of sight. The startled zookeeper dashed up to the cage and confronted a woman who was standing in front of the cage.

"What happened?" he asked.

"I have not the faintest notion," she replied. "All I did was tickle him a little."

"Well, lady," he replied, "I guess you had better tickle me in the same place -- I am the one who has to catch him now!"

My function is to tickle you in the right place -- because it is a long long journey, a pilgrimage, and you are to catch hold of God. Less than that is not going to fulfill you.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY AM I NOT GETTING ENLIGHTENED SOON? WHY IS THERE SO MUCH
DELAY?

Sagaram, the cause must be in you. In fact, YOU ARE the cause. You are not trying to understand what I am saying. Now enlightenment has become an object of your desire -- and enlightenment happens only when there is no desire left. And when I say no desire I exactly

mean no desire -- absolutely no desire. The desire for enlightenment is still a desire. If you go on desiring enlightenment it is not going to happen, neither sooner nor later. It is never going to happen. You will have to drop the desire.

See the point, because mind is so cunning and so stupid too that it can go on being clever. You can even say, "Okay, then I will drop the desire -- but is it guaranteed that when I drop all the desires, the desire for enlightenment included, is it guaranteed that I will become enlightened?" You miss the point again: it can't be guaranteed. And dropping desire to attain enlightenment is not dropping at all -- the desire is coming from the back door again. You are not getting enlightened because you WANT to get enlightened, and it is not something that can be wanted, can be desired. You can't be ambitious for it.

Then what is to be done? Try to understand the futility of desire. Try to see that desire is the culprit, that desire goes on taking you away from the present moment. It is desire that is not allowing you to be meditative. It is desire that goes on creating the mind and goes on creating hindrances for meditation. Mind is a hindrance for meditation. It is desire that goes on creating time and time prevents eternity, becomes a rock between you and eternity.

See the point -- simply see it! It is not a question of having to drop it. Just see the point, that desire is your hell. Seeing it, desiring disappears, because if you see it clearly, totally, one hundred percent, how can you go on desiring anymore? It will slip out of your hands on its own accord. And in that very moment is enlightenment. That moment is enlightenment.

Enlightenment is not something that is going to come to you from somewhere else. Desire dropped, and you are a buddha. The only difference between you and a buddha is desire.

It happened to Gautam Siddhartha exactly the same way. For six years he was also, Sagaram, continuously hankering for enlightenment and could not attain it. For six years he tried hard, harder than any man has ever done. He risked all. He was a warrior, a KSHATRIYA -- a man who knew only how to fight. He fought with God, with existence. He wanted to conquer truth, he wanted to become a conqueror. And after six years of arduous effort he was reaching nowhere, not even a single inch closer to truth than when he started.

One full-moon night sitting under the tree, he started looking backwards. Six years have passed since he renounced his family, his palace, his kingdom. All that is written in the scriptures he has done and all that the teachers he came across told him to do he has done -- and he has done it with totality. Now there is nothing more to do. This whole project has failed.

Then suddenly he became aware that "Although I was searching for truth, I was searching for God, I was still the same person -- the same ego, the same desire, the same ambition: the ambition to conquer, to be victorious. I was the same old man; these six years nothing has changed. Objects of desires have changed -- they are no longer worldly, they are otherworldly -- but what difference does it make? Desire is desire, worldly or otherworldly, it doesn't matter. Desire is desire; its nature is the same."

Seeing it and seeing the futility of it, that evening he dropped... or it will be better to say, desire dropped itself. That evening as the moon rose, a totally new being arose in him: a desireless consciousness, a nonambitious being, not asking for anything. His eyes were clear for the first time, unclouded, no smoke of desire. His flame was burning bright. That night he slept for the first time in his life without dreams, because once desires disappear, dreams disappear. Dreams are reflections of your desires.

And early morning just before the sun was to rise, he opened his eyes. There was nothing to do that day, all is finished. He is no longer interested in the world, he is no longer interested in the other world. He remained in the moment; there were no projects to do. He

was utterly empty. He looked at the rising sun... and that was the moment when he became enlightened.

What is enlightenment? -- the insight that desire is futile, that ambition is illness. Then suddenly you are thrown back to the present moment. To be in the present is to be enlightened. To be now and to be here is to be enlightened.

You are all buddhas -- dreaming, desiring. Understand the desire and let it go.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #3

Chapter title: Life: the greatest gift

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LIFE IS EASY
FOR THE MAN WHO IS WITHOUT SHAME,
IMPUDENT AS A CROW,
A VICIOUS GOSSIP,
VAIN, MEDDLESOME, DISSOLUTE.

BUT LIFE IS HARD
FOR THE MAN WHO QUIETLY UNDERTAKES
THE WAY OF PERFECTION,
WITH PURITY, DETACHMENT AND VIGOR.
HE SEES LIGHT.

IF YOU KILL, LIE OR STEAL,
COMMIT ADULTERY OR DRINK,
YOU DIG UP YOUR OWN ROOTS.

AND IF YOU CANNOT MASTER YOURSELF,
THE HARM YOU DO TURNS AGAINST YOU
GRIEVOUSLY.

YOU MAY GIVE IN THE SPIRIT OF LIGHT
OR AS YOU PLEASE,
BUT IF YOU CARE HOW ANOTHER MAN GIVES
OR HOW HE WITHHOLDS,
YOU TROUBLE YOUR QUIETNESS ENDLESSLY.

THESE ENVYING ROOTS!
DESTROY THEM
AND ENJOY A LASTING QUIETNESS.

THERE IS NO FIRE LIKE PASSION,
THERE ARE NO CHAINS LIKE HATE.
ILLUSION IS A NET,
DESIRE A RUSHING RIVER.

HOW EASY IT IS TO SEE YOUR BROTHER'S FAULTS,
HOW HARD TO FACE YOUR OWN.
YOU WINNOW HIS IN THE WIND LIKE CHAFF,
BUT YOURS YOU HIDE,
LIKE A CHEAT COVERING UP AN UNLUCKY THROW.

DWELLING ON YOUR BROTHER'S FAULTS
MULTIPLIES YOUR OWN.
YOU ARE FAR FROM THE END OF YOUR JOURNEY.

THE WAY IS NOT IN THE SKY.
THE WAY IS IN THE HEART.

SEE HOW YOU LOVE
WHATEVER KEEPS YOU FROM YOUR JOURNEY.

BUT THE TATHAGATAS,
"THEY WHO HAVE GONE BEYOND,"
HAVE CONQUERED THE WORLD.
THEY ARE FREE.

THE WAY IS NOT IN THE SKY.
THE WAY IS IN THE HEART.

ALL THINGS ARISE AND PASS AWAY.
BUT THE AWAKENED AWAKE FOREVER.

LIFE IS EASY
FOR THE MAN WHO IS WITHOUT SHAME,
IMPUDENT AS A CROW,
A VICIOUS GOSSIP,
VAIN, MEDDLESOME, DISSOLUTE.

Life can be lived in two ways: either as a continuous fall... then you are pulled by the unconscious forces of gravitation; you need not make any effort. You are not trying to reach to the peaks, you are simply a rock rolling downwards. Naturally it appears easy, comfortable, convenient. If you conform with the society, if you live according to the tradition, if you follow the stupid crowds, life is easy, but at a very great cost: you don't grow. You miss the whole point, because life is significant only when it is a continuous growth.

Man is the only animal in existence who has the capacity to evolve. Charles Darwin says that monkeys have evolved and become men. I don't agree with him, I can't agree with him. Not that I have anything against the monkeys -- they are good people! -- but if what he says is true, then why have not all the monkeys become men? For millions of years monkeys have remained monkeys. Why are they not growing? They should have taken at least a few preliminary steps by now, but they are exactly the same as they have always been.

You can find proofs for Charles Darwin's theory only if you watch the politicians. Then one suspects he may be right -- otherwise not! Otherwise, monkeys have remained monkeys. And the people who have been following Darwin and trying to prove his theory have been coming across great, unbridgeable gaps. The greatest is, they have not yet found the missing link -- because between monkey and man there must have been a few links. There is a great distance between monkey and man. Where are the missing steps? Not even a single proof has been found yet... except Idi Amin of Uganda!

In fact, Darwin's whole theory is only a guess; it is not yet scientifically valid. And spiritually it is never going to be valid, because those who have known man's spiritual growth have come decisively to this conclusion: that man is a different being altogether from any other being on the earth. He is an evolving animal. No other animal evolves; they remain the same. They are very conformist: they don't go beyond their heredity. They never cross the limit of what is allowed by their instincts; they never do anything beyond the instinctive, beyond the unconscious.

It is only man who has been able to produce a Buddha, a Lao Tzu, a Jesus, a Bahauddin. It is because of the buddhas that we can say man has the capacity to be a god. It is in the buddhas that we have found the link between man and God. Darwin and his followers have not been able to find the link between monkeys and man, but we have found in the buddhas the link between man and God. Man has an infinite potential.

But then you cannot live an easy life. You cannot just be a Rotarian or a Lion. You can't be just a Hindu or a Mohammedan. You can't go on following the crowds. Crowds behave instinctively; they don't know anything of the beyond. Their life is easy. If you are part of them your life will also be easy, but there will be no growth. And growth is all that matters.

The only thing that matters in life is growth. Unless you are moving to the ultimate peak of becoming a god you are wasting a tremendously pregnant opportunity.

Buddha says:

LIFE IS EASY
FOR THE MAN WHO IS WITHOUT SHAME.

This Buddhist idea of shame has to be understood in contrast with the Christian idea of guilt. In the dictionaries they seem to be synonymous; they are not. Shame is a totally different phenomenon.

Guilt is imposed by others on you. It is a strategy of the priests to exploit. It is a conspiracy between the priest and the politician to keep humanity in deep slavery forever. They create guilt in you, they create great fear of sin. They condemn you, they make you afraid, they poison your very roots with the idea of guilt. They destroy all possibilities of laughter, joy, celebration. Their condemnation is such that to laugh seems to be a sin, to be joyous means you are worldly.

Christians say Jesus never laughed. What a lie! And they have been lying for centuries and with such theological acumen, with great scholarship. They have been lying very piously,

very religiously. Have you ever come across a picture of Jesus or a statue in which he looks happy, blissful, joyous? Impossible! You can't conceive of a joyful Jesus -- after two thousand years of Christian propaganda the whole figure of Jesus has become distorted.

He was a man of great joy. He was a man who knew how to laugh and how to love and how to live festively. He loved eating and drinking. He must have danced, he must have joked with his friends, with his disciples. I cannot conceive of him not having a sense of humor, because it is impossible for me to conceive of a man being spiritual and without a sense of humor. A sense of humor is one of the most fundamental qualities of a religious man.

But the picture that Christians have depicted of Jesus is ugly. He is always sad, in deep sorrow -- carrying the whole burden of the original sin committed by Adam and Eve. He has been depicted by the Christians as doing a great service to humanity. He is the savior -- and how can the savior laugh? Laughter seems to be such an earthly quality. He has to be very serious, long-faced. They have destroyed the beauty of Jesus.

Jesus has to be resurrected. He was killed twice. First he was killed by the Jews and the Romans, and then he has been killed by the Christian priests. He got away from his first murder, but from the second he has not yet been able to escape. He is still a captive of the Vatican; he has to be freed from the Vatican.

These people who have made Jesus look so serious, so sad, so sorrowful -- who have made him a martyr -- have also created great guilt in humanity. Whenever you laugh you feel as if you are doing something wrong. Whenever you are happy you start looking guilty. How can you be happy? How can you laugh? How can you dance? How can you sing? The whole world is in such a suffering, and you are singing, and you are dancing? It seems that you must be cruel.

Krishna seems to be cruel to Christian eyes: playing on his flute, dancing, singing, celebrating. He seems to be a hedonist, a Zorba the Greek! Christians can't conceive Krishna to be spiritual. And in fact, the word 'christ' is a derivation of the word 'krishna'. Jesus must have the same qualities as Krishna; hence he has been called Christ. 'Christ' comes from 'krishna', and Krishna-consciousness simply means ecstatic consciousness.

But why does the priest go on creating guilt in man? There is a secret behind it. If you can make humanity feel guilty you remain powerful. The guilty person is always ready to serve those who are powerful. He is always ready to serve those who are puritans. He is always ready to be a slave to the priests. The guilty person cannot have courage enough to be a rebel -- that is the secret. Only a blissful person can be rebellious. The priests must have found this secret long ago, because they have been practicing it for centuries and they have destroyed all the beauty of the human soul.

Remember, when Buddha says "shame" he does not mean guilt. Shame is a totally different phenomenon. Guilt is imposed by others; shame is your own experience. Shame is interior, guilt is from the outside. Shame is not because of others but because of your own understanding: "What am I doing to my own self? What am I doing to my life? How am I wasting it?" It has nothing to do with the priests, Christian, Hindu or Mohammedan. It has something to do with your awareness. It has nothing to do with the moral codes of a society. It has something to do with your consciousness, not with your conscience.

Guilt is part of conscience, and conscience is created by others. You have a Hindu conscience and a Mohammedan conscience and a Jaina conscience, but consciousness is simply consciousness. There is nothing like a Hindu consciousness or a Mohammedan consciousness.

Consciousness makes you aware of what you are doing to yourself. And when you see that you are destroying tremendously pregnant opportunities for growth, shame arises in you. You start feeling a deep anguish, and that anguish is helpful for growth, that pain is helpful to growth. It brings you, for the first time, a vision of the possible, a glimpse of the peaks.

Guilt simply says that you are a sinner. And the feeling of shame simply shows you that you need not be a sinner, that you are meant to be a saint. If you are a sinner it is only because of your unconsciousness; you are not a sinner because the society follows a certain morality and you are not following it.

All moralities are not moral, and something which is moral in one country is not moral in another country. Something moral in one religion is not moral in another religion. Something is moral today and was not moral yesterday. Morals change, morals are just arbitrary. But consciousness is eternal, it never changes. It is simply the absolute -- the truth.

Once you have become a little more aware you start feeling what you have done to yourself and to others. That experience brings shame, and shame is good and guilt is bad. With guilt, deep down you know that it is all nonsense.

For example, in the Jaina religion to eat in the night is a sin. If you are born a Jaina and sometimes you eat at night, you will feel very guilty; knowing perfectly well -- if you are intelligent enough you will know it -- that this is foolish, there can't be any sin in eating at night. But still your conscience will prick you, because the conscience is manipulated by the priest, by the outside powers who are dominating you.

Hence guilt creates a dual personality in you: on the surface you are one person and deep down you are another -- because you can see the futility of it, the nonsense of it. You become split -- guilt creates schizophrenia. And the whole of humanity suffers from schizophrenia for the simple reason that we have created guilt, so much and so deeply that we have divided every man in two.

One part of him is social, formal. He goes to the church and follows the rules as far as they are feasible. He maintains a certain front, a certain face, and from the back door he goes on living a totally different life -- just the opposite of what he goes on preaching, just the opposite of what he goes on praising.

The idea of shame never creates any conflict within you, it never creates any split. It creates a challenge, it challenges you, it challenges your guts. It says to you, "Rise above -- because that is your birthright. Reach to the peaks, they are yours. Those sunlit peaks are your real home, and what are you doing in these dark valleys, crawling like animals? You can fly -- you have wings!"

Guilt condemns that which is wrong in you. The idea of shame makes you aware of that which is possible. Guilt goes on bringing in your past again and again -- burdens you with the past. And the idea of shame brings the future to you, it releases your energies. They are totally different.

Buddha says: LIFE IS EASY FOR THE MAN WHO IS WITHOUT SHAME...

IMPUDENT AS A CROW....

Cunning! And people think that to be cunning is to be clever. It is not so -- only mediocre people are cunning. A really intelligent person need not be cunning. He is intelligent and that's more than enough. Cunningness is a poor substitute, a plastic substitute for intelligence. The mediocre person tries to look intelligent; in that very effort he becomes cunning.

And the greatest cunningness is to be a hypocrite: to be one thing and to show something

else. But then life will be easy. Buddha makes it clear: you will fit with other cunning people, they will understand your language.

What was the fault of Jesus? The only fault was that he was not cunning. What was the fault of Socrates? The only fault was that he was a really intelligent person, utterly innocent, full of intelligence but with no cunningness.

Cunningness is cowardice, intelligence is courage. And the greatest courage in the world is to be exactly what your consciousness says to you to be. And the greatest cowardice in the world is to follow others, to imitate others. Then you remain artificial. Then you are never a real rose, just a plastic rose which looks like a rose but is not a rose. It will not have any fragrance and it will not have any aliveness, and it will not dance in the wind and sing in the sun. It will be dead! IMPUDENT AS A CROW....

A VICIOUS GOSSIP....

Why do people gossip? What must be the reason behind it? Why do they go on biting each other's backs? This is the way of cunningness. They are not sincere people, they are not authentic people. They don't say what they want to say to you, but they have to say it; otherwise they will remain burdened with it. Hence gossiping. They can't say the truth to your face, they have to say it behind your back. And they say it with a vengeance, naturally.

They have to repress themselves in front of you, they have to smile and show a false face; and they feel that they are being insincere, they feel they are being ugly, they feel that they are being cowardly. They will take revenge. And this is their way of taking revenge: they will gossip about you, they will say things about you, they will invent things about you. And they will invent things about themselves too; what they are not, they will pretend to be. They will magnify your faults and they will magnify their glories.

Sokolow, aged seventy-five, rushed into a doctor's office. "You gotta give me a shot so I can be young again," he pleaded. "I got a date with a young chicken tonight!" "Just a minute," said the physician. "You are seventy-five years old. There is nothing I can do for you."

"But Doctor," exclaimed the old man, "my friend, Rosen, is eighty-five, and he says he has sex three times a week!"

"Alright," advised the doctor, "so you say it too!"

What you cannot do, you can at least say you do. Who is preventing you from saying it?

... VAIN, MEDDLESOME, DISSOLUTE.

These people are vain, empty, utterly empty, hollow, full of straw and nothing else. But they go on bragging about themselves, they go on declaring themselves to be great -- they find ways and means. And the easiest way to declare yourself great is to declare that others are nothing, to reduce them as much as possible. That helps you feel that you are somebody special. And these people are bound to be meddlesome, querulous, always ready to fight for trivia.

Just watch yourself and watch others. What are people doing? Ninety percent of their energies are being wasted in being cunning, hypocrites, gossips, vain, meddlesome, dissolute. And, of course, when you waste so much of your energy in such stupid activities you cannot

have any decisiveness in your life, you cannot be committed, you cannot become involved in anything. And your old habits will always come in to destroy all your commitments, your involvements. You will be just driftwood, you will be dissolute.

Many people ask me... they want to take sannyas, but they cannot decide. Who else can decide for you? My suggestion is: Decide this way or that, but never remain in indecisiveness. If you cannot decide for sannyas, decide against it -- at least decide something! But be decisive, because being decisive is of great importance.

What you decide is not so important; much more important is that you are capable of making a decision. And once you decide, then let the commitment be one hundred percent. That's the only way to become integrated; otherwise you will remain fragmentary. You will remain a crowd, you will never become a single individual. In fact, that's exactly the meaning of the word 'individual': it means indivisible. If you are fragmentary you are not an individual. The whole process of individuation is the process of commitment, involvement.

Sannyas is a great commitment, the greatest in life, because you are moving into a world of which you cannot be certain at all beforehand. You are moving into such an uncharted sea that you don't know what is going to happen; there is no guarantee whether you will be able to reach to the other shore, whether you will be able to come back to the old shore again -- there is no guarantee. And the ocean is vast and it is always stormy... and the boat is so small! But just the courage to take a small boat and go into the uncharted....

The very phenomenon of risking your life makes you alive. The very risk gives you a new birth.

Buddha says: But then life will be difficult.

BUT LIFE IS HARD
FOR THE MAN WHO QUIETLY UNDERTAKES
THE WAY OF PERFECTION,
WITH PURITY, DETACHMENT AND VIGOR.
HE SEES LIGHT.

If you want to see light -- that is Buddha's word for God -- if you want to see truth and if you want to be liberated by truth, if you want to get beyond all this stupid misery that you have been living in for centuries, if you want to have wings to soar above the clouds into the vastness of the sky, if you want to whisper with the stars and dance with the whole cosmos... then life is going to be hard, because growth is painful, growth is arduous. It is going uphill, it is going against gravitation. It is going against the crowd, it is going against tradition, it is going against convention. It is becoming free from all that keeps you in bondage.

But when you live in a prison you have many securities. For example, in a prison nobody can murder you; you are always guarded, more guarded than any king. Kings have been murdered, but prisoners cannot be murdered. Your bread and butter is safe. In a prison you need not be worried about employment, and everything will be supplied to you. You need not think about tomorrow, it is not your responsibility.

At breakfast time you will get your breakfast, at lunchtime you will get your lunch. It is not going to be much of a lunch but at least it is certain! And supper is going to be supper and never a dinner, but so what? People feel better in a secure situation, even though the security is poor. Insecurity creates great turmoil and anxiety in your mind.

This is the experience: that people who have lived in prisons for a few years don't want to get out, and if they have to come out, sooner or later they find ways to get in again. They are called jailbirds... because the outside life is too much trouble. Then you have to think about

everything: where to live, where to find your work, search for work, for food. And everything seems to be too much of an unnecessary harassment. When you are in a jail, everything is supplied for you. You live like a king!

And that's why millions of people have decided to live in the jails called Hinduism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, communism, India, Pakistan, China, Japan... all kinds of jails, political, spiritual, ideological. It seems to be very convenient to be a slave.

Hence Buddha is right: BUT LIFE IS HARD FOR THE MAN WHO QUIETLY UNDERTAKES THE WAY OF PERFECTION. If you want to grow towards the heights, if you want to be perfect, if you want to be total and whole, if you want to know what it is all about, then you will have to risk many securities, many safeties, many comforts. You will have to go into the unknown, into the dark night -- and sometimes without even a candle.

... WITH PURITY, DETACHMENT AND VIGOR. HE SEES LIGHT. You will have to learn the ways of purity. By purity Buddha always means innocence, the unburdened consciousness -- unburdened of knowledge, unburdened of scholarship, Vedas, Bibles, Korans. They all burden you, they give you a false sense of knowing; and the false sense of knowing becomes the barrier in knowing. If you really want to become a knower you will have to drop all knowledge, you will first have to become ignorant. That is purity: a mind without any content, a mind like a child's, a pure mind.

And detachment.... By detachment Buddha means, don't think of yourself as the body. If you think yourself to be the body you cannot undertake this adventure of finding yourself, because you have already become identified with your body. Don't be identified with the mind either. If you think that you know already, then you will remain confined to whatsoever you are.

Remain open: that is detachment. Don't say that "I am the body, I am the mind." Say that "I know nothing. The body is there, the mind is there, but I don't know who I am. And certainly I am not my body."

As you go deeper into innocence you will be able to see that if your hand is cut off, your consciousness is not reduced that much -- it remains the same. Your leg can be cut off; your body is no longer the same, but your consciousness remains the same, it is not reduced. If your mind changes -- and mind continuously changes -- your consciousness does not change with your mind; it is an unchanging phenomenon. It is the only unchanging factor in existence; everything else is a flux. Only the witness remains permanent, absolutely permanent. It is eternal. Mind is time and you are timelessness.

But for that you will have to learn the ways of detachment and you will have to release great vigor, great enthusiasm and great energy. Ordinarily your energy is being wasted in unnecessary pursuits. You will have to cut your unnecessary pursuits. That is true sannyas.

Sannyas does not mean renouncing life but renouncing the unnecessary life. Just look, take note, watch, analyze, observe, and conclude how many things you are doing which are unnecessary -- how many things you go on doing because you have become accustomed to doing them. You have never thought about them, whether they are necessary or not. How much do you talk with people? Is it all necessary?

If you start watching you will be surprised: you will become more telegraphic, in words, in actions, in your pursuits. You will become very choosy. And you will be surprised that almost ninety percent of your activity was futile; its only function was to keep you occupied. Its only function was a slow suicide. It was poisoning you.

When this ninety percent of your unnecessary activity is reduced, great energy becomes available to you. And only with such energy, such detachment and such purity can you create

the right space in which light is seen.

Fenton's wife was going to have a baby and he could not get a doctor. The snow outside was eight feet deep, the telephone lines were down, and it was still snowing. He decided to go out and look for an M.D. He fought his way through the storm and saw a light which turned out to be a bar. He went in and began drinking heavily.

"What's the matter?" said Hymowitz, sitting on a nearby stool.

"My wife is going to have a baby," cried Fenton, "and I can't find a doctor...."

"I can help you," said the Jewish man.

"Are you a doctor?"

"I am a veterinarian. But you give me your address. I will go and get my satchel, and I will come over and do the job for you."

Fenton rushed home and soon Hymowitz arrived carrying his satchel. "Now don't worry about a thing," he said. "Get blankets and plenty of hot water." He went into the bedroom.

Twenty minutes later, Hymowitz came out, sweat pouring from his brow and said, "You got a hammer?"

"A hammer!" roared Fenton. "What do you want it for?"

"Don't ask no questions, get me a hammer."

Fenton brought him the tool and Hymowitz said, "Don't worry about nothing. Get plenty of hot water, lots of blankets!" He ran back into the bedroom.

Thirty minutes later he came out, stripped to the waist, perspiration pouring from his body. He said, "Hey, you got a chisel?"

"My God!" screamed Fenton. "First you want a hammer, now it's a chisel. What are you doing to my wife?"

"What do you mean, your wife? First I gotta open the satchel!"

The real work has not yet started -- even the satchel is not opened! And that's how your life is: you are born, but the real work has not yet started.

My function here is to supply you with hammers and chisels and a few vets too -- my therapists. The satchel has to be opened first. And it is hard work because you have learned how to remain closed; that has become your way of life. And to be open seems to be just impossible.

Yes, once in a while you open up, in a certain situation -- maybe in a therapy group, in a meditation, in a Sufi dance, in music -- once in a while, in a certain space, you allow yourself to open up. And then you see the beauty of life and the great joy pouring out of you. But then you become afraid, guilt arises. Suddenly you close again.

Almost every day I receive letters from sannyasins saying, "I am feeling very good, a great well-being is arising in me, but simultaneously I am also feeling guilty. Why?" Somebody writes, "I am feeling very blissful, but also, side by side, a shadow is following my bliss. I am feeling guilty."

Why does this guilt arise? That guilt is the strategy of your old mind. The old mind is saying, "What are you doing, man? This is not your way of life. Close up! You are going beyond your limits. And I am giving you a warning -- then later on don't say to me that you were not warned."

So you take one or two steps beyond yourself and then rush back and close the doors. You have become so afraid of the fresh air. It has to be learned -- howsoever hard it is, but it has to be learned -- because that is the only way to be reborn, the only way to celebrate, the

only way to know bliss and benediction.

Buddha says:

IF YOU KILL, LIE OR STEAL,
COMMIT ADULTERY OR DRINK,
YOU DIG UP YOUR OWN ROOTS.

But that's what people are doing continuously. We are all destructive. That's what he means when he says: IF YOU KILL.... Don't take it literally -- you are not murderers, but you are all killers. If you are destructive you are a killer. And the closed person is always destructive, he is never creative.

You can only be either destructive or creative. If your energies are not released into creativity they are bound to become sour, bitter, poisonous; and they will make you angry, full of hatred and violence. Then there are two ways for that violence to go: one is to be violent with others, and the other is to be violent with yourself. Buddha is against both, so am I.

The politician is violent with others. Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao -- these people are violent with others; they destroyed millions of lives. Mahatma Gandhi is totally different, he has not killed anybody -- he is the apostle of nonviolence -- but he is continuously destructive towards himself. His violence has turned upon himself. That's how your saints are created, your mahatmas are created. The politicians are sadists and the saints are masochists; both are psychologically ill.

IF YOU KILL, LIE.... And everybody is lying. If you are not being your true self, whatsoever the cost, howsoever hard it is -- if you are not being your true self you are lying. You may not be literally lying, you may not even be aware that you are lying, but if you are a hypocrite -- you smile when you are not feeling like smiling, you say hello to somebody when there is no heart in it -- it is a lie. When you say to somebody "I love you," just formally, you are lying.

That's why Buddha says: It is hard to be authentic, because even your own people will feel offended. Your wife will feel offended because you will not be continuously saying, "I love you, I love you." Once in a while you will say, "I hate you, I hate you more than I hate anybody else!" And your wife is not going to be sweet to you all the time. Once in a while she will throw things at you, destroy the crockery, nag you.

But if you live an authentic life you accept all this, in you and in others; you don't reject it. This is part of the life situation, this is how we grow. All sweetness and all politeness is phony, it is bourgeois. An authentic person is sweet and bitter; he loves, he hates. When you accept both the polarities of your being you become authentic. Then you are not lying.

OR STEAL.... Very few people are thieves in the ordinary sense of the word; otherwise everybody is stealing. If you are pretending to be wise on borrowed knowledge it is stealing, it is a theft -- subtle, but it is theft.

COMMIT ADULTERY.... The meaning -- the ordinary meaning -- of the word 'adultery' is: making love to a woman you are not married to. But the real meaning of adultery is making love while you are not in love. She may be your own wife, but if you are not in love, then making love to her is adultery.

And man is a complex phenomenon: today you may be in love with your wife -- yes, even with your wife! I know it is difficult, it is hard, and it is very rare too, but it happens. Today you may be in love with your own wife, and then making love to her is prayer, is

worship, it is communion with God. And this communion can happen even with some other woman to whom you are not married. If love is there then it is not adultery, and if love is not there, then even with your wife whatsoever you are doing is adultery.

OR DRINK.... Remember, all the buddhas are against any chemical drug that can make you unconscious, for the simple reason that you are already so unconscious.

Just the other day somebody had asked a question: "Jesus used to drink alcohol. What do you say about it?"

I can allow Jesus! He was so conscious that he could afford to drink once in a while. But I cannot allow you. You are already so unconscious, you are already so burdened; now, making you more unconscious will be dragging you towards hell.

In the East, particularly in India, there has existed a tremendously beautiful esoteric school of tantrikas. One of their very secret methods is that whenever a master thinks that a disciple is ready, he allows him to drink alcohol or take some other drug in small portions, in small quantities, slowly. As his meditation deepens he is allowed to drink bigger amounts. The only condition to be fulfilled is that he should remain conscious. Even under the influence of the drug he should remain conscious -- that is the only condition to be fulfilled. This is a rare experiment!

And a moment comes when a real meditator can drink as much... he can drink alcohol just like water and he will remain as centered as ever, as conscious as ever. That is the crucial test. That day the master says, "Now there is no need to drink at all. You passed through the test."

Buddha is talking about you. He is not giving these sutras to tantrikas, he is talking to the common man. Hence he says: IF YOU KILL, LIE OR STEAL, COMMIT ADULTERY OR DRINK, YOU DIG UP YOUR OWN ROOTS. He is not telling you to repress. He is simply saying, become more aware. Buddha was never in favor of repression. Repression is an unconscious effort; it never transforms you. It keeps you the same but repressed.

"Sinners!" shouted the evangelist, accusingly, at the tent full of true believers. "You are all sinners. Every one of you has something on his conscience, and one sin is just as bad as another. Stealing is as bad as lying. Ain't that so, Brother William?"

Brother William nodded his agreement.

"And adultery is just as bad as murder. Ain't that right, Sister Rose?"

"Can't rightly say, Preacher," replied Sister Rose. "I never killed nobody."

Young Maureen knelt in the confessional and whispered to the priest, "Ah, Father, I have sinned grievously. On Monday night I slept with Seamus. Tuesday night I slept with Timothy. On Wednesday night I slept with Dennis. Ah, Father, what shall I do?"

"My child," replied the priest, "go home and squeeze the juice from a whole lemon and drink it."

"Ah, Father, will this purge me of my sin?" she asked.

"No, child, but it will take the smile off your face."

Repression will do only that: it will take the smile off your face; otherwise, everything will remain the same.

Buddha is not for repression. He says: Become more conscious of your lying, of your destructiveness, of your stealing, of your adultery, of your becoming constantly unconscious and finding new ways of becoming unconscious. Beware, because you are digging up your

own roots.

AND IF YOU CANNOT MASTER YOURSELF,
THE HARM YOU DO TURNS AGAINST YOU
GRIEVOUSLY.

These are the ways that destroy the possibility of your ever becoming a master of your own being. And the man who is not a master of himself -- whatsoever he is doing to others is destructive, and ultimately all that destruction rebounds on himself. Harming others he is harming himself, because he is sowing seeds which he will have to reap.

YOU MAY GIVE IN THE SPIRIT OF LIGHT
OR AS YOU PLEASE,
BUT IF YOU CARE HOW ANOTHER MAN GIVES
OR HOW HE WITHHOLDS,
YOU TROUBLE YOUR QUIETNESS ENDLESSLY.

Share whatsoever you have, but share for the sheer joy of sharing; don't think of others. People, even in being religious, even in practicing spirituality, are always comparing and competing with others. Somebody is fasting for one day and you fast for two days, just to show him that you are higher, holier.

In a small town they had just erected a fine new church. All it needed was a set of chimes. So Father McLain went around collecting donations for the chimes.

Deegan, the blacksmith, donated fifty dollars; Dugan, the contractor, came across with seventy-five; Donnelly, the undertaker, gave his check for one hundred.

When the priest got to Brennan's Bar and Grill, the owner did not like the idea of contributing two hundred dollars.

"But Brennan," said the priest, "just think -- Deegan, Dugan and Donnelly gladly contributed to the chimes, and you should be represented with a donation."

"Well, Father, it is an awful lot of money."

"But think how proud you will feel, along with Deegan, Dugan and Donnelly, when the chimes ring out."

The saloonkeeper finally agreed and when the chimes were installed, the reverend met Brennan on the street. He said, "Brennan, did you hear the chimes?"

"I heard them."

"What is the matter? Don't you like them?"

"Well, I hear them ring out Deegan, Dugan, Donnelly; Deegan, Dugan, Donnelly... but doggone it, I never hear anything that sounds like Brennan!"

People are so stupid that even when they are trying to be spiritual they continue their old ways of competition, of jealousy, of envy.

Buddha says: YOU MAY GIVE IN THE SPIRIT OF LIGHT OR AS YOU PLEASE, BUT IF YOU CARE HOW ANOTHER MAN GIVES OR HOW HE WITHHOLDS, YOU TROUBLE YOUR QUIETNESS ENDLESSLY. Never think of the other in the world of spiritual growth -- just think of yourself. Be utterly selfish in that way. Don't compare, otherwise you will never be able to attain to stillness and silence; you will be continuously disturbed.

THESE ENVYING ROOTS! Buddha says,
DESTROY THEM
AND ENJOY A LASTING QUIETNESS.

If you can destroy jealousy, envy, competitiveness, you enter into a world of lasting quietness.

THERE IS NO FIRE LIKE PASSION,
THERE ARE NO CHAINS LIKE HATE.
ILLUSION IS A NET,
DESIRE A RUSHING RIVER.

Beware of lust, unconscious sexuality. When sex becomes conscious it has a totally different flavor. It becomes tantra, it is no longer sex. When sex becomes conscious it is love, it is no longer lust. Love brings freedom, and lust simply creates prisons for you.

THERE IS NO FIRE LIKE PASSION, THERE ARE NO CHAINS LIKE HATE. ILLUSION IS A NET, DESIRE A RUSHING RIVER. Beware of desire, because it is going to drown you. It has drowned so many many people, and it has drowned you many many times in the past. This time be alert. Don't allow desire to drown you and don't allow unnecessary wastage of energies. Because this is my observation: that the weaker you are spiritually, the more desires will be powerful in you. The stronger you are spiritually, the more energy you have spiritually, the less is the power of desire able to drag you, to drown you. And illusions and illusions... that's all desires are. That's what your mind is. It is never satisfied; it only goes on creating newer and newer nets for you to be caught in. It goes on postponing the moment of your becoming free -- it goes on alluring you for the tomorrow.

Becky's greatest dream was to make love with Mick Jagger. After spending the night with a man, her best friend Jane would ask her about the experience, and the reply was always the same: "It was good, but it was not Mick Jagger."

Finally Becky's dream came true and she got a chance to sleep with Mick Jagger.

The next day her friend Jane was eager to hear the report, but when she asked Becky how it was, Becky replied, "It was good, but it was not Mick Jagger."

Nothing is ever going to satisfy you. Even Mick Jagger will not be Mick Jagger! It is your illusion that you project on Mick Jagger. The real Mick Jagger is just as ordinary as any Harry, Tom, Dick... or is it Tom, Dick, Harry? I always get confused between these three people!

HOW EASY IT IS TO SEE YOUR BROTHER'S FAULTS,
HOW HARD TO FACE YOUR OWN.
YOU WINNOW HIS IN THE WIND LIKE CHAFF,
BUT YOURS YOU HIDE,
LIKE A CHEAT COVERING UP AN UNLUCKY THROW.

DWELLING ON YOUR BROTHER'S FAULTS
MULTIPLIES YOUR OWN.
YOU ARE FAR FROM THE END OF YOUR JOURNEY.

Because the reason -- the basic reason -- of dwelling on your brother's faults is to make your own faults look smaller. You magnify others' faults so that you can say, "I am far better than them," so that you can feel, "There is nothing much to be changed in me. Look at people, how ugly they are!"

When everybody is so ugly, you start feeling beautiful. When everybody is so materialist, you start feeling spiritual. It is a trick, a strategy, to hide yourself from your own eyes. And remember, while you are hiding your faults, they are growing inside of you like cancer.

Just do the opposite. Don't bother about others' faults, that's not your business at all. Just look at your own faults, watch them, observe them -- because observing them you will be able to be free of them. In fact, the deeper the observation, the more is the possibility of those faults disappearing from you on their own accord, just as dewdrops disappear in the early morning sun.

THE WAY IS NOT IN THE SKY.
THE WAY IS IN THE HEART.

Don't look upwards! When you pray you look upwards, as if God is there. Buddha says: Look inwards, because God is there.

SEE HOW YOU LOVE
WHATEVER KEEPS YOU FROM YOUR JOURNEY.

A very important indication for the seeker: See how you love your own chains, see how you love your own faults. See how you protect and defend your own misery. SEE HOW YOU LOVE WHATEVER KEEPS YOU FROM YOUR JOURNEY.

Jealousy.... You say, "How can I live without jealousy?"

Just the other day, somebody had asked, "You teach us not to be jealous, but then without competition what will life be? Without competition there will be no progress!" Now he is trying to hide his competitiveness and his jealousy behind the great word 'progress'. And not only are YOU jealous, even animals are. In fact, jealousy is a very animal desire.

The rutting season had begun and the veterinary surgeon was on the farm giving the cows artificial insemination. By the time he got to the last cow he had no sperm left so he began to pack away his equipment.

The cow slowly turned her head towards him and with big, mournful eyes, said, "Not even a kiss, Doctor?"

Watch yourself! SEE HOW YOU LOVE WHATEVER KEEPS YOU FROM YOUR JOURNEY.

BUT THE TATHAGATAS,
"THEY WHO HAVE GONE BEYOND,"
HAVE CONQUERED THE WORLD.
THEY ARE FREE.

The buddhas, the TATHAGATAS, those who have gone beyond the world -- listen to what they say. They say: Real progress is in being nonambitious. Real growth is in being without envy. The moment your jealousies disappear totally, you have arrived home.

THE WAY IS NOT IN THE SKY. THE WAY IS IN THE HEART. Look within. Watch how many jealousies, how many angers, how many lustful desires are boiling there. Just watch them!

And this is the greatest contribution of Buddha -- that he has said, and proved beyond doubt because it has worked for thousands of people -- that a deep observation of anything that is wrong in you is enough; you need not do anything else. Just be aware of it and it disappears. It disappears just as you bring light into a room and the darkness disappears.

ALL THINGS ARISE AND PASS AWAY.
BUT THE AWAKENED AWAKE FOREVER.

Become aware, awake. Then you will see that everything comes and goes, all things come and pass. Life is a flux. Your consciousness is the only thing that is immovable, that is eternal. To attain it is freedom. To attain it is the goal of life. If you miss it you have missed your life and you have missed a tremendously great gift, a great opportunity. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #4

Chapter title: A real man is unpredictable

14 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN THE MOMENT COMES THE LEAF LETS GO ITS TENDER HOLD AND
GREETS ITS DYING WITH INNER GRACE. IS IT THEN THAT THE WAY IS OPEN
FOR LIFE TO EMBRACE ITS OWN E'ER THE LEAF TOUCHES DOWN?

Yes, Amitabh, that's the secret of life and death both, the secret of the secrets: how to allow existence to pass through you totally unhindered, unobstructed, how to be in a state of absolute nonresistance. Buddha calls it TATHATA -- suchness.

The ego is resistance. Let-go means disappearance of the ego. When you are just a hollow bamboo, existence sings millions of songs through you. It transforms you into a beautiful flute. But you have to be a hollow bamboo, utterly empty, so there is nothing to obstruct the flow.

A total yes is sannyas, an unconditional yes: yes to all, to life and to death -- because death is not against life but is life's ultimate culmination, its highest peak. Yes to joy and yes to sadness too, because joy cannot exist without sadness. Joy is possible only if sadness creates the background. They are joined together so intrinsically that they are inseparable. And man's whole effort is to separate them. Man goes on trying to do the impossible -- he wants to live without death. Now that is utter stupidity! Life implies death; death is at the very core of life. The only way to deny death is to deny life too.

So the people who have tried to deny death have died; before death has come they are no longer there. They have not lived at all. In denying death they had to deny life too, because the more you live the more you become available to death. When life is at the peak, death is the closest. Avoid death and you will have to avoid the peaks of life. You will have to live in a lukewarm way, neither dead nor alive, which is far worse than death itself.

And so is the case with all the polar opposites: destroy one and the other is automatically destroyed. You cannot save the other; they are like two aspects of the same coin.

Seeing it, Amitabh, a great understanding arises. One relaxes. One says yes, to life, to death, to darkness, to light, to sadness, to joy, to all that is without any choice. That choiceless understanding is enlightenment, is buddhahood.

You say, "When that moment comes the leaf lets go its tender hold and greets its dying with inner grace...."

That's how YOU have to learn to die. The way of the leaf is the way of the sannyasin too. And your hold has to be tender; otherwise it will be difficult to let go. Your hold has to be almost not a hold at all. Your hold cannot be a clinging. Only those people cling who don't understand this polar game of existence, and their clinging destroys all. They have to die, but their death becomes graceless. They have to die, as everybody else, but their death becomes agony.

The word 'agony' comes from AGON -- agon means struggle. Agony means struggle. They die fighting. The whole fight is an exercise in futility: they are not going to win, but still they go on trying. Millions of people have tried and failed; still we are such fools, we go on repeating the same pattern. We still hope that "Maybe I am the exception, maybe I can manage somehow."

Nobody has been able to manage, not because they have not tried enough, not because they have not tried strongly, but because it is not possible in the very nature of things. They have done all that can be done, nothing has been left undone, but death is bound to happen -- in fact it has already happened in your very birth. To be born is one pole; the other pole is hidden in it.

One starts dying the moment one starts breathing. The first moment of birth is also the first moment of death. Yes, it takes seventy, eighty years to complete the process. Death does not come suddenly after eighty years; it grows, it grows every moment. It is growing now.... Life is one wing, death is another wing, and both wings are yours. And you are trying to fly with one wing? This is how you create misery for yourself, failure and frustration. Accept both.

Let your hold be tender, so tender that it can be dropped at any moment and there will be no struggle in dropping it, not even a moment's delay -- because even a moment's delay is enough to miss the point, to miss the grace of it.

My work here consists of teaching you how to live and how to die, how to be joyous and how to be sad, how to enjoy your youth and how to enjoy your old age, how to enjoy your health and how to enjoy your illness. If I teach you only how to enjoy your health, your joy,

your life, and the other part is neglected, then I am teaching you something which is going to create a division in you, a split in you.

I teach you the totality of existence. Don't possess, don't hold anything, don't cling. Let things come and pass. Allow things to pass through you, and you remain always vulnerable, available. And then there is great beauty, great grace, great ecstasy. Your sadness will also bring a depth to you, as much as your joy. Your death will bring great gifts to you, as many as life itself. Then a man knows that this whole existence is his: nights and days, summers and winters, all are yours.

In remaining vulnerable, open, relaxed, you become a master. That's a strange phenomenon, very paradoxical: in remaining surrendered to existence you become victorious. And these moments will be coming to you again and again. My whole effort is to bring more and more of such moments, such penetrating moments, for you. Don't behave stupidly, don't go on repeating old strategies, old patterns of your mind. Learn new ways of being.

And the greatest thing to learn is not to hold onto anything: to your love, to your joy, to your body, to your health. Enjoy everything -- your health, your body, your love, your woman, your man -- but don't cling. Keep your hands open -- don't become a fist. If you become a fist you become closed -- closed to the winds and the rains and the sun and the moon, closed to God himself. And that is the ugliest way to live; it is creating a grave around yourself. Then your existence is windowless. You go on suffocating inside and you are suffocating because you think you are creating safety and security for yourself.

I have heard an ancient Sufi parable:

A king was very much afraid of death, as everyone is -- and the more you have, the more, of course, you are afraid. A poor man is not as much afraid of death. What has he got to lose? What has life given to him? He remains unconcerned.

That's why in poor countries you will see again and again a great indifference about death, poverty, starvation. The reason is, people have lived in such poverty for so long that now they are not so worried about death. Death comes to them as a relief -- relief from all the miseries and anxieties, relief from starvation, suffering, poverty.

People coming from richer countries think, "Why are they so indifferent to death?" The reason is simple: there is nothing to cling to. Their life has not given anything to them. Their life is so poor that death can't take anything away from them; it can't make them poorer than they already are. But the more you have, the more you become afraid of death. The richer the society, the more fear of death.

In poor societies the taboo is sex, and in richer societies the taboo is death. That is an indication whether the society is rich or poor -- you can just look at what their taboo is. If they are very much against sex that means they are poor; if they are very much against death, even afraid to mention it, that simply means they are rich. Hence it is a very difficult encounter between poor countries and richer countries -- their taboos clash.

This is happening every day here, because my people have come from all over the world and the poor Indian society has the taboo against sex. Sex is their problem, sex is their fear. Birth is their fear, not death. They think of how to stop birth, they ponder over birth control methods. In richer countries the scientists go on searching how to postpone death. In poor countries the problem is how to postpone birth.

So the king was very much afraid, naturally. He had so much and death would take everything away; and he had wasted his whole life in accumulating. How to protect himself? And in accumulating so much wealth he had created many enemies and they were always in

search of an opportunity to cut off his head, to shoot him.

He took advice from old, wise people of his country. They told him to make a castle with only one door -- no windows, no other doors, just a single door to enter into and to come out of. He would be safe. And on the door he could place a one-thousand-strong security force so it would be impossible for anybody to enter.

The idea was appealing. He made a big castle with no windows, no doors, except the one door which was guarded by one thousand warriors.

The neighboring king, his friend, was also afraid of death. He heard about this castle and he came to see. He was very much impressed. He said, "I will immediately start working, I will immediately create a castle for myself -- this is so safe and so secure!"

When his friend was departing -- the king had come out of the castle to say goodbye to him -- he again appreciated the castle. While he was appreciating the castle, a beggar sitting by the side of the road started laughing loudly. Both the kings were shocked and they asked him, "Why are you laughing? Have you gone mad? And don't you know how to behave in the presence of kings?"

The beggar said, "I could not control myself. Excuse me! But I used to be a king myself, and let me tell you the truth of why I am laughing. I have been watching, because I beg here on this road. I have been watching... the castle is being built, but I am puzzled: I say to you, there is only one mistake, one error, which is going to prove fatal."

The king said, "What is that mistake? You tell us, we will correct it." The king was ready to listen, and not only to listen but to correct it.

The beggar said, "You do one thing: you go inside and tell your people to close the door also, forever, because this door is going to prove dangerous. Death will enter from here! These one thousand warriors will not be able to prevent death, they will not even be able to see it. So close the door completely. Instead make a wall, and you be inside the castle and you will be safe forever! Nobody can kill you, not even death can enter in."

But the king said, "That means I will be already dead! If I cannot come out, what is the point of living?"

And the beggar said, "That's why I am laughing. You are ninety-nine point nine percent dead! Only one door is left, so only that much you are alive."

The more safe you are, the more dead you are. And this is not a beautiful death, the graceful death of the leaf, of the rose petal falling towards the ground, moving back to the source. It is an ugly death, man's invention. A natural death is beautiful; man has made it ugly. Man has made EVERYTHING ugly; whatsoever man touches becomes ugly. If he touches gold it turns into dust.

Amitabh, let this understanding penetrate as deeply as possible. Let this become your very core, your insight. Yes, it is so. Don't possess, don't hold tight. Remain relaxed, remain nonpossessive. If something is available, enjoy it; when it disappears, let it disappear with gratitude -- gratitude for all that it has done for you, with no grudge, with no complaint. And you will know the greatest joys of life and death, light and darkness, of being and nonbeing both.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IN EXISTENCE WHENEVER AN ENLIGHTENED PERSON APPEARS, BOTH THE

BAD AND THE GOOD FORCES START FUNCTIONING. AS HISTORY TESTIFIES, OFTEN THE BAD FORCES WIN. A JESUS IS CRUCIFIED, A SOCRATES IS POISONED, A MANSOOR IS CHOPPED, BUDDHA, MAHAVIRA ARE STONED. AS SUCH, A LARGE PART OF HUMANITY REMAINS IN UTTER DARKNESS. BELOVED MASTER, WILL THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS REMAIN AS IN THE PAST? WILL THE SAME PHENOMENON CONTINUE AFTER YOU LEAVE? PLEASE THROW SOME LIGHT.

Dharma Bhikkhu, the first thing to understand is: don't divide existence into good and bad, into God and Devil, into forces of good and forces of evil. That division is a wrong way to look at reality. Existence is one. In existence Jesus and Judas are not separate, but players in the same drama. Can you think of Jesus without Judas? You think Christianity was founded by Jesus alone? Then you are utterly wrong -- fifty percent by Jesus, fifty percent by Judas. And in fact, Judas has played a more important role than Jesus himself.

Hence I don't call Christianity "Christianity"; I call it "Crossianity," because the cross has become the symbol. And who is responsible for the cross? Judas is responsible for the cross. Without Judas, the story of Jesus will lose all its glory. Judas gives the contrast; he is the blackboard on which Jesus becomes a silver line. He is the black cloud, and Jesus shines forth as a lightning energy -- but without the black cloud you will not be able to see the lightning either.

Do you see stars during the day? They are there, but you can't see them. To see them you will need the dark night -- the darker the night, the more shining are the stars. The night is more starry because more and more stars appear as the darkness deepens. Will you say that darkness is against the stars? It enhances them, it nourishes them.

So the first thing to remember, Dharma Bhikkhu, is that existence is not divided into two camps. It is one game, it is one play; we are all players in it, and the enemy is as much needed as the friend.

It is not accidental that before Jesus was caught he kissed Judas and washed his feet. Christians think this is just saintliness, holiness. My observation is: it is understanding; it has nothing to do with saintliness or holiness. A tremendous understanding!

Jesus is saying, "Although Judas is going to betray me, he has to fulfill his role and I have to fulfill mine -- and we are part of the same drama." This is the Eastern insight: that the forces of light and the forces of darkness are not really separate, they only appear so.

If Socrates was not poisoned you would have forgotten him long ago. And he was going to die anyway, so the people who poisoned him helped his work, they really served his cause. They made his name immortal.

There have been many Sufi mystics of the same status as al-Hillaj Mansoor, but how many names do you remember? Do you remember even the name of the master of Mansoor? All names have been forgotten. Mansoor has become an eternal light, for the simple reason that he was killed, brutally killed -- yes, chopped into parts. Jesus' death compared to Mansoor's looks very human, compassionate. Mansoor was killed part by part. First his legs were cut off, then his hands, then his eyes were taken out, then his tongue was cut out, then his head was cut off -- in parts, in pieces.

But Mansoor became the most precious name in the whole Sufi tradition; and the tradition is rich: Bahauddin, Jalaluddin, Hassan, Rabiya, Mansoor's own master, Junnaid, and thousands of others who have become enlightened.

These two traditions in the world have created the most enlightened people: one is Zen,

born out of Buddha's insight, and another is Sufism, born out of Mohammed's insight. These two traditions have created the greatest light in the world. But you cannot find a single name in Zen compared to Mansoor, for the simple reason that no Zen master was chopped up, killed, crucified.

If Jesus has conquered almost the whole world -- because almost half of humanity is under his impact -- what is the reason? Is Mahavira in any way lagging behind in his enlightenment? Is Kanad not capable of transforming the whole world? They are as capable as Jesus, but they don't have their Judas -- the cross is missing. They died in their beds, they died in an ordinary way. As far as their inner being is concerned they died in an extraordinary way, but who is going to see and understand it? Jesus' death becomes such an historical phenomenon, so significant, that history is divided at that point: before Jesus and after Jesus. Jesus becomes the line of division. Nobody else has been so significant. Why?

And you say, Dharma Bhikkhu, "Often the bad forces win."

No, never. In the first place, the good and the bad are not enemies -- playing a game of hide-and-seek. And in the second place, the good always wins because the good is bigger than the bad. Jesus is far bigger than Judas, and Socrates is far bigger than the people who poisoned him, and Mansoor is far bigger than the people who killed him.

Good is infinite; bad is just a part in it, a small part -- intrinsic, necessary, inevitable, but a small part. It serves good.

No, by Jesus' crucifixion the forces of evil have not won -- they can't win, it is impossible. God is always victorious. His ways are strange: sometimes he conquers you in such a strange way that you can't see the point immediately. He conquers through Jesus by crucifying Jesus -- a strange method, a mysterious way, but such are the ways of God.

And thirdly, it is always going to remain the same; about that, there is going to be no change. And I don't think that there is any need for any change either; it is perfectly right. It is far more beautiful to die on the cross than to die in Sassoon Hospital!* Just the idea of dying in Sassoon Hospital is frightening. I am not afraid of death, but I am afraid of Sassoon Hospital!

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM A STRONG MAN, BUT I CANNOT FIND A WOMAN WHO TRULY LOVES ME.
WHAT IS MISSING IN ME? I HAVE COME HERE TO FIND A SOULMATE. CAN YOU
HELP ME?

Sudhiro, maybe... but before I can help you to find a soulmate I will have to create a soul in you, which is far more difficult! You may be physically strong; that does not mean that you have a soul.

Soul is only a seed; you don't have actual souls within you, just possibilities. And without a soul, people start searching for a soulmate! Only a SOUL can attract another soul. If you have a soul, then some soul is bound to be attracted towards you; you will find the soulmate.

But one never thinks that way. And the idea that you are a strong man may become an obstruction, because a strong man ordinarily is one who is more animalistic. That's our idea of strength: a man who looks more like an animal.

Whenever I see the pictures of Mr. Universe I am simply puzzled -- I can't see any beauty, they look utterly ugly; all muscles and nothing else! They look more like animals

than men.

And this is not health either, because they all die early and they all die with dangerous diseases, for the simple reason that they force their bodies in a certain mold. They don't love their bodies; their bodies are tense. By the time these Mr. Universes are forty they are on the verge of dying and they succumb to great illnesses, incurable, because they themselves have created those illnesses. They have been forcing their bodies, manipulating their bodies. They have succeeded, but at a great cost.

Strength, in the ordinary mind, means aggressiveness. And a woman needs a little more tenderness, not aggressiveness. And who knows, Sudhiro? You may just be carrying this idea that you are a strong man and you may not even be that. It may be just an ego idea, a fantasy.

Moe and Sophie had been married for twelve years. One night in bed Moe said, "Lift up your nightgown."

Sophie did not answer.

Moe tried once again. "Hey, be a good girl. Lift up your nightgown."

Sophie still did not reply.

Moe stormed out of the room, slamming the door. Sophie got up and locked it. For half an hour Moe walked the living room. Then he strode back to the bedroom, pushed on the door, and found it was locked.

"Open the door," he pleaded. "I am sorry I got sore. Open the door!"

Sophie did not answer.

"If you don't open the door I will break it down!"

"Look at my athlete!" shouted Sophie. "A nightgown he can't lift up, but a door he will break down!"

So I don't know how strong you are. Maybe you are able to break doors -- that won't help. You will have to learn the other art! And I don't know, Sudhiro, how old you are -- because you must have been searching long; otherwise you would not have reached here. And if you have been failing for your whole life you must have become crystallized into certain patterns. You may be aggressive, you may be a pretender, you may be less interested in love and more in conquering a woman.

There are many people who go on doing that: they go on counting how many women they have conquered. There are women also -- now only in the West but soon they will be in the East too -- who go on counting, as if love is a question of quantity!

A man was making love to a woman and he asked her, "Am I the first man to make love to you?"

And a long silence followed. The man asked, "Have you heard me or not?"

She said, "I have heard, but I am counting."

There are people who keep count: how many women they have conquered, how many men they have conquered. If you are interested in conquest you are not interested in love. And when slowly slowly, life starts slipping out of your hands, when death starts knocking on your doors, you become frightened. Suddenly you become alert that you have missed something beautiful.

Love is one of the greatest experiences in life -- and many miss it. They may reproduce children, they may have married many times, but love is a totally different phenomenon. It

needs a great sensitivity, it needs a soul. And when time passes and energies starts waning and death comes closer, you are in a panic.

That's exactly my feeling reading your question, Sudhiro -- that you are in a panic.

Two little old ladies were chatting over the backyard fence. The first one boasted, "I went out with old man Cain last night and I had to slap him twice."

"To stop him?" asked her friend.

"No," she giggled, "to start him!"

But it is good that you have come here. If you cannot start, we can slap you! Something is always possible. One thing that you need is: rather than searching for a soulmate, become a soul, become more conscious.

When love is unconscious it is only lust and nothing else -- a beautiful name for an ugly thing. When love is conscious, only then it is love. But how many people are conscious? When love is meditative, only then it is love.

And a meditative love will attract a meditative love energy. You get only what you deserve, remember, neither less nor more. You always get exactly that which you deserve. Existence is very just and very fair. So if you are not getting a soulmate, it is not going to help to frantically search for one. Rather look in. You are missing something in you -- you are missing love qualities. You are not tender, you are not sensitive, you are not conscious. And you don't know how to give without asking anything in return. Your love is a demand, there is a condition to it. It is a kind of exploitation. You want to use the other's body, and no woman is ever happy if she is used -- she hates it.

Millions of women hate their husbands for the simple reason that they feel used, as if they are just machines for your sexual lust to be relieved so that you can have a good night's sleep. No woman can ever respect you if she feels she is being used. Each being is an end unto himself. Never use a woman, never use a man, never use anybody. Nobody is a means for your purposes. Respect -- love is a sharing, it is not using the other, it is not trying to snatch something from the other. On the contrary, it is giving wholeheartedly for no reason at all, just for the sheer joy of giving.

And then suddenly you will find one day you have found someone with whom your energies are in harmony, in accord. And it is a beautiful experience even to find a single person with whom you are in accord. And here you can find many persons with whom you are in accord.

You can't imagine my ecstasy, because I am in accord with all of my sannyasins, in deep accord, a tremendous harmony. Then love reaches its highest peak. It is no more sexual, it is pure prayer. And when love is prayer, you have found the soulmate.

But if your love is lust you can't find a soulmate, you can only find some woman's body. And the body is not going to help fulfill your longing. You need attunement with the soul, with the inner being, with the interiority of the woman or of the man. At least with one person if it happens, great joy arises. And then when you know the art, it can happen with many more people. And that's what friendship is.

My effort here is to create a commune where thousands of souls are in such deep friendship, in such love, as if they are all soulmates. We can release such great light into the world through that energy field! We can start such a revolution in the world, we can ignite such fire, that it will go on burning in the future, down the centuries, helping people to be transformed, to be reborn.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE COME ACROSS A STATEMENT BY R.D. LAING THAT MADNESS IS NOT
BREAKDOWN, IT IS BREAKTHROUGH. OUR MEDITATION CAMPS, WHENEVER
THEY ARE CONDUCTED, ARE SEEN AS A BREAKDOWN, EVEN BY
PSYCHIATRISTS. IS IT JUSTIFIED AND ETHICAL FOR PATIENTS OF DEPRESSION
TO BE GIVEN DYNAMIC MEDITATION? PLEASE ADVISE. I AM MERELY A
SURGEON.

Krishna Teertha Bharti, R.D. Laing is bringing a radical change into the world of therapy. He is not an ordinary psychiatrist, he is a revolutionary psychiatrist. He understands me and what I am doing here. He goes on sending his books to me. He reads what is happening here, what I am saying, what I am teaching. He has been meeting with sannyasins in London -- he is immensely interested. But he is a revolutionary and his insight is great, and I agree with him in toto. He is right: madness is not a breakdown, it is a breakthrough.

But one thing I would like to say: all madneses are not breakthroughs. But every madness can be transformed into a breakthrough -- and that should be the work of the therapist. Even if the madness is a breakdown, the function of the therapist is to help the breakdown to be transformed into a breakthrough. Otherwise, what is your purpose? What are you doing?

Up to now, the function of the therapist has been to normalize the person, to bring him back to his old self. And what was his old self in the first place? It is his old self that has brought this state of madness. If you bring him back to the old self you are simply postponing the same thing happening again. Sooner or later he will again become mad. Maybe you are helping him for temporary relief. Unless his breakdown becomes a breakthrough you have not been a real help to him.

My methods of meditation are methods for future psychotherapy. The orthodox, the ordinary psychiatrists will be against my methods, because they cling to the old idea. They are afraid of the breakdown -- I am not afraid of the breakdown. Breakdown simply means the change has started. Breakdown simply means all the old strategies, all the old securities, have failed. Breakdown simply means that your old personality is of no use anymore. You need a new being, a new birth.

When the child is born out of the womb he must be thinking -- if he can think -- that this is a breakdown, because his whole world is disappearing. The womb, its coziness, its warmth, its safety, security -- no worry, no responsibility -- all that is disappearing. And the child has to pass such a narrow passage, he must be feeling that he is dying. And then he has to learn a new way of life from ABC. It takes twenty-five years for us to educate him to function rightly in the society.

But our society is abnormal, our society is neurotic. It has been dominated by neurotic politicians, neurotic priests, for centuries. So we convert each child into a neurotic -- Hindu neurotics, Mohammedan neurotics, Christian neurotics. We change every child into a fanatic, and the more fanatic he is the more we praise him. The more he says, "Hinduism is the only religion, the only right religion, the only true religion," Hindus will praise him.

That's how Ayatollah Khomeini is being praised by foolish people in Iran. He is a lunatic -- he needs a breakdown! -- but he is being praised as a great leader, a revolutionary leader.

Down the centuries, fanatics have been praised.

If somebody says, "India is the greatest country in the world, the most religious, the most sacred land," people will praise him. They will say, "Look how devoted he is to the country." He is simply mad -- he needs therapy!

Because we have praised these kinds of neurotic attitudes, approaches, and we have condemned others... if somebody does not praise Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Christianity, we think he is a traitor. If somebody is not a great nationalist we think he is a traitor. We have condemned the sane people and we have praised the insane. Naturally, the crowd has remained insane.

The whole world needs a breakdown! But just a breakdown is not going to help. Before the world goes through that breakdown -- and the day is coming closer every day -- methods and devices have to be invented, innovated, which can transform the breakdown into a breakthrough.

That's what my meditation techniques are: a preparation for the future, a preparation, an absolutely necessary preparation, for something which is going to happen. Humanity IS on the verge of a breakdown -- we have come to the very end of the tether. Now there is no more, we cannot go on any longer in this way. The old patterns have been outlived; they are all outdated.

Your psychiatrists and your psychoanalysts will be against me, because they serve the past and I have no love for the past, not at all. I love the present, and through the present I prepare for the future. The past is so ugly, it is not even worth looking at. In a better future we will stop teaching people about past history, about Alexanders, Genghis Khans, Nadirshahs, Tamerlanes, because even to mention them to the children is wrong. Even to give them an idea that such people have existed, that man can fall into such degradation, is poisoning their minds.

But your psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, are in the service of the past; hence they will be against my methods. Their whole effort is somehow to patch up people. If some hole appears they simply patch it up, if some wound appears they cover it up. They keep you functioning efficiently as a clerk in an office, as a deputy collector, as a police inspector, as a stationmaster, etcetera. They are not interested in your humanity. Their interest is only that you should remain a functioning member of society, mechanically useful, that's all.

My purpose is totally different: I want you to be a human being. I want you not only to be a human being but to rise towards being divine.

You ask me, Krishna Teertha Bharti.... He is a surgeon, a doctor; naturally this question has arisen in his mind. You ask me, "Is it justified and ethical for patients of depression to be given Dynamic Meditation?"

What else can be more justified and more ethical -- because to be a sufferer of depression simply means he has repressed too much. Depression is nothing but repression. He is depressed so much because he has not been allowed to express himself. Dynamic Meditation is expression. In expressing himself, in catharting all that has been repressed in his unconscious, he will be unburdened, he will become saner, healthier.

Two robbers broke into a bank in a small town.

"Alright," said the bigger man. "Line up! We are gonna rob all the men and rape all the women!"

"Wait a second!" snapped his partner. "Let us just grab the dough and beat it!"

"Shut up and mind your own business," said the spinster from behind the counter. "The big

fella knows what he is doing!"

We have made everybody repressed, pushing down all kinds of things. They are boiling within.

Before she left a friend's house Aunt Emma was warned that a sex maniac was loose in the neighborhood. That evening when she returned to her apartment, she cautiously looked under her bed, in her closet and behind the draperies.

Then Emma switched on the light. "Well, he is not here!" she sighed. "Damn it!"

Everybody who has been brought up in our societies needs some methods to vomit anger, sex, greed, jealousies, envies. You are sitting on a volcano... and the volcano can erupt at any moment! If catharsis is allowed -- and that's what Dynamic Meditation is all about -- the volcano will disappear. You will become saner.

I am not saying you will become more normal, but I am saying you will become more sane. Now, the two may not coincide; in fact they cannot -- because by the normal we really don't mean the normal but we mean the average. It is a wrong use of the word. 'Normal' should mean one who lives according to the norm, one who lives according to the natural, spontaneous -- he is normal. But people are not allowed to live naturally and spontaneously. They are forced to live an average life as others are living -- and the average is thought to be normal.

That's why I say I make people saner. They will be normal REALLY, but they may not coincide with your idea of the normal. They will not be average, certainly -- they will be higher than the average. They will have more insight into life, more joy in their lives, more freedom in their lives, more rebellion too -- more freedom and more rebellion. And the society and church are against freedom. They don't want you to be free, they want you to be slaves. Their whole vested interest is in your being always a slave.

Hence they are all against me. I can understand, I am not at all surprised by their anger against me. Their anger is natural, because whatsoever I am doing here is going to sabotage their whole structure, and sometimes just a hole in the boat is enough to sink it. And my effort is to make as many holes as possible!

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS MAN PREDICTABLE?

Tosho, man is not predictable -- if he is a man. But very few men are really men -- they are machines. Machines are predictable. Man has freedom. You cannot predict Buddha, but you can predict the so-called ordinary people. They are predictable -- they go on doing the same thing again and again. You know what they have been doing up to now and according to that you can predict what they are going to do tomorrow.

Small children are not predictable because they are not yet converted into machines.

Preparing to give a small boy an aptitude test, a psychiatrist told his nurse to put a pitchfork, a wrench and a hammer on the table.

"If he grabs the pitchfork he will be a farmer. If he grabs the wrench he will be a mechanic. And if he grabs the hammer he will be a carpenter," the doctor explained.

The boy fooled everyone -- he grabbed the nurse.

Man has become so mechanical that even animals sometimes behave in a more unpredictable way than man.

Experimental psychologists like to tell a story about a professor who investigated the ability of chimpanzees to solve problems. A banana was suspended from the center of the ceiling, at a height that the chimp could not reach by jumping. The room was bare of all objects except several packing crates placed around the room at random. The test was to see whether a lady chimp would think of first stacking the crates in the center of the room and then of climbing on top of the crates to get the banana.

The chimp sat quietly in a corner, watching the psychologist arrange the crates. She waited patiently until the professor crossed the middle of the room. When he was directly below the fruit, the chimp suddenly jumped on his shoulder, then leaped into the air and grabbed the banana.

Tosho, man -- a real man -- is not predictable, because he lives moment to moment. He does not live out of the past and he does not live out of any ideology for the future. He simply lives THIS moment. He responds to the situation, he is responsible; hence he is not predictable.

My sannyasins have to become unpredictable. The more unpredictable you are, the more you are human.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #5

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IF YOU DETERMINE YOUR COURSE
WITH FORCE OR SPEED,
YOU MISS THE WAY OF THE LAW.

QUIETLY CONSIDER
WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG.
RECEIVING ALL OPINIONS EQUALLY,
WITHOUT HASTE, WISELY,

OBSERVE THE LAW.

WHO IS WISE,
THE ELOQUENT OR THE QUIET MAN?
BE QUIET,
AND LOVING AND FEARLESS.

FOR THE MIND TALKS,
BUT THE BODY KNOWS.

GRAY HAIRS DO NOT MAKE A MASTER.
A MAN MAY GROW OLD IN VAIN.

THE TRUE MASTER LIVES IN TRUTH,
IN GOODNESS AND RESTRAINT,
NONVIOLENCE, MODERATION AND PURITY.

FINE WORDS OR FINE FEATURES
CANNOT MAKE A MASTER
OUT OF A JEALOUS AND GREEDY MAN.

ONLY WHEN ENVY AND SELFISHNESS
ARE ROOTED OUT OF HIM
MAY HE GROW IN BEAUTY.

A MAN MAY SHAVE HIS HEAD
BUT IF HE STILL LIES AND NEGLECTS HIS WORK,
IF HE CLINGS TO DESIRE AND ATTACHMENT,
HOW CAN HE FOLLOW THE WAY?

THE TRUE SEEKER
SUBDUES ALL WAYWARDNESS.
HE HAS SUBMITTED HIS NATURE TO QUIETNESS.

HE IS A TRUE SEEKER
NOT BECAUSE HE BEGS
BUT BECAUSE HE FOLLOWS THE LAWFUL WAY,
HOLDING BACK NOTHING, HOLDING TO NOTHING,
BEYOND GOOD AND BEYOND EVIL,
BEYOND THE BODY AND BEYOND THE MIND.

The way of Gautama the Buddha is the way of let-go; it cannot be determined by willpower. Willpower is only a beautiful name for ego power. The existence of the will is nothing but a by-product of the ego. The ego itself is a shadow, hence willpower is a shadow of a shadow. The very idea of having a will of one's own is against existence. It creates a rift between you and the whole. The whole has will -- how can the part have a will of its own? The part can win, not against the whole but with the whole. The part can win, not by winning but by surrendering.

The path of Buddha is of total surrender: total surrender to the dhamma, to tao, to the

universal law, to God. These are different names for the same phenomenon. We are living in a cosmos, not in a chaos. Everything is as perfect as it can be; nothing can be improved upon. The very idea of trying to improve upon things is sheer stupidity. Those who have known, they have known the absolute perfection of existence.

Then what is left? To dissolve in the whole and celebrate! This cannot be done as a determination on your part, because if YOU determine, then you remain there behind your determination hiding in disguise. If YOU determine, how can you dissolve? YOU cannot surrender -- if you surrender, it is not surrender.

Then what is surrender? How is it going to happen at all? Surrender is the understanding that the ego is false. In that very understanding, the ego evaporates -- is not found anymore -- and the surrender has happened. Not that it has been done by you; it happens without your doing. Only then is it true, authentic; it has immense beauty and tremendous power, because then you become a vehicle of the whole. You are no longer a part, you simply represent the whole.

You are the wave in the ocean -- and the wave in the ocean is the ocean itself! If the ocean contains the wave, the wave contains the ocean in a similar way. They are inseparable, they are one. The wave is the manifestation of the unmanifest, a finite expression of the infinite. So are you just a wave. The moment you start thinking yourself separate, the wave has gone insane.

The first sutra:

IF YOU DETERMINE YOUR COURSE
WITH FORCE OR SPEED,
YOU MISS THE WAY OF THE LAW.

The ego is always aggressive; it can exist only through aggression. It creates such fuss, such dust, such smoke, that you can't see. It makes you blind. It whirls you round and round, it makes you dizzy. That's why the ego is always hankering for more and more power, more and more force. It wants to do things with absolute force.

The ego is a fascist, it is totalitarian, it is dictatorial. It does not want any rebellion against itself. It immediately destroys any possibility of you becoming free of it. Just the seed of a rebellion... and it starts destroying it. It is constantly watching. It is constantly trying to keep you so occupied that you never become aware of the great slavery you are living in. And the ego is very cunning: it convinces you that "I am you."

So whenever the idea of dropping the ego arises you start feeling as if you are losing your identity. The ego is not your identity. It is because of the ego that you are not able to know who you really are. The ego is the barrier. It keeps you running and it keeps you at such a speed, in such a hurry, that you don't have any time to think things over, to ponder, to meditate, to see what you are doing, why you are doing it.

It does not give you any time to see. It keeps you crazy, engaged, constantly engaged in one desire or other. Before one desire is spent it creates ten more. It keeps new desires ready so there is never a gap, never an interval left between two desires -- because in that gap you will be able to see and recognize the stupidity of your life, the utter madness of your life. And once you have seen it you cannot remain part of it anymore. You will jump out of it! You have seen that the house is on fire.

Buddha says: IF YOU DETERMINE YOUR COURSE WITH FORCE OR SPEED,

YOU MISS THE WAY OF THE LAW. You miss the whole point of existence, because existence is available in all its beauty and benediction only to those who are living in a relaxed way -- not with force, not with any speed; who are not rushing, running, who are not ambitious, who are not at all engaged in some not-yet future. It is available to those who are at rest, at home with the present moment, so relaxed as if there is no other time. This moment is all.... In that relaxed state, tao opens its doors.

Buddha's name for tao is dhamma. In English there is no real synonym for tao or dhamma, hence it has been translated as 'the law'. It is a poor word. 'The law' does not really indicate the meaning of Buddha's word 'dhamma'. Dhamma means the nature of existence. Dhamma means the harmony of existence. Dhamma means that which holds the existence together. Dhamma means the universal interconnectedness. It is a multidimensional word, tremendously pregnant. To call it "the law" is to reduce it to a one-dimensional word.

And why do we miss the point of existence, the very point which can make us blissful, which can make us free from all misery? We miss because we are in such a hurry. Strange! Ordinarily we think the man who is moving with speed will reach sooner, and the man who works with great force is going to achieve. Yes, that's how it happens in the world; but in the deepest realm of existence just the reverse is the case.

If you go with speed you will miss; if you are in too much of a hurry you will not be able to see. Your eyes will remain clouded, you will remain tense. You will not be able to see that which is, because your mind is so full of desire, of ambition, of achievement, you can't see that which is. You are always hankering for that which should be.

Ordinarily, the "ought" has become more important than the "is," the "should be" has become more important than "that which is." And God is that which is, truth is that which is. Hence, Buddha says: Relax, let go, rest.

QUIETLY CONSIDER
WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG.
RECEIVING ALL OPINIONS EQUALLY,
WITHOUT HASTE, WISELY,
OBSERVE THE LAW.

Much is missed in the translation: QUIETLY CONSIDER.... Buddha's word is not 'consider' -- he says meditate, quietly meditate. But in English, to meditate means to consider, to think concentratedly. To meditate means to meditate UPON something. There is an object, you have to contemplate about it. Meditation in English has the connotation of concentrated thinking on a certain object.

But the Buddhist meaning of meditation -- DHYANA -- is totally different. It has nothing to do with any object in particular; it has something to do, certainly, with you, but not with the object. It has something to do with the consciousness, not with the content. It is a totally different orientation. The content is outside, the object is outside, and consciousness is inside. The English word 'meditation' is extrovert; the Buddhist word 'meditation' is introvert.

When Buddha says meditate he means don't think -- it is just the opposite of the English meaning. He says: drop all thinking and see. That is the only way to know things as they are... because if you are thinking, you are bringing your prejudices in. If you are thinking, you are bringing your past conclusions in. If you are thinking, your mind is functioning -- and mind is past, and the past never allows you to see the present. Thinking has to stop for meditation to be. Thinking has to evaporate totally. In that state of no-thought you can see.

But to the Western mind, the state of no-thought seems as if you will fall asleep. What

will you do if there is no thought? The Western mind is constantly DOING something. It can keep itself awake only if it is occupied, doing something. It is a doer. And that is the difference between the Eastern and the Western approach.

The East has stumbled upon a totally different kind of experience -- the experience of no-thought and yet being fully awake. This was the greatest revelation, one of the most important contributions to the world. The West knows thinking and sleep. You are doing something either with the body or with the mind; if you have nothing to do with the body or the mind you go to sleep, then sleep takes over.

Rest, in the West, becomes sleep; rest, in the East, is a state of wakefulness without thought. It is neither sleep nor thinking; it is a totally different thing from both. Thoughts have disappeared....

The Western psychologists say: If there is no thought, how can there be consciousness? Western psychology insists that consciousness is always consciousness OF something; it can't exist by itself. Logically it is appealing, convincing, but existentially it is absurd.

Consciousness can exist without any thought -- I say it by my own experience. It is not a question of my conclusion through a thought process, it is my experience. It is the experience of all the buddhas of the past: consciousness CAN exist without thought. That is the only possibility of liberation; otherwise there will be no possibility -- either you are occupied with thoughts or you fall asleep and become occupied with dreams.

And you go on moving in this vicious circle: dreams, thoughts, dreams, thoughts.... Dreams are pictorial thoughts, thoughts are verbal pictures; they are not much different. Dreams are a little primitive, thoughts are a little more sophisticated, but they do the same thing. They keep you focused on the outside, they never allow you to experience your own subjectivity.

That subjectivity is your truth. And the only way to know it is to be in total rest -- as one is in sleep -- and yet be totally aware, alert, and without any thoughts. This is samadhi, this is the ultimate state of dhyana -- meditation. This is what Buddha means when he says: QUIETLY CONSIDER WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG.

Now, if you consider what is right, what is wrong, you miss. You are bound to start thinking, "What is right and what is wrong?" And what will you think about? You will start chewing over many thoughts that have been provided to you by the society. The society has taught you, "This is right and that is wrong," and you will start chewing them again. Maybe you will make some new combinations, you will color and paint and decorate them, but basically, essentially, they will be impositions from others. It is not your own experience. Hence Buddha can't mean thinking.

He says: meditate quietly. Be silent and see. And in that seeing you will know -- without any logical process you will simply know: This is this. This is good and this is bad. Not that you have to decide it according to the Bible or the Koran or the Gita. If you have eyes you know where the wall is and where the door is. Do you have to think about it? Each time you go out of your room do you have to think again and again where the door is and where the wall is? You simply go out of the door without thinking at all, because you can see! But if you are blind, each time you will have to think again, "Where is the door?" You will have to grope for the door.

Thinking is a blind state, it is a groping in darkness. Meditation is a state of having eyes, you are capable of seeing. You simply see what is right and what is wrong. And when you see what is right and what is wrong you can't do the wrong, you can't go against the right.

A meditator naturally follows that which is good -- not that he decides to follow it -- and

naturally avoids that which is bad. Not that he decides to avoid it; a meditator never takes any vows -- there is no need. A man with eyes never takes the vow that "I will always enter from the door, go out from the door. I promise you, God, that I will never try to enter from the wall. Believe me, I am a man of my word, I will keep it, although I know there will be many temptations." If somebody is saying that, you will laugh. "What nonsense he is talking! What temptations?" Have you ever been tempted by the wall to get in and out through it? No such temptation is there.

When one can see clearly, good results. It is so natural, it is so spontaneous, you can't say that you have decided it. You can't say that you have used your will. You can't even say that this is your act. All that you can say is that this is how things are happening, not that you are doing them, you are only allowing them to happen. Then life has such a relaxed joy, because no tension follows it, no strain. The achieving mind is no longer there, hence there is never any frustration.

QUIETLY CONSIDER WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG. But in the English translation it becomes just the opposite. If you simply cling to the English words it means think, ponder, consider, what is right and what is wrong.

RECEIVING ALL OPINIONS EQUALLY, WITHOUT HASTE, WISELY, OBSERVE THE LAW. Buddha says: Don't have any prejudice. And we are so full of prejudices, we are bundles of prejudices. And whenever we think that we have come to a conclusion, it is just a deception -- you have again come to a prejudice which has already been put inside you by the society, by the church, by the state. You are victims of so many vested interests, which are all sitting around you with greedy eyes to exploit you, to suck your blood and soul.

Watch, the next time you feel that you have understood something, observed something. Go back and try to see: is it some past prejudice that has again popped up in a new form, in a new format, with new words? And you will be surprised: it is so.

The head doctor at the hospital was making his rounds and he passed before a group of newborn babies. "What's the matter with this little fellow? He seems awfully puny and underweight."

The nurse said, "He is one of those artificial insemination babies, and I am afraid he has been coming along rather slowly."

"Confirms a pet theory of mine," said the doctor. "Spare the rod and spoil the child!"

That's what you go on doing. Peter's principle says: If the facts do not conform to the theory they must be disposed of. He also says: If you cannot convince them, confuse them.

And that's what your great scholars go on doing. They cannot convince anybody, but they can certainly confuse. They have confused the whole world. That's what your theologians have done, your priests have done. The world lives in such confusion because of these great scholars, priests, professors, philosophers, pundits; and they have devoted their whole lives to confusing you. They are not convinced themselves of what they are saying, but when they become capable of confusing you they enjoy the ego trip. It is very satisfying to confuse somebody because you become superior. And there are always foolish people who are ready to become victims of words -- beautiful, fine words. And systems made of words are nothing but houses made out of playing cards.

George Bernard Shaw used to say: Build a system that even a fool can use and only a fool will want to use it.

Every religion tries to convince the lowest denominator, the ordinary man. They can't

succeed in convincing, because they themselves are not convinced. Conviction comes out of truth, not out of thinking, not out of studying. Conviction comes out of experience. They are themselves not convinced, but they have become very very skillful, efficient, in using words, making great systems out of words. They can confuse people. And there are millions of fools who are ready -- ready to be confused, and they think that their confusion is their conviction.

That's why there are so many Christians -- all confused about Christ. Whenever somebody says, "I am a Christian," I immediately translate it that he is confused about Christ. When somebody says, "I am a Buddhist," I know that he is confused about Buddha. Because if you are NOT confused about Christ you will not be a Christian, you will be a christ! If you are convinced of the truth of Christ, you will be a christ not a Christian. If you are convinced of the truth of Buddha, if YOU have experienced it, you will be a buddha not a Buddhist.

Fools are many and they can be exploited by these clever, cunning people. Scholars are clever and cunning people. They are experts in using fine words with such skill that you cannot see the loopholes. Because you can't see the loopholes you start believing in their words. But no belief ever delivers you from your misery, no belief becomes salvation -- Christian, Hindu or Mohammedan. Belief as such is a bondage.

Buddha says: RECEIVING ALL OPINIONS EQUALLY.... Without any prejudice, without any opinion already arrived at, without any a priori.... Just listen to, and watch, all kinds of things. Be a pure mirror -- that is meditation. And without haste, because if you are in a hurry you will jump upon the conclusion. You are not really concerned with truth, you are more concerned with a conclusion, because the conclusion gives comfort, the conclusion gives you a security, the conclusion makes you feel that you know. It covers up your ignorance, it makes you feel sure and certain.

Hence people are so ready to become part of any church. They are not ready to become free. Even if sometimes they leave a church, they leave only to join another church. The Hindu becomes the Mohammedan, the Mohammedan becomes the Christian, the Christian becomes the Hindu. And this way they go on moving from one church to another, but they remain the same people because their approach remains the same.

There are only two approaches: one is of the mind, the other is of meditation. The approach of the mind remains confined to the world of beliefs, and the approach of meditation is the approach without thoughts, without beliefs, without prejudices.

WITHOUT HASTE, WISELY, OBSERVE THE LAW. Don't be in a hurry. In hurrying you may decide something which is not true. Just for the longing to make a decision, you may conclude, you may start believing. A real inquirer is ready to wait, he is very patient. Even if it takes lives he is ready to devote lives.

Truth is worth devoting as much time to as you can. One should not be in the mind in any way or have any hurry; otherwise he is bound to fall victim to some false commodity. In the name of truth, he will have something bogus.

Buddha says: ... WISELY, OBSERVE THE LAW. Again the problem arises: OBSERVE THE LAW makes it appear as if Buddha is saying, "Follow the Ten Commandments." No, he is not saying that. Again he is saying: Observe your nature, your self-nature, follow it. Be yourself, be authentically yourself. Risk everything for being yourself. It is comfortable not to be yourself, because when you are ready not to be yourself people are very happy with you. You follow them, you imitate them, they become your leaders -- religious, political, etcetera. But when you try to be yourself you are nobody's follower and nobody is your leader.

My sannyasins are not my followers, just friends, fellow-travelers. I am not their leader, I

am not leading them towards anything. I am simply a poet singing my song, a musician playing on my sitar. You enjoy it! It is not a question of being convinced by me. When you listen to the birds in the morning you don't become convinced of the truth of their song... just the beauty.

My effort is to share my joy, my beauty, my experience with you. And I am grateful that you allow me to be with you. That you allow me to hold your hand in deep love, I am grateful. But you are not my followers, just my friends. I am not your leader, I am not your guide. I have become awakened, true -- and you are fast asleep. I can wake you up. But if somebody wakes you up in the morning he does not become your leader and does not become your guide. Just a friend! And a friend in need is a friend indeed. And that is the greatest need: that you are asleep and somebody is needed to wake you up.

"Follow the law," in Buddha's vision, means follow your self-nature, dhamma, tao.

WHO IS WISE,
THE ELOQUENT OR THE QUIET MAN?

Buddha asks: WHO IS WISE? The clever, the cunning, the man who is very skillful with words, the man who can make great systems of thoughts, great structures which have all the explanations for all the questions? Is that man wise? Or the one who is silent? Is that man wise who demystifies existence and supplies all the answers to you? Or the man who mystifies existence again through his silence, through his being, through his presence, through his love, through his sharing?

Certainly, that man is wise who mystifies existence again for you; with whom you again start looking at things with wonder, with awe, with whom you again start listening to the sermons of silence and songs of stones. That man is wise with whom you again become capable of being innocent like a child, with whom you again become capable of dancing in the wind, in the sun, in the rain. That man is wise, because he brings you closer to nature, and to be closer to nature is to be closer to yourself.

He does not give you a certain code, a morality, a pattern to live by. He does not impose a discipline upon you. He simply shares his vision, insight, clarity, and things start becoming clear to you. And out of your clarity you start living. Of course, your life is going to be unique, it is not going to be an imitation of the master. If it is an imitation, you miss the point, you miss the master. It is going to be unique; it will have its own flavor, its own fragrance.

WHO IS WISE, THE ELOQUENT OR THE QUIET MAN?

BE QUIET,
AND LOVING AND FEARLESS.

Three things Buddha says: Be quiet -- learn to be silent more and more -- AND loving, because if your silence is not loving it will make you insensitive. Then your silence will be that of a cemetery -- dull, dead. It will not be a silence which can celebrate, it will not be a silence which can sing and dance. It will not be a silence which can bloom in a thousand and one flowers. Hence, Buddha immediately says: it should be loving.

And love is possible only if you are fearless; if you are afraid you cannot be loving. The man who is afraid of anything -- death, the police, the magistrate, the government -- the man who is afraid of anything can't love.

And all fears are basically fears arising out of death. The fear of the policeman is also the

same, because he can kill, he can shoot you. The fear of the government is nothing but the fear of violence -- the government can kill more powerfully than anybody else. What is the fear of the magistrate and the law? -- because the magistrate has the power to send you to the gallows or he can give you a life sentence. You are afraid. But deep down all fear is of death... and death is a myth. It has never happened, it never happens, it is never going to happen.

The meditator comes to know the falsity of death, and in that very moment all fear disappears; he becomes fearless.

Remember, Buddha is not saying be brave, he is saying be fearless. That is a totally different dimension. There are three words to be understood. One is the coward, who is continuously afraid; everything makes him fearful, whether valid, invalid, possible, impossible. He goes on living in the fears of his own imagination, he creates his own nightmares.

Then there is the brave man, who is the opposite of the coward. And we have praised the brave man very much, but the brave man is nothing but the coward standing on his head; he is the same type of man. It is not that the brave man has no fears -- he has fears, but in spite of them he goes on fighting, he goes on moving in a direction where he knows there is fear. But the fear gives him a challenge; to fight with the fear becomes his ego trip. He is the brave man.

Buddha is not talking about the brave man. He is saying simply: Be fearless. When you are fearless you are neither a coward nor brave, because both are rooted in fear. The coward has succumbed to fear and the brave is trying to win over fear, but both are concerned with fear. And the fearless one has simply dropped the whole thing. He is neither brave nor cowardly. He knows there is no death, there is nothing to be afraid of and there is nothing to be brave about.

This is a different dimension, a transcendence of the duality of cowardice and bravery.

Be fearless, be loving, be silent, and you will be wise. This is his definition of wisdom.

FOR THE MIND TALKS,
BUT THE BODY KNOWS.

The word 'body' can give you a wrong connotation again. What Buddha means is: the mind talks -- the mind is a part. And when he says the body knows, he means the WHOLE knows. Buddha always used the word 'body' for the whole; it is not the same as when YOU use the word 'body'. When you use the word 'body' it is a part; body, mind, soul, these are three parts in your mind, in your thought processes. This is how you have divided yourself. When Buddha says the body he means your wholeness: "This very body the Buddha, this very earth the Lotus Paradise." When he uses the word 'body' he means your wholeness, your totality. The mind talks, your totality knows.

The mind is useful if you have known. Then the mind can be used as a beautiful instrument to convey, to communicate. After all, Buddha himself is using these words through the mind, but when you have known, mind is a beautiful instrument. Without knowing, you may have studied much from the scriptures... and your mind becomes a gramophone record. You go on repeating others. Avoid that.

It is better to be ignorant and be yourself than to be very knowledgeable, because all knowledge that is not yours is far worse than ignorance -- it keeps you unaware of your ignorance. If you become aware, something can be done. If you become aware, ignorance can

be dissipated.

GRAY HAIRS DO NOT MAKE A MASTER.
A MAN MAY GROW OLD IN VAIN.

Just becoming old does not mean that you have become a wise man. Age in itself does not make anybody wise. One may grow old; that does not mean that one has become a grown-up. Growing old and becoming grown-up are totally different phenomena.

A young reporter was interviewing old Harry Blackwell on his one hundred and first birthday.

"Tell me, Mr. Blackwell, if you had your life to live over again, would you still make the same mistakes?"

"Sure as hell would!" came his emphatic reply.

"You mean you would not do ANYTHING differently?"

"Sure would. I would start sooner."

This man must have been at least sincere. Otherwise old people become cunning, insincere, dishonest.

Sunday was to be the day of Joe's wedding, and he and his father were enjoying a nightcap together. Lifting his glass in a toast to his father, Joe asked, "Any advice before I take the big step, Dad?"

"Yes," the father said, "two things. First: insist on having one night out a week with the boys. Second: don't waste it on the boys."

People go on growing in age but not in maturity. They don't become really ripe; they remain as childish as anybody else. And when you are a child and are childish it is not so embarrassing, but when you have become old and you are childish it is very embarrassing. They hide it, but deep down they are the same person, nothing has happened -- because nothing ever happens without meditation. Just accumulating experience of the outside world does not transform you. It makes you very well informed about many things, but information is information, it is not transformation.

THE TRUE MASTER LIVES IN TRUTH,
IN GOODNESS AND RESTRAINT,
NONVIOLENCE, MODERATION AND PURITY.

The true master is not one who knows about truth; the true master is one who lives in truth, who IS truth. The Upanishads say, "AHAM BRAHMASMI -- I am God." al-Hillaj declares, "ANA'L HAQ -- I am God!" They are saying, "We are not talking about truth, we have BECOME it." Unless you become the truth your wisdom is not true wisdom, it is only mere knowledge. You can go on exhibiting it as wisdom, but you are not fooling anybody except yourself.

THE TRUE MASTER LIVES IN TRUTH.... And when you live in truth, when truth is your very breath, then goodness follows as a shadow.

And the word 'restraint' is again not a right translation. Buddha means discipline: a discipline not imposed by others, a discipline that arises out of your own being, out of your

own understanding, out of your own truth.

The wise man lives as truth, as goodness; his whole life is that of discipline. He does not try to live in any controlled way; he simply lives according to his nature -- and that is his discipline. He lives in nonviolence. He cannot hurt anybody, because to hurt anybody is to hurt oneself. Now he knows all is one. He lives in moderation.

That is Buddha's very specific contribution: the middle path. Buddha says: Avoid the extreme, because it is on the extreme that anxiety arises. You can indulge in an extreme way and you will suffer. You can renounce the world, become another kind of extremist, and you will suffer. Extreme always brings suffering. To be in the middle is to be beyond suffering.

When the traveling salesman's car broke down, he stopped at a farmhouse and was invited to sleep with the farmer's daughter. They went to bed and he made a pass.

She said, "Stop. Stop that or I will call my father."

He tried again. She said, "Stop, or I will call my father." But she moved closer. Finally he succeeded.

Shortly after, she tugged on his pajama sleeve and said, "Could we do that again?" He obliged.

A little later she woke him up and asked if they could do it again. He obliged.

The third time she woke him up and asked if they could do it again he said, "Stop that or I will call your father."

Indulge to the extreme and you will suffer. Or renounce to the extreme and you will suffer. Buddha is a very down-to-earth man; he says remain in the middle, exactly in the middle is the way. There you become balanced.

... NONVIOLENCE, MODERATION AND PURITY. All these things follow naturally if you are wise -- not knowledgeable, remember, but wise. Mind becomes knowledgeable, meditation brings wisdom.

FINE WORDS OR FINE FEATURES
CANNOT MAKE A MASTER
OUT OF A JEALOUS AND GREEDY MAN.

ONLY WHEN ENVY AND SELFISHNESS
ARE ROOTED OUT OF HIM
MAY HE GROW IN BEAUTY.

You may have a beautiful face, fine features; you may have a very articulate way of expressing yourself, of communicating your ideas, you may be very good with words. These things do not make a master; cannot, because if you are jealous and greedy you remain the same.

ONLY WHEN ENVY AND SELFISHNESS ARE ROOTED OUT OF HIM MAY HE GROW IN BEAUTY. A real master is truly beautiful, but that beauty is not of the body. It is something inner that starts radiating out of the body. Yes, his body has a certain aura, a light around itself, a coolness, a grace -- but they arise from his innermost core. They arise from his center and spread towards the circumference. But just having a beautiful body does not mean that you are wise.

Yes, a man of truth is bound to find some way to communicate it, he has to. It is inevitable, because when truth is known, a deep urge is felt to share it. When you have the

truth you will find words, but just having beautiful words does not mean that you have found the truth.

A MAN MAY SHAVE HIS HEAD
BUT IF HE STILL LIES AND NEGLECTS HIS WORK,
IF HE CLINGS TO DESIRE AND ATTACHMENT,
HOW CAN HE FOLLOW THE WAY?

One can become a renounced beggar, one can become a monk, a nun -- that is not going to help. Unless something in your inner being changes... a radical change is needed. Superficial changes won't do.

THE TRUE SEEKER
SUBDUES ALL WAYWARDNESS.

What is waywardness? Your mind moving to the past and to the future, your mind going in all directions, your mind never being herenow: that is waywardness. A TRUE SEEKER SUBDUES ALL WAYWARDNESS.

HE HAS SUBMITTED HIS NATURE TO QUIETNESS.

He surrenders everything to the present moment and its silence.

HE IS A TRUE SEEKER
NOT BECAUSE HE BEGS
BUT BECAUSE HE FOLLOWS THE LAWFUL WAY....

Remember again: by lawful he means the natural.

HOLDING BACK NOTHING, HOLDING TO NOTHING....

The true seeker holds back nothing, he gives everything that he has. He shares totally his love, his joy, his experience -- and he holds to nothing, he clings to nothing. He need not cling to anything: the whole universe belongs to him, the whole kingdom of God is his.

BEYOND GOOD AND BEYOND EVIL,
BEYOND THE BODY AND BEYOND THE MIND.

He lives a transcendental life, in the world and yet not of the world; lives in the body but is not identified with it; lives in the mind but never for a moment finds himself deluded that he is the mind. He is neither the mind nor the body.

Living in the world, doing all that is needful, he remains transcendental. He is like a lotus leaf or a lotus flower -- in the water and yet untouched by it.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Don't take enlightenment seriously

16 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
HOW DID YOU BECOME ENLIGHTENED?

Prem Christo, one never becomes enlightened -- one IS enlightened. One simply remembers it. It is not an achievement, but only a recognition. You are as much enlightened as I am, nothing is missing. You have not lost your god, it is impossible to lose him. He is our very life; without him we cannot exist for a single moment.

So the question is not how to find him. The question is how to become more alert, aware of that which already is the case.

Enlightenment is not a process of becoming, it is a discovery of being. You don't grow towards enlightenment; hence it is never gradual -- growth is gradual. It is an explosion -- sudden, instantaneous. It happens in a single moment... it can happen any moment.

You are only asleep, not unenlightened. You have to be awakened. So remember it: never think in terms of becoming. Becoming is desire, and desire is a hindrance, desire is a dream. If you want to become enlightened you will never be enlightened. Don't make it a goal, an object for desire, because all goals bring future in. And when the future comes in you are in a turmoil. That is what your so-called unenlightenment is. When there is no goal there is no future. When there is no desire, there is no possibility of dreaming. And the moment dreaming stops, sleep disappears.

The state of that no sleep, no desire, no dreaming, no goal, IS enlightenment. Suddenly you find yourself utterly perfect. And one starts laughing, because one was searching for something which was never lost; one was seeking something which one has already been. How can you find that which you already are? It is impossible to find it. That's why enlightenment seems to be such a difficult process -- because it is not a process at all, hence the difficulty.

The masters down the ages have simply been devising methods to wake you up, to shake you up, into enlightenment. They have used all kinds of methods, all kinds of devices. But all those devices are arbitrary; they have no intrinsic value of their own. Their value depends on

the master and his artfulness, his skill. If somebody else is going to try those devices they won't work. It is not a science, it is an art, a knack.

The Zen master may slap you, may throw you out of the door, may jump upon you and beat you, but it works only in the hands of a Zen master. If YOU do it you will find yourself beaten, that's all, or in jail. A Zen master has a totally different vision of life, and slowly slowly, he creates a certain energy field around himself where the device starts functioning. It cannot function anywhere else.

The Sufi master uses his own devices, they were great device-makers. The most important Sufi tradition is called Naqshbandi; NAQSHBANDI means the designers, the devisors. And strange devices they have invented. For example, Jalaluddin Rumi's Sufi dance, whirling, a very strange device. In his hands it worked tremendously, because when you really whirl you become disidentified with the body. That's why children enjoy whirling very much; they feel a great upliftment.

But for that, certain preparations are needed; certain food, certain patterns of sleep, certain exercises have to precede it. Otherwise, if you start whirling suddenly, you will simply feel nausea and nothing else; you may fall sick. No enlightenment is going to happen through it. Everybody cannot do it. A preparation is needed for the device to work, because the device is arbitrary, it is a hothouse plant.

When the master is alive he gives his life to his devices. The moment he is gone, only dead formulas are left. And people go on repeating those formulas for centuries. All those formulas appear stupid later on. In the hands of the master they had a golden touch; without the master, without the awakened one, they are just empty exercises.

Remember it: that the great masters cannot be imitated. They are unique and they should not be imitated.

A diplomatic dinner was being held at the embassy in Paris. Among the guests was an elderly dowager. She had overindulged in food, as was her wont, and as a result belched loudly. In the embarrassed silence that followed, an Englishman, seeing a countryman in difficulty, gallantly pretended that he was the offender and apologized for the faux pas profusely.

The difficult moment passed, but not for long. Once again a hearty belch rose through the murmur of polite conversation. This time a Frenchman, not to be outdone by the suave Englishman, apologized for the offensive interruption and received admiring glances for his quick thinking.

An American observing all this determined not to be outdone and placed himself in the vicinity of the dowager so that he could do honor to HIS country. Inevitably, the poor lady belched again and the American cried out, "That's alright, lady, this one is on me!"

Avoid imitation! That's what has happened to all the great devices invented by the masters. People go on imitating literally, not understanding the spirit -- and the spirit is the real thing to understand, not the letter.

Hindus go on repeating methods invented by people like Patanjali, Manu, Yagnavalka. Thousands of years have passed, but the orthodox mind clings to the letter; it is afraid to change anything. And without understanding the spirit of it, it goes on repeating like a parrot. And situations go on changing.

Now Patanjali cannot be applied to modern human beings exactly as he has taught to HIS disciples. Five thousand years have passed, man is no longer the same. If you want to apply

Patanjali you will need another Patanjali to shift many things, to change many things, to drop many things, to add many things. He will have to create the whole methodology again, because man does not exist for any methods -- all methods exist for man.

No system is so valuable that man can be sacrificed to the system; all systems have to serve man. If they serve, good; if they become useless, out-of-date, irrelevant, they have to be dropped -- with deep reverence, with gratitude -- they have done their work.

But the human mind is such, it always loves the past. The more ancient a method is, the more it is loved. In fact, the more useless it is: it can't change you, it can't help you to change.

Each time a new person becomes aware of his innermost being, listen to him, and while he is alive be available to him. It is going to be hard to be available to the alive master, because he will not only be teaching you words, he will be cutting chunks of your being. It hurts, because you have gathered so much unnecessary garbage around yourself; it has to be cut, mercilessly cut. Only then can your essential being be revealed in all its beauty.

A farmer gathered his sons around him and demanded, "Which one of you boys pushed the outhouse into the creek?"

The culprit did not step forward. "Now, boys," said the farmer, "remember the story of George Washington and the cherry tree. It is true that young George chopped down that tree, but he told his father the truth and his father was proud of him."

Whereupon the farmer's youngest son stepped forward and admitted that he had pushed the outhouse into the creek. The farmer picked up a switch and proceeded to whip his son soundly.

"But Pa," protested the boy tearfully, "you told me that George Washington's father was proud of him when he confessed to chopping down the cherry tree."

"He was, son," replied the farmer, "but George Washington's father was not sitting in the cherry tree when his son chopped it down!"

The situation has changed... and you go on repeating old formulas. First watch the situation. Hence, methods that have worked before are not going to work now.

Enlightenment is the most simple thing, but because man is very complex -- and as time passes man becomes more and more complex -- he will need more and more complex methods.

I must be the first enlightened person who is using therapeutic groups as a help to meditation, for the simple reason that in the past man was so simple there was no need for him to pass through therapies first. He was healthy in a way, saner in a way, authentic, truer, sincere and honest.

Modern man is cunning, very cunning, and very repressed, so much so that he himself is not aware what he has repressed in his being. And modern man is very clever, he is not simple. He is so clever that he can go on deceiving even himself. By deceiving others continuously he has become skillful in deceiving. The skill has become so ingrained that now no conscious, deliberate effort is needed for him to be cunning. He can simply be cunning without any effort on his own.

This changed situation demands new methods, new approaches, new windows, so new that your mind is at a loss what to do. If your mind knows what to do, the device cannot be of any help. The mind, when it is unable to find a way out, is at a loss -- that is the great, precious moment when something of the beyond can happen.

A little old bearded Jew accidentally brushed by a Nazi officer and knocked him off balance.

"Schwein!" roared the German, clicking his heels.

"Solomon," said the Jew, bowing politely. "Pleased to meet you."

You see the cunningness, the cleverness!

Liddell walked into a Chinatown tavern and said to the Oriental behind the bar, "Hey, Chink, give me a drink!"

Ten minutes later Liddell called out again, "Alright, Chink, give me a drink!"

A short time passed and once again Liddell shouted, "Say, Chink, give me a drink!"

"Listen," said the Chinese bartender, "I have held my temper, but you come behind the bar and see how you like to be insulted."

The two men exchanged places. "Okay," said the Oriental. "Now, you Nigger, give me a jigger!"

"Sorry," said the black, "we don't serve Chinks in here."

The modern man cannot be helped by Patanjali or Moses. It will need a totally new approach.

That's exactly what I am doing here. You need therapies so that much garbage can be thrown out of you. Therapy is catharsis; it brings you face-to-face with your own unconscious. No old method has ever been able to do it -- it was not needed in the first place, it was unnecessary. Sitting silently, doing nothing was enough. But now, if you sit silently doing nothing, that is not going to help.

In the first place, you can't sit silently -- so much turmoil is inside. Yes, from the outside you can manage to sit just like the Buddha, a marble statue, still, but deep down are you still? The body can learn the trick of being still, but the mind is not so easily overcome. In fact, the more you force the body to be still, the more the mind rebels against it, the more the mind will try to pull you out of your so-called stillness. It takes the challenge and explodes on you with a vengeance, and all kinds of thoughts, desires, fantasies, erupt.

Sometimes one wonders where all these things go when you don't meditate. The moment you sit for a few moments' silence, all kinds of nonsense things start floating in your head, as if they were just waiting; when you sit for meditation they will come.

It was not so in the past. The primitive man was simple, the primitive man never needed anything like a Primal Therapy group. He was already primitive! You have become so civilized that first your civilization has to be taken out of you. That is the function of Primal Therapy: it makes you again primitive, it brings you to the point of innocence. No primitive man ever needed anything like Encounter; his whole life was an encounter!

But now, when you want to hit, you say hello and when you want to kill, you smile. And not only is the other deceived, you also believe that your smile is true. And people are so polite that they tolerate you, they accept you, they don't look at what you are doing. If you don't interfere with them they leave you alone. Everybody is living a double life: the social life, which is formal, and the private life which is just the opposite.

You will need some processes in which you are brought to your authentic self so your duality is dropped, so that you can for the first time see who you are. Your morality, your so-called religions, they all teach you a kind of duality, they all make you pseudo. They talk about truth, but that is mere talk. They don't make you true, they make you polished, polite,

civilized. They teach you how to be formally good. They give you a beautiful surface and they don't take any care of your inner being which is your real you. And you tend to forget your real you.

Enlightenment is seeing your real being. And you have become so accustomed and attached to the unreal. You have to be hammered back into your reality.

I have devised dynamic, chaotic methods just to give you again a glimpse of your pure childhood when you were as yet uncontaminated, unpolluted, unpoisoned, unconditioned by the society; when you were as you were born, when you were natural. The society molds you into certain patterns. It destroys your freedom. It takes all other alternatives from you; it forces a certain alternative to you. It forces and pressures you in so many subtle ways that you have to choose it. Of course, it also gives you the idea that you are choosing it.

I have heard:

When Ford started manufacturing cars he had only one color, black. He would show his cars to the customers and he would say, "You can choose any color, provided it is black!"

That's what people are doing to their children. You can be anybody you like, provided you are a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian. Provided you behave like this, you are free, you are absolutely free. They go on creating a facade of freedom and go on creating simultaneously a deep slavery.

You need to be thrown back to your reality. And sometimes even cruel methods are needed. Zen masters beating their disciples: you can't say this is a very compassionate method. It is a cruel method, but it is arising out of great compassion. And sometimes what cannot be taught can be provoked by the master by slapping your face.

A man went into a store to buy his wife a gift. When he received the package from the clerk he started to leave, but then turned suddenly and slapped the clerk across the face. No sooner had he done it than the man began to apologize profusely. The clerk was naturally taken aback, but he could not doubt the sincerity of the man's apologies.

"Perhaps," suggested the sympathetic clerk, "you ought to see a psychiatrist."

A few months later the man reappeared at the store. He made a purchase but made no attempt to do the clerk any harm. "I took your advice, young man. I went to see a psychiatrist."

"How did he cure you?" inquired the clerk.

"Well," replied the man, "right after I paid him for my first visit I slapped him in the face."

"Then? Then what happened?"

"He slapped me back."

You get it? And that cured him, that was the treatment. That brought him back to his senses. Sometimes it is needed, and only a cruel method can become a breakthrough.

A chaotic, a dynamic meditation, is a very cruel method. It is not like sweet prayer, it is bitter, but it can cleanse much dust off your being. It can bring great awakening to you. It can become your first satori. Just a hundred-percent commitment is needed.

Christo, you ask me, "How did you become enlightened?"

The first thing: I never became enlightened. I had always been enlightened just as you are, just as everybody is. All that happened is, I recognized it. And the journey was as arduous as you can imagine. It was more arduous than it is for you, because I had no master

to guide, to indicate.

In India there are thousands of pseudo teachers. Masters have disappeared long ago. India has become so pseudo a country that today there exists no other country which is as pseudo. India is unique, incomparable! But this was going to happen for a certain reason, for a certain historic inevitability it was going to happen.

India has produced Patanjali, Gautam Buddha, Mahavira, Nagarjuna, Bodhidharma, great masters, and when you produce great masters, naturally imitators arise. Imitators can arise only when the real exists; when the real is not in existence you cannot have the false. If there is real currency, then you can have false notes, but if there is no real currency at all then you cannot have false notes. The false is possible only because of the real.

And economists say that there is a law: the false currency tends to put the real currency out of work. It pushes the real currency out of its function. You can observe it, it is a simple law. If you have two ten-rupee notes in your pocket, one real and one false, first you will try the false because you want to get rid of it first -- the sooner the better. The real can be used any time, but the false, who knows? Somebody may catch hold of you.

So you will be in a hurry to push the false into circulation so it moves away from you and you are freed from the burden. If all the people have false notes, they will hide the real notes in their treasures and the false will become the currency.

And that's exactly what happens in the world of spirituality too: the true masters become nonexistential, nonfunctioning, and the untrue become leaders of men... for simple reasons. One is that the true master will never fulfill your expectations; hence you will like more to be with a false teacher because he will fulfill your expectations. He will be more than willing. He wants to catch hold of you, he wants you to be his disciple. He will be ready, very much ready, to fulfill your expectations so that you don't leave him.

The true master lives according to his light. You cannot expect anything from him. Unless you are ready to drop all your expectations you can't live with the true master. The false master will always buttress your ego. He will say, "You are great, you are virtuous." He will give you small tricks to feel virtuous: "Go every Sunday to the church and you will be virtuous, religious, spiritual." Now, just by going to the church every Sunday do you think you become spiritual? Is spirituality so cheap? But he will give you cheap things which you can easily purchase and feel great.

With the true master, real work has to be done. The real master works on you just like a sculptor, with the chisel and hammer in his hand. He starts dismantling you, because that is the only way to transform you, to give you a new birth. He starts killing you! A real master is a death, because only after death is there a possibility of resurrection.

I was without a master. I stumbled in darkness on my own. It was hard work, it was maddening, because nobody was there even to give me hope, any guarantee -- even to give me just simple sympathy that I am on the right track. I was moving into the uncharted sea without anybody encouraging me.

You are far more fortunate. I can tell you when you are right and when you are wrong. I can tell you, "Go on, you are on the right track, the moment is not far away when things will start changing; the spring is just on the way. Any moment it will be here. In fact, the first flowers have started appearing. You may not be able to see those first flowers. I can see."

Now in medical circles there is great discussion and great hope that sooner or later we are going to find ways in which a disease that is going to happen after six months can be predicted beforehand. It has become possible through Kirlian photography. It gives the photograph of your body energy, and it shows where the body energy is going wrong. Six

months before you may actually fall ill, Kirlian photography starts giving you indications. If those indications can be well understood, you can be treated before you are ill. Then you will never be ill.

A master can see flowers which are going to happen to you after a few days, which are not yet visible to you or to anybody else -- but can be visible to the master. He can recognize the signs, the invisible indications. He can decipher the language of the unknown and the unknowable. He can tell you, "Go on!" Buddha says to his disciples again and again, "CHARAIVETI! CHARAIVETI! Go on! Go on! Don't be worried. I can see the dawn is not far away."

You can only see that the night is becoming darker and darker, but when the night is really dark, that is only an indication that the dawn is very close, that soon on the eastern horizon the sun will rise. But this can be seen only by one who has seen the sunrise before.

I worked hard in every possible way, but the day I came to know who I am was a great surprise. I had never thought about it, that it was going to be so. God was never missed, I had only forgotten the language. God was already there, always has been there; god is our innermost nature. The day I recognized it I started laughing. That day I knew that life is a great joke -- god playing a great joke, a great game of hide-and-seek; but a game all the same. Don't take it seriously.

Christo, don't take enlightenment seriously. Take it playfully. And the more playful you are, the closer you will be to it.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DO I EVER SEE ANYBODY OR ANYTHING AS THEY REALLY ARE?

Prem Shanta, mind is incapable of seeing. Mind is blind -- blind with a thousand and one prejudices, blind with concepts, ideologies, philosophies, religions, blind with your past experience. Your eyes are so much covered with dust, layer upon layer, that you can't see that which is. And whatsoever you see is your interpretation of reality, not reality itself. You never hear what is said to you, you never see what confronts you. You see that which you want to see; you see that which you are capable of seeing. And you hear that which you want to hear; you hear that which you already believe in.

Your mind continuously goes on screening; it allows only that which fits with it, it does not allow anything in which does not fit with it. It is on a constant vigilance; it guards.

I am talking to you here: three thousand people, that means three thousand meanings! When I am saying anything I am saying it with one particular meaning, but when it reaches to you it takes an individual color -- you give it your own color. Immediately it is something else. Unless you learn how to listen without the mind, how to see without the mind....

That's what meditation is all about: putting the mind aside, seeing without any prejudice, without any a priori conclusion, without any conclusion at all. When your eyes are functioning just like mirrors, simply reflecting that which is, neither condemning it nor appreciating it... when your eyes are nonjudgmental, when you don't say, "This is good, this is bad. This should be, this should not be" -- when you don't say anything, you simply reflect... then you see that which is -- otherwise not, ordinarily not.

You have to disappear to see the reality as it is. If you are there, the more you are there, the less you see the real.

A number of showgirls were entertaining troops at a remote army camp. They had been at it all afternoon and were tired and very hungry. At the close of their performance, the major asked, "Would you girls like to mess with the enlisted men or the officers this evening?" "It really doesn't matter," spoke up a shapely blonde, "but we've just got to have something to eat first."

Preoccupied mind! They are hungry, the hunger is too much there. Now everything they hear they will hear through this hunger.

Fast one day and then go to M.G. Road, and you will see only restaurants, hotels, and you will not see anything else. And for the first time you will start smelling food smells coming from the restaurants and hotels. And you have passed the same road many times, but you have never smelled so intensely. Fast two, three days and your nose becomes so sensitive to food odors, to the aroma of food, that you will be surprised -- your nose has never been so sensitive.

If you are hungry and you look at the full moon, you may see just a chapati! It is impossible to see the full moon.

The Jewish lady and her son were walking along the beach when a tidal wave crashed on them. When the water receded the boy was gone.

"Ah Merciful Father," the mother pleaded. "Please return my beautiful child. I will be so grateful -- I will never cheat on my income tax or my husband again, I will stop smoking, I will do anything -- anything!"

Just then another wave loomed up and her small son was standing there. She clasped him to her bosom, looked at him a moment and once again turned her eyes heavenward. Looking up she said, "But he had a hat!"

Now, the Jewish mind... she can't forget the hat! The son is back -- so what! Where is the hat?

Everybody has a certain mind. All minds are your choices. When you look without the mind you look without any choice. Then you are choicelessly aware. That's the real way to see things as they are.

Shanta, ordinarily you don't see the real existence, you only project your ideas. That's why you go on missing the great beauty that surrounds you, the splendor that is all over. You cannot see god, not because he is absent but because your mind is so full of ideas ABOUT god -- Christian ideas about god, Hindu ideas about god, Jewish ideas about god. You can't see god if you go on carrying these ideas.

God is a simple reflection; it is not a philosophy, it is not ideology. Knowingly, unknowingly, we are all full of ideologies -- political, religious, social -- and we go on looking through them.

A politician was bitten by a dog, and a few days later his doctor told him that the lab tests were positive, that the dog had rabies, and that he too was infected.

The politician pulled out a notebook and began writing furiously.

"Now, take it easy," said the doctor. "No need to start writing your will. You will pull through."

"Will, hell!" snapped the politician. "This is a list of the people I am going to bite."

Now before he forgets, before he really goes insane, he wants to make a list. A politician is a politician, even if he is on the verge of going mad! He must be making the list of all his political enemies. He is not much concerned about his own problem -- he wants to use his problem to create problems for others. He is much more concerned about who he is going to bite; he wants to be ready for that. That is the basic political mind: the political mind is not interested in himself; it is more interested in harming others, how to topple others, how to destroy others.

The religious person is much more interested in his own joy. The politician is much more interested in seeing others miserable; his joy is only in seeing others miserable. Now, such a mind is incapable of seeing anything good in life -- impossible. He can't see any beauty, he can't see any grace. He has none, how can he see it? You can see only that which you are.

And if you want to see that which is, then you have to disappear completely. You have to be utterly empty, a nobody, a no-mind, just an empty space. Then life bursts forth with all its splendor.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA RENOUNCED
HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE.

Kamalesh, it seems you must be a bachelor!

Murphy's definition of a bachelor: A rolling stone who gathers no boss.

Murphy's definition of marriage: A man is incomplete until he is married; then he is really finished.

You don't understand what poor Buddha suffered! Only married people know it, but very few married people have the courage to say it.

I have heard an anecdote:

Maxim Gorky, Anton Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy, the three great Russian novelists, were sitting on a bench in a park and chitchatting. Naturally they started talking about the phenomenon called woman.

Chekhov was very bitter; he was abusing women like anything. Gorky was also not in any way sympathetic.

When they both were finished they asked Tolstoy, who was keeping quiet. Tolstoy said, "If you really want to hear the truth you will have to wait."

They said, "What do you mean by 'You will have to wait'? How long?"

He said, "I can't say how long, but you will have to wait. I can say the truth only when one of my legs is in the grave. I will say the truth and jump into the grave! Then I don't want to be outside the grave, because if my wife comes to know about it then my life, which is already hell... I don't know what will happen to me!"

And remember, the same is the case with women: if you ask them, they will tell the same stories about the husbands.

There is an ancient Arabic saying:

The gods gave man fire, and he invented fire engines. They gave him love, and he

invented marriage.

Marriage, up to now, has been such a suffering! It is because of marriage that monasteries have existed -- the whole credit goes to marriage! Otherwise there would be no monks and no nuns. It is seeing the ugliness of marriage, millions of people simply decided never to get into it, or even those who had already got into it escaped.

The woman has suffered much, but her suffering has been of a different quality: she has suffered because her freedom has been taken away from her. Man has dominated her, made her a slave. Man has also suffered... because remember one simple law of life: If you make others suffer, the suffering is bound to rebound on you. Man made the woman a slave, physically... and the woman? She made the man a slave spiritually. In fact, man's suffering has been much deeper than the woman's suffering.

There is now the Women's Liberation movement. Some daring men are needed to start a Men's Liberation movement, because man's slavery became spiritual -- and spiritual slavery is far more dangerous.

Murphy's definition of cooperation: An exchange between a woman and a man in which she coos and he operates.

Kamalesh, you seem to be absolutely unaware of the phenomenon of marriage -- which is destructive to both man and woman. Love is creative, marriage is destructive. But love is not dependable: this moment it may be there and the next moment gone. And man wants permanent things; he is obsessed with permanent things. He wants security, safety, he wants to cling. Hence love is not reliable, so he created marriage.

Marriage is a plastic flower. Love is a real rose, but the real rose is beautiful in the morning; by the evening it is gone. Nobody can say when it will disappear, when the petals will start falling. Just a strong wind and it is no more, just a strong sun and it is no more. But the plastic flower will be there; come rain, come sun, come anything, the plastic flower will be there. In fact, plastic is the only permanent thing in the world.

Now ecologists are very much worried about plastic because you cannot destroy it. You go on throwing plastic bottles and containers and they all go on accumulating in the earth or in the sea. Sooner or later they will surround the whole earth and they will destroy the fertility of the earth, because they cannot melt, merge, become one with the earth.

The real flower goes back to the earth, becomes earth again. Then again a new flower will arise. But the plastic flower sticks, remains forever. It is dangerous; it is a hindrance in the circulation of life processes.

Marriage is a plastic flower -- marriage is an institution. And who wants to live in an institution?

If Buddha escaped, you should not be worried; it is understandable. He must have suffered!

"Daddy, what is polygamy?"

"Polygamy is a situation in which a man can have more than one wife."

"Okay. So what do you call a situation in which a man can have only one wife?"

"Monotony, my son, monotony."

Marriage is monotonous, it is utter boredom. Two persons are just hooked with each

other.

Buddha was courageous -- at least he escaped. Not much of a courage, but some courage still is there: he escaped.

I am teaching my sannyasins a far more courageous way: don't escape, but try to live in love. And start forgetting the whole idea of marriage -- slowly slowly.

A recently divorced man was feeling so depressed he decided to consult a psychiatrist. The doctor listened to his complaints and then had this to recommend, "I think you ought to get married again, Mr. Jones.... Buy a house, have some kids; live like other men. You will be back to your old self in no time."

"No thanks, Doc," said Mr. Jones. "I would rather commit suicide."

Once you have known the ugliness of marriage there are only two possible ways. One is, escape from it like Buddha, which I don't approve of because that doesn't change much. Yes, it helps Buddha -- he gets out of it -- but the world continues the same.

My own suggestion is, drop the very concept of marriage -- live in love. And if love continues, good; if it disappears, good. What is the harm in it? Anything that appears one day is bound to disappear one day; that's how things are -- the way of things, the natural way. Allow it. Don't cling, don't be possessive. Live passionately while it is there, and when it is gone it is gone. Feel grateful for all that it has done to you. Say goodbye. Don't complain, don't have any grudge.

The newspaper account of George's tragic death read: "His friends could give no reason why he should have committed suicide. He was a bachelor."

Kamalesh, you must be a bachelor! One thing is good about being a bachelor: you will not commit suicide. And if you commit suicide you will leave everybody in a puzzle. Nobody will be able to figure out why. You are not yet experienced about this so-called relationship business. You seem to be utterly inexperienced. Hence you say, "I am unable to understand why Gautama the Buddha renounced his beautiful wife."

Certainly he had a very beautiful wife, but beauty of the body is so superficial that within a week you start not looking at it. You start ignoring it, you start forgetting it.

Ask any husband for how many years he has not looked at his wife's face -- and he used to think before that she is a beautiful woman. Ask any wife how long she has not looked at her husband's face. Years may have passed.

Do a small experiment: close your eyes and try to remember your wife's or your husband's face. You will not be able to remember it. You may be able to remember the face of your neighbor's wife, but not your own wife; it is almost impossible. If you can do it you are a rare specimen, you are a wonder! It does not happen. If you try to remember your wife's face, everything will go dizzy. Thousands of other faces will appear, but not your wife's face. Why?

You have not looked at the poor woman for years, for the simple reason that marriage makes things so certain. Marriage makes things so dead and dull. Marriage takes all surprise and wonder away. Marriage makes you take your wife for granted, your husband for granted. What is the need to look at your wife? She will be there tomorrow and the day after tomorrow and forever. You look at people when you know you may not be able to look at them again. Marriage kills; it makes something tremendously beautiful very ugly.

Yes, Buddha had a beautiful wife, but then he became tired -- tired of the whole repetitive game. He was a very alert man, intelligent. If he was as stupid as millions of others are he would have lived without any effort to go through a radical change. He would have simply repeated the whole circle of life -- eating, drinking, reproducing -- he would have lived and died. But he became aware that life can't be only this repetition. Life must be something more, life has to be something more. There must be some hidden secret in it which we are missing because of our repetitiveness.

He escaped not exactly from the wife: he escaped to know the truth of life. It was not basically escaping from the wife; it was not an escape FROM but an escape FOR. That's why, when he attained the truth, the first thing he did was to come back to the palace to share his new vision, his insight, with his wife. He remembered her.

He felt that this much he owed to her. He had come to ask her forgiveness because he had escaped, left her. He had not even asked her permission. He had not even told her that he was going away. He escaped like a thief and had come back to apologize. A man of great grace: even after becoming enlightened he came to apologize to somebody who is not enlightened.

His disciple, Ananda, said to him. "This does not look right, an enlightened person going to the unenlightened to apologize, to ask her, 'Forgive me.'"

Buddha said, "I know it does not look right, but this much I owe to her. I have to complete, finish things; otherwise something remains hanging. And more than that, my going to her will help her to come to me; otherwise -- she is a very proud woman -- she will not come to me. And she will go on carrying that grudge, that wound; she will suffer unnecessarily. And what I have found I am going to share with everybody, why not with my wife? What wrong has she done to me?"

He went to his wife. The wife was very angry, naturally. She shouted, screamed; she did all that a woman will do in such a situation. And Buddha stood there utterly silent, not even uttering a single word. Then suddenly she became aware that he has not said a single word. She wiped her tears, looked at Buddha, saw that he is so silent and so beautiful, and a totally different kind of beauty: the beauty of the inner. He is radiating, he is luminous. She asked him, "Why are you not answering me?"

Buddha said, "How can I answer? I am no longer the same person that had left you. You look at me, you observe! Look into my eyes, feel my presence! I am not the same person -- that person is dead. I am a totally new being, I am reborn! And I have come to share my joy, my finding, with you, because I love you. And the old love was not love, it was exploitation; this new love is really love. The old love was just lust. Now I want to give all that I have known to you, for no other reason, but just for giving's sake. Just sharing will make me so blissful. If I can help you in any way I will feel tremendously obliged."

The wife became a sannyasin; she was initiated.

You ask me, Kamalesh, "I am unable to understand why Gautama the Buddha renounced his beautiful wife."

In fact he has not renounced the wife: he has renounced the whole marriage system, he has renounced the old way of life. The wife was just a part of it. He renounced the way he had lived up to that moment.

When he left his palace he was twenty-nine years old; when he came back, twelve years had passed... he had become enlightened. He had come to know the truth, the meaning, the significance, of existence. He had come to know the great celebration that goes on and on: the celebration you call God. He had come to share his celebration with his wife, with his child, with his father, with his stepmother, with his friends. Whosoever was ready, he was

ready to give to them. And he transformed their lives.

Gautama the Buddha is the only man in the whole history of human consciousness who has transformed so many people. The debt of humanity is immense, unpayable.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN YOU SAY, "WAKE UP, BE CONSCIOUS, COME OUT OF YOUR DREAMS!" --
AND TO MAKE IT CLEAR YOU GIVE EXAMPLES -- INSTEAD OF GOING DEEPLY
INTO IT WE LAUGH AS IF IT IS A JOKE. HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Abhinav Bharti, I also laugh! But I am not allowed to laugh loudly in front of you, because that is against the art of telling jokes. The joke teller must be serious. But I laugh in my room! When there is nobody, I have a hearty laugh. And in fact, this whole thing is a joke: your misery, my enlightenment.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #7

Chapter title: The silence of a song

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SILENCE CANNOT MAKE A MASTER OUT OF A FOOL.

BUT HE WHO WEIGHS ONLY PURITY IN HIS SCALES,
WHO SEEKS THE NATURE OF THE TWO WORLDS,
HE IS A MASTER.

HE HARMS NO LIVING THING.

AND YET IT IS NOT GOOD CONDUCT
THAT HELPS YOU UPON THE WAY,
NOR RITUAL, NOR BOOK LEARNING,
NOR WITHDRAWAL INTO THE SELF,
NOR DEEP MEDITATION.
NONE OF THESE CONFERS MASTERY OR JOY.

O SEEKER!
RELY ON NOTHING
UNTIL YOU WANT NOTHING.

Silence has been praised down the ages as one of the most important factors for inner transformation; but silence alone is neither enough nor beneficial. Silence alone can be tremendously harmful. Silence alone is a negative state, it can make you more dead than you are. It can destroy the joy of inner being, it can be an obstruction for the growth of a celebrating soul.

Silence is beautiful only if it is rooted in awareness; if it is not rooted in awareness, then it is utterly empty. With awareness silence has a depth, a plenitude, a fulfillment, a contentment, an overflowing joy. With awareness silence blooms, releases great fragrance; without awareness the silence is utterly empty and dark, dismal, sad.

Silence can be either of the cemetery or of a sunrise. Silence can be of a bird on the wing, or it can be that of a corpse. Both are silences, but diametrically opposite. The silence of a corpse has to be avoided, the silence of a flower has to be imbibed. The silence of the flower will make you a flower, the silence of the corpse will make you a corpse. Both look the same from the outside. Don't be deceived by appearances -- always look for the essential, for the very core.

Two things can appear similar from the outside and may be just the opposite of each other. The seeker has to be very cautious, very conscious on each step; because the false is easy to attain. It is very easy to become dead, and very difficult to be overflowing with life.

That's why millions of monks and nuns have followed a false path -- they have become silent. You can go to the monasteries and you will find people who are silent, but their silence has the taste of death. Their silence is not the silence of a song, of a dance; their silence is not divine. In fact they have fallen rather than risen higher, soaring upwards. They have fallen so much, they have become just dead rocks. Their silence has not been a transformation, it has been a suicide. And because it has not been a soaring up high, you will find all kinds of foolishnesses still in it, waiting for their opportunity, for their moment to explode.

The foolish person can become silent. It may deceive many, they may think, "He has arrived." But he is simply hiding his foolishness, his stupidity, his unconsciousness behind a beautiful facade of silence.

An ancient Sufi parable says:

Four persons decided to go into silence. They moved into a cave; they wanted to live in silence for three months, because they had heard so much about it -- they had become so much intrigued. They were so ambitious to gain something out of it. It was not understanding that had brought them to the cave. It was greed, it was desire, ambition.

Hence within minutes everything was exposed. Just within minutes the first man said, "I wonder whether I have put the candle out or not? It will be a sheer wastage, there is nobody in the house."

The second one said, "You fool! You have spoken! And we have taken the vow of silence."

The third one laughed and said, "You are a greater fool! If he had spoken, what was the need for you to speak?"

And the fourth one said, "Thank God, I am the only one who has not spoken yet."

Just by being silent nothing changes, you remain the same. Transformation comes through awareness. Awareness brings a silence of its own, very alive, throbbing with eternity, full of a song. It is not sad and not serious because it is not dead, it has a dance to it. It is tremendously beautiful, it is positive, existential. It does not make you just a hollow thing. It makes you so full that you start overflowing with joy. You become so fulfilled that you cannot contain your contentment within yourself, you have to share it. You become a cloud full of rainwater. You have to shower it.

But out of a hundred so-called seekers, it is only once in a while that a rare seeker comes to know the difference between the real silence and the unreal silence. How can the fool within you be dropped by being silent? Yes, it will not be expressed, but it will be there. In fact it will become more and more powerful -- unexpressed it will accumulate energy. And any moment, any opportunity, and you will show it; you will be unable to hide it forever.

It was discovered in an apartment building, that exactly fifty apartments were rented by Jewish families and fifty by Christian families. Word got around and thereafter, for years, whenever a Jew moved out, another Jew rushed into his place, and likewise the Christians. Thus the balance was maintained. Once, however, the Jews were faster than the Christians and the numbers became unbalanced -- fifty-one to forty-nine. After that the Christians started moving out until at last the building was ninety-nine percent Jewish.

A movement arose among the tenants for an all-Jewish building. A committee was formed and Mr. Ginsberg, as spokesman, went to visit Mr. Gallagher, an Irish bachelor. When he came home, Mrs. Ginsberg asked what happened. "Well," replied Mr. Ginsberg, "Gallagher says he has made love to every woman in the building except one, and won't move out until he makes love to her."

"Hm," mused Mrs. Ginsberg, "it must be that lousy, stuck-up Mrs. Pincus."

The first moment, and your fool will be out. How long can you keep it down? How long can you sit upon it? How long can you be on guard? Just a little relaxation and it will be out.

Buddha says:

SILENCE CANNOT MAKE A MASTER OUT OF A FOOL.

A strange statement from a buddha, because silence has been praised so much; but the buddha says the truth as it is. He does not care about the tradition.

In India, silence has been one of the most praised qualities for centuries. The Jaina monk is called MUNI -- muni means "the silent one." His whole effort is to be silent, more and more silent. Buddha says, "But don't be a fool, just silence is not going to help." It may help you keep your foolishness to yourself, but the foolishness will go on accumulating, and sooner or later it will be too much. It is bound to come out, and it is better to let it come out in small doses every day, rather than accumulating it, and then having it come like a flood.

This has been my own observation, too. The people who have remained silent for a long time become very stupid, because their silence is only on the surface. Deep down there is turmoil. Deep down they are the same people, with greed, jealousy, envy, hatred, violence -- unconscious, with all kinds of desires.

Maybe now they are desirous of the other world, greedy for the other world, thinking more of paradise than of this world and the earth. But it is the same thing, projected onto a

bigger screen, projected on eternity. In fact, the greed has become a thousandfold. First it was for small things: money, power, prestige. Now it is for god, samadhi, nirvana. It has become more condensed and more dangerous.

Then what has to be done? If silence cannot make a master out of a fool, then what can make one a master? Awareness. And the miracle is, if you become aware, silence follows you like a shadow.

But then that silence is not practiced; it comes on its own accord. And when silence comes on its own accord, it has a tremendous beauty to it. It is alive, it has a song at its innermost core. It is loving, it is blissful. It is not empty; on the contrary, it is a plenitude. You are so full that you can bless the whole world and yet your sources remain inexhaustible; you can go on giving, and you will not be able to exhaust the source. You have stumbled on God already -- but it happens through awareness.

That is Buddha's very significant contribution, his emphasis on awareness.

Silence becomes secondary, silence becomes a by-product. One does not make silence a goal -- the goal is awareness. If you take care of the rosebush, if you give it the right amount of water, sun and shade, roses are bound to come in their own time. You need not be worried about the roses. Silence is a rose, awareness is the rosebush. You take care of the rosebush, don't be too much concerned about the rose. If you are too much concerned about the rose without thinking about the rosebush, there is every possibility you will purchase some plastic roseflowers. A practiced silence is a plastic phenomenon, it is false, pseudo, deceiving others and deceiving yourself.

SILENCE CANNOT MAKE A MASTER OUT OF A FOOL. And what does Buddha mean by a fool? Who is foolish? He does not mean the unknowledgeable person, he does not mean the uneducated, uncultured. The fool can be very much cultured. The fool can have a Ph.D., the fool may have accumulated great knowledge, learning. In fact, fools are known to do such things, for the simple reason that they are afraid of their own foolishness and want to cover it up. A Ph.D., a D.Litt. becomes a good cover.

The fool becomes a great philosopher, a great scholar. Instead of knowing he becomes knowledgeable. Instead of seeing light he knows more about light. And slowly slowly, he convinces himself that knowing about light is knowing light, knowing about God is knowing God, knowing about love is knowing love. It is not so. He remains confined to the empty words. He will be verbose, he may know fine words. He may use language skillfully, he may use logic to prove his ideology, he may be a skillful logician. But nothing of these things changes his foolishness, he remains a fool all the same.

Then what is foolishness? The word that Buddha uses, the original word, is **MULHA**, which has been translated as the "fool." In fact it should be translated as "one who lives in unconsciousness," one who lives like a sleepwalker, who lives mechanically, who goes on moving through many things, but all his gestures are empty. He lives without knowing why, he goes on rushing without knowing where. He is not even aware of who he is -- he has not tasted his own consciousness. And because his inner being is in darkness, he remains foolish in whatsoever he tries to do. His knowledge, his learning, his scholarship, are of no avail.

One who lives unconsciously, like a somnambulist, is a fool; one who lives consciously starts changing from foolishness towards wisdom. Again let me remind you: wisdom is not knowledge. Wisdom is consciousness, and the man who attains to the perfection of wisdom, perfection of consciousness, is called a master by the Buddha. **SILENCE CANNOT MAKE A MASTER OUT OF A FOOL.**

On his honeymoon, Abe was so overtaken with gratitude towards Becky, that he wanted to give her something. Having nothing else at hand, he reached into his wallet and gave her twenty dollars. Thereafter it became a family ritual. Each time Abe would make love to Becky, he would give her some money, the amount varying according to how his business was going.

Years passed, the Depression came and business got really bad. For weeks and months Abe did not make love to Becky. Finally, in desperation, she asked, "Abe, what is the matter? Don't you love me anymore?"

Abe told her the truth, that he was nearly bankrupt. "Don't worry, darling," she replied, and lifting up the mattress, she revealed thousands and thousands of dollars. "All the money you gave me, I put in the bed," she said.

"Ah," he screamed hitting his forehead, "I should have given you all my business."

An unconscious man can't always be on his guard. There are moments when the secret comes out. You can deceive, but only for a time -- you cannot deceive forever, at least not your wife.

And how can you deceive God himself? How can you deceive existence? With existence you have to be absolutely true, because before existence you are utterly naked. Existence knows you through and through, you are transparent. It is better not to hide, because if we don't hide, there is a possibility that we may start changing our life patterns, our ways, our styles.

And there are only two styles:

One style is unconsciousness -- I call that the worldly style. And the other style is that of consciousness -- my name for that style is sannyas. Sannyas simply means a committed effort to live consciously.

BUT HE WHO WEIGHS ONLY PURITY IN HIS SCALES,
WHO SEES THE NATURE OF THE TWO WORLDS,
HE IS A MASTER.

Who is a master according to Buddha? ... HE WHO WEIGHS ONLY PURITY IN HIS SCALES.

Remember always, with Buddha purity is never a moral concept. He is not a priest, he is not a politician. He is a man who has gone beyond all dualities -- the duality of good and bad included. Then what can he mean by purity? By purity he always means innocence, just like a small child who knows nothing of what is good and what is bad.

The sage also becomes a child again, but he goes beyond. The child is below the duality, and the sage is beyond duality. One thing is similar, that both are not part of the world of duality, of the world where everything is divided into polar opposites: good and bad, night and day, love and hate, life and death, this world and that world, the sinner and the saint.

The sinner is one who knows what is good and what is bad, but follows the bad. The saint is one who knows what is good and what is bad, but follows the good. And the sage is one who knows what is good and what is bad, but has gone beyond both and is no longer interested in those divisions. He lives in a choiceless awareness. That is purity.

To live without any choice means to let God live through you. If you choose then you don't allow God to live through you. When you stop choosing, when you simply surrender to the whole, when you say, "Thy will be done," you are no more a chooser, no more a doer,

you become a medium. Then God lives through you, then whatsoever happens is divine; it is neither good nor bad, it is simply divine. Out of choiceless awareness, actions become divine.

BUT HE WHO WEIGHS ONLY PURITY IN HIS SCALES, WHO SEES THE NATURE OF THE TWO WORLDS.... Religious people go on talking about this world and the other world. They condemn this world: this is momentary, this is a flux, nothing abides, everything changes, everything turns into dust. They go on condemning this world in every possible way, and they go on praising the other world. But Buddha says that this world and that world are both parts of your projection; you have projected the other world against this world. Because you see this world is impermanent, you project a permanent world. That is a desire on your part, it has nothing to do with reality.

You would like to have a permanent world where things abide, where everything remains as it is. You are afraid of change, hence you create an unchanging world. You call it paradise, heaven; nothing changes there, time exists not. This world is temporal, that world is nontemporal. This world is made of dust, and that world is made of gold. But dust or gold are all your projections.

It is out of the misery of this world that you have created your paradises; and if you look in the scriptures of all the religions, you can easily detect the projection. Whatsoever is missing here, you have placed it there. Whatsoever you don't like here, you have not put into the other world. Whatsoever you like here, but you are afraid that it will be taken away by death or by circumstances, you have made absolutely eternal there.

For example, in heaven nobody ever grows old -- everybody remains young. Have you ever seen an old angel in any picture? They are all boyish-looking. In Hindu mythology the heavenly women never grow beyond the age of sixteen; that is a desire. In Hindu mythology the APSARAS, the heavenly women, don't perspire, no deodorants are needed, no perfumes are needed. Their bodies are made of gold. But what kind of a woman is it if her body is made of gold? Would you be able to love a woman whose body is made of gold? -- a wish fulfillment.

In Hindu mythology there are trees in heaven, wish-fulfilling trees. You just sit underneath the tree, you wish anything and it is immediately fulfilled, instantly. These are desires, unfulfilled desires, unfulfilled dreams. We are so frustrated here that we project a world.

Karl Marx is right in that way when he says that religion is the opium of the people. Yes, the so-called religions have functioned as the opium. They keep people intoxicated with the other world, they help them somehow to tolerate the suffering that is present in this world. It is only a question of a few days -- then comes death and deliverance. And then you will live in God's presence for ever and ever, in eternal joy.

Buddha never talks about the other world; he says this world and the other are both projections of our mind. One should get rid of both, one should turn inwards rather than looking outwards. This world is outside, that world is outside; both are exterior to you, and both are objects of desire. And any object of desire is bound to bring frustration. Any expectation is bound to turn into frustration. Expectation is the beginning of frustration, the very seed. Beware of it!

Buddha says, one who knows this is a master, and one who lives in choiceless awareness, neither choosing this nor that, is a master. He is really a king; otherwise everybody is a beggar. If you have desires you are a beggar. Desiring means begging; you are constantly begging for this and for that.

Just look at your mind, the mind is a beggar. Drop the mind and you will be surprised:

your consciousness is the master. But the mind lives through division, it always lives through the polar opposites: it puts that against this, and then goes on choosing. Mind means choice, choice means unconsciousness. Consciousness means choicelessness, and to be choiceless is to be free from all desire, is to be free from all projection, is to be free from all imagination, is to be free from future.

And the moment you are free from the future, the present suddenly bursts forth in all its splendor before you; its glory is infinite, its joy is unbounded, its ecstasy is inexpressible. It transforms your beggar into a master.

HE HARMS NO LIVING THING.

The master cannot be violent, he can only be love, pure love; he cannot harm, it is impossible. Why? Many religions have been teaching nonviolence. Buddha does not teach nonviolence; again, it is a by-product, a consequence of being a master. He does not say, "Be nonviolent so that you can be a master." He says: Be a master, so that you can be nonviolent. That's where he differs from ordinary religious thinking. He brings a very extraordinary insight of tremendous import.

If you understand his insight, you will have understood the essential core of real religion. If you practice nonviolence, you will remain violent; at the most, your surface will become nonviolent. You will paint it in beautiful colors; but behind it, behind all those rainbow colors, you will be the same person, the same violent person.

Why does violence exist in man? Because we can't see ourselves as part of a universe, we see ourselves as separate. In that separation is violence. If I am separate from everybody else then of course I have to fight for my own survival.

Charles Darwin says: Life is a struggle -- a struggle to survive, and only the fittest survive. So you have to fight tooth and nail, you have to fight with your total energy, only then can you survive; otherwise, you will be eaten, destroyed. And if you look outside, it seems so.

Politics proves Charles Darwin. Everybody is fighting with everybody else; and how can you be nonviolent if you are continuously fighting? Man is so cunning that he can change, transform his nonviolence also into a weapon. He can make a weapon out of it, he can start fighting nonviolently.

I have heard a story:

A young man, a Gandhian, a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, was in love with a woman. The father was very much against him, the woman herself was very much against the man -- she hated even to see his face. But he was determined, he was a man of willpower, and he was very nonviolent. So he did a nonviolent trick.

He went to the woman's house, sat at the door and declared that he would fast unto death, unless she married him. A very nonviolent method: fasting unto death. You are not harming anybody. That's what Mahatma Gandhi was doing his whole life: fasting unto death. But is it nonviolence? It is violence, pure violence. Of course you are not destroying the other, you are destroying yourself; but the threat that "I will destroy myself," is a threat of violence. And you leave the other absolutely undefended.

The woman was very much perturbed, disturbed, what to do? If this man dies, she will feel guilty her whole life that she has been the cause of the death of a young man. The father was also very much disturbed. And newspapers were writing and praising the young man:

how nonviolent he is, how Gandhian he is. The father was getting crazy -- what to do, what not to do? Somebody suggested, "You inquire of some older Gandhian, some method must be there, some antidote."

He went to an old Gandhian who told him, "No, don't be worried. I know. You do one thing, a very simple thing." He whispered a secret in his ear and the father was very happy -- and the trick worked. The old Gandhian said, "You go to an old prostitute I know, you tell her to come to your house, sit by the side of the young man, and let her declare that 'I am fasting unto death unless this young man marries me.'"

And that very night the young man escaped and was never seen again.

Nonviolence in the hands of politicians is bound to become violent. It is only a beautiful name for an ugly phenomenon. This is not Buddha's approach, although Gandhians go on declaring that Gandhi is the greatest nonviolent man after Gautam Buddha. He is not; he has no understanding of Buddha and his insight. He is purely and simply a politician. His politics are also very subtle -- his politics are very cunning, devious. But he is not religious at all. His whole approach is political.

If you practice nonviolence -- and he practiced it his whole life -- the nonviolence will be false. It cannot be practiced. Anything -- nonviolence, wisdom, silence, love, compassion, joy, none of these beautiful qualities can be practiced. If you practice them you falsify them. They come on their own; all you need to do is to be more and more aware.

On the tree of awareness many flowers bloom: the flower of love, the flower of truth, the flower of compassion, the flower of nonviolence. Why? -- because the more you become aware, the less you can believe in the separation. The more you become aware, the less you are an ego. When you become totally aware, you disappear -- you become part and parcel of the whole. Then how can you be violent? To whom? There is nobody else, with whom are you going to fight?

Violence or nonviolence is not the question at all. There is nobody else to fight with. It is all oneness, this whole universe is one God and we are part of it. Seeing it, knowing it, realizing it, compassion and love start flowing. HE HARMS NO LIVING THING.

AND YET IT IS NOT GOOD CONDUCT....

Remember these words, their import, their significance. They are very pregnant. AND YET IT IS NOT GOOD CONDUCT.... "Remember," Buddha is saying, "I am not talking about good conduct."

THAT HELPS YOU ON THE WAY.

Good conduct can give you only respectability. Good conduct can help you attain a pious ego, good conduct will make people praise you. They will call you a saint, your ego will be very satisfied; but good conduct can't help you on the way. In fact it is going to hinder.

The more respectable you become, the less rebellious you are. The more respectable you become, the more and more afraid you are of going against tradition, against conformity, against convention. The more respectable you are, the more you are a slave; a slave of the society and the church, a slave of the state, a slave of others -- because they start dominating you. They start in subtle ways telling you what to do and what not to do. Then they reward you with respect. That is bribery. By rewarding you, they are saying, "Look, if you go on

doing the same thing, we will reward you more. If you don't do the same thing, if you go astray, we will withdraw our respect. We will condemn you."

They respect you for the simple reason that you fulfill their desires and their expectations, that you become just a part of the dead tradition, an example of all that has been dead for a long time. You become a slave to the past.

AND YET, says Buddha, IT IS NOT GOOD CONDUCT THAT HELPS YOU ON THE WAY... because your good conduct is only practiced by you; it has not arisen from your own innermost core, you are following the conditioning. You are following whatsoever has been forced upon you. If you are a Hindu you will follow a certain conduct that Hindus expect of you. If you are a Mohammedan, you will follow certain other conduct which has been forced upon you.

Ayatollah Khomeini, whose real name is Ayatollah Khomeiniac, goes on telling his followers: Be martyrs, we are martyrs -- if you die fighting for religion, you will be born into paradise. JIHAD, religious war, is the surest and the most easily available way to reach to God; every other way is a very long way. To die in a religious war is a shortcut.

Now many people, mad people, are following this lunatic. Yes, he is Khomeiniac. But this has been always so. These maniacs, these lunatics, fanatics, have dominated humanity. They go on promising you a beautiful future after death. It is a beautiful business, because nobody comes back to say whether it really happens or not. It is dealing in invisible goods.

You can have good conduct according to a certain society but you will still remain as unconscious as you were before. By being a Mohammedan or a Hindu or a Christian you don't become conscious. If you become conscious you CAN'T be a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian. How can you be so foolish as to be a Hindu, to be a Buddhist, to be a Jaina? -- impossible! You will not have any adjective to you. You will simply be a human being, a divine being. That's more than enough, what else is needed?

But following so-called good conduct, you will remain the same unconscious person.

Joe was out all night with a dazzling blonde. He came home at dawn and tried to appear quietly sober, as his wife eyed him with suspicion.

"Joe, where is your underwear?" she said as he was undressing.

"My God," he cried with aggrieved dignity, "I have been robbed."

Your whole life is lived in such an unconscious way. You can practice good things, you can do good things, give service to people, you can donate to charity. You can even become a Mother Teresa of Calcutta, but your life will be the same. Yes, you will get a Nobel Prize, and you will be honored all over the world. The world consists of fools and only the fools are honored.

Just look at the irony: Jesus is crucified and Mother Teresa is given a Nobel Prize. Socrates is poisoned and Mother Teresa is given a Nobel Prize. Maharshi Raman was not given a Nobel Prize. J. Krishnamurti has worked his whole life as nobody has ever worked, for a better human being, for a better, conscious world. But he has not been given a Nobel Prize, his name has never even been considered for it.

George Gurdjieff, one of the greatest masters, who transformed people's lives into light, was not given a Nobel Prize. Mother Teresa is not a Raman Maharshi, she is not a J. Krishnamurti, she is not a George Gurdjieff. But why is she honored? Because she fulfills your requirements: she serves beggars, orphans, widows. And that is your idea of a saint -- that he should serve. He should serve all kinds of fools, then he is a saint. Then other fools

will respect him.

You are unconscious, your expectations are unconscious and there are people who will fulfill them. You will respect them, you will call them saints. Now, Mother Teresa has no taste of awareness, no experience of ecstasy, but that is not the point for people. The point is how many hospitals she runs, how many orphans she has raised -- as if the world is not already much too overpopulated. How many old people does she serve, how many old people have survived through her efforts?

These things have nothing to do with real religion; these are social services. She is really serving the status quo, that's why she is respected. The Nobel Prize was not given because she is religious or a mystic. The Nobel Prize was given because she serves the capitalist system, she serves the status quo, she serves the vested interests. She is not a revolutionary, but a reformist. She is not a rebel.

Unless you become capable of seeing the beauty of rebellion, the beauty of a Jesus, Socrates, Buddha, you will not understand what real religion is.

The tensions of life were threatening to get a stranglehold on Bill; so after he had finished a good dinner, he relaxed mindlessly in a soft chair next to the stereo, with a stiff drink in his hand. His wife knew nothing of his nervous state, and climbed onto his lap with the thought of trying to wheedle a fur coat out of him.... She snuggled and murmured and fondled. "Good heavens, Ethel," he exploded. "Get off. I get enough of this at the office."

You just watch yourself: what you say, what you do, what you hear, what you see, and you will be surprised -- you are always surrounded by smoke. A subtle smoke surrounds you, and you see through that smoke, and everything becomes distorted. Buddha's simple message is, first be aware. He says: AND YET IT IS NOT GOOD CONDUCT THAT HELPS YOU UPON THE WAY....

NOR RITUAL....

Going to church every Sunday, doing your PUJA, your worship every morning, saying your prayer every night before going to bed... these are all rituals, dead rituals that you go on repeating; you have become habituated to them, they are just habits. If you don't do them you feel as if you are missing something. If you do them you don't gain anything at all.

A man said to a psychiatrist, "Look, I have everything I need -- a good house, a beautiful wife, successful children, a lovely job, but still my life is humdrum."

"Well," said the psychiatrist, "you are suffering from too much routine. You must bring novelty into your life. When do you usually make love to your wife?"

"Always at bedtime," replied the man.

"That's the trouble. You are too settled. Try grabbing your wife passionately at some unusual time. Fling off your clothes when you come into the house and get her. Then come back next week and report what happened."

"So," said the psychiatrist the following week, "how was it?"

"Well," replied the client, "the bridge club loved it, but it was still humdrum."

Just by changing your outer routine nothing is changed. You go to the church, you can change -- you can start going to a temple. You were repeating one mantra, you can change --

you can start repeating another mantra. You were a member of the Lions Club, you can become a member of the Rotary Club. Christians become Hindus, Hindus become Christians in the hope that by just changing outer forms something is going to be changed in their life. But the inner remains the same.

Unless the inner changes, your life is going to remain humdrum. And a humdrum life can never know the flavor of the divine, can never know the taste of the wine of God.

NOR RITUAL, says Buddha....

NOR BOOK LEARNING....

You can learn as much as you want. The psychologists say that each single human brain is so capable of learning that it can accumulate all the knowledge contained in all the libraries of the world; a single human mind is capable of storing all the knowledge possible. You can become a walking ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, but that is not going to help. You will know the words, but words are words. The word 'fire' is not fire; don't try to cook your food on the word 'fire'. The word 'love' is not love either, and the word 'God' is not God.

But people become so much obsessed with words -- they become so much obsessed that if somebody says anything against the Bible, you are ready to be killed or kill. And bible is just a word; the word 'bible' simply means "the book." It does not mean anything else.

If somebody says anything against the Vedas, Hindus become mad. Words have become so important, more important than your life. The whole history is full of blood and bloodshed just because of words. Buddha says: Beware, don't get too much entangled in words.

A Jewish mother was very unhappy because her son did not like BLINTZES. In desperation she consulted a psychiatrist who suggested that if she showed Sammy, step by step, how blintzes were made, he might come to love and understand them. Eager to try out the suggestion she took Sammy into the kitchen the very next day.

"Look, Sammy," she said, mixing the dough. "Eggs, milk, flour. You like eggs and milk and flour, don't you Sammy? Taste a little."

The little boy, with a sour expression, grudgingly tasted a bit of each. She rolled out the dough and fried it into cakes.

"Taste a little," she urged him, and again he tasted a bit. Encouraged, she went on mixing the cheese and cinnamon and sugar.

"Look, Sammy, cheese, cinnamon, sugar. You like them, don't you Sammy?"

"Yes, Mom," he replied.

Really encouraged now, she placed the cheese mixture in the middle of a cake. Cautiously she folded over one corner.

"Okay, Sammy?"

"Okay, Mom."

Then she folded a second corner.

"Okay?"

"Okay."

Then she folded the third corner and finally the fourth one.

"Blintzes!!! Yech!!!" screamed Sammy, and ran out of the kitchen.

And it is not so only with children. It is so with your great theologians, philosophers, thinkers -- just words.

Buddha says: NOR RITUAL, NOR BOOK LEARNING....

NOR WITHDRAWAL INTO THE SELF.

Buddha must be the first enlightened master who has said this so clearly. Now modern psychology has rediscovered it. I say rediscovered it because they are not aware of Buddha's statement. They think that introversion is a kind of disease. Buddha is saying exactly the same thing. He is saying: NOR WITHDRAWAL INTO THE SELF.

Introversion is a disease, so is extroversion. The real man of awareness is neither extrovert nor introvert -- he simply is. When needed he goes out, when needed he goes in; he is fluid, flexible. He is not focused and fixated. There are extroverts who can't go in, and there are introverts who can't go out. Both are ill, both are pathological. NOR WITHDRAWAL INTO THE SELF is going to help you on the way....

NOR DEEP MEDITATION.

Let me repeat.... You will be surprised, because Buddha is one of the greatest meditators of the world. And Buddha is responsible for the greatest stream of meditation that has flowed up to now. He is the very source, but still he is such a sincere man that he says: NOR DEEP MEDITATION.

NONE OF THESE CONFERS MASTERY OR JOY.

Why not even meditation? -- because meditation is a method. Meditation can cause a certain state of the mind, but it cannot make you available to the uncaused. It may prepare the ground, it may cleanse the ground, but it cannot bring the flowers. It is as if you prepare the ground for a garden: you remove all the rocks, all the weeds, all the roots, all the grass. You prepare the ground, but that's not enough. If you prepare the ground and then sit under a tree and wait for the roses to come, they will not come.

Meditation is only a negative method; it helps you to prepare the ground. It removes the barriers, but then you have to sow the seeds -- only then will flowers be coming. Meditation is creating the ground, awareness is sowing the seeds. Only meditation with awareness can help you on the way; and then there is mastery, and then there is joy.

O SEEKER!
RELY ON NOTHING....

To make it absolutely sure that you don't rely on anything, he has said: AND YET IT IS NOT GOOD CONDUCT THAT HELPS YOU UPON THE WAY, NOR RITUAL, NOR BOOK LEARNING, NOR WITHDRAWAL INTO THE SELF, NOR DEEP MEDITATION. NONE OF THESE CONFERS MASTERY OR JOY.

But who knows? -- you may find something else. Hence, to make it absolutely clear, categorically clear, he says: O SEEKER! RELY ON NOTHING.

Reliance on anything brings dependence, dependence brings slavery, slavery is misery. Don't depend, not even on meditation. One day, even meditation has to be transcended. Don't depend even on the master, because the master can only point the way, YOU have to follow the path. The master cannot go with you.

Buddha is reported to have said: If you meet me on the way, kill me; if I come in your way as a hindrance, kill me immediately. Don't have any hesitation... that I am your master.

How can you kill me?... He is saying something very metaphorical. He is saying, "Deep in meditation, the last thing to be dropped is the master." Everything can be dropped easily, but the more the master helps you to drop things, the more you become attached to the master himself; and the love for the master is so pure, and so ecstatic, it brings such joy, that it is very difficult to drop the master at the last moment. And the last moment is the last barrier. The master has to be dropped, you have to go alone -- absolutely alone into the unknown. RELY ON NOTHING....

UNTIL YOU WANT NOTHING.

Go on dropping your desires, even the desire for being a master, the desire for being blissful, the desire for knowing God, the desire for nirvana. All desires have to be dropped.

Mind is so cunning: you can drop one desire and it immediately supplies you with another. And it may supply you with a more subtle desire. The gross desire can be understood by everybody, the subtle desire is more difficult to understand. For example, the desire for God is not thought to be a desire worth dropping. No Christian will say, no Jew will say, no Mohammedan will say, "Drop the desire for God." Drop all desire FOR God, but don't drop the desire for God.

It is only Buddha, the only man in the whole history of human consciousness, who has said the whole truth -- truth in its absolute purity, truth and nothing else. He is so insistent on the truth, that he says you will have to drop the master, and you will have to drop all kinds of desires. Otherwise, mind is very innovative, very creative, imaginative. You drop one thing and it immediately says, "Good. Now seek this, seek truth, seek God."

Now nobody can raise any objections about seeking God -- Buddha raises objections to that, too.

After numerous complaints from the neighbors, Harry sadly agreed to have a veterinarian render his cat fit to guard a sultan's harem.

"I will bet," said one neighbor, "that that ex-tom of yours just lies on the hearth now and gets fat."

"No, he still goes out at night. But now he goes along as a consultant."

If you cannot do anything, at least you can function as a consultant; but the going continues. Nothing has changed, the operation has failed.

Remember, if you are a real seeker... and this is a strange paradox: if you are a real seeker, you will have to drop all seeking as such. Otherwise you will go on seeking one thing after another, and there is no end to it.

When all seeking stops, you are suddenly at the very center of your being. Seeking drives you outside, seeking takes you away from yourself. Jesus says: Seek and ye shall find. Knock and the doors shall be opened unto you. Ask and it shall be given.

Buddha will not say that. Buddha will say, "Seek and you will not find. Knock and the doors will never be opened for you. Ask and you will not be given."

Then why does Jesus say so? Is Jesus not a buddha? Jesus is also a buddha, but the difference of their statements is because of the audience. Jesus is talking to ordinary people, and Buddha is talking to very evolved disciples. Jesus is talking to the crowds. If he had said

to them, "Seek and ye shall never find," they would not have understood him. They would have thought him mad, absolutely mad.

Seek and you shall not find? Ask and it shall not be given to you? Knock and the doors shall not be thrown open unto you? He was talking to ordinary people, hence he has to use very ordinary expressions.

Buddha is talking to adepts, initiates. Jesus was not so fortunate as Buddha. Jesus' disciples were very ordinary, even those twelve apostles were very ordinary, unconscious people. Buddha had thousands of BODHISATTVAS, thousands of disciples who were just on the verge of becoming buddhas any moment. Thousands were just on the verge of bursting into a flame of eternal light. He could talk without any fear of being misunderstood; hence he says: RELY ON NOTHING UNTIL YOU WANT NOTHING.

The greatest moment in life is when there is no desire left inside you, when desirelessness settles, absolute desirelessness. In that very moment all is attained, because all has always been there inside you. It was because of desires that you were running hither and thither, not looking inside. When all running has stopped, suddenly your own truth explodes with all its beauty, with all its benediction upon you.

Listen to Buddha, meditate over his sutra. It will give you great insight -- insight into desire and its futility. It will help you to drop all desires. And the moment you are desireless you have arrived home.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #8

Chapter title: Be in it; don't be of it

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
AT DARSHAN ON YOUR BIRTHDAY I LOOKED AT YOU, A STILL POOL OF
SERENITY, AND EVERYTHING ELSE HAPPENING AROUND YOU WAS
IRRELEVANT. IT WAS SUDDENLY SO CLEAR THAT THIS -- SITTING SILENTLY
AMIDST THE CHAOS AND FERVOR -- WAS YOUR TEACHING; THAT YOU ARE
THE WAY.

Prem Pramod, so at last a ray of light has entered into your darkness -- an insight, a

glimpse. Now don't lose track of it! It is very difficult to get it and very easy to lose it. In fact, the mind and its ways are so old that soon you start suspecting whether the glimpse was true or you had only imagined it.

And the mind tries to convince you that it was sheer imagination, that you projected it, that it was just an idea. Maybe you became hypnotized by the situation. Maybe you became overwhelmed by so many people in such joy, in such ecstasy. Maybe you were touched by the flood of energy around you. Soon the mind will start creating doubts. Go on remembering. These insights are rare.

Yes, Pramod, that's exactly what my teaching is: Be in the world, in all its absurdities, in all its nonsense, noise, and yet remain cool, aloof, detached. Be IN it, but don't be OF it. Let it happen all around you -- there is no need to escape from it, there is nowhere to escape. And even if you escape somewhere, that is not going to transform your being; your mind will remain the same. The best way is to use the opportunity of the world.

The world is an opportunity, a great opportunity, a tremendously valuable gift of God. It is a teaching device. Be in it and yet so far away, so transcendental, that nothing of it reaches to the core of your being. Only your circumference is touched by it, but your center remains aloof.

Be the center of the cyclone: that's exactly my teaching. The world IS a tale told by an idiot, full of fury and noise, signifying nothing. But it is very easy to get caught into the net, because the fool is not only outside, the fool is also inside. Your mind is part of the tale told by an idiot and your mind would like to find some meaning in it -- whereas none exists. The mind cannot remain without finding some meaning; if it cannot find, it invents it. Otherwise it feels empty, it feels something is missing.

There is no meaning in the world; all meaning is in the very center of your being. The world is simply noise, there is no music. Music is in the deepest recesses of your being -- and that music has to be heard in all the noise of the world. Then the noise of the world functions as a backdrop, a background; it becomes a context. You can hear the inner music more clearly because of the noise. Then the noise is no longer a disturbance, rather a help.

That's why I don't teach renunciation: I teach rejoicing.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE HEARD THAT SWAMI PREM CHINMAYA IS SO ILL, SO WEAK, THAT HE IS BEING GIVEN BLOOD. WILL IT NOT BE RIGHT THAT OUR SANNYASINS DONATE BLOOD IN SUCH CASES?

Avinash, don't be worried! The blood of a nonsannyasin is not going to disturb Prem Chinmaya. Blood is blood; it is neither sannyasin nor nonsannyasin -- and it is not thicker than water.

Yes, there are stories which create worry....

Because of his rare blood type, Gaffney was selected to be the donor for an English king who had been seriously ill.

The first transfusion helped enormously. A second brought the stricken monarch back to consciousness.

The third was in progress when the king jumped up in bed and shouted, "The hell with the

King of England!"

But these are only stories -- blood cannot do that!

And Prem Chinmaya is faring well: he is going very steadily in his consciousness. The body is weak, but the spirit is not weak. The flesh is weak, but the spirit is very strong. In fact, his illness has been a great blessing to him. He has learned more from his sickness than from anything else. He has become more and more silent, accepting, unfearing. Even if death comes now he will be able to receive it, welcome it as a guest.

I am tremendously happy with him! When seven, eight years ago he had come to me, he was suffering from the same disease, but his fear was greater than the disease.

The body has to go one day; nobody can live here forever. What excuse one chooses to go is a private affair. One can choose cancer, one can choose tuberculosis, one can choose heart attack; and there are a thousand and one alternatives available. But those are all excuses. The basic thing is that one cannot live here for long; it is not our home.

We have to go in search of the home, and only those who can go silently, joyously, can find it; otherwise, you will immediately find yourself in another womb, back into the world. Unless you learn the lesson, you will be thrown back again and again into the world.

Eight years ago when he had come to me, the thing that was more disturbing was not the illness but his fear of death. All these eight years he has lived with death... it can happen any moment. But slowly slowly, as his meditation has deepened, as his love has deepened, as he has understood more and more that death is part of life -- you cannot deny it, and in denying it you will be denying life itself -- he has become more accepting. A great suchness has descended upon him, and that is significant -- more significant than life, more significant than death.

He will die one day, but now I am not worried about his death. He knows now how to die, he has learned the knack of it. Death will not be just an end but a great beginning for him. He will not be drowned by death; he will ride on it, he will go victorious. Hence there is no need to worry about him. And any blood will do. Blood is blood; it goes only into the body, it does not affect your soul.

But these ideas have existed for centuries: your food affects your soul, your clothes affect your soul.... These are all nonsense ideas! They affect you only if you are identified -- but then anything will affect you. If you are not identified, nothing affects you; you remain untouched. And that's the great experience: to feel untouched amidst all turmoil.

And I am tremendously happy with Prem Chinmaya: he has proved himself. And it is possible that because of his understanding, his life has been lengthened. Even doctors are a little puzzled how he is continuing; by all ordinary rules he should not be here anymore.

Amritam, our doctor, has also asked a question: How does Chinmaya go on pulling himself?

The reason is, he is no longer interested in pulling, that's why he goes on pulling himself. If death comes this moment, he will accept it. Because of this, death has become irrelevant. He has become absolutely free of the anxiety. It is anxiety that kills more; it is deep down anxiety that becomes destructive. Because he is no longer in anguish, he may live a few more years, he may live long.

But whether he lives or not is no longer of any importance. The important thing has happened. If he lives he will live with a cool heart; if he dies he will die with a cool heart. He has learned the lesson.

Rejoice with him! Learn from him -- because everybody has to encounter his death

sooner or later. And one can never be certain: you may be perfectly healthy, and tomorrow death may take you away. So health is no guarantee.

In fact, it happens more often that a perfectly healthy person dies more quickly than an ill person. Because the healthy person has no way of coping with illness, any illness can prove fatal. But a person who has lived long with illness becomes adjusted to it, he can cope with it; he knows the ways of death. The healthy person knows nothing, so it often happens that the healthy person will die with the first stroke and the unhealthy person may live long. His body has become seasoned, has become more tolerant of diseases.

But remember, that is not the point at all. Whether Chinmaya lives a few years or not has no meaning anymore. If he lives, good; if he goes, he can go with joy in his heart, because his life has not been meaningless, his life has not been futile.

The first flowers have started blossoming.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CAN YOU CONVINC ME ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF GOD?

Sargam, why are you worried about God? What wrong has he done to you? Why can't you forgive him and forget him? Why remain so concerned about God? Be concerned more with life, with existence, and you will know God! In its right moment, life itself becomes luminous, existence itself becomes divine. It all depends on your inner clarity. If you can see clearly, ONLY God is. No proof is needed. If you can't see clearly, then no proof is going to be of any help.

There have been philosophers arguing for and against God for centuries, at least for five thousand years, with no conclusion in sight. They have not been able to come to any conclusion. Five thousand years of constant speculation, thinking, argument, logic, and what is the result? What is the outcome? It has all been an exercise in futility! And you still go on asking about proofs.

Proofs have been supplied, but they can be argued against, they can be disproved. Faults can be found in them for the simple reason that God is not an object which can be proved by logic. God is your subjectivity which is beyond logic, beyond thinking, beyond mind.

God is not a thing but an experience. And how can you prove the experience? Can you prove the experience of love? Nobody has been able to prove that love exists, nobody can prove that beauty exists. Nobody can prove anything really valuable. It may be truth, it may be love, it may be bliss, it may be beauty; they are all beyond proofs or disproofs. Nobody can disprove either.

And God is the culmination of all the great values, the essential core of beauty, love, truth, bliss. God is the essential core of all these values; these values cannot be proved. How can you prove the essence of them? He is just a perfume -- not even the flower but just the fragrance.

But why does this desire arise? The desire arises because your mind says, "Unless God is proved there is no need to waste time for God or in meditation or in prayer." It is mind's strategy to keep you away from meditation, from prayer.

There is no need for God! If you want to meditate you can meditate without God. Buddha meditated without God; he had no belief in God. Mahavira meditated and became enlightened without any idea of God. God is not a necessity, God can be disposed of! But

when Buddha attained to meditation he became a god. Mahavira became a god himself.

That's how it happens: you meditate and YOU will become a god, you will discover godliness in your own being. And that is the beginning of discovery. Then you start discovering it in others. Then slowly slowly, the whole existence is full of God, overflowed with God.

But ask for the proof first and you will miss the whole journey. Then the mind says, "First prove, then meditate." The mind has played a trick on you, the mind has befooled you. And it looks logical: before you start any inquiry, let it be proved. If God is, then meditation is significant; otherwise why are you meditating? If God is, then prayer is significant; if there is no God, then prayer is futile.

I say to you: whether there is a God or not, prayer is significant. Prayer does not change God -- prayer changes you! Prayer has nothing to do with God; it has everything to do with you. The praying person becomes a totally different kind of person. Meditation has nothing to do with God, but meditation transforms you.

These are alchemical ways of transforming your interiority. And when your interiority is changed, is full of light and clarity, you will be able to see.

God can be seen but cannot be proved. Only small things can be proved, only things which are worthless can be proved. Be free of this desire for proof. It is a stupid desire.

Mary and Bob were in their upper berth on the train to Niagara Falls, and she kept repeating, "Bobby, I just can't believe that we are really married!"

From the lower berth bellowed a sleepy voice, "For Chrissake, Bobby, convince her -- we wanna get to sleep!"

Yes, of such things you can be convinced, but nothing higher, nothing deeper, nothing really valuable.

You ask me, Sargam, "Can you convince me about the existence of God?"

And what else do you think I am doing here? I am not arguing for God, I am not directly trying to prove the existence of God; but in an indirect way I am creating the right situation, the right milieu, the right context, where God can become available to you. That's what is going on here. I don't talk much about God because there is no need. I talk about love, about meditation, about awareness, about mindfulness, and I talk about a thousand and one things. They all are significant in the sense that they will create the right atmosphere, the right climate for God to happen.

I am trying to create a buddhfield: a certain space in which you can grow into gods. My effort is not to give you a belief in God; my effort is to give you an experience of God. And belief is of no value because hidden behind belief there is always doubt. Only experience is of real help, because in experience there is no doubt left.

When YOU know, only then you know. I can silence you through logic, I can make you convinced through logical argumentation, but that conviction will be only intellectual -- somebody else may destroy it. If somebody else can argue in a better way against God, you will be at a loss; your whole belief system will collapse. But nobody can argue against your experience. If you have known, then the whole world can say there is no God, but still you know that there is God. And only such existential conviction is of any value.

Beliefs are for fools; the wise ones seek experience. Hence, please don't ask that I should convince you, that I should give proofs for God's existence. That is not my function. I am not here to convert you to a particular ideology. I am here to transform you to a totally new

existence, a new way of life, a new way of vision.

God is not there somewhere outside you; hence science is never going to discover God. God is your inner nature. You will have to dive within. You will have to encounter your own self. You will have to go on seeking and searching in your consciousness. And when you have reached to the center of your consciousness... the revelation!

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
AH RAREST ONE, HOW IS IT THAT YOU GIVE SO MUCH?

Chaitanya Kabir, I would like to give you much more! But the real cannot be given in words. The real can be conveyed only through gestures, through silence, through presence. And sometimes even silence is not adequate enough; even presence, at the ultimate peaks, fails. The ultimate cannot be given in any possible way.

I go on talking to you, but it is not that which I would like to say. That which I would like to say to you cannot be spoken, and that which can be said is not really the thing that I would like to say to you. It is the ancient dilemma, the dilemma of the mystic. He knows, but he cannot say it; and whatsoever he says is not what he knows.

Lao Tzu says: The tao cannot be said, and if you say it, it is no more tao. Read instead of tao, "dhamma," and it becomes the statement of Buddha. Read instead of tao, "truth," and it becomes a statement of Socrates. The truth cannot be said -- it is so vast! -- but efforts have to be made. In those very efforts, a few people who are vulnerable, open, intelligent, may be able to have a little glimpse -- a faraway glimpse, of course -- but that glimpse will become a seed in them and will start growing.

And what I have to say to you is inexhaustible, hence I can go on speaking. For these five years I have been speaking nonstop, and yet I have not said anything -- not even a single word has been said! Hence I can go on speaking, because it can never be said.

One can ask, "Then why speak at all?" There is a reason to it: I have caught so many of you through speaking! If I was just sitting silently here, yes, a few people would have been here, but very few, because silence is a difficult phenomenon, the most difficult to understand. It needs tremendous intelligence; not only intelligence, it needs a certain silence in you too. Then only, two silences can commune. And the world does not teach you to be silent; it teaches you words, language.

I have to use words and language so that you become caught in the net. Once you are caught and cannot escape, then you will have to listen to my silence too. And once you have understood my words, you will start feeling the silence that surrounds those words. Those words are born out of silence; they carry something of silence in them, some fragrance around them.

But what I have been saying to you is only the most rudimentary; it is for the beginners. As you grow in understanding, as your silence deepens, my contact with you will be more and more of silence. Even while I am speaking, you will listen to the intervals between the words and you will read between the lines. You will not be so much concerned with the words, but with the wordless. You will be more concerned with the origin of it all.

Two hippies were crossing the Atlantic by steamship. They were out on deck, looking at the ocean, and one said, "Man, look at all that water out there!"

"Yeah, man," the second, farther-out cat replied. "And just think, like that is only the top of it."

Only the superficial, the surface, can be talked about; the depths remain hidden. But the surface can become an invitation.

Chaitanya Kabir, my words are only invitations -- invitations towards my being, invitations towards my presence. Hence, those who come here and remain nonsannasins are bound to go empty-handed. They will accumulate a few words, they will become a little more knowledgeable; philosophically they will become a little enriched, but their being will remain the same. They will know more but they will not be more. Unless you become committed, unless you become involved, unless you risk all that you have, you will remain concerned only with the words.

The deeper your commitment, the greater is the possibility of moving towards the depths, because to move towards the depths is possible only when you are ready to die -- die as an ego, die as a person.

And that's exactly what transpires between the master and the disciple: the master is no more an ego; the disciple also slowly slowly becomes a non-ego, a nonentity, a nobody... and then they merge and meet, then they melt into each other.

I have chosen a flag for the new commune. The flag is of two colors: white and orange. The white represents the master, the orange represents the disciple. And the flag has a full moon on it as a symbol. The full moon represents enlightenment. Enlightenment is light, but not like the sun; it is not hot, it is cool -- it is like the moon.

Enlightenment is not masculine but feminine, because enlightenment is a gift from God. You cannot be aggressive about it, you have to be just receptive, available, open, like a womb; hence the moon. And the moon is half red and half white; that represents the meeting and merger of the master and the disciple. The master is in the disciple, hence the moon is half red; and the disciple is in the master.

The master and disciple are not two. When they become one, when it is no longer a dialogue, when there is no question of I and thou, when the I and thou disappear into one unity, then silence is understood, then presence is understood. And then inexhaustible sources open up for you. Then you are moving into the ocean, the river is falling into the ocean.

These words are only invitations. Come along with me! These words are just to prepare you so that you can take a jump into the ocean. It needs guts, it needs daring, because jumping into the ocean means disappearing as you have known yourself up to now, losing your old identity. It is a loss in the beginning -- but not really, because the river loses itself as a river but becomes the ocean. It is a gain.

The disciple losing himself in the master becomes a master; he attains to his true identity. And the master is only a door: from the master he moves into God himself.

That's why in the East, the master is conceived of as a god. That is very difficult for non-Easterners to understand, why the master is conceived of as a god... because he is the door into the divine.

Chaitanya Kabir, I can understand your wonder. You say, "Ah rarest one, how is it that you give so much?"

But from my side I am not giving you so much, for two reasons. One is that you have to be prepared before you can be given. You can be given only as much as you can accept, digest. You can be given only that much which can become your blood, bones and marrow; more than that will cause indigestion, which will not be helpful to you but will be harmful.

And I would like to give you much more, but in the very nature of things it cannot be given. I am utterly helpless. I can shout, I can go on calling to you, "Come closer!"... because if you come closer, slowly slowly, my energy field will start vibrating with YOUR energy field. And when my heart and your heart are pulsating with the same beat, in the same rhythm, then the real communion has started.

But it is happening, slowly slowly. A few of you are coming closer, dropping your egos. A few of you are becoming more and more silent. A few of you are daring the ultimate, are getting ready to take a jump into the ocean from where no return is possible. Things are happening, but they take time.

And such an energy field has not existed for centuries; so many things have to be worked out from ABC. Such an energy field existed while Buddha was here. Such an energy field existed with Bodhidharma in China. Such an energy field existed with Zarathustra in Iran. Such an energy field existed with Jesus in Jerusalem. But for centuries this phenomenon has disappeared from the world, and man has become too much worldly, too much interested in trivia, in the superficial, in the meaningless. Even if he goes to God, he goes for meaningless things. He does not go for inner transformation, he does not go to die and to be reborn.

You are here to die and to be reborn. Much is happening... much more is going to happen. As you become more and more ready, I will be showering more and more.

And it is inexhaustible because it is not mine, it has nothing to do with me. I am just a vehicle, a hollow bamboo. I am simply available to existence: whatsoever song it wants to sing through me, I am ready to sing it. I am simply a medium.

Use this opportunity as much as you can, because such doors open only once in a while and it is very easy to miss them. For stupid things one can miss them, and you can rationalize your stupidity easily.

Beware, be watchful....

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THERE IS RESEARCH IN THE WEST THAT SUGGESTS THAT MEN ARE HAPPIER BEING MARRIED THAN NOT, AND THAT THE SUICIDE RATE IS LOWER FOR MARRIED MEN. AND THAT THE REVERSE IS TRUE FOR WOMEN. PLEASE COMMENT.

Prabhudasi, there is a difference between the male mind and the female mind; their functioning is different. They are polar opposites -- never forget that. Spiritually they are exactly the same, but physiologically they are poles apart; they function in different ways.

For example, man is more physical than woman, man is more extrovert than woman. The woman is more psychological and more introvert. That's why there are so many magazines like PLAYBOY with nude women on their covers and pictures of nude women inside -- and millions of copies are sold. So much pornography exists all over the world, but it is all a male idea. The woman is not as much interested in the nude man as man is interested in the nude woman.

When a man and a woman are in deep, loving embrace, the woman immediately closes her eyes. Kiss a woman, and she closes her eyes. But the man watches himself kissing the woman, watches the woman kissed, watches her reactions, watches continuously whether she is getting an orgasm or not. He remains more or less an outsider, a spectator. He is more

interested in watching than in BEING in it.

The woman simply closes her eyes. She is less concerned with the man and what is happening to him; she is more concerned with her inner being, what is happening there. Hence, women are not interested in pornography; their real interest is in their inner processes. These differences are so great that they make for different life-styles.

Prabhudasi, you are right: modern research has certainly found a very strange-looking fact. But it is not really strange. Men are happier being married than not because when they are not married they simply feel lonely. When they are married, even if the marriage is miserable, it is better than to be lonely; at least there is something to keep you occupied. Misery also keeps you occupied and man always wants to remain occupied -- something on the outside so that he need not go in, so he can keep his eyes open.

The woman is not so interested in the outside, so when a woman is unmarried she feels more alone than lonely. And she can enjoy her aloneness better than a man because she is more inner-directed -- she is more selfish, in a way. I am using the word with a very positive meaning: she is selfish, she is self-centered. The man is other-centered; he is constantly thinking of others.

The woman is thinking more about herself. At the most, she remains interested in the neighborhood -- who is fooling around with whom. She is not much concerned about Vietnam or Iran. She simply feels a little puzzled about why men are so much interested in Vietnam. What have you to do with Vietnam? It is so far away, why be bothered about it?

I have not come across a single woman who has asked me about proofs for God. It is so far away! No woman has asked me whether heaven really exists, is hell a reality? She is not concerned about these things. She is more concerned with things that are close to her; she is more concerned with her clothes than with God.

And man thinks all these feminine interests as stupid: when there are such great subjects, the woman is concerned about her clothes! She will not discuss communism and Karl Marx, Mao and Mahatma Gandhi. She, at the most, can listen to all these things out of politeness. Her interest is about where you got your sari, the texture of your clothes, and who is looking beautiful. She is concerned with that which is close; her concern is for herself.

Hence, she can remain alone in a more healthy way than man; he feels very lonely. If he can't get his morning newspaper he starts freaking out! He has to know what is happening in the whole world. He can't be alone. Even in his aloneness he will create some imaginary beings -- God, angels -- and imaginary problems: How many angels can stand on the point of a needle? And he will be really into the problem; he will waste his whole life counting the angels, and he will argue to no end! The woman simply laughs. The woman deep down knows boys are just boys -- let them talk nonsense! They call it philosophy, theology -- they are very skillful in giving great names to stupid things.

That's why man will commit suicide if he is lonely. Marriage is a must for him; he needs a woman for many things. First, she gives him a grounding -- the woman is very earthly, earth-bound. In all the mythologies of the world she has been represented by the earth. The woman gives him roots into the earth; otherwise, without a woman, he is just without earth, without roots; hanging in the air. The woman gives him a nest, the woman becomes a home for him. Without the woman he is homeless, a vagabond, driftwood.

Still, there is going to be conflict, there is going to be misery, there is going to be constant nagging... it is inevitable because they are such polar opposites; their interests never meet. Hence the woman has to nag, otherwise the man will never fulfill HER desires -- and the man has to concede. Slowly slowly, if the man is intelligent enough, he becomes henpecked.

Only very stupid and stubborn people never become henpecked. A little intelligence and the man understands it: that it is better to listen to whatsoever she says and follow it. Otherwise twenty-four hours a day she will be after you. She will not leave you any rest. It is better to do whatsoever she is saying and be finished with it, so you can read your newspaper!

All that nagging and all that misery can be tolerated because the woman fulfills a certain very deep need: she makes you earth-bound and she takes care of your body. She is not much concerned about your soul -- that she leaves for you to think about -- but she nourishes your body. She nourishes, she cares, she loves; she makes you feel loved, needed -- she gives you a deep contentment. Without her, you simply don't know who you are. Without her you are always a lost child. She mothers you.

Hence it happens that married men are happier than unmarried men. It should not be so, because the unmarried man has no problems. The married man has problems, so logically it seems very strange that the married person should be happier than the unmarried. But life does not follow logic; life has its own strange ways. The unmarried man is without roots, without nourishment, without warmth. He is cold, living in a cold world; he goes on shrinking and dying. The woman gives warmth, gives life, makes him feel at home, helps him to remain together. Without the woman he starts falling apart.

But the woman can be more happy alone than married, because she can make herself rooted without the man; the man is not such a great need. She can be more independent than the man -- she IS more independent.

Just because the woman is more independent, down the ages man has tried to make her dependent in other ways -- economically, socially. Naturally, she is more independent and that hurts the man and his ego, so he has tried to make her dependent in some way; artificial dependence has been created for her. Economically she has been paralyzed, she has to depend on man. This is a consolation for man: if he depends on her, she also depends on him. It is a compensation and a consolation.

Politically, socially, she has been thrown out of the society; she has been forced to remain in the home so that man can feel that "I am not the only one dependent, she is also dependent on me." This is a psychological strategy of the ego, of the male ego. Otherwise, if the woman is given total freedom -- economic, social, political -- man will look really poor compared to her.

In matriarchal societies, man IS poor. There are a few tribes still existing on the earth which are matriarchal, where woman rules; the women are stronger, more confident of themselves, and men are weaklings.

Certainly the woman is stronger than man in many ways. She lives longer than man, five years longer than man. If man's average lifespan is seventy, then woman's will be seventy-five. She lives five years longer than man -- why? She must have more resistance. And after giving birth to ten, twelve children.... Just think of a man giving birth to ten, twelve children -- he will be finished long before! Just carry one child in your womb for nine months and you will commit suicide! Or if that is difficult, just try to bring up a child -- and either you will kill the child or you will commit suicide.

The woman has great resistance, great tolerance of things. The woman is more balanced; physiologically, chemically, she is more balanced. That's why she looks more beautiful -- her beauty has roots in her physiological balance.

It is like this: if people are created from two cells, one from the mother and one from the father -- each cell consisting of twenty-four smaller parts -- then man has two cells, one

consisting of the full twenty-four while the other contains less. And the woman has two cells, both consisting of the full twenty-four, equally. The woman is more balanced.

Man has an inner imbalance, hence goes berserk more easily, goes mad very easily. Any woman can drive any man mad, it is such a simple phenomenon! Women are ill less than men; men are ill more, they suffer more illnesses. One hundred fifteen boys are born for each hundred girls, and by the time they reach the age of marriage, fifteen boys have disappeared. By the marrying age there are one hundred girls to one hundred boys. Nature also gives birth to fifteen more boys knowing perfectly well that fifteen are going to die sooner or later. So by the time the boys and girls come to the marriageable age, the proportion will be the same.

Unmarried women are more at ease with themselves. If politically and economically they were not prevented, they would like, they would love to remain unmarried. Maybe that is one of the reasons why man has made them so helpless politically, socially and economically, so that they HAVE to decide for marriage; otherwise many women would like to remain unmarried. Even if they would like to become mothers they would like to become mothers without marriage. Yes, there is a great need to be a mother in a woman, but there is no great need to be a wife.

Men's needs are more physiological; women's needs are more psychological. Hence the woman always feels as if she is exploited in marriage. And her feeling is true, because man's interest is sexual and the woman's interest is far more total; it is not just sexual. Sex may be a part in that totality. But man's interest is basically sexual; everything else is just decorative, it is not essential. He is continuously interested in sex.... The simple reason is that their sexualities are very different.

Man has a local sexuality; his sex is confined to the genital organs, it is not spread all over his body. The woman is totally sexual, her whole body is sexual; it is not genital. Hence a woman needs longer foreplay before she can go really into lovemaking.

And the man is always in a hurry; his love is nothing but a hit-and-run affair! The woman is not even warmed up, and the man is getting dressed and going away! The man is finished. His sexuality is genital. The woman is more total; her whole body has a deep sexuality in it. Unless her whole body becomes involved she can't have orgasmic experience. And if she can't have orgasmic experiences she becomes disinterested in sex. So wives are disinterested in sex. Man's whole interest is in sex.

The young executive greeted his attractive secretary warmly as he entered the office. "Good morning, Marge," he said, tossing his briefcase on his desk. "I had a dream about you last night."

Flattered, but wishing to appear aloof, she casually inquired, "Ah, did you?" "No," her boss replied. "I woke up too soon."

Their understanding is different. The woman always feels cheated, used, as if she is a machine. She feels used as a means; it is humiliating. Hence marriage is very humiliating to the woman. It seems only a permanent kind of prostitution, nothing else. She feels as if she has been sold forever. And in the bargain what does she get? A repetitive life, with no creativity, with no joy, with no exploration; a slavery, a constant slavery and the constant humiliation of being used as a means.

Of course, if more married women commit suicide that is natural; more married women go mad, that is natural.

Lester was continuously nervous and tense, so he went to see his doctor. He was greeted by the lovely, red-headed nurse, and he told her his problem.

She said, "That's easy to fix." And she took him into a little room, relieved his tension and said, "That will be ten dollars, please."

A few weeks later he was nervous and tense again, went back to the doctor, and the doctor examined him and gave him a prescription for tranquilizers and said, "That will be five dollars."

"If it's all the same to you, Doc, I would just as soon have the ten-dollar treatment."

For men, sex is not a spiritual phenomenon but only a physiological release. For women it is a spiritual phenomenon. Hence the woman always feels offended; unless love happens as part of a great spiritual experience she is unable to cooperate in it. Yes, she can be part of it in a cold way. It is because of this situation that millions of women have completely forgotten what orgasm means; they have become frozen. It is due to man's nonunderstanding about the difference.

Each man and each woman needs a great education about it -- that they are different; their physiologies are different, their psychologies are different. And they have to understand each other's psychology, each other's physiology. They have to be taught. Each university should help the students to understand each other's biology, spirituality. But nothing is being taught.

Sex is taboo: don't talk about it. People act as if we are born with all the knowledge needed. That is sheer nonsense! You may be able to produce children, that's possible, but that is not enough.

Sex has a far deeper significance. It is not only for reproduction; it has a multidimensional quality to it. It is also fun, it is play, it is prayer, it is meditation, it is religion, it is spirituality. Sex has the whole spectrum; it is the whole rainbow, all the colors from the lowest to the highest.

A great education is needed so that man can understand the woman and can help her to move towards orgasmic peaks, and the woman can understand the man and can help him.

Marriage right now is based on ignorance, and it has been so for centuries. All knowledge about sex has been repressed. It has been discovered again and again, but it has been repressed again and again by the moralists, by the puritans, by the priests, by the politicians, because they don't want you to become orgasmically blissful.

There is a danger for the politicians and the priests: if people are orgasmically blissful they won't go to the churches and to the temples because they will know a far higher and deeper form of prayer in their own lives. And if people are orgasmically blissful they won't follow stupid leaders into war. They will love life so deeply, they will not be so ready to be killed or to kill. Their respect for life will be so tremendous, their joy of life will be such, that they will feel grateful to God. They will not be in such a hurry to throw away life at any stupid excuse: Mohammedans fighting Hindus, Hindus fighting Mohammedans, killing each other.

The politicians and the priests both are agreed upon one thing: don't allow people to have orgasmic joy; otherwise they will no longer be slaves. It will become impossible to manipulate them; it will become impossible to reduce them to sub-human, mechanical persons. They will have a spirituality of their own and they will have such a rich life, they will not be ready to lose it so easily.

These priests and politicians have created such a repressive society and such a repressed man that the whole humanity is ill and abnormal.

Charlie entered the airline ticket office, and the girl behind the counter was as magnificently endowed with feminine equipment as any girl he could ever remember seeing. She was wearing a low-cut dress and bending low over the notations she was making. He stared at her.

She looked up and said, "What can I do for you, sir?"

Charlie heard his own breath hissing in his ears like steam, but tried to master the situation. He did, after all, need two tickets to Pittsburgh. He finally spoke. "Oh, give me two pickets to...."

The whole humanity is boiling within. People are so afraid, they are just somehow managing to keep their faces together. Charlie's statement: "Give me two pickets to..." is not really complete. The complete sentence will be: "Give me two pickets to Tittsburgh." That is left out because the joke has been compiled by a man who must have been afraid himself. It is not a complete joke. "Tickets to Pittsburgh" becomes "pickets to Tittsburgh" -- and this happens to almost everybody.

Such an abnormal situation is created by centuries of repression. People don't talk about sex clearly -- they don't talk about sex at all. Even if they talk, they talk in roundabout ways, they talk diplomatically.

Mr. Ginsburg was walking home from the shop when he ran into Mrs. Cohen who said, "Mr. Ginsburg, your business is open."

He said, "You must be wrong. I just closed it."

Then he ran into Mrs. Goldberg who also said, "Mr. Ginsburg, your business is open." Again he denied it.

When he got home his wife told him his fly was open and then he understood. So he called Mrs. Cohen on the telephone and said, "Mrs. Cohen, when you told me my business was open, tell me, was the salesman in or out?"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #9

Chapter title: Man's absence is his freedom

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THE WAY IS EIGHTFOLD.
THERE ARE FOUR TRUTHS.
ALL VIRTUE LIES IN DETACHMENT.
THE MASTER HAS AN OPEN EYE.

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY,
THE ONLY WAY TO THE OPENING OF THE EYE.
FOLLOW IT.
OUTWIT DESIRE.

FOLLOW IT TO THE END OF SORROW.

WHEN I PULLED OUT SORROW'S SHAFT
I SHOWED YOU THE WAY.

IT IS YOU WHO MUST MAKE THE EFFORT.
THE MASTERS ONLY POINT THE WAY.

BUT IF YOU MEDITATE
AND FOLLOW THE LAW
YOU WILL FREE YOURSELF FROM DESIRE.

Gautama the Buddha worked hard for six years in all kinds of disciplines to arrive home, to know the truth of his being, to realize the meaning of life. But he failed utterly -- not because he was lacking in effort, not because he was not committed to the methods he was practicing, but because he was not meditatively in them. His efforts were, in a way, superficial; they were not arising from his own innermost core. On the contrary, they were imposed from the outside by others -- by tradition, by teachers, by scriptures.

After six years of arduous effort and frustration he realized this: "I can be transformed only when something becomes my own insight, when something comes out of my own vision. Borrowed visions won't do, borrowed methods won't help. Scriptures will make me a parrot, but they cannot make me the enlightened one."

After six years he changed his whole way of life: he started living from the within. And that became the turning point. That became the beginning of the endless journey into truth. That became the beginning of eternal joy, celebration.

It was natural. Everybody in the beginning follows others; that comes easy. You yourself don't know where to go, what to do, how to do it. You start asking the experts. And the problem is that in the spiritual inquiry there are no experts -- there cannot be, because each individual is so unique that expertise is not possible.

Expertise is possible if there is no individuality. About matter you can come to conclusions -- matter is predictable -- but about man you cannot come to conclusions in the same way.

Something about man remains unpredictable, and that unpredictable quality is his very essence. That's what makes him man; that is his freedom. He is not bound to the law of cause and effect; he functions under a totally different kind of law. He can behave in such a way that it would have been inconceivable for you, seeing the situation, given the situation, to imagine. If you had predicted it, your prediction would have seemed like an absurdity. But man can function outside the law of cause and effect.

Then how to help man? -- how is a master supposed to help others? He helps not by giving detailed information, instructions; he helps only by indicating. He hints, he does not guide. That is one of the most essential things to be understood about Buddha: he is not a guide. He does not give you the whole map of the journey but only an indication, a vague, subtle hint. You need not follow him in all details. You can understand him and then you will have to work out your own life-style.

And I perfectly agree with him. He learned it the hard way; I have also learned it the hard way.

Listen to me -- listen with an open heart. Try to understand what is being conveyed to you, but don't follow it mechanically. Let it first become an understanding in you, then follow your understanding, not my instructions. My instruction can only help you to raise your eyes towards the sky. It cannot give you a fixed pattern of life; it cannot give you a discipline but it can give you the direction. And the difference is great: a direction is a totally different phenomenon; a description, a detailed description, makes you a slave.

Just an opening... fingers pointing to the moon are of immense help. You need not cling to the fingers, you need not worship the fingers. In fact, when you start looking at the moon you have to forget all about the fingers. You will feel grateful, but you will not be an imitator. You will be an individual in your own right. You will be a free consciousness. That is Buddha's fundamental message.

He says:

THE WAY IS EIGHTFOLD.

Remember, it is only a hint. "The eightfold path" is simply a way of expressing his experience, giving you a certain direction. The essence of the eightfold path is in the word 'rightness'. Buddha uses the word 'rightness' about everything. He divides life into eight parts and he uses 'rightness' about each part: right food, right effort, right mindfulness, right samadhi, and so on and so forth. And it is not only a question of eight things; if you understand, then it has to be used as a direction.

Whatever you are doing can be done in a wrong way or in a right way; both the alternatives are always there. So you have to understand what he means by "rightness," the essence of it. You have to taste the flavor of rightness, then you can apply it in everything that you are doing. You are walking: you can walk in the right way and you can walk in the wrong way. You are talking: you can talk in the right way, you can talk in the wrong way. You are listening: you can listen in the right way, you can listen in the wrong way.

If you are listening with all kinds of prejudices, that is a wrong way of listening; it is really a way of not listening. You appear to be listening, but you are only hearing not listening. Right listening means you have put aside your mind. It does not mean that you become gullible, that you start believing whatsoever is said to you. It has nothing to do with belief or disbelief. Right listening means, "I am not concerned right now whether to believe or not to believe. There is no question of agreement or disagreement at this moment. I am simply trying to listen to whatsoever it is. Later on I can decide what is right and what is wrong. Later on I can decide whether to follow or not to follow."

And the beauty of right listening is this: that truth has a music of its own. If you can listen without prejudice, your heart will say it is true. If it is true, a bell starts ringing in your heart. If it is not true, you remain aloof, unconcerned, indifferent; no bell rings in your heart, no synchronicity happens. That is the quality of truth: that if you listen to it with an open heart, it

immediately creates a response in your being -- your very center is uplifted. You start growing wings; suddenly the whole sky is open.

It is not a question of deciding logically whether what is being said is true or untrue. On the contrary, it is a question of love, not of logic. Truth immediately creates a love in your heart; something is triggered in you in a very mysterious way.

But if you listen wrongly -- that is, full of your mind, full of your garbage, full of your knowledge -- then you will not allow your heart to respond to the truth. You will miss the tremendous possibility, you will miss the synchronicity. Your heart was ready to respond to truth.... It responds only to truth, remember, it never responds to the untrue. With the untrue it remains utterly silent, unresponsive, unaffected, unstirred. With the truth it starts dancing, it starts singing, as if suddenly a sun has risen and the dark night is no more, and the birds are singing and the lotuses are opening, and the whole earth is awakened.

Exactly like that, when you hear the truth really, totally, immediately something awakens in you. Truth has that immense impact. Hence Buddha will say: Right listening, right effort....

You can make efforts to the extreme, and then you will miss. You can make too much effort and you will miss, or you can make too little effort and you will miss. You can become enlightened only when the effort is exactly balanced, in equilibrium.

Buddha's word is SAMYAKTVA; it is difficult to translate. Only one of its meanings is rightness. Another meaning is equilibrium; and it has a few other qualities about it, too. The third meaning is equanimity. The fourth meaning is, looking at things with a similar eye, with no judgment; looking at things equally, without any a priori judgment or conclusion -- looking at things with no conclusion at all. Because if you have a conclusion already, you can't look at the thing as it is; your conclusion will interfere. But the most important meaning is rightness.

Right effort will mean neither leaning too much to the left nor leaning too much to the right. Right effort will mean exactly like walking on a tightrope. Have you seen the tightrope walker? He continuously balances himself between the right and the left. If he leans a little too much to the left he will fall; he immediately balances himself by moving to the opposite side. But if he leans a little too much to the right he will fall, too; then again he balances by moving to the left. He is continuously moving between right and left. Balance is not something static; it is a dynamic process.

Hence you cannot decide your character once and for all. And those who decide their character once for all are dead people. They simply go on following a dead routine; they are not transformed by this dead routine.

Life is a continuous process, a movement -- it is a river. You have to adjust yourself according to the situations; otherwise you remain fixed, and life goes on changing all around. The only result will be that a gap arises between you and your life, and that gap creates misery, sorrow.

You are always missing the train. Either you are too early or you are too late, but you are never on the exact point. You are either running ahead or you are lagging behind. You are either in the past or in the future. Some people live in their memories and other people live in their imagination.

And to live rightly means to be in the present, to be exactly in the middle -- in the middle of past and future, in the middle of imagination and memory, in the middle of that which is no more and that which is not yet. In that exact middle-ness is the rightness: samyaktva.

And Buddha applies this to every facet of life, to every aspect. You can eat too much and then one day you become tired of eating too much; you suffer, your body suffers. Then you

start fasting -- that is moving to another extreme. Again your body suffers, first from too much food, then from no food at all. When are you going to be exactly in the middle?

And remember, again let me repeat it: the middle is not a fixed point. You cannot decide once and forever that this is the middle, that "I will eat only so much" -- because your needs change. One day you have walked ten miles, you may need a little more food. One day you have rested, you have not worked at all, it was a holiday -- you will need a little less food. One day you have been chopping wood; you will need more food, your body needs more nourishment. And one day it was raining and you were simply playing cards; you can do with little food.

And once in a while your body may not need food at all. If you are ill it will be good to give the body complete rest, because eating means work for the body. The body has to digest it, the body has to continuously work on the food. Once in a while it is good; if you are feeling that the body is not in good shape, it is good not to eat. But there is no religious quality about it; this is a very scientific approach.

One thing is certain: that nothing can become a static phenomenon. You have to go on moving.

When you are young you will need eight hours sleep. When you become old you will need four hours sleep, three hours sleep, and that will be enough. When you were a child you needed ten hours of sleep. In the mother's womb the child needs twenty-four hours of sleep; after the birth, twenty-two hours, then twenty hours, then eighteen hours, and slowly slowly... by the end, when a person comes to die, he needs only two hours sleep and that's enough.

In the mother's womb the child is growing; those nine months one grows so much that one will not be growing as much in ninety years' time. Leaps and bounds! The pace is so quick and so fast that the child needs absolute rest. But the old man, he has stopped growing long ago. Now the body does not need so much rest. The body no longer revives itself; it is getting ready to die, the process of revival has stopped. Now whatsoever cells are dying are dying; they are not being reproduced again. Hence, less and less sleep is needed. You can't fix it forever.

There are fools who fix it, who say, "I have taken a vow to sleep for only five hours a night." They will suffer when they are young, they will suffer when they are old; their suffering will never end. When they are young they will suffer because the body may need ten hours sleep, nine hours sleep, at least eight hours sleep -- and they have decided to sleep only five hours. They will be continuously missing those three hours. They will look a little sad, tired, their faces lusterless, their eyes always sleepy. They will not show intelligence, because body and mind both need deep rest. They will simply move through life like a somnambulist, half asleep.

And their scriptures say that if you feel sleepy in the daytime it means you are a sinner, TAMASIK, that you are suffering from lethargy. And the only thing that you are really suffering from is foolishness! You have decided that you will sleep only five hours when the need is for eight hours. And in old age you will try to sleep five hours and you will not be able to sleep, then you will suffer because you can sleep only three hours. Then the whole night you are tossing and turning and cursing the whole world, and you can't conceive why you can't sleep at least five hours. And trying to sleep five hours when you can sleep only three hours will be a disturbance; it will keep you in despair. You will continuously think that something is being missed.

Never decide like that. Buddha says: Let your life be dynamic. It has to correspond to the reality, to the situation in which you are. Don't follow dead rules; respond to reality, to that

which is. In that responsibility you grow, you become mature. To be responsible is to be right.

And he says this rightness has to be applied in all aspects of life. Even about awareness, meditation, he says "right mindfulness" is needed -- because one can become too obsessed with meditation. One can become so fascinated by meditation that one may start escaping from life.

It has happened down the ages. Millions of people have escaped from life for the simple reason that they wanted to meditate and life is a disturbance. They can't meditate in the marketplace, they can't meditate in the family, they can't meditate with the children around. They have to go to the Himalayan caves; only then they can meditate. That is a wrong meditation. If meditation is so poor, so impotent that you can't meditate in your own home, then your meditation is not worth anything. If it needs the Himalayas, then it is not your meditation that is making you silent; it is the silence of the Himalayas.

After thirty years of meditating in the Himalayas, you come back to the world, and then all the effort, that whole arduous journey, all those thirty years of work upon yourself, will simply disappear, evaporate. The world will disturb you more than before, because now you have lived outside the world for thirty years. You have become unaccustomed to it, its noise, its people, their ways. This is not right meditation.

Right meditation has to become a strength in you, not a weakness. It has to make you stronger -- so strong that you can sit in the marketplace and yet be meditative.

And Buddha even uses the word 'right' for samadhi. That has to be understood. He says: "right realization of truth." One wonders, can there be wrong realization of truth? Buddha says yes. Samadhi is the ultimate state when all desires disappear, all thoughts disappear, the whole mind disappears. You are in a state of no-mind. But this can happen in two ways.

You can fall into a deep sleep, so deep that there are no longer even dreams -- the mind has disappeared. In deep sleep there is no desire, there is no mind, no thought. But this is not samadhi -- this is coma!

And many people -- in India particularly -- go into such a coma, and they think they are in samadhi. For hours together they become unconscious. It is a kind of hysterical fit. You can see their faces, their mouths foaming. You can see the quality of their being. They are just lying down like corpses; they are not radiating. You will not see any joy around them, just a negative kind of emptiness. But they are thought to be great saints.

Buddha says this is a wrong kind of meditation and a wrong kind of samadhi. Right samadhi means you have to be without mind, fully awake; in wakefulness, thoughts have to disappear. It is easy to fall asleep, to fall into a deep coma, in a kind of hysterical fit and be without mind; but that is falling below mind not transcending mind. Right samadhi is a transcendence: you go beyond mind, but you are fully alert, aware. Only then is samadhi right -- when it grows in awareness and when awareness grows through it. When you become enlightened you have to be absolutely awakened; otherwise you missed at the last step.

This way Buddha divides life into eight parts and calls his way "the eightfold way." **THE WAY IS EIGHTFOLD.** But you have to look at your life, you will have to decide about your life. Don't just follow the words of the Buddha. Follow the **SPIRIT** of it, because things have changed. In twenty-five centuries it was bound to be so. You are living in a different kind of society, you are living with a different kind of mind. Your life is no longer the same as it was in Buddha's time. So the essential core will remain the same, but many things will have to be changed.

Remember that you have to be always alert, watchful, balanced; always in the middle,

never moving to the extreme, never becoming excessive in anything. But then you have to work it out; different people will have to work out different plans for their own life.

If you simply follow the Buddha's words -- as Buddhists are doing all over the world.... They miss the whole point; they still go on doing the same thing. Buddha used to walk, they are still walking, because you have to walk in a right way....

I will tell you: there is no need to walk in order to practice the right way of walking. You can sit in an airplane in the right way. You have to apply the essence of his teaching to YOUR situation. He could not have said -- obviously -- that you should sit in the airplane in a right way. Now, you cannot walk from Chicago to Poona, you will have to come by airplane; but you can sit in the airplane in a right way. And if the pilot informs you that one engine has failed and the other is just on the verge of failing, you have to remain tranquil, still, balanced. Even if the plane catches fire and you are falling and sooner or later -- it is a question of moments -- you will be dead, you have to keep your awareness, you have to keep your coolness. You are not to become disturbed.

You have to apply the essence to your life; otherwise things remain superficial. One practices them, but deep down one remains unchanged.

An Italian woman and a Jewish woman were sunning themselves next to each other at a fine Miami hotel. The Jewish woman started to brag about her husband. "My husband is so generous -- I asked him for a Cadillac and he gave me a Rolls Royce!"

"It's-a nice!" said the Italian lady.

"He is so wonderful. If I ask for a coat, he buys me a mink."

"It's-a nice!" came the reply.

"If I say I am tired, he immediately sends me to Miami."

"It's-a nice!"

"What about your husband?"

"My husband," said the Italian woman, "is-a so nice, he's-a send me to finishing school-a, where they teach me to say 'It's-a nice,' instead of 'You are full of-a shit-a!'"

You can learn beautiful words. You can go on saying "It's-a nice!" and deep down you are still saying the same thing. Deep down you are not changed at all. Finishing schools won't help. You become cultured, sophisticated, religious. You meditate, you pray, you do all kinds of rituals, but they remain rituals -- not even skin-deep. Just scratch a little bit and you will find the real man -- and he is as animal as other animals, or sometimes even more. Because no animal can fall as low as man, and no animal can rise as high as man. Man's fall is great, man's rise is great.

Man is a ladder between heaven and hell, between the animal and God. Falling towards being an animal is an unconscious process; rising towards being a God is a conscious effort. Buddha says:

THE WAY IS EIGHTFOLD.
THERE ARE FOUR TRUTHS.

These are the four truths, he insists again and again. First: life as you know it is sorrow. He wants to make you aware of the phenomenon that your life is nothing but misery. It is a long long tragedy, it is tragic. You don't want to listen to such things; you want to go on believing that you are already in paradise.

You don't want to see your wounds -- and Buddha opens up your wounds again and again. He forces you to see all the pus that you are carrying. Hence people became angry at him. Before Buddha, they were told beautiful things about themselves by other priests and so-called religious teachers.

Buddha is the first master who wants you to be absolutely authentic about yourself. He wants you to become aware of the real situation. He is not interested in singing a lullaby, his interest is in waking you up. He is not a sedative, he is an awakener.

The first truth for the real seeker, he says, is to know that life is sorrow. The second truth is that there is a cause to it. His approach is very scientific. He says: first become aware that your life is sorrow. But don't be worried, don't become sad because of this fact. There is a cause to it. And if there is a cause to it, the third truth is: there is a way to remove it. If there is a cause to it, it can be uncaused. If there is no cause to your misery, then it is not removable; then there is really despair, then there is no hope.

That's exactly where modern existentialists are finding themselves. They have understood the first truth -- that life is sorrow, meaningless, absurd -- but they have not moved beyond that. Sartre, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel, they are all hanging around the first truth. Hence, they have created a great despair in the intelligentsia of the whole world. If life is sorrow and there is no way out of it, naturally it creates hopelessness. Naturally, it seems suicide is the right thing to do; to go on living is cowardly. For what? If it is only sorrow, then why go on living? Why not return the ticket? And what is there to be grateful to God for?

Buddha says: "Life is sorrow" is only the first truth. The second is: there is a cause to it, so don't be worried. Sorrow is there, but because there is a cause to it there is hope. And there is a way to remove it. That eightfold path is the way to remove it.

And what is the cause? Desire -- TANHA -- is the cause of it.

And the fourth truth is the ultimate truth: there is a state when sorrow is no more: the state of enlightenment, liberation, nirvana.

In these four simple truths he has reduced the whole spiritual inquiry, the whole spiritual endeavor. And he has reduced it in such a beautiful way and in such a simple way that anybody who is a little intelligent will not find it difficult to understand.

THERE ARE FOUR TRUTHS....

This life that you are living is sorrow, but this is not the only life. This is the life you have chosen. You can live another kind of life: Buddha lived it, I am living it, you can live it. You can live in a totally different way: you can live desirelessly, you can live meditatively, you can live with choiceless awareness. You can live so centered and rooted in your being that no sorrow can remain. No sadness, no misery, no death remains possible; they all disappear. As you become full of light, your life goes through a transformation. This is not the right kind of life that you are living.

The traveling salesman asked the farmer to put him up for the night. The farmer said, "Sure, but you will have to sleep with my son."

"Good Lord," said the salesman, "I am in the wrong joke!"

Yes, you are in the wrong joke -- you are in the wrong life. But because YOU have chosen it there is great hope: you can stop choosing it. And you have to choose it continuously, constantly, only then can you be in it. Remember, to be in the wrong you have to make great efforts -- and you are making great efforts.

Look at the politicians, how much effort they make to remain in power. Look at the rich

people, how much effort they make to remain rich. And their richness brings only misery, and their power trips bring only misery. The more power they have, the more greedy they are; the more riches they have, the more greedy they are. They become more and more obsessed with the same thing. They go on and on wasting their lives... and in the end they die with empty hands.

You are feeding your wrong life. You go on watering the weeds and you go on hoping that one day roses are going to bloom. You go on hoping that "the spring will come and there will be roses and roses in my garden." But weeds can't produce roses. You have to uproot the weeds and you have to stop feeding and nourishing them. You have to clean the garden of the roots, of the rocks, of the weeds, and then only can you plant roses.

There is a cause to your misery: YOU are the cause. Your sleepiness is the cause, your unconsciousness is the cause. And in your unconsciousness you go on dreaming and desiring stupid things, with such great fervor, with such great enthusiasm. It is strange to see people putting so much effort into creating their own hell; with the same effort they can create a thousand and one paradises. The effort that you put into creating one hell is enough to create one thousand and one paradises.

Buddha says: There is a cause to it -- your constant desire. And there is a way to remove it -- becoming aware of your desire, seeing it through and through. And there is then the ultimate state of freedom, when desire ceases, disappears. You are left without any desire, without any dream, without any sleep -- alert, aware, conscious. Then you know real life.

You can call it God; that is not Buddha's word. He is suspicious of the word 'God'. Because of this word 'God', priests have exploited man for so long that Buddha never uses it. He is suspicious of the word 'soul' too, because there have been many who have not used the word 'God', but then they have substituted 'God' with 'soul'. And they have used the same exploitation with the word 'soul', they have done the same to humanity.

Buddha avoids God, soul, heaven, everything. He creates a new word, a very strange word. Now it doesn't sound so strange, but when for the first time he used it it was really strange, particularly in this country where for thousands of years people had been talking about religion.

Nobody was ever aware that such a word could be used for the ultimate state. Buddha uses the word 'nirvana'. Nirvana literally means cessation, disappearance, dissolution; you are no more. It doesn't seem to be very appealing! You are no more? This is the goal? You cease to be -- and for that one has to make arduous effort? And one has to meditate and become choiceless and drop all desires? For what? -- just not to be?

Shakespeare says: To be or not to be, that is the question. He will decide for "to be"; Buddha decides for "not to be." He says, "Yes, that's the question. To be is misery, not to be is joy."

But people were very much puzzled: "How can there be joy if I am not there? If I have ceased completely to be, who is going to enjoy?"

And Buddha said, "That is the whole point to understand: if YOU are, misery is -- misery is your shadow; when you are not there, of course there is nobody to enjoy, but there is joy."

A very strange way of expressing it, but I can understand his difficulty. Use any word that can give you some idea of the ego and you cling to it. 'Soul' becomes only magnified ego, purified ego. And remember: a purified poison is more poisonous. The word 'soul' simply means nothing but a very great ego, superior, holy, sacred, divine; but it is the same ego, now tremendously decorated, crowned, garlanded. First it was temporary, now it is immortal. First it was momentary, now it is eternal... but it is the same ego!

Whenever you think of yourself as enlightened what are you doing? What is your idea of enlightenment? You still remain there just as you are; only one thing is added to you: enlightenment. You remain the same PLUS enlightenment. Buddha says that is not possible; either YOU are, or ENLIGHTENMENT is; both cannot be together. You have to disappear. And he is right, he is absolutely right.

The ego has to go, in all its forms, and then the authentic reality explodes. And that explosion is tremendous joy, it is bliss. There is nobody to experience it, there is nobody to observe it. You are not an observer of this bliss, you are the bliss itself; there is no observer separate from it. The observed is the observer, the experienced is the experiencer, the knower is the known. The old duality is no longer relevant.

Buddha's word is significant: nirvana, cessation, stopping to be.

ALL VIRTUE LIES IN DETACHMENT.

Hence, become detached from your ego, become detached from your possessions. Become simply detached from every possible source of attachment.

The forgetful professor left his hotel room and discovered he had left his umbrella behind. He went back to get it and found that the room had been rented already. Through the door he heard sounds.

"Whose little baby are you?"

"Your little baby."

"And whose little hands are these?"

"Your little hands."

"And whose little feet are... and whose little knees... and whose little...?"

"When you get to an umbrella," said the professor, through the door, "it is mine."

'I' exists through 'my', 'mine'; hence so much desire for possessions. You go on accumulating and the more you accumulate, the more you can feel you are. The greater your possessions, the more money you have, the more you can feel you are. Ego is empty; it needs to be filled by things continuously so that it can go on remaining in the deception, in the illusion that it is full. But it never really becomes full; it is a bottomless pit. You go on putting things into it and they go on disappearing; it remains empty. It is never full -- it cannot be full in the very nature of things. It is a false entity, how can it be full?

YOU are full. But when I say "you," I don't mean the ego; I don't mean anything that you understand by yourself. All that has to go, then the real you is discovered. And that real you is not separate from me, and that real you is not separate from the trees, and that real you is not separate from the clouds. That real you is part of the whole.

That's why Buddha says you become part of the universal law, dhamma, tao. You disappear as a separate entity. You are simply a wave in the ocean. This is liberation: liberation from yourself is liberation, freedom from yourself is freedom.

ALL VIRTUE LIES IN DETACHMENT.

THE MASTER HAS AN OPEN EYE.

Your eyes are closed because you see only outside. Inwardly, you are completely blind. And there is the real treasure and there is the truth of your life -- and about that you are blind. You see meaningless things, you see all kinds of rubbish. You just go on missing your own

center, your own source of consciousness. Buddha says: To see it is to be a seer; otherwise you are blind.

THE MASTER HAS AN OPEN EYE -- and you also have those inner eyes, but you are keeping them closed. You have completely forgotten that you have those eyes. The methods of meditation are nothing but methods of opening the inner eyes. They are there; you have to learn how to open them.

THIS IS THE ONLY WAY,
THE ONLY WAY TO THE OPENING OF THE EYE.
FOLLOW IT.
OUTWIT DESIRE.

The only way to open the inner eyes is to drop desiring. What is desire? Desire means: "I feel empty and I would like to be full." Emptiness hurts. "I need money, I need power, I need prestige, so that I can feel full" -- although those who have much money and power and prestige are as empty as you are. Just look at them, just watch! Just look around! Do you see the rich person? -- is he really rich? Surrounded by riches, of course, but is he rich? Is there any inner richness? Is he more sensitive to truth? Is he more aware of beauty? Is he more capable of love? Has he experienced who he is? Does he know the significance of life? Has he any sense of the ultimate?

These are the things that make one rich. Yes, he has a big bank balance, but how can that make him rich? He may be famous, the whole world may know of him, but does he know himself? And if he himself is unacquainted with himself, what does it matter how many people know him? Deep down he is not even aware of his own being. There is great darkness inside -- and there is light all around, but what is the point of having so much light when there is no light inside? Yes, there are suns and stars and moons outside, but inside not even a small candle! And you call it richness?

No, Buddha is rich because the inner light is there. Jesus is rich because the inner light is there. You are rich if your inner being is suffused with light, bathed in light. You are rich if you know that existence is divine. You are rich if you have experienced the exquisite beauty that surrounds, that permeates the whole. You are rich if you have tasted the nectar of your own consciousness. You are rich if you are capable of sharing your love unconditionally. Otherwise you are a beggar.

Buddha says: THE ONLY WAY TO THE OPENING OF THE EYE is to become desireless.

FOLLOW IT TO THE END OF SORROW.

And go on uprooting one desire after another desire -- because the mind is very cunning. You uproot one desire, it immediately starts growing another desire. It is so cunning, it can even become desirous of God. It is so cunning, it can even become desirous of nirvana. It can desire not to be. That desire is absurd, but mind is so cunning. Beware of the cunningness of the mind!

Passers-by on a New York subway were intrigued by a rather scruffy-looking Irishman standing before a large sign which read: SEE THE WORLD'S ONLY, ONE AND ONLY, TALKING CAT FOR ONLY 10 DOLLARS!

After a large crowd had gathered and the man's pockets were spilling over with money, he pulled a mangy-looking animal from a box and holding it in the air, whispered in the ear of the nearest member of the audience.

Rather embarrassed, the poor spectator looked into the eyes of the bewildered cat and said, "Who was the last president of China?"

Swiftly the Irishman yanked the cat's tail and the beast wailed loudly, "MAO...!"

The mind is very cunning. It can find ways to exploit others and it can find ways to exploit you too. And it goes on gathering all kinds of cunningness from the world. That's what you call experience.

The older you grow the more cunning you become, although you pretend that you have become more wise. Just by becoming old nobody becomes wise; otherwise every old man would become a buddha. Just by becoming old you certainly become cunning. Of course, your whole life's experiences of being cheated teach you some lessons: you start cheating others, you start learning the ways of the world. A child is innocent; an old man still innocent is very difficult to find. You become great experts on borrowed knowledge.

A man suffering from backache went to a very expensive specialist who recommended hot packs. After using hot packs all night long he felt worse than ever.

His maid, seeing him in agony, asked what the trouble was. When he told the story she said, "Not hot packs. Cold packs!"

He tried it and got prompt relief. Irate, he returned to the specialist and reported the whole story.

"Hmm," mused the doctor, "cold packs. My maid says hot packs!"

The specialist and the nonspecialist are not very much different. The expert and the nonexpert, both are in the same boat.

Beware of knowledgeable people! They know nothing and yet they pretend that they know. Not only that, they teach others. They themselves have wasted their lives and unconsciously they are destroying other people's lives.

In this world, if everybody decides one thing -- that "I will say to others only that which I have known" -- the world can immediately become a far more beautiful and better place than it is. A single decision on everybody's part, that "I will not go on conveying borrowed knowledge. I will say only that which I have experienced"... immediately, ninety-nine percent of the rubbish will simply disappear from the world.

But with it will disappear your scholars, your pundits, your priests, your political leaders -- and they don't want to disappear. They have invested so much in their borrowed knowledge; even to tell them that "your knowledge is borrowed" makes them angry.

Real knowing happens only when desire has disappeared. Then your eyes are clear of all smoke, all clouds. Then you can see. And when you can see, you can see both within and without.

A lovely young thing entered a doctor's office on her lunch hour and addressed a handsome young man in a white coat. "I have had a pain in my shoulder for a week. Can you help me?" she asked.

"Lie down on this table," he said, "and I will massage it for you."

After a few minutes the beautiful patient exclaimed, "Doctor, that is not my shoulder!"

The young man smiled and replied, "No, and I am not a doctor either!"

Watch who you are listening to. Watch who you are reading. I have known so many books on meditation written by people who know nothing of meditation. They have come to me to ask about meditation, and when they came to ask I was puzzled. I asked, "But I have read your book. You have written such a beautiful book on meditation!"

They said, "Yes, it has sold well and we have earned much, but as far as meditation is concerned, we have not done it at all."

I asked them, "How have you written such beautiful books?"

They said, "Reading other books."

All that you need is good scissors and glue, and you can write a book on anything! Just collect fifty books, go on cutting relevant pieces and glueing them, and a new book is created. That's how all kinds of absurdities go on. New books go on appearing on each subject. There are so many books on meditation that if so many people were meditating this world would be a paradise! So many books on yoga, so many books on God, so many books on Christ, Buddha, Mahavira!

If people knew Buddha, Mahavira, Christ, Mohammed, so well, this world couldn't be in such ugly shape. But they don't know. They are knowledgeable, certainly, but their knowledge is mechanical. They have read -- because they can understand language -- but they have not experienced anything.

And religion is basically experience. It is an experiment with your own subjectivity. It is a journey inwards. It is a penetration into your own interiority. Buddha says:

WHEN I PULLED OUT SORROW'S SHAFT
I SHOWED YOU THE WAY.

He says, "I am not a scholar, I am not an expert, but one thing is certain -- I am no longer miserable. My sorrow has disappeared. And the moment my sorrow disappeared, I showed you the way." That's the right way to show the way to others. Be what you would like others to be. Except that, all that people go on saying is nonsense.

I have known many Buddhist monks who are great scholars on Buddha, who have read all Buddhist scriptures, but who have not meditated at all; who have not tasted even a single drop of Buddha's experience, but they go on believing that they are Buddhists. Not only that, they go on converting others to Buddhism.

Beware of such people! Whether they are Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, Jainas, Jews, it doesn't matter -- beware of such people. Avoid such people. Look into the eyes of a man; feel his presence. If you can see something that is not borrowed, if you can feel something that has happened to the man, then and only then -- if your heart is touched and stirred -- listen to him and follow his insight: otherwise not. It is not a question of books, it is a question of existential experiencing. WHEN I PULLED OUT SORROW'S SHAFT I SHOWED YOU THE WAY.

IT IS YOU WHO MUST MAKE THE EFFORT.
THE MASTERS ONLY POINT THE WAY.

Buddha says, "Still I can only point the way. You will have to make all the effort. I

cannot make it for you. I cannot be your salvation."

Look at the beauty of this man! He says, "I cannot be your salvation. If it was possible for me to be your salvation, then I would have done it already. I would not have even asked your permission!"

Christians go on saying that Jesus is the salvation, but that is nonsense because if Jesus is the salvation, then why is the world still in misery? Jesus has happened! He would have solved everybody's problems. He has not solved anybody's problems, not even the Christians' -- he cannot! Nobody can do it, and it is good that nobody can do it, because if others can do it then they can undo it too. And if your freedom can be given by others it won't be much of a freedom; it will be another kind of bondage.

Freedom has to be achieved by your own efforts. Nobody can give it to you; hence nobody can take it away from you. It is absolutely yours.

Buddha says: IT IS YOU WHO MUST MAKE THE EFFORT. THE MASTERS ONLY POINT THE WAY.

BUT IF YOU MEDITATE
AND FOLLOW THE LAW
YOU WILL FREE YOURSELF FROM DESIRE.

Just do two things: meditate, watch your thought processes; become just a spectator of your mind. That is meditation, becoming a witness. And second: follow the law, follow the natural course. Don't be unnatural, don't try to fight with nature -- stop being a fighter. Learn how to relax with nature, learn to let go. Flow with nature, allow nature to possess you totally. By "nature" he means dhamma, tao, the ultimate nature of things, the universal law.

Do these two things, and you will free yourself from desire and desire will disappear. Meditate and let go. This is the path, the only path... and desire disappears on its own accord.

It is desire that keeps you in bondage, that is the cause of misery. And because of desire you have to do so many stupid things; you have to behave like a fool. Running after money is foolish, running after power is foolish. You are making a fool of yourself, but you never become aware of it because others are also doing the same. Because the majority is doing the same nobody takes note of it; otherwise you would be thought to be mad.

I know rich people who have so much that they don't know what to do with it, but still they go on and on. They have forgotten how to stop, as if their minds don't have any brakes, only accelerators. So they go on accelerating; they don't know how to stop. Now there is no point in earning more money because they have all that money can purchase. They have more money than their next ten generations will need -- but they can't live. From morning to night they are possessed with the mania, with that madness of earning more and more and more.

If you ask them why, they can't answer. And it is not thought to be polite to ask such embarrassing questions!

Just watch: your desires make you stupid, they dull your intelligence. They make you behave like buffoons.

Mrs. Nusbaum told her husband that he always looked shabby and that he should buy some new clothes. At lunchtime Mr. Nusbaum noticed that there was a sale at a shoe store so he bought some new shoes. When he came home he said expectantly, "What do you think, Becky?"

"I don't see anything," she said.

So he went to the bathroom and took off everything except his new shoes and then came out again. "So?" he said.

"So," she replied, "it looks the same to me!"

"No, look! It is pointing to my shoes."

"Hmm! Then better you should buy a new hat!"

Desire makes a fool of everybody. But because everybody else is also in the same boat you never become aware of it. And if, once in a while, a Buddha appears in your boat, you throw him out of the boat because he becomes a disturbance, a nuisance. He starts telling you that "This is nonsense! This is stupidity!" He is intolerable.

It is a very strange phenomenon that the real benefactors of humanity look dangerous and the really dangerous people -- who go on poisoning your minds and your beings -- appear to be benefactors. The politicians and the priests and the pundits, these are the poisoners; but they are great leaders, great guides. They guide you -- they guide you into bigger and bigger ditches, they guide you into more and more darkness! You can look at the world and you will be convinced of the fact.

Whenever a buddha appears you are very much annoyed by him, by his presence. because he starts talking about light. He starts talking about opening your inner eyes. He starts talking about your subjectivity, your consciousness. And these are things you have not heard about. These are things you are not interested in, because nobody else seems to be interested in them. You are interested in money, and a buddha talks about meditation.

Sometimes people come to me and they say, "If we meditate, will we become wealthy?"

And there are frauds who say "Yes." Maharishi Mahesh Yogi says to people, "If you meditate you will become wealthy, you will become rich -- because a meditator attracts money."

No wonder he has such a great appeal in America, because who would not like to sit for just fifteen minutes in the morning and in the evening and attract money? A magic secret to become more rich, more powerful -- you can become the president, the prime minister, just by doing Transcendental Meditation, morning and evening. Twenty or thirty minutes does not seem to be a wastage; it seems to be worth it.

People come to me too, to ask, "Will it help us to become rich, to become more powerful?" Even if you become interested in meditation you become interested for wrong reasons. Your meditation is also a wrong meditation, not a right meditation.

If you become interested in samadhi, you ask, "What will be the gain? What we will get out of it? What kind of paradise will become available to those who have attained to samadhi?"

And there are religions which go on giving you ideas about paradise, that you will have this and you will have that -- rivers of wine, beautiful women, golden trees, paths studded with diamonds and emeralds. All that you desire, they are ready to provide you. And then you become interested in samadhi. That is a wrong samadhi. That is not a right approach towards religion.

Buddha is right. He says, "YOU will not be there, your mind will not be there. None of your desires will be fulfilled. All your desires will evaporate, disappear. There is no way to say anything to you about that ultimate state because you are bound to misunderstand it. It will be discontinuous with you. You will cease, totally cease, and there will be a totally new kind of life about which nothing can be said in your language, in the language that you can understand."

Those who followed Buddha must have been really courageous people, people with guts. It has always been so and it will always be so.

Those who are with me are courageous people, people who are ready to risk all: their desires, their egos, their very existence. But if you can risk all, all becomes available to you.

Just two small things: meditation and let-go. Remember these two key words: meditation and surrender. Meditation will take you in, and surrender will take you into the whole. And this is the whole of religion. Within these two words Buddha has condensed the whole essence of religion.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 7

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Perfection is death

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WILL YOU PLEASE TALK ABOUT THE DESIRE TO HELP PEOPLE, ITS DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES TO OTHER FORMS OF DESIRE?

Veet Aikagro, desire is desire; there is no difference at all. Whether you want to help people or you want to harm people, the nature of desire remains the same.

A buddha does not desire to help people. He helps people, but there is no desire in it; it is spontaneous. It is just the fragrance of a flower that has bloomed. The flower is not desiring that the fragrance should be released, should reach to the winds, to people. Whether it reaches or not is not the concern of the flower at all. If it reaches, that is accidental; if it does not reach, that too is accidental. The flower is spontaneously releasing its fragrance.

The sun rises: there is no desire to wake up people, no desire to open the flowers, no desire to help the birds to sing. It all happens on its own accord.

A buddha helps not because he desires to help; compassion is his nature. Every meditator becomes compassionate, but not a servant of the people. The servants of the people are mischievous; the world has suffered too much from these servants -- because it is desire masquerading as compassion. And desire can never be compassionate; desire is always exploitation.

Now they will exploit in the name of compassion; they will exploit with beautiful names.

They will talk about service to humanity and they will talk about brotherhood and they will talk about religion and God and truth. And all their beautiful talk will bring only more and more wars, more and more bloodshed -- more and more people will be crucified, burned alive.

That's what has been happening up to now. And if you don't bring a new understanding to the world, it is going to continue the same way.

So two things to be remembered. One: to desire is the same, whether you desire to help or to harm. It is not a question of the object of desire; the question is of the NATURE of desire. The nature of desire leads you into the future; it brings the tomorrow in. And with the tomorrow come all the tensions, all the anxieties, "whether I am going to make it or not, whether I am going to succeed or not."

The fear of failure and the ambition to succeed will be there, whether you desire money or you desire victory in the world or you desire to be compassionate to people or you desire to bring salvation to people. It is all the same game, only names change. This is very fundamental to understand.

A man asked Buddha, "I would like to help people. Instruct me."

Buddha looked at him and became very sad. The man was puzzled, confused. He said, "Why have you become sad? Have I said anything wrong?"

Buddha said, "How can you help people? You have not even helped yourself! You will only harm them in the name of help."

First bring the light within your being. Let the flame be enkindled in your consciousness... and then you will never ask this question. Then, naturally, your very presence and whatsoever you do will be of great help.

Aikagro, desire is desire: there is neither material desire nor spiritual desire. It is an ego trip, helping people, and you become holier than others, and you become wiser than others -- you know and they don't know. You want to help because you have arrived and they are all ignorant people stumbling in darkness, and you want to become a light for them. You want to become a master and you want to reduce them into disciples.

If this desire is there, then this desire is not going to help them -- it is not going to help you either. It will do a double harm; it is a double-edged sword. It will cut others, it will cut you too. It is destructive, it can't be creative.

Then there is another kind of help which is not out of desire, which is not out of any ego projection. That kind of help, that kind of compassion, happens only at the ultimate peak of meditation, never before it. When the spring has come to your consciousness, when you are all flowers inside, fragrance starts reaching to others. You need not desire -- in fact you can't help it. Even if you want to prevent it you can't prevent it. It is inevitable -- it will reach to others. It will become a light in their life, it will become a herald of new beginnings, not because you are desiring it but because you are transformed.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I WANT TO BE A SANNYASIN, BUT I DON'T WANT TO WEAR ORANGE OR A
MALA AND I DON'T WANT TO CHANGE MY NAME. CAN I BE A SANNYASIN
TOO?

Rupesh, then why bother? Then believe that you are a sannyasin. Who can prevent you from believing? You can believe anything!

It happened in Baghdad:

The caliph of Baghdad was very angry at a man who was brought to his court. The man was declaring that he is a new prophet, the new messiah. God has sent him after Mohammed, because now fourteen centuries have passed and the message of Mohammed has become old. A new dispensation is needed; "hence he has sent me to deliver the message."

Mohammedans can't tolerate such things! The caliph said, "You come to your senses, otherwise you will be in trouble!"

And he ordered that this man should be whipped, put into jail -- no food, no water for seven days, and beaten as much as possible. "Don't allow him any sleep, any rest."

For seven days the man was tortured. Then the caliph came to the jail. The man was chained to a pillar; he was looking very pale, tired, his whole body swollen, bloody. He had not even been given water, no food, no sleep, and continuous beating.

The caliph asked him, "What do you think now?"

He said, "What do I think now? I am more convinced than ever that I am the messiah, because when I was coming, God said to me, 'Listen! My messengers have always been treated very badly; Jesus was crucified, Mohammed was continuously hunted by murderers, Socrates was poisoned, Mansoor was killed. So, many tortures will happen to you.' So I am grateful," the man said to the caliph, "that you have proved to my heart's content that I am the prophet!"

At that moment a man who was chained to another pillar started laughing loudly.

The caliph asked, "Why are you laughing?"

The man said, "This man is simply lying -- because I am God myself and I have not sent this man at all!"

You can believe anything! Nobody can disturb your belief; even disturbances can become proofs that you are right. But why bother?

If you can't even change the color of your clothes, will you be able to change your soul? If you can't even change your name, which is just a fiction.... All names are fictions: you come into the world without names and then names are given to you. If you are so identified, Rupesh, with your name, how are you going to change your inner world, your identity with the body, with the mind? If you cannot drop the identity with a fictitious name, the body is too real, the mind is too real; it will be impossible for you to change that.

A poor man came home and asked his wife, "Why don't we ever have blintzes?"

"Well," replied the wife, "blintzes are expensive. They require cheese."

"Could you not leave out the cheese?"

"Maybe," she said, "but they still require eggs."

"So leave out the eggs."

"Yes," she said, "but they require butter and cinnamon and sugar."

"So leave them out," he said.

Sometime later she served him some flat cakes made practically from flour and water.

Taking a taste he said, "I don't see what rich people like about blintzes."

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I WANTED TO ASK YOU A QUESTION THE OTHER DAY, BUT WITHOUT MY ASKING YOU ANSWERED IT. HOW DO YOU MANAGE SUCH MIRACLES?

Suriyo, if you are looking for miracles you will find them aplenty -- but miracles don't happen. The universal law always remains the same; there are no exceptions to it. But there is a stupid desire in almost everybody for miracles. We have not yet outgrown the days of magic. Only in the history books do they say that the days of magic are over. Religion was born out of magic, philosophy was born out of religion, science was born out of philosophy. But these are only words. In fact, there are millions of people who still live in the world of magic, who are childish in their approach towards reality. So they will jump on anything.

It must have been just a coincidence. Now there are three thousand people here and everybody has questions. Three thousand people must be having at least thirty thousand questions! And I go on speaking year in and year out. Just leave a little space for coincidences!

An old farmer had three daughters. When the oldest girl married she moved to Twin Cities, Minnesota, and soon gave birth to a beautiful set of twin boys. Her sister married shortly thereafter, and she and her husband took up residence in Three Rivers, Ontario. Pretty soon she gave birth to triplets. The youngest sister got herself engaged, but after almost a year she still refused to set the date for the wedding.

Her father grew concerned and finally demanded that she stop procrastinating and set the date. "If you love that boy, you will marry him this spring or you won't marry him at all!" "But Pa," she wailed, "I really do love Fred, but he keeps talking about moving to the Thousand Islands!"

Suriyo, it was just a coincidence that you had the question and I talked about it. I was not aware of your question -- I was not even aware that you are here! It is so difficult to remember sannyasins now -- one hundred thousand sannyasins! If I try to remember them all, I will go crazy! I somehow manage.... Mukta goes on prompting me by the side every evening, who is coming... and then still I sometimes make a mess out of it. She says, "He has just come," and I ask him, "When are you leaving?" Or somebody is leaving and I ask him, "When have you come?"

So what miracle?

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE BEEN PRAYING FOR YEARS, BUT NONE OF MY PRAYERS HAS BEEN ANSWERED. WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME AND WITH MY PRAYERS?

Govind, prayer simply means gratitude, thankfulness. It is not a demand, it is not a desire. And if you desire anything, then it is not prayer. Then don't call it a prayer. And that's what you must have been doing: desiring something, asking God, "Do this, do that for me." And because he is not doing it, you are becoming frustrated. And rather than thinking that something is fundamentally wrong in the very idea of prayer that you are carrying in you, you may be even suspecting whether God exists or not.

Prayer is not a demand on God, it is not a desire for something. If it is, then it will never

reach to him. Desires are heavy things. They gravitate towards the earth, they can't fly into the sky.

When you have a pure gratitude, when you are not asking anything but simply feeling thankful for all that he has already done for you... and he has done more than you are worthy of, he has done more than you deserve. Just look at what he has done for you! He has given you life and love and joy. He has given you a tremendous sensitivity for beauty. He has given you awareness. He has given you the possibility of becoming a buddha. What more do you want?

Feel thankful, and then prayers have wings, they can fly; they reach to the ultimate. Then the earth cannot pull them downwards. Then they start rising, soaring upwards, they levitate. With desire the prayer gravitates downwards; it cannot levitate.

But millions of people go on praying with this wrong attitude: they pray only when they need something.

The Texan was on his knees in church giving thanks for all his blessings. "Of course," he added, "I am grateful for my six houses, although I could use two or three more. Now, I am grateful for my Rolls and six Cadillacs, but I could use a couple more yachts to add to my collection. And I know I should be grateful for the banks I own, but could you see your way clear to give me five more to make it an even dozen?"

A little man kneeled next to him and talked up to God: "I need bread and a job -- I would be so grateful."

The Texan whipped out a hundred-dollar bill and handed it to the man. "Will you please stop bothering God with that small stuff?"

But whether the stuff is small or big, whether you are asking for bread or for banks, it is the same, exactly the same! Don't ask for anything. Thank him for all that he has already done. Bow down! Words are not needed in thankfulness. Just bow down in deep gratitude, in silence.

A real prayer is nonverbal; words are inadequate. They are made for other things, not for prayer. Yes, once in a while you may find tears rolling down from your eyes, and they are far more significant than all the words you could use. Yes, once in a while you would like to dance like a Baul mystic -- for no reason at all, for the sheer joy of being! That dance will be prayer. Yes, once in a while you may like to play on the flute. And believe me, God loves music! He is tired of your words! Sing, dance, cry, or just be silent.

And you will be surprised: great light starts showering on you. You are bathed in bliss, in benediction.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
HAVING HAD THE ADVENTURE OF LOOKING THROUGH ANCIENT SCRIPTURES OF YOURS, I HAVE NOTICED THAT FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS YOU HAVE KEPT ON REPEATING THIS LEGEND: "THERE ARE FOUR TIMES MORE FEMALE DISCIPLES THAN MALE DISCIPLES. THE SAME WAS THE CASE WITH BUDDHA, THE SAME WITH ME TOO."
ABOUT BUDDHA I DON'T KNOW -- I WAS NOT THERE -- BUT ABOUT YOU, AFTER DOCUMENTED AND METICULOUS RESEARCH, I AM HAPPY TO INFORM

YOU THAT YOU HAVE FIFTY-TWO THOUSAND, THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN FEMALE DISCIPLE AND FIFTY-THREE THOUSAND, NINE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIX MALE DISCIPLES.

AS THE OLD BOB DYLAN USED TO SAY: "THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING" -- FORTUNATELY! WOULD YOU PLEASE SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THIS? A DISCIPLE DOES NOT LIVE ON LEGEND ONLY.

Sarjano, you will have to do a little more meticulous research. Just look into those fifty-three thousand, nine hundred and forty-six male disciples... how many of them are really male? And then you will understand that my legend is still exactly true; it can't be otherwise. Buddhas don't lie! If facts don't fit with the legend, the facts have to be changed!

To be male or to be female is more a question of psychology than of physiology. One may be a male physiologically and may not be a male psychologically, and vice versa. There are aggressive women -- and unfortunately they are growing in the world -- very aggressive women. The whole Women's Liberation movement is rooted in these aggressive women's minds. When a woman is aggressive she is not womanly.

Joan of Arc is not a woman and Jesus Christ is a woman. Joan of Arc psychologically is a man; basically her approach is that of aggression. Jesus Christ is not aggressive at all. He says: If somebody hits you on one cheek, turn the other. Give him the other cheek, too. That is psychological nonaggressiveness. Jesus says: Resist not evil. Even evil has not to be resisted! Nonresistance is the essence of feminine grace.

Remember that if a man is totally receptive, physically he remains a man but his interiority becomes more a womb. And only such men whose interiority becomes feminine are capable of receiving God. To be receptive, totally receptive, you will need to learn how to be a woman. Each seeker of truth has to learn to be a woman.

Science is male, religion is female. Science is an effort to conquer nature; religion is a let-go, dissolving oneself into nature. The woman knows how to melt, how to become one. And each seeker of truth has to know how to dissolve into nature, how to become one with nature, how to go with the flow, without resisting, without fighting. And then you will see: the proportion will always be the same.

Here also you will see that change happening. Many women have reported to me, complained that, "What is happening here to men? They are becoming more and more feminine!" That is true -- that is bound to happen. As you become more and more meditative, your energies become nonaggressive. Your violence disappears; love arises. You are no longer interested in dominating; instead, you become more and more intrigued with the art of surrendering. That's what makes a feminine psychology.

To understand feminine psychology is to understand religious psychology. The effort has not yet been made, and whatsoever exists in the name of psychology is male psychology. That's why they go on studying rats, and through rats they go on concluding about man.

If you want to study the feminine psychology, then the best examples will be the mystics -- the purest examples will be the mystics. Then you will have to learn about Basho, Rinzai, Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu. You will have to learn about these people, because only through their understanding will you be able to understand the peak, the highest crescendo of feminine expression.

Because the woman has been dominated for centuries, religion has disappeared from the earth. If religion comes back, the woman will again gain respect. And because the woman has been dominated, tortured and reduced to a nonentity, she has become ugly. Whenever your

nature is not allowed to go according to its inner needs it turns sour, it becomes poisoned; it becomes crippled, paralyzed -- it becomes perverted. The woman that you find in the world is not a true woman either, because she has been corrupted for centuries.

And when the woman is corrupted, man cannot remain natural either, because after all, the woman gives birth to the man. If she is not natural, her children will not be natural. If she is not natural -- she is going to mother the child, male or female -- those children naturally will be affected by the mother.

Woman certainly needs a great liberation, but what is happening in the name of liberation is stupid. It is imitation, it is not liberation.

Here there are many women who have been in the Liberation movement, and when for the first time they come here they are very aggressive. And I can understand their aggression: centuries and centuries of domination have made them violent. It is a simple revenge. They have become insane, and nobody is responsible except man. But slowly slowly, they soften, they become graceful; their aggressiveness disappears. They become, for the first time, feminine.

Real liberation will make the woman authentically a woman, not an imitation of man. Right now that's what is happening: women are trying to be just like men. If men smoke cigarettes then the woman has to smoke cigarettes. If they wear pants then the woman has to wear pants. If they do a certain thing then the woman has to do that. She is just becoming a second-rate man.

This is not liberation, this is a far deeper slavery -- far deeper because the first slavery was imposed by men; this second slavery is deeper because it is created by the women themselves. And when somebody else imposes a slavery on you, you can rebel against it, but if you impose a slavery on yourself in the name of liberation, there is no possibility of rebellion ever.

I would like the woman to become really a woman, because much depends on her. She is far more important than man because she carries in her womb both the woman and the man, and she mothers both, the boy and the girl; she nourishes both. If she is poisoned then her milk is poisoned, then her ways of bringing up children are poisoned.

If the woman is not free to be really a woman, man will never be free to be really a man either. The freedom of woman is a must for the freedom of man; it is more fundamental than man's freedom.

And if the woman is a slave -- as she has been for centuries -- she will make a slave of man too, in very subtle ways; her ways are subtle. She will not fight with you directly; her fight will be indirect, it will be feminine. She will cry and weep. She will not hit you, she will hit herself, and through hitting herself, through crying and weeping, through using these Gandhian methods, she will dominate you.

Even the strongest man becomes henpecked. A very thin, weak woman can dominate a very strong man simply by using Gandhian methods. Gandhi is not the inventor of those methods; they have been used for centuries by women. He simply rediscovered them and used them politically. The woman has been using them for centuries, but only in a family context.

The woman needs total freedom so that she can give freedom to man too.

This is one of the fundamentals to be remembered: if you make somebody a slave you will be reduced to slavery ultimately, finally; you can't remain free. If you want to remain free, give freedom to others; that's the only way to be free.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CANNOT ONE EVER FIND A PERFECT PARTNER IN MARRIAGE?

Sagaro, perfect people don't exist. And perfect people, if they existed, would be very boring. It is imperfection that keeps life interesting. Just think of a perfect husband, a perfect wife: they will be utterly bored!

Bertrand Russell is reported to have said: I don't want to go to heaven, for the simple reason that there will be sages and sages, all perfect. Heaven is bound to be very boring.

Just think of all perfect people -- what life can there be? Bertrand Russell is right: in hell there is much more life than in heaven. Heaven will certainly be dull and dead.

Perfection is death; perfection is not found in the world. The world lives through imperfection, because in imperfection there is growth, evolution. Perfection means you have come to a dead end; now there is no way to go further ahead. You are stuck.

You ask me, "Cannot one ever find a perfect partner in marriage?" Very difficult, almost impossible!

I have heard about a man who searched his whole life for a perfect woman, and naturally he had to die a bachelor. When he was dying, somebody asked him, "Your whole life you were searching for a perfect wife. Could you not find a single woman who was perfect?"

He said, "Who said that I didn't find her? Many times I came across a perfect woman."

Then the questioner asked, "Then what happened? Why didn't you get married?"

He said, "Because she was also looking for a perfect husband!"

In the first place, to find one person who is perfect is very difficult -- and you are trying to find two persons. Impossible! It has not happened up to now; it can't happen.

And what will make a perfect marriage? If the woman is truly a woman and the man is truly a man, there is bound to be some tension, and that tension is beautiful. In fact, that's what brings beauty to marriage. A little conflict is natural; without that conflict there will be no salt. Your food will be without salt -- it will not taste good. There will be no spice in your life. If the woman is really a woman, the man a real man, then they will be polar opposites -- and that is their attraction.

Yes, once in a while they will come close and that closeness will bring great joy, and then they will fall away again. And this will be a constant process of coming together and going away again. Each time they go away they will fight, because that's how they can go away from each other.

Fighting is nothing but a device. If you understand things, fighting is a device for separation. And each separation is beautiful because it again gives you an opportunity for a mini-honeymoon. Then you can meet again. Fighting and then persuading each other, fighting and then making things okay again, is beautiful. If there is no fight, those two persons will not be real persons.

It was the night before the wedding.

"Honey," the young man said, "I have a confession to make. If you change your mind about marrying me it is alright, but you've got to know -- I am a sadist."

"Ah baby!" cried the girl. "Am I glad you told me! I have been keeping it from you -- I'm a masochist!"

... Now this is a perfect marriage: marriage between a sadist and a masochist. You can't improve upon it.

So the two got married and went away on their honeymoon. That evening at the hotel, the eager bride threw off her clothes, fell on the bed and in a throaty voice said, "Beat me! Beat me!"

The groom stood over her, crossed his arms and replied, "Hope!"

He is a REAL sadist, because if he beats her he is not torturing her, he is simply giving her joy: she wanted to be beaten and he beats her. Instead he says, "Hope!" and just stands there with crossed hands... so even this perfect marriage failed!

I have never heard about any perfect marriage. They say perfect marriages are made in heaven. Nobody comes back from there so maybe it is true, but what kind of marriage will those perfect marriages be? There will be no tension, there will be no individuality in the man or in the woman. They will never collide, they will never fight. They will be too sweet to each other.

And too much sweetness brings diabetes!

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS THE REASON FOR TALKING SO MUCH IN FAVOR OF THE WOMEN HERE
BECAUSE YOU MAY ALSO BE A LITTLE AFRAID OF THEM TOO?

Anand Toshen, it is true! Even Buddha was afraid, so this is nothing new. For ten years continuously he refused women. He would not accept them as his disciples, he would not initiate them -- for ten years continuously. Thousands of women wanted to be initiated as his sannyasins and he would say no. He was very adamant about it. Finally he had to relax for a certain reason, out of courtesy.

When he was born, his mother died immediately after his birth and he was brought up by a stepmother. And the stepmother had served him so much that when his stepmother came and asked to be initiated as a sannyasin he could not refuse -- just out of courtesy. She was the most valuable woman in his life; without her he would not have been alive at all. He could not say no to her. And because he said yes to her then the doors were opened. Then other women came and then he could not say no to anybody else.

But one thing he said: "My religion was going to last for five thousand years; now it will last for only five hundred years, because these women are going to disturb the whole thing."

I am not that much afraid! In fact, my first disciples, the first people I initiated, were women -- just to put accounts right! Buddha was too adamant, and it does not look good.

But, Toshen, there is a truth in it....

Murphy's maxim: You can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool your own woman.

That is impossible, she is bound to find out. Nobody can befool a woman for the simple reason that she does not function through logic; she functions through love, through the heart. Her process is illogical; she simply jumps to the conclusions. She cannot argue, but she immediately arrives at the conclusions. Her process is like a quantum leap: she immediately

understands, she can see through and through. The more you try to hide from her, the simpler it is for her to find it out.

Women are powerful people, not in the muscular sense but as far as their resistance is concerned, as far as their life energy is concerned, as far as their tolerance is concerned. And I am bound to be a little afraid because my whole work depends on them.

This is the first time that a commune is being run by women -- the first time in the whole history of man. I have given more power to women knowingly, because my understanding is that their functioning is graceful, insightful, loving, compassionate. It is not rude. And when I have made them the pillars of my temple, certainly I cannot speak against them!

So whatsoever I say about women, listen very cautiously! They are in many ways more powerful than men. Modern research says they are more powerful sexually. And if they are more powerful sexually, then as a corollary, remember -- spiritually they are bound to be more powerful, because it is sex energy that becomes transformed into spiritual energy.

Just the other day I was telling you: man's orgasm is local, woman's orgasm is total. Her whole body is involved in it; each fiber of her being pulsates with joy. And man became so much afraid of her joy that he has repressed, for centuries, the orgasmic qualities of women. And I can understand why he became so afraid -- because when the woman REALLY goes into orgasm she will scream, she will shout, she will go into a kind of LATIHAN. She will start saying sounds, words -- meaningless, gibberish, what Christian mystics call glossolalia.

There is a certain Christian sect which goes into an orgasmic state; it is a kind of meditation, deep meditation. I have used glossolalia on many of my sannyasins. I had to stop it, because three thousand persons going into glossolalia would disturb the whole of Poona! And neighbors started complaining to the police. But in old camps I used the method very much; it is tremendously powerful.

You simply become relaxed, in a state of let-go. You start swaying, moving. And then you allow whatsoever comes to your mind, you start saying it -- meaningless words or sounds or anything. And soon you are possessed by it. Christian mystics say it is God speaking through you. It's exactly so. Sufis call it gibberish.

Gibberish comes from the name of a Sufi mystic, Jabbar. Jabbar used it for the first time in Sufi tradition. Just as I go on speaking every day, he also used to speak -- but in gibberish! Sometimes I think that when you get tired of words -- because I am never going to be tired! -- when you say, "Beloved Master, enough is enough!" then I will start gibberish. Then I will simply sit here and say anything. You can make any sense out of it; it will be Greek, Latin, Arabic, Chinese, Sanskrit, any language you want to make out of it. The meaning you give to it will depend on you.

Jabbar helped many people, because he would go into such orgasmic joy when he would say these things that his disciples would also start. And then there would be chaos! It is because of his name in the word 'gibberish' that you still remember Jabbar, not knowingly. The English word 'gibberish' has come from Jabbar.

If a woman really goes into orgasmic joy, she will start saying things which will not be meaningful. Sheer joy, utterances of joy, like Alleluia! It does not mean anything; meaning is left far behind. It has a tremendous intensity and passion in it.

Man became afraid, because the whole neighborhood would know that you are making love to your woman. And police would come and dogs would start barking, and all kinds of things would happen! And people used to live in joint families. In one house there would be a hundred or more people -- and one woman going into orgasmic joy would create such chaos!

And more difficulties were ahead.... When a woman goes into orgasmic joy she has the

capacity of multiple orgasms, which man is incapable of fulfilling. Man can have only one orgasm and the woman can have multiple orgasms -- twelve, fifteen, twenty. Then how is the man going to satisfy her? Either he will feel defeated, ashamed, poor, humiliated, or he will have to call his friends! And that too was against his ego.

Sheila and George were spending the first night of their honeymoon in a quaint medieval town in France. Sheila suggested coyly that they make love every time the old watchman rang his hourly bell. George smiled in delight at this prospect, but four rings later he pretended he had to go out for cigarettes and staggered off to the watchman's tower.

"Listen, old man," he wheezed, "do me a favor and for the rest of the night ring that bell at two-hour intervals instead of hourly. Here, I will give you some money."

"I would be happy to oblige," said the watchman, "but I cannot. A beautiful young lady has already bribed me to ring the bell every half hour."

It is because of that fear that man has repressed all of woman's orgasmic capacities. Millions of women have lived and died without knowing that they have the capacity to experience orgasm. And without knowing that you can have great orgasmic explosions, you will not be able to understand anything of spirituality; it will be almost impossible for you. The woman is more powerful sexually. It is because of her greater power that she has been repressed; it is out of fear that man has repressed her.

You are right, Toshen, I am a little afraid -- knowing perfectly well that I am doing something which has never been done before. I have to move very cautiously. It is a new experiment, but great possibilities will be released out of this experiment. If this experiment succeeds on a small scale it can succeed on a bigger scale too.

My own vision is that the coming age will be the age of the woman. Man has tried for five thousand years and has failed. Now a chance has to be given to the woman. Now she should be given all the reins of power. She should be given an opportunity to allow her feminine energies to function.

Man has utterly failed. In three thousand years, five thousand wars -- this is man's record. Man has simply butchered, killed, murdered; he has lived as if only for war. There are a few days in between two wars which we call days of peace. They are not days of peace; they are only days of preparing for the new war. Yes, a few years are needed to prepare... and again the war, again we go on killing each other. It is enough! Man has been given enough chances. Now feminine energies have to be released.

My commune is going to be rooted in feminine energy, in the energies of the mother. To me God is more a "she" than a "he." "He" is poorer; it can't include "she."

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE YOU SO MUCH AGAINST CLEVERNESS? DOES IT NOT PAY IN LIFE TO BE CLEVER?

Ageha, cleverness is only a beautiful name for cunningness. Hence I am against it. I am not against being intelligent, but an intelligent person need not be clever. It is only the unintelligent person who has to be clever; because he is missing intelligence he has to replace it with something else.

Cleverness is plastic intelligence, cultivated intelligence. It is a poor substitute. And I

know in life -- at least in the short range -- it pays, but never in the long range. And the wise person has to think of the long range. You can be cunning, and for the moment it may pay, but sooner or later you will have to pay for it.

You are sowing seeds which are wrong and you will have to reap... or is it "reap the crop"? You can't avoid the consequences; the consequences are bound to come.

Homer and his pretty wife were about to check out of the hotel when Homer expostulated over the amount of the bill. The hotel manager told him that was the normal rate for a double room with bath and TV.

Homer said they did not use the TV.

"I am sorry, sir," said the manager. "It was there for you to use if you had wanted it."

"Okay," said Homer, "but in that case I am going to charge you for making love to my beautiful wife."

The manager denied it, and Homer said, "That's okay. She was there for you to use if you wanted to."

The manager was so flustered he reduced Homer's bill and Homer decided to try it again the next time they went on a trip.

"Sir, that is our normal rate," said the young clerk.

"But we did not use the TV."

"I am sorry, but it was there for you to use if you wanted to."

"In that case, I will have to charge you for making love to my beautiful wife."

To Homer's chagrin the young man stammered, "Okay, okay, I will pay you. But keep your voice down, will you? I am new at this hotel and you are apt to get me fired."

Cunningness may pay in the short range, but sooner or later you will be caught in your own net. You will fall in the ditch you have dug for others. Beware of it!

I am not against being intelligent -- I am all for being intelligent -- but intelligence is a totally different quality. Intelligence is of the heart and cleverness is of the mind. Cleverness is a heady thing. Even a computer can be clever but not intelligent.

Be intelligent! But to be intelligent needs great changes in your life, in your life patterns. Intelligence is a by-product of meditateness. If you become silent, if you become innocent, then you will be intelligent. Intelligence means responding to the situation immediately, without any preparation, without the past, without any rehearsal... just responding as a mirror reflects immediately whatsoever confronts it.

When you start reflecting whatsoever life brings in front of you and you act out of the moment, you are intelligent. But if you are clever and cunning you are using your past, your past experiences, and you are responding according to your past experiences. That is not response -- that is reaction. And that can be done by computer. You are not really human when you are bringing your past into the present and acting out of it.

Be wise, be meditative, be intelligent. Avoid being cunning. That is ugly, that is unspiritual, and that reduces you into a machine.

And you are not a machine, you are a man. Whatever can be done by a machine is not worth doing. Do that which only a man can do. Then your glory is great and then you will release great splendor in your life.

Enough for today.