
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

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Chapter #1

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FOR IF IN YOUR RENUNCIATION
YOU ARE RECKLESS AND BREAK YOUR WORD,
IF YOUR PURPOSE WAVERS,
YOU WILL NOT FIND THE LIGHT.

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO
RESOLUTELY, WITH ALL YOUR HEART.
THE TRAVELER WHO HESITATES
ONLY RAISES DUST ON THE ROAD.

IT IS BETTER TO DO NOTHING
THAN TO DO WHAT IS WRONG.
FOR WHATEVER YOU DO, YOU DO TO YOURSELF.

LIKE A BORDER TOWN WELL GUARDED,
GUARD YOURSELF WITHIN AND WITHOUT.
LET NOT A SINGLE MOMENT PASS

LEST YOU FALL INTO DARKNESS.

FEEL SHAME ONLY WHERE SHAME IS DUE.
FEAR ONLY WHAT IS FEARFUL.
SEE EVIL ONLY IN WHAT IS EVIL.
LEST YOU MISTAKE THE TRUE WAY
AND FALL INTO DARKNESS.

SEE WHAT IS.
SEE WHAT IS NOT.
FOLLOW THE TRUE WAY.
RISE.

Gautama the Buddha has given to the world the most psychological religion. It is incomparable; no other religion even comes close to it. Its heights, its depths, are tremendous. And the reason why Buddha succeeded in giving such a beautiful vision of life is very simple: he did not believe; he inquired, he explored. He did not believe in the tradition, he did not believe in the scriptures, he did not believe in the priests.

This was one of his fundamentals: that unless you know, you don't know. You can borrow knowledge, you can become knowledgeable, well informed, a scholar, a pundit, a professor, but you will not be a seer. Deep down the ignorance will persist and will affect your life. Deep down you will remain the same childish self, immature, ungrounded, uncentered, unintegrated. You will not be an individual, you won't have any authenticity. You will be pseudo, false, phony.

It is a quantum leap into the unknown. When you don't believe in the tradition, when you don't believe in the scriptures, when you don't believe in anything except your own experience, you are going into the unknown all alone. It needs guts, it needs courage. And only a courageous person can be truly religious.

Cowards are there in the churches, in the temples, in the mosques in millions, but they don't create any religious beauty, any religious fragrance in the world. They don't make the world more beautiful, more alive, more sensitive. They don't create anything. They only go on doing formalities, rituals. They themselves are dead and they go on deceiving others; they themselves are deceived.

Borrowed knowledge creates great deception because you start feeling as if you know -- and that "as if" is a big "as if."

Truth liberates, belief binds. Truth liberates because it has to be yours; it has to be an inner experience, an encounter with that which is.

Buddha is a nonbeliever. He is not an atheist like Karl Marx or Friedrich Nietzsche; neither is he a theist like all the priests of all the religions. He is an agnostic. He neither believes nor disbelieves; he is open. That is his great gift to the world: to be open to truth.

Go utterly naked, without any conclusions, without any ideology, any prejudice. Otherwise there is every possibility that you will project your own idea. You will not see that which is, you will see only that which you want to see. You will be creating your own reality which is bound to be false. Reality has not to be invented, it has to be discovered. It is already there. And remember, it is not the reality which is hidden, it is your eyes which are covered with layers of dust.

Buddha gave to the world a nonmetaphysical religion, a psychological religion. He simply helps you to go beyond mind. He helps you to understand the mind because it is only

through understanding that transcendence happens.

But when I say that Buddha has given the most psychological religion to the world, don't misunderstand me. He has not given a psychology; he has given a psychological religion which is a totally different phenomenon. He has not given a psychology like Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Adler, Pavlov, Skinner, etcetera. These people are confined to the mind; they think mind is all. There is nothing beyond the mind, so analyze the mind. If you have found the truth of the mind you have found the truth, according to them. That is beginning with a wrong attitude.

Man is neither the body nor the mind. Man is the awareness within which can look at the body, which can look at the mind, which is capable of witnessing all. You are the witness.

Hence I say, Buddha has not given a psychology. A psychology is a very ordinary phenomenon. It does not bring transformation to your life because it cannot bring any transcendence. At the most it helps you to be a little more adjusted to yourself and to the world that surrounds you, to the society, to the people with whom you have to live. It helps you to become a little more adjusted.

Psychology is basically orthodox; it is not revolutionary, it cannot be. It serves the status quo, it serves the establishment. It keeps you within the boundaries; it does not help you to go beyond the boundaries. It is not in your service. It is controlled by those who are in power -- by the state, by the church, by the society. In a very disguised way it keeps you tethered to the collective mind. It does not help you to become an individual, because to be an individual is to be rebellious, to be an individual is to go on your own, to be an individual is to be a danger to the society. Capitalist, communist, whatsoever the society is -- Hindu, Christian, Mohammedan -- it doesn't matter; the individual is a danger because the individual tries to live out of his own light. He does not follow anybody. He is not a follower, he is not an imitator.

Buddha gives a psychological religion. Religion means he helps you to understand the mind so that you can go beyond it -- not so that you can become adjusted to the collective but so that you can rise to the heights of your individuality, to the peaks of your destiny.

Psychology believes that man lacks meaning in his life and meaning can come only through therapy. Psychology in essence means meaning through therapy. And religion is just the opposite; religion means therapy through meaning. Religion gives you meaning first and then automatically the meaning becomes a healing force, it becomes therapeutic.

Buddha says again and again that, "I am a healer," that "I am a physician," that "My function is not that of a philosopher but that of a physician. I help people to become healthier, to become whole." And what is his process? His process is to impart meaning to your life. That too he does in a profoundly new way; it has never been done before like that. He does not give you an arbitrary meaning because the arbitrary meaning will be seen sooner or later to be arbitrary, and the moment it collapses you will fall into deep darkness. The darkness will be far darker than it was before. Now you have lost meaning. You will feel suicidal; you will not feel life is worth living at all. Even breathing will become hard, difficult. The question will arise: Why? Why should I go on living if there is no meaning?

Buddha does not give you any arbitrary meaning. Hence I say he has no metaphysics. He helps you to discover the intrinsic meaning of your life. He does not give you meaning, but he gives you methods and means to discover the meaning that you are already carrying within yourself like a seed.

Psychologists go on saying: First seek ye the kingdom of Freud, Jung, Adler, Pavlov, Skinner and company, and then all else shall be added unto you. It never happens; it has

never happened yet to a single individual. It can't happen in the very nature of things. Even Freud knows no meaning, lives without meaning, lives deep down in despair. He says that there is no hope for man, that man can never be happy, it is impossible. It must be his own understanding, his own experience of life. He says that at the most we can help man to be less miserable, that's all. What kind of goal is this? -- helping man to be a little less miserable! It is not very appealing.

Man needs blissfulness, not less miserableness. Man needs something positive -- something to live for and something to die for, something so full of worth that even life can be sacrificed to it. But it should not be arbitrary. There are many arbitrary meanings.

Adolf Hitler gave Germany an arbitrary meaning: Live for the Aryan race, live for the pure Nordic blood, because you are born to rule the world. He gave great hope, but it flopped. It was bound to happen. He himself committed suicide; that was almost destined.

Religions go on giving false meanings to your life. They go on talking of the other life, the beyond: "After death there is paradise for those who are virtuous and there is hell for those who are not virtuous." And who is virtuous? The person who follows the priest is the virtuous person. The person who does not follow the tradition, the convention, the person who is not a conformist, is bound for hell.

Yes, out of fear and greed you can give a little meaning to life, but it is so arbitrary, so artificial, that there is not a single individual on the earth who is so stupid that sooner or later he will not see the falsity of it.

And now man has come of age; hence religions are disappearing. There is no possibility in the future for Christianity, for Islam, for Hinduism, for Judaism, to exist. And if they want to exist they will have to change their whole outlook, their very foundations.

But there is every possibility for Buddha and his message to prevail. In fact, his day has come. He came twenty-five centuries ahead of his time. Now is the time, the right time for him. He does not talk of fear, he does not talk of greed, he does not talk of hell and heaven, he does not talk even about God. He is so modern, so contemporary; he belongs to our century. Even we are not so contemporary as he is. He destroys all the old structures. He frees religion from all frozen ideologies. He brings many revolutionary changes in the religious outlook.

First he says there is no need to be knowledgeable; one has to be innocent. It is through innocence that the truth is known, not through knowledge.

A neighbor was saying, "Your cat was making an awful noise last night."

The other replied, "You are right. Ever since she ate the canary, she thinks she can sing."

You can go on eating the scriptures; you will not be able to sing at all. You can know all the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gitas, the Korans, the Bibles, but you will remain as stupid as ever. Of course you will start bragging about your knowledgeability. You will start showing it, you will become an exhibitionist. Even when you don't know anything you will pretend that you know.

Spinster Peabody's proudest possession was Count, her exquisite cat. Unfortunately, he had been missing for two days. When she opened the freezer door, Miss Peabody nearly died of shock. There was Count frozen solid.

She immediately called the priest, who said there still might be a chance to save the poor animal. "Give it two tablespoons of gasoline," he told her.

With trembling hands, Miss Peabody opened Count's mouth and carefully spooned in the priest's strange prescription.

The seconds ticked away and nothing happened. She was about to give up hope when suddenly the cat opened his eyes, let out an ear-piercing screech and shot across the room at a hundred miles per hour, running over the furniture, the walls, even the ceiling. Count kept this up for two minutes and then suddenly stopped dead in his tracks, not moving a muscle.

Miss Peabody called the priest again.

"What do you think happened?" she asked.

"Simple," said the priest. "He ran out of gas."

The priests have all the answers. Ask them anything, any stupid thing. They can't say, "We don't know," that is impossible. The priests have never said that they are ignorant; their whole business depends upon their knowledgeability.

Socrates says: I know only one thing, that I know nothing. That is exactly Buddha's approach too -- and Socrates and Buddha were contemporaries; they have much in common. If Socrates was born in India he would have been called a buddha. He also trusts innocence, the innocence of a child who knows nothing. If you can become a child again, then only the doors of the mysterious can open for you. You can see. The dust on your eyes is nothing but knowledge, information, scripture.

The psychotherapists are called by people "shrinks"; they are! A psychotherapist's whole effort is to reduce you; he is a reductionist. He studies rats, and whatsoever he comes to know about the rats he applies to you. It is so disgusting, so humiliating, so absurd, illogical! He studies the lowest to know the highest.

You can know nothing of the flower by studying the seed, by dissecting the seed, by analyzing the seed. For thousands of years you can go on analyzing the seed; you will never come across the colors of the rose, the lotus, or the fragrance. You will never know what fragrance was hidden in the seed. Analysis cannot yield it to you.

Studying rats and then applying that knowledge to man is simply saying that man is nothing but a kind of animal, a little more complex maybe, but nothing more than that. Reductionism means always bringing things to "nothing but's."

The real understanding of man is only possible not by studying the rats but by studying the buddhas, the christs, the krishnas -- the highest. By studying the peaks you will know exactly who you are, not by the lowest denominator but by the highest manifestation. When you study a buddha, a great longing arises in you to reach to those heights. When you study rats, then there is no longing. In fact, you feel very satisfied whatsoever you are. In fact, you feel greatly contented that you are a little better than the rats, a little more complex, a little more clever. You feel gratified. Religion disappears.

Religion lives in your longing to reach to the peaks, to attain to the ultimate heights, to bring your total potential into manifestation, into actuality. Religion is the science of self-actualization.

If a psychotherapist can be called a "shrink," then a real religious person should be called a "stretch." He stretches you to the ultimate possibilities.

Now the sutras:

FOR IF IN YOUR RENUNCIATION
YOU ARE RECKLESS AND BREAK YOUR WORD,
IF YOUR PURPOSE WAVERS,

YOU WILL NOT FIND THE LIGHT.

Buddha will talk again and again about light and darkness; hence those two words have to be understood. They are metaphors. Buddha has to use metaphors. All the buddhas, all the awakened ones, have to use metaphors. The ordinary language is not enough, is very inadequate. When you start expressing something inner you feel the difficulty. The language has no words for it, or even if the words are there they are too small and the experience is too big. The experience cannot be contained in those words, hence the use of the metaphor.

A metaphor simply means, don't cling to the literal meaning of the word. Understand it as a finger pointing to the moon. Don't cling to the literal meaning; otherwise you will be in difficulty because then you will only misunderstand. A metaphor is a metaphor. It is poetry, it is not prose. You have to be a little poetic, a little imaginative, a little sympathetic to understand it. Literal meaning has been a disaster.

But that's how we always read. Even if we are reading a buddha we try to read him literally. Then light means light and darkness means darkness. That's not so.

Jack was home from college for the holidays. One day he asked his uneducated mother if he could tell her a narrative. His mother, not being used to such big words, asked him the meaning of 'narrative'.

"A narrative is a tale," Jack said.

That night, when going to bed, Jack asked his mother if he might extinguish the light. She wanted to know the meaning of 'extinguish'.

"To put out," Jack said.

A few days later Jack's mother was giving a party at their home, and the cat wandered into the room. Jack's mother raised her voice and said confidently, "Jack, take the cat by the narrative and extinguish him."

Beware of that fallacy.

When Buddha uses the word 'light' he means the state of no-mind, because the state of no-mind is a state of tremendous light, as if thousands of suns have risen simultaneously within your soul. And whenever Buddha says 'darkness' he means the state of mind. Mind is dark; it is a dark night, not even a ray of light. And we all live in the mind, we all live in the dark night, and we have no idea of the dawn because we never go out of the mind. We cling to the mind. Mind is our blindness.

A man has eyes only when he goes beyond mind. Then he starts seeing things as they are. The mind distorts. The mind never allows you to see reality as it is; it projects. It does not allow the whole reality to penetrate to your heart. It allows only two percent; ninety-eight percent is rejected. And this two percent that is allowed in is distorted in a thousand and one ways -- interpreted, colored -- and by the time it reaches you it is no longer real. So you live in a very unreal world. If you live in the mind you live in dreams, you live in sleep.

So whenever Buddha says 'darkness', he means a state of unconsciousness, a mechanical state in which you function but you are not aware what you are doing, in which you move but your movement has no quality of alertness in it. You talk, you listen, you eat, you walk, you go to sleep, but like a zombie, unconscious. This is darkness.

When you start becoming more aware of what you are doing, of what you are thinking, of what you are feeling, when you become more and more aware, more and more light penetrates you. When you are a hundred percent aware you are full of light.

That's exactly the meaning of the word 'enlightened'. The word 'enlightened' is a translation for the word 'buddha'. Buddha means the enlightened one, the awakened one, the aware one. He says: **FOR IF IN YOUR RENUNCIATION YOU ARE RECKLESS AND BREAK YOUR WORD, IF YOUR PURPOSE WAVERS, YOU WILL NOT FIND THE LIGHT.**

Renunciation means sannyas. Renunciation can be of two types. The first type -- the wrong type -- is the renunciation that happens through fear or greed. You have been told that if you renounce the world then you will attain the pleasures of heaven. You have been told if you don't renounce you will suffer eternal pain and hell. Many people become afraid of hell and many people become greedy for heaven, and they renounce the world. This is a wrong renunciation.

Anything that you do out of fear and greed is bound to be wrong because fear and greed are unconscious states. Out of fear you have dreamed about hell, out of fear you have dreamed about heaven. There is no hell, no heaven. These are all your dreams. When you are not dreaming at all, when the sleep has disappeared and you are awake, there is no heaven, no hell. That state Buddha calls "liberation": liberation from greed, liberation from fear.

And if you act out of awareness, if your renunciation happens out of awareness, it is true renunciation because then you really don't do anything, things start happening. You see something is wrong; it drops, it simply drops. You don't have to make any effort. You see the ugliness of anger and anger evaporates; the very seeing becomes the transformation. You understand your desire and the futility of your desire -- that it cannot be fulfilled, that it is unfulfillable, that you are in a vicious circle. Seeing it -- that you are moving in circles -- you jump out. This is also renunciation, but you don't jump out of desire for another desire: to get into heaven, to avoid hell. You are not jumping out of desire; you are only changing one desire for another. You are exchanging worldly desires with unworldly desires, but desire is desire. You can change the object, but the nature of desire remains the same.

This is a great contribution of Buddha to religious consciousness. He says: Don't renounce, let renunciation happen. If it happens on its own accord it has a beauty of its own, it has grace, and you never repent, you never look back. If you renounce, if you make effort, your renunciation will bring sadness to you. And many times you will start thinking whether you have done right or wrong. Many times your mind will waver, many times desire for the renounced will again surround you like a cloud. Many times you will be full of lust and greed and fear. Many times the world will attract you again. That is natural.

Hence Buddha says: **FOR IF IN YOUR RENUNCIATION YOU ARE RECKLESS AND BREAK YOUR WORD, IF YOUR PURPOSE WAVERS, YOU WILL NOT FIND THE LIGHT.**

It can happen only in a wrong kind of renunciation that your purpose wavers, because when you renounce with effort it is always a halfhearted affair. A part of your mind says, "Renounce, because if you don't renounce you will suffer." A part of your mind says, "Don't renounce. Who knows whether there is any life after death or not? And who knows whether renunciation is rewarded or not? Nobody comes back from the other shore to tell the truth. It may be all imagination, it may be all a strategy of the priests. Who knows?"

Doubt is bound to persist, and when doubt is there there is wavering, and when doubt is there you are split. When doubt is there you can never be wholeheartedly into anything; you remain divided. You can never be an individual, indivisible. And the person who renounces for some motive is renouncing through the mind -- and that is impossible. You cannot renounce through the mind.

Mind is the first thing to be renounced -- and you are trying to use mind for renunciation? Mind will poison everything. It will create new desires in you, it will create new greeds, it will create new ambitions, it will create new egos in you. Look at the so-called holy people, the so-called saints and mahatmas. They look more egoistic than anybody else. Their faces look sad, as if they are in great pain, suffering. And their eyes? They are looking at you always with that attitude of "holier-than-thou." They are condemnors; they will call you sinners. They are ready to throw you into hell and hellfire. For themselves they are hoping that they will be in heaven enjoying heavenly pleasures forever and forever.

What kind of renunciation is this? This is a wrong kind of renunciation and you cannot attain to light through it; you will go on falling into deeper and deeper darkness. You have taken the first step in a wrong direction, and the first step is the most important step because the second will follow the first, and so on, so forth. And you will go on farther and farther away from the truth.

Hence I don't tell my sannyasins to renounce, although renunciation happens. Many of my sannyasins write to me, "Beloved Master, you deceived us. We were thinking nothing has to be renounced, and now many things are simply disappearing."

Just the other day there was a letter. One sannyasin has written that his sexual desire has completely disappeared -- and he had tried his whole life to renounce it and he had never succeeded. And here we are not teaching to renounce anything, not even sexual desire, so his letter has a relevance. He says, "You tricked us. I was thinking that I have come here to enjoy my sexual desire for the first time, because the whole life I have been trying to be a monk. Tired of it, utterly a failure in renouncing it, I had come here -- and now it has disappeared!"

This is beautiful, if it has disappeared on its own accord. If you have not dropped it, it won't come back again. If you have dropped it, it is bound to come back again because dropping it simply means repressing it. Dropping does not mean anything else; it simply means you have repressed it forcibly. Sooner or later, in some weaker moment, it will be back again -- and with a vengeance. But if it drops on its own... you have not done anything to drop it, not even a decision; you have not willfully acted on it, it is through understanding. Seeing the futility of it, seeing that it does not fulfill, that it is a kind of a toy... You can remain engaged in it, it keeps you occupied. It keeps you so much occupied that you don't have any time to look inwards. But it never takes you anywhere; you are always the same. It brings no integrity, it brings no joy. The more you know it, the more it becomes a boring phenomenon. The more you know it, the more boredom it brings.

If you really want to enjoy sex, be a monk, be a nun. Then you will enjoy it. Then you will not think of anything else; twenty-four hours you will be enjoying it. In a monastery what else is there to enjoy? Of course it will be just fantasy. Fantasy is personal pornography. Nobody else can see what you are seeing and you can go on giggling and enjoying. You can go on reading the Bible, the Koran, so everybody thinks how religious you are, how pious -- and nobody knows what you are really doing inside.

The so-called religious people are very pornographic; they are bound to be. The more you make an effort to escape from men and women, the more the unfulfilled, the repressed, is bound to become cerebral. It will become a fantasy in your mind, it will capture your imagination. You will dream about it, you will think about it, you will be surrounded by it. You can look into the records of all the monks and the nuns of all the world and you will be surprised: things were happening to them which are not happening to anybody anymore.

In the Middle Ages the nuns were reporting in thousands that the Devil comes and makes love to them. Now what has happened to the Devil? He does not come anymore. The

ordinary devils are enough. But those nuns, they were imagining. And when for years you have been starved, you have willfully tried to do something, the imagination gathers force. A moment comes when you start dreaming with open eyes; you can see the Devil standing there.

And what imagination those nuns had! If you just look into the records you will be surprised. The Devil has a forked penis! It is not an ordinary genital organ -- but forked, so that it can enter both the holes! Now these nuns must have been mad, utterly mad. And false pregnancies were happening... nothing but hot air in the belly, but the belly would go on becoming bigger and bigger. Just fantasy has taken so much grip of the mind, of the body, that the nun thinks she has become pregnant, so she starts accumulating air in the belly. She looks to everybody as if she is pregnant. She walks like a pregnant woman. And of course, what can she do? If the Devil comes, she has to yield. Who knows? -- he may not come again!

And this is not only about one religion; this is the case with all the religions. In India, the scriptures tell so many stories of the great monks, ascetics, doing their penances in the forests. And when they are coming just on the verge of success, beautiful women descend from heaven to distract these poor fellows. They have not done any wrong to anybody and even if they have done wrong, what kind of punishment is this? This is something like reward! Beautiful women come from heaven, goddesses, APSARAS, and they dance naked around them, and they make all kinds of obscene gestures to the poor fellows. Details are given in the scriptures, very detailed descriptions, what they do, how they do, how they seduce the poor fellow. And then he falls from his great heights, becomes an ordinary mortal. Then they don't come anymore. This is nothing but mental masturbation, but this is bound to happen if you repress. This is a wrong kind of renunciation. It has dominated the whole religious scene for ages, it has been very destructive.

The right kind of renunciation is very natural and spontaneous. It is not AGAINST anything. It allows you to watch, see, understand, be more meditative, so that you can bring more understanding to your actions, to your thoughts, to your feelings. Out of that accumulated understanding, things start happening. Then the mind is no more there to waver. Nothing has been repressed so nothing can come back again. Then things simply start disappearing like dewdrops in the early sun. That's the only possibility to find the light.

And remember, even these people who have been teaching repression, they don't call it repression -- they call it willpower. They give it beautiful names. Ugly things can be hidden very easily behind beautiful names. Willpower is nothing but ego power. When you call it willpower it looks beautiful; when you call it ego power you see the ugliness of it.

A religious person is one who has no more use for ego. Ego means violence with yourself. It may be very subtle, it may not look like violence. You may be doing violence to yourself in a very graceful manner. And the priests have been forcing you to do things, but they don't say that they are forcing. They have been conditioning children, hypnotizing whole societies, to do certain things. And once you are hypnotized and conditioned you think YOU are doing it on your own, out of your own freedom. And that is sheer nonsense. A Hindu who has been conditioned for thirty years to be a Hindu cannot do anything out of his own freedom unless he drops all his Hindu nonsense. And the same is the case with the Christian and the Jew and the Jaina and the Mohammedan and the Parsi and the Sikh.

The first step is to drop that which has been forced upon you. It may look almost as if it has not been forced because it has been so long, you have completely forgotten. Thirty years, forty years, fifty years conditioning -- who remembers when it began, how it began? You

were so young, three years old or four years old... and then the teaching starts and it goes on conditioning you. It can condition you for anything, any stupid thing. Everybody else will see the stupidity; only you will not. You will think you are doing something great, something religious, something sacred.

Stalin was giving Mao Zedong instructions in practical communism. "Comrade," he said, "how would you make a cat eat chili pepper?"

"There are two ways," said Mao. "I could force it down him or I could stuff a fish with the pepper and give the fish to the cat."

"Wrong," replied Stalin. "It is not compatible with our ideology. The first method is coercion, the second deception. You know we never coerce or deceive the people."

"Then how would you do it?" asked Mao.

"I would rub the pepper on the cat's tail. When this started to smart, the cat would turn around and lick its tail, thus eating the pepper voluntarily."

This has been done by the priests for centuries. They rub the pepper on your tail, and one day you start licking your tail and you think you are doing it voluntarily.

The first step towards real religion is to drop Christianity, Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Jainism; to drop all ideologies, to unlearn what has been forced upon you -- to be a child again. Then you can start seeing things in their true colors, then you can start seeing things as they are. Children are more aware of the reality than you are. The older you become, the less aware you are because the more you become burdened with experience, knowledge, opinions, ideologies.

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO
RESOLUTELY, WITH ALL YOUR HEART.
THE TRAVELER WHO HESITATES
ONLY RAISES DUST ON THE ROAD.

Buddha says: DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO RESOLUTELY.... But by resolution he does not mean will, as it is ordinarily meant in the dictionaries. Buddha is compelled to use your words, but he gives a new meaning to his words. By 'resolution' he means out of a resolved heart -- not out of willpower but out of a resolved heart. And remember, he emphasizes the word 'heart', not the mind. Willpower is part of the mind. A resolved heart is a heart without problems, a heart which is no longer divided, a heart which has come to a state of stillness, silence. That's what he calls a resolved heart.

DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO RESOLUTELY, WITH ALL YOUR HEART. Remember the emphasis on the heart. Mind can never be one; by its very nature it is many. And the heart is always one; by its very nature it cannot be many. You cannot have many hearts but you can have many minds. Why? -- because the mind lives in doubt and the heart lives in love. The mind lives in doubt and the heart lives in trust. The heart knows how to trust; it is trust that makes it one. When you trust, suddenly you become centered.

Hence the significance of trust. It does not matter whether your trust is in the right person or not. It does not matter whether your trust will be exploited or not. It does not matter whether you will be deceived because of your trust or not. There is every possibility you may be deceived -- the world is full of deceivers. What matters is that you trusted. It is out of your trust that you become integrated, which is far more important than anything else. It is not a question that first you have to be certain whether the person is worthy of trust or not. How

will you be certain? And who will inquire?

It will be the mind, and the mind knows only how to doubt. It will doubt. It will doubt even a man like Christ or Buddha. It can't help.

Judas doubted Jesus. He could not trust -- even a man like Jesus. And Jesus trusted Judas; he could not doubt even a man like Judas. See the point. Who is the gainer? If you superficially look, then it seems Jesus has lost because he is crucified. If he had not trusted Judas he would have saved his life. But that is only a superficial understanding. In fact the loser is Judas, not Jesus. One has to die some day or other, and one cannot die a better death than Jesus. It is his death that brought a revolution into the consciousness of humanity.

If Buddha had also been crucified we would have been far richer. Dying on a bed would not have been of much help. And what difference does it make to Jesus where he dies? But a man like Jesus uses even his death as a situation, as a device. He used it and he used it very skillfully. Socrates could not use his death so skillfully. Maybe it is because of Socrates' death that Jesus has learned a lesson: how to use death. There are foolish people who cannot use their lives usefully, artistically, gracefully, beautifully, and there are people like Jesus who can even use their death. Their death is also a device.

The real loser is Judas, and he understood immediately. When Jesus was crucified he felt so ashamed that he committed suicide the next day. Now, committing suicide is ugly; being crucified has a beauty. It is a sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice, the ultimate offering one can make to God. And Jesus made it. His last words were, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." He surrendered totally: "Let thy kingdom come." He effaced himself totally, he dropped his ego totally: "Thy will be done." He trusted Judas absolutely. He hugged him, he kissed him, he washed his feet. He knew that the man was going to betray him -- and still his trust was total.

So remember, trust does not mean that first you have to inquire, that first you have to make everything certain, guaranteed, and then you trust. That is not trust, that is really doubt: because you have no more possibilities to doubt, hence you trust. If another possibility arises of doubt you will doubt again. Trust is in spite of all the doubts, in spite of what the man is or what the man is going to do. It is of the heart, it is out of love.

When you trust and love with a resolved heart it brings transformation. Then you never hesitate. Hesitation simply keeps you in fragments. Taking a quantum leap, without any hesitation or in spite of all the hesitations, you become integrated. Hesitations disappear; you become one. And to become one is to be liberated -- liberated from your own stupid crowd that exists inside you, liberated from your thoughts and desires and memories, liberated from mind itself.

THE TRAVELER WHO HESITATES ONLY RAISES DUST ON THE ROAD.

IT IS BETTER TO DO NOTHING
THAN TO DO WHAT IS WRONG.
FOR WHATEVER YOU DO, YOU DO TO YOURSELF.

It is better to do nothing... but to do nothing is very difficult. When you think you are not doing anything... that is not what Buddha is saying. To do nothing means to be so still, so silent, that there is no action within or without, no thought even, no desire.

IT IS BETTER TO DO NOTHING -- one will have to be very conscious to do nothing -- THAN TO DO WHAT IS WRONG. The wrong can be done only when you are unconscious. The definition of the wrong and the right according to Buddha is a very different one; it is not

moralistic. He will not say, "This is right and that is wrong." He will not give you a list of Ten Commandments; he has not given any commandments. He gives you rather a criterion so that you can judge in your life what is right, what is wrong. He has not decided it. It can't be decided because life goes on changing. What is wrong one day may be right another day; what is wrong this moment may be right another moment. So you cannot label actions as right or wrong. Situations change, you change, people change. So there is no possibility of giving you a list that says, "Do these things and don't do these things."

All other religions have done that; Buddha has not done that. He gives you a criterion, he gives you an insight. He gives you a touchstone so you can see what is gold and what is not gold. Consciousness is his touchstone. If you are conscious and not doing anything, that is far better than doing something wrong, because doing something wrong means you are unconscious. Doing anything out of unconsciousness is wrong and doing anything, even nothing, out of consciousness, is right.

When the bottle of Scotch broke on the floor, the three little mice lapped it all up. Now they were really blind.

"I'm going to find Muhammad Ali and knock his brains out," said the first one.

The second said, "Just let me at that Idi Amin! I'll give him what's coming to him!"

"You guys do what you want," said the third mouse. "Me, I'm going upstairs and making love to the cat!"

That's what is happening to everybody, because everybody is living in an unconscious state. You are unaware of what you are doing, why you are doing, who you are, why you are, where you are going. Everything seems to be in darkness, and still you go on doing things.

It is better, Buddha says, to do nothing. Be quiet, silent, still, in a state of nondoing, because that is possible only if you bring more and more alertness. And then out of that silence, out of that awareness, out of that nothingness, out of that nondoing, whatsoever arises is good, is virtue.

FOR WHATEVER YOU DO, YOU DO TO YOURSELF. If you harm people, the harm will come back to you. If you love people, the love will come back to you. The world goes on echoing back, reflecting back. The world gives you only that which you have given in the first place to the world.

LIKE A BORDER TOWN WELL GUARDED,
GUARD YOURSELF WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

That's what he calls awareness: Be on guard.

LET NOT A SINGLE MOMENT PASS
LEST YOU FALL INTO DARKNESS.

Not even a single moment should be left unguarded. Each moment you have to be alert, conscious. Walking, walk consciously. Breathing, breathe consciously. Eating, eat consciously. Do whatsoever you are doing, but bring the quality of consciousness into your work. Sitting, sit consciously. Let consciousness become a constant, running underground stream, so you go on doing your usual things, but there is an undercurrent of consciousness. That will make your life religious -- not going to the church, not going to the temple, not praying to some imaginary God, not repeating scriptures.

FEEL SHAME ONLY WHEN SHAME IS DUE.
FEAR ONLY WHAT IS FEARFUL.
SEE EVIL ONLY IN WHAT IS EVIL.
LEST YOU MISTAKE THE TRUE WAY
AND FALL INTO DARKNESS.

Buddha says: FEEL SHAME ONLY WHEN SHAME IS DUE. Don't be bothered what others say. Unless YOUR consciousness says it is shameful there is no need to be worried. Even if the whole world says that what you are doing is shameful, let them say it; you need not be worried about it.

This is a very revolutionary message. Ordinarily you have been told to follow others, to follow the collective, to follow the official religion, to follow whatsoever has been told for centuries. Buddha says it is immaterial what others say. What really matters is that if YOUR consciousness says it is shameful, then drop it. In fact, there will be no need to drop it; it will drop on its own accord. Let your consciousness be decisive in every matter.

FEAR ONLY WHAT IS FEARFUL... and don't be afraid of hell and don't be afraid of punishment after death. These are strategies of the priests to exploit people, to exploit their fear. Everybody is afraid because everybody has become an ego and the ego is always afraid. The ego means you think yourself separate from the whole; then fear arises because you are not separate from the whole. And when you think you are separate, the question arises: How long can you remain separate? Death will come; then what will happen to you?

The ego makes you so selfish, so self-centered, that you forget completely that you belong to the eternal universe. There is no need to fear that you are just a wave in the ocean; you will be here, whether as a wave or not as a wave, but you will be here. Nobody can destroy you. Nothing ever dies and nothing is ever born. The wave arises and disappears. Even before it has arisen it was there and when it has disappeared it is still there. That arising and disappearing is just a momentary phenomenon: something that was unmanifest becomes manifest.

But we are very much afraid, and the fear arises because we have believed, we have been told again and again, hypnotized to believe in the ego. This whole social structure up to now, hitherto, has been propounding an egoistic life attitude. Then fear, then greed, then ambition, are natural. And ego is being taught to every child; his ego is strengthened so that you can make him ambitious. Out of ambition arises politics. Ego is created so that you can make him afraid. Out of fear arises religion -- the so-called religion.

Little Sheldon seemed to be enjoying himself at the zoo with his father. As they were looking at the tigers, however, a troubled look came over the boy's face. His father asked him what was the matter.

"I was just wondering, Daddy. In case a tiger breaks loose and eats you, what number bus do I take home?"

Even small children are poisoned with the idea of the self. Buddha says there is no self, no ego. Deep down you are not separate. You are not an island; you are part of the universal continent. So: FEAR ONLY WHAT IS FEARFUL. SEE EVIL ONLY IN WHAT IS EVIL. Don't believe others; believe only your own eyes, your own insight... LEST YOU MISTAKE THE TRUE WAY AND FALL INTO DARKNESS.

Believing in others' ideas you are going to fall into darkness. They are in darkness and

following them you will go into darkness. If you want to reach to light you will have to travel alone.

SEE WHAT IS.... Such a simple statement, but it contains the very essence of religion.

SEE WHAT IS.
SEE WHAT IS NOT.
FOLLOW THE TRUE WAY.
RISE.

SEE WHAT IS.... That is meditation. Put your mind aside. Face reality directly. Encounter it, be face-to-face. Put the mind aside. Look into reality silently, without any thought, so that the thought cannot be a hindrance, a barrier, a distortion. That's what meditation is: seeing what is and seeing what is not.

The past is not, but the mind remains in the past. The future is not, but the mind remains in the future. And the present is, but the mind has no contact with the present. And whenever you are in contact with the present, the past is no more there, the future is no more there. When you are absolutely here and now, totally, utterly here and now, your life will have a new quality to it. That is true holiness -- because you will know the whole and you will become the whole.

Buddha calls it the true way, the way of the awakened ones. You can also rise to these heights. Rise! Awake!

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #2

Chapter title: Is there life before death?

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS THIS REALLY ALL THERE IS? MY LIFE SEEMS SO MEANINGLESS AND
EMPTY. I KEEP THINKING THERE MUST BE SOMETHING MORE. I WANT THERE
TO BE SOMETHING MORE.

Prem Barkha, there is infinitely more, but your wanting it is a barrier in reaching to it.

Desiring is like a wall that surrounds you; nondesiring becomes a door. This is one of the most paradoxical but very fundamental laws of life: desire and you will miss, don't desire and it is yours.

Jesus says: Seek and ye shall find. Buddha says: Seek ye not; otherwise you will miss. Jesus says: Ask and it shall be given to you. Buddha says: Ask not; otherwise it will never be given to you. Jesus says: Knock and the doors shall be opened. Buddha says: Wait... look... the doors are not closed at all. If you knock, your very knocking shows that you are knocking somewhere else -- on the wall -- because the doors are always open.

Jesus is as much enlightened as Buddha -- because there is no question of being more enlightened or less enlightened. But then why this difference?

The difference comes from the people to whom Jesus is speaking. He is speaking to people who are uninitiated, uninitiated into the mysteries of life. Buddha is speaking to a totally different kind of group, the initiates, the adepts, those who can understand the paradoxical. The paradoxical means the mysterious.

Barkha, you say, "My life seems so meaningless and empty...."

It seems so meaningless and empty because you are constantly hankering for more. Drop that hankering, and then you will go through a radical transformation. The emptiness disappears immediately as you stop asking for the more. The emptiness is a by-product of asking for more. It is a shadow that follows the desire for more. Let the desire disappear and look back: there is no shadow anymore.

Asking for more is what our mind is -- constantly asking for more. It makes no difference how much you have, it will go on asking for more. And because it goes on asking for more you go on feeling you are empty, you are missing so much. See the point: the emptiness is created by asking for more. The emptiness is not there, it is a fallacy, but it will look very real when you are caught in the net of desiring.

See that desire is the cause of your emptiness. Watch your desiring, and in watching it disappears, and with it disappears the emptiness. Then comes a deep deep fulfillment. You feel so full, so overfull that you start overflowing. You have so much that you start sharing, you start giving -- giving for the sheer joy of giving, for no other reason. You become like a cloud full of rainwater: it has to shower somewhere. It will shower even on the rocks where nothing is going to grow; it will shower unconditionally. It will not ask whether this is the right place to shower or not. It will be so burdened with rainwater that it has to shower to unburden itself.

When desiring disappears you are so full of bliss, so full of contentment, so full of fullness that you start sharing. It happens on its own accord. And then there is meaning in life, then there is significance in life. Then there is poetry, beauty, grace. Then there is music, harmony -- your life becomes a dance.

Barkha, this emptiness and meaninglessness is your doing, so you can undo it.

You say, "I keep thinking there must be something more."

That's what is creating the trouble. And I am not saying there is not something more, there is -- much more than you can ever imagine. I have seen it! I have heard it! I have experienced it! There is infinitely much more! But you will never come into contact with it if desiring continues. Desiring is a wall, no-desiring is a bridge. This is the very essence of Buddha's teaching. This is his basic message to the world. Bliss is a state of no-desire, misery is a state of desire.

You say, "I want there to be something more."

The more you will want the more you will miss. You can choose. If you want to remain

miserable, want more, more and more, and you will be missing more and more. This is your choice, remember, this is your responsibility. Nobody is forcing you. If you really want to see that which is, don't hanker for the future, for more. Just see to that which is.

The other day Buddha was saying: See that which is and see that which is not. That is meditation, and meditation takes you beyond mind. Mind is constantly asking, desiring, demanding and creating frustration because it lives in expectations. The whole world is suffering through meaninglessness, and the reason is that for the first time man is asking more than he has ever asked. For the first time man is desiring more than he has ever desired. Science has given him so much hope, so much support to desire more.

In the beginning of this century there was great optimism all over the world because science was opening new doors and everybody was thinking, "The golden age has arrived, it is just by the corner. We have reached it. In our very life we will see it -- that paradise has descended on the earth." Naturally everybody started desiring for more and more and more. Paradise has not descended on the earth. Instead, the earth has become a hell.

Science released your desiring, it supported your desires. It supported your hopes that those desires can be fulfilled. And the outcome is that the whole world is living in deep misery. It has never been so before. It is very strange, because for the first time man has more possessions than ever. For the first time man has more safety, more security, more scientific technology, more comfort than ever before. But more meaninglessness is also there. Man has never been in such a despair, in such a desperate effort to get more.

Science gives you desiring; religion gives you an insight into desiring. That insight helps you to drop desire. And then suddenly something that was hidden up to now becomes unhidden, becomes manifest. Something wells up within your being, and everything that you had ever desired is fulfilled... and more. More is available than you could have imagined, than anybody has ever imagined. Unimaginable bliss descends on you. But prepare the ground. Prepare the right soil. Nondesiring is the name of the right soil.

I have given you the name Prem Barkha. It means "love showering." Yes, exactly that can happen. Love can shower, bliss can shower, God can shower on you. Just be in a receptive mood. You are aggressive, you want more -- that is aggression, subtle aggression. Be receptive, open, available, and then you are entitled to all the miracles possible.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I FEEL LIKE I AM GETTING DETACHED FROM SEX. NOW WHAT IS NEXT?

Sant, that is only a feeling. It happens to almost everybody here. And the simple reason is not that you have become detached, but you have become afraid.

So many women write to me, "Why in your commune are men so afraid of us?"

Man has always been afraid. This is nothing new. But one man was living with one woman; he was afraid but was able to manage somehow. Now here he sees women and women and women. He becomes really afraid. There are biological reasons for the fear.

Women are capable of multiple orgasms, man is not. Sexually man is very poor compared to women. No man is capable of satisfying any woman. If the woman is allowed freedom she will make anybody afraid, because she will make you feel very inferior. She is capable of multiple orgasms: within seconds she can have many orgasms and you can have only one orgasm. And with one orgasm you are finished! She has not even started and you are finished

-- that is very embarrassing. Because of this fear, man has repressed women all over the world. It is not that man is stronger, that is why he has repressed women. No, it is out of fear.

Man has destroyed women's capacity for orgasm. For centuries man has told them that orgasm is possible only to men, not to women. He has taught women to be absolutely unalive in a sexual relationship. He has told women, conditioned them, hypnotized them for centuries that it is more womanlike, ladylike, to be just silent, unmoving. It is for the man to make all the movements, take all the initiative. Hence man makes love, not the woman. The woman is just there, a silent partner. And the reason is great fear because, if she becomes an active partner, she will reduce the man to almost nothingness. If she becomes active the man is very much afraid. How is he going to satisfy her? All his manhood will be at stake. He will no longer be capable of bragging that he is man, something higher, superior. Sexually he is not; sexually he is very inferior. In a muscular way he may be stronger than the woman, but sexually he is not.

There are countries in Africa where operations are even done on small girls. The clitoris is cut when they are very small -- a very painful operation -- just to make sure that they don't have any idea of orgasm. In Sudan you will not find a single woman who knows anything about orgasm because their very mechanism for orgasm is damaged; their vagina is more like a wound than a healthy organ. What fear! -- to cut the clitoris. Then they will always be inferior. In India I have asked many women, "Have you ever achieved orgasm?", and they say, "What is it?" I have never come across an Indian woman who knows what orgasm is, because that is very un-Indian, for an Indian woman to feel orgasmic, to rejoice in making love.

I have heard that a man was making love to a woman on the seabeach. And then the policeman came and said, "Are you mad or something? She is dead! What are you doing?" He said, "My God! I thought she was Indian!"

The Indian woman has to just be there, not doing anything. She has not to show any signs of joy. If a woman really becomes orgasmic she will wake up the whole neighborhood! She will shout and sing and dance and jump. She will do Dynamic Meditation! And the whole neighborhood will know what is happening.

Afraid of women, man has repressed them in subtle ways -- and sometimes not so subtle, like these Sudanese people. In Africa many Mohammedan countries do it -- the operation, the surgery on the clitoris. Not only that, they sew the vagina of the woman so much that making love to a woman becomes almost impossible. And the childbirth is so painful that once a woman has made love to a man she decides never to do that again, it is so painful! Once she has given birth to a child she decides never to be pregnant again; the whole experience is nightmarish. And this has been done by man, and the priests have been behind it.

Sant, in my commune it is a totally different phenomenon. Centuries-old taboos are broken, centuries-old inhibitions are thrown to the winds. I am all for freedom, particularly sexual freedom, because all other freedoms are rooted in that. If a man or a woman is not orgasmic he is not alive, she is not alive -- they are dead. They breathe, they eat, they walk, but that is not life. They only vegetate.

A scientist was doing an experiment on a certain species of fish. In that species the female fish, whenever approached by a male fish, starts moving away in a very coquettish way, alluring, enchanting, inviting, but starts escaping -- does not really escape but pretends that she is escaping. That excites the male; he starts running after her. The more he runs after her,

the more he becomes excited, his passion is aroused. Then, of course in a very diplomatic way, the female fish allows him to make love.

One scientist, Lorenz, trained a female fish just to do the opposite: that whenever she comes across the male, go, take the initiative, jump upon the male fish. And Lorenz was surprised: whenever this was done, the male fish was so much afraid; the male fish could not believe his own eyes, what is happening! And the male fish was unable to make love -- a sudden impotence! The mechanism works in a certain way: the female has to be seductive but unavailable -- not absolutely unavailable because that will destroy the whole game, just a pretension of unavailability. That excites the male energy. That makes the male more and more interested, obsessed. He is functioning at the optimum, and when he is functioning at the optimum he makes love easily -- because the male mind, whether in men or in mice, is the same. The male mind wants to conquer.

And, Sant, you are in the same situation like the male fish. Now female fish are jumping upon you, making you afraid, and you are trying to hide the fact in a beautiful religious term: detachment. It is nothing! If you feel it is detachment, just go to the Himalayas for one month -- sit in a cave, and you will think only of women and women!

I am just like another Lorenz. This commune is a pond, and I am training female fish to embrace every male fish!

When one is really detached -- out of understanding, out of meditation -- then there is no detachment either; that thing has to be understood. When one is really detached one is neither attached nor detached. The whole thing becomes irrelevant as if there is no question anymore of attraction, of nonattraction. The whole question drops. You are simply yourself. You don't think in terms of women, women don't think in terms of men. Thinking, "I am attached" -- or "detached" -- means you are still thinking in terms of women.

Real detachment -- that which comes out of understanding -- has no reference to the other. You are simply yourself, utterly joyous, happy, so blissful that you don't need the other. The other has been forgotten completely, the other exists no more. A woman will pass and you will not think whether she is a man or a woman. That is transcending your biology, and that is one of the greatest things in life -- to transcend your biology -- because only then, for the first time, you become something superior to the animals. Otherwise there is not much difference, maybe some difference of quantity but not of quality. Unless you transcend biology you remain part of the animal kingdom, another species of animal, that's all.

Sant, now watch your detachment, whether it is fear or understanding. Have you understood the stupidity of the whole game? If you have understood, then you will not ask, "Now what is next?" There is nothing next then. You have transcended biology and you will be really at rest with yourself. You will become orgasmic without the help of the other. And orgasmicness will become so natural, so spontaneous, it will have no reference to sex at all.

A Buddha is orgasmic twenty-four hours a day because he is rejoicing each moment in its totality; there is nothing more. If you have transcended the biology, if sex has disappeared -- through understanding, remember, not through some kind of repression or fear -- then you have entered into God, you have become divine.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHATEVER I DO, I TRY TOO HARD. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT BUDDHA'S "RIGHT EFFORT."

Anand Nagaro, Gautama the Buddha has taught only one thing, and that is the middle way. Never go to the extreme. All extremes are the same. Be exactly in the middle and you will be freed, you will be liberated.

There are people who are obsessed with sex; that is one extreme. Then there are people who escape from women, and if they are women they escape from men; they escape to the monasteries, to the caves. They are also obsessed -- of course, in the opposite direction. That is the other extreme. There are people who are greedy, too much greedy; their whole life is nothing but greed. And then there are people who renounce, who become afraid of touching anything.

There are Jaina monks; in Buddha's time they were very influential. Buddha's whole fight was with Jaina monks, because they were extremists. They remain naked because if you wear clothes you may become attached to the clothes. They will not carry anything with them, not even a razor; when their hair is too long, they will pull it out. They will not wear shoes, they will walk barefoot, because shoes are a luxury. Naked, without any possessions, they impress people very much.

Extremists are always very impressive. You are greedy, you are after money, after power, prestige; they have renounced all. Certainly, a great respect arises in your heart for them because you know you cannot do this; it is too cold to be naked. And to live without money.... The Jaina monk cannot touch money; he is not allowed to touch it, he is not even allowed to SEE money. How can you live without money? A great respect arises in you. You live on one extreme and you respect the other extreme. Sooner or later, when you will become fed up with your extreme, you will start moving to the other extreme. But no basic change happens. The man who is afraid of touching money is still in a state of ignorance, unawareness.

Buddha says: Stop in the middle. There is no need to be indulgent, there is no need to renounce either. Just be in the middle, exactly in the middle. He has a great point there: if you remain exactly in the middle, that is the point from where transcendence happens.

It is like the pendulum of a clock. It goes from the right to the left, from the left to the right. Try to understand the pendulum and its process because it is very similar to the process of your mind. When the pendulum is going towards the right, visibly it is going towards the right, but invisibly it is gaining momentum to go to the left. When it is going to the left it is gaining momentum to go to the right.

When you are indulging you are gaining momentum for renouncing the world, and when you are renouncing you will gain momentum to indulge again. And this can go on for lives together. But hold the pendulum in the middle and the clock stops.

That's what Buddha says: hold the pendulum in the middle and the mind stops. The mind is the clock because the mind is time, the mind is desire. It brings past and future -- it IS time. Hold it in the middle. Don't live in the past and don't live in the future. Be in the present, that is the middle. Don't be indulgent and don't be a renunciate; be in the middle. Fulfill the necessities of life. Don't be obsessed by possessing things and don't be obsessed by renouncing them. Both are obsessions and both are pathological states. Avoid both, be in the middle. In the middle is balance.

You ask me, Nagaro, "Whatever I do, I try too hard. Please tell us about Buddha's 'right effort'."

Right effort means don't try too hard. Right effort also means don't stop trying completely. It means, just try in a relaxed way, neither too hard nor too soft, just in a relaxed

way, in a very playful way. When you are trying too hard you become tense; when you are not trying at all you become lazy. When you are trying playfully you are neither lazy nor tense. Your life has a beauty, a grace, a balance, a harmony. Be in the middle, that's exactly the meaning of right effort.

Whenever Buddha uses the word 'right', remember, he means balance. 'Right' is a translation of a word which means balance, because the extreme is wrong, both the extremes are wrong. Buddha's word is SAMYAK; SAM means balance, equilibrium. He uses that word more than any other word; he uses it for everything. If you are making effort for anything, let it be samyak, balanced, exactly in the middle.

If you are meditating, Buddha says, let it be samyak -- right meditation. Don't make too much fuss about it, don't make a tension out of it. Don't create anguish. Don't become mad. Don't be aggressive. And he also says that that does not mean to forget all about it and go on living the way you are living. No, make efforts for meditation, but in a joyous way, a graceful way, always in the middle. Be gentle, be gentlemanly. Buddha is the perfect gentleman; the emphasis is on gentle. He is a rare person in that way.

Mahavira seems to be an extremist -- another enlightened person who was Buddha's contemporary, the last prophet of the Jainas. He seems to be very extremist. It is said that for twelve years he was silent, didn't speak a single word. Now, this is going too far. Don't speak too much....

I have heard a story about Morarji Desai:

Whenever he speaks, his wife will send him a note. Every-body around him became curious, naturally, "What is that note?" Always it comes, inevitably.... And on the note they found there is only one word: Kiss.

They told Morarji Desai, "This is rare in this age of unfaithfulness; your wife still loves you so much. You are eighty-four, she must be seventy-five or more. Still such romance that whenever you stand to speak she sends you a note always welcoming you with a kiss."

Morarji looked angry -- as he always looks, that is nothing new! When he smiles, that is rare. Even in his smile there is no smile; still he looks as if he is angry. The smile seems to be painted. But he was really angry. He said, "You don't know what she means. It is a short form; it means, 'Keep it short, stupid.' That is the meaning of 'kiss'."

If you keep it short, that's okay, but there is no need to become dumb for twelve years. Be telegraphic, use only words which are necessary. Don't go on chattering twenty-four hours a day, either with others or with yourself. People are chattering constantly, day in, day out. In the day they are chattering, in the night they are chattering.

Mulla Nasruddin's wife went to the physician and said that "My husband talks in his sleep. Something has to be done. I am very much disturbed about it."

The physician said, "I can understand. Take this medicine and within a week or two he will stop talking in his sleep."

The wife said, "You misunderstand me. I don't want him to stop, I want him to talk clearly so I can hear what he is saying."

People are talking in their sleep, people are talking while they are awake. People are constantly talking; needed, not needed, they go on talking. Talking seems to be a kind of escape from themselves. So Buddha says it is good for a few hours to be silent, but there is no

need to be silent forever.

It is said that Mahavira ate only once in a while. Ten days he would fast -- or twenty days or thirty days -- and then one day he would take food. In those twelve years he took food only three hundred and sixty-five times; that means only one year. In twelve years, if that is the proportion, it comes to once every twelve days.

Buddha says that is unnecessary, that is torture, that is making an extreme effort for no reason. It is perfectly good if you eat only as much as is needed; people are eating too much, people are stuffing themselves with food. That is again another way of keeping yourself away from yourself, keeping yourself engaged.

People feel so empty -- like Prem Barkha -- everybody feels empty. And there is some unconscious desire to fill this emptiness -- through food, through smoking, through drink, through something; through talk, through the television, through the radio. Just remain occupied so you feel full.

Just the other day I was reading that in America they have now invented a new kind of refrigerator. You open the door and the refrigerator immediately says, "Excuse me, be kind to yourself. Please close the door." People are constantly moving towards the fridge; that seems to be their only exercise. Even in the night when they have nothing to do or they are not feeling sleepy they will go to the fridge.

There are people, and their number is big... out of ten, one person is capable of sleepwalking. They walk in their sleep and the direction is always towards the fridge. Even in sleep they know where the fridge is! They don't stumble anywhere, they go directly like an arrow. Now this is one extreme, and not eating for eleven or twelve days then eating only for one day, that is another extreme.

Buddha says "right food." Be in the middle. Eat as much as is necessary for your health, for your well-being, don't eat too much. And that goes for everything in your life.

A lady went into a shoe store to buy a pair of shoes. The salesman brought her a pair which she tried on. "Ah," she said, "I don't like these shoes. They are too wide. I don't want them too wide, I don't want them too narrow. I just want them in between."

So the salesman gathered up the shoes and returned with another pair which were tried on. This time she frowned and said, "These shoes won't do. The holes in the toes are too big. I don't want them too big and I don't want them too small. I just want them in between."

So the salesman went back to the store room and got her another pair at which she exclaimed, "Ah, I don't like them. The heels are too high. I don't want them too high and I don't want them too low. I just want them in between."

At this point the salesman looked at her and said, "Madam, if you will stand up and bend over I will give you a shoe not too high and not too low -- just in between!"

The salesman seems to be a Buddhist: just in between!

In every action, remain just in between. Through that balance comes transcendence, through that balance mind disappears. The mind is an extremist. It lives only through extremes; it dies if you stop moving from one extreme to another.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH?

Nijanando, first ask: is there life before death? People ask: Is there life after death? What concern is that for you? You are alive. Ask the significant question, the really relevant question: Is there life before death? Are you really alive?

A woman went to the insurance company and said, "Can I get the money for which my husband has been insured?"

The man in the office said, "But he is still alive. He is not dead. You will get the money only when he is dead."

She said, "I know that he is not dead, but no life is left in him either."

That's the situation: people are not dead and yet not alive either. They are somehow walking, talking, doing things, keeping themselves together, but there is no aliveness, there is no flavor of aliveness.

And you are concerned, Nijanando, with what happens after death. Forget all about it. You are alive -- first live it totally. And remember one thing: whatsoever you do with your life now, that is going to create your future. Your future comes out of your present. If you live miserably now you will live miserably after death -- even more miserably because your whole life lived in misery will produce more misery for you.

I am not concerned about life after death; my whole concern is life before death. And whatsoever you do with your life now will produce, as a consequence, your future. The tomorrow will be born out of today, the next moment will be born out of this moment. So if this moment is lived rightly, totally, wholly, meditatively, then the next moment is bound to be more total, more holy, more meditative, because life goes on accumulating. If you live blissfully, bliss accumulates. You will take with you when you die whatsoever you have gained in this life.

But down the ages people have remained concerned about the other life. I also talk sometimes about the other life, but just to joke, to laugh at it. It is not really a concern.

In hell, as punishment for his sins, Ayatollah Khomeini and Jimmy Carter had to walk together hand in hand for eternity. As they were strolling along, they came across Morarji Desai arm in arm with Gina Lollobrigida.

Carter asked, "Mr. Desai, how come I am stuck for eternity with this turkey, while you get the gorgeous Lollobrigida?"

Morarji Desai answered, "Jimmy, she is not my punishment -- I am hers!"

Only for jokes I talk about hell and heaven and life after death, but it is not my concern at all; I am not interested. My whole interest is in my present moment. Now is my interest, here is my interest, because God knows only one time -- now -- and God knows only one space -- here. If you want to be in contact with God you will have to learn how to be now and here.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE DESIRES A "NO-NO," BUT LONGING FOR THE HEIGHTS OKAY? I GET LOST IN THE SUBTLETIES OF THE WORDS. THE BUDDHA MADE A SUPREME VOW NOT TO RISE FROM MEDITATION UNTIL ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT. FOR THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS HE HAD VISIONS AND HALLUCINATIONS, INCLUDING ONES OF HELL, DEMONS, ETCETERA. WHAT KIND OF EFFORT IS

THIS?

Jyotirmaya, when Buddha made that vow he was not a buddha; he was as ignorant as you are. In ignorance, whatsoever he has done, please forgive him. Don't take much note of it. In ignorance everybody goes on doing stupid things. That vow is stupid.

Truth is not something that you can force by your willpower. Taking a vow that "I will not rise from meditation until attaining enlightenment" shows violence and ignorance. But Buddha was not Buddha at that time, he was Siddhartha Gautama -- stumbling, groping in the darkness as everybody else is groping. He was not in any way different from you. He had himself yet not learned the art of being in the middle; he was an extremist. This is extremism.

For six years he tried hard and failed. That hard work upon himself did not yield any result; it cannot. That's why when he became a buddha he was very much against hard effort, he was very much against extremes. He had lived through all kinds of extremes: he had lived like an ascetic, tortured himself. For six years he suffered as much as a human being can suffer -- but truth cannot be bought by your suffering. It is not a commodity and it is not possible to attain to it just by sheer force of willpower. You can sit for three days or three lives under a tree, and you won't attain it.

He didn't attain it, remember. What he attained was hallucinations, visions of hell, demons, etcetera. That was his punishment, so beware of it.

How he became enlightened is a totally different story. After three days, when he was tired, utterly tired of his effort, and he saw the frustration, the failure... those six years' continuous torturing himself, and no gain, no success. He had not moved even an inch nearer to truth; he was still where he had started. Only one thing had happened: he had become weaker because he had been fasting. He had become ugly; he had become just bones, all flesh had disappeared. He had become just a skeleton. He looked like he had come out of a grave. No gain, no success... all efforts had failed.

Then one evening he saw the futility of human effort. He saw the futility of human ego -- because all efforts are egoistic: "I will attain." The 'I' is always behind all your achievements, desires of achievement. The 'I' is very ambitious: it wants to be successful in this world, it wants to be successful in the other world. It wants to have money, it wants to have God too. It wants to have power; it wants to have liberation, moksha, truth, nirvana. It wants to have everything.

Buddha saw it and in that seeing he dropped that mad effort and he dropped the very source of ambition. It was a full-moon night. He laughed at himself, at the whole stupidity of six years. He relaxed, he sat under a tree. For the first time after six years, just sitting not to achieve anything, just sitting, not meditating. Hence in Zen, meditation is called ZAZEN. Zazen means just sitting doing nothing, the spring comes and the grass grows by itself.

That evening he sat there under the tree with no desire, because all desires had failed. The worldly desires had failed, the otherworldly desires had failed.

You will be surprised to know: enlightenment is not a success. Enlightenment happens only when you have totally failed. Enlightenment is born out of total failure -- because if you succeed, the ego remains. When the failure is total, absolute, irrevocable, categorical, when there is no going back, the ego disappears. Ego lives, feeds on success; it cannot live in failure. It leaves you.

That evening the ego disappeared. The full moon rose. He watched the full moon, he enjoyed the full moon. For six years he had not seen the moon at all, he was so much preoccupied with his own spiritual attainment. The night was cool and beautiful. The forest

was silent, and just by the side was flowing the river Niranjana. He enjoyed the reflection of the moon in the Niranjana. He enjoyed the silence. Then he fell asleep. He slept without any dreams, because all dreams are by-products of desires.

In the morning when it was dawn and the birds started singing he was awakened by their songs. Lying under the tree, nowhere to go, nothing to do, he watched the sun rise above the horizon; the east becoming red and a beautiful morning and the cool breeze.... And something happened, something clicked. He became enlightened -- not out of six years' effort but only one night's effortlessness. Not out of six years' constant striving of the ego, but only one night's state of no ego, no desire. And in the morning he was enlightened.

Then again he laughed. He laughed because he saw that he was always enlightened but could not see the fact, the truth of it, because he was so much concerned with attaining it. If you are so much concerned with attaining it you will not be able to see that it is already the case.

You are all buddhas. Nobody is born otherwise, everybody is born a buddha. It is not a question of achieving, Jyotirmaya, remember it: buddhahood, enlightenment, is not a question of attainment. It is a question of becoming silent, still, egoless, desireless, so that you can see with unclouded eyes who you are. You are a buddha already, you ARE enlightened.

He laughed in the night because his whole life had failed; it was ridiculous. In the morning he laughed because he was searching for something that was already inside his soul; there was no need to seek and search for it. In fact, seeking and searching was keeping him away from it.

Seek, and ye will not find; seek not and it is yours.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT POSSIBLE TO LOVE AN ITALIAN MAN WITHOUT WANTING TO KILL HIM?

Satya Bharti, it is impossible. But remember, the moment you stop thinking of killing him, love will also disappear. To fall in love with an Italian in the first place is very crazy, and then this desire to kill him is natural. Love is a kind of fight -- Italian or not Italian. Love is a kind of fight; it is a struggle. And when you stop fighting, when you stop struggling, love disappears. I am not talking about the love of the buddhas; I am talking about the love Satya is asking about.

And do you know who this Italian is? Sarjano, the most Italian out of all Italians!

After the Ark had pushed off, Noah assembled all the animals in the central cabin and made a short speech. He pointed out that the trip was liable to be a long one, and that quarters were somewhat limited. "Therefore," he said, "I want to emphasize that we can't have any population increases at all until the flood subsides and we can get to land. I am appointing the giraffe, as the tallest of you, to stand guard and make sure my instructions are carried out."

Finally the water subsided, the Ark landed and the doors were opened. Out came the animals, two by two, as they had come in -- no more of any species. Then the cats came out -- followed by a litter of little kittens. As they passed the giraffe, one of the cats looked up and winked. "I will bet," he said, "you thought we were fighting."

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
DO YOU BELIEVE IN ASTRONOMY AND ASTROLOGY?

Ismail Nagdum, I don't believe in anything and I don't disbelieve anything. My whole effort here is to help you to destroy all beliefs and all disbeliefs, because only then will you be able to know. Knowing happens only when the inner being is utterly empty of beliefs and disbeliefs, when you are neither a Catholic nor a communist, neither an atheist nor a theist. And that was Buddha's attitude too: he was an agnostic.

A real seeker of truth does not believe in anything, positively or negatively. He does not believe in God, he does not believe in no-God. So what to say about astronomy and astrology? Belief is not his concern; knowing, experiencing, seeing, is his concern, because it is only through seeing that transformation happens.

But people go on believing all kinds of things because belief gives you a false idea of knowledge. It makes you feel good -- it hides your ignorance. Otherwise belief is the most stupid thing that one can do. Belief means you don't know and yet you believe. Remember, belief is irrelevant when you don't know -- and belief is irrelevant when you DO know. When you don't know, your belief is false, rooted in ignorance. When you know, there is no need to believe -- you know already.

Do you believe in the sun, in the moon? Does anybody ask you, "Do you believe in the earth?" Nobody asks such questions. People ask, "Do you believe in God? Do you believe in astrology? Do you believe in life after death?" These questions seem to be relevant because nobody seems to know.

I don't believe in anything. And remember, if you start believing, then there is no end to it; you can believe in any nonsense. Once you believe, there is no problem.

Harry came home from work earlier than usual one afternoon. "Darling, I'm home," he cried and rushed upstairs to the bedroom, where he found his wife lying on the bed, a surprised look on her face. The curtains were drawn, the sheets and blankets were in disorder. "Is everything alright?" he asked.

"Why, yes... yes, of course, dear," she replied uncertainly.

Taking off his jacket he went to the wardrobe and to his surprise found a man crouching inside.

"Hello, what are you doing here?" said Harry in astonishment.

"Oh... I... I'm the gas man.... I've, er... come to check the gas meter."

"Hmm, I see," said Harry and hung up his jacket.

Then reaching under the bed for his slippers, he found another man lying there.

"Well... and who are you?" he asked.

"Ah, yes... well... I'm the, er... the electrician... I've come to fix the wiring."

"I see," said Harry. "Alright then."

Then, taking off his tie and shirt, he remarked, "I say, dear, it is a bit dark and stuffy in here, don't you think?" and drawing back the curtain he saw a man perched outside on the window ledge.

"Hello," said Harry, "and what are you doing here?"

"Well," said the man, "if you believed those other guys -- actually, I'm waiting for a bus."

The eighth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT REALLY BAD LUCK TO HAVE A BLACK CAT CROSS YOUR PATH?

Narendra, it depends on whether you are a man or a mouse!

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS LAUGHING AT THE KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE?

Govindo, what should I do? Should I cry and weep over spilt milk? If you cannot laugh at knowledgeable people, at whom are you going to laugh? They are the most stupid people in the world, the most ridiculous.

A British couple after a few years of marriage finally had a child. As the child's hair was completely red and both parents' hair was brown, things looked a little suspicious. The bewildered wife, upset at the obvious insinuations, suggested that they both go to see a doctor.

The doctor, after taking note of the unusual phenomenon, looked even more puzzled than the couple. "According to the laws of genetics," he explained, "it is impossible that a man and a woman with brown hair can give birth to a child with red hair." The doctor decided to make inquiries in another direction. "How frequently do you have sexual intercourse?" he asked. The answer was a British embarrassed silence.

"Once a day?" encouraged the doctor.

"Well, not really," was the embarrassed answer of the couple.

"Well, once a week then?" asked the doctor.

"Ahem, I wouldn't say that," answered the man.

"Once a month?" probed the doctor.

"Well, ahem, we don't -- not that often," was the reply.

"Aha!" cried the doctor. "Now I get it! Nothing to be worried about -- it's only rust!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #3

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I SHALL ENDURE HARD WORDS
AS THE ELEPHANT ENDURES THE SHAFTS OF BATTLE.
FOR MANY PEOPLE SPEAK WILDLY.

THE TAMED ELEPHANT GOES TO BATTLE.
THE KING RIDES HIM.
THE TAMED MAN IS THE MASTER.
HE CAN ENDURE HARD WORDS IN PEACE.

BETTER THAN A MULE
OR THE FINE HORSES OF SINDH
OR THE MIGHTY ELEPHANTS OF WAR
IS THE MAN WHO HAS MASTERED HIMSELF.

NOT ON THEIR BACKS
CAN HE REACH THE UNTRODDEN COUNTRY,
BUT ONLY ON HIS OWN.

THE MIGHTY ELEPHANT DHANAPALAKA
IS WILD WHEN HE IS IN RUT,
AND WHEN BOUND HE WILL NOT EAT,
REMEMBERING THE ELEPHANT GROVE.

THE FOOL IS IDLE.
HE EATS AND HE ROLLS IN HIS SLEEP
LIKE A HOG IN A STY.
AND HE HAS TO LIVE LIFE OVER AGAIN.

MY OWN MIND USED TO WANDER
WHEREVER PLEASURE OR DESIRE OR LUST LED IT.
BUT NOW I HAVE IT TAMED,
I GUIDE IT,
AS THE KEEPER GUIDES THE WILD ELEPHANT.

AWAKE.
BE THE WITNESS OF YOUR THOUGHTS.
THE ELEPHANT HAULS HIMSELF FROM THE MUD.
IN THE SAME WAY DRAG YOURSELF OUT OF YOUR SLOTH.

The fundamental problem is not metaphysical, it is not concerned with the ultimate reality. It is concerned with you, your mind, your functioning of the mind, your sleep, your state of a sleepwalker.

Man ordinarily exists only mechanically. He is not aware although he believes he is aware. In fact that belief hinders him from becoming aware. Man is fast asleep not only in the night but in the day too. He is constantly dreaming. You can watch it yourself. Any time close your eyes, relax a little and you will be surprised: dreams start moving. They were already moving like an undercurrent. You were occupied with outside reality, hence you were not looking at them, but they were there all the time. Your back was towards them. Just look a little in and you will find thousands of dreams crowding you: possible, impossible,

consistent, inconsistent.

When you see this state, you will understand why humanity has missed always the awakened ones. The awakened one has no more any undercurrent of dreaming in him. He is fully alert, aware. He speaks the language of awareness and you are asleep. There is no possibility of communication between you and the awakened one. He shouts, he makes every effort to reach you, to penetrate you, to penetrate your sleep and unconsciousness, but it is thick, dense and very deep. Rarely do you hear him, very rarely, and even when you hear him you misinterpret him. Even when you hear him you don't listen to him. You are like a drunk who seems to be hearing, but still goes on interpreting according to his drunken state. The whole humanity needs to be part of an organization like Alcoholics Anonymous. You may not be alcoholic, you may not be taking any intoxicant, you may not be taking or injecting any drug, but the society goes on injecting into your blood, into your being, many poisons.

For example, each child is poisoned by the society through teaching him ambition. Ambition is a poison far more dangerous than any alcohol can ever be, far more dangerous than marijuana or LSD, because ambition destroys your whole life. It keeps you moving in a false direction. It keeps you imagining, desiring, dreaming, it keeps you wasting your life. Ambition means a subtle creation of the ego, and once the ego is created you are in the grip of darkness. And the whole social structure depends on ambition. Be the first! Wherever you are, whatsoever you are doing: be the first! -- as if being the first has something divine about it. By what means you become the first is irrelevant. By right means or wrong means, succeed! As if success in itself has become equivalent to life, synonymous with life.

Life has nothing to do with success. Success keeps you rushing towards the future and that becomes your intoxicant. Hoping, hoping for the tomorrow, wasting that which you have or that which you don't have and will never have.

Rabinowitz walked into Gold's theatrical agency with a puppy under his arm.

"I got here an attraction that will make you a million dollars. I got a little puppy dog that plays an electric piano and sings 'My Yiddish Mama'."

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

Rabinowitz opened up a suitcase, pulled out a tiny piano, put the puppy at it and the dog began playing and singing.

The theatrical agent leaped up and shouted, "My God! We will clean up a fortune!"

Just then the door opened and in walked a big dog, grabbed the puppy by the neck, and ran out with him.

"What the hell was that?" asked the agent.

"That is the puppy's mother," answered Rabinowitz. "She wants him to be a doctor!"

That is being done to every child. Your mother wants you to be a doctor, your father wants you to be an engineer, your uncle wants you to be a scientist and so on, so forth. And nobody asks what you are intrinsically meant to be. They go on imposing their ideas on you. Their ambitions have remained unfulfilled, they project their ambitions through you. They want their ambitions and egos fulfilled through you. And they are going to remain unfulfilled again; hence you will have to do the same damage to your own children. It is from one generation to another generation that the poison is passed on.

For centuries man has lived in this mad situation. Now it has reached to a climax. The whole earth has become almost a madhouse.

If Buddha was not understood twenty-five centuries ago, it will be even more difficult to

understand him now, because the unfulfilled ambitions of twenty-five centuries are overwhelmingly there, they are surrounding you. You are flooded with them. All the people who have lived and died have left their ambitions as a heritage for you. Your eyes are blind, your ears are deaf, your hearts only pump the blood, they no more feel....

The vicar was driving home one night when suddenly his car made a terrible noise and ground to a halt.

Taking out his flashlight and a box of tools, he pulled up the bonnet and started to look over the engine.

While he was tinkering away with a spanner in hand, the local drunk staggered by and stopped to ask, "Anything wrong, Vicar?"

"Yes. Piston broke."

"So am I," replied the drunk.

You are not in your senses. Hence buddhas have been misunderstood, and to understand them has become more and more difficult. Keep it in your mind when you meditate on these beautiful words -- simple words, because buddhas have always used simple words, but with tremendous meaning.

The Buddha says:

I SHALL ENDURE HARD WORDS
AS THE ELEPHANT ENDURES THE SHAFTS OF BATTLE.
FOR MANY PEOPLE SPEAK WILDLY.

I SHALL ENDURE HARD WORDS.... Buddha expects that that is going to be his reward. He will shower you with his love and compassion and all that you can do is insult him, throw hard words or stones at him. All that you can do is some kind of harm. You are going to hurt him. Hence he says in the beginning: I SHALL ENDURE HARD WORDS. He expects that, and every buddha has expected that down the ages.

Once a disciple of Buddha was going to preach his word to the masses. He had become enlightened, and Buddha said, "Now you are ready to go, you need not accompany me any longer. Once in a while you can come to see me; otherwise you can help people on your own. Go and help people to become more aware, more meditative."

But he said also, "One thing I would like to ask: What part of the country would you like to go to?" There was a part of Bihar, where Buddha lived, where no sannyasin of Buddha's had ever gone. The name of the part was Suka. This newly enlightened sannyasin said, "I will go to Suka."

Buddha said, "Please don't go there. Nobody has gone there yet for a certain reason. The people there are very wild, uncultured, stupid, mischievous, murderous, very violent. Don't go there."

But the disciple said, "If they are in such a bad situation they need us more than anybody else. The physician is needed only where people are ill."

Buddha said, "That I can understand, but before you go, before I bless you to go, I will ask three questions. First: If they insult you, what will be your response?"

The young man said, "I will thank them, I will feel grateful that they are only insulting me. They could have beaten me. They are good people. They are not beating me; they are simply insulting me -- and what can words do? Words are words, they can't hurt me."

Buddha said, "The second question: If they beat you, what will be your response?"

The young man said, "I will thank them, I will feel grateful that they are beating me. They could have killed me. They are only beating me -- they are so compassionate, so kind. It would have been so easy for them to kill me."

Buddha said, "Now, the last question. If they kill you, dying, in the last moments, what will be your response?"

The young man said, "Still I will be grateful and thankful to them because they are taking a life away from me in which I may have done something wrong. If I had lived more I may have committed some crime, some sin; I may have fallen from my peak of awareness. They are simply taking that life which is useless to me. I have attained the treasure, I don't need life anymore. They are taking something useless away from me and I will be grateful because, who knows, if I had lived more, in some situation I may have gone astray."

Buddha said, "Now you can go anywhere you like with my blessings. You have not only become enlightened, you have become capable of being a master."

Remember it, that every enlightened person is not a master, although every master has to be enlightened. Many enlightened people have lived on the earth without ever becoming masters for the simple reason that to be a master needs certain qualities which are not necessary for being enlightened. Enlightenment is an individual process; it is something inward, subjective, it can happen within you. To be a master means the capacity to communicate, and not only to communicate but to commune with others, others who are almost mad, others who are almost incapable of seeing things.

Keller paid a lot of money for Buck, a golden retriever. One morning Keller went duck hunting with Buck. Within ten minutes he shot a duck that fell into a pond.

Buck ran over the surface of the water, picked up the duck, returned running over the top of the water, and laid it at the feet of his master.

The rest of the morning every bird that fell into the pond when shot was retrieved by Buck running over the top of the water without even wetting his feet.

Around noontime Keller met a fisherman. While they chatted a duck flew by and Keller quickly sent it hurtling down into the middle of the pond.

Once again, Buck ran out over the top of the water, retrieved the duck, and brought it back.

"I just bought this dog yesterday and he cost me a lot of dough," said Keller.

"Well, they pulled a fast one on you," said the fisherman. "The dog can't even swim!"

To communicate, to commune about the unknown, about the invisible, about the mysterious, is one of the greatest of arts. To help people to see that which they have never seen before although it is always around the corner, to help people to hear that which they have never heard before although it has been always there, to help people to be silent, to be meditative, is one of the most difficult arts because people are mad. They don't know what silence is. To wake them up out of their sleep is almost a miracle.

A deaf man was visiting his friend and the dog of the friend barked at him like mad. Being unable to hear anything, he said to his friend after they had exchanged greetings, "Your dog did not sleep well last night."

"Why do you say that?"

"He looked at me and kept yawning."

A deaf man can't hear, he can't hear the dog barking; he can only see the movement, the gesture, the lips moving, the mouth opening and closing, and he will interpret it according to his own understanding. He says, "He looked at me and kept yawning."

That's how we have listened to the buddhas. We have not listened at all, we have heard their words, certainly. If we had listened to them there would have been no need for us to crucify Jesus or poison Socrates or kill al-Hillaj Mansoor.

Buddha says -- the first thing to remember: I SHALL ENDURE HARD WORDS AS THE ELEPHANT ENDURES THE SHAFTS OF BATTLE. It is a battle between the awakened one and the unawakened crowd. It is really a great battle, it is a war, and the unawakened are many and the awakened is one. And all the unawakened feel a certain humiliation in the presence of the awakened. They feel as if his presence proves to them that they have not risen to their real heights, that they have wasted their lives. Rather than rising to their heights they would like to remove the presence of the awakened one so that they can feel at ease. You always feel at ease with people who are just like you; their presence does not in any way make you feel inferior. The presence of a Buddha makes you feel inferior and you are bound to take revenge. It is a battle, and a buddha has to be like an elephant who endures the shafts in a battle.

FOR MANY PEOPLE SPEAK WILDLY.... Not only will their words be hard, they will be almost wild, mad. I know it from my own experience.

For twenty years I was traveling around this country. I have encountered all kinds of wild people. It was necessary to invite them, it was necessary to choose my people from the crowds, hence I had to go. But the way they were behaving was really strange. I was not harming them; I was simply telling them to wake up in a thousand and one ways, but they were throwing stones at me, they were disturbing my meetings, they were preventing me from entering their towns. They were preventing me from getting down from the train in their towns. They were doing all kinds of things... they were really wild for no reason at all.

They are still doing it, although I don't go to their towns; although I never move anywhere now, they are still behaving in a wild way. Strange things they go on saying -- and not only saying, but believing. And now it is not only in India that they are saying hard words about me, it is almost all over the world.

Just yesterday I received an article published in London. They say that I brainwash people here and when their brains are washed away completely, then the men are sent for smuggling jobs and the women are sent for prostitution. That's what I am doing to you, so beware! Once your brain is washed completely these two alternatives are left. And the man who writes it, writes it with great confidence as if he knows.

Just the other day I received a news from Bombay. A sannyasin has come across a few photographs in a studio. The sannyasin could see in the pictures somebody who looks like me. At the first glance he was shocked; when he looked closely then he could see that it was somebody else, but with some similarity. Now, they have bribed this man to be naked among naked women, and they have taken his pictures, and now they are going to publish them all over the world. Great idea! I really loved it. Some imagination.

But this is how they have been doing always. And I am not saying that they do it knowingly. No, they may be thinking that they are serving humanity, they are making people aware of the danger that I am. They may have every good intention behind all these things; that makes it more complex. They are simply servants of humanity.

Buddha says: FOR MANY PEOPLE SPEAK WILDLY.

So if you want to live in this world and be awakened you will have to be ready to accept their hard words, their wild actions patiently, silently, with a deep understanding that what can they do? Whatsoever they can do they are doing. It is not their fault, they are simply asleep, and in their sleep they are saying absurd things.

When somebody is drunk and starts saying absurd things you don't take much note of it. You say, "He is a drunkard" -- but that's how people are.

THE TAMED ELEPHANT GOES TO BATTLE.
THE KING RIDES HIM.
THE TAMED MAN IS THE MASTER.
HE CAN ENDURE HARD WORDS IN PEACE.

THE TAMED ELEPHANT GOES TO BATTLE.... By "tamed elephant" Buddha means "the disciplined one." The words 'tamed elephant' are not very accurate; it will be better to say "the disciplined one." There is a great difference between taming and discipline. You can tame through force, coercion, violence, but you cannot discipline through coercion. Discipline comes out of understanding. You can help people to understand their own minds and the functioning of their minds, the state of their sleep, mechanicalness. Out of that understanding a change happens, a radical change happens: they become soft, compassionate, silent, peaceful, more understanding, more available, more open.

THE TAMED ELEPHANT GOES TO BATTLE. THE KING RIDES HIM. THE TAMED MAN IS THE MASTER. HE CAN ENDURE HARD WORDS IN PEACE.

The disciplined man also becomes a master, also becomes a king. He rides on his own discipline, on his own understanding. He lives in the world with wild people, uncultured, uneducated in the real sense of education: they don't know who they are. That should be the first step for a right education. They are not acquainted with their own interiority. What kind of education is this that does not make them aware of their inner kingdom, that goes on stuffing them with nonsense, useless information? -- geography, history... what are you going to do with Genghis Khan and Tamerlane? What is the point of it all?

But we go on stuffing people with unnecessary information. What is the point of knowing where Timbuktu is? Let it be where it is. Even if it is not anywhere, it doesn't matter. And histories of murderers called kings, murderers called great conquerors, Alexander the Great or Napoleon.... And in future people will be reading about Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Ayatollah Khomeiniac. It is all absolutely irrelevant.

The basic education is missing. The first thing to be taught is meditation, the art of going in, because only out of that arises a discipline. The word 'discipline' is beautiful; it means the capacity to learn. A disciplined man is always ready to learn more. He is never closed, he never claims that he knows everything. He knows what he knows, and he also knows what he does not know -- and what he knows is very small, and what he does not know is immense. He cannot brag about his knowledge. In fact the more he knows the more he becomes aware of the uncharted, of the unmapped, of the unknown; and not only of the unknown but the unknowable. The more and more he feels the mystery of existence, the more and more he wonders. That is true knowledge, true education, true culture.

Then a man becomes a master, a king; only then can he make an effort to reach people. Only then can he communicate his love, his understanding, his knowing, his seeing.

BETTER THAN A MULE

OR THE FINE HORSES OF SINDH
OR MIGHTY ELEPHANTS OF WAR
IS THE MAN WHO HAS MASTERED HIMSELF.

Buddha is not concerned with God, Buddha is concerned with you. His religion is man-oriented, not God-oriented. One of the great poets of India, Chandidas, has condensed Buddha's whole teaching into a simple sentence: SABAR UPAR MANUS SATYA -- the truth of man is the highest truth, there is no truth higher than it -- TAHAR UPAR NAHIN; there is nothing higher than that.

Buddha has given man such dignity as nobody else has ever done. All other religions condemn man, they condemn man in order to praise God; and their "God" is nothing but their imagination. Hence there are as many gods as there are religions. There are at least three hundred religions in the world, three thousand sects of those religions, and there must be thirty thousand subsects. And there are as many gods as there are sects in the world. Every sect has its own idea of god, and God does not exist at all.

What exists is a godly existence, a divine existence. God not as a person but as a presence certainly exists. But to understand that presence, you have to understand your own inner presence first, because it is from there that you can take off, it is from there that you can have the first glimpse of what godliness is. If you have not known yourself you will never know God.

You can go on worshipping in the temples, in the mosques, in the churches, but your God is childish. Compared to Buddha's teachings the gods that are worshipped look very stupid. The worshippers look stupid, and their gods, because they are created by the stupid worshippers, also look silly. Your gods are nothing but your projections; they can't be more than your own state of mind. Just watch. Different gods are created by different people. If horses could think of a religion, then their god must be a supreme horse. It can't be man, that much is certain. No horse can believe that man has any divinity in him. Man seems to be the most barbarious animal. If horses were to imagine, they would imagine the Devil in the shape of man. Man imagines God in his own image; hence Negroes have their god like Negroes. You can see the hair of the Negro gods, they are Negroid; you can see the lips of the Negro gods and they are thick. Hindu gods are Hindu, and Chinese gods are Chinese, the cheek bones showing prominently and the noses of course Chinese.

Every country, every race, every religion thinks of God according to its own idea of how man should be. But those are all our projections. Buddha is not concerned at all with them. Buddha wants YOU to become a god. He wants you to become divine. You are divine; he wants you to recognize the fact. There is nobody higher than you. This declaration is something superb, something unique. Nobody had dared before Buddha to respect man so much.

Father O'Reilly had taken up golf and was practicing on the church lawn while Sister McCarthy looked on. Father O'Reilly raised his club, and swung at the ball.

"Oh, shit! I missed," he shouted.

"Father O'Reilly," admonished Sister McCarthy, "God will be very angry if you use such language."

"Yes, Sister," answered Father O'Reilly. "I shall try to control my tongue." He raised his club for another try and swung at the ball. "Oh, shit! I missed," he shouted.

"Father O'Reilly, I am sure God will punish you severely if you say that again!" said the

Sister.

"Yes, I will try especially hard next time, Sister McCarthy," said the priest. He raised his club again and swung at the ball. "Oh, shit! I missed," he shouted.

Just then a bolt of lightning flashed out of the sky and Sister McCarthy disappeared in a holocaust of flames. Then a great voice boomed from the sky. "Oh, shit! I missed."

Our gods can't be very different; they are our gods, they will reflect us. Hence Buddha says: Get rid of all gods. What you are worshipping in the temples is nothing but your own image. It will be better if you keep a mirror and worship your reflection in it. That will be far better, at least far truer, less deceptive.

Buddha's emphasis is on man. It is the only man-oriented religion in the world. And of course it transforms man, it does not make you superstitious, it does not give you any belief. It gives you a key to open the doors of your own being. And when you know who you are, you will know what this whole existence is and its beauty and its grace and its splendor.

NOT ON THEIR BACKS
CAN HE REACH THE UNTRODDEN COUNTRY,
BUT ONLY ON HIS OWN.

Remember, you cannot reach to the untrodden country on anybody else's back. You will have to reach on your own. The last words of Buddha were: Be a light unto yourself -- because there is no other light.

He gives you total freedom, he wants you to be free from all kinds of bondages. He does not want you to be a follower, an imitator; he wants you to be authentically your own self.

THE MIGHTY ELEPHANT DHANAPALAKA
IS WILD WHEN HE IS IN RUT,
AND WHEN BOUND HE WILL NOT EAT,
REMEMBERING THE ELEPHANT GROVE.

Even though it is a mythological elephant, Dhanapalaka is said to be the greatest elephant who has ever been on the earth, the wisest elephant. It is just a beautiful story. But even Dhanapalaka with such might, with such wisdom, goes wild when he is in rut; when he is sexually aroused he is no more in his senses, he becomes mad.

Sex is really an internal process of intoxicating you. It is chemical. You have nothing to do with it. It is your body chemistry, it is your physiology that releases certain chemicals in your body and then in a sexual state you can do something for which you will repent. Later on you will say, "I cannot believe how it happened. It happened in spite of me." And it is not only sex; so many things are happening in you through your physiology. When you are angry, it is not you. Again certain poisons are released in your blood and you are under the impact of those poisons.

Buddha says: If you start watching the processes of sexuality, anger, greed, you will be able to see that it is not out of you that these things are born. You are only a witness. These things are born in your body, in your mind; and body and mind are not two things, they are one. You are psychosomatic. The mind is your inner body, and the body is your outer mind. Hence the body affects the mind and the mind affects the body. You are a third force.

That third force is known only through meditation; there is no other way to know it, because it is through meditation that you become disidentified with the bodymind

mechanism. Otherwise you can be very mighty, very knowledgeable, even sometimes in some moments very wise, but all that can go in a second. Your body can possess you, your physiology can become so powerful over you that you become a slave. You lose your mastery. Whenever you are angry, whenever you are in a sexual arousal, you are no more a master, you are simply a slave.

Buddha is not against sex, remember. Buddha is not against anger or greed, he is against slavery. And anything that creates slavery in you, he would like you to transcend it. Remember the difference. There are people who are against sex -- they are against sex because sex is hedonistic, they say; they are against sex because sex makes you happy. They are against happiness. They can't tolerate any happiness anywhere. They are sadists, they would like the whole world to be in suffering; they enjoy suffering. They not only want others to suffer, they make themselves suffer too. Suffering is their joy. That is a perverted state, a pathological state.

Buddha is not against sex because it gives you pleasure; he is simply trying to make you aware of the fact that these are the things that keep you tethered into a kind of inner slavery. You are a slave of your own chemistry, you are a slave of your own physiology -- and this slavery has to be transcended.

THE MIGHTY ELEPHANT DHANAPALAKA IS WILD WHEN HE IS IN RUT, AND WHEN BOUND HE WILL NOT EAT, REMEMBERING THE ELEPHANT GROVE. When he is under the impact of his sexuality he cannot eat; he thinks only of the elephant grove, he thinks of female elephants. His whole mind is possessed by fantasy -- and that's true about you too. Whenever you are under the impact of any chemical process you are no more yourself, you are distracted from your true being. You are no longer centered. You become eccentric. That's exactly the meaning of the word eccentric: you lose your center, you go off center.

THE FOOL IS IDLE.
HE EATS AND HE ROLLS IN HIS SLEEP
LIKE A HOG IN A STY.
AND HE HAS TO LIVE LIFE OVER AGAIN.

Buddha wants you to be reminded that if you live like a fool -- idle, lazy, without making any effort to transform your being, without making any effort to transcend your slavery, without making any effort to become a master -- if you live like a fool, just eating and rolling in your sleep, LIKE A HOG IN A STY, you will have to live again and again the same stupid life. You will have to repeat it. In fact you have already repeated it many times, and you have not yet understood why you are repeating it again and again. You have to learn the lesson. The lesson is freedom. If you don't learn it you will be sent back to the same school, to the same grade again and again.

That is one of the greatest contributions of Indian spirituality to the world. India has contributed a few things; this is one of the contributions of great significance. The idea is that existence is an opportunity for understanding, for transcending, for going through a radical change. It is a school. Life is a school. If you learn rightly, if you discipline yourself rightly you will not be coming back again, you will exist in the universal. You will never become again a separate individual; you will never have to be an ego again. You will live an egoless existence, like the wave which has disappeared in the ocean.

That has been the ultimate goal of the mystics: to disappear into the universal, not to be separate; to melt and merge into the universal. Separation brings anxiety, separation brings

death, separation brings misery. We are miserable because we are feeling separate from God or the universe. Bliss arises whenever you feel one with the universe; when you are in harmony with the universe bliss arises. There is great joy, rejoicing; you disappear, you die in a way, but you are reborn. You are reborn as the ocean, you die as the dewdrop.

But if you don't learn the lesson you will have to come back again. Unless you learn you will have to repeat the same process.

David, a student of a university, received a telephone call from his brother Blake, back home.

"Hi, David," said Blake. "Your cat is dead."

David fell apart. He began crying uncontrollably. When finally he was able to compose himself, he scolded his brother.

"Damn it, Blake," he told him. "You know how I loved that cat. You did not have to call me and just spill it out, first thing -- 'Your cat is dead.' You should have broken it to me gently. You could have said, 'Dave, the cat got out of the window the other day and crawled up the rainspout and got up on the roof and slipped and fell,' and then you could have said it died."

"I am sorry," apologized Blake.

"Okay, forget it," said David. "How is Mom?"

"Well, Mom got out the window the other day and crawled up the rainspout...."

It is so difficult to learn, we go on repeating the same mistake again and again -- maybe in a new way, in a new fashion, in a new style, but it is the same mistake. You watch your life: you have not done many mistakes, you have been doing the same mistakes again and again. You move in a circle. How are you going to learn? I am not against making mistakes. Make as many mistakes as you can, but please at least don't make the same mistake twice. Then certainly there will come a great understanding to you. One learns through mistakes, so nothing is wrong in mistakes as such. The wrongness is in repeating them again and again. That means you are not learning anything.

Your whole life you have been angry. What have you learned out of it? Your whole life you have been jealous. What have you learned out of it? If you are not learning out of these experiences, you will have to repeat your life again. Learn out of every experience, small or big. Whenever you are jealous you are in a fire, your heart burns -- and you know what you are doing to yourself. You know the wrongness of it, but you know it only because others say so. It is not your own understanding, your own insight. Let it become your own insight, so the next time the situation arises to be jealous you can laugh at it, so the next time the same situation arises you don't behave in the same old pattern; you can get out of the old pattern.

To me this is sannyas: getting always out of the old patterns, becoming always new, remaining always fresh, young, learning. Then your whole life will teach you something of tremendous value and you will be able to die in deep silence, peace, joy. Then there is no coming back. Then you become part of the whole. That is nirvana, that is moksha.

In Western religions there is no word which can translate moksha or nirvana. In Western religions -- Christianity, Islam, are offshoots of one religion, Judaism -- there are two words, hell and heaven. In Indian religions there are three words: hell, heaven and moksha. Hell means nothing but misery; it is a psychological state of misery, a state of negativity, a state of darkness, of utter loneliness. And heaven is joy, happiness, health, light. But there is a third word, moksha. Moksha means freedom, freedom from both heaven and hell, freedom from pain and pleasure -- because pain binds you as much as pleasure binds you. Pain may be an

ugly chain and pleasure may be a beautiful chain, decorated, maybe made of gold, but it chains you. Hell may be a poor place and heaven may be a very rich place but poverty and riches are two aspects of the same coin. One has to be free of both.

When you are free of both, you are free of mind, because mind lives in the duality of heaven and hell, of darkness and light, of misery and happiness, of day and night, of life and death. When you have transcended both and reached to the third which is beyond, which is transcendental, it is moksha. Moksha means nirvana; it is cessation of the ego, and meeting and merging into the universal. That has been the goal of the Eastern mystic.

Just as science has reached its ultimate peaks in the West, religion has reached its ultimate peaks in the East. Whenever East and West will meet there will be a great meeting of science and religion. And that is going to be one of the greatest moments in the history of humanity, because then man can live outwardly a rich life and inwardly a full life. Then there is no need to be as poor as India is or to be as empty inwardly as America is. One can be rich outside, and one can be rich on the inside simultaneously.

THE FOOL IS IDLE. HE EATS AND HE ROLLS IN HIS SLEEP LIKE A HOG IN A STY. AND HE HAS TO LIVE LIFE OVER AGAIN.

An elderly German sat before the fire and in a reflective moment spoke to his dog, "You is only a dog, but I wish I was you. Wen you go your bed in, you shust turn round dree times and lie down; wen I go de bed in, I haf to lock up de place, and wind up de clock, and put out de cat, and undress myself, and my wife wakes up and scolds, and den de baby wakes and cries and I haf to walk him de house around, and den maybe I get myself to bed in time to get up again.

"Wen you get up, you shust stretch yourself, dig your neck a little, and you was up. I have to light de fire, put on de kiddie, scrap some vit my wife, and get myself breakfast. You be lays round all day and haf blenty of fun. I haf to work all day and haf blenty of drubble. Wen you die, you was dead; wen I die, I haf to go somewhere again."

You need not if you learn; if you learn the lesson you need not go anywhere again. You disappear into the whole, you are everywhere and nowhere then. You are no more an entity, confined into boundaries.

MY OWN MIND USED TO WANDER
WHEREVER PLEASURE OR DESIRE OR LUST LED IT.
BUT NOW I HAVE IT TAMED,
I GUIDE IT,
AS THE KEEPER GUIDES THE WILD ELEPHANT.

This also is something new in Buddha. Christians believe Jesus is special; he is the only begotten Son of God. Hindus believe Krishna is special; he is the perfect incarnation of God. Mohammedans believe Mohammed is special; he is the only prophet of God, the only messenger. Jainas believe Mahavira is special; he is the last, the twenty-fourth TIRTHANKARA, the last prophet of Jainism; there will be no more prophets after Mahavira. Unique they are, these people, special, not just ordinary human beings like you and me.

Buddha is different again. He says, "I am an ordinary human being." He says, MY OWN MIND USED TO WANDER.

Gospels never say anything like that, no Hindu scriptures will ever say anything like that about Krishna or Rama because that will make them ordinary like you. They are born gods.

Buddha simply says, "I was a human being just like you. I was groping in darkness just like you. I was doing all kinds of things as you are doing; I am in no way special. All that happened to me is happening to you and something more has happened to me which can happen to you if you allow it to happen. I was as ordinary as you are; just only one thing has happened to me which has made all the difference. I have become aware and you are unaware. You are carrying the truth in you as much as I am. I am aware of it; you are not aware of it.

"But remember, whether you know the truth or you don't know, it makes no difference to the truth. The truth remains true. Knowing or not knowing does not make any difference. Truth is truth. It is behind you," Buddha says, "it is in front of me. I have turned in; I have taken the hundred-eighty-degree turn, that's all. It is not much to brag about. You can do it."

This is again very special about Buddha. He never claims that he is unique; hence he is of more help to humanity than anybody else. Because he says: I was just like you.... MY MIND USED TO WANDER WHEREVER PLEASURE OR DESIRE OR LUST LED IT.

He does not deny that there was lust in him from the very beginning. He does not deny that there was desire, he does not say that he was born pure. He simply says, "I was as much after pleasure -- I was as much full of desire as you are, and I was as much full of lust as you are. So nothing is wrong in lust, in desire, in pleasure; if anything is wrong it is in your unawareness. Be aware; and lust disappears, and desire disappears and the constant greed for pleasure disappears."

When you become aware, you are so at ease, so full of bliss, who bothers about pleasure? When you have diamonds who cares about pebbles? When you have inexhaustible sources of inner bliss who goes on begging for small pleasures, ugly pleasures? -- they simply disappear.

Buddha says: BUT NOW I HAVE IT TAMED, I have disciplined my mind, I have meditated, I have gone into the functioning of the mind, I have seen it through and through. Now I have become the master. Seeing it I have become the master. Knowing it I have become the master. Understanding makes you the master. Now I GUIDE IT, AS THE KEEPER GUIDES THE WILD ELEPHANT.

So don't feel guilty -- that is Buddha's message -- don't feel guilty for your greed, don't feel guilty for your anger, don't feel guilty for your lust. All that you need to do is become aware of your greed, become aware of your lust, become aware of your desire, and see the miracle happen. Just as you bring light in the room and darkness disappears, exactly like that, precisely like that, as you bring awareness in all desire, all greed, all anger, all lust simply disappears as if it has never been there. Don't try to escape, don't try to renounce, because if you renounce you are simply renouncing the opportunity.

A man escapes from his wife, goes to the Himalayas or moves to a monastery.... There are monasteries where no woman has been ever allowed in; there are monasteries where once you go in, you are not allowed to go out again your whole life. Now, this is not a transformation, this is simply escaping from the opportunity.

Dick brought Sally to his bed. "What would you like to do?" he asked.

"I would like to see today's newspaper," she said.

"Sure," said Dick, "I will send my dog for it. He is so smart he will even bring back the change." Dick gave the dog ten dollars and sent him for the paper. In an hour when the dog didn't return, Dick and Sally went out looking for him. They found the dog making it with a French poodle.

"Did he ever do this before?" asked Sally.

"No," said Dick, "this is the first time he ever had any money."

Opportunity.... You can escape from the opportunity, that will not change your being. Outwardly you will become a monk; inwardly you will remain the same person. Outwardly you will become a nun; inwardly you will remain the same person. And the real question is of your inner consciousness, not of your outer circumstances. The mind is not bad if it is used as a mechanism and you are the master. The mind is beautiful as a servant. When it becomes the master then it is ugly. Let consciousness be the master, the guide, and let the mind be like an elephant tamed, disciplined. How can you do it?

Buddha says:

AWAKE.

BE THE WITNESS OF YOUR THOUGHTS.

In these simple words he has given to the world the greatest meditation: vipassana. More people have become enlightened through vipassana than through any other method. There are thousands of methods but vipassana seems to be the easiest, the most perfect, and very natural. It does not demand any unnaturalness from you.

Reverend Johnson, an old black preacher, was warning his parishioners about sin. "Sin," he said, "is like a big dog. There is the big dog of pride, and the big dog of envy, and the big dog of gluttony, and finally there is the big dog of sex. Now, folks, you gotta kill those big dogs before you are ever gonna get to heaven. It can be done -- I know -- because I've done it. I killed the big dog of envy, and the big dog of pride, and the big dog of gluttony -- and yes, brethren, I killed the big dog of sex!"

"Brother!" came a voice from the back of the church, "Are you sure that last dog didn't die a natural death?"

You cannot kill these dogs. Either they die a natural death -- but that does not bring any transformation to you -- or you have to become masters. There is no need to kill... Buddha will not suggest you kill anything. Why kill anything? If you kill anger you will never be compassionate in your life, because it is anger, and the energy involved in anger, which becomes compassion. If you kill sex you will be simply impotent, that's all; you will not attain to love. It is sex transformed that creates love energy. Love energy is confined to sex. When you bring awareness to it, sex disappears but love energy is released. Anger disappears but compassion is released. Greed disappears and sharing comes in its place.

It is not a question of killing; these are energies. Don't be such a fool as to kill anything, because if you kill it you will miss something very essential in your life. Transform. Religion has to be the real alchemy, the science of transformation. It is not murderous.

But the stupid religious people go on murdering, destroying. They are destructive, self-destructive. Hence even if they drop their anger they don't become graceful, they don't attain to creativity, they don't contribute to the world and its beauty. They are burdensome, they are not in any way a help. They are a hindrance in the progress of humanity. Buddha will not suggest to you to kill anything. He says: Just be awake. BE THE WITNESS OF YOUR THOUGHTS.

Anger is a thought, sex is a thought. Just watch, be alert, let them move on the screen --

anger, greed, lust -- and you remain aloof, cool, just a witness. In the beginning it is very difficult, but only in the beginning. If you persist then within three to nine months you will be able to do the impossible.

One day it happens that your witness has become so perfect that the screen remains empty, nothing passes -- no thought, no desire. That day you have attained to the first state of samadhi, the first satori. And the first satori is the beginning; it triggers many satoris in you, culminating ultimately into samadhi, into nirvana.

When the mind becomes just a pure mechanism... when you want to use it, you use it, when you don't want to use it, it remains silent.

THE ELEPHANT HAULS HIMSELF FROM THE MUD.
IN THE SAME WAY DRAG YOURSELF OUT OF YOUR SLOTH.

Buddha insists again: nobody can pull you out of your mud, nobody can help you. So don't believe that Jesus will come and everything will be solved. Jesus has been before and nothing has been solved. Don't believe in salvation through somebody; no messiah can help you. Buddhas only point the way. You have to do everything on your own. Nobody can do it for you. I cannot see for you, I cannot hear for you; you have to do it on your own.

There are a few things which cannot be done by anybody else for you, on your behalf, and those are the most precious things which only you can do. Awareness is one of those most precious things.

Buddha says: THE ELEPHANT HAULS HIMSELF FROM THE MUD. Just like that, IN THE SAME WAY DRAG YOURSELF OUT OF YOUR SLOTH.

By awareness Buddha does not mean presence of mind. Many people misunderstand. Whenever Buddha uses the words 'awake', 'awareness', people think he is talking about presence of mind. Presence of mind is presence of mind; awareness has nothing to do with the mind. Awareness is something beyond the mind.

Presence of mind is very ordinary. In any danger it comes to you. If somebody is going to shoot you, you will have presence of mind in that moment. If a tiger suddenly jumps in front of you, you will have presence of mind; you will do something which you have never done before.

Frank and Gene were tossing down a few brews at the neighborhood pub.

"Boy, did I have a close call with Angie last night," said Frank.

"What happened?" asked Gene.

"Well, I got home real late, so I took off my shoes, climbed the stairs, opened the door of the bedroom, tiptoed in, and closed the door without making any noise. Just as I am about to get into bed, the wife wakes up and says, 'Is that you, Toto?'"

"What did you do?"

"For once in my life I really used my head," said Frank. "I licked her hand."

This is presence of mind. She is thinking he is the dog, Toto. But presence of mind is not awareness; it is a small phenomenon, a tiny thing. Mind can do it.

Awareness is something beyond the mind. You have to watch the mind, you have to watch the presence of mind as much as absence of mind. You have to watch both, you have to go beyond both. It comes, it certainly comes, and when it comes it takes all that is your misery, your ego, your insensitivity, your cruelty. It takes all mud from you... and out of that

mud arises the lotus, the one-thousand-petaled lotus of samadhi in you.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #4

Chapter title: Freedom is something inner

14 February 1980 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THIS MORNING WHEN YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT WAKING UP AND RISING FROM SLOTH, I FELT SO STUPID -- AND I THINK I AM GETTING STUPIDER AND STUPIDER! WHAT TO DO... IS IT ENOUGH TO JUST BE HERE WITH YOU? I FEEL VERY HOPELESS. AND IT MAKES ME SAD.

Krishna Gopa, it is a good sign that you feel that you are becoming stupider and stupider. That simply means the borrowed knowledge is disappearing, hence the feeling. You are unlearning whatsoever you had learned up to now. Unlearning is the basic process of becoming innocent again.

But don't call it becoming stupid; don't use that word -- that is condemnatory. And then one starts feeling sad. You are becoming more innocent. You are becoming more and more unburdened from unnecessary knowledge, information. You are becoming more natural, more like a child, more full of wonder. And if you call it being stupid you will miss the whole point.

Your mind can call it stupid because the mind is losing its ground. The mind is dying, and the mind is bound to make all possible efforts to save itself, to survive. And the first step is to condemn the state of not-knowing that is growing in you. Every meditator comes across it and every meditator finds that mind condemns it. It is against the mind; you are becoming a no-mind. And who wants to die? The mind does not want to die; it wants to keep its possession of you. Hence the condemnation. Beware of it.

Let the knowledge disappear. Don't be worried at all because that knowledge has not given you anything. In the first place, borrowed knowledge creates only bondage, not freedom. It burdens you; it does not give you wings. It does not make you light, it makes you heavy. It makes you hard, it makes you more and more mechanical, because through the thick wall of knowledge you cannot see the mysterious surrounding you. And the moment you

don't see the mysterious you are almost dead.

Life is in harmony with the mysterious. Life is in being full of wonder. Life is knowing the art of wondering, of being in awe. The knowledgeable person is a poor person, very poor, utterly impoverished -- and he himself is responsible. He thinks he is very rich because he knows about roses, although he has not seen a single rose. He knows all about love, although he has never loved himself. He knows about God, but to know about God is not to know God. To know about light is not to know light.

A blind man can know all there is to know about light, but he will still remain blind. He will not experience the joy that light brings, that the morning brings, that the sunrise brings. He will not see the colors of the rainbow, of the flowers, of the butterflies. He will remain utterly oblivious of the world of light and color. He is blind! He knows about... but knowing about light is of no use if you are blind. And if you have eyes, whether you know about light or not, it makes no difference at all. Even without knowing light you experience it -- and that is TRUE knowing. Knowledge is not true knowing, it is not wisdom. Knowledge comes through information; wisdom comes through experience.

Gopa, don't condemn your innocent state that is growing in you. Don't call it stupid. That is mind playing a trick upon you; it always plays the trick. In the old scriptures, the same mind is called the Devil; there is no other Devil. It is the mind that tempts you to go wrong because the mind can exist only when you are wrong. The mind is not needed at all when you are moving towards truth, when you are right. When you are on the right track, mind has no utility; it simply loses its power over you. And that's what is happening.

You say, "This morning when you were talking about waking up and rising from sloth, I felt so stupid -- and I think I am getting stupider and stupider!"

You are blessed. Go on becoming more and more stupid -- stupid in the sense of innocent.

Jesus was called a fool. Saint Francis was called a fool; used to call himself "the fool of God." Why have Jesus and Francis and people like these been called fools? Even they themselves have called themselves fools for the simple reason that there is something which the fool can know and the knowledgeable can never know. The fool is innocent. The fool is not so foolish as the knowledgeable person is. Sometimes he seems to be wiser than your so-called wise people.

It was an ancient custom in almost all the countries of the world that every great king used to have a fool in his court. Why? -- for the simple reason that sometimes the fool says things which the wise -- so-called wise -- cannot say. The fool is so innocent that he simply utters the truth. The so-called wise are cunning; they will not say the truth, they will say that which appeals. It may be a lie -- and lies have great appeal because people live in lies. And particularly in the courts, all kinds of lies remain prevalent. The king is surrounded by all kinds of cheats, all kinds of cunning people; hence a fool was needed, so that he can depend on the fool. The fool will not be cunning and he will say whatsoever is the case. He is so foolish that he will not be bothered about the consequences of it.

This is strange, but something significant to be understood. The fool was a necessary part in every great king's court, and the fools have saved many kings many times. They have saved their kingdoms because their advice came from a state of not-knowing, utterly innocent. They have a clarity that the knowledgeable person cannot afford; he is clouded.

Gopa, your knowledge is disappearing. This is really SATSANG; this is what it means to be with a master. He takes away your knowledge and gives you wonder in return. He makes you a child again. And unless you are a child you will not enter into MY kingdom of God.

But because you are calling it stupidity, condemning it, giving it a negative name, you are feeling sad, hopeless. We live through words; we have become so much attached to words that we are deceived by words. Just change the word and you will see the change in your inner climate. Call it innocence and just feel the texture, the taste. Call it stupid and feel the texture and the taste. When you call it stupid you suddenly feel surrounded by darkness; when you call it innocence, as if a flower starts opening within your heart, a fragrance surrounds you.

Beware about words, what words you use, because we have lived so long with words, through words....

I have heard:

A hunter lost his way in the forest. By the evening he reached a private land, but he was afraid to enter because just on the gate there was a big signboard saying: BEWARE OF DANGEROUS DOGS. But the night was descending and the forest was full of wild animals. It was better to encounter the dogs than to be eaten by the wild animals. And he was so tired, so utterly tired; he wanted to rest. And there was some hope: if dogs are there, there may be somebody -- the owner of the dogs, the owner of the land, the man who has put these big signs.

He entered in, a little afraid, shaky, but there was no other way, there was no alternative. Just a few yards he entered in and again there was a board, an even bigger one: BEWARE OF THE DANGEROUS DOGS. His heart started sinking, but there was no way to go back, nowhere to go back, so he had to go in. Again, even a still bigger board.

And then... just a small dog, a very small dog, standing before the cottage of the owner. So small a dog that you could simply take him by the feet and throw him at least a hundred yards!

The hunter was very much puzzled. He asked the owner, "Where are the big, dangerous dogs?"

He said, "There are none. This is my only dog."

The hunter asked, "Can this dog prevent people coming in?"

The man said, "No, but the signboards do. You are the first man in years who has entered. Even if there is no dog, those signboards will do."

People live through words. In a crowded theater, if somebody suddenly shouts, "Fire! Fire!" people will start running. Nobody will bother whether there is any fire. The very word 'fire' and your imagination starts working.

Gopa, don't call it stupid, otherwise you create your own sadness and you are a victim of your mind. Your mind will feel happy because it has made you sad. If you are sad you will start collecting the knowledge that has fallen from you; you will put it back into its old place. You will again start collecting information so that you don't feel stupid. Call it innocence.

Be very careful what words you use. Words have associations, deep associations. They have become almost concrete realities in our life; they are no more words, they are things.

You say, "I feel very hopeless. And it makes me sad."

Hopelessness always comes if you have been hoping too much; it comes in the same proportion. Expect and you will be frustrated. Hope and sooner or later you will feel hopelessness. Hence my whole effort here is to make you free from hoping. If you become free from hoping you will never be trapped into any hopeless state. Hopelessness is a by-product of hoping. Frustration is a by-product of expectation. But it is natural, in a way.

When you come to me, you come with great hopes; you want to become enlightened, you want to become a buddha. But the problem is, I cannot help you to become a buddha because you are already a buddha! There is no need for you to become a buddha. Becoming is not the question at all -- buddha is your being. And whenever you drop this idea of becoming, suddenly you will recognize the buddha within.

What I am doing here is not helping you to become somebody, but just to recognize who you are. All the devices here are just devices to make you remember -- not devices to help you become, but only to remind you.

The family moved from the city to the suburbs and was told to get a watchdog to guard the premises at night. So they bought the largest dog they could find.

Shortly afterwards the house was broken into by burglars who made a good haul -- while the dog slept.

The householder went to the kennel-owner and told him about it. "Well," said the dealer, "what you need is a little dog to wake up the big dog."

That's what you need! Buddha is fast asleep in you. Just a little device, a little dog will do -- to wake up the big dog!

Mrs. Mulla Nasruddin and her neighbor were chatting about their teenagers.

"Is your son hard to get out of bed in the morning?" asks the neighbor.

"No," replied Mrs. Mulla Nasruddin. "I just open the door and throw the cat on his bed."

"How does that wake him?"

"He sleeps with the dog."

My work consists of such things, throwing a cat on your bed.... It is not some great work -- it is sheer fun!

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT MODERN ART?

Asang, the first thing is, it is not art. For the first time something exists in the name of art which is not art at all. It is more a therapy than an art. Look at the modern paintings and you will be convinced of what I am saying. The painters must be insane; they have poured their insanity on the canvas. It helps them because it releases some tensions inside their being. It is a catharsis, but it is not art. It is therapy through art, but not art itself.

If Picasso is prevented from painting, he will go mad. Vincent van Gogh went mad before he committed suicide. And I have been looking into his life deeply and my feeling is he went mad because he could not paint as much as he wanted. He had no money to paint. His brother was giving him money enough just to survive, and he was not eating for four days per week. He would eat only for three days and four days he will fast to save money to paint. How long can you do that? But painting was more important for him than food -- and it ended in madness. He could not paint as much as he wanted, and when he saw that there was no possibility to paint anymore -- the brother is tired, the family is tired and nobody wants to help him and nobody wants to purchase his paintings -- he committed suicide.

The same would be the case with Picasso if he was prevented from painting: he would go

mad or he would commit suicide. Suicide is the ultimate in insanity. But his paintings are a great help, a great relaxation.

And it is not only so with painting; it is so with poetry, music, dance. Everything modern is a little crazy because modern man is a little crazy, off the center.

Gurdjieff has divided art into two categories. The modern art he calls subjective art. The ancient art -- the real art -- the people who made the pyramids, the people who made the Taj Mahal, the people who made the caves of Ajanta and Ellora, they were of a totally different kind. He calls that art objective art. Subjective art is like vomiting. You are feeling sick, nauseous; a good vomit helps you to feel good. The poison is thrown out, you feel relieved. It is good for you, but not good for others.

Now, in the name of modern painting, you are hanging vomited, nauseous, sickening things in your rooms. In the name of modern music you are simply getting into crazier spaces within you. It is subjective art.

Objective art means something that helps you to become centered, that helps you to become healthy and whole. Watching the Taj Mahal in the full moon, you will fall into a very meditative space. Looking at the statue of Buddha, just sitting silently with the statue of the Buddha, something in you will become silent, something in you will become still, something in you will become buddhalike. It is objective art, it has tremendous significance.

But objective art has disappeared from the world because mystics have disappeared from the world. Objective art is possible only when somebody has attained to a higher plane of being; it is created by those who have reached the peak. They can see the peak and they can see the valley both. They can see the height of humanity, the beauty of humanity, and the sickness and the ugliness of humanity too. They can see deep down in the dark valleys where people are crawling and they can see the sunlit peaks. They can manage to create some devices which will help the people who are crawling in the darkness to reach to the sunlit peaks. Their art will be just a device for your inner growth, for maturity.

Modern art is childish -- not childlike, remember, childish; not innocent but stupid, insane, pathological. We have to get rid of this trend. We have to create a new kind of art, a new kind of creativity. We have to bring to the world again what Gurdjieff calls objective art.

The farmer was looking at one of those modern, abstract paintings. "It is a perfect picture of those fellows in New Delhi," he said. "No matter which way you look at it, it does not make sense."

But the farmer is saying something which Picasso himself has said. Picasso has said, "The world today does not make sense, so why should I paint pictures that do?"

If the world today does not make sense, that means more pictures, more music, more poetry is needed that makes sense -- to help humanity to come out of this absurd state. That was the function of objective art: to help you come out of your absurd state. But Picasso says, "The world today does not make sense..." as if it was making sense in the past. It has never made any sense; the world has always been the same. But he finds a rationalization. He is saying, "If the world itself makes no sense, why should I paint pictures that do?"

If you ask me, that should be precisely the reason to make pictures that DO make sense. Otherwise, how is the world going to be helped? It needs music, it needs poetry, it needs dance. It needs paintings which can help it to rise above its misery, its schizophrenia, its neurosis, its psychosis.

But Picasso himself is only a representative of the neurotic mind. Picasso became so

famous for the simple reason that he represented us very clearly.

The marriage broker introduced a really ugly girl to a young man. The victim protested that the lady had misplaced eyes, a broken nose and a deformed face.

"Ah," said the marriage broker, "it is apparent that you do not like Picasso."

Looking at Picasso's paintings, have you not felt it? Everything is deformed, misplaced.

I have heard that a very rich lady wanted a portrait of herself done by Picasso. He agreed for a fantastic sum. The lady was ready to pay. Six months he took to make the portrait.

When the portrait was ready, the lady looked at it and said, "Everything is okay; I just don't like the nose. You will have to improve it."

Picasso looked at the lady, then he looked at the painting and he said, "It is impossible."

The lady said, "Why? I am ready to pay. If you want more money, I am ready to pay."

Picasso said, "It is not a question of money. I don't know where the nose is."

His paintings are nightmarish. And it is not only Picasso; Picasso simply symbolizes the whole of contemporary art. He is the most representative modern artist. He is right, in a sense, because the world makes no sense.

The world has never made any sense, but there have been people who created such art that it helped people to find some sense in a senseless world. And that finding of sense helps you tremendously to become centered.

"It is terrible to see men looking like girls, with long hair and all. You can't tell the difference. I was sitting in a restaurant when a girl came in. I turned to the person at the next table and said, 'Isn't it terrible how girls look like boys these days?'"

"That's my son," she said, pointing to the girl.

"Ah, I'm sorry. I didn't know you were the mother."

"I'm not," the neighbor said indignantly. "I'm the father!"

Things are topsy-turvy. Things are becoming more and more topsy-turvy. The world seems to be less a cosmos now and more a chaos.

In the ancient philosophies, cosmology was one of the most important things to be discussed. Now there seems to be no cosmos, no cosmology. The whole world seems to be in a chaos, as if all is accidental. Nothing seems to be essential, intrinsically valuable; everything seems to be just happening as an accident. And this is reflected in everything. It is reflected in art, it is reflected in science, it is reflected even in religion.

We need again a cosmology. I know the world IS a chaos; that is a challenge for human consciousness to create a cosmos out of it. It is a tremendously valuable opportunity to create a cosmos. Just to say that it is a chaos, remain with it as it is, is to fall below human dignity; it is not accepting the challenge. It is really a great challenge to change yourself AND the world. It IS a puzzle, but it is a puzzle only if you have already concluded that there can be no meaning at all; otherwise it is a mystery, not a puzzle.

A mystery may not have any meaning, but it has significance. And there is a difference between meaning and significance -- and significance is far more meaningful than meaning itself; significance is far more important. What meaning is there in a roseflower? -- but significance certainly is there. Just think of a world without roses. It will be a poor world;

some significance will be lost. What significance is there when you hear the sound of running water? Have you not felt some significance? Yes, meaning you cannot prove.

Meaning seems to be imposed by the mind upon existence; significance seems to be part of existence itself. We have lost contact with the language that can understand significance; we only understand meaning. Meaning is intellectual, significance is existential. There is no meaning in love, but great significance; no meaning in God, but great significance; no meaning in meditation, but great significance, great splendor.

I would like to say to my sannyasins, Asang, that my sannyasins have to be not only meditative, they have also to be creative. And they have to create what Gurdjieff calls objective art. They have to create something which can help a wandering humanity to come to a resting place. Yes, much can be created that can give shelter, that can become a deep, deep experience of communion with nature.

That is the real function of art: helping people to commune with nature, because out of that communion arises religion. Science is an intellectual effort to understand nature, art is an emotional effort to understand nature, and religion is an existential effort to COMMUNE with nature. Art is higher than science, religion is higher than art. Science has to be objective; if science is subjective it will be just fiction -- science fiction. Art has also to be objective; otherwise it will be fiction. And that's what modern art is -- fiction. And religion has also to be objective, really authentic; otherwise it is speculation, philosophy.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I WANT TO GIVE UP SMOKING. WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT IT?

Mahendra, why? Why in the first place do you want to give up smoking? What is wrong in smoking? Yes, it is a little stupid, silly -- just poisoning your breath, taking smoke in and out, wasting money, life. But it is not a sin, it is not a crime either. You should not feel guilty about it. Maybe you will live a little less, two or three years less than you would have lived. But what is the point of living three years more? What will you do by living three years more? You will create a little more trouble in the world -- so better you go a little earlier. And the world is too much populated.

Nobody had thought about birth control before. Now we are thinking constantly everywhere how to reduce the population, how to prevent new children from being born. Sooner or later we will have to think about the other end: how to help the old people to go faster, because that is absolutely logical, part of it. If we prevent children from coming in just to keep the world a little less populated -- it is already too much populated -- sooner or later we have to think about ways and means how to help old people to go quicker, faster. We will have to make it a birthright.

If somebody decides to die, it should not be a crime. In fact, he should be supported, respected, because he is creating space for new people to come. He is helping the world -- he is a great servant of humanity.

You say, Mahendra, "I want to give up smoking."

Why in the first place? -- because you have been reading that it is bad for your health? But what will you DO with your health?

There is a beautiful story about Jesus, not related in the Christian gospels. My feeling has

always been that it has been deleted somewhere down the centuries because it is a dangerous story. But Sufis have kept it intact, recorded. There are a few Jesus stories which Sufis have guarded, and they should be thanked for it because they are the most beautiful stories out of all the stories that the gospels contain. This one is a beauty.

Jesus came to a village. He saw a man lying in the gutter, shouting, talking incoherently, making noise. It was difficult to understand what he wanted to say; he was completely drunk.

Jesus came close just to understand what he wanted to say -- maybe he needed some help. When he came close he recognized the face. He shook the man. The man opened his eyes, and Jesus said, "Don't you recognize me? I recognize you."

The man said, "I also recognize you, but please leave me alone."

Jesus said, "As far as I remember you were ill, very ill, almost on the verge of death, and I cured you. I have done a miracle -- and I don't see any gratitude in your eyes."

The man said, "Gratitude? I was going to die and that would have been a rest from this ugly life. You made me healthy again and now I am suffering again. Who is responsible? Why did you make me healthy again? Who gave you the right?"

Jesus was shocked -- he had never thought about it. Jesus said, "But you are healthy -- you can USE your health."

And the man said, "That's what I am doing. When one is healthy one drinks, eats, enjoys the things of life. What else can I do with my health?"

It is really a very pertinent question: What will you do with your health? Eat, drink, be merry! And the man seems to be almost angry at Jesus.

Jesus walked away very puzzled, and he saw another man who was running after a prostitute. He stopped the man and said, "Young man, I know you perfectly well. You were blind and I gave you eyes."

And the man said, "What else should I do with the eyes? The eyes are meant to look and search for beauty. And that woman -- have you not seen how beautiful she is? Leave me alone! I have no more time for you."

Jesus was very sad because he was thinking he had helped these people. He came out of the village and a man was preparing to kill himself. He asked the man, "Life is so valuable! Why are you killing yourself?"

The man looked at Jesus and he said, "Don't you recognize me? I had died and you are the man who disturbed my death and you brought me back from my death. It is too much! I cannot bear this life any longer. Enough is enough! And please, you have come again... and I have made every preparation to kill myself. Don't do your miracle again -- I don't want any of your miracles!"

This is a strange story, but of great significance. Man is such, so blind, that he will do something wrong if he is healthy, he will do something wrong if he is alive, he will do something wrong if he has eyes -- he will see something wrong. Unless you are conscious you are going to do wrong.

That's why in the East, Buddha, Mahavira, Lao Tzu and people like them have never done any miracles -- or they have done only one miracle, and that miracle is the transformation of unconsciousness into consciousness -- because unless that happens everything is going to be wrong. It is giving a sword into a child's hand: either he will cut himself or somebody else. You don't give poison to a child to play with; it is dangerous. Man is unconscious, almost in a state of drunkenness.

So what will you gain out of it if you stop smoking?

O'Leary walked into a bar and ordered a beer and a whisky. He drank the beer and poured the whisky into his vest pocket. O'Leary repeated this routine several times, and finally the puzzled bartender asked, "What is the idea?"

"None of your business!" said the Irishman. "And what is more, you are so nosy I have a good mind to punch you in the eye!"

Just then a mouse stuck his head out of O'Leary's vest pocket and said, "And that goes for your damned cat too!"

Man is unconscious. He only APPEARS conscious, he is not conscious at all.

So rather than asking me what I have to say about it, you should watch. The most important thing is not stopping smoking; the most important thing is to watch why you smoke in the first place. If you don't understand the cause of it and if the cause is not removed, you can stop smoking -- then you will start chewing gum, because the basic cause is there and you will have to do something. If you don't start chewing gum, then you may start talking too much.

I don't smoke. If any day I have to stop talking I may have to start smoking! You will do something....

This amorous playboy cornered the girl in the back seat of his sedan and was eagerly trying his hand at her. She kept resisting and pushing him away, but he kept coming with more hands than an octopus.

She finally slapped him away and hollered, "I don't know what has come over you. You have always been so restrained and gentlemanly."

He said, "Yes, I know, but I just can't help it. I am trying to give up smoking."

Smoking is keeping many people from many things which will be far more dangerous. Your hand is engaged, your mouth is engaged, your mind is engaged. And you are not harming anybody in particular, only harming yourself. That is your birthright, that is your freedom. Otherwise you will do something else.

Have you watched? Whenever you feel nervous, tense, you start smoking. It helps you to cool down, to relax a little bit; otherwise life will become too much. When you are not feeling nervous, when you are enjoying, when you are relaxed, you don't remember smoking. Hours may pass and you may not smoke for the simple reason that there is no cause. Otherwise you become afraid you may do something wrong. Better to keep yourself engaged.

Mahendra, my suggestion is: first go deep down into your smoking habit. Meditate over it, why in the first place you smoke. It may take a few months for you to go into it, and the deeper you go the more you will be freed of it. Don't stop smoking. If it disappears on your understanding, through your understanding, that is totally a different matter. If it disappears because you went to the root cause of it and you saw the point....

For example, it may be that your mother's breast was taken away from you earlier than you wanted and it is just a substitute.

To many people I have suggested -- and it has been of help to smokers -- I say, "If you really want to stop smoking, then start sucking your thumb." They say, "But that will look very stupid!" That is true... smoking looks as if you are doing something great! You are doing the same thing, in fact a little more harmful. Just sucking on your thumb is not harmful at all, but smoking IS harmful. But because everybody is smoking and it is an accepted thing and it

seems to be a very grown-up thing....

Small children want to grow up, if not for anything else than just for being allowed to smoke. Seeing grown-up people smoking they feel very inferior -- they are not allowed. They are told, "You are too small -- wait a little. This is something which only grown-up people can do." It symbolizes a grown-up person. And if you are really smoking costly cigarettes, costly cigars, rare, exotic, then it shows your success, it shows that you have arrived. It gives you dignity.

Go deep into it. It may be that your mother's breast was taken away too early. Then my suggestion is: in the night before you go to bed, Mahendra, have a bottle with a rubber nipple fixed to it and suck it. Every night before you go to sleep become a child again. Go on sucking on it. Fill the bottle with warm milk. That's what the smoking is doing. The warm smoke going in and out symbolizes the milk of the mother. You will have to go deep into the causes.

One of the great things in life is that if you understand the root cause of something you can overcome it without any trouble, without any willpower. If you use willpower to stop it you will find some substitute -- you will have to find some substitute. Maybe you are not allowed to speak; in the office the boss won't allow you, in the home the wife won't allow you. She goes on talking, she gives you no time to talk. And you are also afraid if you talk you get into trouble; whatsoever you say is wrong. And the wife jumps upon it, takes the cue from that and starts nagging you. So in the home you have to hide behind a newspaper. Whether you read the newspaper or not is not the point, but you have to hide behind the newspaper. You have to look engaged, occupied, so you need not talk and you need not hear what the wife goes on saying.

Women all over the world, except for a few countries in the West, don't smoke, for the simple reason that they talk too much. Their lips have so much exercise, there is no need! In a few countries in the West they have started smoking and the reason is the Women's Lib movement. They have to compete with men in everything; whether it is sense or nonsense that doesn't matter. I am very much afraid they may start pissing standing any day, because they are equal to men! Howsoever stupid it is, they will do it.

Go into the cause of it, Mahendra, and if you can find the cause it will simply melt away. But don't stop by force -- let it go on its own accord, through watchfulness, through awareness.

So I will not say to stop smoking or stop anything, but I will suggest always: watch, meditate, be aware, go into the roots. This is a fundamental law of life: if you can understand the root of something it disappears, it evaporates. Unless you understand the root it will continue in one form or another.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM IN LOVE WITH A BEAUTIFUL GIRL, BUT SHE IS POOR. THERE IS A HAG
WITH LOTS OF LOOT IN LOVE WITH ME. SHALL I MARRY THE RICH GIRL OR
THE POOR GIRL?

Narayano, marry the rich girl and be good to the poor!

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM IN LOVE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Mahesh, the only cure for a man in love is marriage. If that does not cure him, nothing will.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
FOR FORTY-FIVE YEARS I LIVED IN PRISON, MOSTLY MADE BY MYSELF. NOW I KNOW IT IS POSSIBLE TO BECOME MORE AND MORE FREE. BUT WHAT TO DO, WHEN YOU FEEL YOU NEED A SAFE PLACE, A GOOD CLIMATE TO GROW? ANOTHER PRISON? HOW TO BE FREE ANYWHERE, ANY TIME? I FEEL SORROW AND REBELLION IN ME ABOUT THAT.

Yvonne, freedom has nothing to do with the outside; one can be free even in an actual prison. Freedom is something inner; it is of the consciousness. You can be free anywhere -- chained, in a jail, you can be free -- and you can be unfree outside the jail, in your own home, visibly absolutely free, but you will be a prisoner if your consciousness is not free.

You are confusing outer freedom with inner freedom. As far as the outside is concerned you can never be absolutely free -- let it be clear once and forever. As far as outside is concerned you are not alone, so how can you be absolutely free? There are millions of people around you. On the outside, life has to be a compromise. If you were alone on the earth you would have been absolutely free, but you are not alone.

On the road you have to keep to the left. And Yvonne will feel this is a great bondage: "Why? Why should I be forced to be on the left? I am a free man. If I want to walk on the right I will walk on the right. If I want to walk in the middle of the road I will walk in the middle of the road." In India you can do it -- India is a free country, remember! It is the greatest democracy in the world, so right, left, middle, anywhere you can walk!

But one man's freedom becomes so many people's problem. You are free to be yourself, but you should not be an interference in other people's lives.

A man of understanding will respect his freedom as much as he will respect others' freedom, because if nobody respects your freedom, your freedom will be destroyed. It is a mutual understanding: "I respect your freedom, you respect my freedom, then we both can be free." But it is a compromise. I have not to interfere with your being, I am not free to trespass on you.

You want to sing loudly in the middle of the night. Of course you are a free person, and if you cannot sing loudly in your own house, what kind of freedom is this? But the neighbors have to sleep too; then there has to be a compromise.

On the outside we are interdependent. Nobody can be absolutely independent. Life is an interdependence. Not only with people are you interdependent, you are interdependent with everything. If you cut all the trees you will die because they are constantly supplying you with oxygen. You are dependent on them -- and they are dependent on you because you are constantly giving them carbon dioxide. We take oxygen in and exhale carbon dioxide; the trees do just the opposite, they exhale oxygen and inhale carbon dioxide.

So when people like Mahendra are smoking, trees must be feeling tremendously happy because more carbon dioxide is being created for them! Listening to me these trees will be

feeling very sad that I am telling you to go to the root cause of it and then smoking will disappear. That means trees won't get as much carbon dioxide as they were getting before!

We are interdependent, not only with the trees -- with the sun, with the moon, with the stars. Everything is an interdependence.

Just tomorrow there is going to be a solar eclipse, a total eclipse. It will have tremendous effects on the life on earth. If you look at the sun directly you can go blind forever. Avoid looking at the sun -- in fact, don't come out. There will be every temptation to come out because in the middle of the day, nearabout four-thirty in the afternoon, you can see stars in the sky; just as in the night you have always seen them, in the middle of the day you can see stars. There will be great temptation to come out and see, but avoid it, don't come out. It is dangerous to the eyes, it is dangerous to your nervous system, it is dangerous to your mind mechanism. Many people will go berserk, many people will go blind. Women who are pregnant should avoid coming out absolutely because the child in the womb is very very vulnerable. He has no safeguards yet; he is soft, so soft he can be affected by anything. And in the solar eclipse, when it is total, dangerous rays enter into the atmosphere.

So when the eclipse happens I would like all my sannyasins to go inside their rooms, close the doors, sit in deep meditation. It will last only a few minutes. Avoid the temptation of coming out, and don't try to find out devices through which you can see it without being harmed. No device is absolutely foolproof; it is better to avoid it.

Now life is so interdependent... the sun is so far away. It takes ten minutes for the rays of the sun to reach to the earth, and rays move with tremendous speed -- one hundred eighty-six thousand miles per second. But we are related to other suns and other solar systems too. Everything in existence is interdependent, so you cannot be absolutely free on the outside -- and there is no need either.

Enjoy this interdependence. Don't call it bondage. It is not dependence, it is INTERdependence. You are dependent on others, others are dependent on you. It is a brotherhood, it is relatedness. Even the smallest grass leaf is related to the greatest star.

But in the inner world, in the inner kingdom, you can be absolutely free. So the whole question is of the inner. And then, Yvonne, you will not feel sad and rebellious; there is no need. Understand that the outer interdependence is a must, it is inevitable; nothing can be done about it. It is part of how things are. Accept it. When nothing can be done about it, acceptance is the only way. And accept it JOYOUSLY, not as a resignation. Accept it! This is our universe; we are part of it. We are not islands, we are part of the whole continent. We are not egos.

Yvonne, your idea of freedom is rooted somewhere in the idea of the ego. We are not egos. The ego is a false entity -- because we are not separate, how can we have egos? It is good as far as language is concerned; it is utilitarian to use the word 'I', but it has no substance in it. It is pure shadow, utterly empty. A useful word, utilitarian, but not real.

But inner freedom IS possible. It happens as you go deeper and deeper into awareness. Watch your body, watch your thought processes.

Just the other day Buddha was saying: Watch, witness the whole process of your thoughts. And slowly slowly, you will see you are neither anger nor greed, neither Hindu nor Mohammedan nor Christian, neither Catholic nor communist. Slowly slowly, you will be aware that you are not any thought -- you are not mind at all. You are a pure witness. The experience of pure witnessing is the experience of total freedom, but it is an inward phenomenon. And a man who is inwardly totally free has no hankering to be outwardly free. He is capable of accepting nature as it is.

Yvonne, create inner freedom through witnessing. Sannyas is only for the inner freedom. And live out of inner freedom and then you will be able to see the interdependence on the outside. It is beautiful and it is a blessing. There is no need to rebel against it. Relax into it, surrender to it. And remember: only a person who is really free can surrender.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I ALSO THINK THAT A MAN OF KNOWLEDGE IS BETTER THAN AN IGNORANT MAN. AM I ABSOLUTELY WRONG?

Sanatan, a man of knowledge is a totally different phenomenon. I was saying that the man of knowledge and the knowledgeable man are not the same. The man of knowledge is what a buddha is: one who knows. But the knowledgeable man is not a buddha; he does not know. He has accumulated great information, but that information is borrowed. It is from the scriptures, from the books, from others. He has not experienced it; it is about and about. He can talk, he can write, he can sermonize, but he knows nothing. He talks ABOUT God; he has no idea what God is. He has no glimpse even -- what to say about experience.

The priests all over the world of all the religions are knowledgeable people. Jesus knows, but the pope is not a man of knowledge. He is a knowledgeable man, he has great information. He can quote scriptures.

One of the great thinkers of the West was Ingersoll. Whenever he would deliver discourses -- and he was a great orator too -- he would make a mysterious sign in the air with his finger before he would start speaking. And when he would end, after that again he would make something with his fingers -- some very mysterious thing in the air. He was asked again and again, but he would laugh and he would not answer.

When he was dying somebody asked, "Now please tell us, otherwise we will be always curious and wondering -- what were you doing your whole life? Is there some magic in it? Why do you make some mysterious signs before you speak and then again when you end?"

He said, "There is no magic in it, but I could not tell it before. Now I can tell it. Before I started my speech I was making the sign of inverted commas, and after I ended I had to close the inverted commas. I was saying to myself and to you too that it is all just quotation, it is not my experience. The whole thing is borrowed -- it is within inverted commas."

That is a knowledgeable man. But Ingersoll is sincere, at least honest. The knowledgeable man is not better than the ignorant man, remember, Sanatan. The man of knowledge is certainly better than the ignorant man, of course, obviously, but the same is not true about the knowledgeable man. The knowledgeable man is even worse than the ignorant man. The ignorant man at least knows that he is ignorant; he has no pretensions, he has no facade. The knowledgeable man has a beautiful facade, a mask.

And the problem is: if you go on deceiving others, slowly slowly you become autohypnotized. You start thinking that you know. But there is no difference. The knowledgeable person is only on the surface painted with great knowledge and the ignorant person is not painted; he is raw. The knowledgeable person is a little polished. But deep down they are the same person. Both will be greedy, both will be full of lust, both will be full of anger, both will be full of ego. Their lives will be nothing but ego trips. Their lives will be nothing but sexuality, violence, greed, jealousy, possessiveness. There will be no difference

at all.

Sanatan, remember, you have to become a knower on your own. If you quote me, that is knowledgeable; if you know it on your own, that is knowing. And knowing brings freedom, knowing brings truth. Knowledgeability is respectable; you become an expert. The more you know, the more people think you are great, but deep down you go on living the same animal kind of life, no difference at all -- or maybe only one difference: you are a bigger hypocrite than the ignorant man.

Norman Bush had a terrible stutter. His wife Rose suggested that he go and see a specialist. Reluctantly he was persuaded to visit the best man in Harley Street who told him, "Well, Mr. Bush, there is only one thing we can do about this stutter of yours. You see, the problem is your balls are too big. However, we should be able to transplant a smaller pair. That would undoubtedly cure your ailment."

Norman was given a week to think it over and reluctantly accepted to undergo surgery. When he came out, his speech fully restored, his wife was delighted. Then came those long nights when Rose was eager and Norman showed no interest. As the weeks went by she grew more anxious and frustrated.

Then one night she said to him, "You know, I think I preferred you the way you were before, with your big balls and your stutter. I would go and see that doctor again and have the operation reversed."

Reluctantly, Norman was dragged off again to the specialist. "You know, Doctor," said Norman, "my wife says she liked me better the way I was before with my stutter and all, and, um, well, ah, do you think I could have my old balls back again?"

"Not f-f-f-fucking likely!" said the doctor.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #5

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IF THE TRAVELER CAN FIND
A VIRTUOUS AND WISE COMPANION,
LET HIM GO WITH HIM JOYFULLY
AND OVERCOME THE DANGERS OF THE WAY.

BUT IF YOU CANNOT FIND
FRIEND OR MASTER TO GO WITH YOU,
TRAVEL ON ALONE --
LIKE A KING WHO HAS GIVEN AWAY HIS KINGDOM,
LIKE AN ELEPHANT IN THE FOREST.

TRAVEL ON ALONE,
RATHER THAN WITH A FOOL FOR COMPANY.

DO NOT CARRY WITH YOU YOUR MISTAKES.
DO NOT CARRY YOUR CARES.

TRAVEL ON ALONE
LIKE AN ELEPHANT IN THE FOREST.

Nirupa says that this is my serious day. The fault is not mine; the whole fault is Gautama the Buddha's. That old guy is absolutely serious.

It is said of Jesus that he never laughed. That can't be true because Jesus is very much a man of the earth, very earthly. It is impossible that he never laughed. He loved people, he loved mixing with people, with ordinary people -- farmers, carpenters, fishermen, gamblers, drunkards, prostitutes. Seeing his company, it seems absolutely improbable that he never laughed. He enjoyed eating, drinking; he enjoyed company. He must have gossiped, joked, laughed.

But it is possible that Buddha never laughed. He is utterly serious. He is very much Indian. He is pure water... I mix as much wine as I can!

So Nirupa, forgive me, because if I mix more wine, then that old guy will be really angry! As it is, he already thinks I am corrupting him, but he can't do anything -- I am alive and he is dead! I am not an Indian at all.

Once an American lady was asking me, "What 'nese' are you? -- Japanese, Chinese, Javanese?"

I told her, "I am no one." And then I asked her, "Who are you? -- monkey, donkey or yankee?"

I belong to no country, to no tradition, to no race, to no religion. I am just a white cloud floating all over the world. I don't have any roots anywhere; hence I am free. Buddha has roots in the Indian soil, in the Indian mind.

Buddha would have remained the same, unavailable, unapproachable. It is through the Chinese and the Japanese that he became a little more human. Otherwise he would have remained a god above the clouds, almost unreachable. When Buddhism was introduced into China they brought it down to the earth. Chinese are very down-to-earth people. They have never given birth to any men like Buddha. They had their own awakened people -- Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu -- but they are full of laughter, full of joy, full of gratitude. They belong to this existence; they are not in any way escaping from it. They are living it in its totality.

And the Japanese are even more earthly. When Buddhism reached Japan via China, its

very color, texture, its very fragrance changed. It became tremendously multidimensional, creative, more life-affirmative. Laughter came in. The Japanese masters transformed the very seriousness of Buddha into its opposite.

But in India the effort has never been made. In India Buddha has remained old, for twenty-five centuries.

My effort here is to make him alive again. And to make him alive means to make him a contemporary, to help him to speak to you the way you would like to be spoken to, the way you will be able to understand him. He has to be brought from his heights. The earth has its own beauty and any height has to be based on this very earth.

So, Nirupa, forgive me, because speaking on Buddha something of him is bound to come in; that is unavoidable. I try my best to give new colors to his colorless way of expression, to give him more liveliness, but still, I cannot go too far from his sutra. Although I take enough rope, I go as far as it is possible -- nobody has gone so far as I have been trying to go -- but still the point of reference remains his sutras.

I love the man -- he has a beauty of his own -- but there is no need to be so serious. But it was the way in India in those days, and it is the way even today, to be serious. Religion is thought to be a very serious phenomenon.

I may be the first person in the whole history of India who is mixing religion with jokes. Let us start with a few jokes.

The first:

Pierre, a Frenchman, Tonio, an Italian, and Stash, a Pole, were traveling through the country when their car broke down.

They found lodging at a farm, and in the course of the night the Frenchman decided to sneak into the farmer's daughter's room.

The farmer heard him walking up the stairs and said, "Who is it?"

Thinking quickly, Pierre whispered, "Meow, meow...."

Twenty minutes later, Tonio made the same attempt. As he neared the farmer's daughter's room, the girl's father shouted, "Who is there?"

The Italian also imitated the feline sound, "Meow, meow...."

Stash decided that he, too, should make an attempt. Just as he got to the girl's room, the farmer shouted, "Alright, who is it?"

The Polack replied, "It is me, the cat."

The second:

Benson and his dog were sitting at a bar. He ordered two martinis. Benson handed one to the dog, who promptly drank it, then ate the glass until only the base and the stem remained. Then he left.

"That's the craziest thing I have ever seen," said the bartender.

"Yeah, he's a dumb dog," said Benson. "The stem is the best part."

Third:

Mr. Benchley was quietly drinking his martini in a corner when a lady approached him and said, "Don't you know that stuff you are drinking is slow poison?"

"That's alright," he answered. "I'm in no hurry."

Fourth:

The car hit her and a hundred yards away he stopped and looked back.
"Watch out!" he shouted.

The woman raised herself on her elbow and screamed, "Why -- are you coming back?"

The fifth and the last:

Roxanne, a beautiful, well-built blonde, applied at a circus for the job of a lion tamer. Ralph was another candidate.

"I will give you both a chance," said the manager. "The girl can go first."

Roxanne, wearing a full-length mink coat, entered the cage. A huge lion was let in with her and immediately the animal started to charge.

Suddenly, Roxanne opened her fur coat and stood there, completely naked. The lion stopped dead in his tracks and began licking her feet, then her hands, then he went meekly back to the corner.

The manager was amazed. He turned towards the young man. "Well, pal, do you think you can top that?"

"I sure can," said Ralph. "You just get that stupid lion out of there and I will show you."

Now, the sutras:

These stories are about the state of humanity. They are different aspects of man's unconsciousness, his mechanicalness, different aspects of man's unawareness. Man goes on living like a robot. All his behavior comes out of a dark space within him. Hence the misery of the world. Unless that inner space is lit, becomes full of light, there is no hope for humanity.

In the past we would survive because the weapons to kill man were not yet perfect. Now they are. Now we have perfect atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, laser rays, death rays and what-not. Now we have become so efficient in destroying humanity and the earth that if within this last part of the century we don't bring a light within millions of people's hearts, humanity is doomed. Then there is no future. We may be living the last years of human existence on the earth.

But this critical state can become also a great blessing in disguise. It may make us more aware, more responsible. It may provoke us to DO something so that humanity takes a surge towards the higher plane of consciousness.

Buddha's whole message is concerned with consciousness: how to raise consciousness in humanity, how to make him more alert, more capable of seeing things as they are, how to make him capable of becoming more spontaneous and functioning out of awareness and not out of unawareness. We function out of unconsciousness.

All these sutras are just to prepare the ground, a right ground from where you can take off.

IF THE TRAVELER CAN FIND
A VIRTUOUS AND WISE COMPANION,
LET HIM GO WITH HIM JOYFULLY
AND OVERCOME THE DANGERS OF THE WAY.

Each single word has to be meditated upon. The first word is 'if'; it is a big 'if'. Buddha says: If THE TRAVELER CAN FIND....

It is very difficult to find an awakened master for the simple reason that very few people ever try to get out of the routine of unconsciousness. The routine of remaining unconscious is

comfortable, cozy, because it keeps you confined to the world of the familiar and it keeps you with the crowd. It is risky to go away from the crowd because the crowd never forgives a person who goes away from it. The crowd wants to possess you all in all, body and soul. The crowd wants to dominate you. The crowd lives through domination.

This effort to dominate is what politics is all about. Politics means the crowd is trying to dominate the individual, to destroy the individual, to destroy freedom, to destroy spontaneity, to destroy any idea of going on one's own, of living one's own life according to one's own light. The crowd wants you to follow the mass, the collective mind. The crowd does not want you to have your own way. The crowd has already made a superhighway; you can simply follow it. And in a way it is more comfortable, it is cozy. You are surrounded with people, it is warm.

When you move alone into the dense and deep and dark forest of the unknown, it is cold, and there are thousands of fears arising. You don't know, in the first place, how to cope with the unknown. You are efficient in coping with the known; your system of education makes you capable of coping with the known. Your education is very much against the unknown.

You will be surprised to know that your education is against intelligence. Society needs imitators. It wants you to be good in memorizing, not in becoming intelligent. It wants you to become good machines, not beautiful people; efficient machines, but machines all the same. It needs you to function well, but it does not want you to be more conscious. Then you would start saying no to many things; you will not be so obedient.

The society wants yea-sayers. It wants blind people. It does not want you to see because if you see you are bound to be affected by your seeing, you are bound to change your ways. The society wants blind followers.

Hence it is very rare that a person becomes awakened because -- the first thing -- to become awakened, to be a buddha, means to go away from the collective mind; to become so much an individual, integrated, that even if the whole world is against you you don't care. You have decided that you will live according to your inner voice.

That is the first step, but a great step, a quantum leap. It is moving into danger, it is risky. You will be creating enemies. And you will be going into a world which is uncharted, a territory of which you know nothing. No maps exist; no maps can exist, in the very nature of things.

Hence it is very rare to find the awakened master. In hundreds of years it happens only once that there is a man like Jesus or Buddha or Lao Tzu. There are thousands of pretenders and they are easily available and they are very cheap. In fact, even if you don't find them, they will find you. They are constantly searching for followers. Their whole business depends on how many followers they have. Each religion is concerned in having more followers because more followers mean more power.

Just a few days before, the Protestant church of Germany has released a report against me -- a big report, eighteen pages! To all the churches the report has been sent. They have been alerted that, "This man is dangerous. And the danger is more so," says the report, "because this man quotes Jesus. And sometimes he explains Jesus in such a beautiful way that Christians may get hooked by him."

I am sitting here. I have never been to Germany and I will never be there. What is the fear?

A small commission was made to study all of my books to prepare the report. The commission seems to be a little bit confused. It seems a few people of the commission have become interested... because if you have a little bit of intelligence, even just a little bit of

intelligence, how can you avoid seeing that there is something? So they say, "There is something, there seems to be something. And it happens to be very much like Jesus' teaching. But beware. Jesus has said, 'False prophets will be coming who will speak like me.' But Jesus is the only begotten Son of God."

There is a great fear that if a few people go away from the crowd, the crowd feels reduced, its power lost. So no crowd wants anybody to leave its fold. It will create all kinds of hindrances. And if you want to become enlightened you have to pass all those hurdles created by the society, by the church, by the state, by everybody around you, by your own family.

Remember Jesus. He has said: Unless you hate your mother and your father and your family you cannot come with me. It looks a little harsh and hard on Jesus' part. It looks as if these words can't be his -- but they ARE his. And the man was so loving and so compassionate; why should he be so hard on his family? -- because they were creating all kinds of hindrances for him.

And every family is going to create hindrances because when you go in search of truth you are going away from the power of the family. And everybody is power-hungry. The father is power-hungry, the mother is power-hungry, the husband, the wife. Even the children are power-hungry. Even the children don't want you to go out of the fold.

To become an enlightened person is almost like going the whole way AGAINST the current. Hence it is very rare.

That's why Buddha starts the sutra: IF THE TRAVELER CAN FIND....

And it is a pilgrimage, the greatest, the most adventurous, of coming to oneself. It is a strange journey. You have gone so far away from yourself that you have to come back. You have forgotten the way how to come back home. You need a guide, but only somebody who has come home can guide you. And there are thousands of pretenders. It is very easy to pretend. Anybody can talk, advise, say beautiful things; it costs nothing. Anybody can read the scriptures, anybody can quote the scriptures -- and that's what is happening all around the world. And religion is a good business. You can exploit people very easily; "for their own good" you can exploit them.

Buddha says: IF THE TRAVELER CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS AND WISE COMPANION.... Remember: the real master from HIS side is only a companion, a friend. From YOUR side he is a master; from HIS side he is only a friend. From your side he is a master because you are unawakened and he is awakened. From his side he is only a friend because he knows there is no essential difference between him and you. You are just asleep; that is not much of a difference -- no difference in quality.

You can be awakened.

Your buddhahood can become manifest.

You are just a bud and he has become a flower, but any bud can become a flower any moment. He was also a bud before; now he has opened his petals, he has become a flower. He has released his fragrance. Everybody is capable of doing it. From the master's side, the disciple is a friend, a companion.

The pseudo master will always pretend that he is higher than you, holier than you, superior to you. He will talk always in such a way that you cannot understand; that is his way of hiding himself. He will talk in spiritual jargon, he will talk in esoteric ways. And there are foolish people who become victims, because people have some idea that if you cannot understand something, there must be something in it. If you cannot understand, it must be very deep, very profound.

Even here... I am with you, but there are a few people who pretend they are my mediums. And they tell people that, whatsoever they are saying, I am speaking through them. I am fully alive -- I can speak on my own! Wait a little. Let me die, then you can do your business. You will do it, but not now.

But I can forgive these people because they earn a little money and they exploit a few people. I cannot understand the people who become victims of these persons. They can't see the point. I am here: what is the need of somebody to function as a medium, to tell them what I want to tell them? I will tell you myself. Am I not telling you enough? Do you want more? Year in and year out I go on speaking to you every day.

But there are a few people... they don't come to listen, they don't come here. They avoid the commune, but they go on sitting in the Blue Diamond,* and a few foolish people go on meeting them there. And they roll up their eyes and they pretend to go in a trance, and then they start talking nonsense. The more nonsense it is, the more philosophical it seems, the more metaphysical it seems. And they always get a few people to listen to them, to follow them. It is a strange phenomenon, but somehow the pseudo has an appeal.

One thing about the pseudo master is that he manages a facade, he wears a mask. He wears a mask that you would like him to wear. He fulfills your expectations. The true master never fulfills anybody's expectations.

Jesus proved that he was a true master because at the last moment he frustrated everybody, even his closest disciples. They were hoping that he would do some miracle: "If he can raise people from death, if he can cure blind people, if he can cure crippled persons, he is going to do something when he will be crucified. Some great miracle is going to happen...." And nothing happened, nothing at all! That proves his authenticity. He was not there to fulfill your expectations.

But the pseudo master always tries to fulfill your expectations. Sometimes he manages beautifully. Sometimes he will do miracles.

I know one man. He told his story to me himself because he fell in love with me. He was worshipped by many as enlightened. By and by he became tired of playing the role. It is tiring. When you are not enlightened and you have to pretend to be enlightened and you have even to manage a few miracles, it is tiring.

He came to see me. He cried and wept and he said, "Save me from my followers! I am utterly tired and bored, and I have to do things just to keep them satisfied." He said to me, "Once I had to do a miracle because my followers were expecting something big so that many more people can come."

Followers are also interested that if many more people come to THEIR master, they feel that they are with the right person. If they are alone with the master, then they start feeling a little doubtful. Nobody believes in his own being, nobody trusts in his own intelligence. When you see thousands of people you say, "It must be right. So many people can't be wrong." Remember, the reality is just the opposite: so many people can't be right!

The man said to me, "I had to manage a miracle. I stopped a train for seven minutes." I said, "How did you manage it?"

He said, "Simple! I had to bribe three persons. One was the ticket collector. I had managed it that I would be traveling without the ticket and he would come and ask for the ticket. And I would get angry and I would say, 'There is no need for any ticket for me. We are saints and we are allowed every freedom.' So I became very angry. When I became angry, he became angry -- he was bribed and he was told to become very angry." He pushed the man

outside the railway compartment.

This man was traveling with a big group of his followers; almost half of the train was full of his followers. They all got down, and the man said, "Okay, then try to take your train. I will not allow it to move a single inch" -- and he stood there with rolled-up eyes. And the driver tried, and the guard was showing the flag and the stationmaster was showing the flag, and nothing was happening. The train was stuck because the driver was bribed, the guard was bribed. Three persons were bribed.

Finally they rushed to him, fell at his feet, asked to be forgiven, asked him to come in again and told him, "Nobody will ever again ask you for the ticket. We are stupid people -- forgive us!"

He entered the train and immediately it moved. That created a great sensation. Thousands of people became his followers because he managed to do this miracle.

All miracles are done in this way. If you want to do miracles, you can come in private to me and I will teach you -- because these tricks cannot be taught publicly! Once you know, everybody knows; then they lose their whole mystery. All these tricks are done in this way. But people's expectations are fulfilled.

The pseudo masters speak the language of your desires. They say, "If you meditate, you will become rich, you will become successful." That is absolute nonsense.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi says to people, "If you meditate you will become healthy, you will become rich, you will become successful, you will become famous. In whatsoever line you are working you will be at the top."

That's what you want, so you say, "Okay, then it is not much of a problem to meditate. Fifteen minutes in the morning, fifteen minutes in the evening..." just half an hour lost and all success is yours. This is the most successful formula for success -- and you want to succeed. You want a thousand and one desires to be fulfilled.

Now, there are masters who say, "Whatsoever you want, you will get it through meditation. Money will pour in. Just ask in deep meditation and it is going to happen."

This is speaking the language of your desire. The truth is just the opposite. If you ask me, if you really meditate you will be a failure in life, an utter failure. If you are succeeding, even that success will disappear because meditation will make you so relaxed, so nonviolent, so loving, so noncompetitive, so nonegoistic, that who cares for success? Meditation will make you so joyous that who wants to bother about the tomorrow? Who wants to stake today for the tomorrow?

Meditation will make you inwardly rich, certainly. Inwardly you will become ecstatic, but outwardly it can't be guaranteed that you will become rich, that you will become successful, that you will become very healthy, that no disease will ever happen to you. That is all sheer bullshit!

Maharshi Raman died of cancer, Ramakrishna Paramahansa died of cancer. Can you find greater meditators? J. Krishnamurti suffers from many illnesses; he has been suffering from severe headache for almost twenty years. The headache is so severe that sometimes he wants to hit his head against the wall. Can you find a greater meditator? Can you find a greater buddha alive? If J. Krishnamurti suffers from a headache, if Raman Maharshi dies of cancer, if Ramakrishna dies of cancer, do you think meditation is going to give you health? Yes, in a way it will make you more healthy and more whole, but only in a very inner way. Deep down you will be whole, deep down there will be an inner spiritual health.

Raman is dying with cancer, but his eyes are full of joy. He dies laughing. This is real

health. In deep agony is his body, but he is just a witness. This is meditation.
Buddha says:

IF THE TRAVELER CAN FIND
A VIRTUOUS AND WISE COMPANION,
LET HIM GO WITH HIM JOYFULLY
AND OVERCOME THE DANGERS OF THE WAY.

If you can find a man who is awakened, who is really virtuous and wise, whose virtue is not only a cultivated facade but a spontaneous fragrance, whose wisdom is no longer knowledge, whose wisdom is his own authentic experience... if you can find such a person, then go with him joyfully, wholeheartedly, totally. Then don't hold back, because this is a rare opportunity.

How will you recognize the real awakened person? How will you recognize that he is authentic, true, that what he is saying he knows? How will you recognize him? That is one of the most important questions that has been asked for centuries, and it has not been answered adequately because it can't be answered adequately. Only a few hints can be given.

You cannot recognize a true master through the head. To your head he may look very illogical. Let that be one of the hints -- because the pseudo master tries to be very logical. He has to convince you, and you can be convinced only if he is logical. He tries even to give logic about God. He creates theology, which is the most stupid thing in the world -- logic about God! There is no way to prove God logically, but the pseudo master tries to prove everything logically because you can understand only logic.

The true master speaks paradoxically. He is a living paradox. He contradicts himself, because truth is the meeting of the opposites. And in the true master the truth has happened, the opposites have met. The polar opposites have disappeared in him; they have become one, they have melted into one unity. He is as paradoxical as existence itself. That should be the first hint.

The head can only give you this much, so if your head feels somewhere that something is illogical, don't escape from the place. That illogicality simply means something mysterious is there. Now move to the heart. When your head says something is illogical, the head is saying, "It is beyond me -- drop it. I can't understand it. It is incomprehensible." Rather than dropping it, drop the head! Then you will be able to see the true master.

The true master can only be felt. It is a question of a loving openness on your part. The disciple has to open the heart. The true master comes through the heart, not through the head. He is felt as love, not as logic. He is felt as a song, not as syllogism. He is felt as poetry, not as prose. He is a dance; you can know him only through participation.

Be with a true master. Just being with him, sitting by his side in deep silence, with no prejudice, with no idea what is happening, something transpires. Something jumps from the master into your heart. You can feel it. It is energy, it is an energy phenomenon. It is not a question of a theory, of any hypothesis, of philosophy. It is a jump of energy, a quantum leap. Something invisible radiates from the true master and penetrates to the true disciple. And who is the true disciple? -- the one whose heart is open.

And once you have felt the presence of the true master, Buddha says: GO WITH HIM JOYFULLY... not reluctantly, not with doubts -- joyfully, dancing, celebrating. You have found the master. There can be no greater blessing than that, because on the way you will find many problems without the master. The first step will not be possible; only the master can push you. And you can allow him to push you only if you trust.

It is just like a new bird who has come out of the egg and sits on the edge of the nest, looks at his mother, father, parents, other birds flying in the sky. A great longing arises in his heart too. He flutters his wings, but he cannot gather courage; he is afraid he may fall down. He has never flown before. He does not know what it is all about, how these people are managing. They may be different, they may have certain qualities. Who knows that he has wings also? He can have a certain feeling that there are wings; he can see a certain similarity. But the fear of falling, of killing oneself or crippling oneself, is also there.

The mother goes and calls from the tree far away, gives him a call. He wants to go, but the fear.... The mother goes around the nest, flies, to show him that "What I am doing YOU can do." Slowly slowly, he gathers courage, and one day the mother simply pushes him. He has to be pushed. In spite of his fear, when he is pushed he can see that he opens his wings; he is able to balance himself. Of course, in the beginning it is a little awkward, but soon he becomes efficient.

Without the master the first step is difficult, the most difficult thing. How to move into the unknown if there is nobody to push you? But the master can push you only if you trust him, if you love him. It is just like the bird loves the mother and he knows that whatsoever she is doing she will not do any harm. Out of that trust he allows her to push him; in fact, deep down he wants to be pushed. He knows, "I cannot do it on my own." But if the mother is doing it she must be doing it right.

When the disciple feels such a love affair with the master, then things become possible. And then there are many dangers on the way. The first step is the most difficult; then as you move deeper and deeper many more things have to be dropped. Who is going to tell you what to drop and what not to drop? It is all unknown to you. Somebody needs to constantly watch you.

And then comes the last step, when the ego dies. That is also very difficult -- it seems as if YOU are dying. The master has to help you die because only through death you will be reborn. The master has to help you understand that this is not death. The seed disappearing in the soil is not dying; it is really being born as a tree. And the river disappearing in the ocean is not dying, it is simply becoming the ocean. It is not losing anything, it is gaining much more. It is losing nothing and gaining all.

BUT IF YOU CANNOT FIND.... Buddha says: It is not easy to find an awakened master, so:

... IF YOU CANNOT FIND
FRIEND OR MASTER TO GO WITH YOU,
TRAVEL ON ALONE....

Travel you must. If you can find a master, a companion, a friend, you are blessed, you are fortunate. If you cannot find, just don't make it an excuse that what can you do? -- there is nobody like Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu available. "What can I do? I have to live the ordinary life. I cannot go into the unknown on my own." No, you CAN go. It will be a little bit difficult, hazardous, risky, but the risk is worth taking.

TRAVEL ON ALONE --
LIKE A KING WHO HAS GIVEN AWAY HIS KINGDOM,
LIKE AN ELEPHANT IN THE FOREST.

Don't be worried that you are alone. Slowly slowly, you will become able to balance

yourself. Slowly slowly, in slow steps, you will be able to go beyond the known. Slowly slowly you will be able to die as an ego and be born as an egoless presence. It may take a little longer time. It may take you sometimes astray because you are alone and there is nobody to call you back again and again to the right path, but still it is better to travel alone than not to travel at all.

The greatest fault, the greatest misery is that people are not traveling at all towards truth. They are simply going in circles in their mundane affairs: the business, the wife, the husband, the children, the office and the home. And they go on in circles. Their whole life is just pointless; it makes no sense. It has no meaning, no significance. Still, somehow they go on, afraid of risking.

Don't be afraid of risking. If you can risk, the whole universe is going to help you because this universe is not in any way aloof and unconcerned about you.

Buddha has said, "When I became enlightened, the whole universe rejoiced. That moment I felt that the whole universe was helping me, waiting for me to become enlightened."

The story is beautiful. Don't take it literally. It is symbolic, it is a metaphor. When Buddha became enlightened, trees bloomed out of season. Trees cannot bloom out of season, but we have to express somehow the joy that was felt in existence itself.

Whenever there is a man like Buddha, the whole humanity takes an upward surge; it soars higher. Just take two dozen names from human history -- Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Mohammed, Bahauddin, Kabir -- just two dozen names. Take them out of human history and you will not be human at all; you will lose all your humanity. It is through these few people that great consciousness has been released. And even though you have not done anything you have been blessed by it. It has showered on you without your becoming aware of it.

So if you have to travel alone, travel, but travel you must, in spite of all the dangers and risks. The greatest risk is NOT to travel, because then you are stuck, you don't grow, you are like a stone, you will never flower. In traveling maybe you will go astray, you will commit a few mistakes. So what? One learns through mistakes, one learns through going astray. And if one keeps alert one can't go very far away; that alertness brings one back.

TRAVEL ON ALONE,
RATHER THAN WITH A FOOL FOR COMPANY.

Buddha says: Just for the company's sake, don't move with a fool. Beware of that.

I have been observing thousands of saints and mahatmas -- Jaina, Hindu, Mohammedan -- and I was surprised to find one thing: ninety-nine percent of them look foolish, stupid. Something dull and dead seems to be inside them. There seems to be no flash of insight; no intelligence radiates around them. They look like walking graves. They have already died. They are worshipped because people worship death, and because people worship them they think they have arrived. They have not moved a single inch! They have even fallen below the ordinary humanity.

This is my experience: that your so-called saints are far below the ordinary humanity as far as intelligence is concerned, awareness is concerned. They are not meditators, they don't know what meditation is. In the name of meditation they go on doing something else. They are utter fools!

When Buddha uses the word 'fool' he means somebody who is living an unconscious life. Somebody is accumulating money in an unconscious way, not knowing why, not knowing for what, not knowing that death will come and everything will be taken away. Somebody else

has renounced money, but he is as unconscious as the one who is greedy for money. Somebody goes on stuffing himself with food and somebody else goes on long fasts. Both are torturing their bodies in different ways, but both are self-destructive. The man who eats too much tortures his body, remember it -- he is also ascetic in his own way -- and the man who fasts also tortures his body. Both are self-destructive.

And by self-destruction you cannot attain to liberation, to God, to nirvana. It is only through a tremendous creativity, sensitivity, awareness, that one comes home.

So Buddha says: Beware of the company of the fool. It is better to be alone rather than to be with a foolish person, because the foolish person is bound to affect you. You will be with him and he will certainly infect you with his foolishness.

Intelligence is also contagious. If you live with an intelligent person you start becoming intelligent, because we are not so separate, we vibrate together. If we live with somebody for a long time we start synchronizing with the person.

That's the whole secret of SATSANG -- the communion with the master. If he is awakened, his disciples slowly slowly start moving towards a subtle awakening. It is bound to happen. If the disciple can simply be in the presence of the master, surrendered, relaxed, in a state of let-go, he may not have to do anything at all. The presence of the master will start flooding him, will start changing his being. We are joined together.

Have you not watched it? If four persons are laughing and you are in a sad mood and you go to these people, you forget your sadness; you start laughing. Later on when you remember that you were sad, it looks very strange. How did you forget your sadness? How did you start laughing? What happened? The energy there, the space there, was totally different from you: it was more powerful than you. Those four persons were creating a certain vibe. Hence the significance of a buddhafield. The master creates a field around himself; through his disciples he creates an energy field. To be in that energy field is a transformation in itself.

But the same happens if you move with the foolish people. Just to keep company, people would like to be with anybody. They are so afraid of being alone.

Buddha wants you to beware of that. It is better to be with trees and the clouds and the river and the mountains and the ocean, because they will not make you more foolish than you are; they may even help you to become a little more intelligent, because the whole existence is nothing but intelligence. If you can be in deep communion with nature you will become more intelligent. There is all around you tremendous intelligence available, but only intelligent people can feel it. The foolish person remains closed.

The fool lives in his own world; that's why he is called the idiot. The word 'idiot' means one who lives in his own world, one who has his own idiom, one who has his own private reality. He is closed to the real; he has his own fantasy. He lives in his dreams.

Pat went to see the doctor about his eyes. The doctor suggested he bathe them every morning in brandy.

The next time Pat came to see the doctor, the doctor asked him how his eyes were.

"Did you follow my advice?" he asked.

"I tried to -- but I can't raise the glass higher than my mouth!"

The fool is not only the person who is ignorant. The fool can be very knowledgeable; often he is. He can be a pundit, he can be a priest, he can be a professor. And then he is more dangerous because he appears to talk sense, and deep down he is as ignorant as anybody else, as foolish as anybody else.

A famous professor walked into a travel agency to buy a steamship ticket.
"To where?" the agent asked.

"Have you got a globe of the world?"

The travel agent handed him a globe. The professor turned the globe around and around looking at all the countries and continents. After thirty minutes he said, "Pardon me, haven't you got anything else?"

Your professors, your pundits, your scholars, are not very much different.

And remember, the foolish person may have a certain character. It is easy for the fool to create a certain character because he is stubborn. Stupidity is always stubborn. If some idea gets into his head he may be able to practice it more consistently than the intelligent person because he is stubborn, he cannot be flexible. He is not dynamic, he is stagnant.

That helps many foolish people to become respectable -- because they can do stupid things nobody else will be able to do, but they do them with such perseverance, with such patience, with such strength, that they succeed in doing them. They can create great characters, they can be great moralists, they can be very pious, and they can impress you.

Remember, character is not of much value. What is valuable is consciousness -- not conscience but consciousness. Conscience is created by the society. The more foolish you are, the more the society is able to create a conscience in you. It gives you an idea how to live your life. It manipulates you in a very subtle way. It hypnotizes you and conditions you. And the conditioning is so long that you forget completely that these are not your ideas.

For example, if you are born in a vegetarian family you will be a vegetarian, thinking that you have renounced all meat-eating, etcetera, that you are great -- you are a vegetarian. But if you were born in a nonvegetarian family you would have been a nonvegetarian. It depends on the conditioning; you are not doing it consciously. You are allowing other people to dominate you, to decide for you.

The intelligent person is rebellious. He does not allow others to decide for him; he keeps the right to himself. Hence, stupid people become saints very easily because they allow the society to condition them. At least in that particular society they will be very much respected. To others they will look very stupid, to others they will look insane, but to that particular society which has conditioned them they will be great saints.

Just a few days before in Bombay, a naked Jaina saint has come -- Acharya Vidyananda. He lives naked. To the Jainas he seems to be a great saint; to others he seems to be a little bit crazy, eccentric. And if you look at his face he looks stupid, although he talks on great scriptures. But his face shows simply stupidity, no radiance. His body seems ugly. If there is going to be a competition, a world competition in ugliness for Mr. Universe, then he may succeed. But to his set, to his followers he looks so great -- that he has transcended his body. And all that he is doing is unnecessarily torturing his body.

If you torture the body it becomes ugly. It is a gift of God -- make it beautiful. It is your home, you have to live in it -- make it beautiful.

But once you are in a certain conditioning, that is your whole universe. You think in terms which others have told you. Unless by some accident you come across a new idea....

Old maid Sarah possessed several million dollars, a pedigree female cat, and some very Victorian ideas on the subject of sex. In fact, her feelings about sex were such that for five years she had never allowed her cat to go out of the house for fear of "contamination."

Deciding to take a vacation in Hawaii, Sarah instructed her housekeeper, "Now be sure you don't let the cat out. I repeat, do not, under any circumstances, let the cat out."

After Sarah had been gone about a week, the housekeeper received a telegram, "Having a wonderful time. Met the nicest young man. Let the cat out!"

People are living in small ponds of their own ideology and it is very rare that they will come across something new that will go through their thick layer of conditioning and will make them aware what they are doing to themselves. These are the people you worship, you respect, whom for centuries you have worshipped and respected. And because of this worship and respect the whole humanity has remained tethered to the lowest possibility of intelligence. You could have reached to the Everest of intelligence, but we have not allowed our intelligence to soar high, higher than the collective mind wants it to.

DO NOT CARRY WITH YOU YOUR MISTAKES.
DO NOT CARRY YOUR CARES.

Buddha says: Go alone, just remember two things. Don't carry your mistakes -- that means, don't carry your past. There is no need even to repent about the past. Your religious people go on teaching you, "Repent!" because it is through repentance that they make you feel guilty, and when you are guilty you can be exploited.

A real master always makes you feel good about yourself, not guilty; respectful towards yourself, not guilty. But the priests live on creating guilt in you. They would not like you to forget your mistakes; they want to remind you again and again. They have not even forgotten the sin that was committed by Adam and Eve; they go on reminding you about the original sin. You have not committed it, but you are born into the chain in which the first man and woman committed it and you are carrying the load of it. You have to feel guilty even for that, what to say about your own mistakes? The priests have lived in great power for the simple reason that they have reduced you into guilty sinners.

The elderly priest listened in while the young curate took his first confession. "You did well," he told the young priest, "but I suggest that when you hear the confessions of these pretty young ladies it would be more appropriate if you went, 'Tsk, tsk, tsk,' and not 'Wow!'"

DO NOT CARRY WITH YOU YOUR MISTAKES. Don't repent, don't feel guilty. Drop the past; it is no more.

And: DO NOT CARRY YOUR CARES. That is: don't think about the future, don't be worried about it. Live in the present. That is what meditation is all about: living in the present. Mind lives in the past and in the future; and if you can be in the present, mind disappears, and silence prevails -- profound silence, virgin silence.

See it as a fact... right now, here. If there is no past and no future, then this moment has such beauty, such grace. Then the birds singing and the traffic noise and this beautiful silence... and something will transpire between me and you. It can transpire only in the present.

TRAVEL ON ALONE
LIKE AN ELEPHANT IN THE FOREST.

Be in the present and travel on alone -- if you cannot find a master. But if you can find a master, let him go with you; go with him joyfully.... AND OVERCOME THE DANGERS OF THE WAY.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Truth cannot be lost

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM REJECTING MY MIND AND CLINGING TO AWARENESS.

Prem Shahido, mind has not to be rejected at all; if you reject it, it will remain. Rejection means repression. Anything rejected never leaves you; it simply moves from the conscious to the unconscious, from the lighted part of your being to the dark layers where you cannot face it. You become oblivious of it, but it is there, more alive than ever. It is better to face the enemy than to keep the enemy at your back; that is far more dangerous.

And I have not told you to reject the mind. Mind is a beautiful mechanism, one of the miracles of existence. We have not been able yet to make anything comparable to human mind. Even the most sophisticated computers are nothing compared to it. A single human mind can contain all the libraries of the world; its capacities are almost unbounded. But it is a machine, it is not you. To get identified with it is wrong, to make it your master is wrong, to be guided by it is wrong. But to be the master and the guide is perfectly right. The mind as a servant is of tremendous value, so don't reject it. To reject it will impoverish you, it will not enrich you.

I am not AGAINST the mind; I am in favor of transcending it. And if you reject you cannot transcend. Use it as a stepping-stone. It all depends on you: you can make it a hindrance if you start thinking that the mind has to be rejected, denied, destroyed; or you can make it a stepping-stone if you accept it, if you try to understand it. In the very effort of understanding it, transcendence happens. You go beyond it, you become a witness.

And, Shahido, a second thing....

You say, "I am clinging to awareness."

That is bound to happen. If you reject mind you will start clinging to awareness. And clinging is nothing but mind functioning from the back door. Clinging is a process of mind. But that is bound to happen to people who reject, repress.

The question is of transformation. The mind has to be used rightly; then there will be no clinging to awareness. Otherwise, afraid of the mind, that it may come back, you will cling to awareness -- and in clinging it has already come back, it is already there. Clinging is mind; nonclinging is intrinsic to awareness. You cannot cling to awareness; if you cling, it is just a mind phenomenon. Your awareness too is just a pseudo thing created by the mind because you were asking too much for it. It is false, utterly false; if you have to cling to it, it is false.

Real awareness remains with you; you need not cling to it. Who will cling to it? You ARE awareness. Who will cling to whom? In awareness there are not two -- the clinger and the object of clinging; in awareness you are one. There is only awareness and nothing else. One cannot cling to awareness. But it is bound to happen if you reject the mind; the very first step has gone wrong. Don't reject it -- understand it.

And in fact, the word 'understand' is very significant. When you understand something it stands under you. You become transcendental, you go beyond it; it is below you. It has its utility; great utility. There will be no science without mind and there will be no technology without mind. All human comforts will disappear without human mind. Man will fall back into the world of the animals or even far below without the mind. Mind has given much.

The problem is not the mind; the problem is your identification with it. You think you are it, that is the problem. Disidentify. Watch the mind, and you BE the watcher and let the mind be there watched, witnessed, observed. And a great radical change happens through observation. Mind functions far more efficiently when you observe it because all that is rubbish drops and mind need not carry unnecessary weight; it becomes light. And when you become a watcher, mind can have some rest too. Otherwise your whole life mind is working, working, day in, day out, year in, year out; it stops only when you die. It creates a deep fatigue, mental fatigue.

Now scientists say even metals become tired -- metal fatigue. So what to say about the mind which is very subtle, which is very delicate? Handle it carefully. But YOU remain aloof, unconcerned, uninvolved. When you are writing you don't become the fountain pen, although you cannot write without it. A good fountain pen is very essential for good writing. If you start writing with your fingers nobody will be able to read what you have written, not even you, and it will be very primitive. But you are not the fountain pen, and the fountain pen is not the writer but only a writing instrument.

The mind is not the master but only an instrument in the hands of the master.

Shahido, be more alert, aware, but don't cling to it. Clinging will destroy the whole beauty of it. Why cling? What is the fear? We cling only out of fear. You ARE awareness, you cannot lose it. Even now, when you are unaware of the fact that you are awareness, you have not lost it.

Truth cannot be lost. Whether you know it or you know not, it makes no difference. The truth remains the truth, known or unknown. Your innermost being is still pure awareness. You live on the circumference, hence you are not able to see your own center.

Sannyas means exploring your interiority, moving towards the center. That's what meditation is all about. When you become centered, suddenly there is great freedom because you know you are not the mind and you are not the body. That does not mean that you start rejecting the body or the mind. You respect the body, you respect the mind. You love the body more so, more than ever. It is a beautiful house. It is your home and you have to live in

it seventy, eighty, ninety years. And it is serving you so beautifully; its service is of great value. You respect it, you befriend it, you take care of it. But still you know: "I am neither the body nor the mind. I am consciousness."

And then there is no question of clinging. Knowing that "I am consciousness," you become part of God. Then there is no birth for you, no death for you. Then you ARE part of eternity, and to be part of eternity is to be blissful. When you know you cannot die, all fear disappears and the energy involved in fear is released as love. When you know you are part of the whole there is no anxiety left, no anguish possible, and the energy involved in anxiety, in anguish, is released. You become compassion, love, joy; it starts overflowing you. You are not only a blessing to yourself, you become a blessing to everybody else; you become a blessing to existence itself.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH DREAM ANALYSIS FOR ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT?

Gautami, dream analysis cannot help you to become enlightened, but dream witnessing can certainly help you.

That is the difference between psychology and religion: psychology analyzes dreams; religion watches them, helps you to become aware of them. And the moment you become aware of your dreams they disappear; they can't exist for a single moment longer. They can exist only when you are utterly unaware; for their existence that is an absolute condition.

A buddha never dreams, he cannot dream. Even if he wants to dream he cannot. Dreaming simply disappears from his being because even in the night while he is asleep, deep down in his innermost core he is awake. A flame of awareness continues and he knows what is happening. He knows that his body is asleep. Witnessing becomes so ingrained that not only in the day but in the night also it continues. And then dreaming disappears. You dream because you desire; your dreams reflect your desires. Now, you can go on dissecting your desires for lives, and you will not attain to anything. You can go on analyzing your dreams....

There are many systems of analysis. If you go to the Freudians they will analyze your dreams in one way: they will interpret everything as sexuality. Imaginable things, unimaginable things, everything has to be reduced to sexuality. If you go to the Adlerians with the same dreams, they will interpret them according to their ideology. Then every dream is reduced to Adler's idea: will to power. Then everything is nothing but will to power; each dream has to fit with his philosophy. And so is the case with the Jungians and others.

And one thing has been observed again and again -- a very strange phenomenon happens. If you go into psychoanalysis of any kind -- Freudian, Jungian, Adlerian -- you start dreaming in the way your psychoanalyst expects you to dream. If you go to the Freudian, sooner or later you start dreaming according to his idea. People are very obliging; they feel sorry for the poor analyst. And he is making such hard effort to analyze your dreams. First he starts giving you interpretations and then you start dreaming according to his interpretations. Soon you fit with each other -- you are as if made for each other. Then he is happy and you are happy. He is happy because his theories are confirmed and you are happy that you are a good boy, dreaming according to the great expert. And when you see your psychoanalyst happy, YOU

feel happy. Seeing you feel happy, he feels happy. It is such a mutual arrangement! And nobody is really helped... dreaming continues.

I have never come across a fully psychoanalyzed person, because according to Freud, a fully psychoanalyzed person is one whose dreaming has disappeared. And that was not true even about Sigmund Freud himself; he continued to dream to his very last. And he was very afraid of psychoanalysis, you will be surprised to know, because he knew his disciples would only prove that all his dreams were sexual.

Once Jung wanted to psychoanalyze Freud. Jung was his most beloved disciple in those days, just as once Judas was one of the most beloved disciples of Jesus. And what Judas did to Jesus, Jung did to Freud. People whose names start with 'J' are dangerous!

Freud and Jung were traveling and they started talking. Jung said, "This idea occurs to me again and again: that I would like to psychoanalyze you. You have not been psychoanalyzed. In fact, nobody who has not been psychoanalyzed should be authorized to psychoanalyze other people. And you are the founder -- you should be psychoanalyzed."

Freud actually started trembling and he said, "No, no, never! That will destroy my prestige."

Jung said, "If that is so, then it has already destroyed your prestige, at least for me. If you are so much afraid to talk about your dreams, that simply shows what kind of dreams you must be having."

There is not a single person in the world who is totally psychoanalyzed. And unless dreams disappear, your mind will remain in a turmoil. Dreams simply say you don't know how to put your mind off; you don't know where the switch exists so that you can put it on and off according to your needs. When you are going to sleep you can't put it off; it goes on chattering. Even if you say to it, "Shut up!" it does not listen to you at all; it does not care. And you know perfectly well it won't listen. You feel so impotent as far as your own mind is concerned that you have to move according to it, it does not move according to you. If it wants to chatter it will chatter; when you fall asleep, still it goes on chattering.

The art of meditation makes you aware where the switch is: it is in witnessing. Witnessing is the switch that can put your mind on or off. You become the master, so when you want to use it you use it and when you don't want to use it you simply put it off and it gives rest to the mind.

Hence the mind of a meditator is far more brilliant, far more intelligent, far more alive, sensitive, than the mind of a nonmeditator, because the mind of a meditator has a few periods of deep deep rest that rejuvenates it. If you see a meditator and he is not intelligent, that simply means he is not a meditator at all. A meditator cannot be stupid, a meditator cannot be mediocre; that is impossible. If he is a meditator, then he will radiate sharpness, intelligence, brilliance. He will be a genius, he will be creative.

In fact, if we can create more and more meditators in the world, in every dimension of life there will be more creativity, more intelligence, less stupidity, less lethargy. But it has not happened down the ages. Just the opposite has happened because in the name of meditation, something else has continued. In the name of meditation people either have been concentrating or contemplating. Both are not meditation.

Concentration is just the opposite of meditation and so is contemplation, in a different way. Concentration means closing your mind, focusing your mind, on a certain point, on a certain object. You are so focused on a certain object that you become unaware of everything else; that is concentration. It excludes everything else; it includes only one thing: the object of your concentration, whatsoever it is.

And meditation means absolute openness. It includes all, it excludes nothing. Hence it is not concentration at all. It is a state of vulnerability, openness, availability.

The person who is trying to concentrate can be distracted. He can be easily distracted by anything. Just a dog in the neighborhood starts barking and he is distracted, a child starts giggling and he is distracted, a bird starts singing and he is distracted. Anything will do, as if he is just waiting for anything to distract him; he is tired of focusing his mind. It is a tension, it is a strain.

Meditation is not a tension, it is not a strain. One is never tired of meditation. It is relaxation -- how you can be tired of it? It is deep rest, it is utter restfulness. One is available to everything; nothing can distract you.

You can listen to me either as concentration or as meditation. If you listen to me as concentration, then anything can distract. A car passes by... the cuckoo starts calling from the distance -- the chattering of the birds. Anything can distract you, any small thing. Not that the birds are interested in distracting you; they are not concerned with you at all. But you will feel anger arising in you.

That's why so-called religious people become more angry than anybody else. They live almost in rage. If a single person in your house becomes religious, he is enough to create trouble for everybody, because each small thing distracts him and then he takes revenge.

You can listen to me in meditation. Then you are not concentrating on me; you are simply sitting available, open. The birds go on chattering; that too comes to you, but because you are not concentrating it is not a distraction -- it enriches. What I am saying to you is enriched. The singing of the birds becomes a background to it. And you never feel angry and you never feel tense.

Contemplation is also not meditation. Contemplation means thinking. Thinking can be of two types. One is zigzag, in jumps from one object to another, a little crazy; that is ordinary thinking. Anything leads to anything. A dog starts barking and you start thinking about your girlfriend. There seems to be no relationship, but maybe your girl had said once, "I go on barking at you and you don't listen!" Suddenly the dog reminds you. Or maybe she also has a dog who barks at you whenever you go to see her. And then from one thing to another... you will not stay with anything long. The girlfriend reminds you of her mother, and so on, so forth. Nobody knows where you are going to end. When you will look retrospectively you will be surprised: just the dog barking in the neighborhood started the whole process of thought.

Contemplation means remaining concerned with one object, thinking about it and only about it. Thinking has a consistency. If you are thinking about love, then you are thinking about love and all its aspects. You don't jump from one thing to another. Yes, you have a little rope just so that you can move around the subject of love, but you keep moving around it, around and around. You forget the whole world -- love becomes your world for the moment.

Meditation is not contemplation either because it is not thinking at all -- consistent, inconsistent, crazy, sane. It is not thinking at all; it is witnessing. It is just sitting silently deep within yourself, looking at whatsoever is happening inside and outside both. Outside there is traffic noise, inside there is also traffic noise -- the traffic in the head. So many thoughts -- trucks and buses of thoughts and trains and airplanes of thoughts, rushing in every direction. But you are simply sitting aloof, unconcerned, watching everything with no evaluation.

You ask me, Gautami, "Is it necessary to go through dream analysis for attaining enlightenment?"

No, not at all. Have you ever heard anybody becoming enlightened through psychoanalysis? Yes, people have become mad, but nobody has become enlightened.

Psychoanalysis depends on analysis of the mind, and they don't see anything else in you. The body is taken care of by the physiologists; then all that remains is a constant traffic in the mind either of thoughts or of dreams, memories, imagination, desires. The psychoanalyst has nothing else to do: he looks into your dreaming process. And why does he choose dreams? -- because if he asks you what you think when you are awake you are never authentic, you are never sincere. You are so deceptive, so dishonest, that whatever you say about your thinking is bound to be managed; it is not going to be true. You will say only that which is worth saying and you will delete many things. You will edit your thoughts. You will not allow the psychoanalyst to look into your thoughts without any censor, without any editing. You will not allow him the raw material of your thoughts because that will look like you are insane.

You can try it. Sit in your room, close all the doors so nobody can come in, and start writing whatsoever is happening in the mind -- whatsoever it is. Just go on writing for fifteen minutes, then read it -- and you will be shocked. This is your mind? All these thoughts are going on in your mind? Are you mad or something? You can't show it to anybody.

It is good that people don't have windows in their heads; otherwise the wife will look through the window in the head of the husband and she will find everything. She finds everything anyway, window or no window!

The psychoanalyst has to depend on your dreams because in dreams it is very difficult for you to deceive him. You don't know yourself what your dreams mean so you have to say them as they are, and he can find a few clues about you. But this is not going to make you enlightened. This may help you a little bit to become more normal, but what is normality? Even the people who are normal are not normal -- they are normally abnormal, that's all. So you will be normally abnormal.

There are two kinds of abnormal people in the world: normally abnormal, abnormally abnormal. The work of the psychoanalyst is to bring abnormally abnormal people to the first category: normally abnormal. He helps you to adjust with the society, with people, with yourself, but he can't help you to become enlightened.

You can go on and on analyzing your dreams and you will never come to your witnessing soul through that analysis. How can you come to the witness by analyzing the dreams? One dream will lead you into another dream. Maybe you will become a very skillful dreamer, very artful. Maybe you will start dreaming in a better way, in a more scientific way, but dreams are dreams. They cannot take you to the witness of the dreams which is your reality.

Al: "I had a great dream -- I dreamed I broke the bank at Monte Carlo."

Charles: "I had a great dream too -- I dreamed I was in a room with Sophia Loren and Brigitte Bardot."

Al: "Wow! Bardot and Sophia! Why didn't you call me?"

Charles: "I did, but your maid said you were in Monte Carlo!"

You can analyze this dream. What will be the gain? Neither the bank in Monte Carlo nor Sophia Loren or Bardot -- nothing is going to be your gain. But the psychoanalyst will analyze it. If you go to the Adlerian, his emphasis will be on the bank in Monte Carlo: will to power, money, prestige. He will forget all about Sophia Loren and Bardot; he is not interested -- that is nothing. If you go to the Freudian he will not think about Monte Carlo and the bank at all; that is nonessential, accidental. The real thing is Sophia Loren and Bardot.

And if you go to a Jungian, then nobody knows what he will do with your dream. He is so confused! But he will make much fuss about it, that much is certain. He will create much dust -- esoteric dust. He may start looking into your dream and finding things which you would have never suspected -- some ancient mysteries, maybe Egyptian. Or he may go even farther back -- Atlantis. He is really a grave digger. And he goes on finding things which are not there.

You must have heard the definition of a philosopher. The philosopher is a man who is blind looking in the dark night, in a dark room, for a black cat which is not there. But Jung FINDS it there! That's the beauty of Jung -- he finds the black cat which is not there; he finds it still. And he creates so much smoke and dust that you cannot deny him. He creates great argument. And he himself is very much afraid of going towards the witness.

He has been in India, and there was a man -- a man the like of whom happens only once in a while. Maharshi Raman was alive. And wherever Jung went in India, almost everywhere people suggested to him, "Why are you wasting your time here and there, going to Varanasi and Bombay? Why don't you go to Maharshi Raman?" People knew that he is a great psychoanalyst, world-famous. "You should go to Maharshi Raman, who has gone beyond the mind. Sitting by his side you may have a few glimpses. You may come away a totally changed person."

But Jung avoided him, he did not go there. On the contrary, back home he started writing against Eastern mysticism. He could not write against mysticism as such because he was himself creating great mysteries -- superficial because he was not an initiate in any mystery school. He was gathering things from superficial sources. He had never been in contact with a living master. He had come so close to a buddha -- Maharshi Raman -- yet he missed. And in self-defense he started writing back home that Eastern mysticism is not meant for the Western mind -- as if there are Eastern souls and Western souls too. Yes, there is a difference in the skin of the Eastern people and the Western people; it is not much of a difference, just a little color pigment -- four annas' worth. And remember, the black person has it more than the white. He is more valuable -- four annas more valuable -- because he has a certain pigment that makes him black which the white skin is missing.

And yes, there is a certain difference in the mind, because the Eastern mind is conditioned in a different way and the Western mind is conditioned in a different way. Conditionings are different, but the witness is the same. Jesus and Buddha, Mohammed and Mahavira, are not different. Saint Francis and Ramakrishna, Eckhart and Krishnamurti, are not different. One who has known the witness is neither Eastern nor Western. He is no more the body and no more the mind -- how can he be Eastern or Western?

And Jung started talking this nonsense in self-defense. He said, "That's why I avoided Maharshi Raman, because Eastern methods are not suitable to us. The West needs its own yoga, the West needs its own meditations." What difference can there be in being aware? Whether you are in the East or in the West, awareness will be the same -- and that is the essential core of meditation.

They are great interpreters of dreams... the whole world of the psychoanalyst is the world of dreams. And as far as the enlightened person is concerned, for him the whole world is nothing but a dream. For the psychoanalyst, dreams are his whole world, and for the enlightened person the whole world is nothing but a dream.

The analyst was annoyed with her patient who said she did not dream the night before.

"Look," he warned her, "if you don't do your homework, I can't help you."

Dreaming is a necessity; that is your homework. Do it at home and then come to the psychoanalyst, and he is there with his whole expertise to analyze it.

Gautami, enlightenment means going beyond desires and dreams. There is no need to waste your time in analyzing. Just go beyond, put your whole energy in going beyond. And when you go beyond, all dreams disappear on their own accord.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO I KEEP LOSING EVERYTHING BUT MY EGO?

Sughanda... Odum, an elderly black called before the justice of the peace, was charged with keeping a vicious dog.

"That dog bit my girl Bobbie Jo three times," complained the mother.

"Did your dog bite little Bobbie Jo?" asked the judge.

"No, sir," said Odum. "My dog, he never bit any little girl."

"Well," said the judge to the mother, "this man says that the dog did not bite your little girl."

"I will go home and bring Bobbie Jo here and show you," said the woman.

"Hold on," said the black man. "In the first place, the dog is so old he ain't got no teeth and he can't bite. In the second place, the dog is blind and could not see Bobbie Jo anyhow. In the third place, the dog is deaf and can't hear a thing. And in the fourth place, he ain't my dog in the first place."

Sughanda, you cannot lose your ego because in the first place it does not exist at all. You can lose everything else because those things really exist, but how can you lose something which does not exist? You cannot lose your shadow; it does not exist. And the ego is far more false than your shadow; it is not even a shadow. It is not substance, it is not even a shadow. It is just an idea planted by society within you. It has no reality, so how can you lose it?

The only way to lose it is to LOOK for it -- and you will not find it. And when you don't find it you have lost it. Go within and look for it, search for it.

That's what the meditators have been doing for centuries. They close their eyes and they go in and they search for the ego, where it is -- and they can't find it. When you can't find it and you have looked in all the nooks and all the corners of your being and it is not found anywhere, then you know you have lost it. In the first place, really it was never there; it was only your belief.

It is like you see a rope in the dark and you believe it is a snake. Then you are trembling and perspiring and running and trying to save yourself from the snake -- which does not exist at all. All your running and your perspiration and all your shouting is just futile, but it can be dangerous to you. Even a false snake can kill you -- you may have a heart attack! That's the trouble with false things; you cannot lose them -- they are not there -- but they can do real things to you.

You may have experienced it sometimes in your dream, when you are having a nightmare. You are running, and a tiger is chasing you, and the tiger is coming closer and closer, and you are running faster and faster and you know that only few moments are left. You can almost feel the hot breath of the tiger on your back.

And then suddenly you come to a cul-de-sac; the road ends. You can't go back -- the tiger

is there; you can't go ahead. If you jump into the valley you will be dead before you reach the bottom.

In that state you wake up. The nightmare is too much; it wakes you up. Your heart is palpitating, your breath is disturbed, you are perspiring on a cold winter night. And there is no tiger -- just your wife putting her hand on your back, breathing so close.... You are awake, the nightmare has disappeared. You know there is no tiger -- "It is only my poor wife" -- but still, for a few minutes the perspiration will continue, the heart will go on beating faster, you will start up. Still, knowing perfectly well that all was false, you are trembling.

Exactly is the case with the ego: it is a false entity. When you wake up you can't find it. So the question is not of dropping it. How can you drop something which is not? The question is seeing into it, looking for it, searching for it.

I don't say to you, "Seek and search for God." That is nonsense. How can you seek and search for God, and where? You don't know the address. And even if you meet the gentleman you won't recognize him. Even if he says hello, you won't understand his language. He does not speak German, he does not speak French, he does not speak Italian -- not even Italian!

But every nation believes that "He speaks our language." The Indians think that he speaks Sanskrit, that he himself has written the Vedas. And the Mohammedan thinks he speaks Arabic -- he himself has spoken in Arabic through Mohammed, the only messenger. And of course, the Jews think they are the chosen people of God -- he speaks Hebrew.

After the second world war one German general was talking to an English general. He said, "I can't believe how it happened, how we failed. We had better armies than you, more advanced technology, we were better equipped in every way. How did we fail and you succeeded?"

The English general smiled and he said, "The reason is we used to pray before starting to fight every day."

The German said, "But we also did. We also used to pray before we started to fight."

The Englishman said, "That we know, but we used to pray in English and you in German -- and he does not understand German at all."

Every country believes its language is divine, God's language. But God knows only the language of silence -- and you don't know silence. So when he will say hello it will be a very silent hello. It will not be uttered, it will not be said; it will be only a gesture. And it is almost impossible for you to hear it because it cannot be heard.

You cannot recognize his face because it does not resemble Jesus', it does not resemble Krishna's, it does not resemble Buddha's. All faces are his and still he has no face. The Zen people call that face "the original face"; it resembles nobody. Christians will not recognize him because they will be looking for Christ's face and Hindus will not recognize him because they will be looking for Krishna's face. Yes, in Krishna's face also he was and in Christ's face also, but they are just waves -- Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mahavira -- and he is the ocean. You can't recognize the ocean if you only know about a single wave; the ocean is not a wave although all waves belong to the ocean.

You cannot search for God, and you are so asleep that all your search is going to be wrong. The first thing is to search for your ego; that is the right direction for the seeker. And when you don't find the ego -- when the ego is not found at all, it simply disappears -- then is the possibility of recognizing God's face, because he is egolessness. And when you have the taste of egolessness, a little taste, you will understand him. When the ego disappears you will

know what silence is, what space is, what emptiness is. You are so full of nonexistential ego; when it is gone you will know great spaciousness within you. And he is space, pure space. Something of him will be known by you; then you can recognize him, you are bridged to him.

Sughanda, you say, "Why do I keep losing everything but my ego?"

Because everything else has a concrete reality and the ego has no reality at all. If you want to lose your ego you will have to go in. Maybe that's why people don't go in -- afraid that they may lose themselves. And their fear is right. Beware! If you are ready to lose yourself, then only decide to go in.

But that moment is the greatest moment in life -- when you lose your ego -- because that very moment, immediately, God is found. The moment you are not, God is. The moment you evaporate, God descends in you.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I ALWAYS FEEL THAT ANIMALS ARE VERY FRIENDLY WITH ME. WHY?

Roberto, you are an Italian! I will tell you one Italian story.

"It is wonderful the power I have got over dumb animals," boasted Rizzoli to his wife. "You notice wherever we go, dogs -- big ones, small ones -- no matter how mean, they all-a come up and lick-a my hand."

"Maybe," said Mrs. Rizzoli, "if you would eat-a with a knife and fork-a once in a while, they would not be so friendly!"

Just be a little less Italian, Roberto, so that even human beings can be friendly to you.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY TO HANDLE A WOMAN?

Somesh, there is only one way to handle a woman. The trouble is, nobody knows what it is.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I DID NOT LIKE YOUR TELLING TO US NOT TO LOOK AT THE SUN TODAY WHILE IT IS IN TOTAL ECLIPSE. I THOUGHT YOU BELIEVED IN ABSOLUTE FREEDOM.

Sunderam, you are not the only one to ask this question. At least twenty other fools have also asked the same. Please forgive me that I told you not to look at the sun directly -- do it! Please do me a favor! I was utterly wrong to say it so -- your freedom is destroyed. Enjoy your freedom; at least today, don't forget to enjoy it. Look as much as you can at the sun and don't use any device -- because that will hinder your freedom. With the naked eyes -- natural eyes -- look at the sun. Enjoy it to your heart's content.

I was not going to say it to you. The whole blame goes to Vivek! She nagged me and nagged me to tell you; otherwise I was not going to tell you anything.

A few of these twenty fools have said, "We had never thought that you are superstitious." This is not superstition -- these are scientific facts. There are millions of superstitions also. For example, in India, after the eclipse is over then take a bath and if you can take the bath in a holy river like the Ganges it is thought to be very religious, holy -- because Indians believe that the sun has been in deep difficulty and it is out of the difficulty. That is superstition. The sun is not going into any difficulty at all. The eclipse is not happening on the sun; the sun has nothing to do with the eclipse. It is just the moon coming between you and the sun; it is not happening on the moon either. It is only happening for us.

Indians give donations after the eclipse is over, rejoicing that the sun god is out of trouble. Those are superstitions.

But looking at the sun is dangerous -- scientifically dangerous; it is not a question of superstition. You can try it. A few of the others have written, "How can we believe in what you say when your date was wrong, your day was wrong?" That is true. Even if my date is wrong and my day is wrong, the sun in eclipse will have the same effect. About days and dates I am not so sure. In fact, I have no idea of time. I have to go on looking at the clock again and again, otherwise I will go on talking and talking.

Just last month it happened: the clock stopped... at eight twenty it stopped. I looked at it again and again... it was ten to ten. And I am so superstitious that I still believed the clock! I was still thinking it was eight twenty. Finally I started seeing some restlessness around me. I thought, "What is the matter? Something somewhere is wrong." I looked at the clock -- again eight twenty. I said, "There is no problem; there is still time enough."

Yes, on the fourteenth I said, "Tomorrow." Naturally, my date was wrong, but that does not mean that what I said is wrong. Fifteenth or sixteenth, that doesn't matter; dates are arbitrary. They are just our creation -- days are arbitrary. But just because of that, if you ask me how you can believe....

I am not telling you to believe anything. You can go and check with the scientists -- it is dangerous to the eyes, and sometimes so dangerous that the blindness that will be caused by it will be incurable.

But this is not a commandment. I am not saying that looking at the sun in eclipse is a sin or a crime. I am not saying that it is something immoral, irreligious, unspiritual. It is simply stupid!

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT TRUE THAT MONEY CANNOT BUY HAPPINESS?

Anando, yes, it is true. Money cannot buy happiness -- but it makes misery more comfortable. That's why I am not against money, I am all for it. It is better to be comfortably miserable than uncomfortably miserable. I have lived in poverty and I have lived in richness, and believe me: richness is far better than poverty.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #7

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TO HAVE FRIENDS IN NEED IS SWEET
AND TO SHARE HAPPINESS.
AND TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING GOOD
BEFORE LEAVING THIS LIFE IS SWEET,
AND TO LET GO OF SORROW.

TO BE A MOTHER IS SWEET,
AND A FATHER.
IT IS SWEET TO LIVE ARDUOUSLY,
AND TO MASTER YOURSELF.

OH HOW SWEET IT IS TO ENJOY LIFE,
LIVING IN HONESTY AND STRENGTH!

AND WISDOM IS SWEET,
AND FREEDOM.

Gautama the Buddha does not talk about God, but he talks about love, freedom, truth, authenticity. He talks about the essential religion. He does not waste his breath on heaven and hell, the theory of reincarnation. He is absolutely unconcerned about the so-called great metaphysical problems. He is nonmetaphysical -- in a sense, very down to earth. He means business. He wants to give you a science which can transform your life. He is interested in creating an alchemy of inner revolution so the baser metal can be changed into gold. His religion is unique, in a way.

There are three types of religions in the world. Jainism is the only religion which is emphatically atheistic. It denies God and raises man to his ultimate peak. It declares that man is God and there is no other God. Except Jainism, all other religions -- Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity -- are theistic. They are rooted in the idea of God; without God they will be at a loss what to do. They ARE at a loss because since Nietzsche declared "God is dead," humanity, by and by, has agreed with Nietzsche. His statement became very prophetic; it represents the twentieth-century mind. And the religions which have depended on the idea of

God for centuries feel uprooted. They are dying, withering away.

Buddha is unique. He is neither atheistic like Jainism, nor theistic like other religions. He is a superb agnostic. He says there is no need to worry about unnecessary things. Think of the essential, think of the intrinsic, and don't be bothered about the accidentals.

If you are authentic, if you are compassionate, if you are meditative, then if there is a God he will come to you; you need not go in search for him. And if there is a paradise it will descend in your heart. There is no need to be bothered about such abstract ideas; they simply waste your time. And if you are not authentic, not meditative, not compassionate, not wise enough, even if you come across God what are you going to do? You will feel a little embarrassed and God will feel a little embarrassed facing you. You both will be unnecessarily in a strange situation -- what to say, what to do, what not to say, what not to do. You would like to escape and he would like to escape.

Just think: if suddenly you come across God, what will you do? You will run away from him as fast as you can!

Rabindranath has a beautiful parable. In one of his poems he sings: I searched for God for many lives. I saw him sometimes far away on a star, but by the time I reached there he had left the star long before; he was somewhere else. He was always somewhere else and I was chasing him. The very adventure was beautiful; I was enjoying the thrill of it.

And then one day I happened to reach his home. For a moment I was ecstatic that I had arrived, but the next moment I became very sad. Standing at his door I was just going to ring the bell, but my hand became frozen. I thought for a while, "If I ring the bell and he comes out, then what? Then what am I going to do? And after that whom am I going to search? All is finished! My whole past has been nothing but a search for God; it was meaningful because of the search. If the search disappears, all meaning will disappear."

So Rabindranath says, "I descended back from his steps. I took my shoes in my hand so that he would not hear that somebody had come. Otherwise, who knows? He may simply open the door and he will say, 'Come in!' And then I ran away from the place as fast as I could.

"And again I am searching for God, and now I know where he is so I avoid that space only and I search everywhere else, knowing perfectly well that I am not going to meet him there and my search can continue. I can go on hoping and desiring and deep down I know the whole ridiculousness of it -- because he is just by the corner; I can reach his home any moment."

This is a true parable about man: you also know where he is. If he is anywhere at all he is within YOU, not even by the corner. If he is anywhere, he is in your consciousness, in your heart of hearts. He is your life. There you don't look at all, afraid you may find him. And you go on searching in Kaaba, in Kailash, in Kashi, and you go on and on searching knowing perfectly well that you will not find him. And the search can continue and the thrill can continue and you can go on hoping and desiring.

Buddha simply cuts all your hoping and desiring. He does not say there is no God, he does not say there is. He simply says it is irrelevant. It does not matter whether he is or he is not; it is absolutely beside the point. What matters is your inner transformation, and the inner transformation cannot be postponed for tomorrow; it can happen right now.

That's the trouble with Buddha: if you go with him you have to drop your hopes, you have to drop your desires. You have to be in the present, utterly silent. And then life has a

new color, a new joy, a new music. Then life has a new beauty.

Right now, in the first place, you cannot meet God because you don't have eyes to see him and you don't have ears to hear him and you don't have the right heart to feel him. You are not loving enough. Your eyes are not clear; they are so full of dust -- dust of knowledge, memories, experiences. Your ears only appear to hear, but they don't listen.

But by chance even if you meet him, what are you going to ask? A new wife, a new husband, another place to live, a little longer life, youth...? What are you going to ask? -- money, power, prestige? Whatsoever you ask will be stupid.

A black man worshipped God, praying every day for six years. He was always asking for this or that problem to be resolved.

God became very fed up with him and decided to pay him a visit. So one day while the man was praying, God came to his side in living flesh and said, "Hey man, here I am! What do you want to know? Ask!"

The man could not believe his eyes, but he finally asked, "Ah my God, why is my skin so black?"

God answered, "Because the sun in your country is very hot and you must survive."

"And why is my hair so short and kinky?"

"Because in the jungle you have many trees and your hair would get caught."

"And why am I so thin and fast?"

"So that you can fight with lions and other animals in the jungle."

"Then, God, what the fuck am I doing in New York?"

That's going exactly to be the case with you. What are you going to ask God? All your questions will come out of your unconscious. In fact, all questions will be absurd. That's not the way to encounter reality. One has to be silent, utterly silent.

Hence Buddha says, don't be bothered about God. Be concerned with your own preparation, be prepared. The emphasis is totally different. All the religions emphasize God, the object of search; Buddha emphasizes YOU, the subject. All other religions emphasize the sought; Buddha emphasizes the seeker. And it is certainly more significant to change yourself and prepare yourself for the ultimate encounter with reality -- call it God, existence, truth, liberation, or whatsoever you would like to call it. The real thing, the essential thing, is to be prepared for that encounter.

And if you are ready, if your heart is flowing with love and your head is no longer crazy, no longer full of rubbish, and your eyes have clarity and your ears are ready to listen, then the whole reality turns into God; then everything is divine. Buddha does not say anything about it; he goes on emphasizing your inner change.

These sutras are simple but immensely beautiful. Truth is always simple; it is untruth which is complicated. The untruth has to be complicated so that you don't find that it is untrue, so that you can't find it. Truth is simple, utterly simple and naked.

Buddha says:

TO HAVE FRIENDS IN NEED IS SWEET
AND TO SHARE HAPPINESS.

He emphasized friendship very much. To translate his word for friendship -- MAITRI -- is a little difficult because it has the quality of friendliness more than friendship. Friendship

becomes a relationship, fixed; friendliness is more flowing, more fluid. Friendship is a relationship, friendliness is a state of your being. You are simply friendly; to whom, that is not the point. If you are standing by the side of a tree you are friendly to the tree, or if you are sitting on the rock, you are friendly to the rock. To human beings, to animals, to birds, you are simply friendly. It is not something static; it is a flow, changing moment to moment. He says: TO HAVE FRIENDS IN NEED IS SWEET.

Friendliness is one of the most significant qualities for the seeker to develop; it is really sweet. It makes your whole life full of sweet music, full of sweet harmony. In Buddha's vision it is higher than so-called love. Your so-called love is tethered to your biology; friendliness is freedom from biology. The ordinary so-called love is the same in human beings as it is in animals, as it is in the trees. It is sex-oriented. It is only a sugarcoating around the bitter pill of sex. In fact, if love is taken away from your sex, sex will look very ridiculous. It is because of the sugarcoating that you can swallow the pill.

Watch animals having sexual intercourse and one thing you are bound to observe; it is impossible not to observe it, it is so emphatically there: they don't seem to be joyous. They seem to be in a hurry and their faces look sad, as if they are being forced by some unknown energy into certain acts in which they are not interested. Hence animals have their sexual seasons when their biology takes a grip on them, forces them to do something which they are not really interested in at all. They have to do it almost like slaves. And once they are finished with their sexual intercourse they move away from each other -- not even a thank-you! They don't look at each other.

Scientists say love has grown in man for the simple reason that man is the only animal in the world who makes sexual intercourse face-to-face. You have to say something, you have to smile, you have to say goodbye, you have to say so long. Otherwise it will look so awkward to finish suddenly and escape! Because you are facing each other you have to be a little polite, a little cultured, a little polished. You have to behave in a certain manner; you can't be rude.

Animals are not facing each other while making love so they don't encounter, they don't look into each other's eyes. It is a simple biological process and they are almost forced by their biology, by their hormones, to go through it. They go through it, they are dragged through it like slaves. And the same is the situation with you; only the sugarcoating is different.

Friendship is a higher phenomenon. It is pure love; it has nothing to do with your biology. Love -- ordinary love -- can be explained through biology, but friendship cannot be explained. It is a mystery. Friendship is like fragrance; love is gross, because of its sexuality, because of its origins. It is a little heavy. It functions under the law of gravitation: it goes on falling downwards, it has no wings. Friendship has wings. It is nonbiological; it makes you really human, it helps you to transcend your animality.

Buddha praises friendship, friendliness, very highly. He has even chosen that when he comes back again his name will be Maitreya -- the friend. He must have loved the word very much. I don't think he will come again or anybody ever comes again. God never makes the same mistake again, remember! Once is more than enough, twice will be too much. But he must have loved the word so much that he says, "Next time, if I am at all going to come, my name is going to be Maitreya -- the friend." The word contains his whole philosophy. He says: TO HAVE FRIENDS... IS SWEET.

Why is it sweet? -- because with friends your relationship is not physiological, it is not even psychological; it is a spiritual communion. With friends you can sit in silence. When

you are with your lover you can't sit in silence; silence looks awkward. The woman will think, "Why are you silent? Are you angry or something?" And if she is silent you will think something is wrong -- she is sulking. Why is she so silent? Silence becomes heavy, a burden; it has to be removed.

So people go on talking, whether it is needed or not. They go on talking about anything.

Mulla Nasruddin was coming from his village to see me in his bullock cart, with his dog. It was too hot, a summer afternoon, and suddenly he was surprised that the dog said, "It is too hot."

He looked around; there was nobody, just his dog. He said to the oxen, "Have you heard? Have you heard what has happened?"

And the oxen said, "Yes, he is just like anybody else -- always talking about the weather and doing nothing."

If people have nothing else to talk about they talk about the weather. Anything will do, just go on talking. It keeps you, in a way, connected. In fact, it keeps you DISconnected. It is not a bridge; rarely it is a bridge. It is a bridge only between a master and a disciple; otherwise it is not a bridge. When the master speaks out of his silence and the disciple listens out of his silence, it is a bridge. Otherwise it is a wall, a China Wall.

Lovers are facing each other. They have to say something; otherwise silence becomes awkward, embarrassing. Friends don't face each other in that way. They face something else -- maybe the sunset, a bird on the wing, a beautiful white cloud. Holding hands, sitting together, they face something else. They both are facing something else. They are in a sort of deep communion, they are one. Their hearts are beating in harmony. Real friends sitting together will find that their hearts start beating in the same way. They even start breathing in harmony; when one exhales, the other exhales. This happens on its own accord; it is a synchronicity. When you are feeling in communion, this happens.

This happens here every day. When you are in communion with me it happens.

Many sannyasins write to me, "Beloved Master, how does it happen? Just before you are going to say something we know you are going to say this. It is so clear and then you say it." It happens because of a deep communion. As it arises in MY being it starts arising in YOUR being.

Hence the ultimate between the master and the disciple is silence, sitting together. There is no need to say anything. Whatsoever happens in the master's being also starts happening in the disciple's being. The disciple starts reflecting the master like a mirror.

On a smaller scale the same happens with friends. But by friends Buddha does not mean acquaintances. By friends he means a love which has gone beyond sexuality, a love which has gone beyond biology, a love which has transcended ordinary nature, transcended gravitation and has become part of the higher law of grace.

TO HAVE FRIENDS IS SWEET AND TO SHARE HAPPINESS....

You can share your happiness only with the friends. Sharing is possible only when two hearts are open to each other; only in deep trust can you be open to the other. In fear you are closed, in doubt you are closed. You are on guard. You are afraid the other may be some danger to you, the other may do some harm. You are not vulnerable when you are in fear. Only with friends you can be vulnerable, open, available. Then sharing is possible. And sharing is one of the greatest spiritual qualities.

The miracle is that the more you share your bliss the more you have it. The more you

share, the more it comes to you. The more you share, the more you become aware of an inexhaustible source within yourself.

Happiness is great in itself, but to share it makes it immensely rich, multidimensionally rich. If one is a miser about one's happiness he will kill it. To hoard your happiness is to destroy it; to spread it far and wide is to help it grow more and more. Miserliness is very dangerous as far as bliss is concerned.

But with whom you will share if you don't have friends, if you don't know the art of being friendly? If you know the art of being friendly you can share with as many people as possible, with as many animals as possible, with as many trees as possible. You can go on sharing every moment of your life because you are always with someone. You can share it with the sun, with the moon, with the stars. No distance prevents. You can share your bliss with a friend who is far far away, thousands of miles away from you. In that moment of sharing spaces disappear, time disappears. There is no time gap, no space gap. You are suddenly together. You can even share with friends who are no longer alive. In deep communion they become available to you, nonphysically.

AND TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING GOOD
BEFORE LEAVING THIS LIFE IS SWEET,
AND TO LET GO OF SORROW.

Friendship is good, it is virtue. Sharing your joy is good, it is great virtue. In fact, all other virtues are by-products of sharing your bliss. Sharing is the very foundation, the source. Share your truth, share your meditation, share your love. Share whatsoever inner beauty arises in you, whatsoever inner glow arises in you. Share your inner flame and never be a miser, and you will become richer and richer, and there is no end to that richness.

In the ordinary world sharing will make you poor. If you share your money you will become poor. You have to be a hoarder, you have to be miserly. In the inner world just the opposite is the case: hoard, and you will lose; share, and you will have it.

In the inner world a totally different kind of law exists. There you can have your cake and eat it too. And it would be better if you don't eat it alone, if you invite your friends to eat with you.

AND TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING GOOD.... What does Buddha mean by "something good"? Buddha always emphasizes that unconscious acts are bad and conscious acts are good. You can do something apparently good, but if you are unconscious it can't be good. Your intention is good, but the action and its consequences are going to be bad.

For example, just the other day somebody had asked, "I want to stop smoking. What should I do? What do you say about it?" Now, he is asking a simple question. You can ask the same question to any of your so-called saints -- Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, Jaina, Buddhist -- and they will all say, "Stop it immediately! Smoking is bad." But I can't say it that way. I can say to you, "Become more conscious. If your consciousness changes something in you and smoking disappears, good; otherwise, please continue to smoke." Why?

Adolf Hitler never smoked, but I can't call him a virtuous man. He was always getting up before the sunrise -- BRAHMAMUHURT. In India this is a must for a saint. Brahmamuhurt means God's moment -- as if all other moments are the Devil's and just the few moments before the sunrise are God's! Getting up early in the morning before sunrise is thought to be very religious. And if you are sleeping late and getting up at nine or ten, certainly you are a

sinner.

Adolf Hitler was a very religious man, if this is what religion is -- getting up early. And he was going to bed also very early. He was not a smoker, he was not a drinker.

In that sense, Jesus is less religious than Adolf Hitler. He loved drinking, he loved good wine. He loved it so much that once he transformed the whole sea into wine, you know! Now, what kind of religious man is this Jesus? He loved eating with friends, inviting friends. He was always in a festive mood.

Adolf Hitler used to eat alone. He was a perfect dog! Dogs eat alone. Even if you are just looking they will keep their backs towards you, afraid you may snatch away their food or something. Some other dog may come and start barking and fighting may start. They can't invite anybody. Dogs don't believe in parties! They are loners, very meditative! They eat alone. And of course they eat very silently, no conversation. And they eat quick and fast; they don't waste time. Adolf Hitler did the same. He was also afraid of people, just like dogs.

It is said that he had not a single friend in the whole of Germany. And Buddha says: Be friendly. It is sweet to have friends. He had no friend because he was so afraid of people, so suspicious, that he could not afford friendship. To be friendly means to be intimate. To be friendly means to be available to the other. To be friendly means to trust the other.

He never got married in his whole life. He got married only at the very end, just three hours before he committed suicide. When it was absolutely decided that he was going to commit suicide he called a priest and got married, so that at least in death he can have a companion. The woman had to commit suicide with him also. A strange marriage! Why did he avoid marriage his whole life? -- for the simple reason that he was not sure whether to allow a woman in the same room in the night when he was asleep. Who knows? -- she may cut your throat, kill you, poison you. You may start uttering some secret in your sleep; she may hear it. She may open your letters. Women are known to do such things, well known, really. In fact, it is very difficult to get your letter without it being read by your woman; she is bound to read it.

Mulla Nasruddin's wife was fighting with him. "Something has to be done -- you have to write to your mother. She has been very cruel and crude towards me."

Nasruddin said, "But she is a thousand miles away. How can she be suddenly cruel and crude towards you?"

The wife said, "Yes, she has been. Look at this letter!"

In the letter there was a postscript. The letter was written to Nasruddin and the postscript to Nasruddin's wife, "Please, after you have read it, give the letter to my son!"

Women know each other!

Adolf Hitler was very afraid to get married. He remained a bachelor, a BRAHMACHARI, a celibate. Now, what more religious qualities do you need in a saint? -- no smoking, no drinking, no wife, no friends. He lived the life of a monk!

But my feeling is, if he had smoked a little, if he had got drunk once in a while, had fallen into the hands of some woman, had loved somebody, had some friends, played chess or gambled a little bit, he would have been a far more human being and the world would have been saved from the second world war. But he became almost stonelike.

You can do good things, but if you are not conscious your good things are bound to result into something disastrous.

In Manhattan, a policeman strolling his early morning beat stopped in front of an East Eighties brownstone. Sitting on the stoop was Millarney, completely snookered.

"Why don't you go home?" suggested the cop.

"I live here," said Millarney.

"Why don't you go inside then?"

"I lost my key," answered the drunk.

"Why don't you ring the bell?"

"I did, an hour ago."

"Why don't you ring it again?" asked the officer.

"To hell with them!" snorted Millarney. "Let them wait!"

The ordinary humanity is really in a state of stupor. People are asleep. There is no need to be a drunkard, people are already drunk. Naturally we are not born conscious, we are born unconscious, and then we go on becoming more and more unconscious in life -- because we are unconscious, we want to be more unconscious. It seems to be natural, it fits with us. To be conscious seems to be a very uphill task.

Hence the immense attraction for alcohol or for other drugs. From the times of the Vedas up to now it has been the same. The Vedas praise SOMARAS very highly. Somaras seems to be something like marijuana, LSD, psilocybin, something like that. It has not yet been discovered exactly what it was, but whatsoever it was, it was one of the most perfect of drugs.

Aldous Huxley, one of the most intellectual, philosophic persons, a great scholar, has called the perfect LSD "soma." He says that in the twenty-first century we will be reaching to that perfection. From the Vedas to Aldous Huxley, drugs have been an obsession with humanity, for the simple reason that we are born unconscious and the problems of life, anxieties of life, dangers of life, make us sometimes conscious. They wake up our deep, deep slumber, they disturb it. So we need more drugs, more and more drugs, to remain undisturbed in our unconsciousness. And out of that unconsciousness we act, we live our lives.

Ferguson and Malone decided to go hunting one morning.

"Listen," said Ferguson, "I will bring all the guns and such and you bring all the provisions."

"Fine," said Malone.

The next morning when they met, Ferguson was loaded down with guns and ammunition. Malone was carrying a loaf of bread and six bottles of whisky.

Ferguson blew his stack. "Look what happens when I leave the provisions to you!" he shouted. "A loaf of bread and six bottles of whisky! What the hell are we gonna do with all that bread?"

When Buddha says, AND TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING GOOD, he means when you do something consciously. You cannot do anything bad consciously; that is an impossibility. It is as much impossible to do anything bad consciously as it is impossible to do good unconsciously.

Before leaving this life be conscious, act out of your consciousness, so that you can beautify this existence a little bit, so that you can sing a little song, so you can dance a little dance, so the world is enriched, so that you can be a little more creative, so that the world is a little more divine than it was before you came into it. Contribute something to it. Don't be just a wastage.

AND TO LET GO OF SORROW. People think sorrow is clinging to you; that is utter nonsense. YOU are clinging to sorrow, because you have invested so much in sorrow. Your greatest investment is your ego. When you are sad, when you are miserable, your ego can feed on these illnesses, diseases. The ego can keep alive only through these pathologies; the ego lives on them.

When you are blissful, really blissed out, ego disappears. You are, but there is no ego, no idea of I, no idea of separation. In bliss there is a merger with the whole; in misery you are alone and separate. Misery makes you an island and bliss takes all your boundaries away from you. In bliss, the river disappears in the ocean. And we are very afraid to disappear as an ego. We want to keep our identity intact.

Mulla Nasruddin came across a small boy sitting in the gutter crying loudly.
"My boy, don't cry like that," said the Mulla.

Said the little boy, "Listen, mate, you cry your way and I will cry mine."

Sorrow has something very personal about it; bliss is impersonal. Your misery is YOUR misery; it defines you. It is nobody else's misery, it is especially yours; it gives you a certain uniqueness. But bliss? Bliss is universal.

Hence Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Lao Tzu, these people have disappeared into bliss. They don't have any personality. They are no-persons, they are nonentities. They are tremendously alive, but they are not separate from the whole. They have allowed the whole to live through them.

Buddha says: AND TO LET GO OF SORROW.

Please watch how you are clinging to your sorrow, your misery. Drop it, let go of it! And your life will have a great sweetness.

TO BE A MOTHER IS SWEET,
AND A FATHER.
IT IS SWEET TO LIVE ARDUOUSLY,
AND TO MASTER YOURSELF.

TO BE A MOTHER IS SWEET.... Why? Just giving birth to a child is not to be a mother, remember. Otherwise there are millions of mothers on the earth -- and there seems to be no sweetness. In fact, if you ask the psychologists they will say just the opposite. They will say the only problem to be solved is the mother. The only pathology that millions of people are suffering from is the mother. And what they are saying they are saying after fifty, sixty years of constant analysis of thousands of people. Everybody's illness basically comes to one point: that it has been given to you, transmitted to you by your mother.

There are people who are afraid of women; and if you are afraid of women you can't love them. How can love arise out of fear? And why are you afraid of women? -- because your childhood was lived in fear of your mother. She was constantly after you, she was constantly hammering you. She was constantly telling you to do this and not to do that -- of course, for your own good. She has crippled you, she has destroyed many things in you. She has made you phony because she has told you what is right to do. Whether you like it or not, whether it is spontaneously arising in you or not, you have to follow the order. And you were so helpless... your survival depended on the mother so you had to listen to her. She conditioned you. And it is because of the fear of your mother that you are afraid of women.

Millions of husbands are henpecked for the simple reason that their mothers were too

strong. It has nothing to do with the wife; they are simply projecting the mother on the wife. The wife is only a new edition of the mother. They are expecting everything from the wife that they expected from the mother. On the one hand it cripples them; on the other hand they start expecting things which are not possible from the wife's side -- because she is not your mother. So you feel frustrated. And how can you make love to your wife?

A boy who has really been dominated by the mother, who has been reduced into absolute obedience, will not be able to make love to a woman, because as he will come close to the woman psychologically he will go impotent. How can you make love to your mother? It is impossible.

Hence many people become impotent with their wives, but only with their wives. With the prostitutes they are not impotent. It is strange: why are they not impotent with the prostitute? -- for the simple reason that they can't think of their mother as a prostitute; that is impossible. Their mother, and a prostitute? The prostitute is a world apart. But they can think of their wife as a mother, they can project the mother. The wife becomes simply a screen. They want the wife to take care of them like a small child, and if she is not taking care they feel offended.

Thousands of neurotic people and psychotic people are there in the world because of the mother. And Buddha says: TO BE A MOTHER IS SWEET. He must mean something else. He can't mean a Jewish mother! He means not just giving birth to a child; that does not make one a mother. To be motherly is a totally different phenomenon. It is something absolutely human; it transcends animality. It has nothing to do with biology. It is love, pure love, unconditional love.

When a mother loves unconditionally -- and only a mother can love unconditionally -- the child learns the joy of unconditional love. The child becomes capable of loving unconditionally. And to be able to love unconditionally is to be religious.

And it is the easiest thing for a woman to do. It is easy for her because naturally she is ready for it. She is just on the verge of transcending biology through being a mother. You can be motherly without giving birth to a child. You can be motherly to anybody. You can be motherly to an animal, to a tree. You can be motherly to anything. It is something inside you.

Being motherly means being capable of unconditional love, loving the person for the sheer joy of loving, helping the person to grow for the sheer joy of seeing somebody grow.

A real therapist is a mother. If he is not, he is not a real therapist. He is only a professional exploiting people, exploiting them because of their misery. But a real therapist is a mother. He becomes a womb for the patient. He gives the patient a new birth. He starts the life of the patient again from ABC. He gives him a clean sheet to write his life again.

That's what I mean when I say "the psychology of the buddhas"; that is real therapy. A master is a real therapist; his very presence is therapeutic. He surrounds you like a mother. He is a cloud who surrounds you from everywhere, from all the sides, in all the dimensions, like a mother.

TO BE A MOTHER IS SWEET, AND A FATHER. To be a father is a little more difficult. To be a mother is easier because each woman is born intrinsically to be a mother. But fatherhood is an institution invented by man; hence it is very difficult to come across a real father. But when you come across a real father it is a miracle. A real father is also a mother. He is called a father because he is a man, but his whole approach is of unconditional love.

In ordinary life lovers are exploiting each other; it is a mutual exploitation. Unconditional love means no exploitation. The other is not being used as a means but is respected as an end

unto himself or herself.

Give your children your love, but don't give your ideologies. Don't make them Catholics and communists; that is poisoning them. Don't make them Hindus and Jainas and Buddhists; that is very destructive. Give your love, give your loving nourishment, and give them strength enough to inquire who they are, what this reality is all about. Give them every support so they can go on in life with an adventurous spirit. Then you are helping them; then you are really educating them. Ordinarily, whatsoever exists in the name of education is nothing but mis-education.

Real education is helping the person to be himself. It is possible only if you love the person for his own sake, for no other motive. If there is a motive, your love is contaminated. Then you are not a real father or a real mother.

IT IS SWEET TO LIVE ARDUOUSLY, AND TO MASTER YOURSELF.

Life is basically insecure. Only death is secure. Life insurance is a contradiction in terms; there can be only death insurance. Life is an adventure, unpredictable. Hence one has to live it arduously. Life is dangerous; only death is safe. So the people who want to live safely die before their death, and the people who want to live without any danger don't live at all.

Life means danger, life means risk. Life means going always from the known to the unknown, from one peak to another peak, always climbing peaks which have not been climbed before, always moving into the uncharted sea with no maps, with no guidelines. Only then you live ecstatically, and only then you know what life is. Through living dangerously one becomes integrated. Through living a life of insecurity one passes through fire and becomes pure gold.

The only way to become a master of oneself is to go into the unknown, unafraid or in spite of all the fears. Buddha invites you for an arduous life. That's what sannyas is all about.

"Hello, hello, police. Please come quickly. There is a big black cat coming to get me. Hurry up! I am afraid."

The policeman replied in a tired voice, "Now, come on! What kind of man are you, afraid of a black cat?"

"I am not a man. I am a peacock."

It is very rare to find a real man. Even to find a peacock is very rare. There are only rats, white and black and all colors of rats! It is not an accident that psychologists go on studying rats to understand man. Strange, trying to understand rats so as to understand man! But not really, not really so strange as it appears, because the majority of men live like rats.

The psychology of Pavlov is based on the study of dogs, and the psychology of Skinner is based on the study of rats. And both are perfectly true as far as the majority of humanity is concerned. Only once in a while they may not be right. If they try to apply their psychology on a buddha they may not be right, but as far as the ordinary humanity is concerned they are perfectly right. What has happened to man? He has lost all meaning and significance for the simple reason that he has become a very cowardly being. He lives in such cowardly ways, he is so afraid of anything new.

I know people who have been listening to me for years -- ten years, twelve years, fifteen years -- and they go on saying to me, "We want to become sannyasins, but we are still thinking." And they go on finding excuses, sometimes one excuse, sometimes another excuse. They love me, but they are not courageous enough to declare it. They hide the fact. They are not courageous to move into this unknown dimension of sannyas. They love me so

they listen to me, and they love me so sometimes they think that one day they are going to become sannyasins, but they go on finding excuses to postpone it.

It is because of this cowardliness that man has lost all meaning and significance. All joy, all bliss, all ecstasy, has disappeared. Man looks very sad. Even if he laughs, his laughter looks phony, mechanical, false -- something cultivated, managed, not coming from the depths. It has no profundity, it does not sound like it is coming from the center. It is only a painted smile on the circumference.

Do you know how the word 'phony' came into existence? It came because of the telephone. When the telephone was invented and people started listening to others thousands of miles away on the telephone, the voice sounded strange. It is bound to be so. It is mechanical; it has not that authenticity. And there was nobody behind it; it was coming out of nowhere. Hence the word 'phony'. You smile, but you don't seem to be behind it; you may not be there at all.

And now even a new thing has come into existence. At least in the old days you could imagine that on the other side there must be somebody. Now there may be just a tape recorder saying, "Hello. How are you?"

I have heard:

One psychologist became very tired with a patient, tired because he was saying the same things again and again. And he was so rich that there was no hope of getting rid of him! So the psychologist said, "You do one thing. I will leave my tape recorder and you go on talking to the tape recorder. And whenever I have time I will listen to it."

The man said, "That's perfectly right" -- because psychologists sit behind a screen, particularly Freudian psychologists. The patient lies down on the couch and the psychologist sits behind a screen. It is a good device... so that the psychologist can go to sleep, can read a newspaper, or may even leave. And the patient goes on talking, believing that he is there. Only once in a while he has to say, "Hmm. Yes. Go on," but this can be done by a tape recorder.

Next time, next session, and the psychologist said, "You did perfectly well last time. Now my tape recorder is here again. You go on talking to it. I am going to see a matinee show. When I am back I will listen."

When he was outside he saw the patient walking out. He said, "Where are you going?" The patient said, "To the matinee show."

He said, "What happened? Aren't you going to talk to the tape recorder?"

He said, "I have put my tape recorder there. I have told everything to my tape recorder, and my tape recorder is talking to your tape recorder, so what's the need of me being there? I'm also coming to the matinee show!"

Life has become phony because of us, because we are living in a very cowardly way. We are not living arduously. We are not trying to climb new mountains, new peaks. We are not trying to explore. We have become more concerned with comfort, with security, safety. Buddha says: IT IS SWEET TO LIVE ARDUOUSLY.

Have you ever enjoyed climbing to the peak of a mountain? It is hard. You perspire, breathing becomes difficult, you become tired. And then you reach to the sunlit peak and then you lie down on the grass, and what relaxation and what joy arises in your being! The silence of the peak and the arduous climb, and you have reached, and the joy of reaching! You could have been dropped by a helicopter, but then there would have been no joy. It would have

been comfortable.

Edmund Hillary could have reached to the peak of Everest by a helicopter -- it was easier -- but he tried the hard way. And he writes, "I have never known such bliss. When I reached to the peak I was all alone, the first man on Everest." Nobody had seen the sky from that point, nobody had seen the world from that point. It was sheer ecstasy. He danced.

Sooner or later buses will be going there and hotels will be there and cinema houses, and it will become very comfortable. But don't hope that you will have the same ecstasy as Edmund Hillary had, although you will be standing on the same spot. You will look a little silly and stupid, that's all. And you will not believe why this Hillary danced; you don't see any point. All around there are hotels and tourist centers and guides and everything is available; the whole world is there. You don't see why he laughed, why he enjoyed, why he danced, because you don't feel any dance.

Life is joy only when you live it raw, when you live it in all its wildness, when you live it naturally, spontaneously. Yes, there are bound to be difficulties, there are bound to be dangers, but they are part of life, and without them life will not be life at all. And this is the only way to master yourself.

OH HOW SWEET IT IS TO ENJOY LIFE,
LIVING IN HONESTY AND STRENGTH!

Strange words from the mouth of Buddha. They would be perfectly right from the mouth of Zorba the Greek, but from the mouth of Buddha? OH HOW SWEET IT IS TO ENJOY LIFE, LIVING IN HONESTY AND STRENGTH!

Just the other day I received a very angry letter from someone who was here for a few days. He is the librarian in Dharamsala of the Dalai Lama's library -- must be a scholar!

He writes to me, "You are saying things which are not Buddhist at all. In Mahayana sutras," he quotes, "Mahayana scriptures, it is perfectly and clearly stated that one has to live life ascetically. And you are changing the whole color of Buddha -- you are making him look as if he is a hedonist!"

I don't care about the Mahayana sutras and the scriptures, but I know Buddha, I know his heart. I know that space from my own experience. I am not a scholar; in fact I have never read these sutras before! Every day I have to look at them and start talking to you. I am not concerned much with what Buddha said, but I know what Buddha WOULD have said. I cannot believe that he was a pessimist. He believes, of course, in a totally different kind of life. He does not believe in the ordinary, unconscious life -- dishonest, unauthentic, unloving, unmeditative. He calls that life misery, but only a certain kind of life he calls misery. True life cannot be misery, true life is bliss.

OH HOW SWEET IT IS TO ENJOY LIFE, LIVING IN HONESTY AND STRENGTH!

We have forgotten all honesty. Out of fear we have become dishonest, out of fear we have become false. Out of fear we follow the crowd and become phony. Out of fear we wear masks so that we look like everybody else -- and we are not like everybody else. Everybody is unique; nobody is like anybody else. We have fallen below the animals as far as honesty is concerned.

Kaflin was planning a vacation and did not know what to do with his collie. He wrote to the resort hotel and asked if dogs were allowed.

He received this answer from the manager: "Dear sir, I have been in the hotel business for

over thirty years. Never yet have I had to call in the police to eject a disorderly dog in the small hours of the morning. No dog has ever attempted to pass off a bad cheque on me. Never has a dog set the bedclothes afire through smoking. I have never found a hotel towel in a dog's suitcase. Certainly, your dog is welcome. P.S. If he will vouch for you, you can come too."

Of course, a dishonest life cannot be a life of bliss. You think you are deceiving others; you are simply destroying yourself and destroying all possibilities of growth, because growth comes through sincerity, honesty, authenticity. Growth comes through accepting your truth in its total nudity. And then life is certainly a joy, then life is certainly a bliss.

But you cannot expect anything else from a scholar. A scholar is bound to be stupid, otherwise why should he be a scholar in the first place? An intelligent person will seek and search for truth. He will not bother about Mahayana sutras and scriptures. I have no respect for scholarship.

And this man became very much disturbed, so much so that he has left already. If he had been here I would have hammered him a little more, but I received his letter just the other day when he had left. I hope that sometime again he will come, because to me the space of Buddha is a totally different space from what Buddhist scholars think it is.

He said, "Whatsoever you are saying is illogical and against the scriptures." So far so good! If it is against the scriptures it must have some truth in it. If it is illogical then it must be closer to truth, because truth IS illogical. Life is illogical. Those who think that life is logical are simply befooling themselves. Life is absolutely illogical because life contains contradictions and logic cannot contain contradictions. Logic is stupid.

A cyclist was stopped on the road by a policeman. He was no ordinary man -- he was a professor of logic.

"Ah so! No light, that is twenty marks. No brakes, that is fifty marks. No bell, that is ten marks."

The cyclist turned round and looked at the row of traffic lined up behind him. He pointed at the man behind him and said, "Alright, that is eighty marks. But the poor man behind me, what will he have to pay? He has no bicycle even!"

Logically, that's true. If no bells, ten marks, no brakes, fifty marks, no light, twenty marks -- no bicycle, how much will he have to pay?

A male scorpion was walking along the bank of a river. At a certain point he saw on the other bank a most beautiful female scorpion dancing erotically to attract him. He desired very much to cross the river, but he could not swim.

Suddenly he saw a big red frog and called to him, but the frog, being afraid of the scorpion's poison, started to hop away.

The scorpion, however, was a philosopher, and he said to the frog, "Come on, don't be afraid. Look at it logically. I am not interested in you, I am interested in her. I just want you to get me across the river. Everything will be okay. I am obviously not going to sting you because if I do, not only will YOU die, but I will die too because I can't swim. So come on, be logical and help me get across."

The red frog reluctantly agreed. The scorpion jumped on his shoulders and they began to cross the river. The frog swam very carefully, always looking towards the approaching shore.

Suddenly the frog felt a shooting pain in his ass and shortly after he felt the coolness of death slowly overtaking him. He turned to the scorpion and said, "Shit! This is not logic at all!"

"Yes," the scorpion agreed. "It is not logic, it is my nature."

Logic is one thing, life is totally another. My concern here is not logic but life. My statements may not be logical -- they cannot be -- but they are alive; they have the flavor of life.

Buddha says: OH HOW SWEET IT IS TO ENJOY LIFE, LIVING IN HONESTY AND STRENGTH!

AND WISDOM IS SWEET,
AND FREEDOM.

Buddha says: Meditation brings two things. It brings wisdom, it brings freedom. These two flowers grow out of meditation. When you become silent, utterly silent, beyond the mind, two flowers bloom in you. One is of wisdom: you know what is and what is not. And the other is of freedom: you know now there are no more any limitations on you, either of time or of space. You become liberated.

Meditation is the key to liberation, to freedom, to wisdom.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #8

Chapter title: The nature of things

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I UNDERSTAND YOU TO SAY THAT THE INTELLECT IS A BARRIER TO SELF-REALIZATION. PLEASE EXPLAIN FURTHER WHAT YOU MEAN BY THIS. I HAVE BEEN VERY INTERESTED TO LISTEN TO YOUR LECTURES DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS. FAR FROM BEING UNINTELLECTUAL, THEY COULD BE DESCRIBED AS AN INTELLECTUAL TOUR DE FORCE. FURTHERMORE, A SCIENTIST CANNOT DISCARD HIS SHARE OF KNOWLEDGE ON WHICH HE

BASES HIS JUDGMENTS: SURELY HIS JUDGMENTS MUST BE OBJECTIVE. I FEEL THAT I MUST HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD YOU.

Richard, I have been saying nothing against intelligence, intellect, but against intellectuality -- and that's a totally different phenomenon. When somebody becomes identified with his intellect, intellectuality is born; when somebody remains the master, unidentified with his intellect, intelligence is born. Intellect is the same. The whole thing depends whether you get identified with it or you remain transcendental to it. If you become identified, it is intellectuality; if you remain unidentified, it is intelligence.

Intelligence is of tremendous importance; intellectuality is a barrier. Intellectuality is a barrier even in the world of science. Intellectuality can, at the most, give you scholars, wordy people who go on and on spinning, weaving systems of thought with no substance at all.

In the scientific endeavor, intelligence has to be focused on the objective world; in the religious exploration, intelligence has to move inwards. It is the same intelligence, only the direction changes. In science, the object, the outer object, is the goal of inquiry; in religion, your subjectivity, your interiority, is your adventure. The intelligence is the same.

If you become an intellectual then you will not be a scientist; you will only write histories of science or philosophies of science, but you will not be a scientist, an explorer, an inventor, a discoverer, on your own. You will be simply accumulating information. Yes, that too has a certain use; as far as the outside world is concerned, even information has a certain limited utility, but in the inner world it has no utility at all. It is a barrier; it has a negative effect on the inner experience.

You say, "I understand you to say that the intellect is a barrier to self-realization."

The intellect is neither a barrier nor a bridge; intellect is neutral. Get identified with it, it becomes a barrier; remain unidentified with it, it is a bridge. And without meditation you cannot know your transcendental nature.

In science, concentration is enough; at the most, contemplation is needed. In religion, meditation is the only way. Concentration is not needed, is not a help; it is a positive hindrance. Contemplation also is not a help; it is a compensation for not being meditative, it is a poor substitute for it. Meditation -- only meditation -- can bring the inner revolution.

Meditation means getting out of the mind, looking at the mind from the outside. That's exactly the meaning of the word 'ecstasy': to stand out. To stand out of the mind makes you ecstatic, brings bliss to you. And great intelligence is released. When you are identified with the mind you cannot be very intelligent because you become identified with an instrument, you become confined by the instrument and its limitations. And you are unlimited -- you are consciousness.

Use the mind, but don't become it. Use it as you use other machines. Mind is a beautiful machine. If you can use it, it will serve you; if you cannot use it and it starts using you, it is destructive, it is dangerous. It is bound to take you into some trouble, into some calamity, into some suffering and misery, because a machine is a blind thing. It has no eyes, it has no insight. Mind cannot see; it can only go on repeating that which has been fed into it. It is like a computer; first you have to feed it.

That's what your so-called education is, you go on feeding it. Then it becomes a great memory in you, so whenever you need to remember anything it can supply. But you should remain the master so that you can use it; otherwise it starts directing you.

Don't be guided by your car; remain a driver. You have to decide the direction, you have to decide the goal. You have to decide about the speed, when to start and when to stop. When

you lose control and when the car takes over and it starts going on its own you are doomed.

But I am not absolutely against information. Information is good if it is stored in the memory and whenever you need it you can find it easily. It is dangerous only when you don't need it and it goes on hammering itself on you; when it forces you to do something, when you are just a victim, then it is dangerous. Otherwise it is beautiful. It is a beautiful means, but it is not the end.

At school the teacher was asking his class questions. He turned to Jenkins, "Who knocked down the walls of Jericho?"

"Please, sir," replied Jenkins. "It was not me, sir."

The teacher was very angry. He went straight to the headmaster and said, "I have just asked Jenkins who knocked down the walls of Jericho and he said it was not him. What do you think about that?"

The headmaster said, "I have known the Jenkins family for years, and if he said it wasn't him, it WASN'T him."

The teacher was even more angry. He phoned the Minister of Education and said, "I asked a boy in class who knocked down the walls of Jericho and he said it wasn't him. I then went to the headmaster to complain. He said he had known the family for years and if the boy said it wasn't him, it WASN'T him. What do you think about that?"

The minister was silent for a second, then said, "Listen, I am fed up with complaints from your school. Get the walls repaired and if there are more complaints, I am going to shut that school down!"

Information is not bad in itself -- you have to know who knocked down the walls of Jericho! But if information becomes so powerful in your mind that it goes on and on and you cannot put it off, you cannot put the mind in a state of relaxation, then the mind becomes wearied, tired, bored, exhausted. In that state, how can you be intelligent? Your energies are dissipated. Intelligence needs overflowing energies. Intelligence needs health, wholeness.

A meditator will be more intelligent than anybody else and a meditator will be able to use his mind objectively and subjectively both. He will be able to move outside as easily as he will be able to move inside. He will be more flexible. He is the master. He can take the car forward, he can take the car backward.

When Ford had made his first car there was no reverse gear in it. It was a difficult problem to come back home. You had to go round, you had to take the long route, just to come back home. Even if you had gone a few yards past your garage you could not come back to the garage -- there was no reverse gear in it. Later on it was added.

Meditation gives you the reverse gear. Ordinarily you don't have it and you have to go round the world again and again, and still you cannot find where your home is; you cannot come back. You cannot go in; you know only how to go out. You cannot back in. A meditator becomes more fluid, more flexible. He becomes more enriched.

I am not in favor of those people who in the past, in the name of religion, became fixated into their introversion; that is another extreme. A few people are fixated as extroverts; as a reaction, a few other people become fixated as introverts. Both become dead. Life belongs to the flexible one who can move from extroversion to introversion and from introversion to extroversion as easily as you move outside your house and inside your house. When it is too cold inside you come out in the sun; when it becomes too hot you come inside under the shelter, in the coolness of the house -- and there is no problem. It is as simple as that.

Meditation does not mean going against the outside world. It has been so in the past. That's why religion has failed, it could not succeed; it could not have succeeded in any way. Life belongs to the fluid, to the flowing. Whenever you become fixated you become a thing. Your monks were introverts; they closed their eyes to the outside world.

That's why in the East we could not develop science, although the first steps were taken in the East. Mathematics was developed in India. The first steps towards technology were taken in China. But there it stopped for the simple reason that the greatest people in the East became fixated introverts; they lost interest in the objective world, they closed themselves totally to the objective. This is being only half of your total potential.

Now the West is doing just the opposite: it has become utterly extrovert, it does not know how to go in. It does not believe that there is any "in," it does not believe in any soul. It believes in man's behavior, not in man's inner existence. It studies the behavior and it says there is nobody inside it -- it is all mechanical.

Man has become a robot. If you don't know the soul, man becomes a robot. He is understood to be just a beautiful mechanism developed over millions of years -- the long long journey of evolution -- but he is only a sophisticated machine.

It was not difficult for Adolf Hitler to kill so many people so easily for the simple reason that if man is a machine, what is the harm in killing people? If you destroy your wristwatch you don't feel guilty; howsoever sophisticated it was, it was only a wristwatch. If you decided to destroy it, it is for you to decide; nobody can object to it. You cannot be dragged into a court as a murderer.

Stalin could kill millions of people easily without any prick in his conscience for the simple reason that Marxism believes that there is no soul. Man is nothing but matter; consciousness is only a by-product of matter. This is one extreme.

Science has developed in the West, but religion has disappeared. In the East, religion developed but science disappeared. In both the ways man remains poor and half.

My effort here is to create the whole man who will be able to be scientific and religious together.

A big, mangy dog was threatening a mother cat and her kittens. He had backed them into the corner of a barn, when suddenly the cat reared back on her hind legs and started barking and growling loudly. Startled and confused, the dog turned and ran from the barn, its tail tucked between its legs.

Turning to her kittens, the mother cat lifted a paw and told them, "Now do you see the advantage of being bilingual?"

I want man to be bilingual. He should know science as much, as deeply as he should know meditation. He should know mind as much as he should know meditation. He should know the language of the objective world -- that is science -- and he should know also the language of the subjective world -- that is religion.

Only a man who is able to bridge the objective and the subjective, a man who is able to bridge the East and the West, a man who is able to bridge the materialist and the spiritualist, can be a whole man. The world is waiting for the whole man. If the whole man does not arrive soon, then there is no future for humanity. And the whole man can come only through deep, profound intelligence.

I am not against intellect, I am not against intelligence; I am against intellectuality. Don't get identified with your mind. Always remain a watcher on the hills; a witness to the body, to

the mind, a witness to the outer and to the inner, so that you can transcend both the outer and the inner and you can know that you are neither -- you are beyond both. That beyond is God.

God is neither an object nor a subject. God is neither the outside nor the inside. He is both and he is neither.

Richard, you say, "I have been very interested to listen to your lectures during the past few days. Far from being unintellectual, they could be described as an intellectual tour de force."

When I am talking to you, even if I am talking about something supra-intellectual, I talk in intellectual ways because otherwise you will not be able to understand what I am saying. Intellect is the only possible communication right now. Unless YOU learn the language of total silence I have to go on talking in YOUR language. You understand logic, I use logic -- for very strange purposes: to help you go beyond logic. I use every possible way to help you transcend duality.

I am not unintellectual or anti-intellectual, but my effort here is to help you to go beyond intellect and anti-intellect both, to go beyond logic and illogic both. It is possible. When you are in absolute silence you are neither logical nor illogical, but that silence cannot be expressed directly; that silence has to be translated into your language. That's what I am doing here. It is an arduous effort because much splendor and grandeur is lost in translating it. That experience of silence is so vast it cannot be put into words, but it has to be put into words. Only then will you be able to hear it. Even then very few people hear it, because people are not present; they are absent, they are asleep.

I have to start with your language, and slowly slowly, you will start learning my language. I am bilingual and I will make you also bilingual. There are two languages: the language of words and the language of silence. Right now I have to use the language of words to translate the poetry of silence, the music of silence. Later on, when you have developed a little meditateness, you will be able to understand the poetry of silence, the music of silence directly -- just by sitting near me. There will be no need for me to say anything at all.

I am waiting for that day and I am really in a hurry for that day, because talking is becoming more and more difficult for me. To you it may seem that I can go on talking forever; as far as I am concerned it is becoming more and more difficult because I can see the impossibility of putting the unknowable into words. It seems murderous -- the whole beauty is lost. Only something reaches you and that too depends on you: if you are available to me it reaches to you; otherwise it will not reach you. You will go on listening to that which you want to listen to and you will go on seeing that which you are capable of seeing.

For a holiday, Donnelly decided to go to Switzerland to fulfill a lifelong dream by climbing the Matterhorn. He hired a guide and went up. Just as they neared the top, the men were caught in a snow slide.

Three hours later, a Saint Bernard plowed through to them, a keg of brandy tied under his chin.

"Hurray!" shouted the guide. "Here comes man's best friend!"

"Yeah," said Donnelly. "And look at the size of the dog that is bringing it!"

You hear that which you can hear, you see that which you can see. It is a tug of war between me and you to bring you to a point from where you can see something that I am seeing.

Once I have accomplished the right number to create the buddhafiield I will go into silence. The way you are going into meditation makes me hopeful soon it will be happening; it will not be long. Soon the right amount of energy will be available. Then I can just sit silently with you; you can dance and sing around me or sit in silence. And there will be a communication -- more a communion than a communication. Something is bound to transpire then. But before that can happen I have to go on persuading you through words, through logic. It is a kind of seduction. I have to seduce you towards something which you have utterly forgotten.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CAN YOU PUT YOUR PHILOSOPHY IN A NUTSHELL?

Vandan, any philosophy that can be put in a nutshell, belongs there.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS PESSIMISM?

Gyanesh, man can look at life in two ways: either through a no or through a yes. Either he can be negative in his approach or positive. These are the two easily available ways for the mind.

There is also a third way, but to achieve to the third you have to go through arduous effort of becoming more and more aware. To the sleeping person these two ways are ready-made, available from the very birth.

The positive person lives through a kind of optimism. His optimism is shallow, but he is full of hopes. He counts only the roses on the rosebush; he does not look at the thorns, he ignores them. Sooner or later he is bound to be disappointed.

Every child begins with a positive attitude towards life. That is natural because if the child begins with a negative attitude he will not begin at all; he would have died in the mother's womb. He waited for nine months, he passed through the birth canal, which is a painful process, suffocating. There must be deep down an unconscious hope; hence he is patiently waiting for the day when he can see the sun, see the light, be in the world. He is like a seed, very unconscious; he is not aware of it. But every child is born with great hopes, every child is an optimist; he looks through the positive.

But life disappoints everyone. Life is very strange, in a way: if you don't get what you want, you are disappointed, naturally; but if you get what you want, then too you are disappointed. Disappointment seems to be the destiny. If you don't get what you want, you suffer -- you have failed. You have not been able to prove yourself, you have not been able to prove your mettle. Others have succeeded, you are a failure. You can't respect yourself. And if you can't respect yourself, you can't respect life. It seems like a curse. You would like to return the ticket to God. If you meet him, your first question will be, "Why have you created me? For what? -- for all these disappointments? Are you a sadist or something, creating so many people and then giving them so much misery?"

And the religious people say, "It is God's play, his LEELA." What kind of play is this? God does not seem to be in his right senses. It seems as if he is enjoying the tortures. He

seems to be more like Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, than like Gautam Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus.

These people don't seem to be like God, because when all your hopes are turned into hopelessness, when all your desires are frustrated, when nothing comes out of your optimism, naturally you become sour, you become bitter, and pessimism is born.

Pessimism is nothing but the failure of optimistic attitudes. Then you start counting the thorns and ignoring the roses. Then you look always for the darker side. That is the philosophy of pessimism.

Contemplate on these laws of Murphy:

First: If anything can go wrong, it will.

Second: Nothing is ever as simple as it seems.

Third: Everything takes longer than you expect.

Fourth: Left to themselves all things go from bad to worse.

Fifth: Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.

Sixth: Mother Nature is a bitch.

Seventh: It is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious.

Eighth: If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

Ninth: If you can keep your head when, all around you, others are losing theirs, you just don't understand the situation.

And the tenth: For every human problem, there is a neat, simple solution -- and it is always wrong.

Pessimism simply means looking at life negatively, always searching for the flaw, for the loophole, for something negative, and accumulating all those negativities. And when you look at the dark side, always, of course, there are two nights and only one small day sandwiched between the two nights -- dark dark nights.

Optimism ends into pessimism. Every pessimist has been an optimist once -- he is an ex-optimist. He hoped too much and because those hopes were not fulfilled he has become sour, angry, enraged. Now he cannot see the flowers and the stars. He can't see anything beautiful; he goes on looking for the ugly. And when you look for the ugly you will find it on every step. Whatsoever you look for you are bound to find it, remember, because life consists of both -- positivity and negativity -- in the same quantity. Life cannot exist without the other; the other pole is a must.

It is just like electricity. Electricity cannot exist only with one polarity, positive or negative; it has to have both the poles together. It is possible only through the tension that is created between the negative and the positive.

But there is a third kind of person -- I call that person the awakened, the enlightened -- who looks at life in its totality, who is neither a pessimist nor an optimist, who simply accepts life as it is; who accepts the night, who accepts the day, who accepts the rose and the thorn, because he understands that life is out of necessity dual, dialectical. And in his awareness grows a synthesis between the polar opposites. The synthesis never grows on the outside, as Karl Marx says.

Karl Marx says life is a dialectical process between thesis and antithesis and it always comes to a synthesis. Then synthesis turns again into a thesis and creates its antithesis. That is utterly wrong. Outside, life is always thesis and antithesis; it never comes to any synthesis.

Synthesis is achieved only in the inner vision of an enlightened being. Synthesis is

attained when you have attained to absolute silence. In that silence you are so clear, so transparent, that you can see through and through. Then you know that life needs both: day and night, birth and death. Then there is nothing wrong in death; it is perfectly useful, needed, inevitable. Then a deep acceptance arises in you. Buddha calls that acceptance TATHATA -- suchness. Life is such. You understand it and through that understanding you transcend it.

Don't be a pessimist and don't be an optimist. Just watch, be a watcher and attain to the ultimate synthesis where you become a third force rising higher and higher and seeing from above, a bird's-eye view. Deep down everything is in conflict, but it is okay because you understand life cannot exist without it. It is not God's fault. There is no God as a person who can be blamed for it. It is just the nature of things -- tao, dhamma -- that life functions through duality. But consciousness can soar so high that it can transcend all duality and can reach to oneness.

The real meditator is neither pessimist nor optimist. He lives in a kind of suchness, in total "accept-ability."

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM BORED WITH MY HUSBAND. I HAVE TRIED EVERYTHING, BUT NOTHING SEEMS TO WORK. HAVE YOU ANY SUGGESTIONS?

Geetama, not many, just one. Write a letter to five of your friends like this:
Hello there!

This letter was started by a woman like yourself, in hopes of bringing relief to a tired and discontented wife.

Unlike most chain letters, this one does not cost anything. Just send a copy of this letter to five of your friends who are equally tired. Then bundle up your husband and send him to the woman at the top of the list and add your name to the bottom of the list.

When your name comes to the top of the list you will receive 16,478 men and some of them are bound to be a hell of a lot better than the one you already have.

DO NOT BREAK THE CHAIN... HAVE FAITH!

One woman broke the chain and got her own sonofabitch back.

At the date of writing this letter, another friend of mine received 183 men. They buried her yesterday.... But it took three undertakers thirty-six hours to get the smile off her face.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOUR MESSAGE IS UNIVERSAL, BUT IS IT ONLY FOR THOSE WITHOUT A RELIGION? WHY ARE NOT YOUR FELLOW INDIANS CROWDING AT THE GATE TO GET IN?

Charles Gardiner, my message is universal. That does not mean that everybody will be able to understand it. The more universal a message is, the less people will be able to understand it, because the more universal it is, the more mysterious it is. It is so beyond the reach of the ordinary, stupid mind -- just because it is universal.

People can understand things which are not so universal more easily. They can

understand racial things, they can understand national things, they can understand ideological things. But any message that is really universal is bound to be understood only by a very few chosen people.

Only the most intelligent people will be interested in what I am doing here. Hence you will see gathering around me intelligent people from all over the world, young, fresh, intelligent.

India is not young, it is not fresh. It is very rare to find an Indian who is young. In India everybody is born old. It is such an ancient country with such a long long tradition that everybody is burdened. A younger country is of course more receptive.

For example, America is more receptive to any new message than any other country for the simple reason that it is the latest country in the world -- with only a three-hundred-year tradition, it is nothing. India has lived at least ten thousand years -- ten thousand years according to the historians, one hundred thousand years according to Indians themselves. The truth may be somewhere in between. I can settle on fifty thousand years -- but that too is very long. And as the country becomes old it goes on gathering rubbish, junk. And every generation goes on giving its junk and rubbish to the new generation, thinking that this is heritage, thinking that they are giving something very valuable.

America is the most receptive. And next to America, Germany seems to be very receptive for the simple reason that Adolf Hitler killed the old Germany completely, he destroyed the old completely. He created a discontinuity. The new German generation is no longer looking backwards. Adolf Hitler is standing there and nobody wants to look at him, so better forget all about it! Adolf Hitler has done a great service to Germany. He has destroyed the old heritage -- not knowing that he is doing such good work, otherwise he would not have done it -- not knowing that he is doing something immensely valuable. Unconsciously he has done it.

India also needs a discontinuity with the past. The past hinders.

Hence people from other countries are coming to me more. And certainly one becomes curious, just as Gardiner has become curious: "Why are not your fellow Indians crowding at the gate to get in?"

India is too old, my message is too new. India is ancient, traditional; I am rebellious. There is no meeting ground between me and India. I am not an Indian, in fact. So please don't call them "fellow Indians" -- they are not. I am not an Indian, I belong to no nation; only then can I be universal. If I am an Indian, then I am already prejudiced in favor of India. Then my message cannot be universal; it will be deep down Indian, basically Indian -- camouflaged, hidden behind beautiful words, abstractions, but it will remain essentially Indian; it can't be universal.

Mahatma Gandhi used to say that the whole universe is one, all religions are one. In his ashram he used to teach that Hindus and Mohammedans and Christians are all one. In his prayer meetings all the prayers of all the religions were recited. He loved one prayer the most which says: ALLAH ISHWAR TERE NAM -- Ishwar and Allah, both are your names, God.

But when he was killed he forgot all about Allah. He said, "Hey Ram!" Then the hidden Hindu came to the surface. His whole life he was saying, "Both are the same, both are names of the same." But when the bullet went into his heart he forgot all his philosophy. It would have been really beautiful if he had said, "Allah!" But he said, "Ram!"

He used to say that the Gita and the Koran and the Bible have the same message, but he worshipped the Gita and he called the Gita his mother. Then what is the Koran? He has not even called the Koran his auntie! The Gita is his mother -- and of course he has chosen a few pieces from the Koran and from the Bible which are in agreement with the Gita. Anything

that disagrees with the Gita has not been chosen by him, so the Gita remains the criterion. Now this is so clear, that anything that does not fit with the Gita is wrong; it may be in the Koran, it may be in the Bible, but it is wrong. He would not say it so clearly because he was a politician.

I am not a politician -- I say things as they are. I call a spade a spade -- and sometimes a fucking spade! I am not a politician; I simply say whatsoever is the case.

Indians are not very happy with me, they cannot be. Neither am I very happy with them, so why should they be? I am utterly against their traditionalism, their egoistic idea that they are holier than everybody else in the world. Nobody is holier than anybody else. I am against their idea that their country is the only religious country in the world, that they are the source of all that is great. These are stupid ideas. Every country carries them and every country believes in them.

You ask the Chinese, you ask the Japanese, you ask the Italians, you ask anybody. Every country believes it. And you can find always great arguments to support it.

Indians would have crowded at the gate if I was helping in some way, nourishing and feeding their ego. I am not doing that, I cannot do that. Only then can I be universal. I am continuously hammering on their ego. I am continuously trying to destroy their "holier-than-thou" look. They are angry at me. How can they crowd at the gate to come in?

If sometimes a few of them out of curiosity come in, within five to seven minutes they start getting up. Only a few stupid Indians get up from here. What I am saying does not suit them. They would like me to praise their Vedas as the only scriptures, the real scriptures, written by God himself. They would like me to praise everything that is Indian. I cannot do that. I can praise only that which is praiseworthy, not because it is Indian. I can praise things, not because they are Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist, but simply because they are beautiful.

I praise the Taj Mahal not because it is Mohammedan, but just because it is a beautiful piece of objective art. I praise the Upanishads not because Hindus have written them but because they are so immensely valuable, intrinsically valuable. I praise Lao Tzu in the same way, I praise Jesus in the same way, I praise Mohammed in the same way. Wherever truth has happened, whomsoever it has happened to -- to Bahauddin or to Buddha -- it does not make any difference to me.

That makes Indians very angry. They would like me to criticize Mohammed and to praise Mahavira, or if I cannot do that then at least praise Mahavira more than Mohammed, but create a hierarchy in which Buddha, Krishna and Mahavira are at the top. Yes, Jesus is also good and Mohammed is also good, but not at the top -- far below in the hierarchy. That I cannot do because I see the same phenomenon happening in Buddha and the same experience in Jesus. I am not helping Indians' ego in any possible way -- I am doing just the opposite. They cannot crowd at the gate to come in.

What I am trying here is not something of the past; it belongs to the future. So only a few Indians will be able to come to me -- a few Indians who are capable of rising above their Indian mind, very rare individuals who are ready to rise with me above nationality, above race, above all kinds of egoistic attitudes. They are here, but they are here because they are also no longer Indians.

Indians believe that they know, they are very knowledgeable. Naturally -- it is an ancient country; you need not read the scriptures, the scriptures are in the atmosphere. And my idea is that the knowledgeable person can never be religious. And up to now India has believed in the knowledgeable person -- the pundit, the scholar, the professor. And my effort is to help you become more and more childlike, more innocent, full of wonder not full of knowledge,

full of awe not full of information. There is no need to read the Vedas -- because anyway ninety-nine percent of the Vedas is absolutely rubbish! Now this hurts the Indians. Only one percent is beautiful; you have to be very choosy.

The same is the case with other scriptures of the world. You look at the Bible, look at the Old Testament; ninety-nine percent is just rubbish. It would be better if we got rid of that rubbish so only diamonds can shine forth. Otherwise the pebbles are so many, the diamonds are lost. But no -- no Jew will be ready to drop anything out of the Old Testament. And the same is the case with the New Testament, and the same is the case -- more so -- with the Koran.

I have many Mohammedan sannyasins. They go on asking me when I am going to speak on the Koran, and I go on postponing it for the simple reason that there is not much in it to speak on. Very rarely do you come across a line one can manage to speak about in a beautiful way. Otherwise, just very ordinary statements....

But the reason is, in those days everything was written in the religious scriptures: history, geography, mythology. That was the only way. The old religious scriptures are like ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA; they are the encyclopedias of the old days. Everything is written, whatsoever was happening in those days and whatsoever was thought important. It may have been important in those days; now it is irrelevant.

And even when I speak on Buddha, Mahavira, Krishna, I speak in an absolutely nontraditional way. I speak out of my own experience, I am not a commentator. I love Buddha because I have known the same light, I have experienced the same truth. So when I comment on Buddha it is not a commentary. Buddha's statements are only excuses, just pegs; I go on hanging myself on those pegs.

The Indian mind is very much against that. They think I am distorting. They think I should comment according to the scriptures. I am commenting according to my consciousness, not according to any scripture. And when I see something which cannot be said by a buddha I simply drop it, I don't comment on it.

I know what buddhahood is! I go on creating Buddha again. That is resisted very much. They would like me to be just a historian, a commentator, a scholar. They would like me to quote their scriptures, refer to their scriptures. I never refer, I never quote. In my books you will not find any footnotes. I don't believe in all that nonsense. I speak out of my heart. I love Buddha, I love Jesus. I speak, I use their statements as grounds to take off, that's all -- just jumping boards. It goes against the Indian approach, Indian scholarship.

Gardiner, because my message is universal it will appeal only to those people who ARE universal, who don't belong to any country anymore, to any religion, to any church. Yes, you are right. You say, "Is it only for those without a religion?"

Yes, it is for those who are without a religion, without a nation, without a race; it is only for those liberated ones. It is for the new generation. The new generation is courageous; it has dropped much of the load that people have been carrying for centuries. Only then can there be a communion between me and you.

And you can see this is a universal gathering. People from at least forty countries are here. Except the Chinese and the Russians -- except the communist bloc -- you will find people from every country here. And even in Russia the orange people are starting to work underground. Small cells have started functioning. People are meeting really in underground basements, meditating. A few people even have become sannyasins. It is very difficult to send them malas and names, but we have found ways and they have found ways. They cannot wear orange in the open.

One woman who has become a sannyasin wrote to me, "What to do?" I said, "Use red instead of orange. Wear red and tell people that you love communism so much that you cannot resist the temptation of wearing red!" She loved the idea. She said, "This is beautiful!"

But when they meditate and they meet in underground basements they wear orange, they wear malas, they read the books, they listen to the tapes. They have even translated a few books into Russian; just hand-written, those books are passed from one hand to another. But they are not here; it will be difficult for them to be here.

One woman has written that she is ready to escape from Russia if somebody can help her so that she can remain here forever. She is ready to leave her husband, her home, her security, safety, everything.

Soon from China and Russia also people will be coming here. This is becoming a universal temple -- and it is especially for those who have no more interest in religion. They can understand me, because the priests have destroyed their interest in religion. The churches have destroyed any possibility for any intelligent person to be religious.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO I ALWAYS GET SEXUALLY EXCITED WHEN I SEE A BEAUTIFUL
WOMAN?

Nanda Kishor, the first thing is that you are an Indian. It is very difficult for an Indian not to get excited when he sees a beautiful woman. Long long repression... your unconscious is full of repressions so you don't miss any opportunity.

Of course you don't show it. It is courageous of you that you have asked the question.

Nothing is wrong in being sexually excited by seeing a beautiful woman. You are simply paying a compliment to her, that's all. You are saying she is beautiful and attractive. In a more understanding world you will simply go to the woman and thank her and she will accept your compliment with gratitude. If a woman passes and nobody gets excited about her, nobody ever, that is really a miserable thing to go through.

I was a professor in a university for a few years. One day it happened: I was sitting in the vice-chancellor's room. A girl came, she was crying and weeping and she said that one boy was continually teasing her. He was throwing small stones at her, writing love letters to her.

The vice-chancellor was, of course, very angry. I was sitting there so he told me, "Can you help this girl? Can you console her?"

I asked the girl, "If nobody ever teased you and nobody ever wrote a love letter and nobody threw pebbles at you, would that be right? Would you be happy?"

Her tears disappeared. For a moment she was shocked. Then she said, "I have never thought of it in that way."

I said, "That will be real misery! This simply shows that somebody is interested in you. Go to him and thank him! Nothing is wrong in it. He is simply a little foolish; he does not know how to pay compliments to a beautiful girl. Send the boy to me and I will teach him a few things! He needs a little tuition -- he has no intuition. And you need not be worried and you need not be crying: this is natural!"

You are, Nanda Kishor, one of the species of animals. Man is an animal unless he becomes a buddha. If you become a buddha and then you are excited by seeing a beautiful

woman, come and ask the question. Then it will be something worth asking because then it will be a problem. But you are not a buddha -- so meanwhile enjoy! Once you become a buddha, then I cannot help -- nobody can help. Then even if you want to get down, there is no way.

It is an animal instinct, as much in animals as in human beings. Yes, it has to be transcended, but by repression you cannot transcend. Accept it. Acceptance is the first step towards transcendence. And don't feel guilty about it -- it is not a sin.

When you see a beautiful sunset you don't feel any guilt. When you see a beautiful flower and you are attracted you don't feel any guilt. When you see a beautiful face of a man or a woman, why should you feel guilty if you are attracted, if you want to look back, if you want to go close and have a closer look? Why should you feel guilty about it? But that's how you have been taught for centuries. If you go closer to the woman, the woman will start shouting for the police and you will start finding excuses.

Nobody looks into each other's eyes. It is thought to be offensive. Even if you want to look into some beautiful eyes you cannot. Only three seconds is allowed. How all over the world people have come to agree on three seconds is something mysterious. Just for three seconds you can look at somebody and the other will not be offended. If you look more than that, the other feels offended.

Maybe there is a reason. You don't know how to look at the other; you don't know how to look gracefully. Maybe your look is ugly -- and it is bound to be ugly if you are carrying much repressed sexuality. Your look will be pornographic. Deep down in your imagination you will be undressing the woman, and she feels offended. Who are you to undress her even in your fancy? Your look is ugly; it looks as if you are penetrating her being, as if you have found a substitute for sexual penetration through the eyes. You are reducing her into a thing, and nobody wants to be reduced into a thing. Your look has no respect in it. If your look has respect, if your excitement has beauty, grace, there is no problem.

Yes, it has to be transcended one day because this is also a duality -- man/woman -- the same duality as between positive and negative, birth and death, summer and winter. It has to be transcended. One has to come to a point from where nothing disturbs your coolness, nothing distracts you from your center.

But the way to come to it is not repression, Nanda Kishor. The first step is acceptance: it is natural. Accept it as part of your nature, as part of your biology. And then try to understand it, watch it, observe it, witness it. Slowly slowly, as your witnessing will grow, you will go beyond it. One day you will not find any difference between a man and a woman: you have gone beyond sexuality. That is true BRAHMACHARYA, true celibacy, but it is not what has been told to you.

In the name of celibacy, sex has been repressed for centuries and you have become just full of sexuality. Rather than transcending it you are boiling within.

In order to find out whether his wife was cheating on him, a man bought a parrot. The parrot was an amazing bird, but in a fight had lost both legs and had to balance itself on its pelvis.

One day the man questioned the parrot and found out that his wife was, in fact, cheating on him. Quickly he asked the parrot, "What happened?"

The parrot said, "First your wife was kissing a strange man, and then she started to take off her clothes...."

"And then?" interrupted the man.

"And then they both got on the bed...."
"And then?" cried the man.
"Then she pulled on the blankets...."
"And then, and then?"
"I don't know," said the parrot. "I fell over!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #9

Chapter title: The monkey in the forest

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IF YOU SLEEP,
DESIRE GROWS IN YOU
LIKE A VINE IN THE FOREST.

LIKE A MONKEY IN THE FOREST
YOU JUMP FROM TREE TO TREE,
NEVER FINDING THE FRUIT --
FROM LIFE TO LIFE,
NEVER FINDING PEACE.

IF YOU ARE FILLED WITH DESIRE,
YOUR SORROWS SWELL
LIKE THE GRASS AFTER THE RAIN.

BUT IF YOU SUBDUE DESIRE,
YOUR SORROWS FALL FROM YOU
LIKE DROPS OF WATER FROM A LOTUS FLOWER.

THIS IS GOOD COUNSEL
AND IT IS FOR EVERYONE:
AS THE GRASS IS CLEARED FOR THE FRESH ROOT,
CUT DOWN DESIRE
LEST DEATH AFTER DEATH CRUSH YOU
AS A RIVER CRUSHES THE HELPLESS REEDS.

FOR IF THE ROOTS HOLD FIRM,
A FELLED TREE GROWS UP AGAIN.
IF DESIRES ARE NOT UPROOTED,
SORROWS GROW AGAIN IN YOU.

Gautama the Buddha's most fundamental message to humanity is that man is asleep. Man is born asleep. He is not talking about the ordinary sleep; he is talking about a metaphysical sleep, a deep deep unconsciousness within you. You are acting out of that unconsciousness, so whatsoever you do goes wrong. It is impossible to do right with this unconsciousness within you. This unconsciousness perverts all of your efforts, it leads you into wrong directions. It is bound to be so.

Even if a buddha is with you, you will misunderstand him for the mere reason that you are not conscious. If you are really asleep and a buddha is sitting by the side of you, you cannot recognize him, you cannot see him, you cannot feel him. You will go on dreaming in your own way; you will remain confined to your own private world of dreams.

The most private thing in life is your dreaming. When the dreaming disappears you enter into the world of the universal. Then you enter into truth, into God, into nirvana. But with all your dreams, that is impossible; you are lost in your own dreams. And it is not only one dream within you; millions of them are constantly growing... one is being replaced by another. You think that now you are awake because one dream has left you, but another has taken its place. You can even dream that you are awake. Buddhas go on shouting, but you don't hear.

Jesus says: If you have eyes to see, see. If you have ears to hear, hear. He is not talking with deaf and blind people, he is talking with people like you. He is saying exactly the same thing that Buddha is saying: that you are asleep.

Jesus had been to India, and when Jesus came to India, Buddha was very much alive. Although he had left his body five hundred years before, the air was still full with his songs. There were still people deeply connected with him; there were still people for whom he was almost a tangible reality.

Buddha had said that "My religion will last for five hundred years." Those years were coming to an end; it was the last phase. The sun was setting, but the sun was still on the horizon.

Jesus must have visited Buddhist schools, monasteries. In Ladakh there is still a hand-written scripture in existence in which Jesus has written about his coming to India, his visit, his experiences, what he had gained here. Christian scriptures are completely silent about his life. He is mentioned once when he is twelve years old and then for eighteen years there is a gap. Then he is mentioned when he is thirty, and then he lives only three years more. Where had he been for eighteen years? The people who were writing the gospels must have been aware of the gap, but they were afraid to say anything about those eighteen years, because he was traveling, moving from one mystery school to another mystery school.

He talked very much the way Buddha talked. He carried a similar message and a similar understanding to his people. He was misunderstood for the simple reason that he had brought something which was not part of Jewish tradition; he had brought something alien. And the most alien thing was that he was telling people, "You are asleep, you are really dead."

Just being born is not enough to be awake. Awakening has to be achieved through arduous effort; otherwise you can pass your whole life wandering in the forest of dreams. And he was aware that the people who were listening to him were not capable of understanding him at all. He was saying one thing and they would understand another. He

was aware that there was something that seemed to be hindering the message.

Jesus is sitting at the table with his twelve disciples, eating beef and drinking wine. At a certain point he looks intensely up at his disciples and says, "One of you will betray me. Judas, Judas, why, why you?"

At this, in a fit of anger, Judas gets up and screams at the disciples, "Why the hell is it that every time he gets drunk he takes it out on me?"

Jesus looks drunk to Judas. Buddha also looks drunk to the people. And in a way, they are drunk -- drunk with the divine. They belong to another world. We live in the night, they have seen the dawn. We live in our dreams of achieving this and that, in our ambitions, in our ego trips for power, for money, for prestige. And they live at a totally different point. They live as beings, we live as becomings. We live as desires, as dreams; they are real beings: they have no dreams, no desires. We live in the past or in the future; they live in the present. We live in words, they live in silence. We live in thousands of frustrations, they live in deep peace.

Why do we live in frustrations? How do we manage to live in so many frustrations? We have become experts in creating frustrations although we don't do it intentionally. We don't do anything intentionally; our whole lives are accidental. In sleep, your life is bound to be just accidental, at the mercy of the winds. We are just as straws in the wind or dry leaves in the wind. We don't know who we are, we don't know where we are going, we don't know from where we are coming. We don't know anything about our being -- and we know great information about facts, figures which are utterly meaningless.

Unless you know yourself, no knowledge is of any meaning. At the very center of your being there is darkness; no light from the outside can dispel it.

The greatest problem in the world is how to commune your awakening with those who have never tasted it. They are bound to misunderstand. Misunderstanding is almost inevitable.

The color TV was invented in the USA. News of this beautiful new toy arrived up to the kingdom of God. God, being very curious, sent one of his archangels down to the earth to get one.

As God sat in front of his new color TV set with the archangel sitting beside him, he pressed the first button. Immediately, the image of naked, tired, sweating people appeared on the screen. They were working incredibly hard in a Johannesburg diamond mine.

Upon seeing this, God shouted, "Ah Christ, holy shit, what the hell are they doing down there?"

Saint Peter replied, "They are being good and working hard, my Lord, just as you wanted."

"No, no, no, that is not what I meant! They have missed the whole point!" screamed God at the top of his thunderous voice.

Then he pushed another button. The image changed to the glorious Vatican in all its pomp and splendor, with his holiness the pope, dressed in gold. He was surrounded by luxuriously dressed nobles and velvet-cloaked cardinals with massive crowns on their heads. God turned to Peter, shouting, "And who are they?"

Saint Peter humbly replied, "These are the ones who did not miss the point...."

In fact, everybody misses the point; it is bound to be so. Coming from the peaks of

awakening to the dark valleys of sleep one cannot expect that it will be understood rightly.

Hence Buddha insisted, he always emphasized to his disciples, "Before you start trying to understand what I am saying and what I am doing, be silent at least for two years, utterly silent, thinking nothing. When you have attained to stillness, then you will be able to communicate with me. Then if you have any questions you can ask, and then it will be possible for me to pour my heart into your heart."

But it used to happen that whenever somebody would come and would stay for two years in silence, he would never ask anything -- because silence is the answer of all the answers. Silence is the answer for all the questions. There would be no need to ask Buddha because in silence he would see the glory, the splendor of Buddha, and it would start permeating his being like a flood, taking away all dust accumulated down the centuries.

The first sutra:

IF YOU SLEEP,
DESIRE GROWS IN YOU
LIKE A VINE IN THE FOREST.

Desire cannot be dropped unless you wake up. Millions of people have tried to drop desiring without waking up. In fact, the very idea of dropping desire was another desire and nothing else. They heard from the buddhas, from the awakened ones, that there is great peace if you drop desire, there is great bliss if desires wither away; that you will attain to eternity, that you will not know any birth, any death anymore, that you will become part of the universal celebration that goes on and on -- if you drop desire. Millions became greedy, thinking that by dropping desire they will attain all these joys. Now, this is a new desire taking root in you. The desire for God, the desire for truth, the desire for liberation, the desire for becoming desireless, is still a desire. You have misunderstood the whole point again. A new greed -- religious greed -- has taken possession of you.

Millions of people have lived in the monasteries -- monks and nuns and all kinds of ascetics -- torturing themselves in the hope, in the desire, that this is the way to destroy desires. When all desires are destroyed they are going to attain to heavenly pleasures. And those pleasures are real pleasures; they are not momentary like the pleasures on this earth, they are eternal. How can you drop desire by creating a new desire, a bigger desire, a far more dangerous desire?

As I see it, the religious people are more in the grip of desire than the nonreligious. The nonreligious is satisfied with small things -- a good house, a beautiful wife, children, a little bank balance -- small things. But religious people go on condemning these people that they are sinners. And they themselves are saints because they want a bank balance in the other world, and a bank balance which will be inexhaustible!

It is very difficult to drop desire; unless you wake up you cannot drop desire. Desire is a natural phenomenon when you are asleep. Desire is dreaming and nothing else. When you wake up dreams disappear, and when you wake up desires disappear.

Hence it has to be understood: the real point is not to fight with your desires but to fight with your sleep. That is cutting the very root; otherwise you remain the same. You will function out of your unconsciousness and you will go on doing the same; it does not matter what it is.

Three men were riding in a bus on a hot summer day in Israel. One of them was a rabbi, a Jew, another a Greek, and the other a Palestinian.

The bus departed, and a fly flew onto the shoulder of the Greek. He simply slapped it away. The fly then flew over to the rabbi's shoulder and he did the same. The fly then flew over to the Palestinian. The Palestinian immediately grabbed the fly and ate it.

A second fly flew into the bus and exactly the same thing happened: the fly landed on the Greek, the Greek slapped it away over to the Jew, the Jew also slapped it away, and finally it landed on the Palestinian who grabbed it and ate it.

At this point, the Greek and the Jew both looked at the Palestinian in amazement.

Sure enough, a third fly flew into the bus. It flew over to the Greek and was slapped away. It flew over to the rabbi and this time the rabbi grabbed the fly, went over to the Palestinian and asked, "You want to buy a nice fly?"

Rabbi or no rabbi, a Jew is a Jew! If there is some business he is not going to miss it.

You are living in dreams. Your priests, your rabbis, your monks, your nuns, your bishops, your popes, they are all living in the same sleep. Maybe your dreams are a little bit different from each other, but the quality of the dream is the same.

Why do you dream? -- because there are so many desires unfulfilled, and to live with unfulfilled desires is painful. In dream you try to fulfill them; in dream you create a false feeling of fulfillment. Hence your dreams show much about you: what your desires are, what you want to become. But if you want to become anything in life, you are asleep.

The man who is awake knows there is nowhere to go, nothing to become. He is already that which he ever can become. Seeing the grandeur of his being, desires wither away on their own accord. You are not even expected to drop them; they drop by themselves, like dry leaves falling from the trees.

IF YOU SLEEP, says Buddha, DESIRE GROWS IN YOU....

Remember: desire grows only when you are asleep, unconscious, unaware, unmeditative. And this is natural. It grows... LIKE A VINE IN THE FOREST. And whatsoever you do in this sleep is going to be wrong, remember. You can become an ascetic, you can fast, you can pray, but your prayers will be wrong.

Hence, Buddha never says pray; he says meditate. What can you pray? You will always pray FOR something; it will be a desire. You can go to the churches and the temples and listen to people's prayers, and you will be surprised: they are always asking and asking. Their prayers are superficial. They had not gone there to thank God; their prayers are not full of gratitude but full of complaints. They want more and they are ready to pray. Their prayer is nothing but buttressing: they praise the Lord; they hope that this buttressing will help their prayers to be fulfilled. And behind the prayer there is a desire.

Buddha says: Don't be bothered with prayers, because you are asleep and your prayer is bound to be nothing but a desire. Your asceticism is bound to be nothing but an expression of your desire. Your asceticism is going to be nothing but a deep hedonism. Hence all religions talk about the joys and the pleasures of heaven and paradise. These are the allurements which keep people going to the temples and to the churches and to the mosques.

Buddha says: Go into silence, because silence creates the right space to wake up. Silence goes to the very center of your being like an arrow and wakes you up. And when you are awake, your whole life is a prayer! And don't go on doing things in your sleep because you can do much more harm. It is better to be ordinary when you are asleep -- your harm will be ordinary. Don't try to be extraordinary, don't try to be a saint or a mahatma; your harm will be

far bigger.

Contemplate on this maxim of Murphy:
If two wrongs don't make a right, try three.

What else can you do when you are asleep? Try and try and try again; go on trying. But if the fundamental is wrong, whatsoever you do is going to be wrong.

And the problem with desire is this: if you DON'T get it -- which is almost inevitable because all your desires are impossible.... You ask for the impossible; it can't happen in the nature of things; hence you feel frustrated when it doesn't happen. And if at all it happens by some miracle, by some accident... if it happens, then, too, it is not going to fulfill you or make you contented because the moment it happens, again your mind starts asking for more; or, by the time it happens you are no longer interested in it.

The soldier boy was unhappy.

"But this is Christmas time," I tried to cheer him up. "Santa Claus and all that!"

"What Santa Claus?" he cried. "Twenty years ago I asked Santa for a soldier suit -- now I get it!"

Murphy's maxim: Being frustrated is disagreeable, but the real disaster in life begins when you get what you want.

Blessed are those who don't get what they want, because at least they can hope. The real disaster happens when you get what you want, because then there is no possibility to hope; then you are stuck with it. And it is YOU who have desired it, who had worked for it. But out of sleep nothing else is possible.

Sleep is our common disease; we are born with this disease. It is so common, that's why we don't think about it at all as a disease; otherwise this is the greatest disease, according to all the awakened ones.

Buddha's suggestion is: Be conscious. Bring more consciousness to your inner being and also to your outer actions. He does not want you to create new desires -- holy desires instead of unholy desires. He does not want you to become a saint as against being a sinner. He does not want you to substitute your mundane desires with sacred desires. He wants you to do something totally different, that is his great contribution to humanity: he wants you to become conscious.

Out of consciousness a radical transformation happens: desires disappear and peace descends -- the peace of desirelessness.

LIKE A MONKEY IN THE FOREST
YOU JUMP FROM TREE TO TREE,
NEVER FINDING THE FRUIT --
FROM LIFE TO LIFE,
NEVER FINDING PEACE.

Observe what you have been doing: LIKE A MONKEY IN THE FOREST....

Charles Darwin became aware of the phenomenon very late: that man is a descendant of monkeys. And he may not be right, because he thinks that PHYSICALLY man is a descendant of the monkeys. That does not seem to fit the reality: man seems to be essentially

different from monkeys as far as the body is concerned.

For millions of years, monkeys have been seeing man standing on two feet and they have not learned the trick yet. You don't see suddenly a monkey walking like a man. How did it happen in the first place that a few monkeys started walking on two feet and became the ancestors of humanity? It does not seem to be likely.

But all the awakened ones of the world have known that as far as the MIND of man is concerned, it is very like the monkeys; it is not much different. The real monkey is not in your body but in your psychology; it is not physiological, it is psychological.

Your mind is continuously jumping from one tree to another tree. It is constantly restless; it cannot remain restful even for a single moment. It wants to be continuously occupied. And what is the gain?

Buddha says: LIKE A MONKEY IN THE FOREST YOU JUMP FROM TREE TO TREE, NEVER FINDING THE FRUIT -- FROM LIFE TO LIFE, NEVER FINDING PEACE.

Peace is the fruit -- and the mind has no idea what peace is. It knows only conflict, it knows only war, violence, destruction. It knows only all sorts of perversions, neurosis, psychosis. It knows a deep inner split, but it knows nothing of peace; it has never tasted it, it is absolutely unknown. It is only a word, empty of any meaning. Meaning comes through experience, otherwise all words are empty. God is an empty word to you because you have not experienced it. Peace is an empty word to you because you have not experienced it.

Buddha does not use the word 'bliss'. That was always the case before Buddha: that bliss is the fruit. SAT-CHIT-ANAND -- truth, consciousness, bliss -- these are the three aspects of the ultimate fulfillment. But Buddha does not talk about bliss for a certain reason. The reason is that the moment you talk about bliss you are bound to be misunderstood. People start thinking about happiness and pleasures -- maybe on a higher plane, but their idea of pleasure remains the same, their idea of happiness remains the same. They think of sexual pleasure even in paradise.

There are religions who even allow homosexuality in paradise, because they were born in countries where homosexuality was very much prevalent. And every religion promises you beautiful women in paradise. Who has projected these ideas? Frustrated people, those who have failed here; now they are hoping they will succeed in the other world, on the other shore.

Buddha does not use the word 'bliss' for the simple reason that it can create a misunderstanding. It creates it because you know something about happiness, and you think maybe there is a great difference between bliss and happiness, but happiness gives you some idea of what bliss will be.

Bliss is not happiness. Bliss is more like peace than like happiness. Bliss is neither unhappiness nor happiness; it is peace from that turmoil, that conflict. It is peace, absolute peace, because it is a transcendence of duality. Happiness always lingers with unhappiness; unhappiness is always with its other side, happiness. They are two sides of the same coin. When the whole coin drops from your hand you are neither happy nor unhappy.

It is because of this that Buddha never had a great appeal to the Indian masses. Who wants peace? Everybody wants happiness -- and everybody knows that happiness is followed by unhappiness, as day is followed by night, as death is followed by birth, birth is followed by death. It is a vicious circle: if you are happy, you can be certain that soon you will be unhappy; if you are unhappy, you can be certain that soon you will be happy again.

Seeing this game of happiness and unhappiness, the watcher, the meditator becomes

unidentified with both. When happiness comes he knows that unhappiness will be coming, so why get excited? When unhappiness comes he is not at all disturbed because he knows happiness will be coming just around the corner, so why become disturbed? He is neither excited by happiness nor disturbed by unhappiness. This is peace. He remains the same, in a deep equilibrium; his silence is undisturbed. Day comes and goes, night comes and goes, everything comes and goes. He remains a witness, unconcerned, cool. That coolness, that unconcernedness is peace.

But nobody wants peace. People who are asleep cannot want peace. Hence Buddha, although while he was alive thousands of people were transformed by him, as had never happened before.... Many more people became enlightened around him than around anybody else in the whole history. Still, his religion disappeared from India; it did not appeal to the masses. That carrot was not there hanging in front of you: bliss. He was talking of peace.

Peace seems to be very unalluring; it does not ring bells in your heart. Peace, just peace? So much effort for meditation and so much effort for waking up, and the result is only peace? You want something more exciting, more sensational. You want ecstasy, not peace. Your sleep creates the dream of bliss, of ecstasy, of great joys, eternal joys.

But Buddha's choice of the word is very right, absolutely right. He never moves from the inner truth, he goes on insisting on it. Whether it appeals to you or not, he is not much concerned about that. He is not at all going to compromise with you and your desires and your sleep.

Of course, when Buddha died, the scholars started interpreting his peace as bliss -- another name, they said, for bliss. But from India it disappeared, the religion disappeared. The scholars and the pundits learned it a little late. When the religion had disappeared from India, then they thought over it, and why it had happened. And this was the cause: Buddha was talking about peace, about nirvana. Nirvana means cessation, that you will cease totally. Who wants to cease totally? Deep down you want to remain, abide. Yes, you can accept that the body will not be there, the body will fall into dust -- dust unto dust. But your spirit, your soul WILL be there.

And Buddha says you don't have any soul, because your soul is nothing but a holy name for your old ego. And what is your spirit? -- nothing but another facade for the ego to survive. He is very compassionately cruel. He says you will not be there at all.

People used to ask him, "Then why should we meditate? It seems like committing absolute suicide!"

And Buddha said, "Yes, exactly it is that. But peace will be there."

Now the problem becomes even more complicated. You can even become interested in peace; tired of your joys, happiness, unhappiness, sadness, misery, suffering, you can even reluctantly, in a resigned way, agree to attain to peace -- but YOU will not be there. Then another problem arises which is far more significant to you in your sleep: "If I am not there, who is going to experience peace? And what is the point of attaining something if you can't experience it, if you are not there at all?"

And Buddha is absolutely right. He says: If YOU are there, peace cannot be. When you are not there, peace is.

Shakespeare says: To be or not to be is the question. Buddha says: Choose not to be. To be is the problem; not to be means all problems have been transcended, all worries have been transcended.

Buddhists learned that there is something dangerous in Buddha's message; it has to be changed. They changed it. In Tibet, in China, in Japan, they dropped Buddha's words or they

gave new meanings to those words. While they were translating Buddhist scriptures into Tibetan, into Chinese, into Japanese, Korean, they made it a point that all negatives should be dropped from Buddha and they should be replaced by positives. "You will be there in all your glory, in all your grandeur, in all your beauty. You will be there in your purity. Your soul will be there, utterly purified, pure gold. And you will attain to bliss: MAHASUKH -- great bliss."

And then, like fire, the religion of Buddha spread all over Asia. It disappeared from the country of its origin for the simple reason that Buddha would not compromise with your sleep; it succeeded all over Asia because the followers compromised. They destroyed the purity of Buddhism; they brought it down to your level. Buddha's effort was to raise you to HIS level, and his followers brought him to your level.

That's what happens always with the followers, because they are also asleep; they are people like you. They are also dreaming like you, they are also desiring like you. There is a certain understanding between you and them. They can understand your dreams because they are their dreams too. Buddha is as far away from them as he is from you. It is a strange phenomenon, but it has always been so. Christians succeeded when they betrayed Christ and Buddhists succeeded when they betrayed Buddha. You have to betray the master, then you can be a success. When the master starts speaking like sleepy people, then sleepy people become interested; then he is speaking in your language.

The other night, Veet Marco had a dream:

While Jesus Christ was on the cross, three soldiers were playing cards beneath him. At a certain point one of the soldiers got up and pierced Jesus' rib with his spear. Jesus moaned, and the soldier laughingly returned to his seat and continued playing cards.

Soon after a second soldier got up and held a sponge soaked in vinegar up to Jesus' face.

Jesus screamed, "Father, Father, why have you forsaken me?"

The soldier started laughing, then went back to his seat and resumed playing cards.

Suddenly the sky became dark, the earth started to tremble, lights beamed from the north and from the south and a mysterious silence filled the air.

The nails on Jesus' hands and feet started disappearing. The third soldier, seeing this, ran to Jesus' feet and began praying and worshipping God. A terrible wind started blowing and Jesus began to ascend. The soldier hung on to his legs, screaming and crying, "Jesus, Jesus, yours is the power and the glory!"

Jesus' face was filled with light, his hair blowing in the wind, his body donning a white silken robe, ascending up and up into the sky, with the third soldier clinging to his legs, ascending along with him.

The soldier, suddenly realizing what was happening, became frightened and cried up to Jesus, "Jesus, Jesus, where are you going?"

Jesus smilingly replied, "I am going to my father up in the Kingdom of God."

"And how about me?" quizzed the frightened soldier. "Where am I going?"

Jesus, kicking him off, screamed down to the falling figure, "You sonofabitch, you go back to your fucking mother!"

Now, Marco's dream is Marco's dream; it has nothing to do with Jesus. But in your dreams, Jesus will take a form that is really imposed by you, Buddha will take a form that is imposed by you. Rather than allowing them to transform you, you would like to transform them according to YOUR ideas. This has been happening down the ages.

IF YOU ARE FILLED WITH DESIRE, says Buddha,
YOUR SORROWS SWELL
LIKE THE GRASS AFTER THE RAIN.

The more desires you have, the more misery you will create for yourself. Misery is a consequence of desiring -- and you go on desiring. In fact, you think that if your desires are fulfilled your miseries will disappear. In the first place they are never fulfilled; in the second place, if they are fulfilled, nothing is fulfilled by their fulfillment. You remain as empty as you have always been -- or even more, because up to now you were occupied with a certain desire; now even that is fulfilled. A deep deep emptiness comes to you.

You wanted to have a beautiful house; now you have it. Suddenly, you don't know what to do. You were so much engaged in earning money, you were so mad after getting the house; now you have got it. For a moment you feel good -- not because of the house, remember, but just because the whole tension, that mounting tension has disappeared -- the house is yours. All that strain and tension is relaxed; it is the relaxation of that tension that gives you a little experience of pleasure. That you could have experienced any time if you had relaxed; it has nothing to do with the house.

See the mechanism of desire! But after that relaxation, after a few moments or a few hours or maybe a few days... it depends how intelligent you are. If you are really intelligent, then within seconds that disappears -- you can see the futility of it. If you are not that intelligent, then a few hours; if you are really stupid, then a few days. It is in the proportion of your stupidity: you will remain happier for a longer period if you are more stupid because you will not see the point. But sooner or later, howsoever stupid you are, it is bound to disappear. And then you will be left with a great emptiness, hollowness, and you would like again to strive for something else. Maybe you need more money now or a beautiful woman to suit the beautiful house. Again a new desire, and you rush. Again you will attain... and for a few moments, the relaxation.

It is like the sexual experience. What pleasure you attain in sexuality is nothing but the pleasure of a mounting excitement, tension, and then the relaxation. Your energies go on mounting higher and higher and higher, and then you explode -- you ejaculate. And suddenly you fall back into a certain calmness; the excitement is gone. But you don't learn anything from it: that this is the whole secret of all your pleasures. Running, rushing, competing, fighting for something creates great tension.

That's why it happens that if you are involved into something really deeply you may not feel any interest in sexuality. If you are involved deep in scientific endeavor you may not be interested in sex at all. You may be a little puzzled, confused: "Why are people so much interested in sex? What is there?" You have found a new sexuality for yourself. Science is your wife; now you are running after science. Or you may be a politician; then politics is your wife. But one day, when you become the prime minister of the country or the president of the country, you have reached to the climax, and then after the climax there is nowhere to go... a certain calm falls over you. That calm is misunderstood as if you have attained it through the experience, by becoming the president, the prime minister, famous, respectable, a Nobel Prize winner. It is not that; it is because of relaxation.

If you relax right now without attaining anything, that same calm will fall over you -- even deeper because you will be full of energy. But we never look into anything, and even if we look into anything we conclude very superficially.

I have heard about a man who was passing through a forest, felt his bladder was full, stopped his car, went behind a bush. As he was peeing, a wild bee stung his prick. He screamed -- the pain was too much and he did not know what to do.

Then suddenly he remembered, twenty years back when he was just a child it had happened once and his mother had a remedy for it. She had given him a glass of milk and told him to put his prick in the glass, and it had soothed him, calmed him. But where to find the glass of milk? And the pain was excruciating! And tears were coming down from his eyes as he started driving in the hope of finding somebody in the forest.

He was able to find a small hut. He knocked on the door. He was feeling very embarrassed -- how to say it and what to say? A woman opened the door, but the pain was so much that he had to say something. So he said, "Please don't ask me why, just give me a glass of milk. I am in terrible pain, I am dying! Just give me a glass of milk and please, don't ask why because I cannot answer it. I am feeling so embarrassed!"

The woman could see the pain of the man. She rushed in, brought a glass of milk.

The man took the glass of milk, rushed towards the back of the house.

The woman was curious, naturally, as to what was happening. She had never seen such a thing before! So she went back just silently so she would not disturb the man. And what she saw... she could not believe her eyes! She said, "My God, I have been married for thirty years, and now I know how you fill up these things! I was always wondering how you fill up these things again and again and again! Now I know!"

Your conclusions are as superficial as that! That poor man is not filling it up! You pass through experiences, but you never go deep into them to find out the truth, what really happens.

You must have made love many times, but have you ever thought about it? -- what really happens that gives you calmness, a certain pleasure, a certain joy? Nothing much... just a mounting tension is relaxed. First you go into mounting it higher and higher, and then you fall from that height in a deep deep valley of calmness. But this calmness is available to any meditator without creating any tension.

Hence, meditation takes you beyond sex; nothing else can ever take you beyond sex. Everything else is a substitute for sex. Somebody is running after money -- money is his sex; and somebody is running after power -- power is his sex; and somebody is running after something else. Those are all sexualities, substitutes for sex. These people can easily avoid sex because they have found their own new version.

IF YOU ARE FILLED WITH DESIRE, YOUR SORROWS SWELL LIKE THE GRASS AFTER THE RAIN.

BUT IF YOU SUBDUE DESIRE,
YOUR SORROWS FALL FROM YOU
LIKE DROPS OF WATER FROM A LOTUS FLOWER.

The word 'subdue' has to be rightly understood. It does not mean repression; it means understanding, it means transforming. It means transcendence. It means that you have become master of your own soul, that now nothing dominates you -- sex, power, money, nothing dominates you. It does not mean that you have to renounce the world; it simply means that you have to renounce your unawareness.

Desire disappears as you become more and more aware. When awareness is one hundred percent, there is no desire at all. YOUR SORROWS FALL FROM YOU LIKE DROPS OF WATER FROM A LOTUS FLOWER.

Ordinarily, people are not raising their consciousness. On the contrary, they live through conscience, not through consciousness. To live through conscience is to live according to the mob psychology, is to follow the crowd. Conscience is created by the crowd; consciousness is an individual phenomenon -- you have to create it. The society won't help you at all; it will hinder you in every possible way. The society does not want conscious people at all. They are rebellious, they are dangerous for the status quo, for the establishment, for the church, for the state, for the nation. They are dangerous because they have gone through a revolution and their very vibe creates revolution in others.

The society lives through conscience. It gives you the idea about what is right and what is wrong: "Do this and don't do that." It goes on giving you commandments. It gives you detailed information about what is right and what is wrong. And in fact that is absolutely absurd, because life goes on changing every day.

What was wrong in the times of Moses is no longer wrong today, and what was right in the days of Krishna is no longer right today. Nobody can give you a detailed map of what is right and what is wrong. In fact, something may be right in the morning and may be wrong in the evening. Next moment it may not be right! Life is a flux, and conscience is a static thing. Consciousness goes on moving with life; it is a flow.

Murphy says: A conscience cannot prevent sin -- it only prevents you from enjoying it.

Conscience prevents nothing; it simply prevents you from enjoying your life. You remain the same; you simply become more miserable! That's why your saints have such long long faces, look so serious, sad, dead. Nothing has changed in them: they don't radiate life, they don't radiate love, they don't radiate peace. They only show you what conscience can do. It can kill you, it is a slow poisoning.

Buddha does not believe in conscience; he believes in consciousness. But buddhas talk about consciousness and you always understand conscience. In fact, there are languages like French in which conscience and consciousness are not two words; 'conscience' means both, consciousness and conscience. That's actually the process, how you understand.

A man lost in the woods finally arrived at his destination, The Old Log Inn. On his arrival, however, he was all beaten up, with swollen eyes, bloody nose and mouth.

The alarmed receptionist demanded, "My God, what happened to you?"

The man replied, "I was lost and found a couple making love in the woods, and all I asked was 'How far is The Old Log Inn?'"

Please remember, consciousness does not mean conscience. Don't translate it as conscience; it has been translated so for centuries.

And then sorrows fall away from you LIKE DROPS OF WATER FROM A LOTUS FLOWER. So naturally they disappear, they don't leave a trace behind.

THIS IS GOOD COUNSEL
AND IT IS FOR EVERYONE:
AS THE GRASS IS CLEARED FOR THE FRESH ROOT,
CUT DOWN DESIRE

LEST DEATH AFTER DEATH CRUSH YOU
AS A RIVER CRUSHES THE HELPLESS REEDS.

The unconscious man is a helpless victim of circumstances; he is accidental. He has no intrinsic value yet because he has not created any inner light yet. Only with consciousness you have intrinsic value; otherwise your life is just accidental.

When a child was born in Bethlehem, three kings came bearing gifts for him in the stable where he lay.

The first king came forward, putting down his gift of frankincense and myrrh before the cradle. The second king set down his gift of a large bar of gold. The third king advanced with his gift, but tripped over the bar of gold.

"Jesus Christ!" he exclaimed.

The father of the child looked up at him and said, "That's a good name! We were thinking of calling him Fred."

Your names, your lives, your everything is accidental. Consciousness will make you go beyond accidents.

FOR IF THE ROOTS HOLD FIRM,
A FELLED TREE GROWS UP AGAIN.
IF DESIRES ARE NOT UPROOTED,
SORROWS GROW AGAIN IN YOU.

Remember: there is no other revolution except consciousness. It cuts the desires from the very roots and it brings freedom to you.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 9

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Intelligent people are dangerous

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IT IS LIKE DRIVING A CAR IN FORWARD AND REVERSE AT THE SAME TIME. I AM NOT GOING ANYWHERE. IS THE IGNITION SWITCHED ON OR AM I JUST A BAD DRIVER?

Ray Horton, the very idea of going somewhere is basically wrong. Nothing is going anywhere. Existence is now-here; it is not moving towards a particular destiny. There is no destiny, there is no ultimate purpose. But we have been taught for centuries that existence is moving towards a certain goal and we have been also taught to live ambitiously, to prove that you are something, somebody: "Reach somewhere." But existence is absolutely purposeless.

I am not saying that it is not significant. Precisely because it is purposeless it is significant, but its significance is not that of the marketplace. It is a totally different kind of significance: the significance of a roseflower, the significance of a bird on the wing, the significance of poetry, music. It is an end unto itself.

We are not to become something -- we are already it. This is the whole message of all the awakened ones: that you are not to achieve something, it has already been given to you. It is God's gift. You are already where you should be, you can't be anywhere else. There is nowhere to go, nothing to achieve. Because there is nowhere to go and nothing to achieve, you can celebrate. Then there is no hurry, no worry, no anxiety, no anguish, no fear of being a failure. You can't fail. In the very nature of things it is impossible to fail, because there is no question of success at all.

It is just a conditioning by the society that creates the problem in you. And then you start thinking, "I am not reaching anywhere, and life is slipping out of my hands and death is coming closer. Am I going to make it or not?" And then there is great fear of missing, frustration that so much is lost. And who knows? -- tomorrow may never arrive. "I have not yet been able to prove myself, my worth. I have not become famous yet. I have not accumulated much wealth. I am not a president of a country or a prime minister."

Or you can start thinking in otherworldly terms, but the process is the same. You can say, "I have not yet become enlightened. I have not yet become a Buddha or a Jesus. Meditation is far away. I don't know who I am." And you can go on creating a thousand and one problems for yourself.

All these problems are created because the society wants you to be ambitious, and ambition can only be created if there is a goal in the future. For ambition, future is needed. And without ambition, the ego cannot be created. And the ego is the basic strategy of the society to rule over you, to exploit you, to oppress you, to keep you miserable. The ego exists in the tension between the present and the future: the bigger the tension, the bigger the ego. When there is no tension between your present and future, the ego disappears because there is no point where it can have shelter, where it can exist.

Hence society teaches you, "Become this, become that." It teaches you becoming. Its whole education system is based on the idea of becoming.

And what I am telling you here is just the opposite of it. I am talking about BEING, not about becoming. Becoming is an invention of the crafty politicians and the priests -- and these are the people who have poisoned the whole humanity. They go on giving you goals. If you become tired of the worldly things -- money, power, prestige -- they are there to tell you about paradise, God, samadhi, truth. Again the whole process starts.

And it is easy to be frustrated with the worldly things. Sooner or later you can see the whole stupidity of having more money or more power. Sooner or later you are going to see the futility of the very idea of "more," because the more brings nothing else but more misery.

It takes away all bliss from you, all peace from you. It is destructive. It gives you only fear, trembling, anxiety, neurosis. It makes you insane; that can be seen very easily. It has made the whole earth a madhouse.

But to see that the otherworldly goals -- nirvana and moksha and God and paradise -- are also the same is very difficult. You will need tremendous intelligence to see that those goals are also of the same quality. There is no qualitative change because you are still thinking in terms of becoming, you are still thinking in terms of the future.

Future does not exist, it is nonexistential. It is as nonexistential as the past. The past is no more, the future is not yet; only the present is. And in the present there is no possibility for desiring, no possibility of being ambitious, not space enough for the ego to exist. Whenever you are now and here there is no ego to be found. You are a pure silence. Right now... see what I am saying. I am not propounding a theory or a philosophy; I am simply stating a fact.

Ray Horton, just for a second see... this very moment! Where is the ego? And what heights and what depths of peace suddenly become available to you. They are always within you, but you never look at them -- you are running and running. And because you are not arriving anywhere you are very much worried.

You say, "It is like driving a car in forward and reverse at the same time. I am not going anywhere."

There is no need. This very moment, wherever you are, it is a blessing, it is divine. Where else do you want to go? Why live in the past? It is the past that gives you goals. It is the past that you are carrying in your head which projects goals in the future. Future is only a reflection of the past.

From your very childhood you have been told, you have been hypnotized, by the society, by the priests, by the politicians, by your parents, by the pedagogues. You have been hypnotized continuously that you should have a goal in your life, that you should have some purpose, that you should be a great achiever, that you have to be famous -- a Nobel Prize winner or something -- that you are not to die just an ordinary man. To die just an ordinary man is ugly; you have to die like a president or a prime minister -- as if their death has something special!

Because of this constant hammering on your head you have become so much accustomed to the idea that it is driving you crazy. Otherwise, life is so beautiful as it is; no purpose, no goal is needed. Future can be completely dropped. You live in the future just to escape from the present, and you become so psychologically obsessed with the future that you go on missing that which is for that which is not.

Among the first things that a Jewish boy learns is the biblical injunction: "Honor thy father and mother -- or else!"

Herschel, aged six, was reminded of the admonition the day his father came home and announced that he had decided to buy a car, the first his family had ever owned.

The father was in high spirits. "Imagine, we are in this country only a few years and soon we will own a new car," he said proudly. "I can just see us riding around in Central Park. In the front I am steering, and sitting next to me is Mamma, and in the back is our little Herschel."

Mamma nodded, smiling her approval. "So, when are you planning to buy the car?" she asked.

"In two weeks, a month maybe -- no later."

The pleasant interlude was suddenly shattered by Herschel's mournful cry, "I don't wanna

sit in the back! I wanna sit in the front and help steer!"

"Only one steerer we need in this family," the father reminded his son. "In the front sits Mamma, in the back sits you."

"If I have to sit in the back I will bang my head on the wall, you will see!" wailed Herschel. He ran to the wall and assumed a threatening pose, ready to give action to his words. "Mamma is sitting in the back, I am sitting in the front!"

"No, Herschel, you are in the back," said the father sternly.

"In the front, not in the back!" Herschel's voice rose in a sudden screech. "I ain't gonna sit in the back!"

Father, his manner grim, extended his arm and pointed a commanding finger. "Herschel," he said coldly, "get out of my car!"

People go on living in the future!

And the same is the case with your paradise, just like the car. The same is the case with your nirvana, your enlightenment -- the same as with the car.

It is only the mediocre mind that becomes psychologically obsessed with the future. But the society destroys everybody's intelligence and makes everybody mediocre. The society does not want you to be really intelligent; it is afraid of intelligence. Intelligent people are dangerous people. They are radicals, they are revolutionaries; they are always sabotaging the status quo. The society wants you to remain mediocre, stupid. It wants you certainly to be efficient, mechanically. It wants you to accumulate as much information as possible, but it does not want you to be really intelligent because if you are intelligent you will not care for the future. You will live IN the present and FOR the present, because there is no other life.

Listen to the birds chirping, chattering... the trees flowering... the stars, the sun, the moon. The whole existence lives in the present except you, except human mind. And it is only human mind that suffers.

Come out of the future! It is your dream. You are not supposed to go anywhere. Be happy wherever you are. Be contented with your being and drop the idea of becoming. Then each moment is so precious, then each moment has such beauty, such grandeur, such splendor. Then each moment is exquisite. Then you can feel God everywhere each moment.

God is not a goal; God is the presence right now. If you are present, God is available. If you live in the moment, you are enlightened; there is no other enlightenment. And then ordinary life is so extraordinary. Then to be just a nobody is so fulfilling.

I call this whole approach sannyas: dropping the goals, the purposes, the future -- becoming part of existence this very moment, not postponing it. Then in this very moment, a great explosion is possible in you: the ego disappears, you are no more, but God is. And that is bliss and that is truth.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE SO MANY JEWS HERE?

Alexandra, Jews are intelligent people, the most intelligent in the world. That's why they are hated so much. They have committed only one mistake in their whole history: they crucified Jesus and missed the greatest business that was available to them! It is such a rare phenomenon, that it went into the hands of the Italians -- the whole business! It is

inconceivable -- Jews losing it to the Italians! If the Italians are selling spaghetti, that is okay, but they are selling Jesus! Otherwise, the Jews have never committed any mistake.

But that one mistake has cost them very much: they became uprooted. But sometimes blessings come in the form of curses. When they became uprooted, when they lost their land, they became naturally more intelligent than anybody else because they had to exist in adverse conditions. No other race has existed in such adverse conditions as the Jews. And when you live in adverse conditions the challenge is such, you can survive only if you bring your intelligence to its highest peak. If you behave stupidly you will be destroyed. They were living always amongst strangers antagonistic to them; they became more and more intelligent.

More Nobel Prizes go to Jews than to anybody else. And wherever they are they succeed, whatsoever they are doing they bring a certain magic to it. So whenever they feel a certain vibe, a certain phenomenon happening anywhere, they are the first to reach, they are the first to reap the crop.

Yes, the question arises to many people. Almost fifty percent of my sannyasins are Jews -- so many Jews that sometimes I become suspicious whether perhaps I am a Jew!

Alexandra, you are right, your curiosity is right. But they can understand what I am saying. In fact, they have to drop a certain guilt that they have carried for two thousand years. If they can feel in tune with me, their guilt for killing Jesus will disappear. Deep down the guilt is there; they need somebody who can take away that guilt. It is like a thorn in their very soul -- it hurts. They may not say it, but it hurts. They destroyed their greatest flowering.

Jesus was their highest potential actualized; he was the highest peak of Jewish intelligence -- and they destroyed it. They are carrying the wound; they are wounded people. They want somebody who can heal the wound.

But the problem is: if you go to the priests they wound you more. Go anywhere, you will be wounded more, because your so-called religions all exist on your guilt. The greater the guilt, the more is their power over you. They make you feel guilty, they make you feel sinners.

I am a totally different kind of man: I help you to get rid of your guilt. I want to tell you that you are not sinners, and to commit mistakes is just human -- to err is human. There is no need to make much fuss about it. And your errors are small; just a little awareness and they will disappear. You do not need to be thrown into hell.

And just see the stupidity of the idea.... Christians say that once you are in hell you are there for eternity. Nobody comes out of hell. It has no exit, only the entrance. And then for eternity! -- the very idea is absurd. Even the greatest criminal need not be punished for eternity.

Bertrand Russell has said, "When I look at my sins, if I confess all my sins that I have committed, they are not many, they are not very big. I have not murdered people. Then the cruelest magistrate can send me to jail at the most for four years. And if my thoughts are also to be included, not only my actions, then eight years jail, that's all." He has written a beautiful book, WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN. And among the many that he has given, this is one of the reasons: "I cannot agree with the idea of eternal hell. Nobody has committed such a sin that he should be thrown for eternity into hell -- forever, no escape. And nobody has done so much good that he should be enjoying paradise for ever and ever."

But religions have existed, and they are powerful, for the simple reason that they create fear in you -- fear of hell -- and they create greed in you -- greed for heaven. They wound you deeply. The more you bleed, the more your wound bleeds, the more powerful they are over

you.

My effort here is to redeem you from all your wounds, to redeem you from the fear of hell and the greed for heaven. There is no hell and no heaven. Those are not places somewhere, those are just your own states of mind. Whenever you are in anger, in rage, you are in hell; and whenever you are in love, in compassion, you are in heaven. So you can move from heaven to hell many times in a day.

It is not a question to be decided after death; it is to be decided each moment. And it is absolutely within your capacity to decide.

One Sufi mystic was dying. His disciples had gathered and they said, "One thing we want to know. You are departing forever and then we will never know what was the secret. We have never seen you sad, unhappy, miserable. It seems so superhuman. We have watched you for thirty years, forty years; there are a few people who have lived with you for fifty years, sixty years" -- the man was almost a hundred years old -- "and nobody remembers that you were ever sad, not even a small sadness. What is your secret?"

He said, "There is no secret at all. Every morning when I get up, before I open my eyes I say to myself, 'Listen, old man, a new day is there. What do you want? -- to be sad or to be happy?' And I always say, 'To be happy.' So then I remain happy! I decide in the morning and I remain happy. I have to follow my decision. This I do every day. It is a decision."

You choose misery; it is not a punishment, it is your choice. And you choose joy; it is not a reward, it is your choice.

Jews have suffered very much; they are wounded. Of course, two thousand years of suffering have made them very mature, intelligent, alert. Hence they can recognize me better than anybody else. That's why, Alexandra, they are here.

In July 1974, President Nixon was in the Soviet Union, hoping to achieve a nonaggression pact between that country and the United States, but he was having a hard time of it.

"Before we sign," declared Prime Minister Brezhnev, "you Americans will have to announce to the world that Adam and Eve were communists."

Nixon, uncertain as to how he should cope with this dilemma, decided to consult an authority on Genesis -- in this case, Henry J. Kissinger -- who assured him that he had read several pages of the Bible in his younger days.

Kissinger retired to his study, pored over the Old Testament and the text. Next day he told Nixon to go ahead and sign the pact with the Soviet Union. "The Russians are right," he said, "Adam and Eve were indeed communists. After all, they did not have a stitch on their backs, they had nothing to eat but apples, and they still thought they were in paradise!"

Three boys, a Catholic, a Presbyterian and a Jew, were discussing how they each spent Christmas Day. The Catholic boy had gone to mass, come back, kissed all his family and given them presents, and later on had Christmas dinner. The Presbyterian boy had not gone to church, but had kissed all the family, given out his presents, and then had Christmas dinner.

The Jewish boy said, "Well, dad and I went down to our toy factory, looked at all the empty shelves, sang two verses of 'What a friend we have in Jesus!' and then caught a plane for Osho Commune International, Poona, India."

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IF YOU WERE HERE RIGHT NOW, I THINK I WOULD HIT YOU. IF YOU DON'T
RECOGNIZE ME SOON AND START SAYING YES TO ME INSTEAD OF NO, I AM
GOING TO HAVE TO KILL YOU.

Somendra... thank you, Somendra! I also will need a Judas; otherwise the story will remain incomplete. I can be a Jesus only with a Judas. Yes, somebody has to do the work of Judas -- it is hard work.

There are secret mystery schools which carry the tradition that Judas was one of the most obedient disciples of Jesus. He betrayed Jesus because Jesus wanted to be betrayed.

That's exactly what George Gurdjieff used to say: that Judas was not a renegade, he was simply following Jesus. And his obedience was so total that when Jesus said, "Go and betray me, and sell me for thirty silver coins," he went and did it. Of course, he felt very sorry for doing it, miserable, in deep anguish, but he had to follow the master. So he betrayed Jesus, Jesus was crucified, and next day Judas committed suicide. Judas died the next day. He must have felt very bad, although he had to follow the master. He was the most intelligent of all the disciples of Jesus.

So, Somendra, somebody has to do the hard work of Judas. Some day, I may choose you -- don't be worried and don't be in a hurry! One day I may order you, "Now, Somendra, you can kill me." But before that, let ME kill YOU!

And that's why I go on saying no to you. That is my device to kill you. You would like to be recognized, but it will be too early if I recognize you. It will be nothing but a recognition of your ego. I will recognize you only when I see the ego has disappeared; while the ego is there I will go on destroying it. My no's are nothing but hits on the ego.

Yes will also be said when you have become capable of accepting my no's joyfully. When you have become worthy of receiving the yes, it will come on its own accord; you need not remind me. Your reminding me will only delay it. Your reminding me will make me say more no's to you. You cannot force yes from me, you cannot force me to say yes to you. If you can force yes from me, my whole function of being a master is destroyed. You cannot force anything from me.

Pass through these no's: this is the dark night of the soul. And when the night is the darkest, the dawn is very close.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE SCRIPTURES NOT REALLY OF ANY USE WHATSOEVER?

Thomas, scriptures ARE beautiful, but beautiful only for those who can understand them -- not for you. You cannot understand them, you can only MISunderstand them. I am not against the scriptures -- how can I be? I am speaking on one of the scriptures, THE DHAMMAPADA, Buddha's sayings. I have spoken on Jesus' sayings, I have spoken on Mahavira, on Krishna. I have spoken on the Upanishads, I have spoken on TAO TEH CHING. I have spoken on almost all the beautiful scriptures of the world. How can I be against them and how can I think they are useless? -- although I insist that you don't depend on them. For you they are of no use.

Then what is their use? Their use is a totally different thing. When you become more meditative, the deeper you go into meditation, the more will be your capacity and clarity to understand the scriptures. Scriptures will become witnesses to you that you are on the right track. And when you reach to your innermost core, when you realize your being, then you will know what Jesus means by the kingdom of God, then you will know what Buddha means by nirvana, then you will know what the Upanishads mean by truth -- not before that.

Right now, if you read the Bible or the Koran or the Gita, you will interpret them according to your unconscious state, according to your nonmeditative state. You will misinterpret, you will misunderstand. You are not in the right shape; you are upside down, you are topsy-turvy. You are a confusion, a chaos. You are a crowd, you are not yet an individual. You don't have a center at all. So how are you going to understand Jesus or Buddha or Krishna?

Remember one very fundamental thing: you can understand Jesus only if you have tasted something of Christ-consciousness in you; otherwise there is no way. You can have some glimpses of Buddha only when you have attained something of buddhahood, some texture, some taste, some fragrance. When you have entered into the country of Buddha and the buddhas, then you will be able to see the meaning.

Otherwise, words are there, but who will put meaning into those words? YOU will put meaning into those words. You will be reading Krishna but you will not be really reading Krishna -- you will be reading yourself THROUGH Krishna. The words will be Krishna's, the meanings will be yours -- and it is the meaning that is significant, not the word.

Chauncey de Plotkin was suffering from the heartbreak of psoriasis. After vainly trying the usual patent medicines sold over the counter he finally consulted a doctor and was given a prescription and told how and when to take it.

That evening at home Chauncey's wife was astonished to see her husband swallow a spoonful of the medicine, race out of the house and dash around the block. When he returned he was so exhausted that he flopped down onto the bed and fought to catch his breath.

On the second evening he repeated the performance: he gulped down the medicine, galloping around the block and returning home a few minutes later.

On the third evening he changed his tactics. This time he took his medicine as usual, but instead of racing he began to skip around the room with all the grace of a prancing pachyderm.

The wife could stand it no longer. "Chauncey," she cried, "what in the world are you doing racing around the block and jumping about like that? Have you lost your mind?" "Of course not," replied the weary hubby. "I am just following the doctor's orders. He told me to take my medicine two nights running and to skip the third night."

The words may be of Christ, Buddha, Zarathustra, but who is going to give the meaning to them? Chauncey de Plotkin -- he will put meanings into those words! He will impose his meaning, he will project his meaning.

I am not against scriptures. How can I be? I am for all the scriptures, but I cannot say to you that through the scriptures you can find the truth. That is not possible.

A Christian missionary and a rabbi were traveling together in a train. The Christian missionary said to the rabbi, "Jesus saves."

The rabbi looked at the missionary and then said, "But Moses invests."

Words are bound to be colored by you, they are bound to be part of you. They may descend from very high sources.... It is just like rainwater. When it comes from the clouds it is pure, the purest, but when it falls on the ground it depends on the ground. If it falls in cow dung, then it may be holy for the Hindu but for nobody else! Pure water descending from heaven will have the color of the earth on which it falls, will have the taste of the earth on which it falls.

Exactly the same is the case with the words falling from Buddha, Jesus, Zarathustra, Lao Tzu. It depends on your earth -- on your mind. And what is the state of your mind? Can you think anything original? Can you understand anything original? Your mind only repeats that which it has heard or read, that which it has been taught. It is a machine; it can never produce a single original thought. The original thought never comes from the mind; it comes from the beyond.

Buddha uses the mind to communicate with you. He has to use words, obviously, and by using words he is taking a dangerous step. For seven days he was hesitating.... When he became enlightened, for seven days he didn't utter a single word.

The story is that the gods came from heaven, touched his feet, and asked him to deliver the truth that he had attained because the masses were so thirsty for it. Millions of people would be benefited.

He listened in deep silence. He simply said one thing: "As far as I am concerned, for seven days I have been pondering over it and this is my conclusion: that those who can understand me need not hear my words. Those who can understand me are already meditative, they are already on the way. They don't need my words; they will reach anyway, with me or without. Maybe with me they will reach a little earlier, alone a little later, but what difference does it make in eternity whether you come one year earlier or one year later? "Those who can't understand me are bound to MISunderstand. My words will become a problem for them. They are already confused and I don't want to confuse them any more. My words will create more confusion in them."

The gods were at a loss what to say, how to persuade Buddha. They went away. They discussed it among themselves to find out some way, and then they came back with a new argument. They said, "You are right, there are people, a very few people, who will understand you immediately. And yes, we agree with you totally, they don't need it; they will reach anyway. They are just on the borderline: one step more and they will be buddhas. Even without you they will become buddhas, that is certain. If YOU could become a buddha without any other buddha helping you, they can also become -- we can understand it.

"And your other point is also right: there are millions of people who will not understand you. But we don't agree with you that your words will create more confusion. Those people are so confused, there cannot be more confusion. They have already reached to the rock bottom of confusion; you cannot confuse them any more. So don't be worried about them.

"And we have thought about a third category also. There are a few people who are just in between these two categories: who are not so evolved that they will immediately understand you and become enlightened and who are not so unevolved either that they will simply become more and more confused by hearing you. They are just in the middle -- a small minority, but those people are there. With your help they will reach to the other shore; without your help they may wander and wander for centuries and centuries.

"And you are right in saying that what difference does it make in eternity? It does not make

any difference to YOU because you know eternity, but for those poor people who live in time it makes much difference. For many many lives they will be suffering. For you it makes no difference -- you have entered eternity -- but they are living in time, and time means birth, death and the wheel of birth and death. And they will have to go on the wheel, in the vicious circle, millions of times. Compared to eternity it is nothing, but compared to a small life -- a seventy-year life, a sixty-year life -- it is too much. You have to think about that third category too."

Buddha listened to them and immediately agreed to speak. He followed the argument: yes, there IS a third category. The first category is of those people who cannot understand at all. Words they can understand; intellectually they are capable of understanding whatsoever is said to them. But deep down the meaning is missed, the significance is missed. They hear the music, but they don't get the melody of it. They hear the noise, but they don't feel the harmony; that is a subtle phenomenon. They hear the words.

All the three categories are here. The majority is hearing my words, but they will not feel my silence, they will not feel my presence in them. It is the same to them. They can read a book, they can listen to a tape or they can hear me directly; it is all the same to them, no difference, because the words are the same.

But to the second category there is a difference. To read my words in a book is one thing, because I will not be there in those words, my presence will not be there. I will not be breathing in those words; they will be dead. When you listen to the tape it is a little better than the book, but still my presence is not there. Tapes are mechanical repetitions; there is nobody behind them.

Here when you are listening to me, my words are there and my silence is there. My silence can go with the words if you are available. The second category of people will be able to feel my presence, my silence, my song. And the first category of people will immediately realize that this is it! A sudden enlightenment... not even a moment's gap.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THE OTHER DAY I READ THAT TARU MET YOU ONCE IN THE STREETS OF BOMBAY WHILE YOU WERE CARRYING A BAG OF GIN AND WHISKY IN BOTH HANDS. ARE YOU REALLY A DRUNKARD? 5

Prem Aditya, if Taru says so, it must be so. I am such a drunkard that I can't remember! Yes, vaguely I remember Taru meeting me on the streets of Bombay. I can remember her hug -- it is difficult to forget! But my memory is not very good... so maybe I was carrying bottles of whisky in both of my hands.

That has been very usual for Zen masters in Japan. That is the last stage of enlightenment! To be enlightened means to be utterly drunk -- drunk with the divine.

Maybe those bottles of whisky were empty. They must have been, because a drunkard like me cannot keep those bottles full very long. The moment I get them I drink them. I don't postpone anything! But my memory is not very good....

"Doctor, I have a very serious problem," Max began. "I am losing my memory -- maybe I have already lost it completely. I can't seem to remember anything."

The psychiatrist smiled indulgently. "I am sure it is not quite that drastic. You must

remember SOMETHING."

"No, nothing at all. I tell you, I can't remember a single thing."

"You mean, of course, such things as names and faces and dates? We all tend to forget them now and then."

"Doctor, you don't understand. I mean EVERYTHING!"

"Ah, that is pure nonsense!" snapped the doctor. "No one just forgets everything he has ever known. Even a person suffering from amnesia remembers SOMETHING -- such as whether he drinks coffee or tea or whether he smokes cigarettes or not."

"Listen, Doc," Maxwell said despairingly, "I am telling you for the last time -- I can't remember anything at all. Everything I see, everything I hear, everything I read, it just makes a temporary impression and then goes out of my head forever. That's it, Doctor, I swear to you. I simply can't remember one single goddamn thing!"

The psychiatrist frowned, leaned back in his chair and pondered this unique malady for several moments. Then he asked, "How long has this been going on?"

"How long has WHAT been going on?"

That's my situation too! I don't remember much. I am not much interested in the past, I am not interested in the future either. My whole interest is in the present moment.

And you can see right now -- I am a drunkard! Why bother what Taru says, and somewhere it is written and you read it? Why bother? You can look into my eyes... and they are full of whisky!

And if you don't believe me, come to me in private, and I will cry a little and you can taste my tears. And you will know how they taste -- they will taste of whisky! If Jesus can turn the whole ocean into wine, can't I turn my own tears?

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
NO ERECTION HAPPENS. AM I STILL SEXY? FISHES COME, BUT GO THIRSTY.

Sant... Sant, contemplate on Murphy's maxim: If you play with something long enough, you will surely break it.

The big tomcat was eyeing the cute angora from behind a barbed wire fence. Finally, he decided to jump over it to get to her. With a big leap he landed on the other side.

"Say, aren't you Toby, the tomcat?" asked the angora.

"Not anymore," he replied. "That fence was higher than I thought."

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT ARE THE ABC'S OF PSYCHOLOGY?

The A of psychology: neurotics build air castles. The B of psychology: psychotics live in them. The C of psychology: psychiatrists collect the rent.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO SPEAK INSTEAD OF WRITING YOUR PHILOSOPHY?

Gautam, my spelling is far worse than my pronunciation!
Enough for today.