

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

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Chapter #1

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A MAN IS NOT BORN TO MASTERY.
A MASTER IS NEVER PROUD.
HE DOES NOT TALK DOWN TO OTHERS.
OWNING NOTHING, HE MISSES NOTHING.

HE IS NOT AFRAID.
HE DOES NOT TREMBLE.
NOTHING BINDS HIM.
HE IS INFINITELY FREE.

SO CUT THROUGH
THE STRAP AND THE THONG AND THE ROPE.
LOOSEN THE FASTENINGS.
UNBOLT THE DOORS OF SLEEP
AND AWAKE.

THE MASTER ENDURES
INSULTS AND ILL TREATMENT
WITHOUT REACTING.
FOR HIS SPIRIT IS AN ARMY.

HE IS NEVER ANGRY.
HE KEEPS HIS PROMISES.
HE NEVER STRAYS, HE IS DETERMINED.
THIS BODY IS MY LAST, HE SAYS!

LIKE WATER ON THE LEAF OF A LOTUS FLOWER
OR A MUSTARD SEED ON THE POINT OF A NEEDLE,
HE DOES NOT CLING.

FOR HE HAS REACHED THE END OF SORROW
AND HAS LAID DOWN HIS BURDEN.

Man is born only as a seed, not as a flower. Flowering has to be achieved; one should not take it for granted. Birth itself is only the opportunity for life, it is not life itself. You can still miss life -- and millions miss it for the simple reason that they think that just being born is enough to be alive. It is not enough. It is necessary -- without it there will be no life -- but it is not synonymous with life. You have to be twice-born.

Jesus says: Unless you are born again you shall not enter into my kingdom of God.

A kind of rebirth is needed. The ordinary birth is the birth of the bodymind mechanism, but your spirit is only a potential -- it has to be actualized. Abraham Maslow has called this process self-actualization. Gautam Buddha would call the same process "no-self actualization." Abraham Maslow has no idea of the ultimate; he is thinking about it, speculating about it. He has stumbled upon a certain truth, but he does not know how to express it. He has not experienced it himself; it is only an intellectual understanding, hence he calls it "self-actualization."

But in that ultimate flowering the first thing that disappears is the self. In fact, the self is the only barrier for that flowering. The self is the hindrance, not the help. The self surrounds you like a wall; it is not the bridge.

When you are really born, born to life or to God -- to me both are synonymous -- you are no more, no more as you understand yourself to be. A pure emptiness prevails, an utter void prevails, a silence which is soundless. A music is there certainly, but without any sound. The Zen people call it the sound of one hand clapping. That no-self is your original face. When you are not, you are, and you are for the first time.

If Abraham Maslow had experienced the ultimate state of flowering he would never have called it self-actualization; he would have called it "no-self actualization." You are born as a self, as an ego. This is the seed and the seed has to disappear before the sprout can start growing. The seed has to die in the soil; then and only then the life that is hidden inside the seed will start manifesting itself.

It is a miracle! You are blind, that's why you can't see. So many miracles are happening all around you. When a seed becomes a sprout, a great miracle is happening. If you cut the seed you will not find any leaves, you will not find any flowers, you will not find any tree, you will not find anything at all -- just emptiness. Through analyzing the seed you will not reach any conclusion. But if you let the seed fall down into the right soil, if you allow the seed to die and disappear, out of that nothingness something immensely beautiful arises, something impossible happens. Leaves come, branches come, a big tree grows. Such a small seed contains such a big tree! Now hundreds of people can sit under its shade, hundreds of birds can make their nests, can come to rest every night in its shelter, and thousands of flowers will bloom.

A single seed is capable of making the whole earth green. It has so much potential -- infinite potential, because out of a single seed millions of seeds will arise, and so on and so forth. If you have one single seed the whole earth can be a garden. Why just the whole earth? -- the whole universe can be a garden! The potential is infinite; you have just to find the right opportunity for its expression, for its manifestation, for its realization.

Buddha says:

A MAN IS NOT BORN TO MASTERY.

Every man is born as a slave. It hurts to know it; we would like to be told that we are born as masters. We believe that we are masters -- nobody suspects it. The people who start suspecting their mastery are the only people who are capable of becoming, some day, masters. You doubt everything, but you never doubt your mastery over yourself, and that is the most doubtful thing, the most doubtful thing. What kind of mastery have you got? You are a slave, an utter slave of biological instincts, of sex, of anger, of greed, of ambition. You stink of all these things, you are full of all these things. And still you go on believing deep down somewhere that you are masters.

And rather than making an effort to destroy this slavery you start proving your mastery over others. You try to become Alexander the Great or Genghis Khan or Tamerlane. That is an effort to deceive yourself. That is an effort to prove something which is not there at all. You are trying to gather proofs about your mastery. Of course, if you become powerful enough over many people you can believe more easily that you are a master. It is easier for Alexander to believe that he is a master, but it is only a belief with no foundation to it. He is as much a slave as anybody else; maybe he is a far bigger slave than anybody else.

When he was coming to India, Alexander met a rare man, Diogenes. Had Diogenes been born in India he would have been considered a buddha; he was one of the awakened ones. Even Alexander was immensely impressed by him. He lived utterly naked by the side of a river. It was early morning when Alexander went to see him; he was lying naked on the bank of the river taking a sunbath. Seeing the man, feeling his presence, Alexander for the first time felt a kind of inferiority arising in him. He had come across many kings, he had defeated many kings, but here was a real king -- a master.

When you come across a master it is impossible not to feel the presence -- unless you are absolutely blind, absolutely deaf, utterly dead. Alexander must have been a little sensitive, a little alert, otherwise he would not have come to see this naked fakir. Just the fact that he came to see him, out of the way, shows that he had some deep feeling that all his possessions were not enough to make him contented: "There must be some other way to be contented. Life cannot be only possessions and power; life must have some more secrets to it."

He had heard many things about Diogenes: "He carries a lighted lamp in the day, in the full light of the day. Naked he is, but he carries only one thing in his hands -- a lamp, a lighted lamp. And people ask him, 'Why do you carry this lamp?' And he says, 'I am seeking and searching for a real man; I have not come across one yet. I carry this lamp so that I don't miss him.'"

A real man? Is he so rare? Alexander must have brooded over it. He must have thought, "I am a real man. Let me go and see this Diogenes." He had heard many stories about him: "He seems to be the most blissful person in the world. Nobody has ever seen him in anxiety, in anguish, in fear; he is utterly fearless."

Alexander had heard that once he was caught by a few people -- eight people were needed to catch this simple man -- but he told them, "Don't make so much effort, you need not. What do you want? Simply tell me."

They said, "We want to sell you in the slave market."

He said, "Then there is no need to strain yourselves so much -- I hate to give trouble to anybody. I am coming with you."

And he went with them, ahead of them. They followed him as if they were his followers. And when they reached the market where men were sold and purchased, everybody was attracted towards this beautiful man. He stood there on a platform and shouted, "Listen, all you slaves who have gathered here: a master is being sold! Is there any slave interested in purchasing a master?"

So many stories were in the air about Diogenes... Alexander slowly slowly became so interested that he went to see him. The very interest shows that there was some deep feeling in him about the futility of his own endeavors to conquer the world. And seeing Diogenes he immediately felt himself a nonentity, while Diogenes was an authentic being. Still he tried to laugh it away.

Diogenes said, "Stop laughing! Don't try to befool yourself! You can see the fact that you are missing life."

And Alexander said, "Yes, sir, I can feel it. For the first time I have seen a really alive person. What can I do for you? I have enough money, I can do anything. Just you say and it will be done."

Diogenes said, "I don't need anything. You may have all the money in the world, but I don't have any desire, so all your money is absolutely irrelevant. But one thing you can do is stand aside, because you are blocking the sun. That's all that I can ask from you and you will be kind enough if you can stand aside."

He didn't ask for anything. Alexander said to him, "If I have to come into the world another time, I will

ask God to make me Diogenes instead of Alexander the Great."

Diogenes said, "Why wait for the next life? You can be Diogenes right now! Can't you see the point?" he said. "Nothing is needed to be a Diogenes. You are making so much effort to conquer the world and even if you succeed, what are you going to gain out of it? You will be as miserable as ever, in fact far more miserable, because right now your mind is occupied with the idea, with the ambition of conquering the world. Once you have conquered it you will be at a loss what to do. Better stop now!"

Alexander said, "I can understand -- you are right -- but I cannot stop in the middle of my journey. I have decided to conquer the world."

Diogenes said, "Then go, don't stop -- but death will stop you in the middle. It always stops everybody in the middle, and then you cannot do anything. Then you will remember me. And your victories won't help you at all. When death knocks on the door, a slave, a poor man, a great king, a world conqueror, all are the same -- they are all equal in the eyes of death. Death cannot knock at my door," Diogenes said. "Listen, and look into my eyes. I have conquered death. That is a real victory because I have come to know my real being which is deathless. I have come to experience my consciousness which was before I was born and which will be there after I am gone. I am eternal."

And the day Alexander died he remembered Diogenes -- with bitter tears, of course, because Diogenes was right: his whole life had been a sheer wastage. He had struggled and struggled for nothing.

You have heard the proverb: Nothing succeeds like success -- that is absolutely wrong. I suggest to you another proverb: Nothing fails like success. But because very few people succeed very few people come to know about it. Those who succeed, they always come to know the utter impotence of success.

Buddha says: A MAN IS NOT BORN TO MASTERY.

The first thing to be understood is that you are a slave of unconscious forces. This is the beginning, the first step towards mastery; to recognize your slavery. To see that you are unconscious is the beginning of consciousness. But you go on throwing the responsibility on others, you never look inwards; for ANY causes you never look inwards.

The judge looked sternly down at the defendant. "Young man, it is alcohol and alcohol alone that is responsible for your present sorry state."

"I'm glad to hear you say that, Your Honor," the man replied with a sigh of relief. "Everybody else says it's my fault."

Nobody wants to recognize that he is responsible for the sorry state he is in. You always try to find some excuse. Any excuse will do; if you cannot find one, you can always invent. But you never feel responsible.

The beginning of a religious life is: total responsibility for yourself. Whatsoever you are, you are responsible and nobody else. And your life is a mess.

Have you heard about the Polack who tried to throw himself on the floor... and missed?

Your whole life is a failure -- whatsoever you do, even throwing yourself on the floor -- the reason is that you are not conscious at all, not aware at all. You are living in such unconsciousness, you are almost a machine.

Gurdjieff used to say to his disciples, "You are not men, you are machines." And people used to feel very offended; nobody likes the idea that he is a machine. "I and a machine? Me -- a machine? Others maybe!" But Gurdjieff was saying something very essential: man IS a machine. Everybody else can see it; everybody else can see it about you -- except you. But that is not going to help unless YOU see it.

There were three travelers -- a Jew, a Hindu and an Italian -- who needed a place to stay overnight. They knocked on a farmer's door. The farmer said he only had room for two in the house, but one could sleep in the barn. The Jew said he would sleep in the barn.

They all settled down for the night. A little while later there was a knock on the door. The farmer answered it; it was the Jew. He apologized, but said there was a pig in the barn and as pigs were not kosher he could not spend the night in the same place as them. The Hindu said he would sleep in the barn as pigs did not bother him.

Again the farmer went back to bed. A little while later there was a knock at the door; it was the Hindu.

He apologized and said he was sorry, but there was a cow in the barn and as cows were sacred animals it was not proper for him to sleep in the same place as them. So the Italian offered to sleep in the barn as he had no problem with cows or pigs.

Again the farmer went to bed, but a little while later there was a knock at the door. The tired farmer got up and answered it. There stood the cow and the pig!

Even cows can see, even pigs can feel that you are an Italian -- but not you! You never look at yourself, you always look at others. You are focused on others. You are so extrovert that you don't know how to turn your eyes in. And a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn is needed. Unless you start seeing yourself there is no possibility of mastery in your life; you will remain a slave.

When you fall in love you think you are a master. Are you, or is it just a biological, chemical phenomenon? If it is a biological and chemical phenomenon you are not the master. When somebody insults you and you become angry, are YOU angry or are you just a victim of some unconscious force that is being released in you? When you are angry, enraged, you are almost temporarily insane; you can do anything. You can destroy, you can kill, you can commit suicide. And whatsoever you do, if you survive the moment you will repent. You will say, "I cannot believe how it happened, how I could do such a thing? I did it in spite of myself!"

That expression is significant. Whenever you say, "I did it in spite of myself," you are recognizing, without knowing it, your slavery: that things happen in you which are happening without you -- you are just a victim.

Nobody is born as a master, but everybody is born with a tremendous potential to be a master. Everybody can be a master, but very rarely do people attain to their potential. Very rarely do people attain to their maximum peak, to the crescendo of their being.

The psychologists say that the ordinary person only uses seven to ten percent of his potential in his whole life; ninety percent or more remains unused. And this is about the ordinary person. The psychologists say even the talented people, very talented people, don't use more than twelve to thirteen percent. And the people we call geniuses, they don't use more than fifteen percent of their potential.

Just think, if the whole of humanity were using one hundred percent of its potential -- which it is capable of -- there would be no need to IMAGINE a paradise, we could make it here. We will be in paradise if one hundred percent potential is being used by everyone. But if you don't use it, it remains like a weight. Rather than being a help in your life it becomes such a weight, like a rock hanging around your neck. That which could have become a boat becomes the cause of your drowning.

Religion is concerned basically with helping you to bring your potential into action, to make your potential actual, so it is not just there as a seed but becomes a flower and a great fragrance is released.

That's what happened to Gautama the Buddha, that's what happened to Jesus the Christ. These few people were just like you, made of the same stuff. There is nothing special about them, they are not special beings. Forget that idea. The priests have been preaching it down the ages -- that they were special, that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God. It is all sheer nonsense. You are as much a son of God as Jesus was, no more or less -- no difference between you and Jesus. As far as the potential is concerned you are absolutely alike. But Jesus actualized it and you have not even touched it, it is simply lying there. It is a treasure which has not been used, and anything which is not used for a long time goes dead, becomes stale. It goes rotten, it becomes a dead weight on you, it makes you heavy and ill.

Buddha has nothing special in him. Of course, the Buddhist priests say that he is special. Why do these priests go on saying that Buddha is special, Mahavira is special, Jesus is special, Krishna is special? Why? -- for a simple reason: that helps to protect our egos. They are special, what can we do? If they became enlightened they were bound to become enlightened, they came with a special capability. We are normal human beings, they were AVATARAS. They were direct descendants of God, we are very very faraway, distant relatives, and the distance is so much that it is impossible to bridge it. They were coming directly from the above; they were messengers of God, messiahs, prophets, TIRTHANKARAS -- and we are ordinary people. This is a way of defending our egos -- a very logical way, a very rational way.

Do you think you are paying respect by saying that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God? You are not paying respect, you are being very cunning; you are trying to protect yourself. You are saying, "You are special and we are ordinary, so we have to behave in an ordinary way. You can behave like an enlightened person. What can we do about it? We are made in this way. The responsibility is God's, not ours. It is not our fate to be a Buddha or to be a Krishna or to be a Lao Tzu. It is not our destiny to be a Zarathustra. They

were destined and we are not destined. So if something happened to them it was bound to happen, and if nothing is happening to us, nothing is happening to us because nothing is destined for us."

This is a trick, a strategy. Buddha wants you to be reminded that you are made of the same stuff, the same blood, the same bones, the same marrow, the same consciousness. The only difference is that you are not working on yourself, you are not using the opportunity, you are not transforming yourself. And you go on finding excuses: "How can we do it? We have so many children and the wife and the husband and the parents. And we have to work in the world and we have to earn money and a livelihood." You go on making excuses.

That's why my insistence is that none of my sannyasins are to leave the ordinary world. They have to become enlightened in the ordinary world so that this excuse, this traditional excuse, can be dropped forever.

And there have been people who have become enlightened living very ordinary lives. Kabir was a father and a husband, and he worked his whole life -- he was a weaver -- yet he became enlightened. He didn't renounce the world, he didn't escape. Or Raidas, he was a shoemaker. He continued his work, he remained in the world, and became enlightened.

And there have been many, but you will be surprised: priests don't talk much about these people because these people are dangerous. They talk about the renunciation of Buddha, that he renounced the world, went into the forest; they talk about Mahavira who renounced his kingdom. In the first place you have to have a kingdom to renounce. Where is the kingdom? And if you don't have the kingdom, then in this life at least you can't become enlightened. Even if you have the kingdom, then you have to renounce it.

Jesus is presented in such a way that it becomes almost impossible to conceive of him as a human being. He is born out of a virgin mother -- now, what nonsense! You are not born out of a virgin mother, so at least this life you have missed the train. Next life choose a virgin mother, because everything starts from there! In the first place you have chosen a wrong train.... But there are difficulties: if you choose a virgin mother you are a bastard. If Jesus chooses a virgin mother he is simply exceptional -- it is God's grace.

The priests have been trying to create a distance between you and the enlightened ones so that you can feel at ease. And the effort of all the buddhas is not to let you feel at ease, is to make you restless, to make you divinely discontented, to make you aware that you are capable of tremendous bliss and you are missing it, to make you alert that it is your birthright and yet you have not claimed it.

A MAN IS NOT BORN TO MASTERY.

A MASTER IS NEVER PROUD.

But Buddha immediately in the second sutra says something very significant, because there is every possibility that he will be misunderstood -- hence the second statement. He says that mastery is an achievement, but not in the ordinary sense of the word, because whenever you achieve something you become proud; you say, "I have achieved this." If mastery is an achievement -- which certainly it is -- it is in a totally different sense from ordinary achievements. It is not like becoming a president of a country or becoming the richest man in the world; it is not like becoming famous -- it is totally different. The difference is that in the very achievement of it the achiever dies.

Remember it, never forget about it; otherwise your spirituality can also become a new ego trip. Hence, immediately, Buddha adds: A MASTER IS NEVER PROUD. He cannot be -- because he is no more! This is a very strange achievement: in the very process of achieving it, the ego melts, disappears. In fact it happens only when the ego is found no more. It is a very paradoxical achievement: an achievement certainly, but there is no achiever. Just as a sugar cube dissolves into the tea, the achiever dissolves into the achievement itself. He is no more found anywhere. He becomes one with the achievement. The achievement is not something that he can brag about, it is simply a natural flowering. He is not proud of it.

Roses are not proud, lotuses are not proud, of course, however beautiful they are. The sunrise is not proud, the sunset is not proud, the night full of stars is not proud, the full moon is not proud. It is natural; there is nothing to say about it. It is how it should be. There is no question of being proud about it, no ego enhancement about it.

Beware of the ego. If you start bragging about your spiritual attainment you have missed the whole point. It is no longer spiritual at all; it is again the same game played with new words. Only the words have

changed, but nothing has really changed; there has been no transformation.

And people play the game of the ego in many ways. The Indian thinks that he is the holiest, the most spiritual person in the world; now that is the same game. The American thinks, for different reasons, that he is special, that he is higher than anybody else. And so is the case with everybody. You will not find a single race in the world, a single nation in the world which does not think that it is special. Now the game is played in the name of nation, race.

Every religion thinks, "This is the only way, the true way: all other ways are false." If you ask the Jaina he thinks all other ways are pseudo. If you ask the Christian he has the same idea: "Unless you are a Christian you are not going to be saved, you will suffer in hell." Ask the Mohammedan... And you will be surprised: they belong to different religions, but do they really belong to different religions or do they all belong to the same religion -- the religion of the ego? They all belong to the same religion: the religion of the ego.

The white man thinks he is special, the black man thinks he is special...

I have heard a story about Dr. Radhakrishnan. He was the president of India and he was talking to a few friends.

One white man said, "We are the best -- otherwise why did God make us white?"

Radhakrishnan said to the white man, "You are half-cooked, that's why you are white!"

A black man was also present; he was very happy. He said, "That's right. We are the best!"

Radhakrishnan said, "You are cooked too much -- you are almost burnt! WE are the best, we are just in the middle, neither white nor black. Cooked just right."

People go on trying to defend their egos in every possible way.

An Egyptian and an Indian archaeologist were vying with each other.

"In our recent excavation we came across lengthy cables and have deduced that there was some kind of a telephone system then," the Egyptian boasted.

"We dug and dug and could find no cable. We have reached the conclusion that there was wireless during those times in India," said his Indian counterpart.

Beware! We are playing the same game in the name of religion, in the name of nation, in the name of race, in the name of color, but the game is the same. The name of the game is ego.

The spiritual man is one who has stopped playing the game. He is the master. A MASTER IS NEVER PROUD.

HE DOES NOT TALK DOWN TO OTHERS.

He has no holier-than-thou look. But look at your so-called saints -- they are all looking at you with deep condemnation. They know you are sinners and they are saints. They are higher beings, superior beings; you are mundane, worldly, ordinary. What have you done? What virtue can you claim? They can claim that they have been fasting for years, that they are celibates, that they eat only once a day, that they sleep only three hours per night. And they have invented many kinds of torture for themselves. And of course torture has been thought for centuries to be the way towards spirituality. It is masochism, pure masochism: it has nothing to do with spirituality. But when a person tortures himself, of course he can feel his ego fulfilled. You cannot do it and he is doing it. And you certainly start feeling inferior because it is difficult for you to do it.

If you see a man lying down on a bed of thorns you cannot do it. Certainly he is higher, has superior powers. And if he looks at you as the condemned, as the people who are going to hell, you have to accept it because he is earning rewards. What have you done? You have not done anything like that. You cannot sleep on such a bed; you are a very ordinary human being. His will is like steel -- look at his willpower!

And it is nothing. He is simply more stupid than you are, he is more dull than you are, his body is less sensitive than yours. And there are methods to make your body less and less sensitive. If you sit naked in the hot sun your body starts getting burnt; slowly slowly, all the sensitive parts which are very fragile become hard -- they have to become hard. You become thick-skinned and the thicker the skin, the more

easily you can lie down on a bed of thorns.

Have you not watched? Women can use sleeveless clothes more easily than men for the simple reason that their arms are less sensitive -- more beautiful but less sensitive. Even in cold countries they can move very easily with sleeveless clothes; man finds it difficult. Man's body is more sensitive in that way and more fragile. In cold countries he needs a necktie to prevent any air going in. And look at the women -- their clothes are almost disappearing!

Their bodies are just less sensitive; they have to be less sensitive because they have to be mothers. Giving birth to a child and having a very sensitive body will be difficult, will be very painful, will be utterly painful. Have you any idea... if the body is very sensitive then carrying the baby for nine months in your belly will be a great torture. Just think of yourself carrying a baby in your belly for nine months... you will commit suicide! It will be impossible. Nature makes the woman's body less sensitive and compensates it with more beauty and more roundedness. Man's body is not that beautiful, not that rounded, but more sensitive -- sensitive to cold, sensitive to heat, sensitive to many things.

That is one of the causes of the constant conflict between men and women: because the woman comes to orgasm very slowly; her sensitivity is much less. It takes a longer time for her to come to an orgasm. Man comes quickly; his body is very sensitive. And the gap between the man's body and the woman's body creates a great problem. Unless the man is very alert and takes every care to move slowly with the woman's body, the woman will never be satisfied.

And her dissatisfaction will show in many ways: your tea will be cold, your vegetables will have too much salt. The whole day, from the kitchen, such noises of breaking things will come, as if you are living in an earthquake! Not that she is doing it consciously, that too is absolutely unconscious -- nobody is a master, all are slaves -- but she is taking revenge in her own way.

So whenever you want to make love to a woman, immediately she has a headache, she is tired, she is no longer interested, for the simple reason that she never achieves the orgasm. Why should she participate in a game in which she is always the loser? It is only recently that man is becoming aware of the difference; that difference can be bridged, but skill is needed.

Just ask your wife to prick your back with a needle on many places, and you will be surprised: there are a few places which are absolutely insensitive -- the prick will not be felt at all -- and a few places where the prick will be felt. A few spots are blind. Those people who are lying on a bed of thorns have simply arranged the whole thing in such a way that the thorns are touching the blind spots. It is just a kind of skill; there is nothing in it, nothing holy in it.

You can eat once a day. There are tribes, many aboriginal tribes in India, in South Africa, in the Himalayas, who eat only once a day. The body is so adjustable: you can eat once a day, then it eats too much. You can eat twice, you can eat thrice, then it divides. You can eat five times... and, in fact, to eat five times is far more scientific than to eat one time, because to eat one time means putting too much load on the system. It is better to divide the load. And if man has really come down from the monkeys, look at the monkeys -- they are eating the whole day! Americans are doing exactly that, so whether Darwin is correct about anybody else or not, he is correct about the Americans!

You can eat one time a day; the body will adjust to that. These things are nothing to do with spirituality, but these are the things that your so-called saints go on bragging about.

A real master is not proud: HE DOES NOT TALK DOWN TO OTHERS. The real master is one who has recognized that everybody has the same potential. How can he talk down to others?

Buddha has said that when he became enlightened, immediately he saw that the whole universe had become enlightened with him. This is true as far as he is concerned. Of course the whole universe has not become enlightened -- you have not become enlightened yet -- but as far as Buddha is concerned it is absolutely true. He saw the potential, he saw that everybody is the same. Just that a few people are awake and a few are asleep; that is the only difference, and that is not such a big difference. Don't make such a fuss about it.

And even if your saints don't say directly, "We are holier than you," in a thousand and one indirect ways they go on telling you.

Every time the cowboy rode through the Indian village he would wave at the aged chief. In response the old man would give him the finger in the usual vertical manner, then he would turn his hand so that the third digit stuck out horizontally.

After a few weeks the cowboy could stand it no longer. He stopped his horse and said to the redskin, "I

know what it means to get the finger straight up, but what does it mean when you turn it sideways?" "I don't like your horse either!" replied the chief.

There are direct ways and indirect ways, gestures. The way your saints look at you -- they may not say a single word -- the way they behave, all points to one thing: that they are higher than you. And they keep you constantly afraid of hell. They are telling you, "Beware of hell. You are bound to go to hell." So they are making you alert in advance.

Preacher Pitts had undertaken that morning to describe the terrors of hell to his congregation. "Brothers and sisters," he intones, "some of you have seen melted iron running out of a furnace, haven't you? It's white, sizzling and hissing. Well, in the place I'm talking about they use that stuff for ice cream!"

Their whole effort is to make you as frightened as possible. Look at the great idea of ice cream! And if you want to go to heaven you have to follow their advice, you have to follow in their footprints, you have to become imitators. And imitators are pseudo people. A real master is never an imitator.

Hence I say to you, never become Christians, be a christ, and never become Buddhists, be a buddha. Your potential is of such infinite possibility that why should you settle for some small thing? Just being a Christian is a poor substitute -- why not be a christ? Why not be a buddha yourself? Why be Buddhists?

But your preachers are telling you: Be Christians, be Buddhists, be Jainas, be Hindus! They are not telling you about your ultimate potential, they want you to be followers. And of course there is no Buddha, no Jesus available, so they are the representatives. They have created a strategy: Follow Jesus! Of course you will have to follow the pope -- where is Jesus? The pope is the representative and the pope is infallible. Look at the foolishness of it all. Only a fool can say that he is infallible -- even God is not infallible.

Fallibility is part of the fun -- God must be fallible; otherwise he would not have made you! God must be fallible; otherwise why and how did he manage to create man? And since then he has not created anything; he stopped -- seeing what he had done he stopped the whole process. Since then nothing has been heard about him, where he is, what he is doing.

The Bible says that in six days he created the world -- okay; the seventh day he rested. And what about the next week? Did the Monday come or not? And since then what has he been doing? Seeing that he has committed a mistake he must be escaping as far away as possible.

Now the scientists say the world, the universe is expanding. The simple reason is that God is escaping, so with him of course the world goes on expanding; the boundary goes on expanding with tremendous speed. Do you know at what speed he is escaping from you? One hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second! That is the speed at which the universe is expanding; that must be the speed of his escape. And I don't think we will be able to catch him; it seems impossible to make spaceships which can go at that speed, because that is the speed of light and anything moving at that speed will immediately become light. So if you are moving with that speed, the plane and the passengers and the pilot, all will disappear; they will become simply pure light. With that speed everything will melt and become light. Unless we can find some way not to follow him but to try to find him from the other side....

And I think that is the way of the buddhas. They don't try to reach God, they don't run after him, they simply stand silently. That is the other way, the other way round -- because how long can he escape for? If the universe is also round, finally he will come back to where these people are standing -- and there is the possibility of meeting.

HE DOES NOT TALK DOWN TO OTHERS.

OWNING NOTHING, HE MISSES NOTHING.

The buddha simply uses, the master uses. He owns nothing, he is not an owner. Either he owns nothing or he owns the whole universe -- which is saying the same thing in two different ways. There is no need to own anything -- he uses. You use the sun, you use the moon; you need not own them. So, if one day the sun is cloudy you need not become anxious, you need not go mad, you need not get worried: "What is happening to my sun?" It has nothing to do with you. If one day the moon has an eclipse you are not worried at all because you don't own it; if you own it, then trouble arises. If you own the garden and the

roses are not blooming, then there is anxiety; if you don't own it then you just enjoy.

The master enjoys existence but he owns nothing; because he owns nothing he misses nothing.

HE IS NOT AFRAID.

There is nothing to lose, why should he be afraid?

HE DOES NOT TREMBLE.

Soren Kierkegaard says that every man is trembling inside, there is a constant trembling -- and he is right. The fear of death keeps you constantly trembling. You may keep yourself occupied in a thousand and one things and you may forget about your inner trembling, but it is there.

Soren Kierkegaard is one of the most important thinkers of the Western hemisphere. What he is saying he must be saying from his own personal experience; he was very much afraid of death. He was afraid only of two things: death and money. He never earned anything. His father had left a certain bank balance for him; he lived on it. Each month, on the first day, he would go to the bank and withdraw a certain amount and live on it. He lived in a very very economical way, but he was very much afraid: sooner or later the money was going to be finished -- that was his constant worry. People had seen him in Copenhagen going to the bank and coming home always in a state of trembling.

And then death... and death is certainly related to money. People who are very much afraid of death start accumulating money as a protection -- as if money can protect! People who are not afraid of death don't care much about money; they use money, but they don't care.

And one strange thing happened: Soren Kierkegaard died on the road the day he withdrew the last amount of money from the bank. He was coming home from the bank; this was the last amount, the bank balance was finished. The manager had said, "Next month you need not come -- all the money is finished." He fell in the middle of the road -- he didn't reach home -- and died then and there. If money is finished, life is finished! He must have been a man of tremendous fear.

When he was young he loved a woman, a very beautiful woman, Regina. For three years the love affair continued and finally, when they were going to get married, he refused. It was very strange because Regina was a beautiful woman and he was an ugly man. If Regina had refused it would have been logical, but why did Kierkegaard refuse? He refused out of the simple fear that "If we get married and some trouble arises, then? If some fighting arises or if she falls in love with somebody else? -- she is such a beautiful woman..." Afraid of the possibilities of the future, he simply refused. He refused to live! He never left the city, he was so afraid of accidents. So when he says man is a trembling he is saying it from personal experience.

Buddha says: The master does not tremble. All his trembling disappears because he knows there is no death. Knowing himself he has transcended death. He has no fear of the future because he lives in the present. He is not possessive; hence nothing can be taken away from him.

NOTHING BINDS HIM.
HE IS INFINITELY FREE.

Because he is nonpossessive, NOTHING BINDS HIM. He is freedom, absolute freedom.

SO CUT THROUGH
THE STRAP AND THE THONG AND THE ROPE.
LOOSEN THE FASTENINGS.
UNBOLT THE DOORS OF SLEEP
AND AWAKE.

Three things are our bondage: body, mind, self -- THE STRAP, THE THONG AND THE ROPE. SO CUT THROUGH.... Be aware you are neither the body nor the mind nor the self. Awareness is the sword

with which to cut through.

And LOOSEN THE FASTENINGS: lust, greed, anger, hatred, ambition, jealousy, possessiveness.
UNBOLT THE DOORS OF SLEEP: awaken yourself, become conscious.

On a crowded subway a well-built mulatto secretary felt behind her the presence of a sexually excited soul brother. She tried to move away, but her fidgeting only made things worse. Finally she turned around and snapped, "Mister, you are vulgar!"

"I didn't do nothin' wrong, honey!" said the black man. "But I can understand why you're a little peeved. I got paid tonight, the boss had nothing but small change, and it makes a lump in my pants pocket. Believe me, baby, that's all there is to it."

"I suppose," said the woman, "you also want me to believe that all the time we're standing here your boss is giving you raises!"

Just look at your sex, at your anger, at your greed. You are utterly in their power, helplessly in their power.

Buddha is not a metaphysician; he is a superb psychologist. He is the first to create the psychology of the buddhas.

He is saying: Cut through all this slavery. UNBOLT THE DOORS OF SLEEP AND AWAKE.

Mrs. Rafferty was sitting at home in Dublin with her children, all waiting for the man of the house to come home from his job in the local brewery. A knock came at the door. When Mrs. Rafferty opened it she saw Mick standing with downcast eyes and a sad look on his face. "Bad news," he said. "Pat fell into a vat of whiskey and drowned this afternoon."

Mrs. Rafferty and the children burst into anguished tears, but she managed to stammer, "Oh Jesus, did he suffer? Was it a painful death?"

Mick coughed reverently and took off his hat. "No, mam," he said, "I don't think so. He got out twice for a piss!"

Be awake. Just see what you are doing, just see what your life consists of. Is there any awareness or is it just an unconscious play of unconscious forces? Are you just a victim of forces you are not aware of -- either from where they come or what they are doing to you? Are you going to die in this way?

THE MASTER ENDURES
INSULTS AND ILL TREATMENT
WITHOUT REACTING.

The master cannot react. He responds, but he never reacts. Reactions come from the past, response is spontaneous; it is in the present. The slave reacts, the master responds. The unconscious mind reacts, the conscious man responds. He has no ready-made answers. He encounters the situation, he reflects the situation. He accepts the challenge of the situation -- and acts accordingly. His action is born out of the present.

And remember one fundamental secret of life: if the action is born out of the present it is never binding; if it comes out of the past it is binding, it is karma. If the action comes out of your present awareness it is not karma, it is not binding. You do it and it is finished, you do it and you get out of it; it never accumulates in you. The master never accumulates the past; he dies every moment to the past. He is born anew every moment.

THE MASTER ENDURES INSULTS AND ILL TREATMENT WITHOUT REACTING.

FOR HIS SPIRIT IS AN ARMY.

He need not react. Insults cannot insult him, ill treatment only brings his compassion, because he knows his awareness is a citadel, is a shelter which cannot be broken. It is an ultimate protection; he is ultimately

secure in his awareness.

HE IS NEVER ANGRY.
HE KEEPS HIS PROMISES.
HE NEVER STRAYS, HE IS DETERMINED.
THIS BODY IS MY LAST, HE SAYS!

LIKE WATER ON THE LEAF OF A LOTUS FLOWER
OR A MUSTARD SEED ON THE POINT OF A NEEDLE,
HE DOES NOT CLING.

He does not cling to anything -- body, mind or self. He clings not, he is no more there to cling. He is just pure emptiness. And out of that pure emptiness arises innocence, out of that pure emptiness arises godliness.

FOR HE HAS REACHED THE END OF SORROW
AND HAS LAID DOWN HIS BURDEN.

According to Buddha the only burden is the self, the ego. Put the burden aside and you are absolutely free. He does not talk about God; he only talks about the burden, the ego. Put it aside and you will know what God is. There is no need to talk about God; talking about God is utterly futile. He emphatically avoids talking about God; it is useless. He gives you the right way to experience godliness.

You are gods. Just the seed has to die, the self has to die, and you will start growing. That growth is divine. Religion is the process of inner growth, the process of actualizing the potential, the process of being reborn. Unless you are born again you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #2

Chapter title: Just throw the whole bag

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU SAY THAT ENLIGHTENMENT CAN HAPPEN ANY MOMENT. TO ME IT FEELS LIKE A VERY SLOW
PROCESS OF LEARNING AND BECOMING AWARE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS PARTS OF MY BEING. DO
YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THIS?

Dharmapriya, enlightenment is not a process of learning; on the contrary, it is a process of unlearning.

Whatever you know has to be dropped. Knowledge, the knowledgeable mind, has to be renounced.

If it were a process of learning, then certainly it would take time, it would be gradual. But if it is a question of dropping something then it is not gradual, it need not be gradual. You can simply drop it instantly.

Once it happened:

A man came to Sri Ramakrishna with ten thousand gold coins to offer him. Ramakrishna accepted his offering and then said, "Now these coins are mine -- you go to the Ganges and throw them all into the river." Ramakrishna lived in a temple just on the bank of the Ganges.

The man was very much shocked. "Ten thousand gold coins, solid gold coins, and this fool is saying, 'Throw them into the river!' And I have always thought that this man had become enlightened -- he is simply mad!" He hesitated.

Ramakrishna said, "When you have offered them to me they no longer belong to you. Why are you hesitating? I can send somebody else to throw them away. You please go."

The man went, reluctantly of course, and he didn't come back. One hour passed. Ramakrishna inquired, "What happened to that man? Has he escaped with the coins? Go and inquire."

Somebody was sent. There was a great crowd, he had gathered a great crowd, and he was throwing each single coin, one by one, and counting them!

When Ramakrishna was told, "This is what is happening -- it may take a few hours more," Ramakrishna went himself, hit the man on the head and said, "Are you mad or something? When you collect coins, of course you collect them one by one, it is a gradual process. But when you are throwing them away, why are you counting? Just throw the whole bag! Whether they are ten thousand or a few more or a few less, it doesn't matter. The Ganges won't take any note of it!"

This is the situation. When you stop gathering knowledge you also unlearn slowly, not because unlearning has to be slow. It is only your clinging mind. It is the mind that does not want to renounce knowledge, hence it goes on postponing. It finds beautiful rationalizations.

The idea of gradual enlightenment is one of the most beautiful rationalizations, and it appeals to the mind because all that mind knows is gradual. The whole language of the mind is the language of time. Whatever the mind can do has to be done in time, it needs time.

But enlightenment does not happen in time. When I say it can happen in a moment, please don't misunderstand me -- the moment is not part of time at all! I am saying it can happen immediately; it needs no time at all, not even a single moment is needed. It can happen now... but you cling. You say, "How is it possible? I have to become slowly slowly alert, aware, meditative. Chunk by chunk I have to transform my unconscious being. I have to drop greed, anger, lust, jealousy, possessiveness, hatred, and there are a thousand and one things, and each thing is going to take time. I have to drop fear, I have to drop my identification with the body and the mind, I have to drop my attachments..." And the list is almost infinite. It will take eternity for you to become enlightened; in fact, you will never become enlightened. The very idea that it is going to be a gradual process is only a strategy of the mind to postpone it.

Enlightenment is always sudden. It is a question of understanding, insight, illumination. It is like sudden lightning. It has always happened like that.

Gautam Buddha was trying for his enlightenment for six years; it was a lengthy process. He was following many methods, many paths. He was doing whatever is humanly possible to do, but nothing was happening. He was moving in circles; he was where he had started, he was not going anywhere else. He was becoming tired, utterly tired. Finally one evening this sudden illumination happened to him that his whole effort was irrelevant.

Enlightenment is not something like an achievement; one cannot achieve it. One has to disappear for it to happen. It is a happening and it happens only in the absence of the ego. And whenever you are doing something the ego becomes more and more strengthened. The ego is a doer, and enlightenment happens in a state of non-doing. It is simply the realization of who you are; it is not a question of achievement. You are already it! Just an awakening, just a turning in!

Seeing the point, Buddha relaxed; he dropped all his methods. That is the only use of methods: you get tired of them, you feel utterly bored with them. One day out of sheer boredom you drop all the methods.

That evening he dropped his whole spiritual search. He had dropped all worldly search six years before, but it is the same search whether you are seeking money or meditation, whether you are seeking power or

enlightenment, whether you are running after prestige or God -- it is the same thing! The mind needs some object to run after. The mind wants something to desire. It wants an objective goal; whatsoever that objective goal is doesn't matter -- XYZ, anything will do.

Seeing the point, "It is the same mind -- I have renounced the world, but I have not renounced the mind, and the mind is the real world. And these six years I have only been changing the objects of my desire, but I have not dropped desiring. Instead of money, now I desire enlightenment. Instead of power, now I desire ultimate truth. But is there any difference? It is the same desiring mind, the same ambitious ego; in fact, it has become more subtle. It was gross before, now it is very subtle..." seeing it, he laughed. These six years he had not laughed at all, he had been serious. He laughed at the whole ridiculousness of the effort.

Spiritual effort is more ridiculous than the worldly effort. The worldly effort has a certain relevance, but the spiritual effort has no relevance.

He relaxed -- obviously, naturally. Not that he made an effort to relax: relaxation came to him because there was nothing to achieve, nowhere to go. Relaxation simply came to him; from the beyond something descended. He fell into deep rest.

That night he slept for the first time without dreams. When there are no desires there are no dreams; dreams are reflections of desires. That night there was no nightmare; for six years he had been suffering from many nightmares. A nightmare simply says that you are desiring impossible things; hence your night is disturbed, your sleep is disturbed. There is no rest; it is feverish, it is pathological, it is not healthy. For the first time in his life he relaxed and slept well, totally, like a small child newly born.

Deeply rested, in the morning when he opened his eyes the last star was disappearing from the sky. Seeing the last star disappear, the last trace of the ego disappeared in him. He had found it -- but he had found it without any effort. It had happened, but it had happened not as a goal, not as an achievement -- it had happened out of deep relaxation.

But remember, don't start trying to relax; that is the most absurd thing in the world. And there are many stupid people writing books about relaxation. I have come across one book -- the name of the book is YOU MUST RELAX! Now that very word 'must' is enough to keep you tense. Relaxation cannot be a "must," it cannot be an effort.

Try one night to go to sleep, make an effort to go to sleep, and it will become more and more impossible for you. Every night you go to sleep very easily. If you want to suffer from insomnia this is the sure method to suffer from insomnia. Try, make an effort to go into sleep. Toss and turn and take long breaths and count sheep and jog in the room and take a bath and do some Transcendental Meditation. And then naturally sleep will become impossible, because all these things will be disturbances, distractions. How do you go to sleep? If somebody asks you, will you ever be able to explain? How do you manage? Every night when you fall asleep you are doing a miracle! You are moving from doing to nondoing, from action to no-action. How do you manage it? Is there any art? Have you learned it? What is the trick in it? Try to think about it, and then you will never be able to sleep.

I have heard about one centipede -- the centipede has one hundred legs. The centipede was taking a morning walk and a spider became very much intrigued. The spider must have been a mathematician or something like that. He said, "Uncle, can you satisfy my curiosity? How do you manage? One hundred legs! Which one to put first and which one to put next and then... a hundred legs! You don't fall, you don't get confused? Do you keep counting inside? If I had one hundred legs I am certain I would not be able to walk. My legs would become entangled with each other, I would fall immediately."

The centipede laughed. He said, "You mathematicians, you are always asking nonsense questions! You know that I am managing perfectly well -- but I have never thought about it. Let me think it over."

So he tried to walk and think -- and he fell down immediately. He was very angry at the spider and he said, "Listen! Never ask a centipede this question again -- now for my whole life I will be in trouble! I had never thought about it, things were going perfectly well. I had never looked into the matter. Now that you have asked me I will never be at ease until I have found the answer. Trying to figure it out... you see I am in a mess! Please never ask any centipede. You have crippled me for my whole life. Now I don't think that I will ever be able to walk. One hundred legs! Of course you are right, and I don't know how everything was being managed."

If somebody asks you how you go to sleep, don't try to find out the answer; otherwise you will suffer from insomnia from that very day. People who suffer from insomnia, all that they need is to forget about

sleep; there is no need to worry about it. If you are not feeling sleepy, be happy, enjoy. Read something, listen to music, sing, dance, go for a walk -- you are more fortunate than the people who are fast asleep and snoring. But forget all about sleep. Watch the stars, enjoy the stars, feel yourself far more fortunate than the others, and you will fall asleep without any effort on your part. But don't make any effort.

Enlightenment is something like that. It is not a question of making effort.

Dharmapriya, you say, "To me it feels like a very slow process." It is not a process at all -- it is a jump, a quantum leap! And it has nothing to do with learning; it is UNlearning. You are conditioned. Enlightenment means becoming unconditioned again, becoming a child again. You were a child once so you can be a child again. You have just to put aside all kinds of rubbish that you have gathered around yourself. You have to jump out of it, that's all. It is not a question of a slow process of learning, it is simply a question of seeing the point.

But we are cunning, mind is very cunning. It can't accept the simple fact that we still want to avoid enlightenment. We don't want to be enlightened, we are afraid of the fact, but we are cunning and we cannot accept it. Hence we find out ways -- ways to deceive ourselves that it is a slow process, a very slow process; that it takes not only one life but many lives to become enlightened. It does not take time at all, what to say about a life or many lives? It has nothing to do with time. It is immediate -- it can happen now!

See the point. Allow relaxation to happen, don't try to relax. Simply relax, don't make it a "must." Rest... and if you rest you will start falling into the deep abyss of your own being, and sooner or later you will reach the rock bottom of yourself. To experience that rock bottom of yourself is to be enlightened, is to be a buddha, is to be a christ.

That's why I insist again and again it can happen any moment, just to remind you that your mind is very clever. It can deceive others, it can deceive you. Beware of the mind! It keeps you clouded, it never allows you to see things as they are.

Enlightenment is your nature, hence there is no question of learning, no question of reaching somewhere. You are already there, it has already happened. It is your very being, your very ground. It is in your every breath and in every beat of your heart.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DON'T I FEEL ANY SURPRISES IN MY LIFE? ALL SEEMS SO DULL AND DRAB.

Gyano, I have given you the name Gyano: Gyano means knowledge. You are too knowledgeable, you know too much. And when one knows too much, life loses the quality of being mysterious. Then you are never surprised by anything. Your knowledge goes on supplying you all kinds of answers; even before you have asked, the answer is there, you seem to know everything. Knowing nothing you go on believing in borrowed knowledge, and slowly slowly, that borrowed knowledge hypnotizes you so much that you forget that you don't know. You start believing in your own knowledge -- and it is not your own, it is just borrowed. You may have read the Bible, the Gita, the Koran....

Krishna knew what he was talking about, but when you read you don't know. Jesus knew what he was talking about, but when you read the Sermon on the Mount you are simply collecting, gathering words -- words which are not meaningful to you at all, which cannot have any meaning because meaning comes from experience.

Jesus says: If somebody hits you on one of your cheeks, give him the other one too. You can read it, it is a simple statement. You can even try to follow it -- thousands of Christians are trying to follow it.

I have heard about a Christian saint who used to talk too much about this statement. A mischievous person came and hit the saint on one cheek. Of course, true to his teaching, the saint gave him his other cheek hoping that now he would understand: "He will see how great I am, how compassionate, how considerate, how full of love!"

But the mischievous person was also a great devil; if the saint was great he was also great. He was not in any way inferior to the saint. He hit on the other cheek even harder.

Now this was too much! The saint immediately jumped upon him and started hitting him. The mischievous person was surprised. He said, "What are you doing? What happened to your teaching? What

happened to Jesus?"

He said, "Jesus has said: If somebody hits you on one cheek, give him the other. I have got only two cheeks, so his teaching is finished -- now I am free of the teaching. I will show you who I am! I have followed the teaching literally, exactly."

Once Buddha was asked by a man, "How many times do you say one should forgive?"

Now, the very question is enough to show the quality of the person. He is saying, "How many times...?" When you ask about how many times, you are not a man of compassion.

Buddha said, "Seven times."

The man said, "Okay."

Because of the way he said, "Okay," Buddha said, "Wait -- seventy times!"

The man felt a little reluctant about accepting seventy times, but still he said, "Okay."

Buddha said, "I withdraw my words. You have to forgive infinitely; even seventy times won't do. The way you are accepting it, it seems that when seventy times are over you will take revenge. And you can do harm in a single blow, you can take revenge in a single blow. You are not a man of compassion. You don't understand me, it is not a question of how many times."

You can read Buddha, THE DHAMMAPADA, you can recite it every day; you will become knowledgeable. All questions will disappear because you will have all kinds of answers, but all those answers are borrowed. Hence they will destroy the beauty of life and they will destroy your sense of awe and wonder, which are the most essential religious qualities.

If someone asks me which is the most fundamental religious quality, I will say wonder. And knowledge kills wonder. You start knowing about everything and the more you know, the more your life will be dull and drab, because all that dust of knowledge that gathers around you makes your mirrorlike consciousness so clouded -- there are so many layers of knowledge -- that you lose the quality of childlike wonder. You can't see the beauty of flowers, you can't see the beauty of a sunset, you can't see the miracle of existence. And existence is full of miracles, and surprises are everywhere, all around you.

Just look, but look with open eyes. The knowledgeable person is blind; the most blind person in existence is the knowledgeable person.

Gyano, I have given you the name just to remind you again and again that that is your problem, that is your main characteristic. Gurdjieff used to say to his disciples, "The first thing for the disciple is to know what his main characteristic is." Your main characteristic is knowledgeability.

Look around without carrying your burden of knowledge, and then you are stumbling continuously into new surprises and life again becomes worth living, worth rejoicing. Life again becomes a mystery to be loved and lived. It is not a problem to be solved, it is a mystery to be lived.

"Brothers," said the colored preacher, "the subject of my sermon today is 'liars'. How many in this congregation have read the sixty-ninth chapter of Matthew?"

Nearly every hand went up.

"You are the very people I want to preach to," the reverend said. "There is no such chapter!"

But nobody wants to accept that he does not know. Sixty-ninth chapter of Matthew.... Everybody wants to pretend. And I will not say that they were doing it very consciously, deliberately. Maybe they were thinking that they had read it, maybe they were believing that they had read it, and seeing so many hands going up they must become convinced that yes, there is such a chapter.

In the old days down South, a minister had a Negro named Ezra in his household. Ezra was smart and ambitious, but he could not read or write.

One Sunday the minister saw Ezra in the church, scribbling away industriously through the sermon. Afterwards, the minister asked him, "Ezra, what were you doing in church?"

"Taking notes, sir. I's eager to learn."

"Let me see," said the minister, and he glanced over Ezra's notes, which looked more like Chinese than English.

"Why, Ezra," he chided, "this is all nonsense!"

"I thought so," said Ezra, "all the time you was preaching it!"

Your preachers have poisoned you. Your knowledge has destroyed you; it has taken away the simple joy of not-knowing. Regain that joy of not-knowing. That's the whole purpose of meditation: coming out of knowledge just as a snake slips out of its old skin.

Slip out of your knowledge, Gyano, and then life is full of surprises. Every moment you will come across so many wonderful things. A seed becoming a sprout is a miracle. A bud opening in the morning is a miracle. A flower releasing its fragrance is a miracle. The night full of stars... what more miracles do you need? The whole existence is in a constant celebration!

And still you say, "I feel dull and drab and dragging"?

Then you must be at fault somewhere; nobody else is responsible for it. But we cling to our knowledge because it fulfills our ego.

D.H. Lawrence was walking in a garden with a small child. And, as children are prone to, the child asked, "Why are the trees green?"

D.H. Lawrence is one of the people I love and I respect. D.H. Lawrence is one of the people of this century who had tremendous insight into things. He stood there, thought for a moment, closed his eyes, meditated.

The child said, "Is it such a difficult question for you? Don't you know why the trees are green?"

D.H. Lawrence said, "The trees are green because they are green."

The child said, "Right! That's the right answer."

But you will not agree; no knowledgeable person will agree with D.H. Lawrence. He will say trees are green because of chlorophyll or some other nonsense. But his answer is tremendously beautiful: "Trees are green because they are green!"

And the child was immensely happy. He said, "Right, that's what I also feel. We agree about it!"

Drop your knowledge, become more childlike, and regain your joy in life. To rejoice in life is sannyas. My sannyas is not renunciation: it is rejoicing, it is celebration.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU HAVE SUSSED ME OUT. NOW IS THE TIME TO TELL MY DREADED SECRET! I AM ONE OF YOUR
POLACKS. WHAT TO DO?

Prem Veechi, that's the most beautiful thing about Polacks I love and like. You are not the first Polack who has declared it. Asha wrote a note saying that, "Beloved Master, I am also a Polack." Anupama wrote a note saying that her lover, Amitabh, is a Polack. And many others. This is beautiful!

And see what the British are doing. One British lady, Prem Lisa, has written saying, "We ARE superior so what can we do?"

Veechi, it is beautiful to be a Polack. It is beautiful to be a little foolish, not so superior as the British.

Why don't they have ice-cubes in Poland?

Because the woman with the recipe died.

One Polack arrived in New York seeking his fame and fortune. As he strolled down the sidewalk he noticed a great long ladder propped against the side of a building, stretching upward as far as the eye could see. He started to pass on by, but a voice high in the clouds called down, "Climb up the ladder to success!"

Somewhat nervously he began to ascend, rung by rung, all the way to the top of the fifty-story edifice. When he got there, a slender, blond, blue-eyed boy seated on the ledge of the building smiled sweetly at him.

"Hi, there!" he said. "I am Cess!"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IF GOD IS A SHE, WHY DO YOU KEEP ON CALLING HER A HE?
AND ANOTHER QUESTION: YOU SAY THE ENGLISH ARE LADIES AND THE ITALIANS, WOMEN.
WHERE WOULD YOU PUT THE GERMAN FEMALES?

Prem Prageeta, the German females are precisely that -- females -- neither ladies nor women. 'Female' is more scientific and more German, more scholarly, neutral; it has no evaluation in it.

And God, in fact, is neither he nor she.

So if you say he is a he I will say he is a she; if you say he is a she I will say he is a he -- simply to unhinge you from your convictions.

Once it happened:

Buddha entered a village. A man asked him as he was entering the village, "Does God exist?"
He said, "No, absolutely no."

In the afternoon another man came and he asked, "Does God exist?"
And he said, "Yes, absolutely yes."

In the evening a third man came and he asked, "Does God exist?"

Buddha closed his eyes and remained utterly silent. The man also closed his eyes. Something transpired in that silence. After a few minutes the man touched Buddha's feet, bowed down, paid his respects and said, "You are the first man who has answered my question."

Now, Buddha's attendant, Ananda, was very much puzzled: "In the morning he said no, in the afternoon he said yes, in the evening he did not answer at all. What is the matter? What is really the truth?"

So when Buddha was going to sleep, Ananda said, "First you answer me; otherwise I will not be able to sleep. You have to be a little more compassionate towards me too. I have been with you the whole day. Those three people don't know about the other answers, but I have heard all the three answers. What about me? I am troubled."

Buddha said, "I was not talking to you at all! You had not asked, I had not answered YOU. The first man who came was a theist, the second man who came was an atheist, the third man who came was an agnostic. My answer had nothing to do with God, my answer had something to do with the questioner. I was answering the questioner; it was absolutely unconcerned with God.

"The person who believes in God, I will say no to him because I want him to drop his idea of God, I want him to be free of his idea of God -- which is borrowed. He has not experienced. If he had experienced he would not have asked me; there would have been no need.

"The person who believed in God, he was trying to find confirmation for his belief from me. I was not going to say yes to him -- I am not going to confirm anybody's belief. I had to say no, I had to deny, just to destroy his belief, because all beliefs are barriers to knowing the truth. Theist or atheist, all beliefs, Hindu or Christian or Mohammedan, all beliefs are barriers.

"And the person with whom I remained silent was the right inquirer. He had no belief, hence there was no question of destroying anything. I kept silent. That was my message to him: Be silent and know. Don't ask, there is no need to ask. It is not a question which can be answered. It is not an inquiry but a quest, a thirst. Be silent and know. I had answered him also; through my silence I gave him the message and he immediately followed it -- he also became silent. I closed my eyes, he closed his eyes; I looked in, he looked in, and then something transpired. That's why he was so much overwhelmed, he felt so much gratitude, for the simple reason that I did not give him any intellectual answer. He had not come for any intellectual answer; intellectual answers are available very cheap. He needed something existential -- he needed a taste. I gave him a taste."

Remember this: God is neither man nor woman; he cannot be man or woman. Either he is both or he is neither. God is the ultimate synthesis of all opposites. Man is one extreme, woman the other. God is not an extreme, he is the whole existence. He is vast enough to contain the opposites; all opposites become complementaries in God.

So don't cling to my answers; they are not answers. I am not a teacher at all. I am not here teaching you a certain dogma, a certain creed. I am simply trying to help you to be unburdened of your knowledge so that you can be silent with me. And I am in a hurry because soon I want to go into silence, so you also have to

be quick. Don't linger too much. Don't go on postponing because I will not be talking for ever and ever. Soon I want to be silent. You can sit in silence with me then, you can sing, you can play music, you can dance, but I want to stop all kinds of intellectual communications between you and me. I want to be existentially related to you. I am simply preparing the ground -- I am pulling out weeds.

So it depends: whatsoever your belief is I am going to destroy it. I am against all beliefs. That's why you will find Christian priests against me, the Catholic pope against me, the Hindu shankaracharya against me, the Mohammedans against me, even the communists against me; for the simple reason that I am against all beliefs, communist or Catholic, Hindu or Buddhist, it doesn't matter -- belief is belief.

I want you to be in a state of no-belief, in a state of not-knowing. I want you to function from that state of not-knowing, from that innocence. Only in that innocence will you be able to know. So if you have communist weeds in you I will pull them out. If I need the help of Catholic instruments, I will use Catholic instruments to pull out communist weeds. If you are a Catholic and communist instruments are needed, I will use communist instruments to pull out Catholic weeds.

My function here is that of a surgeon. I am not much interested in what instruments are being used -- surgery has to be done. Something has to be pulled out of you. Your soil has to be completely cleared of all stones, of all weeds. Only then will your nature start growing roses.

So you will be puzzled. Many times you will find my statements contradictory -- they are, and I don't want to hide the fact. They are contradictory, they are absurd! Because I will say one thing one moment and I will contradict it the next moment. And I am not at all consistent -- or I am only consistent in one thing: about my inconsistencies, that is my only consistency. I am consistently inconsistent, that's all. I am always contradictory, for the simple reason that you have come here from different backgrounds and I am trying to destroy all backgrounds, all conditionings. So it depends on you.

God is neither a man nor a woman. In fact, God is not a person at all. The very idea of God being a person is anthropocentric. There is no God, in fact, but only godliness. Drop the idea of God as a person. You all have that childish idea of God as a superfather sitting somewhere on a golden throne in the sky, pulling everyone's strings -- a puppeteer or something, controlling, managing, a superboss, a great manager, engineer, architect. You have this idea of God.

God is not a person at all; God is the ultimate harmony of existence. Remember the harmony, the accord, the music, the melody, the faraway, distant call of a cuckoo... and there is godliness in it. This bird calling... and there is godliness in it. This silence here in which you are all drowned... and there is godliness in it. Godliness certainly exists.

I perfectly agree with H.G. Wells; he has made one of the most profound statements about Buddha ever made. He said that Buddha was the most godless yet the most godly person who ever walked on the earth. The most godless and yet the most godly?

Yes, that's how existence is. It is a godless existence but tremendously godly. Godliness has to be remembered, God has to be forgotten. If you remember God you will go to the church and to the temple and to the mosque and you will do all kinds of stupid things which have been done down the centuries. If you remember godliness then it is not a question of going to Kaaba or Kashi; then it is a question of living it. Then live in a way which is godly. Live in harmony, live beautifully, live aesthetically, live sensitively, live lovingly. Let your life be a tremendous love affair.

Then there is no need for prayer, because there is nobody to hear it. It is a question of meditation, not of prayer. Then don't go on calling on God; you are wasting your time. Be silent, more and more silent, and live out of that silence, act out of that silence. Meet people and animals and the trees and the rocks with deep reverence because all is divine.

Existence is nothing but God.

Existence is synonymous with God.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

I AM A TOURIST. I AM HERE ONLY FOR ONE DAY. CAN I ALSO RECEIVE YOUR GRACE?

Tom, so you have come! I was always waiting. Where are Dick and Harry? And you are from California -- of course, you can't be from anywhere else. Californialand consists only of tourists!

"Tourist" is a new species: they are not ordinary human beings. That is a new development, a breakthrough -- or a breakdown. A tourist is a strange kind of person: he is always rushing to nowhere, he does not know why -- from one place to another place. When he is in Kabul he thinks of Poona, when he is in Poona he thinks of Goa, when he is in Goa he thinks of Kathmandu. He is never where he is, he is somewhere else; he is all over the place except the place where he is. He is never at home. You will never find him in his own home; he has always gone somewhere else, he is always dreaming of other places.

The tourist goes on missing everything; he is in such a rush that he can't see anything. To see things you have to be a little more relaxed, a little more restful. But the tourist is always on the go. He will take his breakfast in New York, his lunch in London, and he will suffer indigestion in Poona!

He carries a camera, inevitably, because he cannot see anything right now, so he goes on taking photographs. Later on he makes albums -- he is a bum and makes albums! And then later on, when it is all over, he looks at the Himalayan peaks, at the Goa beach -- and when he was there he was not there! The camera was doing his work. He need not be there; in fact, why does he bother at all? He can purchase these photographs anywhere, better photographs than he can take because he is amateurish; professionals are already taking photographs. He can get beautiful albums and, sitting at home, he can look at them. But now the problem is that he cannot sit down.

It is one of the qualities that a few people are completely losing; they cannot sit. They have to do something, they have to go somewhere, and they have to go fast. They don't want to lose any time -- and they are losing their whole lives in not losing time! They will not appreciate anything because appreciation needs intimacy.

If you want to appreciate a flower you have to sit by the side of the flower, you have to meditate, you have to allow the flower to have its say. You have to experience the joy, the dance of the flower in the sun, in the wind, in the rain. You have to see all the moods of the flower in the morning, in the afternoon, in the hot sun, in the evening, in the full moon. You have to see all the moods of the flower. You have to become acquainted, you have to create a friendship. You have to say "hello" to the flower; you have to get into a dialogue, an existential dialogue. Only then can the flower reveal its secrets to you.

But the tourist is pathological. Why is he rushing? -- for the simple reason that he does not know what to do with himself if he is left alone, if he is not to go anywhere, if he has just to sit silently. He does not know what to do with himself. He feels awkward, embarrassed; he has to do something.

Man has become a doer. He has lost the quality of being a witness, a watcher.

The tourist cannot understand the Zen approach, the essential Buddhist approach of sitting silently doing nothing, spring comes and the grass grows by itself.

Zen people sit for years doing nothing -- just sitting, watching... what is outside and what is inside, watching their breath...

Now, the tourist will think this is absolutely ridiculous. Why watch your breath? What is the point of it all? Why not watch TV, some horror film? They are glued to their chairs only when the TV takes them into some torture story, into some murder, into some sexual orgy, into something so they can become participants. They are no more spectators, they become identified with the characters. They start becoming part of the story.

Now new dramas are being developed in the West in which the spectators can participate, for the simple reason that spectators cannot sit for three hours, so they are allowed to come on the stage. At least they can come on the stage from this side and go from that side, and the play goes on. Or they can say something, they can have a little chitchat with the actors -- on the stage! Now they are even developing new techniques where the stage should be just in the middle and it's okay if anybody wants to come in, sit on the stage, do something, do some yoga postures. Now in a Shakespearean drama somebody comes and stands on his head... that will help! The people who have fallen asleep will wake up -- something is happening! Otherwise who wants to see Shakespearean drama? The universities have bored people to death with Shakespeare; people are finished with Shakespeare. Once they get out of the university they don't want to even hear the name of Shakespeare. It feels like a dirty word! But the real reason is that people cannot sit there for three hours; they have to do something. They have to be allowed some action; then they can sit.

A strange quality has happened to humanity, a very insane quality: that nobody can sit silently. And that is what meditation is all about.

You ask me, "I am a tourist. I am here only for one day."

I am grateful that you are here for one day, Tom, because there are tourists who are not here even for one day.

"Can I also receive your grace?" you ask.

My grace is available, but are you available to my grace?

An American tourist was gazing into the crater of a Greek volcano. "It looks like hell," he said. "Ah, you Americans," said his guide, "you've been everywhere!"

Where are you going? And what is the hurry? Can't you be here a little longer? You will be going to Goa -- it is almost certain, it is predictable. What are you going to do in Goa? You can do all those stupid things here!

We run almost one hundred therapy groups -- for what? Just for people who can't sit silently, just to tire them. So they are pushed and pulled and they are massaged and Rolfed. Do you know what the latest thing in hell is? -- Rolfig! Learn it here because otherwise you will be in difficulty there. Ida Rolf has died and gone to hell; now she is training people there! But we have managed all kinds of groups here. If you pass through these one hundred groups and you can survive, then you need not be afraid of hell at all. In fact, the Devil and his disciples will be afraid of you! The moment they see the orange people coming they will close the doors. They will say, "Go to the other place!"

And we do all kinds of stupid things with expertise. In Goa you will be just amateurish! Here we have the best experts in the world -- and package deals!

Tom, just be here a little bit more....

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I CAN'T MAKE UP MY MIND WHETHER I WANT TO BE A PSYCHIATRIST OR AN AUTHOR.

Veetrag, why not toss for it -- heads or tails? Get it...?

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I THOUGHT I HAD FOUND A NICE-A BOX-A, BUT SHE TURNED INTO AN ICE-A BOX-A. WHAT IS THIS KARMA THAT THIS NEW YORK JEWISH BOY HAS TO WORK OUT WITH GERMAN WOMEN?

Prem Samvid, every nice-a box-a turns into an ice-a box-a finally; it is nothing special about you. "Nice-a box-a" is only the label -- "ice-a box-a" is the reality! But you are fools, you go on being befooled by the labels. Nobody else is responsible for it.

Every ice-a box-a carries a beautiful facade written in big neon letters: NICE-A BOX-A. Once you are caught, then you know: every woman is a nun!

Hattie and Aretha were standing on a street corner talking when two nuns passed. "Say," asked Hattie, "why do they call them ladies nuns?" "Because," replied Aretha, "they ain't had none, they ain't got none, and they ain't never gonna get none." "No wonder they wear mourning!"

But every woman basically is a nun -- and no man is a monk! That is the trouble. God loves troubles! He creates puzzles, jigsaw puzzles. There is no way to solve them; one simply learns to accept.

Samvid, you accept the ice-a box-a. And it is summer and you will need an ice-a box-a! And when winter comes, we will see. Who knows about tomorrow? By that time you may be befooled by another box-a.

And it has nothing to do with any karma; it is simply the sheer stupidity of the human mind. Women are always attractive when they are not available to you. They are seducers, they are all coquettish. That is natural, that comes just naturally, part of their femaleness. And man is constantly befooled, again and again. Once he is befooled he thinks for a few days, becomes very wise -- but only for a few days. That wisdom does not last long; after a few days again he is deceived. He starts thinking, "Maybe all women are not the

same." But I tell you: all women are the same and all men are the same!

Be more aware. Either accept things as they are... then you are not miserable about it because you have no more expectations; you know this is how things are going to happen -- a deep acceptance of things as they are. Or, don't be deceived again, if you are fortunate to get out of this trap this time -- which is not easy, which is very difficult. To get into the trap is always easy.

And the beauty is that it is the man who tries in every possible way to get trapped. The woman knows there is no need to go after you, she simply waits. She believes perfectly in your stupidity, that you will come. The more aloof she remains, the more you are attracted. Once a woman starts running after you, you will escape, you will become afraid. That is like a mousetrap running after a mouse! The mousetrap simply sits there, knowing perfectly well that the mice are bound to come. Where else can they go? And they circle around.... And the mousetrap has all the allurements -- bread and butter and everything... spaghetti! And once the mouse is in, there is no way out -- no exit!

Jean-Paul Sartre has defined hell as "No Exit." Once you get in, you are in forever, you cannot get out of it. That's why it is called hell. And even if by some chance you get out of it you will feel very lonely. You have become so accustomed to the comforts of the mousetrap, to the security. There is some security; if you are inside a mousetrap, no cat can catch you. You see the security, the safety! Outside the mousetrap there is always danger. So sooner or later you will enter into another mousetrap -- of a different color. The hair will be different, the nose will be different, the body will be different -- just a few differences, but the inside is the same.

Once this is understood -- that every man and every woman carries on the same program -- once this is understood, you can deprogram yourself, you can decondition yourself. Then you can remain with a woman; there is no problem about it. She has turned into an ice-a box-a because you still want her to be a nice-a box-a. If you don't want her to be a nice-a box-a, then what does it matter what she is? Let her be a nice-a box-a or an ice-a box-a -- it is perfectly okay! You become cool and calm.

And the same is the problem with the woman from the other side. Again and again she thinks that this man will fit, this man is going to deliver the goods. No man ever delivers the goods, no man can ever deliver, that is beyond their capacity. No man is responsible really, but your expectations are so high that nobody can meet them. They are impossible; hence everybody falls short. Every woman finds sooner or later just a henpecked husband and nothing else. And who loves a henpecked husband? No woman can love a henpecked husband.

Just watch your life, whether you are man or woman, watch your program, your biological program. Be aware of it so it can be deprogrammed. Then wherever you are you will be free of it because you will be free of expectations.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM A RUSSIAN. CAN YOU TELL ME A JOKE ABOUT THE RUSSIANS?

Darshan, I am never miserly about jokes. If you ask me for one I will tell you two. The first:

Brezhnev, the head of the Russian Communist Party, invites his aged mother to leave the village where she has always lived to come visit him in Moscow. When she arrives he proudly shows her his huge luxury flat inside the Kremlin... the priceless Persian carpets, the imported Swedish furniture, the antique silverware and crystal tableware, and the latest labor-saving machines from America.

"It's beautiful, son," she says.

"That's not all, Mama," he replies.

So he takes her in his huge, chauffeur-driven limousine to his country villa outside Moscow and shows her his private forest, the swimming pool, the stables full of race-horses and the household staff of fifty servants.

"So what do you think of all this?" he asks, sweeping his arm around the estate.

His mother looks a bit worried and whispers, "But, Leonid, what will you do when the communists come back?"

And the second:

Ivan, a small Russian boy, is having great difficulty grasping the basic principles of Soviet communism. After several hours of instruction, his father finally says to him, "Well, look at it this way. Imagine that I, your father, am the party, that your mother is the motherland, that your brothers and sisters are the unions and you are the people."

Ivan still cannot understand the relationship between these institutions, and in a fit of rage his father locks him inside a cupboard in the parental bedroom.

Later that night, forgetting Ivan is still there, his father makes love to his mother. When he is finally released by an embarrassed father the next morning, Ivan exclaims:

"Now I know what you meant, father. The party rapes the motherland while the unions sleep and the people stand by and suffer!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #3

Chapter title: With love among the unloving

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HE LOOKS DEEPLY INTO THINGS
AND SEES THEIR NATURE.
HE DISCRIMINATES
AND REACHES THE END OF THE WAY.

HE DOES NOT LINGER
WITH THOSE WHO HAVE A HOME
NOR WITH THOSE WHO STRAY.
WANTING NOTHING,
HE TRAVELS ON ALONE.

HE HURTS NOTHING.
HE NEVER KILLS.

HE MOVES WITH LOVE AMONG THE UNLOVING,
WITH PEACE AND DETACHMENT
AMONG THE HUNGRY AND QUERULOUS.

LIKE A MUSTARD SEED FROM THE POINT OF A NEEDLE
HATRED HAS FALLEN FROM HIM,

AND LUST, HYPOCRISY AND PRIDE.

HE OFFENDS NO ONE.
YET HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
HIS WORDS ARE CLEAR
BUT NEVER HARSH.

WHATEVER IS NOT HIS
HE REFUSES,
GOOD OR BAD, GREAT OR SMALL.

HE WANTS NOTHING FROM THIS WORLD
AND NOTHING FROM THE NEXT.
HE IS FREE.

THE MASTER LOOKS DEEPLY INTO THINGS
AND SEES THEIR NATURE.
HE DISCRIMINATES
AND REACHES THE END OF THE WAY.

Only the master can look because only the master has eyes. Without meditation you are blind. You can see, but only the most superficial things, only the surface of things, only the circumference and never the center. You cannot penetrate into the nature of things. And truth remains hidden at the very core.

Meditation gives the master an insight into himself and the same insight becomes his bridge to the whole of existence. He is no more blind. Only a man of meditation is not blind. Unless you have attained meditation think of yourself as blind. Yes, you can see, but you can see only outwardly. And the real nature is inside you; it is in your interiority, it is in your subjectivity.

You live outside the house of your being; you have never entered into the innermost shrine. Not knowing yourself, you know nothing. And if you don't know even yourself, what else can you know? All that you think you know is only inferences -- not knowledge, not authentic knowledge but only guesswork.

All your knowledge depends on guessing. Sometimes it works only by coincidence, sometimes it does not work. When it works you think you are very intelligent, when it does not work you think fate is against you. But you never realize the fact that you have no eyes yet to see into things.

Two men were riding on a train for the first time. One of them had a bunch of bananas. He offered one to his friend and began to peel one for himself. Just then, the train entered a tunnel.

"Have you tasted your banana yet?" asked the first man, very alarmed.

"No, I haven't," replied his friend.

"Well, for heaven's sake don't!" said the first man. "I took one bite and went blind."

This is what your knowledge is -- just inferences from coincidences.

Just the other day I told you a joke about a Polack who had come to New York to earn name, fame, money, power, prestige. He heard a voice coming from far away in the sky, "Climb up to success!" A little hesitant, a little scared, he tried; he started climbing the ladder, a fifty-story-high ladder, rung by rung. He reached the very end and there he found a young man who said, "Hi there, my name is Cess!" And would you believe that last night the young man came to take sannyas! In my whole life this is the first time a man with the name of Cess has come to take sannyas! I must have given sannyas to more than one hundred thousand people; thousands of Johns and Peters have turned up, but Cess for the first time! And I think it may be the last time too.

Life is full of coincidences; there is nothing esoteric about it. And he looked exactly like the description! But he was an intelligent man -- he wanted to change his name.

You go on inferring. Inference is not knowing, inference is just guesswork. Yes, sometimes it may work,

but more often it fails. Knowing is totally different; it is never guesswork, it is a clear insight into things, into the very nature of things. To see into the very nature of things is the whole purpose of meditation.

Meditation is not something occult, it is very scientific. It is a process of cleansing your eyes, of giving you clarity, of making you alert. Your minds are so full of prejudice that you can't see. Your minds are so full of a priori conclusions that whatsoever you see is colored by your conclusions, by your conditionings. Your observation is not pure; it is polluted, it is poisoned. You don't see what is the case, you go on seeing what you want to see or what you are prepared to see or what you are conditioned to see. This is not real seeing.

Meditation means removing all your prejudices, putting all your conclusions aside -- seeing without any hindrance, seeing without any curtains, seeing clearly without any mediation of any thought, seeing without Buddha standing between you and reality, or Krishna standing or Christ standing.

That's why Buddha is reported to have made one of the most strange statements; only a man of the caliber of Buddha can say it. He said to his disciples, "If you meet me on the way, kill me. Don't allow me to stand between you and the truth. Immediately kill me, remove me; otherwise I will be the barrier."

The true master is one who helps the disciple finally to get rid of the master too, so that the disciple can encounter reality directly, immediately. The false master is one who creates more and more dependence in the disciple, makes him a slave, so much so that the disciple cannot even think of being without the master.

That's what is happening all over the world. So many so-called saints go on creating dependence in you; their whole effort is how to enslave people. They condition you in such a way that their conclusions become your conclusions. They don't give you eyes, they give you ideas.

The real master gives you eyes, not ideas. He gives you insight into reality and then leaves you in total freedom to function out of that insight.

Buddha says:

HE LOOKS DEEPLY INTO THINGS
AND SEES THEIR NATURE.
HE DISCRIMINATES
AND REACHES THE END OF THE WAY.

'Discrimination' is one of the very important words to be understood. Buddha has used the word again and again; his word is VIVEK. Vivek has far deeper meanings than the English equivalent 'discrimination'. Vivek contains awareness, and discrimination through awareness. One can discriminate without being aware; then it will not be discrimination according to Buddha. You can be told what is right and what is wrong and you can discriminate, "This is right and this is wrong," but because it is not your awareness it is not discrimination. Unless you see what is right and what is wrong it is not going to help much.

The Ten Commandments are of no help to you unless they are handed over to you by God himself, not to Moses. They may have been of infinite value to Moses because he came to those insights himself, independent of the whole past, of the whole tradition. But you are simply repeating like parrots.

From their very childhood we start teaching children what is right and what is wrong, what should be done and what should not be done. And they become conditioned so much that they forget completely that this is not their own voice. They start thinking this is their conscience -- it is not. It is a strategy of the priests and the politicians, a conspiracy against man. They have created a conscience in you and because they have created a conscience in you they have prevented the growth of your own conscience. Your own conscience comes out of your own consciousness; it can't come from the outside. Nobody can give it to you, it has to happen to you in your deep aloneness.

Buddha says: The master knows what is false and what is true. He knows on his own authority, not on any other authority. He does not know according to the Koran and he does not know according to the Talmud, he does not know according to the Vedas -- he knows himself. And only when you know yourself does your knowing have a validity, an authenticity -- an authenticity that can transform you, that can give you a new birth.

And he REACHES THE END OF THE WAY.... The moment that authentic insight has arisen in you, your consciousness is born, YOU are born. This is a rebirth. You are born anew. You have reached the end of the way, there is nowhere else to go. You have arrived home.

HE DOES NOT LINGER

WITH THOSE WHO HAVE A HOME
NOR WITH THOSE WHO STRAY.
WANTING NOTHING,
HE TRAVELS ON ALONE.

In India, people are divided into two categories; this is a traditional division. It was so in Buddha's time too, it is a very ancient division. Buddha is trying to make a distinction: he is trying to make his disciples a third category. The old, ancient categories are two. The first is the worldly, the householder, those who have a home. They are called householders for the simple reason that they live in the fallacy of security, safety -- a safety that they think comes through money, power, prestige, a security that they think comes out of relationships. The wife thinks she is safe with the husband, the husband thinks he is safe with the wife, the parents think they are safe with their children. The safety is fallacious because neither the family nor money nor anything else of this world can save you from death.

When death comes it shatters everything; it shatters all your sandcastles. The householder lives in a kind of dreamworld, a world of his own projections. It is not true, it does not correspond to reality; it is his own projection. The wife thinks the husband is her security and the husband thinks the wife is his security. Now, both are insecure. How can two insecure persons give security to each other? Two insecure persons together become doubly insecure, but the fallacy is created.

This is the first category: the GRIHASTHA, the householder.

And the second category is of those who have renounced the first category, who have moved to the other extreme -- who don't live in houses, who don't live in families, who don't earn money, who don't even touch money, who have moved to exactly the opposite extreme. They are known as sannyasins. They used to wander around the country in small or big groups.

Jaina monks are not allowed to move alone. In Buddha's time there were thousands of Jaina monks because Jainism had existed for at least three thousand years before Buddha. Thousands of Jaina monks -- they are not allowed to move alone, they have to move in a group of at least five, for the simple reason that a person moving alone cannot be trusted. He may fall into some error and, knowing that nobody is with him, nobody knows, he may drink wine somewhere or he may fall in love with a woman or he may go and visit a prostitute or he may do something.... But moving with four others it is impossible; the other four are constantly watching.

So that was a strategy to prevent anybody getting any kind of freedom, any kind of license -- a psychological strategy. Unless all the five decide to conspire together... and that is very difficult, that is almost impossible. Sinners are known to become friendly to each other, saints are not known to become friendly to each other. They don't know what friendship is, they can't conspire. They will watch, they will try to find every kind of fault in the other and they will report to the master. And Hindu monks used to move -- even now they do the same -- in big groups of hundreds.

Buddha says: You have dropped a small family and now you have moved into a bigger crowd -- you have become another family. Nothing has changed. First you were thinking that was your security, now you think this is your security, but the old idea of security still persists.

He says that to be a sannyasin means to accept the natural insecurity of life. That very acceptance is sannyas -- to accept that, "I am born alone and I will die alone, and between these two alonenesses all ideas of being together with somebody are just fantasies. I am alone even while I am alive." One is born alone, one lives alone, one dies alone.

Buddha's emphasis is very much on the fact of your aloneness; he wants you to be aware of it. Once you are aware of it you will be surprised at the beauty of it, at the joy of it. You will not be scared; you will rejoice in it because it has a freedom, it has an ecstasy in it, it has a purity and innocence in it. And why hanker for security?

Life is insecure in its very nature, hence it is simple logic: those who want to be more alive, they have to live in insecurity. The greater the insecurity, the more will be your aliveness; the greater the fallacious, so-called security, the less will be your aliveness.

That's why you see so many dead people in the world, almost dead, for the simple reason that they have become so much attached to the idea of security. And the more dead you are, the more secure you are. Don't do anything that can create any insecurity, remain confined to the familiar, don't ever go beyond the limits. You will never know the ecstasy of going beyond the limits. You will never know the ecstasy of exploring the unknown and the unknowable.

According to Buddha, both categories are the same people. Of course they are extremists and they appear opposite to each other, but don't be deceived. They are not really opposite; they have found different kinds of security.

A Jaina monk wrote to me that he would like to come here. He has been reading my books and he wants to become my sannyasin, but he is afraid he will lose all his security because now the Jaina community protects him, feeds him, takes every care of him, respects him. Once he leaves the monkhood, the Jaina community won't be protecting him anymore.

He asked me whether I am ready to take his life in my hands, whether I will be his security. Now he wants to change from one security to another security, he cannot take a jump into insecurity. And my sannyas is insecurity.

Real sannyas is always insecurity because real life is insecurity. There is a great security in being insecure. In dropping the very idea of security you are secure with the whole, with God, with the total. And there is great excitement then, because each moment you don't know what is going to happen.

Buddha says that the master... DOES NOT LINGER WITH THOSE WHO HAVE A HOME. He does not linger with the first category, the people who are obsessed with money, power and prestige. He does not waste his time with these people, he does not linger with these insane people.

And he says: ... NOR WITH THOSE WHO STRAY -- nor with those who go on roaming around the country in groups because that is another kind of security, a subtler kind, but the mind is the same. One wants to belong, one can't be alone.

He says: WANTING NOTHING, HE TRAVELS ON ALONE -- because the real master has no desire, not even desire for life; hence he is not afraid of death. He has no desire in this world or in the other; hence he is not concerned with creating all kinds of safeties around himself. He is not concerned. He can be alone, utterly alone. He is not trying to be clever and cunning with existence; he trusts existence.

People are trying to be very cunning with existence, although they call their cunningness their intelligence. They always give good names to ugly things. Just look at your life, how cunning you have been trying to be -- even with existence. On the one hand you will go to the church and pray, and on the other hand you are trying to be very cunning in every possible way, seeking your ends, sacrificing everybody else for your ends, not caring about anybody, utterly uncaring, having no respect, no love, no reverence for life. And on the one hand you go on praying in the churches and the temples; that too is part of your cunningness. You know what you are doing in your life; to compensate you go to the church every Sunday, or you go to Kaaba....

At least once in his life every Mohammedan is expected to go to Kaaba. For what? -- to repent for all the sins that he has committed, so that he can be forgiven. Hindus go to the Ganges as many times in their lives as possible, just to take a dip in the Ganges because they think the Ganges cleanses you of all your sins. You commit sins and the Ganges has the responsibility of cleansing you of your sins. And what will happen to the Ganges, taking so many people's sins? It must be the most polluted river in the whole world, the most impure! Each drop of the Ganges must be full of millions of sins. So many Hindus for so many thousands of years have been cleansing their sins there. Avoid the Ganges! Even if by chance you come near the Ganges, escape as fast as you can!

Once a man came to Ramakrishna; he was going to the Ganges to take a dip, a holy dip. He asked Ramakrishna, "Paramahansadeva, you bless me -- I am going for a holy dip. Do you think all my sins will be cleansed?"

Ramakrishna was a very polite man. He said, "Of course, when you take a dip in the Ganges all sins fly away from you; you are freed."

The man said, "When YOU are saying it, I trust it. So it is worth going."

Ramakrishna said, "It is worth going, but remember one thing: when you dive in the Ganges, don't come out."

The man said, "What are you saying? Have you gone mad? I will have to come out, I cannot survive under the water for more than a few seconds!"

Ramakrishna said, "Then it is futile because whenever you come out... have you seen the big trees standing on the banks of the Ganges?"

He said, "Yes, I have seen."

"Do you know their purpose and their function?"

He said, "That I don't know. It is not mentioned in any scriptures."

Paramahansadeva said, "I will tell you the secret. When you take the dip, when you dive in, your sins have to leave you because of the purity of the Ganges, but they sit on the trees waiting for you. When you come back they jump upon you! And the danger is that some other sins may also jump upon you which were not yours in the first place. So be very alert -- if you take a dive, then don't come out!"

People have found cunning ways to continue their lives as they are. All your so-called religions are your cunning ways of avoiding God, not of finding God.

A young clerk in a telegraph office got married and, after a couple of years, was going to attain fatherhood. He was sure that the child would be a boy. However, he wanted to keep the whole thing secret from his co-workers so that he could surprise them with the news that he was the father of a male child.

As the delivery was imminent, he sent his wife to her father's place and asked her to send a telegram to him. The telegram, he told her, should contain only the following words: "Cycle arrived," so that he would know that she had safely delivered.

When the time was ripe she gave birth to a female child. As the telegram, "Cycle arrived," was to be given only after the delivery of a male child, the wife was in a fix as to what to do. Luckily her brother was an intelligent person and he sent the telegram in this fashion: "Cycle arrived with front tire punctured."

Now these people are thought to be intelligent. All kinds of cunning people are thought to be intelligent people. And you have to watch your own cunningnesses. To be cunning is not to be intelligent; to be intellectual even is not to be intelligent. Intelligence has a totally different flavor from intellectuality. Intelligence is the fragrance of meditation -- only a master is intelligent.

WANTING NOTHING, HE TRAVELS ALONE. He can see that the householders are living in a projection, in a projected world of their own; and the so-called monks and nuns are living in another projection, but again it is a projected world. He moves alone -- it has not only to be an outward act, it has to be an inward feeling also.

To be alone is the most fundamental thing for a meditator -- to experience aloneness, to sit silently and just be yourself, just be with yourself, not hankering for any company, not hankering for the other. Enjoy your being, enjoy your breathing, enjoy your heartbeat. Enjoy the inner accord, the harmony. Enjoy just that you are, and be utterly silent in that enjoyment.

People find a thousand and one ways to avoid this aloneness; there are worldly ways and there are otherworldly ways. The worldly person will start listening to the radio or he will turn on his idiot box -- his television. He can't be alone. And the otherworldly person, the religious person, will start praying or reading the Bible. He is also doing the same.

You have to be constantly aware that there are religious ways of avoiding yourself too -- irreligious ways, religious ways, all kinds of ways are available to avoid yourself. The religious person will start a dialogue with God. He will start praying in a formal way -- the Christian prayer, the Lord's Prayer, or the Jewish prayer or the Hindu prayer -- and he will recite mantras, just like a gramophone record, meaning nothing. All that he wants is occupation. All that he wants is somehow not to feel alone. All that he wants is that God is there: "If nobody is there then at least God is there; I am not alone."

The whole idea of God as a person is the fiction created by the people who cannot be alone; hence they have created God. When nobody is there, at least God is always there; you need not be worried about that, he is everywhere. To have an idiot box you need some money and you cannot carry the idiot box everywhere, but God is always there following you like your own shadow. He is always with you. Even when you are in your bathroom he is not gentlemanly enough to leave you alone; he comes with you. You are lying down in your bath naked and he sits by your side. He is a kind of Peeping Tom -- he goes on looking at you! You are making love to your wife and he is standing there; you don't even allow him to be a little gentlemanly. No need for him to be British, but if he is a little gentlemanly, there is nothing wrong in it.

This idea of God is created out of fear -- fear of aloneness. When you close your eyes you are alone, but God is there. Even in your inner being he persists, he insists on being there. This is violence! But there is no God -- it is your idea.

It is like when you are alone and moving into a dark lane in the night or you have lost your way in the forest and you start whistling, just to cheer yourself up. Now that is stupid. It is your whistling, there is nobody else, but even that helps. It is psychologically helpful. You start whistling, you start singing,

humming -- to forget that you are alone, to forget that you are lost.

All your prayers are nothing but whistling in the dark.

Buddha is not in favor of prayers. And this difference has to be understood: he is absolutely in favor of meditation, but never in favor of any prayer. Prayer is again the old trick, the old game which does not allow you to be alone. Meditation is the art of being alone. He says: WANTING NOTHING, HE TRAVELS ON ALONE.

Aloneness is not loneliness, remember it. Aloneness is not solitariness, remember it. Aloneness is solitude. It is tremendously beautiful; it is innocent because there is nothing to pollute it, there is nothing to disturb it, to distract it. It is pure stillness, it is silence. It has a music of its own.

Once you have heard the music of your own aloneness you will not like any other music. Then all other music is only noise; howsoever beautifully arranged, it is noise.

HE HURTS NOTHING.
HE NEVER KILLS.

It is impossible for him to hurt or to kill, because now he knows that he is not separate from existence, that there is nobody else. It is all one, it is one organic unity. We are all waves of the same ocean. Hurting another wave is hurting yourself. It is like hitting your hand, one hand with another hand. It is childish, it is insane. Sometimes small children do that. If the table has hurt them they hit the table hard; they are hurt more, but they enjoy. They think they are punishing the table.

Whenever you punish somebody you are punishing yourself. Whenever you torture somebody you are torturing yourself -- because there is nobody else. The master knows it. It is not only a belief for him, it is his experience. Reaching his own center he has reached the center of the whole existence.

This fundamental has to be remembered: that as far as the circumference is concerned we are all different, but as far as the center is concerned we have only one center. That one center you can call God or truth or nirvana.

HE MOVES WITH LOVE AMONG THE UNLOVING,
WITH PEACE AND DETACHMENT
AMONG THE HUNGRY AND QUERULOUS.

HE MOVES WITH LOVE AMONG THE UNLOVING.... His work is difficult. He is talking to his bodhisattvas, making them aware of the arduousness of their work. It is not going to be easy, it is not going to be cheap, because the awakened one has to move amongst those who are fast asleep. The person who has eyes has to live with those who have no eyes. Communication becomes impossible. He says one thing, they understand something totally different. He tries to help them and they feel offended. He tries in every possible way to save them, but they think that he is trying to exploit them or something.

Just a few days back, a friend from Germany took sannyas. His name was Richard; I have called him Veet Richard. Richard means "hard"; German names are like that. Strange, that all German names I come across, either they mean "hard" or they mean "strong" or they mean "masculine" or they mean "bear-strong" or they mean "the walk of the wolf" -- Wolfgang. I told him, "Go beyond your hardness. VEET means going beyond. Become soft, become a little less German."

And just the other day he wrote a question, saying, "While you were giving me sannyas I was looking at your shoulders and I could not believe that 'This man is my master.'" Now, what do my shoulders have to do with my being a master or not? This is something new! I have come across thousands of definitions of what a master means, but neither Buddha nor Lao Tzu nor Zarathustra nor Jesus, nobody has said anything about the shoulders! And he was looking at my shoulders, not looking into my eyes -- I had asked him to look into my eyes.

But this is how things are. When you are moving with people who are fast asleep they have their own ideas. Then, Veet Richard, go to Muhammad Ali! Find some stupid wrestler for your master. And now I am wondering -- whatsoever I was saying to him, was it worth saying to him? I was simply wasting my time and his time. There is no possibility of any communication. He was in his own world; maybe he was

looking for Adolf Hitler or somebody. I am not Adolf Hitler and I am not Muhammad Ali either, but he must be carrying some idea....

Everybody is carrying some idea -- strange ideas people are carrying. And I cannot fulfill your ideas. You are so unloving and I go on pouring my love on you and there seems to be no response.

People write me such ugly letters that if you come to know about those letters you will be simply shocked. You will not be able to believe it. One woman wrote just the other day, "Either you are mad or you are a fool!" Madam, can't I be both together? Is there any contradiction? Not all fools are mad, true, not all madmen are fools, true, but there are a few who are both together. I belong to that third category. And certainly I must be mad; otherwise why should I be working on you? And I should be a fool, I must be a fool; otherwise I would not have initiated this madam into sannyas. You don't belong here.

But the problem is, everybody who comes is asleep, unloving, and they can't see their sleep, they can't see their unlovingness, they can't see their prejudices.

So many questions have come from British ladies and British gentlemen saying, "The British lady is just a myth and you should not be so interested in a myth. It is not a reality -- the British lady exists nowhere." But these same people believe that the Polack exists, the Italian exists, the Jew exists; they are not myths... because when I am joking about Jews or Italians or Polacks no British lady or gentleman writes to me that these are myths -- they are realities.

Now, no Jew, no Italian, no Polack is writing to me that the British lady is a myth. Why are only the British writing to me about it? Can't you see the point? And if it is a myth -- and I know it is a myth! -- why not enjoy it? Why become so much worried about it? Somewhere deep down you believe it is not a myth, otherwise why? Have a good laugh and it is finished!

But your concern to make me aware of the fact that the British lady does not exist... I KNOW it! I am surrounded by British ladies! I have more British ladies around me than I have Jews or Polacks or Italians. I know it is a myth -- but a beautiful myth!

And one thing is very good about British ladies: they never disappoint you because from the very beginning they are ice-a box-a. That must be said in their appreciation. The Italian lady begins with a nice-a box-a; ultimately, finally, you find out, but then it is too late, that she is not a nice-a box-a, she is an ice-a box-a. But the British lady from the very beginning is clear; she never disappoints anybody. She is truthful, sincere. If you want an ice-a box-a, it is your responsibility.

Buddha says: HE MOVES WITH LOVE AMONG THE UNLOVING.... Yes, the master has to move among the Polacks and the Italians and the Jews, the British and the French... and he has to move with people who know nothing about love, although they all believe they love. And the love of the master is so different that you cannot understand his love. His love is very cool; to you it appears it is cold because you know only two categories, cold or hot. You don't know the third category: cool, neither cold nor hot.

Coolness is not coldness, remember. The master is never cold, but certainly he is not hot either. You know a love which is hot, passionate, lusty, and you know a love which has gone dead, has become cold -- ice-a box-a -- everything has become frozen, it is a corpse. But you don't know the third possibility: the coolness of love and the freshness of that coolness. And the coolness has a paradoxical quality in it. If you compare it with cold, then it is cool; if you compare it with hot, then it is warm. It is exactly in the middle where warmth and coolness are one. The master has a warmth which is cool and has a coolness which is warm, but that is very difficult for people who live in extremes to understand.

HE MOVES WITH LOVE AMONG THE UNLOVING, WITH PEACE AND DETACHMENT.... He loves but he is never attached, and you cannot understand a love which is not attached. To you love and attachment are always associated; it is impossible for you to keep them separate. Love is always attachment to you; the deeper the attachment, the more you think it is love. But the master's love is utterly detached. He loves, yet he is not bound by it. He loves, but he is not binding on you. You know a love which creates excitement. The master's love is utterly peaceful; there is no excitement. It is nothing to do with romance.

HE MOVES... AMONG THE HUNGRY.... The people who are always desiring more, Buddha calls them hungry, constantly hungry. They go on stuffing themselves with every kind of thing and they are never satisfied. Their hunger is impossible, their thirst is unquenchable. The more you give, the more they want. They are never grateful.

... AND QUERULOUS. And, of course, when they are always hankering for more they are quarreling with each other. The master is never querulous, he is never hungry. He is fully contented, utterly contented, absolutely contented. He has arrived! He asks for nothing. Hence it becomes more and more difficult for

you to understand him.

LIKE A MUSTARD SEED FROM THE POINT OF A NEEDLE
HATRED HAS FALLEN FROM HIM,
AND LUST, HYPOCRISY AND PRIDE.

The most important thing to remember is: these things have fallen from him. He has not dropped them, they have fallen. If you drop them they will hang around you. He has not repressed them, he has transcended them -- and the difference is great. If you repress them they will always be with you. If you repress lust it will spread deep down inside your being like cancer. If you repress hypocrisy you will be creating a deeper kind of hypocrisy, that's all. If you repress pride you will become a pious egoist.

Beware of it. Millions are befooled by this because repression is easy, anybody can do it. It needs no intelligence; it needs only a little stubborn stupidity and you can do it. You just have to be a little stubborn, you have to insist and you have to force something inside yourself. You have to put pressure on it, you have to sit upon it. But then you will be in trouble. It is always there boiling, ready to explode any moment.

Three priests -- an archbishop, a bishop and a rather young, newly ordained priest -- stood in the lobby in the airport. The archbishop told the priest to get the tickets while they took care of the baggage.

The priest approached the ticket counter, noting the shapely, seductively dressed young woman behind the counter. By the time she got around to him he was quite flustered by her and stammered, "I would like three pickets to Pittsburgh."

Embarrassed and ashamed, he ran from the counter back to his two companions. He told the archbishop, "Father, I am sorry, I cannot get the tickets. Furthermore, I have sinned... I was tempted by the flesh!"

The archbishop said, "You are young, my son, and weak -- we shall pray on your problem."

The archbishop then sent the bishop for the tickets. The bishop, though not easily swayed in his faith, was also quite taken with the young woman's beauty. He said, to her, "I must apologize for my brother -- he is young. Now, I would like three tickets to Pittsburgh and I would like the change in nipples and dimes."

Shocked by his slip and completely overwhelmed by embarrassment, he returned to the archbishop without the tickets.

The archbishop was by now quite angry at both the priests and the young woman. He then went for the tickets himself. He said, "I would like three tickets to Pittsburgh and I would like my change in nickels and dimes."

As the young woman began processing the tickets, the archbishop said, "Look at you... you should be ashamed. How do you dare to leave the house that way? Why, your breasts are not covered and your skirt is entirely too short. Every man who approaches you is tempted. When you go to heaven," he said, with his voice raising in pitch, "Saint Finger will surely shake his peter at you!"

That is bound to happen. Hence Buddha says: LIKE A MUSARD SEED FROM THE POINT OF A NEEDLE HATRED HAS FALLEN FROM HIM.... He has not dropped it or repressed it; it has fallen of its own accord. ... AND LUST, HYPOCRISY AND PRIDE.

How does this miracle happen that these things fall of their own accord? They fall of their own accord if you become more aware of them -- not repression but awareness is needed. Repression makes them more unconscious and more dangerous. Become more conscious of them, watch them, meditate over them. And as you become more and more capable of watching all kinds of thoughts in your mind, you will become more and more detached from them. You will come to know that the observer is separate from the observed, that they are there like the traffic on the road and you are just a spectator. They have nothing to do with you, they are not part of your being. Repress them and they become part of your being. Repress them and you become more and more controlled by them. You will remain afraid your whole life if you repress anything. Repression creates fear, because you know it is there -- any opportunity and it can arise again.

My approach is also the same: don't repress anything -- watch. Nothing has to be repressed, everything has to be watched. Just by being watchful things start dropping on their own. And then there is a beauty because a silence comes to you, a stillness comes to you which is not forced, not cultivated.

HE OFFENDS NO ONE.

YET HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
HIS WORDS ARE CLEAR
BUT NEVER HARSH.

HE OFFENDS NO ONE -- he cannot because all violence has disappeared from him -- but HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH. If truth offends you, then he is helpless. There is no intention to offend you, but if you are living in lies then truth offends. About that the master cannot do anything, he has to say the truth. In fact, he says only the truth; otherwise he is not interested in saying anything to you.

The little baby was very quiet. He never cried or chuckled or said "Mama" or "Dadda."

When he was three, the parents began to get rather worried, thinking he might never talk at all.

At last, when the child was seven years old, he suddenly spoke. They were sitting having lunch when he said, "Not enough salt."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed his mother. Then she asked, "How is it that in seven years you have never said a word?"

"Well," said the child, "up to now everything has been alright!"

The master speaks only if something is wrong; otherwise he keeps quiet, he remains silent. He speaks only if something is wrong. But that can hurt you, that can offend you. To show that something is wrong with you seems to be offensive to you. You love to be appreciated, not criticized. You love to be buttressed, not to be criticized. You love that your lies should be supported, not destroyed. But about that the master cannot do anything. He has to shatter your lies, he has to bring the truth to your notice. If truth hurts, then that is another matter; otherwise, the master has no intention of hurting anybody. HIS WORDS ARE CLEAR BUT NEVER HARSH.

"How was Lady Hastings' party?" Lord Peter was asked.

With an absentminded, faraway glance in his eyes, he said, "Had the soup been as warm as the wine, had the wine been as old as the chicken, had the chicken been as tender as the maid and had the maid been as willing as the Lady, it would have been a great party!"

The master will not be that roundabout. He will simply say it clearly, although he is not harsh. But he can appear harsh to you -- that is your problem. He is always sweet, and if sometimes he appears harsh to you, ponder over it, why he appeared harsh to you. Maybe something was inside you that started pinching, that started hurting. Maybe there was a wound inside you that you were hiding and the master hit the wound. He has to hit your wounds. He has to pull much pus out of your being. It hurts. The master is a surgeon.

Buddha himself has said again and again: I am not a preacher but a physician.

WHATEVER IS NOT HIS
HE REFUSES,
GOOD OR BAD, GREAT OR SMALL.

That's exactly the definition of meditation according to Buddha and according to all other buddhas too. Watch your mind, and whatever is not yours, whether it is good or bad, great or small, don't get identified with it, don't accept it, go on refusing.

In the East this method is called -- even prior to Buddha it was called -- NETI, NETI, neither this nor that. Go on saying that "I am not this, I am not this, I am not that either." Go on rejecting inside your being whatsoever you can observe you are not.

Slowly slowly, eliminating all that you are not, one day only that is left which you are. That day is a day of great rejoicing. Then the watcher turns over onto itself. Nothing else to watch, it starts watching itself. Nothing else to see, it starts seeing itself. That is the moment you become a seer. That is the moment your wisdom explodes. That is the moment when darkness disappears and there is just light and light and nothing else.

HE WANTS NOTHING FROM THIS WORLD
AND NOTHING FROM THE NEXT.
HE IS FREE.

Once you know that all that the mind contains is not you, all that the mind craves is not you, all that the mind is hungry for is not you, you are becoming free. Slowly slowly, desires disappear. Seeing that all desires are basically futile, that all desires end in frustration, seeing it on your own -- not because I say it or the Buddha says it -- seeing it on your own, desiring evaporates. You are left without any desire and there is no smoke of desire. Your flame of awareness burns bright, and freedom is the fragrance of that flowering of awareness.

Ordinarily we are living like robots. Ordinarily we are living mechanically. We are not conscious at all, although we believe that we are conscious. We are not conscious at all. And because we are not conscious, if we drop the desires of this world, then we start desiring something in the other world. It is absolutely ridiculous.

See your so-called saints and mahatmas desiring the same things that they have dropped desiring in this world, but now they are desiring the same things in the other world.... Mohammedans believe that in their paradise there are streams of wine. Now this seems to be very illogical! Here wine is a sin and there it is the reward -- reward for all your virtues. And you don't have to go to a pub -- streams are flowing everywhere! Here the woman is hell and the woman has to be renounced, and there...?

In the Hindu paradise beautiful women are available, always young, stuck at the age of sixteen; they don't grow beyond that. In fact, I always wonder how they reached sixteen! They must have been born sixteen years old from the mother's womb. Since then they have not grown. And they have bodies of gold -- solid gold, it seems! And not American gold, mind you, pure gold, twenty-four-carat gold! And their eyes are made of emeralds, pure green emeralds. And their bodies don't perspire of course, how can they perspire? If their bodies are made of solid gold it is impossible to perspire. They may melt in the heat, but they cannot perspire!

Here women have to be renounced. And the Hindu scriptures say: The woman is the door to hell. And there the mahatmas are provided with beautiful APSARAS, beautiful women. What kind of nonsense is this?

And the same is the case with all the religions. Because in Mohammed's time when the Koran was written homosexuality was very prevalent in the Arabian countries, provision is made for gay people also! In the Mohammedan paradise not only are beautiful women available but beautiful boys too. They never grow their mustaches, they remain always the same -- young. Now here, in all the Mohammedan countries, homosexuality is one of the greatest crimes. The homosexuals have to be beheaded, death is the penalty. Can't you see the absurdity? In paradise you will be provided with all kinds of beautiful boys! I am not against homosexuality, I am simply against this absurdity. It is perfectly good, generous -- but then why are you against it here?

It is the stupid, unconscious mind of man. He is ready to let go of something in this world, but then he moves to the other extreme. He lets it go here, he renounces it here, and he starts asking for it in the other -- the same thing. The problem does not change. From one problem he moves to another problem, from one desire to another desire.

A fat, round-bottomed Italian woman comes to the doctor's office with her husband. "My husband no shit-a!" she exclaims.

The doctor gives her a small bottle of cod-liver oil, saying, "Give him this tonight and he will be alright tomorrow."

But the next day the woman returns and says, "My husband no shit-a!"

So the doctor gives her a bigger bottle with the same instructions.

The following day the woman is back again: "My husband no shit-a!"

The doctor finally gives her a huge bottle of cod-liver oil. The next day the woman comes back again. "Doctor, Doctor," she exclaims, "no husband, only shit-a!"

But the problem remains; now it is the other extreme.

The seeker of truth has to be very watchful not to move from one prison into another, from one desire

into another. He has to be very alert and aware. He has to de-automatize himself. He has to become a man, not continue as a machine. You are born as a machine, and unless you make a great effort, you will remain as a machine and you will die as a machine. Make every effort to become aware so that you are no more a machine. Then the real man is born.

A wild West cowboy purchases a horse from the local priest. "This horse is very special," the priest explains. "When you shout, 'Praise to the Lord' this horse will start galloping like crazy and the only way to stop it is to call out, 'Amen!'"

At once the man jumps up on the horse's back and shouts, "Praise to the Lord!"

He shoots like an arrow across the desert. Suddenly he becomes aware of a steep canyon ahead of him. "Goddam! I forgot the other command," he says. "What shall I do with no means to slow down this mad horse?"

Cursing and sweating, he approaches the deep canyon, and at the last moment he remembers: "Amen!" And just above the gorge the horse comes to a standstill.

Trembling and relieved, with tears in his eyes, the cowboy looks up to the sky and says, "Praise to the Lord!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #4

Chapter title: Music comes closest

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS IT REALLY SO DIFFICULT FOR THE AWAKENED ONES TO WORK WITH US BLIND PEOPLE AS
GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA SAYS?

Aseema, yes, it is even more difficult than Gautama the Buddha says, because man has become far more blind now than he has ever been before -- he has become more knowledgeable. That is his blindness. Now he lives under the illusion that he knows and that is the greatest illusion of all. Once you start believing that you know, the work of an awakened one becomes almost impossible.

The awakened one can work easily only when you are ready to accept the fact that you know nothing, that your knowledge is borrowed, that it is mere information, that it is not any inner flowering of your being, that it is not your own music, that it is not your own experience. Once a person accepts this, things become very simple. The very acceptance of ignorance is the beginning of discipleship.

But as time has passed, man has been accumulating more and more knowledge, his mind has become more and more capable of memorizing. He has become a walking encyclopedia. Today man knows more than ever, hence the difficulty is greater today than ever before.

The eyes are blind in proportion to the weight of knowledge that you carry. Children are not blind. The younger the child, the more clearly he sees, far more clearly. His perspective is totally different from the so-called grown-up.

Just the other day there was a letter from a young boy from Germany. One month ago he also wrote -- that he wants to become a sannyasin. He is only sixteen years old so I told him, "You inquire of your parents, ask their permission; otherwise they will create difficulties for you. If they allow, you are welcome."

His answer has come and what he says is tremendously beautiful. He says, "Beloved Master, my parents will never understand you. We went to see the film about your ashram -- I was the only one in my family who understood it. My father and mother were absolutely unable to comprehend it, what it was all about. And I am afraid that if I become more grown-up like them I may miss the opportunity. Moreover," he says, "I have dyed all my clothes orange so I am already half a sannyasin -- just the mala is needed."

He says, "I understood the film completely but my parents were simply confused by it. I have been trying to explain it to them, but they seem incapable of understanding." He also says, "I am afraid that if this is what happens when one becomes grown up, then I may miss the opportunity of becoming a sannyasin. So please, send the mala immediately before I become blind!"

A child is not burdened with knowledge. You have to become a child again; then the work of a Buddha is very simple. It is the simplest work in the world -- because the Buddha is not going to make you achieve something, he is simply helping you to see what is already the case. What can be more simple?

But grown-up people are really blind, utterly deaf. Their hearts are closed, they can't feel, they are hung up in their heads, and to communicate with a Buddha you need an open heart. People are encapsulated in their thoughts, so much so, that they live in their own world, continuously imprisoned in their ideologies, in their words. You can't talk to them. You say one thing and they immediately understand something else.

Just the other day I received a letter dated April 18, from the Ritz Hotel, Mysore:

"Dear Sir,

I am very upset since one of your devotees staying at this hotel, a friend of Swami Anand Hasyo, informs me that you make fun of our new president, the Reverend Canon Banana, in your daily Sufi dances. I am told that your devotees are taught to sing: 'You are a banana to me.' This is very disrespectful. How would you like it if in Zimbabwe we taught our people to sing, 'You are not my Bugwan'? Trusting that you will deal with this matter without delay...."

The song is this:

"You can fall in love with a star,
You can fall in love with a tree.
I love you just the way that you are.
You are a mystery to me."

Or, if your partner looks serious, say "banana" instead of "mystery to me."

This Sufi dance has been going on for years, and this fellow, Reverend Banana, became president only on 7th April this month, only one week ago. In fact the nation of Zimbabwe is only one week old. On 11th April he became the president elect, on 17th April he actually became the president. We have been using the word 'banana' for years; it has nothing to do with Reverend Banana.

The letter-writer has also sent a picture of Reverend Banana -- and he LOOKS like a banana, so I can very well understand why he is upset!

Now he should approach the UNO to change the English language; bananas should not be called bananas anymore. And what will you do about the expression "He has gone bananas"? Now you will have to say, "He has gone Reverend Bananas." That will be much more suitable. All the other bananas will be very happy.

Now, these stupid people are all over the world....

And would you believe what the name of this man is? His name is Israel Tomato!

Now I am waiting for some letter from Michael Potato! I really got worried about the whole thing. I love bananas, I love tomatoes, I love potatoes. Now to eat them will mean you are a cannibal!

I immediately went into the garden and asked a bunch of bananas, "What do you think? What should I do?" The bananas were so ashamed they didn't speak a single word. I shook them and I said, "You have to

say something!" They said, "We are sorry, but once in a while a banana falls.... But this man has fallen too much! Please don't include him in our family. No other banana has ever been a politician before. Yes, we have fallen and we have committed many sins before, but this is too much. We feel ashamed!"

I asked the tomatoes, and they are such innocent people -- they look so meditative, almost like Zen masters sitting silently, doing nothing. And they all laughed and they said, "Don't be worried. Continue to eat us. That is the only way for us to become buddhas!"

And he says, "How would you like it if in Zimbabwe we taught our people to sing, 'You are not my Bugwan or Bhagwan?'" I would love it -- please do it! ANYway, if your people start remembering me, that will be good. In fact, my sannyasin kids already call me Bugwan, and it sounds so beautiful! It is far smoother than Bhagwan -- nothing is wrong with it.

But this fellow has not given his address; otherwise I was thinking to send him my answer! And these people are all around the world.

Now my South African sannyasins will be very very happy because they were writing to me again and again, "Beloved Master, you never say anything about the South Africans." Veena, Vidya, Veetrag, they were all worried because I am talking about the Italians and the Jews and the British, and nothing is being said about the South Africans. This Tomato has given me an opportunity to say something.

The doctor advises an African to jog ten miles a day for two weeks.

The guy reports that he feels fine; his only complaint is that he is one hundred and forty miles from home!

One African applying for a post as footman in a country house is asked by her ladyship to raise his trouser leg so that she may ascertain whether his legs will be sufficiently shapely in plush knee-breeches. He does so. She then appears satisfied but asks to see his testimonials.

"And that," he says, recounting the event, "was where I made my big mistake and spoiled everything!"

Get it?

"Why are you so angry?" the doctor at the maternity ward asked the African father. "You should be proud that your lovely wife had twins."

"Oh yeah," snarled the leaping African. "Just wait till I find the other guy!"

The African sergeant gave an order for the whole company to raise the right leg. One confused draftee raised his left leg in error. The sergeant looked down the line and saw the upraised left leg of one soldier right next to the upraised right leg of the recruit beside him. "Who is the smart aleck in the middle of the line," he bellowed, "who raised both legs?"

And to Mr. Tomato I would like to say that I have no respect for politicians; whether they are African or American or Indian or European, it does not matter.

A cannibal rushed into his village to spread the word that a hunting party had captured a politician. "Good," said one of the cannibals. "I've always wanted to try a baloney sandwich."

Three surgeons were at the pub, chatting about their experiences.

The first said, "One guy who came to me had been in a car accident and had lost both his legs. I fixed him up and today he's a champion runner."

"Wow," said the second. "I had a patient once who had been hit by a train and his body was completely smashed. We gave him surgery and today he's a famous dancer."

"That's nothing," said the third. "One guy came to me -- he was a bomb disposal expert. One day a bomb went off and all they found was an asshole and a pair of ears... today he's the president!"

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM A MUSICIAN AND I HAVE COME ACROSS MANY MUSIC TEACHERS OVER THE YEARS. BUT NOW

IT SEEMS THAT I HAVE NOT ONLY FOUND A MASTER BUT ALSO THE ULTIMATE MUSIC TEACHER. IS IT PERHAPS THE SAME THING? AND COULD YOU PLEASE SAY SOMETHING TO US ABOUT MUSIC AND MEDITATION?

Harisharan, music comes closest to meditation. Music is a way towards meditation and the most beautiful way. Meditation is the art of hearing the soundless sound, the art of hearing the music of silence -- what the Zen people call the sound of one hand clapping. When you are utterly silent, not a single thought passes your mind, there is not even a ripple of any feeling in your heart. Then you start, for the first time, hearing silence.

Silence has a music of its own. It is not dead, it is very much alive, it is tremendously alive. In fact, nothing is more alive than silence.

Music helps you from the outside to fall in tune with the inner. Music is a device; it was invented by the buddhas. All that is beautiful in the world, all that is valuable in the world has always been discovered by the buddhas. Only they can discover because they have traveled the inner country, the inner, immeasurable universe. Whatsoever they have found in the inner world, whatsoever they have experienced in the inner world, they have tried to make something similar on the outside for those who can only understand that which is objective, who are not yet able to enter the interiority of their own being, who are not yet even aware that there is an inner world. Devices can be created on the outside which can help.

Listening to great music you suddenly become silent -- with no effort. Falling in tune with the music you lose your ego with no effort. You become relaxed, you fall into a deep rest. You are alert, awake, and yet in a subtle way drunk.

Once it happened:

A great musician came to the court of a king. The musician must have been an awakened master, must have been a buddha. He said to the king, "I will play on my instruments, but you will have to fulfill one of my conditions. Unless this condition is fulfilled I cannot play."

The king said, "Whatsoever the condition is, it will be fulfilled. You say it." He had never thought what the condition could be: "Maybe he will ask for much money -- that can be given easily -- or for some other favor which can be given easily." The king had been waiting a long time for this man.

But the condition was very eccentric. The condition was: "While I am playing nobody should move his head. If anybody moves his head, his head has to be cut off. So the audience has to be informed beforehand that people should come knowing that they are playing with fire. If they start moving their heads in tune with the music, then they will lose their heads -- make it clear to everyone who comes. And surrounding the audience let at least one thousand soldiers stand with naked swords so everybody remains aware and never forgets."

The king was so interested in hearing the musician -- he had heard about him for years and he was not ready to lose this opportunity even at this cost. Of course, whatsoever he was demanding was simply insane, but the king had to agree. He said, "Okay, your condition will be fulfilled."

The whole capital was informed. Thousands of people would have come, but now they were afraid -- only one thousand people came to listen to the musician. Even seeing one thousand people come, the king was surprised: "So many lovers who are risking their lives!" And one thousand soldiers were standing with naked swords. Again it was declared, "You have to remember and go on looking at the swords -- they are standing for you. Nobody can escape." And there were people standing who would take notes -- whoever shook his head, moved his head, would not reach home alive.

The musician started playing, and he was such a master! After only a few minutes, a few heads started moving in tune with the master's music. The king was very much afraid. He saw heads moving, swaying -- people were getting drunk. He himself was afraid for his own head! But a tremendous desire arose in him too, he could not resist it. He himself started moving his head, he forgot all about it. What to say about the audience? The people who were standing with naked swords, many of them started moving their heads and their swords were swaying!

The queen was very much worried. She saw that there were going to be hundreds of people unnecessarily murdered. But sooner or later almost everybody was drunk with his music.

When he finished in the middle of the night, the people who had to report, they reported that "Not a single soul has remained without swaying, and we are sorry to say that we are also on the list!"

The king said, "Now, Master, what do you want? -- all these people butchered, murdered? I am also on

the list, my wife is also on the list, my whole court is on the list!"

The master laughed and he said, "I was waiting for these people. These are the right people for whom I can play. Forget all about the condition! It was just a strategy to prevent those who were not ready to risk their lives, it was to prevent the cowards. These are the people for whom I will play. And not only today -- I am going to stay in this town for months together because these are MY people. They have forgotten about their lives, or even if they had remembered they could not resist. The joy was so tremendous that they were ready to go, even with the risk; they were perfectly aware. These are the people for whom I exist because these are the people who can be turned inwards. They were fully aware and yet drunk."

And that is the whole secret of meditation. The paradox disappears -- the paradox between drunkenness and awareness. And its first experience can happen in music more easily than in any other place, than in anything else. Music, dance... all these are devices, discovered by great awakened masters. They have fallen into wrong hands.

To be a teacher of music is one thing -- he can teach you the technique. I am not a teacher of music -- I cannot teach you the technique -- but I can help you to listen to the inner music, and that is real music.

In China they have the saying: "When the musician becomes perfect he throws away his instruments" -- because they are no more needed. He can close his eyes, he can turn himself inwards and he can listen to the music that is already there and always there. And when the archer becomes perfect he throws away his bow and his arrows; there is no need for them.

Whenever any art is perfect it ends in meditation -- it HAS to end in meditation. If it is not leading you towards meditation then something has gone wrong.

That's why much of the modern art is not art, it is insanity. Much modern music is not music; it simply makes you sexually excited. It is just the opposite of real music. Real music helps you to transcend your biology, your physiology, your psychology. Real music takes you to the world of the beyond -- what Buddha calls the farther shore, even beyond the beyond.

Gurdjieff used to call real art "objective art." Modern art is not, in that sense, objective art. In the past the awakened masters have used all kinds of devices: painting, sculpture, music, dance, drama. Every kind of device has been used to help you, because there are different types of people who can be helped in different ways: somebody through music, somebody through painting, somebody through poetry.

And that's my function here: to create a buddhahfield, a commune where all kinds of devices are used. But the purpose is one, the purpose is single, one-pointed. All these paths are leading you to the same goal -- to your own inner being.

Harisharan, you have come to the right place. I am not a teacher of music because I don't teach you the technique of music, but I am certainly the master of the inner music. I have heard it and I can help you to hear it -- not only to hear it but to be it.

And to be it is to be for the first time. To be it is to be reborn. To be it is to know what bliss is and benediction is.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
TWO YEARS AGO I WAS A CALIFORNIAN TOURIST. AFTER ALL THIS TIME YOU STILL FILL ME WITH
WONDER AND AWE. I LOVE YOU.

Deva Nartano, I am not a consistent man. With a consistent man you are bound to get bored because the consistent man goes on repeating the same thing. I am so inconsistent, so unreliable, so unpredictable that you never know what I am going to say and what I am going to do. What is going to happen in this commune tomorrow nobody knows -- not even me! I will know only when I have done it. I know only when I have said it.

Hence you can be here your whole life and your wonder and awe will not disappear; in fact it will deepen, it will become more and more profound.

And I am not imparting information to you, because it kills wonder. And wonder is such a valuable treasure; no information is of such worth.

I am not here to help you to learn about anything; on the contrary, my work is to help you unlearn. If

you become knowledgeable, naturally whatsoever you know has no surprise for you in it anymore. Your awe and wonder disappear, it becomes old. You know it -- how can you still feel wonder for it? You can feel wonder only if you remain in a state of not-knowing.

That's what I call meditation: the state of not-knowing. I cleanse you. I don't allow any dust to gather on your mirrors. I want you to remain fresh and young. The moment you become knowledgeable you will lose wonder. The moment you become knowledgeable you have lost contact with me.

This place is not for pundits and scholars. This place is for people who have the quality and the courage of remaining ignorant before the immense mystery of existence.

Winslow walked into the saloon and asked for a double bourbon. Suddenly he looked up and realized that tending the bar, apron and all, was a large dog.

"What's the matter?" asked the canine. "Haven't you ever seen a dog tending a bar before?"

"Oh, it's not that," replied Winslow. "What happened to the horse? Did he sell the joint to you?"

This is how the knowledgeable person functions -- nothing can surprise him.

McCarthy walked into a saloon where there were only the bartender, a dog and a cat.

As McCarthy ordered his drink, the dog stood up, yawned and said, "Well, so long, Joe," then walked out.

"Did you hear that?" said McCarthy to the bartender. "The dog talked!"

"Don't be a jackass," said the barkeep, "a dog can't talk."

"But I heard him."

"You think you heard him. Dogs can't talk. It's just that wise-guy cat over there -- he's a ventriloquist."

The moment you start feeling that you know something, remember, you are losing your contact with existence. Knowledge is the barrier, the only barrier that prevents you from communing with God. Remain innocent, remain ignorant. Go on dying to the past and go on dying to all your experiences. Don't collect them, don't be a collector. Remember that every night before you go to sleep, be finished with that day, be totally finished. Go to sleep again as a child and in the morning when you wake up, again wake up as a child. And you will never lose the eyes of wonder and the heart which can feel awe.

And this is what I call the fundamental quality of a religious person: not that you know the dogma, not that you know the creed, but that you know nothing, or that you know only one thing -- that you know nothing. It is better to be a fool with the trees, with the rivers, with the mountains, than to be a scholar, because as the scholar reaches the trees, the trees simply stop any communication, they close their doors. As the scholar reaches close to the flower it is not the same flower; it stops sending its fragrance.

If you reach as a fool and you can say "Hello!" to the tree and you can say "How are you?" the tree feels rejoiced: "Here is a man who is worth talking to, with whom I can have a dialogue." Sit with the tree, hug the tree, kiss the tree, feel the tree. Of course, people will think that you are mad. Let them think! It doesn't matter. What people think about you is absolutely immaterial; don't pay any attention to it. But make friends with trees, because they have deeper secrets to reveal. Make friends with rocks, feel their texture, their coolness, their weight, their age. Commune with nature and soon you will be surprised that if you are available to nature, nature starts becoming available to you. And it is not only that YOU say hello -- the tree responds. It sends its messages to you clearly and loudly.

Now even scientists are aware of the fact that the tree behaves with different people differently. When the woodcutter comes, the tree trembles in fear. Now there are machines like cardiographs which can detect the trembling; they make a graph of what is happening in the inner being of the tree. Seeing the woodcutter with his axe coming to cut the tree, the tree is trembling, the tree is afraid, the tree is angry, the tree is full of hate, the tree does not like this man. If the tree could run the tree would run away from this man. If the tree could attack this man the tree would attack him, in sheer self-defense. But because the tree is rooted and she cannot do anything, at least she can become utterly dead.

But when the gardener comes to water the tree, there is a different graph on the cardiogram. The tree is dancing and swaying, she is all open to the gardener as if she is ready to embrace him, to kiss him. If the tree could make love to the gardener the tree would do it. She is full of love. The fragrance of the flowers is more when the gardener is close by.

Now these are scientific facts -- although there are mythological stories about Buddha that trees would

become greener when he sat underneath them and meditated. It is possible -- now it can be said on scientific authority, it may be possible. A Buddha sitting underneath the tree, what more happiness can a tree have? And the tree underneath which Buddha became enlightened must have felt tremendous joy.

Now scientists say that the tree Buddha became enlightened sitting underneath is the most intelligent tree of all the trees: the bo tree. It has the same chemical in the biggest proportion that makes a man capable of having a mind. No other tree has that quantity of that particular chemical. Buddha must have chosen that tree. And the tree has been preserved, still it is there. It has a different quality, but the quality can be felt only by those who are innocent.

And the same is true about the whole of existence: it is full of God, overfull, overflowing with God. All that you need is an innocent heart to receive it. You are not open, you are closed.

My whole message to you is: function from a state of not-knowing and you will know the truth -- not through knowledge but through innocence.

Nartano, I am happy that you say, "Two years ago I was a Californian tourist. After all this time you still fill me with wonder and awe. I love you."

It is really difficult for a Californian tourist because California is so gullible that all kinds of fools have gathered there -- Muktananda in Palm Beach... all kinds of stupid people from all over the world. They are being attracted towards California as if California has a magnetic force. And any fool can gather disciples there. All that you have to know is some esoteric nonsense. You talk about seven chakras and seven planes and you talk about kundalini and the serpent power and you talk about SIDDHIS, spiritual powers and astral travels, and you will find people coming to you -- intelligent people, far more intelligent people than these Muktanandas. In fact, it is a miracle!

I have met Muktananda. Once I was passing by the side of his ashram and he invited me in, so just for a few minutes I went there. I have come across all kinds of stupid people -- he tops them all! But in California he has a great following. And what is he doing there? -- arranging Hindu marriages! Now, any kind of nonsense -- as if the Hindu marriage is something spiritual. It is the most absurd thing in the world, but people are ready to do anything outlandish.

It is difficult for a Californian tourist, but you made it. That's really creditable. I appreciate it, because to be with me one needs guts. One needs to be ready to drop all bullshit. And Californians are carrying so much bullshit because they are going from one so-called guru to another guru and collecting it from everywhere. Tibetan lamas are there and Hindu monks are there and Japanese Zen gurus are there and the so-called Sufis are there....

In fact, real masters never go anywhere. The disciple has to seek and search, the disciple has to come to the real master. The thirsty person has to come to the well; the well does not go running after the thirsty.

If two years have not destroyed you and your innocence, that means now nothing will ever destroy it. Even if you are not here you have tasted the beauty of being silent, you have tasted the beauty, the joy of being innocent. Wherever you are you will never allow anybody to disturb your innocence, to destroy your beauty.

Be alert. If you can simply live an ordinary life with joy, if you can relish the ordinary things of life, then nothing else is needed. Religion is not something exotic, it is not something supernatural. It is the very ordinary experience of being silent and innocent, of being full of wonder and awe.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF MATURITY?

Prem Lalit, maturity means the same as innocence, only with one difference: it is innocence reclaimed, it is innocence recaptured. Every child is born innocent, but every society corrupts him. Every society, up to now, has been a corruptive influence on every child. All cultures have depended on exploiting the innocence of the child, on exploiting the child, on making him a slave, on conditioning him for their own purposes, for their own ends -- political, social, ideological. Their whole effort has been how to recruit the child as a slave for some purpose. Those purposes are decided by the vested interests. The priests and the politicians have been in a deep conspiracy, they both have been together.

The moment the child starts becoming part of your society he starts losing something immensely

valuable; he starts losing contact with God. He becomes more and more hung up in the head. He forgets all about the heart. And the heart is the bridge which leads to being; without the heart you cannot reach your own being, it is impossible. From the head there is no way directly to being; you have to go via the heart. And all societies are destructive to the heart; they are against love, they are against feelings. They condemn feelings as sentimentality. They condemned all lovers down the ages for the simple reason that love is not of the head, it is of the heart. And a man who is capable of love is sooner or later going to discover his being. And once a person discovers his being he is free from all structures, from all patterns. He is free from all bondage. He is pure freedom.

Every child is born innocent, but every child is made knowledgeable by the society. Hence schools, colleges, universities exist; their function is to destroy you, to corrupt you.

Maturity means gaining your lost innocence again, reclaiming your paradise, becoming a child again. Of course it has a difference, because the ordinary child is bound to be corrupted, but when you reclaim your childhood you become incorruptible. Nobody can corrupt you, you become intelligent enough. Now you know what the society has done to you and you are alert and aware, and you will not allow it to happen again.

Maturity is a rebirth, a spiritual birth. You are born anew, you are a child again. With fresh eyes you start looking at existence. With love in the heart you approach life. With silence and innocence you penetrate your own innermost core. You are no more just the head. Now you use the head, but it is your servant. First you become the heart, and then you transcend even the heart....

Going beyond thoughts and feelings and becoming a pure isness is maturity. Maturity is the ultimate flowering of meditation.

Jesus says: Unless you are born again you will not enter into my kingdom of God.

He is right, you have to be born again. The whole process of sannyas is a process of rebirthing.

Once Jesus was standing in a marketplace and somebody asked, "Who is worthy of entering into your kingdom of God?"

He looked around. There was a rabbi and the rabbi must have moved forward a little, thinking that he would be chosen -- but he was not chosen. There was the most virtuous man of the town -- the moralist, the puritan. He moved forward a little hoping that he would be chosen, but he was not chosen.

He looked around. Then he saw a small child who was not expecting to be chosen, who had not moved, not even an inch. There was no idea, there was no question that he would be chosen. He was just enjoying the whole scene -- the crowd and Jesus and people talking, and he was listening.

He called the child, he took the child up in his arms and he said to the crowd, "Those who are like this small child, they are the only ones worthy of entering into my kingdom of God."

But remember, he said, "Those who are LIKE this small child...." He didn't say, "Those who are small children." There is a great difference between the two. He did not say, "This child will enter into my kingdom of God," because every child is bound to be corrupted, he has to go astray. Every Adam and every Eve is bound to be expelled from the garden of Eden, they have to go astray. That is the only way to regain real childhood: first you have to lose it. It is very strange, but that's how life is. It is very paradoxical, but life is a paradox. To know the real beauty of your childhood, first you have to lose it; otherwise you will never know it.

The fish never knows where the ocean is -- unless you pull the fish out of the ocean and throw it on the sand in the burning sun; then she knows where the ocean is. Now she longs for the ocean, she makes every effort to go back to the ocean, she jumps into the ocean. It is the same fish and yet not the same fish. It is the same ocean yet not the same ocean, because the fish has learned a new lesson. Now she is aware, now she knows, "This is the ocean and this is my life. Without it I am no more -- I am part of it."

Every child has to lose his innocence and regain it. Losing is only half of the process. Many have lost it, but very few have regained it. That is unfortunate, very unfortunate. Everybody loses it, but only once in a while does a Buddha, a Zarathustra, a Krishna, a Jesus regain it.

Jesus is nobody else but Adam coming back home. Magdalene is nobody else but Eve coming back home. They have come out of the sea and they have seen the misery and they have seen the stupidity. They have seen that it is not blissful to be out of the ocean.

The moment you become aware that to be a part of any society, any religion, any culture is to remain miserable, is to remain a prisoner, that very day you start dropping your chains. Maturity is coming. You are

gaining your innocence again.

But every child is not a saint. Of course every saint -- real saint -- is a child. The child has the same quality, but he is unaware of it. And what is the point of having something if you are not aware of it? You may have a great treasure and you are not aware of it; then it is as if you don't have it. Having it or not having it makes no difference.

A very rich man was very much puzzled because his whole life he tried to be rich and rich and rich, and finally he succeeded. He became rich, he became the richest man in the world, but there was no bliss. And he was thinking that once you become rich, bliss is attained. He was very frustrated. That is the fate of all successful people. He started going around asking for any wise person who could help him to attain bliss.

Somebody suggested a Sufi master. He went to the Sufi master on his beautiful horse. He was carrying a big bag full of diamonds, maybe the most precious stones in the world, and he told the master, "I have all these diamonds, but not a drop of bliss. How can I gain bliss? Can you help me?"

The master jumped -- the rich man could not believe his eyes -- the master snatched away the bag and ran away. The rich man followed him crying, shouting, "I have been robbed! I have been cheated! This man is not a master, this man is a thief -- catch hold of him!"

But in that village the master was well acquainted with all the roads and all the lanes and all the streets, so he dodged the rich man. And the rich man had never run after anybody; it was difficult. A crowd started following. They knew the Sufi master, that his ways were very strange.

Finally they came back to the same tree where the master had been sitting and the rich man had found him. The master was again sitting under the tree with the bag. The rich man came there, the master gave the bag to him, and the rich man held the bag close to his heart and said, "I am so blissful. I am so happy that I have found my lost treasure!"

And the master said, "Have you tasted a little bit of bliss? Unless you lose it you cannot taste it. I have made you taste it. This is the way to taste bliss -- lose something."

If you can lose your ego you will gain yourself -- what Buddha calls no-self. He calls it no-self for the simple reason that it is not your old ego anymore. It has no shadow of the ego at all; hence he calls it no-self. Lose the ego and gain the self or no-self, and suddenly you are mature. Lose the mind and gain consciousness and you are mature. Die to the past and be born to the present and you are mature.

Maturity is living in the present, fully alert and aware of all the beauty and the splendor of existence.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT DO YOU CALL THE AMERICAN FEMALES?

Vivek, they are also ladies, but not in the British sense. English English has one meaning of 'ladies'; the American English has another meaning. A lady is one who is a good lay -- but that is the American meaning!

The American hangman comes home.

"It's terrible, darling," he says to his wife. "I'm going to change my profession."

"Why?" asks the wife.

"I'm so fed up with seeing one hanging!"

"Me too," says his wife. "That's why I'm going to divorce you."

The American is the most alive person on the earth today. He is the most alive person for the simple reason that "American" is not a race, it is a mixture -- a mixture of all races. It is a meeting-place -- a meeting-place of all the countries. America has become the richest country for the simple reason that crossbreeding brings out the best in every child. Other races are small ponds breeding amongst themselves; it is as if you are breeding in your own family. The smaller the race, the lower the standard of its intelligence becomes. That's why it is prohibited for brothers to marry their sisters -- for the simple reason that the child will be just dumb, he will not have any salt. He will not be really a man, he will be more a

banana or a tomato! He will not have any intelligence.

Intelligence comes through crossbreeding. And America is the most fortunate country in that way, because its whole history is only of three hundred years and all the world has met there. It is the future of the world; that's how the whole world is going to be. All other countries should learn something; crossbreeding should become the normal thing. Marry somebody as far away as possible from you. But people marry in just the opposite way. They find somebody in the neighborhood, somebody of the same religion, of the same race, of the same color. That is destroying humanity.

Now, you can ask animal breeders -- they have raised the quality of all kinds of animals. Ask the people who are working on raising the quality of fruits and vegetables; they have raised the quality of fruits and vegetables for the simple reason that they have used crossbreeding. But about man we are very unscientific and very superstitious.

In America all these superstitions have broken down. They had to because it was a new country and the whole world converged there. People from every country, from Spain, from Portugal, from Italy, from France, from Holland, from Poland, from England... from everywhere people gathered together there. A totally new kind of human being has been born which is far more intelligent, far more healthy, lives longer, has tremendous capacities for adventure, has courage. And it has created the richest country in the world.

An Indian, an Englishman and an American were walking in a cemetery. "When you die, who would you like to be placed alongside of?" asked the American of his buddies.

"Mahatma Gandhi," said the Indian.

"Winston Churchill," said the Englishman.

"Well," said the American, "I would like to be next to Raquel Welch.

"Wait a minute," said the Indian, "she ain't dead yet!"

"I know," said the American. "But neither am I!"

Even small children in America are showing great insight, intelligence, far more than anywhere else.

Jimmy decided it was time to lecture his young son who was something of a screwball.

"Bob," he said, "you're getting to be a young man now and I think you ought to take life more seriously. Just think if I died suddenly, where would you be?"

"I would be here," replied the kid. "The question is, where would YOU be?"

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
SO THIS IS NOT THE NUT-HOUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS -- IT IS A ZOO! TODAY A SPIDER, A CENTIPEDE,
A MOUSE, A CAT (NOT TO MENTION THE MONKEYS ON THE ROOF), YESTERDAY A PIG AND A COW,
AND BEFORE THAT FISHES, FROGS, PRINCESSES.... ARE YOU NOAH?

Premananda, you have stumbled upon a truth. I am Noah and this is Noah's Ark!

You say, "So this is not the nut-house I thought it was."

There you are wrong. It IS a nut-house, but now you yourself have become one of the inmates! That's why you can't see that it is a nut-house. No nut will see it as a nut-house. Of course, it is a zoo too. It is many things....

And you say, "Today a spider, a centipede, a mouse, a cat (not to mention the monkeys on the roof)...."

There too you are wrong. They were not monkeys... they were American tourists on the way to Goa!

And you have mentioned a spider, a centipede, a mouse, a cat, monkeys, pig, cows, fishes, frogs, princesses... you have forgotten ducks, so I will tell you a joke about ducks; otherwise many orange ducks will be angry at you. Nobody here wants to be forgotten. I am being reminded every day. The Australians are writing every day, "Have you forgotten us?" Norwegians, Swedish, Swiss, they are all writing letters, "Beloved Master, when is our turn coming?"

When their father died, three brothers inherited one duck each. They decided to sell their ducks and see who could get the most money.

The first brother sold his for five dollars.

The second sold his for ten dollars.

The third brother was walking along a country road when he met a pretty young girl.

"Give you my duck if you'll make love with me."

"Sure," said the girl.

When they finished, the girl was so pleased she said, "I'll return your duck if you'll make love with me again."

"Sure," said the third brother.

Walking along the road again, the duck got free from the brother's arms and ran out into the path of an oncoming car. The car ran over the duck. The driver agreed to pay fifteen dollars for the dead duck.

When all the brothers had gathered together again the first brother said, "I got five dollars for my duck."

The second brother said, "I got ten dollars for mine."

Then they both turned to the third brother and said, "What did you get for yours?"

The third brother replied, "I got a fuck for a duck, a duck for a fuck, and fifteen dollars for a fucked-up duck."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #5

Chapter title: He is the moon

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DESIRING NOTHING, DOUBTING NOTHING,
BEYOND JUDGMENT AND SORROW
AND THE PLEASURES OF THE SENSES,
HE HAS MOVED BEYOND TIME.
HE IS PURE AND FREE.

HOW CLEAR HE IS.
HE IS THE MOON.
HE IS SERENE.
HE SHINES.

FOR HE HAS TRAVELED
LIFE AFTER LIFE
THE MUDDY AND TREACHEROUS ROAD OF ILLUSION.

HE DOES NOT TREMBLE
OR GRASP OR HESITATE.
HE HAS FOUND PEACE.

CALMLY
HE LETS GO OF LIFE,
OF HOME AND PLEASURE AND DESIRE.

NOTHING OF MEN CAN HOLD HIM.
NOTHING OF THE GODS CAN HOLD HIM.
NOTHING IN ALL CREATION CAN HOLD HIM.

DESIRE HAS LEFT HIM,
NEVER TO RETURN.
SORROW HAS LEFT HIM,
NEVER TO RETURN.

Gautama the Buddha is describing the indescribable. He is describing the inner world of a master. He is defining what a master is, what the quality of his consciousness is. Where does he exist? -- in time or beyond time, in space or beyond space? Does he have any limitations? any boundaries? or has he only a pure vastness, the vastness of the sky? The very phenomenon is so mysterious that it is beyond the words that we use, that we can use. But still a few indications have to be given. These are only hints -- don't cling to these hints. They are not scientific statements; think of them as pure poetry. Yes, fingers pointing to the moon, but forget the fingers and remember the moon.

No word is adequate enough to define a master. All words do injustice to the master because words are meant to describe the ordinary and the master has transcended the ordinary. Words belong to the world; the master is in the world and yet he is no more of it. He exists here and still he does not exist here. He is only a reflection in the lake. He is only a shadow lingering on this shore; the real one has already reached the other shore.

If you can remember this, then even these words will be of great help; otherwise you are bound to misunderstand them.... I have been telling you again and again that life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved. And Prem Mukta informs me, "Osho, this really happened: I overheard an Italian sannyasin enthusing after the lecture, 'Osho really knows what life is like. It is so true what he says, that: Life is not a problem to be solved but a misery to be lived.'"

Words are dangerous! You can hear in them something which is not there. You can project into them something which is your own, and it is impossible to detect what you are doing. It is good that the sannyasin was saying it to somebody else, but if you don't say it to anybody else... and there are a thousand and one things that you will never say to anybody else -- then they simply remain part of your inner world. And if you have utterly misunderstood them in the first place, then you can start making a foundation out of them for your life. Words can be dangerous.

A true story:

Two mothers were overheard talking about their sons.

"My boy has taken up meditation," said one.

The other replied, "Well, I suppose it's better than sitting around doing nothing."

But that's exactly what meditation is: sitting around doing nothing -- REALLY nothing, not even inside, not even thinking, not even feeling. When action as such stops in toto, meditation begins. When doing ceases utterly, categorically, when there is no movement in your being, then for the first time there is the flowering of meditation.

So listen to these words. These words are beautiful if understood rightly -- which is very difficult because you are so unconscious, you are so blind. You are living in a state of stupor. You are almost drunk -- although you never think of it that way. You may see the drunkenness of others, but you never think that you are also drunk -- drunk with greed, lust, ambition, ego. And these are more alcoholic than any alcohol.

One of the greatest problems with man is: he can see very easily that others are wrong but he cannot see that he himself is in the same boat.

Two pink elephants walked into a pub.
The barman looked up and said, "He's not here yet!"

Get it? He is thinking of some other drunkard who sees pink elephants. He is not drunk, it is some other guy who gets drunk and starts seeing pink elephants. Now he is seeing them, but he is telling the elephants, "Wait, he has not come yet. He must be coming sooner or later."

The moment you start seeing your own state, a great, radical change sets in.

So listen to these sutras with great alertness, awareness, not in a kind of half-asleep, half-awake state. People are mostly in that state twenty-four hours a day: half asleep, half awake. Something they hear, something is always missed. And the trouble is that whatsoever is more significant is always missed because that is beyond their capacity. Whatsoever is nonessential is immediately heard, is understood by them; that is within their capacity. But they go on forgetting the essential -- even if they hear it.

Just watch yourself. Understanding a Buddha, a Christ, a Krishna is one of the greatest exercises in awareness.

Paul was riding his bicycle on a blistering hot summer day. But the heat and fatigue had finally so gotten to him that he stopped and sat down beside the road. Minutes later, a small Mercedes pulled up.

"Anything wrong?" asked the man behind the wheel.

"No, sir, I'm on my way to town," replied the black boy. "I'm just plumb tuckered out."

"As you can see I don't have enough room for you and your bicycle," said the occupant of the Mercedes.

"But if you tie your bike to my rear bumper you can sit on it and I will tow you."

In a few moments the car, pulling the black boy on his bicycle, headed down the highway. At the first stop-light a Jaguar pulled alongside. "Hey," said the man inside, "wanna race?"

"You got it!" was the reply.

They were soon racing at over one hundred and twenty miles an hour, the Mercedes driver having completely forgotten about the black boy behind him on the bike.

Both cars were up to one hundred and forty when they passed a squad car. The bewildered police officer quickly picked up his radio mike. "Hey, Sarge, you ain't gonna believe this!" he shouted. "A Jaguar's racing a Mercedes all hell bent for leather, and there's some white kid keeping up with them on a bicycle!"

Listen to these beautiful sutras very consciously, meditatively, in tremendous reverence, in deep trust, because Buddha is revealing the greatest secrets of life.

DESIRING NOTHING, DOUBTING NOTHING,
BEYOND JUDGMENT AND SORROW
AND THE PLEASURES OF THE SENSES,
HE HAS MOVED BEYOND TIME.
HE IS PURE AND FREE.

Go slowly -- each word is significant. DESIRING NOTHING, DOUBTING NOTHING.... You have been told by the priests down the ages, "Don't doubt, drop doubting." But why in the first place do you doubt? You doubt because you desire. Buddha is bringing the very root of the problem to your consciousness. If a man desires nothing he has no need to doubt anything at all; it is desire that brings doubt in its wake.

This is something very special, nobody has said it so clearly. In fact, nobody had said it before Buddha. If you desire you cannot get rid of doubt because desire brings belief and belief brings doubt. And what your priests are doing is simply ridiculous. They insist that you should believe and you should not doubt. They are putting you in a difficult situation which is impossible to maintain. If you believe, you are bound to doubt; all believers are doubters. This is the great insight of Buddha: no believer can ever get rid of doubt.

Belief means basically that there is doubt and you are covering it with belief. Doubt is there like a wound and you are covering it with beautiful flowers of belief. But by covering a wound with flowers you are not curing it, it is not being healed. In fact by covering it you will make it far more dangerous. It will be growing deep inside you, it will go on spreading; it will become a cancer finally. Why do you believe in the

first place? If you don't doubt, what is the need to believe?

Buddha's approach is always very fundamental; he goes to the very root of the problem. You believe because you doubt. And why do you doubt? He does not stop there. Why do you believe, why do you doubt? -- because you desire.

For example, you believe in an afterlife and you also doubt an afterlife. Both the belief and the doubt persist in you side by side. You believe in afterlife because you desire; there is a great lust for life, you don't want to die. Because you don't want to die, any priest can exploit you. He can tell you, "Don't be worried, only the body dies; your soul will live forever. Your soul is immortal." And you are immediately ready to believe. Why? Without inquiring into such an important matter, you believe some stupid priest who knows nothing about it, who has not experienced anything about it himself, who has not gone deeper into his own being. Maybe he knows the scriptures, he can quote the Bible and the Koran and the Gita, but so what? By knowing the Gita or the Koran or the Bible he does not know that the soul is immortal. How does he know? On what authority is he speaking? On the authority of Christ? -- then it is borrowed. On the authority of Krishna? -- then it is not his own. And unless it is his own there must be doubt in him.

Unless some experience arises in your own being, doubt cannot be dispelled. You can go on believing in light sitting in a dark room, but that does not mean that the darkness will disappear by your believing. You can recite the Gita and you can talk about light, but darkness will remain. You can deceive yourself by believing in light, you can say there is no darkness, you can pretend that there is no darkness, but you know that there is darkness. Otherwise, why are you talking about darkness at all if there is no darkness? Why are you saying there is no darkness? If there is no darkness there is no darkness! Why waste your time?

Why are the priests continuously teaching people that the soul is immortal? They know people are afraid of death and desire life. The fear of death and the desire for life are two sides of the same coin.

Buddha says: If you desire something then you have to believe. Why do you believe in God? Have you seen God? Have you experienced God? You can say Jesus saw God, but he may have been a deluded man. Either he himself lived in an illusion or he was deceiving you. Who knows? How can you be certain that he knew? What grounds have you got that anybody has ever seen God?

If you are suffering from a headache, nobody else can know except you yourself. Yes, if you say it, people can sympathize with you. They may not say so -- they may agree with you, they may disagree with you -- but how can they know that you are suffering from a headache? Only you know.

A visiting psychiatrist, wandering through the wards of a state asylum, saw a patient huddled in a corner scratching himself incessantly.

"Excuse me," said the doctor, "why do you scratch yourself like that?"

"Because," replied the man, "I'm the only one who knows where I itch."

There are things which can only be trusted if they become your personal experience.

But you are afraid of death, you believe in an afterlife, you desire an afterlife. You are afraid of being alone, you want protection. You want a God, a father figure. You are still childish. You can't live on your own, you can't stand on your own feet. Your real father may be dead or if he is not dead now you know perfectly well that he is as limited as you are -- he has his own fears, he has his own tremblings. Now you cannot believe in him in the same way as you used to believe when you were a small child; then your father was all-knowing, all-powerful.

Every child brags about his father, saying, "He is the greatest man in the world!" But sooner or later, he finds he is just an ordinary man like everybody else. He knows that, "He suffers from the same fears as I do." Now he is no more a protection to him.

You cannot hide behind your mother anymore.... You need a greater father, hence the projection of God. It is just your need, your desire for security, safety, for protection. You are not mature enough yet; hence you believe in God.

And look at the qualities of God: omnipresent... obviously. If he is not everywhere, then what is the point of believing in him? You may fall in a ditch and he is not there, and you may go on shouting and he is not there, or he is engaged somewhere else. And there are millions of people on this earth and this is not the only earth. Scientists say there are at least fifty thousand earths which are populated with life, millions of stars. If he is not omnipresent -- and you are so small and the universe is so big -- how is he going to take care of you? Of course you believe he is omnipresent, he is everywhere, so wherever you need him he is immediately available, instantly available.

So he may be omnipresent, but if he is not omnipotent, then? He may not be capable enough to help you; he may have only two hands, and with two hands how much can he do? Hence there are people who believe that he has thousands of hands. But even thousands of hands won't do much, so you have to believe that he is infinite, that his power is infinite, he can do anything.

And not only that: you also have to believe that he is omniscient because he may be omnipotent and he may be omnipresent, but if he is not omniscient then he can only take care of the present. That means when you have fallen in the ditch, only then can he help you, but you have fallen and broken your leg and you have fractures. He is omniscient, he can see the future, he can see everything, so before you fall in the ditch he can prevent you from falling in the ditch.

Just look at the qualities that you have given to your God. Those are not the qualities of God, those are your desires of how God should be. Then you can believe in him; if these qualities are missing then doubts will start arising. And God has to be infallible; if he is fallible, then there is danger. How can you believe in a fallible God? You cannot believe in a fallible God because he may mismanage, he may mess you up. Rather than helping you he may create more trouble. He has to be infallible. And when God is infallible, his son Jesus Christ has to be infallible, because if the father is infallible how can the son not be infallible? And then his representative, the pope of the Vatican, has to be infallible.

Now, you see how your logic goes on in this way... but it is rooted in desire. You believe in such foolish things -- that the pope is infallible. And even now, after two thousand years, you still believe that the pope is infallible. And the popes have done so many stupid things.

Galileo said that the earth moves around the sun, not vice versa.... The Bible says the sun moves around the earth, all the scriptures of the world say that the sun moves around the earth, because it is apparently so. All the languages have these words -- 'sunrise', 'sunset'. We experience it every day; every day we see the sun rising in the morning and setting in the evening. We see the whole movement of the sun from the east to the west, and then in the night it disappears; it has gone to the other side of the earth, it is going round the earth. It is our experience! That's what we know, so before Galileo, all the scriptures of the world believed that the sun went round the earth.

Galileo was the first man who said that the reality is just the opposite: the earth goes round the sun. Now this was against the Bible and to find any fault in the Bible is dangerous. If one thing can be faulty in the Bible, then what about other things? Maybe they are also faulty; they just need some other Galileo to find the faults. Then where will it end? And if prophets are faulty, what about the pope? And all the popes had believed....

Galileo was called into the court of the pope. He was forced -- he was very old, seventy years old, ill -- he was dragged in chains to the court. He was in bed and so ill that he was going to die any day. And he didn't live long after. He was forced to apologize. And Galileo must have been a man of great insight. He said, "Of course, if the Bible says and if all the prophets agree and if all the popes, who are infallible, if they say that the sun moves around the earth, I apologize, I am sorry."

The pope was very happy, the court was very happy that they had brought a sinner back to his senses.

Then Galileo said, "But one thing I must tell you: I can apologize, I can say if you want me to that the sun moves round the earth -- but the sun won't listen to me and the earth has no obligation to follow my orders. Still the earth will go on moving round the sun, my apologies apart. I apologize, but what can I do? If the earth moves around the sun I cannot stop it."

And these popes have been preventing all scientific growth. Still in the twentieth century millions of Catholics go on believing that the pope is infallible. But this is really a logical consequence: if you believe God is infallible, then of course his son is infallible, then his son's representatives are infallible.

But deep down, why do you believe in such nonsense? And this is not only so about Catholics; it is so about Hindus, about Mohammedans, about Jainas, even about Buddhists. They all go on believing in utter nonsense.

Buddhists believe that Buddha was born while his mother was standing in the garden; she had gone for a walk. Not only that, he was also born in a standing posture himself. He came out of the womb, stood on the earth, walked seven steps and declared, "I am the awakened one!" Now for twenty-five centuries Buddhists have believed in this nonsense. No baby can do that, but if you suspect it then you suspect the scriptures. If you doubt the scriptures then great trembling arises in you because then you become afraid. Doubting is not good, doubting is irreligious; one should believe. And the more absurd the belief, the greater is the test for

the believer.

Buddha is saying: DESIRING NOTHING, DOUBTING NOTHING.... The master desires nothing, hence he doubts nothing -- because he believes nothing. A master lives without desire, without belief, without doubt. And then what is left in the inner being of the master is trust. Trust is not belief; it is absence of both doubt and belief. Buddha calls it SHRADDHA. It can only be translated as trust -- trust in existence.

Belief is rooted in desire and every belief carries its own counterpart, doubt, as a shadow. Trust is absence of desire, belief, doubt. It is purity of the heart, innocence of the heart. In that innocent heart there is a meeting and merging with the universe. That is trust; it has nothing to do with you. It is not that you trust; you are no more there, only trust is.

DESIRING NOTHING, DOUBTING NOTHING, BEYOND JUDGMENT AND SORROW.... The master goes beyond judgment; hence there is no question of belief or doubt. He never judges; he never says, "This is right and that is wrong." He has dropped the mind which is a constant process of judgment. The mind continuously judges; its judgment has become an obsession.

You see the roseflower and before you have even seen it, the mind has said, "It is beautiful." You see a man passing by and before you have seen the man rightly, the mind says, "He is ugly." The judgment is instantaneous, it seems to take no time. You are continuously judgmental.

The master looks at the fact but has no judgments, because in fact beauty and ugliness all are our projections. When you say a rose is beautiful it is your idea, nothing else. The rose is a rose is a rose; it is neither beautiful nor ugly, it is simply itself. The ugly man is not ugly and the beautiful man is not beautiful; it is only a question of your idea of what beauty is. Hence with different people different things are thought to be beautiful.

In China beauty has a different color, a different form; in India it has a different form and color, in Europe obviously it is going to be different. Each country has its own idea of beauty and those ideas go on changing, they come like fashions. One thing is beautiful today and tomorrow it becomes ugly; today it is ugly and tomorrow suddenly it becomes beautiful.

Can you believe that Picasso's paintings would have been thought beautiful just two hundred years ago? Impossible! Not even a single person would have been found in the whole world who would have said they were beautiful. And whosoever would have said they were beautiful would have been thought insane.

Vincent van Gogh could not sell one of his paintings, not even one, for the simple reason that everybody thought they were just insane -- not only ugly but insane too. Now only two hundred paintings are in existence and each painting has so much value that if those people come back and see that Vincent van Gogh's paintings are being sold for millions of dollars they will not be able to believe their eyes, what has happened to man. "What kind of beauty have people started seeing suddenly in Vincent van Gogh's paintings? Nobody thought them beautiful." The idea of beauty has changed.

Modern poetry is not beautiful in the same way as Shakespearian poetry is; it is not beautiful in the same way as Kalidas or Bhavabhuti, as Byron or Shelley. It is a totally different kind of beauty. Just our idea! If man disappears from the earth there will be nothing beautiful and nothing ugly. Weeds will be as valuable as roses; there will be no difference, there will be simple equality.

A master is one who has dropped all human ideas about things, hence he has no judgments. He lives in a nonjudgmental way. And can you see? -- when you live in a nonjudgmental way you attain to great serenity, naturally; nothing disturbs you, nothing offends you, nothing attracts you, nothing infatuates you.

BEYOND JUDGMENT and you are BEYOND SORROW. Buddha says: If you really want to go beyond sorrow, go beyond judgment. But going beyond judgment means going beyond mind. Mind is judgmental; if you live in the mind it will keep you tethered to all kinds of judgments. If you drop the mind then suddenly the whole existence becomes available to you. For the first time you are unclouded.

"Come on, let's screw," the Italian told his new date five minutes after he called for her.

"Oh, you're so sophisticated, Pietro," she said.

"So sophisticated" -- after five minutes only! But in Italy it may be sophisticated; after five minutes, in India, it will be rape and the girl will shout for the police. It will take months for you to woo the woman, to persuade her, to bring her down to earth. It is a long long process. But things in Italy seem to be quick: five minutes and she says, "You are so sophisticated, so cultured!" It all depends on your ideas.

DESIRING NOTHING, DOUBTING NOTHING, BEYOND JUDGMENT AND SORROW AND THE PLEASURES OF THE SENSES, HE HAS MOVED BEYOND TIME. HE IS PURE AND FREE.

These four things have to be understood. The first is the senses and their pleasures; that is the lowest kind of life. And remember, by calling it the "lowest" Buddha is not judging it, it is not an evaluation -- it is simply stating a fact. Just as you say "the lowest rung of the ladder" -- there is no judgment. It is not bad, it is no more special than the highest rung. It is simply a statement of fact. This has to be continuously remembered, otherwise you will forget; you will start thinking that Buddha himself is judging. Then is he a master or not? He is not judging, he is simply stating a fact.

Senses are the lowest because they are on the circumference, they are part of your body. There are people who live only in the senses, they are still living like animals. Again remember, it is not a judgment: animals are not bad, animals are not immoral. There is no question of hierarchy. But animals live in the body, and the man who lives only in his senses is living an animal kind of life. He is living in the porch of his palace. Not that he is immoral, but certainly he is unintelligent. He could have lived in the palace and he is living in the porch -- and suffering the heat of the sun, and in the rains he suffers the rains and in the cold he suffers from the cold. He could have been in the safety and the comforts and the coziness of the palace. The palace belongs to him, but he lives in the porch believing that that's all there is to life.

The man who lives only in sensuality, lust, who is obsessed with food, who is obsessed with his body, continuously thinking of the body, is not yet a man. He is a good animal, but utterly blind to the potential that he is born to, utterly blind to what he can become, unconscious of the whole range of his being.

The second circle, deeper than the body, is that of the mind. Mind has its own pleasures which are a little higher. Again, remember, it has nothing to do with judgment. They are a little deeper, they are a little closer to the innermost shrine. They actualize a little bit of your potential. The man who enjoys mathematics, science, philosophy certainly has a deeper sense of joy. Plato has a deeper sense of joy than Nero.

It is said about Nero that he used to keep four physicians constantly with him even when he went to war. Those four physicians were to help him vomit because he liked to eat so many times in the day. Now you cannot eat so many times a day; there is a limitation. You can eat three times, four times, five times at the most; more than that will be impossible. The body will not contain it, you will burst. So after eating, the physicians would help him to vomit immediately so he could eat again. He used to eat at least twenty times per day. He must have been the greatest eater in the world. But what kind of life is this? -- twenty times vomiting to eat twenty times! -- as if he lived only in the buds of the tongue, in the taste buds.

Of course Plato is far deeper. He enjoys a contemplative life: he contemplates the stars, he contemplates the sunrise and the sunset, he contemplates the possibility of human progress. And he enjoys it -- and he enjoys it so much that many times he forgets to eat, he forgets completely that he has missed a meal.

It happened once:

Albert Einstein was brought his breakfast and he was so deep in contemplation -- it must have been some great mathematical puzzle he was involved in -- that he was sitting with closed eyes. So the servant did not disturb him; he left the breakfast in front of him and went away.

Meanwhile a friend came. He also saw him so deeply absorbed that he thought, "It is better... the breakfast is getting cold." So he ate the breakfast and pushed the plates aside.

At that moment Einstein opened his eyes, looked at the empty plates, looked at his friend and said, "Sorry, you came a little late. I have taken my breakfast."

Now, this is better than being a Nero. But there is a third layer still higher, still deeper: the layer of the heart -- love, music, poetry, dance. People who enjoy art, people who can enjoy and appreciate harmony, color, people who can see some poetry in life and existence, who can feel some celebration going on all around, of course they are going still deeper. A Rabindranath... the poet goes deeper than the mathematician, the musician goes deeper than the philosopher. But these are still concentric circles around your center.

The fourth -- the mystics in India have called it simply, "the fourth," TURIYA -- is the world of your being, the innermost core. Those who enjoy meditation, neither food nor philosophy nor poetry, but who have gone beyond all these and entered into the world of utter silence, of absolute emptiness, who know how not to be.... Yes, the question is, "To be or not to be?" Those who have chosen not to be, they are the

meditators. They have moved from the senses to samadhi, and that is the highest experience of life.

Buddha says: DESIRING NOTHING, DOUBTING NOTHING, BEYOND JUDGMENT AND SORROW AND THE PLEASURES OF THE SENSES, HE HAS MOVED BEYOND TIME.

The man who has moved into his being has moved beyond time. Time exists with the body, with the mind, with the heart, but with the being there is no time. You suddenly experience timelessness -- or you can call it eternity. It is only in that state when you have transcended mind, transcended time, that you are pure and free. For the first time you know what purity is. It is not something to be cultivated; it is something like a fragrance of deep meditation. The joy, the song, the celebration that arises out of silence, the sound of soundless silence -- that is purity, that is innocence; you have become a child again. And that is maturity too, that is growth. You have come of age. You are really born, you are born anew.

HOW CLEAR HE IS....

Now the master has clarity because all the clouds have disappeared, the clouds created by the body.... The body creates the darkest clouds, the densest clouds, the thickest clouds. As you go further inwards the clouds are less dark, less thick, less dense. When you have reached the fourth, turiya, all clouds have disappeared; there is pure clarity. You can see through and through. The whole existence becomes transparent. Nothing is hidden from you anymore. HOW CLEAR HE IS.

HE IS THE MOON.
HE IS SERENE.
HE SHINES.

At this point, suddenly there is an alchemical change in his energy. Ordinarily a man lives as a sun energy; the master lives as moon energy. These are just metaphors, but tremendously significant, very expressive indicators. Moon energy means cool energy, sun energy means hot energy. When you live in passion, lust, anger, greed, jealousy, possessiveness, hatred, you live as fire. It is not only that others are burned through you, you are burning yourself. In fact, if you want to burn others you have to burn yourself first; only then can you burn others. You are constantly in a fever. The sun energy is feverish, it creates insanity, it drives you crazy. It keeps you running and rushing after illusions.

Meditation is the miracle that transforms the sun energy into moon energy. The moon creates magic every night. The moon has no rays of its own, it simply reflects the sunrays. It absorbs the sunrays and reflects them back; the moon functions only as a mirror. Hence the moon represents two things: first it is a mirror. The master is a mirror, meditation makes you a mirror -- without any dust, absolutely clean and pure, so everything is reflected in you as it is, with no judgment but simply as it is in its absolute facticity.

And second, the moon, just by reflecting them, transforms the hot rays of the sun into cool energy. That's what happens through a master. He absorbs the same energy that you absorb, he eats the same food as you eat, he drinks the same water as you drink, he breathes the same air as you breathe, but some alchemical change is constantly going on in him.

Out of your food you become more and more sexual, out of your breathing you become more and more hot. The master breathes the same air, but some miracle happens within him that is not perceptible to you. The same air no longer creates the same results for him as it creates for you, the same food no longer creates for him the same problems as it creates for you. The master does not live in another world; he lives in your world and he lives in the same way as you live.

Those who escape from the world are not real masters; they are afraid of the world. They are afraid to absorb this crazy energy. The world is full of it; hence they escape to the Himalayas. But they simply show by their escape that they are not yet masters. The real master lives here in the world. He absorbs the same crazy energy, but when it comes back, when it is reflected back through him, it is no longer crazy. It becomes a grace, it becomes cool. He showers a thousand and one blessings even on those who are not worthy, even on those who are not receptive, even on those who will never feel thankful, even on those who may do harm to him.

Jesus even kissed Judas and washed his feet, and he knew the man had betrayed him. He knew perfectly well, because before he washed the feet of Judas he told his disciples, "Tonight I am going to be betrayed by

one of you." But he cannot do otherwise: he can only kiss, he can only wash the feet. He has no ego, he is utterly humble. In fact, he has no self; he is a nonself. Buddha's word for it is ANATTA -- no-self. And he is constantly radiating the cool energy of the moon.

HE IS THE MOON. HE IS SERENE. HE SHINES -- he is as serene as the moon and he shines as beautifully as the moon.

FOR HE HAS TRAVELED
LIFE AFTER LIFE
THE MUDDY AND TREACHEROUS ROAD OF ILLUSION.

He knows from bitter experience. He has every compassion for you. If you are deep in your mud he only has compassion for you. He makes every effort to pull you out of the mud because he has been in the same mud for lives. He has traveled the same path, he has gone astray thousands of times, he has suffered in the same way.

That is one of the most beautiful things Buddha taught, because all other religions were trying to prove something else. Hindus were saying in India that Krishna, Rama and all their AVATARAS, they descend from heaven, they are parts of God, they are incarnations of God. That is the meaning of 'avatara'; avatara means "descending from above." They are not part of us, they came as messengers of God. They have not traveled on the same muddy path. How can they understand our misery? How can they understand our problems? They have never suffered the same problems.

And the same was the case with Judaism. And remember, these are the only two religions; all other religions are born out of these two. Judaism was also preaching the same idea: that God sends his messengers, messiahs, prophets. Those are special people, they are not ordinary like you.

Buddha's approach is tremendously human; he is the first humanitarian mystic. He says, "I have traveled on the same muddy path, I have suffered in the same way you are suffering, I have committed the same mistakes. Hence I can understand you, and I can understand why you are unable to understand me, because I have come across many buddhas in my other lives, many buddhas; I never understood them, I always misunderstood them. So if you are misunderstanding me there is nothing to make a fuss about. It is simple, it is natural, it is inevitable. So whatsoever you do to me," Buddha says, "it is okay. Still I will go on showering my flowers on you because I have nothing else to shower."

Buddha is not an avatara. He has not come from the above, he has risen from the below. He is a lotus: he has grown out of the same mud in which you are struggling. And I completely agree with him. The Hindu and the Jewish concept is utterly inhuman; that concept is not right. That cannot help humanity to be transformed.

Buddha brings a totally new insight. His approach is not mythological, his approach is scientific. FOR HE HAS TRAVELED LIFE AFTER LIFE THE MUDDY AND TREACHEROUS ROAD OF ILLUSION -- so he knows and he understands you. You may not understand him, but he understands you.

A little girl was being driven very erratically in a car by her grandma.
"Don't go round corners so fast, Gran," she pleaded.
"Do as I do, dear," said the sweet old lady, "and close your eyes!"

Blind people are leading other blind people and they have created all kinds of superstitions, mythologies, religions. Only a buddha is capable, only one who is awakened, only one who up to now had belonged to you. You are asleep and he is awake, that is the only difference; there is no other difference. He can help you to be awakened because he knows how he has become awake, how difficult it is, what problems have to be faced. He knows your state.

The bandage-covered patient who lay in the hospital bed spoke dazedly to his visiting pal.
"Wh-wh-what happened?"
"You had one too many last night and then bet that you could jump out of the window and fly around the block."
"Why didn't you stop me?" he screamed.
"Stop you, hell! I had twenty-five dollars on you!"

The receptionist of a five-star hotel picks up the phone: "May I help you?"
"Yes," is the reply, "can you please tell me when your bar opens?"
"Yes, sir. The bar opens at five o'clock."
"Thank you."

An hour later the phone rings again and the same voice asks, "C-c-an you tell me, p-p-please, when the b-b-b-bar opens?"

"At five o'clock, sir," says the receptionist.
"Th-th-thank you!"

Another hour passes and the phone rings again. "Please, when doesh... doesh... doesh the bar (hic) o-open?"

"I repeat, at five o'clock," answers the annoyed receptionist.

Still another hour later, the phone rings again. "Hic! Hic! Heelloo!"

"You again!" exclaims the receptionist, "I told you we open our bar at five o'clock, but in your state of inebriation we cannot allow you into our bar!"

"But... but... but -- hic -- I don't want to get in!" cries the drunk. "I want to get out!"

Only somebody who has been in knows the ins and the outs. Only one who has been drunk like you can help you. That's why the organization called Alcoholics Anonymous is so helpful. It has helped thousands of drunkards for the simple reason that other drunkards are helping. They understand each other, they understand the problems. They are not standing high above the others looking with eyes of condemnation at them, looking at them with that stupid holy look, "holier-than-thou," and preaching to them to be good. They have been in the same plight, they have suffered much; they understand each other's language.

Hence Buddha helped more people to become enlightened than anybody else in the whole history of humanity. I don't think Krishna helped anybody to become enlightened; he was enlightened, but he could not help anybody else. I am afraid Jesus could not help anybody, not even among his own twelve apostles. They remained very ordinary to the very end; not one of them became enlightened.

Buddha seems to be an exceptional master -- in fact the first master whom we can really call a master, because through him thousands of people became enlightened. And the reason why Buddha's appeal is so deep is that he is not a pretender. He is not a messiah, he has not come from above, he claims nothing. He is not the only begotten Son of God; he does not talk about God at all. He does not talk any nonsense. He is very sensible and very down-to-earth. He means business. And he can help immensely. He says: FOR HE HAS TRAVELED -- the master has traveled -- LIFE AFTER LIFE THE MUDDY AND TREACHEROUS ROAD OF ILLUSION.

When are you going to wake up? You go on postponing, you go on saying tomorrow. And you have been doing this for centuries, and tomorrow has not come yet. When is it going to come? Stop postponing. Postponing is a trick of the mind.

After a smooth take-off the captain of the Boeing 707 welcomes his passengers: "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome aboard. I, Captain Cook, and my crew wish you a pleasant flight. We land in Amsterdam in approximately five hours."

A few minutes later the same voice is heard through the speakers: "Shit, Johnny, I feel like a nice cool beer and a good screw...."

As the stewardess runs towards the cockpit to inform the pilot that the speakers are on, a passenger grabs her by the arm and says, "Hey, lady, what's the rush? We still got another five hours to go!"

We are always thinking in terms of the future. Stop thinking in terms of the future; that is the way of the mind to live, to prolong, to get nourished. The future is the food of the mind. The moment you become decisive about the present, the mind has started dying. It is the beginning of the end, the end of the mind. And the end of the mind is the beginning of your real existence, your real life.

And can't you see that life has been very treacherous, that it has been deceiving you again and again? Still you go on being deceived. How gullible you are! And you go on falling in the same ditches -- they are not even different -- the same traps.

A Jew and a Polack are sitting together in a train compartment. The Jew is eating some apple seeds.

After some time, the Polack becomes curious and asks the Jew, "Why are you eating apple seeds?"
The Jew replies, "Apple seeds make you smart!"

The Polack, even more curious, asks, "Are they for sale?"

The Jew answers, "Yes, of course, You can have these five apple seeds for five dollars only."

The Polack agrees to the deal and starts eating the seeds. Suddenly the Polack turns to the Jew and says, "Hey, you, listen, for five dollars I could have bought five kilos of apples!"

The Jew turns to him with a satisfied smile and answers, "Now you see -- it has started working already!"

You go on repeating the same mistakes. You go on being exploited by the treacherous life, by all kinds of traps which are all around you. And the emperors and the beggars are all in the same boat; there is no difference. The poor and the rich are in the same boat; there is no difference because all are full of desires. And wherever desire exists ego exists, and wherever ego exists illusion exists because ego is the greatest illusion there is. Even in a beggar who has nothing else you will find the same ego as you will find in Alexander the Great, because desiring is the same. Alexander the Great may have much money and much power, that does not matter; he is still desiring. The beggar may not have anything, but he is also desiring.

The distance between you and your desire always remains the same. It is like the horizon: between you and the horizon the distance is always the same. You can go on moving towards the horizon your whole life; the distance is never shortened, it remains the same. You can renounce the world, you can start running away from the horizon, but then again you will be facing another horizon. And now the desire to reach the other horizon.... If you were heading west, now you will be heading east, but it is the same horizon -- or south or north. You can go in any direction, it is the same horizon. Escaping won't help. You can renounce the world, it will not change you.

There is only one change -- only one change, only one revolution and that is the revolution of dropping the illusion of the ego. It is the ego that keeps you on the muddy and treacherous road of illusion.

And remember, don't fool yourself that "Alexander the Great is an egoist. I am a poor man, a humble man. I go to the church every Sunday -- how can I be an egoist?" You are in the same boat, in the same way. You have the same ego.

As a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce stopped at some traffic lights, a tramp tapped on the window and held out his hand. The somewhat literary English gentleman in the back seat rolled down the window and said in a very cultured voice, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be'... William Shakespeare." And the Rolls Royce drove on.

The tramp, seeing that the Rolls had stopped at the next set of lights, raced down the road and tapped on the window again. The gentleman rolled down the window and the tramp said, "'Fuck you'... D.H. Lawrence."

HE DOES NOT TREMBLE
OR GRASP OR HESITATE.
HE HAS FOUND PEACE.

He has no fear. Once desire has gone fear cannot exist. When desire is there you are always afraid -- are you going to make it this time or not? Or if you have achieved the goal of your desire then you are afraid whether you are capable of keeping it forever or not. If you want to become the president then comes the fear -- how are you going to make it? Millions of people want to be the president. There are so many neurotic people -- you are not the only one. The whole world is mad; you are not the only mad person. Are you going to make it? And you have to be really the maddest to make it because you will have to fight with other madmen. There is always trembling.

And if by chance -- and it is always a chance -- if by some coincidence you become the president, then a new fear arises: are you going to keep it? -- because so many people are pulling you. Your legs are being pulled, people are pushing you from your chair. And there are so many people around you and everybody is dangerous because everybody wants to sit in the same chair, but the chair can contain only one person. Now there is great fear, you cannot sleep. In fact now you are more afraid than you ever were; you know sooner or later they will topple you. They are so many and you are alone. They will gather together to topple you.

But the master has no trembling because he has no desire. And he does not cling to anything because he knows that there is nothing worth clinging to; he has that clarity of vision. All that is his is always his, nobody can take it away. He sees it now. And all that is not his is going to be taken away whether you cling to it or not, so what is the point of clinging? Why waste time?

He never hesitates -- his clarity is such. For a master it is never a question of deciding between alternatives; he simply sees... and he acts. It is not a question of either/or. Never! He sees the door and goes out through it. It is not a question of deciding whether to go through the wall or through the door. It is always a question for you to decide whether to go through the wall or through the door. In fact, the wall looks more appealing because millions of times you have tried through the wall and you are really angry at the wall and you want to prove that one day you are going to defeat this wall. This dumb wall has been defeating you again and again; you want to take revenge. In fact, you can't see the door; you only see this wall and that wall. It is always a question of choosing which wall you want to go through.

For the master it is never a question of choice. He lives choicelessly because he lives consciously. He is alert, he has eyes to see, and you are blind; hence you always hesitate. Because he has no fear, no clinging, no hesitation: HE HAS FOUND PEACE. Naturally, there is tremendous peace in his being.

CALMLY
HE LETS GO OF LIFE,
OF HOME AND PLEASURE AND DESIRE.

CALMLY HE LETS GO OF LIFE.... He does not make any fuss about it, he does not brag about renunciation. Whatsoever he sees is futile, he drops it. In fact, to say he drops it is not right -- he lets it go, he allows it to be dropped. He does not resist, that's all. He makes no effort to keep it. And very calmly, without any effort. His life is effortless.

OF HOME.... Home represents security -- he drops the idea of security. What security can there be here when death is going to take everything away? In this life there can be no security, on this shore there is no security; hence he does not bother about security.

AND PLEASURE... because he knows pleasure always brings pain. He has seen it clearly, that pleasure is only a facade; behind it comes hidden pain. He can see through and through; hence he lets it go. And desire he has lived for many many lives and seen that it is unfulfillable. It is always after more: the more you have, the more you ask for. It is an absolutely absurd exercise in futility.

Seen, all these things start disappearing from his life. Not that he renounces.... That's what my emphasis is: never renounce anything. If things are worthless they will fall of their own accord. And when things fall of their own accord there is tremendous beauty in them, because they leave you peaceful, calm and quiet, collected and centered.

NOTHING OF MEN CAN HOLD HIM.
NOTHING OF THE GODS CAN HOLD HIM.
NOTHING IN ALL CREATION CAN HOLD HIM.

When there is no desire, what can hold him? What can make him a prisoner? Neither this world nor the other world, neither the earth nor paradise.

All the religions of the world talk about heaven and hell. Buddha says there is something beyond heaven and hell and that is the true existence. He calls it nirvana. No other religion talks about nirvana; nirvana is a totally different vision. It means you are not hankering for heavenly desires, heavenly joys and pleasures, because it is the same stupidity again repeated on a bigger scale, on a higher plane, but the stupidity is the same.

The master knows the futility of desire; hence he has no desire for heaven, he has no desire at all. Nothing binds him and nothing holds him.

DESIRE HAS LEFT HIM,
NEVER TO RETURN.

... Because he has seen that it is futile. If you drop it because I am saying it, then it will return again and again. If you drop it out of your own experience through meditation, then it has gone forever, NEVER TO RETURN.

SORROW HAS LEFT HIM,
NEVER TO RETURN.

And sorrow is only a shadow of desire. Remember it always: everything has to happen to you through your own experience.

Buddha's last words to his disciples were: Be a light unto yourself. And how can you be a light unto yourself? Go beyond the body, the mind, the heart. Find the center of your being and suddenly there is light. It is already there, it is already burning bright. It is your very being; you just have to discover it.

Discovering it one discovers truth.

Discovering it one discovers peace.

Discovering it one discovers bliss, nirvana.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Life, love, laughter

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
RAMAKRISHNA STAYED IN HIS BODY THROUGH SHOWING INTEREST IN FOOD. NOW TELL ME THE TRUTH -- IS IT THE JOKES THAT KEEP YOU HERE?

Anand Masta, yes, in a way it is true. Religion has for centuries lacked many things. One of the most important of them all is laughter; religion has been too serious. Seriousness is a kind of disease: it is the cancer of the soul. It is very destructive, it is suicidal. Hence, if you don't see religion flowering on the earth -- although there are three hundred religions, millions of churches, temples, mosques, still the earth goes on missing religious consciousness -- the simple reason is that seriousness has killed religion.

Seriousness tends to become sad. You cannot be serious without being sad; they are two sides of the same coin. And you can be serious and sad only if you have missed your roots in life and existence. Only the pathological people are serious; the healthy, the whole will never be serious, cannot be serious.

It was one of the most unfortunate accidents in human history that religion became associated with seriousness. That association has to be destroyed, mercilessly destroyed. Religion has to be freed from the imprisonment of seriousness. Only then will it be healthy, only then will it be able to sing and dance and rejoice. The serious religion has always been rooted in the idea that there is something wrong in life,

something basically wrong in life, as if life is a punishment.

Life is a gift of God, not a punishment. And there is nothing wrong in life. If something is wrong it must be in you. You don't know the art of living, you are incapable of moving into the depth and into the mystery of life. You must be a coward; hence you cling to the shore, to the known, to the familiar. And life always goes on moving into the unknown. Life is adventurous and you are a coward, hence you soon part company. Life goes on its way of adventure and you cling to your security. Clinging to your security you become dead, and when you become dead, life seems to be a drag, a dull affair. In fact, you have lost contact with life.

It is as if you uproot a rosebush from the earth -- soon it will start dying, it will lose its greenness, its roses will wither away. Nothing is wrong with the rosebush, nothing is wrong with the earth either, only you have disconnected them. The rosebush needs nourishment, then it can bloom in thousands of flowers, it can have all the green of the world and all the red and all the gold. Man also is a rosebush. He needs his own soil, he needs roots into existence.

When you are born you are born only with the potential to exist, to survive, not with the art of making life a joy, a bliss, a celebration. That art has to be learned. To me, religion is that very art, the supreme art: the art of transforming the lower into the higher. Religion to me is alchemy. It is the process of transforming the potential into the actual. Man has lived at the minimum; hence he looks so dull. Man can live at the maximum and then there will be great brilliance and great radiance and then there will be great flowering.

Laughter is as precious as prayer or even more precious than prayer, because the man who cannot laugh cannot pray either. A prayer that does not come out of a joyous heart is already dead. It cannot reach God, it cannot leave the earth, it has no wings. It is like a rock: it will fall back to the earth, it cannot fly into the sky.

Religion has lived without laughter, that's why religion has been a corpse. And you are worshipping corpses in your churches and in your temples and in your mosques, you have become worshippers of death. Rather than worshipping life you have been worshipping death.

My approach is totally different -- I bring you a new vision. Religion is against laughter, is against love, is against rejoicing, is against celebration. The religious person, the so-called religious person, condemns everything of this world; he lives surrounded by a thousand and one condemnations. He lives in fear, in trembling. He does not live, he only vegetates.

Your so-called saints and mahatmas are not real people, they don't have the guts to be real, they are phony. But you have worshipped them for so long, and you still go on worshipping them. And the reason you worship them is because they are so dead, because they are so serious, because they are so ugly, because their whole approach towards life is so negative. They are anti-life, anti-love, anti-laughter -- how can they be FOR God? It is only through love and laughter and a tremendous joy in life that you start feeling the presence of something that is beyond.

When life becomes an adventure, a dance of ecstasy, then only do you move beyond the confinement of the body and the mind and soar high towards the infinite.

Yes, Masta, you can say I live on your laughter. I rejoice seeing you dance, sing and laugh. I rejoice seeing you in deep love. I rejoice seeing you dropping the garbage of centuries, the rotten, stupid superstitions of centuries. I rejoice seeing you getting out of the old, being born anew.

All the religions were born thousands of years ago; everything has changed. Those religions don't fit anymore, they have no relevance, their context has disappeared. But they go on sitting on your head, heavy mountains, and they don't allow you to move. In fact, the older the religion, the more precious you think it is. It is not so: the older the religion, the more irrelevant it is.

Religion has to be as new as life itself. Religion has to be new every day, each moment. And that's how the religious person lives: he goes on dying to the past every moment, he is born anew every moment. He moves with life. He has no clinging to the Vedas and no clinging to the Bible and no clinging to the Koran. He can read them as beautiful literature, but he does not cling to them. Those who cling to them are being stupid because something may have been relevant two thousand years ago, but it has no meaning anymore. And you know it perfectly well, but you don't have courage enough to get out of the old fold.

All the vested interests are against you getting out of the old fold. All the vested interests want you to remain committed to the past because then you can be exploited more easily. If you are not committed to the past the priests will disappear, because they represent the past. Who will pay any attention to the pope or to the shankaracharya? They will become laughingstocks! In fact they are ridiculous, utterly ridiculous. All their ideas are so out-of-date that you go on tolerating them only because it is risky to say that they are

out-of-date. It is risky because you may lose something in your business, in your investment. You may start falling apart from the society. You are afraid of being individuals, you want to remain part of the crowd.

And religion's whole purpose is to make you individuals. Religion loses all meaning when it starts making you, forcing you, in fact, to be part of the crowd. Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan, Buddhist -- these are crowds. You have not chosen to be a Christian; it is accidental that you are born a Christian or a Jew or a Hindu. How can religion be accidental? Is such an important phenomenon decided by the accident of birth? You have to be consciously alert to choose your path towards God. You have not chosen your path, you have not even chosen God. You have been forced to choose, and you have allowed all this to happen. It is a bondage! Your being a Christian is a bondage.

The people gathered around Christ were real Christians, were the only Christians, because they had chosen. They were going against the crowd, they were risking their lives, they were moving in danger. They were born as Jews. They would have been more comfortable, they would have lived more conveniently if they had not followed Jesus. Following Jesus was dangerous. It proved dangerous to Jesus himself; he was crucified. His disciples were victimized in every possible way. Those were real people, authentic people. To be a Christian now means nothing.

The people who were gathering around Gautama the Buddha were real Buddhists. They were religious people, because going against the whole crowd of the Hindus, against the whole pattern of the society and following a very rebellious man, being with him, was accepting the life of insecurity. They were genuine, authentic seekers. But the man who is born a Buddhist has not risked anything; it is just a coincidence that he is born a Buddhist.

If you had been adopted by a Mohammedan when you were a small child you would have been a Mohammedan; if you had been adopted by a Jew you would have been a Jew. And you would have never known who you were by your birth, because nobody is born as a Christian or a Buddhist or a Hindu -- everybody is born free. God gives you freedom to choose.

But society does not want you to be free. Neither the state nor the church nor other vested interests want you to be free. They want to cripple you and paralyze you, they want to destroy your intelligence. They don't want you to be very happy either because happy people can be dangerous. Miserable people are good, miserable people are always controllable, miserable people are always ready to become enslaved. They are so miserable, they are always seeking somebody who can give them support, who can make their lives a little easier. The happy person becomes independent; the happier he is, the more independent.

A Jesus or a Buddha or a Krishna or a Confucius, these are the most blissful people the earth has known. They are utterly independent people. They don't care a bit about what others say; they don't bother about their opinions for the simple reason that they don't depend on anybody else. Their bliss is inner.

The society does not want you to be really blissful. It wants you to be sad and ill; it wants you to be pathological, neurotic. Only a neurotic society can be dominated by the priests and the politicians. Only people who have lost all intelligence can be led by idiots like Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. People who have intelligence can't be led by such people. These people are insane! In a better world, there won't be any possibility of Adolf Hitlers. The moment there is somebody like that he will be put in a mental asylum: he has to be treated, he is mad. But right now these mad people have become very influential. Their very madness makes them powerful. They are so mad that the people who are not so mad start following them. They look like leaders.

And people are different only in degrees. Somebody is more mad than you and you are a little less mad than him; of course, one who is more mad than you is going to be your leader. He will be more stubborn, more dogmatic, he will appear more determined, he will appear to have more willpower, he will have a certain hypnotic influence, but that is possible only if you have lost all your intelligence.

My effort here is to give you back that which is really yours. I don't want you to become part of any religion. I simply want you to be religious -- neither Christians nor Hindus, nor Mohammedans -- just religious. That is enough! There is no need to choose a particular doctrine. Religion has nothing to do with doctrines, it is more existential.

And unless you love life you will not be able to love God either. If he is the creator you have to love his creation to love him. To hate his creation and to show love to the creator is absurd. To condemn the creation and to praise the creator is utterly stupid, illogical, unintelligent. If you love the music, only then do you love the musician, or vice versa. And this existence is so beautiful!

Except in man you will not find any sadness anywhere. The trees are not sad and the animals are not sad and the stars are not sad, even rocks are not sad, only man -- because only man has been manipulated,

exploited, distracted from his center.

Yes, Masta, when I see you laughing, loving, rejoicing, dancing, singing, I feel like lingering a little more in the body for you.

I have given you the name Anand Masta. ANAND means bliss and MASTA means mad -- madly blissful, utterly drunk in blissfulness. And very few sannyasins are so deeply fulfilling their names as you are doing. I am absolutely happy with you, all my blessings are for you. Get more and more drunk!

God is not far away. Just when you lose yourself in love he is as close as he can ever be. When you lose yourself in dance, when you abandon yourself in dance, when the ego disappears in your dance, he is just your partner in the dance -- nobody else but him. Whoever the partner is, he is the partner. When your heart is throbbing with joy and ecstasy in singing, he is in your heart, at the very core of your being. And when you laugh, if the laugh is total, if every fiber of your being is laughing....

That's why I love jokes. Jokes are very religious, very spiritual! All jokes are spiritual because they suddenly trigger a process in you and you forget all your seriousness. For a moment you are again an innocent child, again full of wonder and awe. And the laughter overwhelms you, you are drowned in the laughter. The ego is not found when you are deep in laughter. And whenever ego disappears, God is.

Remember it as one of the most fundamental laws: whenever the 'I' is absent, God is present -- they both cannot be present together. The relationship between the ego and God is just like the relationship between darkness and light. If light is present, darkness cannot be there, because darkness is nothing but the absence of light. How can there be presence and absence together? If darkness is there then light cannot be there.

There is an ancient parable:

After many many millions of years, Darkness approached God and told him, "This is too much! I have been patient enough, but for no reason at all your Sun goes on torturing me, chasing me every morning. I have not even taken enough rest and he is back and the chase begins. And I have to run and he goes on running after me. Now it is getting tiring. I have not done anything wrong to this Sun. Why is he so much after me? Why is he carrying such enmity for me?"

God also thought, "This is unfair!" And he called the Sun. The Sun came and said, "I don't know what you are talking about. Have you gone mad or something? What Darkness? I have never come across any Darkness. I have never seen her, I have never met her, so of course, why should I chase your Darkness? I don't even know her! Where is she? You bring her before me! And unless you bring her before me, how can I answer? Both parties have to be present in court. First I have to see who this Darkness is who has been complaining against me and with whom I am not even acquainted. All these millions of years since you have made me I have never seen her, I have never met her. I don't even know her whereabouts." And God said, "That is right. I will call her."

And since then, millions of years have again passed and God has been trying. You have heard that God is omnipotent -- he is not, because he has not been able to call both of them together yet. Yes, sometimes Darkness comes and complains and sometimes the Sun comes and says, "This is unfair -- let us both be present." But even God is not capable of making that happen. So it is just pending, it is in the files. One day, just looking in the files I came across it, and I think it is going to remain forever in the files.

Darkness and light cannot be present together. The ego is just darkness; absence of consciousness is ego. When you become conscious, ego disappears. When consciousness is total, ego is not found at all. And the totality of consciousness is another name for the experience of God.

God is not a person, let me remind you again and again -- God is only an experience of absolute awareness, of ultimate ecstasy. Hence I say laugh deeply, love deeply, live deeply. Risk everything for love, laughter, life. Let your life be a great exploration and go on always moving into the unknown and the unknowable.

Nobody else has used jokes in a spiritual way; hence sometimes people are shocked. When they come for the first time to listen to me, naturally they are shocked because they want to hear something very serious -- as if they are not serious enough already! They want to hear something esoteric, something nonsensical, something which makes no sense to them; then they think there must be great meaning in it. When something is incomprehensible to them they think this is great philosophy! Whenever they come across something written in stupid jargon, esoteric, occult, spiritual, they become very much interested. They think they are going to find some treasure in it.

The treasure is not hidden in big words, the treasure is hidden in you. And it is to be discovered, not

through big words, it is to be discovered through wordlessness, it is to be discovered through silence.

And haven't you felt after deep laughter that a sudden silence comes to you in the wake of it? -- the silence after a storm. For a moment it is as if the mind stops functioning... you are utterly relaxed, in a deep rest.

Those are the moments, Masta, when you start feeling the presence of God. Those are the first glimpses that God is. There is no other proof.

Hence my commune is going to remain a shock to the traditional people. They have seen many spiritual communes, but they were all serious. Jesus will understand what I am saying, but not the pope of the Vatican, because these fools go on saying that Jesus never laughed. And I tell you, on my own authority, that he must have been one of the most hilarious persons. Who else can laugh so beautifully as Jesus? Who else has the right? He was not a deadly kind of saint; he lived, and lived very close to the earth. He lived with all kinds of ordinary people -- with drunkards and gamblers and tax collectors and prostitutes -- and he loved eating and drinking.

Indian spiritual phonies are very much against drinking. That's why they cannot believe that Jesus is enlightened. Many Jaina monks have asked me, "Why do you say that Jesus is enlightened, as Buddha and Mahavira are? He used to drink wine!" There is nothing wrong in it, one just has to learn the art of drinking wine. One should not drink too much; the golden mean has to be followed. Nobody has ever heard that Jesus was lying in the street! He must have known how much to drink and when to drink and when not to drink.

And moreover, wine is absolutely vegetarian; far more vegetarian than milk which Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist monks think is the purest food. It is animal food! It is closer to nonvegetarian food than to vegetarian food. It is part of the human body or the animal body. Wine has nothing wrong in it. And if one is foolish one can drink too much water and can get into trouble. So it is not a question of drinking.

And what is wrong with enjoying eating? He must have enjoyed eating because we have many references that every night with his disciples the gathering used to continue late into the night, eating, drinking.... And do you think he was eating and drinking and they all were eating and drinking and everybody was sitting serious and somber and saintly? Is this the way to drink and eat and enjoy it? They must have been telling jokes and they must have been gossiping and they must have been talking like human beings.

He was very human in that sense, far more human than Buddha and Mahavira. They look more abstract, more in the sky and less on the earth. He was very earthly. He used to stay in the house of a prostitute, Mary Magdalene. Now, your Vatican pope will not have that much guts! Even though he is a Polack, that much guts I don't think he will have!

But when people come here, these people who think themselves spiritual, they come with their ideas, their prejudices -- that there should be no laughter, no dancing, no singing. And when they see sannyasins hugging, then this is too much -- as if there is something wrong in hugging! When they see people holding hands with deep love they are shocked. Spiritual people should be very anti-life, utterly life-negative; they should not affirm life in any way. And my whole effort here is to affirm life in all possible ways.

Masta, a few jokes for you:

Once there was a little girl who came across the word 'frugal' and asked her mother what it meant. She was told that it meant "to save." The next day the child was asked to write a story at school, and handed in the following:

"Once upon a time a princess was lost in the woods and as night fell she became frightened. She began to run, crying out, 'Frugal me! Frugal me!'

"A passing prince heard her pleas and ran to her rescue. He frugaled her and they lived happily ever after."

"Hey, Giulio, where did you get the black eye?"

"Aw, I was at my girl's house," explained the young lover, "and we was-a dancing together real-a tight-a when her father walked-a in!"

"So?"

"So," said the Italian, "the old-a guy's deaf-a. He couldn't-a hear the music-a!"

A Texas cowboy was walking down a Tijuana street. Suddenly young Pablo walked up to him and yanked on his sleeve.

"Hey, meester," said the boy, "you wanna make love to my seester?"

"Podnah," said the Texan, "Ah don't even drink the water here!"

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU SAID THAT FOR BUDDHA FREEDOM IS THE HIGHEST. BUT HIS "DHAMMA" MEANS "THE LAW,"
WHICH INHIBITS FREEDOM. HOW DO FREEDOM AND LAW GO TOGETHER? PLEASE COMMENT.

Anand Maitreya, freedom for Gautama the Buddha is the very law of life. Hence there is no contradiction. Life itself is rooted in freedom. We are not machines, we are not preprogramed. We are utter freedom -- now it is up to us what to make of it. All the alternatives are open, we can choose any alternative, that is our choice. We can become anybody, that is our choice.

It is as if you find a marble rock -- now it depends on you what you want to make out of it. You can sculpt a Christ, you can also sculpt a Judas. The rock is totally available to you; now you have to decide, it is your decision, your conscious decision, what you want to make out of it.

Michelangelo was passing by a shop which used to sell marble. He saw a big marble rock outside the shop, he had seen it lying there for years. He asked the owner, "What's the matter? Can't you sell it?"

The man said, "I have dropped the idea. I can't sell it. Nobody is ready to purchase it, it is useless. I have thrown it out. But if you are interested you can take it free of charge so at least my place will be empty and I can put other rocks there."

Michelangelo took the rock with him, and after one year he invited the owner to see. The owner could not believe his eyes; he had never seen such a beautiful Jesus. He said, "How could you do it? You are really a magician! That rock was utterly useless; no other sculptor was ready to take it even free of charge."

And Michelangelo is reported to have said, "It has nothing to do with me. When I was passing, Jesus called out from the rock saying, 'I am imprisoned here! Help me to get out of this rock!' And I have just removed the unnecessary chunks, I have freed him."

But a Michelangelo is needed to hear it, to hear the Jesus inside the rock calling him to help him to be freed.

A rock is just a rock; it depends on you what you make out of it. That's what existentialists say: that man is born absolutely free. In the ancient days, philosophers used to think that man is born with an essence. Existentialists say man is born only as an existence, with no essence. He has to create the essence out of his own choice. And I perfectly agree with the existentialist approach.

Buddha is the first existentialist of the world and far more truly an existentialist than Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jaspers and others, because after all these existentialists are only thinkers -- they think about existence. Buddha really transformed himself. He was not talking about the essence -- he created it, he showed the world what man can make out of himself.

Gurdjieff used to say that man is not born with a soul. The meaning is the same. It looks very strange when you hear for the first time that man is not born with a soul. The soul has to be created, man is born empty. And millions die only as hollow emptinesses. Their souls are never born because they never make any effort. The old idea is that everybody is born with a soul; it frees you from the great responsibility of creating your own being, of creating yourself. When there is no responsibility to create, you go on living accidentally, like driftwood.

Buddha says freedom is the very law of life. What he means by it is that there is nothing higher than freedom. But by the word 'law', please don't misunderstand him. In fact for dhamma, the word 'law' is only approximately right. In the English language there is not exactly the right word for dhamma. In Chinese there is a word tao that exactly means dhamma. The closest word in English is logos, but that has gone out of use. Hence 'the law' is used, but 'law' has other associations: the ordinary law of the state, of governments, of societies. That is not the meaning of Buddha. Of course, these laws are inhibitions; they prohibit you, they hinder you from freedom.

Buddha is saying freedom is the only real law and anything that hinders your freedom is against the law

of life. Be free. All those laws have to be broken, sabotaged. You have to take your life in your own hands and you are responsible for it. No fate is responsible, no destiny is responsible. You have to create yourself by your own effort.

You are just a tabula rasa. You can write beautiful poems on it, beautiful calligraphy, you can do beautiful paintings on it; or you can leave it as it is. Or you can simply throw colors on it, meaninglessly, in an insane way, like a small child. You can destroy the whole thing. And there is nobody else who is responsible except you; the total responsibility is yours.

That is the most emphatic thing that Buddha wants you to remember: don't shirk your responsibility. Whatsoever you are is your own work and whatsoever you want to be you can be. But you can be that only if freedom is the law of life. If everything is destined, if there is something like fate, if there is something which has been preprogrammed in you, then you are not a man at all, then you are just a biocomputer. You are simply going to repeat the program, you are a gramophone record. You don't have any freedom, you can't change anything. You are just play-things in the hands of unknown forces.

Buddha says this is not true. Hence he even denies the existence of God for the simple reason that if God is there then there will be trouble; then he will be the suprememost being. His very presence will become an inhibition to you.

That's exactly the logic of Friedrich Nietzsche. He said: God is dead, therefore man is now free. But Nietzsche was only a philosopher. He could not contain that much freedom. He went mad.

Buddha is not a philosopher at all, he is a mystic. He used the freedom. He really became responsible for himself. He created his own being and he became the most beautiful person who has ever lived on the earth. He followed the law of freedom and achieved the ultimate joy, the ultimate truth.

You can do the same too. That is his message. He says, "Whatsoever has happened to me can happen to you. If it is not happening, nobody else is responsible except you." So take the total responsibility in your own hands, feel and be responsible, and use the law of freedom because it is available. Life has been given to you with no preprogram; now it is up to you what you want to make out of it. You can become an ugly monster -- a Genghis Khan, a Tamerlane, a Nadirshah -- or you can become a Gautam Buddha, a Jesus Christ, a Lao Tzu, a Zarathustra. It all depends on you, it is your freedom. Choose!

But you can choose only when you are conscious; you can choose only when you are aware, alert. The more aware you are, the more you are capable of choosing the course of your life. The more aware you are, the more you know, the more you can feel a sense of direction.

Freedom is the foundation of life and freedom is the ultimate goal too. Freedom is the source and freedom is the goal.

Use freedom to be free from all bondage.

Use freedom to become ultimately free.

Use freedom to become freedom itself.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I-A NEVER-A THOUGHT-A IT WOULD-A COME-A TO THIS-A, BUT-A I WISH-A I-A WERE-A AN-A ITALIAN!
MUCH-A LOVE-A AND-A PASTA, BIGGA PREMA.

Bigga Prema, avoid such desires, because if you carry them too long they start becoming a reality. Then don't make me responsible for it! Be very careful what you desire, because the danger is that the desire may be fulfilled sooner or later.

I love Italians -- as much as I love others -- but naturally many people are feeling jealous of Italians, for the simple reason that I am telling so many jokes about Italians. But the reason is not that I love Italians more than the Dutch or the Australians; the reason is simply that my librarian happens to be Lalita, an Italian, so she goes on finding Italian jokes for me! So rather than you desiring to be an Italian, just desire that I may get one assistant for Lalita from every country. In the new commune, I am thinking Lalita must have at least a dozen assistants! But beware of having this desire.

Do you know why they hang salami at Italian weddings?
To keep the flies off the bride.

And do you know who fired the bullet into Mussolini's body?
One hundred top Italian marksmen.

Bianco, the barber, nicked his customer six times while shaving him. Finally the bleeding man asked if he could have a razor.

"Why?" asked the Italian. "You wanna shave-a yourself?"

"No," said the victim, "I want to defend myself!"

Collared by the cops after he roared up a one-way street and crashed his 1949 Ford into a store window, the Italian drunk wanted to know what the hell was going on.

"You went against the traffic, you dumb bastard," the angry cop said, "Didn't you see the arrows back there?"

"Holy Mother-a Jesus!" the boozed-up guinea said. "I didn't even see the Indians!"

And if you really want to change in your next life, in the next round when you come back, Bigga Prema, rather than being an Italian, be a Polack! Now you see, the Polack has become the pope -- he has defeated all the Italians! Now if a Polack can become a pope, the next thing is that a woman is going to become a pope-a.

Why do Polack dogs have flat noses?

From chasing parked cars.

And why can't Polacks be pharmacists?

They can't fit the little brown bottles in their typewriters!

And do you know what is written on the bottom of Polish milk bottles?

"Open at other end."

Wojawicz walked into the department store with his mangy mutt. A floorwalker rushed over, pointed to the sign that read, NO DOGS ALLOWED and said, "Hey, mister, can't you read?"

"So," said the Polack, "who's smoking?"

And just the other day all the orange Italians and all the orange Polacks gathered together to decide who is really the greatest. Of course, there was no question of intellectual discussion... it had to be something existential! So they decided to go to the football ground by the side of the railway station and play football -- whoever wins....

For two hours everything happened -- except football. Karate chops were flying and yoga was done and boxing and wrestling and Dynamic Meditation and Kundalini Meditation. And they had forgotten completely that they needed a few referees as well; there were no referees at all.

After two hours even the football lying by the side started laughing! "What is happening?" Then a train passed by and hearing the whistle of the train the Italians thought the game was over, so they left the ground, thinking, "We are equal and the game is over."

But the Polacks were bent upon winning, and now, because the sun was going down, the game became even more fierce. And finally after one hour's effort the Polacks were able to score one goal -- without the Italians, but that doesn't matter!

So if you want to be something really great, it is better to be a Polack rather than an Italian. Why choose something second-rate?

Milewski was trying to light a match. He struck the first match, it didn't work, he threw it away. He struck a second match. That didn't work either and he threw it away. He struck a third one and it lit up.

"That be a good one," said the Polack, blowing it out. "I got to save it!"

A Polack and a Jew were walking in the desert. The Jew was carrying a watermelon, the Polack was

carrying a car door.

After a while the Polack said, "Why are you carrying that watermelon?"

The Jew said, "So when it gets too hot I cut it open and eat a piece of it."

After a while, the Jew said, "And why are you carrying that car door?"

"So," said the Polack, "when it gets too hot I just roll down the window!"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

A WHILE AGO I WROTE TO YOU ABOUT BEING CONFUSED, AND YOU SAID YOU WERE TAKING CARE. NOW SINCE THEN I HAVE GOT EVEN MORE CONFUSED! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ME?!

Prem Asang, taking care! That's my way of taking care! You get confused because you are carrying certain ideas and prejudices in the mind. If you don't carry any ideas, any prejudices in the mind, even I cannot confuse you; nobody in the whole world can confuse you. Confusion arises from your own inner causes.

For example, if you believe in a certain idea and I say something against it, then there is confusion. You cannot leave the old idea; it is so old, it has got so many roots in you and you have lived with it so long that it has become comfortable and cozy. You have believed in it so long, it has given you so many consolations, that now suddenly to drop it will mean moving in a state of insecurity; it has become your security and safety.

But listening to me you cannot cling to it anymore. You cannot drop it and you cannot cling to it, hence the confusion. You cannot cling to it anymore because what I am saying appeals to you, your heart understands it. Deep down something in your inner being says, "Yes, it is so." Between your heart and head a conflict ensues; that is confusion.

Confusion simply means that now you are unable to decide where to go: to go on clinging to the old, which will be impossible because now you have seen that that is not right, that you have been clinging only to a comfortable lie. It is not true, and your heart feels that it is not true... although it gives you consolation. Lies can give you consolation, they are very consoling; otherwise nobody would believe in lies. Everybody believes in lies for the simple reason that they are cheap and give you great consolation. You need not make any effort to realize them. They are handed over to you by others: by your parents, by your teachers, by the society, by the atmosphere. You simply go on gathering from everywhere, from every source.

You are living in a sandcastle; but everything goes well -- unless somebody tells you that this is a sandcastle. Once you have heard that this is a sandcastle, the problem arises: you cannot live in it anymore, it is dangerous to live in it. And you cannot get out of it because you have become so accustomed to it. Hence the confusion. Confusion simply means you are unable to decide.

Unless you become decisive, Asang, the confusion will go on growing. My work consists in creating confusion in you, because without creating confusion I cannot pull you out of your sandcastles, I cannot pull you out of your paper boats, I cannot pull you out of your lies and dreams. And I know perfectly well that when you have put so much investment in a certain belief -- maybe you have lived for thirty years, forty years in a certain belief -- to see now that it was wrong, that it was utterly stupid, that it was ridiculous, creates a great problem for you. Your self-image of being intelligent is shattered. For forty years you have carried something ridiculous without seeing it. What kind of intelligence do you have? You become suspicious of your own intelligence and that doesn't feel good.

That's why to be with a master needs courage. To be with a master needs the courage to accept that "I don't know."

The moment you accept, Asang, that "I don't know," all confusion will disappear, evaporate, simply evaporate -- just as dewdrops evaporate in the early morning sun leaving no trace behind them. The confusion is because you are clinging to a few things which in the past you thought were very valuable. You thought that they were ornaments, golden, studded with diamonds, and now I have made you aware that they are nothing but chains -- maybe golden chains and maybe studded with diamonds, but what are diamonds? -- they are also stones. And what is gold? The difference exists only in man's mind, otherwise gold and iron are the same. The evaluation is ours, the projection is ours. But chains are chains and the chains have to be broken. Now the things you have believed were ornaments, decorations, are being shown

to you persistently as nothing but chains.

Either you will have to escape from me... but remember, escaping won't help you. Once you have been on my surgical table it is better to go through the whole operation! If you escape in the middle of the operation you will remain confused your whole life, because whatsoever you have understood from me is not going to leave you, it will haunt you. So there is no escape from me.

Once you are with me you have to learn the ways of transformation, you have to go through a radical change. You have to die to the past and be born anew. It is hard, it is painful. Every birth is painful, and spiritual birth particularly is very painful. There are no sedatives available. For spiritual birth one has to go through many pains, but those pains are worth it because you grow out of your imprisonments; you grow into freedom, you grow up.

And once you have tasted the joy of growing up, of becoming mature, then there is no problem. Then you know that all that you have left behind was worthless, was rubbish.

But, Asang, this moment has to be passed through. This critical moment has to come in every disciple's life when the disciple is in a kind of limbo, neither here nor there, half in the past and half moving with me, many times thinking to escape.

Just the other day Somendra asked a question: "But, Beloved Master, where is the exit?" There is no exit here! It is one-way traffic. You only come in... we don't have another door, only the entrance. Then you have to be reborn; that is the only exit. But the exit is not in escape, it is in "inscape." It is going inwards.

Asang, I am taking as much care as you can tolerate at this moment! I will take more.... The medicine is bitter and it has to be given in small doses. And this is not homeopathic treatment, remember, this is pure allopathy -- it is pure poison! It is crucifixion, because only then is there resurrection. But that too takes three days. Between the crucifixion and the resurrection... three days. Remember those three days; they are significant, very significant. Those three days are the most difficult days.

Just think of Jesus: three days in the cave, neither dead nor alive. He couldn't have been completely dead because once you are completely dead you are gone. He was not completely alive either; otherwise he would not have remained for three days in the cave, he would have escaped sooner. He must have been hanging between these two polarities of birth and death.

Those three days are significant, they are symbolic. Those three days represent body, mind, heart. You have to die in the body, in the mind, in the heart; then only can you be born as a soul. You have to pass through this dark night of the soul. This is the womb period, those nine months in the mother's womb. In exactly the same way, the disciple has to be in the womb of the master. This buddhafiield is nothing but a womb. You are in the womb. It depends on you: if you go on clinging too long it will take a long time for you to come out.

In India we have many beautiful stories about Lucknow. Lucknow is the most mannerly city in India, very mannerly; too much in fact, so it is said. Once it happened, a woman got pregnant and she was carrying two children within her womb, and they wouldn't come out. Nine months passed, then nine years passed, then ninety years passed....

Finally the woman died and the doctors had to open the womb. Two small, ninety-year-old gentlemen were standing there and they were saying to each other, "Sir, you first!"

Don't take that much time -- here you need not be that mannerly! Jump out of the womb as quickly as possible... because the spiritual womb has no natural time -- nine months or nine years -- it all depends on the individual. It can happen in a single moment or it may not happen in an eternity.

Asang, I am taking care of you, and as you become a little more available to me, a little more patient, a little more capable of absorbing my energy, I will take more care of you.

Just a few days ago I was going to call you one night as a guest medium, but Arup informed me that, "The first time you called Asang as a guest medium, for many days she was almost in a state of craziness, so please don't call her so soon." So I had to drop the idea.

If you are ready, you can come tonight! But then don't get too insane for many days. Try to absorb me. The more capable you become, the more I will confuse you till nothing is left to confuse, till the mind is completely gone and there is nobody to confuse.

That's what happens to my disciples who have been here long enough. Now, whatsoever I say, they

listen joyously without making any comparison, without making any judgment, without any evaluation. They don't think of what I said yesterday, because if they think of that they start becoming confused. So they live in the moment with me. I live in the moment, and once you have understood how to live, you will also live in the moment with me. And then there is no confusion, then there is all clarity. And clarity is innocence and clarity is freedom.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS YOUR DOGMA?

Peter, I believe you must be a tourist here; otherwise you cannot ask such a question. I don't have any dogma. In the first place I don't like dogs at all! And 'dogma' means mother of dogs! Neither do I like any sonofabitch, nor do I like any mother of dogs! There are Christian dogmas and Hindu dogmas and Mohammedan dogmas, and what do they do? They go on barking at each other! I don't have any dogma at all. Even my kids understand it here, my small sannyasins. You can ask them.

Upachara has informed me:

Just heard on the steps in front of the office. Five sannyasin kids are having a serious talk. One of them says, "Osho is not even a sannyasin!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #7

Chapter title: No yesterday, no tomorrow, no today

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HE IS CALM.
IN HIM THE SEED OF RENEWING LIFE
HAS BEEN CONSUMED.
HE HAS CONQUERED ALL THE INNER WORLDS.

WITH DISPASSIONATE EYE
HE SEES EVERYWHERE
THE FALLING AND THE UPRISING.

AND WITH GREAT GLADNESS
HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS FINISHED.

HE HAS WOKEN FROM HIS SLEEP.

AND THE WAY HE HAS TAKEN
IS HIDDEN FROM MEN,
EVEN FROM SPIRITS AND GODS,
BY VIRTUE OF HIS PURITY.

IN HIM THERE IS NO YESTERDAY,
NO TOMORROW,
NO TODAY.

The master is calm, but with a difference. Many people are calm, but they are not masters. Calm can be cultivated very easily from the outside; it will deceive others, but it cannot deceive existence. Deep inside you will remain in a turmoil.

Hence, the first thing to be understood is that Buddha is never in favor of anything cultivated. The moral preachers, the moralists, are continuously telling people, "Be this, be that. Try to be calm, practice calm." And for thousands of years these things have been told to you; these qualities have been praised, appreciated, worshipped. Naturally you try to be calm and quiet and collected, but when you practice something it simply means you are creating a facade, you are just creating a face. It can't transform your being -- it is an exercise. Yes, it will help you to be more prestigious, to be more respectable; people will look up to you as a holy man. But in fact you have become schizophrenic, you have become a split personality, you are divided. Your surface says one thing, your inner reality is totally the opposite. You will live in a continuous civil war, you will be continuously at daggers with yourself.

It is hell to be a saint in this way. Sinners may go to hell after they die; your so-called saints live in hell here and now. There is no certainty about the future hell, but the saint's hell is very much a reality. Never try to cultivate any quality.

Then what has to be done? Should one remain violent, disturbed, insane? No, Buddha says there is another way, the right way. The right way is that these things should come as consequences -- consequences of inner awareness. The magic of awareness is that the more you become alert, naturally, the more a calm surrounds you. You need not cultivate it, it follows you like a shadow, it is simply your vibe. You are surrounded by a subtle aura of peace, serenity. When you are aware inside, there is a grace radiating from your being. That grace is spontaneous, not cultivated. And when something is spontaneous it has tremendous beauty. It is not an artificial flower, it is not a plastic flower; it is something that has grown in you, that has bloomed in you. It is your own flowering. It has fragrance because it has roots in your being.

Unless calmness comes as a shadow of awareness, beware of it. It is false, it is utterly futile. The whole effort that you have put into cultivating it has been a sheer wastage. The same effort could have been put into becoming aware.

That is the difference between morality and religion. Morality is a social phenomenon; society needs it because society consists of millions of people. It has to keep a certain order, a certain discipline; otherwise there will be chaos. Morality keeps that order. Morality creates a conscience in you. Conscience functions as an inner policeman who does not allow you to do anything that is against the law or against the code or against the tradition. Society has imprinted in your heart certain ideas and now you are dominated by those ideas. Even if you go against those ideas they will torture you, they will become a nightmare to you. If you follow them you will feel you are not tortured so much.

So the immoral person finds himself in two difficulties. One comes from the outside because he starts losing people's respect; and in this world respect is the most valuable thing in people's eyes because it is a nourishment for the ego. The moment you lose respect your ego starts dying, your ego is hurt, your ego is wounded. Secondly, something inside you starts creating an inner torture for you -- your conscience. That conscience is also created by the same society.

Hence, society pressures you from both sides, outer and inner. You are just crushed between these two rocks. So cowards cannot be immoral people; cowards are always moral people. In fact they are not moral but only cowards; because they are cowards they cannot be immoral -- that is too dangerous, too risky. And the moral people, the so-called moral people, live a superficial life. They are bound to live a superficial life

because their conscience is not their own -- what else can be their own? They don't possess even their own conscience, what else can they possess? They are the poorest people in the world.

And they are not moral because they understand the beauty of being moral; they are moral simply because they don't have guts enough to be immoral. They follow the dictates of the society and the conscience just out of fear. There is fear of the law and there is fear of hell; there is fear of the policeman and there is fear of God. They are constantly trembling, their life is nothing but a constant trembling. Their prayers arise out of that trembling -- naturally those prayers are false; they are fear-oriented. Even their conception of God is nothing but a projection of their fear.

That's why these people are rightly called God-fearing people. They are not God-loving people. And remember, one who fears God can never love God, and one who loves God need never fear. Fear and love can't exist together, it is impossible. Their coexistence is not possible in the nature of things.

But society pays you enough to be moral, gives you as much ego as it is possible to give -- not only here but in the afterworld too. There are also places, special places reserved for you in heaven. The sinner is suffering here and the sinner will suffer in hell too, and the so-called saint is respected here and he is going to be respected in the other world too.

This is a strategy, a very subtle psychological strategy of society -- to exploit you. But because of this strategy you have completely lost track of real morality: a morality that is not dictated by fear, a morality that does not arise out of cowardice, a morality that is not fear-oriented.

A totally different vision of morality has been given by the buddhas, by the awakened ones of all the ages. Their vision is that real morality comes not out of conscience but out of consciousness. Become more conscious, release more conscious energy in your being, explode into consciousness! -- and then you will see you are living a life in absolute attunement with existence. Sometimes it may be in tune with society and sometimes it may not be in tune with society, because society itself is not always in tune with existence. Whenever society is in tune with existence you will be in tune with society; whenever society is not in tune with existence you will not be in tune with society.

But the real moral person never cares, he is even ready to risk his life. Socrates did that, Jesus did that. Buddha was constantly living in danger. This has always been the case, for the simple reason that they were living according to their own light. If it fits with society, good; if it does not fit with society it is bad for society but it has nothing to do with you. Society has to change itself. Socrates is not going to change himself, Jesus is not going to change himself according to society, Buddha is not going to live according to the crowd. The crowd consists of blind people, of utterly unconscious people who are fast asleep, who know nothing of themselves. To follow them is the most stupid thing in the world that a man can do. One should be intelligent enough to wake up one's own consciousness.

Religion consists not of conscience but of consciousness. Hence, even an atheist can believe in morality. Of course, in Soviet Russia or communist China they have to follow a certain code of morality. They may not believe in God, but they have to enforce morality on people. In fact, they have to enforce it even more because the fear of God is lost. Now the state has to be really very dangerous, because that is the only fear which will keep people confined within the boundaries of morality.

It is not accidental that the Russian government and the Chinese government don't allow any freedom; they cannot allow it. Capitalist countries can allow a little freedom because God is there to help. You allow a little freedom, God won't allow that freedom -- it compensates. But in a communist country there is no God so there is no fear of the supreme, the ultimate, and no other life so there is no fear of hell.

Communist countries have to create hell here, right now, so they create concentration camps; they use Siberia as a substitute for hell. And they have created all kinds of very complicated tortures, all kinds of inhuman tortures. Even the Devil himself can learn much from them! Now in Russia if you don't agree with the society you are immediately declared a mental case -- not that you are politically of a different opinion, no, that is impossible. There can't be any possibility of somebody being politically different from the government policy, from the authoritarian principles, from the recognized ideology. Only an insane person can think that he is different. How can you go against Marx, Engels and Lenin? Impossible! This unholy trinity rules absolutely. The Russian government is totalitarian; it has to be because it has to function in such a way that the fear of God has to be replaced by something; otherwise people will become unmanageable.

Communist countries are bound to become totalitarian. They cannot be democratic, it is impossible, because who will do the work of keeping people afraid and trembling? Unless they accept God and hell.... God and hell are very helpful because they do almost all of the work. For a religious person -- a so-called religious person -- that fear is enough to hold him back, and the rest can be done by the government, but that

is a lesser part, not more than twenty or twenty-five percent. Seventy-five percent of fear comes from the psychological creation of a conscience. In a communist country there is no question of conscience, and of course the question of consciousness does not arise at all because no such thing as meditation is accepted.

A few people in Soviet Russia have become interested in my way of thinking. They have started meditating, but they have to meditate hidden underground in their basements. They cannot tell somebody else that they are meditating because meditation means you have gone insane! "There is no need to meditate at all. Why should one meditate? There is no soul to experience, no God to experience. Man is nothing but a by-product of matter. When death comes all ends, nothing remains beyond death, nothing abides." So consciousness cannot be allowed because meditation is not allowed: meditation is the science of releasing consciousness. And conscience cannot be created because the old ways of creating fear are no more accepted. The whole work has to be done by the government. Of course the government becomes ugly, the government becomes a monster.

But the same is happening in other countries too -- in more subtle ways. Communists are gross; the capitalist countries, the so-called democratic countries, are not so gross, they are subtle, but they do the same thing. They keep you tethered to the crowd, but in such an indirect way that it needs great intelligence to become aware of the fact that you are chained. Those chains are invisible.

Religion really consists in creating a different kind of morality, not the so-called ordinary morality, but a morality which is spontaneous, a morality which arises by itself and is not imposed, a morality which is a consequence of your own intelligence.

Buddha is talking about that when he says: The master IS CALM. He means that he has gone deep into his center, he has penetrated his being to the very core, and he has settled there; now he is at rest. All hustle and bustle has dropped, all running hither and thither has disappeared. Now he knows there is nowhere to go. He has arrived home, he has found his ultimate shelter, the ultimate refuge. Now he knows, "This is my shrine." Sitting in that shrine he is absolutely calm. You cannot see where he is, but you can feel his calm. You can feel him like a cool breeze, you can feel him as a shower of silence. If you come close to him, suddenly you will be touched by something invisible. Your heart will start dancing. Not that he has done anything to you, but your mind can deceive you, your mind can start rationalizing.

Just the other day I was reading a manuscript. One woman came a few months ago, a friend of Pankaja and Savita. She came here just to see what had happened to Pankaja and Savita. Pankaja is a well-known novelist and has published beautiful novels. Suddenly she became a sannyasin and dropped her beautiful career. There were great possibilities: she could have become world-famous. She was on the way -- she was becoming more and more known. Not only did she become a sannyasin, she never went back to England. Not only that -- rumors must have reached England that now she functions in the ashram as a toilet cleaner. Her friend must have been puzzled -- what had happened to her?

Then Savita also disappeared. She was also doing well in her profession. She was a therapist, earning a lot of money and moving ahead. And she also never returned to England.

Their friend came here just to see what was happening to these people -- "They must have been hypnotized." What else can the mind think? The simple explanation comes to the mind: "These people have been hypnotized." Otherwise why should one leave one's prosperous career, good livelihood -- a career which was full of possibilities? Why should one suddenly leave? Either one has gone insane or one has become hypnotized.

She came here just to observe what is happening. Then she also became a sannyasin. But she escaped immediately -- I gave her the name Kanan. She escaped. Now she writes a book about the whole experience and she says, "I don't know what happened, why I became a sannyasin. There is something which pulls you. There is something intangible -- one cannot figure it out, what it is exactly -- but something like hypnosis." She infers, "It may be in the eyes of this man or in the sound of his voice that one feels to become a sannyasin. Even I became a sannyasin, but then I became very much afraid: now I am being pulled the same way into this orange whirlpool in which Pankaja has disappeared, Savita has disappeared. It is better to go before I am too much in it and escape becomes impossible. I escaped. I dropped sannyas immediately because I was afraid -- carrying this man's mala and his picture around my neck was dangerous. Who knows what is hidden in it?"

Now, this woman thinks she is very clever, she thinks she is very rational, she thinks she has done the right thing. All that she has done is she has missed an opportunity which comes only once in a while; maybe for many lives she will not come across such a man again.

There is no hypnotism. Nobody is trying to pull you, nobody is trying to influence you. But certainly there is a fragrance which affects you, which affects you deeply. There is a calm which goes into the heart and stirs the fast-sleeping heart into a kind of wakefulness. But if you are too much in your dreams, and you have invested too much even in your nightmares, you may become afraid -- you may become afraid of being awakened. You may miss the opportunity, you may escape from the opportunity. But then you try to rationalize. You HAVE to rationalize, otherwise how will you console yourself?

Now, by writing this book she is trying to convince herself that she has done the right thing. She has done the most stupid thing in her life.

And the opportunity is still not lost, Kanan. Wherever you are in the world my eyes are reaching there too. And whatsoever I am saying here, the sound of my voice goes on resounding around the earth. If you have even a little bit of intelligence you will be pulled back into the orange whirlpool!

HE IS CALM.
IN HIM THE SEED OF RENEWING LIFE
HAS BEEN CONSUMED.
HE HAS CONQUERED ALL THE INNER WORLDS.

What has happened in the master? What has really happened in the inner world of the master? Buddha says: The first, most fundamental thing is that the seed of renewing life is burnt, utterly burnt, is consumed in the fire of awareness. Yes, awareness is a fire. It burns all that is rubbish, but it also purifies all that is gold. It does two things: burns the rubbish and purifies the gold. It is alchemy.

"The seed of renewing life" is desire. Buddha used to call it TANHA. Tanha means one wants to be born again and again, one wants more and more. In this life you want more and more, but that more is never fulfilled. When you are dying, all desires are standing there unfulfilled so you start desiring another life, one more chance.

There is a beautiful story, a great parable in the Upanishads:

One of the great kings, Yayati, was dying. He was a hundred years old, ripe enough to die -- one should be ready by that time -- but not grown-up enough; the seed of renewing life was not yet burnt. So when death came, Yayati fell at the feet of Death -- a great king, a great conqueror! -- and he said to Death, "Spare me only one hundred years more. I don't ask for more, just one hundred years more. And it is nothing for you, you can do it. All my desires are still unfulfilled because I had never thought about you. I was simply preparing and preparing. I have not enjoyed my life. Now that everything is ready -- I have conquered the whole world, I have all the riches, the most beautiful women, the most intelligent and courageous sons, the best army in the world, everything is settled, all enemies killed -- I was just thinking to relax and enjoy. Is this the time to come? All these hundred years have been spent simply in preparing for these moments. Spare me just one hundred years more so that I can live to my heart's content."

Death laughed and said, "I am ready to spare one hundred years more to you, but I will have to take one of your sons because I have to go with somebody who resembles you; if not you, at least one of your sons. I can't go empty-handed, I have to give the account to my boss himself. He will ask, 'Where is Yayati?' What am I going to say? Such a thing has never been done before, but I feel sorry for you. Just ask one of your sons."

Yayati had a hundred sons; he must have had a hundred wives too. He asked his sons. The oldest was eighty, but he started looking downwards, was not ready to say yes. Why should he? He had lived only eighty years; if his father is not contented with a hundred years, how can he be contented with only eighty years? At least twenty years more he is entitled to live. In those days, the story says, people used to live a hundred years. Why should he die a premature death, an untimely death? And this old fellow has lived enough! He did not want to hurt the old man so he didn't say anything, he kept quiet.

The father was very much shocked; he used to think that his sons were ready to sacrifice themselves. But in this world nobody is ready to sacrifice himself for anybody else. He looked around. His sons also started looking at each other, meaning "Why don't YOU go?"

The youngest, who was only twenty years old, stood up and he said, "I am ready. Take me with you, I am coming with you."

Even Death felt sorry for the boy. Death came close to the young man and said, "Are you a fool or

something? Your other brothers -- one is eighty, one is seventy-five, one is seventy, sixty, sixty-five, fifty -- these people are not ready to go and you are the youngest, you have not lived at all. Why are you ready to go?"

The young man said, "If my father could not live in a hundred years, if my eldest brother could not live in eighty years, if my other brothers... nobody has been able to live, then the whole project is nonsense. I don't want to waste time. If I have to die it is better to die now. Why wait for eighty years? If THESE people have not been able to manage, it is absolutely certain it is unmanageable. And let my father try a hundred years more."

Death tried to convince him, but he wouldn't listen. Death had to take him away.

After a hundred years, Death came back and the situation was the same. Again Yayati fell at his feet and started crying and weeping and he said, "I know that now I should be ready, but nothing is fulfilled yet; all the desires are the same. I have LIVED all the desires, I cannot say that I have not lived them, but nothing is fulfilled. I want more! Now that I have lived a hundred years a new desire has arisen -- I want more! I want to live at least one time more, a hundred years more, just one time more."

And this went on happening again and again. When Yayati became one thousand years old and Death came, he was just going to fall at his feet. Death said, "Wait -- enough is enough! Can't you see the point, Yayati? Are you so blind? You have lived one thousand years, and you have been doing the same things again and again. You have done nothing new in these one thousand years, and still you want more? Can't you see the simple point that mind lives in the more, it goes on asking for more? There is no end to it. Now you come with me -- I am not going to listen anymore. Now even my boss is feeling angry with me. He says, 'This is too much! This man has been given too much time.' But I also wanted to try -- let us see what you can make out of one thousand years. You have not made any progress, you are exactly in the same place, going in circles."

Buddha calls this tanha -- going in circles -- this constant desire for more. One becomes a master when this desire for more disappears, when the seed is burnt in the fire of awareness. HE IS CALM. Then of course he is calm.

When there is no desire, when the winds of desire are blowing no more, there are no waves in the inner ocean, then the ocean becomes absolutely calm. In fact, the ocean is not the cause of waves -- the cause is the invisible winds. You see the waves in the ocean so you think the waves are caused by the ocean; they are not. The waves are caused by invisible winds blowing over the ocean. If the winds stop the ocean will be absolutely calm.

Why are you in a turmoil? Why are there constantly so many waves inside you, so many thoughts and so many memories, fantasies? Why does this whole circus go on? For the simple reason that there are invisible winds of desire blowing upon you.

The watchful person, the intelligent person, becomes aware of the root cause: it is in the winds, the winds of desire. He stops desiring. Seeing the futility of desire he drops desiring. The seed is burnt and then there is calm. This calm is not the calm of your so-called polished, cultured man. This calm is totally different, its quality is different, its source is different -- it comes from the innermost core. The Buddha is calm because the winds are not blowing anymore. And they cannot blow because the very seed has been burnt. HE HAS CONQUERED ALL THE INNER WORLDS. There are worlds upon worlds inside you too, just as outside there are worlds upon worlds. Scientists go on discovering new solar systems, new stars, new galaxies of stars, new milky ways. They go on discovering, there seems to be no end. There seem to be universes and universes unending. So it is in the inner world: there are also many planes and many universes, but all are rooted in a single seed.

Out of a single seed a big tree can grow. You can't see it in the seed, but if you put it in the soil soon a tree starts growing. A small seed brings such a big tree with such thick foliage that thousands of people can sit underneath it, thousands of birds can make their nests in it. And millions of seeds will grow in this tree and each seed contains again millions of trees, and so on and so forth. The scientists say a single seed can make the whole earth green; not only this earth but all the earths in the universe can be made green by a single seed. What potential!

You are all carrying frozen seeds within you which are just waiting for their right opportunity. Maybe you have forgotten completely about a certain desire because there has not been an opportunity to provoke it. That's why monks and nuns and the traditional sannyasins used to escape from the world, simply to deceive themselves -- because when they went to the caves in the mountains they were going away from the

opportunities where they would have become aware of the seed, where the seed would have had a chance to grow.

But remember, the seed is there whether you give it a chance to grow or not, and the seed can remain there for years; for lives it will wait. Give it an opportunity, an accidental opportunity, and immediately the seed becomes alive. The seed can remain frozen, almost dead for millions of lives.

That's why I am absolutely against escapism -- for the simple reason that if you want to burn the seed the best place is in the world, in the marketplace, because there are all kinds of opportunities. You cannot avoid seeing the seed and seeing it means you have to do something about it. If you stop seeing it, if you put a seed on a rock, you will forget about the seed because it cannot grow on the rock.

That's why monks and nuns used to move to the monasteries, nunneries; those were rocks. And they chose to be in the mountains. Have you observed it? -- that all the monasteries of the world have been made in rocky mountains, not beautiful mountains where there are great trees and animals and birds -- because there is danger: even two birds making love is enough of an opportunity to give you the idea! Just two animals in foreplay, and the monks and the nuns will have a great desire arising in them. Suddenly the seed will start sprouting. So they chose to be in rocks, utter rocks where not a tree grows. Or the monasteries were built somewhere in the desert. All Christian monasteries were made in the desert. The ancient Christians lived in the desert, for the simple reason that, in a desert, life is so absent, so utterly absent, that you can forget all about it.

Jaina monks chose mountains, but ugly mountains, just rocks and nothing else, because anything beautiful can create trouble. The distant call of a cuckoo can drive you cuckoo! -- because it has a sexuality of its own, it has a sensuality of its own, it is a sensual call. Do you know? -- it is the male cuckoo who is calling; the female simply waits. She simply waits for the male to come closer. Yes, she gives hints that "I am available," and yet keeps herself very aloof, very proud -- available, but not so easily available either!

Have you seen in the animals one strange phenomenon? -- that it is always the male who is taking the initiative. The peacock with beautiful feathers is the male; one should have thought otherwise, but it is the male not the female. The female has no feathers; the female is ordinary, does not look so beautiful. The male looks very beautiful and the male dances with great exhibition of all his feathers -- they are really beautiful feathers -- and he dances a great dance. He tries to allure.

Something strange has happened in man only; it seems unnatural. In fact, ornaments should be used by men, not by women. Men should use more colorful clothes than women. There is no need for women to bother about anything else, just to be female is enough! That's the whole story of nature if you look around: all the strategies have been used by males.

The monks and nuns have to be protected, but this kind of protection is not going to help. Even if the seed can remain protected for many lives it is there, it is not burnt yet.

An old maid had been going to sit in the park each day for years. As she fed the pigeons, which always roosted and fluttered around the bronze statue of a young Apollo, her eyes would wander over his nude form and she would dream of holding him alive in her arms.

One day as she sat there, a good fairy took pity on her.

Appearing by her side, the fairy offered her three wishes. Without delay the old maid began, "First I want to be young and very desirable."

This was no sooner said than done.

"Second, I wish that the statue of Apollo would come to life."

A wave of the fairy's wand and instantly he sprang down from the pedestal, vibrantly alive. The new voluptuous maid faltered and began to blush. Fluttering her eyelashes coyly she murmured, "I would like to give the third wish to Apollo."

Turning to the naked young god, the good fairy said, "What is your wish?"

"I want to shit on a pigeon," he answered.

Now the marble statue had been carrying this seed maybe for hundreds of years. Those pigeons were continuously doing this thing to him. Waiting, waiting, waiting... one day the time arrived -- all that he wants to do is this.

Buddha says: HE IS CALM. IN HIM THE SEED OF RENEWING LIFE HAS BEEN CONSUMED. HE HAS CONQUERED ALL THE INNER WORLDS.

There are three worlds, and within those three there are many worlds within worlds. The first is the

world of the body, the mysteries of the body. The second is the world of the mind, the mysteries of the mind. And the third is the world of the heart, the mysteries of the heart. And each contains many worlds. Because of these three layers there have arisen three yogas, three sciences. One is HATHA yoga. Hatha yoga means going into the mysteries of the body. And the body has many mysteries; if you go into the mysteries of the body they are unending. You can go on and on forever, it is an infinity in itself.

But that is not the way to freedom and that is not the way to nirvana: you are caught in a new net. You are no more interested in money and you are no more interested in being a president, you are no more interested in worldly name or fame, but now your whole interest is how to become a superman, how to attain the powers that your body contains. For thousands of years so many yogis have been wasting time in that.

Buddha is not concerned with that type of inquiry at all. He wants you to cut through it. He wants you to remember that, if you go into the mysteries of the body, you may be able to walk on water, you may be able to walk in fire, but what is the point of walking on water or in fire? It is simply stupid! Even if you can walk in fire, so what? What is gained? You can fly in the air like a bird, so what? Birds are doing it already -- nothing special.

Three yogis were eating their lunch on the seventeenth-floor girder of a new skyscraper. They were working on their bodies, talking about it continuously, discovering new mysteries.

"Wow," said the second man, who was new on the job. "I see why you guys like to eat your lunch here. The view of the city is beautiful!"

"Yes, the view is nice," said the first man. "But do you want to know why we really like to eat lunch here?"

"Yes," said the new yogi.

"Well," explained the first, "there's the most incredible updraft right at the fourth floor, and when we finish lunch we like to jump off and ride back up on that air current. It puts you right back on the very spot you jumped from."

"Bullshit!" said the second man. "I don't believe you."

"You don't?" said the first, putting down his coffee thermos. "Then I'll show you."

He jumped. Down he went, and sure enough, right at the fourth floor -- whoosh! He was turned back and landed on the seventeenth-floor girder on the exact spot from which he had leaped.

"Wow!" said the second man in total amazement. "That beats the hell out of hang-gliding or anything! Let me do it next!"

He stood up and jumped. Down he went -- then fourth floor, third floor, second floor... splat! All over the sidewalk! Finished!

Back up on the seventeenth floor, the third man, who had been silent until now, turned to the first and said, "You know, Superman, sometimes you're a real prick!"

What is the point of it all?

Buddha is not interested in the yoga of the body, neither is he interested in the yoga of the mind -- MANTRA yoga and other methods which work on the mind and create mental powers, SIDDHIS. Yes, you can do miracles... you can read others' thoughts, but are not one's own thoughts enough? You can predict others' futures, but what is there to predict? It is going to be almost the same as their past.

Just the other day one sannyasin asked... he had been to some Hindu astrologer, very famous. And the astrologer said to him, after great deliberation, brooding, thinking about his chart and meditating about his future, that in this lifetime he cannot become enlightened. Now, this much can be said by any fool about you, because a man who goes to an astrologer to ask about his future is bound to remain unenlightened! That is enough proof. And what does that foolish astrologer know about enlightenment? Is HE enlightened? You should have asked him, "What about you? Are you enlightened, and still doing astrology?"

Because of these fools I have to appoint Kabir here! Why go to other places? Somebody right on the spot is available here. Kabir makes beautiful charts, very colorful! He is doing a good job. Fools need... what to do? And if they are going to go somewhere, it is better to finish them here.

Only fools are interested in the future. The intelligent person is interested only in the present. And enlightenment is not predictable; enlightenment is absolutely unpredictable. It is such a mysterious phenomenon that there is no possibility of predicting it.

But now this idea has been put into his head. Now he will feel at ease: "This time it is not going to happen, so why bother?" So this man will stop meditating, he may even think of dropping sannyas. What is

the point when you are not going to become enlightened this lifetime? "So we will see next lifetime when the time comes, we will meditate again and become enlightened."

But I tell you one thing: next lifetime you will go again to an astrologer -- I can predict it right now! And last time also you had done this! Are you really interested in becoming enlightened or not? Why go on finding excuses? And people can find any kind of excuse -- people are great rationalizers. Now you have a reason not to meditate -- because this time around it is not going to happen, so why waste time? But then how is it going to happen? And why should you go to an astrologer in the first place? Even stars are not enlightened! At least one thing is absolutely certain: that enlightenment is not determined by any causes, it is a sudden phenomenon. Your death may be predictable, your illnesses may be predictable, your foolishnesses may be predictable, but not enlightenment. You see? (AT THIS MOMENT THE VIDEO LIGHTS SUDDENLY COME ON...!) How does it happen? -- for no reason at all!

Somebody asked Picasso, "You seem to be so much interested in art studies in the nude. Why?" "Well," said Picasso, "I guess it's because I was born that way."

One can always find some reason.

Julie: "And if I refuse you, Edward, will you kill yourself?"
Edward: "That has been my usual custom."

The third world is of the mysteries of the heart, BHAKTI yoga. First is hatha yoga, second is mantra yoga, third is bhakti yoga. Buddha says: Go on cutting across them; don't move sideways, otherwise you will be lost in the inner worlds. Hence Buddha is neither interested in yoga, nor in mantra, nor in bhakti, devotion, prayer -- nothing. His simple interest, one-pointed interest, is awareness.

And I absolutely agree with him because that is the only possibility for you to get rid of all this nonsense that you have been living for millions of lives. And you will go on repeating it, because just by living through it again and again you don't become intelligent. You change a little bit, but the basic foolishness remains the same.

A telegram arrived at the army camp saying that Private Smith's father had died. The sergeant was told by the colonel to break the news gently to Private Smith. With the colonel watching, the sergeant went over to the private and said, "Smith, your father died."

The colonel called the sergeant over and said, "If it ever happens again you must be more gentle -- break the news easier!"

Two weeks later another telegram arrived saying that Private Smith's mother had died.

The sergeant lined up the whole platoon and said, "Anyone who has a mother take two steps forward.... Not so fast, Private Smith!"

Now, just the strategy has changed, but it is the same! And that's what has been going on in your life, life after life. A little bit, of course, you change in the details, but the fundamental foolishness persists.

WITH DISPASSIONATE EYE
HE SEES EVERYWHERE
THE FALLING AND THE UPRISING.

One who has become aware, he sees everywhere only one thing: that everything is born and dies, everything begins and ends, that everything is a flux. Nothing is worth clinging to, nothing is worth holding, nothing is worth possessing, because it is bound to disappear sooner or later. Hence he remains nonpossessive. He moves through the world detached, calm, cool, seeing everywhere the falling and the uprising. He knows things come and go; he watches. When something arises he watches and knows perfectly well it will go. Misery comes -- he is not worried because he knows it will go. Happiness comes -- he is not excited because he knows it has come, it will go.

WITH DISPASSIONATE EYE.... Awareness gives him a new kind of eye, a new vision -- dispassionate. He simply looks with no desire; it is a totally different vision. When you look with no desire,

the world appears totally different; when you look with desire you are confined in your desire and you color everything according to your desire.

"What are you thinking about, John?"

"The same as you, Jane."

"Oh, if you do, I'll scream!"

Not even a single word can you hear which is not colored by your inner processes of thought.

A farmer persuaded one of his cowhands to buy two raffle tickets for which the draw was to be held that night at a dance. The next day the cowhand asked the farmer who had won the draw.

"Oh, I won the first prize," said the farmer. "Aren't I lucky?"

"And who won second prize, farmer?" asked the cowhand.

"My wife won that. Wasn't she lucky?"

"Arr, she were that. And what about third prize?"

"Oh, my daughter won that. Wasn't she lucky? By the way, you haven't paid me for your tickets yet, have you?"

"No," replied the cowman. "Aren't I lucky?"

Everybody is looking with his own world of desires, expectations, passions, lust, greed, anger. There are a thousand and one things standing between you and your world; that's why you don't ever see it as it is.

Once your eye is completely clean, clean of all the dust, once it becomes a pure mirror, it reflects that which is. And that is truth and truth liberates, but it has to be your own. My truth cannot liberate you, Buddha's truth cannot liberate you. There is only one possibility of liberation, that is your own truth. And all that you have to do is to create a dispassionate eye.

AND WITH GREAT GLADNESS
HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS FINISHED.
HE HAS WOKEN FROM HIS SLEEP.

The master is glad that he is finished with all the nonsense, with all the stupidity, with all the games of life. He is glad that he is finished, he is out of it, he has transcended. HE HAS WOKEN FROM HIS SLEEP.

Willie D. left Harlem to visit friends in Mobile. On his second night there he met Laura Mae, a beautiful lady whom he soon led out in the woods. As they prepared to make love, Willie removed his pants and hung them neatly on a tree.

"You must be from the North," said Laura Mae.

"Right on, baby," said Willie, "but how could you tell?"

"A Southern boy don't hang up his clothes 'cause when we're finished we're gonna be three miles from here!"

And these games are there... and where are your pants and where are you? Three miles away! Where are your senses? Where is your intelligence? You must have hung it up somewhere and you have completely forgotten where.

The nurse took the gentleman standing by the bed of a woman in the maternity ward aside and asked, "Would you like to see the baby?"

The gentleman nodded. "Looks just like you!" she enthused when they finally came out of the baby room.

Later the nurse told the woman about her husband's delight at seeing the baby. The woman was horrified. "Husband? My husband is on duty in the next town and hasn't arrived yet to see the baby! That man was here to collect the overdue installment on my refrigerator!"

People are asleep. What is happening to them is almost accidental. Why you have fallen in love with

somebody is accidental. Your birth is accidental, your death is going to be accidental.

Buddha says: The master looks at everything falling and rising, rising and falling. All are accidents. There is only one thing which is not accidental, which is intrinsic, and that is your awareness of it all. That awareness makes you awake.

The couple evolved a perfect plan for spending their time. One night a week he goes out with the boys, the other six nights SHE does.

Here is a flash from Detroit: They have come up with a fast car with equally fast brakes -- you can come to a standstill in just the car's length from a hundred miles per hour. It is equipped with a device which automatically wipes your remains from the windscreen.

Altie and Big Bertha stood before the altar. Big Bertha weighed two hundred pounds, her groom a mere one hundred.

"Does you take dis woman for your lawful wedded wife?" asked the minister.

"Ah takes nothin'," replied Altie. "Ah's bein' took!"

Just watch your life, what is happening.

After a long, boring sermon, the minister asks Sandy, "Well, how did you like my sermon, Sandy?"

Sandy replies, "Oh, a bit like outer space, Minister."

"What do you mean, 'a bit like outer space'?"

"Well," says Sandy, "plenty of it but not much in it!"

And that's exactly what your life is: plenty of it, but nothing much in it. Just accidents and nothing else. You have not yet known the intrinsic. That's what Buddha calls sleep.

The master has woken from his sleep. He has come to see that which is eternal in him. He has come to see his own consciousness, he has become aware of his own awareness. And that is the ultimate truth, the ultimate awakening.

AND THE WAY HE HAS TAKEN
IS HIDDEN FROM MEN,
EVEN FROM SPIRITS AND GODS,
BY VIRTUE OF HIS PURITY.

And the way he has taken is invisible. It is not that of fasting; people can see that you are fasting, starving, killing your body. It is not that of torturing your body, it is not that of distorting your body through so-called yoga postures. The way of the buddha is so subtle; nobody can see it except you yourself -- unless you come across another buddha. Only another buddha can see it because it is simply the way of being watchful. How can anybody else see it? It has no ritual.

Buddha's religion is tremendously beautiful -- no ritual, no so-called ordinary religious performances -- simply, you remain watchful. But that is something inside you, nobody else can even detect what you are doing. You can be driving your car, you can be sitting in your office and you can be doing it. It is not even deep breathing -- that others can feel, that you are doing some deep breathing. It is simply vipassana, it is simply watching, watching everything -- outside, inside.

Buddha has given the purest way and the simplest and the subtlest -- but the most fundamental. He has given the golden key, the master key which can unlock all the mysteries of life and existence.

IN HIM THERE IS NO YESTERDAY,
NO TOMORROW,
NO TODAY.

Time has disappeared, because when you become absolute awareness there is no time left. Not only yesterdays disappear... they disappear first. In that order they disappear.

IN HIM THERE IS NO YESTERDAY.... First yesterdays disappear; you become more and more unconcerned about the past. What is gone is gone, only fools care for it. And there are fools who are so worried about their past -- they even write letters to me....

One man from Switzerland has written a letter just the other day, saying, "Seeing your picture and reading a few of your books I have recognized you, that we have met in our past lives. I recognize you absolutely. I am sending my picture -- do you recognize me? If you recognize me, then I will come."

I have told Laxmi, "Inform that fellow that I don't recognize anybody from the past. The past is finished! You have not read my books and you have not seen me yet. And why should you be concerned about being recognized -- that I had seen you in the past? What purpose is it going to fulfill?" Some ego-fulfillment is involved: "Then I will come" -- if I recognize him, that I have seen him in the past.

Now, this type of foolish person is caught by people like Muktananda. They will immediately say, "Yes, we have been together in the past. You have been a disciple to me in the past too and you were working so beautifully and you were growing so high. Just a little bit is left that can be done now, so get initiated into siddha yoga."

The past exists nowhere. Many people write to me, "Give us methods so that we can remember our past lives." What are you going to do? Even if you remember that you were Alexander the Great or Cleopatra, how is that going to help in any way? It will create more complications. You are already in such a mess!

That's why nature closes the door every time you die. This is great compassion, otherwise you will be born mad. Remembering all your past lives you will be in such a state that it will be impossible for you to function at all, because your mother may have been your wife in the past life and in another life she may have been your daughter. Now, how to behave with her? -- as your mother, as your wife, as your daughter? You will get very confused!

There is no need to bother about the past. As you become aware, the first thing to disappear from your mind is the past, and the past is one third of the mind. It is the very base of the mind, the foundation. Once it disappears, then the whole building starts collapsing.

The second to go is tomorrow. When there is no yesterday you cannot conceive of tomorrow. Tomorrow is nothing but a projection of yesterday. You would like to live the joys of yesterday again tomorrow and you would like to avoid the miseries of yesterday; that's what your tomorrow is. If yesterday is gone, tomorrow is finished; soon it will disappear.

And when yesterdays are gone and tomorrows are gone, where is today? It exists between the two. If both the banks have disappeared, the river itself will disappear. If both the banks have disappeared, the bridge will disappear. Chunk by chunk in three pieces, time dissolves: first the past, then the future, and finally the present. Then you are left with no time, a state of timelessness. And this, Buddha says, is nirvana.

To experience timelessness is to experience deathlessness. To experience timelessness is to experience that which really is. It is neither past nor present nor future; it simply is. It cannot be confined to any compartment, into any category; it cannot be categorized. You simply experience each moment with tremendous peace and silence and joy. And each moment becomes so fragrant, so alive! Each moment becomes such a benediction that it is impossible to imagine it, it is impossible to describe it. One has to know it to know it; there is no other way. Nobody can explain it to you. It is not expressible, it is not explainable. It is the greatest mystery. When time disappears, mind disappears, what is left? That which is left, that vastness... that is your real being -- in Buddha's words, your nonbeing, your no-self.

Jesus will call it the kingdom of God; that is a positive way of describing it. And Buddha calls it a state of cessation -- all has ceased. AND WITH GREAT GLADNESS HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS FINISHED. HE HAS WOKEN FROM HIS SLEEP.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #8

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS INNOCENCE AND WHAT IS THE WAY TO BECOME INNOCENT?

Sonja, innocence is your very nature. You do not have to become it, you are already it. You are born innocent. Then layers and layers of conditioning are imposed upon your innocence. Your innocence is like a mirror and conditioning is like layers of dust. The mirror has not to be achieved, the mirror is already there -- or rather, here. The mirror is not lost, it is only hidden behind the layers of dust.

You don't have to follow a way to reach your nature because you cannot leave your nature, you cannot go anywhere else. Even if you wanted to, it is impossible. That's exactly the definition of nature: nature means that which cannot be left behind, that which cannot be renounced. But you can forget about it. You cannot lose it but it can be forgotten.

And that's exactly what has happened. The mirror is not lost but forgotten -- forgotten because it is not functioning anymore as a mirror. Not that any defect has arisen in it, just layers of dust are covering it. All that is needed is to clean it, to remove those layers of dust.

The process of becoming innocent is not really a process of becoming, it is a process of discovering your being. It is a discovery, not an achievement. You don't attain to something new, you simply attain to that which you have always been. It is a forgotten language.

It happens many times: you see a person on the road, you recognize him, his face seems familiar. Suddenly you remember also that you know his name. You say, "It is just on the tip of my tongue," but still it is not coming to you. What is happening? If it is just on the tip of your tongue, then why can't you say it? You know that you know it, but still you are not able to remember it. And the more you try, the more difficult it becomes, because making an effort makes you more tense, and when you are tense you are farther away from your nature, you are farther away from that which is already there. When you are relaxed you are closer; when you are utterly relaxed, it will surface of its own accord.

So you try hard, but it doesn't come, so you forget all about it. Then lying down in your bath, or just swimming in the pool, and you are not even trying to remember that man's name when suddenly it bubbles up. What has happened? You were not trying to remember, and you were relaxed. When you are relaxed you are wide, when you are tense you become narrow -- the more tense, the more narrow. The passage between you and that which is inside you becomes so narrow that nothing can pass through it, not even a single name.

All the great scientific discoveries have been made in this very mysterious way -- in this very UNscientific way, so to speak.

Madame Curie was working on a certain mathematical problem for three years continuously and the more she tried, the farther and farther away the solution seemed. She tried every possible way, but nothing was working, nothing was happening. And there was somewhere a deep, tacit feeling that "The solution exists. I am not struggling with something absurd." This tacit feeling continued all the time as an undercurrent; hence she could not drop the effort either. She was getting tired -- three years wasted for a single problem. But deep down within herself somebody was saying, "The solution IS possible. This exercise is not futile. Go on." And she went on stubbornly, she persisted. She dropped all other projects, she forced herself totally into the one problem. But the more she tried, the more impossible it became.

One night it happened, almost as it happened to Gautama the Buddha; of course, the problems were

different, but the process was the same. Buddha had struggled for six years to attain enlightenment and he had attained nothing. Then one night he dropped the whole effort, went to sleep, and, by the morning when the last star was setting, he became enlightened.

That night Madame Curie dropped the idea, the whole project -- she closed the chapter. "Enough is enough! Three years wasted is too much for one problem." There were other problems which were waiting to be solved. It was finished in her mind, although the tacit understanding was still there just like a constant murmur. But she had followed it long enough, it was time. One has only a limited time; three years is too much for one problem. Deliberately she dropped the idea. As far as she was concerned she closed the whole project. She went to sleep never to be bothered by that problem again.

And in the morning when she got up she was surprised. On a piece of paper on her table, the solution was there, written in her own handwriting. She could not believe her eyes. Who had done it? The servant could not have done it -- he knew nothing of mathematics, and if Madame Curie had not been able to do it in three years, how could the servant have done it? And there was nobody else in the house. And the servant had not entered in the night -- the doors were locked from inside. She looked closely and the handwriting resembled hers.

Then suddenly she remembered a dream. In the dream she had seen that she had got up, gone to the table, written something.... Slowly slowly, the dream became clear. Slowly slowly, she remembered that she had done it in the night. It was not a dream, she had actually done it. And this was the solution! For three years she had been struggling hard and nothing was happening -- and the night she dropped the project, it happened. What happened? She became relaxed.

Once you have dropped the effort you become relaxed, you become restful, you become soft, you become wide, you become open. It was there inside her, it surfaced. Finding the mind no longer tense, it surfaced.

Innocence is there, you have simply forgotten it -- you have been made to forget it. Society is cunning. For centuries man has learned that you can survive in this society only if you are cunning; the more cunning you are, the more successful you will be. That's the whole game of politics: be cunning, be more cunning than others. It is a constant struggle and competition as to who can be more cunning. Whosoever is more cunning is going to succeed, is going to be powerful.

After centuries of cunningness man has learned one thing: that to remain innocent is dangerous, you will not be able to survive. Hence parents try to drive their children out of their innocence. Teachers, schools, colleges, universities exist for the simple work of making you more cunning, more clever. Although they call it intelligence it is not intelligence.

Intelligence is not against innocence, remember. Intelligence is the flavor of innocence, intelligence is the fragrance of innocence. Cunningness is against innocence; and cunningness, cleverness are not synonymous with intelligence. But to be intelligent needs a tremendous journey inwards. No schools can help, no colleges, no universities can help. Parents, priests, the society, they are all extrovert; they cannot help you to go inwards. And buddhas are very rare, few and far between. Not everybody is fortunate enough to find a buddha. Only a buddha can help you to be an intelligent person, but you cannot find so many buddhas who want to become primary school teachers and high school teachers and university professors; it is impossible.

So there is a substitute for intelligence. Cunningness is a substitute for intelligence -- a very poor substitute, remember. And not only is it a poor substitute, it is just the opposite of it too. The intelligent person is not cunning; certainly intelligent, but his intelligence keeps his innocence intact. He does not sell it for mundane things. The cunning person is ready to sell his soul for small things.

Judas sold Jesus for only thirty silver coins -- just thirty silver coins. And a Jesus can be sold. Judas must have thought that he was being very intelligent, but he was simply cunning. If you don't like the word 'cunning' you can call him clever; that is just a good name for the same thing, for the same ugly thing.

The society prepares you to be cunning so that you are capable of competing in this struggle for existence, the struggle to survive. It is a cut-throat competition, everybody is after everybody else's throat. People are ready to do anything to succeed, to be famous, to climb the ladder of success, name and fame. They are ready to use you as stepping-stones. Unless you are also cunning you will be simply used, manipulated. Hence the society trains every child to be cunning, and these layers of cunningness are hiding your innocence.

Innocence has not to be achieved, Sonja, it is already there. Hence it is not a question of becoming, it is

your being. It has only to be discovered -- or rediscovered. You have to drop all that you have learned from others, and you will immediately be innocent.

Hence my antagonism towards all knowledge that is borrowed. Don't quote the Bible, don't quote the Gita. Don't behave like parrots. Don't just go on living on borrowed information. Start seeking and searching for your own intelligence.

A negative process is needed; it is to be achieved through VIA NEGATIVA. That is the Buddha's way. You have to negate all that has been given to you. You have to say, "This is not mine; hence I have no claim over it. It may be true, it may not be true. Who knows? Others say it is so; unless it becomes my experience I cannot agree or disagree. I will not believe or disbelieve. I will not be a Catholic or a communist, I will not be a Hindu or a Mohammedan. I will simply not follow any ideology." Because, whoever you follow, you will be gathering dust around yourself. Stop following.

Here, being with me, you are not my followers, remember it. Friends certainly, but not followers. You are in a love affair with me, but it is not a question of following. And my work here is not to teach you something, but to help you to discover yourself. Just drop all knowledge. It hurts because you have carried that knowledge for so long and you have been bragging so much about that knowledge -- your degrees, M.A.s and Ph.D.s and D.Litt.s, and you have been bragging about all those degrees. And suddenly I am saying to you: Drop all that nonsense.

Just be as simple as a child. Just be again a child as you were born, as God sent you into this world. In that mirrorlike state you will be able to reflect that which is. Innocence is the door to knowing. Knowledge is the barrier and innocence is the bridge.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CAN I ALSO BECOME A GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA?

Govind, yes and no. Yes because buddhahood is nobody's personal possession. Gautama does not have it as a personal attribute; he is not the owner of it and he is not the only buddha. There have been many buddhas before him, there have been many buddhas after him. The word 'buddha' simply means the awakened one.

You are asleep. Naturally, if you can be asleep you can wake up. One who is capable of sleep is also capable of waking up; the very phenomenon of sleep implies the capacity to wake up. If you are incapable of waking up you will be incapable of sleeping too; they are two sides of the same coin.

So, Govind, if you can sleep, if you can dream, you can wake up, you can be a buddha. Hence I say yes -- but you cannot be a GAUTAMA the Buddha; Gautama you cannot be. You can be Govind the Buddha, but not Gautama the Buddha; that is not possible. Nature never repeats. They say history repeats -- and it certainly repeats because history consists of stupid human beings. What else can they do? They can only repeat. But nature never repeats; it never creates the same person again, the same form again. Nature is immensely innovative.

That's the meaning when we say God is a creator. A creator is never repetitive, he never creates the same painting again and again. He goes on creating something new, he is always on a new venture.

Govind, God has never created another person like you and will never create another person like you. He loves individuality, he loves uniqueness. That's his way of showing respect to you, tremendous respect. And it is not only so with human beings: go into the garden, watch the leaves minutely -- you will not find even two leaves exactly the same. Not on the whole of the earth will you find two leaves exactly the same, or two pebbles exactly the same on all the seashores.

Everything is unique, everything has its own signature. Just as your thumb is unique and its print is unique -- there is nobody else who has the same print -- what to say about your soul? Even about such small details God is so careful -- or you can say "nature," if "God" has lost its appeal for you. If the word 'God' has lost its appeal for you, 'nature' is as beautiful, or 'existence', or whatsoever you want. Buddha likes the word 'dhamma' -- the universal law. Lao Tzu loves the word 'tao' -- the harmony of existence, the inner order.

The universe is not a chaos, that much is certain. Whether there is a God or not is irrelevant, the universe is not a chaos. That's why we call it a universe. It has a certain unity, hence "universe," otherwise we would have called it a "multiverse." It is not a chaos, there is an order running inside it, a thread which

joins everything together. Even the smallest grass blade is joined to the biggest star. Nothing is separate, and yet everything is unique and individual. This is the tremendous beauty of existence: it loves and respects the individual, it nourishes the individual.

Hence, Govind, you cannot be Gautama the Buddha, but there is no need to be Gautama the Buddha. That will be ugly, that will be imitative. Never try to imitate because then you will always be only a carbon copy and never something original. And unless you are something original you are not using your life's opportunity to its maximum, you are wasting it.

Don't be a Christian -- be a christ. And don't be a Buddhist -- be a buddha. The Christian is trying to be like Jesus Christ, the Buddhist is trying to be like Gautam Buddha, and this is not possible. What is possible is that you will become an imitator, an actor. And you can act beautifully. You can walk like Buddha, you can talk like Buddha, you can sit like Buddha. You can use the same words, the same language, the same gestures, but still deep down you will be Govind, not Gautam. And you will know it! That all that you are doing is just on the outside. And it is ugly because it will create a kind of hypocrisy in you.

Hence all Christians are hypocrites and all Buddhists are hypocrites. All followers are bound to be hypocrites because they are divided persons, split persons. And whatsoever they show is only on the surface, and whatsoever they really are is hidden behind. And there is a constant conflict between these two, they live two kinds of lives. Avoid this.

I know this desire arises. This desire seems to be very prevalent.

Jesus and Moses were playing golf. When they came to a two-hundred-yard water hazard. Jesus took out a five iron club. Moses warned him that two hundred yards were too far for a five-iron, but Jesus insisted, "If Arnold Palmer can make it with a five-iron, so can I!"

He hit the ball and it landed in the middle of the lake.

"Will you get the ball for me, Moses?" asked Jesus.

"Just this once," he replied, walked over, raised his club, and parted the water. Then he walked out and brought the ball back to Jesus.

Again Jesus took a five-iron and again Moses warned, "If you don't make it, I'm not going to get it for you!"

Jesus reassured him, "If Arnold Palmer can do it, surely I can do it!"

Again he swung the five-iron and again the ball fell in the water. This time Jesus walked out on the water, reached down, and was picking up the ball when the next foursome came up to the tee where Moses was standing. The leader of the group asked Moses, "Who does he think he is, Jesus Christ?"

"No," replied Moses, "he thinks he is Arnold Palmer!"

Govind, you just be Govind the Buddha. There is no need for you to be Gautama the Buddha. Gautama was beautiful, but once it is beautiful -- twice it is too much. And what is the point? What will your contribution to existence be if you are Gautama the Buddha? No contribution. Gautama has done it, he has done what a Gautama can do. You cannot improve upon it.

You do something that YOU can do and no Gautama can ever do. God has great hopes for you: he hopes you will contribute something to existence. He never loses hope, that's why he goes on creating people. Although people go on deceiving, people go on misusing the opportunity, people go on wasting time, but still God goes on hoping. With each child a new hope is born in the world. You have to contribute something that only you can do and nobody else can do, hence YOU have to do it. Forget this whole idea of being Gautama the Buddha -- just be yourself.

And that's exactly what Buddha has taught, that's exactly his essential message. His last words to his disciples were: APPA DEEPO BHAVA -- be a light unto yourself.

When he was dying, naturally thousands of disciples had gathered and they started crying and weeping. The master was leaving, it was natural, and the master had lived with them for forty-two years and they had loved the man, they had loved his vibe. He was one of the most beautiful men who has ever walked on the earth. Not only was he spiritually beautiful, physically he was also one of the most beautiful men. About Jesus that cannot be said. He was spiritually beautiful, but the ancient scriptures say that physically he was not beautiful. He was only four feet five inches and, moreover, a hunchback. Buddha was one of the most beautiful expressions physically too, really a lotus flower. And they had all loved him. They had renounced everything and risked everything for this man and now he was leaving. They started crying. One can understand their crying and their weeping and their tears.

But Buddha said, "Stop! Stop all this nonsense! Why are you crying? What difference is it going to make? I was not your light, you have to be your own light. And," Buddha said to them, "it may be a blessing in the form of a curse, because when I am gone you will try to find yourselves. While I was here you were more interested in me; although I was insisting: Go in! you were focused on me. Now I will not be here, you are bound to go inside."

And that's exactly what happened: many people became enlightened after Buddha died. When they were asked, "Why did so many people become enlightened when Buddha died?" they all said, "Now we understand what he meant, that in the form of a curse it is a blessing -- because once you have seen a buddha and he is gone there is nothing worth seeing outside. So we closed our eyes.

"We have seen all that was the most worth seeing: we have seen the most beautiful person. What else is there? There is nothing worth hearing, worth seeing. We closed our eyes, we turned inwards and because Buddha was not there anymore we heard his words for the first time. When he was here we were able to postpone, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. We were so much enchanted by his personality, by his charisma. Once he was gone we had to fall back upon our own selves. Maybe that was his last device."

Govind, be Govind the Buddha!

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE THERE GREAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT RACES OF MANKIND?

Meera, essentially there are no differences at all. Essentially there cannot be any differences. The whole of mankind is one species of being. But different races have evolved different qualities. They have lived in different climates, they have encountered different situations, they have passed through different histories; naturally they have learned to behave in different ways.

For example, the Jews had to experience a totally different history from anybody else. They have lived for centuries without a country, they have wandered all over the world, they have lived without security, without a home; naturally that has made them very money-minded. When you don't have a home, when you don't have a country, then all your security becomes focused on money; then it is only money that can save you. And when you become focused on money, naturally you become more clever than others in earning it. Your whole being turns into a money-making machine. That's what a Jew is -- a money-making machine. Nobody can defeat him in that because they have lived a totally different past.

When you are living in your home surrounded by the same kind of people, the same race, protected by the country, by the society, you need not worry too much about money. Even without money you are not going to die, people will support you, you can depend on that. But the Jews had no way to depend on anything else; hence money became their country, money became their religion, money became their home, money became their security. That was bound to happen.

In a country like India where for thousands of years everybody has been told to seek and search for his salvation.... And, of course, you can seek and search only for YOUR salvation; you cannot seek and search for somebody else's salvation, that is not possible. The inward journey has to be done in absolute aloneness. But the by-product of it has been that Indians have become very selfish. It was bound to happen. It is an ugly phenomenon, but too much insistence on going inwards, extreme insistence on going inwards, has made people very selfish, because there is nobody who is yours. That has been the teaching of all the mahatmas: "You are alone. You are born alone, you have to live alone, you have to die alone. Nobody is going with you. All relationships are just superficial, so don't be bothered much by them and don't invest much in them." That has made India more selfish than any other country.

This is one of the most selfish countries in the world. It is because of this selfishness that India has remained in bondage for thousands of years -- because everybody thinks only of himself. So if an enemy comes and conquers the country, who bothers about the country? The country does not really exist; there is no idea of nation in India. Individuals are there, but there is no nation. Hence all kinds of quarrels and small divisions and subdivisions... you will not find the same thing happening anywhere else in the world. Every political party goes on splitting into many many small fragments. Then those small fragments start splitting into smaller ones, and the process seems to be unending -- unless you are your own party! You are the member and you are the president and you are the secretary. When only you are left alone, only then will

the process stop. And who knows whether there too the process will stop or not? -- because the habit of splitting everything has gone so deep that you may start saying, "Legs are not part of my party, the lower part of my body is not in my party, only the higher. The higher part is superior and the lower is inferior. The higher part means the brahmins, and the lower means the SUDRAS, the untouchables."

Every race has passed through different phases, different climates. This is a hot country. A hot country makes people lazy, so you cannot compete with Indians as far as laziness is concerned. They are utterly lazy and lousy! You cannot compete with them, it is impossible; they will surpass everyone in that. No country can have any superiority as far as laziness and lousiness is concerned. Indians are the tops!

Because it is a hot country and the climate is not provoking people to work more, people have remained poor. If one person in the whole family earns then it is enough. If just enough is available to survive, Indians are satisfied, more than satisfied. Of course, they find rationalizations for it, they find great spiritual rationalizations for it -- "We are very contented people." That is all nonsense. The reality is that they are simply lazy and the climate is hot and they don't want to work -- so they have to create a philosophy to support themselves: "We are not much concerned about mundane things, we only think of spiritual things."

India condemns everybody as materialist -- and those materialists have always been coming and conquering these great spiritualists! And all their spiritual power has not been of any use. All their Sai Babas, etcetera, have not been of any help. All they can do is, they can produce ash, holy ash, through their spiritual powers, nothing else. Just ordinary magic tricks, any stupid person can do it -- nothing to do with spirituality.

This country has not been able to create science, technology, because, the Indians will say, "We are so spiritual we don't bother about creating material wealth." But they all hanker for it, deep down they all are longing for it. Their hearts are full of desires, but because of their old habit of laziness they can't do anything.

The cold countries became world powers for the simple reason that in a cold country if you want to be alive you have to work. In fact, when the climate is cold it provokes you, challenges you to work; otherwise you will become cold, you will die. You have to work hard, only then can you feel hot and alive. Cold countries became world powers; no hot country has ever been a world power, cannot be. Cold countries easily defeated big, hot countries.

England is a small country, not bigger than a small state of India, a small province, but it dominated India -- easily, very easily, with no problem. It was so simple to dominate. Cold countries become adventurous; Indians have never been adventurous. They will not leave their villages. There are thousands of people in India who have never gone beyond the boundary of their village, and they will never go. But the cold countries started traveling around the world. Now the world is finished; they are trying to reach the stars -- they have reached the moon.

Everest is Indian, the mountain is Indian, but no Indian has ever tried to climb it. "For what?" Indians will say. "For what? What is there? It is so futile!" But for a hundred years Western mountain-climbers have been coming and risking their lives; many have died knowing that it is risky. The more risky it was, the more it was a challenge.

When Edmund Hillary, the first man to reach the top of Everest, was asked, "Why?" -- of course by an Indian! -- "Why did you try in the first place?" do you know his answer? He said, "Simply because it is there! It is a challenge. For no other reason. We cannot tolerate this mountain unless we conquer it -- it is a humiliation! The mountain stands there so high and goes on telling us that nobody has been able yet to climb up to the top. It is a constant challenge!" But no Indian is challenged by it.

Every country, every race has lived in a different way for centuries: climate, situations, history, accidents, ideologies also have made much difference.

For example, Jews would not have been in such trouble if they had not carried this idea that they are the chosen race of God. The very idea has been the cause of all their trouble. If you think you are the chosen people of God, then of course you will be in trouble, because others will start fighting with you and proving that you are not the chosen people. "We are the chosen people. Who says you are the chosen people?" The very idea has been torturing them.

But this is something to understand: people love their misery. People are sadomasochists, they always love suffering. So any idea that gives you suffering, you cling to it. Jews have suffered so much, but they don't drop their idea. In fact, the very suffering and the antagonism of the whole world proves that they must be the chosen people of God; otherwise why is everybody against them?

So there are great differences on the surface -- and the surface is all that comes in contact with others.

Intrinsically no two human beings are different; in their innermost core all human beings are just human beings.

So, Meera, we have to understand both things. Essentially, all human beings are one, but accidentally they are not one. And it is not bad that they are not one. Variety is beautiful, it enriches the world, it makes the world more beautiful. It will be an ugly world where only Hindus live, where only Jews live, or where only Negroes live. It will lose all charm, it will lose all beauty.

It is such a beautiful mess.... Italians and Polacks and the Germans and the French, and they all have their own ways, their own understandings, and they have all developed different styles.

So although everybody, every human being belongs to one species, still we have been able to create a variety -- different flowerings on the same bush. It makes the world really rich. I would not like to destroy these differences, I would like to enhance them -- still with this understanding that human beings are human beings. Nobody is higher and nobody is lower; we should drop the idea of hierarchy, but variety is good.

Do you know how to recognize an Italian in a submarine? He is the only one carrying a parachute!
And how do you recognize the Polack? He is the one running after the Italian to steal his parachute!

A colored maid and her white employer became pregnant at the same time and gave birth on the same day. A few months later the white woman came running into the kitchen and exclaimed to the maid, "My baby said his first word today!"

In the crib the colored baby sat up and said, "He did? What did he say?"

An American couple was touring Europe.

As the bus pulled up at yet another famous cathedral in yet another famous town, the wife turned to the husband and said, "You do the inside of the cathedral, dear, and I will do the outside."

An airplane full of tourists is flying from New York to Texas when one of the engines stops working.

The captain speaks to the passengers: "Ladies and gentlemen, in order to stay alive we have to throw all the luggage overboard. Then we will have less weight and we will safely reach our destination."

So they do. But a few hours later the second engine stops working and again the captain speaks to the passengers: "Ladies and gentlemen, in order to safely reach our destination we need three persons to jump off the plane."

An Englishman stands up. "Sorry," he says, "I beg your pardon... but of course...." He turns around to the rest of the passengers, grabs his umbrella and jumps out of the plane shouting, "God save the Queen!"

A Frenchman gets up with tears in his eyes. "Vive la France!" he cries and jumps out.

A man from India wearing pure white khadi clothes, looking more like Morarji Desai than Morarji Desai himself, walks through the plane, grabs one old woman by the throat, throws her out of the plane and shouts, "Long live Mahatma Gandhi!"

Once a British lady was approached by a German man. As he was quite taken by her beauty, he marched over to her and shouted, "I love you!"

She said, "If you really love me, jump off the cliff!"

Before he could think he kissed her hand and jumped.

A short time later the British lady was approached by an Italian. He swaggered up to her and passionately whispered in her ear, "Amore mio!"

She responded by whispering in his ear, "If you really love me, jump off the cliff."

Coming up for air between kisses he answered, "If you really love me, you must jump with me!"

Impressed with his wit, she conceded to make love with him.

Still a short while later the British lady was approached by a British man. He made her acquaintance and invited her for tea. After several hours of polite conversation, he said, with some reserve, "I love you."

She answered, "If you really love me, jump off the cliff."

To which he gallantly replied, "Ladies first!"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS THERE REALLY NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ORDINARY PERSON AND ONE WHO IS ENLIGHTENED?

Narendra, everyone is born enlightened. Everyone is born absolutely innocent, absolutely pure, absolutely empty. But that innocence, that purity, that emptiness, is bound to be lost because it is unconscious. One has to regain it -- one has to gain it consciously. That is the only difference between an ordinary person and the enlightened one.

The ordinary person came with the same potential, has got the same potential still, but he has not claimed it yet. The enlightened one has lost it and claimed it back. The ordinary person is in a state of paradise lost and the enlightened person is in the state of paradise regained. But you can gain it any moment, it is up to you. Nobody can prevent you from becoming enlightened.

It is not a question of any particular talent. Not everybody is a musician and not everybody can be a musician; that is a question of talent. Only a few are musicians and real musicians are born musicians. You can learn the technique; if you go on and on practicing music, sooner or later you will be able to play, but you will still not be a musician. You will only be a technician -- one who knows how to play but one who has no inspiration, one who is not really in tune with the music of existence. Music is not flowing through you naturally, spontaneously.

Not everybody can be a poet and not everybody can be a scientist or mathematician; these are talents. But enlightenment is not a question of talents. Everybody is enlightened; to be alive is enough. Life itself is the only need, the only requirement. If you are not dead you can still become enlightened. If you are dead, then of course wait for the next round, but nobody is so dead. People are ninety-nine percent dead, but even if you are one percent alive that is enough. That much fire is enough; it can be kindled, it can be helped. It can be used to create, to trigger more fire in you.

The difference between the enlightened one and the ordinary person is not one of talent. This is the first thing to be remembered, because many people think that it is a question of talent. "A Jesus is talented, a Buddha is talented; we are not so talented. How can WE become enlightened?" No, it is not a question of talent at all. You cannot become a Michelangelo and you cannot become a Shakespeare unless you are born one, but you can become a christ, a buddha.

Everybody is entitled to it, it is everybody's birthright, but you will have to reclaim it. And the effort has to be made consciously. You have lost it simply because you were unconscious. And if you remain unconscious, then the difference will remain. The difference is only of unconsciousness.

Buddha is as ordinary as you are, but he is full of awareness in his ordinariness. Because of awareness his ordinariness becomes luminous. He lives the same ordinary life, remember it. That is another illusion that people are carrying within themselves: that a Buddha has to be extraordinary, that a Jesus has to walk on water. You cannot walk on water, so how can you be a Jesus? A buddha has to be special, from the very beginning.

The stories say that before Buddha was born his mother had a few dreams. Those dreams are absolutely necessary. If the mother has not had those dreams before the birth, then the person cannot be a buddha. Now this is sheer stupidity! Joining Buddha with the dreams of his mother is sheer nonsense, there cannot be a more stupid idea.

And what kind of dreams? Jainas have different dreams. Before Mahavira is born, the mother has a few dreams. She sees one white elephant -- that is a must. Every TIRTHANKARA, every prophet of the Jainas, before he is born has to be preceded by a dream of the mother of a white elephant -- as if the son is going to be a white elephant!

Buddha's mother has to see a few dreams, a series of dreams.... These are just stories, fictitious, created by the followers afterwards. The story is that the mother of a buddha has to die immediately when he is born, she cannot live. How can she live after such a great phenomenon? It is so vast and so big, the experience is such that it is bigger than death, she simply disappears. But Mahavira's mother lives, Jesus' mother lives; they didn't have that idea there. But they have other ideas: that when Jesus is born he has to be born to a virgin mother.

Now people can go to absurdities, to the very extremes of absurdities, just to make one thing settled in your minds: that Jesus IS special while you are ordinary. Now where will you find a virgin mother?... and you have already missed. Next time maybe you try again to find a virgin mother -- and unless you conspire with the Holy Ghost, it is impossible. How will you manage? And then three wise men have to come and a star has to lead them. Now stars don't do that at all, no star can do it. Stars go on their routes; they cannot

lead the wise men from the East to the exact place where Jesus is born in a stable, in a poor man's house. Stars can't do that -- that is impossible.

These fictitious stories have been invented just to give the idea that you are ordinary and these people are special.

My whole effort here is to proclaim to you that if they are special you are special, if you are ordinary they are ordinary. One thing is certain: you don't belong to different categories, you belong to the same category.

The miracle is not walking on water, the miracle is not walking in fire; the miracle is waking up. That is the real miracle. All else is nonsense.

Wake up... and you are a buddha! Wake up and you are enlightened! And when you wake up it is not that you will become totally different from your ordinary self; you will be the same person but luminous. You will eat in the same way, but it will not be the same, there will be an intrinsic difference. You will live in the old way, yet it will not be the old because YOU will be new. You will bring a new touch to everything and whatsoever you touch will start turning into gold, will start turning into something meaningful. Before it was meaningless, now it will have significance and meaning. And it is time that you wake up!

The master cannot force you to wake up; the master can only create a situation in which a process can be triggered in you. And ANY situation can be helpful.

Lao Tzu became enlightened just by seeing a leaf, a dry leaf falling from a tree. As the leaf started falling towards the earth, he became enlightened. Now what happened? Seeing the dead leaf falling on the wings of the wind, with no idea of its own, utterly relaxed, utterly surrendered to the winds, he had a glimpse. He must have been in a very vulnerable state. And from that very moment he became a dead leaf in the winds. He surrendered his ego, he surrendered his clinging, he surrendered his own ideas of what should be and should not be. He surrendered all his mind, he simply became a let-go. And that's how he became enlightened.

Anything can trigger the process. The master only creates a thousand and one situations. Who knows what situation is going to trigger the process?

Here you are going through hundreds of groups, doing all kinds of meditations, because nobody can predict in what moment, in what situation, what is going to trigger the process. It has always happened in such a mysterious way, it is not a scientific phenomenon. It is not a question of cause and effect, otherwise things would have been easier. You heat the water to a hundred degrees and it becomes vapor -- but it is not like that. A few people evaporate at zero degrees, a few people evaporate at a hundred degrees, a few people evaporate at one thousand degrees. People are not matter; people are consciousness, people are freedom, so nobody knows what will trigger the process. Not even the master can say that this is going to trigger the process. He can arrange all kinds of devices and he can wait patiently, lovingly, compassionately, prayerfully, and you have to move through all kinds of devices.

I am talking to you. Any word may trigger it... or maybe just a pause may trigger it... and suddenly the sleep is gone, the dreams have disappeared. You are born, spiritually born, twice-born. You have again become a child. That's what buddhahood is, that's what enlightenment is.

Narendra, you ask me, "Is there really no difference between an ordinary person and one who is enlightened?"

There is no difference in this sense: that both belong to the same world of consciousness. One is asleep, one is awake; hence the difference. But the difference is only peripheral, not central, not intrinsic, but accidental.

Respect the buddhas and that will teach you to respect yourself. Respect the buddhas, but don't condemn yourself. Love yourself because you are also carrying a buddha within you. You are also carrying a bud which is going to become a buddha. Any moment, any day... it can be now, it can be here....

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
A GERMAN NEWSPAPER CALLED YOU THE MOST FAMOUS RELIGIOUS LEADER AFTER POPE PAUL
AND KHOMEINI. HOW DO YOU FEEL IN THAT COMPANY?

Veet Vivarto, I would rather be in hell than be in that stupid company -- Pope Paul the Polack and Khomeini the Khomeiniac! I have not done anything so sinful in my life to suffer that company. I have no karmas to be punished -- that will be a punishment.

I have heard:

One mahatma, a great saint, died -- must have been someone like Muktananda. One of his followers died the next day. When the follower reached heaven, the first thing that he was interested in was, "Where is our guru, our Muktananda? He must be enjoying -- he must have been given all the joys that only heaven can provide."

And then suddenly he saw Muktananda underneath a beautiful tree... with whom, do you know? -- with Sophia Loren! Sophia Loren sitting in his lap, both naked, hugging each other! The follower fell at the feet of Muktananda. He said, "Guru Deva, O Great Master, I always knew that you were the greatest master; now I am seeing with my own eyes. God is so pleased with you, he has given you Sophia Loren as a reward!"

Muktananda looked very angrily at the man and said, "You fool, stop talking nonsense! You don't understand a thing. She is not my reward, I am her punishment!"

I have not committed any sin so I don't think that I belong to that company. I belong to very ordinary people -- drunkards, gamblers, not to such stupid people, full of holy cow dung!

But that journalist must think he is praising me. That's what goes on in the world: people are so unconscious that they don't know what praise is and what condemnation is. This is condemnation, not praise!

Khomeini is not religious at all. Khomeini is the most irreligious person present today. And do you think Pope Paul is religious? If he is religious he cannot even be Catholic, what to say about being Pope Paul? He cannot be a pope. A religious person cannot be a Catholic or a Christian or a Hindu or a Mohammedan. These are just politicians playing the same game of power politics in the name of religion.

I have seen the article. The article is one of the most positive articles written about me, except for this small condemnation. So the journalist is not really trying to condemn me; in his vision, in his idea, he is praising me as the third most important religious leader.

I am not religious in the ordinary sense of the word, and I am not a leader at all. I don't like leading anybody. Certainly I am a finger pointing at the moon, but I am not a leader. You have to do all your walking, I am not coming along with you. I am not going to be ahead of you leading you. You are not to follow me, you have to be your own self. I can simply share my experience.

If that experience touches something in you, if that experience makes you aware that life is not what you think it is, that it is far more, that's enough. If I can create a thirst in you, that's enough -- a thirst for God. I am not a leader. If I can create enough thirst in you, then you will seek and search. And those who seek find, and those who search are bound to find, are absolutely, inevitably bound to find. All that is needed is an authentic thirst, a thirst in the very heart, in the very center of your being.

But these people are fast asleep. This journalist has never been here, he does not understand anything that I am saying. Otherwise he would not have compared me with Khomeini and Pope Paul.

The Prince of Wales was vacationing in Paris. After a sumptuous dinner and many drinks he asked the hotel manager for a beautiful young lady to keep him company during the night. The manager showed him to his room and sent him a young lady.

Although the prince was quite drunk he tried to make love with the lovely woman. Each time he tried, however, she would cry out, "MATOUSKA! MATOUSKA!" After several attempts he fell asleep exhausted.

The next morning the prince went for a stroll to a nearby village where he noticed some boys shooting marbles into holes in the ground. Suddenly one of the boys shouted, "Matouska! Matouska!"

The prince, surprised to hear this word used again, was curious and asked what it meant. One boy answered, "Matouska means the wrong hole."

What more can you expect from a man who is fast asleep and drunk? But he was doing his best -- at least he was trying to make love.... Missing the target, that is another thing.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS A FATHER?

Anand Sugeet, a father is a Catholic priest -- who is neither a husband nor a father; but Catholics are well known to do such strange things. Why they call their priests "father" is really strange. Pope also means "father"; it is another form of "papa."

Father Francesco and Father Viggiani were sitting in a grotto chatting.
"Do you think the pope will ever allow priests to marry?" asked Father Francesco.
"It won't happen in our time," replied Father Viggiani. "Maybe in our children's."

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
CAN I ALSO BECOME THE PRESIDENT OF AMERICA?

My God, Tom! I believe you must be the same Tom -- Tom the Tourist! Now great things are happening to you! Reading your question for the first time I understood the meaning of the word 'tomfoolery'. I had always wondered, why this word 'tomfoolery'? Now I know.

Yes, you can be the president, only I think President Tom won't look right. Change your name to Banana, Tomato, Potato. Mr. Potato the President -- what pure poetry! And I think you have the required qualifications for it. The first thing is, you have to be stupid.

You have seen what Jimmy Carter did just two days ago? When Vivek told Asheesh, Asheesh thought it was a joke... because our orange people don't read newspapers. Who cares about all this nonsense? But what he has done is so stupid one cannot believe it. They must have sent their best people for this rescue mission, and what happened is really just great, far out! The two American planes crashed into each other and eight persons died and the rescue mission was canceled. Now the whole world is laughing!

But this is bound to happen when you make a peanut grower a president -- this is bound to happen. What else can he do? His whole life he was growing peanuts, now he has grown up and become a nut himself!

So the first requirement is: you have to be stupid. If you are not, at least pretend to be. That's what Nixon was trying to do; he was not that stupid, but he pretended long enough. But finally the Americans found out that he was not that stupid; they threw him out immediately. So don't be caught -- continue doing something stupid. If you are caught, the same fate awaits you. Be like Ford, just pure stupidity, unadulterated!

The second requirement... that I have been trying to find for you. I have been doing great research since your question! The second requirement is: you need an ugly wife. This is something strange. Nixon, Ford, Carter, they have such ugly ducklings. It is strange, it cannot be coincidental. Only Kennedy had a beautiful wife, and they killed him, remember. So avoid!

Now Reagan has every chance, because just the other day, I was looking at his wife's photograph. I said, "This man seems to have every possibility. Now he can defeat anyone -- as far as his wife is concerned he can defeat Nixon, Ford, Carter, all." And they are sitting together on a sofa and the caption reads, "Reagan is being charged by his wife." I was simply wondering... this woman can DIScharge anybody! If you have such a wife you will renounce the world immediately! And Reagan is being charged by his wife....

So these two things I have found -- stupidity and an ugly wife. And change your name: become Reverend Banana, Reverend Tomato, Reverend Potato -- anything will do. Tom does not look good, it is too ordinary; you need a special name, and then you can become the president. And you have toured enough now -- go back home. This is the time! Carter is losing ground every day, don't miss this opportunity. Get married to an ugly woman, pretend to be stupid. Learn to laugh for no reason, no rhyme. Just exercise your lips, keep them open as much as possible. And I think you have every possibility, as any other American has. Don't waste your time here anymore, because you don't belong here. This is not the place. We don't prepare people to become presidents and prime ministers.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
BUDDHA SAYS, "THE MASTER GIVES UP MISCHIEF." BUT AS I KNOW YOU, YOU ARE PAR
EXCELLENCE MASTER OF MISCHIEF! HAVE YOU SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT IT?

Dharma Bodhi, do you think I need to say something about it? But Buddha had no knowledge about me.
When he said that, I was not included in it. When I make sutras, then you will see!
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #9

Chapter title: Possessing nothing, wanting nothing

29 April 1980 am in Buddha Hall

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POSSESSING NOTHING,
WANTING NOTHING.

HE IS FULL OF POWER.
FEARLESS, WISE, EXALTED.
HE HAS VANQUISHED ALL THINGS.
HE SEES BY VIRTUE OF HIS PURITY.

HE HAS COME TO THE END OF THE WAY,
OVER THE RIVER OF HIS MANY LIVES,
HIS MANY DEATHS.

BEYOND THE SORROW OF HELL,
BEYOND THE GREAT JOY OF HEAVEN,
BY VIRTUE OF HIS PURITY.

HE HAS COME TO THE END OF THE WAY.

ALL THAT HE HAD TO DO, HE HAS DONE.

AND NOW HE IS ONE.

These are the last golden sutras of THE DHAMMAPADA:

POSSESSING NOTHING,
WANTING NOTHING.

HE IS FULL OF POWER.

Why does man want to possess? It is one of the most fundamental things to be understood. Unless you understand why there is a constant hankering to possess more and more things, money, power, you will not be able to get rid of this insanity of possessiveness. Man wants to possess because he has not known who he is; he is unaware of his inner kingdom. He thinks he is a beggar, hence he begs.

Desires are beggars. The more you desire, the more you prove that you are unaware of your own treasures. That very unawareness leads you into the desert of possessiveness. It is a desert because you will not attain to anything. You may possess the whole world, still you will remain the same hollow person, empty, your life meaningless, your vision clouded, your heart dead, your soul unborn.

Man wants to possess because he feels tacitly that something is missing. What exactly is missing he is not able to decipher, but something is missing -- that much is felt by everybody -- so rush and fill the gap. Naturally we start imitating others.

Children are imitators; the only way they learn things is by imitating their parents and the people who surround them. They are all running after money, after power, prestige, respectability. Naturally the child thinks these are the things that have to be attained, achieved. "Whatsoever the cost, I have to risk all. And life is short; hence I have to focus my energies in a concentrated way. I have to move in one particular direction with my totality. I have to be money-mad if I really want to possess money, because I am not the only one who is running after it; millions of people are running after it. It is going to be a great struggle and only those who are cunning, clever, crafty, are going to win the race." So be cunning, be crafty, but anyhow you have to win the race. You have to prove yourself, that you are somebody, that your life was not in vain.

The child learns all this in a very unconscious way from the atmosphere into which he is born. And whatsoever the society is, the game is the same. Somewhere it is money that is more important. If you are born in America, money is more important; that brings power. If you are born in Soviet Russia, then money is not so important; then political power is real money, real gold. You have to be high in the hierarchy of the Communist Party, but the game is the same. If you are born in a so-called religious country like India, then you have to become a great saint, you have to defeat all the other saints. It is the same game now played in the name of religion. You have to be the greatest ascetic, the most famous; you have to leave everybody far behind.

Look deep down: it is one single game being played in so-called religious countries, in capitalist countries and in communist countries. Whatsoever the format, the structure, the game is the same. The game is the game of the ego.

And we are tremendously interested in fulfilling our ego, but it cannot be fulfilled. It is impossible to fulfill it -- because in the first place the ego is a nonentity. It is not real, it is fictitious. If you have real hunger there is a way to satisfy it, but if your hunger is unreal there is no way to satisfy it. If you have a real disease it can be cured, but if you are a hypochondriac and you invent diseases which exist nowhere, nobody can cure you. It is impossible to cure you -- there is nothing to cure. And if somehow you are convinced that one disease has been cured, you have the same old mind and it will invent another disease. It will go on inventing.

Ego is your invention. The hunger of the ego is your invention. You have to keep yourself occupied because you feel in a state of embarrassment. You are not even aware of who you are -- how can you be at ease? You feel a deep unease, it is always there. To hide it you keep yourself occupied with money, with power, with religion, with politics. These are all escapes. You can find any escape -- there are many alternatives available -- but you keep yourself occupied so that there is no need to become so conscious of your inner trembling.

Whenever you have time, whenever you are unoccupied, suddenly the inner hollowness starts opening up and you become afraid. It is like an abyss, you are afraid you may slip into it. Hang onto something,

invent something if there is nothing else to hang on to.

That's why people are even ready to cling to their misery; nobody is ready to drop his misery easily. That's my experience of working with thousands of people. All their problems can be reduced to one problem, that they cling to their misery. It is very difficult for them to drop their miseries because their miseries keep them occupied. Their miseries help them to avoid themselves and their inner hollowness, emptiness, meaninglessness. Their miseries are nothing but a way to escape. Of course those miseries are hurting; hence they talk about how to get rid of them, but they cannot drop them because dropping them means they will be left empty.

So they are in a double bind: they don't want to be miserable and yet they cannot drop their miseries. Miseries are not clinging to you, remember -- you are clinging to your miseries.

You can drop your miseries only when some inner meaning starts flowering in you. Miseries can be dropped only when meditation starts blooming in you because then you start enjoying your emptiness, it is no longer empty. Emptiness itself starts having a positive fragrance; it isn't negative anymore. That's the whole magic of meditation: it transforms your emptiness into a positive fulfillment, into something overwhelming. Emptiness becomes silence, emptiness becomes peace, and emptiness becomes divine, it becomes godliness.

There is no greater magic than meditation. To transform the negative into the positive, to transform darkness into light, that is the miracle of meditation. To transform a trembling person into a fearless soul, to transform a person who was clinging to every stupid thing into a nonclinger, into a nonpossessor, that is what happens through meditation.

Buddha used to call meditation a great sword, it cuts your problems at the very root. It makes you aware that you need not be afraid of your inner abyss. It is beautiful, it is blissful. You have not experienced its bliss and beauty because you have never gone into it, you have always been escaping. You have not tasted of it; it is nectar, it is not poison. But how are you going to know without tasting it? You are running away from something which can become your life's fulfillment. You are running away from something which is the only thing worth achieving. You are running away from yourself.

POSSESSING NOTHING, WANTING NOTHING.... Buddha says that's where meditation brings the master. He is no longer interested in possessing and he is no longer desiring anything. All desires have left him because he has found the ultimate beyond which there is nothing else. He has found the inexhaustible treasure of joy, of bliss, of ecstasy. What else can he desire? He has found a mine of diamonds; now he cannot go on collecting colored stones and seashells on the seabeach. Now that whole activity is stupid -- not that he renounces it.

That is one of the most significant things to be remembered: the real sannyasin never renounces anything, he simply understands his own inner world -- its beauty, its benediction, its blissfulness. And understanding it, great renunciation happens of its own accord. All that is futile slips out of his hands, he cannot cling to it anymore. He becomes nonpossessive. Nothing is so important to cling to anymore. Everything of this world becomes just a toy to play with, good for those who are not yet grown up -- but a meditator has become adult.

Only a meditator becomes adult. Otherwise, your chronological age may be seventy, eighty or ninety, it does not matter -- you are only an old child... ninety years old but still immature because still interested in toys, still carrying your teddy bears, still interested in possessing more and more toys. Children can be forgiven, but you cannot be forgiven. Only a meditator comes of age; for the first time he becomes mature, grown-up. All childishness disappears from him.

And the beauty is, when all childishness disappears from you, you again become childlike but on a different plane. No childishness but absolutely childlike -- the same purity, the same innocence, the same wonder, the same awe. Again existence becomes a mystery. But it is not that you are childish -- you are childlike. It is a totally different phenomenon. Childishness is immaturity; to have a childlike purity is maturity. They are polar opposites.

POSSESSING NOTHING, WANTING NOTHING... the master is at home. He is no longer running after shadows, he is not running at all. Just now to say to you that you are also buddhas will look absurd; at least to you it will look absurd. You will listen, you love me and you will try to understand what I am saying, but deep down you will not be convinced that you are buddhas.

That's why we have been finding every possible rationalization to prove to ourselves that buddhas are a totally different race. Every country has tried to prove to its own heart's content that "Buddha belongs to some other plane of existence, Christ belongs to some other plane of existence. They are amongst us, but

they are totally different from us. They are strangers, they are outsiders. Whatsoever they say is true, but it is not applicable to us, it has no relevance to our world. We live in an ordinary world and they come from some extraordinary existence -- from the beyond."

Every country, every race has convinced itself that Moses, Krishna, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed are not ordinary people. In some way or other we have been trying to prove that they are extraordinary. Not that we are much interested in their being extraordinary, we are simply interested in one thing: if they are extraordinary then we need not worry. Then we can go on the way we are going, we need not change. We can simply remain the same, as we are. To avoid a radical change we create these great rationalizations.

I say unto you that they are all as ordinary as you are -- or as extraordinary as you are. No difference at all. Just a very small difference which is not a difference really: you are asleep and they are awake. You can be awakened, you can wake up -- unless you decide not to wake up. But right now it is difficult for you to understand that you are buddhas.

The function of the master is to remind you that you may be believing that you are slaves, but you are not -- that is only your belief. You are masters. The function of the master is to remind you, to go on reminding you again and again that you are buddhas. If you are behaving like fools that is your choice. You have the freedom to behave like fools, but you also have the freedom to transform your being totally, to become as centered as a Buddha.

Looking at yourself it will be difficult to believe, looking at your life it will be difficult for you yourself to believe that you can ever be mature, that you can ever be a master, that you can ever say about yourself: POSSESSING NOTHING, WANTING NOTHING. You are always wanting. People are so ridiculous that if they become convinced about wanting nothing, then they start wanting this state of wanting nothing. But it is the same game; now the desire has come from the back door.

I have heard:

After Beethoven finished his joyous Fourth Symphony he went through a dry period. Inspiration left him, his imagination went blank and he could compose no new music. This was too much for his restless energy and he fell to drinking at the local taverns where he often wound up in bar fights or went off with whores.

One night, after losing a bar fight and being rejected by the cheapest whore in town, Beethoven sat spending his last pennies on cheap wine. As he was the last customer in the empty tavern, the bartender came over to him and said, "Hey, buddy, you are always causing trouble around here. What do you do for a living anyway?"

Beethoven looked up, his face bruised, his lip bleeding, and said through clenched teeth, "I am a composer."

The bartender said, "You, a composer?! Ha-ha-ha -- Ha!"
That's how the Fifth Symphony was born!

Looking at you it is very difficult to believe that you are buddhas -- bruised face, bleeding lips, even rejected by the cheapest whore, drinking cheap wine. Who will believe that you are a buddha? But I believe it! And not only do I believe it. I know it.

Just something is needed to trigger it. Just something is needed to wake you up.

Beethoven went home and again the inspiration was back, again the sources were flowing.

The master cannot do anything directly, but he can push you, pull you in indirect ways, to help you to see the point. Once seen it becomes yours and unless it becomes yours it is of no use, it is of no meaning, it has no validity.

You are so unaware of yourself. That's why you are running after money, power, prestige. Become a little more aware of who you are. Give a little more attention to yourself.

Lukowski went to the bank to cash a cheque. Since Lukowski had no account at the bank, the clerk asked if he could identify himself.

"Say," asked Lukowski, "is there a mirror around here?"

"Yes," said the teller, "on the post beside you."

Lukowski glanced in the mirror and heaved a sigh of relief. "Yeah," he said, "it is me alright."

That is how you recognize yourself, always looking in the mirror. The mirrors differ. You look in the eyes of other people; if they think you are a good man, you think you are a good man. If they think you are beautiful, you think you are beautiful. If they think you are intelligent, you think you are intelligent. All that you know about yourself is collected from others -- others who don't even know themselves.

This is a very strange world: you are asking people, "Who are you?" and they don't know themselves, and you depend on what they say about you -- you depend on it. You go on collecting information. That's why it hurts when somebody says you are a fool. Why does it hurt? Let him say that you are a fool; just by his saying it you don't become a fool. But why does it hurt then? It hurts because all that you know about yourself depends on public opinion. Now that opinion comes from the same source -- from the outside -- from where you have been collecting the opinion that you are very intelligent. Now you are in a contradiction, that's why you are upset, disturbed. Now he has created a contradiction. Now he has created trouble for you, he has created a dilemma. Now you are again confused, you don't know who you are.

A Sufi parable:

A Sufi stayed in a caravanserai but there was no empty room available. So the manager said, "You will have to share the room with somebody else."

The Sufi said, "That is going to create trouble because when I am alone in my room, in the morning when I wake up I know perfectly well it is me, but when there are two persons in the morning, how am I going to decide who is who?"

While this strange conversation was going on, the man with whom the Sufi was to share the room was also listening to the whole thing. He had a great idea. The manager said, "That seems to be a relevant point" -- because the manager had come across these mad Sufis many times: "They are always saying strange things. Now what is this thing he is talking about?"

But the Sufi was saying something really significant: how do you know in the morning who is who? When there are two persons and there has been a gap of the whole night's sleep, how to gather again that "I am myself"?

The manager said, "I have come across many Sufis and slowly slowly, I have learned many things about them. Do one thing: take this rope with you and when you go to sleep tie this rope around your feet so when in the morning you see the rope around your feet you will know it is you."

The Sufi said, "That seems to be sensible."

In the night, in the middle of the night, when the Sufi was snoring, the other man took away the rope just to play some mischief, tied the rope around his own feet and went to sleep. And in the morning there was havoc! The Sufi woke up; the other man was still sleeping. He shook him and he said, "Now I know you are the Sufi, but then who am I? I am perfectly certain you are the Sufi -- the rope is there -- but the problem is, now who am I? And I had told this foolish manager that some trouble is bound to arise; now this trouble has arisen."

This Sufi parable is significant, it is about you. That's how you know who you are. Yes, not so visibly; but invisibly how do you recognize yourself? -- in the mirror or in the mirror of other people's eyes, in the mirror of their opinions?

Only a buddha is unaffected by others' opinions because he really knows who he is. He needs no arbitrary method, no ropes, no mirrors, no information from anybody else; he knows himself directly. He has an intuitive feeling about his own being, but you don't have any intuitive feeling about your own being.

You say you are a Christian. This is a rope your parents have put around your neck -- not even around your feet, around your neck! And you are dying because you go on getting bigger and the rope was tied when you were a small child; it is becoming tighter every day. A few people are dying as Christians, a few as Hindus, a few as Mohammedans, and everybody has a rope around his neck.

How do you know you are a Christian? You never encountered Christ. If you had not been told that you were a Christian there is no possibility that you would have ever loved Christ or ever thought about him. No Jaina ever thinks about Christ, no Jew ever bothers about Christ, although Christ was born a Jew, lived as a Jew, died as a Jew. But it is the same. No Christian ever bothers about Mahavira. Who cares about Mahavira? Even if you come across a statue of Mahavira you may look at it as a beautiful piece of art, an antique, or you may be a little puzzled why this man is standing naked.

In one of the hotels in Bombay... just a few days ago the hotel opened. It belonged to a Jaina family so

they placed a statue of Mahavira naked, a marble statue, a beautiful statue, in the compound of the hotel, in a beautiful spot surrounded by plants and fountains. Immediately it became a great attraction for the tourists. And the Jaina family was very happy, thinking, "We are spreading the message of Mahavira." But the tourists were not interested in Mahavira or in his message; they were only interested in his nakedness. They were taking photographs.

The manager asked, "Why are you so interested in this statue? Are you interested in Jaina philosophy?"

They said, "What Jaina philosophy? We don't know anything about Jaina philosophy, we don't even know who this man is. All that we know is that he is standing naked and we are interested in nudity."

Once this was known, the Jaina community was very much against it: "This is insulting to Mahavira. Remove the statue." First they were very happy, now they are against. Now they know perfectly well why people are taking photographs and why tourists are coming to the statue: for the simple reason that it is a statue of a naked, beautiful body -- and Mahavira has a beautiful body.

In fact, only a man like Mahavira who has such a beautiful body should be allowed to be naked, nobody else; that should be a condition. I have seen many Jaina monks -- they are so disgusting! They should be forced to wear clothes because to look at them is nauseating! They are eyesores.

No Christian is interested in Mahavira, no Jaina is interested in Christ, no Mohammedan is interested in Buddha, no Buddhist is interested in Mohammed. You are interested only in the rope that was tied around your neck when you were a child. You are still carrying it, it has become your identity.

Who are you? If you write it down, then you will write your name which has been given by others -- you were born without a name. And you will write your degrees which have been conferred by others -- you were born without any degrees. If you write down the whole description of yourself you will be surprised: there is nothing that depends on your own experience, all is dependent on others. This is not self-knowledge, this is self-deception.

Unless you drop this whole deception and start discovering yourself from ABC you will never be able to know this beautiful experience of: POSSESSING NOTHING, WANTING NOTHING. This continuous wanting of something is simply to stuff your inner emptiness. And this constant hankering to be on top is nothing but a projection of a deep feeling of inferiority. All the politicians suffer from inferiority complexes; all the Alexanders and the Napoleons and the Hitlers and the Stalins, without any exception, they suffer from deep inferiority complexes. Somewhere deep down they know that they are nothing; they have to cover this nothingness with something beautiful. They know they are like a wound, they have to cover the wound with beautiful flowers.

A politician was very much in love with his dog. One day he went to the market to buy some dog biscuits.

He entered a shop and shouted, "Have you got biscuits for dogs?"

The shopkeeper calmly replied, "Do you want to eat them here or do you want to take them home?"

Politicians fight like dogs. They are dogs, and they have to be, because it is a very difficult struggle that they have to go through. They have to be very stubborn and stupid, doggedly stupid and doggedly stubborn, only then is there a possibility that some day they may reach the top. Of course, they will not find anything there, but they will go on smiling because now it is meaningless to say, "I have not found anything here." People will laugh. People will say, "We knew it from the very beginning -- there is nothing." That's how people are. They always say, "We knew it from the very beginning. We told you before that you were a fool trying to climb an empty ladder -- on the last rung you would not find anything." So one who has reached the last rung has to go on smiling as if he has achieved something, just in order not to show his idiocy; that he has been an idiot, that he has wasted his whole life.

There is no need to struggle really, life is spacious enough. If we drop these foolish ideas of hierarchy, of who is on the top and who is the first and who is the president and who is the prime minister... if we drop these stupid ideas of hierarchy, if we simply start living whatsoever we are, wherever we are, life can be infinitely rich because the whole energy available can transform this earth into a paradise.

Noah was closing the gate of the ark ready to leave when the elephant appeared on the horizon running like mad.

"Come on," encouraged Noah, "faster!"

The elephant walked the last few steps into the ark. At that moment the mosquito who also was late rushed in, stumbling upon the elephant's ass -- sting!

The elephant turned back in anger and said, "Don't push, please. There is plenty of room for everybody!"

Even elephants understand there is plenty of room for everybody -- and just a mosquito! There is enough room for you if there is enough room for an elephant -- don't push. But these political mosquitoes, they go on pushing like mad; their whole life depends on pushing. Go on pushing till you reach the end -- and then there is nothing. There has never been anything, but we are brought up, educated, conditioned, to be ambitious, to be egoists. Yes, people drop desiring and wanting only when they are almost on their deathbeds, but then it is too late.

The old idea of sannyas was that you should become a sannyasin after seventy-five years. Buddha changed it; he brought a revolution into the very concept of sannyas. Hence India has never been able to forgive him. Even now India has not forgiven him, although he was born in India. He was the best flowering of Indian genius, no other person can be compared to him. In the whole history of the Indian subcontinent he is the brightest star, but India rejected him. There were many reasons to reject him; one of the most important was that he destroyed the old idea of sannyas.

The old idea of sannyas was, when you are too old to live, when life itself is slipping out of your fingers, then renounce. Buddha said, "What is the point of renouncing then? Life is renouncing you. Now why are you trying to deceive yourself? You deceived yourself your whole life -- do you still want to deceive yourself?" Buddha said, "If you want to renounce life, renounce it when desires are very young, when possessiveness is very strong, when your whole being is ambitious. THAT is the moment. If you cannot do it then, you have missed one life."

Mrs. Silver and Mrs. Gold were gossiping over the back fence as they hung out the wash.

"My husband, ah, such a faithful man!" boasted Mrs. Silver. "He never even looks at another woman."

"The same with my husband," said Mrs. Gold. "He never chases after women either. He is too fine, too decent -- too old!"

Buddha says: POSSESSING NOTHING, WANTING NOTHING....

HE IS FULL OF POWER.

When you try to possess, your power becomes invested in meaningless things. When you desire, your power becomes desires and desires are infinite. Each desire becomes a leakage of your power. When all possessiveness and all desires have been understood as futile, and dropped, you become a reservoir of power. And to be a reservoir of power is the only experience that gives you the feeling that God is -- because God is power. When you also experience power within yourself, overflowing, abundant power, you know God is. If you are empty, with no power, tired, wasted in your desires, no proof that God exists can help. All those proofs are for impotent people.

The real person needs no proof for God. He comes to know God from the experience of inner power, from his own inner glow.

FEARLESS, WISE, EXALTED.
HE HAS VANQUISHED ALL THINGS.
HE SEES BY VIRTUE OF HIS PURITY.

And when you are full of power, death disappears. Death appears only because you are so powerless. Death appears only because your desires are exploiting your power, they are sucking your power. Desires are suckers, parasites; they leave you empty. When you are overflowing with energy there is no death. That experience of overflowing power makes you absolutely certain without any doubt that you cannot die. The body will go, the mind will go, but this power that you have felt is going to remain. It is going to expand; there is no way to destroy it. If you yourself don't waste it in desires, death cannot take it away from you.

And when there is no death there is no fear. All fear is death-oriented, all fear is the shadow of death. When you don't possess anything you are fearless, when you don't desire anything you are fearless. Nobody can take anything away from you because you don't possess anything. Nobody can hinder you because you don't have any desire. Nobody can obstruct your path, nobody is your enemy. The whole of existence suddenly becomes friendly.

And when there is power, fearlessness, wisdom arises. Wisdom means your capacity to see the truth. You become a seer. Not that you know the Koran, the Gita or the Bible, but that now you know the inner scripture of consciousness itself. You know the inner christ, you know the inner krishna. You know that as Mohammed was receiving messages from God you are also receiving messages from God; you are no less than any Mohammed. You are also a prophet and a messenger, you are also a messiah. When you are full of power you become receptive.

God can connect with you only when you have power. Right now you are powerless; there is no possibility of any communion between you and God. Power can only be connected with power. Powerlessness cannot be connected with power. Only the same can meet the same. You have to be something of the divine in your own right; then only do you earn, do you deserve that God should communicate with you.

He becomes wise, exalted -- exalted by existence itself. Society may not respect you, society may condemn you, society may crucify you, but who cares about society? Society is man-made. Existence itself exalts the man of wisdom -- the man who has known himself, the man who has experienced God, the man who can say authoritatively, "I know God, not through the scriptures but through my own experience," existence exalts him.

It is said that when Buddha became enlightened trees bloomed out of season. When Mahavira became enlightened gods descended from heaven and showered flowers on him. These are just metaphors, remember, not historical facts, but they indicate something. Whenever a man becomes a buddha, whenever a man becomes enlightened, the whole of existence exalts him, the whole of existence bows down to him. He has come home. The whole of existence welcomes him.

And why does the whole existence exalt him? -- because existence itself is exalted through him. One of its members has reached the ultimate peak of awakening; through him the whole existence has moved a little ahead in evolution. Just cancel a dozen names from the history of humanity -- Lao Tzu, Moses, Abraham, Krishna, Buddha, Mahavira, Christ, Kabir, Nanak... just a dozen names, cancel them, and where will mankind be? You would all have been Reverend Bananas or Reverend Tomatoes, Reverend Potatoes, but not human beings at all. You may know, you may not know; you may be aware, you may not be aware, but these few people have contributed immensely to the growth of human consciousness. Without Buddha and Mahavira and Krishna and Christ, humanity would be still hanging in the trees, just like American tourists!

They came a few days ago and they were making much noise on the roof. You knew them as monkeys, but you could not see them because they were on the roof. I can see through the roof! I immediately recognized them -- these are American tourists on their way to Goa, just paying their homage for a moment here and then gone. You would have all been American tourists!

These few people have released so much consciousness into the world. With each buddha, with each person becoming enlightened, humanity goes a little ahead, a step ahead. Hence the whole universe exalts him.

HE HAS VANQUISHED ALL THINGS. Buddha means by "all things" the world of the mind; not that he has vanquished all the things which are really there. You don't live in reality, you live in your projections.

"The water is absolutely divine this morning," enthused the pretty lass as she came out on the beach. "It is full of men!"

It is your projection. You live in a world of your own ideas.

"My wife deserted me," moaned the unhappy husband. "She took the car and ran off with a traveling salesman."

"Why, that is terrible!" exclaimed his friend, aghast. "Your brand new car!"

Everybody lives in his own world of ideas.

Buddha says: HE HAS VANQUISHED ALL THINGS. Now there is no world of ideas, he has vanquished the mind. Once the mind disappears you can see things as they are in reality. Otherwise you never see them as they are, you see them according to your ideas. You always look through your own projections; those projections are subtle, but they color everything. You always look through your own prejudices; those prejudices are so close to you that you are not aware that they are there. It is as if on the panes of your window a layer of dust has gathered.

I have heard:

One old woman was looking out of a window and she said to the small boy playing outside, who must have been her grandson, "Bobby, today the morning seems to be very cloudy."

And the boy said, "Grandma, the day is perfectly fine as it always is. There are no clouds, it is just that on our window much dust has gathered."

But the old woman is not aware, may not be able to see; her eyes are weakening. She is not able to see that the panes are dusty and she thinks the morning is cloudy.

Your window panes are dusty, but when they are so close to your eyes you become unaware of them; they are colored, hence the whole world looks colored.

Buddha says: When you are full of power and all desires and all possessiveness have disappeared from you, that means your mind has died, ceased to exist. Now you can see things as they are. HE SEES BY VIRTUE OF HIS PURITY. Now everything is pure. He does not see through any screen, he sees through purity. Now he regains the wonder of childhood again, the same awe, the same mystery.

HE HAS COME TO THE END OF THE WAY,
OVER THE RIVER OF HIS MANY LIVES,
HIS MANY DEATHS.

And this is the end. When the mind ends, the journey ends. Now there will be no birth anymore and no death anymore. You have been born millions of times and you have died millions of times. What have you been doing all this time, all along? Nothing in fact, just playing the same games again and again and forgetting the lessons again. It seems man never learns a thing. Each time he dies he forgets all the lessons of that life. Next time, next birth, he starts from ABC again.

It happened:

A great king asked to be initiated by Buddha and became a BHIKKHU, became his sannyasin. But he was just a junior sannyasin; there were elders who had meditated for thirty years, forty years. So where Buddha was staying in a caravanserai, the younger sannyasins -- not younger according to age, younger according to the time of initiation.... This king was old and he was a great king, but in the world of Buddha those things don't count, neither the age nor the money nor the kingdom. He was the most junior because just that day he had taken sannyas, so he had to sleep in the porch because there was no other place.

The king could not sleep; it was difficult, and one can understand his difficulty. He had never slept in such a place. And you know Indian mosquitoes... and the king had never experienced mosquitoes. And the ground was hard and the bhikkhus use no pillows, just their hands, their arms. He tossed and turned but he could not go to sleep.

In the middle of the night he thought, "What have I done? This seems to be stupid! I should be sleeping in my palace, I had everything. This seems to be pointless. Tomorrow morning the first thing I am going to do is to ask permission of the master: 'Please excuse me. I cannot tolerate such unnecessary misery. I am going back to my palace.'"

But in the middle of the night Buddha came out and he said, "Why wait for the morning? If you want to drop sannyas, drop it right now! Why suffer the whole night?"

The king was amazed. He had not said it to anybody -- there was nobody else, he was alone in the porch. He said, "But how did you come to know? It was just a thought in me."

Buddha said, "If your thoughts disappear you can start seeing others' thoughts because others' thoughts are then like things. It is because of your thoughts that you cannot see others' thoughts. You are so covered

with your own thoughts that there is no space for others' thoughts. But you please go!"

The man said, "Now I cannot go. How can I leave such a master?"

Buddha said, "But my suggestion is still this, because you will again think of leaving. You had better leave. Only one thing I have to remind you of: you took sannyas in your past life too -- and the same difficulty was there, and you renounced sannyas. Now the same difficulty has arisen and it will arise again and again. You have not learned anything from your past life."

As Buddha was saying this, the man suddenly felt a tremendous upsurge of the memories of the past life. He could see, he could remember that yes, this had happened. The whole situation was the same. The master was different, the serai was different, the mosquitoes must have been different, but the king was the same person and the difficulty was the same.

The king said, "That's enough, now I am not going to leave; I am going to stick to it. Now whatsoever happens.... I have lived in palaces many times and I have not gained anything so I am not going to waste this life anymore."

And he became enlightened one day. He persisted; a great perseverance must have been needed.

HE HAS COME TO THE END OF THE WAY, Buddha says, OVER THE RIVER OF HIS MANY LIVES, HIS MANY DEATHS.

What have you been doing all your past lives? You have been just a driftwood at the mercy of the winds, no sense of direction. You have not achieved any integrity. Don't waste THIS life; make something out of it, create something out of it.

Bailey, a violin player from New York, finally found a job in a small restaurant orchestra. But on his first night of work he played so terribly that the other musicians decided to fire him on the spot.

Bailey explained to them that he could really play much better, but he had been traveling for two months and had not been able to even touch his instrument. Tomorrow he would practice the whole day to get back in shape.

The second day of work came and he sounded just as bad. Now he was really going to get fired, but he explained to the others that his wife had been nagging him the whole day so that he had been unable to play even one note. Now this was something that the other musicians had much understanding for, so they gave him another chance. Bailey said that tomorrow his wife would go to her mother's so he could practice the whole day.

But the third day Bailey sounded so bad that now even the waiters complained. That was it -- he did get fired.

Just as he was about to leave one of the other musicians walked up to him and said, "Excuse me, but just out of curiosity, do you really make a living as a musician?"

"Yes," replied Bailey.

"Oh, but where do you work?"

"Well, three nights here and three nights there," answered Bailey.

And that's what you have been doing for many nights: three nights here and three nights there, somehow earning your livelihood, somehow just trying to hold yourself together. But for what purpose? What have you achieved? What has been the gain? Certainly you have passed time, but life is such a valuable phenomenon, it is not just to pass through. It is an opportunity to grow, to be.

BEYOND THE SORROW OF HELL,
BEYOND THE GREAT JOY OF HEAVEN,
BY VIRTUE OF HIS PURITY.

... The master transcends. BEYOND THE SORROW OF HELL, BEYOND THE GREAT JOY OF HEAVEN.... He is no longer interested in pain and pleasure. Remember, if you seek pleasure you are bound to suffer pain in the same amount; they always come in the same proportion. If you have so much pleasure you will have to suffer so much pain; that is unavoidable. This is a fundamental law of life, life keeps a balance. The more pleasure you have, the more you will have to suffer pain.

Hell and heaven are not geographical places but psychological experiences. And they are not separate

either, they are two sides of the same coin. If you have one, the other is there just waiting for the right opportunity to assert itself.

The man of understanding, the man of awareness, the man who has gone deep into meditation, into no-mind, becomes aware of this whole phenomenon; he drops the whole coin. He is neither interested in hell nor in heaven. He is neither worried about hell nor desirous of heaven, because he knows if you desire heaven you will suffer in hell.

This is something tremendously beautiful -- remember it. The so-called religious people are all desirous of heaven and the heavenly joys; they are not religious at all. And these are the people who will suffer in heaven... in hell. Wherever they are it is not going to make much difference because if you desire one, the other follows it like a shadow.

I have heard about a man.... In Hindu mythology it is said that in heaven there are KALPAVRIKSHAS. A kalpavriksha means a wish-fulfilling tree. You sit underneath the tree and whatsoever your wishes are they are fulfilled immediately. You wish and they are fulfilled instantly. Even instant coffee takes a little time, it is not so instant, but under a kalpavriksha there is no time gap between the desire and its fulfillment; you have not even desired and it is fulfilled.

One man, a very religious man, reached heaven. He was tired -- the long journey from earth to heaven. The first tree that he came across he sat underneath. Tired he was, weary from the journey, and the tree was cool, shady. He rested underneath the tree.

Suddenly he felt hungry. Immediately beautiful food appeared. He was so hungry he did not even bother from where this food had appeared. He ate to his heart's content.

Then he thought, "If there was something to drink...." Immediately a cold drink -- maybe Coca-Cola! -- appeared. He was very happy and he thought, "Now I would like to rest a little bit, but the ground is so uneven. If there was some bed available somewhere...." Suddenly out of nowhere a beautiful bed -- he had never seen one like it in his life. He fell asleep; he was so tired that there was no question of becoming curious. But when he woke up the sun was just coming down, was going to set. Now he was refreshed, well, nourished. He became a little suspicious: "What is the matter? I desired food, food appeared. I desired drinks and drinks appeared. I desired the bed and the bed appeared. It seems this tree is haunted by ghosts! My God! Are there ghosts?" he thought.

And suddenly ghosts appeared, so terrible, big monsters, just ready to jump upon him. He said, "I am finished! These people are not going to leave me!" And, of course, he was finished; they did not leave him, because whatsoever you wish.... They jumped upon him, tore him to pieces and ate him up then and there, raw!

The religious person, the so-called religious person, is not going to find peace even in heaven because his whole desire for heaven is basically wrong. The desire for pleasure is wrong because it contains the other side, pain. You cannot divide them, they are indivisibly one.

This is one of the greatest contributions of Buddha: that he helped religious consciousness to go beyond heaven and hell. Otherwise Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, they are all confined to the world of heaven and hell. Their ultimate desire is how to attain to heavenly joys. Buddha says the ultimate is how to drop all desire, even that of heaven, because only when all desire disappears are you in a state of absolute freedom. He calls it nirvana. When the mind ceases then you yourself are bliss. But it happens not because of desiring, it happens only when the state of desirelessness has been achieved. When desires have left you, in that space, bliss starts growing in you.

HE HAS COME TO THE END OF THE WAY.

Of course there is no longer anywhere to go -- he has come home.

ALL THAT HE HAD TO DO, HE HAS DONE.

AND NOW HE IS ONE.

... One with himself and one with the whole. You are many, you are a crowd. The master is one, he is not a crowd. You are not one, you are many selves. So one moment you are one thing, another moment you are another thing. You go on changing. Just watch your mind -- every moment you go on changing, because one self says do this, then another self comes and says don't do this, then another self comes and says do something else. And you have many selves -- you are multipyschic. You don't have one mind, you have many minds. And you are being tortured by all these minds, pulled into different directions.

The master has no mind, hence he becomes one. With no desire, with no possessions, with no desire even for heaven, he is bound to become one. He becomes integrated. He is really individual, literally individual. The word 'individual' means one who is indivisible. You are not individuals, you are only persons, personalities -- and that too not one. You have many personalities, many faces, you wear many masks. The master has no masks, no faces; he has only one face -- his original face. He is simply natural. He has no mind; hence he is one.

And the miracle happens: when you are one with yourself, when you are one within yourself, you become one with the whole. And that is the ultimate state. Call it nirvana, call it kingdom of God, call it God-realization, or whatsoever name you want to give it -- it is nameless. But this has been the real goal of all the seekers of truth.

Let this be your only goal. Prepare for it. I hope these beautiful sutras of Buddha will help you tremendously. Meditate over them. They are not philosophy; they are just statements of inner truths, statements of his experience. And they are also statements of my experience.

Whatsoever I am saying here is not just a commentary on Buddha's sutras; Buddha's sutras are just an excuse. I am saying something which is my own experience. I would like you to be able to say one day this is your experience too. It is possible. You all have the potential of being a buddha. Don't settle for anything less than that.

Shake yourself and wake up!

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 12

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Forget all about it

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU CONTINUALLY SPEAK OF DROPPING THE EGO, BUT HOW CAN I DO SO WHEN I CAN'T
DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WHAT IS THE EGO AND WHAT IS MY TRUE NATURE?

Anand Vedant, the ego cannot be dropped. It is just like darkness -- you cannot drop darkness, you can

only bring light in. The moment light is, darkness is no more. You can say this is the way of dropping darkness, but don't take it literally. Darkness does not exist at all -- it is absence of light. Hence you cannot do anything directly to it. You can only do something to light -- either bring light in or take light out. If you want darkness, put the light off; if you don't want darkness, put the light on. The ego cannot be dropped.

Meditation can be learned. Meditation functions as a light, meditation IS light.

Become light, and you will not find the ego anywhere.

If you want to drop it you will be in trouble, because who is this one who wants to drop it? It is the ego itself -- now playing a new game, the game called spirituality, religion, self-realization. Who is asking this question? It is the ego itself, befooling you. And when the ego asks how the ego can be dropped, naturally you think, "This can't be the ego. How can ego ask for its own suicide?" That's how ego goes on deceiving you.

Your self-nature has no questions, it needs no answers. Your self-nature is absolutely light, full of light. It knows no darkness, it has never met any darkness.

Bodhidharma reached China. He was one of the greatest buddhas of all the ages. After Gautam Buddha, Bodhidharma seems to be the most precious person in the Buddhist heritage. When he reached China, his fame had reached far ahead of him. Even Emperor Wu who ruled over the whole of China came to receive him at the boundary. And the conversation that transpired between the two is of immense importance. It has to be meditated upon again and again. It has a tremendous message for you all.

Emperor Wu was not only a great emperor, he was very religious too, and he had done much for Gautam Buddha's message. In fact no other person except Emperor Ashoka had done so much for Buddhism as Emperor Wu had done. He transformed the whole of China into a Buddhist world. He made thousands of temples for Buddha, he made hundreds of monasteries -- millions of Buddhist monks were supported by the royal treasury. He translated all the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. Thousands of scholars worked for years, almost their whole lives. He had done great work. Naturally, he wanted to know from Bodhidharma, "What is my merit?"

The first thing that he asked Bodhidharma was, "I have done so much, what is my merit? What have I gained? What virtue?"

Bodhidharma looked at him very sternly. If you have seen Bodhidharma's pictures you will be puzzled. He looks more like a lion than like a man -- very fierce; his eyes are very penetrating, like swords. He must have cut Wu down to his proper size just by his look.

Wu started trembling, he had never come up against such a man. He had conquered many enemies, he had conquered many dangerous kings, but Bodhidharma was the most dangerous person he had come across. It was a cool morning, but he started perspiring.

And Bodhidharma said, "Merit? Virtue? You are stupid! Now this is the ego and nothing else getting nourished and fat in the name of religion and spirituality. You are bound for the seventh hell, mind you!"

Wu could not believe his ears, could not believe his eyes. He said, "But thousands of other monks have come from India and they have all said, 'Wu, you have done a great service to Buddha's religion. You are a beloved of Buddha, you are blessed by Buddha.' But you are saying just the opposite!"

Bodhidharma said, "Forget all about those monks! They were buttressing you, they were praising you because they knew that that's what you expected from them. They are cunning and crafty people. They know nothing of Buddha and his message. I am a buddha myself, I am not a Buddhist monk. I speak on my own authority, and I say to you: You are cursed!"

Emperor Wu asked, "Do you mean to say there is nothing holy, nothing spiritual, in all these beautiful acts?"

Bodhidharma said, "No action is holy, because every action arises out of the ego. When you forget all about actions, when you disappear and things start happening on their own and you cannot claim that they are YOUR actions, only then does something of immense value, of immense beauty penetrate your life.

"Spirituality has nothing to do with doing, spirituality is the fragrance of being, and you are not a being yet. You are still concerned that you have done this, you have done that.

"The ego is a doer, your self-nature is a nondoer. Your self-nature simply allows existence to flow through it, it simply allows the ultimate law to function through it. Your self-nature is just a hollow bamboo. In the hands of the ultimate nature it becomes a flute and a beautiful song is born out of it. But the flute cannot say, 'This is my song. What is my merit? What am I going to gain out of it? To what heaven, to what joys will I attain?' The bamboo flute is just nothing. Its whole being consists of nothingness. That's why the song

can flow through it, it is utterly empty."

Shocked -- but he could see the point -- Wu said, "You are the first man who is not impressed by my great power, money, my empire. You are the first man with whom I am feeling that something is possible. How can I drop this ego? Yes, I can understand your point. First, I was claiming a great empire, now I am claiming something of the beyond. But the claim is the same and the claimer is the same. I can see your point. I bow my head to you. I am grateful that you have not been polite to me, that you have hit me hard. You have wounded me but I am thankful. How can I drop this ego?"

And Bodhidharma asked, "What ego do you want to drop? Again you want to do something. If YOU drop it, then the ego will persist. This is the subtle game of ego: if you drop it, the ego starts coming from the back door. It starts saying, 'Look! I have dropped the ego. Look how humble I am. There is nobody who is more humble than me. I am the humblest person in the world -- just dust under your feet.' But look into the eyes, look into the heart of the man who is claiming that he is the humblest person -- it is the same ego. It is not egolessness. Egolessness cannot claim humbleness. Egolessness cannot claim egolessness. Egolessness cannot claim at all, it simply falls silent. It cannot even say, 'I am not, I am nobody' -- because the 'I' can exist in any claim whatsoever."

The emperor asked, "Then help me because I cannot get out of this ego."

Bodhidharma said, "Come early in the morning, three o'clock. Come alone, don't bring anybody with you. And don't be worried -- I will finish it once and for all."

The emperor could not sleep the whole night. "What does he mean? -- this mad monk. He will finish it once and for all? And the man looks so dangerous... and three o'clock is not the time to meet such a person. He can do anything, he's so unpredictable. And he has asked that I should come alone."

Many times he decided not to go, but the pull was great, the man had something magnetic. He had to go. At three o'clock he found himself getting ready. He went. Bodhidharma was staying outside the town in a small temple. It was dark, and Bodhidharma was waiting... with his staff in his hand.

And he said, "So you have come! although you hesitated much. You decided many times not to come. You could not sleep the whole night, neither did you allow me to sleep -- because I had to go on pulling you. But now that you have come things can be settled forever. Sit in front of me, close your eyes, go in, and find out where the ego is! And don't fall asleep because I am sitting in front of you with my staff. I will hit you on the head immediately if you go to sleep! Be alert because when I hit I hit really hard. And find out... If you can find the ego, just show me that this is the ego and I will finish it. First you have to find it, where it is."

The emperor followed the logic. He closed his eyes. It was impossible to fall asleep. Bodhidharma was sitting there. Even with closed eyes he could see Bodhidharma sitting there, and once in a while Bodhidharma would hit his staff on the ground just to let him know that "I am here. You go on searching."

Two hours passed, three hours passed. Wu looked and looked. For the first time he looked inside. In fact if you look inside and you can remain alert, just for forty-eight minutes.... That is the limit. The ego can go on eluding you only for forty-eight minutes, not more than that. This has been the experience of all the buddhas down the ages. Now, don't ask why forty-eight minutes, because that's impossible to answer. It is just like at a hundred degrees water evaporates, nobody asks why. Why not at ninety-nine degrees? Why not at a hundred and one degrees? There is no question about it, it is simply so, the law of nature. At a hundred degrees water evaporates. Exactly like that, if you can remain alert and watchful continuously without wavering, for forty-eight minutes, your whole inner being becomes so quiet, so silent, so peaceful, so alert. For the first time there is clarity, transparent clarity. You can see everything that is there.

And Wu looked and looked and looked and could not find any ego -- because ego cannot be found. It is fictitious, it is just your idea, it has no substance in it. It is not even a shadow, what to say about substance? It exists only because you have not looked in. Looking in, your light is discovered -- which is always there, you just have to look in and find it. He was looking for the ego but he found the light, because the ego is not there and the light is there. He had gone to search for the ego but he found the light. And once the light was found there was no darkness.

Three hours passed and then the sun was rising, and Wu's face was transformed. He had a new beauty, a new grace. Bodhidharma laughed and he said, "Now, open your eyes. You have not been able to find it... so I have finished it forever."

Wu opened his eyes, touched Bodhidharma's feet and said, "Master, you have not done anything and yet you have finished it." That's the miracle of a master; he never does a thing, and yet the ultimate miracle happens in his presence. His presence is the miracle, his presence has the magical quality.

Anand Vedant, you need not drop the ego. Just look in, search for where it is -- first find it. Don't worry about self-nature right now. Just go in, search for the ego, and you will not find it; instead you will find your self-nature, luminous, fragrant like a lotus flower. One never comes across such beauty anywhere else. It is the most beautiful experience of life. And once you have seen your own lotus of light, your own lotus blossoming, the ego is finished forever. Then you will not ask such meaningless questions.

"How to distinguish," you say, "between what is the ego and what is my true nature?"

Either the ego is there, then the true nature is not known; or the true nature is known, then there is no ego left. You cannot have both, hence you cannot make any distinctions; you cannot distinguish them, they can't both be present together. Only one can be present.

Right now, whatsoever you are is ego, so don't be worried about distinguishing. If there were no ego the question would not have arisen at all. Self-nature knows no questions, self-nature is ecstasy, not a problem.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
PLEASE TELL ME WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN SURRENDERING TO A MASTER AND
FOLLOWING A MASTER?

Edward Kiefer, there is a great difference. They are poles apart. Surrendering to a master is something of the heart, it is a love affair, it is not an intellectual conviction. It is not that you are convinced intellectually that what the master is saying is right. It is not philosophical. What the master is saying may be absurd -- in fact, it is bound to be absurd, because he speaks from a totally different kind of vision, from the peak where opposites meet, where the ultimate synthesis has happened, where life and death are one, where man and woman are one, where negative and positive are one. Hence whatsoever he says is bound to be paradoxical.

Surrendering to a master means you have felt his grace. It is not a question of his knowledgeability. He may not be knowledgeable at all. Jesus was not knowledgeable. Mohammed was not even able to read or write, he was not even able to sign his own name. But thousands fell in deep love with the man. He had no logical acumen. If you go into the Koran you will not find great philosophy -- simple statements which can be refuted very easily. But the man must have had something totally different. So many people gravitated towards him. Now you cannot see gravitation; it is an energy, it is a force, invisible. It is a communion, heart-to-heart. The master's presence overwhelms you, then surrender happens.

It is not something that you do. You cannot do surrender, remember. Surrender done is not surrender at all, because you can withdraw. Any day you can say, "I take back my surrender." Surrender is something that happens. Sometimes it happens even in spite of you, you never wanted it to happen, you resisted it. People resist to the very end; when it becomes impossible to resist, only then do they surrender, because surrender goes against the ego, it shatters your ego. The very idea of surrendering to someone is against your whole upbringing, your whole education, your whole psychology. You are brought up with the idea of having a strong ego.

Surrender means you are dropping your whole upbringing, you are pushing aside all your knowledge, you are bypassing your mind, you are allowing the heart to say "Yes!" -- a total yes. It is a happening, not a doing. It is just like falling in love.

What is the difference between falling in love and marriage, an arranged marriage? Exactly that is the difference between surrendering to a master and following a master. Surrendering to a master is like falling in love. The force is irresistible. You are behaving like a madman. The master is mad, now you are becoming mad. The master is like a flame, and you are moving towards the flame like a moth, to your own death.

Following a master is a safe phenomenon, like an arranged marriage. You are moving on safe ground. You think about everything -- about the family of the woman or the man, about their economic status, about their social prestige, about everything except love. It is a calculated phenomenon. There is no risk in it. And not to take any chances you go to the astrologer so that he can even predict the future, how things will be going in the future: "Will I be sailing safely?"

You make everything safe before you take the plunge. It is not a jump, it is a calculated step. And that's

what following a master is. It is intellectual, it is of the mind, it is of the head. You are trying to understand intellectually, logically what he is saying. Does it appeal to you?

And who are you and what do you know? And how are you going to judge whether he is right or wrong? -- according to your prejudices, according to your conditioning? A Christian coming across Jesus may be impressed, but not a Jew, because their conditioning differs.

I have heard about two hippies:

They were hungry and had no money, and on a Sunday morning they were just passing by a church when an idea occurred to them. Both had long hair, beards, tattered clothes -- they looked exactly like Jesus and his followers would have looked.

One said to the other, "We should find a cross; we should go to the cemetery and take one cross from some grave. You carry the cross, you look more like Jesus, and I'll go ahead of you proclaiming that the Lord has come. Let's see, maybe something is possible."

So they entered the church. It was a Protestant church. The first entered and shouted loudly, "Awake! Behold! The Lord has come back! He has fulfilled his promise."

Everybody looked and then entered the second hippie with the cross. A few women fainted, a few old people fell at his feet. And people started giving money. When they went out they had collected fifty dollars. They were very happy.

The week went beautifully -- marijuana and all. They enjoyed it as spiritually as possible.

The next week they entered a Catholic church. Even more things became possible. The Catholics went crazy! They could not believe their eyes. People were crying and weeping and trembling and calling "Lord!" They collected one hundred and fifty dollars. That week they were really high....

The third week, just for fun, they thought why not try the synagogue? So they went into the synagogue. They proclaimed, "Behold! The Lord has come back as he promised!"

The old rabbi fixed his glasses, looked, and then asked his assistant, "You go and bring the hammer and nails -- it seems that fool has come back."

You behave according to your conditioning.

If Mahavira appears suddenly on M.G. Road, only Jainas -- and that too only DIGAMBARA Jainas -- will recognize him. The SVETAMBARA Jainas, another sect of the Jainas, will not recognize him because they don't believe that he lived naked. He lived in white clothes -- of course those clothes were invisible. So they will ask, "Where are the invisible clothes?" And Hindus and Mohammedans and Christians will simply rush to the police station, because a naked man is standing on M.G. Road -- he seems to be an Osho freak!

How are you going to judge? According to your prejudices. When you become convinced that this man is saying the right thing, that simply means he is saying the thing that you think is right. But if you know already what is right, there is no need to bother about this man.

Following is useless, it is unnecessary. You are simply collecting support for your own beliefs. It is not going to help, it is not going to change you. Only surrender transforms. Anything that happens through the heart can bring a radical revolution into your being. The head is impotent -- avoid the head.

Sir, avoid the head! Listen to the heart and follow the heart, then surrender happens of its own accord.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS MISUNDERSTANDING?

Sahajananda, misunderstanding happens only to knowledgeable people, it never happens to the innocent. It never happens to those who know that they know nothing; only to them understanding happens. But to those who think they know already, their very knowledge is a disturbance, a distraction. It is knowledge that creates misunderstanding.

If you are already carrying something in your mind, and then you listen to me, there are only two possibilities: either you find me agreeing with you or you find me disagreeing with you. If you find me agreeing with you, you must have misunderstood, because I cannot agree with you. It is impossible, I can agree with you only if you are also awakened, if you are also in the same space, only then. So you must

have distorted the words, dropped a few words, added a few words, given them new meanings -- your meanings, coloring them, dyeing them according to your philosophy, way of life, or whatsoever you call it. It is a kind of adjustment. And then you can be very happy that I agree with you.

I cannot agree with you. It is impossible. Agreement is possible only if we both exist in the same space, otherwise not. In your confusion, in my clarity, there is no possibility of agreement. So that is the first kind of misunderstanding, which is far more dangerous than the second kind of misunderstanding.

The second kind of misunderstanding is: I say one thing and you immediately jump against it because you have come with a negative approach. The first misunderstanding comes from the one who has come with a positive approach. Ordinarily, people think that if you come with a positive approach you cannot misunderstand. The positive approach is very much appreciated around the world. Of course, your priests, your leaders praise your positive approach because you are agreeing with them. I cannot praise it because your agreement means nothing to me.

Your negative approach means disagreement, but both are misunderstandings. If you have come already with a negative mind -- that you are against me, that this man is wrong -- you must have gathered it from public opinion, from newspapers, from magazines. And if you have come already with a negative attitude, then whatsoever I say you will find something wrong with it. You are bent upon finding something wrong with it. That is another kind of misunderstanding.

To me, both are misunderstandings. And the first is more dangerous, because the second misunderstanding is not going to do any harm. You will go empty-handed, that's all; you have not lost anything. But the first misunderstanding can be dangerous. You will go with the idea that I agree with you. You will become more egoistic, thinking that your ideas are right, and that is more dangerous. If you think my ideas are wrong, there is no problem, you remain the same. But if you think that your ideas are right because they are in agreement with me and I am in agreement with you, then you are going with a more strengthened ego.

The positive approach is far more dangerous than the negative.

The real seeker comes with neither the positive mind nor the negative mind. He comes only with an open mind. He comes silently. He has no a priori idea this way or that way. He simply listens, he does not interfere. He does not go on continuously judging. He remains in a kind of let-go -- silent, open, vulnerable. It is not a question of agreeing or of disagreeing. You are simply listening! What this man has to say, you are simply listening to it. And you are not continuously commenting inside yourself that "Yes, this is right, that is wrong. This agrees with the Gita and this does not agree with the Gita. If it does not agree with the Gita how can this man be right? The Gita is bound to be right."

And what do you know about the Gita? All that you know about the Gita is your idea of the Gita. You can't understand Krishna. To understand Krishna you have to be a Krishna, to understand Buddha you have to be a Buddha -- there is no other way. And when you are a Buddha, why should you bother to understand Buddha? When you are a Krishna, what is the need to understand Krishna? You yourself know.

The real seeker listens with an empty mind, utterly empty. He listens totally, with no evaluation, no judgment. Then there is no possibility of misunderstanding. And the miracle of right listening is that, if you listen silently, whatsoever is true immediately strikes deep down somewhere in your heart a chord, a rhythm. Deep down somewhere in your heart a synchronicity happens. That is the miracle of truth. If the mind is silent and if truth is being told, your heart immediately starts beating with it, starts dancing with it. And that is true agreement, not the agreement of the head, not the agreement of the ego, but something existential, something total. Then you have understood. And if something is not true, your heart remains cold.

So there is no need to bother whether it is right or wrong. If it is right it touches something so deep in you that you were not even aware that such a depth exists. And if it is not right nothing moves in you. So your whole being becomes decisive, not just your head -- which is just a fragment. Never allow the fragment to decide for the whole; let the whole decide.

The fanatic fisherman was telling a pal about his great dream: "I dreamt I was out on a lake alone in a boat with Elizabeth Taylor."

His pal said, "Wow -- how did you make out?"

He said, "Great -- I caught a ten-pound flounder!"

You know fishermen, you know people who are mad about catching fish -- who cares about Elizabeth

Taylor? That is beside the point. He catches a ten-pound flounder.

He was really a golf nut. He was just about to tee off on the first hole when a beautiful girl came running up to him in a gorgeous bridal outfit.

The golfer waved her away and said, "Sylvia, I told you -- only if it rains!"

Two drunks were driving over a bridge and one said, "When you come to the end of the bridge, turn left."

The other slobbered, "What're you telling me for? You're drivin'!"

In your state of sleep, in your state of drunkenness, what agreement? what disagreement? what understanding? what misunderstanding? It is all the same.

Here, listening to me, become more and more silent and alert. Forget all about agreeing and disagreeing. I am not interested in converting you, I am not a missionary. I am not interested in creating a following -- not at all. I am certainly interested in sharing my joy with you, certainly interested in sharing my truth with you. But that is a totally different matter.

Dave and Mabel were just married and on their way home to the farm. Their old horse was getting slower and slower, and despite Dave's efforts, just before dusk the nag fell and died! There was nothing to do but put up camp for the night under a nearby tree.

The newly-weds snuggled under the blanket, and Dave turned to Mabel, saying, "Well, what about it, love?"

"What about what, dear?" Mabel replied.

"Oh, never mind," said Dave.

Shortly after, Dave said, "Well... ah, hum, what about it?"

Mabel replied, "What about WHAT, dear?"

Dave asked, "Oh, didn't your mum ever tell you about what marriage is for?"

Mabel answered, "I don't know what you mean, dear!"

Dave said, "Well -- ah -- um -- ah -- you are a woman, and I am a man, and you see -- well -- a man has this -- and it gives life."

"Well, for God's sake, Dave," said Mabel, "go and stick it in the horse and let's get going!"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IN YOUR PROPHETIC VISION, WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE?

Raju Bharathi, I have no prophetic vision. I am not a prophet -- I am not that old-fashioned at all. Do you think I am coming out of the Old Testament?

I am a twentieth-century man and still fully alive, and I don't care a bit about the future; neither do I care about the past. My whole concern is the present, because only the present exists. The past is no more, the future is not yet. Both are nonexistential. Those prophets must have been mad who were concerned about the future. They were always talking about the future.

There are only two types of mad people in the world: a few who are always talking about the past, and a few who are always talking about the future. The people who are talking about the past are the historians, archaeologists, etcetera. And the people who are talking about the future are the prophets, visionaries, poets. I am neither.

My whole concern is this moment... now... here.

So drop that idea, Raju. Raju is a scientist, and naturally he is interested in the future of science. I am not a prophet, but one thing I can say, and it has nothing to do with the future really. It is happening right now. Because people are blind they cannot see it. I can see it. It has already become a reality.

The greatest thing that is happening -- which will be understood only later on -- is the meeting of science and religion, is the meeting of East and West, is the meeting of materialism and spiritualism, is the meeting of the outer and the inner, is the meeting of the extrovert and the introvert. But that is happening

right now. It will grow in the future, but my concern is the present. And I am tremendously happy that something of great importance is on the way.

The seed has sprouted. You are so much concerned with the past or with the future that you can't see the small sprout that is growing right now. Here, under your eyes... the meeting of the opposites -- the opposites are turning into complementaries.

Science alone is only half and cannot be a fulfillment for man. It can give you a better body, it can give you better health, longer life. It can give you more comforts, more luxury. I am not against any of these. I am not an ascetic, I am not that stupid at all. But it can only give you things of the outer world -- which are beautiful in themselves.

I would like everyone to live in more comfort, in more luxury, in better health, better nourished, better fed, better educated. But that's not all -- that is only the circumference of life, not the center.

Religion provides the center. It gives you a soul. Without it science is a corpse -- a beautiful corpse maybe. You can paint the corpse, you can wash the corpse and put beautiful garments on it, but a corpse is a corpse! And, remember, the same is the case with religion. Religion alone is not enough at all. Religion alone makes you a ghost, maybe a holy ghost, but it makes you a ghost.

You can see this happening in India. The whole country has become a holy ghost -- the body has disappeared, the physical health has disappeared, the material wealth has disappeared. And when there is no body to support a soul, you are simply talking nonsense. You can go on talking about the Brahman -- the ultimate reality -- but on a hungry stomach it does not work. It may be just an escape from reality.

If religion itself is not realistic it becomes an escape from reality. If religion is not materialistic enough it becomes an escape, it becomes a dreamworld, a Disneyland. That's what has happened in the East: we talked too much of the spirit and forgot all about the reality that surrounds us. We became introverts, too much concerned about ourselves. We forgot all about the beauties of the trees and the mountains and the sun and the moon and the stars. Humanity in the East became ugly. It has a center but no circumference. Everything has shrunk to the center.

The West has a circumference but no center. People have everything, but something essential is missing.

Science and religion are becoming one. They are already becoming one. I am not saying they will become one, they are already becoming one. All the greatest scientists -- Eddington, Planck, Einstein -- people of the highest caliber in the world of science, became aware that science alone is not enough. There is something far more mysterious which cannot be grasped only through scientific methodology and means, something which needs a different approach, which needs more meditative awareness.

Eddington says in his autobiography, "When I started my career as a scientist I used to think that the world consisted of things, but as I grow old I am becoming more and more aware that the world does not consist of things but of thoughts."

Reality is far closer to thoughts than to things. Reality is far more mysterious than you can weigh, measure, than you can experiment with. Reality is not only objective but also subjective. Reality is not only content but also consciousness. And the greatest religious people, like J. Krishnamurti, are aware that religion cannot exist anymore as it has existed up to now. Something of a radical change is needed.

My own approach is that we have to create Zorba the Buddha.

Today, just by coincidence, is Buddha's birthday, also his enlightenment day, and also the day of his death. He was born on this day, he became enlightened on this day, he died on this day. Today's full moon belongs to him. It is a strange coincidence that this long series of Buddha lectures -- one hundred and twenty-six lectures in all... when I started I had no idea that it would end today.

Just the other night Laxmi told me, "Tomorrow is Buddha Purnima" -- Buddha's full moon.

Let this day also be the birth of a new buddha. The new buddha will be a synthesis of Zorba the Greek and Gautama the Buddha. He cannot be just Zorba, and he cannot be just Buddha.

And that's my whole effort here, Raju, to create a bridge between Zorba and Buddha -- to create a bridge, a golden bridge, or a rainbow bridge, between the earth, this shore, and the farther shore, the beyond. It is happening here! You can't see it happening anywhere else....

We have all kinds of scientists here. Now, Raju himself has become a sannyasin. He has great scientific intelligence. He is young, but of tremendous intelligence. He is one of those scientists who put the first man on the moon -- he belongs to that project. There are so many other scientists here. There are poets and musicians, painters -- all kinds of people, and they have all joined together in one great effort: meditation. There is only one meeting-point here and that is meditation. Only on one point do they meet; otherwise they all have their own individualities. Out of this meeting a tremendous explosion is possible. It is already

happening. Those who have eyes can see it happening.

This may be the only place on the earth where all the countries are represented. We were missing Russians but now I am happy to say that they are also here. All the races are meeting here, all the religions are meeting here. This is a miniature universe, a small world, and we are all meeting here as human beings. Nobody is a Christian, Hindu or Mohammedan. Nobody knows who is a scientist, who is a musician, who is a painter, who is a famous actor. Nobody even tells....

Just the other day I came across the news: one of our sannyasins has won a great, world-famous prize. She has been here, she was here for months, but she never told anyone that she is a great actress. And now she is world-famous; she is now thought to be one of the most serious contenders for the highest award. But she never told anybody anything.

There are musicians of great caliber, poets, authors, painters, sculptors, magicians... all kinds of people are here. And they have all met in a deep merging. Their only meeting-point is meditation -- and their love for their master.

A totally new science is bound to arrive. It will be both science and religion, only then can it be total. It will be science both of the inner and the outer. In fact, the days of religion are over, just science will do, one word will do. 'Science' is a beautiful word; it means knowing, wisdom.

Science should be divided in two categories: objective science -- chemistry, physics, mathematics, etcetera -- and subjective science. Then there is no need to divide religion and science. And the meeting of religion and science in one whole will create for the first time a whole man on the earth. Otherwise, up to now humanity has been schizophrenic, split, insane, divided.

I am all for the whole man, because to me the whole man is the holy man.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING MAD AND BEING ENLIGHTENED?

Deva Sadyo, not much. The only difference is that the enlightened person knows that he is mad and the madman does not know that he is mad.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IF ITALIANS ARE "WOMEN," BRITISH ARE "LADIES" AND GERMANS ARE "FEMALES," WHAT ABOUT SOUTH AMERICAN WITCHES? CAN YOU MAKE SOME COMMENT ABOUT THEM?

Deva Samya, they are amazons.

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I AM LEAVING TOMORROW FOR FRANCE. PLEASE TELL ME A JOKE TO MAKE THE FRENCHIES LAUGH.

Toshen, an agitated Frenchman came into a Paris bistro and told the waiter to bring him a triple shot of cognac. He downed the huge drink in one gulp and asked for another.

The waiter brought it and asked, "What's the matter, monsieur? Did your wife catch you making love to the maid?"

"No," he sighed. "The maid caught me in bed with my wife!"

The eighth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DOES THE BUDDHA ALWAYS SAY: BE A LIGHT UNTO YOURSELF?

Paritosho, simple. Buddha says: Be a light unto yourself, because you cannot trust Indian electricity. In fact, you cannot trust anything made in India.

What is the difference between an American computer and an Indian one?
The American computer has a memory; the Indian one has a vague remembrance.

How many Polacks does it take to put in a light bulb?
Four -- one to hold the bulb and three to spin him around.

How many Jews does it take to put in a light bulb?
Three -- one to put it in and two to supervise.

How many Californians does it take to put in a light bulb?
Four -- one to put it in and three to share the experience.

How many Italians does it take to put in a light bulb?
About sixteen -- one to give the orders, one to handle the money, one to get the bulb, one to tell the rickshaw driver where to go, one to clean up the broken glass, one to translate, three to carry the ladder, one to check the switch, one to shoo away the beggars, four to entertain you while you wait two or three minutes, two or three minutes, two or three minutes... etcetera.

And how many Indians it takes to change a light bulb?
Two hundred -- one to hold the bulb... and one hundred and ninety-nine to turn the house around!

And the last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IN A PREVIOUS LIFE YOU MUST HAVE BEEN AN ITALIAN. COULD YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THAT
EXPERIENCE?

Satyen, I am not a Californian, so I cannot share the experience with you. But I will tell you a few jokes....

"I find it hard to believe that you murdered that crippled old man for fifty cents," the outraged judge told the Italian mugger.

The Italian shrugged. "Fifty cents here, fifty cents there -- it adds up."

Martinelli always takes his superugly wife along with him when he goes away on business. He explains, "It's easier to take her along than to kiss her goodbye."

Maria was complaining to her neighbor, Donna Arminda, "These pains drive me crazy. Every night it's the same thing. If I turn right, the pain attacks the liver; if I turn left, it attacks my heart. It's really hell!"
"But why don't you sleep on your belly?" asked the neighbor.
"On my belly? If I sleep on my belly, Roberto attacks me!"

An Italian was walking down the street with a pig under his arm.
"How much did that cost you?" asked a passerby.
"Fifty cents," replied the pig.

"I see you are no gentleman," hissed the woman on the street corner at the Italian who laughed as the wind swept her skirt over her head.
"No," he replied, "and I see-a you are not-a one-a either."

A long-suffering Italian husband was burying his wife. It chanced that in passing through the gate, the coffin was thrust hard against one of the posts. Almost immediately, to the amazement of the mourners, a muffled scream was heard. The lid was hastily unscrewed, and lo! the woman was not dead at all. She was taken home, and lived for three years. Then she died again.

At the funeral, as the coffin was being lowered from the hearse, the husband addressed the bearers very solemnly: "Boys, mind that post!"

Enough for today.