
The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

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Chapter #1

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THE WISE MAN TELLS YOU
WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN
AND WHERE YOU YET MAY FALL --
INVALUABLE SECRETS!
FOLLOW HIM, FOLLOW THE WAY.

LET HIM CHASTEN AND TEACH YOU
AND KEEP YOU FROM MISCHIEF.
THE WORLD MAY HATE HIM
BUT GOOD MEN LOVE HIM.

DO NOT LOOK FOR BAD COMPANY
OR LIVE WITH MEN WHO DO NOT CARE.
FIND FRIENDS WHO LOVE THE TRUTH.

DRINK DEEPLY.
LIVE IN SERENITY AND JOY.
THE WISE MAN DELIGHTS IN THE TRUTH
AND FOLLOWS THE LAW OF THE AWAKENED.

THE FARMER CHANNELS WATER TO HIS LAND.
THE FLETCHER WHITTLES HIS ARROWS.
AND THE CARPENTER TURNS HIS WOOD.
SO THE WISE MAN DIRECTS HIS MIND.

THE WIND CANNOT SHAKE A MOUNTAIN.
NEITHER PRAISE NOR BLAME MOVES THE WISE MAN.

HE IS CLARITY.
HEARING THE TRUTH,
HE IS LIKE A LAKE,
PURE AND TRANQUIL AND DEEP.

Knowledge is not knowledge. It has the appearance of knowledge, hence it deceives many. Knowledge is only information. It does not transform you; you remain the same. Your accumulation of information goes on growing. Rather than liberating you, it burdens you, it goes on creating new bondages for you.

The so-called man of knowledge is far more foolish than the so-called fool, because the fool at least is innocent. He is ignorant, but he has no pretensions of knowing -- that much truth is his. But the man of knowledge is in a far greater mess: he knows nothing but he thinks he knows. Without knowing, to believe that one knows is to remain forever rooted in ignorance.

Knowledge is a way for ignorance to protect itself -- and it protects itself very cunningly, very efficiently, very cleverly. Knowledge is the enemy although it appears as the friend.

This is the first step towards wisdom: to know that you don't know, to know that all knowledge is borrowed, to know that it has not happened to you, it has come from others, that it is not your own insight, your own realization. The moment knowledge is your own realization, it is wisdom.

Wisdom means that you are not a parrot, that you are a man, that you are not repeating others but expressing yourself, that you are not a carbon copy, that you have an original face of your own.

Knowledge makes you a carbon copy, and to be a carbon copy is the ugliest thing in the world. That is the greatest calamity that can happen to a man -- because knowing not and yet believing that you know, you will remain always ignorant and in darkness. And whatsoever you do is going to be wrong. You may be able to convince even others that you know, you may be able to strengthen your ego, you may become very famous, you may be known as a great scholar, a pundit, but deep down there is nothing but darkness. Deep down you have not yet encountered yourself, you have not yet entered in the temple of your being.

The ignorant is in a far better situation. At least he has no pretensions, at least he is not deceiving others and himself. And ignorance has a beauty -- the beauty of simplicity, the beauty of uncomplicatedness. To know that "I don't know" immediately brings a great relief. To know, to experience, one's utter ignorance fills one with great wonder -- the existence is transformed into a mystery.

And that's what God is all about. To know the universe as a miracle, as a mystery, as something unbelievable, as something impenetrable -- as something before which you can only bow down in deep gratitude, you can only surrender in awe -- is the beginning of wisdom.

Socrates is right when he says: I know only one thing -- that I don't know at all.

To be wise is not to be knowledgeable. To be wise means to realize something of your consciousness -- first within and then without; to feel the pulsation of life within you and then without. To experience this mysterious consciousness that you are, first one has to experience it in the innermost core of one's being, because that is the closest door to God.

Once you have known it within, it is not difficult to know it without. But remember: the wise man never accumulates knowledge -- his wisdom is spontaneous. Knowledge always belongs to the past, wisdom belongs to the present. Remember these distinctions. Unless you understand the difference very clearly between knowledge and wisdom, you will not be able to understand these sutras of Gautama the Buddha. And they are tremendously important.

Knowledge comes from the past, from others, from scriptures. And Buddha has said: My transmission of truth is beyond the scriptures. What I am saying, what I am imparting, what I am communing, is not written anywhere, has not been spoken anywhere -- in fact, cannot be spoken at all, cannot be written at all. It is transferred in deep silence between the master and the disciple: it is a love affair. Wisdom is contagious. It is not taught, remember; you can receive it but it cannot be given to you. You can be open and vulnerable to it, you can be in a state of constant welcoming, and that's how a disciple sits by the side of the master -- ready to drink, ready to allow the master to penetrate his very heart. In the beginning it is painful, because the master's consciousness penetrates you like a sharp arrow -- only then it can reach to your very core. It hurts.

Knowledge satisfies the ego; wisdom destroys the ego completely; hence people seek knowledge. It is very rare to find a seeker who is not interested in knowledge but is interested in, committed to, wisdom. Knowledge means theories about truth; wisdom means truth itself. Knowledge means secondhand; wisdom means firsthand. Knowledge means belief: others say and you believe. And all beliefs are false! No belief is ever true. Even if you believe in the word of a buddha, the moment you believe it is turned into a lie.

Truth cannot be believed; either you know or you don't know. If you know, there is no question of belief; if you don't know, there is again no question of belief. If you know, you know; if you don't know, you don't know. Belief is a projection of the tricky mind -- it gives you the feeling of knowing, without knowing. The Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Christian, the Jew, the Jaina, the Buddhist -- they all believe.

To believe is cheap, it is very easy -- nothing is at stake. You can easily believe in God, you can easily believe in immortality of the soul, you can easily believe in the theory of reincarnation. In fact, they remain just superficial; deep down you are not affected by them, not at all. When death will knock at your door you will know your beliefs have all disappeared. The belief in the immortality of the soul will not help you when death will knock at your door -- you will cry and weep and you will cling to life. When death comes you will forget all about God; when death comes you will not be able to remember the theory -- and the complicated implications of it -- about reincarnation. When death knocks you, it knocks down all the structure of knowledge that you had built around yourself -- it leaves you absolutely empty... and with the awareness that the whole life has been a wastage.

Wisdom is a totally different phenomenon: it is experience, not belief. It is existential experience, it is not "about." You don't believe in God -- you know. You don't believe in the

immortality of the soul -- you have tasted it. You don't believe in reincarnation -- you remember it; you remember that you have been here many times. And if this has been so in the past, this is going to be so in the future. You remember you have been in many bodies: you have been a rock, you have been a tree, you have been animals, birds, you have been man, woman... you have lived in so many forms. You see the forms changing but the inner consciousness remaining the same; so you see only the superficial changes but the essential is eternal.

This is seeing, not believing. And all the real masters are interested to help you to see, not to believe. To believe, you become a Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan. Belief is the profession of the priest.

The master first has to destroy all your belief -- theist, atheist, Catholic, communist. The master has to dismantle all your structure of belief so that you are left again as a small child -- innocent, open, ready to inquire, ready to plunge into the adventure of truth.

Wisdom arises within you, it is not a scripture. You start reading your own consciousness -- and THERE are hidden all the Bibles and all the Gitas and all the Dhammapadas.

A great scholar once bought a parrot. When he got it home he told it, "I am going to teach you to talk."

"Don't bother," answered the bird. "I can talk already."

He was so amazed that he took it to the university. "Look! I have got a fantastic talking parrot here...." But the parrot would not talk, even though the scholar kept insisting that it could.

People bet him ten-to-one that it could not, and he lost the bet. Nothing would induce the parrot to speak. On the way home, followed by the jeers of his friends, the man cuffed the parrot and said, "You fool -- look at the amount of money you lost me!"

"It is you who are the fool," said the parrot. "Take me back to that university tomorrow and you will get one hundred-to-one and win!"

Yes, parrots are far more intelligent than your professors. Parrots have more insight than your pundits, scholars, academicians. If you want to know the real fools you will have to visit a university -- all kinds of pretenders, full of gibberish. Not knowing what they are really doing, but they go on doing things. Not knowing what they are teaching, but they are teachers; they go on writing great treatises.

Mulla Nasruddin had a nameplate on his home. Everybody wondered about his degrees that he had put on the nameplate. On the nameplate he had written: Mulla Nasruddin, B.S., M.S., Ph.D. Everybody was intrigued! Finally the neighborhood people gathered and they said, "Nasruddin, as far as we know you have never been to any university. What to say about any university? -- you have never been to any school. In fact, you cannot read and you cannot write! From where have you got these degrees?"

He said, "Do you know what these degrees mean? B.S. is a short form."
"Short form of what?" they asked.

He said, "Think it over...!" Then they understood. "B.S. is a short form of something which is unmentionable," he said. "And M.S. means 'more of the same.' And Ph.D. means...."

Think over it, meditate over it. Can you infer what Ph.D. means? You remember B.S., its meaning, you remember M.S., more of the same, and then what about Ph.D.? I leave it to

you! If you meditate you will find, and that will make you a little wise. If you cannot find it, tomorrow you can ask in the questions!

Following more than fifty years of atheism, scientists in Russia began to be curious about what religion might be. A group of them took a book of holy quotations and decided to have it decoded by an analogical computer. They opened the book and took the first phrase they saw, typing it out onto the keyboard. The phrase was: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." They crowded around the printout as the words began to appear.

As they read the message their astonishment increased: "The vodka is ready, but the meat is devitalized."

"No wonder religions used to mystify people," they muttered to one another.

Then one of them had an idea. He tapped out the book's title, UNCONSIDERED TRIFLES, onto the decoder. Out came the translation: "Neglected puddings."

"You see!" he shouted. "You have got the wrong book -- this is one about the abuses of cookery."

They are still seeking an authentic religious text. The mind of the knowledgeable man is like a computer. He goes on interpreting things not knowing exactly what he is doing; he is not conscious enough to do it... But I cannot continue further because I see you are all thinking about Ph.D.! Ph.D. means "piled high and deep" -- now be finished with it so we can go further on....

The Buddha says:

THE WISE MAN TELLS YOU
WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN
AND WHERE YOU YET MAY FALL --
INVALUABLE SECRETS!
FOLLOW HIM, FOLLOW THE WAY.

THE WISE MAN TELLS YOU WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN.... The first lesson in a mystery school is the original fall of man. It has nothing to do with Adam and Eve and their original fall. That story is simply a condensed parable about the whole humanity. Each child falls in the same way. It is not something that happened in the past, in the old biblical days; it is not something that happened in the Garden of Eden. That is a poetic expression. It happens whenever a child is born. It happens again and again. It is happening every day.

The parable is that God has prohibited Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge. It is one of the most beautiful parables ever invented by the masters, by the real knowers -- not to eat from the tree of knowledge. And what are your universities? -- trees of knowledge. And what is your education? -- a tree of knowledge.

God had prohibited them to eat from it, so that you can remain innocent, because only the innocent heart can know. The moment you become full of knowledge, knowing stops. In fact, you have found a substitute for knowing -- your knowledge becomes the substitute. Then there is no need to know! You go on clinging to the knowledge and it goes on giving satisfaction to your ego.

But the moment Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge, they fell -- they fell from their original innocence, they fell from their childlike life. Before that there was poetry in their life, before that there was beauty in their life, before that there was ecstasy in their life --

before that there was wonder and awe. Before that each and everything was extraordinary, because the whole existence was full of mystery; they were surrounded by a mysterious universe. The rainbow and the sun and the moon and the stars... it was all unbelievable. They were in constant surprise.

The moment they became knowledgeable all that wonder disappeared. Knowledge kills wonder, and in killing wonder it destroys your spirit of knowing, inquiry. Knowledge demystifies the universe -- and a universe demystified is a universe without God. A universe demystified is a universe without poetry, without love, without music. Then the sound of the raindrops does not come to your heart as a message from the other shore. Then the wind passing through the pine trees leaves you unmoved, and the fragrance of the flowers does not create poetry in you. The colors of a butterfly are ignored. A rainbow remains unseen. You become too much attached to very mundane things: money, power, prestige. You become ugly because your whole existence becomes ordinary; it loses sacredness, it becomes profane. You transform the temple of God into a marketplace.

That is the original fall -- but it happens every day, remember. Don't believe the Christians who say that it happened only once -- it happens with each child. The moment you start the child on the journey of becoming knowledgeable, you are helping him again towards the original fall.

The function of a wise man is to tell you where you have fallen. You have fallen because of knowledge; that is the original fall. You can rise back to those clear, innocent moments; you can enter into paradise again -- but you will have to renounce knowledge.

There are people who renounce the world but they don't renounce their knowledge; there are people who go to the mountains, who renounce the marketplace, but they carry the mind with themselves -- and the mind is the marketplace. The marketplace exists in the mind! It exists nowhere else. They may move to the Himalayas, they may sit in beautiful silent caves, but their mind goes on and on in the same old pattern.

A man who has gone to the caves in the Himalayas still remains a Christian, a Buddhist, a Hindu. Now, to be a Hindu is to remain attached to a certain knowledge that has been given to you -- that is one of the ways of falling. To be a Mohammedan is another way of falling, to be a Christian still another way of falling.

Christianity is a certain kind of knowledge, so is Hinduism, and so are the three hundred other religions of the earth. They all claim to know, they all claim their scriptures are divine, written by God himself -- and only their scriptures are divine and all other scriptures are false.

Buddha says scriptures AS SUCH are false, knowledge AS SUCH is false. Jesus is right, but Christianity is not right. Mahavira is right, but Jainism is not right. With Mahavira there is knowing; Jainism is knowledge. Knowledge is the fall of knowing. Knowing is individual: knowledge is a commodity, a social phenomenon -- you can sell and purchase it, it is available in the libraries, in the universities. Soon you will be able to carry small pocket computers with you; you will not need to go through all the tortures of the schools and colleges and universities. You can have a small computer full of all the knowledge available in the world. A small computer can contain all the libraries of the world and is always at your service: just push a button and whatsoever you want to know the computer will tell you.

That's what your mind has been doing in the past; now machines can do it in a far better way. Your mind is also nothing but a machine, it is a biocomputer. Remember, it is not your soul; remember, it is not your consciousness; remember, it is not your reality, your authentic individuality. It is a social by-product.

If you are born in a Hindu family you attain to Hindu knowledge, and it is certainly different from Christian knowledge. If you are born in Russia you will have communist knowledge -- DAS KAPITAL and the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, Marx, Engels, Lenin: the unholy trinity. If you are born in China you will have the red book of Mao Zedong -- that's the Bible. Now the whole of China is being fed with stupid statements of Mao Zedong. He is not a wise man, he is not enlightened. He has not even known himself -- what revolution does he know? what rebellion does he know? -- because even the first rebellion, the basic rebellion, has not happened.

The basic rebellion, the basic revolution, consists in dropping knowledge so that you can again enter into the Garden of Eden.

THE WISE MAN TELLS YOU WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN AND WHERE YOU YET MAY FALL.... Not only does he tell you about the past, where you have been falling again and again, he makes you aware of the future also. There are many pitfalls, you can go astray any time.

For example, I am telling you that all knowledge is stupid, that you need not cling to the Bible or to the Vedas or to the Koran. You love me, you trust me -- you may drop your clinging to the Koran, to the Bible, to the Gita, but you can start clinging to MY statements, you can start making a Bible out of my ideas. You are back in the same trap; you are back, from the back door. Again you are the same person. Now you don't have the Bible but now you have me.

THE WISE MAN TELLS YOU... WHERE YOU YET MAY FALL.

The last statement of Gautama the Buddha to his disciples was: Be a light unto yourself. They were crying and weeping, naturally -- the master was leaving and they had lived with the master for almost forty years; a few older disciples had lived with him the whole time. These forty years were of tremendous joy, of great experiences. These forty years had been the most beautiful time possible, humanly possible. These forty years had been days of paradise on earth. And now the master is leaving! It was natural, they started crying and weeping.

Buddha opened his eyes and said, "Stop crying and weeping! Have you not listened to me yet? Why are you crying?"

His chief disciple, Ananda, said, "Because you are leaving, because our light is leaving. We see, we feel darkness descending upon us. I have not yet become enlightened and you are leaving. If I could not become enlightened while you were alive, what is the hope for me now when you will be gone? I am in great despair, my anguish is incalculable, I have wasted these forty years. I have been following you like a shadow, it was tremendously beautiful to be with you, but now you are leaving. What is going to happen to us?"

Buddha said, "You are crying because you have not heard me yet. I have been telling you again and again: Don't believe in me -- but you have not listened. Because you have believed in me, and now I am dying, your whole structure is falling apart. Had you listened to me, had you created a light into your being rather than becoming knowledgeable through me, if you had experienced your own self there would have been no need to cry.

"Look at Manjushree!" he said -- Manjushree was another disciple of Buddha, one of the greatest. He was sitting under a tree just close by, with closed eyes, so serene, so quiet, so utterly blissful, that Buddha said, "Look at Manjushree! Go and ask him why he is not crying."

They asked Manjushree. He laughed and said, "What reason is there to cry? Buddha has helped me to know my own light. I am thankful, I am grateful, but there is no darkness

descending. And how can Buddha die? I know I cannot die -- how can Buddha die? He will be here. Just as a river disappears in the ocean he will disappear into the cosmos. But he will be here! He will be spread all over the cosmos. It is going to be something tremendously beautiful. Buddha was confined to a small body; now his fragrance will be released, he will permeate the whole of existence. I am tremendously happy that now Buddha will be spread all over space. I will be able to see him rising in the sun and I will be able to see him flying in a bird and I will be able to see him in the waves of the ocean... and I will be able to see him everywhere.

"He is simply leaving his body. It was a confinement. And how do I know it? I know it because I have known my own soul. I listened to him and you have not listened to him -- that's why you are crying."

Buddha said, "Let me repeat again: APPA DIPO BHAVA -- be a light unto yourself." Then he closed his eyes and disappeared into the cosmos. But his last statement was also his first statement. In fact that was his whole message -- the whole of his life he was repeating the same message again and again and again.

THE WISE MAN TELLS YOU WHERE YOU HAVE FALLEN AND WHERE YOU YET MAY FALL --
INVALUABLE SECRETS! FOLLOW HIM, FOLLOW THE WAY.

When Buddha says, "Follow me," he does not mean imitate him. When he says, "Follow me," he does not say let him be a model to you; make your life according to his life -- no, not at all. "Following" him has a totally different meaning.

There is a Zen story:

A Zen mystic was celebrating a certain festival which is celebrated only on your master's birthday. But people were puzzled. They asked him, "As far as we know you have never had any master. We have also heard rumors that you had approached a great master, Bokuju, many times, but he always refused to accept you as a disciple. Not only that, he used to chase you out of his hut. We have also heard that because of your continuous persistence, he had beaten you a few times, and once he had thrown you, physically, out of the window of his hut. He never accepted you, he never initiated you -- why are you celebrating this day? This is to be celebrated only on your master's birthday."

And the mystic said, "Yet, he was my master. His refusal, his throwing me out, his constant rejection, was his initiation. He was saying, 'Be a light unto yourself -- there is no need to follow me.' Because of his continuous refusal I became enlightened sitting under a tree. There was nobody to cling to.

"The only beautiful man that I have known was Bokuju. If he had allowed, I would have become a shadow to him. If he had allowed, I would have become another Bokuju. I have loved the man, I would have imitated him in detail: I would have eaten the same things, I would have walked the same way, I would have said the same things... I would have been a carbon copy of him.

"But he was great, he was my master -- he refused. He knew where the pitfall is. The moment he looked into my eyes he knew my future, that if he allows I am going to be a pseudo phenomenon, I will never be an authentic individual. Knowing this he was very hard on me. But now I know his hardness was because of his compassion. It is because of him that I became enlightened. Hence I am celebrating this day -- it is my master's birthday."

Somebody asked him, "But your life-style does not show any indication of Bokuju. Your statements are utterly different -- not only different but sometimes contradictory to his

statements. How can you say that he was your master and you are his follower?"

And the mystic said, "Yes, I say he was my master although he never initiated me formally. But formal initiation is immaterial, irrelevant. And I still say that I am his follower, though I cannot prove it by any documents -- but there is no need to prove to anybody. I know, that's all. I am his follower!"

The people insisted, "How can you say that?"

And the mystic said, "He never followed his master; I never follow him. That was his basic characteristic: he never followed his master. And I never follow him -- that's how I follow him. I am a follower and he was my master."

INVALUABLE SECRETS! Yes, these are invaluable secrets. The life of a real seeker is not an ordinary life. It cannot be confined to a certain pattern, it cannot be confined to a certain style of life -- Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan. The life of a real seeker is the life of freedom.

And when Buddha says: FOLLOW HIM, FOLLOW THE WAY... he does not mean to become a carbon copy, he simply means: try to understand his life. Watch, analyze, meditate, and then let your meditation, your watchfulness, your witnessing, become the way.

And following the wise man is really not following the wise man himself, but the way -- the way that has made him wise.

What is that way that makes one wise?

Two things... first the negative: drop knowledge. And second the positive: enter into meditation.

A whole band of saints was being admitted to heaven, and the doors swung open just enough to let each one in.

As soon as one was in, without any ceremony the doors closed and then opened for the next who went in without any hesitation, as if he was quite expecting to be admitted.

Right at the end came a scholar with a reverend beard and majestic gait, large turban and confident look. As he stepped forward, the gates swung open and trumpets sounded while tremendous applause broke out from an assembled multitude. A shining figure came forward to escort him within.

"This is most gratifying," said the scholar to himself, "to know that the learned no longer will have to give themselves airs and graces. Here, at least, our importance is recognized."

To the apparition he said, "Why all this ceremony?"

"Well," said the angel, "it is something of an occasion -- you see, this is the first time that we have had an academic among us."

It is almost impossible for the knowledgeable to enter into heaven. It must have been an occasion! Hence saints were not received with great ceremony, but the academician, the scholar, the pundit, was received with great ceremony. It was so rare.

It is very rare, in fact it is impossible.... This story must be an invention. Scholars are not known to enter into heaven; to be a scholar is to be in the original fall. And to follow a life pattern from the scriptures is bound to be erroneous, because who is going to interpret? Your stupid mind will go on interpreting, and you will follow your own interpretation. You will be going in circles, you will remain the same.

A man was limping as he walked down a street, and wincing with pain.

A doctor stopped him and said, "If I were you I would get yourself seen to -- you need your appendix out."

So he had his appendix out. Presently he went to another doctor claiming that he still had the same trouble, so he was put on a course of tranquilizers. This did not help and he went to a hospital where they prescribed him a diet and remedial exercises.

Some weeks later he had to go to another surgeon because those medicines were not helping at all. The surgeon said, "Your tonsils have to be removed..." so the tonsils were removed. And this way he went on going from one doctor to another, from one surgeon to another, and parts of the body were slowly slowly disappearing. But the problem remained the same!

Then one day he was strolling in the marketplace and one of the doctors saw him. He said, "Glad to see you -- you look better! You look perfect!" said the physician. "How did it happen? Who helped you finally? -- because we had all failed. Was it my service that helped you?"

"Service my eye!" said the patient. "Both the pain and the limp went away the moment I took that nail out of my shoe!"

Sometimes things are very small, but if you go to knowledgeable people they look with magnifying glasses; they magnify everything. They are clever and efficient in creating problems, because they know the solutions. Their solutions are useful only if they create problems.

Go to any expert, and immediately he will tell you so many problems that you were never aware of. He has to, because his whole expertise depends on your having many problems, and the more complicated they are, the more happy he is because now he has an opportunity to show his knowledge, his skill.

The real problem may be very small. The real problem is REALLY small! The problem is that you live in the head. Come down from the head to the heart. The head can become knowledgeable, the heart can never become knowledgeable. The heart can become wise. The heart knows in a totally different way. Its knowing is direct, immediate -- it is not logical, it is intuitive. It is not inference, it is not a conclusion after a long argumentation. It is a simple vision! One simply knows....

The heart is not a process of knowing: it is the opening of an eye.

LET HIM CHASTEN AND TEACH YOU
AND KEEP YOU FROM MISCHIEF.

The mind is mischievous. It goes on befooling you; it plays so many mischiefs upon you that you are not aware of. The first mischief is: the wise man shares his wisdom and you immediately jump upon it and reduce it into knowledge. The second mischief is: the wise man helps you to be yourself and you start hard work in imitating the wise man -- you try to be like him.

The wise man wants you only to have insight into things so that you have your own light. But you don't want insight, you want clear-cut instructions. You don't want to see yourself, you want to be guided. You don't want to accept your responsibility towards yourself; you want to throw the whole responsibility on the shoulders of the master, on the shoulders of the wise man. Then you feel at ease. Now he is responsible; if something goes wrong, he is responsible. And everything is going to be wrong, because unless you take your

responsibility nothing is ever going to be right.
Nobody can put you right except you yourself.

The master simply teaches you to be a master of yourself -- that is the true function of a master. He does not want you to depend on him. But the mind goes on playing these mischiefs. The mind wants you to depend. The mind is always in search of a father figure or a mother figure; you want somebody to hold your hand. You want somebody to guide, to lead.

The master can only indicate. He is a finger pointing to the moon. But the mind plays a mischief: it clings to the finger -- you may even start sucking the finger.

A Zen master, Nan Yin, used to say to his disciples, "Please don't bite my finger -- look at the moon!"

But people are childish. Just like small children suck on their thumbs and believe that they are getting nourishment, grown-up children suck on the fingers of the masters and think they are being nourished. Beware of the mischief of the mind!

And the mind always tells you, "This is simple, to believe in the master. You need not work hard -- what is the point of working hard? Just look: Albert Einstein discovered the theory of relativity, now nobody else needs to discover it again and again. Once he has discovered you can read it in the books. It took years for him; for you it may take only hours to understand it. Why bother to discover it again?"

That is true about outer knowledge, that is true about the outside, objective world; but it is not true about the subjective, inner world. There one has to discover again and again. Buddha discovered, but that discovery is of no use to you. Jesus knew, but that cannot become your knowing. Mohammed understands, but there is no way to transfer it to you. These people can only indicate how they have attained; they can share their whole journey with you. But then you have to move on your own.

The mind is always for the shortcut; and the mind is always for the easier, for the cheaper way. And those are the things which drive you again and again into wrong paths. Beware! Mind always gives you sugarcoated poison. But it tastes sweet only in the beginning; in the end it is going to poison you. Wisdom may not taste so sweet in the beginning -- it in fact never tastes so sweet, it is bitter -- but it purifies you. Knowledge is sweet in the beginning, wisdom is sweet in the end. And whatsoever proves sweet in the end is the true thing.

The story is told about a man who died and was met by an angel who said to him, "During your life you were always of a mind to believe that things over here could not really be as bad as you thought. Would you like to see heaven and hell and choose your own destination, just as you have always chosen in your earthly life?"

Of course he agreed, and the angel opened a door marked "Hell." Inside there were revelers and people dancing and drumming; a constant debauch seemed to be going on, men and women cavorting, demons and spirits prancing about. It all seemed very active and interesting.

Then the angel threw open the door marked "Heaven." Inside it were rows of saintly people sitting and lying around in a state of aseptic bliss. But it all seemed rather cold, dull and dead.

"I will take the first one," said the man, because he did not want to spend all eternity doing nothing.

They went back to the first door and the angel opened it. He found himself pitchforked into a cavern full of flames and grime, soot and fumes, with demons lashing the inmates and

a constant roar of thunder. Painfully and breathlessly he struggled to his feet and stopped a passing devil: "I was taken on a tour and opted for hell, but it was not anything like this!"

The demon grinned: "Oh, but you were only visiting at the time. That was simply for the tourists!"

The mind can allure you, it can give you sweet dreams in the beginning -- but only in the beginning. Once you are trapped, once you are in it, once you have chosen, you will suffer. That's how millions of people are suffering.

Buddha says: LET HIM CHASTEN AND TEACH YOU AND KEEP YOU FROM MISCHIEF.

THE WORLD MAY HATE HIM
BUT GOOD MEN LOVE HIM.

And remember: a wise man is always hated by the world, is bound to be hated by the world. His presence is a disturbance to those who are fast asleep and snoring, because he goes on shouting "Wake up!" He goes on telling you that whatsoever you are doing is all illusory. He goes on shaking you, shocking you into awareness, and you may be dreaming sweet dreams, beautiful dreams. He goes on pulling you out of your dreams and your sleep, and your sleep may be comfortable, safe, secure. And he does not allow you rest; he gives you great work to do upon yourself.

The ordinary humanity has always hated a wise man -- he may be a Buddha or a Socrates or a Zarathustra or a Lao Tzu, it doesn't matter who, but down the ages the wise man has been hated by the ordinary people, by the masses, by the crowds. The wise man has been loved only by a few seekers of truth, a few lovers of truth, a few good men. Remember it!

DO NOT LOOK FOR BAD COMPANY
OR LIVE WITH MEN WHO DO NOT CARE.
FIND FRIENDS WHO LOVE THE TRUTH.

That is the meaning of a spiritual commune: FIND FRIENDS WHO LOVE THE TRUTH -- because alone you may not be able to gather that much courage to go into the uncharted sea. But when you see many are going, a great courage may arise in your heart. It is there, lying dormant; it may become active. Hence a commune is needed -- Buddha created a SANGHA, a commune -- where seekers can gather together, where lovers of truth can hold hands with each other, where meditators can share their experiences with each other, where people can feel that they are not alone, where they can create an alternative society.

And that's exactly what I am trying to do here: create an alternative society -- the society of the friends of truth, the society of the seekers, the society of people who can feel a deep communion with each other, of love, of trust, because this is going to be an arduous journey and a long journey, and you will have to pass through many deserts and many mountains and many oceans.

Alone you may not be able to gather that much courage, alone you may feel hopeless. But when you see many people dancing, singing, rejoicing in their journey, great courage arises in your heart, great trust arises in yourself. You become confident that it is possible in this life to be a buddha.

DO NOT LOOK FOR BAD COMPANY.... What is "bad company"? People who are not

interested in truth. ... OR LIVE WITH MEN WHO DO NOT CARE. And avoid people who are indifferent to truth, because they are going to waste their life. To be with them you will have to be like them. To be with them you will have to behave in their ways. Find people who are in a love affair with existence. That will help your search tremendously; you will be immensely benefited.

DRINK DEEPLY.... And when you have found a wise man, a master, a buddha, when you have found a community of seekers of truth, a sangha, then drink deeply, then don't be miserly, then don't hold back. You have been thirsty for lives and lives. When the time arrives, don't allow your old habit patterns to prevent you -- drink deeply, unhesitatingly, courageously. Go ahead!

DRINK DEEPLY.
LIVE IN SERENITY AND JOY.

To be with a master is really to be a drunkard. A master is sharing his wine! A master is sharing some inner juice that has started flowing in his being. The source is inexhaustible; you can drink as much as you want -- you cannot exhaust it. To be with a master is to learn how to drink him, how to eat him, how to digest him. To be a disciple is really to be a cannibal! The master has to be eaten, drunk, digested, so he starts flowing in your blood, in your bones, in your marrow... so that he becomes part of your being. DRINK DEEPLY. LIVE IN SERENITY AND JOY.

And when you are around a master, don't be sad and don't be serious. That is not the way to commune with a master. You are bridged only by rejoicing. Of course, your joy has to be very serene, calm, cool. Real joy is not feverish, it is cool, it is very silent. It sings a song, but the song is that of silence. It does not shout, it whispers.

LIVE IN SERENITY AND JOY -- because the more serene you are, the more you are available to the master. And the more joyous you are, the more you are close to the master. These are the ways of being closer.

Many sannyasins ask me, "How to be close to you, Beloved Master?" Be serene, be joyous... and you are close! Be sad, be serious, and you are far, far away. Physically you may be close, but if you are sad you are not close. Physically you may be thousands of miles away, but if you are in joy, rejoicing that you have a master, rejoicing that you have found a buddha, rejoicing that the earth is not yet abandoned by God, that he goes on sending his messengers, rejoicing that Christ still walks on the earth, that Mohammed is not dead but is born in another form, rejoicing that consciousness still blooms and becomes a lotus like a buddha... and you have found a lotus!

You are fortunate, you are blessed. Rejoicing in it brings you closer and closer to the master. It is a spiritual closeness; it has nothing to do with physical closeness.

THE WISE MAN DELIGHTS IN THE TRUTH
AND FOLLOWS THE LAW OF THE AWAKENED.

And if you live joyously, in deep serenity, if you drink without holding yourself in any way back, if you go wholeheartedly with the master, you start becoming wise.

THE WISE MAN DELIGHTS IN THE TRUTH.... Then whenever you hear truth, whenever you see truth, you delight. Your delight is immense. Your delight is not of this earth, it is something of the beyond.

... AND FOLLOWS THE LAW OF THE AWAKENED. And slowly slowly you become aware of the law of the awakened. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO! The world is not a chaos, it is a cosmos. The universe is not accidental; there runs through and through in it a certain law. Buddha calls that law dhamma -- he calls that law God. His approach is tremendously scientific. He does not preach any God who sits on a golden throne in the sky and dominates and controls the world, and gets jealous and gets angry -- if you don't follow him he throws you into hell; if you follow him, if you praise him, if you bribe him through prayers and priests, then he rewards you in heaven with beautiful women who never age, who are stuck at the age of sixteen. Buddha does not believe in any God who rewards or punishes. His approach is scientific.

He says God means the ultimate law that keeps the whole universe together. The universe is a garland -- you see the flowers but you don't see the thread running through the flowers; it is hidden. That thread is God, and that God is known only by the awakened, by the buddhas.

Drink deeply from the master, absorb his being, absorb his presence... melt into his presence. Let his warmth and compassion help to melt the ice of your ego. Become one with him. Drop duality. Be bridged.

This is the meaning of discipleship, this is what sannyas is all about, and slowly slowly you will start seeing what is true and what is false. To know the false as false is to know the truth as the truth; to know darkness as darkness is the beginning of knowing light as light. And when love for truth arises in you, it is not far away when you will become enlightened in your own light, when you will be awakened.

Before that happens, follow the law of the awakened, be in tune with the awakened, be in harmony with the awakened -- because it is a synchronicity.

Listening to beautiful music you feel like dancing. It is not caused by music, because all those who are hearing the music may not feel like that; so it is not the law of cause and effect, it is a totally different law. Carl Gustav Jung has called it the law of synchronicity; he has given it a beautiful name. It has been known down the ages, but he is the first who has rediscovered it in the West.

In the East we have called it SATSANG: to be in tune with the master, to be so attuned that his being starts sinking in you, that you start overlapping. Then something starts happening in you which has never happened. The master is not doing it, you are not doing it -- there is nobody who is doing it -- it is simply happening. Just like listening to music you feel like dancing; being in tune with the master you feel an awakening happening to you.

THE FARMER CHANNELS WATER TO HIS LAND.
THE FLETCHER WHITTLES HIS ARROWS.
AND THE CARPENTER TURNS HIS WOOD.
SO THE WISE MAN DIRECTS HIS MIND.

Once some fragments of wisdom have happened to you, direct your mind towards the awakened. The disciple is continuously directing his mind towards his master -- even after the disciple becomes enlightened he continues to direct his mind.

Sariputta became enlightened -- he was one of the great disciples of Buddha. When he became enlightened he was very afraid to go in front of Buddha. Why? -- because he knew now Buddha will tell him to go and spread the word; he will have to leave the master.

It is said that for many days he was hiding from the master, but finally Buddha inquired, "Where is Sariputta? -- because he has become enlightened, and you cannot hide a light.

Bring him, fetch him wherever he is!"

He was hiding in a cave. He was brought forcibly. He said, "I don't want to go. I know what he is going to do to me. He will say, 'Now you go, roam, wander, preach. Now you have become awakened, wake up others!' And I don't want to leave the master. How will I live without his constant presence?"

But he had to leave. When he came to Buddha, Buddha said, "Now go to the east and spread the word. You have attained, now share it." And when the master orders, it has to be followed.

With tears in his eyes he touched the master's feet, went towards the east. But every morning the first thing he would do, he would get up, bow down towards the west where the master was dwelling.

People would ask him, "Sariputta, you are now yourself a buddha in your own right -- what are you doing? Why do you go on bowing down every morning towards the west?"

He said, "It doesn't matter whether I am enlightened or not. It is irrelevant, it is not the point. My master is dwelling in the west; although I am far away, I am still nourished by his presence. I can drop my enlightenment but I cannot drop my master. Enlightenment is nothing compared to the attunement with the master."

... THE WISE MAN DIRECTS HIS MIND -- to truth, to the ultimate law of existence, to the awakened people. And when you direct your mind towards the awakened people, or towards the law of existence, slowly slowly the old mad mind starts settling, the old chattering disappears. You become more and more silent and serene and tranquil. You become a silent lake, all waves gone, not even ripples to be found. Only then is truth reflected in you.

THE WIND CANNOT SHAKE A MOUNTAIN.
NEITHER PRAISE NOR BLAME MOVES THE WISE MAN.

And then you are like a mountain: nothing can shake you. And then praise or blame are not in any way different to the wise man -- they are all alike. Whether the ignorant person, the unawakened person, praises you or blames you, what difference does it make? Both come from his sleep. It is like a man in a dream shouts -- blames, or praises you. Will you take any note of it? Will you differentiate between the two? A man in a dream may condemn you or may praise you -- you know he is dreaming, he is asleep. It doesn't matter! There is no difference. What he is saying is all nonsense. When he wakes up he will laugh at it all himself, it will look so ridiculous.

Hence, you can praise the buddha, you can condemn him -- millions will condemn him, very few will praise him -- but it makes no difference to him. He remains like an unmoving mountain, an immovable mountain.

HE IS CLARITY.
HEARING THE TRUTH,
HE IS LIKE A LAKE,
PURE AND TRANQUIL AND DEEP.

He is not only clear -- Buddha says he is clarity, clarity itself. To be clear is a very ordinary thing; once in a while you are also clear. Once in a while you can rise to a certain clarity. But the mind is always there to play mischief again; again you will fall. You can jump

for a moment and you are beyond the law of gravitation -- but for how long? A few seconds at the most, and you are back again under the same law of gravitation. To be clear is a momentary phenomenon.

The wise man, the awakened man, is not only clear -- he is clarity. You cannot take it away from him. He is clear through and through. He is utterly clear. All the weeds have been taken out of him -- he is only roses and roses, a row of roses. He has become pure light, pure capacity to see. His vision is no longer clouded, his sky is without clouds.

HE IS LIKE A LAKE, PURE AND TRANQUIL AND DEEP. His consciousness becomes a lake, and in that lake are reflected all the stars and all the suns and all the moons and the whole sky... and the whole truth, the whole existence. In his silent lake of consciousness is reflected that which is, and that is another name for God -- that which is.

Meditate over these sutras; not only meditate -- imbibe their spirit. Buddha is sharing his invaluable treasures with you, invaluable secrets.... FOLLOW HIM, FOLLOW THE WAY. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #2

Chapter title: A watcher on the hills

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
COULD YOU TALK ABOUT TRUST? WHENEVER I TRUST, WHATEVER HAPPENS IS BEAUTIFUL; WHEN DOUBT ARISES, I AM IN PAIN. JUST THE FACT OF TRUSTING YOU, OR LIFE, OR SOMEBODY, IS ENOUGH TO MAKE ME FEEL LIGHT, HAPPY. WHY THEN DO I STILL DOUBT?

Prem Isabel, it is one of the most fundamental questions of life. The question is not only about trust and doubt: the question is rooted in the duality of the mind. It is so with love and hate, it is so with body and soul, it is so with this world and the other world.

Mind cannot see the one. The very process of mind divides reality into polar opposites -- and reality is one, reality is not two, reality is not many. It is not a multiverse, it is a universe.

It is an organic whole, this existence. But the mind basically functions by dividing, the mind functions like a prism; immediately it is divided into seven colors. Before passing the prism it was simply white, pure white; after the prism it is the whole rainbow.

Mind divides reality into two. And those two are bound to be always together, because in existence itself they are indivisible. Only in mind, only in your thought, the division exists.

Prem Isabel, you say, "Could you talk more about trust? Whenever I trust, whatever happens is beautiful...."

But your trust is nothing but the other pole of doubt; it cannot exist without doubt. Your trust is simply an antidote to doubt. If doubt really disappears, where will your trust be? What need will there be of trust? If there is no doubt then there is no trust either. And you are afraid to lose trust, you cling to trust. In clinging to trust you are clinging to doubt too, remember. You can have both, but you can't have one. Either you have to drop both or you have to go on keeping both; they are indivisible, two sides of the same coin. How can you avoid the other side? It will always be there. You may not look at it, that makes no difference. But sooner or later you will have to look at it.

Another part of mind is: it gets bored with anything very soon. So if you are in trust, soon it gets bored with it. Yes, it is beautiful, but only in the beginning. Soon the mind starts hankering for something new, for something different, for a change. Then there is doubt, and doubt hurts; again you start moving towards trust, and trust becomes boring, and you have to fall into the trap of doubt.... This way one goes on like a pendulum of a clock: right, left, right, left, one goes on moving. You will have to understand that there IS a trust totally different from what you have known up to now about trust. I am talking about that trust. The distinction is very delicate and subtle, because both the words are the same. I have to use the language that you use. I cannot create a new language; it will be useless because you won't understand it. I cannot go on using your language in the same sense you use it, because then it will also be useless: I will not be able to express my experience, which is beyond your language. So I have to find a middle point; I have to use your language, your words, with new meanings. That compromise is bound to be there. All the buddhas had to do that much.

I use your words with my meanings. Hence, be very alert: when I say 'trust' what I mean is totally different from what YOU mean when you use the same word. When I say 'trust' I mean absence of the duality of doubt and trust. When I say 'love' I mean absence of the duality of love and hate. When you use the word 'trust' it means the other side of doubt; when you use 'love' it means the other side of hate. But then you are caught in a duality, in a double bind. And you will be crushed between the two; your whole life will become a life of anguish.

You know trust is beautiful, but doubt arises because your trust is not beyond doubt. Your trust is AGAINST doubt, but not beyond. My trust is a transcendence; it is beyond. But to be beyond you have to remember: both have to be left behind. You can't choose. Your trust is a choice against doubt; my trust is a choiceless awareness. In fact, I should not use the word 'trust'; it confuses you. But then what to do? What other word to use for it? All words will confuse you.

I should not be speaking really, but you will not be able to understand the silence either. I am speaking in order to help you to become silent. My message can be delivered only in silence. Only in silence, the communion.... But before it becomes possible, I have to communicate to you, persuade you for it. That can be done only through your words. But one thing, if remembered, will be of immense help: I use your words, but with my own meanings -- don't forget my meanings.

Go beyond doubt and trust, then you will have a new taste of trust -- which knows nothing of doubt, which is absolutely innocent. Go beyond both, then simply YOU are left, your consciousness, without any content. And that's what meditation is all about. Trust is

meditation.

Don't repress your doubt! That's what you go on doing. When you listen about the beauties of trust, the wonders of trust, the miracles of trust, a great longing, a great desire, a great greed arises in you to attain it. And then you start repressing doubt; you go on throwing doubt deep into the unconscious so that you need not encounter it. But it is there. And the deeper it is, the more dangerous it is, because it will manipulate you from the background. You will not be able to see it, and it will go on influencing your life. Your doubt will be more potent in the unconscious than in the conscious. Hence, I say it is better to be a doubter, it is better to be skeptical knowingly, consciously, than to be a believer and unknowingly, unconsciously remaining a doubter.

All believers doubt, hence they are so much afraid of losing their trust. Their trust is poor, their trust is impotent. Hindus are afraid of reading the scriptures of the Buddhists, the Buddhists are afraid of reading the scriptures of the Christians, the Christians are afraid of reading the scriptures of other religions. The atheist is afraid to listen to the mystic, the theist is afraid of listening to the atheist. From where does all this fear come? Not from the other: it comes from your unconscious. You know perfectly well -- how can you avoid knowing it? You may like to forget, but you cannot -- it is there! Vaguely you always feel it, the doubt is there, and anybody can provoke it. It may have become dormant, it can become active again; hence the fear of listening to something that goes against your belief.

All believers live with closed eyes and closed ears and closed hearts -- they have to, because the moment they open their eyes there is fear. Who knows what they are going to see? It may affect their belief. They cannot listen, they cannot AFFORD to listen, because something may go deep into the unconscious and the unconscious may be stirred. And it is with great difficulty that they have been able to control it. But this controlled doubt, this repressed doubt, is going to take vengeance, it is going to take revenge sooner or later. It will wait for an opportunity to assert itself. And it is growing stronger and stronger inside you. Soon it will throw your conscious belief systems. That's why it is so easy to change people from Hindus to Mohammedans, from Mohammedans to Christians, from Christians to Hindus -- it is so easy.

Before the Russian revolution, just sixty years ago, the whole of Russia was religious -- in fact one of the most religious countries. Then what happened? Just the revolution! The communists came in power, and within ten years all that religiousness evaporated. People became atheistic because now they were taught in the schools, colleges, universities, everywhere, that there is no God, that there is no soul.

They used to believe in God, now they started believing in no-God! They used to believe before, they are STILL believing. Before doubt was repressed, now trust is repressed. Sooner or later Russia is going to go through another revolution -- when trust will come up again and doubt will be thrown back into the unconscious. But it is all the same! You are moving in circles.

In India, you are great religious people. It is all rubbish. Your so-called religion is nothing but repressed doubt. And that is so in other countries too.

This is not the way of inner transformation -- repression is never the way of revolution. Understanding, not repression: try to understand your no, and try to understand your yes, and then you will see they are not separate, they are inseparable. What meaning can yes have if the word no disappears from languages? What meaning can no have if you don't know anything about yes?

They are bound together, married together, they cannot be divorced. But there is a

transcendence. There is no need to divorce them, there is no need to separate them -- don't try the impossible. Go beyond. Just watch both.

This is my suggestion, Isabel: Watch when doubt arises, don't get identified with it. Don't get disturbed, there is nothing to be disturbed about! Doubt is there -- you are watching it, you are not it. You are just a mirror reflecting it. And when trust arises there will be a little more difficulty in watching because you say, "Trust makes me so happy, trust makes me feel so beautiful." You will jump upon it, you would like to become identified with it. You would like to be known as one who trusts, as one who has faith. But then you will never get out of the vicious circle. Watch trust too.

And the deeper your watching becomes... you will be surprised: looking deep into doubt you will find the other side is trust -- as if the coin becomes transparent and you can see this side and you can also see the other side. Then watching trust you will be able to see doubt hiding behind it. That moment is of great realization: when seeing that doubt is trust, that trust is doubt, you become free from both. Suddenly a transcendence! You are no longer attached to either, your bondage is finished. You are no longer caught in the duality, and when you are no longer caught in duality, you are not part of the mind at all -- mind is left far behind. You are simply a pure consciousness. And to know pure consciousness is to know real beauty, real blessing, real benediction.

If you want to call that state "trust," then you will be understanding my language. I call that state trust which knows nothing of doubt, not even a shadow of doubt.

But of course I am using language in such a way that no linguist will agree with. But that's how it has always been. The mystic has something to say to you which cannot be said. And the mystic has to communicate to you something which is incommunicable. The problem for the mystic is: what to do? He has something, and it is so much that he would like to share it -- he has to share it. Sharing is inevitable, it cannot be avoided. It is like a cloud full of rainwater: it has to rain, it has to shower. It is like a flower full of fragrance: the fragrance has to be released to the winds. It is like a lamp in the dark night -- the light has to dispel the darkness.

Whenever someone becomes enlightened, he becomes a cloud full of rainwater. Buddha has called the man of enlightenment one who has attained MEGHASAMADHI -- MEGHA means cloud, SAMADHI means the ultimate consciousness: one who has attained the cloud of ultimate consciousness. Why does he use the word 'cloud'? -- because of this intrinsic necessity to shower. A man who is enlightened becomes a flower which has opened. The mystics in the East have called the ultimate opening of your heart, of your being, of your consciousness, SAHASRAR -- one-thousand-petaled lotus. When this one-thousand-petaled lotus opens, how can you avoid sharing your fragrance? It is natural, spontaneous; it starts spreading into the winds.

A buddha is a man whose heart is full of light; a buddha is one who has become a flame, an eternal flame which cannot be extinguished. Now it is bound to dispel darkness. But the problem is: how to give the message?

You have a language which is based on duality and he has an experience which is rooted in nonduality. You are on the earth, he is in the sky. The distance is infinite... but it has to be bridged. And you cannot bridge it, only a buddha can bridge it. You know nothing of the sky, you know nothing of that inexpressible experience, that ineffable experience. But he knows both! He knows your darkness because he has lived in that darkness himself. He knows your misery because he has passed through it and he knows now the bliss of ultimate attainment. Now he knows what God is. Only he can manage to bridge, only he can manage to create

some links between you and him.

Language is the most important link between humanity and the buddha. In fact, language is the most distinctive characteristic of human beings; no other animals use language. Man is man because of language. Hence, language cannot be avoided, it has to be used -- but it has to be used in such a way that you are constantly reminded that it has to be dropped, and the sooner the better.

Isabel, drop both doubt and trust, belief and unbelief, skepticism and faith -- drop both! And then see something new arising in you which is not trust in the old sense -- because it has no doubt in it -- which is trust in a totally new meaning, with a totally new texture. That's what I am talking about, that's what I call trust -- trust which is beyond doubt and your trust, beyond both, whatsoever you have known up to now.

There is a light which is neither your darkness nor your light, and there is a consciousness which is neither your unconscious nor your conscious. What Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung called conscious, unconscious, are parts of your mind. When Buddha talks about consciousness he is not talking in the same sense as Freud and Jung -- his consciousness is the witnessing consciousness, which witnesses the consciousness of Freud and the unconsciousness of Freud.

Learn to become more of a witness, create more watchfulness. Let each act, each thought, be seen. Don't become identified with it; remain aloof, distant, far away, a watcher on the hills. Then one day you will be showered with infinite bliss.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
STRONGER AND STRONGER THE FEELING ARISES IN ME THAT THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE CONNECTION BETWEEN EGO AND NO, AND BETWEEN LOVE AND YES, AND THAT LOVE CANNOT SAY NO; ONLY PSEUDO LOVE WHICH IS FROM THE EGO CAN SAY NO; AND THAT EGO CANNOT SAY YES -- EGO CAN ONLY SAY A PSEUDO YES WHICH IS HYPOCRISY. YET MY MIND DOUBTS, OBJECTS TO THE SIMPLICITY OF THIS UNDERSTANDING.

Veet Chitten, the first thing to be understood is that truth is always simple. It has no complexity in it. That's why the knowledgeable person goes on missing it.

Jesus says: Unless you are like small children you will not enter into my kingdom of God.

Truth must be very simple. If only children can understand it, then it can't be complex. Truth simply is. That "isness" may create a great wonder in your heart, it may mystify you -- but it mystifies you because of its simplicity, because of its obviousness. It may create great awe in you but that awe is not of complexity.

If truth was complex then philosophers would have discovered it long before, because they are experts in complexity. They have not been able to discover it yet. And they will never be able to discover it. Their very search is in a wrong direction. They have assumed that truth is complex from the very beginning -- they never doubt the basic assumption -- and they are rushing behind their own complex minds. And the more they go into the mind and think and argue, the more complex the whole thing appears to be.

Science cannot find truth because science also wants things to be complex. Why do science and philosophy want things to be complex? Science is only an offshoot of philosophy. Even today in the university of Oxford, the department of physics is called the

"Department of Natural Philosophy." Science is an offshoot of philosophy; that's why we still go on giving Ph.D.s to scientists -- Ph.D. in chemistry, Ph.D. in physics, Ph.D. in mathematics -- but Ph.D. means doctor of philosophy.

In the ancient days there was only philosophy, then slowly slowly a part of philosophy became more and more experimental, and that part became science.

Science can function only if something is complex. Why? -- because the complex can be divided, analyzed, dissected. The greatest difficulty with the simple is it cannot be dissected, it has no parts to dissect. If you ask a complex question the scientist can answer it; but if you ask a simple question, a very simple question, then the trouble arises.

If you ask, "How many stars are there?" the scientist can answer. But if you ask, "Why does arithmetic have only basically ten numbers, from the first to the tenth, then again the same thing is repeated: eleven, twelve, thirteen...? The basic digits are ten. Why? Why ten? Why not seven? Why not five? Why not three?" Then the scientist is at a loss. He will shrug his shoulders. He cannot answer it -- because the answer is so simple that to say it looks absurd.

Arithmetic has ten digits because you have ten fingers! And primitive people used to count on the fingers, so ten digits became the fundamental thing. It has nothing scientific about it -- just a coincidence. If you had eight fingers, or twelve fingers, the whole mathematics would have been different. It is not a necessity!

A great mathematician, Leibnitz, used only three digits: one, two, three... then four never comes. Then comes ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen... then fourteen never comes: twenty. And it worked well, perfectly well. Albert Einstein even reduced it to two. He said, "Ten is superfluous -- only two are necessary: one, two... that will do! You can count all the stars!"

The number ten is accidental, but so are our many assumptions only accidental. They don't depend on any fundamental law. And if you ask a very simple question... For example, G.E. Moore has asked, "What is yellow?" Now, no scientist can answer it, no philosopher can answer it. You can say at the most, "Yellow is yellow" -- but that is a tautology. You are not saying anything new in it! If yellow is yellow, what kind of answer is this? We know yellow is yellow -- but what IS yellow? You can point to the yellow. You can take the person and you can show him these yellow flowers, but he will say, "That I know! They are yellow flowers. My question is: what IS yellow?"

G.E. Moore, a great philosopher and logician of this age, concedes that it cannot be answered. Why? -- because it is so simple! A simple question cannot be answered. The simpler it is, the more impossible it is to answer it.

Hence, Chittin, the first thing to be remembered is: truth is simple. That's why nobody has yet been able to say anything about it, and all that has been said about it is superficial.

Lao Tzu insisted his whole life that he would not write anything about truth. When finally he was forced to write -- he was really forced to write... that is the only great scripture which has been written at the point of a bayonet!

Lao Tzu was leaving China in his very old age... and you can think of his old age, because when he was born the story is he was eighty-two -- when he was born! So you can imagine how much older he must have been when he died. He was already eighty-two when he was born! A beautiful story, which simply says that he was so mature when he was born that he was a child but never childish. And remember the distance and difference between a child and the one who is childish.

When Jesus says, "Those who are like children..." he is not talking about childish people; he is talking about innocent people. Lao Tzu must have been so innocent that the people who

wrote about him could not write that he was only nine months old. His innocence was so deep and so profound that it cannot be attained in only nine months; hence they thought he was at least eighty-two years old. He was born with white hair. You can look at Paritosh: he must have been born like Paritosh -- pure white hair!

So when he was old -- nobody knows how old, people must have lost track of his age -- when he felt, "Now it is time to leave the body," he started moving towards the Himalayas, because there is no other place more beautiful to die.

Death should be a celebration! Death should be in nature, under the trees and the stars and the sun and the moon. The whole life he had lived with people; now he wanted to go back to nature, and before he entered into the ultimate he wanted to die amidst trees and mountains and virgin peaks.

But the king of the country ordered all the guards on all the boundaries, "Don't allow Lao Tzu to escape. Wherever he is caught, force him to write down his experiences, because he has something invaluable and we cannot allow this man to escape taking it with him."

He was caught at one of the posts and the policeman insisted, "You have to write it down; otherwise I will not allow you to leave the country."

So sitting in the policeman's hut, and the policeman with his bayonet, Lao Tzu wrote TAO TEH CHING.

The first sentence is: "Truth cannot be said, and that which can be said is not truth anymore."

No great scripture begins with such a beautiful sentence. He is saying, "If you have understood this sentence, please don't read on." He deceived the policeman. How can a policeman understand what he is writing? But he deceived. The first statement simply states that there is no need to read any more: if you have understood this you have understood all.

"The tao that can be said is no longer tao." The moment you say it you falsify it. Truth is so simple it cannot be uttered, words are complex, languages are complex. Truth is so simple it can be indicated. Hence Buddha says, "Buddhas can only show you the way," and Zen masters say, "Don't cling to our words -- our words are nothing but fingers pointing to the moon." And remember, the fingers are not the moon! The moon has nothing to do with fingers, but you can only indicate.

Truth is so simple, that's why the whole problem arises.

Chitten, you say, "Yet my mind doubts, objects to the simplicity of this understanding."

Yes, this happens: when you start understanding simple truths -- and ALL truths are simple -- the mind doubts. The mind says, "Things cannot be so simple." The mind is really a very strange phenomenon.

You have a proverb -- almost all the languages of the world have such proverbs -- which says: It is too good to be true. Too GOOD to be true? As if truth and goodness are enemies! You can't believe in the good, you can't believe in the true. You should change the proverb: Too good to be untrue.

In the same way the mind says, "Too simple to be true."

Change it: "If it is not simple, it CANNOT be true."

Truth is simple; hence innocence is needed, not knowledge. Hence a pure heart is needed, not a mind full of information. Hence love is needed, not logic. Truth IS simple.

The second thing to understand: as a general statement your understanding is very close to the truth.

You say, "Stronger and stronger the feeling arises in me that there is an absolute connection between ego and no."

Never use the word 'absolute', avoid it as much as possible -- because it is the word 'absolute' that creates fanatics. Nobody has the absolute truth. Truth is so vast! All truths are bound to be relative. It is the word 'absolute' that has dragged the whole of humanity into misery. The Mohammedan thinks he has the absolute truth in the Koran; he becomes blind. The Christian thinks the absolute truth is in the Bible. The Hindu thinks the absolute truth is in the Gita, and so on, so forth. And how can there be so many absolute truths? Hence the conflict, quarrel, war, religious crusades, jihad: "Kill others who are claiming that their truth is absolute -- OUR truth is absolute!" Down the ages, more murders, more rapes, more lootings, have been done in the name of religion than in the name of anything else. And the reason? The reason is in the word 'absolute'.

Always remember: whatsoever we know and whatsoever we can ever know is bound to remain relative. To remember it will give you compassion. To remember it will make you liberal. To remember it will make you more humane. To remember it will help you to understand other viewpoints.

Truth is vast -- simple but vast, as vast as the sky. The whole universe contains it, and the universe is unlimited, infinite. How can you conceive of the whole truth? How can you have the absolute truth in your hands? But that is how the ego functions.

The ego is very tricky. The moment you start feeling something true, the ego immediately jumps in and says, "Yes, this is the absolute truth." It has closed your mind; now no more truth will be available. And the moment you assert, "This is absolute," you have falsified it.

A man of truth is always relative.

If you had asked Mahavira, "Is there a God?" he would have said, "Yes -- but that is my first statement. The second, no; that is my second statement. And the third, yes and no both; that is my third statement." And he would make seven statements, and each statement would start with 'perhaps': perhaps yes, perhaps no, perhaps both, perhaps both not, and so on, so forth. Sevenfold logic!

What Mahavira did in the world of religion, Albert Einstein did in the world of physics: the theory of relativity. These two names are very important, their contribution is great.

Jainism could not spread for a single reason: because you cannot create a religion on the base of 'perhaps'. People want absolute truths, people want to be fanatics, people want to be believers. They want to depend on somebody, they want somebody authoritative. Now, the moment you say perhaps, they become disinterested in you. Their mind says, "This man does not know; otherwise why should he say 'perhaps'? If he knows, he knows; if he does not know, he does not know. What place is there for 'perhaps'?"

But Mahavira will not say yes or no, because if you say yes it becomes absolute, if you say no it becomes absolute. The 'perhaps' is always there. Why? -- not because he does not know but BECAUSE HE KNOWS, hence the 'perhaps'.

Chittan, never use the word 'absolute' -- avoid it. It has been a calamity in the past; in the future we have to avoid it. Use 'perhaps' more.

Your statement would have been closer to the truth if you had said, "Perhaps there is a connection between ego and no." Of course it would not have sounded so strong; 'perhaps' makes it very diluted. With 'absolute' it is more allopathic; with 'perhaps' it becomes homeopathic, very dilute. With 'perhaps' it can appeal only to people who understand. With 'absolute' it is very appealing to fools, stupids, mediocres, the insane, pathological... it is very appealing!

Doctor Harisingh Gaur, one of the great legal experts of the world, used to say to his students that, "If you have the law in your favor, speak very silently, slowly, be mild, polite --

because the law is in your favor, don't be worried. But if the law is not in your favor, then beat the table, speak loudly, with a strong voice. Use words which create an atmosphere of certainty, absoluteness, because the law is not in your favor. You have to create an atmosphere as if the law is in your favor."

Whenever a man of truth speaks, he speaks in a humble way, he speaks in a simple way.

Avoid the word 'absolute'; it has been in the service of lies, it has never served truth. It has been murderous with truth, poisonous as far as truth is concerned. Better learn to use the word 'perhaps'.

Yes, with a 'perhaps' there is a connection between ego and no. The ego feeds on no, it is its nourishment. The ego avoids saying yes as far as it can avoid. If it has to say yes, it says it very reluctantly, because when you say no you assert your power; no means you are somebody. When you say yes you are no longer powerful, you have surrendered -- yes means surrender. Hence we go on saying no even when it is not needed at all.

A child is asking his mother, "Can I go outside and play on the lawn?" and she says "No!" Now, there is no need, not at all! It is sunny, it is green outside, and flowers and butterflies... and what is wrong for the child in going outside and playing in the sun? Why should he remain in the closed room? But the mother says no -- not that knowingly she is saying no; it is unconscious. No comes easy. No seems to be very natural, habitual, automatic. And the children become very, very alert about it -- children are very perceptive, they watch everything. He will start creating a nuisance, he will go into a tantrum. He may start crying or he may start throwing things or he may start shouting or he may do something which annoys the mother. And sooner or later the mother is bound to say, "Go out and play!" And that's what he had asked in the first place!

And this is so with everybody: the first thing that comes to your tongue is no. It comes so immediately that there has not been time enough to ponder over it. Yes you say only when you are forced to say it. It comes very hard, it is so difficult -- as if something is being snatched from you. In a natural state, things will be just the opposite: yes will come easy and no will be difficult.

A man who goes deep in meditation will find the change happening: yes will become easier and easier and easier, and one day yes will be a simple response, spontaneous. And no will become more and more difficult, harder to say, and even if one has to say no, he will say it in such a way that it sounds like yes. He will formulate it in such a way that it doesn't hurt the other's ego -- because it is by hurting the other's ego that your ego feels good.

The ego IS violent. The more you hurt others' egos, the better you feel -- you are higher, you are superior. With yes, all superiority disappears. With yes, you simply dissolve.

So it has a truth in it, a very simple truth in it: there IS a connection between ego and no, and between love and yes. But remember the 'perhaps'; if you make it absolute you may go wrong. With 'absolute' everything goes wrong... because sometimes love knows how to say no. It is not an absolute thing that love will always say yes -- no. Love can say no, too. But the no that comes out of love is totally different from the no that comes out of ego. Their qualities are different, they exist on different planes.

When love says no, it is not to hurt you, it is to help you. When love says no it is full of love, it has a poetry around it, not violence. It is suffused with love. And a man who always says yes and has become incapable of saying no -- even when it is needed, his yes is mechanical -- his yes has lost all meaning. It is like a gramophone record. He simply says yes as a matter of course. He need not even listen to what you are saying, his yes is inevitable.

A man had come to see Sigmund Freud. Those were the days when Sigmund Freud was too much obsessed with the idea of sex; everything was to be reduced to sex. Just as Christianity for two thousand years had been repressing sex and was obsessed with sex, so was Sigmund Freud. He was almost a saint! If obsession with sex makes a person a saint, Sigmund Freud is a saint.

All the Christian saints have been obsessed with sex; they have created a very repressive society, ugly, sick, nauseating. Sigmund Freud is a revenge, a revenge of the unconscious; he becomes the mouthpiece of the unconscious. Now he was doing the same thing from the opposite end: everything had to be reduced to sex.

A camel passed. Freud and the man who had come to see him both looked outside the window. Sigmund Freud asked the man -- as he was always asking people -- "What are you reminded of, seeing the camel?"

And the man said, "Sex." Freud was of course very happy. Whenever your theory is supported, a new evidence that even a camel reminds a person of sex....

Then to be more clear and on more certain ground he asked, "Do you see these books on the rack? What do they remind you of?"

And the man said, "Sex."

Now even Freud was a little puzzled, and he asked, "What do I remind you of?" And the man said, "Sex."

And Freud said, "How is it possible? The camel reminds you of sex, the books remind you of sex, I remind you of sex...."

The man said, "EVERYTHING reminds me of sex!" Everything can remind you of sex if it is too much repressed, and everything starts taking a sexual color. Sigmund Freud was of course very happy seeing this man. He noted down the whole story. He used to tell this story again and again to his students.

Once it happened, when he was telling it to a new class of students, one of the students who had also been in his class before said, "But sir, you have told this story last year too."

Sigmund Freud waited for a moment and then said, "Then you need not laugh, but let others laugh. If you have laughed last year, that's okay, no need to laugh anymore. But I have to tell this story because it has a point."

There are people, millions of people, who are in this situation. There are people who are reminded of food by each and everything; they have been repressing food. And anything, if you repress too much, creates pathology.

For example: if this idea settles in your mind that love always says yes and ego always says no, then ego means no, love means yes. They have become equivalent, they have become synonymous. Now there is a danger: you will start repressing all no's just to be loving. And so many no's repressed in your unconscious will not allow you to be really loving. Love will remain on the surface, it will be a facade, a pseudo face; it will not be your original face.

So please, Chittin, avoid the word 'absolute'; it can create difficulties for you. Yes, there is a connection, but the connection is not absolute. There are moments when love can say no, and ONLY love can say no, and there are moments when the ego can say yes.

The ego is not innocent, it is very cunning. It can use yes too, when needed. It can use yes as a stepping-stone, it can use yes as a lubricating agent. You cannot go on saying no to each and everything; otherwise life will become impossible for you. You have sometimes to say yes -- you may not like to say it, but you HAVE to say yes. But you will say it in such a way

that the ultimate result is no. You will say it only as a polite gesture, but you will not mean it; you may mean just the opposite.

I have heard:

There was once a Sufi who found himself in a large mass of people milling about outside the palace of the king of his country. The king had ordered that all the famous people of his realm were to be assembled and odes recited in their honor. The court poets had been working for months to get their verses ready, and this was the day of the great gathering of honor.

The royal guards separated the guests from the onlookers but the Sufi began to say, "I don't want to be praised, I don't want to be honored, I don't want an ode in homage to me to be recited...."

This, however, was to no avail, for the guards hustled him into the audience-chamber. He was struggling so hard -- others only resisted from locally conventional modesty -- that the king ordered him to be seated next to the throne. Then the king ordered the king of poets to recite the ode in honor of this most modest man. The poem was nowhere to be found. They asked the sage his name, but nobody could remember who he was, if anyone. Finally the king asked him to say something. He said, "I do not want to be praised!"

"Why not?" demanded the king. "If you don't want to be praised you should not have come to the reception!"

"But I did not come -- your guards picked me up in the street. I was not invited even. All I was doing was saying that I did not want to be praised!"

But why should you say that? He was shouting outside the palace, "I do not want to be praised! I do not want to be praised!" And he was making such a nuisance. Why? The ways of the ego are very cunning. It can play the role of being humble. It can shout from the housetops that, "I don't want to be praised!" It can even decline Nobel Prizes.

That's what George Bernard Shaw did. He refused to accept the Nobel Prize on the grounds that, "Now it is below me. It is for young people -- they will be happy. I have gone beyond all this praise, it is childish for me!" But it is an insult to the Swedish Academy and the king. So he was pressed from all over the world, from kings and queens and prime ministers and presidents. Those who had never written to him, they all wrote letters to him, "Please accept it -- it is insulting to the king and to the country."

For two or three days he created much noise, and then he accepted -- on the grounds that because so many presidents and prime ministers and kings and queens were asking him, just to make them happy, he would accept it. Again he created a great news, front page news. He accepted the Nobel Prize and then immediately donated it to the Fabian Society. Later on it was found that he was the president of the society and he was the only member! But he kept the world for seven or eight days continuously in his grip, and when he was asked he said, "What is the point -- just getting a small corner in the newspapers that a Nobel Prize has been awarded to George Bernard Shaw? I used the opportunity as much as possible; I exploited the opportunity as much as possible."

It was not humbleness, it was the way of the ego. And he knew -- he was clever at it, at the game.

Remember: the ego can sometimes say no, sometimes yes, whichever suits. It can use no too -- it is so cunning. And love also can say sometimes yes and sometimes no, because if the

yes is going to hurt the other.... If the child is asking to go outside and play in the sun it is one thing, but if the child is asking to play with some electric gadget which can be dangerous or the child wants to drink poison, then you have to say no -- and love will be ready to say no.

Love can say no out of love. Ego can say yes out of its own projections. There is no necessary connection, so don't make it absolute, that's all. Perhaps there is a certain connection -- and there is -- but that 'perhaps' has never to be forgotten.

Mahavira used to look very strange to people, because he would not start any sentence without 'perhaps'. It looks a little odd. I am not saying that you have to start using 'perhaps' before every sentence. I am not saying that when you fall in love with a girl you have to say, "Perhaps I am in love with you, perhaps not... who knows? Nothing is absolute, everything is relative." I am not telling you to become an exhibition of stupidity. But let that 'perhaps' become part of your being, let it be an undercurrent.

In fact it is so. When you are in love it is only perhaps, there is no need to say it, but it IS only perhaps. You are not even certain about your own self, how can you be certain about your love? You have not even loved yourself, how can you love somebody else? You don't know what love is -- because love is known only at the highest peaks of consciousness.

What you call love is lust, it is not love. It is using the other as a means, and to use the other as a means is the most immoral act in the world; it is exploitation. But the other will not allow you to exploit if you can't create the atmosphere in which the other falls a prey and becomes a victim easily. So you have to talk about love, and you have to talk about love which will remain forever. And you don't know even about tomorrow, you don't know even about the next moment!

A lover was saying to his beloved, "I am ready to die for you! Just say! I love you so much that just a hint from your side and I can commit suicide, I can sacrifice my life. I am going to get you -- no power in the world can prevent me! Even if fire showers from the skies I am going to find you!" And so on, so forth.

And when he was departing the girl asked, "Will you be coming tomorrow?" He said, "If it doesn't rain."

It is all perhaps! One should be aware of it -- it helps to bring sanity to you, it helps you to be more healthy and whole.

But there is a simple truth in it: that yes somehow is part of love and no part of ego, but not necessarily connected. Sometimes no can be found with yes, with love; yes can be found with no, with ego.

Your approach to life should be that of yes, that of love; and if no is needed at all, it has to serve yes, it has to serve your love. Let the no be the servant and yes be the master -- that's enough! I am not saying destroy no completely. If you destroy your no completely, your yes will become impotent. Let yes be the master and no the servant. No as a servant is beautiful; as a master it is ugly.

And that's what has happened: no has become the master and yes has been reduced to the state of a slave. Free your yes from that slavery and dethrone your no from its mastery, and you will find a right synthesis of your being, of the negative and the positive. You will find a right harmony between the dark side and the light side, between day and night, between summer and winter, between life and death.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HAVE JUST ARRIVED FROM THE WEST -- PARIS -- WHERE I HAD HEARD ABOUT YOU AND READ SOME OF YOUR BOOKS. THEY TOUCHED ME VERY DEEPLY AND ONE QUESTION AROSE IN ME:
HOW IS YOUR SPIRITUAL DIMENSION AND THE WORK YOU DO ON A SPIRITUAL LEVEL CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING AND ENLIGHTENING THE BEHAVIOR OF A MAN INVOLVED IN ACTION ON A MATERIALISTIC LEVEL -- FOR INSTANCE, URBANISM, STRUGGLE AGAINST HUNGER, THIRST AND ALL OTHER DISTRESSES?

Jacques Daumal, I do not divide existence into these old dichotomies, the materialistic plane and the spiritual plane. There is only one reality: matter is its visible form and spirit its invisible form. Just like your body and your soul -- your body cannot be without your soul and your soul cannot be without your body.

In fact, the whole split of the past has been a heavy burden on the human heart -- the split between body and soul. It has created a schizophrenic humanity. As I see it, schizophrenia is not a disease that happens once in a while to a person. The whole humanity up to now has been schizophrenic. It is very rarely, only once in a while, that a man like Jesus, or Buddha, or Mahavira, or Socrates, or Pythagoras, or Lao Tzu, has been able to escape from this schizophrenic pattern of our living.

To divide reality into antagonistic, inimical realism is dangerous because it is dividing man. Man is a miniature universe; if you divide the universe the man is divided, if you divide the man the universe is divided. And I believe in the undivided, organic unity of existence.

To me there is no distinction between the spiritual and the material. You can be spiritual and function on the materialistic plane -- and your functioning will be more joyous, your functioning will be more aesthetic, more sensitive. Your functioning on the materialistic plane will not be tense, will not be full of anguish and anxiety.

Once a man came to Buddha and asked, "The world is in such a distress, people are in so much misery -- how can you manage to sit silently and so joyously?"

Buddha said, "If somebody is suffering from fever, has the doctor also to lie down by his side and suffer? Has the doctor out of compassion to get the infection and lie down by the side of the patient and be feverish? Is that going to help the patient? In fact, whereas there was only one person ill, now there are two persons ill -- the world is doubly ill! The doctor need not be ill to help the patient; the doctor has to be healthy to help the patient. The healthier he is, the better; the healthier he is, the more help is possible through him."

I am not against working on the material plane. Whatsoever work you are doing -- urbanism, struggle against hunger, struggle for ecological balance, struggle against poverty, exploitation, oppression, struggle for freedom -- whatsoever your work on the material plane, it is going to be benefited, tremendously benefited, if you become more spiritually rooted, centered, calm, quiet, cool, because then the whole quality of your work will be changed. Then you will be able to think in a more cool manner, and you will be able to act more gracefully. Your understanding of your own inner being will be of tremendous help to help others.

I am not a spiritualist in the old sense and I am not a materialist either in the old sense. The Charvakas in India, Epicurus in Greece, Karl Marx and others, they are materialists. They say only matter is true and consciousness is only an epiphenomenon, a by-product; it

has no reality of its own. And then there are people like Shankara, Nagarjuna, who say just the same thing in a reverse manner. They say the soul is real and the body is unreal, MAYA, illusion, an epiphenomenon, a by-product; it has no reality of its own.

To me, both are half right, half wrong. And a half-truth is far more dangerous than a whole lie -- at least it is whole. A whole lie has a certain beauty, but a half-truth is ugly -- ugly and dangerous too -- ugly because it is half. It is like cutting a man into two parts.

Just the other day I was reading a story:

It was very hot, and a man with his young daughter was passing by the side of a swimming pool of an intercontinental hotel. It was so hot, the girl said, "I would like to go in the pool and cool myself."

The father said, "Okay, I will sit underneath the tree, and you go ahead."

But she was stopped immediately by the guard and he said, "This pool is restricted. It is not allowed here for Jews... and you look Jewish."

The father said, "Listen: I am Jewish. My daughter's mother is not Jewish, she is a Christian, so my daughter is half Jew, half Christian. Can you allow her to take a bath only up to the waist?"

Dividing man is dangerous, because man is an organic unity. But this is how down the ages it has been done, and now it has become almost a routine thinking, a conditioning.

Daumal, you are still thinking in the old categories. I don't belong to any school -- the school of the materialists or the school of the so-called spiritualists. My approach is total, it is holistic. I believe that man is both together, spiritual and material. In fact, I have to use the words 'spiritual' and 'material' just because they have always been used. In fact man is psychosomatic, not material AND spiritual, because that 'and' creates duality. There is no 'and' between the material and the spiritual, not even a hyphen. Man is materialspiritual -- I use it as one word, materialspiritual. And both the sides....

Spiritual means the center of your being and the material means the circumference of your being. The circumference cannot be there if there is no center, and the center cannot be there if there is no circumference.

My work here is to help your center become a clarity, a purity. Then that purity will be reflected on the circumference too. If your center is beautiful your circumference is bound to become beautiful, and if your circumference is beautiful your center is bound to be affected by that beauty.

My sannyasin is a total man, he is a new man. The effort is that he will be beautiful from both the sides.

There were once two mystics talking. The first one said, "I had a disciple once, and in spite of all my efforts I was unable to illuminate him."

"What did you do?" asked the other.

"I made him repeat mantras, gaze at symbols, dress in special garb, jump up and down, inhale incense, read invocations, and stand up in long vigils."

"Didn't he say anything which might give you a clue as to why all this was not giving him higher consciousness?"

"Nothing. He just lay down and died. All he said was irrelevant: 'When am I going to get some FOOD?'"

Of course, to a spiritual person it is irrelevant, talking about food -- what has that to do with spirit?

I am not that kind of a spiritual person. I am as hedonist as Charvaka, as materialist as Epicurus, as spiritualist as Buddha, Mahavira. I am the beginning of a totally new vision.

In the new commune, just as there will be a Buddha Auditorium, a Mahavira Meditation Hall, a Jesus House, a Krishna House, a Lao Tzu House, there are going also to be gardens dedicated to Epicurus -- because his school was called "The Garden." There are going to be lakes dedicated to Charvakas. In the new commune the spiritualists and the materialists all have to be respected. We are trying to create a harmony, a new synthesis.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE ALL THE SO-CALLED INDIAN GURUS RUSHING TO AMERICA?

Nirmal, in the very ancient scriptures there is a story. Meditate over it.

This is the story: that when destiny was being planned, the archetypal representatives of various peoples and schools were offered their choice of gifts.

The Japanese asked to be given the Zen koan so that people would always be attached to the power of perplexity. The Hindu guru asked for the mantram and the assertion that everything was derived from his philosophy.

Then an American-to-be was asked for his choice. Since he was to be one of the last peoples to emerge, most of the more attractive things had been handed out. But he was not long in asking: "Give me the dollar -- then they all will come to me, sooner or later!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #3

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WANT NOTHING.
WHERE THERE IS DESIRE,
SAY NOTHING.

HAPPINESS OR SORROW --
WHATEVER BEFALLS YOU,
WALK ON

UNTOUCHED, UNATTACHED.

DO NOT ASK FOR FAMILY OR POWER OR WEALTH,
EITHER FOR YOURSELF OR FOR ANOTHER.
CAN A WISE MAN WISH TO RISE UNJUSTLY?

FEW CROSS OVER THE RIVER.
MOST ARE STRANDED ON THIS SIDE.
ON THE RIVERBANK THEY RUN UP AND DOWN.

BUT THE WISE MAN, FOLLOWING THE WAY,
CROSSES OVER, BEYOND THE REACH OF DEATH.

HE LEAVES THE DARK WAY
FOR THE WAY OF THE LIGHT.
HE LEAVES HIS HOME, SEEKING
HAPPINESS ON THE HARD ROAD.

FREE FROM DESIRE,
FREE FROM POSSESSIONS,
FREE FROM THE DARK PLACES OF THE HEART,
FREE FROM ATTACHMENT AND APPETITE,
FOLLOWING THE SEVEN LIGHTS OF AWAKENING,
AND REJOICING GREATLY IN HIS FREEDOM,
IN THIS WORLD THE WISE MAN
BECOMES HIMSELF A LIGHT,
PURE, SHINING, FREE.

Man lives in misery -- not because he is destined to live in misery but because he does not understand his own nature, potential, possibilities of growth. This nonunderstanding of oneself creates hell. To understand oneself is to be naturally blissful, because bliss is not something that comes from the outside, it is your consciousness resting in its own nature.

Remember this statement: your consciousness resting in itself is what bliss is all about.

And to be relaxed in one's own being is to be wise. The English word 'wise' does not connote the same depth, profundity and significance as the word 'buddha'. Wherever you come across the word 'wise man', remember it is a translation for 'buddha'. 'Buddha' has a totally different meaning in the East. It is not just wise, it is far more than that. Wisdom is greater than knowledge, buddhahood is the ultimate. Buddhahood means awakening. Knowledge means objective knowledge -- knowing that which is outside you. It can never be more than information, because you cannot see things from their insides, you can only watch them from the outside; you will remain an outsider. Science is that kind of knowledge. The very word 'science' means knowledge -- knowledge from the outside. That which you are knowing is an object, you are separate from it. Knowing the other is knowledge.

You can go round and round, you can watch it in every possible way. You can weigh and calculate, and dissect and analyze, and you can come to logical conclusions, which will be useful, utilitarian. They will make you more efficient, but they will not make you wise.

Wisdom is subjective knowledge; not knowing the object but knowing the knower -- that is wisdom.

Buddhahood is a transcendence of both. In buddhahood there is no object, no subject; all duality has disappeared. There is no knower, no known; there is no observer and nothing as observed -- there is only one. Whatsoever you want to call it you can call it: you can call it God, you can call it nirvana, you can call it samadhi, satori... or whatever, but only one remains. The two have melted into one.

In English there is no word to express this ultimate transcendence. In fact there are many things which cannot be expressed in Western languages, because the Eastern approach towards reality is basically, fundamentally, tacitly different. Sometimes it happens, the same thing can be looked at in the Eastern and in the Western way, and on the surface the conclusions may look similar, but they cannot be. If you go a little deeper, if you dig a little deeper, you will find great differences -- not ordinary differences but extraordinary differences.

Just the other night I was reading the famous haiku of Basho, the Zen mystic and master. It does not look like great poetry to the Western mind or to the mind which has been educated in a Western way. And now the whole world is being educated in the Western way; East and West have disappeared as far as education is concerned. Listen to it very silently, because it is not what you call great poetry but it is great insight -- which is far more important. It has tremendous poetry, but to feel that poetry you have to be very subtle. Intellectually, it cannot be understood; it can be understood only intuitively.

This is the haiku:

WHEN I LOOK CAREFULLY,
I SEE THE NAZUNIA BLOOMING
BY THE HEDGE!

Now, there seems to be nothing of great poetry in it. But let us go into it with more sympathy, because Basho is being translated into English; in his own language it has a totally different texture and flavor.

The nazunia is a very common flower -- grows by itself by the side of the road, a grass flower. It is so common that nobody ever looks at it. It is not a precious rose, it is not a rare lotus. It is easy to see the beauty of a rare lotus floating on a lake, a blue lotus -- how can you avoid seeing it? For a moment you are bound to be caught by its beauty. Or a beautiful rose dancing in the wind, in the sun... for a split second it possesses you. It is stunning. But a nazunia is a very ordinary, common flower; it needs no gardening, no gardener, it grows by itself anywhere. To see a nazunia carefully a meditator is needed, a very delicate consciousness is needed; otherwise you will bypass it. It has no apparent beauty, its beauty is deep. Its beauty is that of the very ordinary, but the very ordinary contains the extraordinary in it, because all is full of God -- even the nazunia flower. Unless you penetrate it with a sympathetic heart you will miss it.

When for the first time you read Basho you start thinking, "What is there so tremendously important to say about a nazunia blooming by the hedge?"

In Basho's poem the last syllable -- KANA in Japanese -- is translated by an exclamation point because we don't have any other way to translate it. But kana means, "I am amazed!" Now, from where is the beauty coming? Is it coming from the nazunia? -- because thousands of people may have passed by the side of the hedge and nobody may have even looked at this

small flower. And Basho is possessed by its beauty, is transported into another world. What has happened? It is not really the nazunia, otherwise it would have caught everybody's eye. It is Basho's insight, his open heart, his sympathetic vision, his meditateness. Meditation is alchemy: it can transform the base metal into gold, it can transform a nazunia flower into a lotus.

WHEN I LOOK CAREFULLY.... And the word 'carefully' means attentively, with awareness, mindfully, meditatively, with love, with caring. One can just look without caring at all, then one will miss the whole point. That word 'carefully' has to be remembered in all its meanings, but the root meaning is meditatively. And what does it mean when you see something meditatively? It means without mind, looking without the mind, no clouds of thought in the sky of your consciousness, no memories passing by, no desires... nothing at all, utter emptiness.

When in such a state of no-mind you look, even a nazunia flower is transported into another world. It becomes a lotus of the paradise, it is no longer part of the earth; the extraordinary has been found in the ordinary. And this is the way of Buddha: to find the extraordinary in the ordinary, to find all in the now, to find the whole in this -- Buddha calls it TATHATA.

Basho's haiku is a haiku of tathata: THIS nazunia, looked at lovingly, caringly through the heart, unclouded consciousness, in a state of no-mind... and one is amazed, one is in awe. A great wonder arises, How is it possible? This nazunia -- and if a nazunia is possible then everything is possible. If a nazunia can be so beautiful, Basho can be a buddha. If a nazunia can contain such poetry, then each stone can become a sermon.

WHEN I LOOK CAREFULLY, I SEE THE NAZUNIA BLOOMING BY THE HEDGE!
KANA.... I am amazed. I am dumb. I cannot say anything about its beauty -- I can only hint at it.

A haiku simply hints. The poetry describes, the haiku only indicates -- and in a very indirect way.

A similar situation is found in Tennyson's famous poetry; comparing both will be of great help to you. Basho represents the intuitive, Tennyson the intellectual. Basho represents the East, Tennyson the West. Basho represents meditation, Tennyson mind. They look similar, and sometimes the poetry of Tennyson may look more poetic than Basho's because it is direct, it is obvious.

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL
I PLUCK YOU OUT OF THE CRANNIES
HOLD YOU HERE, ROOT AND ALL, IN MY HAND,
LITTLE FLOWER -- IF I COULD BUT UNDERSTAND
WHAT YOU ARE, ROOT AND ALL, AND ALL IN ALL,
I SHOULD KNOW WHAT GOD AND MAN IS.

A beautiful piece, but nothing compared to Basho. Let us see where Tennyson becomes totally different. First: FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL I PLUCK YOU OUT OF THE CRANNIES....

Basho simply looks at the flower, he does not pluck it out. Basho is a passive awareness: Tennyson is active, violent. In fact, if you have really been impressed by the flower, you cannot pluck it. If the flower has reached your heart, how can you pluck it? Plucking it means destroying it, killing it -- it is murder! Nobody has thought about Tennyson's poetry as

murder -- but it IS murder. How can you destroy something so beautiful? But that's how our mind functions; it is destructive. It wants to possess, and possession is possible only through destruction.

Remember, whenever you possess something or somebody, you destroy something or somebody. You possess the woman? -- you destroy her, her beauty, her soul. You possess the man? -- he is no longer a human being; you have reduced him to an object, into a commodity.

Basho looks carefully, just looks, not even gazes concentratedly; just a look, soft, feminine, as if afraid to hurt the nazunia.

Tennyson plucks it out of the crannies and says: ... I HOLD YOU HERE, ROOT AND ALL, IN MY HAND, LITTLE FLOWER.... He remains separate. The observer and the observed are nowhere melting, merging, meeting. It is not a love affair. Tennyson attacks the flower, plucks it out root and all, holds it in his hand. Mind always feels good whenever it can possess, control, hold. A meditative state of consciousness is not interested in possessing, in holding, because all those are the ways of the violent mind.

And he says: LITTLE FLOWER.... The flower remains little, he remains on a high pedestal. He is a man, a great intellectual, a great poet. He remains in his ego: LITTLE FLOWER....

For Basho, there is no question of comparison. He says nothing about himself, as if he is not. There is no observer. The beauty is such that it brings a transcendence. The nazunia flower is there, blooming by the hedge -- KANA -- and Basho is simply amazed, is struck to the very roots of his being. The beauty is overpowering. Rather than possessing the flower, he is possessed by the flower, he is in a total surrender to the beauty of the flower, to the beauty of the moment, to the benediction of the herenow.

LITTLE FLOWER, says Tennyson, IF I COULD BUT UNDERSTAND.... That obsession to understand! Appreciation is not enough, love is not enough; understanding has to be there, knowledge has to be produced. Unless knowledge is arrived at Tennyson cannot be at ease. The flower has become a question mark. For Tennyson it is a question mark, for Basho it is an exclamation point. And there is the great difference: the question mark and the exclamation point.

Love is enough for Basho -- love IS understanding. What more understanding can there be? But Tennyson seems to know nothing of love. His mind is there, hankering to know... BUT IF I COULD UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE, ROOT AND ALL, AND ALL IN ALL.... And mind is compulsively perfectionist. Nothing can be left unknown, nothing can be allowed to remain unknown and mysterious. ROOT AND ALL, AND ALL IN ALL... has to be understood. Unless mind knows everything it remains afraid -- because knowledge gives power. If there is something mysterious, you are bound to remain afraid because the mysterious cannot be controlled. And who knows what is hidden in the mysterious? Maybe the enemy, maybe a danger, some insecurity? And who knows what it is going to do to you? Before it can do anything it has to be understood, it has to be known. Nothing can be left as mysterious. That is one of the problems the world is facing today.

The scientific insistence is that we will not leave anything unknown, and we cannot accept that anything can ever be unknowable. Science divides existence into the known and the unknown. The known is that which was unknown one day, now it is known; and the unknown is that which is unknown today but tomorrow or the day after tomorrow it will be known. The difference is not much between the known and the unknown; just a little more endeavor, a little more research, and all unknown will be reduced to known.

Science can feel at ease only when everything is reduced to the known. But then all

poetry disappears, all love disappears, all mystery disappears, all wonder disappears. The soul disappears, the God disappears, the song disappears, the celebration disappears. All is known... then nothing is valuable. All is known... then nothing is of any worth. All is known... then there is no meaning in life, no significance in life. See the paradox: first the mind says "Know everything!" -- and when you have known it the mind says, "There is no meaning in life."

You have destroyed the meaning and now you are hankering for meaning. Science is very destructive of meaning. And because it insists everything CAN be known, it cannot allow the third category, the unknowable -- which will remain unknowable eternally. And in the unknowable is the significance of life.

All the great values of beauty, of love, of God, of prayer, all that is really significant, all that makes life worth living, is part of the third category: the unknowable. The unknowable is another name for God, another name for the mysterious and the miraculous. Without it there can be no wonder in your heart -- and without wonder, a heart is not a heart at all, and without awe you lose something tremendously precious. Then your eyes are full of dust, they lose clarity. Then the bird goes on singing, but you are unaffected, unstirred, your heart is not moved -- because you know the explanation.

The trees are green, but the greenness does not transform you into a dancer, into a singer. It does not trigger a poetry in your being, because you know the explanation: it is chlorophyll that is making the trees green... so nothing of poetry is left. When the explanation is there the poetry disappears. And all explanations are utilitarian, they are not ultimate.

If you don't trust the unknowable, then how can you say that the rose is beautiful? Where is the beauty? It is not a chemical component of the rose. The rose can be analyzed and you will not find any beauty in it. If you don't believe in the unknowable, you can do an autopsy on a man, a postmortem -- you will not find any soul. And you can go on searching for God and you will not find him anywhere, because he is everywhere. The mind is going to miss him, because the mind would like him to be an object and God is not an object.

God is a vibe. If you are attuned to the soundless sound of existence, if you are attuned to one hand clapping, if you are attuned to what the Indian mystics have called ANAHAT -- the ultimate music of existence -- if you are attuned to the mysterious, you will know that only God is, and nothing else. Then God becomes synonymous with existence.

But these things cannot be understood, these things cannot be reduced to knowledge -- and that's where Tennyson misses, misses the whole point. He says: **LITTLE FLOWER -- IF I COULD BUT UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE, ROOT AND ALL, AND ALL IN ALL, I SHOULD KNOW WHAT GOD AND MAN IS.** But it is all 'but' and 'if'.

Basho KNOWS what God is and what man is in that exclamation mark, KANA: "I am amazed, I am surprised... **NAZUNIA BLOOMING BY THE HEDGE!**" Maybe it is a full-moon night, or maybe it is early morning -- I can actually see Basho standing by the side of the road, not moving, as if his breath has stopped. A nazunia... and so beautiful. All past is gone, all future has disappeared. There are no more questions in his mind but just sheer amazement.

Basho has become a child: again those innocent eyes of a child looking at a nazunia, carefully, lovingly. And in that love, in that care, is a totally different kind of understanding -- not intellectual, not analytical.

Tennyson intellectualizes the whole phenomenon, and destroys its beauty. Tennyson represents the West, Basho represents the East. Tennyson represents the male mind, Basho represents the feminine mind. Tennyson represents the mind, Basho represents the no-mind.

Let this become your basic understanding, then we can go into the sutras of Gautama the Buddha.

WANT NOTHING.
WHERE THERE IS DESIRE,
SAY NOTHING.

A simple statement, but the import is great: WANT NOTHING... because this is how all the awakened ones have come to know -- that the misery is created by desiring. Misery is not a reality, it is a by-product of desire. Nobody wants to be miserable; everybody wants to destroy misery, but everybody goes on desiring, and by desiring one goes on creating more and more misery.

You cannot destroy misery directly, you have to cut the very roots. You have to see from where it arises, from where comes this smoke. You have to go down deep into the soil, to the roots. Buddha has called it TANHA -- desiring.

The mind is constantly desiring. The mind never stops even for a single moment desiring; all day it desires, all night it desires, in thoughts it desires, in dreams it desires. Mind is the constant process of desiring... more and more.

Mind remains eternally in discontent. Nothing satisfies it, nothing at all. You may attain to whatsoever you wanted to attain, but the moment you attain it, it is finished. The very moment of attainment... and your mind is no longer interested in it. Watch and see the tricky mind. For years it may have been thinking to purchase a certain house, a beautiful house; for years it may have worked hard. Now the house is yours -- and suddenly nothing is left in your hand. All those dreams, all those fantasies that you had about this house have flown away, and within hours, or at the most within days, you will be desiring another house again. The same trap, the same track, and you go round and round in circles.

You wanted to have this woman, now you have her; you wanted to have this man, now he is yours -- and what have you gained? All those fantasies have flown away. Instead you are frustrated! The mind only desires. It knows only how to desire; hence it cannot ever allow any contentment. Contentment is the death of the mind, desire is its life.

Buddha says: WANT NOTHING. That means: be contented. That means: whatsoever is, is more than you need; whatsoever is, is already so profound, so beautiful... the nazunia flower by the hedge! You are living in such a tremendously beautiful world, with all the stars and the planets and the sun and the moon... with the flowers and the mountains and the rivers and the rocks and the animals, the birds and the people. This is the most perfect world possible, it cannot be improved upon. Enjoy its beauty. Relish the celebration that goes on around you. It is a continuous celebration.

The stars go on dancing, the trees go on swaying -- ecstatically. The birds go on singing. The peacocks will dance and the cuckoo will call... and all this goes on and you remain miserable -- as if you are determined to be miserable. You have decided, you have staked all that you have, to remain miserable; otherwise there is no reason to be miserable. The THISness of existence is so beautiful, the NOWness of existence is so incredibly beautiful, that all that you need is just to relax, rest, be... let the separation between you and the whole disappear.

The separation is caused by desiring. Desiring means complaint. Desiring means all is not as it should be. Desiring means that you are thinking you are wiser than God. Desiring means

you could have made a better world. Desiring is stupid. Nondesire is wisdom. Nondesire means a state of contentment, each moment living totally and contentedly.

WANT NOTHING. WHERE THERE IS DESIRE, SAY NOTHING. Buddha is not saying that just by not wanting anything desire is going to stop immediately. You have become habituated to it, it is an ancient habit -- for lives and lives you have desired. It has become autonomous. Even without you it goes on by itself, it has its own momentum. So just by understanding that desire creates misery, that there is no need for desire, that one can simply be and enjoy the sun and the wind and the rain, desire is not going to stop so easily.

Hence Buddha says: WHERE THERE IS DESIRE, SAY NOTHING. If desire arises in you just watch it, don't say anything. Don't express it, don't repress it. Don't condemn it, don't fight with it. Don't evaluate it, don't judge it. Just watch -- carefully. The nazunia by the hedge... just look at it, with no prejudice for or against.

If listening to buddhas you become anti-desire, then you have not understood them, because anti-desire is again desire. If you start desiring a state of no-desire, that is getting into the same rut from the back door. Nondesiring cannot be desired; that will be a contradiction in terms. All that can be done is to WATCH desire, carefully. And in that very watching, slowly slowly, desire dies on its own accord.

This is the existential experience of all those who have become awakened. I am a witness to it -- I say to you not because Buddha says so: I say to you because this is my own experience too. Watching desire, slowly slowly desire dies on its own accord. You don't kill it, you don't fight with it, you don't condemn it, because if you condemn it slips, dives deep into your unconscious; then it starts residing there, and it controls you from there.

If you repress desire, you will have to constantly repress and you will have to be constantly on guard. In the day maybe you can succeed in repressing it, but in dreams it will surface again. That's why psychoanalysis has to study your dreams. It can't believe you when you are awake, it can't trust you when you are awake -- it has to look into your dreams. Why? -- because your dreams will say what you have been repressing. And whatsoever is repressed becomes very powerful, because it enters in your unconscious sources and from there it goes on pulling your strings. And when the enemy cannot be seen it is more powerful -- naturally, obviously.

Buddha is not saying fight desire, Buddha is not saying be against desire. He is simply stating a fact: that desire is stupidity, that desire creates misery, that desire will never allow you to be blissful. So watch desire. Say nothing about it! Simple, very simple watching. Don't sit like a judge.

HAPPINESS OR SORROW --
WHATEVER BEFALLS YOU,
WALK ON

UNTOUCHED, UNATTACHED.

And happiness WILL come and sorrow WILL come, because these are the seeds that you have sown down the ages, and whatsoever you have sown you will have to reap. So don't be disturbed. If happiness comes, don't become too much excited; if sorrow comes, don't become too much depressed. Take things easily.

Happiness and sorrow are separate from you; remain unidentified. That's what he means: WALK ON UNTOUCHED, UNATTACHED... as if they are not happening to you but happening to somebody else. Just try this small device, it is a valuable recipe: as if they are

not happening to you but to somebody else, maybe to a character in a novel or in a movie, and you are just an onlooker. Yes, unhappiness is there, happiness is there, but it is THERE! -- and you are here.

Don't become identified, don't say, "I am unhappy," simply say, "I am the watcher. Unhappiness is there, happiness is there -- I am simply the watcher."

It will be of great importance if some day in the future we start changing the patterns of our languages, because our languages are very deeply rooted in ignorance. When you feel hungry, you immediately say, "I am hungry." That creates an identification and gives you a feeling as if YOU are hungry. You are not. Language should be such that it does not give you this wrong notion that "I am hungry." What is really the case is: you are watching that the body is hungry; you are a watcher that the stomach is empty, that it desires food -- but this is not you. You are the watcher. You are always the watcher! You are never the doer. You always go on standing as a watcher far away.

Get more and more rooted into watching -- that's what Buddha calls VIPASSANA, insight. Just see with inner eyes whatsoever happens, and remain untouched, unattached.

A tough, old-time Indian fighter came straggling back into camp with seven Shoshone arrows piercing his chest and legs.

A doctor examined him and remarked, "Amazing stamina. Don't they hurt?"
The oldtimer grunted, "Only when I laugh."

In fact, they should not hurt even then -- and they don't hurt to a buddha. Not that if you pierce the buddha with an arrow there is no hurt; the hurt is there. He may feel it even more than you, because a buddha's sensitivity is at the optimum -- you are insensitive, dull, half dead. The scientists say that you only allow two percent of information to reach you; ninety-eight percent is prevented outside. Your senses don't allow it in. Only two percent of the world reaches to you; ninety-eight percent is excluded.

To the buddha, a hundred percent of the world is available, so when an arrow pierces a buddha it hurts a hundred percent; to you it hurts only two percent. But there is a great difference: a buddha is a watcher. It hurts, but it does not hurt HIM. He watches as if it is happening to somebody else. He feels compassion for the body -- he feels compassion, his compassion for his body -- but he knows that he is not the body.

So, in a way, it hurts him more than it hurts to you, in another way it hurts not at all. He remains aloof, unconcerned. It is a very paradoxical state. He CARES for the body, but yet remains unconcerned -- unconcerned about the consequences. He takes every possible care because he respects the body. It is such a beautiful servant, it is such a good house to live in -- he takes care but he remains aloof.

Even when the body is dying a buddha goes on watching that the body is dying. His watchfulness remains to the very last. The body dies and the buddha goes on watching that the body has died. If one can watch to such an extent, one goes beyond death.

DO NOT ASK FOR FAMILY OR POWER OR WEALTH,
EITHER FOR YOURSELF OR FOR ANOTHER.
CAN A WISE MAN WISH TO RISE UNJUSTLY?

The things of the world do not matter -- the wealth, the power, the prestige, they don't matter. The buddha cannot ask for them for himself or for another. That distinction has to be

remembered. Ordinarily it is thought that a buddha will not ask for himself, but he can ask for others. No, he will not ask for others either. That's where Christianity and Buddhism have diametrically opposite visions.

There is a story:

A woman came to Buddha crying, weeping, carrying the dead body of her only son. People had told her that if she goes to the Buddha, he is such a compassionate man, he may do some miracle. Buddha asked the woman, "You do one thing: you go into town -- bring some mustard seeds. One condition has to be fulfilled: they should be brought from a house where nobody has ever died."

The woman was very happy; this was not a problem because their whole village was growing mustard seeds. So every house was full of mustard seeds. She rushed from one house to another, but in her excitement that her son is going to be revived again she forgot completely that the condition is impossible, it cannot be fulfilled.

By the evening she had knocked on all the doors, and everybody said, "We can give you as many mustard seeds as you want, but they will not help because we cannot fulfill the condition: somebody has died in our family -- not only one but many persons really. My father died, my father's father died... and thousands of others before." Somebody's wife has died, somebody's mother, somebody's brother, sister, somebody's son.... She could not find a single family where nobody had ever died.

By the evening when she came she was a totally different woman -- she came laughing. In the morning she had come crying and weeping; she was almost mad because the only son had died. Buddha asked her, "Why are you smiling?"

She said, "Now I know -- you tricked me, you befooled me, but I could not see the point at that time. Everybody has to die, so it is not a question now that my son has died. He had to die one day or other. And it is good, in a way, that he has died before me: if I had died before him, he would have suffered. It is better for me to suffer than for him to suffer. So it is good, perfectly good.

"Now I have come for initiation. Initiate me into sannyas, because I would like to know: is there anything beyond death or not? Is death all or does something survive? I am no longer interested in the son."

Buddha said, "That was the purpose of sending you, so that you can be awakened."

Now the same story you can visualize about Jesus Christ. What Christians say... because nobody knows what kind of man Jesus really was except what the Christians say about him, and they are saying wrong things about him. If he was really a buddha -- and he was -- then he would not have been interested in reviving people from death. He would not revive Lazarus from death -- what is the point? Lazarus is no longer alive. He must have died a few years later; even if he was revived he would have died a few years later. Death is going to happen; you can at the most postpone it.

A buddha is not interested in postponing! A buddha's whole effort is to make you alert, aware, that death is coming. He is not to protect you from death, he has to take you beyond death. And Jesus is a buddha. MY understanding of Jesus is totally different from the Christian interpretation. To me, this is a parable: Lazarus coming back to life simply means Lazarus reborn spiritually.

Buddha has said many times -- Jesus has said also -- Unless you are born again, you will not enter into my Kingdom of God. But "born again" does not mean that you have to be

resurrected. "Born again" means a spiritual process of awakening. Jesus must have awakened Lazarus from his sleep, from his metaphysical death.

When you come to me you are metaphysically dead -- you are Lazarus. The story says Jesus called Lazarus out of his tomb: "Lazarus, come out!" That's what every buddha has been doing down the ages: calling Lazaruses to come out of their graves. When I initiate you into sannyas, what am I doing? -- calling, "Lazarus, come out of your grave! Be reborn!"

Sannyas is a process of rebirth. Lazarus must have been initiated into the deeper mysteries of life which go beyond death. But to make this beautiful metaphor into an historical event is to destroy the whole poetry of it, the whole significance of it.

A buddha will not ask -- for himself or for his family or for anybody else -- for power, prestige, possessions, because they are utterly useless.

CAN A WISE MAN WISH TO RISE UNJUSTLY? That's impossible. Remember, the "wise man" is a translation of 'buddha'. An awakened man cannot do anything unjust -- it is impossible, it can't happen in the nature of things. The awakened one can do only the right, the just. And to ask for power, prestige, money, possessions, fame, is stupid. A wise man cannot ask for them, either for himself or for others.

And the buddha knows whatsoever is just is already happening; there is no need to ask for it, there is no need to desire it. Existence is very just and very fair. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the inexhaustible, eternal law, that existence is very fair and very just. You simply remain natural and existence will go on bestowing a thousand and one blessings on you without your asking for them.

The famous statement of Jesus is: Ask and it shall be given. If you ask Buddha he will say: Ask not and it shall be given. Jesus says: Knock and the doors shall be opened unto you. If you ask Buddha he will say: Knock not, because the doors are already open. Just look... the nazunia flower, and Basho looking at it carefully.

FEW CROSS OVER THE RIVER.
MOST ARE STRANDED ON THIS SIDE.
ON THE RIVERBANK THEY RUN UP AND DOWN.

Buddha says again and again that people are in such a hurry, not knowing where they are going, but in a great hurry they are going somewhere. And they simply go up and down, on THIS bank, hoping that by running and rushing and remaining occupied they will reach to the other shore.

I have heard that the pope in the Vatican received a phone call, a long-distance phone call, from New York. The bishop from New York phoned in a very nervous, excited, feverish state: "Sir, immediate instructions are needed: one man who looks like Jesus has entered into the church, and he says, 'I am Jesus Christ.' Now what am I supposed to do?"

The pope pondered over it for a moment and then said, "Look occupied."

What else can you do? If Jesus has come, at least look occupied, do something! Let him see that his people are very busy -- be busy. Even if there is no business, don't be worried.

That's what people are doing -- busy without business, looking very occupied. And all that they are doing is just rushing up and down the same bank. This way you cannot reach the other shore.

FEW CROSS THE RIVER. MOST ARE STRANDED ON THIS SIDE. What does he

mean by "this side"? This side means death, time, this momentary existence. That side means deathlessness, timelessness, eternity, God, nirvana. One needs guts to cross the stream, because the other shore is not visible. In fact, only this shore is visible, the other shore is invisible. This shore is gross, the other shore is subtle. This shore is material, the other shore is spiritual -- you cannot see it, it cannot be shown to others.

Even those who have reached to the other shore can only call you, invite you, but they cannot give any proofs. I cannot give you any proof of God; Buddha has not given, Jesus has not given -- nobody who knows can give any proof of God. God cannot be proved. You can only be persuaded to come to the other shore and see on your own.

Buddha says again and again: IHI PASSIKO! Come and see!

BUT THE WISE MAN, FOLLOWING THE WAY,
CROSSES OVER, BEYOND THE REACH OF DEATH.

The only effort of any intelligent person in this world should be, first and foremost, how to know something which cannot be destroyed by death -- because death can happen any moment, next moment, tomorrow. Because death can happen any moment, the intelligent person's first effort will be to know something that cannot be destroyed by death, and to be centered into that something which is deathless, to be rooted in that, so you are not destroyed. BUT THE WISE MAN, FOLLOWING THE WAY, CROSSES OVER, BEYOND THE REACH OF DEATH.

Death is the most important phenomenon -- far more important than birth, because the birth has already happened; now you cannot do anything about it. But death has to happen -- something can be done about it, some preparation. You can be ready to receive it, you can be consciously in a state of welcome for it.

You missed the opportunity of birth, don't miss the opportunity of death. And if you can receive death in a meditative state, you may be able to receive your next birth -- which will be followed by death -- consciously. If you can die consciously, you will be born consciously. Your next life will have a totally different flavor. And a person can be born only once after he has died consciously -- only one more life.

The Christians, the Jews, the Mohammedans, believe in only one life. My interpretation is that when you have died once consciously -- and are reborn consciously -- THAT life is real life; only that is worth counting. All other lives before it were not worth counting. That's why these three traditions have not counted them. It is not that they don't know about them -- Jesus is perfectly aware of past lives -- but they are not worth counting. You were asleep, you were dreaming, you were unconscious. It was not LIFE; you were somehow dragging yourself in sleep.

Buddha used to tell his disciples: Count your life only after you have taken sannyas.

Once it happened:

A great king, Bimbisara, had come to see Buddha. He was sitting at Buddha's side talking to him and an old man came, bowed down, touched Buddha's feet, an old sannyasin. And as it was the habit of Buddha to ask, he asked the old man, "How old are you?" And the old man said, "Just four years old, sir."

Bimbisara could not believe his eyes, could not believe his ears: "This old man who looks almost eighty, if not more, is saying he is four years old?" He said, "Pardon me, sir, can you repeat it again, how old you are?"

The old man again said, "Four years old."

Buddha laughed and said, "You don't know the way we count life: it is four years ago that he became a sannyasin, that he was initiated into the eternal, that he was taken into the timeless. It is only four years ago that he crossed from this shore and reached to the other shore. He has lived for eighty years, but those years are not worth counting; it was a sheer wastage."

Nobody has interpreted Christianity, Judaism, Islam, in the way I am interpreting. They all believe in one life, and Christians, Mohammedans and Jews think there is only one life. That is not the case; you have lived many times, but they are not worth counting. Only one life will be worth counting: when you will be born consciously -- but you can be born consciously only if you die consciously.

So the first and the most important thing in life is to prepare for death. And what is the way to prepare for death? -- what Buddha calls "following the way." Meditate over this small anecdote.

Nan Yin, a great Zen master, was visited by Tenno, who, having passed his apprenticeship, had become a teacher. The day happened to be rainy, so Tenno wore wooden clogs and carried an umbrella.

After greeting him, Nan Yin remarked, "I suppose you left your wooden clogs in the vestibule. I want to know if your umbrella is on the left or on the right side of the clogs."

Tenno, confused, had no instant answer. He realized that he was unable to carry his Zen every minute. He became Nan Yin's disciple and he studied six more years to accomplish his every minute Zen.

This is the way. One has to be alert and aware of each and everything that one is doing. Now, Tenno has not done something very serious -- he had simply forgotten where the umbrella is, at the right side of the clogs or at the left side. You will think Nan Yin is too hard; it is not so. It is out of compassion that he asked this question.

Nan Yin's own master, when he had come for the first time to his master, had asked a similar question.

Nan Yin had traveled almost two hundred miles into the mountains to reach the master, and do you know what the master asked, the first question? Not very philosophical, not very metaphysical.... The moment Nan Yin bowed down, the master asked, "What is the price of rice in your town?" The price of rice...!

But Nan Yin instantly said, "I am no longer there, I am here. I never look back, and I destroy all the bridges that I have crossed. So forget all about the rice and its price!"

The master was tremendously happy. He hugged Nan Yin, he blessed him, and he said, "If you had told me the price of rice in your town, I would have thrown you out of the monastery. I would not have allowed you here, because we are not interested in rice merchants."

Each master has his own way of seeing into disciples' inner beings. Now this was a simple question: Nan Yin said, "Where is your umbrella -- on the left or on the right side of the clogs?" Now, nobody can think of Immanuel Kant asking such a question to any of his disciples; nobody can imagine Hegel or Heidegger or Sartre asking such a question to one of his students -- impossible!

Only a man like Nan Yin, a man who is a buddha, can ask such a question -- so ordinary, yet with such extraordinary insight. He is saying, "When you were putting your umbrella, were you aware? -- or did you just do it mechanically?"

Once a man, another man, a professor in a university, came to see Nan Yin. He threw his shoes -- must have been angry or something -- slammed the door, came in. At least thirty other disciples were sitting there. Nan Yin looked at the professor; he was a very famous professor... must have expected that Nan Yin will stand up and welcome him. Instead, Nan Yin shouted at the professor and told him to go back and ask forgiveness. "You have misbehaved with the door, you have misbehaved with the shoes! Unless they forgive you, unless I see that you have been forgiven, I will not allow you in -- you get out!"

Shocked, shattered -- but the professor could see the point. Still he tried; he said, "But what is the point of asking forgiveness from the shoes or the door? They are dead anyway, how can they forgive?"

Nan Yin said, "If you can be angry at them and they are dead, if to be angry is okay, then you should be ready to ask forgiveness too -- apologize!"

The professor went; for the first time in his life he bowed down to his shoes. And he remembers in his memoirs that "That moment was one of the most precious in my life, when I bowed down to my shoes. Such silence descended on me! For the first time I felt free of the ego, utterly open. The master has done the trick. When I came back, he received me with such joy. He said, 'Now you are ready to sit by my side, now you are ready to listen to me. Now you are finished; otherwise the thing was incomplete. And never leave anything incomplete, otherwise it goes on hanging around you. You will have a hang-up. If you misbehave with the door and you don't complete the whole process, you will remain angry somewhere.'"

Moment-to-moment awareness is the way of a buddha. If you can remain moment to moment aware, you will become perfectly clear that there is something in you which is beyond death, which cannot be burned, cannot be destroyed, which is indestructible. And to know that rock of indestructibility within you is the beginning of a new life.

HE LEAVES THE DARK WAY
FOR THE WAY OF THE LIGHT.

The way of living unconsciously is called by Buddha the dark way. And the way of living consciously, attentively, moment to moment, bringing your consciousness to each act, each small act, each detail, is the way of light.

HE LEAVES HIS HOME, SEEKING
HAPPINESS ON THE HARD ROAD.

By 'home' is meant clinging to security, safety, the familiar, the known. By 'leaving the home' he does not mean leaving your family, your children, your wife, your husband -- that has been, down the ages, how the Buddhists have interpreted this line. That's not my interpretation. That is not real home. The real home is something inside your mind: the calculativeness, the intellect, the logic, the armor that you create around yourself against the whole world -- that is 'the home'. 'Leaving the home' -- that means leaving all security, going

into the insecure, dropping the known, moving into the unknown, forgetting the comforts of the shore and going into the troubled waters, into the uncharted sea. That is the hard way -- but the other shore can be attained only through the hard way.

Those who are lazy, those who are always in search of some shortcut, those who want God cheap, those who are not ready to pay anything in return for the ultimate truth, they are befooling themselves and wasting their time. We have to pay with our life, we have to pay with all that we have, we have to surrender totally, we have to become committed intensely and wholly. That is the hard way, and only through the hard way one can cross the stream of existence and can reach to the other shore, the deathless, the eternal.

FREE FROM DESIRE,
FREE FROM POSSESSIONS,
FREE FROM THE DARK PLACES OF THE HEART....

If you are ready to drop all armor of security and comfort, if you are ready to drop all calculative mind, clever mind, cunning mind, if you are ready to drop the mind itself, all dark parts of your heart will disappear. Your heart will become full of light, desire will disappear -- desire means future. And possessions will not be anymore your clings -- possessions means the past.

When there are no more desires, no more clinging to the possessions, you are free from past and future. To be free from past and future is to be free in the present. That brings truth, God, freedom. That, only that, brings wisdom, buddhahood, awakening.

FREE FROM ATTACHMENT AND APPETITE,
FOLLOWING THE SEVEN LIGHTS OF AWAKENING,
AND REJOICING GREATLY IN HIS FREEDOM,
IN THIS WORLD THE WISE MAN
BECOMES HIMSELF A LIGHT,
PURE, SHINING, FREE.

And as you move more and more into the present, inside you will come across seven lights -- what Hindu yoga calls seven CHAKRAS, Buddhist yoga calls seven lights, seven lamps. As you become more and more detached from the body, detached from possessions, uninterested in desires, your energy starts moving upwards. The same energy that is contained at the lowest center, at the sex center.... Now, only at the sex center sometimes do you have the experience of light, which you call orgasm, but very rarely even there. Only very rarely, very few people have known that making love, a moment comes when lovers become full of light. Then the orgasmic experience is not only physical, it has something spiritual in it.

Tantra tries to create that space and context in which the sexual centers start radiating light. And when two lovers are not only exploiting each other's body but are really worshipping each other's body, when the other is a god or a goddess and lovemaking is like prayer and meditation -- with great reverence one goes into lovemaking -- it happens that both the centers meet, the male and the female energies, and great light starts flowing inside your being.

The same can happen on six other, higher points; the higher the point, the greater and brighter the light. The seventh point is SAHASRAR, the one-thousand-petaled lotus. There the light is so much that Kabir says it is "as if one thousand suns have suddenly arisen" -- not

one, but one thousand suns.

FREE FROM ATTACHMENT AND APPETITE, FOLLOWING THE SEVEN LIGHTS OF AWAKENING, AND REJOICING GREATLY IN HIS FREEDOM, IN THIS WORLD THE WISE MAN BECOMES HIMSELF A LIGHT, PURE, SHINING, FREE.

He himself becomes a light to himself and he becomes a light unto others too. Be a buddha! Life is meaningless without it. Be a buddha! Only then you are fulfilled. Be a buddha! Then you have bloomed. Be a buddha and you will know God resides in you. Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #4

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IF THE JEALOUSIES, THE POSSESSIVENESS, THE ATTACHMENT, THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS AND DESIRES AND ILLUSIONS DROP, WILL ANYTHING BE LEFT OF MY LOVE? HAS ALL MY POETRY AND PASSION BEEN A LIE? HAVE MY LOVE PAINS HAD MORE TO DO WITH PAIN THAN WITH LOVE? WILL I EVER LEARN TO LOVE? OR IS IT NOT A LEARNING BUT A GIFT, AN OUTGROWTH OF SOMETHING ELSE? A GRACE DESCENDING?

Satya, love cannot be learned, it cannot be cultivated. The cultivated love will not be love at all. It will not be a real rose, it will be a plastic flower. When you learn something, it means something comes from the outside; it is not an inner growth. And love has to be your inner growth if it is to be authentic and real.

Love is not a learning but a growth. All that is needed on your part is not how to learn the ways of love but how to unlearn the ways of unlove. The hindrances have to be removed, the obstacles have to be destroyed -- then love is your natural, spontaneous being. Once the obstacles are removed, the rocks thrown away, the flow starts. It is already there -- hidden behind many rocks, but the spring IS already there. It is your very being.

It is a gift, but not something that is going to happen in the future: it is a gift that has already happened with your birth. To be is to be love. To be able to breathe is enough to be able to love. Love is like breathing. What breathing is to the physical body, love is to the

spiritual being. Without breathing the body dies; without love the soul dies.

So the first thing to be remembered: it is not something that you can learn. And if you learn you will miss the whole point; you will learn something else in the name of love. It will be pseudo, false. And the false coin can appear as the real coin; and if you don't know the real, the false can go on deceiving you. Only by knowing the real, will you be able to see the distinction between the false and the real.

And these are the obstacles: jealousies, possessiveness, attachment, expectations, desires.... And Satya, your fear is right that, "If all these disappear, will anything be left of my love?"

Nothing will be left of your love. Love will be left... but love has nothing to do with "I" or "you." In fact, when all possessiveness, all jealousies, all expectations disappear, love does not disappear -- you disappear, the ego disappears. These are the shadows of the ego.

It is not love that is jealous. Watch, look, observe again. When you feel jealous, it is not LOVE that feels jealous; love has never known anything of jealousy. Just as the sun has never known anything of darkness, love has never known anything of jealousy.

It is the ego that feels hurt, it is the ego that feels competitive, in a constant struggle. It is the ego which is ambitious and wants to be higher than others, wants to be somebody special. It is the ego which starts feeling jealous, possessive -- because the ego can exist only with possessions. The more you possess, the more the ego is strengthened; without possessions the ego cannot exist. It leans on possessions, it depends on possessions. So if you have more money, more power, more prestige, a beautiful woman, a beautiful man, beautiful children, the ego feels immensely nourished. When possessions disappear, when you don't possess anything at all, you will not find the ego inside. There will be nobody who can say "I."

And if you think THIS is your love, then certainly your love will also disappear. Your love is not really love. It is jealousy, possessiveness, hatred, anger, violence; it is a thousand and one things -- except love. It masquerades as love. Because all these things are so ugly, they cannot exist without a mask.

An ancient parable:

The world was created, and God was sending every day new things to the world. One day he sends Beauty and Ugliness to the world. It is a long journey from paradise to the earth. The moment they arrive it is early morning, the sun is just rising. They land near a lake and both decide to have a bath because their whole bodies, their clothes, are so full of dust. Not knowing the ways of the world -- they are so new -- they take their clothes off; utterly naked, they jump into the cool water of the lake. The sun is rising, people start coming.

Ugliness plays a trick: when Beauty goes swimming far away into the lake, Ugliness comes on the bank, puts on the garments of Beauty, and escapes. By the time Beauty becomes aware that "People are arriving and I am naked," she looks around... her clothes are gone. Ugliness is gone and she is standing naked in the sun, and the crowd is coming closer. Finding no other way, she puts on the clothes of Ugliness and goes in search of Ugliness so that the clothes can be changed.

The story says she is still trying to find... but Ugliness is cunning and goes on escaping. Ugliness is still in the clothes of Beauty, masked as Beauty, and Beauty is moving in the clothes of Ugliness.

It is a tremendously beautiful parable.

All these things are so ugly that you cannot tolerate to be with them even for a single

moment if you see their reality. So they don't allow you to see the reality. Jealousy pretends to be love, possessiveness creates a mask of love... and then you are at ease.

You are not befooling anybody else, Satya, but yourself.

Mulla Nasruddin was passing by the side of a cemetery. He saw a grave; on the grave there was a stone and on the stone was written: "I am not dead -- I am only fast asleep."

Mulla had a belly laugh. He said, "You are befooling nobody but yourself."

Satya, these things are not love. So what you know as love, what you have known up to now as love, will disappear. It has nothing of poetry in it. Yes, passion is there, but passion is a feverish state, passion is an unconscious state. Passion is not poetry. The poetry is known only by the buddhas -- the poetry of life, the poetry of existence.

Excitement, fever, are not ecstasies. They look alike, that is the problem. In life many things look alike and the distinctions are very delicate and fine and subtle. Excitement can look like ecstasy -- it is not, because ecstasy is basically cool. Passion is hot; love is cool, not cold but cool. Hatred is cold; passion, lust, is hot. Love is exactly in the middle. It is cool -- neither cold nor hot. It is a state of tremendous tranquility, calmness, serenity, silence. And out of that silence is poetry, out of that silence is song, out of that silence arises a dance of your being.

What you call poetry and passion are nothing but lies -- with beautiful facades. Out of your hundred poets, ninety-nine are not really poets but only in a state of turmoil, emotion, passion, heat, lust, sexuality, sensuality. Only one out of your hundred poets is a real poet.

And the real poet may never compose any poetry, because his whole being is poetry. The way he walks, the way he sits, the way he eats, the way he sleeps -- it is all poetry. He exists as poetry. He may create poetry, he may not create poetry, that is irrelevant.

But what you call poetry is nothing but the expression of your fever, of your heated state of consciousness. It is a state of insanity. Passion is insane, blind, unconscious, and it is a lie. It is a lie because it gives you the feeling as if it is love.

Love is possible only when meditation has happened. If you don't know how to be centered in your being, if you don't know how to rest and relax in your being, if you don't know how to be utterly alone and blissful, you will never know what love is.

Love appears as relationship but begins in deep solitude. Love expresses as relating, but the source of love is not in relating: the source of love is in meditating. When you are absolutely happy in your aloneness, when you don't need the other at all, when the other is not a need, then you are capable of love. If the other is your need you can only exploit, manipulate, dominate, but you cannot love.

Because you depend on the other, possessiveness arises -- out of fear. "Who knows? -- the other is with me today; tomorrow he may not be with me. Who knows about the next moment?" Your woman may have left you, your children may become grown up and will be gone, your husband can desert you. Who knows about the next moment? Out of that fear of the future you become very possessive. You create a bondage around the person you think you love.

But love cannot create a prison -- and if love creates a prison, then nothing is left for hatred to do. Love brings freedom, love gives freedom. It is nonpossessiveness. But that is possible only if you have known a totally different quality of love: not of need but of sharing.

Love is sharing of overflowing joy. You are too full of joy; you cannot contain it, you have to share it. Then there is poetry and then there is something tremendously beautiful

which is not of this world, which is something that comes from the beyond. This love cannot be learned, but obstacles can be removed.

Many times I say learn the art of love, but what I really mean is: learn the art of removing all that hinders love. It is a negative process. It is like digging a well: you go on removing many layers of earth, stones, rocks, and then suddenly there is water. The water was always there; it was an undercurrent. Now you have removed all the barriers, the water is available. So is love: love is the undercurrent of your being. It is already flowing, but there are many rocks, many layers of earth to be removed.

That's what I mean when I say: learn the art of love. It is really not learning love but UNlearning the ways of unlove.

The moment you are centered in your being, rooted in your being, you become full of grace, as if God has penetrated you. You are empty and God starts descending in you. He can descend only when you are not: your absence becomes his presence.

God is not a person but a presence. And two swords cannot exist in one sheath: either you can exist, or God. You have to disappear, evaporate. Your absence is what sannyas is all about.

The process of sannyas is the process of becoming absent more and more, so that one day there is only empty space left inside and nothing else. In that emptiness, whenever it is total, instantly God is felt. God is felt as a presence -- and God is another name for love. And to know God is to know poetry, to know God is to know celebration, to know God is to know bliss -- SAT-CHIT-ANAND.

That's how the mystics in the East have defined God: SAT means truth, CHIT means consciousness, ANAND means bliss. If you are utterly empty, you will come to know these three things. For the first time you will have some taste of truth, some experience of consciousness, some flavor of bliss.

But, Satya, right now, although it will hurt you because it will be very destructive... what I am saying is going to shock you. You have believed in your poetry, in your passion, you have believed in your illusions and dreams and you have felt great because of all this. And I am saying: all this is simply nonsense. Although the majority of humanity lives in such illusions, all these are mirages. If you really want to encounter life you will have to be ready for many shocks, you will have to be ready to be shattered into pieces.

The function of the master is to destroy you, because only when you are destroyed the context is created in which God can be felt. Your death is the beginning of a divine existence.

Die! Die to the ego, die to your past, and you will be resurrected. That resurrection will make you go beyond death, beyond time, beyond misery, beyond the world -- what Buddha calls "beyond this shore."

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DOES JESUS TELL HIS DISCIPLES: BE AS CUNNING AS THE SERPENTS AND AS INNOCENT AS THE DOVES?

Anand Jayesh, the serpent is the symbol of wisdom. In all the ancient cultures of the world -- Hebrew, Hindu, Chinese -- the serpent is the only symbol which is common.

By 'cunning' Jesus does not really mean cunning as you understand it. In the ancient Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke, there is only one word for both 'wisdom' and

'cunning', hence the wrong translation.

But why have Christians chosen to translate it as 'cunning' and not as 'wisdom'? -- because of the biblical story that it is the serpent who seduced, corrupted the mind of Eve, persuaded her to go against God's commandment and to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Because of this biblical story the serpent has become the original source of sin. It is the serpent who persuaded Eve, then Eve persuaded Adam and humanity fell from the grace of God. Adam and Eve were turned out of the Garden of Eden; hence the serpent became a condemned phenomenon.

But in reality the parable has a totally different meaning. Christians will not concede to that meaning. What meaning do I give to that immensely significant parable? It has many meanings. That is the beauty of ancient parables: they have many-dimensional richness. They are not one-dimensional, they are multidimensional. They can be interpreted in a thousand and one ways; that is their richness. They have many facets; they are like a diamond -- and the more facets a diamond has, the more valuable it is.

When the kohinoor was found for the first time it was a very big stone, the biggest diamond the world has ever known. Now it is only one third of its original weight, because down the ages the jewelers have been polishing, cutting, and polishing and cutting; they have been giving new facets to the diamond. Now it is one third of its weight but millions of times more valuable. So are ancient parables: they are kohinoors. But the problem with the so-called religions is that they become addicted to one meaning. Then they become afraid of other meanings, other possibilities.

The serpent is not cunning, the serpent is wise in the parable. It is because of his wisdom that humanity was born. If there had been no serpent, you would not have been here -- not even Jesus would have been, nor Buddha. The world would have lacked humanity. It is the serpent and his wisdom that creates this great journey of humanity -- and it has been of immense value; otherwise there would have been trees and animals and birds, but no Lao Tzu, no Zarathustra, no Krishna, no Buddha, no Mohammed, no Christ, no Kabir, no Nanak. Yes, trees would have been there and birds and animals, but the existence would have missed something of immense importance; it would have missed humanity, it would have missed human consciousness, which is the ultimate growth point up to now. It is the serpent and his wisdom! The serpent was far more wise than Eve and Adam, because he taught them rebellion.

Wisdom is always rebellious. In fact, if you ask me, God was giving an opportunity to Adam and Eve to rebel; hence the commandment not to eat from the tree of knowledge. This is a simple psychological fact. The garden was so big that Adam and Eve, left to themselves, would never have discovered the tree of knowledge; it was only one tree and there were millions and millions of trees.

But God pointed out the tree and said, "Don't eat the fruit of THIS tree." By saying this he is provoking. In fact, the first seducer is God; the serpent is the second seducer. The serpent is simply an agent of God, a messenger of God. God must have waited for long after he prohibited.... Now Adam and Eve are bound to eat the fruit of knowledge.

You can try it. Prohibit the children, "Don't eat ice cream. Don't go near the fridge!" -- and then they are bound to go. They might not have gone if you had not told them NOT to go. Prohibition becomes invitation. You are challenging them; you are challenging them to assert themselves.

God has challenged Adam and Eve, and then he must have waited for long. The challenge didn't work; Adam and Eve must have been very obedient people. They were the first people

on the earth; hence they may not have tasted of rebellion and the joys of rebellion and the growth that rebellion brings. The agony and the ecstasy of rebellion were unknown to them. Hence the serpent was used as a messenger; in the whole animal kingdom, the serpent was chosen to be the messenger of God. The serpent is a symbol of wisdom -- and it is because of the serpent that you are here. The serpent is really the father -- the father of humanity.

The original statement of Jesus means: Be as wise as the serpents and as innocent as the doves. But the word 'cunning' is also beautiful. Gurdjieff used to say that unless you are cunning you cannot escape from the bondage of the world -- because the bondage is so complex that you have to be very sly. Gurdjieff used to say that if you want to learn from a master you have to be very sly, cunning. That's how he learned. He moved for at least twenty years from one master to another master -- but masters take their own time, they are not in a hurry. They don't live in time, they live in the eternal, so there is no hurry. But Gurdjieff was in a hurry, so rather than waiting until whenever the master feels the time is right and he will impart his knowledge, he will impart his wisdom, he started stealing wisdom from the masters.

Gurdjieff says he learned by stealing, by being cunning. It looks strange to use the words 'sly', 'cunning', in reference to spirituality, but Gurdjieff is a rare man. If you understand him rightly, what he means simply is: be clever, be intelligent, be utterly alert, be wise.

In the East, the serpent has become the symbol of the energy that is dormant in you. In yoga we call it KUNDALINI -- the serpent power. It is dormant in your sex center, like a coiled serpent, fast asleep, snoring. At the lowest center of your being your energy is asleep; it has to be awakened. And once the serpent starts rising in you, you will be surprised that you are not so small as you appear from the outside. From the inside you are as vast as the sky; even the sky is not the limit.

The serpent is a beautiful symbol. It has no legs, still it moves so fast; its movement is a miracle. Zen people say: God cannot be explained, truth cannot be defined.

To define truth is like putting legs on a snake. The snake moves without legs, there is no need of any legs. If you put legs on the snake you may stop its movement totally; it may not be able to move at all.

So is the case with wisdom: it moves without legs. It moves without information, without knowledge. It moves without intellectuality; it moves intuitively.

The serpent dances listening to music. Scientists were very much puzzled in the beginning, because the snake has no ears at all, it cannot listen. But how can you deny it? -- everybody knows that the serpent becomes absolutely hypnotized by music; it sways, dances. How does it become possible? -- because it has no ears. Then after great inquiry and research it was found it has no ears but it hears from every cell of its body. Its whole skin functions as an ear; it is all ears.

And that's how a disciple has to be: all ears; not only listening from the ears but listening from the feet to the head, listening from each cell of one's being so that each fiber of your existence starts pulsating, falls in rhythm with the master.

The serpent is of great significance. Jesus is right. You became puzzled, Jayesh, because of the word 'cunning'. It simply means wise.

Sheikh Mustapha needed one more horse before setting off on a trip into the desert. Two steeds were brought to him from a nearby village, but the owner of each horse, not wanting to give up his animal, insisted his nag was worthless, brokenwinded, old and crippled.

"It is a simple thing to settle," said the sheikh. "We will stage a race. The winning horse will

be taken."

An advisor stepped forward and whispered, "It won't work, Your Highness. Neither man will let his horse run fast."

"They will," said Mustapha. "Let each man ride the other's horse."

You can call it cunningness, you can call it wisdom. The sheikh is wise, is cunning, is sly. He says, "Let each man ride the other's horse." Then there is not going to be any difficulty to decide who comes first, because each will try the hardest possible to bring the horse first -- it is the other's horse.

Jesus says: Be wise, be cunning, be sly -- because life is complex, very complex, and your bondage is very ancient. You have become accustomed to your slavery. Unless you behave very intelligently, there is no possibility of your ever getting out of this imprisonment. You will have to focus all your energy on a single point: how to attain freedom.

It is like a prisoner: if he wants to get out of the jail he will have to be really cunning, wise, sly. He will have to watch from where to escape, he will have to watch continuously what side of the prison is less guarded. He will have to watch very carefully which guards can be bribed. He will have to make some connection with outside people; only if he can get some help from the outside -- a rope, a ladder, certain informations: at what time of the night he should escape, at what time the guards are changed, at what time the guard falls asleep, how to get the rope, how to get a ladder.... If he behaves stupidly he will be caught, and he will be far more in danger than before. It is better not to try to escape if you are not intelligent enough.

Hence each master sharpens your intelligence. Wherever you find that your intelligence is being dulled, escape from that place as fast as possible.

And that's what is being done in almost all the so-called spiritual places. The so-called ashrams and the temples and the mosques and the churches, they dull you, they console you. They tell you that you are already free, there is no need to go anywhere. They tell you that the prison does not exist -- this is your home. They tell you the guard is not your enemy, he is your friend. He is not guarding you so that you cannot escape, no; he is guarding you so that nobody can enter in and harm you. They say decorate the prison. They give you all kinds of suggestions and advice how to decorate it and how to make it beautiful. They console you. And the more you are consoled, the more you are lulled into sleep, the less becomes the possibility of your ever becoming a buddha, ever becoming awakened, ever becoming really free.

Your so-called saints go on singing lullabies; they help you to sleep better. And you will be surprised that the so-called mantras are nothing but a way to fall deeply asleep. That's what Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation is. If you repeat ANY word... it does not matter what word you repeat -- Rama, Rama, or Krishna, Krishna, or Christ, Christ, or Coca-Cola, Coca-Cola -- anything will do. If you go on repeating a certain word continuously it will help you to fall deep asleep, because the mind becomes bored with it. When the mind becomes bored it starts feeling dull, sleepy. When the mind becomes bored there is only one escape from the boredom -- to fall asleep.

Mothers have known it for centuries. Transcendental meditation has been used by all the mothers all over the world. Whenever the child is not going to sleep they start repeating a single line, a lullaby. Anything will do; just go on repeating the same again and again and the child starts falling asleep.

And that's how hypnosis functions: any repetition -- a mantra is not necessarily needed --

ANYTHING. You can make a black spot on the wall and go on looking at it, looking constantly at it, and within minutes you will be fast asleep, because consciousness needs flow, consciousness needs something new to keep alert, consciousness needs movement. Consciousness is a stream.

In fact it is because of this that Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation -- which is neither transcendental nor meditation -- has become so significant in America. America is the country which suffers most from sleeplessness, the only country which can sleep only through tranquilizers, sleeping pills -- and even those are no longer working -- the only country which has become so restless that sleep has become almost impossible. New methods are needed, more subtle methods are needed.

But to fall asleep is not meditation, it is consolation. It will give you a little rest and tomorrow you will find yourself a little more fresh. It is good -- I am not against it. It is a nonmedicinal tranquilizer. If you use tranquilizers you can use transcendental meditation -- far better. At least you are not stuffing yourself with chemicals which may have any side effect. It will not harm you, but it is not meditation at all -- because meditation means sharpening of intelligence. Meditation means becoming more alert, more bright, more brilliant, becoming more luminous, becoming more wise.

Jesus is right when he says: Become as cunning as the serpents. Have you watched a serpent -- how alert he is, how watchful? A slight disturbance, just a dry leaf in the wind, and the serpent escapes. You walk, your footsteps are enough... just a little sound and the serpent is gone like the wind. He is so alert, so watchful.

Learn that watchfulness, learn that alertness. Learn that beautiful movement, that flexibility, that fluidity of a serpent. And be as innocent as doves.

Jesus is bringing both the polar opposites: be wise, intelligent, but not knowledgeable, and be innocent. You may misunderstand wisdom as knowledge; hence he adds: be innocent as doves. If you are innocent and wise you cannot be knowledgeable; you will be intelligent, but you will not be knowledgeable. You will not go on accumulating knowledge, you will not become a walking ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA. Those kind of people are almost always stupid.

I have come across a man who was really a walking ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA; that was all that he was reading. Now, the ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA is not something to read; once in a while you can consult it. But this man was continuously reading it. You could have asked any question; if it is in the ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA then that man was able to answer it exactly like that. For a few days he stayed with me; I have never seen such a stupid man -- very knowledgeable and very stupid.

This happens because his knowledge has not given him more consciousness, his knowledge has given him only information. Information becomes accumulated in the memory part of your brain -- and memory is not consciousness; consciousness is a totally different phenomenon. Consciousness is the witness in you, it can witness your memory.

Sometimes you see a person, you remember that you remember him, but still the name is not coming. You say it is just on the tip of the tongue, you KNOW it is just on the tip of the tongue, and still it is not coming. What is happening? Your consciousness says it is in the memory, but somehow the memory is blocked, somehow the memory is not in a state to deliver what you need. There may be some obstacle; maybe you are so much in a hurry that the memory has become tense. You try hard; the harder you try, the more difficult it becomes. Then in tremendous frustration you drop the whole project. You go into the garden,

you sit under a tree, you start smoking... and suddenly it bubbles up, it surfaces.

Your consciousness is a totally different phenomenon. Your consciousness was saying, "It IS in the memory..." but somehow you have not been able to find it. And then sitting under the tree, smoking relaxedly, it surfaces. Now your consciousness watches it surfacing; now you know it has come in front of you. You are seeing it coming up; you are the seer, you are never the seen. You are never the content of consciousness, you are consciousness.

The knowledgeable person gathers content, and the meditative person sharpens consciousness. The meditative person becomes wise; the knowledgeable person remains simply knowledgeable. But if some situation arises in which his knowledge is not applicable, he will behave very stupidly. He will not know what to do, he will be completely at a loss. If the answer is in the encyclopedia he will repeat it like a gramophone record, but if the answer is not there in the encyclopedia then he will be simply dumb; he will not be able to respond spontaneously.

Wisdom is a spontaneous response; knowledge is depending on the past. Knowledge is mechanical; it can be done by a computer. And sooner or later it is going to be done by computers, because memorizing is a wastage of time, an unnecessary wastage of time. A small portable computer can do everything: you can keep it in your pocket and it can remember the whole ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA; just pushing a button any information can be available.

In the coming century the whole education system is going to be totally transformed and changed because of the computer. It will be stupid to teach children history, geography -- unnecessary, there is no need. All that can be done by a computer; the child can carry the computer.

And my own observation is: the less you depend on memory, the more intelligent you become. That's why it happens that in the universities you will not find very intelligent people. Professors, chancellors, vice-chancellors -- I have seen many, but it is very difficult to find some intelligent person there. You can find more intelligent people in the farmers, in the gardeners, in the villagers. And the reason is clear: because they are not knowledgeable they cannot depend on the memory. They have to respond to reality, they have to respond to challenges, they have to bring their consciousness to respond -- their consciousness remains more sharp. A farmer, a villager, is far more wise than a professor in the university. The professor can depend on the memory, the farmer cannot depend on the memory.

I have heard:

A woman purchased some canned fruits, but it was a new type of can and she did not know how to open it. So she told the cook, "You wait. I will look in the literature -- the literature has come with the can. Let me see: they must say how to open it."

She went to look in the literature. After half an hour when she had studied the whole literature she came back, but the cook by that time had opened the can. She asked, "How did you manage? It was even difficult for me to find out in the literature how to open it! How did YOU manage?"

The cook said, "Because I can't read I have to depend on my intelligence. You can read; you need not use your intelligence."

Be wise -- that means be more conscious. And be innocent -- that means be more like a child, full of wonder and awe. If these two qualities are there, wonder and awe, intelligence and wisdom, you cannot miss God; it is impossible to miss God.

Then you will not ask where God is, you will ask where God is not. He is everywhere, within and without.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY DO MEN HAVE HAIR ON THEIR CHESTS?

Well, Sahajanand, they can't have everything!

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
L. RON HUBBARD'S WORK FOCUSES ON CLEARING THE MIND, WHEREAS YOU OFTEN SPEAK OF DROPPING THE MIND. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE? PLEASE COMMENT.

Anand Salam, L. Ron Hubbard's work is psychological, it is not spiritual. To clear the mind is a psychological work: to drop the mind is a spiritual revolution. Clearing the mind you remain attached to the mind, and howsoever you clear it, it remains. Even if the glass wall is absolutely transparent and you can see outside as clearly as if you are outside, still you are not outside. The very clear, absolutely transparent glass wall still keeps you imprisoned. You can see the butterflies in the sun, you can see flowers, you can see birds flying in the sky, you can see clouds and the moon and the stars....

And if you don't try to get out you may remain in the deception that you are out in the open. But if you try to get out, you are in for a great surprise: there is a transparent wall that prevents you -- you are still a prisoner.

The mind can be made very clear, but the mind remains. In fact the more clear it is, the more you will be deceived by it -- because it will become more and more transparent. You will not feel enclosed by it, you will become identified with it. And the clear mind will give you great insights, great visions -- of light, of love, of the beyond -- and you may start thinking that you are having spiritual experiences.

NO experience is ever spiritual; ALL experiences are psychological. To go beyond your psychology is what I mean when I say drop the mind.

Hubbard's work is very ordinary; it should be part of the psychological literature. But in the West people have forgotten completely what spirituality is all about; hence it is very easy to deceive. And I am not saying that Hubbard is deceiving others -- he may be deceived himself. He has a clear mind and his processes are good as far as clearance of the mind is concerned, but it is not spiritual work. It cannot take you to the eternal and it cannot make you aware of your innermost core. It keeps you identified with the mind, and the more mind becomes clear and beautiful, the more you become attached to it because the more precious it looks. And when it starts giving you visions and spiritual experiences, then it becomes absolutely impossible to drop it. It is easier to drop an unclear, confused mind; it is difficult to drop a clear mind.

So I am not interested in making your mind clear. My whole effort is to make you aware of your confused mind, to make you aware of your ill mind, to make you aware of your insanities, to make you aware of your schizophrenia, to make you aware of your whole pathology, so that you are bound to drop it, you cannot cling to it anymore.

And the moment mind is dropped, the moment you know you are not the mind, a mutation has taken place. You are transported into another world; you have entered into the world of consciousness.

The body is there. The physiologists work on it and they think the body is all -- they don't even believe in mind. Mind is an epiphenomenon, just a by-product; it is nothing but the functioning of the body. Then there are psychologists who think man is more than the body: he is psychology, he is mind, he is not just the body. But their mind also is going to die with the body; maybe it is separate but it cannot exist on its own.

The psychologist has not moved very far away from the physiologist. And in fact psychology and physiology are two aspects of the same coin. Man is neither body nor mind but both: man is bodymind, man is psychosomatic. The body affects the mind, the mind affects the body; hence they are not separate. You drink alcohol; the alcohol goes into the body but affects the mind. You can take LSD or marijuana; it goes in the body, it changes the chemistry of the body, but immediately your mind is totally different.

Even a man like Aldous Huxley was deceived by LSD. He thought that under the impact of LSD what he was experiencing was exactly what Kabir had experienced in his mystic experiences, in his mystic world. A man like Huxley, a man of far more clear mind than Hubbard, got deceived. He thought that, "We have found the shortcut to spiritual experience: LSD is enough. There is no need now to fast for years, no need to stand on your head for years, no need to torture your body, no need to do the old, ancient austerities. Those are bullock-cart methods, and we are in a jet age and we have found a spiritual shortcut -- LSD." He was deceived because he also thought that the mind is all. And LSD can give you great mental experiences because it can change your mind.

Change the body, the mind changes. Change the mind, the body changes.

That's how hypnosis works. If you are hypnotized and told that tomorrow you are going to have a great fever, if it is insisted again and again and you are conditioned that tomorrow, early morning, as you wake up you will find yourself with a great fever.... Nothing has been done to the body, just your mind has been conditioned: tomorrow morning you are going to suffer from fever. One can even die.

In 1952, a few countries of the world made laws against hypnosis. They made it clear that only authorized hypnotists can be allowed to hypnotize people, because in one of the universities of America a great accident happened. Four students, all psychology students, were studying about hypnosis and the history of hypnotism, and they became intrigued and they wanted to try it. So they hypnotized one of their friends; he must have been really very vulnerable.

Thirty-three percent of people are very vulnerable; out of three one person is very ready to be hypnotized. These thirty-three percent are the problem in the world; up to now they have been the problem: anybody can hypnotize them. Adolf Hitler depended on these thirty-three percent, Mao Zedong depended on these thirty-three percent. All wars, all fanatic crusades, have depended on these thirty-three percent. One third of the people of the world are very prone, very ready, to be hypnotized.

By coincidence that boy must have been one of those people, and those three tried hard to hypnotize him. They hypnotized him and they were feeling great, because whatsoever they were saying, he was doing. They told him to dance, he danced. They told him that, "This is very hot water," and they gave him ice-cold water, and he could not drink it. He said, "It is too hot, my mouth will be burned." And they were surprised when they put a small pebble on the palm of the hypnotized person and told him that, "This is fire." He was already burned,

immediately burned, actually burned -- by a cold pebble. They became more and more intrigued by the whole phenomenon.

They tried the last thing. They told the person to lie down and they told him, "You are dead!" -- and he died. Then they tried hard to wake him up, but it was too late. Because of that incident many countries have made laws against hypnosis. Only authorized professionals should be allowed to use it because it can be dangerous. It can affect your mind, and through the mind your body.

Mind and body are not separate, but YOU are a third entity. You are in the body, in the mind, but you are not identified with them. You are a witnessing consciousness.

My work is totally different from Hubbard's work: his work is psychological, my work is spiritual. My effort here is not to give you a clear mind; my effort here is to give you a state of no-mind, because only through no-mind will you be able to know the reality -- the reality within and the reality without. But the no-mind is the door, the only door.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY IS IT THAT THE JOURNALISTS NEVER SEEM TO UNDERSTAND YOU?

Kavyo, it has nothing to do with me. They have never understood Jesus, Socrates, Buddha, Kabir. They cannot understand; it is against their investment.

The journalist lives on creating sensations. Any news is news only when it is sensation. They live on rumors and they have to make rumors very spicy. They have no interest in truth, because truth is never news. Truth is so ancient, truth is always the same. I am saying the same truth. Buddha said it, Christ said it, and all those who have known. It is nothing new -- how it can be news?

And they come here in search of news. They have to invent -- and it is really interesting how inventive people can be.

Just a few days ago I was reading a report in a Punjabi magazine about this commune, this ashram. The man says, the journalist says, that he has been here for fifteen days, stayed in the commune, and whatsoever he is writing is based on his own experience. Because he introduced his article in this way I became interested: what has he seen? So I went through it. Ordinarily I don't read what journalists go on writing, it is impossible. We have a big press department for that, at least thirty persons continuously reading and collecting, because it is happening all over the world, in all the languages. So much is being published that it is impossible for me to keep any track of it. But because this man said that, "I have been in the ashram for fifteen days," I looked into the article. I was amazed!

He says that the ashram is spread over fifteen square miles! Now, I think even Poona is not spread over fifteen square miles. He says the moment you enter the gate the first thing that you see is a big white marble statue of a naked woman! Because I very rarely go to the gate, I asked Laxmi, "What has happened? Where is this statue?"

He says that there are artificial lakes, artificial waterfalls, thousands of sannyasins swim naked in the lake. There are underground air-conditioned halls where ten thousand people can sit together. Each morning I deliver a discourse in an underground hall. You are sitting in an underground hall, air-conditioned, and not only that -- all the disciples have to sit in absolute nudity! Feel your clothes -- if you think you are wearing clothes you are deceived. You are all naked.

Now these people have a great investment in creating rumors. That's how the magazines, the newspapers sell. They have nothing to do with truth. This man has never been here.

They cannot understand for two reasons. First: if they understand, they will not be able to write anything. That has happened to a few journalists. Those who have understood, they have become sannyasins; they have forgotten all about writing. They had come to write; now they have decided not to go again back, they have decided to be here.

Not only journalists... here are detectives from many countries. And a few detectives even have become sannyasins! And they have confessed to me that they had come as spies, but now they have understood what is happening here and they would like to become part of the commune.

If a journalist goes and reports exactly what he has seen, nobody is going to believe him. That's what happened with Satyananda. He had come from a famous German magazine, STERN, to report; then he became a sannyasin. His becoming a sannyasin created a trouble. His own people with whom he had worked for years -- the chief editor, the editors and others -- they thought that he had been hypnotized. He tried hard for months to convince them that he had not been hypnotized, but they wouldn't listen. They were not even ready to publish what he had written. They said, "You are too much influenced, you are not in your senses." And even when they agreed after months of argument to publish it, they cut the whole article into half in such a way that it lost all context, it lost all its wholeness, it became fragmentary.

In the first place, the journalist lives on rumors. He is not here to understand me, he is here to MISunderstand me; that is his investment. Secondly: the people who become journalists -- not all the people but almost ninety-nine point nine percent of the people who become journalists -- are very uncreative people. In fact those who can create, they create; those who cannot create, they criticize. Uncreative people become great critics.

It is easy to criticize poetry, it is difficult to write poetry. It is very easy to criticize painting -- you can criticize Picasso, but you cannot paint like Picasso. It is easy to criticize anything.

Turgenev has written a story, THE FOOL. In a certain town there was a man who was known as the greatest idiot in these parts. He was very much worried because wherever he would go people would laugh at him, whatsoever he would say people would ridicule him. Even if he was saying something right, people would laugh at him because nobody could believe that the idiot could say anything right. It was assumed that he was a perfect idiot.

A Sufi mystic was passing through the village. The idiot went to him and he said, "My whole life is wasted -- everybody thinks I am an idiot. Can you help me?"

He said, "It is so easy! You just start doing one thing -- you start criticizing, and after seven days you come to me. I will remain here for seven days just for you; within seven days everything will be changed. But you criticize! If somebody quotes Shakespeare, immediately say, 'What is there in it? It is all nonsense, rubbish!' If somebody says, 'The moon is beautiful, look!' -- just say, 'What is it? I don't see any beauty. Prove what beauty is there!' Nobody can prove it, because beauty cannot be proved. If somebody says, 'What a beautiful morning!' -- immediately jump upon it and start criticizing. You do only one thing for seven days: go around the town and criticize everybody."

Within seven days the man came back -- not alone, followed by hundreds of people, and they all said, "You have done a miracle! The greatest idiot has become the greatest wise man. Nobody can argue with him."

It is easier to criticize, very easy to criticize. It is very difficult to create.

And what I am creating is something invisible. Unless you have very sympathetic eyes you will not be able to see it. Unless you fall in rapport with me you will not be able to understand it.

Father Murphy was a priest in a very poor parish. He asked for some suggestions as to how he could raise money and was told that a racehorse owner always had money.

He went to a horse auction, but instead of buying a horse he got a donkey. However, he thought he would enter it in the race and the donkey came in third. The next day the headlines in the paper read, "Father Murphy's ass showed." The archbishop saw the headlines and was displeased.

The next day the donkey came in first and the headlines read, "Father Murphy's ass out in front." The archbishop was up in arms and figured something had to be done. Father Murphy had entered the donkey once again and the donkey came in second.

The headlines read, "Father Murphy's ass back in place." The archbishop thought this too much, and forbade the priest to enter the donkey in the next race.

The next day the headlines read, "Archbishop scratches Father Murphy's ass."

The archbishop ordered Father Murphy to get rid of the donkey. He was unable to sell it, so he gave it to Sister Agatha for a pet. When the archbishop heard this he ordered Sister Agatha to dispose of the animal at once. Since she could not give it away, she sold it for ten dollars.

The next day the headlines read, "Sister Agatha peddles her ass for ten dollars."
They buried the archbishop three days later.

Journalists live on such stupid things. Their whole investment is wrong, their priorities are wrong. And they know perfectly well how to report about politicians because that is their business. The politician understands them, they understand the politician; they speak the same language. But when they come across a person like me, the distance is so vast. They speak one language, I speak totally another. They can't understand what I am saying: they go on misunderstanding it, they go on putting their own interpretations on it.

And the journalists think themselves very clever, they think themselves very knowledgeable, they think themselves very intellectual. A great misunderstanding prevails that they are part of the intelligentsia -- they are not!

Intelligence is always creative; it is only nonintelligence which is critical. Criticism is not of much value; hence I don't pay any attention to what they go on saying. And you need not be worried about them -- leave them to themselves.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO SPEAK YEAR IN, YEAR OUT, AND STILL IT IS ALWAYS AS FRESH AS THE MORNING RAYS OF THE SUN?

Suryananda, I am a drunkard! I don't know what I have said yesterday. In fact I don't know what I have said today. And slowly slowly you also become drunkards with me, so you go on forgetting. Hence it appears every day fresh and new, because neither I remember nor you remember! And there is no need to remember either.

The new priest at his first mass was so afraid he could hardly speak. Before his second week at the pulpit he asked the other priest how he could relax.

The priest replied, "Next week it may help if you put a martini in the water pitcher. After a few sips, everything should go smoothly."

The following week, the young priest put his elder's suggestion into practice and really talked up a storm.

After his sermon, he asked the other priest how he liked the sermon.

The elder priest replied, "There are a few things you should learn before addressing the congregation again:

1. Next time sip instead of gulp the martini.
2. There are twelve disciples, not ten.
3. There are ten commandments, not twelve.
 4. David slew Goliath, he did not kick the shit out of him.
 5. We do not refer to our savior Jesus Christ and his disciples as J.C. and the boys.
 6. Next week there is a taffy-pulling contest at Saint Peter's, not a peter-pulling contest at Taffy's.
7. We do not refer to the Cross as the Big T.
 8. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not referred to as Big Daddy, Junior and Spook.
 9. Last but not least, it is the Virgin Mary, not Mary with the cherry."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #5

Chapter title: Freedom contains all

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AT THE END OF THE WAY,
THE MASTER FINDS FREEDOM
FROM DESIRE AND SORROW --
FREEDOM WITHOUT BOUNDS.

THOSE WHO AWAKEN
NEVER REST IN ONE PLACE.
LIKE SWANS, THEY RISE
AND LEAVE THE LAKE.

ON THE AIR THEY RISE
AND FLY AN INVISIBLE COURSE,
GATHERING NOTHING, STORING NOTHING.
THEIR FOOD IS KNOWLEDGE.
THEY LIVE UPON EMPTINESS.
THEY HAVE SEEN HOW TO BREAK FREE.

WHO CAN FOLLOW THEM?
ONLY THE MASTER,
SUCH IS HIS PURITY.

LIKE A BIRD,
HE RISES ON THE LIMITLESS AIR
AND FLIES AN INVISIBLE COURSE.
HE WISHES FOR NOTHING.
HIS FOOD IS KNOWLEDGE.

HE LIVES UPON EMPTINESS.
HE HAS BROKEN FREE.

Gautam Buddha's search is not for God; it cannot be. If God is not known already, how can you search for him? If the search depends on believing in God, then the search is falsified from the very beginning.

A true search has to be neither of belief nor of disbelief. If you believe, you will project; you will autohypnotize yourself according to your belief. There is every danger that you will find whatsoever you believe in -- you will create an illusion of it.

Deep belief can create a space in which hallucinations become possible. Hence the Christian can see Christ and the Hindu can see Krishna. The Hindu never comes across Christ, the Christian never comes across Krishna. Why does it never happen? -- because whatsoever you believe, you find. Not that it is there in reality but because you are projecting it on reality. The reality functions as a screen and you go on projecting your own prejudice. If you disbelieve, then of course there is no possibility of ever finding it; from the very beginning your mind is closed.

Hence Buddha's search is not for God. We don't know whether God is or not; we cannot take any standpoint. And without taking a standpoint about God there is a possibility of inquiring into his reality.

This is a basic difference between Buddha's approach and the approach of all other religions. Buddha is far superior. The other religions are very anthropocentric: their idea of God is nothing but their idea of man -- projected, magnified, decorated, made as beautiful as possible, but it is man projected onto the sky.

That's why the Negro will have a God according to the Negro idea of what a human being is: the lips will be thick, the hair will be curly. The Chinese will have his own projection, the Indian will have his own idea. There are three hundred religions on the earth; there are not three hundred gods. Why these three hundred religions? And these three hundred religions have at least three thousand sects, and they all have differences about God and God's conception.

God is one, because reality is one. If God is equal to reality, synonymous with reality,

then there are not many existences, there is only one existence -- it can't have so many images. In fact, no image can represent it; every image will be only partial. And to claim the whole truth for the part is a sin -- a sin against yourself and against humanity and against truth.

And the moment you start thinking about God in anthropocentric terms, you make an image. That image is nothing but a toy to play with. You can worship it, you can pray, you can bow down to it, but you are simply being stupid. You are bowing down to your own toy, you are worshipping your own creation! And that's what your temples, your churches, your mosques are -- man-made, manufactured by man's own mind.

God cannot be manufactured. God cannot be part of man's creation. On the contrary, man is God's creation. The Bible says: God created man in his own image. But what has happened on the earth is just the opposite of it: man has created God in his own image. And of course there are many kinds of man, so there are many kinds of God, and great quarreling continues, who is right. It is not the question of WHAT concept of God is right, the question basically is WHOSE concept is right.

God too has become an ego trip: Christians fighting with Mohammedans, Mohammedans fighting with Hindus, Hindus fighting with Jainas. And this "sorry-go-round" goes on and on.... The whole history of humanity has been ugly because of these so-called religious people. They have proved the most irreligious. They have proved to be the greatest fanatics, utterly blind, deeply prejudiced, completely closed, not ready to listen to anything that goes against them or that is a little bit different from their idea. Religions have made people blind, deaf. Religions have made people foolish, unintelligent.

Buddha is a totally different world, he brings a totally different vision. The first thing to be remembered: he is not interested in God... and the miracle is that he finds God. His inquiry is not into God, but he ends, he lands, in God. His inquiry begins with a totally different angle, and that is the right angle to begin with. If you start as Buddha starts, you are bound to find God.

H.G. Wells is right when he says that Gautama the Buddha is the most godly man on the earth and yet the most godless. Yes, he is a paradox. He denies God, he says there is no God. He says there is no need to worship, he says there is no need to believe. Inquire, don't believe! Search and seek, but without any prejudice for or against. Start with a totally pure and open mind. Start like a small child, in utter innocence, who has not even heard of God. And he does not say that if you start this way you will find God, because he knows the cunningness of human mind. If he says, "If you start this way you will find God," your mind will say to you, "Then THIS is the way to find God -- start this way," but deep down your desire for God remains. The desire for God arises in your psychology; it is not a spiritual search.

Sigmund Freud is right that God is nothing but a search for a father or mother figure. Buddha would have agreed with him, Buddha would have blessed Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud's insight is very accurate about it. He does not go very far, but he begins rightly, though he becomes stuck in the middle because he was not aware of Buddha and he was not aware of Lao Tzu. He remained basically part of the Judaic-Christian tradition -- which is not very evolved, which is not yet a metaphysics in the true sense of the term.

Christianity and Judaism are very earthly religions, more rooted in man's psychology than in man's spiritual understanding. And because man's psychology is a chaos, whatsoever is rooted in his psychology is bound to remain a chaos.

Man needs a father figure, somebody to depend upon. In the name of God people are not

searching for God but are only searching for excuses for their dependence -- beautiful excuses so that the dependence does not look like slavery, so the dependence also starts having a flavor of religiousness, spirituality. But to call God "the father" indicates what you have been searching for.

There are religions which call God "the mother"; it is the same, the same game -- either mother or father. If the society is mother-oriented, matriarchal, then God becomes "the mother"; if the society is father-oriented, patriarchal, then God becomes "the father."

Germany calls itself "the fatherland," India calls itself "the motherland"; the difference is only in names. Whether you call the country motherland or fatherland does not make much difference, because you create the same trouble. The labels are different but it is the same politics; the labels are different but it is the same childish approach towards reality.

Why do you seek for God? Out of fear? Yes, there is fear, because there is death. If you are seeking God out of fear you will never find him. God can be found only through love, not through fear.

In all the languages of the world such phrases exist as "God-fearing"; the religious person is called God-fearing. It is utter nonsense! A religious person is never God-fearing: a religious person is God-LOVING. His prayer arises not out of fear but out of tremendous love and gratitude. His prayer is a thankfulness, not a demand. He does not ask for security, because he knows already that he is secure. He does not ask for safety, he does not ask for protection, because he knows that existence protects, that existence is our home, that we belong to it and that it belongs to us. Why should he ask for such things which are already available, which are already given, which are built in, in your very existence?

But the so-called religious person goes on demanding. Maybe he has lost his father, his mother... and everybody one day or other loses them. It is not really that your father dies, then you lose him; the moment you become mature, you start moving on your own, the father is lost, the mother is lost -- and the childhood illusions are lost. And then great fear arises: up to now you were protected by the father, cared for by the mother. Now who is going to protect you and who is going to care for you? The sky seems to be utterly neutral; it does not care this way or that, whether you live or die doesn't matter. A great fear arises in one's being, a trembling. Soren Kierkegaard has exactly called it trembling; in that trembling he thinks religion is born. Yes, in that trembling religion is born, but that religion is pseudo, that religion is not true.

Religion is born when you are centered, rooted, not trembling. Religion is born in great understanding, not in fear. Religion is born when you start feeling that the existence responds with love, that it is not uncaring, that it is not cold; that it is very warm, that it is very welcoming. It is our very life -- how can it be uncaring towards us?

But the so-called religious people go on asking God for protection; hence God is called "The Great Protector." The religious people go on asking God for eternal life because they are trembling, they are scared of death... and death is coming every day closer and closer. Soon it will encompass you, it will drown you into darkness. Before that you have to find a secure ground, a home. That becomes your search for God.

Buddha is not interested in such a search. He says rather than listening to the ill, pathological mind and going according to it in search of God, it is better to drop this pathological mind. It is better to drop this whole pathology, be free of it -- because in that freedom is seeing, in that freedom is knowing.

Free from mind you become a knower. You become so absolutely certain of immortality, of timelessness, of deathlessness, that there is no need for any God to protect you -- you are

already protected. In that protection you bow down to existence in gratitude. In that protection, in that caring, in that love that goes on flowing invisibly from the universe towards you.... It nourishes you every moment. It is the universe that you breathe in and out, it is the universe that flows in your blood, it is the universe that becomes your bones, your very marrow. The moment it becomes your own experience, you have become religious.

And now you know that God is, but this is a totally different God. It is not a father figure -- it is not a figure at all. It is not a person but a presence, a loving presence overflowing the whole cosmos. Now it is not a person controlling, a dictator dictating. It is not like the Old Testament God who says, "I am very jealous."

Buddha says: God and jealous? Then who is going to be beyond jealousy? Buddha says even man has to become nonjealous, only then will he be able to know God. But can it be a condition that you have to become nonjealous and then you will know a jealous God? Can it be a condition that to know a jealous God first you have to drop all your jealousies? That would be very illogical! The Old Testament God says, "I am jealous, I am angry. Those who don't listen to me will be condemned forever!"

Bertrand Russell has written a book, WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN. In the book he gives many arguments; one of those arguments is worth considering. He says the Christian and Jewish God seems to be utterly unjust, unfair, because Christians and Jews believe only in one life. Bertrand Russell says, "As far as I am concerned, for all the crimes that I have committed, even the hardest judge cannot sentence me for more than four years. And if the sins that I have not committed but only contemplated are also included, then too, at the most, eight years, ten years."

In a life of seventy years, how much sin can you commit? In a life of seventy years one third is spent in sleeping, the other one third in working for bread and butter. What time do you have to commit sin and how much can you commit? And, Russell says, the Christian, the Jewish Gods say you will be punished for eternity! Now, this is unfair! Even if you punish a man for seventy years, okay; seventy years at least he lived. If life itself is sin, if to breathe is sin, then send him for seventy years to hell -- but sending him to hell for eternity, for ever and ever he will be in hell... Russell says that this is unjust. If this is your idea of God, then what is your idea of the Devil? How can God be more devilish? This is a very evil conception.

But because the so-called religions are based in fear, such ideas create more fear in people. And the priests exploit your fear; they say you will be condemned, punished. And they have created pictures, paintings of hell, hellfire and all kinds of tortures they have invented in hell.

These people can't be saints. Even to contemplate that others should be burned forever and forever needs a very cruel mind -- even to think about it, even to write about it.

Buddha says the search, the true search, is not for God, cannot be -- because God is the need of a pathological mind. Let this sink deep in you; otherwise you will not be able to understand this very superior vision of religion.

Secondly, Buddha says religion is not a search for truth either, because the moment you start inquiring about truth you become intellectuals. The whole inquiry becomes philosophical, intellectual, rational -- truth is a rational concept. Then you start thinking that you have to go through many logical processes, that you have to argue, discuss, debate, and then finally one day you will come to the conclusion -- as if truth is going to be a conclusion of a logical process, as if truth is going to be a by-product of your syllogism.

Truth is not just intellectual. And what can the intellect think about truth? It is all imagination, inference. At the most it can arrive at a certain hypothesis, a workable

hypothesis, utilitarian; but it can never arrive at any truth.

That's why philosophy never arrives; it simply goes on and on in circles -- it moves in vicious circles. Science also never arrives at truth. At the most it comes across hypotheses which are accepted today and rejected tomorrow because tomorrow you find a better hypothesis which works more efficiently; hence yesterday's hypothesis has to be discarded.

Newton is discarded by Albert Einstein; Albert Einstein will be discarded sooner or later by somebody else. Science never comes to truth, to ultimate truth. Everything is utilitarian: if it works then it is worth using. But the question is not of truth, the question is of utility.

Buddha says truth can only be existential, not intellectual. Intellect will be a part in it, emotion will also be a part in it, the body will also be a part in it -- and the center of it is going to be your witnessing consciousness. It will be a total phenomenon, not only intellectual, not only emotional.

There are two kinds of religion: the intellectual religions and the emotional religions. The intellectual religions philosophize and the emotional religions worship, pray -- but both are partial. And the truth is not just the sum total of all its parts: it is more than the sum total of its parts.

Hence Buddha says an existential approach is needed -- not intellectual only, not emotional only. Neither the philosopher is going to discover it, nor the devotee.

Thirdly, Buddha says, "My search is not for bliss either..." because you cannot conceive what bliss is. Whatever you will conceive is bound to be somehow colored by your idea of happiness. And your idea of happiness is not very blissful, is not very close to bliss. Your idea of happiness is much closer to unhappiness. Your idea of happiness is nothing but the opposite of unhappiness -- and they are both together, two aspects of the same energy. Like day and night they are joined together; the day follows the night, then the night follows the day, and it goes on and on. Happy one moment, unhappy another, happy again, unhappy another... and this way your whole life is wasted.

When you hear the word 'bliss', what notion arises in your mind? -- something of happiness, something of eternal happiness, something when you will never know unhappiness again. But if unhappiness disappears, happiness cannot remain. If darkness disappears completely there will be no light. They depend on each other; they appear contradictory but they are really complementaries. So whatsoever you conceive of as bliss is going to be wrong from the very beginning. You will be searching for a new kind of hedonism -- maybe spiritual, metaphysical. Maybe you are not searching happiness here, but you are searching for happiness on the other shore.

And that's what all the religions talk about in the name of heaven, paradise: what they are missing here they project in paradise. If you look into the ideas about paradise of different people you will be able immediately to know one thing: what is missing in their life. You will not know anything about paradise, but you will certainly know what is missing in the lives of the people whose conception this paradise is.

For example, the Mohammedan paradise has provision for homosexuality. Strange! But that's what was very much prevalent in the days when Mohammedanism was in its early stages. The Mohammedan countries have still remained very homosexual; it is the only paradise. So if some gay people are here they should remember it. When after death you are asked, "Where do you want to go?" immediately say, "To the Mohammedan paradise." There you will find gay clubs. But don't go to a Hindu paradise -- there you will not find gay clubs at all! That has never been the idea in India; it has been a sin.

If you go to a Greek paradise you will find homosexuality very much praised. In fact, in

the Greek culture man's body was thought to be far more beautiful than the woman's body; hence all the Greek sculpture is centered around the male figure. Even in the schools of Plato and Aristotle homosexuality was the rule, not the exception. The Greek idea of paradise is bound to be with the Greek mind.

In the Hindu paradise you will find beautiful women and they are all stuck at the age sixteen, for centuries and centuries, because the Hindu idea of beauty is the sixteen-year-old girl -- not even eighteen, what to say about twenty-one! The Hindu idea is that at sixteen the woman attains perfection; after that there is deterioration. And because the Hindu, so-called saints were starving themselves of feminine relationship, from female energy, their minds were too much obsessed with women. Of course they had to find some consolation somewhere; their paradise is their consolation.

In their paradise women have bodies of gold, eyes of diamonds. What kind of women these will be! Utterly dead! I don't think the Hindu saints will allow blood to run through their veins -- cows' milk will be far better and far purer, and holier too! And these girls go on dancing continuously, singing songs, around sages -- sages who had renounced family life here on the earth. They are really on a picnic! Their paradise is what they are missing here.

Analyze the paradise of any race, any country, any religion, and you will know what they are really missing here. The Hindu paradise is very rich -- Hindus are poor. In the Hindu paradise there are rivers of milk -- water does not flow there. In the real world of the Hindus you cannot even find pure water in the rivers.

I have not tasted water at least for fifteen years -- I have to depend on soda water! All kinds of impurities are found in Indian rivers, Indian water, because the whole sewage system goes on pouring itself into Indian rivers, and buffaloes and cows and people are taking their baths there. Indian rivers seem to be the dirtiest -- and that is the only water to drink. But they have managed beautifully in paradise; they have dropped water completely. Rivers are of milk and curd!

And there are wish-fulfilling trees; you simply sit underneath the tree, no need to work at all. Indians are tired of working, utterly tired. Just sit under a wish-fulfilling tree and whatsoever you wish is immediately fulfilled, instantly -- just as you have instant coffee. That too takes a little time, but under the wish-fulfilling tree the wish arises, "A woman!" and the woman appears. "Food!" and suddenly there is food. "Coca-Cola!" and immediately there is Coca-Cola. India has been starving for centuries; the wish-fulfilling tree simply indicates the starving country, the poor country.

When these scriptures were being written many things were not there in the world, hence they are not there; otherwise Rolls Royces would have been in paradise, especially made in solid gold, for the great sages, mahatmas, saints. They have golden thrones, so there is nothing wrong about having solid gold Rolls Royces. Here you have to move in worthless cars; even they are very difficult to find. India produces the worst kind of cars in the world!

I have heard that when the manufacturer of Ambassador cars died -- I knew him, he was my friend, so I believe that the story is true -- he was suddenly taken to paradise. He was very much puzzled because he was not hoping for that much. He was thinking that if he can get some good quarters in hell, that will do. This was too much! He was a little puzzled. He asked when the door was opened, he asked the doorkeeper, "Is there something wrong? -- because I have been thinking that I will be thrown into hell, I have never done anything good. Why are you taking me in?"

The doorkeeper said, "You made the Ambassador, and because of the Ambassador many

more people have remembered God than through anything else. Whosoever travels in an Ambassador remembers God continuously: 'My God!' You have made people so religious. Even atheists when they travel in your car start remembering God -- they have to! Hence this special concession for you: a special place has been reserved for you in heaven."

If now the scriptures are written, then there will be solid gold Rolls Royces and everything that is missing here will be there.

Buddha says: My search is not for bliss... because the moment you talk about bliss, people start thinking of pleasures. It is better not to talk about bliss, it is dangerous. People will simply misunderstand.

Then what is his bliss for? He has chosen a word never chosen before -- he says: My search is for freedom. That word is immensely important: freedom from the ego, freedom from the mind, freedom from desires, freedom from all limitations. In a way, he is very scientific in his inward journey. He is saying if you can create a space in your being where your consciousness is totally free, then all is achieved: God is achieved, truth is achieved, beauty is achieved, bliss is achieved. But only in freedom anything becomes possible.

Hence these sutras:

AT THE END OF THE WAY,
THE MASTER FINDS FREEDOM
FROM DESIRE AND SORROW --
FREEDOM WITHOUT BOUNDS.

Not God, not truth, not bliss, but freedom. Freedom is Buddha's word which contains all: God, bliss, truth, beauty. And freedom avoids all other pitfalls. Freedom needs courage; you cannot attain to freedom if you are afraid. Freedom needs that you drop all identification with the mind and the body; otherwise you will remain confined, you can't be free.

Freedom means that you get out of this constant desiring mind. It is the desiring mind that creates paradise. If you drop desire, how can you talk about paradise? If you drop desire, sorrow disappears automatically, because sorrow is a shadow of desire. The more you desire, the more frustrated you feel, because no desire is ever fulfilled. Desire is unfulfillable; its very nature is such. It is not that YOU are incapable of fulfilling it; desire's very nature is such that it cannot be fulfilled -- it goes on becoming bigger and bigger. In the beginning you ask for ten thousand rupees; by the time you have ten thousand, your desire has moved ahead of you -- it is asking for one hundred thousand rupees.

It is like the horizon that surrounds the earth: it looks so close by. Move, and it moves ahead with you. The distance between you and the horizon remains always exactly the same. In fact, there is no place where earth meets the sky -- there is no horizon. The horizon is a mirage: it only appears, it is not a reality.

So is fulfillment: fulfillment is only a mirage. It only appears there, very close, alluring, enchanting, inviting. You go on moving, and you waste your whole life; and by the time you are dying you have not even moved a single inch closer to fulfillment. People die on the same spot where they were born. People die in the same stupid state in which they were born.

I have heard:

Sir Henry, bored with English country life, visited a French SALON DE PLAISIR. In response to Sir Henry's request for something unusual, the madam suggested, "I can give you Hott Tung, a Chinese delicacy."

"No," replied his lordship, "I have already had one of those."

"Perhaps," asked the madam, "you would like to make a selection from our Black African group."

"I have had one of those too," yawned Sir Henry. "Actually, the only thrill I have not tried would be a little bitty girl, about eight years old."

"This is outrageous!" shrieked the madam. "The very idea is criminal! I am going to summon a policeman."

"No, don't do that," said the Englishman. "I have already had one of those!"

You can have everything and yet you will not have anything at all. You can have all the wealth of the world and still you will be poor. You can have all that the world makes available and yet the discontent will be deeper than ever before -- because before there were hopes, now even hopes will disappear.

AT THE END OF THE WAY, THE MASTER FINDS FREEDOM. The goal is to find freedom, but one has to start becoming a master of oneself, master of one's consciousness. That is the beginning, the first step. You are not master of your own consciousness. You are a slave of a thousand and one desires, thoughts, imaginations. You are pulled into this direction and that. You don't know who you are and where you are going. You don't know why you are existing at all. You don't know the purpose of your life, you don't have any sense of direction. How can you be a master of yourself?

The first thing to becoming a master of oneself is to become more conscious of your acts and your thoughts. Unconsciousness is slavery, consciousness is mastery.

I call my sannyasins swamis; the word 'swami' means the master. It simply means one who is trying to become centered in his being, rooted in his consciousness, who is trying not to be pulled by desires against his wishes. But desires are very cunning and the ego plays such games that unless you are constantly alert you will remain a slave.

Rabinowitz, hiding with his wife from the Nazis in a secluded Berlin attic, decided to get a breath of fresh air. While out walking he came face-to-face with Adolf Hitler.

The German leader pulled out a gun and pointed to a pile of horse manure in the street. "Alright, Jew," he shouted, "eat that or I will kill you!" Trembling, Rabinowitz did as he was ordered.

Hitler began laughing so hard he dropped the weapon. Rabinowitz snatched it up and said, "Now, you eat the manure or I will shoot!" The Fuhrer got down on his hands and knees and began eating.

While he was occupied, Rabinowitz sneaked away, ran through an alley, climbed over a fence, and dashed up the stairs to the attic. He slammed the door shut, bolted and locked it securely. "Bessie! Bessie!" he shouted to his wife. "Guess who I had lunch with today!"

The ego is very subtle. It can find opportunities where they don't exist at all; it can make the impossible possible. And you have to be very alert, because the mind is always rationalizing. The mind can go on rationalizing everything and it can rationalize so beautifully that even you will be allured -- it is your own mind deceiving you!

Unless one is really committed to being free it is impossible to be free. It is very rarely a man becomes free, very rarely: a Jesus, a Moses, a Mohammed -- only few and far between. But everyone has the capacity, everyone has the seed, the potential. You can become a Jesus, you can become a Buddha, you can become a Confucius, you can become a Socrates.

All that is needed, all that is required, is there. Only one thing is missing: you have not yet decided, you are indecisive; you have not decided to become a master of your own being. And then stupid things go on deceiving you, but you can always rationalize.

It is little known that Sherlock Holmes had a secret vice unrevealed in the stories. When Dr. Watson came around to 221B Baker Street one afternoon, the housekeeper told him that Holmes had a visitor, a schoolgirl.

Watson sat down to wait, but then heard muffled sounds coming from the study. Fearing that the schoolgirl might be an assassin in disguise he broke open the door, only to find the great detective and the girl -- a very young girl -- engaged in rather a shocking form of play. "By God, Holmes!" huffed the doctor, "just what sort of schoolgirl is this?" Smirked Holmes, "Elementary, my dear Watson!"

You can always find ways and means to protect yourself, to deceive others and to deceive yourself -- unless a very deliberate, conscious decision has been made. I call that decision sannyas.

Sannyas is nothing but a decision, a total decision, a commitment, an involvement, that "Now my whole energy is going to move into one direction -- the direction of freedom; I have decided to be free, free from all desire and free from all sorrow. Freedom without bounds is my goal."

And it can be attained. Once the decision is there and you are pouring your energy into it and nourishing it, nobody can prevent you from attaining it. It is your birthright.

THOSE WHO AWAKEN
NEVER REST IN ONE PLACE.
LIKE SWANS, THEY RISE
AND LEAVE THE LAKE.

Buddha is saying: If you start awakening you will be surprised that your whole life you were stuck in the same place, you were not really moving. Your movement was empty, impotent. You were not moving, because you were not reaching anywhere. You were moving up and down on the same bank, thinking that by running up and down you will reach the other shore. But the other shore is as far away as ever, and you are unnecessarily wasting your breath.

THOSE WHO AWAKEN.... Those who become committed to freedom, those who take a decision that, "Now I am going to be free from all that is dark in me, from all that creates future in me, from all that is past in me -- I am going to be free from it all. I am going to be a pure freedom so that I can have wings and I can soar high, to the ultimate heights of being and existence...." Unless you decide that... and it needs guts to decide. Many people come here and they go on hesitating for months about whether to take the jump or not -- and never for a single moment thinking what they have got to lose, never for a single moment realizing that time is rushing out of their hands... tomorrow may never come. If anything has to be done, it has to be done right now.

And strange is man and his ways! That which is useless he immediately is ready to do, and that which is of immense value he postpones. He goes on saying "Tomorrow," and the tomorrow never comes. Instead comes death.

And this has been happening many times. This is not your first life on the earth; you have lived millions of times and each time this postponement has been your root cause of misery.

Now don't postpone any more. Use this opportunity. Use this context that I am creating here. It is a buddhafield! If you are ready to take a jump into it, you will never be the same again. But the jump has to be total. You should not cling to the bank, you should leave the bank absolutely. In that very leaving, in that very renunciation of the bank, the transformation happens -- you start becoming freed.

It is not the chains which are keeping you in bondage; it is you who are holding on to the chains, it is you who are clinging to the chains. This is a very absurd situation! The prison is not holding you in; it is you who are afraid to go out. And you go on believing that there is no way out: "What is there to find outside? Those who have gone have never returned. Who knows? -- there are wild animals and dangers. Here I am safe, living comfortably."

Don't think in terms of comfort, think in terms of freedom. Don't think in terms of safety, think in terms of being more alive. And the only way to be more alive is to live dangerously, is to risk, is to go on an adventure. And the greatest adventure is not going to the moon -- the greatest adventure is going to your own innermost core.

THOSE WHO AWAKEN NEVER REST IN ONE PLACE. Don't be stagnant, don't remain in one inner place. Move! Movement is life. Become a river. Don't remain a stagnant pool, otherwise you will stink.

That's why millions of people stink. Their life does not seem to be a benediction, a blessing. Their life gives no aura of beauty, their life does not radiate. They seem to be completely dark and dismal, utterly depressed, hiding inside their own caves, not capable to come out in the sun, in the moon, in the rains, in the wind; not courageous enough to open up like flowers, not capable of risking and being on the wing.

THOSE WHO AWAKEN NEVER REST IN ONE PLACE. That is growth. Go on growing. God is not something that you will encounter on the road; God is your ultimate growth. God is not to be found anywhere, you have to become God. In fact, you are God; you only have to discover your reality.

A real human being is one who goes on growing. Each morning the sun finds him never in the place where it had left him the last evening. Each evening the sun finds him somewhere else, not at the exact place where it had found him in the morning. He is movement, he is revolution. He goes on and on, he never looks back. He never moves on the old trodden paths; he finds his own way.

LIKE SWANS, THEY RISE AND LEAVE THE LAKE. Have you seen swans leaving the lake? I am reminded of Ramakrishna. His first samadhi, his first glimpse of God, glimpse of truth or bliss, happened when he was only thirteen years old. He was coming back from his farm -- he was a farmer's son -- he was coming back to his home. On the way there was a lake. The rainy season was just to come, the monsoons were approaching. The sky was becoming cloudy, dark clouds, thunder, lightning, and Ramakrishna was almost running because it seemed that it was going to pour heavily. He was passing by the lake of the village; because he was running he disturbed the swans in the lake and they all flew together.

Swans are one of the most beautiful birds, the whitest -- symbols of purity, innocence. A long queue of swans suddenly rose high against the backdrop of the black clouds. Ramakrishna was transported into another world. The vision was so beautiful, and the vision was such a message, he fell there on the bank of the lake in utter ecstasy. The joy was such that he could not contain it; he became almost unconscious as far as the outside is concerned.

The other farmers were returning to their homes, everybody was in a hurry; the clouds were there and it was going to rain and they wanted to reach home. They found Ramakrishna lying on the lake bank absolutely unconscious, but with such joy on his face, so radiant was

his being, that they all fell on their knees. The experience was so superb, it was something not of this world.

They carried Ramakrishna home; they worshipped him. When he came back he was asked, "What has happened?" He said, "A message from the beyond: 'Ramakrishna, be a swan! Open your wings, the whole sky is yours. Don't be trapped by the lake and its comfort, security and safety.' I am no longer the same person. I have been called. God has called me!"

And since that day he was never the same person: something was triggered by the swans rising high in the sky.

Buddha says: LIKE SWANS, THEY RISE AND LEAVE THE LAKE -- as if Buddha is predicting something about Ramakrishna. The distance is vast, twenty-five centuries, but the prediction is true. It is not only about Ramakrishna, it is about all those who are going to awaken ever; it is about all the buddhas.

The swan has become a symbol in the East of the awakened one, hence the awakened one is called PARAMAHANSA. Paramahansa means the great swan.

ON THE AIR THEY RISE
AND FLY AN INVISIBLE COURSE,
GATHERING NOTHING, STORING NOTHING.
THEIR FOOD IS KNOWLEDGE.
THEY LIVE UPON EMPTINESS.
THEY HAVE SEEN HOW TO BREAK FREE.

This sutra is of immense import. Drink it slowly, let it sink in your heart. ON THE AIR THEY RISE.... The world of spirituality is a subtle world; it is more like air than like earth. You can feel it but you cannot see it. You can breathe it and live on it but you cannot hold it in your fist. It is invisible.

ON THE AIR THEY RISE AND FLY AN INVISIBLE COURSE. And the course of a buddha, of one who is awakened, is invisible; hence nobody can follow a buddha. He leaves no footprints. He is like a swan flying in the sky; he leaves no footprints. He is not like a man walking on the sand.

Buddha has said again and again: "I am like a swan, a bird in the sky. I leave no footprints. Hence you cannot imitate me, hence there is no need to bother to imitate. Understand -- that will do." Listen, feel, imbibe the spirit of a buddha, that's all. Be nourished by his presence, be thrilled by his being, but don't try to imitate. Don't try to become a carbon copy, because God loves only originals; carbon copies are rejected.

ON THE AIR THEY RISE AND FLY AN INVISIBLE COURSE, GATHERING NOTHING, STORING NOTHING. The man who has awakened gathers nothing, stores nothing. He remains utterly empty inside. GATHERING NOTHING, STORING NOTHING means he goes on dying to the past continuously. It is the past that you gather, it is the past that you store. You think it is very valuable -- it is all junk! Even the greatest experiences of the past are junk. They were great when they were present; once they are past they are useless. Throw them away. Forget all about the past so that you can remain clean and pure and available for the new. If you become too much cluttered with the past, who is going to be available to the new? And the new is constantly impinging upon you! Remain spacious, go on creating space inside you. And the only way is not to store anything.

The past stored becomes your ego; the past creates the ego. And the ego fills you so much that it leaves no space for God to enter in or bliss to flow in or beauty to penetrate you.

The sun comes and knocks on your doors, but your doors are closed. The moon comes

and waits at the door, but you don't open it -- because you are too full of yourself. You are the only barrier between yourself and God. You have to disappear.

And remember that the ego will find new ways to enter inside you. If you push it out from the front door it will come from the back door. It will wear new masks. It may become knowledge, scholarship, austerities. It can pretend anything. But remember: the past accumulated in any way is bound to culminate into an ego. And the ego is always comparing, the ego is always thinking in terms of superiority, inferiority. And because of these comparisons, these ideas of superiority and inferiority, you go on suffering, you live in sorrow.

Nobody is superior and nobody is inferior, because comparison is false, comparison itself is not valid. Two persons cannot be compared because each is unique, they are not alike. You can compare two Ford cars, that's okay, but you cannot compare two individual human beings. What to say of human beings? -- you cannot compare two rosebushes, you cannot compare two rocks, you cannot compare two pebbles on the seashore, because each pebble is unique. There is no one other pebble like it, not only on this earth but on any other earth anywhere, on any other planet anywhere.

Scientists say there are at least fifty thousand earths where life exists, and millions and millions of planets which are dead. And each planet must be having millions and millions of pebbles, but you will not find another pebble which is exactly like this pebble. How can you compare two dissimilar things?

Comparison is the way of the ego. Avoid comparison, otherwise you will always suffer. You will suffer in two ways. Sometimes your ego will feel superior to somebody; that will give you airs, that will get into your head, that will make you tense. You will not walk on the earth; you will become drunk, drugged. Or sometimes it will give you the feeling of inferiority; then too you will be crestfallen, shattered. Again great anguish and pain....

And this will happen continuously, because in one thing you may look superior to somebody, and in another thing you may look inferior to somebody else. Somebody is taller than you and somebody else is smaller than you. Somebody is more beautiful, although you are more knowledgeable. But somebody is stronger, has a more muscular body, is more athletic -- and you look a very poor specimen in front of him. Somebody is so ugly that you feel great compared to him, and somebody is so beautiful that you start feeling ugly. Now you will be pushed and pulled between these two; these two rocks will crush you.

Harlemite Huckley was driving his big blue Cadillac through Mississippi. He pulled up at a gas station and honked his horn.

"What do you want, boy?" asked the attendant.

"Give me ten gallons of gas," said Huckley. "Check my oil and wipe off the windshield. And look, man, I am in a hurry."

Immediately the attendant pulled out a big .38, picked up an empty oil can and said, "You must be one of them smart ones from up north. I am gonna show you, boy, how we expect your kind to behave around here."

He threw the oil can into the air and emptied his gun at it. When the can came down, it had five bullet holes in it. The attendant tossed it to Huckley saying, "Now, you look that over and think about it."

Huckley looked at it, then got out of the Caddy and picked up an apple he had lying on the seat. He threw the apple in the air, whipped out a knife and as the apple came down, he made a few passes at it. The apple landed at the attendant's feet, peeled, cored, and quartered.

The attendant said, "How many gallons of gas did you want, sir?"

This will happen every day, this will happen every moment. There are millions of people and each individual is unique. Drop that nonsense of comparing. But you cannot drop it unless you drop the past -- the past LIVES on comparison, the ego FEEDS on comparison.

Buddha says: GATHERING NOTHING, STORING NOTHING. THEIR FOOD IS KNOWLEDGE. 'Knowledge' is not a right translation of what Buddha means. It would have been more true to translate it as 'knowing', not 'knowledge'. The difference may not look great between these two words, but it is great, it is vast. It is tremendously important to understand the difference between knowledge and knowing.

Knowledge is always of the past; it is a finished phenomenon, a full point has come. Knowing is always a present process. Knowing is alive, knowledge is dead. A buddha is not a man of knowledge but a man of knowing. A scholar is a man of knowledge, a pundit is a man of knowledge but not a man of knowing. Knowing is riverlike, flowing.

And it is very important to remember, as far as Buddha is concerned, that he did not believe in nouns, he believed in verbs. He says the noun is only a convenience. In fact, in reality nouns don't exist, only verbs. When you say, "This is a tree," your statement linguistically is acceptable but not existentially, because by the time you said, "This is a tree," this is no longer the same tree -- one dead leaf has fallen, one new leaf has started coming up, the bud has opened. The bird that was singing on the tree is no longer singing. The sun that was shining on the tree is hidden behind a cloud. It is no longer the same tree, and it is growing, continuously growing.

A tree, to be true, should be called treeing, not a tree. A river should be called rivering, not a river. Everything is growing, moving, everything is in a flux. Verbs are true, nouns are false. If some day we are going to create an existential language, it will contain no nouns, it will contain only verbs. You are not the same person that had come this morning to listen to the discourse. When you leave you will be a totally different person -- so much water has gone down the Ganges, so much has changed. You may have come very sad and you may leave laughing. You may have come very serious and you may leave very playful. These changes are tremendously important.

Hence I will translate it: THEIR FOOD -- the food of the awakened ones -- IS KNOWING. 'Knowledge' is not the right translation. They continuously are in a state of awareness, consciousness; they are continuously learning, knowing. They never say, "I have known." They only say, "I am available, open to know, more available, more open to know." The full point never comes, the process continues.

Life is a process, not a thing, not a commodity. It is an unending river, no beginning, no end. Inexhaustible it is: AES DHAMMO SANANTANO. This is the very law of life, that everything goes on changing. Buddha has said: Except change, everything changes. Heraclitus would have agreed with Buddha, Buddha would have agreed with Heraclitus; they would have embraced each other. And they were contemporaries, almost contemporaries.

It has always happened in the world that whenever some insight happens in one part of the world it is always echoed all over the world in different parts, in different languages, by different people -- as if something triggered in one part invisibly affects other sensitive souls everywhere else.

When Buddha was alive in India, Greece was rich with Heraclitus, with Socrates, with Pythagoras. China was rich with Lao Tzu, Confucius, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu. And all these people have something very similar, although their languages are different.

Heraclitus says: You cannot step in the same river twice. Buddha will agree absolutely; in fact he will say you cannot even step in the same river once, because the river is constantly flowing. And it is not only the river that is flowing, you are also flowing.

One man came and insulted Buddha very much; Buddha listened to him silently. The next day he felt sorry, came to apologize. Buddha said, "Forget all about it, because I am not the same man whom you had insulted, and you are not the same man who had insulted me. So who is going to apologize to whom? And what can I do now? -- that man is no more, it is finished forever! You will never see that man again, so don't be worried. And you are not the same either! How can you be the same?"

Ananda, Buddha's disciple, who was sitting by the side, said, "Sir, this is too much! This is the same man -- I cannot forgive him ever! He insulted you so much, he said such ugly words, he abused you badly. It hurts still in my heart. I could not say anything because you wouldn't allow it. I had to swallow it all, otherwise I would have shown this man!"

Buddha said, "Ananda, can't you see this is not the same man at all? The man who had come yesterday was abusing, was insulting -- this man is apologizing. How can they be the same? Do you think insult and apology are the same? This is somebody else! Just look into his eyes -- tears are flowing from his eyes. Do you remember the other man? Fire was in his eyes! He wanted to kill me, and this man is touching my feet! And you still say, Ananda, this is the same man?"

Nobody is ever the same. To know it is knowing, to be constantly aware of it is knowing. Their food is knowing....

THEY LIVE UPON EMPTINESS. And because they go on discarding the past they always remain empty. Their emptiness has a purity of its own. They are utterly spacious, like the sky without clouds. THEY LIVE UPON EMPTINESS....

THEY HAVE SEEN HOW TO BREAK FREE. And this is the way: THEY HAVE SEEN HOW TO BREAK FREE. Drop knowledge, become a knowing awareness, alertness, watchfulness, witnessing -- all verbs, remember. Forget the past and remain available to the present and don't project the future, and you will remain empty. And to remain empty is the way of the free man.

Freedom is utter emptiness, but in that utter emptiness descends something from the beyond which Buddha leaves undescribed, unexpressed, because it is inexpressible. He does not call it truth, he does not call it God, he does not call it bliss. He does not call it any name; he simply keeps quiet about it, utterly silent. He says: Come and see.

WHO CAN FOLLOW THEM?
ONLY THE MASTER,
SUCH IS HIS PURITY.

Unless you also become a master -- master of your own inner being, of your consciousness -- unless you also become empty, you cannot go with the buddhas, you cannot fly with the swans.

LIKE A BIRD,
HE RISES ON THE LIMITLESS AIR
AND FLIES AN INVISIBLE COURSE.
HE WISHES FOR NOTHING.

HIS FOOD IS KNOWLEDGE.

HE LIVES UPON EMPTINESS.
HE HAS BROKEN FREE.

And if you can keep the company of a buddha you will also be free. You will also rise on the winds. You will also start the flight of the alone to the alone. You will also start moving to the ultimate.

Buddha calls this ultimate freedom, nirvana -- cessation of the ego, cessation of your personality. Freedom means freedom from your personality. Then whatsoever is left is God, is truth, is bliss.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #6

Chapter title: There is no evolution

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
COULD THERE BE AN ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE PHYSICAL EVOLUTIONARY
PROCESS? IF SO, WHAT IS IT?

Digvijay, there is no goal of life. Life itself is its goal. It is not moving towards some target. It is herenow, it has no future. Life is always in the present. But the mind cannot live in the present: mind dies in the present. Hence, down the ages, mystics have invented devices to bring the mind to the present. The moment the mind comes to the present, it melts as snow, melts in the hot sun; it disappears, evaporates.

And the disappearance of the mind is the greatest experience possible to human beings, because in that disappearance is the appearance of God.

Mind lives in the future; future is its territory, its kingdom. And future is possible only through goal orientation. So mind makes goals out of everything; life must have a goal -- not only a goal but an ultimate goal. Then mind is perfectly happy, then it can protect itself: how to achieve that goal, how to reach to that ultimate?

The moment you can ask, "How?" mind is perfectly at ease. It is very clever, cunning,

skillful in inventing ways and means to achieve something, whatsoever it is -- but it has to be there in the future. Mind lives through creating goals: political, social, evolutionary, spiritual, and so on and so forth; but the mind needs some goal to exist, it feeds on it.

In truth, all is and nothing is going to happen. Tomorrow never comes. It is always now and here.

The mystic approach is totally different from the goal-oriented mind. The mystic says, "Live the moment in its totality, love the moment in its totality, drown yourself in this overwhelming existence, and you will come closer and closer to God." By "God" I don't mean some person; by "God" I simply mean the essential core of existence, the center of the cyclone.

The universe is the circumference and God is the center. If you dive deep in the now, in the here, you are bound to encounter the center. And the miracle is that the center of all is also your center too. To become aware of it, to live that center, from that center, into full awareness, is to be a buddha, is to be enlightened.

But remember, buddhahood is not an ultimate goal. It is not something which has to be achieved somewhere else. It is available right now -- immediately it is available, not ultimately. Remember these two words: the ultimate and the immediate. The ultimate brings the mind in, the immediate helps the mind to disappear.

To me, the immediate is the ultimate. There is no goal, physical, psychological, spiritual. All is as it should be... it already is. Drop your tensions, anxieties for the future, what is going to happen. All has already happened! Live it! Don't be ambitious. Goals make you ambitious, and they drive you crazy. The more goal-oriented a person is, the crazier he becomes -- because ambition is nothing but ego. You can go on inventing new goals; there will always be the horizon beyond. And with those new goals your ego can go on and on having new trips.

The mystic and the world of the mystic is a totally different dimension. What I am talking about here has nothing to do with goal orientation -- that is the way of the mind. I am teaching you the way of no-mind.

Digvijay, I know your tremendous interest in the evolutionary process. I am perfectly aware that you have devoted your whole life in that search. And you will be shocked when you hear me say that you have been wasting your life -- wasting because the present is being sacrificed for the future. And unless you drop this idea of an ultimate goal you will never be able to come down to the earth, to the present, to the moment. And without that there is no meditation, and without meditation there is no God.

The immediate is the ultimate -- I teach you the immediate, living moment to moment, without carrying the past. Buddha says, not hoarding the past, not accumulating the past; I would like to add, not projecting in the future either. If the past and the future disappear, what is left? A great silence, a profound presence of something utterly unknown. A mystery overwhelms you. And that mystery is immediate. I will not say "ultimate," because 'ultimate' means you can postpone for tomorrow. 'Immediate' shocks you, shakes you into awareness right now.

A goal is possible if we divide life into means and ends. That's how it has been down the ages. But life is one, it cannot be divided. It is indivisible, whole; it is an organic unity. Nothing is a means, nothing is an end. The whole life is one. You cannot categorize means and ends.

But the moment you think about evolution, goal, you have to divide life, then something becomes a means and something else becomes the end. Adolf Hitler believed in evolution,

hence he could convince the intelligentsia of Germany, which is one of the most sophisticated intelligentsia of the world. In the name of evolution he could preach his Nazi philosophy that superman is the goal, that man has to be sacrificed for the superman. It appealed, it looked logical.

Who is the superman? And who is going to become the superman? Of course, the Nordics, the Germans. It enhanced the German ego tremendously. "Even if the whole humanity has to be destroyed, it is worth destroying because the great goal of superhumanity is looming large on the horizon. Everything can be sacrificed for it." That's how he could convince his country to drag the whole world into a world war.

Sri Aurobindo also talks in the same language -- the language of evolution. Not the superman but the supermind is the goal. And you have to sacrifice your present for that supermind; again the same idea of sacrifice. Man has remained dominated by the idea of sacrifice. Sacrifice! Sacrifice! Sacrifice! Be a martyr! That's the only way to create a golden future.

My effort here is just the opposite. Avoid Adolf Hitlers and Sri Aurobindos. No sacrifice! Don't try to be a martyr! There is no other goal than this moment, and existence is as perfect as is ever possible. Existence is as perfect as it ever will be. Existence IS perfection.

But because of the idea of a goal, we start comparing: then man is higher than the monkeys and the monkeys are higher than the dogs, and so on and so forth. But who is going to decide? Have you ever asked the monkeys? As far as I know, they still laugh at Charles Darwin, because they can't believe this poor man is higher than the monkeys. Have you ever fought with any monkey? Fight with a monkey barehanded and you will know who is more powerful. Can you jump like the monkeys on the trees? And then you will know whose body is more athletic. Monkeys live on the trees and you live on the earth: you are the fallen monkeys! But Charles Darwin never asked the monkeys.

Man himself goes on deciding. So if Germans decide then Germans are the highest race, obviously. And if Indians decide then they are the Aryans, the real Aryans, the pure blood. And if Jews decide then they are the chosen people of God. But who is going to decide? And if man decides then man is higher than all the animals. In fact, there is nobody higher and nobody lower. All these categories are stupid -- there is no hierarchy.

Existence is absolutely communist. Everybody is equal, participating in the same life, breathing the same air, getting warmed by the same sun, dancing under the same sky. Even trees are not lower than you, even rocks are not lower than you. The very language of lower and higher is utterly wrong. But the word 'evolution' brings that language in; it becomes the "in" thing. Then you have to make a hierarchy: then you are above animals and below angels. And then the whole journey starts: how to go higher and higher and higher? And there is no roof, there is no ceiling; you can go on projecting.

But if you ask the bees they won't think that you are higher than them. The intelligentsia of the bees must be watching a thousand and one stupidities of human beings -- because the bees are the most organized phenomenon in existence. Man and his society must look like chaos compared to the society of the bees. Everything is so organized -- even Adolf Hitler would have felt a little inferior. And so willingly, so voluntarily -- the bees are not forced, they are not living in a concentration camp. Willingly, joyously, they are part of an organization, so deeply involved with the organization that they have lost their individuality totally; they live as an organic part, they are not separate. Or if you watch the society of the ants, it is fixed, systematic; it has a tremendous order.

Now, how are you going to decide who is higher? This chaotic society of man? In three

thousand years man has fought five thousand wars -- constantly killing each other, murdering, butchering, in the name of politics, in the name of religion... and this man you think is the highest evolved being on the earth? There are people like Arthur Koestler who think that something in the very beginning has gone wrong in the human mind, some nuts and bolts are missing -- man is born crazy.

If you watch man, it appears so. His whole life seems to be that of violence, struggle, destruction. No other animal is so destructive. No other animal kills its own species; the tigers don't kill other tigers and the dogs don't kill other dogs. Even if they fight, their fights are mock fights; they fight only to decide who is powerful. Once it is decided, the fight stops -- because to attack somebody who is weaker than you is not only wrong, it is utterly destructive and stupid too.

Two dogs will fight: they will show their teeth, they will bark, they will jump at each other, but they are simply watching who is more powerful. Once they have taken note who is more powerful, one dog will stop barking, will put his tail between his legs, and it is finished! He has given the sign that "I am weaker and you are stronger." And there is no shame, he is not ashamed -- what can he do if he is weaker and the other is stronger? How is he responsible for that? One tree is taller, another tree is not taller. Do you think the rosebushes are feeling ashamed because the mango trees and the neem trees and other trees are going so high? The roses are not worried at all: "So what? You are taller and we are not taller -- that's the way you are, this is the way we are."

See the sanity of the point: except human beings nobody is so insane as to fight with someone who is weaker. Once it is decided... And don't you have even that much consciousness as dogs and tigers have -- that they can see, it is so apparent that the other is stronger? Then what is the point of fighting at all? The game is finished -- the other is the winner. Hence no destruction happens, hence no killing happens. And animals don't kill even other animals unless they are hungry -- except man. Only man goes for hunting.

And Digvijay is a former prince: he must know what hunting is, he must have animal heads in his palace, trophies. The more tigers and lions you have killed, the greater you are. And for what? Just to exhibit! Whenever I have visited the palace of a king, I have felt very sorry for the king. He seems to be utterly insensitive; showing these dead heads and dead bodies and skins of animals, he thinks he is exhibiting his power, his vitality. He is simply exhibiting his utter stupidity, inhumanity.

Animals kill only when they are hungry; then it can be forgiven. No animal ever kills without hunger; no animal ever kills as a play. Killing somebody in a game, can you think this hunter is more evolved than other beings? Just destroying a life for sheer play -- and the play is also unjust, because you are sitting in a treetop and the animal is on the ground, and from high on the top where the animal cannot reach you shoot him. The animal has no weapons to protect himself, and you think you are being very brave? You are simply showing your cowardliness.

If we look at man it does not appear at all that he is the most evolved animal on the earth -- just the opposite. No other animal goes insane except man. Yes, a few animals go insane, but they only go into insanity when they are put in zoos, not in their wild state. And a zoo is a human phenomenon.

Just think of yourself: if the elephants created a zoo and put you into a zoo -- how long would you remain sane? It will be impossible for you to remain sane; it will be just natural to go insane. Animals don't become homosexuals -- unless they are put in a zoo. In a zoo they turn into homosexuals; in a zoo they are bound to because they can't get their females. In a

zoo they are confined in such small spaces; those small spaces are bound to drive them crazy.

You must have seen tigers walking up and down in their cages, because they used to live and run for miles. The whole wild world was theirs, and now just a small cage... and surrounded by the tourists and the visitors and foolish people looking at them. Just think of yourself being in a zoo made by the elephants or the tigers or the monkeys, and all kinds of monkeys looking at you, day in, day out, the whole situation unnatural.

Now scientists say that there is a certain territory that is needed by every animal, a certain space; if that is not given to that animal it is bound to go insane. Wild animals need an area of miles and miles to remain free and to remain sane. Yes, in a zoo they go insane, they go crazy. They attack even their own species; they become destructive. Even sometimes they have been known to commit suicide, but never in their natural state. It is only man who commits suicide, goes insane, becomes sexually perverted -- and still man goes on thinking that he is the highest peak!

As far as I am concerned, I don't believe in hierarchy. The monkey is a monkey, the man is a man. Nobody is higher and nobody is lower. The rocks are rocks and the trees are trees. And we all participate in one God. Yes, there are great changes happening, but it is not evolution; evolution means we are going higher. Changes are there, certainly; life is constantly moving, it is a river. But change does not mean evolution, remember. You can change without your being evolving -- and that's what is happening.

And that change, constant change, gives you grounds to impose your theory of evolution on it. Things are changing, life is always in a flux; nothing is permanent, all is fluid. Man has not been like this before, and man will never again be like this. Everything is in a process, but the process is not goal-oriented; it is not moving towards a certain goal. It is a very playful process.

Children playing, you cannot say that they are evolving; children playing, you cannot say they are achieving something. They are not achieving anything. That's exactly the concept of LEELA in the East. Leela means play -- the world is God's play, and in play there is no question of evolution.

The idea of evolution is really Western; the East has never believed in evolution. The East believes in playfulness. In playfulness there is no evolution at all. Nothing is means and nothing is taken as ends. It is a dance of energies, not moving into any particular direction, not meant to achieve something; the joy is in the play itself, the value is intrinsic, not extrinsic. When you start thinking of evolution, the value is extrinsic; the value depends on what you are going to achieve, what you are going to become.

If a man becomes a great scientist, a Nobel Prize winner, he has evolved, but the man who remains a woodcutter, he has not evolved. Why? What is there so significant in doing mathematics? And what is there so insignificant in chopping wood? One likes to chop wood, another likes to play with figures, arithmetic, geometry or something else -- these are likes, different likes. One loves to swim, somebody else loves to philosophize... there is nothing higher and nothing lower.

But we have made a society on a hierarchical pattern. The brahmin is at the top -- the brahmin means the professor, the academician, the Nobel Prize winner, the famous doctor, the famous engineer, the scholar. That is the meaning of the brahmin -- he is the highest. Why? Why is not the woodcutter the highest? If the woodcutter enjoys his chopping of wood more than the professor enjoys his teaching, who is higher? The professor may be simply dragging, repeating every time, every year, the same thing.

I used to know a professor who was repeating the same lectures at least for thirty years. I had heard it, and his other students had told me that exactly the same lectures, word for word.... So one day, when the professor was asleep in the afternoon, I went into his house. I looked into his books, found the book in which he had collected all the lectures, and stole it.

You cannot believe what happened to the professor! He didn't turn up the next day. I inquired after him; he said, "I am shattered, my life is finished -- somebody has stolen my book, and I cannot speak without it. I have been using the same notes for thirty years! Now I cannot make again new notes."

I could see the poor man; he was just functioning like a gramophone record. There was no need of him. I gave him the book and I said, "Why do you bother to come to the university at all? You can simply send this book, one of us can read it, and others can take notes. Why do you bother in your old age to come to the university again and again? This book will do! You can die in peace. This book is enough. You don't have to live at all -- there is no need."

Now, this professor is a brahmin; he is the highest because the head is thought to be the highest. It IS on the top, maybe that's why the idea has arisen that the head and the head people are the topmost people. The bosses are called "heads" and the servants are called "hands"! Why? Just because physically the head is on top...?

We have created hierarchy in society. The lowest are those poor people who are chopping wood or cleaning the roads. Why are they the lowest? -- because they are doing the most essential things. The professors can be discarded, the society can exist without them; but the society cannot exist without the street cleaners, the toilet cleaners, the woodchoppers -- the society cannot exist without them. They are far more essential, far more fundamental, but they are the lowest.

The whole idea is wrong. There is no hierarchy. The professor is doing his work, and the woodcutter is doing his work, and both are needed. Neither is there a hierarchy between men and other animals, nor is there a hierarchy between men and men. I am against the whole idea of hierarchy.

And that's my vision of a new commune.

In the new commune there is going to be nobody higher and nobody lower. In this ashram, there is nobody higher, nobody lower. There are toilet cleaners and there are professors, therapists, and they are all the same -- they are all doing some useful work, some essential work. The vice-chancellor here, in this commune, is on the same ground as the woodchopper. The great therapist has no more prestige, power, than the toilet cleaner. Hence, there is no problem. A Ph.D. can choose toilet cleaning -- one Ph.D. IS doing that; another Ph.D. is just cleaning the streets of the ashram.

If there is no hierarchy, there is no problem; otherwise, the Ph.D. will think, "How can I do this work, this menial job? I am not a hand, I am a head." In this commune there are no heads, no hands -- people, whole people, respected, loved, for whatsoever they are doing, or whatsoever they can do, or whatsoever they LIKE doing.

This whole existence is a commune. God is the center and we are all its circumference.

There is no evolution, Digvijay, no ultimate goal. It is a play. Enjoy it, celebrate it! If this idea of ultimate goal and evolution can drop from your mind, I KNOW your potential; you can become one of the great sannyasins. You can be a new man. But you are going crazy because of this idea; your whole life is being devoted to it. And if it is fundamentally wrong then you will repent one day. Forget all about it! Start meditating more and more about your own inner being. Don't be worried what is going to happen; rather, be involved with what is

already happening. God is a presence, God is a being, not a becoming, and so is this whole existence.

The day we drop the idea of evolution and ultimate goal, the world will be freed from its bondage of future. It is the future that is keeping us in a bondage, and the past -- and both are in conspiracy against man.

Future and past dropped, you attain to freedom -- freedom, Buddha says, which has no bounds.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MANY JOKES?

Viramo, first, in none of my past lives have I been an Englishman. Secondly, in many of my past lives I have been a Jew.

Sir Reginald, riding in a New York taxi, was challenged by the driver to solve a riddle: "This person I am thinking of has the same father that I have and the same mother, but it is not my sister and it is not my brother. Who is it?"

The Britisher thought for a moment, and then gave up. "It is me," the cabdriver told him. "By Jove! That's jolly good. I must try that on the chaps at my club!"

A month later he was sitting in London with his cigar-smoking cronies. He said, "Gentlemen, this individual I have in mind is not my brother and not my sister, yet this person has the same parents as I have -- who is it?"

After several thoughtful minutes, all the members conceded defeat. "Who is it?" one of them inquired. "Come, Reggie, give us the answer."

Reggie slapped his knees in triumph. "It is a taxicab driver in New York City!" he roared.

And the second story:

Morton and Fogel were discussing humor over lunch. "Do Jews react differently when they hear a joke?" asked Morton.

"What a question!" replied Fogel. "If you tell an Englishman a joke he will laugh at it three times: once when you tell it, again when you explain it and a third time when he understands the point. Tell a German the same joke: he will laugh twice -- both times to be polite -- there won't be a third time because he will never get the point. Tell the same joke to an American: he will laugh once, immediately, because he will get it right away. But," said Fogel, "when you tell the joke to a Jew...."

"Yes?" asked Morton.

"When you tell the same joke to a Jew, he won't laugh at all. Instead he will say, 'It is an old joke -- and besides, you told it all wrong!'"

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I HEARD YOU SAY THAT BEING A SANNYASIN MEANS TO BE READY TO LIVE A VERY LONELY LIFE. BUT SINCE I'M A SANNYASIN I FEEL THAT I CAN'T BE LONELY ANYMORE, AS YOU ARE ALWAYS AROUND. DO I UNDERSTAND YOU

WRONG?

Deva Maya, you do not understand me at all. It is not a question of understanding right or wrong -- you don't understand me at all.

I have NOT told you that a sannyasin has to be ready to live a lonely life. What I had told you was: a sannyasin knows how to live alone. And to be lonely is totally different from being alone. Not only different, they are opposites. They are as far away from each other as the sky and the earth; the distance is infinite between them.

To be lonely means a negative state: you are hankering for the other, you are longing for company, you are missing the crowd. You cannot tolerate yourself; you feel yourself intolerable. You are bored with yourself -- that's what being lonely means -- utterly bored.

To be alone is totally different: it is utterly ecstatic. To be alone means a positive state. You are not missing the other, you are enjoying yourself. You are not bored by yourself, you are intrigued. A great challenge comes from your innermost core. You start a journey of interiority. When there are others you are occupied with them, your consciousness remains focused on them. When you are alone, your consciousness moves inwards. When you are with others you have to be an extrovert -- your consciousness turning upon itself, showering upon itself. When you are with others your light shows their faces; when you are alone your light shows your own original face.

Maya, you have not understood me. I had not told you that to be a sannyasin means "to be ready to live a very lonely life." From where did you get this idea of living a very lonely life? Certainly one has to be able to live alone, but to live alone does not mean that you cannot relate; on the contrary, a man who can live alone becomes so full of joy, becomes so brimful, that he HAS to relate. He becomes a raincloud -- he has to shower. He becomes a flower so full of fragrance that he has to open its petals and allow its fragrance to be released to the winds.

A person who knows how to be alone becomes so full of song that he has to sing it. And where can you sing a song? You can sing a song only in love, in relating, in sharing with people. But you can share only if you have in the first place.

The problem is that people don't have any joy in their being and they are bent upon sharing it. Now, two miserable people bent upon sharing their joys with each other -- what is going to happen? The misery will not be doubled, it will be multiplied.

That's what people are doing to each other: husbands to wives and wives to husbands, and parents to children and children to parents, and friends to friends. In fact enemies are not so inimical as friends prove finally: torturing each other, unloading their miseries on each other, throwing their dirt on each other. They are stinking -- what can they do? When they come close to you, you have to suffer their stink. And you have to suffer if you want them to suffer YOUR stink. So it is a bargain.

You cannot live alone, they cannot live alone -- you have to be together. Even if it stinks, at least there is the consolation that "I am not alone."

A man who knows how to be alone knows how to be meditative. Aloneness means meditation -- just relishing your own being, celebrating your own being.

Walt Whitman says: I celebrate myself, I sing myself. That is aloneness. This man Whitman is really a mystic, not just a poet. He should be counted with the ancient RISHIS of the Upanishads. America has not given birth to many great mystics; Whitman is really one of the most precious gifts of America to the world. He says: I celebrate myself, I sing myself. That's what a mystic has always been supposed to do, that's what a mystic's function is: to

celebrate himself. But how will you celebrate? You will have to invite others. You will have to ask others to come and participate.

Meditation gives you the insight of your own inner treasure, and in love you share it. That's what I mean when I say that a sannyasin has to be ready to be alone -- so that one day he can be ready to love. Only a man who knows the beauties of solitude can love. But just a slight difference and you can miss the whole point.

Now, the difference between aloneness and loneliness is not much; as far as language is concerned there is no difference at all, they are synonyms. In the dictionaries you will find aloneness described as loneliness, loneliness as aloneness -- but that is only in the dictionaries, not in life itself. In life itself it is totally different.

Don't live through language, don't become too much obsessed with language, because language is only utilitarian. It can mislead you -- it misleads. It can't help it; it has been invented by people who know nothing. I am saying "aloneness" and your mind hears "loneliness." Once you translate aloneness as loneliness you are millions of miles away -- not only miles but millions of light-years away from me.

Potter saw a store with a sign reading: "Hans Schmidt's Chinese Laundry." Being curious he entered and was greeted by a Chinese who identified himself as Hans Schmidt.

"How come you have a name like that?" asked Potter.

"When I land in America I stand in immigration line behind German," explained the oriental.

"When they ask German his name, he say, 'Hans Schmidt.' When official ask me my name I say, 'Sam Ting.'"

It is very easy to understand.

P.F.C. Perkins refused to go and fight in Korea. He was told that if he would not bear arms, the provost marshal would shoot him. "Are you a conscientious objector?" asked the first sergeant.

"I ain't objectin' to nothin'," said Perkins, "but I had the gonorrhoea and the diarrhoea both, and if this 'Korea' is anything like it -- go ahead and shoot!"

Maya, I said something, you heard totally something else.

A London chap sees a good-looking girl sitting alone at another table and says, "Would you care for a cigarette?"

She said, "Sorry, I don't smoke."

He waited for a few moments and then said, "Would you care for a drink?"

"Sorry, I don't drink."

He waited another ten minutes and asked, "Would you care to have dinner with me?"

"I am sorry," she replied, "I don't eat dinner."

"Well, for heaven's sake! If you don't smoke or drink or eat dinner, what in heaven's name do you do about sex?"

"Oh, along about six I have a cup of tea and a biscuit."

You change that word 'loneliness'; drop it completely from your mind. Learn what aloneness is -- and aloneness is a beautiful phenomenon, the most beautiful. Then my presence will not disturb your aloneness, my presence will enhance it. My presence, my

remembrance, feeling me around yourself, engulfing you, will enhance it, will make it richer, will make it more crystal-clear. And not only my presence but the presence of my sannyasins will also be absolutely nondisturbing to aloneness.

In fact, aloneness cannot be disturbed at all. It is such a crystallized state of consciousness, nothing can distract you away from it, and everything helps to make it stronger. Have you watched this paradoxical phenomenon? For example, right now we are sitting here in silence... the chirping of the birds -- is it disturbing the silence or enriching it? The crow -- is he disturbing your silence, or helping and giving it a contrast? If you are really silent, then even in the marketplace you will be surprised that your silence deepens. If your silence is disturbed by the marketplace, that simply means it was not silence in the first place. It was just forced, cultivated, practiced, plastic -- it was not true.

If true silence is there, nothing can disturb it. Each disturbance comes to enhance it. It is like in a dark night you are walking on a street and a car passes by with full headlights on. For a moment you are dazed by the light, and then the car is gone by. Do you think the darkness is less than before? It is deeper than before, it is denser than before. The car and its headlights have not disturbed it at all; rather, they helped tremendously.

And this is how it is with aloneness: your aloneness will not be disturbed by the commune, and certainly not by me -- because I am not a noise. I am a melody, a music -- a music that cannot be heard by the ears but can only be heard by the heart.

It is good that you have started feeling me. It is good that you say, "Since I am a sannyasin I feel that I can't be lonely anymore, as You are always around."

Yes, you cannot be lonely anymore, but you will be more alone now that I am always with you. And aloneness is a precious treasure, the door to the kingdom of God. But forget that word 'loneliness'; it is ugly, it is pathological.

And a man who seeks friendship, love, companionship, out of loneliness is not going to find it. In fact, with whomsoever he will associate he will feel cheated and he will make the other feel cheated. He will feel tired and bored, and he will make the other feel tired and bored. He will feel sucked and he will make the other feel sucked, because both will be sucking on each other's energies. And they don't have much in the first place. Their streams are running very thin; they are like summer streams in a desertland. You cannot take any water out of them. But if you seek friendship and love and companionship out of aloneness, you are a flooded river, a river in the rains. You can share as much as you want. And the more you share, the more you will have.

This is the inner economics: the more you give, the more you get from God. Once you have known the knack of it you become a spendthrift, you are no longer a miser.

A spiritual person cannot be a miser, and a miser cannot be a spiritual person.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENT OF
PRIME MINISTER, CHOWDHRY CHARAN SINGH?

Narendra, I have nothing to say about such rubbish things, but because you have asked, just to be polite to you and to your question, just to pay my respects for your question, I will tell you three stories.

First:

A man took a cab to the palace of the prime minister where he asked the driver to wait for him.

The driver refused saying he did not have time. "But you will wait for me," said the passenger. "I am the new prime minister."

"In that case," replied the driver, "I will wait -- you won't be in there long!"

And the second:

Work schedule of the Indian cabinet:

Monday: Conference with leading personalities.

Tuesday: Formation of new cabinet.

Wednesday: First meeting of the new cabinet.

Thursday: First announcements of new cabinet.

Friday: Withdrawal of announcements.

Saturday: Resignation of new cabinet.

Sunday: Holiday.

Monday: See above.

And the third:

It is an historical fact that Diogenes went all around the known world, lamp in hand, trying to find an honest man.

When he got to New Delhi, they stole his lamp.

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
SEX AND DEATH SEEM TO BE THE MAIN ATTRACTIONS FOR ME. WHAT CAN YOU SAY ABOUT THESE POLES TO HELP ME GO BEYOND?

Saguna, sex and death are really one energy. Sex is one side of the coin, death the other side. Hence, anybody who is interested in sex is bound to be interested in death -- although he would like to avoid it. Anybody who is interested in death is bound to be interested in sex -- although he would like to avoid it. Why? -- because the popular conception is that sex and death are opposites. They are not. And because of this popular conception there have existed two kinds of cultures in the world: sex-oriented and death-oriented.

For example, India has remained for centuries a death-oriented culture. Because it is death-oriented it represses sex. Thinking that sex is against, it represses sex, it avoids sex; it pretends sex does not exist. You can talk about death with no problem, but you cannot talk about sex.

Just the other day a sannyasin had asked, "I was almost caught and imprisoned by the police because I was saying goodbye to my girlfriend and we kissed each other before the police station." It was very difficult to get rid of the police. They caught hold of them; they had to wait there for two hours. Somehow they persuaded them, apologized.

The sannyasin had asked, "I am puzzled. What wrong had I done there? I was saying goodbye to my girlfriend, she was leaving; we may see each other, we may not, because who

knows about tomorrow? She will be away for six months, and who knows what is going to happen in these six months? So what was wrong with my kissing the girl and her kissing me, just a goodbye? Why is it objectionable? People are pissing on the streets and nobody objects!"

Now, that sannyasin does not know that since Morarji Desai became prime minister of this country pissing has become a holy thing. You can piss anywhere -- that is something sacred. In fact it is a sacred duty. Do as much as you can, because it is not pissing: it is the water of life. You are nourishing the earth; you are doing a great public service.

I have heard:

When Morarji Desai went to America, he was very much puzzled because in the parties, in the gatherings, in meetings, ladies would always keep to the other side of the room. Finally, he had to ask; he was curious why ladies wouldn't come close to him. He was informed, "We are sorry to say, but ladies are afraid that you may feel thirsty any time, and if you do your thing in public it will be embarrassing. So they keep to the other side. In case something like that happens, they can escape; at least they can turn their backs towards you."

In India, kissing is something like a sin, a crime. And in a public place, and that too before a police station! India is a death-oriented culture. You can talk about death; dead bodies of beggars can lie down by the side of the road and nobody will pay any attention. People will go on passing. It is accepted; death is accepted. In fact, not only accepted, but magnified -- to create fear in people so that they become religious.

If death is magnified, it really scares you. And out of fear you can start going to the temple, to the mosque, to the priest, because death is coming -- sooner or later you will have to die. Some arrangements have to be made, arrangements for that long journey. Who knows what will be needed? The priests pretend that they know.

And all the so-called saints of India will be talking about death. They will bring up the subject of death again and again and again. Their whole business depends on death; if people forget about death, people start forgetting about God, people start forgetting about temples, people start forgetting about saints. So saints cannot leave you alone; they will go on bringing the subject of death in your mind so they can go on keeping you trembling. Your fear is the secret of their trade: if you are afraid, you will remain slaves to them. If you become unafraid, then you will get out of their folds; then you cannot be exploited. Death is not bad for them, it is good. It helps their business.

But sex... that is a danger for them. India is not a sex-oriented country. Kissing, hugging, love, the very phenomenon of love, makes you more earthbound, makes you less afraid of death. Lovers are the people who are the least afraid of death. When you are in love you don't care about death. If it comes, it comes. So what? If you are in love, you can die smilingly. With a kiss on your lips you can say goodbye. You loved, you lived; there is nothing to repent. Your life has not been a wastage. You bloomed! You danced in the sun, in the wind, in the rain -- what more can you expect? Immense was the gift of life: love was its gift. You are grateful! Why should you go to the priest? You may go to the poet, you may go to the painter, you may go to the musician, but you will not go to the priest.

That's why you will be surprised: in my commune you will find musicians and you will find poets and you will find dancers and you will find singers, but you will not find any priest at all. The priest seems to be the center of all religious activity, and he is missing here, absolutely missing -- because my approach is that first you have to know what love is, you

have to go deep into love. Dive as deep as possible into love!

If you can dive really deep into love you will be surprised that you have arrived at death. That's my own experience -- I am not propounding a theory, I am simply stating my own existential state, my own experience. I am only stating a fact: if you love deeply you are bound to come to the phenomenon of death. And when you come through love to death, even death is beautiful, because love makes everything beautiful. When you come through love to death, love glorifies death, love beautifies death; even death becomes a blessing. Those who have known love will know death as the ultimate in orgasm.

Now there are sex-oriented cultures, for example, America. There, death is taboo; you should not talk about death. If you start talking about death, people will avoid you. You will not be invited to parties anymore. You are not supposed to talk about death; death has not to be mentioned. Death is still one of the unmentionables. That's why even if somebody dies we have euphemisms, words to cover up the fact of death. We say, "He has passed away." We don't say, "He has died." We say, "He has become God's beloved." We don't know about God, we don't know what it means to become God's beloved, because we have never been beloved to anybody. Even if God wants to hug you, the police will catch hold of him. If he kisses you, even you will feel a little disturbed -- God? and kissing me? Is he really a God or just a fraud? How can God kiss? Kissing has never been thought a spiritual activity. Even in public places it is prohibited, and he is doing it on a universal plane -- not only public but universal, at the very center of the cosmos! But we have these ways of avoiding death; it has to be somehow avoided. The word itself is taboo.

It is because of Sigmund Freud that the taboo against the word 'sex' was removed -- the whole credit goes to this man. He is one of the greatest benefactors of humanity. Although he himself was not enlightened, he has done a great service, a pioneer work: he removed one great taboo. Now you can talk about sex without feeling ashamed, without feeling guilty.

Another Freud is needed -- a Freud who will remove the taboo against death. The West is sex-oriented, the East is death-oriented; hence in the East people are repressive of sex and in the West people are repressive of death. Both are wrong because sex and death are two sides of the same coin. If you repress one, you cannot experience the other in its totality, because to experience the one in its totality is to experience the other too, and both have to be experienced. Life is an opportunity to experience sex and death. If you experience these two and if you can come to your own authentic experience that they both are one, you have transcended. Knowing that both are one is transcendence.

Saguna, you ask me, "What can you say about these poles to help me go beyond?"

Experience both. But right now death is not there; right now you have to experience love, sex -- all the delicacies of love, intricacies of love, complexities of love, all the nuances of love. Right now, go deep into love, Saguna. And then when death comes you will be able to go deep into death too.

In fact, while making love, at the highest peak of orgasm a small death happens, because mind disappears, ego disappears, time disappears, as if the clock suddenly stops. You are transported into another world. You are not a body anymore, not a mind anymore, not an ego anymore... you are pure existence. That's the beauty of orgasm. To know orgasm is to experience a little bit of death, a small death.

First go deep into love so you can have a few tastes of death. Then death will come one day -- then go dancingly into it, because you know it is going to be the greatest orgasm that you have ever known, that it is going to be the deepest of love. And that's how one transcends -- knowing that both are one. That very knowing is transcendence.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I WANT TO BECOME A SANNYASIN, BUT GRADUALLY. IS IT OKAY WITH YOU?
OR IS A SUDDEN JUMP A NECESSITY?

Girish Chandra, you remind me of a story:

During World War I, RAF Captain Bainsby shot down the German ace Baron von Ribstein over English territory. The next day Bainsby visited the baron in the hospital.

"Old chap," said the Britisher, "is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," replied Von Ribstein. "They are amputating my right arm. Would you drop it over Germany?" Captain Bainsby did as he was requested and a week later returned for a visit.

"My friend," said the baron, "they are taking off my right leg. Would you drop it over the fatherland?"

Bainsby fulfilled the request and went back to see his air nemesis once again.

"Captain," said Von Ribstein, "they are going to remove my left leg. Once more, can I get you to drop it behind the German lines?"

"Of course, old bean," replied Bainsby. "But I say, you are not trying to escape, are you?"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #7

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HE IS THE CHARIOTEER.
HE HAS TAMED HIS HORSES,
PRIDE AND THE SENSES.
EVEN THE GODS ADMIRE HIM.

YIELDING LIKE THE EARTH,
JOYOUS AND CLEAR LIKE THE LAKE,
STILL AS THE STONE AT THE DOOR,
HE IS FREE FROM LIFE AND DEATH.

HIS THOUGHTS ARE STILL.
HIS WORDS ARE STILL.
HIS WORK IS STILLNESS.
HE SEES HIS FREEDOM AND IS FREED.

THE MASTER SURRENDERS HIS BELIEFS.
HE SEES BEYOND THE END AND THE BEGINNING.

HE CUTS ALL TIES.
HE GIVES UP ALL HIS DESIRES.
HE RESISTS ALL TEMPTATION.
AND HE RISES.

AND WHEREVER HE LIVES,
IN THE CITY OR THE COUNTRY,
IN THE VALLEY OR IN THE HILLS,
THERE IS GREAT JOY.

EVEN IN THE EMPTY FOREST
HE FINDS JOY
BECAUSE HE WANTS NOTHING.

Man is a seed of great potential: man is the seed of buddhahood. Each man is born to be a buddha. Man is not born to be a slave but to be a master. But there are very few who actualize their potential. And the reason why millions can't realize their potential is that they take it for granted that they already have it.

Life is only an opportunity to grow, to be, to bloom. Life in itself is empty; unless you are creative you will not be able to fill it with fulfillment. You have a song in your heart to be sung and you have a dance to be danced, but the dance is invisible, and the song -- even you have not heard it yet. It is deep down hidden in the innermost core of your being; it has to be brought to the surface, it has to be expressed.

That's what is meant by 'self-actualization'. Rare is the person who transforms his life into a growth, who transforms his life into a long journey of self-actualization, who becomes what he was meant to be. In the East we have called that man the buddha, in the West we have called that man the christ. The word 'christ' exactly means what the word 'buddha' means: one who has come home.

We are all wanderers in search of the home, but the search is very unconscious -- groping in the dark, not exactly aware what we are groping for, who we are, where we are going. We go on like driftwood, we go on remaining accidental.

And it becomes possible because millions of people around you are in the same boat, and when you see that millions are doing the same things that you are doing, then you must be right -- because millions can't be wrong. That is your logic, and that logic is fundamentally erroneous: millions can't be right.

It is very rare that a person is right; it is very rare that a person realizes the truth. Millions live lives of lies, lives of pretension. Their existences are only superficial; they live on the circumference, utterly unaware of the center. And the center contains all: the center is the kingdom of God.

The first step towards buddhahood, towards the realization of your infinite potential, is to recognize that up to now you have been wasting your life, that up to now you have remained utterly unconscious.

Start becoming conscious; that is the only way to arrive. It is arduous, it is hard. To remain accidental is easy; it needs no intelligence, hence it is easy. Any idiot can do it -- all the idiots are already doing it. It is easy to be accidental because you never feel responsible for anything that happens. You can always throw the responsibility onto something else: fate, God, society, economic structure, the state, the church, the mother, the father, the parents.... You can go on throwing the responsibility onto somebody else; hence it is easy.

To be conscious means to take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders. To be responsible is the beginning of buddhahood.

When I use the word 'responsible' I am not using it in the ordinary connotation of being dutiful. I am using it in its real, essential meaning: the capacity to respond -- that's my meaning. And the capacity to respond is possible only if you are conscious. If you are fast asleep, how can you respond? If you are asleep, the birds will go on singing but you will not hear, and the flowers will go on blooming and you will never be able to sense the beauty, the fragrance, the joy, that they are showering on existence.

To be responsible means to be alert, conscious. To be responsible means to be mindful. Act with as much awareness as you can find possible. Even small things -- walking on the street, eating your food, taking your bath -- should not be done mechanically. Do them with full awareness.

Slowly slowly, small acts become luminous, and by and by those luminous acts go on gathering inside you, and finally the explosion. The seed has exploded, the potential has become actual. You are no longer a seed but a lotus flower, a golden lotus flower, a one-thousand-petaled lotus flower. And that is the moment of great benediction; Buddha calls it nirvana. One has arrived. Now there is no more to achieve, nowhere to go. You can rest, you can relax -- the journey is over. Tremendous joy arises in that moment, great ecstasy is born.

But one has to begin from the beginning.

After a three-day drinking bout, Tooley and Bragan registered at a hotel and asked for twin beds. However, in the darkness they both got into the same bed.

"Hey!" yelled Tooley. "I think a homo has crept in bed with me."

"There's a queer in my bed, too," called Bragan.

"Let's throw the fairies out," called back the first.

A terrific wrestling match ensued and finally Tooley went sailing out of the bed. "How did you make out?" he called from the floor.

"I threw my guy out," said the other Irishman. "How about you?"

"He threw me out."

"Well, that makes us even. Get into bed with me."

This is how man is: in darkness, utterly unconscious; doing things, not knowing why; simply doing because there is an unconscious urge to do. Now, this is not only a mystic hypothesis about man. Sigmund Freud, Gustav Jung, Alfred Adler and others, the modern researchers into the psyche of man, have also come across the same fact.

Freud says man lives unconsciously, although the mind is so cunning that it can find reasons, motives. At least it can create a facade as if you are living a conscious life -- and that

is very dangerous because you can start believing in your own facade. Then your life is gone, then you will not be able to use this tremendously valuable opportunity.

People go on doing unconscious things -- although they suffer, although they are immensely miserable, still they go on doing the same things which bring misery to them. They don't know what else to do. They are not there, they are not present; hence they can't do anything. They are trapped in the unconscious instincts.

Hennessy, loaded to the gills, was lurking on a dark and deserted street corner. Soon a man came walking by, and Hennessy sprang out of the shadows, a gun in his hand. "Stay where you are!" he slobbered. Then he pulled a bottle out of his pocket. "Here," Hennessy ordered, "take a drink of this."

Too terrified to resist, the poor schnook took the bottle and drank deeply. "Wow!" he exclaimed. "That stuff tastes awful!" "I know," gurgled the crooked Irishman. "Now you hold the gun and force me to drink some."

The stuff that you are drinking, that stuff that you call your life, is really awful! But you go on forcing yourself, doing the same repetitive acts again and again -- not knowing what else to do, not knowing where else to go, not knowing that there are other alternatives possible, that there are alternative life-styles possible. And the greatest alternative is the religious dimension.

The religious dimension simply means the dimension of being conscious, of being alert, of living a life with self-remembrance. Let me add that by self-remembrance I don't mean self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is a false phenomenon; it is another name of ego. Self-remembering is a totally different phenomenon; it is the cessation of the ego. In self-consciousness there is no consciousness, there is only self; in self-remembering there is no self, only remembering.

Buddha's whole methodology is that of self-remembering: SAMMASATI. It has been translated as right-mindfulness or right awareness. What is RIGHT awareness? Can awareness also be wrong? Yes, there is a possibility: if awareness becomes too much focused on the object it is wrong awareness. Awareness has to be aware of itself, then it is right awareness.

When you look at a tree, at a mountain, at a star, you can be conscious -- conscious of the tree, conscious of the mountain, conscious of the star -- but you are not conscious of the one who is conscious of all these things. This is wrong awareness, focused on the object. You have to unfocus it from the object, you have to help it turn inwards. You have to bring it to your own interiority, you have to fill your subjectivity with its light.

When one is full of light, not showing other things in the light but only showing the light itself, then it is right awareness and that is the door to nirvana, to God -- to self-actualization.

By birth you are only given an opportunity. There is no inner necessity that you will really become, that your potential will be realized, that you will really attain to beinghood. Only the opportunity is given, then it is up to you. You will have to find the way, you will have to find the master, you will have to find the right situation. It is a great challenge.

Life is a great challenge to know oneself. If this challenge is accepted, you really become man for the first time; otherwise you go on existing on a subhuman level.

And it is not only the worldly people who are living an unconscious life. The so-called religious are not in any way different.

Father Duffy was sent to a small Eskimo village in the coldest part of Alaska. Several months later, the bishop paid him a visit. "How do you like it up here among the Eskimos?"

"Just fine," replied the priest.

"And what about the weather?" asked the bishop.

"Ah, as long as I have my rosary and my vodka I don't care how cold it is."

"I am glad to hear it. Say, I could go for a bit of vodka myself right now."

"Absolutely," said Father Duffy. "Rosary! Would you bring us two vodkas?"

The worldly, the otherworldly, are not really different. There is only one difference that makes a difference and that is of awareness, alertness. And the awareness can be practiced anywhere: you need not go to the mountains, you need not go to the monasteries, you need not renounce the world.

In fact, IN the world it is easier to practice awareness than anywhere else. This is my own experience, and not only my personal experience but my observation of thousands of sannyasins, too. The easiest way to become aware is to be in the world and practice it, because the world gives you so many opportunities. A monastery cannot give you so many opportunities. Living in a mountain cave, what opportunities do you have to be alert? You will be more and more asleep there, more and more dull. Intelligence will not be required, hence you will lose all sharpness of intelligence. And awareness will not be required; there will be no challenge for it. It is only in challenges that life grows; the greater the challenge, the greater the opportunity. And the world is really full of challenges. Hence to my sannyasins I say: never renounce.

Rejoice in the world! In the past we have renounced too much and the result has been nil. How many buddhas have we produced in the past? They can be counted on the fingers. Only rarely, very rarely, a man became a Buddha, Christ or Krishna. Out of millions and millions of seeds only one seed sprouted? That is not much. It has been a sheer wastage of great human potential, and the reason has been the escapist attitude of the religions.

I affirm life, I rejoice in life. And I would like you all to be deeply, intensely, passionately in life, with one condition only: alertness, watchfulness, witnessing. And I know the difficulty arises, because you will be living with millions of sleepy people -- and sleep is contagious; just as awareness is. Awareness, too, is contagious; hence the significance of being with a master.

The master cannot give you the truth. Nobody can give the truth to anybody else; it is untransferable. The master cannot take you to the ultimate goal, because there you will have to arrive alone, nobody can accompany you. You cannot reach there by imitating the master, because the more you imitate somebody, the falser you become. How can you arrive to truth by becoming false?

Then what is the function of a master? Then what is the use of searching for a master? Then why be a disciple at all? Still there is a reason, and the reason is that awareness is as contagious as sleepiness. If you sit with a few people who are all feeling sleepy you will start feeling sleepy.

A famous Sufi story says:

There was a fruit seller. He had a very cunning fox who used to watch his shop. Whenever he had to go out he would tell the fox, "Be alert. Sit in my place and just watch. Watch every activity that goes on around here. Don't allow anybody to steal anything. If

somebody tries to steal, make noises -- I will run out of the house immediately."

One day Mulla Nasruddin was passing. He heard the shopkeeper talking to the fox, saying all these things, "Be alert, watch every activity that is going on around, and if you see that something is against us or somebody is trying to steal the fruits, make a noise immediately and I will come out."

Mulla Nasruddin was very much tempted. The shopkeeper went in. Nasruddin sat in front of the shop and just started pretending he was falling asleep; with closed eyes he started dozing.

For a moment the poor fox thought, "What to do? Should I make a noise? But sleep is not an activity -- in fact it is just the opposite -- and the master has said that if some activity goes on around.... This is not activity: this man is falling asleep, and what can a man who is asleep do, what harm?" But the fox was not aware that Mulla was trying a Sufi strategy! By pretending to be falling asleep, by dozing with closed eyes, slowly slowly he managed to make the fox fall asleep. Then he stole the fruits.

When the master came back, the fruits were gone... and the fox was snoring! He shook the fox and asked, "What is the matter? Didn't I tell you if any activity happens you have to make a noise so that I can come? But I never heard any noise."

The fox said, "But there was no activity happening. Just one man came; he sat in front of the shop and started dozing. Now, sleep is not an activity, is it? Sleep is inactivity." Simple logic! A poor fox and simple logic.

"Then what happened to you?" the owner asked.

The fox said, "That I don't know, what happened to me. But the more I watched the man dozing, somehow I started dozing myself and it was impossible to remain awake. I don't know when I fell asleep."

If a few people are dozing and you are sitting with them, you can see the point: the vibe of sleep reaches to you. And similar is the case... although a little difficult because sleep is downhill and awakening is uphill. It is a little harder task. But to be with a man who is awake, who is a buddha, is bound to make you alert -- just being with the master.

We are affected continuously by people around us. We may be absolutely oblivious of the fact that whatsoever we think has been given by others to us; whatsoever we feel, even that, too, has been given to us by others. The child learns by imitation. Even our emotions may be just borrowed, not only our thoughts; our sentiments may be just borrowed.

People even can die just because of a borrowed idea. What is a motherland? -- an idea which we go on stuffing in the heads of small children. And we go on telling them that to die for the motherland is to be a great man, is to be a martyr; to die for the motherland is the greatest virtue.

In the past they used to say the same thing about religions, churches: "To die for the church, to die for your religion, is the sure way to enter into paradise. Instantly you are uplifted into paradise if you die for your religion." Kill others for your religion and it is not sin; die for your own religion and it is not suicide. Killing is not murder, committing suicide is not suicide! Once these ideas have been implanted in your being, imprinted in your being, they start functioning from there.

Three boys, a Catholic, a Jew, and a black kid, were sitting on a curb. A priest and a rabbi saw the boys.

The Catholic priest recognized one of the kids as a member of his parish, so he said,

"Sonny, what are the two biggest things in your life?"

He said, "Father, the two biggest things in my life are the Catholic church and my priest."

The rabbi looked down and recognized the Jewish kid from his congregation. He said, "Son, what are the two biggest things in your life?"

"Rabbi, the two biggest things in my life are my congregation and my rabbi."

Both members of the clergy left smugly satisfied. Then the little colored kid looked at his two buddies and said, "Say, ain't neither one of you little mama's boys never had no girls nor watermelon yet?"

We learn from others. It may be your idea of God, it may be the priest, the rabbi -- or the watermelon! It is all the same: we learn from others.

In the close intimacy with a master, two things happen: one is his contagious awareness, his contagious love, his contagious compassion; and second, a great unlearning. Whatsoever you have learned from sleepy people, whether it is about the watermelon or about the rabbi -- there is not much difference between watermelons and rabbis! What you have learned from the established church and the state and the educational system, which are all serving vested interests, which are all serving the past, the dead past, which are not in your service.... Remember, they are to exploit you, they are to reduce you to machines -- efficient, but machines are machines, whether efficient or not efficient. Their function is to make you slaves of the society -- and the society is ill, the society is insane, the society is pathological.

Two things happen in the affinity of the master: the first, his contagious awareness; and the second: a process of unlearning. He starts destroying all that you have learned. He cannot give you the truth, I repeat, but he can take away the lies. And that is one of the most essential things; without it, the truth can never happen to you. Truth is going to happen to you in your aloneness, but before it can happen all the blocks have to be removed: the blocks of lies that have been placed in the way of truth.

The master can take away your lies. His function is negative in that way, and positive in being contagious. His vibe can touch and wake you up. He can be a sunray entering through the window in your bedroom, falling on your face, and telling you that, "It is morning, now get up!" making it very difficult for you to sleep. Yes, the master can make it difficult for you to sleep and difficult for you to imitate and difficult for you to learn from those who are really your enemies and not your friends.

If these two things are possible, your life starts moving, you are no longer stuck. Your seed has fallen into the right soil: now in the right time the sprout will come. Soon there will be spring and you will see your own flowers. And the flowers of consciousness are the greatest flowers there are.

The sutras:

HE IS THE CHARIOTEER.
HE HAS TAMED HIS HORSES,
PRIDE AND THE SENSES.
EVEN THE GODS ADMIRE HIM.

The moment your potential becomes actual, the moment you are a realized soul, even gods admire you. Even gods are far behind, because even gods have not yet become buddhas. They are also living unconscious lives -- maybe living in heaven. What you call angels in Christianity are called gods in Buddhism. The angels living in heaven, even they are not

buddhas; they are as asleep as you are. The only difference is in their situation: they are in paradise and you are on earth. But the difference is not in their psychology; as far as their inner being is concerned it is as dark as yours.

Hindus have never been able to forgive Buddha, because he said that even gods admire a buddha, even gods worship a buddha.

The story is told that when Buddha became a buddha, when Gautama Siddhartha became enlightened, became a buddha, gods came from paradise to worship him. They touched his feet and they showered celestial flowers and they played celestial music. Hindus have never been able to forgive Buddhists for this story -- gods worshipping a man? But see the point: the gods are not worshipping a man, the gods are worshipping awareness, the gods are worshipping buddhahood. Gods are not worshipping Gautama Siddhartha the man, but the flame that has happened into his heart. That flame is eternal light, that flame is divine. And even gods are yet far far away from it; they have to attain it.

The idea of a buddha is higher than the idea of gods. Buddhism is the only religion of the world which has given man such dignity; no other religion has dignified man so highly. Buddhism is the religion of man.

A Buddhist poet, Chandidas, has said: SABAR UPAR MANUS SATYA, TAHAR UPAR NAHIN -- the truth of man is the highest truth, there is no higher truth than that.

But the truth of man does not mean the body of man, the bones and the blood and the marrow, no. The truth of man means the flame which is not yet lit in you. Once it is lit you are transported into a totally different world. You have become part of the whole, you are no longer separate. The way to reach to this actualization is: HE IS THE CHARIOTEER. He becomes a conscious master. His body is a chariot, he drives it where he wants to, not vice versa. The unconscious man is driven by his body.

Just watch yourself: your body goes on driving you. Just a moment before you were not hungry, and you pass by the side of a restaurant, and the smell of food... and suddenly you start feeling hungry. The body is deceiving you, because just a moment before you were not hungry at all, there was no hunger. This hunger is the body driving you towards food. You were not even thinking of food just a moment before, and the smells coming from the bakery -- and suddenly a great desire, a great hunger, has arisen in you. It is the body driving you; you are not the charioteer. The chariot has become the master. This is the ordinary situation.

HE HAS TAMED HIS HORSES.... Senses are called the horses. In the ancient days in India there were chariots with five horses. Great kings used to move in chariots with five horses. Those who were the greatest, those who were called CHAKRAVARTINS -- the world rulers -- they used to move in chariots with seven horses. Five horses represent the five senses... and your five senses are continuously influencing you. A man who wants to be really conscious has to start by becoming alert of these things.

If you take your dinner at a particular time every day, and you see the clock and it is time.... The clock may have stopped, the clock may not be right, the clock may be one hour ahead, but if it is time, immediately there is hunger. Now, this hunger is false, created by the senses, created by the body -- and you are going to be driven by these senses your whole life?

All over the world, seekers of truth have become aware of this phenomenon and they have reacted in two ways; one is right, the other is wrong. The wrong way is to start fighting with your senses and your body. By fighting you will never win. By fighting you will become weaker, you will be dissipating energy. By fighting you will become repressive -- and that which is repressed will take revenge sooner or later. Whenever it will find any opportunity to take possession of you, it is bound to take possession of you -- and with a vengeance!

You can fast for three days, you can force your body to fast, but if it is repression, the fourth day the body will take revenge -- you will eat too much, for a few days you will eat too much. In fact, if you had lost any weight in those three days, you will gain more weight within a week. The body has taken the revenge, the body has taught you a lesson.

Fighting is not the way -- not the way of the buddhas. Fighting is stupid; it is your own body, you need not fight with it, you have just to be more watchful of it. If some watchfulness starts crystallizing in you, you will be surprised that the body starts following you. It no longer commands you, it no longer orders you: it becomes obedient to you.

When the master has arrived, the servants immediately fall in line. But the master is asleep, that's why the servants are pretending to be the masters.

HE IS THE CHARIOTEER. HE HAS TAMED HIS HORSES.... They have not to be killed or destroyed but tamed. They are beautiful animals! If tamed they can be of tremendous value, they can be of great service to you.

A buddha is not one who destroys his senses, but is one who makes his senses more clear, more clean, more sensitive -- but he remains the master. A buddha sees far more than you see, his eyes are far more receptive, because there is no smoke in his eyes, no clouds in his consciousness.

He sees the same green trees, but the trees are far greener for him than they are for you. He smells the same perfume but it is far more for him than it is for you. He sees the same beauty, but it gives him great ecstasy. It may not give you any ecstasy at all; you may bypass it. You may not even see the nazunia flower by the side of the road. What to say of the nazunia -- you may not even see a roseflower. You are so much occupied, your senses are so full of information; they are not empty and available. Your senses are not very sensitive.

The buddha does not kill them, but many saints have been doing that stupidity. There have been Christian saints in Russia -- a long tradition -- who used to cut off their genital organs; the nuns used to cut off their breasts. Ridiculous, stupid! What more stupidity can you expect than this? How can you be a master by cutting off your genital organs? -- because sexuality is not there, sexuality is in the head. And, of course, you cannot cut off your head. And even if you cut it off, it is not going to make any difference; you will be born again with a far filthier head!

Now we know -- scientific research has proved it beyond doubt -- that sexuality has nothing to do with the genital organs; it is not there. The genital organs are triggered by the head; in the brain there are centers. Pavlov and B.F. Skinner's work has been of tremendous value in this field. I don't agree with their behavioristic approach, but what they have researched can be used by the mystics, can be used by the seekers of truth, by the explorers of their inner being, in a very valuable way.

Skinner has found that in the brain there are centers -- centers for food, centers for sex, centers for everything. You touch with an electrode the sex center in the brain, and immediately you have an orgasm. A great joy arises in you as if you have made love to a woman. Skinner was experimenting with rats; he fixed an electrode in the sex center in the brain of the rat and he taught the rat how to push a button if he wants an orgasm. He was surprised what the rat did; he had never thought that rats are so sexual. The rat completely forgot about food, about everything. Even if there was danger, even if a cat was brought, the rat was unafraid. Who cares? He was continuously pushing the button, continuously... six thousand times! Until the rat fell utterly exhausted, almost dead, he went on pushing, because each push and there was an orgasm.

Now sooner or later this is going to happen to you too! It will be far easier, far more

comfortable -- because to have a woman or to have a man is such a conflict. You can just have a small, matchbox-sized computer in your pocket -- nobody will ever know what you are doing! You can go on moving your rosary and with the other hand you can push the button, and people will think that the ecstasy is happening because of the rosary. And your face will glow.... But if it becomes possible you will be in the same situation as the rat: you will die by pushing your button too much, you will forget everything else.

Genital organs have nothing to do with sex; everything is contained in the brain. Your hunger has nothing to do with your stomach; that too is contained in the brain. That's why at the right time, looking at the clock, suddenly the hunger. And the smell of the bakery does not go into the stomach, remember, it goes into the brain. It triggers a certain center in your brain, it pushes a button in the brain, and suddenly you are hungry. Now, destroying your body is not going to help, starving your body is not going to help. Even committing suicide is not going to help. Only one thing can help, and that is awareness.

If you become aware... awareness is not a part of the brain. Awareness is behind the brain, awareness is capable of seeing the brain.

You will be surprised to know that whatsoever modern psychological methods have been able to discover was discovered thousands of years before by the mystics in the East. Buddha was perfectly aware of the brain centers, Patanjali was perfectly aware of the brain centers. And the only way is to find something which is beyond the brain and move to that beyond and remain there. There is your mastery; from there you are the charioteer, from there all the horses are in your hands. And then they are beautiful! Senses are not ugly -- nothing is ugly. Even sex has its own beauty, its own sacredness, its own holiness. But if you are rooted and centered in your beyond, in your consciousness, then everything has a different meaning, a different context. Then eating has its own spirituality.

The Upanishads say: ANNAM BRAHMA -- food is God. The man who had said this must have tasted God in food. And the tantrikas in the East have been saying it for centuries, that sex has the greatest potential to realize samadhi. It is the closest point -- the sexual orgasm is the closest to the spiritual orgasm, hence you can learn much from it. In sexual orgasm time disappears, ego disappears, mind disappears. In sexual orgasm, for a moment the whole world stops.

The same happens in the spiritual orgasm on a far bigger scale. The sexual is momentary and the spiritual is eternal, but the sexual gives you a glimpse of the spiritual.

Senses have to be tamed, not to be destroyed, remember. ... PRIDE AND THE SENSES. EVEN THE GODS ADMIRE HIM. Tame the senses, tame the pride. If the pride masters you, it is ego; if you are the master, then it is only self-respect. And every person of integrity has self-respect. Self-respect is not egoistic, not at all. Self-respect simply means, "I love myself, I respect myself, and I will not allow anybody to humiliate me. I will not humiliate anybody and I will not allow anybody to humiliate me. I will not create slavery for anybody and I will not be a slave to anybody either."

That is pride tamed. Then it has become a servant and it is beautiful.

YIELDING LIKE THE EARTH,
JOYOUS AND CLEAR LIKE THE LAKE,
STILL AS THE STONE AT THE DOOR,
HE IS FREE FROM LIFE AND DEATH.

The man who has become awakened becomes YIELDING LIKE THE EARTH. He loses all rigidity. He is not like a rock; he is like soft earth. And only the soft earth can be fertile,

can be creative. The rock remains impotent; it creates nothing, nothing grows on it, nothing can grow in it. The rock remains utterly empty. But the yielding earth -- soft, humble, surrendering, receptive, womblike -- can give birth to new experiences, can give birth to new visions, new songs, new poetries. The awakened person is not rigid. In the words of Lao Tzu, he is not like the rock but like water. His way is the way of water -- the watercourse way.

JOYOUS AND CLEAR LIKE THE LAKE.... The man who is awakened, who is alert, becomes clear; all his confusions are gone. Not that he has been able to find solutions, no, but because all his questions have disappeared. Not that he has found the answers -- there is no answer to be found. Life is a mystery and remains a mystery; life cannot be demystified. And because he knows the mystery of life and now there are no longer any questions and no longer any conflicting answers, he is very clear, he is clarity itself, and he is joyous.

Why is he joyous? -- because now he knows that the whole kingdom of God is his. Now he knows that he is not an outsider here, that he belongs to existence and the existence belongs to him. He has become part of this infinite celebration that goes on and on. He is a song in this celebration, a dance in this celebration.

STILL AS THE STONE AT THE DOOR.... Yielding like the earth and still like the rock, silent, unmoving.... HE IS FREE FROM LIFE AND DEATH. And he is not only free from death, remember: the moment you are free from death you are free from this life also -- this so-called life. Then there is another life.... Buddha does not name it, he will not give it any definition; he simply leaves it there. He leaves the sentence incomplete, because he knows anything said will destroy the beauty of it. Anything said will give it a limitation, and it is unlimited. Anything said is bound to be inadequate.

So he says only one thing: he is free from this life and this death. The life that you have known and the death that happens every day -- this life and this death both disappear for the awakened one. Time disappears, and life and death are two sides of time. Then he is eternity. He becomes one with the whole; you cannot find him as a separate entity anywhere.

Where is Gautama the Buddha now? Now he is in the air you breathe and in the water you drink and in the birds that go on singing and in the trees and in the clouds. Where is Buddha now? He has become the universe! The dewdrop has become the ocean, but the dewdrop has disappeared as a dewdrop. Now there is no life and death for the dewdrop; it exists no more -- how can there be a life for it? It exists no more, so how can it die? It has gone beyond the duality of life and death.

HIS THOUGHTS ARE STILL.
HIS WORDS ARE STILL.

This is a tremendously important statement. HIS THOUGHTS ARE STILL. That is simple and can be understood, because a man who is alert need not think.

Thinking is needed because we cannot see. If a blind man wants to go out of this hall he will have to think; he will have to ask somebody; he will have to plan where to move, where are the steps, where is the door, and he will grope with his stick. But if a man has eyes he need not ask, he need not think. He simply gets up, he simply starts moving towards the door. He gets out of the door, not thinking about it at all. But the blind man cannot afford not to think. And this is how the sleepy man has to think -- the sleepy man is blind.

The man with awareness has inner eyes, has insight. He can see, and because he can see he need not think. Seeing is enough. Thinking is a poor substitute for seeing. HIS THOUGHTS ARE STILL.... But even more important is the statement: HIS WORDS ARE

STILL. It is a contradiction in terms: "His words" means he speaks. Buddha spoke; otherwise we would not have these tremendously significant sutras. For forty-two years he was speaking continuously -- day in, day out, year in, year out; morning, afternoon, evening he was speaking. But he says: HIS WORDS ARE STILL.

If you are really attuned, if you are really silent in the presence of the master, you will see: HIS WORDS ARE STILL. His words carry a silence around them, his words are not noisy. His words have a melody, a rhythm, a music, and at the very core of his words is utter silence. If you can penetrate his words you will come across infinite silence.

But to penetrate the words of a buddha, the way is not analysis, the way is not argument, the way is not discussing. The way is falling in rapport with him, becoming attuned with him, being in a synchronicity with him. It happens: a moment comes between the disciple and the master when the very heart of the master and the heart of the disciple beat in the same rhythm, when the breathing of the master and the breathing of the disciple are in the same rhythm. When the master breathes out, the disciple breathes out; when the master breathes in, the disciple breathes in. Everything becomes so attuned.

In that attunement, in that at-onement, one enters into the very core of the master's words. And there you will not find any sound, any noise; there you will find absolute silence. And to taste it is to understand the master. The meaning of the word is not important, remember, but the silence of the word. The meaning can be understood by anybody who understands language, that is not difficult; but the silence can be understood only by the disciple, not by the student.

The student listens to the word, understands its meaning, and that's that. He will understand the philosophy of Buddha, but he will not understand the Buddha himself. He will understand his theories, but he will miss his being.

The disciple may not be able to say what his master's teaching is, he may not be able to reproduce his philosophy, he may be at a loss. If you ask him, "What is the teaching of your master?" he may become dumb. But he understands the master -- not what he says but what he is.

There is a very beautiful story:

When Buddha died, all the enlightened disciples gathered together to write down the message of the Buddha, because now the master is gone and for the coming generations the treasure has to be collected.

There were great enlightened disciples, but nobody could exactly reproduce it. A few of them were absolutely silent; when they were asked they shrugged their shoulders. A few said, "It is impossible, it can't be done." A few others said, "We would not like to commit any mistakes, and mistakes are bound to happen, because what we have seen in the man is impossible to express in language." In fact, not a single enlightened disciple was ready to compile the philosophy of the Buddha.

Then Ananda was approached. He was the only one who had lived with Buddha for forty-two years and was not yet enlightened. He had remembered all, everything; he had the whole collection, word for word. His memory must have been just extraordinary. But there was a problem. The problem was: can you believe in the words of an unenlightened person about an enlightened person?

Those who are enlightened are not ready to say anything; the one who is ready to reproduce the whole philosophy, word for word, from the beginning to the end, from the first statement that Buddha made to the last... but he is not enlightened. Can you rely on his

memory? Can you rely on his interpretation? Now, this is really an insoluble problem: those who know, those who can be relied upon, are not ready to say anything, and the one who is ready to say cannot be relied upon -- he is not enlightened himself.

Then the whole gathering told Ananda, "Do one thing -- don't waste a single moment. Bring your total energies and become as alert as possible. If you can become enlightened before your death, then something is possible. We will not collect your statements unless you are enlightened. You remember -- you are the only one who remembers absolutely -- but we cannot trust it."

How can you trust a blind man's report about someone who had eyes and was talking about colors, light, rainbows, flowers? How can you believe in the report of a blind man? It is absurd, it cannot be believed!

So the congregation prayed to Ananda, "You are the only hope. If you can become enlightened we will be able to accept whatsoever you say, but we will not be able to accept it unless you become enlightened."

Ananda had lived for forty-two years with Buddha, but because Buddha was so close to him he had started taking him for granted. It happens. It happens here too. Many of you who are close to me can start taking me for granted. Ananda was very close, the closest one; he was not much concerned about his enlightenment. Whenever he was told he said, "I am not worried about it. Buddha is going to take care of me. I have been serving him for forty-two years -- is he not compassionate enough to help drag me out of the darkness? He will do it. And what is the hurry? Why be in such a haste? It can happen tomorrow, it can happen the day after tomorrow. Buddha is there."

And for forty-two years he had been postponing and believing deep down in his heart that, "Buddha will do it. Although he says nobody can make anybody else enlightened, I know he can do it. I know miracles have been happening around him. And at least, if not for anybody else, for me he is going to make an exception. I have served him so much. And then he is always there; if today I miss, tomorrow; if tomorrow I miss, the day after tomorrow. Where is he going? He is always there."

The day Buddha died, he said to Ananda, "Ananda, now I will not be here tomorrow. So make haste, hurry! Now no more postponing."

And it happened that after Buddha's death, when the congregation prayed to Ananda, for twenty-four hours he sat with closed eyes. This was for the first time in his whole life. In fact, there was so much happening around Buddha that it was impossible to close the eyes. The whole day so many things were happening and Ananda was too occupied. Now Buddha was gone and nothing was happening anymore, there was nothing to see. He closed his eyes and for twenty-four hours, for the first time, he sat in silence.

He became enlightened within twenty-four hours. This had not happened in forty-two years; it happened in twenty-four hours. When he became enlightened, when all the enlightened disciples recognized his aura, his light, his luminousness, then they said, "Now Ananda can be allowed to come in the assembly. He can relate and we will compile."

That's how all the Buddhist sutras have been compiled.

But only an enlightened person can be trusted. Why? -- because he can see. And he can see into the words and find the silence -- which is the real message. If you listen to the meaning, you are a student; if you listen to the silence, you are a disciple. And if you completely forget who is talking and who is listening, you become one with the master -- you are a devotee.

These are the three stages: the student, the disciple and the devotee. The student understands the meaning of the words, the disciple understands the silence of the words, and the devotee becomes the silence itself. HIS THOUGHTS ARE STILL. HIS WORDS ARE STILL.

HIS WORK IS STILLNESS.

His whole work is stillness, he creates stillness. He creates devices to create stillness.

HE SEES HIS FREEDOM AND IS FREED.

THE MASTER SURRENDERS HIS BELIEFS.

Once you become enlightened all that you have believed before becomes ridiculous, irrelevant, absurd, nonsense. It is like the belief of the blind man in light. Whatsoever he had believed before, whatsoever he had thought in his blindness that light is... once his eyes open he will have to drop all his beliefs about light. Not a single word out of those beliefs is going to be true. It is impossible for the blind man to conceive what light is. What to say about light? -- the blind man cannot even conceive anything about darkness either, because to see darkness you need eyes as much as to see light. The blind man knows nothing of darkness and nothing of light.

Once you become awakened all your beliefs in gods, heaven, hell, karma, reincarnation, this and that, they all become simply rubbish. THE MASTER SURRENDERS HIS BELIEFS....

HE SEES BEYOND THE END AND THE BEGINNING.

Now there is no need to believe -- he can see beyond the beginning and beyond the end. He can see the whole through and through. Seeing is the goal.

In India we don't have an equivalent word for philosophy. We have a totally different word for it, that is DARSHAN. Ordinarily it is translated as 'philosophy'; it is not. Philosophy means something of the mind; darshan simply means insight, vision, seeing. In the East we have called the greatest ones, the seers. We have not called them prophets, we have not called them philosophers, we have called them seers -- they have seen. The East has always believed in seeing, not in thinking.

To translate 'darshan' into English is very difficult. To call it philosophy is to be unfair; it destroys the whole beauty of the word 'darshan'. So I translate it with 'philosia'. Philosophy means love for knowledge: 'sophia' means knowledge, 'philo' means love. Philosia means love for seeing -- 'sia' means seeing. Once you have seen, all beliefs wither away like dry leaves falling from the trees.

HE CUTS ALL TIES.
HE GIVES UP ALL HIS DESIRES.
HE RESISTS ALL TEMPTATION.
AND HE RISES.

Now a totally new law starts functioning: the law of levitation. Ordinarily things fall

downwards, but the man of awakening rises upwards. Everything in him starts rising upwards, soaring upwards. He has to cut all ties, because those ties are with the earth. He has to give up all desires, because those desires are the ties that keep him tethered to the earth.

HE RESISTS ALL TEMPTATION. Many times the old mind will try to assert itself. Many many times the mind will make efforts to bring you back to the earth.

Kahlil Gibran says: When a river comes closer to the sea, it waits for a moment, looks backwards -- all those joys, the mountains, the virgin snows where it originated, the forests, the solitude of the forests, the birds, their songs, the people, the plains, thousands of experiences, the long journey.... And now the moment has come to disappear into the ocean. The whole past pulls backwards. The whole past says, "Wait! You will be lost forever. You will never be the same. Without your banks, how can you be? You will lose your definition."

Exactly the same happens when you come closer to buddhahood: when all is being lost, all ties, all desires, great temptations arise. There is no Devil to tempt you; it is your own mind, your own past experiences. Your whole loaded past tries to pull you backwards, but now nothing can pull you backwards. The call has been heard, the invitation has arrived. HE CUTS ALL TIES. HE GIVES UP ALL HIS DESIRES. HE RESISTS ALL TEMPTATION. AND HE RISES.

AND WHEREVER HE LIVES,
IN THE CITY OR THE COUNTRY,
IN THE VALLEY OR IN THE HILLS,
THERE IS GREAT JOY.

And not only that he is joyous: wherever he is he brings a climate of joy. Joy surrounds him.

It is said that wherever Buddha would move, trees would bloom out of season, rivers would start flowing in the summer season when there was no water. Wherever Buddha would move there would be peace, silence, love, compassion, all around. This is really so; not that trees will bloom out of season -- these are metaphors -- but whenever there is a buddha something mysterious starts happening. People start blooming out of season, joy spreads, great waves of joy.

When you enter into the buddhfield you enter into a totally different world: the world of blessings, the world of benedictions.

EVEN IN THE EMPTY FOREST
HE FINDS JOY
BECAUSE HE WANTS NOTHING.

And he is everywhere joyous, because the only thing that destroys your natural capacity of rejoicing is your desiring mind. The desiring mind makes you a beggar. Once all desires have been dropped you are the emperor. Joy is a natural state of your being.

Just let there be no desire and see. When there is no desire there is no mind. When there is no desire there is no turmoil. When there is no desire there is no past, no future. When there is no desire you are utterly contented herenow. And to be contented herenow is joy.

And whenever such a man moves, wherever he moves, he brings his climate with him. A buddha is in the spring season all the year round. And fortunate are those who come in some way close to him, blessed are those who become associated with him, because they also share his joy, his benediction, his wisdom, his love, his light.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #8

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
YOU GRACIOUSLY SENT ME A TAPED ANSWER TO A QUESTION LAST AUTUMN. THE GIST OF YOUR ANSWER WAS THAT I WAS TRYING TOO HARD AT SPIRITUAL PURSUITS. I STOPPED ALMOST EVERYTHING FOR NINE MONTHS AND GOT GOOD RESULTS FROM FOLLOWING YOUR ADVICE.
NOW I AM ATTENDING A SANNYASIN GROUP AGAIN, BUT I FEEL THAT BECOMING A SANNYASIN WOULD BE DOING WHAT YOU TOLD ME NOT TO DO -- TRYING TOO HARD. I HAVE ALREADY BEEN INITIATED INTO MANY GROUPS AND FEEL THAT THIS MAY BE SYMPTOMATIC OF TRYING TOO HARD. SHOULD I JUST RELAX AND ENJOY YOU THE WAY WE ARE NOW?

Mariei Strauss, that's exactly what sannyas is: relaxing and enjoying whatsoever is. It is not an initiation like other initiations you have been through -- it is a totally different phenomenon. It is not a serious affair at all, it is basically playfulness. It is for the first time on the earth that we are trying to bring playfulness to religion.

Religion has always been of a long face, sad, serious, somber. Because of that seriousness, millions of people have remained aloof from religion. Those who were alive could not become religious because religion meant a kind of suicide to them -- and it was so. Those who were already dead or dying, those who were ill, pathological, suicidal, only they were interested in the old religions.

The old religions were not dancing, singing, celebrating; they were anti-life, anti-earth, anti-body. They were purely negative; they had nothing to affirm. Their God was based on negativity. Go on negating: the more you negate life, the more religious you were thought to be.

I am bringing a totally new vision of religion to the earth: I am introducing you to a religion that can laugh, a religion that can love, a religion that can live the ordinary life with extraordinary awareness.

Religion is not a question of changing life patterns, of changing things and situations. Religion changes you, not your situation. It does not change things: it changes the way you look at things. It changes your eyes, your vision; it gives you an insight. Then God is not something against life: then God is the intrinsic core of life. Then spirit is not anti-matter but the highest form of matter, the purest fragrance of matter.

Marcel Strauss, if you avoid sannyas that will be being serious. You have not understood that this is not the same kind of initiation. You have been into many schools, and you have gathered much knowledge about initiation and the mysteries -- but this is not that kind of initiation. It is just the opposite: it is getting initiated into life, into the ordinary life. Once your ordinary life becomes suffused with your meditateness you are a sannyasin. It is not a question of changing your clothes only -- that is only symbolic -- the real sannyasin is bringing meditation to the ordinary affairs of life, bringing meditation to the marketplace. Eating, walking, sleeping, one can remain continuously in a state of meditation. It is nothing special that you are doing, but doing the same things with a new way, with a new method, with new art.

Sannyas changes your outlook.

You listened to my advice and for nine months, you say, you stopped almost everything and got good results from following the advice. But somewhere deep down you are still serious; otherwise you would have taken a jump into sannyas -- nonseriously. Even to ask about it is to show your seriousness. You could not accept it playfully, with a laughter.

Sannyas is just a play -- LEELA. That concept is not known in the West; the West has missed much because of not knowing that concept. In the West, religion has no idea that God is not a creator but a player, that existence is not his creation but his play of energies. Just like the ocean waves roaring, shattering on the banks and the rocks, eternally, just a play of energy, so is God. These millions of forms are not created by God, those are just because of his overflowing energy.

God is not a person at all. You cannot worship God. You can live in a godly way but you cannot worship God -- there is nobody to worship. All your worship is sheer stupidity, all your images of God are your own creation. There is no God as such, but there is godliness, certainly -- in the flowers, in the birds, in the stars, in the eyes of the people, when a song arises in the heart and poetry surrounds you... all this is God. Let us say "godliness" rather than using the word 'God' -- that word gives you the idea of a person, and God is not a person but a presence.

Sannyas is not like becoming a Hindu or a Christian or a Mohammedan. In fact, it is dropping out of all these trips -- Hindu, Christian, Mohammedan, all these trips. Sannyas is simply dropping out of all ideologies. Ideologies are bound to be serious; no ideology can have laughter as its spirit, because ideologies have to fight with each other, argue with each other, and argument cannot be done with laughter. Argument has to be serious! Argument is basically egoistic, how can it laugh? The ego knows no laughter at all.

Once it happened:

A great philosopher and thinker, Keshav Chandra Sen, went to see Ramakrishna. He wanted to defeat Ramakrishna, and, certainly, he was capable of great argument. He argued against God, against religion, against the whole nonsense that Ramakrishna was doing. He was trying to prove that Ramakrishna was a fool, that there is no God, that nobody has ever proved the existence of God. He talked and talked, and slowly slowly he started feeling a little weird because Ramakrishna would only laugh. He would listen to the argument and

laugh -- and not only laugh, he would jump, hug Keshav Chandra Sen, kiss him and say, "Beautiful! This argument I have never heard! It is really intelligent, clever."

Keshav Chandra Sen started feeling very embarrassed. A crowd had gathered seeing that Keshav Chandra, a great philosopher, is going to Ramakrishna; many people had come to listen, hearing that something is going to transpire there. Even they started feeling that the whole journey had been futile. "This is a strange thing that is happening!"

And Ramakrishna danced and laughed and he said, "Even if there had been any doubt in my mind about God, you have destroyed it. How can there be such intelligence without God? You are proof, Keshav Chandra -- I believe in you."

And Keshav Chandra has written in his memoirs, "Ramakrishna's laughter defeated me -- defeated me forever. I forgot all arguments. It looked so foolish! And he had not argued against me, he had not even said a single word against me. He simply kissed me, hugged me, laughed, danced. He appreciated me as nobody has ever appreciated -- and I was talking against him! He said, 'Keshav Chandra, your presence, such intelligence, such genius, is enough proof that God is!' He said this to me," Keshav Chandra writes, "but really his presence, his laughter, his dance, his hugging and kissing, proved to me that God is; otherwise, how is such a phenomenon as Ramakrishna possible?"

The uneducated Ramakrishna, the villager Ramakrishna, proved far more profound than the very sophisticated, educated Keshav Chandra. What happened? Something tremendously beautiful happened. Ramakrishna is really religious; he knows what religion is, he knows what godliness is: to take life in a dancing way, to take life singing, to accept life in all its manifoldness, without any judgment -- to love it for what it is.

A sannyasin means one who is not trying to solve the mystery of life but is diving deep into the mystery itself. Living the mystery is sannyas, not solving the mystery. If you start solving it you become serious. If you start living it you become more and more playful.

Mariel Strauss, see the difference between sannyas and other initiations. There is a qualitative difference. It is not initiation in the old sense, just as it is not a learning in the old sense -- it is an unlearning, and so I can say it is UNinitiation. It will bring you out of all your initiations, because if you have been to so many schools and sects and ideologies, many things must be still hanging around inside you. You need a good cleaning, you need a thorough cleaning, you need a good bath -- and sannyas will give you a shower, it will cleanse your soul. It will give you back the innocence of a child, the laughter of a child, the eyes full of wonder and awe.

Don't hesitate... take the jump. It is a jump, because you cannot come to it through thinking. It is a jump because it is not a conclusion of your mind. To others it will look like madness -- in fact all love is mad and all love is blind, at least to those who don't know what love is. To UNlovers love is blind; to lovers love is the only possible eye which can see to the very core of existence. To those who don't know the taste of religion, sannyas is madness; but to those who know, everything else is madness except sannyas. This is entering into sanity. I don't see anything saner than laughter, saner than love, saner than celebration.

But you are still thinking in serious terms: 'initiation' is a great word. You are still obsessed with your old ideas, still afraid that you may start trying too hard. In fact, you are still trying.

First I had suggested to you not to try too hard. Now you are trying too hard on the opposite end, on the polar opposite: trying too hard not to try hard! It is the same thing. Become a sannyasin and forget all this nonsense. Then one transcends trying and nontrying

both. A great laughter is waiting for you. And the moment the beyond starts laughing inside you, giggling inside you, then you know for the first time what it means to be a christ, what it means to be a buddha.

But Christians say Christ never laughed -- this is THEIR idea about Christ. This is not true about the real Christ -- I know the man! It is impossible to conceive that he never laughed. He enjoyed good food, you know, dining and wining both; he enjoyed beautiful company. And if you want beautiful company you have to find it not in the scholars but in the gamblers; if you really want good company you will have to move to those who live on the fringes of your so-called society -- the fringe people, the outsiders, the gamblers, the drunkards, the prostitutes -- because your society has become so dull and dead. The established society is almost a cemetery; you don't meet people there, you meet only dead bodies, corpses -- walking, talking, moving, doing things... it is a miracle!

One day a small boy was asking me, "Do you believe in ghosts?"
I said, "Believe? -- I am surrounded by ghosts!"

He understood the point immediately. He said, "So... so you mean... the people in the streets and the market are all ghosts?"

I said, "Yes, they are all ghosts. They are all living a post-mortem existence. They have died long ago. In fact, they died before they were ever born."

The society kills and kills slowly, skillfully. You never become aware because it is done so slowly, that's why. A child is slowly poisoned.

In the East, in the past, there used to be a certain kind of woman detective. Those woman detectives were called VISHKANYAS -- poisoned girls. Certain beautiful girls were poisoned very slowly from the very beginning with the mother's milk -- it is an historical fact -- but the poison was given in such small doses that it would not kill them immediately; but slowly slowly their whole system would become poisoned. Poison would flow in their blood, their breath would become poison. By the time they became adolescent, they would be ready to be used by the kings, and they were so beautiful that it was very easy to allure anybody with them. They were sent to the enemy king who was bound to fall in the trap of the beautiful woman, and once the woman kissed the man that was the end of him. Just the kiss was enough to kill; a kiss of death it was.

To make love to such a woman will be the end -- you will die like a few spiders die. There are a few spiders who die while making love -- because the girlfriend starts eating them while they are getting higher and higher, and they are in such ecstasy -- you know spiders -- trembling, and they have completely forgotten the world. They are no longer material, they are spiritual. But women are women; they are very materialistic. The moment the spider gets into his orgasmic spasms, the girlfriend starts eating him. By the time he comes back, he is no more. He was thinking he was coming -- he was really going!

Those poisoned girls were trained... but the miracle was that so much poison didn't kill them. It was given in such mild doses, very slowly.

A scientist was experimenting with frogs: he threw a frog into boiling water -- of course, the frog jumped immediately out of it. Then he gave the frog just ordinary water, normal temperature; the frog enjoyed the bucket, sat at the bottom, relaxed, and the scientist started heating it up slowly slowly, very slowly. Within hours it was boiling, but the frog didn't jump out of it... he died. He never became aware, the thing happened so slowly.

And that's what is happening in society. It takes almost twenty-five years to kill a child totally, to poison a child totally. By the time he comes from the university he is dead, he is finished; now he will live a post-mortem existence.

I can see a grain of truth in the hippie idea that don't trust a man beyond thirty. There IS some truth in it. By the time a man is thirty he is no longer alive -- if he is still alive he will become a Buddha, he will be a Christ, he will be a Krishna. But by that time people die -- and they die so unconsciously that they go on living as if they are alive.

Sannyas means giving you your life back. It is a process of deprogramming you, unconditioning you, unpoisoning you. You cannot decide logically to be a sannyasin, because that very mind is a problem, and you are trying to decide with that very mind. Sannyas has to be a jump. It happens from the heart, not from the head.

Mariel Strauss, you are still thinking from the head. Please, get down from the head. At least let one thing happen from the heart -- not logically but illogically, not in a prosaic way but in a poetic way. Sannyas has to be a love affair! Nonserious, full of laughter, enter into it... and you will be surprised that this is not some other initiation. This will bring out all your initiations and all your philosophy and all your systems of thought.

Sannyas is relaxing in life, trusting in life, resting in life. Nowhere to go, nothing to achieve, then the whole energy is available to dance and sing and celebrate.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DISCIPLE?

Prem Samadhi, it is one of the most delicate mysteries. No definition is possible of a disciple, but a few hints can be given, just fingers pointing to the moon. Don't cling to the fingers -- look at the moon and forget the fingers.

A disciple is a rare phenomenon. It is very easy to be a student because the student is searching knowledge. The student can only meet the teacher, he can never meet the master. The reality of the master will remain hidden to the student. The student functions from the head. He functions logically, rationally. He gathers knowledge, he becomes more and more knowledgeable. Finally in his own turn he will become a teacher, but all that he knows is borrowed, nothing is really his own.

His existence is pseudo; it is a carbon-copy existence. He has not known his original face. He knows about God, but he does not know God himself. He knows about love, but he has never dared to love himself. He knows much about poetry, but he has not tasted the spirit of poetry itself. He may talk about beauty, he may write treatises on beauty, but he has no vision, no experience, no existential intimacy with beauty. He has never danced with a roseflower. The sunrise happens there outside, but nothing happens inside his heart. That darkness inside him remains the same as it was before.

He talks only about concepts, he knows nothing of truth -- because truth cannot be known through words, scriptures. A student is interested only in words, scriptures, theories, systems of thought, philosophies, ideologies.

A disciple is a totally different phenomenon. A disciple is not a student; he is not interested in knowing about God, love, truth -- he is interested in becoming God, in becoming truth, in becoming love. Remember the difference. Knowing about is one thing, becoming is

totally different. The student is taking no risk; the disciple is going into the uncharted sea. The student is miserly, he is a hoarder; only then he can gather knowledge. He is greedy; he accumulates knowledge as the greedy person accumulates wealth -- knowledge is his wealth. The disciple is not interested in hoarding; he wants to experience, he wants to taste, and for that he is ready to risk all.

The disciple will be able to find the master. The relationship between a student and a teacher is that of the head, and a relationship between a disciple and a master is that of the heart -- it is a love relationship, mad in the eyes of the world, utterly mad. In fact, no love is so total as the love that happens between the master and the disciple. The love that happened between John and Jesus, the love that happened between Sariputta and Buddha, Gautama and Mahavira, Arjuna and Krishna, Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu -- these are the real love stories, the highest pinnacles of love.

The disciple starts melting into the master. The disciple destroys all distance between himself and the master; the disciple yields, the disciple surrenders, the disciple effaces himself. He becomes a nonentity, he becomes a nothingness. And in that nothingness his heart opens. In that absence his ego has disappeared and the master can penetrate into his being.

The disciple is receptive, vulnerable, unguarded; he drops all armor. He drops all defense measures. He is ready to die. If the master says, "Die!" he will not wait for a single moment. The master is his soul, his very being; his devotion is unconditional and absolute. And to know absolute devotion is to know God. To know absolute surrender is to know the secret-most mystery of life.

The word 'disciple' is also beautiful -- it means one who is ready to learn. Hence the word 'discipline' -- discipline means creating a space for learning. And disciple means being ready to learn. Who can be ready to learn? Only one who is ready to drop all his prejudices. If you come as a Christian or a Hindu or a Mohammedan, you can't be a disciple. If you simply come as a human being, with no a priori prejudice, with no belief, then only you can become a disciple.

A disciple is the rarest flowering of human consciousness, because beyond the disciple there is only one peak more -- the master. And one who has been totally a disciple one day becomes a master. Disciplehood is a process of becoming a master. But one should not start with the idea of becoming a master; otherwise one is going to miss, because then it is again an ego trip. One should come simply to evaporate.

You have lived through the ego, and your life has been just a misery and nothing else. Enough is enough! One day the realization comes that, "I have wasted a great opportunity by constantly listening to my own ego. It has been driving me onto unnecessary paths which lead nowhere, and it has been creating a thousand and one miseries." The day one realizes that "The ego is the root cause of my misery," one starts searching for a place where the ego can be dropped. The master is an excuse to drop the ego.

You can drop your ego only if you come across a person who catches hold of your heart so tremendously that his being becomes more important than your own being, that you can sacrifice all that you have for him.

Just a few days ago, I received a letter from Gunakar from Germany. In German newspapers a statement of Teertha's has been given too much importance and has been criticized -- and it can be criticized, manipulated, because what has happened in Jonestown has become the talk of the world. Somebody, a journalist from Germany, has asked Teertha, "If your master asks you to shoot yourself, to kill yourself, what are you going to do?" And

Teertha said, "There is no question of thinking at all. I will kill myself immediately."

Now, this statement can be manipulated in such a way that the place that I am creating is going to be another Jonestown. Teertha has said it out of his heart; he has not been political, diplomatic; otherwise he would have avoided such a statement. He had simply said what a disciple is bound to say.

The disciple is ready. In fact to say that he is ready to die is something less than the truth. The disciple has already died into the master; it is not going to happen in the future, it has already happened. It has happened the day the disciple accepted the master as his master: since then he has been no more, only the master lives in him.

Slowly slowly, the presence of the master overflows the disciple. And the presence of the master is not really the presence of the master himself: the master is overflowed with God. The master is only a vehicle, a passage, a messenger; it is God flowing through the master. When the disciple surrenders to the master totally he is really surrendering to God in the guise of the master. God he cannot see yet, but the master he can see, and in the master he can see something godly. The master becomes the first proof of God to him. Surrendering to the master is surrendering to the visible God.

And, slowly slowly, as the surrender deepens, the visible disappears into the invisible. The master disappears. When the disciple reaches into the innermost heart of the master, he does not find the master there but God himself, life itself -- indefinable, inexpressible.

Prem Samadhi, your question is significant. You ask, "What does it mean to be a disciple?"

It means death and it means resurrection. It means dying into the master and being reborn through the master.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHO ARE YOU? ARE YOU THE CHRIST COME BACK?

Premananda, do you think I am crazy or something? I am myself. Why should I be Christ or somebody else? Christ is Christ. He is not Krishna and he is not Buddha and he is not Zarathustra. Buddha is Buddha; he is not Yagnavalka, he is not Lao Tzu. And Socrates is Socrates; he is not Mahavira and he is not Patanjali.

I am myself. Why should I be Christ? In fact nothing in existence is ever repeated. Existence is so creative, it always creates new people. And it is not true only about Christ, Buddha and me -- it is true about you too. There has never been another individual like you, and there will never be. You are absolutely unique. Existence never repeats, remember it; hence you are incomparable, neither higher nor lower. That's why I say there is no hierarchy in existence. Each is superb and each is unique and each is alone. But such questions continuously go on arising. There are reasons for such questions.

Premananda, you must have been taught from your childhood about the second coming of Christ. Now you have fallen in love with me, and you would like somehow to reconcile your childhood mind with your new experiences that are happening here. You would like to bridge what has been told to you and what is happening to you. If somehow it can be bridged you will feel a little at rest. If it cannot be bridged then there will remain a little tension inside you. You will have to decide this way or that.

You cannot serve two masters -- that is the problem, that's why these questions arise.

Now the problem is, "What to do? Should I remain with Christ?" But you don't know anything about Christ except what has been told to you. Christ is only a myth to you. He was a reality to John, to Luke, he was a reality to Matthew. He is not a reality to you, Premananda.

I am a reality to you; I will not be a reality to your children. You will teach your children about me, and one day if they come across a master the problem will arise: now what to do? To choose the past or to choose the present? That is the problem.

You are hesitating. You are afraid that if you choose me you will be betraying Jesus. No, I am not Christ. But by choosing me you will not be betraying Jesus, you will be fulfilling him. I am not Buddha, but by choosing me you will not be betraying Buddha; you will be making him as happy as possible, because by choosing me you will be choosing the essential core of religion. It is not a question of Christ, Buddha or me; these are only forms. Don't be too attached to forms: remember the essential core.

A man in a restaurant calls for the waiter and exclaims, "Waiter! There's a fly walking on my soup."

The waiter falls on his knees, raises his hands and cries, "Jesus is back on earth!"

And I know that Jesus has promised that he will be coming back, but I don't think that he can be so mad as to fulfill the promise. Remember what you have done with him? And if he still comes after what you have done with him he will be really crazy. It is impossible; he cannot come. He may have promised but he cannot fulfill it. If he fulfills it you will crucify him again; you cannot do otherwise. That's how you have been treating all the awakened people all over the world. You cannot tolerate them when they are alive, and when they are dead you worship them: this has been your tradition. When they are alive they are dangerous; you would like to kill them in some way or other. When they are dead they are very consoling; then you will carry their corpses for centuries.

Remember, Jesus was not crucified by criminals, sinners. He was crucified by the rabbis, the priests, the politicians -- the respected people. What was he doing to these so-called respectable people? He was becoming a danger to their very life-style. He was creating great guilt in their being; his very presence was a thorn in their flesh: if he was right, then they were all wrong.

And this was difficult, almost impossible for them to accept -- that this son of a carpenter, absolutely uneducated, unsophisticated, too young to be wise enough.... He was only thirty when he started preaching, and they could not tolerate him even for three years. By his thirty-third year he was crucified; his ministry lasted only for three years.

Buddha was far more fortunate: he was able to work for forty-two years. But Buddha was in a totally different kind of land -- not that the Hindus were behaving in any way differently from the Jews, but Hindus have their own cunning ways of destroying truth. The Jews were more straightforward: seeing the danger, they killed the man. Hindus are far more cunning, bound to be because they are the most ancient race on the earth. And Buddha was not a new buddha they had to encounter; they had encountered many buddhas, they had encountered twenty-four Jaina TIRTHANKARAS. They had seen Krishna and Rama and Parasuram and Patanjali and Kapil and Kanad and thousands of others. They have become very clever and cunning about how to prevent these people from affecting people, from influencing people.

There was no need to kill; they knew far better methods to kill, without killing. They started interpreting Buddha's words, Buddha's sayings, in such a way that they lost all their

significance. There was no need to kill the Buddha; this was an easier way: interpret Buddha according to old scriptures, as if he is simply repeating the old scriptures. Their method was, "He is not saying anything new. It is written in the Upanishads, it is written in the Vedas -- so what? We have already got all this; he is not original."

And he was utterly original. It is NOT written in the Upanishads, and it is not written in the Vedas, because in the first place it can't be written at all. Yes, the people who wrote the Upanishads must have known it, but it is not written.

Hindus were very clever. They started writing commentaries on Buddha and they distorted his whole philosophy. They created so much philosophical argument, so much noise, that Buddha's still, small voice was lost, utterly lost. And the day he died, Hindus created thirty-two schools of Buddhist philosophy; each word was interpreted in thirty-two ways. They created so much confusion that the whole point was lost.

In fact, if they had crucified Buddha it would have been far better. Jesus was killed, but Jews have not commented on Jesus at all. Once they killed him they thought, "Now it is finished and that is that!" They forgot all about Jesus, they never mentioned even his name in their scriptures. They never thought of writing any commentary on his statements. They thought they have killed him and sooner or later people are going to forget all about him and there is no problem left.

In a way, Jesus' sayings have been saved far more accurately than Buddha's sayings, because the brahmins, the clever and cunning brahmins who gathered around Buddha, distorted everything that he was saying. It was distorted so much that if Buddha comes back he will not be able to believe his own eyes what has happened.

But these people never come back. A buddha can only be here once. Once a person has become a buddha or a christ, he evaporates and becomes a fragrance of the universe. He cannot materialize again.

Jesus may have promised because he had to leave his disciples so early. Nothing was ready... the disciples were not ready -- not even a single disciple had yet become enlightened. And they were at a loss what to do without the master. They had just come close to him; only three years' time is not much. They have not yet imbibed his spirit. To console them, to help them, to keep them integrated so they don't start falling apart, he must have promised. He must have said, "Don't be worried, I will be coming back again soon."

This promise was only a device. Remember, devices are neither true nor false, they are only devices. It was a device to keep the spirit in the disciples flowing, to keep them integrated, to keep them confident, centered, rooted. It was simply a device! And it has helped, the device has worked; otherwise there would have been no Christians at all. Those poor disciples would have dispersed and slowly slowly would have forgotten all about Jesus. That's what rabbis and the priests were thinking was going to happen.

But Jesus was far more insightful. He gave them a promise that, "Wait! Don't be worried, I will be coming back. I cannot leave you, I will never leave you."

And this promise has helped in another way too: because this promise has been there, the Christian mystic has been able to remember Christ far more concentratedly than a Jaina can remember Mahavira -- because there is no promise. Mahavira has not said that, "I will come back," he has not said, "I will help you," he has not said, "I will be available to you after I am gone." In fact he has said, "You have to depend on yourself only." It is true, but it is going to be hard for the disciples.

And remember, Gurdjieff used to say that a man like Buddha or Christ CAN lie. And I

agree with Gurdjieff perfectly. If they see that the lie is going to serve the truth, they will not be worried. They will not feel ashamed or guilty; they will use the lie in the service of truth. The lie becomes a device. Buddha calls it UPAYA -- a device.

Christian mystics have been able to remember Jesus far more deeply because this confidence that he will be helpful, that he is around, that whenever he is called he will be coming back.... Not that he will come, not that he is around, not that he is going to help, but this very idea that his help is available makes you centered. So in a way, without helping you, he HAS helped. The lie becomes true; the lie is no longer a lie, it becomes truth.

But don't take such promises seriously. There is no need for me to be a christ just to console you. You have to drop your old ideas; otherwise it is going to be a real problem for me. Here are Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, Jainas, Buddhists, Parsis, Sikhs, and if the Sikhs say, "Are you Nanak?" and the Jainas say, "Are you the Jaina?" and the Buddhists say, "Are you the Buddha?" it will become troublesome. I cannot be all these people.

This is a gathering not of one religion, this is a gathering of all the religions of the world. This is a true human gathering, this is a true international gathering, a universal brotherhood.

Don't pay much attention to such promises, they are devices. But now they are of no more use to you. I am available here alive -- what is the point of thinking of a device which was invented two thousand years before? I am inventing devices every day for you, and while I am alive, please use them. It will be far more beneficial and easy to be benefited by them.

They met at a party. He was overwhelmed by her great beauty and vivacity. "I suppose that you have more invitations than you can possibly accept." he said.

"I cannot go out very often," she answered somewhat evasively, "because I work. But when I don't want to go out with a man, I simply tell him that I live in the suburbs."

"What a clever idea," he said, laughing. "And where DO you live?"

"In the suburbs," she answered sweetly.

Be very alert. Jesus certainly said, "I will come." It was just to wipe the tears from his disciples' eyes, it was out of compassion. But a man who has attained to God cannot come back. It is impossible; in the very nature of things it is impossible -- because he cannot enter into the body again. To enter into the body, you need a certain desire, a tremendous desire. And the man who has attained God has no desires left. It is through the doors of desire that a man enters into the body. If all desires are gone, then there is no way to enter into the body, to enter into the womb.

Hence, in the East, we know that once a buddha is gone he is gone forever. You can try to understand his teachings, but far better will be if you can find a buddha alive somewhere. And it never happens that if you search you will not find a buddha somewhere. If you really search you are bound to find a buddha somewhere or other. Somewhere or other in the darkness of the world there are always a few flames; they are always there because God is still hopeful, because God is still compassionate, because existence cares for you.

If you can come across a living buddha, a living christ, forget all about the past buddhas and past christes. He contains all, and yet he cannot be identified with anyone in particular. He himself is a buddha, he himself is a christ in his own right.

So I don't claim that I am Christ, I don't claim that I am Buddha. I simply claim that I have arrived, that I am at home. And I have thrown my doors open. If you are really a seeker, a lover of truth, don't miss this opportunity....

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHEN YOU ARRIVED IN YOUR CAR THIS MORNING I HEARD A BELLY LAUGH
COME FROM HEAVEN. WOULD THAT BE A FRIEND OF YOURS?

Dharma Chetana, I had also heard the laughter. It did not come from the heaven -- the ghost of Jugal Kishore Birla was just standing by the side of Shiva. He played a trick on Charlie who is my engineer and mechanic for the Benz. He tricked Charlie: he connected the battery in a wrong way. Now, a German engineer, especially a mechanic for Mercedes Benz, a trained expert, highly intelligent, connected the battery wrongly! How is this possible? The ghost of Jugal Kishore Birla tricked him, so something got burned, and I had to come in Jugal Kishore Birla's car -- an Ambassador.

Certainly he was waiting here by the side of Shiva. Shiva may have even felt it, because he was looking all around; he must have felt something. And Chetana, you heard rightly.

Jugal Kishore Birla was the manufacturer of Ambassador cars. He has died. We had met a few times. He was a Hindu chauvinist, and he wanted me to become an ambassador to the world for Hinduism. For that purpose he had met me a few times; that's how we became friendly. He said to me, "I can help you with as much money as you want." In fact he was the richest man in India.

I said, "I can take more money than you have, but with one condition."
He said, "What is that condition?"

I said, "I will take it unconditionally. You cannot make any conditions with me. I can take all that you have."

He said, "Unconditionally? But one condition I have to make; that's why I am ready to give all support."

I said, "Please, don't mention it." But he still mentioned. He said, "My condition is very simple: can't you become a messenger to the world for Hinduism? Hinduism needs somebody to propagate it in such a contemporary and modern way that it appeals to the world mind."

I said, "Then I cannot accept a single PAI from you."

He said to me, "This is strange -- because even Mahatma Gandhi had accepted my conditions."

I told him, "That's why I never call Mahatma Gandhi 'Mahatma' Gandhi. I call him the so-called Mahatma Gandhi; otherwise how can anybody accept your conditions? If he knows, he will not accept any conditions from anybody just for money. I know what the world needs. It is not Hinduism, it is not Christianity, it is not Islam. Enough of all this nonsense! The world needs a purely religious consciousness, with no adjectives attached to it."

But he was a good man in a way. When he was old he tried many times; whenever I would go to Delhi he would invite me to his palace and he would again bring up the subject in some way or other. I said to him, "You have done enough service to humanity; now there is no need for any more service. You have made this Ambassador car -- this is really something wonderful! All the parts of it make noise except the horn. What more service do you want to do to humanity?"

So naturally when I said something about him just a few days ago, he must have got very angry. He tricked Charlie. This is very rare -- an Indian ghost befooling an alive German!

He was here, Chetana, you heard him rightly. But please don't start hearing the laughter of ghosts; otherwise you will be in trouble. Ghosts are always there; because you don't hear

them you remain oblivious to their presence. So Chetana, don't grow this capacity any more; it is dangerous. It is enough to hear me; there is no need for you to hear other heavenly voices. There are a few mystics here too who go on hearing heavenly voices. Every day I receive letters saying, "I hear this and I heard that." I am teaching you to be silent and I am teaching you not to hear anything. And all those voices are in your head; they don't come from heaven. It is really a very distant call -- it won't work, particularly in the rainy season, and not in India.

Remember one thing: all that is heard, all that is read, is trivia. Only your silence -- that hears, that silence in which the sounds come -- that silence is significant. Shift your consciousness from every object to subjectivity, from what you hear to the one who hears, from what you see to the one who sees.

But Chetana has joked, so I am not worried about her. And I love such small jokes: they keep the idea of playfulness alive. They keep my idea of religion alive.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE THERE SO MANY RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD?

Nagesh, why are there so many languages in the world? -- because there are so many people, so many ways to express. And it is not bad, it is good; the world is richer because of it. So many languages make the world tremendously rich. It gives variety, like so many flowers in the garden and so many birds.

Just think: only one flower all over the world, the marigold, and the whole world will look ugly; or the rose -- just one flower all over the world. And what will you do with those roses? Nobody will write any poetry about roses anymore then. And if you will compare your woman's face with the flower of the rose she will become angry, she will threaten you with a divorce. Roses will lose all meaning; they are beautiful because there are millions of other flowers too.

I don't think that the world needs one religion. The world needs religious consciousness, and then that consciousness can flow into as many streams as possible. In fact, my own idea of religion is that there should be as many religions as there are people -- each person having his own religion.

It is difficult to have your own language; each person cannot have his own language, otherwise nobody will understand it.

Mulla Nasruddin has applied for a job. The manager looked at him and did not feel that he's even qualified to apply for it. He asked him, "Can you read and write?"

Mulla Nasruddin said, "I cannot read, but I can write."

The manager was surprised; this is a rare situation -- he could have never conceived of a man who cannot read but can write. He said, "Then write!" He gave him a paper and Mulla immediately started writing on it. He went fast -- one page, two pages, three pages.

The manager said, "Now you stop! You please read what you have written, because I cannot read."

Nasruddin said, "That I have told you before -- I can only write! I can't read."

If you speak a language that only you understand, it will be impossible to communicate with people. But a religion -- you can have your own, because religion need not be

communicated. Religion is not a dialogue between you and other people; religion is a dialogue between you and existence. So any language will do, or no language, or any invented languages -- Esperanto, or anything.

All these religions should be taken as different languages, then fanaticism loses its danger. Then it is beautiful! There are churches and temples and mosques and GURUDWARAS -- if we think these are all different languages, there is no problem. You don't see people fighting about which language is the true language -- Hindi, Marathi, English, German, French. Which language is the true language? Nobody will ask such a question, because all languages are arbitrary, made-up. They are not true or false, they are useful.

An Englishman, a Frenchman and a German were arguing about the respective merits of their languages. The Frenchman said, "French is the language of love, the language of romance, the most beautiful and pure language in the world."

The German announced, "German is the most vigorous language, the language of philosophers, the language of Goethe, the language most adaptable to the modern world of science and technology."

When the Englishman's turn came he said, "I don't understand what you fellows are talking about. Take this" -- and he held up a table knife. "You in France call it UN COUTEAU, you Germans call it EIN MESSER. We in England simply call it a knife, which, all said and done, is precisely what it is."

This is how religions have been arguing. Exactly like this has been the argument between religions: who is right? Christians, Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Jainas -- these are only different languages to express the same phenomenon. If once this is understood then there is no problem; I would like many MORE religions to evolve.

In fact in a better world every person will have his own religion, because religion is your way of expressing the inexpressible. It is like aesthetics: if you love roses and I don't love roses, there is no problem. We don't fight it out; we don't take swords and we don't go on a crusade: "Who is right? -- because this man says lotuses are beautiful, and I say roses are beautiful. Now it has to be decided on a battlefield."

How will you decide? You can kill me, but that won't make any difference. Even dying, I will go on saying lotuses are the most beautiful flowers; my death will not make any change in my vision. You can kill a Hindu, you can kill a Mohammedan: that does not change anything at all.

But this is what, down the ages, people have been doing to each other -- fighting ridiculously. Somebody calls God "Allah" -- he is wrong. Why? Somebody calls God "Ram" -- he is wrong. Why? -- because you call him "God." God, Ram, Allah, are all names, invented names for something which has no name of its own, which is a nameless experience.

There are so many religions, Nagesh, because there are so many people, different types of people. Different people have different likings, different people have different approaches towards reality, and reality is multidimensional.

Hence my emphasis is: we need a religious consciousness, a universal upsurge of religious consciousness. Of course it will take many forms, but forms don't matter; as far as the spirit is alive, forms don't matter. And each form is beautiful. There are so many people: each has a different face, a different beauty. Each person's fingerprints are different from every other person's in the world -- but this does not create any trouble. Each person's

footprints towards God's door are going to be different.

Once we understand it a great brotherhood is possible. Otherwise this nonsense of religious fanaticism -- that "Only I am right" -- has been very destructive. It has destroyed religion itself; it has condemned religion and religious people. That's why there are so many irreligious people, antireligious people. It is what religion has done to humanity up to now that has created antireligious people -- atheists, godless people, God-denying people. The responsibility is of the priests, rabbis, popes, pundits, shankaracharyas -- these are the responsible people. They have made religion so ugly, so inhuman, so violent, so stupid, that any rational person feels a little ashamed of being part of any religious movement.

We have to destroy the ugly heritage of the past. We have to clean the space for the future. All are accepted: the Bible has its own beauty, so has the Koran, so has the Gita. And if you are religious you will enjoy the Bible as much as you will enjoy the Koran and the Gita, because you will know only languages are different. And the difference of languages creates different beauty. Sing the Koran, and you will see the difference. The Bible cannot be beautiful that way; the Koran has a singing quality to it. You can sing the Koran; even if you don't understand the meaning, the very music of it will be a transforming force. In fact, the Koran does not have much meaning; it has great poetry but not much meaning.

Many Mohammedan friends, many Mohammedan sannyasins, ask me when I am going to speak on the Koran. I have thought many times. Many times I have taken the Koran into my hand, looked here and there, and postponed it again -- because the Koran has not much meaning. It has poetry, it has a totally different beauty. It is a piece of art!

If you want meaning then the Gita has more meaning, but not that much poetry; then the Bible has more meaning, but not that much poetry. The Bible has its own beauty. It is so simple, the simplest scripture in the world, and because it is simple it has innocence, purity. Jesus speaks in the language of a villager: the parables and the metaphors are all primitive. But because they are primitive they have a purity, they are unpolluted -- unpolluted by the modern mind. They are straight, they go direct to the heart like an arrow. But if you want meaning then you should look into the Vedas, which are full of philosophy. They have their own beauty -- the beauty of intellectuality.

Each scripture has something to contribute to the world, and no scripture can do everything. But because you don't understand different languages, the problem arises. It will be good to have a few encounters with different religions.

That's why I go on speaking, sometimes on Buddhism, sometimes on Hinduism, sometimes on Christianity, sometimes on Judaism, on Hassids, on Zen, on Sufis -- for a certain reason: to give you different visions, so your own eyes can become rich, so that you can understand different language also a little bit.

Foster, in Tokyo on business, knew no Japanese. Even so, he persuaded an attractive girl, who spoke no English, to come to his hotel room. All during their lovemaking, the Oriental kept shouting "Machigai ana!" with great feeling.

Foster felt proud that he could get the girl so aroused to keep yelling, "Machigai ana!" Foster must have been thinking that this is something like "Fantastic! Far out!"

The next afternoon he played golf with a Japanese industrial tycoon. When the Oriental made a hole-in-one, Foster attempted to make a good impression and exclaimed "Machigai ana! Machigai ana!"

"What do you mean," snapped the tycoon, "the wrong hole?"

It is good to know a little bit of other languages too. It will be a great help to you to have a few glimpses of the Koran, the Bible, the Gita, THE DHAMMAPADA. That will make you more liberal, more broad-minded, more human.
Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #9

Chapter title: A small candle

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BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW WORDS
IS ONE WORD THAT BRINGS PEACE.

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW VERSES
IS ONE VERSE THAT BRINGS PEACE.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED HOLLOW LINES
IS THE ONE LINE OF THE LAW, BRINGING PEACE.

IT IS BETTER TO CONQUER YOURSELF
THAN TO WIN A THOUSAND BATTLES.

THEN THE VICTORY IS YOURS.

IT CANNOT BE TAKEN FROM YOU,
NOT BY ANGELS OR BY DEMONS,
HEAVEN OR HELL.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF WORSHIP,
BETTER THAN A THOUSAND OFFERINGS,
BETTER THAN GIVING UP A THOUSAND WORLDLY WAYS
IN ORDER TO WIN MERIT,
BETTER EVEN THAN TENDING IN THE FOREST
A SACRED FLAME FOR A HUNDRED YEARS
IS ONE MOMENT'S REVERENCE
FOR THE MAN WHO HAS CONQUERED HIMSELF.

TO REVERE SUCH A MAN,
A MASTER OLD IN VIRTUE AND HOLINESS,
IS TO HAVE VICTORY OVER LIFE ITSELF,
AND BEAUTY, STRENGTH AND HAPPINESS.

A famous story:

One night the great German philosopher, Professor Von Kochenbach, saw two doors in a dream, one of which led directly to love and paradise, and the other to an auditorium where a lecture was being given on love and paradise. There was no hesitation on Von Kochenbach's part -- he darted in to hear the lecture.

The story is significant. It is fictitious, but not so fictitious really. It represents the human mind: it is more interested in knowledge than in wisdom, it is more interested in information than TRANSformation. It is more interested to know about God, beauty, truth, love, than experience God, beauty, truth, love.

The human mind is obsessed with words, theories, systems of thought, but is completely oblivious of the existential that surrounds you. And it is the existential which can liberate, not knowledge about it.

The story represents everybody's mind. But I was in for a surprise yesterday. I was reading a book by Silvano Arieti, M.D., and James Silvano Arieti, Ph.D. In their book, LOVE CAN BE FOUND, they quote this story. I was hoping, obviously, that they would laugh at the story and criticize the whole standpoint. But I was in for a surprise: they defended the story; they say the professor did the right thing. Rather than entering directly into the door of love and paradise, entering into the auditorium where a lecture was being delivered on love and paradise -- of course by some other professor -- they say the professor did the right thing. Why? Their reasoning is that unless you know about love, how can you know love? Unless you know about paradise first, how can you immediately enter into paradise?

On the surface it looks logical: first one has to become acquainted with what paradise is, only then can one enter paradise. First you have to have a map. Logical, still stupid; logical only in appearance, but deep down utterly unintelligent.

Love needs no information about it, because it is not something outside you, it is the very core of your being. You have already got it, you have only to allow it to flow. Paradise is not somewhere else so that you need a map to reach there. You ARE in paradise, only you have fallen asleep. All that is needed is an awakening.

An awakening can be immediate, awakening can be sudden -- in fact, awakening can ONLY be sudden. When you wake somebody up, it is not that slowly slowly, in parts, gradually, he wakes up. It is not that now he is ten percent awake, now twenty, now thirty, now forty, now ninety-nine, now ninety-nine point nine, and then a hundred percent -- no. When you shake a sleepy person, he awakes immediately. Either one is asleep or one is awake; there is no place in between. Hence Buddha says enlightenment is a sudden experience; it is not gradual, it is not that you arrive in steps. Enlightenment cannot be divided into parts; it is an indivisible, organic unity. Either you have it or you don't have it.

But man has remained clinging to words -- words which are hollow, words which carry no meaning, words which have no significance, words which have been uttered by as ignorant people as you are. Maybe they were educated, but education does not dispel ignorance. Knowing about light is not going to dispel darkness. You can know all that is available in the world about light; you can have a library in your room consisting only of books on light, yet that whole library will not be able to dispel the darkness. To dispel the

darkness you will need a small candle -- that will do the miracle.

Looking into the ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA I was happy to note that it has no articles on love. That's a great insight! In fact, nothing can be written about love. One can love, one can be in love, one can even become love, but nothing can be written about love. The experience is so subtle and the words are so gross.

It is because of the words that humanity has been divided. A few people believe in a few hollow words -- they call themselves Hindus; others believe in a few other hollow words -- they call themselves Jews; still others call themselves Christians and Mohammedans, and so on, so forth. And they all believe in hollow words. It is not that you have experienced anything. Your being a Hindu or a Jew or a Mohammedan is not based on your own experience -- it is borrowed. And anything borrowed is futile.

But man has suffered much because of the words. A few people believe in the TALMUD, a few people believe in the TAO TEH CHING, a few people believe in THE DHAMMAPADA... and they have been fighting, quarreling, criticizing -- not only that, but killing each other. The whole history is full of blood -- in the name of God, in the name of love, in the name of brotherhood, in the name of humanity.

Mistress Rosenbaum became stranded one evening in a very "exclusive" resort section of Cape Cod. "Exclusive" meant that Jews were excluded. She entered the town hotel and said to the desk clerk, "I would like a room"

"Sorry," he replied. "The hotel is full."

"Then why does the sign say 'Rooms Available'?"

"We don't admit Jews."

"But Jesus himself was a Jew."

"How do you know that Jesus Christ was Jewish?"

"He went in his father's business. And, moreover, it so happened that I converted to Catholicism. Ask me any question and I will prove it."

"Alright," said the desk clerk. "How was Jesus born?"

"By virgin birth. The mama's name was Mary and the papa's name was the Holy Spirit."

"Okay, where was Jesus born?"

"In a stable."

"That's right. And why was he born in a stable?"

"Because," Mrs. Rosenbaum snapped, "bastards like you would not rent a room for the night to a Jewish woman!"

But these bastards are everywhere. They have become the priests and the rabbis and the pundits and the shankaracharyas and the popes. These people are clever, cunning -- with words. They are logic choppers, they can split hairs; they can argue endlessly about useless things, about such stupid things that later on for centuries you laugh at the whole thing.

In the Middle Ages, Christian priests -- Catholics, Protestants and others -- were in a big debate, great discussion was going on for centuries about how many angels can stand on a needle point. It was a great theological debate, it had stirred the whole of Europe, as if something tremendously important was involved in it. How does it matter? But such stupid things have been dominating humanity for centuries.

In Buddha's time it was one of the greatest problems in India, discussed by all the sects, whether there is one hell or three or seven or seven hundred. Hindus believe in one hell, Jains were talking about seven hells; and a disciple of Mahavira, Goshalak, who betrayed

the master, started talking about seven hundred hells.

Somebody asked Goshalak, "Why do you say that your philosophy is superior, higher than Mahavira's?"

He said, "You can see: he knows only about seven hells and I know about seven hundred. He has gone only up to seven and I have traveled the whole way. And just as there are seven hundred hells, there are exactly seven hundred heavens. His knowledge is very limited, he does not know the whole truth."

Now, you can go on talking about such things. Some other fool can say that there are seven hundred and one....

A French professor and an American were talking. The French professor said, "There are one hundred positions in which love can be made."

The American said, "There are a hundred and one."

Now great argument ensued. The American asked, "You relate your hundred positions, then I will relate my hundred and one positions."

The French professor described in detail one hundred positions. The hundredth was hanging on a chandelier and doing it in the ear of the woman!

Now was the turn of the American. He said, "The first position is: the woman lies down on her back with the man on top of her."

The French professor said, "My God! I never thought about it! So you are right -- there are a hundred and one. You need not now relate the whole thing; there ARE a hundred and one. This one I never heard, never thought of even, never could have imagined. You Americans are something!"

These professors, these scholars, they have dominated humanity, and they have distracted humanity from simple existence, from simple life. They have made your minds very sophisticated, clever, cunning, knowledgeable, but they have destroyed your innocence and wonder. And it is innocence and wonder that become the bridge to the immediate -- and the immediate is also the ultimate.

Buddha says:

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW WORDS
IS ONE WORD THAT BRINGS PEACE.

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW WORDS.... Your scriptures are full of hollow words, your minds are full of hollow words. You go on talking, not even becoming aware of what you are saying. When you use the word 'God', do you know what it means? How can you know if you have not known God? The word is empty, the word itself cannot have any significance; the significance has to come from your experience.

When you know God and you utter the word 'God', it is luminous, it is full of light, it is a diamond. But when you know nothing of God, but only the word 'God' taught by others, it is an ordinary pebble with no color, with no luminosity, with no light in it. You can go on carrying it; it is simply a weight, a burden. You can drag it. It will not become your wings, it will not make you light, and it will not help you in any way to arrive closer to God. In fact it will hinder you, obstruct you, because the more you think you know about God, just by knowing the word 'God', the less you will inquire into the reality of God. The more you

become knowledgeable, the less is the possibility of your ever going on the adventure of searching out the truth of God. When you already know, what is the point of inquiring, what is the point of investigating? You have killed the question. You have not solved it, you have not got the answer; you have taken it from others. But others' answers can't be your answers.

Buddha knows, but when he speaks, his words cannot carry his experience. When they leave his heart they are full of light, they are full of dance. When they reach to you they are dull, dead. You can accumulate those words, you can think that you have a great treasure, but you have nothing at all. All that you have are empty words.

Buddha wants you to become aware of this phenomenon, because this is of great importance. Unless you are free of empty, hollow words, you will not start the journey of inquiry. Unless you drop your so-called knowledge, unless you discard all your information, unless you become again innocent like a child, ignorant like a child, your inquiry is going to be futile, superficial.

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW WORDS IS ONE WORD THAT BRINGS PEACE. And what is the criterion? Which word is luminous? Which word is really full of fragrance? The word that brings peace. And that word never comes from the outside -- it is the still, small voice of your own heart. It is heard at the deepest recesses of your being: it is the sound of your own being, it is the song of your own life.

It is not to be found in the scriptures and it is not to be found in learned discourses. It is to be found only if you go in; it is to be found only in meditation, in deep silence. When all borrowed knowledge has left you and you are alone, when all the scriptures have been burned and you are left alone, when you don't know a thing, when you function from a state of not-knowing, then it is heard, because then all the clamor of knowledge and the noise is gone... you can hear the still, small voice. And then a single word... it is a single word: it is the sound of OM.

The moment you enter into your being you will be surprised to find that there is a constant sound that appears like 'om'. Mohammedans have heard it as 'amin' -- it is om; Christians have heard it as 'amen'; it is the same sound. Hence the Christian, the Mohammedan, the Hindu, the Jaina, the Buddhist, they all end their prayers with om. The prayer is bound to end in om; the prayer makes you more and more silent... finally there is nothing but om. All Hindu scriptures end with OM, SHANTIH, SHANTIH, SHANTIH -- om, peace, peace, peace. This is the word 'om'.

And the criterion to judge whether you have really heard it or you have pretended to hear it or you have imagined hearing it is that it brings peace. Suddenly you are full of peace -- a peace that you had never known before.

Peace is something far superior to happiness, because happiness is always followed by unhappiness; it is always a mixture of polar opposites: happiness/unhappiness. They are like day and night, they follow each other.

If you are a pessimist you can count nights, if you are an optimist you can count the days; that is the only difference in people. There are a few people who say, "There are two days and one night between two days" -- those are the optimists. And then there are people who say, "There are two nights and only one day sandwiched in between" -- they are the pessimists.

But in reality both are wrong. Each night has its day and each day has its night; they are equal. All polar opposites are equal; that's how existence remains balanced. If you have happiness today, wait -- tomorrow the unhappiness will come. If you are unhappy today, don't be worried -- happiness will be just by the corner.

In Indian villages mothers don't allow their children to laugh too much, because, they say, "If you laugh too much then you will have to cry, you will have to weep." And there is great wisdom in it -- a primitive wisdom, unsophisticated, but it has some truth in it. Mothers in Indian villages will stop the child if he is giggling too much and laughing too much. They will say, "Stop, stop right now! Otherwise soon you will be crying and weeping and tears will come."

It is bound to be so because nature balances.

Peace is something far higher than happiness. Buddha does not call it bliss just for this reason: if you call it bliss, which it is... but he avoids the word 'bliss' because the moment you call it bliss people understand immediately 'happiness'. Bliss gives them the idea of absolute happiness, great happiness, tremendous happiness, incredible happiness, but the difference between happiness and bliss in people's minds is only of quantity, as if bliss is the ocean and happiness is just a dewdrop. But the difference is only of quantity -- and the difference of quantity is not a real difference, it is not a difference that makes a difference. Only qualitative differences are real differences.

Hence Buddha has chosen the word 'peace' instead of 'bliss'. He says peace -- peace gives you a totally different direction to inquire, to search. Peace means no happiness, no unhappiness.

Happiness is also a state of noise, a state of tension, excitement. Have you observed? -- you cannot remain happy for a long long time, because it starts getting on your nerves; you start feeling tired of it, bored with it. Yes, to a certain extent you can tolerate it; beyond that it becomes impossible. How long can you go on hugging your woman? Yes, for a few moments it is beautiful, ecstatic, but how long? One minute, two minutes, thirty minutes, sixty minutes, one day, two days? How long? You try next time, and you will be able to note the point where happiness turns into unhappiness.

When you want to get hold of a woman you are so allured, attracted. And women know it intuitively, hence they do everything to escape from your hands. They remain elusive, they don't become too readily available. They are aware -- intuitively aware, not intellectually -- intuitively aware of the phenomenon that all this attraction will be gone soon and all this great love will die soon. Everything dies; everything that is born is bound to die. They are far more intelligent that way -- they avoid, they escape. They allow you only a certain amount of intimacy, and then they are again far away. That keeps the game going; otherwise every game will be finished too soon. Any happiness is only for the time being. Beyond that it turns into the opposite; it becomes sour, bitter.

Peace means going beyond the excitement of happiness and unhappiness both. There are people who are attracted to unhappiness too; modern psychology calls them masochists. They enjoy torturing themselves. In the past these same masochists became great MAHATMAS, great sages, saints. Psychologically understood, with the modern insight into human mind, your so-called saints will look -- almost ninety percent of them -- masochistic, or maybe ninety-nine percent even. If looked at deeply, you will find these are people who enjoy torturing themselves. These are people who go on long fasts, lie down on the bed of thorns, stand in the hot sun or in the cold, sit naked in the Himalayan snows. These are the masochists.

And the other side of it is sadism. There are people who enjoy torturing others. And in fact the whole humanity -- almost the whole humanity, except the buddhas -- can be divided into these two camps. These are the real two religions of the world: masochism and sadism. The masochists become religious and the sadists become politicians. Alexander the Great,

Tamerlane, Nadirshah, Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler, Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, all these people, they enjoy torturing others. To torture others is as pathological as to torture oneself.

The person who wants happiness is bound to be sadistic. Analyze your happiness, on what it depends. If you have a bigger house than your neighbor you are happy. In fact, you are torturing your neighbor by having a bigger house: it is a very subtle torture.

I used to stay in one of the most beautiful palaces in Calcutta. It was a beauty, a very old Victorian colonial palace it was, and it was the best house in Calcutta. The man was very proud of it, and whenever I would stay with him he was continuously talking about the house, and the garden, and this and that -- but it was around the house, his whole talk.

Once it happened, I stayed with him for three days and he didn't mention the house at all.

I said, "What has happened? Have you become a sannyasin or something? Have you renounced the world? You are not talking about the house!"

He looked with sad eyes towards me and said, "Can't you see the new house that has come up in the neighborhood?"

I had seen the house. A new marble house had come up, and certainly it was bigger and far more beautiful. And he said, "Since this house has come up all my joy is lost. I am living in such misery, you cannot conceive."

I said, "But you are living in the same house! It is the SAME house, and you were so happy. And you are still in the same house. Why should you be so miserable? What does it have to do with the neighbor? And if it is because of the neighbor that you are feeling so miserable, then remember one thing: when you used to feel so happy about the house, it was also not about the house -- it was about the neighbors, because they were living in small houses. And if you are so much tortured by the neighbor's house, remember, the neighbor must have been in a long long torture because of your house. It is just to take revenge that he has made the new house."

The new house-owner invited me for dinner. He asked my host also to come, but my host simply said, "No, I cannot -- I am too busy." And he was not busy at all! And when the man had gone I said to him, "You are not busy."

He said, "I am not busy, but I cannot go into that house -- unless I have made a bigger house than that. Yes, wait! It will take two, three years for me to make a bigger house, but it is a question of prestige. Once I have made a bigger house I will invite that man for dinner."

This is how people are living.

If you watch your own mind, you enjoy things because others don't have them. You enjoy them not having them, you don't enjoy your having them.

Such is the pathology of man: one is a sadist, he enjoys others being in a state of misery; and the other turns into a masochist. Seeing that it is not good to enjoy others' misery, seeing that it is a sin, seeing that he will have to suffer in hell for it, becoming aware that this is not virtuous, he turns into a masochist, he starts torturing himself. But the torture continues.

Peace means a state of inner health, a state of inner wholeness, where you are not torturing others, not torturing yourself, where you are neither interested in happiness nor in unhappiness. You are simply interested in being absolutely silent, calm, quiet, collected, integrated.

Yes, when the mind is dropped... and mind means your whole past and all that you know and all that you have accumulated. Mind is your subtle treasure, your subtle possession.

When all that mind has been dropped and you have entered into a state of no-mind, a great peace descends. It is silence, it is full of bliss, but Buddha avoids the word. I don't avoid it.

Buddha had to avoid it, because in Buddha's days bliss was talked about too much. The Upanishads were talking about it, Mahavira was talking about it, the whole Hindu tradition was talking about it. SAT-CHIT-ANAND -- God is truth, consciousness, bliss, but the ultimate quality is bliss. Too much talk about bliss. Buddha must have felt that it is better not to use that word. That word has become too orthodox, too conventional, too conformist. And because it has been used so much it has lost its meaning, its savor, its salt, it has lost its beauty. But now it can be revived again; now nobody is talking about bliss.

But whether you call it peace or bliss is irrelevant. Just understand one thing: that it takes you beyond all dualities. Day and night, summer and winter, life and death, pain and pleasure -- it takes you beyond all dualities -- love and hate. It takes you beyond all dual phenomena. It takes you to the one.

Hence Buddha says: ONE WORD. It is a simple, melodious, harmonious state of your inner health, inner sanity. One word is enough, far more significant. BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW WORDS....

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW VERSES
IS ONE VERSE THAT BRINGS PEACE.

There are poets and poets. There are two kinds of poets in the world. One is the poet who is a dreamer, who is very clever in imagination, in fantasy. He creates works of art, he creates sculpture, music, poetry, but all that remains dream stuff. It may entertain you for the time being, but it cannot give you any insight into reality. It may be a consolation, a solace, a lullaby; it may have a tranquilizing effect on you. Yes, that's exactly what it does. All that is called aesthetics, art... has a tranquilizing effect on you.

Listening to classical music you fall into a totally different kind of state. Everything becomes tranquil, still, but it is momentary; it is only a dream world that the musician creates around you. Listening to poetry or looking at great sculpture, for a moment you are dazed, stunned. The mind stops as if you are transported for a moment to some other world, but again you are back in the same old world, in the same old rut.

But there are different kinds of poets, painters, sculptors too: the buddhas. A single verse from them may transform you forever. Listening to a buddha is listening to divine music. Listening to a buddha is listening to God himself. A buddha is God visible, a buddha is God available. A buddha is a window into God, an invitation from the beyond. Shakespeare, Milton, Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, and thousands of others -- these are the dreamers, great dreamers; beautiful are their dreams, but they are not the poets who can transform your being. Mohammed can do it, Christ can do it, Krishna can do it, Buddha can do it, Kabir, Nanak, Farid, yes, these people can do it.

What is the difference between the poetry of a Kabir and a Shakespeare? As far as poetry is concerned, Shakespeare is far more poetic, remember, than Kabir. Kabir knows nothing of the art. Shakespeare is very sophisticated; but still a single verse from Kabir is far more valuable than all the collected works of Shakespeare -- because a single word from Kabir comes from insight, not from fantasy. That is the difference.

Kabir has clarity, he has eyes which can see into the beyond. Shakespeare is as blind as you are. Of course, he is very efficient in bringing his fantasy into words. That's art, worthy of respect, but at the most it can entertain you. It can keep you occupied beautifully, but there

is no possibility of transformation happening through it. Even Shakespeare is not a transformed being, how can he transform you?

Only a buddha, only one who is awakened, can wake you up. Shakespeare is as fast asleep as you are, or maybe even deeper asleep than you are, because he is having such beautiful dreams. His sleep is bound to be deep, because he is not only having dreams, he is singing his dreams. He is bringing his dreams to expression -- and still his sleep is not broken.

Buddha is one who is awakened. Only one who is awake can wake you up. **BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW VERSES IS ONE VERSE THAT BRINGS PEACE.** And how will you know that you are around a buddha? His very presence will bring transcendental peace to you.

So a buddha from the past cannot be of much help, because his words will again be hollow words; he will not be present in them. It will only be a beautiful cage, a golden cage studded with diamonds, but the bird has left the cage long ago.

A buddha is significant only when he is alive, because only his aliveness can trigger a process in you which will lead you ultimately to awakening.

**BETTER THAN A HUNDRED HOLLOW LINES
IS ONE LINE OF THE LAW, BRINGING PEACE.**

By law, Buddha does not mean any moral, social, political law. By law Buddha means dhamma: **AES DHAMMO SANANTANO** -- the ultimate law, the eternal law, the law that makes this universe a cosmos instead of a chaos, the law that runs the whole universe in such tremendous harmony.

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND HOLLOW LINES.... "Lines" is not really a good translation. The original word is **SUTRA**: sutra literally means thread. And in the East the greatest statements of the masters have been called sutras, threads, for a certain reason. A man is born as a heap of flowers, just as a heap. Unless threads are used and the thread runs through the flowers, the heap will remain a heap and will never become a garland.

And you can be offered to God only when you have become a garland. A heap is a chaos, a garland is a cosmos -- although in the garland you also only see the flowers, the thread is invisible.

The sayings of the masters are called sutras, threads, because they can make out of you a garland. And only when you are a garland you can become an offering to God, only when you have become a cosmos, a harmony, a song.

Right now you are just gibberish. You can write down... sit in a room, close the door and start writing on a paper whatsoever comes to your mind. Don't edit it, don't delete anything, don't add anything, because you are not going to show it to anybody. Keep a matchbox by the side so once you have written it you can burn it immediately, so that you can be authentic. Just write whatsoever comes to your mind and you will be surprised: just a ten minutes' exercise and you will understand what I mean when I say that you are just gibberish.

It is really a great revelation to see how your mind goes on jumping from here to there, from one thing to another thing, accidentally, for no reason at all. What nonsense thoughts go on running inside you, with no relevance, no consistency. Just a sheer wastage, a leakage of energy!

The sayings of the buddhas are called sutras. Here the translator has used the word 'line' for sutra. Linguistically it is okay, but these are not linguistic matters. That is one of the great

problems: to translate statements of Buddha, Christ, Krishna, is really almost an impossible job. And those who translate them are not awakened people themselves; they are great orientalist, linguists, grammarians. They know the original language, but they only know the language -- and language is not the real point, it is only the garment.

So remember: BETTER THAN A HUNDRED HOLLOW LINES means BETTER THAN A HUNDRED HOLLOW SUTRAS -- logical, philosophical, proposed by great philosophers and thinkers, but they are hollow because they don't contain the experience.

... IS ONE LINE OF THE LAW -- a single sutra of the law. Who can assert the sutra of the law? Only one who has become awakened, only one who has become one with the ultimate law, only one who has himself become the dhamma. Not a religious person but one who himself has become religion itself. And how will you judge? -- the same criterion continues: it brings peace.

Why are you here with me? Be here only if my presence brings peace to you. Be here only if listening to me a chord starts vibrating in you which brings peace. Be here only if your love for me helps you to transcend the world of dualities; otherwise being here is of no use.

My presence cannot be for all; it can be only for the chosen few, only for those who have really come thirsty, inquiring, who really want to risk all to know God, who are ready to die for truth, who are ready to become sacrifices.

IT IS BETTER TO CONQUER YOURSELF
THAN TO WIN A THOUSAND BATTLES.

And in peace is victory. When peace surrounds you within and without, you are overflowing with peace, you have come home, you have conquered yourself, you are a master.

IT IS BETTER TO CONQUER YOURSELF THAN TO WIN A THOUSAND BATTLES. One buddha is far more significant and valuable than a million Adolf Hitlers. And this victory is something which is a real victory, because all other victories will be taken away from you. Alexander the Great dies like any beggar dies; he cannot take anything with him. He has conquered the whole world, and now going as a beggar...

It is said: there are three instances in Alexander's life which are significant. One is the meeting with the great mystic, Diogenes. Diogenes was laying naked on the bank of a river taking a sunbath. It was early morning... and the early sun and the beautiful riverbank and the cool sand. And Alexander was passing by; he was coming to India.

Somebody told him, "Diogenes is just close by and you have always been inquiring about Diogenes" -- because he had heard many stories about the man. He was really a man worth calling a man! Even Alexander, deep down, was jealous of Diogenes.

He went to see him. He was impressed by his beauty -- naked, undecorated, with no ornaments. And he himself was full of ornaments, decorated in every possible way, but he looked very poor before Diogenes. And he said to Diogenes, "I feel jealous of you. I look poor compared to you -- and you have nothing! What is your richness?"

And Diogenes said, "I don't desire anything -- desirelessness is my treasure. I am a master because I don't possess anything -- nonpossessiveness is my mastery, and I have conquered the world because I have conquered myself. And my victory is going with me, and your victory will be taken away by death."

And the second story: When he was going back from India.... His teacher had told him, "When you come back from India, bring a sannyasin, because that is the greatest contribution of India to the world."

The phenomenon of a sannyasin is uniquely Indian. Nowhere else has the idea of transcending the world totally captured the minds of people as it has in this country.

Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander. Aristotle had asked him, "Bring a sannyasin when you come back. I would like to see what a sannyasin is like, what it is all about."

After conquering India, when he was going back he remembered. He inquired where to find a sannyasin. People said, "Sannyasins are many but real sannyasins are very few. We know one."

In Alexandrian reports his name is given as Dandamesh -- it may be a Greek form of some Indian name. Alexander went to see the man -- again the same beauty as Diogenes, the same peace. Whenever awakening happens it brings something similar. Around every buddha you will find the same spring, the same fragrance, the same peace.

Again, as he entered into the energy field of Dandamesh, he was tremendously affected, as if he had entered into a perfumed garden. He remembered Diogenes immediately. He asked Dandamesh, "I have come to invite you -- come with me. You will be our royal guest, every comfort will be provided for, but you have to come with me to Athens."

Dandamesh said, "I have dropped all coming, all going." He was talking of something else; Alexander could not understand immediately. He was saying that, "Now there is no more coming in the world and no more going out of the world. I have transcended all coming and going." What in the East we call AVAGAMAN -- coming and going; coming into the womb and then going into death.

Alexander said, "But this is a commandment -- I command you! You have to follow. This is the order from the great Alexander!"

Dandamesh laughed. The same laughter -- again Alexander remembered Diogenes -- the same laughter. Dandamesh said, "Nobody can command me, not even death."

Alexander said, "You don't understand -- I am a dangerous man!" He pulled out his sword and he said, "Either you will come with me or I will cut off your head."

Dandamesh said, "Do it, cut off the head -- because what you are going to do now, I have done years before. When the head falls, you will see it falling on the earth and I will also see it falling on the earth."

Alexander said, "How will you see it? You will be dead!"

Dandamesh said, "That is the point: I cannot die anymore, I have become a witness. I will witness my death as much as you will witness. It will happen between us two -- you will be seeing, I will be seeing. And my purpose in the body is fulfilled: I have attained. There is no need for the body to exist anymore. Cut off the head!"

Alexander had to put his sword back in the sheath -- you cannot kill such a man.

And the third story is:

When Alexander was dying he remembered both Diogenes and Dandamesh, and he remembered their laughter, their peace, their joy.

And he remembered that they had something that goes beyond death, "And I have nothing."

He wept, tears came to his eyes, and he said to his ministers, "When I die and you carry my body to the cemetery, let my hands hang out of the casket."

The ministers asked, "But this is not the tradition! Why? Why such a strange request?"

Alexander said, "I would like people to see that I came empty-handed and I am going empty-handed, and all my life has been a wastage. Let my hands hang out of the casket so everybody can see -- even Alexander the Great is going empty-handed."

These stories are worth meditating on.

Buddha says: IT IS BETTER TO CONQUER YOURSELF THAN TO WIN A THOUSAND BATTLES.

THEN THE VICTORY IS YOURS.

No other victory is yours. It can't be taken from you -- that's why it is yours.

IT CANNOT BE TAKEN FROM YOU,
NOT BY ANGELS OR BY DEMONS,
HEAVEN OR HELL.

Nobody can take it away from you. Remember, only that which cannot be taken away from you is yours. Anything that can be taken away from you is not yours. Don't cling to it, because the clinging will bring misery to you. Do not be possessive of anything that can be taken away from you because your possessiveness will create anguish for you. Abide with that which is really yours, which nobody can take away from you. It cannot be stolen, you cannot be robbed of it, you cannot go bankrupt as far as it is concerned. Even death cannot take it.

Krishna says: NAINAM CHHINDANTI SHASTRANI -- you cannot cut it by weapons, swords cannot penetrate it, arrows cannot reach to it, bullets are absolutely powerless as far as it is concerned. NAINAM DAHATI PAVAKAH -- neither fire can burn it.

When on a funeral pyre your body will be burned, YOU will not be burned -- if you have known yourself, if you have understood what this consciousness is within you. If you have conquered your consciousness, then the body will be burned, turned to ashes, but you will not be burned, you will not be touched even. You will remain forever -- you are eternal. But this eternity can be known only when you become a master on your own.

Don't waste your time in mastering others, in conquering power, prestige, in conquering the world. Conquer yourself. The only thing worth conquering is your own being.

BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF WORSHIP,
BETTER THAN A THOUSAND OFFERINGS,
BETTER THAN GIVING UP A THOUSAND WORLDLY WAYS
IN ORDER TO WIN MERIT,
BETTER EVEN THAN TENDING IN THE FOREST
A SACRED FLAME FOR A HUNDRED YEARS --
IS ONE MOMENT'S REVERENCE
FOR THE MAN WHO HAS CONQUERED HIMSELF.

A tremendously significant sutra. Meditate over it slowly. BETTER THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OF WORSHIP... IS a single MOMENT'S REVERENCE FOR THE MAN WHO HAS CONQUERED HIMSELF. Why? -- because in the temples you will be worshipping just stones. And by worshipping the stones -- either in the temple or in Kaaba -- by worshipping statues and pictures, by worshipping dead scriptures, following rituals and

formalities, you will not have any taste of buddhahood.

But ONE MOMENT'S REVERENCE FOR THE MAN WHO HAS CONQUERED HIMSELF is far more valuable. Why? -- because the moment you bow down to the man who has conquered himself, the moment you bow down to a buddha, something of the buddha, something of the vibe penetrates you, stirs your asleep heart, penetrates your being like a ray of light into the dark night of your soul, brings you the first glimpse of the divine.

It is not possible in the temples, in the mosques, in the churches, in the synagogues, in the gurudwaras. It is possible if you are in the vicinity of a Nanak, but not in a gurudwara. It is possible if you are in a love affair with Jesus, but not in a church. It is possible if you have surrendered to a buddha, if you have said to a buddha, "BUDDHAM SHARANAM GACHCHHAMI -- I go to the feet of the Buddha, I surrender myself." But it is not possible in a Buddhist temple; before the statue of Buddha it is not possible. You will have to find a living buddha -- there is no other way. There is no shortcut.

BETTER THAN A THOUSAND OFFERINGS, BETTER THAN GIVING UP A THOUSAND WORLDLY WAYS... IS ONE MOMENT'S REVERENCE FOR THE MAN WHO HAS CONQUERED HIMSELF.

Why do you worship in the first place? Why do you offer flowers, food to the statues? Why do you renounce A THOUSAND WORLDLY WAYS? -- because of greed and fear. Either it is fear or it is greed, or maybe it is both, because greed and fear are not different -- two aspects of the same coin. Greed is fear hidden, fear is greed hidden.

And not only the worldly people are greedy, the so-called otherworldly are also as greedy or maybe they are even more greedy. Their greed is such that it cannot be satisfied by this world. Their greed is such that they are desiring heavenly pleasures: only paradise can satisfy them, this world is not enough. And that's what your so-called saints go on teaching to you. They say, "Why are you wasting your time in momentary pleasures? Follow us! We will show you the way to find pleasures which will last forever."

But this is pure greed! The worldly man seems to be less greedy because he is satisfied with the momentary, and the otherworldly is so greedy that he wants something permanent which lasts forever. The worldly is greedy, the otherworldly is greedy.

Your priests are very greedy people, your monks are very greedy people.

One day a Protestant minister came into Bonatelli's barbershop and got a haircut. When Bonatelli was finished, the minister reached for his wallet but the barber shook his head and smiled. "Put-a your wallet away, Reverend," said the Italian. "I never charge a man of the cloth."

The minister thanked him and left, but he soon returned and presented the pious barber with a Bible.

A few hours later, Father Rourke entered the Italian's shop and he, too, got a haircut. Once again the barber refused to accept any payment. "Forget it, Father," he said. "I no take-a money from a priest."

Father Rourke left shortly thereafter and returned with a crucifix which he presented to Bonatelli as a token of his appreciation.

Toward evening a rabbi entered the shop. He also got a haircut. When the rabbi reached into his pocket, the barber waved the money aside. "That's okay, Rabbi," said Bonatelli. "I no accept-a pay from men who do-a da Lord-a's work."

So the rabbi left, and came back with another rabbi!

People live through greed or through fear. A few people are afraid of hell, hence they are

worshipping; and a few people are greedy for heaven, hence they are worshipping.

A Sufi story says:

Jesus came into a town. He saw a few people sitting very sad, in deep agony; he had never seen such a lot of sad people. He asked, "What has happened to you? What calamity has fallen upon you?"

And they said, "We are afraid of hell, we are trembling. We don't know how we can save ourselves from hell -- that is our fear, that is our constant agony. We cannot sleep, we cannot rest, unless we have found a way."

Jesus walked away from those people. Just a little further ahead he found another group sitting under a tree, very sad, in great anxiety, just as the first lot. Jesus was very puzzled. He asked, "What is the matter? What is happening in this town? Why are you looking so sad? Why do you look so tense? You will go mad if you remain in this state any longer! What has happened to you?"

They said, "Nothing has happened to us. We are afraid that we may lose heaven, we may not be able to enter it. And we have to get it, whatsoever the cost. That is our anxiety and that is our tension."

Jesus left those people also. Sufis say: Why did Jesus leave these people? -- because these are the religious people! He should have taught them the way to avoid hell, and how to enter heaven, but he simply turned away from them.

He found a third group in a garden, a small group of people who were dancing, singing, rejoicing. He asked, "What ceremony is going on? What festival are you having?"

They said, "No special ceremony -- just our gratefulness to God, gratefulness for what he has given to us. We were not worthy of it."

Jesus said, "To you I will talk, with you I will stay. You are my people."

This story is not related to Christians, but the Sufis have a few beautiful stories about Jesus. In fact, they understand Jesus far more deeply than the so-called orthodox church. This is a beautiful story. It says neither those who are living through fear nor those who are living through greed are going to enter into the kingdom of God, but only those who are living in tremendous joy, thankfulness and gratitude.

And where will you learn gratitude? If you have not seen a buddha, you will not know what gratitude is. Where will you learn to celebrate if you have not come across a buddha? A buddha is celebration, a buddha is a festival, an ongoing festivity, a dance that goes on and on, that knows no ending, a song that continues forever.

If you have come across a buddha, then a moment's reverence, says Buddha, is enough.

Drop all your fear, drop all your greed. Learn how to be a disciple. Learn how to imbibe the spirit of someone who has reached his innermost center, who does not live anymore on the circumference, who has become enlightened, whose being is a light.

Learn to open your eyes towards that light. Learn to say: BUDDHAM SHARANAM GACHCHAMI, SANGHAM SHARANAM GACHCHAMI, DHAMMAM SHARANAM GACHCHAMI. Three surrenders: one surrender to the one who has become awakened; the second surrender is to the company who lives in the company of the awakened -- because the perfume of the awakened one starts filtering into the company, the blessed company that lives with the awakened one; and the third surrender is to the law, the ultimate law, through which the sleepy one has become awakened and the other sleepy ones are becoming awakened.

These three surrenders... and a single moment's reverence is more valuable than a hundred years of worship, than a thousand offerings....

BETTER THAN GIVING UP A THOUSAND WORLDLY WAYS IN ORDER TO WIN MERIT, BETTER EVEN THAN TENDING IN THE FOREST A SACRED FLAME FOR A HUNDRED YEARS -- IS ONE MOMENT'S REVERENCE FOR THE MAN WHO HAS CONQUERED HIMSELF.

TO REVERE SUCH A MAN,
A MASTER OLD IN VIRTUE AND HOLINESS,
IS TO HAVE VICTORY OVER LIFE ITSELF,
AND BEAUTY, STRENGTH AND HAPPINESS.

To revere such a person is to know the secretmost phenomenon in existence. Bowing down to a buddha a miracle happens: something starts flowing from the buddha to the heart of the disciple, an invisible river, a river of light.

A MASTER OLD IN VIRTUE AND HOLINESS.... What does this sutra mean: OLD IN VIRTUE AND HOLINESS? There is a paradox: holiness is as new as the dewdrops in the early morning sun on the lotus leaf, and holiness is as ancient as the Himalayas. It is both, because it is eternal. It is from the beginning to the end, but it is new, too, every moment new, renewing itself. It is not a dead thing just sitting there; it is an alive process. It is not a stagnant pool, it is a river rushing towards the ocean. So it is new every moment; hence every buddha is young forever.

Have you ever seen any statue of Buddha as an old man of eighty-two years? No. Have you ever seen any statue of Mahavira as old, or Rama, or Krishna as old? There are no statues of Buddha, Krishna, or Mahavira as old, although they all lived to a very old age, all passed the age of eighty. Why don't we have their statues as old men? To represent the eternal youth of truth, the eternal freshness of truth.

And still what they say is the ancientmost: AES DHAMMO SANANTANO... so ancient that in fact there has never been a beginning. SANANTANO means beginningless -- forever it has been.

To represent this there is told another phenomenon: Lao Tzu is said to have been born old. Buddha died when he was eighty-two and Lao Tzu was born when he was eighty-two. He was born eighty-two years old; he lived in his mother's womb for eighty-two years. A beautiful story. Not that he really lived -- because one has to think of the woman also! -- but it says something. It says that truth is so ancient, it is always old.

These stories are beautiful.

It is said that when Zarathustra was born... he is the only child in the whole history of humanity about whom such a story is told. When he was born -- every child cries when he is born -- Zarathustra laughed. Beautiful! Not that he could have really done it. No child can do it -- it is physiologically impossible -- the child has to cry. Through crying he clears his chest and the breathing system. He cannot laugh, he cannot even breathe; first he has to cry.

If the child does not cry for a few seconds, a few minutes, that means he is not going to live at all. Then he has to be forced. The doctor hangs him upside down and gives him a good slap on the bottom to help him cry. If he cries, that means he is going to live. If he cries, that clears the chest -- because much mucus gathers in the chest while he is in the mother's womb. He does not breathe in the mother's womb so the whole breathing system remains clogged with mucus. So each child physiologically has to cry; through crying he gets rid of the mucus. Laughter is not possible.

But it is very symbolic that Zarathustra laughed. What does it symbolize? It symbolizes that this whole life is just illusory, only worth laughing at. It is ridiculous! He knows from the very beginning it is ridiculous. The real life is something totally different.

TO REVERE SUCH A MAN, A MASTER OLD IN VIRTUE AND HOLINESS, IS TO HAVE VICTORY OVER LIFE ITSELF.... By revering a buddha, by respecting a buddha, by trusting a buddha, you are conquering life itself. And you will attain to beauty, strength and happiness. In that surrender you will become beautiful, because the ego is gone and the ego is ugly. And you will become strong, because the ego is gone -- the ego is always weak and impotent. And you will become happy for the first time, because for the first time you have seen a glimpse of truth, for the first time you have seen a glimpse of your own being. The buddha is a mirror: when you bow down you see your original face reflected in the buddha. Let your heart be full of the prayer:

BUDDHAM SHARANAM GACHCHAMI,
SANGHAM SHARANAM GACHCHAMI,
DHAMMAM SHARANAM GACHCHAMI.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 3

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Vast as the sky

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The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
THE WESTERN MIND IS SO ORIENTED TOWARD ANALYSIS, THE LEFT HEMISPHERE OF THE BRAIN -- THE EASTERN MIND JUST THE OPPOSITE, THE INTUITIVE RIGHT HEMISPHERE. THE WEST IS FASCINATED BY THE EAST AND THE EAST BY THE WEST. EQUAL AMOUNTS OF BOTH -- IS THIS THE HARMONY OF WISDOM AND THE TRANSCENDENCE OF OPPOSITES?

Prem Dhanesh, the transcendence of opposites is not a quantitative phenomenon, it is a qualitative revolution. It is not a question of equal amounts of both; that will be a very materialistic solution. Quantity means matter. Equal amounts of both will give you only an

appearance of synthesis but not a real synthesis -- a dead synthesis, not alive, not breathing, not with a heart beating.

The real synthesis is a dialogue: not equal amounts of both, but a loving relationship, an I/thou relationship. It is a question of bridging the opposites, not putting them together in one place.

Both are important, immensely important. Neither analysis can be discarded nor intuition. Discard analysis and you become outwardly poor, starved, unhealthy. And when one is outwardly poor, starved, unhealthy, how can he go inwards? It is impossible.

The outward poverty prevents the inward journey. You are so obsessed with food, clothes, shelter, you don't have time and space to go in, to think about the higher things of life.

In the Upanishads there is a beautiful story. Shvetketu, a young man, came back from the university full of knowledge. He was a brilliant student, he had topped the university with all the medals and all the degrees that were possible, available. He came back home with great pride. His old father, Uddalak, looked at him and asked him a single question. He said to him, "You have come full of knowledge, but do you know the knower? You have accumulated much information, your consciousness is full of borrowed wisdom -- but what is this consciousness? Do you know who you are?"

Shvetketu said, "But this question was never raised in the university. I have learned the Vedas, I have learned language, philosophy, poetry, literature, history, geography. I have learned all that was available in the university, but this was not a subject at all. You are asking a very strange question; nobody ever asked me in the university. It was not on the syllabus, it was not in my course."

Uddalak said, "You do one thing: be on a fast for two weeks, then I will ask you something."

He wanted to show his knowledge, just a young man's desire. He must have dreamed that his father would be very happy. Although the father was saying, "Wait for two weeks and fast," he started talking about the ultimate, the absolute, the Brahman.

The father said, "You wait two weeks, then we will discuss about Brahman."

Two days' fast, three days' fast, four days' fast, and the father started asking him, "What is Brahman?" In the beginning he answered a little bit, recited what he had crammed, displayed. But by the end of the week he was so tired, so exhausted, so hungry, that when the father asked, "What is Brahman?" he said, "Stop all this nonsense! I am hungry, I think only of food and you are asking me what Brahman is. Right now, except food nothing is Brahman."

The father said, "So your whole knowledge is just because you were not starved. Because you were taken care of, your body was nourished, it was easy for you to talk about great philosophy. Now is the real question. Now bring your knowledge!"

Shvetketu said, "I have forgotten all. Only one thing haunts me: hunger, hunger -- day in, day out. I cannot sleep, I cannot rest. There is fire in my belly, I am burning, and I don't know anything at all. I have forgotten all that I have learned."

The father said, "My son, food is the first step towards Brahman. Food is Brahman -- ANNAM BRAHMA." A tremendously significant statement. India has forgotten it completely. ANNAM BRAHMA: food is God, the first God.

If you drop the analytical mind, science disappears. If you drop the analytical mind, you can't be affluent; you are bound to be poor and hungry, and you will lose your first contact

with God.

The West is in that contact; nothing is wrong about it. This orientation in analysis is a significant step towards knowing God. I am not against it. But one should not stop at it. Food is not an ultimate value, it is a means to an end. And if you have a meditative pilgrimage you start transforming food into prayer.

It depends. The painter eats the same food, but it becomes painting in him. The poet also eats the same food, it becomes poetry in him. The lover also eats the same food, it becomes love in him. The murderer also eats the same food, it becomes murder and destruction in him. Alexander, Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler, Gautam Buddha, Jesus Christ and Krishna, they were not eating different kinds of food; the food is the same, more or less. But in Adolf Hitler it becomes destruction, in Gautam Buddha it becomes compassion. Food is raw energy; it depends on you how you transform it. You are the transformer; you are really significant, not what you eat.

Money is not bad in itself. That's my basic approach towards existence: money is neutral, it depends on you. In the hands of a man of understanding, money is tremendously beautiful. It can become music, it can become art, it can become science, it can become religion. It is not money that is bad, it is the person. The stupid person, if he has money, does not know what to do with it; his money creates more greed. Money can free you from greed, but the stupid person changes money into more greed. It becomes anger, it becomes sexuality, it becomes lust. The more money the stupid person has, the more stupid he becomes, because he becomes more powerful to do stupid things.

With the wise, everything is transformed into wisdom.

The analytical mind is not bad, the scientific approach towards reality is not bad -- but it is only a means, it can't be the end. The end is self-knowledge, the end is to know God, the end is to know the eternal, the deathless. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO: that is the end, to know the ultimate law which pervades, permeates the whole existence -- because by knowing it, one is liberated. Truth liberates.

The East has contributed greatly, immensely towards that ultimate end. But without means, how can you reach the end? And without the end what is the point of having all the means? It is a question of deep dialogue between East and West, it is a question of a marriage, not a quantitative combination of these two different approaches, not half East, half West, not a little bit of science and a little bit of religion. Human life is not that mathematical; it is poetic.

What is needed is a dialogue, an I/thou relationship, a love affair between East and West, a deep embrace. It is not a question of equal quantities; the WHOLE West and the WHOLE East meeting and merging into each other -- not half East, half West -- the whole East and the whole West melting into each other in a deep love relationship. Then only, the real synthesis, the transcendence of opposites, will be possible.

When two lovers meet in deep orgasmic joy, there is transcendence. The attraction is there: the East feels fascinated by the West, the West is fascinated by the East, but the danger is that the people from the West who are too fascinated with the East will drop being Western, they will become Eastern; and the people who are fascinated by the West will drop being Eastern and will become Western. So nothing has changed; there has been no meeting, there has been no merger, just the same problem again. People have simply changed their places: now the Eastern is standing in the Western hemisphere and the Western is standing in the Eastern hemisphere. Now the Westerner is meditating and the Easterner is studying in Oxford, in Cambridge, in Harvard, and becoming a scientist, a physicist. This is not going to

help because there is no meeting happening.

My effort here is not to change the Western mind into the Eastern, not to change the Eastern mind into the Western, but to let here be a meeting of both -- not in part but in totality. And remember, when two wholes meet, it becomes one whole. When two totalities meet, it becomes one totality: that is transcendence. It is urgently needed, because without it there is no hope for humanity, no future for humanity.

What we are trying to do here is of immense importance for the future of man. It is not an ordinary experiment -- in fact there is no other experiment which is more important than this. You may not be aware that you are participating in something which can save the world. Otherwise the division between the Eastern and the Western is going to kill humanity. The East is poor, too poor, and the West is becoming too rich, and the rift is becoming bigger and bigger every day. This rift is bound to create, sooner or later, a third world war -- which will be destructive to both.

Before it happens we have to spread a new vision, we have to give birth to a new humanity, a man who is neither Eastern nor Western but both together simultaneously; not in equal amounts, not half Eastern, half Western -- fully Western, fully Eastern.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,
I WANT TO BECOME A SANNYASIN, BUT I CANNOT BECAUSE I AM ALREADY A PRACTICING CATHOLIC. HOW CAN I ACCEPT TWO MASTERS? AND AM I ALLOWED TO ASK QUESTIONS BEFORE I BECOME A SANNYASIN?

Alexander, there is no question of accepting two masters. It is not a question of masters, it is a question of surrender. If you are surrendered to Christ, you are surrendered to me. If you are surrendered to me, you are surrendered to Christ, to Buddha, to Mahavira, to Krishna. The question is of surrender. You are taking the question from the wrong end. If you know how to surrender, then all the masters are one. Then you will find Christ in Buddha, and Buddha in Christ.

The surrendered heart becomes so deeply harmonious that it can see that Krishna and Christ are not different. Certainly their language is different -- Krishna speaks Sanskrit, Christ speaks Aramaic. Certainly they use different metaphors, different parables. They are different fingers but pointing to the same moon. If you can see the moon, will you be worried about the fingers? If you can see the moon, will you be obsessed with the finger -- whether the finger is that of Krishna or Christ or Buddha or Lao Tzu? What does it matter? Once the moon is known, the fingers are forgotten. To become obsessed too much with the finger is a state of pathology. The Hindu is ill, the Mohammedan is ill, the Christian is ill. They have become fascinated too much, obsessed with the fingers.

There is only one moon, but it is reflected in a thousand and one lakes. Don't become too much attached to the reflection in the lakes, don't become too much attached to the lake! The lake has nothing to do with the moon; even if the lake disappears, the moon remains. The lake may become disturbed, the reflection may be lost, but the moon is there.

Yes, there are different lakes, and they have different kinds of water. One lake is salty, another lake is sweet; one lake has a bluish tinge to its color, another lake is a little green -- and so on, so forth. One lake is very deep. The other is very shallow. But these differences don't make any difference to the moon reflected in those lakes.

If you are really a practicing Catholic you will not hesitate even for a single moment in becoming a sannyasin. Because you are hesitating, let me say to you: you are not a practicing Catholic. And what do you mean by "practicing Catholic"? Because you go every Sunday to the church? Because you do the Lord's Prayer every night? Because you read the Bible every day for a certain period of time? What do you mean by being a practicing Catholic? Then why are you here? For what? If you have found the answer, you need not be here. If you have not found the answer, remember, you have still to inquire, still to journey....

I am offering my hand and you say, "How can I hold two masters' hands?" Do you think you are holding Christ's hand? Look again! Your hands are empty. If you cannot hold the hand of a living master, how can you hold the hand of a master gone for two thousand years? You cannot even be certain whether he ever existed or not. There are people who think that it is only a story, that there has never been an historical person like Christ. There are people, great scholars, who think that this is only an ancient folk drama, this whole story of Jesus has never been a reality.

How are you going to drop these doubts? And if you look into the story, it will create a thousand and one doubts in you. Jesus walking on water, Alexander, can you really believe it? And when I say "really" I mean REALLY. Can you really believe it -- somebody walking on water? Can you really believe Jesus, touching blind people's eyes and giving them sight? Can you really believe Jesus bringing Lazarus back to life from death? Do you believe Jesus is born out of a virgin mother? Is it possible? Do you believe that Jesus came back from death after three days, resurrected?

Look deep down: you will have a thousand and one doubts. In fact, it is so difficult to believe even a living master, how to believe in a dead master? And around dead masters stories are bound to be created by the disciples, out of their foolishness. They think that by creating these stories they will help the message to spread. And for a time being it may be so -- there were days when Jesus became important only because he was born out of a virgin mother. Buddha was not born out of a virgin mother, Mahavira was not born out of a virgin mother, Krishna was not born.... So it was something rare, unique; nobody else could claim it, it impressed people. But as people became more and more educated, as intelligence grew, as people became more and more thinkers, the same thing became the problem. Now one hesitates even to mention it.

Resurrection helped Christianity to spread all over the world, because Jesus was the only one who came back from death: of course, he has firsthand knowledge about what happens after death. Buddha, Mahavira, they are alive and talking about death and beyond, but they don't have any authentic experience. Jesus has. This helped Christianity to spread all over the world. But now the same thing has become a disadvantage. Now to talk about resurrection is to be laughed at.

What do you mean that you are a practicing Catholic? If you were really a practicing Catholic, there are only two alternatives: either you would not have been here, there would have been no need; or if you had felt the presence of Christ-consciousness here, then there would have been no hesitation on your part in becoming a sannyasin. That will be really becoming a Catholic, that will be becoming a christ.

Don't be a Christian; that is not enough. Unless you are a christ, nothing has happened. Try to be a christ, not to be a Christian. The Christian is only a believer, and the believer is always blind. The christ has eyes. And remember, when I use the word 'christ' I don't mean Jesus only. Christ is a state of ultimate consciousness: in the East we call it the state of being a buddha, the state of being a JINA. These are the same words. Jesus is only one of the

christs -- Buddha is another, Lao Tzu is another, and there have been so many, and there will be so many. It is a long procession of lights.

And there is always a living christ somewhere or other. You can call him a buddha, you can call him a christ; it simply depends what language you are using. But don't be a fanatic, don't be sectarian; that creates stupidity, that does not help in growing, it does not help in attaining more consciousness.

As an experiment, two scientists decided to mate a male human with a female gorilla. They agreed only someone really stupid would submit to such an act, so they went down to the docks and grabbed Fanelli who had just gotten off the boat. "We will give you five thousand dollars to go to bed with a gorilla," proposed one of the scientists. "Will you do it?" "Okay, I do it," agreed Fanelli. "But on three conditions." "What are they?" asked the men of science. "First-a, I am-a only gonna do it-a once," said the Italian. "Second-a, nobody can-a watch. And-a third-a, if a kid is born, it is-a gotta be raised a Catholic."

Alexander, enough of Catholics, enough of Protestants, enough of Hindus and Mohammedans. Now be finished with all that nonsense. Let a new humanity emerge, where Jews and Hindus and Jainas and Buddhists will not be constantly fighting, quarreling, trying to destroy each other, trying to impose their own ideas upon others; where man will be free to choose. You don't seem to be free to choose. Your being a Catholic seems to be like chains on your feet, your being a Catholic seems to be like a prison wall around you. You are not free.

You say, "I want to be a sannyasin..." Then who is preventing you? You want to be a sannyasin yet your being a Catholic prevents you. It is a wall, it is not a bridge. True religion is always a bridge and never a wall.

McGuinty sat in the confessional. "Father," he said to the priest, "I don't feel I need forgiveness for my various adulteries." "Why not?" asked the astonished priest. "Well," said McGuinty, "The only married women I have relations with are all Jewish!" "Oh, you are right, my son!" said the priest. "That's the only way to screw the Jews."

You are allowed to do the same thing to a Jew which you are not allowed to do to a Christian. You are allowed to do happily, welcomingly, something to a Mohammedan which you are not allowed to do to a Hindu. What kind of religiousness is this? What kind of humanity have we created? Neurotic it is, psychotic it is. We need a healthier human being.

My sannyasin is not getting involved in a sect; this is not a sect because we don't have any ideology. I don't preach any ideology. Even atheists are here and they are sannyasins and they don't believe in God. And I don't make it a basic requirement. There are no basic requirements, except your longing for truth -- but that is not a thing that makes you sectarian. In fact, the inquiry for truth, the longing for truth, makes you absolutely nonsectarian.

And a religious person is nonsectarian. He is simply religious -- not Christian, not Hindu. He cannot afford to be Hindu or Christian. How can he afford to be so limited? He cannot afford to get involved in prejudices; he cannot believe in conclusions already arrived at by others. He is on his own journey: he wants to know truth with his own eyes, he wants to hear God with his own ears, he wants to feel life and existence with his own heart. His search is

individual.

Sannyasins are not part of a sect. This is the meeting of individuals; we have met because we are on the same journey. There is no ideology binding my sannyasins with each other; it is just because of the same inquiry for truth that accidentally we have met on the same road. We are fellow-travelers. Nothing binds one sannyasin to another sannyasin; there is no bondage of belief, tradition, scripture. And in fact sannyasins are not connected with each other at all directly -- their connection is with me.

One sannyasin is connected with me, another sannyasin is connected with me, hence they are connected with each other via me. There is no other organization. I am functioning only as a center and they are all connected with me, hence they feel connected with each other.

That's how a commune arises, a SANGHA is born. A commune can be alive only when the buddha is present, when the christ is present. Once the christ is gone, the commune disappears and becomes a community. The commune disappears and becomes a sect. I would not like my sannyasins to become a sect ever.

Alexander, you also ask, "And am I allowed to ask questions before I become a sannyasin?"

You have already asked a question, and I have already answered it. Yes, you are absolutely welcome. In fact, after becoming a sannyasin it becomes more and more difficult to ask questions -- they look so stupid. The longer you are here, the less you ask. And those who have been here longest have completely forgotten to ask anything. Don't be worried about that. You can ask questions just for questions' sake; you need not be a sannyasin.

And in fact I am more interested in questions which come from nonsannyasins, because then I can seduce them.

The Russian rabbit fled across the border at Brest and did not stop until a Polish rabbit assured him he was in Poland. "Why are you running?" asked the Polish rabbit.

"Because they are castrating all the camels in Russia," said the Russian bunny.

"But you are not a camel, you are a rabbit!"

"Yes -- but they castrate first and ask questions afterwards."

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IN REBIRTHING A PART OF ME THAT HAD BEEN KNOWLEDGE BUT NOT KNOWN HAPPENED. FIRST THERE WAS PAIN AND FEAR, THEN AN EXPLOSION IN ME THAT FELT LIKE A WILD ANIMAL, FOLLOWED BY TREMENDOUS RELIEF AND JOY. I FELT THAT A DARK CLOUD I HAVE CARRIED A LONG TIME PASSED OUT OF ME. YET STILL I KNOW NOTHING OF WHO I AM. PLEASE COMMENT.

Prem Gyanam, "Who am I?" is not really a question; hence it can never be answered, neither by others nor by yourself. Then what is it? It is a koan. "Who am I?" is utterly absurd. By asking it, don't hope that one day you will get the answer. If you go on asking, "Who am I? Who am I?" -- if you make it a meditation, as Raman Maharshi used to say to his disciples.... He used to give only one simple meditation: just sit and repeat, first loudly, then not so loudly, then just in your throat; then even the throat is not to be used, just deep down in your heart let it resound: "Who am I? Who am I?" Go on asking....

And people used to think that if they follow the instructions rightly, one day suddenly

they will know the answer. That is not true; you will never come to the answer. But by asking it, first all your answers that you had before, ideas about yourself, will disappear too.

"Who am I?" is like a thorn. It can pull out the thorn that is in your feet. You can use this thorn; you can use this thorn to pull out the thorn that is already hurting you in the foot. When both the thorns are out, you can throw both of them. You need not keep the second one because it has been such a blessing to you, it pulled out the first. You need not put it in the place of the first just out of reverence, gratitude.

"Who am I?" is just a subtle device; it is as absurd as Zen koans.

Zen masters say to the disciples, "Go and meditate: what is the sound of one hand clapping?" Now, one hand cannot clap. The master knows it, the disciple knows it -- that one hand cannot clap -- but the master insists, "Meditate on it. Go crazy meditating -- ask and ask and ask, and let the question go deeper and deeper. Let it sink in your heart, in your very soul."

When the master says, the disciple has to do it. Sometimes ten years, sometimes twenty years pass, and the disciple goes on asking this absurd question, knowing perfectly well that one hand cannot clap. And the master says, "If you come across some answers, bring them to me." And sometimes the disciple invents answers, because he gets tired of the question. Sometimes he hopes, "Maybe this is the answer," and he brings it to the master. He says, "The sound of running water, that is one hand clapping."

And the master hits him with the staff on his head and says, "You fool! This is not the answer. Go back" -- because the sound of running water is not one hand clapping, the sound is because of the rocks. Remove the rocks and the sound will disappear. So there are two things clashing, not one thing.

Then he goes and he meditates. And while he is meditating he hears the distant call of a cuckoo, and he thinks "This is it! This MUST be -- so beautiful, so tremendously otherworldly. This is the celestial music; this must be the real thing." And he comes running, and is beaten again.

Zen masters are really experts in beating... not only beating; sometimes throwing you out of the window, sometimes closing the door in your face. They can do anything to wake you up, their compassion is such. And you are again given a good beating, and the master shouts that you are utterly stupid: "This is not it. Go again and meditate." And so on, so forth, it continues, continues, many answers. And no answer is ever accepted; no answer can ever be accepted.

Sometimes it happens, even before the disciple has said what answer he has got, the master starts beating him -- because it is not a question of what answer he brings; that is utterly irrelevant. Whatsoever answer he has brought is going to be wrong. All answers are wrong.

But one day he comes and the master hugs him, because he can see in his eyes, the way he walks, the grace that surrounds him, the climate that he has brought with himself, the silence: no question, no answer. Not that he has brought any answer; on the contrary, this time he has come even without the question, he has forgotten the question itself. He is not asking any more. He comes utterly silent, not even a ripple in his mind. And the master recognizes it immediately.

Sometimes it has happened that the disciple has not turned up and the master had to seek and search for the disciple, because he felt deep down in his heart that the question had disappeared. And now the disciple is feeling, "Why bother the master unnecessarily? What is the point? There is no answer, no question." And the silence is such, and it is so tremendous,

that he does not want to come out of it.

And the master comes and says to him, "Now that you have the answer, what are you doing here? Why didn't you turn up? I have been waiting for you."

Once it happened:

When Rinzai was taking leave of his master -- because the master had said, "You go for a three-year pilgrimage, go to all the temples and all the monasteries" -- and before he was leaving, he started beating him. Rinzai said, "But I have not said anything, I have not done anything. What kind of farewell is this? I am going for a three-year pilgrimage on foot" -- in those ancient days it was dangerous -- "I may come back, I may not come back."

The master said, "That's why. I may not have another chance to beat you. I am suspicious. You are just on the verge of that great silence descending. Just the last part of the question, not even 'Who am I?' but only the question mark is there. And any day it will disappear, and then nobody knows whether you will come or you may not come. And I am an old man; where will I come and search and seek you? This is my last opportunity to beat you -- I cannot miss it!"

And yes, it was so; it was the last opportunity. Rinzai came back after three years, but he was enlightened. He came back and slapped the master and said, "You rascal! You were right. Just once I also want to hit you. You have been beating me at least for twenty years. Just for once...!"

The master was laughing and he said, "You are entitled. You can do it whenever you feel like doing it, but just remember that I am a very old man."

Gyanam, you say, "Yet still I know nothing of who I am." Nobody has ever known. Then what is the difference between a buddha and you? You also don't know who you are, the buddha also does not know who he is -- then what is the difference? He is not bothered by it. He laughs at it, he takes it for granted that life is a mystery. There is no question and there is no answer.

Life is not a question-answer game. It is not a puzzle to be solved, it is a mystery to be lived.

"Pa, I wanna go to college," said Leon.

"Do you know what is what?"

"Huh?"

"Do you know what is what? Go into the bathroom and think for a few minutes, and if you find out what is what, I send you to college."

Leon went into the bathroom, thought a few minutes, came out and said, "Pa, I don't know what is what."

"Sure you don't know what is what. Go out and get yourself a job and when you find out what is what I send you to college."

Leon left, went to a nearby bar, and began drinking. He met Alice, a blonde sitting at the bar. Soon they wound up at her apartment. After a few drinks she said, "Excuse me while I slip into something more comfortable."

Alice returned a few moments later, completely nude. Leon looked at her and said, "What is this?"

"What is what?"

"If I knew what's what I would be in college, not here."

Now you tell me what is what. This is a koan. This Leon's pa must have been a Zen master: what is what.

Now you are asking, "Who am I?" You are yourself, you are you. To ask, "Who am I?" means you are asking for some identity, whether "I am A or B or C or D." You are simply yourself! You cannot be A, you cannot be B, you cannot be C. You are just yourself, you are nothing else. So there is no way to answer it.

Then why is this question given to you? This question is given to you so that it can destroy; it is like a hammer, it can destroy all your old identities. For example, you think, "My name is Ram, so I am Ram." When you ask, "Who am I?" the question will arise, "What about Ram? I am Ram!" But you can see that that is only a name; it is not your reality, it is a given name from the outside. Your parents had to call you something: they called you "Ram." They could have called you "Rahim," they could have given you any name, and any name would have been as relevant as Ram, because you are a nameless reality. So asking, "Who am I?" you will forget this identity with Ram.

Then deep down somebody says, "I am a Jaina," "I am a Hindu," "I am a Jew." That too is an accidental identity -- accidents of birth -- you are not it. How can you be a Jew? What does it mean to be a Jew or a Hindu? Just that you have been brought up by Hindus or Jews, that's all. If a Jewish child is taken away from his home and is brought up by Hindus he will never come to know, never will dream that he is a Jew. Although born of Jewish parents he will never become aware of it -- unless he is told. He will think that he is a Hindu. He may even fight for Hinduism with a Jew, he may kill a Jew for the sake of Hinduism, not knowing at all that he himself is a Jew.

Now in India there are millions of Christians. They think they are Christians, but they have always lived here; their parents were Hindus, their parents' parents were Hindus. For centuries they have been Hindus! Now they have been bribed, persuaded, convinced, converted, and they have become Christians. They can kill Hindus; if the need arises they can fight.

There are millions of Mohammedans in India; they have all been converted forcibly. At least Christians have been persuaded sophisticatedly -- but millions of Hindus have been forced at the point of daggers. The choice was: "You can live as a Mohammedan or you have to die." And who wants to die? Lust for life is so deep that it is better to live, even if you have to live as a Mohammedan it's okay. Now those millions of Mohammedans who live in India basically have the blood of Hindus. But they can kill Hindus -- they have been killing -- and they are being killed by Hindus. Hindus are killing their own children; now they are called Mohammedans. Just change the label... and such a great change happens just by changing the label.

When you ask, "Who am I?" you will come across that point. You will see that you are neither a Mohammedan nor a Hindu nor a Christian; these are accidents of birth, upbringing. If you have been born in Russia you would not have been either Hindu, Christian or Mohammedan; you would have been a communist, a practicing communist -- just as you are a practicing Catholic now. You would have denied God, you would have denied prayer, you would have denied the whole religion -- because the state is powerful, and nobody wants to go against the state; it is dangerous.

The state has never been so powerful as it is in Russia today. The individual has never been reduced to such impotence as he has been in communist countries. He cannot pray according to his own choice, he cannot go to the church or to the temple according to his own

will; the state decides everything. If the state says, "This is so," this is so. You cannot defy the state, otherwise the consequences are great. You will be thrown into imprisonment or sent to Siberia or you may be simply killed. Or, even more dangerous, you may be forced to live in a mental hospital where you will be given electric shocks, insulin shocks; you can be declared to be mad. If you are not communist in Russia you can be declared insane. And you are absolutely helpless; if the doctors say you are insane, you are insane. There is no way to fight with them.

Mulla Nasruddin was dying, on his deathbed, almost in a coma. The doctor came to see him. The doctor was drunk; he took his pulse but could not find any pulse because he was holding the hand in the wrong way. He looked at Nasruddin's face and said to his wife, "I'm sorry to say it, but your husband is dead."

At that very moment, Nasruddin opened his eyes and said, "What! I am alive!"

The wife said, "You keep quiet. He knows better, he is a doctor, an M.D., Ph.D., F.R.C.S. You have some nerve to deny an authority! Keep quiet!"

That's how it is in Soviet Russia: if the psychologist says you are insane, you are insane. You know you are not, but you are utterly helpless; the monster of the state is so huge, and you are caught in the teeth of the monster. If you were born in Russia you would not be Catholic, you would not be Protestant, you would not be Hindu, you would not be Mohammedan.

When you meditate on "Who am I?" you will come across this point, and it will dissolve. And the deeper you will go... then deeper questions will come: first sociological, theological, then biological. You have a man's body or a woman's body: the question will arise, "Am I a man or a woman?" The consciousness is neither. The consciousness cannot be male or female. The consciousness is simply consciousness; it is just the capacity of being a witness. Soon you will pass that barrier too; you will forget that you are man or woman.

And so on, so forth. When all the old identities are dropped, nothing remains, only the question resounds in the silence: "Who am I?" The question cannot go on, on its own; it needs some answers, otherwise it cannot persist. A point comes when asking becomes absurd... the question also evaporates. That is the moment which is called self-knowing -- ATMAGYAN. That is the moment when, without receiving any answer, you simply know, you feel, who you are.

Prem Gyanam, go on inquiring. A few dark clouds have disappeared from your being: feel grateful. There are many more; they all have to disappear. These are all dark clouds -- Catholic, Protestant, Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan, Jaina, Buddhist, communist. These are all dark clouds -- Indian, Chinese, Japanese, German, English. These are all dark clouds -- white, black, man, woman, beautiful, ugly, intelligent, stupid. These are ALL dark clouds! Anything that you can become identified with is a dark cloud.

Let them all go. The beginning has happened. But don't be in a hurry and don't wait for any answer -- there is none. When all questions and all answers have been left behind and you are alone, totally alone, absolutely silent, knowing nothing, no content, no object to know -- that purity of consciousness, that pure sky of consciousness, that's what you are.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MASTERY OVER THE SELF AND CONTROL?

Divya, they are contraries. Mastery over the self has no self in it; it is utterly selfless. Mastery is there, but there is no self to master; there is nothing to master or to be mastered, there is only pure consciousness. In that purity you are part of God; in that purity you are the lord of existence itself. But there is no self.

When we say "self-mastery" we are using a wrong language. But nothing can be done because all language is wrong at those heights; in those moments of plenitude no word is adequate. In control there is self. In control there is more self than ever. The uncontrolled person has not that much self, that much ego -- how can he have? He knows his weaknesses.

That's why you will come across a very strange phenomenon: your so-called saints are more egoistic than the sinners. The sinners are more human, more humble; the saints are almost inhuman because of their control -- they think they are suprahuman. Because they can control their instincts, they can go on long fasts, they can remain sexually starved for years or for their whole life, they can remain awake for days together, not a single moment's sleep -- because they can have such control over the body, over the mind, it naturally gives them a great ego. It feeds their idea that, "I am somebody special." It nourishes their disease.

The sinner is more humble. He has to be; he knows he cannot control anything. When anger comes he becomes angry. When love comes he becomes love. When sadness comes he becomes sad. He has no control over his emotions. When he is hungry he is ready to do anything to get food; even if he has to steal he will do it. He will find every possible way.

A famous Sufi story:

Mulla Nasruddin and two other saints went for a pilgrimage to Mecca. They were passing through a village, it was the last phase of their journey. Their money was almost finished; just a little bit was left. They purchased a certain sweet called halva, but it was not enough for all the three and they were too hungry. What to do? -- and they were not even ready to divide it because then it will not fulfill anybody's hunger. So everybody started bragging about himself that, "I am more important to existence, so my life has to be saved."

The first saint said, "I have been fasting, I have been praying for so many years; nobody here present is more religious and holy than I am. And God wants me to be saved, so the halva has to be given to me."

The second saint said, "Yes, I know, you are a man of great austerities, but I am a great scholar. I have studied all the scriptures, my whole life I have devoted in the service of knowledge. And the world does not need people who can fast. What can you do? -- you can only fast. You can fast in heaven! The world needs knowledge. The world is so ignorant that it cannot afford to miss me. The halva has to be given to me."

Mulla Nasruddin said, "I am not an ascetic, so I cannot claim any self-control. I am not a great knowledgeable person either, so that too I cannot claim. I am an ordinary sinner, and I have heard that God is always compassionate to the sinners. The halva belongs to me."

They could not come to any conclusion. Finally they decided that, "We all three should sleep without eating the halva, and let God decide himself. So whosoever is given the best dream by God, in the morning that dream will be decisive."

In the morning the saint said, "Nobody can compete with me anymore. Give me the halva -- because in the dream I kissed God's feet. That is the ultimate that one can hope -- what greater experience can there be?"

The pundit, the scholar, the knowledgeable person laughed and he said, "That is nothing -- because God hugged me and kissed me! You kissed his feet? He kissed ME and hugged me! Where is the halva? It belongs to me."

They looked at Nasruddin and asked, "What dream did you have?"

Nasruddin said, "I am a poor sinner, my dream was very ordinary -- very ordinary, not worth even telling. But because you insist and because we have agreed, I will tell you. In my sleep God appeared and he said, 'You fool! What are you doing? Eat the halva!' So I have eaten it -- because how can I deny his order? There is no halva left now!"

Self-control gives you the subtlest ego. Self-control has more self in it than anything else. But self-mastery is a totally different phenomenon; it has no self in it. Control is cultivated, practiced; with great effort you have to manage it. It is a long struggle, then you arrive at it. Mastery is not a cultivated thing, it is not to be practiced. Mastery is nothing but understanding. It is not control at all.

For example, you can control anger, you can repress it, you can sit on top of it. Nobody will ever know what you have done, and you will always be praised by people that in such a situation where anybody would have become angry, you remained so calm and collected and cool. But you know that all that calmness and coolness was on the surface: deep down you were boiling, deep down there was fire, but you repressed it in the unconscious, you forced it deep down into your unconscious and you sat upon it like a volcano, and you are still sitting on it.

The man of control is the man of repression. He goes on repressing. Because he goes on repressing, he goes on accumulating all that is wrong. His whole life becomes a junkyard. Sooner or later, and it is going to be sooner than later, the volcano explodes -- because there is only a certain limit you can contain. You repress anger, you repress sex, you repress all kinds of desires, longings -- how long can you go on repressing? You can contain only so much, then one day it is more than you can control: it explodes.

Your so-called saints, men of self-control, can be provoked very easily. Just scratch a little, just scratch, and you will be surprised: the animal comes up immediately. Their saintliness is not even skin-deep; they are carrying many demons in them, they are somehow managing. And their life is a life of misery, because it is a life of constant struggle. They are neurotic people and they are on the verge of insanity, always on the verge. Any small thing can just prove the last straw on the camel. They are not religious in my vision of life.

The religious man controls nothing, the religious man represses nothing. The religious man understands, tries to understand, not to control. He becomes more meditative: he watches his anger, his sex, his greed, his jealousy, his possessiveness. He watches all these poisonous things that surround you. He simply watches, tries to understand what anger is, and in that very understanding he transcends. He becomes a witness, and in his witnessing the anger melts as if the sun has risen and the snow has started melting.

Understanding brings a certain warmth; it is a sunrise inside you and the ice starts melting around you. It is like a flame inside you and darkness starts disappearing.

The man of understanding, meditation, is not a man of control -- just the opposite. He is a watcher. And if you want to watch, you have to be absolutely nonjudgmental. The man who controls is judgmental, continuously condemning, "This is wrong"; continuously praising, "This is good, this is evil, this will lead to hell, this will lead to heaven." He is constantly judging, condemning, praising, choosing. The man of control lives in choice, and the man of understanding lives in choicelessness.

It is choiceless awareness that brings real transformation. And because nothing is repressed, no ego arises, no self arises. And because understanding is a subjective, interior phenomenon, nobody knows about it, nobody can see it except you. And ego comes from the outside, from other people, what they say about you: it is their opinion about you which creates the ego. They say you are intelligent, they say you are so saintly, they say you are so pious -- and naturally you feel great. Ego is from the outside. It is given by others to you. Of course, they say one thing in front of you and they say something else, just the opposite, behind your back.

Sigmund Freud used to say that even if for twenty-four hours we decide that every person on the earth will say only the truth, ONLY the truth, then all friendship will disappear, all love affairs will dissolve, all marriages will go down the drain. If a decision is taken that the whole humanity will practice only truth and nothing else only for twenty-four hours.... When a guest knocks on your door you will not say, "Come in, welcome, I was just waiting for you. How long it has been that I have not seen you! How long I have suffered. Where have you been? You make my heart throb with joy." You will say the truth that you are feeling. You will say, "So this son-of-a-bitch has come again! Now, how to get rid of this bastard?" That is deep inside, that you are controlling. You will say it to somebody else behind the back.

You watch yourself, what you say to people to their face and what you say behind their back. What you say behind the back is far truer, closer to your feeling, than what you say to the face. But ego depends on what people say to you, and it is very fragile -- so fragile that on each ego it is written: Handle with Care.

Pieracki, a Polack, Odum, a black, and Alvarez, a Mexican, were out of work and living together. Pieracki came home one night and announced he had got a job. "Hey, fellas, wake me up tomorrow at six," he said. "I have to be at work by six-thirty!"

While Pieracki slept, Odum said to Alvarez, "He got a job because he is white. We can't get one because I am black and you are brown."

So during the night they put shoeblack all over Pieracki. Then they agreed to wake him late.

Next morning when Pieracki arrived at work, the foreman said, "Who are you?"

"You hired me yesterday," he replied. "You told me to be here at six-thirty!"

"I hired a white man -- you're black!"

"I'm not!"

"Yes, you are! Go and look in the mirror!"

The Polack rushed over to the mirror, looked at himself and exclaimed, "My God! They woke up the wrong man!"

Your ego depends on mirrors. And every relationship functions as a mirror, every person you meet functions as a mirror, and this ego goes on controlling.

And why does it control in the first place, Divya? It controls because the society appreciates control, because the society gives you more ego if you control. If you follow the ideas of the society, their morality, their puritanism, their ideas of holiness, it praises you more and more. More and more people come to pay respect to you; your ego goes higher and higher, soars higher.

But remember, ego will never bring any transformation to you. Ego is the most unconscious phenomenon that is happening in you; it will make you more and more unconscious. And the person who lives through the ego is almost drunk with it; he is not in

his senses.

Fernando was getting married. There was a big wedding feast and the wine flowed like water. Things were going fine until Fernando couldn't find his beautiful bride. After looking over the guests, he found his pal, Luis, was also missing.

Fernando started searching the premises. He looked into the bridal chamber and discovered Luis making love to his bride. Fernando closed the door softly, and crept down the stairs to his guests.

"Queek! Queek! Everybody come look!" he shouted. "Luis ees so drunk he theenk he ees me!"

The ego keeps you almost in a drunken state. You don't know who you are because you believe what others say about you. And you don't know who others are because you believe what others say about others. This is a very make-believe illusory world in which we live.

Wake up! Become more conscious. By becoming conscious you will become a master of your own being. Mastery knows nothing of self, and the self knows nothing of mastery. Let that be absolutely clear to you.

And, Divya, my teaching is not for self-control, self-discipline. My teaching is for self-awareness, self-transformation. I would like you to become as vast as the sky -- because that's what really you are.

Enough for today.