

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Talks given from 21/12/79 am to 02/01/80 am

English Discourse series

13 Chapters

Year published: 1990

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #1

Chapter title: Discontent is divine

21 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

"EVERYTHING ARISES AND PASSES AWAY."

WHEN YOU SEE THIS, YOU ARE ABOVE SORROW.

THIS IS THE SHINING WAY.

"EXISTENCE IS SORROW."

UNDERSTAND, AND GO BEYOND SORROW.

THIS IS THE WAY OF BRIGHTNESS.

"EXISTENCE IS ILLUSION."

UNDERSTAND, GO BEYOND.

THIS IS THE WAY OF CLARITY.

YOU ARE STRONG, YOU ARE YOUNG.

IT IS TIME TO ARISE.

SO ARISE!

LEST THROUGH IRRESOLUTION AND IDLENESS

YOU LOSE THE WAY.

MASTER YOUR WORDS.

MASTER YOUR THOUGHTS.

NEVER ALLOW YOUR BODY TO DO HARM.

FOLLOW THESE THREE ROADS WITH PURITY

AND YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF UPON THE ONE WAY,

THE WAY OF WISDOM.

SIT IN THE WORLD, SIT IN THE DARK.

SIT IN MEDITATION, SIT IN LIGHT.

CHOOSE YOUR SEAT.

LET WISDOM GROW.

CUT DOWN THE FOREST,
NOT THE TREE.
FOR OUT OF THE FOREST COMES DANGER.

CUT DOWN THE FOREST.
FELL DESIRE.
AND SET YOURSELF FREE.

The way of Gautama the Buddha is the way of intelligence, understanding, awareness, meditation. It is not the way of belief; it is the way of seeing the truth itself. Belief simply covers up your ignorance; it does not deliver you from ignorance. Belief is a deception you play upon yourself; it is not transformation.

And the people who think themselves religious are only believers, not religious. They have no clarity, no understanding, no insight into the nature of things. They don't know what they are doing, they don't know what they are thinking. They are simply repeating conventions, traditions; dead words spoken long long ago. They cannot be certain whether those words are true or not. Nobody can be certain unless one realizes oneself.

There is only one certainty in existence and that is your own realization, your own seeing. Unless that happens, don't become contented; remain discontented. Discontentment is divine; contentment through beliefs is stupid. It is through divine discontent that one grows, but it is the path which is arduous. The path of belief is simple, convenient, comfortable. You need not do anything. You have only to say yes to the authorities: the authorities of the church, of the state. You have simply to be a slave to people who are in power.

But to follow the path of Buddha one has to be a rebel. Rebellion is its essential taste; it is only for the rebellious spirit. But only rebellious people have spirits, only they have souls. Others are hollow, empty.

These sutras of today are of immense beauty, truth. Meditate over them. The first sutra:

"EVERYTHING ARISES AND PASSES AWAY."
WHEN YOU SEE THIS, YOU ARE ABOVE SORROW.
THIS IS THE SHINING WAY.

Life is a flux, nothing abides. Still we are such fools, we go on clinging. If change is the nature of life, then clinging is stupidity, because your clinging is not going to change the law of life. Your clinging is only going to make you miserable. Things are bound to change; whether you cling or not does not matter. If you cling you become miserable: you cling and they change, you feel frustrated. If you don't cling they still change, but then there is no frustration because you were perfectly aware that they are bound to change. This is how things are, this is the suchness of life.

Remember Haldane's Law that the universe is not only queerer than we imagine, it is queerer than we CAN imagine. And remember, you are not alone. The world really is like this.

It is a very strange world. Everything is momentary, yet every momentary thing gives you the illusion of being permanent. Everything is just a soap bubble, shining beautifully in the sunrays, maybe surrounded by a rainbow, a beautiful aura of light -- but a soap bubble is a soap bubble! Any moment and it will be gone and gone forever. But for the moment it can deceive you.

And the strangest thing is that thousands of times you have been deceived, yet you don't become aware. Again another soap bubble and you will believe. Your unintelligence seems to be unlimited! How many times do you need to be hammered? How many times do your dreams have to be crushed and shattered? How many times has life to prove that clinging is nonsense? Stop clinging and then you go beyond sorrow. It is clinging that is the root cause of sorrow.

The world is dominated by two types of people: those who understand what they do not manage, and those who manage what they do not understand. Just watch your own life and you will see it happening within your mind too. You understand things which you don't manage; it is easy to understand things which you don't manage.

Somebody asked George Bernard Shaw, "Do you believe that nothing is impossible?" Bernard Shaw is reported to have said, "Yes, I DO believe that nothing is impossible, provided somebody else is going to do it."

It is easy to understand what you don't manage. What YOU manage you don't understand at all. Do you understand your life? You understand about God and you don't understand about your life energy. You understand about heaven and hell. There are people who know how many heavens there are and how many hells.

One man came to me and he said, "In our religion we believe that there are fourteen heavens. Mahavira has reached only up to the fifth; Buddha up to the sixth; Jesus, Mohammed, etcetera, only up to the fourth; Kabir, Nanak, up to the seventh. And my guru," the man said -- he belonged to the Radhaswami sect -- "MY guru has reached to the fourteenth."

I said to the man, "Yes, I know. I have seen him in the fourteenth, because I have reached to the fifteenth. I am acquainted with the guy."

He said, "Fifteenth? But in our scriptures there are only fourteen heavens, not fifteen."

I said, "How can there be fifteen in your scriptures? -- because your teacher has reached only up to the fourteenth!"

Foolish people! But they go on knowing how many heavens there are and how many hells there are. Jainas believe in seven hells. They have thrown Krishna into the seventh because he was the cause of the great war, Mahabharata. He persuaded Arjuna, his disciple, to fight and kill people. He was the cause of great violence so they have thrown him to the seventh, into the last. But in the days of Mahavira, one of the

disciples of Mahavira, Makkhali Gosal, revolted against the master and declared that there are not seven hells but seven hundred.

People go on talking nonsense -- seven and seven hundred -- and they are not aware about their own inner life, from where this breath comes, to where this breath goes. They are not aware of the closest truth of their being, and they go on talking about ultimate things. These talks about ultimate things are simply to avoid real problems of life. These are strategies of the mind to keep you occupied with utter nonsense. Beware of the mind and its cunning ways!

Buddha says: "EVERYTHING ARISES AND PASSES AWAY." WHEN YOU SEE THIS.... He is not saying, "Believe this." He is not saying, "I have become the enlightened one, so whatsoever I say you have to believe in it." He is not saying, "Because scriptures are in my favor you have to believe me." He is not saying, "Because I can prove it logically you have to believe in me."

See the beauty of the man. He says: WHEN YOU SEE THIS, YOU ARE ABOVE SORROW. In that very moment when you have seen this -- that everything is momentary and everything is a flux and everything is BOUND to change.... Do whatsoever you want to do, but nothing is going to become permanent in this life. When you have seen this with your own eyes, and you have understood it through your own intelligence, suddenly you are beyond sorrow.

What happens? A great revolution happens in that seeing; that very seeing is the revolution. Then you don't cling. The moment you see that this is a soap bubble you don't cling to it. In fact, clinging to it will force it to burst sooner; if you don't cling to it, it may remain there dancing in the wind for a while. The nonclinger can enjoy life; the clinger cannot enjoy life.

Gussie had lived a good life, having been married four times. Now she stood before the Pearly Gates.

Father Abraham said to her, "I notice that you first married a banker, then an actor, next a rabbi, and lastly an undertaker. What kind of a system is that for a respectable Jewish woman?"

"A very good system," replied Gussie. "One for the money, two for the show, three to make ready and four to go!"

If you see, you can enjoy; then it is just a game. Then everything is totally different; then it is a big drama. Then the whole earth becomes just a stage and everybody is acting his part. But if you don't see, you become obsessed; you start clinging to things, and deep down you know that they are slipping out of your hands.

"I had everything a man could want," moaned a sad-eyed friend of ours. "Money, a handsome home, the love of a beautiful and wealthy woman. Then, bang! One morning my wife walked in!"

You can't remain in the same state for long. Life changes just like dreams. Hence the mystics have been calling life nothing but a dream; a dream seen with open eyes, a dream shared by others too. In the night the dream is private; nobody can share it. In the day the dream is public; everybody can share it. In the night the dream is subjective; in the day the dream is objective. But the quality of both is the same -- writings on water. You have not even finished writing and they start disappearing. Not even writings on the sand... because on the sand the writing may stay a little longer. It will have to wait for the wind to come or somebody to walk over it. It is writing in water. You go on writing and it goes on disappearing.

Seeing it, YOU ARE ABOVE SORROW -- immediately. Then nothing else has to be done. The moment you have seen it, where is sorrow? The cause has disappeared; you have removed the very cause. You cling and you create the cause. Nonclinging is liberation.

Hence Buddha says: THIS IS THE SHINING WAY -- so simple, so luminous, that unless you are utterly blind, spiritually blind, you can't miss it. He is not talking about great metaphysical truths. He is not philosophizing. He is not using complex words and systems and theories. He is simply stating a fact that he has seen -- and YOU can see it. It has nothing to do with Buddha, it is not his invention, it is not his idea. It is the facticity of life.

Look around. Everything is changing. It is like a river moving and moving -- and you want to catch hold of it? It is mercury! If you try to catch hold of it you will lose sooner than before. Don't try to catch hold of it. Watch joyfully, silently. Witness the game, the dream... and YOU ARE ABOVE SORROW. Buddha is not saying you will GO beyond sorrow. He says, YOU are ABOVE SORROW.

"EXISTENCE IS SORROW."

UNDERSTAND, AND GO BEYOND SORROW.

THIS IS THE WAY OF BRIGHTNESS.

"EXISTENCE IS SORROW." First he says: Sorrow arises out of clinging to momentary things which you cannot make permanent. It is not in the nature of things. It is against the universal law. It is against dhamma, it is against tao. You cannot win. If you fight with the universal law you are fighting a losing battle; you will simply waste your energies. What is going to happen is bound to happen; nothing can be done about it.

All that you can do is about your consciousness. You can change your vision. You can see things in a different light, with a different context, in a new space, but you cannot change things. If you think of the world as very real you will suffer; if you see the world as a strange dream you will not suffer. If you think in terms of static entities you will suffer. If you think in terms of nouns you will suffer. But if you think in terms of verbs you will not suffer.

Nouns don't exist; they exist only in languages. In reality there are no nouns. Everything is a verb because everything is changing and everything is in a process. It is never static, it is always dynamic.

The second thing Buddha says is: "EXISTENCE IS SORROW." To be is sorrow. The ego is sorrow. First he says: See the world as dream, fluctuating, changing, moment to moment new. Enjoy it, enjoy its newness, enjoy all the surprises that it brings. It is beautiful that it is changing, nothing is wrong about it; just don't cling to it. Why do you cling? You cling because you have another fallacy: that YOU are.

The first fallacy is that things are static. And the second fallacy is that YOU are, that you have a static ego. They both go together. If you want to cling you need a clinger; if you have no need to cling, there is no need for a clinger. Go deep into it. If you don't need to cling, the ego is not needed at all, it will be pointless. In fact, it cannot exist without clinging.

The dancer can exist only if he dances. If the dance disappears, where is the dancer? The singer exists only in singing. The walker exists only in walking. So is the ego: the ego exists only in clinging, in possessing things, in dominating things. When there is no domination, no desire to dominate, no desire to cling, no desire to possess, the ego starts evaporating. On the outside you start clinging and in the inside a new clarity starts arising. The ego with all its smoke disappears, the ego with all its clouds disappears. It can't exist because it cannot be nourished anymore. For it to exist it has to cling. It has to create "my" and "mine," and it goes on creating "my" and "mine" in every possible and impossible way.

The ego says, "This is MY country," as if you have brought it with your birth, as if the earth is really divided into countries. The earth is undivided, it is one. But the ego says, "This is MY country" -- and not only that this is my country, "this is the greatest country in the world. This is the holiest land."

Ask the Indians. "This is the most spiritual country in the world. Everybody else is materialist and we are spiritualists." And everybody else has his own ideas. They are great. Ask the Germans. Nobody is of pure blood, only they are -- Aryan blood, Nordic blood, purest blood. God has created them to rule the whole world. And ask the Japanese. They have descended from the sun god directly; they are not ordinary mortals. The sun is their source, and the sun is the source of all life. And you ask anybody. Everybody has his own ideas how HIS country is great, how HIS religion is great. Religion also becomes your possession: "MY religion, MY Christianity, MY Hinduism."

Who can claim religion? Who can claim that religion is a possession? You can be religious, but you cannot claim that Christianity is yours, you cannot claim that Hinduism is yours. But the ego is so stupid! It goes on claiming all kinds of things.

Mr. Ginsberg came home one day from the garment district where he owned a company and said that he must get a mistress.

"Why?" gasped Mrs. Ginsberg.

"Well," replied her husband, "all the owners have them and it looks bad for my business that I don't."

"Well, if it is for business, alright," said Mrs. Ginsberg.

Sometime later Mr. and Mrs. Ginsberg were enjoying an evening at the opera when suddenly Mr. Ginsberg said, "Look, Miriam, there is Mr. Pincus and his mistress sitting across from us in a box."

Mrs. Ginsberg studied the pair for a long time with her opera glasses and then said, "Ours is better!"

Anything and everything will be claimed by the ego. And "ours is always better," whatsoever it is. The ego exists only through such claims. The "I" exists only as an island in the ocean of "my" and "mine." If you stop claiming things as "my" and "mine," the ego will disappear on its own accord.

Neither the wife is yours nor the husband nor the children. All belongs to the whole. Your claim is foolish. We come empty-handed into the world and we go empty-handed from the world. But nobody wants to know the truth -- it hurts. Empty-handed we come and empty-handed we go. One starts feeling shaky, one starts feeling scared. One wants to be full, not empty. It is better to be full of anything -- any garbage -- than to be empty. Emptiness looks like death, and we don't want the truth. Our whole effort is to live in convenience, even if that convenience is based on illusions.

"I demand an explanation and I want the truth!" shouted the irate husband upon discovering his wife in bed with his best friend.

"Make up your mind, George," she calmly replied. "You can't have both."

Either you can have the explanation or the truth. And people are more interested in the explanation than in the truth, hence so many philosophies. They are all explanations -- explanations to explain away things, not to give you the truth; explanations to create great smoke so you need not see the truth. And Buddha's insistence is: SEE it! -- because without seeing it you can't go above sorrow.

James, to his wife: "I am in the mood and you are so beautiful!"

Katherine: "What makes you think I am beautiful?"

James: "When I am in the mood, everybody is beautiful!"

The whole question is of your mood. If you are in the mood of an ego trip, then you will not listen to buddhas, or you will listen in such a way that you can manage, distort, interpret those truths according to yourself, to support you. If you are still interested in the ego you cannot understand these sutras.

If you have become fed up with the ego, if you are tired of its games, if you have seen that it brings only suffering and nothing else, then these truths are so simple to understand that in fact no explanation is needed. And I am not explaining them to you. I am simply hammering them on your head, from this side and from that side. You try to dodge, you try to escape, you try to close your eyes, but I go on shouting in your ears, hoping that sooner or later you will be able to understand -- because without this

understanding happening to you, your life will be a nightmare. And many lives you have wasted in nightmares. It is time to wake up!

"EXISTENCE IS SORROW." UNDERSTAND, AND GO BEYOND SORROW. THIS IS THE WAY OF BRIGHTNESS. Buddha says: This is the way of intelligence. This is not for dull, unintelligent, mediocre minds.

The way of the Buddha is for those who are intelligent. And who is not intelligent? If you decide to be intelligent, you are intelligent. You are born with great intelligence, but you keep it repressed. You are afraid of your own intelligence because your own intelligence will disturb your settled routine of life. Somehow you have managed to settle, and your own intelligence will keep you moving forward. It will go on telling you, "This is not the truth. Again you have fallen a victim of a dream. Move on. Unless you reach the truth, there is no way to rest in peace. Move on!" Because intelligence goads you to move on, you repress it.

Everybody is born intelligent. I have never come across a child who is not intelligent, but it is very rare later on to find intelligent people. What happens in the meantime? Every child turns out to be stupid later on. By the time you come from the university you are fully established in your stupidities. The university is a guarantee that now you are intelligence-proof. Nobody can make you intelligent again -- they have sealed you.

Socrates says: Know thyself. Buddha also says: Know thyself. And both have been misunderstood, Socrates more than Buddha. When Socrates says: Know thyself, people think there is someone inside who has to be known. There is nobody inside. When Socrates says: Know thyself, he is simply saying, "Go in and see what is there." He is not saying that there is someone that you will come to know; he is simply saying go in. But he does not make you so scared.

Buddha says clearly that there is no one: Go in and see. There is only seeing, but not a seer. There is understanding but nobody who understands, knowing but not a knower. This has to be understood. This is Buddha's very emphatic message: that there are processes, certainly, but there is no center to those processes. Yes, there is love but no lover, and there is meditation but no meditator, and there is liberation, but nobody is liberated. It looks very strange, but now modern science agrees with it.

As far as objective reality is concerned, modern science agrees with Buddha more than with anybody else. Hence Buddha has a great future, because science will come closer and closer every day to Buddha. Science is going to speak in the same language as Buddha. Science says there is energy but no matter. That's what Buddha is saying for the inner world: There is energy, movement, processes, but no entity, no ego.

"Know thyself" means: know that you are not. Great courage is needed to know this. People want to know that they are immortal souls. Then they are very happy: "We are immortal souls." And Buddha says, "Don't talk nonsense! You are simply not. Immortality is there, but you are not immortal. When YOU disappear completely, whatsoever is left behind... that cleanliness, that purity, that innocence, that nobodiness, that nothingness, that SHUNYA -- that is immortal. It has no beginning and no end, no birth and no death."

But rather than going in and finding the basic illusion of the ego, rather than going in and finding the root cause of all your misery, you go on throwing the responsibility on others.

Murphy's famous maxim: The man who can smile when things go wrong has thought of someone he can blame it on.

Everybody is trying to blame his misery on somebody else. And that's how we remain in misery, because this blaming is not going to help. In the first place it is wrong -- nobody else is the cause of your misery; the cause is within you. You are living with a fallacy. But even if you are living with a fallacy, the mind enjoys the idea that somebody else is responsible -- "I am not responsible"; you feel a relief.

"Doctor, you've got to do something about my husband."

"What seems to be the problem?"

"He's convinced that he is a refrigerator."

"That's terrible!"

"You're telling me!" snapped the wife. "He sleeps with his mouth open, and the light keeps me awake all night."

A woman called a psychiatrist on the phone and cried, "Doctor, you've got to help me. My husband is driving me crazy. He keeps insisting that he is Moses."

"That sounds serious," replied the psychiatrist. "I think you should bring him to my office tomorrow."

"Ah, I will," she replied, "but in the meantime how do I keep him from parting the water every time I try to take a bath?"

Even if you are mad, the mind would like to believe that somebody else is responsible -- somebody else is mad. People are ready to believe that the whole world is mad, but not themselves. In fact, a madman never accepts that he is mad. You can go to a madhouse and you can ask all the mad people, and you will be surprised: not a single mad person will agree that he is mad. The whole world is mad, he is perfectly sane.

In fact, those who understand mad people, they say that once a madman accepts that he is mad he is no longer mad; sanity has started coming into his being.

That's what all the buddhas have been saying: the moment you understand that "I am ignorant," the first glimpse of knowing has happened. The moment you say that "I am not," for the first time, real existence has penetrated you. The first time you say that "I don't possess anything," the whole world is yours. The first time you say that "I am not separate," that "I am one with the whole," you become the whole. The dewdrop does not really disappear; it becomes the ocean. By knowing one's emptiness, one's egolessness, one loses nothing, one gains all.

And the third sutra:

"EXISTENCE IS ILLUSION."
UNDERSTAND, GO BEYOND.
THIS IS THE WAY OF CLARITY.

Buddha does not give you doctrines, he does not give you dogmas. He is not a bit interested in giving you philosophies of life. His whole concern is one: how to make your mind clear, how to impart clarity to you so that you can see unhindered, so your eyes no more carry any dust, so your eyes are without dust and you can see through and through as things are.

Ordinarily whatsoever you see is your projection. That's what you call existence -- you project. The existence functions only as a screen and the projector is inside you, and you go on projecting your desires, your imaginations, your hopes, your dreams, and you go on seeing things which are not there.

People go on to the very end projecting. Even if you meet them after their death you will find them in the same mess.

Business had been terrible for Blum and he cut down on his help. In a month he had to cut down still further, and everyone said that this terrible strain became a fixation that hastened his death a few weeks afterwards.

As they were carrying his body down the aisle of the chapel, Blum suddenly sat up in the coffin and asked, "How many man are carrying me?"

"There are eight pallbearers, Mr. Blum," said the undertaker.

"Better lay off two," said Blum, lying down again.

Even after death the old obsession continues! And don't take it as a joke -- this is how things are. People go on believing in the same things after death; they go on continuing the same desires. That's how they go on coming back again and again to the earth to fulfill the same unfulfilled desires. And those desires are unfulfillable, so they go on coming again and again, millions of times.

Buddha calls it a vicious circle, a wheel which goes on moving. You are just like a spoke in the wheel. Sometimes you come up and sometimes you go down. But the wheel goes on moving up and down, up and down; life and death, life and death; one moment of success, another moment of failure; one moment of hope, another moment of despair. It goes on and on, and it has been going on for eternity. And this whole thing is your own projection -- this is not reality.

Reality can only be known when you have nothing to project. That state of nonprojection Buddha calls clarity. Clarity means you have no desire, you don't want things to be in a certain way, you are ready to see them as they are. You are simply a mirror, not a projector.

When you are a mirror, this is samadhi, this is satori. You simply reflect like the silent, clear, cool water of a lake reflects the full moon and the stars. When you are absolutely clear, no dreams, no desires, no imaginations, no memories, the whole mind put aside -- the mind is a mechanism to project -- then there is clarity and things are reflected as

they are. And for the first time you know what is the case; otherwise: "EXISTENCE IS ILLUSION."

Understand this: that whatsoever you think as existence is illusion. Understand it, and go beyond. THIS IS THE WAY OF CLARITY.

YOU ARE STRONG, YOU ARE YOUNG.

IT IS TIME TO ARISE.

SO ARISE!

LEST THROUGH IRRESOLUTION AND IDLENESS

YOU LOSE THE WAY.

In ancient India, when Buddha was delivering these sutras to his disciples, this was the accepted tradition, that a man should become a seeker only in the last stage of his life. If you assume life to be a hundred-year span, then the Hindu idea is to divide life in four parts of twenty-five years each.

The first twenty-five years are for education, BRAHMACHARYA. You go to the university, you live with a master to learn the skills of the world, the arts, the craft, the science. And after twenty-five years you come back into the world, you get married. And for twenty-five years now -- the second stage -- you live as a householder, as a husband, as a father, fulfilling the duties of life.

And then comes the third stage, twenty-five years again: you prepare to renounce the world. The third stage is called VANPRASTHA. First is brahmacharya -- celibacy -- so that you can devote your whole mind to your studies, no distractions. Your whole sexual energies have to be concentrated in studies. Then the second stage is called GARHASTHYA -- the stage of the householder. You devote your whole energies to the family life: make a house, create a big business, earn money, raise children. And then the third is called vanprastha. Vanprastha means "facing towards the forest." Now prepare yourself to leave the world -- prepare for twenty-five years! Live still in the house, but turn towards the forest. Slowly slowly, disconnect yourself. Go on giving your responsibilities to your children, who will now be coming back from the university.

And the fourth stage -- after seventy-five years -- the last twenty-five years, you become a sannyasin. This was the routine, accepted, conventional thing in India.

In the first place, people don't live a hundred years, and particularly in those days not at all. All the scientific research that has been gone into proves that people in Buddha's time lived at the most an average of forty years; forty years was the average life. And it does not seem too bad because even now in India, thirty-six years is the average life. With all the new medicine, medical help, hospitals, if India has only thirty-six years as average age, then in those days, with no science, with no medical facilities, if people lived forty years average they were doing perfectly well! So people were not living for a hundred years. By the time one was seventy-five, one was gone. So for the majority of the people, the time for sannyas will never come.

It seems it was just an effort to postpone it. And even if somebody lived after seventy-five -- a few people lived, Buddha himself lived for eighty years -- if a few people lived after seventy-five, their life will be almost without energy. They will be dead, walking corpses. They won't have energy enough to meditate, to rise to the highest peaks of consciousness. They will not be able to transform their beings into buddhahood; that will be impossible for them.

Buddha brought a great revolution and India has never forgiven him for that. He destroyed the whole nonsense idea of stages. It is nonsense, because there are a few intelligent people who can be sannyasins even while they are young, and there are a few superintelligent people who can be sannyasins even while they are small children. Shankaracharya became a sannyasin when he was only nine years of age. Buddha became a sannyasin when he was twenty-nine years old. So it is foolish to postpone it. And why go on postponing truth to the very end when you will be almost a corpse, no energy left? And then you will try to soar high into the sky? When the days have come to go into the grave, you will try to take flight towards the sun? It is impossible.

Buddha was the first in India to introduce the idea of a young sannyasin. His emphasis was that youth is the best time to be a sannyasin because it is great energy that will be needed for the inner transformation, for inner work. It can't be postponed. And who knows about the future? Who knows about even tomorrow or even about the next moment? He says: YOU ARE YOUNG, YOU ARE STRONG -- then this is the time. IT IS TIME TO ARISE. Don't postpone. There is no need to postpone. Don't say that "I will wake up only after seventy-five years of age." A person who has been dreaming for seventy-five years will find it very difficult to wake up after seventy-five years of dreaming. Dreaming would have become almost a second nature to him.

As you grow old you become more and more stubborn, less and less flexible. As you grow old you become more and more mechanical, less and less alive. Your ways of life become so settled, your ways of thinking become so fixated, that it becomes impossible to change them. That's why it is so difficult for an old man to learn any new thing. They say: You can't teach an old dog new tricks. Children learn very easily; old men find it very difficult to learn because they already think they know. Their whole life's experience is there, and their life's experience starts dominating them; it goes on dominating them to the very end.

Zeb and his wife, Addie, had had a reputation for being the stingiest couple in the hills. Zeb died a few years back, and his kin was downright embarrassed about the way Addie went on about the cost of the funeral. She even insisted on having the coffin closed so she would not have to pay the undertaker for a room to hold the viewing.

A few years later, Addie got sick and it looked like she was going to meet Zeb in the hereafter. Addie called her only friend to her side and made her promise to see to the funeral.

"Promise you will bury me in my black silk dress," she said weakly. "But you may as well cut the material out of the back of the skirt. It is good material and it surely is a sin to waste it."

"Now, Addie," replied her friend, "I just couldn't. When you and Zeb walk through those Pearly Gates, you surely don't want to go with no back to your dress."

"Don't give it another thought," replied Addie. "They will all be looking at Zeb anyway."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I buried him without his pants."

The whole life, if you are miserly... even in death you will be the same. As you grow old you become more and more settled.

Youth is the best time for inner transformation because youth is the most flexible time. Children are more flexible than young people, but they are not so understanding. They need a little experience. Youth is exactly the middle; you are no longer a child, no longer ignorant of life and its ways and not yet settled as an old man. You are in a state of transition, and the state of transition is the best time that you can jump out of the wheel of life and death. Youth is the most significant time to take any jump, because the jump needs courage, it needs energy, it needs risk, it needs daring.

Buddha says: YOU ARE STRONG, YOU ARE YOUNG. IT IS TIME TO ARISE.

To be youthful, to be young, to be fresh, is a great benediction. It is the time of rebellion. And if you miss your youth, it will be more and more difficult later on. Not that it is impossible -- it can happen even when you are old -- but it will take more arduous effort and things will not be so easy. It is just like climbing a mountain: when you are young it is easier, when you become old it becomes difficult. Breathing is hard, rising up is tiring, you perspire, you feel exhausted very soon, you will need more rest and the journey will look very long. When you are young you can run up; you can run up to the peak and each step will release more energy in you, because to be young is to be a reservoir of energy.

Many people come to me and ask why I am giving sannyas to young people. ... Because of this: youth is the time for sannyas, because sannyas is the greatest rebellion; no other rebellion is so great. Don't waste your youthfulness on other ordinary revolutions -- political, social, economic. Don't waste your life energy on those stupid games. Put your total energy, focus your total energy, on a single point -- the spiritual revolution -- because that is a radical change, and other changes can follow that change.

If your inner being changes, your whole outer life will be totally different. It will have a different fragrance, a different beauty, a different grace. And when your inner being is changed and becomes a flame of light, you will become a light unto others too. You will become a beckoning light, a great herald of a new dawn. Your very presence will trigger revolutions in other people's lives.

Buddha says: SO ARISE! Don't waste a single moment! -- LEST THROUGH IRRESOLUTION AND IDLENESS YOU LOSE THE WAY.

The only danger is irresolution. A life uncommitted, uninvolved, is not worth calling life. It is only through commitment, involvement, that your life attains sharpness, your intelligence becomes a sword. Through idleness you gather rust; your sharpness disappears. You become old even while you are young. And if you remain sharp and

you remain rebellious, even when you are old you will not be old. Only physically you will be old, but your inner being will remain young.

And that is one of the greatest experiences of life: when your body becomes old, but your inner being keeps its youthfulness. That means you have not lost track of life, that you are keeping yourself in step with life. You are not left behind, you are not lagging behind.

The Buddha says:

MASTER YOUR WORDS.

He says, ordinarily a mind is full of words -- relevant, irrelevant, rubbish; all kinds of words go on gathering inside you. Two persons are talking; you simply hear, and those words become part of your mind -- for no other reason, accidentally. You heard two persons talking. You have become burdened. You go and you read the signboards, and those words become part of your being. You read unnecessary advertisements. In magazines, people read advertisements more than anything else. Or you go on gossiping with people, knowing perfectly well that this is just useless, a sheer wastage of time and energy. But words are gathering inside you like dust, layers upon layers, and your mirror will be covered by them

Buddha says: MASTER YOUR WORDS. Be telegraphic. Listen only to that which is significant, read only that which is meaningful. Avoid the unnecessary, the irrelevant. Speak only that which is to the point. Make your each word your heart. Don't just go on saying things as if you are a gramophone record.

Mary was sitting alone on the couch when her mother came in and turned on the light. "Why, what is the matter, dear?" asked her mother. "Why are you sitting here in the dark? Did you and John have a fight?"

"Oh, no, nothing like that," replied Mary. "As a matter of fact, John asked me to marry him."

"Well, then why do you look so sad?"

"Oh, mother, it is just that I don't know if I could marry an advertising executive."

"But what is wrong with marrying a man who is in advertising?"

"Well, how would you feel if a man who was proposing to you told you that it was a once-in-a-lifetime, never-to-be-repeated, special offer?"

Just like a gramophone record! He may not be at all aware what he is saying, may be repeating his habit. He is skillful in that, it has become part of his mind. It may be repeating itself; he may not be conscious at all of what he is doing.

When Buddha says: MASTER YOUR WORDS, he means, be conscious. Why are you saying something? To whom? And what is the purpose of it? Be clear, otherwise be silent. It is better not to burden others with your garbage. If you can enlighten, good; if you can unburden, good; otherwise it is better to be quiet.

MASTER YOUR THOUGHTS.

Any thought goes on inside your mind. Watch for a few minutes and you will be surprised: the mind seems to be crazy! It jumps from one thought to another thought for no reason at all. Just a dog starts barking in the neighborhood and your mind takes the clue from it... and you remember the dog that you used to have in your childhood, and the dog died... and you start feeling sad. And because of the death of the dog you start thinking about death, and the death of your mother and the death of your father. And you become angry because you were never at ease with your mother; there was always conflict. The dog is still barking, completely unaware what he has done. And you have traveled so far!

Anything can trigger a process in you. This is a kind of slavery: you are at the mercy of accidents. This is not mastery. And a sannyasin, a seeker, should be a master. He thinks only if he wants to; if he does not want to think he simply puts his mind off. He knows how to put it on and how to put it off.

You don't know how to put it on, you don't know how to put it off; it goes on and on. It starts working in the childhood and goes on working till you die. Seventy years, eighty years, continuously working -- so much work, and then you cannot expect anything great out of it because it is utterly tired. It has not much energy left; it is leaking from everywhere. If you can put it off... that's what meditation is all about: putting the mind off, the art of putting the mind off. If you can put it off, it will gather energy.

If for a few hours every day you are without the mind, you will gather so much energy that that energy will keep you young, fresh, creative. That energy will allow you to see reality, the beauty of the existence, the joy of life, the celebration. But for that you need energy, and your mind has only very little energy. Just somehow you manage your life. You live a poor life for the sheer reason that you don't know how to accumulate your mind energy, how to make a reservoir of your inner being. It goes on and on leaking and you don't know how to stop those leakages.

NEVER ALLOW YOUR BODY TO DO HARM.

Three things, Buddha says: Be careful about words, be master of your thoughts, NEVER ALLOW YOUR BODY TO DO HARM. Because the body comes from the animals, the body IS animal. It enjoys harming, it is violent. Be conscious of it. Don't allow it to go into violence. Don't allow it to harm anybody, because if you harm others the harm will come back to you sooner or later.

That's the whole theory of karma: whatsoever you do to others will be done to you. So do to others only that which you would like to be done to you.

FOLLOW THESE THREE ROADS WITH PURITY
AND YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF UPON THE ONE WAY,
THE WAY OF WISDOM.

The last advice Buddha gives is: Don't follow these three paths out of calculation. Follow them innocently, in a childlike way, exploring, inquiring. Make it an adventure, but don't be calculative, don't be businesslike. We are all businesslike, and that is one of the basic reasons why we go on missing the joy of life. A businessman can never know what joy is; he is always thinking about profits.

People come to me and they ask, "If we meditate, what will be the profit out of it? What are we going to gain out of it?" If I say to them, "Meditate for meditation's sake," they look puzzled. They say, "Then what is the point?" They can't understand that, in life, a few things should be done without any calculation.

Love for love's sake, art for art's sake, meditation for meditation's sake. All that is beautiful and great can never be reduced to a means to something else. And the businessman knows only that. The businesslike mind always reduces everything to a means to some end. And these are ends. Meditation is an end unto itself, not a means to anything else. Hence, be childlike, innocent, noncalculative. Be pure... AND YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF UPON THE ONE WAY... the only way, the true way, THE WAY OF WISDOM.

SIT IN THE WORLD, SIT IN THE DARK -- these words are tremendously pregnant:

SIT IN THE WORLD, SIT IN THE DARK.

SIT IN MEDITATION, SIT IN LIGHT.

CHOOSE YOUR SEAT.

LET WISDOM GROW.

Sitting in the world means to be in the mind and sitting in meditation means to be in the no-mind. To be in the mind is to be in darkness and to be in no-mind is to be in light. If you have understood the previous sutras you will know how to be a no-mind... and then there is light and only light. You are flooded with light, you become luminous. And that's how wisdom grows.

CUT DOWN THE FOREST,

NOT THE TREE.

FOR OUT OF THE FOREST COMES DANGER.

CUT DOWN THE FOREST means cut out the root, the very source of it all -- NOT THE TREE, because the tree is only a symptom. If you cut one tree, another tree will be growing. Don't fight with the symptoms; look into the root and destroy the root.

The root is the ego. The root is the desire of the ego. The root is the clinging of the ego. Cut the whole forest: the ego, the desire, the clinging, the cunningness, the cleverness, the calculativeness, the politicalness -- cut all these. Don't go on fighting with small things.

Somebody comes and says, "How can I get rid of anger?" Now, without getting rid of ego you cannot get rid of anger, and if you try you will be only repressing it. People come to me and they ask, "How can we get rid of sexuality?" You cannot get rid of

sexuality if you don't get rid of the ego and its continuous hankering for more and more. You can't get rid of sexuality if you cannot see the inner nothingness. In that seeing, sexuality is transformed into spirituality. Go to the root, to the source.

But people go on pruning the trees, thinking that this is how they are going to transform their life. Yes, they can become more sophisticated, more cultured, more civilized, on the surface more polished -- but this will be only the surface. Deep down they will remain the same person, as ugly as before or even more ugly because all that is repressed will make them more and more perverted.

CUT DOWN THE FOREST.

FELL DESIRE.

AND SET YOURSELF FREE.

If you want to cut out the forest, FELL DESIRE. See the point, that desire is futile. Live in the moment and don't try to live in the future. Nobody can live in the future. How can you live in the future which is not yet? And desire gives you the illusion of living in the future. Sitting, you start thinking you have become the president of a country. You start living a dream, a daydream, thinking that you have found great money, a lottery has been opened in your name. And you start thinking and become very much disturbed, really disturbed: "What to do with it?"

I had a friend, a doctor, and he was very much obsessed with crossword puzzles. Every month he would fill the crossword puzzles, and every month he would hope that this time he was going to get five lakh rupees, ten lakh rupees. I had been watching it for years. And the month would pass and nothing would happen, and he would start preparing for another crossword puzzle.

One day I was sitting in his dispensary, and I told him, "Look, you don't seem to have a great fate!"

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "I have been watching you for so many days, for so many years, and nothing happens. Join with me and this month you will get ten lakh rupees."

He was ecstatic. He said, "Why didn't you say it before?"

I said, "But there is a condition. The library of this city needs five lakh rupees. You will have to give five lakh rupees to the library. Then I can join with you. Then my fate will be with your fate -- and you know my fate!"

He said, "That I know!" But he said, "Five lakhs is too much." He started bargaining: nothing had happened yet, but he was so much disturbed! He started bargaining, "Five lakhs is too much, and I am a poor doctor, and you know how difficult it is and what great competition is there -- twenty doctors in this small town and I am the poorest. You are demanding five lakh rupees! Make it one lakh."

I said, "Okay, so it is agreed: one lakh I will get for the library, nine lakhs you get."

He said, "Yes." But he said yes in such a sad way: "One lakh rupees, just going like that!"

Twelve o'clock in the night he knocked on my door. It was summer and I was sleeping on the terrace so I asked from the terrace, "What is the matter? Who is there?"

He said, "I am your friend. I could not sleep, I had to come. One lakh is too much! This time just fifty thousand. Next month we join forces again and then I will give one lakh."

I said, "Okay -- because I don't want to disturb my sleep. You go away. Fifty thousand is okay, but now don't change it!"

Next morning he changed it. He said, "You know my situation. This time, let me keep the whole amount. Next month, whatsoever you say I will give to the library."

I said, "Then I withdraw my hand. Then you do it on your own."

The month passed. Nothing happened. He came to me and he was crying, just tears. And he said, "I am such a fool! I should have agreed with you. You were only asking fifty thousand rupees, but I did not agree. This month I am going to agree."

I said, "But now I am not going to do this business at all, because I know it will happen again the same way -- great bargaining, and your nights will be disturbed and you will disturb my sleep. You do it on your own."

People even start living in imagination.... You watch yourself. Desire keeps you occupied in the nonexistent and goes on destroying that which is present. And the present is the only life. Now and here is the only life.

Live it in totality, live it with your whole being. Put your mind aside and jump into the now with a no-mind. And all blessings of God will shower on you.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #2

Chapter title: The who behind all who's

22 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS THE GOLDEN RULE IN GAUTAM BUDDHA'S PHILOSOPHY?

Prabhat, once George Bernard Shaw was asked, "Is there a golden rule in life?" He said, "There is only one golden rule: that there are no golden rules."

Life is not mechanical; that's why there is a possibility of religion. If life was mechanical, totally rooted in rules, in cause and effect, in causality, then science would have been enough. And science is not enough.

Science only touches the periphery of life; the innermost core remains untouched. Science only knows the rudimentary; it does not know the highest peak. It knows only the bodily part of existence but not its spiritual center. It is concerned with the circumference and utterly unaware of the center.

Hence there are no golden rules. Life is freedom, it is consciousness, it is bliss, it is love -- but not law.

That's why I am very reluctant to translate Buddha's word 'dhamma' as the "universal law"; it misses something very significant. Dhamma has freedom in it; freedom is the goal of dhamma. And law is absolutely without freedom. Law is like a goods train running on tracks, and dhamma is like a river descending from the peaks of the Himalayas, going zigzag, in absolute freedom, spontaneity, with no fixed routine, unpredictable, towards the ocean.

Life can be lived in rules, but then life becomes superficial. Live life not according to the laws but according to consciousness, awareness. Don't live life according to the mind. Mind has rules and regulations, mind has rituals. Live life from the standpoint of no-mind so that you can bloom into unpredictable flowers.

Buddha has no golden rule in his philosophy.

According to Peter's Principle, the golden rule of life is: Whoever has the gold makes the rules.

And Buddha has no gold -- he can't make the golden rule. And secondly, he has no philosophy either. He has a vision, a DARSHAN, a PHILOSIA, but not philosophy. A philosia simply means the capacity to see. Philosophy is thinking, philosia is seeing. Buddha is not concerned with thinking at all; his whole emphasis is on seeing. See the

truth, don't believe in it. Don't think about it. You can go on thinking about it and about it, but you will never arrive at it by thinking about it.

Thinking about God has nothing to do with God. Thinking about light has nothing to do with light. In fact, only a blind man thinks about light. The man who has eyes ENJOYS light, he does not think about it. Have you ever thought about light? You enjoy it, you live it. It is dancing everywhere amongst the trees... you feel it, you experience it. Buddha is not a philosopher, in the Western sense of the word. He is a seer who has seen. And because he has seen he has become free: free of mind. Mind is needed only if you are a thinker.

Plato and Kant and Hegel and Marx and Bertrand Russell, these are philosophers. Lao Tzu, Buddha, Zarathustra, Jesus, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Eckhart, these are not philosophers; these are seers. These are two totally different currents.

Belong to the seers. Be a seer, because without seeing the truth there is no deliverance.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

THE OTHER DAY I UNDERSTOOD THAT YOU DON'T KNOW EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US. BUT ISN'T IT REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU KNOW US PERSONALLY? THE MASTER LEADS THE DISCIPLE BY THE HAND TOWARDS THE ABYSS, BUT HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE IF YOU DON'T KNOW US, AND WHO IS WHO?

Prem Jyoti, the personality is false; the master never knows his disciples by their personality. He never knows them personally, he knows them essentially. And there is a great difference between the two. To know you personally is meaningless. What is your personality? -- the accident of your birth, the accident of your upbringing -- as a Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian -- your name, your face, your color, your country. All these things make your personality; and all these things are false, all these things are accidental.

I am concerned with the essential core of your being -- and that is not different. It is the same core in everyone. The original face is the same behind all the faces. It has no color, it has no form, no shape. It has nothing to do with your father and mother, with your country. It has nothing to do with your name. I am concerned with your original face.

You come into the world without a name. The name has a certain utility in the world. The master knows you not by your accidents; he knows you by your essence. He does not know you personally; he knows you spiritually.

So I don't know who is who, but I know the "Who" behind all "who's" -- the essential one.

You ask me, "The master leads the disciple by the hand towards the abyss...."

I have got only two hands, and if I go on leading disciples by the hand towards the abyss, then it will take much time to finish all my disciples! That won't do. Jesus may have done it -- he had only twelve disciples -- but how can I manage that?

I have to work out a different way. I cannot take you by your hands. I catch hold of your souls; for that, hands are not needed. And I know YOU perfectly: you as you are before God, in your utter nudity, in your bare essence.

So, Jyoti, don't be worried. If I have to know everybody personally I will have to carry a big book, who is who. And then too it will be very difficult to find out.

The more and more you become meditators, your differences start disappearing, you become more and more alike. Your faces, your eyes, your climate, become more and more similar.

The moment you come close to the abyss to take the ultimate jump, you are no more a separate entity. You are one with the whole. I have to persuade your essence to take the jump; and that's what I am doing. You need not be worried, you need not become concerned.

Yes, you would like to be known by your personal name, you would like to be recognized. That is nothing but a deep deep ego desire. And that's what I want to shatter completely. So even if I know you, Jyoti, I pretend not to know you!

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

HOW CAN ONE DROP AN OBSESSION? OR IS IT NOT TO BE DROPPED AT ALL,
BUT ENJOYED?

Satya, an obsession simply means a wound in your being, which keeps attracting you again and again, which goes on declaring itself, which wants your attention. You cannot drop it. How can you drop your wound? An obsession is a psychic wound, you cannot drop it. Understand it. Watch it. Pay attention to it. Be meditatively with it. And the more you are meditatively with it, the more it will be healed.

Meditation is a healing force. The words 'meditation' and 'medicine' are derived from the same root; they both mean healing forces. Meditation is medicine -- medicine for the soul.

So if you have any obsession, don't call names. The moment you call it an obsession you have already started condemning it. And if you condemn something you cannot watch it -- you are prejudiced against it. How can you watch the enemy? No need to condemn; whatsoever is the case is the case. Just by condemning it you can't change it; by condemning it you can only repress it. You can avoid seeing it, but the wound will continue; it will become cancerous, it will go on growing inside.

Rather than condemning it, rather than calling it names, giving it labels, watch it -- without any conclusion. See what it is. See as deeply as possible, with great friendliness towards it, with intimacy. It is YOUR obsession, YOUR wound! It says something about you, it is part of your biography. It has arisen in you, just as flowers arise in trees. It is

essential because it says something about your past. Go deep into it, with care, with love, and you will be surprised: the more care you show about it, the less it hurts, the less it dominates, the less it forces itself upon you.

Yes, in a certain way, enjoy it! But by enjoying I don't mean become identified with it. If you become identified with it you go insane. If you condemn it, if you repress it, you go insane again. Avoid both the extremes. Keep yourself exactly in the middle, neither condemning nor identifying. Just be a pure witness.

And slowly slowly, it will be healed. Slowly slowly, it will lose all its poison. Slowly slowly, you will see it changing into a positive energy rather than a negative force. It will become helpful. Each obsession is a knot in your being. Once it is opened, great energy is released.

And everybody is carrying obsessions; our whole society is obsessive. A few obsessions are accepted by the people; then you don't call them obsessions. If they are not accepted, then they become obsessions. In one society one thing is thought to be obsessive, in another society it is not obsessive. It may be even respected, may be thought saintly, holy.

For a Jaina monk, to take a bath is an obsession. People who are taking baths every day once or twice are obsessive; they are too much concerned about their body, body-oriented. The Jaina monk condemns them. The Jaina monk does not take a bath. Jaina monks used to come to see me. It was really a difficult time for me -- they stink! But they think they are doing great austerity.

They don't clean their teeth either -- that too is an obsession. Morning, evening and before you go to bed... and a few people will clean their teeth after each meal, so four, five, six times a day. This IS obsession! You are madly concerned about your teeth. And all arguments that you can give are pointless to them because Jaina monks will say, "Look at the animals. Without any cleansing, without any toothpaste, without any toothbrush, their teeth are absolutely clean. Nature takes care, there is no need to worry about it. You are obsessed."

According to them, you are too much concerned about your body odor, about your breath, about your teeth. And this is materialism, and they are spiritual people! But except a Jaina, nobody will think that these are obsessive things.

Remember one thing: that obsessions differ from society to society, from country to country, from religion to religion. What is really obsession? Anything that becomes a dominating force upon you, that dominates you, that becomes master of your being. Anything that reduces you into a slave, that's my definition of an obsession.

Watch it, meditate. Be silently with it, because that is how you will become master again. Silence makes you a master of everything. Don't fight, and don't become identified. If you become identified you are mad. If you fight you are mad from the other extreme.

The director of a well-known mental hospital decided to resign his post after many years of service. This decision brought the local press out for an interview.

"Tell us, Doctor, what are your plans? Will you resume private practice?"

"Well, I have given it some thought," replied the doctor. "I may go back into private practice, but on the other hand I may become a tea-kettle."

Now, living with mad people for so long, with so many tea-kettles, he has also become impressed with the idea.

If you want to become ANYTHING in your life, that is obsession. It is not a question only of becoming a tea-kettle: if you want to become the president of a country or the prime minister, it is the same -- other names for becoming tea-kettles! There are people who are obsessed with the idea that they will not take any rest unless they become the president. And then they are at a loss when they become the president; they don't know what to do now because all that they know is how to become the president. Their whole life they have devoted to a single purpose: how to become the president. Now they have become the president and they are certainly at a loss; they don't know what to do. There are people who want to become rich; they become rich. If you persist you can fulfill any kind of stupidity. Man has immense powers. Yes, you can become a tea-kettle if you persist; nobody can prevent you. But then? Then you are suddenly empty. Then suddenly you find yourself without any goal, lost.

All obsessive people, when their obsessions are fulfilled, will feel lost. If you become identified with an obsession, sooner or later you will feel lost. If it is fulfilled you will be the loser; if it is not fulfilled, certainly you are the loser.

The other way is to repress it, to throw it into the basement of your being, somewhere deep in the unconsciousness, so you don't come across it. But it goes on growing there, and it goes on affecting you and your behavior; it goes on pulling your strings from the back. And the enemy is more powerful when it is hidden. You don't see it, but still you have to follow its dictates -- it becomes a dictator.

Both extremes, Satya, have to be avoided. That's what Buddha also would have suggested: Be exactly in the middle, watchful, choicelessly watchful. Neither choose to be identified nor choose to be repressive. Just see. It is a fact of your psychic life, whatsoever it is. Don't say good, bad, XYZ -- whatsoever it is, watch it. And see the tremendous power of watchfulness: how it transforms wounds into flowers, how it releases entangled energy knots into great forces, positive forces, nourishing forces.

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

WILL YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN THE TIME-LAPSE BETWEEN THE CLOCKS IN THE MAIN OFFICE AND THE FRONT GATE RECEPTION?

Anand Narayano, have you heard about the famous Segal's law? It says: A man with one watch knows what time it is. A man with two watches is never sure.

Watches have no reason to agree with each other; they are not conformist. Watches are revolutionaries! And what are you talking about? You think you have a problem? You should ask me!

I have five clocks in my room, and the whole day I am working out, figuring out, what time it is -- and of course I am never right!

The fifth question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

SINCE YOU SPOKE ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DISCIPLE AND A DEVOTEE, I KEEP FEELING THAT I AM A LOUSY DEVOTEE, YET AT THE SAME TIME IT SEEMS THAT I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO DEVOTED AND IN LOVE WITH YOU AS NOW. COULD YOU PLEASE SAY MORE ABOUT BEING A DEVOTEE?

Heeren, even to be a lousy devotee is something tremendously important. It is better than to be a very keen student. It is better than to be a very attentive disciple. Even to be a lousy devotee is better than anything else. And as the devotion will grow the lousiness will disappear, because love cannot allow lousiness for long. Love is fire; it burns all that is nonessential, all that is rubbish.

I know, Heeren, it is happening, and I am immensely pleased with you. The lousiness will go. When the sun has started rising in the east, how long can the darkness of the night remain? It is already disappearing. In fact, that's why you have become aware of it.

You become aware of a few things only when they start leaving you, because when they are there you will not become aware of them; they have been always there. If you are becoming aware of your lousiness, that simply shows it is disappearing, it is leaving, it is going. Some change is happening; that's why you have become aware of it.

It is said that many people become aware that they were alive only when they are dead. When they are dying, suddenly the idea arises in their mind, "Gosh! So I was alive!" Otherwise it was impossible for them to know that they were alive; some background, some contrast is needed. Death becomes the contrast.

You are becoming aware of some lousiness; it is a good indication. Lousiness is on the go -- say goodbye to it. And once love enters in the heart, lousiness cannot reside there; it is impossible. Love is never lousy. They can't exist together. They are just like light and darkness.

The sixth question:

Question 6

BELOVED MASTER,

IS IT TRUE THAT SOME PEOPLE WAKE UP AND FIND THEMSELVES FAMOUS?

Darshan, yes, it is true. Some people wake up and find themselves famous; others wake up and find themselves late for the morning discourse.

The seventh question:

Question 7

BELOVED MASTER,

MY PREVIOUS LIFE WITH MY MOTHER, FATHER, SISTER AND BROTHER WAS A PERIOD FILLED WITH UNHAPPINESS. WHY DID I CHOOSE TO BE BORN INTO THIS FAMILY?

Prem Joshua, you have not chosen, because you died unconsciously. How can you choose? If YOU had chosen, you certainly would not have chosen such a family. It was unconscious. You moved into the womb robotlike. That's how it happens.

Ordinarily whenever a man dies -- except the buddhas -- he dies in unconsciousness. He lives in unconsciousness, how can he die in consciousness? Death is the culmination of your whole life. If you have lived in unconsciousness, you will die in unconsciousness. It is the condensed moment; your whole life becomes condensed.

If you have lived in unconsciousness, your death is going to be of tremendously condensed unconsciousness. You will die unconscious; then you don't choose. How can you choose?

But millions of stupid people are making love all over the world; millions of wombs are ready to receive you. They are also as unconscious as you are. They don't know why they are making love. They don't know why a certain man is with a certain woman. They don't know what is happening. Something takes a grip, something drives them towards certain acts. They are making love not out of awareness, they are making love out of unawareness. And if a couple has exactly the same kind of unawareness as you have, then immediately you will enter into that womb. That fits with you.

You say, "My previous life with my mother, father, sister and brother was a period filled with unhappiness."

You must have deserved them! We only get that which we deserve. It is fair too; it is not unjust.

Now you are asking, "Why did I choose to be born into this family?"

You could not have done otherwise. And beware! If you don't become alert you will do the same again. You have done it many times; this is not for the first time. You have not chosen the womb, it is not your choice at all.

A wealthy widower and his daughter were traveling to Europe on the S.S. UNITED STATES. The girl fell overboard. Berman, aged seventy-three, hit the water and saved her. After the two were brought back aboard the ship, the widower threw his arms around Berman.

"You saved my daughter's life!" he exclaimed. "I am a rich man. I will give you anything. Ask me for whatever you want!"

"Just answer me one question," said Berman. "Who pushed me?"

It is not your choice. Your whole life must have pushed you into a certain womb. You can choose only when you are aware, and to die in awareness is the greatest experience of life. There is nothing more ecstatic than that.

In life, three things are the most important: birth, love and death. Birth has already happened; now nothing can be done about it. Something can be done about love: you can become a conscious lover, and by becoming a conscious lover you will be preparing for a conscious death, because love and death are very similar. In love also you die in a certain way; your ego dies.

The first experience of death is love. And once you have known the beauty of dying in love you will not be afraid of death at all. In fact, you will wait and you will welcome it when it comes. You will sing a song when it comes. You will dance. Death will not be your enemy but a friend, a great friend, because you knew a small death in love and it was so beautiful. Now it is a big death; it is bound to be a thousandfold more beautiful.

Love prepares a man to die -- but only conscious love, because only in conscious love you die; in unconscious love you don't die. Unconscious lovers quarrel continuously, fight. They try to dominate each other.

Conscious lovers surrender. In fact, surrender is not to each other; surrender is to the god of love. Both the lovers surrender to some unknown energy in which they dissolve their egos, and they experience small deaths. Each time, each orgasm brings a deeper death. As love deepens, death deepens, and they become prepared for the ultimate death. The day the final death comes is a day of rejoicing. They go dancing into death, singing, their hearts full of the thrill of the adventure.

Then they can choose. Then they can move into a certain womb of their own choice. Now they have eyes -- where to go, from what door to enter.

Love is the beginning of consciousness. Death gives you the great experience -- but still only ninety-nine percent, one percent is still left. That one percent is fulfilled by conscious birth. A conscious birth is a hundred percent death. The ego simply disappears, totally disappears. Love is one percent death, death is ninety-nine percent death, birth is a hundred percent death. And once you are born consciously, then there is no more love, no more death, no more birth.

This is the goal of all the buddhas: to be free from the wheel of life and death.

The eighth question:

Question 8

BELOVED MASTER,

I HAVE BEEN DOING MEDITATION FOR ALMOST FORTY YEARS, BUT I AM AS FAR AWAY FROM THE GOAL OF GOD-REALIZATION AS EVER. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Surendranath, to make God a goal is to start in a wrong direction. God is not a goal; if you think in terms of goals God becomes your desire, an object of desire. Then God-realization is nothing but the ultimate glorification of the ego. Hence you have been missing.

I don't know what kind of meditation you have been doing for forty years; it must be some wrong kind. It can't be right mindfulness -- what Buddha talks about -- it must be some wrong mindfulness. You must be doing some kind of concentration and thinking that this is meditation.

This is one of the greatest fallacies, very much prevalent in the so-called religious circles of the world, particularly in India. Concentration is thought to be meditation -- and concentration is not meditation; it is just the opposite of meditation. Concentration is a mind phenomenon. To concentrate upon something means you are focusing your mind on something. It has its own benefits, but those benefits are scientific, not religious. In science, concentration is needed; concentration is a scientific method.

And your schools, colleges, universities, all prepare you for concentration because their preparation is for scientific goals, not for religious experience. Concentration means excluding everything out of the mind except one thing on which you are focusing.

Meditation simply means not focusing on anything at all, not even on God -- not focusing at all. Hence it does not exclude anything, it includes all. In meditation you relax, in concentration you become tense. In meditation you are in a deep rest, just alert about whatsoever is happening. A bird starts singing in the woods, a dog barks in the neighborhood, a child starts crying; the traffic noise on the road, delicious smells floating in the air from the kitchen... all this, everything that is present, that surrounds you -- all your five senses are alert, receiving.

Concentration can be disturbed because you are trying to focus on one thing; anything can disturb it. You are repeating "Rama, Rama, Rama," and a dog starts barking. Now you will be angry at the dog. The dog will look like the enemy who always disturbs you; whenever you meditate it starts barking. Must be an agent of the Devil! Or the child starts crying or the wife starts shouting at the kids, or something or other... and thousands of things are going on all around. You cannot stop the whole world because you are doing a foolish repetition: "Rama, Rama, Rama." You cannot stop the whole world for this. The world will continue.

And who knows? The dog may also be doing his concentration in his own way. Barking may be his Transcendental Meditation! They enjoy barking so much and they feel so exhilarated. Have you observed dogs when they bark, why they bark? Either they bark at the policeman or the postman or the sannyasin. They are against uniforms -- a very revolutionary approach! Any uniform... and the dog starts barking. He is never at ease with the uniform; he is always against, suspicious. Or they start barking at the moon. Maybe that is their way of appreciating beauty. And who are you to prevent them? They have as much right to bark as you have.

I have heard:

In an exhibition in Paris all kinds of dogs were exhibited. A couple of Russian dogs had also come and they were talking to the French dogs. The French dog said, "How are things in Russia?"

They said, "Things are beautiful, just beautiful! You can't imagine how beautiful things are. The food is perfect, medical care is perfect; everything that dogs have always imagined is fulfilled. We have attained utopia."

The French dogs felt very jealous, but when the time came for the Russian dogs to leave they asked the French dogs, "Can we renounce our Russian citizenship? Can we stay in France?"

The French dog said, "But why? You are enjoying utopia. Why should you want to stay here? For what?"

They said, "For only one reason: once in a while we want to bark, but barking is not allowed there. No freedom of speech! And once in a while we would like to bark, and we are ready to risk everything for it."

The dog is barking and you are chanting a mantra. He is not disturbing you -- he is doing HIS thing. But you will feel disturbed, not because of his barking but because of your effort to remain focused on one thing. It is because of your effort to focus that you feel distracted.

A meditator is never disturbed, is never distracted. You cannot distract him because he starts watching the distraction too. He is just a watcher; he watches everything, distractions included. How can you distract him? He transforms even disturbances, disturbances, into deep silence.

Surendranath, my feeling is you must have been doing some kind of concentration; otherwise... forty years is a long time! You must have followed some stupid pundit, some scholar. You may yourself have become a scholar. Forty years is a long time. You may have read the YOGA SUTRAS of Patanjali and you may have read other books on meditation -- and they all talk about concentration.

Buddha is the first person in the history of humanity who has not talked about concentration but about meditation. And he changed the whole phenomenon of meditation; he gave it a totally new color, a new form, a new life.

You must be reading people who have not experienced anything but who go on writing.

Murphy's advice will be helpful to you. Murphy says: When all else fails, read the instructions.

I think for forty years you have been doing meditation without reading the instructions. Try to understand what right mindfulness is.

In India people go on doing all kinds of things. They concentrate, they chant mantras, they fast, they torture their bodies, and they hope that through all these masochistic practices they will realize God. As if God is a sadist! As if God loves you to torture yourself! As if he demands that the more you torture yourself, the more worthy you become. God is not a sadist; you need not be a masochist.

I have come across people who think that without long fasting there is no possibility of meditation. Now, fasting has nothing to do with meditation. Fasting will only make you

obsessed with food. And there are people who think celibacy will help them into meditation. Meditation brings a kind of celibacy, but not vice versa. A celibacy without meditation is nothing but sexual repression. And your mind will become more and more sexual, so whenever you sit to meditate your mind will become full of fantasies, sexual fantasies.

These two things have been the greatest problems for the so-called meditators: fasting and celibacy. They think these two things are going to help -- they are the greatest disturbances!

Eat in right proportions. Buddha calls it "the middle way": neither too much nor too little. He is against fasting, and he knows it through hard experience. For six years he fasted and could not attain to anything. So when he says, "Be in the middle," he means it. About celibacy also: don't enforce it upon yourself. It is a by-product of meditation, hence it cannot be enforced before meditation. Be in the middle there too, neither too much indulgence nor too much renunciation. Just keep a balance. A balanced person will be more healthy, at ease, at home. And when you are at home, meditation is easier. What then is meditation? Just sitting silently doing nothing, witnessing whatsoever is happening all around; just watching it with no prejudice, no conclusion, no idea what is wrong and what is right.

Surendranath, start from ABC. Forget all those forty years. It is good that you have survived those forty years.

A peddler told a friend that the food for his horse was using up all his profits. The friend suggested that he slowly slowly, reduce the horse's diet by one straw at a time. Sometime later he ran into his friend again.

"So, Abe, how are things?"

"Terrible!" exclaimed Abe. "I got the horse down to where he was only eating one straw a day and then suddenly he died!"

Surendranath, you have survived -- good! God is gracious. Otherwise, forty years of the wrong kind of meditation, austerities, can kill anybody. You are a strong man -- you have survived.

And if you have come here, please put aside your whole knowledge. It has not worked, now don't let it disturb you. Now put it aside completely. Start afresh with me. Still there is hope, there is always hope.

My meditation is simple; it does not require any complex practices. It is very simple. It is singing, it is dancing. It is sitting silently. It is being at ease with existence. It is accepting existence as your home.

Forget about God-realization. By your thinking you will never realize God. You simply enjoy life, celebrate life. And one day, when the celebration reaches to its peak, suddenly the curtain disappears from your eyes and the whole existence is nothing but divine. There is no God, but the whole existence is full of godliness. That is God-realization, that is nirvana.

The ninth question:

Question 9

Beloved Master,

ANY MARKS FOR CHOICELESS UNAWARENESS?

Anand Buddha, even if you are aware of that, that will do. Are you aware of choiceless unawareness? That will destroy that choiceless unawareness. Make it an object of awareness and it will disappear, evaporate.

And no marks can be given for it, because if marks have to be given for it then everybody will succeed in getting marks -- everybody, because everybody is living it.

A huge bully sauntered into the dimly lit saloon. "Is there anybody here called Kilroy?" he snarled. Nobody answered. Again he sneered, "Is there anybody here called Kilroy?" There was a moment of silence and then a little Irishman stepped forward. "I am Kilroy," he said.

The tough guy picked him up and threw him across the bar. Then he punched him in the jaw, kicked him, slapped him around and walked out.

About fifteen minutes later the little fellow came to. "Boy, didn't I fool him," he said. "I ain't Kilroy!"

A pretty young girl stretched out on the psychiatrist's couch. "I just can't help myself, Doctor. No matter how hard I try to resist, I bring five or six men with me into my bedroom every night. Last night there were ten. I just feel so miserable, I don't know what to do."

In understanding tones the doctor rumbled, "Yes, I know, I know, my dear."

"Ah!" the surprised girl exclaimed. "Were you there last night too?"

People are living in unconsciousness, doing all kinds of things in unconsciousness. Everybody is an unconscious robot. We are just pretending that we are conscious; we are not conscious.

The moment you become conscious, all unconscious actions disappear from your life. Your life starts moving in a new dimension. Your each act comes out of inner clarity; your each response is virtuous, is virtue. To live unconsciously is to live in sin; to live consciously is to be virtuous, is to be religious. And to live in total awareness is to be a buddha, is to be a christ.

It will be good if we start calling Christ "Joshua the Buddha." His real name was Joshua; from Joshua has come Jesus. And 'christ' has become ugly because of the Christian church; the word has lost its beauty. It will be good if we change, if we start calling him Joshua the Buddha -- because they are all buddhas, they are all awakened people. They live through inner light. You only grope in inner darkness.

Anand Buddha, I have given you the name Buddha. If you feel you are living in choiceless unawareness, make it a point to be aware of it.

A thief asked a great Buddhist mystic, Nagarjuna, "Can I meditate and still remain a thief?"

Nagarjuna said, "Yes. Just do one thing: while you are stealing remain alert, aware, conscious."

The thief was very happy. He said, "You are the right master! I have gone to many people, and they all say, 'First stop stealing, then you can be a meditator.'"

Nagarjuna said, "Those are not masters -- they must be ex-thieves. I am a master. I am concerned with meditation, not with other things. What you do is YOUR business; whether you steal or donate, that is your business. My business is to tell you to be alert, and do whatsoever you want to do."

Of course the thief was very happy -- happy because now he could have both worlds. But after fifteen days he came back, fell at the feet of Nagarjuna, and he said, "You are a very sly fellow! You destroyed my whole profession -- because if I try to be alert I cannot steal; my hands simply won't move. Last night I entered into the king's palace; this was such an opportunity that it happens only once in a lifetime. It was very difficult to enter -- my whole life I have tried -- but it must be because of your blessings: last night I entered, and all the guards were fast asleep. I opened the treasure and such precious diamonds I have never seen in my life! I could have become the richest man, and everything was within my grasp, but you were standing between me and the treasure. You were telling me, 'Be aware!' You were shouting at me, 'Be aware!' And if I tried awareness, those precious stones looked just like stones, not worth bothering about. If I forgot about awareness, they were again precious stones, tremendously valuable.

"It changed many times. I became aware and they were ordinary stones; I became unaware and they were great riches. But finally YOU were victorious. I have come back to you. Now initiate me into sannyas."

Nagarjuna must have been a man like me; otherwise, ordinary teachers can't accept a thief.

Sometimes a drunkard comes to me and he says, "I am a drunkard. Can I also be a sannyasin?"

I say, "Don't be bothered about small things. Sannyas will do! You first be a sannyasin, then we will see."

He seems to be puzzled, he can't understand. But once he becomes a sannyasin, things start changing. Sooner or later he comes and reports that "You did the trick. I cannot drink anymore; it has become more and more impossible. It is so repulsive, disgusting." One drunkard told me -- he has become a sannyasin just a few months ago -- he said, "It has become so difficult. Now I know the strategy and the trick behind these orange clothes, because when I go to the pub people start touching my feet! They say, 'Swamiji, this is a pub! You must have come thinking it is some other place!' And I say, 'Yes -- is this a pub?' And I have to turn back! I can't even go in." He was really angry at me; he said, "I can't even go to the movie, because standing in the queue people start touching my feet, and they say, 'Swamiji, what are you doing here?' And I have to escape!"

Just a small bit of awareness and it will affect your whole life. Just a small bit of awareness and your total life as you have lived up to now will be shattered, will collapse, and a new life will start arising around that small center of awareness.

The tenth question:

Question 10

BELOVED MASTER,

I JUST HAD A GENERAL ANESTHETIC. THE SPACE WAS SO FAMILIAR -- LIKE BEING IN LECTURE OR DARSHAN. IS THIS WHAT YOU ARE DOING -- ANESTHETIZING US SO THAT YOU CAN OPERATE?

Deva Kanta, anesthesia I don't use, but I have my own ways of making you unconscious so that I can operate.

In the first place, you are already unconscious enough; just a little bit of flickering consciousness sometimes you have. I have to prevent that! No anesthesia is needed for that.

A man who had just undergone a very complicated operation kept complaining about a bump on his head and a terrible headache. Since his operation had been an intestinal one, there was no earthly reason why he should be complaining of a headache. Finally his nurse, fearing that the man might be suffering from some postoperative shock, spoke to the doctor about it.

"Don't worry about a thing, nurse," the doctor assured her. "He really does have a bump on his head. About halfway through the operation we ran out of anesthetic."

And I don't have any anesthesia with me so I go on using the same method -- just a good hammering on the head! Yes, for a few days you will have a little headache and a bump! You are not conscious, so you don't need anesthesia -- just a little hammering and you fall flat! Then any operation can be done on you. And this operation is not physical; this surgery is spiritual. Some weeds from your spirit have to be taken out, uprooted. And that's what is happening in the morning discourse, in the evening darshan.

So I can perfectly understand, Deva Kanta, your experience: that in anesthesia you felt the same space, "like being in lecture or darshan."

Being here with me you lose track of your ego. Being here with me you lose track of your mind. You enter a vast space, a great freedom, a tremendous silence, a deep ecstasy; hence only those who are in deep love with me will be benefited. Those who come as outsiders, spectators, yes, they will gather a few words and they will think they have understood the point. They have not understood the point. Unless you start feeling this space that I am, you have not understood -- you cannot.

My message is not in the words that I use but in the silence from where those words come. My message is not verbal, philosophical. It is a communion, a deep communion of the hearts, a meeting, a merger, an orgasmic experience. It is spiritual orgasm.

The last question:

Question 11

BELOVED MASTER,

I HAVE LIVED MY WHOLE LIFE AS A CELIBATE, BUT I STILL SUFFER FROM BAD SEXUAL THOUGHTS. WHY?

Ravishankar, if you had not suffered, that would have been a miracle! If you have tried to live the life of a celibate, what else can you expect?

And why do you call sexual thoughts bad? They are neutral, neither good nor bad. Sexual thoughts are sexual thoughts. Why bring these moral values in? Because of these moral values you remain in a constant fight, in an inner war, a civil war. You go on fighting with your own energy -- the sexual energy -- and that is the only energy you have. There is no other energy; it is the only energy, which has to be transformed into spirituality. This same sexual energy, which you are calling bad, is going to become a great perfume in you.

But trying to live a celibate life without meditation is dangerous. It keeps you obsessed. It keeps you continuously in sexual fantasies. And then naturally you call it bad, because twenty-four hours living with the same ideas is a constant torture.

"Police?" came the voice on the phone. "I want to report a burglar trapped in an old maid's bedroom!"

After ascertaining the address, the police sergeant asked who was calling.

"This," cried the frantic voice, "is the burglar!"

After rushing into a drugstore, the nervous young man was obviously embarrassed when a prim, middle-aged woman asked if she could serve him.

"No-no," he stammered, "I would rather see the druggist."

"I am the druggist," she responded cheerfully. "What can I do for you?"

"Oh... well, uh, it is nothing important," he said, and turned to leave.

"Young man," said the woman, "my sister and I have been running this drugstore for nearly thirty years. There is nothing you can tell us that will embarrass us."

"Well, alright," he said. "I have this awful sexual hunger that nothing will appease. No matter how many times I make love, I still want to make love again. Is there anything you can give me for it?"

"Just a moment," said the little lady. "I will have to discuss this with my sister."

A few minutes later she returned. "The best we can offer," she said, "is two hundred dollars a week and a half-interest in the business."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #3

**Chapter title: Freedom has to be earned
23 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall**

WHILE A MAN DESIRES A WOMAN,
HIS MIND IS BOUND
AS CLOSELY AS A CALF TO ITS MOTHER.

AS YOU WOULD PLUCK AN AUTUMN LILY,
PLUCK THE ARROW OF DESIRE.

FOR HE WHO IS AWAKE
HAS SHOWN YOU THE WAY OF PEACE.
GIVE YOURSELF TO THE JOURNEY.

"HERE SHALL I MAKE MY DWELLING,
IN THE SUMMER AND THE WINTER,
AND IN THE RAINY SEASON."
SO THE FOOL MAKES HIS PLANS,
SPARING NOT A THOUGHT FOR HIS DEATH.

DEATH OVERTAKES THE MAN
WHO, GIDDY AND DISTRACTED BY THE WORLD,
CARES ONLY FOR HIS FLOCKS AND HIS CHILDREN.
DEATH FETCHES HIM AWAY
AS A FLOOD CARRIES OFF A SLEEPING VILLAGE.

HIS FAMILY CANNOT SAVE HIM,
NOT HIS FATHER NOR HIS SONS.

KNOW THIS.
SEEK WISDOM, AND PURITY.
QUICKLY CLEAR THE WAY.

Niravo asked just the other day, "Is Jesus Christ coming back soon to earth as he had promised?" Such nonsense questions go on in people's minds, and not only in the minds of ordinary, common people; but the so-called religious, theological, philosophical intelligentsia too keeps itself involved in such absurdities.

Christ is not a person, it is an experience. Jesus had it, you can have it. Christ is synonymous with Buddha. What we call in the East the buddha, the awakened, the

West has called the christ, the crowned one. Jesus Christ cannot come back, but you can become christ any moment. Christ is already hidden in you as a seed; you are all bodhisattvas, buddhas in essence, in seed. Just a little effort, a little understanding and you can bloom, and your fragrance can be released. Jesus bloomed, Buddha bloomed, so can you. Why wait for Jesus Christ's coming? That is avoiding the fundamental quest. Why not become one? What is the point of waiting for someone else to come and deliver you, and how can anybody else deliver you?

The deliverance that will come from somebody else will not be much of a deliverance. Freedom has to be earned, it cannot be given; if it is given, it can be taken away. If it is given it is not yours, it is not your growth. And anything that is given to you remains only an accumulation on the outside. It never becomes part of your interiority.

Hence Buddha says:

KNOW THIS.

SEEK WISDOM, AND PURITY.

QUICKLY CLEAR THE WAY.

Don't waste time in unnecessary things.

Niravo, are you cuckoo or something? Why wait for Jesus Christ? What wrong has he done to you? Enough is enough. The poor man came once and you crucified him; now are you hankering to crucify him again or what?

The pope came before the gathering of cardinals. Rumors had spread as to the reason for this extraordinary meeting.

"Beloved cardinals," the pope began. "I have called this special session to announce incredible news. It is, however, good news AND bad news. As to the good: I have personally received a phone call from the Lord Jesus Christ. He has arrived on earth and has returned to fulfill his word."

The cardinals cheered and applauded.

"The bad news," the pope continued, "is that he called from 17 Koregaon Park, Poona, India."

Why are you waiting for Jesus Christ? He is already here, he has always been here in the awakened ones. And the world has never missed the awakened ones. Yes, few and far between they have been, but it is because of them the earth has still significance. It is because of them the earth is not yet dead. It is because of those few flowers that the earth has still the perfume of the beyond, that the earth has salt. Otherwise the crowds are dead. If you look at the crowds the earth is a big cemetery.

Only these few people -- a Zarathustra, a Jesus, a Lao Tzu, a Buddha, a Kabir, a Nanak... these people who can be counted on the fingers keep the flame burning. But you can become the flame any moment, your heart is ready to burst into flame. But rather than looking inwards, you go on looking outwards, waiting for Jesus Christ. Rather than searching inwards, you go on searching in the scriptures, in mere words. Rather than

transforming the state in which you are, you go on hoping that some miracle will happen and everything will be good.

These hopes are not going to help you, these hopes are deceptive, dangerous, suicidal. In the first sutra, Buddha says:

WHILE A MAN DESIRES A WOMAN,
HIS MIND IS BOUND
AS CLOSELY AS A CALF TO ITS MOTHER.

One thing very significant has to be understood before we enter into this sutra. In Sanskrit we use the word KAMA both for desire as such, and for sexual desire. The same word is used for both, and there is a reason why the same word is used for both. To desire a woman or a man, or desire at all, both are expressed by the same word, kama. The reason is very psychological, profound. Sanskrit is one of the most profound languages of the earth, very deliberately evolved. That is exactly the meaning of the word 'sanskrit'; SANSKRIT means consciously refined, consciously evolved.

In India two languages have existed in the past. One was called Prakrit -- PRAKRIT means the natural, unevolved, raw, crude, used by the people -- and the other was called Sanskrit. Sanskrit means refined, cultured, evolved, deliberate. That was used only by the intelligentsia, by the brahmins. Hence Sanskrit has many significant clues. It is rooted in great insights.

For example, this same word being used for both desire as such, and for sexual desire, has a tremendously important message in it. All desire is basically sexual desire; that is the message in it. Desire as such has the flavor of sexuality in it, and you can observe it. This understanding is based, rooted in great observation. A man who is mad after money -- watch his behavior, his being, look into his eyes, and you will be surprised that he loves money in the same way somebody else loves a woman or a man.

Now psychologists have performed a few experiments. They have made a few cards, one hundred cards, ordinary playing cards. Just two or three cards are there, inside the whole pack, of naked women. They give you the whole pack, shuffled in such a way that the psychologist himself is not aware where the cards are which contain the pictures of naked women. But he goes on watching the eyes of the person who is looking at the cards, who goes on looking at cards. When he comes to a naked woman suddenly his eyes change. His pupils become big; that is automatic. He is not aware what is happening, but immediately his pupils become so big, they want to take the naked woman in as much as possible. They open all the doors.

The same happens with people who are mad after money, money maniacs. Seeing a hundred-rupee note their pupils become immediately big. They may not be interested in a woman -- and women are aware of it, hence so many ornaments, beautiful saris and all kinds of arrangements for these foolish people. They may not look at the face of the woman but they will be immediately interested in her necklace. They may be immediately interested in her earrings, her hair clip; if it has a diamond, a big diamond,

they become interested in the diamond, and via the diamond they become interested in the woman.

Their sexuality has become perverted, it has become focused on money. And so is the case with power-hungry people, those who are after political power, those who want to become presidents and prime ministers and governors. Just seeing the chair of the prime minister is enough and their whole being is in a state of ecstasy, in a state of orgasmic joy. Just seeing is enough. That is their goal.

Buddha is right to use the same word for both. Hence the misunderstanding in translation. The translator has thought that he is talking about women, so he translated kama as: WHILE A MAN DESIRES A WOMAN, HIS MIND IS BOUND AS CLOSELY AS A CALF TO ITS MOTHER. In fact, Buddha does not mention women. What he is trying to say is: WHILE A MAN desires, HIS MIND IS BOUND AS CLOSELY AS A CALF TO ITS MOTHER. Any desire is a bondage.

Desire AS SUCH is a bondage, because when you desire, you become dependent on the other, on the desired object. Whether it is a woman, money, a man, power, prestige, it does not matter -- it is desire, and desire brings bondage. Why?

It is simple. When you desire something, your joy depends on that something. If it is taken away, you are miserable; if it is given to you, you are happy, but only for the moment. That too has to be understood. Whenever your desire is fulfilled it is only for the moment that you feel joy. It is fleeting, because once you have got it, again the mind starts desiring for more, for something else. Mind exists in desiring; hence mind can never leave you without desire. If you are without desire mind dies immediately. That's the whole secret of meditation.

Create desirelessness and mind is gone, gone forever, never to return back. If desire is there, mind will come. Desire is the root from where the mind comes in. Desire is its nourishment, its food, its very life, its breath. So mind cannot leave you without desire. If you desire God -- even God -- and you meet God, it will be only for a moment that you will be ecstatic. Then suddenly the mind will say, "Now what? Now this goal is achieved. Project future goals. You are finished with God, now there is no more in it."

Desire fulfilled only for a moment gives you a relief, and that relief has also to be understood. In the moment of a fulfilled desire there is relief. There is relief because in that small moment you are desireless. Desirelessness is joy. When one desire is fulfilled and before the mind projects another desire, between the two there is a small interval when there is no desire. That moment is of meditation.

That's how meditation has been discovered. It has not been speculated upon, it is not given by philosophers, by great thinkers. It is a simple observation, a scientific observation, that whenever desire is not there.... You wanted a beautiful house and you have got it. When you open the door of the new house, for a moment you are transported into another world, for a moment there is no desire. A long, long-cherished desire has been fulfilled. It will take a little time for the mind....

Mind needs time, remember. Mind cannot function without time; hence mind creates time. Without time there is no space for the mind to function. Mind will take a little time. In fact, mind is shocked. It was not hoping that the desire was going to be

fulfilled. The goal was so far away, the house was so big, and it was almost impossible, but now that it is fulfilled mind is in shock. The mind is collecting itself again while you are opening the door of the new house, and you enter in the new house and a deep joy arises in you. You say, "Aha!" The time that passes while you say "Aha!" is enough, and mind has projected another desire.

The mind says, "The house is beautiful, but where is the swimming pool? The house is beautiful, but the garden is not looked after." You will have to create a new garden, a beautiful swimming pool, and again the whole process sets in, again you are in the wheel of the mind. But for a moment when there was no desire, there was joy. Joy is always when there is no desire. Whenever there is desire, joy disappears. Desire keeps you a prisoner.

Hence Buddha says: WHILE A MAN DESIRES HIS MIND IS BOUND -- and there is not much difference between one desire and another desire. So mind is not much worried what you desire. Mind's worry is only one: that you MUST desire. Desire anything! You can start collecting postal stamps, that will do -- but desire. Now, postal stamps are useless, but there are many people who go on collecting them.

I know one man who collects cigarette boxes. He has such a collection... he is ready to purchase at any cost. If a new cigarette packet can be given to him, he is ready.... He collects BIDI labels, and he goes on showing people with such great joy, as if he has conquered the world.

I know another man who goes on writing in books, "Rama, Rama, Rama." For years he has been doing it -- almost sixty years -- because now he is eighty years old. His whole house is full of books in which is written only one word, "Rama," and he goes on showing people and bragging: "Look how many millions of times I have written 'Rama'."

When I was a guest in his house, he showed me too. I said. "You must be a fool. You wasted all these books. You should have given these books to children, poor children. They would have used them in a far better way. You have simply wasted ink, paper, your time, your life. And moreover, whenever you will come across Rama, he will hit you on your head, because you must be continuously harassing him: 'Rama, Rama, Rama'. Day in, day out you go on harassing him. Avoid him; if you see Rama anywhere, escape." I asked him, "Do you know why he always carries a bow with him? It is for devotees like you. He is always ready with his bow and arrow, so you cannot escape."

He was shocked. He said, "What are you saying? Are you joking? I have been doing a religious act. Everybody has praised it, great saints have come and praised it."

I said, "Those people must have been fools just like you."

Mind can desire anything. Now, he is not collecting money, but more and more names of Rama.... It is the same game.

A man went to see his lawyer about getting a divorce.

"How much do you charge for handling a case like mine?" he asked.

"I really don't like to handle divorce cases," replied his attorney. "Why do you want to get a divorce?"

"Because I want to marry my wife's sister."

"Now, a case like that could get pretty messy. It might cost you as much as a thousand dollars. Why don't you go home and think it over."

So the man went home, and the next day he called his lawyer. "I have talked the whole thing over with my best friend," he said. "I have decided not to get a divorce after all."

"That's just fine," said his lawyer. "Tell me, what did your friend say that made you change your mind?"

"Well, he tells me he has been out with my wife and her sister, too, and there ain't a nickel's worth of difference between them."

Every desire is the same. The objects differ, but not the quality of desiring. You desire money, somebody else desires God; you desire power, somebody else desires paradise. It is all the same. Hence there are no religious desires, remember. Nondesiring is religious. Desiring is worldly, desire is the world. Nondesire is transcendence.

But when one is under the impact of a desire, the impact is hypnotic. Every desire hypnotizes you. It makes you blind, that's why we say... we use phrases like falling in love. That is significant. The love that you know is certainly a fall -- a fall from consciousness, a fall from understanding. You start crawling on the earth; you are no more in your senses, you lose your intelligence, you become stupid.

The more you are full of desire and lust, the more stupid you are.

Murphy's maxim.... Murphy says: I believe in love at first sight because it saves time.

When you are going to fall, then why wait? Fall at the first sight. At least time is saved if nothing else. When a person is in love with someone -- and by love I don't mean the love of the buddhas; their love is totally different. They are talking about prayer, they are talking about compassion, they are talking about a desireless expression of their being. They are sharing their bliss.

I am talking about YOUR love. It is lust, it is the lowest energy phenomenon possible. You are almost in a hypnotic state. A man in love with a woman, or a woman in love with a man is no longer able to see clearly. The mind becomes clouded, the desire creates so much smoke, it raises so much dust that you can't see clearly. And whatsoever you see is your own projection.

A young army sergeant was posted to the deserts of Arabia by the French Foreign Legion. After a few days he became restless and asked his officer what form of entertainment took place in the camp -- where were all the women and bars and so forth.

The officer replied, "Just be patient and wait until the camels arrive."

So the young sergeant waited patiently for several days more and inquired again and the officer replied, "For heaven's sake, just wait until the camels arrive."

The next night there was an almighty rush, all the soldiers came running out of their tents yelling and screaming.

The young sergeant grabbed the officer and asked, "What is going on?"

"The camels are coming!" replied the officer.

"But why the great rush?"

"Well, you don't want to get an ugly one, do you?"

If you are starving in a desert, even camels will start looking beautiful; otherwise you can't see any difference between one camel and another. But the more your desires are starved, the more blind you become.

So remember, Buddha is not saying to starve your desires. He has been misunderstood by people, by his own followers as much as by his enemies. That is the fate of the buddhas: to be misunderstood by the friends and the enemies both. When he is saying that desire makes you blind, he is not saying to repress desire, because a repressed desire is far more dangerous. He is saying, "Understand desire, meditate over the whole phenomenon of it, and through understanding go beyond it, not through repression. Through meditation, transcend desire. Seeing that desire is misery, seeing that desire is bondage, seeing that desire drags you downwards into hell, one simply is released without any repression."

And to be released from desire is to be a buddha, is to be a christ.

The greatest mystery is that those who have desires live like beggars. They live in bondage, are bound to live like beggars. And those who have transcended desire live like emperors. It seems existence follows a very paradoxical law.

Old Murphy says: In order to get a loan you must first prove you don't need it.

If you want a loan from a bank, prove that you don't need it. If the bank suspects you need it, you won't get it.

Exactly that is the case with dhamma, with the eternal law of existence. When you don't need anything, the whole existence is yours, the whole kingdom of God is yours. And when you need anything, nothing is yours -- only the need and the wound and the desire and the bondage. And desires are jumping upon you from every direction, there are desires and desires. It is not a question of one desire; desiring is the same, but there are millions of desires. So you live simultaneously in millions of prisons, and they go on destroying you, they go on forcing things upon you which you would not have accepted if there had been a moment of insight, of clarity. You would not have accepted such humiliation as you accept because of desires. You would not have accepted this crawling state. You are meant to fly into the sky. You have wings -- wings which can take you to the ultimate. But desires are heavy like rocks; they are crushing you.

And how many desires do you have? One day simply write them down and count them, and you will be surprised: they go on sprouting one after the other. And each desire fulfilled brings ten more desires in. Desires don't believe in birth control; each

desire gives birth to as many desires as possible. Desires are never barren, they are never childless.

Bobbie Jo, a truly homely gal, came home from the Georgia campus for summer vacation. One evening she calmly confessed to her mother that she had lost her virginity last semester.

"How did it happen?" gasped the parent.

"Well, it was not easy," admitted Bobbie Jo, "but three of my sorority sisters helped hold him down!"

Just look around at how many desires are holding you down and how you are being exploited, sucked. And if you look miserable, sad, depressed, if you look weak, if you look as if life has no significance, it is not an accident, it is your own doing. You have not understood how you go on creating your own anguish, how you go on creating, feeding your own enemies.

Yes, Buddha is right: WHILE A MAN DESIRES, HIS MIND IS BOUND AS CLOSELY AS A CALF TO ITS MOTHER.

A Martian landed at a busy intersection in New York City and spent the next two hours crossing the street. He kept going back and forth between the two electric signs that change from "Walk" to "Don't Walk" and then back again.

Finally the weary little Martian stopped at one of the poles and threw his arms around it. "Baby," he said, "I really do love you, but you've got to stop being such a nag."

All desires are a nag, they go on nagging you, they go on forcing you, they go on goading you. You can't have a moment of rest, you can't be relaxed -- all those desires are there. Rest, relaxation, is known only by those who have understood the art of being desireless. That's what Buddha is pointing out:

AS YOU WOULD PLUCK AN AUTUMN LILY,
PLUCK THE ARROW OF DESIRE.

It is an arrow, it is hurting you, it is wounding you, it is great pain, it is nothing but misery. But then why do people go on desiring? Why don't they listen to the buddhas? -- for the simple reason that desires are very cunning. They go on promising you. Desires are politicians; they promise you beautiful things. Of course, those things will happen tomorrow, not today. And it seems logical that time will be needed -- five-year plans. Within five years everything will be perfectly as you would like it to be. Wait! Hope! Let tomorrow come! -- and the tomorrow never comes. Again tomorrow the same desires will be there, promising you. This has been so for so many lives.

You may not remember your past lives, but you can remember your past in this life at least. This has been the case always. The desire goes on telling you, "Tomorrow,

tomorrow, wait, be patient." And all promises are just toys to keep you occupied; the goods are never delivered.

The day you become aware of this cunning game that is being played upon you by your own mind, you throw all those toys. You stop listening to the continuous promises. You start laughing at your own stupidity, at your own ridiculousness, how you have been such a fool for so long. And the desire starts disappearing, it can't befool you anymore. It is an arrow, it hurts, but you are ready to suffer the pain in the hope that tomorrow you will be repaid, rewarded. And of course one has to pay for everything. The desire is very logical, it tries to convince you.

FOR HE WHO IS AWAKE
HAS SHOWN YOU THE WAY OF PEACE.
GIVE YOURSELF TO THE JOURNEY.

Buddha says: Enough is enough. You have listened to desire for thousands of lives and you have been moving in circles, suffering. You have not tasted anything of joy, you have not tasted anything of the beyond. Your mouths are full of dirt. You have not tasted real nourishment, because only God can be the real nourishment. Listen to those who are awake.

Even if you listen, you listen to people who are just as fast asleep as you are, or sometimes even more asleep than you are. You can understand them because they speak in the same language.

Once I was traveling in an air-conditioned compartment with three other passengers. It was really a great coincidence. I have been traveling for at least fifteen years continuously, and it had never happened like that. It was simply rare, unique. All the three passengers were such great snorers.

First the one on the lower berth started, and then the second started responding to him, almost answering. It was like a duet. I was surprised. And then the third started and he was something... those two were nothing, just learners, beginners. And they all snored in such a way as if they were answering each other. It was a great discussion. I could not sleep for one or two hours. I waited, and there was no way.

Then I started acting -- snoring so loudly, fully awake, that all the three started asking me, "Please, you are snoring too loudly."

I said, "Yes, I know it, because I am not asleep. Unless you all three stop, I am going to make this night a hell for you!"

But the way they were snoring was something worth witnessing, almost like answering each other. Great messages were being passed, and they followed the general format of a dialogue: when one was snoring the other two were silent. Then the second would start and the other two would listen -- and then the third would start, and the remaining two would be silent. They knew how to converse.

You can understand people who are asleep more easily because they use the same language, the language of sleep.

Florence and Emily, two pretty young housewives, arranged to have cocktails and lunch together. When they met, Emily could see that something serious was bothering her friend.

"Come on, out with it. What is depressing you?"

"I am ashamed to admit it, but I caught my husband making love."

"Why let that bother you? I got mine the same way."

Try to get it! Don't all be Germans, just try to get it. No... you need something else.

Two colleagues were discussing a patient. "I was having great success with Mr. Green," said the first doctor. "When he first came to me, he was suffering from a massive inferiority complex. He thought that he was too small, which was of course all nonsense."

"How did you treat this patient?" inquired the second doctor.

"I started out with intensive analysis and then group therapy. I convinced him that many of the world's greatest leaders were men of small physical stature. I really hated to lose Mr. Green."

"What do you mean?" inquired his colleague. "How did you lose him?"

"A terrible accident," replied the physician. "A pussycat ate him."

Now, these are your advisers -- more asleep than you are. Now the priests are being replaced by psychoanalysts. Priests were fast asleep; they used to snore, but their snoring has gone out of fashion. Now it is psychoanalysis and different schools of psychoanalysis. Just as there were different schools of theology, there are different schools of psychoanalysis, and you listen to their advice. They are your guides -- the blind leading the blind.

A beautiful girl was talking to her psychiatrist about her problem. "It is liquor, Doctor. Whenever I have a few drinks I have a compulsion to make love to whomever I happen to be with."

"I see," said the doctor. "Well, suppose I just mix up a couple of cocktails, then you and I sit down, nice and relaxed, and discuss this compulsive neurosis of yours."

Listen to the awakened; otherwise there is no way for you. Buddha says: FOR HE WHO IS AWAKE HAS SHOWN YOU THE WAY OF PEACE.

What is the way of peace? Understanding desire and transcending desire through understanding, great peace descends -- because desire is turmoil. Desire is maddening, desire keeps you neurotic.

Murphy's definition of a neurotic: A person who worries about things that didn't happen in the past, instead of worrying about something that won't happen in the future, like normal people.

So there are two types of neurotic people: those who worry about the past and those who worry about the future. The world consists of these two types of neurotics, and your desire is the cause of all this neurosis. It is desire that keeps you still engaged with the past, which is no more. It is utterly foolish to waste time for that which is no more. To look backwards is absolutely meaningless. You can't go back, you can't step backwards in time; then what is the point of wasting your present for that which cannot be recovered?

And then there are people who are too much concerned about the future, which is not yet. Future means that which is not. Remaining concerned with that which is not whether it is past or future is utterly ridiculous. But desire keeps you -- unfulfilled desire in the past keeps you engaged there; hopes of fulfilling desire tomorrow keep you engaged in the future. Only a desireless person lives in the present, and only those who live in the present are alive; others are dead.

FOR HE WHO IS AWAKE HAS SHOWN YOU THE WAY OF PEACE. GIVE YOURSELF TO THE JOURNEY.

Listen to the awakened ones. They are pointing you towards a tremendous journey, a journey into truth, a journey into awareness, a journey into bliss, a journey into peace, a journey into God, a journey into nirvana.

"HERE SHALL I MAKE MY DWELLING,
IN THE SUMMER AND THE WINTER,
AND IN THE RAINY SEASON."
SO THE FOOL MAKES HIS PLANS,
SPARING NOT A THOUGHT FOR HIS DEATH.

It is desire that keeps you clouded and does not allow you to see death, which is approaching every moment closer and closer.

Buddha says: The fool goes on thinking, "HERE I SHALL MAKE MY DWELLING, IN THE SUMMER AND THE WINTER, AND IN THE RAINY SEASON." And he is not aware that maybe the next moment he will be gone like a soap bubble and there may not be any more summer, any more winter, any more rainy season. But he is too concerned about making dwellings, dwellings on the earth, homes on the earth. Stay here, but remember you are in a caravanserai, an overnight stay, and in the morning we go. Don't be foolish.

Even if you can make a house for the winter, another house for the summer, another house for the rainy season.... Buddha must have remembered this, because his father had made three palaces for him in different places, in different climates: for the summer one palace -- must have been on a higher altitude, somewhere in the Himalayas, so he could live without the torture of summer -- and another house for winter in some warm climate, and another house for the rainy season.

He must have remembered that, but he renounced all that for the search for that which is deathless. Wasting your time in these palaces... and death is coming closer, and death

will take you away. Even if you can manage to have all you can desire, mind will not be satisfied.

In the first place you will not be able to manage it, because mind desires impossible things. But even if you can manage, you will not be satisfied.

Old Mrs. Abramson stood at the Wailing Wall hysterically crying and pounding the bricks. A tourist walked over to her and said, "Madam, there is no need for you to cry. The Jews now have a homeland, a place to go to. After two thousand years you finally have the country you have always wanted. Good heavens, why are you crying?" The old lady said, "I want to go to Miami Beach!"

And when she was on Miami Beach she wanted to go to Israel. That's how the mind functions. It is never satisfied, it knows no contentment. It will always find some fault, it will always find some cause to be tense.

Once a tightrope walker wanted to put together an act nobody had ever seen before. He had a rope stretched across the Grand Canyon, refused a net, had himself blindfolded, and then announced he would walk across the rope playing the Blue Danube waltz on a violin. Needless to say, a huge crowd gathered to see this performance, but as he approached the far side of the canyon, this is the conversation he overheard.

"Now, admit it, Harry. Have you ever seen anything like that in your whole life? Is he not amazing? Is he not incredible?"

"Okay, I admit it," said Harry. "He is amazing. He is incredible. But I will tell you one thing he is not."

"And what is that?" asked his wife.

"Heifetz, he's not."

This is the way of the mind: it can't be satisfied. It is impossible to satisfy it; it is a great fault-finder, it is a great inventor of misery. So whether you succeed or you fail, you will remain in misery if you remain with the mind. And the way to remain with the mind is desire. Desire is the glue that keeps you with the mind. Unglue yourself from the mind, become desireless.

But when I say, "Become desireless," I am not saying to let this become your goal. I am not saying that now you have to make efforts to become desireless; I am not saying to make this your desire -- becoming a desireless person. No, not at all; otherwise you would have misunderstood the whole point. Try to understand the desire and all its miseries and all its futilities, and in that very understanding is transcendence.

DEATH OVERTAKES THE MAN
WHO, GIDDY AND DISTRACTED BY THE WORLD,
CARES ONLY FOR HIS FLOCK AND HIS CHILDREN.
DEATH FETCHES HIM AWAY
AS A FLOOD CARRIES OFF A SLEEPING VILLAGE.

Remember death. Remember death always. Never forget death for a single moment. Why? Why is Buddha so much interested in death? -- for the simple reason that it is only death that can keep you aware. If you forget death you will become immediately unconscious. It is because of death that only man can become enlightened and no other animal, because no other animal is aware of death. It is only man who is aware of death. Let this awareness become more and more penetrating. Let it sink in your heart, so it remains there like a thorn, continuously reminding you that life is a shifting sand, that "Don't make your house here. Remember death is coming and whatsoever you do will be undone by death, so what is the point of becoming so much worried, becoming so much concerned, remaining in such anxiety when death is going to take everything away?"

Despite warnings from his guide, an American Jew skiing in Switzerland got separated from his group and fell -- uninjured -- into a deep crevasse. Several hours later, a rescue party found the yawning pit, and to reassure the stranded skier, shouted down to him, "We are from the Red Cross!"

"Sorry," the imperturbable Jew echoed back, "I already gave at the office!"

The Jew is a Jew. He has fallen into a deep pit and the danger of death is all around, but he is more interested in saving a little money. Just hearing the name 'Red Cross' reminds him only of one thing: they must have come for donations.

T.S. Eliot has written these beautiful lines:

WHERE IS THE LIFE WE HAVE LOST IN LIVING?
WHERE IS THE WISDOM WE HAVE LOST IN KNOWLEDGE?
WHERE IS THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE LOST IN INFORMATION?
THE CYCLES OF HEAVEN IN TWENTY CENTURIES
BRING US FARTHER FROM GOD AND NEARER TO THE DUST.

What has happened to us? Why have we lost sight of God? Not only have we lost sight of God, we declared with Friedrich Nietzsche that God is dead. Why are so many people against God? And even those who are not against are not for, remember; they are neutrals. And those who are for are only formally for, they are not truly for. They can't commit their lives in the search for God. What has happened to the modern man?

One thing has happened: we have been able to become more and more forgetful of death. The great advancement in medical sciences has given us a hope as if we are going to live forever. Medical science has certainly helped us to live a little longer than before, but that simply means a little longer: the same misery, the same desire, the same lust, the same bondage. Medical science may be able....

It seems very possible now that man may start living more than one hundred years. There are people who think that man can live at least three hundred years very easily. But what is the point? Whether you live seventy years or seven hundred years, you will

be the same stupid man. In fact, in seven hundred years your stupidity will grow very much. And if death is postponed for seven hundred years, who cares? It is not going to happen soon... and man does not have that much insight to look that far.

We live surrounded by small things. We see only so far, just a little bit ahead, enough to walk. Seven hundred years... that will make religion disappear from the earth, because man is not so intelligent that he can be aware of death if death is postponed for seven hundred years. He is not even intelligent enough to see it after seventy years, not even after seven years.

I have seen people who are seventy and yet not interested in meditation. Strange, very strange. I can't believe it. A man of seventy is still not interested in meditation? That simply means he has not yet been able to see death, and death is very close. Any moment it can happen.

Buddha wants you to remember death continuously. Don't think that he is a pessimist. Don't think that he is death-obsessed -- no, not at all. He simply wants you to remember death so that the sword of death hanging on you keeps you aware, alert.

It happened once:

A sannyasin was sent by his master to the court of the great king, Janaka. The sannyasin was a little puzzled; he said, "Why should I go to the court of the king?"

The master said, "You have to learn one thing, and you can learn it more easily there than anywhere else; hence I am sending you. Go and watch and be very alert. You are going to be enriched tremendously."

The sannyasin was not convinced. Remaining with such a great master, if he cannot learn something, then how can he learn in the court of the king? He used to think the king a fool because he has so many possessions, such a big kingdom, and HE had renounced all, so he had always thought himself holier than the king. Now, going to the king to learn something he felt a little insulted. But when the master was saying it he had to go. So he went, reluctantly, deep down resisting, but he went.

When he reached to the king's court he was shocked. In a way, his doubts were confirmed. The king was sitting, drinking wine; beautiful women almost naked were dancing around, and all the courtiers were there, completely drunk. The sannyasin thought, "What kind of a lesson have I to learn from these fools?" When he thought this, Janaka started laughing. He said, "Why are you laughing?"

Janaka said, "I am laughing because your old man knows something, he understands something, but you don't believe in him. You don't believe in your master. You have come, but reluctantly."

He was surprised: how had Janaka come to know this? He asked, "You seemed to be almost drunk and still you can understand? -- and I have not said anything."

Janaka said, "About this wine we will talk later on. Right now you do one thing; otherwise I am going to kill you." He ordered his soldiers to take their swords out of their sheaths and surround the court and give the sannyasin a cup full of oil, so full that it could not contain even a single drop more. And he told the sannyasin, "Put this cup

on your head, and go around the court seven times. If even a single drop of the oil falls, your head will be cut off."

Now the sannyasin thought, "I'm amongst lunatics and I cannot even escape." Those naked swords were there all around.

And the king said, "Remember it, I mean business. When I say something I do it. So be careful."

Looking at the cup, so full, he could not believe that he would be able to save his head -- but there was nothing else he could do. He had to put the cup full of oil on his head and go round the court seven times. And the dance continued, and the beautiful women continued, and of course he was an old type of sannyasin, deep down very much interested in women. Many times the desire came just to have a look, but the fear of death and those naked swords.... He managed seven rounds, although it was almost impossible.

Then the king asked, "How did you manage? It was impossible."

The sannyasin said, "I could manage because of these naked swords all around. I have never felt death so close, just a foot from my side. Any moment...."

And the king said, "What about these beautiful women? And I know sannyasins; they may not be interested in anything else, but they are bound to be interested in women. And what about this beautiful, delicious food? And the aroma of the food, and the wine... and these are the things that you have suppressed, so they are deep down in your being, they want to surface."

The sannyasin laughed. He said, "Who cares about these things when death is so close by?"

The king said, "You have learned the lesson. This was the lesson the master has sent you to learn."

Remember death. It is closer than those swords, it is always closer than anything else. You are living surrounded by death, and if this can be remembered, this can become the greatest stimulation for meditation, for awareness.

Hence the emphasis. Buddha says: DEATH OVERTAKES THE MAN WHO, GIDDY AND DISTRACTED BY THE WORLD, CARES ONLY FOR HIS FLOCKS AND HIS CHILDREN. DEATH FETCHES HIM AWAY AS A FLOOD CARRIES OFF A SLEEPING VILLAGE.

Don't be a sleeping village; otherwise death will come like a flood and you will be gone. Be awake, be alert, be mindful.

HIS FAMILY CANNOT SAVE HIM,
NOT HIS FATHER NOR HIS SONS.

Nobody can save you except your own awareness. KNOW THIS... and don't only believe in what the awakened ones say. Know this on your own, let it become an existential experience.

KNOW THIS.

SEEK WISDOM, AND PURITY.

Seek the innocence of a child. Drop all your foolish knowledge. All knowledge is foolish.

Remember T.S. Eliot again:

WHERE IS THE LIFE WE HAVE LOST IN LIVING?
WHERE IS THE WISDOM WE HAVE LOST IN KNOWLEDGE?
WHERE IS THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE LOST IN INFORMATION?
THE CYCLES OF HEAVEN IN TWENTY CENTURIES
BRING US FARTHER FROM GOD AND NEARER TO THE DUST.

Where is the wisdom that we have lost in knowledge? Knowledge is purely a substitute for wisdom. Knowledge means borrowed from others. Drop all that which you have taken from others. Wisdom is that which grows in your innocence, when you are just like a small child, full of wonder and awe, mystified by existence, knowing nothing, and wisdom arises. Wisdom wells up in your being. Wisdom is not something that comes from the outside, it is your inner growth. KNOW THIS. SEEK WISDOM, AND PURITY.

QUICKLY CLEAR THE WAY.

And whatever hinders the way for the wisdom to arise, quickly clear it.

Remove knowledge, information, remove all your egoistic trips. Remove desires, remove memories, imaginations, remove the whole mind.

Become a no-mind.

That is purity, and in that purity wisdom blooms.

In the lake of that innocence the lotus of wisdom opens up, and that is the only possible way to be free, to have freedom -- ultimate, total.

"What are you reading?" asked the prison librarian.

"Nothing much," replied the prisoner. "Just the usual escapist literature."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #4

Chapter title: A madman's guide

24 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I AM LOSING MY MIND OR MY MEDITATION, OR BOTH.

Prem Arup, the greatest blessing is when you lose mind and meditation both. To lose the mind is only half the way; the goal is not reached. One who loses the mind starts clinging to meditation; meditation becomes his mind. Meditation becomes his possession, his treasure -- far more beautiful than mind certainly, far more joyous, far more blissful, worth achieving.

To lose the mind is to lose all your miseries. Then great ecstasies bloom, then great joys well up within your being. But even to be ecstatic is to be disturbed. Even to be joyous is to be not totally at home. One has to go beyond ecstasy, beyond the joy, beyond the exhilaration. One has to become utterly peaceful. Hence, Buddha never talks about bliss; he talks about peace, silence. That is the ultimate goal.

Transcend the mind, using the method of meditation. Then do not cling to meditation -- because clinging is the same; to what you cling is irrelevant. The moment the mind disappears, let the meditation also disappear. Neither be a mind nor a no-mind. This is the ultimate goal, the goal of buddhahood. Then you have arrived. Then there is peace. You are no more, only peace exists. There is nobody to possess it.

Half of you was killed when you dropped the mind, and half of you was killed when you dropped meditation. The worldly part disappeared with the mind and the so-called spirituality disappeared with the meditation. Now you are neither body nor soul. You are not. A tremendous nothingness, a total nobodiness exists. Buddha calls it SHUNYA, nirvana. Everything has ceased: misery and joy, day and night, summer and winter, life and death, all are gone. The whole duality is transcended.

Arup, feel blessed. Feel immensely fortunate if both disappear -- although in the clinging it will look very crazy. First, to drop the mind looks very crazy. But then meditation is there to give you a new settlement, a new order, a new discipline -- higher, better, more sophisticated, more cultured, more inner, more subjective.

When you drop meditation, all order, all discipline, all structure, disappears. You take a plunge into the utterly unknown, the ultimate unknown.

This is the moment of the real birth -- not of you but of God. You are no more, now only God is. And by "God" I don't mean a person; by "God" I only mean an experience.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

YOU TELL US THAT AWARENESS IS ENOUGH. THEN WHY DISCOURSES,
GROUPS, SANNYAS?

Rick Ferris, how did you come to know that awareness is enough? I have to tell it again and again -- that awareness is enough, that no discourse is needed. But even that has to be told to you: that nothing is needed. But you are so asleep, you won't come upon the truth by yourself and you won't come upon the truth even if repeated thousands of times.

Now see the trick of your mind: it is not that you have understood that awareness is enough. On the contrary, you have understood that discourses are not needed, groups are not needed, sannyas is not needed. See the tricky mind, the cunning mind... who goes on creating new hells for you. You missed the point and you have misinterpreted the whole thing.

Discourses are to tell you that words won't do, but even to tell that words won't do, words are needed. There is no other way, because you understand only words.

Buddha used to tell a parable:

A man had gone to the market. When he came back his house was on fire. His children were playing inside the house, absolutely oblivious of the fact that the house was on fire. It was a big house and they must have been in the innermost part of the house. He shouted from the outside, because he was afraid to enter the house, but the children wouldn't listen. A great crowd gathered. Then he said to the children, "Come out! See what I have brought for you -- many toys. The toys that you had asked me for, I have brought all, and beautiful toys!"

The children came running out of the house -- and he had not brought a single toy! They started asking, "Where are the toys?"

He said, "Look at the fire! I have not brought any toys, but this was the only way to bring you out of the house. The house is on fire! I was shouting that 'The house is on fire!' and you were laughing and giggling. You were thinking I am playing a joke or something. Yes, I have lied to you that I have brought toys for you, but the lie has worked as a strategy -- it has helped you to come out. It has served a great purpose."

Words are not enough, but because you understand only words, Rick Ferris.... Can you understand silence? Then you would not have been here. There is no need to be here. You could have sat by the side of a silent rock or you could have sat underneath a silent tree... and you would have understood all the buddhas. Then you will not read the Bible and the Koran and the Gita. You would have gone to the desert to feel the silence, the eternal silence of the desert. And you would have understood all the Bibles, all the Korans, all the Gitas. But you have come here!

You can understand only words. And I know truth cannot be communicated through words, but words can be used to bring you out of the house which is on fire. Words can bring you out of the world of words and dreams and desires in which you live. Words can be used in such a skillful way that they can lead you -- or at least point you -- towards silence; hence the discourses.

Groups are a little more rough. If you don't listen to me, if you don't understand words, then real hammers will be needed. I hammer you, but I hammer you with words. I don't whip you, I only show you the shadow of the whip. If you listen, good; if you don't listen, then you will need groups. There they use actual whips! To bring you to your senses they hit you hard. With great compassion they are cruel. They do everything that can be done to wake you up.

And sannyas? Sannyas is just to make a fool of you! You are too much in your knowledge, in your head. A little foolishness will do! You are too knowledgeable, too clever, too cunning. Sannyas is a surrender of all your cleverness, cunningness, knowledge.

Sannyas is a madman's path; I am a madman's guide! But before you can really become sane you will have to drop your old kind of sanity -- which is not sanity.

These are all devices -- sannyas, groups, discourses -- strategies. Not that only through these strategies you will know what truth is, but these will help you. If you are intelligent you will use them as a ladder, as a boat to the other shore. When you have reached the other shore, the boat has to be left behind. It is not that you have to sit in the boat forever and forever or that even when you have reached the other shore you have to carry the boat on your head, just out of sheer gratitude.

You are utterly unaware, and great effort is needed to make you aware.

A guy went to the track and won three hundred dollars. Thinking his luck would hold he went back the next day ready to make a killing.

As he was looking over the horses set to run in the last race he noticed a priest making signs over one of the nags. Thinking that he had really lucked in, the guy bet every nickel he had won and every cent he could scrape up on the horse. Naturally, the horse finished last.

Leaving the track he happened to bump into the very priest he had seen blessing the horse. "Father," he said, "I am a ruined man! I saw you blessing that horse and I bet every cent I had on him."

The priest was horrified. "My son," he said, "I was not blessing that horse, I was administering the last rites!"

I see your life as utterly ruined. You have been betting on dead horses! Your whole life is a mess -- and arranging your life from the outside is not going to help. Some radical transformation of your consciousness is needed.

The so-called religious people have been just doing the opposite. And that's why you go to the churches, to the temples, to the synagogues -- not to be awakened but to be

helped to sleep better. You go there to listen to beautiful lullabies. You go there to be consoled. You go there to be comforted.

My work here is not to comfort you, is not to console you, is not to sing a lullaby by the side of your bed. My work is to wake you up.

Everything is arranged in such a way -- the discourses, the meditations, the groups, the sannyas... it is an attack on your sleep from all possible directions. In a single word it can be said: my work is to dehypnotize you.

For eight days and nights Schlossberg, the suit-maker, was unable to sleep. No medicine took effect, and in desperation, the Schlossberg family brought in a famous hypnotist.

The hypnotist stared at Schlossberg and chanted, "You are asleep, Mr. Schlossberg. The shadows are closing about you. Soft music is lulling you into a state of lovely relaxation. You are asleep, you are asleep...."

"You are a miracle-worker!" sobbed the grateful son. He gave the hypnotist a big bonus and the man left in triumph.

As the outside door closed, Schlossberg opened one eye, "Say," he demanded, "is that schmuck gone yet?"

But these schmucks are your rabbis, your priests, your popes, your shankaracharyas, your imams, your Ayatollah Khomeiniacs.... And because you want more comfortable sleep and sweet dreams, their business prospers.

Sigmund Freud has said that it seems man cannot live without illusions. As far as the ordinary humanity is concerned he is right. Before Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche had the same insight. He said that the people who destroy people's illusions are the real enemies of the people, because man cannot live without lies. "Truth is dangerous! Who wants truth?" says Friedrich Nietzsche. We want beautiful lies and illusions, sweet dreams.

This is true about ninety-nine point nine percent of humanity. Only very rarely a person starts searching for truth, but then he has to risk all his sleep and the dreams and the investments that he has made in his dreams.

A Buddha, a Jesus, a Moses: these people are not to give you comforts. They shatter all your lies; howsoever comfortable they are, howsoever cozy they appear, they shatter them. They want you to know the truth. In the beginning it is bitter.

Buddha has said: Lies are sweet in the beginning, bitter in the end. In the beginning they look like nectar, in the end they prove fatal, poisonous. Truth is bitter in the beginning, sweet in the end. In the beginning it looks like poison, as if it is going to kill you; in the end it is elixir, it is nectar. It makes you capable to know the eternal, the deathless.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF GOD, GOD'S REPRESENTATIVE ON EARTH, A PROPHET, AND/OR JUST A VERY CLEAR INDIVIDUAL? HAVING SEEN YOU A COUPLE OF TIMES IN MORNING DISCOURSE AND LISTENING TO TAPES AND VIDEOTAPES OF YOU, YOU NEVER SEEM TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION. HOW AND WHY DO YOU KNOW OR FEEL SOMETHING I DO NOT?

Harold Peltz, the first thing is that there is no God. Yes, there is godliness, but no God. The idea of God is anthropocentric. The Bible says: God created man in his own image. The truth is just the opposite: man has created God in HIS own image. God is nothing but a projection of human wishes, desires, longings. God is nothing but the projection of human mind.

That does not mean that I am an atheist, but I am not a theist either. My position is exactly that of Gautama the Buddha. He was not an atheist and he was not a theist. He did not believe in God, he did not DISbelieve in God. What was his position?

His position is very unique, his position is worth sharing. His space is worth communing with. And that is the space of all the meditators: they believe in godliness. The whole existence is overfull with spirituality, but there is no such person as God.

You ask me, "Do you consider yourself God?"

No, sir, certainly not! Even if I was I would have denied it -- because who will take responsibility for this ugly world? I cannot take responsibility for creating you! That will be the real original sin!

I am not God, but I have known godliness -- in me, in you, everywhere. Godliness is a quality; it is a fragrance that permeates the whole of existence. The only difference between you and me is that I am aware of it and you are not aware of it; otherwise there is no difference. I am awake, you are asleep. We are exactly the same, participating in the same existence, breathing the same godliness, living in the same ocean of godliness. We are the fish of the same ocean, but you are not aware of the ocean and I am aware of the ocean, within and without, both.

I don't know more than you know -- you may be knowing more than me. My knowledge is poor; I am not a knowledgeable person. And whatsoever I quote is not reliable! You may be knowing more, you may be well informed. You have a great accumulation of facts. In that way I am utterly poor, as poor as a child. But that is not the real difference; that is not the difference that makes the difference.

The only thing that is significant is being aware of the reality.

The English language is very poor; it has only one word, 'God'. Sanskrit is immensely rich, it has many words to signify different approaches. The ultimate, the absolute, is called BRAHMAN. That is the purest godliness, uncontaminated. It is an abstraction: all matter has disappeared, only pure energy, only pure consciousness remains.

The second word in Sanskrit is ISHWAR; that comes close to 'God'. Ishwar means "the creator," but it is lower than Brahman. It is as illusory as the whole world. If the creation is illusory, how can the creator be the real? You can see the point: the creation and the creator are two polarities. The whole world is illusory, hence the creator too is illusory.

You will be surprised to know that you have to go beyond God; only then can you know the ultimate, not before it. To know God is a lower state of understanding.

The third word is BHAGWAN -- which cannot be translated as 'God'. Buddha never believed in God, yet we have called him Bhagwan. Mahavira never believed in God, yet we have called him Bhagwan.

H.G. Wells has said: Gautama the Buddha is the man in the whole history of humanity who is the most godless and yet the most godly.

How can this word 'bhagwan' be translated into English? It simply means "the blessed one"; it has nothing to do with God. Literally it means one who has attained; hence he is called the blessed one -- one who has arrived, one who has become awakened, enlightened.

Bhagwan does not mean a representative. There is no God, so how can you be a representative of God? Buddha is not a representative of God, neither am I. That is a very poor idea, being a representative of somebody -- just a salesman! That is very humiliating!

And Buddha is not a prophet -- neither am I. A prophet means one who brings the message from God to the world. He is nothing but a postman -- and I don't want to be a postman! A prophet is not of much value. There is no God; hence there can be no messengers, no messiahs, no prophets.

And you ask me, "... and/or just a very clear individual?"

One thing will have to be understood: if you become clear, individuality disappears; you are simply clarity. If you are unclear, then individuality is there. Individuality and clarity don't go together. Individuality is deep down nothing but an ego -- to feel oneself separate, separate from the whole.

I am just clarity, not an individual. It is very difficult to understand how you can be clear if there is no individual. Our language forces us to some unnecessary conclusions. When the dance is total, the dancer is no more there; only dance is. And you can ask the great dancers -- you can ask Nijinsky, Gopi Krishna -- and they will agree with it: when the dance comes to the ultimate peak, the dancer disappears. There is only dance, there is nobody dancing. There are not two entities, the dancer and the dance.

When the painter is really merged into his painting, absorbed, then there is not painting AND the painter, there is only painting. There is no painter left; for a few moments the painter disappears. Only when the painter disappears, painting reaches to its ultimate beauty.

The dancer, the painter, the singer, the musician, the poet, they all know those moments, but those are only moments in their lives. In the lives of the buddhas those are not only moments; they have become their reality. The dancer has disappeared forever.

I am no more an individual, but just clarity; not a dancer but only a dance. If you can understand that, only then will you be able to have some communion with this nobodiness, with this nothingness, with this state of nirvana.

You ask me, "Having seen you a couple of times in morning discourse and listening to tapes and videotapes of you, you never seem to answer this question. How and why do you know or feel something I do not?"

I know only one thing: that I know nothing. And that's where the difference may be. You know that you know, I know that I don't know. Only when you come to that state of blissful ignorance, clarity happens. Knowledge is a disturbance; no-knowledge gives you clarity, transparency.

Old man Krestenfeld lay on his deathbed for months and finally passed away. Two weeks later, the relatives gathered like vultures to hear the reading of the will. The lawyer tore open an envelope, drew out a piece of paper and read, "Being of sound mind, I spent every dime before I died."

I would like to say only this much: that I am simply soundness -- not even sound mind... pure clarity, a sky without any clouds, utterly empty. You can also be that. In your innermost core you are already that.

And my effort here is, Harold Peltz, to help you to become nobodies just like me, ignorant just like me. And remember: there is a knowledge that knows not and there is an ignorance that knows.

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

YES, THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE. MY FLAMES OF JEALOUSY, GREED AND VIOLENCE ARE BURNING ME. I SEE YOU SHINING AT THE DOORWAY, BECKONING ME TO SIMPLY COME OUT, YET I HOLD BACK, CLINGING TO MY MISERY WHILE MY MIND RACES ON WITH DESIRES. WHY CAN'T I LET GO?

Deva Dwabha, to be without misery needs great courage. To be miserable is very cheap, very simple; it costs nothing. To be miserable you don't need any courage, any intelligence. To be miserable is so easy, but to come out of it is difficult, arduous. To come out of it needs intelligence, because you are the creator of your misery, and you create your misery because you are unconscious. You can stop creating it only if you become conscious, and to become conscious needs great effort.

Moreover, misery keeps you occupied so that you can avoid your inner hollowness. It keeps you engaged. If you are not miserable you will have to go in, and you are afraid because there is great emptiness. It is a kind of death to go in.

The mystics have called it "the great death" -- greater than the so-called ordinary death, because in the ordinary death only the body dies. If you go in, your mind dies. And one is afraid to die -- your ego dies -- and one is afraid to lose one's identity. And how much effort you have put to attain to a certain identity. One is a famous actor, another is a well-known politician. Somebody is very rich, somebody is very knowledgeable. You have put so much effort... and now I am telling you to come out of it! That means all

your effort has been a sheer wastage. It will need guts to come out of it and it will need courage to be without identity.

The Zen people say: Before you meditate, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. When you go deep in meditation, mountains are no more mountains and rivers are no more rivers. When you attain to satori, when the meditation is transcended, then again mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers.

This is a Zen way of saying that before meditation you have a certain identity. You have a name, fame, form, family, race, culture, religion, country; all these give you a certain idea who you are -- although that idea is absolutely false, arbitrary, accidental. It is just accidental that you were born as a Christian or a Hindu or a Mohammedan; it has no significance at all. It is just an accident whether you are born a German or an Indian or a Chinese. You are none of these.

Your consciousness is simply consciousness, neither Chinese nor Korean nor Japanese. Your consciousness is simply consciousness. It belongs to no country, no race, no color, no religion; all those are conditionings. You have been hypnotized and told that you are an Indian; this is a hypnosis. You have been hypnotized and told that you are a Mohammedan, and the hypnosis is prolonged your whole life. It goes so deep that you may even be ready to die for it. People die for religion, for country, for flags; for many nonsenses they are ready to die. It seems as if their life has no meaning at all, as if they are ready to die for any excuse -- any excuse will do.

Your identity is arbitrary. Before meditation you are a little bit certain who you are. As you go into meditation your miseries start disappearing and with those miseries your identity starts evaporating. You fall into a state of chaos, and that chaos creates fear.

Dwabha, I have given you this name.... DWABHA means twilight; it means neither day nor night, just in the middle. And that's where you are: afraid to go deeper, standing in shallow water. It feels safe, although you are miserable -- but the misery is familiar, well known; you have become accustomed to it. In fact, a kind of family relationship has arisen between you and your misery.

There is a Sufi parable:

A man used to call every night to God and he would pray the same prayer. Again and again he would ask, "Do one favor for me, at least one favor -- and I have been asking my whole life. As far as I can see, I am the most miserable man on the earth. Why have you chosen me to be the most miserable? I am ready to exchange my misery with anybody else, anybody will do -- just let me exchange my misery with somebody else. I don't ask for bliss. Can't you give me only this single opportunity to exchange my misery with somebody else? This is not asking much!"

And one night in a dream he saw God had spoken. A great voice came from the heavens saying, "Gather all of your miseries into bundles and bring them to the temple hall."

So the whole town gathers their miseries into big bundles and they bring them. This man is tremendously happy: "So the moment has come! It seems something is going to happen!"

He rushes with his bundle. On the way he finds others also are rushing. By the time he reaches to the temple he becomes afraid, very afraid, because he sees people are carrying bigger bundles than his. People that he had always seen smiling -- Rotarians, Lions -- in beautiful clothes and always saying nice things to each other, and they are carrying bigger bundles! He starts becoming a little hesitant whether to go or not to go, but he has been praying his whole life, so he says, "Let us see what happens."

They enter into the temple. The voice says, "Put your bundles around the hall." They put their bundles, and the voice says again, "Now you can choose any bundle that you like."

And the miracle of miracles happens: everybody rushes to his own bundle! This man also rushes so fast towards his own bundle, afraid that if somebody else chooses it then he will be at a loss. Everybody has chosen his own bundle, with great relief and they are all happy, carrying their bundles back to their homes. Even this man is very happy, for the simple reason that "Who knows what is in the other's bundle? At least we are aware of our own bundle and what it contains. And we have become accustomed, we have become adjusted to our misery."

Dwabha, that's why you find it very difficult to get out of your miseries. And there may be investments also; your misery may not be just YOUR misery. You may be creating misery for others through your misery. If you are interested in creating misery in others, how can you drop your misery?

The husband comes home and the wife simply lies down on the bed and says she has a headache -- and I am not saying that she is pretending. In fact, it is almost impossible when you see your husband not to have a headache! She must be having one, I trust.... And then the husband becomes miserable. Now the wife cannot drop her headache, because if she drops her headache, then what about the husband? Her headache creates such misery for the husband that she is ready to suffer -- to make others suffer.

"I would divorce Milton in a minute," Mrs. Cooper told the woman doing her hair.

"Then why don't you?" asked the beautician.

"Because it would kill me to see him so happy."

It is difficult! It is difficult to come out of your misery, because it is not just your misery; it has become entangled with others' miseries, it has become a cause for others' miseries. And you enjoy torturing others; you feel powerful whenever you can torture. One is ready to sacrifice if one can create misery for others.

People are sadists and masochists both. It is very rare to find a pure sadist or a pure masochist. Those are only types found in psychological books. In reality, everybody is a sadist and everybody is a masochist. People are sadomasochists: they torture themselves in order to torture others; they torture others in order to torture themselves. It is all intertwined, interdependent. You cannot just slip out of it -- it is your whole

life's investment. Otherwise, nobody is preventing you, Dwabha, you can come out. Just you have to understand. If you cannot even drop your misery, what else can you drop? In the old days, a sannyasin was one who used to renounce life. I have changed the definition of a sannyasin. I call a man a sannyasin who is ready to renounce his misery. But in a way your life and your misery are almost synonymous.

What is your life? What you are doing with yourself and with others? You feel powerful whenever you can torture others; torture gives you a great release of power. Why are these Adolf Hitlers, Joseph Stalins and Mao Zedongs born again and again? From where do they come? They represent you. They represent the essential madness of humanity. They erupt again and again and they will go on coming, you can't prevent them, unless we change the very foundation of human existence. If we change human consciousness from misery to bliss, from tensions to peace.... Otherwise you will have to suffer. You deserve... in fact, you ask for them. Germany must have prayed long enough for Adolf Hitler to happen. And now there are again people in Germany who are starting the same fascist movement. You can't live without these insane people! Something in you needs them. Something that you cannot do to yourself they can do to you. They can release great misery in the world.

Have you seen, have you observed in times of war people look happier than ever? Their faces are more lighted up, they smile more. Suddenly their life has zest, enthusiasm, energy. They are no more dragging; their life has meaning. War gives them meaning. The death and the danger surrounding them helps them to come alive.

After each ten years a great world war is needed. If it is not happening now it is not because of humanity and its changed consciousness. It is happening because of hydrogen bombs, because the third world war will be the last -- and that is too much. A little bit of misery once in a while is good, but just to commit a global suicide seems too much. Nobody will be there even to enjoy it!

If a nuclear war happens, then within ten minutes everybody will be gone. Even the newspapers would not have reached you. You would be absolutely unaware what is happening. It will be simply a chaos. And within ten minutes all life would have disappeared from the earth. Birds, animals, trees, men, women, all would be gone. What is the point if you cannot enjoy? The joy is when you see people in gas chambers evaporating.

In Germany, the gas chambers were made in such a way that people could come and see in. The people who were going to die were not able to see the spectators, but the spectators were able to see. Thousands of people were coming to see; they were paying tickets for it. It was great entertainment! One thousand people in the gas chamber will evaporate. Within a single moment, nothing will be left. And these people -- thousands of people -- have come to see. What joy must they be deriving out of it? There must be something very ugly deep down....

During the French Revolution, when the guillotine was being used almost around the clock, Slutsky lived in a small village outside of Paris. One morning he met Flambeau, who had just returned from the city.

"What's happening there in Paris?" asked Slutsky.

"Conditions are absolutely horrible," replied the Frenchman. "They are cutting off heads by the thousands."

"Oy," moaned Slutsky, "and me in the hat business!"

Man's ugliness! Heads are being cut off in thousands, but Slutsky's problem is not those thousands of people dying. His problem is: "So many heads are being cut off, and me in the hat business!"

Everybody is concerned about his own small, selfish, ugly ego. That's why you cannot come out of your misery. Try to come out of the ego and you will be able to come out of the misery. Try to come out of the self.

Your so-called religious people go on teaching you, "Don't be selfish." Buddha says, "Don't be a self." And I also say to you: Don't be a self. The teaching, "Don't be selfish," has not helped. It can't help because it leaves the root untouched. The self is the root, and your religious people go on teaching -- your so-called saints and mahatmas -- "Don't be selfish." That simply means let the self be there, let the root remain. Just go on cutting off the branches and pruning the leaves. "Don't be selfish"... but then the root is there, it will sprout again; again leaves will come.

Buddha is the only enlightened master of the world who has gone to the very root of the problem. He says: Don't be a self. This is a great insight, a great contribution, one of the most precious. He says, "If you are a self, you will be selfish. Your selfishness may become otherworldly, spiritual; it will remain selfish. A self can only be selfish; a self can exist only in the climate of selfishness. If you try to be not selfish with the self intact, you will be only a hypocrite."

The word 'hypocrisy' comes from a root which means play-acting. You will be just acting a game, playing a game, pretending. You can't be selfish if the self is not there.

And how can the self be dropped? In fact, it is not there if you look in, so there is no need to drop it. All that is needed is a deep insight into your own inwardness. Look into your interiority -- that's what meditation is all about -- look in, and you will not find any self there. And when you don't find any self -- it disappears like a shadow in the light -- all selfishness disappears on its own accord.

Then a totally new quality comes to your existence. You are no longer concerned with creating misery for others; hence you can come out of YOUR misery. And the moment you see inwards, great intelligence is released, great creativity is released. That intelligence brings bliss and, ultimately, even takes you beyond bliss -- beyond mind and beyond meditation. It brings you to the ultimate core of existence; peace, tranquility, silence, stillness.

You cease totally and only then you arrive. You enter into the world of God, or godliness, only when you are no more.

But before you can go in you will have to drop many stupid ideas that you have been carrying all along. You will have to drop all that you have been told and taught. You will have to drop all that you have been educated for.

Your whole society is rooted, based, in the idea of making your life comfortable. Not true, but only comfortable, convenient, so that you can live conveniently and you can die conveniently. Your whole society is based in providing tranquilizers for you. Your religion functions like a tranquilizer. Whenever you are in trouble you go to the rabbi, to the priest, to the imam, and they console you. Your child has died. You go to the rabbi, you go to the priest, and he says, "Don't be worried. God takes away only those whom he loves." He is consoling you! Your child has been chosen by God; your child is one of those chosen few.

If you go to the Hindu priest he will say, "Don't be worried. The soul is immortal, nothing dies. The child has only changed the house and he will get a better house, a new house. It is like changing an old car for a new model. So don't be worried." He consoles you. He does not help you with a radical change. His effort is to make your life as comfortable as possible. And you pay for this, naturally.

He serves you and you pay for it.

Jacobs and Lipkin, two Israeli commandos, were about to be shot by the Arabs.

Jacobs said, "I think I'm gonna ask for a blindfold."

Lipkin said, "Jake, don't make trouble."

People live just with this idea: Don't make trouble. Even when you are going to be shot -- at least at that time you can make a little trouble; you won't lose anything more. But this is our philosophy, our basic philosophy of life: Don't make trouble. So follow the tradition, follow the conventional. Be a conformist. Be a Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian. Go to the church. Don't make trouble. Don't stir the waters. Just keep yourself somehow alive, and die without making any trouble. Then you cannot come out of your misery.

To come out of the misery you will have to be a revolutionary. The greatest revolution in the world is to come out of the miserable patterns of life. You will have to change your whole psychology and you will have to risk many things. You will not be accepted by the society. Otherwise why was Socrates not accepted? Why was Jesus not accepted? You will not be respected by the crowd. The crowd gives you respect only when you are part of the crowd. If you want respectability, then you have to be part of the crowd. Then you have to be just a sheep and not a man.

Dwabha, you can come out of it. Be a lion!

Buddha used to say to his disciples, "Be a lion! Roar like a lion and come out of all kinds of slavery!" And whatsoever the risk, it is worth it.

The last question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

THE OTHER DAY IN DISCOURSE YOU WERE SCOFFING AT MIRACLES, YET THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE SITTING SILENTLY FEELING YOUR PRESENCE,

LISTENING TO YOUR SONG AND THE BIRDS AND THE WIND -- IS THIS NOT A MIRACLE IN ITSELF? OR ARE THERE REALLY NO MIRACLES?

Anand Prakash, listening to me, listening to the birds and the wind, being utterly silent here in a deep, loving communion... it is not a miracle in the sense the word is used. It is in fact the most natural thing. Man has become unnatural; hence it looks like a miracle. It is because of man's becoming unnatural that such a simple thing looks like a miracle; otherwise it is natural, it is spontaneous.

You are not doing anything, I am not doing anything. We are together here; something is happening. Something is transpiring between me and you. Nobody is a doer, neither I nor you; it is happening on its own accord. In that sense it is simple, natural; but in another sense, you can use the word 'miracle'. It looks like a miracle because man has become so unnatural that to be silent even for a few minutes seems like a miracle.

It is as though a man who has lived in darkness his whole life is brought into light and for the first time sees the color of the flowers and the sunrays passing through the trees and the rainbow in the clouds, and starts shouting, "Miracles, miracles, miracles!"

You will say, "These are simple things, natural things. It is just because you have always lived in darkness. That's why these colors, these butterflies, these flowers, the green and the red and the gold of the trees, look like a miracle." But for him it is a miracle.

To me it is just natural; to you it may be a miracle. It depends from what standpoint you are looking at it.

But when I was scoffing at miracles, I meant miracles like Satya Sai Baba is doing: producing Swiss watches. At least produce watches made in India -- that would be a miracle! What is there of a miracle in a Swiss watch? I was laughing at these tricks, and I was saying there are no miracles in the sense that the universal law, dhamma, accepts no exception. Everything is natural and according to tao, according to dhamma, according to the universal nature of things. Nothing is against it; hence there are no miracles. These are all sleight-of-hand. These are just magic.

If you find a magician on the corner producing Swiss watches you won't call it a miracle. But the same man comes as a holy man, as a mahatma, and then immediately it becomes a miracle. Such miracles don't happen.

But a few miracles really happen. For example, just a few days before, a Polack has become the pope! Now this IS a miracle!

I would like to suggest to Buddha to make a few exceptions in his universal law. A Polack and a pope! -- who has ever heard such a thing?

Once old Murphy was asked, "How do you spot a Polack at a cock fight?"

He said, "He is the one with the duck."

Then he was asked, "How do you know the Italians are there?"

He said, "They bet on the duck."

And then he was asked, "And how do you know the mafia is there?"

He said, "The duck wins."

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #5

Chapter title: Be in the world and be holy

25 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

THERE IS PLEASURE
AND THERE IS BLISS.
FORGO THE FIRST TO POSSESS THE SECOND.

IF YOU ARE HAPPY
AT THE EXPENSE OF ANOTHER MAN'S HAPPINESS,
YOU ARE FOREVER BOUND.

YOU DO NOT WHAT YOU SHOULD.
YOU DO WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT.
YOU ARE RECKLESS, AND DESIRE GROWS.

BUT THE MASTER IS WAKEFUL.
HE WATCHES HIS BODY.
IN ALL HIS ACTIONS HE DISCRIMINATES,
AND HE BECOMES PURE.

HE IS WITHOUT BLAME
THOUGH ONCE HE MAY HAVE MURDERED
HIS MOTHER AND HIS FATHER,
TWO KINGS, A KINGDOM, AND ALL ITS SUBJECTS.

THOUGH THE KINGS WERE HOLY
AND THEIR SUBJECTS AMONG THE VIRTUOUS,
YET HE IS BLAMELESS.

The first sutra:

THERE IS PLEASURE
AND THERE IS BLISS.
FORGO THE FIRST TO POSSESS THE SECOND.

Meditate over it as deeply as possible, because it contains one of the most fundamental truths. These four words will have to be understood, pondered over. The first is pleasure, the second, happiness; the third is joy, and the fourth is bliss.

Pleasure is physical, physiological. Pleasure is the most superficial thing in life; it is titillation. It can be sexual, it can be of other senses, it can become an obsession with food, but it is rooted in the body. The body is your periphery, your circumference; it is not your center. And to live on the circumference is to live on the mercy of all kinds of things that go on happening around you. The man who seeks pleasure remains at the mercy of accidents.

It is like the waves in the ocean; they are at the mercy of the winds. When strong winds come, they are there; when winds disappear, they disappear. They don't have an independent existence; they are dependent, and anything that is dependent on the other brings bondage.

Pleasure is dependent on the other. If you love a woman, if that is your pleasure, then that woman becomes your master. If you love a man, if that is your pleasure and you feel unhappy, in despair, sad, without him, then you have created a bondage for yourself. You have created a prison, you are no more in freedom.

If you are a seeker after money and power, then you will be dependent on money and power. The man who goes on accumulating money, if it is his pleasure to have more and more money, will become more and more miserable -- because the more he has, the more he wants, and the more he has, the more he is afraid to lose it. A double-edged sword: the more he wants... the first edge of the sword. Hence he becomes more and more miserable.

The more you demand, desire, the more you feel yourself lacking something, the more hollow, empty, you appear to yourself. On the other hand -- the other edge of the sword -- is that the more you have, the more you are afraid it can be taken away; it can be stolen. The bank can go bankrupt, the political situation in the country can change, the country can go communist. There are a thousand and one things upon which your money depends. Your money does not make you a master, it makes you a slave. Pleasure is peripheral; hence it is bound to depend on the outer circumstances. And it is only titillation.

If food is pleasure, what actually is being enjoyed? -- just the taste! For a moment, when the food passes your taste buds on the tongue, you feel a sensation which you interpret as pleasure. It is your interpretation. Today it may look like pleasure and tomorrow it may not look like pleasure. If you go on eating the same food every day your buds on the tongue will become nonresponsive to it. Soon you will be fed up with it -- that's how people become fed up.

One day you are running after a man or a woman and the next day you are trying to find an excuse to get rid of the other. The same person, nothing has changed! What has happened meanwhile? You are bored with the other, because the whole pleasure was in knowing the new. Now the other is no longer new; you are acquainted with the territory of the other. You are acquainted with the body of the other, the curves of the body, the feel of the body. Now the mind is hankering for something new.

The mind is always hankering for something new. That's how mind keeps you always tethered somewhere in the future. It keeps you hoping, but it never delivers the goods -- it cannot. It can only create new hopes, new desires.

Just as leaves grow on the trees, desires and hopes grow in the mind. You wanted a new house and now you have it -- and where is the pleasure? Just for the moment it was there, when you achieved your goal. Once you have achieved your goal, your mind is no longer interested in it; it has already started spinning new webs of desire. It has already started thinking of other, bigger houses. And this is so about everything.

Pleasure keeps you in a neurotic state, restless, always in turmoil. So many desires, and every desire unquenchable, clamoring for attention. You remain a victim of a crowd of insane desires -- insane because they are unfulfillable -- and they go on dragging you into different directions. You become a contradiction.

One desire takes you to the left, another towards the right, and simultaneously you go on nourishing both the desires. And then you feel a split, then you feel divided, then you feel torn apart, then you feel like you are falling into pieces. Nobody is responsible. It is the whole stupidity of desiring pleasure that creates this.

And it is a complex phenomenon. You are not the only one who is seeking pleasure; millions of people just like you are seeking the same pleasures. Hence there is great struggle, competition, violence, war. All have become enemies to each other because they are all seeking the same goal, and they all can't have it; hence the struggle has to be total. You have to risk all -- for nothing, because when you gain, you gain nothing, and your whole life is wasted in this struggle. A life which might have been a celebration becomes a long, drawn out, unnecessary struggle.

When you are so much after pleasure you cannot love, because the man who seeks pleasure uses the other as a means. And to use the other as a means is one of the most immoral acts possible, because each being is an end unto himself, you cannot use the other as a means. But in pleasure-seeking you have to use the other as a means. You become cunning because it is such a struggle. If you are not cunning you will be deceived, and before others deceive you, you have to deceive them.

Machiavelli has advised pleasure-seekers that the best way of defense is to attack. Never wait for the other to attack you; that may be too late. Before the other attacks you, you attack him! That is the best way of defense. And this is being followed, whether you know Machiavelli or not.

This is something very strange: people know about Christ, about Buddha, about Mohammed, about Krishna; nobody follows them. People don't know much about Chanakya and Machiavelli, but people follow them -- as if Machiavelli and Chanakya are very close to your heart! You need not read them, you are already following them. Your whole society is based on Machiavellian principles; that's what the whole political game is all about. Before somebody snatches anything from you, snatch it from the other. Be always on guard. Naturally, if you are always on guard you will be tense, anxious, worried. And the struggle IS such and it is constant. You are one, and the enemies are millions.

For example, if in India you want to become the prime minister, then millions of people, who also want to become the prime minister, are your enemies. And who does not want to become the prime minister? One may say, one may not say. So everyone is against

you and you are against everybody else. This small life of seventy, eighty years, will be wasted into some utterly futile effort. Pleasure is not and cannot be the goal of life.

The second word to be understood is happiness. Happiness is psychological, pleasure is physiological. Happiness is a little better, a little more refined, a little higher, but not very much different from pleasure. You can say that pleasure is a lower kind of happiness and happiness is a little higher kind of pleasure -- two sides of the same coin. Pleasure is a little primitive, animal; happiness is a little more cultured, a little more human -- but it is the same game played in the world of the mind. You are not so much concerned with physiological sensations; you are much more concerned with psychological sensations. But basically they are not different; hence Buddha has not talked about four words, he has talked about only two.

The third is joy; joy is spiritual. It is different, totally different from pleasure, happiness. It has nothing to do with the other; it is inner. It is not dependent on circumstances; it is your own. It is not a titillation produced by things; it is a state of peace, of silence, a meditative state. It is spiritual.

But Buddha has not talked about joy either, because there is still one thing that goes beyond joy. He calls it bliss. Bliss is total. It is neither physiological nor psychological nor spiritual. It knows no division, it is indivisible. It is total in one sense and transcendental in another sense. Buddha only talks about two words. The first is pleasure; it includes happiness. The second is bliss; it includes joy.

Bliss means you have reached to the very innermost core of your being. It belongs to the ultimate depth of your being where even the ego is no more, where only silence prevails; you have disappeared. In joy you are a little bit, but in bliss you are not. The ego has dissolved; it is a state of nonbeing.

Buddha calls it nirvana. Nirvana means you have ceased to be; you are just an infinite emptiness like the sky. And the moment you are that infinity, you become full of the stars, and a totally new life begins. You are reborn.

Pleasure is momentary, of time, for the time being; bliss is nontemporal, timeless. Pleasure begins and ends; bliss abides forever. Pleasure comes and goes; bliss never comes, never goes -- it is already there in the innermost core of your being. Pleasure has to be snatched away from the other; you become either a beggar or a thief. Bliss makes you a master. Bliss is not something that you invent but something that you discover. Bliss is your innermost nature. It has been there since the very beginning, you just have not looked at it, you have taken it for granted. You don't look inwards.

This is the only misery of man: that he goes on looking outwards, seeking and searching. And you cannot find it in the outside because it is not there.

One evening, Rabiya was searching for something on the street in front of her small hut. The sun was setting; slowly slowly darkness was descending. A few people gathered. They asked the old woman -- she was a famous Sufi mystic -- "What are you doing? What have you lost? What are you searching for?"

She said, "I have lost my needle."

The people said, "Now the sun is setting and it will be very difficult to find the needle, but we will help you. Where exactly has it fallen? -- because the road is big and the needle is so small. If we know the exact place it will be easier to find it."

Rabiya said, "If you don't ask me that question, that will be better -- because in fact it has not fallen on the road at all! It has fallen inside my house."

The people started laughing and they said, "We had always thought that you are a little insane! If the needle has fallen inside the house, then why are you searching on the road?"

Rabiya said, "For a simple, logical reason: inside the house there is no light and on the outside a little light is still there."

The people laughed and started dispersing.

Rabiya called them and said, "Listen! That's exactly what you are doing; I was just following your example. You go on seeking bliss in the outside world without asking the first and primary question: Where have you lost it? And I tell you, you have lost it inside. You are looking for it on the outside, for the simple, logical reason that your senses open outwards -- there is a little more light. Your eyes look outwards, your ears hear outwards, your hands reach outwards; that's the simple reason why you are searching there. Otherwise, I tell you, you have not lost it outside -- and I tell you on my own authority. I have also searched on the outside for many, many lives, and the day I looked in I was surprised. There was no need to seek and search; it has always been there."

Bliss is your innermost core. Pleasure you have to beg from others; naturally you become dependent. Bliss makes you a master. Bliss is not something that happens; it is already the case.

Buddha says: THERE IS PLEASURE AND THERE IS BLISS. FORGO THE FIRST TO POSSESS THE SECOND. Stop looking on the outside. Look within, turn in. Start seeking and searching in your own interiority, into your own subjectivity. Bliss is not an object to be found anywhere else; it is your consciousness.

In the East we have always defined the ultimate truth as SAT-CHIT-ANAND. SAT means truth, CHIT means consciousness, ANAND means bliss. They are all three faces of the same reality. This is the true trinity -- not God the Father, and the Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost; that is not the true trinity. The true trinity is truth, consciousness, bliss. And they are not separate phenomena, but one energy expressing in three ways, one energy having three faces. Hence in the East we say God is TRIMURTI -- God has three faces. These are the real faces, not Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh. Those are for the children -- spiritually, metaphysically, for the immature. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh: those names are for the beginners.

Truth, consciousness, bliss -- these are the ultimate truths. First comes truth; as you enter in, you become aware of your eternal reality: sat, truth. As you go deeper into your reality, into your sat, into your truth, you become aware of consciousness, a tremendous consciousness. All is light, nothing is dark. All is awareness, nothing is unawareness. You are just a flame of consciousness, not even a shadow of

unconsciousness anywhere. And when you enter still deeper, then the ultimate core is bliss -- anand.

Buddha says: Forgo everything that you have thought up to now meaningful, significant. Sacrifice everything for this ultimate because this is the only thing that will make you contented, that will make you fulfilled, that will bring spring to your being... and you will blossom into a thousand and one flowers.

Pleasure will keep you a driftwood. Pleasure will make you more and more cunning; it will not give you wisdom. And it will make you more and more a slave; it will not give you the kingdom of God. It will make you more and more calculating, it will make you more and more exploitative. It will make you more and more political, diplomatic. You will start sucking people; that's what people are doing.

The husband says to the wife, "I love you," but in reality he simply uses her. The wife says she loves the husband, but she is simply using him. The husband may be using her as a sexual object and the wife may be using him as a financial security.

Pleasure makes everybody cunning, deceptive. And to be cunning is to miss the bliss of being innocent, is to miss the bliss of being a child.

At Lockheed, a part was needed for a new airplane and an announcement was sent around the world to get the lowest bid. From Poland came a bid of three thousand dollars. England offered to build the part for six thousand. The asking price from Israel was nine thousand. Richardson, the engineer in charge of constructing the new plane, decided to visit each country to find the reason behind the disparity of the bids.

In Poland, the manufacturer explained, "One thousand for the materials needed, one thousand for the labor, and one thousand for overhead and a tiny profit."

In England, Richardson inspected the part and found that it was almost as good as the Polish-made one. "Why are you asking six thousand?" inquired the engineer.

"Two thousand for material," explained the Englishman, "two thousand for labor, and two thousand for expenses and a small profit."

In Israel, the Lockheed representative wandered through a back alley into a small shop and encountered an elderly man who had submitted the bid of nine thousand dollars. "Why are you asking that much?" he asked.

"Well," said the old Jew, "three thousand for you, three thousand for me, and three thousand for the schmuck in Poland!"

Money, power, prestige -- they all make you cunning.

Seek pleasure and you will lose your innocence; and to lose your innocence is to lose all. Jesus says: be like a small child, only then can you enter into my kingdom of God. And he is right. But the pleasure-seeker cannot be as innocent as a child. He has to be very clever, very cunning, very political; only then can he succeed in this cut-throat competition that exists all around. Everybody is at everybody else's throat. You are not living amongst friends. The world cannot be friendly unless we drop this idea of competitiveness.

But we bring every child.... From the very beginning we start poisoning every child with this poison of competitiveness. By the time he will be coming out of the university he will be completely poisoned. We have hypnotized him with the idea that he has to fight with others, that life is a survival of the fittest. Then life can never be a celebration. Then life can never have any kind of religiousness in it. Then it cannot be pious, holy. Then it cannot have any quality of sacredness. Then it is all mean, ugly.

Buddha says: FORGO THE FIRST TO POSSESS THE SECOND.

IF YOU ARE HAPPY
AT THE EXPENSE OF ANOTHER MAN'S HAPPINESS,
YOU ARE FOREVER BOUND.

Naturally. If you are happy at the expense of another man's happiness -- and that is how you can be happy, there is no other way. If you find a beautiful woman and somehow manage to possess her, you have snatched her away from others' hands. We make things look as beautiful as possible, but that is only the appearance. Now the others who have lost in the game, they are angry, they are in a rage. They will wait for their opportunity to take revenge, and sooner or later the opportunity will be there.

Whatsoever you possess in this world you possess at somebody else's expense, at the cost of somebody else's pleasure. There is no other way. If you really want not to be inimical to anybody in the world, you have to drop the whole idea of possessiveness. Use whatsoever happens to be with you in the moment, but don't be possessive. Don't try to claim that it is yours. Nothing is yours, all is God's.

We come with empty hands and we will go with empty hands, so what is the point of claiming so much in the meantime?

But this is what we know, what the world is: possess, dominate, have more than the others have. And it may be money or it may be virtue; it does not matter in what kind of coins you deal -- they may be worldly, they may be otherworldly. But be very clever, otherwise you will be exploited. Exploit and don't be exploited -- that is the subtle message given to you with your mother's milk. And every school, college, university, is rooted in the idea: compete.

A real education will not teach you to compete; it will teach you to cooperate. It will not teach you to fight and come first. It will teach you to be creative, to be loving, to be blissful, without any comparison with the other. It will not teach you that you can be happy only when you are the first. That is sheer nonsense. You can't be happy just by being first. And in trying to be first you go through such misery that you become habituated to misery by the time you become the first.

By the time you become the president or the prime minister of a country you have gone through such misery that now misery is your second nature. You don't know now any other way to exist; you remain miserable. Tension has become ingrained, anxiety has become your way of life. You don't know any other way; this is your very style. So even though you have become the first you remain cautious, anxious, afraid. It does not change your inner quality at all.

A real education will not teach you to be the first. It will tell you to enjoy whatsoever you are doing, not for the result but for the act itself. Just like a painter or a dancer or a musician....

You can paint in two ways. You can paint to compete with other painters; you want to be the greatest painter in the world, you want to be a Picasso or a Van Gogh. Then your painting will be second-rate, because your mind is not interested in painting itself; it is interested in being the first, the greatest painter in the world. You are not going deep into the art of painting. You are not enjoying it, you are only using it as a stepping-stone. You are on an ego trip.

And the problem is: to really be a painter, you have to drop the ego completely. To really be a painter, the ego has to be put aside. Only then can God flow through you. Only then can he use your hands and your fingers and your brush. Only then something of superb beauty can be born.

It is never BY you but only THROUGH you. Existence flows; you become only a passage. You allow it to happen, that's all; you don't hinder, that's all.

But if you are too interested in the result, the ultimate result -- that you have to become famous, that you have to win the Nobel Prize, that you have to be the first painter in the world, that you have to defeat all other painters hitherto -- then your interest is not in painting; painting is secondary. And of course, with a secondary interest in painting you can't paint something original; it will be ordinary.

Ego cannot bring anything extraordinary into the world; the extraordinary comes only through egolessness. And so is the case with the musician and the poet and the dancer. And so is the case with everybody.

In the Gita, Krishna says: Don't think of the result at all. It is a message of tremendous beauty and significance and truth. Don't think of the result at all. Just do what you are doing with your totality. Get lost into it. Lose the doer in the doing. Don't be -- let your creative energies flow unhindered.

That's why he said to Arjuna, "Don't escape from the war... because I can see this is just an ego trip, this escape. The way you are talking simply shows that you are calculating: that you are thinking that by escaping from the war you will become a great mahatma. Rather than surrendering to God, to the whole, you are taking yourself too seriously: as if, if you are not there, there will be no war."

Krishna says to Arjuna, "Listen to me. Just be in a state of let-go. Say to God, 'Use me in whatsoever way you want to use me. Use me! I am available, unconditionally available.' Then whatsoever happens through you will have a great authenticity about it. It will have intensity, it will have depth. It will have the impact of the eternal on it. It will be signed by God, not by you. And you will rejoice because God has chosen you to be a vehicle."

Buddha says: IF YOU ARE HAPPY AT THE EXPENSE OF ANOTHER MAN'S HAPPINESS, YOU ARE FOREVER BOUND.

And happiness, pleasure, depend on exploitation. You are always at the expense of somebody else. You come first in the university -- what about those thousands of other students who were also struggling to come first? It is at their expense that you have come first.

Jesus says: Remember, those who are first in this world will be the last in my kingdom of God, and those who are the last will be the first. He has given you the fundamental law -- AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- he has given you the inexhaustible, eternal law: Stop trying to be the first.

But remember one thing which is very much possible, because the mind is so cunning it can distort every truth. You can start trying to be the last -- but then you miss the whole point. Then another competition starts: that I'm to be the last, and if somebody else says, "I am the last," then the struggle, then the conflict.

I have heard a Sufi parable:

A great emperor, Nadirshah, was praying. It was early morning; the sun had not yet risen, it was still dark. Nadirshah was to start on that day a new conquest of a new country. Of course he was praying to God for his blessings to be victorious. He was saying to God, "I am nobody, I am just a servant -- a servant of your servants. Bless me. I am going on YOUR work, this is your victory. And I am nobody, remember. I am just a servant of your servants."

The priest was also by his side, helping him in prayer, functioning as a mediator between him and God.

And then suddenly they heard in the darkness another voice. A beggar of the town was also praying, and he was saying to God, "I am also nobody, a servant of your servants." The king said to the priest, "Look at this beggar! He is a beggar and saying to God that 'I am nobody'! Stop this nonsense! Who are you to say you are nobody before me? I am nobody, and nobody else can claim this. And I am the servant of his servants -- and who are you to say that you are the servant of the servants?"

Now you see, the competition is still there, the same competition, the same stupidity. Nothing has changed. The same calculation: "I have to be the last. Nobody else can be allowed to be the last."

Mind can go on playing such games on you if you are not very understanding, if you are not very intelligent.

One thing Buddha wants you to remember is: never try to be happy at the expense of another man's happiness. That is ugly, inhuman. That is violence in the true sense. If you are a saint by condemning others as sinners, your saintliness is nothing but a new ego trip. If you are holy because you are trying to prove others unholy... and that's what your holy people go on doing. They go on bragging about their holiness, saintliness.

Go to your so-called saints and look into their eyes. They have such condemnation for you. They are saying that you are all bound towards hell. They go on condemning. Listen to their sermons; all their sermons are condemnatory. And of course you listen silently to their condemnations because you know also that you have made many

mistakes in your life, errors in your life. And they have condemned everything so it is impossible to feel that you can be good -- impossible. You love food, you are a sinner. You love your children, you are a sinner. You love your wife, you are a sinner. You don't get up early in the morning, you are a sinner. You don't go to bed early in the evening, you are a sinner. They have arranged everything in such a way that it is very difficult not to be a sinner.

Yes, THEY are not sinners -- they go early to bed and they get up early in the morning. In fact, they have nothing else to do! And they never commit any mistakes because they never do anything. They are just sitting there almost dead. They are mummies, corpses, full of rubbish! But because they don't do anything they are holy. And if you do something, of course, how can you be holy? Hence for centuries the holy man has been renouncing the world and escaping from the world, because to be in the world and be holy seems to be impossible.

My whole approach is: unless you ARE in the world your holiness is of no worth at all. Be in the world and be holy! Then we have to define holiness in a totally different way. Don't live at the expense of others' pleasures -- that is holiness. Don't destroy others' happiness -- that is not holiness. Help others to be happy. Create the climate in which everybody can have a little joy.

And what have your saints done? They have done just the opposite. They have created a climate in which everybody is living in hell -- and they are holy. They have condemned God's world and they have taught you to renounce it.

If God is against the world he should have renounced it himself! But he has not yet renounced. Still the spring comes and the flowers bloom, the bees buzz and the birds sing... and the sun still rises, and the night is full of stars. Still new babies go on coming. God has not stopped creation.

It is all nonsense that in six days he created the world and since then he has retired -- it is all nonsense! He can't have a single holiday, because if God goes for a single holiday we will all be dead. Then who will breathe life into us? Then who will be the color in the flowers and the wings of the birds? And who will be the light in the sun and the greenness of the grass? If for twenty-four hours he goes on a holiday, if he has a Sunday, finished -- everything is finished! He can't have a holiday -- and he need not have.

He loves the world; it is his creation. It is not work, it is creativity. It is his joy, it is his play. Do you think on Sunday morning birds don't sing because it is Sunday and they are not going to do any work? Sunday or Monday, it makes no difference. The birds sing and the trees grow and you breathe and existence continues in its celebration without any gap, without any discontinuity.

God has not renounced the world -- and your saints are bigger than God, higher than God, holier than God himself! My own feeling is: God must be afraid of your saints. That's why he never appears before them -- because they will condemn him. They will tell him how many mistakes and how many sins he has committed, and they will ask him how many fasts he has done and how many prayers he is doing every day. And of

course he will be at a loss -- he does not pray and he does not fast and he does not read the holy scriptures! He will look very irreligious.

But these saints had to create this idea: that your life is a sin. You are conceived in sin and you live in sin, and in death you will be dying as a sinner. You are doomed! That gives them great joy. They feel holier-than-thou, they feel they are saved -- the chosen few.

I tell you, there is no difference between a sinner and a saint. All are chosen and all will be saved -- all ARE saved. God is always surrounding you. What more do you need? Everybody is saved.

But if this is the truth, then your saints will start disappearing -- with their big egos. It will be very difficult for them to exist. They are living at your expense. The worse sinner they prove you to be, the more saintly they look; hence they have invented many things. Catholics have confession. It is a great joy to the priest to listen to everybody's sins. The more you talk about your sin, the more he feels holy.

IF YOU ARE HAPPY AT THE EXPENSE OF ANOTHER MAN'S HAPPINESS, YOU ARE FOREVER BOUND.

The dumbest kid in class showed up at the reunion with a gorgeous blond on his arm and a Cadillac at the curb. He showered drinks on everybody. Stunned, one old friend asked, "How did you do it, Abe? You were always slow in math."

"Well," said Abe, "you buy something for a dollar and you sell it for two and that lousy one percent really adds up!"

That's what everybody is doing, whether you know mathematics or you don't. Everybody is exploiting everybody else. Everybody's hand is in somebody else's pocket; and he may not be able to detect it because his own hand is in somebody else's pocket. But then you will depend on the others, **YOU ARE FOREVER BOUND**. Whomsoever you exploit, on the surface you seem to be the master of the situation, but really you are a slave.

The new neighbor joined the mah-jongg group for the first time, and all the ladies gaped at the huge diamond she wore. "It is the third most famous diamond in the world," she told the women. "First is the Kohinoor diamond, then the Hope diamond, and then this one -- the Horowitz diamond."

"It is beautiful!" said Mrs. Fisch, "You are so lucky!"

"Not so lucky," sighed the newcomer. "Unfortunately, with the famous Horowitz diamond, I am afflicted with the famous Horowitz curse."

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Fisch.

"Mr. Horowitz," said the woman.

That's how it is: if you depend on someone for your happiness you are becoming a slave, you are becoming dependent, you are creating a bondage. And you depend on so many people; they all become subtle masters and they all exploit you in return. It is a

mutual arrangement, remember. Exploitation is never a one-way traffic. The husband thinks he is the master, and the wife smiles because she knows better who is the master.

One day Mulla Nasruddin's wife was running after him with a stick. To save himself he slipped underneath the bed. The wife is a fat woman and she could not enter.

Mulla said, "Now you know who is the master of the house!"

And then exactly at that moment, somebody knocked on the door; some neighbors had come. The wife started asking Mulla to come out. "We can finish this quarrel later on. Now the neighbors are there."

Mulla said, "Let them come! Let everybody know once and for all who is the master of this house! I am the master, and wherever I want to sit I will sit!"

What kind of mastery is this -- sitting underneath the bed?

But every husband thinks that he is the master and every wife thinks that she is the master. Even small children... parents think they are the masters; they are wrong. The children know how to manipulate you, they know how to create trouble for you -- in the right moment. When the neighbors are in the house they start exploiting you, they start demanding this and that. When you are in the marketplace, in the shopping center, they create a tantrum, and you have to purchase the toy they want. If others were not there you would have given them a good beating -- but when others are there you are very polite, very cultured. Let the neighbors come, then they will see! They have their own times, opportunities, when to manipulate you.

Every child knows -- even a small child knows -- how to exploit the mother, the father, and when. When the father starts reading his newspaper, he starts asking questions. He won't allow the father to read the newspaper unless his demands are fulfilled.

Everybody in his own way tries to be the master of the other. And in fact, it is a strange situation: everybody has become in a sense the master of others, and also a slave of others. It is a double-bind situation. We are all interdependent; we are both jailors and prisoners.

YOU DO NOT WHAT YOU SHOULD.

YOU DO WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT.

YOU ARE RECKLESS, AND DESIRE GROWS.

Buddha says: You go on doing that which you should not -- and you know it; and you go on doing things which harm you, harm others. Still you persist in doing them because you seem to be almost incapable of remaining conscious. You are so unconscious; that's why you do not what you should and you do what you should not. He is not giving you commandments: that you should do this and you should not do that. He is simply making it clear to you that you are so unconscious that you go on harming yourself and others. You have to become conscious. With consciousness, your life starts changing.

Women's liberation has become an integral part of Egyptian society despite the traditional disapproval of girls who date many different men.

One night, Sabra was sitting in a car with a boy who began kissing her passionately while removing her dress. She started to sob.

"Why are you crying?" he asked.

"I am afraid you will take me for the wrong kind of girl. I am not that kind."

"Stop crying -- I believe you."

"You are the first man," sobbed Sabra.

"You mean I am the first man to do this with you?"

"No. You are the first man to believe me."

People don't know what they are doing, don't know what they are saying. People know only when they have done it, only when they have said it. People know only when it is too late to change anything, when the harm is already done.

YOU ARE RECKLESS, AND DESIRE GROWS. And in this unconscious soil nothing but desire grows. Desire is like weeds. If you don't look after your garden, roses will disappear soon and there will be weeds and weeds.

Mulla Nasruddin has purchased a new house and he planted a beautiful garden, a beautiful lawn. Then a new neighbor moved into the empty house by the side of Mulla's house. He was enchanted with Mulla's garden and his lawn. He said, "I would also like to make a beautiful lawn, but how do you know what is grass and what is just weeds?" Mulla said, "Very simple. You pull out both and throw them. Whatsoever grows again on its own is weeds."

Weeds grow on their own; you need not take any care of them. That's how it is with the unconscious desires: they grow on their own. They are rooted in your biology, in your past, in your physiology, in your hormones, in your chemistry.

Consciousness has to be deliberate. One has to make arduous effort to be conscious. And when you are conscious you do that which should be done and you do not do that which should not be done.

Buddha is not giving you detailed information about what should be done and what should not be done. That is the difference between Buddha and other masters. He simply gives you the master key which unlocks all the locks; there is no need to go on carrying a thousand keys for every lock.

Buddha says: Be conscious and that's enough. Then things will start changing in your life.

... THE MASTER IS WAKEFUL.

That is the fundamental key.

HE WATCHES HIS BODY.

IN ALL HIS ACTIONS HE DISCRIMINATES,
AND HE BECOMES PURE.

Now this word 'discrimination' is not the right translation. Buddha's word is VIVEK. Vivek can be translated in two ways: either as "discrimination" or as "awareness." Whenever Buddha and Mahavira use the word 'vivek' they use it in the sense of awareness, never in the sense of discrimination -- because discrimination means thinking. You are thinking, "This is good and this is not good. This I should do and this I should not do."

Awareness is not thinking; it is clear insight. It is not a question of choosing -- awareness is choiceless. You simply know that this is the only thing that can be done; there is no alternative. You don't choose, you don't weigh which is better. You simply know -- your whole heart knows -- that this is so, and you can't go against it.

IN ALL HIS ACTIONS HE IS aware, AND HE BECOMES PURE. Awareness brings purity, innocence.

HE IS WITHOUT BLAME
THOUGH ONCE HE MAY HAVE MURDERED
HIS MOTHER AND HIS FATHER,
TWO KINGS, A KINGDOM, AND ALL ITS SUBJECTS.

THOUGH THE KINGS WERE HOLY
AND THEIR SUBJECTS AMONG THE VIRTUOUS,
YET HE IS BLAMELESS.

In Buddha's time, these were considered to be the greatest crimes: to kill your own father and mother, and to kill the king.

Buddha says: A man who becomes aware, for him his whole past is like a dream; it disappears without leaving even a trace behind it. It is as if in the dream you kill your father and mother and when in the morning you wake up, do you go to the priest to confess that you have committed a great sin? -- you killed your father and mother in the dream. Or do you go to apologize to your parents, that "Forgive me -- I killed you last night"? You simply forget all about it. It is a dream, it doesn't matter. The father and mother are not killed.

Buddha says: When you become aware, all that you have done in your unawareness, in your unconsciousness, in your sleep, in your metaphysical sleep, is nothing but a dream.

And remember: bad deeds are dreams, good deeds are dreams. Your being a sinner in a dream is a dream as much as your being a saint. When you wake up you are neither a sinner nor a saint. You are simply awareness.

Once Buddha was asked, "Who are you? Are you a god?"
He said, "No."

"Are you an angel?"

He said, "No."

"Are you a CHAKRAVARTIN -- a great emperor of all the world?"

He said, "No."

The questioner was very much puzzled. He said, "You go on saying no to everything.

At least you must be a human being! Now you cannot say no."

Buddha laughed and said, "Yes, I will still say no!"

"Then who are you?" the man asked, annoyed.

Buddha said, "I am just awareness. All these human beings and angels and gods, they were part of my metaphysical sleep. That sleep is no longer there; I have become awakened."

That's exactly the meaning of the word 'buddha': one who has become awakened, one who is enlightened, one who is no longer dreaming. And when you are not dreaming, you have clarity, you can see. And that very seeing becomes the determining factor of your life. Only then you do that which should be done and you don't do that which should not be done.

It is not a question of discriminating between right and wrong. It is a question of coming out of your sleep.

Wake up!

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #6

Chapter title: I call a spade a spade

26 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

YESTERDAY YOU SAID THAT YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW US ALL PERSONALLY. I FEEL THAT EVERY ONE OF US IS AT A DIFFERENT PLACE AND HAS A DIFFERENT REASON TO BE HERE IN THIS LIFE, SO AM I WRONG IF I FEEL THAT THE WAY FOR EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT BUT LEADS TO THE SAME GOAL?

Annemarie Muller, there is no goal and there is no way to it. You are already there, you have never been anywhere else. The very idea of the way and the goal is a mind game. First you create a goal, an ambition, a desire far away in the future, a utopia, worldly or otherworldly, Catholic or communist, and then you start thinking about the ways. But basically there is no goal, hence all ways are false. And once you start trying to achieve the goal, you will get more and more in confusion.

All the ways are just dream stuff, because in the first place you have never left the home, you have only fallen asleep. Adam and Eve have never been expelled from the Garden of Eden, they have only fallen asleep. Eating from the tree of knowledge, the fruit of knowledge, they have become rational beings. That is their sleep; they have lost track of their own heart, they have forgotten about it. But it is there, it has not moved anywhere else.

You are still in the Garden of Eden, you are still in God; where else can you be? There is no other place to be. This is my fundamental approach: that there is no goal, no way, you are not to achieve something. The whole idea of achieving is nothing but an ego trip. First you try to achieve money, power, prestige, and when you fail -- which is bound to happen, because the mind goes on asking for more and more -- when you are in deep frustration, you start turning into a religious person. But your whole pattern remains the same. You still desire a goal. Now it is no longer money, it is meditation; now it is no longer power but paradise. It is the same game being played with other words. Mind has deceived you, mind has taken you on another trip.

How long are you going to be deceived by your own mind? The emphasis is not on going anywhere but on waking up. For example, three thousand people are here right now; if you all fall asleep, you will all be here, nobody will have left the place but you will all dream separate dreams. Dreams are very private things; in fact there is nothing more private than a dream. You cannot share your dream even with your beloved, you cannot invite your friends to participate in a dream -- it is impossible, you are

absolutely alone there. A dream is not an objective phenomenon, it is not a reality; it is just an idea which has hypnotized you, so much so that it appears real. The presence of the other will reveal its unreality.

So if you all fall asleep, naturally you will be at different places. Somebody will be in Constantinople, and somebody in Tokyo, and somebody in Beijing, but in reality you will all be here and now. Your places will be different: somebody will be a king, somebody a beggar, and somebody will be a man, and somebody will be a woman, somebody will be very famous, somebody will be just a nonentity. But do you think these things make any difference? You can all be awakened, and all your dreams, separate dreams, different dreams, will evaporate alike.

You say, "I feel that every one of us is at a different place...."

Certainly, but in a dream. One is a sinner, another is a saint; one is a Christian, another is a Hindu; one is white, another is black. All dreams! In your innermost core you are only a pure consciousness, just awareness and nothing else, a pure mirror, not identified with the reflections.

That's the whole effort of a master -- to wake you up, not to goad you towards certain goals. If the master goads you towards certain goals he will have great appeal for your mind; your mind will agree with him, because that's what the mind hankers for: new goals, so the journey continues, and the stupidity of it all remains.

The real master shatters all your goals. It is only by the shattering of your dreams that you can be awakened. What do you mean by "persons"? The word 'person' comes from the Greek root PERSONA. Persona means a mask. A person is a false phenomenon, it is a mask, it is not your reality. But the ego wants to be recognized personally. The ego wants to relate personally, the ego wants recognition, attention; otherwise you are not a person. Nobody is, nobody has ever been. It is only on the circumference that the mask can exist and can deceive others. But you must know that it is a mask, a camouflage. Deep down behind the mask are you a person? No. Not at all. You are only a presence, not a person.

I relate with your presence, not with your personality. How can I relate with your dreams? I relate with you, but not with your dreams. And it is only in dreams that you are separate. In reality we are all one, it is one organic whole.

You say, "I feel that every one of us is at a different place and has a different reason to be here in this life...."

All nonsense. To be frank with you, just bullshit! But the ego goes on playing with this beautiful idea, that "I have a special reason to be here." Every grass blade also thinks the same way, and every pebble on the shore believes in the same way. Ask any dog or buffalo or donkey, and they all believe that they are here for a special reason and they have come to fulfill a certain mission, they have brought a message to the world. And those who want to exploit you go on telling you such nonsense.

Existence has no reason at all; it simply is. That's its beauty. It has no cause to it, it has no direction either, it is not going anywhere, it has nothing to fulfill. That's its beauty, tremendous beauty. It exists for no reason at all; that's its mystery, unfathomable, immeasurable.

If you can know the reason for existence you have demystified it, you have destroyed all its beauty. Then it carries no more meaning, remember. Then there will be no significance. Why is there love? Is there any reason to it? Yes, if you ask the chemist, the physiologist, he will say, "Yes, it is the hormones in the chemistry of your body; lust maybe, but not love." You are more than the sum total of your parts, and in that more exists God. In that irrational element that permeates the whole exists God.

Tertullian is right when he says: CREDO QUA ABSURDUM -- I believe in God because God is absurd. Tertullian is one of those great buddhas of the world who have really seen through and through. "I believe in God because God is absurd," is one of the greatest statements ever made, one of the most pregnant statements. To believe in God because there are reasons to believe is not much; then anybody will believe. It is not a quantum leap, it is not jumping out of your mind. All arguments convince the mind, and if the mind believes, it is not religious.

When your heart is stirred by something you cannot express; which cannot be adequately even put into words; out of which no system can be made, no scripture, no religion; which simply leaves you dumb, in deep awe and wonder, in a kind of tremendous shock, all old notions shattered, in silence -- you lose all your reasoning, all your argumentation -- only then are you in communion with the whole. It is not a question of argument, and you are not here to fulfill something. It is just a celebration: life for life's sake.

But our minds want something to be nourished by, so your so-called religious preachers, priests, philosophers, theologians, they go on giving you nourishment. They say, "You are sent here for special purposes. You have a special place. Some great work is being done by you." And your ego feels puffed up.

I cannot do it. I am not your enemy. The moment I find any chance I am going to destroy these puffed up egos, spiritual egos, pious egos, religious egos. But the ego is an ego; on what it stands does not matter, on what it is nourished is irrelevant.

No, I don't see that you have a different place; yes, a different dream. And I don't see that you have "... a different reason to be here in this life." There is no reason at all. It is simple celebration. It is the overflowing energy of existence, or God. What is the reason for the waves of the ocean? What is the reason for the rays of the sun? What is the reason for the birds singing? a distant call of the cuckoo? And what is the reason for a dewdrop shining in the early morning sun? What is the reason for a roseflower?

Can't you ever look at life without this business-type mind, always calculating? Can't you put it aside even for a few moments to look at reality as it is? And then you will be surprised: there is no reason at all. Then you can laugh and dance and pray, then only you will have a different quality to your being. The whole will start expressing itself through the part.

But remember again, I am not saying that it will express some special message, that you will become a messiah. I am simply saying the whole will start playing its tremendously absurd game through you without hindrance. It is exquisite, it is beautiful, but it is not arithmetic. It is poetry, it is music, it is dance -- art for art's sake. So is life, so is existence. And that approach I call religious.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY DO PEOPLE THINK THAT TO LIVE WITHOUT POLITICS IS IMPOSSIBLE?

Mukesh Bharti, mind IS politics, because mind is ambitious and ambition is the root of politics. If you are ambitious you are political. Your ambition may take the form of religion, but the politics is there. Then you are competing with other saints.

The night Jesus departed from his disciples, the so-called apostles were not much worried about what was going to happen to Jesus. Their worry was: after Jesus, when the Day of Judgment will come and they all will go to paradise, who will stand next to Jesus? Of course, Jesus will be at the right hand of God; that much they can concede. But who will be next to Jesus? They were quarreling and arguing about this. The last night of the master, tomorrow he may be crucified... but that is not their concern. Those apostles are political, and those apostles have created Christianity, and Christianity is politics and nothing else. So is Hinduism and so is Mohammedanism -- all political desires hidden behind religious words.

Man cannot live without politics, because of the mind. You are brought up, you are trained to be political. Every child is poisoned from the very beginning, poisoned by ambition. We teach children to be ambitious: be somebody in the world, be somebody special, somebody superior, defeat others! We give the idea to every child that life is a struggle and only the fittest survive. Whether you survive by right or wrong means, that is not important.

Twenty-five years of education -- almost one third of your life you are being trained to be ambitious. How can you avoid politics? The only way to avoid politics is to get out of your mind; that means that unless mind is dropped totally, politics will go on clinging to you. You can even be antipolitical but then that will become politics.

You ask me, Mukesh, "Why do people think that to live without politics is impossible?" -- because they cannot conceive how to live without the mind and desire, or how to live without ambition. They know only one way to live: compete, fight! If you are not going to dominate the other, the other is going to dominate you; so before the other dominates you, dominate the other. It is certainly better to dominate than to be dominated; it is better to be the master than to be the slave; it is better to be rich than to be poor. And there is great struggle, and millions of people are fighting for the same thing -- and things are not so many.

How many people can be presidents, and how many people can be prime ministers, and how many people can be Fords, Rockefellers and Morgans and Birlas and Tatas? How many people? Very few people. And life is short, and these are the goals to be fulfilled. If you cannot be a Rockefeller, if you cannot be the president of a country, your life is a sheer wastage, you are a failure. Unless you understand that even by becoming a Rockefeller, a Morgan, you are not going to achieve anything... you will be farther away from yourself. You will be deeper in the dreams.

By becoming a president or a prime minister you are not going to achieve any peace or bliss. No music is going to explode in your innermost being. In fact, you will become more and more ugly. By the time a person becomes a prime minister he becomes the ugliest possible, because the whole struggle makes him ugly. He has to be cunning, more cunning than others, otherwise he will not succeed. He has to be cruel, he has to be violent, he has to be very diplomatic. He has to say one thing, think another, do still another. By the time he reaches to the highest post of his desire, he is completely destroyed. He is no more a human being. He is hollow inside; he has no substance, no soul.

But these people are thought to be successful people, these people are thought to be the makers of history. These people are thought to leave their mark on human evolution. These are the most mischievous people in the world, these are the greatest criminals: Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, these are the real criminals in the world. Small criminals suffer in the prisons, big criminals become presidents and prime ministers.

But the people who have not been able to achieve these foolish desires also suffer very much. They suffer from an inferiority complex, from failure. Your education creates only two kinds of people. First, those who succeed, and by succeeding they come to know that they have wasted their lives. But it is pointless to tell it to others, because then others will laugh and will think you ridiculous. It is better to go on smiling although you know deep down that you have failed, your life has not been of any significance, you have not enjoyed being here. You have not danced, no song has been sung by your heart. Your whole life has been an experiment in futility. You know it but it is too late. You cannot go back, and you cannot say the truth -- that will simply reveal your stupidity. It is better to go on playing the role of being successful.

And then the other kind is those who see these successful people and suffer with great jealousy, envy, are greatly wounded that "We could not make it in this life." This is politics.

My effort here is to teach you a different way of life which is not political at all. Let the mind be dropped. Don't be a slave of your mind. Become more conscious, more alert of all the nuisance that your mind is doing to you, the mess the mind is creating in you, the chaos the mind has reduced you to. Just watch, be alert. And slowly slowly, as your watchfulness grows -- Buddha calls it "right mindfulness" -- you will be able to slip out of the mind. Out of the mind and you are out of politics; otherwise, whatsoever you do is politics. If you don't do anything, that too is politics. You participate, either positively or negatively. If you vote you participate, if you don't vote still you participate, in a negative way. There seems to be no choice. In every way you will be part of it.

During the days of Hitler's dominance, five Germans sat at a table in a coffee shop, each thinking his own thoughts. One of them sighed, another groaned aloud. The third shook his head desperately, and the fourth man choked down the tears.

The fifth man, in a frightened voice, whispered, "My friends, be careful! You know it is not safe to talk politics in public."

Whatsoever you do is going to be politics, except one thing: if you really become a dropout from the world of the mind.

People hate this situation, but they don't know what to do about it. They are caught in such a complex situation, they don't know how to get out of it. And the whole crowd is going in a certain direction. If you move in some other direction the crowd becomes angry at you. The crowd does not allow nonconformists. It wants total submission, it wants slaves, it respects slaves. It gives all kinds of honors -- from the lowest honor to the Nobel Prize -- to the slaves, to the conformists, to those who are somehow supporting the status quo.

You can see it happening everywhere. Just look at the so-called respectable people, they are the greatest slaves. That's why they get respect. It is a mutual understanding. You follow the crowd, the crowd respects you, calls you a saint, a mahatma.

Adolf Hitler did not trust the reports he had been getting that the people were still loyal to him. One evening he disguised himself and went to a movie house. Soon the newsreel went on. The announcer said, "And now the latest picture of our great, our benevolent dictator." The commentary went on. The picture flashed on the screen. With one motion, the audience rose in salute, shouting "Heil, Hitler!"

Hitler was so pleased with the response that he forgot to get up. The man behind him tapped him on the shoulder and whispered, "I know how you feel about that bastard, but you had better stand up or the police will arrest you."

That's how everybody feels, but who wants to get into unnecessary trouble?

To be a nonconformist is to ask for trouble, because the mob feels offended. Why does the mob feel offended by a nonconformist? -- because the nonconformist shows signs of intelligence, he shows signs of individuality, authenticity, responsibility, and then people feel stupid compared to him. They can't forgive him -- and the politicians cannot allow such people to exist at all.

The sultan decided to have the Sufi matched against some wild lions in an arena, to entertain and warn the multitude. Many thousands turned up. The Sufi went into the arena, caught the lions by the ears and threw them out of the ring. The crowd went wild. Then the sultan ordered him to be bound hand and foot and elephants to be stampeded over him. By split-second timing he managed to roll away from the elephants' feet. The crowd roared.

Now the sultan had a pit dug, the Sufi buried in it up to the neck, and ordered three powerful and skilled swordsmen to cut off his head. As they struck, he moved his head this way and that to avoid the swipes, so that they started to tire. But by that time the crowd was on its feet, yelling, "Stand still and fight like a man, you tricky mystic!"

Now the poor man is buried, just the head is out of the earth! But intelligence can manage. Down the ages the real Sufis, the real Zen people, the real Buddhas, the real

Hassids, the real mystics of all the countries, of all the races, have been utterly disgusted with this whole nonsense that goes on in the name of politics. They have been teaching their disciples, "Get out of it, it is futile," and they have suffered much because of it.

Mukesh Bharti, if you feel that politics is a dirty game, don't be worried: "Why do people think that to live without politics is impossible?"

Don't waste your time in that. The crowd is going to remain like that forever, but you can come out of it. Even if you can manage that, that's enough. And maybe if you can manage, then a few others will see the light too, because they will see a new joy arising in your being, a new aroma surrounding you, a new aura, a new atmosphere, a new milieu will start touching other people's hearts.

I am not saying, "Become a missionary." That is a dirty word. But if you are out of these ugly games, your life becomes such a beautiful phenomenon that those who have eyes will see and those who have ears will be able to hear and those who have hearts will be able to feel it. And that's all that you can do. That is real service.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY ARE YOU SO MUCH AGAINST THINKING, THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY?

Gangadhar, because thinking is nothing but dreaming in words. Dreams are nothing but thinking in pictures.

What can you think? You can't think the unknown; you can only go on repeating the known. Thinking is repetitive, it is mechanical. Thinking never brings you to a new insight, neither in religion nor in science. Nowhere does thinking bring you to new windows to existence. Even in scientific work, real insights have happened not through thinking; they have been all intuitive, they have not been of the intellect. All the great scientists are convinced of the fact that it was not their effort that made them discover new ways of life, new secrets of nature, something of the beyond, something very mysterious. It was not their work, at the most they were only vehicles. Hence I am not in favor of making you great thinkers. In fact, you are already great thinkers. Everybody is a great thinker. So much traffic goes on in the mind; you are continuously thinking, day in, day out, your whole life you are thinking -- to what purpose, to what conclusion?

And I am more against theology than any other kind of thinking because that is the ultimate in stupidity. THEO means god, LOGY means logic: logic about God. That is a contradiction in terms. There is no logic about God. Love yes, logic no, a thousand times no. Yes, there can be love for God, but not logic. And if you come through logic to love, your love is also false, pseudo, plastic, synthetic.

Love happens, it is not an argument; then how does it happen? It does not happen through thinking. It happens by glimpses into no-thought, by entering into the intervals between two thoughts. Those are the windows, windows of the divine. I am against theology.

And philosophy has wasted so many beautiful minds that it is a crime now to go on teaching philosophy to people. At least for five thousand years people have been philosophizing. And what has been their conclusion? Philosophy has not come to any conclusion at all. It confuses people. Bertrand Russell has written in his memoirs that when he was young and went to the university, he had the thought that by studying philosophy at least he would be able to solve a few problems. By the end of his life -- and he lived a long, very long life, and a very philosophical life of constant thinking -- by the end of his life he said, "All that philosophy has done is to create more problems. It has not solved a single one. My old problems are exactly where they were. New problems have certainly arisen out of my philosophical thinking."

And that is the experience of all thinkers, all philosophers. Philosophy is thinking about the unknown, about God, about life after death. You don't know what life is before death, and you think about the life after death.

My emphasis is, please know what life is before death, because if you can have an experience of life before death, death will disappear in that very experience. Death evaporates. Then there is no death; life is eternal.

But rather than experiencing, the philosopher goes on thinking, and you have to make the clear-cut distinction between thinking and experiencing. One can think about food, but that is not going to nourish one. Eating is totally a different matter. And you may think about very delicious food with all the vitamins thrown in. Still it is not going to help. And just bread and butter, if really eaten, will do the trick; they will nourish you. The philosopher thinks about love. He does not love, he does not know anything about love. He has not experienced it, but he thinks about it. What can you think about something you have not experienced? And what is the need to think if you have experienced? Hence I am against philosophy. In both ways it is futile. If you have not experienced it, it is futile; if you have experienced it, it is more futile than ever.

Just recently an ape escaped from the local zoo. Must have been a philosopher! Several hours later the beast was finally found in the reading room of the library. He was poring over the first chapters of Genesis and he also had a copy of Darwin's THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES.

When a policeman asked the ape what he was doing, the ape replied, "I am trying to figure out once and for all if I am my brother's keeper or if I am my keeper's brother."

That's how philosophy goes on -- words and words. And words can be placed in such a systematic way that they can deceive you, just like playing cards can be put in such a way that they can give you the illusion of a palace. Paper boats can be made to look exactly like boats; you can paint them, but they are of no use. You can't go to the other shore by paper boats.

Philosophy is a palace made of playing cards, a boat made of paper. Painted beautifully, it looks exactly like a boat but is not a boat.

Except existential experience nothing is going to save you.

Two men were sent to define the border between Poland and Russia.

One day, in the middle of a big wood, they came to a very old house set right on the borderline. Unable to decide to which country it should belong, they approached the inhabitants. After they rang the bell for a long time a very old but well-known philosopher opened the door. They explained their difficulties and asked him what country he would prefer to belong to.

"Oh," he said, "I have been living here for so long now, I don't care at all," and he started to shut the door.

Suddenly he opened it again and said quickly, "No, wait, put me in Poland."

The rather hurt Russian went back after an hour to ask the old philosopher what the reason for his sudden decision was.

"Oh, no special reason," he replied. "I just read in the newspapers twenty years ago that the winters in Russia are very cold."

Philosophy is bookish, verbal, has no relationship with existence. My effort here is to help you enter into existence, and philosophy is a sheer wastage of life and energy -- a life which is so invaluable, an energy which can lead you to God, an energy which is divine. Avoid philosophy, avoid philosophers.

Sit with the wise ones, and they are totally different people. In the ancient days the philosopher was a wise man. Socrates was a totally different kind of philosopher from Bertrand Russell, Immanuel Kant, Hegel, Heidegger. Socrates was a wise man, as wise as Buddha. Pythagoras was also called a philosopher, but in those days the word philosophy had its original meaning: love of wisdom. SOPHY means wisdom, PHILO means love. But slowly slowly, that meaning has changed. Now what is being taught in the universities has nothing to do with wisdom. It is all rubbish knowledge.

Analysis of language is now called philosophy. G.E. Moore and Ludwig Wittgenstein are now thought to be great philosophers. They are linguists, analysts -- great linguists and great analysts, but not philosophers at all, not in the sense of Socrates, Buddha, Lao Tzu.

George Bernard Shaw had been wearied by the tedious conversation of a philosopher who was trying to impress him with his knowledge.

Finally Shaw cut in, "You know, between the two of us, we know all there is to be known."

"How is that?" the philosopher asked delightedly.

"You seem to know everything," Shaw said, "except that you are a bore, and I know that!"

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY DO I FEEL SADNESS ABOUT CHRISTMAS WHEN THE WHOLE MESSAGE IS REJOICE AND BE MERRY?

Vachana, Christ's message IS rejoice and be merry. But that is not the message of Christianity. Christianity's message is: be sad, long faces, look miserable; the more miserable you look, the more saintly you are. Sometimes I really feel for poor Jesus. He has fallen in such wrong company, and I wonder how he is managing in paradise with all these Christian saints, so sad, so dull.

He was not a dull man, he was not a sad man -- he could not be. The word 'christ' is exactly synonymous with buddha. He was an enlightened person. He rejoiced in life, in the small things of life. He rejoiced in eating, drinking, friendship. He loved companionship, he loved the whole life.

But Christians down the ages have painted him as very sad. They have painted him always on the cross, as if for thirty-three years he was always on the cross. And my own understanding is that a man like Jesus will not die sad, even on the cross. He must have laughed before he died. That's what al-Hillaj Mansoor did before he was killed by the fanatic Mohammedans, because he had declared: ANA'L HAQ -- I am God. Mohammedans could not tolerate it, just as Jews could not tolerate Jesus. They killed him -- but before they killed him, he looked at the sky and laughed loudly.

One hundred thousand people had gathered to see this ugly phenomenon, the murder of one of the greatest human beings who has ever walked on the earth. Somebody asked from the crowd, "al-Hillaj, why are you laughing? You are being killed!" And he was killed in the most cruel way, piece by piece. Jesus' crucifixion is nothing compared to Mansoor's: first his legs were cut off, then his hands were cut off, then his eyes were taken out, then his nose was cut off, then his tongue was cut off, then his head was cut off. They tortured him as much as was possible, but he laughed. Somebody asked, "Why are you laughing?"

Mansoor said, "I am laughing because the man you are killing is somebody else, I am not he. I am laughing at God too. What is happening? -- have these people gone mad? They are killing somebody else! Me you cannot kill; it is ridiculous, your whole effort is ridiculous. So let it be remembered, let it be on record that I laughed at your foolishness!"

And that's exactly what Jesus must have done, laughed. But Christians have tried their best to depict Jesus as sad. They have made a saint out of a real authentic human being; they have cut everything. The gospels are not true stories; much has been changed, much has been reduced, much has been added. They have become mere fictions.

Down the ages, Christians have been trying to paint Christ as more and more sad. Why? -- because all over the world religion has been dominated by a neurotic kind of people. It has been dominated by the people who are masochists, sadists. In the East too, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism -- they have all been dominated by the masochistic people, the people who enjoy torturing themselves, the people who are incapable of living life in its totality. The people who are too cowardly to live, escapists, have dominated religion up to now. These escapists have depicted Buddha as not laughing, Mahavira as not laughing.

And Christians actually say that Jesus never laughed in his life. Can you believe that? Jesus never laughed in life? -- and he enjoyed drinking and eating, he enjoyed gamblers and prostitutes, and he enjoyed all kinds of people, and he never laughed? Can you imagine that a man like Jesus, who was always feasting for hours with his friends, never laughed? It is inconceivable! How can you go on wining and dining without laughing? He must have joked, he must have told funny stories. They have been edited out. He was a very true man, and very courageous. He accepted Mary Magdalene, the famous prostitute of those days as his disciple. It needs courage, it needs guts. I cannot believe that he never laughed.

I can rather believe a very fictitious story about Zarathustra -- that the first thing he did when he was born was to laugh loudly. That I can believe, but I can't believe this story about Jesus, that he never laughed. It looks impossible. A child... just the first thing he did was a belly laughter. But I can believe it. It has a certain beauty about it, a certain significance. It simply says that Zarathustra was born wise, he was born enlightened, that's all. Whether he laughed or not, that is not the question.

And it doesn't seem too difficult: if children can cry, why can't they laugh? Doctors say that children cry just to clear their throat, so that they can breathe easily. But that can be done in a far better way by a belly laughter. And now there are doctors who say that if we take enough care children don't cry; on the contrary, they smile. That's a good beginning. Soon Zarathustras will be coming.

But up to now doctors have been very Christian. The first thing they do is they hang the child upside down and hit him on the buttocks. Do you expect a child to laugh? This is a great welcome to the world, putting the child upside down, giving him a hit -- a good beginning, because his whole life he is going to get hit in the pants, again and again. And hanging upside down, how can he laugh? No wonder he cries!

Now there are a few doctors working in a different direction. They bring the child in a more natural way out of the mother's womb; they don't cut the umbilical cord immediately because that creates crying, that is violence. They leave the child on the mother's belly with the umbilical cord intact. They give a good bath to the child, a hot bath, they put the child into a hot tub of exactly the same temperature as it was in the mother's womb.

In the mother's womb the child is floating in water. The water has the same contents as sea water, salty. In the same salty chemical solution, of the same temperature, the child is put in the tub. He starts smiling. It is a real beautiful reception. And not with glaring tube lights... that hurts the eyes of the child. In fact, so many people are wearing glasses only because of the foolishness of the doctors. The child has lived for nine months in the mother's womb in darkness, utter darkness. Then suddenly so much light... it hurts his delicate eyes. You have destroyed something delicate in his eyes. The child should be received in a very dim light, and the light should be increased slowly slowly, so his eyes become accustomed to the light. Naturally the child smiles at the beautiful welcome.

I can believe Zarathustra loudly laughing, but I can't believe Jesus not laughing at all. He lived thirty-three years and did not laugh? -- that can only be possible if he was absolutely perverted, absolutely pathological, ill. Something must have been wrong if

he didn't laugh. But nothing is wrong with him; something is wrong with the followers. They depict their saints, their messiahs, their prophets, as very serious, somber, sad, just to show that they are above the world, that they are beyond, that they are not worldly people. Laughter seems shallow, seems unspiritual.

That's why, Vachana -- because you have been brought up as a Christian. Although the message of Christmas is rejoice and be merry, still there is a sadness, because the whole of Christianity teaches you to be sad. It is not a life-affirming religion, it is life-negative. It is much more life-negative than Hinduism, much more life-negative than Judaism. It has no sense of humor at all. And a religion without a sense of humor is ill, pathological. It needs psychological treatment.

Peter, standing in the crowd, looked up at Jesus on the cross. As he watched, he distinctly saw Jesus motioning him forward.

"Pssst, hey Peter, come here," said the Lord.

As Peter moved forward, two Roman guards blocked his way and beat him till he fell to the ground.

A few moments later, Peter, bruised and bleeding, looked up and saw Jesus again motioning him forward.

"Pssst, hey Peter, come here!"

Looking around, Peter noticed that the crowd was gone and so were the Roman soldiers. He moved closer to Jesus, "Yes, Lord, what is it? What is it you want?"

"Hey Peter," said Jesus. "Guess what? I can see your house from here!"

The fifth question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY IS THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AGAINST YOU?

Vijayanand, any government will be, because I call a spade a spade, and that hurts. It has nothing to do particularly with the Indian government; any government will do. In fact, I have chosen to remain in India because the Indian government is the most lousy in the world. In Germany they will not tolerate me even for a single day. The Indian government seems to be such a chaos that even when they want to do something against me it takes months. By that time I will escape. The Indian government is a phenomenon....

There are at least thirty cases against me in the courts. In one court we lose the case, and the government officer doesn't come to know for months that we have lost it. They think the case is going on. By that time we move to another court. It is really a beautiful government, but they are bound once in a while to get angry with me.

The occasion was the visit of the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, to India. Prime Minister Nehru was anxious to impress his guest with the great strides India had made under his leadership following the principles of socialism and democracy.

They drove through the great park that surrounds the Indian parliament in Delhi, and Khrushchev caught sight of a figure squatting under a tree having a shit.

"Look over there!" said Khrushchev pointing to the figure. "You talk about the great strides your country has made, but I see your government has not even provided proper toilet facilities for the masses! What kind of socialist progress do you call this?"

It is said that Nehru was deeply embarrassed by this remark.

The following year it was his turn to be the guest of Mr. Khrushchev in Moscow. He longed to even the score and find some criticism with which to taunt his host.

As the two leaders walked through the park close by the Kremlin, Mr. Nehru caught sight of a man.

"Look over there!" Nehru shouted. Khrushchev looked... and when he saw the man his face turned crimson with rage.

"Arrest that man!" he yelled to his secret service men.

A dozen cops rushed to the tree and seized the man. They dragged him to the nearest police center for questioning.

The man -- it turned out -- was the Indian Ambassador!

The last question:

Question 6

BELOVED MASTER,

I AM SEVENTY NOW, BUT STILL THE SEXUAL URGE IS THERE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Narayandas, you should not do anything. Enough is enough. Just the other day I have received from the great Madhuri a beautiful Christmas card. I must have received thousands of Christmas cards, but this is the most beautiful. And particularly for you, Narayandas, it will be helpful. So I will read this card from Madhuri.

From twenty to thirty, if you are feeling right

It is once in the morning and once at night.

From thirty to forty, if you are still living right,

You skip the morning but continue at night!

From forty to fifty, it is now and then....

And from fifty to sixty, it is God knows when!

From sixty on, if you are still inclined,

Believe me, fella --

It is all in your mind!

Happy Christmas!

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #7

Chapter title: You have slept long enough

27 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE AWAKENED
AWAKE
AND DAY AND NIGHT THEY WATCH
AND MEDITATE UPON THEIR MASTER.

FOREVER WAKEFUL,
THEY MIND THE LAW.

THEY KNOW THEIR BROTHERS ON THE WAY.
THEY UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY OF THE BODY.
THEY FIND JOY IN ALL BEINGS.
THEY DELIGHT IN MEDITATION.

IT IS HARD TO LIVE IN THE WORLD
AND HARD TO LIVE OUT OF IT.
IT IS HARD TO BE ONE AMONG MANY.

AND FOR THE WANDERER, HOW LONG IS THE ROAD
WANDERING THROUGH MANY LIVES!

LET HIM REST.
LET HIM NOT SUFFER.
LET HIM NOT FALL INTO SUFFERING.

IF HE IS A GOOD MAN,
A MAN OF FAITH, HONORED AND PROSPEROUS,
WHEREVER HE GOES HE IS WELCOME.

LIKE THE HIMALAYAS
GOOD MEN SHINE FROM AFAR,
BUT BAD MEN MOVE UNSEEN
LIKE ARROWS IN THE NIGHT.

SIT.
REST.
WORK.

ALONE WITH YOURSELF,
NEVER WEARY.

ON THE EDGE OF THE FOREST
LIVE JOYFULLY,
WITHOUT DESIRE.

Three reformed and very progressive rabbis were boasting about the advanced views of their respective congregations.

"We are so modern," said the first, "we have installed ashtrays in every pew so members can smoke while they pray."

"Ah!" snorted the second. "We now have a snack bar in the basement that serves ham sandwiches after services."

"You boys," said the third, "are not even in the same class as my congregation. We are so reformed, we close for the Jewish holidays."

That's what has happened to all the so-called followers -- Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists. They are not real followers; their being a follower is only a formality. It is just by accident of birth that one is a Hindu and another is a Christian. It is not out of your own choice, it is not YOUR commitment. You have not chosen to be a Christian or a Hindu or a Buddhist; hence it is absolutely meaningless, it carries no weight. It is at the most a social phenomenon. It has nothing to do with religion, it has no sacredness about it -- a social conformity, useful in its own ways.

But your church is nothing but a club. Just as there are Rotarians, so there are Christians. You belong to a certain club and the club has a few privileges; belonging to it, you also have the right to have those privileges. It is not the search for truth because the search for truth does not make you a part of a tradition. It certainly makes you a disciple, but not a part of a dead tradition, religion, organization. It certainly brings you close to a Christ or a Buddha, but it has nothing to do with the scriptures.

A living master is bound to happen to the person who is in search of truth, who wants to know the meaning of life, who wants to go to the innermost core of his being, who wants to know the depth and the height of existence. He will have to hold hands with a master.

The master is one who has already known. The master is one who has been to the other shore and has come to this shore to show you the path. But only a master can show the path -- a living master, remember. A tradition is just a fossil, a corpse. Yes, once there may have been a light, but the light has gone to the infinite long long ago.

Twenty-five centuries have passed since Buddha's flame became one with the universal flame. Now you can go on worshipping Buddha, but you will not be, in the real sense, a disciple -- you can't be. The buddha you worship is your own invention, your projection. You will have to find a real buddha, a man who is alive, just as alive as you

are, who is in the body, whose flame can help your unlit candle to become lit, whose fire can consume you.

But churches and temples and creeds and dogmas cannot consume you, they cannot make you aflame. They have no fire left. Two thousand years have passed since Christ. You can go on worshipping in the church, but now what you are doing is a kind of social duty. You are not involved in it, your heart is not there. Superficially, on the periphery, you have a label -- Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan -- but behind the labels you are all alike; there is no difference at all.

The first sutra of Buddha says:

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE AWAKENED AWAKE....

Those who are really followers of the awakened ARE awake. That's the only way to be a follower of the awakened -- to be awake. It is not a question of worship, not a question of respect. It is a question of inner transformation. It is going through inner alchemy.

How can you go through inner alchemy if the master is not present? The gap of thousands of years cannot be bridged. But there is no need to bridge it either because whenever there is one who is awakened he is the same, the fire is the same. It does not make any difference in what lamp the flame is alive. The lamp may be of this shape or that shape, the lamp may be made of this metal or that metal, it is irrelevant. The flame has nothing to do with the metal and the shape of the lamp; the flame is always the same. But you will have to seek a lamp which can still show you the path.

The moment you see an enlightened person, if you allow yourself to SEE the enlightened person, three things happen in your life. The first is, you become a student. A student means one who becomes intellectually involved, who becomes intellectually intrigued, who starts feeling that his questions are being answered for the first time, his curiosities are dissolving for the first time. For the first time there is someone who can answer him and his answers are not borrowed; his answers are on his own authority. His answers are not coming from his memory; his answers are welling up from his very center.

And you can feel the difference, the difference is great. It is the difference between a plastic rose and a real rose. You can see that his answers are fresh, young, breathing. They have a heartbeat to them, they are not dead information. He has not collected knowledge; he has known, he has seen, he has become. And you will feel his being. The first step is to become a student; that's how the journey starts.

The second step is to be a disciple. When not only your head is in communication with the master but your heart too, when not only does he look logical but a great love arises in your being for him, then you become a disciple. A disciple knows how to commune, the student knows how to communicate. The student lives on the verbal, intellectual level; the disciple on the nonverbal, feeling level. His heart starts opening. Just as the sun rises in the morning and the flowers start opening, the disciple feels some opening

is happening in him. He is no more the same person. The master has touched his being; something has penetrated in. The disciple has become pregnant.

And the third step is to be a devotee. The student relates through the head, the disciple through the heart, and the devotee through his totality. It is no more a question of head or heart, body or mind or soul; his whole being becomes suffused. He becomes one with the master. It is no more a dialogue of the head or of the heart. There are no more two; the flames have become one.

This is the moment of real initiation, of real sannyas. Buddha is talking about it. He says: THE FOLLOWERS OF THE AWAKENED AWAKE....

They become just like the master. They have the same quality, the same fragrance, the same aura. To understand a buddha, the only way is to become a buddha yourself; there is no other way.

The disciple will know ABOUT the buddha; the devotee will KNOW the buddha. The disciple will feel the buddha. The disciple is just in between the student and the devotee. He will remain a little vague, clouded; he will not have clarity. In that sense, the student is clear -- intellectually clear. The devotee is totally clear. The disciple is in the middle: something is clear and something is very unclear; something is light and something is dark. The disciple is in a state of twilight, neither day nor night.

Buddha is talking about the devotee when he uses the word 'follower'. He does not mean a Christian, a Hindu, a Buddhist. He means someone who has the courage to take the plunge into the very being of the master; he is a real follower. And in that plunge he starts having the same quality -- the quality of being awake.

Ordinarily you are living in a kind of sleep; a metaphysical slumber surrounds you. And even if sometimes there are possibilities, opportunities for you to be awakened, you avoid, because you have invested so much in your sleep. You are afraid of being awake. Deep down you know that if you become awake your dreams will be disturbed -- and you may be having beautiful dreams, nice dreams, sweet dreams. And who wants to get disturbed when there are so many beautiful dreams surrounding you? And when you are dreaming, you don't think that you are dreaming; your dreams look real.

That is one of the strange things about dreams: they have such a deep impact on you. They hypnotize you so deeply that many times you have known that they are dreams when you wake up in the morning, but again every night you fall back into the same hypnosis.

This is the case with you in so many lives. You have lived the same kind of life again and again -- the same desire, the same greed, the same ambition -- and each time you were frustrated, but again you are ready to become a victim. It is exactly like dreams.

This morning also when you woke up you remembered so many dreams from the night and you laughed; it looked so ridiculous. But let the night come again and you will dream again, and when you will be dreaming you will believe them. They are real deceivers! And when one believes that this is real, why should one want to be awake and disturb it? You resist awakening.

Even if you come across a buddha you will not look at him. You will look sideways; you will not look into his eyes. The fear... his energy may start pulsating in you. Hence, many times you have come across a Buddha, a Krishna, a Mahavira, a Christ, a Mohammed, but you have missed again and again on your own accord. You were afraid to encounter them -- the encounter may prove too dangerous.

"Hello. This is long distance. I have a call for you from Palm Springs."

"Hello, Herman, this is Rube. Listen, I am stranded here and I need five hundred dollars."

"I can't hear you. Something is wrong with the phone."

"I want five hundred dollars!"

"I still can't hear you."

"I can hear it okay," interrupted the operator.

"Then YOU give him the five hundred dollars!"

You listen only to that which fits with you; you avoid listening to that which can be a disturbance. You become deaf, you become dumb, you become blind. You have chosen a particular sleepy life and you have lived with that style for so long that it looks almost natural. The unnatural has become the natural and the natural has been completely forgotten.

To awake means to be natural again. To awake means to be awake in your consciousness, in your deepest core of the heart, to become aware.

We go on reading the Bibles, the Korans, the Gitas. That is not a problem. The problem comes when you come across a Mohammed. It is easy to read Ayatollah Khomeiniac; it is difficult to come across Mohammed, because Mohammed is bound to be like an electric shock. He will go like a deep tremor into your being. And these ayatollahs, these imams, they are not to be afraid of. They talk such nonsense.

Just the other day I was reading.... These people write great treatises on the Koran, and you will be surprised to know what they write in those treatises. Such stupid things! -- for example: "You should not urinate towards Kaaba." Great metaphysics! Great spirituality! You should remember continuously, otherwise be prepared for hell. But this can be managed; Mohammedans manage it, they remember the direction of Kaaba. As if God is only in Kaaba and nowhere else! As if Kaaba is the only direction which is divine and all else is undivine!

I was reminded of a beautiful story in Nanak's life:

He went to Kaaba and he slept with his feet towards the sacred Kaaba stone. The imam of Kaaba came and he was very angry. He said, "You pretend to be a holy man and you don't even know the ordinary rules! Whether you are a Mohammedan or not, at least you can be polite! This much courtesy you can show: you should not put your feet towards Kaaba. Change the direction of your feet!"

Nanak laughed and he said, "You have come in the right time -- that's what was puzzling me! Please, you do it. You turn my feet towards any direction... because I have

tried and I have to go to sleep. I have tried; half the night I have wasted already. You try!"

In deep anger, rage, the imam turned Nanak's feet to the opposite direction. He was shocked to see that Kaaba moved towards Nanak's feet! He turned in every direction and Kaaba moved.

Whether it happened or not, that is not the point; but the story is beautiful. It simply says that God is everywhere. Wherever you put your feet it is God's direction, because nothing else exists. But these foolish scholars, they go on talking nonsense and they write big treatises. But they are not dangerous to you.

For example, on a day when you are fasting, in the days of Ramadan when a Mohammedan fasts, in desert countries a great problem has arisen: when you are moving in the desert sometimes you may swallow dust. Now the problem is -- what a great problem! -- in the desert on a fast day, if you swallow dust, is your fast broken or not? Now these ayatollahs say your fast is broken if you swallow the dust voluntarily. But who will swallow the dust voluntarily? For what? Dust is not food, dust is not nourishment! But if it happens involuntarily, then the fast is not broken.

Then for centuries people go on discussing such stupid nonsense -- sheer nonsense! They will miss a Mohammed, they will miss a Moses, they will miss a Lao Tzu; and then for centuries they will discuss useless things. Useless things are not dangerous.

The real danger comes from people who are awake, because to be in their presence it is possible that you may become infected. Awareness is contagious! But read the Koran and the Bible -- it is just a game of words. And if you read every day your Bible and Gita, then even words don't mean anything. You simply repeat like a parrot.

Every year dignitaries of the church come from Rome to Israel and a time-honored ceremony is re-enacted. One of the chief rabbis hands a jewel-covered scroll to a visiting priest who holds the scroll for a minute, shakes his head, and then returns it to the rabbi until the next year.

This year, however, the rabbi and the priest involved in the ceremony grew curious about the scroll and decided to open it. They removed the jeweled covering, then unrolled yards and yards of yellowed parchment with long columns of numbers on it and blurred words.

The rabbi put on his glasses and finally managed to read the ancient Hebrew letters. It was the bill for the Last Supper!

For two thousand years they had been giving it to the other: "Please, you pay it!" And nobody has bothered what is written in it, what exactly it is.

Scriptures are cheap and scriptures are manipulatable. You can manage very easily any meaning out of them. You can invent, you can interpret, you can do a thousand things to the scripture. You can bring it to your own level.

But you cannot bring a buddha to your own level. If you want to commune with a buddha you have to go to HIS level, to HIS plane of being. And his plane of being is awareness.

THE FOLLOWERS OF THE AWAKENED AWAKE.... You are somnambulists! The only possibility in your life of being awake is coming in contact with someone who is awake. Only fire can ignite fire in you. And you are living in such a deep sleep that unless somebody hits you hard enough your sleep may not be broken.

The advance proofs of a cookbook for hipsters recently came my way. The wildest recipe is for a salad. "You cut up lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers and green peppers, then you add a dash of marijuana and the salad tosses itself."

And that's the state you are in. For centuries the salad is tossing itself -- too much marijuana! Everybody is spiritually in a state of deep slumber, dreaming great dreams, but not an inch of evolution... because there are only two states: either you are asleep or you are awake.

This whole idea of human consciousness evolving, the idea of progress, is nothing but a strategy of the mind to keep you sleeping. It is a great trick of the mind. The mind goes on telling you, "Humanity is progressing. Don't be worried -- everything has its own time. When the spring comes, you will also become an evolved buddha. Wait! Nothing can be done before its time. Wait for the right time and you will also be ripe." And you have been waiting for centuries and you can go on waiting for centuries, the right time will never come. This is not the way that it comes. You have to catch hold of it.

You are just in a deep lethargy. Buddhas happen and disappear, light descends from the beyond, but you don't take any note of it. Yes, you do one thing: when a buddha is gone you worship him. You make him a god, you create temples for him, you make statues of him and you worship them. Statues are toys, they can't awaken you. And the real man? The real man you avoid. And because you avoid the real man, a great guilt arises in you. To put that guilt right you worship.

Worship is not religious; worship is just out of guilt. Because you never listened to the buddha when he was alive, when he dies you start feeling guilty. Now what to do? How to put your guilt and the burden of it aside? You worship. You compensate with worship, but you remain the same.

AND DAY AND NIGHT THEY WATCH AND MEDITATE UPON THEIR MASTER.

The devotee -- the real follower -- is constantly watching what he is doing, how he is doing, why he is doing. Even in small matters he de-automatizes himself. Walking, he does not just walk; he walks with meditative awareness. He knows that he is walking. Eating, he knows he is eating.

You eat and you do a thousand and one other things. You go on swallowing food, you go on throwing food in, you go on stuffing yourself... and the mind goes on planning,

goes on remembering, desiring, projecting. You are not there in the act; you are either in the past or in the future. And the present is the only time, only the present is real. Past is unreal, future is unreal; both are unreal -- and you are always living in the unreal. This is sleep: you go on doing things.... You yourself sometimes say, "I did it in spite of myself." What do you mean when you say "in spite of myself"? It simply means that you were not conscious and you did it -- as if you are just an automaton, a robot!

A very fat lady boarded a crowded bus and managed to wedge herself in. She had a long way to go and feeling very uncomfortable reached down and unzipped the zipper in the back of her skirt.

A few minutes later, feeling the draft, she reached back and zipped it up again. Feeling more and more uncomfortable, she reached back and unzipped the zipper, but in a few minutes she reached back and zipped herself up again.

This went on for nearly twenty minutes until finally the man standing behind her leaned over and said, "Listen, lady. I don't know what's on your mind, but in the last half hour you have unzipped my fly at least ten times!"

People are not conscious of what they are doing! They just go on doing things, half asleep, half awake, in a kind of alcoholic state.

The pretty young thing came slamming into her apartment after a blind date and announced to her roommate, "Boy, what a character! I had to slap his face three times this evening!"

The roommate inquired eagerly, "What did he do?"

"Nothing!" muttered the girl. "I slapped him to see if he was awake!"

People only appear to be awake; they are not. People only appear to be alive; they are not. People only appear to be; they are not -- because if they are really there, then there is no difference between them and the buddha. Then they will know all the secrets of life, then they will know the significance of life. Then their life will be a celebration, a constant celebration, a joy, a song, a dance. But people are living in hell, in misery. Misery is symbolic of unawareness; bliss is symbolic of awareness.

FOREVER WAKEFUL,
THEY MIND THE LAW.

The devotees of a master, of an awakened one, are continuously wakeful and they are continuously making every possible human effort to be in tune with the universe, not to fall out of step with the universe -- because that is what misery is.

To be in tune, to be harmonious with the universe, is bliss, is joy, is music, is poetry. You start blooming the moment you are in tune with the whole. Whenever you are not in tune with the whole, something goes berserk in you. Then the whole no more nourishes you; then you are no more rooted in the whole. Then you become an

uprooted tree, then you are undernourished. Then your green foliage starts disappearing. Then flowers can't happen to you, because flowers are possible only when you are overflowed with joy, overflowing with joy.

THEY KNOW THEIR BROTHERS ON THE WAY.

The real devotees are so awake that they immediately, intuitively recognize anybody who has the same quality -- the BROTHERS ON THE WAY. A sannyasin, if really meditative, will immediately know another sannyasin. This is not an intellectual understanding -- not that he infers that this must be a sannyasin -- but a simple intuitive feeling. Something strikes him deep down in his being. Something so similar is there present in the other person that he knows without any mental effort and exercise. He knows through the heart that the other is also on the way.

How do you recognize a man when he is awake? And how do you recognize a man when he is asleep? Sleepers cannot recognize other sleepers and sleepers cannot recognize that somebody is awake, that is true. But if you are awake you know who is asleep and who is awake. Exactly in the same way, on a higher plane, it happens again: the people who have a little bit of awareness immediately become aware of the brothers on the way.

That's how the commune arises, through this recognition. A commune is not a church. A commune is not an organization. A commune is not based on a dogma, on a creed. The commune grows out of this intuitive recognition that the other is also in tune with the whole. You can hear the music! You can hear something which cannot be heard by the outer ears. Something immediately rings a bell in your heart. It is a mysterious phenomenon.

Buddha says: THEY KNOW THEIR BROTHERS ON THE WAY. Wherever you will find anybody who is meditative, out of your meditation you will be able to recognize him.

Every commune has arisen in this way. Of course, every commune has fallen and become a religion finally. That's the way of the world. Once the master is gone, the commune slowly slowly, starts losing its quality of awareness, it becomes more and more formal. When the first disciples have also disappeared it is no more a heart phenomenon, it becomes a head phenomenon. When the second line of disciples has also disappeared, it is only because of your birth that you are a Christian or a Hindu or a Mohammedan. Then you are following a dead path which leads nowhere.

THEY UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY OF THE BODY.

Buddha calls the commune THE BODY. The real devotees start feeling such attunement, such at-onement with other brothers, that they become one body. Buddha used to call it the SANGHA -- the commune, the one body, the family. If something happens it immediately affects all the people, a wave surrounds all instantly.

When Buddha died he had thousands of disciples. They were spread all over the country. The moment he died, all the disciples who were real disciples immediately were affected wherever they were. Thousands of miles away from Buddha, immediately they felt, "The master is no more."

This is a mysterious phenomenon, but now even science is going deep into this phenomenon -- from a different route, of course. They have been experimenting on animals, particularly the relationship between the mother and the child. And they are surprised, utterly surprised, by a mysterious phenomenon. You take the child of any animal deep into the sea, a mile deep or two miles deep into the sea, and you kill the child there. The mother is on the shore; there are two miles of water in between, but the mother immediately knows the child has been killed. She becomes sad, depressed; tears start flowing.

In Soviet Russia particularly, they have worked hard on this phenomenon. They have tried the distance of a thousand miles; and if the child is killed, the mother is immediately affected. There seems to be a spiritual umbilical cord between the child and the mother. It has become very confused in human beings, that's why they have to experiment with animals. Animals are still simple, innocent; they have not yet become educated, cultured, civilized. These misfortunes have not yet happened to them; hence they are working with animals, but it happens in human beings also.

If there is a deep love relationship between the child and the mother, the death of the child anywhere in the world will affect the mood of the mother immediately. Some mysterious connection exists between the mother and the child.

But this is nothing compared to the mystery that happens between the master and the disciple, because the mother/ child relationship is only physical and the master/disciple relationship is spiritual. It is far more profound, far deeper.

Buddha says: THEY UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY OF THE BODY.

THEY FIND JOY IN ALL BEINGS.

You find only that in others which you have found in yourself first. If you are sad you will find sadness all over the place. To a sad person even the full moon looks sad, gloomy, depressed. To a joyous heart even the dark night is luminous. It all depends on you; it all depends how you are, where you are. The whole world moves with your heart, it becomes that which you are.

You have heard it said again and again that the person who is holy, who is meditative, who is prayerful, goes to heaven. That is wrong; just the opposite is the case. To the prayerful person, to the meditative person, heaven comes. Not that he goes to heaven -- heaven comes to him, to his heart. Wherever he is, he is in paradise. And the evil person, wherever he is, he is in hell. There is no need to send him to hell, there is no need to have a special place called hell. Nowhere is there any hell and nowhere any heaven.

If you are joyous you live in heaven, and your neighbor may be living in hell. And sometimes it happens, one moment you are in heaven and the next moment you are in

hell. It all depends on your inner states. If you are soaring high, heaven opens up. If you are drowning in darkness, in sadness, hell is ready to welcome you. THEY FIND JOY IN ALL BEINGS.

THEY DELIGHT IN MEDITATION.

This is a very significant sutra; remember it. Buddha says: THEY DELIGHT IN MEDITATION. It is easy to meditate if you don't want to be blissful -- it is very easy to meditate. If you want just to be blissful and you don't want to be in meditation, that too is easy. The rarest combination is meditation plus bliss. Meditation minus bliss is easy; bliss minus meditation is easy. But meditation minus bliss is not true meditation and bliss minus meditation is not true bliss either. They are true only when they are together.

Many people have tried to meditate without bliss because it is simple, less complex. You have to take only one work upon yourself: that you have to still your mind. And you can force your mind to be stilled, but you will become sad, you will have a long face.

That's why your saints -- so-called saints -- look sad. Sadness has become a necessary quality for being a saint. They can't laugh, they can't dance, they can't sing, they can't love, they can't rejoice. They talk about bliss but they only talk about it. You don't see any bliss in their eyes, you don't see any bliss in their milieu, you don't see any bliss radiating from their inner center. They look sad, dull, dead, unintelligent, for the simple reason that they have chosen a shortcut and there is no shortcut. They have avoided the complexity of spiritual transformation. They have chosen meditation, they have forced their mind to be still. It is a negative state; their minds are only empty, not silent -- forcibly made still. But it is not a natural growth of silence, it is not the flowering of silence. Their silence is like the cemetery, it is not the silence of a garden.

The silence of the garden is full of music: the bees humming and the birds singing and a distant call of the cuckoo. They are all in it, essential parts of it. The garden has a very living silence, full of song and joy. The cemetery is also silent, but it is only the silence of death; because there is nobody, hence there is silence.

You can meditate, force yourself to be silent, but you will miss God, you will miss nirvana. And you can also try to be blissful; that means you can pretend, you can practice, you can rehearse bliss. You can always try to be blissful, smiling, at least looking happy.

Slowly slowly, it becomes so practiced... like Jimmy Carter. Now his smile is disappearing, but just remember two years before -- you could have counted his teeth! You can practice it. I have heard that in the beginning days of his presidency his wife had to close his mouth in the night! I don't know how far it is true, but it appears to be true -- because if you practice the whole day, then in the night too your muscles become fixed. Even in sleep you will go on smiling.

You can practice blissfulness too, but a practiced blissfulness is false. Anything practiced is false, remember it -- never forget it. Things have to be spontaneous and

natural, not practiced, not cultivated. Cultivated blissfulness is only a mask. You are smiling, but the smile is not in the heart. You are showing joy, but you are not joyous. Your heart is a desert; only on the face you have put plastic flowers. They may deceive others, but they can't deceive you and they can't deceive a master. Your smile, your joy, is formal -- just good manners.

This too has happened. There have been many saints, very blissful, always singing and dancing, but deep down just deserts. They both have chosen only the half, and the half-truth is far more untrue than any untruth.

Truth has to be total, truth has to be whole. And the whole truth is: bliss PLUS meditation. It is difficult of course, arduous, to manage both. Why? -- because they seem to be polar opposites. Meditation means silence and bliss means dance. Meditation means stillness and bliss means a song. Meditation means escaping from the world and bliss means sharing with the world. Meditation you can do in a Himalayan cave, but to be blissful you will have to come back to the world.

Bliss needs to be shared; it exists only in sharing. It can't exist when you are alone, it disappears. It is a communion. Meditation can exist in aloneness and bliss can exist in togetherness. But when both exist then you have to learn a totally new way of life.

Buddha will give you the sutra soon. He says:

IT IS HARD TO LIVE IN THE WORLD
AND HARD TO LIVE OUT OF IT.
IT IS HARD TO BE ONE AMONG MANY.

He says: IT IS HARD TO LIVE IN THE WORLD.... Certainly, hence millions have preferred to escape. He himself had escaped in the beginning -- but remember that he did not become enlightened because of his escape. He became enlightened IN SPITE OF his escape. He did not become enlightened because he renounced the world; he became enlightened even though he renounced the world. It was in spite of it. It was not the cause of his enlightenment, it did not cause it.

Enlightenment is not caused by anything.

So when he comes back after his enlightenment to the world, goes to the palace to see his parents -- his old father, his old stepmother -- his wife, his son, the wife asks one question; a very pertinent question she asks Gautam Buddha. She asks, "Tell me one thing -- I have waited long just to ask you one thing. Whatsoever you have attained, was it not possible to attain it here in this house? Was it necessary to escape from the palace and from the world and from me and from your child? Was that absolutely necessary to attain it?"

And that is the only time when Buddha looks downwards without saying anything. His silence is eloquent. He accepts that yes, it was not necessary.

He escaped out of the world because it was hard to live in the world. It is hard.

"Son, I just know that you will do the right thing by this little girl," said the preacher.
"You just marry her and you will be at the end of your troubles."

So he did the right thing and he married the girl. And about six months later, when he saw the preacher again, he tried to murder him.

"You miserable liar!" shouted the young man. "You told me if I married her I would be at the end of my troubles. Well, I married her and she has made my life miserable!"

"That may be true, son, but you can't blame me," replied the minister. "I said you would be at the end of your troubles, but I never said which end."

To be in the world is hard, to live in the world IS difficult, because it is living with so many lunatics. You yourself are a lunatic and everybody else is a lunatic! The world is in such a mess. It simply seems impossible how the good God could manage within six days to make such a mess of the world! There was not time enough... and no woman even to advise him! Still he managed.

Those who know, they say he created Eve only in the end simply so that she would not give advice to him; otherwise in six days it would have been impossible to make the world. She would have interfered in everything: "Do it this way. This is not right." And since he created Eve he has not created anything else. That was too much! He called it a day and he said, "Enough is enough!" Since then nothing has been heard about him.

Shed a tear for the beatnik who committed suicide, leaving a note saying, "Goodbye, cool world."

It is really icy-cold -- no warmth anywhere, no love anywhere, no compassion anywhere. IT IS HARD TO LIVE IN THE WORLD AND HARD TO LIVE OUT OF IT. And it is not easy to live out of it either; it is even harder to live out of it.

Man is in such a dilemma! It is difficult to live in the world, it is difficult not to live in the world. Have you ever tried living in a Himalayan cave? Try for one month, and the world will look so beautiful and so heavenly! A few experiences you have had. It is difficult to live with the wife, but when she goes for a few days to her mother's house, it is very difficult to live without her. When she is with you, you want to be without her; when she is gone, you want her immediately back.

It is going to be so, because the ultimate question is neither to live in the world nor out of it. The ultimate question is to live in a state of wakefulness. If you are living in sleep IN the world you will be in misery; if you live outside the world you will be in far more misery.

I know both types of people, the worldly and the otherworldly. I know the people who live in the marketplace, and I know the people who have renounced the marketplace, and have moved to the monasteries. Both are in misery, deep misery, for the simple reason that just changing the place, just changing your address from the marketplace to the monastery, does not make any difference at all. You are the same person, your consciousness has not changed. And change is needed there. Then you can become the center of the cyclone. Then you can live in the cyclone and yet undisturbed.

But Buddha says that is very rare.

IT IS HARD TO BE ONE AMONG MANY. That happens only once in a while. Among millions, only a single person manages to live joyfully wherever he is -- in the world or outside the world. Who is that person who can manage to live joyfully? -- the one who lives in awareness. That is Buddha's insistent message.

AND FOR THE WANDERER, HOW LONG IS THE ROAD
WANDERING THROUGH MANY LIVES!

And how long have you been wandering! When are you going to decide to be awake? You have slept long enough. It is time to wake up and to start a totally new kind of life which is lived from inside. Light a flame inside of awareness, and then wherever you are it is all joy.

LET HIM REST.... You need rest, you have wandered enough. You are tired, utterly tired, weary, bored.

LET HIM REST.

LET HIM NOT SUFFER.

LET HIM NOT FALL INTO SUFFERING.

The time is right now. Don't suffer anymore. Don't fall again and again into suffering. To fall into forgetfulness is suffering; to remember is to come out of suffering. And rest is the most necessary step for remembering, for awareness. Relaxation is the whole art of meditation and bliss both.

How can you rest with so many desires? They go on pulling you apart. You can rest only if you learn the secret of desirelessness; if you learn to live moment to moment without any future; if you learn to live without any hope for the future; if you live concentratedly in the present, totally involved in the moment, neither worried by the past nor worried by the future, relaxed, at rest. Then meditation and bliss both are easy, spontaneous growths out of a restful heart, out of a relaxed being.

IF HE IS A GOOD MAN,
A MAN OF FAITH, HONORED AND PROSPEROUS,
WHEREVER HE GOES HE IS WELCOME.

And don't be worried what will happen to you if you don't take care of your future, if you don't plan, if you don't arrange beforehand what is going to happen to you. Don't be worried.

Buddha says: IF HE IS A GOOD MAN, A MAN OF FAITH... a man who trusts existence, then don't be worried: WHEREVER HE GOES HE IS WELCOME -- at least welcome by those who know, at least welcome by those who understand... and only their welcome is of any worth.

LIKE THE HIMALAYAS

GOOD MEN SHINE FROM AFAR,
BUT BAD MEN MOVE UNSEEN
LIKE ARROWS IN THE NIGHT.

Don't be worried what will happen to you. You will become so luminous -- LIKE THE HIMALAYAS -- shining from thousands of miles away. You will become so radiant that people will start moving towards you as if you are a great magnet. From far and wide, from all corners of the earth, people will start moving towards you, pulled by an unknown force, by a mysterious energy.

Don't be worried about the future, everything will be taken care of. Trust nature. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO: this is the inexhaustible, eternal law. Trust, and nature will shower upon you millions of blessings.

SIT.... Don't rush, don't run. Don't continually be on the move for this and that. SIT. That's exactly the meaning of ZAZEN. The word 'zazen' has come from this sutra.

SIT.
REST.
WORK.

Zazen means just sitting doing nothing. The first thing to do is learn sitting, a deep restfulness. Become a pool of rest, not even ripples of desire, going nowhere, no ambition -- not even for God, not even for nirvana.

SIT... not only physically -- psychologically, spiritually too. Learn to sit; that is zazen. And REST -- and fall into a deep rest, so the breathing becomes natural, the body becomes cool, all the fever of constant desire and turmoil disappears, evaporates.

And then, WORK. That work will have a totally different quality. It won't be out of desire; it will be creativity. It will be because you have so much energy available that you would like to share your energy with the world, that you would like to create something, that you would like to make the world a little more beautiful, a little more blissful, a little more human.

ALONE WITH YOURSELF,
NEVER WEARY.

And remember the difference between loneliness and aloneness. Never feel lonely. You are never lonely. At the deepest core of your being, God resides; he is always with you. And whenever you are alone, only then will you be able to hear his footsteps. Whenever you are alone, only then will you be able to hear his music, his whisperings. He never shouts, he only whispers. He comes very silently and goes very silently. Be in a deep rest and you become the host; and he is the guest, God is the guest.

ON THE EDGE OF THE FOREST
LIVE JOYFULLY....

The forest represents the unknown, the unknowable. ON THE EDGE OF THE FOREST LIVE JOYFULLY.... Be always close to the unknown and the unknowable and don't be afraid. LIVE JOYFULLY... because the unknown, the unknowable, is also yours. You belong to it, it belongs to you. LIVE JOYFULLY....

WITHOUT DESIRE.

Don't ask for anything. Jesus says: Ask, and it shall be given. Buddha says: Ask not, and it shall be given. Jesus says: Seek, and ye shall find. Buddha says: Seek not, and ye shall find. Jesus says: Knock, and the doors shall be opened unto you. Buddha says: There is no need to knock; the doors are already open.

Why this difference between two enlightened persons? Both are awakened. The difference is because of the audience. Jesus is speaking to very ordinary people; Buddha is speaking to his commune -- that is the difference. He can speak the highest truth without any compromise. Jesus cannot. Jesus has to compromise with the listeners.

Jesus lived without a commune. Yes, a few disciples he had, twelve disciples -- and those twelve disciples are also not of much worth. Buddha had thousands of disciples and of tremendous value -- because many of them became enlightened while Buddha was alive. In his commune there were at least one thousand enlightened people, of the same status as he himself was. He could talk in any possible way and it would be understood; there was no worry on his part about being misunderstood. Jesus had to be constantly on guard, and even then he was misunderstood and crucified.

SIT. REST. WORK. Let these three words sink deep in your heart. Learn to sit silently, restfully, not fighting with yourself, relaxed. Not in a yoga posture, remember, because the yoga posture is a constant effort. No yoga posture is needed. Sit in any way that you find relaxed -- even a chair will do.

Buddha used to sit on the floor; that was easy in those days. You can sit in any posture you like. You can use a pillow, a zen pillow, to sit upon; you can use a chair. The question is not the posture; the question is inner rest.

Be at rest... and when energy accumulates in you, start being creative. Paint, sing, dance, or do whatsoever you feel like doing to make this world a little more beautiful, a little more warm.

We have to create a paradise on the earth.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #8

Chapter title: Out of chaos stars are born

28 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

WHENEVER ONE COMES TO THE ABSURD, SOMETHING INSIDE SIMPLY EXPLODES AND THE WHOLE WORLD LOOKS ANEW. IS IT WHEN THE ABSURD BECOMES OVERWHELMING THAT ONE GETS AN INSIGHT INTO THE GESTALT OF EVERYTHING?

Prem Prabhati, the absurd is nothing but another name of God -- and a far more beautiful name than God itself. For centuries the theologians, the philosophers have destroyed the beauty of the word 'God'. They have painted it, polished it, with such rational garbage that it has no more any life left in it. The god of the philosophers is not the true God because it is nothing but a rational concept.

The God of the lovers is a totally different phenomenon; it has nothing to do with reason, with mind. It is the heart pulsating in tune with the whole. It is a song, a symphony. It is a dance, a celebration. It is more poetry than prose. It is more intuitive than intellectual. It is something felt not thought.

Hence I say 'the absurd' is a far better name for God.

The mind has created a subtle structure around itself of rationality to protect the ego, to protect the separation from existence. All rationality is man-made -- and God is not man-made. All rationality is just a projection of our own ideas on the screen of existence. And God is not a projection; it is a discovery.

To see God one needs eyes absolutely without any idea. The idea is the greatest cloud. One of the greatest mystics of the West -- whose name is not known because he has not signed his book -- has written one of the most important mystic treatises ever: THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING. He says that it is not through knowledge that you come to know; on the contrary, you come to know by UNknowing. This is pure absurdity! It is talking in paradoxes: knowing through unknowing.

What does he mean? He means that when all knowledge has been dropped, when all experience has been put aside, when mind as such is no more functioning, then you relate with existence in a totally new way. Each fiber of your being pulsates with the whole; it is a rhythmic dance. It IS absurd -- you cannot make a theory out of it.

God is not a hypothesis. If God is a hypothesis, then that hypothesis is no more needed. Far better hypotheses have been proposed by science. But God has never been a hypothesis. It is a passionate love affair with existence. It is feeling the existence. It is being in a heart-to-heart contact with existence.

Tertullian is always worth remembering -- a great Christian mystic. He says: I believe in God because God is absurd -- CREDO QUA ABSURDUM EST. The reason that he gives for his belief is that there is no reason to believe.

Unless you have something in your life which cannot be supported by reason at all, your life will not have any significance. Unless you have something for which you can live and for which you can die without any rational grounds, you will go on missing the very meaning of life and existence. You will remain superficial.

Hence the absurd can release something tremendous in you; it can become an explosion. It can make you see the whole world anew, because it is a rebirth. You slip out of the mind. You are no longer covered by the dust of the mind. Everything is fresh and new then. It is mind which makes things old. Because of memory, past, the mind goes on interpreting everything new in terms of the old. Mind cannot do otherwise. Mind means memory -- memory and nothing else. It is your accumulated past experience, and you go on interpreting the new according to the past. Naturally, the past gives its color to the new, it gives its meaning to the new -- and the new is missed. That's why the whole world looks so bored, utterly bored. Existentialists have brought out this situation of boredom as one of the most significant points to be pondered over. They say that man is utterly bored, and they are right. Only stupid people are not bored, or buddhas are not bored. Stupid people are not bored because they don't have that much sensibility, that much sensitiveness to feel boredom. And buddhas are not bored because they don't carry the past. Everything is so fresh, so new; everything is such a surprise. Every moment you are in for a surprise.

For a buddha, life is a continuous revelation, unending revelation. There is no beginning to it and no end to it. It is a mystery; unfathomable, immeasurable, unknown and not only unknown but unknowable too. You can only taste it, feel it, see it, touch it, but you cannot KNOW it. You cannot reduce it to a theorem, to a hypothesis; that is not possible.

Prabhati, you are right: if you can have a contact with the absurdity of it all, with the irrationality of existence, you are moving into a totally different dimension -- moving from mind to no-mind, moving from mind to meditation. That's what meditation is all about: taking you out of the prison of the mind, the prison of the past. And there is no other prison; that past is the only prison.

The man of awareness -- the meditator -- goes on dying every moment to the past so that he remains new, fresh, childlike. Yes, if the absurd becomes overwhelming, you will have your first insight into the gestalt of everything. But remember again, the insight will not be rational. You will not be able to explain it away. You will not be able to say anything about it. You will be able to see, but suddenly you will become dumb. Suddenly you will find language absolutely inadequate, words impotent; communication is not possible. Then only communion remains.

When you know WITHOUT knowledge, the only way to convey the message is through silence, through love, through compassion, through being. You can hold the hand of your friend and something may transpire. You can embrace your friend and something may transpire. You can just look into the eyes of your friend and something may

transpire. The absurd can only be expressed through absurd ways. You can dance or you can sing.

There is a beautiful story of a Baul mystic:

A very rich man, a goldsmith, came to see the mystic and he asked about God: "Do you believe in God? Is there really a God? Does God exist?"

The Baul mystic listened to all his queries smiling, and then he started dancing, playing on his EKTARA -- a one-stringed instrument -- he started dancing.

The goldsmith said, "Are you mad or something? I am asking great metaphysical questions! Rather than answering me, you start dancing! Are you drunk?"

And the mystic said, "That's true, I am drunk -- drunk with the divine! But please don't misunderstand me, don't feel offended. This is the only way I can answer your questions."

And he sang a song -- a song of tremendous beauty and meaning and insight. He said, "I know that you are a goldsmith. I know that you can judge whether something is made of real gold or not. You have a touchstone on which it can be judged. But it will be absolutely useless if you come into the garden and start judging roses on your touchstone. For the gold it is okay, but for the roses it is not at all relevant. Roses cannot be judged on the touchstone on which gold can be judged. You can't know through the touchstone whether the roses are true or not true. For that you will need a totally different kind of approach.

"I know that you have studied much; you are very much interested in philosophical reasoning, argumentation. I have heard about you. But all that reasoning is as absurd here as the touchstone of the goldsmith will be in the garden. I am singing, I am dancing, I am playing music. Feel it! If you can dance with me, come on, dance with me! That may give you some insight into the world where I live. That may give you a touch of the unknown. There is no other way. I cannot logically answer your questions, hence my illogical act."

When Bodhidharma, the great mystic, reached China, the emperor of China had come to welcome him on the border; with thousands of people he had come to receive the great mystic. But he felt very embarrassed seeing Bodhidharma. He had never thought, he could have never imagined, that Bodhidharma would enter China in such an insane way. Bodhidharma was carrying one of his shoes on his head. One shoe was on one foot; the other foot was bare -- and the other shoe was on his head!

The king asked, "I don't understand. Why are you carrying one shoe on your head? Shoes are not meant to be carried on the head!"

Bodhidharma said, "This is the beginning. If you cannot understand this, then it is better I should go back. You have to understand one thing absolutely: that my approach is absurd. This is just to give an indication of my approach -- that I am not a philosopher. You can call me a madman, but I am not a philosopher -- and I am going to put things upside down! All that you have thought up to now, I am going to disturb it. I will bring a chaos into your being, because only out of chaos stars are born."

It is very difficult to drop reason, because one feels frightened. Reason gives you a sense of order. Reason gone, there is only chaos. But remember, reason is barren; chaos is a womb. Out of that chaos something of tremendous importance is born: YOU are reborn. Yes, if the absurd can overwhelm you, you will have an insight into the gestalt of everything; an insight which is untransferable, an insight which is inexpressible. But there are ways beyond words through which it can be communicated.

That's the whole secret of the relationship of a master to a disciple. It is an absurd phenomenon. That's why the West has not known it yet. The West knows the relationship between a teacher and a student; it knows nothing of the relationship between a master and a disciple. The West is absolutely unaware of that dimension. That's why Jesus could not be understood, Socrates could not be understood.

In the East, crucifying a Buddha has not been our practice; giving poison to Lao Tzu has not been our way. Why were Jesus, Socrates and Mansoor killed? For the simple reason that they were trying to bring something absolutely Eastern to the West. They were trying to bring a new insight into God, and the time was not ripe. Maybe NOW the time is ripe. Jesus came a little early.

Now the time is ripe. Now the West has the possibility to open up a new door -- the absurd -- and enter through that door. That is the only door to the temple of God.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,
OLD HABITS DIE HARD!

Prem Harideva, it is true... but why? Why do old habits die hard? -- because you are nothing but your old habits. If they die, YOU will die. You don't have anything more, you don't have anything plus. You are just your old habits, old patterns. You are a mechanism, not yet a man; that's why old habits die hard. It is very rare that a man exists, very few and far between.

A Buddha is a real man, authentic. A Zarathustra is a real man -- a man worth calling a man. The ordinary humanity is just robotlike: it lives unconsciously, it lives mechanically. And habits are all that you have. If you drop all your habits you will simply start evaporating; you will not find yourself at all. What are you? Just watch, and you will find a bundle of old habits. You don't yet have anything more.

That's the whole effort of meditation: to bring something more to your life which is not a habit, something which is spontaneous, something which is nonmechanical, something which transforms you from a robot into a conscious being.

George Gurdjieff used to say that every man is not born with a soul. On the surface it appears not believable because for centuries you have been told by the priests that everybody is born with a soul and you believe in it. It is comfortable to believe that you have a soul. It feels very good, cozy, warm, that deep inside you, you have a soul, eternal, immortal. And Gurdjieff says you don't have a soul at all! You are just hollow

within; there is nothing inside you -- just habits and habits, a cluster of habits and at the very center there is nobody. The house is empty. The master has not yet come or is fast asleep.

Gurdjieff is right: you are only potentially a human being. A possibility is there, but the possibility can be easily missed. And millions of people miss it because to become conscious, to become a soul, arduous effort is needed. It is an uphill task. To remain in your habits is cheap, easy, downhill. Gravitation is enough; it goes on pulling you.

It is like when you are coming downhill in a car, you put the engine off. You don't need any gas for coming downhill; the pull of gravitation is enough. But that cannot be done when you are moving uphill; then gas will be needed. You will need some integrity, some power. And only consciousness releases power.

Consciousness is the key, the ignition key, that releases power in you, and you become capable of soaring high.

Otherwise, Harideva, this old saying is right: Old habits die hard... because there is nobody who can kill those old habits.

At breakfast, Feinberg's wife said to him, "We are having Sonia's boyfriend to dinner for the first time. We are gonna have a big meal with our best dishes. So please behave. Don't eat with your knife, or you will kill her chance of marriage."

That night at supper all went well. Feinberg hardly touched a thing for fear of using the wrong tool. Then coffee arrived. Feinberg took the cup and started to pour his java into the saucer. The family was looking daggers at him. Feinberg kept right on pouring. Finally the saucer was full.

Feinberg raised it to his mouth, looked around the table, and said, "One word out of any of you and I will make bubbles!"

It is difficult, it is very hard. You have to be conscious, alert, on guard. You have to go on remembering. And remembrance is the most difficult thing in existence.

Habits can be dropped not by fighting against them. That's what people ordinarily do. If they want to change a habit they create another habit against it to fight with it. They move from one habit into another habit. If you want to drop smoking you start chewing gum; now it is as foolish as the other. You change one habit for another, but you remain the same unconscious person.

To drop the habit and not to compensate for it and to remain utterly aware and alert so that you don't start moving into another substitute is one of the hardest things in life. But it is not impossible; otherwise there will be no possibility of a Buddha, of a Christ, of a Krishna. Because buddhas happen, it is possible -- although difficult, very difficult; a great challenge has to be accepted. And all those who have any respect for themselves always accept the challenge of the greatest, the hardest thing.

To reach to the moon is not so hard, it is not so difficult. To go to Everest is child's play compared with remembering constantly what you are doing, being aware. But the day awareness starts happening, you know the ecstasy of being, the bliss of being. You know something which cannot be imagined. It is so vast, it is so inexhaustible!

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO. Buddha says: It is the ultimate law of bliss, of joy, of ecstasy. And it is inexhaustible; once you enter into it, it is forever yours. Jesus calls it the kingdom of God; that is his expression for it. But one has to become alert enough, aware enough, so that one can disidentify oneself with the habits, with the patterns, structures, that have become ingrained in your being.

This very rich but very miserly old man is dying, so he calls to his deathbed three men of the cloth -- a rabbi, a priest, and a minister.

When they arrive he says, "Gentlemen, you know the old saying: You can't take it with you. Well, taking it with me is precisely what I propose to do. And because of your religious backgrounds, I feel I can trust you. Here, in these three boxes, is the greater part of all my wealth. My dying wish is that each of you places one box in my grave."

All three agree to his request, upon which the dying man distributes the boxes and dies. Sure enough, on the day of the funeral, they all show up and each places a box in the grave. Later on they decide to go to a nearby pub for a drink, where, after a long silence, the priest at last speaks.

"Friends," says the priest, "I am afraid I have a confession to make. I did not put all the money in the grave. What with contributions falling off lately and the church in need of repair, it seemed such a sin not to put some of the money where it will do some good."

Then the minister says, "Father, I am glad you spoke up. As you know, I am the head of several charities. And, likewise, it seemed to me such a sin to just bury all that money. So I too kept some of it, of course a small portion, to help these very worthwhile and needy charities of mine."

After another long silence, the priest and the minister ask the rabbi, who has been looking out the window all this time, what he thinks about their actions.

"Well," says the rabbi, "I must say that I am deeply surprised, not to say shocked. As a rabbi, respecting the wishes of a dying man, I could only put in the full amount. In fact, I gave him my own personal cheque!"

A Jew is a Jew! Whether he is a rabbi or not does not make much difference: old habits die hard. But they can die. And you have to make all the efforts so that they die, because in their death is the beginning of your real life.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

IS THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT REALLY SO LOUSY AS YOU WERE SAYING THE OTHER DAY?

Pradipama, it is not really a question of the Indian government; basically it is the Indian mind. Indian mind is lousy; Indian government is only an expression of the Indian mind. And because the Indian mind is lousy, whatsoever it does becomes lousy. For centuries the Indian mind has lived in this state. There is a reason why it has happened.

The West is not so lousy; there is a reason for that too. Three religions were born outside of India: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. They are all really offshoots of Judaism; Judaism is the source of them all. Three great religions were born in India: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism. They also are all offshoots of Hinduism. So, in fact in the world there are only two basic religions: Judaism and Hinduism. And the one basic difference between them is that Judaism believes in one life and Hinduism believes in many lives, in reincarnation. That has made the whole difference.

If there is only one life you have to be in a hurry. You have to do everything quick and you have to do everything skillfully so you need not do it again, because time is short. In the West, time is money. Because time is so short -- seventy, eighty years... half of it will be simply wasted in sleep; most of it will be wasted in earning bread and butter, the remainder in looking at the TV. What is left for you? Hence there is a great hurry in the West and a great longing for speed -- without ever thinking where you are going. Everybody is going; the only question is that one should go fast. Who cares where? -- because who has time to bother about where? The only question is: with what speed are you going?

I have heard:

An airplane was lost in the clouds. Its many sophisticated machines were not working and the pilot informed the passengers on the telecom, "Don't be worried. There is bad news and there is good news too. The bad news first: that we don't know where we are going. The good news: that we are going with such beautiful speed that you need not worry. The speed is perfect."

In the East, Hinduism introduced the idea of reincarnation: many many lives, millions of lives. There is more time than you need; it is not money at all. Then there is no question of hurry, no question of speed, no question of being skillful. You can do the same thing again and again. You can sleep and let the time pass. If this life goes down the drain there is nothing to worry about: there will be another life and another, and so on, so forth.

These two ideas have created two different kinds of people on the earth: the Western mind and the Eastern mind. Both these ideas were created for a different reason, but when things reach to the unconscious man he changes them according to his unconsciousness. Both are beautiful ideas, can be of tremendous importance.

The idea that there is only one life means that you should not waste it in unnecessary things. Don't waste it in accumulating money, gadgets; don't waste it in superficial things. Think of the essential, not of the accidental. That was the message behind it. But what happened? People turned it completely upside down. They became much more interested in the nonessential, because there is not much time, so "Eat, drink and be merry! You are not going to be born again, so have as much as you can have of this world."

That's what happened in the West. The idea was to make you a seeker for the essential, but it was transformed into its very opposite. It became: "Eat, drink and be merry,

because soon you will not be here -- and you will not be coming again. Who knows about the other world, and who knows about God, and who knows about heaven? Don't be bothered with such nonsense, such esoteric nonsense! You be simple, and enjoy this life as much as you can. Live it! Squeeze every moment to your heart's content." That's what became of the great idea that was given by Abraham and Moses to the West.

And in the East, the idea that there are millions of lives had also a tremendously significant message. It was to remind you that you have lived many many times in the same rotten way. You have been moving in a wheel, you have been going in circles. Are you not bored yet? Are you not fed up yet? Are you so stupid that you can't see the utter futility of it all? Living for so many lives, desiring the same things, succeeding and failing, and dying every time; have you not become aware that something ELSE is needed? This world won't do, you have to transcend it. This was the idea behind Patanjali, Mahavira, Krishna, Buddha, and their message.

Reincarnation simply means: be BORED with the whole idea of desiring this and that. Be finished with it. Jump out of this wheel of life and death. But what really happened was totally different, just the opposite. What happened was that India became very lousy, slow. The unconscious mind interpreted the whole message that there is no need to be in a hurry. "There are many many lives, so why worry? We will think of God in the old age or in the next life. There is no shortage of time, so go slow." East has not moved at all; it is stuck. It has become undynamic, dormant, stagnant.

This is one of the great calamities that happens always. Whenever a conscious man gives you a certain strategy, a certain idea to help you, you change it according to your mind, and rather than using it as a help it becomes a harmful thing for you. You are given nectar by the buddhas; by the time it reaches you it becomes poison.

So it is not really a question of the Indian government; the Indian government is only an expression of the Indian mind. The Indian mind needs a change, just as the Western mind needs a change. Both have gone wrong. I have no preference for either. Both have created misery for humanity up to now.

We need a new mind which will not be either Western or Eastern -- a new, global mind. For the first time, a universal mind is needed. And for the first time we need a man who thinks not in terms of nations, hemispheres, races, blood, color, religions, but who thinks only in terms of consciousness. We need to raise the consciousness of this whole humanity.

India suffers from great lousiness.

A guy dies and goes straight up to paradise. Saint Peter stops him at the gate and says, "Sorry, sir, but you can't come in. You are not registered in the paradise list. You have to go to hell. But as you were not so bad you can choose between the Indian hell or the German hell."

"Well," says the guy, "before choosing I would like to know what the difference is."

"Okay, I will explain," says Peter. "The Indian hell is a swimming pool full of shit and you stand in it with shit right above your head and each time you try to put your head

out of the shit there is a guard who hits you on the head with his stick till you go back under."

"And what about the German hell?" asks the guy.

"The German hell is a swimming pool full of shit and you stand in it with shit above your head and each time you try to get out there is a guard who hits you on the head with his stick."

"So," says the guy, "I don't see much difference...."

"You know what," says Peter. "As I am feeling pretty far out today I will tell you something: in the Indian hell there is sometimes not enough shit, or the guard is not there, or he forgets his stick...."

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

DO YOU THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO MEASURE LIFE AND LOVE IN PERCENTAGES,
AS YOU DID IN THE LECTURE THE OTHER DAY?

Meeshael, what other day? I have completely forgotten! My memory is not very good.

Harvey was traveling east by train to a business convention in New Orleans. On the train he happened to read an article in the READER'S DIGEST about a seventy-five-year-old American Indian from Arizona who was reported to have the longest memory in the world.

Since the train was passing within a few miles of this famous Indian, Harvey decided to stop and visit him. Sure enough, he was directed to a large teepee in the middle of an Indian reservation. Inside the teepee an old wrinkled man was sitting crosslegged smoking a pipe.

After exchanging a few formalities, Harvey asked, "What did you have for breakfast on December 11, 1908?"

The Indian crossed his hands over his chest and grunted, "Eggs!"

Harvey was immensely impressed and left to catch his train.

Ten years later, while traveling through Arizona, Harvey decided to stop and see if the old Indian was still alive. Sure enough, he was led to the same teepee, but was cautioned to enter very slowly as the old man was very old and must not be startled. Once inside Harvey raised up one hand and greeted him in friendly Indian style, "How!" -- upon which the old Indian grunted, "Scrambled!"

Now, I don't have that type of memory!

Meeshael, what I can say today I will say; I don't know about the other day.

Love and life cannot be measured in percentages. Nothing can be measured, in fact, because the whole is one and immeasurable. But for certain purposes it is possible to use the method of measurement, but that is only for certain purposes.

For example, life cannot be measured, but this can be said: that life exists only between a short range of temperature -- from ninety-eight degrees to a hundred and ten, only twelve degrees. Beyond a hundred and ten and you are finished; fall below the normal and you start slipping. So just twelve, fifteen degrees' span.... For a certain purpose -- for a medical purpose -- that's perfectly true.

Life cannot be measured if you think of consciousness, but if you think of the mind it can be measured. Your mind is nothing but a biocomputer -- and sooner or later, computers will be doing better than your mind. It is possible even in your life, because by the end of this century robots will be walking on the roads -- and they will look exactly like you. And many times you will be in trouble: you may think that the man is real or the woman is real, and the woman or the man may be just a robot.

Now scientists are thinking to cover the mechanism of the robot with artificial, synthetic skin. They will grow hair and they will behave exactly like you. Only once in a while you will suspect that something is wrong -- when their battery will go down. Then, "Grrr, grrr, grrr!" Otherwise they will be perfectly okay. Just a moment before the woman was hugging you and saying, "I love you," and now she says, "Grrr, grrr...." The difference will only be known when the person will fall ill: the real one will go to the hospital and the robot will go to the factory, to the garage. Then you will know the difference; otherwise there will be no possibility of knowing.

In fact, the ordinary man is already nothing but a robot. Your unconscious life can be measured in percentages and your love can also be measured in percentages -- because what love do you have? It is nothing but chemistry!

Yes, the love of a Christ or a Buddha is immeasurable because it is transcendental to the hormones, to the chemistry, to the physiology. But your love is hormonal. Just give an injection of strong hormones and great love arises in you. Take a few hormones out of you, and it falls flat on the ground; all love disappears. Your love can be measured, but it is not love; it is just a biological urge. And your life is a chemical phenomenon. But there is a life behind your life and there is a love above your love that is immeasurable. But neither is my memory very good, nor is my mathematics very good.

Killoran was considered by most of the villagers to be the dumbest man in the town. One day he showed up in new clothes and began buying rounds of drinks at the neighborhood saloon. The neighbors wondered what had happened.

When one of them finally asked him, Killoran replied, "I won the first prize in a big lottery."

"How did you ever guess the lucky number?"

"Well, three times running I dreamed of seven. So I figured it out that three times seven is twenty-four and I bought ticket number twenty-four, and it won."

"Why, you fool, three times seven is twenty-one, not twenty-four."

"You've got the education," said Killoran, "I've got the lottery money."

And, Meeshael, that's what I would like to say to you: you may know mathematics -- you have got the education, I have got the lottery money!

The last question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

I HAVE HEARD THAT MARRIED MEN LIVE LONGER THAN THE UNMARRIED. IS IT SO?

Satyadeva, meditate over Murphy's maxim: Married men don't really live longer. It only seems that way.

And, Satyadeva, why are YOU worried? I think you must be beyond sixty now. Are you thinking to get married so as to live longer? It is time to think of something else -- time to think of death, not of marriage; time to think of the eternal, not the longer.

Even if you live to seventy, eighty, ninety, what does it matter? What will you do? If you live ninety or a hundred years you will do the same stupidities again and again. What have you been doing up to now for these sixty years? You will do the same things even if you are given sixty years more. Think of something new!

And death is bound to come. When you die is not important; death is absolutely certain, THAT is important. After birth only one thing is certain in life and that is death; everything else is uncertain. Don't try to escape death, don't try to avoid it. For centuries people have been trying all kinds of ways to avoid death, but death comes all the same. Whether married or unmarried it doesn't matter: you will die. You are dying!

In fact, death does not come one day suddenly; it starts the day you are born. You start dying from the very first breath. Each birthday is a deathday. Your life is slipping out of your hands and you cannot escape.

An ancient Sufi parable:

A rich merchant in Baghdad sent his servant one day to the marketplace to buy food. But after a few minutes the servant returned looking panic-stricken.

"Master!" he cried. "You must lend me your best horse immediately, so that I may flee to Damascus and thereby escape my fate."

"Whatever is the matter?" asked the merchant.

"I went to the marketplace and I saw Death standing there among the stallholders!" exclaimed the servant. "He made a hostile gesture at me and started walking towards me. I beg you, lend me your best horse so that I may flee to Damascus and escape."

The merchant was a kind man and he did as his servant asked. Then he himself walked down to the marketplace to see if the story was true. Sure enough, Death was standing in the crowd.

"Why did you make a hostile gesture at my servant?" asked the merchant.

"I made no gesture of hostility," replied Death. "I was simply very surprised to see him, for I have an appointment with him tonight... in Damascus."

You cannot escape. Wherever you go you will find your death waiting for you. Yes, it can be prolonged, postponed, but what is the point? Rather than postponing, why not

use this opportunity of becoming aware of death -- that it is approaching, that it is on the way, that any moment you will be in its grip. Don't ask for the horse and don't try to go to Damascus. You cannot escape. The only way is to transcend, not to escape. You ask me, "I have heard that married men live longer than the unmarried. Is it so?" If it is so, then what? Will you get married? At the age of sixty it will be so stupid. A man of twenty can be forgiven, but you cannot be forgiven.

Mr. Goldberg visited the doctor's office, complaining that he had flying crabs. A lab test was taken, and Mr. Goldberg anxiously waited while the doctor with a sad look came to give him the report. "I am sorry, Mr. Goldberg," he said, "but those flying crabs we thought you had -- well, they turned out to be fruit flies. I am sorry, but your banana is dead."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #9

Chapter title: Sannyas is for sannyas' sake

29 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH.
ANOTHER DENIES HIS OWN ACTIONS.
BOTH GO INTO THE DARK
AND IN THE NEXT WORLD SUFFER
FOR THEY OFFEND TRUTH.

WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE.
BUT IF YOU ARE RECKLESS
YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

IF YOU ARE RECKLESS,
BETTER TO SWALLOW MOLTEN IRON
THAN TO EAT AT THE TABLE OF GOOD FOLK.

IF YOU COURT ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE
YOU COURT TROUBLE.
YOUR SLEEP IS BROKEN.
YOU LOSE YOUR HONOR.
YOU FALL INTO DARKNESS.

YOU GO AGAINST THE LAW,
YOU GO INTO THE DARK.
YOUR PLEASURES END IN FEAR
AND THE KING'S PUNISHMENT IS HARSH.

BUT AS A BLADE OF GRASS HELD AWKWARDLY
MAY CUT YOUR HAND,
SO RENUNCIATION MAY LEAD YOU INTO THE DARK.

The mother superior of a convent advertised for a cleaner and retired old Cohen applied for the job. Since he was the only applicant, the mother superior had no other choice but to hire him.

Six months later the mother called Mr. Cohen to her office and said to him, "Dear Mr. Cohen, we are very very pleased with your work. You are the first of your faith to be employed by us and I must repeat that we are pleased. You are a conscientious man and the church has never been cleaner. There are, however, three things I feel I should point out to you. Firstly, Mr. Cohen, don't wash your hands in the holy water. Secondly,

don't hang your coat on the cross. And thirdly, please address me as Mother Superior and not as Mrs. Shapiro."

Man ordinarily is a robot. He lives apparently awake, but not really. He walks, he talks, he acts, but it is all as if in sleep -- not conscious of what he is doing, not conscious of what he is saying, not conscious of all that surrounds him. He moves surrounded in a dark cloud of unawareness.

According to Gautama the Buddha, this is the original sin: to live unconsciously, to act out of unconsciousness.

In fact, the word 'sin' comes from a root which means forgetfulness. Sin simply means that we are not conscious, aware, alert, that we don't have any inner light to guide us.

Buddha talks again and again in these sutras about falling into darkness, but you can fall into darkness only if your inside is full of darkness. Whatsoever is your inside is going to be your destiny. If the inner is full of light, the whole existence is full of light. If the inner is dark, then of course it is nothing but a dark night of the soul all around. You live through your inner core, so whatsoever is the case with your center is going to be reflected by your circumference. The whole world only reflects you, echoes you, resounds you. It is nothing but you multiplied a millionfold. So if you come across ugliness, it must be somewhere inside you. If you meet the enemy, you must have projected it. If you see death, that means something in you is rotten, something in you with which you have become identified corresponds to death.

The world is a mirror; it always shows your real face to you. Buddha insists again and again: Use the world as a mirror, and then go inside and find out the cause. The cause is always in the inner; the effect is in the outer. Don't be deceived by the effect. Don't start thinking that the effect is the cause because then you will be leading a life rooted in utter ignorance. The face in the mirror is not the cause; the face in the mirror is only the effect. Don't try to change the face in the mirror, don't try to paint it.

That's what we go on doing; that's what our whole life consists of. We are always trying to look good in the eyes of others; that is trying to look good in the mirror. What are those eyes of others but mirrors? We are always trying to convince others of our goodness, of our truth, of our sincerity, authenticity, religiousness, spirituality. What is the point of convincing anybody? In fact, by convincing others we are trying to convince ourselves. If the others are convinced -- if the mirror can reflect a beautiful face -- than we can be at ease with ourselves. We can also believe that we are beautiful.

This is the illusion in which we live, and this is the illusion that the society helps to strengthen. The society feeds it, the society nourishes it. The whole effort of the society is to make the mirror more important than yourself, because then you can be dominated, you can be reduced to slaves. And the mirror is in others' hands.

Somebody says to you, "You are so holy!" If you believe him, if this becomes an ego nourishment for you, unconsciously you have become dependent on the person. Now you will be afraid of him -- he can withdraw any moment. He can say to you any moment, "You are no longer holy." You have to go on convincing him. You have to behave according to his idea of holiness. If he wants you to fast, you will have to fast. If

he wants you to go every Sunday to the church, you will have to go to the church every Sunday. If you want to keep your face beautiful in his eyes then you have to follow his ideas of what spirituality means.

This is a very subtle slavery and the society uses it. It respects those who become instruments of the society, of the tradition. It respects those who are conformists.

Buddha says: Discover your original face. Don't be bothered about the mirror, because mirrors can be made which may show your ugly face as beautiful. You must have seen mirrors of many kinds; they can show different kinds of faces to you. One mirror shows your face very long, another mirror shows your face very fat, another mirror shows your face very thin. They can distort, they can make it ugly, they can make it beautiful too. And the mirror is in the society's hands.

Don't trust the mirrors. Close your eyes and search for the original face. But to close one's eyes and to search for one's original face is a little arduous journey, because in your inner world for centuries, for many lives, you have accumulated only darkness. You are afraid of the inner. You have only a repressed reservoir of unfulfilled desires, greed, anger, lust.

Your religions have been telling you to repress, and to repress means you go on piling up inside your being all that the society condemns. Now you will be afraid to go in because you will have to encounter all those ugly things. They are not ugly, but you have been taught that they are ugly and you have been conditioned, hypnotized that they are ugly -- and you believe that they are ugly.

The first thing for the seeker is to get rid of all these beliefs given by others. A believer can never find the truth.

The first sutra:

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH.
ANOTHER DENIES HIS OWN ACTIONS.

Buddha is talking about you, keep on remembering. He is not talking about anybody else, he is addressing YOU. Otherwise the mind is very clever and cunning. It goes on saying, "He is saying these things to somebody else -- you are an exception." You are not -- nobody is. When buddhas speak they speak to the universal, they don't speak to the exceptional -- because, in fact, there are no exceptions. You become exceptional only when you become a buddha, but then you don't need any buddha to talk to you. Then you don't need any message from any awakened person. You ARE awakened.

Once it happened:

One awakened man, a Sufi mystic, Farid, met Kabir, another awakened man. They sat for two days together in absolute silence. Yes, sometimes they hugged each other and they laughed madly and they danced together, but not a single word was uttered.

When the disciples of Farid asked him, "Why for two days continuously didn't you speak a single word?" he said, "There was no need, because wherever I am, Kabir is also

there. We belong to the same dimension, we are bathed in the same light. We are not separate, we only appear separate -- on the circumference, from the outside -- but our inner beings are at the same point, merging, melting. There is no need to say anything to the other."

And the same was the reply of Kabir to his own disciples. He said, "It would have been foolish to say anything, absolutely foolish, ridiculous. Something has to be said only because you cannot understand silence; if you can understand silence, then what is the need of words? What is the need of language? Between two buddhas, language is irrelevant. Silence is so beautiful, so tremendously beautiful, so deep, so profound, so expressive, so eloquent, what is the need of words? But words are needed because you cannot understand anything else."

It is out of compassion that buddhas have spoken -- compassion for those who can only understand language. And language is a poor thing, very poor, very inadequate. Remember it; then slowly you can find out something in these sutras -- not exactly in the words, but between the words; not exactly in the lines, but between the lines, in the gaps, in the intervals, some glimpses, some taste of silence, some perfume.

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH. How do people deny truth and why? First, their lies have become their investments. Watch your own life. You have invested so much in your lies, you would not like to know the truth, because the truth will shatter all your palaces, all your dreams. The truth will shatter all that you have believed up to now. You know it deep down in your heart that you are living in lies, but they are beautiful, they are nice, they are cozy, and you have lived in them so long that it seems difficult to live without them.

There is an ancient Sufi parable:

A man gave to a Sufi mystic a present, a golden bowl with a beautiful fish in it. The Sufi looked at the bowl and the fish and felt very sorry for the fish, because the bowl is an imprisonment.

He went to the lake and he was tremendously happy in liberating the fish. He threw the fish into the lake. He was happy that at least now the fish can have the whole lake, the great freedom, the space that really belongs to her. A golden bowl -- although it is golden it is a confinement.

Then he thought, what will he do with this bowl? So he threw the bowl also into the lake.

The next morning he went to see how the fish was. He was surprised: the fish was in the bowl and the bowl was in the lake. What had happened to the fish? She had again chosen the bowl. Now the bowl is in the lake, but the fish is not in the lake; the fish has entered into the bowl again. She has lived so long in it, it is her home. The mystic thinks it is a prison, but not the fish; she may have been afraid of the freedom.

People become very afraid of freedom, more afraid than of anything else. You will be surprised to know that people talk about freedom, but when freedom is really given to

them they become afraid, frightened, scared, because freedom is vast, unmanageable, uncontrollable. You cannot dominate it. Slavery is small, it is smaller than you. You feel good with it -- you seem to be big compared to your slavery. But compared to your freedom you are nobody, a nonentity, a nothingness. And who wants to be a nothingness? Everybody wants to be somebody; even though one has to live in a prison, one is ready.... If you can be made the head of the prisoners -- a president, a prime minister, or something like that -- you would like, you would love to live in the prison rather than be free and nobody.

The first requirement for attaining to truth is the capacity to be free, the capacity to be nobody. The ego is the greatest barrier. The ego can exist only in a golden bowl; it can't exist in a lake. It is bound to melt, merge and disappear.

Lies are good for the ego. In fact, the ego is the greatest lie; it feeds on other lies. Although truth has a way of coming up again and again... howsoever repressed, it surfaces, because it is truth; you can repress it only for the time being. And to repress truth you will have to be constantly on guard. Of course you will get tired, you will need a little rest, and whenever you are resting the truth surfaces. The truth comes in your life again and again; you can go on denying it, but it never denies you. You can deny God, but God never denies you.

Friedrich Nietzsche declared: There is no God. God is dead. But God has remained silent. He didn't become annoyed; otherwise at least he would have shouted.

I have heard about one atheist, Diderot, who used to argue against God. He had a special argument. In front of the audience he would take his pocket watch and would say that it is such a time -- eight thirty: "Now if there is a God and if you are almighty, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, then you must be here, because you are everywhere. And if you are really there, do only one thing: stop this watch, even for five minutes, and that will be enough proof of your existence."

His whole life he used that argument. People would wait without breathing, that maybe God is going to do something. But God never stopped his watch, not even once.

You can go on denying God, but God never denies you. You can go on refuting truth, but truth never refutes you. Your denial does not become an irritation; your denial is only a childish act. Truth goes on again and again visiting you; it never tires of you. And if you watch your life, you will be surprised in how many ways it comes.

Bobby's mother had been away for a few weeks and was questioning her small son about events during her absence.

"Well, one night we had a thunderstorm and I was scared, so daddy and me slept together."

"Bobby," said the boy's pretty young French nursemaid, "you mean daddy and I."

"No," said Bobby, "that was last Thursday. I am talking about Monday night."

Truth has its own ways. It may speak through your child, it may speak through a flower, it may speak through a sunray, it may speak through a distant call of the cuckoo. It has different ways of approaching you. Unless you are absolutely deaf, and nobody is absolutely deaf; unless you are absolutely blind, and nobody is absolutely blind.... You recognize it, but you go on denying still. You go on avoiding it. You don't want to LOOK at it. You escape; you know ways how to escape from it, although your escapes are not of much value. In fact, in escaping also you emphasize truth.

Grace and Martha were from a very prim and proper Eastern finishing school, and they were spending their vacations together in New York. They met a bohemian artist and at one of his exhibitions Grace noticed that a canvas of a provocative nude bore a striking resemblance to her girlfriend.

"Martha," she gasped, "that painting looks exactly like you! Don't tell me you have been posing in the nude."

"Certainly not," Martha stammered, blushing furiously. "He must have painted it from memory."

Even your escapes emphasize something from which you are escaping. There is really no way to escape from truth. There is no way to run away from truth because wherever you run, truth is there; in whatsoever direction you run, truth is there.

Buddha says: ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH.

The first and the most fundamental way of denying the truth is to believe in certain systems. Systems of belief are the most cunning ways of denying the truth. One is a Hindu, another is a Mohammedan; one is a Christian, another is a Jew. These are all ways of denying the truth. Rather than seeking and searching, rather than inquiring, you believe. Belief means you have borrowed it from others, who had borrowed it from others and so on, so forth. Belief means it is not your experience -- and unless it is your experience it is not truth.

But belief can give you a very deceptive feeling that you know. The Mohammedan, the Christian, the Jaina, the Buddhist, they all think they know. And what is the cause of their feeling? -- because they have learned from scriptures, from priests. Like parrots they have become efficient in repeating -- beautiful words, logical systems; but all is speculation, guesswork. All is imitation. They have not known a single truth in their lives... because a single truth is enough to deliver you.

Jesus says: Truth liberates. But remember one thing which he has not said -- or maybe he said it and it has not been reported in the gospels: Truth certainly liberates, but the truth has to be your own. Only then it liberates. If it is somebody else's it creates only a new bondage, a beautiful bondage; golden chains, maybe, studded with diamonds, very valuable, difficult to lose because you don't think in terms of chains; you think they are ornaments. Beliefs are chains, not ornaments.

A believer is the ugliest person in the world because his belief becomes a barrier into inquiry. I am not saying to become disbelievers, because disbelief is again belief from

another side, from the negative side. Belief and disbelief are two aspects of the same coin. Don't be a theist and don't be an atheist.

The real inquirer remains an agnostic. He remains open, he has no conclusions. He says, "I know only one thing: that I know nothing." He remains available. The moment you have conclusions you become unavailable to truth; conclusions close you. The moment you have a priori prejudices, how can you know truth? You have already concluded, you have already accepted certain beliefs; they will be like clouds in front of your eyes. Your eyes are no longer empty, clean, mirrorlike; they can't reflect that which is, they can only distort. They will distort according to your belief.

So when the Hindu comes to experience God he sees Krishna with his flute. A Christian never sees that; that's strange. A Christian always sees Christ on the cross; a Hindu never sees that. That's strange! A Jaina will never see Krishna, Rama, Christ -- no, not at all; and a Buddhist will never see Mahavira, Mohammed, Moses. They all see their own belief. The phenomenon is very simple: you see whatsoever you project. Your mind functions as a projector. You don't see that which is, you see that which you want to see. Avoid beliefs. Drop all beliefs, Catholic or communist. Don't believe in Kaaba, or Kashi or the Kremlin. Don't believe in the Bible or the Gita or the Koran or DAS KAPITAL. Avoid all beliefs. Remain clean, empty.

That's what meditation is all about: a state of silence, a state of no prejudice, a state of no belief. And then you are very close to truth. It suddenly explodes upon you, and its explosion is such a blessing that you cannot imagine it unless you have experienced it. There is no way to imagine it. Buddhas have been talking down the ages, but still you cannot imagine it. It is unimaginable because it is inexpressible -- but it can be experienced. It is experienceable but not expressible.

First you will have to be ready to drop the ego, because the ego can live only in lies. Secondly, you will have to drop belief systems because belief systems distort; they never allow things to be known as they are. And thirdly, you will have to drop your mind, because mind is a constant occupation with the past and the future, and truth is always in the present. Truth has no past, no future. Truth is always here, always now -- and you are never here and never now. Whenever you are also now and here, there is a meeting; then something transpires. Between you and the whole a bridge suddenly happens. In fact, the bridge has always been there, you were just not aware of it.

Bring your consciousness to the present. Don't go on wandering into the past, in the jungles of the past, in the memories. Howsoever beautiful they are, they are dead -- they are no more. And don't go on great journeys into the future, because whatsoever you desire in the future is never going to happen. Existence has no obligation to fulfill your desires. Existence has no obligation to follow your projections into the future. Whatsoever you desire is going to be wrong.

When you are not there to desire, then existence starts guiding you into the ways of truth, into the ways of tao, dhamma. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO: this is the inexhaustible law. Drop the mind and you are possessed by the whole; cling to the mind and you remain as far away from the whole as one can be. The moment you drop

the mind you start becoming alert and aware. It is mind that is your sleep. You are sleeping either in the past or in the future: both are ways of sleeping.

When I say, "Wake up!" again and again, when Buddha says, "Wake up!" a simple phenomenon is indicated: come to the present.

Mrs. Weissman lived in the thirtieth-floor penthouse of her Park Avenue building. Every day when she went up or down in the elevator, Manelli the elevator man would see her making the sign of the cross. After watching this for several days he could not resist asking her if she was Catholic. She replied, "Definitely not. I am Jewish."

"I no understand," said Manelli. "If you Jewish why you cross yourself every time you get in and out of the elevator?"

"Cross myself!" barked Mrs. Weissman. "Don't be ridiculous! I am checking to see if I have my tiara, my brooch, my clip... MY CLIP!"

People are living in absolute unawareness. Even if they are checking, it is through a deep deep layer of sleep. They are somnambulists. Everybody is in a kind of psychedelic state.

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH. ANOTHER DENIES HIS OWN ACTIONS. And if you deny the truth you are bound to deny your actions too, because unless you are conscious you cannot take responsibility for your actions.

There are a thousand and one ways to deny your actions. In the past, people used to say, "It is karma." Now that disease has gone to the West; now in the West people are saying, "It is karma. What can we do? It had to happen. It was predetermined by a past life." That is simply a way of denying your action, of shirking your responsibility.

In the past, people used to say, "It is fate, KISMET. What can we do? God has already written it; we are just puppets in his hands. If he wants us to be a murderer, we are a murderer; if he wants us to be a thief, we are a thief." Cunning, tricky minds!

Now those old ways are no longer relevant, they have become outdated; we have found new ones. Karl Marx says, "You are not responsible. It is the society, the social structure, the economic structure, it is capitalism. You are not responsible." It is again fate in new words, in modern language, in contemporary jargon. Karl Marx is a fatalist.

And then there is Sigmund Freud who is even more sophisticated than Karl Marx, even more clever. He gives you new ideas. It is the unconscious which is responsible, not you. If you do something, what can you do? -- it is beyond your capacity to avoid it. It is coming from the unconscious, from the dark layers of your being. You have no access to those dark layers. And Sigmund Freud says there is no way to change it; man is a hopeless project.

According to Sigmund Freud, man is bound to live in misery; at the most we can help him to live in misery more comfortably. We can make him accept the misery so he will be a little more comfortable. We can make the misery a little more convenient by giving him good explanations so he is not so much disturbed; otherwise there is no hope. Man is determined by unconscious forces.

These are just new ways of saying the old things: karma, fate, God. The idea of predetermination has dominated the unconscious man up to now.

It is only once in a while that a buddha says, "Accept your act as your own and don't escape from the responsibility, because escaping from the responsibility means you will never be free of it." And you CAN be free of it. Be responsible, whatsoever is the case, good or bad. Remember, except you, no one else is deciding about it.

If you are living in misery it is your decision. It hurts, of course, to think that "I am living in misery out of my own decision." But if you observe a little more silently, this will give you great freedom. In the beginning it hurts; otherwise it is the harbinger of a new consciousness. If I am creating my hell it implies that I can create my heaven too. If I am the cause of my darkness I can be the cause of my light too. I can be a light unto myself. The very idea that "I am solely and wholly responsible for my actions" is a deliverance.

Buddha says: BOTH GO INTO THE DARK....

The man who denies truth because of the ego, because of belief systems, because of the mind wandering in the past or the future, or the man who denies his actions either because of karma or fate or social structure or the unconscious, they both go into the dark. They are missing the opportunity of becoming light; they are choosing darkness.

... AND IN THE NEXT WORLD SUFFER
FOR THEY OFFEND TRUTH.

And whatsoever you do here and whatsoever you are here is going to be the cause, the continuity, in the next world too -- because the next moment is born out of this moment and the next life is born out of this life. Life is a continuum. Death does not create any discontinuity; you remain continuous. By death you simply change your house; you are the same person. You can come from the hut to the palace, from the palace to the hut. You can move from one city to another city, from one planet to another planet, from man to woman, from woman to man. You can go on changing your houses, but YOU, the real consciousness inside, the real self remains always the same.

So if you are creating darkness here, remember: this darkness will hang around you in the next world too. So you are not only destroying this life, you are creating wrong foundations for the next life too. Beware of it.

... AND IN THE NEXT WORLD SUFFER FOR THEY OFFEND TRUTH. The whole cause of suffering is offending truth. What does he mean by "offending truth"? Whenever you deny a truth because of your prejudices, whenever you avoid taking responsibility for your actions, you are offending truth. And by offending truth you are offending the universal law. You are falling apart. You are becoming a separate entity enclosed within yourself. You are no more part of the whole. You will suffer.

Suffering means going against the universal law and bliss means going in tune with the universal law. Bliss is nothing but harmony with the whole and suffering is discord.

WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE.
BUT IF YOU ARE RECKLESS
YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

Read instead: WEAR THE orange ROBE. BUT IF YOU ARE RECKLESS YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

Buddha had chosen the yellow robe just as I have chosen the orange. He chose it for a certain reason. The orange robe had been the robe of the sannyasin before Buddha; it is the ancientmost robe of the sannyasin. Buddha dropped it and chose instead the yellow robe for the simple reason that sannyas, the very idea of sannyas, had gone wrong, and he did not want to associate with it. And because he wanted to emphasize death and he wanted you to remember death again and again -- because death can bring awareness to your life -- he chose yellow.

Yellow is the color of death: the color of the yellow leaf, the color of the setting sun, the color of the dying man's face. Yellow is the color of death. Orange is the color of life, of youth, of love. Orange, in the East, is the color of spring, when all the trees bloom and birds sing and bees hum and there is fragrance all over. The whole climate is full of youth, freshness, rejuvenation.

Buddha emphasized death to make you aware, but now twenty-five centuries have passed and much dust has gathered on Buddha's ideas. Just as orange had become meaningless in Buddha's time, now the yellow robe has become meaningless.

I have chosen again the orange, and with a totally new vision. The old orange sannyasin was a renunciate. My sannyasin is not an escapist; he lives in the world, but lives with such skill and art that he remains transcendental to it.

But it is not a question only of the robe. You can change the robe to orange or yellow or whatsoever. Unless you become heedful, unless you start listening to the buddhas, to their message.... And their message is simple and very short: Wake up! It can be condensed into only these two words. If you don't listen to their message, IF YOU ARE RECKLESS YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

It is not a question of formality, it is not a question of ritual. Buddha was as much against ritual as I am, he was as much against formality as I am; hence I feel a tremendous affinity with him. Twenty-five centuries simply disappear between me and him; we become contemporaries.

A pregnant woman was told that if she wanted her child to behave in a certain way, she should say every day, "I want my child to be so-and-so...." This would condition the fetus and the child would be born already having this trait.

She had noticed how hard it was to teach children manners, so every day without fail she said, "I want my child to be polite."

She was pregnant for nine months, then ten and eleven and for years she went on being pregnant. Finally she died without having given birth. The doctors did an autopsy on

her body, and when they cut her open they found two little old men bowing to each other and saying, "After you!"

We are not interested in such formality; otherwise you will never be born. We are interested in the essential, not in the accidental. We are interested in the intrinsic, not in the incidental.

And the robe is accidental -- orange, yellow, green. The essential is awareness.

IF YOU ARE RECKLESS, says Buddha,
BETTER TO SWALLOW MOLTEN IRON
THAN TO EAT AT THE TABLE OF GOOD FOLK.

If you are reckless, unaware, if you go on living heedlessly, without listening to all these awakened ones, you will suffer much more than you can suffer by swallowing molten iron. Beware! You are creating suffering every moment. By being unaware you create suffering; by being aware you create bliss.

IF YOU COURT ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE
YOU COURT TROUBLE.
YOUR SLEEP IS BROKEN.
YOU LOSE YOUR HONOR.
YOU FALL INTO DARKNESS.

What to say of another man's wife? -- one's own wife is trouble enough, or for that matter, one's own husband. Buddha is saying: Are you not yet aware of the phenomenon? Is not your wife enough to make you aware? Is not your own husband enough to be finished with this game?

But the mind goes on saying, "Maybe this woman is not good; some other woman may be good. Who knows? It didn't fit with this woman; I may be happy with another." And you cannot be happy with anyone. Happiness has nothing to do with the other; happiness is something that you have to create inside you. And you go on asking for trouble. Whenever you depend for your happiness on the other you ask for trouble. Dependence IS trouble. YOU COURT TROUBLE.

The other IS hell, and depending on the other you become a slave. YOUR SLEEP IS BROKEN. Your peace is lost, your rest is gone. Your whole life becomes a constant disturbance, because you are trying to exploit the other and the other is trying to exploit you.

YOU LOSE YOUR HONOR... your grace, your beauty, your sincerity. Buddha does not mean respectability; by "honor" he means grace.

YOU GO AGAINST THE LAW,
YOU GO INTO THE DARK.

The law is that bliss or misery both arise in the innermost core of your being. Nobody can give you bliss or misery. You need not go to anybody; you are enough unto yourself. Just go in. Dive deep in your consciousness.

And the more conscious you become, the more full of light your life is, the more and more benediction goes on showering on you. The more dark you are, the more unconscious, the more misery is bound to happen.

YOUR PLEASURES END IN FEAR
AND THE KING'S PUNISHMENT IS HARSH.

Buddha calls the ultimate law "the king." The punishment is harsh, but YOU are responsible. The law is not cruel; the law is simply law. It is just like gravitation: if you walk rightly, the gravitation cannot punish you. It is not interested in punishing you, it helps you to walk. But you drink too much, you become a drunkard, and you walk, and you fall on the ground and you break your leg. Can you blame the law of gravitation? The law of gravitation is simply there. If you go against it, you will be punished; whereas if you follow it, you will be benefited.

BUT AS A BLADE OF GRASS HELD AWKWARDLY....

Even such a soft thing, a blade of grass, held awkwardly....

MAY CUT YOUR HAND....

It all depends on you. If you are conscious you can hold a sword and it will not cut your hand; if you are unconscious, even a blade of grass may cut your hand.

SO RENUNCIATION MAY LEAD YOU INTO THE DARK.

A tremendously important saying. Buddha says: Even renunciation, taken unconsciously, is not going to help. You can become a sannyasin out of fear, you can become a sannyasin out of greed. These things are not going to help. Unless you become a sannyasin out of awareness, nothing is going to help.

People become religious for wrong reasons, and you cannot be religious for wrong reasons. And the person who lives rightly need not be religious: he is religious already.

Perlman made millions in the bakery business. While on a visit to Rome he went to see the pope and made a huge donation to the church.

The pope was very pleased and said, "Mr. Perlman, is there anything I can do to show my appreciation?"

"Yes, Your Holiness," answered the baking magnate. "Could you make a little change in the Lord's Prayer?"

"Ah, Mr. Perlman," frowned the pope, "I am afraid that would not be possible. The Lord's Prayer is repeated daily by millions of Christians."

"I know," said Perlman, "but I only want a small change. Where it says, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' just make it, 'Give us this day Perlman's pumpernickel bread.'"

Now, that great donation to the church has nothing to do with religion, it has nothing to do with charity; it is business, pure business.

And that's what people are doing. They donate to the poor, they serve the poor, to go to heaven. It is an investment, it is not service. Unless you are conscious, whatsoever you do is going to be wrong. In Buddha's definition, wrong means a thing done unconsciously and right means a thing done consciously. It has nothing to do with the thing itself but with the quality of consciousness through which it is done.

A Catholic priest took his new assistant to the hospital for the first time. The novice priest walked into an intensive care room and went up to a man in bed under an oxygen tent.

"I am here to help you in any way I can," he said. There was no response from the patient so again the priest offered his help. Still no response. Then suddenly the patient grabbed a pencil and paper and furiously began writing, after which he fell back dead.

The priest took the note and excitedly ran out of the room crying, "Father, Father! I got my first confession!" The father looked at the note and read, "Get off the oxygen hose, you sonofabitch!"

Buddha was perfectly aware that many people were becoming sannyasins in his day -- as it has always been -- for wrong reasons. Somebody was poor, somebody was a thief and the king was after him, somebody has committed murder and he wanted to hide and to be a sannyasin was the best place to hide.

BUT AS A BLADE OF GRASS HELD AWKWARDLY MAY CUT YOUR HAND, SO RENUNCIATION MAY LEAD YOU INTO THE DARK. Renunciation has not to be done for any motive. Sannyas has to be out of the sheer joy of being a sannyasin. Just as art is for art's sake, so sannyas is for sannyas' sake. Then it has tremendous beauty, and then it brings bliss, it brings paradise to you. Do whatsoever you want to do, but do it consciously. To be conscious is to be a sannyasin.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Towards a new humanity

30 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

IF BY ANY CHANCE I MIGHT NOT GET ENLIGHTENED THIS LIFETIME, HOW CAN I MAKE SURE THAT I WILL BE A WOMAN IN MY NEXT LIFE? IT SEEMS SUCH A JUICY EXISTENCE.

Anand Baul, the first thing to be remembered is that nobody ever gets enlightened. Enlightenment is your nature; you are already it. It is not something to be achieved, it is not a goal to be reached. It is the source, not the goal. In the innermost core of your being you are all buddhas, and you have always been so, and you will always remain so.

Yes, you have forgotten it. So the question is not of realizing it, the question is only of remembering it. Hence Buddha says: Be more mindful, be more alert, be more watchful. Nothing else has to be done, one has nowhere to go, no pilgrimage is sacred. All pilgrimages are just going astray. You are already there where you want to be; just look within, just turn in, tune in. This is the first thing to be remembered, that it is not a question of achievement.

You say, "If by any chance I might not get enlightened this lifetime...."

There is no chance at all to miss it. It is impossible to be other than enlightened. It is your self-nature, your very being. This whole existence is enlightened.

Then what is the difference between a buddha and you? The difference is very simple. It has nothing to do with your quality. Your quality is exactly the same as that of Gautama the Buddha, or Jesus Christ, but you are asleep and they are awake. They know where they are, who they are, and you are dreaming. But one can come out of the dreams; dreams cannot hold you, dreams can't hinder you.

Dreams are dreams, they have no substance in them. They can't prevent you from becoming awake. Dreams, desire, sleep -- they are all like darkness. When you light a candle the darkness cannot prevent it. The darkness may be very ancient, it may have existed for millions of years and the candle may be fresh and just a small candle, but that's enough. Light has a positive existence. Darkness has no existence at all; it is only absence of light. You can wake up any moment, the candle can be lit any moment, and all dreams and desires will disappear; hence devices have been invented.

What Buddha says, Patanjali says, Lao Tzu says, is that these are only devices to wake you up, alarms and nothing else.

Secondly, whether you want it or not, if you remain asleep next lifetime you are going to be a woman. Even if you don't want it, it is going to happen. There is a simple law. This is my observation of many people's past lives, this is how mind functions, this is very fundamental to the mind: it always moves to the opposite end. If you are rich the mind thinks poverty is religious, spiritual; it has something of innocence in it, and "Look how the poor are free from anxiety, and how the beggar sleeps soundly. I have got everything and I cannot sleep, I cannot rest, not even a moment's rest... continuous worry, anxiety."

The rich man thinks always that the poor are really in a better space than he is. It is the rich people who have given the idea that poverty is spiritual. You will be surprised, take note of it, that all the TIRTHANKARAS, all the great masters of the Jainas were kings. Buddha himself was a king. All the AVATARAS of the Hindus -- Rama, Krishna, they were all kings. It is because of these rich people that a deep idea has prevailed down the ages that poverty is spiritual.

There is nothing spiritual in being poor, there is nothing spiritual in being rich either. The poor man thinks that the rich people are enjoying real life; hence the poor man projects. If he cannot be rich in this life, then let it be next life; if not in this world, then let it be in the other world. It is the poor man's projection -- the paradise, the heaven, where he dreams that he will be rich, and he will have all that rich people have. Not only that, the poor man also dreams that no rich man will ever be able to reach heaven, they will be thrown into hell: "They have enjoyed enough here, now they have to suffer for it. And I have suffered enough here so I have to be rewarded."

Jesus is a poor man, he is not like Krishna, Buddha and Mahavira. Krishna, Buddha and Mahavira have not said that no rich man can enter into paradise. Jesus says: Even a camel can pass through the eye of a needle, but the rich man cannot enter through the gate into heaven. He is a poor carpenter's son; he knows what poverty is. And because of that poverty he speaks a totally different language than Buddha.

In India the idea has prevailed that if you are rich it is because of your past lives' good karmas that you are rich now. And Jesus says: Rich people cannot enter into the kingdom of God. He says: Those who are the first here will be the last there, and those who are the last here will be the first. It is not an accident that Christianity goes on spreading in poor countries; it has an appeal for the poor. It is not an accident that communism is a by-product of Christianity.

The East has not given birth to communism, it could not have done it. And whenever a country becomes rich, remember, it will start becoming Buddhist, it will start becoming more and more Hindu. It is not an accident that America is so much interested in Eastern wisdom. Whenever a society is affluent it starts thinking in a different way than a poor country thinks.

My observation is that if you are a man in this life, you must have been a woman in your past life, and if you are a woman in this life you must have been a man. That's how the pendulum of mind goes from one extreme to the other. Every man thinks -- not only you, Anand Baul -- that the existence of a woman is beautiful, it is juicy. But ask the

woman: she desires to be a man, deep down she feels humiliated that she is a woman, a second-class citizen. Deep down she herself wants to behave like a man.

Women all over the world are trying in every possible way to behave like men. They are wearing men's clothes, smoking cigarettes like men, and whatsoever they can do. They use language like men have always used it, becoming arrogant, aggressive, losing the feminine quality. See the women of the liberation movement: they have lost something -- something soft, feminine, receptive, passive, is no more there. They are aggressive, violent. They can't wait for another life. In this very life they are in a hurry, they want to become like men. They want the same jobs, the same kind of work, the same kind of freedom. Even if that freedom is just stupid, even if that job is hard, they want to prove that they can manage it, that they are not less than men. Their next life they are bound to be born as men.

So don't be worried about that. You will be a woman, watch out! Don't tell me then that you weren't warned. I am giving you the warning. And what do you mean by "juicy existence"?

It appears to you through the eyes of a man that the woman is beautiful; through the eyes of the woman the man is beautiful. This is a biological attraction. That's why two women cannot tolerate each other; it is impossible to find women friends. They are very jealous of each other, suspicious of each other. They cannot trust other women; they know too much about the woman's heart, about the woman's mind. They can't see any beauty. In fact, they cannot believe what man goes on seeing in women. There seems to be nothing. To a woman there is nothing, just as to a man there is nothing in man. It is the biological attraction, chemical attraction.

And the last thing, Baul: it seems you are not much acquainted with women. Become a little more acquainted. Suffer a little with women, let them torture you a little more, and then you will forget all this nonsense.

A man had decided to take a trip with his eighteen-year-old daughter. "Hey, how about me?" his wife exclaimed.

"Oh no," the man said. "You and your big mouth are not going on any vacation with me. I got enough of your big mouth all year long. I am taking our daughter and that's all."

So off they went. The train on which the man and his daughter rode was held up by robbers. They lost everything. "I'm ruined!" the man said. "Everything I own is gone!"

"No, Papa," the daughter said, "I saved the jewelry. The minute I saw the robbers coming, I took my rings, my diamonds and my bracelet and put them in my mouth."

"That's marvelous," said the father. "If your mother was here, we could have saved the suitcase."

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS THE USE OF ESOTERIC TEACHINGS AND SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE? HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF THEY ARE TRUE OR NOT?

Sef Kicken, the esoteric teachings are only for the fools. The fools are very much interested in anything they cannot understand. The idea of the foolish mind is that anything it cannot understand must be very mysterious, must be very superior, must belong to higher planes.

A really religious person has nothing to do with esoteric nonsense -- with theosophy, with anthroposophy, and with so many Lobsang Rampas... and all kinds of nonsense that goes on being written. It must be fulfilling some people's needs. Just as a few people like detective novels, a few others are interested in esoteric knowledge.

There is nothing esoteric in existence. Existence is nude, naked; nothing is hidden.

Once Buddha was asked, "Have you said everything, or is there something esoteric which you have not said?"

Buddha showed his hand -- an open hand -- and he said, "I am like an open hand, not like a fist."

And so is existence -- like an open hand, not like a fist. It hides nothing; all is there, all around you. God is overflowing... and you are pondering over esoteric things -- seven planes or seventeen, seven hells and seven heavens. And the more complicated is the system, the more appeal it has.

Theosophy is more or less sheer nonsense, but it attracted thousands of people around the world. It has become a great world movement. People were talking of hidden masters, guides, astral, ethereal.... And in Madam Blavatsky's room letters used to drop from the ceiling -- letters from hidden masters who live in the Himalayas. Later on it was found that a man used to hide there on the roof and he used to drop those letters. The man himself confessed in the court that "My whole work was that whenever the session of the theosophists would be there and they would wait with closed eyes and pray for masters, hidden masters, to guide them, I had instructions from Madam Blavatsky what letter to drop. Those letters were written by Madam Blavatsky." They were examined later on by experts and it was proved that they were written by Blavatsky herself. But she fooled people for years.

You ask me, "What is the use of esoteric teachings and spiritual knowledge?"

To fulfill the demands of the fools, that is the use. And there is no spiritual knowledge at all.

Spirituality is an experience, not knowledge. You cannot reduce it to knowledge; it is always knowing, never knowledge. It is an insight, irreducible into words. You cannot put it into theories, into systems of thought; that is impossible. And those who try to do it don't know anything... only then can they do it. This is a strange phenomenon: those who know, they never try to reduce their knowing to knowledge; and those who don't know, they are absolutely free. They can create any knowledge, that is their invention.

All spiritual knowledge is the invention of the mind. Real spiritual knowing happens only when the mind is dropped, when you are in a state of no-mind.

And you ask me, "How can I find out if they are true or not?"

Why should you be worried? Rather try to find out who you are. That's the only real religious question, the only quest: "Who am I?" That's enough; no other questions are significant. Avoid all other jargon -- spiritual, religious, theological, esoteric. Avoid all jargon. Just stick to a simple quest: "Who am I?" That's enough. If you know yourself you have known all; if you don't know yourself you may know everything in the world, but that is of no use. It is unnecessary burden and bondage.

Clarence and Lulu were sitting on the front porch in Kentucky on a warm summer evening, holding hands.

Lulu turned to Clarence and said, "Clarence, say something soft and mushy." And Clarence embarrassedly turned to Lulu and said, "Ah, shit!"

That's what esoteric knowledge is -- soft and mushy!

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

YOU TOLD US THE STORY OF KRISHNA AND ARJUNA. BUT IS THERE NO VALUE IN RESISTING WAR IN A TIME WHERE A HANDFUL OF MADMEN PLAY WITH ATOMIC BOMBS?

Peter Bohm, how can you resist these few madmen who are playing with atom bombs? What will be your strategy of resistance? In fact, your resistance may bring the war sooner than otherwise; your resistance is not going to prevent it.

The only thing that can prevent the world war is that you start a totally new consciousness, that you start a new kind of humanity... a man who is capable of love, a man who is capable of meditation. Let love and meditation spread far and wide. Let meditation reach to as many people as possible. Except that, all your efforts at resistance are impotent.

You can protest and you can go on a long march, but have you ever watched the protesters, the people who are against war, the pacifists? Have you watched their processions? They look so aggressive, they themselves look mad! If they had the atom bombs, just to protect peace they would be the first to drop the atom bombs. They are as mad as the other party; there is no difference at all. Their minds are as political as the people who are in power; the only difference is that they are not in power. And their anger, their pent-up anger, you can see on their faces, in their slogans.

Every peace protest ends in a fight with the police, with the military. It ends in burning buses, post offices, police stations, cars. What kind of love is this and what kind of resistance is this? It is impotent! But they are feeling they are doing something great. It is an ego trip and nothing else.

The meek little bank clerk had his suspicions. One day he left work early and sure enough, when he arrived home, he found a strange hat and umbrella in the hallway and his wife on the couch in the arms of another man.

Wild for revenge, the husband picked up the man's umbrella and snapped it in two across his knee.

"There, now, I hope it rains!"

What can you do? Yes, you can shout and you can go for a long march with great posters, and it will give you a certain satisfaction because your pent-up energies will be released. It is a kind of catharsis. Unknowingly, you are doing Dynamic Meditation -- but it would be better if you do it knowingly.

Yes, war has come to a point where it can destroy the whole humanity, and not only humanity but the whole earth. Life as such can be destroyed. What can we do?

Scientific knowledge has gone far ahead of man's spiritual growth; that is the problem, the real problem. Who are these madmen you are talking about? Are they any different from you, Peter Bohm? Richard Nixon, Brezhnev, Ayatollah Khomeini -- are these different people from you? Maybe there is some quantitative difference, but there is no qualitative difference. If YOU come in power you will prove the same. And one day these people were not in power; they were also just like you. When they are in power, then their real faces show up.

Lord Acton says: Power corrupts. It is not true. Power never corrupts, but corrupted people are attracted towards power. Of course, without power they cannot show their real faces. Power only gives them the right context in which they can reveal their heart's reality. Power does not corrupt, it only reveals the truth. Powerless people may not look mad because they cannot afford to be mad. Give them power and then you will see: they are as mad as anybody else.

I don't see any difference between warmongers and pacifists; they are the same kind of people. They appear to be polar opposites but they belong together. Deep down they are one; two ends of the same stick. Yes, I would like the earth to become a paradise and not a cemetery... but what kind of resistance?

Even if Krishna was here, at THIS juncture he would not have suggested war. I am absolutely certain about it. I say categorically that Krishna would not have said to Arjuna to fight at this moment, because this is global suicide. Five thousand years have passed since Krishna and much has changed.

We have come to the point where total war is possible. Nobody is going to be the winner, so what is the point of war? War has been significant in the past because somebody would win and somebody would lose. Now there is going to be no winner; all are going to be the losers. War has lost all significance -- war is absolutely stupid today. It may have had some meaning in the past; it has none anymore.

Krishna's message is irrelevant today; Buddha's message is more relevant. Krishna's message is out of date; Buddha's message is very contemporary. But what is his message? His message is: If you really want peace on the earth, create peace in your

heart, in your being. That is the right place to begin with -- and then spread, radiate peace and love.

If more and more people become peaceful, joyous, if more and more people can dance and sing, if more and more people can say "Alleluia!" from their very innermost core, it will become impossible for these few mad people to create a war. Then we can put these mad people into mental asylums very easily. We can convert our capitals into mental asylums; that is not a big problem, once many many people's inner consciousness is transformed.

Be a meditator.

Be a lover.

Be a celebrant.

Create the whole existence with as much bliss and joy as possible. Make life so beautiful that nobody wants to die.

Right now, the situation is just the opposite: life is so ugly that who cares? If war happens, in fact, people will feel relieved. They don't have to commit suicide and still the war is going to do the work for them they always wanted to do themselves.

Psychologists say it is very difficult to find a man who has not thought at least four times in his life of committing suicide. But to commit suicide is not easy; it goes against the life instinct. But if somebody else can take the responsibility and somebody else can drop an atom bomb or a hydrogen bomb, then we are freed of the responsibility of committing suicide and still the suicide happens. And not only WE are dying but everybody else with us.

We have to change people's suicidal mind. Why do people think of suicide? -- for the simple reason that life is ugly and they don't know how to beautify it, how to make a song out of it. It is just sadness, a long long anguish, a nightmare. That's why people become interested in war and they support war -- for any stupid cause, for any excuse they are ready to kill and be killed.

And in fact, all political causes are stupid, all so-called political revolutions are stupid. The only revolution which is not stupid is spiritual, is inner, is individual.

If you really want a world without war, create this individual revolution I call sannyas. This is real resistance. Without resisting anybody you create a different space, a different context, in which life starts blooming, life becomes creative.

And if people are creative, blooming, joyous, politics and politicians will be things of the past. Yes, you can save a few politicians to keep them in the zoos for future children to come and see: "Look, this is Morarji Desai!" You can stuff them with straw -- they are already stuffed with straw and nothing else; they won't need much more straw, just a little bit will do.

And this is possible now. It was never possible before because war was never such a danger. Politics is now the most stupid game, mad, utterly mad.

These are tremendously significant moments, because we can change the whole human consciousness from being political to spiritual.

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS PRESENCE OF MIND?

Kavita, presence of mind is really a state of no-mind. You can call it mindfulness, awareness, or you can call it a state of no-mind. The words seem to be contradicting each other, but they are indicative of the same state. Presence of mind means to be in the present, to be spontaneous, to be available to whatsoever is happening right now. To be available to here and now is presence of mind. But the only way to be available to here and now is not to be in the past, not to be in the future.

And mind consists of past and future; mind knows nothing of the present. Mind is always occupied, it is never unoccupied. And whenever the mind is unoccupied, utterly without any thought, just watchful, alert, conscious, there arises a great presence. That presence functions on its own accord. That presence makes your life a life of responses, not of reactions.

Ordinary life is of reactions; you react. Reaction means you are reacting to a present situation according to the past. It never fits because life never repeats itself. History may repeat, because history is a mind phenomenon, but life never repeats. It is always new, always fresh; something new is always transpiring. You go on carrying old ideas according to your experience, and you act out of those ideas thinking that you are acting out of experience. This is reaction: you are lagging behind, you are not true to the situation.

A response means being true to the situation; not acting out of the past but acting out of the present moment. Just like a mirror, it simply reflects that which is. If there is a flower, it reflects a flower; if there is a face, it reflects the face. Your mind never reflects that which is; your mind always reflects that which WAS. That's how your mind never comes into a state of communion with reality. Then whatsoever you do is wrong.

Presence of mind is a state of thoughtlessness, but not of sleep, not of unconsciousness. Thoughtless consciousness, contentless consciousness -- a mirror utterly empty, ready to mirror anything. The beauty of the mirror is that it never catches hold of any reflection; it is not like a photoplate. The photoplate immediately catches hold of the reflection and that's why it is destroyed. You can use it only once, then it clings to the past. That's what memory is, mind is -- a photoplate.

The mind of a buddha is not a photoplate but a mirror.

Try to be more and more and more responsible and less and less reactive.

A woman was driving her car at about eighty miles an hour, when she noticed a motorcycle cop following her. She did not slow down; she figured that maybe she could shake him off by doing ninety. When she looked back again there were two motorcycles following her. She boosted her speed again. The next time she looked, three motorcycles were screaming along behind her.

Suddenly she saw a service station looming ahead. She screeched to a stop in front of it, dashed out and ran into the ladies' room.

Ten minutes later, she walked demurely out. The three cops were standing right there, waiting for her. Without batting an eyelash she said coyly, "I bet you thought I wouldn't make it!"

The fifth question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

YOU SAID, "UNLESS YOU BECOME A SANNYASIN OUT OF AWARENESS...." AT THE TIME I ASKED FOR SANNYAS BECAUSE I FELT SAFE WITH YOU AND YOUR SANNYASINS, BUT NOT OUT OF AWARENESS AT ALL. IN FACT, I HAVE MUCH DIFFICULTY IN BECOMING A LITTLE AWARE AND ALSO WITH MEDITATION. DOES THIS MEAN THAT IT WILL BE BETTER TO DROP SANNYAS?

Shridhar, you can drop it -- but only out of awareness!

The sixth question:

Question 6

BELOVED MASTER,

Although You keep telling us that we have to be in the marketplace -- and coming from the West, that should be my marketplace -- I have that strong feeling now that I want to be here near You, that this is my home. Is this also a desire?

Prem Satyam, this is the marketplace I go on talking about!

The seventh question:

Question 7

BELOVED MASTER,

SHOULD ONE TRY TO BE RICH OR NOT?

Asango, meditate on Murphy's maxim: Don't care if you are rich or not as long as you can live comfortably and have everything you want.

That's exactly what I have been doing and that's exactly what I would like you to do. Why bother whether you are rich or not? In fact, people go into unnecessary worries. Whatsoever you have, enjoy it -- it is already too much. You cannot look at it because your mind is constantly occupied with doing this, becoming that. And all that existence goes on giving you, you go on neglecting. You never even thank existence for it; you don't have any gratitude. Otherwise, even if you don't possess anything, you can live a very rich life.

A rich life is something inner. And I am not against outer things, remember, but basically a rich life is something inner. If you are inwardly rich you can make even outer things richer by your inner light. For example, if the buddha lives in a hut, he lives in the hut as if the hut is a palace. If the buddha lives in the palace, of course he

will be able to enjoy the palace more than anybody else in the world. If he can enjoy the hut as a palace, what to say about the palace itself? Wherever he is he finds ways to enjoy life.

The whole art of sannyas is to live a rich life -- but the richness comes through your inner awareness. You can live a very poor life and you can be very rich outwardly; you can have a big bank balance, but you can live a dog's life.

I know very many rich people. I feel sorry for them. They have all, but they are living in such a poor way that I cannot conceive what blindness has befallen them. Can't they see their beautiful houses, their beautiful gardens? But they don't have any sensitivity. So the flowers come and go and they pass those flowers every day, but they don't see. Otherwise a single flower is enough. And whether the flower has grown in your garden or in your neighbor's garden, who cares?

You don't possess the stars, still you can enjoy them. Or do you first have to possess them, and only then you will be able to enjoy them? You don't possess the birds in the sky, but you can enjoy them.

What you need is not more possessions. What you need is more sensitiveness, more aesthetic sensibility, more musical ears, more artistic eyes. What you need is a vision which transforms everything into something significant and meaningful.

You ask me, Asango, "Should one try to be rich or not?"

You ARE rich! You have been given already that which you need. Let it grow, and then whatsoever you have on the outside will be enough.

You can see my sannyasins living here. They have not anything really that you can call possessions, but you cannot find more happy people anywhere in the world. For no reason they are happy, there is nothing to be happy about! But something inner has started growing, something like a subtle fragrance which only people who have sensibility, sensitiveness, can feel; others can't see it.

Many people have asked me, "Why do your sannyasins look so happy?" The why cannot be answered easily, because they want to know something on the outside which is causing the happiness. On the outside there is nothing but all kinds of troubles -- the Indian government, the police, the Indian rotten society and the rotten mind. There is nothing on the outside. But still, my people are immensely happy. And they are not just sitting idly, they are working hard, and working hard for no rewards, no pay; they don't get anything. But something inner is happening; that is real richness.

Asango, think of that. You are a new sannyasin; soon you will become aware of it.

The eighth question:

Question 8

BELOVED MASTER,

I WANT TO GET MARRIED. HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT THE WOMAN I AM MARRYING IS PURE IN CHARACTER?

Suresh, this is what I call the rotten Indian mind! If the woman is really pure, why should she be marrying you in the first place? And why this desire, this imposition on

the other? And what do you mean by purity, purity of character? Do you mean that she has not known anybody sexually before you? But that will mean marrying a woman who is immature, marrying a woman who is inexperienced.

If you are going to employ an engineer, will you ask him, "The first requirement is that you shouldn't know anything about engineering"? Then you ask about experience; you want proofs, certificates.

If you are wise you will inquire whether the woman has been loved by other people too. If a woman has not been approached by anybody up to now, escape! What does it mean? It simply means the woman is dangerous!

Only very ugly people can have that kind of purity you are asking for. But I don't see that by having a few love affairs a person becomes impure. Love purifies. How can it make somebody impure? The more one loves, the more one becomes artful, skillful, intelligent in love.

Millions of marriages fail because two inexperienced persons are trying to work things out. If both are inexperienced, it is bound to fail.

There are a few primitive societies still existent in the world where it is thought to be a must that a woman should know a few men, that the man should know a few women, before they decide to marry. Marriage needs artfulness; it is a great effort to create a symphony between two persons' beings.

So don't ask foolish things. And if you are too much after such a kind of purity, then please, why are you deciding to make the woman impure? You will suffer for it, and she will suffer because she will be making you impure. Don't do such harm to each other. Why in the first place think of marriage? Remain pure!

"Daddy," said young David, "what is puppy love?"

"The beginning of a dog's life, my son."

Murphy says: Anything good in life is either illegal, immoral or fattening.

The three faithful things in life are money, a dog and an old woman.

So either get married to money or to a dog or to an old woman! If you are so much interested in purity, if you are so much wedded to purity, don't ask for a real woman. Find a plastic woman. You can always clean it and soap it. Why bother with real people? Real people are real people.

Two expectant fathers paced the floor in the waiting room of the hospital.

"What tough luck," said one. "This had to happen during my vacation."

"You think you've got troubles?" said the other. "I'm on my honeymoon!"

Real people are real people. Things happen to real people, not to plastic people. Yes, even on honeymoon things can happen!

A pair of good friends, Frenchmen both, were strolling down the Champs Elysees one day when they spied two women approaching. "Sacrebleu, Pierre!" cried one. "Here come my wife and my mistress walking toward us arm in arm."

"Mon Dieu, Henri!" cried out the second. "I was about to say the very same thing."

Charlie was taking his out-of-town pal for a stroll through the city. The friend observed a good-looking girl and asked Charlie if he knew her.

"Yes, that is Betty. Twenty dollars."

"How about that one?"

"That is Dolores. Forty dollars."

"Here comes one that is really first class. Do you know her?"

"That is Gloria. Eighty dollars."

"My God, aren't there any nice, respectable girls in this town?"

"Of course, but you could not afford their rates."

Suresh, either get rid of this idea of marriage or get rid of the idea of purity of character. If you keep both the ideas together you will be in trouble.

And who are you to decide about others' character? If you love the woman, you love the woman with all her limitations, with all her imperfections; she loves you with all your imperfections and limitations.

But this is what -- particularly to the Indian mind -- is very significant: perfection. And to demand perfection is a kind of neurosis. It will drive the other neurotic, and as far as you are concerned, you are already neurotic. If you ask perfection in any human being you will create trouble for yourself and for the other, and your life will be nothing but misery.

The real man of understanding and intelligence accepts the imperfections of the other and still loves. Love is great enough; it can even love people who have no character, people who are not pure according to your ideas, people who sometimes go astray, people who sometimes commit small sins. Love is big enough to accept all this and to transform it too.

The ninth question:

Question 9

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE BECOME SANNYASINS?

Murphy.... My God, are you the same Murphy I have been quoting and misquoting? You should have told me before! But you must be, I hope, some other Murphy, because if you were the same Murphy you would not ask such a question. That old guy is so wise he only gives answers, he never asks questions.

You ask me, "Why do so many people become sannyasins?"

Everybody does so for a different reason; hence it is very difficult to answer. The real sannyasins cannot even give any reasonable answer why they have become sannyasins.

It is a kind of love affair; they fall in love with this madman. It is utterly mad, it is absurd. They simply find some inner communion; something happens to their heart, not to their head. And when something happens to the heart it is unanswerable.

But a few people become sannyasins out of the head; then they are only pseudo sannyasins. They can give you answers why they have become sannyasins.

So this much can be said: one who can answer WHY he has become a sannyasin is a wrong sannyasin, a pseudo sannyasin; the real one can only shrug his shoulders. He can say, "I don't know, it simply happened." He will not be convincing to you -- he can't be -- but try to be sympathetic with the person. It is a love affair.

Who has ever been able to say why he has fallen in love? One simply falls in love for no reason at all. Suddenly something clicks; it clicks in such a subtle way that you cannot figure out why. The why is unanswerable. And whenever it is answerable, the person is not a real sannyasin. This is the paradox: those who can answer, they are not real sannyasins; those who cannot answer, they are real sannyasins.

And then there are different people and they come with different backgrounds, they come here for different reasons. They open up to me in different ways, they take different time, they have different paces.

A modern-day Lewis and Clark exploration team had returned from a two-year exploration of the upper Amazon. Having bravely gone where no men had gone before, they were greeted by members of the press from every nation.

"Tell us, sir," asked a reporter of the first explorer, "what made you go?"

"I had to go," he replied. "I had to meet the challenge, to test my mettle, to meet the unknown, to face hardship, and to ponder the real meaning of life."

"And you, sir," he inquired of the second explorer, "why did you go?"

"You should meet my wife," came the weary reply.

Different people will have different reasons. Somebody is here for the exploration of the unknown; somebody is simply here because of the wife. Somebody is here because this has been his search for many lives; somebody is here accidentally. He was just passing Poona, from Kabul to Goa, and seeing so many crazy orange people he became intrigued. He said to himself, "Man, something far out is going on!" And then he got hooked... then he forgot all about Goa. Then slowly slowly, people forget about the whole world. Then this small place becomes their whole world.

Anxious to be on time for his date, Carl stopped at the drugstore for a hasty purchase. The druggist gave him a knowing smile, and he told the druggist about a lovely chick he met at a party. He was going to spend the evening with her, and her parents would be out at the opera.

When he got to her house, she and her mother were waiting for her father to return from work.

When her father walked in, she introduced both parents to Carl, and Carl said, "Say, why don't Nancy and I join you this evening?"

"You children don't want to spend your evening with us old folks," said Nancy's mother.

"Sure we do," said Carl.

"I didn't know you liked opera," the bewildered Nancy said to her date, as he was helping her on with her coat.

"No, and I didn't know your father was a druggist, either," he said.

So there are different reasons. I cannot give you a single answer. I cannot say why people become sannyasins.

All that I can say is that I am utterly mad, and a few people find themselves in tune with me.

The last question:

Question 10

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS UNAWARENESS?

Shivananda, yes, the question arises and is significant too. It is like the fish asking, "What is the ocean?" Obviously the fish cannot see the ocean; it has lived in the ocean always, from the very beginning. It was born in the ocean, it opened its eyes in the ocean, it has lived as part of the ocean. The ocean is so close, the fish does not feel itself separate from it. There is no space between the fish and the ocean to know about it.

And that's actually the case with unawareness. You are born in unawareness, you live in unawareness, you sleep in unawareness... you wake up in unawareness. You walk in unawareness, you talk in unawareness... you read Bibles, Korans, Gitas, in unawareness. It is so close, you are so permeated by it; it is in your every fiber and cell. There is no distance between it and you. Hence the question is very significant and one has to ask it. Only then can one move slowly out of unawareness towards awareness.

Unawareness is a state of robotlike existence. You go on repeating mechanically. You go on living without any alertness in it; sleepy, a somnambulist you are.

Out of ten people, one person can walk in his sleep, do you know it? That is a big number. Out of a hundred, ten people are capable of walking in their sleep. If you have ten persons in your family, that means one person is capable of walking in his sleep. People get up, they can walk in darkness, they can reach the fridge, they can eat things, they can come back to the bed. In the morning they have forgotten all -- and then they are worried why they go on becoming fatter and fatter! In the day they fast or diet and in the night they compensate as much as they can.

You will have to be a little separate from your acts; then you will be able to know what unawareness is. Somebody insults you; immediately, instantly, anger arises. It is like pushing a button and the light comes on. There is no gap: you push a button and the light comes on. The light has no time to think whether to come on or not. Somebody insults you; he pushes a button and immediately you are enraged.

Gurdjieff used to say to his disciples, "Wait at least for five minutes. What is the hurry? Let him insult you, let him finish first. Then you close your eyes and wait for five minutes, and watch what is happening inside you -- anger boiling."

Gurdjieff himself became enlightened through this simple procedure: that whatsoever is mechanical in man he tried to make it nonmechanical. And all is mechanical in you -- anger, lust, greed, jealousy -- all is mechanical. It simply is there whenever somebody pushes a button. You are functioning like a robot. Become a man.

That's what meditation is all about, that's what sannyas is all about. Create a little distance. Next time somebody insults you, give it five minutes, sit silently for five minutes, and then you can become angry. I am not saying "Don't become angry" -- because that will be too much. I am saying that just for five minutes allow a gap, and you will be surprised: after five minutes it is not the same anger that it would have been five minutes before.

Dale Carnegie remembers an incident in his life. He delivered a radio broadcast on Abraham Lincoln. He mentioned a few wrong facts about Lincoln; even his birthdate was wrong. He received one letter, a very angry letter, from a woman, calling him a fool, calling him stupid. "If you don't even know the right birthdate, what right have you got to speak on Abraham Lincoln?"

He became enraged, and he immediately wrote an angry answer. But it was too late in the day, so he thought, "Tomorrow morning I will post the letter."

Before posting it he read the letter again. It looked too angry -- twelve hours had passed. He read the woman's letter; it was not so insulting as it had appeared at the first glance. So he changed his letter, he wrote it again. When he was writing it again he said, "Why not wait twenty-four hours more and see what happens? What is the hurry? The woman is not going to die."

So he waited twenty-four hours and read his letter again. Now he was even more cool, and still the letter looked a little too strong. He changed it and thought, "Why not wait forty-eight hours? Let it be an experiment! I can always send the letter, but after twelve hours I had to change it, after twenty-four hours I had to change it much more. Let us see what happens after forty-eight hours."

After forty-eight hours he had to change it totally. All anger had disappeared. He said, "Now I will wait two days more and then I will send it."

And when finally he wrote the letter he apologized; he was no longer angry. The woman was right: what right has he if he does not know the facts? At least he should have checked the facts before going to broadcast. It was absolutely right on her part to get angry.

So he wrote, "You are perfectly right. Next time I will not commit such a mistake. I am deeply sorry that I hurt your feelings. I apologize. If any time you happen to be in this city, please come to see me, or, if I come to your town, I will come to see you. I would like to know more about Lincoln -- because I feel you know more than I know."

Naturally, the woman was tremendously impressed by the humbleness of the man; she was not expecting that he would be so humble. Next time she came to that town where

Dale Carnegie lived she phoned him. He went, received her, invited her for a dinner. And finally the woman and he became so friendly, they fell in love!

It looks like a fairy tale -- does not happen in real life! In real life only tragedies happen. But we are responsible for all those tragedies because of our unawareness.

So the first thing I will suggest, Shivananda, is that if you want to know what unawareness is, allow a gap. This is the process of de-automatization. You have become automatic, you function automatically. You have to reverse the whole process, de-automatize it, slowly slowly, in small matters.

For example, you have gone for a walk. Don't walk the same way as you walk every day. Go slow or go fast, but don't just repeat the same routine. And you will be surprised: if you go slow you are more aware, if you go faster you are more aware; if you go exactly the same speed as you follow every day, you lose all awareness.

Buddha told his disciples to walk very slowly, as slowly as possible. Try it and you will be surprised. A great awareness arises if you walk very slowly. You speak in a certain way; one day try to speak in some other way. Speak slowly, and you will be surprised that the slowness of the speech makes you alert. Suddenly something is changed, because you are not functioning according to the robot.

Mind has two parts: one is the learning part, the other is the robot part. The learning part learns; whenever you are learning something you are more aware. For example, if you are learning driving you are more aware -- you have to be. The moment you have learned it, the learning part gives its information to the robot part. Once you have learned driving, then you don't need any awareness; you simply go on doing it mechanically. You turn towards your house, you arrive in your garage, you lock the car. You are doing everything like a robot.

And this is the story of your life, twenty-four hours a day. Change it!

Gurdjieff's method was this: if some vegetarian had come to him as a disciple, the first thing he would insist was, "Eat meat!" Now this is a very shocking thing for a vegetarian -- to be told to eat meat. And Gurdjieff was a tough master; he would throw you out if you didn't listen to him, if you didn't follow the command, if you didn't follow the discipline. He would force you to eat meat. Now, when a vegetarian eats meat he becomes very conscious -- he has to. He has no idea in the past, no experience in the past, of eating meat. Just think of Mahatma Gandhi eating meat... he will become tremendously aware!

And if there was a meat-eater, then Gurdjieff would say, "For a few weeks you be just vegetarian. Don't eat meat at all -- no eggs, no meat, no milk, no animal food of any kind. Just go on eating vegetables." The whole body system had become accustomed to a certain pattern. He would change people's eating hours. If you were eating every day at one o'clock, he would say, "Eat at nine." If you were going to sleep every day at twelve, he would say to go at two or at ten. He would change everything. A man who had never been drinking wine, he would force to drink wine just to change and shatter his pattern. The man who had been a drunkard, he would stop him from drinking.

Gurdjieff was puzzling to people, but the method is simple: he was trying to de-automatize. He was one of the greatest masters of this age, very much misunderstood. Naturally, everybody was against him. Who has ever heard of religious masters forcing their disciples to drink? -- FORCING, actually forcing. And he would sit there....

The greatest thing in his commune was the dinner. It used to last four, five, six, seven hours. Every evening it would start... and it would end in the middle of the night. And he himself would take care of everybody, of what was being eaten, of what was given to them -- and he would go on forcing. People would become so drunk they would fall on the ground, and they would start saying things in their drunkenness -- and he would sit by the side and listen. He also used to drink with them, but he had worked hard on the way. He was a tantra master. He had been to India and to Tibet too, just to learn tantra. Tantra has special methods how to go on drinking and yet remain aware. YOU cannot be aware even without drinking. Tantra has methods to slowly slowly drink, and keep awareness, not to lose track of your awareness. Slowly slowly, the quantity of your drug has to be increased as you increase in your awareness. A moment comes when -- you will be surprised to know, still there are people in the East who practice it -- a moment comes, when no drug can affect your consciousness at all.

Then the last thing they try is this: they keep poisonous snakes and they allow the snake to bite them on their tongue; that is the last method. Ordinarily a man will die.... These snakes are absolutely poisonous. Three percent of the snakes in India are dangerous; you cannot survive their bite -- once bitten you are gone. But these tantra masters will remain alert even in that moment and they will not die. Their bodies have become accustomed to all kinds of poisons and they have become alert, so alert that no drug can affect them.

Gurdjieff used to use that method with his disciples, simply to shatter your settled habits.

My approach here is to send you to this group, then to another group, then to still another group. When you go to different groups for two, three months, each group has its own structure and pattern and each group destroys other groups' patterns and structures.

And finally I send you to Zazen or to Vipassana. They are beyond all ordinary structures. Those are the methods given by Buddha himself. Then you are in a very simple state, watching your own breath -- the breath going in, the breath going out, and you are simply watching.

This watchfulness will make you aware of what unawareness is and what awareness is, both. You become aware of both simultaneously.

It was springtime, and two lovers were cuddling in a meadow on a dark, new-moon night.

The young man whispered to his girlfriend, "I sure wish we had a flashlight!"

The girl replied, "I do too. You have been munching on grass for the last five minutes!"

Get it? -- otherwise I will have to tell another! Meditate over it later on!

Marlene, a pretty Philadelphia secretary, was taking her first trip across the United States. Driving through the desert she ran out of gas. An Indian gave her a ride, sitting behind him on his pony. Every few minutes as they rode he let out a wild, whooping yell that echoed across the desert. Finally he deposited her at a gas station and went off with a last "Yaa-hoo!"

"What were you doing," asked the station owner, "to make that redskin do all that hollering?"

"Nothing," said the girl. "I just sat behind him with my arms around his sides holding onto his saddle horn."

"Miss," said the man, "Indians ride bareback!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #11

Chapter title: The psychology of egolessness

31 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,

GURDJIEFF SAID THAT IN ORDER TO ATTAIN TO REAL WILL ONE WOULD HAVE TO SURRENDER ONE'S FALSE WILL FIRST. IS THIS ALSO TRUE HERE?

Peter Markee, it is true everywhere. It is true forever. Truth is universal: time makes no difference, place makes no difference. And this is one of the most fundamental truths of spiritual growth: the false has to be given up because the false is the barrier. You remain deluded by the false; hence the search for the true never starts. You believe the false to be the true. Then why should you endeavor to realize the true?

If you think that darkness is light, then where is the necessity to search for light? If you think this life is all, then there is no question of seeking and inquiring about another life. If time is your total reality, then eternity never becomes a quest for you.

The false will means the ego; the true will means egolessness. The false will is yours; the true will is God's. The false will is personal; the true will is universal. The false will simply means that you believe yourself separate from the whole; and the true will is dissolving this illusion of separation, becoming that which you really are -- a part in this cosmic harmony, totally one with it. Then you don't have any separate destination, you don't have any private goal. Then wherever the whole is going, YOU are going. You are just a wave in the ocean.

And before the real can be known, the false has to cease, because the false is covering your eyes. You are clinging to the false, to the toy. And unless you see the point -- that the toy is only a toy, not worth clinging.... In that very moment of seeing the toy slips out of your hands on its own accord because you no more cling to it. Seeing the false as false is the beginning of the truth. But that seeing is arduous.

For lives we have lived with the false and we have believed in the false. We have nurtured, nourished the false. All our hopes, all our dreams, are rooted in the false. Our whole lives are investments in the false; hence we are afraid even to look, we are afraid to observe, watch.

The most frightening experience for human beings is to remember, to watch, to be aware; hence the difficulty in meditation. It does not arise from the outside; there is no disturbance outside. The real disturbance is within you. You really don't want to meditate. You are in a double bind. You listen to buddhas talking about the beauties and the blessings and the benedictions of meditation, and you become greedy for it. But then you look at your own investment and you become frightened, so you try to meditate. Yet you don't really want to meditate because meditation means you will

have to see things as they are -- the false as false, the true as true -- and that is going to shatter your whole effort of lives in a single moment.

Great courage is needed to meditate, courage to drop all the investments. Great intelligence is needed. In fact, this is true intelligence: to see that howsoever and whatsoever efforts you make to realize the false, to make it come true, they are going to fail. To see it -- that the whole effort is an exercise in utter futility -- is intelligence. It has nothing to do with intellectuality; it is very simple.

See, watch, and don't be afraid and don't avoid seeing. And don't go on playing with yourself, deceiving yourself. Don't remain in a double bind, with one hand creating and with the other hand destroying.

That's what people are doing: half of their being wants to continue as they are -- the stupid half, the rational part, the arithmetic of their minds. And the other half, the intelligent half, the intuitive half -- the heart -- wants to start anew, because you have seen for so long that nothing succeeds. And still you go on in the same rut. It is time, the right time, to get out of the rut and to have a new birth.

What Gurdjieff was saying has been told by all the great masters of the world. "Awake," Buddha says. It is the same; words differ. "Be watchful," Jesus says. Be as watchful as if the master of the house has gone out and he has told the servants to remain alert because he may come any moment and he does not want them to be asleep -- any moment he can come. They have to be alert, on guard, all the time. Jesus says to be alert. In alertness the first experience is that you have a personality which is false. Gurdjieff calls it the false will. And you have something else, something impersonal in you, which is the true will. Your appearance from the outside is false; what you experience from your innermost core is true. You are a mixture of the accidental and the essential, of the incidental and the intrinsic. You are the meeting point of time and eternity, a crossroads where matter and consciousness meet, where body and soul meet, where real and unreal shake hands. Yes, you are exactly a crossroads. And you have to be very alert not to choose the false -- because the false is very appealing. The false makes all kinds of propaganda for itself; the false will try to convince you with all kinds of arguments.

The truth remains silent. Unless YOU are ready to receive it, it will not even knock on your doors. The false is afraid that if much smoke is not created around it the falsity of it will be seen by you. So beware of the rationalizations of the false, its propaganda, its argumentation, its proofs. And also remember the silence of truth -- utter silence, absolute silence. Truth will never persuade you; it will wait -- it can wait for eternity. But the false cannot wait, it is momentary, it can't be so patient. It has to persuade you, it has to seduce you as immediately as possible. The false is very hypnotizing. Their ways are totally opposite.

Truth is achieved through awakening, and the false is achieved through deep sleep. The false is like a tranquilizer: it is very consoling, comforting, cozy, secure, safe. It gives you all kinds of protections, insurances. It goes on telling you, "Be with me and I will protect you. I am your guardian, your guide, your friend, your philosopher." The truth never claims anything.

Unless you become utterly fed up with the false and its claims -- which are all bogus.... It talks much, but it never delivers any goods. Unless you become totally frustrated, fed up, bored with it, you are not going to look at the silent truth; you are not going to listen to the still, small voice within. And that voice is God's voice. It is universal; it has nothing to do with you.

The true will is not yours. It is the whole speaking through you, functioning through you. The false gives you the idea of great ego -- "I am somebody" -- and the true takes all ego away. It makes you a nothingness, a nobody. Only through your nobodiness the whole can function unhindered.

Yes, Peter Markee, Gurdjieff is right. And whatsoever is true with Gurdjieff is true here too -- is true forever. Wherever a master exists, the false has to be surrendered.

That actually is the function of sannyas. It is a device to surrender the false. Sannyas means you surrender your ego. You say to the master, "Please take this burden off my head." You bow down, you touch the feet of the master. That is simply symbolic that "Now I will not function as a separate entity from you."

And the master is one who has surrendered his will already, who exists no more as a person, who is only a presence, a window into God. And when you surrender to the window you are surrendering to the sky beyond. The window will only make the sky available.

The West has not developed the technique of the master/ disciple relationship yet. A few rare individuals tried, but they failed. Socrates was trying in Athens but he failed; he was not listened to. Jesus was trying again; he failed. The West has remained concerned, concentratedly focused on the false. It believes in the ego. The East believes in egolessness.

The Western psychology says to make the ego stronger. It is a psychology of the false -- rooted in the false, supporting the false. The East says: Let the ego melt, disappear, evaporate. It is the psychology of egolessness. This is a totally different standpoint.

Gurdjieff was again trying to bring the East to the West. He also failed. It is very difficult; centuries are against it, and the hypnosis and the conditioning of the society is against it. Even his own chief disciple, P.D. Ouspensky, could not understand him, misunderstood him. He betrayed him, just as Judas betrayed Jesus.

And do you know? -- Judas was the most cultured, educated person amongst Jesus' disciples; hence he must have had the most polished ego. He was an intellectual. The other followers were simple people: fishermen, carpenters, tax collectors, gamblers, drunkards, prostitutes -- simple people. The only person who was not simple was Judas; he was complex. He could have been a professor in Oxford or Cambridge or Harvard and he would have done perfectly well as a professor -- he was a good arguer. There are a few moments when he even argues with Jesus. And if you listen to the argument you will agree with Judas, you will not agree with Jesus.

One day Jesus is staying in Mary and Martha's home and Mary brings very costly perfume and washes Jesus' feet with that costly perfume. Judas immediately raises a question; he says, "This is stupid -- wasting so much money unnecessarily!" And he gives a good argument -- a socialistic argument. He says, "This much money could have

been given to the poor. There are beggars outside the house. This money could have fed many beggars for many days. It was rare perfume! Why waste it? The feet can be washed with water -- there is no need!" And she had poured the whole big bottle of perfume!

Now, with whom are you going to agree? And do you know what Jesus said? Jesus said, "The beggars will always be there. I will not be here always."

This does not seem to be a very appealing argument! Jesus says, "Don't disturb her. Don't disturb her love, her faith, her trust. It's perfectly alright. It is coming from her deep love for me. Let her do it. And beggars will always be there. Even if this money is given to them, nothing much is going to happen. Maybe for a few days they will be able to eat; then again...."

With whom are you going to agree? Ninety-nine percent is the possibility you will agree with Judas -- and more so after Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao; after so much socialistic communist propaganda all over the world, who will not agree with Judas? He seems to be the forerunner of socialistic philosophy. And Jesus' answer does not seem to be very appealing, convincing. It seems to be evading the question, evading the issue. But Judas betrayed Jesus for the simple reason that he was too much in his intellect, too egoistic, too proud.

The same happened again with Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. Ouspensky was the most articulate disciple of Gurdjieff. In fact, it is because of Ouspensky that Gurdjieff became famous in the world. It is Ouspensky's books that have made Gurdjieff's name known to the world at large. But why did he betray him? In the last years of his life he was very antagonistic to his master. Even to mention Gurdjieff's name in Ouspensky's presence was an offense to him; he did not tolerate even mentioning Gurdjieff's name. It has been completely dropped -- even in his books which were written before he disconnected himself from Gurdjieff. He changed the name from Gurdjieff to just G; he would not write the whole name. He would simply mention, "G said..." -- just like XYZ. And then -- he was clever enough -- whenever somebody asked, "You yourself mentioned G," he said, "Those were the days when he was right. The later Gurdjieff has gone insane. I am against the later Gurdjieff."

And why did he go against him? Gurdjieff was trying to destroy his ego totally and it was impossible for him to accept that. He was in London, Gurdjieff was in Russia, in Tiflis, and Gurdjieff sent a message, "Come immediately. Sell everything there. Don't waste a single moment. Bring all the money and come."

Those were the days of the first world war; it was very difficult to travel, dangerous to travel, and going back to Russia was dangerous for Ouspensky because the Bolsheviks, communists, had come into power and Russia, the whole of Russia was in a turmoil. There was no order, no government.

Still, the master had asked, so he sold all his possessions, his house, took all the money and traveled back to Russia knowing perfectly well he was going into danger. The journey was long; three months it took for him to reach, sometimes traveling by train and sometimes by horse and sometimes he was prevented and the police were after him. But somehow he reached there -- the master had asked him to come, and he did.

He was hoping that as he had made a great sacrifice, so he was going to be patted on the back by the master.

And do you know what Gurdjieff did? The moment Ouspensky arrived he said, "Put down your money and go back! Leave your money here and go back to London immediately!"

This was too much. He became antagonistic. He thought Gurdjieff had become insane. He was not insane. Had Ouspensky followed that too, although it was very illogical.... But Ouspensky was a mathematician, a logician, a great intellectual of this century, one of the most profound mathematicians that we have ever produced. He could not believe all this nonsense. He traveled back, but he turned against, turned very sour -- saying that Gurdjieff had gone mad.

That was his rationalization to avoid seeing the truth, that Gurdjieff was trying to destroy his ego totally. That was the last hit on his head. If he had allowed it he would have become enlightened. He missed the point -- and from the last rung of the ladder he missed and fell down. Sometimes it happens: you can miss at the last moment.

Then for his whole life Ouspensky was talking against Gurdjieff; his name became unmentionable. Whatsoever he was teaching he had learned from Gurdjieff, but he was very secretive. He wouldn't allow his disciples to read Gurdjieff's books. He wouldn't allow his disciples to go and see Gurdjieff. Ouspensky's disciples could see Gurdjieff only after Ouspensky's death; and then they were surprised at how much they had missed. Ouspensky was only a professor, nothing else. Gurdjieff was an enlightened man.

But the problem is always how to drop the ego. Gurdjieff offended many people in the West for the simple reason that in the West there is no tradition, no background, no context for the psychology of egolessness.

That's why I have chosen to be here in the East. Even if people are coming from the West they have to come to ME, because only in the Eastern space is it possible so surrender the ego. The whole milieu is helpful; much effort is not needed.

And once the new commune is established it is going to become a very easy phenomenon, a child's play, to drop the ego. When you see ten thousand sannyasins moving without the ego, without a head, you will look foolish with a head. You will be in a hurry immediately so that your head can be cut off and you can also run without a head and do all kinds of things which were not possible before -- because of the head.

Gurdjieff is right: the false has to be dropped. The false has to cease for the real to be.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,

PLEASE NEVER SPEAK AGAINST THE INDIAN MIND BECAUSE I GET SO ANGRY THAT I START THINKING HOW TO KILL YOU.

Deva Kumar, people who only think of killing never kill. You can go on thinking; thinkers can't do anything. And why do you get so much disturbed if I speak against the Indian mind?

I am against all kind of minds -- Indian, German, English, American -- and I speak against all kinds of minds, because mind is mind. There is not much difference, just different patterns, different ideas, but the basic structure is the same.

Mind means you are not conscious, and you can be unconscious in the Indian way or the Chinese way or the Japanese way; what does it matter? And if you cannot listen to words said against your mind you need not come here; this is not the right place for you.

I am not here to buttress your egos; I am here to destroy them. I have to speak against them. My whole work consists in destroying. First a great destruction is needed, only then your energies are released for some creative work.

And what really is an Indian mind? -- just an accident that you are born in India and you have been conditioned in a certain way. Somebody else is born in Japan and he is conditioned in some other way, but both are conditionings. And the function of the master is to uncondition you.

I can understand your anger, but that anger is not going to help you. Only understanding can help. Try to understand. Your anger will cloud your being more and more; you will become more and more incapable of seeing the truth.

Once upon a time there was a dog who was sitting by the side of the railway line when an express train roared by and cut off an inch of his tail.

Seeking revenge, the dog waited patiently for the train's next trip and tried to bite it as it went past. The train wheels ran right over the poor dog's neck slicing off its head.

The moral of this little story is simple: Never lose your head over a little piece of tail.

And this is only just the beginning, Deva Kumar; just a little piece of your tail has been cut. If you remain here long enough the tail will go, the head will go... and then only, for the first time, you will be reborn: reborn as consciousness, neither Indian nor French nor Italian.

But have you observed this? I speak against the Italian mind, I speak against the German mind, I speak against the Jewish mind, but nobody takes any objection to it. But if I speak against the Indian mind, immediately somebody is there to object. Indians have become very touchy; deep down they feel some kind of inferiority, and on the surface they pretend superiority. Particularly as far as religion and spirituality is concerned, they feel that they are the spiritual guides of the world, that God has chosen them as messengers, that they are the source of religion, that they are holier than everybody else in the world, that their country is divine and all other countries are evil, that they are saints, holy people, and all others are sinners, that they are spiritualists and all other people are materialists.

And because your stupid so-called mahatmas go on telling you these false ideas, when you hear me speaking anything against the Indian stupidity you become enraged. You cannot absorb it, you cannot remain open to it, because all your mahatmas go on buttressing your ego. It is because of this that the Indian masses are against me, for the simple reason that I cannot buttress their egos. I cannot say that "You are great spiritual

people" -- and that's what they want to hear. They don't have anything else. They don't have science, they don't have technology; they don't have money, they are poor; they don't have food, they are starving. The only thing that can give them a little hope, a little satisfaction, is spirituality.

So when I say, "You don't have even that," it hurts very much. Then nothing is left. Remember it: Buddha had it, Krishna had it, Mahavira had it, Nanak had it; that does not mean that all Indians have it. Socrates had it, Pythagoras had it, Heraclitus had it, Plotinus had it; that does not mean that all the Greeks have it. Lao Tzu had it, Chuang Tzu had it, Lieh Tzu had it; that does not mean that all the Chinese have it. These rare people have happened everywhere; it is nothing special to you.

So stop bragging about it. This bragging keeps you unaware of your real situation; it has become very intoxicating to you. It keeps you in a kind of unconscious state.

A fellow called up Mr. Vanderwater on Park Avenue and said, "Mr. Vanderwater, did my friend Bill come to your house party uninvited last night?"

"Yes, he did."

"Ah, the curse of drink! What a man will do when he is drunk! I would like to ask you another question, Mr. Vanderwater. Did he start beating up some of your guests and finish by throwing some of your art works out on Park Avenue?"

"Yes, he did that."

"I am so sorry. One more question: was I also there?"

Ego is very intoxicating, remember it. It is more alcoholic than any alcohol can be. And it is pious; when it is pretending to be holy it is very pious -- and a pious poison is the purest poison. Avoid it. Come back to the earth. Be simple and see the reality as it is.

Two drunks were passing the door of the honeymoon suite at the Ritz Hotel when they stopped a moment to listen. Inside the room the bridegroom was saying to his bride, "Darling, you are so deliciously lovely. Your fabulous beauty should be captured for posterity by the greatest artists in the world."

The two drunks started banging on the door straight away, and the husband called out, "Who the devil is that?"

"Rubens and Rembrandt!" replied both.

Deva Kumar, come down to the earth! Killing me is not going to help much. If you feel like doing that, you can do it; that's perfectly okay. That is not going to help you.

What is going to help you is killing your ego. Put your energy into killing your ego. I am not interested in hurting anybody -- I am not against anybody. If sometimes I hammer on your heads, it is only out of love and compassion.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS TO LISTEN TO DISCOURSE WITH COMPLETE, UNQUESTIONING ACCEPTANCE A FORM OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS?

Ra, if you are unconscious you cannot be complete in anything. The unconscious mind cannot manage to be complete, to be entire, to be total in anything. One thing is certain: if you can manage to be entire, total, whole in anything, you are not unconscious. You may be anything else but not unconscious.

You ask me, "Is to listen to discourse with complete, unquestioning acceptance a form of unconsciousness?"

No, it cannot be a form of unconsciousness, because to bring conscious effort is a must if you want to be absolutely, totally accepting. You will have to bring deliberate effort; you will have to be very conscious about it.

Unconscious mind is always fragmentary; it is many, it is not one. It cannot be one; it is a crowd, it is a mob, many voices within you. When you are unconscious you are many people; you are not a single individual. You are not integrated. Any effort to be total integrates you. And this is just a device, to listen with totality.

But who told you that I am telling you to accept it? Totality is needed in listening, but I have not asked you to accept it. If you accept, you will not be total, because accepting means you are choosing, and choice is always partial: something has been not chosen and something has been chosen.

Acceptance means you are rejecting many things: rejecting your own ideas, rejecting that which goes against me. If I am saying one thing and you accept it, that means you are rejecting the opposite of it. It is a constant choice.

I am not asking you to accept what is being said; I am only asking you to listen totally. Then what is it? It is a totally different phenomenon, neither acceptance nor rejection -- just awareness. When you listen to the birds singing, do you accept, do you reject? Do you agree, do you disagree? You simply listen. The sound of a waterfall... what do you do? You simply listen. The wind passing through the pines... is agreement needed, disagreement? Nothing is needed; you simply listen. The music of the wind passing through the pines, the dance of the trees in the sun... you simply see, you listen. You are just a mirror. The mirror does not agree and does not disagree; it only reflects.

And that is required from the disciple -- not acceptance, remember. I am not creating a creed, I am not giving you a dogma. I don't want you to be believers, neither do I want you to be disbelievers. But what is the point of bringing belief and disbelief into it? Just listen to me silently, fully, so nothing is missed, that's all.

And the beauty of truth is that if you listen silently, totally, it penetrates to the very core of your being; it reaches to the heart. You need not agree; the seed of it falls into your consciousness and starts growing.

Just the opposite is the case with the untruth: if you listen totally, no untruth can penetrate in your being. That totality is enough to throw any kind of untruth out. In a total state of consciousness, in total silence, untruth cannot penetrate; only truth can penetrate.

So I am not interested in your agreement; I am only interested in your openness. And I am not telling you to be unquestioning, neither am I telling you to go on questioning. Both are futile activities while you are listening. If you listen with a thousand and one questions in the mind, how can you listen at all? Those questions create so much clamor, so much noise; they don't allow anything to enter in. And if you listen with an unquestioning mind, that means you are being gullible, you are being just unintelligent. So there is no need for questions and there is no need for unquestioning acceptance.

What is needed, what is required from the disciple, is a total silence; just being here with me in deep communion, bridged, so slowly slowly, your breath falls in tune with my breath, your heart starts beating in the same rhythm as my heart, so we lose separation, so these three thousand people here become almost one entity, so attuned, so deep in accord that they can't feel separate. A great melting, merger, happens. And those are the moments of truth, moments of great joy, moments of meditation.

The disciple is required to listen meditatively, because in those meditative moments windows open into the divine, doors open -- doors where you have never suspected that doors exist, where you have always thought there are walls. Suddenly doors open. Where you have never thought that there is any bridge possible, bridges suddenly appear. It is a mysterious phenomenon.

So those who are here as outsiders, they will only get the most superficial thing: my words. They will not be able to participate in my heart. They will not be able to drink out of my being. They will not be able to be part of my dance, of my song.

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE YOU FALLIBLE?

Nityam, I am not the pope of the Vatican -- I am not infallible. I enjoy fallibility. And Buddha was not infallible and Jesus was not infallible. Only these stupid popes, they started claiming to be infallible, because they wanted to dominate, they wanted to exploit people. I have no desire to dominate anybody, I have no desire to exploit anybody. I have no desire at all.

Fallibility is natural; infallibility is unnatural. Even God has committed so many errors! The first error he committed was to create the universe; that was the beginning of the whole mess. But he did it and he continues to do it; he has not stopped. He created the Devil; if anybody is responsible for the Devil's existence, then God is responsible -- he created him. He created all kinds of sins in you, all kinds of instincts in you. If anybody is responsible, if anybody is punishable, then God is.

Whenever you meet God you can simply throw the whole load on him. You can simply say, "Why did you create me in this way? You should have created me a saint and you created me a sinner. It is up to you. If you are the creator, then it is your responsibility." If something is wrong in the painting, the painter is responsible not the painting. If something is wrong in the music, then the musician is responsible, not the musical instruments. If something goes wrong in the poetry, the poet is responsible.

God is very fallible, that's the beauty; otherwise, God would be too inhuman a concept. It is very human, and in the East we even have ideas of God which are far more human -- far more human than the Christian God. The Jewish God is far more human than the Christian God -- the Jewish God becomes angry. The Christian God is always love, always sweet, very saccharin. The Jewish God can be very bitter. The Old Testament says that God is very jealous and very angry. Be watchful. A very human God.

And if you come to the East you will be surprised. We have a beautiful story: God created the world because he was feeling lonely. Such a beautiful idea, God feeling lonely! So you need not feel too worried sometimes if you feel lonely -- it is divine. God was feeling very lonely, hence he created the world -- just to fill his loneliness. And when he created the first woman he fell in love with her. That is really going too far!

The people who wrote this story must have been really courageous people. That is falling in love with your own daughter. And of course, as women are supposed to do, the woman started the game of hide-and-seek. They love that game very much. They still love it, and they will always love it; that is part of feminine psychology. The man takes the initiative and the woman starts hiding; and the more she hides, the more the man becomes enchanted.

That's why Eastern women look more beautiful than Western women: for the simple reason that the Western woman has forgotten how to hide; she has become available. She is trying to be just like the man. The Eastern woman is not trying to be like the man; she tries to be absolutely feminine -- very shy, never takes any initiative. No Eastern woman ever will say to somebody, "I love you." She simply waits for you to say it to her.

So the woman started hiding. She became a cow just to hide from God. But how can you hide from God? He is omniscient. He looked around and he saw that the woman had become a cow, so he became the bull! Now that is going too far! And that's how the whole of creation happened: she became the mare and he became the horse, and so on, so forth. She went on hiding in new forms, and he went on finding her again and again. This seems to be something very close to the truth.

Even God is fallible. There is no need to be perfect.

These two words have to be understood as deeply as possible: one is perfection, the other is totality. My emphasis is never on perfection but on totality. The old religions have been teaching you for centuries to be perfect. You cannot be perfect; nobody can be perfect. Even God is not perfect -- because to be perfect means to be dead. If something is perfect then there is no evolution possible anymore. Perfection means the full point has come, the cul-de-sac; the road ends. Now you are stuck, nowhere to go. You cannot come back -- because how can a perfect person come back? That will be becoming imperfect again. You cannot go ahead because you have become perfect; there is nothing ahead. Existence is imperfect and will remain so.

I don't teach perfection. Perfection simply creates neurosis in people. Perfectionists are neurotics; they drive themselves crazy in trying to be perfect, because they are trying to do the impossible.

I teach totality; I teach wholeness, not perfection. Be total in whatsoever you are doing. Be total. If you are angry, then be totally angry. If you are in love, then be totally in love. If you are sad, then be totally sad. Don't be halfhearted in anything. That is a totally different approach towards life.

The perfectionist will say, "Never be angry, never be sad." The person who believes in totality will say, "Whatsoever is the case, just be total in it. Don't be halfhearted, don't hold yourself back. Go into it totally."

Then life becomes really a tremendous adventure. Then even sadness is beautiful when it is total. If you can cry and weep totally, then even crying and weeping has a beauty of its own. It will refresh you, it will rejuvenate you, it will unburden you. If you can be totally sad you will come to know something immensely beautiful in sadness which no joy can ever give to you, because sadness has depth; joy is shallow. A person who has not known total sadness has missed a great experience of life.

And total anger also has its own beauty. It will give you the experience of boiling at one hundred degrees, of intensity, of passion, of fire, of becoming aflame. And the miracle is: the person who can be totally angry can be totally compassionate too, because anger will teach him compassion. And sadness will teach him ways of being blissful.

My approach is not that of a perfectionist; I am utterly against it. It has destroyed humanity. It has driven the whole of humanity into a kind of madness. The whole idea has to be dropped. We have to learn a new language -- the language of wholeness. And I call a person holy when he is whole in whatsoever he does.

If you are doing cleaning, then do it totally. Then be utterly lost in it, and it will give you as much as a musician gets when he gets lost totally in his music or a dancer gets when he is utterly lost into his dance. Even cleaning the floor or cooking the food or taking the bath or going for a morning walk -- anything.

Let this be your foundation of life: that whatsoever you are doing at the moment, be utterly lost into it. Nothing of you should be left behind. Don't keep any reservations. And you will come out of it immensely benefited, enriched.

I am as fallible as anybody with only one difference: I am totally fallible!

Moses and Jesus were sitting together in a boat reminiscing.

"I really liked the one where you parted the water of the Red Sea, Moses," said Jesus.

"Ah, yes," said Moses, "but that was nothing compared to your walking on the water -- that beats all. Say, do you think you could do it again?"

"Sure," said Jesus, "but it has been a long time."

He stepped out of the boat. Everything was fine, so he started walking slowly. Soon he noticed the water was coming up over the top of his feet. He was a little concerned, but kept walking. Soon the water was up to his ankles. He turned back towards the boat, worried. By the time he reached the boat again the water was up to his knees. He scrambled back in, relieved but puzzled.

"I don't understand," Jesus said, "I know it has been a long time, but I really thought I had it down. I wonder what went wrong."

Moses was thoughtful too. Finally he said, "I bet I know what it is! The first time you did it you did not have holes in your feet!"

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS NOT LIFE AT ALL BEAUTIFUL ACCORDING TO GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA?

Punito, life as you know it is not beautiful. When Buddha says life is misery, he is talking about the life that YOU know; he is not talking about the life that HE knows. There is no point in talking about the life he knows -- you won't understand it. You have not even any idea of it; you cannot even imagine it.

You know a life which is lived through the mind; he knows a life which is lived without the mind. You know a life which is nothing but nonessential, superfluous, peripheral; he knows a life which is lived from the very center of his being. He knows a life which is not temporal but eternal; you know only the life which is momentary.

He goes on saying that your life is misery -- misery and nothing else -- for the simple reason that it is so momentary. It cannot satisfy you, it cannot give you contentment. It cannot quench your thirst; on the contrary, it makes your thirst more and more persistent. It makes you more and more discontented.

The Irish paratrooper jumped from a plane and then discovered that he had forgotten his parachute. As he was falling through the air he looked around at the scenery and said to himself, "This would be very pleasant if it would only last!"

But this is our situation: without parachutes, falling towards the earth. Of course, it is beautiful scenery: clouds with sunrays and all greenery underneath you and a very silent atmosphere, no noise and unpolluted air. Everything is beautiful, but the problem is, it cannot last. Within moments all will be gone; within moments you will be shattered on the earth.

Hence Buddha goes on reminding you about death: death is there by the corner. We try to make our life to last forever. We try in every possible way to avoid death, but death is unavoidable. We try to befool ourselves that we are exceptions, but nobody is an exception. Death comes inevitably.

The only thing inevitable in life is death. But we go on creating illusions around ourselves that this is not going to happen -- not at least today. And who takes care about tomorrow? "We will see about tomorrow when it comes. Let us enjoy this moment -- eat, drink, be merry."

Buddha says that this "Eat, drink, be merry" philosophy is sheer unconsciousness. And this unconscious state can create more and more misery for you. Unconsciousness is misery, so if your life is unconscious it IS misery.

Consciousness is bliss. If your life is consciousness then it is bliss, but then it becomes a totally different kind of life. It becomes the life of the awakened one, of the enlightened one.

Shanahan staggered out of the saloon. He wandered up the street and by mistake went into a house where a wake was being held. He spotted the refreshments and helped himself.

The wake lasted all through the night and well into the next day. Shanahan made himself useful by serving as bartender and always had one with the guy who was drinking.

At the end of the second day the party thinned out quite a bit, until at last Shanahan was alone with the widow. She approached him for the first time. "You must have been a great friend of O'Leary to stay on like this," she said sadly, "so I feel I can ask your advice. Do you think we should take poor O'Leary to a funeral home or should we hold the services here?"

Shanahan took a final swig of gin and said, "Missus, why don't we just stuff him and keep the party going?"

Yes, everybody would like that, tries that, but it is not possible. The party cannot go on and on and on; it is bound to come to an end.

Buddha simply wants you to be reminded again and again that when death is there, what kind of life are you living? It can't be much of a life. There is another life which is beyond death, which is deathlessness, and it is your birthright to attain to it. But the false has to be dropped first. The false has to be seen as false and then the quest starts for the real. The moment you recognize your life as nothing but a slow kind of death you will start looking for the real life.

And the real life is available and not very far away; it is available inside you, within you. Whatsoever you do on the outside is to be taken away by death. Do something for your inner transformation, because that is the only treasure which cannot be taken away by death.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,

CAN MAN LIVE IN THIS CUNNING WORLD WITHOUT BEING CUNNING HIMSELF?

Anahato, the world is cunning because you are cunning, not vice versa. It is not that you are cunning because the world is cunning. The world is nothing but you; you are the world.

You project your world. And even though the world is cunning, what are you going to gain by being cunning? Even though the world is cunning, what are you going to lose by being innocent, simple?

Nothing of real value can be lost by being simple. In fact, by being simple and innocent the real is attained. Yes, by cunningness you can attain to power, to money, to prestige, but what is the point of attaining all that? Death is bound to take everything away from you. And can't you see the people who are powerful? Are they happy? Do you see any

joy in their lives? Can't you observe the rich people? They live a dog's life, in utter misery!

Alexander the Great said to Diogenes, "If I am going to be born again I would not like to be Alexander again. I would like to be Diogenes."

Diogenes was a naked mystic, had nothing, not even a begging bowl. Buddha at least had a begging bowl with him; Diogenes was absolutely without any possessions.

He used to have a begging bowl, but one day he saw a dog drinking water and he meditated over it, and he thought, "If a dog can manage without a begging bowl, can't I manage without a begging bowl?" He threw the begging bowl into the river and he became very friendly with the dog. He used to tell people, "He is one of my teachers. He has given me one of the most important lessons of my life. Since I have thrown the begging bowl in the river I feel such freedom; otherwise, even in the night I used to remain afraid that somebody may steal my begging bowl. I used at least two, three times in the night to look around to see whether the begging bowl was still there or not. Since I have thrown it away, I have no worry left in the world."

Alexander heard about the joy of Diogenes and he came to see him, and he was tremendously impressed. He had never seen such a man! And to Diogenes he said, "Next time, if God is going to send me again to the world, I will come as Diogenes."

Diogenes laughed. He looked at his dog -- his friend and teacher -- and said to the dog, "Listen to what this man is saying. If he really wants to be Diogenes, who is preventing him? He can be Diogenes just this very moment!" It is said that he laughed and the dog smiled too. Must have been some ancient Snoopy!

Alexander said, "What is the matter? Why are you laughing and why is your dog smiling?"

Diogenes said, "What else can we do? You are talking such nonsense! If you want to be Diogenes, forget all about your world conquest and be here! I live on this bank of the river, and it is a big bank. We both can live here, there is no problem. Why wait for the next life? And why remain miserable meanwhile?"

Alexander said, "I cannot answer it. I understand -- you are right -- but I have my own investments, my own ideas to fulfill first. I have to conquer the world! Once I have conquered it, I can renounce it but not before that."

Diogenes said, "You will never conquer it, because nobody can conquer the whole world. And even if you conquer it you will never be able to renounce it, because then you will say, 'I have put so much energy into it and I have wasted my whole life. Why should I renounce it?'"

Alexander died in misery; Diogenes died in bliss. By coincidence, both died on the same day, and when they were crossing the river that separates this world from the other, Alexander was ahead, Diogenes was just a few feet behind. Alexander looked, felt very ashamed because he was naked. Diogenes was not ashamed at all because he had been naked his whole life. Just to hide his shame Alexander laughed -- a shallow laughter -- and said to Diogenes, "It is strange that an emperor and a beggar are meeting on the

boundary line of these two worlds. It may not have happened before, it may not happen again."

Diogenes had a real laughter -- a belly laughter. He said, "You are right -- an emperor and a beggar meeting on this boundary is a rare phenomenon -- but about one thing you are wrong. You don't know who is the emperor and who is the beggar. The emperor is behind and the beggar is ahead!"

And Diogenes was right.

Buddha insists that by being cunning you can accumulate wealth -- but what is the point of it if it only brings misery, anxiety, anguish? By being innocent you may be cheated, you may be taken advantage of, but what is there to lose?

Anahato, you ask me, "Can man live in this cunning world without being cunning?"

Don't call the world cunning, because that is just a cover-up. You want to be cunning and you cover it up with an explanation, with the rationalization that "The world is cunning, that's why I have to be cunning." It is your world: you make it, you create it.

And remember, everybody who is part of the world thinks in the same way. All the constituents of the world think in the same way: "The world is cunning, that's why I have to be cunning." Who is creating the world? We are the world and we are creating it. But we want to be cunning and we don't want to accept the fact, the ugly fact, that we want to be cunning; hence we call the whole world cunning.

Drop such explanations. And of course, others will also support your explanation because they are in the same boat. So your explanation will look almost like a valid truth. It is not.

Times in the fifties were not easy for Ma and Pa in the rural area of West Texas, as a ten-year drought took no mercy on small farmers. Still, Pa was determined to send Junior off to the prestigious University of Texas, if only for one semester, to boast of his son's academic achievements to the neighbors. So money was saved for several years until one thousand dollars were accumulated.

As Junior boarded the bus ready for departure, Pa sternly announced, "Junior, your Ma and I have sacrificed a lot to send you to the university, and if you really watch yourself you can make it through the year with this money." And he handed the boy an envelope containing the one thousand dollars.

Junior, however, arrived at the university with notions other than that of earning a degree. He enjoyed nights and days of fun and games, recklessly spending Pa's money until one month later all was spent.

In spite of his desperate situation, Junior wrote a letter, saying, "Pa, there are many smart teachers here and one of my professors says he can teach old Blue, our hound dog, to talk... for only five hundred dollars."

When Pa read the letter he became excited and told Ma, "This may be our lucky day at last. If the boy is right, we can put that useless hound dog in the circus, become rich, and retire for life!"

So Pa mortgaged the farm and all the equipment, borrowed five hundred dollars from the bank, and sent it along with Old Blue on the bus. When the dog arrived with the money, Junior, not wanting to be bothered with the animal, killed it and forgot about it. As he continued his carefree life-style for a few more weeks, the money again ran out. By now, however, Junior had learned the trick, so he again wrote to his Pa, "Gee, Pa, Old Blue had us all fooled. He is smarter than we thought. The professor has already taught him to speak English, and now he says that this dog is so intelligent that for only five hundred dollars more he could be taught two more languages, to sing and to dance."

After reading the letter, Pa and Ma were overtaken by visions of great wealth and fame. They immediately hocked all of their belongings, borrowed from all of their friends, and finally raised another five hundred dollars to send to Junior. This time the money lasted until the Thanksgiving break, at which time Junior and Blue were both expected home.

Excited, Pa went to meet Junior at the bus station, but to his surprise, Junior was without the new superstar hound dog. Running up to him he cried, "Hi, Junior! Where is old Blue?"

Junior pulled Pa aside and with a serious look explained, "Pa, the damndest thing happened on the way here. Old Blue was sitting here beside me talking up a storm, when suddenly he said, 'Junior, I got to shit real bad!' And I said, 'Blue, just hold back till we get to the next town. I got to shave, also, and we have a ten-minute layover. We can use the restroom there.'

"So, Pa, Old Blue was sitting on the crapper and I was shaving with that straight-edged razor you gave me last Christmas, when Blue said, 'Say, I wonder if your Pa is still fucking that old cross-eyed mare at the farm?' And Pa, I got so damn mad I just cut that dog's head off!"

Pa bolted forward, very excited, and said, "Are you sure you killed that sonofabitch, son?"

This goes on and on. Somebody has to come out of it. If you are waiting for the whole world to become innocent, and then you will become innocent, then it is not going to happen ever. Forget about the world. You be innocent and lose anything that is bound to be lost by dropping cunningness. And you will not be a loser, remember.

Innocence will give you the real treasure, the kingdom of God. Blessed are the innocent, for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #12

Chapter title: Rivers don't exist

1 January 1980 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

HOW CAN YOU, AS A MAN, TALK ABOUT THE FEMININE PSYCHE? HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT GOD IS A HE?

Gudrun Hofmann, I am not talking as a man, I am not talking as a woman. I am not talking as a mind at all. The mind is used, but I am talking as consciousness, as awareness. And awareness is neither he nor she, awareness is neither man nor woman. Your body has that division and your mind too, because your mind is your inner part of the body and your body is the outer part of your mind. Your body and mind are not separate; they are one entity. In fact, to say body and mind is not right; 'and' should not be used. You are bodymind -- not even a hyphen between the two.

Hence, with the body, with the mind, 'masculine', 'feminine' -- these words are relevant, meaningful. But there is something beyond them both; there is something transcendental. That is your real core, your being. That being consists only of awareness, of witnessing, of watchfulness. It is pure consciousness.

I am not talking here as a man; otherwise it is impossible to talk about the woman. I am talking as awareness. I have lived in the feminine body many times and I have lived in the masculine body many times, and I have witnessed all. I have seen all the houses, I have seen all the garments. What I am saying to you is the conclusion of many many lives; it has not to do with only this life. This life is only a culmination of a long long pilgrimage.

So don't listen to me as a man or a woman; otherwise you will not be listening to me. Listen to me as awareness.

Secondly, you say, "How do you know that God is a he?"

God is neither he nor she. God simply means the totality of consciousness in existence. God simply means life eternal. Life expresses in two ways, man and woman. God is the unmanifest source of life; you cannot call him "he," you cannot call him "she." But because for centuries the word 'he' has been used, I go on using it. You have to remember that I don't mean it.

If you really want to go deep into the phenomenon of God, then God does not exist at all -- as a person. God is only a presence. In other words, there is no God but only godliness: a quality that pervades, permeates, the whole of existence; that is everywhere, in every leaf, in every dewdrop. It is a quality. Once you start thinking of

God as a quality, your whole outlook on life, on religion, on love, will be totally different.

Existence consists not of nouns but of verbs. Nouns are inventions of man and so are pronouns. Verbs are real. When you say "a river" what do you mean? Have you ever seen a river as a noun? The river is always flowing, it is always a movement. It is never static, it is dynamic. How can you make it a static noun? The word 'river' seems to be static.

If you ask the buddhas, the awakened ones, they will say, "Rivers don't exist." But you see the river flowing by! The flow is there, a kind of rivering is there, but no river. You see so many trees, but in fact what exists is a kind of treeing, not trees, because every tree is changing every moment. The time that you will take in using the word 'tree', the tree is no more the same. A few old leaves have fallen, a few new leaves have started coming out, a flower has opened up, a bud is getting ready to open. There is great activity; the tree is constantly in momentum.

The whole existence consists of verbs, and God is nothing but the totality of all these verbs. God is not a quantity but a quality, not a person but a presence. God is an experience, not an object of experience but experience itself. God is subjectivity. And how can you call subjectivity "he" or "she"?

I know why the question has arisen. All over the world, particularly in the West, the liberated woman is asking, "Why call God 'he'?" And she is right, in a way. Why make God identified with the masculine mind? It is a kind of male chauvinistic approach. For centuries, the male has dominated everything, hence he has called God "he." And the rebellion against it is absolutely right.

But to start calling God "she" will not put things right; it will be moving to the other extreme. That will be another kind of chauvinism, it won't change anything. Simply the wrong that man was doing will be done by woman; both are wrong. God is neither.

Hence in the East, where for ten thousand years hundreds of people have arrived to the ultimate pinnacle of experiencing godliness, we don't call God "he" or "she," we call him "it." That is far more beautiful because it takes God beyond he and she. But something has to be called, and whatsoever words are used are going to be inadequate -- he, she, it -- because the word 'it' has also its own dangers. 'It' seems to be dead because we use it for things, and God is not a thing either. 'It' seems to be too neutral, and God is not neutral; he is tremendously committed, involved. 'It' seems to be lifeless, and God is life itself, love itself. Any word will have its own limitations.

So you can use any word -- he, she, it -- but remember, all words are limited and God is unlimited. If you use these words mindfully, then there is no danger. The basic remembrance is that God is a presence, otherwise many foolish questions arise.

If you call him "he" or "she," then the question arises, "Where does he live? Where is he?" And then the question seems to be very relevant because you have reduced him to a person; then where is his dwelling?

"Where is the dwelling of God?"

This was the question with which the rabbi of Kotzk surprised a number of learned men who happened to be visiting him.

They laughed at him, "What a thing to ask! Is not the whole world full of His glory?" Then he answered his own question: "God dwells wherever man lets him in."

There is no dwelling outside somewhere. Whenever you allow yourself, you open up to existence, whenever you allow the wind and the rain and the sun to reach to your innermost core, suddenly there is God, godliness. Suddenly you are overwhelmed by something bigger than you, by something which is oceanic. You start disappearing into it like a dewdrop.

The moment we say, "God is a person," then we start praying, praising. That is a kind of bribery. That is a kind of buttressing his ego. If God is a person he must have an ego. Then praise him and he will be happy with you, and you will be rewarded either here or hereafter. The moment we think of God as a person we start searching for him not IN the world but somewhere far away in heaven, and we miss the whole point. God is now-here, God is nowhere else.

There is a tale that a man inspired by God once went out from the creaturely realms into the vast waste. There he wandered till he came to the Gates of Mystery. He knocked. From within came the cry, "What do you want here?"

He said, "I have proclaimed your praise in the ears of mortals, but they are deaf to me, so I come to you that you yourself may hear me and reply."

"Turn back!" came the cry from within. "Here is no ear for you. I have sunk my hearing in the deafness of mortals."

God is in the stones, God is in the waters, God is in the animals, God is in the birds, God is in people, in sinners, in saints. God is equivalent to isness. Now, is isness he or she? The question will be utterly meaningless.

So don't be worried whether God is he or she. Rather, look within yourself and find the place where he and she both disappear. And that will be the beginning of your understanding of reality, of what it is.

This thing cannot be decided by argumentation. It is not a metaphysical question, it is something existential. If you can find something within yourself which is neither masculine nor feminine, then you will know that there is something in existence which is neither, which is beyond both. And that beyondness is God.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

I AM SIXTY YEARS OLD, BUT YET THE SAME DESIRES PERSIST. WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH ME?

Narayandas, growing old is not growing up. Time by itself does not bring wisdom. Yes, it brings many experiences, but experiences by themselves cannot deliver wisdom to you.

Wisdom is a totally different phenomenon. It does not happen through experiences of the outside world. It happens when you become centered within your being, when you become rooted in your being, when you become integrated, when you are no more a crowd and you become a crystallized soul.

Desires can't disappear just because you have become sixty years old. You can be six hundred years old and desires will be there, in fact more, because they will be also six hundred years old. Your desires are sixty years old; they have gone deep in you in sixty years.

People have this idea that when you are young you suffer from desires, when you are old you go beyond them. Just by being old? That is ridiculous! You don't go beyond desires just by being old. You simply become a hypocrite; you start pretending that you have gone beyond desires. Maybe you can't go into desires because there is no energy available, but the mind thinks more and more. Because you can't do anything, your whole energy becomes cerebral. The young person can do something about his desires; you cannot do, so you only think.

And as death starts coming closer and closer, a great fear arises: so many desires are there which are unfulfilled. You become afraid: if death comes and takes you away.... It is bound to happen sooner or later, and the possibility is of sooner than later. All those desires start taking possession of you. "Fulfill us," they say. "Time is short. Do something." You start going crazy. You continuously become obsessed.

A moralist addressing an audience thundered, "Remember, my friends, when temptation comes your way you must resist it -- resist it!"

"I would like to," said one of the old men, "but I am always afraid it may never come again."

That fear is natural. Death may come before the temptation comes again. Who knows? - - it may not come again.

The old man becomes more and more afraid of losing his desires.

It is not an accident that Buddha introduced a new idea into the world of sannyas. He started initiating young people into sannyas. In India, the tradition was that you should take sannyas only when you are very old, after seventy-five years -- the fourth stage, when you have done everything and only death is left. Then take sannyas. That was the idea and it was a very comfortable idea, a very cozy idea.

In the first place, very few people are going to live beyond seventy-five, particularly in those days and in India. Even today very few people will live beyond seventy-five, so there is no fear of living after seventy-five and becoming a sannyasin. And if by chance you happen to live after seventy-five, all your energies will be already wasted, gone down the drain. Whether you take sannyas or not you will be a sannyasin, so why not take it?

People after seventy-five years used to take the vow of celibacy. You see the foolishness of it!

A man used to come to Ramakrishna each religious festival and he would give a big feast. He was a nonvegetarian, and many animals would be cut up for the feast. He was very rich. Then suddenly all those feasts stopped. There was one great festival and the feast was not happening, and the man had come to see Ramakrishna.

Ramakrishna asked, "What happened? Why are you not celebrating this feast? Have you become irreligious or something? Are you no more interested in your religion?"

He said, "That is not the point. My teeth have fallen out. And when I cannot eat, why should I bother?"

The feast was not for any religious reasons; the feast was simply because he wanted to enjoy. Religion was just an excuse.

People can take the oath of celibacy after seventy-five, so they are saving both the worlds. They have enjoyed this world and now they are creating a bank balance in the other. They are becoming virtuous so cheaply that it is all false.

Buddha introduced the idea that young people should become sannyasins. Then it is something significant. When a young person goes beyond sex, when a young person goes beyond desires, when a young person goes beyond greed, ambition, the longing to be powerful, the ambition to be famous, then it is something tremendously meaningful, significant.

Remember one thing: when you are young you have energies. Those energies can take you to hell and those same energies can take you to heaven. Energies are neutral; it depends on you how you use them.

So the first thing: just by becoming an old person does not mean that you have become wise. Wisdom needs meditation not worldly experience. Worldly experience makes you more cunning; hence it is very difficult to find an old man who is not cunning. You can find a young man who is not cunning; you can find many children. In fact, almost all the children are innocent, they are not cunning. They have not known anything of the world. They have not learned tricks, strategies, politics, diplomacy. They are simply whatsoever they are -- they are authentic. As they grow more and more, as they become acquainted with the world and all the hypocrisy around, naturally they start becoming part of the world. They start learning the same kind of strategies.

By the time a person becomes old he becomes very cunning -- not wise, not intelligent. Remember: if you were stupid when you were a child you will be more stupid when you are old. You will have a long, long-rooted stupidity in you with great foliage and flowers and fruits. Whatever you have will grow with your age. If you meditate then meditation will grow. But just by becoming old you cannot be wise.

The ex-captain's wife paid a visit to a doctor who had achieved fame in the successful treatment of impotency. His method consisted of convincing the male patient he had the virility of a horse. The doctor consented to treat the woman's husband.

A few weeks later the doctor met the woman on the street, "Have you noticed the change you wanted in your husband?" he asked.

"No," replied the woman, "but he just won the Derby!"

Now, a stupid old man...! If you tell him that "You are a horse," you can't expect anything else! He will become a horse; he will become hypnotized with the idea.

Intelligence is a totally different phenomenon; intelligence cannot be hypnotized. An intelligent person cannot be Hindu, cannot be Mohammedan, cannot be Christian -- impossible, because these are all tricks, hypnotic tricks. People are being hypnotized from their very childhood that "You are a Hindu." A constant repetition that "You are a Hindu" makes you a Hindu. It is nothing else but a conditioning. A wise man becomes unconditioned.

So the first thing I will suggest to you, Narayandas: become unconditioned. Whatsoever your sixty years' life has conditioned you for, drop it. That's what your mind is: the accumulated conditionings. Drop them!

And the beginning of meditation is when you start dropping your conditionings. A moment comes when you become unconditioned again, like a child. Then your intelligence explodes. And an intelligent person cannot desire, that is impossible, because desiring only brings misery, frustration. Desiring only creates anxiety, anguish; it never brings any fulfillment, never any contentment.

An intelligent person cannot go on desiring. His very intelligence is enough and desiring disappears -- not that he renounces, remember. Only fools renounce.

Intelligent people don't renounce the world. They live in the world, but they live intelligently, without desiring. Whatsoever comes on their way they enjoy, but they don't hanker for anything. Their sleep remains undisturbed; they don't dream for anything. They don't project for the future, they live in the present.

Yes, Narayandas, you are becoming old, but don't hope that just by becoming old you will become wise enough and desires will disappear on their own accord.

She lay in bed, blissfully happy on this, the first morning of her long-dreamed-of honeymoon.

"Darling," she called as she heard him puttering around in the bathroom, "did you brush your teeth yet?"

"Yes," he cooed, "and while I was at it, I brushed yours too."

Yes, old you can become, but just by becoming old nothing is achieved.

Real growth happens inwards. It is a transformation of your interiority. And now that you are here, forget those sixty years and all the nightmares that you must have passed through those sixty years. Start your life afresh from the very beginning again.

Jesus says: Unless you are born again you will not be able to enter into my kingdom of God. And he is absolutely right. You need a new birth; you have to be twice-born. And to be with a master is a rebirth. It is initiation into the inner world.

Sixty years you have wasted on the outside, accumulating money, accumulating this and that, trying to be respectable, famous, powerful. Now get out of all those stupid games -- no more games! Now let there be a single-pointed search for the truth: the truth that you are, the truth that resides in you, the truth that you are made of, the truth of your consciousness.

My whole effort here is to help you towards self-knowledge. It does not need time; it needs intensity, sincerity. It needs commitment. It needs a tremendous effort to go in, because those sixty years you have created so many things on the outside which will hinder you from going in. They have become walls. You have become unbridged to your own self.

You ask me, "I am sixty years old, but yet the same desires persist."

Good that you have become aware of it, that the same desires are still there. There are many people who are not aware; they have repressed their desires so deeply that even they themselves have become unaware of them. Good that you are aware. The first ray of intelligence... that you are aware that the same desires persist.

And you ask, "What is the matter with me?"

Nothing is the matter with you; it is the same with everybody. One phase of your life is over. Now it is time to grow into another dimension. Sixty years is enough time to know about the world and all that it offers -- or at least promises to offer. You have known it, and it is only by knowing it that one becomes aware of the deceptiveness of it all. You have seen the illusion -- now turn in. Now become a sannyasin! You have been a worldly man up to now. And by a worldly man I simply mean one who is absolutely unaware of himself and is concerned about trivia -- money, power, prestige.

And I call the person a sannyasin who becomes deeply interested in his own life's source, who starts asking, "Who am I?" and who starts moving towards his center. From the circumference he changes his abode towards the center.

The day you reach to your center is the day of great blessings, the day of great enlightenment. That day you transcend life and death. That day you transcend man/woman. That day you transcend all dualities. That day, for the first time, you will taste what bliss is.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY ARE YOU AGAINST FOLLOWING SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE SECRETS OF LIFE? WHAT IS THE NEED TO DISCOVER THEM ONESELF ON ONE'S OWN?

Sudhakar, truth cannot be transferred. That is one of the intrinsic qualities of truth: nobody can give it to you. Yes, words can be given to you, theories can be given to you, theologies can be given to you, but not truth. Following somebody you will be following his words. Following somebody you will become a Jaina, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, but you will never become your own self.

And Buddha is a unique individual just as you are. What did he do? Try to understand it; that may be helpful in your journey. But don't follow him literally; otherwise that will make you only phony, that will make you only pseudo. Existence never repeats anybody. Jesus comes only once, Buddha comes only once. There has never been a person like Buddha before and will never be again, for the simple reason that existence never repeats.

You are a totally new manifestation of God. It has never been before so there has never been a person exactly like you. So whomsoever you follow, you will be following somebody who is not like you and you will get into trouble. You can cultivate a certain character around you, you can act, but by acting you are not going to become a buddha. That's what the Buddhist monks have been doing for twenty-five centuries -- acting, performing, literally following. The way Buddha walks they will walk, the way Buddha eats they will eat, the way Buddha sits they will sit. You can do all these things and it is possible you may do them even better than Buddha, because Buddha was not imitating anybody else; he was spontaneous. When a person is spontaneous he has no time to rehearse it; you will have enough time to rehearse. You may even defeat Buddha in a competition.

It actually happened once:

Friends of Charlie Chaplin were celebrating one of his birthdays and they found a beautiful way to celebrate it. They advertised in the newspapers all over England that there will be a competition and whosoever can imitate Charlie Chaplin will be rewarded. There were three big awards.

Many people participated. At least a hundred were chosen from different cities and they all gathered in London for the final selection of the three winners.

Charlie Chaplin had an idea. He entered in the competition from a different town hoping that he was going to win the first prize -- there was no question about it. But he was wrong; he got the second prize! People came to know only later on that he was also a participant. He was so surprised that somebody managed better than himself. Naturally, the other had practiced it for a long time. Charlie Chaplin was just there being himself; there was no need to practice. He IS Charlie Chaplin, so why practice? What is there to practice? But the other was more polished, more practiced. He walked better than Charlie Chaplin, he talked better than Charlie Chaplin! He outdid him.

This is possible. Some Christian monk may defeat Jesus, some Buddhist monk may defeat Buddha. But still, Buddha is Buddha and you will be only an imitator. Still, Charlie Chaplin is Charlie Chaplin and the man who was acting even in a better way is just acting; deep down he is himself.

You can never be somebody else. Remember it as one of the most fundamental laws. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal law: you can never be like somebody else. That does not mean you should not learn. Learn, but don't follow. Absorb, but go on your own way. Learn from all the enlightened ones. Sit at their feet, absorb their presence, but go on your own way.

Buddha himself said as his last statement on the earth: Be a light unto yourself.

A squirrel on the ground was watching two other squirrels in a tree. One of them fell to the ground, bounced a couple of times, looked back up in the tree and said, "That making love in the tree is for the birds."

That's why I say don't follow. Don't try to make love in the tree -- that is for the birds! -- otherwise you will be in the hospital.

A little boy and girl squirrel were chattering and playing around when suddenly a fox appeared. The girl squirrel dashed up a tree but the boy squirrel stayed on the ground. "That's strange," said the fox. "Usually squirrels are afraid of me and run up the nearest tree."

"Listen," said the boy squirrel. "Did you ever try to climb a tree after playing with a girl for twenty minutes?"

Just look to your own situation! Buddha has a different space, different context, a different world. You cannot follow him -- literally you cannot follow him. Metaphorically you can understand him and you can be tremendously benefited by him.

You ask me, Sudhakar, "Why are you against following someone who knows the secrets of life?"

How do you know that someone knows the secrets of life? That is just a belief. Unless YOU know the secrets of life, you will never know that someone else knows them. And following somebody just out of belief you may be getting into trouble. He may not know at all. He may be a convincing talker; he may be arguing better than you can argue. He can silence you in argument; that does not mean that he knows. He may be more articulate than you are, he may have studied the scriptures. Even the Devil can quote the scriptures! How do you know that he knows the secrets of life? You can know only if you also know.

You can understand Buddha really only when you are also a buddha. You can understand Christ only when you are also a christ -- not by following them but by becoming awakened on your own accord.

Hence I say there is the need to discover the truth by yourself. The inner truth is different from the outer truth. The outer truth can be discovered by one person and then the whole world possesses it. For example, the theory of relativity was discovered by Albert Einstein. Now everybody else need not discover it again and again; that will be just wasting time. He took years to discover it; now if you are intelligent you can understand it within days. If you are really intelligent, then within hours. There is no need to waste years in discovering it again and again.

Somebody discovered -- Newton discovered -- the law of gravitation. Now you need not go and sit in a garden and wait for the apple to fall and then brood over it and then come to the conclusion that there must be a certain magnetic force in the earth which

pulls things downwards. Now, if everybody has to do that there are not so many gardens and there are not so many apple trees, and apples may not oblige you. You may go on sitting under the tree for hours, days, months; they may not fall.

And do you know, even before Newton they used to fall and thousands of people must have watched them falling, but nobody discovered the law of gravitation. So there is no certainty that even if they oblige you and fall in the right time that you will discover the law of gravitation. There is no need -- Newton has done it for you, for all, forever.

This is the quality of the outer, objective truth: once discovered it becomes universal. The inner truth has a totally different quality: it always remains individual, it never becomes universal.

Buddha discovers it but he cannot convey it; he cannot adequately express it, he cannot make it universal. It remains essentially individual. And whatsoever he does is just inadequate; it never fulfills the great need of the masses -- that they need not discover it anymore. Buddha has discovered it, Jesus has discovered it; now you can simply follow it.

This is the beauty of the inner truth, that you have to discover it again and again afresh. And the very discovery is such a bliss that it is good that one person has not finished it forever; otherwise there would have been no spiritual quest left. Buddha is not the first; there had been other awakened people before him. One enlightened person would have done it and then in every primary school you could teach it to everybody. The whole joy of discovering it would have been lost. It is beautiful that the subjective truth remains individual. Thousands of times it has been discovered, but it has not become universal yet and it will never become universal; it will remain individual. You will have to seek and search it on your own.

And when you find it you will be surprised: it is the same truth that was found by Buddha, it is the same truth that was found by Mahavira, the same truth that was found by Mohammed or Moses; it is not a different truth. But this is the quality of the inner world -- that you have to go there all alone. Nobody can accompany you and nobody can give you ready-made maps.

It is a very mysterious world inside; the outside world is not so mysterious, maps are possible. But the inner world remains a secret, a hidden secret. Even when you have known it and you would like to share it you cannot. All that you can share is your desire to share, that's all -- your deep compassion to share, your love for others. But the truth remains as unexpressed as before.

Then why do masters speak at all? They speak not to share the truth -- they know perfectly well it cannot be shared. They speak to make your thirst for truth aflame. They speak to make you more thirsty, more hungry. They speak to create a tremendous longing in you to go inwards. Their presence, their vibe, their song, their dance, all indicate towards one thing: go in.

The fourth question:

Question 4

Beloved Master,

I DON'T WANT TO DIE AND YET I AM HERE WITH YOU. AM I CRAZY?

Prem Svarupo, sane people don't come here, because the so-called sane people are the most insane in the world. The sane people are those who crucified Jesus. The sane people are those who poisoned Socrates. The sane people are those who made many efforts to kill Buddha. The sane people are in politics; they don't come to the enlightened ones, to the awakened ones. Only crazy people can come -- but these crazy people, in the real sense, are the sanest.

It is a paradox. The people who followed Jesus must have been crazy -- they were crazy. Everybody was saying that they were crazy. The people who followed Buddha must have been crazy. Even Buddha's father was saying to people, "You are crazy! He is crazy and you are crazy! He has renounced his kingdom -- he is a fool. And now so many people are renouncing and going with him. What can you find in the jungles? Sitting under trees with closed eyes, what can you find? If you want to do something, do it in the world. If you want to find something, find it in the world."

When Buddha came back to his home after his enlightenment, his father was very angry and he said, "You ARE crazy, but I can forgive you because I have the heart of the father."

Buddha laughed and he said, "First say everything that you wanted to tell me all these twelve years I have not been here in the house. You must have accumulated much anger -- you first cathart! When you have thrown all the garbage out, then there is a possibility to communicate something to you."

The father was shocked. What is he saying? It was not expected at all! For a moment there was silence. And Buddha said, "Just look at me. I am not the same person who had gone. I am a totally different person because my inner being has changed. I am reborn. I am not your son anymore. I am not this body and I am not this mind either. I have attained to the beyond.

"So first throw out all your anger so that you can see me, so that your eyes are clear enough to recognize the change that has happened in me -- a radical change. The person that had gone has died, and the person that has come today is a totally different person -- of course in the same continuum. Hence I look the same way from the outside only; from the inside I am not the same at all."

Svarupo, you ARE crazy! All of my sannyasins are crazy. Only crazy people can be religious -- crazy in the eyes of the world but not crazy in the eyes of the awakened ones, because in the eyes of the awakened ones the world is insane. The world is a big madhouse; you have escaped from it. You are learning how to be sane, how to be saner. You ask me, "I don't want to die, and yet I am here with you."

This happens to everybody. When you come here you start learning a new language, the language of transformation. You start seeing a new truth: that if the ego dies, then you will be really born. If the ego is dropped, then God can enter in you. The ego is the barrier.

When you come here for the first time, you come for improvement, for growth -- not to die. But slowly slowly, you start understanding that growth is possible only if first you allow a certain death: the death of the ego.

Then fear grips you and a contradiction arises in you, a double bind. The intelligent part of you starts saying, "Die -- don't waste time." And the unintelligent part -- your past -- says, "What are you doing? Are you crazy? Who knows what will happen after death? If you drop your personality and your ego, how will you keep yourself together? You may start falling apart! How will you control yourself?" You are afraid of so many things that can happen to you if the control is lost.

Hence you start doing a very contradictory work: on one hand you dismantle yourself, and on the other hand you put yourself together again. This can continue for years.

The fashionably dressed girl these days wears pants to make her look like a boy, and see-through blouses just to prove that she is not.

This is a double bind! And this is bound to happen.

Sooner or later, one day, Svarupo, you will have to take a decisive step. You will have to come out of this double bind, because this is wasting time, energy, opportunity. Who knows? I may not be here tomorrow -- or the next moment. This opportunity may be lost. Right now the door is open and I am beckoning you, "Come in!" Tomorrow the door may disappear and there will be nobody to beckon you to come in. And then you will suffer much, then you will be in deep anguish. Then you will cry and weep for the spilt milk.

Right now is the time to listen to the call, to the challenge. I am a challenge, a call: a challenge of the unknown calling you towards the uncharted sea. I know you are afraid and I know that to leave the shelter of the shore is difficult. You have lived on the shore so long and you have made such a beautiful hut. So cozy it is there, with no fear of the waves and the ocean and the dangers of the unknown. You seem to be very secure there, and I am calling you, "Come out of your cozy security!" -- because it is just a deception.

Death is bound to destroy all. Before death destroys, take the decisive step on your own accord. Move into the unknown. Before death kills you, let the ego be killed by you yourself. Then there will be no death for you, then you can transcend all death.

Great courage, of course, is needed, but if you have taken the courage to be a sannyasin, now don't look backwards. For the sannyasin there is no way to look backwards. Listen to the challenge and go wholeheartedly towards it.

Yes, it will look more and more crazy because you will see you are committing a kind of suicide. But once you have committed the suicide -- the suicide of the ego -- you will be surprised: to live in the ego was REAL suicide and to get out of it is to attain to absolute freedom. Buddha calls that freedom nirvana.

The fifth question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS TALKING AND TELLING JOKES ABOUT THE JEWS?
WHY NOT ABOUT INDIANS?

Shankara, Indians don't have jokes. They are such holy people, you know, so spiritual! They don't have any sense of humor. I have never come across a single originally Indian joke. All the jokes are imported. Sometimes I wonder why the government allows it! On everything else there is great taxation; only jokes can be imported and you don't have to pay three hundred percent tax on them. Indians don't have jokes, hence it is very difficult to tell Indian jokes.

And Jews are the most rich in jokes; they have the best jokes. They are very earthly people, just the opposite of the Indians. Indians have this nonsense of being very holy, and Jews are very earthly people. Their religion is also very earthly. They don't have any idea of renouncing the world. Their rabbis are not celibates; their rabbis are as ordinary as anybody else. This is something beautiful -- I appreciate it. These hierarchies should disappear. The greatest snobbishness exists in the minds of the so-called religious people. And India is very snobbish; hence they have not created any jokes.

Jews are earthly people, ordinary people. They have enjoyed their ordinariness, and they have a great sense of humor. In fact, their sense of humor has been a great blessing to them; otherwise, they have suffered so much.... For two thousand years they have been suffering all over the world. Without that sense of humor they would not have survived. Their sense of humor has helped them survive, has helped them to always resurrect again and again. They have been crushed and killed and destroyed, and yet their spirit has come back again. They could laugh at misery, at suffering. Laughter has been a great boon.

And it is very difficult to change a Jewish joke into anything else! Sometimes I try, but it loses its beauty.

A man said to a friend, "Let me tell you a joke."

"Okay," said the friend.

"Well, a Jewish man was walking down the street when he ran into...."

"Stop!" cried the friend. "Why are you always telling jokes about Jews?"

"Okay, okay, I will tell it differently. A Chinaman is walking down the street when he runs into another Chinaman. 'Are you coming to my son's bar mitzvah?' he asked."

It is very difficult to change the joke. Jewish jokes have a flavor of their own, and if you translate them, they lose that flavor; they become flat.

And why are you worried, Shankara? Why does it hurt you? Every race in the world has contributed something. Every race has lived in different situations, different climates, has evolved differently, has its own personality. Jews have their own personality, and Jewish jokes are very essential to that personality. They know how to

laugh; they know how to laugh at themselves too. That is something really beautiful. It is easy to laugh at others; the real laughter is when you can laugh at yourself.

The sixth question:

Question 6

BELOVED MASTER,

SOMETIMES WHEN I HEAR YOU READING A QUESTION MY FIRST REACTION IS, "WHAT KIND OF A STUPID QUESTION IS THIS?" DON'T YOU EVER FEEL THAT WAY?

Prem Malik, once in a while... for example, reading this question.

The last question:

Question 7

BELOVED MASTER

I WOULD LIKE TO TRY EXPERIMENTING WITH ALCOHOL A LA GURDJIEFF, EXCEPT I AM BROKE. CAN I HAVE AN ALCOHOL ALLOWANCE?

Deva Shraddan, George Gurdjieff would not have given you that experiment. That was given only to people who are against alcohol! For example, if Morarji Desai had gone to George Gurdjieff, then he would have forced him to drink alcohol -- instead of his own urine! But not for you.

So it is very difficult for me to allow you an alcohol allowance -- that would be against the spirit of George Gurdjieff. He would never forgive me!

The essential core of the experiment is to disturb you, to shatter you, to shatter your patterns, fixed patterns. If you are desiring alcohol, then that is the LAST thing that is going to shatter you. It will be fulfilling, it will not be shattering. Instead of alcohol, start drinking the water of life!

"You know, you are the first man I have met whose kisses make me sit up and open my eyes."

"Really?"

"Yes. Usually they have the opposite effect."

With you, alcohol will not be of any help; the water of life may have the right effect. You may open your eyes and sit up. And one thing more is good about it: you can be broke and still you can enjoy it. No allowance is needed, so Laxmi need not worry about it. It gives you total self-dependence.

One Saturday night George ended up at a party in an unfamiliar apartment building. He got very drunk and somehow found his way home in the wee hours. When he woke up the next afternoon with a terrible hangover, he realized that he had left his jacket, tie, shirt and shoes at the party.

With much difficulty he found the apartment building, but he had no idea which apartment he had been in. The only thing he remembered about it was a magnificent gold toilet.

So he knocked at the first apartment. The door was opened by a man with a hangover.

"Hello," said George. "Did you have a party here last night?"

"We sure did!" groaned the man.

"And do you have a gold toilet?"

"A gold toilet? No, we sure don't."

So George had to go to the next door, and so on for three floors. Everyone was recovering from a party, but no one knew anything about a gold toilet. By the time he got to the last apartment, George was beginning to think he had imagined the gold toilet. The door was opened by a man with a hangover.

"Uh, hello," said George. "Did you have a party here last night?"

"We sure had a party here!" groaned the man.

"And do you by any chance have a gold toilet?"

There was a long silence.

Finally the man shouted back over his shoulder, "Hey, Harry -- here is the guy who shit in your tuba!"

So, Shraddan, the allowance can be allowed... but what about other people's tubas? You will create trouble. If you listen to my advice, forget the whole idea. It is good that you are broke. This is called a blessing in disguise. If you were not broke you would have gone a la Gurdjieff, and that would have led you into more trouble.

Gurdjieff certainly forced people to drink, but only the people who were against alcohol. He used to make toasts every night for all the kinds of idiots in the world. He had twenty-six categories of idiots. I don't know to which category you would belong, but you must belong to some category. Unless you are awakened you are bound to belong to some category or other.

An idiot is a person who is trying to find joy where joy does not exist at all, who is trying to search for something which he has never lost in the first place. The enlightened person is one who has looked into his being before searching for anything anywhere else. It is better to look in your own house. He has looked in and has found it there. Now his search has disappeared.

The person who is interested in alcohol must be living in misery, in a kind of suffering. That's why he wants somehow to forget it all. Alcohol is nothing but a chemical strategy to forget your miseries, anxieties, your problems, to forget yourself.

My whole effort here, Shraddan, is to help you to remember yourself -- and you want to forget yourself. By forgetting yourself you will be creating more and more hell for yourself and for others. Remember, rather, remember yourself.

My methods are different from George Gurdjieff's. I am not in favor of any alcoholic beverages. I am not in favor of any psychedelic drugs either, because they all create illusory worlds for you and they all are distractions. They make you more and more oblivious of your own being, unaware of your own self.

My work is based in awareness. The word 'awareness' is the golden key here, the master key. You have to learn to be more aware. Howsoever painful it is in the beginning, be more aware, because it is by becoming more aware that one day you will become part of the celebration of the whole.

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal inexhaustible law.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #13

Chapter title: All words are lies

2 January 1980 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE ALL WORDS LIES?

Peter Hendrickson, truth is an experience so profound that it is inexpressible, so vast that no word can contain it. Words are small things; they have a certain utility, but they have limitations. And truth has no limitations; it is vaster than the sky. Truth means the whole existence.

When you disappear into the whole you know it. Saying that you know it is not accurate; rather, you feel it. Or, to be even more accurate, you BECOME it. When you have become the whole it is impossible to say it. And truths need to be said; they have an intrinsic quality that they have to be shared.

Hence words are only hypothetical; they can be used, but one should not believe in them. They should be used as stepping-stones. Ultimately they are all lies; at the most, approximate reflections, but a reflection is a lie. The moon in the sky and the moon reflected in the lake are not the same. The face in the mirror is not really your face; it is just an illusion. There is nothing in the mirror.

But small children become very much concerned about the face in the mirror -- their own face. When for the first time a small child is put before a mirror he thinks he is seeing somebody sitting in front of him. He tries to catch hold of the child. If he cannot -- and certainly he cannot catch hold -- he tries to go behind the mirror. Maybe the child is hiding behind.

And this is the situation of people who believe in words. But in a way the mirror is useful. By saying that the reflection is a lie I am not saying that it is of no use. If you understand, it says something ABOUT the truth, not the truth itself; it indicates. A finger pointing to the moon is not the moon, but it has tremendous utility: it can point to the moon. If you become too obsessed with the finger, that is your fault, not the fault of the finger. If you forget the finger -- and you have to forget it if you want to see the moon -- then the finger has served its purpose.

Even lies can help you to reach to the truth; otherwise buddhas would not have spoken at all. Unless lies can help you in some way to reach to the truth, words would not have been used at all. No Bible, no Koran, no Gita, no DHAMMAPADA, would have existed.

When Buddha became enlightened, for seven days he remained silent, thinking, "What is the use of saying things to people which cannot be said? -- and even if you say them,

which are bound to be misunderstood? Moreover, if somebody is capable of understanding your words, he is bound to be capable of finding truth on his own."

The story says, then the gods from heaven descended. They touched the feet of Buddha and they prayed to him that he should speak.

Buddha said, "For what? Ninety-nine percent of the people are not going to understand at all, and the one percent perhaps may be able to understand, but that one percent who can understand through words will be able to find the truth even if I don't say anything about it at all. So what is the point of saying it?"

The gods were puzzled. The logic was right, but still something was wrong, because in the ancient days other buddhas had spoken. Then they conferred together to find out how to argue with Buddha. And they found a way; and it is good that they could find a way; otherwise we would have missed these tremendously significant messages of Buddha.

They came back and they said, "You are right; the majority will never understand. And there are a few people who will reach to truth even if you don't say anything. But can't you imagine that there are a few who are in between these two groups, just on the boundary line? If you speak, that will give them a challenge, inspiration. If you don't speak they may be lost. Speak for those few who are just on the borderland, who can be lost without your words and who can find the light with the help of your words."

You are right, Hendrickson: all words are lies, because when you experience you cannot put it into words. How to put love into words? And love is not a very rare experience. How to put beauty into words? Has any poet succeeded yet? Only the fools think that they have succeeded. The greater the poet, the more he is aware of his failure. Has any painter been able to paint the beauty that he experiences? No great painter is ever satisfied. A tremendous discontent follows him his whole life like a shadow. It haunts him. He goes on trying again and again and again; his whole life is a long failure, a tragedy. His great paintings are great for us, but he knows that he has failed. They are great for us because we don't know what beauty is. If these great paintings had not been there we would not have been aware of many things.

It is said that if all the paintings of the world disappear, you will not be able to see the beauty of a sunset. You will not be able to see the beauty of a roseflower. You will not be able to see the beauty of a bird on the wing. You have become able to see it because painters for centuries have been preparing the right context to see it. But ask the painters themselves. Ask a Van Gogh or a Rabindranath Tagore or Nandalal Bose, and they will say that they have failed. What they had seen was something totally different. It was so alive, so pulsating! And the painting is dead; it is nothing but canvas and color. How can you put a sunset on the canvas? It will be a still life and the sunset -- the real sunset -- is dynamic, it is moving, it is moment to moment changing. Your painting will be just a framed phenomenon -- and the sunset has no frame to it.

How can you sing a song that relates your experience of love? It is impossible; all words are inadequate. So first, when you try to express your experience, ninety percent of it is

lost. And when somebody hears it, the remaining ten percent is distorted. Even if one percent reaches to the other person it is more than you can ask.

When I say something to you I know how much is already lost. When I see in your eyes I again know whatsoever was left in the words has been distorted by your mind. Your mind is continuously trying to allow only that which fits with it; it does not allow that which goes against it. It does not hear it at all, and it hears only that which is nothing but a reflection of its own past.

The analyst was concerned about the results of a Rorschach test he had just given for the patient, who associated every ink blot with some sort of sexual activity.

"I want to study the results of your test over the weekend and I would like to see you Monday," he said to the patient.

"Okay, Doc. I am going to a stag party tomorrow night. Any chance I might borrow those dirty pictures of yours?"

What he sees he believes is there; and what he sees is not there, it is his projection. What he hears may not be said at all, but one can hear it very clearly, so clearly that it is impossible not to believe in it. Your mind is coloring everything every moment.

Leonora went into a drugstore to buy film. When she came out she was ripping mad. "Rodney, you go into that store and cut that man real good!" she said to her boyfriend.

"Why, honey," asked Rodney, "what happened?"

"I told him I wanted some film," she explained, "and he had the nerve to ask me what was the size of my Brownie!"

You can read something which is not written. You can hear something which is not told. You can see something which does not exist anywhere except in your own imagination. Then words become farther and farther and farther away from the truth. Words are lies: lies in the sense that they are incapable of transferring the real, the existential. In the very transfer it dies.

One poet had gone to the sea early in the morning. It was a beautiful sunrise, and the waves dancing in the early sun, and the cool sand, and the salty air.... He felt so alive, he experienced such exquisite joy, that he wanted to share it with his girlfriend who was in a hospital, who was ill and could not come to the seabeach.

So the poet brought a beautiful box, opened the box to the sunrays, to the wind, closed the box, sealed it from everywhere so nothing escaped out of it, brought the box to the hospital. Tremendously happy he was, and he said to his girlfriend, "I have brought something so beautiful you may not have ever seen. Such a beautiful sunrise, such beautiful waves, such fresh air, such coolness, such freshness!"

And he opened the box and there was nothing -- no sun, no air, no coolness, no freshness.

You cannot catch hold of beauty in a box. You cannot catch hold of beauty, truth, love, in words. They are very poor. But nothing is wrong with them; they are useful in the ordinary world. When you move into the inner you are moving into the extraordinary. If you are alert, they can be used and they can be used profitably. Yes, lies can become stepping-stones towards truth.

An American G.I. standing outside a cathedral in Paris saw a magnificent wedding procession enter. "Who is the bridegroom?" he asked a Frenchman standing next to him. "Je ne sais pas," was the reply.

A few minutes later the soldier inspected the interior of the cathedral himself and saw a coffin being carried down the aisle. "Whose funeral?" he demanded of the attendant. "Je ne sais pas," said the attendant.

"Holy mackerel!" exclaimed the soldier. "He certainly didn't last long!"

Words have to be understood; they have to be understood according to the person who has spoken them. You should not bring your own mind in. You should keep your mind a little out of the way. The more you become capable of keeping your mind out of the way, the more is the possibility that you can use words as stepping-stones. Otherwise words will create a jungle and you will be lost in it.

In Leipzig, where one third of all street names have been changed since the Russian occupation, trolley conductors are required to call out both old and new names to make it easier for visitors to find their way.

The other day, the conductor of a car passing through the center of the city made the required announcement: "Karl Marx Square, formerly Augustus Square."

A passenger about to alight shouted back, "Auf Wiedersehen, formerly Heil Hitler!"

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WOULD YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDITIONING AND DISCIPLINE?

Prem Dharmendra, there is a great difference. They are totally different dimensions, and not only different but diametrically opposite too. Conditioning is something forced from the outside upon you against your will, against your consciousness. It is to destroy you, it is to manipulate you. It is to create a pseudo personality so that your essential man is lost.

The society is very much afraid of your reality. The church is afraid, the state is afraid, everybody is afraid of your essential person, your essential being, because the essential being is rebellious, intelligent. It cannot be easily reduced to slavery. It cannot be exploited. Nobody can use your essential being as a means; your essential being is an end unto itself.

Hence the whole society tries in every possible way to disconnect you from your essential core, and it creates a false, plastic personality around you and it forces you to become identified with it. That's what it calls education. It is not education; it is mis-education. It is destructive, it is violent.

This whole society, up to now, has been very violent with the individual. It does not believe in the individual; it is against the individual. It tries in every possible way to destroy you for its own purposes. It needs clerks, it needs stationmasters, deputy-collectors, policemen, magistrates, it needs soldiers. It does not need human beings.

We have failed, up to now, in creating a society which needs human beings, simple human beings.

The society is interested that you should be more skillful, more productive, and less creative. It wants you to function like a machine, efficiently, but it does not want you to become awakened. It does not want buddhas and christs -- Socrates, Pythagoras, Lao Tzu. No, these people are not needed at all by the society. If sometimes they happen, they don't happen because of the society; they happen in spite of the society.

It is a miracle how a few people have been able sometimes to escape from this great prison. The prison is so great, it is so difficult to escape out of it. And even in escaping from one prison you will enter into another because the whole earth has become a prison. You can become a Mohammedan from a Hindu or you can become a Christian from a Mohammedan or you can become a Hindu from a Christian, but you are simply changing your prison. You can become a German from being an Indian or you can become a Chinese from being an Italian, but you are simply changing prisons -- political, religious, social prisons. Maybe for a few days the new prison would look like freedom -- only because of its newness; otherwise it is not freedom.

Free society is still an idea that has to be materialized.

This whole slavery of man depends on conditioning. And conditioning starts even when you are in your mother's womb. Now they have found ways to condition the child in the mother's womb. In Russia they have developed certain kinds of belts which the pregnant woman can wear. Those belts press certain points in the growing child's brain and that pressure will create a robot. He will be born like a machine. He will be always obedient, faithful to the state, faithful to communism, faithful to the communist holy trinity -- or unholy trinity -- Marx, Engels, Lenin. He will believe in DAS KAPITAL, just as others believe in the Bible. Nobody reads the Bible, nobody reads DAS KAPITAL.

I have met many communists; I have not seen a single communist who has read DAS KAPITAL from the beginning to the end. Everybody has a copy. Russian books are so cheap and they look so good, they are bound so beautifully, that you can decorate your drawing room with Russian books. But nobody reads them, just like no Hindu reads the Vedas. There is nothing much to read either.

But conditioning starts from the mother's womb or, at the most, the moment you are born. You are circumcised and you become a Jew. You are baptized and you become a Christian, and so on, so forth. You are taken to the church and to the temple and to the mosque, and you are being brought up in a certain atmosphere where you will find all

are Mohammedans or all are Christians or all are Hindus. And naturally the child is bound to follow the people who are around him.

By the time he is twenty-five and comes back from the university he is utterly conditioned, and so deeply conditioned that he will not be even aware of the conditioning. Everything has been fed into his biocomputer. And the society punishes those who are reluctant, resistant to these conditionings. It rewards those, with gold medals, prizes, even Nobel Prizes; it rewards those who are very willing to be slaves, who are willing to serve the vested interests.

Holston was hired as a ranch hand in Texas. One day he approached Davis, the foreman. "What do you do for fun here on the prairie?"

"Well," replied the foreman, "we got a Mexican cook on the ranch and every Saturday night we dress him in women's clothes and six of us take him dancing."

"Not me!" declared Holston. "I don't go for that kind of stuff."

"Neither does the Mex," says Davis, "that's why it takes six of us."

And it is not only a question of sex. The whole society, millions of people around you, are conditioning you, knowingly, unknowingly. They have been conditioned. They may not be aware that they are destructive and violent. They may be thinking that they are being helpful to you. They may be thinking that they are doing all this great service to you out of compassion, because they love humanity. They have been conditioned so deeply that they are unaware what they are doing to their children.

The teachers, the lecturers, the professors, they are the instruments, subtle instruments of conditioning people. The priests, the psychoanalysts, they are very clever and very efficient people at conditioning; they know the whole strategy of it. They know how to manipulate, distort, how to give you a pseudo personality and take away your essential core.

Discipline is totally different. Discipline is out of your own choice; it is out of your own will. Discipline, the very word, comes from a root which means learning. Discipline means you start learning on your own, because nobody seems to teach you the truth. People are interested in teaching you Hinduism, communism, Mohammedanism; nobody is interested in teaching you the truth. When you start seeking, searching, learning, on your own -- knowing perfectly well that nobody is going to support you, you have to go alone -- discipline begins.

Discipline is your protection against conditioning. Discipline is your effort to get rid of all conditioning. Discipline is your rebellion, your revolution.

To be a disciple simply means to be with a man who is not going to condition you. A master is one who unconditions you. That is the definition of a true master: one who UNconditions you, simply unconditions you, and does not REcondition you.

That is one of the objections against me raised in India and in other countries, too: that I am giving people so much freedom that they will misuse it. I know that freedom can be misused if it is not rooted in meditation, but freedom is such a supreme value that even if there is a risk of misuse, it HAS to be given. Slavery can never be misused by the slave

because he is not his own master; then too, it is slavery and is continuously being misused by those who are in power. Slavery is a sin, and howsoever decorated, it is ugly. Freedom can be misused, but it is better to misuse freedom than to be a slave, because you cannot misuse freedom for long.

Freedom -- its use and misuse both -- gives insight. One learns only through mistakes. That is the way of maturity. Maybe in the interim period, when for the first time you come out of the prison, you may misuse your freedom for a little while. You may drink too much, eat too much, but for how long?

And this freedom that a master gives is given through making you more conscious, more aware. And that is the safety valve: the more you are aware, the less is the possibility of misusing freedom -- because misusing it will be suicidal.

Discipline is that which you accept on your own. You are not forced to be a sannyasin; a deep longing arises in you. Something hidden in you takes the challenge. Some seed sprouts... you hear some unheard music... you become attracted to some unknown, mysterious force. But the decision is always yours; it is not imposed on you. YOU decide that you would like to learn, that you would like to seek and search. Out of that longing for truth, discipline begins.

And you are always free to stop. You are always free to drop out of sannyas. You are always free not to be related to me anymore. The guards on the gate are for outsiders so that they cannot enter inside unless they are ready; the guards are not for the insiders to prevent them from leaving. That is the difference. In a jail the guards are for the insiders so that they cannot get out.

Here there are guards, but they are not for the insiders. If somebody wants to get out he gets out with all my blessings. It was his decision to be in; it is his decision to drop out of it. He is a free soul. It is nobody else's business to impose anything upon him.

Dharmendra, discipline comes out of your own inner feel, out of your own love. It is surrender but it is not a slavery. It is a surrender but not a slavery because YOU are doing it. If it is forced, then it is slavery, then it is conditioning.

Avoid all conditioning situations. Avoid people who condition you, even though they say it is for your own sake; even though they say it is for your own good, beware of all those poisoners. They have done enough harm to humanity. It is because of these people that real humanity has not yet been born.

My whole effort here is to bring a new human being on the earth: free, alert, conscious, responsible, doing things according to his own inner feelings, likings, leanings, not serving somebody else's purpose, living his life according to his own light.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT COMMUNISM?

Nagesh, I will not waste my time in giving you my opinion about communism. The whole thing is rubbish, but I will tell you five stories.

The first story:

"Who is your father?" a schoolboy was asked by Khrushchev when he was in charge of Soviet Russia.

"Nikita Khrushchev is my father," replied the lad.

"And who is your mother?"

"The Communist Party."

"Very good. Now tell me, what would you like to be when you grow up?"

"An orphan," replied the child.

The second:

At a Russian factory, workers were asked to choose a new workers' committee by secret ballot. Each man, upon approaching the ballot box, was handed a sealed envelope and told to deposit it through the slot at the top of a cardboard box.

Vasili slit open the envelope and began to examine the ballot.

"Hey," shouted a supervisor. "You can't do that."

"But I want to know who I'm voting for," explained the worker.

"You must be mad," claimed the supervisor. "Don't you realize that the ballot is secret in the Soviet Union?"

The third:

An amateur radio ham went delirious with excitement when he caught a newscast straight from Moscow on his set.

"Our great athlete, Ivan Ivanovitch," the announcer was saying, "has just smashed all existing records for the two-hundred-yard dash, the mile run, the five-mile run, and the one-hundred-mile run, overcoming a blizzard, a range of mountains, and complete lack of water. Unfortunately Ivanovitch's fantastic performance was in vain. He was captured and brought back to Russia."

The fourth:

When Stalin's body was removed from the Lenin mausoleum in Red Square and buried near the Kremlin walls, a small boy asked his grandmother, "What kind of man was Lenin?"

"Lenin was a very great man," she said.

"And what kind of man was Stalin?" asked the child.

"Sometimes he was a very evil man," said the old woman.

"Babushka, what kind of man is Leonid Brezhnev?"

"It is difficult to say, child," replied the grandmother. "When he dies, we will find out."

The fifth and the last:

At a Communist Party convention, one of the delegates kept yelling, "Long live Brezhnev!"

The chairman tried to hush him saying, "Remember you used to yell 'Long live Khrushchev!'"

"Right," said the delegate. "And is he living?"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT A MAN LIKE JESUS CAN COMMIT MISTAKES.
LISTENING TO YOU SAY THAT, I WAS VERY MUCH HURT.

Ronald, this is conditioning. You have been told -- centuries of conditioning is behind it -- that a man like Jesus cannot commit any mistake. Why? If you cannot believe it, you cannot believe that Jesus is human either. To err is human. Yes, he will not commit the same mistake again, that's true. To commit the same mistake again is stupid; it is not human, it is simply stupid. But to commit a mistake is the only way in life to learn. Once it is perfectly okay to commit a mistake, and commit it with total awareness.

If it is a mistake you know it, and you know it so deeply and perfectly that you will never commit it again. But a man learns through committing mistakes. There is no other way of learning. If a man never commits a mistake he will never grow up. Jesus is a human being. Of course it is only through growing up that one day he becomes a divine flame. He was committing mistakes even to the very last.

My own understanding is that he became Christ only at the last moment on the cross. Just before he became a christ, a buddha, he committed the final and the last mistake, but he learned immediately. He must have been so aware even on the cross.

The last mistake was that when he was crucified he shouted at God, "Have you forsaken me?" This is distrust, this is doubt, this is a mistake; one of the greatest that a man can commit -- and a man like Jesus. But this is the last. "Why am I being tortured, what wrong have I committed?" He was complaining, he could not believe his own eyes that this was happening to him. He must have thought deep down -- somewhere a little part of his being must have remained unconscious, and in that dark corner this longing must have remained like a seed -- that "At the last moment God is going to save me. He will do a miracle and the whole world will know that I am the only begotten Son of God." Some unconscious longing... but even if a small part of your being remains unconscious you are not yet a christ.

From where comes this complaint, "Why have you forsaken me?" A great doubt arises, overwhelms him, because this is the last moment: if the miracle is not going to happen he is finished. But he must have been a man of rare awareness. He recognized it immediately, he saw the dark point, he saw the unconscious point. He became relaxed and he said, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Don't take any note of my complaint, I was foolish to say so. Whatsoever is your will is my will. There is no point in saying, 'Have you forsaken me?' If this is what you want, then this is what should happen. Then this is the miracle and I should not ask for anything else. I should not have a separate will of my own."

The moment he said, "Thy will be done," he dropped his separate will. Just a small part of his being must have remained, some hidden subtle ego must have remained lurking

somewhere. With the disappearance of that ego he became a flame of light. He became a buddha.

You cannot believe that a man like Jesus can commit mistakes because you cannot believe that Jesus is a man like you. And unless you believe that Jesus is a man like you, you cannot believe the other part of the story, that you are as divine as Jesus.

Remember these are two sides of the same coin. If you can believe Jesus is a man just like you, then you can also believe that you have the same potential as Jesus. If he can become a christ you can become a christ too.

A little introduction for a joke. This is an Italian story, the story of Pinocchio.

A carpenter, named Gepetto, is feeling very lonely and wishes to have a child. With some sticks of wood he creates a puppet -- with a red hat and a very pointed nose -- and calls it Pinocchio. Hardly has he finished it when Pinocchio kicks him in the leg -- and with this kick Gepetto realizes that this "son" will give him only trouble.

In fact, Pinocchio asks immediately for something to eat, and Gepetto, though very poor, manages to find some food for him and goes to bed himself without dinner. Pinocchio, without even thanking him, goes out, and this way for years he tortures his creator. He goes on doing one mischief after another until finally he is swallowed by a whale in the ocean.

Now forget this introduction as if I have not told you at all; only then will you understand the joke. I had to tell it to you; without it you would not understand the joke -- and that I have to tell you. Now forget all about it. I have not said any introduction to you.

Now the joke....

After forty years of hard work an old carpenter dies and goes to heaven. When he gets to the Pearly Gates he knocks on the door. Saint Peter opens it and says, "Yes?"

The old carpenter explains, "I am an old carpenter. I have worked hard for forty years, I never did any harm to anyone, and I am here for my reward."

Saint Peter replies, "I don't know about that. Wait here for a minute and I will go and get some information on you."

He goes inside and is about to talk to the boss, God, when he runs into Jesus. Jesus says, "Why are you all excited?" So Peter tells him the whole story: an old carpenter, worked hard for forty years, never did any harm to anyone.

Jesus listens to the story with mounting interest and asks, "Did he have white hair?"

Peter says, "Yes!"

"Little pixie eyeglasses with chromium frames?"

"Yes!"

"About so tall? Wearing a waistcoat, a little paunchy?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" says Peter.

Jesus runs to the Pearly Gates, throws open the door, takes a look at the little old man and cries at the top of his lungs, "Daddy!"

And the carpenter looks at him and joyously exclaims, "Pinocchio!"

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS THIS A BLESSING? AFTER BEING ALONE FOR A LONG TIME, I FELL IN LOVE WITH THREE WOMEN AT THE SAME TIME, WHICH WAS EASY IN THE BEGINNING. BUT AS SOON AS I STARTED TO GET INTO A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE, EITHER I RAN TO THE NEXT ONE OR SHE WANTED TO BE WITH SOMEONE ELSE. OF COURSE THE SAME HAPPENED AGAIN AS SOON AS I GOT IN TUNE WITH ONE OF THE OTHER WOMEN. SO JOY AND SUFFERING ARE PRETTY CLOSE TOGETHER, BUT I WONDER -- AM I AVOIDING SOMETHING?

Prem Aditya, don't you think three are more than enough? Do you think you are avoiding the fourth? One woman is enough to create hell, and you are asking me, "Is this a blessing?" It must be a curse in disguise.

"What has happened to Jack? I have not seen him for ages."

"Oh, he married the girl he rescued from drowning."

"And is he happy?"

"Rather! But he hates water now."

You must be a great soul -- either so unconscious that even three women cannot create any trouble for you, or so enlightened that "Who cares?"

While riding home from work one evening, three commuters became friendly in the club car and, after the third round, they began to brag about the relative merits of their respective marital relationships. The first proudly proclaimed, "My wife meets my train every evening and we've been married for ten years."

"That's nothing," scoffed the second. "My wife meets me every evening, too, and we've been married for seventeen years."

"Well, I have got you both beat, fellows," said the third commuter, who was obviously the youngest in the group.

"How do you figure that?" the first fellow wanted to know.

"I suppose you have got a wife who meets you every evening, too!" sneered the second.

"That's right," said the third commuter, "and I'm not even married."

Three women, and you are not even married! They will make a football of you. And you are asking, "Is this a blessing?" -- with a question mark of course. Be a little more careful. This is a dangerous place for people like you, Aditya. There are so many women here and if you go on like this soon nothing will be left of you, and I will lose unnecessarily a sannyasin. Think of me too.

Weinstein, a very wealthy businessman, had an unattractive daughter. He found a young man to marry her and after ten years they had two children.

Weinstein called his son-in-law into the office one day. "Listen," he said, "you have given me two beautiful grandchildren, you have made me very happy. I am gonna give you forty-nine percent of the business."

"Thank you, Pop!"

"Is there anything else I could do for you?"

"Yeah, buy me out!"

I am ready to buy you out whatsoever the price. You just inquire of the three women! Love is significant, a good learning situation, but only a learning situation. One school is enough, three schools are too many. And with three women you will not be able to learn much, you will be in such a turmoil. It is better to be with one, so that you can be more totally one with her, so that you can understand her and your own longings more clearly, so you are less clouded, less in anguish, because love in the beginning is only an unconscious phenomenon; it is biological, it is nothing very precious. Only when you bring your awareness to it, when you become more and more meditative about it, it starts becoming precious, it starts soaring high.

Intimacy with one woman or one man is better than having many superficial relationships. Love is not a seasonal flower, it takes years to grow. And only when it grows does it go beyond biology, and start having something of the spiritual in it. Just being with many women or many men will keep you superficial -- entertained maybe, but superficial; occupied certainly, but that occupation is not going to help in inward growth. But a one-to-one relationship, a sustained relationship so that you can understand each other more closely, is tremendously beneficial. Why is it so? And what is the need to understand the woman or the man?

The need is because every man has a feminine part in his being, and every woman has a masculine part in her being. The only way to understand it, the easiest way to understand it, the most natural way to understand it is to be in deep, intimate relationship with someone. If you are a man be in a deep, intimate relationship with a woman. Let trust grow so all barriers dissolve. Come so close to each other that you can look deep into the woman and the woman can look deep into you. Don't be dishonest with each other.

And if you are having so many relationships you will be dishonest, you will be lying continually. You will have to lie, you will have to be insincere, you will have to say things which you don't mean -- and they all will suspect. It is very difficult to create trust with a woman if you are having some other relationship. It is easy to deceive a man because he lives through the intellect; it is very difficult, almost impossible to deceive a woman because she lives intuitively. You will not be able to look directly into her eyes; you will be afraid that she may start reading your soul, and so many deceptive things you are hiding, so many dishonesties.

So if you are having many relationships you will not be able to dive deep into the psyche of the woman. And that is the only thing that is needed: to know your own

inner feminine part. Relationship becomes a mirror. The woman starts looking into you and starts finding her own masculine part; the man looks into the woman and starts discovering his own femininity. And the more you become aware of your feminine -- the other pole -- the more whole you can be, the more integrated you can be. When your inner man and your inner woman have disappeared into each other, have become dissolved into each other, when they are no longer separate, when they have become one integrated whole, you have become an individual.

Carl Gustav Jung calls it the process of individuation. He is right, he has chosen the right word for it. And the same happens to a woman. But playing with many people will keep you superficial, entertained, occupied, but not growing; and the only thing that matters ultimately is growth, growth of integration, individuality, growth of a center in you. And that growth needs that you should know your other part. The easiest approach is to know the woman on the outside first, so that you can know the woman inside.

Just like a mirror -- the mirror reflects your face, it shows you your face -- the woman becomes your mirror, the man becomes your mirror. The other reflects your face, but if you are having so many mirrors around you and running from one mirror to another and deceiving each mirror about the other you will be in a chaos, you will go nuts.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS WRONG WITH KNOWING MORE AND MORE ABOUT GOD? CAN IT NOT HELP THE SEEKER?

Kamalesh, knowing and knowledge are different. I am all for knowing and I am all against knowledge. Knowing is your insight, it is your capacity to see, it is philosia. Knowledge is philosophy. It is not your capacity to see, it is just your capacity to memorize what others have said. How is it going to help, knowing about God? A blind man can know about light; how is it going to help? A deaf man can know about music, he can read about music, he can even read music, but how is it going to help? It is not going to help at all. The danger is that the blind man may start thinking that he knows so much about light that he must be knowing light itself. And that's what happens to the knowledgeable people.

Knowing about God, they start thinking that they know God. To know love is one thing; to know about love is totally another. To know God is a transformation of your being; to know about God needs no transformation. You can just go to the library and collect information. You can go to the pundits and the scholars and accumulate information.

You ask me, "Can it not help the seeker?"

No, not at all. It will hinder. The seeker has to be empty, unprejudiced. The seeker has to be without any idea of what God is, or truth is. If he has some idea, the danger is he will project his idea on the existence and he will think that he has come to know the truth. Truth can be known only when you are utterly empty, when there is nothing to

distort or project inside you; when you are so silent that you are only receptive, not projective. In total receptivity truth is known.

Meditation is nothing but an effort to cleanse your mind of knowledge. Knowledge is dust that has gathered on the mirror of your being; it has to be cleaned.

A naked girl is standing, speaking endlessly to a naked man kneeling and embracing her belly, later lying supine at her feet. She says, "My life is empty... it is a mockery... I am nothing -- just a facade -- a shell... a dead and useless thing! I am twenty-six years old... and I have never had a meaningful relationship... never had a truly meaningful relationship.... I should not even admit that, I suppose. It is very humiliating! I have passed from one shallow sexual episode to another. That's the story of my entire life... one tawdry, shallow, clutching incident after another. My relationships have no deep, lasting significance -- if I could just ONCE lie down and have something meaningful happen!"

The man replies, from the floor, "Have you ever tried talking less... and lying down SOONER?"

People go on talking and talking about God. Better to be silent, better not to say anything but to sit. You don't know; it is better not to hide your ignorance in big words, in spiritual jargon. To know that "I don't know" is a great step towards real knowing. To know that "I know" without knowing is going astray, is going farther and farther away. Truth asks only one thing: Be silent, so that you can listen, so that you can hear the still, small voice within.

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY DO I CRY AT THE SUTRAS AND NOT LAUGH AT THE JOKES? IS IT BECAUSE I AM BLOCKED OR BRITISH? I KNOW THERE IS NO QUESTION. THE TRUTH IS THAT I WANT TO COME CLOSER.

Sagaro, feel blessed if you are blocked, because if you are British there is no remedy. I have not heard of any therapy that can help. Blocked persons can be unblocked. Encounter will do, Primal Therapy will do, Gestalt will do, and we have here at least ninety groups.

But if you are British, then I am helpless; then nothing can be done about it. To be British is like cancer: no remedy has been discovered yet. Then you will have to wait for the future. But I hope that you are not British; otherwise you would not have been here. Sometimes British people come here.... Anurag's mother has come, she is British. For weeks she has been here, and she has come only to one lecture, yesterday. And what was her response to it? Her response was that I confirmed her ideas.

Just being here and being a sannyasin is enough proof that you are not British. And don't be worried: if you can cry at the sutras, this is a good beginning. Sooner or later

you will start laughing at the jokes -- because a person who can cry, can laugh. The real problem is with those people who cannot cry; they cannot laugh either.

These are not two different things, they are the same. Crying and laughter are deeply related. Whenever you are overwhelmed by something, either you cry or you laugh. Crying is not necessarily sad, laughter is not necessarily joyous. Sometimes crying is a joy, sometimes laughter is ugly and maybe just a device to hide your sadness.

Remember one thing: it is only man who can cry and laugh. No other animal can do it, because no other animal is conscious enough to feel overwhelmed. Only man has that much consciousness that he can feel overwhelmed, flooded with something so much that either he starts crying or he starts laughing -- and both capacities are tremendously needed.

Crying will help you to relieve your tensions, laughter will help you to dance, to sing. Both are interlinked. Crying prepares the way for laughter: your tears will cleanse your heart, and then laughter will arise. If the first process has started the second is not far away.

The eighth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

THE OTHER DAY YOU SAID THAT THE OLD PEOPLE BECOME CUNNING. WHAT ARE YOUR GROUNDS FOR SAYING SO?

Kumarel, I am a crazy person. I don't say things because there are grounds to say them. I simply say something because I enjoy saying it. I cannot give you any proofs and I am never interested in proofs, but I can tell you a story. Those who understand, for them this will be a proof; and for those who don't understand, nothing can ever be a proof. I stated a simple phenomenon; no proofs are needed. Just watch, just watch yourself and others.

As you are growing older, if you don't start growing in awareness, you are bound to become cunning. These are the only two alternatives: either you become wise or you become cunning. If you don't become wise, you will have to become cunning. Cunning is a substitute for wisdom. Either become a buddha or you are bound to become cunning. And very few people become buddhas; others are out of necessity cunning. Life teaches them to be more cunning than others because it is such a struggle for survival and only the cunning ones survive.

Charles Darwin says that the fittest survive. That is not my observation. Not the fittest but the most cunning survive -- unless Darwin means by the fittest, the most cunning. Man is the most cunning animal; he is not the fittest, certainly not. Try to fight with a monkey and you will know who is fittest. Try to run with a horse and you will know who is fittest. Try to fly like a bird and you will know who is fittest. Try to see in the night like an owl and you will know who is fittest. You just look around: you are not the fittest animal on the earth. In fact man is the most unfit animal, the weakest.

Look at the human child. Can the human child survive without the support of the society and the family? But animal children survive; they are born more perfect. It is

only man's child who seems to be prematurely born, as if he needed at least nine months more in the womb. But the problem is that if he lives eighteen months in the womb then he cannot come out; it will be too late, he will be too big. So he comes out, but utterly helpless. The human child is helpless, weak; he has to be taught.

In fact he becomes of any worth only after twenty-five years -- that is one third of his life. He needs preparation to be worthy enough to compete in the world. Then why has man survived and all other animals have either disappeared or are disappearing? They have all been defeated for the simple reason that man is the most cunning. Because of his cunningness he could invent; he does not have strength enough to fight with any animal but he could invent weapons. He has not the strength to tear an animal apart just with his bare hands, but he has invented swords. Swords are nothing but magnified nails. He cannot use his teeth to kill so he has invented many things to kill. He is the most cunning, and as the centuries have passed he has become more and more cunning.

A farmer bought a new rooster for his chicken coop. He already had a rooster, but he felt it was getting too old to service all his chickens, of which he had quite a few.

When the farmer introduced the new rooster to all his chickens, the old rooster came up to the newcomer and arranged a meeting for later that night after the farmer went to bed.

"Listen," exclaimed the old rooster at the meeting that night, "that farmer thinks I'm too old to service all his chickens, but that's not true. I've still got a few good years left and I don't want to become the family's Sunday dinner prematurely. So let's make a deal!"

The deal that the old rooster had in mind was that the two roosters would get into a make-believe fight which would end up with the young rooster chasing the old-timer around the coop pretending not to be able to catch him. The noise of this make-believe altercation would bring out the farmer who would see the old rooster running faster than the new one and thus spare the old stud from the knife for a few years at least.

For doing this, the young rooster would get to fuck all the pretty chickens. The deal was made.

The next day the action started, with all the chickens squawking and the roosters cock-a-doodaling. The farmer came out and spied the new rooster chasing the old one. Picking up his rifle he shot the young rooster dead and exclaimed, "Goddamn! That is the third faggot rooster I've shot this week."

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,
IS REPRESSION ALWAYS BAD?

Prasado, absolutely bad, always bad, with no exceptions bad. Repression simply means you don't understand your life energies. Repression means you are forcing your life energies into the unconscious, throwing them into the basement of your being. There they will go on growing, there they will go on boiling, and sooner or later the explosion. That's why so many people go mad.

Madness is the outcome of repression. That's why so many people are mentally ill -- even if not mad, mentally disturbed -- all over the world. In America they say that out of four, three persons are mentally disturbed. And don't think that is so only for America; the only difference between America and other countries is that America has the latest data, that's all. If you want to know about India you cannot know anything because there is no data available. And America is more honest: if you ask a person anything he will answer it more sincerely than an Indian.

The Indian may be sexually boiling within but from his outside he will always keep that holier-than-thou look. He will not be sincere. You cannot find real figures in India about anything. If you ask any woman, "Have you ever fancied any other man except your husband?" she will say, "No. Never. Not only in this life but in no other life either. And not only in the past, in the future also, I am going to cling to this man." Now this is patent nonsense.

Unless you are utterly a rock inside it is impossible not to fancy someone once in a while, not to be attracted. If you have sensibility, sensitivity, intelligence, it is natural to be attracted once in a while. That does not mean that you are committing a sin; that simply means that you understand what beauty is. That simply means that you are observing life all around you.

It is very difficult to find any data in India. America in that way is the most sincere country in the world. They will say whatsoever is the case. Three persons are mentally ill out of four, and in India my own observation is that four are mentally ill out of four -- but they are blissfully unaware of it.

Repression of any kind is destructive to the body, to the mind, to the soul. Energies have to be transformed, not repressed. Energies are your potential wealth, raw; you have to polish them, then they can become great diamonds. These same energies, sexual energies, can become your spiritual liberation. Repressed you will be in a bondage.

I am not saying to become indulgent; that is going to the other extreme. Buddha will also not support your indulgence. He is absolutely for the middle way, the golden mean. Neither be repressive nor be indulgent. Be watchful, be alert; be friendly to your energies, sympathetic. They are your energies; don't create a rift, otherwise you will always be in conflict, and to fight with your own energies is an unnecessary dissipation. Fighting with your own energies, you are fighting with yourself: you cannot win. You will be simply wasting the whole opportunity of life. Be aware, don't repress, don't indulge. Be aware, be natural. Let energies be accepted and absorbed, and then the same energies, crude energies, become so refined, passing through awareness, that great flowers bloom in your being -- lotuses of enlightenment.

Unless that happens you will never feel at home in existence, you will never feel blissful, you will never feel what God is, you will never feel what nirvana is, what liberation is.

When a young nun comes to tell the mother superior that she has sinned with a man and wishes to do penance so she can be forgiven, the mother superior begins packing a suitcase.

"Oh, please don't put me out!" the young nun cries. "Where will I go? What will I do?" "I'm not putting you out," says the mother superior grimly, "it's me that's leaving. For thirty years here it's been nothing but fucking and forgiving, fucking and forgiving. Beginning now, I'm through doing the forgiving, and I'm going to get in on some of the fucking before it's too late."

Enough for today.