
Take It Easy, Vol 2

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"WE COME INTO THIS WORLD ALONE,
WE DEPART ALONE" --
THIS ALSO IS ILLUSION.
I WILL TEACH YOU THE WAY
NOT TO COME, NOT TO GO!

WE EAT, EXCRETE, SLEEP, AND GET UP;
THIS IS OUR WORLD.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO AFTER THAT
IS TO DIE.

I SHAN'T DIE, I SHAN'T GO ANYWHERE,
I'LL BE HERE;
BUT DON'T ASK ME ANYTHING,
I SHAN'T ANSWER.

WHATSOEVER IT MAY BE,
IT IS ALL PART OF THE WORLD OF ILLUSION,
DEATH ITSELF
NOT BEING A REAL THING.

SHOULD YOU WISH TO KNOW THE WAY
IN BOTH THIS WORLD,
AND THAT OTHER,
ASK A MAN OF MERCY AND SINCERITY.

A MONK ASKS MASTER PAI-CHANG,
"WHO IS THE BUDDHA?"
PAI-CHANG ANSWERS,
"WHO ARE YOU?"

THE PURPOSE OF THE BUDDHAS IS NOT TO INFORM YOU but to transform you. They want to bring a radical change in your consciousness, they want to change your very roots. They want to bring new eyes to you, new clarity. Their purpose is not to inform. They are not there to transfer some knowledge but to transplant some being. They want to share their light with you -- the purpose is not to inform but to enlighten.

Hence they don't bother what your question is. Their answers may sometimes look very irrelevant, absurd. They are not -- but they have a totally different kind of relevancy. They are relevant to you, not to your question.

Now, this monk asks Master Pai-Chang, "Who is the Buddha?" And Pai-Chang answers, "Who are you?"

See the point: he is turning the whole question into a totally new dimension. He is not answering, in fact he is giving a deeper question than the monk had asked -- he is answering with another question. "Who is the Buddha?" -- the answer is easy, he could have said, "Gautam Siddhartha." But that is irrelevant; he is not interested in the history of thought, he is not interested in history at all. He is not concerned with a certain man called Gautam Buddha, he is more concerned with a certain awakening that can happen in everybody. That is real Buddhahood.

He turns the question towards the questioner himself. He makes a sword out of the question and pierces the very heart. He says: "Who are YOU? Don't ask me about Buddhas, just ask one question: 'Who am I?' and you will know who the Buddha is -- because everyone is carrying the potential of being a Buddha; there is no need to look outside yourself.

Lao Tzu says: To find truth, one need not go out of his room. One need not even open the door, one need not even open his eyes -- because truth is your being. To know it is Buddhahood.

Remember it: the statements of Zen masters are not statements in the ordinary use of the word. They are not to convey something that you don't know. They are to shock you, provoke you, into a new quality of consciousness.

Listen to these sutras with this in your mind. Ikkyu is not propounding any philosophy. These are his shocks to his disciples -- and they have immense beauty and immense potential to shock anybody. Listen:

"WE COME INTO THIS WORLD ALONE,
WE DEPART ALONE..."

This has been said again and again, down through the ages. All the religious people have been saying this: "We come alone into this world, we go alone." All togetherness is illusory.

The very idea of togetherness arises because we are alone, and the aloneness hurts. We want to drown our aloneness in relationship....

That's why we become so much involved in love. Try to see the point. Ordinarily you think you have fallen in love with a woman or with a man because she is beautiful, he is beautiful. That is not the truth. The truth is just the opposite: you have fallen in love because you cannot be alone. And if a beautiful woman had not been available you would have fallen with an ugly woman too. So the beauty is not the question. If a woman had not been available at all you would have fallen with a man too. So the woman is not the question either.

You were going to fall. You were going to avoid yourself somehow or other. And there are people who don't fall in love with women or men -- then they fall in love with money. They start moving into money or into a power trip, they become politicians. That too is avoiding your aloneness. If you watch man, if you watch yourself deeply, you will be surprised -- all your activities can be reduced to one single source. The source is that you are afraid of your aloneness. Everything else is just an excuse. The real cause is that you find yourself very alone.

And to be alone is to be miserable. There seems to be nowhere to go, no one to relate to, no one to drown oneself in. Poetry will do, music will do, sex will do, alcohol will do -- but something is needed so you can drown your aloneness, so that you can forget that you are alone. This is the thorn in the soul that goes on hurting. And you go on changing your excuses.

The master's work is to bring you to the original cause. All your so-called love affairs are nothing but escapes. And I include ALL love affairs. The painter is in love with his paintings. And this is not an accident that if a man is too much involved in his poetry he will avoid women, because they will be a distraction. And women are naturally suspicious of a man who has any kind of hobby, any kind of interest, deep involvement, because then they feel jealous, then they know that he has another woman too. If a man is wed to science, the woman is as angry as if he were in love with some other woman. She does not want this science to stand between herself and him.

And the people who have been seekers and searchers and poets and painters, they have always remained bachelors. It is not just accidental. They have another kind of love affair; they don't need the woman, they don't need the man.

Just watch your mind. In one way and one thousand ways it is trying only one thing: "How to forget the fact that I am alone?"

Just the other day, I was reading these lines of T. S. Eliot:

ARE WE ALL IN FACT UNLOVING AND UNLOVABLE?
THEN ONE IS ALONE....

If love is not possible then one is alone. Love has to be MADE possible; if it is not possible it has to be created, believed in. If it is almost impossible then the illusion has to be created -- because one needs to avoid one's aloneness.

When you are alone you are afraid. Remember, the fear does not come from ghosts. When you are alone the fear comes from your aloneness. But we go on hiding that cause, because to see that cause is to be transformed by seeing it. When you are moving in a forest alone you are not really afraid of ghosts or thieves or robbers, because they are more in the crowd. What would they be doing in the forest? -- all their victims are available here.

When you are alone in the room and it is dark, you are not afraid of ghosts; ghosts are just

projections. You are really afraid of your aloneness -- that is the ghost. Suddenly you have to face yourself, suddenly you have to see your utter emptiness and aloneness and no way to relate. You have been shouting and shouting and nobody hears. You have been groping in the dark and you never come across a hand to hold you. You have been in this cold aloneness -- nobody hugs you, nobody is THERE to hug you. Nobody is there to warm you.

This is the fear, the anguish of man. If love is not possible then one is alone. Hence love HAS to be made possible, it has to be created -- even if it is pseudo, it has to be created. One has to go on loving, because otherwise it will be impossible to live.

And whenever a society comes across the fact that love is false, then two things become possible: either people start committing suicide, or people start becoming sannyasins. And both are the same. Suicide is an ordinary effort just to destroy yourself: if you are not there then nobody will be alone. But that doesn't work; you are soon in another body. That has never worked.

Sannyas is the ultimate suicide. If one is alone, then one is alone. It has to be accepted, it has not to be avoided: if one is alone, so what? If that is the fact, then that is the fact -- then one has to go into it. Sannyas means encountering one's aloneness, going into it. Going into it in spite of all the fear. Dying into it. If death happens through it, it is okay, but one is not going to shirk from the truth. If aloneness is truth, then one accepts and goes into it. That's the meaning of sannyas. And one really commits suicide. One disappears.

This is the transformation I am talking about. Buddhas are not interested in information, they are interested in transformation. Your whole world is a great device to escape from yourself. Buddhas destroy your devices, they bring you back to yourself.

That's why it is only for the rare, the courageous, to be in contact with a Buddha. The ordinary mind cannot bear it; the presence of a Buddha is unbearable. Why? Why have people been so much against Buddha and Christ and Zarathustra and Lao Tzu? For a certain reason: these are the people who don't allow you the luxury of the untruth, the comfort of the lie, the convenience of living in illusions. These are the people who don't allow you; these are the people who go on forcing you towards the truth. And the truth is dangerous.

The first truth to experience is that one is alone. The first truth to experience is that love is illusory. Just think of it, just think of the enormity of it, that love is illusory. And you have lived only through that illusion...

You were in love with your parents, you were in love with your brothers and sisters, then you started falling in love with a woman or a man. You are in love with your country, your church, your religion, and you are in love with your car, and ice cream -- and so on and so forth. You are living in all these illusions.

And suddenly you find yourself naked, alone, all illusions have disappeared. It hurts.

Just this morning, Vivek was saying -- and she has been saying again and again with these Ikkyu discourses -- "These discourses are HEAVY, depressing." They are bound to be so, because whenever any of your illusions are touched it creates great restlessness. You become afraid; somehow you were managing it -- and you know deep down that there is no bottom to it but you don't want to look. Seeing will be frightening; you want to go on remaining in the illusion.

Nobody wants to see that his love is false. People are ready to believe that their past loves were false -- but this? No, this love is true. When it has disappeared they will say it was also false -- but then another love is true. In whatsoever illusion they are living, they pretend that this one is true. "Others -- Ikkyu may be right, Osho may be right about other loves, they were false, we know. But this one? This one is a totally different thing. This is not an

ordinary love, I have found my soul mate."

Nobody has ever found one -- how can you find your soul mate? Aloneness is absolute. These are just efforts to deceive yourself -- and you can go on deceiving. That's what you have been doing down the ages, for so many lives...

But you forget. And you forget because of the birth trauma. When the child is born he remembers -- he remembers perfectly all that has happened in the past life; he knows it. But the birth trauma is such, the pain of being born is such... He lived in the womb comfortably for nine months -- never again will you be in such comfort, not even an emperor can be in such comfort.

You were floating in warm liquid. And all needs were fulfilled, and you had no responsibility, no worry. You were just fast asleep and dreaming, dreaming sweet things. You were completely protected, secure. Everything was happening of its own accord; not a single effort was needed on your part.

And suddenly one day after nine months, all that world is destroyed. You are uprooted. You were grounded in the womb, you were connected with the mother: you are disconnected. And you have to pass through the birth canal, which is a very narrow canal.

The child feels immense pain. The pain is such that he becomes unconscious. That is a built-in mechanism in the mind -- whenever something becomes unbearable, the mind simply turns you off so that you need not feel it. In fact, to call any pain unbearable is existentially wrong, because whenever pain becomes unbearable you become unconscious. So you have never known unbearable pain -- if you know it, and you are conscious, it is still bearable. Once it reaches to the point where it becomes unbearable, immediately the whole mechanism for consciousness is turned off. You fall into a coma -- a natural anaesthesia.

So each child passing through the birth canal falls into a coma, and that disrupts his memory. And again he starts fooling around in the same old way, thinking that he is doing something new.

Nobody is doing anything new. All that you are doing you have done so many times, so many MILLION times. It is nothing new. This anger, this greed, this sex, this ambition, this possessiveness -- you have done it all millions of times. But because of the birth trauma there has been a discontinuity, a gap. And because of that gap your past is no more available to you.

Through deep primal scream the past can become available. If you can move backwards into the birth trauma you can remember your past lives. But you will have to move deep into the birth trauma. And once you have reached back into the womb-state of your consciousness, suddenly you will see your whole autobiography. And it is long. It is tedious -- it is nothing but anguish, failure and frustration.

In the new commune, we are going to make efforts to make you remember your past lives. Then you will not think that these sayings of Ikkyu are depressive -- then you will see these are the truths.

But you are living in an untrue life, thinking you are doing something new. And because you think it is new, you remain enchanted by it, by the magic of the new. If you can come to know that you have fallen in love millions of times, and each time it was a failure, it will be impossible to fall into the trap again, You will see that it is futile -- that there is no soul mate, that there has never been. That aloneness is absolute. That there is no way to commune, there is no way to communicate. That nobody can understand you, and you cannot understand anybody.

I know these talks are bound to be depressive. Why? Because these talks will touch some

wounds in you and the pus will start oozing out. And remember always: sometimes it is good to keep the wound open, because that is the condition for its cure. But courage is needed, certainly; without courage nothing can be done. To keep the wound open needs great courage -- but that is the condition for its cure!

You would like to hide it. You would like to hide it behind flowers, you would like to forget about the wound. You would like to move into some consolation: "Maybe love has not happened yet -- now it can happen. This time I may be able to make it."

But love CANNOT be possible. To make it possible is not a question that depends on you. Love itself is an impossibility. It keeps you deluded, it keeps you in a kind of dream state.

Ikkyu says:

"WE COME INTO THIS WORLD ALONE,
WE DEPART ALONE..."

Togetherness is illusory. Aloneness is more fundamental. Love is illusory, meditation is more fundamental -- but ultimately that too is illusory. That's where Ikkyu goes one step ahead and takes the quantum leap. You have heard it said many times: "We come alone into this world, and we depart alone." But Ikkyu says:

THIS ALSO IS ILLUSION.
I WILL TEACH YOU THE WAY
NOT TO COME, NOT TO GO!

That is Zen, pure Zen. The ordinary religion teaches: Love is illusory. Zen finally teaches: Even meditation is illusory. Let me make it clear to you. Love means togetherness -- the possibility of being together, the possibility of being lost into each other, the possibility of communication, the possibility of relating. When love fails, utterly fails, you start moving towards meditation. Meditation means the capacity to be alone. They are polarities, love and meditation. Meditation means the capacity not to relate -- there is no need to relate, one is enough unto oneself.

Many people go on clinging to the world of love; a few escape from it, and then they go on clinging to the world of meditation. Zen says: If you cling to the world of meditation, if you start clinging to your aloneness, you are still far away from the truth. Because if togetherness is false, how can aloneness be true?

This is the great revolution that Zen brings into the world of religion. If togetherness is false then aloneness can't be true either -- because aloneness can be understood only in the context of togetherness. If love is false then meditation can't be true either. Those who have decided for meditation AGAINST love, they have chosen a polarity. And the polarity depends on the other.

Just think: if darkness is false, how can light be true? If pain is false, how can happiness be true? If birth is false, how can death be true? If 'I' is false, how can 'thou' be true? -- or vice versa. They exist as pairs. Love and meditation are a couple, married for ever.

And if you observe silently the functioning of your mind, you will see it happening continuously....

You are in love with a person, and soon you start feeling you need your own space. That is the need for meditation -- you may not look at it that way, but it is exactly that. Being

together, you start feeling suffocated, crowded, crushed. And you start seeing the point that you need your own space. You would like to be alone for a few days.

Just the other day, I received a letter from a woman sannyasin. Her lover has left for the West and she was very much worried and tense, naturally, because she will be alone here without the lover. And he had to go for some reasons, for some responsibilities -- he would have liked to stay with her, but he had to go. So she was very much troubled, in pain.

But she was surprised -- when he left she felt like a burden had left her. She felt very good. She wrote a letter to me, feeling very guilty. Seems a kind of betrayal: your lover has gone and you are feeling happy! You should be crying, you should be weeping, you should be walking around with a long face so everybody knows that your lover is gone. And she is feeling so happy, as she has never felt in her life!

Now what is happening? No need to feel guilty. If people are aware, this will happen to everybody. Whenever your lover goes you will dance. So at last you can be alone! It can't be for long -- within a few days you will be tired of your aloneness and you will start hankering for the lover. This is a polarity.

Love creates the need to be alone -- to be alone is bound to happen through love. And when you are alone, aloneness creates the need to love -- it is bound to happen through being alone. They are partners, partners in the same business.

Zen says: People who have escaped to the Himalayas and are sitting in their caves alone are just as stupid as the people who are chasing women or chasing men and thinking that they are living their life. Both are stupid! because both have chosen the polarities.

And it is proved by thousands of years of experience that the man who sits in the cave in the Himalayas only thinks of the woman and nothing else. And of course he becomes more and more afraid of the woman -- because she is coming even there, if not physically then psychologically. He becomes so fascinated that there are moments when he starts projecting the woman almost physically, as if she is there. He can start having hallucinations.

In the Indian scriptures there are stories of great rishis meditating in the Himalayas; then one day suddenly beautiful women from heaven come to distract them. Why should they be interested in distracting these poor people? for what?

Nobody comes, just hallucination. These people have lived too much in aloneness and are TIRED of aloneness, and now there is nobody to relate to. They create, they project. Their minds are in such need that they have to create somebody to talk to. And naturally, when you are going to create, why not create beautiful naked women dancing around you? That was their repression, that's why they had escaped from the world -- it was there in them.

And have you seen the other point? A person sitting in the marketplace, tired, worried, tense, starts thinking how to renounce the world. He feels very good with even the idea: "One day I am going to renounce the world, and I will go to the Himalayas and be there with the Himalayan silence and the peace and the joy of it." Even the idea makes him feel good and fresh.

In India particularly, people go on thinking that one day or other they will renounce all this nonsense, this marketplace, and they will escape to a monastery and live there in happiness for ever. They CAN'T -- think about those women who come from heaven: they will come, they will torture you.

Meditation and love are part of one pair, one couple. They are together, they are married for ever -- yin/yang, they cannot leave each other.

Hence Ikkyu is absolutely true when he says:

"WE COME INTO THIS WORLD ALONE,
WE DEPART ALONE" --
THIS ALSO IS ILLUSION.

Love is illusion, so is meditation. The only thing that is good about meditation is that it can take you out of love. But don't cling to it -- it is just a device to bring you out of your love. It brings you out of the illusion of love. But then immediately drop it too, otherwise you will start creating new illusions of meditation, kundalini arising, light happening in the chakras... and a thousand and one things -- 'spiritual experiences' they are called. They are not spiritual or anything, they are just imagination.

You cannot live alone long. If the beautiful women are not coming, then kundalini will arise -- something is going to happen, you cannot be alone. Maybe those beautiful women have forgotten or are too tired of the old rishis, and they don't come any more; or they are engaged on some other planets. Then something HAS to happen -- you will start seeing chakras moving inside you, energy arising. In your spine, a great rush; in your head, lotuses opening. You can't be alone! You are creating the world -- now you call it spiritual.

What you call it doesn't matter. What matters is this simple phenomenon that you cannot be alone long. You cannot be together long, you cannot be alone long. Togetherness creates a need to be alone, to remain alone. And sooner or later you find that you are hankering for being together with somebody.

This is just day and night, summer and winter, it goes on moving -- the wheel of life.

Ikkyu is right. He says: The truth is that one has to go beyond love and beyond meditation. One has to go beyond relatedness and one has to go beyond aloneness. When togetherness and aloneness have both disappeared, what is left? Nothing is left. That nothing is the taste of existence. YOU are neither alone nor together. In fact you are not.

I WILL TEACH YOU THE WAY
NOT TO COME, NOT TO GO!

And then where can you go? Then who is there to go? From where can you come? Who is there to come? Then all going and coming disappears, and that which always is, is known. The eternal is known. All coming and going is just dreams, time phenomena, soap bubbles, momentary.

When all those momentary things have been dropped, seeing that communication is not possible, relating is not possible, you start moving into aloneness. Then one day you see another phenomenon, that aloneness is not possible. Then rather than going back to love, which is the ordinary course, you jump out of aloneness too. You jump deeper.

From two you get into one, from one you get into none -- no-one. That is ADVAITA, that is the non-dual; you cannot even call it 'one'. And that is the source. That is the ocean, we are the waves of it. And seeing that ocean, you know you have never been born and you are not going to die either. Your whole existence was a dream existence. All has disappeared.

BUDDHA HAS CALLED this tendency to be in love or to be alone, the disposition of the ego to remain -- either in relationship or in no relationship, but the ego wants to remain; either as a lover or as a meditator, either as a worldly man or as an other-worldly man, but the ego wants to remain -- Buddha has called this disposition AVIDYA, ignorance.

Remember, AVIDYA does not mean non-knowledge. It simply means unawareness.

AVIDYA is a disposition to treat the ego as an absolute. This creates a gap between man and the universe -- because of it, man is not in his right relation to the world. This falsification is called by Buddha AVIDYA -- ignorance, non-awareness.

You move into love in a kind of non-awareness, and you move into meditation also in a kind of non-awareness. If you become aware, love disappears, meditation disappears.

But let me remind you, otherwise you can misinterpret the whole thing: when what you call love disappears, another kind of love arises. You don't have any inkling of it. When meditation disappears then a totally different kind of meditateness arises; you don't have any idea of it. Your meditation is effort -- practice, cultivation, conditioning. When this meditation is dropped then a simple meditative quality arises in your being: you are simply silent, for no reason at all. Not that you are trying to be silent, not that you are trying to be still, not that you are making any efforts to remain tranquil. You are simply tranquil -- because there is nobody to disturb. The ego is not there, the sole cause of disturbance is gone. You are simply quiet -- not that you are trying to be quiet. Trying to be quiet simply means you are disturbed, split, divided in two parts -- the one who is trying to make you silent, and the one who is being pulled and pummelled into silence. There is a kind of conflict -- and how can conflict be meditative? There is enforcement, violence -- and how can violence be peace?

That's why I say that those people who go on forcing yoga postures, mantras, upon themselves and somehow go on trying to maintain their peace are not peaceful people. They are just creating a facade, a hypocrisy.

When the true man arises in you, when the original man arises in you, there is no effort to be anything. One simply is. That is the natural man of Zen. He loves -- not because he needs somebody, he loves because he can't help it. Love is there, love is flowing, and there is nobody to prevent it, so what can he do? He is meditative -- not because he meditates, he is meditative because there is no disturbance found: the sole cause of disturbance, the ego, is no more there. The split is no more there, he is one. Collected, calm, integrated.

And all this is just spontaneous. That's why Zen people don't call the real man of Zen spiritual -- he is neither worldly nor spiritual. He is in the world and yet not of it. He lives in the marketplace but the marketplace does not live in him.

Buddha's teaching is absolutely negative -- for a certain reason. Love has to be negated, then meditation has to be negated. Now, these are the two highest things in the world, the most precious. And Buddha negates both.

Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish thinker and mystic, had a deep understanding about the negative teaching. He says that only negative teaching is possible, because ANY positive teaching, and the mind clings to it and creates new dreams about it. If you talk about God, mind clings to God -- God becomes an object and mind starts thinking "How to relate to God? how to reach to God?" That becomes a love affair again. If you teach about moksha, paradise, then man starts becoming greedy about it: "How to grab it?" And the greed creates new dreams and new nightmares.

Only negative teaching is possible. A true teaching is bound to be negative, a true path is VIA NEGATIVA. Why? Because men are polemic against the truth, intentionally fleeing it. The purpose of negative teaching is to disturb and provoke man into being himself, since he is fleeing, negating himself. Negative teaching is negation of the negation.

Your whole life is negative; right now, negative. You are escaping from yourself -- this is your negation. Now, this negation can be negated only by another negation. And when two

negations meet, they cut each other, they destroy each other, they disappear into that fight.

And the positive is left. It cannot even be called positive -- there is no negative left, so it cannot be called positive. It is the cosmic, the truth. The eternal, the ultimate, the absolute.

Buddha's path is of NETI NETI -- neither this nor that. He says: Go on negating. A moment comes when nothing is found to negate any more, and that is the moment of nirvana. When nothing is left to negate, only nothingness in your hands, then freedom happens. You are freed from the self and all its projections.

WE EAT, EXCRETE, SLEEP, AND GET UP;
THIS IS OUR WORLD.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO AFTER THAT
IS TO DIE.

THIS STATEMENT HAS TWO MEANINGS. The first, for the ignorant man: this is your life, your whole life -- see what your life consists of.

WE EAT, EXCRETE, SLEEP, AND GET UP;
THIS IS OUR WORLD.

That's what you have been doing. Mind must be utterly stupid, otherwise just to do this -- eating, excreting, sleeping, getting up again... and the whole circle starts. This is your life. You move in this way -- day in, day out, year in, year out. Life in, life out, you go on moving in this way.

ALL WE HAVE TO DO AFTER THAT
IS TO DIE.

Only one thing is left out of the circle, that is death. Sooner or later, that too arrives. This is the whole story.

Omar Khayyam in his Rubaiyat says: "Some little talk a while of me and thee there was, and then no more of thee and me." Just a little talk, a repetitive talk, just a little gossiping. Eating, excreting, sleeping and dying: this is all your life consists of.

But the question arises: But this is what even an enlightened person goes on doing. What did Buddha do for forty years after he became enlightened? What did Ikkyu himself do? For so many years he remained enlightened on the earth; he was doing the same.

Yes, but with a difference. That difference has to be understood. Now, a Zen man lives as absolutely ordinarily as everybody else, so you cannot make any other distinction. For example, if you go and see a Jain monk he lives differently: he still eats, excretes, sleeps, gets up, and the round moves on, but he has made special ways of eating. He does not earn, he begs. For excretion also he has made special ways; he excretes in an extraordinary way. He does not go to the ordinary toilet, no -- he has to go outside the town. He cannot use your bathroom; he is no ordinary human being.

Now, just see how foolishly we go on -- extraordinary things. He goes outside the town. He eats only once a day. A certain sect of Jains is even more difficult: they eat standing. The Jain monk stands and eats, he remains naked, he never takes a bath, he never cleans his teeth. He does not sleep on a bed, just on the floor with straw under and over him. He has no shelter, he moves from one place to another, he is constantly on the move.

But these differences are in detail. Basically, whether you go outside the town to excrete,

or you just use the ordinary toilet everybody is using, what is the difference? Whether you earn for yourself, or somebody else earns for you and you beg, what is the difference? Whether you eat twice, thrice or five times or once, does it make any difference? How does it make any difference? These are just habits, they can be cultivated.

There are tribes in Africa who eat only once in twenty-four hours. They have eaten that way for centuries, and they are accustomed to it. They cannot believe that people eat twice; once is enough.

Now, these differences in details are just to create the idea that "I am special." These are ego trips.

A Zen man simply lives as you live. It is very difficult to see the difference, but the difference is there. The difference is that he witnesses everything that is happening -- that is the only difference. He eats, but he is a witness. Now, that is an interior difference. You cannot see it from the outside, but a little bit of it filters outside too. You can see a Zen man walking: he walks so consciously, so alertly. He eats consciously, alertly. He even sleeps consciously. A light remains burning even in his sleep, he goes on watching even his dreams. He is always on the watch -- aware, conscious, alert. That is the difference.

And because he is alert, he remains relaxed. Because he is relaxed, the whole world is relaxed for him. It is the same world he lives in, but the roses are far more rosy and the green is far more green, and the call of the bird is an immense joy.

I have heard:

The patient was a beautiful young showgirl who complained of nervous tensions. The doctor prescribed a programme of tranquillizing pills and told her to come back in a couple of weeks and let him know how she felt.

When she returned, the doctor asked her if she felt any different and she replied: "No, doctor, but I've noticed that other people seem a lot more relaxed!"

If you are relaxed, you will suddenly see other people look a lot more relaxed. If you are silent, the whole world falls into a deep silence. If you are meditative, suddenly you become aware that trees are meditating, rocks are meditating. The moon is in deep meditation, so is the sun and the stars.

When love starts overflowing you -- not the love that you know but the love that Buddhas know -- when love starts flowing then you suddenly see it is flowing all over the place. It is flowing from the trees -- you call it fragrance, it is love. It is radiating from the sun -- you call it light, it is love! It is the gravitation in the earth -- you call it gravitation, it is love.

It is the silence of the night, the chirping of the birds, the flow in the river, the silence in the Himalayas.

When YOUR love starts flowing, suddenly you become aware that love is flowing EVERYWHERE -- that life consists of love, that existence is made of the stuff called love. But first it has to happen in you.

A man of Zen lives as ordinarily as you live. But his ordinariness is not ordinary. His ordinariness has an extra-ordinary quality in it: it radiates joy, celebration, it radiates witnessing.

A great Zen master, Lin Chi, says: "O Brethren in the Way, you must know that there is in the reality of Buddhism nothing extraordinary for you to perform. You just live as usual without even trying to do anything in particular, attending to your natural wants, putting on

clothes, eating meals, and lying down if you feel tired. Let the ignorant people laugh at me. The wise men know what I mean to say."

Lin Chi is saying: Don't do anything in particular, don't be a doer. Let things happen, and be a watcher. And the ignorant will laugh at you; they will say, "What kind of religion is this?"

You must have come across these ignorant people. They will say to you, "What kind of religion is this? Into what trap have you fallen? Because your master is not teaching you anything special."

Yes, I am not teaching you anything special -- because all ideas of speciality are ego trips. I am teaching you to be normal, to be ordinary. And if you can relax into normalcy, into ordinariness, suddenly you will burst forth into an extraordinary radiance. A great splendour will happen to you.

Lin Chi is right when he says, "Let the ignorant people laugh. The wise men know what I mean to say." Eat, drink and be merry, just as everybody else is. Don't try to be special in any way. But eating, remain a witness. Drinking, remain a witness. Merrying, remain a witness. And that witnessing will change everything. That witnessing is the transformation.

Only that witnessing will make you aware of who you are.

I SHAN'T DIE, I SHAN'T GO ANYWHERE,
I'LL BE HERE;
BUT DON'T ASK ME ANYTHING,
I SHAN'T ANSWER.

THIS IS IKKYU'S DEATH VERSE. Traditionally in Zen, when a master dies, his disciples ask him for a death verse -- the last poetic expression, the last statement, the testament. The last statement about death.

Ikkyu says:

WE EAT, EXCRETE, SLEEP, AND GET UP;
THIS IS OUR WORLD.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO AFTER THAT
IS TO DIE.

Now death is coming, and the disciples have asked him to compose the last verse. And this was his last verse:

I SHAN'T DIE, I SHAN'T GO ANYWHERE,
I'LL BE HERE;
BUT DON'T ASK ME ANYTHING,
I SHAN'T ANSWER.

Somebody asked Raman Maharshi -- he was dying, dying of cancer, and somebody asked, "When you are dead, where will you be gone?" And he opened his eyes and said, "Where can I go? I will be here." Because a man who is enlightened knows no other space than here, knows no other time than now. All time consists of now, and all space consists of here. Now-here is his whole existence.

Ikkyu says:

I SHAN'T DIE...

Because in the first place I was never born. Birth is an illusion. And I am not going to die either -- how can I die? because I was never born. Death is another illusion. I will be here, I have always been here. I am the taste of Tao. I am part of this eternity, I am a wave in this ocean. Sometimes as a wave, and sometimes as a no-wave -- but I am here, and I am always here, and I will be always here. There is no coming, no going.

Ikkyu says:

I WILL TEACH YOU THE WAY
NOT TO COME, NOT TO GO!

Birth and death are both your ideas. It is very hard to understand that birth and death are both our ideas. When a man dies, in the last moments when he is dying he projects the birth idea. He starts thinking in the last moments: How to come back? in what form? His whole life's experiences become condensed into one form: a form arises.

He has lived in a certain way -- he wanted to live in some other way, but could not make it. Now that other form takes possession of his mind: "Next time I would like to be this." And the last idea when one is dying becomes the seed.

If you can die without an idea, you will not be born. Your birth is your idea; it creates it. It is not just accidental that you are born; nothing is accidental. You have caused it, you are responsible for it. People die with different forms in their minds. Those forms become the guiding lines -- then they enter into a womb according to those guiding lines. Birth arises.

And you will be surprised to know that death is also your idea. People die according to their ideas. In fact, depth psychology suspects that each death is a suicide. And the suspicion is almost true -- I say 'almost' because I have to leave Buddhas out of it. But about everyone else it is true: your death is your idea.

You start becoming tired of life, sooner or later, and you start thinking how to die, how to disappear. It is too much. Enough is enough! Have you not thought many times of committing suicide?

Freud stumbled upon the idea; he called it 'thanatos' -- the death-wish. Everybody has that, deep inside; it decides your death. Even people who die in accidents are people who are prone to accidents, who would like to die in an accident.

We go on creating possibilities around ourselves, and when they happen then we are surprised. Just watch your ideas and how they create your life. Somebody thinks that he is such a failure, he is never going to make anything. And he is not going to make anything, because this idea is creating his reality. And the more he finds that he is not making any way into anything, the more the idea becomes enforced by the feedback, and the more he will find he is becoming a failure. And a vicious circle is created.

The man who thinks he is going to succeed, he succeeds. The man who thinks he is going to be rich becomes rich, and the man who thinks he is not going to become rich remains poor. Try it. You will be surprised; sometimes you will not be able to believe it.

A man thinks he will never find anybody to be friendly with: he will not find -- he has created a China Wall around himself, he is not available. He has to prove his idea right, remember. Even if somebody approaches with great friendliness, he will reject them. He has to prove his idea, he has a great commitment to his idea. He is not going to be distracted from his idea, his idea is so much a part of his ego. He has to show to the world that he was right,

nobody can be a friend to him, that all are enemies. And all will turn, slowly slowly, into enemies.

Just watch your mind. You are constantly creating your life, you are constantly manufacturing your life.

Psychologists have come to the fact that people have had the idea, for centuries, that life consists of three score and ten years. That's why people live to nearabout seventy; there is no other reason. Because people believe that seventy years is the limit -- leave a few freaks who die a little earlier and a little later, but generally people follow the routine, the convention -- they die at nearabout seventy. They start preparing, as they reach sixty they are getting ready. They get retirement, they start pulling themselves out of the world; they are getting ready. For ten years they will think, "Now it is coming. Three score and ten years. Now one year has passed: nine left. Two have passed: eight left." They are constantly hypnotizing themselves. And by seventy they are gone; they have proved their idea. And they have given the idea to their children also that this is how life is: only seventy years.

There are tribes which live longer. On the border of Kashmir in Pakistan, there is a tribe, Hunza -- they live very long. One hundred is very easy, one hundred and twenty not difficult, one hundred and fifty also possible. But since they have come in contact with other people they have started dying earlier. Their food remains the same, everything remains the same -- their climate, everything, is the same. But just because they have come to know that people die earlier, they must be feeling a little guilty. They have started dying earlier -- one has to follow the crowd. Within thirty, forty years they will disappear. They will become part... three score and ten.

When Bernard Shaw was looking, in his old age... He lived long, when he was fifty he was looking for a place to live. He wanted to go out of London. And do you know how he found his place? A very psychological investigation he made. He went into cemeteries to look at the stones, what was written on them. He found one cemetery where people had lived very long -- ninety, ninety-five, ninety-eight, one hundred... One man had died when he was a hundred, and on the stone there was an epitaph saying: "This man died untimely" -- and he had lived a hundred years! He said, "This is the place to live." Where people think to die at a hundred is untimely, he chose that place to live. And he lived long -- the idea worked.

Physiologists say that there seems to be no inner necessity in the physique of man to die. Yes, you will be surprised to know that there is a possibility one day that man can live very very long, almost a physical immortality -- because the body goes on renewing itself. There is no need really for it to die, because it is constantly renewing itself. Old cells disappear, new cells arrive; within seven years the body changes itself completely. It continuously overhauls itself, renews, rejuvenates, it is a continuum. There is no inner necessity for the body to die.

Now physiologists agree about it. And psychologists also are feeling that the reason why people die may be something to do with the mind, not with the body.

This is one of the greatest teachings of Buddhism -- that birth is mind, death is mind. All ideas. And you are neither.

I SHAN'T DIE, I SHAN'T GO ANYWHERE,
I'LL BE HERE;
BUT DON'T ASK ME ANYTHING,
I SHAN'T ANSWER.

Because it can't be answered. It has to be lived, seen. It has to be tasted. Just go deep inside yourself, watch: are you thinking to die? Then you are creating the seed. In fact, birth

creates death.

Just a few moments before, I told you about the birth trauma. When a child is born the child thinks this is a death. Naturally, because he was living so beautifully. He is being thrown out of paradise. Adam is expelled in every child -- he was in the Garden of Eden, now he is being expelled. That was LIFE, and this seems to be death.

And each child, the whole of his life, wants to get back into the womb of the mother. We create substitute wombs. Our bedrooms are wombs -- the closed bedroom with dark curtains, in the night you put the light off, it is dark, as dark as it is in the womb. Then the bed, the cozy bed, the pillows, the mattress, the blankets -- and you snuggle into the blanket, and you take the womb posture. The warmth of the bed, the darkness all around, the comfort, the silence... you are again slipping back into the womb.

Each sleep every night is a re-enactment of the womb; it is a small death. That's why you find it so hard to get up in the morning -- because getting up in the morning again disturbs your deep unconscious. It is again a birth -- the birth trauma is still affecting you.

You will be surprised that primitive people don't have any trouble getting up early in the morning. By the time the sun rises they are up, no problem at all. And the reason is because they don't have that much birth trauma. In a primitive society the child is not born with such suffering as happens with civilized people. The mother does not go through great pain. It is very simple, it is just like animals.

The mother may be working in the field and she will give birth to the child and carry the child home. Or maybe it was mid-noon and the work was not complete -- she will keep the child by the side of the tree, she will finish the work and then take the child back home. No hospitalization is needed, no drugs are needed, she feels no pain. On the contrary, she feels great ecstasy. More orgasmic is the experience of giving birth to a child than any sexual experience can ever be. And the child comes so easily that he has no birth trauma.

That's why in primitive societies people get up early in the morning. The more a society becomes civilized, the more it becomes difficult...

The other day I inquired about Padma, and she was asleep at eleven o'clock. Must have suffered a great birth trauma. If you have suffered a great birth trauma then every morning you feel it very difficult to get up; your whole body wants to remain in the bed. That is, your body wants to remain in the womb -- it does not want to get out of it, you have to be pulled out of it.

Birth creates death. Each sleep is a small death. That's why many people find it very difficult to make love in bed, because it stirs the idea of death. They become a little afraid. They find it far better to make love in a car or on the beach, but to make love in bed feels a little difficult. For a few people it is really impossible, because the whole idea of the bed conjures up the atmosphere of death.

But for a few other people it is only possible to make love in bed -- because entering into the body of a woman they think of entering into the womb again. It depends what your thinking is. If you think that entering the body of a woman is entering into the womb again, then you will not find any other place to make love except the bed. But if you feel afraid of death and if the birth trauma stirs memories in you, then it will be difficult to be orgasmic in bed.

People die in their beds. Ninety-nine percent of people die in their beds. Naturally -- that seems to be the natural thing: one day they disappear in bed. And for the whole life they think how to create the womb again. Your houses are a recreation of the womb. The more close a thing comes to the womb, the more comfortable it feels.

I SHAN'T DIE, I SHAN'T GO ANYWHERE,
I'LL BE HERE;
BUT DON'T ASK ME ANYTHING,
I SHAN'T ANSWER.

Death is false, as false as birth. You are beyond birth and beyond death. You come into birth, you take the form of the birth, and then you move beyond that form in death -- but you are formless. But nothing can be said about it. It has to be experienced.

WHATSOEVER IT MAY BE,
IT IS ALL PART OF THE WORLD OF ILLUSION,
DEATH ITSELF
NOT BEING A REAL THING.

Death is the greatest illusion, next only to birth. You are eternal.

Ikkyu used to call his approach towards birth and death "the medicine of unborn undying". He used to say, "This can cure all ills" -- because all ills are somewhere in between birth and death. If you can drop the idea of birth and death, then everything is dropped. Then you need not be worried about love and you need not be worried about meditation. Then there is no togetherness and no aloneness.

You are one with the whole. How can you be alone? And how can you be together? -- because there is nobody other than the whole. The whole is the whole -- nothing besides, nothing outside it -- so it cannot be together with anybody. That's why togetherness is impossible. But you cannot be alone either, because the very idea "I am alone" makes you feel separate from the whole. You are in it. You ARE it.

SHOULD YOU WISH TO KNOW THE WAY
IN BOTH THIS WORLD,
AND THAT OTHER,
ASK A MAN OF MERCY AND SINCERITY.

IKKYU SAYS: Don't ask me, I will not answer. First, the experience is such, it can't be answered. But one thing can be done, that's what Buddhas go on doing: they point the way. They don't say what will happen, what happens, but they say HOW it can happen.

SHOULD YOU WISH TO KNOW THE WAY...

Never ask about the experience, it is inexpressible. But ask about the way, then something can be said -- how to move into it, what devices to use, from where to start, how to get out of the vicious circle. How to move out of love: meditation will help. How to get out of meditation: trusting life will help.

And when you are out of meditation and out of love, love will happen and meditation will happen of their own accord. Then they will not be tiny things created by you, they will be gifts of God.

SHOULD YOU WISH TO KNOW THE WAY
IN BOTH THIS WORLD,
AND THAT OTHER,

ASK A MAN OF MERCY AND SINCERITY.

But how to find a Buddha? Two things, Ikkyu says: sincerity and mercy. His compassion will give you the idea -- his love, his overflowing love, for no reason at all.

If you can find a man of love... remember those words: "One glimpse of the real man, and you are in love." Then you are love. If you can find a man of love then don't miss the opportunity. He is the door: enter into him. And you will find sincerity.

Remember, sincerity does not mean seriousness. It means truthfulness, it means authenticity. And how will you judge whether the man is authentic, truthful, or not? There is only one thing to remember: truth is paradoxical. Only untruth is consistent. If you find a man very consistent, avoid him, because that means he is simply philosophizing. He has not yet experienced anything, he is not a sincere man.

A sincere man is one who simply says whatsoever is the case -- whether it contradicts him, whether it is consistent or inconsistent, makes no difference to him.

Remember the Zen definition of truth: A truth is that whose contradictory is also true. So a man of sincerity is bound to be paradoxical. And that is where we miss. If you come across paradoxes you think, "This is an inconsistent man; how can he be true?" You have an idea that truth has to be consistent -- and that prevents you from finding Buddhas. And you fall in the trap of logicians, philosophers, thinkers.

A Buddha is basically, fundamentally, tacitly, paradox -- because he sees the truth in its totality. And the totality is paradoxical. The totality is both: night and day, love and meditation. The totality is both: this and that, visible, invisible. The totality is both birth and death, AND neither. The totality means the whole thing is so complex, you cannot make any consistent statement about it. You have to go on contradicting yourself.

If you can find a man of contradictions, you may be close to somebody who knows. Truth is that whose contradictory is also true.

Look for the sincerity through the paradox. He is so sincere that he is ready to become inconsistent. His sincerity is such that he is ready to be called mad. His sincerity is such that he does not try to convince you through logic. He is not a salesman. He is not worried about convincing you. He simply states whatsoever is the case -- whether you are convinced or not convinced, that is up to you. He is not in any way interested in forcing something upon you. He is ready to help, but not to coerce you.

And what is mercy? It does not mean pity. Buddhas don't pity you, because pity arises out of ego. They are merciful, they are compassionate -- and the difference is great.

Just the other day, somebody asked me a question: "The groups, therapy groups, that are run here are very hard, cruel. How do you allow them, a man of compassion?" And not only that, he mentions the incident that I mentioned some days before, that one of my friends was going to commit suicide. He mentions that "Listening to that story, I thought you are also very cruel. You didn't persuade the man not to commit suicide; on the contrary, you were ready to take him to the river to jump from the cliff and die. What kind of compassion is this?"

You missed the whole story. He was saved! You missed that point. It is not HOW he was saved -- the point is that he was saved. Look at the result.

A compassionate man looks at the result. What devices he uses are not important. He is ready to use ANY device -- just look at the objective result. A compassionate man is not sentimental, emotional. You would have liked me to hug him and cry... But then he would have committed suicide! Would it have been compassion? I would have driven him to

suicide. That's what his parents, his mother and father and friends, were doing, they were driving him to commit suicide. The more they were trying to persuade him, the more he was trying to say no. In fact he was getting more and more excited about suicide, because of these people, because of their attention. And they were all loving people, they loved the man -- but see the difference.

These are the two kinds of love. One is sentimental and emotional; it doesn't help. Another is objective love; it helps. But then the person who is full of objective love decides how to move. His sole concern is how to save people.

I wanted to SAVE this friend, that's why I was so cruel. And I want you also to be saved, that's why all the therapy groups here are cruel. Sometimes even people who should be more knowing, misunderstand.

That's what happened to one of the sannyasins, Geet Govind. He had come from Esalen, he is a co-founder of Esalen, so he knows everything about therapy groups. But he does not know anything about ME. He does not know anything about objective compassion. Seeing the encounter group here, he was very much shaken. And he was not even courageous enough to say it to me -- because after the encounter group I had especially asked him, "What do you think, Geet Govind?" And he said, "All is good, everything is good, I enjoyed it" -- or things like that.

But back home, he started spreading the news around, "Don't go to Poona. Those people are dangerous, the groups are very violent and cruel."

He misunderstood the whole point. But that's what happens to knowledgeable people. Because he thinks he KNOWS -- and he knows about encounter groups, but he does not know that when an encounter group is used by a compassionate man it is a totally different thing. He knows about therapy, but he does not know anything about Buddhas.

Here, the therapy groups are not just therapy groups as they are in Esalen. Here they are used just as devices -- to destroy something, to shake you into awakening. The whole point is to shake you out of your sleep. And all kinds of things will be used. If sometimes a dagger needs to be put into your heart, it HAS to be used. If a sword is needed then it has to be used.

Do you remember Jesus' saying? "I have come into the world not to bring peace but to bring a sword." What does he mean? A man of compassion! Only something like a sword can shake you out of your sleep.

So when you come across a man of mercy, remember: his whole point is how to AWAKEN you. He is not sentimental, he will not cry with you; he will be very objective and very scientific. But he feels for you, he loves you, he wants to help you. And only he can help you. All those sentimental people and all that sentimental nonsense is not going to help. If it was going to help, you would have already been saved.

So whenever you can find a man of sincerity, a man of paradox, truth, whose whole concern is truth... Even if it makes him seem contradictory he is ready; he does not change the truth just to become consistent. And his whole concern is to help people become alert and aware -- even if sometimes cruel methods are needed he is ready to use them. That is the man of compassion and sincerity.

And only a man of compassion and sincerity can be a master. Avoid those who console you. Follow those who are ready to destroy you -- because only when you are destroyed, God is born.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #2

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The first question

WHAT IS THE DESIRE FOR PERFECTION?

ADHEERA, THE DESIRE FOR PERFECTION is the search for the lost womb. The paradise -- lost. The child is utterly happy in the mother's womb; that memory persists. It is not just a memory in the brain, it is in every cell of the body, every fiber of the body. It is all over you.

That memory persists. Those nine months have been of such eternal joy, of such relaxation and let-go, it is not easy to forget it. Even though consciously you have forgotten about it -- because of the birth trauma you became disconnected consciously from it -- yet the unconscious still hankers for it. It tries in every way to reach to that lost paradise again.

The whole of religion consists of that search, and the whole of science too consists of that search. The scientific endeavour is to create that womb outside -- with central heating, with central air-conditioning, with better clothes, with better technology -- the whole effort is to create the womb outside.

And religion tries to create the womb inside -- with prayer, with meditation techniques, with love, with God. But the effort is one: how to be again in those beautiful days. That lost womb is the source of the parable of Adam, Eve and the Garden of Eden.

You ask: WHAT IS THE DESIRE FOR PERFECTION?

The desire for perfection is that whatsoever is the case with you, it is never up to the mark. It is never as it should be, there is a gap. You can still imagine things being better; you can still imagine better days, better possibilities. One goes on hankering for those better possibilities.

You can drop this search for perfection only if you move back through the birth trauma again. If you live it consciously and you remember consciously those days in the womb, immediately the desire for perfection will disappear; it disappears immediately. And the

disappearance of this desire is a great relief, because only then can you start living moment-to-moment -- how can you live with this desire for perfection? It is the source of all neurosis.

The man who wants to become perfect is bound to become neurotic, because he can't be here. He is in the future, which is not. He cannot enjoy this moment, he can only condemn it. He cannot love THIS woman because he has the idea of a perfect woman. He cannot love THIS man because this man is not perfect. He cannot enjoy this food, this breakfast, this morning -- nothing is ever fulfilling to him, can't be. His expectation is there and he is continuously comparing, and continuously falling short.

The man who lives in the desire for perfection, lives a condemned life. And the society helps it too. The parents, the schools, the colleges, the universities, the mahatmas, the priests, the politicians, they all help to make you neurotic.

From the very childhood, you have not been accepted as you are. You have been told, "Be like this, only then are you acceptable." If you want to live a life of your own you will be condemned by everybody, everybody will be against you. Your parents will not be able to tolerate you. They have to mould you, form you, change you, manipulate you -- they have to MANUFACTURE you according to their hearts' desire.

And what is the problem with them? They are also suffering from the birth trauma. They have tried their whole life to become perfect, and they have failed. Nobody can ever succeed; the desire is such that it is bound to fail. Failure is inevitable -- because you can go on succeeding, but with you the idea of perfection starts becoming more and more sophisticated. As you succeed, the idea starts receding further ahead into the future. It becomes more sophisticated: more expectations...

The distance between you and the idea of perfection remains the same. If you have ten thousand rupees, you need one hundred thousand to be happy. When you have one hundred thousand, the desire has moved ahead; now that is not enough. And so is the case in everything.

The parents are living their own traumas. They have tried their whole life and they have failed; now they want to live through the child. Hence they start turning the child into a neurotic being, now they start teaching the child. This is a vicarious way of living. They have failed; now they know that death is coming, now their days are finished, now they are losing hope. A new hope arises, they can live through the child. If they were not perfect, at least their children can be perfect. And they say a tree is known by the fruit: if the children are perfect then the parents must have been perfect.

This is how the whole neurosis continues, from one generation to another generation. The parents are continuously trying to improve upon the child in every way. And all that they succeed in doing is, they make the child feel condemned as he is. They make it impossible for the child to love himself, to respect himself. And once that love and respect for oneself is lost, one IS lost.

The world suffers so much -- from madness, all kinds of mental illnesses, physical diseases. And ninety-nine percent of the causes of all these mind-body problems come from this approach, that the child has to be perfect.

A family was seated in a restaurant. The waitress took the order of the adults and then turned to their young son.

"What will you have, sonny?" she asked.

"I want a hot dog," the boy began timidly.

Before the waitress could write down the order, the mother interrupted. "No, no hot dog," she said. "Give him potatoes, beef, and some carrots."

But the waitress ignored her completely. "Do you want some ketchup or mustard on your hot dog?" she asked of the boy.

"Ketchup," he replied with a happy smile on his face.

"Coming up," the waitress said, starting for the kitchen.

There was stunned silence upon her departure. Finally, the boy turned to his parents. "Know what?" he said. "She thinks I'm real."

That is from where the problem is arising, you don't allow your children to be real. You make them feel unreal, you force them to feel phony, rejected, worthless. And once this idea is created in their minds, that they are worthless as they are, naturally a great desire to become perfect arises. And with that arise all sorts of neuroses.

My effort here is to help you, not to be perfect, but to drop the whole nonsense. In dropping that, you will become for the first time real.

Reality is never perfect, remember. Reality is always growing -- how can it be perfect? Once something is perfect, growth is not possible. Only imperfection can have the joy of growing.

Do you want to remain a flower, growing, opening? Or do you want to become just a dead stone -- perfect, no opening, no growing, no change? Remain imperfect and respect your imperfections, and you will be able to enjoy, celebrate, and you will be able to be healthy and whole. And you will not need to go to a psychiatrist or a psychoanalyst and lie down stupidly on the couch for five years talking nonsense. And there will be no need for any shock treatments either. In fact, if your mental stress disappears, your body will feel immediately relieved.

Many diseases will automatically disappear from the earth if this foolish idea to become perfect disappears. But this has been taught from every nook and corner -- from the church, from the temple, from the mosque, from the university. Everywhere, everyone seems to be part of the conspiracy. Everyone seems to be utterly determined to make every person perfect. And not even a single perfect human being has ever existed -- cannot exist. Imperfection is the way things are. Imperfection is beautiful, because it has the potential to grow and flow. Perfection is simply death and nothing else.

Life is imperfect. And life enjoys imperfection.

I teach you totality, not perfection. And these are two different goals. Perfection is a neurotic goal, totality is a sane goal. Perfection is in the future, totality is herenow. You can be total THIS moment. You can be total in your anger, you can be total in your sex, you can be total in whatsoever you are doing -- cleaning the floor or cooking food or writing poetry. You can be total! THIS moment! It needs no preparation, it needs no cultivation.

And by being total you will enter into God, into nirvana. When you are total, the self disappears -- that is the beauty of totality. Just try to understand -- this is subtle, and of immense significance: when you are total, the self disappears.

Have you ever seen any total moments? Then you know, the self immediately disappears. If you are totally in love with a woman or a man, the self disappears. When you are making love the self disappears, if you are total in it. If you have gone for a morning walk and you are TOTAL in it, nothing else matters in those beautiful moments -- just the morning and you, you and the morning, the birds and the trees and the sun, and you are completely drowned, utterly drowned in the moment -- the self disappears.

The disappearance of the self is benediction. You will know what Buddha means by 'no-self'. He means utter bliss. He never uses the words 'utter bliss' because he knows you -- you can make a goal out of it, you can start striving to utter bliss. YOU can make a goal of the perfectionist -- you can say, "I cannot rest unless I become perfectly blissful." Now you have missed the whole point.

If you are total, bliss happens as a by-product, because self disappears. Dancing, singing, listening to music -- or just here, being with me, sometimes it happens. I can see it happening to many people. I know when I look at your face whether there is self or not. Your face immediately has a different quality. When I look at you and the self is not there, you are just an opening, a window, I can see God clearly in you. In those moments, God is there, you are not. All clouds have disappeared and the sky is clear, transparent, and the sun is shining.

Whenever your self disappears for a moment, suddenly I can see the luminousness that comes to your face, that quality of magic that arises around you.

But we have been taught to live in a non-total way, through the idea of perfection.

I teach you totality. In totality, self disappears. And just the contrary is the case with perfection. With the idea of perfection the self is strengthened. It is an egoist ideal: "I want to be perfect." 'I' cannot be total, because in totality no 'I' is ever found. Hence it appeals to the ego too, to become perfect, to be the most perfect man or woman in the world. The ego feels very good, the ego starts striving for it. The ego is involved with the idea of perfection.

With the experience of totality, the ego is simply non-existential. If you learn how to be herenow, slowly slowly you will see that life is beautiful as it is. Life is beautiful in its suchness, in its as-it-is-ness. It needs no improvement.

This can be helped through the birth trauma -- if you go through the birth trauma, if you live it consciously again, then the whole significance of birth changes.

Right now the womb experience remains in your unconscious -- so important that you are striving for it unknowingly. That's why people go on thinking that in the past, everything was good. This is nothing but a projection because of the womb experience. In all the societies of the world, in all the religions of the world, the idea persists that the golden age was there somewhere in the past. When Adam lived in the Garden of Eden, it was paradise. In India, they say the golden age was very very prehistoric. Then things started falling down -- the original sin. We were in a state of bliss and then we started falling. Then we lost it.

This is nothing but the same story, woven philosophically. The original fall is nothing but the fall from the womb. And the memory that before, some time before, far away in the past, everything was golden and beautiful, is nothing but a memory projected on history. Individual memory projected on collective history. And we have to attain to it again, so we become interested in the future.

The past is important, the future is important, only the present is not important. Because we have lost the past -- and only in the future, trying, striving, reaching it, some day we will find it.

So there are two types of people, and both are not different basically. Religious people say the golden age was in the past. And the non-religious say the golden age is going to be in the future, the utopia is coming. Hindus say the golden age -- SATYAYUGA, the age of truth -- was in the past. And communists say the age, the golden age -- SAMYUGA, the age of equality -- is going to come in the future.

They are not different. They look different, because one talks about the past, another talks about the future. But the mechanism is the same: they both want to avoid the present. Communists and anti-communists are not very different.

Real spirituality begins with the present and ends with the present. It has no past, it has no future. This moment is all.

So, Adheera, try to get consciously into your unconscious. Try to penetrate to where this desire for perfection is arising. Go into your childhood. YOU have been taught, you have been conditioned layer upon layer, you will have to peel yom onion of the mind. And then finally you will come to the birth trauma, the day you were born.

You can live it again. That is the whole process of rebirthing: you can live it again. And once you live it again, it disappears. And what happens? The total perspective changes. If you can live it again consciously -- if you can move back, become a child, a small child, a baby, just coming out of the womb -- you will go through a great suffering and agony. You will suffer the same birth pain; you will feel suffocated, your breathing will become hectic. Sometimes the breathing may stop completely, your body will become paralyzed. You may feel you are dying, because that's what you felt when you were coming out of the womb.

You will feel you are passing through a very narrow tunnel, suffocating, dark. Great fear will arise in your being, you will be shaken and rocked by the fear. You will need somebody to help you.

Hence the need for a master. You will need somebody to protect you, you will need somebody to support you -- to tell you, "Don't be afraid, go into it. Let it pass, don't escape from it." Once you have passed through it and once you have seen consciously what happened in your birth unconsciously, it is wiped out. This is the process of the mind. Anything lived consciously is wiped out; it has no more grip on your unconscious being.

And then for the first time you open your eyes and you see that the world is beautiful. The willow is green and the rose is red. And then for the first time you see that the womb was good but it is not the goal. The womb was convenient but it was only a preparation. It was not real life; it was a sucker's life, it was pure exploitation. It was dependence. It knew nothing of freedom -- how can it be beautiful? Yes, it was convenient and comfortable, but you were simply vegetating, you were not really alive. You were a contented pig. It has no worth in itself.

And then you start seeing that life has beauties which no womb can ever give to you.

All wombs are confined. That's why after nine months a child HAS to come out of it, because of the confinement. All wombs are prisons -- comfortable, warm, but a prison is a prison. Even if it is comfortable, even if it is warm, IT does not make it anything else; it is prison.

You are coming out of the womb into freedom. The whole sky opens up, and the sun and the moon and the trees and the stars -- they were not available to you. And the songs of the birds and the music and all the poetry and love -- they were not available to you. Your paradise was not much of a paradise, your paradise was just a very stupid paradise.

Once you have seen that it was nothing of worth.... It was needed in those moments because you were growing and you were very tender and delicate and you needed the protection. Once the child is nine months he hankers to come out, he wants to come out, he wants to be free of the womb. He is ready to go into the world and see the joys and the miseries of the world. He is ready to go deep into experiences and into existence.

Once you have lived the birth trauma consciously and you have erased the pain memory, you will be surprised that something like a mist from yom eyes has disappeared. And when you open your eyes the trees will be greener than they had ever been, and everything will be totally different. You will see the world in psychedelic colours -- you will not need any drug

trip for it.

People are taking drugs just to create something which is very natural. There is no need to destroy your body chemically for it. You can just go through the birth trauma, and you can come back, and the whole world and the whole experience of the world becomes psychedelic.

It is more colourful. It is a constant jubilation. There is no end to this jubilation -- from beginningless beginning to endless end, it continues. It is a song ad infinitum.

Once you start seeing this, life begins. That's what Jesus means when he says, "Unless you are born again, you will not enter into my kingdom of God." He is talking about rebirthing!

In the East, we have a name for a man who has become alert and total, we call him DWIJA -- twice-born. He has attained to a second birth. The first birth is BOUND to be unconscious. And if you live only with the first birth, you will remain a perfectionist. Once you are twice-born, consciously born, and have erased all the pain-memory of the first birth, you will live the life of totality. Not with the desire for perfection -- all desire for perfection disappears, because you see this is the most perfect world, and you are the most perfect person, and everybody is perfect, and all is as it should be.

When you see all is as it should be, great gratitude arises. Prayer is natural. You bow down to the earth, you bow down to the sun, you bow down to existence. That is the religious quality -- not that you go to church and think you are religious, and you bow down to Christ and think you are religious: you are not! Nothing of the sort. You are simply afraid; you are thinking Christ will save you.

Nobody can save you, unless you save yourself. No Christ, no Buddha, can save you. But you can save yourself. And it is your responsibility to save yourself. And the way to save yourself is to be reborn, born again.

Remember, if you suffer from the desire for perfection -- and almost everybody does -- then make it a point that you have to go back into your birth process and you have to erase the whole tape. And then look again with empty eyes, and you will be surprised.

I have been working on many people. And whenever they come across their birth memory, strange unbelievable things happen. I was helping a young man to go through. He came to a point when he almost started suffocating -- crying, weeping, and then he became paralyzed. For a moment, everything stopped -- even breathing. It was such agony. Then he opened his eyes, looked at me, and he said, "This is strange. I am smelling chloroform and the smell that surrounds a hospital."

I asked him, "Were you born in a hospital?" He said, "I don't know, I have never asked my mother." We checked with the mother and she said, "Yes, he was born in a hospital. And I was in such pain that I was given a heavy dose of chloroform."

The memory of the chloroform entered into his cells. He could still smell it -- after twenty-eight years!

But once you pass through all these memories they start losing their control over you. Going through the birth is the first step. If you can do it, then the second step is going through the death that preceded your birth, nine months before. If you can go through your birth, you can easily go through your death. And once you have gone through your death, your past life becomes available to you. And then the whole stupidity of it...

That's why these Buddha sayings, these Ikkyu sutras, look so depressing to you -- because they are based on a totally different understanding of life. These people have known their past lives and they see the stupidity of it. You cannot see. You think you are doing great

things; you are not aware.

If you have been in love for many many lives, again and again, and always failed and failed and failed, and if you come to know about it, if you can SEE it, then the love affair that you are in today will simply become invalid, just through that experience. Now you know that these are the ways you have always been deceiving yourself. And it is a repetition, a wheel that goes on moving.

These sutras are not philosophical sutras, they don't propound a doctrine. They are based on a totally different experience of life, on a different vision. So sometimes you will feel disturbed.

The other day, Arup was saying to somebody, "These heavy talks, and Osho has called the series 'Take It Easy'!"

That's why I have called it 'Take It Easy'. It ain't easy. It is difficult to take it, it is VERY difficult to take it. It is almost impossible to take it, because it will shatter your whole life pattern. It ain't easy, that's why I have called the whole series 'Take It Easy'. Truth is that whose contradictory is also true.

The second question

SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE THIS TIME I HAVE BEEN FEELING INCREASINGLY UNSPIRITUAL AND MORE AND MORE STUPID -- LIKE AN ORANGE VEGETABLE. I FEEL TO BE ENJOYING SENSUAL PLEASURES AND IN GENERAL TO BE VERY HEDONISTIC. THIS DOESN'T FIT WITH MY PREVIOUS FEELINGS AND IDEAS ABOUT BEING CLOSE TO A MASTER. WHAT IS HAPPENING? AM I GOING OFF THE TRACK? WHAT TO DO?

NISEEMA, THE REAL MASTER NEVER FITS WITH YOUR EXPECTATIONS. And if he fits he is not a master. The real master cannot fit with your expectations, your expectations come out of your mind. Your mind is the problem: it has to go down the drain, in toto.

A real master never fits with your expectations. And those who fit with your expectations are just businessmen, not real masters. They fit, they HAVE to fit -- that's how they depend on you. A real master is always a shock, a shattering. He will not in any way allow himself to fit with you. Then only can he destroy you.

A real master is not a consolation. A real master has to UNCREATE you -- how can he be a consolation? He has to demolish you; he is not a renovation. He is not just patching up things, he has to uproot you from the very roots and transform you to another dimension. He is a transmutation. Nothing will ever fit with a real master.

Do you think Jews were unnecessarily angry with Jesus? The anger was this, that he didn't fit with their expectation.

He used to move with people who were not respectable. He used to live with people who were gamblers, drunkards, thieves. He used to stay in houses where no respectable person, no rabbi, would be ready to go. He allowed this prostitute, Magdalene, to become his closest disciple. He was not fitting with their expectations. A religious person should behave in a certain way -- he was behaving outrageously, he was annoying people.

Now, you ask me: SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE THIS I HAVE BEEN FEELING

INCREASINGLY UNSPIRITUAL.

That is your truth. And I am here to bring your truth to the surface. You must have been repressing what you call 'unspiritual'. In calling it unspiritual you simply say that you are against it; you are condemning it. Our words are significant. When you call something unspiritual you have condemned it.

You say: SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE THIS TIME I HAVE BEEN FEELING INCREASINGLY UNSPIRITUAL.

You are becoming increasingly REAL, that's all. All your ideas of spirituality are being taken away. They were forced, pseudo. You were just repressing your reality and calling it spirituality. You were against yourself: You were not enjoying your being; you were crippling it, poisoning it. You were a victim. Now you are gathering courage to be yourself. Don't call it unspiritual; you are becoming real, you are becoming natural.

And how can nature be unspiritual and how can reality be unspiritual?

To be with me means first I have to take all that is pseudo in you. The false has to be known as false. And knowing it as false, it drops. The true can arrive only when the false has disappeared.

Now, your spirituality was false, Niseema. It was just a facade, it was a show-window spirituality. Deep down, you were always that which you are finding yourself now. Now your depth is meeting with your surface; they are losing the division, the split. You are relaxing, you are dropping the conflict with yourself. The top dog and the bottom dog are meeting, for the first time there is a merger happening. This is the beginning of growth, because only the real can grow. The plastic, the synthetic, the false, cannot grow.

You can have plastic flowers, but they cannot grow. Growth happens only to the real and your spirituality was like a plastic flower. That's how people are spiritual Deep down they are absolutely the opposite, on the surface they have painted faces.

I am taking your painted face away, I am taking your mask away, the mask is slipping off. Hence this question has arisen. You must be becoming afraid: "What kind of master is this? And what am I doing here?" You must have come here expecting that you would become more spiritual, and I am making you more REAL! In your words, more 'unspiritual'.

SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE THIS TIME I HAVE BEEN FEELING INCREASINGLY UNSPIRITUAL AND MORE AND MORE STUPID.

That is a good beginning. To feel that one is ignorant is the beginning of wisdom. Only stupid people never feel that they are stupid. This is how wisdom arises -- when you start seeing the stupidity of it all, something has happened in you, a ray of light has entered.

To move into the world of understanding, first one has to drop all kinds of knowledge. So I am taking your pseudo-spirituality and I am also taking your borrowed knowledge. The so-called spiritual people carry great knowledge -- esoteric, occult, they go on collecting it. They consult I Ching and they consult astrology books and they read tarot cards and they go into the mysteries of kabala. And all are just mind games. They have nothing to do with spirituality, they are really meant for stupid people to play around with. And these people go on reading the Bible and the Vedas and the Gita -- and they cram it, they become parrots. And the they think they know.

Knowledge is not knowing. Anything borrowed can never be your knowing.

So when you come to me, many things are going to happen. Each day you will feel poorer and poorer, and you had come to become richer and richer. So naturally, only the very courageous can stay with me, otherwise people escape. Because who wants to become poorer? You had come with so much knowledge and now you feel stupid. Now what kind of game is this? You had come to learn something, but what I am proposing here is not learning but unlearning.

You had come to accumulate a little bit more. You had already a beautiful collection of knowledge, you wanted to make it more up-to-date. You wanted to have something from a modern Buddha. Because the old Buddha is twenty-five centuries old, and things have changed. You wanted an up-to-date version of Buddhahood. And you come here and I start taking things away from you. Your knowledge starts disappearing and you feel in a panic: what is happening? You start feeling stupid.

You have always been stupid! Just that knowledge was giving you the idea that you are not. Now this is a great revelation. Your spirituality starts looking false, plastic -- and you have been thinking that you are a saint, almost on the verge of enlightenment. And all your morality starts looking meaningless, because it was just an imposition from the outside.

It was because of fear that you were moral, or because of greed that you were moral. All your character looks cheap, because I teach you a totally different kind of life: characterLESS. Only in characterlessness is there freedom. And only in characterlessness does real character arrive -- character that springs from your very source, is not imposed from the outside, is not imposed by the society, is not a kind of obedience but is a growth of freedom. It is a totally different thing, it happens only to people who are rebellious enough. I don't teach you obedience, I teach you rebellion.

So naturally, your spirituality gone, your morality gone, your knowledge gone, all down the drain -- suddenly you are standing there looking stupid, nude, ignorant, characterless, immoral, unspiritual. NOW, what kind of discipleship is this? Naturally, the question arises.

But, Niseema, this is the beginning. First I have to take all that you have away -- so your burdened heart is unburdened, so all the garbage that you have gathered is thrown out and you are clean, left clean. In that cleanliness, in that purity, in that unburdening, you will start growing.

And that growth I am not going to give to you, it will happen to you. You are ready for it -- just the garbage is too much and it doesn't allow you to grow. It is as if a rosebush has been covered by garbage -- Vedas, Gitas, Koranas, Bibles, all garbage -- and the rosebush is dying. I have to take all these books away. Soon the rosebush will start growing, and the day is not far off when you will see the first roses blooming.

I FEEL TO BE ENJOYING SENSUAL PLEASURES AND IN GENERAL TO BE VERY HEDONISTIC.

Beautiful. Enjoy. Because it is only through enjoying them that you will come to see the illusoriness of them -- there is no other way. If I say they are illusory, Ikkyu says they are illusory, Buddha says they are illusory, they are not going to become illusory just because these people say so. You have to see it on your own.

Buddha has said again and again: Don't believe what I say, unless you have examined it, lived it, observed it, concluded it, on your own.

How can you know the illusoriness of these enjoyments unless you go into them? Go into

them. Go into them as totally as possible, so sooner you can come out. Be a hedonist. By being a hedonist you will see that all pleasures bring pain, that each pleasure is followed by great pain. Slowly slowly, you will see that the pleasure and pain are two aspects of the same coin. You cannot get rid of pain unless you see this. Once you have seen that pleasure and pain are TOGETHER, inevitably together....

There is no way to separate them. That's what we have been doing, down the ages -- just trying to separate them. We want all the pleasures and we don't want any pain. And they are together, they come together. We want to avoid pain and we want to enjoy pleasure. But the pain comes.

When you see this happening again and again, one day the very experience will make you capable of dropping both. And the day one drops pleasure and pain both, what happens is called bliss. Great silence, great joy arises -- which is not pleasure, remember, because it has the counterpart of pain in it. It is sheer joy, eternal joy. But it arises only when pleasure and pain both have been dropped.

And if you don't become a hedonist, if you don't experience its truth, then you will become a spiritual hedonist. Then you will think of the same joys -- in paradise of course, not here, but of the same joys. You will hanker after the same women, the same men, the same wine -- but in paradise. You will have to postpone a little bit, that's all.

Your saints are just the same as you -- in fact more greedy than you, more hedonistic than you, but they are waiting for paradise. They will take their revenge there. They will see to it that you all suffer in hell, because you enjoyed on the earth and they suffered on the earth, so now they will be rewarded. They will have beautiful women in paradise, eternally young, with no perspiration, etcetera, etcetera. And rivers of wine. Wine is not sold in pubs in paradise -- rivers. And there has never ever been any effort for prohibition. You can jump into rivers of wine, you can bathe in rivers of wine, you can drink as much as you want. And all kinds of food will be available, and with no fear of becoming fat. Nobody has ever heard -- have you ever seen any fat angel? They never become fat; they go on eating and eating. And all their work consists of is jubilation, singing songs in the praise of the Lord, and fooling around.

These are your saints. Once they were saints sitting with long faces, now they are fooling in paradise.

Your saints are not against pleasure, they are only against the momentariness of it; remember it. They are only against the momentariness of it, because it is fleeting. So what is the point of running after it? They are waiting for permanent pleasure. They are REAL hedonists, more hedonistic than you.

So if you become spiritual, so-called spiritual, then you will be just waiting for your time, impatiently waiting for when paradise arrives and you can jump into all kinds of pleasures. You can explode, and you can explore all kinds of pleasures that you have denied to yourself on the earth.

This is not much different; the worldly and the other-worldly are not different, they are the same.

What I am trying to make you aware of here is not that you have to become hedonistic in the other world, or you have to become antagonistic to hedonism in this world. What I am trying here is to make you aware of the whole situation of life. If something in your unconscious hankers for pleasure, go into it -- that is the only way to go beyond it. Going through is the only way to go beyond. Don't repress.

So Niseema, be hedonistic, TOTALLY hedonistic. Enjoy all sensual pleasures -- there is

no fear about it, because they are all dream stuff. So if you are enjoying a dream, I am the last person to be worried about it. If your saints are against it, that simply shows that they have not yet understood that it is all a dream. Why should they be against it?

That's why my statements sometimes make you very much confused. Just the other day, I talked against love. And every night, every evening, I suggest to people to move into love. They become very puzzled. They have fallen in love with this madman -- in the morning he says "All love is illusion", in the evening he says "Fall in love, go headlong."

I am saying it because it is illusion: go headlong, so soon you will be out of it. If you go in a miserly way you may take years or lives to come out of it, and I may not be here to help you. So I say go headlong -- just jump into the whole turmoil of the world, so that you can come out of the illusion. If it is an illusion you WILL come out of it, there is no need to be worried about it. And even if you don't come out of it, so what? It is just an illusion! Enjoy it while it lasts!

Sooner or later you are bound to be awake. And my own experience is that the more you go into these experiences of life, the more the awakening comes closer. When the night is darkest the morning is the closest. When you are moving in an illusion so deeply and it looks so real that everything else looks unreal in comparison to it, that is the moment when the morning is very close.

You say: THIS DOESN'T FIT WITH MY PREVIOUS FEELINGS AND IDEAS ABOUT BEING CLOSE TO A MASTER.

How can you have any ideas without being close to a master? What expectations can you have? All those expectations will be your projections -- will be your desires, your fears, your greed. They can't be based on truth.

Now you are with me. Being with me for a few years, you will know what it is to be with a master. If you can remain with me long enough to be finished totally, then you will know what it is to be with a master. It is to be with your own death, total death.

But only when you are annihilated is there a possibility of God arising in you. Only after crucifixion the door opens for resurrection.

The third question

A WHILE AGO, SOMEONE WHO IS ALSO PAST THE AGE OF FIFTY LIKE ME, SAID TO ME: YOU ARE STILL A DISCIPLE?

THE PERSON WHO SAID IT IS VERY SELF-RELIANT, SELF-SUFFICIENT. HE DOES NOT LOOK TO OTHERS TO FIND OUT WHAT HE SHOULD DO. HE IS ENOUGH TO HIMSELF.

I CONSTANTLY LOOK OUTSIDE AT OTHERS FOR MORE KNOWLEDGE, FOR MORE SKILLS. I AM TIMID, DIFFIDENT, AND HAVE LITTLE SELF-CONFIDENCE. I AM NOT ENOUGH TO MYSELF.

FOR ME THERE ARE ONLY THESE TWO STAGES: THE DISCIPLE AND THE MASTER. WHAT IS THIS THIRD STAGE, THE SELF-SUFFICIENT FULLY GROWN-UP PERSON THAT DOES NOT LOOK FOR A MASTER? IS THIS A DECEPTION?

THE FIRST THING TO BE UNDERSTOOD: you say, A while ago, someone who is

also past the age of fifty like me, said to me: "You are still a disciple?" Next time you meet him, say to him, "You are still not a disciple?"

What does being a disciple mean, in fact? It means that you have started learning. Instead of collecting knowledge, you have started learning. Discipleship means you have found somebody who has known. You would like to meet and merge with this person's being, so you can also have some taste of reality.

There are egoistic people who would not like that, they would not like to meet and merge with anybody. They would like to remain sufficient unto themselves -- even if it is hell. Even if they are suffering they will not show it to anybody. And they **MUST** be suffering, because ego is hell.

Discipleship simply means that you are losing the boundaries of your ego. First you lose it with one person, and then you see the beauty of losing it. That's what happens with a master. You see the beauty of losing your boundaries, then you start losing it with everybody else too. Then one day you are capable of losing it with the whole existence.

A man who thinks that he is sufficient unto himself will never open up, will remain closed. He will live in what Soren Kierkegaard calls 'a shut-upness'. He will be a monad, windowless. He will suffer agonies, but he will think they are worth it because he has not to look to anybody, he is sufficient unto himself.

Once it happened, a chief minister of a state -- and it will be better to call him a 'mischief minister' -- came to see me, and he said, "I am a self-made man." I told him, "Thank you. You have relieved God of a great responsibility."

Self-made?

You have to be born out of a mother and a father. You have to depend for your breathing on the air, you have to depend for your food on the trees, you have to depend for your warmth on the sun. You have to depend on the seas, rivers, fire. You are dependent! From where comes this nonsense: "I am self-made"? Can you exist even for a single moment if you are disconnected from everything you are plugged into?

Just think -- disconnected from the sun! Think -- disconnected from the air! Think -- disconnected from the earth! Can you live? Can you exist even for a single moment? Impossible.

The idea that "I am sufficient unto myself", that "I am a self-made person", is just one of the most egoistic attitudes -- foolish and false. We are not independent, we are not dependent; we live in a kind of interdependence, that is the truth. These two words are just two extremes -- independence and dependence are two extremes. Both are false. Just exactly in the middle of the two is the truth: interdependence.

Because really the **WHOLE** exists -- I don't exist, you don't exist. How can I be self-sufficient? How can you be self-sufficient? Nobody can be. Only the whole is self-sufficient, and only the whole **CAN** be self-sufficient. The whole exists on its own. That's why we say God is self-sufficient -- God means the total. God is not a person, but the totality of all. It includes everything -- so it cannot depend on anything else, because there is nothing outside it.

But if you look inside, then each part depends on another. Then we live in an ocean of interdependence. You cannot be born without a mother, without a father. You cannot be born without existence supporting you from every side, visibly, invisibly.

When you are in love you cannot be self-sufficient, you will seek a woman or a man. When you meditate you will need somebody who knows what meditation is, not through books but through his experience.

That's what Ikkyu means when he says: Ask someone, ask the awakened. Ask someone who has mercy and sincerity, truth and wisdom. Ask somebody who has known, who has become. Ask somebody who has disappeared. Ask somebody who no more exists on the plane of ego, whose ego is no more relevant. Be with him, be in his presence, imbibe his presence.

And remember, you are not becoming dependent on another human being. That's why in the East we don't call the master a human being. We have called Buddha 'Bhagwan', Mahavira 'Bhagwan', Krishna 'Bhagwan', for a certain reason. We don't call them human beings. Not that they are not just like you -- they are just like you, and yet something has happened in them that has transformed their being, has illuminated their being. Something of the beyond has penetrated them. They are openings to God, so we have called them gods.

Christians feel very offended, Mohammedans feel very offended, Jews feel very offended, when they think that Buddha is called a god. Why? He is just a human being -- Buddha himself says, "I am a human being." But a human being who no more exists on the plane of the ego. Yes, just like you, he has the body. And he eats and excretes and sleeps and he is born and will die just like you. But still, something is there which is not like you: he is absent in the deepest core of his being. And through that absence a new presence has become available there: God has descended in him. You can have a look through him into the totality of all.

To find a master does not mean that you have contacted a person, it means you have contacted a PRESENCE. Just presence, not a person.

A WHILE AGO, SOMEONE WHO IS ALSO PAST THE AGE OF FIFTY LIKE ME, SAID TO ME: YOU ARE STILL A DISCIPLE? THE PERSON WHO SAID IT IS VERY SELF-RELIANT, SELF-SUFFICIENT.

He is missing a lot. He must be utterly bored.

HE DOES NOT LOOK TO OTHERS TO FIND OUT WHAT HE SHOULD DO. HE IS ENOUGH TO HIMSELF.

He will live a closed life. Help him to open up, help him to merge with the whole. And it is difficult to merge with the whole suddenly, it is too much to take in. You have to find a small door to enter.

When you start learning swimming you don't just go into the sea; you have to learn in shallow water by the banks or in a swimming pool.

A master is just a small door into the infinity of God. It is easier to enter from that door rather than jump into the sky directly. If one can jump into the sky directly it is perfectly good -- but that type of man will never say, "I am self-sufficient." He cannot say it, because that type of person will know that there is no self. Jumping into the whole is losing the self. If somebody thinks, "I am self-sufficient and I never look up to anybody else," he is simply living his ego trip.

Help him to open up. And don't allow him to close you up. Because your ego must feel hurt -- when somebody says, "You are fifty, and you are STILL a disciple?" your ego will feel hurt. You will think, "So I am looking to others."

The master is not the other. When you have fallen in tune with a master, he is not the other! He is more yourself than you are. That, only a disciple knows -- he will laugh at the

whole idea. If you ask Sariputra, "Is Buddha the other, someone that you look up to?" he will laugh. He will say, "There is nobody to look up to. He is more me than I am myself. He is my future, he is my potential, my possibility. He is my hope. Through him I have seen what I can be, what is my destiny. Through him I have become aware of the blooming flowers -- they have bloomed in him, I am just a seed. He has given a glimpse of my own possibilities. He is ME."

When a disciple is really a disciple, not just a student, then he will say, "The master and I are not two." And if there is ever a question of choosing, the disciple will choose the master, not himself. Because the master is closer to his being than he himself is.

I CONSTANTLY LOOK OUTSIDE AT OTHERS FOR MORE KNOWLEDGE, FOR MORE SKILLS. I AM TIMID, DIFFIDENT, AND HAVE LITTLE SELF-CONFIDENCE.

That is far better than having so-called self-confidence. Because with self-confidence, confidence is just a shadow; the real thing is the self. There is no self -- how can there be self-confidence?

A real man, a man who has known, lives without self, lives without self-confidence. Not that he lives in a kind of no-confidence -- with confidence disappearing, unconfidence also disappears. He simply LIVES, not bothering about confidence or no-confidence. He simply lives. He is unworried, because the whole has taken care. He has surrendered to the whole, now the whole knows better. He simply flows with the whole -- wherever it is going, he is also going. He is in a surrender.

You are in a far better state than your friend. People come to me and they ask, "How to gain more self-confidence?" For what? Just to make this self look strong? Just to compete with others, fight with others? to prove yourself, that you are greater than others? For what?

Lose the self too! Lose self-confidence, lose self. Let then go, they are all diseases. You just relax into non-being.

And remember, I am not saying that the man of non-being is un-self-confident. He simply lives, like the trees are living. Do you think any tree is self-confident? or un-self-confident? Do you think any river is self-confident or un-self-confident? The whole question is irrelevant; you cannot ask that question, it is pointless, it is meaningless.

The trees flow, grow. The rivers flow, grow. Things are happening. There is nobody taking care of everything. To surrender to this happening is to disappear as an ego. And great joy arises with that surrender.

FOR ME THERE ARE ONLY THESE TWO STAGES: THE DISCIPLE AND THE MASTER. WHAT IS THIS THIRD STAGE, THE SELF-SUFFICIENT FULLY GROWN-UP PERSON THAT DOES NOT LOOK FOR A MASTER?

The fully grown person is not a person at all. The moment you are fully grown you become a presence, not a person -- the person disappears. All persons are immature; personality is immaturity. To be a person means to be false. The word 'person' comes from 'persona', mask -- it is a mask, it is just a face that you have put on yourself to show others. this is not your reality. No person can ever become mature or grown-up, Because no mask can ever be grown-up. The mask hinders.

Drop the mask! Forget about the person! Then presence arises. A presence with no self, with no center in it. A pure presence, just a light. And then life is lived in totality, in

celebration.

You ask me: THE SELF-SUFFICIENT FULLY GROWN-UP PERSON -- IS THIS A DECEPTION?

Yes. 'Person' is a deception, and 'fully grown-up' is an absolute deception. All personalities are ungrown-up, all personalities are childish. Presence is grown-upness, maturity. And to be with a master is to be with a presence. To be with a presence is slowly slowly moving towards the presence, and one day you will also become aflame.

One day when you come REALLY close to a master, something jumps from the master into you -- a flame. Just as it happens when you bring an unlit candle very close to a lit candle. Just a moment before, the unlit candle was unlit and the lit candle was lit. And just a moment afterwards, at a certain distance the flame jumps and both the candles are lit. And the lit candle has not lost anything, and the unlit has gained all.

The master never loses anything. That's why millions of disciples can become lit through a single master. But there is nothing like a fully self-sufficient grown-up person; that is just a deception.

There is a fully grown-up presence. A flame, a light.

The last question

YOU SAY THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE COURAGE AND SINCERITY. THEREFORE I WILL DROP MY FEAR AND ASK YOU THE QUESTIONS DEEPEST AND MOST HONESTLY WITHIN ME, AND I HOPE YOU WILL ANSWER. HOW CAN THERE BE ANY GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT THE QUALITIES OF MAN AND WOMAN? WE ARE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US FIFTY PERCENT MAN AND FIFTY PERCENT WOMAN, THEN WE MUST EACH POSSESS VARYING DEGREES OF MALE OR FEMALE CHARACTERISTICS NOT DEPENDENT ENTIRELY ON IF OUR PHYSICAL BODIES IN THIS LIFETIME ARE BORN MALE OR FEMALE. I AM FEMALE BUT I HAVE ALWAYS WRITTEN POETRY AND I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO GOOD AT SHOPPING LISTS. I AM FEMALE BUT I HAVE NOT BEEN SUSPICIOUS OR JEALOUS OF MAN'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH HIS ART. IN FACT I HAVE MORE OFTEN BEEN IN THE ROLE OF CHOOSING TO BE WITH MY WRITING, THAN CHOOSING TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP LEADING TO HOME AND FAMILY. I AM FEMALE BUT I FEEL MY CREATIVITY AND IDEAS COME FROM STRONGLY WITHIN ME, AND DO NOT LOOK TO A MAN FOR THEM. IF I HAVE BEEN UNCERTAIN ABOUT MY WHOLENESS WITHIN, I HAVE LOOKED OUTSIDE BUT NEVER SPECIFICALLY TO SOMEONE BECAUSE OF THE SEX THEY HAPPEN TO BE.

AND I HAVE LOVED WOMEN AS WELL AS MEN -- NOT WHEN NO MAN WAS AVAILABLE TO ME, BUT BECAUSE I WAS NOT LOOKING AT THE OUTER ILLUSION OF THIS BEING MAN OR WOMAN, BUT FEELING THE ESSENCE OF THAT PERSON WITHIN. I FEEL THESE GENERALIZATIONS REINFORCE OUR ALREADY STRONG PREOCCUPATION WITH THE WORLD OF ILLUSION AND BELIEF IN THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE. YOU CAN SEE YOU'VE MADE ME ANGRY, SO I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE BEGIN TO REACH ME.

The question is from Sky Deborah.

THE FIRST THING: generalizations are generalizations. They are not applicable to every single particular human being, that's why they are called generalizations. The average man does not exist, you cannot find the average man anywhere. But the idea is good, it helps clarity. You cannot find, absolutely corresponding to the generalized idea, a single human being. Human beings come in all sizes and shapes and colours, they are unique. But still, generalization has its own point....

For example, only one single woman has asked the question -- there are thousands of women here. Secondly, the very question shows me that Deborah must be very good at making shopping lists. And I am afraid about her poetry too. You can write a shopping list in poetry form. I would have to have a look at her poetry, only then can I say anything.

My own experience is that out of a hundred poetries ninety-nine are shopping lists. It does not matter whether they are written by men or women. It is very rare to find poetry.

It is said of a great Zen master, Lin Chi.... He had ten thousand monks, disciples, in his monastery. The king had come to see the monastery, he was very much impressed, and Lin Chi was taking him around. And the king asked, "How many disciples do you have?" He said, "One in a hundred."

A strange answer -- one in a hundred? But that's how it has always been. When you have a hundred disciples only one is really a disciple. Ninety-nine are just hangers-around.

Even a great poet, when he writes poetry, ninety-nine times writes only shopping lists. Only once in a while the poetry happens -- all poetries are not poetic. And sometimes this too happens, that a shopping list may have great poetry. All shopping lists are not necessarily unpoetic.

But Deborah must belong to the new kind of woman that is arising in the world, the lib woman.

One thing has to be understood: the liberation movement that is going on in the world is a man-created phenomenon, a male-created phenomenon. You will be surprised about it, that it is again a male conspiracy. Now man wants to get rid of women. He wants to have no responsibility. He wants to enjoy women but only as fun; he does not want to take all the other responsibilities that come with it.

Now, this is a subtle conspiracy: the man is trying to persuade women all over the world that the woman has to become independent. It is a subtle trick. And the male mind is cunning and the male mind is succeeding. And now many women have become poisoned by this idea.

Do you know? The first persons who started talking about equality between man and woman were men, not women. The first persons who started talking about it, that they should have equal freedom, were men, not women. The seed comes from the male mind. And it has always been so -- whenever a man feels what is in his favour, he manages it. His cunning is very subtle. And sometimes he manages it in such a way that the woman thinks she is doing it on her own.

In the past also it has been so. Man has persuaded women in the past that they are pure beings, angels. Man is dirty, boys are boys -- but the woman? She is divine. Man has put woman on a high pedestal; that was his trick to control woman. Man has worshipped, and through worship he has controlled. And naturally, when the woman was on the pedestal she thought that she was something divine -- she could not do those things that men are doing, she could not, because that was going against her ego. That high pedestal was very ego-satisfying. She was the mother, she was divine; she had more divine qualities than man.

Man is ugly, immoral, and all that. Man has to be forgiven for that.

So man, down the ages, started remaining in his ways. And the woman was high. But this was a trick, the ego was persuaded. And once your ego is persuaded, you are caught. Then you cannot move from your posture. To ask for equality will be a kind of fall -- you will have to come down to become equal. It was a strategy, and the woman followed it. She remained pure, she remained virgin up to the marriage.

It was not so for the man. If the woman died, the man was allowed to marry again -- because boys are boys, they cannot live without the woman. If the man died, the woman had to remain a widow for her whole life. Or, in this country particularly -- which did this strategy to the very logical end -- she had to commit suicide. She had to burn herself alive with the husband. And millions of women did it. How were they persuaded? And do you think they were forced? No, nobody was forcing them.

There was no visible coercion, just a very deep seduction. By becoming SATIS, by going into the fire with the husband, their egos were fulfilled. Greatly fulfilled -- people worshipped them. When they entered into the fire, thousands of people would gather together and sing songs in praise of the purity of woman.

And if a woman did not go with the husband into the fire, did not commit suicide, she was condemned, utterly condemned. She was a bad woman. Just by trying to be alive, she was a bad woman. She was disrespected; she would fall immediately in the eyes of others, she would lose all respect. Her life would become a hell. She would be condemned everywhere, she would not be welcomed anywhere. She would be thought of as a bad omen.

In no marriage would she be able to participate. If a child was born and people were celebrating, she would not be able to participate. She would not be allowed to decorate her body, to use beautiful clothes or ornaments or have long hair -- no, she had to live in an ugliness, and condemned from everywhere. It was worse than life, worse than death. So it was better to jump into the fire once and for all, and have the respect.

And temples were raised in the memory of those women. And those women were thinking that they were doing it. What I am making clear is that those women down the ages were thinking that they were doing it, on their own. And it was not so.

Now again the same is happening, in the reverse order. In the West, man has persuaded women that "Now you have to be free, you have to be equal." Because now things have changed, times have changed -- a man would like to enjoy more women than just his wife. Now he wants absolute freedom. And the only way to have absolute freedom is to give absolute freedom to the woman. And he has persuaded her again. And now the woman protesters and libbers, they are shouting with their whole heart for liberty and equality. And they don't know they are again in the same grip: again man is persuading them. Now man wants to use them and throw them, with no responsibility attached to it.

If you look deeply into the whole matter of it, you will be surprised. The male mind is a cunning mind. The woman is more innocent; she cannot be so strategic, so political, she has always believed the man. And you will be surprised: these lib women are again believing in the man! Nothing has changed. Now THIS is in favour of the man that you should be free and you should not ask for any commitment. He does not want to commit himself, he wants to have all freedom. He does not want to take the responsibility of your children. He does not want to live with you for ever, he wants to change his woman every day.

But now again he is creating beautiful words: One should live in no commitment. One should live without involvement. One should not be possessive, one should not be jealous. Now again he is creating beautiful philosophy. He has done it before too -- and then too

women were deceived, and again they are going to be deceived. Women trust. Trust is easy for them; love comes easier to them than logic. And they are very much concerned with the immediate. The man always thinks of strategies, tactics, what will happen, how it will happen -- he thinks of the future, he plans for the future.

Now, Deborah repeats at least five times in this question: I AM A FEMALE.

Is there some worry? Is there some doubt? There must be. One thing has to be told to you: just by being in a female body one need not be a woman. Just by being in a male body one need not be a man. Man and woman are more states of the mind. There are men who are psychologically not male but female, and there are women who are psychologically not women but men. These are the people who create many problems, because they cannot be heterosexual. Heterosexuality has no appeal for them, they have to be homosexuals or lesbians. Their psychology is different from their physiology; their biology and their psychology have a gap in them, unbridged.

And there is going to remain a problem with them. In fact in a better world, in the future world -- soon, I think by the end of this century -- things will be easier. Because if a man is deep down psychologically feeling himself a woman, it is better to go through an operation and become biologically also a woman. Or if a woman is feeling deep down a male, it is better to go through an operation, plastic surgery, and become a man, so it can be bridged.

Once this becomes possible, homosexuality and lesbianism will disappear from the world. Otherwise it cannot disappear, because it has a certain reason in it. The man looks a man from the outside; deep down he is not a man, he is a woman. His deeper woman wants a man -- hence the homosexual.

And there is a third category also: confused people, who don't know who they are. In the morning they are women, by the evening they are men. The difference is so small that they shrink; they become bisexuals. One moment they are loving a woman, another moment they are falling in love with a man. Their psychology and biology is in a state of mess; they will live a very confused life. Science can now help these people too, to make things clear.

Now, repeating again and again that "I am a female" creates suspicion. Why so much concern about being a female? Once would have been enough. Even once was not needed -- your question would have said that you are a female. And not an ordinary female, a libber.

Let me read the question: YOU SAY THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE COURAGE AND SINCERITY. THEREFORE I WILL DROP MY FEAR AND ASK YOU THE QUESTIONS DEEPEST AND MOST HONESTLY WITHIN ME...

Now, what kind of questions are deepest and honest in you? Just think of the whole crap of it. These are the deepest questions? I am talking about Ikkyu and Buddha, and these are the deepest questions. And to ask these questions you needed great courage and sincerity!

HOW CAN THERE BE ANY GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT THE QUALITIES OF MAN AND WOMAN?

Generalizations are not possible about ANYTHING, because no individual will fit them. But still, generalizations are meaningful; they simply indicate. When I say a woman is more concerned with the immediate, I am not saying anything about a particular woman -- Deborah, or anybody else. I am simply saying it about WOMANNESS, that womanness is concerned with the immediate. And if you are not concerned with the immediate then

something somewhere in your womanhood is missing. That is very essential to femininity: the concern for the immediate, the imminent.

But generalizations are generalizations, remember it. And there will be differences between individuals. But the meaning of a generalization is just to indicate a certain quality. It doesn't say anything about particular individuals, it simply says the quality of being a woman is immediateness.

I would like to see Deborah's poetry, because there is a possibility there may be that immediateness in the poetry itself. The poetry may be concerned with the imminent, the herenow; it may not be concerned with the ultimate. And the question also shows it -- her whole concern is her womanhood. She says, "This is my deepest and the most honest question arising in me."

Buddhahood, God, they are faraway questions. Her whole concern is with her body, her womanhood. It is not just an accident that women are standing before the mirror for hours. Their concern is immediate; they are more concerned with the body than with the soul. They are more materialistic than spiritualistic. They are more factual than fictitious.

I AM A FEMALE BUT I HAVE ALWAYS WRITTEN POETRY AND I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO GOOD AT SHOPPING LISTS. I AM FEMALE BUT I HAVE NOT BEEN SUSPICIOUS OR JEALOUS OF MAN'S LOVE AFFAIR WITH HIS ART. IN FACT, I HAVE MORE OFTEN BEEN IN THE ROLE OF CHOOSING TO BE WITH MY WRITING, THAN CHOOSING TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP LEADING TO HOME AND FAMILY.

Now, these are complex things. The atmosphere is such that a woman has to be equal with man. She has not to be interested in the home, family, children, motherhood. She has to become interested in poetry, in literature, in painting, in science, in technology, this and that. Now women's groups gather together around the world to raise their consciousness. And all their consciousness-raising sessions consist of only one thing, that they have to destroy something deep in their womanhood. Only then can they compete with men.

They are soft, naturally soft. They cannot compete with men. If they want to compete with men they will have to become hard. So whenever you come across a lib woman you can see the face loses softness. It is very difficult to say to a lib woman, "Baby" -- very difficult. And she will be angry too, she will not like it. Why 'Baby'? -- she is equal to you. Hardness arises.

All kinds of struggle give hardness. And you may be trying not to be interested in the home, because if you become interested in the home then you cannot compete in the world. If you become interested in children you cannot compete in the world; then that becomes a distraction. And if you have to compete in the world and prove that you are as strong as men, you have to somehow become more like men.

And this will be a loss. This is a loss -- because the only hope for humanity is the softness of woman, not the hardness of man. We have suffered enough from the hardness of man. What is needed is that man should become more like woman, rather than woman becoming more like man.

Nietzsche is right when he says that Buddha and Christ were a little womanish. I agree. And this is how it should be -- because Buddha is the hope. Men should become a little more womanish, more soft, more waterlike. But what is happening is very unfortunate, women are trying to become like men. Naturally, with whomsoever you compete, you try to become like

that. If you are antagonistic against men, sooner or later you will become more like men.

Women are pulling against themselves, trying hard to manage. But that is not natural. The natural is the womb in the woman -- that womb hankers for a child, that womb hankers for a home. The home is the visible womb outside the woman, it is a projection of the inner womb.

Once a woman is no more interested in the home, she is no more interested in her womb. And that womb is there. And men and women are NOT equal, because man is missing that womb. How can they be equal? I am not saying they are unequal, but I am certainly saying they are not equal. They are so different -- how can they be equal? They are polar opposites. They are so different, they cannot be compared in terms of equality or inequality. A woman is a woman, a man is a man. And they SHOULD remain man and woman. A woman should remain interested in the home, because once she stops being interested in the home she will stop being interested in the womb, in the child. And then naturally she turns into a lesbian.

It is not accidental that libbers become lesbians. Because if you are not interested in the womb and not interested in the child, then for what be interested in men? Then it is good to be interested in women. This is a very strange phenomenon that is happening in the world.

My own understanding is this, that man has to become a little more feminine. He has gone too far away in becoming a man, he has lost track of all humanity. Don't follow him, don't compete with him -- otherwise you will be going on in the same rut, in the same routine. You will become warlike. And the libbers screaming and shouting and protesting on the streets are just ugly. They are showing the worst traits of the male mind.

And the last thing: YOU CAN SEE YOU HAVE MADE ME ANGRY, SO I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE BEGUN TO REACH ME.

Now I must have made you even more angry. Fall in love with me!

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #3

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WHATEVER RUNS COUNTER
TO THE MIND AND WILL OF ORDINARY PEOPLE
HINDERS THE LAW OF MEN
AND THE LAW OF BUDDHA.

I WOULD LIKE
TO OFFER YOU SOMETHING,
BUT IN THE DARUMA SECT
WE HAVE NOTHING AT ALL.

AS IKKYU DOES NOT THINK OF HIS BODY
AS IF IT WERE HIS BODY,
HE LIVES IN THE SAME PLACE,
WHETHER IT IS TOWN OR COUNTRY.

THE MIND OF MAN IS WITHOUT SOUND,
WITHOUT ODOUR;
HE WHO ANSWERS WHEN CALLED
IS NOTHING BUT A THIEF.

IF WE SAY "THERE IS,"
PEOPLE THINK "THERE IS";
BUT THOUGH IT ANSWERS,
IT IS NOT,
THIS MOUNTAIN ECHO.

IF WE SAY, "THERE IS NOT,"
PEOPLE THINK "THERE IS NOT,"
THOUGH IT ANSWERS,
THE MOUNTAIN ECHO.

A parable:

A KING WANTED TO PICK THE WISEST MAN among his subjects to be his prime minister.

When the search finally narrowed down to three men, he decided to put them to the supreme test. Accordingly, he placed them in a room in his palace, and installed a lock which was the last word in mechanical ingenuity. The candidates were informed that whoever was able to open the door first would be appointed to the post of honour.

The three men immediately set themselves to the task. Two of them at once began to work out complicated mathematical formulas to discover the proper lock-combination. The third man, however, just sat in his chair doing nothing. Finally, without bothering to put pen to paper, he got up, walked to the door, turned the knob, and the door opened. It had been unlocked all the time!

THIS IS THE SITUATION. Nothing is locked, the door is open. And people are pondering upon ways and means to unlock the lock. People are trying different methodologies, practising a thousand and one things, to get out. And in fact they ARE out. Unless they stop this thinking business they will not know the truth of the situation.

Man is not in bondage, only thinks so. Because he thinks so, he is in bondage. There is no difference between a Buddha and an ordinary man. But the ordinary man thinks there is a difference -- then there is.

You create your prisons, your locks. And then you try to find out the ways to get out of them.

Buddhism cuts the knot with one stroke. Buddhism says: There is no lock, no knot to cut.

That's what I mean when I say Buddhism cuts the knot with one stroke of the sword. There is nowhere to go, nothing to be done. You are already there, and you are already that: just open your eyes. Think of those two great thinkers -- they must have been mathematicians, they must have been engineers -- naturally they inferred that the lock must be of great mechanical ingenuity and they had to find the proper combination. They started working.

Now, they can go on working for eternity -- do you think they will ever find a solution? There is no possibility of any solution, because the problem does not exist in the first place.

In fact they will get more and more entangled. They will get more and more entangled -- not in the problem, because there is no problem, but in the answers that they will invent.

That's where people are stuck. Somebody is a Hindu, he is stuck with HIS answer. Somebody is a Christian, he is stuck with HIS answer. People are stuck in philosophies, and no philosophy is needed. Life is enough unto itself. It needs no elaboration, it needs no explanation, it needs no analysis.

But if you become part of an analytic game then it can go on and on for ever. One thing will lead to another, and that to another, and you are in a chain. And because the problem will never be solved, because there is no problem to be solved, you will have to go on looking for the answers.

Buddhism brings you down to the earth. It says: First look to see whether the lock is locked, whether there is any lock on the door.

There is none. The door is open.

How can there be a lock on the door of existence? We are part of it -- who is going to lock it? for what? Who is going to create the problem? and for what? We ARE existence: we are in it, it is in us. Seeing this, one relaxes. In that relaxation, the vision arises.

That's what happened to the third man. He was not pondering, thinking, analyzing, inventing, inferring. He simply sat there in the chair doing nothing. That's what meditation is all about.

The English word 'meditation' is not a right word, because in English 'meditation' also means 'to think about, to meditate upon'. English has no right word for DHYANA to be translated, because DHYANA exactly means 'NOT to meditate upon', DHYANA exactly means 'NOT to think upon'. DHYANA means not to do anything, just relax and be.

When you are just silent and doing nothing, your perspective is infinite, your perception is clear, you can see through and through. Sitting silently in the chair doing nothing, the man could see that there was no lock on the door. He simply went up, turned the knob and went out.

This is my experience too. This parable is not just a parable, not an invented parable. It is the parable of all the Buddhas: this is how it is. This is not just an invented story; it is the condensed experience, the most essential experience of all the Buddhas -- that there is no lock on the door. You just sit silently, attain to a state of SEEING, of purity, of no thought disturbing, of no cloud of thought moving around your consciousness -- just the clean mirror with no dust of thought -- and suddenly you will be able to see that there is no lock, no door, no enemy, no death, no birth. And you are not to go anywhere and you are not to become somebody.

You are perfect as you are. You are already in that space called paradise. Start enjoying it, don't make a problem out of it. The moment you create a problem out of it, you stop enjoying. How can you enjoy unless you solve the problem. And one problem creates ten problems... ad nauseam.

Cut the first problem! Life is not a problem. Buddha says: Life is simple.

I have heard:

A king went into his garden and found wilted and dying trees, shrubs and flowers. The oak said it was dying because it could not be tall like the pine. Turning to the pine, he found it drooping because it was unable to bear grapes like the vine. And the vine was dying because it could not blossom like the rose. He found heartsease blooming and as fresh as ever. Upon inquiry, he received this reply:

"I took it for granted that when you planted me you wanted heartsease. If you had desired an oak, a vine or a rose, you would have planted them. So I thought, since you had put me here, I should do the best I can to be what you want. I can be nothing but what I am, and I am trying to be that to the best of my ability."

The heartsease is saying what Buddha has said. You are here because this existence needs you as you are. Otherwise somebody else would have been here! -- the existence would not have helped you to be here, would not have created you. You are fulfilling something very essential, something very fundamental, AS YOU ARE.

And your so-called mahatmas go on teaching you, "Become a Buddha, become a Christ, become a Krishna." Nobody tells you just to be yourself. Why should you become a Buddha? If God wanted a Buddha he could have produced as many Buddhas as he wanted. He produced only one Buddha, and that was enough. And he was satisfied to his heart's desire, utterly satisfied. Since then he has not produced another Buddha or another Christ. He has created you instead. Just think of the respect that the universe has given to you. You have been chosen! -- not Buddha, not Christ, not Krishna.

You will be needed more, that's why. YOU fit more now. Their work is done, they contributed their fragrance to existence. Now you have to contribute YOUR fragrance.

But the moralists, the puritans, the priests, they go on teaching you, they go on driving you crazy. They say to the rose, "Become a lotus." And they say to the lotus, "What are you doing here? You have to become something else." They drive the whole garden crazy, everything starts dying -- because nobody can be anybody else, that is not possible. The rose is a rose and the lotus is a lotus. And the lotus is good as a lotus, it can live only as a lotus. If it tries to be a rose it will die, it will become paralyzed -- that is not possible because that is not intrinsic to it; that cannot arise.

And if the lotus really becomes a victim of the priests and starts trying to be a rose, or the rose tries to be a lotus, what is going to happen? The lotus will become pseudo; as a lotus it will start dying, and as a rose it will pretend.

That's what has happened to humanity. Everybody is pretending. Authenticity is lost, truth is lost, everybody is trying to show that he is somebody else. Just look at yourself: you are pretending to be somebody else. And you can be only yourself -- there is no other way, there has never been, there is no possibility that you can be anybody else. You will remain yourself. You can enjoy it and bloom, or you can wither away if you condemn it. Humanity looks so ugly, for this simple reason.

A matchmaker was asked by a young artist to find him a suitable mate. "I know just the girl for a creative man like you!" cried the marriage-broker.

The next day the matchmaker brought the girl to the artist's house. The young man was shocked with her appearance and at the first opportunity he drew the broker aside.

"What kind of a monster do you call that?" he hissed.

"One eye slanted up, the other down; the left ear way up here, the right ear way down there; the forehead sloped back like a..."

"Look, you're an artist," interrupted the matchmaker. "You should know better than anyone else -- you either like Picasso or you don't!"

And every man on this earth has become a Picasso, a perversion. Beauty is lost -- because beauty always follows integrity, beauty is a shadow of an integrated presence. You are disintegrated, you are divided against yourself. You are a rose and trying to be a lotus, a marigold trying to be a rose, an oak trying to be a pine. You are divided, you are fighting with yourself.

This fight is destroying your joy, this fight is dissipating your energies, this fight is suicidal. Don't kill yourself any more! Just drop fighting, and start living. This very moment it can be dropped.

But why can you not drop it? Why are these priests really so influential? There must be some reason in you too. The reason is that their idea that you should become this and that, helps your ego. If you listen to the Buddha or if you listen to me, it will not help your ego at all. Then you are simply what you are: relax and live. Then you are ordinary. Then how are you going to be somebody special?

And the ego hankers for speciality, the ego is always trying to be somebody in PARTICULAR. And these Zen people say: Eat when you are hungry. And this looks so ordinary. And the priests say: Fast when you are hungry. That looks special, that looks extraordinary -- something to do, something to be. When everybody is just an ordinary eater, you are fasting. It gives you a haughtiness, it gives you a great feeling of the ego: you are special, you are not ordinary.

When everybody is enjoying, the priests say, "Live with a long face, only then can you attain to God." That appeals to you. When everybody is dancing, singing -- and that's what life is, a dance and a song -- the priests say, "Go to the Himalayas and sit silently in a cave with closed eyes watching your navel." That appeals.

Just watch! You are attracted by things which are outlandish, unnatural -- because only outlandish and unnatural things, bizarre things, can give you the feeling that you are special. And trying to be special, you will never be able to know what is. You will be so much concerned with being special and somebody, you will not be able to live and love and to see and to understand and to be.

The famous sage seemed to be fast asleep. Nearby sat some of his followers. They carried on a whispered conversation about the sage's unparalleled virtues.

"What generosity!" exclaimed one. "There isn't another one like him in all the land."

"And his piety is without limit!" exclaimed a second.

"And his education!" cried a third. "He's a real genius."

"And his patience! He never gets excited."

They fell silent for a minute. Whereupon the sage slowly opened one eye and said, "And my modesty you don't even mention!"

This is how things are, everybody wants to be special. All the nonsense that goes on in the name of religion and spirituality is nothing but ego decoration.

A really religious man is bound to be very ordinary. This is the refrain of Ikkyu's sutras today.

WHATEVER RUNS COUNTER
TO THE MIND AND WILL OF ORDINARY PEOPLE
HINDERS THE LAW OF MEN
AND THE LAW OF BUDDHA.

A GREAT STATEMENT. A rare statement. only a man who knows can say such a thing. It can't be uttered by the pundits and the scholars, it can be said only by a seer. It has the taste that one has known, that one has lived, that one has experienced. It is a rebellious statement. Just think of its implications: "Whatever runs counter to the mind and will of ordinary people is against the Law of Buddha." So whatsoever is in tune with the ordinary mind, with the ordinary people, is in tune with the Law of Buddha.

See the immensity of the implications. Don't try to be special -- because the only way to be special is to run counter to the ordinary man. If the ordinary man is interested in sex, you be interested in celibacy -- run counter. If the ordinary man is interested in eating and drinking and merrying, you drop all those. If the ordinary man is interested in small things, you simply remain interested in great things -- God, nirvana, moksha, truth. If the ordinary man lives in the marketplace, you go to a monastery.

Just do the REVERSE, that is the only way to be special. If the ordinary man simply stands on his feet, you stand on your head, do SIRSHASANA. If the ordinary man feels good to lie down in a comfortable bed, you make a bed of thorns. If the ordinary man wants his body to be beautiful, you make your body ugly, you destroy its grace. If the ordinary man is doing something, then just to be counter to it, just to be against it, is your religion. And that's what religion is not feasting but fasting. That's what religion has become.

But this is not the true religion -- not the religion of the Buddhas, of those who know. Ikkyu is saying:

WHATEVER RUNS COUNTER
TO THE MIND AND WILL OF ORDINARY PEOPLE
HINDERS THE LAW OF MEN
AND THE LAW OF BUDDHA.

What is the Law of Men and the Law of Buddha? What is Tao, what is Dhamma? To be just natural, easy. To be that which you are, with no hankering to be somebody else. Just see the point: great joy arises then. Of course nobody will know you, nobody will know that you are a great historical person. Nobody will know that you are of those few people who make or mar history. Nobody may ever know about you -- not even your wife may know, or your husband or your children -- because you will be simple and you will be living your life naturally.

Who knows about a rosebush that blooms? Nobody takes note of it in history. Nobody will take note of you either, but there is no need. History is the concern of the foolish people, fame is the concern of the foolish people, name is the concern of the foolish people.

The really wise person is not interested in fame, name, etcetera. He simply lives the moment: Sometimes he becomes famous, but that is another matter. Buddha became famous but he was not trying to; there was no desire. If he becomes, it is okay; if he does not become, it is okay. It is all okay, it is ALWAYS okay. His flavour is that of okayness, everything is okay.

Enjoy your food, enjoy your bath, enjoy the sun, enjoy the wind and the rains, and enjoy

everything that is available to you. And just remain whosoever you are -- true to yourself, creating no hypocrisy, creating no pretension, creating no facade, no face. And utter joy will be yours, God will be yours. God comes only to those who are in an utter relaxation with their being. And the person who longs for something cannot be relaxed, because that longing creates tension.

WHATEVER RUNS COUNTER TO THE MIND AND WILL OF ORDINARY PEOPLE...

Just see the ordinary people. But it is very difficult to find ordinary people, very difficult, because everybody has become extraordinary. It is very difficult to find a sane person, because everybody has become insane. Centuries of priests, mahatmas and saints have driven everybody out of his soul, out of his home.

There are only neurotic people on the earth. Friedrich Nietzsche is reported to have said that everybody is neurotic -- and if you think you are not, then that must be another kind of neurosis. But everybody is neurotic.

What is neurosis? Not being happy with yourself is neurosis, not being contented with yourself is neurosis. And then you get into turmoil and trouble. Then you lose all peace of mind, all joy of life. Then you exist in anguish, then you create hell for yourself.

Become ordinary. That's my teaching too, if it can be called a teaching -- because up to now, teachings have been to drive you towards some extraordinary goal. But if you ask the awakened, they have always been saying: Just be ordinary. Don't strive. Live effortlessly, live in a let-go. And then nature takes possession of you. Your life becomes spontaneous, you live moment-to-moment -- with no ideology to follow, with no conclusions. You live without conclusions; each moment brings its own reality and you respond to it. And you respond out of your total being -- every cell of your body and mind and soul is involved in it.

Then you never repent -- because how can you repent? You responded totally, so whatsoever happens is okay, because nothing else was possible. You had done ALL -- you responded totally, you took the challenge. You can't repent if you live spontaneously. The people who repent are the people who live through conclusions. Then one mind says "Do this", another mind says "Do that" -- because they have heard so many mahatmas and they have read so many books and they have listened to so many ideologies and so many teachers, and all those things are roaming around their minds, trying to impose themselves on the mind.

You choose one thing against something else. If you fail, then that something else which you had denied will take revenge with a vengeance. It will come back to the mind and will make you repent. It will say, "I have been telling you, choose me. And you were a fool to have chosen the other. Now remember in future." And you take a vow: "Then now I will listen to you." You repent.

But you have not understood yet. Repentance will always come if your decision is partial. And no decision lived out of conclusions can ever be total, because the conclusion has been carried from the past, and the situation is new -- how can it fit totally? You have to respond again out of your newness of this moment, then the response is total. And total response is joy -- whether it fails or succeeds, is irrelevant. In its totality it has succeeded already, and there will be no repentance.

Walt Whitman says, "Only what nobody denies is true." Just listen to your innermost core, your ordinary nature, and you will know what truth is. The Christian denies the Hindu,

the Hindu denies the Mohammedan, the Mohammedan denies the Christian, and they go on fighting and arguing. But look at the ordinary natural man, he is neither Christian nor Hindu. When he feels hungry he eats -- and that is true for a Christian and that is true for a Hindu and that is true for a Mohammedan. Nobody denies it: this is truth.

When you feel tired you fall asleep -- nobody denies it. This is truth. Truth is simple. Theories are complex and complicated. Theoreticians go on arguing, truth remains unargued.

Don't listen to what people say, listen to what they are. And you will be surprised -- there is no difference between a Hindu and a Mohammedan and a Christian and a Jew, no difference at all. They go to different churches, obviously, and they read different books, certainly -- but look into their nature. When it is hot the Hindu perspires as much as the Mohammedan; that is natural. The Mohammedan cannot say, "I am not a Hindu, and Hindus are perspiring. I cannot perspire, not at least now; that will be agreeing with the Hindus." When it is cold the body shivers -- the body knows not whether it is a Christian or a Jew or a Jain; it shivers. Just watch natural things, look into nature. And slowly slowly, you will understand Dhamma -- the real religion, the Law of Buddhas.

Ikkyu says:

HINDERS THE LAW OF MEN
AND THE LAW OF BUDDHA.

That too is tremendously important. He makes it equivalent -- the Law of Men and the Law of Buddha are not two different things. For Ikkyu there is no other world, this is the only world, and the other world is hidden in it: you have to search in it to find it. You are not to renounce it -- renouncing it, both will be renounced.

Zen people have a tremendous saying: "Samsara is nirvana". This world is that world, and there is no distinction between this and that, and that is not higher and this is not lower. The Law of Men and the Law of Buddha are the same law, looked at from different angles. It may be difficult for you to understand the Law of Buddha but you can understand the Law of Men -- and follow that law, fall in tune with it.

Just live for a few days naturally. And you will be surprised that all that you have been thinking is far away starts happening so close by. You will be surprised that the God that you used to think is very very far away and will take millions of lives to reach, starts happening to you in your breathing, in the beat of your heart. God starts pulsating in your blood. He is already pulsating there, but you are far away -- you don't give any attention to the close-by.

Nature means that which is here. Fall in tune with it. Never listen to anything that creates a dichotomy between you and nature: let this be a deciding factor, a criterion. Always judge things on this criterion, this is a touchstone. If something is proved on this touchstone then it is gold -- otherwise throw it. If anybody is trying to tell you to become unnatural, avoid him! His appeal is to your ego, and he is driving you neurotic and he must have some investment in your neurosis.

There are people who live on people's neuroses, there are people who live on other people's madresses. The priest lives on that, he has lived down the ages on that -- a subtle exploitation of the helplessness of man. And he makes man more and more helpless, because he knows that only if man is helpless is he then in HIS power.

Avoid anything that makes you afraid of your nature, avoid each and everything that makes you condemn your nature -- because the Law of Men is the Law of Buddha. And if you can read the book of nature inside you, you have all the Bibles and all the Korans and all

the Vedas there; you need not consult anything else, your real master is there. And the real master always throws you there.

That's what Ikkyu is doing.

The truth of human beings is the only truth there is. By finding that truth, you will know the truth of the trees and the rocks and the rivers too -- because there are not many truths, there is only one truth. But that truth can be approached only through nature. There is no way to approach it by being unnatural, artificial, plastic.

A snob walked into a doctor's office and said, "Doctor, I feel terrible. I want you to give me a thorough examination and tell me what is wrong with me."

"Fine," said the doctor. "But first let me ask you a few questions. Do you drink much liquor?"

"I have never touched the vile stuff," the man replied indignantly.

"Do you smoke?" the doctor continued his inquiry.

"I have never touched the filthy weed."

"Do you run around much at night?"

"Of course not! I am in bed every night by ten o'clock for a good night's rest."

"Tell me," the doctor continued, "do you have sharp pains in the head?"

"That's just it!" the snob replied. "I have sharp pains in the head."

"That's the trouble, my dear man," the doctor advised. "Your halo is on too tight!"

Avoid these people with tight halos, avoid the people who have the look of holier-than-thou. They are the poisoners, they are the real enemies. But they are very influential -- and their influence consists in giving you new props for your ego. If you can avoid anything that makes you unnatural, sooner or later you are bound to stumble upon the truth: the door is open! But these people are telling you complex theories about the lock and how to find the right combination. And they are arguing amongst themselves, because each thinks that he has found the right combination.

Nobody has opened the door, they are all inside -- but arguing, convincing each other, converting each other. The foolishness of it... A Christian missionary converting Hindus into Christians, without being worried that he has not opened the door himself. Or a Hindu trying to convert a Christian to become Hindu, not thinking at all that he is wasting his time, he is still a prisoner. What is their joy? Their joy is also of the ego: "How many followers have I got? How many people believe in Christianity?" The number grows, and the ego grows with it. His ego is involved in the numbers. And your ego is strengthened, nourished, by anything that you do against nature.

Have you ever respected anybody for being natural? Just see the craziness of it -- you always respect a person if he is unnatural.

Somebody was brought to me -- a few followers came with him and they said, "Our guru is a great man. He eats only once in three days." Will you respect a man if he eats twice every day? I asked those people, "Will you respect your guru if he eats twice every day?" And the guru was almost STARVED, almost dying. But they are interested in something special -- their guru is special, he eats only once in three days.

I came across a man, he has thousands of followers, because for ten years he has not slept. He is a raving maniac -- bound to be so. Just don't sleep for ten days and you will know. And because of the fear that if he sits down or lies down he will fall asleep, for ten years he has been standing! He needs support on crutches, and people support him in the night and they go on doing KIRTAN the whole night so it keeps him awake -- fully blasting

loud-speakers. And they are killing this man! But they are happy that they have found the true master, he is happy because he has found the true followers. And both are utterly stupid. His face has no sign of any intelligence. How could an intelligent man fall into such a trap? But the ego is fulfilled. Now the fear is that if he drops it, then all his following will disappear. They are not really following him, they are following because he is doing something unnatural.

Down the ages, people have been doing unnatural things. And you have been respecting unnatural things; you ALWAYS respect unnatural things. If you respect anything unnatural, that means sooner or later you will also be doing it to yourself -- because you cannot respect a thing long without doing it. It is getting to you, it is seeping into your heart.

Never respect anything unnatural! Respect nature, worship nature -- but always remember that your respect and worship and love should be for nature, then it is for God. Otherwise it is all an ego game.

But that's how the mind functions. If you hear somebody lives only on water, you start getting excited. People go on moving to these unnatural, artificial, perverted people. It is very rare to find a natural saint, because if he is natural nobody will believe that he is a saint. To be a saint he finds to be unnatural.

One Christian saint remained thirty-seven years sitting on a pillar thirty feet high. He was worshipped all over the world. People used to come from thousands of miles just to pay respect to him. And he was simply sitting there, somehow managing, for thirty-seven years. He died there. If he was an ordinary simple man, do you think anybody would have taken the trouble to go and respect him? For what?

Mind is so much interested in perversion. Christians can't believe that Jesus was born normally; he has to be born out of a virgin mother, then it is special. Then it is against nature! -- but then it is extraordinary. Buddha was not born out of a virgin mother, so he becomes ordinary, Christ becomes special. Buddhist have their stories to make THEIR Buddha special: he was born while his mother was standing. And immediately when he dropped out of the womb, popped out of the womb, he walked -- seven steps! He HAS to walk, otherwise he will be a natural ordinary child. Seven steps he walked and declared: "There is nobody higher than me, there has never been anybody higher than me."

Now, these foolish stories have to be invented because of your perverted mind. Then you seem attracted. You will not respect Jesus if he simply goes in a boat on Lake Galilee. You will not respect him, you will say, "So what? Everybody does that." But he walks on the water -- then there is something special. But just see the point: anything unnatural seems a miracle to you.

And what Ikkyu is saying and what I am insisting again and again is: the greatest miracle in this life and on this earth is to relax into nature -- the greatest miracle, because that is the hardest thing for the ego to do.

You would also like to walk on water, wouldn't you? If I start teaching just now how to walk on water, all the people who have fallen asleep will be immediately awake. Then they will not miss. Who cares about enlightenment? -- you can go on sleeping and there is always tomorrow. But walking on water? Then immediately you will bring yourself to awareness. You will say, "This is not to be missed, it happens only once in a while."

Just see how you are interested in the unnatural -- you call it miraculous. There are no miracles, they have never happened, they don't happen, they can't happen. Because the law of nature is absolute: no exceptions are possible. Don't be befooled and deceived by the stories.

But one miracle is possible, and that is not against the law of nature. But it is miraculous

because it rarely happens -- that's why it is miraculous. You can fall in tune with nature. Immediately you become that which you are. And suddenly all misery and all hell disappears, all nightmares disappear, you are fully awake. And life takes a new colour, a new flavour. That flavour is divine, but it comes out of the natural law.

For my sannyasins, this is my message: Live naturally, as naturally as possible. Avoid the attraction towards the unnatural. The desire to be special, somebody in particular, is pathological. If you want to be special you will have to go against nature. And to go against nature is to go against God, because God IS nature.

George Gurdjieff used to say that all the mahatmas are against God. And I agree with him, in toto -- because they all teach you to go against nature, they condemn nature. Everything that is natural is immediately condemned. They have made God just absolutely opposite to nature.

God is not opposite to nature, nature has arisen out of God. Nature is a wave of God, and it will disappear into God again. It is not against, it CANNOT be against God.

People come to me and they ask, "What kind of sannyasins are you creating who don't renounce life?" I say: They renounce unnatural ways of life. They don't renounce life -- why should they? GOD has not renounced life, otherwise he would have stopped the whole business. He still goes on creating people; he still goes on creating new flowers, new trees, new animals, new birds, new planets -- he is not tired. He has not bothered what your so-called religious people say, he doesn't care at all. If he had listened to your mahatmas he would have stopped creating the world -- because what is the point? He creates the world and then the mahatmas persuade people to renounce it! He goes on creating, because he is life; he can't help it. It is not that he is creating; he is creativity -- it is arising out of him spontaneously, naturally. It will continue.

Life has not to be renounced. And the sannyas that taught people to renounce life was against life, against God, against the Law of Buddhas and the Law of Men. I teach you a new sannyas: to love life, to live life, to be life. Renounce unnatural methods and ways; be natural.

And just the opposite has been said to you up to now. They say, "Renounce the natural and become unnatural." That's why if they are against me, very much worried by me, it seems natural; their being against me seems to be very logical. I am putting things absolutely upside-down for them. I say, "Live life -- that is true sannyas." They say, "Renounce life." Now, their sannyas and my sannyas are not synonymous at all -- polar opposites, diametrically opposite.

In this country the priest has been very important for centuries, very dominant. He still dominates; this country is still not out of the grip of the priest. He is against me, he goes on creating trouble for my work -- because he knows if I succeed then the whole business of the priesthood is destroyed for ever. The priest is afraid, the politician is afraid.

You have been hearing again and again that I am trying to find a place to move to. But Delhi is very much against it -- they don't want me to have a bigger place, bigger space; they go on creating new kinds of hindrances. And they can create them: legal, this and that -- at least they can delay and they can postpone. Their whole effort is so that somehow the world should not know about me. The Australian TV was coming to film the ashram, they were stopped. The BBC people had come, they had filmed half, and now they have been stopped by the government and they cannot film. And people call this the greatest democracy in the world.

Journalists are being prevented from coming here -- the world should not know what is

happening here, people should not come here. But the reason is clear, obvious. The reason is: whatsoever they have been thinking is religion, I say is NOT religion. In fact, what they say is religion is exactly anti-religion.

I am teaching you a new religion, a new dispensation, new in the sense that the priests have not allowed you to see it up to now -- old and the ancientmost in another sense, because those who have awakened have always taught the same.

Remember these sutras of Ikkyu, they are of immense import. If you decide to be special then you will go against nature and you will create pathology in your consciousness and you will become perverted.

I have heard about Catholic nuns... Now, they have been forced into a kind of celibacy. Celibacy arises, it cannot be forced. It is a spontaneous phenomenon -- if you have lived your life rightly, celibacy comes on its own. Just as when you are fourteen sex arrives on its own, if you have lived your life rightly, nearabout forty-two celibacy starts arriving on its own. These are natural phenomena. Celibacy has not to be taught, has not to be practised. It will be as foolish as if you teach a seven-year-old child to practise sex -- it will be as foolish and stupid. There is no need to teach the child to practise sex, it will come in its own time -- the spring will come.

But no spring lasts for ever. The spring that is brought by the age fourteen will disappear by the age forty-two; it disappears naturally if you have lived naturally. But if you have not lived naturally and you have been repressing your sex, then it can continue up to eighty-two. Then dying also you will be thinking of sex.

The last thought in most people's minds when they die is sex, nothing else. It has to be, because that is their most repressed thing. And when they are dying they cling to sex -- sex is just the opposite of death. With sex, life starts; with death, life ends. So when they are dying, to avoid death they start thinking of sex.

It is very rare to find a man who dies without thinking of sex. This is perversion, universal perversion. Celibacy comes on its own -- when the time is right, when you have lived your dreams, your illusions, and you have seen that they are illusory, one day suddenly you see something has disappeared from you. Then you are almost puzzled by its disappearance -- because it was so important up to now. It was the center of your life, the pivot you were revolving around, and suddenly it is no more there. Celibacy comes, has not to be practised.

One has only to live naturally and trust, and everything comes in its time. Celibacy comes, meditation comes, God comes, in its own time. Everything comes -- just as you are born and you will die, everything else also comes. But somewhere you go perverted and then natural things don't happen. Then you remain in a kind of hung-up state.

Celibacy was forced on Christian nuns. And what happened? Do you know the story of the middle ages? Then those nuns started having hallucinations: Jesus comes and fondles their breasts. Now, what nonsense -- Jesus coming and fondling their breasts? This is perversion. Jesus comes and makes love to them in the night; not only that, nuns started creating false pregnancies. Just hot air -- nothing. But their bellies would swell.

And the church became very much concerned -- what to do? Now, these poor women, they have been forced into celibacy, now they are hallucinating. The natural desire has been crushed; now it is coming from the back door. Then it was prohibited -- because this is not moral on the part of Jesus to fondle nuns' breasts, this doesn't look good. And to come in the night and make love -- and he will make them pregnant! This is not good on Jesus' part. So it was prohibited.

Then nuns started thinking that the Devil comes now. Finally, if you cannot have anybody else's support, the Devil is always available. The Devil is such a nice guy, the last resort -- when you cannot find refuge anywhere, you can find refuge in the Devil. Then the Devil started coming. And when the Devil comes he comes in his own ways. Jesus must have been coming in a mild way -- blessed are the meek. When the Devil comes he comes with a fanfare. He has a forked penis -- a devil is a devil.

Now, these hallucinations are ugly, unnatural. But remember, they are not created by the nuns, they are created by the people who forced these poor girls to become nuns. It was an unnatural imposition.

And why, down the ages, have religions tried to repress your sex? For a certain very basic reason -- you will be surprised to know about it, it is one of their trade secrets. They have always been against sex. Why? Because if sex energy is repressed then it becomes easy for a person to become interested in God. If no other outlet is left then the whole imagination, the whole capacity to dream, becomes focussed on God.

Now, this is cheating, cheating on God. The person is not really interested in God -- just there is no other interest left, so all his interest starts flowing towards God. He starts hallucinating, then visions of Jesus and Krishna arise. These visions are absolutely imaginary, and if you allow the person natural sex these visions will immediately disappear.

It is as if you fast for a few days: you will hallucinate about food. And if you are not even allowed to hallucinate about food, then the hallucination will have to find something else as an object to focus upon. This is a trick.

If no love affair is allowed to a person he will start loving God -- what else to do? It is almost inevitable to love God then. So religions have been using this device -- deceptive, hallucinatory: stop people's imagination about sex and then the imagination will find its own outlet. And leave only one outlet open God -- and close all the doors.

It is as if all the doors are closed and only one window is left: you will have to go out that window. If you want to go out, if you feel suffocated, what will you do? You will have to go out that window. It may be arduous, it may be ugly, it may be dangerous -- you may fall, you may break your legs -- but you will have to go through that window.

This is a very very cunning device: repress people's sex and they will automatically start thinking of God. But this is not the true God, it is just a sex-substitute.

The true God does not arise as a substitute. The true God arises when you have lived your illusions and you have finished them, when you have seen through and through and all the illusions have been dropped. In that non-illusionary state of consciousness, you see God. Then that God is not a projection of your mind.

I WOULD LIKE
TO OFFER YOU SOMETHING,
BUT IN THE DARUMA SECT
WE HAVE NOTHING AT ALL.

IKKYU SAYS: We cannot offer you anything special, we can only offer you the natural. But that is nothing to offer, because it is already with you -- you have it.

I WOULD LIKE
TO OFFER YOU SOMETHING...

Out of his love and compassion he wants to offer you something. I want to offer you

something, but I also don't have anything to offer. On the contrary, a real master has to take everything away from you. Slowly slowly, but certainly, he takes things away from you. He persuades you to drop all the garbage that you carry. He leaves you utterly empty.

In that emptiness, God happens. But God cannot be given, truth cannot be transferred. It is untransferrable.

I WOULD LIKE
TO OFFER YOU SOMETHING,
BUT IN THE DARUMA SECT
WE HAVE NOTHING AT ALL.

A beautiful statement: Nothing at all. Yes, that's what a real master gives you -- nothing. He takes everything away, leaves nothing behind. Out of that nothing your nature starts flowing -- because everything that is there is hindering your nature having its say. Everything is a hindrance to your nature song.

AS IKKYU DOES NOT THINK OF HIS BODY
AS IF IT WERE HIS BODY,
HE LIVES IN THE SAME PLACE,
WHETHER IT IS TOWN OR COUNTRY.

And Ikkyu says: There is no need to go to a mountain monastery, you can live in the marketplace. God is available everywhere, because the law of nature is functioning everywhere. And the people who go on changing one place for another place are misguided from the very beginning -- because the question is not of changing PLACES, the question is of changing consciousness.

If you think you are the body, then it seems relevant not to live in the marketplace -- go and live in a Himalayan cave. But you are not your body. So by changing -- moving the body from the marketplace to the Himalayan caves -- nothing will change, you will remain the same. You cannot leave yourself anywhere, you will be going with you! You are your consciousness.

AS IKKYU DOES NOT THINK OF HIS BODY
AS IF IT WERE HIS BODY,
HE LIVES IN THE SAME PLACE...

He lives in the world. But because he is NOT the body and he is not confined in the body, he knows his infinity and immortality. He knows his unbornness, undyingness. He knows his absolute emptiness which cannot be destroyed or changed or modified. He knows his skylike nature -- clouds come and go, but they don't leave any track behind on the sky. The sky remains untouched, unmoved.

HE LIVES IN THE SAME PLACE.
WHETHER IT IS TOWN OR COUNTRY.

Then it makes no difference; you can live wherever you are. Once you have relaxed into nature, once you have relaxed into your natural consciousness, once you are no more trying to be somebody special, you can live anywhere you are -- because all is one law, the Law of

Men and the Law of Buddha. In that very Law you have reached, you have entered the shrine of God.

THE MIND OF MAN IS WITHOUT SOUND,
WITHOUT ODOUR;
HE WHO ANSWERS WHEN CALLED
IS NOTHING BUT A THIEF.

YOUR INNER CONSCIOUSNESS HAS NO SMELL, no taste, no sound. It is untouchable, it is invisible. Become aware of it. And to be natural is the best way to be aware of it -- because in being natural you relax, and when you relax you can see who you are. When you are tense and striving after something, you can't relax and you cannot see who you are. Your interest is more in who you would like to be -- you are focussed on that. And because of that focussing you go on missing that which you already are.

When you are not trying to become anybody, when A is not trying to become B, how long can he avoid seeing that "I am A"? If A is trying to become B, he can go on avoiding seeing that "I am A." And A can never become B it is impossible. A is A, B is B.

In relaxing into nature one becomes aware of one's being.

THE MIND OF MAN IS WITHOUT SOUND,
WITHOUT ODOUR;
HE WHO ANSWERS WHEN CALLED
IS NOTHING BUT A THIEF.

And then, when you know "Who am I?" don't think that you will be able to answer the question. If somebody asks you, "Who are you?" don't think that you will be able to answer it.

The emperor Wu of China asked Bodhidharma, "Who are you?" And Bodhidharma said, "I don't know, Sir." And he was the man who knew; he was amongst those few men who know. But he said, "I don't know."

Wu could not understand him, You would also have missed. You would also have thought that if he knows, then he should say. "Who am I?" If you go to a traditional swami, a sannyasin, a mahatma, and you ask, "Who are you?" he will say, "SHIVOHUM! I am God. AHAM BRAHMASMI! I am the absolute, I am the supremest soul" -- and all that nonsense. Bodhidharma said, "I don't know."

Ikkyu is saying:

HE WHO ANSWERS WHEN CALLED
IS NOTHING BUT A THIEF.

These people who say AHAM BRAHMASMI are just thieves -- they have borrowed words from others. One who knows, cannot say. He will look into your eyes with all his emptiness pouring through his eyes... he may hold your hand, he may sit in silence with you. But he cannot answer that question, "Who are you?" If you insist, he will say, "I don't know" -- because it is so vast, it cannot become part of knowledge. And it is known only when all words disappear -- so to use words for it is to be a thief. Those words are relevant in the world, they are not relevant in that consciousness. It is stealing words from the world, from this, to explain that. And that is not possible.

IF WE SAY " THERE IS,"
PEOPLE THINK " THERE IS";
BUT THOUGH IT ANSWERS,
IT IS NOT,
THIS MOUNTAIN ECHO.

The problem is, Ikkyu says, if we say "There is somebody in me" -- a self, a god, or something...

IF WE SAY "THERE IS,"
PEOPLE THINK "THERE IS";
BUT THOUGH IT ANSWERS,
IT IS NOT,
THIS MOUNTAIN ECHO.

Whatever is said is just a mountain echo; it is not the true thing. It is echoed in words -- silence echoed in words, soundlessness echoed in words: it is an echo, a mountain echo. Remember this phrase: THIS MOUNTAIN ECHO.

But people start believing in it. And that is the danger of saying, "I am the supreme self." Then they start believing that they are supreme selves; then belief is created. And around belief priests arise, temples are built. Around belief churches are created, and around belief politics arises.

IF WE SAY, " THERE IS NOT,"
PEOPLE THINK "THERE IS NOT,"
THOUGH IT ANSWERS,
THE MOUNTAIN ECHO.

If we say "It is," people start believing it is. If we say "It is not," people start believing it is not. Both are untrue -- because the truth is such, there is no way to say it, either through the positive or through the negative. All words falsify it, belie it.

And these are the two kinds of people in the world. In Russia they believe it is not, in China now they believe it is not. In India, in America, in Germany, they believe it is. But how do you believe? If you observe deeply you will not find any difference between an Indian and a Russian. The Russian is being told "There is no God" so he repeats "There is no God." The Indian is told "There is God" so he repeats "There is God." Do you think there is any difference? On the surface there seems to be a great difference -- one is an atheist, another is a theist; one believes, one disbelieves. But do you think there is REALLY a difference? Both have been told something, and both have believed it.

Before 1917, before the revolution in Russia, people were as religious as they are in India. In fact, Russia was one of the most religious countries in the world. Then what happened? Within ten years' time, all that religion, that centuries-old religion, disappeared like vapour -- as if it had never been there.

What happened? The people in power started saying "God is not." And the masses only repeat, the masses only follow blindly. Religion disappeared within ten years. The work of centuries, maybe ten thousand years' work, disappeared in ten years! What kind of religion is this?

And this happened again in China. China is one of the ancientmost countries, maybe the

most ancient: has the ancientmost scriptures, the longest tradition: of religion -- Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism -- has created great enlightened people, has always lived in a religious way. And what happened? Suddenly all the Bibles, Korans, Dhammapadas, Vedas, Tao Te Ching, ANALECTS of Confucius -- all disappeared. And people started carrying a small red book written by Mao Zedong; that became their Bible. Suddenly God no more exists, the soul is just nonsense, meditation a wastage of time; prayer, foolishness. Temples toppled down, monasteries evaporated: within a few years, all was gone.

And do you think if communism comes to India, things will be different? Not at all. I see into people's eyes -- their religion is as bogus as it was in Russia, as it was in China. If the people who are in authority and power start saying there is no God and they start shouting on the TV and the radio, "There is no God!" people will start repeating that. People have always been repeating.

Ikkyu is right, he says:

IF WE SAY " THERE IS,"
PEOPLE THINK "THERE IS";
BUT THOUGH IT ANSWERS,
IT IS NOT,
THIS MOUNTAIN ECHO.

Although we have said "It is," this is just an echo. Don't believe in an echo; an echo is an echo. You will have to go yourself to see what the case is.

IF WE SAY, "THERE IS NOT,"
PEOPLE THINK "THERE IS NOT,"
THOUGH IT ANSWERS,
THE MOUNTAIN ECHO.

That's what you are, believers in mountain echoes -- that's what your religion consists of. You are deceiving yourself. Drop all these deceptions. There is no way to believe anybody, whosoever he is -- Christ or Buddha or me. There is no way to believe in anybody. The only way towards God is through experiencing, not through believing. Believing, you will miss.

Drop beliefs -- this way or that, for or against. And remember, the person who says "I don't believe in God" is not really the person I mean. He believes that there is no God: that is HIS belief. The communist believes that there is NO God -- not that he does not believe.

A real person has no belief, for or against. He cannot say God is, he cannot say God is not. How can you say without knowing "God is not"? And how can you say without knowing "God is"? Both are stupid statements. You can only say "I don't know" -- that will be authentic, true, honest. And you can start only from there: "I don't know."

And see the beauty of it. One starts by saying "I don't know" because one really does not know. Then one starts moving deeper and deeper, and one day one comes to know. And then Emperor Wu asks Bodhidharma, "Who are you?" and Bodhidharma says, "Sir, I don't know."

It begins in "I don't know," it ends in "I don't know", but with a great difference. In the beginning when you say "I don't know" it is just a statement of a fact, that you don't know, how can you say yes or no? But when you end and you say "I don't know" it is a statement of truth, not of fact. You have known -- but whatsoever has been known is so vast, no word can contain it. Only your being can say it, your presence can say it.

Reading sutras like Ikkyu's, or reading the words of Bodhidharma, or listening to me,

always remember that we are using the same words as you use but the meaning is different. For that, one has to be very alert, otherwise misunderstanding arises. I have heard:

It was an international television conference in the USA and the delegates were eating the farewell dinner of the conference.

A Japanese gentleman was sitting next to a delegate from Portland, Oregon. After the Japanese had finished his soup, the American asked him, "Likee soupee?" The Japanese gentleman nodded.

Throughout the meal, the American asked such questions as: "Likee fishee?" and "Likee drinkee?"

When the meal was finished, the chairman of the conference rose to his feet and introduced the Japanese gentleman as the guest speaker of the meeting.

The Oriental gentleman gave a witty, excellent speech on the future of broadcasting -- speaking in English much better than anything any American has ever uttered.

After his speech, the Japanese gentleman returned to his seat and asked his American table companion: "Likee speechee?"

Communication is a problem, a great problem.

These people like Ikkyu speak the same language and yet they don't speak the same language. You will have to be very patient, very loving, open and sympathetic to understand. Only then will these sutras reveal their significance into your being. These sutras can open the door which has never been closed.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #4

Chapter title: The Flight of the Alone to the Alone

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The first question

IT ALL SEEMS SO SIMPLE -- I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT. I KEEP GRASPING AT IT AND IT ELUDES ME, A MUSIC THAT CAN ALMOST BE SMELT, A TASTE THAT CAN ALMOST BE FELT. SOMETIMES I AM ON THE VERY THRESHOLD; OTHER TIMES IT'S NOT IN A MILLION YEARS, NOT FOR ME.

KRISHNA PRABHU, IT IS SIMPLE, hence it is impossible to understand it. If it was complex, understanding would be possible. Only a complex thing can be understood, because a complex thing can be analyzed, divided, broken into parts. A simple thing is indivisible; you cannot analyze it, you cannot dissect it. It is simply there; it is impossible to understand it.

That's why all that is simple eludes knowledge. God is simple, that's why science cannot know him. Love is simple, that's why science can have no idea what it is. Whenever you come across a simple thing you have to drop the effort to understand it; only then can you understand it. A totally new kind of understanding will be needed -- an understanding of the heart, which does not analyze, which does not dissect.

See: science dissects, analyzes, divides. It goes on trying to find the smaller and the smaller part -- it reaches to the atom, to the electron, and it goes on dividing. It will never know about the whole, it will know only about the parts. And once it comes against a part which cannot be divided, again it is elusive.

Now, science knows nothing about the electrons yet, because they can't be divided yet. Once you divide them you will know -- you will know how they are composed, of what they are composed. But then again you are facing something else -- the new division -- and that eludes knowledge.

Religion moves in a totally different way. It does not go to the part, it goes to the whole. 'God' means the whole -- the undivided whole, the totality of all. How can you understand God? In the very effort to understand, you have become separate from it; God is no more total. The one who is trying to understand is separate -- division has started, you are on the way to science. The known and the knower have become separate; the first division has happened. Now it is a process AD INFINITUM.

God can be known only if you remain in an undivided relatedness with the whole. You don't become a knower, you don't become an observer. You don't stand out of it -- you can't. You ARE in it, you ARE it -- how can you know it? You can BE it! And that is a totally different kind of knowing, a different kind of understanding -- the understanding that arises out of being.

You cannot know love from the outside, but you can be love -- and then you will know. But that knowing will not be part of your head. The head will still remain ignorant; you will know, but you will not be able to translate it into the language that the head can understand.

You ask me: IT ALL SEEMS SO SIMPLE...

Not that it SEEMS simple, it IS simple! But you have been taught again and again that if something is simple you will be able to understand it immediately. That is absolute nonsense. The simple is impossible to understand. The simple is elusive; there is no meeting between the effort to understand and between that which is simple. Either the simple has to be denied... If you say that it doesn't exist then you are okay, then the problem has been dropped.

That's what science has been doing: "There is no God, there is no soul, there is no love." Deny all those simple things, then you can at least have your peace of mind; there is nothing left which haunts you. Science denies God just in self-defence -- otherwise God stands there like an impossible problem. And the scientist cannot become a knower if even God has not been understood. And God cannot be understood. The simple way is: say that there is no God, so there is no question of understanding. Then you are at ease.

Religion says: God is, only God is. In fact to say 'God is' is repetitive, because God means is-ness. All that is, is God; God is not a separate entity. This is-ness, just THIS, is God. How can you understand it? You have to drop understanding, you have to become ignorant. If you approach God with your knowledge, knowledgeability, you will go on missing. You have to drop all your knowledge. You have to allow your scriptures to disappear, your doctrines to depart; say goodbye to them, and for ever.

And suddenly, the moment you are in a state of no-knowledge, that is the state of meditation -- the state of no-knowledge, the state of innocence.

Blessed are the ignorant. Why? Because only they can know. Jesus goes on saying to his disciples, "Unless you are like small children you will not enter into my kingdom of God." Why small children? Innocent, ignorant, non-knowledgeable. Carrying nothing in the mind, just empty, with no ideas, no thoughts to project -- not in any way trying to understand.

Innocence gives you wonder, creates awe. You simply feel a great Aha! like a tidal wave arising in your being. Body, mind, soul, all are involved in this Aha! All has stopped. You are there -- not as a knower, you are dissolved as a knower. And then the knowing happens, because then the being happens. Then you are in tune with the whole.

That harmony, that rhythm, that togetherness with the whole, is what religion calls understanding. You are not to be an observer -- in fact you are not to be at all. Then the simple is understood. And the simple is great, and the simple has splendour.

You say: IT ALL SEEMS SO SIMPLE -- I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT.

True. You can't, nobody can. Drop the effort -- that effort will tire you. And when one becomes too tired doing something impossible, one starts denying it. If you cannot know, you cannot know, you cannot know... a moment comes when it is too much to tolerate it. The question becomes heavy on your heart. For sheer self-defence you start saying, "It is not there. If it was there then I would have understood it. Because I cannot understand it, it cannot be there. It is. pseudo-puzzle. God is not there -- a created problem."

Then you can rest. You can go back to sleep, you can walk again, you can again live your mediocre life. It is the cowards who deny God -- cowards because they cannot gather courage to be ignorant enough to know the simple.

I have heard:

The farmer had just returned from a drive in his carriage. His dog, who had been running alongside, threw himself on the grass, his sides heaving with his heavy panting. "It is not the road that tires him," explained the farmer, "but his zig-zagging. We have ridden for about five miles, but the dog has covered twenty-five miles. There was not a cat he did not chase, not a dog he did not bark at, not a driveway he did not investigate. Straight travelling did not tire him, only the zig-zagging did."

Philosophy is zig-zagging. Religion is straight.

Jesus says, "My way is straight and narrow." Religion is the shortest possible way between two points -- between the knower and the known, the shortest possible way. It joins the knower and the known DIRECTLY, without any zig-zagging. Philosophy zig-zags, and zig-zags so much that finally it loses all track of the goal.

What is the shortest distance between two points? Love is the shortest distance between two points -- two alive points, two beings, two existences. Love is the shortest distance,

knowledge the longest.

And that's why religion has a totally different dimension in relating to existence. Those who have become accustomed to zig-zagging -- analyzing, interpreting, philosophizing -- they will go on chasing every cat, every dog, they will go on exploring every driveway, and they will be tiring themselves and reaching nowhere. They don't have any sense of direction.

The simple man, the innocent man, simply goes straight.

And Jesus also says, "The way is straight and NARROW." Why narrow? It is so narrow that it cannot contain your ego. Only you can go -- but you will have to leave your ego outside, outside the door. It is so narrow, two persons cannot walk together. You cannot take your child with you, you cannot take your aging mother with you, you cannot take your beloved with you.

Even a Buddha cannot take you with him. Buddhas only point the way -- because two persons cannot walk on it, it is so narrow. One has to go alone: the flight of the alone to the alone. And so alone that not even your ego is with you, and so alone that not even your mind is with you, and so utterly alone that not even your SELF is with you.

You go into it as absolute silence, as a disappearing person, as an appearing presence.

IT ALL SEEMS SO SIMPLE -- I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT. I KEEP GRASPING AT IT AND IT ELUDES ME...

That's why it eludes you. Not that it is elusive; that is not its nature. It appears to elude you, Krishna Prabhu, because you are trying to grasp it. You create the elusiveness in it by your grasping.

There are things which cannot be grasped. You cannot grasp the sky in your hand -- or can you? You cannot grasp it in your fist; if you try you will miss. The more the fist becomes strong, closed, the less sky it will have in it. Open the fist and you have the whole sky available.

But mind is very much a miser, a hoarder. It always hoards; it immediately closes up on things. If you know something you immediately close up on it, you immediately reduce it to knowledge. That's why knowing is constantly being reduced to knowledge -- and the moment you reduce knowing to knowledge you have killed it. Then you have only a dead bird in your hands -- it cannot fly into the sky; then you will never see it again on its wings.

Knowing is alive, a bird on the wing. Knowledge is a killed bird -- it is in your hands, but you can only have the dead body. The soul has flown, and that was the real thing, the essential thing. You have missed the real and you are hoarding the unreal. But that's our way, that's what we do with everything. Knowing is immediately reduced to knowledge.

Leave your knowing as knowing! Existence consists not of nouns but of verbs. All nouns are false: no noun is true, can be true. There is no tree, there are only treeing phenomena. There is no river, only riverings.

When you say, "This is a man," what are you saying? You are reducing a verb to a noun -- because the man is growing! It is a growth, it is a process. It is not the same even for two seconds, it is a flow. You say, "This is my friend" -- but the time that you take in saying "This is my friend" may be enough to turn him into your enemy.

You say 'love'? There is no love, only loving. See life and you will be surprised: there is no life, only living.

Reduce all nouns to verbs and you will have a far clearer perspective of life. But no verb can be grasped. Nouns can be grasped; because of the miserly mind, man lives through nouns

and has forgotten verbs.

And this miserliness penetrates into everything you do. Why grasp? You see a beautiful flower and immediately you are on the way to pluck it. WHY? It was beautiful on the stem, alive, rooted in God. And you killed it. And are you thinking you are going to give it to your girlfriend? You are presenting death to your girlfriend! Or do you think you are going to put this flower at the feet of the god in the temple? That god is dead, this flower is dead, and between these TWO deaths you are dead. The flower was already offered to God on the bush -- it was WITH God, you took it away from God to offer it to a stone. Why this immediate desire to pluck the flower?

I have heard: A friend was visiting George Bernard Shaw. He was very much against people plucking flowers from his garden -- he had put notice-boards all over the garden: "Don't Pluck Flowers." The friend asked, "Don't you love flowers? Don't you like flowers being arranged on your table?"

Bernard Shaw said, "I love flowers, that's why. I love children too, but I would not like anybody to cut off their heads and arrange those heads on my table."

The idea of the ego is always to kill and destroy. Why? Because once a thing is destroyed you are in control. You can control only dead things. That's why people worship dead gods in the temples, and they worship dead masters.

When Buddha is alive they will not worship him, they will worship Krishna. When Buddha is gone they will worship Buddha, they will not worship Christ. When Christ is gone they will worship Christ, they will not worship Kabir -- and so on and so forth. Once a master is gone, great shrines are raised in his name and people start worshipping him. But while he is alive they stone him to death, they crucify him, they reject him, they deny him. Why? Why are you so much interested in death?

With death you become masters. With an alive master you cannot be in control, he will be in control. With an alive flower the flower is in control, not you; once plucked, you are in control. Then you can go on doing any stupid nonsense -- you can call it IKEBANA and you can go on arranging flowers and you can go on learning flower arrangement, and that is all nonsense.

You have destroyed the flower, now you are feeling guilty. Hence IKEBANA -- it is out of guilt. Now you are trying somehow to pretend that you are creating beauty again. There is deep guilt -- you have destroyed beauty. It was perfectly beautiful on the bush, on the stem, in the wind, with the sun.

But the mind has a constant desire to grasp. Watch this miserliness.
I have heard:

A rich old miser became critically ill and the doctor prescribed a medicine with the following warning: "If after taking the medicine you perspire, it is a sign that you will recover. If you don't perspire, only God can help."

The miser took the medicine, but failed to perspire. It seemed that the rich man was about to die.

"Let us call on him," said the mayor to the elders of the town. "Perhaps he will now repent his ways and leave something for the church."

They visited him, and found him in a repentant mood. They brought paper and ink and the mayor got ready to write. "The church," he said, "is badly in need of repairs."

"A hundred dollars for the church," said the miser, and groaned.

"The widows and orphans fund is depleted," said the mayor.

"A hundred... wait a minute, wait a minute!" the miser cried suddenly. "Cross it out! I'm perspiring! I'm perspiring!"

The mind is always clinging to things. It may be money, it may be meditation. It may be knowledge, it may be love. Watch that the mind always wants to grasp, hold things in hand.

Now, you cannot hold God in your hand. You can hold a flower, you can pluck a flower, but you cannot hold God in your hand. God is too big for that. God means totality. How can you hold this totality in your hand? One has to approach in a different way -- one has to surrender oneself into God's hands. Rather than grasping God, you have to pray to be grasped by him.

You cannot hold the ocean in your hands, but you can drop into the ocean and disappear. That's the way to be it.

I KEEP GRASPING AT IT AND IT ELUDES ME, A MUSIC THAT CAN ALMOST BE SMELT, A TASTE THAT CAN ALMOST BE FELT.

If you go on grasping that will remain so, and for ever. You will always be just on the verge, and missing. It will be a music that can ALMOST be smelt -- but an almost smelt music has not been heard at all. And almost is almost; it is just a way of deluding oneself. Either you have it or you don't have it -- you can't say, "I ALMOST have it." You are alive or you are not alive -- you cannot say, "I am almost alive." You cannot say, "I am almost in love." Either this or that -- it is either/or, and there is no middle way. You will always be on the threshold and missing.

Stop grasping at it, drop that very effort to grasp. Allow it to enter into you, be open to it, be vulnerable. Let him grasp you, let him possess you -- don't try to possess him.

SOMETIMES I AM ON THE VERY THRESHOLD; OTHER TIMES IT'S NOT IN A MILLION YEARS, NOT FOR ME.

And you will be on this see-saw. Again and again you will think you are on the threshold -- just one step more and the bird will be in your hands. But that one step will remain impossible. And then of course you feel frustrated -- how long can you remain in hope, just standing on the threshold? You become tired. When you become tired, it is a million years away from you... Again you start striving, again one day you will feel it is just on the threshold. This way it will remain -- this is how seekers go on missing.

Seeking is not the way to find God. If you want to find him, stop seeking, and find. Stop seeking, and he is found immediately, instantly -- not even a single moment is lost. Why? Because in the very effort of seeking him you are forgetting one thing, that he is already in you. The sought is in the seeker -- but the seeker cannot see it, he is engrossed too much in his seeking. He is running after it, he is searching for it -- his search keeps him so occupied, so engaged, that he cannot look inside and see who is there.

God is already in you, God is already the case. Just stop seeking. And that is the greatest message of Zen: Stop seeking. "Sitting silently, doing nothing, the spring comes and the grass grows by itself." Zen does not give you any seeking, it takes all seeking away from you. Seekers are the losers! because in their very search they go on looking at distant lands. They

go on looking at stars -- they don't look within themselves.
And do you know? There is an ancient parable:

In the beginning when God created the world, he used to live on MG Road. But then he became tired, because people were continuously nagging him. In the middle of the night the phone would start ringing, and complaints....

"Why have you not done this?" and "Why have you done this, and what is the reason for it?" Naturally he got tired.

He asked his counsellors, "Help me. I would like to go somewhere and hide from people." He confessed, "In creating man I have committed my greatest mistake." Do you know? since then he has not created anything else; he is still repenting. That was his last -- he became so afraid of man that he stopped being a creator.

They suggested, "You can go to the Himalayas, nobody will come there." And he said, "You don't know, within just a few seconds"... and millions of light years are just a few seconds for God -- a different time scale. For one who lives in eternity, millions of light years are just moments. He said, "Within moments, you don't know, a man will be there -- Hillary. And Tensing will be there, and they will reach Everest and find me. And once they have found me then the whole MG Road -- then people will start moving there. That won't help."

Somebody suggested, "Then why don't you go to the moon?" He said, "Just a few seconds more, and people will reach there. They are going to reach everywhere!"

Then an old adviser came close to him and whispered something in his ear. And he was very happy and he said "This is the right thing to do." The man had whispered in his ear, "My suggestion is: why don't you hide in man himself? There he will never go. He will go to the mountains, he will go to Everest, he will go to the moon and to Mars and he will go to the planets and stars -- he will go everywhere. One thing he will never suspect is that you can be hiding within his own soul."

God agreed. And since then he has been hiding in you, And you have been searching for him on Everest, on the moon, on the stars, in the scriptures, in the temples, in the mosques, in the churches... Go on searching and you will not find him.

A seeker never finds. Seeking is a sure way of missing. Then who finds him? One who relaxes, one who drops all seeking -- just dives deep into one's own being, sits there silently, starts moving towards the bottom, to the very ground of one's own being. Sitting in your deepest core, you find him. There is no need to go anywhere.

If you are a seeker, and Krishna Prabhu seems to be a seeker...

SOMETIMES I AM ON THE VERY THRESHOLD...

Yes, it will happen again and again. Again and again you will think, "Now! This time I am going to make it, it is going to happen." And it will never happen. Then again frustration and the dark night of the soul will follow. Many times you will see that you have almost made it, ninety-nine percent made it -- but it will never be a hundred percent. And unless it is a hundred percent it is not at all. 'Almost' means nothing, 'approximately' means nothing. That ONE step is as far away as millions of light years, because it cannot be taken.

So after each euphoria, elation, ecstasy, after each feeling of "Now I have arrived," there will be great depression. You will fall back into a dark hole. Again you will have to grope, again you will have to reach that threshold, and again you will fall.

This has been continuing for so many lives -- you are not new here. You have been playing this game for millions of lives: coming closer, coming closer, coming closer, and you feel the ecstasy, now you are just there... and all is missed again, you are falling far away, far away, again disappearing. This wheel goes on moving.

You have to jump out of this wheel. He is not out, so you can never come close to him. If he was far away from you then there would be a possibility sometimes to come close, and there would be a possibility to cross the threshold and reach him and hold him. He is not out, he is your innermost core. He is the beat of your heart and the vitality of your breath and the redness of your blood. He is the pulsation of your being. How can you be just on the threshold?

You have to forget all these thresholds and you have to forget all these distances. And remember always: to be close is also to be distant. Closeness is a kind of distance; you are not yet it.

I teach you the way of non-seeking. I teach you to relax. I teach you to forget all about God and just be yourself.

And one day suddenly, like a great surprise, comes the benediction.

The second question

WHO IS MORE STUPID -- MAN OR WOMAN?

PREM PUNEETA, I have heard an anecdote:

A man was saying to his woman, "Why has God made you women so beautiful?" The woman said, "So that you men can fall in love with us."

The man then said, "Then why did he make you so stupid?" And the woman said, "So that we can also fall in love with you."

But in reality, stupidity has no sex. It is found in all kinds and all shapes and all sizes.

The third question

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEARNING AND COLLECTING KNOWLEDGE?

GREAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE. They are polar opposites, diametrically opposite to each other.

Learning is never knowledge, learning is knowing. Knowledge is never learning, it is a pretension of learning. Knowledge is pseudo, borrowed. You become a parrot, you become an imitator. You become a computer, you function as a memory machine -- you don't know exactly what you think you know, you simply repeat it. And you can become very clever in repeating, very skillful, but still you remain a parrot.

Learning is to encounter truth on your own. Knowledge is borrowed, knowledge is from others.

If you listen to Ikkyu and you learn his beautiful sutras -- and you can learn them by heart and you can repeat them; not only repeat them, you can even try to follow them -- you can create a character according to them. You can live them too, but still it is borrowed. Not only

will your knowledge be false and plastic, your character will also be plastic and borrowed, enforced.

Deep down you will remain the same; nothing will have changed. You will have become richer as far as information is concerned, but you will not be transformed by it. No information ever transforms anybody.

Knowledge is the collection and accumulation of information. Learning is the availability to be transformed. Knowledge always goes to dead masters, learning is always in search of living masters -- because you can learn only through a living phenomenon. There is no way to learn from a dead phenomenon; it is cheap.

A disciple with a Zen master has to pass through a thousand and one pains. And you simply read the whole story within minutes, but it took him thirty years to become enlightened. And those thirty years of agony and ecstasy, those thirty years of falling in love with the master and hating him from the very guts -- of moving closer to him and going far away from him, of falling into his being, and yet fighting with him -- those thirty years of constant meditation and love, of great effort, and finally of knowing the futility of all effort; of great seeking and search, and finally coming to realize that no seeking is needed -- but one comes to it the hard way.

Then one day those thirty years of ripening and maturity bring an integration. One blooms. The satori happens. One understands, one sees.

You simply read it on one page of a book, and this becomes knowledge to you. And sometimes you can say things....

Once it happened, a young man lived with me for three years, and he was in deep love with the Zen approach. And whenever he would see a story -- and there are thousands -- where the master hits the disciple on the face or strikes him with his stick, the young man would bring the story to me and he would say, "How cute!"

One day I slapped him hard. And he was angry, and he forgot all those stories. And he said, "Are you mad or something? Why did you hit me? And I had not done anything!" And I asked him, "Now say 'How cute!'"

Then it doesn't look cute. Knowledge is cheap, you don't pay anything for it. Learning is hard, arduous; you have to pay for it. Inch by inch, you have to die into it. Knowledge is accumulation, learning is not really accumulation at all -- on the contrary, it is just a reverse process.

The master goes on taking things away from you. He does not give you something to be added to your personality, he takes all the props of your personality. And one day suddenly you find yourself collapsing...

One can allow that collapse only if there has arisen a great trust. And when you have collapsed, then like a phoenix the new being arrives. Remember always, the new being is not any change in the old being. The new being is absolutely new, it is not a change in the old being. The old is dead and the new has arrived; they are discontinuous.

The real change only happens through death. Unless death has happened you will only be accumulating, decorating, giving finishing touches to your personality. Yes, you will change little bits here and there, but that will be nothing much. Changing paintings from one wall to another, or painting the walls with a new colour, renovating the ruins, changing the carpet or arranging the furniture in a new style... But basically, fundamentally, you remain the same. These changes are not learning.

A learner is one who is ready to die. If you are after knowledge you are a student. If you are a learner you are a disciple. And it is so easy to be a student, it is so difficult to be a disciple. One goes on missing...

Just the other night, it happened. A beautiful woman came just a few days before, and started feeling a great urge to become a sannyasin, the urge to become a disciple. Then she was coming to take sannyas but could not enter because of her body smell or something. Next day she changed her mind. She said, "I am happy that I could not enter, otherwise I would have become a sannyasin. And I cannot wear orange clothes all the time in my work; it will look so weird, ridiculous, people will laugh."

Now you cannot pay even that much. It is not much! People laugh at you even without your orange clothes -- don't be worried about that; they laugh all the same. Just as you laugh at them, they laugh at you. That's how people manage to laugh a little bit -- otherwise life is so bad, such an agony, a nightmare, if they don't laugh at each other they will commit suicide. It helps; just laughing at each other they feel unburdened. Seeing the ridiculousness of life, they can manage to laugh a little bit. It gives them heart to live again tomorrow.

Man can live without the Bible and without the Gita, but man cannot live without jokes -- those small jokes are far more important. And have you ever noticed the fact that the Jews have the best jokes in the world? Why? Because they have suffered the most. They HAD to create jokes, otherwise they would have committed suicide long before. Those jokes have kept them alive. They have been tortured, down the ages; they have lived against odds. What has helped them to go on living? Do you think it is the Old Testament? Do you think it is the Talmud?

No. It is their capacity to laugh. It is their capacity to continue having a sense of humour that has kept them alive. That's why they have the best jokes in the world.

Hindus don't have jokes. They have lived a very very convenient life -- jokes were not needed; life was comfortable, convenient. When life is too much to bear, one has to create something or other to have a little laughter to unburden oneself.

People are already laughing at you -- they have to laugh. it is their survival; they cannot survive without it. So don't feel offended when people laugh at you, not at all. They are not really laughing at you, they are simply finding any excuse to laugh -- you are as good as anybody else. If you are not in orange they will find something else. And I don't think you are so perfect that they cannot find anything else about you to laugh at.

But just a small price, that they will laugh, and one can drop the idea of becoming a sannyasin.

Just see how cheap we want transformation. We want it to be handed to us, bottle-fed. We want it to just be given to us, injected -- digested by somebody else. Then it becomes knowledge. Buddha has said something, Krishna has said something, Christ has said something -- you can just learn those words, you can become a chatterbox. And it doesn't matter what that chatter is -- worldly or other-worldly, it is chatter all the same. Because you have not experienced anything on your own.

The first honesty for a man who really wants to know truth is to know perfectly well "what I know on my own", and "what I know only as borrowed." And whatsoever is borrowed, throw it! It is all crap. It is better to be ignorant on your own -- because that is true, authentic, sincere -- than to be knowledgeable on somebody else's experience. And who knows whether that experience was true or not? Who knows? -- that man may himself have been repeating others' experiences.

Unless you know by yourself, there is no way.

You ask me: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEARNING AND COLLECTING KNOWLEDGE?

Prem Nath, the difference is great, as great as it can be. Learning needs courage, learning needs a transformation in your consciousness -- a death and a resurrection. Knowledge needs nothing, just a little capacity to memorize -- and any mediocre person can do that. Knowledge needs no intelligence, only memory. Learning needs intelligence.

And these are two different things. Intelligence is a quality of your soul, and memory is just a brain mechanism. Memory is just a bio-computer -- the computer can do it far better than your bio-computer has been doing up to now. Sooner or later, people will be carrying small computers in their pockets rather than reading books, going to the university -- that is really all out of date now. There is no future for schools and universities; the computer will destroy them all.

What is the point of knowing history? You can have a small computer in your pocket and you can inquire whenever there is a need; you can just inquire of the computer.

You can ask when Napoleon the Great was born, what date, what day, with which women he fell in love -- you can inquire about everything. A computer can carry millions of pieces of information in just a small box. All the information that you are carrying, a computer can carry better. What is the need? This is a very, very bullock-cart way -- twenty-five years studying in a college, school, university. And what is really being done there? You are being fed with knowledge; your bio-computer is being trained.

Sooner or later, you will be able to purchase a ready-made, trained bio-computer and it will answer! That day is going to be a great revolutionary day in human history, because from that day it will be simple to know what the difference is between learning and knowledge. A man who carries a computer is a man of knowledge, and a man who has his own EXPERIENCE of life is a wise man.

And remember, a computer can give you information but cannot give you experience. You can ask the computer: "What is love?" and the computer can report all that has been said about love. But that will not give you the experience of love; experience you can only have on your own. You will have to fall in love and know it -- no computer can give it to you.

The computer can give all the information ABOUT God, but to know about God is not to know God. To know God is totally different. It is an encounter: it is personal, intimate, immediate.

And you can see it. The knowledgeable man almost always behaves stupidly. He has to behave so, because his knowledge is borrowed; he cannot behave intelligently. Pundits are the most stupid people in the world.

Two men were walking. One was holding a closed umbrella -- he was a great pundit, a professor of philosophy. Suddenly it began to rain. "Open your umbrella, quickly," said one man to the other.

"It won't help at all," came the answer.

"What do you mean, it won't help? It will protect us from the rain."

"It is no use, the umbrella is full of holes like a sieve."

"Then why did you take it in the first place?"

And the professor said, "Because I didn't think it was going to rain."

The man who carries information is just doing things like that. He does not know how to use it, he does not know why he is carrying it in the first place. He does not know anything. He has been given the information by his parents, by the teachers and priests, and he has been carrying it without even becoming aware why he is carrying it all.

Just look in your head, how many things you are carrying. For what? Those problems don't exist any more, and you are carrying the solutions of those problems. You have become mature, and still you are carrying the advice your mother gave to you when you were a child. Now you are no more a child, you can forget all about it -- and it will be good, it will create a space in your head. Otherwise it has become a junkyard.

Just listen sometimes, silently sitting -- still your mother's voice is heard. Your father says things to you and you still have to follow them, and if you don't follow them you feel guilty! because you are betraying your father. And the father, the poor father, is dead and he does not know anything of what he has done to the son. In fact he has not done anything; his father has done it to him, he has done it to you, and so on and so forth.

Many times sannyasins come to me, particularly women, and they say, "We want to have children." And all that I see... They think that they are asking for children because they are in such a great loving space. Not at all -- when I look into them, all that I see is that they are wanting to have revenge on their mothers. Whatsoever their mothers have done to them, now they want children so they can do it to them. Otherwise how will they get rid of it?

Children are so dependent on you, you can do anything to them. They cannot retaliate, they cannot say no. And you are hankering, full of knowledge that your mother has given to you -- your head is heavy with it, and you want somebody into whom you can pour all that nonsense. And you will feel very relieved; women feel very relieved when they have children.

What relief comes? It is a catharsis, a vomit. It is very rarely that out of love you think of a child, because you don't know what love is. How can you think out of love? You have never loved! But all that you need is a helpless dependent child who will always look up to you, and you will always be the boss and you can mould and pummel and manufacture the child to your heart's desire. That is the only way you can take revenge on your mother; there is no other way.

I have heard a story; it happened in the court of the great Akbar. He had a very wise man, Birbal, with him. They were standing and talking about something, and Birbal said something and Akbar became so angry that he hit him hard on the face, slapped him, before the court. Birbal was red with rage, but to hit back would be too costly. But if you don't do anything, that looks too humiliating. So he hit somebody else who was standing by his side -- he hit him back.

And the man said, "But why are you hitting me?"

Birbal said, "Hand it on to somebody else."

That's how things happen. Now, your mother has hit you hard -- you are still crying. You want to hit somebody, you want to hand it all over; you will be relieved.

Your parents are still alive in you. Your teachers, primary-school teachers -- who knew nothing much, otherwise why should they have been primary-school teachers? -- they are still alive and dominating you. Your college professors, they knew nothing, they were as borrowed as you are.

It is very rare to find a man who knows himself. Just imitators are all around, and you are

still carrying their wisdom that they have given to you. They never LIVED their wisdom, and you are trying to live it; you also cannot live it. When you cannot live it you feel guilty, if you live it you feel unnatural: you are in a predicament.

This is the predicament every human being is in. If you follow whatsoever has been told to you to do, it is unnatural; it never makes you happy, it never gives you joy. Only one thing is good about it, it never makes you feel guilty -- but it makes you sad, it makes you depressed. If you don't follow it then you feel guilty -- that too brings a kind of sadness.

Have you not watched it in your life? It is so difficult to be happy -- why? Because happiness and guilt have become associated in you. So whenever you feel happy you feel something wrong must be there, you must be doing something wrong. Look inside yourself! into your files, and you will immediately come across a parental voice: "Don't do this." That's why you are feeling guilty. Happiness has never been allowed to you in your childhood. You don't allow it to yourself either.

My whole work here consists of this thing: to help you to allow happiness to yourself, to prepare you so that you can give the gift of happiness to yourself. God has given it to you, but your parents have disturbed it.

And don't feel angry at them -- because they were also victims of THEIR parents. It is a vicious circle; it is a very very long circle, it has been going on down the ages. Don't feel angry, but get rid of them! Drop their voices. Start living your life.

A man of knowledge never lives his own life. A man of learning starts living his own life, he learns by living his own life. Yes, he is ready sometimes to commit mistakes; it is good to commit mistakes sometimes, that is the only way to learn. The man of knowledge never commits mistakes -- but he has committed the greatest mistake, the mistake of always remaining borrowed.

And these men of knowledge are very dangerous, because they go on pouring their knowledge into each other. It is a strange phenomenon. When you feel too burdened you need somebody so that you can pour out your knowledge and feel a little unburdened.

I have heard:

A merchant went to a farmer to get a pound of butter. The farmer insisted on swapping the butter for a pair of woollen socks. When the merchant reported this to his wife, she said, "I'll unravel some wool from our bedspread and knit him a pair of socks." When it was finished, the pair of socks was exchanged for a pound of butter.

When the merchant needed more butter, his wife once again unravelled more of the bedspread and knit more socks, which were exchanged for butter. Finally, she had only enough wool for one sock. The merchant took the sock to the farmer and asked for a half pound of butter for it.

"Nothing doing," replied the farmer. "I give you a full pound. You see, I really don't wear the socks. My wife unravels the wool and uses it for knitting a bedspread, and there's just enough in this one sock to finish it."

That's how it goes on -- this stupid society.
Avoid knowledge and plunge into learning.

The last question

WHY AM I SO AFRAID OF YOU?

IT IS A GOOD SIGN: the beginning of a relationship with me. It is natural to be afraid of me, because I am going to be a death to you. I am going to destroy you. Utterly. Only then can I help you. Only then can you have a new life, a new being, a new beginning.

So fear is natural. In spite of the fear, go on coming closer and closer to me. Don't listen to the fear. The fear is simply saying that whatsoever you have had up to now will be taken away: "Escape!" You have a certain amount of knowledge, it will be taken away. The fear is simply an indication from the head, a signal from the computer, saying, "Escape from this place. This man is dangerous, he can destroy your knowledge. And then you will have to learn from ABC, know well, and all that you have done up to now will be a sheer wastage. Listening to this man is dangerous -- he will make you feel that all that you have is useless, and sooner or later you will have to renounce it. Before it happens, escape! Avoid this man!"

You have a certain character, a certain morality, and I am bent upon destroying it -- because I don't believe in morality. I believe in consciousness, not in conscience; conscience is again borrowed, like knowledge. Consciousness is learning.

I would like you to live according to your consciousness. That is the good life for me, the true life, authentic, spontaneous. It never does any harm to anybody -- it cannot. But the life of conscience is a bad life; even if you are moral, even if you go on doing good, you are only a do-gooder. And you harm. And you harm in such subtle ways that you are not aware, and neither do your victims ever become aware of what you have been doing to them.

I will take your morality. I will give you religion, but I will take your morality away -- because for a moral person it is very difficult; to have the experience of religion is almost impossible for him. A moral person lives according to the society; he never rebels. And religion is only for those who are ready to rebel. A moral person lives only like a sheep, with the crowd; whatsoever the crowd says is right he says is right, and whatsoever the crowd says is wrong he says is wrong.

Just watch. Are you a part of the crowd? Or do you have some consciousness of your own too? If the crowd is going to destroy, you are ready to destroy. If the Hindu crowd is going to destroy a Mohammedan mosque you are ready to destroy it, because you are a Hindu and whatsoever the Hindu crowd is doing is right. If the Mohammedan crowd is going to kill Hindus you are ready to kill Hindus.

Down the ages, the so-called religious people have been such great murderers. They talk about love and they create hate and nothing else. They talk about peace and they create war. Look at the hypocrisy! They come with Bibles in their hands, but soon those Bibles turn into swords. Those Bibles are just facades -- behind is hiding the imperialist, the one who wants to dominate the whole world. In the name of God they are simply trying to impose their ego on the world. And then egos fight. It is not a question of the Hindu fighting the Mohammedan or the Christian fighting the Mohammedan, it is the fight of so many egos.

Watch: whenever a crowd is doing something, can you think on your own? Your religions are crowds, your nations are crowds. If India is fighting China, then all Indians are with the Indian government, right or wrong -- it is the motherland, right or wrong. And all Chinese are with the Chinese government, right or wrong.

Nobody thinks on their own.

My whole approach is to make you CONSCIOUS of what you are doing, how you are doing it. Are you being just a coward and a sheep and a follower in the crowd? Or are you thinking on your own? I will take away all your mob-psychologies. Fear arises, because that is where you have always belonged. Suddenly you will be left alone. If you are not a

Christian you will not know who you are. Great fear shakes you, quakes you. If you are not a Catholic who are you? If you are not an Indian then you lose your identity. A great crisis of identity arises in you -- that is the fear.

And you are always afraid of truth -- because you live through lies, and when truth arises you start seeing your lies. It becomes difficult, it becomes almost impossible to carry them any more; you have to drop them. But you have invested your whole life in them.

A wealthy landowner burst into his home one day and, in a voice filled with despair, cried to his startled wife, "Marushka, there is a terrible rumour in town -- the Messiah is coming!" "So what's terrible?" asked the wife. "I think it's wonderful! Why are you frightened?" "I have good reason to be afraid," he whimpered. "We have a fine dairy herd, a barn full of grain, and our orchards are laden with fruit. Now we will have to give up everything and follow Him!" "Compose yourself," said the wife soothingly. "The Lord our God is good. He knows how much suffering we Jews have had to endure. We had a Pharaoh, a Haman -- always somebody; but our dear Lord got rid of them all. Just have faith, my dear husband. He will get rid of the Messiah also!"

It creates great fear if you hear the Messiah has come. Then what about all the investments that you have made? And you will have to give up everything and follow him. Who wants a Messiah to come? People always like the idea that he will come some day, but not today -- some day far away, distant, then they can tolerate the idea that he will come.

That's why when Christ declared: "I am the Messiah you have been waiting for!" the Jews could not trust him. They said, "You can't be. He will come, certainly, but you are not that."

And there is logic in it. The logic is: people only WAIT for the Messiah, they don't REALLY want him to come. Waiting is good, it makes one feel good -- "I am religious and I am waiting for the Messiah. And when he comes I am going to renounce everything." And deep down one hopes that he will never come. He has not come up to now; he will never come. On the surface one pretends that he will come, deep down one knows that he will never come. And one thing is always there: even if he comes we can always say, "You are not the Messiah."

They had been waiting for centuries, and when Jesus declared, "I am the Messiah," they were angry. This man was destroying their whole game of waiting. Waiting is so beautiful; nothing ever changes, one goes on waiting and one goes on doing whatsoever one wants to do. And suddenly this man comes and he says, "I am the Messiah -- now follow me. Come, follow me!"

And they are afraid. Their crops are ready and their orchards are full of fruit. "Is this the time for the Messiah to come? And the business is going so good..." And one is chasing a woman and he is just on the right track and it is only a few days time and she will be his -- and this is the time for the Messiah to come? "Come and follow me"? Can't you wait a little?

Great fear arises. Out of that fear they killed Jesus. Just to defend themselves they killed Jesus -- just to defend their fruits which were ripe, and the woman who was just going to be in their hand, and the man who was just going to succeed. This was not the right time for the Messiah to come. It is never the right time.

A Messiah is acceptable in the future, always in the future, never in the present -- or in the past, but never in the present. The Jews had to deny Jesus. They said, "He will come, but you are not the Messiah." Christians say he WAS the Messiah, but now he is in the past, now

there is no fear.

I am saying to you: I am the Messiah herenow. It creates fear, it creates great anguish and anxiety: "So what to do? And the fruits are ripe, and success is just within reach. And this man has come to disturb all, and he says, 'Come, follow me.'"

That's why you are afraid. Everybody is afraid. Remember always, the courageous person is not one who has no fear -- no, there exists no man like that, who has no fear. The courageous man is one who goes in spite of the fear. He feels the fear, but the pull of love is greater than the pull of the fear. He chooses love rather than the fear.

The courageous man is also afraid. Don't think that only you are afraid; everybody is afraid, it is natural. And don't wait for the time when there will be no fear, and then you will follow! That time will never come. You have to follow in spite of the fear. And if you follow, soon you will see, the deeper you move into love, the energy that was involved in the fear is released from the fear and becomes love energy.

And when all fear is transformed into love, that fire is sannyas, that fire is discipleship. That fire purifies one. Passing through that fire of love, one becomes pure gold.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #5

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MORE FRAIL AND ILLUSORY
THAN NUMBERS WRITTEN ON WATER,
OUR SEEKING FROM THE BUDDHA
FELICITY IN THE AFTER-WORLD.

ALREADY, OVER THE HEART
NOT A CLOUD IS HANGING,
AND NO MOUNTAIN IS THERE
FOR THE MOON TO HIDE BEHIND.

IN OUR WAY THROUGH THIS WORLD
OF BIRTH AND DEATH,
WE HAVE NO COMPANION;
LONELY WE DIE,
ALONE WE ARE BORN.

THE VAST FLOOD
ROLLS ONWARD
BUT YIELD YOURSELF,
AND IT FLOATS YOU UPON IT.

WHO SEES NAUGHT,
SAYS NAUGHT,
HEARS NAUGHT,
SIMPLY SURPASSES
THE BUDDHA.

THE THINKER IS CREATIVE WITH HIS THOUGHTS. This is one of the most fundamental truths to be understood. All that you experience is your creation. First you create it, then you experience it, and then you are caught in the experience -- because you don't know that the source of all exists in you.

There is a famous parable:

Once a man was travelling, accidentally he entered paradise. In the Indian concept of paradise there are wish-fulfilling trees there, KALPATARUS. You just sit underneath them, desire anything, and immediately it is fulfilled -- there is no gap between the desire and its fulfillment.

There is no gap between a thought and a thing. You think, and immediately it becomes a thing; the thought realizes automatically. These KALPATARUS are nothing but symbolic for the mind. Mind is creative, creative with its thoughts.

The man was tired, so he fell asleep under a KALPATARU, a wish-fulfilling tree. When he woke up he was feeling very hungry, so he simply said, "I am feeling so hungry, I wish I could get some food from somewhere." And immediately food appeared out of nowhere -- just floating in the air, delicious food.

He was so hungry that he didn't pay much attention to where it had come from -- when you are hungry you are not philosophic. He immediately started eating, and the food was so delicious that he was caught up in the food. Once his hunger was gone he looked around. Now that he was feeling very satisfied, another thought arose in him: "If only I could get something to drink..." -- And there is still no prohibition in paradise; immediately, precious wine appeared.

Drinking the wine relaxedly in the cool breeze of paradise under the shade of the tree, he started wondering, "What is the matter? What is happening? Have I fallen into a dream, or are some ghosts around and playing tricks with me?"

And ghosts appeared. And they were ferocious, horrible, nauseating. And he started trembling, and a thought arose in him: "Now I am sure to be killed. These people are going to kill me."

And he was killed.

This parable is an ancient parable, of immense significance. It portrays your whole life. Your mind is the wish-fulfilling tree, KALPATARU -- whatsoever you think, sooner or later it is fulfilled. Sometimes the gap is such that you have completely forgotten that you had desired it in the first place; sometimes the gap is of years, or sometimes of lives. So you can't connect the source.

But if you watch deeply you will find all your thoughts are creating you and your life.

They create your hell, they create your heaven. They create your misery, they create your joy. They create the negative, they create the positive. Both are illusory -- the pain and pleasure, the sweet dream and the nightmare, both are illusory.

What is meant by calling these things illusory? The only meaning is that they are your creation. You are creating a magic world around yourself -- that's what is meant by the word maya. Everybody here is a magician. And everybody is spinning and weaving a magic world around himself, and then is caught -- the spider itself is caught in its own web.

There is nobody torturing you except yourself. There is nobody except yourself; your whole life is your work, your creation.

Buddhism insists on this fact very emphatically. Once this is understood, things start changing. Then you can play around; then you can change your hell into heaven -- it is just a question of painting it from a different vision. Or if you are too much in love with misery you can create as much as you want, to your heart's content. But then you are never complaining, because you know that it is your creation, it is your painting, you cannot make anybody feel responsible for it. Then the whole responsibility is yours.

Then a new possibility arises: you can drop creating the world, you can stop creating it. There is no need to create heaven and hell, there is no need to create at all. The creator can relax, retire.

That retirement of the mind is meditation. You have seen all, this way and that. You have enjoyed and you have suffered, and you have seen the agonies and the ecstasies: love and hate, anger and compassion, failure and success, you have seen all. Ups and highs, lows and downs, you have lived all. Slowly slowly, this experience makes you alert that you are the creator.

If you have been on any drug trip, you know it. The drug simply releases your mind energy and things start happening. You are transported into other worlds. If a person suffers from paranoia and he goes on an LSD trip, the trip is going to be very very horrible. He will be persecuted, he will be surrounded by enemies, he will suffer much. If the person is not living out of fear but living out of love and joy, he will have beautiful experiences.

Aldous Huxley says that he lived great heavenly experiences through LSD. But Karl Reiner says that he went through hell. And both are right. They think they are against each other, criticizing each other. Reiner thinks drugs create hell. Drugs create nothing. All that is created is by your mind; drugs can only magnify it. They can exaggerate, they can allow things to appear in a very magnified form, a thousandfold bigger than they are. Molehills are turned into mountains, that's all. The drug can only exaggerate, but the seed is supplied by your mind.

Your whole life is a kind of drug trip. When you are under the impact of a drug, things happen fast; immediately; they start happening. When you are living the usual ordinary life, things take a little longer time, conventional time. But it is the same trip. Your life and your drug experiences are not separate, because both are out of the mind -- how can they be separate?

Buddhism says: To see this point is to allow an awakening in yourself. Then both can disappear. You can simply let things disappear by not cooperating, by withdrawing yourself, by becoming a simple witness, watching.

Scientists say that every day in twenty-four hours, fifty thousand thoughts pass through the average man. Fifty thousand thoughts are continuously passing. You don't allow all the thoughts to be realized; you choose. There are good thoughts, there are bad thoughts, there are beautiful thoughts and there are ugly thoughts -- you choose.

It is almost as if you have a radio and all stations are available on the radio. The whole noise of the world and the politicians is available on the radio. But you choose the station -- that choice is yours. Or you can choose not to put the radio on; you can choose to put it off. Then all that noise disappears.

Exactly this is the situation. A meditator chooses not to choose any station; he simply puts the radio off or disconnects it. And all the noise and all the politicians and all that nonsense disappears.

But if you want to choose, you can choose; you can choose any station. People become addicted to stations. When you enter into somebody's room you can see his radio. You will see the needle on the station to which he is addicted, whether the radio is on or not. Slowly slowly, the radio remains always fixed on that station which he likes.

That is the situation of your mind. When I look into you I see your needles fixed. Somebody has decided to live in hell; his needle is fixed. And it has remained fixed for so long that now even to change to another station is going to be difficult. It has gathered rust; maybe it has lost the capacity to be moved from here to there, it may have become fixed. You may have left it there for many many lives; you have forgotten that other stations are available. And you think you are suffering, you have to listen to this noise. You don't like it at all, but what can you do? -- you have to listen to it.

People become addicted to their thoughts. Then that thought comes more often, is repeated more, creates a groove in the head, in the brain cells, and becomes your reality. Naturally, you think what can you do? -- you are a helpless victim.

Buddhism says: You are not a victim at all -- not a victim of fate, not a victim of God, not a victim of the so-called theory of karma. These are just tricks, strategies, to avoid seeing the fundamental law of life.

When you are suffering you try to find some explanations. There are beautiful explanations available. Somebody says, "This is how God wants it to be, so what can you do? You have to live it. It is not in your hands. Man is impotent and God is omnipotent. What can you do? All that is possible for you is either to suffer happily or to suffer unhappily. Suffering is going to be there, so just suffer -- as happily as possible, as ungrudgingly as possible, without complaint. Suffer with acceptance -- that's all that you can do. Or you can go on crying and weeping, but nothing can change it. It is beyond you."

This explanation helps people. Then they remain fixed in their groove. They forget that they can change anything.

Buddhism declares that man is free. That is Buddhism's greatest contribution to human consciousness and the history of human consciousness, that man is utterly free, that man is freedom. There is no God who is programming you, there is no programming at all. You are programming yourself; you are a self-programmer.

There are other explanations: those who don't believe in God, they believe in karma. You are suffering, you are in anguish, and you say, "What can I do? It is my past life's karma, I have to go through it." This helps acceptance; it is a consolation. It gives you a certain kind of rest, it makes life a little easier -- otherwise it will be too difficult, it will be impossible, it will be unbearable.

Once you see the point that it is predetermined in some way or other -- whether by God or karma, it is the same strategy, with no difference; karma is another God, only words are different -- now nothing can be done. You have done something wrong in the past life, there is no way to undo it now; the only way is to go through it. Go through the worst, and hope for the best. Remain in a kind of consolation that something good will come out sooner or later.

This is why people are in so much misery -- because of their explanations! If you have explained your misery, how are you going to transform it? If you have a certain explanation that helps you to accept it as it is, then there is no possibility of transformation.

Buddhism wants to take away all theories and consolations. Those are all tranquillizers, deadly poisonous. And the insight that Buddhism wants to share with you is that you are the sole agent, the sole creator of your life; nothing else determines it. Each moment you are in control. You just have to see it and you have to try a few changes -- those changes will help you to become more aware.

One day you are feeling very miserable: just sit silently in the chair, relax, and start enjoying. Just do the opposite -- don't get into the trap of the misery: start smiling. In the beginning it will look false. Just get euphoric, blissed out. Start swaying, as if there is a great dancing energy in you. And you will be surprised that, slowly slowly, that which had started almost like a pretension is becoming real. The misery is disappearing; it no more has its hold on you, something has changed. A laughter is arising in you.

Your old habit will say, "What are you doing? What about karma? This is not supposed to be; you should not do such things. This is against all philosophy and metaphysics. Go back into the old groove! This is not right, you are cheating -- you have to be miserable when there is misery. This is inauthentic, this is pseudo."

The mind will bring in all kinds of things to create the disturbance again. But insist: "This time I am going to drop out of the theory of karma. I am going to jump out of the wheel! This time I am going to choose the polar opposite." Start dancing, singing, and see, and you will be surprised. But you will have experienced a great truth, that it changes; that the climate changes, that the clouds disappear, that it becomes sunny, that you are different.

Sometimes you are feeling very happy: do the opposite, become miserable -- for no reason at all, just become miserable. In the beginning it will again be just acting. But soon you will get into the act -- because all that you are doing is nothing but an act, so it can be changed.

What you call your authentic life is also just an ACT. Maybe you have practised it long, that's all, but it is an act. So it can be changed for another act. And once you have learnt the trick of changing your acts from one to another, you will be able to see your freedom. You are something beyond the acts.

The function of a master is to destroy all your acts and to make you capable of being free. Buddhism says you are free, utterly free. Experience your freedom, and slowly slowly get out of the old ruts.

It happened, a professor of English language was invited to speak on the philosophy of life. He was a retired professor, well-known, but he wanted to make a little change in the title of the lecture. He said, "Let it be called 'The grammar of life!'" A professor of English language: the people who had invited him thought, "It is right, it is the same -- the philosophy of life or the grammar of life."

And do you know what the professor said when he spoke? He said: "Live in the active voice, not the passive. Think more about what you make happen than what happens to you. Live in the indicative mood, rather than the subjunctive. Be concerned with things as they are, rather than as they might be. Live in the present tense, facing the duty at hand without regret for the past or worry for the future. Live in the first person, criticizing yourself rather than finding fault with others. Live in the singular number, caring more for the approval of your own conscience than for the applause of the crowd. And if you want a verb to conjugate,

you cannot do better than to take the verb 'to love'."

This is his grammar of life. His whole life he must have been teaching grammar, grammar and grammar. Now it has become almost an unconscious habit; he cannot think in any other terms.

This is how you are caught, you are caught by habits. There is no karma that is holding you -- or if there is any karma it is nothing but your habits. The thing that you have been doing again and again, becomes almost a determining factor in your life, becomes decisive.

But one can drop any habit. You may have been smoking for thirty years -- but you can drop THIS cigarette, half-smoked, on the floor and never take another cigarette in your hand. You are free. If you cannot drop it, that simply means you are choosing not to drop it. If people say, "How can we get out of misery?" they are simply saying, "We don't want to get out of misery." They are deceiving themselves.

People come to me and they go on asking, "How to get out of this?" And I am simply puzzled, because only they are holding themselves in it; nobody else is there. They can come out of it just as easily. The energy that they are putting into being in it is more; less energy is needed to come out of it. But they have forgotten one thing -- they have forgotten their freedom.

The message of Buddhism is freedom. Freedom from God, freedom from heaven and hell, freedom from fear, freedom from the future -- freedom from all these explanations that man has created down the ages and is burdened with and crushed by.

I have heard:

An efficiency expert died and was being carried to his grave by six pall-bearers. As they approached their destination the lid of the coffin popped open and the efficiency expert sat up and shouted, "If you'd put this thing on wheels you could lay off four men!"

Just the whole life's habit -- an efficiency expert is an efficiency expert. And don't laugh at it, this is what you are doing. You are living in habits, you will die in habits. And because of these habits you will miss real life. Real life consists of freedom. And once you know that you are free then there is no obsession to choose this or that. You can choose NOT to choose. That state is called Buddhahood.

MORE FRAIL AND ILLUSORY
THAN NUMBERS WRITTEN ON WATER,
OUR SEEKING FROM THE BUDDHA
FELICITY IN THE AFTER-WORLD.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SUTRA. Go slowly into it. The first thing: to ask the Buddha to help us is foolish, for three reasons. First, he cannot. Second, even if he could he would not. Third, we do not need to be helped since we are all Buddhas already.

Zen people say: Because of these three reasons, to ask for help from the Buddha is foolish. First, he cannot. Why can he not help? Because from his standpoint you don't need any help at all. From his standpoint your whole situation is ridiculous. Your whole misery is false! Rather than being kind to you, he would like to laugh at you -- although he does not laugh. He goes on showing his kindness to you, just not to offend you unnecessarily.

But the basic thing is, from the standpoint of a Buddha all your misery is so stupid. It is as if you are in a house which is on fire -- doors are open, windows are open, you can jump

out from anywhere, and you are just sitting there and shouting, "Help me! How am I to get out of this house? My house is on fire! Bring me maps, guidebooks; teach me techniques, methods, to get out." And the house is on fire and you are just standing in the middle of it. And the doors are open and the windows are open -- you can get out immediately, not even a moment has to be lost. The whole situation is ridiculous.

A Buddha knows that you are all Buddhas. The day a man becomes enlightened, for him the whole world becomes enlightened. Then he can see through and through: he can see your eternity, he can see your eternal purity, he can see hidden inside you the source, the God. And you are crying, and weeping, and he can see your treasure and your empire. And you are begging, begging for help.

The Buddha cannot help you, because he can see your misery is self-created, illusory. And he cannot help you for another reason too: the master himself has disappeared as an ego, as a self. There is nobody who is inside; a Buddha is pure emptiness. Who is there to help you?

You can take all the help that you need, but nobody is there to help you. Let it be very clear: you can partake of the energy of a Buddha, you can eat as much of his energy as possible, you can drink him and you can become intoxicated with him -- but he cannot do anything on his own. The door exists no more.

A Buddha is simply an availability. The master remains available in SATSANGA; his presence, or his absence, is there. You can take in as much as you want, you can allow that presence to penetrate you as deeply as you open your heart. But all depends on you. Yes, you can help yourself through the Buddha, but the Buddha cannot help you. There is no activity possible on the part of Buddha.

Sometimes when you come to me and ask, "Osho, will you help me?" you create a problem for me. If I say I will, I am false. If I say I will not, you are hurt -- I am unkind, unloving. The situation is: I am available. You can help yourself through my presence; I cannot DO anything.

The master is a catalytic agent. His presence can trigger a process in you, but he cannot be a doer. He cannot take any initiative, he cannot be a manipulator, he cannot impose any discipline or character on you, he cannot force you to change -- all that violence is gone. Violence is a shadow of the ego; the day the ego disappears, all violence disappears.

That's why I say a do-gooder is not a good man. And the man who is after you and is trying to change you is not the man to be with. The man who is hankering to change you is an egoist, he wants to make you according to his ideas. He is dangerous, he will destroy you; he will not be helpful to you. He will cut from you this part and that part, he will change things in you. He has a blueprint with him, he has a certain idea that has to be implemented. He will not be bothered about you. His whole concern is with his idea; you are just a plaything.

That's what your so-called mahatmas go on doing. They go on giving you patterns of life, they go on forcing things upon you: "Do this, don't do that. If you do this you will be rewarded, if you don't do this you will be rewarded. If you obey, the paradise is yours. If you disobey, then you fall into hell."

These people are dangerous people. These are politicians, not religious people at all. Their whole effort is to change people; they enjoy it. But people are not things. A man is not a canvas, you cannot paint him the way you want. The man is God, the woman is God, each person is divine. Who can change a person? Just the very idea of changing a person is sacrilegious, is a sin.

Many people come to me and they say, "Why don't you give discipline to your

sannyasins?" Who am I to give discipline to my sannyasins? I am available. Whatsoever they want, they can have; that is their choice and their freedom. I am here to teach a single thing: Freedom. No interference in it. If they choose to remain in the world, fine. If they choose to get out of it, fine. With me, all is good. But the greatest value is freedom.

A Buddha cannot be asked to help you. He is help -- but a passive help, just a presence, a door. You can pass through it, but the door cannot drag you through itself. Be aware of the fact: if you are with a real master he will not drag you anywhere. He will shower his presence on you, he will remain available in a thousand and one ways, but he will give you freedom to choose, freedom to be. His presence is not active, cannot be; all action is violent. His presence is passive. So, for three reasons, it is not possible.

Ikkyu says:

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Secondly, he would not help you, because anything that is given to you from the outside cannot become your eternal nature. Even a Buddha cannot give you the truth -- because truth is not a thing to be given or taken, it is an experience that arises in you. The Buddha is an occasion where you can bloom. But nothing can be given to you, nothing can be transferred.

There are things which are untransferrable. They only ARISE; they grow. They are not commodities, they grow like a fragrance grows in a flower.

Truth is your fragrance. So even if he wants, a Buddha would not help you -- because anything given from the outside, just because it has been given from the outside, becomes untrue. It is no more the real gift. The real gift has to arise in you, it has to be given birth by you, through you. At the most, the master can be a midwife.

That's what Socrates says he is -- a midwife. The child grows in the womb of the mother: the midwife can become an occasion to bring the child out of the womb more comfortably, conveniently. That is the function of a master.

God is growing in your womb. The master can be an occasion to bring this birth to happen in comfort, with as little pain as possible, with as much joy as possible, with celebration.

Thirdly, he cannot help, because he sees we do not need any help. All that we need is an awareness of our freedom, an awareness of the fundamental law that thought creates reality -- that we are creators, that each and everyone is a creator.

Never think for a single moment that God has created the world. You have created your world. And there is not one world, there are as many worlds as there are people here. You live in your world, your wife lives in hers. That's why the clash -- those two worlds are continuously clashing. They have to clash, they are overlapping.

You like one thing, your woman likes another thing. There is no way to convince each other, this way or that -- a liking is a liking. You would like to go to this picture, to this movie; she wants to go to some other picture, to some other movie -- a liking is a liking. Two worlds together, overlapping, interfering with each other -- hence the conflict. We don't live in one world. There are as many worlds as there are people.

And the Buddha is one who has seen the truth of it, that he is the creator of his world, and he has retired from it. He creates no more. A Buddha lives here in the world, without a world. That's the meaning of being a Buddha: he lives in the world but there is no world for him. He

lives in the world but the world is not in him. His own creation has completely disappeared. His canvas is vacant: he creates no more, he no more projects any dreams.

To come close to a Buddha means coming close to an emptiness. Hence the fear. One feels scared. If you look into the eyes of a Buddha you will feel utter emptiness, an abyss. And you feel as if, if you fall into it, you will never reach to any bottom. There is none. There is no bottom, it is eternal emptiness -- one falls and falls and falls. One disappears but never comes to the bottom of it.

The Buddha cannot help you, because he sees your dreams. It is as if you are asleep and you are seeing a very dangerous dream. A tiger is following you and you are screaming, and in your sleep you shout, "Help! Help!" And somebody is sitting by your side awake. What do you think he is supposed to do? Should he try to help you? Then he will be just as stupid as you are. Then he will be as asleep as you are, or even more.

He will laugh. He knows there is no tiger; it is your creation, it is your imagination. He may have a good laugh. But you are suffering -- your tiger may be imaginary, but for the moment your suffering seems to be true. Tears are coming, you are shaking and trembling.

What should the man do who is awake? He cannot save you from the tiger, because there is no tiger in the first place. But he can do one thing: he can help you to be awake.

That's why these sutras are so depressing, you feel sad. Pradeepa has written a letter to me; her brother and her brother's wife are here and she has written, "Osho, the last time they were here you were talking about Sufis, and they were thrilled by the talks -- that's why they have come again. And now these Ikkyu sutras: they are sad and they create sadness." She has asked me to do something so that her brother and brother's wife don't feel sad here. Nothing; can be done. With Ikkyu, I am Ikkyu.

But this sadness is of immense value. And you are not here just to be entertained, you are here to be enlightened. There is nothing wrong in being entertained -- if you decide to be that, fine -- but then you missed a great opportunity. You need to be enlightened. And before one becomes awake one has to pass through many sad layers of one's being. Layers upon layers are there of sadness that you have repressed -- because you never wanted to be sad, you have never faced it.

Buddha brings all your sadness in front of you, because his commitment is not to your sleep and your dreams. Maybe those dreams sometimes are sweet, but a dream is a dream, whether sweet or bitter. Even if it is very entertaining it is a dream, and the time is wasted.

Truth may not be very entertaining, but it is enlightening. And once you have seen the truth, life moves into a totally new dimension. That dimension is of blissfulness. And remember again, blissfulness does not mean happiness -- because what you mean by happiness is again entertainment. What you mean by happiness is nothing but pleasure, sensation, thrill.

Blissfulness has the quality of peace in it, silence, stillness, undisturbedness. There is no pain and no pleasure: that state of non-duality, Buddha is interested in it. And to attain to it, if one has to pass through sadness it is worth it. Any cost is okay, because what you are going to realize is beyond all values; it is beyond all your comprehension.

The Buddha Way is the way of awakening. But you can be awake only when your sadness is emphasized totally. Otherwise who would like to be awake? You have to be made alert about your sadness, about your hell. You have to be made aware of your death, of your illness. You have to be made aware of all the agonies that you have passed through and you are passing through and you will have to pass through. This whole thing has to be emphasized.

I have heard:

A Broadway producer decided he was fed up with the extravagant ballyhoo in the advertising of so many shows. He decided that he would insert a clause in his contract giving him the right to approve all advertising for the new play he was producing.

Writer after writer prepared ads embodying the honesty and sincerity he said he wanted in his ads. He turned them all down. Finally, one brought in a piece of copy which read like this: "Here is a play which combines the drama of Shakespeare, the wit of Rostand, the strength of Tennessee Williams, the intellect of Marlowe, and the plot mystery of Dickens. Greater than Hamlet, more moving than the Bible, this is a play destined to live for ever." "That's it!" shouted the producer. "No exaggeration! Just the simple truth!"

You are living in an exaggerated kind of hope, it can be destroyed only by an exaggerated kind of sadness. The opposite polarity has to be brought in. You are hiding all your wounds, Buddha would like to open them all up. Naturally, one does not like it. Seeing one's wounds, it hurts. Life starts looking very very painful, one feels lethargic about living. Then what is the point? One starts thinking of committing suicide.

That's the point Buddha would like you to reach. Where you start thinking of suicide, only there is sannyas possible -- not before it. When you think the whole life is meaningless, only then does your energy start being concentrated on one point -- that now some other meaning has to be searched for. "This life has failed, in toto. Now another life has to be searched for. I have lived outside myself and seen it is all sadness and agony. Now I have to turn inwards -- a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn."

That's why these sutras appear so sad. They bring the truth of your life into focus.

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AND PEOPLE ARE SO STUPID that even when they come to a Buddha -- who knows no future, who knows no past, who lives in the eternal moment -- they still ask about the after-life. They want to have some felicity in the after-world. They are not interested in being awakened herenow, they are interested in making some beautiful world after death.

Buddha is interested absolutely in the herenow. He wants you to be awake herenow. But you go to him and ask, "Is the soul immortal? Will I live after death? What will happen after death? What happens after death? Where do people go?"

And Buddha used to laugh at all these questions and he would simply put them all aside. In fact this was his usual way: whenever he would enter a town his disciples would go around the town declaring to each and everybody, "Don't ask these eleven questions." And these eleven questions were all questions of metaphysics: the afterlife, God, heaven, hell, karma -- all that kind of garbage.

Buddha used to say: Just ask about the immediate, that which is the question right now. Let me become the answer for that.

People don't want to ask that, they want to avoid it. You are in misery and you ask, "What will happen after death?" People come to me too; they say, "What will happen after death?" I say, "First see what is happening before death." They are not interested in that. Before death? Who bothers about before death? The real question is after death.

If you can't see what is happening now, and you don't want to see it, the story is going to be the same later on too. Somebody has asked, "This question has been pursuing me from my very childhood: how does the stone feel inside? Inside the stone, how is it?"

Inquire first how it feels when you are a man -- because once you were a stone too, but then you were worried, I know, then you were worried about how it feels to be a man. Now you are a man, you are worried about how it feels to be a stone. Are you going to miss all the opportunities?

And remember, it feels the same. If you can know how it feels inside right now, you will know how it feels inside anywhere else. The inside is the same, only outsides differ. One is a woman from the outside, another is a man from the outside; from the inside, nobody is a man and nobody is a woman. And the man is continuously puzzled by the woman. Even your greatest men, so-called greatest men, are continuously puzzled by the mystery of the woman.

How does it feel? From the inside it is the same, even in a stone. The inside is always the same; only the outer periphery, the shape and the form, is different. Inside is God. God is the inside of all things.

But these questions! Now, just think, a person has been continuously thinking since childhood -- it must have become an obsession -- how it feels inside a stone. And the person has not yet asked, "How does it feel right now inside me?"

Buddha is interested in the immediate, the imminent. Go into the right-here-now: enter your reality and see. And whatsoever you will know will solve all your problems. No metaphysics is needed, meditation alone is enough.

But people used to ask him, "Help us for the future life." And he was ready here, available here, to transform you. But you are not interested in being transformed here, because you have a thousand other things to do. You are thinking that after life is finished and all the beautiful things of life have been done, then resting in the grave, yes, then one can meditate. Then one can think about great things. Why be bothered right now? Right now there are so many things to do -- so many INTERESTING things to do.

Buddha cannot help you for the future, because for a Buddha there is no future. The only time for a Buddha is the present. He cannot help you for the past, because there is no past. It is all one NOW.

ALREADY, OVER THE HEART
NOT A CLOUD IS HANGING,
AND NO MOUNTAIN IS THERE
FOR THE MOON TO HIDE BEHIND.

And if you can see it, and if you can go into the right-now of things inside yourself THIS moment, you will be surprised...

ALREADY, OVER THE HEART
NOT A CLOUD IS HANGING,
AND NO MOUNTAIN IS THERE
FOR THE MOON TO HIDE BEHIND.

All is clear there! This very moment! Just you are not there. All is clear there -- just clarity, transparency, crystal clarity. And it has been so since time began. Your inner purity is absolute, it cannot be contaminated.

It is just as if a man is asleep, you shake him and he awakes. Even while he was asleep

his capacity to awake was not destroyed. It was there; it was like a substratum. On the top maybe there was a layer of sleep, of dreams, but deep down he was awake. Otherwise how can you wake him just by shaking him? Just an alarm, just somebody calling from the outside, and he opens his eyes and asks, "Who is calling me?" And he was asleep and he was dreaming a thousand and one things, and he was utterly lost in those things. But something was still aware.

That something is always aware. That something never loses its awareness.

You are lost in thoughts; thoughts are dreams. You are lost in the head -- and that clarity exists in the heart. The head is your confusion, naturally: fifty thousand thoughts passing through your head every day, it is really always rush hour, twenty-four hours. And these fifty thousand thoughts I am talking about are for the very very normal average man. I am saying nothing about the neurotics and the philosophers and the thinkers, mad people; I am not saying anything about them, this is just average.

So many thoughts passing through the head: how can you remain clear? So many clouds: how can you see the sun?

But there is a space inside you, a fountain of clarity: your heart. Slip out of the head and fall into the heart. And suddenly one is aware.

ALREADY, OVER THE HEART
NOT A CLOUD IS HANGING...

Because not a single thought ever passes through the heart. The mechanism of thought is in the head, and the mechanism of awareness is in the heart. The heart is always aware. That's why whenever you do something from your heart it has a beauty, a transcendental beauty, a grace. It has something of the divine -- maybe a small thing, a small gesture, but in that gesture God is revealed. And whatsoever you do from your head is always calculated, cunning, clever, and remains profane and ugly.

ALREADY, OVER THE HEART
NOT A CLOUD IS HANGING,
AND NO MOUNTAIN IS THERE
FOR THE MOON TO HIDE BEHIND.

There it is all clear. And both these spaces are available to you, but somehow you are just standing by the roadside, surrounded by the traffic and the noise.

Get out of your head and get into your heart. Think less, feel more. Don't be too much attached to thoughts; get deeper into sensations. Just see the change: it is only a change of gestalt. You are lost in your thoughts, you cannot hear the birds singing. Then you change the gestalt. Just the focus changes, it is a shift. You are no more worried by the thoughts: suddenly all the birds are there singing, the flowers blooming, the sunrays passing through the trees and the wind playing around with the old dead leaves. Just a shift...

And exactly that has to be done. Hence, one who really wants to be awakened needs to learn all the ways of sensitivity. Feel more, touch more, see more, hear more, taste more. And your mahatmas have all dulled your sensitivities. They have been telling you, "Don't taste, taste is dangerous." They have been telling you, "Don't listen to music; forget your senses." And because you have become closed to all your senses, your feeling has disappeared -- because feeling can live only through the nourishment that your senses give it.

So when a new person comes here and sees people hugging each other, holding hands,

dancing, singing, he is puzzled -- because he knows only one kind of ashram, the cemetery kind, where people are dead, just sitting under the trees, dull, not feeling anything, just chanting "Rama-Rama-Rama". And that chanting is just a kind of lullaby so that they can force all their senses to fall asleep.

If you want to be aware, you have to be sensitive. You have to allow all your senses to become aflame. Then the heart starts living. Then the lotus of the heart opens and there is never any confusion.

IN OUR WAY THROUGH THIS WORLD
OF BIRTH AND DEATH,
WE HAVE NO COMPANION;
LONELY WE DIE,
ALONE WE ARE BORN.

DON'T GET LOST too much in the world of relationship, because all relationship is dreaming. Remember your utter aloneness.

LONELY WE DIE,
ALONE WE ARE BORN.

And this life is just an overnight's stay. Don't become too much committed to it, don't get too much involved. Staying overnight in a SARAI, you don't get involved. You remain there for the night and you know that in the morning you have to go, so you don't become worried about the caravan SARAI.

This life is just a journey, this life is only a bridge. Pass through it; don't become too much involved in it. Remain aloof, detached. And that aloofness and that detachedness has not to be a forced thing. If it is forced, you have missed the point. It has to be out of your understanding. If it is forced, it will kill your senses; if it is out of understanding, your senses will become more alive.

THE VAST FLOOD
ROLLS ONWARD
BUT YIELD YOURSELF;
AND IT FLOATS YOU UPON IT.

And remember, if you are not involved then there is no question of fighting, no question of struggle. It is the involved people who become very very struggling, because they have certain ideas of what has to be done. They want the world to be in a certain way; it has to be changed. They become so involved that they cannot sleep. They have to paint the walls of the CARAVANSARAI, they have to decorate the walls, they have to change the bed, they have to arrange the furniture -- and by the morning they have to go. And the whole night is lost in arranging and fighting and changing things.

Out of understanding, not out of enforced practising, you start floating with life. Then all is okay; then you don't push the river...

THE VAST FLOOD
ROLLS ONWARD
BUT YIELD YOURSELF;
AND IT FLOATS YOU UPON IT.

And if you start fighting with it you are simply fighting with yourself and with nobody else. If you start struggling with life you will become more and more closed, naturally, in defence. If you start struggling with life you will be defeated, because you will dissipate your energy in fighting.

If you don't fight with life, you float with the flow, you go with the river, you go downstream -- you don't try to go upstream, you have no ideas, you are simply in a kind of surrender with life -- this is trust, this is surrender. And this is it! Then a miracle happens: if you don't fight with life, life simply helps you -- it takes you on its shoulders.

Have you seen any dead body floating in the river? And have you watched the secret of the dead man? When he was alive he was drowned by the river, naturally. Maybe he didn't know how to fight, he didn't know how to swim: he was drowned by the river. He must have been fighting, he must have tried hard to get out of it: he was drowned.

Now he is dead, and he is floating on the surface. What has happened? It seems when he was alive he didn't know the secret. Now he knows; now the river is not drowning him. The best swimmer is one who knows how to behave with the river as if you are dead -- AS IF you are dead -- then the river takes you.

This is let-go: living as if dead, living with no attachment, living with no possessiveness, living with no clinging. Living with joy.

WHO SEES NAUGHT,
SAYS NAUGHT,
HEARS NAUGHT,
SIMPLY SURPASSES
THE BUDDHA.

And if you can float with the river without making a house on it, this miracle will happen:

WHO SEES NAUGHT...

You will be able to see that which cannot be seen. And you will be able to see that when it happens, the seer also disappears. You will be able to see that which cannot be called the seen.

This is the trinity of experience: the knower, the known and the knowledge. This is the trinity of experience. If one becomes totally relaxed, this trinity disappears. Then there is no one who is a knower and then there is no one who is known; there is simply knowing. The knower and the known have dissolved into knowing. All nouns have dissolved into the verbs of life.

WHO SEES NAUGHT,
SAYS NAUGHT...

THERE IS AN EXPERIENCE which is not an experience, which you cannot call an experience. That's why Buddha never talks about God -- because to talk about God is wrong, is to falsify, is to belie, is to betray. It is something that nobody has never seen. It is something that is seen only when the seer has disappeared, it is something that comes to your vision only when you are not there. It is utter unity: there is no division of the experience and

the experienced, of the observed and the observer. All distinctions, all dualities, have disappeared. How can you say anything about it?

SAYS NAUGHT...

That's why the sage says a thousand and one things about a thousand and one things, but never says anything about the truth. Nothing can be said about it. The sage is the truth. You can partake of him, you can drink as much as you want out of him, you can live in his vicinity and you can be transformed by being close to him -- but there is nothing which can be said about truth.

The Tao that can be said is not the true Tao. The truth that is uttered becomes immediately a lie.

WHO SEES NAUGHT,
SAYS NAUGHT,
HEARS NAUGHT,
SIMPLY SURPASSES
THE BUDDHA.

Buddhahood is the absolute transcendence of all -- even Buddha is included in that all. One becomes a Buddha only when he surpasses even Buddhahood. Try to see it. If somebody says "I have attained Buddhahood" and clings to it as an experience, he has not yet attained; it is still a part of the world of experience. The ego still persists -- maybe it has become very subtle, but it is there.

The real Buddha is one who has disappeared -- disappeared as an experiencer. That is the utter surpassing. And in that surpassing, one is God.

The God to which we have become very much accustomed is our own imagination; it is not the true God. The God of the Christians and the Hindus and the Buddhists is not the true God. The true God is the God about whom never a single word has been uttered. The God of the Bible and the Vedas and the Koran is not the true God. The true God is one about whom there has always remained utter silence. Our Gods are our creations.

I have heard:

A woman in Manhattan died and willed her estate to God. To settle the estate a case was filed, naming God as a party thereto. A summons was issued and the court went through the motions of trying to serve it. The final report stated: "After due and diligent search, God cannot be found in the City of New York."

But that is the kind of God people are searching for. What kind of God are you searching for? You have a certain image in your mind, that he will be playing on the flute, he will be like Krishna, or he will be just a magnified form of Jesus Christ, or he will be like this or like that... You are simply going through the empty gestures of religion; the real religion has not possessed your life yet.

The real God cannot be imagined; the real God happens only when all imagination has ceased to be. The real God cannot be SEEN; the real God can be seen only when the seer is no more. The real God cannot become an object -- to reduce God to an object is to destroy him, is to kill him, is to murder him. The real God always happens as the innermost core of your subjectivity -- not there, but here. Not then, but now. Not out, but in. And that 'in' also is

only for a moment -- once God has happened, that 'in' also disappears. Then there is nothing outer, nothing inner: all is one.

This is the function of a master -- to make you alert of that which cannot be said, of that which cannot be described. A great love is needed, a great sympathy is needed towards the master. Only then these unimaginable things, indescribable things, indefinable things, can be understood.

The master cannot give you God, but he can make your heart aflame with a longing for him.

The young salesman was perturbed. He had lost an important sale he had thought was in the bag. While discussing the matter with his supervisor, the salesman shrugged his shoulders and said, "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." "For Pete's sake!" shouted the supervisor. "Who told you to make him drink? Your job was to make him THIRSTY!"

That is the job of a master -- to make you thirsty for something invisible. It is a mad kind of thirst, you cannot logically prove anything about it. It is a kind of infection. Hence satsanga is needed -- you have to be in deep communion with the master. Slowly slowly, something contagious enters your being. The look of the master's eye, a gesture caught in a moment when you were utterly silent and the traffic of the mind was no more moving -- just a pause, a silence, a period... and something starts stirring in you.

The master is there outside you. His very presence starts calling forth something that has been asleep for long. One starts arising, one opens one's eyes.

It is a very strange relationship to be with a master, the strangest -- because the master is not, and the disciple is too much. And, slowly slowly, the nothingness of the master overwhelms the disciple: seeing the beauty of nothingness, he starts dropping his somebodiness.

It is related that a fire broke out in a house. Within, a man was sleeping. They tried to carry him out through the window, but could not. The man was heavy, big, weighty. They tried through the door, but could not. He was really fast asleep.

And you know, when a man is fast asleep he becomes very heavy; if he is awake you can carry him easily. Have you observed the fact? Just carry a small child when he is awake, and he is light. And carry the same child when he is fast asleep, and he is heavy. Sleep has a quality of heaviness in it -- maybe sleep is more in tune with the gravitation of the earth, awareness is more in tune with the levitation of the sky. These words are not used in a scientific way, just metaphorically, but whenever a person becomes awake he becomes very light. And if you have carried somebody who is in a coma then you will know, it becomes almost impossible to carry him.

They tried from the window, they could not. They tried through the door, they could not.

One wise man said, "Wake him up, he'll get out by himself!"

That's what the purpose of a master is. By his awareness, by the impact of his awareness, your sleeping quality slowly slowly is dissipated, dispersed. His light provokes your light, his silence calls forth your silence.

And remember, the master is not doing anything in particular. He is just being here: it all happens of its own accord. But the disciple has to be very watchful, the disciple has to be

very very attentive, the disciple has to be very very focussed and concentrated. The disciple has to remain with unblinking eyes. The disciple has to be almost in a kind of deep infatuation, all alert -- just as when you are in love, the whole world disappears, only your beloved is.

Unless the master is your beloved, your lover, unless your whole energy is moving towards him, transformation will not be possible. You have to watch every gesture, every nuance.

After Billroth, the Viennese surgeon, had told his students that a doctor needed two gifts -- freedom from nausea and power of observation -- he dipped his fingers into a bitterly nauseating fluid and licked it off, requesting them to do the same. They did it without flinching. With a grin, Billroth said, "You have passed the first test well, but not the second, for none of you noticed that I dipped my first finger in, but licked the second."

Yes, one has to be very very attentive with a master to see every gesture, because in those gestures is the real message. The way he walks, the way he sits, the way he looks at you, the way he is. What he says is secondary. What he IS is primary, very fundamental. So those who are lost in their arguments and in their words and in their theories, in their expectations, go on missing.

MORE FRAIL AND ILLUSORY
THAN NUMBERS WRITTEN ON WATER,
OUR SEEKING FROM THE BUDDHA
FELICITY IN THE AFTER-WORLD.

ALREADY, OVER THE HEART
NOT A CLOUD IS HANGING,
AND NO MOUNTAIN IS THERE
FOR THE MOON TO HIDE BEHIND.

IN OUR WAY THROUGH THIS WORLD
OF BIRTH AND DEATH,
WE HAVE NO COMPANION;
LONELY WE DIE,
ALONE WE ARE BORN.

THE VAST FLOOD
ROLLS ONWARD
BUT YIELD YOURSELF,
AND IT FLOATS YOU UPON IT.

WHO SEES NAUGHT,
SAYS NAUGHT,
HEARS NAUGHT,
SIMPLY SURPASSES
THE BUDDHA.

Surpass the Buddha! I am bent upon it here, I mean it! Surpass the Buddha -- because that is the true Buddhahood when you have surpassed even the Buddha.

That eternal source is available to you. You are fortunate. Don't miss it.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #6

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The first question

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WAITING FOR GODOT AND WAITING FOR GOD?

NO DIFFERENCE AT ALL. All waiting is waiting for Godot, because all waiting is in vain. You cannot wait for God, because God has already arrived. God is already the case; God is not in the future. God is just THIS, all this: how can you wait for it?

If you wait for it you miss it. Waiting for God is a way of escaping from God, a very tricky and cunning way, very clever and subtle -- so subtle that one can deceive oneself through it. What do you mean when you say 'waiting for God'? God is not there, far away, distant. You are not to travel to God, there is going to be no pilgrimage. God is where you are; you ARE because of God. God is in your breathing, God is your life. There is no other God than life.

To avoid life, people have created images of God -- they are not images of God, they are escapes from God. People are avoiding God, hence they have made temples and mosques and gurudwaras and churches. These are not made by religious people, remember, these are made by the irreligious. Those who don't want to get involved with God, those who want to postpone it, they have created the temples and the so-called religions. Those religions give you a feeling that God will be in the future -- in some other country, in some other land, in some other space, in some other world, but never here. And he is here.

And he is here in the songs of the birds and the green of the trees and the red of the trees and the gold of the trees. He is in the bird on the wing... he is everywhere. You need not even go outside yourself to find him. He is your innermost core, your substratum, your very being. How can you wait for him? It will be just like a fish in the ocean waiting for the ocean; it will be utterly foolish.

So all waiting is for Godot. All waiting is futile. Wait, and you are wasting. Wait, and you are avoiding the guest who has already come -- he is knocking on the door in the wind, in the rain, in the sun; he wants to enter into you. And you are doing your prayer in a shrine,

secluded. Or you are sitting in your cave waiting for God. Who are you trying to deceive? You don't want to receive the guest right now: be truthful. You are afraid to receive the guest; it may disturb your whole pattern of life. It is CERTAINLY going to disturb your whole pattern of life.

To receive God means a death, a disappearance -- because the two cannot exist together, you and God.

Martin Buber, one of the great thinkers of this century, says the relationship between man and God is that of I-thou. It is not -- because there is no I and no thou. It is not a relationship at all, because relationship needs at least two.

God is when there are not two. When you are not then something becomes clear which has always been there, but because of you -- the turmoil that you are, the anguish that you are, the nightmare that you are -- because of you it was impossible to see it. You are the dust in the eyes; you are the darkness around yourself God is available but you are not available to God. You cannot wait for God; God is waiting for you.

But why do people go on thinking in terms of waiting? It gives great illusions: some day it is going to happen. Just see the working of the mind, the functioning of the mind. The mind is always a seeker, always desiring something or other; it exists through desire and seeking. Sometimes it seeks money, sometimes it seeks meditation, but there is no basic difference. It is the same game -- played with different words but not a bit has changed, played with beautiful names but the same game.

Somebody is seeking power here, and somebody is seeking power there -- power there in the other world -- and he calls it 'God'. Somebody wants to be special here, and somebody else wants to be special there. The disciples of Jesus ask him again and again, "We know that you will be exactly on the right side of God, you will be on his right hand. But amongst your disciples, who will be next to you there in that other world, in that kingdom of God? Who will be next to you?"

What is this desire? The same power politics, the same hierarchy, the same ego trip.

The mind remains a seeker. The mind cannot exist with fulfillment, it can exist only in hunger. Mind can only exist in a state of starvation. If you are utterly fulfilled and there is no hunger and no starvation and you are contented, mind disappears like dewdrops in the morning sun -- you will never find the mind again.

Mind looks in the future, searches in the future. And when you are focussed in the future -- some goal, faraway goal... And the farther the goal is, the better for the mind -- because if the goal is not very far, then sooner or later you will achieve it.

God, the idea of God, is the best goal for the mind. The worldly man does not have such a great idea, because his ideas are not impossible, they are feasible. He wants to make a little bigger house -- it is not such a big deal, it can be done. It WILL be done; one day he will have the bigger house -- and then? Then the mind has to create a new desire again.

Just see: why does the mind have to create new desires? Because your old desire has been fulfilled, and mind can exist only in desiring. You have so much money, and mind wants to double it. Then one day you HAVE doubled it: now what to do? Mind has come to a point where suicide is automatically going to happen. If the mind wants to live again, again a new desire has to be released, projected: again you want to double the money, and so on and so forth.

The worldly man has to change his desires many times, again and again; he has to constantly renew his desiring. And who is this other-worldly man, the so-called religious -- the saint, the mahatma? He is more cunning. From the very beginning he has chosen

something; he is waiting for the impossible. It is not going to happen, it has never happened, because it has ALREADY happened. There is no way for it to happen, it is impossible. He can live on and on -- this life, another life, and another life -- and his goal is so utterly impossible that he will not need to change it. He has a permanent goal.

The worldly man has temporary goals, not very very distant. The worldly man thinks in instalments: one desire, then another desire, a better car, a better house, a more beautiful woman...

The other-worldly man has chosen the ultimate in desire. God is the ultimate in desire -- not the true God, the God of your idea is the ultimate in desire. It is intrinsically impossible. You can go on waiting and you can go on striving, you can go on seeking.

To see it, that seeking is the way of the mind, that seeking is mind, that seeking is the source of all tensions and anguish and anxiety, is to become aware of a great phenomenon. Then you don't start seeking God, because that is seeking again. Then all seeking simply disappears, withers away. In the knowing of the fact that seeking creates mind and mind is anguish, seeking disappears. And with the seeking disappears the shadow, the mind.

And when there is no seeking how can there be waiting? When there is no desire how can there be waiting? When there is no desire, no seeking, there is no waiting. Suddenly you are here and now. You cannot move a single inch, you cannot go anywhere, there is nowhere to go now.

In that immediacy, God becomes available. It is better to say that you become available to God -- God has always been available from his side.

It is as if the sun has risen in the morning and you are sitting in your room with closed doors and windows, in darkness. Open the doors, you become available to the sun. The sun was already available -- just the meeting happens.

You cannot wait for God. All waiting is for Godot. Godot means the one who never comes, who CANNOT come, whose arrival is impossible. And the only impossible thing is that which has already happened -- how can it happen again? You are alive, and you are waiting for life, Now, this is ridiculous.

The real man of religion does not think in terms of God. He thinks in terms of life or, even better, of living -- because life can again become an abstract idea. Living, moment-to-moment living. In that very living, one knows what God is, because one knows who one is.

Your idea of God is an escape from living. You are afraid of life, of love, you are afraid of death. You are afraid of ten thousand things, and they are there and you don't want to see them eye-to-eye. You don't want to know what exactly the case is. How to avoid it? You become engaged somewhere else. You create a great desire in your mind, a distant desire -- somewhere in the future it will be fulfilled -- and you become obsessed with it. Then you worship God, and you are worshipping a false God.

All worship is false, because real worship consists of living, not of worship. Real worship consists of small things. Not that you do rituals -- all rituals are just strategies to create a belief that you are doing something special, something sacred. You are simply being stupid, nothing else. You can decorate your stupidity -- you can chant Vedas and you can read Bibles and you can make great rituals in the churches and temples and you can sit around a fire and chant great songs -- but you are simply being stupid; this is not being religious at all.

But a religious man lives day-to-day, moment-to-moment. Cleaning the floor, and there is worship. Preparing food for the husband, and there is worship. Taking a bath, and there is worship. Worship is a quality -- it has nothing to do with the act itself, it is the attitude that

you bring to the act. If you love the man and you are preparing food for him it is worship, because the man is divine.

Love makes everyone divine, love reveals the divinity. Then it is not just your husband, it is God in the form of your husband. Or it is in your wife in the form of a woman -- but it is God, ultimately God and always God. A child, your child: God has come in a certain form to you.

Recognize! See! And there is worship. You may be just playing with your child and it is worship -- far more significant than what you do in the temples; the worship in the temples is just plastic.

Real life has to be lived in an authentic sincere way, with totality, with joy, with celebration. And then you can forget all about God -- because each moment you will be meeting him, each moment you will be coming across him. Then everything is just a manifestation of God. God is the prior condition of everything -- nothing can exist without him. So only he exists, and all else is just a form.

A wave, a tidal wave arises, or a small ripple, but both are the ocean. The small ripple is as much the ocean as the tidal wave. A Buddha walks, he may be a tidal wave. And then an ordinary man, the man who comes to mend your shoes, is also God -- maybe a ripple, but no ripple is any less the ocean. There is no question of being less or more -- a ripple is as oceanic as the tidal wave, and the smallest particle is as divine as the greatest mountain. There is no question, because God is not a question of quantity, it is a question of quality.

Anything that is alive is divine. This vision is religion.

So, Chinmaya, no waiting is waiting for God. All waiting is for Godot. Don't wait -- you have waited long enough. Can't you see the futility of waiting? Accept my invitation to live God! Don't wait. Waiting is not the way, living is the way. Live God! Start THIS moment! What else do you need?

I am here, you are here, the trees are here, the birds are singing and the vast sky is surrounding you. What ELSE do you need? What MORE do you think there will ever be? Nothing is going to be added to it and nothing is going to be taken away from it; this totality will remain as it is.

I am existing in the same totality in which you are existing. But I am existing with open eyes and you are existing with closed eyes -- that's the difference, the only difference; not much.

You are Buddhas with closed eyes.

And it is just a question of a decision to open your eyes. You have the capacity to open them -- because if you can close them you can open them. The very possibility of closing them is there because you can also open them. It is your decision, it is your choice.

You have chosen to live without God because you are afraid of God. And then you say, "I am waiting for God." Very tricky. You don't even want to accept the truth, that you have been escaping from God. So you create false Gods -- ikons and idols and temples -- and you go there and you do stupid things there and you call them yagnas, prayer, and all that stuff.

SEE that you have been escaping. This hurts -- because seeing it, your whole mind topples down to dust. Your whole life is based on this strategy to go on escaping, to go on postponing. "Tomorrow I will live" -- that is your way of living. Tomorrow, never this moment. Next life, after death, in some other time, in some other world...

There is no other world. This is the only world there is. And all those paradises and heavens are just your imagination, to escape, to get involved -- dreams to avoid reality.

My whole process consists in bringing you to THIS moment. Just THIS -- and God

showers on you and God arises in you. And the God within meets the God without, and then there is great joy.

In short, stop being a seeker! Now, Chinmaya is a seeker, hence the question. Stop being a seeker! People enjoy these ideas very much: "I am a seeker of truth" or "I am seeking God." And then they look at you with that bullshit of holier-than-thou, a seeker of truth, a seeker of God. But seeking is basically wrong. Seeking is wrong -- what you are seeking is irrelevant.

Don't be a seeker. You have been a seeker for many many lives. It is time! Wake up from your seeking and start living! When are you going to live if you go on seeking and seeking and seeking?

Start living. Eat when hungry, and while eating be utterly there in it, and it becomes worship. Fall asleep when tired, but really fall asleep totally. And if no dreams pass, that is total sleep; it is worship. If sleep is without dreams it has the quality of meditation. That's why Patanjali says that SAMADHI and SUSHUPTI -- the ultimate state of ecstasy, and deep dreamless sleep -- are very similar. Why similar? Because in deep sleep dreams disappear, thinking disappears. So is the case in samadhi: all thinking disappears, all imagination disappears, all dreaming disappears. The only difference is, in deep sleep you are unconscious, in samadhi you are conscious. Otherwise both take you to the same home, to the source.

Sleep totally. When you are walking, walk totally, let everything else disappear. Enjoy the totalness of a morning walk, all that is involved in it -- the children playing and the dogs barking and the birds on the wing and the clouds in the sky, and you there. What more can you ask for? What more joy? If you can't be happy with such a beautiful world, with so much continuously being given to you, where do you think you will be happy?

Walking, just walk. Listening, just listen. Talking, just talk. Be totally in it -- then each act is transformed, becomes luminous. This is the way to live God.

I don't teach you any seeking for God, I teach you living God. Living starts this moment. Seeking of course has to start tomorrow, always tomorrow. And the tomorrow never comes.

The second question

I WANT TO BE A MASTER. THE IDEA OF JUST SITTING THERE AND DOING NOTHING APPEALS TO ME VERY MUCH. WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT IT?

GREAT IDEA! SOME IDEA! But it is very difficult to just sit. You are so restless. If you can just sit, you ARE a master! But think of just sitting, doing nothing -- can you allow that much rest to yourself even for a single moment?

That's what I go on telling you: Sit silently, passively, doing nothing, just being. And you look at me with bewildered eyes: "Just sitting, doing nothing?" People ask me, "Can't we chant a mantra? Please give us a mantra, so we can at least chant a mantra when we are sitting." That mantra is for nothing but your restlessness.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's transcendental meditation has appeal in America because America is so restless. People can't sit silently; they have to do something or other. If there is nothing to do then they have to repeat Rama-Rama-Rama or Coca-Cola-Coca-Cola-Coca-Cola -- but something. Coca Cola is a great mantra: repeat it and you will have all the benefits of transcendental meditation.

What happens when you repeat a mantra? It just gives your restlessness something to do.

It becomes concentrated, then you can sit. But this is not real sitting; you have escaped again. Now you have escaped into the mantra. A mantra is a mind trip. Just sitting means no mantra, no thought, no movement. Just sitting exactly means just sitting.

Yes, then you can become a master; you HAVE become a master. People will start coming to you of their own accord -- because whenever somebody just sits, such grace arises in that non-moving energy because he is utterly in the present. He can't move anywhere -- he can't move to the past, he can't move to the future. He is just utterly here, he is totally one with this moment. In that, he is bridged with reality, he is one with God.

And a man who is one with God is a master. In that moment, such great gravitation arises in him that people will be attracted, people will start moving towards him. He may be sitting deep in a cave in the Himalayas and people will start reaching there, people will start finding the way to where he is. There is some unconscious pull.

In Buddha's days there was no way, because the world was really very disconnected. Nations existed secluded; there was nothing like newspapers, radio, television -- no way to spread the message. But people started moving. From almost every nook and corner of the known world, people came to Buddha. Somehow it functions, it spreads; it has its own momentum.

You will be a master if you can sit silently. But the very idea of being a master will not allow you to sit silently. You will open your eyes to see whether disciples have started to come or not: "And what am I doing here? It is time, and nobody has come -- I don't see any photographers and any newspaper people and media people coming..." You will not be able to sit silently. You will start waiting for disciples: that's the meaning of the desire to be a master.

A master is one who has no desires. Now, even the desire to be a master is enough; it won't allow you to be a master. A master is not trying to be a master -- he is. He is not managing it, it is spontaneous. He is not searching and seeking for disciples; they come. It happens on its own. The very silent energy of a master -- that luminous energy of being alert, peaceful, at ease, at rest, at home -- starts many people moving towards that source. It is not really in the mind that it happens, this pull. It happens deeper than the mind: it happens in your unconscious.

You say: I WANT TO BE A MASTER.

That will be a barrier. And the reason is the idea of just sitting there and doing nothing. You must be a mighty lazy person. Just sitting there and doing nothing is not a state of laziness, mind you. It is of utter energy, ultimate energy. It is not a kind of sleep, a kind of coma; it is not lethargy. It is a reservoir of energy. The energy is not moving anywhere, the energy is accumulating. And the more it accumulates, the more powerful it becomes.

You must be just a lazy person. The idea appeals to you, because to be a disciple seems to be difficult, arduous -- you have to do this and you have to do that, and you have to meditate, and you have to pass through so many things, and here is Yoga and Zen and Tantra and Sufism and you have to find and search and roam and wander and inquire, and it seems to you to be a long journey. You would like to simply be a master.

I have heard:

A poor half-wit was befriended by a millionaire lover of music who happened to have a private orchestra. One day the half-wit came to his benefactor and asked for a position in his

orchestra. Astonished, the rich man said, "I had no idea you could play an instrument." "I can't," was the answer. "But I see you have a man there who does nothing but wave a stick around while the others play. His job I can handle."

That job is not easy, that is the hardest of all -- from the outside it appears to be very easy.

Just sitting is the hardest thing in the world, the most arduous thing in the world. You can do everything -- you can go to Everest and you can go to the moon -- but just sitting? that is impossible. You can move into any kind of activity -- that fits, that fits with the ego, that enhances the ego: you become a great doer.

But when you are sitting and doing nothing, what happens? What is the difficulty? The greatest difficulty is, when you are not doing anything you start disappearing -- because man exists through his acts.

Jean Paul Sartre is right when he says that man defines himself through his activity. You are what you do.

You are a doctor because you do a certain kind of work. You are a painter because you paint, you are a singer because you sing. Your identity is given by your action. YOU are this, you are that -- your definition comes from your activities. When you are not doing anything who will you be? A doctor, a painter, an engineer, a singer -- who? You will be nobody. You will be simply nobody! Your identity will start disappearing, your definition will slip out of your being. You will be utterly nude and naked and not knowing who you are.

And that is the arduousness of it -- it is very arduous. You will be getting into a great chaos, and great fear will arise in you: what is happening? You will immediately rush into some act, you will start doing something. And once you start doing something you are again at ease, because again you know who you are.

Have you not watched it? Just sitting silently in your room, have you not observed it again and again that you start doing something meaningless? People start moving their furniture, arranging the paintings again or cleaning the books or the cupboard -- they have to do something. Because when they are doing, they are perfectly settled in their knowledge of who they are.

You are a housewife: doing something, you know. You are a mother: when the child is with you, you know who you are. You are a husband: with the wife you know who you are. When the wife dies, something in the husband dies immediately, because he becomes very much frightened -- now who is he? He had become accustomed to living with the idea that he is a husband.

Mulla Nasruddin's wife died and he was crying like anything. One of his closest friends could not believe his eyes -- such big tears were coming from Mulla's eyes, and he had never seen the man cry. And he had always thought that this man is a brave man -- just crying like a child?

To console him the friend said, "Don't be worried, Nasruddin, time heals everything. Within three to six months you will have forgotten this woman. And I say to you, you are still young enough -- you will fall in love again, you will be married again. So don't become so desperate."

Mulla looked with anger at the friend and he said, "What are you talking about? Six months? And what am I going to do tonight?"

If you have become accustomed to a wife, she has become part of your definition. In the

night, alone, you will be afraid -- afraid of the fact that again your definition has disappeared.

When a very rich man goes bankrupt what happens? Why do people commit suicide when they go bankrupt? Is money so valuable, more valuable than life? The problem is, that was their definition. Now there is no money in the bank, their soul has disappeared, they don't know who they are. And it seems so arduous to define themselves again, to start from ABC, to start begging again. And it will take thirty or forty years to be able to make that much money again and have that definition again. That seems to be too long and too much; it is better to disappear, it is better to drop the whole effort.

Your activity keeps you defined; it gives you a certainty, a security. Whenever you are not doing anything you become uncertain. An abyss starts yawning in your being and you feel you are falling into the abyss, and immediately you jump to do something.

I have seen people reading the same newspaper again! I used to travel for fifteen years continuously -- almost three weeks a month I was travelling and watching people. Sometimes it would happen that only one more passenger was with me in the compartment, and I would watch him. He would read the same newspaper again and again -- and would feel a little ashamed also, because I was there. He would open the window and close the window, open the suitcase and arrange it and close it again -- and he would become very much ashamed also, because somebody was just sitting there and doing nothing. And he could not sit. And he would try to sleep, and he could not sleep, and he would jump up and go to the bathroom and come back. And he was not an insane person, just a normal person, for twenty-four hours caged in a compartment, not knowing what to do.

Have you not seen people? -- their holidays are the most difficult days; they don't know what to do. The whole week they think that Sunday is coming and they are going to rest, and they never rest on Sunday! They start a thousand and one things: they start mowing the lawn or they start fixing things around the house. They get more tired on Sunday than they ever get in their office -- because in the office who works? One simply postpones. Files move from one table to another table -- they go on moving and moving and moving, and nothing ever happens. People become so skillful at avoiding in the office, that is their work there. To avoid, to say no, not to do anything: that is their activity there.

Psychologists are perfectly aware that once a person becomes retired he dies earlier than he would have died if he had remained in his work. Ten years' difference happens. If a man was naturally going to live eighty years, and when he is sixty he becomes retired... And he had been hoping for that retirement his whole life -- he was thinking, "Just a few years more and I will get retired and then I will rest and do all those things that I always wanted to do. I will read great poetry, listen to great music, play the guitar or make a beautiful garden, or go to the mountains and rest in the sun, in the wind..."

And when he becomes retired all that happens is he simply becomes afraid of death -- nothing else happens. Once he is retired he starts losing his identity. He was a collector or a commissioner or something, a prime minister, a president...

When politicians are in office they are very healthy. Once they lose their office they become ill; they die soon. Harnessed, they can live long. Unharnessed, they don't see what the point of living is. People start neglecting you, people start ignoring you, you become a nonentity. And not only for people do you become a nonentity, you become a nonentity for yourself -- because you don't know now who you are. You had been a prime minister, now you are not a prime minister -- then who are you? And no answer arises.

No, sitting silently is very difficult, just next to impossible -- unless you are ready to die in silence, unless you are ready to lose all identity, all ego. Yes, if you are ready to lose all

identity, the master will arise in you. But you cannot become a master.

When you have disappeared, the master comes. It is always God who is the master. That's why in the East we call the master divine. The West cannot understand it, because the phenomenon has been very rarely happening there. The West knows bishops, priests, rabbis; it does not really know the phenomenon of a master, it is very rarely happening there. It knows prophets, visionaries, it knows preachers, priests -- but very rarely, only once in a while, has the West come across a master.

And whenever the West has come across a master it has behaved very badly with the master. With Jesus it behaved in a very uncivilized way, because the phenomenon was very much unknown. If Jesus had been just a rabbi, everything would have been perfect. But he was a master. He had disappeared, God had appeared in him. Now God was speaking, now Jesus was not speaking.

And when God speaks, God speaks with great authority. When God speaks, God speaks in absolute terms. When God speaks, God speaks like a God. Jesus says, "I am the truth." This is God speaking. Not Jesus, not Joseph's son Jesus. Christ, not Jesus. It is God speaking: "I am the truth." NOW, no rabbi has ever said that -- how can the Jews forgive this man? He seems to be very arrogant and egoistic.

Now, see the ridiculousness of it. Always, whenever ego disappears, God appears. And God speaks in such ways that it looks as if the man has become very egoistic: "I am the truth! I am the way! And nobody reaches God unless he comes through me." Just see these words: "I have come to liberate you. I and my Father in heaven are one." Now, these statements cannot be tolerated. This man seems to be neurotic, mad, a megalomaniac, has lost all senses, is insane.

Still psychoanalysts go on calling Jesus insane. And it looks insane, because who in his senses can say, "I am the way, I am truth, and nobody ever reaches God unless he passes through me"? Who in his senses can say such things?

Yes, he was not in his senses. He was not at all -- how could he be in his senses? God was speaking, he was just a mouthpiece.

A man becomes a master only when the man disappears. So if you have the desire to be a master, that very desire will prevent you.

Right now, become a disciple. Slowly slowly, the disciple disappears and the master arrives. The first step towards masterhood is discipleship.

The third question

I FEEL AS THOUGH I AM DROWNING AND AM TRYING TO HOLD ON TO SOMETHING. NOTHING COMES TO MY HAND. I FEEL SUFFOCATED. GIVE ME SOMETHING, OSHO. IT IS HEAVY. I WILL DIE OR GO MAD. HELP ME, PLEASE.

THE ONLY REAL HELP will be to help you to be utterly drowned. And of that you are afraid. I am here to drown you! not to save you from drowning -- because only those who are totally drowned are saved.

You ask: I FEEL AS THOUGH I AM DROWNING...

Something great is going to happen: allow it! be drowned! What is there to save? What have you got to lose? You have known only miseries; you are a bundle of miseries and

dreams and hopes and frustrations and expectations -- you are a bundle of all these things. Let this bundle be drowned! Why are you worried? Why do you want to be saved? And if you are saved, this bundle will be saved.

No -- because I love you, I cannot save you. Because I love you, I will help in every way so that you can disappear.

I FEEL AS THOUGH I AM DROWNING AND AM TRYING TO HOLD ON TO SOMETHING.

There is nothing that you can hold on to. You can imagine -- and people when they are in desperate need do go on imagining.

My work here consists of taking all those imaginations away from you, slowly slowly, one by ONE. All toys have to be destroyed, so one day you can see the fact that there is nothing to hold on to. Only then will you relax and allow this drowning. Only then will you relax and die.

And after that death is resurrection.

Vedanta, go down. And don't try to hold on to ANYTHING, because there is nothing to hold on to.

NOTHING COMES TO MY HAND...

Because there is nothing. Nothing can come.

I FEEL SUFFOCATED.

I know. I have passed through the suffocation myself -- I can understand your misery, I can understand your helplessness. But I can't give you my hand, because if I give you my hand you will remain the same. I have to leave you as you are. I have to just sit on the bank and see you drowning.

Of course you will feel angry at me.

I have heard: A Sufi master was sitting on the bank of a river, and a man was drowning. And the man started shouting, yelling, "What are you doing there? I am drowning and I don't know swimming! Come and save me!"

And the master laughed and he said, "I don't know swimming myself, but I am not yelling. So what? If you don't know swimming, you don't know swimming! I don't know it myself, but I am not yelling. There is no need to yell."

Looks very hard -- the story looks very cruel. But this is not an actual case, it is just metaphorical. This is the situation! Vedanta is drowning there and he is shouting for help and yelling, and I say to him: Don't shout and don't yell. Simply disappear. Relax and let go. Don't try to hold on to anything. This is the last struggle of the ego to be saved. This is the death that brings samadhi.

NOTHING COMES TO MY HAND.

Yes, nothing is going to come. I am not here to supply you new toys, new supports, new props.

I FEEL SUFFOCATED.

I know. Don't try to save yourself, otherwise you will be simply prolonging your misery. Die. One has to learn the art of dying -- and that is the whole art of discipleship.

GIVE ME SOMETHING, OSHO.

I cannot give you anything. I can only take things away from you. I have to make you absolutely nude, utterly empty.

That's what Ikkyu's sutras are saying again and again: the Buddha cannot help. All help will be wrong help, because through help your wrong life will be supported.

GIVE ME SOMETHING, OSHO. IT IS HEAVY. I WILL DIE OR GO MAD.

You cannot die, that much is certain -- because nobody has ever died. You cannot die, because death is impossible. Death never happens. It is all life -- life only goes on changing forms.

When a child is born out of the mother's womb the child thinks "I am going to die" -- naturally. For nine months the child has lived in a certain way and now that whole way is being disturbed. How can he think that this is going to be a new life? The child thinks "this is going to be death."

You are in exactly the same situation. Now you are being taken away from a womb -- the womb of the society, the womb of religions, the womb of concepts, abstractions, philosophies. I am taking you away from the womb in which you have lived up to now. It is hard, heavy. And the child thinks, passing out through the mother's womb, that he is going to die. Birth seems to be like death.

And again, when you really die one day -- old, aged, and you die -- do you think it is death? It is again a beginning of a new birth. Each death is a beginning of a new birth, and each birth looks in the beginning as if it is death. But it is all life. Life goes on changing its forms, from one form to another. The form dies and life jumps into another form. Life is a flame that lives eternally.

You cannot die, don't be worried about it -- because nobody has ever died. Death is a myth.

You say: I WILL DIE OR GO MAD.

You cannot die, one thing, because death does not happen. And you cannot go mad, because you are already mad. Now there is no more to it. Man as he exists ordinarily is mad. What more madness can happen to you?

Just sit silently in your room for one hour and write down whatsoever comes into your mind; just write down whatsoever comes, with no editing. Just go on writing whatsoever comes -- relevant, irrelevant, consistent, inconsistent, absurd, nonsense, rubbish -- just go on. And you will be surprised: after one hour, when you look at it you will think "Has some madman written it, or what?"

We keep our mind repressed. We are afraid -- if we look into it, it is mad.

I have heard: A woman was playing on the harmonium and singing. And her voice was so ugly, nauseating, that the neighbour could not sleep -- and it was getting late, it was two o'clock in the morning. Then he knocked on her door and said, "Please stop now! Otherwise I will go mad."

The woman came out, opened the door and said, "What are you talking about? I stopped one hour ago!"

The man has already gone mad!

As man is, he is already mad. You cannot go mad -- don't be afraid about madness. If you allow this death you will become sane for the first time. Ego is mad, ego is madness. And the ego is afraid to die -- the ego is crying for help.

And you have fallen into very dangerous company, Vedanta. Here, no help is given, all helps have to be taken away. I remove, I go on removing all crutches. I know that if all crutches are removed you will be able to stand on your own, because you are not a cripple but the society has made you crippled. And the society has given you all kinds of crutches, and you have lived with those crutches so long that you cannot imagine yourself without them. Naturally, when you take crutches away from the crippled man he feels suffocated, he feels he is dying.

You are on the right track. Whenever this happens to anybody here I become very happy, because then I know the moment has come: if you can be courageous enough to go through this moment you will be reborn.

And you say: HELP ME, PLEASE.

Just the other day, Ikkyu's sutras were saying no help is possible, for three reasons. First, you don't need the help -- in fact you have been harmed by all kinds of help that have been given to you. Nobody has allowed you to be on your own; so much help has been available to you -- your mother, your father, your teachers, your priests. Even before the problem has arisen, answers have been fed to you, all kinds of help. This helping society, these advisers all around, they have been helping you -- they don't bother whether you need it or not. They go on helping, they have a chronic obsession with helping. They are known as social servants: these are the most mischievous people in the world. Their mischief is such that you cannot see it: they help you, they give you good advice, they teach you character, morality and this and that -- and they destroy your whole possibility of growth. They make you false, pseudo, they make you plastic.

When you fall into the hands of a master the process has to be reversed. All help has to be withdrawn. You are to be left in such deep aloneness that you HAVE to grow, that you have to take the challenge of life. And in that very challenge the energy starts moving, starts taking a form, becomes integrated.

Have you not watched it? Whenever there is a difficulty and you face it, something in you becomes strong. Whenever there is a great challenge it gives you steel in your being. And this is the greatest challenge that you can come across -- the challenge of a master, of being with a master.

You don't need help.

Secondly, the master cannot enforce anything. He will not even enforce what is known as good, because enforcement makes everything wrong. You have to partake; the master is a kind of availability. You can take as much as you need, whatsoever you need, you can drink,

you can eat, you can digest the master -- but nothing can be done from the master's side in a very active way, no. He is a passive presence.

And whenever somebody is active he becomes violent. He starts crippling you; he starts watching everything, he becomes a kind of policeman. He starts interfering in everything: you should eat this, you should not eat that, you should go to bed at this time and you should get up at this time -- he starts interfering with your life. He becomes totalitarian, he becomes dictatorial, he destroys your freedom. In the name of great values he cripples you, he paralyzes you.

The real master is just a presence. You can be benefitted, but it is up to you. He is available: you can take it or leave it, but nothing can be done actively from the master's side.

Thirdly, all that you are thinking is your trouble, your problem, your anxiety, is illusory. You have become very very clever at creating illusions for yourself. The basic illusion is the ego. And once that illusion is created then so many other illusions arise out of it.

Now, you are not dying -- just the ego is dying. But you think "I am dying." If you can see it, how can you die? You were never born! Do you remember any moment when you were born? Have you any idea what birth is? If you were born then there must be some memory -- you were not, and then suddenly you popped out -- but do you remember? Those who have gone deepest into inner work have all said that you were never born. Birth has not happened, so how can you die? You are unborn, undying.

Ikkyu calls it 'the great medicine'. No help is needed. At the most you need an awakening -- not help in particular, in detail, but just an awakening. For that, the master's presence is the alarm.

That's why I go on shouting at you continuously, whether you listen or not. I go on calling you. Some day, in spite of your sleep, in spite of you, you may listen. That very moment, you will open your eyes and all the nightmares that you were suffering from will disappear.

This drowning, this suffocation, is just a nightmare.

And remember that one becomes awake only when the nightmare reaches to its peak, never before. Have you observed or not? -- sometimes in your sleep when you are passing through a great nightmare, a moment comes when the intensity of the nightmare, the very intensity of it, becomes a breakthrough: you are suddenly awake. Your sleep can tolerate only so much nightmare, it can settle and remain adjusted with only so much agony. Once the agony point reaches beyond the capacity of the sleep, sleep has to be broken -- it will break on its own.

You are being followed by tigers and you are running and the terrain is rough, mountainous, and you are falling and bleeding and feeling more and more tired. It is an uphill task and the tigers are coming closer and closer and you can hear their roaring sounds and their approach is coming closer and closer and closer... and suddenly you are caught by those tigers. One has just jumped on your chest, is tearing you apart -- and in that very moment the sleep disappears and your eyes open. You are perspiring, your heart is beating fast, the whole body is trembling, but there is no tiger; you are just holding your own pillow.

I am sitting by your side, fully awake, seeing the whole misery. Do you think I should feel compassionate? You are suffering very much, this tiger is going to kill you, so should I bring a revolver or do something? I will kill you if I bring a revolver -- to kill the tiger you will have to be killed, because it is your dream; the tiger is not real. So I am amused. Sitting by your side I enjoy the whole journey that you are going through. I can see through and through and I know that sooner or later the tiger is going to get you -- how long can you

escape? You can escape from a real tiger, there is a possibility; but you cannot escape from an unreal tiger, there is no possibility. It is your creation -- wherever you go it will follow you. It is your mind! How can you escape? Sooner or later you will get tired, weary. You will fall, you will slip from a rock and you will be caught by the tiger. And then tigers do what they know: the tiger will tear you apart.

And at that moment when the tiger is tearing you apart, sleep cannot continue; it is too much. The sleep is broken.

In fact that is the purpose of so many groups that I tell you to go through. Primal, Encounter, Samarpan -- these are just to enhance your nightmares. You are seeing those nightmares, but very mildly; they never come to a peak, so the sleep continues. They have to be brought to a peak, they have to be brought to a climax -- because only from the climax comes the change, the change of consciousness.

Vedanta, good. I am happy, I am pleased. Be drowned, with all my blessings, and the dream will disappear. And the disappearance of the dream is the only way to know that which is. The disappearance of the dream is the appearance of God.

The fourth question

WHAT IS THIS EGO?

An ancient story:

A young woodpecker, who felt exceedingly vigorous one morning, looked around the forest and decided to start the day by pecking a huge oak. He had just gotten off to a good start when a bolt of lightning split the tree from top to bottom. The bird hustled out from under the debris, looked up at what was left of the tree, and murmured with a shudder, "My! I did not even know my own strength."

This is what ego is. It is a misinterpretation -- what is already happening, you think you are doing it. Just a translation from happening to doing is the creation of the ego. Watch, and whenever you feel that you are doing something translate it to "It is happening." Read "It is happening" and the ego will disappear.

All is happening, nothing is being done. There is no doer and no 'do-ee', it is all happening.

The fifth question

PLEASE CAN I BE SIMPLY NORMAL?

NORMAL IS OKAY, but what is SIMPLY normal? Again you are making a condition; you are making it complex. Simply normal? Is being normal not enough? What more is added by putting 'simply' in front of 'normal'?

The mind is such that it cannot be happy with the natural, the normal. It always makes conditions and through those conditions it falsifies everything. Normal is possible, but simply normal is not possible. That 'simple' will be something brought in from the outside.

Man has become so accustomed to the artificial that even when sometimes the desire to

be natural arises in him, what he thinks about as nature is not nature, it is again his IDEA of nature. What he says is natural is again his idea of the natural -- not the natural, because the natural needs no idea. You need not become natural, you ARE natural; just stop being artificial, that's all. No positive effort is needed to become natural -- just don't try to be unnatural.

Do you follow me? A positive effort will always lead you into artificiality. Now if you ask "How to be natural?" you have asked a wrong question, you have started on the wrong track. And then somebody is bound to supply the answer -- because wherever there is a demand, there is a supply. If you ask a wrong question you will find somebody to answer it -- because people are so anxious to advise, to answer, to prove themselves wise, wiser than you. They are just hankering for somebody to ask the question. Ask, "How to be natural? How to be normal?" and somebody will show you the way. But there is no way to be natural; all ways lead to unnaturalness.

Drop all the ways, don't try to be anything. Forget about becoming, and then what is left is natural. The way to the natural is negative.

That's why Buddha's emphasis is on VIA NEGATIVA. He never talks about positivity. He always says, "No, no. Neither this nor that: NETI NETI." Just go on dropping.

But man has become really so unnatural that his idea of nature is also unnatural. Not only has man become unnatural, even animals who live with man become unnatural. Your dog starts learning from you and becomes unnatural, becomes diplomatic, political. He is feeling angry at you: you are not allowing him to sit in the drawing room where he wants to sit, because guests are coming. He is feeling angry. If he is natural he will jump at you. But he is just waving his tail, showing great love for you. Now you have created a split in the poor dog's mind. He is trying to be very polite to you, and really he wants to hurt you.

I have heard:

The story is told of an old lady who rented a furnished villa for the summer, and along with the villa went a large dog. In the sitting room of the villa there was a very comfortable armchair. The old lady liked this chair better than any others in the house. She always headed right for it.

However, much to her regret, she nearly always found the chair occupied by the large dog. Being afraid of the dog, she never dared bid it harshly to get out of the chair. Instead, she would go to the window and call, "Cats!" Then the dog would rush to the window and bark, and the old lady would slip into the vacant chair.

One day, the dog entered the room and found the old lady in possession of the chair. He strolled over to the window and, looking out, appeared very much excited and set up a tremendous barking. The old lady rose and hastened to the window to see what was the matter, and the dog quietly climbed into the chair.

Even animals become cunning, clever, calculating. In zoos, where animals have to live with other animals and in a human space, they start going neurotic, become mad, even sometimes commit murder or suicide too. This never happens in the natural state; no animal species kills its own kind, never. But in a zoo it happens. No animal goes mad in the natural state, but in a zoo it happens.

Man has become very unnatural. Don't ask me how to be natural, just watch how you have become unnatural. Watch each act, each gesture, and see the unnaturalness of it. And whenever you see that it is unnatural, that this is not true, authentic -- that this is not coming

from your being, that you are only pretending, that you are being a hypocrite -- drop it!

Go on dropping. Slowly slowly you will see, all that was artificial has been dropped. Then suddenly one day nature is blooming in all its grandeur. You need not do anything for it -- nature is that which cannot be brought. The unnatural is that which HAS to be brought. The unnatural needs a positive way, the natural needs no positive way. Just not being unnatural is enough for nature to take possession of you.

And the last question

BELOVED OSHO, SINCE I HAVE BEEN HERE, ONE FEELING GETS STRONGER AND STRONGER -- THE ONLY THING THAT I REALLY WANT TO DO IS SIT ON YOUR LAP.

USHA, JUST FAR OUT! But please don't start doing it. I have fifty thousand sannyasins: just think of me too, otherwise I will be killed in a stampede. But the idea is great, just as an idea -- don't practise it.

The idea is symbolic: a great love is arising in you. It is good, it has to be so. Unless you are in deep love with me nothing is going to happen. Only through love, the transformation happens. And it is good that you have not projected it on me -- otherwise, that too happens...

Just the other day, I read in the latest issue of YOUTH TIMES a statement of an Indian film actress, Pratima Bedi. She says, "Rajneesh is sexy." Now, I really enjoyed it! She came to see me once; she must have been there for four or five minutes in front of me. She says I was trying to hypnotize her and I was very sexy and the vibe was sexual.

If the monkey looks into the mirror the monkey cannot see the angel looking out of the mirror. This Pratima Bedi is a wonder-woman! But let me explain to you what a wonder-woman is. I came to know about the wonder-woman through Mulla Nasruddin. One day he was saying, "My wife, Osho, is a wonder-woman." I know his wife, I said, "What do you mean?" because I have never seen such an ugly woman before. "Wonder-woman?"

He said, "Yes, wonder-woman -- because sometimes I wonder whether she is a woman or not."

And he also said, "There is only one word that can explain her: 'temperamental'." I said, "You puzzle me again -- what do you mean?"

He said, "She is fifty percent temper and fifty percent mental."

Now, this Pratima Bedi -- I cannot think of a more ugly duck. And she thinks I was being sexual with her. But something must have happened in her mind.

A mentally retarded man was accused of raping a young girl, so the police made him take part in an identity parade.

The poor victim was to be led into the room where she was supposed to pick out one of the ten men as her attacker, but as soon as she entered the room, the man pointed to her and said, "That's the one!"

It is good, Anand Usha, that you don't project it on me!

People go on projecting their minds. I am a mirror: you can see in me whatsoever you want to see. And when you see it, naturally you think it must belong to me. Nothing belongs to me. This man here, talking to you, sitting in front of you, is just empty. Nothing belongs to

me -- or, only nothing belongs to me.

You can see your faces, you can see your innermost instincts, you can see your unconscious, reflected in me. Remember always not to project it, otherwise that will be a misunderstanding. Your love is good: let this love go higher and higher -- because always, almost always, it starts with the body. Nothing is wrong with the body, but that is the very gross kind of love.

Be on your wings, move a little higher than the body, spread your wings in the sky. Leave the boundaries behind. Don't think that you would like to sit in my lap, think to meet me on higher altitudes -- because I am there! If I am here in the body I am here just for your sake, a little while more. This body is just an excuse to be with you. I am almost cut off from it, just hanging around it a little bit, because I know many are in great need. And I am waiting for them, and they are coming.

But search for me on higher altitudes, move with me as high as possible. Then more and more clear vision will be available to you. At the highest peak, meet with me and that will be the meeting with God himself.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #7

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ON THE SEA OF DEATH AND LIFE,
THE DIVER'S BOAT IS FREIGHTED
WITH "IS" AND "IS NOT".
BUT IF THE BOTTOM IS BROKEN THROUGH,
"IS AND "IS NOT" DISAPPEAR.

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
THE BODY CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
ONLY WHAT CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA
CAN BECOME THE BUDDHA.

AS LIGHTNING
WHICH DISAPPEARS LIKE DEW,
WHICH VANISHES LIKE A PHANTOM --
THUS THINK OF YOURSELF.

A MIND TO SEARCH ELSEWHERE
FOR THE BUDDHA
IS THE FOOLISHNESS
IN THE VERY CENTER OF FOOLISHNESS.

THE DEW ON THE LOTUS LEAF
UNDYED BY ITS COLOUR,
JUST AS IT IS,
IS THE REAL FORM OF BUDDHA.

An elderly woman came into a doctor's office, exclaiming, "Doctor, my stomach hurts!"

The doctor said, "But madam, I am a doctor of philosophy."

For a moment she forgot the pain, and then seemed puzzled. "Philosophy? What kind of disease is that?"

YES, PHILOSOPHY IS A DISEASE, and not an ordinary one either. It is not a common cold, it is cancer -- cancer of the soul. Once a person is lost in the jungle of philosophy he becomes more and more entangled in words, concepts, abstractions. And there is no end to it, one can go on and on for lives together.

Philosophy is all a mind game; mind perpetuates through it. And the truth can be known only when you are in a state of no-mind. So the philosopher never comes to know the truth. Unless philosophy is dropped utterly, in toto, one cannot know what truth is or what God is.

Philosophy thinks ABOUT God and hence goes on missing God. It goes on spinning and weaving theories around and around; it never hits the target. It moves in circles -- it creates one idea about God, and then that idea creates another idea... and ideas don't believe in birth control; they go on reproducing themselves.

Mind secretes philosophy, creates philosophy, lives through it. Without philosophy the mind cannot exist for even a single moment. The mind HAS to be a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian or a communist. The mind cannot remain for even a single moment in existence if it is not Hindu, not Mohammedan, not Jain, not Christian. If the mind has no philosophy to depend on, it dies out of starvation. If there are no props to support it, if a continuous nourishment is not given to it so that it can think more and more, the process stops. Philosophy keeps it going.

Buddhism is not a philosophy -- not at least in Buddha's being or in Ikkyu's being. Those who have realized have realized one thing absolutely, that truth happens in a non-philosophic state. Truth happens in a state of not-knowing, truth happens in innocence. Truth happens when there are no clouds of thoughts moving in your consciousness, when the sky is absolutely clear, when there is no abstraction, when you have no idea what God is or what God is not -- when you don't believe in God and you don't believe in no-God, when you are simply in a state of not-knowing. You don't claim any knowledge: that non-claiming consciousness begins to open up. All knowledge burdens and closes you.

And Zen is one of the medicines for coming out of the disease called philosophy. No other school has been able to devise such powerful medicines for coming out of the world of philosophy as Zen has done.

Buddha did not teach anything to believe in. He was not a teacher in that sense, because he did not teach. He was, on the contrary, an anti-teacher -- he took away all the teachings that people were carrying. Slowly slowly, he helped his disciples to become utterly nude, naked.

Philosophy is a beautiful dress that the mind clings to. Once philosophy is dropped, mind is ugly. No one would like it, it is nauseous. Then to drop the mind becomes very easy -- in fact to cling to it becomes impossible. One HAS to drop it; that dropping comes inevitably and necessarily, of its own accord.

What exactly is philosophy? It is a pretension of knowing, without knowing anything at all. It is thinking. Thinking always means the man is ignorant but is trying to make up something. Whenever you think, that simply shows you don't know. Either you know or you don't. How can you think? What can you think?

If I say, "Does God exist or not?" and you say to me, "I will think over it" what are you going to think over? Either you know or you don't -- it is just simple like that. What are you going to think about? And whatsoever you think will be your fabrication, will be a lie. Thinking consists of lies.

But one can prove to oneself that those lies are truths; one can argue for them. In fact truth needs no argument. Truth is self-evident; only lies need arguments -- they are not self-evident, they need witnesses. A truth is simply truth; unarguably it is there.

That's why the greatest declarations of truth are absolutely without any argument. In the Old Testament there is no argument for God. It simply states: God is. No argument is given, no proofs are contrived. The Upanishads simply declare; they are declarations, announcements to the world at large, but with no argumentation behind them. They are not syllogisms, just poetic assertions. Somebody has known, and he declares. If you ask him, "What is the proof?" he says, "You can also know."

When Vivekananda reached Ramakrishna, he asked this question: "Can you prove to me that God exists?" And Ramakrishna said, "I cannot prove that God exists, but I can make you KNOW. Are you ready? This very moment!"

Vivekananda was shaken to his very roots. The man was standing there and asking, "Are you ready? THIS very moment I can show God to you! but there is no proof." Vivekananda had not expected this. He had seen many other philosophers before; he was expecting something like that Ramakrishna would give a few proofs, would argue for God, would destroy the proofs that say God does not exist. He had never come across a man of real knowledge; this was the first time.

His throat went dry, he could not utter a single word, he was simply dumb. For a moment everything stopped. And Ramakrishna touched his chest with his feet and he fell into deep ecstasy. When he came back he was trembling. What he had seen was impossible to believe -- he had fallen out of the mind for a moment. That touch of Ramakrishna's feet: for a moment he had fallen out of the mind.

Just the same happened last night. Sarjano was there -- and Vivekananda must have been in exactly the same situation as Sarjano was last night -- and I told him to hold my feet in his hands for a moment, and it happened. For a moment he slipped out of the mind.

The impact of no-mind, if you are ready, can take you into a state of no-mind. And there is knowing. Knowing is not through the mind, it is always through the no-mind; it is not through the knower, it is only when the knower is not.

And philosophy goes on accepting the knower and goes on trying to make some toys -- theories, doctrines to believe in -- so that one can deceive oneself. And one can go on and on, for ever and for ever.

I have heard:

An ignoramus managed to get himself invited to a party attended by world-renowned scientists. Among them was Albert Einstein. The illiterate guest immediately made a nuisance of himself by dogging the illustrious physicist's heels and offering what he thought were very profound observations.

"Tell me, Doctor Einstein," asked the pest, "what, in your opinion, is the difference between time and eternity?"

"Sir," answered Einstein, "if I took the time to explain the difference, it would take an eternity!"

In fact Einstein is being very mild, mellow, generous. Even in an eternity, the difference cannot be explained. Even through an eternity, if you go on discussing "What is time?" and "What is eternity?" you are not going to come to any conclusion whatsoever.

Five thousand years of philosophy, and not a single conclusion in the hands. Yes, not a single conclusion. No two philosophers agree; they only agree to disagree. They are constantly arguing against each other. There is no possibility of agreement, because two lies cannot agree. And two truths agree so deeply that they become one truth -- then they are not two, the agreement is so total. That's why it is said that there is only one truth. There cannot be many, because the agreement is so infinite and so total and so whole that whenever there are two truths they immediately jump into one and become one flame.

All Buddhas agree. But on what? -- that cannot be said. If you say it, it becomes part of philosophy. It remains unsaid, but it can be experienced.

Because philosophy is a pretension, it believes in great words. It believes in phrase-mongering -- it creates, fabricates, great words that people can be impressed by.

Art Critic 1: "I think the neo-plasticism of the abstract design proves the mystical, metaphysical and non-humanistic approach to the objective concept of abstraction."

Art Critic 2: "Yes, you have a point there! In fact, it's obvious even from a casual glance that this painting was created by paranoiac-critical activity, brought about by spontaneous dynamic sensations, sometimes made by somnambulistically inclined campanologists, who create a picture of transcendental non-curvilinear and curvilinear objects expressing subjective feelings in a cubistic manner."

Art Critic 3: "I fully agree with you both -- it's a rubbishy painting!"

Philosophy goes on creating such bombastic words; it is never simple, it cannot be. It cannot afford to be simple because if it is simple you will see that it is a lie. It has to be very roundabout, indirect, zig-zag -- never straight, never to the point. Its whole effort is not to come to the point: just go on in every direction, but never come home. And create such bombastic words that you can impress idiots -- only idiots are impressed by those bombastic words.

Truth is simple. Very simple -- so simple that a child can understand it. In fact, so simple that only a child can understand it. Unless you become a child again you will not be able to understand it. It is an experience, not speculation.

But once you get addicted to great words it is very very difficult to bring you down to the earth. Those big words give great fulfillment to your ego. Once a person's mind starts enjoying great words and great ideas and complicated theories, it is very difficult for him to descend to the earth. He flies in the skies, he remains in the high towers of his mind; he never

comes to the fact, to the truth. Because truth is simple -- and what will happen to his philosophy?

Samantha was a six-year-old who liked to exaggerate almost everything she saw or did. One day she was looking out of the window when she called to her mother, "Mummy, Mummy! Come quickly! There's a lion walking on the road outside our house!"

Samantha's mother looked out of the window but could only see a small ginger cat. "Samantha! You're lying again!" she scolded. "Go upstairs to your room immediately and pray to God for forgiveness for being such a naughty little girl, and beg him to stop you from telling so many lies."

Samantha ran up to her room sobbing. A short time later she came down to her mother and said, "I've prayed to God like you said, Mummy. And he said that he, too, thought the ginger cat looked rather like a lion."

Once you have started enjoying exaggerations, big words, bombastic theories, it will be difficult for you. You will try to collect every kind of proof to convince yourself and others that you are on the right track. Once the illusion that you know happens to you -- and that is the illusion philosophy gives, that you know -- then it is very hard to drop that illusion, because then you become ignorant again.

That is one of the most difficult things for you in being with me. When you come, you come with knowledge. And the whole effort here is to help you drop that knowledge. You come here to acquire a little MORE knowledge, not to drop that which you have. You come to accumulate a little more; you come to gather a few more arguments for that which you already believe. And I am telling you to drop all that you know -- because you don't really know; it is a false hallucination. You have created the idea that you know. Yes, it hurts to drop it, because then you again become ignorant. And it has taken your whole life to acquire little bits of knowledge from here and there -- from the school, the college, the university and the priest and the books -- you have been studying and you have been searching and with great effort you have accumulated a little bit of knowledge. And you feel that you may not know the absolute truth but you know enough to move towards truth.

When you come to me you are shocked -- because I am telling you again and again that all that you know is just bullshit: simply drop it! Your God is just a fiction, your prayer is just your fear, your love is just your pretension. You are pseudo, root and all; you are just a falsity.

Drop all this! And become ignorant again, because from that ignorance you can grow. the techniques of Buddhist meditation are nothing but techniques, to help you to get out of the knowledge trip. The whole trip is just garbage.

And remember, knowledge and knowing are not synonymous. Knowing is existential, knowledge is just intellectual. Knowing is out of intelligence, knowledge is just memory -- it needs no intelligence. In fact, to avoid intelligence people become addicted to knowledge -- it is a cheap thing to become knowledgeable. And then they get excited about useless things.

Some time, years ago, Art Buchwald told the story in the New York HERALD TRIBUNE of a Hollywood producer whose hobby it was to collect rare books. He loved his avocation so much that he spoke about it constantly, boring his friends who were tired of hearing about it. One day, they decided to play a joke on him. They hired a bit actor and brought him to lunch. When, inevitably, the subject came up, the actor said he'd had an old

German Bible around the house for years, but it smelled so bad he finally gave it away to an aunt in Santa Barbara.

"Who printed it?" the rare-book collector asked.

"I don't know... 'Guten' something," the bit actor said.

The producer dropped his fork. "Not Gutenberg?" The actor said he believed that was the name. The producer jumped up from the table. "Let's go!" he screamed. "We'll hire a plane!"

"Go where?" asked the actor.

"To get the Bible, man! Don't you realize you have one of the first books ever printed? It's worth three hundred thousand dollars!"

The actor stood up excitedly. Then suddenly he sat down again. "It can't be worth anything," he said.

"Why not?" asked the hysterical producer.

"Because," the actor replied, "somebody named Martin Luther scribbled all over it."

Now the producer must have gone mad, must have fallen into a swoon! People get excited about trivia, and they think they are doing great work. All your hobbies, all your search, all your so-called spiritual work, can be reduced to a single thing: decoration for the ego. And the ego is the only barrier that is preventing you from knowing that which is.

These sutras of Ikkyu are very pragmatic. That is the climate of Buddha. Buddha is a very practical man -- that's why he is non-philosophic. He is a pragmatist, he wants the facts and the truth. And he wants to go directly -- he does not want to go here and there and round and round. He wants to beat the bush, not around it.

The first sutra:

ON THE SEA OF DEATH AND LIFE,
THE DIVER'S BOAT IS FREIGHTED
WITH "IS" AND "IS NOT".
BUT IF THE BOTTOM IS BROKEN THROUGH,
"IS AND "IS NOT" DISAPPEAR.

THAT'S THE WAY TO LET PHILOSOPHY DROP. What is philosophy? It is a constant fight between two camps -- the camp who believes in "Is" and the camp who believes in "Is not". One says "God is," another says "God is not." One says this, and the other says exactly the opposite. One proposes the thesis and another immediately proposes the antithesis. This game between thesis and antithesis is what is called philosophy.

The whole game can be reduced to a simple formula: "Is/Is not." The theist says "IS", the atheist says "Is not." One says the soul exists, the other says there is no soul. One says life has a goal, the other says there is no goal. One says "The soul is immortal," the other says "Nonsense." And this has been continuing down the ages, through the ages. And with no conclusion.

Buddha says: The whole game is futile. For certain basic reasons, the game is futile. Life in its very structure is dialectics, it depends on the polar opposites -- thesis, antithesis. Everything automatically turns into its opposite: birth turns into death, day turns into night, love turns into hate, hope turns into despair. And vice-versa: despair again turns into hope, and night again turns into day, and hate again turns into love, and death again turns into birth. The whole wheel consists of the polar opposites.

Buddha says: To choose between these poles is to be wrong. See the whole of it; don't say

"Is" or "Is not". Don't become part of a camp, don't become part of a school or a doctrine -- because all doctrines are partial and each doctrine is trying to prove that this is the whole. This is the trap of philosophy.

Naturally, when you say "God is light," how can you believe somebody saying "God is darkness"? Obviously he is denying you; you are at daggers with each other.

But Buddha says: Just see -- light turns into darkness every day, darkness turns into light every day. So you are not really contradicting each other, you are complementing.

Polar opposites are not opposites really but complementaries. So there is no way to choose -- and if you choose you will be in difficulties...

You choose love and then love changes into hate and anger. And then you are in a difficulty, because you were thinking love would remain love for ever. You cannot cling to love for ever; in your very choice you have chosen hate too. Love/hate is one relationship. In fact we should drop 'love' and 'hate' as two words, we should make one word: 'lovehate'. We should drop 'day' and 'night' as two words, we should make one word: 'daynight'. 'Birthdeath'. That will be truer, closer to reality -- our division is false.

When you are in love you think, "Now I will love for ever and for ever" -- and you have forgotten how life functions. By the evening the love is gone and the anger is arising -- is BOUND to arise; you cannot do otherwise. In choosing love you have chosen hate too; that is the other aspect of the same coin. But now you are in misery, you think you are betraying. You think, "How is it happening? Why is it happening? Why to me? Why can I not love for ever? Why can my lover not love me for ever? In the morning he was so much interested in me, and now he wants to be alone, left alone. What has happened? Where did I go wrong?"

Nobody has been wrong, nothing has happened, all is happening as it should. And soon this anger will go and you will be hugging each other again and love will be there -- and you will again forget.

To understand life, this is one of the very fundamentals to see, that each thing implies its opposite and each thing automatically turns into its opposite. If you don't want any enemies then don't make friends -- make a friend, and you have started making an enemy. Only friends can become enemies. If you want never to be unhappy then don't seek happiness -- if you seek happiness you are seeking unhappiness too. Unhappiness comes in the bargain, it is part of the game of happiness, happiness cannot exist without it.

Life exists amidst death.

This is one of the greatest insights of Buddha. So he says: There is no point in choosing. Somebody says God is, and somebody says God is not -- they are simply choosing one aspect of reality. God is totality: "Is" plus "Is not". So if you ask Buddha, "What do you say about God?" he will say, "What can I say? If I say 'Is' I am wrong. If I say 'Is not' I am wrong. If I say he is both, I puzzle you -- then you say that I am confusing you. So it will be better if I keep quiet. I will not say a single thing; I will be silent and I will also teach you silence. When you want to know what God is, become silent. Don't choose this way or that."

Philosophy is a choice. When you say "I am a Hindu" you have chosen -- in that, you are saying "I am not a Mohammedan." And God is a Hindu, is a Mohammedan, is a Christian, is a Jain, is a communist, and all, and none.

Why does everything turn into its opposite? Nobody wants it to be so; still it turns. It is the way of existence, Tao, Dhamma; it is how things move. Just as fire burns, it is fire's nature, so is this the nature of existence, that it automatically turns into its opposite. Why does it turn into its opposite? Because the opposite is only opposite seen from the surface. Seen from the deep core of reality it is not opposite but complementary.

Just think of a world where no hate exists -- do you think there will be love? That's what philosophy will say. There are philosophers of love, philosophers of peace, who say if there is no war in the world there will be peace. And it looks so logical, so mathematical, so appealing -- that if there is no war there will certainly be peace; when war disappears there will be all peace and peace and peace. That is not true.

Listen to Buddha. Buddha says: War and peace are together. If war disappears, peace will disappear automatically -- there will be neither war nor peace. How will you know that this is peace? You will forget all about peace.

Just think, if death disappears from the world will you be able to know that you are alive? Impossible. How will you know that you are alive? Death is needed to define life. War is needed to define peace, enmity is needed to define friendship, and hate is needed to define love. So they are not separate. They define each other, they depend on each other -- if one disappears, the other is bound to disappear.

Philosophy chooses. There are pacifist philosophies who think there should be no war, only peace -- that then there will be only peace. That's what Bertrand Russell was saying. It is not possible. Krishna is far closer to truth when he says that sometimes there is peace and sometimes there is war. Both exist together.

Our minds choose logically; logic never allows the opposite. Existence **DEPENDS** on the opposite. Hence, logic and existence never meet. And philosophy is a logical endeavour. The more logical you are, the less is the possibility to know what the truth is.

Buddha says: This is the dilemma, the predicament of human mind -- to be or not to be. But both are together; you cannot decide. If you decide to be, you have also decided not to be, and vice-versa. No choice seems to be the right choice; choose, and you always choose something wrong. Only choicelessness is right. Don't choose, let things be as they are. When it is war, let it be. When it is peace, let it be. When it is love, let it be; when it is not love, let it be. You remain aloof, watching, a witness.

Just see that understanding: you are just a witness, and things turn into their opposites on their own. Peaks are followed by valleys, highs are followed by lows, and so on and so forth. There is nothing you can do. If you don't choose, the doer disappears, starts evaporating. Then you can only be conscious of whatsoever is the case. This is "breaking through the bottom".

ON THE SEA OF DEATH AND LIFE,
THE DIVER'S BOAT IS FREIGHTED
WITH "IS" AND "IS NOT".
BUT IF THE BOTTOM IS BROKEN THROUGH,
"IS AND "IS NOT" DISAPPEAR.

CHOICELESSNESS IS THE WAY to get out of all these clings. Choicelessness is the way out of this world. Mind always chooses.
I have heard:

Mulla Nasruddin was walking with his son along a country road behind their donkey, who was contentedly nibbling the grass along the way. A man, seeing Mulla and his son walking and sweating profusely, remarked, "Look how foolish they are, walking instead of riding."

Hearing this remark, Mulla and his son climbed on the donkey and rode through the next village where they heard an old man exclaim, "They ought to be ashamed, making the poor

donkey carry two riders."

Mulla dismounted and walked while his son rode the donkey to the next village. There, Mulla heard this comment: "Poor old man. That boy ought to be ashamed, making his father walk."

Then Mulla got on the donkey, while his son dismounted and walked for some distance.

Finally, another villager observed, "Look at that old man riding, while his son has to walk. How cruel!"

Mulla rubbed his beard, shook his head, and said to himself, "You cannot please all of the people any of the time."

What was happening in this story? It is one of the most famous Sufi stories -- what was happening? Mulla was doing one thing, people were suggesting the antithesis. And, seeing the point, he chose the antithesis. Then somebody suggested the antithesis of the antithesis, and so on and so forth -- he was always choosing and choosing.

This is how people are moving; this is the way of the mind. You always choose. You choose one thing, and sooner or later from somewhere the suggestion will come: choose the other -- because you become tired of that which you have chosen, and the other is as significant as this. And when you are tired of one thing, naturally you start thinking of the opposite.

You have been fasting too much, then naturally you start thinking of food. When you are eating too much you start thinking of fasting. When you have been running after money too much, one day you decide to run from the world, the world of money and all, and go to the Himalayas. When you reach the Himalayas, by the time you reach there and sit in your cave, you have not even settled there and you start thinking of the world and money and all. You become afraid, sitting in the cave, of what will happen to you -- tomorrow how are you going to get your food now you have no money at all? And in the night you become afraid, alone in the forest with no protection.

Now you see the point, what was beautiful in the house: you were protected and there was a shelter and safety. Now, when you were in the house you never thought about the protection and the safety; it was accepted, it was taken for granted. You were thinking of other things -- you were thinking that you were almost closed in a prison, you were thinking of the open skies and the sunlit peaks and the beautiful forests, and the silence, the primordial silence of the Himalayas, and the snowcapped peaks and that eternal beauty. You were thinking of these things.

And when you are sitting amidst that eternal beauty you will forget about it. You perceive only that which you don't have; that which you have disappears from your perception. Perception happens only when something new happens. You see only the new. The mind tends not to see the old -- what is the point? you have seen it already. Now for the first time you start thinking of the house and the beauty of it. There was no fear there. Now here there is more and more fear, you cannot sleep at night. Although the primordial silence is there, the silence is too much; it is heavy, you cannot tolerate it. It creates fear in you.

Whenever you come across primordial silence you start feeling very afraid, because you have lived in the world of language; you have become accustomed to it. Have you not seen this restlessness? When you meet a person in the train, in the bus, a stranger, you start feeling restless, he starts feeling restless -- unless you become introduced to each other, unless you bring language in. The silence hurts both. You fidget, he fidgets, and finally somebody has to break the ice. That ice is silence. Somebody has to ask, "Where are you going?" -- somebody

has to bring language in. Once language comes in, communication happens. Then you are part of a human world.

Have you not heard the famous Zen story?

Four persons decided to go into silence for one week. A few hours passed, then one said, "I wonder whether I have put the fire out in my house or left it on."

The other says, "You fool, you have spoken! And we had decided not to speak."

The third said, "What do you think you are doing? You have spoken too!"

And the fourth said, "I am the only one who has not spoken yet."

It is difficult to be silent. Language is in our blood, our bones, our marrow. Man lives in a sea of language.

Don't you see it happening continuously? The people who are very very articulate become very important. The man who can use language cleverly becomes a leader, a great leader of men -- and all his skill may be just linguistic. A man who is not very efficient at language remains a third-rate man, because this society lives through language.

It is said of Josef Stalin that he always used to ask his cronies whenever some new name would bubble up in the talks -- somebody, some author, some poet, some philosopher, some thinker -- he would always ask the same question: "Is he a genius?" And if the answer was yes, then the genius would disappear within days. He would not be found any more; he would be killed. Why? Why was Stalin so much afraid of a genius? Because these people are dangerous. 'Genius' means one who is very very clever with language -- who can write beautifully, who can speak beautifully, who is articulate. These are the dangerous people. They create rebellions, revolutions; they become leaders of men.

If the answer was no, that he was not a genius, just a second-rate author or a poet, then there was no problem.

Man lives through language. And you will only know that your language is so essential to you when you have moved to the Himalayas -- never before it. Here, it is taken for granted. Here, sometimes sitting in your room, you feel very good when you are alone -- so silent. But that too is because there is so much noise all around; in contrast it is beautiful. If you go to the Himalayas, within a few days you will become frightened, because there is no contrast any more.

It is good to be silent for a few hours, because it gives you relaxation from language. But then again you are ready to talk, to communicate.

People living in the world think of the beauties of those who have renounced and gone to the monasteries. And people living in the monasteries simply feel that they have missed this chance to live -- life is there outside where people are enjoying, rejoicing, indulging, eating, loving; real life is there. Monks become sad and think constantly of the world. This is one of the basic things to see about the mind.

Buddha says: Once you choose one thing, sooner or later you will have to choose the opposite. You will become tired of it, you will start forgetting about it, you will not perceive it any more -- and you will start thinking of the beauties of the opposite. And each thing that you choose is only a part, it is never the whole. If it is the whole, there is no need to choose. Choice is of the part, can only be of the part. You cannot choose the whole, because then there is no point in choosing.

If you say, "I choose life, I choose death" then what you are saying is, "I don't care a bit -- whether it is life or death, it is all the same to me. I don't choose."

Choicelessness brings you to the whole. Choice is always of the part, necessarily so. And then one person goes from one choice to another, becomes a driftwood -- from this bank to another bank, from that bank to this bank. This is how you have been moving, down the ages, for so many lives.

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JUMP! exactly into the middle, through the middle. Don't choose. Remain alert and don't choose. Let life happen with no choice on your part, as if you are just sitting in a movie: it does not depend on your choice. The movie is moving, the pictures are coming and going, the story is unfolding; it doesn't depend on your choice.

But even seeing a film you start choosing. You start thinking, "If this man had a little better character, if this man was a little more moral" -- you have started choosing. And you know that it doesn't depend on your choice. It is already there, it is going to happen as it is going to happen, you can just relax and enjoy whatsoever is happening.

Yes -- by not choosing, the film will not stop, it will continue. But it will have no more effect on you. You will remain undistracted, undisturbed; you will remain centered.

That's the beauty of choicelessness. Krishnamurti is right when he again and again emphasizes choicelessness. That is also the taste of Zen.

Zen has created many methods to break through the bottom, so that you can jump out of choice, duality, opposites. The koan is one of the most important methods. The master gives a certain puzzle, it is no ordinary puzzle, to the disciple to meditate upon. Its extraordinariness is that it cannot be solved. It has been made with every care so that the mind cannot supply any answer to it; it is unanswerable.

For example "the sound of one hand clapping": the disciple is to meditate upon the sound of one hand clapping. Now, there can be no sound, it is logically impossible -- two hands will be needed. Sound cannot be there unless two things collide -- only then can sound be created. One hand cannot create sound; that is impossible. Now, that has to be meditated upon.

The disciple knows it is impossible, the master knows it is impossible. Day in, day out, the disciple will meditate on the sound of one hand. And he knows it is impossible but the master says, "Go on meditating. Because it is impossible, it is important." He goes on meditating, meditating; he drives himself almost crazy.

Naturally, if you think about it, you will slowly slowly become crazy. Your mind will say, "What are you doing? There can be NO sound!" But the master says, "Go on meditating, you have to find it out. There is a sound," the master says, "which is not created by two hands. Go and find it out."

Sometimes months pass and sometimes years. But one day the mind comes to its ultimate peak. The mind starts really going crazy -- it spins and spins, round and round it goes and moves, and it cannot produce any answer. It comes to its ultimate capacity. From that capacity, the breakdown and the breakthrough.

Suddenly all is silence. The question has disappeared, the questioner has disappeared, the mind is no more there, no thought is there, all is utter silence.

That is the sound of one hand clapping.

This is satori. This is "breaking through the bottom." Then there is no "Is" and no "Is not". Then you cannot say "God is" and you cannot say "God is not". Then the whole is, then the one is -- undivided. This whole is God, or nirvana or Tao.

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA...

Now, this is a koan:

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
THE BODY CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
ONLY WHAT CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA
CAN BECOME THE BUDDHA.

NOW THE WHOLE NONSENSE OF IT! But Zen uses nonsense in a very sensible way. It has sense in its nonsense. Now, you cannot make anything out of this statement:

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
THE BODY CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
ONLY WHAT CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA
CAN BECOME THE BUDDHA.

That's why people like Arthur Koestler think that Zen is all nonsense. On the surface, yes. At the deepest core, the most sensible thing that has ever happened on this earth. It is the sense of nonsense! These are not philosophical statements -- that's where Arthur Koestler goes on missing. These are not philosophical statements, these are devices. These are devices to drive you so crazy that out of the sheer craziness of it the mind comes to a halt. How long can you go on repeating this sutra?

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
THE BODY CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
ONLY WHAT CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA
CAN BECOME THE BUDDHA.

How long? This has to be meditated upon, it is a koan. The master will say, "Find out the meaning of it." Now, there is no meaning; nobody can find out the meaning! But you TRY to find out the meaning -- and you will not be able to find it out, but the very effort will lead you to a certain state.

I have heard, it happened: A woman was getting very fat. She went to the doctor, the doctor gave her a bottle of beautiful red pills and told her, "Within a month, at least fifteen pounds' weight will disappear. And within a year, slowly slowly, you will become normal."

She was very happy, she went home. She had two daughters, one and seven years old -- they liked the bottle and the red pills so much that they swallowed all the pills between themselves. Now the woman was very much afraid. She phoned the doctor, the doctor said, "Don't be worried. For a few days the girls will go crazy; they will not be able to sleep at all, they will remain wide awake. And they will have great energy and they will remain restless for a few days; they will jump and scream and rush about and run all around the house. But nothing really harmful -- within seven days they will cool down. So don't be worried."

But those seven days were hell. The girls wouldn't sleep at all; the whole night they would shout and scream and jump. And they had so much energy, the woman could not control them. They drove the woman crazy. In seven days THEY cooled down, but the woman was just completely broken. But one thing happened: she lost fifteen pounds of weight.

Now, that is a totally different thing -- not a logical conclusion, it may not have happened through the pills themselves, but that's what really happened. And the doctor had said, "In one month you will lose fifteen pounds." She lost it in one week.

This is what a koan is. You will not get to the answer but something else will happen. That is the sense of the nonsense. You will be thinking of the meaning and no meaning will be coming -- because there is none, so how can it come?

Arthur Koestler is right that it is a nonsense statement. And yet he has missed the whole point. It is a nonsense statement, but trying to make sense out of it you will drive your mind crazy. You will become so restless, so disturbed, so stirred, that you will reach the climax. You will start boiling at a hundred degrees -- and at that point the evaporation happens. That is a by-product.

Suddenly the whole mind is gone, and all its problems and all its philosophy and all its answers and questions. All, root and all, has simply disappeared. You simply look around and there is no mind! You look out, and it is not there. You look in, and it is not there. You search everywhere, and it is not there: you cannot find yourself.

And this is the moment of satori, when you cannot find yourself. When you cannot find yourself, you have found it. Now the ego is not there, there is great silence.

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
THE BODY CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA...

Obviously -- because the mind is one half and the body is the other half. And both have been believed in. There are many religions which believe in the mind -- the majority of religions believe in the mind and are against the body. They all teach anti-body practices. Christianity is anti-body, Jainism is anti-body. They teach you how to destroy your body deliberately, they teach you how to destroy all the energy that the body has, because that is your enemy: if you can destroy the body you will know God or you will know truth or whatsoever it is. They live in the mind, they have chosen the mind.

There are religions which have chosen the body -- very few, and they are not called religions either. The Charvakas in India: they were as religious as Christians and Jains, but their religion consists of the body. That's why the majority of religions will call them non-religious, anti-religious. They are not. Their religion is totally different, the polar opposite they believe in the body. They say there is no mind, no soul, that is all nonsense. Just live your body: eat, drink, and be merry. The religion of Epicurus is of the body.

But both are wrong according to Ikkyu, according to Buddha, according to me too. Both are wrong -- because man is a whole, an organic whole: mind and body are together. In fact man is not mind and body, but mindbody. The body is just the visible part of the mind, and the mind is the invisible part of the body. They are one energy.

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA...

True, it cannot. Against the body, the mind cannot become the Buddha.

THE BODY CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA...

Against the mind, the body cannot become the Buddha. If you believe in the first, you will become spiritualists. If you believe in the second, you will become materialists. But in either way you will miss real religion.

ONLY WHAT CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA
CAN BECOME THE BUDDHA.

And now the strange statement.

THE MIND CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA;
THE BODY CANNOT BECOME THE BUDDHA...

Both cannot become Buddha separately, taken apart. But both together CAN become the Buddha. In fact both together are ALREADY the Buddha.

AS LIGHTNING
WHICH DISAPPEARS LIKE DEW,
WHICH VANISHES LIKE A PHANTOM --
THUS THINK OF YOURSELF.

This is again another meditation.

AS LIGHTNING
WHICH DISAPPEARS LIKE DEW,
WHICH VANISHES LIKE A PHANTOM --
THUS THINK OF YOURSELF.

ALL IS MOMENTARY. Only for the moment, like the dew in the morning, will the sun rise, and then it will disappear. Or the lightning in the clouds -- you have not even seen it, and it is gone. All is momentary; nothing abides, everything comes and disappears. Not only that -- everything disappears and turns into its opposite.

Seeing this, there is nothing to cling to; thinking this, one becomes unattached. One starts being in a kind of let-go, one allows whatsoever happens. One has no obsession that it should be so, one has no claim on existence. One simply trusts and flows with existence -- wherever it takes one and whatsoever is happening or is going to happen. One has no predetermined goal.

AS LIGHTNING
WHICH DISAPPEARS LIKE DEW,
WHICH VANISHES LIKE A PHANTOM --
THUS THINK OF YOURSELF.

A MIND TO SEARCH ELSEWHERE
FOR THE BUDDHA,
IS THE FOOLISHNESS
IN THE VERY CENTER OF FOOLISHNESS.

And this is the greatest foolishness, to search for Buddha, because you are it already. Again and again this has to be repeated -- this is the greatest statement, the most potential. Some day you may hear it, some day it may strike you, some day it may just penetrate your heart like an arrow -- hot. And in that very moment you will be transformed. Hence it has to be repeated again and again.

A MIND TO SEARCH ELSEWHERE
FOR THE BUDDHA, IS THE FOOLISHNESS
IN THE VERY CENTER OF FOOLISHNESS.

The greatest foolishness is one. All other foolishnesses arise out of it, it is the mother of all other foolishnesses. What is that? To search for Buddha. You will never find Buddha anywhere, because he is already you. If you search for him you will miss. The seeker is never going to find -- the finders are those who stop seeking.

Again, there are two parties, two philosophies. Some say "Seek outside." There are religions which say, "God is there above in heaven, outside you. Worship God: create a temple, make a statue, an image, an ikon. Learn the right prayer and the right form of ritual, and serve God, and you will find him somewhere outside." This is one kind of religion, which searches outside -- Hinduism, Christianity, Mohammedanism.

There is another kind of religion that searches within. Jainism: it says, "Look within. God is not outside. Your self is the supreme self, God resides in you. So go in, but still search." A few search outside, a few search inside.

Zen says: Don't search at all! Searching out, searching in, there is no difference. To the extent that we know all is dream, to that extent we become unattached to whatsoever happens -- to things and to the self. The more you become detached towards things and towards the self, you start losing the idea of the inside and the outside. That division is again the same duality -- in, out. There is nothing in, nothing out, all is one. Our mistake is to look for truth outside OR inside. The great mistake is to LOOK at all. Then what to do?

The Zen formula is simple: non-doing, WU-WEI. Sitting silently doing nothing -- neither looking out nor looking in, not looking for anything at all, just being yourself -- and in that moment, Buddha is known. Buddha is your very being. 'Buddha' in Buddhism means exactly what 'God' means in other religions.

THE DEW ON THE LOTUS LEAF
UNDYED BY ITS COLOUR,
JUST AS IT IS,
IS THE REAL FORM OF BUDDHA.

AND A GREAT REBELLIOUS STATEMENT, to be remembered always. Somehow, deep inside, the idea persists in you that Buddha is somebody special -- that when you become a Buddha you will be somebody extraordinary. That is again the old seeker's mind which cannot believe in that which is, but always hankers for that which is not. Listen to this statement:

THE DEW ON THE LOTUS LEAF
UNDYED BY ITS COLOUR,
JUST AS IT IS,

IS THE REAL FORM OF BUDDHA.

Be awake! And listen! Just as you are -- JUST AS YOU ARE, I repeat -- you are the Buddha. Nothing has to be added to you, nothing has to be taken away from you. Just as you are, exactly as you are, in your utter ordinariness, you are Buddha.

The day you recognize this you will be surprised -- you will start laughing. How ridiculous has been the whole search, and how ridiculous have been your problems! Listen to these two stories:

A monk once asked a Zen master, "Does a dog have the Buddha nature?"
He replied, "Yes, it does."

The monk then asked, "Do you have the Buddha nature?"
He replied, "No, I don't."

The monk then said, "But I thought everybody has the Buddha nature!"

The master replied, "Yes, but I am not everybody! In fact I am nobody -- so how can I have the Buddha nature?"

He HAS the Buddha nature! This is the way Zen people express themselves, in puzzles. But he has made the point very clear. In your nobodiness, or in your ordinariness... And the ordinariness has to be such that you don't even claim that you are a Buddha. If you claim, you are not. That's why he says, "Yes, but I am not everybody. In fact I am nobody -- how can I be a Buddha?"

When one knows, one does not claim.

Another story:

A Zen master was worshipping at a statue of the Buddha. A novice came by and asked, "Why do you worship the Buddha? I thought Zen teaches us not to. Do not some Zen masters spit at the Buddha?"

The master replied, "Some spit at the Buddha and some worship the Buddha. I prefer the other."

But it is all the same. Life continues as it is. Some worship the Buddha, some spit on the Buddha, life continues as it is.

The man of Zen has no choice, only preferences -- and make clear to yourself the difference between a choice and a preference. A choice says "I am very serious about it." A choice says "This way I would like to live, the other way I would not like to live at all. This is the way to live; that way is worthless."

A preference simply says "I like this, but if it doesn't happen then the other is also good." There is no seriousness involved in it. Naturally, a Zen master also has preferences. When he sleeps he does not sleep on thorns, he sleeps on his bed. This is a preference, not a choice -- if he HAS to sleep on the thorns he will sleep there too. If the bed is not available and sleep is coming on, he will sleep on the thorns too. But again this is not a choice; just in that circumstance it is the only possible thing to do.

He eats food, he does not eat stones -- that is a preference, not a choice. Remember, a Zen master also walks and goes through the door, not through the wall. That is just a preference. That's what this master is saying: "Yes, some spit at the Buddha and some worship the Buddha. I prefer worship."

But he is not serious about it. A Christian cannot be so easy about it -- if somebody spits on Christ he will be mad, he will kill the man! He will not be able to tolerate this, although Christianity goes on talking about tolerance and love and forgiving the enemy. But he will not forgive THIS enemy, he will kill this enemy.

If you spit on the Buddha and a Zen master is worshipping, he will just look at you and think, "He prefers spitting, I prefer worship." There is no choice involved, but a great detachment. See the point, it is of immense value. Preference is okay, choice is not good.

And when it is said "Become choiceless" a few foolish people start thinking that they can't prefer now -- because they think preference is choice. They start thinking that now they cannot prefer.

In India it has happened: there are mahatmas in India, saints -- very well-known, worshipped by thousands -- whose whole prestige is because they don't prefer. If they are eating and you just sit in front of them and piss there, it's okay. Or they may be just sitting in dirt -- it's okay, because they think this is choicelessness. Because of this idea, India has become so dirty. If mahatmas are doing such great things, then followers, if not THAT great, also follow a little bit -- they also should not choose. India has become so poor.

You need not make this mistake. If there is a possibility to be rich, prefer being rich! don't prefer being poor. But remember that this is a preference, not a choice. If riches one day disappear -- because all is fleeting, THE DEW ON THE LOTUS LEAF, then it is perfectly okay, then be poor. Don't choose poverty, don't choose richness. But preference is perfectly good and sane.

If you can be healthy, prefer to be healthy. If you cannot be, then it is okay, then accept your illness. But I am not saying choose illness.

That calamity has happened in this country. For at least four or five thousand years, this country has lived in such a nonsensical philosophy: "Don't choose." That's why this country remained poor. "Don't even prefer." So whatsoever is, is okay. People have been dying and starving, people are ugly, people are ill, their life is a dog's life -- but they go on. They have lost the energy to live, to change, to transform themselves.

Religion became very poisonous in India. This should not be repeated! I have lived in poverty, I have lived in richness. And to be frank with you, richness is better. So is health, so are all the good things of life -- but this is just a preference.

Preference simply means you are not very serious about it. If playfully it is possible, good. You are not dead set for it, that if it doesn't happen you will commit suicide, that if you are not the richest man in the world then you would like not to live at all -- that is foolishness.

Zen people don't choose -- they don't choose the world, they don't choose renunciation of the world. But they have lived in the world; they prefer. They say, "This seems to be more natural." They live like ordinary people, just as you live. But they live with an extraordinary intelligence, they live with great awareness.

As choice disappears more and more and preference takes its place, you become more and more intelligent, more alert, more conscious. A lucidity, a grace, arises in your being.

THE DEW ON THE LOTUS LEAF
UNDYED BY ITS COLOUR...

Ikkyu is saying: Be the dew on the lotus leaf. Although from the outside the dew will look coloured by the lotus leaf -- if the lotus leaf is green the dewdrop will look green, will look emerald -- yet it is not coloured, it remains uncoloured. It is not affected by the lotus

leaf; that is only an appearance.

The Zen man lives in the world, but uncoloured. He may have a wife, he may have children, but he remains uncoloured:

THE DEW ON THE LOTUS LEAF
UNDYED BY ITS COLOUR...

He moves through the world, uncontaminated, unpolluted by it. The world never enters in him. That's why he is not worried about getting out of it. He is not interested in going to the Himalayas. Why? For what? He knows the world is not in him, so what is the point of going anywhere else? The person who is escaping from the world is afraid of the world, because when he is in the world the world enters into him and he cannot resist. He is incapable, he is impotent, he is not yet aware enough to be so that the world cannot enter into him. To avoid this, he is escaping to the Himalayas. But how is he going to become more conscious in the Himalayas?

If the world cannot make you more conscious, the Himalayas cannot make you, certainly -- it is impossible for the Himalayas. The world is a challenge! And intelligence exists only when there is challenge. It is sharpened by challenges -- with greater challenges, greater intelligence happens.

THE DEW ON THE LOTUS LEAF
UNDYED BY ITS COLOUR,
JUST AS IT IS,
IS THE REAL FORM OF BUDDHA.

The shopkeeper in the shop and the worker in the factory and the farmer on the field -- the dew on the lotus leaf, if it is uncoloured by the leaf, then there is no problem. You can be a farmer or a shopkeeper or a clerk or a master, you can be anybody -- that is only the form. Deep inside, remain unattached to whatsoever is happening around you. Preference is okay -- don't choose. And you are Buddha.

This very body the Buddha, and this very earth the lotus paradise.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #8

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The first question

IS "SITTING SILENTLY DOING NOTHING" THE SAME AS "LOOKING INTO ONE'S OWN BEING"?

NO, IT IS NOT THE SAME. Looking, into one's own being is still doing something. Doing nothing is precisely that -- doing nothing, neither looking out nor looking in. Looking is a kind of doing -- even if you are trying to observe, you are TRYING; effort is involved. And through effort comes tension, expectation, frustration -- all that. Just a small effort can bring the whole world in. If you succeed you will feel great; if YOU succeed, the ego will succeed. What the effort is, is irrelevant: success brings ego.

Yes, even if you succeed in meditation it brings ego. If you fail it brings frustration. Frustration is nothing but the ego feeling bad -- it could not make it; the ego is hurt, wounded.

With effort, the whole world enters in. Doing nothing simply means that: no effort, not going anywhere, not desiring anything -- not even nirvana, God, samadhi. Desire is desire -- what you desire, how can it make any difference to desiring? YOU desire money, somebody desires meditation. You desire pleasures of this world, somebody else desires pleasures in the other world -- what is the difference? There is none; it is all the same. The desiring mind is there, and the desiring mind is the world. So even if you desire the other world it remains the world. There is no other world. Desiring creates the world, the whole misery of it.

Not doing anything means not desiring. There is no movement in you, in ANY direction. There is no future in your consciousness, there is nothing beyond this moment -- just this. No going back, no going forward, no memory, no imagination, no out, no in. All is silent. There is no movement; no ripple is arising. That is non-doing. That is the greatest that can happen to human consciousness.

Looking into one's own being is nothing compared to doing nothing. It does have something in it compared to outward movements. It is better, relatively, to move inward -- a good step, but it is not the goal, it is part of the journey. Somebody is looking out, you are looking in: it is better than looking out, but remember, only relatively. It still has to be dropped. But you are coming closer to home -- going out, you are farther away. Looking in, you are still away, but not so far away -- you are coming closer and closer and closer.

But remember, closeness is also distance. Even when you are very close, ninety-nine degrees -- only one degree more, and the happening and the transcendence -- still you are far away. You may not be able to make that one degree; you may wander again. The water is just coming to the point where it can evaporate, but it may not evaporate; it may start cooling before evaporation happens. It may remain water -- it may be HOT water but water is water, hot or cold. But it is relatively better, because the cold water will have to be made hot; this is hot already.

That's the only difference between the worldly man and the spiritual man. The spiritual man is like hot water -- is very close to the jump, to the quantum leap. One step more, and all in and out will disappear. There will be no division left -- no body/mind, no this world/that world. All divisions in all dimensions will simply disappear.

That is the state of samadhi or nirvana. You cannot desire it, you can only understand it. Understanding it is going into it. When you understand it totally, suddenly it is there. It needs

no effort on your part; it is not something to be cultivated, practised. It is something to be ALLOWED. In deep understanding, you open up. This very moment, just THIS, and there is samadhi.

But if there is a slight ripple -- "I should catch it" -- you have missed it. "If it is so close by, I should grab it!" -- you have missed it. If you start looking around -- "Where is it?" -- if you close your eyes and you start groping for it, you have missed it.

Seeking is not the way to find. Non-seeking. That moment of non-seeking is the moment when you are sitting silently doing nothing... and the spring comes and the grass grows by itself.

The second question

WHY DO YOU ALWAYS TALK AGAINST LOGIC?

IM NOT AGAINST LOGIC, LIFE is against it. I am talking about life, not against logic. Talking about life, it comes as a by-product, the talk against logic. Logic is a manmade world; it is not true to the facticity of existence. Logic is man's imposition on reality.

Reality is very illogical, mysterious; it does not follow any rules. And the deeper you go into it, the more and more you will become aware that maybe on the surface there are a few rules, but as you move deep, rules start disappearing. And there comes a point in the depth of reality where all rules are invalid.

Physicists are coming to it, because they have penetrated deep into matter. And they are talking almost like mystics. This is one of the greatest phenomena that has happened to this century -- this century's contribution to human consciousness. The mystics have always talked like that, and they have always been thought mad people. Now, it is very difficult to call Albert Einstein mad or a mystic in some derogatory sense; it is impossible. But he is talking in the same way as a Buddha talks or a Meister Eckhardt or Ikkyu.

Modern physics says: The deeper we penetrate into matter, the more we come to know that all our imposed rules are inadequate. Reality is bigger than our rules. And reality is so vast that it contains contradictions. It is not linear, it does not move in one direction, it moves in all the directions simultaneously. There is no way to approach it logically. You have to drop all logic; modern physics has dropped all logic. It HAD to drop it -- to be true to reality, logic has to be dropped. Otherwise you will not be true to reality, you will be true to a fictitious reality that you have created.

This has been so for the mystics, down the ages -- what physics has just now discovered, mystics have known always. They have been the pioneers in the illogical. Their approach was different -- they approached through consciousness -- but they also came to the same depth. And suddenly they became aware that your logic is okay in the marketplace -- it helps, it is utilitarian; it will be difficult to manage in the world without logic. But when you go deeper, logic becomes a hindrance.

The deeper you start moving, the more you see that the polar opposites are not just opposites but complementaries. And once that is seen, that polar opposites are complementaries, you HAVE to understand that life is not logical.

Logic says A is A and cannot be B. A man is a man and cannot be a woman -- obviously. But go deeper into the reality, and A changes into B and B changes into A. In fact they are constantly changing into each other -- A is nothing but on the way to be B, B is nothing but

on the way to be A.

And watch inside your own being: you are not twenty-four hours a man or a woman -- you change. The man has moments when he is a woman, and the woman has moments when she is a man. These divisions are just utilitarian; deep inside, all is one. These are expressions of one reality.

Just see a woman in anger: do you think she is a woman? In rage she can be more aggressive than any man, more cruel than any man. And for a certain reason -- because her manhood is very very virgin, unspoiled, intact, unused. That power remains unused in her. When she uses it she is really ferocious.

And when a man is in love he is so soft. He is feminine -- when he is in love he is more feminine than any woman.

It is not just accidental that Buddha looks so feminine. He is in immense love with existence; he has come to that ultimate orgasm that happens between the individual and the universal. It has happened. He is orgasmic twenty-four hours -- each moment is of great joy inside him, and of great love. He calls that love 'compassion' -- just to demark it, differentiate it, from your so-called love, he has to call it compassion.

It is passion transformed -- that is the meaning of the word 'compassion': passion transformed, passion which has become luminous, passion which is no more directed to any individual in particular, passion which is simply overflowing. He is feminine.

Just to indicate this feminineness in Buddha, in Krishna, in Mahavira, the Indian painters, the Indian sculptors, have not put any moustache or beard on them -- just to indicate this feminineness. Not that Buddha was without moustache and without beard. It is possible, once in a while a man may not have a moustache or a beard, but it cannot be always so. Of the twenty-four Jain TEERTHANKARAS, nobody has a moustache or a beard -- Buddha, Krishna, Rama, all the Hindu avataras, nobody. This is not possible.

Why have they not been depicted, painted, with moustache and beard? Just to show, just to give you a hint of their utter feminineness, softness, the water-like quality, the lotuslike fragrance, the roundness, the wholeness.

But logic says A is A and can never be B. And logic says, "This is this, and the opposite is the opposite, they never meet."

Rudyard Kipling's famous statement is logical. "West is West, East is East, and the twain shall never meet" -- this is a logical statement, but utterly false. West is not West, and East is not East, and the twain have been meeting all along.

All polarities are joined together, bridged. That's why you feel I am always talking against logic. Logic makes you feel as if things are divided, absolutely divided, unbridgeably divided. They are not. Birth changes into death -- how can they be divided? And the logical mind celebrates when a child is born and weeps when an old man dies. Now, this is logical. But birth and death are two aspects of the same reality -- when one aspect arrives you celebrate, when another aspect arrives you cry and weep!

How ridiculous! Either weep on both the occasions or celebrate on both the occasions. Or if you cannot do that then forget all about celebration and weeping, just keep quiet. But don't make a division -- because the day the child is born he starts dying; when you are celebrating he has already started towards death. What are you doing? If he is one day old, he has died one day; there is one day less in his life now.

With the first breath of the child something has started dying. He has died one breath, he is one breath closer to death -- if you count life in breaths, there is one breath less. One is not going to die suddenly one day when one is seventy. One dies every day, goes on dying, then

one day the whole process is complete and the pendulum swings to the polar opposite.

So it is with love and hate. Logic divides. Logic says love is love, hate is hate, and the twain shall never meet. And the twain are always meeting. Just listen to your life experience -- you hate the same person you love, it can't be otherwise. Everybody hates the same person they love; the hatred is always directed to the same person.

That's why the conflict between lovers, constant quarrelling. The quarrelling stops only when love disappears, remember. Yes, it stops one day; everybody gets tired. Sooner or later, the husband starts thinking "It is enough now" and the wife starts thinking "It is too much -- what is the point in doing the same thing again and again?" And they stop quarrelling. But the day they stop quarrelling, love disappears.

Love cannot exist without hate. This is the illogicalness of life: love cannot exist without hate, hate cannot exist without love. But if you go into books and if you look through logic, you divide. You say, "Always love, never hate." This is not true about life; you are creating a fiction of love. And you are creating difficulties for people.

Down the ages, you have been taught: Only love, don't hate. And this is an impossibility. This is a sure way to kill love -- you will not be able to manage it, and you will feel guilty because you cannot manage it. And there is really nothing wrong with you. Life cannot manage it, life has no obligation to fulfill the demands of logic. Life knows nothing about logic, it is blissfully unaware of it.

If you love, the more intense the love, in the same quantity will your hate be intense. If you feel happy, you will have to feel unhappy -- this is simple. And the logical mind says, "I will only be happy, I don't want to be unhappy." Now, this is being foolish. Logic is foolishness. The mind says, "I want to be just high, always high, never low." How can you be always high? If you don't come low, sooner or later you will forget that you are high. How will you know that this is high? You have to come down -- you have to fall into the valley of sadness, into misery. And then one day again you rise to the peaks and the beauty of the peaks and the flight in the sky. But for how long? The valley is there, you have to go back into it -- it will prepare you again to fly, to go high.

When you are high you are on the way towards being low, when you are low you are on the way towards being high. This is the illogicalness of life.

My respect is towards life, I am utterly with life. Hence, you think, you feel, that I am against logic. In fact I am not against logic, I am only for life. That naturally makes me against logic, but that is just a by-product.

And look at the absurdities the logical mind always falls into.
I have heard:

"What are my chances of recovering, Doctor?" asked the patient.

"One hundred percent," said the doctor. "Medical records prove that nine out of ten people die of the disease you have. Yours is the tenth case I've treated and all the others died. So you see, you're bound to get well."

Now, this is logical stupidity. Life does not follow such rules, life has no obligation to follow them. But on the surface, logic always seems to be true.

The diplomat was on his first official visit to the small country of Bubonga. At the official diplomatic party, the president of the nation handed him a glass of the national beverage. The diplomat took one sip and looked around in awe as the furniture started to move about and

the walls trembled.

"This is certainly a powerful drink," he said to the president.

"Not really," replied his host. "This happens to be an earthquake."

On the surface, logic always gives you clues. Mm? It must be the drink -- mighty powerful drink! We are all hooked on logic. And the man who is hooked on logic remains unhooked from life.

That's why you see so many dead people walking on the streets -- doing shopping, working in the factories, dead, all dead. What has happened to these people? Logic has happened to these people; they suffer from the disease called philosophy. They have become logical in their life -- by becoming logical they have lost track of life. Now they have a certain fixed approach, they move according to their logic. Their eyes can only see through a narrow hole, the hole of logic; they cannot see anything else. And once your logic is fixed, your perception is fixed. You lose freedom -- freedom to see. You go on only seeing things which are allowed by your logic; you go on interpreting in your logical ways, you go on reacting in your logical ways. And you go on always missing the reality -- because the reality is illogical.

And the logical person sooner or later starts feeling that life is absurd, meaningless. Life is not absurd and life is not meaningless. In fact your very effort to impose a certain logic on it makes it look absurd. Your mind wants to impose a certain meaning on life, and it CANNOT be imposed. Then life seems to be very meaningless.

There is nothing wrong with life. The birds don't feel life is meaningless, the trees don't feel that life is meaningless, the rivers don't feel that life is meaningless. Why? Because they have no logic. All is good as it is -- they are in a relaxed relationship with life. They are in tune with life; they have no ideas to prevent it, to become barriers between them and life.

A river comes from the mountains, starts moving towards the north, and then a turning comes and it starts moving to the south. The river does not think, "What is this? Life seems to be very absurd. First I was going north, now I am going south. What is all this? What consistency is there? How am I going to reach to the ocean if I go on this way?" And then again another turning comes, and it is moving towards the east. If the river had a mind, a logical mind, it would go mad. It would simply go berserk. It would never reach to the ocean -- it would become so muddled, so puzzled, so confused, that it would be paralyzed. It is so illogical -- if you are going to the north, go to the north!

But rivers don't think, they don't have any mind. A mind means having a certain idea how things should be. They don't mind -- they allow life whatsoever it wants to be, they always relax with it. If it goes south, okay; if it goes north, okay. They don't create any problem. They reach, certainly; all rivers reach to the ocean.

Only man is lost. Man has lost track of God, because God is hidden in life and man has become too much obsessed with logic. Logic allows you a few things but does not allow all. It is very choosy, it tries to be consistent.

That's the beauty of Zen -- it is paradoxical, it contains contradictions. And always remember, many times people ask me, "How to decide that this man is enlightened, or that this man is really a master? How to decide?" If you can find a man who is utterly inconsistent, contains contradictions, is paradoxical, looks illogical to you -- does not satisfy your logical mind but in a certain subtle way satisfies your heart -- then he is the enlightened person, then he is the master. He fulfills something deep in your heart; you start feeling love for him.

Your mind goes on saying, "What are you going to do? This man seems to be so absurd, not reliable at all; one day he will say one thing, another day he will say just the opposite. Then what are you going to do?" But your heart says, "So it is okay. I will go with this man, whether he goes north or south or wherever, or he stops going at all. I have fallen in love.'

When love arises, only then can you slip out of logic. Otherwise you cannot slip out of logic. Love will give you the courage to move out of the patterns of logic. The person who lives in logic is a coward -- logic protects against inconsistencies, contradictions, paradoxes, dangers. Logic is a security, a safety measure; it is a China Wall around you. It protects you, not only from dangers -- finally it starts protecting you from life itself. Because life contains dangers. It starts protecting you from God, it starts protecting you from love. And then you are dead, then you are a corpse. YOU can go on breathing -- that is not impossible, corpses breathe...

I have seen millions of corpses breathing, walking, doing a thousand and one things -- and still utterly dead.

Logic protects you. Fear always wants to remain in logic. Whenever something like love starts stirring in your heart then there is a possibility to get out of logic. Then courage arises.

To be with a master is to be in love -- in a very absurd kind of love, for no reason at all. That's why no disciple can convince an outsider as to why he has fallen in love with this man or that man, why he has chosen this man as a master. No disciple can ever convince anybody who is not already convinced. It is impossible, because the person from the outside will be logical and you will be illogical. You will know you are right but you will not be able to say why, how. And he will be perfectly able to say that you are not right; he will be more articulate. Logic is articulate, love is silent.

Love can laugh, live. Logic argues.

I am not against logic. You can see from my statements that I USE logic to help you towards love -- how can I be against it? When I attack logic I attack very logically, because that is the only way you will understand. But the whole effort is to bring you out of it, out of its grip. I am for life, but not against logic.

The third question

I HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE SADNESS OR DEPRESSION THAT YOU HAVE SAID MANY ARE FEELING IN RESPONSE TO THIS LECTURE SERIES. ON THE CONTRARY, MORE THAN ANY OTHER SERIES, I FEEL A SENSE OF FREEDOM AND JOY ARISING IN ME, AS IF MY HEART HAS WINGS. AM I MISSING SOMETHING?

ANEESHA, No, you are not missing something. You are getting something. And you are not alone, there are a few other people also -- Vidya has written, Savita has written, and a few others, that they are feeling immense joy with these sutras. But there are a few others who are feeling depressed.

It does not say anything about the sutras, it simply says something about you. There are people who are natural Buddhists -- Aneesha, Vidya, Savita, must be natural Buddhists. The approach of Buddha simply fits with their being, they immediately fall in tune with it. It is their climate, it is their soil: their seed immediately bursts, they start growing in freedom, in joy. Great insight will happen to these people who are natural Buddhists.

And remember, I am saying 'natural Buddhists' -- not Buddhists who are born in a Buddhist family. A natural Buddhist is a totally different phenomenon, it has nothing to do with a born Buddhist. So are there natural Sufis -- for them this series will be depressing. That is not their climate. Vivek, Arup, Pradeepa and others -- that is not their climate, it does not fit with them. The Sufi climate simply goes to their very heart.

And I am using all climates, I am bringing all the possibilities to you. It has never happened before. Buddha created only one climate, one energy-field, Buddha-field. Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi created another, the Sufi-field. With Jalaluddin only those gathered who were natural Sufis, with Buddha only those who were natural Buddhists.

With me it is going to be totally different. This place is going to be the first place in the world, in the whole human history, where all climates will be available, all kinds of soils, all possibilities. So it is going to happen again and again, and you have to remember that you have to learn tolerance, sympathy. When something is not suiting you, just don't start condemning it -- because if I am talking about it, it must be suiting somebody else. And I have to look to the needs of all.

And those old kinds of special fields -- the Buddha-field, the Sufi-field -- cannot exist in this world now, because the earth has become so small. Countries are no more secluded; the world has become just a global village. We are so close to each other, and all the old barriers and boundaries are breaking on their own. Man has become more grown-up.

So around me all kinds of people will be here. Jews are here, Mohammedans, Christians, Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Taoists -- all kinds of people are here. People who believe in Yoga, people who believe in Tantra, people who believe in Zen, people who believe in Hassidism -- they are here. And I have to nourish them all.

So when I am speaking on Sufism the Buddhists, natural Buddhists, won't feel very good. They have to learn to respect others' needs. And if they are sympathetic, understanding, even THEY will be helped -- because this will bring clarity to them. When you understand something which is polar opposite to you, it brings a clarity to you. It makes your self very defined. You are no more in a kind of vagueness, cloudy -- you start taking a shape. That's the function of the polar opposite.

If a Buddhist has never heard about Sufis he will remain vague. He will never know what his boundaries are, what his actual form is. He will remain formless.

So when I am talking about Sufis, and you are a natural Buddhist and you don't feel very good with it, listen attentively -- it will give you a form, a shape, an identity, a clear vision. And when I am speaking on Buddhists, if you are a natural Sufi don't be depressed. Don't stop coming: "These sutras are not for us, they create depression." Know perfectly well that they are not for you, but they are for somebody -- and you can use at least this much, that you can see where you are different, what your natural qualities are which are different. And you can attain to a better identity.

To know "Who am I?" it will be helpful if you exactly know your boundaries, your limitations, your tendencies, your nature, your instincts.

I am going to go on speaking on all kinds of schools. And here, if you are a born Mohammedan, you have to disappear as a born Mohammedan. If you are a born Hindu, you have to disappear as a born Hindu. You have to find your natural qualities -- because only nature grows. Birth is accidental, birth determines nothing. It was coincidence that you were born in a home where people were Hindus -- it is as much a coincidence as if they belonged to a particular political party. If your parents were communists, you need not be a communist. If your parents were Catholics, you need not be a Catholic either.

You have to search for your own path; each one has to search for his own path. I will make all the paths available to you, so you can see and feel. And when the right path happens you will immediately see great joy arising in you. That is indicative that shows that your climate has arrived, that this was the time you were waiting for, that this is your spring.

So Aneesha, don't be worried that you are missing something. You are not missing something -- for the first time you are coming closer to your natural climate. Now don't forget it, it will be of immense help. Once you know who you are naturally, then things change. Then you don't go on groping in the dark, then you start following a certain direction. Then your life has a sense of direction. Then you don't waste your energies all over the place. Then you know what is for you and what is not for you.

And always remember, what is not for you is not WRONG. It may be for somebody else. Just because it is not for you, it need not be untrue. Truth has multi-facets, multi-dimensional is truth. YOU have found your door -- don't say other doors are wrong.

Jesus says, "The house of my God, of my Father, has many doors, many rooms in it, many chambers." In fact, there are millions of doors to God's temple. And each one has to find his door, because nobody can enter from anybody else's door.

The identity that you have attained through birth is a false identity -- it has to be dropped, it has to be lost. Become loose. Don't be a Hindu, don't be a Christian, don't be a Mohammedan. And then suddenly you will start feeling what is really for you. You may be a Hindu, and you may become interested in Sufis. You may be a Mohammedan, and you may become interested in Buddha. You may be a Buddhist, and you may become interested in Krishna. There is no way of knowing beforehand; one has just to put oneself in all kinds of climates.

And when the right climate comes, you suddenly sprout, leaves start coming. IMMEDIATE transformations happen. This must be happening to you Aneesha, to you Savita, to you Vidya.

You say: I HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE SADNESS OR DEPRESSION THAT YOU HAVE SAID MANY ARE FEELING IN RESPONSE TO THIS LECTURE SERIES.

Those were born Sufis -- they reacted according to their experience. I was waiting for you people to write -- you reacted out of your own experience. And this I call understanding, that you allow space for others also. Others will grow through other sutras. To somebody Patanjali simply is a great splendour, to somebody else Patanjali may look dry. To somebody Mahavira is the greatest pinnacle, to somebody else he seems to have no aesthetic sense, no juice, he is just like a dry desert.

To some, Krishna may be the one who strikes deepest in the heart -- touches the very core of your being, starts playing on your flute. To some others, Krishna may look shallow, indulgent, worldly.

Always remember that whatsoever fits with you, go with it wholeheartedly, the whole way. And don't condemn that which doesn't fit with you, because it may fit somebody else. And other people also have to reach God.

The fourth question

I WANT TO DIVORCE MY HUSBAND. WE HAVE LIVED IN MISERY FOR

SEVEN YEARS NOW, BUT I AM A CATHOLIC AND I AM AFRAID THAT GOD IS NOT GOING TO BE HAPPY ABOUT IT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

THAT IS GOD'S PROBLEM. Why should you be worried about it? If he does not feel good he can live in misery -- but why should YOU live in misery? Seven years is really too long to have lived in it.

Never live in any state of misery for too long, because then it becomes habitual. Then you start, deep down, liking it; then deep down you start clinging to it. Then you become afraid -- if it is lost what will you do? You will not have anything to do. Your misery was giving you such great occupation, you were continuously busy with it. If suddenly misery disappears what are you going to do? You will feel very empty.

Always remember, the moment you become aware that something simply creates misery, get out of it -- the sooner the better. If your love relationship, your marriage, gives you both joy and misery then it is okay, you can be in it. I am not saying that any marriage can give you just joy and joy and joy -- no marriage can. Otherwise Buddhas will not find any followers. No marriage can give you just pure joy.

From where do Buddhas find their customers? Who are their clients? People who have lived in the world and seen its misery.

A marriage is not only a marriage between man and woman, it is also a marriage between joy and misery. It is a mixed phenomenon -- it is a marriage. There will be moments of joy and there will be moments of misery. If it is fifty-fifty it is perfectly okay, you can continue. But if it is a hundred percent misery then to be in it is neurotic. And that's what happens. People expect and desire that a marriage should be a hundred percent joy -- which it cannot be, which is not naturally possible. No marriage has ever been, no marriage will ever be. A hundred percent joy is not possible through marriage, it is not in the nature of things.

People expect a hundred percent joy. That is foolish, that is not practical, that is living in dreams. And if you expect that much joy you will create more misery than was natural -- because there will be more frustration. The higher your desire, the deeper you will feel frustrated. The greater the goal, the farther away you will feel from it. The more perfect an ideal, the more you will feel that you cannot make it, that you fall short.

Then there is another kind of foolishness: people go on living in a hundred percent misery too. Don't ask for a hundred percent joy, that is not possible -- but there is no need to live in a hundred percent misery either. This is your life! Why be pathological?

You must be a kind of masochist. NOW you are trying to hide your masochism behind the beautiful name 'Catholic'. And why will God be unhappy? Do you think God is a sadist, he wants you to suffer, to remain miserable? Your mahatmas, maybe they are sadists, and your priests and popes. But I can be absolutely certain about God that he is not a sadist. He will be utterly happy when you are out of your misery.

I have heard:

An unhappy henpecked husband come to his preacher asking for a divorce.

"What! How can you, a religious man, think of such a thing! Don't you realize that our good book tells us that when a man divorces his wife, not only do the angels cry but the very stones weep?"

"Listen," replied the husband, "if the angels and stones want to cry, let them. I want to rejoice!"

Why should you be worried about God? That is not your problem. God's name is simply used to prolong misery -- priests have been using that name to torture you, you have been using that name to torture yourself and others.

God is not a torturer; this world is not God's concentration camp. Get out of your misery! And it is not marriage -- if it is just misery how can it be marriage? What marriage are you talking about? It has not happened! In fact the divorce will only be legal, because the marriage has not happened in the first place.

Seven years are too much. If a man lives to seventy then seven years are too much -- a tenth of your life wasted. If you cannot create joy in seven years, I don't think you will be able to create it now. Get out of it. Try somewhere else. And let the other party also be free -- because you cannot be the only miserable one, the other will also be in the same boat.

I WANT TO DIVORCE MY HUSBAND. WE HAVE LIVED IN MARRIED MISERY FOR SEVEN YEARS NOW, BUT I AM A CATHOLIC AND I AM AFRAID THAT GOD IS NOT GOING TO BE HAPPY ABOUT IT.

I can promise you -- leave it to me. I will see to it that God is happy about it. God is always happy with your happiness. God is not a neurotic person. He is unhappy -- you have kept him unhappy for seven years.

But that's what happens in the name of marriage. People don't get married for healthy reasons, people get married for unhealthy reasons. Hence so much misery happens in marriage. Have you ever looked into your motives, why you wanted to get married in the first place?

Somebody wants to get married because he is alone and loneliness hurts and he wants somebody to be with, to be together with. Now, this is not going to be a real marriage. It is a need -- he just wants to be with somebody. He is not moving towards somebody with any love, he just wants to exploit the other's presence so that he is not lonely. He wants to use the other as a means. And whenever anybody uses the other person as a means there is bound to be misery -- because nobody wants to be used like a means. It is insulting, it is unholy, it is against the dignity of man.

And that's what happens. The woman wants to be together with the man because alone she feels frustrated, the man wants to be together with the woman because alone he feels frustrated. Not that they feel happy together -- that is not there. The only thing that is motivating them to be together is that alone they feel frustrated. Now, see the point of it: if two persons are miserable separately, how can they create happiness together? 'they will create only double misery, or even a multiplication of it.

If two persons are ill separately, together how are they going to become healthy and whole? They will create infections for each other; they will make life even MORE miserable. Alone, at least they were simply responsible for their own misery. Now the other's misery also falls on them and their misery falls on the other. And it goes on being multiplied, as if two mirrors are reflecting each other and throwing garbage on each other.

People get married for a thousand and one reasons -- but one basic thing that should be the ONLY reason is missing: they are not in love. Sometimes the reason is finance -- it is cheaper to have a wife than to have a maidservant, it is cheaper to have a husband than to struggle on your own in this competitive world, it is cheaper to have a husband than to have a servant. But love is missing. And when the most basic ingredient is missing, you will be miserable, you will not be happy.

I have heard:

Darling, Just imagine -- we've now been married for twenty-four hours."
"Yes, dear, it's incredible. And it seems only as if it was yesterday."

Just twenty-four hours being together is enough to give you a taste of hell.
I have heard about another Catholic...

A well-known humourist tells of a young man who attended a golden wedding celebration and could not help but wonder how two people could stay happily married for fifty years. He finally mustered enough courage to ask the elderly 'bridegroom' if he had ever thought of divorce during the fifty marital years. The old man thought for a moment and answered, "Divorce -- never! You know I am a practising Catholic. But murder, many times."

Do you think God will be more happy when you think of murder? That's what people go on thinking. What can you do if you are just hooked to each other and in great misery, and you cannot divorce? Naturally, one thinks of murder or one thinks of suicide.

Men think of murder, women think of suicide. Men are more aggressive, so they start imagining -- even in fantasy it relieves them. Just to think for one hour that they can kill their wife and be free for ever, gives them such great relief. There is no need to really murder, but that night they sleep better. And the wife thinks of committing suicide; sometimes she swallows sleeping-pills. Never too many -- because who really wants to die? But even the idea that one is trying to commit suicide helps; for a few days, life flows more rhythmically. At least one has the feeling that one can die and that will give freedom.

What kind of a world have we created in which people think of murder and suicide continuously? What kind of nonsense have we done? Divorce seems to be simple. If you are happy with somebody, be with them. If you are not happy with somebody, TRY to create happiness, but if it seems impossible then drop out. At least that will be a friendly act; it will be compassionate.

And don't bring God into it. Marriage is man's creation -- God has not created marriage, remember. They say that marriages are made in heaven: this is just false, absolutely untrue. Maybe they are made in hell, but not in heaven. God is not a party to your marriage. When you go to the church and the temple to get married, you are simply creating a pseudo-atmosphere to impress yourself that something great is happening. Nothing is happening, you are simply creating a great impression upon yourself -- it is a kind of auto-hypnosis. Going to the church, so many people and candles and celebration and the priest and all that, gives you an impression that something immensely valuable is happening and God is watching.

When you get married, God weeps. He beats his head and says, "Again?"

Real love is a totally different kind of phenomenon. It need not have the support of the church or the society. A real love is enough unto itself. If a marriage arises out of love it is just a social formality, you are not getting any sanction from it. The sanction is needed because you are not getting sanction from your heart -- you are substituting for it. You want to have sanction from the state, from the church, from God himself -- or at least from the representative of God, the pope, the priest -- so that you can feel that something great has been done.

You are afraid. You cannot trust your own heart, so you need all these props and crutches.

Marriage is a manmade institution -- in nature there exists no marriage. And when once again man is courageous enough to be natural, marriage will disappear.

And I am not saying couples will disappear, but marriage WILL disappear. Marriage is an ugly institution. People will live together out of love, out of sheer joy. They will live together because they WANT to live together -- for no other reason. Then only can there be happiness.

Don't be afraid of divorce. You have never been married really -- hence seven years of misery. If you were really married there would have been great joy too -- great misery, great joy, go together.

The fifth question

I AM NOT INTERESTED IN TRUTH, IN MEDITATION, GOD, NIRVANA, SANNYAS, ETCETERA. WHY?

THEN WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? Are you mad? If you are not interested, you are not interested. Wait -- when the interest arises, come.

But my feeling is, you must be interested in some way. Maybe the interest is unconscious. Maybe your conscious mind says "I am not interested" and your unconscious mind is interested. Perhaps there is no bridge between your unconscious and conscious; perhaps you can't listen to your unconscious or the messages that it gives to you.

You have forgotten the language of the unconscious, you are closed in your conscious.

And this question arises out of fear -- fear that you may really be interested in God, in truth, in nirvana, in meditation, in sannyas. Who knows? And the conscious is afraid. The conscious mind lives in fear, always in fear. It is afraid of all great things -- of love, of God, of sannyas -- it is always afraid of great things. It is a very tiny energy: it is ego. It is always afraid of anything that can drown it. It wants only small things -- a house, a car, a good bank balance -- it is happy only with things that it can control. It wants to remain the master.

That's why the conscious mind creates barriers between itself and its own depth, the unconscious -- so that no messages reach. The unconscious is NATURALLY interested in God. God is not a creation of thinkers; it is a deep urge, a great longing, in the very core of human beings. No man is really a man unless he starts searching for God. No man has really taken account of his humanity unless he becomes interested in meditation. No man is yet courageous enough until he starts risking his life for the unknown.

The desire is arising from your unconscious. Like a tidal wave it comes -- but you are closing yourself against it. So you cannot leave this place, and you cannot get into meditation or into sannyas, either. Watch. Relax a little more. Why are you here in the first place? Nobody has forced you to come here and nobody is preventing you from going. In fact there are many hindrances when you come in, there is no hindrance when you go out. The guards prevent you from coming in -- they are there to screen those who are not yet ready. What excuses they use to prevent you are just excuses. The real thing is, those people who are not yet ready should not be allowed in -- because they simply waste their time, my time. They occupy space, and they are not ready to change, to mutate. They are accidentally here.

There are many hindrances to prevent you from coming in, from coming closer to me. But there is nobody hindering you from going out; everybody is totally free to go away.

Why are you hanging around here? There must be a deep urge somewhere, of which you are not aware, and you are trying to falsify it.

I have heard:

Pretty young girl: "What are we going to do today?"

Young man: "How about a drive in the country?"

Pretty young girl: "Will there be any kissing and cuddling and parking in lonely lanes and all that sort of thing?"

Young man: "Certainly not!"

Pretty young girl: "Then what are we going for?"

The questioner must have a very feminine mind -- wants to say no, and means yes.
Meditate over this story:

David and Debbie both worked in the same office in Hong Kong, and both of them were Chinese.

For more than six months David had admired Debbie from a distance, never managing to pluck up sufficient courage to ask her for a date, but all the time, his passion for her grew stronger and stronger. And he was afraid too, because Debbie was well-known around the office as "not that kind of woman" -- she was known to be a virgin.

At last the great day came when he somehow managed to scrawl a note to her asking if she'd like to have dinner at a restaurant with him.

"I'd love dinner with you," she replied, coming over to his desk in their open-plan office to tell him so in person, and making him blush with pleasure.

That evening in the restaurant he asked her what she would like to eat, and she studied the menu carefully, then said: "I'll have shark's fin soup, please. And Peking duck with dumplings, some suckling pig, steamed fish, and then some fresh lychees."

David was horrified, as he'd been mentally calculating the enormous cost of all this food -- the most expensive items on the menu and more suitable for a wedding feast than for a dinner for two.

"D... d... do you eat like this at home?" he stammered, his face blushing red again.

"No," replied Debbie. "But then, no one at home desperately wants to go to bed with me."

Deep down in the unconscious, things are different than they are on the surface. And it almost always happens that whatsoever is on the surface, just the opposite, the polar opposite, is in the depth.

You say: I AM NOT INTERESTED IN TRUTH, NOT INTERESTED IN GOD, NOT INTERESTED IN MEDITATION, IN SANNYAS, AT ALL. WHY?

Then why does this question arise? Why this 'why'? This is the search for truth! You want to know why: this is the desire for truth. But you want to avoid it, you want to pretend that you are not interested. It gives you safety, it keeps you aloof, it keeps you from going into any commitment. And here, it is a commitment, an involvement.

Sannyas is a commitment, an involvement, staking one's life for the search. Going into the unknown, leaving the known and the familiar. It is insecure, it is utterly unsafe, there can be no guarantee. One has to go in trust, and knowing perfectly well that one may not be able to return back to the old space again. And who knows? The new space may be better, may not be better -- then what? If you cannot come back to your old secure space, and the new

space is not the one that you had thought it to be, then what? That fear cripples. Then one starts managing to get the idea into the conscious mind that "I am not interested in truth."

But you ARE interested. Then one starts managing the idea that "I am not interested in meditations." But you ARE interested. Because you are interested, you create these ideas that you are not interested. You are becoming afraid of your interest. The interest is arising in a subtle way, like a small ripple it is growing. You are afraid, you are shaken. You may have come here accidentally -- a friend simply mentioned me, or you came across an orange sannyasin at the airport or in some place, and just by the way you became curious.

But remember, at the airport there were thousands of other people -- they didn't become curious, you became curious. There must be something in your unconscious that was waiting to be triggered by this orange person. You heard my name and you became curious. Millions of people have heard it, and they have not become curious. You heard it and you became curious -- something went deep into you, the name awoke some deep-hidden desire and longing in you.

You have come here without being perfectly aware why. But I know why you have come here: you are interested in truth, in God, in meditation, in samadhi, in sannyas! Beware!

The sixth question

AN EMPTY WHITE CHAIR
FLOATING,
DIVINE WORDS
MELTING WITH
DIVINE SILENCES.
OSHO, WHERE DO YOU GO EVERY DAY BETWEEN
8 AM AND 9.45 AM?

YOU CAN ALSO COME WITH ME. And that is the only way to know where I go. I cannot say anything about it -- anything said about it will not be true. But I can invite you: I am an open invitation, a beckoning door. Come through me.

These moments that I am with you, I am at the very source of things. If you can fall in tune with me, if you can become harmonious with me, you will also be at the very source of things. You will have a taste of Tao or Dhamma or God, or whatsoever you want to call it.

I am available to you. In that gesture, a great door is available to you. You can move from the false to the true, you can move from the sound to the silence, you can move from the momentary to the eternal. You can move from life/death into that which knows neither life nor death -- which is immortal.

These moments that I am with you are not to impart any teaching to you -- I have none. I am not a teacher, I am a master. A teacher teaches, a master makes it available. A teacher talks about truth, a master IS truth. A teacher gives you ideas about that, a master IS that. This is satsang, this is communion.

Yes, if you come with me, if you don't argue with me -- that's where you miss -- if you don't decide whether what this man is saying is right or wrong... Because what I am saying is neither right nor wrong. What I am saying is just a device, a hypothetical device, just to bring you closer and closer towards me. What I am saying is just a toy so that you can remain engaged playing with me.

And in that playing, sometimes, when you are lost in the play, when you are absorbed in the play, you come through me. Those moments cannot be created directly, they can be created only indirectly. I am creating a Buddhafield, a situation, an occasion -- an occasion where sometimes without even becoming aware, you will be transported.

And many of you have been transported, many of you KNOW it, it is happening every day. Don't ask me where I go. First I have to come to you, because I have to take you there. So I come to you through words -- there is no other way to come to you. And if I have to take you into another kind of world, then I have to come to you. I will have to hold your hand in my hand. And language is the only way that you know how to commune -- hence I speak.

But once I have spoken -- I have given my hand into your hand, I have used YOUR language to be with you -- now you have to use MY language to be with me. Now give your hand to me. My language is silence -- as your language is sound, my language is silence. If I talk to you and you are silent, then your hand is in my hand. If I am talking here and you are also talking there inside yourself, then my hand remains close to you but your hand never comes into my hand.

When I am talking you need not talk. I am doing it already, for you and for me, both. You can be silent. Silence is my language -- I speak your language sometimes, you have to speak my language too.

I am talking and you are listening, with no thoughts in your mind -- and you will be transported! Poona will disappear, all these people around you will disappear. Yes, that's what must have been happening...

You ask: AN EMPTY WHITE CHAIR
FLOATING
DIVINE WORDS
MELTING WITH
DIVINE SILENCES.
OSHO, WHERE DO YOU GO EVERY DAY BETWEEN
8 AM AND 9.45 AM?

I go to the eternal home. First I come to you, through my words. And those who can hold my hand and can become silent start moving with me to the eternal home. That is my home and that is your home, that is everybody's home. That home is God.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #9

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The first question:

THE STRONGEST EMOTION THAT I HAVE IS HATING DEATH. I WANT TO KILL IT! ONCE AND FOR ALL! THE SECOND THING IS: I FEEL EXTREME PAIN WHEN I REALIZE THAT I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO THANK YOU. IS THERE A CONNECTION?

DEVA BHAKTA, TO HATE DEATH IS TO HATE LIFE. They are not separate and they cannot be separated. Death and life exist together, there is no way to separate them. The separation is just an abstraction in the mind; it is utterly false. Life implies death, death implies life. They are polar opposites, but complementary to each other.

Death is the pinnacle of life. If you hate death how can you love life. And that is a great misunderstanding. People who think that they love life always hate death -- and by hating death they become incapable of living. The capacity to live, the capacity to live at the maximum, comes only when you are ready to die, and ready to die at the maximum. It is always proportionate. If you live in a lukewarm way you will die in a lukewarm way. If you live intensely, totally, dangerously, you will also die in a deep orgasm.

Death is the crescendo. Life comes to its peak in death. The orgasm that you know through love is nothing compared to the orgasm that death makes available. All the joys of life simply are pale compared to the joy that death brings.

What exactly is death? Death is the disappearance of a false entity in you -- the ego. Death also happens in love, on a smaller scale, in a partial way. Hence the beauty of love. For a moment you die, for a moment you disappear, for a moment you are no more, and the whole possesses you. You disappear as a part, you become rhythmic with the whole. You don't exist as a ripple in the ocean, you exist as the ocean itself.

That's why all orgasmic experiences are oceanic experiences. The same happens in deep sleep; the ego disappears, the mind functions no more, you relapse into the original the joy. But these are nothing compared to death. these are partial things. Sleep is a very tiny death, each morning you will be awake again. Still, if you have slept deeply, the joy lingers on the whole day -- a certain quality of tranquillity continues deep in your heart. You live differently that day when you have slept well. If you have not been able to sleep well, the day is disturbed. You feel annoyed, irritated, for no reason at all. Small things become great disturbances. You are angry -- not at somebody in particular, you are simply angry. Your energy is not at home, it is distracted. You feel uprooted.

Death is a great sleep. The whole turmoil of life -- seventy. eighty or ninety years' turmoil -- and all the miseries of life and all the excitements and the distractions and the anxieties, simply disappear, are no more relevant. You fall back into the original unity of existence. You become part of the earth. Your body disappears into the earth, your breath disappears into the air, your fire goes back to the sun, your water to the oceans, and your inner sky has a meeting with the outer sky. This is death.

How can one hate death? You must be carrying a misunderstanding. You must have been carrying the idea that death is the enemy. Death is not the enemy, death is the greatest friend. Death has to be welcomed, death has to be waited for with a loving heart. If you think of

death as the enemy, you will die -- everybody has to die, your thinking will not make any difference. But you will die in agony -- because you will be resisting, you will be fighting. In resistance, in fight, you will destroy all the joys that death, and only death, can deliver to you. The death that could have been a great ecstasy will be just an agony.

And when something is too much of an agony one falls unconscious. There is a limit to tolerance, one can bear only so much. Hence ninety-nine out of a hundred die in a state of unconsciousness. They struggle, they fight, to the very end. And when it becomes impossible to fight any more -- they have put all their energies at stake -- they fall into a kind of swoon. They die an unconscious death.

And to die an unconscious death is a great calamity, because you will not remember what has happened. You will not remember that death was a door into the divine. You will be carried through the door, but on a stretcher, unconscious. You have missed a great opportunity again.

That's why we go on forgetting about our past lives. If you die consciously you will not forget, because there will be no gap, there will be a continuity. You will remember your past life -- and to remember the past life is of great import. If you can remember your past life you will not commit the same mistakes again. Otherwise you will go on moving in a vicious circle -- the same cycle, the same wheel will move again and again. You will cherish the same ambitions again and you will commit the same foolishnesses again, because you will think this is the first time you are doing them...

You have done them millions of times -- but each time you died a gap appeared, because you were unconscious. You became discontinuous with your past. Then life starts from ABC again.

That's why you cannot evolve into Buddhas. Evolution needs a continuous awareness of the past, so that the same mistakes are no more committed. Slowly slowly, mistakes disappear. Slowly slowly, you become aware of the vicious circle; slowly slowly, you become capable of getting out of it too.

If you die unconsciously you will be born unconsciously -- because death is one side of the door, birth is the other side of the same door. From one side the door says 'Death', from another side it says 'Birth'. It is the entrance, it is the exit -- it is the same door.

That's why you were born but don't remember it. You don't remember those nine months in the womb, you don't remember your passing through the birth canal, you don't remember the agony that you went through, you don't remember your birth trauma. And that birth trauma goes on affecting you: your whole life will remain affected by your birth trauma.

That trauma has to be understood. But the only way to understand it is to remember it. And how to remember it? You are so afraid of death, you are so afraid of birth, that the very fear prevents you from going into it.

Devabhakta, you say: THE STRONGEST EMOTION THAT I HAVE IS HATING DEATH.

It is your hating life. Love life, and then a natural love for death arises too. Because it is life that brings death. Death is not against life, death is the flowering of all that life contains in it as a seed. Death does not come from the blue -- it grows in you, it is your flowering, you bloom.

Have you ever seen a real man dying? It is very rare to see a real man dying, but if you have, you will be surprised that death makes the person so beautiful. He has never been so

beautiful before -- neither in his childhood, because then he was ignorant, nor in his youth, because then passion was too much of a fever. But when death comes, all is relaxed. The foolishness of childhood is no more there, and the madness of youth is also gone, and the miseries of old age, the illnesses and the limitations of old age, are also gone. One is being freed from the body. A great joy arises from the innermost core, spreads all over.

In the eyes of the real man dying you can see a flame which is not of this world. And in his face you can see a grandeur which is of God. And you can feel the silence, the non-struggling silence, the non-resistant silence of the man who is slipping, slowly slowly, into death with a deep gratitude and acceptance, for all that life has given to him and for all that God has been so generous with. A gratitude surrounds him.

You will find a totally different space around him. He will die as one SHOULD die. And he will release such freedom that those who are close by will be simply stoned on that freedom, will be transported.

In the East, it has always been a great point: whenever a master dies, thousands, sometimes millions of people gather to watch that great phenomenon -- just to be there in the vicinity, to be close by, to see the ultimate fragrance being released, to see the last song that the man is going to sing, and to see the light that comes when the body and soul separate. It is dazzling; it is a great illumination.

Now scientists know perfectly well that if you divide the atom, great energy is released by the division, by the split. Much greater energy is released when the body and soul are divided. They have been together for millions of lives -- now suddenly the moment has come when they will be divided. In that division, great energy is released. That energy release can become a tidal wave for those who want to ride on it. They will have great ecstatic experiences.

DON'T HATE DEATH. And I know, it is not only Devabhakta who hates death, it is almost everybody. Because we have been taught a very wrong philosophy -- we have been told that death is against life. It is not. We have been told that death comes and destroys life. That is utter nonsense. Death comes and fulfills life.

If your life has been beautiful, death beautifies it to its ultimate. If your life has been a life of love then death gives you the MAXIMUM experience of love. If your life has been a life of meditation then death will bring you to samadhi. Death only enhances. Of course if your life has been a wrong life then death enhances that too. Death is a great magnifier.

If you have lived only in anger then in death you will see just hell inside you, just fire. If you have lived in hatred then death will magnify hatred. What can death do? Death magnifies, it mirrors -- but you are the culprit. Death is just a mirroring phenomenon.

Don't hate death. Otherwise you will miss death and you will miss life too.

You say: THE STRONGEST EMOTION THAT I HAVE IS HATING DEATH.

You are wasting your strongest emotion unnecessarily. Love life. Never be negative, negatives lead nowhere. Don't hate darkness, love light. Put your total energy into loving. And you will be surprised, you will be taken aback: if you love light, one day you will suddenly recognize that darkness is nothing but a phase of light, a resting phase of light.

Don't hate the world, as you have been told to again and again in the past by your so-called saints. Love life, love this world, because when your love comes to its total intensity you will discover God herenow. He is hidden.

He is hidden in the trees, in the mountains, in the rivers, in people -- in your wife, in your husband, in your children. If you hate life, if you hate the world and you escape from it, you are going away from God.

I teach you affirmation. Affirm. Let your energies be focussed on the positive. The negative is not the way to live; nobody can live in the negative. In the negative, people only commit suicide. All negatives are suicidal. Only affirmation, total affirmation, brings you to reality.

You say: THE STRONGEST EMOTION THAT I HAVE IS HATING DEATH. I WANT TO KILL IT! ONCE AND FOR ALL!

You cannot do it. Nobody can do it -- it is impossible, it is not in the nature of things. The day you were born, death became absolutely certain. Now there is no shirking. Death can be dissolved only when you dissolve birth. You have already died. The day you were born, you died -- because in the birth, death is determined.

If you really want not to die again then you will have to do something so that you are not born again.

That is the whole Eastern approach: how not to be born again. There are ways not to be born again. If desire disappears you will not be coming again. It is desire that brings you into the body; desire is the glue that keeps you glued to the body. One body disappears, and desire creates another body, and so on and so forth.

Dissolve desire, so you will not need any birth. If birth disappears, death disappears of its own accord. Then there is life eternal -- no birth, no death.

Ikkyu says this is the greatest medicine -- the medicine of no birth, no death. This is the taste of the whole Eastern approach, Eastern realization, Eastern insight. But remember, you cannot fight death. YOU can dissolve birth, and then death is dissolved.

But what happens is that ordinarily we love birth, we love life and that's why we hate death. Now you are going into an impossibility -- you will drive yourself crazy.

I WANT TO KILL IT!

If you really want to kill death, accept it. Accept it totally -- and in that very acceptance death disappears. Because you never really die, only the ego dies. And if you accept death totally, you have renounced the ego on your own. Then there is nothing left for death to do; you have done its work on your own.

What can death take from you? It will take your money, it will take your wife, it will take your husband, it will take your relationships, it will take your world. Don't be attached to these things -- then what is left for death to take from you? It will take your ego, your self-identity. The idea that "I exist as a separate being" -- death will take it away.

You can dissolve it. That's what meditation is all about. That's what sannyas is: a conscious, voluntary decision that "I will dissolve this ego, I will not cling to it." If you don't cling to the ego, what is left? You have died already. And only those who have died already, conquer death and attain to life abundant.

THE SECOND THING IS, you say, I FEEL EXTREME PAIN WHEN I REALIZE THAT I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO THANK YOU.

THAT TOO IS PART OF THE EGO. Why should you be worried about thanking me? Your realization will be enough gratitude, you need not use words. Words are very tiny, trivial, mundane. They can't express anything that is really great, authentic, true, inner. How can you express your gratitude towards me?

And whatsoever words you use will look inadequate, will not suffice, will not make you feel contented. They will look like lies. Words are always inadequate in expressing that which is great, that which is infinite. And gratitude is great, and gratitude is infinite -- because gratitude is the ultimate in love.

Even love cannot be expressed through words. That's why lovers have to invent ways to avoid words and express love. They hold hands: that's a way of avoiding words. The warmth that passes through one hand to another hand, the energy that is communicated from one hand to another hand -- the meeting-point of that energy, how can you express it in words?

Lovers have to hug each other -- words won't do it. Lovers have to sit silently for hours, looking at the moon or at the stars or at the sunset. Listening to the birds, just being silent together, silence is more expressive than any expression can be.

If this is so with love, what to say about gratitude? It is impossible to express it.

Devabhakta, you are right. You will not be able to express your gratitude. Only those can express their gratitude who have not really felt anything -- they can easily say thank you. 'Thank you' is good for mundane things: your handkerchief has fallen and somebody takes it up and gives it back to you and you say thank you -- it is relevant.

But if you come close to somebody and he gives you all that you have been hankering for, for lives -- how can you say thank you? It doesn't feel right; it looks almost profane, obscene. You can just be silent. You can bow down, your eyes may have tears, your face may become aflame -- but there will be utter silence. One thing.

The second thing: there is a tragedy of gratitude that has to be understood.

A man once came to me; he is a political leader. He was suffering from insomnia, and he said, "I am not interested in God, I have not come to you for that. And I am not interested in meditation either. MY whole interest is in one thing: if I can sleep well I will be perfectly satisfied. If you can help me to sleep well, you will have done me a great favour."

He was really in a mess. No tranquillizer was helping him; he had been taking great doses and sleep was as far away as ever. I said to him, "Really, you only want this?" He said, "Absolutely this, and nothing else. I will be grateful to you for my whole life if I can have just four or five hours of sleep every night. The whole night I am turning and tossing -- it is agony, it is hell. And the whole day I am tired. I am going mad -- the day is not far away, the nervous breakdown is coming closer every day."

I gave him a small meditation, just an auto-hypnotic meditation: he just had to affirm ten times at night that sleep is coming, and ten times in the morning that sleep is coming. The great law of affirmation.

He looked unbelieving, he was skeptical. He said, "Just this repetition will help?" I said, "Just try, and then after three weeks come to me."

After three weeks he came! His face was different, he looked relaxed. I said, "What has happened?" he said, "Sleep has started happening, but nothing else."

I said to him. "You did not ask for anything else. Do you remember?" He had completely forgotten about it.

Remember, this is the great tragedy of gratitude. When you have a problem, it looks so big. When it disappears, it simply does not matter. He said, "My insomnia has disappeared but nothing else has happened."

And I have come across this again and again. I have been helping people in different ways, but whenever the help has reached a person, whenever a person has been really helped, he forgets to feel grateful. And I understand -- I don't say that he is ungrateful, I understand. The tragedy of gratitude is this: when you have a problem, that is your whole world. When a person cannot sleep the whole night, that is his whole problem -- God is irrelevant, meditation makes no sense, all that he needs is good sleep.

But when you sleep well, do you think you are doing something great? Everybody else is sleeping well -- nobody feels grateful to God. Do you feel grateful to God in the morning when you have slept a good night? You don't feel grateful. When you have good food to eat and a fridge to always depend upon, you don't feel grateful. Just remain hungry for three or four days and you will say, "I am ready to lose everything if I can have a good meal."

If you are lost in a desert and you cannot find water, and somebody gives you just a small cup of water, you will look at him as the saviour. But water was always available to you, and you never even once thanked God: "You have given me so much water." And once you have attained the water you forget all about it; then it doesn't matter.

That's what has been happening in social evolution too. Man has attained many great things but nobody feels grateful. Three thousand years ago there was great slavery in the world; people were being sold like commodities. Even in those days which people think were of golden beauty, of grandeur -- even in Ramarajya in India -- slaves were sold in the markets.

Mahatma Gandhi used to praise Ramarajya very much; he wanted Ramarajya to come into the world again. And he was blissfully unaware that in Ramarajya there was slavery, people were sold in the marketplaces just like cattle. Now nobody is being sold, but do you feel grateful for that? Do you ever think, "How beautiful the world is, there are no more slaves"? No, you don't feel grateful.

That is the tragedy of gratitude. When it is not, when something is not, you feel too much for it. When it is there you forget all about it.

People have lived in poverty for millions of ages, and they were always asking and always praying. The Vedas are full of prayers of poor people: "Give more food. Give more milk to my cow. Yield more crops to my field." But do you think America is happy? For the first time, an affluent society has arisen on the earth. But America seems to be the most miserable country in the world. What has happened? No gratitude? People have forgotten all about it.

India was under slavery for almost one thousand years. And people were boiling -- they were ready to give all that they had to become free. Now they are free, but nobody seems to be grateful that freedom has come. People say, "So what? Yes, we are free -- so what? What has freedom brought to us?"

Man's mind functions in that way. There are many people here who have been transformed from their very roots. But they have forgotten in what agonies they had come to me, and in what ecstasies they are living now. They have completely forgotten; there is no comparison any more. Now they are worried about when they are going to become enlightened.

And I would like to tell you, even if you become enlightened -- and you ARE going to become enlightened one day or other -- then you will say, "Now what? Now what's next?"

This is the tragedy of gratitude.

You ask me, Devabhakta: THE SECOND THING IS, I FEEL EXTREME PAIN WHEN I REALIZE THAT I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO THANK YOU.

No need to be worried about it. I will KNOW. When you are happy, I am tremendously happy with you. Whether you say it or not doesn't matter, your saying it is not going to be of any help. When I see you happy and blooming, radiant, I am happy. With each disciple coming closer to enlightenment, I become enlightened again and again. With each disciple coming closer to reality, I come closer to reality again and again. You need not say it at all -- and don't be worried about it. This worry is also part of the ego game: "I would like to thank you, I would like to do something in return." There is nothing that can be done.

And be relaxed -- because I am not doing anything to you. Whatsoever is going to happen to you will be your own gratefulness to yourself, your own gift to yourself.

The ego plays many games. First it starts thinking how to give thanks, and becomes worried about it. And if the moment comes to give thanks, then the ego thinks, "But what has the master done? It is my own experience that has bloomed in me -- it was going to bloom anyway, the master was just a trigger point. Even if the master was not there, it was going to happen somehow or other, somewhere else with somebody else -- or maybe it would have happened if I had been on my own too."

And then the ego is very cunning, it jumps upon everything. The ways of the ego are very subtle...

Just a few days before, I talked about Sarjano. One evening he came, and he was in such a beautiful state that I gave my feet into his hands and he had a beautiful satori. A door opened -- for a moment he was transported. For one day he remained in great ecstasy. But the next day the ego started coming in, playing games with him.

In fact to be grateful to the master is very difficult. If you can simply be in a state of forgiving the master, that is more than can be expected. If you can forgive the master, that is enough! That's all that I expect from you. It is very difficult to forgive the master...

After just twenty-four hours, Sarjano started going mad. He started writing ugly letters to me as a revenge, because "How do you dare? Who are you to give me this experience?" -- not exactly in those words. He started pretending to be my friend, no more a disciple, because he is enlightened. That small window that opened created great ego in him. He started using abusive words towards me. So what to say about gratefulness? He started thinking that he is now no more a disciple, just a friend -- he has attained to the same state, so why should he be a disciple any more?

And in a subtle way the ego started being violent. His letters became more and more ugly and nasty. And all the time meanwhile he must have been thinking that he was just being Zen-ish. It is not so easy to be Zen-ish.

Many times it happens that I have to resist the temptation of giving you a glimpse. Many times I see that you are just on the verge -- just a small push, and you will have a great experience. But if I see that the ego is lingering behind, if I give you the push and you attain to some experience the ego will immediately jump on it, will take possession if it, will drive you berserk.

I have to wait, I have to wait long. Slowly slowly, that door has to be opened -- you may not be able to absorb the light, so much light, suddenly. That's what happened to Sarjano.

Forget all about gratitude. If you can forgive me, that is enough, more than I expect from

you. When you become enlightened, please forgive me.

And you also ask: IS THERE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE TWO THINGS? -- MY HATE FOR DEATH AND MY EXTREME PAIN WHEN I REALIZE THAT I WILL NOT BE ABLE TO THANK YOU.

Yes, there is a connection, because both are deaths. And the first is not such a great death as the second. The disciple has to die in the master -- and then there remains nobody to be grateful. That is enlightenment, when there is nobody found inside you. Who is going to be grateful? and to whom?

The disciple, when he disappears, also comes to know that the master has never been there -- he has disappeared long before. These are two emptinesses meeting, embracing each other. Who is to be grateful? and to whom?

The second question:

WHY DO I CONTINUOUSLY THINK OF COMMITTING SUICIDE?

YOU MUST BE INTELLIGENT. Only stupid people never think of suicide. Life is so ugly, life is such a hell. It is very difficult to find an intelligent person who never thinks of committing suicide. The more intelligent you are, the more the idea will be coming again and again: Why go on living? for what? for this same rut? -- going to the office every day, doing the same files every day, coming back every day, talking about the same things, reading the same newspaper, listening to the same stupid radio station... going to sleep, just to get up early in the morning and catch the train to the office....

And so on and so forth, every day, year in and year out. Only a very very mediocre person can go on living. Otherwise, one day or other, the idea arises: "What am I doing here? If this is the way life goes, I have lived for forty years repeating the same thing, I may live forty years more, repeating the same things again -- then what? Then why not stop this game? Why not return the ticket to God and say, "I am finished. Enough is enough!"

The idea of suicide comes to everybody. That's why it is only man who thinks of suicide -- no other animal. It is only man who ponders over the idea of suicide, and sometimes commits suicide. It simply shows intelligence and nothing else.

And particularly in the modern society, man thinks more of suicide -- because modern society has become more mature, more intelligent, more educated, more sophisticated. In the old days, people were not thinking of suicide so much, for many reasons. In the old days, people were not individuals. They belonged to groups, castes, religions, countries. They had no individual existence as such -- and only individuals can commit suicide, remember.

When you have the idea that you are an individual, then the possibility opens up: you can destroy yourself. In the past, man has lived as part of a collective mind. And a collective mind is not a very intelligent mind. The collective mind lives according to the lowest denominator -- it cannot reach to the highest peaks of understanding, of vision, of seeing. The collective mind lives in a meaningless rut, thinking that this is meaningful -- because everybody else is doing the same, so it must be meaningful.

The modern mind is at a loss, the meaning is lost. You have to decide your own meaning. In the old days, when a son was born to a carpenter then he was going to be a carpenter. It was decided, already decided. His parents, his parents' parents... as far back as one could

remember, they have always been carpenters. So he is a carpenter -- he knows his identity, who he is. He knows what he has to do. The society prescribes every rule, every regulation, he has simply to follow it. It is living below individuality -- and nobody can think of suicide when you live below individuality.

When you start becoming an individual, when you start standing on your own, then suddenly you see the point: "What is the purpose of it all? What am I doing here?"

Secondly, in the modern world, everybody has to choose his own identity. That is a great effort. And when you choose your own identity it is always with a suspicion -- it may be right, it may not be right. In the old days, when a man was born to a brahmin family he knew that he was a brahmin. There was no need to think about it, it was predetermined. All was given to him as a blueprint -- he had just to live it. The whole script was supplied by the society, he was just an actor in a drama.

Now the problem is more complicated. You have to write the drama, you have to create the stage, you have to find the actors. You are the director and the actor and the story-writer and the song-writer. You are the stage -- and not only that, you are the audience too. How can you be absolutely certain who you are? Modern man is living continuously in what psychoanalysts call "the identity crisis".

In the old days, the authority was there to tell you what was right and what was wrong. You were not left on your own to decide. Things were clear-cut: "This is right and that is wrong." People followed the authorities.

Now authorities have disappeared, the world is living in a kind of freedom. The more a society is free, the more people will think of suicide. the more a society is free, the more people will COMMIT suicide.

In the East, particularly in India, the so-called religious saints feel very very enhanced by the idea that the suicide rate in India is very low compared to America. And they think America is committing suicide because it is materialist. They are utter fools -- America is committing suicide more because America has more freedom. America is more tense, in anxiety, because America is creating individuality. India is not yet that free; India still lives in the past. America is trying to live in the present AND in the future -- hence the problem: anguish.

America is paralyzed. Because when you have to decide on your own what is right and what is wrong, and there are no more absolute criterions left -- no Vedas, no Manu, no Moses, no Mahavir, nobody saying to you "This is right" -- you have to decide on your own. Hesitation arises, confusion arises.

Freedom is always confusing. A slave lives in a relaxed way; he need not worry -- whatsoever the master says, he follows. He has no anxiety. If it is wrong, the master is responsible. If it is right, the master knows. He is just to follow. His is not to ask why -- he has to do and die. He is a mechanical robot.

I have heard:

In the novel MOTHER NIGHT Kurt Vonnegut portrays the desperate woman Resi beseeching her lover thus:

"Then tell me what to live for -- anything at all. It does not have to be love. Anything at all!" She gestured at objects around the shabby room, dramatizing exquisitely the sense of the world's being a junk shop. "I will live for that chair, that picture, that furnace pipe, that couch, that crack in the wall! Tell me to live for it, and I will!" she cried. "Just tell me what it should be!"

There is nobody to tell you. In the old days, everything was told to you, nothing was left to you. Parents were telling you, "Marry this woman." Astrologers were deciding that this was the right woman for you, and you were marrying a certain woman because your parents decided, the astrologer decided, your birth chart decided. You were not deciding yourself. When you were not deciding, there was no anxiety.

Now you have to decide yourself. There are millions of women in the world -- whom to choose? How to decide whether this woman is going to be a heaven or a hell? There is no way to predict. One is in a turmoil. The profession has to be decided -- to which to belong? Religions have no more grip; a Christian does not really feel like belonging to the church. Now all the ground underneath your feet has disappeared.

Unless you are an absolutely mediocre person, it will be very difficult for you not to think of suicide. Suicide seems to be a great release -- a release from anxiety, a release from choosing, a release from alternatives.

In the novel CAT'S CRADLE one character holds that "We doodely do, what we muddily must, until we bodily bust."

If you are a person like that, then there is no question of suicide. Intelligence thinks about whether life is worth living; intelligence never takes anything for granted.

So the first thing I would like to tell you... you ask: WHY DO I CONTINUOUSLY THINK OF COMMITTING SUICIDE?... is that you are an intelligent person. Don't feel guilty, every intelligent person thinks that way. This is the beginning of intelligence, although not the end. And by committing suicide, nothing is changed. You will be born again, and the whole nonsense will start, from ABC. That is pointless. When you are thinking of suicide, that simply says you are thinking that this life that you have lived up to now is not worth living.

But there are possibilities in it which you have not tried yet. I say to you: This life can become a great joy. It became a great joy to Krishna, it became a great ecstasy to Christ, it became a jubilation to Buddha, it is a benediction to me -- why can it not be so to you?

And all these people had been thinking of suicide, remember. To think of suicide is to grope for sannyas. To think of suicide simply means THIS life is finished -- but there are other alternative lives possible. One need not destroy this beautiful gift of God. The life that you have lived is not the only alternative. It can be lived in a thousand and one ways -- there are other ways to live it.

You may have lived a life without love. Why not try love? You may have lived a life obsessed with money. Why not live a life unobsessed with money? You may have lived a life which hankers to possess. Now live a life which is not worried about possessing anything. You may have lived a life of respectability -- you may have always been considering what people think about you, what their opinion is. There is a life to live without bothering what others are thinking about you; there is a life to live individually and rebelliously.

There is a life to live which is of adventure and not of social conformity. There is a life of meditation, of God, of search, of going within. You may have lived an outside life, chasing this and chasing that. I make available to you another life of not chasing anything, but sitting silently, disappearing within your being. A life of interiority.

And you will be surprised -- the whole idea of suicide will disappear like dewdrops in the morning sun, and you will stumble upon a life which is eternal.

Albert Camus has said:

"What counts is not the best living, but the MOST living. To two men living the same number of years, the world always provides the same sum of experiences. It is up to us to be conscious of them. Being aware of one's life, one's revolt, one's freedom, and to the maximum, is living, and to the maximum.

Become free of your so-called life that you have lived up to now. Don't commit suicide! Let your past commit suicide. Start living afresh, moment to moment. Don't live in desires, but live in a kind of desirelessness.

You have lived a life of strain, effort, struggle. Now start living a life of relaxation, calm and quiet. And you will be surprised -- you have been missing life, not because life is worthless. You have been missing life because you have been taught to live a worthless kind of life.

The third question

I AM NOW A SANNYASIN, BUT WHY DO I GO ON THINKING IN THE SAME OLD WAYS?

THE OLD HABITS DIE HARD. Just becoming a sannyasin on the outside is not going to change your inner patterns of living, thinking, being. The outer sannyas is only a gesture -- a beginning, not the end. You will have to do much.

The outer sannyas is only a gesture that you are ready to change. Now much work is ahead of you. Old habits are not just on the surface. It is not only a question of changing your clothes -- they help, certainly they help, but that is not enough. You will have to change your very gestalt of consciousness.

Otherwise, people go on living in the old ways. Behind new labels, behind new names, they continue to be the old persons.

So don't feel satisfied with just becoming a sannyasin. You have entered -- now much has to be done. Inch by inch, your past has to be taken away from you. And inch by inch, you have to destroy old wrong patterns of being.

I have heard:

There were three partners altogether in the firm. They were in the business of garment manufacture, and it seemed that nothing they did could come out right. It was a disaster. If they would cut plaid, it would be solids that season. They would cut wools, and it would be cottons. They would make midi dresses, it would be separates. They could steal a Paris original, and if they cut it, it would be the disaster of the year.

You can imagine then how much more discouraging it was that just one floor above them was "The Company That Couldn't Go Wrong". Right upstairs was a company that, if they cut something, no matter how crazy the thing was, it would be automatically a hit! They couldn't do anything wrong! No matter what they cut, it was a success.

No wonder then, that one of the partners of the failing firm, Harry -- may God rest his soul -- went out of his mind and decided to commit suicide from the roof. Of course, it was ironic that he had to fall past his competitors one floor above, and as he went by their window he happened to look inside.

That was how come, as he plunged down to the ground, the other two partners could hear his haunting voice, crying: "Nathan! Sam! Cut velvets!"

Now, he is dying... But the old mind, even at the moment of death, persists. The mind does not leave you so easily. How can it leave you so easily? -- you have been cultivating it for so long; your whole life has been a cultivation of it.

Slowly slowly, you have to become aware of your old patterns and you have to stop cooperating with them. It lives on your cooperation, this much is certain. And this is the only hope: if you don't cooperate with the mind it dies of its own accord. You nourish it. Don't nourish it any more -- that is one thing.

And the second thing: if you don't nourish it any more and you don't create a NEW gestalt of being, you will be in difficulty. You will be left with so much energy that it will become restless in you, it will drive you crazy. So two things have to be remembered: don't cooperate with the old pattern, and start creating a new gestalt in your being so that your energy goes on being absorbed in that new gestalt.

Many people try to change the old, without understanding the mechanism of energy. Somebody wants to change a certain habit, and he fights with it -- but he does not know that that habit contains a lot of energy in it. If that energy is released he will feel restless.

Have you not tried it? You have been smoking for long, and you want to stop it, because the Surgeon General says that cigarettes are harmful for your health. And I know the Surgeon General himself smokes, but that is another matter. They are harmful to your health, so you stop smoking. But there was a great energy involved in smoking, a great restlessness was being released through smoking. Have you not observed it? Whenever you feel restless you start smoking -- your restlessness has an outlet through smoking. Whenever you are tense, nervous, you start smoking -- your nervousness, your tension, is released through smoking. If you stop smoking, where will you put your nervousness? Where will your restlessness go? It will boil within you.

That's what is felt as an urge. You start feeling a great urge to smoke. You will have to put this energy to some more creative work: start painting, sculpt, play guitar, sing a song, or dance, or meditate -- do something! Whenever you want to change a habit, create a more beautiful gestalt -- more creative, more enhancing to life, more divine. And you will never be in trouble.

If you simply want to stop smoking you are bound for trouble. You will have to do something else -- you may start chewing gum, which is as foolish as smoking. Or you may start chewing PAN, which is even more foolish. But you will have to do something or other, you will have to substitute it with something, unless you find a creative outlet for the energy.

So watch what you want to change. I don't know exactly what you want to change...

You say: I AM NOW A SANNYASIN, BUT WHY DO I GO ON THINKING IN THE SAME OLD WAYS?

Because you have not yet created new and better ways to think. Create new and better ways to think. Life gives immense opportunities.

It is said that Adolf Hitler in the beginning wanted to become an artist, he wanted to become a painter. But he was refused admission into the art academy and so the great calamity happened in the world. If he had been accepted by the art academy he would have become a painter. But he could not create -- and he had the energy, and the energy was

boiling; it was like a volcano in him. It burst forth into destructiveness.

If you are following some wrong, unhealthy, neurotic, destructive habits, the only reason is, you have not been able to find some creative outlets for your energy. And then the familiar persists -- then the familiar becomes automatic, autonomous. When a person starts smoking, it becomes autonomous. He simply takes the cigarette out, starts smoking it, not at all aware what he is doing. It simply happens robot-like; it is robopathology. If he becomes aware of what he is doing, he may not smoke. If he becomes aware of why he is smoking, what is the root cause behind it, he may be able to change it.

Psychoanalysts say that people smoke, more or less, because they could not drink from their mother's breast long enough. Smoking is a substitute -- the mothers did not allow the children to be fed at the breast, and the child wanted to be fed on the breast. It was taken away from the child; now a substitute has to be found. A cigarette is really a very very similar phenomenon -- it looks like the nipple when you take it, and the hot smoke going in looks almost like hot milk. It relaxes you.

Have you not watched? A child is crying, is restless: the mother gives the breast to the child and he falls asleep. It is soothing. Cigarettes are soothing.

Watch, go deep into your patterns. Something can be done then -- something can be of immense help and the pattern can be changed. My own experience here is that whenever somebody asks me "How to drop smoking?" I tell him, every night before going to sleep, to suck at a false tit, a pacifier. And in the daytime also, when the urge arises, drink milk out of a bottle -- just as if you are sucking at your mother's breast. And it works miraculously. Within a few days, the desire to smoke disappears.

You will have to look into your patterns. Why do you think in a certain way? Why has a certain habit taken possession of you? You cannot simply drop it, because it has roots in you -- and roots go deep and they persist.

I have heard:

A man was starting out in the business of prostitution. He found three women to work for him. The first was a beautician, the second was a telephone operator, and these two were very pretty. The third was a public school teacher who was rather plain. He had his doubts about her.

After some time, he noticed that most of the business came from the teacher, and it really puzzled him. So he eavesdropped.

First he heard the beautician tell her customer to please be careful because he was messing up her hair and make-up. Certainly that could put a man off.

Then he heard the telephone operator tell her customer, "Sorry sir, your three minutes are up." Her attitude was even worse.

Then he listened in on the school teacher, and heard, "No, no, no! You'll have to do it over and over until you get it right!"

Habits die hard. You may have become a sannyasin -- don't think this is the end. This is the beginning of the work; much has to be done now. Don't rest contented with it.

Sannyas is just the beginning -- it gets you into the trouble of transformation. Now you will have to go deep into your mind grooves. You will have to look deep, you will have to see why something is there -- why? You will have to find out the cause of it.

And sometimes it happens, just knowing the cause, ninety percent of problems disappear. And with the ten percent that remain, your energy will need alternative outlets.

And the last question

OSHO, DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?

I AM A MIRACLE, you are a miracle, everything is a miracle. Only miracles exist, nothing else exists. Look again, afresh, and you will see the whole life consists only of miracles.

Have you seen anything in life which is not a miracle? A seed sprouting -- what more of a miracle do you want? A bird on the wing and the stars in the night and the smile on a child's face, and the possibility of love and the possibility of ecstasy and the possibility of knowing God -- miracles and miracles. Miracles abound.

But you must be thinking of some other foolish kind of things that you call miracles. I have heard:

Once Jesus was going to give a sermon from a boat on Lake Galilee. The boat was stopped a little farther into the lake.

Jesus entered the lake, walking on the water, and asked some of his disciples to follow him towards the boat. As they moved into the lake, one disciple started to get in trouble -- all the others were following Jesus walking on the water, but he was getting drowned.

He was very faithful, and kept moving... and the water was getting deeper and deeper. When the water came close to his mouth and he was almost lost, he shouted: "Master, Master, please save me!"

Jesus looked back and said, "Peter! Show this stupid the way on the rocks, otherwise he will get drowned!"

This is a true story, not related in the Bible. But I say to you on reliable sources, this is true.

Miracles are all around. You need not walk on water, you need not walk in fire.

There is a story by Mark Twain about a man going to heaven. When he arrived, he was given a pair of wings and a harp, and for a few days he used the wings as a way of moving about, and plucked on the strings of the harp trying to get some celestial music out of it. Both were pretty much of a bother, and finally he realized that in heaven you don't actually need wings to go any place; and simply by desiring heavenly music, the celestial musicians appear and commence to play. So he put down the wings and the harp, and began to enjoy himself.

And this is the true story of life. You need not have wings to fly, and you need not play on any harp, any foolish harp, to create celestial music. All is available! Just open your eyes. You ARE on the wings, and the music is already there. Just open your eyes, open your ears, be available.

And you will be surprised -- miracles are happening every single moment. Nothing else ever happens.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #10

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THE MIND WHICH IS UNATTACHED
TO ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD,
DOES NOT THINK, DOES NOT FEEL,
IS FLUID AND FLEXIBLE.

ALL BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS
ACHIEVE BUDDHAHOOD AND NIRVANA
AS A RESULT
OF THE MERCIFUL VOW.

THE BUDDHA-NATURE
MEANS NON-BIRTH, NON-EXTINCTION;
THEN KNOW THAT ILLUSION
IS BIRTH, DEATH, REINCARNATION.

THOUGH YOU PRACTISE VIRTUE,
DO NOT GRIEVE THAT MISFORTUNE ARISES;
THE GUILTY KARMA
OF THE PREVIOUS WORLD
IS VANISHING AWAY.

WHEN THEY ARE NOT TWO THINGS,
THEY ARE NOT ONE THING,
AND THE WIND
IN THE INDIAN-INK PICTURE
IS COOL INDEED.

WHY ARE PEOPLE CALLED BUDDHAS
AFTER THEY DIE?
BECAUSE THEY DON'T GRUMBLE ANY MORE,
BECAUSE THEY DON'T MAKE A NUISANCE
OF THEMSELVES ANY MORE.

THE MESSAGE OF THE BUDDHA CAN BE CONDENSED INTO ONE WORD. That word is freedom. Freedom, absolute and unconditional. Freedom not only from outer bondage but from inner too. Freedom not only from others but from oneself too.

Other religions also talk about freedom, but not in that penetrating sense in which Buddha talks about it. Other religions talk about freedom in the sense that the self has to be free. Buddha talks in a diametrically opposite sense, with a new dimension to it. He says: One has to be free from the self itself.

The self is bondage. You are not in bondage because of others, you are in bondage because of yourself. Unless YOU disappear, bondage will continue. It may change forms, it may become modified here and there, it may become more convenient, comfortable, but it will remain.

The moment you disappear, the moment you see yourself as an absolute emptiness, who can make a slave of you? How can emptiness be reduced to slavery? When you are not, how can you be imprisoned? When you are not, freedom is total. Freedom from the self is real freedom.

These sutras are of immense value. Remember, when Buddha talks about freedom he does not mean the ordinary freedom talked about by the politicians, by the priests, and others. The social and the political freedom is: you are completely free as long as you think, act, dress, earn, speak and buy like everybody else. You are free, AS LONG AS... And the conditions are so many that the freedom remains bogus.

You can't be free unless absolutely whatsoever happens spontaneously in you is allowed and accepted. Man has been programmed, you have been given blueprints -- what to be, how to be, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. And those programmes have been put so deep down in your being that you have become unconscious of them. It appears as if you are acting out of freedom; you have been tremendously deceived.

Even when you think you are acting out of freedom, even when you think you are acting out of your own conscience, you are not. The society is controlling you in a very subtle way. The moment the child is born, the society starts programming the child. The society treats you like a computer; it goes on feeding and programming you. By the time you become a little alert, you are already programmed -- you are already a Christian or a Hindu or a Jain. You are already fixed; you are no more liquid, you are no more flowing. And you will function out of this fixity, out of this obsession, that the society has put inside you.

It is like an electrode put inside your brain. You will not know anything about it, but it will control you. That's what conscience is.

Buddha is absolutely against conscience. He is all for consciousness, but never for conscience. That's his revolution. His religion is the most revolutionary religion that has happened in the world up to now. He frees you from conscience. To be free from conscience is to be free from politics, society, religions, ethical codes...

But man becomes very afraid: so much freedom? A great panic arises in you -- because you have been taught that basically you are bad; unless you are taught to be right, forced to be right, you will be bad. Down the ages, this nonsense has been put into everybody's head, that man is naturally evil, that goodness has to be practised, cultivated, that saintliness is not a natural phenomenon, that it comes out of arduous effort. The evil is natural and the good is unnatural. For the good you have to work hard. For the evil you need not work at all, it will take possession of you. God has to be achieved through great cultivation of prayer, yoga, meditation. And evil -- the Devil? He is always available to you.

This is an utterly wrong picture of human nature. Just the opposite is true: God is natural,

evil is unnatural.

This is the dignity Buddha brings to humanity, this is the grandeur that he introduces you to again. This is your inheritance, natural inheritance. Buddha says: Man is naturally good. Nobody wants to be bad -- if people are bad, they have been FORCED to be bad. Love is natural, compassion is natural, mercy is natural. Hatred, murderous instincts, are not natural; they are perverted, enforced, compelled. When a person is compelled he becomes bad -- he HAS to become bad just to survive. Otherwise natural spontaneous flowering happens of its own accord.

Conscience is the effort of the society to make something good out of you. Consciousness is not an effort to make something good out of you, consciousness is just allowing your suchness to bloom.

The first sutra:

THE MIND WHICH IS UNATTACHED
TO ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD,
DOES NOT THINK, DOES NOT FEEL,
IS FLUID AND FLEXIBLE.

THIS IS FREEDOM: a mind which is fluid and flexible. How can a Christian mind be fluid and flexible? How can a Hindu be fluid and flexible? He already has fixed ideas about reality, about himself, about how life should be. He cannot be fluid, he cannot be free. He has accepted a certain bondage of ideology; he has started living in a prison. He may call that prison his church or his temple, he may call that prison the sacred Vedas, the holy Bible -- whatsoever you want to call your prison, you can call it. These are good names. Behind good names you hide the ugly reality.

A really alive person can't be a Hindu, can't be a Mohammedan, can't be a Buddhist. A really alive person is simply alive, flowing, available, responsive, spontaneous. He lives in suchness. He is like a mirror -- he has no fixed idea; whatsoever is encountered is reflected in its totality, in its trueness, in its authenticity.

How to attain such a mind? Every child brings such a mind into the world. No child is born in any ideology, with any ideology. All children are born innocent, pure, unpolluted, mirror-like. But the society immediately jumps on them, grabs them, starts writing on their clean consciousnesses, creates CONSCIENCE -- helps them to become attached to certain things, helps them to be against certain other things, starts giving them a shape.

Freedom is a kind of formlessness. Bondage is a form. Bondage has a clarity, remember, because bondage can have a definition. Freedom is vague, nebulous, cannot have a certain shape. It changes, it changes with the situation. It remains mobile -- it is a process, it is not a thing. And it is a dynamism, not a dead defined phenomenon.

Freedom is indefinable, unpredictable. You can predict the life of a prisoner, you cannot predict the life of a free man. One never knows what tomorrow is going to bring, one never knows how he will act tomorrow, how he will respond -- because he never responds from the past. And only the past is available for us. We can judge only from the past, and his future is never a continuity of the past.

The prisoner lives according to the past; he has a character. His future is going to be nothing but an extension of the past -- he is predictable.

It is said in Eastern ancient scriptures that astrology can be of help to a person who is still unconscious, but it is absolutely meaningless about a Buddha. A mechanical person can be

predicted: his past is available, and his future is not going to be very very different from it -- maybe a little bit different here and there, in details, but the general trend is fixed.

But a man of awareness is absolutely unpredictable. How he will react, respond, nobody knows. He HIMSELF does not know it -- remember it. How can he know? How can the mirror know what is going to be reflected in it next moment? Whether a cloud will pass, or a man or a woman or a child -- who knows? And nobody may pass, it may remain empty -- then it will reflect emptiness.

The unconscious man is like a painted picture, fixed. The conscious man is only a mirror. There is a very beautiful Sufi parable:

It happened that in a great king's court a Taoist painter arrived. And he said he could do something which nobody else could do. The painter of the king's court was offended; he said, "I am ready to accept the challenge. We both will do paintings and then the king can judge."

The king was also intrigued. He knew his painter -- he was one of the rarest, the best of his country -- he believed that his painter would defeat this Chinese. Six months' time was given.

They started painting. The Chinese covered his wall with a curtain and would not allow anybody to look inside at what he was doing. And just in front of the wall on another wall, the other painter was doing a great painting, and everybody was allowed to see what was happening.

Six months passed and the whole capital knew that their painter was going to win. He had never done something like this -- it was unique, it was so alive.

And the final day came and the king arrived and he looked at his painter's painting. It was unique. He said, "Nobody can defeat you. I cannot comprehend that that Chinese will be able to do something better than this -- it is impossible, it is HUMANLY impossible. You have done the last thing.' It was so alive.

And then the curtains were opened, and the king was puzzled. The Chinese had not done any painting. He had simply rubbed and rubbed the wall and made a mirror out of it. For those six months he had been trying to convert the wall into a mirror, and now it was a mirror. And it was mirroring the painting of the other painter. There was no painting on it, but there was depth -- because the other painting was flat. This painting was three-dimensional, because the painting was reflected deep into the wall. It had depth, it had a beauty.

And the king said, "You have defeated my man. But you cheated us -- you have not painted anything."

And the Chinese said, "But this is what we call REAL painting -- to create a mirror. His painting is dead! My painting will remain dynamic, it will change as the seasons change. It will be an alive phenomenon, it will have many moods. Come evening, and it will have a different colour to it. Come the morning, the sun rising, and it will have a different colour to it. And come the night... My painting is not a dead thing, I have made something alive."

The Chinese painter was a Taoist; he knew that only a mirror can be alive. You can make a beautiful painting -- howsoever beautiful it may be, it is still dead, it is stagnant. Only a mirror can remain flowing.

Each child is born with this mirror. But immediately we start imposing paintings on the child's mirror. We don't accept his freedom. Not yet in the history of humanity has that fortunate moment come when we can accept the freedom that a child brings again and again

into the world. He brings the freedom of God, he brings Buddhahood again and again. But we crush that Buddhahood. We immediately start defining him, we immediately start making him a fixed phenomenon, because we want a predictable man.

We are afraid of unpredictable people, we start creating character. We are afraid of consciousness, we create conscience. We destroy beauty, grandeur, splendour. Then you see these ordinary people all over the world; then you see this mediocre stupid world.

And behind each mediocre mind is a Buddha. And behind each stupid mind is a mirror-like phenomenon. It can be rediscovered. How to rediscover it?

THE MIND WHICH IS UNATTACHED
TO ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD,
DOES NOT THINK, DOES NOT FEEL,
IS FLUID AND FLEXIBLE.

This is the sutra to discover it again. If you are attached to anything, you are fixed. A mirror cannot afford attachment. You are standing before the mirror: while you are standing there you are being reflected, reflected totally. The mirror is joyous in reflecting you; the mirror celebrates you, your presence. But the moment you are gone, you are gone. The mirror does not cling to your picture. The mirror does not create a memory of you; the mirror will never think of you again. The mirror will never have any nostalgia, the mirror will never think, "How beautiful a person he was! And when is he going to come again?" And the mirror will not follow you -- not even in thought, not even in dreams. The moment you disappear, you have disappeared.

This is non-attachment. When you are there, you are there. The mirror lives you, loves you, welcomes you, takes you to its very heart. But the moment you are gone, you are gone -- the mirror is empty again. This is the whole secret of non-attachment: live in the world, but don't be of the world. Love people, but don't create attachments. Reflect people, reflect the beauties of the world -- and there are so many. But don't cling. The clinging mind loses its mirrorhood.

And mirrorhood is Buddhahood.

To keep that quality of mirroring continuously fresh is to remain young, is to remain pure, is to remain innocent. Know, but don't create knowledge. Love, but don't create desire. Live, live beautifully, live utterly, abandon yourself in the moment. But don't look back. This is the art of non-attachment.

And that's where we go on missing. You love a woman, and then one day she is gone, gone with somebody else. Or, if not with somebody else, she is still with you but no more with you. Her heart no more throbs for you; that bridge is broken. Or she is dead -- a thousand and one things are possible. Or maybe she still loves you, is not dead, has not left you, but your heart no longer beats with her heart. Suddenly that joy in her being has disappeared from you. It came from the blue, it came from nowhere -- suddenly one day it was there, and another day it is gone. It came like the wind, and you were thrilled with the new breeze. And now the wind blows no more. The woman is there, she still loves you, but your heart no longer responds.

What to do? Go on clinging? Go on thinking of the past? Go on imagining about the future? Go on hoping against all hope that something will happen again? that some day that wind will come again, that some day clouds will disappear and the sun will be shining?

Then you are getting entangled, and you are losing that purity of being a mirror. Hence all misery.

Misery is nothing but the shadow of attachment. And hence all stagnancy. The attached person becomes a stagnant pool -- sooner or later he will stink. He flows no more.

The flow keeps you pure. Yes, these banks are beautiful, but the river goes on flowing. Yes, these trees are beautiful and these birds are beautiful. But the river goes on flowing. The river is utterly thankful, grateful, but it doesn't stop, it doesn't become a stagnant pool. So should be the river of consciousness.

THE MIND WHICH IS UNATTACHED
TO ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD...

And remember, you cannot choose: "I will not be attached to these things, I will be attached only to THESE things." Even if you are attached to one single thing, that is enough to destroy your mirror-like quality. That is enough to keep you from moving, that is enough to destroy the flow.

And remember also, not only the things of THIS world, but the things of the so-called other world will also hinder you, will destroy your spontaneity. Remember: Never be attached.

Now, even the so-called religious people are very much attached. If a Hindu passes by a church, he does not bow down to the church -- his God does not live there. If he passes by a Hindu temple, he immediately bows down with such reverence. But his reverence is false, pseudo; his reverence is impotent. If the reverence was real then why didn't it happen when he was passing by a mosque or a church or a gurudwara?

God is everywhere. Why this confinement? Does God only exist in a Hindu temple? Then God is a prisoner. Because people are prisoners, their gods have also become prisoners. The reverence is not true, it has not happened yet: it is just an empty gesture. If he has come to see the beauty, the existence of God, then he will bow down everywhere, anywhere -- wherever he has an occasion to bow down, he will not miss the opportunity. He will bow down beside a rosebush, because God has happened as a rose. And he will bow down to a child who is giggling, because it is God and nobody else who is giggling.

Real reverence has nothing to do with the OBJECT of reverence. Real reverence is something inside you, flowing.

Don't be attached to the things of the world, and don't be attached to the things of the other world, because things are things. It makes no difference whether they are of this world or the other world -- attachment is the problem.

I have heard a strange story. I hope that it is not true, but I suspect that it IS true.

A very famous Hindu saint, Tulsidas, was taken into a Krishna temple. Now, he was a follower of Rama: when he was taken inside the Krishna temple he would not bow down. And the friend who had taken him there said, "You are not bowing down to Krishna?" He said, "How can I? I bow down only to Rama. My God is Rama, not Krishna. I can bow down only if the statue of Krishna changes its form and becomes the statue of Rama."

The story goes on: it says the statue of Krishna changed its form and became the statue of Rama. Then Tulsidas bowed down.

The first part seems to be historical, the second part seems to be fictitious -- and not only fictitious but stupid too. Because God cannot concede, agree, to such bartering, to such bargaining. But it shows the mind of the so-called mahatmas. Even a man like Tulsidas, who

has written some of the greatest poetry in the world... He was certainly a great poet, but not a mystic -- a great man of knowledge, but not enlightened. Otherwise how could he have said such a foolish thing? -- "God should take the form of MY deity."

What is he asking? He is saying, "I can bow down only to MY concept of God. God is irrelevant, my concept is more important." This is an ego trip. He is not bowing to God, he is bowing to his own ego.

These are all attachments.

Buddha says:

THE MIND WHICH IS UNATTACHED
TO ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD,
DOES NOT THINK, DOES NOT FEEL,
IS FLUID AND FLEXIBLE.

Ikkyu has put the Buddhist message beautifully in this sutra.

THERE ARE THREE LAYERS in your existence. One is thinking. Deeper than that is feeling. Deeper than that is being. Thinking is the most superficial; being, the most profound. And between the two is feeling.

There are religions which are thinking-oriented -- they create theologies. They create great philosophies, they invent proofs for God -- as if God needs proofs, as if God can be proved or disproved.

Then there are religions of the heart, religions of feeling, which don't create theologies, they create devotion. They are far better than the first -- their prayers are more true, because they are more full of tears. Their expressions are more authentic, because they are less verbal. They dance, they sing, they cry, they weep -- they live through feeling, through the heart.

But Buddha goes even deeper. He says: The head is superficial, the heart is a little deeper but not deep enough. Thinking is in words, thoughts, syllogisms. Feeling is emotions, sentiments. But both are disturbances.

Try to understand this. When your mind is full of thoughts you are distracted, disturbed, pulled apart. And when your mind is not full of thoughts but your heart is throbbing with great feeling, then too you are excited. Then too, you are feverish. Love is a fever -- even love for God creates great passion, stirs you, does not calm you down.

Buddha says: Thoughts distract, feelings distract. Come to the deepest core of your being, where thoughts disappear and feelings too. Then what is left? Simple being. One just is. That is TATHATA, suchness. One simply is -- nothing is stirred; no thought, no feeling, just pure existence. That pure existence has no fever in it, no passion, no movement -- it is not going anywhere, it is not doing anything.

In that moment, time disappears. One transcends time; it is a transcendental moment. In that moment, one comes to know reality as it is.

When you think, you can't see reality as it is, because your thinking becomes a barrier. Your thinking colours reality. When you feel, then too you cannot see reality as it is, because your eyes are full of tears and your heart is full of emotions.

When thinking and feeling both disappear, only then the contact -- the contact with truth.

THE MIND WHICH IS UNATTACHED
TO ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD,
DOES NOT THINK, DOES NOT FEEL,

IS FLUID AND FLEXIBLE.

And then you attain to that freedom, fluidity, flexibility, spontaneity. Then you don't live out of your past and you don't live out of your future. Then you don't have any programme; then you are not a robot. Then you live moment to moment -- as life reveals itself, you live it. And you are always true to life, because you have nothing to come between you and life. Your response is always total, it is never a reaction. You don't have any ready-made answers -- if a question arises, the very arising of the question creates an answer in you. Not that you had the answer already there, and the question only provoked a dead answer that was lying there in your memory.

There is no answer in you, you are simply there. A question comes, and an answer arises -- fresh, young, here-now. That answer is true. No answer as such is true. But the quality of the answer, if it is spontaneous, that quality has truth. See the difference.

A Christian missionary had come to see me, and he was saying, "You go on teaching so many things -- you confuse us. Why don't you create a small book, something like a Christian catechism, in which all the essential questions have been answered? -- so we can know and be certain what you mean."

I said, "That is impossible. By the time the book would be ready, my answers would have changed -- because I don't have fixed answers."

Answers arise as responses -- they depend on the questions. Or, even more, they depend on the questioner. Sometimes it happens, one sannyasin asks a question and I answer him. And another sannyasin asks exactly the same question and I answer him in a totally different way. Because, more than the question, the questioner is important. The question has a context -- the context is in the questioner. You can ask the same question, but no two persons can REALLY ask the same question. How can they ask the same question? They are so different, their roots are so different, their experiences are so different. For millions of lives, they have lived differently. Behind their question is their whole past -- all their experiences, all their misfortunes, curses, blessings, failures, successes. The words may look exactly the same, but they can't be. Behind the words, the beings are different.

When you don't have a certain answer ready-made, then you simply respond -- to the question, to the questioner, to the moment. And then you are true to the moment. Next moment, things will not be the same. It is one thing in the morning, it is another thing in the evening. Today it is one thing -- how can it be the same tomorrow? No catechism is possible.

And all catechisms are false -- because then the question is irrelevant, the answer becomes important and a fixed entity. Then the answer is dead, then it doesn't breathe. Then it has no heart, it has no soul, it is a corpse.

Mind has to be fluid. And when the mind is fluid it has splendour, it has immense beauty. Mind has to be freedom. And when mind is freedom then it is never a small mind. Then it is cosmic. When mind is absolutely free, it is not YOUR mind or MY mind. How can it be yours? and how can it be mine? When mind is freedom it is simply the mind, the mind of all the mind of the trees and the rocks and the stars, you and me. It is cosmic.

When mind is fluid, it is God. When mind is flexible, then mind is no more a bondage.

ALL BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS
ACHIEVE BUDDHAHOOD AND NIRVANA
AS A RESULT

OF THE MERCIFUL VOW.

BUDDHA HAS INSISTED again and again that the greatest pitfall for a meditator is his self-centeredness. It has to be understood. Particularly for those who have come to me as sannyasins, it is of immense import.

A meditator, unconsciously, unknowingly, becomes very self-centered. He thinks only of himself -- his meditation, his joy, his silence, his peace, his experience, his ecstasy, his truth and God. And the problem is, the more you become self-conscious, the less is the possibility of meditation. This is a dilemma -- every meditator has to face it.

Meditation happens only when there is no self. Consciousness is okay, but SELF-consciousness is not okay at all. But whenever you try to be conscious you become self-conscious. You don't know how to make yourself conscious without allowing yourself to become self-conscious. For you, self-consciousness has existed always as consciousness. It is not. Consciousness has no self in it, and self-consciousness has no consciousness in it.

Self-consciousness is just ego. Consciousness is egolessness.

Buddha had a specific device to destroy this dilemma. The device was compassion, mercifulness. Each of his sannyasins had to take a vow: "I will not enter into nirvana unless I have helped all the beings of the world to enter into nirvana." It seems to be almost impossible.

The story is told about Buddha that when he reached the gate of nirvana, the gates were thrown open. Rarely it happens -- millions of years pass before a person comes to the gate. For millions of years the gatekeeper was just waiting and waiting for somebody to come. Rust must have gathered on the gate, it had not been opened for so long, for so many million years. The gatekeeper was happy, he opened the door. But Buddha didn't enter the gate. The gatekeeper asked, "Why are you standing outside? Come in, you are welcome. You have earned it."

Buddha said, "I cannot enter. I have taken a vow: unless all living beings enter into nirvana before me, I cannot enter. I will be the last. So I will have to wait -- you can close the door. And I will have to wait infinitely, because millions and millions of beings are suffering and groping in the dark, trying to come. When they all have passed, when I see that now nobody is left behind, then only will I enter."

This is just a parable, but of immense significance. The meaning is: when you start meditating, don't become too self-conscious. Help, be compassionate. Help others to meditate. And whatsoever you gain out of meditation, shower it on others. Share it -- in sharing, it will grow.

Whenever you meditate and you come upon beautiful spaces, IMMEDIATELY pray to existence: "Let my joy be showered over every being -- conscious, unconscious. I don't want any personal claim over it." When you attain to satori, share. Don't hold then, don't become possessive. If you become possessive you will kill them.

There are things which are immediately killed, the moment you possess them. In your experience there is only one thing that is immediately killed if you possess it -- that is love. Satori is even more so. When you attain to a silent space, a meditative experience inside, don't possess it! This is the vow. Don't say, "This is mine." Don't become egoistic about it, don't start bragging. Don't start walking in a special way, don't start looking at people, thinking, "These poor people, they have not attained yet." Don't start pretending that you are a Buddha.

If you have attained to satori, become more humble, feel more grateful. And share it and

shower it on others. Don't hold it -- it is not a treasure to guard, it is a treasure to be shared. And the more you share, the more will be coming to you. The more you hoard it, you will be surprised one day, to find your fists are empty.

It is like love. You fall in love, love is there dancing -- it is almost tangible, you can touch it. Immediately you start grabbing, you start possessing. And you have killed it! You may not become aware right now, but sooner or later you will see you have killed it.

Love is a bird on the wing -- don't encage it. Samadhi is more so -- you cannot catch hold of it. Enjoy it.

That's why when my sannyasins go back to their countries I always insist, "Go, and let your home become a small center, so that you can share your meditations with people." Become more concerned with others, so your self-concern is lessened. And it happens, if you can forget yourself completely in solving the problems of others, your meditation will come so abruptly, so suddenly one day, you will be surprised, you will be taken aback -- you were not waiting for it, and it is there with all its benediction.

And the contrary is also true: the more you wait for it, the less is the possibility for its coming. It happens again and again: the first time, meditation comes easily. One day, just meditating, and there were no expectations... how could you have expected anything? -- you don't have any experience of it. To expect something, you must first have experienced it. So when people come here for the first time and they are meditating, their meditation is experimental, hypothetical; they are simply playing with it, seeing whether maybe something happens, maybe nothing happens. And it happens. In their playfulness, one day they are possessed by some unknown energy.

But then the problem arises. Now they wait for it every day. And it is not coming, and they become very much agitated, annoyed, irritated, angry: why is it not happening now? It happened to them before, so why is it now not happening? And the more they become annoyed, the less is the possibility for it to happen. They have missed one point: it happened in the first place because they were not expecting it. Now they are expecting it -- and this new element of expectation is the hindrance.

Expect, and you miss. Don't expect, and it comes. It always comes on its own. God is generous, and if you want his generosity you also have to be generous. That is the meaning of the vow.

ALL BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS
ACHIEVE BUDDHAHOOD AND NIRVANA
AS A RESULT
OF THE MERCIFUL VOW.

THE BUDDHA-NATURE
MEANS NON-BIRTH, NON-EXTINCTION;
THEN KNOW THAT ILLUSION
IS BIRTH, DEATH, REINCARNATION.

THE BUDDHA-NATURE is no birth, no extinction. To know inside yourself that you were never born, so how can you die? -- to know this state of eternity is to know Buddha. Buddha has not to be sought in the books of history; you are not to go back twenty-five centuries to find out who this man, Gautam the Buddha, was. Whether he was there or not, doesn't matter. Whether he ever existed as a historical person or not, doesn't matter.

The East has never been concerned with history as such; its concern is far deeper, far

more valuable. Christians are very much worried -- if somebody says that Christ is not a historical person they start fighting, they start proving that he is a historical person. For two thousand years they have been accumulating more and more proofs that he is a historical person. But why this obsession? What difference does it make if Christ is a historical person or not? That is not the real point.

We in the East have never been worried about it. Whether Buddha is historical or not, is not the point. Whether Buddha is EXISTENTIAL or not -- that is the point. Can you penetrate into your being and come to know what Buddha-nature is? Then it is okay. If YOU can know, then why not Gautam Siddhartha? If I can know inside myself that something like Buddhahood happens, then it must have happened to this man known as Gautam Siddhartha.

And this must have happened to many more. It has nothing to do with Gautam Siddhartha as such, it has nothing to do with a person. It is your innermost essence.

THE BUDDHA-NATURE
MEANS NON-BIRTH, NON-EXTINCTION...

If you can come to see something in you which was never born and which is not going to die, you have come across Buddha. This is Buddhahood. YOU are the temple and Buddha resides in you.

Go in. It is not a question of going twenty-five centuries back in time. It is a question of GOING IN, RIGHT NOW. This very moment, Buddhahood can be found. It is immediate. It is not a kind of historical research, it is not archaeology. It is just an inner penetration into your own being.

THEN KNOW THAT ILLUSION
IS BIRTH, DEATH, REINCARNATION.

And once you have known -- and it is so simple to know it because it is so natural -- that one was never born, and if one was never born one cannot ever die, then birth is illusion, a dream you have fallen into. And death is illusion, a dream again, produced by the first dream -- a dream inside a dream. And then reincarnation is also a dream: dreams within dreams.

Just a few days ago, somebody asked a question: "What is the point and significance of past lives? Will it help to remember them?"

Even THIS life has no significance. And those past lives were nothing but almost the same thing repeated again and again. What significance can they have?

See the dream that THIS life of yours is, and you will have seen all the dreams that you have lived before. Dreams have no significance.

And see the difference: in the West, psychoanalysis is very emphatic that dreams have significance. In the East, we say dreams have no significance -- only the dreamer. Dreams are objects; the dreamer is your subjectivity. Dreams go on changing, the dreamer remains the same -- the scenes go on changing but the seer remains the same. The seer has significance.

That's where Western psychology and Eastern psychology part. Their ways become absolutely different, diametrically opposite. To the Eastern mystic, all the games that psychoanalysis and its schools and its founders go on playing are just jigsaw puzzles -- good for children, to keep them engaged, but of no more value. If you like playing games,

psychoanalysis is a beautiful game. Play with Freud or Freud, play with Jung or Jung -- you can go on playing; it doesn't matter with whom you are playing. But you remain absolutely the same.

The real thing is a shift, a change of consciousness, from the dream to the dreamer. A change of gestalt, looking not at the object but looking into the subject. Then all is a dream. Reincarnations, death, birth, good and bad, your being a king or your being a beggar, your being a murderer or your being a mahatma -- all are dreams.

But one thing is certain, that for dreams to exist, there needs to be a witness. That witness is the truth. To know that witness is to know the Buddha-nature inside you.

THOUGH YOU PRACTISE VIRTUE,
DO NOT GRIEVE THAT MISFORTUNE ARISES;
THE GUILTY KARMA
OF THE PREVIOUS WORLD
IS VANISHING AWAY.

THIS QUESTION ARISES again and again to those who start searching into the religious truth of life. You see it everywhere: you see a virtuous person suffering, and you see a very evil person succeeding. And the problem arises where is the justice in the world? Is it a just world?

Somebody who has never done anything wrong is suffering so much, all kinds of calamities. And somebody who is known never to have done anything good, who has always been evil, is succeeding -- has all the prestige, respectability, pleasures, comforts of life. Is it a just world? Or is it just a chaos? What attitude to take about it?

There are only two possibilities. One is the communist approach, the socialist approach -- it says it is an unjust society, we have to change the society. If classes disappear, the economic structure is changed, equality is brought in, then there will be no injustice.

This kind of thinking has always remained in the world, it is not new. But nothing has happened out of it. Even in a communist society, injustice continues to happen just the same. Forms change but the content remains the same. Yes, in Soviet Russia the old classes have disappeared, but new classes have appeared. Now there are no longer capitalists and the proletariat, but now there are the rulers and the ruled -- and the same game and the same nonsense and the same misery.

The other approach is that of the religious consciousness. Buddha says:

THOUGH YOU PRACTISE VIRTUE,
DO NOT GRIEVE THAT MISFORTUNE ARISES;
THE GUILTY KARMA
OF THE PREVIOUS WORLD
IS VANISHING AWAY.

He says: Your mind lives through conditioning. Whatsoever you have done remains rooted in your mind; all your doings remain rooted in your mind. Today you may not have done anything wrong, but what about yesterday? Today you may have been very very nice and good, but what about the yesterdays? They are there. And you have sown many seeds yesterday and the crop will be coming today or tomorrow. And if the seeds were poisonous you are going to suffer.

Then accept it as your past karma. If you are doing good and still the result is bad, simply

accept with equanimity, SAMATA -- with equilibrium: "It must be something to do with my past. I have to accept it, I have to reap the crop." And there is no point in complaining and there is no point in shouting and feeling very bad about it. There is no need to lose your cool.

THOUGH YOU PRACTISE VIRTUE,
DO NOT GRIEVE THAT MISFORTUNE ARISES;
THE GUILTY KARMA
OF THE PREVIOUS WORLD
IS VANISHING AWAY.

Feel good! Something bad that was hanging around you is vanishing away.

A man came and spat on Buddha. He wiped his face with a shawl. His disciple, Ananda, was very much disturbed and said, "Just a hint from you, and I will show this man what he has done."

Buddha said, "Don't get disturbed. I must have done something wrong to him in some past life. Now the account is closed -- he has returned it. I am finished with this man." And he said, "Thank you, sir. I must have done something wrong, to you, because nothing happens without a cause. I may remember, may not remember, but I must have done something wrong to you. You have returned it: now we are equal, now we can close the account. And I am not going to react any more, otherwise again the business will continue. Thank you. Do you have something more to say?"

The man was very much puzzled. It was so unexpected! He was expecting to be beaten, he was expecting that the disciples would jump on him -- he was expecting something, and nothing had happened. He would not have thought this would be the statement of the Buddha. He went home but he couldn't sleep the whole night.

Morning, and he was back. And he fell at Buddha's feet and said, "Sorry, sir, excuse me." Buddha said, "Forget all about it. Never think of yesterday -- It is gone!" They were sitting on the bank of the Ganges, and Buddha said, "Look how much water has mowed down the Ganges since then. It is no more the same Ganges! I am no more the same, you are no more the same. Just think -- yesterday you were so full of anger; today you are so humble, you have fallen at my feet. You are no more the same and I am no more the same -- twenty-four hours have passed. Forget all about it, don't think about it any more. It is finished, and finished for ever! I am free of you, you are free of me. Otherwise, we were hooked into each other."

This is the Buddhist attitude towards things. If somebody insults you, thank him. This is a way to be unhooked. Say to him, "Good -- so you have come. I was waiting for you." Because before you can disappear from this world of misery you have to close all the accounts that you have opened, down the ages, through the ages.

WHEN THEY ARE NOT TWO THINGS,
THEY ARE NOT ONE THING,
AND THE WIND
IN THE INDIAN-INK PICTURE
IS COOL INDEED.

When you have come to this tranquillity, to this silence, to this SAMATA, equanimity --

this balance, that nothing can disturb you... Somebody spits on you and you remain undisturbed, unwavering. Somebody insults you and nothing happens to you; you remain as if nothing has happened. When you have become a mirror, things are reflected and disappear and you remain unscratched by their reflections. When you have become unattached to all the things of the world, and you don't cling, and your innocence remains absolute and you remain virgin -- then you cannot say that the world, God, reality, is two, many, or one.

Then nothing can be said about it, because all words fall short.

WHEN THEY ARE NOT TWO THINGS...

One thing is certain, you cannot say 'two' -- because all duality is a mind creation, all duality is created by the clinging and attached mind. When there is no attachment there is no duality.

When you want something to happen according to you, and it doesn't happen, duality arises. When you are ready to relax with everything as it happens, where is the duality? Somebody insults you and you say thank you. Your woman leaves you and you go and give her a good send-off. Where is the duality? Richness comes and you enjoy it. And one day you are poor and you enjoy poverty. Where is the duality?

If you can enjoy all that happens, if you can enjoy the roses that are always there and you don't count the thorns, then where is the duality? Then the mind becomes non-dual. Then all fragments disappear, then a great oneness arises in you. But it cannot be called 'oneness'.

WHEN THEY ARE NOT TWO THINGS,
THEY ARE NOT ONE THING, EITHER.

Why? Because to call it 'one' is to bring numbers in again. It simply IS -- neither two nor one. There is no way to demark it as this or that.

AND THE WIND
IN THE INDIAN-INK PICTURE
IS COOL INDEED.

This is a beautiful statement. When all is one -- the enemy and the friend, the man who loves you and the man who hates you, richness and poverty, failure and success, respectability or disrespectability; when all is one -- youth and old age, birth and death -- there will arise a great coolness. That coolness is the quality of a Buddha. That coolness cannot be disturbed; no heat can enter into it.

And if you come in close contact with a Buddha you will feel that coolness. It is always there. It is not only inside a Buddha, it creates a space around him. If you enter into that space -- you can enter only through sympathy, only through trust, only through love -- if you enter into that sphere of coolness you will be surprised. Remember, it is not coldness -- it is coolness.

It is difficult to understand, for the people who come from the West. Languages are born out of climates -- that's why sometimes it is very difficult to translate. For example, in the West, 'warmth' is a beautiful word. You say 'warm love' -- you cannot say 'cool love'. In India, you can say 'cool love'.

In the West, you say 'a warm welcome'. In India, it will not look like a welcome at all if it

is too warm. It has to be cool. But cool is not cold; cold is dead. Cool is ALIVE -- but silent, non-feverish, non-passionate, like a cool breeze in a hot summer afternoon. Like a cool spring in the Himalayas -- and you are a thirsty traveller, tired, wearied, thirsty, and you come across a crystal-clear cool pool of water.

Yes, that's what a Buddha is -- for all those who are weary, tired, thirsty.

WHY ARE PEOPLE CALLED BUDDHAS
AFTER THEY DIE?
BECAUSE THEY DON'T GRUMBLE ANY MORE,
BECAUSE THEY DON'T MAKE A NUISANCE
OF THEMSELVES ANY MORE.

A beautiful statement from Ikkyu.

THERE ARE A FEW PROBLEMS. A Buddha is accepted by the wider masses only when he is gone. He is accepted only by the chosen few when he is alive. To be in contact with a Buddha who is alive needs courage. Only those who are really daredevils can come close to a living Buddha -- because a living Buddha is going to transform you. And people talk about transformation, but nobody wants to be transformed.

People talk about transformation but they don't mean it. They really mean a few more decorations, a few more feathers, a few more gold medals. They talk about transformation but they don't understand the meaning of the word.

Transformation means crucifixion and resurrection. Transformation means dying as you are, and being born as you know not what -- what is going to happen, who is going to be born or how you will be. One thing is certain, you will not be the same as you ARE. Who is ready for that?

Aud to be in close affinity with a Buddha creates a thousand and one problems. First, a Buddha is paradoxical -- that is his nuisance. He continuously creates a nuisance. He never allows you to cling to anything. Before you start clinging to any of his statements, it is contradicted. He never gives you time enough to settle anywhere; he goes on pushing you and pushing you and pushing you. Unless he destroys you, he never stops.

It is said: "The truth is an endless list of paired proverbs that contradict each other."

Truth is contradictory. And the Buddha is a living contradiction. He says this -- and he is always in a hurry to contradict it before it is too late. You want to cling to something. You are not really in search of truth, you are in search of comforts. And a Buddha is not worried about your comfort, he is worried about the truth.

So he has to say many things and he has to contradict them. Slowly slowly, if you are courageous enough to go on hanging around him, slowly slowly you will come to the point where you will see there is no point in clinging to any statement. Then you simply listen, with no idea of clinging.

In that very moment, truth starts happening.

No statement is true, all statements are false. That is the nuisance of a Buddha, because he goes on making statements and he goes on contradicting them.

Buddhahood is the highest resolution of the truth. But the highest resolution is bound to be paradoxical, because it has to contain both the polarities. Just like a magnet -- a magnet has to have both the polar opposites in it, the negative and the positive. If a Buddha is the highest resolution, he has to contain all the opposites in him.

So the day Buddha dies, schools are born. They choose consistent statements. When

Gautam Buddha died, thirty-six schools were born immediately. That means Buddha was contradicting himself in thirty-six ways. While he was alive, these scholars and logicians and professors kept quiet, because it was impossible to argue with him. But they were waiting for their time. When he died, then they arose with great clamour and with great argument. And they insisted on one thing, that truth should be consistent.

Truth is NEVER consistent -- cannot be.

Then there was only one possibility: they should choose consistent statements and make a philosophy out of them. Thirty-six philosophies were born out of Buddha's statements, and all have missed him. Because if he was anything, he was all those thirty-six philosophies TOGETHER.

But that is a nuisance. It is incomprehensible to the human mind. That is a device -- Buddha makes it almost impossible for you to comprehend him, so one day you lose heart and you stop trying to comprehend him.

In that very moment, the revolution happens.

A Buddha is also a nuisance because your so-called religions are not true religions. The so-called religions can be seen mainly as a device to keep people sane. The enforced vacation of one day, confession to help with guilt, promises of paradise to come -- and so forth. No wonder women are its best customers! The ordinary religions are nothing but consolations. They keep you normal, they help you remain sane.

The world is insane. And the irony is that the world is insane because of your priests. And then they come from the back door and they help you to remain sane -- they create insanity in the world, then they create medicines for it.

When a Buddha comes he does not give you medicines to be sane. He simply makes you aware that there is no need to be insane in the first place. But then the priest is angry, then the establishment is angry. Then their whole profession is at stake.

WHY ARE PEOPLE CALLED BUDDHAS AFTER THEY DIE?

When a Buddha is alive you cannot call him a Buddha because he looks so like you. The body, the blood, the bones -- just like you. He is young, then he becomes old, then he dies -- just like you. How can you believe that a man like you can be a Buddha? It offends you.

You hate yourself so much, that's why. You condemn yourself so much, that's why. You cannot accept a living Buddha as a Buddha, as a God, because you cannot accept yourself as divine. That's the problem.

So when Buddha is gone, then things become simple. Now he is no more like you. Now you can create mythologies, beautiful parables. You can make him as much unlike you as you like. You can give him as much height as you want...

If you go into history, Jain TEERTHANKARAS are as tall as the mountains; they walk, and people cannot see their faces. Now, this looks like something.

A Buddha -- and only five-five? Doesn't look like a Buddha!

Something exceptional -- your desire, your abnormal desire, is for the exceptional. When Buddha is dead you are free to paint him.

All the statues of Buddha that you have seen are false; he never looked like ANY of those statues. In fact those statues are not even Indian -- they were created when Alexander the Great came to India. They are not Indian at all, the facts are Greek. Buddha never looked like any of the statues that you see. He could not have looked like that.

But you create -- then Buddha is in your hands, he cannot say anything. People have made golden statues of Buddha. But he was not made of gold, he was just as much flesh and bone as you are.

He died of food poisoning -- just as you would die of food poisoning, just like you. And that is difficult. Why is it difficult? Because you have been taught to condemn yourself, you have been taught that you are not right. If you are not right, then how can a man be a Buddha if he is just like you -- feels hunger, feels thirsty, needs water, becomes dirty, has to wash his body, has to take a bath, just like you? Then what is the difference?

The difference is in the interiority, not in his exterior. When he is dead, you can also make the exterior according to your imagination, to your heart's content.

WHY ARE THE BUDDHAS CALLED BUDDHAS
AFTER THEY DIE?

Ikkyu jokes. He says:

BECAUSE THEY DON'T GRUMBLE ANY MORE.

Buddhas are continuously grumbling -- in the sense that they are saying "This is wrong, that is wrong, this has to be changed, that has to be changed." They are continuously telling you how to transform your life. They don't allow you to sleep well and have good dreams. They are grumbling -- they go on poking their nose into your life, they go on saying, "Do this, be like this. Wake up!" And when you are having such a beautiful dream...

Just a few days ago, Ninad wrote me a letter. He has fallen in love with a woman. The woman is not in love with him, the woman has gone with her own man. Now Ninad is very much disturbed -- he is so much in love with the woman that he says in his letter, "If this woman says 'Leave Osho immediately for me!' I will leave you in a single moment.

He is simply showing how infatuated he is. Now, if I say to Ninad, "Wake up, Ninad!" he will be angry. He will say, "What! What are you saying?"

He writes in the letter, "Whatsoever you say and whatsoever Ikkyu says, I don't care. Even a single moment's love with this woman is more than enough for me -- I have no desire for nirvana."

And I cannot leave Ninad. He can leave me, if this woman says, but I will haunt him -- I will not allow him to fall asleep. Even when he is with the woman I will be just between the two... and I will go on shaking him: "Ninad! What are you doing? This is all a dream! Don't befool yourself. Wake up!"

So when a Buddha is dead it is easy to accept him. He will not haunt you. You can make a beautiful shrine for him, you can worship him. You can say, "Be here in this temple and don't come out of it! Let us live outside and you live here. And once in a while we will come and pay our homage to you."

BECAUSE THEY DON'T GRUMBLE ANY MORE,
BECAUSE THEY DON'T MAKE A NUISANCE
OF THEMSELVES ANY MORE.

And a Buddha is continuously making a nuisance of himself -- because he is against the establishment, against the scriptures, against all that has become settled. He is continuously

unsettling you. He is throwing you from security into insecurity, he is always forcing you from the known into the unknown. He cannot leave you alone, he cannot allow you to rest. Unless you disappear, he is going to follow you.

Ikkyu is joking. Humourously he is saying: That's why, when Buddhas are dead, people create great temples for them. Great religions are born, great establishments, much worship, thousands and thousands of books are written. And when they are alive, people either crucify them, poison them, insult them or throw stones at them.

Man has never treated a living Buddha with respect. He treats with respect only those who are dead. Man respects death, he does not respect life.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #11

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The first question

WHAT IS A NATURAL BUDDHIST LIKE ME DOING LEADING SUFI DANCING?
AND A NATURAL SUFI LIKE PRADEEPA DOING LEADING VIPASSANA AND
ZAZEN?

ANEETA, THIS IS A CRAZY PLACE TO BE. I know it. The day I talked about the natural Sufi and the natural Buddhist, I looked in Aneeta's eyes and the question was there. And I looked in Pradeepa's eyes too, and she was also bewildered.

Meditation has to go beyond all form, Sufi or Buddhist. In the beginning, a form is needed. And it is good to move naturally, into whatsoever fits with your inborn qualities. But finally one has to go beyond form, otherwise the form itself becomes a bondage. At the ultimate point, one is not to be a Buddhist or a Sufi. At that point, one simply IS -- with no form, with no identity, a pure nothing.

Knowingly, I have given Aneeta the work that she is doing here. She IS a natural Buddhist, that's true. I am taking her out of her natural form. Doing Sufi work, slowly slowly she will slip out of her past. Her past has been Buddhist, it is easier for her to be a Buddhist. And so is the case with Pradeepa -- it would be easier for her to be in Sufi work, her past interest has been there. Her deepest involvement is with Sufi ideas, particularly Gurdjieff. And I have given her the Buddhist work -- to lead Vipassana and Zazen.

This is just a device to bring you out of your routine forms -- a device to help you to go

into pure meditation. Pure meditation is simply meditation. How can it be Sufi? How can it be Buddhist? On the way, you may be Sufis, Buddhists, yogis, tantrikas -- but when you have arrived, all paths disappear. Then you are at the same place, in the same space.

That space is nirvana.

Being with me, many things will look puzzling to you -- because there are so many people at different stages of their growth. For one, I will suggest one thing; for another, I will suggest another. Whatsoever is needed at YOUR stage of growth will be given to you -- and when the need is no more there it will be taken away.

The last thing to be taken away is the form of the meditation. Then one is simply meditative -- then it is no more an activity, but just a quality, a fragrance. The form of the meditation is still part of the mind. "A natural Buddhist" means the mind is still there, because only the mind can be a natural Buddhist. Only a mind can be a Sufi or a Buddhist; mind needs forms, mind needs occupations. The mind is always hankering for some occupation -- without occupation the mind starts dying. It needs perpetual work.

For just three or four days I was not here -- and people had started disappearing. Just to sit here for one hour was difficult. Hearing that I was not coming, Big Prem immediately left, Rakesh left. Even Divya -- the day I came, Divya was not in her place; she was sitting far away. She was sitting there with the idea that if I didn't come she could slip out easily.

Just to sit for one hour silently doing nothing becomes so difficult. Mind is constantly hankering for some occupation. Sufism is one kind of occupation, Buddhism another, and there are millions.

When I say "a born Sufi" I mean your mind is in tune with Sufism. But one has to go beyond the mind, Aneeta. And that's the work I have given to you. It is against your mind, it is just the polar opposite -- and the polar opposite will help to destroy the pattern. Once the pattern is destroyed then one is easily available, flexible, fluid. That fluidity is meditation.

So whatsoever I say to you, do it. Many times it may look contradictory to my other statements, but don't be worried about that. If I have said it, then there must be something in it. I may not have made it clear to you -- because sometimes it is absolutely necessary that the thing should not be made clear to you. If it is made clear, your mind starts taking grip of it. Many things have to be left unclear, vague. Many things have to be simply done -- out of your trust and surrender, not out of your intellectual comprehension of them.

Naturally, Aneeta must have become puzzled -- why has Sufi work been given to her? And she is doing her work beautifully and I am happy with her work. It is difficult for her, and sometimes the Buddhist mind creates trouble for her. But that Buddhist mind has to be dropped -- because all minds have to be dropped. A ladder has to be used in the beginning and finally renounced.

Now the moment has come for Aneeta to renounce that ladder of Buddhism.

The second question

WHY IS MODERN MAN SO NEUROTIC?

BECAUSE THE MODERN MAN is for the first time becoming man. The past of humanity is not of human beings. Man has existed up to now as a crowd, not as individuals; man has existed as collectivities. The individual is being born, hence the modern man is very neurotic. It is a good indication. It is a great revolution human consciousness is going

through.

What is neurosis really? Neurosis is an indefinite state of mind, undecided, indecisive. To be this, or to be that? All outer definitions have disappeared, all props have been taken away. Your identity is very fragile -- everybody knows it.

In the past it was very easy to answer "Who am I?" A Hindu, a Christian, a Mohammedan, Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, brahmin/sudra, white/black, man/woman -- things were clear. People knew who they were.

Now it is not so clear; all those labels have disappeared. Man is standing nude, with no labels -- a great anxiety. And everybody has to define himself. The work of defining oneself was done by others before -- parents, teachers, priests, politicians. They were authorities, infallible authorities. You could be dependent easily; you did not need to think about, meditate, over things. Everything was chewed for you by others and given to you -- you were spoon-fed.

Now man is becoming adult, mature. You have to work out your own identity. It is not so easy -- only very intelligent people will be able to avoid neurosis. Utter intelligence will be needed to avoid neurosis. Great silence, a great capacity to go out of the mind and its traps, will be needed in the future. And it will be so, more and more.

In the past, intelligence was not a great value -- in fact, to be mediocre was very valuable. The mediocre was always a fit and the talented was always a misfit. No society in the past has ever liked people who are geniuses, because they create trouble.

Remember what Ikkyu was saying just the other day? When a Buddha is alive he is a nuisance. What is his nuisance? His genuine intelligence disturbs the mediocre mind; his utter intelligence disturbs the stupid people. His individuality, his freedom, his rebellion, hits hard in the mind of the crowd -- because the crowd does not want individuality, the crowd does not want uniqueness, the crowd simply wants to belong. It simply wants to be not responsible for anything. It wants to be part of a big crowd, so the responsibility is never on oneself, it is always somewhere else. The Pope decides, the Shankaracharya decides, the president decides, and you need not bother about it. It is not for you to ask why -- you are only to do and die.

In the modern mind is the first glimpse of individuality. Hence, neurosis. In the past, all answers were fixed; one was not required to search for answers. God was there, heaven was there, the theory of karma was there, everything was so clear-cut, you could live with all those formulations very easily.

Now you don't know; nothing is certain any more. A great paralysis is happening. This paralysis either can kill humanity or can become a great transforming quantum leap.

I have heard:

In a well-known experiment in learning theory, rats jump from a stand toward a pair of cards. There is a white card that is fixed in place -- if the rats jump toward it they fall to the ground. But if the rats jump toward the other, a black card, the card falls and the rats can eat food that the experimenter has placed behind the card. The rats easily learn which card is which. If the cards are shifted around, they learn always to jump to the black card, wherever it happens to be.

But in the next stage of the experiment, the unambiguously white and unambiguously black cards are replaced by cards that successively approach a neutral grey. At some point the greys become so similar that the rats cannot distinguish between them. They can no longer tell which card is which. In this ambiguous situation, they refuse to jump; they become sort

of paralyzed, tense and neurotic.

They have been puzzled, confused.

This is the situation of man -- a very potent situation, a very pregnant situation. If men are just rats they will go really neurotic and they will commit suicide.

But man is not just a rat -- notwithstanding what B.F. Skinner and other so-called psychologists say. Man is not a rat. If there is a possibility that man may take this challenge and become more integrated. Neurosis is only in the interval sooner or later, man will know how to deal with it. Without authorities, without God, without Bibles and Vedas, man will fall upon his own consciousness. Man will start functioning spontaneously, moment to moment, without any ready-made answers. Then the neurosis will disappear -- and not only the neurosis, but the mob mind also.

For the first time, there will be beauty, grandeur, dignity. In the past, man was not dignified. Yes, once in a while a Buddha happened, once in a while a Christ walked on the earth -- but that was only once in a while. What about the millions of people who lived and died without knowing any taste of freedom, without ever knowing who they were? They believed they were Jews, and died. They believed they were Hindus, and died. They believed they were bodies, and died. They never knew who they really were -- they never came across the inner space.

And unless you come across that inner space you live an undignified life. You live like rats and you will die like dogs.

To be a man is risky. And what is the risk? The risk is, you will have to pass through a kind of neurosis. Before you can become centered in your own being, you will have to go through a kind of uncentering.

ZEN PEOPLE SAY: Before you start meditating, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. When you meditate, when you go deep in meditation, mountains are no more mountains and rivers are no more rivers. But if you go on, if you persist and reach to the highest peak of meditation, then again mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers.

This is one of the most significant statements ever made. In the middle, everything becomes confused.

This century is a century of great transformation. Man will either fall back... and that is happening. That's why Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, Mao Zedong, and people like these, become so important. Why? Because they are authoritative. They say, "You don't know who you are? We will supply you the answers." They are infallible people; they know everything. Adolf Hitler is absolutely certain. People start falling in line with him, they start following him.

The old gods have disappeared. It is very easy for Joseph Stalin or Mao Zedong to lead people -- because people cannot live without gods, people cannot live without priests. People cannot live on their own, this is the problem.

So, these past fifty or sixty years, man has seen two things happening. A very few people have risen towards individuality, and they have become peaks like Everest. But many more have fallen back, have regressed and become fascists or communists -- there are so many brands available.

And whenever a country is very very confused, an Adolf Hitler is bound to arrive. It was not just an accident that Germany became the victim -- one of the most intellectual countries in the world, the country of professors and scholars, thinkers and scientists. Why did the

country of so many intelligent people become a victim of this madman? The reason was that these intelligent people -- professors, philosophers -- could not supply the ready-made answers. They were too polite, they were too hesitant, they were too humble, they were too intelligent. They could not shout, they only whispered -- and people needed slogans, not whisperings.

Adolf Hitler shouted from the housetops. He was not whispering. He gave slogans -- clear-cut, well-defined. All that he gave is nonsense, but that is not the point. People are not worried about sense or nonsense, their whole thing is they want somebody who can shout so confidently that they can follow easily without any turmoil in their being. They followed Adolf Hider.

It happens again and again in the history of man, intelligent people follow very unintelligent leaders. And this has been a problem for psychoanalysts: why does it happen?

Now, just look at India -- a country which has cultivated intelligence for at least ten thousand years, and now following a man like Morarji Desai. This seems just unbelievable. Why should it happen? There is a reason for it. People who think, the MORE they think, the more they become hesitant. They start talking in ifs and buts; they become humble. And people don't need humble statements. To the ordinary mind, a humble statement looks as if you are not certain, you don't know.

That's why, in India, Mahavir could not get many followers -- and he was one of the most intelligent people that has ever walked on the earth. Why did it happen that he could not get followers? Compared to him, very ordinary people have accumulated great masses as their followers. What happened to Mahavir? The reason was, he was so humble. His statements always started with 'perhaps'. If you asked him "Is there God?" he would say "Perhaps."

But who would follow such a man? You would think he himself does not know. "Perhaps." "Maybe." Who is going to follow this man? You ask him "Is there a soul?" and he says "Maybe." The natural inference is that he himself does not know.

The reality is just the opposite. He knows. And he knows it so deeply that it can only be expressed by a 'perhaps', a 'maybe'. It is so vast. It will be stupid to say yes or no -- it will be reducing it to a very ordinary statement; it will become political. It will not have that height and plenitude of a philosophic experience.

"Yes, God is, and God is not. And God is both, and God is not both." In this way Mahavir used to talk. If you asked one question he would answer in seven ways. He would use all the categories of logic to answer your single question, but you would be left more puzzled than ever. You had come with one question and you would go with seven thousand questions. Who would follow this man?

Adolf Hitler says in his autobiography MEIN KAMPF that there is only one difference between truth and untruth, and the difference is of repetition. If you go on repeating an untruth loudly, forcibly, it becomes true. And he experimented with the idea, and he proved the idea to millions of people. Just utter nonsense! but he would go on repeating it. And, slowly slowly, people started believing in him. People needed a leader.

Nietzsche has said God is no more. But people cannot live without God -- people feel very shaky.

So these are the two possibilities: either man will fall and become a victim of some kind of fascism, nazism, communism. Or -- the second possibility, for which I am working here with you -- man may take this vagueness, which looks like neurosis, as a jumping-board, and get free of the whole past and take a quantum leap into the future, and start living without leaders, and start living without clinging, without any kind of belonging.

The whole earth is yours, it need not be divided. And Christ and Buddha and Krishna are all yours, you need not be a Christian or a Hindu or a Mohammedan. The whole past is yours: use it, but don't be used by it. Use it, and go ahead. Use Buddha and Christ and Krishna and Zarathustra and Lao Tzu, but don't be confined by them. You have to go ahead. There is more to life -- there are still unexplored realities. The mystery is infinite.

Man is in a kind of neurosis. This is a very pregnant situation: either you fall back, or you jump ahead. Don't fall back. And falling back is not going to satisfy you, either. Only growth satisfies -- regression, never. Even if your childhood looks very very beautiful, it is not going to satisfy you if you become a child again. You will be miserable, because you have known youth and the freedom of youth and the adventure of youth. To be a child again, in the old sense that you were once a child, will not make you happy. You will feel reduced, not enhanced.

Man is in a kind of neurosis, because denied access to reality always produces insanity. By placing normal people in an abnormal situation we get abnormal behaviour. Modern man is a revving engine without clutches, wheels or destination. Old destinations are no more relevant.

And man now has to learn something absolutely new, which has never been known before. Man now has to learn to live in the herenow. Yes, a sense of direction is needed, but not a fixed goal. A significance is needed, but not a definite meaning. A destiny is not needed -- a dignity is needed, freedom is needed. And man has to explore his freedom and decide on his own.

Remember it: there is no given meaning. That's the problem. In the past there was a given meaning, you were told the meaning of life. Now nobody is telling you what your meaning of life is -- you have to create it.

For the first time, man is on the verge of becoming a creator. Up to now you have been creatures. Now you will be creators. Let this be declared: History is taking a turning! You are on the threshold of a new consciousness. Up to now man has lived like a creature -- God was the creator and man was the creature, and God was the one who decided and man was the one who followed. Now this is going to be no more the case. Now man is the creator, no more the creature. Now man has to decide the meaning of his own life -- he has to give significance to his own life with his own creativity.

You cannot borrow it, you cannot beg it, you cannot bargain for it. You will have to create it. And this is really a problem. To create meaning needs great intelligence, to create meaning needs great awareness, to create meaning needs great endeavour. And people have learnt a simple trick of begging. Somebody will give you meaning -- your father, your mother. Or the Great Father in the skies, he will give you meaning -- you just have to pray.

That's why I say again and again that Buddha is going to become more and more relevant every day. As time passes, Buddha will become more and more relevant to humanity. Buddha came twenty-five centuries before his time. Now is the time for him -- because he believes in freedom, he believes in individuality. He does not believe that you are creatures, he believes that you are creators.

Create yourself: give shape and form to your being. Paint your life, sculpt yourself. Whatsoever you will be, will be your work. It is not fate -- you are responsible.

And people don't want to be responsible; they are afraid of responsibility. They want somebody else to take care of them, they always need guardians. These are the people who are getting neurotic -- because guardians are no more there. In fact they were never there; you were only believing in them -- because you believed in them, they were there. Now the belief

has disappeared, they have disappeared. They were created by your belief.

Man has to learn to live alone on his own. This is a great opportunity -- don't take it negatively, otherwise you will be in madhouses. Take it positively, accept the challenge, and you will be the first real human beings on the face of the earth.

The third question

DURING THE LECTURES YOU SEEM TO BRING US UP TO YOUR LEVEL. YOU SIT AND TALK, SURROUNDED BY BUDDHAS. BUT AS SOON AS YOU LEAVE, OUR EGOS ARE BACK AGAIN; WE'RE THE SAME OLD SCHMUCKS WE WERE BEFORE. IS THE EXPERIENCE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE'RE WITH YOU JUST AN ILLUSION? OR THE ONLY REALITY?

SATYA, IT DEPENDS HOW YOU INTERPRET IT. The criterion is this: if it gives you great contentment, if it takes your anxieties away from you, if it helps your mind to disappear -- even for a few moments -- then it is real. You will get back into your old mind again -- because when you are with me you are not alone, you start flying with me. When you are with me you are riding on a tidal wave. When the wave is gone, of course you have only that which YOU have: the old mind starts functioning again.

And naturally, one hour you are with me and twenty-three hours you are with yourself. So those twenty-three hours may look like the reality, just because they are long. And this one hour may look like illusion. It is not so.

Truth does not depend on durability, truth has nothing to do with time. If something is true, it is true -- whether you know it for a single moment or for your whole life. And if something is untrue, it is untrue -- you can go on dreaming for eternity, it remains untrue. It is not a question of how long it stays with you.

Then what is the criterion? The only criterion is whether it gives you bliss. If it takes you to a point where time disappears, mind disappears, where the world stops suddenly, can stop the mind. Only the impact of the truth can create the interval in you, and for a moment thoughts cease.

I know, once you are away from me, again the old mind will come in. Then be watchful! Then know that this old mind is just a habit: watch it! Don't become identified with it. Let it be there -- you remain aloof, unattached, far away. And then you will be surprised -- even without me, those moments will be coming. Once in a while, then more, then still more. The more you get unattached from your mind, the more these moments will penetrate you.

But, in the beginning, it is natural to feel as if what happens with me is illusory, because it lasts only for a few moments.

Two hippies, feeling high, are ambling slowly down the street. Another hippy, walking toward them, gently lifts his hand in greeting and says, "Hi!" as he passes. Two blocks later, one hippy turns to the other and says, "Man, I thought he'd never stop talking."

It depends on how you interpret...

In the course of his medical examination, a man was asked to stretch his arms in front of him with the fingers of each hand extended. What the doctor saw was a terrific quivering and shaking in all directions. "Good lord!" he said. "How much do you drink?" "Hardly any at all, doctor," was the reply. "I spill most of it."

Your old mind has lived with you long, for a millennium. Its grip is great. And it will supply you with all kinds of explanations: beware. Those few moments that happen here while you are with me, those moments of SATSANG, those moments of communion -- listen to them, nourish them, remember them again and again. Chew them, digest them. They will bring you closer and closer to reality.

This is the whole function of a master -- to give you first tastes of the beyond. So, slowly slowly, a great appetite arises in you.

The fourth question

SOMETIMES IT SEEMS TO USE UP MORE ENERGY TO SAY YES THAN TO SAY NO.

THIS SEEMS SO STRANGE TO ME. IT IS LIKE SAYING RIDING THE HORSE IN THE DIRECTION IT IS GOING IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN HOLDING BACK A RIVER. WOULD YOU COMMENT?

AMITABH, IT DEPENDS. It depends upon your desires. If you are riding on a horse in the same direction the horse is going on its own, but deep down you have a desire to go somewhere else, then it will be hard. Because each moment you will see the horse is taking you away from your direction, from your goal. There will be great turmoil. You are on the horse, but not with the horse. You are AGAINST it -- you want to go somewhere else. Deep down you are saying no; only on the surface have you said yes.

Yes is never difficult. It is difficult only when it is just on the surface and deep down is the no. Then it is difficult, very difficult -- more difficult than the no. If you say no, it will not be so difficult, because it will be your natural inclination. Difficulties arise only when you go against your natural inclination. Otherwise, yes is so simple. How can it be difficult? How can it be a fight?

But dig a little deeper, and hidden behind the facade of yes you will find a great no. In fact, to hide that no, you have created a facade of yes. Then there is a struggle because you are divided. And the no is coming from the deeper core, and the yes is only imposed from the outside. You will find a split.

Then it is better to say yes to no, rather than creating a conflict. It is better to relax with the no. Don't create conflicts, because conflicts are always harmful -- they dissipate your energy. Yes is good if it can come out of your totality, root and all. Otherwise, no is good -- at least it is total.

Remember always, the goodness that happens through yes is because of its totality, not only because it is yes. If you can be total with your no, then it is a kind of yes, only the formulation is in the form of the negative. But always remember that your circumference should not go against the center. If it goes against the center, sooner or later you will be tired -- and the center is going to win finally, so the whole struggle is futile.

Be with the center. And the center may be wrong; there is no necessity that the center is always right -- I am not saying that. The circumference may be right, the center may be wrong -- but if you are totally with the center, that very totality will make you capable of seeing the wrongness of it. Seeing the wrongness of it, there will be a change -- not brought by you but of its own accord. The insight will bring the change.

So this is my suggestion, Amitabh: if you feel that saying yes is difficult, then look --

somewhere there is a great no, which is resisting, fighting with the yes. It is better to go with the no. If the no is right, then there is no problem. If the no is not right, then by going into it you will see that it is not right. Seeing it, that it is not right, it drops. And then a totally new quality of yes arises in you which will not be imposed, cultivated, enforced in any way. It will come from the center to the circumference.

Always live from the inside out, never vice versa. People are doing just the reverse -- they are living from the outside towards the inside. They pay more attention to their circumference, to their conscious mind, to their intellect, to the head. Hence the difficulty. Hence people look in such anguish -- continuously tired, dissipated, fighting. And there seems to be no end to this fight.

The center can never be defeated by the circumference: this is an absolute law. There has never been any exception, and there never will be. So never move into a futile fight. The circumference is impotent against the center, the center has all the energy. The circumference has only words -- the circumference has logic, explanations, philosophies. But the center has all the vitality.

God is in the center. Man is on the circumference. Never put your man against God, otherwise you will be defeated. There is no way to defeat God. Be with God if you want to be victorious.

And if sometimes it is no, then let it be no. Trust it. This is what I call trust and this is what I call yes. Say yes to the center, even if the center is saying no -- then you have to say yes to that no. And go with it, and TOTALLY. If the center is right, fine. If it is not right, the very going into it will help it to disappear from your being.

And then, and only then, yes will arise. Then yes is a song, a celebration, in which the center and circumference embrace each other, dance together. When the center and the circumference dance together, there is joy.

The fifth question

WHY DO PEOPLE WANT TO BE RICH?

WHEN ONE IS RICH, one does not have to be smart. And that's a big relief. That's why people want to be rich.

Nobody wants to be intelligent; richness can afford to be stupid. You can see the faces of rich people -- you will always find a kind of subtle stupidity. The more rich a person is, the more you will find that he does not live, he vegetates. You will not find the sign of life in his eyes.

People want to be rich so they can afford to be stupid -- it is a great relief. If you really want to be intelligent, who cares about being rich? If richness comes as a consequence of being intelligent, that's another matter -- but who bothers about it? It is not a direct goal.

And the difference is great. Intelligent people also become rich. Intelligence is REAL richness -- whatsoever they do, they succeed. So they become rich, but their richness has a different quality to it: they enjoy their richness, they use their richness. A person who just wants to be rich will become rich but will not be able to use it -- he will not have enough intelligence to use it. In fact he was trying to become rich so that he need not be intelligent.

If an intelligent person becomes rich then richness opens great doors -- of music, of literature, of science, of art, of sculpture, of poetry. All these things become available. But the

goal should not be richness. The goal should always be more life, intelligent life, abundant life.

The sixth question

WHY DO MEN GO ON LIVING IN THE SAME OLD RUT OF MISERY?

THEY DON'T KNOW that there is any possibility of being blissful. They have lived so long in misery that misery is equivalent to life -- they have become accustomed to it.

Do you know? -- poor people never rebel, because they become accustomed to poverty. Of course, rich people CANNOT rebel, because all rebellion will go against them. Then who rebels? It is always the middle-class people who rebel.

Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Mao Zedong: all these people belong to the middle classes. All revolutionaries are born in the middle classes -- why? They talk about the revolution of the proletariat, but no proletarian seems to be interested in the revolution.

The proletariat has become accustomed, the poor man thinks this is all there is to life -- he has relaxed into it. He has lived in it, he has no other taste. How can he imagine any other kind of life?

The middle-class person has some taste of richness, and some taste of misery, poverty. He is in between. He becomes rebellious.

You ask: WHY DO MEN GO ON LIVING IN THE SAME OLD RUT OF MISERY?

First, they don't know that anything more is possible. They have given up. They say, "This is life -- this is all there is to it." And then naturally it is better to go on living in the same old type of misery than to change it. Change brings even more misery.

You become accustomed to a certain pain. If you have a headache, and you have lived with the headache for years, you have become accustomed to it. Would you like to change it for a stomach ache? If you think it over, you will decide it is better to have the old: "At least now I can cope with it. And who knows what the new will bring? And then I will have to learn again."

So people remain glued to a certain vicious circle of misery; they go on moving in the same rut. It seems easier. And the more you become acquainted with it, the less it hurts.

Thirdly, they are afraid to drop it. Even if a chance arises to drop it, they will become very much frightened. Because it is like an old love affair -- a great friendship has arisen. Now they won't know how to live without a headache, now they won't know how to live without jealousy. All that they have known up to now has been part of their jealousy, possessiveness, anger. Now if God suddenly appears and says, "I can take all your miseries away..."

Just think: one fine morning you open your eyes and God is standing in your room and he says, "I can take away all your misery." Will you be ready to give up all your miseries? You will suggest, "Give me a little time to think it over. This is so abrupt -- give me a little chance." You will not be able to give it up immediately, because then how will you live? This is your whole script, this is your story; without this story you will feel very empty. And people would like to remain miserable rather than be empty.

And bliss is emptiness. Bliss happens only when you are empty.

Hence, Ikkyu's insistence again and again: "Be empty. Be a nothing, a nobody." There is

no self, just pure emptiness. In that pure emptiness, bliss grows. Bliss blooms only in the soil of emptiness. And who is ready to live in emptiness? People like to live surrounded by junk. It feels good, you feel rich -- this junk is yours, that junk is also yours, everything is yours. Sitting in the middle of it, you are a king.

Empty? Nothing to claim as mine? All empty... and great panic will arise in you.

That's why people don't call their misery 'misery'. To call it misery creates problems -- they give it different names. Somebody says, "It is my karma." Somebody says, "There must be something hidden in it, a great message from the unconscious." Somebody says, "Fate, kismet." Somebody says, "It is God's will. And God is wise, so if he is doing this to me there must be a reason in it."

These are explanations to decorate your misery -- to make it a little softer, a little more polished, sophisticated.

Two hippies are standing on a corner, grooving the scene. Just then, a huge safe falls from twenty stories high, crashing right behind them. "Hey man, did you hear that! What was it?" says the first hippy.

The second hippy closes his eyes, smiles serenely and says, "E flat."

And that is happening every day. But you go on finding beautiful explanations: "E flat." Those explanations are consolations. Your whole life is collapsing, but you go on inventing new ideas. Your whole life is nothing but wounds, but you go on covering them with beautiful flowers.

Stop it! Look into the wounds as they are -- don't decorate them. If you really want to get rid of the wounds, never decorate them. Look directly, immediately, into the wounds. They stink, there is pus, it is horrible, it is ugly. But it has to be looked into.

And leave the wounds open! Because to leave the wounds open is one of the sure ways to cure them. And don't hide your miseries. And before you can ever be able to drop your miseries you will have to learn a few other things...

First, you will have to learn to live with the new. That's what sannyas is all about -- a gesture to live a new style of life. You will have to learn to live with the new, only then can you drop the old.

Secondly, you will have to learn to live in emptiness. That's what meditation is all about. Only then can you drop your junk.

And thirdly, you will have to live with people who are blissful, so that you can have a little whiff, a taste. You will have to live in SATSANG. You will have to look into the eyes of someone who has arrived, so that you can have a little taste -- a little sweetness enters into your being, and you can see. And you can be thrilled and stirred again, and a great longing arises in you, seeing that life is not all misery, that God too happens, that nirvana is also possible.

That is the meaning of being with a master, that something of the beyond is available. If you miss, it is because of you, not because it is not there.

Live in close affinity to some window from where you can see the distant stars. Yes, they will be distant -- but once you have seen them you will never be the same again.

And you will have to start learning from your past experience. People never learn. People learn from books but they never learn from their experiences. And in books there is nothing to learn. All that there is to learn is in your experiences.

Listen to this Sufi story:

Mulla Nasruddin went to the market and saw a big bushel of hot chilli peppers on sale. He bought them, returned home, and began to eat. A little while later, his disciples came and saw the Mulla with tears streaming down his face, his mouth and tongue burning. "Mulla, Mulla, why do you go on eating them?" As he reached for another, Nasruddin replied, "I keep waiting for a sweet one."

You have lived in miseries, but you are waiting for something sweet to happen. And this world is nothing but hot chillis. But you go on waiting for some sweet chilli. "Maybe this one, or the next, or the next" -- you go on hoping against hope.
Drop all hope.

Yes, there ARE blissful experiences, but they are not from this so-called life that you have lived up to now. They come from the beyond, they come from a separate reality.

The seventh question

OSHO, THE OTHER DAY YOU SAID THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE BORN BUDDHIST. I MUST BE ONE OF THEM, BECAUSE I ALWAYS FEEL DEEPLY IN TUNE WHEN YOU SPEAK ON BUDDHA OR IKKYU. THIS IS MY NATURAL CLIMATE. BUT I REMEMBER THAT I ALSO FELT LIKE THAT WHEN YOU WERE SPEAKING ON JESUS, YOGA, TAO, SUFISM...
PLEASE HELP ME TO FIND OUT WHICH IS MY TRUE NATURE.

SUGEETA, you are a natural Rajneesh freak.

The last question

I HEAR SO MANY STORIES ABOUT YOU, ALL CONTRADICTING EACH OTHER. EVEN ABOUT YOUR PHILOSOPHY, NO TWO DISCIPLES OF YOURS SEEM TO AGREE. WHY IS IT SO?

I HAVE NO PHILOSOPHY AT ALL. So how can my disciples agree on anything? I have no dogma, no creed. My assertions are not philosophic, but poetic. My assertions are not about the truth, they are only devices to help you awake. For one disciple I create one device, for another another. How can they agree?

They will agree only when both have become awakened; their awakening will be the agreement. But when two persons are awakened they have nothing to say. They may laugh -- their laughs may agree. Or they may cry out of joy -- their tears may agree. But statements can't agree.

You must be new here. Don't be bothered by it. Because I have no philosophy, there can't be any agreement.

Secondly, each disciple is personally related to me. My relationship is personal. It is not that you are following a certain philosophy -- you are being with a master, not with a philosophy. While I am alive why bother about the philosophy? Leave it for people who will come later on when I am gone. Then there will be much philosophical work -- research and Ph.D.'s and D. Lit.'s. Leave this for other stupid people; you need not bother about it.

You are here with me: quench your thirst. Why should you be asking my disciples about my philosophy? Even if you ask me, you will not find any consistency. One day I say one thing -- and another day is another day! And I have no commitment to the past. When I say something today, I am not thinking at all of all the yesterdays that have passed. I am not obliged in any way to be consistent with the past.

And a man who is always consistent with the past is a dead man. In fact he should not live any more -- what is the point? If he is just going to be consistent with his past, then it is better to close his life.

I am still alive. What I will say tomorrow nobody knows, not even me. It is not decided yet; it will happen. You will be surprised by it and I will be surprised by it -- I am always surprised by my own statements.

And then there are more than sixty thousand sannyasins now. And only very intelligent people become interested in me. Mm? -- this is not a place for mediocres. Only very intelligent people gather courage enough to come close to me. Sixty thousand sannyasins means sixty thousand philosophies -- and each person has his own way of understanding what I am saying. And it is perfectly fine; it has to be so. How can you understand that which I am saying? You can understand only that which YOU are hearing. And there is bound to be a great distance. I say something from my state of consciousness, you hear from your state of consciousness.

Slowly slowly, the distance will become smaller and smaller. And one can hope that one day the distance disappears. But then you will be SILENT.

It happened: Mahakashyap was given the flower by Buddha, as a token "Whatsoever can be said has been given to others. And whatsoever cannot be said, I am giving it to you, Mahakashyap." People gathered. They asked Mahakashyap, "Now tell us, what happened?" And he laughed.

In the Buddhist scriptures there is not a single statement made by Mahakashyap after this. Before, also, he has not been mentioned. He suddenly comes to such prominence that all Buddha's other disciples just disappear, and Mahakashyap becomes the most prominent one. One fine morning, Buddha gives him the lotus flower and says, "This is the transmission of the lamp, or transfer of the message beyond scriptures. I have given to you, Mahakashyap, what I cannot give through words."

Naturally, people were intrigued, interested. But no statement was made by Mahakashyap, except for a simple saying which has been reported. And that simple saying is this: "My master is saying it so beautifully -- what is the point of my saying it in any other way? He is doing it perfectly well; I cannot improve upon it. Whatsoever I say will be degrading it, so I will keep quiet."

In old Taoist monasteries, it was an ancient rule: "Say something only if you can improve upon silence." It was written in all Taoist monasteries, on the main entrance gate: "Say something only if you can improve upon silence. Otherwise keep quiet."

What is the point of saying something if you cannot improve upon silence?

So when a disciple comes very close to me he will not have anything to say. Meanwhile, he can say many things but they will only represent HIS state of consciousness.

Remember always -- have you read Buddhist scriptures? They always start with this statement: "I have heard such..." All Buddhist scriptures start with "I have heard." Why? It is

a significant statement. This statement is made by Ananda, Buddha's great disciple who, when Buddha died, recounted all the stories that Buddha had told -- the parables, the answers, the sermons. But he always starts with "I have heard..." The meaning is: "I don't know what Buddha said, I know only what I have heard. This is MY statement of what I have heard."

Remember, when somebody asks you, "What does Osho say?" say it the way Ananda said it. Say: "I have heard..." Don't claim, "This is what HE says." The only claim, rightful claim, can be this: "This is what I have been hearing -- this may be so, this may not be so."

A hillbilly boy from Nashville, Tennessee, announces to his folks: "It's a'goin to Knoxville, to fetch me a wife."

A few days later, he returns with a nubile young sweetheart called Mary Lou. She is introduced to all the family, cramped around the kitchen table of their tiny shack.

Come six o'clock, his father says, "Well, my boy, I guess you two deserve the family bedroom now. Your Maw and Paw can sleep down here." So the happy couple go off upstairs. Half an hour later, a shotgun blast rattles the timbers. And then the son clambers slowly down the steps from above.

"Whatever happened?" inquired his mother.

"I shot her," said the son.

"Why?"

"She was a virgin."

The boy's grandpa, who had sat quietly through all these proceedings, was first to break the thunderstruck silence. "Son, I guess you did the right thing -- if she was no good to nobody in HER family, then she ain't no use to any of us!"

Or this second story:

Thor came down from Mount Olympus to find, and make love to, a mortal woman. He was handsome and irresistible, so in a short time he found the woman and they jumped right into bed. Now, he was no ordinary lover -- he was the god, Thor -- and the love-making went on for a night and most of the next day.

Mission accomplished, he left -- but then thought perhaps he wasn't being fair since he hadn't told the woman that she had been making love with a god. So he went back to her house and knocked on her door and said, "I just thought I should tell you that I am Thor."

"You're thor!" she moaned. "I can't even walk!"

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #12

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THE MOON IS THE HOUSE,
THE MIND IS THE MASTER IN IT:
WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THIS,
IT IS ONLY A TRANSITORY WORLD
WE LIVE IN HERE.

DEEPLY THINKING OF IT,
I AND OTHER PEOPLE --
THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE,
AS THERE IS NO MIND
BEYOND THIS MIND.

EVERY SPRING WHEN YOU SEE
THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOM,
FEEL WITH PAIN
THE BREVITY OF YOUR LIFE!

THE ORIGINAL MAN
MUST RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL PLACE;
WHY SEEK THEN
THE NEEDLESS BUDDHA?

THE MORNING DEW
FLEES AWAY,
AND IS NO MORE;
WHO MAY REMAIN
IN THIS WORLD OF OURS?

WE PRAY FOR OUR LIFE OF TOMORROW,
EPHEMERAL LIFE THOUGH IT MAY BE;
THIS IS THE HABIT OF OUR MIND
THAT PASSED AWAY YESTERDAY.

DO NOT TAKE IT TO HEART;
THE REAL WAY
IS ONE, ITSELF AS IT IS;
THERE ARE NOT TWO, OR THREE.

THE ESSENTIAL TEACHING OF GAUTAM THE BUDDHA is not a teaching at all, but an awakening. A way to become more aware. He does not give you a doctrine about existence, but he gives you a methodology to see that which is. He is not concerned with God, he is not concerned with the other world beyond. His whole concern is you -- the awareness within.

Hence Buddha has been misunderstood by almost everybody. The religious people have not been able to understand him because he does not talk about God. They have not been able to appreciate him because he does not talk about the other world. And all the religions have

depended on the other world. They are against THIS world and for some illusory world somewhere there in the future -- beyond this life, beyond this body, beyond this moment. Their whole world is a fantasy world. They persuade people to sacrifice the real for the unreal, they persuade people to sacrifice that which is for that which is not yet and may not ever be. They persuade people to sacrifice the present for the future -- how can they understand Buddha? Because he does not talk about the other world at all. He is not an other-worldly one.

But he has not satisfied the materialists either, the atheists either. Because they think this is all that there is -- eat, drink, be merry. And Buddha says: This is not all that there is. You are living only on the surface of things. There is a depth to things -- but that depth can be known, fathomed, only if depth to you go deeper into your own being, into your own consciousness.

The more conscious you are, the more intensely you live. The more conscious you are, the more reality becomes available to you. You EARN reality only through being conscious. When one is absolutely conscious, one is absolutely real.

Naturally, the materialists, the this-worldly people, cannot agree with Buddha, because they say, "This is all. The surface is all, the outside is all, there is no inside to it."

So nobody is agreeing with him. The religious don't agree, the irreligious don't agree. His approach is a very radical approach -- it is against the worldly, it is against the other-worldly. He brings a new light, he brings a new understanding. That understanding he calls 'mindfulness'.

You have to understand this word 'mindfulness'. If you can understand this single word 'mindfulness' you will have understood Buddha's whole being, his whole approach. And he is one of those who have known. If you want to ask anybody, ask a man like Buddha.

But his approach is a methodology, not a doctrine. It is a way of life. People live like robots, they live mechanically. Buddha says: Live non-mechanically. Each of your acts has to be luminous with awareness. And then each act starts revealing reality to you.

And he does not make any distinction between the profane and the sacred -- there is none. The profane is the sacred, if you live it consciously.

Just going for a morning walk -- if you can walk consciously, this is prayer. There is no need to go to any church. Prayer has no relationship with a church or a temple, prayer has something to do with your quality of awareness. You can do a thing prayerfully, and the thing may be anything, cleaning the floor, cooking the food, washing the clothes, taking a bath, going to sleep.

It reminds me of one of the most beautiful stories about Buddha's closest disciple, Ananda. Ananda lived with Buddha for forty years -- and he lived like a shadow. He never left Buddha for a single moment, not even in the night; he would sleep in the same room where Buddha was sleeping. He had taken a promise from Buddha...

When Buddha became enlightened, Ananda came to him to be initiated. He was a cousin brother of Buddha and older than Buddha. He asked Buddha, "I am your elder brother. Once I am initiated, I will be your disciple. Then whatsoever you say, I will have to do -- then I cannot say no.

That is the meaning of discipleship -- a person decides, "Now I will say yes to my master, whatsoever he says. If he says 'Jump and kill yourself' I will jump and kill myself." Surrendering the no is the secret of discipleship.

So Ananda said, "I am going to be your disciple. Before I become your disciple, as your

elder brother I want one promise. Right now I am your elder brother and I can order you" -- the old Indian tradition -- "you are my younger brother and I can say this to you. You have to give me this promise, that you will never tell me to leave you. I will stay with you; wherever you go I will be with you. I will follow you like a shadow, I will serve you like a shadow. Even in the night I will be sleeping just by your side, continuously ready to serve you."

Buddha promised. And Ananda lived with Buddha for forty years. No other disciple lived so close. But because he was so close he started taking Buddha for granted -- naturally. He was so close, he started forgetting Buddha. He was so close that he never tried what Buddha was saying. And the day came when Buddha dropped his body...

Many who had come after Ananda had become enlightened. Ananda was not yet enlightened. He wept bitterly. His misery was great; there was no consolation. Now suddenly he became aware that forty years had been a wastage. "I lived with this man -- a rare opportunity, very rare. To find a Buddha is rare, and to live with a Buddha for forty years continuously -- it has not happened before, it may not happen again. Forty years in a long time. And still I have missed."

He stopped eating food, he stopped all kinds of other activities. He decided to become enlightened before it was too late -- it was already late. Day and night, he was trying to be aware...

And a great council was going to be arranged soon -- all the enlightened disciples were going to gather together to collect the sayings of Buddha. Ananda was not invited. And he was the most reliable source, obviously -- nobody had lived with Buddha so long, nobody had as much information as he had. Nobody had listened to Buddha so much -- morning and evening, day and night, he was always there, just watching. Whatsoever Buddha had said, he had heard it. And he had a miraculous memory, absolute memory -- he had the power of absolute recall. But still he was not invited to the council.

It was not possible to invite him. He had known Buddha, his word was reliable, his memory was perfect -- but he had no inner validity. He himself was not yet a Buddha. Yes, to collect facts he was the right person. But what about truth? And facts and truths are different dimensions. A fact may be a fact and yet may not be true. And a truth may be true, yet may not be a fact.

Truth is not the sum total of all the facts -- truth is something more. Facts are mundane, superficial. Truths are not on the surface, they are inner. Ananda could say everything factual, but he had no inner validity. He himself was not a witness. So even those who had not lived with Buddha were called to the council, but not Ananda.

He worked hard, he staked all. Each moment he was trying to be aware, alert, mindful.

And the last night came -- tomorrow morning the council was going to gather. Ananda was going mad: it had not happened yet. He was becoming more and more tense and he was putting in all that one could put, all that was humanly possible. He was ready to die for it.

The middle of the night had come and nothing had happened yet. And he was driving himself crazy. For days he had not eaten, he had not slept, he had not taken a bath -- there was no time to waste. One o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock, four o'clock in the morning... and he was just on the verge of either going mad or becoming enlightened. It looked more like madness: he was exploding, he was falling apart.

Then suddenly he remembered, Buddha had always said: Be aware, but in a relaxed way. Be aware, but without any tension. Attention without any tension. Calm and quiet. Alert, but with no strain.

That memory came in the right moment -- he relaxed. He was so tired, dead tired, that he

went to bed. When he was just going to put his head on the pillow -- fully aware, relaxed -- he became enlightened. The moment his head touched the pillow, he became enlightened.

He slept, for the first time in his whole life, a different kind of sleep. He was asleep as far as the body was concerned, but his inner light was aflame. Deep within his being, he was alert and aware.

Morning came, and he was still asleep. Other monks came to see whether he had been able to make it. They looked in the room, and it had the same fragrance as that of Buddha -- the same luminosity, the same grace and grandeur. And Ananda was fast asleep but his face had the light, the light that comes from within. Even in his sleep he was mindful. There was grace, there was a silence surrounding the room, there was a new space.

He was invited immediately. He asked the other monks, "Why? What has happened now? Why were you not asking me to come to the council?" And they said, "Just one day ago, your memory was just the memory of the outside of things. Now you know from the inside -- you yourself have become a Buddha.

BUDDHAHOOD MEANS WHEN YOU BECOME SO ALERT that even in your sleep the alertness continues as an undercurrent. Even when you die, you die fully alert -- now there is no way to lose your alertness, your alertness has become your nature.

This is the essential message of Buddha. And unless you understand this, you will miss all the sutras of Ikkyu. Many have commented on the sutras, and particularly the Western commentators go on missing the point -- because they think what the sutra is saying is a philosophy. The best commentator is R. H. Blyth -- but even he misses, because he also seems to have no inner validity. He thinks these sutras are pessimistic. They are not. Pessimism has nothing to do with Buddha. They look pessimistic because they go against your so-called optimism.

Buddha does not give you any hope. But his message is not that of hopelessness. He takes away hope, and with hope he takes away hopelessness too. That is very difficult to understand, unless you have an inner validity. He destroys all optimism, but remember, he is not a pessimist. Once there is no optimism, how can there be pessimism? -- they go together. His vision of life is not dismal, but it looks dismal to people.

Even R. H. Blyth, who is the most perceptive commentator from the West on Ikkyu's sutras, goes on missing the point. He goes on showing where Buddha is wrong, he goes on saying where Ikkyu is morbid.

If you look at the sutras themselves, without making any effort to be mindful, you will miss the whole point. These sutras are just a device to make you mindful.

Buddha gave an example of just how mindful we should be. He told of a person who was ordered to walk through a very crowded marketplace with a water jug, full to the brim, balanced on his head. Behind him walked a soldier with a big sword. If a single drop of that water were to fall, the soldier would cut off his head. Assuredly, the person with the jug walked pretty mindfully. But it has to be mindful in an easy way. If there is too much forcing or strain, the least jostling will cause the water to spill. The person with the jug has to be loose and rhythmic, flowing with the changing scene, yet staying very attentive in each moment.

That is the kind of care we should take in developing awareness: a relaxed alertness.

These two words look diametrically opposite -- they are. Because whenever you are

relaxed you lose alertness, and whenever you are alert you lose relaxedness. And unless they both happen together you will go on missing Buddha's message. It is a very strange message -- it wants you to bring this polarity together. It is the highest synthesis of human consciousness: one polarity is relaxedness, another polarity is alertness, attentiveness.

If you are only attentive then sooner or later you will be tired of it. You cannot be attentive for twenty-four hours; you will need holidays. You will need alcohol, drugs, to drop out of that attentiveness.

That's what is happening in the West. People have become more attentive; attentiveness has been cultivated. The whole educational mechanism forces you to become more attentive. Those who are more attentive succeed, those who are less attentive fail. It is a very competitive world -- if you want to succeed you have to be very attentive. But then it tires you. Then the tension becomes heavy on the head, then it drives you neurotic. Then madness becomes a very very natural by-product of it.

Many more people go neurotic in the West than in the East. The reason is clear: in the West, attentiveness has been practised, down through the ages. It has paid much. The technology, the scientific progress, affluence -- all that has come through being attentive. In the East, people have remained in a relaxed state. But if you are relaxed without being attentive, it becomes lethargy. It becomes passivity, it becomes a kind of dullness. Hence the East has remained poor, unscientific, non-technological, starving.

If Buddha's message is rightly understood, there will be a meeting of East and West. In Buddha, both can meet. His message is of relaxed attentiveness. You have to be very very relaxed, and yet alert. And there is no problem; it is possible.

And I say it to you from an inner validity: It is possible. And only this possibility will make you a whole man, a holy man. Otherwise you will remain half -- and a half man is always miserable, in one way or other. The West is miserable spiritually, the East is miserable materially. And man needs both -- man needs a richness of the inner and the outer, both.

With Buddha, a new age can dawn. And the secret is simple: learn relaxed awareness. When you are trying to be attentive, simultaneously keep in mind that the body should not become tense. It should be relaxed, loose, in a kind of let-go.

I like this story of Ananda becoming enlightened when his head touched the pillow. You cannot find a better place to become enlightened. Remember it.

And Buddha has not given you any objects to meditate upon. He has not told you to meditate on God, he has not told you to meditate on a mantra, he has not told you to meditate on an image. He has told you to do the small things of life with a relaxed awareness. When you are eating, eat totally -- chew totally, taste totally, smell totally. Touch your bread, feel the texture. Smell the bread, smell the flavour. Chew it, let it dissolve into your being, and remain conscious -- and you are meditating. And then meditation is not separate from life.

And whenever meditation is separate from life, something is wrong. It becomes life-negative. Then one starts thinking of going to a monastery or to a Himalayan cave. Then one wants to escape from life, because life seems to be a distraction from meditation.

Life is not a distraction, life is an OCCASION for meditation.

Walking, just be watchful of the breath going in, the breath going out. You are putting one of your feet ahead: watch, feel it from within. You are touching the earth: feel the touch of the earth. And the birds are singing and the sun is rising... One has to be multi-dimensionally sensitive. This will help your intelligence to grow; this will make you more brilliant, sharp, alive. And religion SHOULD make you more alive, more sensitive.

Because life is God, and there is no other God.
Buddha would have agreed with Toscanini...

On Toscanini's eightieth birthday, someone asked his son what his father ranked as his most important achievement. The son replied, "For him, there can be no such thing. Whatever he happens to be doing at the moment is the biggest thing in his life -- whether he is conducting a symphony or peeling an orange."

Peel an orange as if you are conducting a symphony, and you will be coming closer and closer to Buddha. Peel an orange as if you are painting the greatest painting in the world -- with that alertness, with that care, with that love, with that totality. Peel an orange and be multi-dimensionally aware of it -- the smell that is coming from it, the feel, the touch, the taste. Then a small orange, an ordinary orange, is transformed -- transformed by the quality of the consciousness that you bring to it.

And if life can be lived in this way then religion is not life-negative -- it affirms. It does not take you away from life -- it takes you INTO it, to the deepest core of it. It takes you into its mysteries.

That's my approach too. And any religion that has to be maintained separate from life -- a prayer that you have to do in the temple, and a meditation that you can do only in a Himalayan cave -- is not worth much, because you cannot do it for twenty-four hours. Even the man who lives in a Himalayan cave will have to go to beg for his food, will have to collect wood for the winter that is coming, will have to protect himself because the rain is there, will have to think of something because in the night the wild animals are there. Even in that cave he will have to do a thousand and one things. YOU cannot simply meditate for twenty-four hours, it is not possible.

But Buddha makes it possible. He says: Don't separate meditation from life -- let them be together. Turn each opportunity of life into meditation. Do it fully aware, alert, watchful, witnessing.

A disciple had come to see Ikkyu, his master. The disciple had been practising for some time. It was raining, and as he went in, he left his shoes and umbrella outside. After he paid his respects, the master asked him on which side of his shoes he had left his umbrella.

Now, what kind of question...? You don't expect masters to ask such nonsense questions -- you expect them to ask about God, about kundalini rising, chakras opening, lights happening in your head. You ask about such great things -- occult, esoteric.

But Ikkyu asked a very ordinary question. No Christian saint would have asked it, no Jain monk would have asked it, no Hindu swami would have asked it. It can be done only by one who is really with the Buddha, IN the Buddha -- who is really a Buddha. The master asked him on which side of his shoes he had left his umbrella. Now, what do shoes and umbrellas have to do with spirituality?

If the same question was asked to you, you would have felt annoyed. You would have felt that this man is no master at all. What kind of question is this? What philosophy can there be in it?

But there is something immensely valuable in it. Had he asked about God, about your kundalini and chakras, that would have been nonsense, utterly meaningless. But this has meaning. The disciple could not remember -- who bothers where you have put your shoes and on which side you have put your umbrella, to the right or to the left. Who bothers? Who

pays so much attention to umbrellas? Who thinks of shoes? Who is so careful?

But that was enough -- the disciple was refused. Ikkyu said, "Then go and meditate for seven years more."

"Seven years?" the disciple said. "Just for this small fault?"

Ikkyu said, "This is not a small fault. Faults are not small or big -- you are just not yet living meditatively, that's all. Go back, meditate for seven years more, and come again."

This is the essential message of Buddhism: Be careful, careful of everything. And don't make any distinction between things, that this is trivia and that is very very spiritual. It depends on you. Pay attention, be careful, and everything becomes spiritual. Don't pay attention, don't be careful, and everything becomes unspiritual.

Spirituality is imparted by YOU, it is your gift to the world. When a master like Ikkyu touches his umbrella, the umbrella is as divine as anything can be. And if you touch even God, God will become trivia. It depends on your touch.

Meditative energy is alchemical. It transforms the baser metal into gold; it goes on transforming the baser into the higher. The more meditative you become, the more you see God everywhere. At the ultimate peak, everything is divine. This very world is the paradise, and this very body the Buddha.

The sutras.

THE MOON IS THE HOUSE,
THE MIND IS THE MASTER IN IT:
WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THIS,
IT IS ONLY A TRANSITORY WORLD
WE LIVE IN HERE.

OUR REAL HOME IS NOT THE MIND. The mind is just a caravanserai -- good to stay for the night, good for an over-night's stay. But remember, in the morning we have to go. The mind is not your real home. The mind creates only dreams -- and how can dreams be your real home? The mind creates only desires -- and how can you live in desires?

And that's what people are doing and why they are suffering. They are trying to live in desires. They are trying to live in that which is not -- that's what desire means. They are trying to live in the future. How can you live in the future? The only life possible is in the present -- and the mind is never in the present, it is either in the past or in the future. It is always in that which is not. It exists only with non-existence -- with existence it disappears. And we have made our homes in the mind.

Just watch your mind and you will see the point. Either you are thinking of the past, which is no more, and you are wasting your energy. Or you are projecting into the future, which is not yet -- again you are wasting your energy.

Live here! Live now! Now is the home.

But the mind does not allow you to live in the now. If you are in the herenow, the mind disappears. If you are in the mind, now and here don't exist for you.

THE MOON IS THE HOUSE...

The moon is a symbol of dreaming, of hallucinating. That's why mad people are called lunatics -- they live in the moon, they live through the moon. The moon is your dreaming

faculty, the moon creates fantasies in you -- it is unreal, imaginary.

THE MOON IS THE HOUSE,
THE MIND IS THE MASTER IN IT...

The moon, your dreaming faculties, create the house. The house is false. And then of course the mind becomes the master. The mind can be master only with the false. With lies the mind is perfectly at ease, with truth it becomes frightened.

That's why the closer you come to meditation, the more and more fear arises in you. The closer you come to me, the more and more your mind says, "Escape from here." The closer you come towards me the more fear. You can make it a measurement: you can know if you are becoming very much afraid of me that means you are coming closer -- you MUST be coming closer. If you are becoming afraid of meditations, that simply shows one thing, that the mind has become apprehensive -- now there is danger. One step more, and it may be too late and you may have reached the point of no return.

Mind is perfectly at ease with hallucinations, and mind creates all kinds of dreams. Not only in the night, remember -- even in the day. When you are fully awake... at least, you think you are fully awake -- you can't be, because a fully awake man becomes a Buddha. When you are asleep with open eyes -- that's what I mean by 'fully awake' -- watch. Just close your eyes and look within, and you will find just dreams flowing there.

It is like the stars: in the day you can't see them -- but don't believe that they have disappeared; they are there. In the night you will be able to see them. In the day they only disappear because the light of the sun is too much.

Exactly is the case with your dreaming faculties. In the night they are very clear. In the day there are so many other occupations, they go into the background -- but they are there. Close your eyes any moment of the day, stand in the middle of the road and close your eyes, and you will be surprised: the dream is there. Some dream is going on. It goes on without your cooperation -- it continues.

THE MOON IS THE HOUSE,
THE MIND IS THE MASTER IN IT...

And the mind can remain the master only if dreams are there. Hence the mind has always been in search of drugs, hallucinogens, which create new illusions. It is not new -- it has nothing to do with the modern generation and the young people, it is as old as man. It existed in the Rigveda it was called SOMARAS. It was the LSD of those days.

Down through the ages, man has been searching for drugs, because drugs help your dreaming faculties. They make your dream more colourful, psychedelic, more real, more solid. And they can supply you anything that you ask: if you want SAMADHI, marijuana will give it to you. But the samadhi will be just a dream. It will not transform you, it will not change you, it will not bring any radical transmutation in your being -- you will remain the same. Or you may fall even lower than before; you may regress.

THE MOON IS THE HOUSE,
THE MIND IS THE MASTER IN IT:
WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THIS,
IT IS ONLY A TRANSITORY WORLD
WE LIVE IN HERE.

If you don't understand, dreams become real. If you understand, what you call reality ITSELF becomes a dream. Just see the point of the sutra -- it is one of the most significant sutras. If you don't understand, then even dreams look as if they are real. If you understand, if you become aware, if you become alert and you see into things, even that which you had always been thinking was real is no more real. Then all is a dream.

That is the meaning when Buddha says, "The world is a dream." He is not condemning it, remember. He is not saying "Renounce it" -- how can you renounce a dream? He is not saying, "Escape from it" -- what is the point of escaping from a dream? He is simply saying, "Know it as it is."

And remember, many people ask me, "If it is a dream, and we KNOW it is a dream, will it stop?"

It will not stop, because it is a collective dream. You can stop your private dreams by understanding them. You cannot stop collective dreams -- they don't depend only on you, they depend on the collective mind.

It is as if you are sitting in a movie house and seeing the film. The film is a dream -- you know it, there is nothing on the screen. But sometimes you forget; you become very excited, you become very identified, and it starts taking on a reality for you. Then you remember. Then you relax again in your chair and you know that this is just a game, shadows moving on the screen, and there is nothing.

But feeling this, that there is nothing, it is just like a dream, will not stop the movie -- the projector will continue. IT does not depend only on you. But one thing will change: you will relax. You will not be perturbed, you will not be disturbed. The story will continue, you will remain aloof; there will be a distance between you and the story. You will not become a character in it, you will not become obsessed by anything in it.

Buddha says: With understanding, what you have been thinking of up to now as real, that too becomes unreal. By 'unreal' he does not mean that it will disappear -- it will continue.

For example, you think this is your wife, this is your child, this is your husband. If understanding arises, if you become more meditative, the woman will not disappear because of your meditation -- the woman will be there. But the dream, the identification that "This is my wife" -- that idea of possessiveness will be gone. The woman will be there in all her beauty, in fact more so -- because the moment you possess a woman she becomes a thing. Possessiveness is ugly, it is violent; possessiveness is cruel. Whenever you possess somebody, you are insulting them. How can you possess a person?

The woman will be there but she will be no more a wife, you will be no more a husband. The child will be there -- he has come through you but he does not belong to you. You will not claim him; you will not use the child for your ambitions in the future. You will not ride on the child, you will not force the child, you will not mould the child according to your desires -- who are you? Everything will continue, but in a totally different light...

I, you, possessiveness, ownership -- these things will disappear. And just think -- when there is no possessiveness, no I, no you, what silence will descend on you, what peace will prevail!

WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THIS,
IT IS ONLY A TRANSITORY WORLD
WE LIVE IN HERE.

Then this whole world is just a transitory world -- we are here only for the moment and then we are gone. Why be so worried about it? If it is only such a transitory world, why be so much concerned about it?

Somebody has insulted you -- what difference does it make? Within a few years, nothing will be heard of you and him. And dust will fall unto dust and disappear. How many millions of people have lived on this earth before you? And they were also worried like you -- somebody insulted them, somebody said something, or when they were passing on the road somebody smiled, laughed, ridiculed them. And they were hurt and they were wounded...

And where are those people? What happened to those friends and those enemies? And while they were here, how much fuss they were making!

Buddha simply says: If you understand, you will not make much fuss, that's all. You will pass through the world without making much fuss. That is real renunciation, that is sannyas -- passing through the world without making much fuss, without taking it too seriously, without taking it so significantly. It is nothing -- a tale told by an idiot, full of fury and noise, signifying nothing. Enjoy the story, but don't think that it is something serious.

DEEPLY THINKING OF IT,
I AND OTHER PEOPLE --
THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE,
AS THERE IS NO MIND
BEYOND THIS MIND.

Deeply thinking of it, becoming aware, meditating over it -- over all the relationships and all the entanglements and all the complexities of life...

DEEPLY THINKING OF IF,
I AND OTHER PEOPLE --
THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE.

We are just waves in the same ocean.

AS THERE IS NO MIND
BEYOND THIS MIND.

And there is only one kind of mind -- the illusory mind. When my illusions have disappeared and your illusions have disappeared, what will be there to make us separate, distinct? Our illusions are our boundaries. That's why people cling to them, because they are your definitions.

A man says, "I am beautiful, you are ugly" -- he is defining. A man says, "I am very intelligent, you are not so intelligent" -- he is defining. A man says, "I am so strong, and you are weak" -- he is trying to define.

Our definitions are nothing but our illusions. If you drop all illusions, how will you be able to demark yourself? What boundaries will exist then?

"I am a Hindu and you are a Christian. I am a woman and you are a man. I am black, you are white. I am educated, you are uneducated. I am this, you are that." We are trying to create definitions so we can feel who we are. But all our definitions are just illusions.

AS THERE IS NO MIND
BEYOND THIS MIND.

This dreaming mind, this lunatic mind, this mind which thinks of the past and the future and never arrives in the herenow -- this is the only mind. Once this is dropped, what is the difference? What is the difference between a black man and a white man? What is the difference between a Christian and a Hindu? Once the mind is dropped, all distinctions disappear. That is reality. That is one.

EVERY SPRING WHEN YOU SEE
THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOM,
FEEL WITH PAIN
THE BREVIDITY OF YOUR LIFE!

THIS IS THE POINT where R. H. Blyth remarks, in ZEN AND ZEN CLASSICS, "This verse has something morbid in it."

It has nothing like that; it is not morbid. R. H. Blyth must have become frightened by this verse, some fear must have arisen in him -- he is protecting himself. This is a simple statement:

EVERY SPRING WHEN YOU SEE
THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOM,
FEEL WITH PAIN
THE BREVIDITY OF YOUR LIFE!

It is a simple statement. And anybody who watches will feel it -- and will feel it with pain! Such a beautiful life, and so fragile? Such splendour, and so momentary? Such beauty, and so transitory? Such beautiful people, and just ripples on the ocean -- one moment here, and then gone? Who can avoid the pain?

If you see, then each roseflower will remind you of the pain of life. What is the pain? The pain is that beauty should be eternal, that love should be eternal, that truth should be eternal. Truth, and momentary? Love, and transitory? Beauty, and just a dream?

This is the pain. There is nothing morbid in the verse, it is not possible. Ikkyu is not a poet, Ikkyu is a Buddha.

Whatever comes out of him can't have any morbidity. Something must have been wrong with R. H. Blyth's mind -- maybe he became afraid of the truth of the verse. Reading it, translating it, commenting on it, he may have thought of his woman, he may have thought of flowers, he may have thought of the spring, and he may have become afraid.

We don't want to see this fleetingness of life; we want to cling. We want to believe that this is going to remain. When you fall in love with a woman you want to believe that this is going to be eternal. And you know, and everybody knows, that here on this earth nothing can be eternal.

You know. But you don't want to know that you know. You want to hide it, you want to believe that "Maybe it has not happened to others but it may happen to me. I may be the exception." When a flower blooms in your garden, you would like to believe that "In other people's gardens flowers wither away, but in my garden, no. How can God be so angry with me? A miracle will happen -- my flower will remain."

But there are no miracles, no exceptions. The law is absolute.

EVERY SPRING WHEN YOU SEE

THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOM,
FEEL WITH PAIN
THE BREVITY OF YOUR LIFE!

This pain is not to make you sad, remember. That's where people go on missing these sutras. This pain is just to make you more ALERT -- because people become alert only when the arrow goes deep into their heart and wounds them. Otherwise they don't become alert. When life is easy, comfortable, convenient, who cares? Who bothers to become alert? When a friend dies, there is a possibility. When your woman leaves you alone -- those dark nights, you are lonely. You have loved that woman so much and you have staked all, and then suddenly one day she is gone. Crying in your loneliness, those are the occasions when, if you use them, you can become aware. The arrow is hurting: it can be used.

The pain is not to make you miserable, the pain is to make you more aware! And when you are aware, misery disappears. So there is nothing morbid in the verse. But this has been an argument against Buddha, down the centuries, that Buddha's approach towards life makes people miserable. No, it is not so -- life is miserable, Buddha simply makes you aware of it. And he wants you to become aware so that something can be done, so that life need not be miserable.

There is another kind of life possible. There is a life which has no momentariness; there is a kind of life which is eternal. But you can attain to that only if you are finished with this so-called life -- if your attachments with this life are broken. And of course when an attachment is broken there is pain.

Use all occasions. Don't hide your wounds. That's why Blyth says there is something morbid in it -- he is saying, "Why open your wounds again and again? WHY go on looking at the wounds? Forget them! Look at the positive side of life. Why think of other things? Why think this flower will die?"

But whether you think it or not, the flower is going to die.

And Buddha's insistence is this: if you know that THIS flower is going to die, there is a possibility to attain to that flower which never dies. That lotus can open within you. But if you remain obsessed with these flowers which come and go, then that lotus will remain unopened for ever.

THE ORIGINAL MAN
MUST RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL PLACE;
WHY SEEK THEN
THE NEEDLESS BUDDHA?

THE ORIGINAL MAN IS THE GOAL OF BUDDHISM. What is meant by 'the original man'? The original man is man without the mind, the original man is man without any conditioning. The original man is the natural man.

We condition, we culture, we cultivate. We create certain types of minds -- Hindu, Christian, Jain, Buddhist. These are all the unnatural man. A Christian is an unnatural man, so is a Hindu. The natural man cannot be Christian or Hindu. The natural man is simply a kind of is-ness, empti-ness -- with no ideology, with no character, with no morality, innocent, childlike.

THE ORIGINAL MAN
MUST RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL PLACE...

And the way to return to that original place, to that original space, is awareness.

You have been conditioned. You have been taught what to be, how to be, and you have been following that conditioning automatically. You are living like a robot.

Buddha says: This robot-like existence has to be dropped. De-automatize it. And the only process to de-automatize you is to become more alert. Do whatsoever you are doing with more awareness. And you will be surprised that the more alert you are, the less rigid you become; the more alert you are, the more unpredictable you become. The more alert you are, the more you function without your habits. Otherwise you function just as habits, you go on functioning through habits.

When somebody asks a question, just wait for a moment before you answer. Just see for a moment whether the answer is automatic. If it is automatic don't give that answer, you are being a machine. Respond. Somebody asks, "Do you believe in God?" and an automatic answer comes, "Yes, I am a Catholic Christian." Is this YOUR answer? or has this answer been given to you by others -- by your parents, teachers, church? If you were brought up in a Mohammedan country or if you were brought up in a communist family, can you imagine the same answer?

One of my friends went to Soviet Russia. He was a Buddhist monk -- a very intelligent man, a world-famous author. In a primary school, he asked a small child, "Do you believe in God?" The child laughed and said, "God? People used to believe, in the past. God is a myth." A small child saying "God is a myth. People used to believe in God -- now who is so stupid as to believe in a God?"

And the boy asked, "Do YOU still believe in God?"

If you are brought up in a communist country you don't believe in God, you believe in Karl Marx. But it is the same. You don't believe in the Bible, you believe in DAS KAPITAL -- but it is the same.

Belief comes from others. The original man has no belief. Drop belief systems and you will become original. When you answer, remember: is it your answer, authentically yours? Is it your response? Or is your mother speaking through you -- your father, your priest, your teacher? Just listen a little watchfully, and you will be surprised -- you will be able to hear exactly the voice, who is speaking: your mother, your father, your teacher. But then this is mechanical.

Drop it. It is better to say, "I don't know." At least that is your answer closer to truth, closer to God. Because truth is God, and there is no other God.

In small things go on watching how you behave. Do you react? Or do you respond? From reaction, lean more and more towards response. Reaction is conditioned, response is aware.

This is Buddha's technique to transform you. Slowly slowly, the original man arrives. Slowly slowly, the conditioned man disappears. If you don't help the conditioned man, it has to go -- it lives through your help, it can live only through your cooperation. You nourish it, you feed it.

Stop nourishing it. Let it die of starvation!

THE ORIGINAL MAN
MUST RETURN TO HIS ORIGINAL PLACE;
WHY SEEK THEN
THE NEEDLESS BUDDHA?

And this is a beautiful statement. Ikkyu says: Don't be bothered about the Buddha, don't start seeking the Buddha. Seek the original man, and you will find the Buddha! And if you start searching for the Buddha you will never find the original man.

You must have heard about the famous book of Thomas a Kempis, IMITATION OF CHRIST. Now, no Zen man can even think of such a title: "Imitation of Buddha" -- no, impossible. And Kempis' book is so famous that it is almost second in importance to the Bible itself. Imitation of Christ? But if you are searching for Christ you will become an imitator -- that is bound to happen. You will start ACTING like a Christ or like a Buddha. You will start pretending; you will start cultivating a certain character, a certain structure. And slowly slowly you will become more and more unoriginal.

Nobody can become a Christ and nobody can become a Buddha. But everybody can become an original man. Your originality has to be sought within YOU. You have to go withinwards, you have to dig there deep inside yourself. Your sources are there; you are not to look outside. Buddha may be very beautiful -- so what! If you imitate, you become ugly, because all imitation is ugly. And what will you do if you want to become a Buddha? You will start walking like him, you will start talking like him, you will eat what he eats, you will move the way he moves. But this will be only on the surface. Deep down, you will remain the same stupid person you have always been.

This will be creating an illusion. Again you have created a moon-house, and the mind will become the master.

The great teachers have always been against imitation. Don't try to become a Buddha, try to become an original man -- and that is the way to become a Buddha. But when you become a Buddha by finding your original man, this will be a new expression of Buddhahood. It will not in any way be a repetition of the old Buddha. Once is enough. And it is good -- just think of a world where there are so many Buddhas and so many Christs and so many Krishnas, just think of such a world. It will not be worth living in!

Wherever you go, you come across Christ. The milkman comes, and there is Christ. And the postman comes, and there is Christ. You will commit suicide, you will become so tired of Christs!

No, it is good that God never repeats. One Christ is utterly beautiful, one Buddha is beautiful. When you attain to your original nature, it will be a new expression of God -- a new phenomenon, a new splendour, a new song never sung before.

WHY SEEK THEN
THE NEEDLESS BUDDHA?

THE MORNING DEW
FLEES AWAY,
AND IS NO MORE;
WHO MAY REMAIN
IN THIS WORLD OF OURS?

JUST REMEMBER ONE THING: everything is fleeing away, it is a flux. We are like morning dew -- the sun will rise and we will disappear. Before it happens, do only one thing: become aware of your innermost core. Before the dewdrop disappears, become aware of your innermost core -- because in the disappearing dewdrop there is something which never

appears and never disappears. In this fleeting world, there is something which is utterly eternal.

WE PRAY FOR OUR LIFE OF TOMORROW,
EPHEMERAL LIFE THOUGH IT MAY BE;
THIS IS THE HABIT OF OUR MIND
THAT PASSED AWAY YESTERDAY.

And what are you asking for tomorrow? Have you ever thought about it? It is just a repetition of your yesterday. Maybe a little more modified, a little more painted, a little more sophisticated, a little more decorated -- but what are you asking for tomorrow? You will ask for your yesterday. And what was yesterday? Were you really happy yesterday? Just out of old habit, we go on praying and asking for the past to be repeated again and again in the future.

Stop all this! Let the past disappear from your mind, and don't ask for it again. Live in the moment without any expectation from it -- and then great is the benediction. When you can live the moment without expectation, infinite blessing happens. But when you ask for some expectation to be fulfilled, you are only frustrated; nothing happens.

The blissful man is one who lives without expectations, who simply lives -- who is not asking that "Things should be like this." Who knows how to live fully alert, whatsoever happens. In life he is aware, in death he is aware. In happiness he is aware, in unhappiness he is aware. In success he is aware, in failure he is aware. He has the secret key.

That secret key is awareness. He does not ask for anything else now. He knows the art of transforming every situation into blissfulness. The grace of awareness transforms even hell into a heaven.

DO NOT TAKE IT TO HEART;
THE REAL WAY
IS ONE, ITSELF AS IT IS;
THERE ARE NOT TWO, OR THREE.

This is the last sutra of Ikkyu.

DO NOT TAKE IT TO HEART;
THE REAL WAY
IS ONE, ITSELF AS IT IS.

IT IS THE ULTIMATE RADICAL STATEMENT. It says: Life is the way, as it is. Do not try to change it. Do not ask for some other life, do not ask for paradise. Life, as it is, is as it should be. If you are missing it, that simply shows one thing, that you are fast asleep -- that's all.

Awake, and all is as it should be.

You need not be a saint. You need only one thing -- to be awake. There are no sinners and no saints, there are only people who are asleep and people who are awake. The only difference in people is this: somebody is asleep and somebody is awake.

That is the only difference between a Buddha and you -- not much. You are exactly a Buddha. You have just not opened your eyes yet. You are still living in the house of the moon: you are still allowing the mind to be your master. You have not searched for awareness, you have not shaken yourself into wakefulness.

Do not worry because you are a fool or a sinner. Folly and wisdom, illusion and enlightenment, salvation and damnation, are at bottom one thing. There is in reality only one world -- however we divide it into scientific and poetic, finite and infinite, absolute and relative, this and that. Those divisions are all mind things. The world is one -- it is neither poetic nor scientific. The world is one -- it is neither good nor evil. The world is one -- it is neither hell nor heaven.

This is the only world there is.

All that is needed is to be awake to this world -- to be awake to the sunrays, to be awake to the greenery of the trees, to be awake to the birds and the traffic noise, to be awake to the people around you, to be awake to yourself.

Awareness is the key word. The very word 'Buddha' means one who is aware, one who has awakened. And see the difference: other religions say to you, "Become good, become moral, become saints." Other religions condemn you as sinners, other religions condemn you as being unworthy as you are.

Buddhism has no condemnation. Buddhism has no idea of the original sin. And Buddhism does not teach you to become saints -- because what will you do? If you want to become saints, what will you do? You will repress the so-called sins. And repressed, they will be there in your unconscious -- they will not leave you. They will boil there within you; they will drive you crazy and perverted.

How can you become a saint? What will you do? You are angry: what will you do to become a saint? Repress the anger! You are sexual, what will you do? Repress sex. But sex will be there -- repressed, it will go deeper into your roots. It will poison your whole life. It will start happening in perverted ways, it will start dominating you from the back door. Your life will not be transformed by repression.

Buddhism has no idea of sin and no idea of saintliness. Buddhism says: Simply one thing has to be done. People go on doing wrong things, not because they are bad but because they are asleep. See the difference. And how can you expect a man who is asleep to do right things? People are somnambulistic.

Have you seen somebody sleep-walking? There are people, and many, who can: almost one out of ten people, ten percent of people, have the capacity to walk in their sleep. If there are one thousand people here, then many of you can walk in your sleep. But when a person walks in his sleep, naturally he may stumble upon something, he may hit his head against the wall. You will not call him a sinner -- or will you? You will not condemn him, you will not send him to hell for eternity -- that seems to be too cruel. All that is needed is to wake him up! And that wakefulness will change everything.

Buddhism says: There is only one sin, if you want to call it a sin, and that is sleep, unawareness. And there is only one virtue, if you want to call it a virtue -- that is awareness, wakefulness. Buddhism is a very very scientific religion, psychological to its very roots. The greatest psychological insight yet.

Take It Easy, Vol 2

Chapter #13

Chapter title: The Real Israel

11 May 1978 am in Buddha Hall

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The first question

LAST NIGHT, IN A DREAM, I FOUND MYSELF ON A GIRDER HIGH IN THE AIR MOVING TOWARDS SOME DOOR OF SAFETY. THEN MY CLOTHES BEGAN TO GET CAUGHT ON SPLINTERS OF IRON, AND NEXT THE GIRDER BEGAN TO SPLIT. I TOLD MYSELF TO KEEP CALM, NOT TO LOOK DOWN, TO FORGET THE DANGER AND JUST DO ONE THING AT A TIME. THIS I WAS MANAGING AND YET NOT MANAGING. THEN I HEARD MYSELF SAY TO MYSELF, "WELL, YOU COULD ALWAYS WAKE UP." SO I DID.
COULD ONE WAKE UP OUT OF THE NIGHTMARE OF THE MIND JUST LIKE THAT?

YES, SOMENDRA. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY TO WAKE UP -- there is no other. It is only a question of remembering that you CAN wake up. Nothing else is needed, no other effort, no method, no technique, no path. Just a remembrance that "This is my dream." A remembrance that "I have decided to dream it -- and the moment I decide not to dream it, I will be awake." Once your cooperation is withdrawn, the dream is nullified.

If you are living in misery, you are creating it. And nobody else can take it away from you unless YOU decide not to create it any more. Your hell is your work. All that you are is your self-creation. In a single moment, you can awake.

This is one of the greatest messages of Zen and Buddha, that time is not needed. If effort has to be made, then time is a must. But if one can awake without an effort, with just the idea, then time is not needed.

That's why you come across immensely beautiful and unbelievable Zen stories -- enlightenment happening so easily, one cannot believe it. A master hits the disciple, and in that moment the disciple is enlightened. What has happened?

Just the other day, I was telling you the story of Ananda. The moment his head touched the pillow he became enlightened -- all samadhi was his. What happened in that moment? Just the same.

Somendra, your dream is one of the most important dreams one can ever dream. It has a great spiritual significance -- it is a key dream. Don't just think about it as a dream and don't forget it. A key has been delivered to you in your dream. Now use it for the greater dream that you go on seeing the whole day with open eyes: wake up.

The second question

HOW DO YOU KNOW JESUS, BUDDHA, KRISHNA, ZARATHUSTRA AND LAO

TZU?

BECAUSE I AM THEM. And you are also them. Wake up and know. Krishna or Buddha or Christ are not part of history, they are part of your being. They are stages in your being. You need not go into history to know about Christ -- and those who do, they are being simply stupid.

You have to go inwards. You will not meet Christ in Israel, you will not meet Christ by going backwards twenty centuries. Just go within -- there is the real Israel. It is not a question of going INTO time, it is a question of going beyond time. And your consciousness exists beyond time this very moment.

The question is relevant. People go on wondering how I know about Ikkyu. I know nothing about Ikkyu, but I know about myself. And that is where I can know anybody who has ever become awakened. It is not a question of knowing Ikkyu as a person, or Krishna or Christ. They are not persons, they are the ultimate in awareness. If YOU are aware, you know them.

That's why I say to you: If sometimes you come across some of my statements about Christ which don't agree with the Bible, forget the Bible! Or correct it -- at least you can correct your copy. Because what I am saying is not a historical research. I am not proposing any thesis, I am simply saying that which has happened to me. It can't happen otherwise -- it could not have happened otherwise, ever. The taste of enlightenment is the same. To whom it happens, it makes no difference. In what time, what age, what country, it makes no difference. It is an eternal timeless experience.

Once you have known yourself, you have known all the Buddhas of the past. And not only that, but all the Buddhas of the future too -- even those who have not yet happened. In knowing yourself, you come to know all.

The third question

I DON'T FEEL COURAGEOUS, JUST VERY VERY LUCKY -- THAT SOMEHOW AGAINST ALL ODDS AND IN SPITE OF MY STUPIDITY, I AM HERE. AND THAT AFTER THREE AND A HALF YEARS YOU HAVE STILL NOT KICKED ME OUT. AND THAT I DON'T GET THE URGE TO LEAVE. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT WOULD TAKE MUCH MORE COURAGE TO GO BACK INTO THE WORLD AND LIVE WITHOUT YOU AND WITHOUT ALL THAT YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME. EVERY DAY I FEEL TRANSPORTED INTO YOUR BLISS, AT LEAST FOR MOMENTS, AND THE PEOPLE AROUND ME ARE A JOY TO BEHOLD. HOW CAN YOU SAY IT TAKES COURAGE? OR AM I NOT WITH YOU?

The question is from Arup.

ARUP, IT TAKES COURAGE OR CRAZINESS. And you are crazy. Either crazy people can be with me, or courageous. Those who think logically, cleverly, calculatingly, they can't be with me. Courage is also an aspect of craziness. Craziness is much more than courage, but courage is also an aspect of it.

What IS courage? It means, in spite of all that your mind is saying, your logic is saying, your sanity is saying, you still go. You know the danger, you know the risk, still you go. In

spite of all your knowing, you choose to go into a certain experience -- that is courage.

Courageous people are also crazy, although craziness has much more to it than courage. It is much more vital; it has more dimensions to it. And to go into the unknown, how can a man who remains calculating be with me? He will always calculate.

There are people here who are continuously calculating -- they take very calculated steps. But they will go on missing. Their steps cannot be vital enough, and their steps cannot be quantum leaps. Because they calculate, they remain within the boundaries of their knowledge -- they remain within the known. How can you calculate about the unknown? How can you think about that which you have not known yet? You have to throw all your knowledge to the winds, only then can you enter into it.

So sometimes it happens, fools arrive and the so-called wise lag behind.

In love, in prayer, in meditation, in God, a kind of crazy courage is a must. Once you have entered into that world, then no courage is needed. It is just the first triggering point. Once you have entered into the world of the divine, once you have tasted something of it, then Arup is right -- to leave it will be crazy, to leave it will need immense courage. In fact, to leave it will need great stupidity. And to go back into the world will be impossible -- it doesn't happen, it can't happen.

I have heard:

A man noticed that his car had a flat tire, so he stopped and proceeded to change the wheel. The car was parked in front of an insane asylum, and as he worked on the wheel change, one inmate watched him very closely through the fence. The motorist was careless and he accidentally dropped the wheel nuts down a nearby sewer grill. What to do?

After a while, the inmate called to the motorist and suggested using one nut from each of the other three wheels to hold on the fourth wheel.

"That's a very clever idea," said the motorist. "It makes me wonder why you are locked inside those walls."

"That's simple, too," said the inmate. "I am in here because I am crazy, not because I am stupid."

Arup, you are here because you are crazy. And now it is impossible to go away. That point has already been crossed. There is a point -- before that point, one can escape if one wants to escape. Once that point is crossed, then you are beyond recall. Then even if you go away from me, you will not be able to go away from me. Then wherever you are, you will find me within you. And wherever you live, you will live in my climate.

There comes a point of communion, a meeting of the souls. Once that has happened then the point of no return has arrived.

It is courageous, crazy -- even to think of God, to search for God, to devote and dedicate your life to God. To move into meditation is to move into nowhere. And what is the utility of it? Nothing tangible in your hands, nothing you can show to the world that you have achieved.

The world will never know what you have achieved. It will remain an inner experience -- inexpressible, ineffable. Only YOU will know, or those who have arrived at that experience. They will be very few and far between. The whole world will laugh at you. They will think you have fallen into a trap, you are hypnotized, you are wasting your life. And the people who will say this are in the majority -- they have always been in the majority. They laughed at Christ, they laughed at Lao Tzu, they ridiculed Buddha, they were against Mahavir, they

are against me.

And they will take all kinds of revenge on you; they will not allow you to live peacefully. This is very strange. Buddha was not trying to disturb anybody in any way, he could have lived peacefully with his disciples. But people wouldn't allow that.

What was Jesus doing? He could have moved with his disciples into the mountains, meditated, prayed, talked about God and the kingdom of God. What harm was he doing to people? But they were angry, they were in a rage, they were mad at him. They killed him.

Why does it happen again and again? If you are with me, the whole world is going to be against you. To be with me is risky. It is not a simple choice -- you are choosing me against the world. The world is big, the majority has all kinds of power. And they will be against you and they would like to destroy you -- although you are not doing anything to them. Why do they become so panicky?

There is a subtle phenomenon that happens. The moment anybody starts moving towards God, everybody who is living in the ordinary mundane world becomes afraid, because suddenly the presence of the seeker makes them feel that they are wasting their lives. Suddenly the joy on the faces of those who pray and meditate, suddenly the dance, the change, the transformation in people's lives, in their beings -- the laughter, the love -- and people who are running after money and power become suspicious about their own endeavours. What are they doing? Is it right?

A great doubt arises in them -- that's why they become so angry. You create doubt in their life. And they were living in such certainty, they were so absolutely certain that their life was the right life. And there comes a Christ or a Buddha, and his presence shakes them up. They can never again be so certain: doubt has entered into their being. They are angry because of that doubt.

Now, my sannyasins are not doing anything to anybody. You can't find more peaceful, more loving people than these; they are not doing any harm to anybody. But the society is going to be more and more against you. And the society is going to try in every way to prevent you. This is strange, very strange, but there is a subtle logic in it...

Just a few days ago, Maneesha asked a question: "Osho, was the idea of moving to Kutch just a device?"

It was not, Maneesha. I wanted to move to Kutch, everything was planned. But the politics of the country made it almost impossible to move. It is because of the mischief of Morarji Desai that we could not move. But WHY should the prime minister of this country be interested where I am going, where my people are going, what we are doing? We are not making any politics -- my people are the most non-political in the world; we think politics is just stupidity.

But that's why. Suspicion arises, doubt arises: if I am right, then they are all wrong. And if this idea spreads... and it can spread like fire. Truth has a potential -- even if you crucify it, it spreads.

Jesus was not destroyed by crucifixion. In fact it helped: Jesus became a great force in the world because of the crucifixion. Truth cannot be killed. But it can be delayed.

People will be against you. Hence it is courageous to be with me. And I cannot give you anything -- except nothing. That's what Ikkyu says: "I would like to give you everything, but we Buddhas don't have anything else except nothing."

I can give you only nothing -- that is my present. And you will be risking your all. Your

life, your respectability, your family, your finance -- you will be risking all. Risking all for nothing? You must be crazy.

The fourth question

MY PARENTS KEEP ON SAYING THEY WANT ME TO LEAD A 'USEFUL' LIFE AND DO SOMETHING 'USEFUL FOR SOCIETY'. AM I? ARE SANNYASINS?

BARKHA, the society wants you to be reduced to a commodity. To say it politely they say, "Do something useful.' They are saying, "Be useful. Function as a commodity so that people can use you. Be a machine, efficient, functional."

The society has been doing that, down the ages -- reducing people to utilitarian commodities. But they talk as if they are saying it out of great love. And I am not saying that your parents are cheating you -- they may be simply repeating what THEIR parents have done to them. That's how it goes on, generation after generation: the same diseases are being handed on. THEIR parents must have told them, "Be useful -- otherwise you will be a nobody, a hobo. Do something for which society pays you. The more it pays, the more your work has been useful."

The utility of a certain thing is decided by money, how much money you can get out of it. Now, how much money can you get out of meditation? You cannot get any money out of meditation; you may even lose that which you have. While you are meditating, somebody may rob you. And you cannot do both things -- meditating and keeping an eye on your money bag -- that is impossible.

Love is not a utility. You can be as loving as possible, but you will not become famous because of your love. See: people become famous because of their violence, not because of their love. How much you have the power to kill -- that makes you famous. The more power you have to kill, the more important you are. Love? Who cares about love? It is good for poets to talk about it and painters to paint about it and mystics to sing about it. But these people are not the real people -- they are not the real society, they exist on the fringe. They are always on the outer fringe. The society somehow tolerates them, that's all. But the society does not need them.

One of the most calculating thinkers of the world, Plato, decided that in his ideal society called "Republic", poets would not be allowed; there would be no place for poets. Why was this man so much against poets? The only reason is, they talk nonsense.

Poetry cannot be reduced to any utility. Sannyas is poetry -- poetry in life, poetry as living.

Your parents must be worried, I can understand. They feel for you -- although their feeling is not ENLIGHTENED, still they feel for you. They must be worried: "What is going to happen to my child? If one goes on meditating and dancing and singing, then from where is the money going to come? And who is going to support you? How will you live? Where is the security?" They must be worried about you.

I can understand their sympathy, but their sympathy is ignorant. Life can be lived in a poetic way -- SHOULD be lived in a poetic way. Life should not be reduced to any utility, and yet you can earn enough. But always remember Jesus: "Man cannot live by bread alone." You should not become just a bread-producer, a bread-earner. Bread is needed, but bread is needed only so that you can sing a song. The bread is needed for the song, the song is not

needed for the bread -- the bread is a means, it is not an end.

Once your perspective changes, life will have a totally different significance. It will not have utility but it will have significance, which is far more important. You will earn -- needs are not many, needs are very few. Any intelligent person can fulfill his needs very easily. But when needs become the whole life and you are nothing but a means, then needs cannot be fulfilled -- they become neurotic.

Neurotic needs are called desires. That's what Buddha calls them -- neurotic needs. Bread is needed, but you don't need a great treasure. Clothes are needed, but one need not be mad about clothes. One is not here just to go on collecting clothes. Yes, it is beautiful sometimes to put flowers in your hair, to have a garland of flowers or just a rose in your buttonhole. But you are mad if you are running after diamonds and wasting time. Any stone, any beautiful stone from the beach will do. A seashell will do.

There is no need to put your whole energy and life into things which are really unimportant, insignificant. But that's how people are living. They live for the bank balance. Once they have started living for the bank balance they completely forget what the use of the bank balance is; they go on increasing it.

Andrew Carnegie, one of the richest men of the world, was once asked: "You could have stopped earning any time, because you always had more than you needed." He said, "Yes, that's right -- but I could not stop. I had forgotten HOW to stop."

Once you get into things it becomes almost impossible to stop. Now he knew that he had more than he needed and there was no need to go on earning. But he worked from the morning till late in the night. Even the day he died he was working -- late, up to twelve in the night he worked, and by twelve-thirty he died. And he was ill, and the doctors were saying, "You need rest."

But how can you rest? The whole life becomes money-oriented -- money means utility.

An intelligent person knows that money is not the goal. And remember, I am not against money, but money is not the goal. There are two kinds of people: those who are for money, and those who are against money. Both are unintelligent. An intelligent person is neither for nor against. He knows that money has some utility, it fulfills certain needs -- you need clothes, you need a shelter, you need food, so it is perfectly all right. But you need not make money your god.

Barkha, you say: MY PARENTS KEEP ON SAYING THEY WANT ME TO LEAD A 'USEFUL' LIFE AND DO SOMETHING 'USEFUL FOR SOCIETY'.

This is a very strange logic. This is being told to everybody.

I have heard: A mother was saying to her child, "Serve others. Service is religion. God has created you to serve others." And the child must have been an intelligent child -- he said, "Okay, so God has made me to serve others. Why has he made others? To serve me? This looks so absurd. I can serve MYself, they can serve THEMselves -- that seems so simple!"

"Do something useful for the society"? What is useful? Become a teacher in a school? Yes, that is useful -- you can destroy beautiful new children in the name of education. That is utilitarian -- you can condition them. Teachers are the vehicles for the past to destroy the

future. That's what education is all about. The dead trying to control the living: that's what education is. The teacher is just a vehicle. That's why he is respected so much.

The respect has a reason in it: he is the door from which the past enters into the present. All your dead parents and their parents and their parents, they are all working through the teacher to destroy a small child. They have not lived themselves, they wasted their life -- now they don't want this child to live. They want to also mould this child into a certain pattern. They would like him to become a clerk, then it is useful for the society. Or they would like the child to become a soldier, then it is useful for the society. Or they would like the child to become an atomic physicist, then it is useful for the society.

Create war, it is useful. Exploit people, it is useful Destroy people, it is useful.

Your parents must love you, that's why they are worried. Feel thankful for their love, but beware: their love is ignorant. It has no light in it, it is dark, it is dangerous. Feel grateful that they think of you, but don't be trapped by them.

What utility has a rose-flower? And what utility have these birds who are singing? this cuckoo far away, calling you -- what utility? What utility do stars have? and the mountains? and the rivers?

Existence is a celebration. It is not a marketplace, it is a festival, it is a carnival of joy. It is dance, it is song, it is love. It has no utility. It is not a means to any other end, it is an end unto itself.

That's what I teach you: Be joyous, be a celebrant. Love life utterly, live life utterly. And of course that is taken for granted that you will be intelligent enough to provide bread and butter for yourself. And that is not such a big problem -- it can be very easily arranged, with very little effort. One need not waste one's whole life for it.

So, Barkha, make your parents understand what is happening here to you. My people are not going to be beggars; I am against begging. The new commune is not going to beg for anything -- it will be a productive commune, it will itself produce whatsoever it needs. But it will not reduce people to utilities. All that is done is done only so that you can celebrate, so that you can sing, so that you can dance.

Dance is the goal. Everything else has to be just a part. And if YOU are joyous, you help people to be joyous. If you can laugh, you create ripples of laughter in existence. That is the real service. I don't think that if you become a soldier or you go and become part of an army, you are serving society. You are dangerous -- you are an enemy, you are destructive. You are in the service of death, not in the service of life. If you are creating atom bombs, you are not serving anyone.

Do you know? Before Albert Einstein died, somebody asked him, "If another chance is given to you and God is willing for you to come back to the earth, what would you like to become?" He opened his eyes, and said, "One thing is certain -- never again a physicist, never again a scientist! I would rather become a plumber."

There is a reason, great experience in it, great repentance in it. Albert Einstein knows perfectly well that he has wasted his life and he has been the cause of Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- that he has been even more dangerous to humanity than Adolf Hitler. There is a possibility that any day the whole world may disappear and the reason and the cause will be Albert Einstein. But when he was discovering atomic energy he thought he was being of great use to the society.

Please avoid being so useful to the society. Plant a rosebush -- enough of the Hiroshimas

and Nagasaki. Water a small plant: let there be a little more green in the world, a little more red in the world, a little more gold in the world. Play on a guitar: let there be a little more music in the world, a little more harmony in the world. Love. Love for love's sake.

The fifth question

I HAVE BEGUN TO FEEL THAT THERE IS ANOTHER WAY TO MISS THE POINT: RATHER THAN BEING TOO SERIOUS (WHICH I CAREFULLY AVOID) I HAVE BECOME TOO SILLY. I DECIDED THAT I AM TOO INTELLIGENT TO TAKE LIFE SERIOUSLY, SO I MOVED TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE PENDULUM. I HAD BEEN FEELING QUITE COMFORTABLE AND DIFFERENT IN THAT SPACE, BUT NOW I'M FEELING VERY VERY CONFUSED. THE ONLY THING I CAN SEE IS THAT I AM STILL MISSING THE POINT. PLEASE HELP ME.

SARJANO, THAT'S HOW THE MIND FUNCTIONS -- it moves from one extreme to another. That is the mind's way to avoid change; that is the mind's trickery, deception. And it is really a very subtle deception, because it seems such a great change. When you move from one polarity to another, naturally it seems such a great change. What change can be more great than this?

You were eating too much, and then you start fasting. Naturally you think this is a great change. But the mind has deceived you. Whether you eat more or you fast, you remain obsessed with eating. You have not changed. Your concentration is still on food -- you are still thinking of food, fantasizing about food. On the surface you have moved so much, it seems a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn: you were eating too much and now you are fasting. You were running after women continuously, chasing -- and now whenever a woman passes by, you simply close your eyes and say, "Hare Ram, Hare Ram..." You think you have changed! You are the same, you have just moved to the opposite polarity. The mind has deceived you -- you are still obsessed by women, you are still thinking of the woman, you are obsessed.

But this has been happening -- and not only with you, Sarjano. Millions have been deceived by this cleverness of the mind. People move to the monasteries... There are monasteries where no woman has ever been allowed in, for thousands of years -- not even a small girl has ever been allowed in. But the people who live in these monasteries continuously think of women and nothing else. They can't think of anything else; their whole mind becomes possessed by the thought of feminine energy. And these are the people who think that they have changed. They have not changed.

Mind's greatest and most clever trick is, when you want to change, when you insist for change, it goes from one polarity to another. It says, "Look -- what more do you want? I give you all."

Sarjano is an intellectual author. He must have been very serious, authors are serious people. Then, listening to me, trying to understand me, coming closer to me -- and he is in love with me -- something started happening. He had a small satori experience, and that day he decided, "No more seriousness." He moved to the opposite pole, he became silly. He started writing very silly letters to me. And he must have been thinking that he is turning Zen...

Then when I said that this is stupid, naturally he became confused. Now where to go? Seriousness was wrong, now silliness is wrong -- now where to go? I have closed both the doors. That is one of the devices. I would like you to be exactly in the middle -- neither serious nor silly, neither for money nor against money, neither obsessed with eating nor obsessed with fasting. I would like you to be just in the middle.

Buddha has called his way 'the middle path' -- MAJJHIM NIKAYA. And that is one of the most important things to be understood: when you are exactly in the middle, you transcend the polarity. The exact middle is the transcendence point. Then you are no more serious and no more silly, then you are simply conscious. Then all modes disappear, patterns disappear; then one is simply aware.

I can understand your confusion, Sarjano. First I closed one door, the door of seriousness. You immediately turned to another door, the door of silliness. Now I have closed that door too. Naturally you are feeling suffocated -- where to go? You cannot go to the first, you cannot go to the second, and there is no other door. And I know it, there is no other door.

Now be just exactly in the middle. And if you can come to that balance which I mean by saying 'exactly the middle' you will be surprised: all doors disappear, you are transported into another world. You are no more in the mind. Mind means excess, mind means exaggeration. I have heard:

An old maid married a farmer. The first night produced no sexual activity, and none occurred for over a year.

One day as she was watching the farmer plowing in a distant field, he threw down the plow and came running into the house. He rushed up to her, tore off her clothes, and laid her right on the living-room floor.

Things seemed promising at that point, but about a year went by with no more sex. Again, one day as she was watching him with the plowing, he threw down the plow and came running towards the house.

Rather than have all her clothes torn off again, she undressed and found a comfortable place to lie down on the floor.

The farmer burst in, took one look at her and shouted, "Get up, you sex fiend, the barn is on fire!"

These people who live in polarities... One year fasting, and then this mad love-making. One year of no anger, and then a murder. One year of living in celibacy, and then you are BOUND to fall into indulgence. And the indulgence will come like a revenge -- it can't be natural. Your life will move like a pendulum, you will always remain torn apart. And then indulgence will again take you into celibacy -- and it is a vicious circle, it can go on for ever.

You have dropped seriousness, there is no need to choose silliness. That is the same thing! Now you are just standing on your head.

And Zen can give that feeling to many people. There is a kind of Zen becoming prevalent in the West which is not real Zen, it is just another extreme. People enjoy it just because of the extremity of it.

For example, you have always heard that Jesus is God and Jesus has to be worshipped. And Jesus has not to be even thought of as human, he is born of a virgin. He lived a superhuman life -- all those miracles are just to prove that. For twenty centuries, the whole effort of Christian theology has been this, to prove that Jesus is divine, is not human.

People have become tired in the West -- tired of Jesus, tired of the Virgin Mary, tired of

the miracles, tired of this superhuman bombastic exaggeration. Then suddenly they come across Zen statements. A master says, "If you meet Buddha on the way, kill him immediately." This looks beautiful, far-out. That's what people are really hankering to do. Enough! -- twenty centuries of worship, one is fed up. One would LIKE to kill Jesus.

That's what Friedrich Nietzsche did when he declared, "God is dead." What he was saying was, "Enough! We have heard about you enough. Now it is time: we want to get rid of you."

So when you come across Zen statements like "If you meet the Buddha on the way, kill him immediately" it is such a relief. But you don't know who said this. The man who said this had been worshipping Buddha for thirty years. And the day he said it, that day he had also worshipped in the morning. And after he said it, by the evening he was worshipping again. The disciples who had heard him say this could not believe it -- and when they saw him worshipping again they asked, "What are you doing? Just today you said, 'If you meet Buddha on the way, kill him.' Now why are you worshipping?"

And he said, "Because I love him. And because he even ALLOWS himself to be killed, my love grows more. He does not want me to cling to him, because that will become a barrier. He wants me to drop him too. Hence my gratitude is even more.

But if you just see the statement taken out of its context, it becomes silly. You hear of a Zen master just hitting a disciple on the head with his staff and a great satori happens. Now these stories are becoming very prevalent in the West. And people think this is beautiful -- just a single hit. But you don't know; the man had been meditating for twenty-six years. That was the last thing, he was ready for it. Those hits from the master have to be DESERVED -- one has to be worthy of them, one has to be capable of receiving them.

Zen masters use words for Buddha which no other tradition has ever used. And that is possible only because their love is tremendous.

It is said that when Buddha was born he declared: "There is no one higher than me, above or below." And Ikkyu is reported to have said, "If I had been there I would have killed this guy immediately and thrown him to the dogs."

And Ikkyu was worshipping Buddha, morning and evening, with tears in his eyes -- dancing around his statue, bringing flowers for him. If you don't know Ikkyu's whole context you will miss the point. He is saying it out of great love -- his love is so great that it can be said. He is not offending Buddha. Buddha will understand -- he will smile, he will know.

But Ikkyu is not being silly. He is neither serious nor silly, he is simply spontaneous. When he feels like worshipping he worships. When he feels like throwing him out he throws him out too...

He used to live in a hut, and there was no Buddha statue there. A few soldiers were passing by and they stayed the night in Ikkyu's hut. And they saw the man, and the beauty of the man -- he was a Buddha himself.

And they said, "You look so much like a Buddha, and yet you don't have a Buddha statue here? We have a picture -- we will present it to you." But Ikkyu said, "Take your picture with you, because the place is already much too crowded. Don't you see? It is such a small hut, we both cannot live here! Only one can live here."

But they could not understand. They laughed, and they still said, "You keep this picture, this will not take much space." So he kept it. He hung the picture on a pole and told Buddha, "Now be here. And don't ask for any reverence from me and don't ask for any worship. I am

not going to take care of you, and I am not asking any favours from you! This place is already much too crowded, and you know it! But if you insist, be here."

And next morning, he is worshipping. Tears in his eyes...

Now, to understand this man is difficult, difficult because we don't know the spontaneity. That moment was THAT moment, this moment is this moment. And he is so one with Buddha, he can throw all formalities to the wind.

But if you throw the formalities to the wind -- knowingly, with effort, deliberately, just so that you don't look serious -- you have missed the point.

Now, Sarjano, you have tried to be serious, you have tried to be silly. Please don't try anything any more: just be. Just be natural, as you are. And sometimes you will be silly and sometimes you will be serious -- it is okay. Just be simple, don't try to be anything in particular. If you try to be anything in particular you will go on missing the point. If you don't try to be anything in particular, you have got it.

The sixth question

WHAT IS AWARENESS?

A story:

GENERAL GEORGES METAXAS, the late dictator of Greece, was invited to pilot a new flying boat while he was inspecting a Mediterranean air base. He flew it himself, and all went fine until the commander who was accompanying him observed that he was about to make a landing on the air dome.

"Excuse me, General, but as this is a flying boat, wouldn't it be better to come down on the ocean?"

"Oh, of course, Commander, I don't know what I was thinking of!" Metaxas recollected himself and made a successful landing on the water. As he got up from the controls, he said, "Commander, I certainly appreciate the tact you used saving me from that incredible blunder I almost made."

Saying that, he opened the door and stepped out into the sea.

The seventh question

PLEASE HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS RELATIONSHIP. I AM SO ATTACHED AND SO RESISTING, SO ECSTATIC AND SO WRETCHED AND HIDDEN. I SEE NO WAY BEYOND THE CONTRADICTIONS. YOUR GUIDANCES TO ME REMAIN A SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE MYSTERY. OSHO, WHAT IS IT, A DEPTH I'M NOT FALLING IN?

P. S. IS A RELATIONSHIP A SORT OF KOAN?

The question is from Madhuri.

YES, MADHURI, THE BEST KOAN THERE IS IS LOVE, is relationship. That's how it is being used here. A relationship is a puzzle with no clue to it. Howsoever you try to manage

it, you will never be able to manage it. Nobody has ever been able to manage it. It is made in such a way that it simply remains puzzling. The more you try to demystify it, the more mysterious it becomes. The more you try to understand it, the more elusive it is.

It is a greater koan than any koan that Zen masters give to their disciples, because their koans are meditative -- one is alone. When I give you the koan of relationship it is far more complicated, because you are two -- differently made, differently conditioned, polar opposites to each other, pulling in different directions, manipulating each other, trying to possess, dominate... there are a thousand and one problems.

While meditating, the only problem is how to be silent, how not to be caught in thoughts. In relationship there are a thousand and one problems. If you are silent, there is a problem. Just sit silently by the side of your wife and you will see -- she will immediately jump upon you: "Why are you silent? What do you mean?" Or speak, and you will be in trouble -- whatsoever you say, you are always misunderstood.

No relationship can ever come to a point where it is not a problem. Or if sometimes you see a relationship coming to a point where it is no more a problem, that simply means it is not a relationship any more. The relationship has disappeared -- the fighters are tired, they have started accepting things as they are. They are bored; they don't want to fight any more. They have accepted it, they don't want to improve upon it.

Or, in the past, people tried to create a kind of harmony forcibly. That's why, down the ages, women were repressed -- that was one way of sorting things out. Just force the woman to follow the man, then there is no problem. But it is not a relationship either. When the woman is no more an independent person the problem disappears. But the woman has also disappeared. Then she is just a thing to be used; then there is no joy, and the man starts looking for some other woman.

If you ever come across a happy marriage, don't trust it on the surface. Just go a little deeper and you will be surprised. I have heard about one happy marriage...

A hillbilly farmer decided it was time to get married, so he saddled his mule and set off for the city to find a wife. In time, he met a woman and they were married. So they both climbed up on the mule and started back for the farm. After a while, the mule balked and refused to move. The farmer got down, found a big stick, and beat the mule until it again began to move.

"That's once," the farmer said.

A few miles later, the mule balked again, and the entire scene was repeated. After the beating, when the mule was moving again, the farmer said, "That's twice."

A few miles later, the mule balked for a third time. The farmer got down, got his wife down, and then took out a pistol and shot the mule in the eye, killing it instantly.

"That was a stupid thing to do!" the wife shouted. "That was a valuable animal and just because he annoyed you, you killed him! That was stupid, criminal..." and she went on like this for some time. As she stopped for breath, the farmer said, "That's once."

And it is said, after that they lived for ever in married happiness.

That is one way of solving things, that's how it has been done in the past. In the future, the reverse is going to be tried -- the husband has to follow the wife. But it is the same thing.

A relationship is a koan. And unless you have solved a more fundamental thing about yourself, you cannot solve it. The problem of love can be solved only when the problem of meditation has been solved, not before it. Because it is really two non-meditative persons

who are creating the problem. Two persons who are in confusion, who don't know who they are -- naturally they multiply each other's confusion, they magnify it.

Unless meditation is achieved, love remains a misery. Once you have learnt how to live alone, once you have learnt how to enjoy your simple existence, for no reason at all, then there is a possibility of solving the second, more complicated problem of two persons being together. Only two meditators can live in love -- and then love will not be a koan. But then it will not be a relationship either, in the sense that you understand it. It will be simply a state of love, not a state of relationship.

So, Madhuri, I understand your trouble. But I tell people to go into these troubles because these troubles will make you aware of the fundamental problem, that you, deep inside your being, are a riddle. And the other simply is a mirror. It is difficult to know your own troubles directly, it is very easy to know them in a relationship. A mirror becomes available: you can see your face in the mirror, and the other can see his face in your mirror. And both are angry, because both see ugly faces. And naturally both shout at each other, because their natural logic is, "It is YOU, this mirror, which is making me look so ugly. Otherwise I am such a beautiful person."

That's the problem that lovers go on trying to solve, and cannot solve. What they are saying again and again is this: "I am such a beautiful person, but you make me look so ugly."

Nobody is making you look ugly -- you ARE ugly. Sorry, but that's how it is. Be thankful to the other, be grateful to the other, because he helps you to see your face. Don't be angry.

And go deeper into yourself, go deeper into meditation. But what happens is that whenever a person is in love he forgets all about meditation. I go on looking at you -- whenever I see a few persons missing, I know what has happened to them. Love has happened to them. Now they don't think that they are needed here. They will come only when love creates much trouble and it becomes impossible for them to solve it. Then they will come and ask, "Osho, what to do?"

When you are in love, don't forget meditation. Love is not going to solve anything. Love is only going to show you who you are, where you are. And it is good that love makes you alert -- alert of the whole confusion and the chaos within you. Now is the time to meditate! If love and meditation go together, you will have both the wings, you will have a balance.

And the vice versa also happens. Whenever a person starts moving deep in meditation, he starts avoiding love, because he thinks if he goes into love his meditation will be disturbed. That too is wrong. Meditation will not be disturbed, meditation will be helped. Why will it be helped? Because love will go on showing you where there are still problems, where they are. Without love, you will become unconscious of your problems. But becoming unconscious does not mean that you have solved them. If there is no mirror, that does not mean that you don't have any face.

Love and meditation should go hand in hand. That is one of the most essential messages that I would like to share with you: Love and meditation should go hand in hand. Love and meditate, meditate and love -- and slowly slowly you will see a new harmony arising in you. Only that harmony will make you contented.

The last question

IS PSYCHOLOGY OF ANY USE, OR NOT?

IT DEPENDS. If you really want to change, it is of no use. If you only want to pretend that you are changing, then it is of much use. If you only want to play around with the game of change, then it is of much use. Then you can go on unearthing your dreams, desires, associations, and you can go into many many kinds of therapies -- and now there are many available in the world. In fact life is too short to finish all the therapies...

You can go shopping -- many alternatives are available. If you become tired of Freud then you can go to Jung, if you become tired of Jung then you can go to Adler -- and so on and so forth. If you become tired of individual therapies then you can go to group therapies. But this is just playing the game of transformation. You are not really into it, it is a facade.

If you are REALLY interested in transforming yourself, then do what Somendra did in his dream: wake up. There is no need to go on analyzing the dream. Now if you look at Somendra's question...

LAST NIGHT IN A DREAM I FOUND MYSELF ON A GIRDER HIGH IN THE AIR,
MOVING TOWARDS SOME DOOR OF SAFETY.

You can go to a psychoanalyst and he will start analyzing each word. What is the meaning of the symbol, girder, high in the air? It is phallic.

Now you will be in trouble. Now he has produced something, an idea in your mind -- now you will start thinking, "Phallic...?" He has turned, twisted, the dream into a sexual dream. It has nothing of sexuality in it, it is a simple spiritual dream. But psychology does not believe in spirituality, it only believes in sex. Everything has to be reduced to sex.

LAST NIGHT IN A DREAM I FOUND MYSELF ON A GIRDER HIGH IN THE AIR...

High in the air? Go to the Adlerians and they will say, "You must be suffering from an inferiority complex, Somendra. People who suffer from an inferiority complex, they always think of flying high, going high. That is a kind of substitution."

Now the analyst has opened another track. Now you will start becoming worried about the inferiority complex: "How to drop the inferiority complex?"

LAST NIGHT IN A DREAM I FOUND MYSELF ON A GIRDER HIGH IN THE AIR,
MOVING TOWARDS SOME DOOR OF SAFETY.

Door of safety? Then you must be feeling very insecure. Now, these are such obvious explanations. And if you go to some outlandish psychotherapist he may find some outlandish ideas...

THEN MY CLOTHES BEGAN TO GET CAUGHT ON SPLINTERS...

He may suggest, "Always dream in the nude -- otherwise you may get into trouble."

And there can be a thousand and one explanations, all futile. The simple thing is that a dream is a dream. And the most important thing is to know that you can always wake up, that at any moment you can disconnect yourself from the dream.

THIS very moment, you can disconnect yourself from the dream. And the whole dream disappears, girder and all. All the interpretations are just imaginary. They can be made to look very valid; great arguments have been proposed for them and against them. And people

are not even becoming aware that when you go to one psychoanalyst he gives one explanation -- go to another, he gives another; go to a third, he gives another. And ALL explanations seem to be right. They are all rationalizations. And they don't help at all, they don't transform your being.

I have heard:

A great psychologist told his assistant that today three applicants were coming in to be interviewed for the secretarial opening, and to please pay close attention to what was going on -- this was to be an experiment in psychological insight.

The first woman came into the office and provided the usual information -- name, experience, etcetera. Then the psychologist nudged his assistant for attention and asked her what two and two was. Her reply was, "Well, if you add them together, the answer is four." She was asked to wait while the other applicants were interviewed.

The second woman was brought in. After all the information was given, the psychologist again nudged his assistant and asked her what two and two was. Her reply was, "If you write them two two, one behind the other, the answer is twenty-two." She was asked to wait outside.

Then the third woman was brought in. After all the preliminaries, the assistant was again nudged for attention, and again the same question was asked about two and two. "Well," she replied, "if you add them, the answer is four, but if you write them one behind the other, the answer is twenty-two."

Asking her to wait also, the psychologist asked the assistant if he understood what had been going on. (This is psychology!) The assistant said he understood everything except the two-and-two question.

"That simple question, that one simple question, lends much psychological insight into each of them," replied the great man. "The first woman was very positive. Two and two are certainly four. The second one was more imaginative. A two written after a two is certainly twenty-two. And finally, the third woman answered both ways, so she is positive WITH imagination."

"Okay," said the assistant. "I can understand that -- but which one would you pick?"

"That's simple," said the boss. "The one with the big tits, of course."

Psychology seems to lead nowhere. It just goes round and round with great explanations, with great rationalizations, and finally you are the same.

And the really really last question

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE IN SHORT?

Take it easy.