

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

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The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #1

Chapter title: The world is on fire
11 October 1979 am in Buddha Hall

THE WORLD IS ON FIRE:
AND ARE YOU LAUGHING?
YOU ARE DEEP IN THE DARK.
WILL YOU NOT ASK FOR LIGHT?

FOR BEHOLD YOUR BODY --
A PAINTED PUPPET, A TOY,
JOINTED AND SICK AND FULL OF FALSE IMAGINATIONS,
A SHADOW THAT SHIFTS AND FADES.

HOW FRAIL IT IS!
FRAIL AND PESTILENT,
IT SICKENS, FESTERS AND DIES.
LIKE EVERY LIVING THING
IN THE END IT SICKENS AND DIES.

BEHOLD THESE WHITENED BONES,
THE HOLLOW SHELLS AND HUSKS OF A DYING SUMMER.
AND ARE YOU LAUGHING?

YOU ARE A HOUSE OF BONES,
FLESH AND BLOOD FOR PLASTER.
PRIDE LIVES IN YOU,
AND HYPOCRISY, DECAY AND DEATH.

THE GLORIOUS CHARIOTS OF KINGS SHATTER.
SO ALSO THE BODY TURNS TO DUST.
BUT THE SPIRIT OF PURITY IS CHANGELESS
AND SO THE PURE INSTRUCT THE PURE.

At one point during the party her ten-year-old son flitted into the room, arrayed in a strapless black evening gown, his lips covered with lipstick, high-heeled suede shoes on his feet, and a feathered hat on his head.

Quite naturally, the woman was stunned.

"Rodney!" she cried. "You naughty, naughty boy! Go upstairs and remove your father's clothes before he comes in and catches you!"

They cannot understand you. In fact, nobody can understand you except an enlightened person, a Buddha, a Jesus, a Lao Tzu -- but not Freud, Jung, Adler, they cannot understand. They don't have that light in their being yet; they cannot shower that light on you. They are not really authentic people; they are as inauthentic as you are, and as foolish and as stupid as you are.

During a beautiful walk in the Himalayas a father who was a famous psychoanalyst suddenly hears his son scream as he falls into a deep ravine.

"Johnny!" he cries desperately. "Don't move, I'll get a rope to pull you out!"

A few hours later he returns with a rope. Throwing it down he cries, "Johnny boy, grab the rope."

"Daddy, I've got no hands anymore," was the answer from deep down.

"Use your teeth, bite strongly on the rope and I'll pull you up."

Slowly slowly, meter by meter, Johnny is pulled up. When only the last few meters remain the father calls, "Johnny, is everything alright?"

"Yeeeeeeeeeeeeehhhhhh!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #9

Chapter title: Entering the stream

19 October 1979 am in Buddha Hall

DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD
IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS,
OUTSIDE THE LAW.

ARISE AND WATCH.
FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY
THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND.

FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE.
FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY
THROUGH THIS WORLD AND ON BEYOND!

FOR CONSIDER THE WORLD --
A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE.
SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS,
AND DEATH SHALL OVERLOOK YOU.

COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD,
A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS,
A TRAP FOR FOOLS.
BUT HE WHO SEES GOES FREE.

AS THE MOON SLIPS FROM BEHIND A CLOUD
AND SHINES,
SO THE MASTER COMES OUT FROM BEHIND HIS IGNORANCE
AND SHINES.

THIS WORLD IS IN DARKNESS.
HOW FEW HAVE EYES TO SEE!
HOW FEW THE BIRDS
WHO ESCAPE THE NET AND FLY TO HEAVEN!

SWANS RISE AND FLY TOWARDS THE SUN.
WHAT MAGIC!
SO DO THE PURE CONQUER THE ARMIES OF ILLUSION
AND RISE AND FLY.

IF YOU SCOFF AT HEAVEN
AND VIOLATE THE LAW,
IF YOUR WORDS ARE LIES,
WHERE WILL YOUR MISCHIEF END?

THE FOOL LAUGHS AT GENEROSITY.
THE MISER CANNOT ENTER HEAVEN.
BUT THE MASTER FINDS JOY IN GIVING
AND HAPPINESS IS HIS REWARD.

AND MORE --
FOR GREATER THAN ALL THE JOYS
OF HEAVEN AND OF EARTH,
GREATER STILL THAN DOMINION
OVER ALL THE WORLDS,
IS THE JOY OF REACHING THE STREAM.

The first sutra:

DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD
IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS,
OUTSIDE THE LAW.

It is one of the most misinterpreted sutras of Buddha. For centuries the Buddhists have believed that Buddha is saying, "Renounce the world," that Buddha is against the world, that he is a life-denyer, that he would like everybody to become an escapist. But that is not the meaning of the sutra; the sutra has a totally different meaning.

The sutra says: DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW. It does not say: Do not live in the world. It says: live in the world, but do not live in distraction and false dreams. Live in the world, but do not live outside the eternal law of life and existence. Live in the world, but be not of it. Live in the world, but do not let the world live in you.

If it had been understood the way I understand it, the whole history of Buddhism would have been totally different, and not only the history of Buddhism but the whole face of humanity would have been totally different. Because the sutra was understood as AGAINST the world, the Buddhists became life-negative. They became more interested in dying than in living. They became more interested in suicide -- slow suicide, gradual suicide. Suicide became their goal. This is a perversion -- a perversion of a great master and his great words.

The words are clear: DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW. Live in the world without distraction, without dreams, and in communion with the law. His expression is a little negative. His expression is

always a little negative, for a certain reason. Rather than speaking in an affirmative way, Buddha always says the same thing in a negative way. The reason is that when you affirm something it becomes so definite, so solid, that people tend to follow it blindly; hence Buddha uses the negative expression. That way he gives you freedom to analyze, to meditate, to find out on your own. He never says what is, he always says what is not; he defines through the negative. It is a beautiful device for those who can understand, but for those who cannot understand, it is a dangerous device because they will become victims of negativity.

And Buddha had to choose the negative way of expression, because for centuries before him religion was always expressed in the affirmative way, and the affirmative way had become a burden on people's being. He changed the whole religious expression. He would not say: God is; he would only say: You become absolutely empty and then see what is. This is just indicating a way very vaguely, so you cannot cling to it. Otherwise people are clingers: they will fall upon anything and they will possess it.

Buddha is elusive, you cannot catch hold of him. He says: Be empty and see. He says: Let there be no mind and then see. He never defines exactly what will happen when there is no mind. He knows that if he says what will happen when there is no mind, you will start desiring it. And to desire it is never to achieve it, because desiring is a process of the mind.

For example, if Buddha says, just like the Upanishads say, that when there is no mind there will be great bliss... now listening to this, a great desire for bliss is bound to arise. But desire is mind, even the desire for bliss. If, just like the Upanishads, Buddha says: If you drop the mind you will find God, freedom, absolute freedom -- immediately the desire enters from the back door: "How to find this eternity, this deathlessness, this joy, this God? How to attain to paradise?"

Now it will be impossible to drop the mind. The mind has taken a new form, a new desire, new garments, but it is the same old mind. First it was desiring money, power, prestige; now it desires God, samadhi, enlightenment, bliss, truth, freedom. The objects have changed -- but the mind is not in the objects; the mind is in the process of desiring. Hence Buddha never gives you any object to desire; he takes away all objects. This can be done only through VIA NEGATIVA. And he leaves you in an emptiness... but that emptiness is not real emptiness. Just the contrary: it is fullness, it is plenitude, it is overflowing with bliss, with God, with love. But Buddha will never say that, about that he is very conscious -- because for centuries the affirmative has been a distraction for people.

Millions of people in the East have become desirous of the other world, the other shore - - so much so that the very desire for the other shore became their hindrance. To destroy that hindrance, to remove that obstacle, Buddha uses the negative way.

But man is such a fool! The masters move very cautiously, they take every step very cautiously, because man is such a fool. They take every precaution not even to use any word which can be misinterpreted -- but all words can be misinterpreted! Man is so unconscious that to expect that he will understand rightly is to expect too much from

him. He is bound to misunderstand; in unconsciousness, misunderstanding is the only possibility.

The Upanishads were right, but they were misunderstood because of their affirmative approach. People became very indulgent: "If life is God, then indulge in God as much as possible!" This is a logical conclusion: "If existence is God, then eat, drink and be merry! If to be is to be divine, then enjoy life, then let your life be a merry-go-round. All is divine. The Upanishads say: SARVAM KHALVIDAM BRAHMA -- all is God. If all is God, then why not accumulate as much money as you can? -- because money is God!"

You see how our unconscious mind goes on distorting: "If all is God, then why not have more power, more prestige? Then why not go on great ego trips? If all is God, then ego too is God!" The Upanishads say: AHAM BRAHMASMI -- I am God. And when it is heard in deep unconsciousness, we understand the Upanishads are saying the ego is God, because to us 'I' and 'ego' are synonymous. The Upanishads are misunderstood because of their affirmation, their total affirmation.

And Buddha is misunderstood because of his negation, total negation. He moved the pendulum to the other extreme; just to avoid the pitfalls that he had seen on the path of affirmation he moved to the other extreme. He used only negative expressions. DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW. He could have said, in a more positive way: LIVE in the world, without distractions, without dreams. LIVE in the world, in accordance with the ultimate law. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- LIVE in accordance with the eternal law. But that is not his choice. He had seen the affirmative becoming an imprisonment and it was a necessity to destroy the affirmative. You can destroy the affirmative, and for the time being, while the master is alive, people will understand his negative approach because he is there to explain it to you. But when he is gone, then? The negative becomes your imprisonment.

Hindu sannyasins are caught in the affirmative and Buddhist BHIKKHUS are caught in the negative.

My effort here is to help you understand both, and to understand your capacity to misunderstand. And be alert; otherwise each word is going to create something else, something that was never meant.

A performing octopus could play the piano, the zither, and the piccolo. His trainer wanted him to add the bagpipes to his accomplishments, so he placed the Scottish instrument in the octopus' room. Hours passed, but no bagpipe music was heard.

The trainer was disturbed. The next morning he anxiously asked the eight-tentacled creature, "Have you learned to play that thing yet?"

"PLAY it?" replied the octopus. "I have been trying to LAY it all night!"

The octopus can be forgiven -- YOU cannot be forgiven. But men behave in the same way, as unconsciously as possible. Even if they become conscious sometimes, their consciousness is also mixed with unconsciousness. Even if they are alert, their alertness is not pure. Even if they are watchful, their watchfulness has something wrong in it.

McBride and Kavanaugh were in a cafeteria sitting near the WATCH YOUR HAT AND OVERCOAT sign. McBride kept turning every minute, nearly choking on his food, to look at his overcoat.

Kavanaugh continued eating, paying no attention to his own coat on the hook. But McBride's constant twisting began to irritate him. "You dope!" he said. "Stop watching our overcoats!"

"I am just watching mine," said McBride. "Yours has been gone for half an hour!"

Man's state is that of a mess, of chaos! Great work is needed to make you really alert. And the first sutra is the beginning of that great work: DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS....

Your mind is continuously creating distractions. Just watch your mind, and you will understand what Buddha is saying. It never allows you to sit silently even for a few moments. If you sit silently it says, "Why not listen to the radio? The newspaper must have come, your post may have arrived. Why not go to the movie? Why not watch TV?" If you are in the shop your mind says, "Go home, rest -- you are tired." If you are at home your mind says, "What you are doing here, wasting your time? Go to the shop -- you could have earned something!"

The mind never allows you to be where you are, it never allows you to see things as they are. It is always taking you somewhere else, either into the past or into the future; it never allows you to be in the present. Either it drags you into memories -- which are nothing but footprints on the sands of time -- or it drags you into the future: great projections, great expectations, desires, goals.... And you become so much involved with them -- as if they have some reality! And the reality is slipping out of your hands while you are engaged in all these trips into the past, into the future.

The mind never allows you and will never allow you to see that which is; it always takes you to that which is not.

Edith was complaining to her friend, Rose, that her husband never showed any interest in making love. He would just sit every night and watch television. Rose suggested that she make herself more appealing and somehow tantalize him.

So the next night Edith put on her most bewitching perfume and dressed herself in nothing but shoes, hat, gloves, and handbag. She went into the living room and casually strolled around. Her husband kept his eyes glued on the TV set. She coughed, and he finally looked up at her.

"Oh, are you going out?" he asked.

"Of course!" she said sarcastically.

"Great," he replied, "because I was hoping you could mail this letter for me."

He is not there. He is not seeing the woman, he is not seeing that she is naked. He is not there at all! Nobody is -- everybody is somewhere else.

It is said by the ancient Sufis that God wants to meet you, and wherever he thinks you should be he comes, but he never finds you there. You are always somewhere else. He comes in the present -- you are in the past, you are in the future. He knows only one time: now, and only one place: here. But you are never here and you are never now; you are always there and you are always then. The meeting is impossible. He knows no other time than the present and no other place than this. He lives in thisness, suchness. Buddha's word is TATHATA -- he lives in suchness, tathata.

One of the names of Buddha is TATHAGATA -- one who lives in suchness, one who has become free from all the distractions of the mind. And the miracle is that the mind consists only of distraction, so once you are free of all distractions there is no mind left. In the present there is no mind. In the present there is only consciousness, awareness, watchfulness.

Live in the world, but not through the mind. Don't let the past or the future stand between you and reality. And if you can manage the state of no-mind even for a few moments -- that's what meditation is all about -- you will be surprised: suddenly you are in rhythm with existence. You will know what Buddha calls AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- the eternal law. You will pulsate with it, vibrate with it. You will be just a wave in the great ocean of the law. You will be in such attunement, in such attunement, in such deep harmony and accord, that the whole sky will start showering flowers on you, the whole existence will rejoice with you.

This is paradise: paradise is the state of no-mind. Buddha calls it the lotus paradise, because your consciousness opens up like a lotus in the early morning sun and there is great fragrance, great beauty, and there is great grace.

But remember, he does not mean renounce the world, as all the commentators down the ages have said. He is saying: Renounce the mind -- MIND is the world! Renounce distractions and renounce dreams -- because if you live in dreams you cannot see the reality. Your eyes are covered with the dust of dreams, layer upon layer. There are dreams and dreams and dreams, and you are surrounded by so many dreams that you cannot see what reality is. And your priests go on helping you to create new dreams, your psychologists go on helping you to create new dreams. If they take away one dream they immediately replace it with another.

This is the whole foundation of the science of hypnosis: man can be persuaded to believe in something absolutely false. Hypnosis shows the capacity of man to fall into such dreams, into such unrealities that on the surface it looks unbelievable.

Have you seen a hypnotist perform? If he says to a person, "You are not a man but a dog," the man believes it -- if he has been hypnotized rightly, if he has been hypnotized into deep sleep. Hypnosis means created sleep, deliberately created sleep. If he has been hypnotized rightly and told that he is not a man but a dog, he starts barking like a dog! He may never have done it before, but he can do it immediately. He believes it, and the moment you believe something you become it. Of course, your belief is false and your becoming is false.

Psychologists are becoming aware that almost ninety percent of diseases are only beliefs. My own understanding is that as they go deeper into it, they will find that

almost ninety-nine percent of diseases are beliefs. Maybe it was a real disease the first time, but then you started believing in it, you started projecting it, you started repeating it, rehearsing it, practicing it. And slowly slowly, it became a reality for you.

Go into an insane asylum sometime and watch people. They are the same people as you, just a little ahead of you -- the difference is only of degrees. You may be below the boiling point, maybe ninety-nine degrees, and they may have gone beyond -- one hundred and one degrees -- just a two-degree difference or a one-degree difference.

Insane people go on living in their own worlds; they create their own worlds, they believe in their own worlds. They believe in them so much that you cannot pull them out of their dreams. Their dreams have become realities -- that is their insanity.

I have heard about one man who became mad and started thinking that he had died. Now the whole psychological department of that mental institute was after him to pull him out of the idea that he was dead. It was a challenge for them, it was also something new -- they had never come across such a case.

They tried everything but it was impossible, because mad people may be mad but they are as logical as you are. They have their own logic, their own rationality; they have a great capacity to rationalize everything that they are doing.

Finally, a great psychologist was called from the outside to help. The great psychologist came; he talked to the man and he asked him one single question. He asked, "Do you believe that dead men can bleed?"

He said, "No, never! How can dead men bleed? Once one is dead... it is impossible for a corpse to bleed."

Then the psychologist said, "Come along with me!" He took him to the mirror; he pricked his hand with a sharp instrument -- blood started coming out. He said, "Look! So this proves that you are still alive!"

The madman laughed and he said, "This only proves that my statement was wrong -- dead men DO bleed!"

It becomes so impossible to pull them out! And the same is the case with you. As far as buddhas are concerned, the same is the case with you. To pull you outside your minds, to help you to climb out of your dreams -- it is really difficult.

Hypnosis tries one method, but that is not the method of the buddhas. It gives you another dream, maybe a better one -- a little more sophisticated, a little less dangerous, less harmful, more beneficial -- but a dream is still a dream. Whether you dream of poison or of nectar does not really make much difference; at least it makes no difference to the man who has become awakened.

Ordinarily it will make a difference: a man who believes that he is drinking poison will always remain ill; the man who thinks that he is drinking nectar will always look healthy, joyful. Yes, in the ordinary way there is a difference. Hence hypnosis has a limited utility: if you cannot be pulled out of your dreams, at least you can be helped to move from nightmares to sweet dreams. That's the function of hypnosis.

After being troubled with recurring headaches for which her doctor could not find the cause, Jean decided to consult a hypnotist. Amazingly enough, after two treatments the headaches disappeared. Her husband, Ben, was intrigued and asked how the cure had been effected.

Jean said, "Well, all I had to do was to put my hand over my forehead and repeat several times, 'I have no headache, I have no headache.'"

Some months later Ben was aware that he was losing interest in the physical side of marriage and decided to consult the same hypnotist for help. He did so, and the result was amazing.

Jean was ecstatic and asked how it had been accomplished, but Ben refused to tell her. Finally one night, Jean noticed that Ben was staying in the bathroom for an inordinate length of time before coming to bed.

She tiptoed to the bathroom door and peeped through the keyhole. He had one hand over his forehead and his lips were moving. Putting her ear to the keyhole, she heard him murmuring, "She is not my wife, she is not my wife...."

Now, this is creating a new conditioning. You are going from one prison into another -- maybe a better prison with more facilities, but a prison is a prison, after all. And the buddhas want you to be free of all prisons.

DO NOT LIVE IN THE WORLD IN DISTRACTION AND FALSE DREAMS, OUTSIDE THE LAW.

ARISE AND WATCH.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY

THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND.

You can see how Buddha has been misunderstood. You will not find Buddhist bhikkhus joyful, not at all. They are very sad, somber, living almost hopelessly, in despair. They can't find anything to be joyful about, because from the very beginning they have gone on a wrong track.

Buddha says: ARISE AND WATCH. How to get out of the mind and its distractions and dreams? ARISE AND WATCH. Wake up and watch! Watch your mind -- what it goes on doing to you, how it plays games with you, how it goes on and on creating new illusions, new hopes for you. Buddha is not saying become hopeless, he is not saying fall into despair -- because that is again a mind strategy: the despair, the anguish, the anxiety.

Escape is again a mind game. You are worldly; the mind says, "There is nothing in the world. Listen to the buddhas. Escape from the world, go to the Himalayan caves, and everything will be perfectly right. In this world nothing can ever be right." Now the mind is giving you a new projection, a new project.

Buddha says: Don't follow the mind -- detach yourself from the mind. See the mind separate from yourself: playing around, creating new games -- alluring ones, enchanting ones in which you can be caught again.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY.... And if you are really following the awakened ones you will follow joyfully, because a man without distractions and dreams is naturally joyful. Not that he has something to be joyful about, not that he has attained great money, power, prestige, or the power to do miracles -- the power to walk on water and cure the blind people and help the dead to be alive again. No, he has no reason to be joyful. But just because all the distractions of the mind have disappeared, the energy involved in the distractions is released -- that energy is joy.

William Blake is right. He says: Energy is delight. William Blake has many beautiful insights. He is one of the greatest poets the West has produced. Just a few steps more and he would have been an enlightened person. These two poets -- Walt Whitman and William Blake -- they could have been RISHIS, seers. Just a few steps, maybe only one step, a little jump... but they had come very close to the boundary of realization.

William Blake says: Energy is delight. He is right -- this is a great revelation. It can't be said without experiencing it somehow, in howsoever small a measure.

Your joy is always caused from the outside. You have won a lottery and you are joyful; you have purchased a house that, for many years, you have been longing for -- and you are happy; you have found the woman that you had desired and you are happy. But these are momentary happinesses. After two or three days the house will be old, and after a few days the woman will look ordinary. How long can one remain interested in a woman or in a man? Because these are superficial attractions, sooner or later the reality will be revealed.

The Nazi leader, Goring, was seated next to a fine blonde Aryan FRAULEIN at a very important state dinner. During dessert he began feeling her leg under the table. As his hand moved up her thigh he heard a hoarse masculine whisper, "Don't be surprised when you get to my balls -- I am Secret Agent X-7."

What things appear to be from the outside is one thing; what you will find inside is totally different. You may have fallen in love with a secret agent! Everybody is in for a surprise.

When you fall in love with a woman, she is a totally different kind of person. When you are married to her, to your surprise, she is no longer the same person. Sometimes you suspect: what has happened? Has she deceived you? But she is also in the same situation. She is worried: where has that beautiful man disappeared to?

There are old stories of frogs becoming beautiful princes. In my own experience just the opposite happens: you bring home beautiful princes and overnight, in the morning, you find there is a frog! Princes disappear and become frogs -- all princes, unconditionally. Those stories have some truth in them. If frogs can become princes, why not vice versa? Nobody has ever seen a frog becoming a prince, and everybody has seen many princes becoming frogs!

ARISE AND WATCH. The essential core of Buddha's message is awareness, mindfulness. Look at your own mind. Don't get involved with it, remain unidentified. That's what he means when he says: Watch. And as you watch you will become more

and more awake and your life will start having a new kind of joy, which has nothing to do with the outside; it wells up within your being.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY.... If you are rightly following the way of the awakened ones -- Jesus, Buddha, Mahavira, Mohammed, it does not make any difference -- then one sure sign is that you will be joyful for no reason at all. You will be just joyful, naturally. If that thing is missing, remember, you have misunderstood. You have gone onto some wrong track, you have misinterpreted.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND. And look at the Buddhist bhikkhus -- they are miserable! I have known many, I have known very famous ones -- miserable! There is no dance in their feet and no song in their hearts. They are deserts: nothing grows in their being, nothing is green in their life. I have never come across a Buddhist monk who has flowers in his heart, lotuses blooming, birds singing -- nothing of the sort, just an empty desert.

And the reason is, Buddha's negative expression has become his way of life; he has become caught in negativity. How can he be joyous? Joy does not fit with his interpretation of Buddha. And the words are so clear -- but you read only that which you want to read and you see only that which you want to see. You don't read, you don't see that which goes against your prejudices. Such clear words, and yet great misunderstanding has arisen.

Buddhist monks are the saddest people in the world -- long faces. It is bound to happen because they have become escapist.

And Buddha says: FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY THROUGH THIS WORLD AND BEYOND. He does not forget this world. He says: THROUGH THIS WORLD.... If he is in favor of renouncing the world, then what is the point of saying: THROUGH THIS WORLD...? He is not saying renounce the world: renounce the mind and the world is renounced. You live in the world and yet you remain untouched by it. And a great joy arises in you, a great laughter, a great love. And you will be able to carry this love, this joy, this dance, to the other shore, because it is something that is happening inside you; it is not dependent on outside causes, it is not caused by anything.

Remember, one of the fundamentals of life is: that which depends on outside causes will be taken away from you sooner or later. At least one thing is absolutely certain: you will not be able to carry it with you into death. But that which is independent of outside causes, that which is caused in the innermost core of your being, in your own interiority, nobody can take it away. You cannot be robbed of it, it cannot be stolen -- even death cannot destroy it.

The body will be destroyed, but not the song. The body will be gone, but not the dance. The dance, the song, the joy, will move into the universal song, into the universal joy, into the universal ocean of consciousness, of truth, of godliness.

FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE.

FOLLOW THE WAY JOYFULLY.

He repeats it again, because he wants to emphasize it. He must be alert that his way of expressing things negatively could create a great misunderstanding. People could become sad, and the moment you are sad you have fallen out of tune with existence.

FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE. And what is the way of virtue for Buddha? He does not give any details, he does not give you ten commandments. He gives you the eleventh commandment, and the eleventh is enough. If you fulfill the eleventh then you can forget all about the ten, because in following that one, the eleventh, all ten are contained.

That eleventh commandment is meditation. Meditate. That is what is missing in the Jewish-Christian ten commandments: nothing is said about meditation. Everything else is included in them; those are consequences, not causes. That cause is missing. Virtue without meditation is an imposition, a forced imposition. Virtue without meditation is repressive. Virtue without meditation is pseudo. Virtue without meditation is just a facade: you can deceive others, but how can you deceive yourself?

With meditation there arises a totally different kind of virtue: a natural virtue, a spontaneous virtue. Whenever Buddha says: FOLLOW THE WAY OF VIRTUE, he means meditate: arise, awake, watch. These are his words for meditation because if you are alert you cannot do anything that is wrong. Not that you will have to prevent yourself from doing it; even if you want to do it you cannot. Sin becomes impossible if you are alert. Then virtue is the only possibility. Then whatsoever you do is virtuous.

Out of meditation the flowers of virtue arise, bloom. Their fragrance is released to the winds, into the infinity of existence. Buddha gives you only one commandment: awareness. You can call it meditation, you can call it watchfulness. His own word is SAMMASATI -- RIGHT awareness. He insists each time he mentions awareness that it should be of the right kind, because he knows there is a possibility of a wrong kind of awareness too.

What is wrong awareness? People can be aware of others' acts, of others' faults: they can be very keenly aware -- in fact they are. It is so easy to see everybody else's faults in the world. That is a wrong kind of awareness; that is not your business at all. Who are you and why should you be worried?

Right awareness is awareness of one's own being in its totality: all that is good and all that is bad. But as you become aware, the bad starts disappearing -- just as when you bring light into the room, the darkness disappears. When light is in the room, darkness cannot exist there. Sin is darkness, forgetfulness, unconsciousness.

FOR CONSIDER THE WORLD --
A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE.
SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS,
AND DEATH SHALL OVERLOOK YOU.

One thing which is unique to Buddha is that that he never says "Believe." He never says, "You simply have to follow what I am saying." No, that is not his approach. He is very much against believing. He invites you to consider. He says: FOR CONSIDER THE

WORLD -- A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE. He says: Not because I am saying it is it a bubble, a mirage, do you have to believe it. You consider it yourself. If it is a truth, your consideration will show it to you. What is the point, what is the need, of believing?

Religious priests go on telling people: Believe there is God. Believe there is paradise. Believe that your good acts will be rewarded and your bad acts will be punished, that there is heaven and hell -- believe! No priest ever says "Consider." No priest ever wants you to be independent. Only a buddha, an awakened one, can say to you "Consider" -- because he respects you. He knows you are deeply asleep, but your sleep is full of the potential of waking up. Today you are asleep, tomorrow you may be awake. Today you are not a buddha, tomorrow you may be a buddha. Your potential is there. You can go on neglecting it for lives together, but one day or another it is going to happen.

A buddha has tremendous respect for people; hence he can never say "Believe." Belief means that the person who is saying it has no respect for you, he does not trust your intelligence enough. Buddha trusts your intelligence. He provokes it, he challenges it, he invites you. It is an invitation.

CONSIDER THE WORLD -- A BUBBLE, A MIRAGE. He says: I considered it and I found it only a bubble, a mirage, a deception, an illusion. I have lived in the illusion, believing that it was true. You are also living in the illusion believing that it is true, but consider. Give it a little more time. See a little more intensely, concentratedly. Try to penetrate its secret, and you will be surprised: just a pinprick and the bubble is gone, just a little more alertness and there is no mirage... it disappears.

Gurdjieff, one of the buddhas of this century, used to give a certain meditation to his disciples which is very significant. He used to say to his disciples, "If you can remember in a dream that 'This is a dream,' then you are on the very threshold of transformation."

But it is very difficult to remember in a dream that it is a dream. When you are in a dream you believe that it is the truth. And every night you are in a dream, and every morning you come back and you see and you know that it was all false. And again when you fall asleep the dream is there and you start believing in it again, as if you never learned anything. But how to remember?

He created a small device. He would give this device to a few advanced disciples: that in the daytime... because you cannot do anything while you are asleep and in a dream. The preparation has to be done in the daytime; then you have a little bit of awareness. He used to tell them, "As many times as you can manage -- brushing your teeth in the morning -- just put your left hand on your head and say, 'This is all dream.' Walking on the street, put your left hand again on your head and say, 'This is all dream.' Let your left hand and the putting of it on your head become associated with the idea that 'This is all dream.'

"Repeated many times, whenever you put your left hand on your head, immediately the idea will come: 'This is all dream.' Or whenever you say, 'This is all dream,' automatically your left hand will go on your head. This has to be practiced for at least three to nine months in the daytime.

"And then," Gurdjieff used to say, "one day suddenly in a dream you will see it happen: the dream is there, and you put your hand on your head, your left hand, and suddenly you say, 'This is all dream.' And the moment you say it the dream disappears, you are fully awake. The dream cannot exist if you know that it is a dream."

And that is a great experience when it happens -- you can try it. When it really happens, that one night your hand goes to your head while you are asleep, while you are dreaming, and suddenly the idea comes that "This is all dream...." And you are immediately fully awake and you find your hand on your head. It has become so associated; it is like a conditioned reflex. But one thing has become clear: if you can remember, "This is all dream," the dream disappears. The dream can only disappear by your remembering that this is a dream; reality cannot disappear. You can go on remembering, "This is all dream," but you know all the time this is not so. Philosophically you can go on repeating, "This is all dream," and you can be very cunning philosophically.

Once it happened:

A great philosopher came to the court of a king. He said, "This whole world is a dream." The king was a crazy type of person; he said, "Then wait."

He had a mad elephant. He told his whole court to watch. The mad elephant was brought into the courtyard of the palace and the poor philosopher was left alone with the mad elephant. The mad elephant started chasing him, and the philosopher started crying, "Save me! He will kill me -- save me!" He was crying and weeping. And the mad elephant took him and threw him at least thirty feet away. He fell on the ground -- so many bones fractured -- crying and weeping.

Then he was brought back to the court and the king said, "What now? What do you say about the elephant? Is that too a dream, MAYA, illusion?"

But philosophers are cunning people. He said, "Yes, it was a dream -- a bad dream, a nightmare."

And the king said, "What about the fractures?"

He said, "That too is a dream."

"Then why were you crying?"

He said, "I was crying in the dream, and I was crying and shouting -- I remember perfectly well -- 'Save me!' But it was all a dream."

Now this is cunningness -- but man can find cunning rationalizations for everything. The philosopher knows it was not a dream: the elephant was far too real, and he was shaken, afraid, and death was so close that he had forgotten all his philosophy. But back again in the safe court and the mad elephant gone, although he was fractured all over and it was painful, his philosophy was back again, his ego was back.

Reality is reality -- you cannot make it disappear by remembering that it is a dream. But if something is a dream, just by remembering that it is a dream, it disappears.

Buddha says: FOR CONSIDER THE WORLD... What world? Does he mean the rocks and the mountains and the rivers and the stars? No, not at all. He means the world that you have been creating in your mind -- your mind world is a bubble, a mirage.

SEE THE WORLD AS IT IS,
AND DEATH SHALL OVERLOOK YOU.

If you can see the truth as it is, without your mind coming in between, you will not die; death will be impotent in encountering you. Death will come, but it can't take anything away from you, because you have already dropped all those dreams which death can destroy. Death can destroy only the mind. Consider it. Death cannot destroy your body, death cannot destroy your soul; death can only destroy the mind. The mind is a mirage, but the man who has dropped his mind himself, voluntarily... nothing is left for death to destroy.

COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD,
A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS,
A TRAP FOR FOOLS.

Buddha calls those people kings who have intelligence, understanding. He does not call a person a king who has much money, a great kingdom -- no. Buddha calls a man a king, an emperor, who has conquered himself, who has conquered his foolishness, his unconsciousness, who has been able to dissipate all illusions. He is the real king: he has entered into the kingdom of God. Again he invites: COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD, A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS....

As far as kings are concerned, the knowers are concerned, the wise ones are concerned, it is just a painted chariot; it is not a real chariot. It is just a painting. But a painting can be done so beautifully -- the painting can be three-dimensional -- that it can give you all the appearances of being real. But a painting is a painting, it is not real. It is real as a painting, but it is not the chariot. It cannot take you anywhere, you cannot ride in it.

The world is A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS, A TRAP FOR FOOLS. It is because of our unintelligence, unawareness, that we become trapped in it.

The seventy-year-old groom and the twenty-five-year-old bride caused raised eyebrows when they checked in at a hotel. Next morning, he came down early into the dining room, and ordered ham and eggs. From his smile and twinkling eyes, it was obvious that he was extremely happy.

After a while the bride came down. Her face was drawn, voice weak, complexion pale. She ordered toast and coffee. The waitress said, "Honey, I don't understand a young bride looking worn out, with an old man for a husband."

"He double-crossed me," replied the young bride. "He told me he had saved up for sixty years, and I thought he was talking about money!"

Beware of your mind! It can give you great illusions. It can make things appear as they are not and it can help you to see things as they are not. The mind is very inventive. The mind has only one power -- that of dreaming. In the daytime it dreams -- then it dreams through words, language; and in the night it dreams -- then it dreams in pictures.

And there are two types of people: a few people dream in black and white and a few people dream in technicolor. The people who dream in technicolor can become poets, painters, sculptors; they can be very artistic. They need not depend on drugs; their minds supply mescaline and LSD. Their body chemistry is enough to create psychedelic trips for them. But there are other people who only dream in black and white. Those people are scientists, businessmen, bankers -- calculative people -- mathematicians. But whether you dream in black and white or in color it does not matter -- a dream is a dream.

Beware of dreams! And watch your dreams day in, day out, because they are continuously there. You can watch them, and by watching them you will become unidentifiable with them, you will become a mirror reflecting them. And this brings great freedom. Freedom from dreams is freedom from the world.

COME, CONSIDER THE WORLD, A PAINTED CHARIOT FOR KINGS, A TRAP FOR FOOLS. It is the same world: for the meditators, for the kings, it is a painted chariot. Buddha is not saying anything against the world -- simply describing its truth. And for the fools it is a trap. It depends on you.

They had been married that afternoon in Minneapolis and journeyed to the city of Saint Paul, where they had a room at a downtown hotel. Night had fallen. The bride had already donned the beautiful silken nightie reserved for this occasion and was lounging voluptuously upon the bed. For over an hour now, the groom, still fully dressed, had been gazing out the open window into the darkness.

Impatiently Gladys addressed him: "Why don't you undress, dear, and come to bed?"

"Never mind me," he replied. "Go ahead and go to sleep. My mother told me this would be the most wonderful night I would ever see, and I don't want to miss a single minute of it!"

Now, how are you going to interpret the buddhas? In the world of your unconsciousness everything is distorted. You impose your ideas, you color, you distort. You manage to believe in whatsoever you want to believe; otherwise it is a simple fact.

If you look at the world, if you look at yourself, if you look at people, if you look at your life, your past, it will not be very difficult to find that ninety-nine percent of it is just dreaming; only one percent is true. And because of this ninety-nine percent of dreaming you are not able to find that one percent. And only that one percent is substantial, all else is shadow. That one percent is truth, all else is untruth. That one percent can save you, can become the boat to the other shore.

AS THE MOON SLIPS FROM BEHIND A CLOUD
AND SHINES,

SO THE MASTER COMES OUT FROM BEHIND HIS IGNORANCE AND SHINES.

What is Buddha's idea of ignorance? -- not the lack of information but the lack of attentiveness. This sutra also has created great trouble, because the Buddhist bhikkhu thinks that to come out of ignorance he has to become very knowledgeable. So he ponders over the scriptures for years, he goes on repeating scriptures upon scriptures... and there are many scriptures. In fact, Buddhism is the richest religion in that sense.

Buddhism has nearly sixty thousand scriptures. Christianity is very poor -- just the Bible; Mohammedanism is very poor -- just the Koran. Buddhism has so many scriptures that one can go on wasting many lives pondering over them. And yet that is not Buddha's meaning.

When he says: ... THE MASTER COMES OUT FROM BEHIND HIS IGNORANCE AND SHINES, he is saying, it is not a question of gaining more information, it is a question of becoming more conscious, more alert, more attentive. But these people -- the pundits, the scholars -- they can always find reasons, proofs, arguments, to support themselves. All their arguments are stupid!

Once I was staying with a Buddhist monk. He was reading LANKAVATAR SUTRA, one of the very famous Buddhist scriptures. I asked him how long he had been reading it.

He said, "For twenty years this has been my everyday practice. I cannot live without it; this is my food, my nourishment. This is my soul."

I asked him, "But you don't seem yet to have become a buddha. I don't see light in your eyes, any silence around you. I can't smell any fragrance. Twenty years you have been trying to dispel ignorance by knowledge! And LANKAVATAR SUTRA is a beautiful scripture, but it is like a painted lamp: you can go on worshipping the painted lamp for twenty years or twenty centuries -- it is not going to dispel darkness. A real lamp is needed. One has to become conscious inside."

But he started arguing, giving so many reasons. His first argument was this... which is absurd to all outsiders, but this is how it happens. The insiders think this is a great argument. He had two disciples with him. They said, "Right! This is a beautiful argument!"

The first sutra says that those who read this sutra are bound to become liberated. He said, "Look! The sutra itself says that 'Those who read this sutra are bound to become liberated!'"

I said, "This is foolish! It is like...."

I have heard:

Mulla Nasruddin one day declared in the marketplace, "My wife is the most beautiful woman in the world." People gathered; they knew his woman, his wife, perfectly well -- she was an ordinary, homely woman -- and here he is declaring that she is the most beautiful woman in the world.

They said, "Mulla, who has given you this information?"
He said, "Who else? -- my wife herself! Just last night she told me."

Now, quoting the sutra itself in its favor... scholars are cunning people. In Indian scriptures this is always done: first they will praise the book, so much so that they say if you read it once you will be liberated; even a single word of it heard is enough for liberation. Now they are persuading your greed, seducing your greed! They will relate old stories saying, "One man who heard this sutra on his deathbed went directly to heaven. Another, who was ill, heard this sutra and became healthy. Another, who was poor, heard this sutra and became rich. This sutra is so precious that it gives both in this world and the other!"

Every sutra, every scripture, starts this way. This is nothing but salesmanship and rationalization.

The husband wired home that he had been able to wind up his business trip a day early and would be home on Thursday. When he walked into his apartment, however, he found his wife in bed with another man.

Furious, he picked up his bag and stormed out. He met his mother-in-law on the street, told her what had happened, and announced that he was filing suit for divorce in the morning.

"Give my daughter a chance to explain before you take any action," the older woman pleaded. Reluctantly he agreed.

An hour later, his mother-in-law phoned the husband at his club. "I knew my daughter would have an explanation," she said, with a note of triumph in her voice. "She did not receive your telegram!"

The mind is very cunning. Unless you are really watchful you are bound to be trapped by it.

THIS WORLD IS IN DARKNESS.
HOW FEW HAVE EYES TO SEE!
HOW FEW THE BIRDS
WHO ESCAPE THE NET AND FLY TO HEAVEN!

Very rare! It is very rare to find a man who has eyes to see, and very rare is the man who has got back his wings and can fly to the ultimate.

THIS WORLD IS IN DARKNESS -- and the darkness is created by our unconsciousness. It is not part of the world, it is projected by us.

HOW FEW HAVE EYES TO SEE! It is really very rare; hence in the old days people used to travel far and wide to seek somebody who had eyes. They would knock on many doors before they came upon the right door. They would listen to many teachers before they found a master. And once they had found a master, that was the end of

their journey. Then they would become involved, committed; then they would devote their whole life and their whole energy to the work.

Again something like that is happening in the world: people have started looking for masters. And when you look for masters, remember, out of one hundred, ninety-nine will be false. And the false will appeal to you more than the real one, because the false will speak your language and the false will try to convince you, to argue. The false will quote scriptures, the false will console you. They will try to convince you, they will give you beliefs. And the real is going to be hard.

Many people knocked on George Gurdjieff's door, and then escaped from the man because he seemed to be so cruel. He was immensely compassionate, but because of his compassion he had to be hard; otherwise people could not be awakened.

When you want to wake a man up, you don't go to sing a lullaby by his side. You have to shake him, you have to throw ice-cold water into his eyes -- and of course it looks cruel. He may be having sweet dreams, and you are throwing cold water into his eyes!

A real master is hard. A real master is always watching for the right moment to hit you, to hammer you. And he is trying to find the weakest point in you so that you can be exposed easily -- exposed to yourself -- because if you are not alert to your own weaknesses, to your own limitations, you cannot grow.

A real master gives you growth, gives you wings, but takes away many things. He takes away all the rocks hanging around your neck, although you think they are diamonds, great diamonds. He takes your chains away, although you think they are your securities. He takes away all your conceptions, beliefs -- and you think those beliefs and conceptions are great knowledge; you have been bragging about them. He takes away many things from you which you have always cherished and thought were great treasures. He looks hard. And he gives you something of which you have had no taste up to now. He gives you something very unknown and takes away all that is known to you. He looks cruel.

Many people come to me. Very few courageous ones are going to stay with me. The cowards will escape. They will find many rationalizations.

One coward wrote a letter to me yesterday. I will not tell you his name, because he is new and it is not right to hit him so hard immediately! He wrote a long letter saying, "You talk about freedom, you talk about love, you talk about how to get rid of churches, beliefs, rituals. I want to become a sannyasin, but I don't want to wear orange, because this is a ritual and this is again a bondage. This is again fettering me, this is again a chain."

He does not know what it is, because one can know sannyas only by entering into it. No outsider can know what it is, and no insider can explain it to the outsider. It is not explainable. No lover can explain about love to somebody who has never loved. No man who has eyes can explain to the blind man what light is.

What he is really trying to do is to protect his ego, but he is not aware of that. Sannyas is dropping your ego. Yes, by dropping your ego you become free. Freedom means egolessness.

"And the orange clothes and the mala and meditation," he says, "these are the three fetters you are giving to your sannyasins." These are not fetters; these are just indications from the sannyasin that he is ready to take the plunge into the unknown. A simple gesture that he belongs to me, a simple gesture that now, if I want to do something to him, he is ready.

Orange has no other meaning. It is just a statement from your side that you are even ready to look crazy for me, that's all! It is a love affair, and if you are not even capable of looking crazy for me, then it will be difficult -- because later on more and more surrender will be needed.

And ultimately, when you drop your mind, it will look like insanity. In the beginning it looks like insanity; ultimately it proves to be the only sanity in the world. But that is only later on, when the mind is dropped.

Now the mala around your neck with my picture -- it makes you look silly! It is not a fetter, it is simply your readiness. You say, "Okay, if you say this has to be done, I am ready to do it."

And if you think even meditation is a chain, a prison, then why do you want to become a sannyasin at all? The man seems to be very clever in his foolishness. A long letter... and he concludes the letter saying, "If whatsoever I say is right you need not answer. If what I say is wrong, then too there is no need to answer."

Then why write it to me? Why waste my time? Reading the whole letter! If it is right, please don't write to me; if it is wrong, what is the need of writing to me? If you know already that you are right, there is no need to be here, and if you know that you are wrong, then take a jump! Then seek and search for that which is right.

Yes, I am all for freedom, but by freedom I don't mean what you mean. You mean freedom of your ego and I mean freedom FROM the ego. That's how things go on being continuously distorted.

SWANS RISE AND FLY TOWARDS THE SUN.

WHAT MAGIC!

SO DO THE PURE CONQUER THE ARMIES OF ILLUSION

AND RISE AND FLY.

Be ready! Kabir's statement is worth remembering. He says: HANSA UR CHAL VA DESH: O great swan, let us fly to our real land.

The swan is a symbol of purity in the East, because it is so white. And the swan is also the symbol of purity because it lives in the deepest mountains in the Himalayas, it drinks the purest of water.

There is a lake in the Himalayas, Mansarovar. It must be the most pure water in the world, because the air is absolutely unpolluted. Rarely does a man reach there. Very rarely, once every few years, a man reaches there; the journey is long, arduous, dangerous. Swans live on that lake. Only when it is too cold and the lake becomes frozen do they come to the plains; otherwise they remain there, that is their original land. Once the winter is gone, they start flying back to the Himalayas.

The swan is a symbol that this world is not our home, this muddy pool of water is not our real home. We belong to some other world: the world of the Himalayas, of virgin peaks, of the purest of lakes. We belong to Mansarovar. Don't forget. Don't become too much involved in the muddy water of this pool. Remember, go on remembering, your real home.

Buddha also uses the same symbol: SWANS RISE AND FLY TOWARDS THE SUN. WHAT MAGIC! SO DO THE PURE CONQUER THE ARMIES OF ILLUSION AND RISE AND FLY.

IF YOU SCOFF AT HEAVEN
AND VIOLATE THE LAW,
IF YOUR WORDS ARE LIES,
WHERE WILL YOUR MISCHIEF END?

Beware of yourself!

THE FOOL LAUGHS AT GENEROSITY.
THE MISER CANNOT ENTER HEAVEN.
BUT THE MASTER FINDS JOY IN GIVING
AND HAPPINESS IS HIS REWARD.

Don't be a miser! Share your love, share your joy, share your dance. This is the way of my sannyasins, and this is what Buddha wanted, but his followers never followed him.

AND MORE --
FOR GREATER THAN ALL THE JOYS
OF HEAVEN AND OF EARTH,
GREATER STILL THAN DOMINION
OVER ALL THE WORLDS,
IS THE JOY OF REACHING THE STREAM.

That is a Buddhist expression: REACHING THE STREAM. Buddha says: Coming to a master is reaching the stream, getting involved with the master is entering the stream. And once you have entered the stream you can relax, you can go with the stream. The stream is already going to the ocean.

Be part of a master and your journey, your real journey, has started. Now you are on your way towards the ultimate ocean, the ocean of joy, of peace, of silence, of truth. What other religions call God, Buddha calls nirvana: the ocean of enlightenment.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 5

Chapter #10

Chapter title: This mad, mad game

20 October 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

WHEN I EXPECT YOU TO USE A PRECISION SCALPEL WITH MUCH SUBTLETY,
YOU USE A SLEDGEHAMMER. WHEN I EXPECT YOU TO USE A
SLEDGEHAMMER, YOU KISS ME. I GIVE UP!

Amitabh, God functions in a very mysterious way; it is never according to your expectations. And I am not here as a person but only as a vehicle. I simply allow God to function through me; I am not doing anything at all. Things are happening, but they are not being done. I am just as much a spectator as anybody else.

I am also surprised, just like you. When you expect a sledgehammer, I also expect one. And when I see the kiss happening I say, "Gosh! What is he up to?" But I have also given up.

You are on the right track. When so many times you expect something and just the opposite happens, slowly slowly you learn a great secret: that expectation is not the way to be with the divine; it is the barrier, not the bridge. Expect, and you will be frustrated. Don't expect and simply wait... then whatsoever happens has tremendous beauty. Be ready to be surprised, constantly ready to be surprised.

Each moment brings new surprises to the one who has no expectations, who comes with an absolutely open mind. Then incredible things start happening. Even if you had wanted them you could not have expected them; you could not have found yourself worthy enough to expect them.

When you feel that you are unworthy, suddenly great love showers from the divine. You were thinking you would be punished, you were thinking you would be judged, condemned. That's not the way of God: there is no judgment and there is no condemnation. There is no hell, all is heaven -- and all the way to heaven it is heaven. You just need a totally different way of looking at things.

Look with clean, clear eyes, with not even a slight expectation lurking somewhere. Then each moment is a mystery, a revelation. And slowly slowly, you will come upon the second secret -- this is the first secret, when one says, "I give up."

The second secret is: suddenly you see that the sledgehammer is also a kiss and the kiss is also a sledgehammer. Then opposites lose their opposition, they become complementaries. If a sledgehammer is used, that too is because of love, for no other reason. It IS a kiss! Those who understand, those who are ready to surrender, to trust, know it is a kiss. And a kiss is also a sledgehammer, because to be kissed by God is to

be transformed -- to be crushed, killed, resurrected. Sledgehammer or kiss, there is no difference: that is the second secret.

And once these two secrets are fulfilled, there is no more to discipleship. One has arrived home. You have fulfilled half the journey by saying, "I give up." Now please don't forget it.

The mind tends to forget. The mind is very much attached to its old patterns. It goes on again and again slipping and falling back. It is easier to fall back because it is downhill. It is difficult to remain with the understanding that happens once in a while because it is an uphill task.

It is one thing to see the sun, it is another thing to remain filled with its light twenty-four hours a day. Yes, there are moments when windows open and everything is clear and transparent, but those moments will be gone. Soon they will be only memories, just dry flowers with no perfume, just ruins of something. And slowly slowly, as the experience recedes into your memory, you start being doubtful about whether it ever happened or you just imagined it. Was it really so? And once that suspicion, that doubt, arises, you have lost contact with something great, something of the unknown -- you have lost track of it.

This is a great moment, the moment of giving up. It means no more expectations from now on. And when there is no expectation there is no possibility of frustration. Expectation is the mother of all frustrations; expectation gone, frustration disappears. And when there is no frustration in your life, life really becomes a bed of roses. Then God is a constant blessing; he goes on raining his grace, his beauty on you.

I am here only to be a medium, just like a window. Don't be attached to the frame of the window; look at the sky that the window makes available. The stars and the sun and the moon, they don't belong to the window. What I am giving to you does not belong to me; there is no one inside to whom they can belong. I possess nothing, but that is the greatest possession in the world -- nothing -- because when you are nothing, a nobody, you are God. When you are nobody, for the first time the whole can flow through you.

What I do here with my disciples is not my doing; I simply allow something to happen. I don't know what is going to happen, I don't know what I am going to say, I don't know what is going on -- why you are here, why I am here. But something mysterious is happening. I am here, you are here, and between the master and the disciple something transpires which belongs neither to the disciple nor to the master.

It is a mad, mad game in which a third party is involved which is invisible. Yes, I call this disciple/master game a mad game -- M stands for master, A for and, D for disciple!

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

LOVE IS A SECRET. WHY?

Ganesh Giri, love is certainly a secret, but not an ordinary secret -- an extraordinary secret. And its extraordinariness consists in its being an open secret. Everybody knows

it and yet nobody knows it; hence I call it the open secret. Everybody knows it in his deepest heart, but nobody knows it in his head. It is a totally different kind of knowing. It is NOT knowledge. You cannot learn about it, you can only live it. Living is knowing. It is not something that scriptures can give to you; nobody can give it to you. Only you are capable of conferring this gift upon yourself; it is your responsibility. You can KNOW it, but knowing is intuitive.

This word 'intuition' is beautiful. You know the other word, 'tuition'; tuition means somebody else is giving it to you. Intuition means nobody is giving it to you; it is growing within yourself. And because it is not given to you by somebody else, it cannot be put into words.

Language is needed when we are talking to each other. Language is not needed when something is growing in your consciousness, because there is no dialogue. It grows in silence, it blooms in silence; hence when you try to put it into words it escapes. Its very climate is silence. It can't be brought into language; it can't be reduced to theories, concepts, ideologies. That's why it is an open secret: knowing is possible, knowledge is impossible.

Saint Augustine is reported to have said once.... Somebody asked him, "What is love?" He said, "Love is like time."

The questioner was puzzled. He said, "Okay, then -- what is time?"

Augustine said, "You misunderstood me. I meant it is like time because everybody knows what time is, but if somebody asks you what it is, you can't answer."

Can you answer what time is? And you KNOW -- it is not that you don't know -- but knowing seems to be so deep that it cannot be brought to the surface. Or if you try to bring it to the surface it becomes so distorted that it is no longer the same. In the depth it is a diamond; the moment you bring it to the surface it turns out to be an ordinary pebble. And because you know it is a diamond, you cannot use the pebble to represent it.

Love is one of the most mysterious phenomena in existence -- next to God. That's why love is closer to God than anything else. If you can understand love, if you can be love -- because that is the only way to understand it -- you will become aware of the presence of God, immediately, instantly! The moment of love is the moment of the experience of God. Suddenly he is everywhere.

Once your eyes are full of love you have the capacity to see into the trees, to see into the rocks, to their very innermost core, and find God there. Then he is everywhere. All that is needed is a loving heart.

And the problem with modern man is that we have forgotten the language of silence, we have forgotten the way of the heart. We have completely forgotten that there is a life which can be lived through the heart. We are much too hung up in the head, and because we are so much in the head we cannot make any sense out of love. It becomes more and more problematic. It becomes such a problem that there are many people who deny it just as they deny God. They say, "There is no God -- it is fiction; and there is no love either -- that too is only a fiction."

They would like to reduce love to pure chemistry; they would like to reduce love to something physiological, hormonal, concerned with your glands and their secretions. Yes, that too is part of love, but the most superficial part -- the chemistry, the physiology. They are its circumference but not the center. The center is elusive, mercurial; you cannot grasp it with your hand or with your head. It slips out, it escapes your fist. You can have it only with an open hand -- I call it the open secret.

Never make love a question.

You ask me, "Why? Why is love a secret?" There is no why: it is so. Why are the trees green? Small children sometimes ask, "Why are the trees green and why is the rose red?" How are you going to explain to them? If you are foolish enough -- that means if you are scientific enough -- you will try to explain to them that it is because of chlorophyll that the trees are green. But the child can ask, "But why does the chlorophyll make them green and why is the chlorophyll green?" The question remains the same, you have simply pushed it a little further back.

D.H. Lawrence is right. A child asked him, "Why are the trees green?" He said, "They are green because they are green." And the child rejoiced immensely in the answer. He said, "This is the right answer! I have been asking many people; they say foolish things. This I can understand. Yes, they are green because they are green!"

Love is a secret because it is a secret. But it is an open secret -- that much I would like to add -- it is an open secret. It is available! Nobody is guarding it. It is not locked in the temples, it is not locked somewhere in the libraries, it is not locked in some underground treasure. It is an open secret! It is in the rain and in the wind and in the sun. It is just for you to be open and allow it to happen to you. Don't make a question out of it.

Never make a question out of life. Let life remain a mystery, don't try to change it into a problem. That is one of the greatest mistakes we can make, and we have been making it continuously. First we make a question out of something which is a mystery, and then the question cannot be answered. Then the only resort is to deny the whole thing.

Make God a question and then sooner or later a Friedrich Nietzsche is bound to arrive and say, "God is dead." In fact, God died the day you put a question mark on him; he cannot live with a question mark. The question mark shows doubt, and God can live only with trust. The question mark shows doubt, and love can only be felt in trust.

Ganesh Giri, feel it, don't think about it. It is not a question to be solved by philosophy: it is a mystery to be understood by the poet, by the musician, by the actor. Love is not part of the territory of philosophy but part of the territory of poetry.

But poets can only give you glimpses; they cannot give you the experience of it. They can allure you, they can persuade you to go on a great pilgrimage, but they cannot deliver love to you -- it is not a thing to be delivered -- but they can make you enchanted with the mystery of love.

I am not a philosopher; I am very close to the poets -- but poets can also give you only a glimpse. Mystics can help you to experience it; I am a mystic, I can help you to experience it, but the way to experience is not to be intellectually concerned about it. You have to be more sensitive.

Love is herenow. This whole place is full of love -- this is a temple of love.

That's why I am condemned all over the world, criticized, because the whole of human history has been a history of war, violence. The whole human past has been ugly, inhuman, uncivilized, primitive, animalistic. And all the societies that have existed up to now have tried to kill love and the very possibility of love in you, because only if love is killed can you then be reduced to a machine -- a machine which can kill, a machine which can function efficiently without creating any problems, a machine which will be obedient, a machine which will not rebel against any kind of slavery, oppression, exploitation. The priests, the politicians, all have wanted you to be machines, not men, and for centuries they have been in power because you were ready to be reduced to machines.

The only phenomenon that can bring you back to your real nature, that can revive you again into humanity, into human beings, is love. The whole human past has been against love. Yes, to write about love was allowed, but love itself was not allowed. In very cunning ways it was destroyed, killed, uprooted. And there is a great need that man should know what love is, because without love the soul remains un nourished, starved. What food is to the body, love is to the soul. Without love you can't have a very alive soul. Without love your potential will remain a potential; it will never become actual.

This is a temple of love. I am creating a situation here where you can start melting, where you can again start becoming warm, where you can start playing, where you can again be cheerful.

I am not here to create more soldiers in the world, but sannyasins. All the past societies were soldier-oriented. I see the future as sannyasin-oriented. The sannyasin is just the opposite of the soldier, exactly the opposite. The society that has lived up to now, rooted in the soldier, has really outlived its time. It is dying, it is going to die, and it is good that it should die. But before it dies we have to revive a few people as sannyasins; they will be the heralds of a new world, a new age.

But love cannot be taught, it can only be caught. I am love, my people here are love.

Ganesh Giri, what are you doing here? Melt, mix, drop your head! Become as headless as my people are, and you will know what love is. But still it will not become knowledge, it will remain a deep knowing. But that's enough -- that is nourishing. That's enough because that is transforming. That's enough because that opens the door to the divine.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUSNESS?

Consciousness means living with a witness; unconsciousness means living without a witness. When you are walking on the road, you can walk consciously -- that's what Buddha says one should do -- you are alert, deep down you are aware that you are

walking; you are conscious of each movement. You are conscious of the birds singing in the trees, the early morning sun coming through the trees, the rays touching you, the warmth, the fresh air, the fragrance of newly opening flowers. A dog starts barking, a train passes by, you are breathing... you are watching everything. You are not excluding anything out of your alertness; you are taking everything in. The breath goes in, the breath goes out... you are watching everything that is happening.

It is not concentration, because in concentration you focus on one thing and you forget everything else. When you are concentrating you will not listen to the humming of the bees or to the singing of the birds; you will only see what you are concentrating upon. Concentration is narrowing down your consciousness to a point. It is good in archery: you have a target and you have to see only the target and you have to forget everything else.

In MAHABHARATA, one of the ancient scriptures of this country, this story occurs:

Drona, a great archer, is teaching his disciples archery. Arjuna wins finally, for the simple reason that his concentration is the most acute.

A bird is sitting on a tree, and Drona tells all his disciples to take their bows and arrows, focus on the bird, and get ready to shoot it. Then he comes close to each disciple and whispers a question in his ear, "What are you seeing?"

One disciple says, "I see many trees and the bird and the eyes of the bird."

Drona moves to another disciple. He says, "I see only one tree and the bird sitting on it and his eyes."

He moves to the third. He says, "I see only the bird."

He moves to the fourth. He says, "I see only the two eyes of the bird." And Drona had said that the right eye has to be penetrated; that is the target.

Then he comes finally to Arjuna and he asks him. Arjuna says, "I see only the right eye of the bird and nothing else."

In a sense Arjuna is the most concentrated, but he has become unconscious of the whole -- just a pinpoint of consciousness.

When I talk about consciousness it is not the consciousness that is needed in archery. I am talking about a totally different phenomenon: a diffused consciousness, not concentrated, because concentration is tiring, tense, and sooner or later you will fall into unconsciousness. Anything tiring cannot be carried for long.

Consciousness has to be relaxed; it has to be equivalent to opening. You are simply open to all that is happening. I am talking to you, and the train is passing by, and the distant call of a cuckoo... and you are aware of it all. You are open to all the dimensions of your being. You are simply open and vulnerable, alert, not asleep.

This is consciousness, and its opposite is unconsciousness. You are not open at all, you are closed. You are in a kind of sleep -- a metaphysical sleep. All the buddhas down the ages have been fighting the metaphysical sleep.

George got drunk in a bar one night, and as he staggered home he tried to figure how he could hide his not very sober condition from his wife. He decided he would go home and read, since whoever heard of a drunken man being able to read a book? And he laughed at his own cleverness. He thought it would be good to read the Bible!

He made it home and went into the den. A few minutes later his wife called out to him, "What are you doing in there at this hour?"

"Oh, just reading, darling -- reading the Bible," he nonchalantly replied.

Knowing reading was not one of his late evening pursuits -- and certainly nobody had ever thought that he would read the Bible -- she got up and peeked in. "You idiot!" she cried. "Close that suitcase and get to bed!"

When you are drunk, whatsoever you do is going to be like that.

I have heard:

Mulla Nasruddin got so drunk that there was a fight with another drunkard, and he had wounds and scratches all over his face.

He came home in the middle of the night, looked into the mirror and thought, "Now, tomorrow morning is going to be difficult!" How is he going to hide these wounds and these scratches? His wife is bound to know and she will say, "You got drunk again and you have been fighting again!" How to hide it?

A great idea occurred to him. He searched in the medicine chest, found some ointment. He put it on his wounds and scratches, was very happy, pleased with himself that by morning things would not be so bad... and went to sleep.

Early in the morning when he was still in bed, his wife shouted from the bathroom, "Who has put ointment on the mirror?"

Of course a drunken man, a drunkard, looking into the mirror thinks that that is his face. It is natural; if you are unconscious, whatsoever you do is bound to be wrong.

And there is a great metaphysical drunkenness. From many many lives it has become a great weight on you. You have lived unconsciously for so long that the effort to live consciously even for a few minutes seems to be too much.

You love, it is unconscious, and it becomes jealousy, possessiveness. It is no longer love, because love cannot be unconscious. You make friends only to create enemies. You earn money to be happy, but by the time you have earned enough money you are only deeply tense, anxiety-ridden, and there is no joy in it. You run after power, fame, and one day, if you make hard efforts, you certainly succeed. You become famous, but then you realize the fact that by becoming famous nothing has been achieved. Everybody knows you, that's all. Everybody knows your name, but how is that going to make you happy? You have power, but what are you going to do with the power?

In the hands of an unconscious man everything turns sour, bitter, poisonous, everything turns stupid. Give him some intelligent advice and it is bound to fall into wrong hands.

The young lady who was about to get married talked with her mother about the birds and the bees. In this conversation her mother told her that she did not have to take off everything when she went to bed on her honeymoon.

When they returned, the groom asked his mother-in-law, "Is there any insanity in this family?"

"No, why?"

"Well, your daughter slept in her hat all during our honeymoon!"

People are bound to do something stupid. And that's what they have done to the statements of all the buddhas. They write commentaries, great scholarship, but what comes out is stupid. Libraries are full of it, universities are full of it. All rubbish! But people are sacrificing their whole lives for that, and they are not doing the first necessary thing.

You cannot be wise unless you become conscious, unless you break this old habit of functioning in an unconscious way. You have to de-automatize yourself.

Simple things can do the trick. For example, you always walk in a hurry. Start walking slowly. You will have to be alert; the moment you lose alertness you will start again in a hurried way. These are small devices: walk slowly -- because to walk slowly you will have to remain conscious. Once you lose consciousness, immediately the old habit will grab you and you will be in a hurry.

If you smoke cigarettes, make it a very slow process, so slow that it becomes de-automatized. Otherwise, people are not smoking cigarettes -- cigarettes are smoking people! They are not conscious of what they are doing. In a very unconscious way they put their hands into their pockets, take out the packet, the cigarette and the matchbox. They are going through all these motions but they are not alert. They may be thinking a thousand and one things. In fact, when they are more unconscious they tend to smoke more. When they are more in anxiety, tension... worried, they tend to smoke more; that helps them to keep a face as if they are relaxed.

Make it a slow process. Take the cigarette packet out of your pocket as slowly as possible, as consciously as possible. Slowing down the processes is very helpful. Then hold the packet in your hand, look at it, smell it, feel its texture. Then open it very slowly, as if you have all the time in the world. Then take a cigarette out, look at the cigarette from all sides. Then put it in your mouth... wait! Then take the matchbox -- again go through those same slow movements. Then start smoking so slowly... take the smoke in very slowly, let it out very slowly.

And you will be surprised: if you were smoking twenty-four cigarettes per day you will be smoking only six at the most; it will be reduced to one-fourth. And slowly slowly, only two, one, and one day suddenly you will find the whole thing so stupid! Still you can go on carrying the cigarette packet in your pocket for a few days, just in case -- but it is finished, de-automatized.

This is one of Buddha's great contributions to the psychology of man: the process of de-automatization, slowing down everything.

Buddha used to say to his disciples, "Walk as slowly as possible, eat as slowly as possible. Chew each bite forty times and go on counting inside: one, two, three, four, five -- forty times. When the food is no longer solid, it is almost liquid...." He used to say, "Don't eat, but drink." That means make it so liquid that you don't eat it, you have to drink it. And he helped thousands of people to become conscious.

You are unconscious, although you believe you are conscious.... That is like seeing a dream in which you think you are walking in the marketplace. You are awake in your dream, but your awakeness in a dream is only part of the dream -- you are unconscious.

It hurts to accept that "I am unconscious," but the first act of being conscious is to accept that "I am unconscious." The very acceptance triggers a process in you.

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

DOES LOVE ONLY HAPPEN WHEN IT WANTS OR IS THERE SOMETHING WE DO,
LET DOWN, OPEN UP, TO ALLOW IT?

Madhuma, positively, nothing can be done; negatively, much can be done. You will have to learn what negative action is. Lao Tzu calls it WU-WEI: doing without doing, action without action, effort without effort. It is one of the most significant things to learn. We know how to do things; that is a positive, aggressive, masculine way.

There is another approach, more subtle, more graceful, more feminine: to be in a state of let-go, to be in a state of surrender, and to allow existence to flow through you. That is doing through nondoing. In a sense it is negative, because you are not doing anything.

Sitting silently, doing nothing, the spring comes and the grass grows by itself.

This is the secret of real meditation: sit silently, do nothing. Wait.... Wait patiently. Wait in deep trust that the existence cares about you, that whenever you are ready and ripe you will be filled with love, that love will overflow you. The spring comes... that means there is a season to everything. You cannot have it before its time, you have to attain to a certain maturity.

And the greatest maturity is attained by learning the action which is basically inaction, the doing which is not doing at all but a state of nondoing. You remain available; if God calls you, you are ready. You are listening -- that is real prayer. When you say something to God, that is not real prayer; you have moved into action, you have become aggressive.

The real prayer is when you listen to God, you become all ears. You simply listen from every pore of your being; your every cell is just waiting: "If he calls, I will be ready. If he needs me, he will find me available." You remain unoccupied so that you can be available. You remain without thoughts so that you can hear him without distortion.

A maid who seemed to enjoy her work gave notice one day without warning.

"Why do you wish to leave?" the lady of the house asked her. "Is anything wrong?"

"I just can't stand the suspense in this house a minute more," the maid replied.

"Suspense? What do you mean?"

"It is the sign over my bed that says, 'Watch ye, for ye know not when the master cometh.'"

That statement, that beautiful statement -- "Watch ye, for ye know not when the master cometh" -- is one of the greatest sayings of Jesus Christ. But to the poor, unconscious maid it has a different meaning, altogether different -- a very distorted meaning, a meaning that SHE has given to it.

That's what goes on happening to you: God calls you, the spring comes, but finds you so much occupied that the grass cannot grow by itself; he finds you so much burdened, so full of yourself, that he cannot enter into you -- he finds you without any space. And he needs great space. You have to be utterly spacious, you have to be absolutely empty - - only then can God descend in you.

And love is nothing but God approaching closer and closer to you. The rays of God -- that's what love is.

You ask me, "Does love only happen when it wants?"

There is no question of God wanting -- he is ALWAYS ready to happen to you -- just YOU are not ready. And what is needed on your part is not aggressive action; what is needed on your part is to become feminine, receptive, passive. Allow him in: he is knocking on your doors.

Jesus says: Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and ye shall find it. Knock, and the doors shall be opened unto you.

I say to you: He is knocking on your doors -- please leave them open. He is seeking you and you are hiding. He is asking, but you are not responding.

It is not only that man seeks God -- in fact, God is seeking man continuously. But he never finds you, because you are never now, you are never here. You are always gone somewhere else.

Mulla Nasruddin was talking to one of his friends.

The friend said, "How was your night last night?"

Mulla said, "It was a beautiful night! I dreamed that I had gone to the Taj Mahal Hotel, and I have never tasted such delicious food in my life. I enjoyed my night, my dream. I can still feel the flavor of the food, I still feel the joy. Those dreams are still around me."

The friend said, "That's nothing! That's why I asked how your night was, because last night I dreamed that I was on a boat at sea and Sophia Loren was with me -- naked, absolutely naked!"

Mulla suddenly became angry and he said, "What kind of friend are you? Why didn't you ask me to come?"

The friend said, "I did phone. Your wife said you had gone to the Taj Mahal Hotel!"

You are never at home. God goes on calling you, you are always somewhere else: the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Oberoi, the Blue Diamond... somewhere else. You are never found

at home. Whenever he comes you are not there -- because God knows only the present time; he has no idea of the past and no idea of the future. Now is the only reality for him, and you are absolutely unaware of the now.

You enjoy, you reminisce with great joy... your old days, your childhood, your youth. You are always going backwards, into your memories, or you are always moving into "not yet," the future, and imagining, projecting. But you are never now.

The small gap between the past and the future is the only real time. It does not belong to your time, it belongs to eternity. It is only through that moment that God can penetrate you. It is only through that moment that love happens, the spring comes. The spring is always now, here; it is never then or there.

Love is the closeness of God felt in the heart. Be available, Madhuma. Allow. Be open and vulnerable. Don't live with armor around yourself. It is your armor, your safety and security arrangements, it is your strategies that are destroying you. Be innocent, be authentic, be true, whosoever you are. Then you will be able to see that which is, to know that which is. And seeing that which is creates love, releases your love energy.

In the ancient Hebrew the word for God simply means "that which is." It is a code word; it stands for reality itself.

But man goes on distorting scriptures, words, language, everything. Because of your preoccupation, your prejudices, your concepts, your knowledge, you remain ignorant.

It was their honeymoon night and the bride put on a sheer nightgown and crawled into bed -- only to discover that her husband was about to go to sleep on the couch.

"George," she called out, "aren't you going to make love to me?"

"I can't, honey," he replied, "because it is Lent."

"Why, that's awful!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears. "To whom and for how long?"

The preoccupied mind can't see what is, can't hear what is, can't feel what is. The preoccupied mind lives in its own world. Buddha calls that world the real problem: the world that is created by your mind. Renounce that world, renounce the mind! And, Madhuma, you will be overflowing with love and overflowing with God, overflowed. And it is an inexhaustible source; you can go on sharing it, but you cannot exhaust it. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- so is the ultimate, inexhaustible law, the law of the universe.

The fifth question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

DID YOU SAY TODAY THAT THE PATH OF MEDITATION WAS FOR SPIRITUALLY MASCULINE PEOPLE? I AM CONFUSED AS BUDDHA, LAO TZU AND ALL THESE PEOPLE SEEM TO BE MORE FEMININE. PLEASE EXPLAIN.

Anand Dharmen, you are right and yet wrong. You are right because Buddha and Lao Tzu ARE feminine, but they are feminine when they have attained to the ultimate peak

of meditation -- at the peak they are feminine. At the peak everybody is feminine, only God is masculine. At the peak only God is "he," everybody is a she.

There is a beautiful story about a great woman mystic of India, Meera. She was really a mad devotee, a mad BHAKTA, in tremendous love and ecstasy with God. She was a queen, but she started dancing on the streets. The family disowned her. The family tried to poison her -- the family itself -- because it was a disgrace for the royal family. The husband was feeling embarrassed, very much embarrassed, and particularly so in those days. And the story belongs to one of the most traditional parts of this country, Rajasthan, where for centuries nobody had seen women's faces; they were covered, always covered. Even the husband might not have been able to recognize his wife in the daylight, because they were meeting only in the night, in darkness.

In those days, in such a stupid climate, in such a milieu, the queen started dancing on the streets! Crowds would gather, and she was so drunk with the divine that her sari would slip down, her face would be exposed, her hands would be exposed. And the family was obviously very much perturbed.

But she sang beautiful songs, the most beautiful ever sung in the whole world, because they came from her very heart. They were not composed, they were spontaneous outpourings.

She was a devotee of Krishna, she loved Krishna. She told her husband, "Don't go on believing that you are my husband -- my husband is Krishna. You are not my husband, only a poor substitute."

The king was very angry. He expelled her from the kingdom; she was not allowed to enter the territory. She went to Mathura, the place of Krishna. Krishna had died thousands of years before, but for her he was as alive as ever. That is the mystery of love: it transcends the barriers of time and space. Krishna was not just an idea to her, he was a reality. She talked to him, she slept with him, she hugged him, kissed him. Nobody else could see Krishna, but she was absolutely aware of him.

Krishna represented to her the very spirit of existence, what Buddha calls dhamma, the law. That is the masculine formation, the masculine expression: the law. Meera calls Krishna "my beloved" -- not law but love; that is the feminine heart.

She reached Mathura; there is one of the greatest temples of Krishna. And the head priest of that temple had taken a vow that he would not see any woman in his life; for thirty years he had not seen a woman. No woman was allowed to enter into the temple and he had never left the temple.

When Meera reached there, she danced at the gate of the temple. The guards became so enchanted, magnetized, that they forgot to prevent her. She entered into the temple; she was the first woman after thirty years to enter the temple.

The head priest was worshipping Krishna. When he saw Meera he could not believe his eyes. He was mad. He shouted at her, "Get out of here! Woman, get out of here! Don't you know that no woman is allowed here?"

Meera laughed and said, "As far as I know, I know that except God everybody is a woman -- you too! After thirty years of worshipping Krishna, do you think you are still a male?"

It opened the eyes of the head priest; he fell at the feet of Meera. He said, "Nobody has said such a thing ever before, but I can see it, I can feel it -- it is the truth."

At the highest peak, whether you follow the path of love or meditation, you become feminine. So you are right, Dharmen, that Buddha and Lao Tzu, all these people seem to be feminine, because you know them only when they have reached the highest peak. But you don't know their path, you don't know their journey. Their journey was masculine, it was not feminine.

Another story will help you:

A king was very much interested in the ideas of Moses; Moses was alive. The king said to the court painter, "Go and paint an absolutely realistic painting of Moses as he is. I would like his picture to always be in my bedroom."

The painter went. It took six months for him to do a really realistic painting. But when he came back with the painting, the king was puzzled, the whole court was puzzled, because the face of Moses looked like that of a murderer, that of a thief, that of a criminal.

He said, "You say this is the painting you have done in six months? The face looks like Moses, but it can't be Moses' face. I know the man, I have seen him with my own eyes! Yes, the outer lines are exactly like his face, but the gesture, the expression, it is not that of Moses!"

The painter said, "But you have told me to be very realistic, so I have not created any fiction around him. As he is I have painted him; this is just an exact replica. Now I am not responsible. If you find any difficulty in it, you ask Moses."

The painter, the king, the court, they all traveled. They went to Moses, the painting was brought to him and the king asked, "Sir, I have known you for years -- you are the most graceful man I have ever seen in the world. There may never be such a graceful man again... and this is the painting! My painter is a great painter, there is no doubt about it. He has never made any fault like this. He has painted my father, my mother, and thousands of other paintings -- he has painted me. And he is absolutely exact, whatsoever he has done. But with this painting we are not satisfied -- not only not satisfied, I am angry at him. Your face looks like that of a murderer, a thief or a criminal."

Moses said, "You are both right. Now, looking at me, you will see grace. But your painter has painted with such acuteness that he has caught my whole life in the painting. Yes, for the first time I am confessing: once I killed a man. I am a murderer. I have never told this to anybody else. And I have been, in my past, all the things that your painter has painted; they have left their subtle marks on my face. You cannot see them because you don't have the eyes which your painter has. So your painter is right: he has depicted my whole history. It is not only my present face but all the faces that

have been there before. And you are also right, because it does not correspond to my present face -- but I have to agree with your painter."

It is a very significant story. At the peak a person is transformed, but on the path he may have been a totally different person.

Yes, I did say that the path of meditation was for spiritually masculine people. In India, the Buddhists and the Jinas have followed the path of meditation. All the twenty-four TIRTHANKARAS, the great masters of the Jinas, were warriors. They belonged to the KSHATRIYA caste, the caste of the warriors; they were not brahmins. Buddha himself was not a brahmin; he was a kshatriya, a warrior. These warriors followed the path of meditation; they were as masculine as possible. Their whole training was that of the warrior. But at the ultimate peak they certainly were transformed: they became feminine. You can't find a more feminine man than Buddha. They became so feminine, they became so soft, so vulnerable, so beautiful, so graceful, so rounded -- they lost all the corners, all roughness. They became like lotus flowers -- the East has painted them without mustaches, without beards.

Have you ever seen a statue or a painting of Buddha with a beard and mustache? Not that some hormones were lacking in him, not that he could not grow a beard. I know him perfectly well -- he had a beautiful beard! But we have left it out because it does not represent his inner reality. His inner reality has become so feminine that we had to make his face according to the inner. The inner cannot be painted; it can only be painted symbolically. That's why Rama, Krishna, Mahavira, Buddha, none of them is painted with a beard, a mustache, no.

And one thing more: nobody is painted as bald. And I know perfectly well, they were all bald! But women don't go bald, hence the mustache and the beard have been taken away, and instead hair has been added to their baldness -- the same hair maybe, take it away from the beard and put it on the head.

So your question, Dharmen, is right in a way, and yet not right. The man on the path is one thing, and the same man at the peak is a totally different person, transformed, transmuted.

The last question:

Question 6

BELOVED MASTER,

I AM SEVENTY YEARS OLD, AND IT FEELS EMBARRASSING TO BE STILL LONGING FOR SEX. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Jagat Narayan, the first thing is to accept your longing. Don't reject it, don't deny it, don't repress it. It is because of repression that it continues; in your youth you must have repressed it too much.

Once it happened:

I was in New Delhi and a young monk was brought to me; he must have been not more than thirty-five. He was living a life of absolute celibacy. He told me, "It is only a question of a few more years that I have to fight with my sexual desire. Can you tell me," he asked me, "exactly how many more years it will take? I am thirty-five. I am getting a little bit tired of fighting, fighting. Up to now I have succeeded -- now how many more years?"

I said, "It is better if you don't ask me, because the real problem is still ahead of you. The real problem has not happened yet; it happens at the age of forty-two."

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Right now you are young, full of energy, strength -- you can repress your sexual desire. But after forty-two you will become weak; slowly slowly, every day you will become weaker. YOU will become weak, but the repressed sexual desire, accumulated for years, will be very strong. The energy that is repressing it will be weaker and the energy that is repressed will become stronger every day. The real problem starts after forty-two."

He said, "Nobody has ever said that to me. People say that by the time you reach forty-five, if you can manage to keep yourself celibate, the problem disappears."

I said, "They don't know at all, they don't know the ways of energy. The repressor will become weak, but the repressed never becomes weak, because the repressed accumulates."

After ten years, when he must have been forty-five, he came to see me again. I was in Amritsar. He touched my feet, cried, and he said, "You are right. Now I am on the verge of breaking down. Now the urge is so intense, as it has never been, and I am not in a situation to fight. I am tired, defeated, weak. You were right, but I didn't listen to you. And all the people who have been telling me that after forty-five the problem disappears, either were deceiving me or they were deceiving themselves or they were utterly ignorant, unaware of how energies function."

Jagat Narayan, you must have repressed. That's how people are brought up, particularly in India: the religious person is one who represses all his natural desires. Now you are seventy and it really looks embarrassing to still be so childish. The older you grow, the more embarrassing it will become, but the more persistent it will be. Twenty-four hours of your day will become obsessed with sex. And this is what has been done to you by your society: the society has created a kind of split in you, you have become divided from your own nature.

Even now it is not too late. Don't be worried and don't feel embarrassed. Why? If God has given you sex and the longing for it then it is perfectly right, it is divine. YOU have not created it -- why do YOU feel embarrassed? It is instinctive.

If you really want to feel embarrassed, feel embarrassed because you are a Hindu and for seventy years you allowed foolish people to dominate you, stupid priests to dominate you. Feel embarrassed that you were not intelligent enough to get out of the prison in which you were accidentally born. But don't feel embarrassed about sex and the longing for it -- that is natural. Being Hindu is not natural, being Mohammedan is

not natural. Feel embarrassed that for seventy years you have been doing such harm to your own nature.

Accept your sexuality, say yes to it -- because only by saying yes to it is there a possibility of going beyond it. Yes is the stepping-stone. Without yes you cannot reach the other shore; the yes becomes the boat.

But my feeling is that you are still saying no. Be less of a Hindu, be less of a fanatic, be less of an idealist. Be a little more realistic.

Tony's wife passed away and he was almost inconsolable. At the cemetery he collapsed with grief. In the car riding back home, his whole frame shook with wild sobs.

"Now, now, Tony, my boy," soothed his friend. "It's really not so bad. I know it is tough now, but in six months maybe you find another beautiful bambina and before you know, you get married again."

Tony turned to him in rage. "Six months!" he shouted. "What I gonna do tonight?"

You laugh at Tony, but he is more natural. He is not embarrassed about it, he accepts it. Jagat Narayan, even though you are seventy years old, your sex, because it has remained somehow unfulfilled, is not seventy years old but seventy years young! Now there is going to be difficulty: you are seventy years old and your sex is seventy years young. But if you accept it, if you embrace it, if you take it naturally, still it is not too late.

In the East we have a saying: Even if you come back home when the sun is setting, it is not too late....

Eighty-five-year-old Will Jones hobbled down to the local bar to have a cold one and shoot the breeze with his friends. Mr. Jones was the talk of the town, as he had recently married a beautiful nineteen-year-old girl. Several of the boys bought the old man a drink in an effort to get him to tell about his wedding night. Sure enough, the old rascal fell right into their plans.

"My youngest son carried me in and lifted me on the bed with my young bride. We spent the night together and then my three other sons carried me off the bed."

The men scratched their heads and asked the old boy why it took his three sons to take him off when it only took his youngest boy to put him on.

Proudly he replied, "I fought them!"

Jagat Narayan, gather courage! Don't feel embarrassed. At least deep down accept it, even though you may not be able to move into a sexual relationship. The very acceptance -- total, I mean, less than that won't do -- if you accept totally, even that very acceptance will heal the wound. There may be no need to actually move into a sexual relationship. That may be even dangerous; that may create more problems for you than it will solve.

I have heard:

One Friday afternoon a couple appeared before a justice of the peace in a small town and had a marriage ceremony performed. The man must have been nearabout eighty and the girl was only twenty-two. They then drove to a motel and checked in for their honeymoon. They had a lively evening together.

The next morning the groom raised the window shade just to take a look outside, pulled it down again and went back to bed.

The next morning, Sunday, this performance was repeated. The groom raised the shade, looked out for a moment, then pulled it down and went back to his bride.

On the third morning, as he raised the shade, he flew up with it.

So it can be dangerous! Don't blame me that I am telling you to find a bambina, no! You may be too old for it. But nobody is too old to accept something that he has been denying. Drop condemning it -- respect your nature.

And my own observation is, the moment you accept something totally, the very acceptance brings a revolution, a radical change. It is your energy -- accept it. It will make you stronger. Reject it, it keeps you weak. Fighting with your own energy is dissipating it. And fighting with your sex will take so much of your time and so much of your energy -- then when are you going to look at God who is knocking on your door?

Stop fighting, stop fighting absolutely. Start respecting. Drop condemnation. Nothing is sin -- not sex at least. It is a natural phenomenon. If people are allowed to live it naturally, then at the age of fourteen they will become flooded with it. But in an unnatural society they will be flooded before their time.

Do you know? In America the boys and girls are becoming sexually mature earlier than anywhere else. In every other country the boys become sexually mature at fourteen; in America, at thirteen or twelve they become sexually mature. There is too much sex around in the movies, on the TV, everywhere.

A small boy -- must have been six or seven -- was sitting on the steps of his house and crying big tears.

An old man came by and he asked, "My son, why are you crying?" He wanted to help the boy. He sat by his side, wiped his tears with his handkerchief and asked, "Why are you crying? What has happened?"

The little boy said, "I am crying because I can't do what other boys are doing."

And the old man started crying!

The little boy was surprised. He said, "Pop, why are YOU crying?"

He said, "I can't do what the other boys are doing either. Our problems are the same."

In America people are becoming sexually obsessed before their age. That is ugly, that is ill, that is premature. In India the opposite happens: people remain sexually interested even when they are seventy, eighty, ninety. They may not say so -- Jagat Narayan, you are at least authentic, courageous, to say it is so -- but they remain obsessed with it.

In a natural society, children will become sexually overflooded at fourteen -- a beautiful energy -- and by the time they are forty-two the energy will disappear suddenly, as it appeared at the age of fourteen. If a person lives naturally, without the interference of the priests.... Priests who are against sex or priests who are for sex -- avoid both! If a man lives naturally, then between fourteen and forty-two his sex energy will give him tremendous joy, great experience of ecstasy, first glimpses of God and samadhi. And by the time it disappears it will leave you ripe, mature, centered, rooted.

Right now you can do only one thing: accept it totally, absorb it. It is not too late, although the sun is setting. If you can come home, if you can become natural and spontaneous about yourself, authentic, true, at least to yourself, you will be able to face God with a smile on your face. You will be able to enter death dancing, singing.

And a death that can be welcomed with dance and song is not death at all. It becomes the door to the deathless, it leads you into immortality.

Enough for today.