

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

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The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #1

Chapter title: Discontent is divine

21 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

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

"EXISTENCE IS SORROW."
UNDERSTAND, AND GO BEYOND SORROW.
THIS IS THE WAY OF BRIGHTNESS.

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

YOU ARE STRONG, YOU ARE YOUNG.
IT IS TIME TO ARISE.
SO ARISE!
LEST THROUGH IRRESOLUTION AND IDLENESS
YOU LOSE THE WAY.

MASTER YOUR WORDS.
MASTER YOUR THOUGHTS.
NEVER ALLOW YOUR BODY TO DO HARM.
FOLLOW THESE THREE ROADS WITH PURITY
AND YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF UPON THE ONE WAY,
THE WAY OF WISDOM.

SIT IN THE WORLD, SIT IN THE DARK.
SIT IN MEDITATION, SIT IN LIGHT.
CHOOSE YOUR SEAT.
LET WISDOM GROW.

The forest represents the unknown, the unknowable. ON THE EDGE OF THE FOREST LIVE JOYFULLY.... Be always close to the unknown and the unknowable and don't be afraid. LIVE JOYFULLY... because the unknown, the unknowable, is also yours. You belong to it, it belongs to you. LIVE JOYFULLY....

WITHOUT DESIRE.

Don't ask for anything. Jesus says: Ask, and it shall be given. Buddha says: Ask not, and it shall be given. Jesus says: Seek, and ye shall find. Buddha says: Seek not, and ye shall find. Jesus says: Knock, and the doors shall be opened unto you. Buddha says: There is no need to knock; the doors are already open.

Why this difference between two enlightened persons? Both are awakened. The difference is because of the audience. Jesus is speaking to very ordinary people; Buddha is speaking to his commune -- that is the difference. He can speak the highest truth without any compromise. Jesus cannot. Jesus has to compromise with the listeners.

Jesus lived without a commune. Yes, a few disciples he had, twelve disciples -- and those twelve disciples are also not of much worth. Buddha had thousands of disciples and of tremendous value -- because many of them became enlightened while Buddha was alive. In his commune there were at least one thousand enlightened people, of the same status as he himself was. He could talk in any possible way and it would be understood; there was no worry on his part about being misunderstood. Jesus had to be constantly on guard, and even then he was misunderstood and crucified.

SIT. REST. WORK. Let these three words sink deep in your heart. Learn to sit silently, restfully, not fighting with yourself, relaxed. Not in a yoga posture, remember, because the yoga posture is a constant effort. No yoga posture is needed. Sit in any way that you find relaxed -- even a chair will do.

Buddha used to sit on the floor; that was easy in those days. You can sit in any posture you like. You can use a pillow, a zen pillow, to sit upon; you can use a chair. The question is not the posture; the question is inner rest.

Be at rest... and when energy accumulates in you, start being creative. Paint, sing, dance, or do whatsoever you feel like doing to make this world a little more beautiful, a little more warm.

We have to create a paradise on the earth.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #8

Chapter title: Out of chaos stars are born

28 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

WHENEVER ONE COMES TO THE ABSURD, SOMETHING INSIDE SIMPLY EXPLODES AND THE WHOLE WORLD LOOKS ANEW. IS IT WHEN THE ABSURD BECOMES OVERWHELMING THAT ONE GETS AN INSIGHT INTO THE GESTALT OF EVERYTHING?

Prem Prabhati, the absurd is nothing but another name of God -- and a far more beautiful name than God itself. For centuries the theologians, the philosophers have destroyed the beauty of the word 'God'. They have painted it, polished it, with such rational garbage that it has no more any life left in it. The god of the philosophers is not the true God because it is nothing but a rational concept.

The God of the lovers is a totally different phenomenon; it has nothing to do with reason, with mind. It is the heart pulsating in tune with the whole. It is a song, a symphony. It is a dance, a celebration. It is more poetry than prose. It is more intuitive than intellectual. It is something felt not thought.

Hence I say 'the absurd' is a far better name for God.

The mind has created a subtle structure around itself of rationality to protect the ego, to protect the separation from existence. All rationality is man-made -- and God is not man-made. All rationality is just a projection of our own ideas on the screen of existence. And God is not a projection; it is a discovery.

To see God one needs eyes absolutely without any idea. The idea is the greatest cloud.

One of the greatest mystics of the West -- whose name is not known because he has not signed his book -- has written one of the most important mystic treatises ever: THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING. He says that it is not through knowledge that you come to know; on the contrary, you come to know by UNknowing. This is pure absurdity! It is talking in paradoxes: knowing through unknowing.

What does he mean? He means that when all knowledge has been dropped, when all experience has been put aside, when mind as such is no more functioning, then you relate with existence in a totally new way. Each fiber of your being pulsates with the whole; it is a rhythmic dance. It IS absurd -- you cannot make a theory out of it.

God is not a hypothesis. If God is a hypothesis, then that hypothesis is no more needed. Far better hypotheses have been proposed by science. But God has never been a hypothesis. It is a passionate love affair with existence. It is feeling the existence. It is being in a heart-to-heart contact with existence.

Tertullian is always worth remembering -- a great Christian mystic. He says: I believe in God because God is absurd -- CREDO QUA ABSURDUM EST. The reason that he gives for his belief is that there is no reason to believe.

Unless you have something in your life which cannot be supported by reason at all, your life will not have any significance. Unless you have something for which you can live and for which you can die without any rational grounds, you will go on missing the very meaning of life and existence. You will remain superficial.

Hence the absurd can release something tremendous in you; it can become an explosion. It can make you see the whole world anew, because it is a rebirth. You slip out of the mind. You are no longer covered by the dust of the mind. Everything is fresh and new then. It is mind which makes things old. Because of memory, past, the mind goes on interpreting everything new in terms of the old. Mind cannot do otherwise. Mind means memory -- memory and nothing else. It is your accumulated past experience, and you go on interpreting the new according to the past. Naturally, the past gives its color to the new, it gives its meaning to the new -- and the new is missed.

That's why the whole world looks so bored, utterly bored. Existentialists have brought out this situation of boredom as one of the most significant points to be pondered over. They say that man is utterly bored, and they are right. Only stupid people are not bored, or buddhas are not bored. Stupid people are not bored because they don't have that much sensibility, that much sensitiveness to feel boredom. And buddhas are not bored because they don't carry the past. Everything is so fresh, so new; everything is such a surprise. Every moment you are in for a surprise.

For a buddha, life is a continuous revelation, unending revelation. There is no beginning to it and no end to it. It is a mystery; unfathomable, immeasurable, unknown and not only unknown but unknowable too. You can only taste it, feel it, see it, touch it, but you cannot KNOW it. You cannot reduce it to a theorem, to a hypothesis; that is not possible.

Prabhati, you are right: if you can have a contact with the absurdity of it all, with the irrationality of existence, you are moving into a totally different dimension -- moving from mind to no-mind, moving from mind to meditation. That's what meditation is all about: taking you out of the prison of the mind, the prison of the past. And there is no other prison; that past is the only prison.

The man of awareness -- the meditator -- goes on dying every moment to the past so that he remains new, fresh, childlike. Yes, if the absurd becomes overwhelming, you will have your first insight into the gestalt of everything. But remember again, the insight will not be rational. You will not be able to explain it away. You will not be able to say anything about it. You will be able to see, but suddenly you will become dumb. Suddenly you will find language absolutely inadequate, words impotent; communication is not possible. Then only communion remains.

When you know WITHOUT knowledge, the only way to convey the message is through silence, through love, through compassion, through being. You can hold the hand of your friend and something may transpire. You can embrace your friend and something may transpire. You can just look into the eyes of your friend and something may

transpire. The absurd can only be expressed through absurd ways. You can dance or you can sing.

There is a beautiful story of a Baul mystic:

A very rich man, a goldsmith, came to see the mystic and he asked about God: "Do you believe in God? Is there really a God? Does God exist?"

The Baul mystic listened to all his queries smiling, and then he started dancing, playing on his EKTARA -- a one-stringed instrument -- he started dancing.

The goldsmith said, "Are you mad or something? I am asking great metaphysical questions! Rather than answering me, you start dancing! Are you drunk?"

And the mystic said, "That's true, I am drunk -- drunk with the divine! But please don't misunderstand me, don't feel offended. This is the only way I can answer your questions."

And he sang a song -- a song of tremendous beauty and meaning and insight. He said, "I know that you are a goldsmith. I know that you can judge whether something is made of real gold or not. You have a touchstone on which it can be judged. But it will be absolutely useless if you come into the garden and start judging roses on your touchstone. For the gold it is okay, but for the roses it is not at all relevant. Roses cannot be judged on the touchstone on which gold can be judged. You can't know through the touchstone whether the roses are true or not true. For that you will need a totally different kind of approach.

"I know that you have studied much; you are very much interested in philosophical reasoning, argumentation. I have heard about you. But all that reasoning is as absurd here as the touchstone of the goldsmith will be in the garden. I am singing, I am dancing, I am playing music. Feel it! If you can dance with me, come on, dance with me! That may give you some insight into the world where I live. That may give you a touch of the unknown. There is no other way. I cannot logically answer your questions, hence my illogical act."

When Bodhidharma, the great mystic, reached China, the emperor of China had come to welcome him on the border; with thousands of people he had come to receive the great mystic. But he felt very embarrassed seeing Bodhidharma. He had never thought, he could have never imagined, that Bodhidharma would enter China in such an insane way. Bodhidharma was carrying one of his shoes on his head. One shoe was on one foot; the other foot was bare -- and the other shoe was on his head!

The king asked, "I don't understand. Why are you carrying one shoe on your head? Shoes are not meant to be carried on the head!"

Bodhidharma said, "This is the beginning. If you cannot understand this, then it is better I should go back. You have to understand one thing absolutely: that my approach is absurd. This is just to give an indication of my approach -- that I am not a philosopher. You can call me a madman, but I am not a philosopher -- and I am going to put things upside down! All that you have thought up to now, I am going to disturb it. I will bring a chaos into your being, because only out of chaos stars are born."

It is very difficult to drop reason, because one feels frightened. Reason gives you a sense of order. Reason gone, there is only chaos. But remember, reason is barren; chaos is a womb. Out of that chaos something of tremendous importance is born: YOU are reborn. Yes, if the absurd can overwhelm you, you will have an insight into the gestalt of everything; an insight which is untransferable, an insight which is inexpressible. But there are ways beyond words through which it can be communicated.

That's the whole secret of the relationship of a master to a disciple. It is an absurd phenomenon. That's why the West has not known it yet. The West knows the relationship between a teacher and a student; it knows nothing of the relationship between a master and a disciple. The West is absolutely unaware of that dimension. That's why Jesus could not be understood, Socrates could not be understood.

In the East, crucifying a Buddha has not been our practice; giving poison to Lao Tzu has not been our way. Why were Jesus, Socrates and Mansoor killed? For the simple reason that they were trying to bring something absolutely Eastern to the West. They were trying to bring a new insight into God, and the time was not ripe. Maybe NOW the time is ripe. Jesus came a little early.

Now the time is ripe. Now the West has the possibility to open up a new door -- the absurd -- and enter through that door. That is the only door to the temple of God.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

OLD HABITS DIE HARD!

Prem Harideva, it is true... but why? Why do old habits die hard? -- because you are nothing but your old habits. If they die, YOU will die. You don't have anything more, you don't have anything plus. You are just your old habits, old patterns. You are a mechanism, not yet a man; that's why old habits die hard. It is very rare that a man exists, very few and far between.

A Buddha is a real man, authentic. A Zarathustra is a real man -- a man worth calling a man. The ordinary humanity is just robotlike: it lives unconsciously, it lives mechanically. And habits are all that you have. If you drop all your habits you will simply start evaporating; you will not find yourself at all. What are you? Just watch, and you will find a bundle of old habits. You don't yet have anything more.

That's the whole effort of meditation: to bring something more to your life which is not a habit, something which is spontaneous, something which is nonmechanical, something which transforms you from a robot into a conscious being.

George Gurdjieff used to say that every man is not born with a soul. On the surface it appears not believable because for centuries you have been told by the priests that everybody is born with a soul and you believe in it. It is comfortable to believe that you have a soul. It feels very good, cozy, warm, that deep inside you, you have a soul, eternal, immortal. And Gurdjieff says you don't have a soul at all! You are just hollow

within; there is nothing inside you -- just habits and habits, a cluster of habits and at the very center there is nobody. The house is empty. The master has not yet come or is fast asleep.

Gurdjieff is right: you are only potentially a human being. A possibility is there, but the possibility can be easily missed. And millions of people miss it because to become conscious, to become a soul, arduous effort is needed. It is an uphill task. To remain in your habits is cheap, easy, downhill. Gravitation is enough; it goes on pulling you.

It is like when you are coming downhill in a car, you put the engine off. You don't need any gas for coming downhill; the pull of gravitation is enough. But that cannot be done when you are moving uphill; then gas will be needed. You will need some integrity, some power. And only consciousness releases power.

Consciousness is the key, the ignition key, that releases power in you, and you become capable of soaring high.

Otherwise, Harideva, this old saying is right: Old habits die hard... because there is nobody who can kill those old habits.

At breakfast, Feinberg's wife said to him, "We are having Sonia's boyfriend to dinner for the first time. We are gonna have a big meal with our best dishes. So please behave. Don't eat with your knife, or you will kill her chance of marriage."

That night at supper all went well. Feinberg hardly touched a thing for fear of using the wrong tool. Then coffee arrived. Feinberg took the cup and started to pour his java into the saucer. The family was looking daggers at him. Feinberg kept right on pouring. Finally the saucer was full.

Feinberg raised it to his mouth, looked around the table, and said, "One word out of any of you and I will make bubbles!"

It is difficult, it is very hard. You have to be conscious, alert, on guard. You have to go on remembering. And remembrance is the most difficult thing in existence.

Habits can be dropped not by fighting against them. That's what people ordinarily do. If they want to change a habit they create another habit against it to fight with it. They move from one habit into another habit. If you want to drop smoking you start chewing gum; now it is as foolish as the other. You change one habit for another, but you remain the same unconscious person.

To drop the habit and not to compensate for it and to remain utterly aware and alert so that you don't start moving into another substitute is one of the hardest things in life. But it is not impossible; otherwise there will be no possibility of a Buddha, of a Christ, of a Krishna. Because buddhas happen, it is possible -- although difficult, very difficult; a great challenge has to be accepted. And all those who have any respect for themselves always accept the challenge of the greatest, the hardest thing.

To reach the moon is not so hard, it is not so difficult. To go to Everest is child's play compared with remembering constantly what you are doing, being aware. But the day awareness starts happening, you know the ecstasy of being, the bliss of being. You know something which cannot be imagined. It is so vast, it is so inexhaustible!

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO. Buddha says: It is the ultimate law of bliss, of joy, of ecstasy. And it is inexhaustible; once you enter into it, it is forever yours. Jesus calls it the kingdom of God; that is his expression for it. But one has to become alert enough, aware enough, so that one can disidentify oneself with the habits, with the patterns, structures, that have become ingrained in your being.

This very rich but very miserly old man is dying, so he calls to his deathbed three men of the cloth -- a rabbi, a priest, and a minister.

When they arrive he says, "Gentlemen, you know the old saying: You can't take it with you. Well, taking it with me is precisely what I propose to do. And because of your religious backgrounds, I feel I can trust you. Here, in these three boxes, is the greater part of all my wealth. My dying wish is that each of you places one box in my grave."

All three agree to his request, upon which the dying man distributes the boxes and dies. Sure enough, on the day of the funeral, they all show up and each places a box in the grave. Later on they decide to go to a nearby pub for a drink, where, after a long silence, the priest at last speaks.

"Friends," says the priest, "I am afraid I have a confession to make. I did not put all the money in the grave. What with contributions falling off lately and the church in need of repair, it seemed such a sin not to put some of the money where it will do some good."

Then the minister says, "Father, I am glad you spoke up. As you know, I am the head of several charities. And, likewise, it seemed to me such a sin to just bury all that money. So I too kept some of it, of course a small portion, to help these very worthwhile and needy charities of mine."

After another long silence, the priest and the minister ask the rabbi, who has been looking out the window all this time, what he thinks about their actions.

"Well," says the rabbi, "I must say that I am deeply surprised, not to say shocked. As a rabbi, respecting the wishes of a dying man, I could only put in the full amount. In fact, I gave him my own personal cheque!"

A Jew is a Jew! Whether he is a rabbi or not does not make much difference: old habits die hard. But they can die. And you have to make all the efforts so that they die, because in their death is the beginning of your real life.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

IS THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT REALLY SO LOUSY AS YOU WERE SAYING THE OTHER DAY?

Pradipama, it is not really a question of the Indian government; basically it is the Indian mind. Indian mind is lousy; Indian government is only an expression of the Indian mind. And because the Indian mind is lousy, whatsoever it does becomes lousy. For centuries the Indian mind has lived in this state. There is a reason why it has happened.

The West is not so lousy; there is a reason for that too. Three religions were born outside of India: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. They are all really offshoots of Judaism; Judaism is the source of them all. Three great religions were born in India: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism. They also are all offshoots of Hinduism. So, in fact in the world there are only two basic religions: Judaism and Hinduism. And the one basic difference between them is that Judaism believes in one life and Hinduism believes in many lives, in reincarnation. That has made the whole difference.

If there is only one life you have to be in a hurry. You have to do everything quick and you have to do everything skillfully so you need not do it again, because time is short. In the West, time is money. Because time is so short -- seventy, eighty years... half of it will be simply wasted in sleep; most of it will be wasted in earning bread and butter, the remainder in looking at the TV. What is left for you? Hence there is a great hurry in the West and a great longing for speed -- without ever thinking where you are going. Everybody is going; the only question is that one should go fast. Who cares where? -- because who has time to bother about where? The only question is: with what speed are you going?

I have heard:

An airplane was lost in the clouds. Its many sophisticated machines were not working and the pilot informed the passengers on the telecom, "Don't be worried. There is bad news and there is good news too. The bad news first: that we don't know where we are going. The good news: that we are going with such beautiful speed that you need not worry. The speed is perfect."

In the East, Hinduism introduced the idea of reincarnation: many many lives, millions of lives. There is more time than you need; it is not money at all. Then there is no question of hurry, no question of speed, no question of being skillful. You can do the same thing again and again. You can sleep and let the time pass. If this life goes down the drain there is nothing to worry about: there will be another life and another, and so on, so forth.

These two ideas have created two different kinds of people on the earth: the Western mind and the Eastern mind. Both these ideas were created for a different reason, but when things reach to the unconscious man he changes them according to his unconsciousness. Both are beautiful ideas, can be of tremendous importance.

The idea that there is only one life means that you should not waste it in unnecessary things. Don't waste it in accumulating money, gadgets; don't waste it in superficial things. Think of the essential, not of the accidental. That was the message behind it. But what happened? People turned it completely upside down. They became much more interested in the nonessential, because there is not much time, so "Eat, drink and be merry! You are not going to be born again, so have as much as you can have of this world."

That's what happened in the West. The idea was to make you a seeker for the essential, but it was transformed into its very opposite. It became: "Eat, drink and be merry,

because soon you will not be here -- and you will not be coming again. Who knows about the other world, and who knows about God, and who knows about heaven? Don't be bothered with such nonsense, such esoteric nonsense! You be simple, and enjoy this life as much as you can. Live it! Squeeze every moment to your heart's content." That's what became of the great idea that was given by Abraham and Moses to the West.

And in the East, the idea that there are millions of lives had also a tremendously significant message. It was to remind you that you have lived many many times in the same rotten way. You have been moving in a wheel, you have been going in circles. Are you not bored yet? Are you not fed up yet? Are you so stupid that you can't see the utter futility of it all? Living for so many lives, desiring the same things, succeeding and failing, and dying every time; have you not become aware that something ELSE is needed? This world won't do, you have to transcend it. This was the idea behind Patanjali, Mahavira, Krishna, Buddha, and their message.

Reincarnation simply means: be BORED with the whole idea of desiring this and that. Be finished with it. Jump out of this wheel of life and death. But what really happened was totally different, just the opposite. What happened was that India became very lousy, slow. The unconscious mind interpreted the whole message that there is no need to be in a hurry. "There are many many lives, so why worry? We will think of God in the old age or in the next life. There is no shortage of time, so go slow." East has not moved at all; it is stuck. It has become undynamic, dormant, stagnant.

This is one of the great calamities that happens always. Whenever a conscious man gives you a certain strategy, a certain idea to help you, you change it according to your mind, and rather than using it as a help it becomes a harmful thing for you. You are given nectar by the buddhas; by the time it reaches you it becomes poison.

So it is not really a question of the Indian government; the Indian government is only an expression of the Indian mind. The Indian mind needs a change, just as the Western mind needs a change. Both have gone wrong. I have no preference for either. Both have created misery for humanity up to now.

We need a new mind which will not be either Western or Eastern -- a new, global mind. For the first time, a universal mind is needed. And for the first time we need a man who thinks not in terms of nations, hemispheres, races, blood, color, religions, but who thinks only in terms of consciousness. We need to raise the consciousness of this whole humanity.

India suffers from great lousiness.

A guy dies and goes straight up to paradise. Saint Peter stops him at the gate and says, "Sorry, sir, but you can't come in. You are not registered in the paradise list. You have to go to hell. But as you were not so bad you can choose between the Indian hell or the German hell."

"Well," says the guy, "before choosing I would like to know what the difference is."

"Okay, I will explain," says Peter. "The Indian hell is a swimming pool full of shit and you stand in it with shit right above your head and each time you try to put your head

out of the shit there is a guard who hits you on the head with his stick till you go back under."

"And what about the German hell?" asks the guy.

"The German hell is a swimming pool full of shit and you stand in it with shit above your head and each time you try to get out there is a guard who hits you on the head with his stick."

"So," says the guy, "I don't see much difference...."

"You know what," says Peter. "As I am feeling pretty far out today I will tell you something: in the Indian hell there is sometimes not enough shit, or the guard is not there, or he forgets his stick...."

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

DO YOU THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO MEASURE LIFE AND LOVE IN PERCENTAGES, AS YOU DID IN THE LECTURE THE OTHER DAY?

Meeshael, what other day? I have completely forgotten! My memory is not very good.

Harvey was traveling east by train to a business convention in New Orleans. On the train he happened to read an article in the READER'S DIGEST about a seventy-five-year-old American Indian from Arizona who was reported to have the longest memory in the world.

Since the train was passing within a few miles of this famous Indian, Harvey decided to stop and visit him. Sure enough, he was directed to a large teepee in the middle of an Indian reservation. Inside the teepee an old wrinkled man was sitting crosslegged smoking a pipe.

After exchanging a few formalities, Harvey asked, "What did you have for breakfast on December 11, 1908?"

The Indian crossed his hands over his chest and grunted, "Eggs!"

Harvey was immensely impressed and left to catch his train.

Ten years later, while traveling through Arizona, Harvey decided to stop and see if the old Indian was still alive. Sure enough, he was led to the same teepee, but was cautioned to enter very slowly as the old man was very old and must not be startled. Once inside Harvey raised up one hand and greeted him in friendly Indian style, "How!" -- upon which the old Indian grunted, "Scrambled!"

Now, I don't have that type of memory!

Meeshael, what I can say today I will say; I don't know about the other day.

Love and life cannot be measured in percentages. Nothing can be measured, in fact, because the whole is one and immeasurable. But for certain purposes it is possible to use the method of measurement, but that is only for certain purposes.

For example, life cannot be measured, but this can be said: that life exists only between a short range of temperature -- from ninety-eight degrees to a hundred and ten, only twelve degrees. Beyond a hundred and ten and you are finished; fall below the normal and you start slipping. So just twelve, fifteen degrees' span.... For a certain purpose -- for a medical purpose -- that's perfectly true.

Life cannot be measured if you think of consciousness, but if you think of the mind it can be measured. Your mind is nothing but a biocomputer -- and sooner or later, computers will be doing better than your mind. It is possible even in your life, because by the end of this century robots will be walking on the roads -- and they will look exactly like you. And many times you will be in trouble: you may think that the man is real or the woman is real, and the woman or the man may be just a robot.

Now scientists are thinking to cover the mechanism of the robot with artificial, synthetic skin. They will grow hair and they will behave exactly like you. Only once in a while you will suspect that something is wrong -- when their battery will go down. Then, "Grrr, grrr, grrr!" Otherwise they will be perfectly okay. Just a moment before the woman was hugging you and saying, "I love you," and now she says, "Grrr, grrr...." The difference will only be known when the person will fall ill: the real one will go to the hospital and the robot will go to the factory, to the garage. Then you will know the difference; otherwise there will be no possibility of knowing.

In fact, the ordinary man is already nothing but a robot. Your unconscious life can be measured in percentages and your love can also be measured in percentages -- because what love do you have? It is nothing but chemistry!

Yes, the love of a Christ or a Buddha is immeasurable because it is transcendental to the hormones, to the chemistry, to the physiology. But your love is hormonal. Just give an injection of strong hormones and great love arises in you. Take a few hormones out of you, and it falls flat on the ground; all love disappears. Your love can be measured, but it is not love; it is just a biological urge. And your life is a chemical phenomenon. But there is a life behind your life and there is a love above your love that is immeasurable.

But neither is my memory very good, nor is my mathematics very good.

Killoran was considered by most of the villagers to be the dumbest man in the town. One day he showed up in new clothes and began buying rounds of drinks at the neighborhood saloon. The neighbors wondered what had happened.

When one of them finally asked him, Killoran replied, "I won the first prize in a big lottery."

"How did you ever guess the lucky number?"

"Well, three times running I dreamed of seven. So I figured it out that three times seven is twenty-four and I bought ticket number twenty-four, and it won."

"Why, you fool, three times seven is twenty-one, not twenty-four."

"You've got the education," said Killoran, "I've got the lottery money."

And, Meeshael, that's what I would like to say to you: you may know mathematics -- you have got the education, I have got the lottery money!

The last question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

I HAVE HEARD THAT MARRIED MEN LIVE LONGER THAN THE UNMARRIED. IS IT SO?

Satyadeva, meditate over Murphy's maxim: Married men don't really live longer. It only seems that way.

And, Satyadeva, why are YOU worried? I think you must be beyond sixty now. Are you thinking to get married so as to live longer? It is time to think of something else -- time to think of death, not of marriage; time to think of the eternal, not the longer.

Even if you live to seventy, eighty, ninety, what does it matter? What will you do? If you live ninety or a hundred years you will do the same stupidities again and again. What have you been doing up to now for these sixty years? You will do the same things even if you are given sixty years more. Think of something new!

And death is bound to come. When you die is not important; death is absolutely certain, THAT is important. After birth only one thing is certain in life and that is death; everything else is uncertain. Don't try to escape death, don't try to avoid it. For centuries people have been trying all kinds of ways to avoid death, but death comes all the same. Whether married or unmarried it doesn't matter: you will die. You are dying!

In fact, death does not come one day suddenly; it starts the day you are born. You start dying from the very first breath. Each birthday is a deathday. Your life is slipping out of your hands and you cannot escape.

An ancient Sufi parable:

A rich merchant in Baghdad sent his servant one day to the marketplace to buy food. But after a few minutes the servant returned looking panic-stricken.

"Master!" he cried. "You must lend me your best horse immediately, so that I may flee to Damascus and thereby escape my fate."

"Whatever is the matter?" asked the merchant.

"I went to the marketplace and I saw Death standing there among the stallholders!" exclaimed the servant. "He made a hostile gesture at me and started walking towards me. I beg you, lend me your best horse so that I may flee to Damascus and escape."

The merchant was a kind man and he did as his servant asked. Then he himself walked down to the marketplace to see if the story was true. Sure enough, Death was standing in the crowd.

"Why did you make a hostile gesture at my servant?" asked the merchant.

"I made no gesture of hostility," replied Death. "I was simply very surprised to see him, for I have an appointment with him tonight... in Damascus."

You cannot escape. Wherever you go you will find your death waiting for you. Yes, it can be prolonged, postponed, but what is the point? Rather than postponing, why not

use this opportunity of becoming aware of death -- that it is approaching, that it is on the way, that any moment you will be in its grip. Don't ask for the horse and don't try to go to Damascus. You cannot escape. The only way is to transcend, not to escape. You ask me, "I have heard that married men live longer than the unmarried. Is it so?" If it is so, then what? Will you get married? At the age of sixty it will be so stupid. A man of twenty can be forgiven, but you cannot be forgiven.

Mr. Goldberg visited the doctor's office, complaining that he had flying crabs. A lab test was taken, and Mr. Goldberg anxiously waited while the doctor with a sad look came to give him the report. "I am sorry, Mr. Goldberg," he said, "but those flying crabs we thought you had -- well, they turned out to be fruit flies. I am sorry, but your banana is dead."

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8
Chapter #9

Chapter title: Sannyas is for sannyas' sake
29 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH.
ANOTHER DENIES HIS OWN ACTIONS.
BOTH GO INTO THE DARK
AND IN THE NEXT WORLD SUFFER
FOR THEY OFFEND TRUTH.

WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE.
BUT IF YOU ARE RECKLESS
YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

IF YOU ARE RECKLESS,
BETTER TO SWALLOW MOLTEN IRON
THAN TO EAT AT THE TABLE OF GOOD FOLK.

IF YOU COURT ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE
YOU COURT TROUBLE.
YOUR SLEEP IS BROKEN.
YOU LOSE YOUR HONOR.
YOU FALL INTO DARKNESS.

YOU GO AGAINST THE LAW,
YOU GO INTO THE DARK.
YOUR PLEASURES END IN FEAR
AND THE KING'S PUNISHMENT IS HARSH.

BUT AS A BLADE OF GRASS HELD AWKWARDLY
MAY CUT YOUR HAND,
SO RENUNCIATION MAY LEAD YOU INTO THE DARK.

The mother superior of a convent advertised for a cleaner and retired old Cohen applied for the job. Since he was the only applicant, the mother superior had no other choice but to hire him.

Six months later the mother called Mr. Cohen to her office and said to him, "Dear Mr. Cohen, we are very very pleased with your work. You are the first of your faith to be employed by us and I must repeat that we are pleased. You are a conscientious man and the church has never been cleaner. There are, however, three things I feel I should point out to you. Firstly, Mr. Cohen, don't wash your hands in the holy water. Secondly,

don't hang your coat on the cross. And thirdly, please address me as Mother Superior and not as Mrs. Shapiro."

Man ordinarily is a robot. He lives apparently awake, but not really. He walks, he talks, he acts, but it is all as if in sleep -- not conscious of what he is doing, not conscious of what he is saying, not conscious of all that surrounds him. He moves surrounded in a dark cloud of unawareness.

According to Gautama the Buddha, this is the original sin: to live unconsciously, to act out of unconsciousness.

In fact, the word 'sin' comes from a root which means forgetfulness. Sin simply means that we are not conscious, aware, alert, that we don't have any inner light to guide us.

Buddha talks again and again in these sutras about falling into darkness, but you can fall into darkness only if your inside is full of darkness. Whatsoever is your inside is going to be your destiny. If the inner is full of light, the whole existence is full of light. If the inner is dark, then of course it is nothing but a dark night of the soul all around. You live through your inner core, so whatsoever is the case with your center is going to be reflected by your circumference. The whole world only reflects you, echoes you, resounds you. It is nothing but you multiplied a millionfold. So if you come across ugliness, it must be somewhere inside you. If you meet the enemy, you must have projected it. If you see death, that means something in you is rotten, something in you with which you have become identified corresponds to death.

The world is a mirror; it always shows your real face to you. Buddha insists again and again: Use the world as a mirror, and then go inside and find out the cause. The cause is always in the inner; the effect is in the outer. Don't be deceived by the effect. Don't start thinking that the effect is the cause because then you will be leading a life rooted in utter ignorance. The face in the mirror is not the cause; the face in the mirror is only the effect. Don't try to change the face in the mirror, don't try to paint it.

That's what we go on doing; that's what our whole life consists of. We are always trying to look good in the eyes of others; that is trying to look good in the mirror. What are those eyes of others but mirrors? We are always trying to convince others of our goodness, of our truth, of our sincerity, authenticity, religiousness, spirituality. What is the point of convincing anybody? In fact, by convincing others we are trying to convince ourselves. If the others are convinced -- if the mirror can reflect a beautiful face -- than we can be at ease with ourselves. We can also believe that we are beautiful.

This is the illusion in which we live, and this is the illusion that the society helps to strengthen. The society feeds it, the society nourishes it. The whole effort of the society is to make the mirror more important than yourself, because then you can be dominated, you can be reduced to slaves. And the mirror is in others' hands.

Somebody says to you, "You are so holy!" If you believe him, if this becomes an ego nourishment for you, unconsciously you have become dependent on the person. Now you will be afraid of him -- he can withdraw any moment. He can say to you any moment, "You are no longer holy." You have to go on convincing him. You have to behave according to his idea of holiness. If he wants you to fast, you will have to fast. If

he wants you to go every Sunday to the church, you will have to go to the church every Sunday. If you want to keep your face beautiful in his eyes then you have to follow his ideas of what spirituality means.

This is a very subtle slavery and the society uses it. It respects those who become instruments of the society, of the tradition. It respects those who are conformists.

Buddha says: Discover your original face. Don't be bothered about the mirror, because mirrors can be made which may show your ugly face as beautiful. You must have seen mirrors of many kinds; they can show different kinds of faces to you. One mirror shows your face very long, another mirror shows your face very fat, another mirror shows your face very thin. They can distort, they can make it ugly, they can make it beautiful too. And the mirror is in the society's hands.

Don't trust the mirrors. Close your eyes and search for the original face. But to close one's eyes and to search for one's original face is a little arduous journey, because in your inner world for centuries, for many lives, you have accumulated only darkness. You are afraid of the inner. You have only a repressed reservoir of unfulfilled desires, greed, anger, lust.

Your religions have been telling you to repress, and to repress means you go on piling up inside your being all that the society condemns. Now you will be afraid to go in because you will have to encounter all those ugly things. They are not ugly, but you have been taught that they are ugly and you have been conditioned, hypnotized that they are ugly -- and you believe that they are ugly.

The first thing for the seeker is to get rid of all these beliefs given by others. A believer can never find the truth.

The first sutra:

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH.
ANOTHER DENIES HIS OWN ACTIONS.

Buddha is talking about you, keep on remembering. He is not talking about anybody else, he is addressing YOU. Otherwise the mind is very clever and cunning. It goes on saying, "He is saying these things to somebody else -- you are an exception." You are not -- nobody is. When buddhas speak they speak to the universal, they don't speak to the exceptional -- because, in fact, there are no exceptions. You become exceptional only when you become a buddha, but then you don't need any buddha to talk to you. Then you don't need any message from any awakened person. You ARE awakened.

Once it happened:

One awakened man, a Sufi mystic, Farid, met Kabir, another awakened man. They sat for two days together in absolute silence. Yes, sometimes they hugged each other and they laughed madly and they danced together, but not a single word was uttered.

When the disciples of Farid asked him, "Why for two days continuously didn't you speak a single word?" he said, "There was no need, because wherever I am, Kabir is also

there. We belong to the same dimension, we are bathed in the same light. We are not separate, we only appear separate -- on the circumference, from the outside -- but our inner beings are at the same point, merging, melting. There is no need to say anything to the other."

And the same was the reply of Kabir to his own disciples. He said, "It would have been foolish to say anything, absolutely foolish, ridiculous. Something has to be said only because you cannot understand silence; if you can understand silence, then what is the need of words? What is the need of language? Between two buddhas, language is irrelevant. Silence is so beautiful, so tremendously beautiful, so deep, so profound, so expressive, so eloquent, what is the need of words? But words are needed because you cannot understand anything else."

It is out of compassion that buddhas have spoken -- compassion for those who can only understand language. And language is a poor thing, very poor, very inadequate. Remember it; then slowly you can find out something in these sutras -- not exactly in the words, but between the words; not exactly in the lines, but between the lines, in the gaps, in the intervals, some glimpses, some taste of silence, some perfume.

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH. How do people deny truth and why? First, their lies have become their investments. Watch your own life. You have invested so much in your lies, you would not like to know the truth, because the truth will shatter all your palaces, all your dreams. The truth will shatter all that you have believed up to now. You know it deep down in your heart that you are living in lies, but they are beautiful, they are nice, they are cozy, and you have lived in them so long that it seems difficult to live without them.

There is an ancient Sufi parable:

A man gave to a Sufi mystic a present, a golden bowl with a beautiful fish in it. The Sufi looked at the bowl and the fish and felt very sorry for the fish, because the bowl is an imprisonment.

He went to the lake and he was tremendously happy in liberating the fish. He threw the fish into the lake. He was happy that at least now the fish can have the whole lake, the great freedom, the space that really belongs to her. A golden bowl -- although it is golden it is a confinement.

Then he thought, what will he do with this bowl? So he threw the bowl also into the lake.

The next morning he went to see how the fish was. He was surprised: the fish was in the bowl and the bowl was in the lake. What had happened to the fish? She had again chosen the bowl. Now the bowl is in the lake, but the fish is not in the lake; the fish has entered into the bowl again. She has lived so long in it, it is her home. The mystic thinks it is a prison, but not the fish; she may have been afraid of the freedom.

People become very afraid of freedom, more afraid than of anything else. You will be surprised to know that people talk about freedom, but when freedom is really given to

them they become afraid, frightened, scared, because freedom is vast, unmanageable, uncontrollable. You cannot dominate it. Slavery is small, it is smaller than you. You feel good with it -- you seem to be big compared to your slavery. But compared to your freedom you are nobody, a nonentity, a nothingness. And who wants to be a nothingness? Everybody wants to be somebody; even though one has to live in a prison, one is ready.... If you can be made the head of the prisoners -- a president, a prime minister, or something like that -- you would like, you would love to live in the prison rather than be free and nobody.

The first requirement for attaining to truth is the capacity to be free, the capacity to be nobody. The ego is the greatest barrier. The ego can exist only in a golden bowl; it can't exist in a lake. It is bound to melt, merge and disappear.

Lies are good for the ego. In fact, the ego is the greatest lie; it feeds on other lies. Although truth has a way of coming up again and again... howsoever repressed, it surfaces, because it is truth; you can repress it only for the time being. And to repress truth you will have to be constantly on guard. Of course you will get tired, you will need a little rest, and whenever you are resting the truth surfaces. The truth comes in your life again and again; you can go on denying it, but it never denies you. You can deny God, but God never denies you.

Friedrich Nietzsche declared: There is no God. God is dead. But God has remained silent. He didn't become annoyed; otherwise at least he would have shouted.

I have heard about one atheist, Diderot, who used to argue against God. He had a special argument. In front of the audience he would take his pocket watch and would say that it is such a time -- eight thirty: "Now if there is a God and if you are almighty, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, then you must be here, because you are everywhere. And if you are really there, do only one thing: stop this watch, even for five minutes, and that will be enough proof of your existence."

His whole life he used that argument. People would wait without breathing, that maybe God is going to do something. But God never stopped his watch, not even once.

You can go on denying God, but God never denies you. You can go on refuting truth, but truth never refutes you. Your denial does not become an irritation; your denial is only a childish act. Truth goes on again and again visiting you; it never tires of you. And if you watch your life, you will be surprised in how many ways it comes.

Bobby's mother had been away for a few weeks and was questioning her small son about events during her absence.

"Well, one night we had a thunderstorm and I was scared, so daddy and me slept together."

"Bobby," said the boy's pretty young French nursemaid, "you mean daddy and I."

"No," said Bobby, "that was last Thursday. I am talking about Monday night."

Truth has its own ways. It may speak through your child, it may speak through a flower, it may speak through a sunray, it may speak through a distant call of the cuckoo. It has different ways of approaching you. Unless you are absolutely deaf, and nobody is absolutely deaf; unless you are absolutely blind, and nobody is absolutely blind.... You recognize it, but you go on denying still. You go on avoiding it. You don't want to LOOK at it. You escape; you know ways how to escape from it, although your escapes are not of much value. In fact, in escaping also you emphasize truth.

Grace and Martha were from a very prim and proper Eastern finishing school, and they were spending their vacations together in New York. They met a bohemian artist and at one of his exhibitions Grace noticed that a canvas of a provocative nude bore a striking resemblance to her girlfriend.

"Martha," she gasped, "that painting looks exactly like you! Don't tell me you have been posing in the nude."

"Certainly not," Martha stammered, blushing furiously. "He must have painted it from memory."

Even your escapes emphasize something from which you are escaping. There is really no way to escape from truth. There is no way to run away from truth because wherever you run, truth is there; in whatsoever direction you run, truth is there.

Buddha says: ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH.

The first and the most fundamental way of denying the truth is to believe in certain systems. Systems of belief are the most cunning ways of denying the truth. One is a Hindu, another is a Mohammedan; one is a Christian, another is a Jew. These are all ways of denying the truth. Rather than seeking and searching, rather than inquiring, you believe. Belief means you have borrowed it from others, who had borrowed it from others and so on, so forth. Belief means it is not your experience -- and unless it is your experience it is not truth.

But belief can give you a very deceptive feeling that you know. The Mohammedan, the Christian, the Jaina, the Buddhist, they all think they know. And what is the cause of their feeling? -- because they have learned from scriptures, from priests. Like parrots they have become efficient in repeating -- beautiful words, logical systems; but all is speculation, guesswork. All is imitation. They have not known a single truth in their lives... because a single truth is enough to deliver you.

Jesus says: Truth liberates. But remember one thing which he has not said -- or maybe he said it and it has not been reported in the gospels: Truth certainly liberates, but the truth has to be your own. Only then it liberates. If it is somebody else's it creates only a new bondage, a beautiful bondage; golden chains, maybe, studded with diamonds, very valuable, difficult to lose because you don't think in terms of chains; you think they are ornaments. Beliefs are chains, not ornaments.

A believer is the ugliest person in the world because his belief becomes a barrier into inquiry. I am not saying to become disbelievers, because disbelief is again belief from

another side, from the negative side. Belief and disbelief are two aspects of the same coin. Don't be a theist and don't be an atheist.

The real inquirer remains an agnostic. He remains open, he has no conclusions. He says, "I know only one thing: that I know nothing." He remains available. The moment you have conclusions you become unavailable to truth; conclusions close you. The moment you have a priori prejudices, how can you know truth? You have already concluded, you have already accepted certain beliefs; they will be like clouds in front of your eyes. Your eyes are no longer empty, clean, mirrorlike; they can't reflect that which is, they can only distort. They will distort according to your belief.

So when the Hindu comes to experience God he sees Krishna with his flute. A Christian never sees that; that's strange. A Christian always sees Christ on the cross; a Hindu never sees that. That's strange! A Jaina will never see Krishna, Rama, Christ -- no, not at all; and a Buddhist will never see Mahavira, Mohammed, Moses. They all see their own belief. The phenomenon is very simple: you see whatsoever you project. Your mind functions as a projector. You don't see that which is, you see that which you want to see. Avoid beliefs. Drop all beliefs, Catholic or communist. Don't believe in Kaaba, or Kashi or the Kremlin. Don't believe in the Bible or the Gita or the Koran or DAS KAPITAL. Avoid all beliefs. Remain clean, empty.

That's what meditation is all about: a state of silence, a state of no prejudice, a state of no belief. And then you are very close to truth. It suddenly explodes upon you, and its explosion is such a blessing that you cannot imagine it unless you have experienced it. There is no way to imagine it. Buddhas have been talking down the ages, but still you cannot imagine it. It is unimaginable because it is inexpressible -- but it can be experienced. It is experienceable but not expressible.

First you will have to be ready to drop the ego, because the ego can live only in lies. Secondly, you will have to drop belief systems because belief systems distort; they never allow things to be known as they are. And thirdly, you will have to drop your mind, because mind is a constant occupation with the past and the future, and truth is always in the present. Truth has no past, no future. Truth is always here, always now -- and you are never here and never now. Whenever you are also now and here, there is a meeting; then something transpires. Between you and the whole a bridge suddenly happens. In fact, the bridge has always been there, you were just not aware of it.

Bring your consciousness to the present. Don't go on wandering into the past, in the jungles of the past, in the memories. Howsoever beautiful they are, they are dead -- they are no more. And don't go on great journeys into the future, because whatsoever you desire in the future is never going to happen. Existence has no obligation to fulfill your desires. Existence has no obligation to follow your projections into the future. Whatsoever you desire is going to be wrong.

When you are not there to desire, then existence starts guiding you into the ways of truth, into the ways of tao, dhamma. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO: this is the inexhaustible law. Drop the mind and you are possessed by the whole; cling to the mind and you remain as far away from the whole as one can be. The moment you drop

the mind you start becoming alert and aware. It is mind that is your sleep. You are sleeping either in the past or in the future: both are ways of sleeping. When I say, "Wake up!" again and again, when Buddha says, "Wake up!" a simple phenomenon is indicated: come to the present.

Mrs. Weissman lived in the thirtieth-floor penthouse of her Park Avenue building. Every day when she went up or down in the elevator, Manelli the elevator man would see her making the sign of the cross. After watching this for several days he could not resist asking her if she was Catholic. She replied, "Definitely not. I am Jewish."

"I no understand," said Manelli. "If you Jewish why you cross yourself every time you get in and out of the elevator?"

"Cross myself!" barked Mrs. Weissman. "Don't be ridiculous! I am checking to see if I have my tiara, my brooch, my clip... MY CLIP!"

People are living in absolute unawareness. Even if they are checking, it is through a deep deep layer of sleep. They are somnambulists. Everybody is in a kind of psychedelic state.

ONE MAN DENIES TRUTH. ANOTHER DENIES HIS OWN ACTIONS. And if you deny the truth you are bound to deny your actions too, because unless you are conscious you cannot take responsibility for your actions.

There are a thousand and one ways to deny your actions. In the past, people used to say, "It is karma." Now that disease has gone to the West; now in the West people are saying, "It is karma. What can we do? It had to happen. It was predetermined by a past life." That is simply a way of denying your action, of shirking your responsibility.

In the past, people used to say, "It is fate, KISMET. What can we do? God has already written it; we are just puppets in his hands. If he wants us to be a murderer, we are a murderer; if he wants us to be a thief, we are a thief." Cunning, tricky minds!

Now those old ways are no longer relevant, they have become outdated; we have found new ones. Karl Marx says, "You are not responsible. It is the society, the social structure, the economic structure, it is capitalism. You are not responsible." It is again fate in new words, in modern language, in contemporary jargon. Karl Marx is a fatalist.

And then there is Sigmund Freud who is even more sophisticated than Karl Marx, even more clever. He gives you new ideas. It is the unconscious which is responsible, not you. If you do something, what can you do? -- it is beyond your capacity to avoid it. It is coming from the unconscious, from the dark layers of your being. You have no access to those dark layers. And Sigmund Freud says there is no way to change it; man is a hopeless project.

According to Sigmund Freud, man is bound to live in misery; at the most we can help him to live in misery more comfortably. We can make him accept the misery so he will be a little more comfortable. We can make the misery a little more convenient by giving him good explanations so he is not so much disturbed; otherwise there is no hope. Man is determined by unconscious forces.

These are just new ways of saying the old things: karma, fate, God. The idea of predetermination has dominated the unconscious man up to now.

It is only once in a while that a buddha says, "Accept your act as your own and don't escape from the responsibility, because escaping from the responsibility means you will never be free of it." And you CAN be free of it. Be responsible, whatsoever is the case, good or bad. Remember, except you, no one else is deciding about it.

If you are living in misery it is your decision. It hurts, of course, to think that "I am living in misery out of my own decision." But if you observe a little more silently, this will give you great freedom. In the beginning it hurts; otherwise it is the harbinger of a new consciousness. If I am creating my hell it implies that I can create my heaven too. If I am the cause of my darkness I can be the cause of my light too. I can be a light unto myself. The very idea that "I am solely and wholly responsible for my actions" is a deliverance.

Buddha says: BOTH GO INTO THE DARK....

The man who denies truth because of the ego, because of belief systems, because of the mind wandering in the past or the future, or the man who denies his actions either because of karma or fate or social structure or the unconscious, they both go into the dark. They are missing the opportunity of becoming light; they are choosing darkness.

... AND IN THE NEXT WORLD SUFFER
FOR THEY OFFEND TRUTH.

And whatsoever you do here and whatsoever you are here is going to be the cause, the continuity, in the next world too -- because the next moment is born out of this moment and the next life is born out of this life. Life is a continuum. Death does not create any discontinuity; you remain continuous. By death you simply change your house; you are the same person. You can come from the hut to the palace, from the palace to the hut. You can move from one city to another city, from one planet to another planet, from man to woman, from woman to man. You can go on changing your houses, but YOU, the real consciousness inside, the real self remains always the same.

So if you are creating darkness here, remember: this darkness will hang around you in the next world too. So you are not only destroying this life, you are creating wrong foundations for the next life too. Beware of it.

... AND IN THE NEXT WORLD SUFFER FOR THEY OFFEND TRUTH. The whole cause of suffering is offending truth. What does he mean by "offending truth"? Whenever you deny a truth because of your prejudices, whenever you avoid taking responsibility for your actions, you are offending truth. And by offending truth you are offending the universal law. You are falling apart. You are becoming a separate entity enclosed within yourself. You are no more part of the whole. You will suffer.

Suffering means going against the universal law and bliss means going in tune with the universal law. Bliss is nothing but harmony with the whole and suffering is discord.

WEAR THE YELLOW ROBE.
BUT IF YOU ARE RECKLESS
YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

Read instead: WEAR THE orange ROBE. BUT IF YOU ARE RECKLESS YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

Buddha had chosen the yellow robe just as I have chosen the orange. He chose it for a certain reason. The orange robe had been the robe of the sannyasin before Buddha; it is the ancientmost robe of the sannyasin. Buddha dropped it and chose instead the yellow robe for the simple reason that sannyas, the very idea of sannyas, had gone wrong, and he did not want to associate with it. And because he wanted to emphasize death and he wanted you to remember death again and again -- because death can bring awareness to your life -- he chose yellow.

Yellow is the color of death: the color of the yellow leaf, the color of the setting sun, the color of the dying man's face. Yellow is the color of death. Orange is the color of life, of youth, of love. Orange, in the East, is the color of spring, when all the trees bloom and birds sing and bees hum and there is fragrance all over. The whole climate is full of youth, freshness, rejuvenation.

Buddha emphasized death to make you aware, but now twenty-five centuries have passed and much dust has gathered on Buddha's ideas. Just as orange had become meaningless in Buddha's time, now the yellow robe has become meaningless.

I have chosen again the orange, and with a totally new vision. The old orange sannyasin was a renunciate. My sannyasin is not an escapist; he lives in the world, but lives with such skill and art that he remains transcendental to it.

But it is not a question only of the robe. You can change the robe to orange or yellow or whatsoever. Unless you become heedful, unless you start listening to the buddhas, to their message.... And their message is simple and very short: Wake up! It can be condensed into only these two words. If you don't listen to their message, IF YOU ARE RECKLESS YOU WILL FALL INTO DARKNESS.

It is not a question of formality, it is not a question of ritual. Buddha was as much against ritual as I am, he was as much against formality as I am; hence I feel a tremendous affinity with him. Twenty-five centuries simply disappear between me and him; we become contemporaries.

A pregnant woman was told that if she wanted her child to behave in a certain way, she should say every day, "I want my child to be so-and-so...." This would condition the fetus and the child would be born already having this trait.

She had noticed how hard it was to teach children manners, so every day without fail she said, "I want my child to be polite."

She was pregnant for nine months, then ten and eleven and for years she went on being pregnant. Finally she died without having given birth. The doctors did an autopsy on

her body, and when they cut her open they found two little old men bowing to each other and saying, "After you!"

We are not interested in such formality; otherwise you will never be born. We are interested in the essential, not in the accidental. We are interested in the intrinsic, not in the incidental.

And the robe is accidental -- orange, yellow, green. The essential is awareness.

IF YOU ARE RECKLESS, says Buddha,
BETTER TO SWALLOW MOLTEN IRON
THAN TO EAT AT THE TABLE OF GOOD FOLK.

If you are reckless, unaware, if you go on living heedlessly, without listening to all these awakened ones, you will suffer much more than you can suffer by swallowing molten iron. Beware! You are creating suffering every moment. By being unaware you create suffering; by being aware you create bliss.

IF YOU COURT ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE
YOU COURT TROUBLE.
YOUR SLEEP IS BROKEN.
YOU LOSE YOUR HONOR.
YOU FALL INTO DARKNESS.

What to say of another man's wife? -- one's own wife is trouble enough, or for that matter, one's own husband. Buddha is saying: Are you not yet aware of the phenomenon? Is not your wife enough to make you aware? Is not your own husband enough to be finished with this game?

But the mind goes on saying, "Maybe this woman is not good; some other woman may be good. Who knows? It didn't fit with this woman; I may be happy with another." And you cannot be happy with anyone. Happiness has nothing to do with the other; happiness is something that you have to create inside you. And you go on asking for trouble. Whenever you depend for your happiness on the other you ask for trouble. Dependence IS trouble. YOU COURT TROUBLE.

The other IS hell, and depending on the other you become a slave. YOUR SLEEP IS BROKEN. Your peace is lost, your rest is gone. Your whole life becomes a constant disturbance, because you are trying to exploit the other and the other is trying to exploit you.

YOU LOSE YOUR HONOR... your grace, your beauty, your sincerity. Buddha does not mean respectability; by "honor" he means grace.

YOU GO AGAINST THE LAW,
YOU GO INTO THE DARK.

The law is that bliss or misery both arise in the innermost core of your being. Nobody can give you bliss or misery. You need not go to anybody; you are enough unto yourself. Just go in. Dive deep in your consciousness.

And the more conscious you become, the more full of light your life is, the more and more benediction goes on showering on you. The more dark you are, the more unconscious, the more misery is bound to happen.

YOUR PLEASURES END IN FEAR
AND THE KING'S PUNISHMENT IS HARSH.

Buddha calls the ultimate law "the king." The punishment is harsh, but YOU are responsible. The law is not cruel; the law is simply law. It is just like gravitation: if you walk rightly, the gravitation cannot punish you. It is not interested in punishing you, it helps you to walk. But you drink too much, you become a drunkard, and you walk, and you fall on the ground and you break your leg. Can you blame the law of gravitation? The law of gravitation is simply there. If you go against it, you will be punished; whereas if you follow it, you will be benefited.

BUT AS A BLADE OF GRASS HELD AWKWARDLY....

Even such a soft thing, a blade of grass, held awkwardly....

MAY CUT YOUR HAND....

It all depends on you. If you are conscious you can hold a sword and it will not cut your hand; if you are unconscious, even a blade of grass may cut your hand.

SO RENUNCIATION MAY LEAD YOU INTO THE DARK.

A tremendously important saying. Buddha says: Even renunciation, taken unconsciously, is not going to help. You can become a sannyasin out of fear, you can become a sannyasin out of greed. These things are not going to help. Unless you become a sannyasin out of awareness, nothing is going to help.

People become religious for wrong reasons, and you cannot be religious for wrong reasons. And the person who lives rightly need not be religious: he is religious already.

Perlman made millions in the bakery business. While on a visit to Rome he went to see the pope and made a huge donation to the church.

The pope was very pleased and said, "Mr. Perlman, is there anything I can do to show my appreciation?"

"Yes, Your Holiness," answered the baking magnate. "Could you make a little change in the Lord's Prayer?"

"Ah, Mr. Perlman," frowned the pope, "I am afraid that would not be possible. The Lord's Prayer is repeated daily by millions of Christians."

"I know," said Perlman, "but I only want a small change. Where it says, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' just make it, 'Give us this day Perlman's pumpernickel bread.'"

Now, that great donation to the church has nothing to do with religion, it has nothing to do with charity; it is business, pure business.

And that's what people are doing. They donate to the poor, they serve the poor, to go to heaven. It is an investment, it is not service. Unless you are conscious, whatsoever you do is going to be wrong. In Buddha's definition, wrong means a thing done unconsciously and right means a thing done consciously. It has nothing to do with the thing itself but with the quality of consciousness through which it is done.

A Catholic priest took his new assistant to the hospital for the first time. The novice priest walked into an intensive care room and went up to a man in bed under an oxygen tent.

"I am here to help you in any way I can," he said. There was no response from the patient so again the priest offered his help. Still no response. Then suddenly the patient grabbed a pencil and paper and furiously began writing, after which he fell back dead.

The priest took the note and excitedly ran out of the room crying, "Father, Father! I got my first confession!" The father looked at the note and read, "Get off the oxygen hose, you sonofabitch!"

Buddha was perfectly aware that many people were becoming sannyasins in his day -- as it has always been -- for wrong reasons. Somebody was poor, somebody was a thief and the king was after him, somebody has committed murder and he wanted to hide and to be a sannyasin was the best place to hide.

BUT AS A BLADE OF GRASS HELD AWKWARDLY MAY CUT YOUR HAND, SO RENUNCIATION MAY LEAD YOU INTO THE DARK. Renunciation has not to be done for any motive. Sannyas has to be out of the sheer joy of being a sannyasin. Just as art is for art's sake, so sannyas is for sannyas' sake. Then it has tremendous beauty, and then it brings bliss, it brings paradise to you. Do whatsoever you want to do, but do it consciously. To be conscious is to be a sannyasin.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #10

Chapter title: Towards a new humanity

30 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

IF BY ANY CHANCE I MIGHT NOT GET ENLIGHTENED THIS LIFETIME, HOW CAN I MAKE SURE THAT I WILL BE A WOMAN IN MY NEXT LIFE? IT SEEMS SUCH A JUICY EXISTENCE.

Anand Baul, the first thing to be remembered is that nobody ever gets enlightened. Enlightenment is your nature; you are already it. It is not something to be achieved, it is not a goal to be reached. It is the source, not the goal. In the innermost core of your being you are all buddhas, and you have always been so, and you will always remain so.

Yes, you have forgotten it. So the question is not of realizing it, the question is only of remembering it. Hence Buddha says: Be more mindful, be more alert, be more watchful. Nothing else has to be done, one has nowhere to go, no pilgrimage is sacred. All pilgrimages are just going astray. You are already there where you want to be; just look within, just turn in, tune in. This is the first thing to be remembered, that it is not a question of achievement.

You say, "If by any chance I might not get enlightened this lifetime...."

There is no chance at all to miss it. It is impossible to be other than enlightened. It is your self-nature, your very being. This whole existence is enlightened.

Then what is the difference between a buddha and you? The difference is very simple. It has nothing to do with your quality. Your quality is exactly the same as that of Gautama the Buddha, or Jesus Christ, but you are asleep and they are awake. They know where they are, who they are, and you are dreaming. But one can come out of the dreams; dreams cannot hold you, dreams can't hinder you.

Dreams are dreams, they have no substance in them. They can't prevent you from becoming awake. Dreams, desire, sleep -- they are all like darkness. When you light a candle the darkness cannot prevent it. The darkness may be very ancient, it may have existed for millions of years and the candle may be fresh and just a small candle, but that's enough. Light has a positive existence. Darkness has no existence at all; it is only absence of light. You can wake up any moment, the candle can be lit any moment, and all dreams and desires will disappear; hence devices have been invented.

What Buddha says, Patanjali says, Lao Tzu says, is that these are only devices to wake you up, alarms and nothing else.

Secondly, whether you want it or not, if you remain asleep next lifetime you are going to be a woman. Even if you don't want it, it is going to happen. There is a simple law. This is my observation of many people's past lives, this is how mind functions, this is very fundamental to the mind: it always moves to the opposite end. If you are rich the mind thinks poverty is religious, spiritual; it has something of innocence in it, and "Look how the poor are free from anxiety, and how the beggar sleeps soundly. I have got everything and I cannot sleep, I cannot rest, not even a moment's rest... continuous worry, anxiety."

The rich man thinks always that the poor are really in a better space than he is. It is the rich people who have given the idea that poverty is spiritual. You will be surprised, take note of it, that all the TIRTHANKARAS, all the great masters of the Jainas were kings. Buddha himself was a king. All the AVATARAS of the Hindus -- Rama, Krishna, they were all kings. It is because of these rich people that a deep idea has prevailed down the ages that poverty is spiritual.

There is nothing spiritual in being poor, there is nothing spiritual in being rich either. The poor man thinks that the rich people are enjoying real life; hence the poor man projects. If he cannot be rich in this life, then let it be next life; if not in this world, then let it be in the other world. It is the poor man's projection -- the paradise, the heaven, where he dreams that he will be rich, and he will have all that rich people have. Not only that, the poor man also dreams that no rich man will ever be able to reach heaven, they will be thrown into hell: "They have enjoyed enough here, now they have to suffer for it. And I have suffered enough here so I have to be rewarded."

Jesus is a poor man, he is not like Krishna, Buddha and Mahavira. Krishna, Buddha and Mahavira have not said that no rich man can enter into paradise. Jesus says: Even a camel can pass through the eye of a needle, but the rich man cannot enter through the gate into heaven. He is a poor carpenter's son; he knows what poverty is. And because of that poverty he speaks a totally different language than Buddha.

In India the idea has prevailed that if you are rich it is because of your past lives' good karmas that you are rich now. And Jesus says: Rich people cannot enter into the kingdom of God. He says: Those who are the first here will be the last there, and those who are the last here will be the first. It is not an accident that Christianity goes on spreading in poor countries; it has an appeal for the poor. It is not an accident that communism is a by-product of Christianity.

The East has not given birth to communism, it could not have done it. And whenever a country becomes rich, remember, it will start becoming Buddhist, it will start becoming more and more Hindu. It is not an accident that America is so much interested in Eastern wisdom. Whenever a society is affluent it starts thinking in a different way than a poor country thinks.

My observation is that if you are a man in this life, you must have been a woman in your past life, and if you are a woman in this life you must have been a man. That's how the pendulum of mind goes from one extreme to the other. Every man thinks -- not only you, Anand Baul -- that the existence of a woman is beautiful, it is juicy. But ask the

woman: she desires to be a man, deep down she feels humiliated that she is a woman, a second-class citizen. Deep down she herself wants to behave like a man.

Women all over the world are trying in every possible way to behave like men. They are wearing men's clothes, smoking cigarettes like men, and whatsoever they can do. They use language like men have always used it, becoming arrogant, aggressive, losing the feminine quality. See the women of the liberation movement: they have lost something - something soft, feminine, receptive, passive, is no more there. They are aggressive, violent. They can't wait for another life. In this very life they are in a hurry, they want to become like men. They want the same jobs, the same kind of work, the same kind of freedom. Even if that freedom is just stupid, even if that job is hard, they want to prove that they can manage it, that they are not less than men. Their next life they are bound to be born as men.

So don't be worried about that. You will be a woman, watch out! Don't tell me then that you weren't warned. I am giving you the warning. And what do you mean by "juicy existence"?

It appears to you through the eyes of a man that the woman is beautiful; through the eyes of the woman the man is beautiful. This is a biological attraction. That's why two women cannot tolerate each other; it is impossible to find women friends. They are very jealous of each other, suspicious of each other. They cannot trust other women; they know too much about the woman's heart, about the woman's mind. They can't see any beauty. In fact, they cannot believe what man goes on seeing in women. There seems to be nothing. To a woman there is nothing, just as to a man there is nothing in man. It is the biological attraction, chemical attraction.

And the last thing, Baul: it seems you are not much acquainted with women. Become a little more acquainted. Suffer a little with women, let them torture you a little more, and then you will forget all this nonsense.

A man had decided to take a trip with his eighteen-year-old daughter. "Hey, how about me?" his wife exclaimed.

"Oh no," the man said. "You and your big mouth are not going on any vacation with me. I got enough of your big mouth all year long. I am taking our daughter and that's all."

So off they went. The train on which the man and his daughter rode was held up by robbers. They lost everything. "I'm ruined!" the man said. "Everything I own is gone!"

"No, Papa," the daughter said, "I saved the jewelry. The minute I saw the robbers coming, I took my rings, my diamonds and my bracelet and put them in my mouth."

"That's marvelous," said the father. "If your mother was here, we could have saved the suitcase."

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS THE USE OF ESOTERIC TEACHINGS AND SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE? HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF THEY ARE TRUE OR NOT?

Sef Kicken, the esoteric teachings are only for the fools. The fools are very much interested in anything they cannot understand. The idea of the foolish mind is that anything it cannot understand must be very mysterious, must be very superior, must belong to higher planes.

A really religious person has nothing to do with esoteric nonsense -- with theosophy, with anthroposophy, and with so many Lobsang Rampas... and all kinds of nonsense that goes on being written. It must be fulfilling some people's needs. Just as a few people like detective novels, a few others are interested in esoteric knowledge.

There is nothing esoteric in existence. Existence is nude, naked; nothing is hidden.

Once Buddha was asked, "Have you said everything, or is there something esoteric which you have not said?"

Buddha showed his hand -- an open hand -- and he said, "I am like an open hand, not like a fist."

And so is existence -- like an open hand, not like a fist. It hides nothing; all is there, all around you. God is overflowing... and you are pondering over esoteric things -- seven planes or seventeen, seven hells and seven heavens. And the more complicated is the system, the more appeal it has.

Theosophy is more or less sheer nonsense, but it attracted thousands of people around the world. It has become a great world movement. People were talking of hidden masters, guides, astral, ethereal.... And in Madam Blavatsky's room letters used to drop from the ceiling -- letters from hidden masters who live in the Himalayas. Later on it was found that a man used to hide there on the roof and he used to drop those letters. The man himself confessed in the court that "My whole work was that whenever the session of the theosophists would be there and they would wait with closed eyes and pray for masters, hidden masters, to guide them, I had instructions from Madam Blavatsky what letter to drop. Those letters were written by Madam Blavatsky." They were examined later on by experts and it was proved that they were written by Blavatsky herself. But she fooled people for years.

You ask me, "What is the use of esoteric teachings and spiritual knowledge?"

To fulfill the demands of the fools, that is the use. And there is no spiritual knowledge at all.

Spirituality is an experience, not knowledge. You cannot reduce it to knowledge; it is always knowing, never knowledge. It is an insight, irreducible into words. You cannot put it into theories, into systems of thought; that is impossible. And those who try to do it don't know anything... only then can they do it. This is a strange phenomenon: those who know, they never try to reduce their knowing to knowledge; and those who don't know, they are absolutely free. They can create any knowledge, that is their invention.

All spiritual knowledge is the invention of the mind. Real spiritual knowing happens only when the mind is dropped, when you are in a state of no-mind.

And you ask me, "How can I find out if they are true or not?"

Why should you be worried? Rather try to find out who you are. That's the only real religious question, the only quest: "Who am I?" That's enough; no other questions are significant. Avoid all other jargon -- spiritual, religious, theological, esoteric. Avoid all jargon. Just stick to a simple quest: "Who am I?" That's enough. If you know yourself you have known all; if you don't know yourself you may know everything in the world, but that is of no use. It is unnecessary burden and bondage.

Clarence and Lulu were sitting on the front porch in Kentucky on a warm summer evening, holding hands.

Lulu turned to Clarence and said, "Clarence, say something soft and mushy."

And Clarence embarrassedly turned to Lulu and said, "Ah, shit!"

That's what esoteric knowledge is -- soft and mushy!

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

YOU TOLD US THE STORY OF KRISHNA AND ARJUNA. BUT IS THERE NO VALUE IN RESISTING WAR IN A TIME WHERE A HANDFUL OF MADMEN PLAY WITH ATOMIC BOMBS?

Peter Bohm, how can you resist these few madmen who are playing with atom bombs? What will be your strategy of resistance? In fact, your resistance may bring the war sooner than otherwise; your resistance is not going to prevent it.

The only thing that can prevent the world war is that you start a totally new consciousness, that you start a new kind of humanity... a man who is capable of love, a man who is capable of meditation. Let love and meditation spread far and wide. Let meditation reach to as many people as possible. Except that, all your efforts at resistance are impotent.

You can protest and you can go on a long march, but have you ever watched the protesters, the people who are against war, the pacifists? Have you watched their processions? They look so aggressive, they themselves look mad! If they had the atom bombs, just to protect peace they would be the first to drop the atom bombs. They are as mad as the other party; there is no difference at all. Their minds are as political as the people who are in power; the only difference is that they are not in power. And their anger, their pent-up anger, you can see on their faces, in their slogans.

Every peace protest ends in a fight with the police, with the military. It ends in burning buses, post offices, police stations, cars. What kind of love is this and what kind of resistance is this? It is impotent! But they are feeling they are doing something great. It is an ego trip and nothing else.

The meek little bank clerk had his suspicions. One day he left work early and sure enough, when he arrived home, he found a strange hat and umbrella in the hallway and his wife on the couch in the arms of another man.

Wild for revenge, the husband picked up the man's umbrella and snapped it in two across his knee.

"There, now, I hope it rains!"

What can you do? Yes, you can shout and you can go for a long march with great posters, and it will give you a certain satisfaction because your pent-up energies will be released. It is a kind of catharsis. Unknowingly, you are doing Dynamic Meditation -- but it would be better if you do it knowingly.

Yes, war has come to a point where it can destroy the whole humanity, and not only humanity but the whole earth. Life as such can be destroyed. What can we do?

Scientific knowledge has gone far ahead of man's spiritual growth; that is the problem, the real problem. Who are these madmen you are talking about? Are they any different from you, Peter Bohm? Richard Nixon, Brezhnev, Ayatollah Khomeini -- are these different people from you? Maybe there is some quantitative difference, but there is no qualitative difference. If YOU come in power you will prove the same. And one day these people were not in power; they were also just like you. When they are in power, then their real faces show up.

Lord Acton says: Power corrupts. It is not true. Power never corrupts, but corrupted people are attracted towards power. Of course, without power they cannot show their real faces. Power only gives them the right context in which they can reveal their heart's reality. Power does not corrupt, it only reveals the truth. Powerless people may not look mad because they cannot afford to be mad. Give them power and then you will see: they are as mad as anybody else.

I don't see any difference between warmongers and pacifists; they are the same kind of people. They appear to be polar opposites but they belong together. Deep down they are one; two ends of the same stick. Yes, I would like the earth to become a paradise and not a cemetery... but what kind of resistance?

Even if Krishna was here, at THIS juncture he would not have suggested war. I am absolutely certain about it. I say categorically that Krishna would not have said to Arjuna to fight at this moment, because this is global suicide. Five thousand years have passed since Krishna and much has changed.

We have come to the point where total war is possible. Nobody is going to be the winner, so what is the point of war? War has been significant in the past because somebody would win and somebody would lose. Now there is going to be no winner; all are going to be the losers. War has lost all significance -- war is absolutely stupid today. It may have had some meaning in the past; it has none anymore.

Krishna's message is irrelevant today; Buddha's message is more relevant. Krishna's message is out of date; Buddha's message is very contemporary. But what is his message? His message is: If you really want peace on the earth, create peace in your

heart, in your being. That is the right place to begin with -- and then spread, radiate peace and love.

If more and more people become peaceful, joyous, if more and more people can dance and sing, if more and more people can say "Alleluia!" from their very innermost core, it will become impossible for these few mad people to create a war. Then we can put these mad people into mental asylums very easily. We can convert our capitals into mental asylums; that is not a big problem, once many many people's inner consciousness is transformed.

Be a meditator.

Be a lover.

Be a celebrant.

Create the whole existence with as much bliss and joy as possible. Make life so beautiful that nobody wants to die.

Right now, the situation is just the opposite: life is so ugly that who cares? If war happens, in fact, people will feel relieved. They don't have to commit suicide and still the war is going to do the work for them they always wanted to do themselves.

Psychologists say it is very difficult to find a man who has not thought at least four times in his life of committing suicide. But to commit suicide is not easy; it goes against the life instinct. But if somebody else can take the responsibility and somebody else can drop an atom bomb or a hydrogen bomb, then we are freed of the responsibility of committing suicide and still the suicide happens. And not only WE are dying but everybody else with us.

We have to change people's suicidal mind. Why do people think of suicide? -- for the simple reason that life is ugly and they don't know how to beautify it, how to make a song out of it. It is just sadness, a long long anguish, a nightmare. That's why people become interested in war and they support war -- for any stupid cause, for any excuse they are ready to kill and be killed.

And in fact, all political causes are stupid, all so-called political revolutions are stupid. The only revolution which is not stupid is spiritual, is inner, is individual.

If you really want a world without war, create this individual revolution I call sannyas. This is real resistance. Without resisting anybody you create a different space, a different context, in which life starts blooming, life becomes creative.

And if people are creative, blooming, joyous, politics and politicians will be things of the past. Yes, you can save a few politicians to keep them in the zoos for future children to come and see: "Look, this is Morarji Desai!" You can stuff them with straw -- they are already stuffed with straw and nothing else; they won't need much more straw, just a little bit will do.

And this is possible now. It was never possible before because war was never such a danger. Politics is now the most stupid game, mad, utterly mad.

These are tremendously significant moments, because we can change the whole human consciousness from being political to spiritual.

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,
WHAT IS PRESENCE OF MIND?

Kavita, presence of mind is really a state of no-mind. You can call it mindfulness, awareness, or you can call it a state of no-mind. The words seem to be contradicting each other, but they are indicative of the same state. Presence of mind means to be in the present, to be spontaneous, to be available to whatsoever is happening right now. To be available to here and now is presence of mind. But the only way to be available to here and now is not to be in the past, not to be in the future.

And mind consists of past and future; mind knows nothing of the present. Mind is always occupied, it is never unoccupied. And whenever the mind is unoccupied, utterly without any thought, just watchful, alert, conscious, there arises a great presence. That presence functions on its own accord. That presence makes your life a life of responses, not of reactions.

Ordinary life is of reactions; you react. Reaction means you are reacting to a present situation according to the past. It never fits because life never repeats itself. History may repeat, because history is a mind phenomenon, but life never repeats. It is always new, always fresh; something new is always transpiring. You go on carrying old ideas according to your experience, and you act out of those ideas thinking that you are acting out of experience. This is reaction: you are lagging behind, you are not true to the situation.

A response means being true to the situation; not acting out of the past but acting out of the present moment. Just like a mirror, it simply reflects that which is. If there is a flower, it reflects a flower; if there is a face, it reflects the face. Your mind never reflects that which is; your mind always reflects that which WAS. That's how your mind never comes into a state of communion with reality. Then whatsoever you do is wrong.

Presence of mind is a state of thoughtlessness, but not of sleep, not of unconsciousness. Thoughtless consciousness, contentless consciousness -- a mirror utterly empty, ready to mirror anything. The beauty of the mirror is that it never catches hold of any reflection; it is not like a photoplate. The photoplate immediately catches hold of the reflection and that's why it is destroyed. You can use it only once, then it clings to the past. That's what memory is, mind is -- a photoplate.

The mind of a buddha is not a photoplate but a mirror.

Try to be more and more and more responsible and less and less reactive.

A woman was driving her car at about eighty miles an hour, when she noticed a motorcycle cop following her. She did not slow down; she figured that maybe she could shake him off by doing ninety. When she looked back again there were two motorcycles following her. She boosted her speed again. The next time she looked, three motorcycles were screaming along behind her.

Suddenly she saw a service station looming ahead. She screeched to a stop in front of it, dashed out and ran into the ladies' room.

Ten minutes later, she walked demurely out. The three cops were standing right there, waiting for her. Without batting an eyelash she said coyly, "I bet you thought I wouldn't make it!"

The fifth question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,

YOU SAID, "UNLESS YOU BECOME A SANNYASIN OUT OF AWARENESS..." AT THE TIME I ASKED FOR SANNYAS BECAUSE I FELT SAFE WITH YOU AND YOUR SANNYASINS, BUT NOT OUT OF AWARENESS AT ALL. IN FACT, I HAVE MUCH DIFFICULTY IN BECOMING A LITTLE AWARE AND ALSO WITH MEDITATION. DOES THIS MEAN THAT IT WILL BE BETTER TO DROP SANNYAS?

Shridhar, you can drop it -- but only out of awareness!

The sixth question:

Question 6

BELOVED MASTER,

Although You keep telling us that we have to be in the marketplace -- and coming from the West, that should be my marketplace -- I have that strong feeling now that I want to be here near You, that this is my home. Is this also a desire?

Prem Satyam, this is the marketplace I go on talking about!

The seventh question:

Question 7

BELOVED MASTER,

SHOULD ONE TRY TO BE RICH OR NOT?

Asango, meditate on Murphy's maxim: Don't care if you are rich or not as long as you can live comfortably and have everything you want.

That's exactly what I have been doing and that's exactly what I would like you to do. Why bother whether you are rich or not? In fact, people go into unnecessary worries. Whatsoever you have, enjoy it -- it is already too much. You cannot look at it because your mind is constantly occupied with doing this, becoming that. And all that existence goes on giving you, you go on neglecting. You never even thank existence for it; you don't have any gratitude. Otherwise, even if you don't possess anything, you can live a very rich life.

A rich life is something inner. And I am not against outer things, remember, but basically a rich life is something inner. If you are inwardly rich you can make even outer things richer by your inner light. For example, if the buddha lives in a hut, he lives in the hut as if the hut is a palace. If the buddha lives in the palace, of course he

will be able to enjoy the palace more than anybody else in the world. If he can enjoy the hut as a palace, what to say about the palace itself? Wherever he is he finds ways to enjoy life.

The whole art of sannyas is to live a rich life -- but the richness comes through your inner awareness. You can live a very poor life and you can be very rich outwardly; you can have a big bank balance, but you can live a dog's life.

I know very many rich people. I feel sorry for them. They have all, but they are living in such a poor way that I cannot conceive what blindness has befallen them. Can't they see their beautiful houses, their beautiful gardens? But they don't have any sensitivity. So the flowers come and go and they pass those flowers every day, but they don't see. Otherwise a single flower is enough. And whether the flower has grown in your garden or in your neighbor's garden, who cares?

You don't possess the stars, still you can enjoy them. Or do you first have to possess them, and only then you will be able to enjoy them? You don't possess the birds in the sky, but you can enjoy them.

What you need is not more possessions. What you need is more sensitiveness, more aesthetic sensibility, more musical ears, more artistic eyes. What you need is a vision which transforms everything into something significant and meaningful.

You ask me, Asango, "Should one try to be rich or not?"

You ARE rich! You have been given already that which you need. Let it grow, and then whatsoever you have on the outside will be enough.

You can see my sannyasins living here. They have not anything really that you can call possessions, but you cannot find more happy people anywhere in the world. For no reason they are happy, there is nothing to be happy about! But something inner has started growing, something like a subtle fragrance which only people who have sensibility, sensitiveness, can feel; others can't see it.

Many people have asked me, "Why do your sannyasins look so happy?" The why cannot be answered easily, because they want to know something on the outside which is causing the happiness. On the outside there is nothing but all kinds of troubles -- the Indian government, the police, the Indian rotten society and the rotten mind. There is nothing on the outside. But still, my people are immensely happy. And they are not just sitting idly, they are working hard, and working hard for no rewards, no pay; they don't get anything. But something inner is happening; that is real richness.

Asango, think of that. You are a new sannyasin; soon you will become aware of it.

The eighth question:

Question 8

BELOVED MASTER,

I WANT TO GET MARRIED. HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT THE WOMAN I AM MARRYING IS PURE IN CHARACTER?

Suresh, this is what I call the rotten Indian mind! If the woman is really pure, why should she be marrying you in the first place? And why this desire, this imposition on

the other? And what do you mean by purity, purity of character? Do you mean that she has not known anybody sexually before you? But that will mean marrying a woman who is immature, marrying a woman who is inexperienced.

If you are going to employ an engineer, will you ask him, "The first requirement is that you shouldn't know anything about engineering"? Then you ask about experience; you want proofs, certificates.

If you are wise you will inquire whether the woman has been loved by other people too. If a woman has not been approached by anybody up to now, escape! What does it mean? It simply means the woman is dangerous!

Only very ugly people can have that kind of purity you are asking for. But I don't see that by having a few love affairs a person becomes impure. Love purifies. How can it make somebody impure? The more one loves, the more one becomes artful, skillful, intelligent in love.

Millions of marriages fail because two inexperienced persons are trying to work things out. If both are inexperienced, it is bound to fail.

There are a few primitive societies still existent in the world where it is thought to be a must that a woman should know a few men, that the man should know a few women, before they decide to marry. Marriage needs artfulness; it is a great effort to create a symphony between two persons' beings.

So don't ask foolish things. And if you are too much after such a kind of purity, then please, why are you deciding to make the woman impure? You will suffer for it, and she will suffer because she will be making you impure. Don't do such harm to each other. Why in the first place think of marriage? Remain pure!

"Daddy," said young David, "what is puppy love?"

"The beginning of a dog's life, my son."

Murphy says: Anything good in life is either illegal, immoral or fattening.

The three faithful things in life are money, a dog and an old woman.

So either get married to money or to a dog or to an old woman! If you are so much interested in purity, if you are so much wedded to purity, don't ask for a real woman. Find a plastic woman. You can always clean it and soap it. Why bother with real people? Real people are real people.

Two expectant fathers paced the floor in the waiting room of the hospital.

"What tough luck," said one. "This had to happen during my vacation."

"You think you've got troubles?" said the other. "I'm on my honeymoon!"

Real people are real people. Things happen to real people, not to plastic people. Yes, even on honeymoon things can happen!

A pair of good friends, Frenchmen both, were strolling down the Champs Elysees one day when they spied two women approaching. "Sacrebleu, Pierre!" cried one. "Here come my wife and my mistress walking toward us arm in arm."

"Mon Dieu, Henri!" cried out the second. "I was about to say the very same thing."

Charlie was taking his out-of-town pal for a stroll through the city. The friend observed a good-looking girl and asked Charlie if he knew her.

"Yes, that is Betty. Twenty dollars."

"How about that one?"

"That is Dolores. Forty dollars."

"Here comes one that is really first class. Do you know her?"

"That is Gloria. Eighty dollars."

"My God, aren't there any nice, respectable girls in this town?"

"Of course, but you could not afford their rates."

Suresh, either get rid of this idea of marriage or get rid of the idea of purity of character. If you keep both the ideas together you will be in trouble.

And who are you to decide about others' character? If you love the woman, you love the woman with all her limitations, with all her imperfections; she loves you with all your imperfections and limitations.

But this is what -- particularly to the Indian mind -- is very significant: perfection. And to demand perfection is a kind of neurosis. It will drive the other neurotic, and as far as you are concerned, you are already neurotic. If you ask perfection in any human being you will create trouble for yourself and for the other, and your life will be nothing but misery.

The real man of understanding and intelligence accepts the imperfections of the other and still loves. Love is great enough; it can even love people who have no character, people who are not pure according to your ideas, people who sometimes go astray, people who sometimes commit small sins. Love is big enough to accept all this and to transform it too.

The ninth question:

Question 9

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE BECOME SANNYASINS?

Murphy.... My God, are you the same Murphy I have been quoting and misquoting? You should have told me before! But you must be, I hope, some other Murphy, because if you were the same Murphy you would not ask such a question. That old guy is so wise he only gives answers, he never asks questions.

You ask me, "Why do so many people become sannyasins?"

Everybody does so for a different reason; hence it is very difficult to answer. The real sannyasins cannot even give any reasonable answer why they have become sannyasins.

It is a kind of love affair; they fall in love with this madman. It is utterly mad, it is absurd. They simply find some inner communion; something happens to their heart, not to their head. And when something happens to the heart it is unanswerable.

But a few people become sannyasins out of the head; then they are only pseudo sannyasins. They can give you answers why they have become sannyasins.

So this much can be said: one who can answer WHY he has become a sannyasin is a wrong sannyasin, a pseudo sannyasin; the real one can only shrug his shoulders. He can say, "I don't know, it simply happened." He will not be convincing to you -- he can't be -- but try to be sympathetic with the person. It is a love affair.

Who has ever been able to say why he has fallen in love? One simply falls in love for no reason at all. Suddenly something clicks; it clicks in such a subtle way that you cannot figure out why. The why is unanswerable. And whenever it is answerable, the person is not a real sannyasin. This is the paradox: those who can answer, they are not real sannyasins; those who cannot answer, they are real sannyasins.

And then there are different people and they come with different backgrounds, they come here for different reasons. They open up to me in different ways, they take different time, they have different paces.

A modern-day Lewis and Clark exploration team had returned from a two-year exploration of the upper Amazon. Having bravely gone where no men had gone before, they were greeted by members of the press from every nation.

"Tell us, sir," asked a reporter of the first explorer, "what made you go?"

"I had to go," he replied. "I had to meet the challenge, to test my mettle, to meet the unknown, to face hardship, and to ponder the real meaning of life."

"And you, sir," he inquired of the second explorer, "why did you go?"

"You should meet my wife," came the weary reply.

Different people will have different reasons. Somebody is here for the exploration of the unknown; somebody is simply here because of the wife. Somebody is here because this has been his search for many lives; somebody is here accidentally. He was just passing Poona, from Kabul to Goa, and seeing so many crazy orange people he became intrigued. He said to himself, "Man, something far out is going on!" And then he got hooked... then he forgot all about Goa. Then slowly slowly, people forget about the whole world. Then this small place becomes their whole world.

Anxious to be on time for his date, Carl stopped at the drugstore for a hasty purchase. The druggist gave him a knowing smile, and he told the druggist about a lovely chick he met at a party. He was going to spend the evening with her, and her parents would be out at the opera.

When he got to her house, she and her mother were waiting for her father to return from work.

When her father walked in, she introduced both parents to Carl, and Carl said, "Say, why don't Nancy and I join you this evening?"

"You children don't want to spend your evening with us old folks," said Nancy's mother.

"Sure we do," said Carl.

"I didn't know you liked opera," the bewildered Nancy said to her date, as he was helping her on with her coat.

"No, and I didn't know your father was a druggist, either," he said.

So there are different reasons. I cannot give you a single answer. I cannot say why people become sannyasins.

All that I can say is that I am utterly mad, and a few people find themselves in tune with me.

The last question:

Question 10

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS UNAWARENESS?

Shivananda, yes, the question arises and is significant too. It is like the fish asking, "What is the ocean?" Obviously the fish cannot see the ocean; it has lived in the ocean always, from the very beginning. It was born in the ocean, it opened its eyes in the ocean, it has lived as part of the ocean. The ocean is so close, the fish does not feel itself separate from it. There is no space between the fish and the ocean to know about it.

And that's actually the case with unawareness. You are born in unawareness, you live in unawareness, you sleep in unawareness... you wake up in unawareness. You walk in unawareness, you talk in unawareness... you read Bibles, Korans, Gitas, in unawareness. It is so close, you are so permeated by it; it is in your every fiber and cell. There is no distance between it and you. Hence the question is very significant and one has to ask it. Only then can one move slowly out of unawareness towards awareness.

Unawareness is a state of robotlike existence. You go on repeating mechanically. You go on living without any alertness in it; sleepy, a somnambulist you are.

Out of ten people, one person can walk in his sleep, do you know it? That is a big number. Out of a hundred, ten people are capable of walking in their sleep. If you have ten persons in your family, that means one person is capable of walking in his sleep. People get up, they can walk in darkness, they can reach the fridge, they can eat things, they can come back to the bed. In the morning they have forgotten all -- and then they are worried why they go on becoming fatter and fatter! In the day they fast or diet and in the night they compensate as much as they can.

You will have to be a little separate from your acts; then you will be able to know what unawareness is. Somebody insults you; immediately, instantly, anger arises. It is like pushing a button and the light comes on. There is no gap: you push a button and the light comes on. The light has no time to think whether to come on or not. Somebody insults you; he pushes a button and immediately you are enraged.

Gurdjieff used to say to his disciples, "Wait at least for five minutes. What is the hurry? Let him insult you, let him finish first. Then you close your eyes and wait for five minutes, and watch what is happening inside you -- anger boiling."

Gurdjieff himself became enlightened through this simple procedure: that whatsoever is mechanical in man he tried to make it nonmechanical. And all is mechanical in you -- anger, lust, greed, jealousy -- all is mechanical. It simply is there whenever somebody pushes a button. You are functioning like a robot. Become a man.

That's what meditation is all about, that's what sannyas is all about. Create a little distance. Next time somebody insults you, give it five minutes, sit silently for five minutes, and then you can become angry. I am not saying "Don't become angry" -- because that will be too much. I am saying that just for five minutes allow a gap, and you will be surprised: after five minutes it is not the same anger that it would have been five minutes before.

Dale Carnegie remembers an incident in his life. He delivered a radio broadcast on Abraham Lincoln. He mentioned a few wrong facts about Lincoln; even his birthdate was wrong. He received one letter, a very angry letter, from a woman, calling him a fool, calling him stupid. "If you don't even know the right birthdate, what right have you got to speak on Abraham Lincoln?"

He became enraged, and he immediately wrote an angry answer. But it was too late in the day, so he thought, "Tomorrow morning I will post the letter."

Before posting it he read the letter again. It looked too angry -- twelve hours had passed. He read the woman's letter; it was not so insulting as it had appeared at the first glance. So he changed his letter, he wrote it again. When he was writing it again he said, "Why not wait twenty-four hours more and see what happens? What is the hurry? The woman is not going to die."

So he waited twenty-four hours and read his letter again. Now he was even more cool, and still the letter looked a little too strong. He changed it and thought, "Why not wait forty-eight hours? Let it be an experiment! I can always send the letter, but after twelve hours I had to change it, after twenty-four hours I had to change it much more. Let us see what happens after forty-eight hours."

After forty-eight hours he had to change it totally. All anger had disappeared. He said, "Now I will wait two days more and then I will send it."

And when finally he wrote the letter he apologized; he was no longer angry. The woman was right: what right has he if he does not know the facts? At least he should have checked the facts before going to broadcast. It was absolutely right on her part to get angry.

So he wrote, "You are perfectly right. Next time I will not commit such a mistake. I am deeply sorry that I hurt your feelings. I apologize. If any time you happen to be in this city, please come to see me, or, if I come to your town, I will come to see you. I would like to know more about Lincoln -- because I feel you know more than I know."

Naturally, the woman was tremendously impressed by the humbleness of the man; she was not expecting that he would be so humble. Next time she came to that town where

Dale Carnegie lived she phoned him. He went, received her, invited her for a dinner. And finally the woman and he became so friendly, they fell in love!

It looks like a fairy tale -- does not happen in real life! In real life only tragedies happen. But we are responsible for all those tragedies because of our unawareness.

So the first thing I will suggest, Shivananda, is that if you want to know what unawareness is, allow a gap. This is the process of de-automatization. You have become automatic, you function automatically. You have to reverse the whole process, de-automatize it, slowly slowly, in small matters.

For example, you have gone for a walk. Don't walk the same way as you walk every day. Go slow or go fast, but don't just repeat the same routine. And you will be surprised: if you go slow you are more aware, if you go faster you are more aware; if you go exactly the same speed as you follow every day, you lose all awareness.

Buddha told his disciples to walk very slowly, as slowly as possible. Try it and you will be surprised. A great awareness arises if you walk very slowly. You speak in a certain way; one day try to speak in some other way. Speak slowly, and you will be surprised that the slowness of the speech makes you alert. Suddenly something is changed, because you are not functioning according to the robot.

Mind has two parts: one is the learning part, the other is the robot part. The learning part learns; whenever you are learning something you are more aware. For example, if you are learning driving you are more aware -- you have to be. The moment you have learned it, the learning part gives its information to the robot part. Once you have learned driving, then you don't need any awareness; you simply go on doing it mechanically. You turn towards your house, you arrive in your garage, you lock the car. You are doing everything like a robot.

And this is the story of your life, twenty-four hours a day. Change it!

Gurdjieff's method was this: if some vegetarian had come to him as a disciple, the first thing he would insist was, "Eat meat!" Now this is a very shocking thing for a vegetarian -- to be told to eat meat. And Gurdjieff was a tough master; he would throw you out if you didn't listen to him, if you didn't follow the command, if you didn't follow the discipline. He would force you to eat meat. Now, when a vegetarian eats meat he becomes very conscious -- he has to. He has no idea in the past, no experience in the past, of eating meat. Just think of Mahatma Gandhi eating meat... he will become tremendously aware!

And if there was a meat-eater, then Gurdjieff would say, "For a few weeks you be just vegetarian. Don't eat meat at all -- no eggs, no meat, no milk, no animal food of any kind. Just go on eating vegetables." The whole body system had become accustomed to a certain pattern. He would change people's eating hours. If you were eating every day at one o'clock, he would say, "Eat at nine." If you were going to sleep every day at twelve, he would say to go at two or at ten. He would change everything. A man who had never been drinking wine, he would force to drink wine just to change and shatter his pattern. The man who had been a drunkard, he would stop him from drinking.

Gurdjieff was puzzling to people, but the method is simple: he was trying to de-automatize. He was one of the greatest masters of this age, very much misunderstood. Naturally, everybody was against him. Who has ever heard of religious masters forcing their disciples to drink? -- FORCING, actually forcing. And he would sit there....

The greatest thing in his commune was the dinner. It used to last four, five, six, seven hours. Every evening it would start... and it would end in the middle of the night. And he himself would take care of everybody, of what was being eaten, of what was given to them -- and he would go on forcing. People would become so drunk they would fall on the ground, and they would start saying things in their drunkenness -- and he would sit by the side and listen. He also used to drink with them, but he had worked hard on the way. He was a tantra master. He had been to India and to Tibet too, just to learn tantra.

Tantra has special methods how to go on drinking and yet remain aware. YOU cannot be aware even without drinking. Tantra has methods to slowly slowly drink, and keep awareness, not to lose track of your awareness. Slowly slowly, the quantity of your drug has to be increased as you increase in your awareness. A moment comes when -- you will be surprised to know, still there are people in the East who practice it -- a moment comes, when no drug can affect your consciousness at all.

Then the last thing they try is this: they keep poisonous snakes and they allow the snake to bite them on their tongue; that is the last method. Ordinarily a man will die.... These snakes are absolutely poisonous. Three percent of the snakes in India are dangerous; you cannot survive their bite -- once bitten you are gone. But these tantra masters will remain alert even in that moment and they will not die. Their bodies have become accustomed to all kinds of poisons and they have become alert, so alert that no drug can affect them.

Gurdjieff used to use that method with his disciples, simply to shatter your settled habits.

My approach here is to send you to this group, then to another group, then to still another group. When you go to different groups for two, three months, each group has its own structure and pattern and each group destroys other groups' patterns and structures.

And finally I send you to Zazen or to Vipassana. They are beyond all ordinary structures. Those are the methods given by Buddha himself. Then you are in a very simple state, watching your own breath -- the breath going in, the breath going out, and you are simply watching.

This watchfulness will make you aware of what unawareness is and what awareness is, both. You become aware of both simultaneously.

It was springtime, and two lovers were cuddling in a meadow on a dark, new-moon night.

The young man whispered to his girlfriend, "I sure wish we had a flashlight!"

The girl replied, "I do too. You have been munching on grass for the last five minutes!"

Get it? -- otherwise I will have to tell another! Meditate over it later on!

Marlene, a pretty Philadelphia secretary, was taking her first trip across the United States. Driving through the desert she ran out of gas. An Indian gave her a ride, sitting behind him on his pony. Every few minutes as they rode he let out a wild, whooping yell that echoed across the desert. Finally he deposited her at a gas station and went off with a last "Yaa-hoo!"

"What were you doing," asked the station owner, "to make that redskin do all that hollering?"

"Nothing," said the girl. "I just sat behind him with my arms around his sides holding onto his saddle horn."

"Miss," said the man, "Indians ride bareback!"

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #11

Chapter title: The psychology of egolessness

31 December 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,

GURDJIEFF SAID THAT IN ORDER TO ATTAIN TO REAL WILL ONE WOULD HAVE TO SURRENDER ONE'S FALSE WILL FIRST. IS THIS ALSO TRUE HERE?

Peter Markee, it is true everywhere. It is true forever. Truth is universal: time makes no difference, place makes no difference. And this is one of the most fundamental truths of spiritual growth: the false has to be given up because the false is the barrier. You remain deluded by the false; hence the search for the true never starts. You believe the false to be the true. Then why should you endeavor to realize the true?

If you think that darkness is light, then where is the necessity to search for light? If you think this life is all, then there is no question of seeking and inquiring about another life. If time is your total reality, then eternity never becomes a quest for you.

The false will means the ego; the true will means egolessness. The false will is yours; the true will is God's. The false will is personal; the true will is universal. The false will simply means that you believe yourself separate from the whole; and the true will is dissolving this illusion of separation, becoming that which you really are -- a part in this cosmic harmony, totally one with it. Then you don't have any separate destination, you don't have any private goal. Then wherever the whole is going, YOU are going. You are just a wave in the ocean.

And before the real can be known, the false has to cease, because the false is covering your eyes. You are clinging to the false, to the toy. And unless you see the point -- that the toy is only a toy, not worth clinging.... In that very moment of seeing the toy slips out of your hands on its own accord because you no more cling to it. Seeing the false as false is the beginning of the truth. But that seeing is arduous.

For lives we have lived with the false and we have believed in the false. We have nurtured, nourished the false. All our hopes, all our dreams, are rooted in the false. Our whole lives are investments in the false; hence we are afraid even to look, we are afraid to observe, watch.

The most frightening experience for human beings is to remember, to watch, to be aware; hence the difficulty in meditation. It does not arise from the outside; there is no disturbance outside. The real disturbance is within you. You really don't want to meditate. You are in a double bind. You listen to buddhas talking about the beauties and the blessings and the benedictions of meditation, and you become greedy for it. But then you look at your own investment and you become frightened, so you try to meditate. Yet you don't really want to meditate because meditation means you will

have to see things as they are -- the false as false, the true as true -- and that is going to shatter your whole effort of lives in a single moment.

Great courage is needed to meditate, courage to drop all the investments. Great intelligence is needed. In fact, this is true intelligence: to see that howsoever and whatsoever efforts you make to realize the false, to make it come true, they are going to fail. To see it -- that the whole effort is an exercise in utter futility -- is intelligence. It has nothing to do with intellectuality; it is very simple.

See, watch, and don't be afraid and don't avoid seeing. And don't go on playing with yourself, deceiving yourself. Don't remain in a double bind, with one hand creating and with the other hand destroying.

That's what people are doing: half of their being wants to continue as they are -- the stupid half, the rational part, the arithmetic of their minds. And the other half, the intelligent half, the intuitive half -- the heart -- wants to start anew, because you have seen for so long that nothing succeeds. And still you go on in the same rut. It is time, the right time, to get out of the rut and to have a new birth.

What Gurdjieff was saying has been told by all the great masters of the world. "Awake," Buddha says. It is the same; words differ. "Be watchful," Jesus says. Be as watchful as if the master of the house has gone out and he has told the servants to remain alert because he may come any moment and he does not want them to be asleep -- any moment he can come. They have to be alert, on guard, all the time. Jesus says to be alert. In alertness the first experience is that you have a personality which is false. Gurdjieff calls it the false will. And you have something else, something impersonal in you, which is the true will. Your appearance from the outside is false; what you experience from your innermost core is true. You are a mixture of the accidental and the essential, of the incidental and the intrinsic. You are the meeting point of time and eternity, a crossroads where matter and consciousness meet, where body and soul meet, where real and unreal shake hands. Yes, you are exactly a crossroads. And you have to be very alert not to choose the false -- because the false is very appealing. The false makes all kinds of propaganda for itself; the false will try to convince you with all kinds of arguments.

The truth remains silent. Unless YOU are ready to receive it, it will not even knock on your doors. The false is afraid that if much smoke is not created around it the falsity of it will be seen by you. So beware of the rationalizations of the false, its propaganda, its argumentation, its proofs. And also remember the silence of truth -- utter silence, absolute silence. Truth will never persuade you; it will wait -- it can wait for eternity. But the false cannot wait, it is momentary, it can't be so patient. It has to persuade you, it has to seduce you as immediately as possible. The false is very hypnotizing. Their ways are totally opposite.

Truth is achieved through awakening, and the false is achieved through deep sleep. The false is like a tranquilizer: it is very consoling, comforting, cozy, secure, safe. It gives you all kinds of protections, insurances. It goes on telling you, "Be with me and I will protect you. I am your guardian, your guide, your friend, your philosopher." The truth never claims anything.

Unless you become utterly fed up with the false and its claims -- which are all bogus... It talks much, but it never delivers any goods. Unless you become totally frustrated, fed up, bored with it, you are not going to look at the silent truth; you are not going to listen to the still, small voice within. And that voice is God's voice. It is universal; it has nothing to do with you.

The true will is not yours. It is the whole speaking through you, functioning through you. The false gives you the idea of great ego -- "I am somebody" -- and the true takes all ego away. It makes you a nothingness, a nobody. Only through your nobodiness the whole can function unhindered.

Yes, Peter Markee, Gurdjieff is right. And whatsoever is true with Gurdjieff is true here too -- is true forever. Wherever a master exists, the false has to be surrendered.

That actually is the function of sannyas. It is a device to surrender the false. Sannyas means you surrender your ego. You say to the master, "Please take this burden off my head." You bow down, you touch the feet of the master. That is simply symbolic that "Now I will not function as a separate entity from you."

And the master is one who has surrendered his will already, who exists no more as a person, who is only a presence, a window into God. And when you surrender to the window you are surrendering to the sky beyond. The window will only make the sky available.

The West has not developed the technique of the master/ disciple relationship yet. A few rare individuals tried, but they failed. Socrates was trying in Athens but he failed; he was not listened to. Jesus was trying again; he failed. The West has remained concerned, concentratedly focused on the false. It believes in the ego. The East believes in egolessness.

The Western psychology says to make the ego stronger. It is a psychology of the false -- rooted in the false, supporting the false. The East says: Let the ego melt, disappear, evaporate. It is the psychology of egolessness. This is a totally different standpoint.

Gurdjieff was again trying to bring the East to the West. He also failed. It is very difficult; centuries are against it, and the hypnosis and the conditioning of the society is against it. Even his own chief disciple, P.D. Ouspensky, could not understand him, misunderstood him. He betrayed him, just as Judas betrayed Jesus.

And do you know? -- Judas was the most cultured, educated person amongst Jesus' disciples; hence he must have had the most polished ego. He was an intellectual. The other followers were simple people: fishermen, carpenters, tax collectors, gamblers, drunkards, prostitutes -- simple people. The only person who was not simple was Judas; he was complex. He could have been a professor in Oxford or Cambridge or Harvard and he would have done perfectly well as a professor -- he was a good arguer. There are a few moments when he even argues with Jesus. And if you listen to the argument you will agree with Judas, you will not agree with Jesus.

One day Jesus is staying in Mary and Martha's home and Mary brings very costly perfume and washes Jesus' feet with that costly perfume. Judas immediately raises a question; he says, "This is stupid -- wasting so much money unnecessarily!" And he gives a good argument -- a socialistic argument. He says, "This much money could have

been given to the poor. There are beggars outside the house. This money could have fed many beggars for many days. It was rare perfume! Why waste it? The feet can be washed with water -- there is no need!" And she had poured the whole big bottle of perfume!

Now, with whom are you going to agree? And do you know what Jesus said? Jesus said, "The beggars will always be there. I will not be here always."

This does not seem to be a very appealing argument! Jesus says, "Don't disturb her. Don't disturb her love, her faith, her trust. It's perfectly alright. It is coming from her deep love for me. Let her do it. And beggars will always be there. Even if this money is given to them, nothing much is going to happen. Maybe for a few days they will be able to eat; then again...."

With whom are you going to agree? Ninety-nine percent is the possibility you will agree with Judas -- and more so after Karl Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao; after so much socialistic communist propaganda all over the world, who will not agree with Judas? He seems to be the forerunner of socialistic philosophy. And Jesus' answer does not seem to be very appealing, convincing. It seems to be evading the question, evading the issue. But Judas betrayed Jesus for the simple reason that he was too much in his intellect, too egoistic, too proud.

The same happened again with Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. Ouspensky was the most articulate disciple of Gurdjieff. In fact, it is because of Ouspensky that Gurdjieff became famous in the world. It is Ouspensky's books that have made Gurdjieff's name known to the world at large. But why did he betray him? In the last years of his life he was very antagonistic to his master. Even to mention Gurdjieff's name in Ouspensky's presence was an offense to him; he did not tolerate even mentioning Gurdjieff's name. It has been completely dropped -- even in his books which were written before he disconnected himself from Gurdjieff. He changed the name from Gurdjieff to just G; he would not write the whole name. He would simply mention, "G said..." -- just like XYZ. And then - - he was clever enough -- whenever somebody asked, "You yourself mentioned G," he said, "Those were the days when he was right. The later Gurdjieff has gone insane. I am against the later Gurdjieff."

And why did he go against him? Gurdjieff was trying to destroy his ego totally and it was impossible for him to accept that. He was in London, Gurdjieff was in Russia, in Tiflis, and Gurdjieff sent a message, "Come immediately. Sell everything there. Don't waste a single moment. Bring all the money and come."

Those were the days of the first world war; it was very difficult to travel, dangerous to travel, and going back to Russia was dangerous for Ouspensky because the Bolsheviks, communists, had come into power and Russia, the whole of Russia was in a turmoil. There was no order, no government.

Still, the master had asked, so he sold all his possessions, his house, took all the money and traveled back to Russia knowing perfectly well he was going into danger. The journey was long; three months it took for him to reach, sometimes traveling by train and sometimes by horse and sometimes he was prevented and the police were after him. But somehow he reached there -- the master had asked him to come, and he did.

He was hoping that as he had made a great sacrifice, so he was going to be patted on the back by the master.

And do you know what Gurdjieff did? The moment Ouspensky arrived he said, "Put down your money and go back! Leave your money here and go back to London immediately!"

This was too much. He became antagonistic. He thought Gurdjieff had become insane. He was not insane. Had Ouspensky followed that too, although it was very illogical... But Ouspensky was a mathematician, a logician, a great intellectual of this century, one of the most profound mathematicians that we have ever produced. He could not believe all this nonsense. He traveled back, but he turned against, turned very sour -- saying that Gurdjieff had gone mad.

That was his rationalization to avoid seeing the truth, that Gurdjieff was trying to destroy his ego totally. That was the last hit on his head. If he had allowed it he would have become enlightened. He missed the point -- and from the last rung of the ladder he missed and fell down. Sometimes it happens: you can miss at the last moment.

Then for his whole life Ouspensky was talking against Gurdjieff; his name became unmentionable. Whatsoever he was teaching he had learned from Gurdjieff, but he was very secretive. He wouldn't allow his disciples to read Gurdjieff's books. He wouldn't allow his disciples to go and see Gurdjieff. Ouspensky's disciples could see Gurdjieff only after Ouspensky's death; and then they were surprised at how much they had missed. Ouspensky was only a professor, nothing else. Gurdjieff was an enlightened man.

But the problem is always how to drop the ego. Gurdjieff offended many people in the West for the simple reason that in the West there is no tradition, no background, no context for the psychology of egolessness.

That's why I have chosen to be here in the East. Even if people are coming from the West they have to come to ME, because only in the Eastern space is it possible to surrender the ego. The whole milieu is helpful; much effort is not needed.

And once the new commune is established it is going to become a very easy phenomenon, a child's play, to drop the ego. When you see ten thousand sannyasins moving without the ego, without a head, you will look foolish with a head. You will be in a hurry immediately so that your head can be cut off and you can also run without a head and do all kinds of things which were not possible before -- because of the head.

Gurdjieff is right: the false has to be dropped. The false has to cease for the real to be.

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,

PLEASE NEVER SPEAK AGAINST THE INDIAN MIND BECAUSE I GET SO ANGRY THAT I START THINKING HOW TO KILL YOU.

Deva Kumar, people who only think of killing never kill. You can go on thinking; thinkers can't do anything. And why do you get so much disturbed if I speak against the Indian mind?

I am against all kind of minds -- Indian, German, English, American -- and I speak against all kinds of minds, because mind is mind. There is not much difference, just different patterns, different ideas, but the basic structure is the same.

Mind means you are not conscious, and you can be unconscious in the Indian way or the Chinese way or the Japanese way; what does it matter? And if you cannot listen to words said against your mind you need not come here; this is not the right place for you.

I am not here to buttress your egos; I am here to destroy them. I have to speak against them. My whole work consists in destroying. First a great destruction is needed, only then your energies are released for some creative work.

And what really is an Indian mind? -- just an accident that you are born in India and you have been conditioned in a certain way. Somebody else is born in Japan and he is conditioned in some other way, but both are conditionings. And the function of the master is to uncondition you.

I can understand your anger, but that anger is not going to help you. Only understanding can help. Try to understand. Your anger will cloud your being more and more; you will become more and more incapable of seeing the truth.

Once upon a time there was a dog who was sitting by the side of the railway line when an express train roared by and cut off an inch of his tail.

Seeking revenge, the dog waited patiently for the train's next trip and tried to bite it as it went past. The train wheels ran right over the poor dog's neck slicing off its head.

The moral of this little story is simple: Never lose your head over a little piece of tail.

And this is only just the beginning, Deva Kumar; just a little piece of your tail has been cut. If you remain here long enough the tail will go, the head will go... and then only, for the first time, you will be reborn: reborn as consciousness, neither Indian nor French nor Italian.

But have you observed this? I speak against the Italian mind, I speak against the German mind, I speak against the Jewish mind, but nobody takes any objection to it. But if I speak against the Indian mind, immediately somebody is there to object. Indians have become very touchy; deep down they feel some kind of inferiority, and on the surface they pretend superiority. Particularly as far as religion and spirituality is concerned, they feel that they are the spiritual guides of the world, that God has chosen them as messengers, that they are the source of religion, that they are holier than everybody else in the world, that their country is divine and all other countries are evil, that they are saints, holy people, and all others are sinners, that they are spiritualists and all other people are materialists.

And because your stupid so-called mahatmas go on telling you these false ideas, when you hear me speaking anything against the Indian stupidity you become enraged. You cannot absorb it, you cannot remain open to it, because all your mahatmas go on buttressing your ego. It is because of this that the Indian masses are against me, for the simple reason that I cannot buttress their egos. I cannot say that "You are great spiritual

people" -- and that's what they want to hear. They don't have anything else. They don't have science, they don't have technology; they don't have money, they are poor; they don't have food, they are starving. The only thing that can give them a little hope, a little satisfaction, is spirituality.

So when I say, "You don't have even that," it hurts very much. Then nothing is left.

Remember it: Buddha had it, Krishna had it, Mahavira had it, Nanak had it; that does not mean that all Indians have it. Socrates had it, Pythagoras had it, Heraclitus had it, Plotinus had it; that does not mean that all the Greeks have it. Lao Tzu had it, Chuang Tzu had it, Lieh Tzu had it; that does not mean that all the Chinese have it. These rare people have happened everywhere; it is nothing special to you.

So stop bragging about it. This bragging keeps you unaware of your real situation; it has become very intoxicating to you. It keeps you in a kind of unconscious state.

A fellow called up Mr. Vanderwater on Park Avenue and said, "Mr. Vanderwater, did my friend Bill come to your house party uninvited last night?"

"Yes, he did."

"Ah, the curse of drink! What a man will do when he is drunk! I would like to ask you another question, Mr. Vanderwater. Did he start beating up some of your guests and finish by throwing some of your art works out on Park Avenue?"

"Yes, he did that."

"I am so sorry. One more question: was I also there?"

Ego is very intoxicating, remember it. It is more alcoholic than any alcohol can be. And it is pious; when it is pretending to be holy it is very pious -- and a pious poison is the purest poison. Avoid it. Come back to the earth. Be simple and see the reality as it is.

Two drunks were passing the door of the honeymoon suite at the Ritz Hotel when they stopped a moment to listen. Inside the room the bridegroom was saying to his bride, "Darling, you are so deliciously lovely. Your fabulous beauty should be captured for posterity by the greatest artists in the world."

The two drunks started banging on the door straight away, and the husband called out, "Who the devil is that?"

"Rubens and Rembrandt!" replied both.

Deva Kumar, come down to the earth! Killing me is not going to help much. If you feel like doing that, you can do it; that's perfectly okay. That is not going to help you.

What is going to help you is killing your ego. Put your energy into killing your ego. I am not interested in hurting anybody -- I am not against anybody. If sometimes I hammer on your heads, it is only out of love and compassion.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS TO LISTEN TO DISCOURSE WITH COMPLETE, UNQUESTIONING ACCEPTANCE A FORM OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS?

Ra, if you are unconscious you cannot be complete in anything. The unconscious mind cannot manage to be complete, to be entire, to be total in anything. One thing is certain: if you can manage to be entire, total, whole in anything, you are not unconscious. You may be anything else but not unconscious.

You ask me, "Is to listen to discourse with complete, unquestioning acceptance a form of unconsciousness?"

No, it cannot be a form of unconsciousness, because to bring conscious effort is a must if you want to be absolutely, totally accepting. You will have to bring deliberate effort; you will have to be very conscious about it.

Unconscious mind is always fragmentary; it is many, it is not one. It cannot be one; it is a crowd, it is a mob, many voices within you. When you are unconscious you are many people; you are not a single individual. You are not integrated. Any effort to be total integrates you. And this is just a device, to listen with totality.

But who told you that I am telling you to accept it? Totality is needed in listening, but I have not asked you to accept it. If you accept, you will not be total, because accepting means you are choosing, and choice is always partial: something has been not chosen and something has been chosen.

Acceptance means you are rejecting many things: rejecting your own ideas, rejecting that which goes against me. If I am saying one thing and you accept it, that means you are rejecting the opposite of it. It is a constant choice.

I am not asking you to accept what is being said; I am only asking you to listen totally. Then what is it? It is a totally different phenomenon, neither acceptance nor rejection -- just awareness. When you listen to the birds singing, do you accept, do you reject? Do you agree, do you disagree? You simply listen. The sound of a waterfall... what do you do? You simply listen. The wind passing through the pines... is agreement needed, disagreement? Nothing is needed; you simply listen. The music of the wind passing through the pines, the dance of the trees in the sun... you simply see, you listen. You are just a mirror. The mirror does not agree and does not disagree; it only reflects.

And that is required from the disciple -- not acceptance, remember. I am not creating a creed, I am not giving you a dogma. I don't want you to be believers, neither do I want you to be disbelievers. But what is the point of bringing belief and disbelief into it? Just listen to me silently, fully, so nothing is missed, that's all.

And the beauty of truth is that if you listen silently, totally, it penetrates to the very core of your being; it reaches to the heart. You need not agree; the seed of it falls into your consciousness and starts growing.

Just the opposite is the case with the untruth: if you listen totally, no untruth can penetrate in your being. That totality is enough to throw any kind of untruth out. In a total state of consciousness, in total silence, untruth cannot penetrate; only truth can penetrate.

So I am not interested in your agreement; I am only interested in your openness. And I am not telling you to be unquestioning, neither am I telling you to go on questioning. Both are futile activities while you are listening. If you listen with a thousand and one questions in the mind, how can you listen at all? Those questions create so much clamor, so much noise; they don't allow anything to enter in. And if you listen with an unquestioning mind, that means you are being gullible, you are being just unintelligent. So there is no need for questions and there is no need for unquestioning acceptance.

What is needed, what is required from the disciple, is a total silence; just being here with me in deep communion, bridged, so slowly slowly, your breath falls in tune with my breath, your heart starts beating in the same rhythm as my heart, so we lose separation, so these three thousand people here become almost one entity, so attuned, so deep in accord that they can't feel separate. A great melting, merger, happens. And those are the moments of truth, moments of great joy, moments of meditation.

The disciple is required to listen meditatively, because in those meditative moments windows open into the divine, doors open -- doors where you have never suspected that doors exist, where you have always thought there are walls. Suddenly doors open. Where you have never thought that there is any bridge possible, bridges suddenly appear. It is a mysterious phenomenon.

So those who are here as outsiders, they will only get the most superficial thing: my words. They will not be able to participate in my heart. They will not be able to drink out of my being. They will not be able to be part of my dance, of my song.

The fourth question:
BELOVED MASTER,
ARE YOU FALLIBLE?

Nityam, I am not the pope of the Vatican -- I am not infallible. I enjoy fallibility. And Buddha was not infallible and Jesus was not infallible. Only these stupid popes, they started claiming to be infallible, because they wanted to dominate, they wanted to exploit people. I have no desire to dominate anybody, I have no desire to exploit anybody. I have no desire at all.

Fallibility is natural; infallibility is unnatural. Even God has committed so many errors! The first error he committed was to create the universe; that was the beginning of the whole mess. But he did it and he continues to do it; he has not stopped. He created the Devil; if anybody is responsible for the Devil's existence, then God is responsible -- he created him. He created all kinds of sins in you, all kinds of instincts in you. If anybody is responsible, if anybody is punishable, then God is.

Whenever you meet God you can simply throw the whole load on him. You can simply say, "Why did you create me in this way? You should have created me a saint and you created me a sinner. It is up to you. If you are the creator, then it is your responsibility." If something is wrong in the painting, the painter is responsible not the painting. If something is wrong in the music, then the musician is responsible, not the musical instruments. If something goes wrong in the poetry, the poet is responsible.

God is very fallible, that's the beauty; otherwise, God would be too inhuman a concept. It is very human, and in the East we even have ideas of God which are far more human -- far more human than the Christian God. The Jewish God is far more human than the Christian God -- the Jewish God becomes angry. The Christian God is always love, always sweet, very saccharin. The Jewish God can be very bitter. The Old Testament says that God is very jealous and very angry. Be watchful. A very human God.

And if you come to the East you will be surprised. We have a beautiful story: God created the world because he was feeling lonely. Such a beautiful idea, God feeling lonely! So you need not feel too worried sometimes if you feel lonely -- it is divine. God was feeling very lonely, hence he created the world -- just to fill his loneliness. And when he created the first woman he fell in love with her. That is really going too far!

The people who wrote this story must have been really courageous people. That is falling in love with your own daughter. And of course, as women are supposed to do, the woman started the game of hide-and-seek. They love that game very much. They still love it, and they will always love it; that is part of feminine psychology. The man takes the initiative and the woman starts hiding; and the more she hides, the more the man becomes enchanted.

That's why Eastern women look more beautiful than Western women: for the simple reason that the Western woman has forgotten how to hide; she has become available. She is trying to be just like the man. The Eastern woman is not trying to be like the man; she tries to be absolutely feminine -- very shy, never takes any initiative. No Eastern woman ever will say to somebody, "I love you." She simply waits for you to say it to her.

So the woman started hiding. She became a cow just to hide from God. But how can you hide from God? He is omniscient. He looked around and he saw that the woman had become a cow, so he became the bull! Now that is going too far! And that's how the whole of creation happened: she became the mare and he became the horse, and so on, so forth. She went on hiding in new forms, and he went on finding her again and again. This seems to be something very close to the truth.

Even God is fallible. There is no need to be perfect.

These two words have to be understood as deeply as possible: one is perfection, the other is totality. My emphasis is never on perfection but on totality. The old religions have been teaching you for centuries to be perfect. You cannot be perfect; nobody can be perfect. Even God is not perfect -- because to be perfect means to be dead. If something is perfect then there is no evolution possible anymore. Perfection means the full point has come, the cul-de-sac; the road ends. Now you are stuck, nowhere to go. You cannot come back -- because how can a perfect person come back? That will be becoming imperfect again. You cannot go ahead because you have become perfect; there is nothing ahead. Existence is imperfect and will remain so.

I don't teach perfection. Perfection simply creates neurosis in people. Perfectionists are neurotics; they drive themselves crazy in trying to be perfect, because they are trying to do the impossible.

I teach totality; I teach wholeness, not perfection. Be total in whatsoever you are doing. Be total. If you are angry, then be totally angry. If you are in love, then be totally in love. If you are sad, then be totally sad. Don't be halfhearted in anything. That is a totally different approach towards life.

The perfectionist will say, "Never be angry, never be sad." The person who believes in totality will say, "Whatever is the case, just be total in it. Don't be halfhearted, don't hold yourself back. Go into it totally."

Then life becomes really a tremendous adventure. Then even sadness is beautiful when it is total. If you can cry and weep totally, then even crying and weeping has a beauty of its own. It will refresh you, it will rejuvenate you, it will unburden you. If you can be totally sad you will come to know something immensely beautiful in sadness which no joy can ever give to you, because sadness has depth; joy is shallow. A person who has not known total sadness has missed a great experience of life.

And total anger also has its own beauty. It will give you the experience of boiling at one hundred degrees, of intensity, of passion, of fire, of becoming aflame. And the miracle is: the person who can be totally angry can be totally compassionate too, because anger will teach him compassion. And sadness will teach him ways of being blissful.

My approach is not that of a perfectionist; I am utterly against it. It has destroyed humanity. It has driven the whole of humanity into a kind of madness. The whole idea has to be dropped. We have to learn a new language -- the language of wholeness. And I call a person holy when he is whole in whatsoever he does.

If you are doing cleaning, then do it totally. Then be utterly lost in it, and it will give you as much as a musician gets when he gets lost totally in his music or a dancer gets when he is utterly lost into his dance. Even cleaning the floor or cooking the food or taking the bath or going for a morning walk -- anything.

Let this be your foundation of life: that whatsoever you are doing at the moment, be utterly lost into it. Nothing of you should be left behind. Don't keep any reservations. And you will come out of it immensely benefited, enriched.

I am as fallible as anybody with only one difference: I am totally fallible!

Moses and Jesus were sitting together in a boat reminiscing.

"I really liked the one where you parted the water of the Red Sea, Moses," said Jesus.

"Ah, yes," said Moses, "but that was nothing compared to your walking on the water -- that beats all. Say, do you think you could do it again?"

"Sure," said Jesus, "but it has been a long time."

He stepped out of the boat. Everything was fine, so he started walking slowly. Soon he noticed the water was coming up over the top of his feet. He was a little concerned, but kept walking. Soon the water was up to his ankles. He turned back towards the boat, worried. By the time he reached the boat again the water was up to his knees. He scrambled back in, relieved but puzzled.

"I don't understand," Jesus said, "I know it has been a long time, but I really thought I had it down. I wonder what went wrong."

Moses was thoughtful too. Finally he said, "I bet I know what it is! The first time you did it you did not have holes in your feet!"

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS NOT LIFE AT ALL BEAUTIFUL ACCORDING TO GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA?

Punito, life as you know it is not beautiful. When Buddha says life is misery, he is talking about the life that YOU know; he is not talking about the life that HE knows. There is no point in talking about the life he knows -- you won't understand it. You have not even any idea of it; you cannot even imagine it.

You know a life which is lived through the mind; he knows a life which is lived without the mind. You know a life which is nothing but nonessential, superfluous, peripheral; he knows a life which is lived from the very center of his being. He knows a life which is not temporal but eternal; you know only the life which is momentary.

He goes on saying that your life is misery -- misery and nothing else -- for the simple reason that it is so momentary. It cannot satisfy you, it cannot give you contentment. It cannot quench your thirst; on the contrary, it makes your thirst more and more persistent. It makes you more and more discontented.

The Irish paratrooper jumped from a plane and then discovered that he had forgotten his parachute. As he was falling through the air he looked around at the scenery and said to himself, "This would be very pleasant if it would only last!"

But this is our situation: without parachutes, falling towards the earth. Of course, it is beautiful scenery: clouds with sunrays and all greenery underneath you and a very silent atmosphere, no noise and unpolluted air. Everything is beautiful, but the problem is, it cannot last. Within moments all will be gone; within moments you will be shattered on the earth.

Hence Buddha goes on reminding you about death: death is there by the corner. We try to make our life to last forever. We try in every possible way to avoid death, but death is unavoidable. We try to befool ourselves that we are exceptions, but nobody is an exception. Death comes inevitably.

The only thing inevitable in life is death. But we go on creating illusions around ourselves that this is not going to happen -- not at least today. And who takes care about tomorrow? "We will see about tomorrow when it comes. Let us enjoy this moment -- eat, drink, be merry."

Buddha says that this "Eat, drink, be merry" philosophy is sheer unconsciousness. And this unconscious state can create more and more misery for you. Unconsciousness is misery, so if your life is unconscious it IS misery.

Consciousness is bliss. If your life is consciousness then it is bliss, but then it becomes a totally different kind of life. It becomes the life of the awakened one, of the enlightened one.

Shanahan staggered out of the saloon. He wandered up the street and by mistake went into a house where a wake was being held. He spotted the refreshments and helped himself.

The wake lasted all through the night and well into the next day. Shanahan made himself useful by serving as bartender and always had one with the guy who was drinking.

At the end of the second day the party thinned out quite a bit, until at last Shanahan was alone with the widow. She approached him for the first time. "You must have been a great friend of O'Leary to stay on like this," she said sadly, "so I feel I can ask your advice. Do you think we should take poor O'Leary to a funeral home or should we hold the services here?"

Shanahan took a final swig of gin and said, "Missus, why don't we just stuff him and keep the party going?"

Yes, everybody would like that, tries that, but it is not possible. The party cannot go on and on and on; it is bound to come to an end.

Buddha simply wants you to be reminded again and again that when death is there, what kind of life are you living? It can't be much of a life. There is another life which is beyond death, which is deathlessness, and it is your birthright to attain to it. But the false has to be dropped first. The false has to be seen as false and then the quest starts for the real. The moment you recognize your life as nothing but a slow kind of death you will start looking for the real life.

And the real life is available and not very far away; it is available inside you, within you. Whatsoever you do on the outside is to be taken away by death. Do something for your inner transformation, because that is the only treasure which cannot be taken away by death.

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,

CAN MAN LIVE IN THIS CUNNING WORLD WITHOUT BEING CUNNING HIMSELF?

Anahato, the world is cunning because you are cunning, not vice versa. It is not that you are cunning because the world is cunning. The world is nothing but you; you are the world.

You project your world. And even though the world is cunning, what are you going to gain by being cunning? Even though the world is cunning, what are you going to lose by being innocent, simple?

Nothing of real value can be lost by being simple. In fact, by being simple and innocent the real is attained. Yes, by cunningness you can attain to power, to money, to prestige, but what is the point of attaining all that? Death is bound to take everything away from you. And can't you see the people who are powerful? Are they happy? Do you see any

joy in their lives? Can't you observe the rich people? They live a dog's life, in utter misery!

Alexander the Great said to Diogenes, "If I am going to be born again I would not like to be Alexander again. I would like to be Diogenes."

Diogenes was a naked mystic, had nothing, not even a begging bowl. Buddha at least had a begging bowl with him; Diogenes was absolutely without any possessions.

He used to have a begging bowl, but one day he saw a dog drinking water and he meditated over it, and he thought, "If a dog can manage without a begging bowl, can't I manage without a begging bowl?" He threw the begging bowl into the river and he became very friendly with the dog. He used to tell people, "He is one of my teachers. He has given me one of the most important lessons of my life. Since I have thrown the begging bowl in the river I feel such freedom; otherwise, even in the night I used to remain afraid that somebody may steal my begging bowl. I used at least two, three times in the night to look around to see whether the begging bowl was still there or not. Since I have thrown it away, I have no worry left in the world."

Alexander heard about the joy of Diogenes and he came to see him, and he was tremendously impressed. He had never seen such a man! And to Diogenes he said, "Next time, if God is going to send me again to the world, I will come as Diogenes."

Diogenes laughed. He looked at his dog -- his friend and teacher -- and said to the dog, "Listen to what this man is saying. If he really wants to be Diogenes, who is preventing him? He can be Diogenes just this very moment!" It is said that he laughed and the dog smiled too. Must have been some ancient Snoopy!

Alexander said, "What is the matter? Why are you laughing and why is your dog smiling?"

Diogenes said, "What else can we do? You are talking such nonsense! If you want to be Diogenes, forget all about your world conquest and be here! I live on this bank of the river, and it is a big bank. We both can live here, there is no problem. Why wait for the next life? And why remain miserable meanwhile?"

Alexander said, "I cannot answer it. I understand -- you are right -- but I have my own investments, my own ideas to fulfill first. I have to conquer the world! Once I have conquered it, I can renounce it but not before that."

Diogenes said, "You will never conquer it, because nobody can conquer the whole world. And even if you conquer it you will never be able to renounce it, because then you will say, 'I have put so much energy into it and I have wasted my whole life. Why should I renounce it?'"

Alexander died in misery; Diogenes died in bliss. By coincidence, both died on the same day, and when they were crossing the river that separates this world from the other, Alexander was ahead, Diogenes was just a few feet behind. Alexander looked, felt very ashamed because he was naked. Diogenes was not ashamed at all because he had been naked his whole life. Just to hide his shame Alexander laughed -- a shallow laughter -- and said to Diogenes, "It is strange that an emperor and a beggar are meeting on the

boundary line of these two worlds. It may not have happened before, it may not happen again."

Diogenes had a real laughter -- a belly laughter. He said, "You are right -- an emperor and a beggar meeting on this boundary is a rare phenomenon -- but about one thing you are wrong. You don't know who is the emperor and who is the beggar. The emperor is behind and the beggar is ahead!"

And Diogenes was right.

Buddha insists that by being cunning you can accumulate wealth -- but what is the point of it if it only brings misery, anxiety, anguish? By being innocent you may be cheated, you may be taken advantage of, but what is there to lose?

Anahato, you ask me, "Can man live in this cunning world without being cunning?"

Don't call the world cunning, because that is just a cover-up. You want to be cunning and you cover it up with an explanation, with the rationalization that "The world is cunning, that's why I have to be cunning." It is your world: you make it, you create it.

And remember, everybody who is part of the world thinks in the same way. All the constituents of the world think in the same way: "The world is cunning, that's why I have to be cunning." Who is creating the world? We are the world and we are creating it. But we want to be cunning and we don't want to accept the fact, the ugly fact, that we want to be cunning; hence we call the whole world cunning.

Drop such explanations. And of course, others will also support your explanation because they are in the same boat. So your explanation will look almost like a valid truth. It is not.

Times in the fifties were not easy for Ma and Pa in the rural area of West Texas, as a ten-year drought took no mercy on small farmers. Still, Pa was determined to send Junior off to the prestigious University of Texas, if only for one semester, to boast of his son's academic achievements to the neighbors. So money was saved for several years until one thousand dollars were accumulated.

As Junior boarded the bus ready for departure, Pa sternly announced, "Junior, your Ma and I have sacrificed a lot to send you to the university, and if you really watch yourself you can make it through the year with this money." And he handed the boy an envelope containing the one thousand dollars.

Junior, however, arrived at the university with notions other than that of earning a degree. He enjoyed nights and days of fun and games, recklessly spending Pa's money until one month later all was spent.

In spite of his desperate situation, Junior wrote a letter, saying, "Pa, there are many smart teachers here and one of my professors says he can teach old Blue, our hound dog, to talk... for only five hundred dollars."

When Pa read the letter he became excited and told Ma, "This may be our lucky day at last. If the boy is right, we can put that useless hound dog in the circus, become rich, and retire for life!"

So Pa mortgaged the farm and all the equipment, borrowed five hundred dollars from the bank, and sent it along with Old Blue on the bus. When the dog arrived with the money, Junior, not wanting to be bothered with the animal, killed it and forgot about it. As he continued his carefree life-style for a few more weeks, the money again ran out.

By now, however, Junior had learned the trick, so he again wrote to his Pa, "Gee, Pa, Old Blue had us all fooled. He is smarter than we thought. The professor has already taught him to speak English, and now he says that this dog is so intelligent that for only five hundred dollars more he could be taught two more languages, to sing and to dance."

After reading the letter, Pa and Ma were overtaken by visions of great wealth and fame. They immediately hocked all of their belongings, borrowed from all of their friends, and finally raised another five hundred dollars to send to Junior. This time the money lasted until the Thanksgiving break, at which time Junior and Blue were both expected home.

Excited, Pa went to meet Junior at the bus station, but to his surprise, Junior was without the new superstar hound dog. Running up to him he cried, "Hi, Junior! Where is old Blue?"

Junior pulled Pa aside and with a serious look explained, "Pa, the damndest thing happened on the way here. Old Blue was sitting here beside me talking up a storm, when suddenly he said, 'Junior, I got to shit real bad!' And I said, 'Blue, just hold back till we get to the next town. I got to shave, also, and we have a ten-minute layover. We can use the restroom there.'

"So, Pa, Old Blue was sitting on the crapper and I was shaving with that straight-edged razor you gave me last Christmas, when Blue said, 'Say, I wonder if your Pa is still fucking that old cross-eyed mare at the farm?' And Pa, I got so damn mad I just cut that dog's head off!"

Pa bolted forward, very excited, and said, "Are you sure you killed that sonofabitch, son?"

This goes on and on. Somebody has to come out of it. If you are waiting for the whole world to become innocent, and then you will become innocent, then it is not going to happen ever. Forget about the world. You be innocent and lose anything that is bound to be lost by dropping cunningness. And you will not be a loser, remember.

Innocence will give you the real treasure, the kingdom of God. Blessed are the innocent, for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #12

Chapter title: Rivers don't exist

1 January 1980 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

HOW CAN YOU, AS A MAN, TALK ABOUT THE FEMININE PSYCHE? HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT GOD IS A HE?

Gudrun Hofmann, I am not talking as a man, I am not talking as a woman. I am not talking as a mind at all. The mind is used, but I am talking as consciousness, as awareness. And awareness is neither he nor she, awareness is neither man nor woman. Your body has that division and your mind too, because your mind is your inner part of the body and your body is the outer part of your mind. Your body and mind are not separate; they are one entity. In fact, to say body and mind is not right; 'and' should not be used. You are bodymind -- not even a hyphen between the two.

Hence, with the body, with the mind, 'masculine', 'feminine' -- these words are relevant, meaningful. But there is something beyond them both; there is something transcendental. That is your real core, your being. That being consists only of awareness, of witnessing, of watchfulness. It is pure consciousness.

I am not talking here as a man; otherwise it is impossible to talk about the woman. I am talking as awareness. I have lived in the feminine body many times and I have lived in the masculine body many times, and I have witnessed all. I have seen all the houses, I have seen all the garments. What I am saying to you is the conclusion of many many lives; it has not to do with only this life. This life is only a culmination of a long long pilgrimage.

So don't listen to me as a man or a woman; otherwise you will not be listening to me. Listen to me as awareness.

Secondly, you say, "How do you know that God is a he?"

God is neither he nor she. God simply means the totality of consciousness in existence. God simply means life eternal. Life expresses in two ways, man and woman. God is the unmanifest source of life; you cannot call him "he," you cannot call him "she." But because for centuries the word 'he' has been used, I go on using it. You have to remember that I don't mean it.

If you really want to go deep into the phenomenon of God, then God does not exist at all -- as a person. God is only a presence. In other words, there is no God but only godliness: a quality that pervades, permeates, the whole of existence; that is everywhere, in every leaf, in every dewdrop. It is a quality. Once you start thinking of

God as a quality, your whole outlook on life, on religion, on love, will be totally different.

Existence consists not of nouns but of verbs. Nouns are inventions of man and so are pronouns. Verbs are real. When you say "a river" what do you mean? Have you ever seen a river as a noun? The river is always flowing, it is always a movement. It is never static, it is dynamic. How can you make it a static noun? The word 'river' seems to be static.

If you ask the buddhas, the awakened ones, they will say, "Rivers don't exist." But you see the river flowing by! The flow is there, a kind of rivering is there, but no river. You see so many trees, but in fact what exists is a kind of treeing, not trees, because every tree is changing every moment. The time that you will take in using the word 'tree', the tree is no more the same. A few old leaves have fallen, a few new leaves have started coming out, a flower has opened up, a bud is getting ready to open. There is great activity; the tree is constantly in momentum.

The whole existence consists of verbs, and God is nothing but the totality of all these verbs. God is not a quantity but a quality, not a person but a presence. God is an experience, not an object of experience but experience itself. God is subjectivity. And how can you call subjectivity "he" or "she"?

I know why the question has arisen. All over the world, particularly in the West, the liberated woman is asking, "Why call God 'he'?" And she is right, in a way. Why make God identified with the masculine mind? It is a kind of male chauvinistic approach. For centuries, the male has dominated everything, hence he has called God "he." And the rebellion against it is absolutely right.

But to start calling God "she" will not put things right; it will be moving to the other extreme. That will be another kind of chauvinism, it won't change anything. Simply the wrong that man was doing will be done by woman; both are wrong. God is neither.

Hence in the East, where for ten thousand years hundreds of people have arrived to the ultimate pinnacle of experiencing godliness, we don't call God "he" or "she," we call him "it." That is far more beautiful because it takes God beyond he and she. But something has to be called, and whatsoever words are used are going to be inadequate -- he, she, it -- because the word 'it' has also its own dangers. 'It' seems to be dead because we use it for things, and God is not a thing either. 'It' seems to be too neutral, and God is not neutral; he is tremendously committed, involved. 'It' seems to be lifeless, and God is life itself, love itself. Any word will have its own limitations.

So you can use any word -- he, she, it -- but remember, all words are limited and God is unlimited. If you use these words mindfully, then there is no danger. The basic remembrance is that God is a presence, otherwise many foolish questions arise.

If you call him "he" or "she," then the question arises, "Where does he live? Where is he?" And then the question seems to be very relevant because you have reduced him to a person; then where is his dwelling?

"Where is the dwelling of God?"

This was the question with which the rabbi of Kotzk surprised a number of learned men who happened to be visiting him.

They laughed at him, "What a thing to ask! Is not the whole world full of His glory?"

Then he answered his own question: "God dwells wherever man lets him in."

There is no dwelling outside somewhere. Whenever you allow yourself, you open up to existence, whenever you allow the wind and the rain and the sun to reach to your innermost core, suddenly there is God, godliness. Suddenly you are overwhelmed by something bigger than you, by something which is oceanic. You start disappearing into it like a dewdrop.

The moment we say, "God is a person," then we start praying, praising. That is a kind of bribery. That is a kind of buttressing his ego. If God is a person he must have an ego. Then praise him and he will be happy with you, and you will be rewarded either here or hereafter. The moment we think of God as a person we start searching for him not IN the world but somewhere far away in heaven, and we miss the whole point. God is now-here, God is nowhere else.

There is a tale that a man inspired by God once went out from the creaturely realms into the vast waste. There he wandered till he came to the Gates of Mystery. He knocked. From within came the cry, "What do you want here?"

He said, "I have proclaimed your praise in the ears of mortals, but they are deaf to me, so I come to you that you yourself may hear me and reply."

"Turn back!" came the cry from within. "Here is no ear for you. I have sunk my hearing in the deafness of mortals."

God is in the stones, God is in the waters, God is in the animals, God is in the birds, God is in people, in sinners, in saints. God is equivalent to isness. Now, is isness he or she? The question will be utterly meaningless.

So don't be worried whether God is he or she. Rather, look within yourself and find the place where he and she both disappear. And that will be the beginning of your understanding of reality, of what it is.

This thing cannot be decided by argumentation. It is not a metaphysical question, it is something existential. If you can find something within yourself which is neither masculine nor feminine, then you will know that there is something in existence which is neither, which is beyond both. And that beyondness is God.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

I AM SIXTY YEARS OLD, BUT YET THE SAME DESIRES PERSIST. WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH ME?

Narayandas, growing old is not growing up. Time by itself does not bring wisdom. Yes, it brings many experiences, but experiences by themselves cannot deliver wisdom to you.

Wisdom is a totally different phenomenon. It does not happen through experiences of the outside world. It happens when you become centered within your being, when you become rooted in your being, when you become integrated, when you are no more a crowd and you become a crystallized soul.

Desires can't disappear just because you have become sixty years old. You can be six hundred years old and desires will be there, in fact more, because they will be also six hundred years old. Your desires are sixty years old; they have gone deep in you in sixty years.

People have this idea that when you are young you suffer from desires, when you are old you go beyond them. Just by being old? That is ridiculous! You don't go beyond desires just by being old. You simply become a hypocrite; you start pretending that you have gone beyond desires. Maybe you can't go into desires because there is no energy available, but the mind thinks more and more. Because you can't do anything, your whole energy becomes cerebral. The young person can do something about his desires; you cannot do, so you only think.

And as death starts coming closer and closer, a great fear arises: so many desires are there which are unfulfilled. You become afraid: if death comes and takes you away.... It is bound to happen sooner or later, and the possibility is of sooner than later. All those desires start taking possession of you. "Fulfill us," they say. "Time is short. Do something." You start going crazy. You continuously become obsessed.

A moralist addressing an audience thundered, "Remember, my friends, when temptation comes your way you must resist it -- resist it!"

"I would like to," said one of the old men, "but I am always afraid it may never come again."

That fear is natural. Death may come before the temptation comes again. Who knows? -
- it may not come again.

The old man becomes more and more afraid of losing his desires.

It is not an accident that Buddha introduced a new idea into the world of sannyas. He started initiating young people into sannyas. In India, the tradition was that you should take sannyas only when you are very old, after seventy-five years -- the fourth stage, when you have done everything and only death is left. Then take sannyas. That was the idea and it was a very comfortable idea, a very cozy idea.

In the first place, very few people are going to live beyond seventy-five, particularly in those days and in India. Even today very few people will live beyond seventy-five, so there is no fear of living after seventy-five and becoming a sannyasin. And if by chance you happen to live after seventy-five, all your energies will be already wasted, gone down the drain. Whether you take sannyas or not you will be a sannyasin, so why not take it?

People after seventy-five years used to take the vow of celibacy. You see the foolishness of it!

A man used to come to Ramakrishna each religious festival and he would give a big feast. He was a nonvegetarian, and many animals would be cut up for the feast. He was very rich. Then suddenly all those feasts stopped. There was one great festival and the feast was not happening, and the man had come to see Ramakrishna.

Ramakrishna asked, "What happened? Why are you not celebrating this feast? Have you become irreligious or something? Are you no more interested in your religion?"

He said, "That is not the point. My teeth have fallen out. And when I cannot eat, why should I bother?"

The feast was not for any religious reasons; the feast was simply because he wanted to enjoy. Religion was just an excuse.

People can take the oath of celibacy after seventy-five, so they are saving both the worlds. They have enjoyed this world and now they are creating a bank balance in the other. They are becoming virtuous so cheaply that it is all false.

Buddha introduced the idea that young people should become sannyasins. Then it is something significant. When a young person goes beyond sex, when a young person goes beyond desires, when a young person goes beyond greed, ambition, the longing to be powerful, the ambition to be famous, then it is something tremendously meaningful, significant.

Remember one thing: when you are young you have energies. Those energies can take you to hell and those same energies can take you to heaven. Energies are neutral; it depends on you how you use them.

So the first thing: just by becoming an old person does not mean that you have become wise. Wisdom needs meditation not worldly experience. Worldly experience makes you more cunning; hence it is very difficult to find an old man who is not cunning. You can find a young man who is not cunning; you can find many children. In fact, almost all the children are innocent, they are not cunning. They have not known anything of the world. They have not learned tricks, strategies, politics, diplomacy. They are simply whatsoever they are -- they are authentic. As they grow more and more, as they become acquainted with the world and all the hypocrisy around, naturally they start becoming part of the world. They start learning the same kind of strategies.

By the time a person becomes old he becomes very cunning -- not wise, not intelligent. Remember: if you were stupid when you were a child you will be more stupid when you are old. You will have a long, long-rooted stupidity in you with great foliage and flowers and fruits. Whatsoever you have will grow with your age. If you meditate then meditation will grow. But just by becoming old you cannot be wise.

The ex-captain's wife paid a visit to a doctor who had achieved fame in the successful treatment of impotency. His method consisted of convincing the male patient he had the virility of a horse. The doctor consented to treat the woman's husband.

A few weeks later the doctor met the woman on the street, "Have you noticed the change you wanted in your husband?" he asked.

"No," replied the woman, "but he just won the Derby!"

Now, a stupid old man...! If you tell him that "You are a horse," you can't expect anything else! He will become a horse; he will become hypnotized with the idea.

Intelligence is a totally different phenomenon; intelligence cannot be hypnotized. An intelligent person cannot be Hindu, cannot be Mohammedan, cannot be Christian -- impossible, because these are all tricks, hypnotic tricks. People are being hypnotized from their very childhood that "You are a Hindu." A constant repetition that "You are a Hindu" makes you a Hindu. It is nothing else but a conditioning. A wise man becomes unconditioned.

So the first thing I will suggest to you, Narayandas: become unconditioned. Whatever your sixty years' life has conditioned you for, drop it. That's what your mind is: the accumulated conditionings. Drop them!

And the beginning of meditation is when you start dropping your conditionings. A moment comes when you become unconditioned again, like a child. Then your intelligence explodes. And an intelligent person cannot desire, that is impossible, because desiring only brings misery, frustration. Desiring only creates anxiety, anguish; it never brings any fulfillment, never any contentment.

An intelligent person cannot go on desiring. His very intelligence is enough and desiring disappears -- not that he renounces, remember. Only fools renounce.

Intelligent people don't renounce the world. They live in the world, but they live intelligently, without desiring. Whatever comes on their way they enjoy, but they don't hanker for anything. Their sleep remains undisturbed; they don't dream for anything. They don't project for the future, they live in the present.

Yes, Narayandas, you are becoming old, but don't hope that just by becoming old you will become wise enough and desires will disappear on their own accord.

She lay in bed, blissfully happy on this, the first morning of her long-dreamed-of honeymoon.

"Darling," she called as she heard him pattering around in the bathroom, "did you brush your teeth yet?"

"Yes," he cooed, "and while I was at it, I brushed yours too."

Yes, old you can become, but just by becoming old nothing is achieved.

Real growth happens inwards. It is a transformation of your interiority. And now that you are here, forget those sixty years and all the nightmares that you must have passed through those sixty years. Start your life afresh from the very beginning again.

Jesus says: Unless you are born again you will not be able to enter into my kingdom of God. And he is absolutely right. You need a new birth; you have to be twice-born. And to be with a master is a rebirth. It is initiation into the inner world.

Sixty years you have wasted on the outside, accumulating money, accumulating this and that, trying to be respectable, famous, powerful. Now get out of all those stupid games -- no more games! Now let there be a single-pointed search for the truth: the truth that you are, the truth that resides in you, the truth that you are made of, the truth of your consciousness.

My whole effort here is to help you towards self-knowledge. It does not need time; it needs intensity, sincerity. It needs commitment. It needs a tremendous effort to go in, because those sixty years you have created so many things on the outside which will hinder you from going in. They have become walls. You have become unbridged to your own self.

You ask me, "I am sixty years old, but yet the same desires persist."

Good that you have become aware of it, that the same desires are still there. There are many people who are not aware; they have repressed their desires so deeply that even they themselves have become unaware of them. Good that you are aware. The first ray of intelligence... that you are aware that the same desires persist.

And you ask, "What is the matter with me?"

Nothing is the matter with you; it is the same with everybody. One phase of your life is over. Now it is time to grow into another dimension. Sixty years is enough time to know about the world and all that it offers -- or at least promises to offer. You have known it, and it is only by knowing it that one becomes aware of the deceptiveness of it all. You have seen the illusion -- now turn in. Now become a sannyasin! You have been a worldly man up to now. And by a worldly man I simply mean one who is absolutely unaware of himself and is concerned about trivia -- money, power, prestige.

And I call the person a sannyasin who becomes deeply interested in his own life's source, who starts asking, "Who am I?" and who starts moving towards his center. From the circumference he changes his abode towards the center.

The day you reach to your center is the day of great blessings, the day of great enlightenment. That day you transcend life and death. That day you transcend man/woman. That day you transcend all dualities. That day, for the first time, you will taste what bliss is.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY ARE YOU AGAINST FOLLOWING SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE SECRETS OF LIFE? WHAT IS THE NEED TO DISCOVER THEM ONESELF ON ONE'S OWN?

Sudhakar, truth cannot be transferred. That is one of the intrinsic qualities of truth: nobody can give it to you. Yes, words can be given to you, theories can be given to you, theologies can be given to you, but not truth. Following somebody you will be following his words. Following somebody you will become a Jaina, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, but you will never become your own self.

And Buddha is a unique individual just as you are. What did he do? Try to understand it; that may be helpful in your journey. But don't follow him literally; otherwise that will make you only phony, that will make you only pseudo. Existence never repeats anybody. Jesus comes only once, Buddha comes only once. There has never been a person like Buddha before and will never be again, for the simple reason that existence never repeats.

You are a totally new manifestation of God. It has never been before so there has never been a person exactly like you. So whomsoever you follow, you will be following somebody who is not like you and you will get into trouble. You can cultivate a certain character around you, you can act, but by acting you are not going to become a buddha. That's what the Buddhist monks have been doing for twenty-five centuries -- acting, performing, literally following. The way Buddha walks they will walk, the way Buddha eats they will eat, the way Buddha sits they will sit. You can do all these things and it is possible you may do them even better than Buddha, because Buddha was not imitating anybody else; he was spontaneous. When a person is spontaneous he has no time to rehearse it; you will have enough time to rehearse. You may even defeat Buddha in a competition.

It actually happened once:

Friends of Charlie Chaplin were celebrating one of his birthdays and they found a beautiful way to celebrate it. They advertised in the newspapers all over England that there will be a competition and whosoever can imitate Charlie Chaplin will be rewarded. There were three big awards.

Many people participated. At least a hundred were chosen from different cities and they all gathered in London for the final selection of the three winners.

Charlie Chaplin had an idea. He entered in the competition from a different town hoping that he was going to win the first prize -- there was no question about it. But he was wrong; he got the second prize! People came to know only later on that he was also a participant. He was so surprised that somebody managed better than himself. Naturally, the other had practiced it for a long time. Charlie Chaplin was just there being himself; there was no need to practice. He IS Charlie Chaplin, so why practice? What is there to practice? But the other was more polished, more practiced. He walked better than Charlie Chaplin, he talked better than Charlie Chaplin! He outdid him.

This is possible. Some Christian monk may defeat Jesus, some Buddhist monk may defeat Buddha. But still, Buddha is Buddha and you will be only an imitator. Still, Charlie Chaplin is Charlie Chaplin and the man who was acting even in a better way is just acting; deep down he is himself.

You can never be somebody else. Remember it as one of the most fundamental laws. AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal law: you can never be like somebody else. That does not mean you should not learn. Learn, but don't follow. Absorb, but go on your own way. Learn from all the enlightened ones. Sit at their feet, absorb their presence, but go on your own way.

Buddha himself said as his last statement on the earth: Be a light unto yourself.

A squirrel on the ground was watching two other squirrels in a tree.

One of them fell to the ground, bounced a couple of times, looked back up in the tree and said, "That making love in the tree is for the birds."

That's why I say don't follow. Don't try to make love in the tree -- that is for the birds! -- otherwise you will be in the hospital.

A little boy and girl squirrel were chattering and playing around when suddenly a fox appeared. The girl squirrel dashed up a tree but the boy squirrel stayed on the ground.

"That's strange," said the fox. "Usually squirrels are afraid of me and run up the nearest tree."

"Listen," said the boy squirrel. "Did you ever try to climb a tree after playing with a girl for twenty minutes?"

Just look to your own situation! Buddha has a different space, different context, a different world. You cannot follow him -- literally you cannot follow him. Metaphorically you can understand him and you can be tremendously benefited by him.

You ask me, Sudhakar, "Why are you against following someone who knows the secrets of life?"

How do you know that someone knows the secrets of life? That is just a belief. Unless YOU know the secrets of life, you will never know that someone else knows them. And following somebody just out of belief you may be getting into trouble. He may not know at all. He may be a convincing talker; he may be arguing better than you can argue. He can silence you in argument; that does not mean that he knows. He may be more articulate than you are, he may have studied the scriptures. Even the Devil can quote the scriptures! How do you know that he knows the secrets of life? You can know only if you also know.

You can understand Buddha really only when you are also a buddha. You can understand Christ only when you are also a christ -- not by following them but by becoming awakened on your own accord.

Hence I say there is the need to discover the truth by yourself. The inner truth is different from the outer truth. The outer truth can be discovered by one person and then the whole world possesses it. For example, the theory of relativity was discovered by Albert Einstein. Now everybody else need not discover it again and again; that will be just wasting time. He took years to discover it; now if you are intelligent you can understand it within days. If you are really intelligent, then within hours. There is no need to waste years in discovering it again and again.

Somebody discovered -- Newton discovered -- the law of gravitation. Now you need not go and sit in a garden and wait for the apple to fall and then brood over it and then come to the conclusion that there must be a certain magnetic force in the earth which

pulls things downwards. Now, if everybody has to do that there are not so many gardens and there are not so many apple trees, and apples may not oblige you. You may go on sitting under the tree for hours, days, months; they may not fall.

And do you know, even before Newton they used to fall and thousands of people must have watched them falling, but nobody discovered the law of gravitation. So there is no certainty that even if they oblige you and fall in the right time that you will discover the law of gravitation. There is no need -- Newton has done it for you, for all, forever.

This is the quality of the outer, objective truth: once discovered it becomes universal.

The inner truth has a totally different quality: it always remains individual, it never becomes universal.

Buddha discovers it but he cannot convey it; he cannot adequately express it, he cannot make it universal. It remains essentially individual. And whatsoever he does is just inadequate; it never fulfills the great need of the masses -- that they need not discover it anymore. Buddha has discovered it, Jesus has discovered it; now you can simply follow it.

This is the beauty of the inner truth, that you have to discover it again and again afresh. And the very discovery is such a bliss that it is good that one person has not finished it forever; otherwise there would have been no spiritual quest left. Buddha is not the first; there had been other awakened people before him. One enlightened person would have done it and then in every primary school you could teach it to everybody. The whole joy of discovering it would have been lost. It is beautiful that the subjective truth remains individual. Thousands of times it has been discovered, but it has not become universal yet and it will never become universal; it will remain individual. You will have to seek and search it on your own.

And when you find it you will be surprised: it is the same truth that was found by Buddha, it is the same truth that was found by Mahavira, the same truth that was found by Mohammed or Moses; it is not a different truth. But this is the quality of the inner world -- that you have to go there all alone. Nobody can accompany you and nobody can give you ready-made maps.

It is a very mysterious world inside; the outside world is not so mysterious, maps are possible. But the inner world remains a secret, a hidden secret. Even when you have known it and you would like to share it you cannot. All that you can share is your desire to share, that's all -- your deep compassion to share, your love for others. But the truth remains as unexpressed as before.

Then why do masters speak at all? They speak not to share the truth -- they know perfectly well it cannot be shared. They speak to make your thirst for truth aflame. They speak to make you more thirsty, more hungry. They speak to create a tremendous longing in you to go inwards. Their presence, their vibe, their song, their dance, all indicate towards one thing: go in.

The fourth question:

Question 4

Beloved Master,

I DON'T WANT TO DIE AND YET I AM HERE WITH YOU. AM I CRAZY?

Prem Svarupo, sane people don't come here, because the so-called sane people are the most insane in the world. The sane people are those who crucified Jesus. The sane people are those who poisoned Socrates. The sane people are those who made many efforts to kill Buddha. The sane people are in politics; they don't come to the enlightened ones, to the awakened ones. Only crazy people can come -- but these crazy people, in the real sense, are the sanest.

It is a paradox. The people who followed Jesus must have been crazy -- they were crazy. Everybody was saying that they were crazy. The people who followed Buddha must have been crazy. Even Buddha's father was saying to people, "You are crazy! He is crazy and you are crazy! He has renounced his kingdom -- he is a fool. And now so many people are renouncing and going with him. What can you find in the jungles? Sitting under trees with closed eyes, what can you find? If you want to do something, do it in the world. If you want to find something, find it in the world."

When Buddha came back to his home after his enlightenment, his father was very angry and he said, "You ARE crazy, but I can forgive you because I have the heart of the father."

Buddha laughed and he said, "First say everything that you wanted to tell me all these twelve years I have not been here in the house. You must have accumulated much anger -- you first cathart! When you have thrown all the garbage out, then there is a possibility to communicate something to you."

The father was shocked. What is he saying? It was not expected at all! For a moment there was silence. And Buddha said, "Just look at me. I am not the same person who had gone. I am a totally different person because my inner being has changed. I am reborn. I am not your son anymore. I am not this body and I am not this mind either. I have attained to the beyond.

"So first throw out all your anger so that you can see me, so that your eyes are clear enough to recognize the change that has happened in me -- a radical change. The person that had gone has died, and the person that has come today is a totally different person -- of course in the same continuum. Hence I look the same way from the outside only; from the inside I am not the same at all."

Svarupo, you ARE crazy! All of my sannyasins are crazy. Only crazy people can be religious -- crazy in the eyes of the world but not crazy in the eyes of the awakened ones, because in the eyes of the awakened ones the world is insane. The world is a big madhouse; you have escaped from it. You are learning how to be sane, how to be saner. You ask me, "I don't want to die, and yet I am here with you."

This happens to everybody. When you come here you start learning a new language, the language of transformation. You start seeing a new truth: that if the ego dies, then you will be really born. If the ego is dropped, then God can enter in you. The ego is the barrier.

When you come here for the first time, you come for improvement, for growth -- not to die. But slowly slowly, you start understanding that growth is possible only if first you allow a certain death: the death of the ego.

Then fear grips you and a contradiction arises in you, a double bind. The intelligent part of you starts saying, "Die -- don't waste time." And the unintelligent part -- your past -- says, "What are you doing? Are you crazy? Who knows what will happen after death? If you drop your personality and your ego, how will you keep yourself together? You may start falling apart! How will you control yourself?" You are afraid of so many things that can happen to you if the control is lost.

Hence you start doing a very contradictory work: on one hand you dismantle yourself, and on the other hand you put yourself together again. This can continue for years.

The fashionably dressed girl these days wears pants to make her look like a boy, and see-through blouses just to prove that she is not.

This is a double bind! And this is bound to happen.

Sooner or later, one day, Svarupo, you will have to take a decisive step. You will have to come out of this double bind, because this is wasting time, energy, opportunity. Who knows? I may not be here tomorrow -- or the next moment. This opportunity may be lost. Right now the door is open and I am beckoning you, "Come in!" Tomorrow the door may disappear and there will be nobody to beckon you to come in. And then you will suffer much, then you will be in deep anguish. Then you will cry and weep for the spilt milk.

Right now is the time to listen to the call, to the challenge. I am a challenge, a call: a challenge of the unknown calling you towards the uncharted sea. I know you are afraid and I know that to leave the shelter of the shore is difficult. You have lived on the shore so long and you have made such a beautiful hut. So cozy it is there, with no fear of the waves and the ocean and the dangers of the unknown. You seem to be very secure there, and I am calling you, "Come out of your cozy security!" -- because it is just a deception.

Death is bound to destroy all. Before death destroys, take the decisive step on your own accord. Move into the unknown. Before death kills you, let the ego be killed by you yourself. Then there will be no death for you, then you can transcend all death.

Great courage, of course, is needed, but if you have taken the courage to be a sannyasin, now don't look backwards. For the sannyasin there is no way to look backwards. Listen to the challenge and go wholeheartedly towards it.

Yes, it will look more and more crazy because you will see you are committing a kind of suicide. But once you have committed the suicide -- the suicide of the ego -- you will be surprised: to live in the ego was REAL suicide and to get out of it is to attain to absolute freedom. Buddha calls that freedom nirvana.

The fifth question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS TALKING AND TELLING JOKES ABOUT THE JEWS?
WHY NOT ABOUT INDIANS?

Shankara, Indians don't have jokes. They are such holy people, you know, so spiritual! They don't have any sense of humor. I have never come across a single originally Indian joke. All the jokes are imported. Sometimes I wonder why the government allows it! On everything else there is great taxation; only jokes can be imported and you don't have to pay three hundred percent tax on them. Indians don't have jokes, hence it is very difficult to tell Indian jokes.

And Jews are the most rich in jokes; they have the best jokes. They are very earthly people, just the opposite of the Indians. Indians have this nonsense of being very holy, and Jews are very earthly people. Their religion is also very earthly. They don't have any idea of renouncing the world. Their rabbis are not celibates; their rabbis are as ordinary as anybody else. This is something beautiful -- I appreciate it. These hierarchies should disappear. The greatest snobbishness exists in the minds of the so-called religious people. And India is very snobbish; hence they have not created any jokes.

Jews are earthly people, ordinary people. They have enjoyed their ordinariness, and they have a great sense of humor. In fact, their sense of humor has been a great blessing to them; otherwise, they have suffered so much.... For two thousand years they have been suffering all over the world. Without that sense of humor they would not have survived. Their sense of humor has helped them survive, has helped them to always resurrect again and again. They have been crushed and killed and destroyed, and yet their spirit has come back again. They could laugh at misery, at suffering. Laughter has been a great boon.

And it is very difficult to change a Jewish joke into anything else! Sometimes I try, but it loses its beauty.

A man said to a friend, "Let me tell you a joke."

"Okay," said the friend.

"Well, a Jewish man was walking down the street when he ran into...."

"Stop!" cried the friend. "Why are you always telling jokes about Jews?"

"Okay, okay, I will tell it differently. A Chinaman is walking down the street when he runs into another Chinaman. 'Are you coming to my son's bar mitzvah?' he asked."

It is very difficult to change the joke. Jewish jokes have a flavor of their own, and if you translate them, they lose that flavor; they become flat.

And why are you worried, Shankara? Why does it hurt you? Every race in the world has contributed something. Every race has lived in different situations, different climates, has evolved differently, has its own personality. Jews have their own personality, and Jewish jokes are very essential to that personality. They know how to

laugh; they know how to laugh at themselves too. That is something really beautiful. It is easy to laugh at others; the real laughter is when you can laugh at yourself.

The sixth question:

Question 6

BELOVED MASTER,

SOMETIMES WHEN I HEAR YOU READING A QUESTION MY FIRST REACTION IS, "WHAT KIND OF A STUPID QUESTION IS THIS?" DON'T YOU EVER FEEL THAT WAY?

Prem Malik, once in a while... for example, reading this question.

The last question:

Question 7

BELOVED MASTER

I WOULD LIKE TO TRY EXPERIMENTING WITH ALCOHOL A LA GURDJIEFF, EXCEPT I AM BROKE. CAN I HAVE AN ALCOHOL ALLOWANCE?

Deva Shraddan, George Gurdjieff would not have given you that experiment. That was given only to people who are against alcohol! For example, if Morarji Desai had gone to George Gurdjieff, then he would have forced him to drink alcohol -- instead of his own urine! But not for you.

So it is very difficult for me to allow you an alcohol allowance -- that would be against the spirit of George Gurdjieff. He would never forgive me!

The essential core of the experiment is to disturb you, to shatter you, to shatter your patterns, fixed patterns. If you are desiring alcohol, then that is the LAST thing that is going to shatter you. It will be fulfilling, it will not be shattering. Instead of alcohol, start drinking the water of life!

"You know, you are the first man I have met whose kisses make me sit up and open my eyes."

"Really?"

"Yes. Usually they have the opposite effect."

With you, alcohol will not be of any help; the water of life may have the right effect. You may open your eyes and sit up. And one thing more is good about it: you can be broke and still you can enjoy it. No allowance is needed, so Laxmi need not worry about it. It gives you total self-dependence.

One Saturday night George ended up at a party in an unfamiliar apartment building. He got very drunk and somehow found his way home in the wee hours. When he woke up the next afternoon with a terrible hangover, he realized that he had left his jacket, tie, shirt and shoes at the party.

With much difficulty he found the apartment building, but he had no idea which apartment he had been in. The only thing he remembered about it was a magnificent gold toilet.

So he knocked at the first apartment. The door was opened by a man with a hangover.

"Hello," said George. "Did you have a party here last night?"

"We sure did!" groaned the man.

"And do you have a gold toilet?"

"A gold toilet? No, we sure don't."

So George had to go to the next door, and so on for three floors. Everyone was recovering from a party, but no one knew anything about a gold toilet. By the time he got to the last apartment, George was beginning to think he had imagined the gold toilet. The door was opened by a man with a hangover.

"Uh, hello," said George. "Did you have a party here last night?"

"We sure had a party here!" groaned the man.

"And do you by any chance have a gold toilet?"

There was a long silence.

Finally the man shouted back over his shoulder, "Hey, Harry -- here is the guy who shit in your tuba!"

So, Shraddan, the allowance can be allowed... but what about other people's tubas? You will create trouble. If you listen to my advice, forget the whole idea. It is good that you are broke. This is called a blessing in disguise. If you were not broke you would have gone a la Gurdjieff, and that would have led you into more trouble.

Gurdjieff certainly forced people to drink, but only the people who were against alcohol. He used to make toasts every night for all the kinds of idiots in the world. He had twenty-six categories of idiots. I don't know to which category you would belong, but you must belong to some category. Unless you are awakened you are bound to belong to some category or other.

An idiot is a person who is trying to find joy where joy does not exist at all, who is trying to search for something which he has never lost in the first place. The enlightened person is one who has looked into his being before searching for anything anywhere else. It is better to look in your own house. He has looked in and has found it there. Now his search has disappeared.

The person who is interested in alcohol must be living in misery, in a kind of suffering. That's why he wants somehow to forget it all. Alcohol is nothing but a chemical strategy to forget your miseries, anxieties, your problems, to forget yourself.

My whole effort here, Shraddan, is to help you to remember yourself -- and you want to forget yourself. By forgetting yourself you will be creating more and more hell for yourself and for others. Remember, rather, remember yourself.

My methods are different from George Gurdjieff's. I am not in favor of any alcoholic beverages. I am not in favor of any psychedelic drugs either, because they all create illusory worlds for you and they all are distractions. They make you more and more oblivious of your own being, unaware of your own self.

My work is based in awareness. The word 'awareness' is the golden key here, the master key. You have to learn to be more aware. Howsoever painful it is in the beginning, be more aware, because it is by becoming more aware that one day you will become part of the celebration of the whole.

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO -- this is the eternal inexhaustible law.

Enough for today.

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 8

Chapter #13

Chapter title: All words are lies

2 January 1980 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

BELOVED MASTER,
ARE ALL WORDS LIES?

Peter Hendrickson, truth is an experience so profound that it is inexpressible, so vast that no word can contain it. Words are small things; they have a certain utility, but they have limitations. And truth has no limitations; it is vaster than the sky. Truth means the whole existence.

When you disappear into the whole you know it. Saying that you know it is not accurate; rather, you feel it. Or, to be even more accurate, you BECOME it. When you have become the whole it is impossible to say it. And truths need to be said; they have an intrinsic quality that they have to be shared.

Hence words are only hypothetical; they can be used, but one should not believe in them. They should be used as stepping-stones. Ultimately they are all lies; at the most, approximate reflections, but a reflection is a lie. The moon in the sky and the moon reflected in the lake are not the same. The face in the mirror is not really your face; it is just an illusion. There is nothing in the mirror.

But small children become very much concerned about the face in the mirror -- their own face. When for the first time a small child is put before a mirror he thinks he is seeing somebody sitting in front of him. He tries to catch hold of the child. If he cannot -- and certainly he cannot catch hold -- he tries to go behind the mirror. Maybe the child is hiding behind.

And this is the situation of people who believe in words. But in a way the mirror is useful. By saying that the reflection is a lie I am not saying that it is of no use. If you understand, it says something ABOUT the truth, not the truth itself; it indicates. A finger pointing to the moon is not the moon, but it has tremendous utility: it can point to the moon. If you become too obsessed with the finger, that is your fault, not the fault of the finger. If you forget the finger -- and you have to forget it if you want to see the moon -- then the finger has served its purpose.

Even lies can help you to reach to the truth; otherwise buddhas would not have spoken at all. Unless lies can help you in some way to reach to the truth, words would not have been used at all. No Bible, no Koran, no Gita, no DHAMMAPADA, would have existed.

When Buddha became enlightened, for seven days he remained silent, thinking, "What is the use of saying things to people which cannot be said? -- and even if you say them,

which are bound to be misunderstood? Moreover, if somebody is capable of understanding your words, he is bound to be capable of finding truth on his own."

The story says, then the gods from heaven descended. They touched the feet of Buddha and they prayed to him that he should speak.

Buddha said, "For what? Ninety-nine percent of the people are not going to understand at all, and the one percent perhaps may be able to understand, but that one percent who can understand through words will be able to find the truth even if I don't say anything about it at all. So what is the point of saying it?"

The gods were puzzled. The logic was right, but still something was wrong, because in the ancient days other buddhas had spoken. Then they conferred together to find out how to argue with Buddha. And they found a way; and it is good that they could find a way; otherwise we would have missed these tremendously significant messages of Buddha.

They came back and they said, "You are right; the majority will never understand. And there are a few people who will reach to truth even if you don't say anything. But can't you imagine that there are a few who are in between these two groups, just on the boundary line? If you speak, that will give them a challenge, inspiration. If you don't speak they may be lost. Speak for those few who are just on the borderland, who can be lost without your words and who can find the light with the help of your words."

You are right, Hendrickson: all words are lies, because when you experience you cannot put it into words. How to put love into words? And love is not a very rare experience. How to put beauty into words? Has any poet succeeded yet? Only the fools think that they have succeeded. The greater the poet, the more he is aware of his failure. Has any painter been able to paint the beauty that he experiences? No great painter is ever satisfied. A tremendous discontent follows him his whole life like a shadow. It haunts him. He goes on trying again and again and again; his whole life is a long failure, a tragedy. His great paintings are great for us, but he knows that he has failed. They are great for us because we don't know what beauty is. If these great paintings had not been there we would not have been aware of many things.

It is said that if all the paintings of the world disappear, you will not be able to see the beauty of a sunset. You will not be able to see the beauty of a roseflower. You will not be able to see the beauty of a bird on the wing. You have become able to see it because painters for centuries have been preparing the right context to see it. But ask the painters themselves. Ask a Van Gogh or a Rabindranath Tagore or Nandlal Bose, and they will say that they have failed. What they had seen was something totally different. It was so alive, so pulsating! And the painting is dead; it is nothing but canvas and color. How can you put a sunset on the canvas? It will be a still life and the sunset -- the real sunset -- is dynamic, it is moving, it is moment to moment changing. Your painting will be just a framed phenomenon -- and the sunset has no frame to it.

How can you sing a song that relates your experience of love? It is impossible; all words are inadequate. So first, when you try to express your experience, ninety percent of it is

lost. And when somebody hears it, the remaining ten percent is distorted. Even if one percent reaches to the other person it is more than you can ask.

When I say something to you I know how much is already lost. When I see in your eyes I again know whatsoever was left in the words has been distorted by your mind. Your mind is continuously trying to allow only that which fits with it; it does not allow that which goes against it. It does not hear it at all, and it hears only that which is nothing but a reflection of its own past.

The analyst was concerned about the results of a Rorschach test he had just given for the patient, who associated every ink blot with some sort of sexual activity.

"I want to study the results of your test over the weekend and I would like to see you Monday," he said to the patient.

"Okay, Doc. I am going to a stag party tomorrow night. Any chance I might borrow those dirty pictures of yours?"

What he sees he believes is there; and what he sees is not there, it is his projection. What he hears may not be said at all, but one can hear it very clearly, so clearly that it is impossible not to believe in it. Your mind is coloring everything every moment.

Leonora went into a drugstore to buy film. When she came out she was ripping mad.

"Rodney, you go into that store and cut that man real good!" she said to her boyfriend.

"Why, honey," asked Rodney, "what happened?"

"I told him I wanted some film," she explained, "and he had the nerve to ask me what was the size of my Brownie!"

You can read something which is not written. You can hear something which is not told. You can see something which does not exist anywhere except in your own imagination. Then words become farther and farther and farther away from the truth. Words are lies: lies in the sense that they are incapable of transferring the real, the existential. In the very transfer it dies.

One poet had gone to the sea early in the morning. It was a beautiful sunrise, and the waves dancing in the early sun, and the cool sand, and the salty air.... He felt so alive, he experienced such exquisite joy, that he wanted to share it with his girlfriend who was in a hospital, who was ill and could not come to the seabeach.

So the poet brought a beautiful box, opened the box to the sunrays, to the wind, closed the box, sealed it from everywhere so nothing escaped out of it, brought the box to the hospital. Tremendously happy he was, and he said to his girlfriend, "I have brought something so beautiful you may not have ever seen. Such a beautiful sunrise, such beautiful waves, such fresh air, such coolness, such freshness!"

And he opened the box and there was nothing -- no sun, no air, no coolness, no freshness.

You cannot catch hold of beauty in a box. You cannot catch hold of beauty, truth, love, in words. They are very poor. But nothing is wrong with them; they are useful in the ordinary world. When you move into the inner you are moving into the extraordinary. If you are alert, they can be used and they can be used profitably. Yes, lies can become stepping-stones towards truth.

An American G.I. standing outside a cathedral in Paris saw a magnificent wedding procession enter. "Who is the bridegroom?" he asked a Frenchman standing next to him.

"Je ne sais pas," was the reply.

A few minutes later the soldier inspected the interior of the cathedral himself and saw a coffin being carried down the aisle. "Whose funeral?" he demanded of the attendant.

"Je ne sais pas," said the attendant.

"Holy mackerel!" exclaimed the soldier. "He certainly didn't last long!"

Words have to be understood; they have to be understood according to the person who has spoken them. You should not bring your own mind in. You should keep your mind a little out of the way. The more you become capable of keeping your mind out of the way, the more is the possibility that you can use words as stepping-stones. Otherwise words will create a jungle and you will be lost in it.

In Leipzig, where one third of all street names have been changed since the Russian occupation, trolley conductors are required to call out both old and new names to make it easier for visitors to find their way.

The other day, the conductor of a car passing through the center of the city made the required announcement: "Karl Marx Square, formerly Augustus Square."

A passenger about to alight shouted back, "Auf Wiedersehen, formerly Heil Hitler!"

The second question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WOULD YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDITIONING AND DISCIPLINE?

Prem Dharmendra, there is a great difference. They are totally different dimensions, and not only different but diametrically opposite too. Conditioning is something forced from the outside upon you against your will, against your consciousness. It is to destroy you, it is to manipulate you. It is to create a pseudo personality so that your essential man is lost.

The society is very much afraid of your reality. The church is afraid, the state is afraid, everybody is afraid of your essential person, your essential being, because the essential being is rebellious, intelligent. It cannot be easily reduced to slavery. It cannot be exploited. Nobody can use your essential being as a means; your essential being is an end unto itself.

Hence the whole society tries in every possible way to disconnect you from your essential core, and it creates a false, plastic personality around you and it forces you to become identified with it. That's what it calls education. It is not education; it is mis-education. It is destructive, it is violent.

This whole society, up to now, has been very violent with the individual. It does not believe in the individual; it is against the individual. It tries in every possible way to destroy you for its own purposes. It needs clerks, it needs stationmasters, deputy-collectors, policemen, magistrates, it needs soldiers. It does not need human beings.

We have failed, up to now, in creating a society which needs human beings, simple human beings.

The society is interested that you should be more skillful, more productive, and less creative. It wants you to function like a machine, efficiently, but it does not want you to become awakened. It does not want buddhas and christs -- Socrates, Pythagoras, Lao Tzu. No, these people are not needed at all by the society. If sometimes they happen, they don't happen because of the society; they happen in spite of the society.

It is a miracle how a few people have been able sometimes to escape from this great prison. The prison is so great, it is so difficult to escape out of it. And even in escaping from one prison you will enter into another because the whole earth has become a prison. You can become a Mohammedan from a Hindu or you can become a Christian from a Mohammedan or you can become a Hindu from a Christian, but you are simply changing your prison. You can become a German from being an Indian or you can become a Chinese from being an Italian, but you are simply changing prisons -- political, religious, social prisons. Maybe for a few days the new prison would look like freedom -- only because of its newness; otherwise it is not freedom.

Free society is still an idea that has to be materialized.

This whole slavery of man depends on conditioning. And conditioning starts even when you are in your mother's womb. Now they have found ways to condition the child in the mother's womb. In Russia they have developed certain kinds of belts which the pregnant woman can wear. Those belts press certain points in the growing child's brain and that pressure will create a robot. He will be born like a machine. He will be always obedient, faithful to the state, faithful to communism, faithful to the communist holy trinity -- or unholy trinity -- Marx, Engels, Lenin. He will believe in DAS KAPITAL, just as others believe in the Bible. Nobody reads the Bible, nobody reads DAS KAPITAL.

I have met many communists; I have not seen a single communist who has read DAS KAPITAL from the beginning to the end. Everybody has a copy. Russian books are so cheap and they look so good, they are bound so beautifully, that you can decorate your drawing room with Russian books. But nobody reads them, just like no Hindu reads the Vedas. There is nothing much to read either.

But conditioning starts from the mother's womb or, at the most, the moment you are born. You are circumcised and you become a Jew. You are baptized and you become a Christian, and so on, so forth. You are taken to the church and to the temple and to the mosque, and you are being brought up in a certain atmosphere where you will find all

are Mohammedans or all are Christians or all are Hindus. And naturally the child is bound to follow the people who are around him.

By the time he is twenty-five and comes back from the university he is utterly conditioned, and so deeply conditioned that he will not be even aware of the conditioning. Everything has been fed into his biocomputer. And the society punishes those who are reluctant, resistant to these conditionings. It rewards those, with gold medals, prizes, even Nobel Prizes; it rewards those who are very willing to be slaves, who are willing to serve the vested interests.

Holston was hired as a ranch hand in Texas. One day he approached Davis, the foreman. "What do you do for fun here on the prairie?"

"Well," replied the foreman, "we got a Mexican cook on the ranch and every Saturday night we dress him in women's clothes and six of us take him dancing."

"Not me!" declared Holston. "I don't go for that kind of stuff."

"Neither does the Mex," says Davis, "that's why it takes six of us."

And it is not only a question of sex. The whole society, millions of people around you, are conditioning you, knowingly, unknowingly. They have been conditioned. They may not be aware that they are destructive and violent. They may be thinking that they are being helpful to you. They may be thinking that they are doing all this great service to you out of compassion, because they love humanity. They have been conditioned so deeply that they are unaware what they are doing to their children.

The teachers, the lecturers, the professors, they are the instruments, subtle instruments of conditioning people. The priests, the psychoanalysts, they are very clever and very efficient people at conditioning; they know the whole strategy of it. They know how to manipulate, distort, how to give you a pseudo personality and take away your essential core.

Discipline is totally different. Discipline is out of your own choice; it is out of your own will. Discipline, the very word, comes from a root which means learning. Discipline means you start learning on your own, because nobody seems to teach you the truth. People are interested in teaching you Hinduism, communism, Mohammedanism; nobody is interested in teaching you the truth. When you start seeking, searching, learning, on your own -- knowing perfectly well that nobody is going to support you, you have to go alone -- discipline begins.

Discipline is your protection against conditioning. Discipline is your effort to get rid of all conditioning. Discipline is your rebellion, your revolution.

To be a disciple simply means to be with a man who is not going to condition you. A master is one who unconditions you. That is the definition of a true master: one who UNconditions you, simply unconditions you, and does not REcondition you.

That is one of the objections against me raised in India and in other countries, too: that I am giving people so much freedom that they will misuse it. I know that freedom can be misused if it is not rooted in meditation, but freedom is such a supreme value that even if there is a risk of misuse, it HAS to be given. Slavery can never be misused by the slave

because he is not his own master; then too, it is slavery and is continuously being misused by those who are in power. Slavery is a sin, and howsoever decorated, it is ugly. Freedom can be misused, but it is better to misuse freedom than to be a slave, because you cannot misuse freedom for long.

Freedom -- its use and misuse both -- gives insight. One learns only through mistakes. That is the way of maturity. Maybe in the interim period, when for the first time you come out of the prison, you may misuse your freedom for a little while. You may drink too much, eat too much, but for how long?

And this freedom that a master gives is given through making you more conscious, more aware. And that is the safety valve: the more you are aware, the less is the possibility of misusing freedom -- because misusing it will be suicidal.

Discipline is that which you accept on your own. You are not forced to be a sannyasin; a deep longing arises in you. Something hidden in you takes the challenge. Some seed sprouts... you hear some unheard music... you become attracted to some unknown, mysterious force. But the decision is always yours; it is not imposed on you. YOU decide that you would like to learn, that you would like to seek and search. Out of that longing for truth, discipline begins.

And you are always free to stop. You are always free to drop out of sannyas. You are always free not to be related to me anymore. The guards on the gate are for outsiders so that they cannot enter inside unless they are ready; the guards are not for the insiders to prevent them from leaving. That is the difference. In a jail the guards are for the insiders so that they cannot get out.

Here there are guards, but they are not for the insiders. If somebody wants to get out he gets out with all my blessings. It was his decision to be in; it is his decision to drop out of it. He is a free soul. It is nobody else's business to impose anything upon him.

Dharmendra, discipline comes out of your own inner feel, out of your own love. It is surrender but it is not a slavery. It is a surrender but not a slavery because YOU are doing it. If it is forced, then it is slavery, then it is conditioning.

Avoid all conditioning situations. Avoid people who condition you, even though they say it is for your own sake; even though they say it is for your own good, beware of all those poisoners. They have done enough harm to humanity. It is because of these people that real humanity has not yet been born.

My whole effort here is to bring a new human being on the earth: free, alert, conscious, responsible, doing things according to his own inner feelings, likings, leanings, not serving somebody else's purpose, living his life according to his own light.

The third question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT COMMUNISM?

Nagesh, I will not waste my time in giving you my opinion about communism. The whole thing is rubbish, but I will tell you five stories.

The first story:

"Who is your father?" a schoolboy was asked by Khrushchev when he was in charge of Soviet Russia.

"Nikita Khrushchev is my father," replied the lad.

"And who is your mother?"

"The Communist Party."

"Very good. Now tell me, what would you like to be when you grow up?"

"An orphan," replied the child.

The second:

At a Russian factory, workers were asked to choose a new workers' committee by secret ballot. Each man, upon approaching the ballot box, was handed a sealed envelope and told to deposit it through the slot at the top of a cardboard box.

Vasili slit open the envelope and began to examine the ballot.

"Hey," shouted a supervisor. "You can't do that."

"But I want to know who I'm voting for," explained the worker.

"You must be mad," claimed the supervisor. "Don't you realize that the ballot is secret in the Soviet Union?"

The third:

An amateur radio ham went delirious with excitement when he caught a newscast straight from Moscow on his set.

"Our great athlete, Ivan Ivanovitch," the announcer was saying, "has just smashed all existing records for the two-hundred-yard dash, the mile run, the five-mile run, and the one-hundred-mile run, overcoming a blizzard, a range of mountains, and complete lack of water. Unfortunately Ivanovitch's fantastic performance was in vain. He was captured and brought back to Russia."

The fourth:

When Stalin's body was removed from the Lenin mausoleum in Red Square and buried near the Kremlin walls, a small boy asked his grandmother, "What kind of man was Lenin?"

"Lenin was a very great man," she said.

"And what kind of man was Stalin?" asked the child.

"Sometimes he was a very evil man," said the old woman.

"Babushka, what kind of man is Leonid Brezhnev?"

"It is difficult to say, child," replied the grandmother. "When he dies, we will find out."

The fifth and the last:

At a Communist Party convention, one of the delegates kept yelling, "Long live Brezhnev!"

The chairman tried to hush him saying, "Remember you used to yell 'Long live Khrushchev!'"

"Right," said the delegate. "And is he living?"

The fourth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT A MAN LIKE JESUS CAN COMMIT MISTAKES.
LISTENING TO YOU SAY THAT, I WAS VERY MUCH HURT.

Ronald, this is conditioning. You have been told -- centuries of conditioning is behind it -- that a man like Jesus cannot commit any mistake. Why? If you cannot believe it, you cannot believe that Jesus is human either. To err is human. Yes, he will not commit the same mistake again, that's true. To commit the same mistake again is stupid; it is not human, it is simply stupid. But to commit a mistake is the only way in life to learn. Once it is perfectly okay to commit a mistake, and commit it with total awareness.

If it is a mistake you know it, and you know it so deeply and perfectly that you will never commit it again. But a man learns through committing mistakes. There is no other way of learning. If a man never commits a mistake he will never grow up. Jesus is a human being. Of course it is only through growing up that one day he becomes a divine flame. He was committing mistakes even to the very last.

My own understanding is that he became Christ only at the last moment on the cross. Just before he became a christ, a buddha, he committed the final and the last mistake, but he learned immediately. He must have been so aware even on the cross.

The last mistake was that when he was crucified he shouted at God, "Have you forsaken me?" This is distrust, this is doubt, this is a mistake; one of the greatest that a man can commit -- and a man like Jesus. But this is the last. "Why am I being tortured, what wrong have I committed?" He was complaining, he could not believe his own eyes that this was happening to him. He must have thought deep down -- somewhere a little part of his being must have remained unconscious, and in that dark corner this longing must have remained like a seed -- that "At the last moment God is going to save me. He will do a miracle and the whole world will know that I am the only begotten Son of God." Some unconscious longing... but even if a small part of your being remains unconscious you are not yet a christ.

From where comes this complaint, "Why have you forsaken me?" A great doubt arises, overwhelms him, because this is the last moment: if the miracle is not going to happen he is finished. But he must have been a man of rare awareness. He recognized it immediately, he saw the dark point, he saw the unconscious point. He became relaxed and he said, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Don't take any note of my complaint, I was foolish to say so. Whatsoever is your will is my will. There is no point in saying, 'Have you forsaken me?' If this is what you want, then this is what should happen. Then this is the miracle and I should not ask for anything else. I should not have a separate will of my own."

The moment he said, "Thy will be done," he dropped his separate will. Just a small part of his being must have remained, some hidden subtle ego must have remained lurking

somewhere. With the disappearance of that ego he became a flame of light. He became a buddha.

You cannot believe that a man like Jesus can commit mistakes because you cannot believe that Jesus is a man like you. And unless you believe that Jesus is a man like you, you cannot believe the other part of the story, that you are as divine as Jesus.

Remember these are two sides of the same coin. If you can believe Jesus is a man just like you, then you can also believe that you have the same potential as Jesus. If he can become a christ you can become a christ too.

A little introduction for a joke. This is an Italian story, the story of Pinocchio.

A carpenter, named Gepetto, is feeling very lonely and wishes to have a child. With some sticks of wood he creates a puppet -- with a red hat and a very pointed nose -- and calls it Pinocchio. Hardly has he finished it when Pinocchio kicks him in the leg -- and with this kick Gepetto realizes that this "son" will give him only trouble.

In fact, Pinocchio asks immediately for something to eat, and Gepetto, though very poor, manages to find some food for him and goes to bed himself without dinner. Pinocchio, without even thanking him, goes out, and this way for years he tortures his creator. He goes on doing one mischief after another until finally he is swallowed by a whale in the ocean.

Now forget this introduction as if I have not told you at all; only then will you understand the joke. I had to tell it to you; without it you would not understand the joke -- and that I have to tell you. Now forget all about it. I have not said any introduction to you.

Now the joke....

After forty years of hard work an old carpenter dies and goes to heaven. When he gets to the Pearly Gates he knocks on the door. Saint Peter opens it and says, "Yes?"

The old carpenter explains, "I am an old carpenter. I have worked hard for forty years, I never did any harm to anyone, and I am here for my reward."

Saint Peter replies, "I don't know about that. Wait here for a minute and I will go and get some information on you."

He goes inside and is about to talk to the boss, God, when he runs into Jesus. Jesus says, "Why are you all excited?" So Peter tells him the whole story: an old carpenter, worked hard for forty years, never did any harm to anyone.

Jesus listens to the story with mounting interest and asks, "Did he have white hair?"

Peter says, "Yes!"

"Little pixie eyeglasses with chromium frames?"

"Yes!"

"About so tall? Wearing a waistcoat, a little paunchy?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" says Peter.

Jesus runs to the Pearly Gates, throws open the door, takes a look at the little old man and cries at the top of his lungs, "Daddy!"

And the carpenter looks at him and joyously exclaims, "Pinocchio!"

The fifth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS THIS A BLESSING? AFTER BEING ALONE FOR A LONG TIME, I FELL IN LOVE WITH THREE WOMEN AT THE SAME TIME, WHICH WAS EASY IN THE BEGINNING. BUT AS SOON AS I STARTED TO GET INTO A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE, EITHER I RAN TO THE NEXT ONE OR SHE WANTED TO BE WITH SOMEONE ELSE. OF COURSE THE SAME HAPPENED AGAIN AS SOON AS I GOT IN TUNE WITH ONE OF THE OTHER WOMEN. SO JOY AND SUFFERING ARE PRETTY CLOSE TOGETHER, BUT I WONDER -- AM I AVOIDING SOMETHING?

Prem Aditya, don't you think three are more than enough? Do you think you are avoiding the fourth? One woman is enough to create hell, and you are asking me, "Is this a blessing?" It must be a curse in disguise.

"What has happened to Jack? I have not seen him for ages."

"Oh, he married the girl he rescued from drowning."

"And is he happy?"

"Rather! But he hates water now."

You must be a great soul -- either so unconscious that even three women cannot create any trouble for you, or so enlightened that "Who cares?"

While riding home from work one evening, three commuters became friendly in the club car and, after the third round, they began to brag about the relative merits of their respective marital relationships. The first proudly proclaimed, "My wife meets my train every evening and we've been married for ten years."

"That's nothing," scoffed the second. "My wife meets me every evening, too, and we've been married for seventeen years."

"Well, I have got you both beat, fellows," said the third commuter, who was obviously the youngest in the group.

"How do you figure that?" the first fellow wanted to know.

"I suppose you have got a wife who meets you every evening, too!" sneered the second.

"That's right," said the third commuter, "and I'm not even married."

Three women, and you are not even married! They will make a football of you. And you are asking, "Is this a blessing?" -- with a question mark of course. Be a little more careful. This is a dangerous place for people like you, Aditya. There are so many women here and if you go on like this soon nothing will be left of you, and I will lose unnecessarily a sannyasin. Think of me too.

Weinstein, a very wealthy businessman, had an unattractive daughter. He found a young man to marry her and after ten years they had two children.

Weinstein called his son-in-law into the office one day. "Listen," he said, "you have given me two beautiful grandchildren, you have made me very happy. I am gonna give you forty-nine percent of the business."

"Thank you, Pop!"

"Is there anything else I could do for you?"

"Yeah, buy me out!"

I am ready to buy you out whatsoever the price. You just inquire of the three women!

Love is significant, a good learning situation, but only a learning situation. One school is enough, three schools are too many. And with three women you will not be able to learn much, you will be in such a turmoil. It is better to be with one, so that you can be more totally one with her, so that you can understand her and your own longings more clearly, so you are less clouded, less in anguish, because love in the beginning is only an unconscious phenomenon; it is biological, it is nothing very precious. Only when you bring your awareness to it, when you become more and more meditative about it, it starts becoming precious, it starts soaring high.

Intimacy with one woman or one man is better than having many superficial relationships. Love is not a seasonal flower, it takes years to grow. And only when it grows does it go beyond biology, and start having something of the spiritual in it. Just being with many women or many men will keep you superficial -- entertained maybe, but superficial; occupied certainly, but that occupation is not going to help in inward growth. But a one-to-one relationship, a sustained relationship so that you can understand each other more closely, is tremendously beneficial. Why is it so? And what is the need to understand the woman or the man?

The need is because every man has a feminine part in his being, and every woman has a masculine part in her being. The only way to understand it, the easiest way to understand it, the most natural way to understand it is to be in deep, intimate relationship with someone. If you are a man be in a deep, intimate relationship with a woman. Let trust grow so all barriers dissolve. Come so close to each other that you can look deep into the woman and the woman can look deep into you. Don't be dishonest with each other.

And if you are having so many relationships you will be dishonest, you will be lying continually. You will have to lie, you will have to be insincere, you will have to say things which you don't mean -- and they all will suspect. It is very difficult to create trust with a woman if you are having some other relationship. It is easy to deceive a man because he lives through the intellect; it is very difficult, almost impossible to deceive a woman because she lives intuitively. You will not be able to look directly into her eyes; you will be afraid that she may start reading your soul, and so many deceptive things you are hiding, so many dishonesties.

So if you are having many relationships you will not be able to dive deep into the psyche of the woman. And that is the only thing that is needed: to know your own

inner feminine part. Relationship becomes a mirror. The woman starts looking into you and starts finding her own masculine part; the man looks into the woman and starts discovering his own femininity. And the more you become aware of your feminine -- the other pole -- the more whole you can be, the more integrated you can be. When your inner man and your inner woman have disappeared into each other, have become dissolved into each other, when they are no longer separate, when they have become one integrated whole, you have become an individual.

Carl Gustav Jung calls it the process of individuation. He is right, he has chosen the right word for it. And the same happens to a woman. But playing with many people will keep you superficial, entertained, occupied, but not growing; and the only thing that matters ultimately is growth, growth of integration, individuality, growth of a center in you. And that growth needs that you should know your other part. The easiest approach is to know the woman on the outside first, so that you can know the woman inside.

Just like a mirror -- the mirror reflects your face, it shows you your face -- the woman becomes your mirror, the man becomes your mirror. The other reflects your face, but if you are having so many mirrors around you and running from one mirror to another and deceiving each mirror about the other you will be in a chaos, you will go nuts.

The sixth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS WRONG WITH KNOWING MORE AND MORE ABOUT GOD? CAN IT NOT HELP THE SEEKER?

Kamlesh, knowing and knowledge are different. I am all for knowing and I am all against knowledge. Knowing is your insight, it is your capacity to see, it is *philosia*. Knowledge is philosophy. It is not your capacity to see, it is just your capacity to memorize what others have said. How is it going to help, knowing about God? A blind man can know about light; how is it going to help? A deaf man can know about music, he can read about music, he can even read music, but how is it going to help? It is not going to help at all. The danger is that the blind man may start thinking that he knows so much about light that he must be knowing light itself. And that's what happens to the knowledgeable people.

Knowing about God, they start thinking that they know God. To know love is one thing; to know about love is totally another. To know God is a transformation of your being; to know about God needs no transformation. You can just go to the library and collect information. You can go to the pundits and the scholars and accumulate information.

You ask me, "Can it not help the seeker?"

No, not at all. It will hinder. The seeker has to be empty, unprejudiced. The seeker has to be without any idea of what God is, or truth is. If he has some idea, the danger is he will project his idea on the existence and he will think that he has come to know the truth. Truth can be known only when you are utterly empty, when there is nothing to

distort or project inside you; when you are so silent that you are only receptive, not projective. In total receptivity truth is known.

Meditation is nothing but an effort to cleanse your mind of knowledge. Knowledge is dust that has gathered on the mirror of your being; it has to be cleaned.

A naked girl is standing, speaking endlessly to a naked man kneeling and embracing her belly, later lying supine at her feet. She says, "My life is empty... it is a mockery... I am nothing -- just a facade -- a shell... a dead and useless thing! I am twenty-six years old... and I have never had a meaningful relationship... never had a truly meaningful relationship... I should not even admit that, I suppose. It is very humiliating! I have passed from one shallow sexual episode to another. That's the story of my entire life... one tawdry, shallow, clutching incident after another. My relationships have no deep, lasting significance -- if I could just ONCE lie down and have something meaningful happen!"

The man replies, from the floor, "Have you ever tried talking less... and lying down SOONER?"

People go on talking and talking about God. Better to be silent, better not to say anything but to sit. You don't know; it is better not to hide your ignorance in big words, in spiritual jargon. To know that "I don't know" is a great step towards real knowing. To know that "I know" without knowing is going astray, is going farther and farther away. Truth asks only one thing: Be silent, so that you can listen, so that you can hear the still, small voice within.

The seventh question:

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY DO I CRY AT THE SUTRAS AND NOT LAUGH AT THE JOKES? IS IT BECAUSE I AM BLOCKED OR BRITISH? I KNOW THERE IS NO QUESTION. THE TRUTH IS THAT I WANT TO COME CLOSER.

Sagaro, feel blessed if you are blocked, because if you are British there is no remedy. I have not heard of any therapy that can help. Blocked persons can be unblocked. Encounter will do, Primal Therapy will do, Gestalt will do, and we have here at least ninety groups.

But if you are British, then I am helpless; then nothing can be done about it. To be British is like cancer: no remedy has been discovered yet. Then you will have to wait for the future. But I hope that you are not British; otherwise you would not have been here. Sometimes British people come here.... Anurag's mother has come, she is British. For weeks she has been here, and she has come only to one lecture, yesterday. And what was her response to it? Her response was that I confirmed her ideas.

Just being here and being a sannyasin is enough proof that you are not British. And don't be worried: if you can cry at the sutras, this is a good beginning. Sooner or later

you will start laughing at the jokes -- because a person who can cry, can laugh. The real problem is with those people who cannot cry; they cannot laugh either.

These are not two different things, they are the same. Crying and laughter are deeply related. Whenever you are overwhelmed by something, either you cry or you laugh. Crying is not necessarily sad, laughter is not necessarily joyous. Sometimes crying is a joy, sometimes laughter is ugly and maybe just a device to hide your sadness.

Remember one thing: it is only man who can cry and laugh. No other animal can do it, because no other animal is conscious enough to feel overwhelmed. Only man has that much consciousness that he can feel overwhelmed, flooded with something so much that either he starts crying or he starts laughing -- and both capacities are tremendously needed.

Crying will help you to relieve your tensions, laughter will help you to dance, to sing. Both are interlinked. Crying prepares the way for laughter: your tears will cleanse your heart, and then laughter will arise. If the first process has started the second is not far away.

The eighth question:

BELOVED MASTER,

THE OTHER DAY YOU SAID THAT THE OLD PEOPLE BECOME CUNNING. WHAT ARE YOUR GROUNDS FOR SAYING SO?

Kumarel, I am a crazy person. I don't say things because there are grounds to say them. I simply say something because I enjoy saying it. I cannot give you any proofs and I am never interested in proofs, but I can tell you a story. Those who understand, for them this will be a proof; and for those who don't understand, nothing can ever be a proof. I stated a simple phenomenon; no proofs are needed. Just watch, just watch yourself and others.

As you are growing older, if you don't start growing in awareness, you are bound to become cunning. These are the only two alternatives: either you become wise or you become cunning. If you don't become wise, you will have to become cunning. Cunning is a substitute for wisdom. Either become a buddha or you are bound to become cunning. And very few people become buddhas; others are out of necessity cunning. Life teaches them to be more cunning than others because it is such a struggle for survival and only the cunning ones survive.

Charles Darwin says that the fittest survive. That is not my observation. Not the fittest but the most cunning survive -- unless Darwin means by the fittest, the most cunning. Man is the most cunning animal; he is not the fittest, certainly not. Try to fight with a monkey and you will know who is fittest. Try to run with a horse and you will know who is fittest. Try to fly like a bird and you will know who is fittest. Try to see in the night like an owl and you will know who is fittest. You just look around: you are not the fittest animal on the earth. In fact man is the most unfit animal, the weakest.

Look at the human child. Can the human child survive without the support of the society and the family? But animal children survive; they are born more perfect. It is

only man's child who seems to be prematurely born, as if he needed at least nine months more in the womb. But the problem is that if he lives eighteen months in the womb then he cannot come out; it will be too late, he will be too big. So he comes out, but utterly helpless. The human child is helpless, weak; he has to be taught.

In fact he becomes of any worth only after twenty-five years -- that is one third of his life. He needs preparation to be worthy enough to compete in the world. Then why has man survived and all other animals have either disappeared or are disappearing? They have all been defeated for the simple reason that man is the most cunning. Because of his cunningness he could invent; he does not have strength enough to fight with any animal but he could invent weapons. He has not the strength to tear an animal apart just with his bare hands, but he has invented swords. Swords are nothing but magnified nails. He cannot use his teeth to kill so he has invented many things to kill. He is the most cunning, and as the centuries have passed he has become more and more cunning.

A farmer bought a new rooster for his chicken coop. He already had a rooster, but he felt it was getting too old to service all his chickens, of which he had quite a few.

When the farmer introduced the new rooster to all his chickens, the old rooster came up to the newcomer and arranged a meeting for later that night after the farmer went to bed.

"Listen," exclaimed the old rooster at the meeting that night, "that farmer thinks I'm too old to service all his chickens, but that's not true. I've still got a few good years left and I don't want to become the family's Sunday dinner prematurely. So let's make a deal!"

The deal that the old rooster had in mind was that the two roosters would get into a make-believe fight which would end up with the young rooster chasing the old-timer around the coop pretending not to be able to catch him. The noise of this make-believe altercation would bring out the farmer who would see the old rooster running faster than the new one and thus spare the old stud from the knife for a few years at least.

For doing this, the young rooster would get to fuck all the pretty chickens. The deal was made.

The next day the action started, with all the chickens squawking and the roosters cock-a-doodaling. The farmer came out and spied the new rooster chasing the old one. Picking up his rifle he shot the young rooster dead and exclaimed, "Goddamn! That is the third faggot rooster I've shot this week."

The last question:

BELOVED MASTER,

IS REPRESSION ALWAYS BAD?

Prasado, absolutely bad, always bad, with no exceptions bad. Repression simply means you don't understand your life energies. Repression means you are forcing your life energies into the unconscious, throwing them into the basement of your being. There they will go on growing, there they will go on boiling, and sooner or later the explosion. That's why so many people go mad.

Madness is the outcome of repression. That's why so many people are mentally ill -- even if not mad, mentally disturbed -- all over the world. In America they say that out of four, three persons are mentally disturbed. And don't think that is so only for America; the only difference between America and other countries is that America has the latest data, that's all. If you want to know about India you cannot know anything because there is no data available. And America is more honest: if you ask a person anything he will answer it more sincerely than an Indian.

The Indian may be sexually boiling within but from his outside he will always keep that holier-than-thou look. He will not be sincere. You cannot find real figures in India about anything. If you ask any woman, "Have you ever fancied any other man except your husband?" she will say, "No. Never. Not only in this life but in no other life either. And not only in the past, in the future also, I am going to cling to this man." Now this is patent nonsense.

Unless you are utterly a rock inside it is impossible not to fancy someone once in a while, not to be attracted. If you have sensibility, sensitivity, intelligence, it is natural to be attracted once in a while. That does not mean that you are committing a sin; that simply means that you understand what beauty is. That simply means that you are observing life all around you.

It is very difficult to find any data in India. America in that way is the most sincere country in the world. They will say whatsoever is the case. Three persons are mentally ill out of four, and in India my own observation is that four are mentally ill out of four -- but they are blissfully unaware of it.

Repression of any kind is destructive to the body, to the mind, to the soul. Energies have to be transformed, not repressed. Energies are your potential wealth, raw; you have to polish them, then they can become great diamonds. These same energies, sexual energies, can become your spiritual liberation. Repressed you will be in a bondage.

I am not saying to become indulgent; that is going to the other extreme. Buddha will also not support your indulgence. He is absolutely for the middle way, the golden mean. Neither be repressive nor be indulgent. Be watchful, be alert; be friendly to your energies, sympathetic. They are your energies; don't create a rift, otherwise you will always be in conflict, and to fight with your own energies is an unnecessary dissipation. Fighting with your own energies, you are fighting with yourself: you cannot win. You will be simply wasting the whole opportunity of life. Be aware, don't repress, don't indulge. Be aware, be natural. Let energies be accepted and absorbed, and then the same energies, crude energies, become so refined, passing through awareness, that great flowers bloom in your being -- lotuses of enlightenment.

Unless that happens you will never feel at home in existence, you will never feel blissful, you will never feel what God is, you will never feel what nirvana is, what liberation is.

When a young nun comes to tell the mother superior that she has sinned with a man and wishes to do penance so she can be forgiven, the mother superior begins packing a suitcase.

"Oh, please don't put me out!" the young nun cries. "Where will I go? What will I do?"
"I'm not putting you out," says the mother superior grimly, "it's me that's leaving. For thirty years here it's been nothing but fucking and forgiving, fucking and forgiving. Beginning now, I'm through doing the forgiving, and I'm going to get in on some of the fucking before it's too late."

Enough for today.