

Turning In

Talks on Zen

Talks given from 12/08/88 pm to 28/08/88 pm

English Discourse series

CHAPTER 1

The absolute host

12 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

RYUSUI SAID:

EMPTINESS IS A NAME FOR NOTHINGNESS, A NAME FOR UNGRASPABILITY, A NAME FOR MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, THE WHOLE EARTH. IT IS ALSO CALLED THE REAL FORM. IN THE GREEN OF THE PINES, THE TWIST OF THE BRAMBLES, THERE IS NO GOING OR COMING. IN THE RED OF THE FLOWERS AND THE WHITE OF THE SNOW, THERE IS NO BIRTH AND NO DEATH.

JOY, ANGER, LOVE, PLEASURE – THESE ARE BEGINNINGLESS AND ENDLESS DELUSION. ENLIGHTENMENT, PRACTICE, REALIZATION – THESE ARE INEXHAUSTIBLE AND BOUNDLESS. THUS, EMPTINESS IS THE NAME FOR NOTHING ELSE; ALL THINGS ARE THE REAL FORM. IN ALL WORLDS, IN ALL DIRECTIONS, THERE IS NO SECOND, NO THIRD.

THEREFORE, IN THE FUNDAMENTAL VEHICLE THERE IS NO DELUSION OR ENLIGHTENMENT, NO PRACTICE OR REALIZATION. EVEN TO SPEAK OF PRACTICE AND REALIZATION IS A RELATIVE VIEW.

IN OUR SCHOOL, FROM THE FIRST ENTRY, THIS POINT SHOULD BE PRACTICED WHETHER SITTING, LYING DOWN, OR WALKING AROUND. WHEN SLEEPING, JUST SLEEPING, THERE IS NO PAST OR FUTURE. WHEN YOU AWAKEN, THERE IS NO SLEEP EITHER. THIS IS CALLED THE ABSOLUTE HOST.

Maneesha, Ryusui is pointing to a very fundamental question which Gautam Buddha raised for the first time in human history.

The question is, is enlightenment something to be achieved, desired, longed for? If so, then there must be practices, disciplines, rituals, and the whole paraphernalia. And millions of people have gone astray in search of enlightenment. Buddha is the first human being who has said that everything is absolutely arbitrary because you need not go anywhere. Enlightenment is your very nature.

It is consciousness that you are built with; this house, this body is not you. And this mind also is not you. And there is not much problem to stand aside and watch the mind and its functioning, to stand aside and watch the gestures of the body. This watcher is your reality, your truth. It is already here, so don't go in search somewhere else. Whenever, wherever you find it, you will always find it here and now. Now is the time and here is the space. If you can be now here, you are a Gautam Buddha.

I have heard a small story about a man who was a great atheist. The whole day he was arguing against religion, against all kinds of superstitions. He had written in his sitting room in big letters: GOD IS NOWHERE.

Then a small child was born to him.

One day the small child was looking at the writing. He was just learning to write, learning the alphabet, so he could not manage to read GOD IS NOWHERE; on the contrary, he read: GOD IS NOW HERE – nowhere can be divided into two.

The father heard it and was amazed. He had never thought about it, that 'nowhere' consists of 'now' and 'here'.

The small child changed the man's whole approach; he started thinking about now and here. And he was puzzled... because he has never been now; his mind has been wandering in the past or in the future, but never now, never in the present.

Mind has no relationship with the present.

This moment, if you are here, the mind is no more.

Mind needs the past as memory, and mind needs the future as projection. Without future and past, the mind cannot exist. And the present is so small, just a split second. In the present, there is no work for the mind to do – either it can do some work for the future or some work for the past, but it is absolutely impotent as far as the present is concerned.

The father had defeated many philosophers, but this small child changed his whole life because he started to be here, and to be now, and he found a new area opening within himself.

That area is meditation.

Meditation means no mind – no past, no future, no present... just eternity, a pure mirror which reflects the whole and is not scratched by anything. Just as the sky is not scratched by the clouds moving, or the sun rising, or the full-moon night, the sky remains unscratched.

You have heard the Zen haiku about the shadows of the bamboos... sweeping the temple steps, but they don't make any noise.

The moon in the sky is reflected in the smallest pond but it does not disturb the pond. It does not create even a single ripple. And the miracle is, neither does the pond want the moon to reflect nor does the moon want to be reflected. But existence manages spontaneously a beautiful phenomenon – a single moon being reflected all over the earth.

In rivers, in oceans, in ponds, in lakes, in streams ... even in a single dewdrop on a lotus leaf, the full moon is reflected as fully as in the biggest ocean.

But everything is happening so silently on its own accord.

In existence there is no effort, there is no intention. Everything is very relaxed and at ease.

Gautam Buddha was the first man to say that anybody who is searching for himself is a fool. The very search is preventing you from finding. Don't search! Don't go anywhere, just sit down and close your eyes and be within. Forget all about past and future, forget the body and the mind – you are the host. This is only a house, a temporary caravanserai; by the morning you will have to go on. The caravan continues from one serai to another serai, so don't get attached to the caravanserai where you happen to be right now, in this moment.

Detached, aloof, just watching... and the mind disappears.

Mind is your attachment with the body and through the body with the world and all its greed, anger, love, hate, jealousy. The whole world is a projection of your mind, in which you live in suffering and misery – or once in a while a little joy, a little pleasure, but very superficial, not even skin deep.

But behind all this scene is hiding your buddha, your awareness, your pure consciousness – unclouded, unscratched, from eternity to eternity.

To realize this is the greatest experience in the world.

But all the religions have been driving people astray, searching for gods which don't exist, praying before gods they have never met. No prayer has been responded to, but all the religions are combined in a conspiracy to take you away from yourself. These are the ways.... God is far away; self-realization is going to be through arduous practices, disciplines. Everybody cannot afford it. Nobody has that much time, nobody has that much capacity for self-torture. Nobody is so much a masochist that he can become a saint.

Naturally, the ultimate outcome is the present-day humanity: everybody has lost his way to himself.

And it is a single step – just turning in. It is not a finding, it is not a discovery, it is not an invention. It is simply a remembrance.

You can forget it, you can remember it. These are the only two things you can do about your nature, about your intrinsic consciousness.

But between the two there is not much difference; the difference between sleep and waking is the only difference. And one who is awake today was asleep yesterday; one who is asleep today may become awake tomorrow, so it is only a question of timing. It is only a question of your decision, when to recognize. As far as buddhahood is concerned, it is waiting there since eternity to eternity. Whether you recognize it or not, it does not matter.

If you recognize it, all your actions will change. Your world view will change. Mind will not be any more a master to you, but will be a very good and very efficient servant, a good bio-computer. But first the master has to be recognized; then the mind and the body function according to the wisdom of the master.

Ryusui is a great master. He's saying:

EMPTINESS IS A NAME FOR NOTHINGNESS.

In the dictionaries and encyclopedias you will find emptiness having a negative connotation.

In the experience of the meditator, emptiness is not negative. It is simply that your room is full of furniture. Have you ever thought about it, that room means space? You take out all the furniture – what is left behind? Ordinarily, anybody will say that now the room is empty.

Buddha was the first person to say that now the room is really a room, empty of any thing, just itself. All the junk has been removed. Emptiness in Buddha's conception is a very positive – the most positive – quality.

Buddha introduced many original viewpoints to the world; this is one of his original contributions.

Emptiness and nothingness don't really mean what you ordinarily mean by them. Emptiness simply means the pure, unclouded sky of your consciousness. And nothingness simply means 'no-thingness'. Just put a hyphen and then you will see the change that happens: no-thingness. Your consciousness is not a thing, it is not an object. It is always a subjectivity. You cannot put it before yourself and examine it.

That is the problem before the scientist: he cannot recognize consciousness because he cannot make consciousness an object of examination. He cannot dissect it. He cannot find out what it is constituted. He cannot pull it apart and look deeper into it, because consciousness is not a thing. It is 'no-thing' – but it is. It is pure 'isness'.

As your mind ceases thinking and you become detached from your body, a tremendous silence descends over you and a luminous being is revealed which I'm calling the buddha.

The buddha simply means the awakened one. Everyone has the potential. Very few have realized it, but everybody has the potential. If you don't realize, nobody is responsible for it except you. And it is so close....

But this is the difficulty: when things are very obvious we tend to forget them. We can see far away but we cannot see inwards.

In fact our whole education, our culture, our civilization, prepares us to be someone in the world, to have some great achievement. No culture teaches its children that "You don't have to become anybody, you just go in and find out who you are." And unless we find a culture, an educational system in the world which helps people to find their buddhahood, we will remain barbarians.

Ryusui says:

EMPTINESS IS A NAME FOR NOTHINGNESS, A NAME FOR UNGRASPABILITY, A NAME FOR MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, THE WHOLE EARTH.

I would like to say, the whole universe is utterly empty – but this emptiness is not negative.

Now even physicists have come to understand.... New stars are born every day; old stars die every day. One can ask, from where do the new stars come...? As far as God is concerned, he started creation six thousand years ago and he did his job in six days. The seventh day he went on holiday and since then he has not been seen anywhere. Such a long holiday! One thing is certain: that the world he created must have been created in six days because it is such a mess. You cannot create a better world in six days.

I have heard that when Henry Ford died he encountered God – it is just a rumor, I cannot authorize you to spread it. God asked Henry Ford, "You are a great, intelligent man; you have made such great cars. What do you think of my creation?"

Henry Ford said, "Just bullshit! Your creation..."

God said, "You should behave like a Christian! This is not good to use such words. And what is wrong with the world?"

He said, "Everything is wrong! For example, man has no reverse gear. He cannot go back into childhood, come back again young, go forward and become old and then come back again. An ordinary, intelligent person can understand that a reverse gear would have been of great help. And you have put man's pleasure-point in such an ugly and dirty place – between two exhaust pipes! And you think yourself a great creator... and anyway, where have you been all this time?"

But I don't know – this is a gossip.

I don't want to hurt anybody's religious feelings.

As far as physics is concerned, all the great stars come out of nothing, and all the great stars die and disappear into nothingness again. For the first time, modern physics has confirmed Gautam Buddha's idea that everything is nothing. Sometimes it takes a form and sometimes it disappears into the ocean of existence.

Just like the waves in the ocean – in the full moon night they become so tidal... and then they disappear. Just throw a small pebble in a silent lake, and it will create circles upon circles, and again those circles will disappear and the lake will be silent.

We are made of the stuff 'nothingness'.

Nothingness is not nothingness, as it is usually understood; nothingness is the womb of everything. It gives birth to everything and ultimately it goes back to its womb.

Hence, birth and death both prove only one thing: that existence consists only of nothingness. Birth and death are simply ripples.

He's saying, this is A NAME FOR UNGRASPABILITY, A NAME FOR MOUNTAINS, RIVERS, THE WHOLE EARTH. And I'm adding – this will not do – it is the name for the whole universe, the universe that we have come to know through our scientific instruments, and the universe that we are not yet acquainted with, and the universe that we will never be acquainted with because it is infinite. There are no boundaries; all is like soap bubbles in a vast ocean. Our great stars, our planets, our suns, our solar systems... just soap bubbles. They may remain here for millions or trillions of years, it does not matter.

In the eternity of existence, four million light years are just a small second.

IT IS ALSO CALLED THE REAL FORM.

Nothingness is the real form because it is the only form that never changes. Everything comes and goes, only nothingness remains.

IN THE GREEN OF THE PINES, THE TWIST OF THE BRAMBLES, THERE IS NO GOING OR COMING. IN THE RED OF THE FLOWERS AND THE WHITE OF THE SNOW, THERE IS NO BIRTH AND NO DEATH.

JOY, ANGER, LOVE, PLEASURE – THESE ARE BEGINNINGLESS AND ENDLESS DELUSION.

By calling them 'delusion' he does not mean that they are condemned. That is a misconception which even followers of Buddha go on carrying. It is simply a description of their nature.

For example, in a movie you know that on the screen there is nothing but light and shadow, a game between light and shadow projected on an empty screen. But you enjoy the drama, you enjoy the movie, the story. You will find people crying when there is a tragedy; you will find people laughing, forgetting completely that the screen is empty.

That's exactly what Buddha is saying: he is saying existence is an empty screen. On this screen many figures arise, many dramas, many tragedies, many comedies. But remember always, these are all soap bubbles. He's not saying that you have to renounce it. What is there to renounce? One does not renounce soap bubbles... one does not renounce delusions. One simply understands that a delusion is a delusion and that is the end of it.

The people who have renounced the world are going against Gautam Buddha. They should be forced to answer the question, "If the world is an illusion, where are you going? And if the world is an illusion, what is the point of renouncing it?" Why not be a little more playful? Why not be a little more non-serious?

The existence is absolutely non-serious. It is so playful – otherwise what is the need of so many flowers? It is so abundantly joyful, it goes on creating thousands of species of flowers, birds and animals and stars. It is an unending play.

And where can you go? Wherever you go it is the world; you will simply get caught in a new delusion – that you have renounced the world.

This idea of renunciation is a great disease. What have you renounced? – in the first place there was nothing to renounce, only to understand. Buddhism is not supposed to be renunciation, it is supposed to be understanding. Just know what is momentary, delusory, and play the game – follow the rules. Just don't be idiots.

In the Russian revolution, in 1917, when the Czar was overthrown and Lenin and his Communist Party came into power, a woman started walking in the middle of the road.

The traffic policeman told the woman, "Keep following the route."

The woman said, "Now we are free."

The policeman laughed. He said, "You are free, but that does not mean that you have to disturb the traffic. If everybody is free in the traffic, most of them will never reach their homes! The whole road will become a long graveyard."

That woman must have been Indian. You can see the Indian traffic. I always wonder, how do people survive? I myself never go out. Just the traffic is enough to prevent anybody from going out of their homes. Everybody is going in every direction. This is revolution!

A man of understanding follows the rules of the game, knowing perfectly well that these rules are just rules; they are not truths. They can be changed.

In America, you have to drive on one side, in India you have to drive on another side. It does not matter which side you choose, but you have to choose one side. Otherwise, there is going to be a chaos.

Knowing that JOY, ANGER, LOVE, PLEASURE – THESE ARE BEGINNINGLESS AND ENDLESS DELUSION does not mean you have to renounce them. I want you to know that you have to rejoice in them, knowing perfectly that they are a movie on an empty screen. There is no need to renounce the movie. And what are you going to gain by renouncing the movie? Just wasting your ticket...

ENLIGHTENMENT, PRACTICE, REALIZATION – THESE ARE INEXHAUSTIBLE AND BOUNDLESS.

So don't think that because one day you became silent and found a deep blissful state within you, your work is finished. It is simply homework. Now the work begins, because you have tasted your inner space. You can go as deep as you want. Even the Pacific is not so deep as your consciousness is. Your heart is connected with the universal heart. Certainly, the journey is inexhaustible.

One does not just become enlightened; one goes on becoming enlightened every day, more and more. There comes no point which can be called the full stop. Yes, on the way you can have a few places of rest, commas, semi-colons, but never the full stop! The full stop does not exist.

THUS, EMPTINESS IS THE NAME FOR NOTHING ELSE; ALL THINGS ARE THE REAL FORM.

All things are empty.

IN ALL WORLDS, IN ALL DIRECTIONS, THERE IS NO SECOND, NO THIRD.

It is one whole, the whole existence, and we are not separate from it. We are rooted in it. We cannot exist for a single moment without our roots in existence. Those roots are not visible, but we are breathing – these are our roots. Each pore of the body is breathing – these are our roots. They don't show. You don't even realize that your whole body is breathing, breathing the cosmos. If, leaving aside your nose, your whole body is thickly painted so that you cannot breathe from your body, you will be dead within three hours. The nose alone will not be enough. It is the main root, but all these branches, thousands of branches, of roots, are spread into the cosmos.

THEREFORE, IN THE FUNDAMENTAL VEHICLE THERE IS NO DELUSION OR ENLIGHTENMENT, NO PRACTICE OR REALIZATION. EVEN TO SPEAK OF PRACTICE AND REALIZATION IS A RELATIVE VIEW.

In the Western world the concept of relativity was introduced by Albert Einstein, but in the East it is at least ten thousand years old. Of course Albert Einstein used it in a particular sense, but the concept of relativity has been an accepted concept in the East for centuries.

Everything is relative.

So when one man is unenlightened and another man is enlightened, the difference is only relative. It is not absolute. The man who is asleep can wake up any moment; you just have to throw some cold water into his eyes.

That's what happened to Chuang Tzu.

One morning he woke up – a cold winter morning. He was sitting in his bed, wrapping his body with his blanket, very sad.

He was not a man of sadness. In fact, in the world history of philosophy and consciousness, Chuang Tzu is a unique person, so absurd and so rational together.... He was a very playful man. His disciples had never found him so serious. They asked him, "What is the matter? Are you sick or something?"

He said, "The problem is so big, I don't think you will be able to solve it. But anyway, I will tell you the problem; perhaps somebody can solve it. The problem is, while asleep, in my dream, I became a butterfly."

The disciples laughed.

They said, "Don't unnecessarily make a fuss about it. In dreams everything happens. Who cares?"

Chuang Tzu said, "You don't understand the implications! If Chuang Tzu can become a butterfly in the dream, then what is the problem? – the butterfly may have gone to sleep and be dreaming of being Chuang Tzu. Now the problem is: Who am I? A butterfly dreaming herself as Chuang Tzu? And if I can dream myself as Chuang Tzu, there is no reason that the butterfly cannot dream!"

The disciples said, "It is beyond our comprehension. This is... we never thought about it. We have become many things in our dreams, and we never bothered."

Then his chief disciple, Lieh Tzu, who had gone to another village to preach, came back.

The disciples were waiting for him....

They said, "Our master is very sad, and his problem seems to be without any solution."

Lieh Tzu asked what was the problem and the disciples said, "This is the problem: he does not move from his bed. He said, 'First I have to solve this; only then I can move.'"

Lieh Tzu went to the well and pulled out ice cold water in a bucket.

The disciples asked, "What are you doing?"

He said, "You just wait."

And he went and poured the whole bucket over Chuang Tzu!

Chuang Tzu jumped out of the bed. Lieh Tzu said, "Have I to go again and bring another bucket, or is the problem solved?"

Chuang Tzu said, "It is solved! Don't go – it is too cold! You idiot, where have you been? If by chance it had been the butterfly who was dreaming, you would have killed her. Be a little sensible!"

But this is the only difference: you are asleep. A buddha becomes awakened. The difference is not categorical, the difference is relative – you can also become awakened.

Hence, Buddha does not proclaim any superiority over those who are still asleep. It is their freedom: if they want to sleep they can sleep, life after life. But one day they will have to become tired and bored with sleeping. One day they will jump out of the bed and say "Enough!"

That much is the difference.

So there is not a question of following any practice or even speaking of realization because there is not much difference, and the difference that exists is relative.

IN OUR SCHOOL, FROM THE FIRST ENTRY, THIS POINT SHOULD BE PRACTICED WHETHER SITTING, LYING DOWN, OR WALKING AROUND. WHEN ASLEEP, JUST SLEEPING, THERE IS NO PAST OR FUTURE. WHEN YOU AWAKEN, THERE IS NO SLEEP EITHER.

THIS IS CALLED THE ABSOLUTE HOST.

If you have found your buddha within, you have found the absolute host, which never goes anywhere, which simply remains now and here.

Mitsuhiro wrote a haiku:

BEWARE OF GNAWING

THE IDEOGRAM OF NOTHINGNESS:

YOUR TEETH WILL CRACK.

SWALLOW IT WHOLE...

... Don't chew it. He's saying: don't think, just swallow it whole. Thinking about this great matter is bound to crack your teeth. Your mind is not capable; it is not meant to think about the absolute.

All the philosophers are wrong in the sense that they are trying, through mind, to figure out something about the fundamental, the absolute – the ultimate. They don't understand that mind is an arbitrary functioning of the body.

It has come to this stage because you have to deal with reality, and the consciousness cannot deal with reality; it is simply a mirror. It can reflect; more than that it cannot do.

The body has to create an arbitrary mind to function in the world. Its function is not to think about the absolute – how can it think about the absolute that it has not known? At the most it can become a parrot: it can repeat scriptures but those scriptures will not be its own realization.

And unless something is your own realization, it is just an unnecessary burden.

... AND YOU HAVE A TREASURE

BEYOND THE HOPE OF BUDDHA AND THE MIND.

THE EAST BREEZE FONDLES THE HORSE'S EARS:

HOW SWEET THE SMELL OF PLUM.

Zen is very poetic, it says things not in syllogisms but in poetry. It is symbolic.

Socrates or Plato or Aristotle will talk in syllogisms, in logic. Their statements will be rational. Zen speaks through poetry. Its statements are indirect indications, fingers pointing to the moon – but the finger is not the moon.

Another Zen poet says, you simply must be empty, empty of everything:

SIMPLY YOU MUST EMPTY "IS" OF MEANING,

AND NOT TAKE "IS NOT" AS REAL.

Isness is your reality, just pure isness, unnamed, with no boundaries, with no limits.

But be so empty that the whole sky of your consciousness is without clouds. In that emptiness grows the ultimate understanding – what Buddha calls the Lotus Paradise. In that emptiness you become one with the cosmic soul.

And without this realization your life is worthless.

A poem by Sozan:

A ROOTLESS TREE,
YELLOW LEAVES SCATTERING.
BEYOND THE BLUE –
CLOUDLESS, STAINLESS.

Just a description... I will repeat:

A ROOTLESS TREE...

The sky has no roots anywhere.

... YELLOW LEAVES SCATTERING.

BEYOND THE BLUE –

CLOUDLESS, STAINLESS.

This beyondness is your nature, this beyondness is your buddha. Once found, you have found the host.

Question 1

A question from Maneesha:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

CAN ONLY THE EYES OF ENLIGHTENMENT SEE EMPTINESS?

Maneesha, these are only different ways of saying the same thing – emptiness, enlightenment, the eyes of enlightenment, the wisdom of enlightenment, the illumination of enlightenment. These are only different ways of talking about the ultimate realization within. It is so vast that it can be described in a thousand and one ways.

But this is certainly true: that without the eyes of enlightenment you cannot see emptiness. In fact they both happen together, simultaneously, the emptiness and enlightenment. They are not two things.

And another question from Professor Schneider-Wessling. He has asked an immensely important question. His son is a sannyasin already, and the professor is sitting just in front of me. He is also a member of our World Academy for Creative Science, Arts and Consciousness. Now take care of

him, so he returns back to Germany as a sannyasin... secretly. There is no need to proclaim it to the public. Just keep it a secret!

He was worried whether to ask this question or not, because it might disturb the series of lectures on Zen.

Professor, as far as I am concerned, nothing disturbs. You can ask any question and it immediately fits into my series! You will see.

Question 2

His question is:

WHY DID THE MIND DEVELOP IN A DESTRUCTIVE DIRECTION?

Man has lived almost four million years on this planet. In these four million years most of the time there were dark nights without fire, wild animals, danger all around, and every moment full of fear. Out of this fear and danger man has had to create a certain capacity to survive.

You may have observed that man's child is the weakest child in the world. He needs care for years until it is possible for him to stand on his own. The mother was continuously afraid for the child: in the deep forest – all the wild animals were in search of food just as man was in search of food. That was the basic search for millions of years – food. And even today, for millions of people, that is the basic search.

Mind developed as a survival measure – how to hide yourself, how to find caves, how to make caves? How to live in darkness without being harmed, how to live in trees? It has been a difficult time for millions of years.

And man's child is so weak against any animal. You cannot fight hence you had to invent weapons as a substitute. You don't have the claws of a tiger, you need something as a substitute. You don't have the teeth of the lion or the crocodile; you needed to be inventive enough so that you were not too close. Because even if you had a knife in your hands – which was very difficult, the early knives were made of stone... even if you had a knife in your hand and a lion came, most probably you would tremble with fear and the knife would fall down! Just the roar of the lion and you would be frozen; you would not know what to do now.

I have heard... a man with his wife and his mother-in-law had gone hunting. Suddenly they heard from a nearby cave the mother-in-law shouting, "Help! Help!" The wife was sitting on a tree and she saw that a lion was there, so she asked her husband, who was underneath the tree with his gun, "My mother is in trouble – a lion is facing her. Do something!"

The husband said, "The lion got into trouble himself – why should I do anything? Your mother-in-law is enough! She finished me, she will finish the lion. Now it is his problem, not my problem."

Man had to invent arrows so that he could be far away from the wild animals and still kill them. Slowly slowly other weapons came. All these weapons came because of the helplessness of man.

When he found fire, then he was safer. When he discovered gunpowder, first in China, he became even more safe. Perhaps the Chinese became civilized before anybody else for the simple reason that they finished off the wild animals, and in finishing the wild animals a great fear, a constant fear and danger, disappeared.

But the mind remained, the mind that has been created through millions of years. It is still afraid of darkness, although you know there is no need to be afraid of darkness. But the mind does not know that times have changed; millions of years' habit still continues. The mind does not know, the mind is blind.

One professor, a vice-chancellor of Varanasi University, Professor Rajnath Pandey, was staying with me, and he was very much against the way I grow trees around my house. I said, "Why are you so much against them?"

He said, "These trees are enemies! If you don't go on cutting them, if you don't go on keeping them away, sooner or later your house will be a ruin and the trees will have overtaken it."

Man has been fighting with trees. We don't think in that way now, but he was right, he was a man of history. I had never thought of it but he was right, that trees have killed man. We had to destroy trees to create towns, villages, and we had to destroy trees because they were hiding wild animals.

Man has passed through such a struggle for survival that he cannot forget those habits. So even though now we don't have wild animals to attack, we are preparing nuclear weapons. We don't have any reason to fight, but we are cultivating more and more arms just out of old animal habit. Everybody knows that the Third World War is impossible, simply because the Third World War will destroy everybody. Nobody is going to be the winner and nobody is going to be the loser. All will be finished, the whole planet will be a graveyard.

The whole joy of fighting is in being victorious – but there will be no victory, what is the point? It is absolutely clear. Just now there are only five countries with nuclear weapons, but by the end of this century there will be twenty-five countries with nuclear weapons. One cannot understand... for what? Already we have enough nuclear weapons to destroy this earth seven hundred times.

And only one man in the whole history, Jesus Christ, got resurrected. I don't think that he will get resurrected seven hundred times. People even suspect that he was not resurrected this one time; he never died. Because here in India, in Kashmir, we have the graves of both Jesus and Moses. And a village exists in Kashmir named after Jesus, Pahalgam, because Jesus used to call himself 'the shepherd', who had come to save the sheep. Pahalgam, in Kashmiri means the shepherd, the village of the shepherd. Strangely enough, when they were escaping from Egypt, Moses had come to Kashmir in search of the lost tribe.

It took forty years of searching for great Moses to find Israel, and Jews will never forgive him. In forty years, such a long journey through the whole desert of Saudi Arabia – by the time he reached Jerusalem almost three-quarters of the original people who had come with him had died. And my own feeling is that he never found Israel. He had to say to his people... he himself was eighty years old, tired, utterly tired... he declared Jerusalem to be the holy place they were searching for.

I don't see that Jerusalem has anything holy in it.

And Jews will never forgive Moses because he passed by all the oil lands, which are now really the richest countries in the world. If he had stopped in Saudi Arabia, or in Iran... But one tribe just got lost in the desert. Declaring Jerusalem was just hiding his failure.

And Moses put new people in charge, who were not acquainted with him at all, because two-thirds of the original people had died. The third generation was just entering its youth and they had no respect, just as no young people have ever had respect for the older generation. This generation gap is not a new thing. Moses found an excuse: "I have to go. You manage things, I am going to search for the lost tribe." The lost tribe had reached Kashmir, and Kashmir certainly looks like paradise.

When the first great mogul, Babur, came to India, seeing Kashmir he could not believe it. People coming from the desert, seeing so much greenery, so many flowers, so many streams, such pure crystal-clear water, such beauty, eternal snows on the mountains... That lost tribe had really found paradise! So Moses remained there with his people. Kashmiris are basically Jewish; you can look at their noses....

You know the nose of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru; he was a Kashmiri. You know the nose of Indira Gandhi; she was a Kashmiri. And Jesus, you should remember always, was never a Christian. He was born a Jew, he lived a Jew, he proclaimed himself as a Jewish prophet – that was his sin. He died as a Jew, but he died here in India. I have been to his grave.

It is a strange coincidence that the graves of Moses and Jesus are in the same village. And the couple, the family who takes care of those two graves are still Jews. Mohammedans converted the whole of Kashmir to Mohammedanism, but they left that one family out of respect for Moses and Jesus.

It seems that Jesus never died on the cross. The Jewish cross is such that it takes hours to kill a young man, and Jesus was only thirty-three. A man who is healthy and young, the Jewish cross will kill him in forty-eight hours. It is the slowest process of killing a person. Just by nailing his hands and his feet to the posts... the blood oozes slowly, slowly. It takes forty-eight hours.

And there was a conspiracy between the followers of Jesus and Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, that he should be put on the cross on Friday, as late as possible. So the whole process was delayed. First he had an interview with Pontius Pilate, and then Jesus was forced to carry his cross, a heavy cross; he fell three times on the road. And the place chosen for the cross was a hillock, so in every way they tried to postpone the time. The crucifixion happened nearabout two o'clock, and Jews stop working on Friday evening. All work has to be stopped by sunset on Friday because Saturday is their sabbath, their holy day.

So Jesus had to be brought down from the cross; he was still alive. He may have been in a coma, but he was not dead. And he was put in a cave, but the people who were guarding the cave were Roman soldiers, not Jews. They allowed him to escape. His friends took him out. It was dangerous to remain in Judea, and it was dangerous to go back to Judea when he was healed.

The news had already reached that there was a place in India where Moses had gone, and had found the lost tribe and died. Jesus thought, "That is the only place where I will be at home."

He traveled to Kashmir and he lived a long life, one hundred and twelve years. That is all written on his grave in Hebrew. In India, nobody knows Hebrew.

But the world powers are collecting nuclear weapons for ordinary people who only die once; they never resurrect.

Only here do they resurrect – every night!

There are enough nuclear weapons. But it is out of fear – the mind is still the old mind repeating old fears, dangers – that if you stop making nuclear weapons, the enemy is not going to stop. And the enemy is also thinking in the same terms; every country is thinking in the same terms. So seventy percent of the world's wealth, production, genius, everything, is devoted to a war which is never going to happen. Just by making it so total, you have made it out of date.

Professor, the mind had to develop in a destructive direction just to save itself. But now it is no longer needed. Now the destructive energy has to be transformed into a creative energy. And a mind that can create destructive weapons like atom bombs and hydrogen bombs, and destroy cities like Hiroshima and Nagasaki within seconds.... And today the bombs that were thrown on Hiroshima and Nagasaki are – in comparison to American and Soviet nuclear missiles – child's play, just toys. We have gone far in these forty years: we can destroy ourselves within ten minutes.

This totality is a great blessing in disguise. This means, now we have to find ways to protect ourselves from our mind's fear, to protect ourselves from our own weapons. Now there is no enemy to be killed; now the world war, if it happens at all, will be suicide.

We have to save ourselves from our own minds. This mind was created for a certain reason: to save us from the animals. For centuries we were in danger; now we are in danger from our own destructive weapons.

This is a great moment in the history of mankind, and perhaps in the whole history of the universe, because we only suspect that there are some planets where life may exist, but there is no certain proof. It may be that only on this earth has life come to such a point that a few people have become buddhas, a few people have come to know the universal secret of life. To destroy it is so idiotic, is so against the universe!

The only way is to find something within you which can overpower your mind. Otherwise the mind knows nothing else except destruction; that was the function it was created for. It is not its fault, but it is continuously afraid for no reason at all. Sometimes it knows that there is no reason to be afraid; then it starts asking, "Why is there no reason to be afraid?"

Mind knows only one language – that is of fear, danger, and how to survive and make yourself safe against an antagonistic universe.

Even a great man like Bertrand Russell wrote a book, CONQUEST OF NATURE. The same fear of the mind – we have to conquer. This idea has to be changed. The idea should be that now we have to rejoice in nature, we have to find the mysteries and secrets of nature, and we have to go beyond mind. This artifact is not our nature.

That's what we are doing in meditation.

Meditation is finding something in you that is superior to the mind. Only then can the mind be prevented from destroying humanity and this beautiful planet. It was perfectly okay to be destructive up to now, but now the situation and the context is totally different.

Somebody asked Albert Einstein, "What do you think about the Third World War?"

He said, "I cannot say anything about the Third World War, but I can say something about the Fourth World War."

The questioner was puzzled. He said, "If you don't know about the third, how can you know about the fourth?"

Albert Einstein said, "The fourth will never happen; that much can be said. If we just let the third happen... finished."

Look at the past of the mind: Genghis Khan killed thirty million people, alone. His successor, Tamerlane, killed forty million people. We don't know the exact numbers for Nadir Shah, but we know about Adolf Hitler; he killed thirty million. And now we are ready to kill five billion human beings, not to say anything about millions of birds, millions of animals, millions of trees – because the Third World War will be an end to all life on this planet. It is not just human beings who will be killed, it is going to be a loss to the whole universe.

Scientists say that there are perhaps five hundred planets where some kind of life exists, but it is all guesswork. No certainty, no communication has been possible up to now. All we know is that in this vast infinity we are the only people alive with a potentiality of becoming eternal, of becoming immortal. In every possible way this earth should be saved – from our minds.

The only way I can see is meditation.

Up to now, mind has been our survival. From now onwards only meditation can be our survival because meditation means going beyond mind, searching for something in your consciousness which is higher than your mind, which can dictate to the mind, which can rearrange the mind. Mind is just a bio-computer; it needs new data, that's all. Instead of fear it can learn to love; instead of being in danger it can start enjoying the eternity of its life source.

There is no death. Only forms change, life continues on and on.

This is what we are trying to do here. This is what all the buddhas of the past have been doing, but in the past they were not so relevant. Today the situation is different: today either you listen to the buddha or you commit suicide. There is no other choice – meditation or suicide, global suicide. That is the simple alternative, there is no third way.

In Gautam Buddha's time there was not much difficulty – small wars, a few people killed, there was no harm. But now the destructive mind has brought us to a situation where we have to re-code the mind for construction, for creation. And if the mind can be so destructive, it can be transformed

in the same way to great creativity, with the same energy. Energy is neutral: you can put it in the service of death or you can put it in the service of life.

Our effort here is to put our minds, our bodies, in the service of life – in creativity, in music, in poetry, in dance. Great is the moment when we can change the mind, feed it with new information. And the same mind that brings nuclear weapons can bring great joys, plenty of food, better clothes, more health, longer life, less disease; it can eliminate old age completely.

And the moment is ripe because nobody who is a little bit intelligent can be in favor of a third world war; only a few retarded politicians – and even they cannot openly say that they are in favor of a third world war. But their preparation continues. That preparation is dangerous, dangerous in many ways, because a third world war may happen accidentally: the weapons have become so sophisticated that just a push of a button....

Just a few days ago I was telling you about a Soviet nuclear base which had a map of the whole world in the office showing the distance and the time, how much time it would take for its nuclear weapons to reach to this land or that land. The map also had push-buttons on it and a janitor, seeing that too much dust had gathered on the board, was dusting it. The professor in charge came in. He said, "You idiot, what are you doing?"

He said, "I am simply dusting, there is too much dust..."

He said, "Do you see? Where is England? You have dusted it off!"

He had pushed the button.

But I don't think we would like to be dusted off in this way. It is now time.... No greater question has ever been asked, and there has never been such a parting of the ways. Those who want to commit suicide can commit suicide on their own, but they cannot be allowed to destroy the whole world!

Professor Wessling, your question absolutely fits with the Zen series, because Zen is a search for no-mind, or a cosmic mind, beyond the human mind.

Before we enter into our inner being, our every-evening meditation... I don't want Professor Wessling to understand that we are serious people. We are very non-serious. We are absolutely playful; whatever happens we will sing and dance to the very last moment.

On his first trip out of Poland, Kabloski finds himself sitting next to a priest in the plane. He has never seen a priest before, and asks, "Why do you wear your collar back to front?"

"Because I am a father," replies the priest, smiling.

"Funny," says Kabloski, "I'm a father too!"

"Ah!" says the priest, "but I am a father to hundreds of people."

"Really?" says Kabloski, thinking for a moment. "In that case," he continues, "shouldn't you wear your pants back to front?"

Little Rufus has been playing in the woods all day. Suddenly, he realizes that he is lost and that it is late. He hunts around for a way out, but finally gives up. Kneeling on the ground, he holds out his hands.

"Please, God," Rufus prays, "I am lost. Please show me the way out of here."

Just then a little bird flies overhead and drops a load of shit on his outstretched hands. Little Rufus examines it closely and then goes back to praying.

"Oh! Please, God!" he says. "I really am lost, so don't hand me that shit!"

"I locked my husband out of the house last week for playing around with other women," sobs young Mrs. Bedspring in the confession box. "And now he wants me to take him back. What should I do, Father?"

"You must take him back," replies Father Fungus, patting her hand through the curtain. "It is your Christian duty. But first," Fungus continues, tightening his grip, "how would you like to get even with the bastard!"

An Englishman, a Frenchman and a Russian Jew are discussing the meaning of true happiness.

"Coming home from work to a loving wife with a gin and tonic," spouts the Englishman.

"Ah, you English!" says the Frenchman. "Real happiness is meeting a cute little girl who spends the night with you. She entertains you and then leaves you quietly and with no regrets."

The Russian Jew is sitting, thinking.

"True happiness," he says, "I experienced a few years ago. In the middle of the night the KGB knocked on my door and shouted: 'Herman Fingel! You are under arrest!'"

The Englishman and the Frenchman look at him in alarm.

"Yes!" says the Russian Jew, smiling happily. "And I shouted back: 'Herman Fingel lives upstairs!'"

Now, Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes.

Feel your body to be completely frozen.

Collect your consciousness, your life energy inwards.

Close all the doors and all the windows.

Just be in, concentrated.

Find the center of your life,

because that is also the center of the universe.

Finding it is the greatest blessing that man has ever experienced.

Finding it you are a buddha, this very moment.

To be a buddha is not a discipline, it is not a practice.

It is simply a remembrance.

Remember!

Just a little ice-cold water on your eyes...

Wake up!

And this moment will become your life's greatest moment.

Drink from your inner being as much light,

as much delight as you are capable of.

Let it sink into every cell and nerve of your being.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Now relax.

See the body as dead, there, far away from you

and the mind is also part of it, a mechanism;

you are just a watcher.

A simple watchfulness and you reach to the beyond.

You transcend life and death, you transcend duality.

You come to feel the eternity, the immortality,
your cosmic wholeness. You are not just a part,
you are the cosmos.

That is the meaning of being a buddha.

This is the host we were talking about.

Everything else changes,

this host remains always now and here.

This is your nothingness,

this is your emptiness,

just pure space.

And out of this pure space arise

all kinds of creativity

all songs, all joys, all dances. Only this experience,

if it becomes like a wildfire around the world,

can save humanity from itself.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back – silently, gracefully,

without any hurry.

Keep hold of the consciousness

and the experience you have reached,

because you have to keep it like an

undercurrent, twenty-four hours

so that every act reflects your consciousness,

your compassion, your love, your meditation.

It is not something to be done for a few minutes
and be finished with.

It is something that has to become
your very breathing,
your very heartbeat.

Only then there is a possibility
for a future humanity,
for a new man
whose mind will not be destructive,
whose earth will not be divided into nations,
whose whole energy will be devoted to making life
as rich, as blissful, as peaceful, as loving,
as the poets have always dreamed of,
and only a few mystics have experienced.

Meditation is the way in,
it is the way to wake up the master
who can control the mind,
who can chain the mind,
who can use the mind in the service
of greater values
of truth and beauty and love and joy.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the ten thousand buddhas?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 2

Morality: nothing but delusion

13 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

ENO SAID:

GOOD FRIENDS, IN THIS TEACHING, FROM THE OUTSET, SITTING IN MEDITATION DOES NOT CONCERN THE MIND NOR DOES IT CONCERN PURITY; WE DO NOT TALK OF STEADFASTNESS. IF SOMEONE SPEAKS OF 'VIEWING THE MIND', THEN I WOULD SAY THAT THE MIND IS OF ITSELF DELUSION, AND AS DELUSIONS ARE JUST LIKE FANTASIES, THERE IS NOTHING TO BE SEEN. IF SOMEONE SPEAKS OF 'VIEWING PURITY', THEN I WOULD SAY THAT MAN'S NATURE IS OF ITSELF PURE, BUT BECAUSE OF FALSE THOUGHTS, TRUE REALITY IS OBSCURED.

IF YOU EXCLUDE DELUSIONS, THEN THE ORIGINAL NATURE REVEALS ITS PURITY. IF YOU ACTIVATE YOUR MIND TO VIEW PURITY, WITHOUT REALIZING THAT YOUR OWN NATURE IS ORIGINALLY PURE, DELUSIONS OF PURITY WILL BE PRODUCED. SINCE THIS DELUSION HAS NO PLACE TO EXIST, THEN YOU KNOW THAT WHATEVER YOU SEE IS NOTHING BUT DELUSION.

PURITY HAS NO FORM, BUT NONETHELESS SOME PEOPLE TRY TO POSTULATE THE FORM OF PURITY AND CONSIDER THIS TO BE ZEN PRACTICE. PEOPLE WHO HOLD THIS VIEW OBSTRUCT THEIR OWN ORIGINAL NATURES AND END UP BY BEING BOUND BY PURITY.

ONE WHO PRACTICES STEADFASTNESS DOES NOT SEE THE FAULTS OF PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. THIS IS THE STEADFASTNESS OF SELF-NATURE. THE DELUDED MAN,

HOWEVER, EVEN IF HE DOESN'T MOVE HIS OWN BODY, WILL TALK OF THE GOOD AND BAD OF OTHERS THE MOMENT HE OPENS HIS MOUTH, AND THUS BEHAVE IN OPPOSITION TO THE WAY. THEREFORE, BOTH 'VIEWING THE MIND' AND 'VIEWING PURITY' WILL CAUSE AN OBSTRUCTION TO THE WAY.

Maneesha, there is a tremendous gap between morality and religion. Most of the religions are just moralities; their function is to decide what is good, what is bad, what is right, what is wrong. They look at man through his actions and they decide his innermost being accordingly, but this is a false approach.

Sometimes a man who thinks he is doing good, and it may appear to others also that he is doing good, will do immense harm – of course unintentionally...

For example, Krishna, in SHRIMAD BHAGAVADGITA, argues that his disciple Arjuna should go to war. Arjuna's father had a brother who was blind, and he had one hundred sons – perhaps, being blind, he had nothing else to do! – and now the question was to whom the kingdom belonged. The sons had come of age. Up to now Arjuna's father had been ruling the kingdom because the blind brother could not do that, so the question had never arisen before. But now it was a different situation.

Arjuna had only five brothers, including himself, and on the other side were a hundred sons. They demanded that since their father had been denied half of the kingdom just because he was blind, now they wanted to claim the whole kingdom, "... because you are only five, and we are one hundred."

All the armies of both sides gathered near Delhi in a vast, open ground. Krishna was the charioteer of Arjuna. Seeing the situation – on both sides there were relatives; although they were fighting, they were cousin-brothers, and in every way everybody was entangled with each other – the grandfather of Arjuna, who was one of the wisest men of those days, Bhishma, had decided to be on the side of the blind son.

He loved Arjuna.... Arjuna was the master archer, and there was every possibility that he would win. The teacher who had taught Arjuna had also taught his one hundred cousin-brothers. Now it was such a difficult division. This master who had taught them archery had also chosen to be with the blind man. His blindness created a kind of sympathy, that he had been denied and now it was time for his sons. But the master also loved Arjuna as his best disciple.

Seeing the complexity, knowing perfectly well that he was going to win but it was going to be a massacre of his own friends, family, relatives, Arjuna told Krishna, "Take my chariot to the front so I can see who is on my side and who is on the other side."

Seeing the faces, he said, "I don't feel like fighting. The throne is not worth that much massacre, and I cannot conceive of myself on the throne with all these people dead. I have loved them, we have lived together, we have played together. Now this is very unfortunate. It is better that I should retire to the Himalayas and let my brothers rule the kingdom. Obviously, their father had been denied because of his blindness. And it was not his fault." But Krishna was very much insistent.

Krishna's sister was married to Arjuna – he had a vested interest that Arjuna should get the kingdom, win the war. He argued for the war as an essential necessity at this moment "... because those hundred cousin-brothers are all sinners, drunkards, gamblers. It is your duty, for the sake of goodness, to fight. It is not a question only of a fight between two parties, it is a fight between darkness and light. It is a fight between God and the Devil." But Arjuna was not convinced, and the final strategy of Krishna was one which I call very deceptive.

Krishna is one of the incarnations of the Hindus, the perfect incarnation of God. There are other incarnations which are partial incarnations, but Krishna is the perfect incarnation.

But if you look at him without any prejudice, he is the perfect politician! The final trump card was that he said, "As an incarnation of God, I order you to go to war. Remember, it is God's will. Nothing happens against God's will. Not even a leaf falls from the tree without the will of God."

Now, this was too much for poor Arjuna to fight against. Unwillingly, he went to war. He won the war. It has been five thousand years now, but it has broken the very spine of this country. After that war this country has never been interested in war, it has never invaded any country. It has been invaded by many – small countries have ruled over it for two thousand years continuously – and it has not even resisted because it has seen, in the Indian 'Great War' as it is called, such a massacre of humanity – for the sake of power? For the sake of money? But Arjuna was managed by a very good argument: "Nothing happens without God's will. How can it happen without God's will? So don't bring your mind in, just do what God wants."

If I had been in the place of Arjuna I would have put my arrows and my bow in the chariot and moved towards the Himalayas, saying that "This is God's will – what can I do? Nothing happens without his will. Now this is happening!" But he got caught by the argumentation and Krishna convinced him that it was a good war.

No war is good! No war can be good. Every warmonger in the world has been trying to prove the same thing, that "This war is for the good." Adolf Hitler killed six million Jews in Germany just for God's sake and for the fatherland. He was doing a great service to his fatherland....

You cannot find any war that was fought for any other than good reasons: for God, so many crusades; for God, so many living human beings, particularly women, burned alive.

Morality is concerned only with actions. And I want to say to you, Zen has nothing to do with morality. It is pure religiousness, which is a much higher point of view. It does not decide what is right and wrong, it simply wants your consciousness to have the clarity to see in every situation. The question is never of deciding. Deciding means that doubt has already arisen. Deciding means you are wavering; deciding means half of you is on this side and half of you on that side, and you are troubled about where to go.

A man of pure consciousness never decides, he simply acts spontaneously. There is nothing good for him and nothing bad for him.

The only thing good is to be conscious and the only thing bad is to be unconscious. Actions don't count. This has to be understood – then Eno's words will be very easy. He is making a very fundamental statement.

ENO SAID:

GOOD FRIENDS, IN THIS TEACHING, FROM THE OUTSET, SITTING IN MEDITATION DOES NOT CONCERN THE MIND NOR DOES IT CONCERN PURITY; WE DO NOT TALK OF STEADFASTNESS. IF SOMEONE SPEAKS OF 'VIEWING THE MIND', THEN I WOULD SAY THAT THE MIND IS OF ITSELF DELUSION, AND THE DELUSIONS ARE JUST LIKE FANTASIES, THERE IS NOTHING TO BE SEEN. IF SOMEONE SPEAKS OF 'VIEWING PURITY', THEN I WOULD SAY THAT MAN'S NATURE IS OF ITSELF PURE, BUT BECAUSE OF FALSE THOUGHTS, TRUE REALITY IS OBSCURED.

The question is not of finding in your thoughts what is right and what is wrong, in your actions what is right and what is wrong. The question is of finding a consciousness so total and so intense that only whatever is right remains, and whatever is false burns out. You don't have to decide.

And when action arises out of silent meditation, it has a purity and a beauty and a fragrance. It has nothing to do with morality or immorality. Those are very low considerations of society, of the collective mass. Zen belongs to the highest peaks of the Himalayas, to the highest peaks of consciousness. From there, the vision is clear in all directions. There is no need to decide; you simply see what is right. You don't even think about it, you simply act. You don't think about the consequences.

Out of this purity, only roses can bloom. Out of this purity, there is no possibility of anything evil arising in you.

Zen's concern is a pure religiousness – not religion, remember. Religion has become almost identified with moral conceptions, with commandments. But time goes on changing; every moment, everything is moving. You cannot decide what is right forever, you can only depend on your clarity. What is right today may be wrong tomorrow. Commandments belong to the very lowest class of morality.

I remember, when God made the world and he went around selling the commandments, he asked the Babylonians, the Egyptians, and everybody asked, "First tell us, just as a sample, what are your commandments? Just tell us one."

And God thought the best would be, with no argumentation, "You should not commit adultery."

The Egyptians said, "Then what shall we do? Keep your commandment to yourself; we will find our own ways to decide what to do and what not to do. You have done enough that you have made us, now please leave us."

And just on the way he met Moses. Being a Jew, you can understand, Moses' approach was totally different. When God had asked, "Do you want a commandment?" everybody else had asked, "What is the commandment?" Only Moses asked, "How much?"

God said, "It is absolutely free, you don't have to pay anything."

Moses said, "In that case, I will have ten."

And with those ten commandments Jews are carrying a load of mountains on their hearts. Everything becomes wrong, everything makes you feel guilty.

And this is not only true about the Jews – all the religions have used the strategy to exploit man by making him feel guilty. The first thing to enslave a man is to make him feel guilty, that whatever he is doing is wrong. Then he loses his nerve. Then he is not strong enough to resist the oncoming slavery.

Your so-called morality and immorality are all devices of parasites, priests, politicians.... This 'p' is strange – all the pigs! And you will be shocked to know that the pig is one of the Hindu incarnations of God. Avirbhava is not here; she is finding other ancient gods in the Far East; otherwise, she would have enjoyed. She has got the pig already, but she does not know that it is a Hindu incarnation.

These priests have made man absolutely unthinking. They have enforced only one thing, guilt and belief. It is a double-edged sword: on one side it makes you guilty, and on the other side it makes you believe – because how are you going to get rid of your guilt? The priest is there to help you. He has become, on his own accord, a mediator between you and God.

Just a few months ago Pope the Polack brought a new sin into the world; it has never existed before. The new sin, he has declared, is confessing to God directly. You have to confess through the right channel, through the Catholic priest, because if you start making direct phone calls to God, what is the purpose of the priest and what is the purpose of the pope? Their purpose is to stand in between you and God. And the problem is, there is no God; it is their invention. So naturally they have to stand in between to hide the fiction. If they remove themselves... if you remove all the priests, all the gods will disappear. They are created by man.

The Bible says God created man in his own image. It is absolute nonsense. On the contrary, it can be said that man created all the gods in his own image. Just fictions. And from those gods descend paigambaras, prophets, tirthankaras, avataras, messiahs, Christs. The simple fiction of God is so reproductive that it creates a thousand and one fictions, and man is surrounded by a fictitious world in which only the vested interests are benefited. The whole of humanity is crushed, sacrificed to ideas which have no existence at all.

Zen has nothing to do with any worship, any God, any religion. It has nothing to do with any morality. It is a very rare phenomenon.

Eno says:

IF YOU EXCLUDE DELUSIONS, THEN THE ORIGINAL NATURE REVEALS ITS PURITY.

All that is needed is to put aside your delusions, and your original purity will arise, and you will have, for the first time, eyes to see and ears to hear the existential.

Otherwise, these shopkeepers – Christians and Hindus and Mohammedans and Jews – never allow you to reach existence. Just on the way you meet a priest. All directions are full of priests; wherever you go you will meet a priest and he will hand over to you as many commandments as you can carry. He will give you permanent values in an impermanent world. He will give you unnatural ideas which cannot be implemented, and because they cannot be implemented they make you feel guilty.

Almost all the homosexuality is produced by religions, their monasteries, where they force men and women to live apart. It was bound to happen. Where is the sexual energy going to move? You don't give them any formula for any transformation of the energy, any alchemy. You just separate men and women, and the women become lesbians, the men become homosexuals. And now all your thousands of years of religion have produced nothing but AIDS. That is the greatest contribution of all your religions.

I have been in contact with all kinds of monks – Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Christian missionaries – and I was surprised that these people are diverting people's naturalness, their purity. A love between a man and woman has a religiousness, has a sacredness. It is natural while it lasts – although it is a beautiful delusion. But so what? Everything is delusion – why not have good delusions? Why insist on having nightmares? But in your monasteries, nightmares are created.

Strange things, that are unbelievable, happened in the Middle Ages. Thousands of women were burned in the name of God; priests enjoyed it very much. A special court was made to decide whether the woman was a witch or not. And what was the criterion for a woman to be a witch? The criterion was whether she was making love with the Devil or not. They tortured the woman, and just because of the torture the woman finally had to confess that she had been making love with the Devil; otherwise they would continue to torture her. There is a limit to human patience. And once she had confessed that she was having a love affair with the Devil, the court was free to decide that she should be burned alive.

Now, there are no witches to be found. It seems the Devil has become fed-up with women... or maybe he has also gone gay. One never knows about these gods and devils.

Everything is so fictitious, so unbelievable that it was at one time even believed that the Devil's prick was forked. And the women, thousands of women, confessed in the court that "Yes, it is true – he makes love in both the openings together." Such nonsense! And great bishops and popes and cardinals and a special court, a Grand Jury, deciding these stupid things.... And first the poor women were tortured so much that they found only one escape – to confess. Whatever was said, they had to accept it.

Now, the Devil has no more businesses going on around the world. As a consequence, God's own business is becoming a failure, a bankruptcy.

Zen is not concerned with such gods and such devils, which are only imaginary nightmares. Its concern is to put aside all fictions of the mind and to let your natural purity have its say.

That naturalness, all religions have condemned. That naturalness does not need any god. You cannot find that trees have gods, or lions have gods, or any birds have gods. The moment a man becomes natural, simple, unclouded by any fictions created by the priests to exploit and suck his blood, he simply sees that he is part of this vast cosmos and whatever is natural, whatever arises out of his own original being is the only religiousness, the only honesty.

But every natural thing has been condemned. And once a thing is condemned it becomes an obsession; it becomes very desirable.

I used to live in a city, Raipur, and just across from me lived a very snobbish man. He was very rich and powerful. One day he found a man pissing by the side of his garden. In India it is absolutely natural; there is no constitution, no law against it. He called his servants to beat the man.

I was looking at all this and I said, "There is no need. Just make a few small signboards here and there. You have a big property, a vast garden; just write around it, 'Don't piss here.'"

He said, "The idea is good..." And the next day when he woke up, all around the wall people had pissed! – as if the whole city became obsessed with pissing....

Every negation of nature is bound to create an obsession.

It almost became difficult to pass by his house without pissing... so many boards calling you forth, your bladder trickling.... He was very angry with me. He said, "I thought you were a nice fellow!"

I said, "I am not. I am simply an ordinary, natural human being. Nice fellows... YOU are a nice fellow."

He said, "I thought you were a professor of psychology, so you would give me a good suggestion. What kind of suggestion have you given?"

I said, "This is a suggestion which comes directly from God!"

It was God who first prohibited Adam and Eve from eating the fruit of the tree of wisdom and the tree of eternal life. It was because of his prohibition that they had to eat. Whether the Devil persuaded Eve or not, it does not matter. If he persuaded her he did a great revolutionary act; he should be worshipped for it.

But my understanding is that just by giving them the order to avoid these two trees... and those two trees were nothing but apple trees, so innocent. I lived for years only on apples, just to see how much sin... Finally my doctors persuaded me, "It will destroy your health. Apples are good, but one apple only."

But one apple destroyed Adam and Eve. They became sinners. Not only did they become sinners – after them all their descendants up to now, we are all sinners because Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

In fact the whole responsibility goes on God. Why did he give them this stupid idea? In a vast Garden of Eden there were millions of trees. If he had not told them, perhaps we would still be jumping from tree to tree, Charles Darwin included! No need to find out where the tail has disappeared to; it would be hanging around. No need to find out where the missing man is; there has never been any man. It is because of disobedience – I will call it rebellion – that you are here. You have to thank the Devil for provoking Eve to eat the fruit. And his argument was perfect; even Aristotle would not have been able to find any fault in his argument.

He said, "God has prohibited only these two trees. Do you know why? Because if you eat the fruit of the tree of wisdom" – to me it is a metaphor, it means meditation – "and eternal life" – because

meditation ultimately finds the eternal sources of life.... Those two trees are joined together in their roots; it is one tree, in fact, expressing in two ways: eternal life and wisdom – God has prohibited you, according to the Devil, because he is very jealous. If you eat these fruits you will also be like gods, and then all his power-trip, his speciality, is gone. He becomes a commoner. Everybody is a god.

What Christianity, Mohammedanism, Judaism, have been doing is preventing you from becoming gods. That's why in all these three religions there is no place for meditation, because meditation will take you to the roots of your being, where wisdom blossoms, where eternal life becomes your own life. You become part of the oceanic existence, and out of this situation, out of this state, there is no question of morality or immorality. Whatever you do, whatever you are is good, divine; it has a bliss and a grace of its own.

And because it comes from your own original source it gives you a great individuality. You are no more a Christian or a Hindu or a Buddhist; you are no more a follower of anybody. You are simply rejoicing in your existence, dancing in tune with the trees, with the rivers, with the ocean, with the stars ... with the wind blowing through the pine trees... with the rain, with the clouds. You have become one with the whole.

There is no question – you cannot hurt yourself, you cannot do what is thought to be evil. It is possible only if you are kept away from your own original self.

Zen's search is not for any stupid God or any Devil. Its search is for your original face.

IF YOU EXCLUDE DELUSIONS, THEN THE ORIGINAL NATURE REVEALS ITS PURITY. IF YOU ACTIVATE YOUR MIND TO VIEW PURITY, WITHOUT REALIZING THAT YOUR OWN NATURE IS ORIGINALLY PURE, DELUSIONS OF PURITY WILL BE PRODUCED.

There are people who are trying to be pure. In different religions there are different superstitions about how one becomes pure.

I had a friend: he was very old, but he loved me. He was thought to be the father of the Indian parliament. He remained continually, for sixty-five years, as a member of the Indian parliament. From the very beginning he was a member, until his last breath just a few years ago. But he was very puritanical.

I used to stay in Delhi, in his house. He used to drink only milk, because milk is the only pure food: God himself has given the child only milk; everything else is man-manufactured. The argument seems to be convincing – but the milk had to come only from a cow. I said, "Up to that point I could reluctantly agree that it is right that the child is given only milk... but the child is not given the milk of the cow. A cow has her own children. Taking the milk of the cow is exploiting the cow."

And not only would he use cow's milk, the cow had to be absolutely white, no black dots. I said, "My God, do you think a black cow gives black milk?"

He said to me, "To be on the safer side, I want absolutely pure milk." So that idiot, although he had many honorary D.Litts, used to take a cow with him wherever he went. Behind his car would be a

truck carrying a pure white cow. It was not possible that in every village – he was a politician, and he had to visit great constituencies; it was not possible... Cows you can find anywhere but sometimes they have brown patches, sometimes black patches; that makes them impure.

Strange ideas.... If you look without any prejudice, you can only laugh.

I was born, unfortunately, in a Jaina family. It is one of the ancientmost religions. Even small children are not allowed to eat or drink in the night. You can eat only after sunrise, up to sunset. After that, even small children who may be thirsty, may be hungry... but there is no way.

Up to my eighteenth year there was no way because all food would be distributed by the evening. In the night, even if you entered the kitchen you could not find anything.

And the conditioning of centuries....

I went for a picnic with my school friends on a nearby mountain where there was a very ancient, beautiful castle. They were all Hindus so they were not concerned about day or night. I asked them again and again, "Just think of me, too. When are you going to prepare the food?"

They said, "Right now we are going to explore the whole castle. It has so many things to be explored...." There were hidden water currents, hidden swimming pools, beautiful halls, carved pillars, great statues. So I had to remain hungry the whole day, and in the night they started making food.

I have never smelled such beautiful food! It was nothing much, but my hunger was so much, and I had been constantly holding back, that "I will not eat." But my whole nature was saying that my stomach was hurting, the whole day walking over the mountain, around the castle, inside the castle... and they were all very persuasive and they said, "We are not going to tell anyone...."

I said, "It is not a question of telling anyone. The question is, I know that I am eating in the night and that is a sure way to hell." But finally they succeeded because they said, "If eating in the night is a sure way, then wouldn't you like to come with your friends? We are also going the same way, you will not be alone."

My hunger and their persuasion, and the fragrance that was coming from the food, all conspired together, and I ate. But the whole conditioning was against it. I had to vomit the whole night, until every single grain that I had eaten was thrown out. I went to sleep only in the early morning hours.

But that became a clear indication to me what a superstition can do. Nobody else vomited; everybody slept so soundly, tired from the whole day's exploration. They were snoring and I was alone. I said to myself, "These people were saying 'We will be with you,' but only I am in hell! They are all enjoying a beautiful sleep – must be having great dreams – and I cannot sleep because of that food. Unless I throw it out...."

Practicing purity is not true purity.

Purity has to come out of your spontaneity.

Anything practiced makes you a hypocrite, and all the so-called religious people are hypocrites because they are practicing religion.

Whatever you want to practice you can practice – you can force your nature into the unconscious, into the collective unconscious, or even deeper, to the cosmic unconscious, but it will remain there, and any moment.... You are sitting on a volcano. Your nature can explode and all your conditioning will be thrown away. It is good that the explosion happens and they are thrown away, so only your pure nature, without anybody's conditioning, remains as the source of your words, of your actions, of your gestures.

A religious man, in this sense, is a natural and original man. He does not belong to any organization. To belong to any organization is to go against nature.

Just to belong to nature is enough.

PURITY HAS NO FORM, BUT NONETHELESS SOME PEOPLE TRY TO POSTULATE THE FORM OF PURITY AND CONSIDER THIS TO BE ZEN PRACTICE. PEOPLE WHO HOLD THIS VIEW OBSTRUCT THEIR OWN ORIGINAL NATURES AND END UP BY BEING BOUND BY PURITY.

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who are suffering from guilt because they could not manage to go against their nature, and the others who are suffering from their saintliness because they did not listen to their nature and went ahead, against it. Of course they have respectability, but their whole being is poor. Their whole being is on fire. They may have become saints by doing all kinds of stupid things that their surrounding society expects... for example here in India you will find many people standing on their heads. Even the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, used to stand on his head every morning in the garden, and he was respected for it tremendously. He did nothing for the country, but he was respected because he was following yoga.

The truth is that if you stand on your head more than three minutes, you will destroy many subtle cells, and there are millions of those cells in your small skull. If you stand on your head blood comes like a flood because of gravitation, and that flood destroys the most intelligent parts of your brain.

Why don't the animals have such developed brains? – because they are horizontal. Their blood circulation is equal from the head to the tail. It is only man who stands erect, on two feet. That creates the possibility for the growth of the brain, because when you are standing the blood reaches not as a flood but in the right amounts, as much as is needed. The more intelligent a man, the more delicate and complicated system of cells he will have in his head.

Albert Einstein has left his brain to be examined after his death. He himself was puzzled: "Why are other people not so intelligent? There must be something wrong with me." He wanted to know, but anyway there was no way to convey the message to him when he was dead. Now we know what was the matter: he had twenty-six percent more of these subtle cells than the ordinary human brain. Now those cells can be cultivated, but not by standing on your head.

Standing on your head is the worst thing that you can do for your intelligence, but in the Hindu conditioning that posture is very much valued. Not knowing anything about what is happening inside, people have followed it for thousands of years. It is not a coincidence that forty percent who

receive the Nobel Prize are Jews; it is very disproportionate, looking at the whole world. Only three Hindus have been able to receive a Nobel Prize up to now. Such a vast country, such an ancient culture, so many practices, so many disciplines, but as far as intelligence is concerned it is very low. And yoga is one of the reasons – keeping people's brains from growing.

But any absurdity, if continuously told to you, becomes a great discipline. Every religion is against me for the simple reason that I am trying to make it clear to the intelligent people around the globe that you don't have to practice anything, you don't have to discipline yourself in any way, you don't have to follow any commandments – you have only to go in and allow your own self-nature to move according to its own growth. Don't disturb it. All that you can do is not to disturb your inner nature and you will blossom like any great flower.

ONE WHO PRACTICES STEADFASTNESS DOES NOT SEE THE FAULTS OF PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. THIS IS THE STEADFASTNESS OF SELF-NATURE. THE DELUDED MAN, HOWEVER, EVEN IF HE DOES NOT MOVE HIS OWN BODY, WILL TALK OF THE GOOD AND BAD OF OTHERS THE MOMENT HE OPENS HIS MOUTH, AND THUS BEHAVE IN OPPOSITION TO THE WAY. THEREFORE, BOTH 'VIEWING THE MIND' AND 'VIEWING PURITY' WILL CAUSE AN OBSTRUCTION TO THE WAY.

You don't have to be a traditionalist and you don't have to be an anti-traditionalist. This is a great problem: it is very easy to be unorthodox, but it is changing your prisons from orthodoxy to non-orthodoxy, from traditionalism to non-traditionalism. Both are binding, both are obstructing your self-nature. Drop both, the negative and the positive, the yes and the no. Simply be, without any judgment, and in this being without any judgment have arisen the greatest peaks of consciousness man has encountered.

Kyogen wrote:

AT ONE STROKE I FORGOT ALL MY KNOWLEDGE!

THERE IS NO USE FOR ARTIFICIAL DISCIPLINE,

FOR, MOVE AS I WILL,

I MANIFEST THE ANCIENT WAY.

Another Zen poet:

THE FLUTE WITHOUT HOLES

IS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO BLOW.

... Not only difficult, it is impossible. So what the poet is saying is, the flute has all the possibility of bringing songs to the world; you just have to open all your doors and windows, all your holes. Otherwise, every bamboo will be a flute; they have the potentiality. Just a little difference – opening a few doors, a few windows, just a few holes in a hollow bamboo – and it becomes a great instrument of music. Existence can flow through it and can become a great musical wave. Existence has its own sound and its own music. We just have to be silent enough to hear the soundless sound.

Basho wrote:

THERE IS NOTHING YOU SEE

THAT IS NOT A FLOWER;

THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN THINK OF

WHICH IS NOT THE MOON.

Great statements, so condensed... THERE IS NOTHING YOU SEE THAT IS NOT A FLOWER – it may be in the seed, it may be not yet manifest, but there is nothing that has not the potential to blossom. THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN THINK OF WHICH IS NOT THE MOON.

The moon has become symbolic in Zen because of Gautam Buddha. Gautam Buddha was born on a full-moon night, he became enlightened on a full-moon night, and he died on a full-moon night. Because of this coincidence the moon has become a symbol of Buddha.

Wherever you are, whoever you are, you are the moon, the buddha.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

I UNDERSTOOD YOU TO SAY RECENTLY THAT THERE WAS NO SENSE GIVEN TO US TO TAKE US INWARDS, AND HENCE MEDITATION WAS ABOVE THE NATURAL – TRANSCENDENTAL.

WHAT THEN IS THE URGE, THE ENERGY THAT PROVOKES A PERSON TO GO ABOVE WHAT IS NATURAL? AND WHY DOES GOING IN AFFECT SOME PEOPLE'S LIVES, EVEN TOTALLY CHANGE SOME PEOPLE'S LIVES, WHILE IT LEAVES OTHERS ABSOLUTELY UNTOUCHED?

Maneesha, you have asked two questions. One is, "What then is the urge, the energy that provokes a person to go above what is natural?" Boredom.

Have you ever seen a bored buffalo, or a bored donkey? In the whole of nature you will not find anybody bored except man. Boredom is a unique quality as far as man is concerned, a very high-rate quality.

Man becomes bored with nature too, but first one should come to be natural. As you become natural, slowly slowly you become bored with it. And that boredom is being discussed by the existentialists in the West, but without understanding the deeper implications the East has encountered. The existentialists stop with boredom; the East has not stopped with boredom, it has taken a quantum leap. It has gone beyond nature.

But beyond nature is not against nature. Beyond nature is simply above nature, supranature, transcendental to nature.

So the first thing is finding the self, the nature. There is not much trouble in it, you just have to put your delusions aside. Then soon, you will start feeling bored with nature itself because it is repetitive: waking in the morning, eating your food, going to your work, coming home in the evening, going to your bed... a circle... silent, peaceful, no more tensions of the old days, no more anguishes and worries of the old days, very content. But even contentment at a point becomes boredom, even peace at a point becomes heavy.

Even enlightenment at a point has to be dropped.

The moment you drop enlightenment you transcend nature. Enlightenment is the ultimate point up to which nature can take you, and then there is the cliff. Jumping into the unknown, disappearing into the universe – that is the quantum leap.

So there are two jumps: one is a very small one, from delusions to nature; the other one is really The Great Matter – but boredom is the cause.

Just look at the life of a Gautam Buddha – no television, no cigarettes, no cards to play, no chess, no football games, no boxing matches.... What is in the life of poor Buddha? – just a silence, eternally silent, where nothing happens, no football.

That's why I say it is very difficult for Americans to become enlightened. They are so entertained that the point of boredom never comes. They go on changing their wives.... In India you are bound to get bored with your wife, but in America you will simply change. Why get bored?

The average time in America for everything is three years: in three years you have to change your wife, you have to change your car, you have to change your house, you have to change your job, you have to change your city, you have to change everything. This way... and seven and a half hours per day, millions of people are just sitting glued in their chairs before that idiot-box, television.

Now they have started a great association, the association of TV potatoes, and people are becoming members and wearing potato badges.

It is very difficult in America to become enlightened. So much is going on....

It was good Buddha was born twenty-five centuries before, in India. Here, things are very much still the same. Just go into a deeper part of the country, into a village, and you will find life utterly boring – simple, but there is nothing, just simplicity. This simplicity comes to a point when you want to disappear into the universe. That is the urge to go beyond the natural.

"And why does going in affect some people's lives, even totally change some people's lives, while it leaves others absolutely untouched?"

It all depends on the receptivity of the people. You may come across a buddha, you may even shake hands with a buddha, and you may not recognize anything unusual at all. You are a bamboo without holes. You are not receptive enough.

To recognize a buddha is in itself a great meditative quality. Unless you have been meditating you will not be able to see the radiance of the buddha nor his rhythmic heartbeat, nor his grace and beauty, nor the area of energy that is created around him just like a magnet. The deeper you go into meditation, the more you can recognize. So a few people who are in some way receptive – poets, dancers, musicians, creative people who are not limited by the boundaries of the knowledge given to them but are always searching for the new, always open to receive a new guest – these people will recognize the buddha immediately. But there are millions more to whom buddha is just a word. They are bamboos without holes. They will not be affected at all.

It is unfortunate, but you cannot interfere in somebody's life. You cannot start drilling holes in somebody's life to make him receptive. You have just to wait: perhaps their time has not come. Perhaps tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow... and it does not matter in the eternity of time. Whenever it happens it is always fresh and new, whenever it happens it is always early.

Now, let us drill a few holes in everybody without touching any screwdriver.

Just the hands should be enough!

(THE MASTER MAKES TICKLING MOTIONS TOWARDS ANANDO, AND SETS OFF WAVES OF GIGGLES.)

You should not touch....

Jablonski goes to the hardware store and asks the manager for a job.

"Okay," says the manager, "you can have the job if you can sell. Can you sell?"

"I guess so," says Jablonski.

"Well," says the manager, "watch me and learn something!"

A man comes into the store and asks the manager for some grass seed. "Fourth aisle over, third shelf," says the manager.

The man returns with the grass seed and the manager says, "Would you like to buy one of our new lawn mowers? They are on sale right now."

"What?" says the man. "But I don't even have my grass yet."

"I know," says the manager, "but you will in a few weeks and then you will need a new lawn mower. And if you buy one now, it will be much cheaper."

"I guess you are right," says the man, and he buys the lawn mower.

"So," says the manager to Jablonski, "do you think you can do that?"

"Sure," replies Jablonski. "No problem!"

"Okay," says the manager. "I have to go to the bank. You take over – and sell!"

Jablonski nods and waits for his first customer. Just then a woman walks up to him and says, "Where are the tampons?"

"Fifth aisle over, fourth shelf down," replies Jablonski, professionally.

When she returns to pay, Jablonski asks, "Do you have a lawn mower?"

"No. Why?" asks the woman.

"Well," says Jablonski, "you might as well mow the lawn while you aren't doing any fucking!"

Young Leonard Loophole is on vacation in the woods, and he decides to write a letter to his girlfriend. But he has no writing paper with him, so he walks to a nearby village store.

Inside, he approaches the girl attendant, Molly Must, a very sexy young brunette.

"Do you keep stationery?" asks Leonard.

"Well," says Molly, in a sexy voice, "I can until the last few seconds, and then I go completely wild!"

Zabriski is leaving on a business trip to Poland. "I always hate to leave," he says to his friend, Klopski. "I never trust my wife on her own. There is always this doubt... always this doubt."

"Don't be worried," says Klopski. "I am your best friend. While you are gone, I will keep an eye on her."

"Really?" says Zabriski. "Would you do that for me? I am so relieved. I know that I should trust my wife, but there is always this doubt... always this doubt."

"It is okay," says Klopski. "Leave it to me."

Three weeks later Zabriski returns and meets with his friend. "I am afraid I have some bad news," says Klopski.

"Well, what is it?" asks Zabriski.

"The very first night you were gone," tells Klopski, "I watched Seamus O'Ryan sneak into the back door of your house. Your wife met him there dressed only in high-heels and red satin panties."

"Really?" asks Zabriski. "Then what?"

"Then Seamus kissed your wife and he put his hand down into her red satin panties."

"Really?" asks a shocked Zabriski. "Then what?"

"Then," says Klopski, "she put her hand down inside his pants, and Seamus began kissing her breasts."

"Really?" gasps Zabriski. "Then what?"

"Then," continues Klopski, "they fell back onto the sofa. She threw off her panties, he threw off his pants, and then the lights went out – so I could not see any more."

"What? The lights went out?" shouts Zabriski. "You see? There is always this doubt!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes.

Feel your body to be completely frozen.

Gather yourself in.

Nothing exists outside,

just concentrate on the center of your being.

This is the only refuge – to be in this space,

you are beyond death, beyond life. You are meeting with existence.

Except this meeting, all religion is simply talk.

From this point you can take the jump

and disappear into the open sky. It is within you

to transcend even yourself.

Rejoice this moment, feel blissful.

See the flowers everywhere.

Look – in everything, the moon.

From your space of buddhahood

the whole existence becomes a great poetry, a great song.

A great creative energy arises out of this space.

This nothingness, this emptiness is the origin of the smallest grass leaf up to the biggest star.

Deeper... deeper.

Don't hold anything, just go deeper.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

The body is there, the mind is there,

but you are not the body, you are not the mind.

You are just the watcher, just the witness.

Nothing has ever happened to you

and nothing will ever happen to you;

you are just a mirror, reflecting.

This moment, this suchness is your original nature.

Everything else is imposed on you.

This space is purely your own.

To realize this is to become a buddha.

It is simply a recognition:

you are already a buddha,

you just don't have the guts to recognize

and to remember it in your day-to-day work.

Twenty-four hours you are a buddha;

there is not even a holiday for your buddha.

Just keep this consciousness as an undercurrent,

flowing into all your activities,

waking, sleeping...

This is the only religiousness that I know. All so-called religions are political exploitations, fictions of the priests. They have taken the whole dignity of human beings; they have made them slaves, and sacrificial. You can only assert your freedom by being a buddha. Out of this, whatever you do is right, is good, is graceful.

This moment, this place is so blessed

that ten thousand buddhas have melted like ice

into each other.

There is only one lake of buddhahood; drink out of it.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back from your great experience,

but bring the fragrance of it with you.

Sit down like a buddha for a few seconds...

collecting all that has happened in these few

moments within you,

becoming clearly aware of the road that leads to

your innermost core,

because you will be going and coming on the same

way every day.

This is the way towards your home,

where you are the host, not the guest.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the buddhas?

Yes, Beloved Master!

CHAPTER 3

Go on unconcerned

14 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

RINZAI SAID:

WHAT IS THE USE OF CATCHING A DREAM, AN ILLUSION, A FLOWER IN THE SKY? THERE IS, FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY, ONLY THE ONE WHO IS NOW PRESENT HERE AND IS LISTENING TO MY EXPOUNDING OF THE DHARMA....

ALL TROUBLES EXIST BECAUSE YOU ARE MINDFUL OF THEM; IF YOU ARE MINDLESS OF THEM, HOW CAN THEY HOLD YOU? IF YOU DO NOT TAKE THE TROUBLE TO DIFFERENTIATE AND GRASP APPEARANCES, YOU WILL REALIZE TAO IN AN INSTANT. IF YOU FOLLOW OTHERS, AND SUCCEED IN LEARNING SOMETHING BY KEEPING YOURSELVES BUSY WITH YOUR STUDIES, YOU WILL FINALLY RETURN TO THE REALM OF BIRTH AND DEATH. IT IS FAR BETTER TO MAKE YOURSELVES UNCONCERNED, AND GO TO SOME MONASTERY WHERE YOU CAN SIT CROSS-LEGGED ON THE CORNER OF A MEDITATION BED.

MAKE NO MISTAKE: THERE IS NO DHARMA EXTERNALLY, AND THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE FOUND INTERNALLY. DO NOT GRASP THIS MOUNTAIN MONK'S VERBAL WORDS, FOR IT IS FAR BETTER TO PUT AN END TO ALL KARMAS AND GO ON UNCONCERNED. DO NOT ALLOW THOUGHTS THAT HAVE ARISEN IN YOUR MINDS TO GO ON UNINTERRUPTED, AND DO NOT ALLOW THOUGHTS THAT HAVE NOT YET ARISEN TO RISE. THIS IS MUCH BETTER THAN YOUR TEN YEARS OF JOURNEYING TO CALL ON LEARNED TEACHERS.

ACCORDING TO THIS MOUNTAIN MONK'S VIEW, THERE ARE NOT SO MANY THINGS; SUFFICE IT TO BE ORDINARY AND TO GO ON UNCONCERNED, WEARING YOUR ROBE AND EATING YOUR RICE....

THERE ARE BALD-HEADED AND BLIND MONKS WHO, AFTER SATISFYING THEIR HUNGER, IMMEDIATELY SIT IN MEDITATION TO LOOK INTO THEIR MENTAL ACTIVITIES AND ARREST THEIR THOUGHTS SO THAT THE LATTER CANNOT ARISE AGAIN. THESE PEOPLE HATE DISTURBANCE AND SEEK QUIET; THIS IS THE WAY OF THE HERETICS.

THE PATRIARCH SAID, "THOSE WHO SET THEIR MINDS ON LOOKING INTO QUIETNESS, APPLY THEM ON CONTEMPLATING EXTERNALS, AND KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL TO QUIET AND FREEZE THEM IN ORDER TO ENTER SAMADHI, ARE ALL IN THE STATE OF MENTAL ACTIVITY."

Maneesha, there are three words to be understood perfectly well before you can understand what Rinzai is saying. He is talking about the fourth word.

The three words that he is not talking about are 'concentration', 'contemplation', and 'meditation'.

In English there is no word for the fourth state of your consciousness, so unfortunately we have to translate that fourth word into the third – meditation. But it is not accurate, and it is dangerous. But if you understand that it is just to indicate something which is not contained in the English word itself, then there is no problem.

The fourth word is dhyana, which became ch'an in China and in Japan it became zen.

'Concentration' means you put all your thoughts on one object. It is a perfectly valid means for any scientific research.

The second word, 'contemplation', means to allow your mind to move only on a certain object. In a way it includes concentration, but in another way it gives you a little more rope. For example, you are contemplating on love, its meanings, its implications.... Contemplation is the method of philosophy.

'Meditation', in English, simply means a far more deep concentration. The first concentration is superficial: you just stay on the surface, you touch the circumference. In meditation you go to the very center of the object. But remember, all are object-oriented.

The fourth word, 'zen', is introverted. It is going in; it is non-objective. It is neither scientific nor philosophical; it covers a totally different area. It means not to know the object but to experience the subject.

Closing yourself in and finding the center of your life and consciousness is the goal of Zen.

Unfortunately, nothing like Zen ever developed in the West. And because the experience never developed there was no need for any word for it. Words are needed only when there are experiences to be expressed. In the East, concentration, contemplation and meditation are all mental activities.

Zen is going beyond the mind, where no object exists. And remember, the moment the object is no more there, you cannot maintain the subject; they are two sides of the same coin. On the outside the object drops, on the inside the subject disappears, and then what remains is that spotless cleanness, that silence out of which everything arises and disappears. That is dhyān in Sanskrit, jhān in Pali, ch'an in Chinese and zen in Japanese.

They have all traveled from dhyān, and whenever a word moves from one language to another language it automatically takes different shapes, different pronunciations. But you have to understand it clearly, that only the words are different; the space they point to is one, where there is no object and no subject, where there is no knowledge and no knower; just pure innocence, the fragrance of pure innocence. And the flowers that blossom in that innocence are of ultimate ecstasy, of absolute bliss.

The whole East has been in search, for thousands of years, for the origin of your very life, the very center of your being. It has not been concerned with the outside world; that's why science has not developed in the East. The genius of the East was interested not in objects and things; it was interested in only one thing: who is alive in me? Who is throbbing in my heart? Who is taking my breath in and out? And once you have found this space, you cannot find anything more precious.

Rinzai is one of the most famous Zen masters. Just as Bodhidharma took dhyān to the land of China, Rinzai brought from China – his Chinese name is Lin Chi – the same lamp, the same light, to Japan. It is a tremendous transmission from one land to another land, from one master to another master, and it is the only tradition in the world which is still breathing, still alive.

So while you listen to Rinzai, remember: it is not scripture – it is a life, a song, a dance. It is all that is the source of life.

RINZAI SAID:

WHAT IS THE USE OF CATCHING A DREAM, AN ILLUSION, A FLOWER IN THE SKY?

According to the people who have become enlightened, the whole world becomes almost like a dream. I say "almost like a dream;" I have to give you the exact definition.

A dream is something that goes on changing, and the real is that which remains always the same. Your consciousness is a reality, an eternity. Everything else around you is of the same stuff dreams are made of.

When you are asleep, the dreams look so real – I don't think anybody in the world has ever suspected while dreaming that a dream might be a dream. While you are asleep and dreaming, the dream becomes such a total reality that not even a doubt arises. And when you wake up in the morning you suddenly find that you were running after non-existential fragments of your imagination.

To the awakened man, to the buddha, the whole world and all its objects become almost like dreams. Everything is fleeting fast: the young man becoming old, the old man coming closer to his grave. Seen from the heights of a buddha, everybody is digging his own grave, every day. It takes seventy years, but in comparison to the eternity of existence, seventy years are not even seven seconds.

If a whole album of photographs is taken from the time you became impregnated in your mother's womb through the whole nine months of growth, and the series of photographs of that growth is shown to you, do you think you will recognize that it is you? Even your childhood pictures, if they are presented to you in your old age... you may think, "Perhaps I used to look like this, but I cannot be absolutely certain...."

Everything is fleeting. Because of this flux, buddhas have called the world a great dream.

THERE IS, FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY, ONLY THE ONE WHO IS NOW PRESENT HERE AND IS LISTENING TO MY EXPOUNDING OF THE DHARMA.

ALL TROUBLES EXIST BECAUSE YOU ARE MINDFUL OF THEM.

The mind has a very great strategy to project responsibility onto somebody else. If you are sad, somebody else is responsible for it; he misbehaved with you. If you are angry, somebody else is responsible for it; he enraged you. Mind continually throws the responsibility on some other object.

But the truth is, if you are silent and don't allow the mind to function, there is no trouble – no sadness, no anger, no love, no hate – just a pure sky without any clouds.

ALL TROUBLES EXIST BECAUSE YOU ARE MINDFUL OF THEM. You give too much juice to your troubles.

You are in such great love with your misery that even if a clear-cut path to get out of your troubles is shown to you, you will have second thoughts.

I have sometimes told a story to you....

A sannyasin who had renounced the world... not my sannyasin, who rejoices in the world; that is a great difference that I'm creating in the whole tradition of sannyas. The old sannyasin was renouncing the world and at the same time saying that the world is just a dream. If it is just a dream, why not enjoy? What is the hurry to escape from a dream? The dream cannot harm you.

You are quoting scriptures that say it is a dream, but you know perfectly well it is a reality. You know the woman you are renouncing and escaping from by going into the mountains... BOTH are a reality. Otherwise, mountains are also dreams – perhaps a little longer lasting, but that does not make any difference in the definition of dreams. A dream is that which changes.

Where are you going? The old sannyasin was escaping from the world.

I am introducing to humanity a new sannyas, a new way of rejoicing in the world. Why not rejoice? It is only a dream; it cannot even scratch you. It cannot spoil you – it does not exist in the first place, so what is the hurry? And wherever you go, you will find troubles. They may be new troubles, but what does it matter? Old troubles are always better. They are well acquainted with you, you know them very well.

Just the old husband, for example – you know him, and all the nonsense that he will do. The old wife... the husband knows that she will nag and nag and nag, and it has been going on for years.

Now it is just a broken record – who cares? The husband and wife never have any conversation. Neither the husband listens to what the wife is saying nor the wife listens to what the husband is saying. The conversation continues, and everybody knows that nobody is listening to anybody. It is better to keep the old wife, the old husband. It is simpler, less complex. With the new husband you will have new troubles; with the new wife you will have new problems.

An old sannyasin, a traditional sannyasin, had become so troubled in his home-life that he renounced the world. But that does not make any difference: you cannot renounce your mind.

Wherever you go, your mind is inside you.

So he went deep into the mountains but he had the same mind. He was a very violent man. And a bird flew over him, dropping a great load of shit. He said, "My God, here also, the same problem! All my life I have suffered. And I thought that I had renounced the world, but even these idiot birds torture a sacred holy man!"

So many incidents happened that finally he thought, "Wherever you go there are problems. It is better to commit suicide."

So he jumped into the river, but by chance, unfortunately, he knew how to swim. So he came out swimming, cursing himself: "Why did I learn swimming in the first place? And now all my clothes are wet!"

So he thought to collect dry wood by the side of the river-bank to make a funeral pyre. The neighbors who lived there gathered around..."What is happening? First this man jumped, then came out, and now he's making a fire."

They asked, "What is the problem?"

He said, "I'm going to jump into the fire, because in the river I could not succeed in committing suicide."

They said, "Please, do it somewhere else, because your burning body will stink up the whole neighborhood."

He said, "It is so difficult. You cannot allow a person either to live or to die!"

That night he dreamed and prayed to God: "It is enough! Either you take away my troubles... I'm even ready to exchange because I see everybody smiling, laughing, enjoying. I'm ready to change with anybody!"

A voice in his dream filled the whole sky, saying, "Everybody should collect his troubles in bags and come to the temple in the center of the city." So he thought, "Perhaps my prayer has been heard!" He collected all his troubles... but he saw that everybody in the city was moving with bigger bags than he was carrying. Now he became afraid.

He tried to look for somebody who was carrying a smaller bag, but he could not find anybody – his bag seemed to be the smallest.

He said, "My God, if I have to change... My old troubles were at least well acquainted with me. New troubles... Who knows what kind of woman you will get, whether she beats the husband or not, how old she is, whether she is alive or just dead..."

He became very much worried, but there was no other way. He went to the temple. Everybody came to the temple, all with big bags. A few people even had two bags. And the voice said, "Now put all your bags by the side of each pillar in the temple, and I will give you the signal – you can choose anyone's bag you want."

The old sannyasin thought, "This is a very dangerous situation!" He looked at the bags; they appeared so big! "Only God knows what is inside." At least his small bag... he knows what is in it.

He kept himself close to his pillar, so when the time came to exchange, he could jump immediately and pick up his own bag. But he was very much surprised that everybody was doing the same! No exchange happened, because nobody wanted unknown troubles. Even the people who had two bags carried their two bags back home.

And as he reached his home he thanked God, "You are compassionate and merciful that you allowed me to keep my own troubles."

There grows a kind of friendship with your own troubles. Somebody else's headache... one does not know what kind of headache. People cling to their troubles. And by renouncing the world, nothing is gained – only a few more troubles.

I don't want anybody to renounce the world. I want everybody to revolutionize the world by revolutionizing himself.

And the only revolution is not to be attached to your mind. Whatever it says, just be a witness. Don't get caught in its net. This is the simple art of being without any troubles. And a consciousness which is without any troubles knows the greatest joy that life has kept in the very center of your being. It starts overflowing you. Its fragrance is indescribable; its sweetness one can only experience but cannot explain.

ALL TROUBLES EXIST BECAUSE YOU ARE MINDFUL OF THEM; IF YOU ARE MINDLESS OF THEM, HOW CAN THEY HOLD YOU?

In fact, you are holding them – all your headaches. You are clinging to them. Without them, what are you going to do?

The whole art of revolutionizing your individuality is very simple: don't hold on to anything that mind brings to you. And remember that mind persuades you – "This is very beautiful. There is no harm, you can hold it." But once you hold it, soon you become aware that only the appearance was beautiful; inside it is a whole hell. But now you cannot leave it either, you have become habituated to it.

Mind is a great salesman. That's why everybody is so much in trouble. Mind goes on telling you, "Hold this trouble, it is so beautiful. Go on a honeymoon. Don't miss this point." But as you reach the

honeymoon hotel, all the romance is already finished. As you look closely at the woman, and she looks closely at you, you know: "My God!" You are carrying all the suitcases – "just married"... and it is the beginning of all misery.

But this is not only about marriage; this is about everything. The problem basically is, the moment you hold something you are no more a witness. You have lost your watchfulness, and that is your authentic being. You become identified with anything you hold.

IF YOU DO NOT TAKE THE TROUBLE TO DIFFERENTIATE AND GRASP APPEARANCES, YOU WILL REALIZE TAO IN AN INSTANT.

'Tao' is the Chinese word for dharma, for the truth.

IF YOU FOLLOW OTHERS, AND SUCCEED IN LEARNING SOMETHING BY KEEPING YOURSELVES BUSY WITH YOUR STUDIES, YOU WILL FINALLY RETURN TO THE REALM OF BIRTH AND DEATH.

Unless a deep meditation cleanses you of your mind completely, you are going to be born again and again and suffer again and again. It is almost a wheel which goes on moving – from birth to death, from death to birth – and you are glued to the wheel, crushed by it, but you don't leave it. You are afraid: "If I leave it, in this vast universe I will be lost!"

It happened to a man who was lost in the mountains and could not find the way back to his home. The sun was setting and he became more and more afraid and nervous. The night started coming, and everything became silent and dark

Now he started moving very slowly, because one never knows where one is going. In fact he came to the dead end of a small pathway, and he fell from that dead end, but clung to some roots.

The night was cold. His hands became almost frozen, they lost the capacity to hold on anymore. He remembered his god, he remembered even other people's gods. Somebody may help! He recited whatever he knew of the scriptures but... no way. The hands were getting colder and they started slipping from the roots.

He said good-bye to the world: "I'm finished, I don't know how deep the valley is in which I'm going to fall, or how many fractures, or how many pieces of me will be found. But that is not my problem," he thought. "That is others' problem."

But such tears! – and he had always thought of leaving the world because it is so troublesome. Now a good chance was there, but he was holding on.

The coldness went on becoming deeper and deeper, and finally he had to let go of the roots. And just as he was surprised, you will be surprised: he was standing on the ground! All the night long, only six inches down was plain ground, his way back home.

But that night he suffered almost a hell. The whole night, the coldness, the every-moment fear, that "Now it is becoming more and more difficult to hold on to the roots." He could not believe that he would ever see another day, another sunrise.

But when he fell down – just six inches – he could not believe it! He looked all around. Just nearby was his house. He said, "My God! I unnecessarily provoked all the gods, recited all the scriptures that I have memorized – for nothing! Just six inches down!"

That is exactly your situation. You are holding so tight. To what are you holding? And I'm trying every day to persuade you not to hold, because just below, six inches down, is your very center of being, your eternity.

But even if you die, it is a rehearsal; you don't die really. You try... but I'm not saying to try, I'm saying to die! And people are dying so carefully. I'm puzzled... I simply keep my eyes closed in order not to see how comfortable you are making it for yourself.

Just waiting for Nivedano's drum to bring you back to life – and you have not died yet! Just one day at least try... REALLY die! Don't think of any comfortable position, because you will not be able to have a comfortable position in your grave. And one day you will be in a grave, so it is better to be prepared.

Here, every day, ten thousand people die and within five minutes they are all resurrected. And two thousand years ago, nobody was certain that Jesus was actually dead. My feeling is that he was just as dead as you all are. Resurrection is not possible unless the death is just like your death.

So he closed his eyes, rested on the cross and waited for the evening when the crowd would disperse. His friends had made every arrangement to bring him down from the cross and take him out of Judea.

I don't give you that much trouble – just five minutes' death, because you have to get only six inches down from your mind. Your center is exactly six inches away. That much witnessing, and you are free of all troubles and for the first time you know the beauty of existence. And don't wait – Nivedano will wake you up.

IT IS FAR BETTER TO MAKE YOURSELVES UNCONCERNED, AND GO TO SOME MONASTERY WHERE YOU CAN SIT CROSS-LEGGED ON THE CORNER OF A MEDITATION BED.

MAKE NO MISTAKE: THERE IS NO DHARMA EXTERNALLY, AND THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE FOUND INTERNALLY.

This is a great statement. He's saying you cannot find anything outside and you cannot find anything inside.

What you find inside is not a thing. It is pure consciousness, unbounded consciousness, just pure sky. Finding it is to find the greatest treasure. And you are carrying it, and desiring small things, mediocre things, while in your innermost being you are an emperor.

I want you just to be reminded of it. Once you have known the beauty and the joy and the bliss, you will not be able to forget it. It will follow you like a shadow all day long, all night long. Slowly slowly, it will become just your breathing, your heartbeat. You don't have to take care of it; it is always there, taking care of you.

DO NOT GRASP THIS MOUNTAIN MONK'S VERBAL WORDS... Rinzai used to live on a high mountain and was known as a mountain monk.

DO NOT GRASP THIS MOUNTAIN MONK'S VERBAL WORDS, FOR IT IS FAR BETTER TO PUT AN END TO ALL KARMA AND GO ON UNCONCERNED. DO NOT ALLOW THOUGHTS THAT HAVE ARISEN IN YOUR MINDS TO GO ON UNINTERRUPTED, AND DO NOT ALLOW THOUGHTS THAT HAVE NOT YET ARISEN TO RISE. THIS IS MUCH BETTER THAN YOUR TEN YEARS OF JOURNEYING TO CALL ON LEARNED TEACHERS.

ACCORDING TO THIS MOUNTAIN MONK'S VIEW, THERE ARE NOT SO MANY THINGS; SUFFICE IT TO BE ORDINARY AND TO GO ON UNCONCERNED, WEARING YOUR ROBE AND EATING YOUR RICE.

THERE ARE BALD-HEADED AND BLIND MONKS WHO, AFTER SATISFYING THEIR HUNGER, IMMEDIATELY SIT IN MEDITATION TO LOOK INTO THEIR MENTAL ACTIVITIES AND ARREST THEIR THOUGHTS SO THAT THE LATTER CANNOT ARISE AGAIN. THESE PEOPLE HATE DISTURBANCE AND SEEK QUIET; THIS IS THE WAY OF THE HERETICS.

This is not the right way; this is the way all the sannyasins of all religions of the world have followed up to now.

Escaping from the world is not done without any reason. The reason is that to be in the world is very disturbing. But remember, unless you want to be disturbed, nothing can disturb you. If you remain just a watcher then the disturbances will come and go. Even in a marketplace you can become a buddha. And I want buddhas to be in the marketplace, because the buddhas on the mountains have not been of much help in transforming humanity.

Now we need buddhas in the marketplace – that is the only hope for a future mankind and for a better and new man: joyous, loving, compassionate and able to dance, able to sing, able to celebrate.

No buddha of the past was able to celebrate. That is missing something.

No buddha of the past was able even to laugh. Something is missing....

Now you see our buddhas... Sardar Gurudayal Singh, being the ancientmost buddha here, leads the laughter. He's a rare man in the world, because I have never heard of anybody laughing before the joke is told! He's the most unique person. He trusts me – why wait for the joke?

THE PATRIARCH SAID, "THOSE WHO SET THEIR MINDS ON LOOKING INTO QUIETNESS, APPLY THEM ON CONTEMPLATING EXTERNALS, AND KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL TO QUIET AND FREEZE THEM IN ORDER TO ENTER SAMADHI, ARE ALL IN THE STATE OF MENTAL ACTIVITY:"

It is nothing to do with what we have called dhyana. An authentic meditation has nothing to do with freezing your thoughts, repressing your thoughts. All these activities are mental activities.

The only activity in you which is not mental is witnessing, because witnessing is able to witness all mental activities. It is behind the mind – just six inches behind.

When you enter into meditation today, don't cling to any roots! When it is time to die, die. When it is time to resurrect, resurrect. But don't be in a hurry. Resurrection in a hurry does not suit a gentleman. At least while you are resurrecting, be nice fellows.

Ryokan wrote:

BUDDHA IS YOUR MIND

AND THE WAY GOES NOWHERE.

DON'T LOOK FOR ANYTHING BUT THIS.

IF YOU POINT YOUR CART NORTH

WHEN YOU WANT TO GO SOUTH,

HOW WILL YOU ARRIVE?

And we are all trying to arrive into our own being, but driving our thoughts in all directions.

UNAWARE OF COMING AND GOING,

I TURN BACK ALONE.

CAUGHT IN THE MIDNIGHT SKY,

THE MOON SILVERING ALL.

These haikus have come out of deep meditation, deep witnessing. UNAWARE OF COMING AND GOING, I TURN BACK ALONE. If you turn back inside yourself, naturally you are alone, but in that aloneness miracles happen.

CAUGHT IN THE MIDNIGHT SKY, THE MOON SILVERING ALL.

He's simply saying that it is so beautiful inside, as if the moon is caught in the sky and everything has become silver in its light.

Obviously, inside there is no darkness. And certainly the light is not of the sun but of the moon. The light of the sun is hot. The light of the moon is cool, and inside there is such a cool breeze blowing... but you never reach to that point, to feeling that coolness.

Homeo wrote:

WINO, ALWAYS STUMBLING,

YET IN DRINKING

I SHOW MOST DISCRETION.

WHERE TO WIND UP?

SOBER THIS EVENING

SOMEWHERE ON THE RIVER BANK

I FIND DAWN'S MOON.

He's saying that, "When I'm not drunk" – and by 'drunk' he certainly means drunk on the divine – "When I'm not drunk with my own inner sources, I stumble here and there. But when I'm drunk, I SHOW MOST DISCRETION. SOBER THIS EVENING, SOMEWHERE ON THE RIVER BANK I FIND DAWN'S MOON."

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

IT SEEMS THAT THE MIND GIVES US THE ILLUSION OF CONTROL OVER LIFE, WHILE AWARENESS MAKES US RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR LIVES.

IS NOT THE TURNING POINT RECOGNIZING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING IN CONTROL AND BEING RESPONSIBLE?

Maneesha, even the word 'responsible' is a different name for control.

A man of consciousness drops both control and responsibility. That does not mean that he is irresponsible; it simply means he becomes spontaneous.

The word 'responsibility' is contaminated by the missionaries of all the religions; hence, I would like not to use the word 'responsible'. I would like to use the word 'spontaneous'.

When the mind is dropped you function spontaneously. Your song, your dance, your silence, your words, all come out of your spontaneity. They are not irresponsible: they cannot be. But I don't want to use the word 'responsibility'. The word is perfectly good, but it has become contaminated in its use by religions to force things upon you: "This is your responsibility" – responsibility towards your parents, responsibility towards your children, responsibility towards society... responsibility towards everything! And they have used responsibility just to repress your spontaneity.

Otherwise, the word in itself is very beautiful. If it can be cleaned off – a good dry cleaning! – then it has to be broken in two parts: response-ability. Then it will be equivalent to spontaneity.

But why unnecessarily dry clean when a fresh word is available?

Now, something serious...

Big black Dougie goes into an all-white bar in Mississippi with three friends. He goes up to the barman and bets him fifty dollars that he can lick his own eye.

"Crazy nigger," thinks the barman. "No one can lick his own eye." So he takes the bet.

Dougie pops out his glass eye, licks it, and then bets the barman fifty dollars that he can bite his other eye too.

"Two glass eyes?" thinks the barman. "This guy must be really dumb." So he takes the bet.

Dougie pulls out his false teeth and bites the other eye. The barman starts to lose his temper.

"Wait!" says Dougie, calmly. "I will bet you double or nothing that I can piss into that empty glass while you slide it along the bar."

"That is impossible," the barman thinks to himself. "No one can do that." So he takes the bet.

Dougie drops his pants, pulls out his dong, and starts pissing all over the bar and the floor. The barman starts laughing and mopping up the mess.

"I knew it!" he shouts. "You really are dumb to think you could do that!"

"Not so dumb," replies Dougie, pulling up his pants. "You see, I bet those three friends of mine a hundred dollars each that I could piss all over your bar and you would wipe it up laughing!"

Fergus MacFish has an embarrassing accident doing yoga, and has to have his testicles surgically removed.

By chance, it just happens that the famous transplant surgeon, Doctor Slasher, has a spare pair of gorilla balls in his refrigerator.

After a long and tricky operation, the gorilla nuts are successfully transplanted and Fergus makes a complete recovery.

Some years pass, and one day Fergus' wife, Phyllis, gives birth to their first child. Fergus is thrilled and asks the nurse anxiously if it is a boy or a girl.

"We don't know yet," replies the nurse. "We can't get the hairy bastard off the ceiling!"

There is a fire at the Pig and Whistle Pub, and it is beginning to get out of control.

Suddenly, Paddy's old Ford car comes speeding around the corner, crosses the street, and drives straight into the middle of the flames.

The car nearly puts out the fire, and then the doors burst open. Paddy and Seamus jump out, and start beating wildly at the flames.

Ten minutes later the fire is out, and Paddy and Seamus push the old Ford out of the pub. The landlord offers the two brave men some free drinks, and gives Paddy a hundred-dollar reward.

"What are you going to do with all that money?" asks Sean, who has been drinking at the bar throughout the action.

"Well," says Paddy, swallowing a large whiskey, "the first thing I'm going to do is to take my car and get those goddam brakes fixed!"

Pope the Polack is getting very lonely because nobody wants to talk to him anymore, so he decides to buy himself a pet parrot. He goes into a pet shop and sees a parrot he likes very much.

"How much?" asks the Polack.

"One thousand dollars," replies the shopkeeper.

"Holy cow!" cries the pope. "Is he really worth that much?"

"He sure is," says the man. "You can ask the parrot himself."

So Pope the Polack asks the parrot and the parrot replies, "There is no doubt about it."

The pope is thrilled and immediately purchases the parrot. He's very excited and runs home to the Vatican to show off his new pet. He calls everybody together and then says proudly, "This is a truly remarkable parrot."

"There is no doubt about it," says the bird.

"Quite so," says the pope. "And what is your name?" But the parrot remains silent. "Holy shit," says the pope. "Don't you know your name?"

The parrot just looks at him.

"Can't you say anything?" cries the frustrated Polack. But the parrot just looks bored. The pope is furious and shouts, "I must have been an idiot to buy you!"

The parrot says, "There is no doubt about it!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes.

Feel the body completely frozen.

Gather all your life energy in.

Just watch, witness the mind and the body.

You are neither.

You are the witness – a pure mirror.

This is it.

You don't have to go anywhere to find it,

it is just at the very center of your being.

All the bliss, all the grandeur,

all the beauty, all the truth...

In this suchness arises your spontaneity.

In this suchness you become a buddha.

Remember it.

Remember it.

It is your self-nature.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Now die... don't hold on to any roots.

Without any worry, die,

because after two minutes is the resurrection.

Just watch the body lying there,

the mind making small noises,

and you are just a watcher,

unmoved, untroubled, unscratched...

This is your eternity.

This is your buddha.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

This is the resurrection time.

Slowly, gracefully, come out of the dead, fresh.

As a buddha, sit down for a few seconds,

remembering the experience, the space that you have visited.

It is your home.

It belongs to you exclusively.

You can enter into this space

any moment.

It is just a question

of remembering the experience.

It is so simple and so obvious.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the ten thousand buddhas' resurrection?

Yes, Beloved Master!

CHAPTER 4

Enlightenment is the way to extinction

15 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

DAIKAKU SAID:

THIS TEACHING IS THE SCHOOL OF THE ENLIGHTENED MIND. THE ENLIGHTENED MIND ITSELF BASICALLY HAS NO DELUSION OR ENLIGHTENMENT. THIS IS ACTUALLY THE SUBTLE ART OF THOSE WHO REALIZE THUSNESS. EVEN IF YOU DON'T BECOME ENLIGHTENED, WHEN YOU SIT ONCE IN MEDITATION, YOU ARE A BUDDHA FOR THAT SITTING; WHEN YOU SIT FOR A DAY IN MEDITATION, YOU ARE A BUDDHA FOR A DAY; WHEN YOU SIT IN MEDITATION ALL YOUR LIFE, YOU ARE A BUDDHA ALL YOUR LIFE. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE FUTURE; ONE WHO CAN HAVE FAITH IN THIS IS SOMEONE WITH GREAT POTENTIAL.

PRACTICING EVERYTHING WITHOUT ANY SENSE OF ATTAINMENT IS CALLED THE EXCEEDINGLY PROFOUND TRANSCENDENT WISDOM. THIS WISDOM CAN CUT OFF THE SOURCE OF BIRTH AND DEATH, LIKE A SHARP SWORD.

TO PRACTICE VIRTUE IN HOPES OF REWARD IS THE ILLUSION OF ORDINARY FOLK; BODHISATTVAS DO NOT SEEK FOR THE RESULTING REWARDS AS THEY CULTIVATE ROOTS OF VIRTUE, BECAUSE THEY CULTIVATE GOODNESS FOR THE SAKE OF IMPARTIAL LOVE AND COMPASSION, AND THUS IT BECOMES SUSTENANCE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT. AS FOR THOSE WHO SEEK REWARDS AS THEY CULTIVATE VIRTUE AND ATTAIN THE LESSER REWARD OF HUMANITY OR GOD-HOOD, THIS IS SURELY THE WORK OF BIRTH AND DEATH.

ENLIGHTENMENT IS THE WAY TO EXTINCTION. IF YOU TAKE PEACE AND QUIET TO BE BLISS, ALL THINGS ARE AFFLICTIONS; BUT WHEN YOU ARE ENLIGHTENED, ALL THINGS ARE ENLIGHTENMENT. PEOPLE OF THE WORLD DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS BASIS OF DELUSION AND ENLIGHTENMENT. THEY SUPPRESS THOUGHTS OF BIRTH AND DEATH, AND THINK THAT THIS IS THE NON-BIRTH OF A SINGLE THOUGHT, AND ALSO CONSIDER THIS MINDLESSNESS – BUT THESE ARE STILL THOUGHTS OF BIRTH AND DEATH, NOT MINDLESSNESS, NOT QUIESCENCE. WHEN YOU TRY TO STOP THOUGHT BY THOUGHT, BIRTH AND DEATH CONTINUE.

Maneesha, the whole question for Zen is how not to discriminate. Mind is discrimination, division, duality. The effort of Zen is to bring you to a space where you are simply a watcher, without any judgment. At the moment you are simply a watcher, all that is false disappears on its own accord and all that is real shines forth in its absolute illumination.

This is your home. In this space there is no mind; hence no desire, no jealousy, no anger, no hate. You have become just a mirror. You reflect the tremendous glory and splendor of the whole existence. For the first time you have gone beyond human conditionings. You have become universal.

Obviously, in this moment, in this space, there is no darkness. And remember clearly: darkness and light are two aspects of the same coin. When darkness disappears, light also disappears. What is left is tremendously new, you have not even dreamed of it.

In this clarity, in this silence, the whole existence seems to be exactly what it is, not what it is "supposed to be." Your enlightenment becomes, suddenly, the enlightenment of the whole universe.

This is one of the most important points that Daikaku is making. And there is a second important point which he is making, which is very rare. Perhaps nobody else has ever made this statement before, but it is absolutely true. While you are in meditation, in silence – even for a single moment – you are a buddha. You can come out, and you can again forget.

You can sit in meditation for one hour, or if meditation becomes your undercurrent of consciousness, you can remain a buddha for twenty-four hours. In other words, whenever you are aware and silent and whenever you feel the whole existence to be enlightened, you are a buddha. You can forget it – it is your freedom to forget or to remember.

A very rare genius, Daikaku, makes this statement: "Ordinary masters will not enter into the lion's den." It is a very strange statement, with no precedent. But I can say to you, it is true: every day you become a buddha. I see you coming back from your home, resurrecting. You are a totally different man – so silent, so peaceful, so fragrant, such a beauty to see.

But I know you will forget. Forgetfulness has been your habit for millions of years. So this one moment of buddhahood will become a beautiful memory, and then the forgetfulness comes like a flood of old habit and the whole moon disappears behind the black clouds. But the moon is there; we will discover it again. There is no harm in discovering your buddhahood again and again.

One can hope, one can trust that one day these old habits will become weakened and your whole buddhahood will become a simple matter, just like breathing.

But nobody except Daikaku has made the point – that even for a single moment, if you are silent and push aside all your thoughts and habits, clearing the space of the mind which has been occupying it for centuries... even though it may only remain for a single moment, you are a buddha. Perhaps you will have to remember again and again till the old habits start dying out. They will die because they don't have any roots. Unless you support and nourish them, they cannot exist.

It is a strange story that man supports his misery, nourishes it, takes care that it does not leave him, because it is his only companion. People magnify their miseries, if they cannot magnify anything else.

In the university where I was a professor, a woman was also a professor. Her husband was a very prominent advocate of the High Court. Because I used to pass by where they lived, coming from the university or going to the university, the woman was always waiting there for a lift. The husband saw it once or twice and the third time he came to see me in the university and he told me, "I am worried about you."

I said, "What is the matter?"

He said, "You are giving my wife a lift every day. Don't believe her – she is such a hypochondriac. Just a small cough and immediately she says, 'I am suffering from tuberculosis.' Don't listen to what she says! It is her habit to enjoy her misery. She paints it as deeply as possible, she is almost a creative artist – suffering and suffering."

I said, "You don't have to tell me. I enjoy her and I am not worried about her tuberculosis. She is not an exception, she is the rule."

Everybody is trying to magnify his sufferings, his miseries. It is a very sad condition that rather than jumping out of this vicious circle, you go on weaving around yourself more and more of the same stuff. But there is a very deep pay-off in it: it brings sympathy to you. It is not for no reason at all that people magnify their misery. It simply shows that they have not received love.

I told the husband, "You think that your wife is wrong. I want to say to you that you have not loved her enough. Seeking shelter in misery comes only when nobody loves you; you can always fall upon your misery as an old friend. When you are miserable everybody is sympathetic to you, when you are not miserable nobody cares about you."

The whole psychology is upside-down. People should pay attention to others when they are looking radiant, joyful, blissful. That will be giving nourishment, because attention is nourishment. Never give attention to misery, because you are nourishing the misery. You are forcing the person to remain miserable because sympathy is so sweet – but it is a sweet poison. It is not, and cannot be, a substitute for the joy of love.

But people settle at the minimum. If love is not coming their way and they don't know how to get it, immediately the alternative seems to be misery. Then people pay attention to you. So I told the husband, "Just try to be a little more loving."

He said, "My God, I hate to go home, and you are telling me to be loving to that woman? As I enter the house she starts her tirade of imaginable and unimaginable illnesses. And she goes on reading

medical encyclopedias, finding out what kind of misery would be good. She knows great names. In the beginning she used to freak me out, that 'My God, I have never heard of this disease!' And she would give the whole description of what was happening. Only later on I found the encyclopedia and the exact description, and she had marked it. At first I used to take it seriously and take her to the doctor. And every doctor said, 'This misery has just been discovered. This disease is only just in the periodicals; only experts know about it. Your wife is a real genius! Even ordinary practitioners, physicians, doctors, will not understand what kind of disease she is talking about!'"

He said, "I remain in the court as long as I can, then in the court library. And then I go to the bar, because I can tolerate that woman only when I am drunk. I wanted to warn you because you are giving her a lift every day – you may end up in my situation!"

I said, "Don't be worried. I never sympathize, I simply enjoy. She talks as you are saying and I encourage her to talk more, because I love such details. And she looks at me with very weird eyes: '... A strange fellow. I am suffering from cancer, I say to you!'"

I told her, "Suffer! Just tell me the details – I love it. You know so much about cancer. Obviously, you must be suffering, even cancer experts may not be able to defeat you, but please give me all the details. I love it so much!"

In three days I stopped her. She would sit completely silently, keeping her face looking out of the window. And I would go on poking her: "Please tell me something. You are so great, you are carrying such a burden of the whole world. You are almost an encyclopedia of medicine."

She stopped asking for a lift. I had to go inside their house and ask her husband, "Where is she? – because I enjoy her so much." She was such a nice woman, so knowledgeable! And I am absolutely ignorant about these great diseases. It was just a great teaching on the way – for one hour coming, one hour going; for two hours every day I would become an expert!

I have been in touch with thousands of people – they have all been victims of a wrong psychology. Their parents have paid attention to them when they were sick. Nobody bothers about a child when he is not sick. This is a very dangerous phenomenon: you are forcing the child to be sick because you are giving attention, and attention is a subtle food.

I had a gardener, an authentic gardener, who really loved flowers, who loved the plants. And I would see him sitting by the side of the roses and other flowers. Sometimes I heard him talking to the flowers. At first I thought he looked a little crazy, but every year he was winning the first prize in the city for growing the biggest flowers. He was with me for almost twelve years.

I asked him, "What is your secret?"

He said, "Nothing, I am just a little crazy. When there is nobody around, I talk to the flowers: 'Don't let me down this time. The time for the exhibition is coming close – grow as big as you can.' And I have been winning for twenty years continuously. No flower has ever let me down."

Just the attention, just a loving attention to a flower, makes him immensely happy. There is someone who will be happy: the flower will do everything for him to make him happy. There is someone who is watching and waiting for his growth; he is not alone, he is not unneeded.

This whole world looks so miserable for the simple reason that we have chosen to give attention to the wrong things, things which should be taken care of but without any sympathy.

You can love somebody, but please don't love her headaches. Just make sure that she goes and gets some Greek aspirin. More than that is destroying the person. But when she is laughing, enjoy her, don't even ask the question, why is she laughing? When she is dancing, dance with her; don't ask, "What is the occasion?"

Pay attention to the right things and you will see a transformation happening in the person. You can help not only yourself in discovering your buddha, you can also help everybody else who is in contact with you. If you give right attention, right nourishment to his hidden treasure, to his hidden splendor, you can help buddhahood to be spread like a wildfire.

And we need it! We have always needed it, but we need it more than ever now. We need a silent, peaceful, loving, at-ease and relaxed humanity. Enough of all those Genghis Khans and Tamerlanes and Nadir Shahs and Adolf Hitlers and Stalins and Mussolinis. If educationists of the world are a little aware, they should simply drop these people from the history books; there is no need to give attention to them. It is the same thing. You give too much attention to these terrible barbarians... you provoke the same barbarians around you, and somebody else starts becoming a Nadir Shah or a Tamerlane.

Just drop all that nonsense, that garbage. Why not talk about the buddhas? Why not talk about the beautiful painters? Why not talk about the great dancers, the musicians, all kinds of artists? Let people's minds be filled with creativity, and it will be very easy for a creative person to find the buddha. The destructive person has gone too far away; to bring him back to his buddhahood is very difficult.

I am reminded of Alexander the Great, who is one of the most terrible specimens of all those barbarians. While coming out of Greece, on the boundaries, he met one of the most beautiful men. No history book bothers about that beautiful man, and so many pages are wasted on Alexander.

He met Diogenes.

Diogenes lived naked; the climate was good, his health was good. All that he possessed was a lamp. He used to keep it lit even in the daytime. Alexander had heard many stories about Diogenes. But by chance, while he was moving, somebody told him that Diogenes was just nearby, living by the side of a river. So Alexander stopped his army and he said, "I will have to see the man. I have been thinking to see him but he was so far away; I cannot miss this opportunity."

So he went to see Diogenes. Diogenes was having a sunbath by the side of the river, on the sand in the early morning sun – a cool breeze, birds singing all around, his lamp by his side. Alexander had seen many beautiful women, many beautiful men, but nothing could be compared with the beauty, the radiance of this naked fakir. He could not believe his eyes that a man could be such pure gold that he need not be hidden behind clothes.

What is of importance, in reference to Daikaku, is the question that Diogenes asked Alexander: "Where are you going? – because I hear armies going by my side, day and night, thousands of soldiers. Where are you going?"

Alexander said, "I want to conquer the world."

Diogenes said, "That's good. What will you do after that?"

Nobody had ever asked that. For a moment there was silence.

Alexander said, "After that I will relax."

Diogenes said, "You must be stupid, because I am relaxing already without conquering the whole world. If you want to relax afterward, why take the trouble? Why not relax now? This river bank is big enough – we can both share it. Just throw your clothes away and lie down. And we can even share the lamp."

Alexander said, "Logically you are right." He understood logic because he was a student of Aristotle, the father of Western logic.

He said, "I can understand the logic. It looks stupid after taking so much trouble to kill and massacre, and then afterwards just to relax. Why not relax now? You are right. But I have gone too far. It is just a question of a few months more and my conquest of the world will be over. Otherwise, even relaxing by your side, I will go on remembering that it was only a question of a few months more. I will not be able to relax. I can relax only after I conquer the whole world."

Diogenes said, "It is up to you. I was even ready to share my riverside. I was even ready to share my lamp, my only property."

Alexander was continuously watching the lamp. In the day? – what was the point of keeping the lamp burning?

He asked, "Forgive me, I have no right to ask, but why do you carry this lamp even in the full daylight? The sunlight is there, and you go on carrying this lamp, naked."

Diogenes said, "I am searching for an authentic man. Who knows at what time he will meet me? I want to see his face, the original face. This lamp is just symbolic."

It is said that when Diogenes was dying, somebody from the crowd asked, "What happened to your great search for the original man?"

He said, "I could not find him. But this much I must say in favor of humanity: that my lamp has not been stolen, it is still with me. More than that I cannot say."

History should teach more about these people. And there have been thousands around the world; they will provoke a longing in the people's minds.

Just today Shunyo was telling me that Anando is compiling a book on all the saints that I have spoken on. She has already found three hundred names. She was puzzled; she said, "I never could imagine that there have been three hundred buddhas."

I said to her, "This is just a sample. Humanity is kept completely unaware of their greatest masterpieces, of their real original people who are the very salt of the earth."

The natural effect is that everybody goes on becoming more miserable. Every generation is more miserable than the previous one.

I have been hearing from California that even six-year-old children have been found, in thousands, to be taking drugs. A six-year-old child taking drugs? An eight-year-old child murdering? A nine-year-old child trying to rape a girl...? But when you emphasize so much murder, drugs and rape on the television, you are teaching these things. All these governments and all these corporations are emphasizing the wrong kind of people on their television and radio, not knowing at all that they are creating an urge in millions of viewers to imitate them. These crimes should not even be mentioned.

Pay attention to the right, to the beautiful, and you will be nourishing it.

So your work is not only to be a buddha, your work is also to help others who are asleep, by throwing a little cold water in their eyes! In the beginning they will be irritated. Everybody is irritated with me. It is not acceptable to disturb somebody's sleep; and a sleep which has lasted for centuries... to disturb it, you are certainly a nuisance. But I want you to be a nuisance. As your own experience deepens, don't be worried, spread it, even to those who are annoyed; it does not matter. Perhaps just being annoyed may take them out of their nightmares.

DAIKAKU SAID:

THIS TEACHING IS THE SCHOOL OF THE ENLIGHTENED MIND. THE ENLIGHTENED MIND ITSELF BASICALLY HAS NO DELUSION OR ENLIGHTENMENT.

Every statement has to be listened to very carefully. He is saying the enlightened Mind has neither mind nor enlightenment; it is simply a pure consciousness. Don't cling to enlightenment either: that clinging shows that you have destroyed the enlightenment, reduced it into some kind of thing – respectability, reputation. It is none of these.

Enlightenment is so silent a joy... it does not even make ripples in the lake, it just reflects the moon. It is so silent, just like the bamboo shadows sweeping the temple steps. No sound, no footsteps.

THE ENLIGHTENED MIND ITSELF BASICALLY HAS NO DELUSION OR ENLIGHTENMENT.

There have been thousands of enlightened people who have said that the enlightened Mind has no delusion, but they have forgotten to add that it has no enlightenment either. It is just like a disease: you have a disease, you carry a medicine with you. The disease is cured – do you still think to carry the medicine? You just donate it to the Lions Club!

So when you become enlightened just donate it to the Lions Club! Perhaps somebody may need it. But don't carry it with you; otherwise enlightenment itself becomes a new imprisonment. Do you see the immense significance of his statement? This actually is the subtle art of those who realize thusness.

EVEN IF YOU DON'T BECOME ENLIGHTENED, WHEN YOU SIT ONCE IN MEDITATION, YOU ARE A BUDDHA FOR THAT SITTING.

So when I say to you after your meditation that now we should celebrate the ten thousand buddhas, I am not joking. I am making a certain point again and again to you that you may forget after a few minutes, and rush to a party somewhere in a hotel! Buddhas are not supposed to do that! But times have changed – modern buddhas always do that. After having a good experience they celebrate it in many ways. And where to go to celebrate, to have a real Italian party?

Nothing is wrong in it if you go on remembering that you are a buddha. Nothing is wrong in the world if your remembrance remains there in the background.

He is making a really great statement, never before made.

WHEN YOU SIT ONCE IN MEDITATION, YOU ARE A BUDDHA FOR THAT SITTING... at least; WHEN YOU SIT FOR A DAY IN MEDITATION, YOU ARE A BUDDHA FOR A DAY; WHEN YOU SIT IN MEDITATION ALL YOUR LIFE, YOU ARE A BUDDHA ALL YOUR LIFE. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE FUTURE; ONE WHO CAN HAVE FAITH IN THIS IS SOMEONE WITH GREAT POTENTIAL.

Sitting in meditation should be understood clearly: you cannot sit twenty-four hours in meditation, but you can be twenty-four hours in meditation. That is what is called 'sitting in meditation'. Don't take it literally. It does not mean that you have to sit twenty-four hours in meditation. It simply means that whatever you do, do with the remembrance, with the same silence and the same benediction, with the same grace and the same ecstasy.

Whatever you are doing, it does not matter: carrying water from the well, chopping wood, anything. But just do it with your buddha alive within you, conscious within you, and your whole life becomes a 'sitting in meditation'.

PRACTICING EVERYTHING WITHOUT ANY SENSE OF ATTAINMENT IS CALLED THE EXCEEDINGLY PROFOUND TRANSCENDENT WISDOM.

If somebody asks you what is the purpose of your meditation... it is not a purposeful act. It is not a commodity, it does not produce anything marketable.

That's why most of the people in the world have remained ignorant of their hidden treasure, because that hidden treasure can open up only when you are sitting without any desire of attainment. Attainment creates tension, worry.... Attainment creates impatience – when is it going to happen? whether it is going to happen or not? Attainment creates jealousy: somebody is claiming that it has happened to him, how can it be that it has not happened to me?

Sardar Gurudayal Singh is laughing. And he does nothing, he just remains a buddha the whole day. You can find him in any position, but he will be the buddha. He has been with me for thirty-five years. Hitting him again and again, I have awakened him so much that now it is difficult for him to sleep! So he goes on waking up other people. What else to do when you cannot sleep? You cannot allow anybody else to sleep, it is too much.

The desire for attainment is a barrier to meditation. Even the desire to attain enlightenment is a barrier. One has to drop all desires for attainment. Now, nothing can be done about it; this is how nature functions.

You can't ask any scientist, "Why is water made of only two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen, H₂O? Why?" The scientist has to shrug his shoulders, because you cannot ask nature why. It is just the way nature moves. It is not in our hands.

Meditation is far deeper. Its basic condition is that you should not desire any attainment. Now you cannot ask why. You can ask why but you will remain out of the world of meditation.

This is the nature of meditation, that it cannot function if your mind is occupied with some attainment. That attainment functions like a rock. Only a man who has nothing to attain, who is simply sitting for the joy of it, reaches to enlightenment so easily that it almost seems as if no effort has been made. In fact every effort shows that there is some attainment which you have to push aside. If there is no desire for attainment, immediately you are enlightened.

For the first few days you may walk amongst other people showing your enlightenment just like a peacock showing all its colored feathers. But for how long? And anyway, nobody takes any notice, because to understand enlightenment you need enlightenment.

In the world of blind people, if you have eyes you can go on and on moving around – nobody is going to recognize your eyes. To recognize somebody's eyes you need eyes.

Enlightenment is a third eye, the eye that looks inwards. It can be recognized only by those who have looked a little inwards, who may have been, for a few minutes, a buddha but have forgotten all about it in the mundane activities of the world.

PRACTICING EVERYTHING WITHOUT ANY SENSE OF ATTAINMENT IS CALLED THE EXCEEDINGLY PROFOUND TRANSCENDENT WISDOM. THIS WISDOM CAN CUT OFF THE SOURCE OF BIRTH AND DEATH, LIKE A SHARP SWORD.

You will not be born again and you will not die again. In fact you will not be anymore. Your small energy will disappear into the oceanic energy of existence. That is true relaxation. That is total rest. You are no more there to have any anxieties.

TO PRACTICE VIRTUE IN HOPES OF REWARD IS THE ILLUSION OF ORDINARY FOLK; BODHISATTVAS DO NOT SEEK FOR THE RESULTING REWARDS AS THEY CULTIVATE ROOTS OF VIRTUE, BECAUSE THEY CULTIVATE GOODNESS FOR THE SAKE OF IMPARTIAL LOVE AND COMPASSION, AND THUS IT BECOMES SUSTENANCE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT.

Enlightenment has many doors. It is not open only to the so-called saints. An artist deep in his art, painting so totally that he disappears and only the painting remains – whether he knows it or not, for that moment he has become a buddha. A singer with his totality disappears in his song.

Enlightenment is not the monopoly of the saints: that is one of the basic points I want to make clear to the world. There are a thousand and one doors. Only one single quality should be there – that

you are rejoicing in doing it, for no attainment. When a singer sings, if he is singing for some reward he cannot be total.

I am reminded of one of India's greatest singers, Tansen. Even today, in Gwalior, there is his samadhi and singers from all over the country go there on his birthday to pay their respects to that great genius. He was in the court of a great emperor, Akbar, and Akbar could not conceive that music could go higher or deeper than Tansen's. But it became a continuous question in his mind: Is it possible to transcend Tansen? Can somebody do something more than he is doing?

Finally he asked Tansen himself: "This question has been torturing me. I know that there is no one who can go so deep and create such beautiful music. Thousands of musicians have come to the court; they know the technique, but their totality is not in it."

Tansen said, "Please forgive me. You don't know my master – I am not even dust under his feet. You don't know what totality in music is."

Akbar said, "Then invite your master to the court. We will give him all the respect that is possible."

Tansen said, "That is the difficulty; that's why I have never mentioned him." He lived just near to where the Taj Mahal now stands. "He is a very silent, poor man, but he never sings on demand. That is the difficulty. You cannot call him and ask him to sing or play his sitar. When it comes spontaneously to him, then it is a totally different world – you will not be able even to compare me with him."

Akbar said, "You are creating trouble. If he cannot be asked, then how am I going to listen to him?"

Tansen said, "I know perfectly that at three o'clock, early in the morning almost every day, he plays his sitar. What can be arranged is that we should hide behind the trees where he lives in a hut by the side of the Ganges and just listen as thieves. There is no other way. If he becomes aware that somebody is there, he may stop. So be very quiet." And perhaps never in the history of man has any emperor like Akbar gone to listen to a beggar.

His name was Haridas. In the middle of the night they were hiding behind the trees like thieves. At three o'clock exactly, Haridas started playing on his sitar, and Akbar wept for the first time. Returning home, his tears continued.

Tansen said to him, "Now we are coming close to the palace. Wash away your tears! Why are you weeping?"

Akbar said, "I am weeping because now my whole idea that you are the greatest singer, the greatest musician in the world, is shattered. Your master is miles beyond. But what is the reason that you cannot manage to be the same as your master?"

He said, "The reason is clear: I sing and play for reward; he sings and plays out of spontaneity, for no reward, with no desire even that somebody should listen to it. Just out of his fullness, out of his abundance he pours out music. I cannot do it. I am a court poet, a court singer, a court musician: I do my best, but deep down there is a desire for reward. And you have been rewarding me, you have

filled my house with gold. You have raised my position to being the world's greatest musician, but I know the greatest musician is a beggar who was my master.

"I had to sit by his side for thirty years, because there was no other way. He would not teach you anything – if you could learn that was your business. He would play only when it came to him. You could watch, you could see the tremendous splendor that suddenly happened. Haridas disappeared, only the music remained."

In those moments, when Haridas disappeared, he was a buddha whether he knew it or not. The activity may be in any direction, any dimension.

I want everybody to know that if you can do something without any desire of reward or attainment, you are in meditation. You will blossom into enlightenment. Out of your abundance will come love and compassion, and for a few days you may walk differently from others. But soon you will realize that others cannot recognize it – that is one thing.

And a second thing: it is ugly on your part, mean, to show your enlightenment, to show your light to the people who are blind. It is not compassionate. Soon the enlightened man forgets about his enlightenment. That is The Great Matter – forgetting even enlightenment. The whole world is gone and enlightenment too. Nothing remains behind, you have become part of the universe.

This is rest. This is relaxation.

ENLIGHTENMENT IS THE WAY TO EXTINCTION. IF YOU TAKE PEACE AND QUIET TO BE BLISS, ALL THINGS ARE AFFLICTIONS; BUT WHEN YOU ARE ENLIGHTENED, ALL THINGS ARE ENLIGHTENMENT. PEOPLE OF THE WORLD DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS BASIS OF DELUSION AND ENLIGHTENMENT. THEY SUPPRESS THOUGHTS OF BIRTH AND DEATH AND THINK THAT THIS IS THE NON-BIRTH OF A SINGLE THOUGHT, AND ALSO CONSIDER THIS MINDLESSNESS – BUT THESE ARE STILL THOUGHTS OF BIRTH AND DEATH, NOT MINDLESSNESS, NOT QUIESCENCE. WHEN YOU TRY TO STOP THOUGHT BY THOUGHT, BIRTH AND DEATH CONTINUE.

You cannot stop thought with thought. You cannot control mind with mind itself. You have to be aloof, out of the mind, just watching it.

Perhaps for a few days it may make a little fuss, that "You have deserted me!" Just go on watching. It will disappear because its nourishment is your identification with it. Now that you are no longer identified, it cannot last long. It will shrink, it will die out, it will disappear like smoke in the sky, and only the watcher remains.

But when there is nothing to watch, even the purpose of the watcher is not there. When there is nothing to watch, the watcher has committed suicide without knowing it. That's why he is saying, ENLIGHTENMENT IS THE WAY TO EXTINCTION.

You will be extinguished, completely dissolved into the whole. Only then will you find... you will not be there, but only peace, but only light, but only joy, but only dance.... The flower has disappeared, leaving behind only fragrance.

Tekkan wrote:

NO MIND, NO BUDDHA, NO BEING.

BONES OF THE VOID ARE SCATTERED.

WHY SHOULD THE GOLDEN LION,

SEEK OUT THE FOX'S LAIR?

No mind, and you find the buddha – but that buddha has also to disappear. No buddha, and you find the ultimate being of the universe – even that has to disappear. When everything has disappeared and you are completely erased, you have found the cosmic truth.

It is not your truth, it is not my truth, it is simply Truth.

A Zen poet:

ALL IS HARMONY, YET

EVERYTHING IS SEPARATE.

ONCE CONFIRMED,

MASTERY IS YOURS,

LONG I HOVERED ON THE

MIDDLE WAY,

TODAY THE VERY ICE SHOOTS FLAME.

Buddha's path is called The Middle Way; no extremes, just keep in the middle.

TODAY THE VERY ICE SHOOTS FLAME. "I have come to the point where ice and fire are in harmony, where everything is in harmony." A better word for harmony would be synchronicity – everything is in a deep synchronicity, all hearts have become one heartbeat.

Another haiku runs:

EVER ONWARDS TO WHERE THE

WATERS HAVE AN END:

WAITING MOTIONLESS FOR WHEN THE

WHITE CLOUDS SHALL ARISE.

Meditation is just like the rivers running towards the ocean: when they meet the ocean, they will disappear. They are running so fast to their extinction.

Buddhism did not appeal much to the Indian priesthood, the brahmins, for the simple reason that for centuries they have been praying to God for rewards. All the VEDAS are full of asking God for this or that. The whole mind of India was not prepared to accept Buddha. The conditioning was, you pray, you make fire rituals, you sacrifice, and God will give you great rewards. You do virtuous acts and in paradise you will be paid a thousand times more.

This idea had been cultivated in India for thousands of years when Buddha said that this is not true religion, this is sheer business, this is not an authentic search for existence. You are still hankering for rewards. Because of this he had chosen the word 'nirvana' for his ultimate point.

Nirvana actually means blowing out a candle. When you blow out a candle, can you say where the flame has gone? Can you find the flame anywhere? It must have gone somewhere, but you know it is impossible to find it. It has disappeared in the universe.

Buddha used the word 'nirvana', which we are translating as enlightenment; but the word 'enlightenment' does not carry the same flavor of extinction. It still gives the idea of attainment. Nirvana means seeking extinction, blowing out the candle in the cosmos.

Naturally, hundreds of times in his forty-two years of preaching, great Hindu scholars, priests and philosophers approached Buddha and asked him, "What is the point in striving for something in which you will disappear?"

Question 1

Maneesha has asked a similar question:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

NOBODY IN THEIR RIGHT MIND WOULD WANT TO BE EXTINGUISHED. SO WHO OR WHAT IS IT INSIDE US THAT FEELS A PULL TOWARDS OBLITERATION?

It was absolutely right to ask Buddha, "Your teaching is strange: meditating seems to be the ultimate suicide. Why should one desire extinction?" But Buddha's answer was very clear, although it was not received by the Indian mind.

His answer was very clear. He said, "Because you are the problem; hence extinction is the only solution."

It is not that you have problems; this has to be understood very clearly. It is not that you have problems, so problems can be solved separately and you can be saved. If that were the situation, then Buddha would have been wrong. But this is not the situation. You are the problem. You cannot be without problems.

Just think that one morning you wake up and you don't have any problems – you will be in such grief. You will say, "My God, what am I going to do? No problems at all!"

You cling to problems because problems give you personality. They give you a certain identity.

Without problems, you are no more. You are just a collection of problems. That's why Buddha is right, that meditation is the extinction not only of problems but of you too, because you were nothing but a collection, a name for a collection of problems. When all the problems are gone, you are gone... you are not separate from your problems. Buddha's greatest contribution to the world was the realization that man himself is the problem. You may go on changing problems – that is possible – but you cannot exist without problems. There is no need! If you don't have any problem, what is the point of existing?

Psychologists now say that after retirement, people lose almost ten years of life. If they had remained working they would have lived ten years more, but because they got retired... They had been hankering for years to be retired so they could go on a world tour or visit ancient palaces, castles, the Himalayas. They will enjoy, life will be fun. Up to now life has been just work, work, work. After retirement they can enjoy life as fun.

But after retirement they find that life has become absolutely useless. Nobody needs them. Their children are grown up, they have gone their way. And even if they tour around the world...

I have seen tourists with all kinds of cameras and bags and machinery covering both their sides, but look at their faces! They know that they are unnecessarily running from the Taj Mahal to Ajanta, from Ajanta to Ellora. They know perfectly well that all this is useless; they are simply keeping themselves engaged in something which is futile. Now death seems to be the only release. Naturally their lifespan shrinks.

What Gautam Buddha is saying is a very ultimate answer to man. He says that you are the problem. It does not matter what shape the problem takes – unless you are ready to extinguish yourself, the problem will go on coming in new forms. Youth has its problems, childhood has its problems; the child wants quickly to grow up.

I have been talking to small children. They all want to grow up quickly because they see that others are enjoying – smoking cigarettes, going to the movies, having girlfriends. They want to grow as quickly as possible.

Once I used to live by the side of a post office, and I used to go early, at three o'clock in the morning, for a walk. One night I saw a little boy. It was a full-moon night, so I could figure out who he was; he was the postmaster's son. And seeing me, he hid himself behind a tree.

I got hold of him and I asked, "What is the matter? Why are you hiding? Just come out."

He said, "I will come out, but don't tell my daddy."

I said, "What is the problem, that you are trying to hide?"

He was hiding an artificial mustache, and a cigarette. He was pretending to be his father. He was walking the same way as his father walked.... He said, "Just don't tell him, otherwise he will give me a good beating."

I said, "What is the hurry? Someday the mustache will grow, and then you can smoke cigarettes also. It is too soon."

He said, "I have been waiting and waiting and everybody seems to be enjoying and I have to go on playing with toys. Whenever I make a fuss my father brings another toy. How long do I have to be with toys? I want real things!"

I said, "You can have real toys."

He said, "I have! I can show you in my house, you come with me. I have a beautiful girl who opens her eyes and if you lie her down she closes her eyes. But after all it is only a toy! – it is not a real girlfriend."

I said, "That's true!"

Small children have their problems. When they grow up, they have their problems. The same girlfriends, the same boyfriends that they had wanted become a nightmare, nagging each other, torturing each other, doing everything nasty to each other and still holding together. It is very difficult to get rid of your torturer, because deep down you also feel alone if nobody tortures you.

The Hindu shastras say that you have to beat your woman once a week absolutely; otherwise she will think you don't love her. I think there is something in it! If you don't beat your girlfriend, she will beat you. It is up to you to choose.

George Bernard Shaw used to say that giving women equality is impossible. When asked why he said, "My lifelong experience" – and nobody has lived so long as he has lived, he almost made a century – "My experience is, either you keep the woman down with force or she will keep you down. Equality is not possible. Either you are superior or she is superior. One of you has to be inferior at any cost."

Equality is impossible, according to George Bernard Shaw, and I can see the point. It is always difficult.

So when you are young you have your troubles and you want to get out of this troubled age quickly, but problems remain.

As old age starts coming one becomes afraid, because old age means death is not far away. And old age means the younger generation around you is no longer interested in you. You are too old, too out of fashion. You cannot mix with the younger generation, they avoid you. You are finished; just understand the point that you are finished. All your false teeth won't help.

There are people around who have everything false, and they are thinking to deceive younger people. But how long can you deceive? – in the night you have to take out your false teeth. One day you may not be observed, but the second day... while sleeping your false hair falls from your skull, and the woman who is lying beside you cannot believe that you have been deceiving her! But everything seems to be false.

There is an age where false things are needed; otherwise you are out-of-date. But what are you doing here? Just go to your graves! Meditate there! The world has left you alone. Old age... and death seems to be knocking at any moment on your door, and the fear of the unknown... Your whole life is a problem.

From the very birth the child resists coming out of the womb because he has lived for nine months in a most comfortable, most luxurious place. No work, and every need is automatically provided – why should he leave this place? And who knows what is outside? That is why women have so much trouble giving birth to a child: the child clings, the child does not want to come out. From that moment, up to when you are put on a funeral pyre, you are just trouble – to yourself and to others.

Maneesha, that is the need, the desire, for ultimate annihilation, dissolving into the universe – so that you don't have any personal needs, any personal problems; so that you don't have any burden, not even of being, because being is also a burden.

Buddha's insight is so great that he is still ahead of his time. Even though twenty-five centuries have passed, he has not yet found his contemporaries, because what he is saying is so ultimately true that it hurts, that one wants not to see it, to close one's eyes.

It was for this reason that Buddhism could not grow in India – because India's mind was, for centuries, cultivated with the idea that prayer, meditation, yoga, everything is for a reward.

And Buddha says, "If you have any idea of reward, you will miss. The very idea of attaining something will prevent you from merging into existence." It was so contrary to people's minds that only a few very intelligent people followed him. And after he died, within three hundred years... just three hundred years after his death, not even a ripple remained. In India, Buddhism has completely disappeared.

Three hundred years later Alexander the Great came to India. He wanted to meet some Buddhist saints, but he could not. He could not find any. Why did it disappear so quickly, such a great insight? The reason is, the Indian mind is basically greedy. It talks about renunciation, but even renunciation is for a reward. It talks about charity, but charity is also for a reward. Everything is business.

Buddhism managed to grow its roots in China, in Korea, in Japan, in Thailand, for the simple reason that they were not so-called religious people. China was under the great impact of Confucius, who did not believe in God, who did not believe in any heaven or any hell. Buddhism found the right ground where people were not asking for attainment, even after death. And Japan was even more fertile a land; they did not have the Indian greed.

It is very strange that India continues to claim to the whole world that it is the only spiritual land. It is all cow dung. I have lived for half a century, and I have watched the Indian mind from all sides – they are more greedy than any people in the world, but they have made even their greed spirituality.

Buddha could not make his roots here for the simple reason that the Indian mind was already prejudiced and prepared for having great pleasures beyond death. It could not lose those pleasures. And naturally, to the mind, the question that Maneesha is asking arises.

"Nobody in their right mind" – that is true... "Nobody in their right mind would want to be extinguished."

But who is there who is in their right mind? In fact, when you are in your right mind, you would love to be extinguished. Only the insane want to continue. What is the point? Just think for a moment: before you were born, do you think there was something missing in the world? And think again: when you will be dead, do you think something will be missing in the world? Millions of people have come and gone – the world continues.

Buddha is saying: Birth is pain, youth is pain, old age is pain, death is pain – why do you want to continue? For what? His meditation is a search for dissolving oneself back into the cosmos. It is total rest, rest from yourself; total freedom, freedom even from yourself.

This is one of the reasons I am not part of India. Those who have come to me from all over the world are not greedy people. They really want to understand that life is a problem, that mind is a problem. In fact, to be is to be a problem. Then why not be courageous and not be?

You will find very few Indians here; they are all against me. Again they find another buddha teaching annihilation, extinction, teaching ultimate death. But only very intelligent people can understand it. Buddhism is for the most sophisticated, for the most intelligent. It is not for the ordinary people, for the mediocre. They will go on suffering, but they will never understand that their very being is suffering. Non-being is the freedom from suffering.

A few laughs before you disappear, die, extinguish... and this time really go. At least for a few moments you will be a buddha, and there is no harm if you don't come back. We will still celebrate – it is a promise.

Dilly and Dally, two salesmen, are standing together at the bar, talking about football. At the other end of the bar an old drunk is having trouble holding himself and his drink upright at the same time.

Suddenly Dilly notices a very unpleasant smell.

"Hey, Dally!" he says, "do you smell shit?"

Dally sniffs the air, nods and starts to hold his nose.

"I think it's coming from that old drunk over there," he says.

"Excuse me," says Dally to the old guy, "but there is a terrible smell around here. Did you shit in your pants?"

The bleary-eyed drunk lifts up his head and stares at Dilly.

"Yup," he slobbers, "what about it?"

"Well," says a shocked Dilly, "why don't you go to the bathroom and wash yourself?"

The old drunk stares back, blinking, and then says, "Because I haven't finished yet!"

Three secretaries, Betty, Boopsee and Barbara, are working in the same office for the same boss, the famous male chauvinist tyrant, Dumford Porkeye.

"He is so mean," says Betty to Boopsee and Barbara on their coffee break, "so yesterday I put salt in his sugar bowl just to watch his face when he drank his coffee."

"That's nothing," says Boopsee. "I found a pack of condoms in his desk drawer and took a pin and put holes in the ends of all them!"

At that moment, Barbara fainted.

Donald Dixteen is touring Spain. He is looking at the boats in the harbor of a small fishing village, when Old Carlos comes over to him and asks, "How many boats do you see there in the water?"

"About twenty-five," replies Donald.

"Twenty-eight, in fact!" says Carlos. "And I built every one of them with my own hands! But do my neighbors call me Carlos the boat builder? They do not! How many houses do you see on the hillside over there?" continues Carlos.

"Thirty-two," replies Donald.

"Correct!" agrees Carlos, "all built by me. But do my neighbors call me Carlos the house-builder? They do not!"

"Well, what do they call you?" insists Donald. "Carlos the what?"

"What do they call me?" exclaims Carlos, eyeing a nearby hen lovingly.

"You wouldn't believe it," explains Carlos, "just because of that one little chicken I fucked!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes.

Feel your body to be frozen.

Gather your consciousness inwards,

deeper and deeper....

This silence, this peace, this blissfulness

discovers the buddha within you.

For these few moments you are a buddha

and it is up to you, if you can remember –

then you can be a buddha twenty-four hours.

'Buddha' simply means silent awareness.

And the silent awareness is not something dead,

it is full of joy,

it is full of juice,

it is full of dance.

It has a music of its own.

To make it more clear, Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax....

Relax into the universe.

Drop yourself, with all your problems.

Just don't be!

This is transcending even the buddha.

This is entering into the cosmos itself,

losing all your personality, individuality.

The dewdrop slipping from the lotus leaf

into the ocean...

This is the most blissful

and ecstatic moment of your life.

Continue to remember it.

It is your own nature.

It is not something uncommon,

it is not something extraordinary,

it is just pure nature, simply very ordinary,

without any claim to anything.

This brings so much light and so much delight

that it starts overflowing in you.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but don't come back

leaving your experience behind –

bring it with you.

Slowly, gracefully resurrect.

Sit for a few seconds as buddhas,

collecting,

remembering where you have been...

the experience...

so that it becomes an undercurrent in your life

twenty-four hours a day.

It can change all your gestures, activities –

not only yours, it can change people around you.

It is infectious.

Share it, don't be a miser!

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the ten thousand buddhas?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 5

Meditation, the method of great liberation

24 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

DAIKAKU SAID TO HIS ASSEMBLY OF MONKS: "SITTING MEDITATION IS THE METHOD OF GREAT LIBERATION; ALL THE TEACHINGS FLOW FORTH FROM THIS; MYRIAD PRACTICES ARE MASTERED THIS WAY. SUPERNORMAL POWERS, KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM AND VIRTUE, ALL ARISE FROM HERE. THE PATH OF LIFE OF HUMANS AND GODS OPENS HEREIN; ALL THE BUDDHAS HAVE ENTERED AND LEFT BY THIS DOOR. BODHISATTVAS PRACTICING IT HAVE ENTERED THIS DOOR. DISCIPLES AND SELF-ENLIGHTENED ONES ARE STILL ONLY HALFWAY THERE, WHILE OUTSIDERS, THOUGH THEY PRACTICE, DO NOT ENTER THE RIGHT PATH. WHATEVER ESOTERIC OR EXOTERIC SCHOOLS DO NOT PRACTICE THIS, DO NOT HAVE ANYONE WHO REALIZES THE WAY OF BUDDHAHOOD."

A MONK THEN ASKED DAIKAKU, "WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT SITTING MEDITATION IS THE ROOT SOURCE OF ALL THE TEACHINGS?" DAIKAKU ANSWERED, "MEDITATION IS THE INNER NO-MIND OF THE ENLIGHTENED ONES; DISCIPLINE IS THEIR OUTER CHARACTER; DOCTRINE IS THEIR SPEECH; BUDDHA-REMEMBRANCE IS THE INVOCATION OF THE BUDDHA'S NAME. ALL COME FROM THE ENLIGHTENED NO-MIND OF THE BUDDHAS; THEREFORE, IT IS CONSIDERED FUNDAMENTAL."

THE MONK ASKED AGAIN, "THE METHOD OF MEDITATION IS FORMLESS AND THOUGHTLESS; SPIRITUAL QUALITIES ARE NOT OBVIOUS, AND THERE IS NO PROOF OF SEEING REALITY – SO HOW CAN WE BELIEVE IN THIS?"

DAIKAKU SAID, "YOUR OWN NO-MIND AND THE ENLIGHTENED NO-MIND ARE ONE – IS THAT NOT SPIRITUAL QUALITY? IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR OWN NO-MIND, ON WHOM CAN YOU CALL FOR WITNESS AND PROOF? OTHER THAN THE IDENTITY OF NO-MIND AND BUDDHA, WHAT PROOF DO YOU SEEK?"

Maneesha, Daikaku is making some very important statements for those who are on the path; not for those who are seeking knowledge, respectability, reputation. Daikaku is a master only if you are a seeker. Unless your whole life depends on a single point of finding your own center, the very source of your being, you will not be able to understand what Daikaku is saying.

But this assembly is no ordinary crowd. This assembly is of the bodhisattvas, who are essentially buddhas, and their urge to explore their inner reality to its totality has brought them from all corners of the world. This is the right assembly for a man like Daikaku.

DAIKAKU SAID TO HIS ASSEMBLY OF MONKS:

SITTING MEDITATION IS THE METHOD OF GREAT LIBERATION.

It is very strange that just by silently sitting, watching your thoughts moving here and there as if they do not belong to you – you don't have to do anything about them, not even make a judgment – just sitting silently not doing anything, and the door opens. Your ultimate reality is not something to be sought in the outside world; it is hidden in the seeker himself. The moment you start looking for it here and there, you are going far away, far away from yourself. There is no need to go anywhere. Just sit down, settle down. The mind is just like dust in water. If you are patient enough, the dust will settle and the crystal-clear water will be there reflecting the full moon.

Zen does not preach any discipline, any doctrine, any practice. It is one of the greatest blessings to humanity that Zen has made the search for oneself so obvious and so simple.

SITTING MEDITATION IS THE METHOD OF GREAT LIBERATION; ALL THE TEACHINGS FLOW FORTH FROM THIS; MYRIAD PRACTICES ARE MASTERED THIS WAY. SUPERNORMAL POWERS, KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM AND VIRTUE, ALL ARISE FROM HERE. THE PATH OF LIFE OF HUMANS AND GODS OPENS HEREIN; ALL THE BUDDHAS HAVE ENTERED AND LEFT BY THIS DOOR.

These sentences have to be remembered. While sitting silently you will come across a door within you, just an opening. If you remain in this opening, still, many things will start happening to you: knowledge, wisdom, some miraculous powers, great virtue – but this is only the door.

A few are sitting outside the door; they can sit as long as they want. They are exoteric people who cannot look in, who always look out. They have become obsessed with the outside reality. They are also sitting by the side of the door. But their back is towards the door, not their face.

The disciple is also sitting, but his face is towards the door. But this is only a door to a tremendous phenomenon of existence. You are not to stop here, although it will allure you with great wisdom, miraculous powers, virtues. It will bring you peace and silence.

But Daikaku says, ALL THE BUDDHAS HAVE ENTERED AND LEFT BY THIS DOOR.

There is something more beyond this door. The buddhas have entered and left the door behind. They have gone beyond.

What is beyond knowledge? – innocence. What is beyond wisdom? – just a sense that "I know nothing." What is beyond miracles? – no buddha has done a miracle.

Buddha did not walk on water and did not turn water into wine and did not make any Lazarus come back to life. Compared to Jesus he has not done anything, but he is far beyond Jesus. Jesus is only at the door; he has not entered into the ultimate reality. Buddha cannot do any miracle for the simple reason that he is no more. He cannot be knowledgeable because he has dropped himself, like a dewdrop from the lotus leaf into the ocean. His let-go is so total that a tremendous energy field is created around him in which anything may happen; but he is not the doer.

I would like to show you the difference. Lazarus died – he was a friend of Jesus, and a follower. His sisters were followers of Jesus. They wouldn't allow the town's people to bury the dead man. Jesus was informed; he was far away. It took four days, and when he came, the dead body of Lazarus was being kept in a cave in the mountains. He called, "Lazarus! Come out!" and Lazarus came out. This is thought to be the greatest miracle of Jesus.

A similar situation arose before Buddha, but the story is totally different. A woman was going to drown herself, but people saved her somehow. Her husband had died but she had a small child, so she thought to live for the child. But then the child died; now there was nothing for her to live for. People said, "Don't be worried, Buddha is in the town. You come with us, bring the dead body of the child. And if he cannot make him alive, then nobody can do anything."

The woman came crying, weeping, carrying the body of the dead child. Buddha said, "Leave the child here. I will bring him back to life on one condition: you have to bring some mustard seeds from a house where nobody has ever died."

The poor woman could not understand the logic of it. She thought, "What a great opportunity! This is not difficult" – because mustard seed was the principal crop in that village. "There must be some house where nobody has died." She went from house to house.

And they said, "How many mustard seeds do you want? We can bring many carts full if your child can be revived. But it won't help, because not only one person but thousands of people must have died in this house, in this family. And you are unnecessarily wasting your time – you cannot find a house where nobody has died."

But she went on searching – perhaps... a hope against hope. By the evening it became clear that everybody who is born dies, and she could not find the required mustard seeds. But her tears disappeared, and instead of tears a great awareness arose, that "Life and death exist together. And what does it matter if my child dies today or tomorrow? He would have to die, and it is good that he has died before me. If I had died first he would have been an orphan, a beggar. This is a great blessing."

By the time she reached Buddha the sun was setting, and Buddha said, "Where are the mustard seeds?"

She fell down at Buddha's feet and she said, "I have brought myself, not the mustard seeds. I want to be initiated into the search for that which never dies."

Now you can see the difference between the two stories. In one Lazarus is resurrected, but he will have to die again. What was the point of resurrecting him? He has not been transformed. He has not gained any insight, he has not become awakened. But this woman in a similar situation with a great master, encounters the very basic problem: how to transcend life and death? How to get beyond this circle of life and death?

Buddha initiated her, and he said, "For this reason I had to send you – so that the understanding arose on your own that everybody dies. Now the question is, is there something that never dies? And I am happy that you have come back with that understanding. Your initiation is not an imitation, your initiation is out of understanding."

Christian missionaries continuously go on saying that except for Jesus, nobody – neither Buddha nor Bodhidharma... there have been thousands of masters, but Jesus is unique because of his miracles. But buddhas will laugh.

The real miracle is that the woman has come to an understanding that she wants to enter into herself. From the outside you may not think it a great miracle. To resurrect the body is not the question – he will die again, you are simply giving him another chance to die.

Even Christian scholars are finding all the miracles of Jesus unfounded. They have been added three hundred years after Jesus, to give him a glamor that he is really the son of God. All pure fiction!

Now there is a great controversy going on in Christian circles: can we accept Jesus if his miracles are proved fictitious? Take away the miracles and Jesus is nothing. But take anything away from Gautam Buddha, he is still a Gautam Buddha. You cannot take away anything from him because nothing is added. He has remained simply himself, no fiction, no mythology. This is a real miracle, that a man who influenced the whole East also managed that nobody add any mythology, any fiction to his life. His life has remained a pure flame without any smoke.

ALL THE BUDDHAS HAVE ENTERED AND LEFT... This is only a door. It is not a place to live, it is simply a passage to pass through. ... AND LEFT BY THIS DOOR.

BODHISATTVAS PRACTICING IT HAVE ENTERED THIS DOOR. DISCIPLES AND SELF-ENLIGHTENED ONES ARE STILL ONLY HALFWAY THERE WHILE OUTSIDERS, THOUGH THEY PRACTICE, DO NOT ENTER THE RIGHT PATH.

If you are doing some practice outside, that means you are doing some yoga exercise, distorting the body this way and that way, standing on your head. And nobody ever thinks, "Is self-realization a certain posture of the body?" You can go on standing on your head for your whole life but still you will not become enlightened; you will just become a very fat head. All the blood will accumulate in your head, your hands and legs will slowly start shrinking. Certainly you will not be a human being anymore, but just a big football with small hands and legs. It is a miracle, but what can you do with such a miracle?

This statement, DISCIPLES AND SELF-ENLIGHTENED ONES ARE STILL ONLY HALFWAY THERE... They have not even reached the door.

It will be a little difficult to distinguish between the enlightened one and the self-enlightened. The self-enlightened is only imagining that he is enlightened. Nobody can prevent you from imagining any kind of thing you want. And nobody can refute you, because there is no way to refute and there is no way to argue for or against.

I have heard about a madman who got the idea that he was dead. Madness was not enough, he added something more. He would say, "I know that I am dead."

People said, "Don't say such things; you are talking, you are walking, you are eating."

He said, "So what? That does not prove that I am not dead. I have seen many dead people doing the same thing. What do you think about yourself?" Then people thought that this was very dangerous: if their families heard that this fellow thought that everybody is dead, and talking and eating and walking do not matter; you are dead and it can continue.... They took him to a psychiatrist who said, "Don't be worried. I will cure him."

They said, "We are not worried about him, we are worried about you – because he has cured many people. A few of his friends have started having another thought, that perhaps they are dead. He is very convincing, a very logical and rational person."

The psychiatrist said, "You go and leave him with me."

To the madman the psychiatrist said, "Have you heard that dead men don't bleed?"

He said, "Yes, when I was alive I had heard it, I remember."

Then the psychiatrist said, "The matter is settled."

He took out his knife and cut a little on the mad fellow's hand and blood came out. The madman said, "Aha! That means that proverb is wrong: dead men do bleed. Now give me the knife, I will try it on you."

The psychiatrist said, "You will try it on me?"

He said, "I have to know whether you are alive or dead. Now it is proved that dead people bleed. If you are dead, you will bleed. If you are still alive you will not bleed. Just give me your hand."

He said, "My God, your family was right."

The madman took his hand and made a good cut and said, "Look! We both are dead. Everybody is dead. I have not come across a single person who is alive. But everybody is deluded – what can you do?"

The psychiatrist said, "Please don't tell anybody else that I am dead. You just go home."

He said, "Which home? I am coming with you. Behave like a dead man – graceful, silent, friendly. I can help your practice very much: every day I can have a table in your office. Difficult patients that you cannot treat, I can treat within a minute. It just has to be proved that they are dead. And a dead person cannot worry, a dead person cannot dream; they are just befooling themselves. A dead person needs no psychiatry."

Daikaku is saying, BODHISATTVAS PRACTICING IT HAVE ENTERED THIS DOOR.

They have not stopped at the door, they have passed through it. There is every allurements to remain at the door because you suddenly feel immensely powerful, capable of doing miracles.

But a real seeker is not in search of miracles, he is in search of the source of his life from where everything arises.

BODHISATTVAS PRACTICING IT HAVE ENTERED THE DOOR, left the door behind, become buddhas. Their miracle is their love, their miracle is their compassion. Their miracle is to spread buddhahood like a wildfire.

Making wine out of water is not a miracle, it is a crime. Don't do any such thing here. If Jesus had made wine into water, that was perfectly natural, there was no crime in it. But making wine out of water is certainly dangerous. But whether dangerous or not, it is trivia, not a miracle.

The only miracle is to be authentic, honest, yourself. And then anything that follows around you, in your field, is not your doing. So those who are of great understanding that their ultimate aim is to search for the buddha within, they have entered the door.

DISCIPLES AND SELF-ENLIGHTENED – this is a category of mad people – ARE STILL ONLY HALFWAY THERE,

WHILE OUTSIDERS, THOUGH THEY PRACTICE, DO NOT ENTER THE RIGHT PATH.

Those who are outside can go on doing austerities, self-torture, fasts and all kinds of things, but they will not enter. And those who have only half entered will remain clinging to the door. And the door is not the reality; you have to pass through it, beyond....

In other words, the door is the mind and the beyond is the no-mind – and that is the only miracle worth calling a miracle.

WHATEVER ESOTERIC OR EXOTERIC SCHOOLS DO NOT PRACTICE THIS, DO NOT HAVE ANYONE WHO REALIZES THE WAY OF BUDDHAHOOD.

All esoteric schools are just hallucinatory, playing on the imagination of man with all good intentions, but they are not the path to know the truth, to know the source of life. And the exoteric who are doing outward things.... For example, they drop their clothes, and they think because they have become naked they have attained great virtue.

One cannot imagine the blindness of man. All the animals are naked – except for a few English dogs. Some old ladies in England still cover their dogs. When they take the dog for a walk they

go on pulling their leashes, particularly to keep him from making any tree or lamppost a toilet. Or he may come across a girlfriend... to prevent him from enjoying a love affair, they go on pulling the leash. And the dogs have to be covered, because naked dogs remind them of pornography. These women are really pornographic! England has a few specialties; one of these specialties is these old women. Even today they are afraid to leave their dogs, or even their chair legs or table legs naked, because that is pornographic. Now, who is pornographic? – these women, in their imagination.

I have heard about three old men, great friends, all retired. One was sixty-five, another was seventy-five, and the third was eighty-five. One evening when they were meeting in the park, a daily routine, they found the youngest, the sixty-five-year-old, looking very sad. They asked, "What is the problem? You can tell us. We have been friends for years."

He said, "I am so ashamed. But I have to tell you that I was looking through the keyhole of the bathroom when a beautiful woman, who was a guest in my house, was taking her bath."

The other two laughed and said, "You idiot, everybody has done that. It is nothing special."

The man said, "You have not heard the whole story. I was caught red-handed and my mother slapped me."

Those two old fellows again said, "Don't be worried – every child does it. And it is very rare to find a mother who does not slap."

That sixty-five-year-old man said, "You don't understand – it is not a question of childhood, it happened today!"

They said, "Then it is certainly serious, but not much to be worried about."

The seventy-five-year-old then said, "My problem is more difficult. Whenever I make any approach to my wife, she simply turns over and says, 'I am suffering from a great headache. Don't bother me!' Years have passed. I have already forgotten how to make love."

The third man laughed. He said, "You are also of the same category. Think about my problem. This morning my wife started beating me."

They said, "This is serious. What happened?"

He said, "I was just preparing to make love, and she started beating me and told me, 'You idiot! The whole night, three times, you have already made love. Neither do you sleep nor do you allow me to sleep.'"

The other two fellows laughed and said, "It seems he is losing his memory. Otherwise at this age, four times... unbelievable!" They said, "You consult some psychologist. You are simply losing your memory."

The only grown-up-ness is not of age: you may be eighty-five and still an old goat. Goats don't grow wiser, they simply grow older. The only path to wisdom goes inwards.

That's why no other animal except man can know himself, because no other animal has any idea at all of the inner. Everything is outer. You become a man when you become aware that there is something inner. And it has to be searched for vigorously, because life is not certain – at any moment death may destroy the opportunity.

A MONK THEN ASKED DAIKAKU, "WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT SITTING MEDITATION IS THE ROOT SOURCE OF ALL THE TEACHINGS?"

It looks very simple; that's why it creates questions. Just say to somebody, "Sit silently and everything will happen," and he will think you are mad: "You have to do something for something to happen."

One great American writer, Napoleon Hill, has written a book, THINK AND GROW RICH – just think. I thought, he seems to be a Zen master, because they say, "Sit and find the buddha." This fellow is saying, "Think and grow rich." Just think, with closed eyes, that a Lincoln Continental is standing in your porch: if you think really hard, you will find it.

He seems to be a very articulate writer, very convincing, that this whole world is your idea. Whatever you think happens. Think of money and money will start coming; think of a beautiful woman and you will hear a knock on the door, but the basic requirement is first to believe. If you don't believe, nothing is going to happen. That condition is tricky. If the Lincoln Continental does not arise in your porch, you know your belief is not strong enough to pull that big a car. If instead of a very beautiful woman a very ugly woman knocks on the door you know that Napoleon Hill is right, but your belief staggered, wavered; and this ugly lady is the result.

It happened that the day Napoleon Hill's book was published – in America the writers promote their books – he was standing in the bookstore where the book was released and he was signing books for the first buyers. By chance, Henry Ford came to look for some books and he saw this fellow autographing. He asked the owner of the shop, "Who is this fellow, and what is he doing here?"

He told him, "He is a great writer and his book is selling like hot cakes. It is a great book. Just seeing the name, you will be surprised. Think of purchasing it. It is called, THINK AND GROW RICH."

Henry Ford was a very clever, cunning fellow. He went to Napoleon Hill, looking at him from up to down, from down to up, and asked, "Have you come in your own car or on a public bus?"

Napoleon Hill said, "What kind of question is that? I am answering questions about my book."

Henry Ford said, "It is about your book."

He said, "I have come on the public bus."

Henry Ford said, "That shows that your book is a fraud. You don't even have your own car. Can't you think? I am Henry Ford and this is my address. So when you have your own car, come to me and I will purchase your book. But get the car by thinking, not by any other means."

Poor Napoleon Hill was so shocked, and could not say anything in answer.

There have been many movements like this in the world, particularly in Christian countries. There is a movement called Christian Science which believes that whatever you believe happens – just believe it totally. They have their churches in all the great cities where they meet and read their literature, and enforce each other's belief, nourish each other with their own experiences, encourage each other to believe and it will happen. People return from their meetings full of joy, "Now I am going to really believe and really think for something great to happen."

The movement died, by and by; it had to die because it was so stupid.

One young man was encountered by an old woman who asked, "Your father is a regular member of our church, science and Christianity combined, but I have not seen him for two or three weeks. Where is he?"

The young man said, "He is sick, very sick."

The old woman said, "All nonsense! He simply believes that he is sick. Just tell him to think, 'I am healthy. Who says I am sick?' Go home immediately!"

The boy was not a Christian Scientist; he giggled at this old woman. His father was really sick, but he said, "I will tell him your message."

After a few weeks again they met and again the old woman said, "What happened? Did you tell your father?"

He said, "I told him, but now he thinks he is dead. It has been almost one week – everything is finished. We all tried, and he tried to think that everything is going great..."

By thinking you cannot reach anywhere. That's why in Zen the question arises again and again.

A MONK ASKED DAIKAKU, "WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT SITTING MEDITATION IS THE ROOT SOURCE OF ALL THE TEACHINGS?"

DAIKAKU ANSWERED, "MEDITATION IS THE INNER NO-MIND."

By sitting he does not mean that you sit and think about a Lincoln Continental. Sitting in Zen means simply sitting and doing nothing, not even thinking, not even chanting a mantra; creating a silent space where even you are not, just a pure mirror reflecting nothing.

MEDITATION IS THE INNER NO-MIND OF THE ENLIGHTENED ONES; DISCIPLINE IS THEIR OUTER CHARACTER.

What you see as discipline is really their manifestation of meditation in the outside world. A buddha walks in a certain way, talks in a certain way, looks in a certain way. All his gestures have a quality of buddhahood, of awareness.

But you cannot reverse the sequence: you cannot first discipline yourself and hope that by disciplining yourself you will become a buddha. First you have to become a buddha; discipline

comes on its own accord. And that discipline which comes spontaneously is the only right discipline. Otherwise, everything is torture.

DISCIPLINE IS THEIR OUTER CHARACTER; DOCTRINE IS THEIR SPEECH.

Whatever they say comes from the very source of life. The source is not the great scriptures, the source is their own experience. Hence, whatever they say is their doctrine.

BUDDHA-REMEMBRANCE IS THE INVOCATION OF THE BUDDHA'S NAME.

There have been many Zen masters who would wake up in the morning and the first thing they would ask.... For example, Obaku used to ask every morning, "Obaku, are you still here?"

And his disciples would say, "If outsiders listen to it they will think you are mad. Why do you do it?"

And he would say, "Because in the night I forget completely... a silent mind with no dreams, no thoughts. When I wake up I have to remind myself again that Obaku is still here. Who can I ask? I can ask only myself, 'Obaku are you still here?'"

And he himself would say, "Yes, sir."

One has to have a deep respect towards oneself. It would be a good discipline for you. Rather than repeating the names of Rama and Krishna, it would be a great discipline for you just to ask yourself your own name: "Devageet, are you still here?" Don't bother that Raj may be listening. And say, "Yes, sir."

And all of you, if you can do this much, you will be surprised what a great silence follows when you say, "Devageet, are you still here?" and you yourself say, "Yes, sir." Then there follows a great silence. And it is also a remembrance of your own being, also a respectfulness, a gratitude that one day more is given to you, that again the sun will rise, that again for one day at least, you will be able to see the roses blossom.

A man of no-mind, a man of meditation, finds himself so grateful for each moment that life gives to him. There is no reason – you don't deserve it, nobody deserves it. It is a sheer gift of life. You cannot ask to extend your life even by a single moment. You cannot say, "I am worthy, so let me have a few more years; I deserve it."

Nobody deserves. But life goes on pouring in you out of its abundance.

ALL COME FROM THE ENLIGHTENED NO-MIND OF THE BUDDHAS; THEREFORE, IT IS CONSIDERED FUNDAMENTAL.

THE MONK ASKED AGAIN, "THE METHOD OF MEDITATION IS FORMLESS AND THOUGHTLESS; SPIRITUAL QUALITIES ARE NOT OBVIOUS, AND THERE IS NO PROOF OF SEEING REALITY – SO HOW CAN WE BELIEVE IN THIS?"

DAIKAKU SAID, "YOUR OWN NO-MIND AND THE ENLIGHTENED NO-MIND ARE ONE – IS THAT NOT SPIRITUAL QUALITY?"

What Daikaku is saying is that your mind, minus your thoughts, is the no-mind of the buddha. And do you think it is not a spiritual quality? Because out of this no-mind will arise truthfulness, integration, compassion, all kinds of virtues and love.

IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR OWN NO-MIND, ON WHOM CAN YOU CALL FOR WITNESS AND PROOF?

Nobody can be a witness to you. Nobody can enter into your no-mind, and you cannot have any proof except the transformation of your character.

OTHER THAN THE IDENTITY OF NO-MIND AND BUDDHA, WHAT PROOF DO YOU SEEK?

Daikaku is throwing the question on the monk. The monk was asking, "How can we be certain that somebody is a buddha?"

You cannot be certain about somebody being a buddha, unless you are a buddha. Only a buddha can recognize another buddha. The buddha can recognize even the potential buddhas. When I call you bodhisattvas, that's what I mean – you are potential buddhas. The next moment you may awake, this moment you may be snoring. It is your right to snore, to sleep, to dream, to get out of all of this vicious circle. But whether you are asleep or awake, your inner quality does not change; the source remains always pure.

Yakusai wrote:

A DEAFENING PEAL,

A THIEF ESCAPED MY BODY.

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

THE LORD OF NOTHINGNESS

HAS A DARK FACE.

He is saying, "I had been trying to get rid of my mind – finally the thief left." When for the first time your mind stops functioning, you encounter enormous darkness. Up to now you have been accustomed to the light of the small mind; now the light is so great that it is blinding. And one feels, in the beginning, that he has fallen into utter darkness. But slowly slowly, he becomes accustomed and starts seeing that the darkness was too much light.

You may have seen it happening: coming in from outside on a sunny day – entering your home it looks dark, but after an hour it is no more that dark. Your eyes are flexible. When you go out, if there is too much sun, the lenses of your eyes shrink. They don't allow that much light in. And when you come home with those shrunken lenses of your eyes, it seems dark. You need your lenses to be larger again. It takes a little time, but soon the whole house is full of light.

The same is true about the inner eye – the first encounter is of great darkness. But darkness turning into light is a great experience. Then you know that they are not two, but two faces of the same coin.

A haiku by Sodo:

IN MY TEN-FOOT BAMBOO HUT

THIS SPRING,

THERE IS NOTHING:

THERE IS EVERYTHING.

Just visualize poor Sodo, a master in his own right, in his ten-foot bamboo hut. The spring has come; there is nothing and there is everything....

The ultimate experience of meditation is of both: on the one hand there is nothing; on the other hand there is the whole universe.

You lose your old identity; that's why it feels there is nothing. But you gain a new identity with the oceanic existence – then you feel there is everything. But both are authentic experiences.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU AND FACING NOTHINGNESS FOR A FEW MINUTES EACH EVENING IS ONE THING, BUT QUITE ANOTHER WHEN IT CONFRONTS ONE DURING THE OTHER TWENTY-THREE HOURS AND FIFTY-FIVE MINUTES OF THE DAY. IT SEEMS EASIER EITHER NOT TO EVEN KNOW SUCH A SPACE EXISTS, OR TO GO INTO IT TOTALLY THROUGH SITTING IN MEDITATION ALL DAY.

THE THIRD WAY – OF GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF DAILY LIFE, WHILE WALKING AROUND FEELING EMPTY INSIDE – IS REALLY WEIRD. YET YOU SEEM TO DO IT SO BEAUTIFULLY. CAN YOU GIVE US SOME TIPS?

Maneesha, it certainly looks weird if you are utterly silent, not angry, and trying to show anger. It looks weird because you feel the split, and your anger has not that heat. Inside you are nothing and outside you are showing love; your love is bound to be lukewarm, not even lukewarm. And you will be feeling a strange split; that creates the weirdness.

But look at it from this point: actors on the stage, do they feel weird? They know perfectly they are not what they are pretending to be. But knowing that it is only acting, there is no conflict. So this is the only tip I can give to you: your whole life should be just an acting – deep inside, eternal silence; on the outside, whatever is the requirement, act it. But that action does not create any split because you know it is acting.

The weirdness comes only when your action becomes identified with you, and at the same time you are pulling yourself into nothingness, and the action is pulling you towards the outer world. Then you are in a weird space. Otherwise silence, nothingness, can remain untouched.

You can do anything, whatever you feel. See with your clarity what is needed and do it totally. But remember, the outer world is the world of drama. Never forget for a moment that the outside is only drama. Then inside you can remain at peace, carrying on every kind of work without any weirdness.

Before we enter into our daily meditation, just a few tips so that nobody goes weird. Just become a buddha and come out! Go in from the same door and come back out from the same door.

It is a fateful day in the Kingdom of Kwatz! Three notorious criminals – Gunn, the German; Andre, the Frenchman; and Sagar, the Proper – are all being brought up to the guillotine for execution.

Gunn, the German, climbs the long stairs, and the black-hooded executioner asks him, "How do you want to go, face-up or face-down?"

The German stiffens up proudly and shouts, "I am the bravest of Germans, I vill vatch it coming – put me face-up!"

He is placed on the block face-up and the executioner pulls the lever. The blade comes hurtling down, and at the very last moment screeches to a halt, just millimeters from the German's neck.

"Hurray!" shouts the crowd. "It's a miracle! It's a miracle! Set him free! Set him free!" and Gunn, the German, is set free.

Then Andre, the Frenchman, is brought up.

"Which way do you want to go?" asks the black-hooded executioner, "face-up or face-down?"

"I am a man of zee earth!" exclaims Andre. "I will go face-down!"

The Frenchman is placed face-down on the block. The huge guillotine blade is slowly raised into position. There is a tense hush over the crowd. Then the lever is pulled and the blade plunges with tremendous force towards the waiting Frenchman's neck – but at the last moment it screeches to a grinding halt.

"Another miracle! Another miracle!" screams the crowd. "Free him, too! Let him go!" And the Frenchman is set free.

Then Sagar, the Proper, carefully mounts the stage stairs. Adjusting his crystal necklace, combing his hair and removing some dust off his shirt, he stands ready before the executioner.

"So what will it be for you?" asks the executioner, removing his hood to reveal himself as the Master of Masters, Shree Rajneesh. "Face-up or face-down?"

"Are you kidding?" says Proper Sagar, bowing to touch The Master's feet. "I'm not going near that thing until you get it fixed!"

Balonski is totally drunk and he staggers into a fairground. He goes up to the rifle range and says, "Give me ten shots!"

"That will be two dollars," laughs the attendant.

Balonski fumbles around, pays the money, grabs the gun, and fires ten quick shots, each of them a perfect bull's-eye.

The attendant is shocked and amazed as he hands Balonski the grand prize, a twelve-inch, live turtle.

Some time later the drunk returns, dropping his bottle of vodka on the counter. He plops down two dollars, grabs the gun and fires another ten shots – again, all of them perfect bull's-eyes.

Flustered, the attendant sweeps his arm across the prizes and says, "Choose anything you want."

Balonski looks around blinking and then says, "Just give me another one of those crunchy sandwiches!"

On their tenth wedding anniversary, Herman and Hettie Horowitz decide to make a trip around Europe. They fly from L.A. to Paris and rent a car.

A week later they are driving through the Austrian Alps when they see a small signpost which reads: "Wishing Well – first turn left."

Herman is a little skeptical but he follows the signpost and stops the car next to an old, stone well. The couple get out of the car and go over to the well.

Herman leans over the well, and following the instructions he throws in a coin, then silently makes his wish.

Then Hettie does the same, but she leans too far, loses her balance and falls head-first into the well.

"Wow!" shouts Herman, stepping back. "It really works!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes...

feel your body to be frozen.

Collect all your life energy inwards,

move towards the center.

This is the door we have been talking about.

Don't get stuck with the door, look beyond.

Even a few steps beyond the door will be
an immense experience.

Going beyond the door,
you are moving in the oceanic reality.

You are no more.

The door was your boundary – you have gone beyond it.

These are the most blissful moments of your life....

This is your buddhahood.

To make it more clear, Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax, leave the body aside, the mind aside...

and you stand just aloof...

a watcher, just a witness.

This is the heart of the buddha.

This is his great contribution to humanity –

that just by watching, witnessing,

you can enter into the eternal.

Drink as much as you can

from your original source.

It will refresh you, it will resurrect you,

it will give you a new character.

And without any effort

you will find yourself changing every day.

Your whole life will become a dance, a song.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but bring with you the fragrance, the silence,

the beauty that you are experiencing.

Sit down for a few moments just reminding yourself

that you are the buddha,

that eternity is yours,

that you are beyond life and death,

that you are part of this immense universe

which is always here.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the gathering of the ten thousand buddhas?

Yes, Beloved Master!

CHAPTER 6

Underlying great doubt there is great satori

26 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

HAKUIN SAID:

MY HUMBLE ADVICE TO YOU DISTINGUISHED PERSONS WHO STUDY THE PROFOUND MYSTERY OF THE BUDDHA-DHARMA IS THIS: YOUR CLOSE EXAMINATION OF YOURSELF MUST BE AS URGENT AS SAVING YOUR OWN HEAD WERE IT ABLAZE; YOUR EFFORTS TO PENETRATE INTO YOUR OWN ORIGINAL NATURE MUST BE AS TIRELESS AS THE PURSUIT OF AN INDISPENSABLE THING; YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE VERBAL TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHAS AND PATRIARCHS MUST BE AS HOSTILE AS THAT TOWARD A DEADLY ENEMY.

IN ZEN, HE WHO DOES NOT BRING STRONG DOUBT TO BEAR UPON THE KOANS IS A DISSOLUTE, KNAVISH GOOD-FOR-NOTHING. THEREFORE IT IS SAID: "UNDERLYING GREAT DOUBT THERE IS GREAT SATORI; WHERE THERE IS THOROUGH QUESTIONING THERE WILL BE A THOROUGH-GOING EXPERIENCE OF AWAKENING."

DO NOT SAY, "SINCE MY THOUGHTS ARE ALWAYS FLYING ABOUT IN CONFUSION, I LACK THE POWER TO APPLY MYSELF TO GENUINE CONCENTRATION ON MY KOAN."

SUPPOSE THAT, AMONG THE DENSE CROWD OF PEOPLE IN THE HURLY-BURLY OF THE MARKETPLACE, A MAN ACCIDENTALLY LOSES TWO OR THREE PIECES OF GOLD. YOU WILL NEVER FIND ANYONE WHO, BECAUSE THE PLACE IS NOISY AND BUSTLING OR BECAUSE HE HAS DROPPED HIS PIECES OF GOLD IN THE DIRT, WILL NOT TURN BACK TO LOOK

FOR THEM. HE PUSHES ANY NUMBER OF PEOPLE ABOUT, STIRS UP A LOT OF DUST, AND WEeping COPIOUS TEARS RUSHES AROUND SEARCHING FOR HIS GOLD. IF HE DOESN'T GET IT BACK INTO HIS OWN TWO HANDS, HE WILL NEVER REGAIN HIS PEACE OF MIND. DO YOU CONSIDER THE PRICELESS JEWEL WORN IN THE HAIR, YOUR OWN INHERENT, MARVELOUS TAO, OF LESS VALUE THAN TWO OR THREE PIECES OF GOLD?

Maneesha, Zen is the only revolutionary religion in the world. All the other religions are traditional, orthodox, superstitious, fundamentally based on belief. Any religion that is based on belief is a fiction, because belief simply means a repressed doubt.

Zen is an exception: it does not believe in anything – not even in the scriptures, not even in the sutras of Gautam Buddha. Belief, as such, is denied completely. I agree with it, without any condition; that has been my own whole approach.

Truth has to be experienced, not believed. Once you believe in it you will never experience it. Truth has to be searched for. Out of necessity, you have to doubt all the theories and ideologies propounded by the scriptures and others. If you don't doubt them, you will be in a sheer confusion. If you believe in them you will stop there, at your belief. Your god will be a belief, not a truth. Your own very self will be just a belief, not something that you have lived, not something that you have danced, not something that you have touched. All beliefs take you away from yourself.

To find out the truth, you have to learn the art of disbelief.

Hence Zen has a very special position. Atheists also disbelieve, but they stop at their disbelief, just as theists stop at their belief. The atheist's disbelief is only negative belief; it is nothing different. But when Zen talks of disbelief or doubt, it simply means a challenge to explore; not something to settle at, but to begin from there. You have discarded and eliminated all beliefs, all disbeliefs: then your pure consciousness asserts itself on its own accord. And the beauty of spontaneous flowering is the only beauty in the world.

HAKUIN SAYS – and Hakuin is one of the masters to be listened to very carefully – MY HUMBLE ADVICE TO YOU DISTINGUISHED PERSONS WHO STUDY THE PROFOUND MYSTERY OF THE BUDDHA-DHARMA IS THIS: YOUR CLOSE EXAMINATION OF YOURSELF MUST BE AS URGENT AS SAVING YOUR OWN HEAD WERE IT ABLAZE.

He is saying that your inquiry should be so intense and total... as if it is a question of life and death. If you don't find it, your life is futile and fruitless. Unless you find it, you cannot blossom and dance and sing in joy. There will not be any rejoicing, any celebration, any festivity in your life. Your life will be a dark, unending night where the sun never rises.

YOUR EFFORTS TO PENETRATE INTO YOUR OWN ORIGINAL NATURE MUST BE AS TIRELESS AS THE PURSUIT OF AN INDISPENSABLE THING; YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE VERBAL TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHAS AND PATRIARCHS MUST BE AS HOSTILE AS THAT TOWARD A DEADLY ENEMY.

This can be said only by a great master, a buddha himself. He is saying that YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE VERBAL TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHAS AND THE GREAT MASTERS MUST

BE AS HOSTILE AS THAT TOWARD A DEADLY ENEMY. The implication is that you should not believe in the word, but look for the experience. The word may be coming from the greatest master, but still, it is a word. And howsoever Buddha may have found himself, his nourishment is not going to be your nourishment. If he has quenched his thirst, all that he can say is, "Water has helped me to quench my thirst." You can go on repeating "H2O" as a mantra but your thirst will not be quenched.

Zen says: Think of all the great words and great teachings as your deadly enemy. Avoid them, because you have to find your own source.

You have not to be a follower, an imitator. You have to be an original individual; you have to find your innermost core on your own, with no guide, no guiding scriptures.

It is a dark night, but with the intense fire of inquiry, you are bound to come to the sunrise. Everybody who has burned with intense inquiry has found the sunrise. Others only believe. Those who believe are not religious, they are simply avoiding the great adventure of religion by believing.

IN ZEN, HE WHO DOES NOT BRING STRONG DOUBT TO BEAR UPON THE KOANS IS A DISSOLUTE, KNAVISH GOOD-FOR-NOTHING. THEREFORE IT IS SAID: "UNDERLYING GREAT DOUBT THERE IS GREAT SATORI; WHERE THERE IS THOROUGH QUESTIONING THERE WILL BE A THOROUGH-GOING EXPERIENCE OF AWAKENING."

This is a unique quality of Zen. It says that hidden behind a great doubt is your satori, your enlightenment.

What exactly is doubt? Doubt means eliminating anything that is borrowed. It is not saying that something is not true, it says that "It is not my truth. And unless something is my truth, I am not going to discontinue my search."

Doubt means a great love for truth, which never compromises for any cheap beliefs which are available in the marketplace, in every temple, in every church, in every synagogue. All the religions are telling you just to believe and you will be saved. This is pure nonsense, because millions of people have believed and nobody seems to be saved.

Millions of people are believing today, but the world is a mess. Their belief does not change the world, their belief does not change them, their belief makes no difference at all in their character. It does only one thing: it functions as an umbrella. It keeps them hiding from a great inquiry that is our basic right. They go on repressing the inquiry with belief, saying, "What is the point of knowing the truth? – Krishna has known it. Just read SHRIMAD BHAGAVADGITA every day, and that's all." Why should you bother to inquire yourself?

Or they say that Buddha has found it and he has told it: now there is no need for you to find it again.

This is what belief means. It takes your individual inquiry away from you. But remember, with the inquiry gone, the individuality is also gone. All the religions together have conspired to take away the dignity of man, because they have taken man's individuality. They have made people into a crowd, a crowd of believers.

Zen wants you to be an individual seeker. Throw away all the scriptures, burn all the scriptures, never take anybody's word as your truth. It is a great challenge, and it needs strength, it needs integrity, it needs a love for truth at any cost. Only those who gamble everything for truth are the blessed ones.

The world of religion is not the world of the businessman. It is the world of the gambler, who risks everything on the unknown – he does not know what is going to happen.

I am reminded... A Japanese actor earned much money in Hollywood, and after earning so much money he thought to go back home and relax: "Enough is enough – there is no point to going on earning. There is a little time before death knocks on the doors, and it will be good to rest."

But before returning to Japan he thought he should go around the world to have a look before he settled in Japan. He went to Paris, and in a gambling place he risked everything that he had earned – millions of dollars, just in one go. Even the owner was trembling, every gambler there was perspiring: "My God, what kind of man is this?"

He did not save a single dollar, he gambled everything, and lost. And then he went to his room and went to sleep.

The next morning, in the newspapers, there was news that a Japanese man had jumped from the seventh floor of a building and had killed himself. In the hotel everybody thought that it must be the Japanese who risked everything, but in this hotel there were not seven stories. And he had gone to his bed, so they went and knocked on the door. The man opened the door. Those people were shocked to see him – he was perfectly alive. They said, "Have you seen the morning newspaper?"

He said, "Yes, I see that some Japanese has committed suicide from a seventh floor. And I knew you all would think I was going to commit suicide, but I'm not the one to accept defeat. I will earn money again, and I will come back to this hotel to put down just as much money – more than this time!"

And he went back to Hollywood. When he came back after earning enough money, more than the first time, that gambling place had closed. It was too risky. The man said, "What is the matter? Just a day before you were open and now you are closed."

They said, "You can gamble somewhere else. There are many gambling places in Paris, but don't frighten us. You are a man of strange steel."

A man who can gamble everything for the unknown result – that's exactly the situation of a religious man. You are renouncing all the scriptures and all the great masters' words, and you are going into your own inner world without any guide, without any map, without any companion, alone, on a path never walked by anybody. Your inner path is your path; nobody else can walk on it.

But if one can doubt totally, denying all that is not his own, it creates an immense purity and creates great power, it gives a tremendous freedom – all which are absolutely necessary to inquire into your own being. What is there? Nobody can say it. Only you have to go there, and only you can go there.

Hakuin is saying that there will be a thorough-going awakening where there is thorough-going questioning.

Go on questioning everything that the religions have been telling you to believe. Belief is the greatest barrier to the religious man. But just the contrary has been preached: faith and belief are praised by all religions. And the world that we see is the result of this stupid teaching – believing and having faith. Out of a thousand years of believing what have you gained? Where are you? The world has never been in more of a mess than it is today. If you want to get out of the mess, please throw out all that you have believed up to now.

Be utterly naked of belief, and the truth is not very far away. Just turn in and it is there. It does not come by faith, it comes by turning in. Faith is outside, belief is outside. Only turning in brings a transformation in being.

DO NOT SAY, "SINCE MY THOUGHTS ARE ALWAYS FLYING ABOUT IN CONFUSION, I LACK THE POWER TO APPLY MYSELF TO GENUINE CONCENTRATION ON MY KOAN."

SUPPOSE THAT, AMONG THE DENSE CROWD OF PEOPLE IN THE HURLY-BURLY OF THE MARKETPLACE, A MAN ACCIDENTALLY LOSES TWO OR THREE PIECES OF GOLD. YOU WILL NEVER FIND ANYONE WHO, BECAUSE THE PLACE IS NOISY AND BUSTLING OR BECAUSE HE HAS DROPPED HIS PIECES OF GOLD IN THE DIRT, WILL NOT TURN BACK TO LOOK FOR THEM. HE PUSHES ANY NUMBER OF PEOPLE ABOUT, STIRS UP A LOT OF DUST, AND WEeping COPIOUS TEARS RUSHES AROUND SEARCHING FOR HIS GOLD. IF HE DOESN'T GET IT BACK INTO HIS OWN TWO HANDS, HE WILL NEVER REGAIN HIS PEACE OF MIND.

Hakuin is saying that the loss of even two or three pieces of gold is enough to make you look for them, but you don't know what a treasure is hidden inside you, what a splendor you are carrying.

DO YOU CONSIDER THE PRICELESS JEWEL WORN IN THE HAIR, YOUR OWN INHERENT, MARVELOUS TAO, OF LESS VALUE THAN TWO OR THREE PIECES OF GOLD?

You never bother about who is hidden inside you, what is the source of your being.

Those who have known the source, they are unanimously in agreement that it is the most precious experience that can happen in this world. It is the most universal which gives you a deathlessness, and which gives your life a tremendous freshness, and in each moment a radiance, a grace, a beauty. Your whole life becomes a celebration.

And this is something that nobody can steal away. This is something that nobody can destroy. Even death is incapable of touching it. It is your eternal treasure. From eternity to eternity, it is yours – but you never look at it.

Dangai wrote:

EARTH, RIVER, MOUNTAIN:

SNOWFLAKES MELT IN AIR.

HOW COULD I HAVE DOUBTED?

WHERE IS

NORTH? SOUTH? EAST? WEST?

Once you know, doubt commits suicide on its own accord. Never believe; let the doubt die. That is a totally different situation. When you believe, doubt remains alive – in fact, very forcibly alive.

One Christian missionary, Stanley Jones, said to me, "My faith in Jesus Christ is absolute!"

I said, "You simply analyze your own statement. Is not faith enough? Has it to be absolute? What is the purpose of the word 'absolute'? Faith is enough, if it is there. But it is not there. Just by the side of faith are disbelief, unfaith, doubt – all are there. To cover them up you have to bring a bigger umbrella. Absolute faith simply shows that your doubt is very great. Ordinary people have small doubts; their faith is small. You are a learned scholar, a world-famous scholar – naturally your doubt is going to be very great."

He said, "I had never looked from this angle, but perhaps you are right." He was a very honest man. He said, "I will have to think it over."

When somebody says to somebody else, "I love you absolutely," then you have to be aware. Don't get caught in absolute love affairs – just temporary is good. Absolute is going to be a constant murder!

The real lovers don't even say "I love you." They will not use the word 'love' for their great experience. The word is very small and used too many times; it has lost its freshness. It is my experience that when love starts disappearing, people start saying to each other, "I love you very much." It is only when love starts disappearing, when they become aware that love is no more there, now only words can continue the misery that they used to call love. Now they have to repeat it continuously.

But if you know, then the moment you have dropped all belief, including disbelief; when your doubt is total, suddenly there is an explosion, as if the fire of your being, which was hidden, has come to its fully-fledged form. Its flames are even reaching out of you. You are on fire! In this case there is no question of doubt and there is no question of belief. You simply know.

Once a Western journalist asked Shri Aurobindo, "Do you believe in God?" It is a very common question. Shri Aurobindo said, "No."

The man was very much puzzled. He had come to see him from far away just because he had heard that he was a man of God. So the journalist was not going to just leave Shri Aurobindo at that.

He asked, "What do you mean by saying no?"

Aurobindo said, "When you know something, you do not believe. Do you believe in the sun? Do you believe in the starry night? Do you believe in the roses? You see they are there: there is no question of belief."

Belief arises only in darkness, when you don't know. And belief keeps you in darkness – because of belief you never try to discover on your own what is the truth.

A haiku:

BUTTERFLIES SETTING OUT

TO CROSS THE SEA,

HAVE DISAPPEARED:

MY SELF COMES BACK TO ME.

He is saying that all our thoughts are nothing but butterflies trying to cross the sea: they will disappear somewhere. Have you watched your thoughts? If you have lived forty or fifty years, how many million thoughts have crossed the sea and disappeared? Every day, you go on creating new thoughts and they go on disappearing into the dust. Only one thing remains with you, and that is your am-ness. Only you remain.

As a Zen poet has said, "Clouds come and go and the sky remains." It never goes anywhere, it never comes from anywhere. You are the sky. Anything that happens in this sky is just a traffic – no need to be concerned about it, no need to be identified with it.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked a question:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

I HAVE UNDERSTOOD YOU TO ENCOURAGE US TO KEEP THE ABILITY TO DOUBT ALWAYS ALIVE. IS THERE NO POINT AT WHICH DOUBT IS NO LONGER NEEDED? A POINT WHEN IT IS NO LONGER HELPFUL?

Yes, there comes a point when you know the truth, when doubt simply dies. It is no more useful, no more helpful. It is just a shadow that disappears, as when you bring light into a house and all the darkness disappears.

Doubt is part of the dark night. It is useful when the night is there to give you an impetus, a persistence, a perseverance to search for the rising sun. But once you have reached the rising sun the darkness disappears, and with it the doubt too.

Now, a few really serious things....

Zabriski and Klopski are sitting around the Smoking Senorita pub, enjoying a few beers.

"Hey," says Zabriski, "you won't believe it, but I came home last night and found my wife sprawled on the couch making love to some other guy."

"Really?" coughs Klopski. "I hope you knew how to handle it."

"I sure did!" exclaims Zabriski. "I fixed them. I turned out the lights so they could not see what they were doing!"

Little Ernie is studying the properties of electricity in his class.

"We are going to learn about some of the practical uses of electricity," says Miss Goodbody. "So tomorrow I want everyone to bring some electric tool to show us."

The next day there is much excitement as the kids bring their electric bulbs, hair dryers, irons and all kinds of things. When Ernie arrives he is sweating and carrying a huge artificial lung on his back.

"Ernest!" says a surprised Miss Goodbody, "where in heaven's name did you get that electric lung?"

"I took it from grandpa's room," says Ernie, smiling.

"And he didn't mind?" cries Miss Goodbody.

"I don't think so, teacher," replies Ernie. "He just said, 'Glrrrrr...'"

On a Lufthansa flight from Berlin to New York, Harry Jablonski is sitting next to a beautiful young woman.

"Hello," says Harry, casually eyeing the pretty girl. "Are you German?"

"Ja," says the girl.

"How nice," says Harry, his eyes twitching slightly. "May I ask your name?"

"Ja, okay," she replies. "My name is Hilda Brombeck."

"Well hello, Hilda," Harry says, loosening his tie. "Is this your first trip to New York?"

"Ja, it is," replies Hilda. "I'm going on business."

"Really?" inquires Harry. "May I ask what kind of business?"

"Ja, sure," says Hilda. "I'm going to the International Congress of Nymphomaniacs."

"Really?" exclaims Harry, beginning to perspire. "Uh... that is fascinating. May I ask, what do you do at this congress?"

"Ja," says Hilda. "We discuss important issues like which men have the longest, hardest pricks. And which men can screw for the longest time. Things like that."

"Really?" squeaks Harry, taking off his coat. "May I ask which men do have the longest pricks?"

"Ja," says Hilda. "Those sweet Jewish men have those long pricks."

"Really?" splutters Harry. "And may I ask, which ones can screw the longest time?"

"Ja, sure!" replies the beautiful girl. "It is the American Indians who give the longest screw."

"Really?" cries Harry, grabbing off his glasses.

"Ja!" smiles Hilda. "And by the way," she continues, "you have not told me your name."

"Oh, my name?" gasps Harry, his eyes bulging out, "my name is Running Bear Goldstein!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes.

Feel your body to be frozen.

Gather all your life-energy like an arrow,
going deeper and deeper into your being,
to the very roots.

Here is the source not only of your life,
but of all life.

Here are the roots connecting you
with the universal source of life.

In this space, you are the original man.

In this space, you are the buddha.

This is your home.

You can go out, but never forget the home.

This is your nourishment, your consciousness,
your very life energy.

Keep it pure and flowing, and it will change
your character, your lifestyle, your actions.

It will bring grace and compassion and love,
just as flowers come to the rosebush.

Anything that comes out of this space is yours.

It will make you feel independent, individual, on your own.

There is no question of doubt or faith – you know it.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax, just to make it clear that
the body is lying, the head is lying,
and you are simply watching.

Just be a watcher, a witness.

This is the greatest miracle in the world –
to be a witness...

You can remain a witness twenty-four hours,
doing all kinds of things.

You can also remain watchful, alert, aware.

The day you are for twenty-four hours aware,
without any effort, spontaneously, naturally,
you have come home.

You have become a buddha,

which was your destiny.

Right now you are only a seed, a bodhisattva.

When the seed becomes a flower,

the bodhisattva transforms itself into a buddha.

It is all your potentiality,

you don't have to seek it anywhere else.

I call it the miracle

because we are searching everywhere

for just two or three gold coins,

and an eternal treasure is available to us... the whole gold mine!

Every one of you is a splendor, a majesty,

a magic, a miracle.

If you can just remember your buddhahood,

the journey is complete.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, all the buddhas.

Slowly, silently, gracefully,

remembering the experience

and the space you have been in.

Sit down for a few moments,

just being a buddha,

a pure sky, a silent lake, an empty mirror.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the gathering of the buddhas?

Yes, Beloved Master!

CHAPTER 7

Nothingness is your original face

27 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

BANKEI SAID:

WHAT I TELL PEOPLE ABOUT IS NOTHING SPECIAL; IT'S THE UNBORN, ENLIGHTENED, NO-MIND INNATE IN EVERYONE. WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

WHILE YOU ARE ALL HERE LISTENING TO MY SERMON, WHEN A DOG BARKS OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE, YOU KNOW IT IS A DOG, AND WHEN A CROW CAWS, YOU KNOW IT IS A CROW. AND ALSO YOU CAN DISTINGUISH THE COLORS BLACK AND WHITE, AND SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.

EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NOT THINKING ABOUT HEARING DOGS AND CROWS, OR SEEING BLACK, WHITE, MEN OR WOMEN DURING THE TALK; NONETHELESS, RIGHT HERE YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR THEM ALL, BEFORE CONCEPTUALLY DISCRIMINATING THEM. THEN EVEN IF A THOUSAND OR TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE SHOULD TELL SOMEONE THAT A DOG'S BARK IS A CROW'S CAW, THAT PERSON WOULD HARDLY BE DECEIVED BY THEM.

ISN'T THIS ENLIGHTENED NO-MIND, WITH ITS INCONCEIVABLE QUALITIES OF CLEAR AWARENESS, SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR?

BECAUSE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT EVERYONE HAS SUCH WONDERFUL QUALITIES AND POWERS, THEY GET CONFUSED BY ONE THING AND ANOTHER. THAT CONFUSION ULTIMATELY ARISES FROM SELF-IMPORTANCE.

SELF-IMPORTANCE MEANS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT YOU GET ANGRY AND UPSET WHEN YOU HEAR YOUR NEIGHBOR CRITICIZE YOU, AND ONLY DISLIKE AND MALTREAT THAT PERSON. ALSO, WHEN YOU HEAR YOUR NEIGHBOR PRAISE YOU, YOU THINK WELL OF THAT PERSON, AND ACT NICELY; THIS TOO IS BECAUSE OF SELF-IMPORTANCE.

CONSIDERING THE ROOT SOURCE OF THIS SELF-IMPORTANCE, WHEN PEOPLE ARE BORN THEY HAVE NO BAD THOUGHTS OF HATRED OR LIKING FOR ANYONE. IT IS JUST THAT, AS THEY GROW UP, THEY LEARN AND CULTIVATE VARIOUS BAD THINGS AND BAD THOUGHTS BY SEEING AND HEARING THEM, PILING THEM UP INTO MENTAL HABITS. ALWAYS PUTTING THESE MENTAL HABITS TO USE, VARIOUS KINDS OF CONFUSION AND ERROR BEGIN.

Maneesha, before I discuss the very important man of Zen, Bankei, and his remarkable statements, I have to introduce Avirbhava's new gods for the museum. Before I do it, I will say something to you about insects, which are worshipped by many people as gods.

This museum is going to be a hilarious phenomenon. It is going to be a mirror for you of what humanity has been doing – its priests, its so-called wise men, all driving humanity into different directions of stupidity. But when religious garbage is poured on anything, poor people, the poor masses believe in it. And this is not only in the ancient world; man has worshipped almost anything, and is still worshipping almost anything, without considering at all that it is very undignified, that you are destroying your own humanity.

My researchers have found that certain creatures of various insect species have been considered to be expressions of God since the earliest times.

"According to the legends of the Teton Indians in America, the spider was the first creature in life to attain maturity. Particularly the grey spiders were heralded as the patron saints of traveling. The Indians would stomp on a spider before setting out on the trail and pray to its spirit for a safe journey."

A good idea! Released from the body, now the spirit can guide.

I have told you before that there is a species of spiders: when the male and female spiders are making love, the male spider becomes so drunk, so orgasmic, his long legs trembling... and the female spider starts eating him. By the time his orgasm is finished, he is finished.

Somebody has informed me that there is another spider which is a little more intelligent. First he brings a fly as a present to the girlfriend, so while he is making love, she is eating the fly – just to save his own life. She has to eat something. Certainly it is an intelligent step.

You also bring ice cream and roses and sweets and chocolates; the reason is the same. If you don't give the woman something to eat, she will eat you! Just let her chew something and she will not chew you.

"These spiders have also been considered to be incarnations of the spirit of fertility in certain primitive societies, including those of Polynesia and the Philippines.

Butterflies were worshipped as family gods in Samoa, and were considered to be the incarnations of the bushman god, Kay-gon.

Beetles have been considered holy since ancient times. In Egypt, the scarab, or dung beetle, was worshipped as a direct descendant of the god Ra. Ra is the greatest god of the Egyptian religion and his direct descendant is the dung beetle!

"Even today, in Southern Africa, the Hottentots sacrifice live sheep and cows to the glorious beetle."

But remember also that in India, in the times of the RIGVEDAS, horses were sacrificed, cows were sacrificed, even man was sacrificed to please the gods. And who are the gods? Somebody is a monkey, somebody is an elephant... and man is sacrificed, killed and eaten by the priest as a prasada, as the god's gift. And this is being done to praise the gods so they don't become angry.

Before I ask Avirbhava to bring her new additions to the museum, a little joke:

Two cockroaches, Clod and Crunch, are enjoying dinner on a pile of garbage in Poona.

"Do you know," says Clod, "that they have just built a new apartment building on Burning Ghats Road?"

"Really?" says Crunch, munching on an old banana peel.

"Yes," says Clod, "and the kitchen is so clean there is not a speck of dust anywhere. In the refrigerator everything is spotless. In fact, there is not a crumb of dirt in the whole place."

"Please, please!" says Crunch, spitting out his banana peel, "not while I'm eating!"

Okay, Avirbhava, bring your things.

(THREE HUGE BUTTERFLIES START DANCING AROUND THE PODIUM, HUMMING WILDLY. A LARGE MOTH FLIES UP TO THE ROOF OF THE AUDITORIUM, WHILE A SPIDER AND A CATERPILLAR PARADE PAST.

THE MASTER IS CHUCKLING IN HIS CHAIR, AND EVERYONE IS GOING CRAZY WITH LAUGHTER, ENJOYING THE SHOW TREMENDOUSLY.)

BANKEI SAID:

WHAT I TELL PEOPLE ABOUT IS NOTHING SPECIAL.

That makes it special, because ordinarily people who are saying ordinary things think that they are very special. Only a man who has attained to buddhahood can make such a statement: WHAT I TELL PEOPLE ABOUT IS NOTHING SPECIAL; it is just simple and ordinary. The desire to be special is the desire of the ignorant; the desire to be simple is the desire of the conscious. It is only the unconscious mind which creates the ego of being special. When the unconscious mind is gone, everything simply is. There is nothing extraordinary in it.

He is saying, IT'S THE UNBORN, ENLIGHTENED, NO-MIND INNATE IN EVERYONE.

Whatever I am saying is to provoke the sleeping buddha in everyone. It is everyone's inherent nature – how can it be special? It is another matter that millions have decided never to look in; that is why we have very few buddhas in the world. But even then, it does not become a special thing.

Those who are closing their eyes, keeping their backs towards themselves, can turn in a single moment. In a single moment the whole world can become a buddhahfield.

WHILE YOU ARE ALL HERE LISTENING TO MY SERMON, WHEN A DOG BARKS OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE, YOU KNOW IT IS A DOG, AND WHEN A CROW CAWS, YOU KNOW IT IS A CROW. AND ALSO YOU CAN DISTINGUISH THE COLORS BLACK AND WHITE, AND SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.

EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NOT THINKING ABOUT HEARING DOGS OR CROWS, OR SEEING BLACK, WHITE, MEN OR WOMEN DURING THE TALK; NONETHELESS, RIGHT HERE YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR THEM ALL, BEFORE CONCEPTUALLY DISCRIMINATING THEM. THEN EVEN IF A THOUSAND OR TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE SHOULD TELL SOMEONE THAT A DOG'S BARK IS A CROW'S CAW, THAT PERSON WOULD HARDLY BE DECEIVED BY THEM.

What he is saying is that one who has known his buddhahood, even if ten thousand people try to convince him that it is not so, he cannot be convinced. It is indubitably certain for him that his self-nature is eternal and ultimate.

But the point is that it should not be a belief, it should be an experience. If it is only a belief, then anybody can criticize it: a better argument, a better intelligence, can destroy it completely. But if it is your experience then the whole world can be on one side, and still you will say that "I am experiencing it, hence it does not matter how many people are against me. No argumentation can destroy my confidence in my own experience."

Philosophy is more concerned with argument, and following philosophy, religions have created theology; that is the argument for God. That is exactly the meaning of theology: logic for God. But nobody has ever been able to prove the existence of God logically. Great treatises and very intelligent people have been involved in it.

Zen has never made any theology or any philosophy. It is an existential approach, not intellectual; you have to experience it, no belief is needed. Once you know it, no argument can destroy it. Knowing is very simple, getting from mind to no-mind is within your reach. Becoming a witness of your thoughts is the simplest thing in the world, even without knowing you are witnessing them. When you say, "I am feeling anger," what do you mean? If you don't witness anger, then how can you say, "I am feeling anger," or "I am feeling a headache?" Who is feeling the headache? There must be a witness beyond the head. There must be a witness beyond all your feelings – love, anger, hate – beyond all your thoughts, beyond all your beliefs. This witness is simply the miracle of Zen.

Zen has pointed to the very central fact that transforms man and brings him into a totally new world of eternity where death does not exist, where misery has never been heard of, where suffering is unknown. On the contrary there are only blessings; there is only blissfulness, only benediction, and a tremendous gratitude as a prayer to the whole existence in thankfulness.

ISN'T THIS ENLIGHTENED NO-MIND, WITH ITS INCONCEIVABLE QUALITIES OF CLEAR AWARENESS, SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR?

BECAUSE PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THAT EVERYONE HAS SUCH WONDERFUL QUALITIES AND POWERS, THEY GET CONFUSED BY ONE THING AND ANOTHER. THAT CONFUSION ULTIMATELY ARISES FROM SELF-IMPORTANCE.

All your confusions are arising out of your desire to be important. You try to show that which you are not. You say things which you don't know. You advise people although you don't follow the advice yourself.

Kahlil Gibran has a story: In a big city there were many dogs, and one dog was a philosopher. Rarely does such a disease happen to dogs, but once in a while, for a change, there are exceptions. He continuously preached from morning till night to every dog, "Because of your barking our whole doghood loses its dignity; otherwise we are the highest animals in the world. Just stop barking unnecessarily."

The dogs were always very thankful for his advice, but said, "What to do? A strange urge arises – seeing a postman, or a sannyasin, or a policeman, anybody in uniform." Dogs are very much against uniforms. They seem to be very free thinkers. They don't want people to be in a crowd, they want everybody to be individual, themselves.

Everybody respected the philosopher dog. He was thought to be the wisest ever born of their species. He never barked. But one night, a dark night, the other dogs decided, "He has been preaching for years and nobody listens; it makes us so ashamed. At least to give him peace, one night we should try to stop barking – just for one night. It is going to be difficult, but we will hide in dark corners of streets, in dark groves and keep control. It is only a question of a few hours and in the morning we will be free to bark."

The philosopher went around and he could not meet any dog. He could not believe: "Where have all the dogs disappeared to?" And there was such a silence and nobody for him to teach, and suddenly a great urge to bark arose in him. Now he knew why he was not barking – because from morning to night, all his energy was involved in teaching; there was no time nor energy to bark. And in front of everybody else how could he bark – against his own philosophy?

But now there were no other dogs, so the question of preaching was not there. Neither was there any witness that he was barking against his own wisdom. So he walked and barked as much as he could, because it was a lifelong repressed feeling. Nobody had ever heard such barking; he went almost crazy. All the dogs of the city who were hiding here and there slowly, slowly gathered by his side. And when they saw that their philosopher himself was barking there was an explosion: thousands of dogs were barking. And for the first time the philosopher felt his humbleness – that he too is a dog, and he was unnecessarily harassing others and harassing himself.

The religions have done the same to man: they have harassed themselves and their followers into all kinds of self-torture, into all kinds of unnaturalness. They have given them the greed to be great saints. They have given them the greed that they will be a beloved of God if they follow certain principles. Nobody follows! All people have back doors in their lives.

At the front door you will meet one person, and at the back door you will meet somebody else – at the back door he will be more natural. At the front door or in the sitting room the person is a gentleman, or a lady, hiding everything natural. But Zen wants you to be natural and not split; the front door and back door should not be two doors.

You should have only one face, your own original face. And you should be grateful that nature has given you a tremendous opportunity to be creative, to be loving, to be silent, to be able to know the ultimate source of life. Nothing more can be asked. And everything is so easy if you simply drop your egoistic idea of being special.

SELF-IMPORTANCE MEANS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT YOU GET ANGRY AND UPSET WHEN YOU HEAR YOUR NEIGHBOR CRITICIZE YOU, AND ONLY DISLIKE AND MALTREAT THE PERSON. ALSO, WHEN YOU HEAR YOUR NEIGHBOR PRAISE YOU, YOU THINK WELL OF THAT PERSON, AND ACT NICELY; THIS TOO IS BECAUSE OF SELF-IMPORTANCE.

A man of simplicity will neither feel gratified by anybody's praise nor will feel angry at anybody's anger. Those are their problems – why are you unnecessarily taking them? Somebody is angry, he is burning in his own anger, in his own fire – why do you immediately jump in? Somebody is praising you and you immediately accept it knowing perfectly well that nobody is going to praise you unless he has some purpose. The moment somebody says to you, "You are so beautiful, so intelligent," beware! That person wants to exploit you in some way or other. Otherwise who has time to praise you – and why?

So whenever somebody says to you, "You are so beautiful," immediately say, "Shut up! It is my problem, not your problem."

Neither accept praise nor accept anger, and just remain attuned to your simplicity.

CONSIDERING THE ROOT SOURCE OF THIS SELF-IMPORTANCE, WHEN PEOPLE ARE BORN THEY HAVE NO BAD THOUGHTS OF HATRED OR LIKING FOR ANYONE. IT IS JUST THAT, AS THEY GROW UP, THEY LEARN AND CULTIVATE VARIOUS BAD THINGS AND BAD THOUGHTS BY SEEING AND HEARING THEM, PILING THEM UP INTO MENTAL HABITS. ALWAYS PUTTING THESE MENTAL HABITS TO USE, VARIOUS KINDS OF CONFUSION AND ERROR BEGIN.

Every child is born a buddha. Then slowly, slowly he starts imitating others; as time passes he forgets his simplicity, his buddhahood. He is lost in the crowd, which is a vast jungle in which he will meet all kinds of people but not a buddha. He will imitate all kinds of people and will not think for a single moment, "Is life just imitation?" And can imitation give you any joy, just being a carbon copy?

Unless you are original, simply yourself, you can never have joy enough to dance and sing, joy enough to be grateful to existence.

But every child is driven into conditioning. You should ask your conditioning what you are doing and why you are doing it. Why are you smoking? – just because others are smoking. Why, in a hot country, are you wearing a tie? – because every gentleman...

When I was a professor in the university I was continually amazed. The city I was in was exactly in the center of India, very hot, and the professors were putting on ties and shoes and wearing coats,

and perspiring. And I would say, "Who is telling you to do all these things? If you want to perspire, you can go to a sauna bath. But why? To have a twenty-four-hour sauna bath is not good."

But the people who had been ruling India for three hundred years had come from cold countries, and they had brought their habits. And the ruling party becomes an example: whoever is ruling must be right. The British people even living in India never dropped their habits.

Knowing perfectly that this is a hot country, carrying habits which they had cultivated in England is absolutely stupid. Not only did they carry them, but they taught their habits in every school, college and university, to every bureaucrat, to all people in important posts in the government – and nobody took note that this is a hot country.

One of my friends, a scholar of Tibetan, wanted to go to Tibet. I said, "You will not be able to survive."

He asked, "Why?"

I said, "You are such an orthodox and stupid brahmin" – both things go together – "that unless you take a cold bath before sunrise and then do your puja, your worship, you can only then take even a cup of tea. Before taking a bath, you cannot do anything. And do you know that in the Tibetan scriptures it is said that everybody should have a bath at least once a year? And that, too, people don't follow. Who follows scriptures? But when this is written in the scriptures, that means that, all things considered, at least one bath per year is not too much."

He said, "You unnecessarily create confusion. I am completely ready to go."

I said, "I will see you back after three days." And on the third day I received him at the airport. He looked very shy, and I said, "What happened?"

He said, "You were right. It is too cold, and without taking a bath I cannot do my puja, and I cannot even take my breakfast; there is no question of lunch and dinner. The first thing is a bath before sunrise."

Friends in Tibet tried to help him: "This is a different climate, totally different. You are in the land of eternal ice, everything is frozen since eternity. Do you want to kill yourself?"

In three days he had double pneumonia; he rushed back home. He said he would not have reached back alive if he had stayed longer. Scholarship is one thing, but your life...

I said, "It is good. In the morning you had gone wrong, in the evening you have come home. But now learn another lesson: why do you go on wearing the tie and the coat and the hat – because you are a professor?"

When I went to the university in my lungis and a shawl, they were so shocked that nobody had the courage even to ask, "What is the matter?" Finally the vice-chancellor called me to his room. He closed the door, because he knew that I might say something which might become troublesome. And he said, "This is too much."

I said, "What is too much? I am being paid for my teaching, not for my clothes. And you cannot decide what I should wear. And if you insist I will not wear anything."

He said, "Wait! Something is good, better than nothing. You can do as you like, but do at least one thing, just to please me – don't use these wooden sandals, because they disturb the whole university. Wherever you go, for miles it can be heard that you are arriving."

I said, "It is a question of principle; it is a question of religion."

"A question of religion? I never thought of that. I have myself been a professor of philosophy and religion."

I said, "You don't know much. In India for thousands of years, all the monks – Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist – have used wooden sandals for the sake of being non-violent. Because shoes are made of leather, some animal has to be killed. It is not that I am mad; I am simply following a long tradition of all the greatest men born in this country."

He said, "That's good. But do something so that they don't make so much noise."

It is because of him that I had to change from wooden sandals to rubber and velvet. But I have consistently been true to the idea that leather shoes show your indifference to life. They are anti-life. And I have used a special design for my shoes which keeps the feet completely open, so in the heat there is no need for me to perspire.

Every child, if left and helped to grow according to his own sensibilities, will bring something beautiful into the world, some unique personality. Right now everybody is a copy of everybody else.

This very vice-chancellor, when for the first time I entered the university, looked at me and asked, "Why are you growing a beard?"

I said, "I am not growing it, it is growing. Don't ask nonsense questions. On the contrary, I can ask why you are cutting your beard."

He said, "Settled. I will not ask anything and you will not ask anything."

I said, "No. You can ask anything, but you have to have the courage to receive the answer. You have to say that you asked a wrong question. I am not growing it, I am not pulling my hairs every day so that they grow; I am not watering them. You are shaving twice a day. My hairs are natural and you are unnecessarily becoming a woman."

He said, "What?"

I said, "It is so easy to understand. Do you think a woman would look good with a beard? The same is true about you – without a beard, you look just like a woman. A little weird, but..."

He said, "I promise never to disturb you, but don't spread these ideas in the university, that I look like a woman, a little weird."

I looked as I wanted. I lived as naturally as I wanted. That has given me a tremendous sense of peace and integrity. There is no regret. There is no complaint against life, only deep gratitude.

I want every one of you to live only according to your own consciousness. And as your meditation grows deeper, your consciousness will become wider. Live according to you, according to your consciousness, even if it goes against the whole world. Only then can you feel a sense of reality, a sense of solidarity, a sense of individuality.

Basho wrote:

I AM A MAN WHO BREAKFASTS
WITH A VIEW OF MORNING GLORIES
OPENING IN THE DEW.

He is saying that he lives in nature. I AM A MAN WHO BREAKFASTS WITH A VIEW OF MORNING GLORIES OPENING IN THE DEW.

In a very indirect way, in a poetic way, he is saying he is a natural man.

Another Zen poet wrote:

AMONG THE GREATEST TREASURES
TO BE FOUND ON EARTH,
BEING OF NOTHINGNESS
IS THE GREATEST.

Just be nothing, and you have the greatest treasure in existence. Meditation slowly, slowly makes you nothing. Nothingness is your original face, and the miracle is that in nothingness you find everything, the whole world is yours.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,
COULD IT REALLY BE THAT ONE DAY ENLIGHTENMENT IS SEEN AS "NOTHING SPECIAL"?
COULD CHILDREN LIVE SIMPLY THROUGH AWARENESS, RATHER THAN CONDITIONING, SO
THAT THEY POP OFF INTO NIRVANA ALMOST AS SOON AS THEY POP OUT INTO LIFE?

Maneesha, hope for the best... and expect the worst.

Seamus is only five feet tall, but his girl-friend, Glenda, is six foot three. One night, when the two shy lovers are walking by the barn, Seamus asks for a kiss. Glenda consents, so Seamus stands on an old tractor engine and gives her a little kiss.

They walk on a couple of miles down the country lane, and Seamus plucks up courage and asks Glenda for another kiss.

"No!" Glenda replies haughtily. "I have given you all the kisses you are going to get tonight."

"Okay, then," says Seamus in disgust, "in that case I am not going one step further with this son-of-a-bitch engine!"

He was carrying the engine with him! Wherever chance arose...

Seamus O'Ryan is feeling especially romantic, so he buys his girlfriend, Peggy, a bunch of roses. Peggy takes one look at the roses, smiles with a sly grin, and takes Seamus by the hand. She leads him slowly up the stairs to the bedroom, throwing off one piece of clothing at a time until she is completely naked. Then she lays seductively on the bed, strokes herself lightly, and opens her legs.

"This," she purrs sexily, "is for the roses."

"Don't be silly," replies Seamus. "They will last much longer in a vase!"

It is supper time for Jesus, his cousin, Irving, and the twelve apostles. They are dining at the deluxe Pork and Pie restaurant, and everyone is having a gay time.

Vintage Arab wines are flowing like water. The fellows are stuffing themselves as the waiters bring course after course of exotic dishes.

The party is reaching a crescendo as the orchestra strikes up a hot number, and three dancing girls come in carrying a huge, two-hundred-pound stuffed pig.

At this point Peter raises his cup of wine and shouts, "A toast to Lord Jesus!"

"Yes, yes!" yells Thomas, jumping up, "a toast to Lord Jesus!"

Everyone raises their cups and shouts in unison, "To the Lord Jesus!" – and they all drink.

Curious, cousin Irving turns to Jesus and says, "How do you inspire such faithfulness in your men?"

"It is fucking simple," replies Jesus, pulling out his credit card. "It is either that, or every Jew for himself!"

Now, Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes.

Feel your body to be frozen.

Collect all your life-energy inside,

and move this inner force

as deeply as possible, like an arrow,

to reach the very source

from where you have sprung

and from where everything has sprung.

Deeper and deeper, without any fear.

Be drowned... in the source of your being.

It will resurrect you, it will give you a rebirth,

it will bring new qualities to blossom:

more awareness, more silence,

more blissfulness, more ecstasy.

You have to carry this experience around

for twenty-four hours.

This is the buddha, the original man.

Let this experience sink into

every cell of your being, every nerve of your body.

Once you know your buddha,

it starts radiating through your mind,

through your body,

all around you, like an aura.

A silent and peaceful light, a cool breeze,

follows you in every activity

just like your shadow.

To make it deeper and to feel it more clearly,

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax. Let go. The body is there, the mind is there, but they are not you.

You are the watcher, you are the witness.

This witness is the highest growth of consciousness.

There is nothing beyond it.

To remain a witness, awake or asleep,

is the whole process of meditation;

because once you are full of awareness, witnessing,

you cannot do anything that is wrong.

You don't have to decide what is right, what is wrong – you simply do the right.

It happens always to be the right.

It is your spontaneity that blossoms like roses.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but come back like buddhas.

Silently, peacefully, gracefully, sit down for a few moments,

relishing and grateful for the experience.

Even if for a single moment you can touch your buddhahood,

you have done a miracle.

That single moment

soon will become your whole life.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the gathering of the buddhas?

Yes, Beloved Master!

CHAPTER 8

Fulfilling buddhahood right where you are

28 August 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

DAIKAKU SAID:

THIS SCHOOL IS AN EXCEEDINGLY DEEP AND SUBTLE TEACHING; ONCE YOU HAVE HEARD IT, IT BECOMES AN EXCELLENT CAUSE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT FOR ALL TIME.

AN ANCIENT SAID, "THOSE WHO HEAR THIS, EVEN IF THEY DON'T BELIEVE, HAVE BLESSINGS GREATER THAN HUMANS OR GODS; THOSE WHO STUDY, EVEN WITHOUT ATTAINMENT, EVENTUALLY REACH BUDDHAHOOD."

A MONK ASKED DAIKAKU: "HOW SHOULD I REST MY MIND; HOW SHOULD I USE MY MIND?"

DAIKAKU SAID: THE NO-MIND HAS NO ATTACHMENT TO APPEARANCES; DETACHMENT FROM APPEARANCES IS THE CHARACTER OF REALITY. AMONG THE FOUR MODES OF CONDUCT – WALKING, STANDING, SITTING, AND LYING – SITTING IS CONSIDERED TO BE STABLE AND TRANQUIL. THIS MEANS SITTING STRAIGHT AND CONTEMPLATING REALITY.

SITTING STRAIGHT MEANS SITTING CROSS-LEGGED AS THE BUDDHAS DO. CONTEMPLATING REALITY MEANS SITTING MEDITATION. FORMING THE SYMBOL OF ABSORPTION IN THE COSMOS, BODY AND MIND UNMOVING, EYES HALF-OPEN, WATCHING OVER THE TIP OF THE NOSE, YOU SHOULD SEE ALL COMPOUNDED THINGS AS LIKE DREAMS, ILLUSIONS, BUBBLES, SHADOWS. DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN THOUGHT ABOUT THEM.

WHEN THE EYES ARE OPEN AND YOU CAN SEE FOR A DISTANCE, YOUR MIND CAN BE DISTRACTED BY THE PROFUSION OF OBJECTS; YET IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES, YOU FALL INTO A STATE OF DARKNESS AND OBLIVION, AND YOUR MIND IS NOT CLEAR. WHEN YOUR EYES ARE HALF-OPEN, YOUR THOUGHTS DON'T RACE; MIND AND BODY ARE ONE THUSNESS.

WHEN YOU EXAMINE CLEARLY, THE AFFLICTIONS OF BIRTH AND DEATH CANNOT BE APPROACHED. THIS IS CALLED FULFILLING BUDDHAHOOD RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE, THE MEANING OF GREAT CAPACITY AND GREAT FUNCTION.

Maneesha, Zen is fundamentally a device for discovering yourself. And there have been many ways to find out about yourself; you can approach from the north, or you can approach from the south. There are a thousand doors, or perhaps no door. The question is how to convert your seeing-energy away from the outside attachment and towards the inner world. There is no object inside, there is only a watcher, an utter silence.

Because for centuries and for many, many births, we are attached to objects in the outside world, it becomes difficult to enter into a space where there is nothing to hold onto, nothing to concentrate upon. One feels afraid. The very earth underneath your feet disappears; you are just hanging in pure space.

This fear has prevented people from even thinking about meditation. To avoid it they get engaged in every kind of thing, just to look busy. If they sit silently, automatically the desire to explore the inner arises. You are carrying a great world and you have not even knocked on the doors of it.

One Sunday morning, as a bishop entered his church in New York, he was very much puzzled, shocked: standing there was a man looking just like Jesus Christ. And to all practical purposes, this was just not possible. He seemed to be a hippie. Jesus lived a hippie life – but how to decide?

He asked the man, "What are you doing here?"

The man said, "You are asking me? I should ask you what you are doing here. I am Jesus Christ!"

The bishop started trembling. He said, "My God, I had never thought this encounter would happen."

Now, how to decide whether this man was a hippie or really Jesus Christ? He looked like Jesus Christ. He immediately phoned Rome, and asked the pope, "This is the situation – I'm caught. Nobody is here, the people of the congregation have not come yet, it is still early morning, and a young man looking like Jesus, but also looking like a hippie, says that he is Jesus Christ, the Lord we all have been worshipping. What should I do?"

Now the pope started scratching his head. He had never been in such a difficult situation himself – "The poor bishop!" He said, "Do one thing: look busy. Who knows? Just look busy, and inform the police that a hippie is pretending to be Jesus Christ; let them decide."

To avoid something, the simplest way is to get busy with something else.

The whole problem for someone who wants to get into meditation is to know all the tricks that the mind can play to prevent you.

Daikaku is discussing the device of meditation in a very pragmatic way and in particular detail.

THIS SCHOOL IS AN EXCEEDINGLY DEEP AND SUBTLE TEACHING; ONCE YOU HAVE HEARD IT, IT BECOMES AN EXCELLENT CAUSE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT FOR ALL TIME.

The only condition is, ONCE YOU HAVE HEARD IT. How difficult it is to hear! Our minds are so engaged: there is no space left to hear anything other than the mediocre, trivial, unnecessary things of life. We are so full of rubbish that there is no place for a diamond.

ONCE YOU HAVE HEARD IT...

There are two points to be remembered: your openness to hear, and who is the man that you are hearing, whether he is a meditator or just a scholar. If you hear a scholar, even if you are open, the scholar cannot help you in any way to enter into yourself, although he may be repeating the right words, just like any enlightened one.

But the words take on a different color, a different sound, a different song, a different aliveness when they come from the lips of the awakened one. When they come from deep, meditative consciousness, they carry around them some fragrance – it is invisible – which is more important than the dictionary meaning of the words.

Hearing can be of tremendous importance if the hearer is open and what is heard is not repetitive, parrot-like – like a scholar, a rabbi, a pundit.

If a man is saying what he knows himself, without quoting the scriptures, if he is quoting himself in this situation where the hearer is ready and open and the meditator himself is ready to shower, then the miracle happens. Something invisible is sown in the heart of the hearer.

ONCE YOU HAVE HEARD IT, IT BECOMES AN EXCELLENT CAUSE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT FOR ALL TIME.

AN ANCIENT SAID, "THOSE WHO HEAR THIS, EVEN IF THEY DON'T BELIEVE, HAVE BLESSINGS GREATER THAN HUMANS OR GODS."

A very strange statement, but very beautiful and true.... It does not matter whether you believe or not. Those who ask you to believe in what they say are slave creators. What I am saying to you – it does not matter whether you believe it or not, what matters is whether you hear it or not. If it is truth, just hearing is enough, believing is not needed. Believing is needed only when it is not truth, but only a quotation from the scriptures, from other buddhas. When it is not coming from your own heart-source, it does not have the freshness of the breeze passing through the pines, it does not have the freshness of the rose in the rain, it does not have the aliveness of a small child just born. It is stale, it is dead, and dead words are very dangerous. It is just like a dead corpse – it looks exactly like the living man, only it does not breathe. There is no other difference.

Those who have learned the strategy of stopping their breath for long times – and there are many techniques for it – they can play the game....

I have told you about one Zen master who said to his disciples, "Today I'm going to die. Don't prevent me, enough is enough! I have been with you, I have tried my best and now the time has come, I have to leave. But I don't want to leave in an unoriginal way. Find some original way for me to die."

His disciples looked at each other, "Original way to die? People simply die!"

There was silence. Finally, one man said, "Just lie down on your bed and die."

The master said, "That is too common, too mediocre." Almost ninety-nine point nine percent of people do it that way. The bed is the most dangerous place in the world.

He said, "As far as I'm concerned, the moment the lights are off I jump out of bed. I lie down on the floor, that is safer. To sleep in a place where ninety-nine point nine percent of people have died, to sleep in that place? – I wonder how people can manage to sleep. Don't ask me to be so unoriginal. Just suggest some way that is absolutely new."

One man said, "I have heard about a buddha who died sitting in the lotus posture."

But somebody else said, "That is not new. A few more have died the same way. It is unique, but not original, not ultra-original."

Another man suggested, "I have looked in the whole history of Zen, and there has only been one monk who died standing."

The old master said, "My God, that means I cannot even die standing. Somebody has done it already; it will be a repetition. Listening to you all I was wondering if you have ever heard of anybody dying standing on his head?"

They all looked at each other and said, "We have never heard of anybody dying standing on his head."

The master said, "That is perfectly original, so I'm going to do it. Look!"

He stood on his head and died.

Now, a man, dead, standing on his head... even alive it is difficult to stand on your head. The disciples were very much disturbed: "What to do now? It is suspicious... whether he is really dead or pretending."

They tried listening to his heart – no sound. They tried to hear his breathing – no sign. But a certain ritual has to be performed before a great master is put on the funeral pyre, and they were afraid that there might be a mistake, that they might put a living master on the funeral pyre. The funeral pyre was ready in the grounds of the monastery. Somebody said, "His sister is also a great master; she is just in the nunnery close by. And she is older than him – he is ninety and she is ninety-three. If anybody can do anything, that is the right person."

Somebody ran away and called the sister. She came, saying, "He is so mischievous. From the very beginning he has been doing mischievous things, but now he should die like a gentleman. He is making a mockery of death."

She came and hit him, and he fell. And he started laughing.

She said, "You behave! Death is an important occasion. Just go to your bed and die silently. I'm going. I will not be coming back if somebody comes to call me; I have other things to do." In the East, when the older sister says something, when an older person says something, one has to follow.

The old master, laughing, put his body on the bed and said to his disciples, "Okay, I close my eyes. Take me to the funeral pyre."

They said, "Now we are even suspicious about whether you will be dead on the bed too."

He said, "Believe me, this time I'm really going to die."

But they waited. They took their time, just making excuses – that they were making the funeral pyre, and watching him to see whether he gave any sign. And he did give – he opened one of his eyes and just looked at what was happening, and said, "Be quick, I'm dead," and he closed his eyes. Finally, they had to put him on the funeral pyre not knowing exactly whether he was dead or not.

AN ANCIENT SAID, "THOSE WHO HEAR THIS, EVEN IF THEY DON'T BELIEVE, HAVE BLESSINGS GREATER THAN HUMANS OR GODS."

The blessing is in the hearing, not in the belief. Belief is pure poison; never believe a thing. Experiment, live it thoroughly so that you can say on your own authority that it is true. Never say, "I believe in it," because that is the statement of an ignorant man. It is better to say, "I don't know." That at least shows your honesty; that at least shows that you are not a hypocrite; that at least shows your innocence.

But all over the world you will find people talking about things of which they know nothing. Everybody is talking about God, and there is not a single case, as a fact, of God encountering any man. They are talking about the son of God. Now almost half of the world is Christian: they believe that Jesus is the only begotten son of God. There is no sign of God anywhere.

First, God has to be proved, then it has to be proved that he has a wife, then it has to be proved that they don't follow birth control.... There are so many practical things first to be decided!

There is no God. Still, millions of people believe that Jesus is the son of God. The whole of humanity has believed in all kinds of things, and that has kept your intelligence very low. Even your very intelligent people are on average using only fifteen percent of their intelligence. Eighty-five percent of their intelligence is a sheer wastage.

You will be happy to know that the University of Oregon did a survey about the commune: how much intelligence the commune people have and how much intelligence the average Oregonian has. They were surprised, shocked.

They did not publish the survey until after I had left and was deported from America. But now the survey is published and it says that the average Oregonian has only seven percent intelligence, and the average commune member had fourteen percent intelligence – double that of any Oregonian.

And the research is being done by the Oregonians. You might think that people who have seven percent intelligence cannot judge about people who have fourteen percent. They must have tried to bring their intelligence as high as possible. My understanding is that it cannot be more than three or four percent; seven is make-believe. And the commune people must have nearabout twenty; they were reduced to fourteen.

But still, it is so obvious that the lower intelligence destroys the higher intelligence.

Stones are very much against the flowers.

Belief is of the ignorant people who do not want to explore the truth themselves. But a man of sincerity never believes in anything – any God, any scripture, any religion. He searches.

Daikaku is giving you his method for exploring the inner world.

THOSE WHO STUDY, EVEN WITHOUT ATTAINMENT, EVENTUALLY REACH BUDDHAHOOD.

Those who hear a living word immediately reach to their very being. But those who study the dead word, even without attainment, but with the desire, the longing, the seed somehow gets planted even through study. It may take a longer time, perhaps lives, to come to attainment, but even those who study without attainment eventually reach buddhahood.

Zen's greatest contribution is that it raises everybody's dignity to the highest. Everybody is a buddha. You may attain it, you may not attain it; it is your decision. But the buddha will wait just behind you, deep inside you, and it will wait from eternity to eternity. Any day, any moment, you can open your eyes and see it. You can go in and say, "Hi!"

A MONK ASKED DAIKAKU: "HOW SHOULD I REST MY MIND; HOW SHOULD I USE MY MIND?"

DAIKAKU SAID: THE NO-MIND HAS NO ATTACHMENT TO APPEARANCES; DETACHMENT FROM APPEARANCES IS THE CHARACTER OF REALITY.

The mind is nothing but many attachments, many thoughts, many identities, and the no-mind cuts through all these and makes a silent space in you. Through no-mind you come to know the character of reality. Mind keeps you dreaming, imagining, fantasizing. It never allows you to see reality as it is. You are almost always imposing your idea on the reality. And your mind is capable enough: if you give it the power it can create even unreal things, as if they are real.

Where I used to live, in the village, by the side of my house there was a small, very narrow street going nowhere except to the house of a brahmin priest who was also a teacher. In the middle of the street, just by the side of my house, there used to be a huge neem tree.

The neem tree is thought by Indian medicine to have a very purifying effect on the air, on the atmosphere. Its leaves are thought to treat many diseases, and just the wind that passes through

it gets purer. Every old house used to have neem trees around it. But there is only one danger: in neem trees ghosts live.

And this was a very ancient tree. When we purchased that house, the only problem was that it had been for sale for many days and nobody was ready to purchase it because of this old neem tree. And the sign of ghosts was clear.

In India, if somebody is suffering or is possessed by a ghost, he is taken to a neem tree. Some mantras, some Vedic rituals are done, and a big nail is hammered into the tree with the idea that the ghost is now joined with the tree and he cannot leave the tree. And on this tree there were so many big nails – who would purchase the house?

I told my father, "You don't be worried, you just purchase it. As far as ghosts are concerned, I will deal with them."

He said, "What are you saying? It is an ancient tree and everybody is prohibiting: 'Don't purchase it. Even if it is given free, don't take it.'"

But we had a need for a house. Finally I convinced him, "Don't be worried. We will cut the neem tree, and when we cut the neem tree and throw it into the river, the ghosts will all go with the tree. They are nailed, they are not free."

He said, "That's true, they are nailed."

Because of that neem tree it was such a joy for me. The brahmin priest who was also a teacher in the high school, was my teacher also. He talked very much about bravery and this and that. And in the night when he would come home, because he used to do private tuition, he would run, saying, "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama! Hare Krishna, Hare Rama!" And he would run, because that was the dead end – his house.

I asked him one day, "You are such a brave man. I don't see you doing this 'Hare Rama, Hare Krishna' anywhere else except near the neem tree."

He said, "That neem tree is dangerous."

One of my fellow students used to go to his house at night to study, and he was very much afraid. His teacher was afraid, his father was afraid – but that was the shortcut; otherwise they had to go almost one mile round, then they would reach there – so he used to bring a lamp.

I told him, "You are stupid. In darkness you may escape, but if you have a lamp you are declaring yourself. The ghost cannot see in the darkness, but in the light of the lamp..."

He said, "You seem to be right." He asked the teacher.

The teacher said, "No, don't be worried. But he has a point. If you see some ghosts in the darkness, you can escape, this way or that way. But if you have a lamp, the ghosts will go directly towards you."

But he said, "Without a lamp I cannot enter this street."

So the teacher said, "Don't be worried."

The boy said, "You are asking about being worried? – I'm so afraid I cannot go home now." I had made him so afraid with so many stories about the ghosts of the neem tree – that they jump over people, that it was not one ghost but almost a company, a whole regiment – that he demanded of the teacher, "You please come with me, at least to the main road."

He said, "I can do it one day, but not every day."

I was sitting up in the tree with an old kerosene oil drum. The teacher came with great braveness, to show his disciple that there was no hurry. But then I beat the drum and threw it on the teacher so that his head was covered... and there was so much havoc! He fell down, the student fell down, the whole neighborhood gathered, "What is the matter?"

I also came down to ask, "What is the matter?"

The teacher looked at me and said, "Please save me!"

So I said, "What is the matter? I was just going to sleep and I heard this noise. But it has happened before also. It is better that you should go the long way. This way is dangerous."

Even the teacher was trembling, perspiring... "Hare Krishna, Hare Rama," because who knows?... he had to go back also.

The boy went home and the teacher said, "What am I supposed to do now?"

I said, "You have to go through the dangerous place. I cannot help; anything is possible. It is not one ghost. If it was one ghost I could have convinced him not to bother you, but there is almost a regiment."

He said, "Then it is better I go the other way."

I said, "You go the other way, but never talk about your bravery and all those things that you teach in the school."

It was very difficult to find a woodcutter to cut the tree. My father wanted to remove it, because it was an unnecessary trouble for all the neighbors. And who knows? – it might be true.

So I brought an old Mohammedan who said, "I don't believe in ghosts." He was a very old Mohammedan. I frightened him as much as I could.

I said, "Don't take this risk. You are old enough, and it is almost a regiment."

He said, "Don't be worried."

The more I frightened him... And my whole plan was that he would take it as a challenge, otherwise nobody was ready. I had gone to many woodcutters. They all had said, "That tree we cannot touch."

So this was my final device – that I started talking about ghosts, not about the tree or the cutting of the tree.

He himself proposed it, "If you want, I can cut that tree."

I said, "No, I will not say that you do that. You are old and the ghosts are many, and you will be alone. Although I will help you as much as I can, but I'm so small."

He became more and more challenged. He took his axe and told me, "Come with me. I'm going to cut the tree at the risk of my life." Everybody in the neighborhood prevented him, physically prevented him – "Don't touch that tree!"

And I asked people, "Has anybody ever seen the ghosts?" Nobody had ever seen any ghosts, except for that teacher. And that was not a ghost, it was a kerosene drum. And he was suspicious about me, because here and there he said to people, "I suspect that ghosts cannot carry kerosene drums."

But that man was so adamant: he cut the tree. There was no ghost or anything, but he became so much afraid inside of what he was doing just for the challenge... one never knows.

The day the tree was cut, he fell sick. I went to see him. He said, "You were right. Now I'm alone in the house and those ghosts torture me."

I said, "Which ghosts?"

"Those ghosts that the neem tree had; they have all come with me."

I said, "Can you show me?"

He said, "That is the trouble. If anybody else is here, they completely disappear. And when I'm alone, they torture me in such ways you won't believe – somebody is sitting on my chest, somebody is pulling my hair. And the fear is such that I cannot even scream."

That fellow died, and there was no ghost or anything. I had been up and down that neem tree a thousand times in search of the ghosts – I never found any. But the man created the phobia.

Your mind is very creative. Once it creates something, it starts believing in its reality. And it is very difficult to know with the mind what is real and what is just your imagination.

Only in a state of no-mind do all mind-created realities disappear, all ghosts disappear. A pure, absolutely silent reality arises in your vision.

Daikaku is saying, THE NO-MIND HAS NO ATTACHMENT TO APPEARANCES; DETACHMENT FROM APPEARANCES IS THE CHARACTER OF REALITY. AMONG THE FOUR MODES OF CONDUCT – WALKING, STANDING, SITTING, AND LYING – SITTING IS CONSIDERED TO BE STABLE AND TRANQUIL.

That is true, scientifically true. These are the four positions possible for the body to create a right background for the mind to become silent.

If you are asleep, you are horizontal. In a horizontal state meditation is very difficult. If too much blood is rushing into your head, it will keep you awake. That's why pillows are used all over the world: to keep the head a little above the body, so the blood flow is less. With less blood flow, you can sleep.

Standing, you are going too much against gravitation. And you cannot go on standing for a long time, you will get tired. From where does the tiredness come? It comes from the gravitation which is pulling you down. If you are standing up, you are going against the gravitation.

Those who have experimented with all the postures of the body have found that the lotus posture, the way you have seen the Buddha sitting, is the most suitable. Because the spine is erect, gravitation is the least. When the spine is erect and you are sitting, the pull of gravitation is the least. Your body can have a tremendous rest.

For the Westerner it is difficult because for centuries, because of the cold, people have not been sitting on the ground. Their bones, their body structure, make it difficult. For a Westerner to learn to sit in the lotus posture takes at least six months to do it perfectly. Now that is too much. In six months the Western mind wants to go around the whole world. Six months just to learn to sit silently – are you mad or something? And what will you do by sitting in a lotus posture?... unnecessary torture! But it is not. Sitting in that posture it is easier for the body to be at rest and yet not asleep. The body is at rest and then you can contemplate reality.

SITTING STRAIGHT MEANS SITTING CROSS-LEGGED AS THE BUDDHAS DO.

Crossed legs help you to remain in the same position; you cannot fall, you cannot doze off. In fact it hurts so much that you cannot even think of dozing off.

But scientifically, being in a cross-legged lotus posture is perfect. You have a base, and because of the crossed legs you cannot fall this way or that way. Those crossed legs will prevent you from falling. And you have to keep your spine erect – then there is less pull of gravitation and the body is at rest. You can remain in that posture for hours once you have learned it.

In the East, at the time of Buddha, it was an ordinary posture. Everybody was sitting that way; it was nothing special to be learned.

In hot countries chairs were used only by kings. Everybody – even the richest people – were sitting cross-legged, and if you sit that way from your very childhood, your body takes to that posture very easily. It is so restful that you cannot conceive, until you sit that way, how much the body feels rested – far more rested than in sleep. And this cross-legged posture is for a certain purpose.

CONTEMPLATING REALITY MEANS SITTING MEDITATION. FORMING THE SYMBOL OF ABSORPTION IN THE COSMOS, BODY AND MIND UNMOVING, EYES HALF-OPEN...

It has been a very controversial point amongst meditators in the East. Some prefer to have the eyes closed, because even if the eyes are half-open, the world – half of the world – is visible; you cannot turn in completely. So a few have preferred closed eyes. But that has one difficulty – the moment you close your eyes, you start dreaming.

It is habitual. You have always dreamed with closed eyes. Have you ever dreamed with open eyes? The association between dreaming and closed eyes is so old – millions of years old – that the moment you close your eyes dreams start and meditation becomes impossible. Sleep prevents it, dreaming prevents it, thinking prevents it. All these have to disappear, and only then the pure clarity of vision appears.

A few have preferred open eyes. Their idea is that once you understand clearly that all you see is illusory, then there is no need to be afraid; just see that it is just a drama, a screenplay. There is no need to be worried about it, to be attached to it or to judge it.

But it has its own difficulties. In the first place, you have to blink; you cannot keep your eyes continuously open. Blinking is absolutely necessary to keep the eyes clean, no dust should gather. That is the function of your eyelids; they are just like the wipers of a car.

But idiots are idiots. There have been instances of self-torturing saints who have cut off their eyelids, so there is no question of blinking. They sleep with open eyes, they dream with open eyes, they wake up with open eyes. There is no question – they have simply cut off their eyelids.

But this is unnecessary and confusing, because they will not know when they are asleep and when they are awake. They will not know if they are dreaming or not. Everything will become confused.

Small children feel it. They cannot make a distinction between waking and sleeping. In sleep the child is playing with a toy and suddenly he wakes up, and he finds the toy is gone. He looks all around and starts crying, "Where is the toy?" It takes some time to learn, to experience the distinction between sleep and waking.

Because of these problems, some people like Daikaku have preferred half-open eyes. You are allowed to blink, but don't look far away, just look four feet ahead of you, exactly four feet. Your eyes cover a very limited area; nothing much can happen in that small area. The sun will not rise, the full moon will not be seen. Even seeing the faces of people is impossible unless they come very close. You can only see their feet.

This device was created to avoid women. You should not see the face of a woman, because otherwise attachment, love, liking and all kinds of nightmares arise. Saints can be defined as people who have completely escaped from the fact that there are women in the world. They are the perfect escapists. But it is not so easy to escape from something. The more you escape from it, the more you dream of it.

If it was possible to make a window into the head, you would be surprised to see that ordinary people don't dream such ugly dreams as your saints do.

The saints can maintain for a whole day the repression of their natural desires. But when they are asleep, their control is no longer there. Then if you look through their window... it will be a really great device to make windows. For anybody who wants to become a saint, it should be compulsory that a window has to be made, and you will find it more entertaining than any television. Everything will be topsy-turvy, but utterly interesting.

But some method has to be used. I don't agree with Daikaku or Gautam Buddha on this point, that the eyes should be half-open. My understanding is that the eyes should be left naturally as they are. Sometimes you feel to close them; then close them. Sometimes you feel to open them, to see the whole horizon – then open them. And sometimes you feel just to keep them half-open – then nobody is preventing it.

You are the master of your eyes. Why should any discipline be imposed on you?

Meditation has nothing to do with your eyes, open, half-open, or closed. Daikaku thinks that if you keep your EYES HALF-OPEN, WATCHING OVER THE TIP OF THE NOSE, YOU SHOULD SEE ALL COMPOUNDED THINGS AS LIKE DREAMS.

Nonsense. At least you will believe in your nose because you are so focused on the nose. Then Jews will be the great meditators! And what about people who have nothing much of a nose, just flat ground?

It has nothing to do with it – that just by half-closing your eyes, YOU SHOULD SEE ALL COMPOUNDED THINGS AS LIKE DREAMS, ILLUSIONS, BUBBLES, SHADOWS. That can be understood with open eyes. It is a question of understanding, not of the eyes. It can be understood with closed eyes.

My own preference for meditators is to close the eyes, while all the traditions of the past have been against closed eyes. The reason is that they have never allowed their saints enough time to sleep. If a saint is allowed only four hours to sleep, naturally, whenever he closes his eyes, he will fall into a sleep.

But a man like me goes on sleeping. My eyes say, "Now it is time to open," and I say, "Don't bother. You will find the same world there, and the same nonsense going round. Keep your eyes completely closed as long as you can. At least for that much time you are out of the world."

If I close my eyes I don't fall asleep. I have slept in advance enough for many months.

These people were worried that if you close your eyes, you will fall asleep; if you open your eyes, you may fall into some trap, into some illusion – or into some woman, to be more honest.

But my understanding is that the more you are acquainted with women, and the more women are acquainted with you, the less is the interest. It is only acquaintance that can destroy the interest. The more apart they are kept, the more interesting men look to women and women look to men. The distance creates the illusion.

In my university classes girls had to sit on one side of the room, boys had to sit on the other. And the professor would sit in the middle, facing nobody, because the boys were on this side, the girls were on that side.

I immediately changed it. The first day I entered the class, I said, "Immediately get mixed and sit in front of me."

They looked at each other, "What kind of man is this? Every teacher says to be separate, not to talk to girls."

I said, "Just come in the middle. And rather than throwing small pebbles, if you want to, give a good hit! Why should you write and then throw those letters in the air? There is no need. You just take hold of the girl and get out! I'm the last one to object."

They could not believe me. They thought I was a strange fellow. They reported to the vice-chancellor that I was destroying the whole discipline, although they loved the idea very much. The vice-chancellor said to me, "You are destroying the discipline of the university."

I said, "I don't believe in this discipline. Who made this discipline? Is there any law?"

He said, "There is no law. But putting girls and boys together, they will be more interested in each other than in listening to you."

I said, "You are wrong! Keeping them separate, they are thinking of each other rather than listening to me. And I put them so close together that there is no need to be thinking about the girl. She's smelling of her perspiration, and you are stinking, you have not taken a bath for a few days. And every day like this, how long can you remain interested? I have given them every opportunity. If they want to go out they go out. They don't need my permission. And whenever they want to come in they just come silently, they don't need my permission. I am here to teach, not to make them saints or sinners. They can become whatever they want."

"The best way is to taste both – sometimes saint, sometimes sinner. Why not have the whole wavelength available to you? Once in a while be a saint: fast, say 'Hare Krishna, Hare Rama,' sit in a cross-legged lotus posture. Sometimes, just be a playboy. Having the experience of both you will transcend both. And transcendence is the real thing."

The vice-chancellor hit his own head. He said, "Transcendence? I have never heard that the university has any course for transcendence."

I said, "It may have, it may not have; but I'm going to make my students transcend all dualities of man and woman."

And you can see, here you are listening to me – nobody is interested in who is sitting beside them, whether she is a woman or a man. Maybe a woman with a beard! – all kinds of people are here, and nobody is bothered. If you are here, you are here to listen to something.

But all these saints of the past were continuously worried about the outside world. Most emphatically the man was concerned about the woman – and the woman was concerned about the man. But these are not authentic problems for a meditator. The meditator has to close his eyes and watch his thoughts, not even making the judgment that they are bubbles, or shadows, or illusions, or dreams. The moment you make such judgments – dreams, shadows, bubbles, illusions – you are saying that you don't understand.

If it is just an illusion, there is no need to say anything; the illusion will disappear. If it is a bubble, how long can it remain? Soon it will pop off. If it is not a real woman, but just imagination, how long will

it remain there? Soon the cloud will go away from the moon without scratching the moon. Anything that is illusory you need not be worried about. But all these saints were continuously worried about bubbles and shadows and illusions and dreams.

My understanding and experience of meditation is to let it be whatever it is; you just remain silent, without any concern, without any judgment, without making any appreciation or condemnation. Soon all the dust will settle, and you will be left behind in your immense glory, in your tremendous beauty, in your peaks of consciousness.

Daikaku is talking about the old pattern, old-fashioned meditation. I don't agree with it; it comes from fear.

WHEN THE EYES ARE OPEN AND YOU CAN SEE FOR A DISTANCE, YOUR MIND CAN BE DISTRACTED BY THE PROFUSION OF OBJECTS;

I don't see it, because I have been looking all around; the mind is not distracted.

The mind gets distracted because you don't know anything about meditation. Once you know about meditation, your mind becomes a mirror; it reflects but it is not distracted.

YET IF YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES, YOU FALL INTO A STATE OF DARKNESS AND OBLIVION, AND YOUR MIND IS NOT CLEAR.

So what is wrong in it? Falling into darkness – it is a very beautiful, velvety darkness. Falling into oblivion – it is a great experience.

WHEN YOUR EYES ARE HALF-OPEN, YOUR THOUGHTS DON'T RACE; MIND AND BODY ARE ONE THUSNESS.

WHEN YOU EXAMINE CLEARLY, THE AFFLICTIONS OF BIRTH AND DEATH CANNOT BE APPROACHED. THIS IS CALLED FULFILLING BUDDHAHOOD RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE, THE MEANING OF GREAT CAPACITY AND GREAT FUNCTION.

What he is saying is basically right, but he is mixed up with the old traditional ways of meditation. Once in a while those old methods work, in a certain situation; but I want a more scientific method that always works. It should not be a question of any accident. By accident I mean, supposing your wife dies...

A man's father died. All the elders of the neighborhood came, "Don't be worried. We are here. If you need any advice or anything, think of us as your fathers – don't be worried, there is no need."

Then his mother died, and the same happened again. All the women came, and they said, "Don't weep, don't cry. We are your mothers. You can always depend on us."

Then his wife died, and nobody came. And he was sitting in front of his house, crying and weeping. Somebody asked, "What is the matter?"

He said, "The matter is that now nobody is coming and saying to me, 'Don't cry. If your wife has died we are here.' And for this moment I have been waiting! My father died, I did not care. My mother died, I did not care. Now my wife has died and not a single woman has the humanity and compassion to come and say to me, 'Don't be worried, I am here. I will be your wife.'"

The man asked him, "So what are you going to do?"

He said, "I'm going to become a sannyasin. This is all useless. This whole world is illusory, just talk... no reality."

Many people become sannyasins because they have nothing else to do – no employment, no qualification. I have come across many sannyasins who wanted to drop their monkhood but they were afraid that if they drop it, what will happen about their food, clothes and shelter? Because those same people who come to touch their feet will not give them employment. They will ask for certificates, they will ask for qualifications.

For sannyas, nobody asks for any qualification, no certificate is needed. In the past, most of the sannyasins of all religions were just hobos. Finding no place or achievement in life, they found sannyas the easiest way to be respectable.

I want to change the whole definition of sannyas. I want my sannyasins to be in the world, but not of it. I want my sannyasins to be in the world, but not to let the world into them.

It is very simple – just a right meditation and a right grounding in yourself, and the world cannot disturb you. Nobody has time to disturb you. Everybody is so much engaged in his own affairs and worries and sufferings. And if you can be silent in the world, then your silence has some value, some authenticity. In the Himalayas, the silence is not yours; it belongs to the Himalayas. The moment you come into the world, it will be disturbed.

For thirty years a man remained in the Himalayas meditating, and he started thinking that he had become a buddha. Then there was a great fair, a Kumbha Mela, in Allahabad, which is perhaps the greatest gathering of Hindus on the earth. So some people asked the great saint, "Now you have been thirty years in the Himalayan caves, it is time you should come down. And this is the most appropriate time, because millions of people will be at the kumbha mela. They will rejoice, seeing your peace and your silence."

He loved the idea. He came down, but in the crowd nobody knew him. Just as he entered the crowd, a man stepped on his feet. He immediately jumped and took hold of the man's neck and said, "I will kill you!" And then he remembered, "My God! What happened to thirty years in the Himalayas? What was that silence? He has not done much, he has just stepped on my feet, but he has taken away thirty years of buddhahood."

A real silence, a real buddhahood, has to be discovered in the world – here and now. Otherwise it can be phony – most probably it will be phony. It won't have the fire test. The world is a fire test. If you can become silent here... and I don't see that there is any hindrance. We become silent here every day, and slowly, slowly the silence will flow into your being, into your daily activities.

Your buddhahood should not be an extraordinary or special thing, but just a pure innocence, reflecting the beauty of this whole universe.

A haiku by Issa:

FROM THE WHITE DEWDROPS,

LEARN THE WAY

TO THE PURE LAND.

FROM THE WHITE DEWDROPS, LEARN THE WAY.... What is he saying?

Have you seen the dewdrops on the lotus leaves? The lotus is the biggest flower in the world, and it has very big leaves floating on the water. In the night, dewdrops gather on the leaves and in the morning they slowly, slowly fall towards the lake, and they silently merge into the lake without making any fuss.

Issa is saying: FROM THE WHITE DEWDROPS, LEARN THE WAY TO THE PURE LAND. By "pure land" he means the buddha land, the buddha consciousness.

And Masushi, another master:

UNDER THE SWORD LIFTED HIGH,

THERE IS HELL

MAKING YOU TREMBLE;

BUT GO AHEAD,

AND YOU HAVE THE LAND OF BLISS.

There is a danger on the borderline between mind and no-mind. There is a danger in going to an unknown territory; but where you are, you are just in hell. You don't recognize the hell because you are born in hell, and everybody else is in hell. Naturally, one takes it that this is what life is meant to be.

But just go a little deeper and you will land in a totally different space which will give you for the first time the joy, the bliss, the ecstasy. And what a comparison between what you have been doing up to now outside and what was hidden inside you! You were searching for stones and inside there were diamonds. You were fighting for stones and you were carrying a mine of diamonds.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT PLACE DOES A STRUCTURED MEDITATION TECHNIQUE HAVE IN THE LIVES OF YOUR SANNYASINS, BOTH WHEN WE ARE LIVING NEAR YOU AND WHEN WE ARE AWAY?

IS IT SUFFICIENT TO SIT IN MEDITATION IN YOUR PRESENCE OR LISTEN TO A VIDEO, AND THEN TO CARRY THAT MEDITATIVENESS INTO THE REST OF THE DAY, OR SHOULD ADDITIONAL TIME BE SET ASIDE TO DO ZAZEN OR VIPASSANA?

Maneesha, it is up to everyone's convenience.

If you feel that it is not enough to be meditative in all your activities, then it is perfectly good to have some small time just for meditation. But if you feel that you have the same joy, the same silence when you are doing your work meditatively as when you are sitting especially for meditation, then there is no need.

Ultimately, there should be no need. For the beginners I am saying, at your convenience. But finally, your whole life should be nothing but a meditation. Whatever you do should be a meditation. And there should be no separate, particularly structured timetable. That is for the beginners. And I don't think you are beginners; now it is time enough not to be beginners.

Before we enter into the meditation, a little clearance, a little lightness, a little of Sardar Gurudayal Singh.

Giovanni comes home early one day and finds his wife Sofia in bed with Luigi, the carpenter.

Sofia screams; Luigi screams. Then Giovanni runs to the closet, pulls out his pistol, and faces his wife. Then he puts the barrel of the gun to his forehead.

"Oh, no! Oh, no! Poor Giovanni," cries Sofia. "Don't do that!"

Giovanni smirks at her and says, "Don't feel sorry for me, you stronza! You are gonna to be the next!"

Kowalski and Zabriski are having a few beers at the Crunchy Crumpet pub.

"Jesus Christ!" says Kowalski. "The judge really nailed me in court today."

"What happened?" asks Zabriski.

"Well," says Kowalski, "first, he fined me five hundred dollars for attempting to make love to some woman on the bus. And then, when he took a good look at her, he fined me an extra ten dollars for being drunk!"

Big Black Leroy strides into the Hoo Flung Dung Bar and Noodle House in Chinatown.

"Hey, Chink!" shouts Leroy to Five Dragons Wu behind the bar, "give me a drink!"

Wu frowns but serves Leroy a drink.

Five minutes later, Leroy is thirsty again. "Hey, Chink!" he shouts, "give me a drink!"

Five Dragons Wu scowls but serves the drink.

Leroy knocks back the drink and shouts again, "Hey, Chink, how about a drink?"

"Listen, buster," says Wu, finally, "I keep my temper. You come behind the bar and see how you like to be insulted!"

Leroy and Five Dragons Wu change places.

"Okay?" asks Wu. "Now, you nigger, give me a jigger!" "Sorry," replies Leroy, "we don't serve Chinks!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent.

Close your eyes.

Feel your body to be completely frozen.

Gather all your life force and go deeper into yourself, making your life-energy just like an arrow.

Deeper and deeper....

The deeper you go,

the closer you are to your buddhahood.

At the deepest, you are no more,

just the buddha is.

This is the ultimate experience of the meditator.

In this moment, the dewdrop slips into the ocean

and becomes the ocean.

In this moment is the whole eternity.

Life and death are just games, waves in the eternal consciousness that you are.

It is not yours individually, it is the vast ocean in which everybody is part.

This life-energy expresses itself in millions of ways:

in the roses, in the birds, in the trees, in the oceans.

It is the same life-energy in different forms.

Once you see the point,

all life becomes sacred, divine.

There is no other God

than this existence itself.

To make it clear, Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax.

The body is there, the mind is there,

you are a watcher.

This watching is the most miraculous thing.

This watching takes you to the transcendental,

to the beyond,

to skies beyond skies, to infinity.

The joy of it, the blissfulness of it, is inexpressible,

but it brings a dance to you,

and slowly slowly the dance deepens

into every fiber of your being,

into your twenty-four-hour activities.

Something inside goes on dancing, singing,

rejoicing, for no reason at all.

Just to be in such a beautiful existence

is enough to be grateful.

I know no other prayer than gratefulness –

a deep gratitude to existence.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but bring with you the experience,

the space, the taste of silence.

Sit down for a few moments as buddhas,

remembering and reminding yourself

that this is what you have to carry along in your life,

that this experience of being a buddha has to become your heartbeat, your breathing,

your joy, your love.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

Can we celebrate the gathering of the buddhas?