

The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1

Chapter #6

Chapter title: Through a glass darkly

26 June 1979 am in Buddha Hall

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

I FEEL LIKE I KNOW THE ANSWERS. WHY DO I STILL ALLOW THE QUESTIONS TO BECOME PROBLEMS?

Savita, there are not answers, there is only the answer. And that answer is not of the mind, that answer cannot be of the mind. Mind is a multiplicity. Mind has answers and answers, but not the answer.

That answer is a state of no-mind. It is not verbal. You can know it but you cannot reduce it to knowledge. You can know it, but you cannot say it. It is known in the innermost recesses of your being. It is light that simply illuminates your interiority.

It is not an answer to any particular question. It is the end of all questioning, it refers to no question at all. It simply dissolves all the questions and a state is left without any question...that's the answer. Unless that is known, nothing is known.

Hence, you may feel that you know the answers, but still questions will go on popping up, still questions will go on torturing you. Still questions are bound to arise because the root is not cut yet. New leaves will be sprouting, new branches will be arising.

The root is cut only when you disconnect yourself from the mind, when you become so aware, so watchful that you can see the mind as separate from you. When all identity with the mind is dropped, when you are a watcher on the hills and the mind is left deep down in the darkness of the valleys, when you are on the sunlit peaks, just a pure witness, seeing, watching, but not getting identified with anything -- good or bad, sinner or saint, this or that -- in that witnessing all questions dissolve. The mind melts, evaporates. You are left as a pure being, just a pure existence -- a breathing, a beating of the heart, utterly in the moment, no past, no future, hence no present either.

Unless that state arrives you will feel many times that you know the answers, but each answer will only create new questions. Each answer will trigger new chains of questions in you. You can read, you can study, you can think, but you will get more and more in the mire of the mind, more entangled, more entrapped. Slip out of the mind!

Hence, I am not giving you answers, I am trying to point out the answer. You cannot use the plural for it because it is one. It is a state of utter silence, peace, no-thought. Buddha calls it right mindfulness -- *sammāsati*. And he says that those who are rightly mindful, alert, aware, the truth comes to them of its own accord. You need not go anywhere, it comes. You need not even seek and search, because how can you seek and search? Out of your ignorance, whatsoever you do will bring more ignorance. Out of

your ignorance, wherever you go you will go astray. Out of your confusion, how can you find clarity? Out of your confusion you will become more and more confused -- in search of clarity.

Hence Buddha says: The master watches, the master is clear. Aes dhammo sanantano -- this is the law, the ultimate, eternal, inexhaustible law.

To be silent is to have the answer. To be silent is to be without questions...and the root is cut, then no leaves arrive anymore.

Savita, you say, "I feel like I know the answers."

That is only an illusion. And the mind is very clever in creating new illusions. The mind is very deceptive: it can deceive you in knowledge too. It can deceive you in everything! It can even make you believe that you are enlightened, that you are a buddha already. Beware! The only enemy is the mind; there is no other enemy.

The old scriptures talk about the mind. They have a special name for it -- they call it the Devil. The Devil is not somebody outside you; it is your own mind that goes on tempting you, that goes on cheating you, deceiving you, that goes on creating new illusions in you. Beware, watch the mind! And in watching, questions disappear -- not that they are answered, let me repeat it again.

The buddha knows no answers -- not that he has come to the conclusion of all questions, no, not at all. On the contrary, he has no questions anymore. Because he has no questions anymore, his whole being has become the answer.

Savita, that moment is possible.

That's my whole work here. I am not here to give you more information; that you can get anywhere. Thousands of universities exist, thousands of libraries exist. Information you can get anywhere, you can become knowledgeable anywhere. My effort is to make you unlearn whatsoever you have learned up to now, to make you innocent so that you can start functioning from a state of not-knowing. So that you don't have any answers, so that you act spontaneously, not out of the past and out of the conclusions already arrived at. So that you don't have any ready-made formula for anything...so that you are like a small child mirroring reality.

And when you are silent, no knowledge clamoring inside you, your perception is clear - - no dust on the mirror...you reflect that which is. And out of that reflection whatever action arises is virtue.

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

YOU WANT US TO BE INDIVIDUALS, BUT DURING WORK IN THE ASHRAM WE HAVE TO BE VERY DISCIPLINED. DISCIPLINE AND INDIVIDUALISM -- ARE THEY NOT DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE?

Sudarshan, I would like you to be individuals, but not individualists. And there is a great difference. The individualist is not an individual yet. The individualist who believes in individualism is only an egoist. And to be an egoist is not to be an

individual. Just the contrary: the individual has no ego, and the ego has no individuality.

The ego is such an ordinary phenomenon -- everybody has it! There is nothing special about it, there is nothing unique about it. Everybody has the ego. It is so common! The uncommon thing is egolessness.

Only an egoless consciousness attains to individuality. And by individuality I simply mean the literal meaning of the word: individual means indivisible, individual means integrated; individual means one who is not many, who is not a crowd, who is not multipyschic; one who has attained to unity, one who has become a crystallized being. Gurdjieff uses the word 'crystallization' for individuality. But the basic requirement for crystallization is to drop the ego, because ego is a false entity. It won't allow you to be real, it won't allow you to be authentically real. It won't allow you to grow. It is false, it is a deception, it is an illusion. You are not separate from existence, but the ego goes on pretending separation.

And the other word that you have used in the question also has to be understood: discipline. Discipline does not mean anything imposed upon you. Nothing is imposed in this commune. If you enter this commune it is at your own choice. The doors are open -- you can leave any moment. In fact, entry is difficult and we make every possible effort to help you to leave. Nobody is hindered from leaving, although every possible effort is made to hinder you from entering. Entry is very difficult.

If you choose to become part of this commune it is your decision -- your readiness to commit yourself, to be involved.

Out of this decision a discipline arises. You can choose to get out of the commune, but once you are in the commune it means that you have taken a responsibility. And it is only through responsibility that one grows. By fulfilling one's responsibility totally, growth becomes possible.

There are a few people here, only a few, who go on trying to deceive the commune. They are simply befooling themselves; nobody is befooled! They don't want to work, they try to avoid it in every possible way. They find excuses, they even fall ill just to avoid work. But this is so stupid! You have entered the commune to work upon yourself. You have entered the commune to make a concentrated effort to become an integrated individual. You have entered the commune for your spiritual growth, for enlightenment. And if you avoid...and that seems to be the real question behind the apparent question.

You say, Sudarshan, "Individualism and discipline -- are they not diametrically opposite?"

They are not! An individual is always a disciplined phenomenon. One who is not disciplined is not an individual; he is just a chaos, he is many fragments. All those fragments are functioning separately, even in opposition to each other. That's how people are ordinarily: one part of the mind going to the south, another part going to the north; one part saying one thing, another part opposing it. You know it! I am simply stating a fact -- you can observe it. One part says "Do this." Another part immediately

says "No!" Something says "Yes," and something immediately destroys it by saying "No."

This is your situation! You are an individual in such a situation, when you cannot even say a total yes or a total no? Your no is always halfhearted and your yes too -- and you think you are an individual?

An individual means one who can function as a totality, as an organic unity. How are you going to become an organic unity? It can only be through conscious discipline.

That's what Buddha is saying again and again: perseverance, effort, a conscious, deliberate effort to grow -- and total effort, not lukewarm. You have to boil at a hundred degrees. Yes, sometimes it is painful, but it all depends on you, on how you interpret it. If you really want to grow it is not painful -- it is tremendously pleasant. Each step deeper into discipline brings more and more joy, because it gives you more and more soul, being.

Discipline means readiness to learn; hence the word 'disciple', they come from the same root. Who is a disciple? -- one who bows down, surrenders, and is ready to learn. And what is discipline? -- the readiness, the openness, the vulnerability, to learn.

Entering into this commune you are entering into a buddhafiield. It is a surrender, it is a trust! I am here to make you individuals, but you will have to pass through many many devices. Many fires you will have to pass through, many tests. Only then, slowly slowly, will you be welded into one unity. And you have remained a multiplicity for so long, for so many lives, that unless concentrated effort is made, unless you are attacked from every nook and corner, unless your sleep is broken in every possible way, you are shaken and shocked, the individual is not going to be born.

The work that is happening in the commune is not really what it appears from the surface. It is something else -- it is a device! We have to use devices.

Somebody comes to me and wants to become part of the commune, and I say to him, "Go to Deeksha." Deeksha is my device! I have given her total power -- and I have given her total power because she is so loving, so soft, so caring. She wounds people, but she heals also. By one hand she hammers, by the other she consoles. She is a device.

And when I say to you, "Go and work with Deeksha," and she shouts at you and in every possible way she provokes you, it is discipline to watch -- not to act in your old ways, as you have always acted. And she is so motherly that it is very simple to react to her as you have been reacting to your own parents. It is very simple that she will create a reaction in you that your mother creates in you. Mothers are intolerable creatures -- and Deeksha is a perfect mother!

I know, Sudarshan, it is difficult -- but growth is difficult. Many more devices are going to be created. You will be sent to many dimensions. No corner of your being has to be left undeveloped, otherwise you will become lopsided.

And the first principle of discipline is surrender. Apparently it looks contradictory, because that's what you have been told: that if you surrender, then you are no longer an individual. And I say to you, if you cannot surrender you are not an individual. Only an individual can surrender. Surrender is such a great phenomenon, only a man of great will can surrender. It is the ultimate in will. To drop your will is bound to be the

ultimate in will. To put yourself aside, absolutely aside, and to say to something such a total yes -- which your mind resists, your old habits resist....

And sometimes you are right -- and that's where the whole beauty lies. You are right, and still you have to surrender to something which does not appear at all right logically.

Deeksha is crazy! You may be far more intellectual, far more rational -- but you have to surrender to Deeksha. Her craziness is her quality -- that's why I have chosen her. I have got many more rational people: I could have chosen a Ph.D. who would have convinced you that he is right. But when you are convinced and you follow, it is not surrender. When you are not convinced at all, you see the apparent stupidity of a certain thing, and still you surrender, that is a great step, a great step of getting out of your past.

This commune is a lab, this commune is an alchemical process. You come here as a crowd and I have to weld you into unity. Much hammering is going to happen, and you will come out of this whole process as pure individuals.

Discipline is the way to create individuality. But remember: to be an individual is not to be an individualist. Individualism is an ego trip. And the people who believe in individualism are not individuals, remember -- remember well. Deep down they know they are not individuals, hence they create a facade of philosophy, of logic, of argument, because deep down they don't feel they are individuals. They pretend on the outside that they are individuals -- they believe in individualism. Believing in individualism is not becoming an individual. Belief is always false.

When you are an individual you need not believe in individualism. When it is a truth of your being, belief is not needed. Belief is needed only to cover things: you don't know about God and you believe in God. The believer is an atheist. He may be a Christian, a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, it doesn't matter: a believer is an atheist. He does not know about God, and still he believes. That means he is even trying to deceive God! He is a hypocrite, he is a parrot. Parrotlike he goes on repeating what the scriptures say, what others say. And parrots can repeat beautifully, without understanding a thing, without knowing a thing, mechanically.

A Negro walked into a pet store in Harlem, wanting to buy a good talking parrot. The proprietor told him that they had a wide selection of parrots, so what sort did he want?

The Negro asked to see a fifty-dollar parrot. "Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" he called as soon as the parrot appeared. The parrot said nothing.

"I wanna parrot that talks good," he said. "Show me a good one."

So the proprietor brought out a two-hundred-dollar parrot: "Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" No answer.

"You gotta better parrot than this?" asked the Negro.

The proprietor said yes, and led the Negro behind the counter, to where the thousand-dollar parrot, beautifully plumaged with sparkling beady eyes, clearly a very special parrot, sat proudly in a luxurious cage.

"Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" came from the Negro, but the parrot didn't even look up.

"Man, this your best parrot?" asked the Negro, "because I wanna a good talker and this one looks dumb."

The proprietor took him to the back of the shop where in a special polished brass cage the size of a small room sat the pride of the proprietor's collection -- a five-thousand-dollar parrot. The parrot, dressed in a silk smoking jacket and sitting on a quilted perch, was smoking a pipe and reading the FINANCIAL TIMES.

"Polly wanna a cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" the Negro yelled.

The parrot sniffed and looked at him over his gold-rimmed spectacles with aristocratic disdain.

"Polly wanna cracker? Polly wanna cracker?" the Negro yelled again.

"Polly wanna cracker?" said the parrot in an impeccable Oxford accent. "Nigger wanna watermelon?"

The believer is a parrot. The believer knows nothing. The believer is an atheist in disguise. He is trying to befool himself, the world and even God.

The man who believes in individualism is not an individual. The man who is really an individual need not believe -- he knows it, so what is the point of believing? Belief is always needed in ignorance, and individualism is a belief. To be an individual is an experience! Individualism is very cheap, but to be an individual needs arduous discipline. It needs great perseverance, work, watchfulness. It comes only out of years of effort in awareness, in meditation.

And whatsoever is happening here in this commune, Sudarshan, is nothing but different ways to introduce you to meditation. In the kitchen, in the carpentry shop, in the soap workshop, in the boutique -- whatsoever is happening, apparently it looks as if it is the same ordinary thing as happens everywhere else. It is not. If you go and see the carpenters working, of course they go on working like any other carpenters anywhere else -- but with a different quality. That quality cannot be seen. You will have to become a participant, only then will you slowly feel it. That quality is of trust, love.

My sannyasins are here because they love me, for no other reason. They are simply here with me to be here with me. For the sake of being here with me they are ready to do anything. But whatsoever they are doing is only the outer part. You will see the body of the work but you will not be able to see the spirit of the work. For that you will have to become a participant.

And, Sudarshan, it seems that you are still a spectator. Maybe you are working in the commune, but still you have not become a participant -- otherwise such a question would have been impossible.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

WHY AM I FEELING I AM MISSING SOMETHING? THAT I SHOULD BE SOMETHING ELSE? PLEASE HELP ME LET GO OF THIS GARBAGE.

Dhyana Yogi, if it is garbage, if you really understand that it is garbage, then there is no question of helping you drop it. Knowing it as garbage is dropping it!

But it seems that you have heard me say that it is garbage. It has become a belief in you; it is not your own knowing, it is not your own experience. You are still clinging to it.

Deep down you still think it is precious, it is not garbage. Deep down you still think these are diamonds not pebbles. Deep down somewhere you still believe it is a treasure to be protected and guarded.

Don't start believing me, because that will make no difference. You were believing in Mohammed, or you were believing in Christ, or in Buddha, and then you come and you start believing in me. That is not a revolution, that is not conversion. You simply change the object of your belief, but the belief remains -- the same believing mind. You believe in Jesus, but Jesus speaks the language which is now two thousand years old. You cannot make much sense out of it; the context is lost in which it was relevant. I speak the language of the twentieth century. You can make sense out of it, so you withdraw your belief from Jesus and you start believing in me. This is very simple and cheap.

I am not saying believe in me. I am saying drop all believing and start seeing, because belief will remain a blindness -- start seeing! Is it really garbage that you are carrying? Is it your understanding that it is garbage? Then you will not ask how to drop it. Nobody asks how to drop garbage. The problem arises only because deep down you know yourself that it is gold. And somebody says that it is garbage and says it very convincingly, and you cannot argue, and he silences you. And the man has such authenticity, such integrity, that in his presence you simply become overflowed with his being. You simply start saying, "Yes, it is garbage." But deep down you still know it is not garbage, it is gold! Hence the problem arises: how to drop it?

If you understand on your own that it is garbage, you will never ask how to drop it. Seeing it as garbage is dropping it, knowing it as garbage is dropping it! The garbage is not clinging to you -- you are clinging to it. The garbage cares nothing about you, the garbage is not interested in you. If you drop it, it is not going to make much fuss about it -- "Why are you dropping me?" It will not say a single word, it will not create any problem for you. It will not go to the court. You need not have a divorce! If you drop it, the garbage will be really more happy than it is now. It will be finished with you, it will be free from you. It must be getting tired of you. It is you who are clinging to it. Why are you clinging to it? Why does one cling to something? -- because deep down one goes on believing it is precious.

Dhyana Yogi, you say, "Why am I feeling I am missing something?"

Because from your very childhood you have been told that in yourself, intrinsically, you are worthless. As you are you have no value. The value has to be attained, the worth has to be proved. From your very childhood you have been taught this millions of times. The parents, the teachers, the priests, the politicians, they are all in a secret

conspiracy to destroy the child. And the best way to destroy a child is to destroy his trust in himself.

To destroy the trust in the child you have to prove to the child that worth is not a given phenomenon, that it has to be achieved in life and you can miss it. Unless you work, unless you are very ambitious, unless you struggle with others.... It is a tooth and nail fight and you have to cut each other's throats to achieve it. You are being conditioned to be violent, ambitious, full of desires: to have more money, to have more power, to have more prestige. Because you have been told that intrinsically you don't have any worth, this problem has arisen.

And I say that you are intrinsically worthy, that you are born as buddhas. Unaware you are, utterly oblivious of the reality of your own being, but you are hidden gods. What I am saying is so totally different from what has been told to you, that a problem has arisen. I say you are buddhas -- right now you are buddhas! -- but the whole training and teaching, conditioning is: How can you be a buddha right now? Tomorrow maybe, one day certainly, in some future life it is going to happen...but right now? It seems impossible.

You have believed too much in your parents, in your teachers, in your politicians, in your priests, and whatsoever they have told you, you have collected it. It is garbage, but you have carried the garbage for so long that suddenly to drop it seems impossible -- so long you have remained attached to it, so long you have thought it beautiful, precious, nourishing. Now I say: It is all nonsense! Drop it, and just be a buddha from this very moment! It is not a question of attaining, it is only a question of becoming aware. It is only a question of becoming conscious, alert, awake, not a question of achievement.

So you listen to me: one part of your mind says, "Yes, the Master must be right!" One part of you simply nods yes, because what is being said is a simple truth of life. But all your training is against it. When you are close to me you start feeling it is true. When you go away from me the mind jumps back upon you -- with vengeance. And of course it is very powerful. The mind is so powerful, that's why it destroys your intelligence.

Intelligence has nothing to do with the mind; intelligence has something to do with the heart. It is the quality of the heart. Intellectuality is the quality of the head. The intellectual is not necessarily an intelligent person and the intelligent person is not necessarily an intellectual.

Your intellect is full of garbage -- and I am trying to wake up your intelligence. And the whole society has tried to make you unaware of your intelligence. The society is against your intelligence. It wants you to be mediocre, because only mediocre people can be good slaves. It wants you to be unintelligent and stupid, because only stupid people can be dominated.

And stupid people are obedient, stupid people are never rebellious, and stupid people simply vegetate. They don't make any effort to live their lives at the optimum. They don't try to burn their torch of life from both ends simultaneously. They don't have intensity. Stupidity is obedient, and obedience creates stupidity.

A rather simple dude rode into town in the middle of the day stark naked. The sheriff called him over and said, "Jake, what are you doing riding into town with no clothes on?"

"Well, sheriff," said Jake, "it is a long story. I was riding into town to get some provisions for my pa, when I came across this lady on the side of the road who asked me for some help. Now my daddy always told me to help gentle lady folk, so I got off my horse and helped her carry her picnic basket down to the river. Then I helped her lay out her blanket, and helped her with everything she asked me to do. Then she said, 'How about taking your boots off, cowboy?' So I did, sheriff, and then she said, 'How about taking your clothes off, cowboy?' And I said, 'Sure thing, Ma'am.' And she was there on that rug, naked as the day she was born. Then she lay back and said, 'Go to town cowboy!'...and so here I am, sheriff."

Obedience is a form of stupidity -- and the society wants you to be stupid. Stupid people are good people. They remain always with the status quo, they never go against it. Even if they see the rottenness of things, they simply close their eyes, or they are always ready to accept any stupid explanation.

For example, this country has been poor for centuries, starving, suffering. But because people are religious, obedient, stupid, they have been given any kind of explanation and they have accepted it. Some believe that God has made them poor because poverty is something very pious. They worship poverty; in India poverty is worshipped. If you renounce your riches and you become a naked fakir, millions of people will think you are a great sage. You may be simply stupid, but just because you have renounced riches you are a great sage. I have seen many stupid sages.

Now it is a contradiction in terms -- how can a stupid person be a sage? A sage has to be wise! But it is very difficult in this world to be wise and be worshipped. Wise people are to be murdered, crucified, poisoned. Stupid people are worshipped. Stupid people simply follow whatever the society says. Whatsoever the society wants them to do, they simply do it. So a few people have been worshipping poverty.

Gandhi used to call poor people *daridra narayana* -- "the poor are divine." Poverty is divine! The poor people are gods! If this is true then who would not like to be poor? If poor people are gods, who would not like to be a god?

And then there are other explanations: that you are poor because in your past lives you have committed sins. Those explanations have been invented for those people who don't believe in God. The Jainas, the Buddhists, they don't believe in God so you cannot give the first explanation to them. They need another explanation: the theory of karma. But the purpose is the same! If you have committed sins in your past life, then it is better to be finished with the karma. Go through poverty, and go through poverty without any resistance. If you create any resistance, you will again be creating bad karma and you will suffer in your future life. Enough, after all, is enough! Now be finished with the whole thing -- suffer at this moment contentedly. So people have become cows and buffaloes; they are suffering contentedly, no resistance, no rebellion.

The society wants you to be stupid, not intelligent. Intelligence is dangerous. Intelligence means you will start thinking on your own, you will start looking around on your own. You will not believe in the scriptures; you will believe only in your own experience.

Dhyana Yogi, please don't believe in what I say.

Experiment, meditate, experience -- unless it becomes your own understanding, nothing is going to help.

You ask me, "Why am I feeling that I am missing something?"

...Because you have been told always that you have to find something. Now you are not finding it, so the feeling arises that you are missing. And I am telling you, you have never lost it in the first place! Please stop trying to find it, stop seeking and searching. You have it already! Whatsoever is needed, you have it already. Just look within and you will find infinite treasures, inexhaustible treasures of joy, love, ecstasy.

Nothing is being missed if you look in, but if you go on searching outside you will feel more and more frustrated. And as you grow older, of course, you will feel that your life is slipping out of your hands and you have not found it yet. And the whole irony is that you have not lost it in the first place. It has always been within you...it is this moment within you.

But don't believe me. I am not here to create believers, I am here to help you experience. The moment it becomes your experience, it liberates. Truth liberates, says Jesus -- not belief but truth.

But my truth cannot be your truth; my truth will be your belief. Only your truth can be true to you. Truth certainly liberates, but let me add that the truth has to be your truth. Nobody else's truth can liberate you. Somebody else's truth will become only an imprisonment.

Dhyana Yogi, you are not missing anything. Nobody is missing. In the nature of things we cannot miss it. We are part of God and God is part of us. There is no way, no possible way to miss it. How can you escape from yourself? Where? Wherever you go you will remain yourself. Even in hell you will remain yourself, because you cannot escape from yourself, you cannot escape from God.

It is there waiting, patiently waiting for you to look in.

You say, "...that I should be something else?"

That has been told to you again and again: "Be somebody! Look at Gautam Buddha, at Krishna, at Christ. Be a Buddha, be a Krishna, be a Christ!" Then certainly you will die in misery, in anguish, frustrated -- utterly frustrated, crying and weeping -- because you cannot be a Buddha. You are not meant to be a Buddha! You cannot be a Christ, you cannot be a Krishna. You can only be yourself.

A great Hassid master, Zusiya, was dying. People had gathered -- disciples, sympathizers. Somebody asked, an old man, "Zusiya, when you are facing God -- and soon you will be facing God because you are dying -- will you be able to say to him that you followed Moses absolutely, truthfully?"

Zusiya opened his eyes, and these were his last words. He said, "Stop talking nonsense! God is not going to ask me, 'Zusiya, why were you not a Moses?' He will ask me, 'Zusiya, why were you not a Zusiya?'"

You have to be just yourself and nobody else. And in fact that's what buddhahood means: to be yourself. That is what christ-consciousness means: just to be yourself. Buddha was not an imitation of somebody else. Don't you think there were many many great men who had preceded him? He must have been told, "Be a Krishna! Be a Parshvanath! Be an Adinatha!" He must have heard beautiful stories, mythologies. He must have read the PURANAS, ancient stories about the great men, Rama, Krishna, Parasuram. He must have heard all that, he must have received the heritage. But he never tried to be somebody. He wanted to be himself, he wanted to know who he is. He never became an imitator; that's why one day he became awakened.

Jesus never tried to be Abraham, Moses, Ezekiel. Jesus simply tried to be himself. That was his crime, that's why he was crucified. The same people who crucified Jesus would have worshipped him if he had simply been an imitator, a carbon copy of Moses. If he had been just a gramophone record repeating the Ten Commandments, the Jews would have worshipped him. But they had to crucify the man -- he was just himself.

The rotten society, the crowd, the mob mind, cannot tolerate individuals. It is impossible for them to tolerate a Socrates. Do you know what the charge was against Socrates? Exactly the same thing is said about me! This was the crime of Socrates, that he used to corrupt the minds of the youth. That's exactly what my enemies say: that I am corrupting people's minds, particularly the minds of the youth.

Socrates was corrupting the minds of the youth? He was trying to awaken their intelligence, but the society became afraid. If so many people become so authentic, true, then the vested interests are in danger. Then you cannot drive people like cattle. And that's what priests enjoy, and the politicians too.

There is a conspiracy between the priest and the politician to exploit people, to dominate people, to oppress people. And the fundamental is: never allow them to become intelligent. Give them substitutes. What is the substitute for intelligence? -- intellectuality. Give them education; send them to the school, to the college, to the university, so they become intellectuals.

Have you ever heard of universities creating intelligence? They create intellectuals, they create scholars, they create people who know the scriptures -- to the very word they can repeat the scriptures -- but they don't create intelligent people. They serve society; the educational system is invented by this rotten society to serve its own purposes. It is not there to help you, it is there to keep you in bondage.

Dhyana Yogi, I cannot help you let go of this garbage, I can only help you to be more conscious. And if you are conscious the garbage will be dropped of its own accord. One day suddenly you will find it disappearing...suddenly disappearing. As consciousness deepens, all garbage disappears -- just as you bring light in and darkness disperses.

Buddha says: Become more aware and the light will start pouring in...aes dhammo sanantano.

The fourth question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

I OFTEN READ THE 'HYMN TO LOVE' IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS IS EXACTLY YOUR MESSAGE. ALSO, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT IT NEVER ACTUALLY USES THE WORD 'GOD'. I CAN FIND NOTHING TO CONTRADICT YOUR BASIC MESSAGE IN THIS LOVELY POEM. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT SEEMS TO BE EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE SAYING IN YOUR DISCOURSES. AM I RIGHT?

YOU HAVE SUCH A BEAUTIFUL VOICE THAT IT WOULD BE REALLY NICE TO HEAR YOU SAY SOME OR ALL OF IT, ESPECIALLY AS I FEEL YOU WILL SOON STOP TALKING PUBLICLY ALTOGETHER. HERE IS A COPY OF THE HYMN.

Premartha, the message of all the buddhas is always the same because the truth is one. Expressions may differ, different languages may be used, but that which is indicated towards is the same.

Millions of fingers can point to the same moon. Fingers are bound to be different -- my finger is different from the finger of Jesus or Buddha or Moses or Abraham -- but the moon is the same. And this hymn is a beautiful finger pointing to the moon. It is the very essence of all the teachings of all the buddhas of all the ages -- past, present, and future too.

THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND ANGELS, AND HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM BECOME AS SOUNDING BRASS OR A TINKLING CYMBAL. AND THOUGH I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES, AND ALL KNOWLEDGE; AND THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO THAT I COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS, AND HAVE NOT LOVE, I AM NOTHING. AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR, AND THOUGH I GIVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED, AND HAVE NOT LOVE, IT PROFITETH ME NOTHING.

LOVE SUFFERETH LONG, AND IS KIND; LOVE ENVIETH NOT; LOVE VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP, DOTH NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY, SEEKETH NOT HER OWN, IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED, THINKETH NO EVIL; REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH IN THE TRUTH; BEARETH ALL THINGS, BELIEVETH ALL THINGS, HOPETH ALL THINGS, ENDURETH ALL THINGS.

LOVE NEVER FAILETH: BUT WHETHER THERE BE PROPHECIES, THEY SHALL FAIL; WHETHER THERE BE TONGUES, THEY SHALL CEASE; WHETHER THERE BE KNOWLEDGE, IT SHALL VANISH AWAY. FOR WE KNOW IN PART, AND WE PROPHECY IN PART. BUT WHEN THAT WHICH IS PERFECT IS COME THEN

THAT WHICH IS PART SHALL BE DONE AWAY. WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I SPAKE AS A CHILD, I UNDERSTOOD AS A CHILD, I THOUGHT AS A CHILD; BUT WHEN I BECAME A MAN, I PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS. FOR NOW WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY; BUT THEN FACE-TO-FACE. NOW I KNOW IN PART, BUT THEN SHALL I KNOW EVEN AS ALSO I AM KNOWN. AND NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF ALL THESE IS LOVE.

These are the essential qualities of a religious person. This is my message -- this is the message!

The language is old, and because it is old it has a beauty of its own, because the older the language is, the more poetry it has. As we have become more and more scientific our language has also become more and more scientific.

As the hymn is two thousand years old, it has something of primitive innocence in it, the childlike quality of wonder, of being surprised at the mysterious. But, Premartha, you are perfectly right: there is nothing in it which contradicts me, and there is nothing in it which I would like to contradict either. Whosoever said it must have been an awakened one.

But don't go on simply repeating it. It is beautiful to repeat, it is beautiful to sing it, but not enough. Practice it, let it become the very flavor of your life. Let it be dissolved into your blood, into your bones, into your marrow. Let it surround you like an invisible aura. Don't go on simply repeating it. It is beautiful -- and that is the danger. You can become so charmed, so hypnotized by its beauty, that you may go on repeating it your whole life. And the more you repeat, the more beautiful it will look...because these ancient messages have tremendous power and many layers of meaning.

But don't go into the linguistic or philosophical analysis of it. It is a prayer! -- and a prayer is not something to be said but something to be felt. A prayer is not something to be read but something to be lived. Live it!

It is true: AND NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF ALL THESE IS LOVE.

You can think about love, you can have beautiful flights of imagination about love, you can have beautiful dreams about love, but that is not going to help. What is going to help is, you have to become love. Love has to become your essential core. Everything else has to be sacrificed to love, everything else has to become part of your loving life.

Then only will this prayer be true for you. And then it will not be Christian, then it will not belong to the New Testament. It will be something that is part of your heart; you will breathe it. And whosoever will come close to you will have a little glimpse of it. A little light will be shed on everybody's path...if you live it.

Scriptures can be understood only if first they are practiced. People do just the opposite: they read the scripture and they try to understand it. Intellectually it is not difficult to understand those scriptures, they are simple. People become very proficient, very efficient, in repeating the scriptures -- and they end with that. They remain parrots.

And what can you understand about it? Intellectually whatsoever you understand will not be right, because it will reflect your state of mind, not the state of the mind who uttered these words.

A retired cattle rancher, aged sixty-five, who had sold his ranch and come to New York to see the sights, checked into a midtown hotel.

Once upstairs, he made himself comfortable and relaxed on the bed. While he was resting, he saw the door slowly open, and there standing before him was a curvaceous blonde attired only in a sheer negligee.

"Oh," she apologized when she saw the old fellow, "I must be in the wrong room."

"No," he corrected, "you are in the right room, but you are about forty years too late!"

The interpretation is always going to be yours. You can read Jesus, you can read Buddha, but who is going to interpret it? You will interpret it. And what is your understanding? What light have you got? Those beautiful sayings will remain just beautiful sayings, beautiful nothings. Yes, good poetry, but poetry cannot liberate you unless it becomes your own experience, unless you can become a witness to the scriptures.

"Your continual unfaithfulness proves you are an absolute rotter," stormed the outraged wife who had just caught her husband for the seventh time in a sportive romp with another woman.

"Quite the contrary!" came the cool reply. "It merely proves that I am too good to be true."

Your interpretations will always reflect you. When you look in the mirror you will be looking at your face, you will be looking at yourself. You can't see the mirror, you can only see your face reflected in it. You will be able to see the mirror only when you have lost your face, when you have lost your head, when you are not. When you have become a nothing, a nobody, then stand before a mirror and you will see the mirror and its mirroring and you will not be mirrored in it, you will not be reflected in it. You will not be present there. Before you become an absence, going before the mirror is of no use.

And that's what people go on doing: reading the Bible, the Koran, THE DHAMMAPADA, they read themselves.

The worried mother was lecturing her teenage daughter on the subject of sex morality. "Of course I realize you may be tempted while you are out on a date. If you are, dear, please ask yourself this all-important question: is an hour of pleasure worth an entire life of humiliation?"

"Gosh, mother," asked the daughter, "how do you make it last an hour?"

Remember always, you cannot understand Jesus, Moses, Zarathustra. Your face will come in it too much.

A newly wed patient was complaining to his doctor about his marital relations. It seems the first time he makes love to his spouse it is just wonderful, but the second time, he is perspired and sweaty.

The medicine man decided to consult the wife. "Isn't it odd," the medico asks the missus when she arrives, "that it is just wonderful the first time and the second time he is all perspired and sweaty?"

"Why should it be odd?" she smirks. "The first time it is in January and the second time it is July!"

You cannot go directly into the sayings of the buddhas. First you will have to go inside yourself. The basic encounter has to be with your own originality, and then all the buddhas will become clear to you. And then one thing more starts happening: then Jesus and Buddha and Moses and Mohammed are not saying different things -- they are saying the same things.

Unless a person becomes a witness to the ultimate truth himself, he will go on thinking that Buddha is saying one thing and Jesus is saying something contrary; that Buddhism is against Hinduism, that Hinduism is against Jainism, that Jainism is against Mohammedanism. Unless you witness the truth you will go on believing these three hundred religions, and you will be part of the quarrel, the conflict, the antagonism that goes on between these religions continuously. The day you see the truth of your own being, all these three hundred religions simply disappear, evaporate.

Once -- just like Premartha -- a Christian missionary went to see a Zen master. He wanted to convert the Zen master, so he had brought the Sermon on the Mount with him. He started reading the Sermon on the Mount: he had read only the first two or three sentences, and the Zen master said, "Stop! Whosoever said it was a buddha!"

The missionary was surprised. He said, "But these are the words of Jesus!"

The master said, "It doesn't matter what the name of the buddha is, but whosoever said this was a buddha. He had arrived."

And I say this to you because I know too. Once you have tasted, you will know. In whatsoever form the truth comes you will immediately recognize it. But first become a witness.

The last question:

Question 5

BELOVED MASTER,
ONLY ONE STEP?

Digambara, yes, in fact, not even one...because we are not to go anywhere. We are already in God! I say "only one step" just to console you, because without any steps you will be too puzzled. I reduce it to the minimum, only one step, so that something remains for you to do, because you understand only the language of doing. You are a doer! If I say, "Nothing has to be done, not even a single step has to be taken," you will be at a loss how to make any head or tail of it.

The truth is, not even a single step is needed. Sitting silently doing nothing, the spring comes and the grass grows by itself. But that may be too much. Your doer mind may simply ignore it or may think it is all nonsense. How can you achieve God without doing anything? Yes, a shortcut the mind can understand; that's why I say, "a single step." That is the shortest -- it cannot be reduced to less than that.

A single step! That is just to make you understand that doing is nonessential. To attain to being, doing is absolutely nonessential. When you are agreed and convinced that only one step is needed, then I will whisper in your ear, "Not even one -- you are already there!"

Rabiya, a great Sufi mystic, was passing.... It was the street she used to pass every day on her way to the marketplace, because in the marketplace she would go every day and shout the truth that she had attained. And for many days she had been watching a mystic, a well-known mystic, Hassan, sitting before the door of the mosque and praying to God, "God, open the door! Please open the door! Let me in!"

Rabiya could not tolerate it that day. Hassan was crying, tears were rolling down, and he was shouting again and again, "Open the door! Let me in! Why don't you listen? Why don't you hear my prayers?"

Every day she had laughed, whenever she had heard Hassan she had laughed, but it was too much today. Tears...and Hassan was really crying, weeping, crying his heart out. She went, she shook Hassan, and said, "Stop all this nonsense! The door is open -- in fact you are already in!"

Hassan looked at Rabiya, and that moment became a moment of revelation. Looking into the eyes of Rabiya, he bowed down, touched her feet, and said, "You came in time; otherwise I would have called my whole life! For years I have been doing this -- where have you been before? And I know you pass this street every day. You must have seen me crying, praying."

Rabiya said, "Yes, but truth can only be said at a certain moment, in a certain space, in a certain context. I was waiting for the right, ripe moment. Today it has arrived; hence I came close to you. Yesterday if I had told you, you would have felt irritated; you may have even become angry. You may have reacted antagonistically; you may have told me, 'You have disturbed my prayer!' -- and it is not right to disturb anybody's prayer."

Even the king is not allowed to disturb the prayer of a beggar. Even if a criminal, a murderer, is praying in Mohammedan countries, the police have to wait till he finishes his prayer, only then can he be caught. Prayer should not be disturbed.

Rabiya said, "I had wanted to tell you this, that 'Hassan, don't be a fool, the door is open -- in fact, you are already in!' But I had to wait for the right moment."

Digambara, I say "only one step" -- and even that seems to be unbelievable to you, hence the question.

You ask me, "Beloved Master, only one step?"

Not even one, Digambara. But the right moment has not come yet, at least for you. When it comes I will whisper in your ear, "You are already in. Not even a single step is needed" -- because we are not going outside. Steps are needed to go outside, steps are not needed to go in.

It is like a man dreaming, and in his dreams he has gone far far away. Will he need a long journey to come back home? He is already home, he is sleeping in his home...but he may be in Timbuktu in his dream. All that is needed is that he has to be shaken up.

As Rabiya shook Hassan, Digambara, one day I will shake you up! You just need cold water to be poured on you -- really cold water, ice-cold, so in shock you open your eyes. Do you think you will ask me, "How to go back home -- because I am in Timbuktu?" No, you will not ask, if you see that you are already in your home, had fallen asleep and dreamt about Timbuktu. You had never gone there.

You have not gone out of God! You cannot, it is impossible, because only God exists. Where can we go, where can we go? There is no place where God is not. We are always in him and he is always in us. But that needs an awakening.

Not even one step -- that is just to bring you closer to truth. Slowly slowly, you have to be persuaded. One thousand steps are reduced to one step, and then I will take that step away from you too. But that needs a right moment. Ultimate truths can be said only in a right, ripe situation.

That moment will also come.

Just be ready to receive it, welcome it....

Enough for today.