

## **The Dhammapada: The Way of the Buddha, Vol 1**

### **Chapter #9**

**Chapter title: Seated in the cave of the heart**

**29 June 1979 am in Buddha Hall**

AS THE FLETCHER WHITTLES  
AND MAKES STRAIGHT HIS ARROWS,  
SO THE MASTER DIRECTS  
HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS.

LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER,  
STRANDED ON THE SHORE,  
THOUGHTS THRASH AND QUIVER.  
FOR HOW CAN THEY SHAKE OFF DESIRE?

THEY TREMBLE, THEY ARE UNSTEADY,  
THEY WANDER AT THEIR WILL.  
IT IS GOOD TO CONTROL THEM.  
AND TO MASTER THEM BRINGS HAPPINESS.

BUT HOW SUBTLE THEY ARE,  
HOW ELUSIVE!  
THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM,  
AND BY RULING THEM TO FIND HAPPINESS.

WITH SINGLEMINDEDNESS  
THE MASTER QUELLS HIS THOUGHTS.  
HE ENDS THEIR WANDERING.  
SEATED IN THE CAVE OF THE HEART,  
HE FINDS FREEDOM.

Freedom is the goal of life. Without freedom, life has no meaning at all. By "freedom" is not meant any political, social or economic freedom. By "freedom" is meant freedom from time, freedom from mind, freedom from desire. The moment mind is no more, you are one with the universe, you are as vast as the universe itself.

It is the mind that is the barrier between you and the reality, and because of this barrier you remain confined in a dark cell where no light ever reaches and where no joy can ever penetrate. You live in misery because you are not meant to live in such a small, confined space. Your being wants to expand to the very ultimate source of existence.

Your being longs to be oceanic, and you have become a dewdrop. How can you be happy? How can you be blissful? Man lives in misery because man lives imprisoned. And Gautama the Buddha says that *tanha* -- desire -- is the root cause of all our misery, because desire creates the mind. Desire means creating future, projecting yourself in the future, bringing tomorrow in. Bring the tomorrow in and the today disappears, you cannot see it anymore; your eyes are clouded by the tomorrow. Bring the tomorrow in and you will have to carry the load of all your yesterdays, because the tomorrow can only be there if the yesterdays go on nourishing it.

Each desire is born out of the past and each desire is projected in the future. The past and the future, they constitute your whole mind. Analyze the mind, dissect it, and you will find only two things: the past and the future. You will not find even an iota of the present, not even a single atom. And the present is the only reality, the only existence, the only dance there is.

The present can be found only when mind has ceased utterly. When the past no more overpowers you and the future no more possesses you, when you are disconnected from the memories and the imaginations, in that moment where are you? who are you? In that moment you are a nobody. And nobody can hurt you when you are a nobody, you cannot be wounded -- because the ego is very ready to receive wounds. The ego is almost seeking and searching to be wounded; it exists through wounds. Its whole existence depends on misery, pain.

When you are a nobody, anguish is impossible, anxiety simply unbelievable. When you are a nobody there is great silence, stillness, no noise inside. Past gone, future disappeared, what is there to create noise? And the silence that is heard is celestial, is sacred. For the first time, in those spaces of no-mind, you become aware of the eternal celebration that goes on and on. That's what the existence is made of.

Except man, the whole existence is blissful. Only man has fallen out of it, has gone astray. Only man can do it because only man has consciousness.

Now, consciousness has two possibilities: either it can become a bright light in you, so bright that even the sun will look pale compared to it.... Buddha says it is as if a thousand suns have risen suddenly -- when you look within with no mind it is all light, eternal light. It is all joy, pure, uncontaminated, unpolluted. It is simple bliss, innocent. It is wonder. Its majesty is indescribable, its beauty inexpressible, and its benediction inexhaustible. As dhammo sanantano: so is the ultimate law.

If you can only put your mind aside you will become aware of the cosmic play. Then you are only energy, and the energy is always herenow, it never leaves the herenow. That is one possibility: if you become pure consciousness.

The other possibility is: you can become self-consciousness. Then you fall. Then you become a separate entity from the world. Then you become an island, defined, well defined. Then you are confined, because all definitions confine. Then you are in a prison cell, and the prison cell is dark, utterly dark. There is no light, no possibility of light. And the prison cell cripples you, paralyzes you.

Self-consciousness becomes a bondage; the self is the bondage. And just consciousness becomes freedom.

Drop the self and be conscious! That is the whole message -- the message of all the buddhas of all the ages, past, present, future. The essential core of the message is very simple: drop the self, the ego, the mind, and be.

Just this moment when this silence pervades...who are you? A nobody, a nonentity. You don't have a name, you don't have a form. You are neither man nor woman, neither Hindu nor Mohammedan. You don't belong to any country, to any nation, to any race. You are not the body and you are not the mind.

Then what are you? In this silence, what is your taste? How does it taste to be? Just a peace, just a silence...and out of that peace and silence a great joy starts surfacing, welling up, for no reason at all. It is your spontaneous nature.

The art of putting the mind aside is the whole secret of religion, because as you put the mind aside your being explodes into a thousand and one colors. You become a rainbow, a lotus, a one-thousand-petaled lotus. Suddenly you open up, and then the whole beauty of existence -- which is infinite! -- is yours. Then all the stars in the sky are within you. Then even the sky is not your limit; you don't have any limits anymore.

Silence gives you a chance to melt, merge, disappear, evaporate. And when you are not, you are -- for the first time you are. When you are not, God is, nirvana is, enlightenment is. When you are not, all is found -- and when you are, all is lost.

Man has become a self-consciousness; that is his going astray, that is the original fall. All the religions talk about the original fall in some way or other, but the best story is contained in Christianity. The original fall is because man eats from the tree of knowledge. When you eat of the tree of knowledge, the fruits of knowledge, it creates self-consciousness.

The more knowledgeable you are, the more egoistic you are -- hence the ego of the scholars, pundits, maulvis. The ego becomes decorated with great knowledge, scriptures, systems of thought. But they don't make you innocent; they don't bring you the childlike quality of openness, of trust, of love, of playfulness. Trust, love, playfulness, wonder, all disappear when you become very knowledgeable.

And we are being taught to become knowledgeable. We are not taught to be innocent, we are not taught how to feel the wonder of existence. We are told the names of the flowers, but we are not taught how to dance around the flowers. We are told the names of the mountains, but we are not taught how to commune with the mountains, how to commune with the stars, how to commune with the trees, how to be in tune with existence.

Out of tune, how can you be happy? Out of tune you are bound to remain in anguish, in great misery, in pain. You can be happy only when you are dancing with the dance of the whole, when you are just a part of the dance, when you are just a part of this great orchestra, when you are not singing your song separately. Only then, in that melting, is man free.

That's what freedom is. It is not political, not economic, not social. Freedom is spiritual. The social, the economic, and the political freedom are freedoms only if they help people to be spiritually free. If they don't help people to become spiritually free, then they are pretenders. Then in the name of freedom man is made more and more a slave.

Beautiful names become facades hiding ugly realities. If you are not spiritually free you are not free at all. Then all your freedoms are bogus, phony, pseudo. Then you have been duped. Then you have been given toys to play with.

Buddha is talking about the reality -- the real freedom. He calls it nirvana. The word 'nirvana' is very beautiful; it means cessation of self-consciousness, utter cessation of the self, the naked state of egolessness. It brings great ecstasies, great harvest; inexhaustible treasures it brings.

Hence Buddha goes on repeating again and again...two statements he repeats in THE DHAMMAPADA. One is: *as dhammo sanantano*. This is the ultimate law of life: that you disappear and you will find yourself. Very paradoxical -- that just by disappearing one finds. By dropping the self one becomes the ultimate self. By disappearing as a dewdrop one becomes the ocean.

And the other statement that he repeats again and again is: *as dhammo visuddhya* -- such is the law of purity, of becoming innocent, pure. What is the law of purity? A simple law: become disidentified with the mind, don't think of yourself as a mind. Not that Buddha is against the mind, not that he does not want you to use it -- he wants you to use it, but not to be used by it. And usually the second is the case: the mind is using you. You have become a slave. The master has become the slave and the slave has become the master. Everything has gone topsy-turvy.

You are standing on your head! Now how can you walk, how can you move, how can you dance? Have you seen anybody dancing standing on his head? Your life will not be a life of movement anymore if you are standing on your head. Your life will be stagnant, it will become a dirty pool of water. You will start stinking soon. Standing on your head you are crippled, paralyzed.

If you just stand on your legs again -- a small change, a very small change, but it brings a radical revolution -- immediately you are capable of movement, and movement is life. Not to move is to die.

How do you define death? When a person cannot move in any possible way. He cannot breathe -- that is one kind of movement; he cannot see -- that is another kind of movement; he cannot walk, he cannot talk -- these are all kinds of movement, different dimensions of movement. Because all movement has ceased we say the man is dead.

The more movement you have, the more life, the livelier you are. Have multidimensional movement! But that is possible only if you stop standing on your head. You have to be put right.

The day you come to me you come in a topsy-turvy state. Initiation into sannyas means nothing except that I persuade you to stand on your feet and not to go on doing this shirshasana -- headstand -- your whole life.

Be natural, be part of nature. Don't brag. Don't go on puffing up your egos. We are tiny parts -- immensely beautiful if we function with the whole, but absolutely ugly if we function against it.

But you have been told by your societies to fight, to struggle, because life is a struggle for survival, because if you don't fight you will be defeated. And you have to be victorious, and you have to be famous. You have been given great ambitions and all

those ambitions have become chains, all those ambitions are keeping you tethered. All those ambitions are the root cause of your mind; they create the mind.

Buddha's word 'tanha' contains all the meanings of desire, ambition, achievement. These are the nourishments of the mind. If you go on nourishing the mind you are poisoning yourself. And the mind will become bigger and bigger and you will become smaller and smaller. The mind becomes almost a cancerous growth.

Sannyas means an operation. Buddha transformed thousands of people through sannyas, through initiation. He was a great surgeon.

And once you become aware that you are the cause of your own misery, things start changing. You no longer help your own misery, you no longer feed it. And once you become aware that you are not your mind but a witness to it, you start rising above the mind, you are no longer tethered. You start growing wings, you start soaring higher and higher. Mind remains always groping in the dark valleys of life, but you can become an eagle, you can soar high. You can be the master and then you can use the mind -- and very purposely it can be used.

These sutras are how to become the master of your mind. They contain the science of becoming the master.

The Buddha says:

AS THE FLETCHER WHITTLES  
AND MAKES STRAIGHT HIS ARROWS,  
SO THE MASTER DIRECTS  
HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS.

Now meditate: are your thoughts directing you, or do you direct your thoughts? -- because much depends on that insight. Are you being dominated by your thoughts? Do they go on driving you hither and thither? Do they suggest to you, do they fascinate you, do they obsess you? Do they pull your strings and are you simply a slave? Or are you the master, and can you say to your thoughts "Stop!" and they have to stop -- can you put them on or off?

People never meditate over it because it makes them feel very humiliated. It shows them their impotence: they cannot even stop thoughts, their own thoughts.

There is a famous Tibetan parable:

A man served a master for many many years. The service was not pure; there was a motivation in it. He wanted some secret from the master. He had heard that the master has the secret -- the secret to do miracles. With this hidden desire he was serving the master day in, day out, but he was afraid to say anything. But the master was continuously watching his motivation.

One day the master asked, "It is better that you please speak your mind, because I am continuously seeing a motive in all your service that you do for me. It is not out of love, certainly not out of love. I don't see any love in it and I don't see any humility in it. It is a kind of bribery. So please, just tell me, what do you want?"

The man was waiting for this opportunity. He said, "I want the secret of doing miracles."

The master said, "Then why did you waste your time so long? You could have said it the very first day you had come. You tortured yourself and you tortured me too, because I don't like people around me who have motives. They are ugly to look at. They are basically greedy, and greed makes them ugly. The secret is simple -- why didn't you ask me the first day? This is the secret...."

He wrote down a small mantra on a piece of paper, just three lines maybe: "Buddham sharanam gachchhami, sangham sharanam gachchhami, dhammam sharanam gachchhami -- I go to the feet of the Buddha, I go to the feet of the Buddha's commune, I go to the feet of the dhamma, the ultimate law."

And the master told the man, "You take this small mantra with you, repeat it five times, just five times. It is a simple process. Just remember one condition: while you are repeating it, take a bath, close the door, sit silently -- and while you are repeating it, please don't remember monkeys."

The man said, "What nonsense are you talking about? Why should I remember monkeys in the first place? I have never remembered them my whole life!"

The master said, "That is up to you, but I have to tell you the condition. This is how the mantra was given to me, with this condition. If you have never remembered monkeys, so far so good. Now go home, and please never come back to me. You have the secret, you know the condition. Fulfill the condition and you will have miraculous powers, and whatsoever you want to do you can do: you can fly in the sky, you can read people's thoughts, you can materialize things, and so on and so forth."

The man rushed home; he even forgot to thank the master. That's how greed functions: it does not know thankfulness, it does not know gratitude. Greed is absolutely unaware of gratitude; it never comes across it. Greed is a thief and thieves don't thank.

The man rushed, but he was very much puzzled: even on the way to his home monkeys started appearing in his head. He saw many kinds of monkeys: small and big, and red-mouthed and black-mouthed, and he was very much puzzled -- "What is happening?" In fact he was not thinking of anything else but the monkeys. And they were becoming bigger and they were crowding all around.

He went home, he took a bath, but the monkeys were not leaving him. Now he was becoming suspicious that they were not going to leave him while he would be chanting the mantra. He had not even chanted the mantra yet, he was simply preparing. And when he closed his doors the room was full of monkeys. It was so crowded that he had no space for himself! He closed his eyes and there were monkeys, and he opened his eyes and there were monkeys. He could not believe what was happening! The whole night he tried. Again and again he would take a bath, and again and again he would try and fail, and fail utterly.

In the morning he went to the master, returned the mantra and said, "Keep this mantra with you. This is driving me mad! I don't want to do any miracles, but please help me to get rid of these monkeys!"

It is so impossible to get rid of a single thought! And if you want to get rid of it, it becomes even more difficult, because when you want to get rid of a thought it is a question -- a very decisive moment -- of who is the master: the mind or you? The mind will try in every possible way to prove that he is the master and not you.

The master has been a slave for centuries, and the slave has been the master for millions of lives. Now the slave cannot leave all his privileges, priorities, so easily. He is going to give you great resistance.

You try it! Today take a bath, close your doors, repeat this simple mantra: Buddham sharanam gachchhami, sangham sharanam gachchhami, dhammam sharanam gachchhami -- and don't let the monkeys come to you....

You are laughing at the poor man. You will be surprised: you are that man.

Sigmund Freud used to tell another story:

It happened once in a big hotel that a man came to stay. The manager was a little hesitant in giving him a room although there was an empty room. The man said, "Why are you hesitating so much?"

The man said, "The reason is, just below that room there is a politician staying, a very famous man and very powerful, a big gun. And he is annoyed by small things, so we have kept the room above him empty for three days since he has been here -- because if anybody walks some noise is created, if you move something some noise is created, and he becomes so irritated and so angry that he creates much fuss about it."

The stranger said, "Don't be worried! I will be very careful. Moreover, I am going to stay only overnight. I will be coming nearabout twelve in the night because I have much work to do in the town, and I will be leaving early in the morning, five o'clock. There is not much possibility that between twelve and five I will do anything which will irritate the great man. At the most I will be asleep and dreaming, and I don't think my dreams will disturb him."

The manager was convinced: "If he is going to stay just for five hours there is no problem." He was allowed.

At twelve the man reached his room exhausted: the whole day's work, a thousand and one things clamoring in his head. He had completely forgotten the politician. He entered his room. He was so tired. He sat on his bed, took off one of his shoes and threw it in the corner of the room. Then suddenly the noise of the shoe reminded him that maybe the politician, the great leader, would get disturbed, may be awakened. So the other shoe he put down very silently.

After one hour the politician knocked on his door. He came out of his sleep, opened the door and said, "Have I done anything? -- because for one hour I have been asleep."

The politician was red with anger. He said; "Yes! Where is the other shoe? I cannot manage to sleep. That other shoe goes on hanging, a continuous question in my mind -- where has the other shoe gone? Is this man sleeping with one shoe on? One I know you have thrown, but what happened to the other one? I have tried in every possible way to get rid of the idea -- that this is not my concern. How am I concerned with his shoe? But the more I have tried to get rid of the idea the more I have become possessed by it. Now

there is only one possible way to go to sleep: to come and wake you and ask you what happened. Unless I know I cannot sleep."

It is very difficult even to get rid of an absurd thought, utterly meaningless to you, of no purpose, something which is just accidental, none of your business. But still it can pursue you, it can haunt you, it can torture you. It can become such a powerful thing that it can drive you mad.

People don't look in. They know that it is better not to look in because it is very humiliating. To see oneself as a slave is humiliating. And the mind has been on the throne so long, it has become accustomed to being the master. And it is not the master.

You are born as a consciousness, not as a mind. Your innermost core is consciousness, not mind. Mind is nothing but accumulated thoughts, junk of the past. You are totally different from it.

Watching it, slowly slowly you will see the distance. A thought arises in you, watch it. Watch it without any judgment. Don't be for or against, simply look at it, see into it, just like a mirror reflecting it. And one thing will become certain: that it is separate from you. It comes and goes, and you abide forever. The reflection in the mirror is not the mirror. Many reflections come and go, the mirror remains. The mirror is only the capacity of mirroring. A thought is there -- anger, greed, jealousy -- some thought, some kind of thought is there. It is not you!

But our whole training, our whole conditioning, is basically wrong. Our languages are basically wrong because they give us wrong notions. When you see the thought of hunger arise in your mind you immediately say, "I am hungry," which is utter nonsense. You have never been hungry and you cannot be hungry, because consciousness has nothing to do with hunger, food, satiation. What is actually happening is: the body is hungry -- you are aware of it. You are simply reflecting the situation of the body.

To be exactly precise you should say, "I am aware that my body is hungry, I am seeing that my body needs food."

But every language says, "I am hungry, I am thirsty." I know it is simpler to say, "I am thirsty," than to say again and again, "I am aware that my body is thirsty."

One of the great Indian mystics visited America -- his name was Swami Ram. He used to speak of himself in the third person, he never used to use the word 'I'. He would only call himself Ram. He would say, "Ram is hungry. Ram is thirsty. Now Ram is feeling sleepy." It is a very strange way because we are not accustomed to it.

When he went to America for the first time, people could not understand him or would understand him only in a wrong way, misunderstand him. He would say, "Ram is hungry." They would look all around -- where is Ram? And then he would show them: "This body is Ram, this body is hungry."



And they would say, "Then why don't you simply say 'I am hungry'? Why go so roundabout, why go in circles? 'Ram is hungry.' Then we have to ask, 'Who is Ram?' Then you have to say, 'This body is Ram.'"

But Ram would say, "I cannot assert something which is not true. I cannot say 'I am hungry' because I am not."

Once it happened that he was sitting in a park, a public park, and a few people who had gathered around him were asking questions. One man asked, "We have heard about Krishna that when he used to play on his flute that people would forget their jobs and just rush towards him enchanted, as if possessed. What was his secret?"

Ram was only wearing one single cloth, he had just wrapped a blanket around himself. He threw the blanket -- rather than answering he created a situation. That's how great mystics work. He threw the blanket, he was utterly naked, and he ran away. All the people ran with him! Not only those who were surrounding him but others also who were standing here and there or who had come for a morning walk, and people who were sitting on the benches reading their newspapers, they threw their newspapers. A great crowd was following him, and he was laughing and giggling, and the whole crowd was following him.

And then he stood under a tree and he said, "Why are you following me? For what? I have not even played on the flute! And you had asked me why people used to become possessed by Krishna's flute."

Wherever something of the beyond happens, people become enchanted. "You are enchanted," he said. "And Ram has not done anything special. Ram has only become naked and has been running like a child in the morning sun."

Somebody who was not acquainted with his way of talking asked, "Who is this Ram?" And again he said, "This body is Ram, this mind is Ram, and I am a watcher just as you are a watcher. Just as you watched this body running naked in the morning sun, I was also watching. You are watching from without, I am watching from within. We are both watchers."

This is the way to become disidentified from the mind: be a watcher.

Buddha says: AS THE FLETCHER WHITTLES AND MAKES STRAIGHT HIS ARROWS, SO THE MASTER DIRECTS HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS. Then it will be possible and only then: when you have become an observer, when you have reduced your thoughts to observed objects, the content of the mind is no longer powerful. You have slipped out of its power, you are standing apart. You are a spectator, a witness. When you have become a witness, you will be able to direct your thoughts. Then thoughts can be used, then thoughts are beautiful.

The mind is the most sophisticated mechanism in the whole of existence, and the human mind more so than any other. It is the most evolved machine, it can be used for great things. But you have to be the master, only then can you use it.

But the situation is such that the car is driving the driver.

The driver has become completely unaware of himself; maybe he is drunk. He is simply moving wherever the car is leading him. Now he is bound for a ditch, bound for an

accident! And if your life is so full of accidents it is not an accident at all -- it has to be so.

You are following a machine. It is a biocomputer, your mind; beautiful if you can use it as a master, dangerous if it uses you. This is slavery. To be free of it is to know something of freedom.

And the first effort should be like the fletcher who makes his arrows straight.

Your minds are not in a state of harmony; your minds are in a mess, nothing is straight there. Everything has become a very complicated labyrinth, a riddle. You don't know what is what and which is which. You don't know what you are doing and why. And one moment one thought possesses you, another moment another thought possesses you, and both may be contradictory. So by one hand you make something and by the other hand you unmake it. Hence the utter failure of life, a sheer wastage of energy and time and opportunity.

Watch how contradictory your thoughts are. One part says yes, another part immediately says no, never misses the opportunity to say no. Now saying yes and no together is wasting your energy. Either say yes and be total, then your thought is straight; or say no and be total, then your thought is straight. But saying yes and no together, or alternately -- one moment yes, another moment no -- where are you going to reach? You take one step in one direction, another step in another direction. You will remain stuck in the same place, or at the most you will move in circles. But your life will not be a life of growth, you will not grow. You may certainly grow old but you will never grow up, you will never attain to maturity.

Straighten out your thoughts! It is almost a complete jungle in your mind -- all paths are lost. You don't know what is happening. You can't stop either, because it makes you frightened to stop. Everybody else is doing so much, everybody else is achieving, reaching, fulfilling their ambitions, how can you stop? You have to go on, and you have to go on with great speed and great gusto and enthusiasm. And you don't know where you are going, what the goal is. What do you really want to achieve in life? Money? And even if you achieve much money what will you do with it?

You can purchase more misery, of course, when you have more money; that's what you are going to do. You will go on purchasing the same things that you are purchasing now. Of course, you can purchase them in bigger quantities, that's all. You will live in bigger houses, but you will live; the house is not going to live it. If you are anxious in a small house you may be more anxious in a bigger house, because you will have more space to be anxious in. If you are ignorant, utterly ignorant of yourself, how is money going to help? How is being famous going to help? You may become a world-renowned person, but that will not change anything. Your inner darkness will remain the same; it may even become darker.

The first thing Buddha says is: ...THE MASTER DIRECTS HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS. He does not allow the thoughts to go into contradictory pathways. He does not allow one thought to be destroyed by another. He does not allow thoughts to direct him -- he is the director. He masters them; he uses them as beautiful implements, instruments.

And then certainly he comes to fulfillment, because he knows where he is going and he knows what he is doing.

On each step of his journey he is perfectly aware of his whereabouts; he has a certain sense of direction. He does not go on running in all the directions simultaneously; he has a direction. Naturally he becomes integrated, he becomes a great power. Without attaining any political power he becomes a great power. His power arises from his own being, it is his own. Nobody can take it away; it does not depend on anybody. Even death cannot take it away from him, even death is impotent.

But people are living in such an insane state. This state is insane! People feel offended when I say that the whole of humanity is insane, but what can I do? -- it is so. The fact has to be stated, howsoever painful it is. I am also pained by it, I feel sorry for humanity, but it has to be said: that the whole of humanity is mad. What you call normal human beings are not normal at all. They are normally mad, certainly; their madness is almost the same, hence they are normal. But they are not the norm, they are not the principle, they are not the criterion of health. The whole earth is a big madhouse.

Kahlil Gibran has a beautiful story:

One man becomes insane; he is put in an insane asylum. A friend comes to visit him. The friend is a professor, a professor of philosophy, has written many books, is a well-known scholar, is also a psychologist. The madman is sitting on a bench under a tree in the garden, surrounded by a big wall. The professor comes, sits by his side and asks him, "How are you feeling inside this place?"

The madman laughs. He says, "I am feeling so good -- as I have never felt before."

The professor is puzzled. He says, "Why? Why are you feeling so happy being in this madhouse?"

The madman says, "Madhouse? This you call a madhouse? I have left the madhouse outside -- this is the sanest place in the world! The madhouse is outside; this wall protects us from mad people. If ever you become tired of the mad people outside, you are always welcome here. Come in! It is very peaceful here -- nobody interferes in anybody's work. It is very silent here. Very few people are here, and I have never seen such sane people in my whole life -- they are all like me!"

That's his definition of sanity: he is sane and they are like him. The people who are outside are insane.

But the same criterion is followed by the people outside: you think yourself sane because you are exactly like your neighbors. But who knows? -- the neighbors may be insane too.

The whole history of humanity proves that this is an insane humanity; something is basically wrong with it. In three thousand years man has fought five thousand wars. Will you call this humanity sane? Everybody is greedy, jealous, possessive -- and you call this humanity sane? Everybody is at each other's throats -- and you call this humanity sane? Normal of course -- normal in the sense that they are all alike.

Once Mark Twain advertised, as a hoax, that he had lost a cat so black that it could not be seen by ordinary light, and he wanted it back. Nearly a thousand people contacted him claiming to have seen it.

Just look around, just observe people, and you will be surprised seeing the utterly insane state which is known as normal. What is normal? What is the definition of a normal human being?

He should be full of love, he should be full of bliss. He should be fearless. He should be joyous and ecstatic. He should be able to sing and laugh and dance. He should be able to enjoy the small things of life. He should be total in whatsoever he is doing. His thoughts will be straight: if he says no he means no, if he says yes he means yes. He will not be diplomatic, he will not be political in that he says one thing, he means another, and will do a third thing. You cannot figure it out, you can never be sure what the political person is going to do. He has one face outside and another reality inside. He is double-faced, in a double bind. He smiles at you, he greets you -- and he hates you, he curses you inside. He is an enemy, yet he pretends to be a friend.

This is insanity! This hypocrisy is insanity, this split is insanity. This schizophrenic atmosphere is insane. It is not a healthy human being that we have been able to produce. We have failed up to now...and we have to do something very drastic now, otherwise humanity is doomed. Now the insane people have so much destructive power in their hands that one war more and humanity is finished and this planet is finished.

Something tremendously drastic is needed, a quantum leap is needed. But this is possible only through those people who listen to the buddhas.

...THE MASTER DIRECTS HIS STRAYING THOUGHTS.

LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER,  
STRANDED ON THE SHORE,  
THOUGHTS THRASH AND QUIVER.  
FOR HOW CAN THEY SHAKE OFF DESIRE?

Thoughts cannot live out of desire, just as a fish cannot live out of the sea. Thoughts cannot live out of the sea of desire: thoughts are basically instruments of a desiring state. And we are continuously desiring, desiring this and that. We cannot stop thinking if we go on desiring. First the desire, the very root, has to be cut.

What is there to desire in life? Those who have known, those who have realized life, say there is nothing worth desiring in life. Live it! and live as wholly as possible, and live each moment to its uttermost. Squeeze it totally. But there is nothing to desire. Desire leads you astray because it leads you into the future.

Drink out of the present moment, because the present moment is the door to God. God has only one tense: the present. He knows no past and no future. If you also want to be part of God...and that's the only way to be sane, to be healthy. Only a religious person is

sane and healthy. If you want to be part of God, you will have to learn to relax in the present moment.

Die to the past and die to the future, and live in the present. Don't allow yourself to move from the present, not even a single inch here and there; otherwise you will always go on missing the train.

And the mind is continuously running from one object to another, from one person to another. You have a wife, but the mind is running after other people's wives. You have children, but they never look so beautiful as other people's children. The grass is always greener on the other side of the hedge. Everybody else seems to be happier than you.

And then, of course, you logically deduce: "They have bigger houses, better children, a beautiful woman, more money, more power, more prestige, so these are the things I also need. Unless I have all these things, how can I be happy?" You make your happiness conditional. And the moment a man makes his happiness conditional he is doomed; he will remain unhappy his whole life.

Happiness is not conditional; nothing is needed to be happy. Only to be alive is needed -- and that you are, you already are. Only to be conscious is needed -- and that you already are. Hence the mystics and the buddhas say that bliss is our very nature. But the mind is a runner and it keeps dragging you.

The sultan called for his eunuch. "I am in the mood," he said. "Go get me wife number 256."

So the eunuch ran out of the palace and into the harem. He ran through the garden, past the orchard, and up the steps. Soon he returned with wife 256. A bit later the sultan sent for the eunuch again and said, "I want more. Go get me wife 87." The eunuch ran and got her. Then the king wanted wife 68, and soon after, wife 92.

When he returned with wife number 92 the eunuch was panting heavily. Then he suddenly collapsed and died.

Moral: It is not the loving that kills you, it is the running around.

The mind is continuously running around. It never sits, it can't sit. Sitting seems to be death to it, and in a way it is. That's why Zen people say, if you can sit silently for a few hours every day, doing nothing, not even chanting a mantra, because that is again a running of the mind, the same mind.... It can sing pop songs, it can chant a religious mantra, it makes no difference. It wants some work, it wants activity, it wants occupation, it wants to run. Its life is in the running.

The Zen people say just sit, don't do anything. The most difficult thing in the world is just to sit doing nothing. But once you have got the knack of it.... If you go on sitting for a few months doing nothing for a few hours every day, slowly slowly, many things will happen. You will feel sleepy, you will dream. Many thoughts will crowd your mind, many things. The mind will say, "Why are you wasting your time? You could have earned a little money. At least you could have gone to a film, entertained yourself, or you could have relaxed and gossiped. You could have watched the TV or listened to the

radio, or at least you could have read the newspaper you have not seen. Why are you wasting your time?"

Mind will give you a thousand and one arguments, but if you just go on listening without being bothered by the mind.... It will do all kinds of tricks: it will hallucinate, it will dream, it will become sleepy. It will do all that is possible to drag you out of just sitting. But if you go on, if you persevere, one day the sun rises.

One day it happens, you are not feeling sleepy, the mind has become tired of you, is fed up with you, has dropped the idea that you can be trapped, is simply finished with you! There is no sleep, no hallucination, no dream, no thought. You are simply sitting there doing nothing...and all is silence and all is peace and all is bliss. You have entered God, you have entered truth.

THEY TREMBLE, THEY ARE UNSTEADY,  
THEY WANDER AT THEIR WILL.  
IT IS GOOD TO CONTROL THEM.  
AND TO MASTER THEM BRINGS HAPPINESS.

Watch, and you will see the trembling mind, the quivering thoughts chasing each other, running in every possible direction, consistent, inconsistent, meaningful, meaningless. Just one day sit down in your room, close the doors, and start writing the thoughts that are happening to you. That will help you to become aware. Just go on writing whatsoever is happening. Don't edit, don't make them look consistent, beautiful. It is not to be shown to anybody, it is just for your observation. For fifteen minutes go on writing, then read it, and you will be puzzled: are you mad or something? What kind of things are going on in your head? All kinds of things, so irrelevant that you cannot conceive any possible relationship with them. Anything leads to anything just accidentally.

The dog starts barking in the neighborhood and your mind starts functioning. You remember a dog you used to have in your childhood, and suddenly the mind jumps from the dog to a friend who was also known in the childhood...and from the friend to the school, and the teacher. And this way the mind goes on hopping, and you will land nobody knows where. And it was just started by the barking of the dog who knows nothing about you, who is not interested at all in you, but he triggered a process. You may reach anywhere! And each time it happens you will reach some other place.

Mind goes on jumping from one place to another, and mind has so much information that it can produce all kinds of worlds.

Watching it you will see the truth of Buddha's statement: THEY TREMBLE, THEY ARE UNSTEADY, THEY WANDER AT THEIR WILL. They don't listen to you, they have their own will. Each thought has its own will and insists on remaining itself. It does not want to be tinkered with, it does not want you to interfere. If you interfere, it resists, it protests. Every thought wants its own individuality. And these millions of thoughts in your head destroy your individuality, because they all claim their own individuality and they all claim to be autonomous and free. And if you say anything, they ask, "Who

are you?" And each time they will show you your place, they will reduce you to nothing.

Unless they are controlled, Buddha says, there is no possibility of bliss happening to you. You will remain in a mess, you will remain a confusion.

Inmate: "I have a mad, insane desire to crush you in my arms."

Lady psychiatrist: "Now you are talking sense!"

It depends on you what you call sense and what you call nonsense. There are philosophers in the world who say all is nonsense, and there are philosophers in the world who say everything is sense, sensible. This is the most rational world, they say, very logical. It all depends on you what you call sense and what you think is sensible. It depends on your training, your upbringing, your conditioning, the way you have been hypnotized.

Now, eating meat is sensible if you have been brought up in a house where nobody ever thought of vegetarianism; even if they talked about it, they talked only to laugh at vegetarians: "These foolish people who think that by becoming vegetarians they are becoming religious." If you are born in a vegetarian house, in a vegetarian family, then the people who eat meat are monsters. They are not people at all; they are untouchable, they are not human beings, they are animals.

You yourself never know what is right, what is wrong; you know only according to what others have said to you. This is not a way which can lead you into sanity. You will have to become more aware, more alert, more watchful. You will have to decide on your own. You have lived a borrowed life. You will have to reflect -- you become a human being only when you start reflecting on things on your own. When you observe accurately, precisely, when you judge, when you value, when you weigh things and you start living according to your own consciousness more and more, you will attain to freedom. And freedom brings bliss.

Freedom means you have to control the mind, your so-called mind, which is not yours at all because it has been given to you by others, in fragments. A part of it belongs to your mother, another part to your father, another part to your uncle, and so on and so forth...to the priest, to the teacher, to the neighborhood boy.... You have gathered fragments from all over the world -- from the books you have been reading and the films you have been seeing.

If you look into it you will be surprised -- you don't have any mind of your own. Everything is borrowed! How can you be authentic? You are just a piled-up phenomenon, fragments from so many different sources that they can never melt and become one. But one thing is not borrowed in you and that is your consciousness, that is your awareness. That you have brought with you, that is part of your inner core. Depend on it and never depend on the mind. Become independent of the mind and absolutely dependent on consciousness, and you are taking the greatest step of your life.

BUT HOW SUBTLE THEY ARE,  
HOW ELUSIVE!  
THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM,  
AND BY RULING THEM TO FIND HAPPINESS.

It is not going to be an easy job. It is arduous, because the mind is very cunning and thoughts are very subtle.

One soldier is explaining transmigration of souls to another and tells him that if he is killed his body will decay on the battlefield and finally sink into the ground. In the spring a beautiful flower will come up on the spot.

"And that is me, is it?" asks the other soldier.

"No, wait a minute. Then a cow comes along and eats the flower and leaves behind a big pile of cowplop. Then I come strolling through the field with my girl, I see this cowplop and I tap it with my walking-stick and I say, 'Hello, Bill! Why, you ain't changed a bit!'"

Mind is very cunning -- it can always find its ways to remain the same. It can find new ways so that it can remain old. It can find new garments so it can hide behind them; it can find beautiful rationalizations.

Beware! Mind is not a simple phenomenon, it is complex, subtle, very elusive. If you try to catch hold of it you will be in difficulty. If you push it out through the front door, it will come from the back. If you want to control it and repress it, it will start functioning from your unconscious -- which is far more dangerous because it will control you still, although now you will be absolutely unaware of its control. The enemy is no longer visible, that's all, but the enemy is there. And when the enemy is invisible the enemy is more powerful.

...HOW SUBTLE THEY ARE, and HOW ELUSIVE! THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM.... So remember, they are not to be repressed, they are not to be caught. THE TASK IS TO QUIETEN THEM, AND BY RULING THEM TO FIND HAPPINESS.

It is through stilling them that one becomes a ruler, not by ruling them that you quieten them. Remember that process: it looks similar, it is not. It is very very different, diametrically opposite in fact. You have to quieten them first, still them first.

And the way to still them is just to watch silently without judgment, without saying this is good, this is bad. The moment you say good and bad you have jumped into the mire. The mind has already caught you, you are already entrapped.

You simply watch! Your moral teachers don't allow you watching. You sit and just look...a thought of murdering somebody comes. Your mind is enjoying the thought of murdering somebody. This is one part. Another part of the mind says, "This is very bad, this is a sin. You should not even think such a thought, even to think it is a sin." This is another part of the mind. You become identified with the other part, the moral part. You say, "This is my conscience." It is not your conscience: it has been put into you. It is



the society controlling you from within; it is a strategy of the society to control you. You don't know what is right and what is wrong.

Be innocent! Just watch, watch both. One part of the mind is saying, "Murder that man - he has insulted you!" Another part of the mind is saying, "This is bad, this is immoral. You will fall into hell, you will suffer in your next birth, you will be punished for it." Know well, the second is also mind, and there is no choice between two fragments of the mind. Watch both, enjoy both. See the contradiction of the mind -- don't get identified with any part.

Remember, the ego wants to be identified with the good part, the moral part. It feels beautiful: "I am against murder, look! I am not for it." You are just getting caught by another part of the mind. You are still a slave. Your sinners and your saints, both are slaves.

The really free man is free from both good and bad. He is beyond good and evil. He is just consciousness and nothing else. He simply observes. And if you can just observe without being identified, slowly slowly mind quietens down, and in that quietening is your power. One day when the mind is completely gone, has become totally still, you are the sovereign.

WITH SINGLEMINDEDNESS  
THE MASTER QUELLS HIS THOUGHTS.  
HE ENDS THEIR WANDERING.  
SEATED IN THE CAVE OF THE HEART,  
HE FINDS FREEDOM.

And when the mind is no more, where do you go? Suddenly, when the mind is no more, you enter into the heart. You slip out of the mind, out of the grip of the head. And then the heart, the cave of the heart, is your palace. The mind is a by-product of the society: the heart is an extension of God.

This is possible only if you work singlemindedly to still the mind, to be aware of the mind, to be utterly watchful, without any judgment and without any identification.

THE MASTER QUELLS HIS THOUGHTS. HE ENDS THEIR WANDERING. SEATED  
IN THE CAVE OF THE HEART, HE FINDS FREEDOM.

The head is a slavery, the heart the freedom. The head is a misery, the heart the ultimate bliss.

AES DHAMMO SANANTANO.

Enough for today.