

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

## **Chapter #10**

### **Chapter title: Neither this nor that**

**30 June 1979 am in Buddha Hall**

The first question:

Question 1

BELOVED MASTER,

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND OTHER GODMEN?

Sunil Sethi, I am not a godman, I am simply God -- as you are, as trees are, as birds are, as rocks are. I don't belong to any category. 'Godman' is a category invented by journalists. I simply don't belong to any category. You don't belong to any category either. All categories are false. The deeper you go into yourself, the more and more you will find that you simply are -- neither this nor that. The seers of the Upanishads say: neti, neti -- neither this nor that. No category is applicable.

There is a beautiful story about Buddha:

He was sitting under a tree. One astrologer approached him -- he was very puzzled, because he saw the footprints of the Buddha on the wet sand and he could not believe his eyes. All the scriptures that he had been studying his whole life had been telling him about certain signs that exist in the feet of a man who rules the world -- a chakravartin -- a ruler of all the six continents, of the whole earth. And he saw in the footprints in the wet sand on the riverbank all the symbols so clearly that he could not believe his eyes! Either all his scriptures were wrong and he was wasting his life in astrology...otherwise, how was it possible on such a hot afternoon, in such a small, dirty village, a chakravartin would come and walk barefoot, on the burning hot sand?

He followed the footprints, just in search of the man to whom these footprints belonged. He found the Buddha sitting under a tree. He was even more puzzled. The face was that of a chakravartin -- the grace, the beauty, the power, the aura -- but the man was a beggar, with a begging bowl!

The astrologer touched the feet of the Buddha and asked him, "Who are you, sir? You have puzzled me. You should be a chakravartin, a world ruler. What are you doing here, sitting under this tree? Either all my astrology books are wrong, or I am hallucinating and you are not really there."

Buddha said, "Your books are absolutely right -- but there is something which belongs to no category, not even to the category of a chakravartin. I am, but I am nobody in particular."

The astrologer said, "You are puzzling me more. How can you be without being anybody in particular? You must be a god who has come to visit the earth -- I can see it in your eyes!"

Buddha said, "I am not a god."

The astrologer said, "Then you must be a gandharva -- a celestial musician."

Buddha said, "No, I am not a gandharva either."

And the astrologer went on asking, "Then are you a king in disguise? Who are you? You can't be an animal, you can't be a tree, you can't be a rock -- who exactly are you?"

And the answer the Buddha gave is of immense importance to understand. He said, "I am just a buddha -- I am just awareness, and nothing else. I don't belong to any category. Every category is an identification and I don't have any identity."

Sunil Sethi, exactly the same is my answer: I don't belong to any category, and godman is a category. I am simply awareness. I am simply a watchfulness. And this is not something special; this is part of your innermost core, too. You are as divine as anybody else -- a Buddha, a Krishna, a Christ. You are as divine as anybody else. The highest and the lowest, all are divine, because only God exists.

This is the first thing to be remembered: that I don't belong to any category. Neither do you belong to any category. Are you a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Christian? Are you black or white? These are things which are outside -- you are not these things. Consciousness cannot be black and cannot be white; consciousness can't have any color. Are you rich or poor? Consciousness cannot be rich or poor either. Are you a man or a woman? Consciousness is neither a man nor a woman.

Consciousness is simply consciousness! To realize this is to declare, "aham brahmasmi! - I am God!" It is not a new category. When somebody declares "I am God!" it is not a new category, it is simply disappearing from all categories. That is exactly the meaning of the word 'God'.

When Mansoor says, "ana'l haq! -- I am the truth!" he is saying the same thing. He is saying, "I am consciousness."

I have no claim to be a godman -- I am not.

The second thing: between me and the so-called godmen there are many differences. The most basic is that I am life-affirmative and they are life-negative. I love life; they hate life. I would like you to go deeper and deeper into life; they would like you to shrink back, withdraw. They are all for renunciation, I am all for rejoicing. To me "Rejoice!" is the only message. "Renounce!" is escaping. Renouncing is committing a slow suicide. Rejoice! and rejoice tremendously. Only then will you be able to know what God is all about.

At the optimum of your being, when the intensity is total, when you are not holding anything back, when you dance with abandon, when you sing so totally that the singer disappears in the singing...when you love so infinitely that there is no lover left behind, you simply become the energy called love, then you affirm life. And life IS God.

I am life-affirmative; your so-called godmen are life-negative. And because basically life can not be negated -- you are life, how can you negate it? -- they create hypocrisy. It is bound to happen. Your so-called godmen down the ages have been creating hypocrisy. They don't allow you to be authentic. They don't allow you to be natural -- how can they allow you to be authentic? They create a division in you.

They are the root cause of all schizophrenia, and the whole of humanity suffers from schizophrenia. The differences between one person's schizophrenia and another's are only of degrees. You are split! Who has done this wrong to you? Your so-called godmen, the so-called saints, the so-called mahatmas. They are at the very root of all your misery because their very teaching is "Deny nature! Fight nature! Go against the stream; push the river!" And you are part of nature, just a wave in the river -- how can you fight with nature? Fighting, you will be defeated. If you are a sincere person, you will go mad; if you are not yet mad, that will simply show that you are not a sincere person. You say one thing and you do another.

I have heard:

A sodomist was given a room in a hotel with another man, who, the room clerk assured him, was not averse to a bout, but that for form's sake he might put up a struggle. "But don't you pay any attention to him. You go ahead -- he likes it."

Next morning, the sodomist came down and the clerk asked him how he had fared. "It was quite easy," he answered. "He put up no struggle at all."

"My God!" said the clerk, "I put you in the wrong room. That was the archbishop!"

It is bound to happen. Hypocrisy is a natural by-product of all your pseudo godmen. And they can only be pseudo! If someone has realized God, he is not a godman -- he is simply God! Why 'godman'? And he knows that not only is he God but everybody is God. When he says "I am God," he is not using the word in a comparative sense. He is not saying, "I am holier than thou." He is simply saying, "I am what you are, but I am aware and you are not aware yet." The difference is not in our qualities, in our beings, but only in our consciousness. You have the same treasure that I have, but I have stumbled upon it and you are still seeking and groping. Sooner or later you will find it. If you go on seeking, it is bound to be found -- because it is there. How long can you go on missing? Even in the deepest darkness, if you search for it you are bound to find it. When I say I am God, I am simply declaring that the whole of humanity is divine. I am simply declaring that all human beings are divine; I am simply declaring that all that exists is divine. A godman, a so-called godman, declares that he is God and you are sinners. He creates a new kind of superiority, a new hierarchy. And his whole trade secret is to make you feel guilty. And the more guilty you feel, the more you are in his grip.

How to make you feel guilty? Just condemn natural things and it will start happening. Condemn sex -- you will have sexual desires arising and you will feel guilty. Condemn food...condemn everything that is a natural inclination in you.

The wife-swapping party is raided by the crusading minister, who plans to put an end to these goings-on. When he rings the bell, the man of the house arrives and does not seem a bit embarrassed.

The minister says, "I was told you had a party here tonight."

"We do," says the man. "We are playing guessing games right now. The women are blindfolded trying to guess the men's names by feeling their pricks. You ought to come on in, Reverend, your name has been guessed eight times already!"

The whole priesthood down the ages has proved only one thing: that you cannot fight against nature. Although there is a way to surpass it -- but the way does not go against it; it goes through it.

That is my first and most fundamental difference: I affirm life as it is. That does not mean that there is no growth possible beyond life -- there is immense possibility of growth -- but all growth has to be founded on a deep, passionate love of life. It is only through experiencing life that transcendence happens.

I would like you to go beyond sex, but I don't condemn sex. Sex is a natural desire, and is good in its own place. But one should not stop with it; it is only a beginning, a glimpse -- a glimpse of the beyond. In deep sexual orgasm, you become aware for the first time of something which is not of the ego, of something which is not of the mind, of something which is not of time. In deep orgasm, mind, time, all disappear; the whole world stops for a moment. For a moment you are no longer part of the material world; you are just a pure space.

But this is only a glimpse -- and at great cost. You should move ahead. You should seek and search for ways and means so that this glimpse becomes your very state. That's what I call realization, enlightenment. An enlightened person is in a state of orgasmic joy twenty-four hours a day. What the sexual person attains only once in a while, with great effort, the spiritual man attains without any effort and without any wastage. The spiritual man simply lives there; on those ultimate peaks is his abode. You only see those peaks from thousands of miles away.

I am not against sex, because sex is the first window into spiritual existence. I am not against food, because I am not against any enjoyment. There are all kinds of experiences that you will come across through enjoying things -- food, love, music, dance, nature...it is only through enjoying all these things that you will, slowly slowly, become aware of the invisible.

It is because of this that the Upanishads say: annam brahma -- food is God. A tremendously significant statement: food, and God? made synonymous? -- annam Brahma. Food is God? What are they saying? These people knew, they knew what they were saying -- the taste of food is the taste of God. The taste of any joy is the taste of God -- howsoever far away, howsoever much a reflection.

The moon reflected in the lake is still a reflection of the moon, although you will not find it in the lake. If you jump in the lake you will only disturb the reflection and you will not find the moon there. The reflection is not the moon, the reflection reflects the moon. And if you are a little intelligent you will not jump into the lake, you will look up into the sky where the real moon is.

God is reflected when you enjoy food. God is reflected when you enjoy sex. God is reflected in a thousand and one lakes of life. Take the key from the reflection; take the indication, the clue, and start moving to the original.

That's my fundamental difference. I am not against life or anything that life implies -- neither sex nor food, neither the body nor bodily pleasures. I am not averse to comfort, I am not against luxuries either.

Just the other day there was a question. Somebody has asked -- he must be a newcomer and an Indian -- he has asked, "Are you not a hypocrite? Why do you live in luxury?" He does not know the meaning of the word 'hypocrite'. I may be the only person in the world who is not a hypocrite.

A hypocrite is one who says one thing and does another. A hypocrite is one whose inner and outer lives are different -- not only different but diametrically opposite. I am not against luxury, so why should I be a hypocrite? I am not against comfort -- I am not a masochist, that's all. I don't believe in torturing myself or anybody else. I don't believe in torture.

I would like the whole earth to live in luxury. Certainly, I know that today that is not the case. The whole earth is not even getting the minimum necessities of life. But I am not going to torture myself just because of that, because that is not going to help them either. If there are one thousand people in misery, there will be one thousand and one people in misery -- that's all.

I don't believe in misery. And I am not living a double life. My life is very simple -- simple in the sense that it has a kind of integrity. I am doing what I am saying. I believe in luxury; to me, religion is the highest form of luxury. If I cannot make everybody live in luxury, at least I can manage to live in it myself. Otherwise people will say to me, "Physician, first heal thyself."

But these so-called godmen, they all live in luxury and they are all against luxury. These are hypocrites! They talk about poverty and the spirituality of poverty, and they all live in luxury -- they are hypocrites.

I hate poverty! I don't respect poverty, I don't appreciate poverty. It is out of stupidity that people are poor; it is out of superstitious minds that people are poor. People need not be poor. It is because of thousands of years of teaching that poverty has something spiritual in it that people are poor.

A very famous German thinker, Count Keyserling, came to India. He wrote a diary while he was traveling in India. In his diary he notes many significant things. One thing he wrote was, "I became aware, visiting India, about two things. One: that to be poor is to be spiritual; and the other: that to be ill, starved, ugly, is to be holy."

I am not teaching these things. I would like my whole commune to live in as much comfort as possible. The commune has to become a model -- a model for the whole world. My sannyasins are to live in every possible joy: physical, psychological, spiritual. The joys of the body and the joys of the mind and the joys of the spirit -- all have to be lived in such a harmony that the fourth man is born out of that harmony.

That's why I say: Be scientific, be aesthetic, and be religious. Out of these three dimensions, out of the meeting of these three rivers, the fourth will be created. And the fourth is my way.

Any kind of unnatural approach towards life creates complexities, creates pathologies. It does not make people sane; it drives them insane.

Patient in psychiatrist's office: "Doctor, you have got to help me. I keep dreaming about food, continually dreaming about food."

Doctor: "Don't you ever dream about girls?"

Patient: "Yes, but I keep pouring ketchup over them."

Now, if you make somebody feel guilty about his food -- that's what so-called religious people are doing -- then he will start dreaming about food. And to eat is healthy, nourishing, good; to dream about it is ugly and pathological. Dreaming about food simply says that you are somehow depriving your body of what it needs.

Who dreams about food? Only a person who represses his desire for food. You can try it: fast for one day and then see what happens.... The whole day you will think about food; from everywhere the mind will come again and again to the idea of food. And in the night you are bound to dream about food.

Repress sex and you will dream about sex. Repress anything and you start becoming pathological. A really healthy man has no dreams -- he has nothing to dream about. He lives each moment totally; he never represses anything. Hence his unconscious remains utterly empty and clean. Repress, and your unconscious becomes cluttered with unnecessary furniture. And in dreams you are bound to face your unconscious. You have to face it; in deep sleep you have to pass through it. It creates a turmoil throughout your whole life.

I am life-affirmative. I am in tremendous love with life, and that's my teaching. The so-called godmen are all against life; they are creating a pathological humanity.

Secondly, they are all otherworldly; I am this-worldly. Not that I don't believe in the other world -- there is no question of believing in it; I know it is -- but one need not worry about it. Worrying is not going to help. The other world is going to be born out of this world. Make this life beautiful, live this life as sensitively as possible, and the other will be born out of it. It will be far more beautiful than this if you can make this beautiful.

Buddha says just in the first sutras that if this life is beautiful, the other is going to be even more beautiful. But if you think of the other life, if you project about the other life, if you dream about the other life, life after death, you will make this life so ugly, so ill at ease, that the other will become more ugly.

You need not think of the tomorrow, the today is enough unto itself. Live this day with such joy and ecstasy...from where is the tomorrow going to come? It will be born out of this ecstasy, it will be more ecstatic. And then you have the key -- the key that unlocks all the doors of life.

Live the moment! I believe in the moment. Those godmen, they talk about the other life, life after death, heaven and hell -- all that is absolutely unnecessary. People are already much too puzzled; don't puzzle them any more.

My teaching is very simple, to the point: live moment to moment, dying to the past, not projecting any future...enjoying the silence, the joy, the beauty, of this moment. And out of this, that will be born. It comes of its own accord. As Buddha says: Just as the shadow

follows you, the future follows you. If your present is ugly, the future is going to be hell; if your present is beautiful, the future is going to be paradise.

Thirdly, up to now, these so-called godmen have been dividing humanity into Hindus and Christians and Mohammedans and Jainas and Sikhs and Parsis...there are three hundred religions on the earth and at least three thousand sects within those three hundred religions. These godmen have been creating hatred amongst people. They talk about love, but they create the context in which only war happens. Religions have been fighting with each other, destroying each other, murdering each other, butchering each other. More blood has been shed in the name of religion than in the name of anything else. Not even politics is so criminal as your so-called religions.

Now, all your godmen are either Hindus or Mohammedans or Christians. I am neither a Hindu nor a Christian -- I am nobody. And I help people to become nobodies. I help people to become unburdened of all this nonsense. It is enough to be -- there is no need to be a Mohammedan or a Hindu or a Christian. There is no need to go to any temple, mosque or church. The whole existence is their temple, and the trees are continuously in worship, and the clouds are in prayer, and the mountains are in meditation...just start looking around.

Look rightly! Look without belief in your eyes, look without prejudices, and you will find God. You cannot miss him because he is everywhere! He is not like a target that you can miss; hit anywhere and you will find him, because he is everywhere. It is impossible to miss him. All that you need is an innocent heart. But a Hindu cannot be innocent, a Mohammedan cannot be innocent. He is full of garbage: full of theories, theologies, full of borrowed knowledge -- that's what I call garbage.

I am not saying that Mohammed is not right, I am not saying that Buddha is not right; otherwise, why should I speak on Buddha, on Mohammed, on Christ? They are true, but their truth cannot be your truth -- you will have to find it on your own. Truth cannot be borrowed, truth is untransferable; it never becomes part of your heritage. You have to seek and search on your own; it has always to be individual.

My truth is my truth. It's my experience. I can talk about it, I can sing songs in its praise, I can dance it. I can show you my ecstasy -- but still, that which has been experienced remains unexpressed. No scripture has been able to express it. All scriptures are efforts to express, but all efforts have failed: truth is inexpressible.

The scriptures simply show the compassion of the people who attained, but they don't prove that the compassion has succeeded in expressing the truth.

Rabindranath was dying and somebody said to him, "You should be happy and glad and thankful to God -- you are the greatest poet the earth has ever known. You have written six thousand poems; nobody else has done that. Even Shelley, who is thought to be the greatest poet in the West, has written only two thousand songs. You are thrice great!"

But tears started rolling down from Rabindranath's eyes. The man was puzzled; he could not figure out why Rabindranath was crying. He said, "Why are you crying? Feel

thankful to God! He has fulfilled your life. You have attained all that one aspires to attain."

Rabindranath said, "I have not attained anything! Those six thousand songs are proof of my failure." Listen attentively. Rabindranath says, "Those six thousand songs are proofs of my failure. I was trying to say something, but I have not been able to say it. Each time I tried, I failed. I tried again and again and again, six thousand times I tried, and I have failed. The song that I had come to sing is still unsung. I am taking it with me."

That is the case with a Buddha, a Mohammed, a Zarathustra -- with all those who have known. You cannot be a believer and religious together. If you want to be religious, you have to drop all beliefs. That is my third basic difference.

I teach you to be religious, but not believers. You have to be inquirers, explorers. You cannot take things for granted: because so many people say it, then it must be true. Truth has to become your own experience -- you have to be a witness to it. And the moment you are a witness to it, you will not be able to say that you are a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian. These are all philosophies, guesswork, theologies, logic, calculation, cleverness -- but the experience is missing.

My whole approach is existential, experiential. I am not giving you any dogma; I am not trying to give you a certain doctrine. On the contrary, I am trying to take all doctrines away. I would like you to be utterly empty of doctrines and beliefs and prejudices.

In that emptiness you are God -- as much as I am, as much as Buddha is. That emptiness opens the doors to your divinity.

I am not a godman. I am as ordinary as you are, as everybody else is; as ordinary or as extraordinary -- it means the same. I am not superior to anybody and I am not inferior to anybody. Nobody is superior and nobody is inferior. We belong to one reality -- how can we be inferior and superior?

The second question:

Question 2

BELOVED MASTER,

THERE IS A QUESTION I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO GET AN ANSWER TO. IT IS A STUPID QUESTION AND YET I FEEL THAT I WANT SO MUCH TO KNOW THE ANSWER.

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CREATION, WHY LIFE EXISTS, WHY EVERYTHING EXISTS? I DON'T BELIEVE IN ACCIDENTS.

Prem Patrick, the question is certainly stupid, you are absolutely right about it. And the question is not answerable. Anybody who answers it will only create a few more questions in you. You have not been able to get any answer because there is none. Life is a mystery -- hence this question cannot be answered. You cannot ask "Why?" If the "Why?" is answered, life is no longer a mystery.

That's the whole effort of science: to destroy the mystery of life. And the way is to find the answer to every why. And science believes -- of course, arrogantly and ignorantly --



that one day it will be able to answer all whys. It is not possible. Even if we answer all whys, the ultimate why will remain: Why does life exist at all? What is the meaning of existence? What is the purpose of all this? This question is ultimate -- it cannot be answered.

If somebody gives you an answer, that will simply create another question. If somebody says...for example, these answers have been given -- a few people believe that God created the world because he wanted to help humanity. Now, what kind of answer is this? He created humanity to help humanity. What was the need to create? A few others say God created the world because he was feeling very lonely. If God too feels very lonely, then there is no possibility of anybody ever becoming a buddha.

And suddenly God started feeling lonely -- what was he doing before he created the world? For eternity he had remained alone...then suddenly one day, one morning, he went crazy, or what? Suddenly he started feeling lonely after breakfast! And what need was there to create the whole world? Just one woman would have been enough!

And now how is he feeling today? Too crowded? Too much in the marketplace? Must be planning to destroy the world soon. What kind of God are you talking about? Is your God a person who can feel lonely?

These are foolish answers to foolish questions.

Then there are a few people who say it is God's play -- his leela. Can't he sit silently? And what kind of play is this? Adolf Hitler and Mussolini and Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Nadirshah...God's play? Millions of people are being massacred and it is God's play? Six million Jews killed by Adolf Hitler and God is playing a game? Why can't he play golf? or chess? Why torture people? So much misery in the world, and these fools go on saying it is God's play? Children are being born paralyzed, blind, deaf, dumb...God's play? What kind of God is this? Either he is nuts or he is not God at all, at least not godly. Must be very evil.

Now, these answers don't help -- they create more questions. Patrick, I can only say this much: that life has no purpose, cannot have any purpose.

All purposes are within life. Yes, a car has a purpose; it can take you from one place to another. And food has a purpose; it can nourish you, it can keep you alive. A house has a purpose; it can give you shelter when it rains and when it is hot. And clothes have a purpose.... All purposes are within life, but life itself cannot have any purpose because it is not a means to some end. A car is a means, a house is a means.

Life has no goal, life is not going anywhere. Life is simply here! It has never been created -- forget that idea of creation. That creates many stupid questions in the mind. It has never been created, it has always been here, and it will always be here -- in different forms, in different ways, the dance will continue. It is eternal. Aes dhammo sanantano -- so is the ultimate law.

There is no purpose -- that's the beauty of life! If there were some purpose, then life would not be so beautiful. Then there would be a motivation, then it would be businesslike, then it would be very serious. Look at the roses and the lotuses and the lilies -- what purpose? The lotus in the early morning sun opening up, and the cuckoo

starts calling...what purpose? Is it not intrinsically beautiful? Does everything need a purpose outside itself?

Life is intrinsically beautiful. It has no extrinsic purpose, it is not purposive. It is just like the song of a bird in the dark of the night, or the sound of water, or the sound of the wind passing through the pine trees....

Man is goal-oriented because your mind is goal-oriented. It creates questions like this: "What is the goal of life?" There must be some goal. But if somebody says, "This is the goal of life," then you will ask, "What is the goal of this goal? Why should we attain it? What purpose is it going to serve?" And then somebody says, "This is the goal of this goal." The same question arises again, and you fall into a regress, ad infinitum.

You ask me, "Can you tell us what is the purpose of creation?"

The world has never been created. The word 'creation' is not right. It has always been here, it is eternal. There is no creator. God is not the creator of the world: God is the very creative energy of existence -- creativity rather than a creator. He is not the poet but the poetry, not the dancer but the dance, not the flower but the fragrance.

You ask me, "Why does life exist?"

These questions look very philosophical, and can torture you very much, but are absurd. It is like asking, "What is the taste of the color green?" Now, it is irrelevant. The color green has no taste; color and taste are not related at all. "Why does life exist?" Just look at the words: 'life' and 'existence' mean the same thing; it is a tautology. If you are asking: Why is life life? then it will be clear to you. But when you ask, "Why does life exist?" the language deceives you.

You are asking: Why is life life? You are asking: Why is a rose a rose? Would you be satisfied if the rose were a marigold? Then you would ask: Why is a marigold a marigold? How are you going to be satisfied?

If life does not exist, will you be satisfied? Just conceive of yourself without body, without mind, a ghost, asking the question: Why doesn't life exist? What happened to life? Why did it disappear? The same question will persist and persecute you.

Life is a mystery. There is no why, no purpose, no reason. It is simply here. Take it or leave it, but it is simply here. And when it is here, why not take it? Why waste your time in philosophizing? Why not dance and sing and love and meditate? Why not go deeper and deeper into this thing called "life"? Maybe at the ultimate core you will know the answer. But the answer comes in such a way that it cannot be expressed. It is like the dumb man's taste of sugar. It is sweet -- he knows that it is sweet, but he cannot say it.

The buddhas know but they cannot say. And the idiots know not and they go on saying, and they go on giving you answers. Idiots are very clever in that way -- in finding, fabricating, manufacturing answers. Ask any question and they will answer you.

When Gautama the Buddha used to move in his country from one place to another, a few of his disciples would go ahead of him and declare in the town: "Buddha is coming, but please don't ask these eleven questions." And one of those eleven questions was:

Why does life exist? and another was: Who created the world? In those eleven questions the whole of philosophy is contained. In fact, if you drop those eleven questions nothing remains to ask.

Buddha used to say these are useless questions. They are not answerable -- not because nobody knows the answer. They are not answerable in the very nature of things.

One great philosopher, Maulingaputta, came to Buddha, and he started asking questions...questions after questions. Must have been an incarnation of Patrick! Buddha listened silently for half an hour. Maulingaputta started feeling a little embarrassed because he was not answering, he was simply sitting there smiling, as if nothing had happened, and he had asked such important questions, such significant questions.

Finally Buddha said, "Do you really want to know the answer?"

Maulingaputta said, "Otherwise why should I have come to you? I have traveled at least one thousand miles to see you." And remember, in those days, one thousand miles was really one thousand miles! It was not hopping in a plane and reaching within minutes or within hours. One thousand miles was one thousand miles. It was with great longing, with great hope that he had come. He was tired, weary from the journey, and he must have followed Buddha because Buddha himself was traveling continuously. He must have reached one place and people said, "Yes, he was here three months ago. He has gone to the north" -- so he must have traveled north.

Slowly slowly, he was coming closer and closer and then the day came, the great day, when people said, "Just yesterday morning he left; he must have reached only the next village. If you rush, if you run, you may be able to catch him." And then one day he caught up with him, and he was so joyous he forgot all his arduous journey and he started asking all the questions he had planned all the way along, and Buddha smiled and sat there and asked, "Do you really want to have the answer?"

Maulingaputta said, "Then why have I traveled so long? It has been a long suffering -- it seems I have been traveling my whole life, and you are asking, 'Do you really want the answer?'"

Buddha said, "I am asking again: Do you really want the answer? Say yes or no, because much will depend on it."

Maulingaputta said, "Yes!"

Then Buddha said, "For two years sit silently by my side -- no asking, no questions, no talking. Just sit silently by my side for two years. And after two years you can ask whatsoever you want to ask, and I promise you I will answer it."

A disciple, a great disciple of Buddha, Manjushree, who was sitting underneath another tree, started laughing so loudly, started almost rolling on the ground. Maulingaputta said, "What has happened to this man? Out of the blue, you are talking to me, you have not said a single word to him, nobody has said anything to him -- is he telling jokes to himself?"

Buddha said, "You go and ask him."

He asked Manjushree. Manjushree said, "Sir, if you really want to ask the question, ask right now -- this is his way of deceiving people. He deceived me. I used to be a foolish

philosopher just like you. His answer was the same when I came; you have traveled one thousand miles, I had traveled two thousand."

Manjushree certainly was a great philosopher, more well-known in the country. He had thousands of disciples. When he had come he had come with one thousand disciples -- a great philosopher coming with his following.

"And Buddha said, 'Sit silently for two years.' And I sat silently for two years, but then I could not ask a single question. Those days of silence...slowly slowly, all questions withered away. And one thing I will tell you: he keeps his promise, he is a man of his word. After exactly two years -- I had completely forgotten, lost track of time, because who bothers to remember? As silence deepened I lost track of all time.

"When two years passed, I was not even aware of it. I was enjoying the silence and his presence. I was drinking out of him. It was so incredible! In fact, deep down in my heart I never wanted those two years to be finished, because once they were finished he would say, 'Now give your place to somebody else to sit by my side, you move away a little. Now you are capable of being alone, you don't need me so much.' Just as the mother moves the child when he can eat and digest and no longer needs to be fed on the breast. So," Manjushree said, "I was simply hoping that he would forget all about those two years, but he remembered -- exactly after two years he asked, 'Manjushree, now you can ask your questions.' I looked within; there was no question and no questioner either -- a total silence. I laughed, he laughed, he patted my back and said, 'Now, move away.'

"So, Maulingaputta, that's why I started laughing, because now he is playing the same trick again. And this poor Maulingaputta will sit for two years silently and will be lost forever, will never be able to ask a single question. So I insist, Maulingaputta, if you really want to ask, ASK NOW!"

But Buddha said, "My conditions have to be fulfilled."

And, Patrick, the same is my answer to you: fulfill my condition -- meditate, sit silently, just be here, and all questions will disappear. I am not interested in answering you, I am interested in dissolving your questions. And when all questions disappear, the questioner also disappears -- it cannot exist without questions. When there is no question and no questioner, what bliss, what ecstasy! You cannot imagine, you cannot dream, you cannot comprehend right now. Then the whole mystery of life opens up, mysteries upon mysteries...there is no end to it.

The third question:

Question 3

BELOVED MASTER,

I HAVE HEARD MANY SPIRITUAL SAINTS IN MY LIFE -- WHY DO THEY ALL SPEAK A VERY DIFFICULT LANGUAGE?

Kamla Kant, they have to, because they know nothing. If they speak simple language as I am speaking to you, the day-to-day language, they will not be able to hide their

ignorance. Behind the camouflage of big words they can hide their ignorance; that is one of the trade secrets. And people are so foolish that if they can't understand what is being said to them, they think it must be something great.

The incomprehensible looks to them as if it is something profound. The comprehensible seems to be superficial. Hence, down the ages your so-called saints have been using very complicated, complex, difficult language, using big words, using dead languages, so nobody understands. Latin, Sanskrit, Arabic -- that's what is being used by your so-called saints.

When you hear them you can't figure it out, what it is all about, and, naturally, you cannot say, "I don't understand your language" -- that is humiliating. So you start nodding your head, "Yes, it is true." They are hiding their ignorance, you are hiding your ignorance -- this is a mutual conspiracy. You know it perfectly well.

When you go to the physician, he writes the prescription in Latin or Greek. Why can't he write in simple English or Hindi or Marathi? If he writes in simple English that you understand, you will think him a fool, because he is writing such things -- how can such simple things help your great complex disease? And if he writes in simple language, you are not going to give the chemist fifty rupees for it; you will go to the marketplace and purchase the same things for two rupees.

The physician writes the prescription in such a language...and it is always illegible. Even if you go back again to the doctor to ask what he has written, he will be in difficulty.

I have heard that Mulla Nasruddin was using a prescription from a doctor for many things: he has used it as a ticket in a train, because the conductor could not read it; he used it in the moviehouse, because the ticket-checker could not read it -- he used it in many many ways. He used it as a pass to see a certain minister. He told me, "For two months this prescription has been such a help -- wherever I want to enter and whatsoever I want to do, I just present this prescription because they cannot read it and they cannot admit that they cannot read it. They simply allow me, they have to allow me."

This is a well-known secret, that saints who are bogus are bound to use very difficult language; otherwise, you will be able to see that they are as ignorant as you are, or sometimes even more ignorant than you are. They create a great camouflage, a facade, of big words from dead languages. They quote scriptures, high-sounding words, and you are simply at a loss as to what to do. Either accept your ignorance and ask them what they are saying, or simply say that it must be something very profound -- how can a man like you, a sinner, ignorant, unknowledgeable, irreligious, understand it?

A preacher was asked to conduct a revival in a small southern town. There being no hotel, he was housed with one of the church sisters, a young widow. After the revival, taking his leave, he said to the hostess, "Sister Jones, never in all my ecclesiastical career have I encountered such an abundant, satisfying and abiding manifestation of

thorough, complete, and delightful exemplification of gratitude, graciousness, appreciativeness and hospitality as you have demonstrated."

Sister Jones smiled, simpered, and answered, "Parson, I don't know what all those big words mean, but want to say that you are a real world beater, a strong repeater, and that you do it neater, sweeter and more completer with less peter than any other person I ever had here!"

You can use very complex language, but you cannot deceive those who know -- you can only deceive those who don't know. If you read Hegel's books you will come across sentences which go on running for pages. By the time you reach the end of the sentence, you have already forgotten the beginning. It is almost impossible to make any sense out of it. Hence, when Hegel was alive, he was thought to be the greatest philosopher who had ever lived on the earth. But as people went into his books more closely -- scholars worked and thrashed it out and figured things out -- it was found that he was not saying anything very special. Much was absolute nonsense -- but with great words.

Great words attract people, big words fascinate people, hypnotize people.

You ask me, "Why do they all speak a very difficult language?"

...Otherwise, who is going to listen to them? For what?

A farmer with two lazy sons, once ordered them to clean out the crapperhole. They simply dug a new one and moved the shit-house a few feet over. One night the old man had a call of nature and ran out back along the well-worn path, falling into the pit. Up to his neck in shit, he began hollering, "Fire! Fire!"

People came running, pulled him out, and cleaned him off, then asked why he had yelled "Fire!"

"Do you think anyone would have come if I hollered 'Shit!'?"

The reason why they use difficult language is simple; otherwise, who is going to come? They can't talk like me -- I am simply using the language that you use. I am simply talking to you! This is not a sermon, just a dialogue between friends, gossiping -- it is not a gospel.

And you can use simple words, day-to-day words only if you really have something to convey, otherwise not. If you don't have anything to convey, then you will have to use big words out of necessity.

The last question:

Question 4

BELOVED MASTER,

ARE NOT ALL THE PRIESTS THE WORST ENEMIES OF GOD?

Deepesh, not all the priests, but just the few -- the pope, the shankaracharyas. These are the people who are the enemies of God; otherwise, poor priests are simply trying somehow to make their bread and butter. They have nothing to do with God -- they are

not friends, they are not enemies. They don't have any time for God. It is just a profession, and a poor profession at that. The poor priest doesn't get more money than the lowest clerk, and he runs the whole day from one temple to another, from one house to another -- he is almost a beggar! No, he is not the enemy of God. He just doesn't know any other way to earn his bread, particularly in India.

In India, priests are brahmins, and brahmins are the poorest people. They don't know anything else, and they can't do anything else -- the traditional mind won't allow them. They can't be cobblers, they can't be carpenters, they can't be sweepers.... The brahmins down the ages have lived on only one thing: praying to gods. But if you simply go on praying to God, you will die, you will starve. Money is not going to shower on you from the skies; it has never happened. So you have to use your praying capacity, your scriptural knowledge, as a profession.

But the poor priest is not the enemy or anything. He does not know anything about God, he is not really interested in God at all.

I remember:

A priest used to live just behind my house when I was a child. I used to torture him with great questions: "Does God exist? Is the soul immortal? What is the philosophy of karma?" One day he said to me, "You please don't bother me. I tell you the truth: I don't know anything. And you are a kind of nuisance! Nobody asks me these questions -- I am a simple priest. People just ask me to do puja -- worship -- so I go, and they pay me two rupees, three rupees, per day. Somehow I am managing. I have three children, an old father, mother, wife, and also I have to pretend that I am living perfectly well, because that's how a brahmin should pretend. He is the high caste, so I have to pretend that everything is going well.

"And then after the whole day's work when I come home, you are sitting here! I have earned only three rupees in the whole day, and we are almost starving. Now, who bothers whether God exists or not! And I don't know at all. I only know how to worship, and I can worship any god -- just give me the money."

So please, Deepesh, don't think that all the priests...not all the priests, only a few cunning ones are against God. They are worshippers of the Devil, they are the reason that very few people have been able to become buddhas. But the other priests, ninety-nine percent of them, are just poor people not knowing what to do. Traditionally, just knowing one thing, they can beg. But they are high caste, so they beg with a method. That method is their ritual for worship.

A man sees signs on the highway saying ONE MILE TO GRANDMA'S CAT-HOUSE. Overcome by curiosity and surprise that anyone should have the nerve to advertise so plainly, he goes in.

An old lady admits him and snaps, "Two dollars, please, and you can go right through the door ahead of you at the end of the hall."

He pays, goes through the door, which slams shut behind him, and finds himself out in the yard, which is full of wooden boxes with wire fronts, inside of which are some mangy cats. Overhead is a small hand-lettered sign: "You have now been screwed by grandma. Please do not tell the secret -- I am just an old lady trying to make ends meet."

Enough for today.