

Rinzai: Master of the Irrational

Talks on Zen

Talks given from 23/10/88 pm to 31/10/88 pm

English Discourse series

CHAPTER 1

The Master of the shouts

23 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

RINZAI BECAME KNOWN AS THE MASTER OF THE SHOUTS. ON ONE OCCASION, A MONK ASKED, "WHAT ABOUT THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF THE BUDDHA-DHARMA?"

RINZAI SHOUTED – THE MONK BOWED.

"DO YOU SAY THAT'S A GOOD SHOUT?" RINZAI ASKED.

THE MONK COMMENTED: "THE THIEF IN THE GRASS HAS MET COMPLETE DEFEAT."

"WHAT'S MY OFFENSE?" RINZAI ASKED.

THE MONK REPLIED, "IT WON'T BE PARDONED A SECOND TIME."

RINZAI GAVE A SHOUT.

Maneesha, this silent and beautiful evening we are going to start a new series of meditations on the sutras of Rinzaï. Rinzaï is one of the most loved masters in the tradition of Zen.

The first transmission of the light happened between Gautam Buddha and Mahakashyapa. The second great transmission happened between Bodhidharma and his successor. Bodhidharma took the ultimate experience of consciousness from India to China; Rinzaï introduced the same consciousness, the same path of entering into oneself, from China to Japan.

These three names – Mahakashyapa, Bodhidharma and Rinzi – stand like great peaks of the Himalayas.

One of the most difficult things is to change an experience into explanation, and from one language to another it becomes almost an impossible task. But Bodhidharma managed it, and Rinzi also managed. This transmission of the lamp has to be understood deeply; only then will you be able to understand the sutras that follow.

No language is able to translate an inner experience, a subjective experience, for the simple reason that language is created for the objective world, about things, about people. No language has been created about the innermost center of your being, for the simple reason that when two men of the same experience meet there is no need to say anything. Their very presence, their very silence, the depth of their eyes and the grace of their gestures is enough.

There are only three possible situations. Either two enlightened beings meet, then language is not needed; they both meet beyond language, their meeting is the meeting of no-mind.

The second situation is if two unenlightened people meet: they will talk much, they will use great words, much philosophy, much metaphysics, but it will all be meaningless. It will not be supported by their experience. They are just parrots, repeating other people's words. Obviously they cannot create the language for the buddhas. They have no idea what it is in the innermost core of your being.

The third possibility is a meeting between an enlightened person and an unenlightened person. The enlightened person knows, the unenlightened person does not know. But although the enlightened person knows, it is not enough to convey it. To know is one thing; to transfer it into language is another thing.

You know what love is – you can sing a song, you can dance, but you cannot say a single word about what love is. You can have it, you can be overwhelmed by it, you can know the absolute experience of love, but still you cannot bring even a fragment of it into words. Words are not meant for it. To transfer it from one language to another language is almost an impossibility.

Even Buddha did not say anything to Mahakashyapa. Mahakashyapa simply lived with Buddha for many years sitting silently under his tree. He never asked a question, he simply waited and waited and waited. The longer he waited the more silent he became. The longer and deeper his patience, the greater became his trust and his love and his gratitude. Just by waiting he was going through a metamorphosis. He was changing into a new man. Nobody would have known it if by chance this incident had not happened.

A great philosopher of those days, Maulingaputta, came to Buddha. In India in those days it was a very common tradition that teachers would go to other teachers to discuss matters. With great respect they would fight tooth and nail, and whoever was defeated would become the disciple of the victorious one.

Maulingaputta had defeated hundreds of teachers and he had come to Gautam Buddha now with five hundred followers to challenge him. This challenge was not antagonistic; this challenge was absolutely in search for truth.

Maulingaputta said with deep respectfulness, "I want to challenge you to have a debate with me."

Buddha said, "There is no problem... but that will not decide anything. You have been discussing with hundreds of teachers and you have been victorious, not because you have the truth but because you are more logical, more argumentative, more sophisticated than the others. It does not mean that you have the truth; it simply means you are better educated – you have done your homework better than the others, you are clever, more intelligent and have a sharper logical capacity. But that does not mean you have the truth.

"Do you want to inquire about the truth or just to have a debate? – because with these hundreds of debates, what has happened? You have gathered hundreds of followers and you don't have the truth yourself. Now you have taken responsibility for hundreds of followers. Do you understand what you are doing?"

Those days were of tremendous honesty. Maulingaputta said, "You are right. I don't know as an experience what truth is, but I can argue about anything. I have been trained in argumentation." He was a sophist. Sophists can argue either for or against, it doesn't matter.

In Greece, before Socrates, there was no philosophy, but only sophistry. Teachers were roaming around teaching people how to argue. It does not matter for what, and whether you are right or wrong is irrelevant. What is relevant is whether you have a weightier argument than the other.

Socrates changed the whole history of philosophy in the West. He said that this is absolutely stupid. Just being logically more proficient does not mean you have the truth. Somebody may have the truth... and it is more probable that the man who has the truth may not be able even to say it. The question of arguing about it, for it, does not arise. He may not even find words to convey it.

Buddha said to Maulingaputta, "If you are really a man in search of truth, then sit down by my side for two years as if you are not – no questions, no communications – and after two years I will remind you that the day has come; now you can challenge me."

At this moment Mahakashyapa, who had been there for thirty years with Buddha, suddenly burst out laughing. The whole gathering of ten thousand monks could not believe it: this man had never spoken a word to anybody, not even to Buddha. He had never come even to touch his feet or to say hello. He remained sitting far away under his tree. He had monopolized the tree and nobody else could sit there. What had happened that he suddenly started laughing so loudly? Maulingaputta said, "What is the matter?"

Buddha said, "You can ask him yourself."

Mahakashyapa said, "The matter is simple. This man, Gautam Buddha, is cheating you. He cheated me; he told me also to remain silent for two years. Now thirty years have passed, and the question does not arise. My silence has deepened. Now I know who I am. I know the very height of my consciousness. Not that I have found any answer – there is no question and no answer, just a pure clear silence.

"So if you want to ask him, we will all enjoy. You can ask, but this is the time to ask. Don't wait for two years. That's why I laughed: again he is back to his tricks. There are many here who came with the

same desire” – Sariputra and Moggalyan and other great philosophers of that time had come with the same desire to discuss – “but this barrier of two years’ silence is very dangerous. If you want to ask anything now, right now is the time. That’s why I laughed.”

Maulingaputta had brought a beautiful lotus flower as a gift for Gautam Buddha. Buddha called Mahakashyapa and gave the lotus flower to him. This is called in the Zen tradition “the first transmission.” Nothing has been said, but everything has been heard. Mahakashyapa’s silence and his childlike laughter were enough to prove he had found it. The giving of the lotus flower to Mahakashyapa is a certificate.

In this way Mahakashyapa became the first patriarch of the Zen tradition. After him there have been six others. Again and again from master to disciple the flame has been transferred in silence. The sixth was a woman, and Bodhidharma was her disciple. Those were the golden days – when a woman, particularly in the East, was not thought to be inferior to man. She could become the master. She transferred her understanding to Bodhidharma and told him, “Your work is to pass over the Himalayas and go to China.”

It is a difficult task, first, to go by foot across the Himalayas. It took three years for poor Bodhidharma to reach China. And then the greatest barrier was that he knew nothing of Chinese – it would be difficult even if you knew Chinese – but he managed. He was surrounded slowly, slowly by people who were really thirsty.

All that was happening was that he would sit silently facing the wall. He sat for nine years continuously, and those who wanted to sit would come and sit around him. Just sitting around him without any language, without any communication, some energy started moving. Something started happening to people. Their lifestyles changed, their lives became a grace and a beauty.

After fourteen years Bodhidharma left China and went back to disappear into the Himalayas. He was too old now. You cannot find a better place to disappear than the Himalayas – utter silence, eternal snows which have never melted, thousands of places where nobody has ever reached.

Before leaving he called four of his disciples and told them, “I am leaving, my time has come. This body cannot contain me anymore. Soon my consciousness will open its wings and will be gone. Before it happens, I want to reach to the Himalayas. I have called you four; one of you is going to be my successor. So this is a great test. I am asking the same question to all four. Who is my successor will depend on your answers.”

Bodhidharma asked, “What is the essence of my coming from India to China?”

The first man said, “You have come to spread the great experience of Gautam Buddha.”

Bodhidharma said, “You are right, but barely. You are just my skin. Sit down.”

He looked to the next disciple, who said, “Your coming to China means bringing the very revolution in the innermost being from unconsciousness to consciousness.”

Bodhidharma said, “A little better, but still not satisfactory. Sit down.”

He looked at the third disciple, and the third disciple said, "You have come to spread that which cannot be said."

Bodhidharma said, "You are far better than the other two. But even saying this much, that nothing can be said about it, you have said something. Just sit down. The first one has my skin, the second one has my bones, you have my flesh."

He looked at the fourth one who had only tears of gratitude and joy and just collapsed at the feet of Bodhidharma without saying a word.

Bodhidharma told him, "You have my very marrow, you are my chosen disciple. What others could not say with their words you have said with your tears. What others could not say with great significant statements, you have stated by your gratitude."

Rinzai comes after a few more patriarchs. And just as Bodhidharma was sent by his master, Rinzai's master sent him to Japan. It was again the same difficult task, but just as Mahakashyapa succeeded and Bodhidharma succeeded, Rinzai also succeeded in creating silence, in turning people inwards.

The message is not linguistic.

The message is existential.

The master can only create a certain situation, a certain device in which, if you allow, if you are receptive, you can be transformed. This transformation is almost a death and a resurrection. Your old personality will fade away; your original face will show.

The face that you are carrying right now is given to you by the society, by the culture, by the education, by the parents. Your personality is not your originality; your originality has been covered with all kinds of lies, convenient to the society and the vested interests.

Being with a master your personality is going to drop just as dead leaves drop. You will remain utterly naked, as you were born. All knowledge that you have borrowed will disappear. You will be as innocent as a child. In this innocence there is no need to say anything.

That's what happened to Maulingaputta. After two years he completely forgot about the time. Those two years were of such silence.... For a few days he counted, then he dropped the idea of counting. For a few days thoughts passed through his mind, but how long can they...? If you are not interested in them, if you are just a mirror, they come like clouds and go away, without leaving any trace behind. After two years he was pure innocence – no question, no answer, no debate, no challenge. Those were all parts of the personality that had melted down in those two years living in the energy field of a buddha.

Buddha himself told Maulingaputta, "Have you forgotten? Today two years are complete. Now if you want to challenge me, if you want to ask any question and discuss anything, I am ready."

Maulingaputta touched Buddha's feet and said, "Mahakashyapa was right. I am no more; who is there to challenge you? I am no more; who is going to ask the question, and who is going to listen

to the answer? These two years passed so soon. It seems as if just the other day I had come here. You have done a miracle.”

Buddha said, ”I have not done anything. Just being in my presence, slowly, slowly your heart starts being in a kind of synchronicity with the master’s heart. By and by you melt down in the warmth and love of the master. This has been my experience – that at least two years is the time necessary to complete the process. Forgive me for keeping you waiting for two years, but there is no other way of reaching from heart to heart, from being to being.”

Rinzai did the same miracle in Japan, and his credit is tremendous because in Japan Zen reached to the highest peak. The seed was born in India, in Gautam Buddha. It was carried as a flower by Mahakashyapa for six generations. Bodhidharma, who carried it as a full blown flower to China, was the seventh. Even the emperor came to receive Bodhidharma; his fame had reached before him. But the emperor could not understand the ways of Zen.

Zen has a certain way, a certain approach which is not available to any other religious tradition. It is unique, a category in itself.

The emperor Wu had come from far away, from his capital to the border of China, to receive Bodhidharma. He was shocked at what he saw, because Bodhidharma was carrying one shoe on his head and one shoe was on his foot.

Now, the emperor was a very sophisticated man; he had a great court of very cultured people. This kind of behavior... but just because of his sophistication and culture he could not say anything about it. He was not yet even introduced. He avoided seeing the shoe sitting on Bodhidharma’s head.

The emperor asked – because he was the man who had made thousands of Buddha statues in China, had brought one thousand scholars from India to translate in combination with Chinese scholars all the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. He had done much and converted the whole country into a land of Buddha. Obviously the monks used to say to him, ”You have accumulated too much virtue. All these virtuous acts... immense is going to be your reward in the other world.” So he asked Bodhidharma, ”I have done all these things; what is going to be my reward?”

Bodhidharma said, ”You idiot! You will fall directly into hell. You are asking for a reward? The very idea of reward is of greed. The very idea of achieving something is not a reflection of your wisdom.”

The emperor was shocked, his court was shocked – but how to get away now? This man is not the right man to bring into the country. Still he asked another question, did not take any note of the insulting language that Bodhidharma had used. He said, ”Your Holiness...” and he could not complete his sentence.

Bodhidharma said, ”There is nothing holy, nothing unholy. All is empty, just pure nothingness. These divisions of the mind, the sacred and the profane, the holy and the unholy, the saint and the sinner, do not exist as you enter into deeper meditations. All divisions disappear. So don’t call me ‘your holiness’; I have left behind that kind of childish language of being holy, of being unholy. Be straightforward.”

The king said, "My mind continuously remains cluttered with thoughts. I have been reading the Buddhist scriptures, and they all say that unless you are thoughtless and yet perfectly aware you will not find the truth."

Bodhidharma said unexpectedly – he was a very unexpected man, you could not have predicted his behavior – he said, "If that is the problem, come early in the morning. I am not entering China, I am going to live outside in this small temple. You can come early in the morning, at three o'clock. But come alone – no courtiers, no guards, no arms. Just come alone, and I will put all your thoughts aside from your mind. I will bring silence to your mind."

The emperor was very much afraid. This man seems to be almost insane. The whole night he could not sleep, was hanging between whether to go or not to go, alone "... and that man is so mad, keeping one shoe on his head, calling me 'idiot,' and he has a big staff and he has told me not to bring any arms. He can do anything: he may hit me, he may throw a rock" – he thought all kinds of things.

But by the time of going he felt a great pull: "Whatever he said, however he behaved, he has a tremendous presence and a great magnetic pull. I will risk it."

He went to the temple, and Bodhidharma was waiting for him. Bodhidharma said, "It is a very simple matter. You just sit here and I am sitting in front of you. You see my staff – if I feel that some thought is stubborn and is not leaving you, I will hit your head. Your work is only to watch your thoughts without any judgment. Just be a witness."

The emperor thought, "Perhaps I have taken a wrong step. This man can hit any moment, because my mind is full of thoughts. But let us try, now that I have come. It will look very cowardly to go away." So he sat before Bodhidharma, just watching his thoughts.

The watching of the thoughts implies no judgment, no appreciation, no identification. Just watch as you watch the crowd passing on the road, or you watch the clouds moving in the sky – with no judgment. Your mind is only a screen. A few clouds are moving; you simply watch. You are the watcher, and everything else in the world is the watched.

As the morning sun was rising the whole aura of the emperor changed. Just within two hours there was no thought left. Witnessing is such a fire, the only fire that can bring you to your truth, that can burn all your falsity, all your phoniness. Bodhidharma saw the changing face, a new grace arising. He shook the emperor and asked him, "Is there any thought anymore?"

The emperor fell at his feet and told him, "You certainly did it! I pray you, don't leave China. All those scholars and monks and priests are simply parrots. They go on talking about witnessing and watching, but you have given me the experience. Without teaching me about witnessing you have simply made me a witness. I don't need anything anymore."

The moment you find your witness, you have found your ultimate eternal being. That is your purest consciousness. That makes you a buddha, and it is everybody's potential.

Rinzai managed to transform the whole fabric of the Japanese consciousness. He did more than anybody else. He brought new dimensions into meditation. It is unbelievable but he managed to

transform everything into meditation. For example archery... Now, nobody can think that archery can be a meditative act; but Rinzai maintained that every act, if you do it with full awareness, just as a witness, not as a doer, becomes meditation.

A little note about Rinzai, master of the irrational.

RINZAI, ALSO KNOWN AS LIN-CHI, WAS BORN IN THE EARLY NINTH CENTURY AND WAS TO BECOME THE FOUNDER OF ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SCHOOLS OF ZEN.

BRILLIANT AS A CHILD, LATER, WHEN RINZAI BECAME A PRIEST, HE STUDIED THE SUTRAS AND SCRIPTURES. REALIZING THE ANSWER DID NOT LIE WITHIN THEM, HE WENT ON PILGRIMAGE, VISITING OBAKU AND DAIGU, TWO GREAT MASTERS. AFTER HIS ENLIGHTENMENT HE BECAME PRIEST OF A SMALL TEMPLE ON THE BANKS OF THE HU-T'O RIVER.

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

RINZAI BECAME KNOWN AS THE MASTER OF THE SHOUTS. His speciality consists... he used shouts as a method to silence you – a sudden shout.

You are asking about God, you are asking about heaven, you are asking about great philosophical or theological problems and the master immediately shouts. Your mind gets a shock, almost an electric shock. For a moment you are not, only the shout is. For a moment the mind stops, time stops – and that is the whole secret of meditation.

Many mystics around the world have used sounds, but in a very superficial way. Rinzai used shouts in a tremendously deep way. His shouts would become just like a sword entering in you, piercing to the very center.

You can understand... when you shout Yaa-Hoo! your mind disappears. Yaa-Hoo! has no meaning, but shouting it you get suddenly thrown to your own center, and once you have touched your own center, even for a simple glimpse, your life has started changing.

Rinzai would shout at the disciples to give them a first experience of their centering. You are both a circumference and a center. You live on the circumference; the shout simply pushes you to the center. Once you experience being at the center you suddenly see the whole world changing. Your eyes are no more the same; your clarity and transparency are absolute. You see the same green leaves greener, the same roses rosier, the same life as a festival, as a ceremony. You would love to dance.

And then the disciples, once they learned that the shout can help them to reach to their very center... It was a strange sight when Rinzai started accepting disciples near the river. The disciples would be shouting around the whole valley, and the valley would resound with shouts. You could tell from miles away that you were somewhere close to Rinzai. It was not only that he was shouting, but that shouting was a method to throw you from the circumference to the center.

There are many ways to throw you to the center. Every way is valid if you reach to your center, because your center is the only immortal part in you. Everything else is going to die.

Today Professor Barks is here. He has done a tremendous job in translating Rumi. He has come as close as possible, but I don't think he knows that Rumi's whole effort by whirling is to find the center. If you whirl for hours, you will see slowly that something at the very center is not moving at all, and that is you. Your body is whirling, but your consciousness is a pillar of light.

Rumi attained his first enlightenment by whirling for thirty-six hours continuously. People thought he was mad. Even today a small group of his followers continues. They are called whirling dervishes. But the point is the same: whirling, your whole body becomes a cyclone, and your witnessing self becomes the center. Everything moves around you, but the center remains unmoving. To know this unmoving center is to know the very master key of all the mysteries of life.

Rinzai had no idea about Rumi, neither did Rumi have any idea about Rinzai, but both were working on the same strategy – somehow to force you to the center. As your consciousness becomes deeper, as it becomes an easy thing to go to the center just like you go in your house and come out, you have become a buddha.

Then slowly, slowly your center starts changing your circumference. Then you cannot be violent, then you cannot be destructive; then you are love. Not that you love – you are love. Then you are silence, then you are truth, although the old you has disappeared. That was your circumference, that was the cyclone that is gone. Now, only the center remains.

Rinzai's method is far simpler than Rumi's. Very few people will be able to whirl for hours, but shouting is a simpler method. Anybody can shout and can shout wholeheartedly, and it can be very intense and urgent. Whirling you will take hours to find out the center; shouting, a split second and you are at the center.

The anecdote...

RINZAI BECAME KNOWN AS THE MASTER OF THE SHOUTS. ON ONE OCCASION A MONK ASKED, "WHAT ABOUT THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF THE BUDDHA-DHARMA?"

Now, he is asking something important. What is the cardinal principle of the religion of Buddha?

RINZAI SHOUTED – THE MONK BOWED.

"DO YOU SAY THAT'S A GOOD SHOUT?" RINZAI ASKED.

THE MONK COMMENTED: "THE THIEF IN THE GRASS HAS MET COMPLETE DEFEAT."

"WHAT IS MY OFFENCE?" RINZAI ASKED.

THE MONK REPLIED, "IT WON'T BE PARDONED A SECOND TIME."

RINZAI GAVE ANOTHER SHOUT.

The first shout of Rinzai was perfectly good. The monk bowed down because he felt a great relief by moving from the circumference to the center. But Rinzai was a little suspicious. Because everything in this world becomes traditional, it had started becoming traditional that Rinzai will shout and you have to bow down to show that you have understood it, that it has reached to your center. It was becoming a tradition.

This is very unfortunate. Everything becomes a habit, a ritual, a tradition, and loses all meaning. Now, his bowing down may be true or may be just a mannerism. That's why Rinzai asked, "DO YOU SAY THAT'S A GOOD SHOUT?"

THE MONK COMMENTED: "THE THIEF IN THE GRASS HAS MET COMPLETE DEFEAT."

What does he mean by this? The monk is saying, "You have been found being unsuccessful. Your shout missed."

THE MONK COMMENTED: "THE THIEF IN THE GRASS HAS MET COMPLETE DEFEAT."

"WHAT IS MY OFFENSE?" RINZAI ASKED.

THE MONK REPLIED, "IT WON'T BE PARDONED A SECOND TIME."

The monk is saying, "Your shout missed." He is not saying that shouting at him a second time will not be pardoned; he is saying, "Your being a failure will not be pardoned – IT WON'T BE PARDONED A SECOND TIME. The first time I forgive you; you missed, you did not reach to my center. I bowed down because you tried, you tried hard. But the second time it will not be pardoned."

Anybody reading it will think that he is saying, "If you shout a second time it will not be pardoned." That is not the case. He is saying, "Your failure will not be pardoned a second time."

RINZAI GAVE A SHOUT – and the anecdote ends suddenly. After the shout there is silence. The second shout succeeded. Now the monk is silent, Rinzai is silent.

There have been long progressions for reaching to yourself, like yoga. But devices like Rinzai's are very simple, don't require any discipline as a prerequisite. Anybody... no need of having a certain character; good or bad, sinner or saint, it does not matter. What matters is to reach to the center, because at the center you are neither a sinner nor a saint. Your being a sinner or a saint are all on the periphery. Our whole society lives on the periphery; all our divisions are very superficial.

I am reminded of a great follower of Buddha, Nagarjuna. He lived naked. Perhaps Nagarjuna is the greatest logician that has walked on the earth. Aristotle is no comparison to him, neither is Shankara; Nagarjuna's argumentation is the most refined. But he used to live naked – a beautiful man – and even kings and queens were disciples to him. In a certain capital the queen was his disciple. She asked him, "You will have to give me a favor. I want to take away your begging bowl."

He said, "That is not a problem. You can have it."

She said, "That is only half of it. I have prepared a begging bowl for you. This one you give to me; it will be a present, the most precious to me in the whole world. And I have made a begging bowl which you cannot reject, you have to accept it."

He said, "I have not seen it either."

She said, "Seeing or not seeing is not the question. First, give me the promise that you will not reject it."

So he said, "Okay, I will not reject it."

She brought out the bowl, and it was made of solid gold, studded with diamonds. Nagarjuna said, "You don't understand the situation. Whether I reject it or not, I will not be able to keep it even for a few hours. A naked man carrying a begging bowl made of solid gold, studded with great diamonds – do you think I will be able to keep it? But I have promised, so I will accept it."

A thief was watching the whole transaction. He followed Nagarjuna. He knew that this fellow lives outside the city in a dilapidated temple, and every afternoon after he has taken his food, he goes to sleep. This is a very good time to take this begging bowl away. Anyway, somebody is going to take it away....

So he went and he was hiding behind a wall by the side of a window watching that somebody else does not enter inside. Nagarjuna made his place to sleep and he had complete awareness that somebody had been following him.

"Why keep him unnecessarily waiting? Anyway I am going to sleep and he will take the begging bowl. It is better to give it him. Why make him a thief?" So he threw the begging bowl outside the window where the thief was sitting.

The thief could not believe it. This is really a strange man. A strange desire arose in the thief that it would be good to have a little time to sit at this man's feet, so he asked from the window, "Can I come in?"

Nagarjuna said, "What do you think I have thrown the begging bowl for? – to bring you in. Come in. That was just an invitation."

The thief could not understand, but was very much impressed by the man.

Nagarjuna said, "I did not want to make you a thief, that's why I have thrown the begging bowl. Now you can have it."

The thief said, "It is so precious; you are a man of great mastery over yourself. I also hope one day I will not be a thief but a master like you."

Nagarjuna said, "Why postpone it? It is a very simple secret. You can become a master."

He said, "You don't understand. I am a thief, I am a born thief. I cannot resist the temptation."

Nagarjuna said, "It does not matter at all. You can remain a thief. I will give you a small meditation: whatever you do, even if you go to steal in the palace, just be a witness of what you are doing. I don't want you not to be a thief; do whatever you want to do, but do it with full awareness. Just be a witness."

He said, "This seems to be simple. I have been going to many saints. They say, 'First you drop stealing, otherwise you cannot be religious.' You are the first man who is not asking me to drop stealing."

Nagarjuna said, "Those saints that you have met are not saints. No saint will ask you to drop stealing. Why? Do it perfectly well. Just remain a witness."

The thief could not understand the strategy. After the third or fourth day he came back to Nagarjuna and said, "You are very clever. In these four days there have been so many opportunities to steal, but as I go to steal, to take something, immediately my hand relaxes. The moment I witness myself stealing it seems to be so embarrassing that I pull my hand back. For four days I have not been able to steal anything."

Nagarjuna said, "Now it is your problem; I have nothing to do with it. You can choose. You can choose witnessing, or you can choose stealing."

The man said, "Only in these four days have I been able to feel my own dignity. I cannot drop witnessing. I am coming with you."

What witnessing does is again throw you back to your center. At the center you are a buddha. On the periphery, who you are does not matter. Once you start living at the center, slowly, slowly your circumference will start changing its colors. It will become as pure as you are at the center. It will become as compassionate as you are at the center. It will take all the fragrance of the center in all your activities.

The authentic religion does not preach morality. Morality comes on its own accord. The authentic religion teaches you to be centered in yourself. Then everything that is good follows, and what is bad simply does not arise. It is not a question of choice; choicelessly you are good. It is not that you are being good; you cannot be otherwise.

This is the miracle of Zen.

Zen simply means witnessing.

These shouts throw you to the center, and once you have learned to be at the center, you will know that on the periphery you are always a beggar, and at the center you are always an emperor. And who wants to be a beggar?

Religion is the alchemy of transforming beggars into emperors.

A great Zen poet, Ikkyu, wrote:

CRAZY MADMAN,

BLOWING UP A CRAZY WIND,

WANDERING HERE AND THERE,

AMIDST BROTHELS AND WINE SHOPS.

IS THERE AN ENLIGHTENED MONK

WHO CAN MATCH ME

EVEN FOR A SINGLE WORD?

I PAINT THE SOUTH; I PAINT THE NORTH;

I AM PAINTING THE WEST AND EAST.

He is saying "People think I am crazy..." CRAZY MADMAN, BLOWING UP A CRAZY WIND, WANDERING HERE AND THERE, AMIDST BROTHELS AND WINE SHOPS.

An authentic buddha is not afraid of brothels and wine shops. The saints who are afraid are really repressed people; they are not transformed beings.

IS THERE AN ENLIGHTENED MONK WHO CAN MATCH ME?

A buddha can move with absolute freedom in the marketplace. Those who renounce the world are the cowards, the escapists, and they have destroyed all the religions of the world. All the religions are in the hands of the cowards.

An authentic religious man is a lion, and he is so centered in himself that he is not worried about being anywhere. He is so certain of his purity, of his eternity, of his divinity that he knows that if a thief comes to him, it is the thief who will have to change; if a prostitute comes to him, it is the prostitute who will have to change.

Our so-called saints are so much afraid. Their fear shows their repressions. A repressed man is not a religious man; he is simply sick, he needs psychiatric treatment.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

OUR LOVE FOR MUSIC, POETRY, DANCE, OUR LOVE FOR LOVE ITSELF – DOESN'T THAT SUGGEST AN URGE IN US TO DISAPPEAR?

IF THAT IS SO, WHY DOES MEDITATION, THE ART OF DISAPPEARING, NOT COME MORE NATURALLY TO US?

Maneesha, music, poetry, dance, love are only half way. You disappear for a moment, then you are back. And the moment is so small....

Just as a great dancer, Nijinsky, said, "When my dance comes to its crescendo, I am no more. Only dance is." But that happens only for a small fragment of time; then again you are back.

According to me, all these – poetry, music, dance, love – are poor substitutes for meditation. They are good, beautiful, but they are not meditation. And meditation does not come naturally to you, because in meditation you will have to disappear forever. There is no coming back. That creates fear.

Meditation is a death – death of all that you are now. Of course there will be a resurrection, but that will be a totally new, fresh original being which you are not even aware is hidden in you.

It happens in poetry, in music, in dance, only for a small moment that you slip out of your personality and touch your individuality. But only because it happens for a small moment, you are not afraid; you always come back.

In meditation, once you are gone in, you are gone in. Then, even when you resurrect you are a totally different person. The old personality is nowhere to be found. You have to start your life again from ABC. You have to learn everything with fresh eyes, with a totally new heart. That's why meditation creates fear.

The UPANISHADS say that the master is a death. It is an incomplete sentence. The master is a death but also a rebirth, a resurrection. A master is nothing but meditation. A master simply gives you a meditation; he cannot do anything else. He gives you the meditation to die and to be reborn.

A meditator can play music and it will have a totally different significance. A meditator can write poetry, but then the poetry will not be only a composition of words. It will express something inexpressible. A meditator can do anything, but he will bring to it a new grace, a new beauty, a new significance.

Music, poetry, dance or love can become hindrances to meditation if you stop at them. First comes meditation, and then you can create great poetry and great music. But you will not be the creator; you will be just a hollow bamboo flute. The universe will sing songs through you, will dance dances through you. You will be only an address – c/o you. Existence will express itself, and you will be just a hollow bamboo.

Meditation makes you a hollow bamboo; then whatever happens through that hollowness, that empty heart belongs to existence itself.

Then existence sings songs. There are very few songs which existence...

For example, in the Bible, the Old Testament, the Song of Solomon is existential. It is very strange that Jews don't want even to mention the Song of Solomon. They are very much worried if somebody discovers the song. It is so beautiful, so authentic and true, but in this world of falseness, phoniness, hypocrisy, anything authentic is suspected.

The UPANISHADS, the BOOK OF TAO or the BOOK OF MIRDAD, very few sculptures... some old classical music – a few pieces have descended from existence itself and the musician has been just an instrument, he has allowed it to take shape, to take form through him. As far as I am concerned, poetry and music and love and dance are more religious activities than the so-called religious rituals, because at least they give you a little glimpse. If you follow that glimpse you will enter into meditation.

Meditation directly and naturally does not attract you because of a great fear of death. You don't know after death whether there is going to be a resurrection or not. That's the place where a master is needed to give you a promise, a trust: "Don't be worried. That which is dying is not you, and that which is arising is your original being."

But you can have a master only if you can trust someone. It is going into very dangerous ways. Meditation is the most dangerous thing. You need someone who has been on the path, who has been treading on the path, coming and going. You need someone who can create courage, encouragement and trust in you that you can take the quantum leap.

Now it is Sardar Gurudayal Singh's time.

One morning Nancy Reagan is sorting out the laundry when she comes across one of Ronald's white shirts. It seems Ronnie's ball-point pen broke, and it spread a nasty red stain with a dark center on the chest pocket of the shirt.

When Nancy gives the shirt to her Chinese laundryman, Wank, he holds it up, and looks at the stain for a couple of minutes.

Then, shaking his head with approval, Wank says to Nancy, "Nice shot!"

Ronald Reagan is brought to trial on a charge of molesting a female chimpanzee at the Washington Zoo. He is convicted quickly by a unanimous decision.

Afterwards, old Judge Grump looks at Reagan and says, "Mr. President, sir, do you have anything to say to this court before I pass sentence on you?"

"Your honor," says the senile president, "only one thing: If I had known there would be such a fuss about all this, I would have married the bitch!"

Father Dingle goes to Jerusalem for a holiday to see all the holy relics. Out of curiosity, he goes to visit the famous Jewish shrine, the Wailing Wall. When he gets there, he watches in amazement as all the Jewish men pray wildly, waving their arms and with their whiskers whirling in the breeze.

Suddenly, he notices a man standing quite calmly, talking softly to the wall, without any wild gestures at all.

It is strange because Jews cannot talk without waving their hands.

Father Dingle goes over to the man and introduces himself.

"Good afternoon! My name is Father Dingle," says the priest, "and I couldn't help noticing that your method of praying is different from everyone else around here."

"Praying?" says Moishe, the old Jew. "Who is praying? I am talking to God! I am asking for his advice."

"Oh!" says Father Dingle, in surprise. "Well, I don't want to be nosey but what kind of advice?"

"All types of advice," replies Moishe. "Like: Should I let my son go to Poona? Should I let my daughter marry her no-good, American boyfriend? How to persuade my wife Ruthie to be more adventurous in bed? – things like that."

"I see," says Father Dingle. "And what does God tell you?"

"Ha!" says Moishe. "Tell me? I've been standing here for thirty years and he has told me nothing! It is like talking to a brick wall!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent.

Close your eyes...

Feel your body to be completely frozen.

Now look inwards, collecting your total consciousness

with a great urgency

as if this is going to be your last moment.

Penetrate into the center of your being.

The moment you reach the center

you are a buddha.

Suddenly, thousands of flowers

start showering on you.

The whole universe starts rejoicing.

At this moment only consciousness is there.

All divisions disappear...

just a witnessing...

and slowly, slowly the Buddha Auditorium
becomes a lake of consciousness.

Not ten thousand buddhas,
but one buddhahood –
just a lake without any ripples.

This is your original face.

The whole revolution of religion
is to bring the buddha
from the center to the circumference.

How blissful and how peaceful
the moment has become!

The evening was beautiful in itself
but the presence of ten thousand buddhas
has made it a majestic splendor.

To make the witnessing more clear,

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax.

Just watch.

The body is not you,
the mind is not you,
you are only the witnessing.

This experience of witnessing
is the ultimate truth of your being.

This is what the UPANISHADS have called

satyam, shivam, sundram –

truth, good, beauty.

In this space you are eternal.

You have never known any birth,

you have never known any death.

All that happens on the circumference.

At the center there is no death, no birth...

just a pure sky.

You are blessed to be here

in this tremendously valuable moment.

Gather as many flowers and fragrances...

persuade the buddha to come along with you.

Soon Nivedano will be calling you back.

Before that, witness the path that you have gone through.

You will be coming back through the same path.

This acquaintance with the path

that leads from the circumference to the center

is of uttermost importance,

because you will have to go

again and again and again

till your circumference and center become one.

When Nivedano calls you back,

remember that you are a buddha.

Come back with the same grace

and the beauty

and the joy

and the blissfulness.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back,

but come back as a buddha,

silently, peacefully,

with a great grace.

Sit for a few moments, just to recollect

and remember where you have been,

what path you have followed.

What you have experienced

has to become part of your daily life.

You have to express your buddha

in your actions, in your gestures,

in your words,

in your silences.

Slowly, slowly the old disappears

and the new is born.

This new man

is the only hope for the whole world.

We have to spread the message

to every human being around the earth,

”You are the buddha;

just you have forgotten it.”

Remember,

it is not something to be achieved,

but only remembered.

Hence it is very easy and very obvious.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 2

Empty heart, empty mind

25 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

ON ONE OCCASION RINZAI SAID, "WHOEVER COMES TO ME, I DO NOT FAIL HIM: I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE HE COMES FROM. IF HE SHOULD COME IN A PARTICULAR WAY, HE WOULD BE AS IF HE HAD LOST HIMSELF. IF HE SHOULD NOT COME IN A PARTICULAR WAY, HE WOULD HAVE BOUND HIMSELF WITHOUT A ROPE. NEVER EVER SPECULATE HAPHAZARDLY. UNDERSTANDING AND NOT UNDERSTANDING ARE BOTH WRONG. I SAY THIS STRAIGHT OUT. ANYONE IN THE WORLD IS FREE TO DENOUNCE ME AS HE WILL."

THE MASTER FURTHER SAID, "EACH STATEMENT MUST COMPRISE THE GATES OF THE THREE MYSTERIES, AND THE GATE OF EACH MYSTERY MUST COMPRISE THE THREE ESSENTIALS. THERE ARE TEMPORARY EXPEDIENTS, AND THERE IS FUNCTIONING. HOW DO ALL OF YOU UNDERSTAND THIS?"

THE MASTER THEN STEPPED DOWN.

Maneesha, Rinzai is right. The way you walk, the way you talk, the way you see – all your gestures indicate your inner reality. It cannot be otherwise, because whatever is shown on the circumference must be coming from the center.

Rinzai is saying, "I can see the person in his wholeness, and whether he is enlightened or not, just by the way he walks or the way he talks." This statement is significant in the sense that enlightenment is not an intellectual phenomenon; it is existential. It transforms your total being.

So whatever you do, it does not matter what it is – even if you don't do anything but simply sit down silently – you cannot deceive a man of enlightenment. He will be able to see through and through, straight into your being. Whether you are silent or speaking does not matter. Even if you are sleeping... the enlightened man sleeps in a different way than the unenlightened. It simply shows that all our actions, gestures, words, silences, arise through our being. All these waves come from the very center.

The unenlightened person creates a different aura around himself. He has no presence; he is almost absent. He is a somnambulist, as if walking in sleep, stumbling in the darkness.

The enlightened man simply is a man whose inner being is full of light. He does not stumble, he does not grope. He has nothing to choose.

This I emphasize: the enlightened man is choiceless. He has not to choose what is good and what is bad. Whatever comes out of his spontaneity is bound to be good, is bound to be beautiful, is bound to be a tremendous grace. His every action or inaction is not only a blessing to himself – he has so much of it that he can bless the whole world.

The enlightened man has become part of the abundance of cosmic reality. He is no more a miser, a small island. He has become a vast continent. He is no more an individual.... First he dropped his personality and attained individuality; then he drops his individuality too and attains to cosmic reality. At that point, he is everywhere and nowhere. Everything around him changes.

So if you see such a man and if your vision is clear, there is no need for him to say to you that he is enlightened.

There is a small incident:

One of Gautam Buddha's disciples, Manjushri, became enlightened. He had been meditating for almost twenty years, and those who had already become enlightened immediately recognized him. Sariputra told him, "Why don't you go and tell the master?"

Manjushri laughed. He said, "Do I have to go to the master for recognition? I know that whenever he comes across me, he will see it. I don't have to say it." And that's how it happened.

The next morning, when Gautam Buddha was going for a morning walk, he came by the side of the tree where Manjushri used to meditate. He stopped, he looked around, and he said, "Manjushri, you should have come and announced your enlightenment. Do you think you can hide fire? All around you there are flames declaring your enlightenment. All around you flowers have blossomed, which may not be visible to the ignorant, but anybody who is enlightened will recognize you whether you say it or not."

Manjushri touched Gautam Buddha's feet and he said, "This was the reason that I did not come to you. If it is authentic, if I am not in a hallucination, if I am not imagining that I have become enlightened, then it is better that Gautam Buddha himself recognizes it, rather than my going to him. He knows hundreds of people who have become enlightened under him. If he passes by me without recognizing it, that simply means my time has not come yet, I am simply imagining."

And that was not the only incident – because under Gautam Buddha more people became enlightened than under any man in history. Ten thousand monks continuously followed him, and all they were doing the whole day was simply meditating, just witnessing their minds. In time, in season, the right climate, the right moment... one by one they started exploding.

My experience is that it is very much a triggering process. If one person becomes enlightened and you are sitting close by him, something may trigger in you. Just his changed energy can give a push to your own energy.

Our enlightenment is not something of a kind that has to be achieved; it is already there, it is our very nature. It is the simplest thing in the world, and that has made it the most difficult.

Going within yourself just needs a small push, and that push need not be physical. It is not physical; it is more something like magnetic energy, or something more like electricity. You don't see it, but it can travel from one person to another person, if the other person is ready enough. He will be surprised by the explosion.

Gautam Buddha allowed ten thousand people to be always with him simply to create an energy field. Somebody is a step ahead of you, somebody is two steps ahead of you, somebody is very close to the explosion. If he explodes, he can create a chain reaction and those who are just behind him may catch the fire. Hence in Zen it is called the transmission of the lamp, or transmission of the light.

But nobody can act like an enlightened man; it is not possible, because enlightenment has no particular form. Each enlightened being is so unique that you cannot imitate. And imitation takes you away from yourself. The more you imitate, the less is the possibility of your becoming enlightened.

So one has to learn how to be with an enlightened man. It is not something to be learned; it is not something like a teaching or a discipline. It is a way of receptivity, of opening, of allowing the master to enter in you.

We are ordinarily very afraid. We keep a distance from each other, and we keep our defenses. We are afraid that somebody may offend us. Defense is necessary. Somebody may humiliate us, somebody may hurt us, so we go on creating defensive measures around our being, and we always keep a little distance even from those we love.

Adolf Hitler never married for the simple reason that he could not allow anybody in his room while he was asleep, because who knows, everybody is a stranger.... He got married just three hours before his death, when the enemies were bombing Berlin and it became absolutely certain that there was no possibility now except defeat. It was only a question of hours.

In the middle of the night he called a priest into his bunker and got married. His friends said to him, "What is the point now that you are preparing poison?"

He said, "Now there is no danger; I will die married. This woman has always been hankering to be married, and I was postponing it." Now there was no point in any defense. He got married and the next thing they did was they both took poison and went on a spiritual honeymoon.

But the fear of not keeping people at a distance is always there. One has to become aware of being with a master. You have to drop your defenses, that's all. You have simply to be open and available. Keep your doors open. At the right moment the master is going to step in – not physically, but just his spiritual energy is going to give a new dance to your being.

Rinzai's statement is significant.

ON ONE OCCASION RINZAI SAID, "WHOEVER COMES TO ME, I DO NOT FAIL HIM: I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE HE COMES FROM."

He does not mean the place from which he is coming, but the space from which he is coming, in what space he is, in what state of consciousness.

IF HE SHOULD COME IN A PARTICULAR WAY, HE WOULD BE AS IF HE HAD LOST HIMSELF.

He will come stumbling, fumbling. He will look... in his eyes you will find that he is simply lost. He does not know where he is going or why he is going. Almost exactly that is the situation for the majority of humanity. Nobody has the sense of direction; they are all just groping.

Rinzai is saying, "I never fail anybody. I simply see straight to which place this man is coming from, in which space he is. I see whether he is hesitant, doubtful, uncertain, looking for guidance, or is full of knowledge which is borrowed, and has a great ego as if he knows."

IF HE SHOULD NOT COME IN A PARTICULAR WAY, HE WOULD HAVE BOUND HIMSELF WITHOUT A ROPE.

Everybody looks as if they are free; nobody is handcuffed, nobody is bound by a rope. But look a little closely: you are bound by too many ropes, which are pulling you in certain directions, and perhaps in contradictory directions. That creates split personalities, that creates fragmentary personalities.

You may call those ropes love, you may call those ropes ambitions, desires, jealousies, hate – it does not matter what you call them, they are all ropes. But if your mind has any content in it, that content becomes your rope.

Only a contentless mind knows what freedom is.

From the outside everybody looks free, but Rinzai is talking about the ropes that are invisible. And you can understand, you can see your own ropes – your fixations with the mother, with the father, with the wife, with the husband, with the children, with your friends, with your enemies.

It happened when Mahatma Gandhi was shot in 1948. Jinnah was the man who had fought Gandhi his whole life for a separation of the country into two parts – a separate and sovereign country for Mohammedans. He was sitting in his garden reading a newspaper when his secretary came running and told him that Gandhi had been shot, he was dead. The secretary could not believe that Jinnah had tears in his eyes. He did not say anything, he simply went back into his room. In fact, at the same moment Jinnah died. He became sick and he never came out of his room.

Many times he was asked, "Why should you be so much concerned? You were perfectly healthy. This news of Gandhi..."

Jinnah said, "Now I can see that even with enemies there is a certain relationship. Without Gandhi I am no more. And if Gandhi can be shot by a Hindu, I can be shot by a Mohammedan any moment." He had never had guards around his home before Gandhi was shot. He had refused, saying that "Even to conceive that any Mohammedan will do any damage to my life is just absurd. I have fought for them, I have given them their country." But the day Gandhi died, he immediately ordered that guards should be put around his home.

Nobody could understand that it would be such a shock to him. He himself could not understand it: "I should rather be happy that Gandhi is dead, but my eyes are full of tears. Without Gandhi I have lost myself. Fighting with him was my whole life. Half of my life is finished. Now I have to live a crippled life" – and he never became healthy again, he died just a few months afterwards.

If you look around yourself you will find many ropes – almost a net. And if there was one rope only, it would be easy to cut it and be free. There are so many ropes... your whole personality consists of ropes. Even though those ropes make you a prisoner – they give you nothing but misery and trouble, they don't allow you to have your dignity and your mastery – somehow they are long-time acquaintances and to drop them feels like you are cutting something of your own being. They have become your second nature.

It happened in the French Revolution that the revolutionaries opened the doors of a great prison thinking that they were doing something great. That prison was meant only for people who were to be imprisoned for their whole lives, the very dangerous criminals, so their handcuffs had no keys, because there was no need, they would never be free. So after handcuffs were put on and chains on their feet, the keys were thrown in a well which was just in the center of the prison.

The revolutionaries tried to cut off their handcuffs, their chains, and they could not believe that the prisoners were so resistant. Somebody had lived for forty years, somebody for fifty years – there was even a man who had been there for seventy years, and he said, "Now the eyes cannot tolerate even to come out in the light. We have been living in dark cells, and after seventy years the world must have changed too much. Even our own friends and wives, most of them must be dead. Even our children won't recognize us.

"It is so cozy and comfortable here – no work, the food is given. It is rotten, but it is given at least every day, you don't have to work for it; you don't have to look for employment. And we have become so accustomed to our small dark cells that we cannot conceive now of another kind of life." But revolutionaries are revolutionaries; they are stubborn people. They forced them. They cut their chains and their handcuffs and forced them out of jail. But they were surprised that by the evening they were all back.

It is something so important, it is far more important than the French Revolution itself. The prisoners begged them, "Don't force us. Outside does not exist for us. The gap is too big – seventy years – and we are living very happily." A few of them said, "We cannot sleep without the chains." They have become almost like teddy bears.

The same is the situation of almost everyone: your chains have become teddy bears. However dirty, smelly, greasy and Italian, but on every airport, on every railway station you will find children dragging their teddy bears. They will not leave them because they cannot sleep without them. With them it feels so warm and they have been such friends, no quarrel.

We are all accustomed to many ropes.

Rinzai is saying, "IF HE SHOULD NOT COME IN A PARTICULAR WAY, HE WOULD HAVE BOUND HIMSELF WITHOUT A ROPE."

Only if he comes like a lion roaring, alone, no more part of the crowd, no more dependent on the crowd, no more a Christian, no more a Hindu, no more a Buddhist – if he has thrown all the scriptures and all the conditionings away, he will come in his full glory, a man in his total dignity.

This dignity is not a comparative thing. It has nothing to do with anybody else; it is not relative. It is his own nature come to full blossoming. He has thrown all hindrances away.

If you come across a man who has no ropes, no chains, no conditionings, you will immediately see the difference between yourself and that person. His freedom will be almost tangible and you will see your slavery clearly in comparison to him. Of how many things you are a slave! Your slavery is multidimensional. But you go on living because everybody else is also living in the same way. You think perhaps this is the only way of life.

This is not the only way of life. In fact, it is not a way of life at all. It is a way of missing life. Without blossoming into your full potential, you have dragged yourself from the cradle to the grave, but you have not lived.

I have heard about a man who died, then he recognized that "My God, I was alive!" – but now it was too late.

Most people will realize only when death strikes, "I have lived without living. I have not danced, I have not blossomed, I have not known myself, and death has come." And death means all doors are being closed. Now one knows nothing of what is going to happen. There is no more future. You cannot plan for tomorrow, and all yesterdays are gone – great opportunities to become awakened, great opportunities to become a buddha.

You have missed.

Rinzai goes on, "NEVER EVER SPECULATE HAPHAZARDLY. UNDERSTANDING AND NOT UNDERSTANDING ARE BOTH WRONG."

This a tremendously important statement: UNDERSTANDING AND NOT UNDERSTANDING ARE BOTH WRONG. Ordinarily you will say, "Understanding is right and not understanding is wrong." But I will support Rinzai. He is right. It is not a question of understanding or not understanding, it is a question of realizing.

For example, a blind man can understand what light is intellectually, but what is that understanding? A blind man can write a treatise on light, on colors, and can be very logically right. But what is that understanding? He has never seen colors.... And this is the situation.

People are writing about God, describing in detail as if they have seen God, quarreling with others because they have a different conception of God. For thousands of years people have been fighting about God, about heaven and hell, and nobody seems to realize the fact that these are all hypotheses. Nobody has seen God. So if somebody says, "I understand about God," it is as futile as not understanding about God.

The question is knowing – directly, straightforwardly. The question is being one with the truth, not knowing the truth from far away, from others' experience, from scriptures. You cannot borrow truth; it is not a commodity.

You have to become the truth.

Even if a person says, "I have seen truth," it is wrong, because you cannot see truth – truth is not something material – neither can you see God. If you see, it is hallucination.

That's why Buddha has said to his disciples, "If I meet you on the way, just don't hesitate, cut off my head and throw me out of the way. Pass me without looking back" – because in meditation it is always possible that the last barrier will be the master. That is your last love, your great love affair. You may pass through all other small matters, psychological fixations, but what are you going to do with the last rope?

It happened in Ramakrishna's life:

Ramakrishna was a great devotee, and the path of devotion is full of imagination. Mind has the capacity to hypnotize itself and can see the object of imagination just standing before it.

You should pay attention to the fact that no Mohammedan or Christian ever experiences Krishna, no Hindu ever experiences Jesus. They all see what they imagine, what they believe in, what is their hypothesis. If you continuously go on insisting on a certain hypothetical concept of God, one day you will see that hypothesis becoming a reality.

Ramakrishna was a devotee of the Mother Goddess of Calcutta. An enlightened man, Totapuri, was just passing by. He looked at Ramakrishna and he felt great compassion for the poor fellow. He told Ramakrishna, "You think that you have experienced the Mother Goddess."

Ramakrishna said, "See, I have talked with her, and not one day but every day." He was an honest man, and what he was saying was absolutely true.

Totapuri laughed and he said, "Listen, that Mother Goddess is nothing but pure imagination. Unless you drop that you will never become enlightened. So sit down. I will remain here for three or four days, just for you. I have to help you in somehow dropping the Mother Goddess."

Now that was a very difficult matter. Ramakrishna had loved the Mother Goddess his whole life, danced before her. And he was not a traditional fellow; he was very untraditional, very loving, very innocent – so much so that twice the trustees of the temple in which he used to worship, where he was the priest, had to call him saying, "This is strange what you are doing...."

First he would taste the food that was to be offered to the goddess, and then he would offer it. Now this is absolutely wrong according to the Hindu tradition. First you should offer it to the god and then you can distribute it, you can eat it.

But Ramakrishna said, "My mother always used to taste it first and then she would give it to me. I don't care about anybody, I know what the reason was. The reason was whether it is worth giving. Is the taste right? Is the sweetness not too much or too little? I cannot offer it without tasting it first."

He used to fight with the Mother Goddess. Nobody could understand what was happening. He would lock the temple for three or four days and would tell the Mother Goddess, "Remain inside the temple, because you are not doing anything for your devotees. So many people come and they ask you and their prayers are not answered. I am the priest here; it is my duty to take care. Now remain locked up. After three or four days I will see you again."

The trustees said, "You are here as the salaried priest. Your work is to worship every day."

He said, "That is not the question. The question is that the Mother Goddess has to listen to me. When she listens I prepare such good food for her and bring so many roses and so many flowers. When she is really listening to the prayers I dance the whole day. But when she is not listening, becomes adamant, then I am also a man of some dignity...."

Totapuri said to Ramakrishna, "You sit in silence. You don't have any other ropes that I can see, just this one rope. So when you see the Mother Goddess arising in your imagination, just take the sword and cut the mother in two pieces. They will fall, and with them will fall the last barrier."

Ramakrishna said, "From where am I going to get the sword?"

Totapuri said, "From where have you got this Mother Goddess? – from the same place. It is your imagination. That is also your imagination; only imagination is needed to cut it."

It took three days, because he would go into meditation and the Mother Goddess would be standing there, and he would forget all about Totapuri. He would forget all about the sword, and tears would start flowing from his eyes, and Totapuri would shake him saying, "What are you doing?"

Ramakrishna said, "What to do? – because once I see her, she is so beautiful.... Don't force me to cut her."

Totapuri said, "Listen, I can see even from the outside: your face immediately changes when you see the mother. I have brought a piece of glass, and the moment I see that you are seeing the mother – because your tears start flowing, your face becomes so beautiful – I will make a cut just on your third eye center with the glass. I have to do this because tomorrow I leave. I cannot waste any more time. This is the last chance: either you do it or I am finished with you."

And Totapuri said, "When I cut your forehead and blood starts flowing, don't hesitate, just take the sword and cut the mother."

Ramakrishna cut the mother and he remained silent for six days. Totapuri remained for six days, and when Ramakrishna opened his eyes he thanked Totapuri and said, "If you had not come, I would have lived my whole life with the hallucination. My last barrier has fallen away."

Ramakrishna became enlightened after he had cut the last barrier. But even the followers of Ramakrishna don't mention this incident, because this incident makes the whole effort of worshipping futile. If you have finally to cut it, why start it in the beginning?

Neither understanding is needed – because understanding is intellectual – nor not-understanding, because that too is intellectual. You can be a theist, you can be an atheist, that does not matter; both are intellectual standpoints. You have to drop them both and you have to see without any prejudice, without any hypothesis, without any belief system. Only then... then you don't see the truth, you become the truth. And unless you become the truth you are not enlightened.

So see the difference: it is not a question of seeing God, it is not a question of seeing Buddha. It is a question of being a buddha. There are not three, the one who sees, the one who is seen, and the process of seeing; there is only one.

You are it.

This is the greatest understanding Gautam Buddha brought into the world.

Rinzai is saying, "I SAY THIS STRAIGHT OUT. ANYONE IN THE WORLD IS FREE TO DENOUNCE ME AS HE WILL."

THE MASTER FURTHER SAID, "EACH STATEMENT MUST COMPRISE THE GATES OF THE THREE MYSTERIES, AND THE GATE OF EACH MYSTERY MUST COMPRISE THE THREE ESSENTIALS. THERE ARE TEMPORARY EXPEDIENTS, AND THERE IS FUNCTIONING. HOW DO ALL OF YOU UNDERSTAND THIS?"

THE MASTER THEN STEPPED DOWN.

What are the Three Mysteries? Our every experience is divided into three: the observer, the observed and the process of observation. You can take it to different dimensions – the knower, the knowledge, and the process of knowing. Unless these three mysteries become one, when the observer is the observed also...

When you are a god, then all the mysteries disappear, then the whole existence is clearly available to you. All the doors are open, nothing is hidden. The whole splendor of existence is available, but it is available to a consciousness which has come to a peak where there is no subject and no object and nothing relating them, where the three have become one.

This oneness is the buddhahood, is your buddha nature.

In this oneness you become part of the cosmic whole – and not just a part. It is the strangest experience: when a dewdrop disappears in the ocean, you can say that the dewdrop has become a part of the ocean, but the reality is that the dewdrop has become the ocean. There is no question of being part. Part is still apart, there is a distance. Just pure oneness...

William James gave the right words for this experience: the oceanic experience. You have become the whole ocean.

Rinzai is saying that he will be denounced – denounced by all devotees, denounced by all those people who keep a distance between you and God. He will be denounced by all those who cannot conceive that you are in your intrinsic reality nothing but a divine force, and the whole existence is a divine dance. "But," he says, "it does not matter if I am being denounced. I have to say the truth."

Zen is the only way of seeing the truth without any belief. If you have a belief already, your belief will become the barrier. One has to be utterly belief-less. I am not saying that you have to be a DISbeliever; that is again a belief. Believing or disbelieving, both are belief systems. Theist and atheist are both two extremes of one concept, of one hypothesis. One is saying yes, the other is saying no, but both of them are absolutely unaware of the truth.

That truth cannot be denied, and no evidence can be given, or proof. One has to live it; only life is a proof. When somebody has reached to the point where he is truth, obviously all his actions are bound to change. All his life patterns are going to be different.

Rinzai is right that he can see the moment somebody enters into his temple in what space he is, what are his ropes: Has he any direction in life or is he just going haphazardly like dead wood floating in a river? Has he any consciousness that each moment he is missing the significance and meaning of life or is he just sleepy, keeping himself occupied so that the question, the ultimate question does not arise?

Ikkyu, a great Zen poet, writes:

FORESTS AND MEADOWS,
ROCKS AND GRASSES
ARE MY COMPANIONS.
THE "WRONG WAYS" OF THIS
"CRAZY CLOUD" WON'T BE CHANGED.
ORDINARY PEOPLE CALL ME A FOOL
BUT I'M NOT BOTHERED.
SINCE I'M ALREADY LABELED
"HERETIC" AND "DEMON,"
THERE'S NO NEW PUNISHMENT
LEFT FOR MY AFTERLIFE!

A man of truth is bound to be condemned, because our whole lives are lived on consolations, which are lies. We are all under the opium that religions have been supplying to us. The moment a man

comes out of this state of sleepiness, the whole crowd will be against him, because his behavior will change so totally from the crowd's.

The crowd cannot tolerate anybody who behaves differently. The reason is a great fear that perhaps he may be right. And he looks right: his beauty is changed, his grace has changed, his words have an authority which they never had before. His silences are deep. He is surrounded by an aura of a new energy.

This makes people very much afraid – afraid that "this man may be right; then we have missed our whole lives. This man somehow has to be destroyed." It is not for no reason that Socrates and Anagoras were poisoned and al-Hillaj Mansoor was crucified. Sarmad and Jesus... and there are hundreds of others who have been stoned to death or burned alive, and their only crime was that they had attained the truth.

Now this reminds me that in South America in the early part of this century a small tribe was discovered living in the deep forest – only three hundred people, but all blind. They had no idea that they were blind because they had never seen anybody with eyes – and there was no question of seeing because they had no eyes.

A scientific researcher heard about this tribe, so he went into the forest, lived with the tribe to understand them, did not offend them by saying that they are blind, pretended that he was also just like them. He found that the reason why they were all blind was a certain fly. When the child is less than six months old, if that fly stings the child, he will become blind.

So there were children who had eyes, but the fly was a common fly in every house everywhere, so it was impossible for any child to get away. And nobody can remember the past beyond the fourth year or the third year at the most; nobody can remember what happened when they were six months old.

So the whole tribe lived and they lived perfectly well. They managed to farm something, they managed to bring wood for winter. They managed to bring water from the well. They became adapted to the life of blind people. And because the whole society was blind, only this young researcher could find the fly. If after you are six months old that fly bites you, you will not become blind, so only for six months a child has to be protected. But there was no question of protection in the tribe; they had no idea what was happening. A six-month-old child cannot say, "Protect me from the fly."

He remained so long there that he fell in love with a woman. He wanted to marry her, but by and by the tribe became suspicious of the man. Although they were blind, they started finding that this man walks in a different way, talks in a different way, knows things that they don't know. He says, "Now it is sunrise"; he says, "Now the whole sky is full of stars" – and those blind eyes could not see any star.

Slowly, slowly they found that this man had some way which was different from them. They forced him, saying, "You have to be honest with us. What is the difference between us and you? – because we don't see any sunrise, we don't see any sunset, and you talk about flowers and colors, and you talk about stars. Where are these things? There must be some difference between us and you."

He had to be honest with those poor blind people. He said, "I have eyes and you don't have eyes. Although you are born with eyes, a common fly here destroys the eyes before the child passes the six-month limit. I can be of much help; I can bring medical help to kill these flies and perhaps some way to cure you also, so you can see."

But they refused. They said, "We are so happy as we are, we don't want any disturbance. And as far as your marriage – the condition is that we will have to destroy your eyes; otherwise we cannot believe a man with eyes.... You can do any harm to us and we will be absolutely vulnerable."

So they gave him time: "You can think for twelve hours. If you want to marry the woman, we will destroy your eyes. We will find them. And if you want your eyes, then you cannot live with us and you cannot marry the woman."

That night he thought many times, "What to do? These idiots don't want to be helped. They are perfectly happy in their blindness." One can understand that there will be trouble if three hundred blind people suddenly get eyes.... You see your wife and you say, "My God! This buffalo is my wife?!" And you see your own face in the mirror and you cannot believe that this is you, because you have never seen your face. Everything is going to be disturbed.

That researcher escaped in the night, dropping the whole idea of helping them, dropping the idea of getting married to the woman. His idea had been that he should get married and then take away the woman to the civilized world where she could be treated, and if he succeeded in treating her, then he could bring a medical team and treat all those three hundred people.

The same is the situation with every buddha. He brings a new light, a new life, a new eye. But you start stoning such people. The only crime of Socrates was that he wanted to teach people how to find the truth. The only crime of al-Hillaj Mansoor was that he declared, "Ana'l haq! I myself am God" – but he was not declaring it as part of an ego-trip, because he was saying, "You are also God, you simply don't know it. I know it."

Al-Hillaj Mansoor's case is particularly special. His teacher was Junnaid, and Junnaid said, "Mansoor, I too know I am God, but I also know the crowd will not tolerate such a declaration. You keep it within yourself; you help people to recognize that they are gods, but don't start declaring that you are God. You will not be tolerated."

But Mansoor was young. Junnaid was old and he had seen what kind of people were all around. Mansoor did not listen to him and started declaring, "I am God, and you are God also; the difference is just that you are not aware and I am aware." He was completely butchered, it cannot be called crucifixion. Jesus' crucifixion was simple. Mansoor was cut piece by piece, legs, feet, hands, eyes, tongue, head – piece by piece he was just destroyed.

Why does it happen? These people become a danger to our consolations. They start declaring things which we are afraid to know. We don't want to know who we are, because that may disturb everything in our life. We have a settled circumference; if we know the center, we will have to change everything on the circumference. It is risky. And we are living in our misery and in our suffering, but it has become such a familiar way of living. Everybody is living in the same way – so why take the risk?

But the presence of a man like al-Hillaj Mansoor provokes you to change your life. It irritates people, it annoys people that somebody knows more than they know. They cannot tolerate such a person. To think in this world is the most criminal act; to know in this world is to prepare for your own crucifixion.

Question 1

Professor Coleman Barks has asked a question:

I FEEL VERY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ENLIGHTENMENT, YOUR WISDOM, YOUR DARING EXPERIMENTS, YOUR LIFE.

THANK YOU!

RUMI SAID, "I WANT BURNING, BURNING..." WHAT IS THAT BURNING? SHAMS SAID, "I AM FIRE." DO YOU HAVE ANY WORD ON SHAMS? FROM SHAMS?

WHAT DO THE BURNING AND THE FIRE HAVE TO DO WITH MY OWN ENLIGHTENMENT?

Coleman, you have asked a very dangerous question! – because burning has nothing to do with your enlightenment. On the path of enlightenment there is no question of burning.

But because you are in love with Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi... I also love the man. But you have to understand that Sufism still depends on a hypothetical God. It is not free from the hypothesis of God. And particularly Sufism has the concept of God as a woman. Love is their method – love God as totally as possible. Now you are loving an impossible hypothesis, and totality is asked. You will feel the same kind of burning, in a more intensive way, as lovers feel on a smaller scale.

Lovers feel a certain burning in their hearts. A deep longing and desire to meet with the beloved creates that burning. To love God is bound to create a very great fire in you. You will be on fire because you have chosen as your love object something impossible; your object of love is hypothetical. You will have to weep and cry, and you will have to pray, and you will have to fast, and your mind has to continuously repeat and remember the beloved.

The mind has the capacity to imagine anything and also has the capacity to hypnotize itself. After long repetition you can even see God, just the way you imagined. It is a by-product of your mind. It will make you very happy, you will dance with joy.

I have been with Sufis and I have loved those people. But they are still one step away from being a buddha. Even though their poetry is beautiful – it has to be, because it is coming out of their love – their experience is a hallucination created by their own mind. In Sufism, mind is stretched to the point that you become almost mad for the beloved. Those days of separation from the beloved create the sensation of burning.

On the path of dhyān, or Zen, there is no burning at all because there is no hypothesis, no God. And it is not a question of love. A man of Zen is very loving, but he has not practiced love; it has come as a by-product of his realization. He has simply realized his own buddhahood. There is no question of another, a God somewhere else in heaven. He has simply reached his own center of life, and

being there he explodes into love, into compassion. His love comes after his enlightenment, it is not a method for enlightenment.

But for Sufis, love is the method. Because love is the method, it remains part of the mind.

The effort on the path of Zen is to go beyond mind, to attain no-mind, to be utterly empty of all thoughts, love included. Zen is the path of emptiness – no God, no love, nothing is to be allowed; just a pure nothingness in which you also disappear.

Who is there to feel the burning? Who is there to feel the fire?

So although I love Sufis... I don't want, Coleman, to hurt your feelings, but I would certainly say that you will have one day to change from Sufis to Zen. Sufis are still living in imagination; they have not known the state of no-mind. And because they have not known the state of no-mind, however beautiful their personalities may become, they are still just close to enlightenment, but not enlightened. Remember, even to be very close is not to be enlightened.

And the reason is clear: Sufism is a branch, an offshoot of Mohammedanism. It carries almost all that is good in Mohammedanism. But Mohammedanism is the lowest kind of religion. Mohammedanism, Judaism, Christianity – all are hypothetical.

There have been only two religions which are not hypothetical, Buddhism and Taoism. Zen is a crossbreed of these two, and the crossbreed is always better than both the parents. It is the meeting of Buddha and Lao Tzu; out of this meeting is born Zen. It is not Buddhism, it is not Taoism; it has its own individuality. It carries everything beautiful that comes from Buddha and everything great that comes from Lao Tzu. It is the highest peak that man has ever reached.

Hinduism is a mess: thirty-three million gods! – what do you expect? Hinduism has remained a philosophical, controversial, hypothetical religion. It has not been able to reach the heights of Buddha. Buddha was born a Hindu but revolted against this mess, searched alone rather than believing. That is one of the most important things to remember. Any religion that begins with belief is going to give you an auto-hypnotic experience.

Only Taoism and Buddhism don't start with a belief. Their whole effort is that you should enter yourself without any concept of what you are going to find there. Just being open, available, without any prejudice, without any philosophy and scripture – just go in, open-hearted, and when you reach to the point where mind is silent, not a single thought moving...

According to Tao and Buddha, even God is a thought. When there is no thought, you reach the highest Everest of consciousness. At that point you know that every living being has the potentiality of being a god.

Buddha is reported to have said, "The moment I became enlightened, I was surprised: the whole of existence is enlightened, only people don't understand. They are carrying their enlightenment within themselves and they don't look at it."

Buddha has reported his past lives' experiences. When he was not an enlightened man but was just a seeker, he heard about a man who had become enlightened, so he went to see him. He had

no idea of what enlightenment is, and he had not come with any prejudice for or against. But as he came close to the man, he found himself bowing down and touching the man's feet. He was surprised! He had not decided to do it – in spite of himself he was touching the man's feet. That was one surprise. And as he stood up, the second surprise was even bigger: the enlightened man touched his feet. He said, "What are you doing? You are enlightened, it is perfectly right for me to touch your feet. But why are you touching my feet?"

And that man laughed. He said, "Sometime before, I was unenlightened. Now I am enlightened. You are unenlightened now. Someday you will become enlightened. So it is only a question of time. As far as I am concerned, you may not know it but I can see your hidden treasure."

So everybody is a buddha, either aware of it or unaware of it. No hypothesis comes into the path of Zen.

What Rumi is saying – "I WANT BURNING, BURNING..." – is the mind focused on a hypothetical beloved, and the burning desire to meet him, to melt in him. But it is an objective god – it may be woman or man, it does not matter.

In Bengal, in India, there is a small sect which believes that only Krishna is male and everybody else is female. Because everybody is female and there is a great burning to meet the lover, the god, they sleep with a statue of Krishna in their bed.

But these are all mind games. Except for Gautam Buddha and Lao Tzu, and the people who became enlightened from their lineages, the whole of humanity is living in hypotheses. I appreciate the poetry of Rumi, I appreciate the beauty of many Sufi mystics, but I cannot say that they are enlightened. They are still groping, and their groping will stop only when they drop this hypothesis of God.

The search has to be inwards, not outwards. Any search that is outwards is going to change your personality. It can make it more beautiful, more loving, but it is just imagination.

It happened that one Sufi master who was very much loved... his disciples used to come to me and say, "When our master comes, we want you both to meet."

I said, "On one condition: your master should be my guest for just three days, and you have not to come for three days."

So the master came, as he used to come every year for a month or two to that place. He was a lovely man, very fragrant, very radiant, very joyful. He used to dance and sing and play on instruments. When he came to my house, I closed the door and told the disciples, "Now you disappear, and for three days leave him with me."

The master said, "What do you want?"

I said, "You put your instruments away, and for three days don't think about your beloved God."

He said, "What is the purpose of this?"

I said, "The purpose will be known after three days. Just for three days be normal. You are abnormal."

He said, "You are a strange fellow! I am abnormal?"

I said, "Just drop this idea of a hypothetical God. Have you seen God?"

He said, "I see God everywhere."

I said, "When did it start happening?"

He said, "It took twenty years for me to see God in everyone. Finally, I started seeing."

I said, "That's why I am saying that for three days, don't do anything you have been doing. For these three days take a holiday from your practice of seeing God in everyone."

Just in one day it was finished! The next day he was very angry with me. He said, "Just let me go. You have destroyed my twenty years' effort. For just one night I followed your idea, and now in the morning I don't see any God anywhere."

I said, "A God that you have been seeing for twenty years disappears within a single night – what is it worth? Can't you see that it is a hypothesis that you have imposed? And twenty years are not needed for such programming – such programming can be done within hours."

A person can be hypnotized just for seven days continually and told he will see God everywhere, in everyone, and he will be very joyful, very loving. Within seven days the person can be programmed just like a computer, and he will start seeing God. But this is not the way of truth.

Coleman, it is perfectly good: enjoy Rumi's beautiful poems, enjoy beautiful Sufi stories. I have enjoyed them. But I warn you, don't get lost into them. They are just a game of the mind, a strategy of self-hypnosis.

I said that you have asked a dangerous question. I don't want to hurt your feelings and your love, but I have to say the truth even if it hurts. One day you will feel grateful to me.

Sufism is nothing. You can find good poetry anywhere. And if you want, bring any Sufi to me and I will take away all his experience within one hour. These are abnormal people, hypnotizing themselves.

The real thing is to come to a point of DEhypnotizing yourself, because every society has already hypnotized you. A Hindu thinks Krishna is a god, and never bothers that Krishna stole sixteen thousand women from different people. He was married only to one woman. But sixteen thousand women – any beautiful woman, and his soldiers would catch hold of her; he just had to make a sign that they should take her to the palace.

Krishna behaved with women like they were cattle, and he never thought that they have children, they have husbands, they have their old parents, or their husband's parents, and he is destroying

their whole family life. And what is he going to do with sixteen thousand women? He is not a bull. Even a bull will be tired. Sixteen thousand – it is a record. Still, no Hindu will question the point.

Rama is God to the Hindus, and nobody questions that he killed one poor untouchable, a young man, just because he heard somebody reciting the Vedas. The Hindu society has maintained the caste system for five thousand years, and the untouchable, the sudra, the last, is not allowed to read any religious scripture. He is not allowed to be educated either. Untouchables are not allowed to live in the city; they have to live outside the city. They do all the dirty work of the city and they live the poorest life in the world. Their whole dignity and manhood is taken away.

And this young man had not read anything, he simply heard some brahmin reciting the RIGVEDA. Just hiding behind the trees out of curiosity, he was caught hold of, and when he was brought to Rama because he had committed this great crime, Rama told his people, "Melt some lead and pour it into both his ears, because he has heard the Veda, which is prohibited."

The man certainly died. When you pour burning lead into the ears, you cannot expect the man to remain alive. He fell dead then and there. And no Hindu questions it. Even people like Mahatma Gandhi just go on repeating the name of Rama; he is a god.

And this is the situation all over the world, with every religion. I have looked in all nooks and corners, and except Zen I don't find any religious phenomenon which is absolutely pure and which has not committed a single crime against humanity. It has only contributed more beauty and more grace and more love and more meditateness.

So it is perfectly good, Coleman; enjoy the poetry, but don't think that these poetries are coming out of enlightenment. They have not even heard the word enlightenment. No word exists in Persian, in Urdu, in Arabic, equivalent to enlightenment. They have "God realization," realization of the beloved – but the beloved is separate from you.

The whole point is that even if you find a god which is separate from you, millions of others must have found him before. You will be in a crowd. And what are you going to do when you meet God? – say, "Hello, how are you"? There is nothing much in just meeting – you will look embarrassed and God will look embarrassed: Now what to do with this Professor Coleman? "It was very good... you were doing good translations, but why have you come here?"

Now don't do any such thing, creating any embarrassment for God. There exists no God. What exists is godliness, and that godliness surrounds you. We are all in the same ocean.

An ancient story is: A young, very philosophical-minded fish asked other fish, "We have heard so much about the ocean; where is it? I want to meet the ocean."

Everybody shrugged their shoulders; they said, "We have also heard about the ocean, but we don't know where it is."

An old fish took the boy aside and told him, "There is no other ocean anywhere. We are in it. We are born in it, we live in it, we die in it. This is the ocean."

And I say unto you, the same is true with us. We are born in godliness, we live in godliness, we die in godliness. Just one thing has to be remembered: either you can pass through this tremendous experience of life asleep, or fully awakened.

Meditation is the only way to make you aware. And once you are fully aware, all around is the ocean of godliness. The very life, the very consciousness is divine. It expresses in all the forms – in the roses and in the lotuses and in the birds and in the trees. Wherever life is, it is nothing but godliness. We are living in the ocean of godliness. So don't search anywhere. Just look within, because that is the closest point you can find.

Sufism is beautiful but is not the ultimate answer, and you should not stop at Sufism. It is a good training to begin with. End up with Zen.

And it is a great, surprising thing, that from the peaks of Zen you will be able to understand Sufism more than you can understand by living in the Sufi circles. Some distance is needed, and Zen gives you the distance. From that distance you can witness all the religions. What are they doing? – playing games, beautiful games, but games are games after all.

You are asking, "What do the burning and the fire have to do with my own enlightenment?" Nothing at all. You are enlightened in this very moment; just enter silently into your own being. Find the center of your being and you have found the center of the whole universe. We are separate on the periphery but we are one at the center. I call this the buddha experience.

Unless you become a buddha – and remember, it is the poverty of language that I have to say "Unless you become...." You already are. So I have to say, unless you recognize, unless you remember what you have forgotten....

Every child in its innocence knows, and every child goes astray because of so much knowledge being poured in by the parents, by the priests, by the teachers. Soon the child's innocence is completely covered with all kinds of bullshit.

The whole effort of meditation is to cut through all the dust that society has poured upon you and just to find that small buddha-nature you were born with. The day you find the buddha-nature you were born with, the circle is complete. You have again become innocent.

Socrates in his last days said, "When I was young I thought I knew much. As I became older I started thinking I knew everything. But as I became still older and my consciousness became sharper, I suddenly realized I don't know anything."

It is a beautiful story that in Greece there is – used to be, now it is ruins – the temple of Delphi. And the oracle of the temple of Delphi declared that Socrates was the wisest man in the whole world. The people who had known Socrates rushed to tell him, "The oracle has declared you the wisest man in the world!"

Socrates said, "The oracle for the first time is wrong. I know nothing."

The people were very much in a puzzle. They went back to Delphi and told the oracle, "You say he is the wisest man and he says he knows nothing."

The oracle said, "That's why he is the wisest man in the world. He has again become a child. He has come back home."

Question 2

Maneesha has also asked a question:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

YOU HAVE BEEN SPEAKING ON THE EMPTY HEART OF ZEN. LAST NIGHT WE SPENT AN EVENING LISTENING TO RUMI'S EXPRESSION OF THE SUFI HEART.

COULD YOU TALK OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?

The reality is that what the Sufis call the heart is just part of their mind. The mind has many capacities: thinking, feeling, imagination, dreaming, self-hypnosis – these are all qualities of the mind. In fact there is no heart as such; everything is being done by the mind.

We have lived with this traditional division, that imagination and feeling and emotions and sentiments are of the heart. But your heart is just a pumping system. Everything that you think or imagine or feel is confined into the mind. Your mind has seven hundred centers and they control everything.

When Zen says empty heart it simply means empty mind. To Zen, heart or mind are synonymous. The emphasis is on emptiness. A mind that is empty becomes the door to the divine that is all around – but first it has to be empty.

Sufism is a beautiful imagination. Zen has nothing to do with imagination. Everything has to be emptied out. The name of Rumi is beautiful in a sense: not in Persian but in English, 'roomy' means empty. The room either can be full of furniture or it can be without furniture, simply a room. That empty room contains the whole space, the whole existence.

Sardar Gurudayal Singh must be waiting. Coleman has asked a very serious question, and Sardar Gurudayal Singh is thinking, what happened about his time?

Betty Cheese, the wife of Chester, and Miss Goodbody, the unmarried schoolteacher, go on holiday together in Jamaica. They are lying around on the beach, thoroughly enjoying themselves, when Miss Goodbody says, "I think I will send a postcard to my boyfriend, Herbert."

"That's a good idea," says Betty. "I will send one to Chester." So the two girls run off and buy a couple of postcards.

Miss Goodbody writes on hers, "Dearest Herbert, The place is beautiful, wish you were here."

Betty Cheese writes, "Dearest Chester, The place is here, wish you were beautiful!"

Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev are scowling at each other across the conference table in Geneva. They are perched on the brink of nuclear war, in a dispute over who has control of the small oil-producing country, Abu Dhabi.

"Look here, Reagan," says Mr. Gorbachev. "Why should we destroy the whole world just because of a small piece of real estate?"

"You are right," replies Reagan. "But how can we settle this argument without a war?"

"Simple," says Gorbachev. "You and I can have a contest of courage right now – man to man."

"Great!" says the senile president of America. "What shall we do?"

"Well, in Russia," says Gorbachev, "we settle things like this: we just stand in front of each other, and each one of us gets to take a good kick at the other, right between the legs. Whoever can get up the quickest afterwards is the winner."

"Great idea!" says Reagan. "Let us get started."

The two men stand up, and Gorbachev goes first. He winds up and lets fly a mighty kick that nails Ronald right in the nuts. Reagan screams, falls over, and rolls around on the ground with his eyes popping out. After about five minutes of this, he manages to drag himself to his feet.

"Okay," gasps Ronnie, "now it's my turn."

"Oh!" says Gorbachev. "Never mind – you can have Abu Dhabi!"

Herbert Hoop reaches the age of thirty-two and decides to take out a life-insurance policy. He goes along to the Ripoff Insurance Agency and is shown into the doctor's office for a complete physical examination.

After a thorough check-up, the doctor tells Herbert to get dressed.

"All the tests came out fine," says Doctor Bandid. "But if you don't mind me making a personal observation, you have absolutely the smallest prick I have ever seen. Do you have any problems with it?"

"Well," says Herbert, "I have been married for ten years and we have two lovely kids and a good sex life. The only problem I have with my prick is that I have difficulty finding it in the daytime."

"Really?" says Bandid. "And what about at night?"

"That is no problem," replies Herbert. "Then there's two of us looking for it."

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent...

Close your eyes, feel your body to be completely frozen. Now look inwards with your total consciousness and with a great urgency as if this is going to be your last moment of life. Pierce the center like a spear. It is not far away, just one step.

The moment you reach your center you will find a tremendous silence, a great serenity, and a joy that you have never known before. Flowers will start showering on you, because existence rejoices very much. Any evolution of consciousness – when ten thousand people are at their center, it is a momentous event.

This moment you are the buddha. You don't have to become, you have always been. Your work consists in bringing this buddha from your hidden center to the periphery of your life, to your activities, to your relations.

Slowly, slowly bring the buddha from the center to the circumference... and you have passed through the greatest revolution possible. I know no other authentic revolution than this.

Just witness carefully. Buddha is not in front of you, you are the buddha. Be careful about it. If you see the buddha outside, cut the head of the buddha immediately. Your witnessing is the buddha. Your very isness, your very life, your very being is the buddha.

To make it more clear,

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Now witness. You are not the body, you are not the mind, you are just a witness, a witness of emptiness, a witness of nothingness, and suddenly from the very center of your being arises a great blissfulness, a great ecstasy.

At this moment the Buddha Auditorium has become a silent lake of consciousness. You have melted into each other. You are just part of the ocean. Don't ask where the ocean is. Thisness, suchness is the ocean. To be here now is the ocean, and the oceanic consciousness is the ultimate freedom.

Before Nivedano calls you back, gather as much experience and the flowers and the fragrance and persuade the buddha to come with you. He comes... he is your intrinsic nature. Just as he can be at the center, he can be at the circumference.

That fortunate day certainly comes one day that your whole life becomes filled up. All your activities, all your gestures become so graceful, so divine. Your very silence becomes such a song. Your unmoving center becomes such a dance.

And one who knows his center, also knows his eternity, his immortality. Buddhas don't die, neither are they born. They simply appear and disappear into the same ocean just like waves.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but come as buddhas, peacefully, silently, gracefully. Sit for a few minutes to collect the space you have been in, the path you have trodden.

You have to go deeper and deeper every day, you have to bring more and more of the buddha to the circumference of your life.

It happens, certainly – I say it with absolute authority because it has happened to me. Why cannot it happen to you? It is our birthright, just you have to claim it.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 3

Either experience or just go home

26 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

ON ONE OCCASION RINZAI SAID, "FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY, YOU SEIZE UPON WORDS FROM THE MOUTHS OF OLD MASTERS AND TAKE THEM TO BE THE TRUE WAY, SAYING, 'THESE GOOD MASTERS ARE WONDERFUL, AND I, SIMPLE-MINDED FELLOW THAT I AM, DON'T DARE MEASURE SUCH OLD WORTHIES.'

"BLIND IDIOTS!" COMMENTED RINZAI. "YOU GO THROUGH YOUR ENTIRE LIFE HOLDING SUCH VIEWS, BETRAYING YOUR OWN TWO EYES. IT IS ONLY THE GREAT MASTER WHO DARES TO DISPARAGE THE BUDDHAS AND PATRIARCHS. FROM OLDEN DAYS OUR PREDECESSORS NEVER HAD PEOPLE ANYWHERE WHO BELIEVED IN THEM. ONLY WHEN THEY HAD BEEN DRIVEN OUT DID THEIR WORTH BECOME RECOGNIZED. IF THEY HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ACCEPTED BY PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, WHAT WOULD THEY HAVE BEEN GOOD FOR? THEREFORE IT IS SAID, 'THE LION'S ONE ROAR SPLITS THE JACKALS' SKULLS.'"

Maneesha, there are a few essential things which make Zen absolutely different from any religion, any sect, any kind of discipline, teaching. The most important of these essentials is that Zen is a revolution. All other religions are servants to the vested interests.

The rich people and the powerful people, the politicians, have dominated all the religions. The priests have been nothing but servants to these criminals. It is such a worldwide conspiracy that no one recognizes it. It is so obvious and so simple that we are from the very beginning, from our very childhood, being programmed.

This programming is done with all the good intentions in the world. The parents love you, but their love is as unconscious as they are. The parents want you to follow the same path as they and their forefathers have followed. Neither have they come to know the truth, nor have their forefathers. They just go on teaching old words to the small children, who are absolutely in a helpless situation.

The children cannot prevent them. Firstly, they are dependent on the parents for food, for clothing – for their whole livelihood. And secondly, they do not know what is being done to them. Taking them to the temples, to the mosques, to the churches, to the synagogues... they feel happy. They don't know that they are being enslaved in a very subtle way. They rejoice because all their parents, their neighborhood, their society rejoices. They don't even question what is being put into their minds. They had come with a clean slate, but every moment something is being written on the clean slate.

The universities are slaves, the colleges are slaves – because they depend for their existence on the government money. So the politicians dominate....

Just now, because Ronald Reagan is against Charles Darwin's theory of evolution... Being a fundamentalist, fascist Christian, he can only see that the world was created – that is the Christian standpoint – that the world was created in its wholeness, there is no question of evolution. But Charles Darwin's tremendous inquiries show that there is evolution; the world was not created as complete, it is always incomplete and evolving. It is none of the business of any government to prevent new ideas from being placed before the students.

Now Ronald Reagan is trying to ban Charles Darwin from America. His book on evolution has been banned from the libraries, from the universities. Now even to use his name is a crime.

Galileo for the first time wrote in his book that the old idea of the sun moving around the earth is only supposition; it is not the truth, it only appears so. The truth is just the contrary: the earth moves around the sun.

Now, it was against the statements of the Bible, and the Bible is the word of God, and God can never commit a mistake. What to say about God – even the pope is infallible, and he is a very faraway relative to God; he does not commit, CANnot commit any mistake. And particularly when God himself has made the world – he knows better than Galileo whether the sun is moving around the earth or the earth is moving around the sun.

Galileo was old, almost on his deathbed. He was dragged to the pope's court and he was forced to change the statement. He tried to persuade the court, saying that, "I am also a Christian; I am not an atheist. I believe in God, I believe in Jesus – but this is a scientific fact and a small fact which has nothing to do with religion."

The pope said, "It has much to do with religion. If one thing is wrong in the Bible, then people can start thinking, 'Who knows, other things may be wrong also.' We cannot allow anything to be wrong in the Bible. It is the very truth. You have to change it; otherwise face death."

Galileo said, "Death I am facing anyway, but just for your joy I will change the statement. But remember, I will have to make a footnote...."

The pope did not ask what footnote; he said, "You just change the statement and whatever footnote you want to write, write it."

Galileo did a great job. He changed the statement, and underneath in the footnote he said, "Whatever I say, it makes no sense. The earth still goes around the sun. Who am I to decide?"

Now, the fear of all these kinds of primitive minds – their gods, their greed of heaven, their fear of hell – is being imposed continuously on the child. It is continued in the educational systems. No educational system exists in the world at this moment which can be called creating rebels, not creating slaves. The world is full of slaves.

You will be able to understand Zen and Rinzai, their tremendous effort to bring the rebel into the world, to create a religion which is also rebellion. Of course, every rebellion has to be against the past.

The common masses think that the more ancient a scripture is, the truer. They fight, their scholars continuously argue that "our scriptures are more ancient," and they don't understand a simple thing: that the more ancient a scripture is, the more primitive it is going to be, the more fallible, and more stupid, because man's consciousness has been continuously growing – objectively in science, subjectively in energy fields like Zen.

This statement will shock the priests and the so-called religious people, but it is absolutely true.

Rinzai says on one occasion, "FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY, YOU SEIZE UPON WORDS FROM THE MOUTHS OF OLD MASTERS AND TAKE THEM TO BE THE TRUE WAY, SAYING, 'THESE GOOD MASTERS ARE WONDERFUL, AND I, SIMPLE-MINDED FELLOW THAT I AM, DON'T DARE MEASURE SUCH OLD WORTHIES.'"

It is thought that all that is old is gold. This is not always the case. It may be just gold plated, simply polished to look like gold.

Truth has nothing to do with being old or new. In fact it is always the new, because consciousness is continuously growing and finding more and more space and new mysteries.

The same attitude existed with scientists in the early days of science's growth, three hundred years ago, when it started growing as a separate world from religion. They had still the mind of the fanatic and they started using the same mind about scientific truths – that these truths are eternal.

It is only in this century, with Albert Einstein, that it became clear that not even scientific truths are eternal. Those truths only show our limitations. If we have better eyes and better instruments we will be able to see much more, which will destroy the principles.

Now the situation is such that science is growing with such vastness, such speed, that you cannot write a big volume on scientific research, because by the time your big volume will be finished it will be out of date. So science has to depend now on papers, periodicals. The moment you find something you have immediately to publish it in scientific journals or papers, because the next month nobody knows – somebody may find something else and make you out of date.

Rinzai is saying, "People think anything that has come from the mouths of old masters..." In the first place you cannot decide who is the master unless you encounter him. Old masters may be just fiction, just an idea that has been implanted in you and has gone so deep in your consciousness that you don't question it.

Millions of people are worshipping such superstitious things, and they don't ask a question. If you raise a question you will be dragged to the court: you have hurt somebody's religious feeling. Truth is not important, but some idiot's religious feeling. That idiot cannot be religious in the first place; how can he have religious feeling?

But the masses go on carrying the dead. Now there is no way to prove it, no evidence that these people were enlightened, that what they have said is true. They may have been just poets, they may have been just good writers, they may have been good philosophers, clever and articulate. But because the person is not present, it is very difficult to see his aura, it is very difficult to feel his presence.

It is very difficult, if the master is dead, to find out in his words anything living. The words are alive when they are just coming fresh from the empty heart of the master, and their life is very short. Just for a moment, if you are receptive, they may enter into your being. If you start thinking about them, by that time they will be dead. It is an immediate transmission.

So the old masters... just because they are old and worshipped by many people for many centuries, does not make any sense.

Rinzai is saying to his followers, "FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY, YOU SEIZE UPON WORDS FROM THE MOUTHS OF OLD MASTERS AND TAKE THEM TO BE THE TRUE WAY, SAYING, 'THESE GOOD MASTERS ARE WONDERFUL, AND I, SIMPLE-MINDED FELLOW THAT I AM, DON'T DARE MEASURE SUCH OLD WORTHIES.'"

How can I question? How can I measure? I am an ordinary man and these are extraordinary people. Some have claimed that they are prophets of God, some have claimed that they are messengers of God, some have claimed that, like Jesus, they are the only begotten son of God. They are very rare people; how can you question them? You are an ordinary human being.

But the truth is, all these prophets and messiahs and messengers of someone who does not exist are exploiting people. What they say is just words, but they are hiding behind masks of being prophets.

These people who claim to be prophets are psychologically sick. Just to be human, purely and utterly intelligent, with an empty heart to experience the world, is enough. You don't have to be a prophet, you don't have to be a messenger, a paigambar, a messiah.

But this strategy of being a prophet, a messiah, a messenger, is to make their own statements authoritative. They are speaking in the name of God, and unfortunately God does not exist.

I am not in agreement with Friedrich Nietzsche, who said that God is dead. He said really a great thing, but I don't agree because God has never been born, so how can he die?

God is only the accumulated fear of humanity.

Man feels so insecure surrounded by death, surrounded by all kinds of anxieties and anguishes of the world, he needs psychologically a protector, somebody there above to whom he can pray in times of difficulties, on whom he can rely, who will be just and compassionate and merciful. Man has projected all these ideas on a hypothesis of God.

There are egoistic people who can proclaim, "I am the prophet. I have been sent specially by God to deliver the message." But the message is so rotten that it proves it is not even written by a good writer.

Just look at your PURANAS: they are so filthy, pornographic. But no Hindu ever inquires, "Does God write pornography?" They are obscene. Koran or Bible or Hindu PURANAS, they look so childish. They don't have the polished, sophisticated look even of a great writer like Leo Tolstoy or Fyodor Dostoevsky. They are written by uneducated people.

Mohammed could not write, he was absolutely uneducated, so whatever he has said has been written by his followers. Jesus was uneducated, a carpenter's son, the poorest of the poor. He could not read or write, but he had gathered from meetings of rabbis, listening to the rabbis in the synagogues. He must have been a megalomaniac, proclaiming himself the only begotten son of God. Not a single statement shows any originality. It is simply repetition of the old.

But people go on believing in them, neither asking their credentials, nor bothering that their claims show a certain psychological sickness, that they want to be known as superior to human beings when their acts show that they are not even human.

Mohammed married nine women. Now it will create a chaos in the world, and he has put in the Koran that it is every Mohammedan's birthright to marry four women at least. Now, in nature the proportion of men and women is equal; nature knows how to keep the balance.

Psychologists became aware after the first world war, and more aware after the second world war, that nature is not unintelligent; there is some great intelligence functioning behind it. Because in the wars many men died, the proportion, the balance was disturbed; there were many more women than men. After both the wars more boys were born than ever before.

Ordinarily, if one hundred girls are born, one hundred and fourteen boys are born, because boys are not, as you think, stronger than girls. They are more fragile, they are more prone to be sick, so by the time they get married, fourteen boys have already died and the balance comes equal – a hundred girls, a hundred boys.

But after the world war, suddenly – that gives an indication that nature wants to keep the balance – the centuries-old one hundred girls, one hundred and fourteen boys simply changed. After the war it became one hundred and forty, one hundred and fifty boys to one hundred girls, because the old proportion had to be restored.

If every man starts marrying four women, what about the three men who will be left without women? Do you think they will just sit silently doing nothing and let the grass grow by itself? They will corrupt

the whole society. For them you will have to manage prostitutes. They will create all kinds of sexual perversions and you will have to be too protective of your wives, because the fear will be there that there are three persons around who are unmarried.

Then there is every danger that you cannot love four wives equally; you must have one wife you love more. Four wives will not be equally beautiful either. There will be constant conspiracy and constant jealousy and constant fighting among the four wives to possess the husband, so the whole life will be a continuous struggle – and outside you have left three persons in search of a woman.

Now, will God send this kind of message?

And if you say to Mohammedans that this is absolutely stupid, God cannot commit such a mistake... He himself created one man, one woman, and that is a sure proof he wants keep the balance. He created Adam and Eve, he did not create four Eves. One was enough to destroy Adam's peace. One was enough to drag him out of heaven.

In a small school, the schoolteacher was asking the boys, "Can you relate the story of God becoming angry because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve?"

One boy stood up and said, "Everything is clear. Just one thing I don't see how he managed, because in the books nothing is written about it. It says God drove them out of paradise..." The little boy was asking in which kind of car. It must have been a Ford – but were there cars in those days, in Eden? He drove them out, and driving certainly implies that there was some vehicle. The boy was asking what kind.

But he has created only one woman and one man; that is enough proof that existence needs a certain balance. This idea of Mohammed's was only an emergency. It is not a dictate from God and it is not forever to be true. It was only in a particular situation in Saudi Arabia where there were more women and less men, because men were continually fighting, so the proportion had come to such a situation that unless one man marries four women, three women will remain unmarried, and that will create trouble. So it was simply a matter of a certain situation; it cannot be made a principle for eternity.

But even now, far away from Arabia, in India, even the Indian constitution accepts that a Mohammedan can marry four women. Now, Mohammedans cannot find four women themselves, so they have to abduct other people's wives, daughters. And you will be surprised to know that even though they got a separate country saying that they could not live with Hindus, still in India they want a separate land of their own. Now the original country is divided into three countries, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Hindustan, and still India has the greatest Mohammedan population in the whole world. No other country has this big a population of Mohammedans. From where is it coming?

If one man marries four women, naturally he can create four children in a year. If four women marry one man, that will not do....

I mean, if four men marry one woman, still there will be one child. The opposite will not work. I committed a mistake! I am not infallible, you should remember that. I am neither a prophet, nor a messiah; I don't accept any god. I am just myself – why should I be a prophet or a messiah in the

service of some hypothetical god? I am not a postman. All these prophets are postmen, but they think they are very great.

Rinzai is saying that this superstitious idea has to be dropped. He is very clear.

He says, "BLIND IDIOTS!" COMMENTED RINZAI. "YOU GO THROUGH YOUR ENTIRE LIFE HOLDING SUCH VIEWS, BETRAYING YOUR OWN TWO EYES. IT IS ONLY THE GREAT MASTER WHO DARES TO DISPARAGE THE BUDDHAS AND PATRIARCHS. FROM OLDEN DAYS OUR PREDECESSORS NEVER HAD PEOPLE ANYWHERE WHO BELIEVED IN THEM. ONLY WHEN THEY HAD BEEN DRIVEN OUT DID THEIR WORTH BECOME RECOGNIZED. IF THEY HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ACCEPTED BY PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, WHAT WOULD THEY HAVE BEEN GOOD FOR? THEREFORE IT IS SAID, 'THE LION'S ONE ROAR SPLITS THE JACKALS' SKULLS.'"

A very significant statement, very unique. He is saying that if you are accepted by everyone, that simply means you belong to the mediocre masses – you are a Mahatma Gandhi, you are not a Socrates.

A man of truth is bound to be burned alive or stoned or poisoned or crucified, because he will stand against the masses and their consolations. He will say things which are not contained in their scriptures. He may even contradict their scriptures.

You can see, as an existential example.... I have not done any harm to anybody in my life but I am condemned all over the world for the simple fact that I will not accept any lie as a consolation. Consolation is only for the cowards. It is good for the mediocre.

The man of truth is bound to contradict many superstitions which have been hanging around you for centuries, and as time has passed they have become more precious. The man of truth, the man of experience, of enlightenment, is bound to contradict many of your so-called religious leaders.

Rinzai is saying, "If anything Buddha says" – even Buddha, and he is a follower of Buddha – "even if Buddha says something which does not conform with my experience, I am going to contradict him."

This has been Zen's tradition, a very living tradition. They will worship Buddha, they will offer songs and flowers to Buddha's statue, but as far as their experience is concerned, if Buddha goes against it, then they don't care. They trust their own consciousness, and if it comes to this point, they will have to contradict even Gautam Buddha.

This, ordinary people cannot understand. They think that either you worship Buddha, or you don't. But Rinzai is saying that you can love even though you may not agree.

Buddha is a personality really worth loving. No other man of that grandeur has walked on the earth – but that does not mean that he is infallible. He committed many mistakes, and the man of experience will expose him although he follows him and loves him, respects him, has tremendous gratitude. That does not mean that anything that is not right should be overlooked.

Rinzai is saying, "IT IS ONLY THE GREAT MASTER WHO DARES TO DISPARAGE THE BUDDHAS AND PATRIARCHS. FROM OLDEN DAYS OUR PREDECESSORS NEVER HAD PEOPLE ANYWHERE WHO BELIEVED IN THEM."

Zen does not want anybody to be a believer. Either experience or just go home. Except experience, no belief is going to help.

So those who have followed Zen masters were not followers, they were fellow travelers. They were rejoicing in the master's enlightenment. They were drinking as much of his wisdom as possible, and they were finding the path so that they could also experience the same lightning experience which dissolves all questions, all answers, and leaves you simply innocent, centered – eternity in your hands. But they were not followers, and this is very difficult for the ordinary masses to understand.

One Hindu monk was traveling with me in the train some thirty years ago and he was very well known in North India. He asked me, "How many followers have you got?"

I said, "No, I don't have any followers."

He said, "You don't have any followers? Then in what way do people think that you are a master?"

I said, "Mastery has nothing to do with followers; otherwise the more followers you have the greater master you are. Then nobody can compete with the pope. He has six hundred million Catholics: he is the greatest master."

I told him, "I have fellow travelers. I have friends.... Friendship is giving respect to a person, dignity to a person. Following humiliates."

Never be a follower, because that means you are just a shadow, just moving in the footprints of somebody else, not trying to find your own path and your own being. Followers are weaklings.

A man of courage finds his own path. He can rejoice in the enlightenment of someone. He can love someone to the extent that he can call him his master, but the master can never call him a follower, only a friend who is just a little behind – a few steps more and he will also become a buddha. To reduce him to a follower is very insulting and humiliating. But all the religions have done that; they have reduced the whole humanity into slaves.

"FROM OLDEN DAYS," says Rinzai, "OUR PREDECESSORS NEVER HAD PEOPLE ANYWHERE WHO BELIEVED IN THEM."

They discouraged people from believing in them; they encouraged people to trust in themselves. And that's where the paths of all the religions become separate from Zen. They are all trying to gather more converts, more Hindus, more Catholics, more Mohammedans. It is a political game; it is not religion.

Did you see when the pope came to India? – the president and the prime minister of India were present to receive him. They don't come to receive any Shankaracharya, they don't come to receive any Acharya Tulsi, they don't come to receive any Mohammedan Sufi. What is special about the pope? He has six hundred million people behind him; he has a tremendous political power.

But Zen is not interested in political power. It has a totally different kind of power – the power of love. That does not reduce you into a slave, into a shadow, but raises you up to the same state of being in which the master is.

Buddha is reported to have said, "I will not be satisfied unless all those who have been with me become buddhas. Less than that will not satisfy me. If you want me to rejoice and celebrate, then don't waste time – become buddhas." This is a very human, very respectful approach. And another very important thing he says....

Before I say it... there was one important thinker in India, Mahatma Bhagwandin. Only two persons were known as Mahatma, Mahatma Gandhi and Mahatma Bhagwandin. Mahatma Gandhi was a politician; all his gestures were just to catch voters. But Mahatma Bhagwandin was an independent thinker. It was just coincidence, but I used to meet him once in a while in some conference or somewhere. He loved me, and the day he died I was present in Nagpur. Just by coincidence, I had been coming from a lecture tour, from Chaanda and Wardha, to Nagpur, and just as I was going into Nagpur University to speak, somebody told me that Mahatma Bhagwandin was on the verge of death. So I dropped the lecture and I went to see him.

He had become absolutely a skeleton. He held my hand and he told me, "It is good that you have come, and so unexpected. Just one thing I always wanted to say to you and I have never said it. Now there is not much time, I should say it. You will have to live a life of persecution. You will be condemned by millions, because whatever you say goes against the mass mind. But," he said, "don't change your path. Whatever happens – even if crucifixion happens it does not matter. What matters is that truth should be proclaimed."

Rinzai is saying that only when these old masters had been driven out did their worth become recognized. When the masses had stoned them, thrown them out of the crowd, spread all kinds of lies and rumors about them, only then were they recognized.

IF THEY HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ACCEPTED BY PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, WHAT WOULD THEY HAVE BEEN GOOD FOR?

Rinzai is making a very pregnant statement. If you are accepted everywhere, respected everywhere, it simply means you are good for nothing. It simply means that you are a cunning diplomat, that you go on saying things that appeal to people, that you never say anything that may hurt the mass mind, the retarded people. You don't speak from your heart and your experience, you simply look at the people and you speak what they want to hear.

That's what your priests and mahatmas are doing. Whatever you want to hear they repeat like parrots. It is a very vicious circle. You wanted to hear it; they repeated it. They became very respectable to you because they have confirmed your lie as a truth, they have helped your consolation. You will raise them into great mahatmas and saints. But saints have never been rebellious.

I have to make it clear that all your saints were diplomats, clever and cunning. Whatever you wanted they did. They confirmed your beliefs, howsoever stupid, and they became great in your eyes.

The really great are those whom you have crucified. Their fault was that they did not console you; they simply stated the fact, the truth. That truth is a lion's roar.

Rinzai is right when he says, "THEREFORE IT IS SAID, 'THE LION'S ONE ROAR SPLITS THE JACKALS' SKULLS.'"

The ordinary, retarded humanity I call retarded because it has been found after the first world war... At that time the psychologists had discovered how to measure intelligence. So they measured the intelligence of soldiers and they were surprised: they were all below fourteen percent. You can have one hundred percent intelligence; fourteen percent is a very retarded intelligence.

The speaker of the Indian parliament, Lok Sabha, was angry with my statement when I said that all these politicians are retarded. He wrote a letter to me saying, "You have insulted the parliament. You will have to answer, otherwise legal action can be taken against you."

I told Neelam, my secretary, to write an answer to the speaker, to whatever questions he has asked. In those answers, as a preface, I told her to write that I am ready to bring a group of psychoanalysts to the parliament to check the intelligence of the members "... and if it is proved that it is below fourteen percent, you all will have to resign. If it is proved that it is not the truth, they have an average of above fourteen percent, I am ready to suffer any punishment for it.

"A legal judgment will not be decisive. The only way to prove whether I am right or wrong is first to take a psychological test of all the Lok Sabha members. Either they will all have to resign, including you, or I am ready for any punishment. There is no need to go to the court; the Lok Sabha itself can decide any punishment. I am perfectly ready for it."

He became silent, and I have been waiting for almost two years now. He saw the point, that I will create trouble. Those politicians are chosen by the ordinary masses; they represent the ordinary. They are not great intellectuals, intelligentsia.

But he must have looked at the situation. He knows in this parliament people throw shoes at each other in argument, they beat people, they have to be dragged by police officers out of the parliament house. All their actions prove that they are retarded people, but clever enough to persuade the masses, because the masses are even lower.

But his silence is great. His silence proves he understood the point – that it will be a worldwide uproar if the whole parliament is proved to be retarded. And there is every possibility... He knows what goes on happening every day in the parliament.

Rinzai is saying, "ONLY WHEN THEY HAD BEEN DRIVEN OUT DID THEIR WORTH BECOME RECOGNIZED. IF THEY HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ACCEPTED BY PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, WHAT WOULD THEY HAVE BEEN GOOD FOR? THEREFORE IT IS SAID, 'THE LION'S ONE ROAR SPLITS THE JACKALS' SKULLS.'"

One man of ultimate intelligence is enough to drive the whole humanity against him. Twenty-one countries have banned my entry. Strange... what can I do on a three weeks' tourist visa? I am not a terrorist, I don't carry bombs; I am against any kind of violence. But whole parliaments without a single person objecting decided that not only can I not enter into their country, but I cannot refuel my airplane at their international airports, I cannot even land my airplane on their airports. They say that my presence will be disturbing to their morality. Just on the airport, miles away from the city, my presence will be spoiling the morality, the religion, their way of life, their tradition, their orthodoxy. Just standing at the airport in my airplane....

In England, which is thought to be one of the most intelligent countries, I had to stay only for six hours and I wanted to stay only in the airport lounge. I had both things – I had my own airplane, my own pilot, and I had also purchased a first-class ticket, so that they could not say that the lounge is only for first-class ticket people.

The chief of the airport was in a very embarrassing position. He said, "What can I do? The home ministry says on the phone that this man should not be allowed even in the lounge. He is a dangerous man."

I said, "You can check my luggage. I am not carrying any bombs. In what way can I disturb the morality of England and their religion? And if their religion and morality can be destroyed so easily, are they worth keeping?"

He phoned again to the home ministry and the reply was the same – that if I want to stay I can stay six hours only in the jail, but not outside the jail. And I had to stay for six hours in the jail because the flying time of my pilot was over. Every pilot has a flying time – that was the difficulty – and it is against flying laws to fly overtime, so the pilot has to rest for six hours. I and my few friends who were traveling with me had to rest in the jail. The same happened in many places. It is now almost one man against the whole world.

The archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church, the most ancient church of Christianity, threatened the prime minister and the president that if they didn't remove me immediately he would dynamite the house in which I and my friends were living. We were living on an island just for the duration of the four weeks' visa; we were not going to stay there. I had not stepped out of the garden of the bungalow in which I was staying.

But the archbishop of the Christian church, the oldest church, forgets completely about the teachings of Jesus, that you should love your enemy. I am not even a friend.... But this is the world we are living in. A world full of slaves with different trademarks – Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian.

Zen is a revolutionary statement about religiousness.

A Zen poet, Ikkyu, wrote:

RAIN HAS FALLEN SINCE DUSK,
WAILING OVER THE HSIANG RIVER.
YET THE HOMELESS TRAVELER
SINGS WITH HIS WHOLE SOUL.
THIS BLUE SEA AND BLUE SKY
HOLD THE ESSENCE OF MY HEARTBEAT.

Zen is a religion of beauty.

You know the Upanishadic description of the ultimate reality, satyam, shivam, sundram. Either a man can reach to the ultimate by finding the truth of his being, satyam, or he can reach by finding the divinity of his being, the goodness, or he can reach to the ultimate by finding the eternal beauty of his being.

Zen is a religion of beauty. The strange fact is that if you can get one, the other two follow automatically. If you attain to truth, satyam, then shivam and sundram will follow automatically. They are one thing looked at from three standpoints.

Because beauty is the heartbeat of Zen it has been more creative. It has created great poetry, great paintings. It has transformed ordinary things like archery or swordsmanship into meditation. It is not a non-creative religion; it has created and added to the beauty of existence.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked a question:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

CAN ONLY OTHER ENLIGHTENED BEINGS, OR PEOPLE WHO ARE YET TO COME, BE CONTEMPORARIES OF A MASTER?

Yes, Maneesha, because enlightenment is beyond time, so all enlightened people are contemporaries. The distance in time between them does not matter at all at that peak that is rising beyond time.

Whoever reaches... the distance between two persons may be twenty-five centuries or five thousand years, but that distance is in time. That distance is a measurement of the mind, and enlightenment is both beyond time and mind. Hence, only enlightened people can be contemporaries.

The unenlightened has the potential to explode into enlightenment, and this very moment he will be moving in the world of the buddhas. This very moment he will find himself standing beside Gautam Buddha and Rinzai.

I am reminded of a small anecdote.

In Zorba the Buddha Rajneesh Restaurant in heaven, Gautam Buddha, Confucius, and Lao Tzu are all sitting around a table, and a very beautiful young sannyasin carrying a very beautiful jar comes along and asks, "Would you like to have a taste of life?"

Confucius immediately closed his eyes and he said, "Enough is enough. I have lived life and I don't want anything to do with life at all."

Buddha said, "I would like to have a sip first to see how it tastes" – Buddha was always on the middle path. So he took a sip and he said, "It is very bitter."

The girl was going to ask the same to Lao Tzu, but before she could say anything he took the whole jar and drank all the juice, and he said, "Unless you drink it wholly and totally, how can you know?"

This Confucius is behaving as much like an idiot as he used to behave on the earth – closing his eyes. Buddha is behaving the same way he used to behave on the earth – always the middle path. Unless you know the whole, you don't know."

So when you become buddhas, you will be meeting all kinds of fellows, you will be contemporaries of all the buddhas of the past. But you carry the potential this very moment.

Question 2

Maneesha has asked another question too:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

ARE YOU NOT THE GREATEST, THE MOST DARING ICONOCLAST OF ALL TIME?

Unfortunately, Maneesha, I am.

It is time for Sardar Gurudayal Singh.

Baron Fuzz-butt, a nobleman at the court of King Arthur of Merrie England, has a reputation for being very gallant towards women.

"There is no such thing," he announces one day, "as an ugly woman."

He is overheard saying this by a woman who has a nose that is really squashed flat on her face, and she confronts Fuzz-butt.

"Confess the truth!" she cries. "You are now face to face with an ugly woman!"

"Not at all, madam," replies Baron Fuzz-butt gallantly. "You are like all women, an angel fallen from heaven. You were just unlucky that you fell on your nose!"

Gorgeous Gloria starts dating Rock Hunk, the film star, and soon moves into his penthouse apartment, high above the smog of San Francisco.

One evening, Gloria comes back from shopping to find that Rock is not at home. Feeling hungry, she looks in the freezer and finds that it is empty, so she goes out to eat at a restaurant.

By chance, she goes to the same restaurant where Rock is having a quiet candlelight dinner with Luscious Lucy, another of his girlfriends.

Gloria takes one look at the scene and quickly makes her way towards their table.

Rock Hunk looks up as Gloria comes storming across the restaurant, and then quickly looks away again as though he does not know her.

"What's the matter, darling?" snarls Gloria, as she reaches the table. "Don't you recognize me with my clothes on?"

Leroy, the black dude, is sitting up in a tree one day in Central Park, New York, enjoying the view. He is dozing off when a young white couple comes and sits on the park bench below him. The couple starts petting and kissing, and before long they are sprawled on the bench, making love.

Just then a policeman walks up and arrests the young couple for indecent exposure. The cop sees Leroy sitting up in the tree and drags him along as a witness.

The next day, in court, Leroy is in the witness stand, and the judge says, "Now, Leroy, will you tell the court what you saw?"

"Yes, your honor!" cries Leroy. "They was a-fucking!"

"Now look here!" snaps the judge. "You cannot use language like that, or I will hold you in contempt of court! Now, tell me again: what were they doing?"

"They was a-fucking!" cries Leroy.

"Right!" says the judge. "I sentence you to one month in jail for contempt."

A month later Leroy is back in the witness stand and the judge asks him again what he saw.

"Your honor!" cries Leroy. "They was a-fucking!"

"One month in jail for contempt!" cries the judge, and Leroy is taken away.

This goes on, month after month, for the next few years. Finally, when Leroy comes back for the two-hundredth time, the judge says, "Look, Leroy, I am completely fed up with this case. We are all a lot older now; surely you can tell me, in decent language, what happened that day in the park!"

"Okay, your honor," says Leroy, "let me put it like this:

His pants was down

Below his knees,

His balls was swayin'

In the breeze.

His you-know-what,

Was you-know-where,

And if that's not fucking,

Give me the electric chair!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent, close your eyes, and feel your body to be completely frozen.

Now look inwards with your total life energy, with your whole consciousness and with a great urgency, as if this moment is the last moment. Penetrate into your center of being just like an arrow.

There, at the center, you are a buddha and a contemporary of all the buddhas. Even this very moment time has disappeared... mind has been left behind. You have gone beyond both.

This silence, this blissfulness, this utter serenity... Only one thing remains, witnessing, because witnessing is another name of the buddha.

Hold on to witnessing as Nivedano will give you the signal to relax.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Hold on to the witnessing.

You are not the body, you are not the mind, you are just a pure consciousness, an awareness. As you become deeply aware, your individual entity disappears. This Buddha Auditorium really becomes a buddha lake. I can see your consciousness melting and merging into a lake without any ripples.

At this moment this place is the holiest, because nowhere else in the world are ten thousand people trying to reach to the center.

This center has to be brought slowly, slowly to your ordinary activities.

The same witnessing, the same silence, the same grace, the same joy – whatever you do around the clock, remember you are a buddha and you have to keep the dignity of a buddha, and your whole life will be transformed.

Now, collect as much awareness, as many flowers that have been showering on you... The beauty, the truth, the good, you have to carry them back.

This evening was beautiful on its own accord, but the ten thousand buddhas melting into an ocean made it a historical moment.

There were days in the past when in many places this golden moment was happening. Now all those places have disappeared.

I am trying to revive a forgotten language.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back... but don't forget that you are a buddha. Silently, peacefully, carrying a great awareness with you, remain in this awareness twenty-four hours a day. Slowly slowly it will become your very heartbeat. You will not have to remember it; it will be there just like an undercurrent in all your actions, gestures, words, silences.

Collect the experience.

Remember the golden path that you have gone in by, and have come out from the same path.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 4

How coarse

27 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

ONE DAY WHEN RINZAI AND PU'HUA WERE BOTH ATTENDING A DINNER AT A PATRON'S HOUSE, RINZAI ASKED: "A HAIR SWALLOWS UP THE GREAT SEA, AND A MUSTARD SEED CONTAINS MOUNT SUMERU. IS THIS THE MARVELOUS ACTIVITY OF SUPERNATURAL POWER OR ORIGINAL SUBSTANCE AS IT IS?" PU'HUA KICKED OVER THE DINNER TABLE.

"HOW COARSE!" EXCLAIMED THE MASTER.

PU'HUA RETORTED, "WHAT PLACE DO YOU THINK THIS IS – TALKING ABOUT COARSE AND FINE!"

THE NEXT DAY RINZAI AND PU'HUA AGAIN ATTENDED A DINNER. THE MASTER ASKED, "HOW DOES TODAY'S FEAST COMPARE WITH YESTERDAY'S?"

PU'HUA KICKED OVER THE DINNER TABLE AS BEFORE. "GOOD ENOUGH," SAID RINZAI, "BUT HOW COARSE!"

PU'HUA COMMENTED, "BLIND MAN! WHAT HAS BUDDHA-DHARMA GOT TO DO WITH COARSE AND FINE?" RINZAI STUCK OUT HIS TONGUE.

Maneesha, before I discuss this small and yet significant anecdote about Rinzai, I have to introduce to the Museum of Gods a gift from Rafia.

For a few months there has been a very strange tension arising in American traffic, because so many cars are on the road that you can walk home faster than you can take your car. For three hours, four hours, five hours people are simply stuck. Naturally, there is a limit to patience, and a few people started bringing their guns.

In San Francisco and L.A. six persons were shot for no reason, but just because after honking for five hours and not being able to move one inch, they became so angry – and anger is inside everybody, just it needs a certain time to surface – that they shot people who were absolutely unknown to them. These people were not blocking the way, they were not the cause; they also were blocked. Nobody knew where the flow of the traffic had been stopped or what had happened – whether it was an accident or a truck had turned over.

Seeing this situation, that six people have been killed within a week, other car owners started purchasing guns, because it is getting very dangerous; at least in self-defense, even if you are not going to kill somebody, you can show your gun.

But the situation was becoming worse because in America you don't need any license for guns. They are freely available in the market. The license is needed for the seller, the shopkeeper, not by the owner of the gun. It is absolutely stupid to give people weapons that are dangerous to life, but the constitution of America allows it.

It was allowed in the beginning, but now it has become a solid tradition. The constitution allowed guns to people to kill Red Indians. Red Indians were killed just like animals – hunted, chased deep into the forest or into the mountains. Now America belongs to non-Americans, the whole of America, and strangely enough the American constitution talks about freedom, about freedom of speech and individuality, and they themselves are holding onto somebody else's land.

It seems that the whole world is blind.

France has sent as a gift to America the Statue of Liberty, and America is the greatest slave land today. In fact the slavery is such that there is no possibility for the Red Indians – to whom the land belongs – ever to be back again in power. They have been crippled completely. Most of them have been killed, and the rest are forced to live on reservations, in deep forests, not allowed to live in the cities, and they are given pensions.

One would think this is very compassionate, but the real reason for giving them pensions – not work – is a very psychological strategy. What will they do with the money? They will drink alcohol, they will go to prostitutes, they will gamble, and they will produce more and more children, because each child brings more pension. They have completely forgotten the very idea of freedom, that this is their land.

At that time guns were allowed freely for everybody, and that situation continues. Still you can have almost any kind of gun, automatic or semi-automatic – and if the government says that only six people were killed, you can be sure at least eighteen people must have been killed. Always remember, any government report is bound to be a lie. If it is concerned with the enemy, then too it is a lie.

A few months ago, when the Russian nuclear plant had an accident, American radio immediately declared that two hundred people had died. "Their dead bodies have been found, and many more may have been consumed by the fire."

A group of journalists from Europe came to explore the situation – and only four persons had died. The American radio has not even been asked for an apology. From where did they get the idea of two hundred dead and many more consumed by the fire? So when it is concerned with others they lie, when it is concerned with themselves they lie.

Politicians' main function seems to be lying.

And this mad humanity seems to be concerned continuously with war. As far back as you can see, there are wars and wars and wars, and each war has taken millions of lives.

Genghis Khan killed forty million people, Tamerlane killed thirty million people alone – and they did not have very sophisticated means. Data is not available about many other killers. Alexander the Great and Napoleon and Ivan the Terrible all killed... their greatness depends on how many people they have killed. Adolf Hitler killed thirty million people. Joseph Stalin killed in his own country one million Russians.

It seems the main purpose on this earth is to kill; and particularly in America today they are piling up weapons, knowing perfectly well that they have enough weapons to destroy this earth many times. But it seems to be a mania, a kind of neurosis.

Rafia has brought a small gift for the Museum of Gods, and it is not a toy. In the beginning it was produced as a toy. Now the so-called intelligent and civilized and mature people are carrying it with themselves, and psychologists are even suggesting that it is helpful. If you are feeling angry, rather than using a machine-gun, use this small instrument. If you are wanting to use old methods, then the middle button is for bombing... (THE MASTER AIMS A SMALL BLACK BOX AT THE AUDIENCE AND PUSHES THE MIDDLE BUTTON, MAKING BOMBING SOUNDS FOR SOME TIME. SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 190.)

The first button is for death rays...

(HE PUSHES THE LEFT BUTTON, MAKING ELECTRONIC SIREN SOUNDS.)

And the third button is for nuclear weapons, missiles...

(HE PUSHES THE RIGHT BUTTON, MAKING SOUNDS LIKE FLYING MISSILES THAT LAND WITH LOUD EXPLOSIONS.)

Buttons exactly like these are going to destroy humanity. And why have people started carrying this toy? Psychologists suggest that it helps to release your anger.

If there is somebody you want to kill, three ways are available. For a faraway enemy – this is the latest witchcraft – send nuclear missiles...

(HE PUSHES THE BUTTON, MAKING MORE MISSILE SOUNDS.)

If the enemy is very close by, bombing is better...

(HE PUSHES THE BOMBING BUTTON AGAIN.)

If you don't want to destroy things, only life, then death rays are good...

(HE SENDS OUT SOME MORE DEATH RAY SOUNDS.)

Now it is being carried by adult, mature people in their pockets. It seems that killing has become a god in itself. There have been war-gods, whose only function is to create war; there have been destruction-gods – for example Shiva, in Hindu mythology, is the one who will destroy the whole of humanity. I don't think Ronald Reagan will be able to compete with Shiva. He is trying his best to be the Shiva of Hindu mythology.

This small instrument shows the mind of man. Death rays simply kill life; they don't destroy your houses, they don't destroy your furniture, they don't destroy anything but only the living. You will be destroyed, your plants, your trees will be destroyed, and all that is dead will remain. Just think of a place where everything alive has been destroyed and only dead things are standing untouched: it will create a nightmare to your mind.

And this small instrument is exactly the replica of what Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan are carrying with themselves. It is just a question of pushing a button, and immediately life will disappear from this earth. It has never been so easy to destroy.

All religions have been life-negative, and that is the cause of this much destructiveness in the human mind. If they had told people to learn silence and peace and meditation, and love life, and dance life, then these idiots like Ronald Reagan would not have happened. It is all the religions that are destroying man's love for life, man's love for joy, man's love for laughter, for dancing, for playing music, for singing. Everything has been denied by the religions, and the ultimate consequence is that the whole creative energy in man has turned to being self-destructive.

Nobody analyzes exactly why people are so much interested in destroying. Where has the joy of creating gone? The whole responsibility lies with the religions. These politicians are simply carrying the ideologies that religions have preached. Any kind of ideology that is life-negative is dangerous – more dangerous than death rays, more dangerous than nuclear missiles.

If we want to save the world from being destroyed unnecessarily, a world which has created people like Buddha and Mahavira and Bodhidharma... An earth that is capable of reaching to such heights of consciousness is worthy to be saved. The whole universe is so vast, yet we are not certain that anywhere life has reached to such heights as we have come to. It is suspected that five hundred planets in the whole universe must have some kind of life, but it is just guesswork – although it is being done by scientists, so it must have some possibility.

Nobody can say with absolute certainty that there is anywhere else in this vast universe a consciousness of a buddha – and you are destroying this earth, which is the only place in this vast universe a small planet has come to the highest peak of consciousness. It is not only a crime against humanity, it is a crime against the whole universe.

War is not a god, and man has not to be sacrificed to it. But the only way to save man from this destructiveness that is coming closer and closer is to spread more love, is to spread more meditation, is to spread more freedom, more individuality. More life-affirmation is the only way to prevent this beautiful earth and its tremendous possibilities from being destroyed.

Even though man has remained mad, fighting continuously, a few individuals have been creating also. We can be proud of Leonardo da Vinci, we can be proud of Michelangelo, we can be proud of Leo Tolstoy, we can be proud of Fyodor Dostoevsky, we can be proud of Chuang Tzu, we can be proud of Rinzai. Thousands of flowers, in spite of the madness of the masses, have still grown up and blossomed, have left tremendous fragrance that is still alive, goes on moving from one being to another being.

The politicians have to be prevented in any case because it is not only destroying this humanity, it is destroying the only living place in the whole universe. The earth has taken four million years to bring about human beings, and all human beings can become buddhas. Perhaps four million years more may be needed.

And a buddha is such a beauty, is such a grace, is such a rose, that to turn the whole earth into a graveyard will be the greatest crime. But it will remain unrecorded because there will be no one to record it. It will consume everyone; nobody is going to be the victor, nobody is going to be the defeated. The only difference will be ten minutes: if Russia starts the war, within ten minutes – just ten minutes – American missiles will be on the way. If America starts, within ten minutes Russian missiles will be turned towards America.

So only a time span of ten minutes... and everybody will be consumed alive in the greatest fire that has ever happened on the earth – millions of wars together, not only destroying man but animals, trees, anything that has life.

So this is Rafia's very significant gift... because war has been the undeclared god of the mad humanity up to now.

The director-general, Avirbhava, is not present, she is sick, so Anando, the associate director-general of the Museum of Gods, should take it for your museum.

(ANANDO COMES FORWARD TO TAKE THE SMALL BLACK BOX, AND AS SHE SITS DOWN A MISSILE SOUND ACCIDENTALLY GETS TRIGGERED. EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE MASTER, STARTS LAUGHING. SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 191.)

Don't start bombing here!

Maneesha has brought a very small anecdote, but very difficult to understand. Many may have read it without knowing what it signifies. But you have to understand it very clearly; it has great significance, but in a Zen way.

ONE DAY WHEN RINZAI AND PU'HUA WERE BOTH ATTENDING A DINNER AT A PATRON'S HOUSE, RINZAI SAID: "A HAIR SWALLOWS UP THE GREAT SEA, AND A MUSTARD SEED CONTAINS MOUNT SUMERU. IS THIS THE MARVELOUS ACTIVITY OF SUPERNATURAL POWER OR ORIGINAL SUBSTANCE AS IT IS?"

What he was saying is of great significance. Have you ever thought that even a simple mustard seed can make the whole earth green? Any seed, a single seed, contains infinity. First it will become one plant, and that plant will bring hundreds of seeds; then each seed will become again a plant, and that will become a continuous chain, unending. The whole earth just needs one single seed of anything, and it will soon be green all over.

Rinzai is saying that the smallest life contains the eternal life; the small and the bigger are not different.

He is making a significant statement, but PU'HUA KICKED OVER THE DINNER TABLE.

"HOW COARSE!" EXCLAIMED THE MASTER.

The disciple, rather than saying anything in response to it, kicked over the dinner table. What is he saying by kicking over the dinner table? He is one of the intimate disciples of Rinzai, and he is saying, "This is not the right place to say such great and immensely meaningful things. The people who have arranged this dinner cannot understand what you are saying."

The master said, "HOW COARSE! It is not expected from you to be so coarse. You could have acted in some more sophisticated way and told me that, 'This is not the right place to make such great statements. Great statements can be made only to great people, people who have the open being and the silence of no-mind. Only they will understand this.'"

PU'HUA RETORTED, "WHAT PLACE DO YOU THINK THIS IS – TALKING ABOUT COARSE AND FINE!"

THE NEXT DAY RINZAI AND PU'HUA AGAIN ATTENDED A DINNER. THE MASTER ASKED, "HOW DOES TODAY'S FEAST COMPARE WITH YESTERDAY'S?"

PU'HUA KICKED OVER THE DINNER TABLE AS BEFORE. "GOOD ENOUGH," SAID RINZAI, "BUT HOW COARSE!"

PU'HUA COMMENTED, "BLIND MAN! WHAT HAS BUDDHA-DHARMA GOT TO DO WITH COARSE AND FINE?" RINZAI STUCK OUT HIS TONGUE.

Zen is a very playful religion. Rinzai sticking out his tongue to his disciple must be absolutely unparalleled. No master anywhere in the world would have done such a thing. But Zen accepts with absolute certainty that whatever the master's action is, it has significance. He is not condemning Pu'hua, but just making a laughingstock of him.

He is saying, "Whichever the place, whether the person can understand or not, you still can make great statements. They fall into the person like seeds. Perhaps not today, but tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, when the rains come the seeds may sprout." You may not understand today, you may ignore it today, but who knows about your tomorrows? Tomorrow you may suddenly become aware of what a great seed has been sown in your unconscious mind.

So Rinzai's standpoint is that it does not matter whether the person is capable of understanding it or not. If you have it, share it. Don't be bothered whether the person deserves it or not.

Everybody intrinsically is a buddha. Sooner or later he will understand it. It may not happen in your life, you may be dead – but the day he will understand it, he will bow down to the earth in deep respect, in gratitude that when he was not even prepared you had delivered to him the very master key which opens all the doors of existence.

He is not agreeing with Pu'hua, whose standpoint is very ordinary and practical. Pu'hua says, "What is the point of saying things to people which are absolutely irrelevant to their mind?"

But even that which is not understood this moment... you may suddenly get it in the middle of the night. Suddenly a great realization may come as you are relaxed and silent, and you will see what you have missed. But it does not matter if you miss in the morning and get it in the evening. Whenever you get it, it is always early.

Rinzai's standpoint is that of a great master.

I am reminded of Jesus' once saying – and Pu'hua will agree with that saying – "Don't go on throwing your seeds; they may fall on stones, they may fall on roads, they may fall on the boundaries of fields where people walk. They may sprout, but still they will be killed. Throw your seeds in the very good soil."

Pu'hua will absolutely agree with Jesus. But that is a statement not out of abundance, not out of your too-much-overflowing energy; that is the standpoint of a miserly man.

Rinzai says, "Don't bother! Even the stone sometimes becomes a fertile ground. Don't bother, because the more you give the more you have, so it does not matter even if it falls on the wrong ground. You should not be the choosers; that is judgmental. Who are you to choose who is worthy and who is not worthy?"

He is perfectly right, and although Pu'hua seems to be more pragmatic, practical, still he has something to contribute to the anecdote.

At the end he says, "BLIND MAN! WHAT HAS BUDDHA-DHARMA GOT TO DO WITH COARSE AND FINE?"

Because Rinzai has made the statement, "Your kicking over the table is very coarse," he says, "BLIND MAN! WHAT HAS BUDDHA-DHARMA GOT TO DO WITH COARSE AND FINE?"

It is true, buddha-dharma has nothing to do with coarse and fine. It has to go beyond both. That's where RINZAI STUCK OUT HIS TONGUE – just making a laughingstock of Pu'hua, but not denying him, or that what he was saying was right.

So the anecdote is very strange in the sense that Pu'hua is right on a very practical ground, and Rinzai is right as far as the ultimate is concerned. Both are right, just their rightness is concerned with different contexts.

Where Rinzai is, he is sharing himself out of abundance. He is just a rain cloud so full of water that it does not matter where it falls; he has to unburden himself.

And Pu'hua is also right, but on a much lower level. He is saying, "You should give your insights only to those who understand." But if buddhas become so miserly, life will lose many significant explosions in people's consciousness, because sometimes a casual visitor suddenly catches fire.

Life is so mysterious that somebody may be searching for truth for years and will be getting even farther away from it by his searching – searching in a wrong direction. And somebody may be a casual visitor who has nothing to do with truth, who has never thought about it, but he is innocent, he has no prejudice, no idea. Coming close enough to a master he may suddenly become aflame.

So one never knows, one should not be judgmental. If you have it, share it with the stones. Even the stones one day can become buddhas. Share with everyone – with the blind, with the deaf, because their day will also come. It is only a question of time. Everybody is going to become a buddha, everybody is on the path. However far astray you go, you will come back. You have to realize your being and its potential.

Ikkyu wrote:

STRAW-SANDALED,

WITH EMACIATED LEGS AND NO INTIMATES,

ONLY THE PILLAR MOVES WITH ME,

ACCOMPANYING MY SONG.

THE CUCKOO LAMENTS

WITH ITS BLOOD:

IT IS SPRING IN MY HEART.

He is saying, "I am a poor beggar – STRAW-SANDALED. I have only sandals of straw – WITH EMACIATED LEGS AND NO INTIMATES, ONLY THE PILLAR MOVES WITH ME."

What is this pillar? In Zen they call the consciousness your real pillar. ONLY THE PILLAR MOVES WITH ME, ACCOMPANYING MY SONG. THE CUCKOO LAMENTS WITH ITS BLOOD; IT IS SPRING IN MY HEART.

It does not matter that you possess money or power, it does not matter that you are an emperor. All that matters is whether you possess the pillar of consciousness – your whole being just lighted inside, no darkness. In that very moment it is spring for you. Thousands of flowers will start blossoming around you.

It is one of the great contributions of Zen that whenever one person becomes enlightened the whole existence rejoices in it, because we are all connected, so deeply connected that even if one person becomes enlightened, his enlightenment is a moment of joy for the whole existence. Not only man, but trees will rejoice, the birds will sing, the whole sky will be filled with tremendous love for you. It starts showering on you.

It is so clear when your enlightenment happens that you have been a welcome guest to all the mysteries of existence. Your springtime has come.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

WITH THE PATH OF SUFISM, THE WAY OF THE HEART BEHIND US, WHERE DOES THE DEVOTEE FIT IN?

Maneesha, the devotee fits in everywhere. Of course the context becomes different.

In Sufism, the devotee is devoted to God to such an extent that al-Hillaj Mansoor started shouting, "I am God!" The devotee disappears into God. But God is a hypothesis, so the devotee in Sufism is only living in a very great hallucination. It is his mind's projection.

But the devotee in Zen has no hypothesis, he is not devoted to any God or to any fiction. His devotion is to a living human master. It is not a fiction, it is a real being-to-being contact.

So don't think that the devotee has no place in Zen. In fact, in Zen the devotee has a more authentic and real meaning. In Sufism it is only imagination, great imagination. It will bring many flowers, will make the person very blissful, but it is just like a person who is intoxicated.

It is not a coincidence that in Sufism they have wine, and saki – the woman who brings the wine – and God conceived of as a woman. The man who gets deeply involved in Sufi imagination almost looks mad, but you can see he is very joyful; he dances and sings, his whole energy is now being dominated by his imagination.

But if a person, by drinking alcohol or by taking marijuana, dances and sings, do you think it has any significance in the ultimate sense? It is just chemical. Soon the chemical will be out of the body and with the chemical going out of the body, the person is back down to the earth, more shattered than he was ever before. Imagination is a certain release within you of something intoxicating.

That's why I said to Coleman yesterday, "You bring a Sufi to me, and within one hour I will bring him down to the earth. Otherwise he is flying in the sky."

There have been cases when people under LSD thought they could fly. It was so clear for them, without any doubt, that they flew out from a seventeen story building. It was not a question of courage, it was not a question of any decision; they were so certain under the impact of LSD that they were found shattered on the earth in pieces.

Sufism is a much lower state, but very simple to be intoxicated with. But the devotee on the path of Zen does not disappear, he simply takes a new context. Now it is a question of coming closer to a living master. It is not a question of coming closer to God, which is only a hypothesis. You can come close to God only in imagination, and you don't know the powers of imagination.

It happened that Ramakrishna tried many paths. He was the first man in the history of seekers who had tried many paths to see whether they reach to the same point or not. So whatever was available around him in Bengal, he tried. There is a sect which believes that only Krishna is the male and everybody is a female. He followed that path also. It is absolutely imagination, but the story shows the power of imagination.

For six months Ramakrishna lived like a woman, and his disciples were completely shocked to see that he started walking like a woman. Not only that, but his breasts became like a woman; not only that, but he started having periods. Even doctors could not believe it. His voice changed; and when he started having regular periods, his disciples tried to hide the fact, because if others knew they would laugh. They persuaded him to change this path: "You have gone too far!" – and it took almost six months for him to be his own self again.

Imagination is not a small thing, it has tremendous power. If you follow imagination – and all the religions have been doing that – you will see Krishna and you will see Christ. But all that seeing is just your projection. You want to see Krishna, you insist on your imagination producing Krishna, and it will produce. But you are falling into a trap of your own mind.

A devotee in any other religion is devoted to God; only in Zen is his devotion towards a living master. There is no question of imagination. Imagination has to be avoided completely if you want to know the truth.

Now it is time for Sardar Gurudayal Singh. Where is he? Anando, send missiles!

(ANANDO SHOOTS DEATH RAY SOUNDS IN SARDARJI'S DIRECTION.)

No, I think bombs will be better!

(ANANDO SENDS SOME BOMB SOUNDS ACROSS THE AUDITORIUM.)

Bert Badbreath suspects his wife, Luscious Lucy, is cheating on him, so he hires Manfred Sneek, the private detective, to follow her.

Manfred gets hot on Lucy's trail, watching her in bars, nightclubs and hotels all over the city. The next morning, Sneek comes back to report to Bert.

"I followed her into the Crawling Cat bar," says Sneek, "and then she gave me the slip. And then I traced her to the Rotten Jazz nightclub, and she gave me the slip there too."

"This is getting ridiculous," cries Bert. "What happened next?"

"Well," says Sneek, "then I traced her to Screwing Sands hotel...."

"Don't tell me," interrupts Bert. "She gave you the slip there, too!"

"That's right," reports Sneek, with a big grin, "and also her panties!"

A landscaping crew has a large, fully-grown pine tree suspended in the air on chains from a boom truck. Suddenly the boom moves sharply and the tree swings around, hitting a brand new Cadillac parked by the side of the road.

Betty Cheese jumps out of the smashed car and looks at the damage. "You will have to come with me and explain this to my husband," she says to one of the men.

"Don't worry, lady," replies the landscaper. "My company will pay for the damage."

"No, you don't understand!" cries Betty. "I want a witness to be there when I tell Chester that I was parked and a tree ran into me!"

Doctor Horton, the anthropologist, stumbles upon a tribe of cannibals in the middle of the jungle. Standing in the center of their village is a tall pole with a hat hanging on the top.

Immediately, Doctor Horton recognizes the hat and shouts to the cannibal chief, "My God! That is Doctor Fracture's hat! He is my best friend!"

"He was your best friend," says the cannibal chief, picking his teeth with a toothpick. "Last night he was our dinner."

"You ate him?" cries Doctor Horton.

"Yup," says the chief. "First we chopped up his legs, then we deep fried them and served them with lots of Pepsi-Cola."

"Really?" exclaims Doctor Horton.

"Yup," replies the chief. "Then we boiled his arms in garlic sauce and ate them, also with lots of Pepsi-Cola."

"Really?" cries Doctor Horton in disbelief. "You really ate all of him?"

"Yup," says the chief. "All of him, with lots of Pepsi-Cola."

"You mean," shouts Doctor Horton, "you even ate his... his... his thing?"

"That's right, we ate his thing," says the cannibal. "But not with Pepsi-Cola – with Coca-Cola... because things go better with Coke!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent. Close your eyes. Feel your body to be completely frozen.

Now look inwards with your total consciousness and with a great urgency, as if this is going to be your last moment.

The center is not very far away, and as you come closer to the center you will start feeling a coolness, a fragrance, an immense silence, and a great joy.

This moment, when you are at the center, you are only a witness. The body is far away, the mind is far away – you have left them all.

You are just a mirror, alert, aware, watchful, and flowers start showering on you – new fragrances, the peace that passeth understanding. Suddenly you are part of the whole cosmos.

In this Buddha Hall, ten thousand buddhas have disappeared.... Just one buddha-consciousness...

To make it clear,

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Just remain a witness. The body is there, the mind is there, but you are neither the body nor the mind. You are an eternal witness.

Since existence began, you have been there as a witness in different forms. Witnessing is your exact nature, and to realize this witness is to become a buddha.

All boundaries disappear, and the Buddha Auditorium becomes a lake of silent consciousness without any ripples, so silent that it becomes almost a mirror.

You are fortunate to be here at such a momentous event. The whole humanity is so poor in comparison to you. You may not have anything, but if you have your buddha awakened, you have all the treasures of existence in your hands.

You have to bring this awareness, this witnessing, this buddhahood, from the center to the circumference of your day-to-day life.

In every action, buddha should be expressed. In your silence, buddha should be present. In your songs you should allow the buddha to sing. In your dances, you should not dance; allow the buddha to dance.

Slowly, slowly your whole life is completely overtaken by your innermost core. The difference between the circumference and the center disappears.

That is the most precious moment.

In Zen they call it coming back home.

Soon Nivedano will be calling you back. Collect as much flowers and fragrance... Persuade the buddha to come with you. He has come always; just a right persuasion...

At the center he is only a seed, at the circumference he will become the flower.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but come back as a buddha – with the same grace, with the same beauty, with the same blissfulness.

Sit down for a few moments just to recollect the space you have been in, the path, the golden path that you followed towards your center, and the same path you have followed back.

Remember, the buddha is not an achievement, it is a revelation. You have always been a buddha; just a little recognition and your whole life goes through a transformation.

This is the only revolution worth calling a revolution.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 5

Relax and disappear

28 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

RINZAI ONCE WENT TO VISIT ONE OF UNGAN'S DISCIPLES, ANZAN. ON THAT OCCASION HE ASKED ANZAN: "WHAT IS THE WHITE COW OF THE DEWY GROUND?"

ANZAN RESPONDED BY SAYING: "MOO! MOO!"

RINZAI COMMENTED: "YOU ARE DUMB!"

ANZAN SAID, "HOW ABOUT YOU?"

RINZAI OBSERVED,

"YOU ANIMAL!"

ON ONE OCCASION RINZAI ASKED A NUN, "WELL-COME OR ILL-COME?"

THE NUN SHOUTED.

"GO ON, GO ON, SPEAK!" CRIED RINZAI, TAKING UP HIS STICK. AGAIN THE NUN SHOUTED. RINZAI HIT HER.

ON ANOTHER OCCASION RINZAI ASKED LO'PU, "UP TO NOW IT HAS BEEN THE CUSTOM FOR SOME MEN TO USE THE STICK AND OTHERS TO GIVE A SHOUT. WHICH COMES CLOSER TO THE HEART OF THE RECIPIENT?"

"NEITHER," RESPONDED LO'PU.

"WHAT does COME CLOSE?" ASKED RINZAI.

LO'PU SHOUTED. THE MASTER HIT HIM.

Maneesha, the deeper I look into Zen, the more things become crystal clear. One thing is its absolute uniqueness in the world of religions.

In comparison to Zen, all the religions look like entertainment. Formal rituals, social conditionings – Zen goes through them like a sword cutting all the ropes that bind you. It has no ritual, it has no mantra, it has no way of sacrificing anything to anyone. The very basis of sacrifice, God himself, is missing in Zen.

Without God you cannot create rituals, sacrifices. Without God all your religions will look absolutely meaningless. If God is removed, what will become of Hinduism and Islam and Christianity? With the removal of a hypothesis the whole edifice of those religions falls completely to the ground. It is a single hypothesis, and a hypothesis is not a reality. A hypothesis is only man's projection.

It is true man wants some security, it is true that man wants some safety. He is insecure in this vast universe, too small and too alone, too helpless. And there is always death: any moment it can knock at your doors.

Out of all these insecurities, anxieties, fears, has arisen the hypothesis of God. People cling to it, because without it their lives will become such an anxiety, they will go insane. Taking God away from them, you are taking their very sanity, their very intelligence, their mind, their whole conditioning of millions of years.

According to me, unless you are able to throw away the hypothesis of God and heaven and hell, all projections, you cannot be an authentic seeker. You have to drop all that which has made the so-called religions around the world. Their base is the same; they may create much theology around the hypothesis, they may fight with each other over their theologies, but essentially they are all the same.

Their gods may have different faces, but the god is there. Their hell and heaven may have different climates, but they are there. They go on arguing about that which is imaginary, and they think that this argumentation, which they have continued for centuries, is of some importance. In fact, it is an effort to deviate man's mind: fight over the non-essentials so nobody raises the question... nobody has the time to ask about the essentials.

Zen is pure essence, unpolluted, uncorrupted by any non-essential. You cannot take away anything from Zen, because it is only a declaration of your self-nature; neither can you add anything to Zen, because anything added will be artificial.

Zen is absolutely in favor of nature. It is not against entertainment; in fact only Zen is capable of laughing, of entertainment, but its entertainment is not different from its enlightenment. The very quality of entertainment differs.

J. Krishnamurti, a man who struggled for ninety years – his last words have some great meaning. One of my friends was present there. Krishnamurti lamented, he lamented his whole life. He lamented that "people have taken me as an entertainment. They come to listen to me...." There are people who have listened to him for fifty years continually, and still they are the same people as had come for the first time to listen to him.

Naturally it is annoying and irritating that the same people... Most of them I know, because J. Krishnamurti used to come only once a year for two or three weeks to Bombay, and slowly, slowly all his followers in Bombay became acquainted with me. They all were sad about this point: What should be done? How can we make Krishnamurti happy?

The reason was that Krishnamurti only talked, but never gave any devices in which whatever he was talking about became an experience. It was totally his fault. Whatever he was saying was absolutely right, but he was not creating the right climate, the right milieu in which it could become a seed. Of course he was very much disappointed with humanity, and that there was not a single person who had become enlightened through his teachings. His teachings have all the seeds, but he never prepared the ground.

Zen does not deny entertainment the way J. Krishnamurti condemned it in his last testament to the world. He said, "Religion is not entertainment." That's true, but enlightenment can be vast enough to include entertainment in it.

Enlightenment can be multidimensional. It can include laughter, it can include love, it can include beauty, it can include creativity. There is nothing to keep it from the world and from transforming the world into a more poetic place, a more beautiful garden. Everything can be brought to a better state of grace.

Zen does not talk about great principles, that has to be noted. It simply creates the device and leaves you to find the way out. Obviously it has been immensely successful. Not a single Zen master has ever lamented that "my disciples have not listened to me. I have been an utterly disappointed failure. Humanity has betrayed me." Not a single Zen master even mentions it once.

If something does not succeed, that only means your device was not right. You have not looked into the person and into his potential rightly. Perhaps your device was good for somebody else but not for this person.

Zen has only created devices, leaving you completely free to find the truth. And it is strange, more people have become enlightened through Zen than through any other religion of the world. The other religions are very big, and Zen is a very small stream. You can see these small things, and a master uses them in such a way that they start pointing to the moon.

RINZAI ONCE WENT TO VISIT ONE OF UNGAN'S DISCIPLES, ANZAN. ON THAT OCCASION HE ASKED ANZAN, "WHAT IS THE WHITE COW OF THE DEWY GROUND?"

It is one of the Zen koans. It does not mean anything; it simply gives you a puzzle that cannot be solved. Now, asking somebody, "WHAT IS THE WHITE COW OF THE DEWY GROUND?" – what kind of metaphysical question is this? No religion will ask such a question.

I am reminded of a small child who used to come to visit Picasso often, and who lived nearby, in the neighborhood. He became very friendly with Picasso. He was just five or six years old, but very daring. Seeing Picasso painting continually, one day he also brought a paper and showed it to Picasso saying, "Look at my painting."

Picasso looked at his painting and he said, "My God, what is this?"

The boy said, "It is a cow eating grass."

Picasso said, "You have defeated me. Where is the cow?"

The boy said, "Don't ask stupid questions. The cow has gone home. After eating the grass, do you think the cow will remain there?"

Picasso said, "Okay, but where is the grass?"

The boy said, "You are absolutely unintelligent. When the cow has eaten the grass, how can it be there?" It was just a plain paper that he had brought.

Picasso said, "I love your intelligence. It really puzzled me when you said the cow you have painted, and I could not see any cow. I have been puzzling the whole world and you have puzzled me."

The Zen koans are puzzles without any answer. ANZAN RESPONDED BY SAYING: "MOO! MOO!" No answer is the right answer. One has to be utterly in silence; only silence can answer a Zen koan. But Anzan has used his mind and tried to figure out some way to indicate what the white cow is. He has brought the mind in.

RINZAI COMMENTED: "YOU ARE DUMB! Do you think you can deceive me by making such sounds? Can't you speak? Are you dumb?" The koan needs a response. This moo, moo won't do.

ANZAN SAID: "HOW ABOUT YOU?" He was thinking, "What could be more appropriate than this answer?" In fact, no answer is ever appropriate for a Zen koan. That has to be remembered. Don't look for any answer, just look for silence. Just be utterly silent. In your silence the master will be able to see your answer.

ANZAN SAID, "HOW ABOUT YOU? – if you think my answer is not right, and I am dumb."

RINZAI OBSERVED, "YOU ANIMAL! Making the sound moo, moo you have proved that you are still using the animal mind."

In Zen, mind is an animal heritage, and unless you go beyond mind, you are not an authentic human being. Just your body is that of a human being, but your mind is a very long process of four million years of animals; it contains all the animals you have gone through. You are not newcomers, you are old, as old as the time life has existed on this earth, and you have passed through all the phases of animals. Your consciousness carries a tremendous past.

So when Rinzai says, "YOU ANIMAL!" he is not condemning him. He is simply stating the fact that he is still using the animal mind. Only when you are in a state of no-mind do you go beyond the animal. You go beyond your past, you open up to the universe; you are no more simply repeating your past heritage. Your past heritage is the heritage of all animals.

His saying this is not condemnatory; in Zen there is no condemnation. People may misunderstand, but he is simply saying that you are using the animal mind to figure out what the answer will be. I wanted you to go beyond the human mind, beyond the animal mind, because no-mind only is the answer to every koan, to every question, to every quest. A single answer – no-mind. Be so silent that there is no thought at all. So it does not matter what the koan is, the answer is the same: utter silence, going beyond the animal mind.

ON ONE OCCASION RINZAI ASKED A NUN, "WELL-COME OR ILL-COME?"

THE NUN SHOUTED.

"GO ON, GO ON, SPEAK!" CRIED RINZAI, TAKING UP HIS STICK. AGAIN THE NUN SHOUTED. RINZAI HIT HER.

Now, it will look absolutely absurd to anybody who has been brought up with a rational education. What is happening here? A nun comes, Rinzai asks her, "WELL-COME OR ILL-COME?" THE NUN SHOUTED. That was not the right answer.

When a man like Rinzai asks, "WELL-COME OR ILL-COME?", he is saying that if you come with the mind, you are ill-come; if you come with no-mind, you are well-come. Only no-mind is well-come. In the world of Zen, mind is the only thing that has to be thrown out, and then you have the whole universe available. You are welcomed by the whole universe.

Just because of your mind you are in a cage. You are not accepted by the universe, you are not showered with flowers by the universe because you are a prisoner of your own thoughts in a small skull. You are a prisoner, and a prisoner cannot be welcome.

Rinzai is saying, "Are you a prisoner, or should I welcome you as a free person?" – free from the mind.

THE NUN SHOUTED. Her shout does not show that she has understood Rinzai. This is a difficulty – that as time passes everything becomes traditional. The shout was invented by Rinzai, but slowly, slowly it became a traditional answer: whenever you find yourself in a difficulty and you cannot answer, now you have a traditional answer. You can shout.

But the shout is not applicable everywhere. Somewhere it may be: if Rinzai had asked something which was meaningless, a good shout would have been the right answer. But what he has asked is so meaningful that you cannot respond with a shout. You have to respond with silence. You have to show your no-mind. You have to show that you are well-come.

Even though the nun shouted... "GO ON, GO ON, SPEAK!" CRIED RINZAI, TAKING UP HIS STICK. AGAIN THE NUN SHOUTED. She has just learned like a parrot.

You can learn anything like a parrot, that is the difficulty. You can learn great philosophy, you can learn theology, you can learn words of great beauty and you can repeat them without even knowing exactly their implications.

Now, in Zen this became a problem. When shouting or hitting with the stick is taken as a tradition, it loses all meaning. THE NUN SHOUTED; Rinzai did not take any note of it. He said, "GO ON, GO ON, SPEAK! Are you well-come here or ill-come?" He ignored her shouting, he gave her another chance.

But the woman seems to have been stubborn, incapable of learning. AGAIN THE NUN SHOUTED. This was too much. Rinzai took up his stick, but did not hit her because she was not worthy of a hit. She was not even able to understand a simple question. She has only learned the shouting as a ritual. She is so poor as far as consciousness is concerned, she does not deserve a hit from a man like Rinzai.

In Zen, when the master hits you, it means he is showing his love, he is showing his acceptance. By hitting you he is giving you an indication of his approval. That is a kind of certificate. Disciples long for years to be hit by the master. It is a very different world that Zen has created.

In the ordinary world, if you hit somebody you know perfectly well what will happen. But in Zen it is totally different. The master hits only when there is a person who deserves it. The hit is a very secret approval. No outsider will understand what is going on. It is not for the outsiders; it is only for the insiders, the very few who can understand.

Rinzai cried, "GO ON, GO ON, SPEAK!" But she seems to have been very stubborn. This was the time Rinzai should have hit her, but he simply cried, taking up his stick...

AGAIN THE NUN SHOUTED. Now this was too much. RINZAI HIT HER – and this hit was not of approval, this hit was against her stubbornness.

So you should remember that in Zen everything is flexible. It has no certain, fixed meaning. In a different situation it may mean something different. He tolerated her shouting but finally he had to hit her.

RINZAI HIT HER. It is not a hit of approval, it is a hit to break down her stubbornness and to bring her to her senses. "Just shouting will not help. I am asking you, 'Speak!' I am asking you a direct question: Are you well-come? Do you think you deserve to be welcomed? Then show it. Your shouting does not show it."

Three times he gave her the chance, and the stick after three times is not of approval. He hit her just to bring her to her senses. Perhaps a stick even in such circumstances may stop her thinking for a moment. Obviously it is going to.

She was thinking she was doing the right thing: it was the shouting invented by Rinzai himself. He introduced shouting in Zen. Rinzai is the founder of shouting, so she must have thought that she was doing the right thing. But she did not understand that shouting can be right in a certain situation, wrong in another situation. Here, he has not put before her any koan. His question is very simple.

He is asking, "Are you well-come here? Do you deserve, do you think you deserve?" – because you don't waste the time of a man like Rinzai. First you have to deserve his company, and the only way to deserve the company of a buddha is silence, utter silence. Just be. If the nun had simply touched the feet of Rinzai and sat down, that would have been the right answer. But she missed.

Devices are not necessarily always successful. In life there is no such thing as a device that is always successful, because different persons give a different context. The same device may be helpful to one person, and with another the same device may completely fail.

ON ANOTHER OCCASION RINZAI ASKED LO'PU, "UP TO NOW IT HAS BEEN THE CUSTOM FOR SOME MEN TO USE THE STICK AND OTHERS TO GIVE A SHOUT."

There have been masters who simply used always the stick, and Rinzai has introduced shouting; his disciples who have become enlightened have used shouting rather than hitting. The purpose is the same. A shout is also a hit, but very subtle. Perhaps it goes deeper than a stick. The stick only touches your skin, may go as deep as your bones; but a shout may penetrate to the very being, because it is an invisible force. A stick is a material, ordinary thing; it can hit the body but it cannot hit the consciousness.

So he is asking Lo'pu, "UP TO NOW IT HAS BEEN THE CUSTOM FOR SOME MEN TO USE THE STICK AND OTHERS TO GIVE A SHOUT. WHICH COMES CLOSER TO THE HEART OF THE RECIPIENT?"

"NEITHER," RESPONDED LO'PU.

"WHAT DOES COME CLOSE?" Rinzai asked again. LO'PU SHOUTED. In his shout he is saying that shouting comes close.

THE MASTER HIT HIM. This hit is of approval, of great joy, because shouting was the invention of Rinzai himself, and certainly shouting goes deeper. So this hit is of great approval: Lo'pu, you are right.

Zen has a very flexible methodology. It does not give commandments to be followed for generations; it does not give general principles which are applicable in every situation to every person. It is more intimate and more personal.

Rinzai used shouting, but after him only his disciples who became enlightened continued. Finally it disappeared. The stick still continues, because the stick is more visible, more material, and we always tend to understand the material more easily than the immaterial. A shout is an immaterial thing.

Rinzai has given a tremendous device, but it is for very intelligent people to know the difference when the shout is of approval or of disapproval. He also used the stick. Now Lo'pu has shouted, so giving him a shout will not be right. The master hit him. He needs a more clear-cut approval that he is right.

Zen never became the religion of the majority and it will never become. It will remain always for the chosen few, for the rare ones, just because it does not console you by giving any opium, and it does

not give you promises and hopes for the future life. It insists on remaining in the present. Don't move backwards or forwards, because the present moment is the only moment you ever have been in and will ever be in. Whenever it is, it is the present moment.

So the past is meaningless; there is no point in studying the past scriptures. The future is irrelevant; there is no need to bother about paradise and heaven. There are such great treatises written in such detail....

I entered a temple and they had there a map of their projection: the earth is in the middle and then underneath the earth is hell and above the earth is heaven – and it showed exactly where in heaven God lives. I asked the priest who was showing it to me – and it was an ancient map – “Do you know where Timbuktu is?”

He said, “Timbuktu? Never heard of it.”

I said, “You don't know where Timbuktu is? Do you know Constantinople?”

He said, “You are just making these names up.”

I said, “I am not making these names up. You don't know even this earth, and you think you know heaven and you know hell? What are the grounds on which you know these things?”

He said, “I don't know. This is an old map. It is an ancient temple.”

I asked him, “Does anybody else in your whole city, in your whole community know?”

He said, “I don't think so, because I am the priest, and if I don't know, nobody knows. But we believe...”

And that is where Zen departs from all religions. The moment you say, “We believe,” you become undeserving of any Zen compassion. You cut yourself off from the Zen clouds which can rain and bring your potential to flowering.

Never say, “I believe.” That is one of the greatest lies invented by man. If you know, say, “I know.” If you don't know, say, “I don't know.” Belief has no place at all in existence. What do you mean when you say, “I believe”? You are saying, “Although I don't know, I think it must be so.”

But try it in ordinary life and then you will understand. Because you are using it for hypothetical things, nobody takes note of it. Tell some woman, “I believe I love you,” and she will give you a good slap. Believe? – either you love her or you don't love her, but what can it mean, “I believe...” or perhaps, “I believe that I love you”? You cannot deceive any woman. A woman is so earthly.

Now even Sardar Gurudayal Singh is laughing. He tries to deceive women, but does not succeed much. Just look at his turban – rainbow-colored! But once in a while he succeeds. There are a few cuckoos around whom no sannyasin wants to be with. People give them the address of Sardar Gurudayal Singh – and with cuckoos he manages perfectly well.

Just a few days before one cuckoo's letter came saying that she has become enlightened. I said, "It is good! You just go to Sardar Gurudayal Singh. That is the right place, and he is the right person to give you the recognition. Either you will make him enlightened or he will make you unenlightened. Something is bound to happen. You just go" – and I heard that Sardar has made her unenlightened.

She is very sad that she was sent to such a man who does not take anything seriously. He laughs at her enlightenment, and his laughter has created a doubt in her, "Who knows whether I am enlightened or not? If Sardar Gurudayal Singh is laughing..."

There are always cuckoos around. They become enlightened, they become unenlightened – ups and downs. One day they are enlightened... And you will always find such cuckoos around Sardar Gurudayal Singh. So no need to inform me. Whenever you become enlightened, just go to Sardar Gurudayal Singh!

Ikkyu wrote:

I ALMOST LOST MY MIND
BETWEEN STUDYING AND SEVERE
TRAINING.
BUT LIFE'S MOST VALUABLE THING REALLY
IS THE FISHERMEN'S SONGS.
ALONG THE HSIAO RIVER,
THERE'S SUNSET AND RAIN,
CLOUDS AND MOON,
EXCELLENCE BEYOND WORDS
SINGING NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.

Ikkyu is one of the most loved haiku poets, and you can feel why he is so much loved. He is not a dreamer, he is a very earthly man.

I ALMOST LOST MY MIND BETWEEN STUDYING AND SEVERE TRAINING. BUT LIFE'S MOST VALUABLE THING IS THE FISHERMEN'S SONGS.

When he heard the fishermen's songs near the Hsiao River... He is saying the fishermen's songs along the Hsiao River are the most valuable thing – more valuable than the holy scriptures, because the fishermen's songs are so spontaneous, so authentic.

THERE'S SUNSET AND RAIN, CLOUDS AND MOON, EXCELLENCE BEYOND WORDS SINGING NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.

Haikus are to be visualized. Just visualize the great river Hsiao and the silent night and the fishermen singing, night after night... and after each song the silence deepens.

These poems are not poems in the ordinary sense, they are pictorial, depictive. They have color, they have form, they are almost tangible. You can hear the fishermen's songs, you can hear the waves of the Hsiao River. Night after night... and the moon and the clouds and the rain and the sunrise and the sunset... all are paintings rather than poetry.

That is the difference between ordinary poetry and haiku. Ordinary poetry is a composition of words. Haiku is a very strange phenomenon: it is a painting in words – not in colors, but in words. It is a very alive thing.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

IS IT USEFUL FOR THOSE OF US WITH YOU TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR MEDITATION AND GROWTH, AND TO BE ABLE TO ARTICULATE IT? OR DO WE JUST NEED TO WATCH?

Maneesha, you just need to watch. The moment you start thinking, "What is happening?" mind will come back. If you start analyzing, mind will come back. Whatever you do, except watching, mind will come back. That is the only enemy to be avoided, and watching is the only shelter in which the mind cannot enter.

Your question is significant. One tends to think, "What is happening?" and analyze it. But one is unaware of the fact that in this effort of analyzing, finding explanations, mind has come back from the back door. By watching, we are trying to get free from mind. All other activities belong to the mind.

So you need only to watch, you need only to get as deep in watching as you can. Go deeper and deeper to such an extent that mind is left miles back, and only a pure witness is there. That is your pure gold, that is your buddha.

Now it is Sardar Gurudayal Singh's time.

Mungo, a big black gentleman, walks out of the jungle and into an African town looking for work. He hears of a job at the local factory, and goes along for an interview.

"You can have the job," says the white boss, "but you must understand one thing: I don't want you to bring any friends or relatives here. I know what you jungle people are like. This job is for you only. Understand?"

"Yes, I understand, boss!" says Mungo. "No friends. No relations. Just me, myself, alone!"

The next morning, when he arrives to start work, Mungo walks through the factory gates followed by a little black pygmy.

"Hey!" shouts the boss, "I thought I told you, no relatives and no friends!"

"But boss," stammers Mungo, "he is not my friend or my relative – he is my lunch!"

In a small village in southern Italy, Giovanni and Maria get married. But Giovanni lives in a small cottage with all his family, so the young couple have to spend their wedding night sleeping in the same room as everybody else.

In the middle of the night, Giovanni and Maria start to make love, but suddenly Maria cries, "Ah! Giovanni, it hurts-a too much!"

"Really?" says Giovanni. "Okay, I will-a go to the cupboard and put-a little olive oil on-a my noodle."

So he gets up, steps over his father, his mother, his sister, his grandfather and grandmother, and finally gets to the cupboard. He puts a little oil on his prick and then goes back to Maria.

But after a few minutes, Maria cries again, "Ah! Giovanni, remember I am-a virgin! It hurts-a too much."

"Okay," says Giovanni, "I will put-a some more olive oil on-a my noodle." So he climbs over his father, mother, sister, grandmother and grandfather and puts some more oil on his prick. Then he goes back to Maria.

But the same thing happens again. This time, Giovanni has climbed over everyone and got to the cupboard, when suddenly his grandfather sits up in bed and shouts, "Hey, Maria! Go easy on-a the oil! What-a the hell will we use for salad-dressing tomorrow – Giovanni's prick?"

Pope the Polack is setting out on his Catholic pilgrimage to America, when he gets lost in the Rome International Airport. He wanders around the corridors, pushing his luggage trolley, and somehow gets on a flight to London.

Arriving at London Airport in his long gown and rocket-shaped hat, the Polack pope walks up to the immigration desk, where he is asked to fill out a form. The pope copies all the details out of his Polish passport and then hands the form to the official.

"There is one section that needs completing," says the official, eyeing the Polack's strange clothing and pointing to the paragraph marked 'sex'.

"Oh, yes!" says Pope the Polack. "That should read: Twice a day."

"Really?" says the official. "But I don't want to know that, what I want to know is: male or female?"

"Oh, I see what you mean," replies the Polack pope, with a wink. "I like both!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent. Close your eyes and feel your body to be completely frozen.

Now look inwards with your total consciousness with your total life energy and with an urgency as if this is your last moment of life. Only with such urgency you can reach to the center of your being.

Your center of being is also the center of the whole cosmos. At the center we are all one. Just witness deeply. The deeper your witness... the fog disappears and you can see yourself as a buddha.

The experience of being a buddha is the greatest experience in life. Suddenly from all over flowers start raining, existence becomes so loving. In this silence everything becomes a dance. Even silence becomes a song.

Deeper and deeper... let your arrow of consciousness penetrate as deep as possible. The path is small. A little courage and suddenly you are at the center, freed from the body, freed from the mind, you are ready to disappear into the cosmos. To be nobody is the greatest blissfulness.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax, and just disappear in the ocean of consciousness that is surrounding you. We are nothing but fish in the ocean. This moment the Buddha Auditorium has become a lake of consciousnesses without any ripples.

Such joy, such peace... and the experience of your being immortal, eternal. You have been here always and you will be here always. There are only two ways of being here: one is in bondage, another is in freedom. Watchfulness takes you out of the prison and opens the doors of the infinity.

You are not the body, you are not the mind. You are only this witnessing consciousness. This is your freedom. This is your original face. This is the buddha you have been searching for.

You have to bring all this experience slowly, slowly to your circumference, to your daily life. In your ordinary activities the buddha has to be expressed. In your love, in your other relationships, in your friends, in the marketplace, sitting or walking, talking or silent, you should remember you are a buddha.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but bring all that is at the center to the circumference. Come back as a buddha, gracefully, peacefully, in absolute silence and you know what Zen is.

This bringing of the buddha to the surface is the whole science of Zen. To transform every being into his original face – that is the face of the buddha – is my work, and it is your work too.

The more buddhas we have around the earth, the more the earth is protected from destructive forces. The more buddhas we have around the earth, the more beautiful it will become.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 6

All you can do is drop your mind

29 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

WHEN RINZAI ONCE VISITED HORIN, HORIN SAID: "INTO THE SEA, THE MOONLIGHT FALLS CLEAR AND SHADOWLESS, BUT THE WANTON FISH DECEIVE THEMSELVES."

RINZAI COMMENTED: "IF THE MOONLIGHT ON THE SEA IS WITHOUT SHADOWS, HOW CAN THE FISH BE DECEIVED?"

HORIN THEN SAID: "SEEING THERE IS WIND, WAVES ARISE; PLAYING WITH THE WATER, THE ROUGH SAIL FLAPS."

RINZAI SAID: "THE FROG IN THE MOON SHINES BRIGHTLY ALONE, AND ALL RIVERS AND HILLS ARE AT PEACE. THE LONG BREATH OF THE WIND IS THE VOICE OF AUTUMN IN EARTH AND SKY."

HORIN SAID: "THOUGH YOU MAY SPREAD YOUR THREE INCHES OF TONGUE, AND ILLUMINATE THE CELESTIAL QUIETNESS, JUST TRY AND SAY A SINGLE WORD TO FIT THE OCCASION!"

RINZAI RESPONDED: "WHEN YOU MEET A MASTER SWORDSMAN, SHOW HIM YOUR SWORD. WHEN YOU MEET A MAN WHO IS NOT A POET, DO NOT SHOW HIM YOUR POEM."

Maneesha, the way of Zen requires certain conditions to be fulfilled. They are not the conditions that other religions require; they are the conditions of receptivity, of awareness, of listening, of an

understanding of the wordless, a deep penetration into silence. No other religion asks you these things. They want you to be virtuous, to be moral, not to indulge in adultery. Their requirements are very superficial.

Zen requires real qualities of being. Only then the master can impart his understanding of the ultimate. In other words, Zen is not a theology, but a being-to-being communion. The disciple has to rise to the same height as the master, otherwise he will miss whatever is being said to him. These qualities will bring him very close to the height of the master.

A master certainly knows at what height you are and he speaks accordingly. He never wastes a single word or a single moment.

Maneesha has brought this small anecdote, which will explain to you what Rinzai, who was the founder of Zen in Japan, is about.

WHEN RINZAI ONCE VISITED HORIN, HORIN SAID: "INTO THE SEA THE MOONLIGHT FALLS CLEAR AND SHADOWLESS, BUT THE WANTON FISH DECEIVE THEMSELVES."

RINZAI COMMENTED: "IF THE MOONLIGHT ON THE SEA IS WITHOUT SHADOWS, HOW CAN THE FISH BE DECEIVED?"

All deception is taking the shadow for the real. But strangely enough – perhaps you have never observed it – a shadow itself cannot cast a shadow. Hence the ancient law that if you see a man without a shadow, remember he is a ghost, because a real man will have a shadow. Only a man who appears as a man but is transparent – you can pass your hand through him and you will not touch anything – will not make any shadow.

The reflection of the moon in the lake is a shadow itself. How can it cast a shadow? That is impossible. But what Horin wanted to say is not anything unnecessary or non-essential.

He said, "INTO THE SEA, THE MOONLIGHT FALLS CLEAR AND SHADOWLESS, BUT THE WANTON FISH DECEIVE THEMSELVES."

What do they deceive themselves about? What is their deception? What is their illusion? Their illusion is to take the reflection as the real moon.

But RINZAI COMMENTED: "IF THE MOONLIGHT ON THE SEA IS WITHOUT SHADOWS, HOW CAN THE FISH BE DECEIVED?"

The fish can certainly be deceived, because even men are deceived by shadows. Rinzai's question is clear and from a height of consciousness. Everybody in the world is deceived by shadows. What are all your imaginations? What are all your dreams?

Have you ever considered the fact that while dreaming you never think that this is unreal? While awake you may think perhaps that all you are saying is unreal, only a dream; but in a dream you can never think that it is a dream, for the simple reason that if you are so much aware as to experience the dream as a dream, the dream will stop. Dreaming can continue only in a very unconscious, unaware state.

The real question is not about the fish. The fish is only a symbol. The real question is about the man.

"IF THE MOONLIGHT ON THE SEA IS WITHOUT SHADOWS, HOW CAN THE FISH BE DECEIVED?"

There is only one way for the fish to be deceived, and that is to take the reflection as the real moon.

Horin missed the point. He started explaining why the fish gets caught into a deception. That was not what Rinzai wanted him to do. For him the fish was not the point at all, neither was the reflection of the moon. His concern was this, that what to say about a fish, even men are deceived by shadows – and not only in dreams, but in actual life when they are awake. Every day you continue to get deceived, but you are not aware, hence it does not hurt you and your dignity.

You see a woman as very beautiful – and she is certainly beautiful, but where does that beauty go after the honeymoon? Then you want to kill the same woman for whom you were ready to die one day.

You can appreciate other women's beauty, but I have never heard of any husband appreciating his own wife's beauty. Perhaps what he saw was not the real woman as she is; he saw the woman as he wanted to see her.

It was a dream projection, and a dream projection cannot be prolonged for long. Sooner or later the dream projection drops away, and suddenly you see the real person. Nothing has changed: the woman is the same, the man is the same, but neither the woman thinks you are the same man she fell in love with, nor do you think she is the same woman you had fallen in love with.

What happened? Just within a week... and if you are intelligent enough, then just over the weekend. It depends on intelligence. The idiots can live out their whole lives. The more intelligent a person is, the sooner he will see his projections, imaginations dropping, the clouds disappearing, and he will see the pure sky without any clouds – and it is going to change his opinion.

Rinzai is saying that we are all living in shadow. You think, you project, you imagine, you dream. The greatest lovers in the world were those who never met; their love is eternal. People sing songs of Siri and Farhad, of Laila and Majnu, of Soni and Mahival, and the only reason why their love is remembered is that they were never allowed by their parents and the society to be together.

If Laila and Majnu had got married, you would never have heard their names. Have you ever heard any story, any poetry concerning a married couple? I at least have searched enough, and I have not found it. It seems to be intrinsically impossible, because as they come close, their projections start falling. If they are kept away, forced to be apart, then their dreams become even more beautiful. Their imagination takes wings.

And not only in this matter but in other matters also, you live in shadows, in your hopes. What have you got in your hopes? Just empty imagination that tomorrow something will happen that has not happened up to now, and you will feel fulfilled. It never happens. What happens tomorrow is death, and death creates fear for a simple reason you may not be aware of.

The fear of death is that it takes the future out of your hands. You have been living in the future in your imagination, and death comes and puts a full stop. No more tomorrow. The future is simply your idea of how things should be. The existence has no obligation to you to fulfill your desires and your hopes. People even give promises, people say to each other, "I will love you my whole life," not knowing at all that the whole life is a long thing.

One man was saying to his girlfriend, "I will love you my whole life."

Then for a moment he became silent, and the woman said, "Why have you become silent suddenly?"

He said, "Just tell me one thing. In your old age, will you start looking like your mother? – because then I cannot give that promise. Suddenly I thought, 'What am I saying? In the old age this woman is going to look like the mother-in-law!'" And mother-in-laws... it is just strange that people don't shoot them.

I have heard, a hunter was going into the forest for hunting. His wife insisted on going and she also insisted on taking his mother-in-law. Not to create any trouble he said, "Okay, there is no harm in it. You can sit in the top of a tree and you can see."

The mother-in-law was not too old to climb a tree, so she was sitting in a small tree when a lion came near. The wife saw it from her tall tree and shouted to her husband, "Just see, one lion is very close to my mother."

The husband said, "It is not my problem, it is the lion's problem. Now he has got into trouble. If he wants to get out, he will get out. You just keep quiet."

People expect something, and it is never fulfilled. There is always frustration all around. People are living in despair, and the reason is that what they expected... existence has no desire, no reason to go according to their expectations. If you want to be happy, go along with existence and its ends wherever it takes you.

That's what I mean by let-go: you simply drop your projections, your imaginations, and let the existence take hold of your whole life. Then there is no despair, because there is no possibility of being frustrated. There is no anguish and no anxiety; you are relaxed with existence. Whatever happens, that is good.

The whole existence is wiser than you, so whatever happens – Buddha says suchness – just whatever happens, remember, such is the nature of existence. Don't stand aloof and against existence; be part, and feel a certain oneness.

That oneness can be called suchness, or isness, or thisness, but the meaning is that whatever happens is good. You have to find out the beauty of it and the joy of it. Only such a man can be blissful; otherwise there is always the feeling of being deceived.

Every man – out of a thousand, perhaps one man dies without the idea that he has been deceived by life. Almost everybody dies with the idea, "What was it? Seventy years I struggled; what is the game?" All your expectations are shattered, all your dreams are broken, all your promises remain unfulfilled. You are dying a bankrupt.

Almost everybody dies a bankrupt as far as his expectations are concerned. Only a man of let-go is not deceived by anything. He takes everything that comes in the way happily and joyously, and if things change, he allows the change without any hindrance, without creating any barriers to prevent the change. Such a man knows no deceptions. He knows life has never deceived him, but has always fulfilled those longings which he was not even aware of.

HORIN THEN SAID: "SEEING THERE IS WIND, WAVES ARISE; PLAYING WITH THE WATER, THE ROUGH SAIL FLAPS."

He did not understand that Rinzai was not talking about the fish, and he is trying to explain his own statement without listening to what Rinzai has raised as a question.

RINZAI SAID: "THE FROG IN THE MOON SHINES BRIGHTLY ALONE, AND ALL RIVERS AND HILLS ARE AT PEACE. THE LONG BREATH OF THE WIND IS THE VOICE OF AUTUMN IN EARTH AND SKY."

Everything is as it should be. So peaceful are the hills in the full moon night... rivers are at peace, dancing in the full moon night. Because of their dance the full moon's reflection becomes a silver spread over all. Everything is silent and peaceful, there is no frustration in the hills, there is no frustration in the rivers. Even the frog in the moon shines brightly alone.

If you look at nature, just taking man and his mind away, everything is bliss, everything is buddha. It is only man's mind that creates trouble, because it cannot allow a let-go.

THE LONG BREATH OF THE WIND IS THE VOICE OF AUTUMN IN EARTH AND SKY.

And there is great joy that autumn is coming. The moon is full of blissfulness and all that shines in the moonlight, except man...

Man can also be as happy as the hills and as peaceful as the rivers if he looks at the moon and the surroundings without any mind. With no thought, he will also become part of the whole scene.

But man remains always concerned with his own stupid ideas. When the whole existence is rejoicing, it is only man who is worried. Have you ever seen a tree worried? No animal is ever worried. Even in dying, it dies peacefully. Such is the way of existence, that anything that is born is going to die.

But man's mind intrudes, always creates problems, because it expects things to be different than they are. He is not ready to accept the suchness of existence; he wants it according to him. This, according to him, is the whole misery. Everybody is trying that everything should be according to him. One may say it, one may not say it, but even without saying it, your mind is weaving thoughts about how things should be brought according to YOUR idea – and this is impossible.

You cannot change existence.

All that you can do is drop your mind.

HORIN SAID: "THOUGH YOU MAY SPREAD YOUR THREE INCHES OF TONGUE, AND ILLUMINATE THE CELESTIAL QUIETNESS, JUST TRY AND SAY A SINGLE WORD TO FIT THE OCCASION!"

RINZAI RESPONDED – and his response is of fundamental importance: "WHEN YOU MEET A MASTER SWORDSMAN, SHOW HIM YOUR SWORD. WHEN YOU MEET A MAN WHO IS NOT A POET, DO NOT SHOW HIM YOUR POEM."

Each according to his worth, each according to his receptivity. You are not yet able to receive one word and understand it. I cannot recite a poem to you, because you will not understand it; you will certainly misunderstand.

I have heard, a thief was brought into the court, and the judge said, "Why have you entered this man's house?"

The poor thief said, "I have entered to steal something. But the man was so strange: he caught hold of me, and when I tried hard to escape he said, 'Don't be worried, just sit down and listen. I have written a new poem.' I thought it was better to listen silently, but the poem went on and on and on. And he was holding me by the hand, so this way the whole night he tortured me. I didn't understand a single word of what he was saying, and I could not escape either.

"By the morning the police came, and now I am standing here before you with only one hope: that you will not give me the punishment to listen to this poet again. I am ready even to go to the gallows. I had no idea that this house belongs to a poet, otherwise I would not have entered."

Poets are like that. It is very difficult for them to find audiences. They go on searching around to see if they can find somebody, and everybody goes on running away saying, "I have to do some special work. Right now I am not available." Who wants to waste time?

"Unless you are a poet," Rinzai is saying, "don't say anything to a person who is not worthy of it, because that is insulting him, that is degrading him, that is taking his dignity, that is bringing up his unworthiness. So don't ask me for a single word; you are not yet capable of receiving it. You have not understood a single thing, and you went on explaining. You are not a fish and you don't know what goes on in the mind of the fish.

"Talk about man and talk about his deceptions, and find out the reason why he gets deceived. It is his own resistance to existence, and an effort to give a mold to the whole life – which is not possible. He is trying the impossible and goes on failing."

This failure is not just his mistake. It is not that he has not been doing rightly; whatever he does he will be a failure. Nobody can be wiser than the cosmic existence. So the wise people allow themselves to go along with the existential river, not even asking, "Where are we going?"

Existence is going nowhere. It is simply here, just playing with thousands of forms, thousands of situations, creating more and more consciousness, more and more happiness, more and more love. If it is not happening to you, it simply means you are keeping your doors closed.

Just open your heart and relax with existence and suddenly you will see, THE FROG IN THE MOON SHINES BRIGHTLY ALONE. No company is needed, no richness is needed – just a poor frog. No political position is needed – and all rivers and hills are at peace. They don't have anything, but they have peace, which you cannot purchase.

THE LONG BREATH OF THE WIND IS THE VOICE OF AUTUMN IN EARTH AND SKY. Just be with existence wherever it is going and you will be unworried. Your tensions will disappear. You will be as happy as a child, you will be as beautiful as a flower.

Ikkyu wrote:

WHEN YOU BREAK UP A CHERRY TREE

AND LOOK,

THERE ARE NO FLOWERS AT ALL;

THE FLOWERS ARE BROUGHT BY THE

SPRING WIND.

EVEN THOUGH YOU SOAR BOUNDLESSLY

EVEN BEYOND THE CLOUDS,

JUST DON'T RELY ON

THE TEACHINGS OF GAUTAMA.

Two things Ikkyu is saying: one, you cannot bring the flowers, which will come in their own time. You have to wait, you have to be patient. You cannot ask, "Why are the cherry flowers not coming?" The tree is there, you are watering the tree.... You can even, Ikkyu says, break up a cherry tree and look inside the tree to find where the flowers are hidden. There are no flowers at all.

The flowers are brought by the spring wind. Let the spring come, let the right moment and the climate and the right wind reach the cherry tree. It will blossom suddenly, it will explode into immense beauty.

The cherry tree is waiting; it is not in a hurry, it is not running somewhere to catch up with spring. It is simply waiting silently, joyously. Spring comes; even if it is a day or two late, what does it matter? It has always been coming.

The second thing Ikkyu says: EVEN THOUGH YOU SOAR BOUNDLESSLY EVEN BEYOND THE CLOUDS, JUST DON'T RELY ON THE TEACHINGS OF GAUTAMA. That can be said only by the Zen masters about their own originator: "Don't rely on Gautama the Buddha's teachings" – because his teachings were in a different context. He was talking to a different kind of people. You may not be that kind of person at all, and the times have changed; those teachings may be no more relevant.

Only rely on your own consciousness. Even Gautama's consciousness is not reliable. He is not saying that Gautama is wrong; he is saying that Gautama was dealing with situations fifteen hundred years before.

I have told you of an instance when just in a single day... In the morning a man asked Gautam Buddha, "Is there a God?"

And Gautama said, "No, there is no God."

In the afternoon another man asked, "What do you think about God?"

Gautama said, "Yes, God is."

You can understand the trouble Ananda, who was continuously with him, was in. He started having a migraine. What kind of man is this? In the morning he says, "There is no God," and in the afternoon he has forgotten completely, and he is saying, "There is God."

He waited for the time in the night when there would be nobody around, but before that a third person came in the evening, sat down and asked Gautama, "I have no conception either for or against God. Just help me to understand."

And Gautam Buddha did not say anything to the man, but on the contrary simply closed his eyes, remained silent. Seeing this, the other man also closed his eyes and sat. He thought perhaps Buddha was going to say something in his silence and they both remained in silence for two hours.

The man felt so beautiful and so fresh and so young, so rejuvenated, that after two hours he opened his eyes and he was a changed man. He touched Gautam Buddha's feet, thanked him and told him, "I was not expecting that much. You have given me more than I had asked. You have given me a taste. I had come only to ask a question; you have taken me to the experience itself. I will remain grateful to you my whole life."

In the night Ananda said, "You should at least think of me. The whole day I have been in such a trouble. What kind of man are you? In the morning you say no, in the afternoon you say yes, in the evening you don't say anything, but just remain silent – and that fellow gets the answer and you have not said anything."

Buddha said, "The first man, to whom I said, 'There is no God,' was an atheist, and he had come to get a confirmation of his atheism, that if Gautam Buddha also is an atheist, then there is no problem. Atheism is certainly the right approach. There is no God.

"The second man had also come for confirmation of his own prejudice. He was a theist and he wanted support. They were not seekers, they were only asking for consolation. They had already got the idea; they were simply asking me to support their ideas. They were satisfied with their ideas without ever moving into any new space.

"But the third man was really a seeker. He plainly said, 'I don't have any idea for or against.' For such a man only silence is the answer. And because he had no prejudice, seeing me closing my

eyes and becoming silent, he immediately understood the hint. He closed his eyes and he went deep into silence. Although I had not said anything to him, he went away immensely richer than he had come.

"And Ananda," Buddha said, "you should not be disturbed, because none of these questions were yours. It is not your problem."

Ananda said, "It is not my problem, but I have ears and I am always close to you."

Buddha said, "You will have to learn that I don't have any fixed philosophy so that I can hand over immediately ready-made answers. I have to see the person, his capacity. I don't want to insult anybody. I don't want to give something which they cannot understand, which is going to be over their heads."

If this was the situation in Buddha's own time, Ikkyu is right: JUST DON'T RELY ON THE TEACHINGS OF GAUTAMA. Find out your own sources. Go deeper into your own being. You will find there the affirmation of Gautam Buddha.

But don't rely on the teachings. Just don't sit with the scriptures, reading them for years, studying them for years. That is not going to help. Gautam Buddha had not read those scriptures before he became enlightened, so it is absolutely certain that they cannot be the cause of anybody's enlightenment. Just do what he did; don't be too much concerned what he said. Whatever he said was meant for his contemporaries, for his time, for the people he was talking to.

Do what Buddha did. He became a no-mind, and becoming a no-mind, you will have to throw even Buddha and his scriptures out of your being. Only in this emptiness is there a possibility of the cherry blossoms of your being coming from the potential to the actual. You can bring the spring by bringing the no-mind.

As no-mind comes, thousands of miracles follow. But don't desire those miracles; if you start desiring them, you will never have the no-mind, because those desires will not allow the mind to be empty.

So remember, it is one of the most significant things for a seeker that he should not become too much concerned about the search. He should remain playful. "If there is a truth in existence, some day, somewhere I am going to encounter it."

But don't be serious, just be playful. In playfulness you are relaxed, and in relaxation, utter relaxation, you will find Gautam Buddha himself, so why bother about his teachings? When you can find Gautam Buddha himself, then why bother about dead scriptures? Ikkyu is right, absolutely right.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked a question:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

IS THE WITNESS A PRESENCE OR SIMPLY AN ABSENCE – THE ABSENCE OF IDENTIFICATION WITH BODY AND MIND?

Maneesha, it is a difficult question – difficult only because your mind never accepts contradictions, and existence absolutely is in favor of contradictions. In fact, existence is made of contradictions. So these two words, presence and absence, are both right.

In the witness there is absence, certainly, of your personality, of your mind, of your thoughts, feelings – anything that you are carrying within your mind is absent. If you look from this side, it appears that no-mind is empty mind.

But the moment all these things are emptied out, the potential of your being starts growing – a new presence which was hindered from growing by all the furniture that you have been carrying in the mind. Now that all that furniture and all those stones are thrown and the soil is ready, there comes a new presence.

So both are there as far as your mind is concerned. Meditation is an effort of creating absence. But when the mind is really absent, in that silence, in that unlimited space, your potential starts glowing, radiating, flowering. Suddenly you are full of cherry blossoms, a new presence, a new fragrance.

So absence and presence are both together in your meditation. On the one hand you are emptying, on the other hand the empty space is being filled with your potential. Before there was no space for it to blossom.

Meditation is simply creating a space for your potential to come to flower. A man of meditation has such a presence that you can feel it.

In my dining room I have got a small statue of Buddha. It is only a statue, but when Jayesh came for the first time and saw it, he said, "This statue has a great presence." I have loved that statue and carried it from India to America, from America to India, because it has a presence. It is only a statue, but a statue of a meditating buddha. Something of meditation in that very posture radiates a very alive aura.

I have brought another statue for your Buddha Auditorium, to be placed just at the gate, so you can see that even a statue, because it is in a meditative posture, radiates something. Just sitting by the side of the statue you will find something flowing from the statue towards you. It is not a worship, it is just being silently close and watching the posture. Because the posture is of meditation, something of meditateness radiates even from the stone.

So when you are meditating, you are doing both the things: on one hand you are throwing away all that is garbage, and on the other hand you are helping roses to blossom. You will have an absence and you will have a great presence, together: absence of all that was ugly in you, and presence of all that is beautiful.

It is time for Sardar Gurudayal Singh. I hope he is still in his rainbow-colored turban. That turban has a special presence!

It is the farewell party at the White House for Ronald and Nancy Reagan. Everybody gets pretty drunk and Nancy Reagan offers to give George Bush, the president-elect, a private tour of the presidential bedroom.

When they get back to the party, George Bush looks for Ronald Reagan and finds him slumped on a couch, fast asleep.

"Hey, Ronald," says Bush, shaking Reagan roughly. "Do you have any pictures of Nancy in the nude?"

"What?" mumbles Reagan, in shock. "You idiot! Of course I don't!"

"Okay," says Bush, holding up his camera. "Wanna buy some?"

Doris and Jeff Dull have been married for six years and have three kids. But Jeff has a strange habit – he will only make love with the lights off.

Doris puts up with this for as long as she can, but one night her curiosity gets the better of her. She and Jeff are making love in the usual way when suddenly she snaps the light on, and to her horror, she sees that Jeff is making love to her using a cucumber.

"You impotent wimp!" shouts Doris. "So this is why you never wanted the lights on! It's disgusting – explain yourself!"

"Okay, dear," says Jeff, calmly. "I can explain the cucumber, if you can explain our three kids!"

Adolf Hitler pushes the doorbell at the Pearly Gates of Heaven and demands to be admitted. He kicks up such a fuss that Saint Peter calls Jesus to come and deal with the situation.

"I want to come in," cries the Fuhrer, "and I will reward you highly if you let me stay."

"What do you mean?" asks Jesus. "You cannot possibly come in. Just look at what you did on earth!"

"Look," says Hitler, taking Jesus to one side, "if you let me in, I will personally present you with Germany's highest award for bravery, the Iron Cross."

"Really?" says Jesus. "That's a very tempting offer. Just let me make one phone call."

So Jesus calls up God the Father. "Dad," says Jesus, "I've got Adolf Hitler here at the Pearly Gates, and he wants to come in. What do you think?"

"Jesus Christ!" shouts God. "Are you kidding? The guy is a psychopath!"

"I know, Dad," says Jesus, "but you see, he has made me this terrific offer. He wants to give me the Iron Cross!"

"The Iron Cross?" shouts God, in amazement. "You idiot! Look what happened when you got that wooden one!"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent. Close your eyes. Feel your body to be completely frozen.

Now look inwards with your total life energy, with your total consciousness, and with an urgency as if this is going to be the last moment of your life.

Only with urgency can you reach to the center of your being, and at the center of your being you are the buddha. To realize this is to create the right space for all kinds of transformations in your life. Let this experience sink into every fiber of your being.

The buddha has only one quality, and that quality is witnessing. The buddha is made of witnessing, of watching. Just watch, and in your very watching your buddhahood deepens.

This evening, this moment you are the most fortunate ones on the earth, because to be a buddha is to be a Himalayan Everest of consciousness. Then you don't have to follow any discipline, any morality. All that is good comes behind you like a shadow.

Just remain a witness around the clock. Whatever you are doing, do it with full awareness and with a grace that shows that you have recognized the buddha in the deepest core of your being.

To make it more clear,

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Just watch, be a witness.

You are not the body, you are not the mind; you are simply the witnessing, and this witnessing is the buddha.

The spring has come and the cherry tree has blossomed into thousands of flowers. Collect as many flowers and as much of witnessing...

Persuade the buddha to come from the hidden secrets of your life into the circumference, into your day-to-day life. He always has come, just the right persuasion is needed, and showing him your worthiness by witnessing.

Collect as much of this relaxed moment, of this let-go, before Nivedano calls you back.

This moment the Buddha Auditorium is no more the gathering of ten thousand buddhas. It has become a lake of tremendous consciousness without any ripples. You are the fish in the ocean. Don't ask where the ocean is.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, and bring your buddha with you. Silently and gracefully, sit for a few moments just to remember where you have been, what golden path you have followed, what your center is like.

The silence, the beauty, the blissfulness – you have to spread it on your circumference in every action, in every gesture, in every word, in every silence. You should remain a buddha in spite of any situation.

Being with me, you have got an opportunity which is no more available anywhere on the earth. It used to be available in many, many places. Those golden days have passed.

My effort is to give you a glimpse of those golden days when thousands of people in different places were trying to reach to the ultimate consciousness, to immortality, to eternity.

Without reaching to your center you are a cherry tree which will never find its spring. The moment you reach to your center you allow the spring to come to you. Your whole life becomes a dance, a poetry, a song.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 7

There is no final destination

30 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

ONCE, WHEN KINGYU SAW RINZAI COMING TO HIS MONASTERY, HE SAT IN HIS ROOM HOLDING HIS STICK CROSSWISE. RINZAI STRUCK THE STICK THREE TIMES WITH HIS HAND, THEN ENTERED THE MONK'S HALL AND SAT DOWN IN THE FIRST SEAT.

KINGYU CAME IN, SAW RINZAI, AND SAID, "IN AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN HOST AND GUEST, EACH SHOULD OBSERVE THE CUSTOMARY FORMALITIES. WHERE ARE YOU FROM, AND WHY ARE YOU SO RUDE?"

"WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, OLD OSHO?" ANSWERED RINZAI.

AS KINGYU WAS ABOUT TO OPEN HIS MOUTH TO REPLY, RINZAI STRUCK HIM. KINGYU PRETENDED TO FALL DOWN. RINZAI HIT HIM AGAIN. KINGYU SAID, "TODAY THINGS WERE NOT TO MY ADVANTAGE."

AT A LATER TIME, ISAN ASKED KYOZAN, "IN THE CASE OF THESE TWO VENERABLE ONES, WAS EITHER THE WINNER OR LOSER?"

KYOZAN SAID, "WHEN ONE WINS, ONE WINS UNCONDITIONALLY. WHEN ONE LOSES, ONE LOSES UNCONDITIONALLY."

Maneesha, the anecdote that you have brought can be understood only if you understand Zen's position about conditionality. In our lives everything is conditioned – conditioned by circumstances,

conditioned by traditions. When I say everything is conditioned, I mean nothing is yours; everything has come to you from the outside. You are just a gathering point. On your own you are nothing, you are utterly empty.

Zen wants you to approach life unconditionally. That means without any prejudice, without any precondition, without any expectation. You can be total only if you are standing at your very center.

You love, but your love is conditional. You have friends but your friends are conditional. Just a small change in circumstances and the lovers become enemies and the friends are no more friends.

Machiavelli had a great insight when he wrote the book *THE PRINCE*. Although it is a book of diplomacy and has nothing to do with religion, there are insights which can help you to understand. Machiavelli says, "A king should never tell to his friend what he cannot tell to the enemy, because no one knows: who is a friend today may be an enemy tomorrow, and who is an enemy today may be a friend tomorrow." He is laying down a diplomatic policy – but our whole life is diplomatic. We say things because the listener will appreciate them; then it has become conditional. To say the truth we don't have to consider at all whether it will be liked or not.

Gurdjieff used to teach his disciples unconditionality as a basic principle for finding the truth. If you put any conditions, those conditions will be the barriers, and what are all your religions except conditions?

When a follower of Krishna or a follower of Christ sits for meditation, his desire is to see Krishna – he is expecting existence to be according to his desire – and the Christian is asking for Christ. Because of their conditioned minds it is possible Hindus may see Krishna. The Christian will not see Krishna and the Hindu will not see Christ; they will see according to their conditions. They will see their own conditions in a kind of hallucination, and they will feel immensely joyous that they have realized God.

All your so-called saints are simply psychopaths. They don't understand that the basic foundation of finding the truth is to first clean your mind of all conditions. Approach existence absolutely empty. Allow existence to say something. Don't ask.

That's where Zen comes to be the highest kind of religiousness. Just compare it to Jesus' saying to his followers, "Ask and it shall be given unto you" – but ask. What you can ask will be some desire, some longing, some passion, some greed. What can you ask? – and existence has no obligation to fulfill your asking.

Jesus goes on by saying, "Knock and the doors shall be opened unto you." It seems as if existence is closed; unless you knock, the doors will not be opened.

The truth is, existence has no doors, so where are you going to knock? And existence is every moment available; your doors are closed. Are you going to knock on your own doors? And who is going to open them?

Jesus says, "Seek and ye shall find." Beautiful words, and if you don't understand, then great poetry. But if you understand, then they are not fundamental statements of a religious consciousness.

A religious consciousness will just change the whole thing into its opposite: seek and you will miss; don't seek and you have already found. Knock and you will be knocking in vain, because existence has no doors; it is in every dimension open. Ask and you will be living in an illusion. It will be given to you not by existence, but by your own imagination.

Don't put any condition on existence, don't put any pressure on existence. Just be available and rejoice, whatever comes to you. And existence comes in such abundance to the unconditional man that it is simply surprising. You had not asked and all the treasures, all the splendors, all the mysteries, are your own. You were not seeking, and the truth is already there.

You are the truth, the whole seeking is stupid. The more you seek, the farther you will go away from the truth. So stop seeking – and complete stoppage of desiring, seeking, asking, they are all the same things. Just remain at your center, available and open, unconditionally, and you have found that which cannot be said.

In this background you should understand this anecdote.

ONCE, WHEN KINGYU SAW RINZAI COMING TO HIS MONASTERY, HE SAT IN HIS ROOM HOLDING HIS STICK CROSSWISE. RINZAI STRUCK THE STICK THREE TIMES WITH HIS HAND, THEN ENTERED THE MONKS' HALL AND SAT DOWN IN THE FIRST SEAT.

Obviously the first seat belonged to Kingyu; he was the master of the monastery. And this is strange behavior from a guest, that he knocks first the stick of the master three times, and then, without saying anything, enters the assembly hall and sits in the place of the master.

KINGYU CAME IN, SAW RINZAI, AND SAID, "IN AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN HOST AND GUEST, EACH SHOULD OBSERVE THE CUSTOMARY FORMALITIES."

That's where Rinzai differs, and any great master will differ. Kingyu had many more disciples than Rinzai, because the masses could understand him more clearly. He was following in a way the formalities of the masses. He expects Rinzai also...

He says to Rinzai, "IN AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN HOST AND GUEST" – he thinks he is the host, which formally he is, and Rinzai is a guest, which formally he is – "EACH SHOULD OBSERVE THE CUSTOMARY FORMALITIES."

There Rinzai does not agree, and no great master can agree. Traditional formalities? Then what is Zen all about? It is the revolution against the formal. It is all for the spontaneous, not for the customary.

"WHERE ARE YOU FROM, AND WHY ARE YOU SO RUDE?"

He is not rude. On the surface he will appear rude to anybody, but he is exactly expressing his position. When he struck three times on the stick, he told his host, "Try to understand that a greater master is here. You are only a formal teacher."

Those three strikings on the stick show that from now onwards, "formally, you are the host; but in existence I am the host, you are the guest." What is true on the surface is not necessarily true at the center.

Rinzai is saying, "A master has come to a disciple." He has made it clear by striking the stick of Kingyu that from now onwards, "While I'm here, I am the master." He is not being rude, he is simply being straightforward, and that is the quality of an authentic master.

Kingyu asked him, "WHERE ARE YOU FROM, AND WHY ARE YOU SO RUDE?" He could not understand the behavior, although the behavior is clear. The master has struck three times on Kingyu's stick, and he is sitting in his seat in the assembly hall.

Rinzai is saying, "You are a mere teacher, you are not yet a master. Whatever you know is mere knowledge, it is not your own existential experience."

"WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, OLD OSHO?" ANSWERED RINZAI. OSHO is a very honorable word. Just in a single word he has said, "I have not been rude; I have just declared that I have come here."

"WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, OLD OSHO? You are old and you are well respected by me, but that does not mean that you know the truth. You have strived hard your whole life, you disciplined yourself, you have been training yourself, but you have not yet got the point. I respect you, your old age, your lifelong effort.

"I am not rude, but truth has to be said even if it appears to be rude. WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, OLD OSHO?"

By the word 'osho' he has made the position clear: "I am not rude, and I cannot be rude to anybody. It is really out of compassion that I have struck on your stick, showing you that you don't deserve to have it. It should be in my hands. You did not understand, that's why I had to come to the assembly hall and sit in the position where you used to sit.

"Obviously you are feeling insulted, but all I am saying is that the moment a real master enters, then he is always the host, he is never the guest."

AS KINGYU WAS ABOUT TO OPEN HIS MOUTH TO REPLY, RINZAI STRUCK HIM. He did not allow him to speak, because it is not a question of speaking, it is not a dialogue.

Try to understand: don't be bothered about words, but the actual situation. He was going to open his mouth means he was going to say something. Rinzai struck him to say, "Don't say anything, see! Don't get lost into explanations, just see the situation, just look into my eyes!"

KINGYU PRETENDED TO FALL DOWN. RINZAI HIT HIM AGAIN – because no pretensions are allowed in Zen. Either you fall down, not by any effort but as a happening... You don't pretend; it is not a drama.

KINGYU PRETENDED TO FALL DOWN. RINZAI HIT HIM AGAIN. Now this hit is for his pretension – not only this pretending to fall, but his whole life is a pretension. He is not a master, yet he has been pretending to be the master.

KINGYU SAID, "TODAY THINGS WERE NOT TO MY ADVANTAGE."

That is not the response of one who has understood. He is still thinking in terms of advantage. He has not understood the meaning of the behavior of Rinzai. He throws the responsibility, like everybody else in the world, on destiny, on kismet, on the lines of the hand, on the birth chart – all kinds of stupid excuses. "What can I do? TODAY THINGS WERE NOT TO MY ADVANTAGE."

The reality is that Rinzai did too much, gave him again and again opportunities to understand – which would have been one of the greatest days in his life – that a master has walked down from his hill to his monastery, uninvited, and tried to wake him up. But he is thinking of advantages....

AT A LATER TIME, ISAN ASKED KYOZAN, "IN THE CASE OF THESE TWO VENERABLE ONES, WAS EITHER THE WINNER OR LOSER?"

This was asked century after century in Zen: "What happened that day? Who was the winner and who was the loser?"

AT A LATER TIME, ISAN ASKED KYOZAN – both great masters – "IN THE CASE OF THESE TWO VENERABLE ONES, WAS EITHER THE WINNER OR LOSER?" KYOZAN SAID, "WHEN ONE WINS, ONE WINS UNCONDITIONALLY. WHEN ONE LOSES, ONE LOSES UNCONDITIONALLY."

This is such a profound statement; it means the question of being a winner or loser is meaningless. The point is, whatever happens it should be unconditional, it should be spontaneous. To be a failure spontaneously is as valuable as to be victorious. The real value is in spontaneity, in unconditionality.

If you fail, you accept your failure unconditionally, with joy. That's a gift of nature. One never knows, even a dark night may turn into a beautiful dawn. You should not start having opinions about who has won and who has lost. Both the participants in a Zen encounter should remain spontaneous whatever happens. The value is in the spontaneity; it has been taken away from victory completely.

Victory is part of a struggling world, a world with conditions, a world with desires. Zen pays no attention to victory or defeat; they are both meaningless. What is meaningful is spontaneity. It is possible that the spontaneous one may be defeated and the victorious may not be unconditional. In the eyes of Zen, the defeated one is at a higher state.

It happened once, a Zen samurai, a Zen warrior, had come home early from the front, and he found the servant making love to his wife.

Being a man of Zen, he said to the servant, "Don't be worried, just finish your job. I am waiting outside. You will have to take a sword in your hand and fight with me. It is perfectly okay whatever is happening. I am waiting outside."

This poor servant started trembling. He does not even know how to hold a sword, and his master is a famous warrior; he will chop off his head in a single blow.

So he ran from the back door to the Zen master who was also the master of the warrior. He said to the master, "I have got into trouble. It is all my fault, but it has happened."

The master listened to his story and he said, "There is no need to be worried. I will teach you how to hold the sword, and I will also tell you that it does not matter that your master is a great warrior.

All that matters is spontaneity. And in spontaneity you will be the better, because he seems to be confident: there is no question of this servant surviving; it will be almost like a cat playing with a rat.

"So don't be worried. Be total, and hit him hard, because this is your only chance of living, survival. So don't be half-hearted, don't be conditional, thinking that perhaps he may forgive you. He will never forgive you. You will have to fight with him. You have provoked and challenged him. But there is no problem: as far as I can see, you will end up the winner."

The servant could not believe it, and the master said, "You should understand that I am his master also, and I know that he will behave according to his training. Knowing perfectly well that he is going to win, he cannot be unconditional – and you have no other alternative than to be unconditional. Just be total. You don't know where to hit, how to hit, so hit anywhere. Just go crazy!"

The servant said, "If you say so, I will do it. In fact there is no chance of my survival, so why not do it totally!"

Seeing that the time had come, he learned how to hold the sword, and he came back and challenged his master, "Now come on!"

The master could not believe it. He was thinking the servant would fall at his feet and cry and weep and say, "Just forgive me!"

But instead of that the servant roared like a lion, and he has got a sword from the Zen master. He recognized the sword, and he said, "From where did you get it?"

The servant said, "From your master. Now come, let it be decided once and for all. Either I will survive or you will survive, but both cannot."

The master felt a little tremble in his heart, but still he thought, "How can he manage? It is years' training.... I have been fighting for years in wars, and this poor servant..." But he had to take out his sword.

The servant went really crazy. Not knowing where to hit, he was hitting here and there and just... The samurai was at a loss, because he could fight with any warrior who knew how to fight – but this man knows nothing and he is doing all kinds of things. The servant pushed him to the wall, and the master had to ask him, "Please forgive me. You will kill me. You don't know how to fight – what are you doing?"

The servant said, "It is not a question of doing. It is my last moment; I will do everything with totality."

The servant became the winner, and the warrior also went to the master and said, "What miracle have you done? Within five minutes he became such a great warrior, and he was making such blows, so stupid that he could have killed me. He knows nothing but he could have killed me. He pushed me to the wall of my house, his sword on my chest. I had to ask to be forgiven and tell him that whatever he is doing it is perfectly okay and to continue."

The master said, "You have to learn a lesson, that it is finally the totality, the unconditional absoluteness... whether it brings defeat or victory does not matter. What matters is that the man was total, and the total man never is defeated. His totality is his victory."

That's what Kyozan is saying: "WHEN ONE WINS, ONE WINS UNCONDITIONALLY." He does not take any credit that "I am the victor"; it is always the unconditional consciousness that is the victor.

"WHEN ONE LOSES, ONE LOSES UNCONDITIONALLY." There is no question of any defeatism; there is no question of feeling a failure. He gave his total effort. But if nature wants that the other should win, it is perfectly okay. "I have not left anything, I did my best and was total, and I was absolutely spontaneous. More than that I cannot do."

So when two warriors fight in Japan – and it happens often, even today – most probably nobody wins and nobody is defeated, because both are total. Their efforts are so spontaneous that finally they end up without winning or being defeated. Very rarely is a person defeated, and whoever is defeated, it is just circumstantial. The victor does not declare himself and his egoism; on the contrary, he embraces the defeated and he appreciates the way the defeated fought. It was spontaneous and total, "and it is just by chance that I am the winner and you are not. It is just by chance. But as far as your spontaneity and totality are concerned, you are absolutely equal to me."

This is a very different approach. Victory or defeat are no more the values. A great shift in values takes place: spontaneity, absoluteness, putting all that you have at the stake, that is valuable. Whether victory happens or defeat happens, that is not material.

One German professor, Herrigel, was one of the first Western disciples of a Zen master in Japan. He was learning archery. He was already a great archer in Germany, because there values are different. He was a great archer because he was always right one hundred percent, his arrow reaching to the exact middle of the target, the bull's-eye. In Germany your success will be counted by the percentage – a hundred percent, ninety percent, eighty percent. That is the way it is counted all around the world, except in Japan.

In Japan, when Herrigel had learned archery for years in Germany and had become the champion archer of Germany, he heard about a different valuation. He went to Japan and remained there for three years with a master. He could not understand why the master was always saying, "You missed" – and his arrow was always reaching exactly to the bull's-eye.

The master said, "That is not the point, whether your arrow reaches the bull's-eye or not. The point is that you should be spontaneous. Forget about the target. Remember that you should be spontaneous, you should not make an effort."

Three years passed, but the German professor, Herrigel, could not understand what this man was talking about. Every day he would try, and the master would say, "No!"

Finally he decided to go back: "This is useless, wasting time!" He could not understand what this spontaneity is. He could not understand how you can be spontaneous when you are an archer. You have to take the bow in your hand, you have to aim, you have to be exact so that your arrow reaches to the point – how can you be without effort? Some effort is absolutely needed. And you will agree that he was not wrong.

But Zen will not agree. The Zen master continued working, without getting bored or fed up that three years have passed and this man cannot relax.

Herrigel told him after three years, "Tomorrow I have to leave. I'm sorry that I could not understand. I still carry the idea that I am one hundred percent right, so how can you say that I don't know archery at all?"

So the next day, early in the morning, he went to see the master for the last time. The master was teaching somebody else, so he sat there on the bench and just looked. For the first time he was not concerned; he was going, he had dropped the idea of learning archery through Zen, so he was totally relaxed and was watching, just watching how the master took the bow in his hand and how he totally relaxed as if not concerned at all whether the arrow reaches to the target or not, with no tension and with no desire, being just playful and relaxed.

He had been seeing the master for three years, but because he was full of desire he could not see that his archery was totally different: the value is not in the target, the value is in your gesture, in you. Are you relaxed? Are you total? Is your mind absolutely silent? A different orientation... because the archery is not important, the meditation is important. And a man of meditation, although he does not care about the target, simply reaches the target, with no mind, in utter clarity, in silence, relaxed.

Zen has brought a different valuation to everything. In China they have a saying that when a musician becomes perfect, he throws away his instruments; when an archer becomes perfect, he throws away his bows and arrows. Strange, because what is the point of becoming a perfect archer and now you are throwing away your bows and arrows?

One man declared to the emperor of China, "Now you have to announce it and recognize me as the greatest archer in China. I am ready for any challenge." And he was absolutely perfect, just like Professor Herrigel – one hundred percent successful.

But the king said, "Have you heard about an old archer who lives deep in the mountains?"

He said, "I have heard about him, but I am ready to contest."

The king laughed. He said, "You should go and meet that old man. If he recognizes you, I will recognize you, because I don't know archery... But he is a great archer, perhaps the greatest, so you should go. Bring his recognition, and my recognition is available. But without asking him I cannot do it. It is not a question of a challenge."

So the man had to travel to the high mountains, where he found a very old man whose back was bent, who could not stand straight. He asked, "Are you the archer?"

The man said, "I used to be. But perhaps half a century has passed, and when I became a perfect archer, according to my master, I had to throw away my bows and arrows. You think you are a perfect master; have you come for recognition?" The king had sent information to him that he was sending somebody.

The man said, "Yes."

The old man said, "Then why are you carrying the bow and the arrows?"

The man said, "Strange... That's what my mastery is."

The old man laughed. He brought him out of his small cottage to a mountain cliff. The old man was so old, maybe one hundred and forty years old, and the cliff went so deep underneath, thousands of feet into the valley. If you just missed a single step or trembled or hesitated, you were gone. The old man walked to the very edge of the cliff, half his feet hanging off the cliff, half his feet on the cliff.

The young man could not believe his eyes. The old man said, "Now you also come. There is enough space here for one more!" The young man tried just two steps and sat down, trembling, seeing the situation.

The old man laughed and he said, "What kind of archer are you? How many birds can you kill with a single arrow?"

The young man said, "Of course one bird."

The old man said, "You have to learn under a Zen master. It is a sheer wastage of one arrow, just one bird. My master never allowed anybody the certificate unless he was able with one arrow to bring down the whole flock."

The young man said, "How many can you bring down?"

He said, "You say the number."

Just then a flock of birds flew over. The old man just looked, and seven birds fell down.

The young man said, "My God!"

The old man said, "When you can look with totality, your very eyes become arrows. But you are a novice; you could not come to the edge of the cliff. If you are trembling inside, then your archery cannot be perfect. You may manage to hit the targets, but that is not the point. The point is that you have an untrembling total presence. Then your total presence becomes as sharp as any arrow.

"That's why the ancient proverb: When the musician becomes perfect, he throws away the musical instruments. Now his very voice, his very being is musical; now the very air around him has a music. And when the archer becomes perfect, his untrembling totality becomes almost a death ray, if he looks towards a flock of birds, or a flock of animals."

The master said, "You go back and learn from this point. The target is not the target; you are the target. Become total – and if I am alive, I will visit you after five years to see whether I can give you the recognition. Or if I am gone, my son will come after five years. He is as great an adept as I am, and you will be able to recognize him, because whatever I can do with my eyes, he can also do."

After five years the old man came. These five years the archer tried his best to be total, and he succeeded. The old man asked, "Where are your bows and arrows?"

He said, "It must be two years by now, but it seems like centuries have passed and I have not seen the arrows and the bow. Now I can do what you were able to do."

The old man did not ask for a test, he simply gave the recognition. He said, "I can see in your eyes the unwavering totality. I can see in your body the spontaneous relaxedness. You can go to the king and tell him that the old man gives the recognition, and just for your recognition I have come down from the hills."

Zen brings a new valuation into everything. It is not a life-renouncing religion, it is a life-transforming religion. It transforms everything, it negates nothing. But one thing has to be remembered: unconditionality, totality, spontaneity – strange values, because no religion talks about them, and they are the authentic values that will give you the alchemy to change your being.

All religions talk about formalities, etiquette, manners. They are all concerned with your polished personality. They make you pretenders, they make you actors, but they don't change your center.

This a beautiful anecdote, and Kyozan is saying, "WHEN ONE WINS, ONE WINS UNCONDITIONALLY." There was no desire to win, one was simply playful, enjoying the very art and enjoying the meditateness and spontaneity. Now whatever happens, that is not the concern.

Of course when two persons will be fighting, one will be defeated, one will be victorious. What does it matter who is victorious and who is defeated? All that matters is whether both are at the same degree of concentration, at the same degree of unconditionality. Whoever is higher in unconditionality – he may be the defeated one, but according to Zen he is at a higher point of consciousness, and that is real victory. The formal victory is another thing.

Ikkyu wrote:

MYSELF OF LONG AGO,

IN NATURE

NON-EXISTENT:

NO FINAL DESTINATION,

NOTHING OF ANY VALUE.

He is giving you the very manifesto of Zen. MYSELF OF LONG AGO, IN NATURE... I have disappeared in nature, I don't know when, I have not kept a diary and I don't remember that I was anything else at any time.

MYSELF OF LONG AGO, IN NATURE NON-EXISTENT: I don't find myself, I find only nature. No final destination... I am going nowhere. There is no final destination, because final destination will mean death.

Life is a continuity always and always. There is no final destination it is going towards. Just the pilgrimage, just the journey in itself is life, not reaching to some point, no goal – just dancing and being in pilgrimage, moving joyously, without bothering about any destination.

What will you do by getting to a destination? Nobody has asked this, because everybody is trying to have some destination in life. But the implications...

If you really reach the destination of life, then what? Then you will look very embarrassed. Nowhere to go... you have reached the final destination – and in the journey you have lost everything. You had to lose everything. So standing naked at the final destination, you will look all around like an idiot: what was the point? You were hurrying so hard, and you were worrying so hard, and this is the outcome.

I have told you about one of Rabindranath's stories. It is a song. The story says in song, "I have been searching for God for centuries. Sometimes he was around the moon, but by the time I reached there he had moved to some other star. I saw him at another star, but by the time I reached there he had moved again. This went on and on, but there was great joy in that he is there, and one day I am going to find him. How long can he hide? How long can he escape?"

"And it happened that one day I reached a house where there was a board saying that this was the house of God. I had a great sense of relief that my destiny was fulfilled. I went up the steps and I was just going to knock on the door when I became aware that, 'Just wait, have a second thought! What are you going to do if God comes and opens the door? What will you do next?'"

Your whole life has been a journey, a pilgrimage, finding, searching. You are trained as a runner since millions of years, and suddenly you meet God and you don't have anything to say. What will you say?

Have you ever thought that if you meet God by chance, neither will you have anything to say, nor will he have anything to say? You unnecessarily burned yourself out, finished. Final destination means ultimate death.

Ikkyu is right when he says, "NO FINAL DESTINATION, NOTHING OF ANY VALUE" – everything is just to enjoy and dance and sing. But don't ask about value; don't ask what is virtue and what is good. Rejoice in everything, and go on in different pilgrimages knowing perfectly well that life is not going to end anywhere, the journey will continue, the caravan will continue. There is no place where the road ends.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

WHEN THERE IS NOTHING TO PERCEIVE – NO INPUT FROM THE BODY OR THE MIND AND SO ONE HAS NOTHING BY WHICH TO DEFINE ONESELF – IS WHAT IS LEFT WITNESSING? THERE DOES NOT EVEN SEEM TO BE A WITNESS, BUT JUST THE AWARENESS THAT THERE IS NO ONE THERE.

That's exactly right. There is no witness, there is only witnessing. There is only consciousness, but no personality to it, no form. There is only awareness, like a flame arising from nowhere and disappearing into nowhere, and just in the middle you see the flame.

Have you watched a candle, where the flame goes? Gautam Buddha himself used as the word for the ultimate experience, blowing out the candle. Nirvana means blowing out the candle. Nothing is, just a pure awareness, not even confined into your individuality, but just a floating cloud, no firm shape – a tremendous isness, a great joy.

But it is not your joy; you are absent. Then arises in your absence the joy, the blissfulness. The moment you are not, then the witnessing is pure. And this witnessing brings the greatest benediction possible. This witnessing is the buddha.

We have been serious. Now Sardar Gurudayal Singh, a man of great patience... Even if I go on the whole night talking seriously, he will still wait that his time will come. A great trust. That's why he can laugh before the joke is told: it shows a great trust that whatever happens, something good is going to happen.

"My wife is like Venus De Milo," says Paddy into his beer one night.

"Really?" says Seamus, in surprise. "You mean she has a shapely body and stands around naked?"

"No," replies Paddy. "She's an old relic and not all there! Many parts are missing."

"Well, in that case," says Seamus, "my wife is like Mona Lisa."

"Why is that?" asks Paddy. "Is it because she is Italian and has a mysterious, seductive smile?"

"No," replies Seamus. "It's because she is as flat as a canvas and belongs in a museum!"

Little Ernie gets the idea that it might be fun to become a politician when he grows up. So his dad takes him to Washington to watch the inauguration of the new American president, Adolf Ramsbottom.

Little Ernie notices Father Fungus, the bishop of New York, standing on the podium next to the new president.

"Dad," whispers Ernie, "is the priest there to pray for the president?"

"No, son," replies his dad. "The truth is that the priest looks at the president – and then prays for the rest of the world."

Kowalski goes into a crowded bar for a few drinks after work. A couple of hours later, he feels the need to take a shit, so he asks the bartender for directions to the toilet.

"It's upstairs," replies the barman, "down the hall, turn left, and second door on the right."

Kowalski, who is pretty well plastered by now, blinks at the bartender, and sets off in search of the toilet.

He manages to get up the stairs all right, but gets confused from there onwards. Finally, completely lost and desperate to relieve himself, he pulls up a loose board from the floor and makes his deposit.

But what Kowalski does not know is that this floorboard is right in the middle of the ceiling of the bar below.

When he gets back downstairs, he finds that the bar is completely deserted. The place smells awful. Kowalski goes over to the bartender, sits down at the bar and orders another drink.

"Where did everybody go?" asks Kowalski, drunkenly.

"My God!" replies the bartender. "Where were you when the shit hit the fan?"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent. Close your eyes and feel your body to be completely frozen.

Now look inwards with your totality and with an urgency as if this is your last moment. Deeper and deeper, like a spear, move towards the center. It is not far away, and the moment you reach the center you are just a witness, witness of the body, witness of the mind and witness of many new things – a silence, a peace, a deep serenity, a cool breeze fragrant with thousands of roses.

At the center you belong to the eternity. At the center you are the buddha.

The buddha is never born and never dies; it is your very nature.

Recognize your very nature as carefully as possible, because slowly, slowly we have to bring the buddha to our ordinary life – in our actions, in our gestures, in our responses.

To bring the buddha from the hidden center to the circumference of life is the whole art of religion. Everything else is non-essential, commentary.

To make it more clear,

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax and watch. The body is lying down, but you are not the body; the mind is there, but you are not the mind.

You are just a pure witness.

You are not a person either.

Suddenly, the Buddha Auditorium has become a lake of silent consciousness. Individuals are gone, like dewdrops in the ocean. A tremendously precious moment...

Persuade the buddha, collect all the flowers that are showering on you the peace, the silence, the blissfulness. You have to bring them out in your actions, gestures, words, silences.

My effort is to bring out as many buddhas around the world, fully recognizing themselves... because that is the only protection against the stupid politicians and the warmongers. They are determined to destroy this beautiful planet.

Only a buddha-consciousness spreading like wildfire and taking over the hearts of millions of men can protect this small, beautiful planet.

In the whole universe – so vast, unbounded, infinite – this small planet only is alive, and this small planet only is conscious, and this small planet has been able to reach to the highest consciousness in the buddhas.

Before Nivedano calls you back, remember to gather as much experience of being on the center and bring it with you.

Persuade the buddha every day... Sooner or later the spring will come, and you will, without any doubt, recognize your buddhahood. And your recognition is not only of your buddhahood; your recognition is that the whole life is capable of being at the highest peak of consciousness.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but bring the buddha with you.

Show the buddha in every action – even getting up, sitting down. Show the beauty and the grace and the music.

Life has to become a poetry, a painting, a music, a dance.

Okay, Maneesha?

Yes, Beloved Master.

CHAPTER 8

Holidays are not for saints

31 October 1988 pm in Gautam the Buddha Auditorium

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

RINZAI SAID, "I EXPOUND THE DHARMA OF MIND-GROUND, BY WHICH ONE CAN ENTER THE SECULAR AND THE SACRED. BUT YOU ARE MISTAKEN IF YOU SUPPOSE THAT YOUR REAL AND TEMPORAL, SECULAR AND SACRED CAN ATTACH A NAME TO EVERYTHING REAL AND TEMPORAL, SECULAR AND SACRED. THEY CANNOT ATTACH A NAME TO THIS MAN. FOLLOWERS OF THE TAO, GRASP AND USE, BUT NEVER NAME – THIS IS CALLED THE 'MYSTERIOUS PRINCIPLE.'"

WHEN HE DECIDED THAT HIS DAYS WERE ALMOST OVER, RINZAI PUT ON HIS FINEST ROBES AND SEATED HIMSELF IN ZAZEN. HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, GATHERED AROUND HIM, "AFTER I AM GONE, DO NOT DESTROY MY TREASURY OF THE TRUE EYE OF THE LAW." HIS CHIEF DISCIPLE, SANSHO, SAID, "WHO WOULD HAVE THE CHEEK TO DO THAT?" RINZAI RESPONDED, "AFTERWARDS, IF SOMEONE ASKS YOU A QUESTION ABOUT THE TRUE EYE OF THE LAW, HOW WILL YOU REPLY?" SANSHO EXCLAIMED: "KWATZ!" RINZAI COMMENTED, "WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT A BLIND DONKEY WOULD DESTROY IT?"

Maneesha, this is the last talk on the beautiful series, RINZAI: MASTER OF THE IRRATIONAL. To be with Rinzai... it has been a beautiful time. To make him our contemporary, just for a few moments, was pure nectar. This will be the last talk on Rinzai.

Before discussing Rinzai's sutra and the anecdote, Avirbhava, the director-general of the Museum of Gods, has brought a great new member. First I will tell you about the new member of her museum. His name is Dragon.

"According to the Old Testament, the dragon is said to have descended from the Babylonian female dragon called Tiamet. In Christianity the dragon represents the devil; hence, paintings of numerous saints' lives depict combat between them and a dragon, representing God and the devil.

"Where the West sees the dragon as evil, the East considers him to be benevolent. In China it was said that when he died, the emperor ascended to heaven like a dragon. It was believed that when a dragon ascends to heaven, the pressure of its feet on the clouds causes rain. Also in Chinese mythology the dragon is a messenger of heaven who revealed yin and yang, the two forces of the universe, to the Yellow Emperor.

"In the I-Ching the dragon symbolizes wisdom.

"In Japan, the three-clawed dragon represents the emperor, having both imperial and spiritual power."

This Museum of Gods is immensely significant. It declares the end of all gods. They belong only to the museums. That is the very purpose of the Museum of Gods. Their relevance to life is finished; they can only be remembered as mythologies, as fictions, as exploitations by the priesthood, as pathological inventions of insane people.

The future man will not have a god; the future man will be a god. For long enough we have been under fictitious entities. It is time to declare ourselves free from all fictions.

The new man's god is no more in the heaven, it is in his own being – more intimate, more close. The new man will not worship the god, the new man will live the god, will sing the god, will dance the god; he himself will be the temple of the god. Hence I have called the new man the buddha.

Now I will call Avirbhava to bring the dragon.

(A GREEN, PAPIER MACHE DRAGON ENTERS GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA AUDITORIUM FROM THE BACK AND STOMPS AROUND THE HALL. EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE IT SPRAYS FROM ITS FANGED MOUTH STEAM AND SMOKE. EVERYBODY IS LAUGHING WHILE ORIENTAL MUSIC PLAYS. LAUGHTER, CHINESE MUSIC, HAND-CLAPPING. SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 190.)

The sutra:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

RINZAI SAID, "I EXPOUND THE DHARMA OF MIND-GROUND, BY WHICH ONE CAN ENTER THE SECULAR AND THE SACRED. BUT YOU ARE MISTAKEN IF YOU SUPPOSE THAT YOUR REAL AND TEMPORAL, SECULAR AND SACRED CAN ATTACH A NAME TO EVERYTHING REAL AND TEMPORAL, SECULAR AND SACRED. THEY CANNOT ATTACH A NAME TO THIS MAN."

'Mind-ground' simply means the empty mind. Only the ground is left, only the foundation is left, and everything else is gone. Even to have dreams you have to be alive. Do you think a dead man can dream? Your life functions as a ground for all your projections, for all your imaginations, for all your

gods in heaven and hell, and all kinds of mythologies, theologies and philosophies. But for all, the ground is the mind.

Zen does not go beyond the essential ground of mind. It does not grow any mythology on it, it does not grow any system of beliefs on it; it simply remains with the silent mind – and the silent mind is exactly no-mind. These are different expressions only. You can say 'no-mind' because there are no thoughts; you can call it 'mind-ground' – there are no thoughts either.

This mind-ground can describe things as sacred, as profane, as material, as spiritual, as astral, as ethereal – this mind is capable of naming thousands of things, real and unreal. But it cannot name this man. Rinzai is pointing to his own realization, and the new man that is born out of realization. The mind-ground cannot give a name to this man – the new man, the man of Tao, or the man of enlightenment.

Why can it not give a name to it? Because a name is a thought, and Zen does not accept any thought, sacred or profane; it accepts only the pure consciousness, the empty heart. Nothing should be echoing in it.

Hence, this mind which can create such great mythologies... Millions of people have lived under the impact of fictitious gods. The whole game is of the mind. It can create God, it can create the devil, it can create anything you want, but not this man. The man who is enlightened is no more. How can you name him? The man of enlightenment is dissolved in the cosmos; now he has no more any form or any boundaries. How can you name him?

So the whole process of naming things, which you think is thinking, is not of any worth; just the very ground of consciousness is valuable. Anything you grow on that ground is futile. It is capable of giving you anything you want. Its power of imagination is immense, knows no limits – but they will all be fictions, hallucinations, mirages. Whenever you come to the truth, the mind is incapable, absolutely impotent and incapable of naming it.

Truth has no name, it is nameless. Your ultimate being has never been named, and there is no way to give it a name. When you find it, you are so absorbed and overwhelmed by it that you disappear; only it remains. The luminosity, the love, the compassion, the grace – all are there, but you have disappeared. Who is going to name it?

Your disappearance means opening the doors of the universal. By disappearing, I mean you disappear in the ocean. Now, when the dewdrop has disappeared in the ocean, where to find it? How to name it? All that you can say is that it has become one with the ocean. It was a small ocean, that's why it could become one with the ocean. It kept itself small, within limits. Today it dropped its limits, slipped from the lotus leaf, disappeared in the ocean. But that does not mean that it has died; it simply means that it has become too big, that you can no longer call it a dewdrop.

Rinzai's last statements... "FOLLOWERS OF THE TAO, GRASP AND USE, BUT NEVER NAME – THIS IS CALLED THE 'MYSTERIOUS PRINCIPLE.'"

Tao is exactly at the same height of understanding as Buddha. The word 'tao' does not mean anything. It was under compulsion that Lao Tzu called it tao – a meaningless word – just as Buddha has called it dhamma.

His whole life Lao Tzu never wrote. Even the emperor insisted that "You should write down your experiences. They will be valuable for the coming centuries."

Lao Tzu said, "You don't know what you are asking for. Nobody can write it, nobody can pronounce it. One can live it, love it, one can be dissolved into it, one can be resurrected into it, but nothing can be said about it. Words are too far away, too much misleading."

His whole life Lao Tzu denied every proposal from the disciples that "You have lived a great life of utter silence, of peace and blissfulness; it will be a great loss to humanity if you don't write down just a small treatise, a few sutras, a few footprints that can show how you reached to this height, in what direction we have to move – just to guide us."

But Lao Tzu said, "I would love to say, but I cannot corrupt the purity of the experience. The moment I say it, it will be corrupted. The words are too small and the experience is immense. Please just forgive me!"

This had been his attitude his whole life, but at the end he said to his disciples, "Now it is time that I retire into the Himalayas. My death is not far away, and I would like to meet my death and welcome her in the right place" – and there cannot be any more right place than the eternal silence of the Himalayas.

It is not only Lao Tzu, but many have moved in their last days to the Himalayas and disappeared in the eternal snow. The Himalayas have a mysterious attraction: because of the height, because of the untrodden paths, there are still thousands of places where man has not reached, which are absolutely unpolluted by man and his ugly radiations.

Lao Tzu took leave of his disciples, but he got into trouble, because the emperor informed the guards on all the ways that go to the Himalayas. There were guards on every way that led to the Himalayas going out of China. He informed the guards, "Wherever you find Lao Tzu crossing the Chinese border, hold him prisoner. Be very respectful, but make a deal with him that if he wants to go to the Himalayas, he has to write the treatise of his experiences – just the essential hints."

He was caught, with great respect, and he was given the cottage of the guard, and he was locked up and told, "Until you write down the essential experience and the steps towards it – we are under strict orders – you will not be allowed to leave China and move into the Himalayas."

Under such loving compulsion, finding no way out, Lao Tzu wrote his book, THE BOOK OF TAO. He starts from the very first line, "Truth cannot be said. The moment it is said, it becomes untrue."

All those who read this small treatise are warned from the very beginning that these are words, and words cannot carry the wordless silence. This is the preface to his own treatise: "I am being forced, so I am writing it, but this is not the truth. You cannot get the truth from a book." Such honesty!

Rinzai says, "FOLLOWERS OF THE TAO, GRASP AND USE" – they grasp the mind-ground, they grasp their very being, and use it – "BUT NEVER NAME – THIS IS CALLED THE 'MYSTERIOUS PRINCIPLE.'" They get hold of it, they use it in their whole life, they become one with it, but they never say a single word about it, what it is.

You have to live with a master who has attained to it, perhaps in deep silence, sitting with the master. Your heart and his heart may start synchronizing, dancing in the same tune, getting into a harmony. Nothing will be said, nothing will be heard, but everything will be understood. Because of this it is called the "mysterious principle." Nobody has said it, nobody has ever heard about it, but thousands of people have lived it.

Religion is not an explanation, it is an experience. It is nothing to be studied, it has to be lived. That's where all the religions have gone wrong. They have become scriptures, they have become temples, churches, synagogues, they have created prayers, rituals, according to the masses. Whatever the masses need they are ready to supply: just remain in their fold, because the presence of the followers is their political power.

Your so-called religions – I want to clarify it, with absolute certainty – are nothing but hidden politics. Their faces are religious, but those faces are not real, they are masks. Deep inside is pure politics and nothing else. Naturally they have to conform to the masses. It is so laughable, so ridiculous a thing that the religions have to conform to the masses, who know nothing, just in order to keep them in the fold.

I have heard about three rabbis in New York, talking to each other. The first rabbi said, "My synagogue is the most sophisticated, because I even allow people to smoke or drink inside the synagogue while the preacher is preaching. There is no harm in smoking or drinking. This is a modern idea of a synagogue."

The second rabbi said, "That is nothing. I allow people even to make love – what is the harm? The preacher is preaching and people are enjoying, loving each other. Love is the message!"

The third one said, "You are still far behind my synagogue. My synagogue is the last word, because in front of my synagogue hangs a big board saying that on Jewish holidays the synagogue will remain closed!"

Now, you cannot improve on that.

Considering the people... Gurdjieff used to say, "If you consider the people, you will never be religious." Never consider anybody. Just search for your truth and live accordingly, even if it goes against the whole world. Don't make any compromises or any considerations. A man of authentic religion is a man of no compromises and no considerations.

WHEN HE DECIDED THAT HIS DAYS WERE ALMOST OVER, RINZAI PUT ON HIS FINEST ROBES AND SEATED HIMSELF IN ZAZEN.

These small symbols show the very fine quality of the man. They are indications, for those who can understand, that he is preparing himself to meet death. Obviously he should put on his finest robes and seat himself in zazen. He should meet death in a beautiful silence of meditation.

HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, GATHERED AROUND HIM, "AFTER I AM GONE, DO NOT DESTROY MY TREASURY OF THE TRUE EYE OF THE LAW."

I have explained to you that Zen calls what in India we have for thousands of years called the third eye – the eye that looks within – the true eye of the law. These two eyes look outwards, and it is very symbolic that outside everything is always divided in two. If there is night, there is day; if there is love, there is hate; if there is friend, there is enemy.

To look outside it is absolutely necessary that you should have two eyes. But to look inside, these two eyes should melt into one. And as you turn inwards, there is only one eye of the law, one eye of Tao, or simply the third eye.

He asked his followers before his last breath, "AFTER I AM GONE, DO NOT DESTROY MY TREASURY OF THE TRUE EYE OF THE LAW. I have given you a treasury, I have introduced you to the mysterious principle, I have made you aware of the third eye; don't let anybody destroy it."

HIS CHIEF DISCIPLE, SANSHO, SAID, "WHO WOULD HAVE THE CHEEK TO DO THAT? Who can destroy it, who will have the guts, the cheek to do it?"

RINZAI RESPONDED: "AFTERWARDS, IF SOMEONE ASKS YOU A QUESTION ABOUT THE TRUE EYE OF THE LAW, HOW WILL YOU REPLY?" SANSHO EXCLAIMED: "KWATZ!" RINZAI COMMENTED, "WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT A BLIND DONKEY WOULD DESTROY IT?"

Sansho is responding exactly... Shouting "Kwatz!" was introduced by Rinzai into the Zen tradition. When you cannot answer a question, when a question is not answerable, then a good shout immediately puts the other person, at least for a moment, in silence. That is your answer. You are saying, "Be silent and you will know!" – not saying so much in words, but just giving a good shout. The man simply is shocked.

For a moment the mind becomes alert: "What is going on? I have asked a very logical, rational question and this fellow shouts at me!" And the shout comes so quickly, without reason and rhyme, that the mind cannot work out the meaning of it. So it becomes silent – at least for a few moments.

Sansho gave a good shout, "Kwatz!", but that was not the right thing.

RINZAI COMMENTED, "WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT A BLIND DONKEY WOULD DESTROY IT?" He is saying that it is always destroyed by the blindness of man. Before a blind man you may shout as much as you want; it won't help him to have the third eye. He cannot even look outwards, how can he look inwards? He does not know what 'look' means.

Every great religious peak is destroyed after the death of the master by blind donkeys. You will not be able to recognize them, because these blind donkeys are not the donkeys you know. These blind donkeys are the pundits, the rabbis, the bishops, the popes, the shankaracharyas. These blind donkeys go on destroying everything, because they have to manipulate the public mind. They are not concerned about saving the truth. Who cares about the truth? – the real question is how many followers you have.

Everybody cares about having more power, and there is only one power outside, and that is the power of having the masses behind you. But to have the masses behind you, you have to be behind them. You have to come to all kinds of compromises, otherwise they will not follow you.

They have already had a prejudiced mind for centuries. They know what is right and what is wrong – and they know nothing! They know what is truth, what is God, what is heaven, and you cannot change their conditionings. It will be easier for them to leave you and go to some other fold, where their prejudices are nourished.

It is a very strange situation: where your ignorance is nourished you feel happy, and where your ignorance is exposed and killed you feel very unhappy, because you are so much identified with your ignorance. This is your blind donkey-ness.

Rinzai is saying that there is no way to save the third eye, except if you have it and you go on transmitting it to other recipients. It cannot be saved in scriptures, it cannot be saved in any other way. The only way to save it is to have it – and have it in such abundance that you can share with others.

RINZAI THEN DIED, IN ZAZEN – sitting in the Buddha-posture. THE YEAR WAS 866 OR 867, AND HE LEFT BEHIND HIM TWENTY-TWO ENLIGHTENED DISCIPLES.

It is a great contribution to human consciousness. To leave twenty-two enlightened disciples is to raise the level of consciousness – a single man's great effort and great contribution. And throughout these eleven hundred years Rinzai's disciples have continued to become enlightened. It is still a living stream, flowing, it has not got lost into a desert.

The desert is that of the scholars. That desert is being created by the universities and the colleges and the schools. In that desert everything gets lost. In the vast deserts of Sahara, small streams of consciousness simply get lost, rather than reaching to the ocean. All scholarship leads you away from the ocean, because all these scholars are the servants of the vested interests. They have a certain interest, and for that interest they can compromise everything – and they have compromised everything.

If he has not created living fires around him, every great master is going to be forgotten. Humanity loses much when a master is forgotten. There have been thousands of mystics, and even their names are forgotten.

Anando is compiling a book on all the mystics I have spoken on. She talked to Professor Coleman Barks. He was very much interested; he wanted to publish it himself. But he said, "From where has he found these three hundred? I have not even heard these names – three hundred buddhas!" He has left, otherwise I would have sent him the message that I am still living and I am going to speak on at least two hundred more. There are more still, but even their names are lost.

You are listening to people and their sutras which have been forgotten by the majority of humanity. My effort is to revive all those golden peaks in your consciousness, so you can have the trust that "If so many people became enlightened, there is no reason why I cannot become enlightened."

My speaking on these people has a single purpose: to create a trust in you about yourself, that your destiny is to be a buddha.

Ikkyu wrote:

WHETHER I ELEVATE THIS MESSAGE

OR PUT IT DOWN,

EVERYTHING UNDER THE HEAVENS

IS THE IMPERIAL DOMAIN.

I SALUTE AND SAY,

”SO BE IT... SO BE IT.”

That is another version of total relaxation with existence, another version of let-go, another version of suchness, thisness, isness.

He is saying, ”WHETHER I ELEVATE THIS MESSAGE OR PUT IT DOWN, EVERYTHING UNDER THE HEAVENS IS THE IMPERIAL DOMAIN. I SALUTE AND SAY, ‘SO BE IT... SO BE IT.’ Whatever happens, my absolute determination, my absolute commitment is that whatever happens is good. So be it.”

It may seem sometimes that something is a misfortune – but still Ikkyu is right. Many times blessings come in disguise, and those who are ready to accept even misfortunes joyfully, they transform the misfortune into a joy. Just by accepting them, without any resistance, is the way of transforming them into a beautiful space.

SO BE IT.

Whatever happens, don't have any grudge, don't have any complaint against existence. That is the purest message of Zen.

Question 1

Maneesha has asked:

OUR BELOVED MASTER,

FROM RECOGNITION OF AN INTERNAL, UNWAVERING WITNESS, TO WORSHIP OF AN EXTERNAL GOD FOR WHOM PEOPLE KILL – CAN WE REALLY MAKE THE JOURNEY BACK TO THE WITNESS AGAIN WITHIN A SPLIT SECOND, WITH JUST ONE STEP? UNLESS I'M ACTUALLY SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU, REMEMBERING TO WITNESS SEEMS SUCH AN UPHILL TASK!

Maneesha, it is not an uphill task, it is a downhill task! The ego is always ready for an uphill task; it is a question of downhill. To be just natural, simple, nobody, cannot be an uphill task. So first change the idea: it is not an uphill task, it is downhill.

And secondly you say, ”Unless I'm actually sitting in front of you, remembering to witness seems such an uphill task!”

You are making it uphill. If it is possible in front of me, what prevents you when you are not sitting in front of me? If it is possible in front of me, then it is possible anywhere.

And you say, "Unless I'm actually sitting in front of you..." But how can you be certain that I am actually here? You don't have any proof of my being here. You cannot believe your eyes – they deceive you many times. It may be simply just that the whole assembly has fallen asleep and you are all dreaming me; I am the dream of you all.

You cannot determine whether anything outside your witnessing has any reality or not. Because of this, the great philosopher Shankara continuously insisted and proved to the whole of India that the outside world is just a dream, maya, illusion. And there are parallels in the West: Bradley and Bosanquet both tried the same idea – that you cannot say whether the outside is real or unreal, because in a dream you start believing in the dream.

Your believing is not very reliable. In a dream, do you ever doubt, "Perhaps I am in a dream"? In a dream you are so deeply involved that the dream becomes actual, so actual that if you are having a nightmare, and a lion or a dragon is just sitting on your chest, you will wake up out of fear, and you will experience a great relief that it was a dream. But even the dream has its effects: your breathing shows as if you have been running fast, your perspiration shows that your body has believed, your mind has believed, that the dragon was a reality.

There is no way to prove that the outside is not another dream – maybe a little longer, seventy years long; maybe a special dream that when you go to sleep it waits for you, and when you wake up it continues again. But there is no way to prove rationally that the outside is really there. It may be, it may not be.

So don't be worried about my actuality. I may be just a device... in fact, I am a device. If you can become a witness in front of me, you know that you have the capacity to become a witness. Then there is no reason to make it an uphill task. Just be playful about it.

I know in the beginning you will forget many times. Just try to understand this simple thing: when you forget, don't be bothered; otherwise, what happens is you forget witnessing, and then you remember, "My God, I forgot!" – and now you start repenting. That is also forgetting again. What you have forgotten is forgotten. Now you have remembered, continue.

Never repent for those moments which have gone. They are gone. If you start repenting, you will be destroying more moments. And man's mind is such that it can forget. Now that I have said, "Don't repent!" it will repent, and then it will repent that it has repented, and the witnessing will be far away.

So just make it simple: when you forget, you forget. That chapter is closed. Now you are remembering – remember, witness. Slowly, slowly the gaps of forgetting will become smaller, fewer. It needs a little time. You are not seasonal flowers which appear in a few days and disappear in a few days. You are flowers of eternity.

So there is no need to worry about it; if for a few moments you forget witnessing, it is perfectly okay. Now, witness! Don't give a single thought for that which is gone. It is natural, don't feel guilty.

I never want anyone who belongs to me to feel guilty for anything. Whatever has happened, so be it! Now you are aware, witness. You will fall again, many times you will forget, many times you will wake up. This is the natural process. It is nothing personal; it has to happen to everybody.

So take it easy, and just go on growing, more and more witnessing and less and less forgetting. A time comes – has to come – when even if you want to forget, you cannot. Then you will be angry with me – really angry that "Now I want to forget and I cannot forget!" Now you are very happily trying to witness, but the day you will be a perfect witness, you will be angry at me, because there is some beauty in forgetting a few things. But you cannot forget... your witnessing has become so solid that you cannot take even a holiday. Holidays are not for saints.

Now Gurudayal Singh has declared the time for the saints.

Old Herbie the tramp knocks at the door of an inn named George and the Dragon.

A big woman opens the door and says, "What do you want?"

"Could you spare a poor man a bite to eat?" asks Herbie.

"No!" screams the woman, slamming the door.

A few minutes later, Herbie knocks again.

"Please, miss," asks the tramp, "could I have a little something to eat?"

"Get out, you good-for-nothing!" shouts the woman, "and don't you ever come back!"

After a few minutes, Herbie knocks on the door again.

The woman answers it.

"Pardon me," says Herbie, "but could I have a few words with George this time?"

You will get it in the night, exactly in the middle of the night!

Donald Dixteen is standing at a public urinal, when big black Rufus runs in. Rufus frantically unzips his pants, whips out his twelve inch whacker, and starts pissing buckets.

"Wow!" cries Rufus with relief. "I just made it!"

"Really?" says Donald, eyeing Rufus' massive machinery. "Will you make me one too?"

It is Halloween night in Washington and there is a Ghosts and Ghouls party at the White House. Nancy Reagan, George Bush and all the White House staff are dressed up as monsters and witches, with hideous, ghostly masks. Everyone is waiting excitedly for Ronald Reagan himself to appear.

"I can't wait to see Ronnie's costume," says Nancy, who is dressed as Dracula's daughter, with a carving knife stuck through her neck.

"Me neither," replies Bush, who is disguised as Frankenstein for the evening. "Last year Ronald really scared the shit out of everybody when he was carried in in that coffin!"

Just then, the door opens and in walks Reagan. But to everyone's disappointment he is dressed as usual, in his dark-grey business suit. In his hand is a little black box.

"Oh, Ronald!" cries Nancy. "What a shame! We all thought you were really going to scare us this year."

"Scare you?" exclaims Reagan, looking round at the assembled ghosts. "I'm seventy-five years old, I'm senile, physically weak and mentally retarded – and with this little box I can destroy the whole world! Doesn't that scare you?"

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

(Gibberish)

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Be silent. Close your eyes. Feel your body to be completely frozen.

Now look inwards, with all your consciousness, with your total life energy, and with an urgency as if this is going to be your last moment.

Just like a spear, move towards the center. At the center you are just a witness, a pure silent space, witnessing the body, the mind – also witnessing the flowers showering on you, also witnessing that your individuality is dissolving, that you are becoming a part of the ocean.

At this moment, when you are at the center of your being, you are a buddha. And remember, the buddha is not made of bones and blood and marrow. The buddha is made only of witnessing. Whenever you are only a witness, you are a buddha.

And this is so simple, because it is so natural. It is your very being.

This eternity... this universe is absolutely happy with you, is rejoicing with your silence.

To make the witnessing absolutely clear,

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Relax, let go. Remember the last words of Ikkyu, "So be it...."

Utterly silent, serene, the Buddha Auditorium has become a lake of consciousness. Individuals are gone; there is not even a ripple on the lake.

You are blessed. At this moment, nowhere else in the world are ten thousand buddhas sitting in meditation, witnessing and creating a tremendously powerful energy-field.

We are trying to revive a golden past – not of the ordinary masses, but only of the buddhas. The world has only one possibility to survive, and that possibility is to spread buddhahood around the earth as fast as you can. Otherwise, within twelve years this immensely beautiful planet will be simply dead – nothing alive, not even a wild flower. And it is unfortunate because this is the only planet in the whole universe which has grown to the point where one can become a buddha, where one can become an immortal.

At this moment you are immortal.

At this moment death does not exist for you.

At this moment you have the very secret miraculous principle in your hands. Use it, be it – there is no name for it – sing it, dance it, but remain utterly silent about it. Saying anything about it is betraying the miraculous principle.

Spread the fire of buddhahood to all the nooks and corners of the earth. That is the only protection against nuclear weapons.

Now collect as much of the experience as you can before Nivedano calls you back, and persuade the buddha – go on persuading every day. Inch by inch he will come closer to the circumference. Bring him with you.

Everybody is pregnant with a buddha. Just it takes a little time... because for centuries you have never thought about it. It is so new to think that you are a buddha, so rebellious to think that you are a buddha.

But as far as I am concerned, this is a simple fact, a simple truth.

Gather as much as you can.

Nivedano...

(Drumbeat)

Come back, but come with the same serenity, silence, grace, beauty, and sit for a few moments remembering the space you have been in, remembering the path, the golden path, that you have followed to reach your center.

Remember that at the center only witnessing is the truth. Everything dies, only witnessing remains.

Witnessing is our eternity, but live it in your actions, in your words, in your responses, in your silences, in your songs, in your dances.

We can create a world of great splendor, in spite of all the idiots who are determined to destroy it.

Okay, Maneesha?