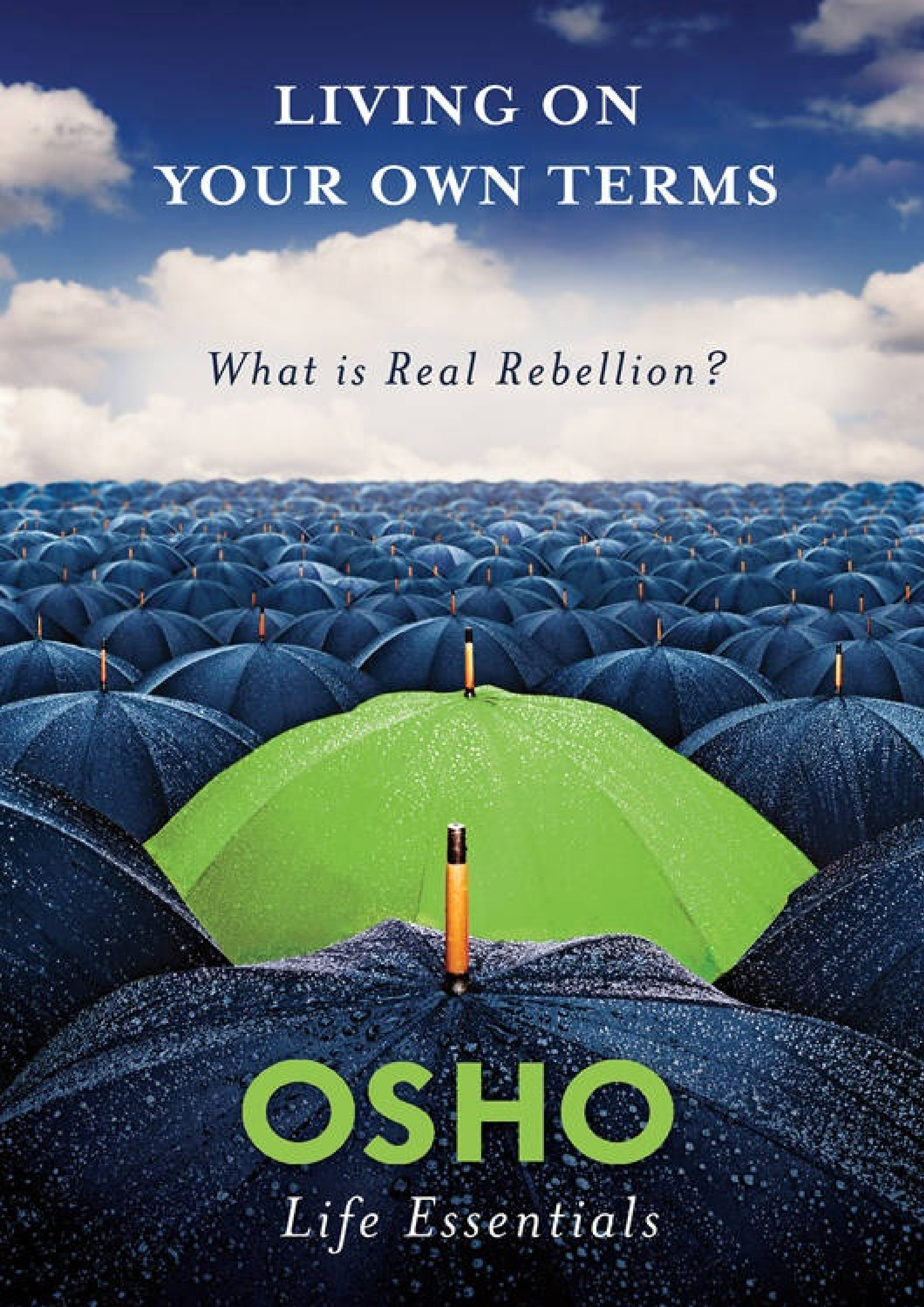
LIVING ON YOUR OWN TERMS

What is Real Rebellion?



OSHO

Life Essentials

Living on Your Own Terms

What Is Real Rebellion?

Osho



St. Martin's Griffin
New York

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- What is real rebellion? And what is the difference between reaction and the action of the rebellious human being?
- Can you please say something more about violence as the expression of rebellion?
- I have heard you say that it is enough for us to just be, that we don't need to do anything to be in God. I have this gut feeling that I need to "do" to be worthy, to contribute, to give something. And you say that God is within me—I realize I am looking inside for some concept I got from the outside. It is like looking down into a well in the night. I see reflections and I think it is the bottom, but it is only the surface. Even when I know I need only let go and wait rather than look for anything, I am still waiting for my own concepts of what should happen. Please comment.
- One of the most beautiful and relaxing spaces I know is the one of "yes," and an acceptance of myself and others. Would you like to talk about "yes" as part of the rebellion?

2. Understanding Is Freedom

- The priests and nuns and relatives that shaped my life are now old and dried up. Most are dead. It seems worthless to rebel against those helpless old people. I am not the priest and the doctrines. I feel that to rebel against anything outside myself is a waste of time and just simply not to the point. This makes the situation much more frustrating and entangled. It seems the self must rebel against the self. I accept that it is not the essential self—the original face—that has to do the rebelling. It is the trained self, the subterfuge. But that is the only "self" I have or know with which to do the rebelling. How does the subterfuge rebel against the subterfuge?
- Why in the first place have people been distracted from their original self?
- I have tried my whole life to change myself, but it seems nothing ever changes—I remain the same. Is not there any hope for me?
- I am aware of my need for approval and acceptance from others. I don't want to be driven by this need. How does it resolve?
- Whenever in life I've had a bout of feeling miserable, a point always comes when I just laugh at myself, feel freedom return, and see that all I had done was to stop loving myself. This insight in itself is perhaps not particularly profound but at the moment of its realization, I am always amazed to see how easily, for what, and for how long I am willing to forsake my own self-love. Is this at the roots of most people's suffering, or is it just my trip?

3. You Are Born with Courage

- I feel divided in two parts—half going toward the unknown, and half toward all that is familiar from my past. When I get close to letting go of what I believe is mine, I panic—even though I yearn to go to the

place of the unknown that you talk about. Please give me courage to take the next step.
- Is renouncing the world and society part of a rebellious spirit?
- What has gone wrong? Why is it that people meet everything new reluctantly, and with fear, rather than with eager joy?
- Sometimes after an experience of meditation I feel tremendously good and bright, and then I'm afraid to get influenced again by people so that I fall back again into my old mind. Can you say something about energies and experiences, and how we can move in the marketplace without getting influenced by other people who have not such good energy?

4. Create the Way by Walking
- Anarchy simply means absence of authority, which is beautiful. But in common language it has the meaning of absence of discipline. Why that confusion? Could you speak about discipline, especially its relation to rebellion?
- You once said that this is a very beautiful world but it is in the wrong hands. I agree with all my being. I feel it. But how can we stop those greedy hands that are torturing nature and enslaving human beings if we don't fight and struggle? Is the destruction of the old not necessary for the building of the new?
- My parents are so disappointed in me, they worry all the time. They have made my being here possible, so how can I turn from them? What do I owe to my parents?
- When I listen to my feelings, my inner voice, they tell me to do nothing but just to sleep, eat, and play on the beach! I am afraid to follow these feelings because I think I will get too weak to survive in this world. Will existence protect me when I allow myself to let go?

5. When All Voices Are Silent
- What is the difference between human nature, instinct, and habit? Are there any means by which they can change, or not?
- Being in the world is sometimes hard for me, for I see how hard people are and how they step on one another. This hurts me very much, sometimes even physically, and I feel vulnerable like a small child. Please tell me how to deal with it.
- My feelings of unworthiness still dominate my life, and I'm clinging to them so tightly that I despair of ever letting go. It has been a long and serious road so far.
- How can I find out which of the many voices inside me is the one that comes from the real self to guide me? How can I be sure it doesn't come from the unconscious?

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Introduction

The qualities of a rebel are multidimensional. The first thing: The rebel does not believe in anything except his own experience. His truth is his only truth; no prophet, no messiah, no savior, no holy scripture, no ancient tradition can give him his truth. They can talk about truth, they can make much ado about truth, but to know about truth is not to know truth. The word *about* means around—to know about truth means to go around and around it. But by going around and around you never reach to the center.

The rebel has no belief system—theist or atheist, Hindu or Christian, he is an inquirer, a seeker. But a very subtle thing has to be understood: That is, the rebel is not an egoist. The egoist also does not want to belong to any church, to any ideology, to any belief system, but his reason for not belonging is totally different from that of the rebel. He does not want to belong because he thinks too much of himself. He is too much of an egoist; he can only stand alone.

The rebel is not an egoist; he is utterly innocent. His nonbelieving is not an arrogant attitude but a humble approach. He is simply saying, “Unless I find my own truth, all borrowed truths are only burdening me; they are not going to unburden me. I can become knowledgeable, but I will not be knowing anything with my own being; I will not be an eyewitness to any experience.”

The rebel does not belong to any church, any organization, because he wants not to be an imitator. He wants to remain pure and unpolluted so that he can search without any prejudice, so that he can remain open without any preconceived idea. But his whole approach is that of a humble person. A rebel respects his own independence and also respects the independence of everybody else. He respects his own divineness and he respects the divineness of the whole universe. The whole universe is his temple—that’s why he has left the small temples made by man. The whole universe is his holy scripture—that’s why he has left all holy scriptures written by man. But it is not out of arrogance, it is out of a humble search. The rebel is as innocent as a child.

The second dimension will be not to live in the past, which is no more, and not to

live in the future, which is not yet, but to live in the present with as much alertness and consciousness as one can manage. In other words, to live consciously in the moment. Ordinarily we live like somnambulists, sleepwalkers. The rebel tries to live a life of awareness. Awareness is his religion, awareness is his philosophy, awareness is his way of life.

The third dimension is that the rebel is not interested in domination over others. He has no lust for power, because that is the ugliest thing in the world. The lust for power has destroyed humanity and has not allowed it to be more creative, to be more beautiful, to be more healthy, to be more wholesome. And it is this lust for power that ultimately leads to conflicts, competitions, jealousies, and finally to wars. Lust for power is the foundation of all wars. If you look at human history, the whole of it is nothing but a history of wars, man killing man. Reasons have changed, but the killing continues. It seems reasons are only excuses; the real fact is that man enjoys killing.

In one of Aesop's fables—and those are some of the greatest fables in the world, so simple and so significant—a small sheep is drinking water from a mountain stream of crystal-clear water. A great lion comes and naturally becomes interested in the sheep—it is breakfast time, but he has to find an excuse. So he says to the sheep, "You are dirtying the stream. Don't you understand that I am the king of the jungle?"

The poor sheep says, "I know, but Your Highness, the stream is not going toward you. I am standing below you, and even if it becomes dirty by my drinking water, the water is going downstream—not toward you. You are making it dirty and I am drinking that dirty water. So your logic is not right."

The lion saw the point and became very angry. He said, "You don't have respect for your elders. You have some nerve arguing with me."

The poor sheep said, "I have not argued, I have simply said what was factual. You can see that the stream is coming toward me."

The lion was silent for a moment and then said, "Now I remember. You belong to a very uncultured, uneducated family. Your father insulted me yesterday."

The poor sheep said, "It must have been somebody else, because my father has been dead for three months—and you must know that he is within your belly. He is no longer alive, you have made a lunch of him. How can he behave disrespectfully toward you? He is dead!"

That was too much. The lion jumped and caught hold of the sheep, saying, "You don't know manners, you don't know etiquette, you don't know how to behave."

The sheep said, "The simple fact is, it is breakfast time. You simply eat me; there is no need to find any excuse."

In such simple parables, Aesop has done miracles. He has said so much about man.

A rebel simply lives his life in the moment, with awareness, with no desire to dominate either while he is living or when he is dead. He does not have any lust for

power. He is a scientist of the soul—that is the fourth dimension. Just as science uses doubt, skepticism, and inquiry, he uses the same methods for his inner search. Science uses them for objective reality; he uses them for his subjectivity. But he does not condemn doubt, he does not condemn skepticism, he does not condemn disobedience, he does not condemn a nonbelieving approach to reality. He enters within his own being with a scientific mind.

His religion is not superstitious—it is scientific. His religion is not a search for God, because to begin with God means you have already accepted a belief, and if you have accepted a belief your search is contaminated from the very beginning.

The rebel goes into his inner world with open eyes, with no idea of what he is looking for. He goes on polishing his intelligence. He goes on making his silences deeper, his meditation more profound, so that whatever is hidden in him is revealed to him, but he has no preconceived idea of what he is looking for.

He is basically an agnostic. That word has to be remembered because it describes one of his basic qualities. There are theists who believe in God, there are atheists who do not believe in God, and there are agnostics who simply say, “We do not know yet. We will search, we will see. We cannot say anything before we have looked into every nook and corner of our being.” He begins with, “I do not know.” That’s why I say he is just like a small child—innocent.

Two boys were discussing running away from home. “But if our fathers catch us they will hit us,” said one.

“So,” said the other, “we will hit them back.”

“But we can’t do that,” said the first boy. “The Bible teaches us to honor our father and our mother.”

“Right. Then you hit my father and I will hit yours.”

Just an innocent and simple solution with no difficulty!

The rebel lives a childlike innocence, and innocence is the most mysterious phenomenon. It opens the doors of all the secrets of life.

Only a rebellious person is truly revolutionary and is truly religious. He does not create an organization, he does not create a following, he does not create churches.

But it is possible that rebels can be fellow travelers: They may enjoy to be together, to dance together, to sing together, to cry and weep together, to feel the immensity of existence and the eternity of life together. They can merge into a kind of communion without any surrender of anybody’s individuality; on the contrary, the communion of rebels refreshes everybody’s individuality, nourishes everybody’s individuality, gives dignity and respect to everybody’s individuality.

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Saying Good-bye to the Past

The rebel simply says good-bye to the past. It is a constant process; hence, to be a rebel means to be continuously in rebellion—because each moment is going to become past; every day is going to become past. It is not that the past is already in the graveyard; you are moving through it every moment. Hence, the rebel has to learn a new art: the art of dying to each moment that has passed, so that he can live freely in the new moment that has come.

What is real rebellion? And what is the difference between reaction and the action of the rebellious human being?

The first thing to be understood is the difference between rebellion and revolution.

Revolution is an organized effort to change the society forcibly, violently. But the trouble is, you cannot change the society through violence, because it is violence that is the very life current of the society. That's why all the revolutions have failed. And there is no possibility of any revolution succeeding, ever.

Rebellion is individual, nonviolent, peaceful. It is out of love. Rebellion is not against something, but for something. Revolution is against something, but not for something. Revolution is so much engaged in being against, it forgets for what all this fuss is being made. It is anger. But anger cannot create a better society. Rebellion is not oriented against the society, but is oriented toward a new man, a new humanity.

Revolution is fighting with the past.

Rebellion is meditating for the future.

I have said rebellion is out of love, silence, understanding, compassion—all the qualities that make a person divine. Revolution is based on all the qualities that make man again an animal. Because rebellion is individual, there is no need of any struggle, of any fight. The society will not even be bothered by one individual being different than others. But even single individuals meditating, loving, hoping for a new sunrise, can create the possibility of a new society. Their very presence will be enough to transform others. Their love cannot fail—love never fails. Their understanding, their intelligence, their compassion are bound to succeed.

But rebellion has not been tried. Revolution seems to be easier, because against

such a big society you need a big organization. But the moment you become organized you become the same type of society. You become just a reflection of what you are opposing. You stand before a mirror: The reflection in the mirror is your reflection, although it is opposite to you. So just being opposed does not mean that you are really different; the methods are the same. The old society depends on violence, the revolutionaries depend on violence. The old society depends on enslaving people, the revolutionaries depend on the same. The old society depends on beliefs, revolutionaries also depend on beliefs. It makes no difference whether your belief is in the Holy Bible or in *Das Kapital.*

And one thing very significant to remember: If the revolutionaries are going to win, they have to be more violent than the old society, more cunning, more clever, more political, more cruel; otherwise they cannot win. So, in fact, in the name of revolution more violence is becoming victorious, more cruelty is becoming victorious; more slavery, more submissiveness is demanded by the revolutionary party. You can see it happen in all the revolutions.

Rebellion is a spiritual phenomenon.

It is not against the society as such; it is simply the intelligence that shows that this society is dead, that this society is incapable of giving birth to a new human being, that it is spent, that it is almost on the verge of global suicide. It needs compassion; it does not need anger.

The rebel can do only one thing.… He is not going to organize, because the moment you organize you have to follow the same patterns as the society you are going to oppose, and you have to follow the same language, the same patterns, structures, that the society has practiced for so long.

There is an ancient Chinese saying: “To have a bad friend is not as bad as to have a bad enemy.” Looks strange, but it has great meaning in it—because if you have an enemy, then sooner or later you will have to follow his tactics and strategies to fight with him; there is no other way. If you want to be victorious you have to be far ahead of him in his own methods. Hence, I always say: friends you can choose without much consideration, but enemies have to be chosen with great consideration because they are going to change your character.

The rebel has no enemy. He simply has a vision that the old is finished. It need not be fought against; it is dying itself. Fighting with it is to give it life. Just ignore it. It is already on its deathbed; it will die of its own accord. Don’t give it energy by fighting.

The rebel can do only one thing: He can transform himself into the new man, he can become his own vision. That is the only proof that his vision is not a dream. The rebel starts transforming his vision into a reality.

I want you all to be rebellious.

That’s why I don’t believe in organization. I don’t want you to be another religion,

another ideology, because that will be simply a repetition of the old patterns. You can be together without any conditions, without any bondage, just out of sheer friendship. No ideology dominating you, but just pure love—because you are on the same path, discovering yourself, finding out whether the vision of a new human being can become a reality or not. You can help each other, you can support each other, you can encourage each other.

There are moments when encouragement is needed, because to change—and to change totally—is not an easy job. Many times the mind wants to fall back into its old patterns, old habits; therefore, the commune. The commune is not an alternative society. It is not another organization, it is something totally new. It is a loving togetherness of fellow travelers who are all working on themselves. But five thousand people all working on themselves create an atmosphere of great encouragement—you are not alone. And if five thousand people are trying, there is hope. You can see people ahead of you, you can see people behind you—on all the rungs of the ladder. That makes it clear that human beings just like you are carving the way, changing themselves. It becomes an individual challenge for you not to be a coward and fall back into old habits. You cannot fall back into old habits because five thousand people are watching you and they are very optimistic about you. They have great hopes for you; they see that the sunrise is not far away.

Yes, it is very dark right now, but to find the light you need not go back. To find light you have to go forward. The darker the night, the closer is the morning, and a few have reached the morning. You can see the sunlight in their eyes, you can see the flowers of their being blossoming. You can feel the fragrance that is released. So it is only a question of a little more patience, a little more courage.

But rebellion remains individual. Rebels can live together; they can create an atmosphere, a milieu, a buddhafield where awakening becomes easier. But they are not organized, they are not bound to any belief. They are free individuals; out of their free choice they have joined these seekers of the sunrise.

You ask me, “What is the difference between reaction and action as far as the rebellious person is concerned?” The rebellious person has no reaction; he has only action. The revolutionary has only reaction; he does not have any action. The difference is significant.

Just a few days ago I received a letter from an old woman who is the president of the Atheists’ Association of America. She must be the oldest atheist in the whole world, because I used to know one man in India, Gora, who was her follower, and he was old himself. She has opened, in many countries, associations for atheists. On some television show she must have listened to my words, saying that there is no God, and she was immensely happy. She wrote the letter to say, “You are certainly a man of great courage. Although I am very old, I would like to come and see you, meet you,

talk to you."

I told my secretary to write to her that she is welcome, but she must understand that I am not an atheist: "If she is coming here thinking that I am an atheist because I have declared there is no God, then she will be disillusioned. It is better to make it clear."

To me, atheism is reaction, a reaction against theism. There are people who believe in God, millions of people; a few people react to it and they start *disbelieving* in God. This is a reaction. You can check it very easily by a simple method. If all the theists disappear, if there is no theism at all in the world, can atheists exist? They were secondary, they were simply a reaction. When there are no religions and nobody is saying there is God, what is the point of disbelieving in God? You will look a little silly. With the death of theism, atheism will die automatically. That means it was only a shadow, it was not a reality in itself. A reaction is a shadow.

When I say there is no God, I am not saying that I disbelieve in God—even for disbelief, God has to be. Whether you believe or disbelieve, that is your chosen approach, but for both God is needed. For the theist he is needed, for the atheist he is needed. I am simply saying there is no God, has never been. All theists and all atheists are wrong. Those who believe are wrong, and those who disbelieve are wrong.

I don't think that old woman will come. I would love her to come, because in her whole life she may not have met a man who is neither a theist nor an atheist. Because there is no God, there is no point in being either one. I think it is simply stupid: If there is no God, then a person is wasting her whole life establishing atheist associations all over the world. This is sheer wastage of one's life! If there is no God, then why bother? But no, this has become her whole life. But just denying, just disbelief cannot make anybody blissful.

My statement that there is no God is an action, not a reaction. I am not speaking against anybody; I am simply giving expression to my own experience. I have searched for him within myself, and I have not found him. I have found, instead, godliness; I have found eternal consciousness. I have found immortality, I have found eternal light—but no God.

I don't think this woman has ever thought of looking inward. She is simply fighting with the theists. Those theists are idiots; in fighting with them you are bound to become an idiot. Reaction cannot take you further than those you are reacting against.

The revolutionary is reactionary. He is against the society; he is against its economic structure, he is against its political ways. He is against so many things—his whole life is negative. It depends on being against this, against that, against thousands of things; there are so many no's in the revolutionary's life. But you cannot live a life of benediction, bliss, out of thousands of no's.

A single yes is far more powerful than a thousand no's. The no is empty. It shows your anger, it shows your violence, it shows your destructiveness, but it does not show

that you have anything creative that you are going to contribute to life and existence.

Action means something not related to anything, but coming out of your own silence, out of your own spontaneity. The rebel knows no reaction; he knows action. Action means yes.

The rebel creates; he gives birth to himself. He becomes a new man, he heralds a new age. He opens himself to all possibilities, he allows himself unknown dimensions. Not against anybody—it is simply a growth, just like a rosebush is growing. Do you think it is growing against the rocks? Do you think it is growing against anybody? It is growing, not as a reaction; it is growing because growth is its nature. It is growing to blossom, to bring its potential to actuality. It is a process of actualization.

Action means the process of actualization. Reaction is simply hate, anger, jealousy, violence, destructiveness. Those are not the qualities to be valued. So, in my vision, the revolutionary has no value, only the rebel. And you can see … Socrates is not a revolutionary, he is a rebel. Gautam Buddha is not a revolutionary, he is a rebel. Heraclitus is not a revolutionary, he is a rebel. And these are the greatest heights humanity has reached.

Revolutionaries are on the same ground as those whom they are opposing. They have to be on the same ground to fight with them. The rebel is not fighting against anybody. The rebel is making himself free so that he can grow, grow to his own destiny. The rebel has a beauty; the revolutionary is a political, social criminal. The rebel is the only holy man, he is sacred.

But the moment you start organizing rebellion, you change its character; it becomes revolution. It is no longer the same thing. That's why I have to insist again and again … the tendency to organize is very deep-rooted, because it is millions of years old. And to be alone needs guts.

To be alone … but you can be together with people who are also trying to be alone. Your togetherness is just a friendship of two fellow travelers. There are no conditions. It does not make you a Christian, a Hindu, a Buddhist. You remain yourself, the other remains himself or herself. This is the only respect expected of sannyasins: Do not destroy the dignity of the other person. That person is as valuable in existence as you are. There is no need to impose your ideas on anybody. Who are you? What authority have you got to impose your ideas on others? You can share, you can tell, you can expose your heart. And if the other feels that something falls in tune with him, and chooses it, it is their decision, not your imposition.

Revolutionaries are trying to impose their ideas on others. They are doing the same thing as the old religions have been doing. That's why I categorize communism as one of the religions; there is no difference. It does not matter that communism does not believe in God, because there are older religions that do not believe in God: Buddhism does not believe in God, Jainism does not believe in God. So that is not a problem. A

religion is something that you try to impose on others. It is an effort to convert people; it is always missionary.

A rebel is never a missionary, he is always a friend. He can invite you to his innermost being and, if you see something that suits you, that is helpful to you, that is going to nourish you, make your search easier, you can choose it. But it is out of your freedom—nobody is converting you. That's how it should be in the commune. Whatever I say to you, you need not believe it. You have just to be available to it, so that you can decide. The decision has to be yours. And if it suits you, suddenly if it rings a bell in your heart, then I am no longer responsible for it: The bell is ringing in *your* heart. But if it doesn't suit you, my love for you remains the same because it is not based on converting you.

In fact, each individual has to be unique. That is the prerogative of human beings—to be unique. All the religions, all the political ideologies, they have all tried to destroy that privilege. I want to encourage your privilege. On no account should your individuality be interfered with. Your freedom is absolute, and the highest value.

Can you please say something more about violence as the expression of rebellion?

Violence can never be a part of the rebellious spirit for the simple reason that violence is the whole past of humanity—and the rebel wants to discontinue with the past. Violence has been the way of life for millennia. Directly or indirectly we have lived under violence. Our armies, our police, our jails, our judges, our wars, our so-called great religions, all have lived in violence. And violence, reduced to its essentials, is irreverent toward life.

To me, the religious person, the religious consciousness is nothing but a deep reverence for life itself—because there is no God beyond life, there is no paradise beyond consciousness. Violence is a violation of both life and consciousness; it is destructive.

The rebel is a creator; his whole philosophy is that of creativity. We have lived in destructiveness far too long, and what is the achievement? That's why I have made a clear-cut distinction between the rebel and the reactionary. I have also made a distinction between the rebel and the revolutionary.

The reactionary is the lowest category. He can never disconnect himself from the past. The past is his orientation; he reacts against it. But whether you are for it or against it, it remains your reference, your context.

The revolutionary is a little higher than the reactionary. He does not only react, he also has dreams of the future, he has his utopias. But as far as violence is concerned, the revolutionary down the ages has thought that right ends can be attained through wrong means. I refute that contention. Right ends can be achieved only through right

means. Through violence you cannot achieve a peaceful, silent, loving humanity. The violence will be in the roots; it will poison your whole superstructure.

The rebel has to be nonviolent out of sheer necessity. Unless he is nonviolent, he cannot be the vehicle of a peaceful, warless, classless humanity. If you sow the seeds of violence, you cannot expect and hope that the flowers will not be affected by violence. Those flowers will come out of the seeds you have sown. So each violent revolution has created another violent society, another violent culture. It is disgraceful to see that we still need armies, that we still need nuclear weapons. It is undignified to see that we need the policeman, the court, and the jail. A better humanity, a more conscious human being, will get rid of all this nonsense that surrounds us and pollutes our whole being.

The rebel cannot be half-hearted. He cannot be a chooser; he cannot choose a few things from the past, and not choose a few other things. The past as a whole has to be completely denied. Only then can we get rid of barbarousness in humanity—cruelty, violence, and a deep-rooted disrespect for life and existence.

My approach is that of reverence for life.

The rebel will be ready to die but he will not be ready to kill. It is the pride of man to die for a cause; it is animalistic to kill someone, however great the cause may be. By killing, you have spoiled it completely. And looking practically, the rebel is an individual against the whole world; if he chooses to be violent, he will be crushed. The enemy—the past—has much more violent powers in its hands.

The rebel has to trust in love, has to trust in meditativeness, has to be aware of his immortality—knowing that even if his body is crucified he remains untouched. Here I am not talking only about political rebellion. I am talking about the individual rebel—a spiritual phenomenon, not a political entity. And no spirituality can accept violence as a means to attain the end.

Violence is simply out of the question as far as my rebellion, my vision of the rebel, is concerned. He cannot destroy—we have destroyed enough. He cannot kill—we have killed enough. It is time to stop this whole idiotic way of life. We have to come out of this darkness into the light. Even if it costs you your life it is perfectly good … because my rebel will be basically a meditator.

I am not conceiving of my rebel without meditation—that is his essential experience. And once you understand that you are immortal, who is worried about being killed? And if millions of meditators are ready to open their chests before the guns of the old and the rotten past, there is a possibility: Perhaps it may also bring a change of heart in those people who have these destructive weapons in their hands.

Rebellion has not been tried on a vast scale. Just with the effort of millions of people meditating, loving silence and peace, and destroying all kinds of discriminations that create violence, we will be making the space, the gap, the

discontinuity that can save man and life on this planet.

I have heard you say that it is enough for us to just be, that we don't need to do anything to be in God. I have this gut feeling that I need to "do" to be worthy, to contribute, to give something. And you say that God is within me—I realize I am looking inside for some concept I got from the outside. It is like looking down into a well in the night. I see reflections and I think it is the bottom, but it is only the surface. Even when I know I need only let go and wait rather than look for anything, I am still waiting for my own concepts of what should happen. Please comment.

The first thing—the most fundamental—to be understood is that you are already in God. It is not a question of being in God; you are already there. Just as the fish is in the ocean, you are in God. God simply means the existence, that which exists.

In the ancient Hebrew, the word *God* stands for "that which is." "G" stands for "that," "O" for "which," and "D" for "is"—that which is. The word *God* is tremendously significant. It does not indicate a person; it simply indicates a presence. And the presence is everywhere! Life is synonymous with God, the universe is synonymous with God. *To be* is to be in God—there is no other way. To breathe is to breathe in God—there is no other way. To sleep is to sleep in God and to wake up is to wake up in God—there is no other way. You can choose to sleep, but still you are in God. You can choose to forget God, but still you are in God. You can choose to deny God, but still you are in God. Not to be in God is the only impossible thing—the only impossible thing I say.

So it is not a question of becoming worthy. But I am not saying don't become worthy. I am not saying be lazy, lousy. I am not saying become an escapist. I am not saying don't contribute to existence. But your contribution to existence should not be a means to reach God—that's what I am saying. Your contribution to existence should be in gratefulness that you are already in God. It should not be a means to reach, because you are already there. It should be an overflowing of joy because you are already there. Be very clear about the distinction.

Share your joy, your love, your ecstasy. Make life as beautiful as possible. Just out of thankfulness that existence has chosen you to be, that you are allowed to be, that you are given life. What else can you do? If you can sing a song, sing it with your totality! If you can paint, paint, and put your whole heart in it. If you can dance, dance to abandon so you disappear completely in the dance and there is no more any dancer but only the dance remains.

But these are not means, let me remind you, to reach God—these are just our poor thanks, our heartfelt gratitude. Prayer is true when it comes out of gratitude. Prayer is false when it is just a means to persuade God, to seduce God, to ask for something—even if you are asking for godliness itself, then too your prayer is full of desire. And

when prayer is full of desire, it is too heavy; it can't have wings. It can only grope in the darkness of the earth; it cannot soar high in the sunlit sky.

When prayer is without desire it has wings, it can reach the ultimate. And when prayer is without weight, when it is out of thankfulness, not desiring anything but just to show your gratitude for all that has already been done for you …

You say: "Is it enough for us to just be? But my gut feeling is that I need to do something to be worthy, to contribute, to give…"

It is not a gut feeling, it is just what has been conditioned in you by the society. The society has been telling you continuously, persistently, day in, day out, from your very childhood—in the school, in the college, in the university, in the church, the priest, the politician, the parent, the professor—they are all joined together in one single conspiracy to give you the idea that as you are, you are unworthy. You have to do something, you have to prove yourself, then only will you be worthy.

This is the strategy of the society to exploit you; this is the society's ugly way to make slaves of you—not creators but slaves. But in beautiful, sophisticated ways you have been conditioned. Beautiful words cover very ugly realities. The ugly reality is that the society wants to use you as a slave, the society wants to manipulate you, the society wants to control you. It manages it in two ways.

On the outside is the state, the policeman, the magistrate; they enforce laws, but laws can never be absolute, and man can always find ways to defy laws. Then the society creates another safeguard: It creates a conscience in you; it goes on hypnotizing you, saying again and again that you have to be worthy. And the helpless child has no other way than to oblige, than to surrender. His whole life is at stake; he cannot survive on his own. He has to depend on the parents. He has to watch continuously what they want, what they appreciate, what is rewarded by them. If it is rewarded by them, then he is worthy, he feels good; if he is punished by them he feels unworthy, he feels bad about himself.

Slowly, slowly the idea settles, sinks deep in your heart, becomes almost your second nature, that just to be is not enough. Trees are enough, animals are enough, birds are enough—only man has this stupid idea that just to be is not enough. It is a very cunning tactic to destroy the freedom of the individual, to destroy the self-respect of the individual, to create in the individual a deep guilt feeling. It has gone deep, certainly—so deep that you misunderstand it as a "gut feeling." It is not a gut feeling at all.

But I am not against being creative, remember. I am all for it. I want my people to be creative—but for a totally different reason, with a totally different intention, with a totally new motive. I want you all to be creative; I don't want you to escape to the monasteries—I want you to live in the world and live fully, and live the whole spectrum of life. Bring your total potential to expression! Bloom in as many ways as

possible! Because only then will you feel fulfilled. But this has not to be as a means to attain something. This has to be just an expression of your joy, of your celebration. Then the quality changes.

When you use something as a means, you are not really interested in it. For example, if you are painting just to be appreciated, your focus is on appreciation, not on the painting; your heart is not there. You are already imagining, dreaming about how you will be appreciated. And because your constant worry is how to be appreciated, you will paint something that will not come out of you spontaneously—you will paint something others are bound to like. You will paint it according to them. You will become a very poor painter. You will not allow your genius to come out, because the genius is not easily appreciated—remember it. The more talented you are, the more genuine your intelligence is, the less is the possibility of being easily appreciated. The greater possibility is that you will be condemned. Why? Because a genius brings something new into the world, so new that old criteria don't fit with it. And the old criteria are deep-rooted in the human mind; they cannot easily go away.

The genius has to create not only his poetry, his painting, his dance, his music, he also has to create new criteria by which to judge them. Vincent van Gogh was not appreciated in his time—one of the greatest painters the world has ever known. He lived in utter poverty; his brother supported him. But his brother was not much in favor of his painting either, because it was not paying—so what is the point of doing something that does not pay? On the contrary, because of van Gogh's paintings people used to think he was mad. He was painting in such a new way—as it had never been done before. He had his own vision. He was a genius! In his paintings, trees are so high that they reach to the stars; stars are very close and trees grow very far away. Now who is going to appreciate this painting?

Any schoolchild can say, "This is nonsense! Stars are not so close, and trees … who has seen such big trees, reaching above the stars?" But Vincent van Gogh used to say, "Whenever I see a tree, this is my feeling: that the earth is trying to reach the stars, to go beyond the stars, through the trees. These are the hands of the earth reaching for the unknown, for the transcendental. And I love my earth, hence my stars are small and my trees are big. I am part of this earth; I am also a hand of my earth. To me, stars are small."

This is not a question of astronomy, physics, mathematics: It is a totally different vision. Trees are seen as ambitions of the earth, love affairs of the earth with the sky. But who is going to appreciate him?

In one of his paintings the sun is painted black. Now who has ever seen a black sun? But he used to say that the sun that shines outside *is* black compared to the sun that is inside. It is a comparison. Kabir will agree; Kabir says, "When I saw the inner sun, then I knew that the outer sun is just a black hole. When I saw my inner life, then

I knew that the outer life is nothing but another name for death."

The moment the inner is known, suddenly the outer starts fading away. Now, van Gogh is talking in a mystic way—he is a mystic—but who will understand? It will take years for people to understand. Van Gogh lived and died unappreciated, unknown. He remained absolutely unknown in his lifetime.

You will be surprised to know that now each of his paintings is so valuable that no other painting can compete. Even Picasso's paintings are not so valuable—millions and millions of dollars for a single painting. In his own day, in his whole life, van Gogh could not sell a single painting. He had to distribute his paintings to friends, or to the man who used to give him a cup of tea in the morning free of charge. Those same paintings now cost millions and millions of dollars. People had discarded them; people accepted them out of politeness, because as far as they were concerned it was all junk—so why collect it?

Vincent van Gogh committed suicide when he was only thirty-three. It was impossible to live; he could not earn a single cent. His brother used to give him money, but just enough to exist, to survive. He needed money to paint—for the canvas and the colors and the brushes. So this was his arrangement: He used to get money every Sunday for one week, so every week for three days he would eat and for four days he would fast, so that money could be saved to purchase canvases, colors, and other things that he needed.

To me, van Gogh's fasting is far more significant than all the fasts that have been done by your so-called saints. This fasting has something beautiful in it, something spiritual in it. When your so-called saints go on a fast, it is a means; they are fasting so that they can reach heaven and enjoy all the heavenly joys. But van Gogh's fasting has a totally different quality to it: It is his love to create.

And why did he commit suicide? That too has a tremendous significance, it is no ordinary suicide. In fact, a man like van Gogh cannot do anything in an ordinary way. He committed suicide because he said, "Whatsoever I wanted to paint, I have painted. Now, just to exist is pointless. I have given that which I came to give; now I can go back to the original source. There is no need to live in the body anymore. I have contributed."

Years and years passed, then slowly he was appreciated. Now he is thought to be one of the greatest painters in the world.

This has been so with all the geniuses: In their own time they are condemned—condemned by the masses, condemned by the crowd, condemned by the priests, condemned by the politicians. They are appreciated by only very few people—sensitive, receptive, intelligent—only by very few people who have the capacity to see something that is new, unknown, that has never happened before; only by very few people who can put their minds aside and look.

I would like you to be creative, but don't be bothered about appreciation, don't be bothered that you will be gaining fame, a name through it. Whenever the motive is to gain something out of creativity, you are no longer interested in it. You become a technician; you are no longer an artist. You may do the painting and you may do it perfectly, technically perfectly, but it will not have the soul, it will not be alive, because you will not be there. You will be looking all around for the appreciators to come. And you will always paint accordingly, so that they can appreciate.

There are people who say only that which people want to hear. These people will be very famous, known, appreciated, respected, but they are mediocre people. The genius speaks that which arises in his heart; he does not care a bit whether anybody is going to like it or not. He says it straight, he says it direct—he never thinks of the results and the consequences.

Be creative in that sense and your creativity will become an offering to God. God has given you so many gifts; something has to be done, just in deep thankfulness. But remember: with no motive, not as a means but as an end unto itself. Art for art's sake, and creation for creation's sake, and love for love's sake, and prayer for prayer's sake. And that's how one, slowly, becomes religious. The religious person lives in the moment; he has no worry about the future, not even about the next moment. When it comes, it will come. He does not prepare for it. He lives this moment, and out of this moment the next will be born. And if this moment has been beautiful, if this moment has been a benediction, the next is going to be, of course, a deeper benediction, a greater blessing.

You say, "I have this feeling that I need to *do* to be worthy…" The need to do can be a gut feeling, because we have too much energy and the energy wants to dance, the energy wants to paint, the energy wants to sing, the energy wants to *do* something. But this can't be a gut feeling: "I need to *do* to be worthy." That is a feeling that has been put inside you—like scientists put electrodes in the brain and then a person can be manipulated. Just like that, the society has been going on down the ages—it creates a conscience in you: "Do this, this is right, approved, respected. Don't do that; that is unworthy of you. You will be condemned if you do it." And a kind of division is created within you between right and wrong, between the "should" and the "should not."

The problem is that no "should" can ever be a fixed phenomenon; it changes with life. No right is always right, and no wrong is always wrong, so to decide beforehand is dangerous. I don't teach you conscience; conscience means right and wrong are like things, decided: This is a rose and that is a lotus, and this is a stone and that is a diamond—decided. Decided forever! Right and wrong are not things. They change. Life is a riverlike phenomenon. What is right today may not be right tomorrow.

One Zen master asked his disciple, "What is God?"

The disciple bowed down, remained silent. The master blessed him and said, “This is good. I am happy.”

Next day, again, the master asked the disciple, “What is God?”

Of course now the disciple had learned, so he bowed down, an even deeper bow, remained quiet, even closed his eyes, and the master hit him hard on the head and said, “You stupid!” The disciple was puzzled. He said, “But what has happened? Yesterday you were so happy, and the answer is the same—even better than yesterday!”

The master said, “That is where you went wrong: Yesterday was yesterday, today is today. Now you are simply repeating a ready-made formula. Now you are not being true, not being spontaneous, not being responsible. Now you have learned a trick. How can the same answer be right today? Twenty-four hours have passed, so much water has gone down the Ganges!”

Existence is dynamic, it is not static—it is not a stagnant pool. It is a constant continuum, flow. No answer can ever be fixed—and that’s where the society deceives you. It gives you fixed answers. With fixed answers one thing is good—that’s why we cling to them—they give you a sort of certainty, security, safety. You can remain certain that you are right. But life goes on changing, and your “right” remains fixed. And then your whole life becomes a misery, because your answers never fit the questions. Then your whole life is an effort to put square plugs into round holes—your whole life you go on trying, and it is very frustrating. The reason is that you never see that life is changing.

The really conscious person changes with life. The really conscious person cannot afford to be consistent. Consistency is part of a mediocre mind. I am not saying be deliberately inconsistent; I am simply stating a fact, that to be consistent means to be stupid, to be consistent means to remain with the past, blind to the present. If you look at the present you have to change with life.

Hence you will find a thousand and one contradictions in Jesus’s statements, and so is the case with Buddha. And that has always been the case with the enlightened people, because they don’t have any ready-made answer. You hanker for the ready-made answer so you can jump upon it, you can hold it tight in your hand and you can be certain.

You suffer from uncertainty—and uncertainty is the nature of life. Certainty is part of death. Be certain and you will be dead. Remain flowing, remain uncertain, remain available to the changing circumstances, and you will remain more and more alive.

To be totally alive means to live in the moment with no past interfering at all—then you respond to the moment and the response comes from your consciousness, not from your conscience. Conscience is a deception; conscience is a social trick. The society has created the conscience. And the function of the master is to destroy your conscience so that your consciousness can be freed.

Your gut feeling is not a gut feeling. You have been deceived. There is no need to do anything to be worthy—you are already worthy. If you were not worthy, you would not be here at all. God has given you birth, has created you—must have seen some worth in you. If you are unworthy, then God is not a very original creator; then he is not much of a creator, either! How can he create an unworthy person?

Society makes you unworthy, because that is the only way to exploit you—to make you feel unworthy. Then you will try hard to become worthy because that is the only way to gain self-respect. And to become worthy you will follow the dictates of the society.

Society creates fear in you—fear of being unworthy, fear of being condemned, fear of being left alone, fear of being nobody, fear of being anonymous. And then you are ready to yield, to bow down to any kind of nonsense.

Simon's parents were in despair when he flunked out of school. They tried sending him to every school in the city—private, public, progressive, military academy—but he took no interest. Finally they tried a Catholic school. When Simon came home with his first report card, his parents were surprised to see a straight A report.

"What happened?" they asked him.

"Well," he replied, "when I saw that poor guy nailed to the cross everywhere I looked, I knew they meant business!"

Create fear … create as much fear as you can. That has been the policy of the society. Hells have been created just to catch hold of you; heavens have been created just to reward those who will follow the dictates. All are imaginary: There is no hell, no heaven. But these rewards and punishments are subtle strategies—they have worked up to now, and they have destroyed all human dignity.

This is not a gut feeling in you. Your gut feeling and the conscience created by the society have got mixed up. The gut feeling is to *do* something—yes, that is a gut feeling. When energy is there, one wants to do something; that is natural. Energy wants to be expressed. But with the motive to be worthy … that is a conscience part, which is getting mixed with your gut feeling. Be clear about it.

You have been messed around by the society in every possible way. You have been confused so much that you have to depend on somebody. Either you go to the priest—in the old days you used to go to the priest. In India they still go to the priest. In the West, the new priest has arisen: the psychotherapist, the psychiatrist, the psychologist—go to him. And the miracle is that the priest is just like you, maybe even more in a mess than you are, but still you go to him to find good advice. Yes, he repeats good advice like a parrot. Your psychotherapist, your psychiatrist, your psychoanalyst may be in deeper anxiety, in more tensions than you are.

Just the other night one of my sannyasins was asking me, "Osho, you had told me last time when I came here, 'Look for the lighter side of life, count the roses, ignore

the thorns. They are there, take note of them, but don't pay too much attention to them.' But my psychoanalyst has said, 'This is dangerous, this is going to repress your emotions.' So I am puzzled—what to do?"

I told him, "You just wait a few days, your psychoanalyst will be here…!" But I was not aware that this sannyasin himself is a psychoanalyst. Just later on my caretaker told me that this man himself is a psychoanalyst. Now, one psychoanalyst going to another psychoanalyst—for what? And that one may be going to somebody else.

The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, was one of the most pathological persons you can imagine—very superstitious. You will laugh, if you go into his biography, about how such a man could become the founder of psychoanalysis. How such a man could be trusted, that people believed what he was saying was true.

One of his friends gave him the idea that just as each woman has a twenty-eight-day period when her menstruation comes, exactly like that each man has a twenty-three-day period. There is some truth in it—not twenty-three days, exactly twenty-eight days. Now much more research has been done on it. Those four or five days when a woman goes through the period are sad, depressive, dull, negative—exactly like that, the man also goes into a negative state each month for four or five days. Of course, his period is not very visible, but it is there; it is a psychological fact. It should be there, because men and women are not very different.

So the friend's idea was on the right track. Sigmund Freud suddenly got one idea—lying down in his bed, he was thinking about twenty-eight and twenty-three—suddenly an idea flashed in his mind: Twenty-eight plus twenty-three means fifty-one, and he could not sleep the whole night. He became certain by the morning that he was going to live fifty-one years—a very great "gut feeling." And he started talking about it: twenty-eight plus twenty-three equals fifty-one years, and he will die.

The fifty-first year came and passed … and he did not die. Then something else had to be found. The day he was expecting to die, his phone number was changed and the end of the phone number was sixty-two. So he said, "Look, another indication: So now I am going to die at sixty-two." That day also came and passed. But the people like Sigmund Freud are not easy … they will find something or other. He was staying in a hotel and the number of the room was eighty-two, so he said, "Look, another indication from above—at eighty-two I am going to die—that is absolutely certain." And that day also passed. He died when he was eighty-three.

Such superstitious people.… He was so afraid of death, that's why he was so concerned about it. He was so afraid of death that five times in his life he fainted publicly because somebody started talking about death. He used to faint flat on the ground. Just the idea of death! And such a pathological, neurotic person became the founder of psychoanalysis.

He used to project himself: Whatever was true for him he thought was true for every human being. That is the very limit of nonsense. All that he has said about man is not about man, it is about Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud is a single individual; he does not represent all human beings. Nobody represents all human beings, nobody ever can.

So maybe a few people are helped by psychoanalysis—very few people, rarely have I seen a person who has been helped by psychoanalysis—but those are the people who are of the same type as Sigmund Freud.

Now much research has happened and it has been found that even those people who are helped are not helped by psychoanalysis but by something else. In one experiment, twenty-five persons were given psychoanalysis for six months, and twenty-five persons were just kept waiting and were told, “Soon your psychoanalysis will start.” They were all suffering from the same kind of illness, and the result was very surprising. The twenty-five who were given psychoanalysis were helped a little bit, but the twenty-five who were kept waiting were helped far more. Just waiting helped them far more. In fact, this secret has been known in the East, it has been practiced for centuries. If you take a mental case into a Zen monastery, they put him in isolation for three weeks; nobody talks to him—just the opposite of psychoanalysis—nobody talks to him, nobody listens to him. They just keep him isolated; somebody goes, absolutely silently, and puts the food there, comes back. He has to live with himself for three weeks … and miracles have been happening down the ages.

Just putting him there for three weeks in isolation, slowly he cools down—no psychoanalysis, no therapy, just isolation. In fact, he was suffering too much from people, from the stress of being in a crowd continually. Psychoanalysis may not be the real cause of help, but the length of time—two years, three years, four years the psychoanalysis continues. It continues as long as you can afford it; it depends on you. If you have enough money, it can continue your whole life. In fact, psychoanalysis never comes to a termination. It cannot, because the mind is very inventive. It goes on inventing more and more rubbish. It starts enjoying, slowly, because the more rubbish it brings up the happier the psychotherapist feels. Seeing him happy, the mind obliges with more. Whatever the expectations of the psychotherapist are, the patient fulfills them.

Patients are really patient people, very obliging, courteous. Good people they are! That’s why they are suffering; they are not hard people—not hardware but software. Because they are soft they are suffering. The hard guys are not suffering; the hard guys make others suffer. The soft guys become victims. Three, four years lying down on the couch, talking nonsense, waiting, waiting, waiting—it helps one to unwind, one becomes a little more relaxed. And somebody is listening to you very attentively, or at least pretending that he is listening very attentively.

My own observation is that the attention of the psychotherapist is of immense value. This is a world where nobody gives you any attention. If the husband wants to talk to the wife she says, “There is so much work to be done in the kitchen—and the dishes have to be washed and I have no time.” If the wife wants to talk to the husband, he is tired from the whole day at the office and the work and the traffic, and he wants to watch the TV. A survey says that the average husband/wife communication in America is only thirty-three minutes per day—and that is the average. And in that thirty-three minutes you can count fighting, nagging, pillow-throwing, and every kind of thing. Only thirty-three minutes between husband and wife—out of twenty-four hours?

A great need has arisen that somebody should listen to you. Hence the psychotherapist helps—he is a professional listener. That is the only quality he has, the only qualification really. You can start the business—no other qualification is needed—if you know only one thing: how to be attentively sitting there by the side and listening. Just listening attentively will help. The person starts feeling, “I have some worth. Somebody…” And the more he has paid, the more it helps because the person who is listening is no ordinary psychotherapist, not run-of-the-mill. “Somebody special, very famous, world-known—and listening so attentively to me?” The very idea gives worth: “Then I must be saying something immensely beautiful.”

Gibberish you may be bringing up. That’s what in psychobabble is called “free association”—anything that comes to your mind, bring it up. If such gibberish is being listened to so attentively, a great need is fulfilled—the person feels worthy, feels important, feels as if he is somebody.

Remember, this society has messed you up so much that man as such is almost on the verge of going insane. All love has disappeared, all communication has disappeared, all friendship has disappeared, all aesthetic sensitivity has disappeared. People have become like zombies. They talk to each other yet they don’t talk, they don’t meet. This society is an ill society, and when I say “this society” I mean all the societies that exist in the world. More or less, in this way or that, they are ill—because in the past, for centuries, we have been creating a model of the human being that is wrong. We are giving people ideals and saying, “Unless you fulfill these ideals you will never be worthy.” And those ideals are impossible. We are giving people ideas of being perfect. And once the idea of being perfect enters in one’s being, it turns one into a neurotic.

Accept your limitations, accept your imperfections. That’s what it means to be a human being! And accept yourself as you are—with joy, not in helplessness. Because existence accepts you—this is my basic teaching—existence accepts you, so accept yourself; love yourself. Let there be a great upsurge of self-love. Out of that love you will start becoming creative; a person who loves himself is bound to become creative.

I am not saying you will become famous; I am not saying that you will be a Picasso or an Ezra Pound or a Pablo Neruda, no—you may be, you may not be. But that is irrelevant! The real thing is to enjoy creativity. Whatsoever you do, do it with joy. Bring your total intelligence to it, be meditative in it.

You say: "And you say that God is within me. I realize I am looking inside for some concept I got from the outside." That kind of God you will never find within you. You will have to drop all the concepts that have been given to you from the outside, because God is not a person. No picture of God exists, no statue is possible. God is an experience! If you have the idea of a God that your parents and your society have given to you, you will go inside with that idea and that idea will be the hindrance —it will not allow you to see that which is. And God *is* that which is. It needs no concepts to see; concepts blind you. Drop all concepts.

If you really want to go in, go as an agnostic. This word is beautiful. You must have heard the word *gnostic; gnostic* means one who knows—*gnosis* means knowledge. *Agnostic* means one who knows not; *agnostic* means one who knows only one thing: that he knows not. Be an agnostic—that is the beginning of real religion. Don't believe, don't disbelieve. Don't be a Hindu, and don't be a Jaina and don't be a Christian; otherwise you will go on groping in darkness forever and forever. Unless you drop all ideologies, all philosophies, all religions, all systems of thought, and go inside empty, with nothing in your hand, with no idea … how can you have an idea of God? You have not known him. Just go … with a great desire to know, but with no idea of knowledge; with intensity to know, with a passionate love to know what is there, but don't carry any ideas given to you by others. Drop them outside. That is the greatest barrier for the seeker on the path of truth.

God is there but you cannot see because your eyes are blinded by the concepts given to you. God is not a Jew, so if you have a Jewish idea of God you will not find him. I have heard a beautiful story about a Sufi mystic, Farid:

One night he dreams that by the grace of Allah, he has reached paradise. And the whole of paradise is decorated, millions of lights, and flowers everywhere—some celebration is going on—and great music. He inquires, "What is going on?"

They say, "This is God's birthday—we are celebrating it. You have come at the right time."

So he stands underneath a tree to see what is happening, because a great procession starts moving on the road. A man is sitting on a horse; he inquires, "Who is this man?" and they say, "Don't you know him? He is Hajrat Mohammed." And then millions and millions of people appear behind him, and he asks, "Who are these people?" and he is replied to. "They are Mohammedans, followers of Mohammed." And then comes Jesus, and millions are following him. And then comes Krishna on his golden chariot, and millions again are following him. And so on and so forth … the procession

continues, continues, continues.

Then finally, in the end, on an old donkey an old man is coming. Nobody is behind him; he is just alone. Farid starts laughing, looking at this man—it is hilarious: nobody following him. And why should he be going on his donkey? He asks, "Who are you, sir? I have seen Mohammed, Christ, Krishna, Mahavira, Buddha—who are you? You look like a kind of joke! And nobody following you."

And the old man is very sad and he says, "Yes, I am God. This is my birthday. But some people have become Mohammedans, some have become Christians, some have become Jews, some have become Hindus—nobody is left to be with me."

Just out of shock, Farid woke up. He told his disciples the next day, "Now I am no longer a Mohammedan. The dream has been a great revelation. Now I am no longer part of any organized religion—I am simply myself. I would like to be with God, at least one person following him."

If you have a certain idea of God, you will not be able to see him. Your very idea will become a barrier. Drop all ideas that you have gathered from without; only then can you go within.

You say: "It is like looking down into a well in the night. I see reflections and I think it is the bottom, but it is only the surface. Even when I know I need only let go and wait rather than look for anything…" That is true—stick with that insight. If you are looking for something, you will not be able to see, because the very idea of looking for something means that you have an idea of what you are looking for. To look for something is a kind of blindness.

Seeing happens only when you are not looking for anything in particular; you are just there, open, available. So whatsoever is, is revealed. Don't look for God if you want to see him. Just wait—let go and wait. God is a happening! If you are silent, open, loving toward your own being, conscious, it is going to happen. Any moment, when you are in the right tuning with existence, it will happen.

God is there, you are there, just right tuning is needed. And that's what I am teaching to you, right tuning. Dropping all ideologies helps you to be rightly tuned. And once you are in tune with existence, that is bliss. You have come home.

One of the most beautiful and relaxing spaces I know is the one of "yes," and an acceptance of myself and others. Would you like to talk about "yes" as part of the rebellion?

The ordinary connotation of rebellion will be easier with "no" than with "yes"; will be easier with disobedience than with obedience, will be easier with doubt than with trust. But that is the ordinary connotation of the word. The rebellion I am talking about is certainly a "no" to the past—to all that is superstitious, to all that has harmed humanity, to all that has hindered the growth of human consciousness, to all that has

made the world a hell. But this is not the basic part of rebellion.

The fundamental part of the rebellion is “yes.” Yes to a new man; yes to a new woman; yes to a new kind of love relationship; yes to a new world without families, without nations, without religions; yes to a whole humanity as one family. Yes to a world of peace, love, joy—which to me are the basic components of religiousness. Yes to a world full of songs and music and dance and creativity.

The no part is very small. The no part is just like demolishing an old building that is dangerous to live in, which can fall at any moment, which is not going to remain for long and it is better to demolish it, otherwise it will kill people. The no part is just the way the sculptor works on the stone, cutting pieces away from the rock—that is the no part.

But the yes part is the creation of a beautiful Gautam Buddha, or a Jesus Christ. Every creation needs, as a preparation, some destruction—some destruction of the wild weeds to create a garden of roses. That much no is absolutely essential. But it is in the service of yes.

You say, “One of the most beautiful and relaxing spaces I know is the one of ‘yes.’” But you should not forget that a yes cannot exist without a no preparing the way for it. This is the dialectics of life: To create something, something else has to be destroyed. You cannot create something without destroying something else.

I have heard about an old church: It was so ancient that people had stopped going in, because even a strong wind and the church would start swaying. It was so fragile, any moment it could fall. Even the priest had started giving his sermons outside the church, far away in the open ground.

Finally, the board of trustees had a meeting; something had to be done. But the trouble was that the church was very ancient—it was the glory of the town. Their town was famous far and wide because of the old church; perhaps it was the oldest church in the world. It was not possible to demolish it and make a new one. But it was also dangerous to let it remain as it was—it was going to kill a few people. Nobody had been going in for years—even the priest was not courageous enough to go in, because who knew at what moment the church would simply collapse? So something had to be done.

The board was in a very great dilemma: Something had to be done, and yet nothing should be done because that church was so ancient. And with things that are ancient, man has been in such deep attachment. So they passed a resolution with four clauses in it. First was that “We will make a new church, but it will be exactly the same as the old. It will be made of the same material the old is made of—nothing new will be used in it, so it remains ancient. It will be made in the same place where the old church stands, because that place has become holy by its ancientness.”

And the last thing in their resolution was, “We will not demolish the old church

until the new is ready."

They were all happy that they had come to a conclusion. But who was going to ask those idiots, "How are you going to do it?" The old should not be demolished till the new was ready, and the new had to be made of everything the old was made of, in the same place where the old was standing, with exactly the same architecture the old had. Nothing new could be added to it: the same doors, the same windows, the same glass, the same bricks—everything that would be used had to be from the old church. And finally, the old should not be touched till the new was ready: "When the new is ready, then we can demolish the old."

Such is the human mind: It clings to the old, but it also wants the new, and then it tries to find some compromise—that at least the new should be like the old. But a few things are impossible; nature just won't allow them.

First you have to say no. And you have to learn to say no with a loving heart, because you are saying it in the service of yes; it is not negative at all. Just because it is no does not mean it has to be negative. In language it is negative. But in reality, if it is in the service of yes, it is a servant of yes, how can it be negative? That which serves the positive—prepares the ground for the positive, prepares the way for the positive to come in—cannot be negative.

My rebel has a heart full of yes, but his yes is not impotent. His yes is capable of saying a thousand no's in the service of yes. He will destroy everything that prevents the new from being born. He will destroy all old ties, all old chains, all old jails—psychological, spiritual—in the service of freedom, in the service of love, in the service of truth. Then the no goes through a transformation, it becomes part of a bigger yes. And a yes that has no part in it which is capable of destroying … that yes remains impotent because it cannot create. There is no creation possible without destruction.

So remember one thing: Destruction should not, in itself, be the goal. Then it is ugly, then it is simply no, then it is only negative. Then it is against life and against existence. Every destruction should be in the service of some creativity. Then it is not negative. Then it is not in the service of death, it is in the service of life. It is life-affirmative. And to transform no into yes is the whole art of the meditative rebel.

The ordinary rebel starts enjoying destruction and he forgets completely what he is destroying for; destruction becomes a goal unto itself. Disobedience becomes his ego, his stubbornness, his adamant attitude toward life. I don't want political rebels; I want spiritual rebels whose concern is not with destruction at all. They will not destroy even a small thing unless it is absolutely needed for the new creation, for the new world.

Paddy put five dollars into the collection plate at his church. "What," Paddy asked the priest, "happens to all this money?"

"It goes to the Lord," answered the priest.

"Oh, well," said Paddy, removing his five dollars from the plate, "I am seventy-five years old. I am bound to see the Lord before a young man like you, and I can give it to him personally."

That seems to be an absolutely positive attitude! What is the point of giving five dollars to a young priest when you are going to meet the Lord before him? Withdraw your five dollars—it is better to give it personally rather than through a mediator who is going to take his commission. And who knows whether it ever reaches to the Lord or not? There is no guarantee.

You have to remember not to be serious about anything but to remain playful, nonserious; because the more playful and nonserious you are, the more clear is your understanding.

A serious man stops understanding, he has already taken a certain attitude, fixed, unchanging; he has become prejudiced. Your yes should not be a prejudice, otherwise it will not be yes in the sense I am talking about. My yes implies no in it. My creativity implies destruction in it because without the no, the yes becomes impotent. No has certain qualities which yes does not have. Just don't let no become your master and your boss.

Yes remains your highest value, and no becomes a servant—then there is not a problem with no. No has a beauty of its own. When it is just a shadow of yes, it is immensely beautiful. And a person who cannot say no—his yes has no meaning at all.

So I teach you yes as the ultimate value, the end, and no has to be its means. Then you are using the whole dialectical process of life. Then you are using the opposites for a single purpose. You are transforming their diametric oppositeness into a complementary, organic unity.

2

Understanding Is Freedom

Every society takes care to make the mind stronger and stronger, so that if there is any conflict between heart and mind, the mind is going to win. But every victory of the mind over the heart is a misery. It is a victory over your nature, over your being—over you—by others. And they have cultivated your mind to serve their purposes.

The priests and nuns and relatives that shaped my life are now old and dried up. Most are dead. It seems worthless to rebel against those helpless old people. I am not the priest and the doctrines. I feel that to rebel against anything outside myself is a waste of time and just simply not to the point. This makes the situation much more frustrating and entangled. It seems the self must rebel against the self. I accept that it is not the essential self—the original face—that has to do the rebelling. It is the trained self, the subterfuge. But that is the only "self" I have or know with which to do the rebelling. How does the subterfuge rebel against the subterfuge?

The rebellion I am talking about is not to be done against anybody. It is not really a rebellion, but only an understanding. You are not to fight with the outer priests, nuns, parents, no. And you are not to fight, either, with the inner priests, nuns, parents. Because outer or inner, it doesn't matter; they are separate from you. The outer is separate, the inner too is separate. The inner is only the reflection of the outer.

You are perfectly right in saying, "It seems worthless to rebel against those helpless old people." I am not telling you to rebel against those old, helpless people. And I am not telling you, either, to rebel against all that they have put inside you. If you rebel against your own mind it will be a reaction, not a rebellion. Note the difference. A reaction is out of anger; a reaction is violent. In a reaction you become blind with rage. In a reaction you start moving to the other extreme.

For example, if your parents have been teaching you to be clean and take a bath every day, and this and that, and you have been taught from the very beginning that cleanliness is next to godliness, and one day you start rebelling, what will you do? You will stop taking a bath. You will start living in filth. People do that. They were taught cleanliness is next to godliness; now they are thinking that filthiness is next to godliness, dirtiness is next to godliness. From one extreme they have moved to the other. This is not rebellion. This is rage, this is anger, this is revenge.

And while reacting to your parents and their so-called ideas of cleanliness, you are still attached to the same idea. It is still haunting you, it is still powerful over you, it is still dominant, it is still decisive. It still decides your life, although you have become the opposite of it; but it decides. You cannot take a bath easily; you are reminded of your parents, who used to force you to take a bath every day. Now you don't take a bath at all.

Who is dominating you? Your parents, still. Still, what they have done to you, you have not been able to undo. This is reaction; this is not rebellion.

Then what is rebellion? Rebellion is pure understanding. You simply understand what is the case. Then you are no longer neurotically obsessed with cleanliness, that's all. You don't become unclean. Cleanliness has its own beauty. One should not be obsessed by it, because obsession is ill.

For example, a person continuously washing his hands the whole day is neurotic. Washing of the hands is not bad, but just washing your hands the whole day is mad. But from washing your hands the whole day, if you move to nonwashing, you stop washing forever, then again you are trapped in another kind of madness, the opposite kind.

The man of understanding washes his hands when it is needed. When it is not needed, he is not obsessed with it. He is simply natural, spontaneous about it. He lives intelligently, that's all.

And there is not much difference in obsession and intelligence if you don't watch very minutely. If you come across a snake on the road and you jump, naturally you jump out of fear. But this fear is intelligence. If you are unintelligent, stupid, then you will not jump out of the way and you will unnecessarily invite danger into your life. The intelligent person will jump immediately—the snake is there. It is out of fear, but this fear is intelligent, positive, life-serving. But this fear can become obsessive. For example, you cannot sit in a house. Who knows? It may fall. And houses have been known to fall, that is true. Sometimes they have fallen; you are not absolutely wrong. You can argue that "If other houses have fallen, why not this one?" Now you are afraid to live under any roof—it may fall. This is obsession. Now it is becoming unintelligent.

It is good to be aware that you eat clean food. But I know a man, a great poet.… Once he traveled with me. His wife told me, "Now you will know how difficult it is to live with this man." I said, "What is the matter?" She said, "You will know yourself." He would not drink any tea, any water, anywhere. It was so difficult, because he would say, "Who knows if there are germs in the tea or the water?" He would not eat in any restaurant. It was such a problem. We would have to travel for thirty-six hours on the train, and he would be starving and thirsty and he would not drink water.

I tried in every way to persuade him. He said, "No. Who knows—if there are

germs, then? It is better," he said, "to starve for thirty-six hours and not to eat. I am not going to die; don't be worried." But I could see the man was torturing himself. It was hot summer and he was thirsty. I tried in every station—I brought soda, I brought Coca-Cola, and everything. He said, "Forget all about it—I cannot take anything unless I am absolutely certain. What is the certainty? What is the guarantee?"

And he is not absolutely wrong, that is true. You know India, and you know Indian stations and Indian restaurants. You know! He is right, but now this is carrying the logic too far.

I told him, "Then you should stop breathing, too!" He said, "Why?" I said, "Who knows, what is the guarantee? Stop breathing! Either drink this water or stop breathing!" Then he was brought to his senses, because I was really angry. "Why do you go on breathing? Who knows, there may be germs, there are germs everywhere."

He drank a cup of tea, but the way he drank! His face … I cannot forget. It has been ten years by now, but I cannot forget his face—as if I was killing him! I was a murderer and he was obliging me.

At the next station, he got down and he said, "I cannot travel with you; I will go back home." I said, "What is the matter?" He said, "You were so angry, and it seemed that you would start beating me or something. And you said, 'Don't breathe anymore.' How can I stop breathing?" I said, "I was just giving you an argument, that if you can breathe, then why not drink the water? It is the same Indian water as the Indian air. Don't be worried."

He refused to travel with me. I had to travel alone. He went back home, and since then I have not seen him. One can become obsessive about anything. Anything that may be intelligent within boundaries may become neurotic if you stretch it too far. Reaction is moving to the other extreme.

Rebellion is a very deep understanding, a profound understanding of a certain phenomenon. And rebellion always keeps you in the middle; it gives you balance.

You are not to fight with anybody, the nuns and the priests and the parents, outside or inner. You are not to fight with anybody, because in a fight you will not know where to stop. In a fight one loses awareness; in a fight one starts moving to the extreme. You can watch it.

For example, just sitting with your friends, by the way, you say, "That movie I went to yesterday was not worth seeing." You may have mentioned it just by the way, but then somebody says, "You are wrong. I have also seen the movie. It is one of the most beautiful pictures ever made." Now you are provoked, challenged; you become argumentative. You say, "It is worthless, the most worthless thing!" And you start criticizing. If the other also insists, you become more and more angry and you start saying things you have not even thought about. And later on if you look back and see the whole phenomenon that had happened, you will be surprised that when you had

mentioned that it was not worth going to, it was a very mild statement, but by the time you finished with the argument you had moved to the extreme. You had used all that was possible, all the nasty words that you know. You could condemn in any way; you used all your skills of condemnation. You were not ready to do that in the beginning; if nobody had opposed you, you might have forgotten all about it. You might never have made such strong statements.

It happens—when you start fighting you tend to move to the extreme.

I am not teaching you to fight with your conditionings. Understand them. Become more intelligent about them. Just see how they dominate you, how they influence your behavior, how they have shaped your personality, how they go on affecting you from the back door. Just watch! Be meditative. And one day, when you have seen the working of your conditionings, suddenly a balance is attained. In your very understanding you are free.

Understanding is freedom, and that freedom I call rebellion.

The real rebel is not a fighter, he is a man of understanding. He simply grows in intelligence, not in anger, not in rage. You cannot transform yourself by being angry against your past. Then the past will continue to dominate you; then the past will remain the center of your being, the past will remain your focus. You will remain focused, attached to the past. You may move to the very other extreme, but still you will be attached to the past.

Beware of it! That is not the way of a meditator; that is not the way of a sannyasin. Sannyas is rebellion—rebellion through understanding. Just understand.

You pass by the side of a church and a deep desire arises in you to go inside and pray. Or you pass by the side of a temple and unconsciously you bow down to the deity of the temple. Just watch. Why are you doing these things? I am not saying to fight. I am saying to watch. Why do you bow down to the temple?—because you were taught that this temple is the right temple, that the deity of this temple is the real image of God. Do you know? Or have you just been told and you have been following it? Watch!

Seeing it, that you are just repeating a program that has been given to you, that you are just playing a tape in your head, that you are being automatic, robotlike, you will stop bowing. Not that you will have to make any effort, you will simply forget all about it. It will disappear, it will leave you without any trace.

In reaction the trace is there. In rebellion there is no trace; it is utter freedom.

And you also ask, “Who is to fight with whom?” That question arises only if it has to be a fight. Because it is not going to be a fight, the question does not arise.

You have just to be a witness. And the witnessing is your original face; the one who witnesses is your real consciousness. That which is witnessed is conditioning. The one who witnesses is the divine source of your being.

Why in the first place have people been distracted from their original self?

Man is born with an unknown, an unknowable potentiality. His original face is not available when he comes into the world. He has to find it. It is going to be a discovery, and that is the beauty of it. And that's the difference between a being and a thing.

A thing has no potential, it is what it is. A table is a table, a chair is a chair. The chair is not going to become anything else, it has no potentiality; it has only actuality. It is not a seed of something.

Man is not a thing. That brings all the trouble and all the joy, all the challenges, all the disturbances.

The child comes just empty, with no writing on him, no indications even of what he is going to be—all dimensions are open.

This is the first basic thing to be understood: that a child is not a thing, a child is a being. He is not yet, he is just going to be. He is a process, and there is no possibility to predict where he is going to end; what will be the ultimate outcome of his life's experiences, anguishes, anxieties, ecstasies; what it is going to amount to in the end, finally. The final sum total of his whole life is not available in the beginning.

He does not bring a chart with him. All the astrologers have been befooling you, palmists have been befooling you, and they could befool you because there was a chance to do it. The parents are concerned what the child is going to be. And their concern is out of love; hence they can be exploited by all kinds of con men. Those con men can predict, "He is going to be this, or that." But they don't do much harm; they simply exploit a little bit. Their predictions never come true.

The greater problem arises from the priest, from the politician, from the pedagogues. The politician is not interested in what the real potential of the child is. He is interested that the child becomes a part of his power trip. He has an investment in every child, because every child is a potential friend or enemy. It is good to start canvassing as early as possible. So before the child starts on his own, he is distracted onto a path that is going to fulfill the politician's desire, but that is going to kill the seed in the child himself.

The priest is interested—he has an investment. The pope is a bigger pope if he has more Catholics in the world. If Catholics disappear, what is the value of a pope? Who would care about him? Each child that is born has some power that can be exploited by the politicians and the priests.

Soon the child is going to become a fully-fledged citizen of the world—he should be grabbed. He should become a Catholic if he is born to Catholic parents or, if fortunately he is an orphan, then Mother Teresa can look after him and convert him into a Catholic. They are immensely happy: The more the world has orphans, the more

Mother Teresas can get Nobel Prizes—more orphans means more Catholics. The more poor people there are in the world … they can be easily converted to Christianity.

Jesus says man cannot live by bread alone. That is true of an authentic man, but not true about the masses. As far as the masses are concerned, I say to you that man lives by bread and bread alone. And there are only masses—where is the authentic man? These politicians, these priests, these pedagogues don't leave anybody to himself so that he can become authentic, so he can get his original face, so that he can find himself.

Everywhere there are people with vested interests in every child. And the child is simply a tabula rasa, nothing is written on him; it is a great temptation for everybody to write something on him. The parents, of course, would like to write their religion, their caste, their philosophy, their politics, because the child should represent them. The child should carry their inheritance. If they have been Hindus for centuries, the child should be a Hindu, carrying the heritage of Hinduism to future generations. They are not interested in the child's own potential—nobody is interested in it—they are interested in their own investment, and of course everybody is investing.

The parents are investing so much in the child, giving birth to him, raising him, educating him; and everything is conditional—whether it is said or not, that is not the point. They will say one day, "We have done so much for you, now is the time that you should be conscious of what we have been doing and repay us." Because this is how they have been brought up by their parents—generation after generation, the same process. The teacher is interested that the student should represent him. The religious teacher is interested that the disciple should be a model of his teachings.

What I want you to remember is that everybody is interested in the child for some motive in which the child is not interested at all. But the child is helpless, he cannot fight all these people. They are powerful. He is dependent on them; if they want to make something of him, he has to become that. This much is absolutely clear to the child, that if he goes against the parents and he is misbehaving, he is betraying them. These ideas are given by the parents, the priests, the teachers. He feels guilty. Any assertion of his own self becomes guilt, and every pretension of pleasing the parents, the religious priests, the educationists, the politicians—which is only a pretense—pays very well. The child starts learning politics from the very beginning: to be hypocritical, base. Be authentic and you are punished. Now, the child has a simple arithmetic and we cannot condemn him for it.

In my childhood—because from there I can speak to you more authoritatively; I don't know your childhood, I know only my childhood—it was an everyday question. I was continually asked to be truthful. And I said to my father, "Whenever you say to me to be truthful, you have to remember one thing, that truth has to be rewarded; otherwise you are forcing me not to be truthful. I am willing."

Very easily I figured out that truth does not pay: You are punished. Lies pay; you are rewarded. Now it was a question of very decisive, very great importance. So I made it clear to my parents that it had to be understood clearly: “If you want me to be truthful then truth has to be rewarded, and not in a future life but here and now, because I am being truthful here and now. And if truth is not rewarded, if I am punished for it, then you are forcing me to lie. So let this be clearly understood; then there is no problem for me, I will always be truthful.”

I don’t think that every child tries to figure it out and makes a clear-cut contract with the parents. But this became a contract with my father. Howsoever the truth was against him, his morality, his family, his society, his respect, that did not matter; what mattered was that I was true. And for that I needed immediate reward, “Otherwise next time you know I will say what you want to hear—but remember, it will be a lie.”

The day that for the first time I said this to my father, he said, “Let me think it over, because you seem to be tricky. You are putting me into a subtle net. You do some mischief and are truthful, and I will have to reward you for your mischief.”

I said, “It is your business to decide whether you want me to be truthful or not. Anyway I am going to do what I want to do. The mischief would have happened anyway. It has happened; only afterward the question arises to be truthful or not. So why bring mischief into it? It has already happened. Now nothing can be done about it. You cannot undo it. What can be done is that you can force me to lie, and I can lie. And I can lie with such a face that you will think I am absolutely truthful. I will learn. If that is the way, then let that be the way, but remember, you have been responsible for distracting me from truth because you were rewarding lies and punishing the truth. You can think it over. I am not in a hurry. You are asking me.”

What had happened was that, living two or three blocks away from my family was a Brahmin family, very orthodox Brahmins. Brahmins cut all their hair and just leave a small part on the seventh chakra on the head uncut so that part goes on growing. They go on tying it and keeping it inside their cap or inside their turban. And what I had done was cut the father’s hair. In summertime in India, people sleep outside the house, on the street. They bring their beds, cots, on the streets. The whole town sleeps on the streets in the night, it is so hot inside.

So this Brahmin was sleeping … and it was not my fault! He had such a long *choti;* it is called *choti,* that bunch of hair. I had never seen it because it was always hidden inside his turban. While he was sleeping, it was hanging down and touching the street. From his cot it was so long that I was tempted, I could not resist; I rushed home, brought the scissors, cut it off completely, and took it to my room.

In the morning he must have found that it was gone. He could not believe it because his whole purity was in it, his whole religion was in it—his whole spirituality was destroyed. But everybody in the neighborhood knew that if anything goes

wrong … first they would rush to me. And he came immediately. I was sitting outside, knowing well that he would come in the morning. He looked at me. I also looked at him. He said to me, “What are you looking at?”

I said, “What are you looking at? Same thing.”

He said, “Same thing?”

I said, “Yes. The same thing. You name it.”

He asked, “Where is your father? I don’t want to talk to you at all.”

He went in. He brought my father out and my father said, “Have you done anything to this man?”

I said, “I have not done anything to this man, but I have cut a *choti*, which certainly cannot belong to this man because when I was cutting it, what was he doing? He could have prevented it.”

The man said, “I was asleep.”

I said, “If I had cut your finger while you were asleep, would you have remained asleep?”

He said, “How could I remain asleep if somebody was cutting my finger?”

I said, “That certainly shows that hairs are dead. You can cut them but a person is not hurt, no blood comes out. So what is the fuss about? A dead thing was hanging there. And I thought that you were unnecessarily carrying this dead thing inside your turban for your whole life—why not relieve you? It is in my room. And with my father I have the contract to be truthful.”

So I brought out his *choti* and said, “If you are so interested in it, you can take it back. If it is your spirituality, your Brahminism, you can keep it tied in a knot and put it inside your turban. It is dead anyway; it was dead when it was attached to you, it was dead when I detached it. You can keep it inside your turban.”

And in front of that man, I asked my father, “My reward?”

The man said, “What reward is he asking for?”

My father said, “This is the trouble. Yesterday he proposed a contract that if he speaks the truth … and sincerely; he is not only speaking the truth, he is even giving the proof. He has told the whole story—and even has logic behind it—that it was a dead thing so why be bothered with a dead thing? And he is not hiding anything.”

He rewarded me with five rupees. In those days, in that small village, five rupees was a great reward. The man was mad at my father. He said, “You will spoil this child. You should beat him rather than giving him five rupees. Now he will cut other people’s *chotis*. If he gets five rupees per *choti,* all the Brahmins of the town are finished, because they are all sleeping outside in the night, and when you are sleeping you cannot go on holding your *choti* in your hand. What are you doing? This will become a precedent.”

My father said, “But this is my contract. If you want to punish him, that is your

business; I will not come into it. I am not rewarding him for his mischief, I am rewarding him for his truth—and for my whole life I will go on rewarding him for his truth. As far as mischief is concerned, you are free to do anything with him."

That man told my father, "You are getting me into more trouble. If I do something to this boy, do you think things will stop there? I am a family man: I have my wife, my children, my house—tomorrow my house will be burned down." He was very angry, and he said, "Especially now it's a problem, because tomorrow I am going to perform a ceremony in the next village, and people seeing me without my *choti*…"

I said, "There is no need to worry—the *choti* I am giving you back. You can also reward me with something for giving your *choti* back. Just don't ever take off your turban in the other village; even in the night keep your turban on. That's all. It is not a big problem, it is only a question of one night. And in the night who is going to look for your *choti*? Everybody will be asleep." He said, "Don't you give me advice. I feel like beating you but I know better, because that will create a whole chain of things."

I said, "It has already been created. You have come to complain; you are not rewarding me for my being so absolutely honest and sincere and telling you that I could not resist my temptation. And I have not done any harm to anybody; no violence has happened—not a single drop of blood came from your *choti*. Just by complaining to my father you have already created a chain of reactions."

He said to my father, "Look…!"

My father said, "It is not my business."

And I said to my father, "That's what the whole Brahminism teaches—the chain of reactions."

My father said, "You keep your philosophy to yourself. And stop going to these lectures of the sadhus and the monks and mahatmas, because whatsoever you get from them you somehow manage to conclude such strange things."

I said, "But this is what I am saying, and it is not strange. That's exactly what the theory of karma is: You do one act, the reaction will follow. He has done an act of complaining against me, now the reaction will follow."

And the reaction followed, because he had told me that he was going to the other village.… He was very angry with me, but when you are angry, you are angry—and he was really completely freaked out. So he was angry with his wife, with the children.… I watched everything, and he somehow managed to get his things together and went off in a horse buggy. The moment he left, I told his wife, "Do you understand where he is going? He is going forever—and you don't know! He had come to say this to my father, that he is going forever and he is never coming back again."

The wife suddenly started crying and screaming, "Stop him!" Other people ran and they stopped his buggy.

He said, "Why are you stopping me? I have to catch the train!"

They said, “Not today. Your wife is crying and beating her chest—she will die!”

He said, “But this is strange. Why should she beat herself, and why should she cry?” But the people would not allow him to go, and they were pulling at his bag and suitcase.

The man who was driving the buggy said, “I will not take you. If this is the situation, that you are leaving your wife and small children forever, I will not do such an act.”

The Brahmin said, “I am not leaving, I will come back, but I don’t have time to convince you. The train will be missed—and the station is two miles away.”

But nobody was listening to him, and I was provoking people: “Stop him, otherwise his wife, his children … you will have to look after them, otherwise who is going to feed them?”

They brought him back with his bags, and of course he was angry and threw his bag at his wife. His wife asked, “What have we done? Why are you…?” And I was there outside in the crowd.

He said, “Nobody has done anything. That boy told me there would be a reaction. The reason is that three days before, in the temple, I was teaching the philosophy of action and reaction and this boy was present there. Now he is teaching me.” He told me, “Forgive me and I will never say a single word about this action and reaction. And you can cut anybody’s *choti* if you want, I will not complain. You can cut off my head and I will not complain—because I want to stop this chain completely. Now my train is gone.”

Then everybody asked, “What is the matter? We don’t understand. Who has cut your *choti*?”

I said, “Look! The chain is impossible to stop. These people are asking, ‘Whose *choti*? Who has cut it? Where is the *choti*?’” I said, “Just look inside his turban, on his head!” And a man who was considered to be a wrestler in the town came up and took off his turban and the *choti* fell out.

My father was also there, and saw it. When we were returning home he said to me, “I will reward you but don’t take advantage of our contract.”

I said, “I am not. That is not a contract between me and you. My contract is that I will always speak the truth to you, and you will reward me for it.” And he remained consistent. Whatsoever I had done, howsoever wrong in his eyes, he continually rewarded me. But it is difficult to find a father like that—the father has to forcibly impose his ideals on you.

My father was condemned by my whole city: “You are spoiling the child.”

He said, “If that is his destiny, to be spoiled, let him be spoiled. I will not be responsible for interfering in his destiny; he will never be able to say, ‘My father spoiled me.’ And if he is happy in being spoiled, then what is the wrong in being

spoiled? Wherever, and whatsoever happens in his life, I don't want to interfere. My father has interfered with my life, and I know that I would have been a different person if he hadn't. And I know that he is right, that every father turns the child into a hypocrite, because I have been turned into a hypocrite. When I want to laugh, I am serious. When I want to be serious I have to laugh. At least let one person laugh at the time when he want wants to laugh. And let him be serious when he wants to be serious."

He said, "I have eleven children but I will think of myself as having only ten." And he always thought that he had only ten. He never counted me among his children because, he said, "I have given him total freedom to be himself. Why should he carry any image of me?"

In a better society … and when I say in a better society, I mean a society that understands each person's integrity, respects even a small child's being, and does not impose on it. But that society seems to be far, far away, because all people have their vested interests and they cannot stop their trips; they have to use and exploit people.

Somebody becomes a president; you never think that he has become president at your cost, that something in you has been killed so that this man can become the president of the country. If everybody was left unique, original, it would be impossible for the people who are presidents and prime ministers, who are ruling the whole world and who have been destroying the world for thousands of years and go on destroying it, to continue doing this.

With individuals there will be totally different kinds of societies: There will be communes, not societies. There will be no nations, because there is no need.

What is the need of nations? The whole Earth is one. Only on the maps do you go on drawing lines, and over those lines you go on fighting and killing and murdering. It is such a stupid game that unless the whole of humanity is mad, it is impossible to think how it goes on continuing.

What is the need of nations? What is the need of passports and visas and boundaries? This whole Earth belongs to us: Wherever one wants to be, one has the right to be. The sun is nobody's property, the Earth is nobody's property, the moon is nobody's property; the wind, the clouds, the rain—nothing is anybody's property. Why do you draw these lines?

You can understand it easily … soon you will see lines on the moon. Right now there are not, but soon you will see a Russian zone, an American zone, a Chinese zone. Nobody lives there, nobody will ever live there. There seems to be no possibility of life growing on the moon. The moon is a dead planet—not a single drop of water. Yes, you can be there for a few hours with all your gas masks and oxygen cylinders and everything, but this is not the way that people can live there. But already they have put their flags.… There is nobody to see the flag, there is nobody to salute the flag—not

even a bird sometimes to shit on the flag! The first thing the Americans did was to place a pole, and put up the flag. How idiotic! And for whom? But other fools will follow. They will go to Mars, they will go to other planets, and they will do the same thing everywhere.

There is no need for nations—except that politicians need nations because without nations there will be no politics; except that generals need nations, because without nations there will be no wars; except that the factories that produce weapons will go out of production. What will happen to your nuclear weapons plants and all the energy involved in them?—because if there are no nations there is no need to create nuclear weapons. For whom?

The simplest solution to save humanity is to remove from the map all the lines—and just from the map; on the Earth there are no lines. Just from the maps simply remove all the lines and you won't have the third world war and you will not need so many armies all around the world.

Millions of people are doing nothing except turning left, turning right.… If somebody is watching from above, he will be surprised. Why do people go on turning right, then left, then about turn, then march, then come back, disperse—every day millions of people all around the Earth? He will certainly think something is wrong—some nut, some bolt, needs to be put right.

These nations can exist only if your personality is false. These churches and religions can exist only if you don't have your original face, because a person who has his own original face—what business has he to do that he needs to go to the pope? For what? There is no reason why he should go to any religious teacher or to any temple or to any synagogue. And why should he become a Mohammedan, a Christian, a Hindu? Why?

With your original face you will feel so contented, so immensely fulfilled and at home that there will be no search left; you have found it.

But these people will not allow you to find it. They will distract you, for the simple reason that they have some trips, they have some ideas of their own, and you have to be sacrificed for their ideas. Politicians will sacrifice you for their politics. Religions will sacrifice you for their kind of politics. Nobody is interested in the child, and the reason is clear: The child has to be molded into a certain pattern that fits in a society, in a nation, in a particular ideology.

In Russia the child had to be taught communism from the very beginning. He had to know the names of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin; they were their gods. In noncommunist countries it is the same thing, only the names differ. Everybody is sacrificed to some stupid ideology, theology, politics, religion. That's why people get distracted.

But the child allows it for the simple reason that he does not know who he is going

to become. Naturally he depends on his parents, elders—those who know better. And he is not aware that they don't know better; they are in the same boat, as ignorant as the child. The only difference is, the child is innocent also. They are cunning but ignorant, and just because of their cunningness, they go on hiding their ignorance in borrowed knowledge.

My grandfather used to take me to any mahatma, any saint, and he used to say to me, "If you don't come then I am not going, because then it is so dull. You make it alive." And I was simply raising very simple questions. What can a child do?

One Hindu monk, Swami Vidyananda, used to come to the town every rainy season. For four months he lectured there—he was a well-known teacher. The first day I went with my grandfather, I simply stood up, and because of my grandfather, nobody could throw me out or tell me to sit down. Everybody knew about him, that he was a dangerous man in that matter. If anybody said, "Boy, you sit down, you don't understand such great things," my grandfather would say, "But I don't understand either, and I am seventy years old. So you keep quiet, you understand!" And he would tell me, "You ask."

It was clear that they could not throw me out, they could not stop me, so I simply asked Vidyananda, "One thing I want to know about what you are saying: Is it borrowed or experienced? Now, remember that you are sitting in the temple of God." It was a Rama Mandir, the best place in the town, the most precious temple of the town with a very beautiful marble hall—so all the best discourses were arranged there. I told him, "You look at the statue of Rama; and remember that you are in a sacred place and remember your robe, that you are a monk. Don't disgrace your robes and don't disgrace your God; just say the truth: Whatever you are saying, is it experienced? Do you know God? Have you seen God just the way you are seeing me? Have you talked with God the way you are talking with me? Or have you just learned from the books?" There was a great silence. The man hesitated.

I said, "Your hesitation says everything. You better tell the truth because if you have seen God, why should you hesitate? You feel a little afraid—l can see perspiration on your forehead, and it is cool inside."

The man said, "I never thought about it. But being a sannyasin and being in the temple of God, I cannot speak untruthfully. I have no experience. I am saying whatsoever I have heard and read and studied."

Then I said to him, "Get out! Get out from this place immediately. Then find a person who has himself known, and bring him here. You are throwing borrowed rubbish on these poor people's heads, and giving them the idea that they also know … because I know these fools, they are all from my own town, and they talk as if they know."

I told the people, "Listen to your guru!" He was almost the guru of the whole city,

because for years—he must have been sixty at that time—for years he had been visiting the town for four months every year. But that was the last time. Since then I have not heard about him in that town.

When I was traveling about India I went on inquiring about what happened to Vidyananda, whether he died or he was still alive; what happened? Finally I met him in a place I had never expected, near Madras, in Adyar. Adyar is the headquarters of the Theosophical movement. I had gone to deliver a few talks in Madras, and my host wanted to go and see Adyar. Adyar is beautiful; the Theosophists had done a really good job. They had made a beautiful place, but it is now lying deserted; nobody goes there. They had made beautiful houses, cottages, a great garden—a whole colony.

Adyar has perhaps the biggest bo tree. When the Theosophical movement was alive, underneath that bo tree they used to have their conventions; thousands of people can sit under its shade. And Adyar has perhaps one of the most precious libraries in the world. Theosophists had collected manuscripts from China, Tibet, Ladakh, Mongolia, Korea—strange places, strange languages—and they have a very great underground library of ancient scripts. I found this man there in the library; he was working as a librarian, but he was no longer a monk.

I asked him, “What happened?”

He said, “That day you changed my whole life. After that I could not speak with the same authority as I had spoken before; I lost my courage. I tried, but every time the question arose in me that I don’t know, so why am I telling these people? Perhaps it is not right, perhaps it is right—who knows? I am committing a sin, because these people will start thinking that they know. That day in your city…” He had not been able to recognize me. I had to remind him because he had last seen me as a child. I could recognize him, although by then he was near ninety; but from sixty to ninety, not much change happens.… Yes, you become older, but no basic change happens. He was older, fragile, but in a way younger, more alive.

I said to him, “You are thirty years older now, but I can see your eyes are younger, more alive.”

He said, “Yes, because I have dropped that life of phoniness. Now I am simply what I am. I don’t know—I am searching but I don’t know that it will be possible to know in this life because so much is lost.”

I said, “Don’t ever be pessimistic. It can happen any day—it can happen today. If it is not happening that means that still somewhere you are carrying the borrowed. Can I ask you again, after thirty years, another question?”

He said, “I will be obliged because that first question has done me a great service. It has taken away my monkhood, my mahatmahood, my followers—everything.”

I said, “Why did you start working in the library as a librarian?—because this is again the same kind of business. Now you are searching in ancient scripts found in

Tibet, found in Ladakh, found in Nepal. You are still not looking in yourself. First you were searching for truth in printed books, now you are searching for it in handwritten ancient scripts, thinking that these people must have known. But you are again doing the same foolishness. Neither does the printing press know. It goes on printing Bible after Bible—millions of Bibles—and the printing press remains just a printing press; it does not even become a Christian. Do you think in handwritten scripts you will be able to find truth? These people were just working as writers. They were simply copying, and they were being paid for it. It is not that they were knowers; they were copiers, and they were doing a primitive method of printing. In those days printing was not possible, so people used to write, copying from one manuscript to another manuscript, and from that to another manuscript, and they would sell them. Do you think these people knew?"

He said, "Again you are right. I have been here for twenty years in this underground library, looking into all kinds of strange methods, ideologies—very impressive, very logical—but certainly I am doing the same thing; I am not looking in. Now you will not find me anywhere."

He dropped his job that very day. While I was still in Adyar he left. I came back after walking around.… It is a big place and once it was a throbbing commune; when Annie Besant was alive, thousands of people lived there. When I came back to the main office and inquired about Vidyananda they said, "He has left. What have you told him?—because after you met him in the library he came into the office and he said, 'I am leaving, and leaving forever. I am finished with books. Although I am much too old.… But perhaps a few days may be enough, or at least before I die I should begin rightly. Perhaps in the next life I can complete my search, but at least I should begin.'"

Nobody is asking, "What you know, is it your knowledge?" If it is not your knowledge, put it aside; it has no value. "What you are doing, is it your aspiration? Do you really feel a bell ringing in your heart?" If it is not so, then don't waste a single moment more.

People go on doing things that other people have forced them to do—and people are going to continue to force them. It is most improbable that parents will stop forcing their children to be just images of their own idea, that teachers will stop forcing on them whatsoever they "know," as if they really know. They will go on pretending that they know.

My principal in high school was a mathematician. I was not a student of mathematics but I used to go to his office whenever I saw that he was alone and talk about higher mathematics—because now the older mathematics is not applicable any longer to physics, biology, chemistry, biochemistry. They are going beyond it. So he told me, "Why don't you start attending my classes?"

I said, “I have no problem, I am not a student of mathematics, but whenever I am free and you have a class I would love to come if you allow me. But then don’t get disturbed by me because I will not just be dead there, I will be alive.”

He said, “What do you mean by being ‘alive’?”

I said, “Exactly what it means: being alive. You just give me a chance and see.”

I was always interested in many things, trying to find out whether they were really based in knowing or were only hypothetical—because if they were hypothetical then they were not really true; they were just pragmatic, helpful, convenient. For example, Euclidean geometry—that’s the class he was teaching when he allowed me for the first day. Now, Euclid’s definitions—even a child can see that they are wrong. Euclid says: “A line has length but no breadth.” Now, without breadth, how can a line be? It is so simple, one does not need to be a mathematician; I am not a mathematician, and I was not at all at that time. And I asked him, “This is stupid what you are saying, that it has length but no breadth—it does have breadth. Draw a line on the board without breadth, just with length, then I will accept your hypothesis.”

He said, “Now I know what you mean by being alive. I have done postgraduate mathematics and this question never came to my mind. Euclid says it; every school, every college, every university teaches it, so I never thought … but perhaps you are right.”

I said, “It is measurable. With the chalk you draw a line on the blackboard, and still you’re saying that it has no breadth. And ‘the point’ Euclid says, ‘has neither length nor breadth.’ Then how can it be? It may have a very, very small length, a very, very small breadth, but that does not mean that it has none. You just need a magnifying glass. You just wait and I will run to the chemistry lab and bring the magnifying glass and show you.”

He said, “There is no need to go—I can understand. But then, what am I to teach? Euclid is finished, because these are basic definitions.”

I said, “These are hypotheses. Just one thing you have to accept, that these hypotheses are practical, but not truth.”

So you have to find out, about whatsoever you know, whether it is just hypothetical, useful in life, or really a truth that you know, that you have felt, that you have experienced. If it is only a hypothesis, put it aside and you will feel such an unburdening. All hypotheses, all borrowed knowledge that has gathered there and which you are carrying—you are dragging a mountainous load, you are being crushed under it—just put it aside.

Be ignorant; accept that “I am ignorant.” And from that point you can start the search.

Every child is going to be burdened. I hope that someday it will not be so. In fact there is no need, because when you are teaching Euclid, you can teach very simply

that this is not truth, it is only a hypothesis. With this hypothesis it becomes easier to understand the triangle, the circle, and everything. But remember that at the base there is a hypothesis, and the whole palace is hypothetical.

Similarly, your God is a hypothesis and the whole pyramid of theology is based on nothing but that hypothesis. If you start looking into things it does not need great intelligence, it needs only simple innocence to see.

That principal called me into his office and he said, "You are not to come again to my classes because now it will be difficult for me to deal with the children. They have seen me as ignorant. Up to now I was an authority—you destroyed that." But he was a sincere man in a way. He said, "I can understand you, but don't do it to any other teacher because they may not understand it. And now I know why so many complaints go on coming against you that you are a disturbance. But this was not a disturbance. You have opened my eyes, and I will never again be able to be the same. But what puzzles me is that I never thought about it, I simply accepted it."

That's the point I want you to notice. You have accepted everything up to now: What they have said, you have accepted. You have to start questioning, doubting. Don't be afraid of authorities—there is no authority. Krishna or Christ, Mohammed or Mahavira—nobody is an authority. And if they are an authority, then they are an authority to themselves, not to you.

You will be an authority only to yourself if someday you come to know the truth of your own original face. Then too, you will not be an authority to somebody else. Nobody can be an authority to anybody else. This whole idea of authority has to disappear from the world.

Yes, people can share their experience, but that is not authority.

I don't want to force anything on you—not a single word, not a single concept. My whole effort is somehow to make you alert and beware of all authorities. And the moment you see there is some authority hanging around your being, throw it out.

Be finished with all that has been given to you, forced upon you, and the original face will start showing up. You never know, you cannot even imagine what your original face will be, what your true being will be. You will know only when you know, when you are face to face with yourself, when there is no hindrance of any kind and you are left totally alone.

In that aloneness have flowered all the beings that have flowered.

Not many have flowered. Only once in a while.… It is a strange tragedy that millions of people are born and only once in a while a person blossoms. That's why I say there is no gardener, no God looking around watching, caring; otherwise millions of trees and only one tree comes to flower…? Spring comes and goes and only one tree blossoms; millions of trees simply remain barren, unproductive? What kind of gardener is looking after the garden?

This is enough proof that there is no gardener, no God; but that does not mean that you have to become pessimistic. In fact, that gives you a new dimension—that you have to be your own gardener. It is good that there is no God, because you can be your own gardener. But then the whole responsibility is yours, you cannot blame anybody.

I am taking the God away so that you cannot blame the poor old man. Enough he has been blamed for everything: He created the world, he created this, he created that. … I take all that blame away from him—he does not exist.

You have created him just to throw your responsibility on him. Take your responsibility back.

Accept your aloneness.

Accept your ignorance.

Accept your responsibility, and then see the miracle happening.

One day suddenly you see yourself in a totally new light, as you have never seen yourself before. That day you are really born. Before that it was only a prebirth process.

There are reasons why people have been distracted from their originality. First, you don't know what your originality is. Second, there are people who are in a hurry to impose some idea of their own on you, because once that idea is imposed, you are psychologically enslaved. A Christian cannot find truth, a Hindu cannot find truth, because Christianity is a prison, Hinduism is a prison. Somebody is burdened by the Koran and somebody else is burdened by the Torah.

So it is not a question of what has to be thrown—whatever it is.… That's why with me, a Jew, a Christian, a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Jaina, a Buddhist, a Parsee, a Sikh—anybody can find something transpiring in him, because what I am saying is applicable to all. Whether you are burdened with the Bible or the Koran makes no difference. I am not interested in you throwing out the Bible; I am interested in you throwing out any kind of garbage that you are carrying. And I call it garbage because it has been given by others to you; it is not yours.

Remember it: Only what you experience is yours.

What you know—only that you know.

Let it be very small, don't be worried; seeds are very small, but a seed has potentiality. It is not a thing, it is a being who is ready to burst forth—it just needs the opportunity.

And that's what to me is the function of the master: to create the opportunity—not to give you knowledge, not to give you discipline, not to give you a doctrine or a dogma, but to create an opportunity where all these things slowly, slowly disappear. They are not clinging to you, you are holding on to them hard.

So when I say they disappear, I mean slowly, slowly you open your fist. Of course you take time, because for so long you have thought that you are holding something

precious. And even if you understand me, again and again the idea comes that perhaps if you drop it you may lose something precious. But there is nothing precious there.

Remember one criterion: Anything precious is only that which you know, and there is no way to lose that which you know. Anything that can be lost, and which you have to cling to, cannot be precious because it can be lost. That shows that it is not your experience.

So we have to accept that the society is going to continue the way it has continued, but we can find intelligent people and take them out of the society.

That's what I mean by sannyas.

People cannot understand it because they think that I am trying to create a certain religion by giving you a certain dress, a certain identity. No, I am not creating any religion. It is absolutely religionless religion. This dress I am giving you is simply so that you start having a distance from the crowd, so that the crowd pushes you out and does not allow you in. Otherwise you would like to be inside. Who wants to be outside the crowd?—it is so cozy there, so warm. I give you this dress simply as a strategy, a device so that people will avoid you; wherever you go, people will turn away. That's the only way to save you; you cannot mix with the crowd. Otherwise it would have been easier for me, and easier for my sannyasins if I had not made you different looking from other people. Many more people would have come here more easily. But I am not interested in many more people. I am not a politician, I am not a pope; what do I have to do with "many" people?

I am interested only in those chosen few—intelligent, courageous, capable of coming out in the cold and dropping the coziness of the crowd and the mob. Just in the beginning it feels cold; soon your body has its own system of creating warmth. Your being soon starts creating its own aroma.

So we have to go on pulling people from the crowd, and continue to destroy whatsoever the crowd has given to them—because when you pull a person out of the crowd, that person brings the crowd in his mind. You can pull the person out of the crowd very easily—it is not so difficult—but the person brings the crowd in his mind. Then the second part of the work is more difficult: to push the crowd out of his mind.

Both things have to be done: pull the person out of the crowd, and then push the crowd out of the person, so he is simply left alone.

And to me there is nothing greater than to be left utterly alone, in your pure, essential beinghood.

I have tried my whole life to change myself, but it seems nothing ever changes—I remain the same. Is not there any hope for me?

In the first place, why do you want to change yourself?

You are beautiful as you are—why can't you accept yourself? And the miracle is: When you accept yourself, the change happens. It can't happen by your effort, because who will change you? The same mind trying to change itself? The violent mind trying to be nonviolent? How is it going to happen? Even in being nonviolent there will remain violence.

The angry mind trying not to be in anger? You can manage, you can cultivate a hardness around you. You can repress the anger, but it is the same mind—anger is there. You are sitting on top of it; you are sitting on a volcano. The stupid mind trying to be intelligent? In the very effort, stupidity will become more and more ingrained.…

Then what is the way out? The way out is acceptance—acceptance is a magic key. Accept yourself as you are! And in that acceptance, intelligence arises. In that acceptance, why does intelligence arise? Because whenever you accept, you are no longer divided; the split disappears. The split is between you and the *should*, between you and the *ought*. That is where the whole secret of schizophrenia is rooted: "I am *this* and I have to be *that*."

Now there are only two things: Either drive yourself crazy in becoming *that* … and it will be just like a dog trying to catch its own tail, or like pulling yourself up by your own shoestrings. You can hop a little, jump a little, but that will not do much. That's what your so-called religious people go on doing: hopping, pulling themselves up by their own shoestrings. For a moment they are a little higher than the earth, but back down they come, and with a bang.

This is not the way. The split will become even deeper. The more you try, the more you will fail, and the more you fail, the more you will lose your self-confidence, your respect for yourself—in drugs, in alcohol, in this and that, in power politics, in money, in the marketplace. People have invented a thousand and one ways to escape from themselves. And they have to invent them because they have created an ugly idea of themselves. To tell them "Know thyself!" is to shock them. They don't want to know themselves.

So people like Socrates go on saying "Know thyself"—nobody hears, nobody listens. Nobody wants to know himself, because you have already decided that you are a nauseating being, that you are sick, that you are ugly, abnormal, that all kinds of pus and wounds are there inside you. Who wants to go there? It is better not to look at those wounds, forget all about them.

And if you try to change, what will you do? You will prune this branch, that branch. And the problem is in the roots, not in the branches. If you prune a tree, the tree will become thicker. It will have better foliage; more leaves will grow, because the tree will take the challenge. You want to destroy the tree? You cut one leaf: three leaves will come—that is the answer of the tree. Cut one branch: Three branches replace it. The tree cannot so easily be defeated. It has to survive. And you can go on

cutting the leaves and branches—nothing will happen. Deep down you will remain the same, because the roots are intact.

> The Japanese was a longtime customer at this Greek restaurant because he had discovered that they made especially tasty fried rice. Each evening he would come in he would order flied lice.
>
> This always caused the Greek restaurant owner to nearly roll on the floor with laughter. Sometimes he would have two or three friends stand nearby just to hear the Japanese customer order his "flied lice."
>
> Eventually, the customer's pride was so hurt that he took a special diction lesson just to be able to say "fried rice" correctly.
>
> The next time he went to the restaurant he said very plainly, "Fried rice, please."
>
> Unable to believe his ears, the Greek restaurant owner said, "Sir, would you repeat that?"
>
> The Japanese replied, "You heard what I said, you Gleek plick!"

This is not the way to change. You can change one letter of the alphabet, but deep down you are still Japanese. It will assert itself from somewhere else. Either you will go crazy or you will become a hypocrite. Your society, your insane society, only leaves two alternatives for you: Either go crazy trying to improve upon yourself, pulling yourself up by your shoestrings; or, if you are a little more intelligent, be a hypocrite. Pretend and say one thing, and do just the opposite—keep a back door to your life. At the front door have a beautiful facade—paint the *should*, the ideal, the *ought*—and live from the back door, live really naturally from the back door.

But that too creates a split: You can never be at ease. You are constantly lying, and you will be caught again and again. How long can you pretend? And you cannot succeed in your pretensions because your neighbors are also pretending, so everybody knows what everybody else is doing. They know they have back doors, so they know that you must also have them.

That's why whenever you hear something wrong about somebody else, you immediately believe it, you don't ask for proof. Whenever you hear something good about somebody else, you ask for proof. If somebody says, "That saint is bogus; he is not really a saint. In fact, he is a murderer, a debaucher, greedy, violent," you immediately believe it! And if somebody says, "That man is really a saint," you have a suspicion. You say, "I will see. We will have to look into it; I will have to inquire."

You know people, and how people are—how can you believe so easily that people can be good? You know your goodness is false—that gives you the idea that

everybody else's goodness is bound to be false. This whole society consists of hypocrites.

Please stop improving upon yourself, stop changing yourself. How are you going to change, and for what? And who is going to decide what you should be? If you allow somebody else to decide who you should be, it will be an imposition from outside. The priest, the politician, they are trying to impose some ideals on you. And because of those ideals you cannot be natural, you cannot be simple; you have to carry heavy weights on you. And you are always unnatural, arbitrary, artificial. You cannot imitate anybody else!

The famous book by Thomas à Kempis is *The Imitation of Christ*—but I have never come across more false a title or more ugly a title. "The Imitation of Christ"? And the book is respected very much; it is one of the most respected Christian treatises. But the whole idea is wrong. If you imitate Christ, you will be an imitator only—you will never be a Christ. And to be an imitator is to be a hypocrite. How can you imitate Christ? He was a totally different man. He never imitated anybody. If he had imitated he would have been loved and respected by the Jews; if he had imitated Moses or Abraham, he would not have been crucified. He never imitated anybody! He simply asserted himself as he was; he respected himself as God had made him, without any imitation. He was an original man, not a carbon copy.

Now, Thomas à Kempis will be a carbon copy; if he succeeds at all, then too he will be a carbon copy—and a carbon copy is ugly. Be the original. When you can be the original, why should you be the carbon copy? Don't imitate Buddha, don't imitate Jesus, don't imitate me—never imitate anybody! Learn from everywhere, but never imitate. Just be yourself. You have to be only yourself. And there is no way to know who you are beforehand. How will you decide who you are, unless you go in and see who you are?

So the first thing is not the effort to change—the first thing is the effort to acquaint yourself with your own being. Who is residing in you? Look at this guest who has come to you. Your body is a host … some stranger is residing in the body, some stranger from the beyond has descended in the body. That is you! Just look, watch, meditate, be aware of it. Drop all efforts to change yourself. Put your whole energy into knowing yourself, and out of that knowing comes growth. And that growth will bring your original face. You have to be only yourself. You have to be only that which you already are.

I am aware of my need for approval and acceptance from others. I don't want to be driven by this need. How does it resolve?

One has to see the foolishness of it. It is not a question of resolving it. One has to

see the ridiculousness of it; then it falls. It is not resolved—diseases are not to be resolved; they fall away. Just try to see the foolishness of it.

I will tell you a few anecdotes.

A woman, newly arrived to live in a spacious mansion, met the woman she knew lived in a cottage at the edge of her estate.

"Welcome to our little community," greeted the cottage dweller.

The new resident, drawing herself up haughtily, replied, "Please do not address me. I never speak to an inferior."

"Oh," replied the cottage dweller sweetly, "and where in the world did you ever meet one?"

Everybody is an egoist. It is difficult to see that you are in the same boat. You can see all others in the same boat. Just see it—that everybody in deep ignorance remains an egoist, goes on thinking in terms of the ego. Nobody is there in the world to fulfill your ego; everybody is trying to fulfill his own. Who has time to fulfill your ego? And if sometimes somebody fulfills your ego, he must be fulfilling it as a means to fulfill his own.

Basically, everybody is interested in himself. As you are interested in yourself, others are interested in themselves. Just become aware of this.

Everybody is trying to compete, and in this competition, in this egoistic, ambitious race, one is destroying all that is beautiful. One is destroying a beautiful life that could have flowered and become a pinnacle of existence—Buddhalike, Jesuslike, Krishnalike. But everybody is asking others, begging: "Approve of me! Say something that gives me a good feeling about myself." Hence, flattery works. Hence, anybody can deceive you just by flattering you.

And people go on doing things that they never wanted to do, but they go on doing them because that is the only way they can get the approval of others. Everybody is distracted from his destiny because others are looking, and they have a fixed idea as to how to approve of you.

It happened:

The new bride had returned to the small town after her runaway marriage. "I suppose my elopement was a nine days' wonder around here," she commented to the village's lone policeman.

"It would have been," he replied, "only the Smiths' dog went mad the same night."

People go on wasting their time and life and energy. There is no need! In fact, as you are, you are perfect. Nothing is to be added to you. God never creates anybody imperfect. How can he create anybody imperfect?

You have heard religious people teaching you that God created the world. They go on teaching you that you are created by God in his own image. But still they go on teaching you: “Become perfect”! This is simple absurdity. God created you in his own image, and still you need perfection? Then God must be imperfect. How, out of God, can imperfection come? Creation carries his signature. You also go on carrying his signature and drop this begging! Somebody is asking for money, somebody is asking for bread, somebody is asking for approval. All are beggars.

Don’t ask. In asking you will miss much that is already available to you. Look rather than asking. Look within yourself, and the emperor of emperors is there. Start enjoying it, start living it!

It happened:

> The famous college athlete had just returned from the Olympics with a chestful of medals when he fell ill. At the hospital the doctor took his temperature, shook his head doubtfully, and said, “You’re running a temperature of a hundred and five.”
>
> “Oh, yeah?” answered the athlete weakly. Then, suddenly interested, he asked, “Hey, doc, what’s the world record?”

Drop all this nonsense! You are already approved of, otherwise you could not have been here. God has accepted you, given birth to you. If van Gogh paints, whatever painting he creates is already approved of—otherwise he would not have created it in the first place. If Picasso paints something, in the very painting, the painting is approved of. The painter has put his heart into it. Just go deeper into your own being—God has put all the treasures that you need there. He has approved of you, accepted you. He is happy that you are!

But you don’t look there. You are asking from others like a beggar: “Approve of me!”—and they are also beggars just like you. Beggars asking beggars. Even if they approve of you a little, they will wait for you to approve of them. It is going to be a bargain. And just think of it: They don’t have anything to give to you when they themselves are begging, and what can you give to them when you yourself are begging? Just a little alertness and one drops all begging. And with that, ambition drops, ego drops. One starts living.

Dance, while you are alive. Breathe blissfully while you are alive. Sing while you are alive. Love, meditate, while you are alive. And once you change, you shift your

consciousness, your focus of consciousness, from the outside to the inside, you feel tremendously happy and blessed. Just to feel “I exist” is such a blessing that nothing else is needed. “I exist!”—all the dance, all the song, all blessings, are included in it. “I exist!”—God is included in it.

Don’t make your God a beggar. Be a God! Recognize your godliness and then there is nothing to achieve. One has simply to start, one has to start to live. Live like a God: That’s my message to you. I don’t say become a God—I say you are, start living! You are, so recognize it! You are—remember it! You are—just become mindful of it.

There is nothing to be achieved. Life is not an achievement, it is a gift. It has already been given. For what are you waiting? The door is open, and the host has already invited you. Come in!

Whenever in life I’ve had a bout of feeling miserable, a point always comes when I just laugh at myself, feel freedom return, and see that all I had done was to stop loving myself. This insight in itself is perhaps not particularly profound but at the moment of its realization, I am always amazed to see how easily, for what, and for how long I am willing to forsake my own self-love. Is this at the roots of most people’s suffering, or is it just my trip?

It is not just your trip. It is at the root of most people’s suffering—but not with the meaning you are giving to it.

It is not because you have stopped loving yourself that you fall in misery. It is that you have created a self that does not exist at all. So sometimes this unreal self suffers misery in loving others, because out of unreality, love is not possible. And it is not on one side: Two unrealities trying to love each other … sooner or later this arrangement is going to fail. When this arrangement fails, you fall upon yourself—there is nowhere else to go. So you think, “I had forgotten to love myself.”

In a way it is a small relief: At least instead of two unrealities, now you have only one. But what will you do by loving yourself, and how long can you manage to keep loving yourself? It is unreal; it won’t allow you to see it for a long time because that is dangerous: If you see it for a long time, this so-called self will disappear, and that will be a *real* freedom from misery.

Love will remain, unaddressed, to someone else or to yourself. Love will remain unaddressed because there is nobody to address, and when love is there, unaddressed, there is great bliss.

But this unreal self won’t allow you much time. Soon you will be falling in love with someone else again, because the unreal self needs the support of other unrealities. So people fall in love and fall out of love, and fall in love and fall out of love—and strange is the phenomenon, that dozens of times they do it and still they don’t see the point. They are miserable when they are in love with someone else; they are miserable

when they are alone and not in love—only a bit relieved for the moment.

In India, when a person dies, people carry him on a stretcherlike construction on their shoulders. But they go on changing it on the way, on their shoulders—from this shoulder they will put it on the right, and after a few minutes they will again change and put it on the left. It feels a relief when you put it from the left shoulder onto the right. Nothing is being changed—the weight is there, and on you, but this left shoulder feels a kind of relief. It is momentary, because soon the right shoulder will start hurting so you will have to change it again.

This is what your life is. You go on changing the other, thinking that perhaps this woman, this man, will bring you the paradise you have always been longing for. But everybody brings hell—without fail!

And nobody is to be condemned for it, because they are doing exactly the same as you are doing: They are carrying an unreal self out of which nothing can grow. It cannot blossom. It is empty—decorated, but inside empty and hollow. So when you see somebody from far away, he or she is appealing. As you come closer the appeal becomes less. When you meet, it is not a meeting but a clash. And suddenly you see the other person is empty and you have been deceived, cheated, because the other person has nothing that had been promised.

The same is the other's situation in relation to you. All promises fail, and you become a burden to each other, a misery to each other, a sadness to each other, destructive to each other. You separate. For a little while there is relief, but your inner unreality cannot leave you in this state for long; soon you will be searching for another woman, another man, and you will get into the same trap. Only the faces are different; the inner reality is the same—empty.

If you really want to get rid of misery and suffering then you will have to understand—you don't have a self. Then it will be not just a small relief but a tremendous relief. And if you don't have a self, the need for the other disappears. It was the need of the unreal self to go on being nourished by the other. You don't need the other.

And listen carefully: When you don't need the other, you can love. And that love will not bring misery.

Going beyond needs, demands, desires, love becomes a very soft sharing, a great understanding. When you understand yourself, that very day you have understood the whole of humanity. Then nobody can make you miserable. You know that they are suffering from an unreal self, and they are throwing their misery on anybody who is close by.

Your love will make you capable of helping the person you love to get rid of the self.

I know only of one present.… Love can present you only with one thing: that you

are not, that your self is just imaginary. This realization between two persons suddenly makes them one, because two nothings cannot be two. Two somethings will be two, but two nothings cannot be two: Two nothings start melting and merging. They are bound to become one.

For example, if we are sitting here … If everybody is an ego then there are so many people they can be counted. But there are moments I can see—perhaps many times you see them, too—when there is utter silence. Then you cannot count how many people are here. There is only one consciousness, one silence, one nothingness, one selflessness. And only in that state can two persons live in eternal joy, can any group live in tremendous beauty. The whole of humanity can live in great benediction.

But try to see the self, and you will not find it.

Not finding it is of great importance. I have told many times the story of Bodhidharma and his meeting with the Chinese emperor Wu—a very strange meeting, very fruitful. Emperor Wu perhaps was at that time the greatest emperor in the world; he ruled all over China, Mongolia, Korea, and the whole of Asia, except India.

He became convinced of the truth of Gautam Buddha's teachings, but the people who had brought the message of Buddha were scholars. None of them were mystics. Then the news came that Bodhidharma was coming, and there was a great thrill all over the land. Because Emperor Wu had become influenced by Gautam Buddha, that had made his whole empire influenced by the same teaching. And now a real mystic, a buddha, was coming—it was such a great joy!

Emperor Wu had never before come to the boundaries where India and China meet to receive anyone. With great respect he welcomed Bodhidharma, and he asked, "I have been asking all the monks and the scholars who have been coming, but nobody has been of any help—I have tried everything. But how to get rid of this self? And Buddha says, 'Unless you become a no-self, your misery cannot end.'"

He was sincere. Bodhidharma looked into his eyes and said, "I will be staying by the side of the river near the mountain in the temple. Tomorrow morning, at four o'clock exactly, you come and I will finish this self forever. But remember, you are not to bring any arms with you, any guards with you; you have to come alone."

Wu was a little worried—the man was strange! "How can he just destroy my self so quickly? It takes—it has been told by the scholars—lives and lives of meditation; then the self disappears. This man is weird! And he is wanting me to come to him in the darkness, early in the morning at four o'clock, alone, even without a sword, no guards, no other companion. This man seems to be strange—he could do anything. And what does he mean that he will kill the self forever? He can kill me, but how will he kill the self?"

The whole night he could not sleep. He changed his mind again and again—to go or not to go? But there was something in the man's eyes, and there was something in

his voice, and there was some aura of authority when he said, “Just come at four o’clock sharp, and I will finish this self forever! You need not be worried about it.”

What he said seemed absurd, but the way he said it, and the way he looked were so authoritative: The man knows what he is saying. Finally, Wu had to decide to go. He decided to risk it: “At the most he can kill me—what else? And I have tried everything. I cannot attain this no-self, and without attaining this no-self there is no end to misery.”

He knocked on the temple door, and Bodhidharma said, “I knew you would come; I knew also that the whole night you would be changing your mind. But that does not matter—you have come. Now sit down in the lotus posture, close your eyes, and I am going to sit in front of you. The moment you find, inside, your self, catch hold of it so I can kill it. Just catch hold of it tightly and tell me that you have caught it, and I will kill it and it will be finished. It is a question of minutes.”

Wu was a little afraid. Bodhidharma looked like a madman—he is painted like a madman; he was not like that, but the paintings are symbolic. That’s the impression he must have left on people. It was not his real face, but that must be the face that people were remembering. He was sitting with his big staff in front of Wu, and he said to him, “Don’t miss a second. Just the moment you catch hold of it—search inside every nook and corner—open your eyes and then tell me that you have caught it, and I will finish it.”

Then there was silence. One hour passed, two hours passed, and the sun was rising, and Wu was a different man. In those two hours he looked inside himself, in every nook and corner. He had to look—that man was sitting there; he could have hit him on his head with his staff. You could expect anything, whatever! He was not a man of etiquette, manners; he was not part of Wu’s court, so Wu had to look intently, intensively. And as he looked, he became relaxed, because it was nowhere. In looking for it, all thoughts disappeared. The search was so intense that his whole energy was involved in it; there was nothing left to think, and desire, and this, and that.

As the sun was rising Bodhidharma saw Wu’s face; he was not the same man—such silence, such depth. He had disappeared. Bodhidharma shook him and told him, “Open your eyes—it is not there. I don’t have to kill it. I am a nonviolent man, I don’t kill anything! But this self does not exist. Because you never look at it, it goes on existing. It is in your not looking for it, in your unawareness, that it exists. Now it is gone.”

Two hours had passed, and Wu was immensely glad. He had never tasted such sweetness, such freshness, such newness, such beauty. And he was not.

Bodhidharma had fulfilled his promise. Emperor Wu bowed down, touched his feet, and said, “Please forgive me thinking that you are mad, thinking that you don’t know manners, thinking that you are weird, thinking that you can be dangerous. I have

never seen a more compassionate man than you.… I am totally fulfilled. Now there is no question in me."

Emperor Wu said that when he died, on his grave, the memorial, Bodhidharma's statement should be engraved in gold for the people in centuries to come to know … "There was a man who looked mad, but who was capable of doing miracles. Without doing anything he helped me to be a non-self. And since then everything has changed. Everything is the same but I am not the same, and life has become just a pure song of silence."

3

You Are Born with Courage

Compromise simply means you are on uncertain ground. Rather than compromising, find grounding, roots, individuality. Find a sincerity of feeling, the support of your heart. Then whatever the consequence, it does not matter. One who knows knows perfectly well that no harm is possible. You can kill him, but you cannot harm him. And one who does not know is always trembling, always worried. In that worrying and trembling, that anguish, he goes on compromising with everybody—just to be safe, not to be harmed. But what are you trying to save? You don't have anything to save.

I feel divided in two parts—half going toward the unknown, and half toward all that is familiar from my past. When I get close to letting go of what I believe is mine, I panic—even though I yearn to go to the place of the unknown that you talk about. Please give me courage to take the next step.

The real question is not of courage; the real question is that you don't understand that the known is the dead, and the unknown is the living.

Clinging to the known is clinging to a corpse. It does not need courage to drop the clinging; in fact it needs courage to go on clinging to a corpse! You just have to see … that which is familiar to you, which you have lived, what has it given? Where have you reached? Are you not still empty? Is there not immense discontent, a deep frustration and meaninglessness? Somehow you go on managing, hiding the truth and creating lies to remain engaged, involved.

This is the question: to see with clarity that everything that you know is of the past, it is already gone. It is part of a graveyard. Do you want to be in a grave, or do you want to be alive? And this is not only the question today; it will be the same question tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. It will be the same question at your last breath.

Whatever you know, accumulate—information, knowledge, experience—the moment you have explored them you are finished with them. Now, carrying those empty words, that dead load, is crushing your life, burdening your life, preventing you from entering into a living, rejoicing being—which is awaiting you each moment.

The man of understanding dies every moment to the past and is reborn again to the future. His present is always a transformation, a rebirth, a resurrection. It is not a question of courage at all, that is the first thing to be understood. It is a question of

clarity, of being clear about what is what.

And secondly, whenever there is really a question of courage, nobody can give it to you. It is not something that can be presented as a gift. It is something that you are born with, you just have not allowed it to grow, you have not allowed it to assert itself, because the whole society is against it. The society does not want lions, it wants a crowd of sheep. Then it is easy to enslave people, exploit people, do whatever you want to do with them. They don't have a soul; they are almost robots. You order, and they will obey. They are not free individuals.

No society wants you to be courageous. Every society wants you to be a coward, but nobody says it so sincerely; they have found beautiful words instead. They will not say, "Be cowardly," because that will look offensive to the person and he will start thinking, "Why should I be cowardly?"—and a coward is not something respectable. No, they say, "Be cautious. Think twice before you leap. Remember your tradition; your religion is thousands of years old, it has wisdom. You are a newcomer, you cannot afford to disbelieve in it. There is no comparison. You have just come in, and your religion has been there for ten thousand years, accumulating more and more experience, knowledge. It is a Himalayan phenomenon. You are a small pebble. You cannot fight with tradition—that is fighting against yourself, it is self-destructive. You can only submit to tradition; that is wise, intelligent. To be with the crowd you are protected, you are secure, you are assured that you will not go astray."

In so many ways you will be told a simple thing: Just be a coward. It pays to be cowardly; it is dangerous to be courageous because it is going to bring you in conflict with all the vested interest. And you are a small human being; you cannot fight with the whole world.

My grandfather used to say to me, "Whatever you say is right. I am old, but I can understand that you are saying something true. But I will suggest you don't say it to anybody; you will be in trouble. You cannot be against the whole world. You may have the truth, but truth does not count; what counts is the crowd. Somebody may be simply lying"—and all religions have been doing that, lying about God, lying about heaven, lying about hell, lying about a thousand and one things—"but the crowd is with them. Their lies are supported by the immense humanity and its long tradition. You are nobody."

I was very friendly with my grandfather. He used to take me to the saints who were visiting the town. He enjoyed very much my arguments with the so-called saints, creating a situation absolutely embarrassing for the saint because he was unable to answer me. But coming back, he would tell me, "Remember, it is good as a game, but don't make it your life; otherwise you will be alone against the whole world. And you cannot win against the whole world."

The last thing he said was the same. Before he died, he called me close and told

me, “Remember, don’t fight against the world. You cannot win.”

I said, “Now you are dying. You have been with the world—what have you gained? What is your victory? I cannot promise you what you are asking. I want it to be absolutely clear to you that whatever the cost … I may lose in the fight, but it will be my fight, and I will be immensely satisfied because I was in favor of truth. It does not matter whether I win or lose—that is irrelevant, the defeat or the victory. What is important is that whatever you feel is right, you stand for it.”

This courage is in everybody. It is not a quality to be practiced; it is something that is part of your life, your very breathing. It is just that the society has created so many barriers against your natural growth that you have started thinking, from where to get courage? From where to get intelligence? From where to get truth?

You have to go nowhere. You contain in the seed form everything that you want to be. Realizing this and seeing the other side … the people who live with the crowd—what is their gain? They lose everything. In fact they don’t live at all; they only die. From their birth they start dying, and go on dying till the last breath. Their whole life is a long series of deaths. Just look at the whole crowd of people. You can be with them, but the same is going to be your fate.

It is so simple if you see it: the only way to live life is to live on your own. It is an individual phenomenon, it is an independence, it is freedom. It is a constant unburdening of all that is dead, so that life can go on growing and is not crushed under the weight of the dead.

Is renouncing the world and society part of a rebellious spirit?

The whole past of man is full of those people who have renounced the world and society. Renunciation has become part of almost all religions, a foundational principle.

The rebel is renouncing the past. He is not going to repeat the past; he is bringing something new into the world. Those who have escaped from the world and society are escapists. They have really renounced responsibilities, but without understanding that the moment you renounce responsibilities you also renounce freedom. These are the complexities of life: freedom and responsibilities go away together or remain together.

The more you are a lover of freedom, the more you will be ready to accept responsibilities. But outside the world, outside the society, there is no possibility of any responsibility. And it has to be remembered that all that we learn, we learn through being responsible.

The past has destroyed the beauty of the word *responsibility*. They have made it almost equivalent to duty; it is not really so. A duty is something done reluctantly, as part of your spiritual slavery. Duty to your elders, duty to your husband, duty to your

children—they are not responsibilities. To understand the word *responsibility* is very significant. You have to break it in two: *response* and *ability*.

You can act in two ways—one is reaction, another is response. Reaction comes out of your past conditionings; it is mechanical. Response comes out of your presence, awareness, consciousness; it is nonmechanical. And the ability to respond is one of the greatest principles of growth. You are not following any order, any commandment; you are simply following your awareness. You are functioning like a mirror, reflecting the situation and responding to it—not out of your memory, from past experiences of similar situations; not repeating your reactions but acting fresh, new, in this very moment. Neither is the situation old, nor is your response—both are new. This ability is one of the qualities of the rebel.

Renouncing the world, escaping to the forest and the mountains, you are simply escaping from a learning situation. In a cave in the Himalayas you won't have any responsibility, but remember, without responsibility you cannot grow; your consciousness will remain stuck. For growth it needs to face, to encounter, to accept the challenges of responsibilities.

Escapists are cowards, they are not rebels—although that's what has been thought up to now, that they are rebellious spirits. They are not, they are simply cowards. They could not cope with life. They knew their weaknesses, their frailties, and they thought it was better to escape; because then you will never have to face your weakness, your frailty, you will never come to know any challenge. But without challenges how are you going to grow?

No, the rebel cannot renounce the world and the society, but he certainly renounces many other things. He renounces the so-called morality imposed upon him by the society; he renounces the so-called values imposed by the society; he renounces the knowledge given by the society. He does not renounce the society as such, but he renounces everything that the society has given to him. This is true renunciation.

The rebel lives in the society, fighting, struggling. To remain in the crowd, and not to be obedient to the crowd but to be obedient to one's own conscience, is a tremendous opportunity for growth. It makes you bring out your best; it gives you a dignity.

A rebel is a fighter, a warrior. But how can you be a warrior in a cave in the Himalayas? With whom are you going to fight? The rebel remains in the society, but he is no longer part of the society—that is his renunciation and that is his rebelliousness. He is not stubborn, he is not adamant, he is not an egoist; he does not just go on fighting blindly.

If he finds something is right he obeys it, but he obeys his own feeling of rightness, not the commandment given by others. And if he sees that it is not right he disobeys it, whatsoever the cost may be. He may accept a crucifixion, but he will not accept any

spiritual slavery.

The situation of the rebel is tremendously exciting: Each moment he is faced with problems because the society has a fixed mode, a fixed pattern, fixed ideals. And the rebel cannot go with those fixed ideals—he has to follow his own still small voice. If his heart is saying no, there is no way, no power, to force him to say yes. You can kill him, but you cannot destroy his rebellious spirit.

His renunciation is far greater than the renunciation of Gautam Buddha, Mahavira, and millions of others—they simply renounced the society, escaped into the forest, into the mountains. It was an easier way, but very dangerous because it goes against your growth. The rebel renounces the society and still remains in it, fighting moment to moment. In this way he not only grows, he also allows the society to learn that there are many things that are not right, but have been thought to be right. There are many things that are immoral but have been thought moral; there are many things that have been thought very wise, but they are really *other*wise.

For example, all the societies of the world have praised virginity in women. It is a universally accepted ideal that the woman should remain a virgin before marriage. Sometimes there is a small, thin barrier of skin in a woman's vagina, and if the woman makes love to somebody, that small barrier prevents the sperm from going to the egg.

The first thing the man is interested to know about is the small barrier, whether it is intact or not. If it is not intact then the girl is not a virgin. Sometimes riding on a horse or climbing a tree or in an accident, that small barrier can be broken, can have holes, although the girl is a virgin. In the Middle Ages it was impossible to get a husband for her, so there were doctors who used to make an artificial skin barrier and fix it so that the woman looked virgin, whether she was virgin or not. Stupidity has no limits.

In fact, virginity should not be a part of a truly understanding society. Virginity means the woman remains unaware of what she is going to face after marriage. A more compassionate society will allow boys and girls to know sex before they get married so they know exactly what they are going for, whether they want to go for it or not. A woman should be allowed to know as many people before marriage as possible, and the same applies to the man—because before deciding on a right partner, the only way to know is to have experiences with many partners, different types of people.

But ignorance has been propounded in the name of virginity, in the name of morality.

Ignorance cannot be supported on any grounds. If in the world married people are so miserable, one of the major reasons is that they were not allowed to know many women, many men, before their marriage; otherwise they would have chosen, with more understanding, the right person who fits harmoniously with them.

Astrologers are consulted—as if the stars are worried about whom you get married

to, as if the stars are at all interested in you! Palmists are consulted, as if there are lines on your hand that can give indications for a right partner. Birth charts are consulted.… All these things are absolutely irrelevant. When you were born and when the woman was born has no relationship to the life that you are going to live. But these have been rationalizations. Man was trying to console himself that he has been trying every possible way to find the right partner.

There is only one way to find the right partner: that is, allow young boys and young girls to mix with as many partners as possible, so they can know the differences between women, the differences between men. Then they can come to know with whom they are polar opposites, with whom they are just lukewarm, with whom they are passionately in harmony. Except that there is no way of finding the right partner.

A person of rebellious spirit will have to be aware about every ideal, howsoever ancient, and will respond according to awareness and understanding—not according to the conditioning of the society. That is true renunciation.

Lao Tzu, an authentic rebel—more authentic than Gautam Buddha and Mahavira, because he remained in the world and fought in the world—lived according to his own light, struggling, not escaping. He became so wise that the emperor invited him to become his prime minister. He simply refused. He said, “It won’t work because it is improbable that we can come to the same conclusions about things. You live according to the ideals your forefathers have given to you; I live according to my own conscience.” But the emperor was insistent; he could not see that there was any problem.

The very first day in his court a thief was brought in; he had been caught red-handed, stealing from the richest man in the capital—and he confessed that he was stealing. Lao Tzu gave six months in jail to both the rich man and the thief. The rich man said, “What? I have been robbed, I am a victim, and I am being punished? Are you mad or something? There is no precedent in history that a man whose money has been stolen should be punished.”

Lao Tzu said, “In fact, you should be given a longer term in jail than the thief—I am being much too compassionate—because you have gathered all the money of the city. Do you think money showers from the sky? Who has made these people so poor that they have to become thieves? You are responsible.

“And this will be my judgment in every case of stealing; both persons will go to jail. Your crime is far deeper, his crime is nothing. He is poor and you are responsible for it. And if he was stealing a little bit of money from your treasures, it was not much of a crime. That money belongs to many of the poor people from whom you got it. You went on becoming richer and richer and many more people went on becoming poorer and poorer.”

The rich man thought, “This man seems to be crazy, utterly crazy.” He said, “I

want one chance to see the emperor." He was so rich that even the emperor used to borrow money from him. He told the emperor what had happened. He said to him, "If you don't remove this man from the court you will be behind bars just like me—because from where have you got all your treasures? If I am a criminal, you are a far bigger criminal."

The emperor saw the logic of the situation. He told Lao Tzu, "Perhaps you were right that it will be difficult for us to come to the same conclusions. You are relieved from your services."

This man was a rebel; he lived in the society, he struggled in the society. A rebellious mind can only think the way he thought. He was not reacting—otherwise there were precedents and law books. He was not looking in the law books and the precedents; he was looking inside his own self, watching the situation. Why are so many people poor? Who is responsible for it? Certainly those who have become too rich are the real criminals.

A rebel will renounce ideals, morals, religions, philosophies, rituals, and superstitions of the society, but not the society itself. He is not a coward, he is a warrior. He has to fight his way and he has to make paths for other rebels to follow.

As far as the world is concerned … and the world and the society are not the same thing. In the past, the so-called religious people have renounced the society and the world, both. The rebel will fight against the society, renounce its ideals, and he will love the world—because the world, the existence, is our very source of life. To renounce it is to be anti-life. But all religions have been anti-life, life-negative.

The rebel should be life-affirmative. He will bring in all those values that make the world more beautiful, more lovable, which make the world more rich. It is our world—we are part of it, it is part of us—how can we renounce it? Where can we go to renounce it? The world is in the Himalayan cave as much as it is here in the marketplace.

The world has to be nourished because it is nourishing you. The world has to be respected because it is your very source of life. All the juice that flows in you, all the joys and celebrations that happen to you, come from existence itself. Rather than running away from it, you should dive deeper into it; you should send your roots to deeper sources of life and love and laughter. You should dance and celebrate.

Your celebration will bring you closer to existence, because existence is in constant celebration. Your joy, your blissfulness, your silence, will bring the silences of the stars and the sky; your peace with existence will open the doors of all the mysteries it contains. There is no other way to become enlightened.

The world has not to be condemned, it has to be respected. The rebel will honor existence, he will have immense reverence for life in whatsoever form it exists—for men, for women, for trees, for mountains, for stars. In whatever form life exists, the

rebel will have a deep reverence. That will be his gratitude, that will be his prayer, that will be his religion, that will be his revolution.

To be a rebel is the beginning of a totally new kind of life, a totally new style of life; it is the beginning of a new humanity, of a new man.

I would like the whole world to be rebellious, because only in that rebelliousness will we blossom to our full potential, will we release our fragrances. We will not be repressed individuals, as man has remained for centuries … the most repressed animal. Even birds are far more free, far more natural, far more in tune with nature. When the sun rises, it does not knock on every tree, saying, "Wake up, the night is over." It does not go to every nest of birds, saying, "Start singing, it is time for song." No, just as the sun rises, the flowers start opening on their own accord. And the birds start singing—not by an order from above, but from an intrinsic inevitability, from a joy, from a blissfulness.

Once I was a professor in a Sanskrit college. Since there were no professors' quarters immediately available and I was alone, they made arrangements for me to live in the hostel with the students. It was a Sanskrit college, following the old traditional way: Each morning every student had to wake up at four o'clock, take a cold shower, and line up by five for prayer.

For many years I used to wake up on my own in the darkness of the very early morning … and they were not even aware that I had come as a professor, because I had not started teaching yet.

It was a mistake on the part of the government to send me to that college, because I had no qualifications to teach Sanskrit. It took six months for the government to correct their mistake. Bureaucracy moves slowest, just as light moves fastest. They are the two polar opposites: light and bureaucracy.

So I had no business there and the students had no idea that I was a professor … and instead of prayer they were all abusing God, abusing the principal, abusing the whole ritual; in the cold of winter taking a cold shower—it was absolutely compulsory. I heard the whole situation. I said, "This is strange … instead of being in prayer, they are doing just the opposite. Perhaps these six years in this college will be enough for them: They will never pray again in their whole lives. They will never wake up early, never again. These six years of torture will be enough of an experience."

I told the principal, "It is not right to make prayer compulsory. Prayer cannot be made compulsory; love cannot be made compulsory."

He said, "No, it is not a question of compulsion. Even if I remove the order that it is compulsory, they will still pray."

I said, "You try it."

He removed the order. Except for me, nobody woke up at four o'clock. I went and

knocked on the principal's door at four o'clock. He himself was asleep—he was always asleep, he never participated in the prayer himself. I said, "Now come on and see; not a single student out of five hundred has woken up, and not a single student is praying."

The birds do not sing out of compulsion. This cuckoo is not singing because of any presidential order, because of an emergency—it is simply rejoicing with the sun, with the trees.

Existence is a constant celebration. The flowers have opened their petals not because of any order—it is not a duty. It is a response—a response to the sun, a respect, a prayer, a gratitude.

A rebel lives naturally, responds naturally, becomes at home and at ease with existence. He is an existential being. That defines the rebel correctly: the existential being. Existence is his temple, existence is his holy scripture, existence is his whole philosophy. He is not an existentialist, he is existential; it is his experience.

He is at ease with the trees, with the rivers, with the mountains. He does not renounce, he has no condemnation; he has only great honor in his heart, and gratitude. To me, this gratitude is the only prayer.

What has gone wrong? Why is it that people meet everything new reluctantly, and with fear, rather than with eager joy?

The new does not arise out of you, it comes from the beyond. It is not part of you. Your whole past is at stake. The new is discontinuous with you, hence the fear. You have lived in one way, you have thought in one way, you have made a comfortable life out of your beliefs. Then something new knocks on the door. Now your whole past pattern is going to be disturbed. If you allow the new to enter you will never be the same again, the new will transform you.

It is risky. One never knows where you will end with the new. The old is known, familiar; you have lived with it for long, you are acquainted with it. The new is unfamiliar. It may be the friend, it may be the enemy, who knows. And there is no way to know. The only way to know is to allow it; hence the apprehension, the fear.

And you cannot remain rejecting it either, because the old has not given you yet what you seek. The old has been promising, but the promises have not been fulfilled. The old is familiar but miserable. The new is maybe going to be uncomfortable but there is a possibility—it may bring bliss to you. So you cannot reject it either and you cannot accept it; hence you waver, you tremble, great anguish arises in your being. It is natural, nothing has gone wrong. This is how it has always been, this is how it will always be.

Try to understand the appearance of the new. Everybody in the world wants to

become new, because nobody is satisfied with the old. Nobody can ever be satisfied with the old because whatsoever it is, you have known it. Once known it has become repetitive; once known it has become boring, monotonous. You want to get rid of it. You want to explore, you want to adventure. You want to become new, and yet when the new knocks on the door you shrink back, you withdraw, you hide in the old. This is the dilemma.

How do we become new?—and everybody wants to become new. Courage is needed, and not ordinary courage; extraordinary courage is needed. And the world is full of cowards; hence people have stopped growing. How can you grow if you are a coward? With each new opportunity you shrink back, you close your eyes. How can you grow? How can you be? You only pretend to be.

And because you cannot grow you have to find substitute growths. You cannot grow, but your bank balance can grow; that's a substitute. It needs no courage, it is perfectly adjusted with your cowardliness. Your bank balance goes on growing and you start thinking that you are growing. You become more respectable. Your name and fame go on growing and you think you are growing? You are simply deceiving yourself. Your name is not you, neither is your fame you. Your bank balance is not your being. But if you think of the being you start shaking, because if you want to grow there then you have to drop all cowardice.

How do we become new? We do not become new of ourselves. Newness comes from the beyond, say from God. Newness comes from existence. Mind is always old. Mind is never new; it is the accumulation of the past. Newness comes from the beyond; it is a gift from God. It is from the beyond and it is of the beyond.

The unknown and the unknowable, the beyond, has ingress into you. It has ingress into you because you are never sealed and set apart; you are not an island. You may have forgotten the beyond but the beyond has not forgotten you. The child may have forgotten the mother; the mother has not forgotten the child. The part may have started thinking, "I am separate," but the whole knows that you are not separate. The whole has ingress in you. It is still in contact with you. That's why the new goes on coming although you don't welcome it. It comes every morning, it comes every evening. It comes in a thousand and one ways. If you have eyes to see, you will see it continuously coming to you.

God goes on showering on you, but you are enclosed in your past. You are almost in a kind of grave. You have become insensitive. Because of your cowardliness you have lost your sensitivity. To be sensitive means the new will be felt—and the thrill of the new, and the passion for the new and the adventure will arise and you will start moving into the unknown, not knowing where you are going.

Mind thinks it is mad. Mind thinks it is not rational to leave the old. But God is always the new. That's why we cannot use past tense or future tense for God. We

cannot say “God was,” we cannot say “God will be.” We can only use the present: “God is.” It is always fresh, virgin. And it has ingress in you.

Remember, anything new coming into your life is a message from God. If you accept it you are religious. If you reject it you are irreligious. Man needs just to relax a little more to accept the new; to open up a little more to let the new in. Give way to God entering you.

That is the whole meaning of prayer or meditation—you open up, you say yes, you say, “Come in.” You say, “I have been waiting and waiting and I am thankful that you have come.” Always receive the new with great joy. Even if sometimes the new leads you into inconvenience, still it is worth it. Even if sometimes the new leads you into some ditch, still it is worth it, because only through errors one learns, and only through difficulties one grows. The new will bring difficulties. That’s why you choose the old—it does not bring any difficulties. It is a consolation, it is a shelter.

And only the new, accepted deeply and totally, can transform you. You cannot bring the new in your life; the new comes. You can either accept it or reject it. If you reject it you remain a stone, closed and dead. If you receive it you become a flower, you start opening … and in that opening is celebration.

Only the entry of the new can transform you; there is no other way of transformation. But remember, it has nothing to do with you and your efforts. But to do nothing is not to cease to act; it is to act without will or direction or impulse from your past. The search for the new cannot be an ordinary search, because it is for the new. How can you search for it? You don’t know it, you have never met it. The search for the new is going to be just an open exploration. One knows not. One has to start in a state of not-knowing, and one has to move innocently like a child, thrilled with the possibilities—and infinite are the possibilities.

You cannot do anything to create the new, because whatsoever you do will be of the old, will be from the past. But that does not mean that you have to cease to act. It is to act without will or direction or impulse from your past. Act without any will or direction or impulse from the past—and that is to act meditatively. Act spontaneously. Let the moment be decisive.

You don’t impose your decision, because the decision will be from the past and it will destroy the new. You just act in the moment like a child. Utterly abandon yourself to the moment—and you will find every day new openings, new light, new insight. And those new insights will go on changing you. One day, suddenly you will see you are each moment new. The old no more lingers, the old no more hangs around you like a cloud. You are like a dewdrop, fresh and young.

Remember, a buddha lives moment to moment. It is as if a wave rises in the ocean, a majestic wave. With great joy and dance it comes up, with hope and dreams to touch the stars. Then the play for the moment, and then the wave disappears. It will come

again, it will have another day. It will again dance and again it will be gone. So is God—comes, disappears, comes again, disappears. So is a buddha consciousness. Each moment it comes, acts, responds, and is gone. Again it comes and is gone. It is atomic.

Between two moments there is a gap; in that gap, Buddha disappears. I say a word to you, then I disappear. Then I say another word and I am there, and then I disappear again. I respond to you and then I am no more. The response is again there and I am no more. Those intervals, those emptinesses keep one utterly fresh, because only death can keep you absolutely alive.

You die once, after seventy years. Naturally you accumulate seventy years' garbage. A Buddha dies every moment—no garbage is accumulated, nothing is accumulated, nothing is ever possessed. That's why Buddha said the other day that to possess marks is to be a fraud, because possession is of the past. Not to possess marks is to be a Buddha.

Just think of it—each moment arising, just like a breath. You breathe in, you breathe out. You breathe in again, you breathe out again. Each breath coming in is life and each breath going out is death. You are born with each incoming breath, you die with each outgoing breath. Let each moment be a birth and a death. Then you will be new.

But this new has nothing to do with your past, your will, your direction, your impulse. It is to act spontaneously. It is not reaction but response. All that is done out of the past is old, so that one can of oneself do nothing new. To see this is to be done with the old and with the past and with yourself. That is all we can do. But it is everything, it is all. Upon the ending of the old, the new may follow, it may not. It does not matter. The very wish for the new is an old wish. Then one is utterly open. Even to ask for the new is an old wish.

A buddha is not even asking for the new. There is no desire for anything, that "It should be like this." If there is desire you will manage it like that, you will impose yourself upon it. See life desirelessly. See life without any conditions. See life as it is—*yatha bhutam*—and you will be continuously renewed, rejuvenated.

That is the real meaning of resurrection. If you understand this you will be free from memory, psychological memory that is. Memory is a dead thing. Memory is not truth and cannot ever be, because truth is always alive, truth is life; memory is persistence of that which is no more. It is living in a ghost world, but it contains us, it is our prison. In fact, it is us. Memory creates the knot, the complex called "I," the ego. And naturally this false entity called "I" is continuously afraid of death. That's why you are afraid of the new.

This "I" is afraid, not really you. The being has no fear, but the ego has fear, because the ego is very much afraid of dying. It is artificial, it is arbitrary, it is put together. It can fall apart any moment. And when the new enters, there is fear. The ego

is afraid, it may fall apart. Somehow it has been managing to keep itself together, to keep itself in one piece, and now something new comes—it will be a shattering thing. That's why you don't accept the new with joy. The ego cannot accept its own death with joy—how can it accept its own death with joy?

Unless you have understood that you are not the ego, you will not be able to receive the new. Once you have seen that the ego is your past memory and nothing else, that you are not your memory, that memory is just like a biocomputer, that it is a machine, a mechanism, utilitarian, but you are beyond it.… You are consciousness, not memory. Memory is content in consciousness, you are consciousness itself.

For example, you see somebody walking on the road. You remember the face but you can't remember the name. If you are the memory you should remember the name too. But you say, "I recognize the face but I don't remember the name." Then you start looking in your memory, you go inside your memory, you look to this side, to that side, and suddenly the name bubbles up and you say, "Yes, this is his name." Memory is your record. You are the one who is looking into the record, you are not the memory itself. And it happens many times that if you become too tense about remembering something it becomes difficult to remember it, because the very tension, the very strain upon your being does not allow the memory to release its information to you. You try and try to remember somebody's name and it doesn't come, even though you say it is just on the tip of the tongue. You know that you know, but still the name is not coming.

Now this is strange. If you are memory, then who is preventing you and how is it not coming? And who is this who says, "I know, but still it is not coming"? And then you try hard, and the harder you try the more difficult it becomes. Then, fed up with the whole thing, you go into the garden for a walk, and suddenly, looking at the rosebush, it is there, it has surfaced.

Your memory is not you. You are consciousness, memory is content. But memory is the whole life-energy of the ego. Memory is of course old, and it is afraid of the new. The new may be disturbing, the new may be such that it may not be digestible. The new may bring some trouble. You will have to shift and reshift yourself. You will have to readjust yourself. That seems arduous.

To be new one needs to become disidentified with the ego. Once you are disidentified with the ego you don't care whether it dies or lives. In fact you know that whether it lives or dies it is already dead. It is a mechanism. Use it but don't be used by it. The ego is continuously afraid of death because it is arbitrary. Hence the fear. It does not arise out of being, it cannot arise out of being, because being is life. How can life be afraid of death? Life knows nothing of death.

It arises out of the arbitrary, the artificial, the somehow put together, the false, the pseudo. And yet it is just such letting-go, just that death that makes a man alive. To die

in the ego is to be born into being, into God.

The new is a messenger from God, the new is a message from existence. It is a gospel. Listen to the new, go with the new. I know you are afraid. In spite of the fear, go with the new, and your life will become richer and richer and you will be able one day to release the imprisoned splendor.

Sometimes after an experience of meditation I feel tremendously good and bright, and then I'm afraid to get influenced again by people so that I fall back again into my old mind. Can you say something about energies and experiences, and how we can move in the marketplace without getting influenced by other people who have not such good energy?

The most basic thing to remember is that when you are feeling good, in a mood of ecstasy, don't start thinking that it is going to be your permanent state. Live the moment as joyfully, as cheerfully as possible, knowing perfectly well that it has come and it will go—just like a breeze comes in your house, with all its fragrance and freshness, and goes out from the other door.

This is the most fundamental thing. If you start thinking in terms of making your ecstatic moments permanent, you have already started destroying them. When they come, be grateful; when they leave, be thankful to existence. Remain open. It will happen many times—don't be judgmental, don't be a chooser. Remain choiceless.

Yes, there will be moments when you will be miserable. So what! There are people who are miserable and who have not even known a single moment of ecstasy; you are fortunate. Even in your misery, remember that it is not going to be permanent; it will also pass away, so don't get too disturbed by it. Remain at ease. Just like day and night, there are moments of joy and there are moments of sadness; accept them as part of the duality of nature, as the very way things are.

You are simply a watcher: neither do you become happiness nor do you become misery. Happiness comes and goes, misery comes and goes. One thing remains always there—always and always—and that is the watcher, one who witnesses. Slowly, slowly get more and more centered into the watcher. Days will come and nights will come … lives will come and deaths will come … success will come, failure will come. But if you are centered in the watcher—because that is the only reality in you—everything is a passing phenomenon.

Just for a moment, try to feel what I am saying. Just be a watcher. Do not cling to any moment because it is beautiful, and do not push any moment away because it is miserable. Stop doing that. That, you have been doing for lives. You have not been successful yet and you will never be successful ever. The only way to go beyond, to remain beyond, is to find a place from where you can watch all these changing phenomena without getting identified.

I will tell you an ancient Sufi story….

A king asked his wise men in the court, “I am making a very beautiful ring for myself. I have one of the best diamonds possible. I want to keep hidden inside the ring some message that may be helpful to me in a time of utter despair. It has to be very small so that it can be hidden underneath the diamond in the ring.”

They were all wise men, they all were great scholars; they could have written great treatises. But to give him a message of not more than two or three words which would help him in moments of utter despair … They thought, they looked into their books, but they could not find anything.

The king had an old servant who was almost like his father—he had been his father’s servant. The king’s mother had died early and this servant had taken care of him, so he was not treated like a servant. The king had immense respect for him. The old man said, “I am not a wise man, knowledgeable, scholarly; but I know the message—because there is only one message. And these people cannot give it to you; it can be given only by a mystic, by a man who has realized himself. In my long life in the palace I have come across all kinds of people, and once, a mystic. He had also been a guest of your father and I was put into his service. When he was departing, as a gesture of thankfulness for all my services, he gave me this message”—and the old man wrote it on a small piece of paper. He folded it and told the king, “Don’t read it, just keep it hidden in the ring. Only open it when everything else has failed, when there is no way out.”

The time came soon. The country was invaded and the king lost his kingdom. He was running away on his horse just to save his life and the enemy horses were following him. He was alone; they were many. He came to a place where the path stopped, came to a dead end; there was only a cliff and a deep valley; to fall into it was to be finished. He could not go back, the enemy was there and he could hear the sounds of the hooves of the horses. He could not go forward, and there was no other way.…

Suddenly he remembered the ring. He opened it, took out the paper, and there was a small message of tremendous value: It simply said, “This too will pass.” A great silence came over him as he read the sentence. “This too will pass.”

And it passed.

Everything passes away; nothing remains in this world. The enemies who were following him must have got lost in the forest, must have taken a different path; the sound of the hooves of their horses faded, slowly, and then could not be heard anymore.

The king was immensely grateful to the servant and to the unknown mystic. Those words proved miraculous. He folded the paper, put it back into the ring, gathered his armies again, and reconquered his kingdom. And the day he was entering his capital,

victorious, there was great celebration all over the capital, music, dance—he was feeling very proud of himself.

The old man was there, and was walking by the side of his chariot. He said to the king, "This time is also right: look again at the message."

The king said, "What do you mean? Now I am victorious, people are celebrating. I am not in despair, I am not in a situation where there is no way out."

The old man said, "Listen. This is what the saint has said to me: This message is not only for despair, it is also for pleasure. This is not only for when you are defeated; it is also for when you are victorious—not only when you are the last, but also when you are the first."

And the king opened the ring and read the message, "This too will pass." And suddenly the same peace, the same silence, amidst the crowds, jubilating, celebrating, dancing … but the pride, the ego was gone.

Everything passes away.

The king asked his old servant to come on the chariot and sit with him. He asked, "Is there anything more? Everything passes away.… Your message has been immensely helpful."

The old man said, "The third thing the saint said, 'Remember, everything passes. Only you remain; you remain forever as a witness.'"

So this is the answer to your question: Everything passes, but you remain. You are the reality; everything else is just a dream. Beautiful dreams are there, nightmares are there … But it does not matter whether it is a beautiful dream or a nightmare; what matters is the one who is seeing the dream. That seer is the only reality.

In the East we don't have anything like philosophy. Scholars have translated the Eastern word *darshan,* which means *seeing*, into "philosophy," finding no other way to capture its meaning. But they are not at all connected: Philosophy is *thinking*, not seeing. A blind man can think about light, but cannot see it; the man with eyes can see the light; there is no need to think about it. In the East there is nothing comparable to philosophy; in the West there is nothing comparable to *darshan*. I have coined my own word to translate *darshan,* and that is *philosia*. *Philo* means love, and *sia* means to see. *Sophy* means thinking, *sia* means seeing. And the whole East has been working only in one dimension for centuries: how to find the seer. You cannot go beyond it; that is the ultimate. Everything is in front of it; it is behind the whole reality, and everything goes on changing.…

You are a child, you will become young, you will become old. You are alive, you will be dead—everything goes on changing.

But the seer is something absolutely eternal.

Just a little glimpse of it and all your problems will start disappearing, because a totally new perspective will arise—a new vision, a new way of life, a new way of

seeing things, seeing people, responding to situations. And the seer is always present, twenty-four hours a day; whatever you are doing or not doing, it is there. It has been there for centuries, for eternity, waiting for you to take note of it.

Perhaps because it has been always there, that's why you have forgotten it. The obvious is always forgotten. Remember it when you are feeling a well-being, a euphoria; remember it when you are in misery, in anguish. Remember it in all climates, in all moods—go on remembering it. Soon you will be able to remain centered in it; there will be no need to remember.

And that is the greatest day in one's life. That day you become enlightened. That day you become awakened. That day Zorba changes into a buddha.

4

Create the Way by Walking

When you see a beautiful sunset, you enjoy the beauty of it … when you see a Buddha, enjoy the beauty of the man, enjoy the authenticity of the man, enjoy the silence, enjoy the truth the man has realized, but don't become a follower. All followers are lost. Remain yourself—because this man Gautam Buddha has found because he has remained himself. All these beautiful names—Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Lieh-tzu, Bodhidharma, Nagarjuna, Pythagoras, Socrates, Heraclitus—that have been a great inspiration to many people were themselves never inspired by anybody. That's how they protected their originality; that's how they remained themselves.

Anarchy simply means absence of authority, which is beautiful. But in common language it has the meaning of absence of discipline. Why that confusion? Could you speak about discipline, especially its relation to rebellion?

Anarchy is one of the most beautiful words in the human language. Yes, it means absence of authority. It means you are accepted as an independent individual; you are no longer a slave.

Your question is: Why, in people's minds, has anarchy taken on the connotation of absence of discipline? It is a very simple psychological phenomenon. All discipline that you have known was imposed upon you by the authority. The authority of the parents disciplined you—what to eat, what not to eat, when to eat, when to go to sleep, and when to get up. What to do and what not to do was never left to your own decision. The parents were your first authority, just like God the Father was the first authority for Adam and Eve. He was the father and they were the children, and he was telling them not to eat from the tree of knowledge, not to eat from the tree of eternal life. Authority disciplines you.

Then there are teachers in the school, the priest in the church, in the temple, the rabbi in the synagogue, and they are all authoritarian figures. You have to do what they say; otherwise you will have some kind of punishment either here or after death.

Naturally, authority and discipline become associated with each other. So whenever authority is removed, you think now there is no need of discipline.

The reality is, when authority is removed then there is a real need of discipline.

Now there is nobody to impose any order on you; it is your responsibility to live a life of order, discipline. Why? Because one who lives without order starts falling into pieces, falling apart. His life starts losing harmony. A man who does not know discipline lives a life that cannot be called really human; he falls back into the world of the animal kingdom.

Discipline makes you integrated, gives you a certain crystallization. And without that crystallization you cannot be more conscious. Authority is slavery for you. Discipline is living an organic, harmonious life.

Just see how authority has destroyed humanity down the ages. Start from the very beginning.… It was God's authoritarian order that Adam and Eve should not eat from these two trees of knowledge and eternal life. What was the result? The result was disobedience. Any obedience forced upon you creates in you, if you have any guts, disobedience. You want to do just the opposite.

When I first read the story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion, I went to my father and showed him the story. He said, "But why are you showing it to me?"

I said, "I am showing it to you so that you understand: no shoulds, no should-nots; otherwise I am going to disobey. Even God could not manage; you will not be able to manage it. The story is clear."

He said, "You draw strange conclusions! The story is told so that people don't disobey, and you are drawing the conclusion that the story says people should not be authoritarian."

I said, "It is absolutely clear—because in the Garden of Eden there were millions of trees; if God had not been so stupid, then I don't think even by now Adam and Eve would have found the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. He is responsible for their disobedience, and if anybody has to be punished, God should be punished. So I am just telling you that if you tell me to do anything, I am going to do its very opposite, whatever the consequences. It may harm me, it may harm you, it may harm anybody, but one thing is certain: obedience is not going to be my way of life. You can certainly advise me, but the choice is always mine, to do or not to do." My whole family remained in trouble continuously. And it was natural.…

In my city there was a very beautiful river. But it was a mountain river, so suddenly in the rains it would become too big and huge, and in summer it would shrink and become small. In the rains the current was so great that to cross the river by swimming was almost to invite death. But I told my father, "This river is a constant challenge to me. So I am ready—even if death happens, I am going to cross this river when it is in full flood."

It becomes almost one mile broad, and it takes about three, four hours to cross it. And the current is so powerful that you cannot cross it directly. The current goes on pushing you downward, so when you reach—if you survive—you reach almost five,

six miles down on the other shore. Then you have to walk twelve miles up—then only can you come back to the spot from where you had started. It was going to take the whole day.

My father said, “Don’t do that.”

I said, “You are not advising me, you are ordering me. I am going to do it.”

My whole family was in a turmoil: “You are so small, and this is dangerous. Nobody has even tried it; the best swimmers in the city have not dared.”

I said, “That makes it more challenging.”

I went against the whole family. They even threatened me that they wouldn’t allow me to come into the house if I survived. I said, “That’s okay. I will sit just outside the house.”

It was difficult. There were moments when I thought, “Perhaps it is not possible to reach the other shore.” It was arduous, tiring, but I managed it. And then twelve miles I had to go upstream.

By the evening I was back. I didn’t enter the house, I sat just on the steps. They were all amazed to see me, that I had come back alive. My mother said, “Why don’t you come in?”

I said, “You made the condition that even if I survive, you are not going to let me in. So I am sitting on the steps. If you have any objection, I can sit on the street.”

My father came and took me in. He said, “We are sorry. We never expected that you would be able to manage. You do not know in what agony we remained the whole day.”

I said, “But the ecstasy that I have felt—in comparison to it your agony means nothing. My suggestion is next time you also come with me. All my uncles are invited to come with me. It is a tremendous job, but once it is done, something in you crystallizes. I feel stronger than ever!”

In the school it was continuously a problem, because I did not believe in any authority.

I have loved hats from my very childhood, but in the school I had to drop hats because it was compulsory; you could not come to the school without a hat. My family said, “But you love hats!”

I said, “I love hats, but I love freedom more … even more than my head! If I have to lose my head, I will lose it willingly, but I cannot lose my freedom. I have been called by the principal of the school to see him tomorrow, so I am very excited about the encounter.”

The principal was thinking that he would just threaten me and things would be settled. I entered his room and I told him, “Before you start threatening me—and I know you have been using corporal punishment—if you do any harm to me, I am going directly to the police station. Corporal punishment has been banished, it is

illegal; you will be unnecessarily in trouble. I don't want you to be in trouble. So first, drop whatever you have been thinking. Man to man, let us discuss the whole problem. If you can convince me …

"I love hats, but if you simply order me, then there is no way that I will use hats." I asked him, "What relationship has a hat with education? Does it increase a person's intelligence?"

He said, "These questions I have never thought about."

I said, "Then you think, and you inquire; consult higher authorities. You have to prove that the hat has some relevance. I have come to the school to be educated. If the hat helps intelligence, I am perfectly willing to wear it. But you will have to prove it."

The reality is that in India, Punjabis are the only people who always wear a head covering. They use turbans; that is part of their religion. The Sikh has to wear it, otherwise he is not a Sikh. And they have the reputation for being the most unintelligent people in the whole country. The Bengalis are the people who don't wear any hats, any caps, and they have the reputation for being the most intelligent people in the country. Not a single Punjabi has risen to world eminence for his intelligence. They have not achieved Nobel Prizes. But Bengalis have become world famous. They have achieved the Nobel Prize for science, the Nobel Prize for literature, and all kinds of other awards.

I told the principal, "What this proves is that the turbans are preventing the intelligence of the poor Sikhs. The Bengalis, without any caps, any turbans, any hats, seem to have fresher minds, are more intelligent. They have created the best literature in the whole of India, the best poetry, the best art, and their language is a beauty. Even if two Bengalis are fighting, you cannot think that they are fighting, their language is so sweet."

The principal said, "I will call you when I have figured it out, but you seem to be a difficult case."

I said, "That's true. But call me only when you have enough proof."

I remained all my school life without a cap. Naturally, many other students stopped wearing caps. One day the principal called me and said, "This is too much! You are not wearing a cap and you are spreading a kind of rebellion, disobedience. Now others are not wearing caps."

I said, "I have not said anything to anybody; to wear a cap or not is their freedom. One thing is certain, you have not come up with any argument to prove it helps intelligence. To you I can say that you should not wear the cap! It is not dignified of you. For no reason, why are you destroying your intelligence?"

In the college, I used to have a long robe, with a wraparound *lungi* as it is used in India, and with no buttons on the robe, so the chest is open. And I was very healthy and robust, one hundred and ninety pounds. The principal told me, "Coming to the

college without buttons is not according to the dress code."

I said, "Then change the dress code, because my chest needs fresh air. And I decide according to my needs, not according to anybody's idea of etiquette."

In my first year in the college, I won the all-India university competition for debate, and the professor in charge—he is dead now, Indrabahadur Khare—was a very properly dressed man. Everything about him was proper. He took me to a photo studio near the college, because they wanted my picture to be released to the newspapers, to the magazines, and particularly for the college magazine: I had won the all-India competition and I was just a first-year student. But he was very tense all the way there. When we entered the studio, he said, "Excuse me, but without any buttons, how will your photograph look?"

I said, "It will look just like me! You have not won the debate, I have won the debate. And when I was debating there were no buttons, so what is the problem now? If I can win the debate without buttons, then my photograph has to be without buttons!"

He said, "You do one thing"—he was a very small man. He said, "You can take my coat, it will fit you. You just put it on top of your robe and it will look beautiful."

I said, "Then better you stand here and let it be perfectly proper. Let that picture go."

He said, "That cannot be done. That will be simply objectionable. The principal will say, 'This is your photograph, and…'"

So I said, "You should remember, my photograph has to be like me. I cannot use your coat. Either the photograph will go without buttons, or I am not interested in the photograph at all. So you decide."

He had to decide for something very improper. He said, "I have never done anything improper, and I never allow anybody to do anything improper. But you seem to be strange."

I said, "This is not improper!" Every child is born naked—that is proper. Every animal is naked, and that is proper. But there are people addicted to properness.…

I have heard that in the times of Victoria in England, ladies were putting clothes on their dogs, because to keep a naked dog with them was not ladylike. And the dog does not know any etiquette—if the dog meets a lady of his own kind, he may have an erection. That is very improper in public. He may even try to make love—in public! No, he has to be covered completely. He cannot have any erection in public, he cannot make love in public because of the clothing. And you will be surprised: even the legs of the chairs were covered with clothes—because they are "legs," and a lady's leg should not show. Stupidity can go to any length.

I have fought against authority my whole life. But I have never forgotten the difference—on the contrary, the more I have fought against anybody imposing his

authority, the more I have tried on my own to be disciplined. Because now I am alone, nobody can discipline me, I have to discipline myself; otherwise I will start falling apart, I will not be able to have an integrated individuality.

I believe in discipline.

The word "discipline" is very beautiful. It comes from a root that means learning: A man of discipline is a man who is always learning, a man who is always ready to learn. He is a man who is always open to learn with no prejudice, with no preconceived conclusions. A bigot cannot learn. A Christian cannot learn, a Hindu cannot learn, a Buddhist cannot learn. They have already accepted conclusions without any experience. They are closed people.

Discipline means you remain open. It comes from the same root as *disciple*. A disciple means one who is ready to learn. A disciple means one who is not bigoted, who is not prejudiced, who has no unexperienced beliefs, who knows what he knows and who knows what he does not know. He is very clear about it. And when there is no authority over you, then you are the authority—a tremendous responsibility, a great freedom.

You once said that this is a very beautiful world but it is in the wrong hands. I agree with all my being. I feel it. But how can we stop those greedy hands that are torturing nature and enslaving human beings if we don't fight and struggle? Is the destruction of the old not necessary for the building of the new?

That is one of the oldest traps into which man has fallen again and again. Yes, I say the world is a very beautiful world, but it is in wrong hands—immediately your mind starts thinking how to destroy those wrong people, how to take the world from those wrong people and out of their hands. Rather than transforming yourself, rather than transforming your own mind, you immediately start thinking in terms of politics. I talk religion, you immediately interpret it in politics.

And it looks logical, because it seems perfectly right: "How can we stop those greedy hands that are torturing nature and enslaving human beings if we don't fight and struggle?" But if you fight and struggle, do you think you will be able to transform the world and its situation? By fighting and struggling you will just become like those people against whom you are fighting and struggling; that is one of the fundamental laws of life. Choose your enemies very carefully! Friends you can choose without any care. There is no need to be worried about friends because friends don't have the impact on you, don't impress you so much as the enemy. One has to be very careful with the enemy because you will have to fight the enemy. In fighting, you will have to use the same strategies, the same tactics, and you will use those strategies and tactics for years and years. They will condition you. That's how it has happened down the ages.

Joseph Stalin proved a far more dangerous czar than the czars that had ruled Russia before communism took over. Why?—because he had learned the strategy from the czars. Fighting with the czars, he had to learn the ways and means, the same ways and means that they were using. The whole life spent in fighting, practicing violence—by the time Joseph Stalin came to power he was a czar, far more dangerous obviously, because he had succeeded against the czars. He must have been more cunning, must have been more violent, must have been more ambitious, must have been more Machiavellian. Otherwise it would have been impossible to win against the czars.

And he did the same on a far greater scale: He defeated all the czars! All the czars put together had never done so much violence, committed so much murder, as Joseph Stalin alone did. He had learned the lesson so well that it is suspected that the leader of the revolution, Lenin, was poisoned by Joseph Stalin, slowly, in the name of medicine. He was ill, and in the name of medicine he was slowly poisoned and killed. If Lenin was there, then Joseph Stalin would be the number three man, because there was another man, Leon Trotsky, who was number two. So the first thing was how to destroy Lenin—he killed Lenin—and then the second thing was how to kill Trotsky. He killed Trotsky. Then he was in power, and once he was in power he started killing everybody. All the members of the Politburo, the highest commanding communist leaders, were killed by Stalin, by and by. Because they all knew the strategies, they had to be removed.

This has happened with all the revolutions in the world.

Now when I say this world is a very beautiful world but it is in the wrong hands, I don't mean that you start fighting those wrong hands. What I mean is: Please don't you be those wrong hands, that's all.

I don't teach revolution, I teach rebellion, and the difference is great. Revolution is political, rebellion is religious. Revolution needs you to organize yourself as a party, as an army, and fight against the enemies. Rebellion means you rebel as an individual; you simply get out of this whole rut. At least you should not destroy nature.

And if more and more people become dropouts the world can be saved. That will be true revolution—nonpolitical; it will be spiritual. If more and more people get out of the old mind and its ways, if more and more people become loving, if more and more people are nonambitious, if more and more people are nongreedy, if more and more people are no longer interested in power politics, in prestige, in respectability …

That's what sannyas is all about. Sannyas is dropping out of the old, rotten game and living your life on your own. It is not a struggle against the old, it is simply getting out of the clutches of the old—and this is the only way to weaken it, this is the only way to destroy it. If millions of people in the world simply get out of the hands of the politicians, the politicians will die of their own accord. You cannot fight with them. If you fight you become a politician yourself. If you struggle against them you become

greedy yourself, ambitious yourself; that is not going to help.

Be a dropout. And you have a small life: for fifty, sixty, seventy years you may be here—you can't hope that you will be able to transform the world, but you can hope that you can still enjoy and love the world.

Use the opportunity of this life to celebrate as much as possible. Don't waste it in struggling and fighting.

I am not creating a political force here; no, not at all. All political revolutions have failed so utterly that only blind people can go on believing in them. Those who have eyes are bound to teach you something new. This is something new! This has been done before too, but not on a large scale. We have to do it on such a large scale—millions of people have to become dropouts! By dropouts I don't mean that you leave the society and go to the mountains. You live in the society, but you leave the ambition, you leave the greed, you leave the hatred. You live in the society and be loving, and live in the society as a nobody.

That is the pure essence of sannyas: living as nobody, with no greed, with no ambition. And then you can enjoy and you can celebrate. And by celebrating and enjoying, you will spread the ripples of ecstasy to other people.

We can change the whole world, but not by struggle—not this time. Enough is enough! We have to change this world by celebrating, by dancing, by singing, by music, by meditation, by love, not by struggle.

The old certainly has to cease for the new to be, but please don't misinterpret me.

The questioner is an Italian, and modern Italy is really much too political; the whole thinking is political. The whole Italian mind is obsessed with politics. Maybe one of the reasons is that they are fed up with the Vatican and the Pope and all that nonsense. They have seen too much of it and they have moved to the other extreme.

Certainly the old has to cease—but the old is within you, not without. I am not talking about the old structure of the society; I am talking about the old structure of your mind that has to cease for the new to be. And a single person dropping the old structure of the mind creates such a great space for many to transform their lives that it is incredible, unimaginable, unbelievable. A single person transforming himself becomes a trigger; then many more start changing. His presence becomes a catalytic agent.

This is the rebellion I teach: you drop out of the old structure, you drop out of old greed, you drop out of old idealism. You become a silent, meditative, loving person; you be more in a dance, and then see what happens. Somebody, sooner or later, is bound to join the dance with you, and then more and more people. This is how it has happened here.

Lao Tzu says that you need not go outside your room; everything can happen just living inside your room. But Lao Tzu had to go out. He used to go on his buffalo,

moving from one village to another. I have simply followed his advice—I never go outside my room. I am just living in my room, and you have all come from different corners of the world. It is a miracle! Why have you come? And many more are on the way; they will be arriving soon. This place is going to become a tremendous force in the world, a transforming force in the world. It is going to become a spiritual explosion—but we are not to fight with anybody and we are not to struggle with anybody.

I have no political leanings. I am utterly against politics. Yes, the old has to cease for the new to be—but the old has to cease *within you,* then the new will be there. And once the new is within you the new is infectious, contagious; it starts spreading into other people.

Joy is contagious! Laugh, and you see others start laughing. So is it with sadness: be sad, and somebody looking at your long face suddenly becomes sad. We are not separate, we are joined together, so when somebody's heart starts laughing many other hearts are touched—sometimes even faraway hearts.

You have come from such faraway places; somehow my laughter has reached to you, somehow my love has reached to you. Somehow, in some mysterious way, my being has touched your being and you have come here against all the difficulties. A thousand and one difficulties are being created, and they will be created more and more. Although I am not struggling against anybody, still those who are in power are afraid because they cannot think that there can be a man who has no political leanings. They cannot believe that there can be a man who can attract thousands of people and will not use the power of these people to attain to some political powers, to some political status. They cannot believe it! How can they believe it? They can only understand the way they can understand.

So the politicians are afraid and they are creating every kind of barrier, but that is not going to hinder anybody. In fact, that is going to help me tremendously! It will become a challenge for all courageous people. It may prevent a few cowards—and it is good if they are prevented because they will not be of any use here. In fact, it will be a kind of screening: Only the people who can be benefitted by me will be reaching here. So it is good; whatever hindrances are being created are good.

But I am not teaching you to struggle against anything. Whenever you struggle against anything you become a reactionary—because it *is* a reaction; you become obsessed with something, you are against it. And then there is every possibility that the thing you are against will dominate you—maybe in a negative way, but it will dominate you.

Friedrich Nietzsche was very much against Jesus Christ. But my own analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche is that he was too impressed by Jesus Christ, just because he was against him. He was obsessed; he was really trying to become a Jesus Christ in his

own right. His great book, *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* is an effort to create a new gospel. The language he uses, the metaphors he uses, the poetry he uses, certainly reminds one of Jesus Christ, and Nietzsche was very much against him. He never missed a single point—if he could condemn Jesus, he would immediately condemn, but one is reminded again and again of Jesus. He was obsessed.

When he became mad, in the last phase of his life, he even started signing his letters as "Anti-Christ Friedrich Nietzsche." He could not forget Christ even when he became mad. First he would write "Anti-Christ" and then he would sign. You can see the obsession, the deep jealousy of Jesus that dominated him his whole life. It destroyed his immense creativity. He could have been a rebel, but he reduced himself to a reactionary. He might have brought something new to the world, but he could not. He remained obsessed with Jesus.

I am not against anything or anybody. I don't want you to be free *from* something, I simply want you to be free. See the difference: *Freedom from* is never total; that "from" keeps it entrapped with the past. Freedom from can never be real freedom. Neither can *freedom for* ever be real freedom; that is a search for a new slavery. And this *freedom from* and *freedom for* almost always go together as two sides of the same coin.

What I teach is simple freedom, neither from nor for—just freedom; neither against the past nor for the future, but just to be in the present.

My parents are so disappointed in me, they worry all the time. They have made my being here possible, so how can I turn from them? What do I owe to my parents?

The trouble with the family is that children grow out of childhood, but parents never grow out of their parenthood. Man has not even yet learned that parenthood is not something such that you have to cling to it forever. When the child is a grown-up person, your parenthood is finished. The child needed it—he was helpless. He needed the mother, the father, their protection; but when the child can stand on his own, the parents have to learn how to withdraw from the life of the child. And because parents never withdraw from the life of the child they remain a constant anxiety to themselves *and* to the children. They destroy, they create guilt; they don't help beyond a certain limit.

To be a parent is a great art. To give birth to children is nothing—any animal can do it; it is a natural, biological, instinctive process. To give birth to a child is nothing great, it is nothing special; it is very ordinary. But to be a parent is something extraordinary; very few people are really capable of being parents.

And the criterion is that the real parents will give freedom. They will not impose themselves upon the child, they will not encroach upon his space. From the very

beginning their effort will be to help the child to be himself or to be herself. They are to support, they are to strengthen, they are to nourish, but not to impose their ideas, not to give the shoulds and should-nots. They are not to create slaves.

But that's what parents all over the world go on doing: Their whole effort is to fulfill their ambitions through the child. Of course nobody has been ever able to fulfill his ambitions, so every parent is in turmoil. He knows death is coming closer every day, he can feel that his death is growing bigger and bigger and life is shrinking—and his ambitions are still unfulfilled, his desires are still not realized. He knows that he has been a failure. He is perfectly aware that he will die with empty hands. Just the way he had come, with empty hands, he will go.

Now his whole effort is how to implant his ambitions into the child. He will be gone, but the child will live according to him. What he has not been able to do, the child will be able to do. At least through the child he will fulfill certain dreams.

It is not going to happen. All that is going to happen is the child will remain as unfulfilled as the parent, and the child will go on doing the same to his children. This goes on and on from one generation to another generation. We go on giving our diseases; we go on infecting children with our ideas, which have not proved valid in our own lives.

Somebody has lived as a Christian, and his life can show that no bliss has happened through it; somebody has lived like a Hindu and you can see that his life is a hell; but these people want their children to be Hindus or Christians or Mohammedans. How unconscious man is!

I have heard:

> A very sad, mournful man visited a doctor in London. Seating himself in a chair in the waiting room and glumly ignoring the other patients, he awaited his turn. Finally the doctor motioned him into the inner office, where after a careful examination the man appeared even more serious, sad, and miserable than ever.
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> "There's nothing really the matter with you," explained the doctor. "You are merely depressed. What you need is to forget your work and your worries. Go out and see a Charlie Chaplin movie and have a good laugh!"
>
> A sad look spread over the little man's face. "But I am Charlie Chaplin!" he said.

It is a very strange world! You don't know people's real lives; all that you know are their masks. You see them in the churches, you see them in the clubs, in the hotels, in the dancing halls, and it seems everybody is rejoicing, everybody is living a heavenly life, except you—of course, because you know how miserable you are

within. And the same is the case with everybody else! They are all wearing masks, deceiving everybody, but how can you deceive yourself? You know that the mask is not your original face.

But the parents go on pretending before their children, go on deceiving their own children. They are not even authentic with their own children! They will not confess that their life has been a failure; on the contrary, they will pretend that they have been very successful. And they would like the children also to live in the same way as they have lived.

You say, "My parents are so disappointed in me.…" Don't be worried at all—all parents are disappointed in their children! And I say all, without any exception. Even the parents of Gautam Buddha were very much disappointed in him; the parents of Jesus Christ were very much disappointed in him, obviously. They had lived a certain kind of life—they were orthodox Jews—and this son, this Jesus, was going against many traditional ideas and conventions. Jesus's father, Joseph, must have hoped that now that he was growing old, the son would help him in his carpentry, in his work, in his shop—and the stupid son starts talking about kingdom of God! Do you think he was happy in his old age?

Gautam Buddha's father was very old and he had only one son, and that too was born to him when he was very old. His whole life he had waited and prayed and worshipped and had done all kinds of religious rituals so that he could have a son, because who was going to look after his great kingdom? And then one day the son disappeared from the palace. Do you think he was happy? He was so angry, violently angry, he would have killed Gautam Buddha if he had found him! His police, his detectives were searching all over the kingdom. "Where he is hiding? Bring him to me!"

And Buddha knew it, that he would be caught by his father's agents, so the first thing he did was to cross the boundary of his father's kingdom; he escaped into another kingdom and for twelve years nothing was heard about him. When he became enlightened he came back home to share his joy, to say to the father that "I have arrived home," that "I have realized," that "I have known the truth—and this is the way."

But the father was so angry, he was trembling and shaking—he was old, very old. He shouted at Buddha and he said, "You are a disgrace to me!" He saw Buddha—he was standing there in a beggar's robe with a begging bowl—and he said, "How dare you to stand before me like a beggar? You are the son of an emperor, and in our family there has never been a beggar! My father was an emperor, his father was too, and for centuries we have been emperors! You have disgraced the whole heritage!"

Buddha listened for half an hour, he didn't say a single word. When the father ran out of gas, cooled down a little … tears were coming out of his eyes, tears of anger,

frustration. Then Buddha said, “I ask for only one favor. Please wipe your tears and look at me—I am not the same person who left home. I am totally transformed, but your eyes are so full of tears you cannot see. You are still talking to somebody who is no more! He has died.”

This triggered another anger, and the father said, “You are trying to teach me? Do you think I am a fool? Can’t I recognize my own son? My blood is running in your veins, and I cannot recognize you?”

Buddha said, “Please don’t misunderstand me. The body certainly belongs to you, but not my consciousness. And my consciousness, not my body, is my reality. You are right that your father was an emperor, and his father too, but as far as I know about myself I was a beggar in my past life and I was a beggar in a previous life, too, because I have been searching for truth. My body has come through you, but you have been just like a passage. You have not created me; you have been a medium, and my consciousness has nothing to do with your consciousness. What I am saying is that now I have come home with a new consciousness, I have gone through a rebirth. Just *look* at me, look at my joy!”

The father looked at the son, not believing what he was saying. But one thing was certainly true: He was so angry, but the son had not reacted at all. That was absolutely new—he knew his son. If he was just the old person, he would have become as angry as the father—or even more, because he was young and his blood was hotter than the father’s. But he was not angry at all, there was absolute peace on his face, a great silence. He was undisturbed, undistracted by the father’s anger. The father had abused him, but it seemed not to have affected him at all. He wiped his tears from his old eyes, looked again, saw the new grace …

Your parents will be disappointed in you because they must have been trying to fulfill some expectations through you. Now that you have become a sannyasin, all their expectations have fallen to the ground. Naturally they are disappointed. But don’t become guilty because of it, otherwise they will destroy your joy, your silence, your growth. You remain undisturbed, unworried. Don’t feel any guilt. Your life is yours and you have to live according to your own light.

And when you have arrived at the source of joy, your inner bliss, go to them to share. They will be angry—wait, because anger is not anything permanent; it comes like a cloud and passes. Wait! Go there, be with them, but only when you are certain that you can still remain cool, only when you know that nothing will create any reaction in you, only when you know that you will be able to respond with love even though they are angry. That will be the only way to help them.

You say, “They worry all the time.” That is their business! And don’t think that if you had followed their ideas they would not have worried. They would have still worried; that is their conditioning. Their parents must have worried, and their parents’

parents must have worried; that is their heritage. You have disappointed them because you are no longer worrying. You are going astray! They are miserable, their parents have been miserable, and so on, so forth … back to Adam and Eve! And you are going astray; hence the great worry.

But if you become worried you miss an opportunity, and then they have dragged you again back into the same mire. They will feel good, they will rejoice that you have come back to the old traditional, conventional way, but that is not going to help you or them.

If you remain independent, if you attain to the fragrance of freedom, if you become more meditative—and that's why you are here, to become more meditative, to be more silent, more loving, more blissful—then one day you can share your bliss. To share, first you have to have it; you can share only that which you already have. Right now you can also worry, but two persons worrying simply multiply worries; they don't help each other.

You say, "They worry all the time." It must have become their conditioning. It is the conditioning of everybody in the world.

A rabbi was being hosted by a family, and the man of the house, impressed by the honor, warned his children to behave seriously at the dinner table because the great rabbi is coming. But during the course of the meal they laughed at something and he ordered them from the table.

The rabbi then arose and prepared to leave.

"Anything wrong?" asked the concerned father.

"Well," said the rabbi, "I laughed too!"

Don't be worried about their seriousness, about their worrying about you. They are trying unconsciously to make you feel guilty. Don't let them succeed, because if they succeed they will destroy you and they will also destroy an opportunity for themselves that would have become possible through you.

You say, "They have made my being here possible." Be thankful for that, but there is no need to feel guilty. "So how can I turn from them?" There is no need to turn from them, but there is no need either to follow them. Go on loving them. When you meditate, after each meditation pray to the existence that "Something of my meditativeness should reach to my parents." Be prayerful for them, be loving to them, but don't follow them. That won't help you or them.

You say, "What do I owe to my parents?" You owe this, that you have to be yourself. You owe this, that you have to be blissful, that you have to be ecstatic, that you have to become a celebration unto yourself, that you have to learn to laugh and

rejoice. This is what you owe to them: you owe them enlightenment. Become enlightened like Gautam Buddha, and then go to your parents to share your joy. Right now, what can you do? Right now nothing is possible; right now you can only pray.

So I am not saying turn away from them, I am saying don't follow them—and this is the only way you can be of some help to them. They have helped you physically, you have to help them spiritually. That will be the only way to repay them.

When I listen to my feelings, my inner voice, they tell me to do nothing but just to sleep, eat, and play on the beach! I am afraid to follow these feelings because I think I will get too weak to survive in this world. Will existence protect me when I allow myself to let go?

First thing: There is no need to survive in this world. This world is a madhouse. There is no need to survive in it. There is no need to survive in the world of ambition, politics, ego. It is the disease. But there is another way to be, and the whole religious standpoint is: You can be in this world and not be of it.

"When I listen to my feelings, my inner voice, they tell me to do nothing.…" Then don't do anything. There is nobody higher than you, and God speaks to you directly. Start trusting your inner feelings. Then don't do anything. If you feel just to sleep, eat, and play on the beach, perfect. Let that be your religion. Don't be afraid then.

You will have to drop fear. And if it is a question of choosing between the inner feeling and the fear, choose the inner feeling. Don't choose the fear. So many people have chosen their path out of fear, so they live in a limbo, they live in indecision.

Fear is not going to help. Fear always means the fear of the unknown. Fear always means the fear of death. Fear always means the fear of being lost—but if you really want to be alive, you have to accept the possibility of being lost. You have to accept the insecurity of the unknown, the discomfort and the inconvenience of the unfamiliar, the strange. That is the price one has to pay for the blessing that follows it, and nothing can be achieved without paying for it. You have to pay for it: Otherwise you will remain fear-paralyzed. Your whole life will be lost.

Enjoy whatsoever your inner feeling is.

"I think that I will get too weak to survive in this world." There is no need. This is fear speaking in you, fear creating more fears. Out of fear more fear is born.

"Will existence protect me?" Again the fear is asking for guarantees, promises. Who is there to give you a guarantee? Who can be a guarantee for your life? You are asking for some sort of an assurance. No, there is no possibility. In existence, nothing is ensured—nothing can be. And it is good. Otherwise, if existence is also ensured, you will be already completely dead. Then the whole thrill of it, of being alive like a young leaf in the strong wind, will be lost.

Life is beautiful because it is insecure. Life is beautiful because there is death. Life

is beautiful because it can be missed. If you cannot miss it, everything is forced upon you, then even life becomes an imprisonment. You will not be able to enjoy it. Even if you are ordered to be blissful, commanded to be free, then bliss and freedom both are gone.

"Will existence protect me when I allow myself to let go?" Try! Only one thing I can say to you.… I am not talking to your fear, remember. Only one thing I can say to you—all those who have tried have found that it protects. But I am not talking to your fear. I am simply encouraging your adventure, that's all. I am persuading, seducing you toward adventure. I am not talking to your fear. All those who have tried have found that infinite is the protection.

But I don't know whether you can understand the protection that the universe gives to you. Your protection that you are asking for cannot be given by the universe, because you don't know what you are asking. You are asking for death. Only a dead body is absolutely protected. Something alive is always in danger. To be alive is a hazard. More alive—more adventure, more hazard, more danger.

Nietzsche used to have a motto on his wall: "Live dangerously." Somebody asked him, "Why have you written this?" He said, "Just to remind me, because my fear is tremendous."

Live dangerously because that's the only way to live. There is no other. Always listen to the call of the unknown and be on the move. Never try to become settled anywhere. To be settled is to die: It is a premature death.

I was attending a birthday party, a small girl's birthday, and many toys were there and many presents, and the girl was really happy, and all her friends were there and they were dancing. Suddenly, she asked her mother, "Mom, were there such beautiful days in the past, when you used to be alive?"

People die before their death. People settle in security, comfort, convenience. People settle in a gravelike existence.

I am not talking to your fear.

"Will existence protect me when I allow myself to let go?" It has always protected, and I can't think it is just going to be different to you. I cannot believe that it is going to be an exception in your case. It has always been so. It has protected those who have left themselves to it, who have abandoned themselves to it, who have surrendered themselves to it.

Follow nature. Follow your inner nature.

I was reading an anecdote; I liked it very much:

> It was spring on the Columbia University campus, and KEEP OFF signs sprang up on the freshly seeded lawns. The students ignored the warnings, which were

followed by special requests, and continued tramping across the grass. The issue became rather heated, until finally the buildings and grounds officials took the problem to General Eisenhower, at that time president of the university.

"Did you ever notice," asked Eisenhower, "how much quicker it is to head directly where you are going? Why not find out which route the students are going to take anyway, and build the walks there?"

This is how life should be. The roads, the walks, the principles should not be fixed beforehand.

Allow yourself a let-go. Flow naturally and let that be your way. Walk, and by walking, make your way. Don't follow superhighways. They are dead, and you are not going to find anything on them. Everything has already been removed. If you follow a superhighway, you are moving away from nature. Nature knows no ways, no fixed patterns. It flows in a thousand and one patterns, but all spontaneous. Go and watch … sit on the beach and watch the sea. Millions of waves arising, but each wave unique and different. You cannot find two waves the same. They don't follow any pattern.

No human being worth the name will follow any pattern.

People come to me and they say, "Show us the way." I tell them, "Don't ask that." I can only tell you how to walk—I cannot show you the way. Please try to see the distinction: I can only tell you how to walk, and how to walk courageously. I cannot show you the way, because the way is for cowards. Those who don't know how to walk, paralyzed, for them the way exists. For those who know how to walk, they go into the wilderness and just by walking they create their way. And each one reaches to God in a different way. You cannot reach as a mass and you cannot reach as a crowd. You reach alone, absolutely alone.

God is wild. He's not yet civilized—and I hope that he will never be civilized. He is still spontaneous, and he loves spontaneity. So if your inner nature says to go to the beach and to relax, do that. That is from where your God is calling you.

I teach you just to be yourself, nothing else. It is very difficult to understand me because out of your fear you would like me to give you a pattern of life, a discipline, a style, a way of life.

Persons like me have always been misunderstood. A Lao Tzu, a Zarathustra, an Epicurus, have always been misunderstood. The most religious people were thought to be irreligious because if someone is really religious he will teach you freedom, he will teach you love. He will not teach you law, he will teach you love. He will not teach you a dead pattern of life. He will teach you a chaos, an anarchy, because stars are born only out of chaos. He will teach you how to be totally free.

I know there is fear, there is fear of freedom; otherwise why should there be so

many prisons all around the world? Why should people carry prisons around their life continuously, invisible prisons? There are only two types of prisoners I have come across: a few who live in a visible prison, and the remaining who live in an invisible prison. They carry their prison around themselves—in the name of conscience, in the name of morality, in the name of tradition, in the name of this and that. Thousands are the names of bondage and slavery.

Freedom has no name. There are not many types of freedom; freedom is one. Have you ever watched? Truth is one. Lies can be millions. You can lie in a million ways; you cannot say the truth in a million ways. Truth is simple, one way is enough. Love is one, laws are millions. Freedom is one, prisons are many. And unless you are very alert, you will never be able to move freely. At the most, you can change prisons. From one prison you can go to the other prison, and you can enjoy the walk between the two. That's what is happening in the world. A Catholic becomes a Communist, a Hindu becomes a Christian, a Mohammedan becomes a Hindu, and they enjoy—yes, there is a little freedom felt just when they are changing the prisons. From one prison to another, taking the walk in between, they feel good. And again they are in the same trap, with a different name.

All ideologies are prisons. I teach you to beware of them—my ideology included.

5

When All Voices Are Silent

When you know only doing, you are unaware of your great potential. I want you to know being, too. And it will not destroy your doing, it will simply beautify it; it will make each act a prayer, each act an art, each act a deep fulfillment. Being will flow through your doing; it will make your life more colorful. Otherwise, soon you will get fed up with your doings, because they are the same again and again, again and again —how long can you remain excited about them? But if your doing flows from your being, then each doing has a different flavor, a different individuality, a different fragrance.

What is the difference between human nature, instinct, and habit? Are there any means by which they can change, or not?

Habit is not nature, it is nurture. You learn it by imitation. By seeing people doing things, you start doing them. By seeing what makes people successful, you follow them. It does not come out of your nature, it comes out of your surroundings. Yes, it can become so deep-rooted that in every language there is an expression that says habit is "second nature." It becomes so deep-rooted that you cannot even make the distinction whether it is habit or nature.

But habit is never nature. You did not bring it with you, and any day you want to drop it, you can drop it. Any day you want to change it, you can change it. Nature cannot be changed.

And instinct is part of nature. In you, nature is expressed in four layers. Instinct is the lowest. Then there is intellect, which is higher than instinct. Most people never know anything more than these two, and these two are always fighting for supremacy. All the religions have remained with intellect; that's why they are against instinct.

Only a few great thinkers like Acharya Brihaspati in India and Epicurus in Greece have been in favor of instinct against intellect. These are very rare people; otherwise everybody has been in favor of intellect, because intellect has a higher position. It brings more respectability to you, more honor. Instinct is almost like the animals. Intellect makes you superior to the animals—but instinct is juicy, intellect is dry. Hence the people who live with instinct are joyous, happy, loving, and the people who

live with intellect are dry, quarreling.

In fact there is an old story that dogs must have been great intellectuals in their previous lives; that's why they are continuously barking at one another. You cannot stop dogs from barking at one another, and you cannot stop intellectuals from barking at one another; there is a similarity. It can be either that dogs are born as intellectuals, or intellectuals are born as dogs—or perhaps there are both types.

Beyond your intellect is your feeling. Another name for your feeling is intuition, a more scientific name. But very few people reach to intuition, because to reach to intuition you have to go beyond intellect, and meditation is the only way. Unfortunately, meditation is not part of our education. Education stops at intellect, creating a quarrel between your instinct and intellect, creating a split, a schizophrenia that you will suffer from your whole life.

If you meditate, something beyond intellect starts functioning. You can call it the heart, you can call it intuition. It has no arguments, but it has tremendous experiences. But it is not the end of your whole nature. There is, beyond this third, the fourth, which has not been named. In the East, it has simply been called *turiya*, and *turiya* means "the fourth." It has not been named because any name falls short of it. It is your ultimate nature, your very essential nature. It is where you meet with the universal nature, just like a dewdrop disappearing into the ocean.

Nature is a vast world—it begins with instinct and ends with the fourth, the *turiya*.

Habit is a result of nurture; you learn it from others.

For example, when I was a student and I wanted a scholarship for my postgraduate studies, my professor was absolutely confident: I had all the qualifications. There was just one great disqualification—that I might get into an argument with the vice-chancellor about something. So my professor, the head of the department of philosophy, went with me just to prevent me from quarreling. He went on telling me on the way, "Listen, everything depends on him. It is a special scholarship; it comes from the vice-chancellor's special fund. Other scholarships are very small; this is the biggest scholarship, and you need it."

He knew that with whatever money I was getting from my home, I was purchasing books. Even if I had to go hungry it was okay, but I could not resist … if I saw a new book in the university bookstall, I had to purchase it. The head of my department supported me as much as he could. Knowing me—that I could go hungry, but I would purchase the book—he had arranged with the cafeteria manager: "I will pay his bills for food and everything that he needs, so don't ask him." He wanted me to get the biggest scholarship, so I could purchase as many books as I wanted.

He was persuading me all the way while going toward the vice-chancellor's office: "Just remember one thing, you have one disqualification. Don't get into an argument with that old man; otherwise all your qualifications won't do. It is simply in his

hands." I remained silent, noncommittal, and he said to me, "Why are you silent?—because I am afraid…"

I said, "I cannot commit myself and I cannot promise. If he provokes me, then I don't care about the scholarship. I will not miss the opportunity to have a good encounter."

He said, "You are mad, but I will be sitting by your side, and if you start some argument, I will start pulling your shirt. That is to remind you that you are forgetting."

I said, "You can do anything you want, but I am not promising anything to you."

He said, "You are stubborn."

I said, "I am not stubborn; if he does not provoke me, there is no question."

But as I entered the office, he provoked me immediately. He said to me, "Why are you growing your beard?"

The head of my department looked at me and thought, "Finished! That scholarship is gone!" because I said to the vice-chancellor, "You are asking an absurd question. The beard is growing by itself. I'm not growing it, I'm not pulling out these hairs."

He said, "That's right; but you can shave."

I said, "That brings up the question: I can ask you why you have been shaving your beard, which nature has given you. You cannot ask the same question to me because I am not growing it, just as I am not growing my nose. And what can I say if somebody asks me, 'Why don't you cut off your nose?' Why are you shaving twice a day?"

He was an old professor of history from Oxford—he had been a professor at Oxford, and when he retired from there he had been appointed here as vice-chancellor.

I said, "You have to give me an answer."

He said, "You are asking a question I have never thought about. And you seem to be right.… Why did I start shaving my beard? The only thing I can think of is that because everybody else was shaving, I started shaving."

I said, "It is only a habit. And you are living in a habit blindly—not even alert about why you are shaving your own beard twice a day, wasting time. And the imitation of others does not show much intelligence; you should have asked why they were shaving. You would have found that their answer is the same: They are imitating others."

I told him, "You just think of one possibility: if women start growing beards … which is possible. Just by giving a woman certain injections, hormones that man has and the woman does not have, she will start growing a beard and a mustache. Do you think she will look beautiful?"

He said, "My God! She cannot, she will look awful."

I said, "The same is the situation with you. You look awful without a beard, which is a natural phenomenon."

When I said, "You look awful," my professor started hectically pulling my shirt,

hitting my leg with his. I said to him, “Professor S. S. Roy, you have not come with me to pull my shirt, or to hit my leg with your leg.”

I told the vice-chancellor, “You have to interfere. He is disturbing our conversation.”

Even today, I can remember Professor S. S. Roy’s face! He could not believe that I would do that to him.

The vice-chancellor said, “Professor S. S. Roy, that’s not right.”

I said, “I have been telling him all the way, but he is greedy about me getting the scholarship, so he wants me not to argue with you. But I don’t care about the scholarship; I care about whatever is the truth, scholarship or no scholarship.”

The vice-chancellor looked at me and said, “Don’t be worried about your scholarship.” He did not ask anything about my qualifications, whether I qualified for the scholarship or not. He simply signed. He said, “I loved you. No student has ever dared to say in front of me, ‘You look awful.’ And I could not answer it! Perhaps you are right, because it is unnatural what I am doing, and what you are doing is natural. I would love once in a while, if you are passing by the office … you are always welcome, you can come just for a chitchat. I enjoyed just this small talk with you.”

My professor was amazed. Coming back, he was absolutely silent. I said, “What is the matter? You are very silent.”

He said, “I am wondering what kind of man you are. You managed so quickly, and you said to him, to his face, ‘You look awful.’ And we know that he is a very angry man and very revengeful. And he has invited you: ‘Whenever you want … there is no need for any appointment. You can come directly in.’ What did you do? It was almost like magic—within a minute! And you made me into such a fool. I could not even raise my eyes. I was looking down … What to say? I have done those things; I cannot deny it.”

People don’t think what they are doing: what kind of dress they are using, whether it is comfortable or not; what kind of houses they are living in, whether they are aesthetic or not. They are simply imitating others.

A life of imitation is not a true life. It is not sincere. One should live naturally on all the four steps: Instinct is of the body. Intellect is of the mind. Intuition is of the heart. And the fourth, *turiya,* is of the being.

If you can live all these four in harmony, you are the perfect human being. Nothing should be denied in favor of anything else. All four have to be together in a harmony. And if you can avoid habits, if you can allow your nature to be your whole life, with no space for habits at all … All habits take you away from your nature; all habits prove you to be mediocre.

Live naturally and you are as natural as a rose flower; live through habits and you are made of something plastic, dead, meaningless. Then you feel miserable, and

nobody else is responsible for it. You allowed imitation to enter into your authenticity and it has poisoned everything. Just follow your inner voice.

Your body has its own wisdom—use it.

Your mind can grow into a great giant as far as intelligence is concerned; use it, but don't be used by it.

Your heart has so much love, so much beauty; it can fill the whole universe, it is oceanic. Allow it to spread and expand, and share it with people.

And the fourth is the ultimate. That is your eternal life with all conceivable blissfulness, ecstasy, joy, fearlessness, deathlessness.

If one lives simply according to his nature on each of these four rungs, one is a true human being; one does not have any habit. Habits destroy your truth and impose things on you that were never intended by nature to be your destiny.

An American, an Englishman, and an Irishman were all facing a firing squad. "Listen," said the American to the other two, "one at a time we will think of a means to distract the fire; then when the firing squad turn their backs, the one who creates the distraction runs over the hill. I will go first and show you."

The squad lined up and took aim. Quickly the American shouted, "Tornado!" The squad turned round to look and the American ran over the hill.

The squad started to line up again and the Englishman yelled, "Flash flood!" Again the squad turned, expecting to see a tidal wave of water.

For the third time the squad lined up to take aim. The Irishman, thinking quickly, yelled out, "Fire!"

Being in the world is sometimes hard for me, for I see how hard people are and how they step on one another. This hurts me very much, sometimes even physically, and I feel vulnerable like a small child. Please tell me how to deal with it.

There are always problems in the world, and the world has always been there, and the world will remain there. If you start trying to work it out—changing circumstances, changing people, thinking of a utopian world, changing the government, the structure, the economy, the politics, the education—you will be lost. That is the trap known as politics. That's how many people waste their own lives.

Be very clear about it: The only person you can help right now is you yourself. Right now you cannot help anybody. This may be just a distraction, just a trick of the mind. See your own problems, see your own anxieties, see your own mind, and first try to change that.

It happens to many people: The moment they become interested in some sort of religion, meditation, prayer, immediately the mind tells them, "What are you doing

sitting here silently? The world needs you; there are so many poor people. There is much conflict, violence, aggression. What are you doing praying in the temple? Go and help people."

How can you help those people? You are just like them. You may create even more problems for them, but you cannot help. That's how all the revolutions have always failed. No revolution has yet succeeded because the revolutionaries are in the same boat.

The religious person is one who understands that "I am very tiny, I am very limited. If with this limited energy, even if I can change myself, that will be a miracle." And if you can change yourself, if you are a totally different being with new life shining in your eyes and a new song in your heart, then maybe you can be helpful to others also, because then you will have something to share.

Just the other day a friend sent me a very beautiful incident in the life of Basho. Basho is the greatest haiku poet of Japan, the Master haiku poet. But he was not just a poet. Before becoming a poet he was a mystic; before he starting pouring out with beautiful poetry, he poured deep into his own center. He was a meditator.

It is said that Basho was entering upon a journey when he was a young man. The journey was an endeavor to find himself. Not long after he had begun he heard a small child crying alone in the forest—maybe he was sitting under a tree, meditating, or trying to meditate, and he heard a small child crying. He meditated for a long time on what to do. He then picked up his pack and continued on his way, leaving the child to its own fate.

In his journal he recorded: "First one has to do what one needs for oneself before one can do anything for another."

It looks hard … a child alone in the forest, crying, and this man meditates on whether to do anything or not, whether he can help the child, whether it will be right to help him or not. A child, a helpless child crying in the wilderness, alone, lost—and Basho meditates over it and finally decides. How can he help somebody else when he has not even helped himself yet? He himself is lost in a wilderness, he himself is lonely, he himself is childish. How can he help anybody?

The incident looks very hard, but is meaningful. I'm not saying don't help a child in the forest if you find him crying and weeping. But try to understand: Your own light is not burning and you start helping others. Your own inner being is in total darkness and you start helping others. You yourself are suffering and you become a "servant of the people." You have not passed through the inner rebellion and you become a revolutionary. This is simply absurd, but this idea arises in everybody's mind. It seems so simple to help others. In fact, people who really need to change themselves always become interested in changing others. That becomes an occupation, and they can forget themselves.

This is what I have watched. I have seen so many social workers, *sarvodayis,* and I have never seen a single person who has any inner light help anybody. But they are trying hard to help everybody. They are madly after transforming the society and the people and people's minds, and they have completely forgotten that they have not done the same to themselves. But they become occupied.

Once an old revolutionary and social worker was staying with me. I asked him, "You are completely absorbed in your work. Have you ever thought if what you really want happens, if by a miracle, overnight, all that you want happens, what you will do the next morning? Have you ever thought about it?"

He laughed—an empty laughter—but then he became a little sad. He said, "If it is possible, I will be at a loss as to what to do then. If the world is exactly as I want it, then I will be at a loss for what to do. I may even commit suicide." These people are occupied; this is their obsession. And they have chosen an obsession that can never be fulfilled, so that they can go on changing others, life after life.

Who are you? This is also a sort of ego, to feel that others are hard upon one another, that they are stepping on one another. Just the idea that others are hard gives you a feeling that you are very soft. No, you are not. This may be your way of ambition: to help people, to help them to become soft, to help them to become more kind, compassionate.

Kahlil Gibran has written a small story:

There was a dog, a great revolutionary one might say, who was always teaching other dogs of the town that "Just because of your nonsense barking we are not growing. You waste your energy by barking unnecessarily." A postman passes, and suddenly … a policeman passes, a sannyasin passes. Dogs are against uniforms, any sort of uniform, and they are revolutionaries—they immediately start barking.

The leader used to tell them, "Stop this! Don't waste energy, because this same energy can be put into something useful, creative. Dogs can rule the whole world, but you are wasting your energy for no purpose at all. This habit has to be dropped. This is the only sin, the original sin."

The dogs were always feeling that he was perfectly right. Logically, he was right: Why do you go on barking? And much energy is wasted; one feels tired. Again the next morning one starts barking, and again by the night one is tired. What is the point of it all? They could see the leader's meaning, but they also knew that they were just dogs, poor dogs. The ideal was very great and the leader was really a revealer—because whatsoever he was preaching he was doing. He never used to bark. You could see his character, that whatsoever he preached he practiced also.

But by and by, they got tired of his constant preaching. One day they decided—it was the birthday of the leader—and they decided, as a gift, that at least on that night they would resist the temptation to bark. At least for one night they would respect the

leader and give him a gift. Nothing could make him happier than this.

All the dogs stopped that night. It was very difficult, arduous. It was just like when you are meditating, how difficult it is to stop thinking—it was the same problem. They stopped barking—they had always barked, and they were not great saints, just ordinary dogs. But they tried hard. It was very, very arduous. They were hiding in their places with clenched teeth, with closed eyes so they would not see anything. They tried not to listen to anything. It was a great discipline. The leader walked around the town. He was very puzzled: To whom to preach? Whom to teach now? What has happened? There was complete silence. Then suddenly, when midnight had passed he became so annoyed … because he had never really thought that the dogs would listen to him. He had known well that they would never listen, that it was just natural for dogs to bark. His demand was unnatural, but the dogs had stopped. His whole leadership was at stake. What was he going to do from tomorrow? Because all he knew was just to teach. His whole ministry was at stake. And then, for the first time, he realized that because he was constantly teaching from the morning till the night, that's why he had never felt the need to bark. His energy was so involved in his teaching, and that was a sort of barking.

But that night, there was nowhere to be found anybody who was guilty. And the preacher-dog started feeling a tremendous urge to bark. A dog is, after all, a dog. He went into a dark lane and started barking. When the other dogs heard that somebody had broken the agreement, then they said, "Why should we suffer?" The whole town started barking. Back came the leader and said, "You fools! When are you going to stop barking? Because of your barking we have remained just dogs. Otherwise, we would have dominated the whole world."

Remember well that a social servant, a revolutionary, is asking for the impossible—but it keeps him occupied. And when you are occupied with others' problems, you tend to forget your own problems. First settle those problems—because that is your first, basic responsibility.

A famous psychologist had bought a farm just for fun. Every time he threw grain into his plowed furrows an army of black crows would swoop down and gobble up his grain. Finally, swallowing his pride, the psychologist appealed to his old neighbor, Mulla Nasruddin.

The Mulla stepped into the field and went through all the motions of planting without using any seed. The crows swooped down, protested briefly, and flew away. The Mulla repeated the process the next day and then the next, each time sending the birds off befuddled and hungry. Finally, on the fourth day, he planted the field with grain; not a crow bothered to come.

When the psychologist tried to thank Mulla, the Mulla grunted. “Just plain ordinary psychology,” said he. “Ever heard of it?”

Remember, this is very plain, ordinary psychology: not to poke your nose into others’ affairs. If they are doing something wrong, that is for them to realize. Nobody else can make them realize it. Unless they decide to realize it there is no way, and you will be wasting your valuable time and energy. Your first responsibility is to transform your own being. And when your being is transformed, things start happening of their own accord. You become a light and people start finding their paths through your light. Not that you go, not that you force them to see. Your light, burning bright, is enough invitation; people start coming. Whosoever is in need of light will come to you. There is no need to go after anybody because that very going is foolish. Nobody has changed anybody against his will. That is not the way things happen. This is plain, ordinary psychology; ever heard of it?… Just keep to yourself.

My feelings of unworthiness still dominate my life, and I’m clinging to them so tightly that I despair of ever letting go. It has been a long and serious road so far.

Nobody is born unworthy. Everybody is equal in the eyes of existence. But remember, equality does not mean similarity. Everybody is equally unique.

The idea of unworthiness that is torturing you is torturing millions of human beings. It is the people around you who make you feel unworthy, undeserving, useless, good-for-nothing; this is a secret conspiracy against the individual by the crowd.

Perhaps you are not aware that the crowd is the enemy of the individual. The crowd does not like individuals; it likes only phony people imitating one another. Anybody who stands alone, in his own right, declaring his own freedom, doing his own thing without any fear of consequences, will be condemned by the crowd.

The crowd cannot afford such rebels, because their very presence is dangerous—it may become a wildfire. Many others who are suffering in slavery may start revolting, seeing that it is possible to live your life according to your own light, that it is possible to have your own style, your own religiousness, your own morality—you don’t have to belong to any crowd, you don’t have to become a spiritual slave. If this idea spreads, there will be millions of people who have not died completely—in whose beings there is still a spark of life—who may explode into rebellion against the masses.

The masses are easy to control; hence, those people who are in power hate individuals. And this has been the story throughout human history. From the very childhood, the parents, the teachers, the priests, the neighbors, from all directions, the society starts encroaching upon the freedom of the individual. All their effort is to

distract you from your own being; they want you to be somebody else, they don't want you to be yourself.

That is the cause of your feeling of being unworthy. It is natural—you can never be somebody else; however perfect your pretension and your hypocrisy is, deep down you will feel you have betrayed yourself. Deep down you can never feel contentment, self-respect, a pride that is natural to every being, a dignity which existence showers upon you just by giving you life.

If you are allowed to be yourself, you will never feel unworthy because that will be your natural growth. If you are a rosebush, roses will blossom in you, and if you are a marigold, then marigold flowers will come. Neither does the marigold flower feel it is unworthy nor do the roses feel that they are special, higher, or holier. Even the smallest grass blade feels as dignified as the biggest star in the universe.

In existence there is no inferiority complex anywhere, and as a corollary there is no superiority complex either. The marigold is happy being a marigold—even the idea is stupid, "Why am I not a rose?" It will be a very poor existence where there are only roses and roses and roses, and no other flowers. Roses will lose all their beauty. The variety of millions of flowers makes existence rich beyond all our dreams.

But the society wants you to be just a sheep. You may have the qualities of being a deer, or being a tiger, or being a lion, or being an eagle—all the varieties are possible in different individuals—but the society likes only one brand: Everybody has to be a sheep. Now, if you force a lion to be a sheep, he is going to feel unworthy. You are imposing something upon him that is not natural.

This feeling of unworthiness is because of an imposition of unnatural demands upon you, made by everybody around you. Nobody likes you as you are; everybody wants you to be this, to be that. Of course if you fulfill their demands you will be loved, respected, honored, but it is very dangerous and very costly; you will have to lose yourself. You will become just a hypocrite, and what will be the gain? What is their respect, what is their honor, what are their rewards? They cannot balance the loss—you have lost your soul. They can give you Nobel Prizes, but even a thousand Nobel Prizes cannot make up for the loss that you have suffered in the transaction. You have lost your very space in existence, your very territory, your most significant essential being and consciousness.

I can understand your problem, and I don't think you are incapable of understanding it intellectually. You do understand, but just intellectual understanding never brings any change; it brings you more trouble. It makes you aware that you have done something very stupid, and now you have become an expert in doing that stupidity. Now that is your expertise—for that expertise you are paid, honored, respected, so you cling to it. This becomes a tremendous dilemma. It creates a state of schizophrenia. You know that what you are doing is wrong, but this knowing is only

intellectual; it has not penetrated into the deeper parts of your being from where actions arise.

Intellect is an inactive force. It has not become your meditation, it is still your mind; and mind is absolutely impotent. So you understand intellectually that you are doing wrong, and the same intellect says that this is the only thing that you know—unworthy or worthy, but this is the only thing that gives you credit, makes you respected by the crowd: "Don't leave it, because you don't know where you have lost your soul and whether you will be able to find it again." You don't even remember the way back home. So you go on clinging to that which intellectually you know is not right. You are destroying yourself, but you go on drinking the poison, because you have forgotten the way to your home.

Just the other day Latifa, a sannyasin here, was crying, and today all the clouds have disappeared. She has taken the bold step. Intellectually she has been thinking and thinking for almost an eternity … because misery lengthens time so much that one hour passes as if it is one life; hence I say she has been suffering as if for the whole eternity. Knowing perfectly well—because I was continuously hammering her—that if you are miserable in a situation and the doors are open, why don't you get out of that situation? She wants to get out, but clings; she is afraid of the open, is afraid of the fresh air, is afraid of the unknown. Her deeper being feels the pull, the challenge, the excitement of the unknown, but her superficial mind thinks of security, safety. And who knows?—you may fall into a worse condition. At least this misery is well known, and you have somehow become accustomed—in fact, so habituated that a fear somewhere in the corner of your being lurks: Are you capable of surviving without it?

It is miserable but at least there is something. You are not alone, and you are not empty; you are full of misery, and you can depend on it that tomorrow also the misery will be there. You need not be worried that tomorrow maybe you will be empty and alone. So one becomes a mess inside.

But finally Latifa came to her senses, took the bold step. And today she wrote a letter to me of tremendous gratitude, saying that she feels as if a cancer has been removed from her being; she feels clean, healthy, happy, light—the whole burden has disappeared. And this was the cancer she was clinging to.

But you can experience the joy and the freedom and the lightness and the open sky, only when you drop clinging; there is no other way.

But people are such that even when they have come here and they have been listening to me, they are managing what to listen to, what not to listen to. Whatever gives nourishment to their prejudices, they are open to, very happy that their convictions are being supported. The moment I say something that goes against their convictions—and those convictions are their misery, the foundation of their suffering and their hell—immediately they close themselves. But how long can you keep

yourself closed? I go on hitting you from every dimension, every direction. Sooner or later you have to listen.

Then too, such is human stupidity that people start defending themselves. I sometimes wonder why you are wasting your time. If you are here to defend yourself, that you can do very well wherever you are. It will be easier to defend yourself somewhere else; here it will be very difficult. I will not allow you to defend yourself, because by defending yourself you are defending all your miseries; they are synonymous. You and your miseries, you and your suffering, you and your ideology—they are not separate.

Your personality is your hell, and I have to hammer it and bring out your individuality, which is a totally different phenomenon—that which you had brought with you when you were born. This personality is a cover that has been put over you by the society; it is a mask. But you have lived with the mask so long that you have started thinking it is your original face. In their sleepiness people go on defending that which is their cancer.

One woman today wrote to me that she hates Hymie Goldberg, who is one of the characters in my jokes. I could not believe that somebody can hate a poor fellow like Hymie Goldberg! But perhaps she has an anti-Jewish mind … just the name of Hymie Goldberg and her Nazi upbringing feels hurt that I am making Hymie Goldberg almost a great hero. It is true, I am going to write a biography of Hymie Goldberg.

In the same question, the same woman says, “I don’t like you to laugh with us.” It seems she is also against laughter. I rarely laugh, but once in a while I want simply to join with you—so as not to give you the feeling that I am separate from you. I want to be one amongst you, not somewhere high up, very serious—a golden stone Buddha. Certainly, Gautam Buddha did not laugh; neither is there any reference anywhere that Jesus ever laughed. These people are serious people.

I am not serious. I have been telling you again and again that I am absolutely nonserious, but you don’t take it seriously! You think I must be joking … it is such a difficult problem, how to solve it? And when I read this woman’s question, I remembered another question that came to me yesterday … this man was telling me that a few scientific researchers have found the G-point in the vagina of women. I could not figure it out, why it should be called “G-point.”

I have also found a G-point. It is not in the vagina, it is in everybody’s belly—just behind your navel. And it is meaningful to call it the G-point because it creates giggling. It is absolutely stupid to say there is a giggling vagina, but a giggling belly is a well-known fact. You know about belly laughter—a real laughter always comes from your belly.

So I don’t care about your scientists; my own research says that the G-point is in everybody, man or woman, in the belly, behind the navel. And perhaps this woman’s

G-point is either paralyzed or is crippled, damaged—something is wrong with her G-point! Here she should expose herself; then her G-point can start functioning. Among so many G's, how can you remain serious?

I have heard … Two small kids, twins, started their first day at school and their teacher asked them, "What are your names?" They were looking so beautiful, so absolutely alive. Dressed in the same way, it was almost impossible to figure out who was who. So she asked, "What are your names?"

One said, "My name is Ronald Reagan, and my brother's name is Richard Nixon." The teacher could not believe it. She thought, "These kids are playing a joke on me, they are making fun of me." She immediately phoned their home and said to their mother, "Mrs. Johnson, your two kids have come and when I asked their names, one said his name is Ronald Reagan and that his brother's name is Richard Nixon. I could not believe it; that's why I am phoning. Are they making fun of me?"

She was in for a great surprise, because from the other end of the phone the woman shouted very angrily, "You have some nerve to call me Mrs. Johnson. I am *Miss* Johnson, and they are my kids, and when you have two bastards, what names can you give them? If you were in my place, would you be able to suggest better names for two bastards?"

Just watch life, and your G-point will start functioning!

You have fallen prey, a victim to what people have said to you. This commune is to erase all that has been said to you and accept you the way you are. As you are is absolutely right, worthy, respectable, and there is no need to change it and create a phony personality just because others want it. You have tried to make others happy too much, and the total result is that everybody in the world is unhappy. Everybody has tried to make others happy, but do you see the total result? Everybody is unhappy.

I teach you to be happy, I don't teach you to make others happy. In your happiness, if there is some truth, some vitality, it will spread—it will help others also to be happy. But that should not be the criterion; that should not be the ideal of your life. You are trying to make others happy, they are trying to make you and others happy, and everybody is unhappy because everybody is pretending.

People can be happy only in one way—there are not two ways—if they are authentically themselves. Then the springs of happiness start flowing; they become more alive, they become a joy to see, a joy to be with; they are a song, they are a dance. But they are not dancing for anybody's approval, nor for anybody's appreciation; they are dancing out of their own abundance of happiness, out of their own joy.

This whole world can be a dancing world, full of songs and full of music, full of creativity and full of life and laughter. But the basic strategy that has been followed up to now has to be completely destroyed, without mercy.

The new minister stood at the church door, greeting parishioners as they departed after the end of the service. The people were generous in complimenting the clergyman on his sermon, except one fellow who said to him, “Pretty dull sermon, Reverend.” And a minute later, the same man appeared again and said, “Pretty dull sermon, Reverend.”

Once again the man appeared, this time muttering, “You really did not say anything at all, Reverend.” When he got the opportunity, the Reverend pointed out the man to one of his deacons. “Ah,” said the deacon, “don’t let that guy bother you. He is a poor soul who goes around repeating whatever he hears other people saying!”

This is a very strange and insane world. Everybody is living in some way falsely, just to get appreciation, just to hear people’s applause. Everybody is so hungry for attention. The people you think of as great leaders are almost beggars as far as attention is concerned; that’s all their whole life is devoted to—how many people are looking up to them. That gives nourishment to their ego. And they are ready to do any nonsense if they are promised, “More and more people will be attracted to you; you will get more attention.”

I have a strange story to tell you. It is not fiction, and it is about one of the most famous men, Abraham Lincoln. He had a very ugly face. He came from a very poor family; his father was a shoemaker. He himself was chopping wood just to get enough money to go to school—a very poor heritage. His face was certainly not attractive, and when he stood for the presidential election … His intelligence was great; perhaps there has been no other man in America of such great intelligence. His rationality, his logic, his ways of arguing his case were superb. But his personality was poor, just because of his face.

The first day when he started his election campaign, a little girl … and as far as my understanding goes, that little girl should have the whole credit for Abraham Lincoln’s becoming the president of America, although nobody bothers. Nobody even thinks about that little girl, or tries to find out who she was. She came close and she said, “Uncle Lincoln, with this face you cannot win the presidency. I have a small suggestion: If you grow a beard and mustache, most of your face will be covered, and the beard and the mustache can be given a shape that can change your whole profile.”

A little girl … but she was looking attentively at his face; she was interested in his arguments. But women are more aware of physical beauty even from their very childhood. She figured out that if he grows a beard and a mustache, much of his face will be covered. Then a new face can be created by giving shape to the beard and to

the mustache. And it appealed to Lincoln. He was himself worried about what to do with his face. He started growing his beard … and now you don't see in his photographs or his statues that his face was ugly. All that ugliness is covered by his beard. In fact, that beard has have given him a new personality.

People have forgotten, but Lincoln did not forget. After becoming the president, the first letter that he wrote was to that small girl, thanking her, "Your suggestion worked." He was a man of great humbleness and great understanding.

But this world does not look into the inner being. It does not look at your intelligence, your talents, your creativity, your potentiality. It simply looks at the outer, superficial personality. And because you are continuously asking for attention, you have to concede to the people; you have to compromise on every step with them if you want to be accepted as worthy. The problem is that whatever you do, you cannot be absolutely false; something of the real will remain, and that will be your feelings of unworthiness. It will hurt you that you have not been able to succeed in being a complete success in the world.

Anybody who wants to be a success in the world, anybody who is ambitious and egoistic, is going to suffer the same problem as you are suffering. But the problem is very simple and can be dropped immediately, without any effort: just a simple understanding that you don't need anybody's attention; on the contrary, what you need is a deep contentment with yourself. And that is possible only if you are real.

What others say, don't be worried about; it does not matter. The only thing that matters is your inner happiness, your peace, your silence, and finally your realization of your eternal life. You are asking, "What should I do with my unworthiness? It still dominates my life, and I am clinging to it so tightly that I despair of ever letting go." Just a little understanding is needed—not much effort, because it is you who are clinging to it; it is not clinging to you.

There is a Sufi story that a river was in flood, and a few people were standing on the bank watching the river rising higher and higher. A Sufi mystic was also standing there. Sufis use just a blanket, a woolen blanket to cover the body; they don't use anything else. In fact, the name *Sufi* is derived from woolen blankets. In Persian, *suf* means wool, and *sufi* means one who uses only wool. So with his blanket, he was standing there watching other people, and then suddenly they saw a beautiful blanket, a woolen blanket floating down the river. A young man could not resist. Although everybody said it was dangerous—the river was in flood, and it was a huge river—the young man said, "That blanket I cannot lose." He jumped.

But it was not a blanket, it was a wolf, alive. So as he caught the blanket, the blanket caught him! He started shouting, "Save me!" Everybody asked him, "What do you mean by saving? Just drop that blanket!" He said, "It is not a blanket that I can drop. Now it is a question of whether the blanket drops me or not—it is a wolf!" It was

just that they had seen the wolf's body, which looked like pure wool.

The Sufi wrote in his diary, "What I saw today was a real problem. Up to now I have seen people wondering how to drop this, how to drop that.… Those were all unreal because the problems were not clinging to them, they were clinging to their problems. It was not a question of any help; if they wanted to drop it, they could drop it." The Sufi wrote, "But today it was totally different; it was a real problem! It was beyond that poor man's ability to drop it, because he was not clinging to it; now the wolf was clinging to him, and the wolf took him down to his grave."

It is good that wolves are not clinging to you. Whatever you are clinging to, all are just false ideas given by others to you. And the reason why you are clinging to them is that you are afraid that without them you will be almost naked, you will be empty, and you will be moving in an unknown space.

But I want to say to you that moving every moment into the unknown is the greatest blessing of life. Remaining with the known is sheer boredom, every day the same. Then what is the point of living? You have lived it many times, many days.

My encouragement to you is: Love change, love the unknown.

Risk everything known for the unknown, and you will always be in an ecstatic state. You will always be a gainer, because the unknown has hidden treasures only for those who can drop the known. But I can only say it to you; the dropping has to be done by you. It has to be your decision, your commitment—only then will it bring joy.

How can I find out which of the many voices inside me is the one that comes from the real self to guide me? How can I be sure it doesn't come from the unconscious?

It is very simple: None of the voices come from the inner self. All voices come from the mind. When all voices are absent, the inner self inspires you in silence toward a certain action, direction. It does not come in words, it is just a silent indication. Otherwise it would have been absolutely impossible to find out which one is the voice of the inner self.

It is easy, because no voice is of the inner self. So when all voices have died down and there is utter silence, the inner self is capable of taking your hand and moving you. That is the moment to be in a let-go, and allow it to take you wherever it takes you.

In language we have to use words that do not apply to the inner reality—for example, the "inner voice." There is no voice—it is simply the inner silence. But if we use the words "inner silence," you will not get the idea that there is some inspiration or some direction that is being pointed to. Hence the words "inner voice" have been used. But these are not the right words.

Epilogue

How can I become a light unto myself?

These were the last words of Gautama the Buddha, his parting message to his disciples: “Be a light unto yourself.” But when he says, “Be a light unto yourself,” he does not mean *become* a light unto yourself. There is a great difference between being and becoming.

Becoming is a process; being is a discovery. The seed only appears to become the tree; that is an appearance. The seed already had the tree within itself, it was its very being. The seed does not become the flowers. The flowers were there unmanifest, now they are manifest. It is not a question of becoming; otherwise a pebble could become a flower. But that doesn’t happen. A rock cannot become a rose; that doesn’t happen because the rock has no potential for being a rose. The seed simply discovers itself through dying into the soil—dropping its outer shell, it becomes revealed in its inner reality.

Man is a light in the seed. You are already buddhas. It is not that you have to become buddhas, it is not a question of learning, of achieving, it is only a question of recognition—it is a question of going within yourself and seeing what is there. It is self-discovery.

You are not to become a light unto yourself; it is already the case. But you don’t go in, your whole journey is outward. We are being brought up in such a way that we all become extroverts. Our eyes become focused on the outside; we are always seeking and searching for some goal “there,” far away. The further the goal, the more challenging it appears to the ego. The more difficult it is, the more attractive it appears. The ego exists through challenges; it wants to prove itself. It is not interested in the simple, it is not interested in the ordinary, it is not interested in the natural, it is interested in something that is neither natural, nor simple, nor ordinary. Its desire is for the extraordinary. And the reality is very ordinary, it is very simple.

The reality is not there but here, not then but now, not outside but in the innermost sanctum of your being. You have just to close your eyes and look in.

In the beginning it is difficult, because the eyes only know how to look out. They

have become so accustomed to looking out that when you close them, then too they continue to look out—they start dreaming, they start fantasizing. Those dreams are nothing but reflections of the outside. So it is only in appearance that you seem to be with closed eyes, your eyes are still open to the outside world, you are not in. In fact, every meditator comes across this strange phenomenon: that whenever you close your eyes your mind becomes more restless, your mind becomes more insane. It starts chattering in a crazy way: relevant, irrelevant thoughts crisscross your being. It is never so when you are looking outside. And naturally you become tired, naturally you think it is better to remain occupied in something, in some work, rather than sit silently with closed eyes, because nothing seems to happen except a long long procession of thoughts, desires, memories. And they go on coming, unending.

But this is only in the beginning. Just a little patience, just a little awaiting … If you go on looking, watching these thoughts silently, with no judgment, with no antagonism, with no desire even to stop them—as if you have no concern with them—unconcerned … Just as one watches the traffic on the road, or one watches the clouds in the sky, or one watches a river flow by, you simply watch your thoughts. You are not those thoughts, you are the watcher, remembering that "I am the watcher, not the watched." You cannot be the watched, you cannot be the object of your own subjectivity. You are your subjectivity, you are the witness, you are consciousness. Remembering it. It takes a little time. Slowly, slowly the old habit dies. It dies hard but it dies, certainly. And the day the traffic stops, suddenly you are full of light. You have always been full of light, just those thoughts were not allowing you to see that which you are.

When all objects have disappeared, there is nothing else to see, you recognize yourself for the first time. You realize yourself for the first time.

It is not becoming, it is a discovery of being. The outer shell of the thoughts of the mind is dropped, and you have discovered your flowers, you have discovered your fragrance. This fragrance is freedom.

Hence, don't ask, "How can I become a light unto myself?" You are already a light unto yourself, you are just not aware of it. You have forgotten about it—you have to discover it. And the how of discovery is simple, very simple: a simple process of watching your thoughts.

To help this process you can start watching other things too, because the process of watching is the same. What you are watching is not significant. Watch anything and you are learning watchfulness. Listen to the birds, it is the same. One day you will be able to listen to your own thoughts. The birds are a little farther away, your thoughts are a little closer. In the fall, watch the dry leaves falling from the trees. Anything will do that helps you to be watchful. Walking, watch your own walking.

Buddha used to say to his disciples: Take each step watchfully. He used to say:

Watch your breath. And that is one of the most significant practices for watching because the breath is there, continuously available for twenty-four hours a day wherever you are. The birds may be singing one day, they may not be singing some other day, but breathing is always there. Sitting, walking, lying down, it is always there. Go on watching the breath coming in, the breath going out.

Not that watching the breath is the point, the point is learning how to watch. Go to the river and watch the river. Sit in the marketplace and watch people passing by. Watch anything, just remember that you are a watcher. Don't become judgmental, don't be a judge. Once you start judging you have forgotten that you are a watcher, you have become involved, you have taken sides, you have chosen: "I am in favor of this thought and I am against that thought." Once you choose, you become identified. Watchfulness is the method of destroying all identification.

Hence Gurdjieff called his process the process of nonidentification. It is the same, his word is different.

Don't identify yourself with anything, and slowly one learns the ultimate art of watchfulness. That's what meditation is all about. Through meditation one discovers one's own light. That light you can call your soul, your self, your God, whatever word you choose—or you can remain just silent, because it has no name. It is a nameless experience, tremendously beautiful, ecstatic, utterly silent, but it gives you the taste of eternity, of timelessness, of something beyond death.

OSHO International Meditation Resort

Location: Located one hundred miles southeast of Mumbai in the thriving modern city of Pune, India, the OSHO International Meditation Resort is a holiday destination with a difference. The Meditation Resort is spread over forty acres of spectacular gardens in a gorgeous tree-lined residential area.

Uniqueness: Each year the meditation resort welcomes thousands of people from more than one hundred countries. The unique campus provides an opportunity for a direct personal experience of a new way of living—with more awareness, relaxation, celebration, and creativity. A great variety of around-the-clock and around-the-year program options are available. Doing nothing and just relaxing is one of them!

All programs are based on the OSHO vision of "Zorba the Buddha"—a qualitatively new kind of human being who is able *both* to participate creatively in everyday life *and* to relax into silence and meditation.

Meditations: A full daily schedule of meditations for every type of person includes methods that are active and passive, traditional and revolutionary, and in particular the OSHO Active Meditations.™ The meditations take place in what must be the world's largest meditation hall, the OSHO Auditorium.

Multiversity: Individual sessions, courses, and workshops cover everything from creative arts to holistic health, personal transformation, relationship and life transition, work-as-meditation, esoteric sciences, and the "Zen" approach to sports and recreation. The secret of the Multiversity's success lies in the fact that all its programs are combined with meditation, supporting an understanding that as human beings we are far more than the sum of our parts.

Basho Spa: The luxurious Basho Spa provides for leisurely open-air swimming surrounded by trees and tropical green. The uniquely styled, spacious Jacuzzi, the

saunas, gym, tennis courts … all are enhanced by their stunningly beautiful setting.

Cuisine: A variety of different eating areas serve delicious Western, Asian, and Indian vegetarian food—most of it organically grown especially for the meditation resort. Breads and cakes are baked in the resort's own bakery.

Night Life: There are many evening events to choose from—dancing being at the top of the list! Other activities include full-moon meditations beneath the stars, variety shows, music performances, and meditations for daily life.

Or you can just enjoy meeting people at the Plaza Café, or walking in the nighttime serenity of the gardens of this fairy-tale environment.

Facilities: You can buy all your basic necessities and toiletries in the Galleria. The Multimedia Gallery sells a large range of OSHO media products. There is also a bank, a travel agency, and a cyber café on campus. For those who enjoy shopping, Pune provides all options, ranging from traditional and ethnic Indian products to all global brand-name stores.

Accommodation: You can choose to stay in the elegant rooms of the OSHO Guesthouse, or for longer stays opt for one of the Living-In program packages. Additionally there is a plentiful variety of nearby hotels and serviced apartments.
www.osho.com/meditationresort

About Osho

Osho defies categorization. His thousands of talks cover everything from the individual quest for meaning to the most urgent social and political issues facing society today. Osho's books are not written but are transcribed from audio and video recordings of his extemporaneous talks to international audiences. As he puts it, "So remember: Whatever I am saying is not just for you … I am talking also for the future generations."

Osho has been described by the *Sunday Times* in London as one of the "1000 Makers of the 20th Century" and by American author Tom Robbins as "the most dangerous man since Jesus Christ." *Sunday Mid-Day* (India) has selected Osho as one of ten people—along with Gandhi, Nehru, and Buddha—who have changed the destiny of India.

About his own work Osho has said that he is helping to create the conditions for the birth of a new kind of human being. He often characterizes this new human being as "Zorba the Buddha"—capable of enjoying both the earthy pleasures of a Zorba the Greek and the silent serenity of a Gautama the Buddha.

Running like a thread through all aspects of Osho's talks and meditations is a vision that encompasses both the timeless wisdom of all ages past and the highest potential of today's (and tomorrow's) science and technology.

Osho is known for his revolutionary contribution to the science of inner transformation, with an approach to meditation that acknowledges the accelerated pace of contemporary life. His unique OSHO Active Meditations™ are designed to first release the accumulated stresses of body and mind, so that it is then easier to take an experience of stillness and thought-free relaxation into daily life.

Two autobiographical works by the author are available:
Autobiography of a Spiritually Incorrect Mystic
Glimpses of a Golden Childhood

For More Information

www.OSHO.com

A comprehensive multilanguage Web site including a magazine, OSHO Books, OSHO TALKS in audio and video formats, the OSHO Library text archive in English and Hindi, and extensive information about OSHO Meditations. You will also find the program schedule of the OSHO Multiversity and information about the OSHO International Meditation Resort.

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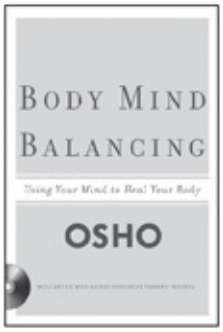
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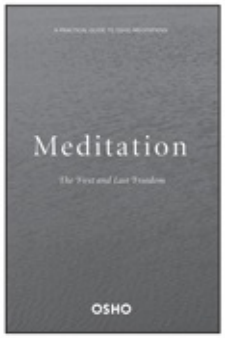
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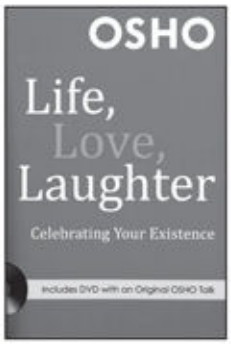
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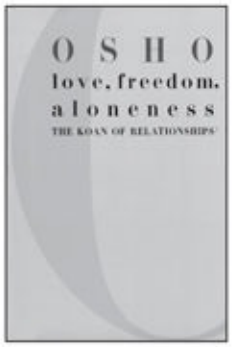
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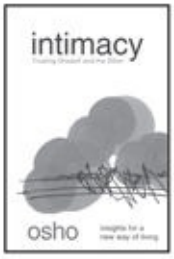
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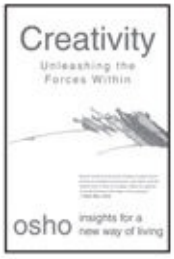
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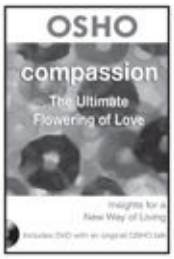
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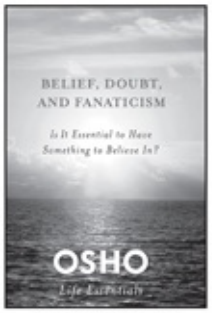
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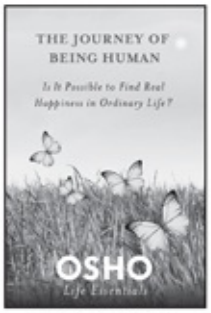
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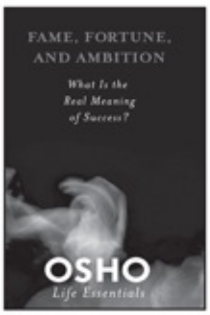
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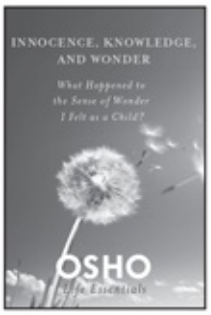
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