

Beloved Bhagwan, What is the difference between the emptiness of the child before the formation of the ego and the awakened childlikeness of a Buddha?

There is a similarity and there is a difference. Essentially the child is a Buddha, but his buddhahood, his innocence, is natural, not earned. His innocence is a kind of ignorance, not a realization. His innocence is unconscious -- he is not aware of it, he is not mindful of it, he has not taken any note of it. It is there but he is oblivious. He is going to lose it. He has to lose it. Paradise will be lost sooner or later; he is on the way towards it. Every child has to go through all kinds of corruption, impurity -- the world.

The child's innocence is the innocence of Adam before he was expelled from the garden of Eden, before he had tasted the fruit of knowledge, before he became conscious. It is animal-like. Look into the eyes of any animal -- a cow, a dog -- and there is purity, the same purity that exists in the eyes of a Buddha, but with one difference.

And the difference is vast too: a Buddha has come back home; the animal has not yet left home. The child is still in the garden of Eden, is still in paradise. He will have to lose it -- because to gain one has to lose. Buddha has come back home... the whole circle. He went away, he was lost, he went astray, he went deep into darkness and sin and misery and hell. Those experiences are part of maturity and growth. Without them you don't have any backbone, you are spineless. Without them your innocence is very fragile; it cannot stand against the winds, it cannot bear storms. It is very weak, it cannot survive. It has to go through the fire of life -- a thousand and one mistakes committed, a thousand and one times you fall, and you get back on your feet again. All those experiences slowly, slowly ripen you, make you mature; you become a grownup.

Buddha's innocence is that of a mature person, utterly mature. Childhood is nature unconscious; buddhahood is nature conscious. The childhood is a circumference with no idea of the center. The Buddha is also a circumference, but rooted in the center, centered. Childhood is unconscious anonymity; buddhahood is conscious anonymity. Both are nameless, both are formless... but the child has not known the form yet and the misery of it. It is like you have never been in a prison, so you don't know what freedom is. Then you have been in the prison for many years, or many lives, and then one day you are released... you come out of the prison doors dancing, ecstatic! And you will be surprised that people who are already outside, walking on the street, going to their work, to the office, to the factory, are not enjoying their freedom at all -- they are oblivious, they don't know that they are free. How can they know? Because they have never been in prison they don't know the contrast; the background is missing.

It is as if you write with a white chalk on a white wall -- nobody will ever be able to read it. What to say about anybody else -- even you will not be able to read what you have written.

I have heard a famous anecdote about Mulla Nasruddin. In his village he was the only man who could write, so people used to come if they wanted to write a letter or some document, or anything. He was the only man who could write. One day a man came. Nasruddin wrote the letter, whatsoever the man dictated -- and it was a long letter -- and the man said, "Please, now read it, because I want to be sure that everything has been written and I have not forgotten anything, and you have not messed up anything."

Mulla said, "Now, this is difficult. I know how to write but I don't know how to read. And moreover, the letter is not addressed to me so it will be illegal to read it too." And the villager was convinced, the idea was perfectly right, and the villager said, "Right you are -- it is not addressed to you."

If you write on a white wall even you yourself will not be able to read it, but if you write on a blackboard it comes loud and clear -- you can read it. The contrast is needed. The child has no contrast; he is a silver lining without the black cloud. Buddha is a silver lining in the black cloud.

In the day there are stars in the sky; they don't go anywhere -- they can't go so fast, they can't disappear. They are already there, the whole day they are there, but in the night you can see them because of darkness. They start appearing; as the sun sets they start appearing. As the sun goes deeper and deeper below the horizon, more and more stars are bubbling up. They have been there the whole day, but because the darkness was missing it was difficult to see them.

A child has innocence but no background. You cannot see it, you cannot read it; it is not very loud. A Buddha has lived his life, has done all that is needed -- good and bad -- has touched this polarity and that, has been a sinner and a saint. Remember, a Buddha is not just a saint; he has been a sinner and he has been a saint. And buddhahood is beyond both. Now he has come back home.

That's why Buddha said in yesterday's sutra: NA JHANAM, NA PRAPTIR NA-APRPTIH -- "There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path. There is no cognition, no knowledge, no attainment, and no non-attainment." When Buddha became awakened he was asked, "What have you attained?" And he laughed, and he said, "I have not attained anything -- I have only discovered what has always been the case. I have simply come back home. I have claimed that which was always mine and was with me. So there is no attainment as such, I have simply recognized it. It is not a discovery, it is a rediscovery. And when you become a Buddha you will see the point -- nothing is gained by becoming a Buddha. Suddenly you see that this is your nature. But to recognize this nature you have to go astray, you have to go deep into the turmoil of the world. You have to enter into all kinds of muddy places and spaces just to see your utter cleanliness, your utter purity.

The other day I told you about the seven doors -- of how the ego is formed, how the illusion of the ego is strengthened. It will be helpful to go deep into a few things about it.

These seven doors of the ego are not very clearcut and separate from each other; they overlap. And it is very rare to find a person who has attained to his ego from all the seven doors. If a person has attained the ego from all the seven doors he has become a perfect ego. And only a perfect ego has the capacity to disappear, not an imperfect ego. When the fruit is ripe it falls; when the fruit is unripe it clings. If you are still clinging to the ego, remember, the fruit is not ripe; hence the clinging. If the fruit is ripe, it falls to the ground and disappears. So is the case with the ego.

Now a paradox: that only a really evolved ego can surrender. Ordinarily you think that an egoist cannot surrender. That is not my observation, and not the observation of Buddhas

down the ages. Only a perfect egoist can surrender. Because only he knows the misery of the ego, only he has the strength to surrender. He has known all the possibilities of the ego and has gone into immense frustration. He has suffered a lot, and he knows enough is enough, and he wants any excuse to surrender it. The excuse may be God, the excuse may be a master, or any excuse, but he wants to surrender it. The burden is too much and he has been carrying it for long.

People who have not developed their egos can surrender, but their surrender will not be perfect, it will not be total. Something deep inside will go on clinging, something deep inside will still go on hoping: "Maybe there is something in the ego. Why are you surrendering?"

In the East, the ego has not been developed well. Because of the teaching of egolessness, a misunderstanding arose that if the ego has to be surrendered, then why develop it, for what? A simple logic: if it has to be renounced one day, then why bother? Then why make so much effort to create it? It has to be dropped! So the East has not bothered much in developing the ego. And the Eastern mind finds it very easy to bow down to anybody. It finds it very easy, it is always ready to surrender. But the surrender is basically impossible, because you don't yet have the ego to surrender it.

You will be surprised: all the great Buddhas in the East have been kshatriyas, from the warrior race -- Buddha, Mahavira, Parshwanath, Neminath. All the twenty-four tirthankaras of the Jainas belong to the warrior race, and all the avatars of the Hindus belonged to the kshatriya race -- Ram, Krishna -- except one, Parashuram, who was, accidentally it seems, born to a brahmin family, because you cannot find a greater warrior than him. It must have been some accident -- his whole life was a continuous war.

It is a surprise when you come to know that not a single brahmin has ever been declared a Buddha, an avatara, a tirthankara. Why? The brahmin is humble; from the very beginning he has been brought up in humbleness, for humbleness. Egolessness has been taught to him from the very beginning, so the ego is not ripe, and unripe egos cling.

In the East people have very, very fragmentary egos, and they think it is easy to surrender. They are always ready to surrender to anybody. A drop of a hat and they are ready to surrender -- but their surrender never goes very deep, it remains superficial. Just the opposite is the case in the West: people who come from the West have very, very strong and developed egos. Because the whole Western education is to create an evolved, well-defined, well-cultured, sophisticated ego, they think it is very difficult to surrender. They have not even heard the word surrender. The very idea looks ugly, humiliating. But the paradox is that when a Western man or woman surrenders, the surrender goes really deep. It goes to the very core of his or her being, because the ego is very evolved. The ego is evolved; that's why you think it is very difficult to surrender. But if surrender happens it goes to the very core, it is absolute. In the East people think surrender is very easy, but the ego is not so evolved so it never goes very deep.

A Buddha is one who has gone into the experiences of life, the fire of life, the hell of life, and has ripened his ego to its ultimate possibility, to the very maximum. And in that moment the ego falls and disappears. Again you are a child; it is a rebirth, it is a resurrection. First you have to be on the cross of the ego, you have to suffer the cross of the ego, and you have to carry the cross on your own shoulders -- and to the very end. Ego has to be learned; only then can you unlearn it. And then there is great joy. When you are free from the prison you have a dance, a celebration in your being. You cannot

believe why people who are out of prison are going so dead and dull and dragging themselves. Why are they not dancing? Why are they not celebrating? They cannot: they have not known the misery of the prison.

These seven doors have to be used before you can become a Buddha. You have to go to the darkest realm of life, to the dark night of the soul, to come back to the dawn when the morning rises again, the sun rises again, and all is light. But it rarely happens that you have a fully developed ego.

If you understand me, then the whole structure of education should be paradoxical: first they should teach you the ego -- that should be the first part of education, the half of it; and they should then teach you egolessness, how to drop it -- that will be the latter half. People enter from one door or two doors or three doors, and get caught up in a certain fragmentary ego.

The first, I said, is the bodily self.

The child starts learning slowly, slowly: it takes nearabout fifteen months for the child to learn that he is separate, that there is something inside him and something outside. He learns that he has a body separate from other bodies. But a few people remain clinging to that very, very fragmentary ego for their whole lives. These are the people who are known as materialists, communists, Marxists. The people who believe that the body is all -- that there is nothing more than the body inside you, that the body is your whole existence, that there is no consciousness separate from the body, above the body, that consciousness is just a chemical phenomenon happening in the body, that you are not separate from the body and when the body dies you die, and all disappears... dust unto dust... there is no divinity in you -- they reduce man to matter.

These are the people who remain clinging to the first door; their mental age seems to be only fifteen months. The very, very rudimentary and primitive ego remains materialist. These people remain hung up with two things: sex and food. But remember, when I say materialist, communist, Marxist, I do not mean that this completes the list. Somebody may be a spiritualist and may still be clinging to the first....

For example, Mahatma Gandhi: if you read his autobiography, he calls his autobiography My Experiments With Truth. But if you go on reading his autobiography you will find the name is not right; he should have given it the name My Experiments with Food and Sex. Truth is nowhere to be found. He is continuously worried about food: what to eat, what not to eat. His whole worry seems to be about food, and then about sex: how to become a celibate -- this runs as a theme, this is the undercurrent. Continuously, day and night, he is thinking about food and sex -- one has to get free. Now he is not a materialist -- he believes in soul, he believes in God. In fact, because he believes in God he is thinking so much about food -- because if he eats something wrong and commits a sin, then he will be far away from God. He talks about God but thinks about food.

And that is not only so with him, it is so with all the Jaina monks. He was under much impact from Jaina monks. He was born in Gujarat. Gujarat is basically Jaina, Jainism has the greatest impact on Gujarat. Even Hindus are more like Jainas in Gujarat than like Hindus. Gandhi is ninety percent a Jaina -- born in a Hindu family, but his mind is conditioned by Jaina monks. They are continuously thinking about food.

And then the second idea arises, of sex -- how to get rid of sex. For his whole life, to the

very end, he was concerned about it -- how to get rid of sex. In the last year of his life he was experimenting with nude girls and sleeping with them, just to test himself, because he was feeling that death was coming close, and he had to test himself to see whether there was still some lust in him.

The country was burning, people were being killed: Mohammedans were killing Hindus, Hindus were killing Mohammedans -- the whole country was on fire. And he was in the very middle of it, in Novakali -- but his concern was sex. He was sleeping with girls, nude girls; he was testing himself, testing whether brahma-charya, his celibacy, was perfect yet or not.

But why this suspicion? -- because of long repression. The whole life he had been repressing. Now, in the very end, he had become afraid -- because at that age he was still dreaming about sex. So he was very suspicious: would he be able to face his God? Now he is a spiritualist, but I will call him a materialist, and a very primitive materialist. His concern is food and sex.

Whether you are for it or against it doesn't matter -- your concern shows where your ego is hanging. And I will include the capitalist in it also: his whole concern is how to gather money, hoard money -- because money has power over matter. You can purchase any material thing through money. You cannot purchase anything spiritual, you cannot purchase anything that has any intrinsic value; you can purchase only things. If you want to purchase love, you cannot purchase; but you can purchase sex. Sex is the material part of love. Through money, matter can be purchased, possessed.

Now you will be surprised: I include the communist and the capitalist both in the same category, and they are enemies, just as I include Charvaka and Mahatma Gandhi in the same category, and they are enemies. They are enemies, but their concern is the same. The capitalist is trying to hoard money, the communist is against it. He wants that nobody should be allowed to hoard money except the state. But his concern is also money, he is also continuously thinking about money. It is not an accident that Marx had given the name Das Kapital to his great book on communism, 'the capital'. That is the communist Bible, but the name is 'the capital'. That is their concern: how not to allow anybody to hoard money so the state can hoard, and how to possess the state -- so, in fact, basically, ultimately, you hoard the money.

Once I heard that Mulla Nasruddin had become a communist. I know him... I was a little puzzled. This was a miracle! I know his possessiveness. So I asked him, "Mulla, do you know what communism means?"

He said, "I know."

I said, "Do you know that if you have two cars and somebody hasn't a car, you will have to give one car?"

He said, "I am perfectly willing to give."

I said, "If you have two houses and somebody is without a house you will have to give one house?"

He said, "I am perfectly ready, right now."

And I said, "If you have two donkeys you will have to give one donkey to somebody else who has not?"

He said, "There I disagree. I cannot give, I cannot do that!"

But I said, "Why? -- because it is the same logic, the same corollary."

He said, "No, it is not the same -- I *have* two donkeys, I don't have two cars."

The communist mind is basically a capitalist mind, the capitalist mind is basically a communist mind. They are partners in the same game -- the game's name is 'the capital', Das Kapital.

Many people, millions of people, only evolve this primitive ego, very rudimentary. If you have this ego it is very difficult to surrender; it is very unripe.

The second door I call self-identity.

The child starts growing an idea of who he is. Looking in the mirror, he finds the same face. Every morning, getting up from the bed, he runs to the bathroom, looks, and he says, "Yes, it is I. The sleep has not disturbed anything." He starts having an idea of a continuous self.

Those people who become too involved with this door, get hooked with this door, are the so-called spiritualists who think that they are going into paradise, heaven, moksha, but that they will be there. When you think about heaven, you certainly think of yourself that as you are here, you will be there too. Maybe the body will not be there, but your inner continuity will remain. That is absurd! That liberation, that ultimate liberation happens only when the self is dissolved and all identity is dissolved. You become an emptiness.... THEREFORE, O SARIPUTRA, in nothingness there is no form, or: FORM IS EMPTINESS AND EMPTINESS IS FORM.

There is no knowledge because there is no knower; there is not even vigan, no consciousness, because there is nothing to be conscious about and nobody to be conscious about it. All disappears.

That idea that the child has of self-continuity is carried by the spiritualists. They go on searching: from where does the soul enter into the body, from where does the soul go out of the body, what form does the soul have, planchettes and mediums, things like that -- all rubbish and nonsense. The self has no form. It is pure nothingness, it is vast sky without any clouds in it. It is a thoughtless silence, unconfined, uncontained by anything. That idea of a permanent soul, the idea of a self, continues to play games in your minds. Even if the body dies, you want to be certain that, "I will live."

Many people used to come to Buddha... because this country has been dominated by this second kind of ego: people believe in the permanent soul, eternal soul, atman -- they would come to Buddha again and again and say, "When I die, will something remain or not?" And Buddha would laugh and he would say, "There is nothing right now, so why bother about death? There has never been anything from the very beginning." And this was inconceivable to the Indian mind. The Indian mind is predominantly hooked with the second type of ego. That's why Buddhism could not survive in India. Within five hundred years, Buddhism disappeared. It found better roots in China, because of Lao Tzu. Lao Tzu had created really a beautiful field for Buddhism there. The climate was ready -- as if somebody had prepared the ground; only the seed was needed. And when the seed reached China it grew into a great tree. But from India it disappeared. Lao Tzu had no idea of any permanent self, and in China people have not bothered much.

There are these three cultures in the world: one culture, called the materialist -- very predominant in the West; another culture, called the spiritualist -- very predominant in

India; and China has a third kind of culture, neither materialist nor spiritualist. It is Taoist: live the moment and don't bother for the future, because to bother about heaven and hell and paradise and moksha is basically to be continuously concerned about yourself. It is very selfish, it is very self-centered. According to Lao Tzu, according to Buddha too, and according to me also, a person who is trying to reach heaven is a very, very self-centered person, very selfish. And he does not know a thing about his own inner being -- there is no self.

The third door was self-esteem:

the child learns to do things and enjoys doing them. A few people get hooked there -- they become technicians, they become performers, actors, they become politicians, they become the showmen. The basic theme is the doer; they want to show the world that they can do something. If the world allows them some creativity, good. If it does not allow them creativity, they become destructive.

Did you know that Adolf Hitler wanted to enter an art school? He wanted to become a painter, that was his idea. Because he was refused, because he was not a painter, because he could not pass the entrance examination in art school -- that rejection was very hard for him to accept -- his creativity turned sour. He became destructive. But basically he wanted to become a painter, he wanted to do something. Because he was not found capable of doing it, as revenge, he started being destructive.

The criminal and the politician are not very far away, they are cousin-brothers. If the criminal is given the right opportunity he will become a politician, and if the politician is not given the right opportunity to have his say, he will become a criminal. They are border cases. Any moment, the politician can become a criminal and the criminal can become a politician. And this has been happening down the ages, but we don't yet have that insight to see into things.

The fourth door was self-extension.

The word 'mine' is the key word there. One has to extend oneself by accumulating money, by accumulating power, by becoming bigger and bigger and bigger: the patriot who says, "This is my country, and this is the greatest country in the world." You can ask the Indian patriot: he goes on shouting from every nook and corner that this is punya bhumi -- this is the land of virtue, the purest land in the world.

Once a so-called saint came to me, a Hindu monk, and he said, "Don't you believe that this is the only country where so many Buddhas were born, so many avatars, so many tirthankaras -- Rama, Krishna and others. Why? -- because this is the most virtuous land."

I told him, "The fact is just the opposite: if in the neighborhood you see that in somebody's house a doctor comes every day -- sometimes a vaidya, a physician, a hakim, an acupuncturist, and the naturopath, and this and that -- what do you understand by it?" He said, "Simple! That that family is ill."

That is the case with India: so many Buddhas needed -- the country seems to be utterly ill and pathological. So many healers, so many physicians. Buddha has said, "I am a physician." And you know that Krishna has said, "Whenever there is darkness in the world, and whenever there is sin in the world, and whenever the law of the cosmos is

disturbed, I will come back." So why had he come that time? It must have been for the same reason. And why so many times in India?

But the patriot is arrogant, aggressive, egoistic. He goes on declaring, "My country is special, my religion is special, my church is special, my book is special, my guru is special" -- and everything is nothing. This is just ego claiming.

A few people get hooked with this 'mine' -- the dogmatist, the patriot, the Hindu, the Christian, the Mohammedan.

The fifth door is self-image.

The child starts looking into things, experiences. When the parents feel good with the child, he thinks, "I am good." When they pat him he feels, "I am good." When they look with anger, they shout at him and they say, "Don't do that!" he feels, "Something is wrong in me." He recoils.

A small child was asked in school on the first day he entered, "What is your name?"

He said, "Johnny Don't."

The teacher was puzzled. He said, "Johnny Don't? Never heard such a name!"

He said, "Whenever, whatsoever I am doing, this is my name -- my mother shouts, 'Johnny don't!' My father shouts, 'Johnny don't!' So I think this is my name. 'Don't' is always there. What I am doing is irrelevant."

The fifth is the door from where morals enter: you become a moralist; you start feeling very good, 'holier than thou'. Or, in frustration, in resistance, in struggle, you become an immoralist and you start fighting with the whole world, to show the whole world.

Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt Therapy, has written about one of his experiences that proved very fundamental to his life's effort. He was a psychoanalyst practicing in Africa. The practice was very good because he was the only psychoanalyst there. He had a big car, a big bungalow with a garden, a swimming pool -- and everything that a mediocre mind wants to have, the middle-class luxuries. And then he went to Vienna to attend a world psychoanalyst's conference. Of course, he was a successful man in Africa, so he was thinking that Freud would receive him, there would be great welcome. And Freud was the father-figure for the psychoanalysts, so he wanted to be patted by Freud. He had written a paper and had worked for months on it, because he wanted Freud to know who he was. He read the paper; there was no response. Freud was very cold, other psychoanalysts were very cold. His paper was almost unnoticed, uncommented upon. He felt very shocked, depressed, but still he was hoping that he would go to see Freud, and then something might happen. And he went to see Freud. He was just on the steps, had not even entered the door, and Freud was standing there. And he said to Freud, just to impress him, "I have come from thousands of miles." And rather than welcoming him, Freud said, "And when are you going back?" That hurt him very much: "This is the welcome? -- 'When are you going back?'" And that was the whole interview -- finished! He turned away, continuously repeating, like a mantra in his head: "I will show you, I will show you, I will show you!" And he tried to show him: he created the greatest movement against psychoanalysis -- gestalt.

This is a childish reaction. Either the child is accepted -- then he feels good, then he is

ready to do anything the parents want; or, if again and again he is frustrated, then he starts thinking in terms of, "There is no possibility that I can receive their love, but still I need their attention. If I cannot get their attention through the right way, I will get their attention through the wrong way. Now I will smoke, I will masturbate, I will do harm to myself and to others, and I will do all kinds of things that they say 'Don't do,' but I will keep them occupied with me. I will show them."

This is the fifth door, the self-image. Sinner and saint are hooked there. Heaven and hell are the ideas of people who are hooked there. Millions of people are hooked. They are continuously afraid of hell and continuously greedy for heaven. They want to be patted by God, and they want God to say to them, "You are good, my son. I am happy with you." They go on sacrificing their lives just to be patted by some fantasy somewhere beyond life and death. They go on doing a thousand and one tortures to themselves just in order that God can say, "Yes, you sacrificed yourself for me."

It seems as if God is a masochist or a sadist, or something like that. People torture themselves with the idea that they will be making God happy. What do you mean by this? You fast and you think God will be very happy with you? You starve yourself and you think God will be very happy with you? Is he a sadist? Does he enjoy torturing people? And that is what saints, so-called saints, have been doing: torturing themselves and looking at the sky. Sooner or later God will say, "Good boy, you have done well. Now come and enjoy the heavenly pleasures. Come here! Wine flows here in rivers, and roads are of gold, and palaces are made of diamonds. And the women here never age, they remain stuck at sixteen. Come here! You have done enough, you have earned, now you can enjoy!" The whole idea behind sacrifice is this. It is a foolish idea, because all ego ideas are foolish.

The sixth is the self as reason.

It comes through education, experience, reading, learning, listening: you start accumulating ideas, then you start creating systems out of ideas, consistent wholes, philosophies. This is where the philosophers, the scientists, the thinkers, the intellectuals, the rationalists are hooked. But this is becoming more and more sophisticated: from the first, the sixth is very sophisticated.

The seventh is appropriate striving:

the artist, the mystic, the utopian, the dreamer -- they are hooked there. They are always trying to create an utopia in the world. The word utopia is very beautiful: it means that which never comes. It is always coming but it never comes; it is always there but never here. But there are moon-gazers who go on looking for the faraway, the distant, and they are always moving in imagination. Great poets, imaginative people -- their whole ego is involved in becoming. There is somebody who wants to become God; he is a mystic. Remember, 'becoming' is the key word on the seventh, and the seventh is the last of the ego. The most mature ego comes there. That's why you will feel, you will see a poet -- he may not have anything, he may be a beggar, but in his eyes, on his nose, you will see the great ego. The mystic may have renounced the whole world and may be sitting in a Himalayan cage, in a Himalayan cave. You go there and look at him: he may be sitting

there naked -- but such a subtle ego, such a refined ego. He may even touch your feet, but he is showing, "Look how humble I am!"

There are seven doors. When the ego is perfect, all these seven doors have been crossed; then that mature ego drops on its own accord. The child is before these seven egos, and the Buddha is after these seven egos. It is a complete circle.

You ask me: "What is the difference between the emptiness of the child before the formation of the ego and the awakened childlikeness of a Buddha?"

This is the difference. Buddha has moved into all these seven egos -- seen them, looked into them, found that they are illusory, and has come back home, has become a child again. That's what Jesus means when he says, "Unless you become like small children, you will not enter into my kingdom of God."

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