

Attention Creates Reality for Us

Brisbane, Australia — October 11, 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2zisU2iXLE>

Friends, welcome to the second session of the second day of our three-day program here in Brisbane. You might have noticed I've taken my jacket off, because now we have to work. Talking one can do with jackets on, but when you have to work you have to be ready. We have to meditate, in the manner which will lead to the results I was speaking of with you this morning. Before we do the meditation, I am now routinely doing, in my meditation workshops, routinely doing two exercises to train ourselves to move our attention where we like, especially good for newcomers—and also to show that the sense perceptions do not belong to this body, but they can be used independently of this body so that when we have astral experiences we can move around with the same facility of perceptions as we have here, or even better.

The first exercise is called the *Orange Juice Experiment*. Some of you might have heard about it, might have done it also. But those who haven't done it, I encourage them to join me in that exercise. In this experiment, we will consider that our body is made of glass. It is transparent, it is hollow. There's nothing inside, only the shape of the body is like a glass, glass vessel. We have to, by our imagination, fill up this glass bottle which is shaped like our body, with orange juice. We have to think that there's orange juice flowing. We pack the orange juice in our feet, in our legs, take it in our whole body, into our arms, hands, and take it all the way to the top of the head. We have to leave no space empty. The whole body should be completely filled up with orange juice. After that is done, we will use two sets of valves. Some are in the fingertips. When we press our fingers, the orange juice flows out. When we relax, it stays inside. Similarly, we have valves in the toes of our feet. When we press our toes of our feet in front, the orange juice flows out. When we relax, it stops. That's the kind of valves we have in the body.

I will from time to time give you instructions, when to use these valves, and what to do with the orange juice inside the body. So now, let us close our eyes, and sit in such a way that you don't have to move. If you move or shake, the body is made of glass, it'll break. So, you're to be very steady during this experiment, and put yourself in upright position, and not too relaxed or too humped or something, but be conscious that you are now sitting inside an empty glass bottle. Imagine you are empty glass bottle and start filling yourself up with orange juice, starting from the feet and going all the way up to the head. Close your eyes and begin.

Watch the orange juice level as it is going up from the feet, up in your legs. See it going all the way up. You will notice that during our sessions here, when I do meditation, at the end I'll be

rubbing my forehead and eyes, rubbing my hands and arms and sometimes the knees also. This we do when we do deep meditation and we become unaware of the body and we come back. This helps in rapid getting back into the body and feeling physical again. That's why it's just a routine that I do.

How many of you were able to successfully do this Orange Juice Experiment? Very good. How many of you were absolutely able to clear the body of all orange juice? How many of you had some orange juice sticking when you finished the experiment? You all did very, pretty good. Now if you find that orange juice was sticking in any part of your body even after you were trying to get rid of it, it means that that part of your physical body needs some help. It's also a diagnostic way to find out where there are blocks in the body where your attention can be trapped.

Why did we do this exercise? Because during this exercise you moved your attention at every part of the body just because I was telling you to do it. I said: "Look at the surface of the orange juice on top of the head." Your attention went right there. I said: "Stop and hold at the eye level." Your attention went there. Every time I mentioned a level, your attention was able to not only go there but to see the level of the orange juice. The purpose of this exercise was to show you this attention, which moved all over the body, is the very attention you will be using in meditation. You were able to personally experience what is needed for meditation. What is needed is the concentration of the very attention which you just used in this experiment. It's just a way to enable you to know what exactly are we going to do when we say put your attention here or put your attention there.

We will do a second exercise now. In this exercise we will assume that this body of ours is a house in which we live. This house has many floors. Indeed, it has six floors. Starting from the bottom of the torso, it has six floors divided by different organs where we stopped during the Orange Juice Experiment. Ultimately, they end up at the eyes. Behind the eyes is your sixth-floor room where you are normally living and where you will be during this exercise. During this exercise you will feel that you are living in your house on the sixth floor, and the sixth floor is behind the eyes, and you will put a nice chair there. On the side of the chair you'll have a little side table like I have here. On the side table you will place a bunch of flowers like these—not just a copy of these flowers, your favorite flowers. On the side there'll be a beverage, a drink of your choice which you like. There'll be a plate with snacks of your choice, your favorite snacks. You'll imagine these things are there next to you in the sixth floor of your house where you're sitting in the center on a chair. Once you're able to establish that feeling that you are... this is a house, you are in the sixth floor sitting at the back in the center, and the table is next to you, then I will give you further instructions what to do.

So, close your eyes and make this body your house in which you live. Figure out the body has six floors. The five floors are below you. There is an elevator at the back of the body running along the spine. There's a staircase in front of you going from one floor to another right to the bottom, and you are right now at the sixth floor, and you're sitting behind the eyes, in the center of that room. Look at that room and see, do you recognize it? Do you like that room that's on the sixth floor? If you don't, decorate it. Put a nice chair in the center with your imagination. Put a nice side table. Put some drapes or curtains if you like on the side windows. Make it a nice place so you enjoy sitting there. Now place on that side table a vase, a vase of flowers, a drink and your snack. Favorite drink, favorite snack, favorite flowers.

How many of you could successfully do this experiment? How many of you saw that the flowers you saw were different from the flowers you were imagining? How many of you saw the color of the flowers changing? How many of you were able to recognize the scent, the fragrance of the flowers? How many of you felt it was new? How many of you were able to take a sip of the drink and feel it's different than you imagined? How many of you felt the second sip was different from the first one? How many of you liked the snack that you ate? How many of you still have the taste of the snack in your mouth? Very good, that was quite a feast!

There was no flowers. There was no drink. There was no snack. And you not only had the experience of all these, but you still have the taste of what we did in your mouth. Where did it come from? Can imagination create all sense perceptions? Yes, it does. You just did it. You think what is imaginary—what we call imagination—is not as imaginary as we think. It looks imaginary to us sitting here because we have determined this physical world to be the only reality. Everything else is imaginary. When you will rise to a level where you will withdraw your attention from the body, the very imagination you thought was imaginary will become reality. The physical world will look like it was just imaginary. Such a big shift in your experience of reality takes place. You cannot imagine anything unless it exists in the astral plane. I just guided you. I just guided you to have a few experiences, but you will have your own independent experiences, and the beauty is that the power of imagination is so strong that whatever you imagine becomes a reality in the astral plane.

Now look at the type of difference that we have living here. We are stuck in something already programmed around us, for imagination changes nothing here, but imagination changes everything in the astral plane. We can have such a variety of experiences in the astral plane. These sense perceptions that you experienced did not have any relation with this body, but they were your experiences. You had them. They were part of your imagination, part of your creativity. And it was not physical imagination because some of you saw things you had no intention of imagining. How many of you had an experience where you wanted to imagine something else but what turned out was different? So many of you! That shows that what is existing in the astral plane can come up, not by your imagination. You can imagine one thing.

Something else can turn up from there. It's just an exercise to show the independence of our sense perceptions.

Why did I do this exercise with you? To prepare you, that when you do meditation and withdraw attention, you'll be able to have experiences, sensory experiences—seeing, touching, tasting, smelling, everything—and it will not be connected with this body at all. But as you withdraw your attention from the body, that'll become more and more real. When 50 percent of the attention goes up that becomes real. If less than 50 percent goes up it remains imaginary. This remains real. It is our attention that is creating reality for us, and you can check it out. This experiment was just to show the great potential, the possibility of seeing things, experiencing things, experiencing a new world, a world which has such things which we don't even have here, a world where things change. And you will feel that the world here was dreamlike, that you have awakened to a higher reality.

When you will come back to the body, like I called you by counting 5. I count 5 to give you a feeling now you are to open your eyes, to anticipate you're opening of eyes at the count of 5. The withdrawal back to this reality tends to make it... that was imaginary, dreamlike, but when you're there, that's more real.

There was a Chinese philosopher, his name was Fa-Hien. Fa-Hien had a dream. In the dream he felt he was a butterfly and he was flapping his wings and going into all the flowers. The flowers were very different from what he had seen. Their light coming out of those flowers, illuminated, and they changed colors as he watched them. He had never seen those flowers at all and he said: "This is the reality. I am actually a butterfly and flying and look at real flowers." And then he came, woke up in the physical body, and this became real. But the thought came to him: "Am I really Fa-Hien, who had a dream that I was a butterfly? Or am I really a butterfly who's now dreaming that I'm Fa-Hien the philosopher?" He told his friends: "I had a very strange dream," he told them, "in which I became a butterfly." And the friends said: "You can't become a butterfly, you are a human being. Don't say you became butterfly. What happened was, you saw a butterfly in your dream." Fa-Hien said: "I never saw any butterfly. I was the butterfly. I was flapping my wings and I was the one who was looking at the flowers. It was my eyes, the eyes of a butterfly that was seeing everything. And when I woke up they became the same eyes of me, a human being. It's the same being who was looking at those, looking at those flowers." And he contemplated that no matter what form we take, the self, the feeling—"this is me, this is myself"—never changes. He became a butterfly, but he was still the same self as Fa-Hien, the philosopher in a human body.

Which means it does not matter how many times you change your forms. Your self, your awareness this is your own self in that form never changes. You'll notice the self, where you feel this is me, this is myself, whether in this body or dream body when you go to sleep in a

dream. The dream body that runs around, you don't see it. You run around. But you become the dream body. If in a dream you become a bird, you fly—and just the same you as awake, as a human being.

You'll notice with this meditational practice, by going on the spiritual path, that everything will change except the self. The self will always be the same, no matter whether it has form or no form. A totally formless experience of the self is still the same. It was the same self that was a human body, the same self that was a butterfly, the same self that's become a causal body, the same self that is formless, the same self which is totality of all consciousness. It's the same self as the whole creation. Self will never change. That is why, if the definition of reality is *that which does not change*, then the only real thing is the self. Everything else changes. Everything else changes, except the self. The reality is the self. And all this changing situation, changing experiences, are occurring around the self, and because of the self. Because the self is the only conscious part. Self is the only conscious part which can experience these things. Supposing in a dream you see 20 people, and it appears all 20 have their self. Are you seeing through 20 people or one person? Only one. The dreamer has gone into a dream and all others are created by the dream. Looks like everybody's like me and they must also be seeing my dream. Maybe you're all dreaming together. Maybe 20 of us are dreaming. You wake up. Only one was dreaming. The 20 were part of that dream. When you realize that this truth goes on till the entire discovery of yourself, you'll find the many have just been created by one dreamer, by one creator. The totality of consciousness remains one and is continuously the self.

I mentioned to you in the morning about the power of sound, which changes into something different at the top. What is the sound? Where does it come from? From the self. The sound and the self go together. Therefore, I said the sound pulls you within because it's coming from the self. That is why they say the whole creative power is the self. In the Bible they say: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Why do they say Word? They could have said power. In the beginning there was a power, and that power was with God, and power was... Why did they say Word? Because a word can be spoken and listened to, and the power of that creative being, starting from the very totality, coming to this physical world, can be heard and listened to. We can listen within ourselves. It's the same power, unbroken power. Our Word—the connection of consciousness of the self—is a continuous connection right to the top of our true home. It never changes. Levels of experience change. The whole world changes when we go from one level to another, but the self experiencing that world never changes, remains the same. That is why they say: "If you have self-realization, you're just one step from God realization. Because the self is just a created unit of God realization, which itself is created by illusion." This world is not illusion. People say this world is maya, illusion. And I say if it was illusion, we would not take so much interest in it. It's reality. We have used the process of illusion by consciousness that blocks everything else and

makes it real. There was a famous dancer in India, Sarabhai, and she had a dance school, and they said dance is a form of spiritual expression. I gave a talk at Ahmedabad in the city. She invited me to have a cup of tea. When we were having cup of tea she said: “One question has always baffled me, that when we say this world is maya, mythia, illusion, it doesn’t look like that. Why is that?” I said: “Because we are mistaking two things for one. We are mistaking the experience of something with the thing.”

When I take a sip of water—here I’m going to do—I have just tasted some nice water in my mouth. Was it...was it maya, was it illusion? No, I had experience. How can you call your personal experience an illusion? When I taste something, I have actually tasted it. It’s actual reality. How can you say it’s illusion? Where is the illusion then? What is meant by maya? What is meant by maya is... Because I picked up the cup of water here, because I took it to my mouth and I tasted it, the taste of water was real. I thought the cup is also real. The water is also real. These are not real. Taste was real. We are mixing up experience with things. An experience is generated and gives us experience of things. It’s the other way round than we think. We think water has to be there, then we can drink it.

Okay, let me take a more imminent, immediate experience, in a dream. Supposing in a dream I did the same thing. I picked up a glass of water and sipped it—wonderful taste—and I keep it back and I wake up. The experience of the water was real. It did not disappear. I remember it. You remember your experience in imagination, but the glass disappeared. The water disappeared. It was experience of drinking the water that created the cup and created the water, and that’s the maya. The maya is very subtle. It’s not pure illusion. It is an illusion created from actual experience. The experience is always actual. It’s always real. When we begin to say a material thing is creating the experience, that’s the illusion, that’s maya, and the correct definition.

I gave that example to Miss Sarabhai. I said: “Here we have a cup of tea. You’re enjoying the cup of tea, so am I. Can you call it your own taste, your own actual experience of tasting tea? Can you call it a myth? Can you call it a maya? Can you call it illusion? You’re having it right now. You can’t say how you had no experience. You did! Real, true experience, real experience. But then we assume that the cup was real, the tea was real. That’s the illusion. The illusion is: from an experience we jump to the fact that the exterior form, which we associate with that experience, is creating that experience and therefore the outside things are more real than even the experience. This is the mistake that we make which makes an outside world more real than the experience of the outside world.”

Philosophers have been talking about this subject. They have been saying: “You look at a tree. Is the tree there because you can see it, or you’re seeing it because it is there? Is there a real tree, then only you can see it—or your seeing it that creates the tree?” Those who say there has to

be a real tree before you can see it are called the materialists. Those who say: “No, your ability to see a tree creates the experience of a tree outside.” They are called idealists. The battle between the idealists and materialists has gone on for centuries. For thousands of years they have been discussing it, with no conclusion.

Do we have to continue with this endless debate, or can we find a way to test this out? For example, if I had the experience of a tree in a dream, and I was questioning myself: “Is there a real tree that I am seeing, or am I making up the tree because I am seeing it? I can’t decide it.” When I wake up, answer comes immediately. The tree wasn’t there, I was making it up, but I was seeing it as real. Therefore, if you want to find an answer—is the materialist right or the idealist right—wake up. Just one step. Just awaken to one next level of consciousness, you’ll get the answer straight away.

Now these mystics, who have been doing these wakeful experiences, getting to higher levels of consciousness, what is their testimony? They say: “We have found out that when you awake, you find that all the things that look real are being created by experiences which are real. Things become real because of that.” The scientists say: “No, we have another test. Our test is, if a tree is not brought in front of you, you can’t see it. If you could make a tree it should be there before it is brought to you. So, you bring in front a tree, then you see it. So tree has to come first, then you see it.” Then the idealists say: “Then there should be a time lag between a tree and your seeing of the tree.” All studies have shown that it’s simultaneous. The tree and seeing of the tree take place at the exact same moment. There’s no gap. If there was a gap you could say that when I saw a tree, tree came afterwards, or when the tree came, I saw it afterwards. But seeing of a tree and the tree are simultaneous.

Therefore, the questions remain unanswered until we can go to a higher state of wakefulness. Then the answer comes automatically. Once you go into a higher state of consciousness through meditation and stop arguing outside, stop debating it all outside, you get the answer — that the consciousness is making up the entire universe, that the consciousness is the creator of all experiences, the consciousness is the creator of the world, the totality of consciousness, the ultimate creator of everything—not by speculation, but by awakening to the higher state. So that’s why these mystics say that these deep questions: “Why am I here? Why I’m born?” They’re all created because we are not looking in the right place for the answers. We’re looking at the illusion and trying to see: “This must be real,” because we’re not willing to turn around.

Famous Greek philosopher, Socrates, he gives an example. You might have...some of you read that he gives the example of three people standing in front of a cave, and the light behind the cave is making the shadows inside the cave. They’re looking at the shadows, and as they move, the shadows move also, and they say: “These are monsters, three monsters out to eat us, and we have to huddle together.” The more they huddle the monsters are huddled also, and they

say: "This is terrible, these monsters, be alert. The monsters are going to eat us up." A man coming from outside looks at these stupid people. They don't realize these are shadows being cast by the light behind them. He tells them: "Look, these are shadows. Turn around and see the light. You will automatically find out these are shadows cast by yourself." And they say: "Don't listen to this man. He's a co-conspirator with these monsters. He's come to destroy us along with his monsters." And they won't turn around. "Can you imagine?" Socrates says: "We are like that."

We are casting shadows and making three dimensional, four dimensional, eleven dimensional experiences outside from consciousness. And somebody says the light inside is casting the shadows. Are we not willing to turn around and see? Not willing to go within and see where the light is casting a shadow? Because our attention is gripped by the objects we've created. It is so gripped by objects, by external forms. We have no time, no intention, no understanding of going to see how it's being created.

I'll give you another example. We go to see a movie. On the screen, there are shadows. The film is loaded in the projector behind. Behind the film is the light. The light passes through the film. Film moves at a certain speed and causes those images, those shadows to look like real, and we are sitting in the audience. We're looking at the screen. We're not looking behind, what is happening there. We take it as real. We cry. We worry what's going to happen next. We get so emotionally involved in that drama going on as shadows, they look like real to us. We take pity on them. We have compassion for those characters. They're all shadows on a predetermined, pre-scripted, pre-filmed celluloid behind us. Never, nobody turns around to see these are just shadows. We get so involved in seeing that. If we could just know they are not real. We're making them real. And why are we making them real? To have an experience. We paid. We got a ticket. We bought a ticket with money, and then we see monsters on the screen. We see tragedies and monsters on the screen and pay ticket to see it, because we make them real. This world is exactly like that. Our attention is grabbed by these and we have our emotional attachments. We have all our feelings for shadows which have become real.

Those shadows are single dimension, so we can say maybe they're only on the screen, but now they are made 3D movies. I don't know if anyone here in Brisbane, but in Disneyland, in the United States, they have 3D cameras. And two cameras take pictures from the distance of the eyes and they create a feeling of distance in even the picture. Two pictures being shown, they combine the same way these eyes combine, and we see those things coming near us. There, a butterfly comes flying near you and actually in the audience people try to fly it off. There's no butterfly, that's on the screen. It's just an illusion created of three dimensionals.

In one show I went, and in that movie, they were showing, there was a truck carrying some rats and mice they'd captured somewhere. Somehow, the back door of the truck falls, and all the

rats climb down. They come right into the audience and all the people lift up their feet, and as they lift up their feet, they can feel the rats right there. They can feel because they've put some little air, air pumps in the chairs and they pump the air at that time. They look exactly like mice. Not only that, then there's a huge stink of those mice also put in the chairs. They create a real experience, and this is a show going on. People buy a ticket to see that and everybody screams when these things happen, knowing so well it's not real.

Why do we make these things which are not real known to us? We close our eyes, close our understanding, close our knowledge, in order to make them real, to enjoy them. Aren't we doing the same thing with life itself? There's no difference. We're doing exactly the same thing. Aristotle, a disciple of Plato, disciple of Socrates, explains why we do this. He says we have to make these images into reality so that we can remove the excess of emotions of our own lives, that a purpose is being served that when we do this drama. At that time there were no movies. He's talking of drama. He says: "When we watch a drama, see a tragedy on the drama, we feel it's our tragedy. We shed tears. We forget that we are an audience, and these are just actors. We think the whole thing is real, we are also part of it. We begin to identify ourselves with the characters on the stage and we—what he calls—do something called a "willing suspension of disbelief." I'm translating from his Greek: "a willing suspension of disbelief." Normally we would disbelieve, but for the sake of watching drama, we suspend it. Normally, our consciousness would know it's all created just to make it real and have all kinds of experiences, emotional, mental, and spiritual. To have all these experiences, we make it real. That's what we are doing right here.

So, all these examples have been given to us by which we can verify why this creation took place, why it is the way it is. So that we can remove the excess of emotions—which again Aristotle calls that it is a purgation of emotions, that we are able to purge ourselves from those excess of emotions and maintain, get peace. We're looking for peace also here. The show here, the drama here does not show us peace. But when we get rid of this emotion and see the truth, peace comes back to us. So, there are so many examples people give. Of course, there's no true example we can give because the nature of experience is so different, but at least we know one thing, that the answers to these questions are inside us.

People say: "How can God be so cruel as to create criminals and terrorists? How can God be so cruel? How can God put so many people in hospitals, suffering? How can God put people in prisons and lose their freedom? What kind of God is it? A very unjust and cruel God! It defies the very concept of God, who should be good. The God was supposed to be a summation of good. How come he's doing all evil things? Or maybe, he's not a complete God. Maybe God has separated himself and gone somewhere and allowed the evil things to be done by his opposite?" So, we create a devil, a Satan, and God and Satan become two, and we explain, God is good, Satan is bad. Who created both of them? We don't... Maybe God created, maybe

something created, but obviously, in this world we cannot worship a God who also created Satan. Why this happened? What is the answer that so much suffering and misery is going on here, and we say God created everything. We are all God's children? Does he care for his children like the way they are being treated, being murdered, being tortured? Is that how God treats his children? These are questions that are bothering people because they don't look inside for the answer. They look only outside. If you were to go inside, and see why this show, with duality, with ups and downs, with good and evil, is going on, you'll get the answer right inside.

This is not real; this is made up. It becomes reality for us to experience, to experience extremes, extremes of high and low, to experience those here so when we go back to our true home, where none of the duality exists, we can truly appreciate: "Thank God it was a nightmare. Thank God it was a bad dream we had, it was not real." If you... Unless you go and awaken to that level, how can you say that? Sitting here—this is our only reality—we ask all these questions. And yet all the questions: why God created all this, why he created duality, why he did all this, can be quickly answered going within and seeing the true nature of consciousness. And totality of consciousness being the creator, which for its own peace, for its own appreciation, has created this.

People sit in church, in temple, mosque, synagogue worshipping, praying. What do they pray for? They pray for things to improve here, to pray for things that are happening here. They are praying: "God, give us this, God, give us this." Nobody ever says: "God, we have been praying for you for so many things. By the way, do you need anything? Should we give you something in return at least? Everybody says that you should at least return somebody's favor. God, you've given us so many favors, what do you need?" Supposing we were to say, to put this question to God, what would be his answer? God's answer will be: "I only want your appreciation for what I give you. I want you to have gratitude. I want [you] to say *thank you*. If you appreciate what I've given, you have given me my return." Now imagine, do we do that? How often? People who do express gratitude, and express gratitude to God for what they get, they get basically a feeling, that that is what God is appreciating right now.

Why does God like appreciation? Because God is nothing but our own totality. We like appreciation. We all like appreciation. If the creative power created all this and then in the middle of it gave gifts, the least expectation is gratitude. That's why, in spiritual life, gratitude plays a very important role. And also, that because the whole show is pre-staged, pre-determined—forgiveness, that you don't carry. Remember these two words. They will come up in spiritual life—when I talk tomorrow about the lifestyle of a spiritual seeker, you will find gratitude and forgiveness figuring out there.

I have mentioned all these things to tell you the great potential of meditation. Let us meditate. Let's try now, what I've been talking about. The last thing we did was to think that this body of ours is our house and we live in the sixth floor of this house. The other floors are below us, we can feel them, and we are at the center. If you can gather your attention behind the eyes, at the center, where you feel you already are—not that you make a little image of yourself there. The little images are not yourself—the one looking at the image is yourself. People make that mistake. They close their eyes and say: "Oh, I see myself sitting in the center." That's not you. That's just an image. Where are you? Where you're looking from the image, that's just behind it. You should feel you're there in the center. You are there. The body's below you. You should be able to feel that, and this feeling that you are there should be the beginning of meditation. If you don't first put yourself there, meditation will become just a ritual and give you nothing. People close their eyes and sit, and they meditate, waiting for something to happen. Why should anything happen? By closing eyes nothing happens. By repeating words and thinking of everything else nothing happens.

Why should anything happen at all when you feel you are sitting in a chair? I visit my friend's homes, they show me: "This is our special room for meditation." I like that room—specially prepared, incense, candles, beautiful decoration—and then you meditate there. I know you meditate all the time on the candles and the incense. You don't go inside. You made something so special, so attractive, your attention is always there. People buy little mats. "This is my meditation rug. I sit on this. This is my special meditation chair. I sit on that." And the whole attention is the beautiful rug they're sitting on, the beautiful chair they're sitting on. How are they going to go inside? There is no place for meditation, effective meditation, except to sit behind the eyes. Put your rug there. Put your chair there, then meditate.

If you don't start like that, you're wasting your time. I can go that far and say that. People have wasted time forty, fifty years without starting their meditation from the starting point, which is behind the eyes. That is your place. That you can decorate. Buy the best furnished chair, it's free today. It's always free. The imaginative chair is always free. Get the best place, decorate it. Make it your regular meditation chamber and sit in that and start meditation. Unless you can sit in there, meditation becomes an auto... It becomes almost a mechanical exercise, just a mechanical exercise. It's nothing to do with putting attention inside, it's just for a routine. "I have done two and a half hours of meditation." And none of those two and a half hours was sitting inside.

There was a friend of mine in San Francisco, many years ago, and he invited me to come and stay in his house. I went a long journey... I think I went from India, took a long journey to San Francisco, and I wanted to have a nice sleep. And he said: "We will meditate at three o'clock in the morning." I said: "Ohhh, I have to keep up my face with this guy now, so I'll also have to meditate with him." He said: "Three o'clock, what a great luck you have come from India! We'll

meditate together.” “Okay, okay, we’ll meditate together.” Three o’clock by alarm, we woke up, both sat together, and he was in meditation, and I was not so meditating. I was from time to time opening the corner of my eye to see what he’s doing. I don’t know whether it was coincidence or what happened. Every time I opened my eye to see, he was also opening his eye and looking at the watch. He had to complete two and a half hours. Every time I would wait for ten minutes: “Now let me see.” And I saw... I don’t know how often he was seeing, but I noticed, and ultimately the long two and a hour hours passed. If you enjoyed them, they pass very quickly, but that day was a long two and a half hours. And he said: “What a wonderful meditation we had! Ishwar, that’s great you were here!” I said: “Meditation was great, but it wasn’t meditation at the third eye center. It wasn’t meditation on the self. It was meditation on your watch, because your attention on the watch went to complete two and a half hours.”

What kind of meditation is that? Don’t we realize the very purpose of meditation is to withdraw from these things, to withdraw your attention and bring it back inside. That is why it’s so important to think of that place alone as your place for meditation. If you can’t meditate two and a half hours, do it for one hour. Can’t do it for one hour, do it for 15 minutes. Can’t do it for 15 minutes, do for one minute. But do it right! Don’t tie it up with time that your whole attention is on an outside equipment for seeing time, don’t do that. And if you start enjoying inside—which when we meditate tomorrow, you’ll see how you enjoy meditation with the techniques we’ll talk about—time passes just like that. When we like something, time passes very quickly. Supposing you’re sitting with some friends having nice gossip—gossip talking ill of other people, telling scandals and stories, which is very common—and we are sitting in a certain position. For hours we talk. Neither the legs get tired nor do we get tired—and looks like, oh, five hours have passed, actually only one hour passed—such a long time passed so quickly? And then when we want to meditate, oh, the legs are hurting. We have to change our position, we don’t know, we can’t concentrate. And how long have we been sitting, two and a half hours? Fifteen minutes!

This... The nature of time is so subjective—you’ll be amazed how subjective it is—that what is our experience of passing of time, we don’t believe in it. We believe in what the clocks say, what the watches say. We don’t believe our own sense of time, and time passes slowly or fast whether you’re enjoying or suffering. Oscar Wilde talks of suffering. He says in his opening chapter on his work on suffering, he says: “Suffering is one long moment.” When the time doesn’t pass, you’re suffering. When one moment looks long, you’re suffering, you’re not happy. A good definition. The point is, in our life, as human beings, they’re very cleverly placed good and bad. There are good events happening. Bad events happening. Good tangible things happening. Bad tangible things happening. Good intangible things happening. Bad intangible things happening. Somebody has a lot of money, we think: “Good karma.” But he’s the saddest person because his beloved left him. He was ditched in the love affair. Money means nothing

for him. Somebody's very poor, his faith is strong. He's laughing and happy all the time. He's losing one thing, gained another. When you study both these things together, you find that life is a very well-balanced thing.

But then why do we feel this world has got so much suffering? Because suffering extends the time. The good and bad being equal, suffering extends the time and the good contracts the time. We think there's more suffering than good. Actually, they're balanced in this world. You study it. So that is why, I would say: "When you meditate, first of all, remember that is the place. Secondly, don't worry about the time." Don't say I have to do two and a half hours when you can't do it and you're restless, trying to run away from it. How can you meditate? Do one minute; next day do two minutes, third day three minutes. Add one minute a day and improve. When you start enjoying, hours will pass like minutes, automatically. I talk to you tomorrow how to make that happen, but today I just want you to meditate by putting your attention behind the eyes and knowing, which is the starting point for meditation.

So, let's close our eyes. Sit upright, because houses, tilted houses we don't like, reclined houses we don't like. This is our house; upright house is the best. So, make an upright house, six floors, sixth floor behind the eyes, and we are sitting right in the center. Think of the floor on the sixth floor. Think of the center of your room. Think of what is around you in that room. Don't think of anything else except what is around you in that room, meditation room on the sixth floor, behind the eyes. Put all your attention on examining that room. See that your chair is in the center of the room. If it is too forward, push with your feet and bring it to the center. If it's too back in the head, move it forward, pull it with your arms and make it to the center. Keep sitting and relax on that chair and do not put any strain on your head. Just imagine you are there. Don't try to focus on anything. Relax on your chair. Stay in the center. Don't think of anything else at this time except your chair where you're sitting and what is coming and going in front of you. Any faces or figures that appear in front of you, let them pass. Don't move forward to see them. Let them move from one side to the other, let them pass. You see any colors, any lights, any stars? See from a distance, don't move towards them. Any sounds come, don't move towards the sound to listen better. Stay in the center. Let the sound come to you. No other thoughts. Think deeply about where you are.

How many of you could successfully locate yourself in the sixth floor? Very good, so you're all qualified to do meditation. If you've not been able to do it, you have to practice this first before you start meditation. Otherwise, it will become mechanical. It's so important to start from there. How many of you were able to see images coming in front? And how many of you saw images moving across? Very good, that's normal. How many of you could see lights or colors? Very good. How many of you could hear some sounds? Very good. How many of you were able to stay back, in the center, when this was all happening? Great. You're all well qualified to go into meditation.

How many of you kept on thinking of other things when I kept on saying: “Don’t think of anything else.” Most of us? That is the problem. This is the only obstacle to meditation; nothing else. We don’t put our attention there long enough, sufficient enough, concentrated enough, to get the results. We are so used to thinking of other things. Even when we don’t want to think, other thoughts come. Now we have to control that. There are certain means of controlling, and the controlling is done by putting artificial words in the thought process. Allow thinking to be replaced with words which are not your thoughts, and listen to those thoughts, to those words that you place so much that thinking has very little scope to comment. Then we can concentrate on the sounds and lights inside. That’ll prevent us from thinking of other things. It still takes time, but this is the practice. The practice of meditation is how to withdraw your attention more and more to this third eye center behind the eyes. And the more you can do it, the more inner experiences will start up, which will be so entertaining, that automatically you start thinking more of them. When nothing much is happening, automatically your mind goes to other thoughts.

We will proceed with this meditation technique tomorrow, and we will do exactly these things: to use the power of repetition of words to replace thoughts; to use sounds and music within our own self to draw the attention within; to experience love and devotion inside with our beloved which makes the whole meditation process entertaining and good. Once we do those three things, we’ll have a good idea how we can make progress in meditation. We’ll do that tomorrow, but remember, you have to practice thinking of the body as a house. You’re the sixth floor, attention behind the eyes in the center. This you can practice tonight to be ready for tomorrow, so don’t think it’s just a talk and we leave it here. Practice tonight, so tomorrow you’ll be more prepared for this.

Now, I’d like to end this session for today in order to answer some questions and which you have given in writing, and also to have some interviews with people who already asked for it, for one-on-one meeting with me to discuss something personal. And if you haven’t given your name for that meeting one-on-one, you can still give it to Rishi or Tarun or Mark. Give it to one of these people, and we will make sure that you are able to have that personal, private meeting with me also. Thank you very much.

I’ll now take up these questions. He will read each question that comes up, give me the paper so I can read again to be sure I understand the question, and I’ll attempt to give you the answer.

Q. I’ll break this question into parts. First part: relationship between effort and grace.

A. I said in the morning that in the area of *varnatmak shabd*, area of spoken language, whether it is spoken discourse, listening, reading books, it’s your effort, you’re to make an effort. In using words as a mantra or *simran* inside, your effort. This part is all effort. After that, being

pulled by the sound, no effort, all grace. Eventually, love and devotion, love coming which pulls you to highest level, all grace. It looks like there's a division of when we put effort and when we get grace. That... It looks like that from this end of the journey. When you reach the other end, you'll find without grace you could never have put any effort. Without grace, you could never have been a seeker. Without grace, you could never have listened to a discourse. Without grace, you could never have meditated. Without grace, you would have done nothing. That the whole thing was grace. But that is the experience we get at the other end. Starting from here, looks like it's all going to be effort, that you have to make an effort right to go to our home. But in actual experience, this experience of effort keeps on changing. You say: "I am not able to make the effort." And how much effort can we make? What is the purpose of effort? Is it to succeed? Not necessarily.

Again, I'll give you an example of a disciple of Great Master. His name was Daryai Lal. He was the finance minister and a judge in a neighboring state called Kapurthala, about 20 miles away from the Dera, from the ashram of the Great Master, and he was a disciple. He invited Great Master once to that place. Master visited Kapurthala. After retirement, he came to Great Master, and said: "Master, give me some seva, some service. I want to be near your holy feet all the time and give me some service." Great Master said: "You're a highly educated person. You held high office, in public office, and you can be a secretary. You can be administrator of this Dera. You can do other things. You can be editor in chief of our publications, a lot of opportunities. Whichever you want to choose, you can choose." He said: "Sir, I don't want any of those. I want to be your doorman. I want to stand outside your door. That's all I want. Because I want to see how much grace is being poured by you on the visitors who enter your door. That'll be a great experience for me, more than being administrator or doing those things. Please, give me the opportunity to be your doorman." Great Master said: "So be it." And he became his doorman. We used to see him outside the door of the Great Master, always pleased and happy to see us, which made us happy also, very good doorman, brilliant doorman, but bright and humble. He enjoyed his work. He felt very happy, blissful.

One day, he tells Great Master: "Master, I have been enjoying this seva, this service you gave me, to be your doorman. It has been very satisfying for me, but I realize I missed out on a very important part of your teaching. I never meditated. I was sitting all the time on your door. I want to catch up with the lost time that I could not meditate. Master, I understand this year you're not going to your usual summer resort"—in a city called Dalhousie, which was a hill station in India. "I understand you're not visiting your house there. Can I borrow your keys of that house? I'll go there and work for three months on catching up with my lost meditation, so that I can make up something that I missed out here." Great Master said: "Here are the keys, go, meditate."

He took the keys, went to the hill station. And as he opened the door, with great feelings—such solitude, such beauty, such vibrations of Great Master who's been living here, meditating here...“I'll get so much benefit here.” So, he opened the door, got in. A man followed him, and he says, “I am the plumber, waiting for somebody to come. I have to repair the plumbing here.” “Okay, okay, do that.” Another man comes: “I have this work to do. I was waiting for somebody.” He was so surrounded by these people, he could not meditate at all. Everyday something new happened. At the end he found he could not even meditate the little meditation he could do as a doorman, and he spent three months there being so disturbed by people. He'd never been disturbed before. He felt very bad, sad, disappointed at himself. Came back to the Dera, took the keys back: “Master, I failed. I thought I'll be able to put in my effort and do the best. I failed absolutely. There were more distractions there than anywhere else, and I could not concentrate my attention at all. Master, I failed.” Master laughed, Great Master laughed. He said: “No, Daryai Lal, you did not fail. You passed. You passed an examination of your own mind, that your mind thought effort will give you everything. It gives you nothing. Without grace, effort has no value...that you were trying to put effort ahead of grace. It doesn't work like that. You passed. Now you know it. Earlier, three months ago, you didn't know it.”

So, he learned a lesson that it's not our effort that gives something. Effort is supported by grace, which makes it look successful effort. So that is why, the truth is, it's all grace. The feeling that we want to search and seek is grace. We try to take steps toward this. With a mind like ours, that we're still willing to do it, isn't that grace? Our mind wouldn't let do any of these things. It's grace that makes us overcome the mind and do this. It's grace that builds up so much faith that we can override the doubts and the fears of the mind. So, it's totally grace, but looks like, for our mind's sake, you have to put in effort. Automatically, one day, we'll find out it was all grace.

Q. Next part of the question: “I wanted to know your personal experiences and struggles as a seeker and practitioner.”

A. My personal experiences? I don't share all my experiences, but I can indirectly tell you that I don't speak to you from books. I don't share anything with anybody, on a spiritual subject, except my experiences. Furthermore, I regard Hazur Maharaj Baba Sawan Singh Ji, the Great Master, as a Perfect Living Master, not because he brought any certificate that he was a perfect master, not because he showed me a will that he had inherited this *gaddi*, that he had inherited this position because of his old master, not because I know any other master, but only because what he promised, he delivered. That was my only concern. If a master says: “I can give you this,” and gives you, he's a perfect master from my definition. So indirectly I'm telling you, he's a Perfect Living Master.

People from the original place where Radha Soami satsang started, Agra in India, where Saint Shiv Dayal Singh, properly known as Soami Ji, where he started this process and named successors. And he named four successors in his last words. *Aakhri Bachan* contains four names, and Jaimal Singh's name is not there. Baba Jaimal Singh, who was the master of my master, his name is not there. The people, later on in Jaimal Singh's group, said that Jaimal Singh was asked, after the death of Soami Ji, by his wife Radha, "that you carry on the same work" that Soami Ji was doing in Agra, others were doing elsewhere—a very indirect way of appointing a master and ask him [to] do that work. So, people would come from Agra to talk to me, because they thought I was following a wrong master. I was following a master who was not a master, and they would tell me: "Look, there is no evidence that Jaimal Singh was a master." In fact, he was excommunicated from the council of Radha Soamis there. They excommunicated him because they had said that the right words to use were different than the five words you are using and telling people to repeat. They told me: "Please, there's still time to check yourself from following a false master whose own master was not even initiated nor named. And there's no will. There's no document to show that Jaimal Singh actually gave this mantle of work to Sawan Singh. Why don't you listen?" I would tell them: "I don't know Soami Ji, I never met him. I don't even know Jaimal Singh, never met him. I don't know any of the other people you talk about, I never met them, I don't know. I don't know if he had a will or not. I only know that when he initiated me, he said: "This is what you can expect," and he delivered it. I don't need any other definition. I don't need any outside evidence. His evidence does not come from outside, it comes from inside. He said: "Do this, in this particular way. That's what happens." So, I followed his instructions, and what he says actually happens, so I can't go beyond that to tell you why I follow him. I said: "He has proved himself to the hilt, not by statements, not by discourses but by delivering within yourself what he promises. So, I think he's a Perfect Living Master. I don't need any other definition." They would get disappointed at not being able to persuade me. They said: "He's a very haughty man, he's just, he's a psychopath, he's believing only Baba Sawan Singh," all kinds of words they would use for me. But I said: "If the whole world came and told me that your master's not a Perfect Living Master, and my experience tells otherwise, which one will I believe?" Even masters tell us that to believe your own experience rather than listen to anybody else. "*Jab tak naa dekho apni naini tab tak naa patijo Guru ki bani.*" "Unless you've experienced yourself, don't even believe your Guru." They go on to that extent. Therefore, it's only the experience that can actually convince you who you're dealing with.

My personal experiences have been two-fold, and they are for everybody. When we get initiated by a Perfect Living Master, the progress takes place both internally and externally. In some cases, there is more progress internally, and less externally. In some cases, it's the other way round, and there are more external things that happen and less internal. Some people say:

“Our life has changed, everything around us has changed, so wonderful, but I didn’t see anything inside.” How did your life change then? How could your life change and nothing happened inside? Then some say: “We have so much experience inside, but our life is still, we are still put in the same karmic situation outside. Why didn’t the master take all our karma off when I’m getting so many lights and sounds inside?” So, it appears that the progress that is made is both internal, by having internal experiences of other worlds, or external experiences in this very physical world when you suddenly feel: “There’s no reason to be angry at anything. There’s no reason to be greedy. There’s nothing is going with us. There’s no reason to be possessive of anything, that this lust for things outside has no value, that you get something better.” All these things outside are changing your whole personality, and you notice...others notice even more. Where is that happening from? It’s also a measure of progress, when you are changing so rapidly in all these things, which are vices common to all human beings. When these are changing, something is happening.

I’ll tell you the story of Baba Jaimal Singh, Great Master’s master. Baba Jaimal Singh once wrote a letter to Soami Ji. He said...because they were living two different states, at some distance, with no regular transportation. Baba Jaimal Singh wrote to Soami Ji: “Beloved Master, I am missing you too much. I can’t feel that I can separate myself from you anymore. I want to have your *darshan*, to have a look at your face and sit at your feet, as quickly as I can. I don’t know what is happening inside, but I miss you too much. Please, give me permission to come and sit on your feet.” Postal delays were very common. After a month, a reply comes back to Baba Jaimal Singh. “My beloved son, Jaimal Singh, I am very happy to know that your soul is roaming around in the higher regions, is going into *Khand Brahmand*.” Jaimal Singh reads the letter: “My soul is going nowhere. This must be letter meant for somebody else. By mistake he’s mailed it to me, or somebody’s just given wrong information and Master has said this.” He wrote back: “Beloved Master, I received your letter. In that you say that my soul is going around in higher regions. My soul goes nowhere. This does not apply to me, what you’ve written to me. Therefore, I only said that I am missing you so much, please give me permission to come and see you.” Another month goes by, a reply comes: “My beloved son, Jaimal Singh, I am very happy to know... I’ve got your second letter. I’m very happy to know that your soul is roaming around in *Khand Brahmand* in the higher regions.” Baffled by these two letters. Soami Ji says: “So far as seeing me is concerned, you can come and see me the weekend of the first week of next month.”

With these two letters in his hand, Baba Jaimal Singh arrives in Agra and presents them to Soami Ji. “Soami Ji, these letters don’t apply to me. My soul was going nowhere and twice you’ve written the same thing to me. This was not meant for me. How did it happen?” So Soami Ji laughs and says: “Let’s go inside and meditate for little while.” So, he takes Jaimal Singh outside—ten, twelve people sitting outside. He goes into his hut for a little while, about half an

hour, and they both come out. And then he says: “Jaimal Singh, now tell me, when I wrote those letters to you, was your soul roaming around in the higher regions?” “Yes, Master.” Soami Ji says: “I am not saying, did your soul go into higher regions during half an hour of meditation. I am asking, was your soul roaming around at the time when I wrote those letters to you, months ago?” “Yes, Master.”

Others couldn't understand what they're talking, so Soami Ji addresses other people. He says: “When the soul roams around in higher regions, it does not mean that you have to see whether it's roaming around. It does not mean that your *nirat*, the power of seeing, has been opened. It can be blocked. There can be blinders put on you, and you don't know, but you can feel. How do you feel that's there, missing your master so much? Well, he was experiencing something here which was related to what the soul was doing inside.” So, he said: “Sometimes masters have to get your work done here, where your attention is needed here, and if your attention gets pulled at that time, when your karmic pattern requires you to do/put your attention here, they can put blinders on your eyes and take you. But you'll have a feeling that you're making great progress without seeing anything.” So then, Soami Ji explained: “It is not always necessary that the verification of your spiritual progress is always with internal spectacular experience. It can be external, your feeling of love and devotion growing so much, your ability to be able to feel that here is also sort of experience of the progress on the spiritual path.”

So that is why when we say, experiences, yes... I not only put effort, I experienced grace. I experienced both. Not only did I experience effort and grace, I experienced skepticism. I experienced doubt. I experienced so much doubt I moved away from this path just shortly after I got initiated.

I was initiated at a young age. On the 9th of March 1936 I was initiated. I was born in November 1926, only nine-and-one-half years old. My grandfather, who was already initiated, took me to Great Master. And in those days Master could initiate young children of that age and used to give them *dhun*—this means the power to listen, to teach them how to listen. And then when they practiced listening, then he would give them—when they were teenagers—he would give them *simran*, or the repetition of words. Conversely, for teenagers, he would sometimes give only the *simran* to repeat. When they made some progress, he would give them *dhun*, or the *bhajan*, or ability to listen. That was called half initiation. So, my grandfather took me to Great Master and said: “This is Ishwar, you know, son of Lekh Raj. You've known him from childhood. I've brought him for half initiation.” And Great Master was doing the process of selecting people for initiation at that time. In the middle of it I arrived. He holds me in front of him, holds my arm like this, and he says: “What kind of initiation do you want, sweet or salted?” Now I knew...this was very common with him, to call a child and say: “What do you want, sweet or salted?” They all said sweet, and he had some sweets around him. He'd say: “Here they are.” They'd run away. I said: “He's playing the same trick with me.” I said, “No, no, no, no, not sweet

and salted, I want the one inside.” Then he laughed and didn’t say if I’m going to be initiated or not, just laughed but held my arm, pulled it to himself and put his arm around, and continued with his selection. I had no knowledge. “Am I going to be initiated or not?” But I felt this: “The way he talked about sweet and salt means ‘no,’ but he should let me go run now. Why does he hold on, holding me back?”

Anyway, we waited. The *chhanti*, the selection process, went on for a while. And then he gets up, still holding my arm, and he says: “Come inside, you’ll get full initiation, and you sit right in front of me.” That’s quite a surprise for me. I go there and sit in front. I look at him, and I remember his opening words. They were so beautiful and so convincing, I can never forget either his voice or those words. The words were: “What I am going to give you,” he told the whole group that was being initiated, “what I am going to give you I got from my Master. It has worked for me. I hope it’ll work for you. If you can find something better than what I’m giving you, take it. Don’t come back to me for my permission. I give you permission in advance.” That told me that he was not binding me down to anything. He was letting me practice something. If it doesn’t work, I’ll look for something else. He’s himself given that permission, right here. I can never forget those words. When I came back, I said: “He’s so open that he’s allowing me to study anything, go anywhere.”

I came back to the house, and I told my father: “Great Master initiated me, gave me full initiation, though my grandpa took me only for half initiation.” My father was overjoyed, and he said: “Very good!” He told the family members: “Oh, this boy has been initiated, very good!” After some time, some other satsangi friends of my father came to the house, and my father shared the same excitement with them. “My son got initiated!” They said: “What, that boy, nine-and-a-half-year-old boy?” “Yes, look at Master, he initiated him.” They said: “Oh, we are very sorry about it. Ohhh, that’s terrible.” I was... I was in the other room, by the way. I overheard this conversation. “We’re very sorry about it. This was not a good thing that you got done, to get a child initiated at this age is a terrible mistake! He never had a chance to see what initiation is. He never had a chance to examine what other things he can do in life. He was innocent person captured because his father happens to be initiated. This was terrible.” Then they gave an example of another satsangi, Bhagat Singh. Bhagat Singh was an attorney, and they talked of his son, Nikki, Nikki...Gurdayal Singh, his pet name was Nikki. They told my father: “Look at Nikki. He was initiated when he was eleven, and he’s turned turtle when he grew up because he found it was all because of his father’s pressure that he got initiated. Do you want your son to be like Nikki?”

I was overhearing all this. I said: “These people are right. I did not know what they’re giving me. I never had a chance to see what else is available in this world, and just because my father follows this master, I’m feeling so happy, I followed the same thing. Maybe he’s totally in delusion and I’m also going to be in same delusion. What kind of initiation have I got?” And I

began to revolt against this initiation, the path, and the master that has been forced upon me because of my father's belief system, and I never had my own. I was a thinker. I used to think: "This is not true. I never got a chance to examine." Until I remembered Great Master himself said: "If you find something better, take it." "At least, I will not be disobeying him if I go about searching and put his path on hold."

And for eight years, in my teenager years, I was a total skeptic, and I searched everything: got converted to other religions, got baptized, got converted to Islam, got converted to other forms, tried kundalini yoga, tried other yogas, went around everywhere to see what is better than what he gave me. And without practicing this, just out of my doubts, went about—I'm telling you a very personal story because somebody's asked this question—and it was only after about eight years I realized that nobody's even promising more, and this man promised. At least give him a fair trial, give him a fair chance to prove what he said, and then I began to only do meditation properly, after satisfying myself that not only have other people offered me something higher, they've not even described something higher, for my intellectual curiosity, to satisfy my reason that there is something higher. Then I began to practice. Then I practiced relentlessly, that I must see if there's something. Otherwise I'm still willing to reject it again. That was a period of skepticism and lot of effort, a lot of effort. And I found that there was a strange combination of sometimes feeling that the love of the master when I met him was so strong and pulled me against my own doubts. And at the same time, I was skeptic that I'm getting caught in something without examining it at all. It took me many years, but eventually, after the effort, I got some experiences, some belief that this is based upon experience, and not based on blind faith.

Then I went to the master and told him this whole story. I said: "This is what I've been doing so far." He said: "That was necessary for you." I was surprised to hear that "that was necessary for you," to go through that period of skepticism, to go through all these other forms of meditation, to go through all this. I didn't understand why it is necessary. After seventy years, today I understand why he said that, because I meet friends who have done all those very things. They ask me questions about those very things which I practiced. Had I no personal experience, I would be foreigner for them in their own traditions. I can at least discuss their own traditions with them. I can tell them where they lead and what happens to them, because unless you have personal experience of something, you cannot even feel the experience of somebody else. You can't feel the pain of somebody else if you haven't gone through pain. You can't even experience doubt of somebody if you haven't been doubtful. So, I thought he put me through a grinder for some special purpose.

Toward the end of my life—now I'll be 88 next month, that's a pretty long time to practice these things, to experiment with these things—I can say there was a purpose in everything that happened. It was perfect the way it was placed in my life. Today I can say that. So, don't think

that I was a child with a golden spoon in my mouth and I got all this. I went through the normal struggles of a seeker. I went through normal travails, and, and trying to use free will, trying to use mind to find what is the best. Ultimately, it comes down to: “What is your experience? Where do you go from there?” Ultimately, it’s only your own experience that convinces me. That is how I pushed myself through this path.

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