

Dying while Living — Experience of Free Will

Chicago — December 11, 2011

I am very happy that you came here for this celebration. Apart from the holidays you celebrated my birthday. I am very grateful for your coming here, giving me your good wishes. And some of you sent me some astral flowers—I appreciate those also. And many of you have sent me cards of birthday greetings, and I try to call or send emails and thank you for that. If I have missed for somebody, I'd like to, right now, thank everybody who sent me greetings on this birthday of mine.

People think that the birthday is when you are born. We were never *born*. Our bodies were born. We are celebrating the birth of our bodies because the soul is never born, has always been there, it's been always part of its totality of its creator, it has *never* been separated. When we say we go back and merge in the creator, it's not that we have separated, and go back, it's only that we realize that we were never separate. That's called a merger. So that's why the real birthday is a continuous birthday, all the time. We are born, all the time. We never die. On the other hand, these bodies, of course...the reason why I still think it's great to say "Happy Birthday" to a physical body is because this physical body is the best creation in this entire universe.

I have examined all forms of life that exist in this world. Eight point four million species of life exist starting from a large bulk of them in the plant life, and many in small insects, germs, bacteria and those little forms, and then going into fish and fowl and birds and so on and then going up into mammals, human beings, and beyond, into angels, rulers of heavens—they are all beings. All these beings from the smallest plant, the smallest vermin to the biggest angel have the same soul in it. A soul of a being is the same, no matter what the life form. But out of all these 8.4 million species of life, which are listed in some of the ancient Indian scriptures, out of which more than half—more than 54/5.4 million—are in the plant kingdom alone, out of all these different forms of life, the *highest* form of life, the most unusual and distinguished form of life is the human life, to be in a human body. A human body is the *most* precious thing in this whole cycle of life, the whole cycle of birth and death there is nothing like a human body. Now why is that? Why should a human being be raised higher than the angels and the gods? Why is it considered the most important form of life? The reason is, it is *only* in this form of life that a special talent exists which is called free will, the ability to make choices, the ability to choose, the ability to decide out of different options open to it which one to pick up. No other life forms have these options open. They are all governed by predetermined, instinctive programs.

People question whether even human free will is it real, or not? If everything is predetermined, and known to God, how can you have free will? Maybe we don't have any real free will. But that doesn't matter. We are not talking of real or unreal free will. We are talking of *experience* of free will, and only human beings have the experience of free will, the experience of choosing, the experience of saying, "I want this," or "I don't want this," the experience of seeking, because unless you can seek you will never find, and the truth is hidden from *all* life forms unless they seek for it, and the seeking is only possible where there is free will, and free will is only existing in a human form. See the supremacy of this form? It's the highest form, ever created. That is why they say that man is created in the image of his creator, God. What is common between a human being and God? It's not that he has two eyes and form—he's formless! He's a power, he's a creative power. He's the creative power, the Word, consciousness per se in its totality, something very different. He doesn't look like a human being. He can take any form. Then what is common between a human being and the creator? The *only* common thing is that creator has real free will, and we have experience of free will. That's common. The creator's will creates everything, and our free will makes us choose things between different options. Our options are very often fixed. It doesn't matter. We still feel we have a choice. Sometimes we think very hard, what to decide, it's so difficult. We are sometimes like a donkey who was placed equidistant from grass and hay, and he couldn't make up his mind which one to eat, and he died of starvation. [laughter] Sometimes we can't make decisions, and yet there are people here who can tell you in advance, before you have made a decision, what decision you will make.

I'll tell you my own experience with a guy in India, a kind of a swami who wore a turban. I had gone for an interview for the Indian navy. And when I came out of the interview, in the Indian city of Lucknow, he accosted me on the way, and he said, "Do you have a piece of paper?" And I said, "Yes, I have papers with me." Gave him a piece of paper. He took a pen and he wrote something on it. Then he folded the paper, folded again, into little packet and gave it in my hand. He said, "Now take another piece of paper, write the name...write any number between 1 and 10." I said, "This is a common thing. Many people play this. They know when you ask them to write a number between 1 and 10, most people will write 5. It's a number between 1 and 10. I am not going to...we will call his bluff off. I'll write a *different* number." So, I wrote 3. Then he says, "Write the name of a flower." The most common flower in India is rose. I said, "He is expecting me to write rose. I am going to surprise him by writing the name of a flower he may never have heard of, the slightly unusual flower that is only in North India called chameli, c-h-a-m-e-l-i." So I wrote chameli, c-h-a-m-e-l-i and I smiled at him. He said, "Write your date of birth." So, I wrote 1926. He said, "That's not your date of birth, that's your year of birth. Write the date." So, I wrote after that Nov 26. Normally we write the year at the end and not at the beginning. He said, "Open the paper I gave you." I opened the paper. It said "3, chameli, 1926 Nov 26," in the very order I had written it.

He wrote that paper before he asked me any questions. He wrote that paper before I decided what to do. He wrote that paper before I *thought* I was using my free will to decide what to do. I was amazed. I said, "It's incredible." How could he possibly do it? He wrote those things before I had made a decision! He said, "Shall I tell you something more?" I said, "Go ahead." He said, "When I asked you to write the number, you said, 'Everybody writes 5. I am going to surprise this fellow and write 3.'" Told my whole thought process. "When I asked you to write the name of a flower, you thought, 'I am going to write a new name of a flower he's never heard. Instead of rose I will write chameli,' and you wrote chameli. And when you wrote the date of birth, you didn't write...and I saw the whole of your thought process." I said, "But how could you see? I hadn't even *thought!*" If somebody thinks, and some thought reader, mind reader is there, and he reads my thought I can understand it. There *are* mind readers. I know a number of them, mind readers, who can read your mind and tell you what you are thinking. They can almost see the writing on your forehead. They are *antish katan* readers. In India, there are several of them. They read your forehead and tell you what you are thinking. So, it's very dangerous to be close to them. (What we all think, you know. We don't want people to read our thoughts.) But this guy read my thoughts before I thought it out. It proved two very important things: One, I thought I had real free will and I could think. How could I have real free will if he could read it before I thought? Predetermination was proved beyond a shadow of doubt, with this one little experience, that everything is predetermined. Even how we use free will is predetermined. Even how we will make a decision is predetermined. What thoughts will precede our decision-making is predetermined.

It takes a long journey to the universal mind, where all thoughts are pre-stored, all future thoughts have been pre-stored. It takes a journey to that realm to be able to see what you will think and what you will decide in the future. But we... not only that guy could do it, we can all do it. All it needs is to withdraw your attention away from this physical body, away from the sensory body and go on to have a look at the mind where all memories are stored, and you will find that what you think you'll be doing is all predetermined. Yet, if everything is predetermined, how can we have free will? Very good question, good logical mental question, not a good spiritual question. The spiritual question is how do you *feel* about it? The answer is we feel we have free will! That's all that is needed, which means that we are destined on our spiritual path also already. We are destined who will go where, but we have to go through whole process. We have to go through an experience, an experience of seeking, experience of being found by a Perfect Living Master, experience of making all the progress that we have to make. So that is why, while we are in the human body, we get that *unique* experience of free will, where we make a decision. Our free will is a *real* experience, but an unreal free will. The creator's free will is real...the creator's free will has created all free wills.

Somebody said, "Can you really call your free will not real?" And I looked back again on the subject of free will. It's a very popular subject, because it's a great contradiction. In philosophy, in metaphysics, the question of free will is very controversial. If God *knows* everything, even what we are going to do, he knows in advance, how can we have free will? And yet, if we have no free will, why are we being punished for our karma? You say, "You did something bad." How can we do anything bad unless God did it bad? He should bear the punishment, not me! If he *willed* everything, he willed our sins also, and he willed our virtues also, who are we to come and suffer? Why shouldn't he suffer? Good question, but it is a good question. In metaphysics, this question has come up again and again, "If we have no real free will, why does the law of karma exist at all? How can you be punished and rewarded for something over which you have no control?" The answer is very surprising. The spiritual answer is very surprising. The spiritual answer is: "Your free will does not operate independent of the creator's will." At the end of the spiritual journey you discover that your experienced free will was *no* different than the creator's will. You could not have experience of that free will except if the creator had that will. Therefore, there is no difference, but you only realize it when you are at the other end, not here. When you are here, it looks like an individual free will, of an individual. All free wills operate within the will of the creator. Therefore, they *are* free. The creator's will is free. To that extent, when you realize that your free will is operating within the will of the creator, and his will is free, your will becomes free, and no longer an illusion.

On the other hand, what about karma then? Well, if free will is illusion, karma is illusion too. That's the other beauty. Karma is not real. No soul has ever undergone any karma. Karma is a mental experience. Karma is created by the mind, suffered by the mind, enjoyed by the mind. It's a mental game. When you rise above the mind and become yourself, there is no karma at all. You find you were never given any karma, nor did you create any karma. You had created...you were given a device, a thinking device, a device which experiences free will, and through that device, you experience punishment and reward. Therefore, the whole package of experience of free will, experience of karma, good and bad, punishment and reward, the whole thing is a single package and operates only in the three worlds of the physical world, the astral world, and the causal world. It does not go into the spiritual world at all. In the spiritual world there is neither mind, nor karma, nor punishment nor reward. This is all a local thing here, generated for our experience here. It does not belong to us, it's temporary. We took it on, wore a costume on a stage so that we could act well and enjoy the act. We have to take it off when we go home. We don't carry it with us. We don't carry any karma with us when we go home.

Our true home lies beyond the mind and therefore lies beyond karma. So, the answer is very beautiful that while we are here in the physical body, the experience of karma becomes real, the experience of free will becomes real, the experience of seeking becomes real, the experience of being found by a Perfect Living Master becomes real. The whole show takes place in such a beautiful, real way, that there is no way that we can ever doubt its reality. If we have created this illusion for ourselves, how come we take it so real? What is the reason that this physical world around us, which by all statements of all enlightened people is an illusion, created by our own mind—if our own mind has created this illusion, how come we are taking it as *so* real? There are several reasons for that.

One reason is that we have nothing else to compare it with. There is only reality we are experiencing, so we try to relate one part of reality with another, and we think, “This must be real.” I want to know is this table real? Yes, I can touch it, I can taste it, smell it. It’s real! I checked it out! What would happen if I saw the same thing in a dream? You’re dreaming at night, and I saw a table, and I say, “Is the table real, or not? Am I dreaming, or is table real?” Touch it, taste... “Oh, yes, it’s real. I touched it, I checked it out, it’s real!” And then I wake up. Where is the table? [laughter] It was dream! It disappeared like a dream. When we rise from this level of wakefulness to another level, this looks like a dream. Then we realize that all things were just created the same way, like a dream at night is created. How is the dream at night created? By the mind. How is this world created? By the mind. How are astral worlds created? By the mind. How is the mind created? By the mind. These three worlds are all a mental game, a show, a projection, just created so that we can have an experience, that we can have an unusual, unique experience. I’m sure you all find it very unique, not always very pleasant. It may not be pleasant experience, it’s a *unique* experience, because you have been able to create reality.

The other strong element, that makes it real, apart from the fact that we have no other point of reference to judge it, is the existence of free will. If we can make choices here, how can it be not real. And this experience of free will with *no* knowledge of the future, is what makes it real. Supposing each one of us could just open a little window and see what we are going to decide in the next five minutes. All free will will disappear. In five minutes, all free will will be destroyed if you can see your future for five minutes more. Therefore, what is sustaining the free will of a human being is ignorance. I didn’t know why they call ignorance as bliss, and now I find out ignorance is bliss because it creates free will and makes this world real for us. Why is it necessary to make this world real? Because there is no comparison between watching a movie and knowing it’s a movie than actually living in this life, in this world. If we could know that this is just a projection, it’s like a movie being put on a screen, like a theatrical stage on which the whole show is going on, and we are merely an actor and audience at the same time, if we *knew* that, the whole fun of reality will

go away. In order to make sure that we experience this as reality, we have shut off knowledge of the future, we have shut off knowledge of our astral self, we have shut off knowledge of the soul, we have shut off who we are, and just to make this real. It was a good move to experience reality outside, to create an illusion and make it real, a great thing!

When you go to New York and go to Broadway to see a play, there are many kinds of plays. Some are just cheap plays, you just...you can see on the street people performing. They are not realistic at all. You can buy a dollar ticket and see them. But when you have to pay \$150, those actors have to act as if it is real. That means the more valuable the show is, the more real it must look, even if it is not real. Therefore, we were designed to be good, real actors, acting our parts on a script, so well trained, and it should look absolutely real. So to make no...to take no chance, lest we mess up the play by realizing right on the stage, "Oh, this is not real, This is just a stage show," and not messing up the whole play, we have deliberately created this reality and cut ourselves off so that we can make a *real* show and enjoy it and then walk away when we want to. That's what we are supposed to do. That's what we do, anyway.

So, when Perfect Living Masters come here, they tell us, "You don't have to wait to die to find out what happened. You can find out right now. You can die while living. You can have the experience of death, *exactly* the same experience you will have when you die." How do you do that? What happens in death? You know, in death, the life force does not withdraw all of a sudden—looks sometimes like it's gone all of a sudden. But if a person you watch dying, in a...specially in a hospital, and dying slowly, you'll find that the patient who's dying, first will complain that the patient does not know where the feet are, where the hands are. Their awareness disappears first. Then says, "I don't know where my...put my leg this side," and the leg is already this side. "Put my arm...I can't find my arm." So, the death takes place in stages, starting from the extremities of this body, and then goes on, and then goes into the torso. The person is still speaking, and half the body is dead, and keeps on. When it is crossing the torso, and goes into the head, you're gone, death is complete. So, there's a process in which death takes place, and that is the withdrawal of life force from the extremities of the body, on to the head, and finally from the brain, when the brain is dead, you're dead. That is precisely the process which the mystics tell us, "If you want to simulate death, you want to have an artificial experience of death, just withdraw your attention in the same order." Withdraw your attention from the hands, feet, your extremities, bring it up slowly, slowly, up to the head, and once you are in the head, you'll feel your body is gone, you'll become unaware of the body. Identical experience to physical death. It's called "dying while living."

In the Bible, Paul says, "I die daily." He doesn't mean physical death; it means he *experiences* death. You will notice that this kind of death that comes up is a secret of finding out that you are not this body. If you become unaware of this body and you are still there, very *strongly* there, your eyesight is better. No glasses are needed when you don't have this body—20/20, even better eyesight, no matter what glasses you were wearing or contact lenses you were wearing, you don't need any of that stuff. You have no weight, no matter how obese or fat you were in the physical body, you will be...body you *still* have. When you are unaware of the physical body, you can fly. You just lift yourself, you are light. There are so many other advantages of that particular form in which you have now found, and that form is not new. It's not that you have found some new form, you're already in that. That form is covered by a physical body. Therefore, you don't know it.

So, by the experience of physically withdrawing attention from this body, becoming unaware of it, you become aware of another inside body of yours. The same process can be used to become unaware of the inner body also, and you become unaware of that body. You find you are the mind alone, just creating both bodies. You could carry the process further, with the help of a Perfect Living Master who can tell you how to withdraw your attention even beyond that. You can withdraw yourself to the point where even the mind disappears, and you find you were permanent, immortal, soul, consciousness, pure and simple. The rest was all created around you by your consciousness. It's a personal experience. It's a practical experience. All of us are capable of having it. There's no qualification that you have to be born in a particular country, in a particular tribe, or in a particular caste, or in a particular form, or you should have a particular color. It's open to all nationalities, all human beings, of all ages. This can be practiced by a child of five years old and right up to 100-year-old man. It's not something confined to any particular group. It's not a religion, it's a discovery of your own self. All religions are telling us, "Go within, the kingdom is inside you. Go and find it." Are we following that?

We are running into the houses we have built. We call them temples, churches, mosques. We call those people... those houses outside as the place of worship, where the creator has given us the house of worship right sitting on our head, and we don't go inside that. The *true* house of worship is our own body, our own head and that's where we should draw ourselves and if you want to worship the creator, worship there, you'll *find* the creator. But outside are concepts, superstitions. We just start believing things, blind faith, so the best thing is to *experience* yourself. Great Master's teaching was one...had one good feature, it said, it says, Great Master said, "Do not believe anybody unless you can experience it. Do not even believe your master if you cannot experience yourself." And do not believe *everything*. Believe what you experience. Go step by step and increase your faith and belief as you keep on having more experience. It's very different from people they say, "Just believe, just believe." Religion says, "Just believe," without any experience at all.

Our lives are the same, our people are the same. The people who are giving their speeches, who are giving sermons to us, their lives are just like ours. There's no change. Anger, lust, greed, there's no change. They're all the same. What kind of religion is that, what kind of spirituality is that? Even a little bit of advancement in this spiritual path of going within yourself changes *all* these things. It changes the level of your anger, greed, lust, ego. All these things change, and you can see them. Other people can also see them. So, this is a visible spiritual path. This is what the mystics say we should follow. So, we should be able to practice something which shows what is real, what is not, and how this whole pattern has been set up. Once you reach home, where you already are...you don't have to *go* there, you *discover* you are there. Once you discover that you were always in that home from where the whole show was created, once you find that out, the show changes its character. Then you visit with knowledge, something of which you are the director. You're not merely a blind actor, you are the director, actor, and audience of the same play. It's a different experience altogether. This life becomes a different experience. So, "dying while living" has been considered as the process by which you can be aware, that you are more than this physical body.

There's a story about it. I told you earlier that I'll tell you a few stories. Story number one. I'll tell you some more. Story number one: There used to be a merchant, in India, he used to do import and export business, with Africa. Every year he would take some things from India, silks and something from Benares/Varanasi and take them to Africa, sell them, bring cashew nuts and other African products to India. That was his business; every year he would go. During his business he used to pass through a forest in Africa where there were a lot of parrots. It was a parrot jungle there, so he used to look at those beautiful birds, and on one trip he decided he should take one of these birds home.

So, he went to that forest, bought a cage, and he picked up one of the parrots and put him in the cage and took him home, and every day fed the parrot with beautiful special food which parrots like. I don't know if you know what parrots like: they like chilis, Mexican chilis, Indian chilis, red chilis, they like green chilis also, and they like a special porridge kind of thing made with the wheat flour and some sugar mixed with it that's called *churi*. So this parrot was fed with lot of *churi* and lot of chilis, and he was very happy. The parrot was taught to sing. The parrot would sing and dance in the cage, and next year when the merchant was going to Africa, he asked this parrot in the cage, "I am going back to your homeland. Do you have any message to send to the people back home?" And the parrot said, "Yes, tell them I am enjoying my life in this cage. I eat *churi* and chilis, and I dance and sing and I'm very happy in this cage." So, the merchant went and after finishing his business in Africa, he went to that forest, and he called all those parrots together. He said, "Come on, folks, I have a message for you."

“You remember I took one of you with me back to India. That parrot I took with me has sent you a message. He says he’s enjoying himself in his cage, he sings, dances, enjoys, eats chili and churi.” On hearing this, one elderly parrot sitting on a branch had tears in his eyes, and he fell down dead. So, the merchant was very shocked. He said, “This parrot must have been very close to the one I took, that he could not stand this message and he had tears and he died.” Anyways, feeling sorry for this parrot he went back home, and he told the parrot in his cage, “I conveyed your message in the jungle to all the parrots, but one parrot must have been very close to you, because when I told him that you are enjoying your life in this cage, dancing, singing, having chili and churi, that parrot had tears in his eyes and he fell down dead.” When he said this, the parrot in the cage had tears in his eyes and he fell down dead.

He said, “Oh, stupid merchant, if you *knew* that these two parrots are so close to each other, why did you convey this message?” Anyway, feeling sorry for both the parrots now, he threw the dead bird out. As soon as he threw the dead bird out, the parrot opened his wings and flew up and sat on the wall. And the merchant said, “You aren’t dead after all?” He said, “No, nor is the other one dead.” He only sent me a message through you. His message was, “If you want to get out of the cage, die while living.” [laughter] We tell this story, you know, to make a point, but the real stories, not parrot stories, human stories.

I tell you a human story of a very great disciple of the Great Master. He was a veterinary doctor, and his name was Doctor Isher Singh, not to be confused with Ishwar (Ish...no “w” in that). Dr. Isher Singh was a very devoted disciple of Great Master. He was a seeker for a long time, and he wanted to seek the real truth. He had been to several masters, got initiation, did different kind of meditation, but he was not satisfied. Something was missing. So, he was still searching when two of his neighbors, who were Muslims and he was a Sikh (two different religions), those Muslim neighbors told him, “Isher Singh, you are constantly talking about seeking a perfect master, somebody who can take you to the highest levels. We know one. His name is Baba Sawan Singh, and he is on the river Beas, on a river, on the bank of a river, from the Grand Trunk Road it’s only three miles downstream. If you go downstream three miles, he has a small hut in which he’s living, and he’s an official, working for the public works department on roads and buildings, and he comes on weekends, and he gives discourses, so why don’t you go and meet him? He said, “Okay since you say so. Are you satisfied with him?” They said, “We are fully satisfied, and you will be fully satisfied.” Getting this conviction from his neighbors, he decided to go along the bank of the river. So, he took his bike, he used to have a bike, besides riding on horses he had a small bicycle. So he went on his bicycle, and when he went to that road, he went down that road. The road was very narrow and on the side of the river, and he went three miles...no hut, no master. He went another few miles...no hut, no master. He said, “Maybe Indians

have a way of saying, 'That's three miles away.' You go three miles, they say, 'Yes, three miles away.' They don't change even if you go twelve miles, they'll say 'three miles,' so every time it's three miles. Well, ultimately you reach, so he went on for twelve miles... no hut, no master. It became very dark, at night.

So, he found a ferry boat that crossed the river. So, he asked the ferryman, "I am looking for a *dera*, a hut where a master lives, Great Master Baba Sawan Singh. I didn't find any hut." He said, "Oh, foolish man, he's on the other side of the river. You are walking on the wrong bank. You should have gone on the other side." He said, "Can you take me on your ferry to the other side, so I can walk back, take my bike and walk back?" He says, "So late at night? There are wild animals there on the other side. There is no proper road there. There is not even a footpath there on the other side from here. People are just living in a village there, and they all come by ferry." "No, no, take me by ferry, I'll take...no...I'll take a chance." He says, "It a big risk to travel at night, on foot, with a bicycle, with no pathway." He said, "No, I'll take the risk." So, the ferryman took him across. And Isher Singh struggled through that. There were thorns and there were bushes. He had to carry his bike on his head. There was no place to drag the bike even. So ultimately, he spent all the time trying to remain close to the river. Often, he would go far away and then come back to the river.

He reached early morning and found the hut and found the *dera*. It was just two roomed place, small little place, and he knocked on the door, early morning. And a woman, elderly woman came out and said, "You guys have no sense, you come to disturb..." and then she began to use some very abusive language I need not repeat. "Go away from here! Is this the time to disturb a master?" He said, "This must be that woman they were telling me there's a woman living there, and she's a very devoted disciple, she has come from Agra, was Great Master's master's attendant, and was initiated by Soami Ji from Agra, and her name is supposed to be Bibi Rukko. If this is the woman who spent time with three masters and is so full of anger, what will I get here? This is not a master at all." He said, "I am thoroughly disappointed," and the woman sent him away, and he came home early morning and he was crying. He said, "I wasted my time. All night I was travelling to see a Perfect Master. There is no master there! Look at that woman, how angry she was. So, in the morning, he went to his neighbors and said, "You are wrong. There's not a master, and that woman who lives with him, and you tell me she has spent time with three masters, three Perfect Masters, could not even control her anger? What kind of spirituality is that?"

They laughed at him. He said, "Why are you laughing at me?" He says, "Master played a trick on you. He plays games. You must know Perfect Living Masters play games. Some people don't realize it. Religious teachers don't play games, but masters play games. He has played a game on you." He said, "What kind of game was that. I didn't even see him?" "That's exactly the game. You went to see him, and you saw a woman and came back!" [laughter]

“That’s the game he played on you. Who...when you want to go and see somebody, go and see that person. If something comes in the way, and you come back from there, that’s a game. So, he played a game on you. Now next time you’ll see she’ll be the finest woman you ever come across. It was an act, for your sake, to show you that masters cannot be found the way you think they can be found.” You have to pierce a veil of ordinariness that exists between them and you, and when you are able to pierce that, you discover who master is, so he played a game. That was a curtain between you and the Great Master. Go again! He said, “This makes some sense, I’ll try again.”

Then he found out that there was a man who owned a lot of land in the very area where that hut was, and he was a chief of that area, that landlord...landowner. So, he went to that landowner because he used to look after his horses as a veterinary doctor, and he told the chief, “Chief, let’s go to that place, the dera, three miles down, where your land is. You can see your land, and I’ll go and see that man. He says, “What man?” He says, “There is a man who is called Great Master, Baba Sawan Singh.” “Oh, no, you mean Baba Sawan Singh? Oh no, I am not going with you.” “Why? Why are you so afraid?” He said, “I understand whoever goes there never comes back.” [laughter] “I am not going there!” He said, “Are you so frightened of just a man sitting in a hut? Come on, we’ll both go together.” He said, “Okay, I’ll go with you only on one condition, that I will not go *near* him. I will stand at a distance.” So, he knew that on a weekend, in the Saturday evening he gave a discourse at five o’clock, so they went by that time, and they tied their horses on a tree, both of them, the chief, and Doctor Isher Singh, and they stood at a distance.

Great Master was sitting on a small little improvised stage and there were about twenty people sitting in front of him, and he had a book in his hand. He would read the book, a few lines, then he would close the book and explain what he had read. There was some poetry or something in Hindi, Indian language, and then he would discourse on what he had just read. So, these people stood there, and Great Master saw there are other people have come, so he put the book aside and looked at them and called them, like this, with a gesture of the hand. That means “come.” In India, we call a person like this (palm down). Over here we call like this (palm up). I discovered that also. And different...different use of fingers mean different things, but anyway, forget that! [laughter] He called the man like this (palm down). And the chief said, “He’s calling *you*.” He said, “No, he’s calling *both* of us.” He said, “No, no, he doesn’t know me!” Doctor Isher Singh said, “He doesn’t know me, I never met him. He knows you, you are the chief, owner of the land here.” He said, “No, no, I will not go in front, *you* go.” He says, “No, I am not going. He’s calling you and you want me to go?” Anyway, they were talking like this when the chief said, “Let’s separate and see who he calls.” So, chief went this side, Isher Singh went this side and then they looked. The Great Master looked at both of them, he looked at Isher Singh and called. So Isher Singh went and sat behind those twenty people. Great Master picked up the book and before he read he put

it back again and told Isher Singh, "Come in front, sit in front." So he got up and he sat in front. Then he looked at the master and the book. The master read from the book and gave all the answers that Isher Singh had been seeking for *years*. Then he would close the book, and he would explain the answers. Isher Singh was very impressed. Then he opened the book, and read little more, and give more answers to him. He said, "This is the right place, and the right thing is this book. He has all the answers, that's why he became a Great Master, he has the right book with him."

Being a Sikh, he had been trained that after the last Sikh guru, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, a book, is now a guru, a master. Having believed that concept, it became readily available to him that here's a book he's reading, and giving answers all because of the book, that things are all in that book. So, at the end of the discourse, he got up and said, "Master, can I borrow that book from you?" And Great Master said, "No, no, I can't lend that book." He got convinced—this is it! He said, "I have some money, I can buy it from you." He said, "No, I will not sell it for any amount. No matter how much money you have, I won't sell it." He got *more* convinced. He said, "Master can I buy it...can I borrow it for a week? When you come next weekend, I'll give it back to you." He said, "Oh, no, no, no, sometimes in the middle of the week I have to study it." "Master, can I borrow it for one night, while you sleep, and I'll read it outside your hut." He said, "No, no, sometimes in the middle of the night, I wake up and read this book." He was convinced the whole thing is in the book, and master would not let go of the book. The book, of course is commonly available, you know, *Sar Bachan*, in verse. He said, "This master is just holding on to this source of knowledge and not letting me have it. I don't care." He went back and told his neighbors, "We found out the master's secret, why he became a Great Master, he has the *book*. It's a secret book of knowledge which has all the answers. He gave me all the answers from that book and he would not part with the book!" And they laughed at him, because the book is available for two rupees everywhere, in his own town.

He said, "He played a game on you again. The book is easily available. If he had given you the book, what would you have done?" Isher Singh told me personally. He said, "Had he given me the book that day, I would never have gone back to him. I would have spent all my life on the book." So, Great Master played another game on him by not giving him the book. He said, "You have to get initiated by this. Get naam, get the real initiation, make him your master and responsible for you. Let him give you the *secret* of going within. He's just reading from the book for the sake of our intellects, for the sake of our minds. Go and ask for initiation, you'll get the *real* thing." He said, "This time I am going to ask for initiation, I understand. This is not an ordinary master playing games and being...trying to be too clever with me. I am going to be clever with him now this time."

He took his horse, and he went to the dera in the daytime. And he went and he saw Great Master was sitting there outside that little hut, and he got down and said, "Master, I have been coming to you. I heard you that day. You never gave me the book. I want initiation, not the book." Great Master said, "Oh, have you broken your arm?" He said, "What does that mean?" He said, "I mean have you fractured your arm and got it healed?" He said, "Is that a requirement for initiation [laughter] to break your arm? Why would I break my arm?" He said, "You know, you ride horses, don't you ride horses? Sometimes you can fall from a horse, you can break your arm. That is not a big thing, so after you break your arm and you get healed, come back to me, I'll initiate you. I promise I'll initiate you after you come back and have your arm healed. He said, "He's a very funny...he's a very funny master. Why would I break my arm? I'm not going to get on a horse."

He went back home, and his wife, whose name was Maya, Maya said, "Doctor, what have you been doing all day?" Because the doctor was also taking care of the Kapurthala prince—it was a ruling state there. The ruler of the state was like a king of that state. His horses and camels and all animals also this doctor was taking care of. He said, "The ruler, the raja has sent for you five times during the day, and I've been saying, 'He's not here, he's not here.' "Where has he gone?" "He's very angry with you, run to the palace and go and meet him." So, he said, "So maybe some animal has fallen sick or something. I should run." So, he ran... went running to the palace, and the prince was sitting on his throne, and said, "Isher Singh, where have you been all day?" He said, "I went to see a Maharaji." They used to call Maharaji, the Great Master. He said, "Who Maharaji? I am the only Maharaji here. I am the only ruler...who...who is." "No, no, there is a white bearded man there." "Are you falling for those white bearded men? Come on, I'll tell you why I was calling you. I have only today got two new horses directly from Saudi Arabia. They are Arabian steeds, the best horses they have, and since morning they have been here, and I...everybody is telling me, 'Prince, come and inaugurate them,' and I said, 'No, till my doctor comes I will not inaugurate. Doctor will ride one horse, I will ride the other horse. That's the inauguration.'" And Dr. Isher Singh said, "I am not going to ride the horse." "What? You've been riding horses every day, and now what's happened?" "No, no, I'm not going to break my arm." [laughter] He said, "What stupid superstition have you got? Where do you get this from?" "No, no, that guru there in the hut told me." He said, "Don't follow these stupid things. They are superstitions. Come and ride the horse." "No, I am not going to ride the horse." He said, "Can you, for the sake of keeping my face, at least get on the horse. I will get on one horse, you get on the other, you get off, and I'll ride away, and everybody will take pictures, and inauguration will be complete." He says, "Okay, I'll do that." So, the prince got on one horse, he says he jumped, put his foot on the stirrup...what is what...and then jumped on the saddle. As soon he jumped, the horse bolted, and he had no time to put his foot on the other side. The horse hit a stone outside, and Isher Singh fell, had multiple fractures on his right

arm. Same night when he had come back from meeting the man with the white beard. He said, "I knew this would happen. [laughter] That man is true."

But what a strange way to build his faith. It built his faith, that the man *knew* something. He said, "This is terrible." But anyway, got plastered, and took several weeks with a multiple fracture was there, and they didn't have proper treatment, so it got solidified and acids being formed, whatever makes it very solid. He couldn't move. He couldn't even move his shoulder. Everything was stuck like that. After six weeks when the plaster was removed and found he couldn't move, he said, "Still I am going to the master. I have broken my arm. Now initiate me!" So, he went back to Great Master and he said, "Master, I've come back. I've broken my arm and healed. Now initiate me." Master said, "Okay, raise your right arm to your ear right here." He said, "I can't. It's stuck." "Sorry, I can't initiate you." He said, "Every time, master, you put a new condition." He said, "No, it's not a new condition, it's an old condition. I said, 'Get healed, then come to me.' You are not healed." He said, "Master, this cannot be healed, it's become solid." He said, "When your horse's leg is fractured, and you don't want to shoot them, how do you cure?" He says, "Oh, I use very strong acid to dissolve this and it's so terrible, it's so painful, the horse hits on the ground, and almost breaks the ground by hitting, so painful." He says, "Why don't you try that?" [laughter] He said, "Master, that's too much for me, a horse feels so much pain." He says, "No, no. Do you mix it with some oil?" "Yeah, I mix with some turpentine oil and I do this." "Why don't you dilute it sixteen times, then apply it. It will be not so painful. Heal your arm, come back, I'll initiate you. I promise." He went back, and he applied that treatment. He said it was quite painful—in spite of the dilution of the acid it was quite painful—but did release his arm and he could then bring his arm up. He went back and was initiated by Great Master.

Now a man who goes through this process to get initiation, I tell you, values initiation a lot more than a person who says, "I want to be initiated." "Okay, get in line." Do you see the difference? Initiation is not that easy a thing like we think sometimes. It's a very special thing. According to me, it's the most special thing that can ever happen to a human being, by a Perfect Living Master. Initiation by a Perfect Living Master, there is nothing to compare with it. It's a guarantee of going back home, no matter if you meditate or not, I can tell you even this. I should not be saying that. [laughter] I want to encourage people to meditate. [laughter] But the truth is, once initiated, you're guaranteed to go home, no matter what. So it's such a big thing. He got it and realized the value of it. He said, "This is the most valuable thing I have ever got."

This Dr. Isher Singh spent the last years of his life at my house. He would come and stay there. He was very good friend of mine. I was holding an important position in the government. I was the chief secretary of the state government and that was a position where fifty secretaries of the government were reporting to me. I was a very busy man. He

would love to come and see me in the office, because my wife would not let him come home. She said, "He needs rest. My husband is working so hard. Don't come, doctor, don't come. I like you but don't come to the house." So, he would wait all day. I felt very sorry that I am so busy I can't give time to him I would...he would just sneak in for a few minutes, go out. And I felt this is too bad that such a good man. I honored him. I think he is one of the greatest satsangis, greatest disciples of Great Master and he has to wait outside my office like this. I used to feel bad about it. I said, "Why don't you come home sometimes?" He said, "No, no, your wife never lets me come." She says, 'Doctor Ji, is this the time you have found out to come to my house when my husband is so tired, he comes back and he doesn't even have a chance to have a cup of tea, and you...there you land up again, and I know from my officers they tell me you sit outside his office all day.'

Then he found a little weakness of my wife. She loved an Indian preparation called pakoras. Have you ever had pakoras? Fritters, fried, salty fritters, and she had onion and potato... she loved them. He...then he found a trick. Before I would come home, he would go and buy some hot pakoras, and take them, and from the gate he would shout, "Toshi, brought the pakoras." "Come in, come in Doctor." [laughter] So they would be there before I would return. He was such a wonderful man. He taught me, until the last day of his life, that we do not recognize a Perfect Living Master. We think he's a master. We think he's a teacher. We think he's somebody spiritual. We forget: first he's a friend, then he's a master. His friendship rises above his...mastery. It is his friendship through which he delivers his spirituality. Without his friendship, we don't get anything, and he is the best friend we can ever have. He said we didn't recognize our master. Our master is the best friend.

So, such is the story of Isher Singh. When he found that initiation is so useful, such a great thing, he wanted to persuade his father to get initiated. The father was a very staunch believer in the Sikh tradition that there can be no living master now. After ten masters who came in the Sikh tradition, after that the book is the master. They believe that. It's part of their religion, and his father was in that religion and believed after that no living person, no human being can ever be a master after this—only the book is the master. He tried to persuade his father, "Dad, at least come and see him once." "No way. I'm not going to see these imposters who claim to be gurus and masters!" "He's different. I have been initiated, I know the value I got." "You are a fool. You were born a fool, you're still a fool." [laughter] Isher Singh said, "Master, just come... master, I don't know how to bring him. I want him to be initiated." Great Master told him, "Isher Singh, you bring your dad to me, that's *your* job, to initiate him is my job. You bring him to me, I'll initiate him." He said that's a simple thing. I have to bring him. So, he tried to persuade his dad, somehow to come. The dad refused.

So, one day he tried to play a trick. Great Master was leaving the station, the railroad station for some town, and the railroad station is about three miles away from the hut and Isher

Singh and his dad often went to that railroad station for traveling. So, he told his dad, "Dad, I have some work in the station, would you like to come along with me?" He said, "Yes, sure." So, he and his dad took their horses and went to the station, and Great Master was waiting on the platform for the train to come. He said, "Will you hold my horse, dad, and I'll go and meet the station master here, I've some little work with him and I'll come back." He said, "Okay, son." So, he held his horse and the son ran down to the Great Master. "Master, my dad is up there. Come, give him your *darshan*, and I'll be happy, because if you give darshan, he'll be initiated. I know. If you just see him once." And Great Master said, "Yes, let's go." Now imagine like a child he ran. Sometimes it's difficult for us to realize the old man with a white beard running like a child, just to please Isher Singh and go and see his dad. But he ran up—there is a staircase that you have to go up in that platform—so he ran up the staircase, but by the time they reached there, the dad suspected something, and he had left Isher Singh's horse and fled away. He could never see. And Isher Singh said, "This is not working. I must try some other method."

So, one day, new idea struck him, an idea I don't want to recommend to anybody. It's a historical story. Isher Singh decided that since Great Master has already told me, "You bring him to me, that's your job. I'll initiate him." That's his job. I should fulfill my part which is to bring him, and if he doesn't want to go, I'll just take him." So, when the dad was sleeping on his bed—they had very light cots, you know, and bamboo cots, and so on—he brought a rope, a big rope, and while dad was still sleeping he just tied him up. And dad said, "What are you doing, Isher Singh, what are you doing?" He said, "Don't you worry, I am taking you to the master." [laughter] "And you tie me up and take me like this?" He said, "Don't worry." He had arranged for a horse cart outside. A horse cart was waiting outside. He tied up his dad on the bed, carried the whole cot, very strong man, carried the whole cot and took it outside and put it on the cart, and said, "Go straight to the dera." And his dad shaked and screamed, "What are you doing, my son has become mad." All the neighbors came out, and said "What happened, what happened?" And Isher Singh says, "My dad has got a little crazy, I am taking him to mental hospital." [laughter] He says, "I am not mad my son is mad!" They said, "Take him quickly."

So, there is the cart with the man crying out, is going to the dera. All the way the rope is hurting him. He has almost bruised his legs. He was in a sad state of bruises by the time he reached dera. And the master was sitting outside the hut, when a strange sight came, a man screaming on the cart, [laughter] horse cart, and tied up in a rope and Isher Singh on a horse, nearby, saying, "Come on, come on, reach the master. I will take you to the master." He reached there. Great Master got up, "Isher Singh, what have you done?" He said, "I brought my dad." [laughter] "Is this the way to bring your dad?" Dad said, "That's what I have been telling him. He tied me with ropes to bring me to you. You think I'll accept you because he has brought me like this?" "No, no, no, you take off his ropes! Go and apply some

balm." He called some few sevadars, "Go and apply some balm. Look how he is injured on the legs. This is a terrible thing. You, Isher Singh, must be mad to bring him like this!" Dad said, "That's what I've been telling him!" So, they went in. Isher Singh sat outside. "This...my dad has no chance of accepting this master, since I brought him like this." And master comes out after a few minutes and says to Isher Singh (puts his hand like this...shhhhh), says, "Now you go away. Come back in three days." He says, "I know my dad. In three days nothing will happen. In three *weeks* nothing will happen. He needs to be here for three *months* to understand!" But anyway, he went away to come back in three days.

After three days, Isher Singh returns, and he finds master sitting on his chair, and his dad sitting in front of him like this. [hands folded] I mean, just standing in front of him like this. He rubbed his eyes, "Is that my dad?" He used to call him bapu. He said, "Bapu, is that you?" Isher Singh saw the dad standing like that and couldn't believe his eyes. And his horse dirtied the place. He shit upon the floor in front. His dad took off his shirt and wiped that place and he said, "Don't you realize that before the Perfect Living Master you are doing this? You are always mad. You were born a fool, you're still a fool! [laughter] You can't recognize a master?" He said, "Dad, is that you?" He said, "You don't know, son, what happened. I came here, and I met the Perfect Master. He's so kind to me. Only this morning he initiated me." He was shocked at that.

Strange things happen with masters, I can tell you. Don't take the Perfect Living Masters to be just teachers. They are not teachers. They come to see the game going on here. They are also players in the game. They're created for a certain part, and that part is that when we are ready, we go back home with them and they take us back home, through a simple process of initiating us, taking responsibility, and doing a wonderful thing by initiation, that unlike meditation, where we try to go within ourselves, alone, they manifest themselves after initiation in our consciousness. And when we meditate, the Perfect Living Master who has initiated us, we are able to see him, in a radiant form, in the form in which we saw him in a physical body, in a form where you can see the friend again. And from that point onwards, the *entire* journey, through *every* level of consciousness, through the astral plane, through the causal plane *beyond* into the spiritual regions right up to our own home, in the true home, they are with us. They are even with us when we merge in totality, and we can have the experience of the one-and-the-many, the one-and-the-two. And that experience is available only because of the experience we have had when we are physical beings in this body and have a Perfect Living Master. It's a very unique thing. We are never alone after that. Once you have the experience of the radiant form of your master after initiation, you are never alone. You will never feel lonely. And when I go around and meet people and they all complain about loneliness, I said, "They don't know the solution." The solution is to find a permanent friend inside you. And you can't find inside, because when you close your eyes, it's dark! Therefore, find a friend outside who's also inside you. The only friend who is

always inside you, has always been inside you is the Perfect Living Master, whom you meet when you are ready to meet him. So that's why I thank you all for coming and joining me in this celebration but take advantage of this.

I want to share this knowledge with you because it benefitted me. It worked for me! This initiation by a Perfect Living Master has *worked* for me, given me everything that I talk about. I do not talk anything, in any of my talks, from books, nor do I repeat what other people say. I'm only telling you my experience with the initiation of a Perfect Living Master. So that's why there's nothing greater than that, but you have to be ready for it. You can't just say, "I apply, and I get it." It doesn't work like that. Be ready in your heart, be ready and seek in your heart. Say (within yourself), "I am *sick* of what I have had so far. I am not pleased with this drama that is going on. I am *fed up* with this life. I've had enough of it. I've had many times enough. I don't remember all of it, but I am fed up with what's going on, I want *real* peace, I want *real* freedom, I want *real* love. You get it inside. If you're ready like that, you will get initiated, no matter where you are. Just be ready. You don't have to go. Master will come to you.

The power of coincidence will operate in such a way that by strange coincidences you'll come across a Perfect Living Master. It'll be hard to recognize, externally, but the miraculous experiences after that will help you to know who a Perfect Living Master is. It will still create doubts for your mind. The mind is a creator of doubt, and when you have a doubt you have fear. Doubts and fears are created by the mind, and they come with us even when we haven't progressed too much, they come. When you progress enough, they go away. If you have had an experience, even once of going beyond your own mind and knowing that you are a soul, a spirit, and not your mind, there'll be no fear and no doubt ever left in you. And these are the two things, stumbling blocks, to all our progress here. Everything we are afraid of, everything creates doubt, how can we be sure? How can I be sure? Some people spend all their lives questioning, "How can I be sure?" And they miss the bus.

Final story of a man who was walking in a village in India, and there are wells, but the wells don't have parapet walls, they just dig the well and draw the water out in buckets. So the well didn't have any wall around it, so while he was walking, he just fell into the well. Happened to be intellectual professor who fell into the well. In the water he said, "Oh, how did I fall here, that's terrible, now I don't know what to do!" A man heard his screams, and heard his voice, was passing by, he said, "Don't worry, I'll give you a rope to come out. You hold on to the rope, I'll pull you out!" And he ran to bring a rope and lowered the rope into the well and said, "Hold the rope, and I'll pull you up!" He said, "Before I catch the rope, first tell me how did I fall into the well?" He says, "Do you know, you can examine this when you come out." "No, no, I want... first you tell me why I fell into this! Secondly, tell me if I catch

the rope how do I know you'll not drop me again. [laughter] How can I be sure that you'll pull me out?" The man kept on arguing. He said, "Can't you get all these answers once you are out of the well?" He says, "No, I will only catch the rope, first you give answers to all my questions!" He said, "OK, you stay here then."

That is our condition. Many of us are asking questions indefinitely. There has to be a time when we should say, "Okay, let me take one step further and try out something. Somebody is giving a suggestion. Maybe it'll work. If it doesn't, I'll give it up, but let me go ahead before asking all the questions in advance." Questions will come up, and they will be answered, but you can't say give me *all* the questions and answers first, then I'll take the first step. That's what happened to the man in the well. We are sometimes like the man in the well, and we spend our whole life in asking questions and not moving forward at all.

The path is simple, we have made it difficult with our minds. Our minds have distracted us, taken us away from our true goals, taken us away from the purpose of life. We do not know why we are human beings. We do not know how this destiny was created for us. We do not know what karma is. We don't know what is going to happen in the next five minutes. We have no idea of the future. We have no memory of the past. What a trap, and we... don't we want to be released from this trap? And here are mystics coming and telling us there is a way out. You can get all this knowledge, *all* the knowledge, the answers to these questions: "What is the purpose of your life?" "Why are you here?" "How did you form your destiny?"—are inside you. You don't have to go to any astrologer or soothsayer or somebody to find out answers. The answers are lying inside you, to *all* these questions. Once you discover the structure of this creation, every answer is there, and that can all be found by going within.

I congratulate you that you are...many of you are on this path. I feel very happy that you are following this path. I think that's the best celebration on my birthday to meet co-travelers on the spiritual path. Thank you very much. God bless you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVU7qpilAc0&feature=youtu.be>

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