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## Power of Concentration of Attention Chicago, Illinois — June 22, 2012

Friends, in one of my talks I mentioned the need for establishing yourself imaginatively behind the eyes before doing any meditation, that if you start meditation without first feeling that you are sitting in your head it takes very long to get any effect, and sometimes the meditation doesn't work at all. So, it is important that you feel that you are actually sitting in the head, that this body is a house which has many floors—six floors depending on the different chakras below—that these are different floors, that you are sitting on the sixth floor behind the eyes and feel you are in the head in this building called your body. Then meditation is successful and good. And I also explained in that talk the importance of your feeling you are there and not making an image, a little image of yourself. Because if you make an image of yourself with your eyes closed, that is not you. You are the one watching that image and that one who is watching should be in the head.

Somebody heard that talk of mine, and that is on minute 53 to minute 57 of the talk, and wrote to me an email, “Can you please explain what you said in minute 53 to minute 57 in Hindi.” I am going to explain it to you in Hindi so this it can eventually go over to the gentleman who asked for it. So have patience for a few minutes while I speak in Hindi.

*Jab bhajan simran karte hain, to bahut avashkyak hai ke apka dhyan ankh ke peechhey ho. Aur ankh ke peechhey ka matlab ye nahin hai ki sirf ankh band kar lo aur samjho ke aap peechhey baithey ho. Na hi iska ye matlab hai ke aap apni tasveer bana ke, chhoti si murti bana lo aur usko dekho. Agar murti ko dekhoge ankh band karkey, to aap vo murti mein nahin ho, aap vahan ho jahan se aap murti ko dekh rahey ho. Is liye zaruri ye hai ke aap samjho ke aap apne sir ke andar baithey huay ho. Aur ye samjho ke aap sab kuch dekh rahey ho apney samney. Jo kuchh tasveerein samney aati hain, koi rang aatein hain, koi tasveerein aati hain, unko dekho baithkey. Lekin samjho ki ye shareer aapka ek makaan hai. Aap uski chhathi manzil pe baithey huay ho. Aur us chhathi manzil se aap drama dekh rahey ho. Jaisey television ki screen ko dekhtey hain, vaisey samjho samney ki screen television ki hai. Aap uskey samney baith kay usko dekh rahey ho. Jab tak aap apney aap ko ye nahin samjhogey ke*

*aap sir ke andar baith kay tasveer dekh rahey ho, bhajan simran itna kamyab nahin hota. Isliye meri ye salah hai ki aap jab bhajan shuru karo, to pehley apne aap ko apni ankh ke peechhey sir ke andar bitha lo aur samjho aap baithey huay ho aur dekh rahey ho. Yeh baat main aap ko Hindi mein keh raha hun kyun ke kisi ne ye request ki hai ke ye hissa jo maine apnay English ke talk mein kaha tha, minute 53 to minute 58, usko maine Hindi mein bol ke batla diya hai. Dhanyavad. Thank you.*

That was sample of my old Hindi language. Kabir says in Hindi, “*Mala to kar mein phiray, mala to kar mein phiray, jeebh phiray mukh mahein; manua to chahun dish phiray, ye to simran nahin.*”

Kabir says, “If the beads are in your hand and you are moving them and your tongue is repeating the words, your mind is roaming around the world, don’t call it simran anymore.”

This is not simran at all, because simran is to be done with the mind, and if your mind is not even attending to the words that you are repeating, it’s no use. Then, the mind is running all over the world and you are trying to repeat the words with your tongue and part of the mind and part of the tongue, that’s not going to be effective at all. But to repeat the same point again that the meditation techniques are actually very simple. Those of you who are initiated and are practicing it already, it’s a good reminder for them, and those who are not initiated and are looking forward to initiation and are seekers, for them it is important to know that the process of withdrawing our attention behind the eyes requires that we identify ourselves as consciousness, as a being sitting behind the eyes. It’s always a good idea to think of your body as a house in that case, as a mansion in which you are sitting as it has many floors, and the floors can be designated because of the different organs you have inside which also designate the different chakras we talk of. The six energy centers, they really delineate the six floors. You can imagine that you are really in a building on the sixth floor, and behind the eyes there is a floor, and you can make the floor very hard because it’s imagination. You can make the floor concrete. You can make it steel, and once you make that floor it’s important not to go below that. Because in meditation the tendency to go below that is very strong, because the process of withdrawing attention is similar to the process of going to sleep at night. Because in both cases you become unaware of your body. So that is why in the case of meditation, you don’t want to go to sleep. Lot of people do go to sleep in meditation. In fact, Great Master used to say, “Are you suffering from insomnia? Try meditation.”

You will find that the tendency to sleep is strong, so in order to avoid that, we stay at the eye center. We do not go below the eye center. When we talk of the eye center, we talk of the point behind the eyes. We don’t have to look for it. It is natural point from where we are automatically operating in our wakeful state. But in order to understand where exactly it is, and if you think the body is a house, to be able to locate yourself well it’s good to remember

that the eyes are in front of you. The third eye is behind these eyes and not in the middle of these eyes. And the ears are virtually on either side of here. So that is why you are really centering yourself. Very often when we close our eyes and we think we are in the center of the head we are actually in the front of the head. And we think it is center because we close our eyes and it's dark. And you can check it out because if you were in the center of the head, you couldn't touch yourself by touching the eyes. But if you bring your hands up while you are trying to meditate and you touch your eyes, you will find that you already crossed the point where you think you are in the center. So actually, the darkness in front of you, you begin to think it's inside your head. So therefore, it requires practice. This little technique is very important for successful meditation, that you actually begin to believe the body and your head is at a place in which you are. And then, once you begin to feel you are there, you will lose the sense of it being the head, which will happen. It does not mean you have to go back again and again to think of the body. Once you are there and you don't have a sense of the body, it's all right. Then don't go back to again determining where you are. Some people keep on going back again and again. And then the tension remains in the body. So, once you feel you are in the middle of the head, the space expands. It's as large as your imagination can make it. So, once you are in the center of the head, you can grow a garden there. You can have a big garden of flowers, and there is enough space for that. It's not as small as the head is. You can have anything happening there, or you can make a closed room there with walls. You can decorate the walls, and it's not necessary that walls will be of the size of the head. You'll see that they are as large as you want to make it. So, consciousness operates like this, that when you feel you are in the center of the head and that is the space where you are, then the attention from the body is picked up much faster.

And you begin to know...you don't know after a while where your hands are, where your feet are. Gradually with practice you don't know where the rest of the body is, and then you step into a different level of experience. So that's why I tried to say in Hindi also the importance of fixing yourself there before starting meditation. Great Master used to emphasize: *Don't even start*. It's not, it's not a ritual, that you close your eyes, do simran, keep on repeating. That's repeating like a parrot. People can keep on repeating words and their mind is running all over, it doesn't mean anything. So, in order to make the mind active, the best way is to make the mind do the simran and not your tongue. Let the process that thinks, let the thoughts be converted into the words. Instead of thinking any other thought, the words should be the thought. Then it's good simran. If you cannot do that, or till you reach that point, make the mind listen to the words you are repeating. Put your attention on the words, which means repeat the words slowly, very deliberately and listen to them. Because when you listen to it, the mind gets attached to this and therefore the mind remains within. It is to be practiced in a way that you understand why we are doing it. Don't just do it as it's a prayer or a ritual taught by a guru and therefore you do it every day, and one day you'll go to heaven. That's what religion teaches us. A religion has misled all of

us by not letting us do the real meditation and putting us into rituals. So, this becomes a ritual. People convert even good meditation into a ritual by doing it in a ritualistic way. Do it in a scientific way. Do it like an experiment and you are experimenting with consciousness and understanding what the self is. And therefore, it's important that you are able to start your meditation after you establish there and make sure that your mind is involved, the thinking mind which is distracting you all the time. After all, what is preventing us from knowing who we are?

Think of it. Today, what is preventing...? If we are inside our head, we are who we are. What is preventing us from knowing who we are? Think carefully. It's your mind. The mind thinks of everything else except yourself. Therefore, the mind is running around all over the world and not letting us know who we are. So, the whole control in meditation is of the mind, that the mind and its thoughts have to be brought back into the location where we are. And that is why the meditation done with the mind is the best, and the repetition done with the mind... There is one better way of doing, even better than the mind, and that is if you are initiated by a Perfect Living Master, and the master's image remains inside you and you are able to see it and talk to the master in your imagination and have conversation with the master and the master speaks to you. If you have reached that point, then don't even do the repetition. Tell the master to do it. That's the easiest way. You close your eyes. Sit in the head and say, "Master, start off," and he should go and do the meditation for you.

Perfect Living Masters tell us that they can do anything for us. We don't believe them. Therefore, they say, "Okay, you keep on doing what you are doing." If you believe them, they would do everything for us. We don't have that kind of faith that the masters can really do everything for us. But when they say *everything for us*, it includes meditation also. So, masters can do meditation for us provided we have established that image of the master inside us, we talk to the master on a daily basis and then the master can do the repetition, draw our attention and then we feel so good about it. Because our whole attention is not only on the repetition of words which is merely designed to draw our attention in, but also of focusing on the *dhyana* or the contemplation of the face of the master which helps a lot in reaching the point of third eye and consciousness. So, there are many stages of learning how to do simple things like repetition of a mantra. This repetition of *simran* also takes so many stages of learning. Ultimately, we learn the best way of doing it is to sit in the head, let the mind do it or the master do it. We just are listeners and just enjoying the joy of being in the company of our beloved. That's a very good sensation and a very good feeling. And not only a good feeling, it helps draw the attention faster into our own consciousness, and we see all the beautiful results that I was talking to you earlier.

I will now open up this meeting to questions and answers because many of you may have questions on what I have said earlier, or many of you may have questions on what I did not

say. So, you have opportunity now to ask any question. If you don't have a question, you can also give an answer, or you can make a comment on anything. It's open.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. No. No, we become human. The disk only provides for human, but the karma of life provides for all other forms of life. Transmigration takes place because of the karma that's fitted into one lifetime. It can keep on regenerating different life forms. We do not pick up those life forms. We can be. We never were, but we can be. But how do we know when we picked up the tape. We might have picked up the tape several lifetimes earlier, and we are going through the karma now and thinking it's all happening to us now. So, we have made many of lifetimes real. In the past lives, there can be lives that you never lived but you remember them because they become your lives, past lives. In the future, you can have actually those lives. They are also the karma.

Attachments are the main distraction in our spiritual quest always. And Buddha said, the only reason why we are here is because of desire and attachment. That desire and attachment has fixed us here and we can't get out of it. The difficulty with attachments is that once you have already established the attachments, it's very difficult to break them. The more you try to break them, the more you try to detach, the stronger the attachment becomes. I sometimes have given my own example. I used to love Shakey's Pizza. When I first came to this country, and I said, "I don't like I am attached to Shakey's Pizza." I said, "No Shakey's Pizza! No Shakey's!" The more I said, the more it would come in front of me. Sometimes when we try to push for detachment, we can't because the pushing of a detachment, pushing attachments away is keeping your mind on the attachment. How can you detach? Nobody in my knowledge has ever been able to practice detachment. They have not been able to say, "I had this attachment. I have given it up." When you say, "Given it up," it's still there, because you still remember what you gave up. That's equally an attachment.

Therefore, the only way masters tell us to detach yourself from an attachment is to have another attachment. A better attachment. There are little girls in India. Before they are married, they are given little dolls to play with. And they say, "Oh, this is my little doll, my child, my so and so," and the doll becomes very real for them, so real that they cry if you take the doll away from them. They are so attached to the dolls. When they grow up and get married and have their real life and real kids, they forget the dolls. And this is an example given that when something more real and something better comes up, then the attachment automatically fades away. So therefore, the answer to attachment is not detachment but more attachment somewhere else.

So therefore, there's another reason for having a Perfect Living Master for whom you can have love and devotion. If you have a Perfect Living Master who can manifest himself in you

in meditation, then the attachment to that master inside gradually detaches you from everything else. So that's the secret, that you attach yourself to something more attachable, more attractive than the other attachments. Automatically they'll become less.

Q. [Question about parenting not picked up on the video.]

A. The best way to parent children and give them an exposure to spirituality is to practice spirituality yourself. If you teach them something, they don't learn. If you practice yourself, they learn. The best way is to be an example for them, and if you are a good example, they are affected by it. I find that parents who try to teach too much, the children rebel against too much teaching. Secondly, every child is born with his or her own karma. And they have their life set, destiny set. They all look alike when they are little babies. When they grow up, they all become different. And they all act differently than we... Such cute little babies become such naughty kids when they grow up. So, all carry their own destinies with them. We have to do our best duty to take care of them, protect them, see that they don't face danger, educate them with our resources, bring them up as best as we can till they grow up. And then leave them to their destiny, because their destiny is their destiny. And for spiritual experiences, there's nothing better than an example.

Q. Are there souls who never have gone to lower creation?

A. Yes. Lots of them. Many more than have come into the creation. When the division of consciousness into individuated consciousness—which we call soul—took place, the distinction between the individuated souls was, the adventurous ones and the non-adventurous ones. Only about ten percent were adventurous enough like us who came out. The rest were content to be in state of bliss. Now what happens? We go into all this misery of different levels of creation, also have some good moments and some bad moments and eventually find our way back and merge with the other souls who have never left their homes. And those souls are in bliss, dancing and singing. But we dance better than them and they say, "What's so special with you?" And we tell them, "You don't know what you are missing." Because they never saw the other side.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. Attention descends from Sach Khand, from our totality and continues to percolate into every level and comes right up to this level. The difference between these different consciousness, awareness and attention is that consciousness is an ability to be aware. It does not always mean what you are aware of. For example, you are conscious that there is a place from where you came but you are not aware of it right now. You can recall and you be aware of it. So, consciousness is a total ability to be aware of anything. So, it's a very generic term. Awareness is what you are aware of now, at present. Attention is the probe that you are putting into that part of awareness where you like. Consciousness you have no control

over. Awareness you have some control over. Attention you have full control over. Attention you can focus where you like. So, the whole secret of meditation lies in our ability to use attention. And we can put our attention behind the eyes. We can put our attention on things outside. If you go to see an orchestra with several musical instruments playing and you like the drums better. You try it out, you put your attention on the drums, drums become louder. All other instruments become weaker. There has been no change in the actual volume, but your attention can pick up one and become unaware of the others. This ability of attention even at the physical level to concentrate on one thing, thereby becoming unaware of other things, is the secret of meditation. So that you can put your attention there and become unaware of your body itself and become unaware of the whole world. So that is why attention is the instrument we use for meditation. It's just a probe that can move around in awareness.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. There is an area... We are making grand divisions of creation. These are grand divisions of creation. The physical plane in which we are now sitting and talking to each other, the physical plane in my view is the best. With all its hardships and all its problems, because it has a unique experience which is very rare to find anywhere else. And that experience is called the experience of free will. We feel we can make choices here. It's only a human being who has the feeling that they can make choices and there is only one other—God—who can make choices. In between everybody knows what's happening so there is no choice. So next to the creator, human being comes next. Sometime people say we are made in the image of the creator. And man is made in image of God. What does it mean? It doesn't mean looks like him. He has no form. This is exactly the similarity, that God has real free will and we have the experience of free will. It's not real free will. It's experience of free will. But there is a stage in the astral stage where all knowledge becomes available to us. And in the physical plane we have partial knowledge and therefore we use free will. There's an overlap between the two. And the overlap is very interesting, because in the overlap we can see what can be seen here and we can see what is the unseen here.

So, when we die in the physical body, we are in that overlap. It's in the overlap that we have all the other experiences. We talk of ghosts and spirits moving around. In India they believe there are two kinds of ghosts. We call them "*bhoot*" and "*prait*." You have heard of them—*bhoot* and *prait*? *Bhoot* is a ghost or a disembodied spirit that moves around from place to place, roaming around aimlessly or roaming around with some attachments of the past. *Prait* is one that is stuck to one place because of an event that happened which caused it to leave its body, like an accident, like a murder, like a some unnatural death. And then the *prait* is the spirit that remains there. Now who are these disembodied spirits? They are astral bodies but caught up in the overlap of the physical and the astral. They can see the physical world, and we try to contact them. They can make their presence felt sometimes

and we call it haunted place, that somebody has died but is still haunting me, and comes and I can see, feel the presence of people.” So those are in the overlap of the physical and the astral and immediately after that. But once you withdraw your attention from this area and go into the pure astral, then your contact is lost. This looks like a dream world then. It becomes like a dream world. Till then both worlds look very real. These are the differences between the astral. In the astral you remember everything. You can remember past lives. You can remember old events. In the overlap you cannot do that. But in the physical you can't do much at all, except have some strange kind of déjà vu when you go somewhere and say, “I think I've been here.” Right?

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. I think dozing off is always good. Somebody, somebody asked me a question about some problem. I said, “Do you sleep enough?” So, the thing is that dozing does take place. But there's a certain thing that is helpful in dozing. And that is the practice of simran. Because simran is a way of keeping the mind busy. Simran does not take us to Sach Khand. Simran does not take us to higher levels. The maximum simran can take you is to the astral plane. It can't even take you to causal plane. Simran is a very temporary device at the physical level and the whole idea of repeating those words, however magical they might be, however wonderful they might be, is to prevent the mind from thinking other things. You want the mind to think of those words, and if the words are charged, as they are given in initiation, the advantage of those words is that an association is created with those words with inner experiences. Let us not forget all language, all words, are merely phonetic symbols. They are sounds. How do they have meaning? By association of ideas. They associate a certain sound in a particular culture in particular language, and we begin to think that's the meaning of it. If I have... As a child grown up and when the liquid is given to me to quench my thirst and everybody calls it water, I will learn the word water. And every time I will think of water, water will mean that which is learnt. Every word that we speak has got its connotation or meaning on association of ideas. So therefore, when we speak in language, we think we are telling the same thing to everybody, that they are listening, but they are not. And nobody realizes that we all speak a different language. We say I'm speaking in English. Everybody speaks English, but the meanings of each word are slightly different for each one. Because your own association of ideas is based upon your experience with those words. It's never identical. That's why they say language is a very poor communication tool. Love is a better communication tool.

So unspoken language is sometimes better than the spoken language. Spoken language sometimes cause misunderstandings. But once we understand that the spoken words have a meaning which is attached to things outside—that's how the words have been created—even abstract words have all been associated with outside meanings. The masters give us words which they know have an inner association with experiences that we are still to

have. So, when we repeat those words, we don't know what they mean. We're just using it as a mechanical device. But when the experiences come inside, we realize the importance of these words, and we call them charged words and the words become more effective than ordinary words. But this is not known to us till we go within. Meanwhile the repetition is good, and if you can habituate the mind to repeat the words, simran becomes very easy. Therefore, the mind is used to habit forming. So, the simran or the repetition of words should be done to form a habit. Now when a habit is formed, the habit is not lost even in sleep. So, supposing you are habituated to doing simran and you go to sleep, even in the sleep your subconscious keeps on doing the simran. That is why dozing off is not that bad as people might think. In fact, it is practiced that before you go to sleep at night, do your simran so that the mind keeps on doing simran all night long. If you have the habit, have been doing it regularly, you can wake up in the middle of the night and you will know you are doing simran. That means that it actually has picked up, and it's useful. It is useful as a device in turning away other thoughts away while you are doing meditation.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. You, now, we make stories like these, picking up tapes and all. Just to describe here the actual truth is that picking up the tape is actually living that tape. It does not mean that we first pick up and then come and live. Picking up the tape there means starting off all the destiny. So therefore, the destiny starts from there and what looks like having come from there over here is all within that tape. Within the tape we have the experience that we are descended from the causal level into astral into physical. That's part of the tape. So as a part of the tape, when we go back, you can change the tape if you want, if you're still interested. You can throw away the tape. Say, "I don't like. I'm back home. I don't like this adventure, had enough of it." Or you can say, "Oh, my God, I didn't realize that was just a dream-like state and I took it so real. I want to have it again." And then you can go back and create. Then you get trapped again and you forget it was not real. Then you cry and you find a master. He takes you back. You say, "Oh I picked it up myself, this tape," which is very interesting story of how we handle this tape, picking up.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. I don't initiate anybody. I see master because Master Sawan Singh died in his physical body. He can't be seen. I can see him. And that's the beauty of initiation by a master that you see him all the time. And even after he dies you see him. In fact, you see him more after he dies than you see him when he is alive. So, since I can see him, I can see his initiation. People think I am initiating, but I know. That's why I call it Great Master's initiation and not my initiation. I am very happy to be a witness. It's a secret story he wants me to share with you. Do you know how to keep a secret? Okay, those who can keep a secret, raise your

hands. Okay, please keep it a secret and if you tell somebody else, tell them also to keep it a secret.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. The beauty of having a Perfect Living Master in your life is you have a perfect friend in your life. I have said more than once that in this spiritual path I realized that friendship is even more important than spirituality. We really need friend. We need a real friend. We need a friend who is always with us. We need a friend with whom we can have unconditional love. There is nothing like it. In this whole world I don't find anything better than that, having a friend with unconditional love. But when you have a friend with unconditional love, it's not friendship that he's teaching me how to go to Sach Khand. We enjoy daily life. At every level. If you have Perfect Living Master in your life, it does not become that you are now a serious monk on your way to spiritual home. You are on a daily adventure examining this world, other worlds and going together with the master wherever you like. And you have altercations with the master. You can cry with the master, you can laugh with the master. It's like a real friend. It's a very unusual relationship but the best relationship that you can have.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. So, I sometimes have strange experiences. Now what David is telling me to relate is an experience I had in Detroit, Michigan, in 1962 or 1963. That is about the time I first came to this country to study. I was admitted to Harvard University for a course and the money for my course was paid by Ford Foundation. Ford Motor Company had a big plant in Detroit, Michigan, making motor cars. They wanted me to see the plant also. So, I was in Boston, in Cambridge actually, Massachusetts, studying there. But I would like... I had to come to Detroit for seeing the motor car plant. And there were some satsangis there from masters, from India. And I heard that they were having satsangs. I said it will be a good idea to hear the satsang also. So, I was a young student and studying in college there. I wrote to that gentleman who was in charge of the satsang in Detroit that I have to come to Detroit for visiting Ford Motor Company and can I also attend satsang. I can tie up the two dates together. And he said, "Oh, these fellows. You know, these Indian students come here. They bother us so much and they just want to have freebies from us," and he was very angry. He said, "No, no, we are very busy, all of us. We don't have time." So, I said, "Okay, then I'll just go to the Ford Motor Company." So, I called them and made an appointment to visit them on a weekend. Which was already the same weekend that they were going to have a satsang on a Sunday. So, when I came there I got out of the plane and walked out and a man, an elderly, bulky little man I had never seen before stands there, says, "Are you Ishwar Puri?" I said, "Yes, I am." He said, "I am so and so. I am representative of the satsang and I have come to take you home and you will be giving satsang here tomorrow." I said,

“How did that happen? Aren’t you the guy who wrote to me that you are very busy, you have no time for me?” He said, “Something very strange happened. The usual guy who gives satsang has fallen sick and his alternate has gone away to India, and the third person disappeared. We can’t find him. So, the committee met yesterday, and they said, “What about that guy who wrote to you that he has come from India? Maybe he can tell you some stories. So, they sent me to the airport to pick you up. They called your house and your wife told us the flight number and by the time I came here, half the passengers of the flight had already gone out. So, I said, ‘I have never seen you. I don’t know if you wear a turban, if you are old or young. I had no idea who Ishwar Puri is.’ So, what I did was I came, I closed my eyes” that man told me, “I closed my eyes and said, “Master, I don’t know who is Ishwar Puri. Tell me who he is.” When I opened my eyes, you were the first person. I said, “Are you Ishwar Puri?””

I said, “I am shocked at you Americans. You do these kind of tricks with the master? I have never heard of it, that anything you want to do, just close your eyes and ask the master? I never did this in India. This is something new for me.” Anyway, then we had a satsang in Veterans Memorial Hall next day, and he sat in front row and I was sitting in front with him. Then he announced that this guy from India has come and he will speak today. So, he made me stand on the stage. And I...little, you know, stage nervous, speaking first time to American audience. So, I must have closed my eyes and then I spoke whatever I could speak. At the end of this talk, he came up to me. He said, “That was brilliant. I know what you did.” I said, “What did I do?” He said, “I saw you close your eyes and you asked Master, ‘What should I say?’ and whatever the master told you, that you said. Isn’t that right?” I said, “No, you are not right.” I said, “I did close my eyes and I said, ‘Master, what shall I say?’ And Master said, ‘Who has made you my spokesman? Why do *you* have to say?’ I said, ‘Why?’ He said, ‘I can say it myself.’ I said, ‘Go ahead.’ So, I went back and sat with you on the chair next to you and heard my own image speaking to you. I heard as much of myself as you did.”

That’s the story he is telling, David. This is one of the early experiences with the American seekers. They are very sharp, I must say. The Americans know tricks of the spiritual trade I didn’t know. So, I learnt that. The truth is if you let the master do things, he will do everything for you. He will make it appear as if you are doing it. But you will know you are not doing it. The master makes you do. He doesn’t actually, doesn’t tell you what to do. He does it. So, this is such a remarkable relationship. It’s very difficult to describe because it’s very personal. First of all, it’s very personal. Now he has made me share this secret. So, I’ve shared the secret with you. I would normally say...I said, “Yes, I made a good speech. And just take undue credit for the speech. Credit belongs to the master always.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. Did you find me or I found you? Big question mark, right? Yes. There is always a question mark. I tell the story of a few blind people and they are locked up in a room. The room has walls and the door, there's only one door in the room and that's flush with the wall. You can't see where the door is. So, the blind people are trying to find a way out and they are groping with their hands. And they are trying to find how to get out. Since they are blind they can't see the door and they can't even know where it is. So, they go round and round and say, "We don't know. There is a door, we know. We don't know where it is." Then a man who is with eyes walks in and closes the door and looks at these people all running around trying to find the door. So, he finds one guy—he's really running too much, he is too earnest about this door—and he stands in front of him and holds his hand. He says, "I can show the door." "I found him!" the man says. "I found him."

He still believes he found him. He cannot even realize that only the guy who had the eyes could find him. Just because he was able to hold his hands, he had not found him—he was found. The situation with us is identical with that, that we think we have found. We think we have done something, but actually it is the other way around. We get found. The strangest part is that we get found by strange coincidences. I think very high of coincidences now. I used to think they are just accidents but now I know coincidence has deep meaning in it. I find that there are two functions we are performing in our mind and in our consciousness. One is a mental function of reasoning. We reason out things and use logic and take decisions. The other function is intuitive. We use our intuition, gut feeling. Just a hunch. We feel this is it. Without knowing what the reason is. These two feelings are actually coming because of the two different functions of the mind and the soul. Only the mind reasons, and the soul has intuition. The consciousness without the mind functions as intuitive agency. It doesn't require the mind for intuition. So therefore, intuitive knowledge that comes to us comes in a very strange way because we suddenly have a gut feeling. Sometimes it doesn't make any sense. We still know, "I feel like that," and you ask, "How do you feel?" "I don't know, but I know it." That kind of intuitive feeling comes from the soul. Now what I've noticed is when you have an intuitive feeling, a coincidence happens outside to match that feeling. You have a particular feeling and you go and drive on the road and there is a poster and says one word that resembles what you got intuitively. It's just a coincidence. As more intuitive knowledge comes to you, more of these coincidences start happening. So therefore, I have found that people who are on the spiritual path, the more they advance on the spiritual path the number of coincidences in their life increase.

So that means coincidence is not an accident. It is more than that. So very often coincidence is a good vehicle that the masters use to find their marked sheep. So, we coincidentally find, and we say, "How did that happen?" We are looking for something else and this came up or somebody just mentions, "How did it happen?" or "I read a book ten years ago, didn't have any effect on me. Now I turned the page, suddenly it has effect on me."

So, things like that happen, and we are led on the spiritual path. So, I think coincidences are very important factor. Masters find us like that, but it's very difficult to recognize a master, very difficult to recognize a master, because a Perfect Living Master will not say he's a master first of all. He doesn't need to. His work is done without saying anything. Secondly, he will not demonstrate, because he wants to be just like an ordinary person. Why does he want to be like an ordinary person? Because friendship is a very essential part of the spiritual relationship with the master. You cannot be friends with somebody who is totally different from you. Supposing a master flies into this room right now while we are sitting here, and he flies through the door and flies right up. We all look at him, say, "Wow, that's great." Some of us will say, "Must be some strings attached somewhere." Some will say, "This is some kind of magic. What's happening?" Some might even faint to see that. But none of us will be friend of that guy. We may even worship him. We may be awe inspired by him. Not friends of him. If he happens to fall down, we'll run to him and say, "Are you hurt?" There's a chance of a friendship with that guy. Therefore, it's amazing how ordinariness of a master is essential for the experience of friendship with the master. Not only that, also the master has to come to the level of his disciple and if the disciple is at a level of a richness, he has to go that richness level. He is a poor man, he'll be poor for the disciple. He'll be exactly so that the disciple can relate as a friend. Friendship comes as part of the deal with the spiritual relationship with a master.

Eventually you find that it is even more valuable in this physical world, it is even more valuable, the friendship. The rest of it is actually, from the point of your master, a given. A master is never worried about our spiritual progress. When he initiates us, he's done. From his point of view, it is all done. The rest of it is just a little time. If we have been here for a million lifetimes, then it's just a matter of a little time to go. For him, it is done. He's not bothered. He's just seeing how the rest of the life is played out. From our point of view we think, "Oh, we are making slow progress. We not doing enough meditation. We have to work hard now." That's our point of view. The master is not worried about it. He knows he has taken care. He's bound to take us to home which he's made a commitment. So that is why the points of view of the master is different.

While this is going on, friendship still prevails. That's a very good thing in the relationship with a master. You know, there is... In meditation, we go through periods when it becomes totally dark, which is good. There is a period when it becomes lighted up. It shows the duality. The relationship between light and darkness is very beautiful. Not only are they opposites, light is what exists. Darkness does not exist. It's the absence of light. See, we think both are existing. The duality has not been created by creating two existences. Only one exists. The absence of that becomes the other. The whole of the computer technology today is based on one and zero. The whole electric circuitry that goes into a computer chip is not based upon one positive and negative going through it. It goes and doesn't go. That's

the other one. So, the darkness and the light that come only show the presence of light. And the darkness is the opposite of that which is absence of light. So, both of them come in meditation in the early stages and then you transcend because the whole screen becoming white or light is good indication. Most people see little specs of white and they gradually become enlarged and become white. You are lucky. Congratulations. But don't tell anybody.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. These are two different types of practices. The *pranayam* or the breathing exercises have been practiced by the yogis in India. Many different disciplines. And the pranayam they do because the translation of the word *pran*, which means the life force, breath of life. Pran literally means the breath of life, was taken differently by some people as physical breathing. Some took breath of life as consciousness. Therefore, the practice of pranayam started with some going into the different centers in the body, the breathing became very significant to go into these different chakras. The others took up as pranayam, which means the life force which is consciousness, and they went behind the eyes and above. The eyes became the dividing point. The pranayam with breathing takes our attention to the centers below and the life force—putting your attention on consciousness and not on breathing—takes you behind the eyes and above that. The difference is below the eyes are energy centers. They control all the energies that we live with in this physical world and there are also similar centers in the astral body, and they live the astral way the same way. In fact, they are reversed in the astral body, but that's a different subject I'm not talking now. But pranayam, the breathing can calm you but it's an exercise of the energy centers. The spiritual discipline that I'm talking of which gives you the experience I talk are connected with the life force and the breathing does not contribute to that.

There is a...there is a psychologist professor in California, who has designed a system combining psychological methods of induction into other experiences and breathing exercises, pranayam from India, and put them and we have in our midst a teacher of that system called Holotropic Breathwork. Have you heard of that? Holotropic Breathwork. The teacher, examiner sitting right here in our audience. And if you want more information, he can give you. I think he is sitting right in the corner at the back. There he is. He is a practitioner, and he is also an examiner who goes to different countries to examine people who qualify in Holotropic Breathwork.

Q. [Question about separation from the physical body.]

A. No, you can be separated and still be walking. In fact, you need not be spiritually experiencing a separation. People do sleep walking. A friend of mine is sitting in this audience who sleepwalks and does things and doesn't know he has done anything at all. And I sometime see, I have seen a few things happen and he had no knowledge of all that he did it. So, there was a aunt of mine who used to sleepwalk. She was very afraid of heights.

She could never go up on a terrace. In sleepwalks she would stand on the edge of the terrace and walk there. In wakeful state she could never do it. And there was a friend of mine in Detroit who was walking on a street once and suddenly all the street lit up and everything got lighted up. It was very strange. Houses with all lights on it, brilliant. The roads began to shine on which he was walking. It lasted just for a few seconds and then he realized what happened. So, he called me, and I said astral experiences need not happen when you close your eyes. They can happen while you are walking. So, you need not always have this separation, or you can have separation and still have the body walking. The other thing is that sometimes we talk of the word separation as a negative thing.

And I tell you no experience is possible without separation. If we were not separate, you would have none of this world. We are separated from ourselves. We are separated from our own totality. It's only separateness that creates everything. If you see the negative and positive, they were not separated, they disappear. If the positive and negative merge, it disappears completely. It's only sustained by separation. Even though we feel we have love for somebody, it's separation that makes the love. If you are not separated, you never have love. On a very minor scale, people who date each other separately really are very fond of each other. When they marry, something happens. I had a friend in Nevada. I had a friend in Nevada. A girl who came and met me in India and she fell in love with a man and was so happy. They dated and they said they are soulmates and in bliss. Then they married. Then they began to fight like cats and dogs. Their life was terrible. So, they divorced. When they divorced, they fell in love again. They said, "Oh, we did something wrong. We belong to each other." And they married again. Once they married, they were fighting once again. They separated again. They married again—three times—to the same people. Those two people married each other three times and they related their experiences that something happens in marriage. So, they asked me, "What is it? How come we love somebody, and we feel so good while we are dating and when we marry, something happens and we can't have that same feeling again." I said the real thing is that the separation. As you get a chance to meet, that's different than being together and taking each other for granted all the time. So, lives are different. Married life is different from the life of a separation and dating. So, I'm not recommending don't get married. Because on the other hand, I also told them that marriage is the fastest way to pay off your karma. So, you have to get married to get rid of it quickly.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. The souls that have been initiated by a Perfect Living Master, when they die they see the Perfect Living Master who takes care of them. And he places them either in another life. If they have not been able to do their spiritual exercises or work and complete it in the next life or makes them do work in the astral plane and take them gradually up. They never get reborn again. Those who are not initiated, they normally see at the time of death a whole synopsis of their life and where it is leading them, and they can see that the karma of this

life which is just ended is creating events for them for the future. They can see those events as they die. And at the time of death they can either be in a hold-up state in the overlap (as I was mentioning, astrophysical overlap) and if the death is unnatural they are generally in the overlap for quite a while as a disembodied spirit or they take birth once again in a different form. But the families of those who are initiated, they are duly, they are initiated in due course. It's a big advantage to the families. Not only the families, up to seven generations, they say, benefit from one initiate. If one person gets initiated by a Perfect Living Master, seven generations are affected by that. Now somebody asked Great Master, "When you say seven generations, is it the past seven generations or the future?" He said, "What's the difference? Same people recirculate." The same souls are born in the same location, same areas, same people, just for the sake of karma.

But for an initiate, death is not the kind of experience that we think it is. We are afraid of death, but if you do your meditation and withdraw your attention, it's like death. There is no difference in the total withdrawal of attention from the body—and what you experience—than what you will experience when you physically die in the body. And this is why sometimes it's called dying while living.

And you heard that story of that parrot? There was a businessman in India. (This is just for relief, comic relief. I'm telling stories in the middle of a heavy discourse.) There was a businessman in India; he used to go to Africa to do import and export business. He would carry some Indian silks and so on and bring some cashew nuts and things from Africa. Every year he would go. In his trip to Africa, he used to pass through an African jungle where there were beautiful parrots, and he said, "Why not take one of these parrots home, and I can have a pet in the house." So, he captured one parrot, took a cage and brought him to India. Every day, he would feed that parrot with the finest kind of food that the parrots like. I don't know if you have parrots as pets, but they love red and green chili. And they love a mixture of wheat and with little brown sugar and you mix it up. They love that. That's called "churi." So "mirch" is chili and churi is that concoction and he would feed him mirch and churi every day. And the parrot would dance and laugh and learn any languages in that cage.

Once when he was going back to Africa, he asked his parrot, "You have been away from home for a long time. Do you have any message to give to your folks?" He said, "Tell them I am enjoying my mirch and my churi and I am enjoying living in this cage and dancing." He said, "Okay, I'll tell them." So, he went to Africa after finishing a business. He went to that forest and called all the parrots. "Come along here, folks. You remember I took one of you to India? He has sent you a message. The message is he is enjoying his life in the cage. He eats churi and mirch and dances and sings every day." On hearing this, one elderly parrot sitting on a branch of a tree had tears in his eyes and he fell down dead.

He felt very sad. "This guy must have been very close to my parrot that he could not stand my message." Anyway, feeling sad, he went back home and told the parrot that "I conveyed your message to the parrots in the jungle, but one parrot must have been very close to you. Because when I told him that you are enjoying your life in the cage eating churi and mirch and dancing and singing, he had tears in his eyes, and he died." On hearing this, the parrot in the cage had tears in his eyes and he died. He said, "What a foolish man I am! If I knew it was such a serious message for that parrot, I shouldn't have told him." But anyway, the bird is dead, so he took the dead bird out and threw it out of the cage. And as soon as he threw the bird out, the bird flew and sat on top of a tree. He said, "You aren't dead after all?" He said, "No, nor is the other parrot dead. He just sent me a message through you. He said if you want to get out of the cage, die while living." So, the meditational practice is dying while living, and once you have done it you are never afraid of death.

Q. [Question not picked up in the video.]

A. When he asked me the question about souls that are already there, who have not left the home and in a state of constant bliss, we call them *bans*, in Hindi we call them bans. And those who have come here and have gone back, we call them *hans*. Hans are the ones who have been transformed by the experience here. So, the difference is that these adventurous ones who came here are... Not all those who came here and all will go back, because there is a difference in those...when he came... I'm making a story. I'm not the one making a story, but other mystics have made stories. I'm repeating them to just explain a point that when these souls in large bulk decided to come for adventure, not all of them thought that the adventure could be a misadventure and we may like to come back. Just like hardly ten percent of the total created consciousness of souls who are there which came for adventure, only one percent...that means 10 percent of those turned back and said to the creator, "What if we don't like it there? What if it turns out to be misadventure and the creator said, "Don't worry, I'll come and bring you back." And the theory is that the marked souls are those who got that promise. So out of all the souls in all life forms that exist in creation, only about 10 percent are marked. So, the marked souls are the ones who are found by master from time to time wherever they exist and in the state of consciousness, in the state of karma wherever they are. When they are ready, they are picked up by a master and taken back. The rest go around here and circulating in what is called 8.4 million life forms. The list of life forms is recorded in one of these Indian scriptures. Out of that about 5.4 million is in the plant kingdom only and then some are insects, some are other forms and they go on and then there is a human form, then there are angels and then there are gods and goddesses who run different regions and so on in hells and heavens. So, all those are recorded in that list and these are all different life forms of souls. The soul can go into any one of those life forms, and they keep on circulating here till an event takes place called the dissolution which we call *pralay*, or grand dissolution which is a *maha pralay*. In the

pralay, the dissolution, the whole of this creation has outlived itself dissolved and the souls who are not marked, they go up to a level above the dissolution. They go to causal stage in the dissolution, and they go to Par Brahm above the causal stage in grand dissolution and stay in a dormant state till a new wave of creation takes place and they reappear and they recirculate here.

The difficulty of explaining this is that: Can we say that they are here forever? That's a... The word "forever," as I said, is a concept. Because what is forever? In a place there is no time, what is forever? Forever is created. Forever is created in the three worlds. It does not exist where the souls belong. So that is why, although we can tell it like a story, that these marked souls go, the others stay here forever, but the truth is that the forever is not in a time, not a time frame. And so, those souls are in a different state, and these souls who are in dormancy in creation and recreation between dissolutions are also in the state of dormancy but not in a state of forever. It's very difficult to explain that state because not in time. But the marked souls particularly are those 10 percent who turn around and didn't want to stay here in case it was not a very habitable place. We are those guys sitting here. Otherwise we wouldn't be sitting here. So, the fact we are sitting here and feel that we need to go somewhere, that this is not it for us—sure, we are those. And then we are picked up gradually and how the marked... Why do you call them marked souls? Is not a marking for the soul. It is marking in the list of the Perfect Living Masters' manual. They read their own manual, and they see what is marked.

There is another secret which I don't want to reveal but I will because of your question. The secret is that although we say, "marked souls," if perfect living masters are right at the original state where marking took place and they are sitting here, when are they marking? So instead of saying that they come to pick up marked souls, you might as well they say, they mark the soul they pick up. I read very beautiful saying once that "he does not call the qualified, he qualifies the ones he calls." So, there is a subtle difference. So therefore, the power is in the hands of the creator who happens to be in consciousness in the form of a human being amongst us. It's a remarkable story. He is not functioning independently of that. He is functioning right now in the marking also. Thank you for asking this question.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. You can share information without pressuring anybody. It is... You can't try to convince somebody of anything. Like poet Alexander Pope says, "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." You can't convince people against their will. But you can share information. When they are ready, they immediately pick it up. And therefore you can share information to the best you can do. I tell my friends that this is a very personal thing—spiritual progress, spiritual thing is very personal. Make best use of it. I know you like your friends, family also to also benefit. Share the information that you can, but don't try to force

anybody into it because when their time is right, they will pick up the slightest thing that you give them. And when the time is not right, you can try as hard as you like, but they will not be affected by it.

The other thing I wanted to mention since you have mentioned love and devotion and the practice of this path. There is another element called grace. Grace is a very powerful factor here, but we don't see much of it. We don't know when it flows. Grace flows all the time. And grace comes in very large abundance to us and sometimes our cup is not turned in that direction. Raining. Grace rains like rain. It's raining all the time. If you put a cup upside down, nothing goes into it. You turn the cup slightly, a few drops go into it. You turn it fully, not in the first shower, second shower gets filled up. Grace is like that. And what is the cup? The cup is the cup of attention. If our attention is on the world and into attachments of the world, the cup is turned in a different direction.

Grace is flowing behind it. If you turn the cup around, it will get filled up with grace. If you want to experience grace, turn your attention towards it and you will experience it. So, it's a game of attention. Like George asked me, "What is this attention?" Attention is the most marvelous thing that was created in the whole of creation. Because it's attention that can take us back home. It's attention that can make us achieve anything in the world. It is attention that creates all success in any endeavor. It's our ability to concentrate attention, the secret of everything. If attention was just like awareness, we could do nothing. Attention allows us to focus it on something and therefore it's the secret weapon for everything. So, attention is a very valuable thing.

Q. [Question not picked up on the video.]

A. Yeah, but we don't see it like that every time. David says: "Does everything come to us for our benefit?" I said, "It does, but we don't see it like that." When you give a... When the doctor gives an injection to a child, the child thinks the doctor is the enemy. But he is giving it for his benefit. Actually, it is true that everything comes for our benefit even though we cannot understand it at that time. If you are a spiritual practitioner, that means you practice meditation and your awareness is growing, in due course, sometimes very quickly, you come to know what you thought was not good was beneficial for you later on, later time. So actually, everything has a place and when we are initiated by a master, he makes sure everything is so placed in our life, even what we think are adversities, we think they are bad parts of some. From his point of view to get through karma quickly or to go through a certain phase quickly is not a bad thing at all. He is looking at the big picture and we say, "What good is it? I went to Great Master's bhandara and when I came back, I had the biggest problems. I wanted to go to a spiritual meeting, and I had a hard time on the way." When you prepared yourself, one doesn't see it like that at that time. But later on we are

able to realize, when you see the big picture, you are able to see the advantage of every little thing that happened in our life.

When you accept that, along with grace comes... these are very common words in religions also. People teach them but we don't practice them. Acceptance. If you accept things as they are, life becomes easier. When we fight against everything that's coming, life becomes harder. There was a guy in, I think, an American guy who started a movement called EST. You remember EST? His name was Erhard. Erhard Seminar Training. EST. He came to India also and he gave. I attended two of his courses to understand what he is saying. What he meant was EST or "est" in French which means what is is. It's a very simple philosophy. Accept what is, it is, what ought to be is your mind's work. Forget that. Don't dwell on what ought to be, what should have been, or this. Accept what is. He made it very simple, but of course he made it hard for the exercises that he made us do. He said, "If you are attending his particular course, you, for example, cannot go to the bathroom. If you want to do number 1, do it in your pants." I didn't like that part, and he wouldn't let anybody get out. They couldn't run out of the course once you were in. So, he made it little difficult but then, his theory was that to get something valuable, you pay a price. And, of course, in America I believe he charged for that, but in India there was no charge for that.

When people start asking money for spirituality, I run away from them. Because I know that the Perfect Living Masters have always given their work free. Never charged for spiritual teachings or spiritual practices at all. So, it's one of the signs that if you make a business of it, then you are right here. If you are making spiritual teaching a way of making you money, you are right here in this world. Where are you going? Masters come as givers. They don't come as takers. Of course, they live their life. They earn their living. They do work like anybody else. But they don't. They make an example of it, that even if they have to do a job [and] it does not give them enough money, they'll work poor. But they'll do the work free. Historically we know that there were masters. There was one Kabir. He was a weaver. He had very rich clients of his. But he kept on weaving all his life while he was teaching. There was another—cobbler. He used to mend shoes. And that cobbler, name was Ravidas, and the cobbler mending shoes of people. His disciples included the king of the ruler of that state at that time in India. And the ruler would come to him and say, "You move to the palace and come, and I'll take care of you. He said, "No. My destiny is a cobbler. What I do is a spiritual work, is God's work. I do it not changing my destiny here. I am a cobbler."

Then one day, the king said, "I should get something special from this mystic." So, in the middle of the night, without telling anybody, he left the palace and went to the cobbler who was working, repairing shoes in middle of the night. And he said, "Majesty, what makes you, brings you here in the middle of the night? He said, "I have come for special grace." He says, "You have left your throne to come for special grace? I'll give you really some good grace."

And he was working with the leather in that water, a little dirty water with which he was dipping the leather. Took a little bit of the water, he said, "Drink this." The king said, "I came for grace. I didn't expect dirty water," but he couldn't say no. He put his hands in front and instead of drinking the water, he allowed the water to go down his arms into the sleeve of his shirt. And he felt very embarrassed. "Thank you. Thank you." Ran away. He said, "That was a big disappointment. I thought he'll give me some grace, open my inner eye or something. He gave me some dirty water." And he didn't like that there was stain on the shirt and people will ask where did the stain come from. Early morning there was a washerman on the campus, on this palace compound. He called him immediately. He says, "Please, don't tell anybody. Get my shirt washed, laundered immediately and bring it back." So, the washerman took the shirt and his little daughter, this girl, he said, "Look at the stain. Can you take care of it?" She said, "Yes." She began to chew on the stain, just to take it off. And as she chewed on it, she began to give a discourse to her father. He says, "What's happened to you?" She said, "I can see the light and I can see this." She gave a big discourse. In due course, she was giving discourses. People came to the washerman's house.

The king heard that suddenly the daughter of the washerman got enlightened. He said, "I should go and also get enlightened from this woman." The cobbler couldn't give me much. So, he went to the girl and the girl got up and saluted. He said, "Don't do that. I have not come as a king. I've come as a beggar to you. I want enlightenment that you have." She says, "I am not saluting you as a king. I am saluting you because all the enlightenment I got from you." He says, "From me? How is that?" "In the shirt, you sent the shirt." He didn't realize what was in the shirt. Then the king realized, "Oh boy, I didn't realize these mystics play these tricks also." But they do. So, then he realized that these people can do lot of these things. He went back to the cobbler. He said, "I want that little water that you gave that day." He said, "That water had nothing. It was that moment that you came, and I saw and the special grace was given to you at that time. Now you can get the same grace but meditate for about 20 years more." So, the one moment of that special grace can be equal to 20 years of meditation. It happened in number of cases that we hear of in stories.

And I'll tell you this final story—many of you have heard it. Another king who was a seeker himself like this king, this king Pipa whose story I just told you. The other is king Janak and he was a very earnest seeker and wanted to get enlightened. So, he asked his ministers and advisors, "Can I find somebody, some learned person, somebody enlightened who can share light to me and make me enlightened. And he said, "Yes, your majesty, you are living in a country which is full of these yogis, swamis, gurus and any number of them can give you enlightenment. All you have to do is to have a nice feast and they'll come up and they'll enjoy the feast and they'll give you enlightenment."

So, the king held a big feast and there was certain kind of food that these yogis and swamis particularly like and I can tell you stories about those foods later on when we in a culinary

discussion, and *kheer* and *halwa* and things like that. I'll talk to you again. But he made all those nice foods and invited about a hundred different yogis, swamis came and sat in his camp, and the king disguised himself as an ordinary person and went around from camp to camp, from swami to swami, yogi to yogi and he found they were very learned people. They quoted from the text all the time, from the scriptures, but they disputed and argued with each other so much. They got angry with each other. They are fighting, some of them. He said, "These people are learned but none of them are enlightened. They are not the people I was looking for." Very disappointed he came back to the palace and told his ministers and advisors that "I was disappointed with these people." They said, "Majesty, it was a very small feast you had. The big ones are not here. You have to have a big nationwide feast. Call them from all over the country and we will advise them by beat of drum." There were no televisions, no communication, no iPhones in those days. So naturally they had to spread the word by beat of drum.

King is calling a feast for all holy men to come and all swamis, yogis, mahatmas to come and he wants to have a feast. So, they all assembled in the palace. He set up big tents for them to come, stay and the feast was held for a week so that he could be sure he'll get the right people to give him enlightenment. The king again disguised himself and incognito walked amongst them and he found the same story repeated seven times over. They were all learned. They all had certain practices. They were full of ego, full of saying, *I know this, I know this*. King said, "What kind of enlightenment is this?" And very disappointed he came back to the palace, told the ministers and advisors, "These are not the people I was looking for." He said, "King, what you are looking for, you will not find at a feast then. There is a man who can give you enlightenment, but he is a hunchback, and he sits on the bank of the river, quiet man and you have to go to him. Invite him and he will not come on an invitation for a feast." King said, "I will go personally and invite him." So, he went and invited this old hunchback man, whose name was Ashtavakar. Ashtavakar means eight folds. Ashtavakar means eight because he was hunchback with eight folds on his back. His body was deformed, but his eyes were very bright. So, when he invited him, he said, "Come to my palace and give me enlightenment." He said, "King, you have asked me, I will certainly come."

So, he came, and the king arranged all the nobility, nobles, neighboring kings, all princely people, his family members to assemble in the great auditorium of the palace. And Ashtavakar comes along with his 5 or 6 disciples. As was the custom, they took off their shoes when they entered the hall. And as he walked up, Ashtavakar walked up, the king had placed two chairs on the stage. One for himself and one for the master. And as the master walked up, people looked at his body and they said, "This deformed person is coming to teach us enlightenment? What is the king doing?" So, they are mocking at him. And so, the master sat on the chair and he said, "King Janak, what is the price of leather today?" He said,

“Master, what is this question? I thought you came to give enlightenment to me.” He says, “No, I wanted to know the price of leather. Are they not leather merchants sitting here?”

He said, “No, Master these are royalty, nobility. They are my relatives. They are neighboring kings, princes, princesses are sitting here.” He said, “Oh, they were looking at my skin like they were interested in it, so I thought they might be leather merchants.” So, the people saw he has a sense of humor. So, they kept quiet to listen to him. He said, “King Janak, what kind of enlightenment do you want?” He said, “I want instant enlightenment.” Must have been an American in past life. All want instant things, you see. King said, “I want instant enlightenment.” The master said, “Even instant is a time. How much time is an instant?” He said, “Master, when I go out horse riding, by the time I put my foot in the stirrup and jump on the saddle is an instant.” He said, “Okay, you have to pay a price if you want instant knowledge.” He said, “Master, I’ll give any price. All my coffers, all my wealth is open to you. Take whatever you want.” The master said, “I want three things.” The king said, “Master take ten. No limit.” “No, I only want three things.” He says, “Yes master.” “I want you to give me your body, I want you to give me your wealth, and I want you to give me your mind. When you have done that, I’ll give you instant knowledge.”

It’s a very strange price tag, of course but the king was a real seeker, real earnest seeker. He said, “I would be willing to pay any price. “Yes,” he said, “Master, I agree. All my wealth, all my palaces everything belongs to you. My body belongs to you and my mind also belongs to you.” He said, “Are you sure? Are you sure your body now belongs to me?” He said, “Yes, master.” “Okay, take this body that belongs to me now and put it on my shoes that I took off at the entrance.”

So, the king gets up and walks. Whole audience is upset. “The king has got a crazy man over here. Instead of giving a nice lecture to us, he is telling the king to walk to shoes. What kind of enlightenment is this?” So, the king says, “These people don’t know anything. They know I am a rich king. I have all the wealth and therefore they are thinking of that.” When this thought came to him, Ashtavakar shouted from the stage, “King, you have no business to think of your wealth. You have already given it to me.” Says, “Oh, my god, I forgot that I have already given it to him. That’s not mine anymore.”

And Ashtavakar shouted, “King you can’t even think what you have done or not done. Your mind has been given to me. Thoughts belong to me.” And he put his hands on his head and said, “I can’t even think.” And when he did that, Ashtavakar with his grace gave him the light and he got enlightened and he said, “King, don’t go to the shoes. Come back.” King Janak came back. On the stage he says, “King Janak, did you get enlightened?” Says, “Yes master.” “Was it in an instant?” “Master, it was less than an instant.” “Any questions?” “No questions.” He said, “This was just a sample of what you can get. Now, to get the same thing again, meditate for 20 years more. You’ll get it again.”

So, these are stories we tell about the value of grace and about the value of blessings from masters. So, when we get that grace, something we cannot even understand sometimes. So, I know you all came, and I am very happy that you shared your time with me and I was able to share my stories with you. I didn't share all the stories.

One for the road. Just to lighten the burden of the heavy talk I have given. It's a story about a man who used to go to church and was very fond of that church. He wanted to pray like everybody prayed all the time. The pastor of the church had two parrots. Was it two? Okay. My prompt is at the back, prompter is at the back. The pastor had two parrots who had beads in their hands. He had trained them to repeat all the prayers. So, the parrots were repeating all the prayers, and this guy was very impressed. "If I could have two parrots like this, I would be inspired all the time in my life." So, he went to the parrot store and he bought two parrots. Brought them home to train them like the pastor had done. When he opened the cage, took the parrots out, they were female parrots and they both said, "We are hookers. Would you like to have a good time?" He was shocked. "What have I done? I didn't want these kind of parrots."

He went to the pastor. He said, "I made a big mistake. I brought two parrots. I thought they will have beads in their hands, and they will pray like your parrots do. My parrots are very funny. They are females who say, "We are hookers. Would you like to have a good time?"" The pastor said, "Don't worry, parrots are always trained. So, you can train your parrots and change them. I will give you my two parrots who are praying all the time. In their company, your parrots will learn how to... Buy a pair of beads and keep them ready and when my parrots crow, your parrots will learn how to pray. So, he brought the pastor's two parrots with their beads and they were praying and then when they met, the two parrots who were in the, in his house, the female parrots said, "We are hookers. Would you like to have a good time?" And one of the other parrots said, "Throw away your beads. Our prayers have been answered."

I must tell you every master I met, Perfect Living Master, had a great sense of humor. The Great Master had the greatest sense of humor. So, I always enjoyed his friendship. Thank you very much for coming. God bless you.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93sMSgXQM1c>