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Souls are the Same, Minds are Different

Rice Lake, Wisconsin, USA — April 1, 2013 (Bhandara)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7StXGY46cQ>

Friends, welcome to this third day of our four-day program in Rice Lake. I am very happy to see all of you again and to know that I have so many co-travelers with me on the spiritual path. We are all traveling on the same path. Sometimes the streets are narrow and different, but they all end up in a big road, which is common for all of us. The destination is still the same. We may have followed different paths — they looked different — but so long as our destination is our True Home, our *Sach Khand*, the place to which we really belong, to which our soul belongs, our journey is still the same. We are all heading for the same Home.

Therefore, if you look at other people on the same path, and they are following somewhat different things, do not be disturbed. Do not try to teach anybody that they should do something different than they are doing, because so long as we are/our destination is the same, little change in the routing here and there doesn't matter.

I'm very happy that in this group of people sitting here with me there are people who are following different masters, people who are following different systems of meditation, people who have tried many experiments differently. I welcome all those people, and whatever they are doing is the right thing and they are just steps in the right direction, because eventually the destination will still be the same.

Why is the destination the same? Because the destination is oneness. It is one Totality of Consciousness. There is no other. There is no second. Our reality is only one. Our reality is that we are participating in a big show within one Total Consciousness. There is nothing outside of it. No matter where you are, you are still part of that. No matter who you are, where you are, what level you are, you are still part of that.

A Perfect Living Master who comes in our midst as an ordinary human being, he is in touch with that oneness, not in the sense that he can have access to it. It's not in the sense that he can switch over and see what is going on there. We can do that, but a Perfect Living Master lives in that oneness while he is with us here. Therefore, for him the whole show and all of us are part of that oneness at all times. He cannot see anybody outside of that. Therefore, that's a big difference between different teachers that come. Teachers who have gone to a certain level of experience inside, in which there are still differences, in which there are still many, may teach you to go there and find this or find that, but a Perfect Living Master knows all the time that we are all participating in different roles, at different levels, in the same one. He does not say, "Let's go and become one!" He knows we are one. We all are one, and we all will discover that if your seeking is for your True Home, if you seek your True Home, oneness comes automatically because that's the reality, that's the truth, that's the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth is that consciousness has never been split. It's not that in order to make souls that were divided up into little units. All the units are within that one right now. They've never been split. The oneness of consciousness has never been split. The ultimate creator has never been divided up. He is always one. All things that are happening, all experiences happening, are happening within that one.

Therefore, it's not even appropriate to think that we are separate, we are different, that path is right, that path is wrong, and be critical of people. It's no use criticizing anybody, because everybody's belief system is a different street leading to the same ultimate goal, if the goal is oneness, if the goal is our True Home. Our True Home does not make any distinction which side you are coming from, what path you are following, because eventually, if you want to go Home, the final destination is still the same.

I am making this point specially because we tend to be critical, we tend to be divisive, we tend to be separated, separatists. We try to say, "No, I have a better path than you have." How do you know that? How do you compare all these things? If the destination is the same, why are you so critical about a little change of detour here or there, little change of a route here or there? Therefore, those who are initiated by a Perfect Living Master and understand this point that we are all traveling, co-travelers, to the same destination, they never criticize anybody because they know they are all heading for the same destination. And they may have teachers, guides, who take them halfway, take them a quarter way, some may take them the whole way, but the end is the same. At the end there'll be no separation. It is not something to make belief that we are all one. That's not something...the mind will never accept this. No mind can accept that we are all one, because the mind believes in separation, mind sees everything separate, mind cannot function as one, mind functions as many, always.

Therefore, it's not a mental game. The spiritual path is not a mental game at all. We have played too many mental games. We play even now, all the time. This spiritual path rises

above the mind. It has nothing to do with mental games. Of course, you can play a few mental games on the way, for entertainment. People play games all the way. I am not against playing games. You can play all kinds of games on the way, chat, tell stories, entertain each other, but that doesn't mean that our destination is different. It doesn't mean that just because different guides are taking us to different routes that therefore we should be critical of each other.

My Master used to say, Great Master used to say that there are many kinds of sins in this world, and sin is a mental thing, by the way. Sin is part of karma, it's part of mental things. Sin and virtue both are mental things. In the area of love, there is neither sin, there is no virtue, it's all one. Where there is all one, there can be no sin. In oneness there can't be any sin. So, our ultimate destination has no sin and no virtue. All these are mental things here. But if we are critical of people, Great Master used to say it's one of those sins which has no pleasure in it. Most of the sins have some pleasure element. That's why we commit sin. But the sin without pleasure is criticizing other people, to talk ill of other people. It's not worth it. It's not worth talking ill of anybody.

When we say we love everybody, it's not supposed to be a mental love that you say in your voice, "Oh, I love you," inside say, "I really hate this person, but I can't say that." Not like that. When you love somebody, you identify. You say, "We are the same." You recognize that the soul of the person, of every person, is the same. Do not think that the souls are different. All souls are the same. They are identical. Minds are different. The covering upon the soul is different, not the soul itself.

When we come across a Perfect Living Master, he is not looking only at our bodies and minds, he is looking at the soul. And all souls, irrespective of their condition, irrespective of their location, are yearning inside to go back home. No matter if they found a master or not, no matter in what situation they are, no matter what they are experiencing. Some are tied up so strongly with their mind, knotted up so strongly with their minds, that the mind guides them, mind has taken over, mind has become their self and they are traveling round and round in this experience. Unfortunate, but it's happening.

And then there are souls who are striving to get out, who are able to see, "Why am I trapped here? I don't want this. I am fed up. I want to get out of here." And those souls trying to gradually get out of this take time to disassociate themselves, disassociate from the covers upon themselves. They begin to feel, "This world doesn't look like it belongs to us. It's got too many strange oppositions, pairs of opposites. How could this world be real? How could this world mean anything to us, with hospitals full of patients crying out of, out of pain? How could this be a place where murderers and criminals sitting in prisons out here? What kind of place is this? How could this be my home where so much torture goes

on? How can this be my home where people are lies, hypocrites all the time? How can this be my home? If people all try to play games with each other, how can this be my home?"

When a soul is disturbed by these things, says, "This could not be my home, I have to go back home, I have to go back to where I belong," that's the soul that's able to release itself through the help of an arrangement made by the soul of finding a Perfect Living Master, a human being like the embodiment of that soul right here, and gradually, stage by stage, getting rid of these covers upon itself and discovering that the soul was all the same. Soul was full of its own inherent knowledge called intuition. Intuitive knowledge is not learned. Intuitive knowledge does not come from mental exercise. Intuitive knowledge does not come from books. Intuitive knowledge does not come from attending classes. It's born, it's inbred into the soul. Love does not come from books. Love does not come from learning. It's part of the nature of the soul. Beauty and appreciation of beauty and the joy that arises with it, the bliss that can come into us, does not come from the mind. It's inbred, it's part of the quality of the soul. The soul realizes these qualities when it leaves the mind and the senses and the body behind.

And this is made possible right here in a human life through the guidance of a Perfect Living Master who manifests himself as a friend of ours in this life. It's a response to the seeking of a soul that a Master appears. A Master does not appear just to teach something. There are a lot of teachers. Thousands and thousands of teachers exist teaching the same things a Master will come and teach. They are saying the same thing. Books are written, million of books exist today, in all languages, teaching the same thing. It's not teaching. We don't need teaching. We have had enough of teaching. We need somebody whose...who can hold our hand, take us back home, even in the dark areas on the way. We need somebody who can be a friend of ours, who can be companion, who can take away our loneliness by constant companionship which we never lose. That's the role of a Perfect Living Master in our life.

The role is not limited to just telling us the way and saying, "Now you go." Many people can do that, that, "This is the way, now you go. I didn't promise to take you. I just told you that I'll tell you the way." That's not a Perfect Living Master's role. It may be the role of many teachers who can say, "We can teach you the way," and they can read from books and teach you. Perfect Living Masters do not teach from books. They teach from experience. They speak with a confidence that only can come by their own experience, and not from any kind of learning, from anywhere. They do not teach anything beyond what they have experienced themselves. It's a different kind of experience altogether to have a Perfect Living Master in your life. It is not the same thing, like going to any lecture and understanding the teachings. You could understand these teachings from books. Libraries are full of them, but people have gone through those stages when they've gone through teachings, they've gone through books, they've gone through libraries. The Perfect Living Master knows exactly where we are. He doesn't say, "Now I want to ask you where you are

and what can I do for you and help you.” He knows where we are. He guides us from the point where we are. He gives directions exactly fitted to where we need to go. He changes the directions, if necessary. He says one thing at one time. He may change it after two days, because we have made a progress — we don’t need the same kind of instruction again. So, he is not just merely teaching a standard teaching from a book at all.

They say that when Jesus Christ gave his talk — a Master of the past, but lot of people still worship him — when he gave a talk, the Sermon on the Mount, when he gave that sermon, it’s so recorded that at the end “there was a hush upon the multitude.” I am just reminding you what he, what was written there. There was a hush upon the multitude because he “spoke like one with authority and not like the scribes.” That is true of all masters. They do not speak like they are learned people, who learned many languages, many words, and they speak them out. They speak with the authority of having personal experience — distinguish them totally from the others.

Somebody was asking a master in India recently and I saw his talk. They said, “How do we know who is a master?” And he said, “Not from his dress. Not from his long hair or short hair. Not from his face. Not from anything visible, but from the type of knowledge he gives you directly from his own knowledge, the knowledge he can transmit from his own knowledge — not from knowledge he has himself acquired from books and learning.” This is a very important factor because we will run into all kinds of teachers. There is no harm in that. We need it. We need this step. There were people who came to Great Master and said, “Master, what can I do next?” He said, “Read more books.” Another man came, he said, “Master, I’ve read all the books. What should I do?” He said, “Throw them all into a river.”

These masters have their own way of doing these things. From in my own household, my...my father married into a household which was very religious in Hinduism. My mother’s mother, my grandmother on the maternal side, she had a temple in her house in which there were little, little idols — “This is Brahma, this is Vishnu, Shiva...” — all the gods and goddesses made of metal and wood and all those, and she worshipped them. She had nice incense. She burned the incense. She had a bell, she would ring the bell, and make music and sing and chant, and she felt very happy. All the gods and goddesses were very happy with her, and she was happy with them.

My dad got initiated by the Great Master and he found out that these are external things. The real thing is inside. So, he went to preach to my grandma. He said, “Mom, you are doing something wrong. This is, these are all metal and wooden pieces.” She said, “Don’t you be so blasphemous and tell my gods this thing. They’ll punish you. They’ll even put a *sarap* on you.” *Sarap* means a curse on you. And she tried to frighten him. My dad was not frightened. He tried to still teach her that “you should find a living Master.” And he said, “I have found a living Master, Great Master Baba Sawan Singh. He is a Perfect Master. You

meet him, he will tell you.” She said, “I’ll never go anywhere when my gods are sitting in my house. I should go outside?”

So, she did not listen to my dad at all, and said “Don’t interfere in my spiritual life.” Then Great Master...then my dad went to Great Master. He said, “Master, I have a problem. I want my mother-in-law to come on this path, and she is so close to me, I love her, but she won’t listen to me at all. And she is believing in those little gods and goddesses and has created a temple in her own house.” Great Master said, “Don’t worry. I will come and see her.” And my dad said, “What will that...? That’ll make no difference if he comes and sees her.”

So, one day Great Master came, and my dad invited her to my grandma’s house where he comes and meets my grandma, and she says, “This son-in-law of mine is very stupid. He doesn’t respect my gods and goddesses.” He says, “Really? Where are your gods and goddesses?” She said, “Oh, they are in my temple.” He says, “Can I also go and worship them?” “Oh yes, yes! Do you worship them?” “Yes, I do.” Great Master goes, sits there with her and burning incense and ring the bell. And my grandma is very happy, looks in a snotty way at my dad, “See? You didn’t know your own Master!”

So, here is the Great Master, just ringing the bell and worshipping with her and saying, “These are great gods and goddesses,” and my grandma feels so happy. After that she says, “I want to go and meet Master!” She comes three or four times to the *satsang* of Great Master, goes to the Dera with my dad. “He understands me.” And then after a few months she goes to the Master, says, “Master, I have to be initiated by you because the truth is inside.” He initiates her. And she says, “Master, I have a problem. What do I do with all the gods and goddesses?” He says, “Do you have a big bag in which you get wheat or rice? You know, the big gunny bag?” She says, “Yes, I buy the wheat and I have a bag.” He says, “Put all those gods and goddesses in that bag and throw them into the river.” That’s exactly what she did. So, all I’m saying is we cannot know how Masters operate.

Great Master went to a town in Pak...now Pakistan, Rawalpindi, which is the capital now, Islamabad, and he was to give a discourse there. There was a stronghold of fundamentalist Sikhs, the people with beard and turbans who believe that the guru now, their master, is a book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. “That’s the Master. There can be no human being as a Master.” When they found a Sikh master, wearing a turban and a beard, is coming to talk as if there is a living master, they said, “We should kill him.” They all draw their swords, and they all wear swords as part of their regimen. To be a Sikh, you have to wear, as a *Khalsa*, you wear a sword. They drew their swords. “If he comes and preaches to anybody in this city, we’ll kill him.”

This went around. By the way, on that trip I was with the Master's party in that, so I know this situation happened while I was myself a witness. And there, secretaries and everybody came running to Great Master and said, "Master, cancel your program. They are going to kill you. They have already announced. They have gathered all the force, all the Sikhs have gathered together, and they have sharpened their swords that makes sure that he is killed and all others who follow him should also be killed, and I don't think your secretaries and everybody is going to follow you there. The threat is very real." And they advised him. He says, "No, the satsang will take place. I will give my discourse tomorrow. I'll give my discourse at 10 o'clock, as planned. But before that, at 8 o'clock, I will go to the Sikh temple, to the Gurdwara. They said, "Master, that's the most dangerous step you're going to take, to go into the lion's den? That's what exactly what it'll be. That's where they're waiting for, drawing their swords." He said, "That's where we will go." And that's where he went at 8 o'clock. We followed him. We said, "If it's a big sacrifice, we are all going to be sacrificed today. Let's see how it feels to be sacrificed." We never had that experience.

He went there, and he was a properly dressed-up Sikh with a beard, turban, little kirpan, sword, everything, like a Sikh. His chanter, Bhan Singh, his name was Bhan Singh, was also a properly dressed Sikh. They went there. He went and bowed to the book, to *Granth Sahib*, like every other Sikh was doing. And he sat down and told the chanter, his chanter, "Take over and read from that page from the *Granth Sahib*." So, the chanter, who was a hurly burly guy, he went — there was always a man sitting on, reading the book in the Gurdwara, so the chanter pushed him aside and took over the chanting himself and opened that page which Master had said, and he began to read, "Unless you have a human being as a Guru, you cannot get any salvation. Unless you can see the face of the Master..." He is reading from the Book! He's reading from the same book the Sikh's consider as their Guru, and he went on reading. And he also read other things like... I sometimes liked that song very much, which says, "Jo Mange," which says that a Guru with all that power can place his hand on your head — what a blessing — that if he gives you a hug, he can remove so many of your vices and cut your karma. He read all those things, which is only possible if you have a living human being.

So, when he read that, and those people said, "This man, who we were going to kill, is a believer in our own Guru, and he has come to hear, and he is paying respect to our own book." They put their swords back and listened to him, and they changed their mind. And at 10 o'clock, when he went to give the address, they all came to listen to his satsang there. That's an actual event that happened.

We cannot know how Masters do these things. I was mentioning the other day about Swami Brahmanand who wanted to give blessings to the Great Master, in Karachi. And same thing happened there, that Brahmanand left everything and came back and got initiated and told me, "Your Master is a great diplomat." Well, they are not diplomats, they are more than

that. These Masters, they understand what is needed by us. We don't understand enough about ourselves. We don't even know our past lives. We don't even remember things of our own childhood. How can we know much about...we don't know anything about the future, and there, here is a man who comes and can see all of this at once. He knows much more than we do, and if he is taking care of us, what else do we need?

A teacher can teach you, cannot take care of you. A teacher can tell you the way. He cannot hold your hand and take you home. A Perfect Living Master takes care of you and takes you home. He not only takes care of you in the sense that he'll spiritually take you home, he takes care of you every day of your life right you are here. When a Perfect Living Master initiates somebody, it's the biggest event of one's life. There is, in my view, and I have gone around the world seeing everything, there is nothing like it. I cannot think of any equivalence of that, of any event that can match the event of initiation by a Perfect Living Master. Initiation by a Perfect Living Master means: Stop worrying forever. Initiation by a Perfect Living Master means: There is somebody who'll watch over you and take care of you at every step of your life, here and hereafter.

It's not a small thing. It's not that he is just a teacher telling you how to go home. He is taking care, responsibility. And a Perfect Living Master, if you do a little homework to go up to a small stage like a meeting point, rendezvous point behind the eyes, will be with you forever in presence. He'll be present forever. But these are things that are not possible. So therefore, I cannot see anything equivalent to that. If he initiates you, guarantee of going home. It's a guaranteed ticket back to your own place, no matter in what circumstances you are, no matter what you do.

And then you have the friendship of a person whose love is unconditional, who never judges. We all judge! We all are prone to judge because we live mental lives. Our mind likes to judge all the time. We judge people, we judge situations, we give judgement, we are critical, we are praising some and criticizing some others all the time. And here is somebody who doesn't judge, just loves, who forgives, at all times. The forgiveness is amazing.

Once a man came to the Great Master in an evening, and we were about 20 or 30 people sitting around him, and he was dictating some letters, the Great Master, in his easy chair. I remember that incident very, very clearly. A man came and said, "Master, forgive me. You told me not to drink alcohol. I went into bad company and got drunk last night. You told me not to eat meat. I had all the meat stuff served to me and I ate everything. You told me not to indulge in immoral activities with women. I did all that. I am the worst sinner. I have done all bad things which you have stopped me. Please forgive me." And Great Master said, "Okay, you are forgiven, don't do it again." He said, "Thank you, thank you, thank you," and he ran away.

It puzzled all the people around, and the secretaries particularly, who had been with the Master for many years. They said, “Master, this man did everything wrong, and just said ‘forgive me’ and you forgave him?” He said, “What, what should I do? He has already punished himself. Look at his mind, how much he has been punishing himself with what weight he was carrying to come to me. So why should I not forgive him? So therefore, I forgave him and told him ‘don’t do it again’. What else do you expect?” He says, “Master, supposing” — and there is a conversation going on with his own secretaries — “Master, supposing he does the same things again and comes to you, will you again forgive him?” He said, “You know, we know peoples’ minds are like that. I will again forgive him.” He says, “Master, when will you punish him?” He says, “There are too many punishers in this world. Don’t put me in the category of punishers. Leave me in the category of forgivers.”

This is the nature of Perfect Living Masters. They forgive. They know under what circumstances we do things which make us feel guilty. They know exactly the temptations through which we are placed. They know exactly how our life is being led, and therefore, they do not look upon us as sinners or this thing. They look upon us as people trapped and need compassion. Their compassion is overwhelming and universal. Their compassion is what qualifies them to forgive everything that they see, but they teach not to do it again. They guide us into change of behavior and so on, but not by punishment. They say, “There are too many people punishing us anyway. The bigger punish...the biggest punisher is our own mind. It punishes us more than anyone else can punish us.” Therefore, they see that, and therefore they are forgivers.

I am mentioning these things because do not take a Perfect Living Master just to be a teacher who is coming and telling us. He is totally different. And initiation by him... What does initiation mean? An initiation is not teaching you the method of meditation. I teach meditation in all the workshops every day. It doesn’t mean it’s initiation. Books tell you how to meditate. It’s not initiation. Yoga teachers tell you how to do yoga and meditation. It’s not initiation. Telling any mantra is not initiation. Telling you methods of meditation is not initiation. Then what is initiation? Initiation is establishment of the Master’s form within us and taking care of us forever. Initiation does not take place outside. It takes place inside. Whether you are initiated or not will not be known to you till you go inside and find out that you were initiated. Initiation is not connected with the transfer of other teachings.

There was a very poor man — I am giving you this example to tell you what it really means — a poor man, living at quite a distance from the Dera where the Great Master lived, felt very strongly. Somebody mentioned Great Master and he felt that he had seen him in dreams, he had seen him in visions, but he wanted to go and get *Naam*, get initiated. And he traveled — he had no money to buy a bus ticket even — with a little bundle of few clothes and some food he tied up on his back, and he walked. Took him a month of walking

to the Dera to come there, just to get initiated. After one month, with all that strong feeling that he had got, he arrived at the Dera. This is also something in which I am a witness.

The Great Master was coming out of his house, was just in front of his door when this man arrived, carrying that bag, all ragged, with very poor clothes. When he saw the Great Master, who looked royal with his beautiful beard and his dress — he was a royal Master, I must tell you, he was kingly and we all could see it, clearly — when the Master was standing there, this man threw his bag and ran and caught hold of the Master's feet, and said, "Master, initiate me! I have come for initiation." In Punjabi he said, "Give me Naam!" He said, "Initiate me!" And the Master said, "What, once again?" It's the first time he is seeing him. "What, once again?" Then Master suddenly caught what he had just said. He said, "Oh, I initiated you a month ago when you left your place to come here. Oh, you mean telling about the words and all that. I'll do it tomorrow morning."

That actually is an instance. When did the initiation take place? Not when he said how to meditate, not when he gave the mantra, not when he taught him that, but when he initiated him a month earlier, when he took responsibility for him, which made the man run and drive to his feet.

Therefore, do not take initiation to be just a method of teaching meditation. Anybody can do that. Books can do that. Initiation is by a Perfect Living Master who takes full responsibility for the soul that you carry with you. He is...he knows that the mind you will shed here, the body will be left here, yours as well as the Master's. The mind will be left here, yours and the Master's. The sensory systems and the astral body will be left here, will not go with us. The soul will. Only the soul will travel Home because it belongs there, and that's the real spiritual journey.

Great Master used to say, "I have to teach people and take them through these stages of the three worlds of the negative power, but that's not my real journey. The real journey I take people on into is from *Par Brahm* to *Sach Khand*, from beyond the mind, when the soul recognizes it's a soul and was not what it thought it was, and up to its totality when it merges and becomes one and knows it was always one. That's the spiritual journey, that the rest is only to get you out of the system, to get you out of here.

There was a friend of mine, a distant uncle, who we used to have morning walks together. Somebody told him that five words are given at initiation, and these five words represent five levels of consciousness, and they represent five worlds. "Three of these levels of consciousness belong to the negative power. Why are you repeating those? You should only repeat two words, because the two words belong to the positive power, belong to us, to the soul. And that's spiritual words, and the three earlier words are only for these three different levels which belong to the negative power. Why are we worshipping the negative

power by repeating those words?" And he switched to a simran, a repetition, of two words. And he asked me while we were on a morning walk, "You are an old initiate of Great Master. Do you repeat five words or two?" I said, "I repeat five." He said, "But that's not right." I said, "What do you do?" He said, "I repeat two." I said, "What made you do that?" He told me the story, and he said, "Can you check with the Great Master? I believe you have access to him, and go inside and check whether two words are the right one or five words are the right one?" I said, "Okay, once I check I'll give you the story next, I'll tell you next morning walk when we go." Next morning, I told him Great Master said, "If you have to climb a stair, a steps ladder, to climb up a ladder to go somewhere, do you start from the two top steps of the ladder or from the bottom? We are right here in the physical world. We have to start from here. No matter whose region it is, we have to step from here and go step by step till we reach our own place. Therefore, we should go with five words." And then he, of course, reverted back to five words.

So, people can have all kinds of ideas, and they come up and then I have to give answers to them. There is a friend of mine, probably sitting in this audience, and I won't name him because he asked me a question long ago and I said, "You know I have to check with Great Master. I can't say any answer without checking with my Master. He tells me the answer, I convey it to you. I am just a post office, conveying letters from one to the other. So, I'll have to check." He said, "Why don't you check?" I said, "Wait, let me go." I had to...need to go to the washroom at that time, so I was in a rush to go to the rest room. I said, "Let me go to the rest room." Since then, till today he believes I only talk to Great Master in the rest room. Even now when he has a question to ask me, he says, "Go to the rest room!" All kind of these funny things happen in life.

So, the point I am making is that initiation by a Perfect Living Master cannot be fully described. It's a great arrangement by which you are guaranteed to go home because you wanted it. You didn't want it today, you wanted it from inception. You wanted it before anything was set up, before the creation of this universe you wanted it. And that's why, when the time is right, you had enough of this ride and journey in different experiences, the time is right, you say, "Now I enforce my arrangement I made which was a promise I got," and a Perfect Living Master appears in your life and initiates you. Of course, prior to that you may have made lot of preparation. So according to the rules of the game of this physical world, we say, "When a person is ready, he can be initiated."

What is a readiness? When you are already marked to go home, what readiness do you need? The readiness is in experience. It does not mean that you... There is a certain amount of preparation needed to be ready. It means you will experience the preparation. You will experience that. According to the laws of this world which believes in karma and law of cause and effect, because we believe in that, the world runs on that basis, therefore even the initiation, even the going back on a promised date and time, is prepared by the cause

and effect. "Oh, you did this, you prepared and therefore now you are ready to be initiated." So, it does not mean that readiness is a readiness which requires a certain amount of preparation to qualify and then you get initiated. It looks like that. A lot of things look like something else than they are. The whole world looks like something different than it is. We look like different than we are. So, everything looks/appears different, because that's the nature of illusion. Illusion means that you create something which looks like real and is actually not real.

There was a famous dancer in India, very famous dancer and also a political figure, who once invited me to watch performance in a dancing school. And the children were performing beautiful school dances, and then she was talking to me how art can be an expression of spirituality, a very, a good subject. Good subject how music has always played a big role in spirituality, how art performances have a role, and where do they come from, where do inspirations come from, how do poets write poetry. She had that kind of subject matter in her mind she discussed. It was a very interesting discussion we had. At the end she says, that "I believe that all this which we were talking of is very real, and we have practicing music, dance performance, recital of poetry, composition of poetry. All this is happening in a physical world, and it's all spiritual. It's coming from, inspired from a higher level of consciousness. How can you call this unreal? How can you call a world in which we say masters come and spirituality is exists, and people are worshipping and getting divine miracles, and then music arts is playing a role, and inspiration is coming from people with poetry, scientific inventions are being made by people with no background here, existing here? Where is it coming from? It's coming from a spiritual place. Somewhere higher up. How can you call it unreal?" I said, "Who called it unreal?" She said, "All the books say, the scriptures say it's *maya*, it's *mithya*, unreal, illusion." I said, "That's not what the book says."

And that's what I am going to share with you now, that the book does not say it's unreal. The book says that the process of illusion has been created to create what is reality for us. It's quite different. If you say, "What is reality," you ask me this question, "What is really real," I'll say, "Nothing is real." Nothing at all is real! Not even our True Home is real. These are experiences created for us. The only reality I know is the experiencer of these illusions who thinks it is real. The experiencer is real. The witness is real. Experience cannot be real. It keeps on changing. Every experience changes.

What I explained to her is, the expression used in our Sanskrit literature in India where they say, "This is *maya*," translated as illusion, it's not a correct translation. *Maya* is not illusion. *Maya* means that an experience can be generated where you think the things of experience are real, whereas only the experience is real.

I'll give an example. Example is this: Here is a cup of water. [Ishwar Ji holds up a cup of water] I hope everybody can see it, with ice and water in it, nice glass, and I am going to

take a sip of it [Ishwar Ji takes a sip of water]. I just had a real sip of cold water. Therefore, I assume that the glass is real, the water is real, and the ice is real. None of them was real. The sipping of the water was real! The experience was real! I jumped to the conclusion that because the experience was real, therefore the glass must be real, the water must be real, and the ice must be real. The experience was not unreal! It had happened. How can I say it was unreal when it's happening? It happened to me. The experience of life is happening to us, it's real. But we jumped to the conclusion, because the experience is happening, therefore the things that are causing the experience, the material that is causing experience is also real — and that's the mistake we make.

Now, another example, I'll try to explain this point. When we go to sleep, supposing I go to sleep and have a dream. In the dream I take a sip of water, the same way. The same glass I see in a dream and I take a sip of water and I drink the water, tastes very good, cold ice water, and I wake up. There was no glass. There was no ice. But I can still recall that I drank the water and had the experience. The experience was not unreal. The experience is always real. That's our only definition of reality. Our definition of reality is that which we experience as real. Therefore, the word *maya*, which was used in the text was to represent that just because an experience is real, we take the things of experience to be real, which they are not. It's like a dreamlike state. If you have a dream, somebody says, "You haven't had a dream," that's wrong. You had a dream. You had an experience.

So, we are having experiences which are real, and we think the things that create experience, the people that create experience must be real, and that's called *maya*, the illusion. What we have done is not to create illusions, but to create reality through illusion. We create reality. Nothing else is real for us. Sitting here, do you know any other reality except this? No. The only reality is we are human beings with bodies, with flesh, and we are living in a physical world. This is our reality. When we dream, the dream becomes reality. This disappears for that time. We wake up to further level of wakefulness into higher level. Everything disappears as a dream and reappears when we dream again.

Somebody said, "If this is really true what you are saying, that the experience is real, and if we go to a higher experience where we come to know that is more real and this was less real, it's just a comparison of reality and this is less real, why would you come back here to less real?" I said, "Why do you go to sleep every night then? If that was so, you wouldn't sleep again. You would say, 'Oh, that was a dream. I am never going to go dream again.' You sleep again because you know it's a dream. You know that sleep is necessary. You know you have to go through this. It does not stop you from going to sleep to have a dream just because you know it's a dream." The same situation here at every level of reality. From every level of reality, we can, for the purpose of a built-in experience go into any level, including the lowest level, even in dream level, which is the lowest level, or dream within a dream, which is still lower, but certainly the one level where we have the experience of free

will, which is the wakeful state of consciousness, we always come back there, even after those experiences we can have in meditation.

Of course, if the body was not there, if you were not a human being, then of course we don't have that opportunity. But if we have a physical body, and in this physical body, alive and kicking with all vital signs functioning, you can go and have an experience of greater wakefulness. And you come back here, it doesn't mean that you are going back again into a lower level, it's going back into something. It's relaxing and different, like a dream.

So, once you know the nature of reality, you will change your definitions. You will change your concept. When we say, "This is illusion," which means unreal, it's not correct. By illusion we have created reality, and at one time we have only one reality. That's a big problem. If we could have two realities, the whole thing would be easy to blow up and just go back home. We can't have two realities at the same time. When we are dreaming, we shut off this reality. When we wake up, we shut off dream reality. When we wake up further, we shut off both realities. So, we are moving from one reality to another. You can call it dream to another, that's just a way of saying how it's created. When a dream is created and becomes real for us and things become real, it's a reality for us. When does that become a dream? It becomes a dream only when we wake up. It doesn't become a dream during a dream. If it does become, we are still acting like it's reality. We tell people around, "It's a dream." How can you tell people around? When you wake up, you don't tell anybody. So therefore, at every level of reality we are creating one reality, living in that, moving to another, going back into the other and forgetting the first one. That's how we are creating reality for ourselves.

If a definition of reality is that which does not change, then none of these can be real because they all change. Then the only reality is the experienter of this change, the self, the ultimate consciousness that alone does not change. Everything else changes, and that's the only reality, which indeed it is.

But when you have a Perfect Living Master, there is a difference. Or anybody else, not a Perfect Living Master, anybody else who has gone to the experience of Totality, even in the human being, in the human body, if you've gone to the experience of Totality and experience it once, you retain that forever. Then everything becomes like a dream at the same time. Then it doesn't become real. Then you are acting your role at all the different places at once. Now, that is only possible when you are at the top, because all other places you are separated. At all other, including *Par Brahm*, including when you are a soul, you are still separated. You are many souls. But at the top there is no many at all. The many and the one are the same at the top. And that's the point when you can hold all the experiences because you discover they were all taking place there. Nothing ever took place outside of that.

Reminds me, in my very early visit to this country I spoke in a church and somebody had asked me, "If we left our home and ran into all these troubles, why did we leave the home at all?" And my answer at that time was very brusque. I was not good in speaking, I think. I said, "We never left the home." They were surprised, that what are we talking about? If we never left our home, what are we talking about? I said, "We are talking about losing awareness of our home. We lost awareness, and we lost awareness successively. Ultimately, we are at this state, but we are in our home. This spiritual path means no travel anywhere. It means waking up to our own reality, to waking up to where we are, progressively. As we went down progressively, stage by stage and came to this level where we recreated something unique. At the sixth level of devolution of consciousness, we recreated something that was only there, free will, the ability to seek, to choose, to make, to design, to set up the whole system. That recreated will came back here and did not go below this, nor above this. So, two areas which were the most important for us, spiritually, where the physical form of a human being and the Totality of Consciousness in our True Home, because in both places we had will, decision making. There, we made a decision, created the whole show. Here we make small decisions to deal with everyday affairs. But the power to experience free will is the same in both places. So, these are the only two common things.

That's why they say, "Man is made in the image of his Creator." Not that he looks like the creator, or that he has other attributes. The only attribute common to the creator and to human being is the attribute of the experience of free will. Real free will there, illusion of free will here, but they are both similar experiences.

And that is why all this set up that we have here, this is designed in a particular way. Imagine if you could see what I am talking about, imagine you could see this whole structure of how it's created and how experience has been generated in so many ways and gone to such details of creation: molecules, atoms, smallest particles, galaxies, width, space, unlimited space. I was talking of infinity and infinity plus, and infinity plus plus. Look at the whole conceptual thing. Look at the whole big picture. Isn't it the most amazing thing that one can see? And Masters have said, "We are struck with amazement at the beauty, at the perfection of the whole system in which everything is included that you can think of. And yet, this vision of a perfection of everything is available to us at the sixth level of devolution of consciousness, at the human level, because of the possibility planted into the system of free will, of choosing, of seeking. And you can seek.

People say, "What is the qualification to come on a spiritual path?" Only one qualification — seek! Whoever is a seeker of the True Home will go to the True Home, I can tell you this. Majority of the people don't seek. They don't want to seek. They just live in drudgery of life, being born, live, earn, multiply, produce kids, families, jobs, die. That's what their life is. Other forms of life are even worse. If you look at plants and insects and birds and mammals,

even worse. I'm talking human beings are almost like them, too. They just live, eat, drink, multiply and go. There are only some, and you look around in the world, very few. Some people say, "The whole world is going to be saved because everybody will become spiritual." I don't see that. I, people say, "Long ago there was a *Sat Yuga*, and there was golden age and people were all like this." I don't see that either. I see human beings have always been like this, and there are always a small section of them who are seekers. And the rest are just livers, drifters, they just drift through life and they don't seek. They think there is nothing to seek, there is nothing changing, it's just a drudgery of life, just go through it.

So, the seekers are always those who are going to go back home when they are ready. Readiness depends on whether they have gone through the experiences which they planned for themselves. Some wanted a longer journey; some wanted a shorter journey. Some said, "I just want to make a short visit to the creation, and I want to be back." And some say, "No, it's going to be nice. I know I can come back when I like and therefore, I am going to enjoy myself." And there are some who have come and gone. Most people say, "Once we get out of this mess, we won't come back."

If this question was put to you: If you go back home, how many of you would want to stay there and never come back? How many of you would like to come back again on this adventure land? Well, there are a few who are ready for that. There is...there are some who would like to come back. So long as they know, so long as they know it is just an adventure land. How many of you, when they come back again, will make sure they have a firm return ticket? Okay.

This experience has been generated by us, and there is a way out, and we can go back. You are not here for nothing, you have not come here by accident, as you might think. Some of you might think that you were assembled, somebody told you, somebody saw YouTube, somebody came by that. No, it's all very well planned. It's your plan, and you have made an arrangement existing earlier, and that's why you are here.

So, I am very happy to welcome you all as co-travelers with me on this path. I have treaded some paths, and I can tell you, it's a great journey, if you call it a journey. We like to call it a journey because in this world, when you move from point A to point B, it looks like a journey. It never looks like point B is moving to point A, does it? Supposing you want to go from here to Chicago. It doesn't look that Chicago is going to come here, it looks like we have to go there. What if you suddenly discovered you never went there, Chicago came here? It'll be a big surprise, but that's happening. We don't realize, driving a car... Supposing you are driving a car — I am giving you some examples, and they look absurd or maybe crazy, I may be a little crazy in these examples — but if you are driving a car, are you moving on the road, or the road and the trees and the whole environment is moving back? Which

one is true? You think the car is moving. That's a wonderful maya. That's a great illusion, which makes the car's movement real. All movement becomes real.

What if I told you that you never moved anywhere at all, that in truth there was no movement at all, you will remain steady at the same place all the time — all experience moved around you? You'd say, "That looks crazy, not my experience." It may not be your experience but may be the truth.

So, the thing is that we cannot understand how it's being set up, how it's being created, because... Why don't we understand? Because we are going to use one level of experience as our reality. Right now, we think this world, set up as it is, is real. Therefore, we have to move on it, the world can't be moving around, it's real, it's stationary fixed world, so we have to move into it.

So that's why otherwise it's all a game of consciousness, operating around the self. And the self, which is the Totality of Consciousness, creates all experiences around itself, including the experience of its own identity, which I will talk to you a little bit more about the identity of the self, per se, without experience, which is a deep subject, but I want to share with you. You come a long way to listen to me, to talk to me. I should share all the deepest secrets, and that's a very deep secret. What is the real nature of our own Totality if there is no experience? Because that is very difficult to know: What is our own experience if there is no experience, if we have anything emanating from the Totality of Consciousness itself.

I'll talk to you a little bit more in the afternoon. And till then, I will leave it open for some questions and answers. And is anybody going away today? Yeah? So, you asked for an interview? Those...has anybody asked for interview who is going away today? Okay. All right, let's start from here. Question?

Q. "Two things: I am fulfilling a promise from my wife who's home with our kids back in Sweden. I would like to send my...her greetings to you, she met you..."

Ishwar Ji: "Thank you! Thank you very much!"

Q. "Question: Intuition, since it is a function of the soul, a question out of curiosity. Before and after an initiation, what is the correlation between the Master and the intuition when you are initiated? Is it enhanced, connected, or are you guided daily through intuition as well, or are they separate? The actual guidance is from the Master and intuition is another part, or are they correlated?"

A. "They are correlated, and intuition is enhanced after initiation. Okay?"

Right at the back there! Yes, please get up. Yes, sometimes the back benches think they don't get a chance, so...

Q. "If I return to Sach Khand and make a free will decision to come back, can I come back as you?"

A. "It's up to you! In Sach Khand you can make any decision you like, and it'll happen. It'll happen like that."

Q. "A quick practical question regarding meditation. When we are meditating, the other day you said as soon as you hear the sound, switch off all the mantra, stop the mantra. Does that go with the practice sound or only the real sound?"

A. "Both. It applies to both."

Q. "Okay, so you start with your practice sounds, you can listen to those, and then use the mantra only as the mind..."

A. "That's correct."

Q. "Okay. Thank you."

A. "Thank you. Okay, yes?"

Q. "I have two questions. So, the first question is: Regarding near-death experiences we have a lot of patients comatose, or they go through major surgeries, open-heart bypass surgery or brain surgery, so they receive a lot of anesthesia. They are physically dead because of temperature is very very low, or the comatose patients. So, they have those near-death experiences. Anyhow, the science comes and tells us that these happen because the brain does not have oxygenation, so those centers are in deprivation of oxygen, so then anger and pain are separated, so they have those nice experiences. And most of them, they describe that they are in a higher state. My question is: Is this true? Of course, not scientifically, but what happens at that moment, and why that doesn't happen to all comatose patients or all patients that have brain surgery? That's the first question.

The second question: I was wondering why our creator makes it so hard for us to go back home? You mentioned yesterday that we shut off the centers of our higher awareness. So, when we come to this life, we have those centers of awareness, you know, all shut off, and it is so hard, we have to find a Perfect Living Master. And again, you mentioned that 10 percent of the souls, they will go back home, and still that journey is, it seems to us, you know, hard. We have to come some through reincarnation, reincarnation you know

suffering in order to appreciate, you know, the perfect love and, so why the journey be like this? This was just out of curiosity of my mind, to satisfy my mind, when our ultimate goal is the Totality of Consciousness for all of us. So, when all the souls, billions of souls that are here, of course they come again and again as the same souls, had only one ultimate goal, the Totality of Consciousness.”

A.Thank you very much. Thank you, very good questions. First question about comatose people and those who have had near-death experiences. Remember, that’s near-death, not death experiences. None of them have died. So, they are experiences of the threshold, and it’s not an experience of really going to a higher level of consciousness. They go to the threshold of consciousness, and there they are able to see things which they would see in the beginning of their actual death. They all see nice things, they see light and they see guiding people, they see figures, they see...very similar experiences they have in near-death experiences. In comatose people or those who are in that state, they are really dying from the physical body, but not dying in their astral body, and therefore that is natural to have that experience.

What we teach as a method of meditation is also dying while living, that you pull the attention from your extremities, you bring it back to the eye center. It’s an experience very similar to the experience of dying. Therefore, the experiences we get are very similar to start with. As a threshold experience, they are very similar to the experience of near-death experiences recorded by other people. They have good experiences, mostly, because they are not dead, and they are able to relate that experience to us. People who do meditation and have the same experience also have good experiences, and they relate to us, and tell us, “It was great experience. We saw the great...we saw our masters, we saw this...” and their experiences are, compared to what they are living here, very good experiences. So, the near-death experiences are very similar to the experiences of dying while living through meditation.

Why does it happen to them? Because they are losing consciousness of the body, of the physical body, and it’s a repetition of the same steps that take place when we deliberately withdraw consciousness from the body. So, the experiences are similar in these two cases.

I also find that in the case of near-death experiences, some people are able to see clarity and clarity of vision, and some can remember things, meet old people who have died. In near-death experiences they have recorded that. It’s the same thing that happens during meditation. So, in a way, by knocking off consciousness of the body, one way or another, but not fully dying, you get similar experiences in both cases. And that’s why it happens like that.

Regarding the problem of why it's so hard to go back to our True Home, it is not hard. We make it hard. What makes it hard? Let's see, why do we call it a hard experience? I can tell you one thing: When you will go back home, you will not say this. You will not say it was a hard experience. You will only say it before you go home. That's the main thing. You will say, "That was so simple. I just didn't catch it, that it was merely opening up my eyes and waking and seeing where I am? And I thought it's very hard to go back home? How did I make it so hard?" We made it so hard by identifying ourselves with our minds.

Supposing we do not identify ourselves, but at this moment say, "That's a machine working, I am not the mind, I am a soul, the consciousness that is empowering the mind, that is empowering the body and the senses. I am that, and not the thinking mind." It'd not be hard. The problem of hard, being hard, is a series of obstacles we are throwing in our own path and then trying to cross them. It is like a person throwing bricks in front of him and saying, "Why are the bricks coming in my way?" We throw obstacles in our way through a device which was given to us for very good use, the mind. Mind can be used to think what you want. Mind can be used to communicate what you want. Mind can be used to interpret and give meaning to any receptions of signals getting from outside. Mind can be used for that. Mind is a great access. It's the best computer. No computer can match the computer power of the mind. It is such a great machine. But when you start thinking, "That is me," it becomes very hard. The path has become hard because we made it hard. Not we designed it that way. We designed differently.

Somewhere an error took place. I call it a perfect thing, but I said when you look at a portion of it, it's imperfect. This is one of the imperfections. One of the imperfections is that when we decided to have different experiences, including the experience of space and time, cause and effect, to widen the experience and to take in one gulp the whole experience and say, "Let's take it in a different way, in terms of time. Spread it out." When we decided that, it was a good move to spread it like that, wide. The machine that we used to spread it around wide was our own mind, which is a very good machine to create time and space. It did create that, but we didn't realize that by doing that, we identify ourselves with that machine. There is nothing hard except made hard by our own mind.

When we get initiated by a Master, he tells us that the mind is the one that's coming in your way. After some time, you will find there is no problem in the world except your own mind. There is no enemy in the world except your mind. There is no obstacle in the world except your own mind. It's the mind that makes it hard, otherwise it's very easy. Very simple, very easy.

Bulleh Shah says, "What's the problem on finding God? They say there is a hard path to God. No! It's simple! Pull your attention from here [Ishwar Ji points to the outer world], put it there [Ishwar Ji points to his head]. You found God." He makes it look so simple. I

sometime make it look simple too, but actually it is simple, but our mind comes in the way and makes it hard.

One of the reasons the mind makes it hard is mind believes in struggle. It's a nature. The mind, "You have to struggle to get things." So, if I have to put some...pick up this glass easily, the mind will say, "No, it's difficult, because it's far off, it's like this." The mind puts obstacles and makes simple things hard. Mind loves complexity. Do you know that? Mind loves complexity. Mind loves complex situations in which you have to separate and study things. Mind loves this kind of analytical situation, and because its method is analytical it must break into pieces and then try to reassemble them. This thing what we do every day in our live we do with the spiritual path also — and looks hard. So actually, it is not hard, it is very easy. And when you reach the other side, True Home, you will say, "That was the easiest thing! I was, I was always here! What even think of hard? Just be carried away by a new computer I got? Just by getting a little machine that I got, a thinking machine that made it so hard?" Yeah, the thinking machine made it hard. Think of it. The answer I am giving is: Think of it with the mind and you will find the mind made it hard. The mind can sometimes help us in answering questions about the mind.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, it's a book, it's a — *gita* means a song. The Bhagavad Gita is a song. It's a...in the Indian...part of the Indian scriptures, the *Gita*, in that there is a story of a fight between two clans. They were cousins, but they had a fight, a big battle of Kurushetra. In that battle, Krishna, the Avatar, the great teacher, a representation of Vishnu the sustainer of the universe upon this earth, is talking to the prince. The prince is Arjun, and he is a real prince in this physical world. Krishna is a chauffeur. He hired him to drive his chariot. But the chauffeur is enlightened, and the prince is not. So, the chauffeur is, apart from driving his chariot, also gives him lectures on the way. And this is one of the biggest lectures he gave him.

In the middle of the battlefield, while the enemies are facing each other, he is telling him things like, "You know, this is all unreal. Even the battle has been fought and decided already. You are just replaying it. It's a replay of an old battle." He says, "I can't understand it. I see the enemy standing right in front of me." He says, "Well, I can show you." Later on, he shows him that the battle was over, and everybody was killed and all that by opening his mouth wide, which means he spoke too much. But they say, he opened his wide mouth to show...we misinterpret some of these into...but the main thing he said is that to get out of this mess of having this battle and all that, you should get union with your real self. You should be a yogi. Yoga means union, union with your own reality, own self. To have that union with the self, there are three pathways.

Krishna is telling Arjun, on the battlefield, that there are three pathways to go there. The first is for those people who don't think too much, don't use their brain too much, but

believe in action, the path of desireless action with no desire for results. If you can perform action in this world with the utmost skill, to the best skill you have, any action that comes in your way you perform with skill and never expect about the result, you'll get yoga, you'll become a yogi. That's called the *karam yogi*, the yogi of action.

The second is the *sankhya yogi*, or *gyan yogi*, the one who will use his mind to discover the limitation of the mind, and that's what I was trying to bring up. He says the mind will always tell us what to do, and you debate in the mind to the extent of tiring out the mind. Take the knowledge the mind can give, till the mind says, "I can know no further." You tire the mind out to its own limit and the mind will say, "I cannot go beyond that," which is, if you ask questions from the mind of things which are beyond time and space, the mind will say, "No." Just by realizing the limit of the mind you will go above the mind and be a yogi.

He says, "But the best way is the third way. The third way is the *bhakti yoga*, the yoga of love and devotion, because that yoga starts from above the mind. And therefore, when you are filled with love and devotion for some being who is coming and telling you he can help you beyond the mind, that love and devotion will carry you even there." So, these three paths Krishna indicates to Arjun in that poem.

And there he says that the mind takes a lot of time to beat it down, but you do it with the mind. You use the mind to beat the mind, because there is no other instrument to beat it with. So, when the thinking mind creates all this problems in you, you think that if you are not the mind, you are not the mind, you are the soul going on your own journey, it becomes easy.

Do you know, in the meditation workshops I have, one of the things I do is to make people see their own mind, which makes them help them to know they are not the mind, and I think it is very important part. Very few people do that practice, but I found it useful for myself, and I find it useful for other people because ordinarily we are identifying with our mind completely. Who is saying it is a hard path? Our mind. We are not saying it. The soul is not even saying that. The soul is listening to the mind, and the mind says, "It's a very hard path." The mind...the soul goes along with it, because it is not separating itself. If we take the mind, the thinking mind, as something operating either arbitrarily because of prior indoctrinated instructions given into it or current instructions we are giving to the mind now and start thinking on that pattern, and you know you are giving directions, the mind will not come in your way, path will be easy. But if you identify with the mind and go with the mind space, and the mind say, mind doesn't want you to go. On the other hand, the mind will come and interfere in your going.

The whole process we are talking of is how to get the mind out of the way, how to control the mind, how to make the mind subservient to the directions we give to the mind. We

should tell the mind what to think, not listen to what the mind is thinking on its own. If you identify with the mind and say, "I am the mind," it's a hard path. And the moment you say, "I am going to ignore the mind and just be on my own," what do you have to be on your own, besides thinking? Now that's the point that was raised by him...intuition, circumstance, a situation created in your world outside of yourself without your doing anything about it. What body you have, who people you meet, the jobs you are doing — very little choice is there. Where you are born, where you die...no choice. All these things indicate to you what you should do without the thoughts. They...circumstances and coincidences tell you all the time what you should be doing, and that's not the mind. Neither circumstances nor intuition are the mind. If you live a life like that, life becomes very easy. Not only life becomes easy, the spiritual path becomes easy.

So therefore, if you like, I don't know if we have time today, but at some meditation workshop I'll definitely see that you practice how to watch the mind as something that is not the self, that's not your self, and the path will become easy. It has become easy for those who did that. So, we cannot say universally that the path is a difficult one. The path is difficult so long as we allow the mind to be considered as the self. Okay? Yes?

Q. [Question not clear on the video.]

A. Well, I can't qualify what Jesus said. But I can agree that we are who we are. I can agree with that statement that "I am who I am." The question is, "Who are you then?" It remains unanswered. When I say, "I am who I am," and somebody says, "Who are you then?" I say, "I am Ishwar Puri." No, I am not. Ishwar Puri is the name given to this body, and I am thinking it's me. "I am who I am" is a question really built into this statement. Then who are you? Who are you talking about? They say, "I am." If somebody calls me by name, I answer that's who I am. People say, "Are you Ishwar Puri?" I say, "Yes." So, I am considering the body to which the name has been given. It was never given to my soul, never given to my mind, never given to my astral self. I have had several names in several incarnations myself. How can I say I am Ishwar Puri? Only this body is Ishwar Puri.

Somebody says, "Is that your brother?" I say, "Yes." I should say, "That's the brother of my body. He is not my brother! *That guy* is my brother! That guy is my brother in the astral plane right now!" See, we make these statements by misidentifying who I am. This is begging the question. When you say "I am who I am" is begging the question, because if we knew who I am, there would be no problem, you would be in Sach Khand right now. If you could really tell who you are and not identify with any of the covers upon yourself, you are at home. We are misidentifying ourselves with the covers upon ourselves and calling that the self. That's the whole problem here. That's the spiritual question here: Who am I?

And when Socrates says, “Know Thyself,” that’s all he is saying: Know the real self, not the covers upon the self. And how do you distinguish the self from the covers? I do not know any way except by uncovering. If I wear my jacket from birth to death, I will never know it’s a jacket. I have to take it off. Then I know it’s a jacket and I am somebody else wearing it. The same thing with the body. The same thing with the mind. Same thing with the astral self. They are all covers upon our selves. Unless we uncover, we don’t know who we are. Therefore, every time we make a statement in a physical body, “I am who I am. I am Ishwar Puri.”

I’m not... Somebody asked me, “What’s my real name?” I said, “You have several real names.” “What do you mean?” I said, “I am looking at you in this incarnation, in one earlier one...earlier... All the three names are different. You had three different bodies and three different names. Which name shall I call you by? I have to call you with the name of the current body you are wearing as a means of identification. This body is a card saying, “This is my identification card.” You can, for the purpose of this show, for the purpose of this drama, you can use this identification. And I give a name to this identification. That’s all. It’s not the name of the Self.”

So, we are constantly misidentifying ourselves, making the path hard and difficult like she says. The moment we do not misidentify with any of these three...I am not even talking of the soul, which itself is also a misidentification, that we are separate, but so long as we can disassociate the self from the body, from the senses and from the mind, path is easy. Three steps. Just take three steps and path is easy. First step, body is not real, you can withdraw your attention. And each these three things can be done without dying and without physically leaving these — you can keep wearing these three. You can keep wearing the physical body, keep wearing the mind, keep wearing the sense perceptions. Withdraw the experience of them. Withdraw the awareness of them. And, when we go to sleep, we lose the awareness of a body. Not a big deal. Why are we making this such a big deal? Every night we go to sleep, we are not aware where the body is. We are in a dream world. We are somewhere else. Why should it be difficult? But when we are saying, “This is me, this is my self,” it becomes difficult.

When you withdraw attention from the body, it’s like dying while living. The withdrawal of attention is like dying while living. Withdrawal of attention from the sensory perceptions is like dying in the astral body and discovering you are not. Dying with your thoughts, with the thoughts being left aside, is like going back to your soul’s status. And it is easier by practice as a human being to lose the awareness of these and reopen the awareness of your inner self than it is even by dying physically.

Supposing you die physically, and you are in the astral body. You lose free will, you can’t seek, you go into the cycle of predetermined destiny, you lose the chance of being a seeker.

People who are sitting today, souls who are sitting in the astral plane and don't have to come back, are beseeching the Lord to come back in order to have the power to seek and go back home. People who are sitting higher up in the causal plane, people sitting in the Banknal, in the crooked tunnel, are beseeching to come back so that they can get the kind of ignorance that's needed to seek here.

People, how will anybody understand that ignorance is really a blessing? It is! In...only in ignorance in the human form can we seek. If we know everything, seeking stops, because we know it. So, this is a great blessing. We are in the best possible state, as human beings, to seek, to be discovered, be found by a Perfect Living Master, to be initiated in this state. He won't initiate anybody in the astral stage. Why not? There are souls who are seekers. They have to come back here. It's a very very wonderful setup, if I may call it a setup.

But the point is that when you say, "I am who I am," it depends on who you are, you think you are. If you know you are the soul and these are covers upon you see, the correct statement is correct. If not, it's a lie. Okay? Yes?

Q. "My question is: Yesterday I think you had said that when we go within, right before we meet the Master within, we see a star and we go through the star, then we go through a moon, and then we are with the Master in that point, the Master takes us on. My question is, when we are flying solo, so to speak, do we, does the star and the moon appear to us or do we have to find it? Do we get lost along the way?"

A. No, the stars and moon appear to you. You don't have to struggle to find anything, and secondly, you do not necessarily have to see the stars and moon. Not everybody has to go through every step on the spiritual path. If you have done work earlier, in a previous life people have done work and have done meditation, they skip many stages in this life. They catch up with all that and they skip them. Not everybody sees stars and moon and this. Some see, some see one part of it, some see more, some see go straight to the radiant form also. But you don't have to look for anything. They come by itself.

Q. "Are there dangers along the way, of misguiding until we see...?"

A. If you are initiated, there is no danger. If you are initiated, the mantra a Master gives, which may be ordinary words, he charges them with the power to keep negativity and danger away, both outside and inside. That's one of the peripheral benefits, a side benefit of initiation, that you get something which can keep negativity away, both inside and internal experience and outside. Yes?

Q. "I noticed..." [Remainder of the question not clear on the video.]

A. Specifically, you want to understand about the centers? Now I didn't understand the question."

Q. "Physical...physical holes of the body, two nostrils, two eyes, two ears, one mouth, two lower apertures, but women have three lower and breast feeding openings, and then our belly. And the tenth door is to women the belly's door, I think."

A. I think...thank you, I understand the question. You say why am I saying nine doors, you should say twelve doors. I think some of the scribes may not know good counting, I think. They are referring, they are referring, they are referring to the nine major openings on the body, which draw attention outside. There are...the whole skin is like that. The whole skin is a door also. The, all pores on the skin are also doors that way. So, you could count any number of them. But when we say nine doors, we are referring to the nine major openings, and all beings that we can see, and they are the ones through which we get attached to things outside. And that's why we refer to them as nine doors. [Another satsangi adds a comment] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's why we say that these are the sense perceptions that take us outside, and it is not a mathematical accuracy, because mathematically we can add more. Every pore of the skin can be added as a door. Okay?

Q. "I was asking myself whether women have a disadvantage, because giving birth to another body is a deep connection and draws the attention into the physical world. This is also..."

A. Okay, I'll give you a little unusual answer to that question, that the soul is neither female nor male. It...to experience it splits into female and male. When you reach Par Brahm and discover your own self, it's neither male nor female. Only in the lower regions it becomes this divided in order to use it as a procreative machine and continues to be divided into sexes here. When you go above the mind there is no sex, and we do not have disadvantage women or disadvantage men.

The...in one way the women have been disadvantaged in history because their bodies have been more frail than the bodies of men and men have overpowered them. But women have overpowered the men with something which is a balancing act, given in their brain, which is called a cleverness which the man lacks. In Punjabi, in Punjabi Great Master used to call it *chalitra*, that a woman has a *chalitra* by which she can make a man her slave. Well balanced. Don't worry, it's well balanced. Okay?

Yes, at the back. That girl in the back. Yes please? Give her the [micro]phone.

Q. "My question is about physical plane. I understand that we are bound to go home at some point, but we are here for a reason. And are we here to have different experiences that are predestined? And is there a way for us to use our imagination and our mind to choose different experiences and choose something other than suffering?"

A. Yes, our current experiences which we are having here are predestined. They were predestined by a choice we made when we entered the causal stage and where we picked up our records, called the "akashic records," which is a package of destiny. In order to change it, we can change it through the mind at the akashic record level, not while we are playing out the role here. If you can go to that level, you can change and pick up another destiny. But not while you are still here.

Q. "Is it possible to go to that level?"

A. "Yes! Every level you can. It is possible. In human being in the physical level in the physical body you have access to every level if you follow the right technique of losing awareness of one level and creating the level of another. At the causal level, if you go to that place, that's where you chose the whole package of destinies, and that can be changed there.

The other way you can change it is by somebody else operating from higher levels, and which we call "divine intervention." There can be divine intervention to change our predetermined destiny. But there is a catch in that. What...we find our destiny...people can read destiny, they can read astrology, astrological charts, which say, "I am going to suffer these things. It's all in my chart." And then you go and pray to God, to pray to a divine person, pray for divine intervention, and divine intervention takes place, and that special bad event that was going to happen does not happen. You say, "Thank you, I'm glad my destiny has changed." Then you go up and find that that change was also prerecorded. At the end you will find everything was prerecorded. But from level to level, it looks like you are changing the destiny. But it is possible to change the destiny at the akashic level.

Q. "One more question. When you say being initiated by Perfect Living Master, does that involve, does the initiation involve seeing, once you are initiated, seeing perfection in your self, or are we not perfect beings?"

A. Repeat the question. This is a little...

Q. "When you say that it is important to get initiated by a Perfect Living Master..."

A. "Yes...?"

Q. "...once that initiation takes place, does that initiation also serve to show you your perfect self..."

A. Yes.

Q. "...as you were created?"

A. "Absolutely! That is the purpose. An initiation by Perfect Living Master shows you by experience personally that you are perfect. Not only perfect. You are as perfect as the Perfect Living Master. You are exactly like that.

Q. "The reason I am asking this is, going back to the Christianity, you know, one of the things that they say, the sins, and the way I interpret that is that the sin is that we don't see ourselves as perfect. I don't know if that is correct."

A. "Which is true. Sin and virtue are products of the mind. They operate only in the three worlds of the mind. Our true Self has no sin and doesn't exist there."

Q. "Thank you."

A. Yeah. All right. Yes?

Q. "This is a question from my sixteen-year-old son. He would like to know more about reincarnation. Some kind of proof that he can understand it better."

A. "Well, the only proof is that people say they remember their past lives, and they have gone there and found out. There are lot of recorded...there is a professor in Rajasthan in India, Professor Banerjee. He has travelled round the world tracing out people who remember past lives, little kids remembering past lives, and they were taken to the place which they are remembering. One child born in Russia, where they didn't even believe in God, was talking about a life in Japan as a child grew up. At age eleven, Professor Banerjee and his team took him to Japan, and they found all the things he was mentioning were actually there, showing he had been there earlier.

People have...they are able to speak up. In my household, I have a sister. She came to America last year, and her reference is in a book, published book about her experience of past life. So, I can tell you my experience in my own family, that one of my sisters was born, and she had a big problem of not breathing properly when she was born, and she had then shaking of the hand, which they called "St Vitus's Dance." They diagnosed it as St Vitus's Dance, and the doctors all said there is not much chance of her survival, and that she will die.

So, we tried everything. My parents were trying to do medical systems, homeopathy, ayurvedic, Unani Greek medicine, and ultimately, they even brought people who said we can...there is a spirit haunting her, we'll exorcise the spirit. They went through all that stuff, but the child was very small. And then my dad, who had by that time been initiated by Great Master, said, "Before she dies, I would like her to be taken to Great Master, so he can cast a glance on her and that'll save her soul and help her in getting initiated in her next life.

So, we went, we took that baby, much younger than me, so we travelled to the Dera and took her to the...to Great Master and said, "Master, this child is suffering from this illness and has to die, and therefore we said we should bring it to you to get your blessing, so that in the next life she'll get some benefit of that. And he laughed and he said, "She is not going to die. She will claim all the debt you owe to her before she dies. I don't think she is going to go away without it."

First, we thought it's a joke, and then we said, not from a Great Master talking like that, there must be some meaning in it. We got back. Her breathing improved, she began to...had a...what they call "hiccup" of a strange kind and began to recover. When she recovered, she, as a child, she would say "baba," "mama," you know, sounds like that she would make, but we didn't understand that she is taking any names. As she grew up to age two and three, she began to take names of people. "My brother..." whose name she would give was not a part of our family. "My sisters, two sisters, Shanta and Kantha..." There is no Shanta and Kantha in our family anywhere.

So, we said, "Somebody is teaching her all this. Maybe some servants in the house, maybe some friends are coming, whose children maybe having these names, and they are giving her this information." But she kept on telling, "If you don't treat me well..." That's how she was talking as a three-years-old child, telling her brother, me, "You don't treat me well, I'll go to my real brother, Om Prakash! If you people don't treat me like this, I'll go to my home with the three sides!" We never understood what the three sides of a home means, and she kept on talking about it. Then, my, one aunt, my aunt came, my mother's sister came to live with us for a few days, and we told her, "She talks of funny names, which are not part of our family at all." She says, "Maybe she is remembering her past life. But I can't think of, who would, who could she be? She doesn't seem to be connected with us, because even in our extended family there are no people with these names."

Then, my aunt got sick, and a doctor...this is in Hoshiarpur, this happened in Hoshiarpur, the place where we lived and where Baba Faqir Chand was also there, the famous saint, unknowing saint. The doctor came, and my aunt mentioned to the doctor, "There is something wrong with this girl, this child. She speaks of names and names of relatives and a home, three-sided home, and it has nothing to do with our house. What do you think it

could be?" He said, "What names does she take?" She says, 'My sisters are Shanta and Kantha, and my brother is Om Prakash.'" He said, "They are the children of my neighbor. He is a bookseller. His bookstore is there in the main street, and these are his...the names of his kids. I treat them. I am their doctor." We said, "That's amazing, we should go and see."

So, we took her in our car, next day, and we used to tease her, "Oh, there is your old home with three sides." "That's not my home! My home has three sides." She always criticized us. When we took her there and we went to the bookstore to see the man whose children this doctor was treating, and she said immediately, "There is my house!" So, we said she is making a mistake. That's a store, that's a bookstore. That couldn't be the house. But when we went in, she ran straight inside the bookstore, because the house was right behind, three sided, the front was the bookstore. And it was right there, in the back.

The father was there, the old father of this girl, and then the doctor confirmed that one of the girls...she is talking of two sisters...she was one of them who she is talking about, who, as a teenager girl, died. And died in mysterious circumstances according to the doctor. Nobody spoke, the grieving was not like normal. So, he didn't know why, why and how that teenager girl died, and but the way this fitted, the doctor suspected that she is the same girl, reborn, reincarnated.

So, they, when we went in, we said, "This girl talks of these names and so on." He says, "I'll check out if she is my daughter reborn." And being a Hindu, believing in reincarnation, it was not something very new, funny for him. He said, "I can find out. I'll ask her a question. Come with me." He took the child aside and asked a question and came crying, and said, "She is my child. She is my child." He took out some money from his pocket and said, "I owe you something." He gave the money to the child and said, "Yes, she is remembering her past life. She is my dead child come back again."

We were very touched by that, and we got in the car and drove back. As we were driving back, we asked, "What did she...what did that man ask you, by which he found out that you are his daughter?" She said, "He asked me, 'Do you remember the well?'" There was a well in the center of the courtyard. "'Do you remember the well?' I told him, 'Yes, you through me into it! I remember it.'" And we were shocked to hear this. We went back to ask the man, "Did you ask that question?" He said, "No, I never asked that! I..." "What did you ask that you got so convinced that she was your old daughter?" He says, "I only asked her, 'Do you remember where you used to keep your clothes?' And she pointed to the right place." She said, "Why are you telling me this?" While she is standing there, and he is explaining this, "You asked me about the well! You threw me into the well! Don't you remember?" He said, "No, this is wrong. This is wrong." I even explained to him, I said, "No criminal case can be made against you on the evidence of a reborn child. It's a great historical thing going on.

It's something proving reincarnation, and then admit if you asked her this!" "No, no, no, I never killed anybody." And he didn't accept that.

After that, till then she was always talking of the old names. From that day onwards she began to recognize us, her brothers and sisters and so on. So, this happened in our own house. But because this spread, the news spread around in that town that there is a girl who remembers her past life. And people said, "Oh, she is a goddess." And they began to worship. We had to move away from there, because they thought it's a big thing that the girl has remembered her past life. But this happened in our own home, and a book written by a former civil servant of India, who lives in South Africa, in his book he gives the whole story of this girl's reincarnation. But there are so many stories. This happened in front of me, so I can validate this.

So, there are evidences of past lives that exist because people can remember these things. And there is another way to know past life. And people sometimes try this, that's called "past life regression." You have heard of that? People can be made to remember. It's a psychological way. It's a pure psychology. You try to remember things of your childhood and create conditions in which you can remember. Some things you don't want to remember, and that's the talking-out cure for some of these psychological ailments, you know, that you make a person remember what happened, which is creating trauma in you, and the whole thing is hidden in your subconscious, and you bring it up. Very often by bringing it up in a grown-up state, you see it was childish to be afraid of it, and it goes away. It's a treatment, psychiatric treatment is based on that.

Q. "There is a famous doctor, Brian Weiss, that he has done a book, *Many Lives, Many Masters*, so he treats patients that way. They got regression..."

A. Exactly!

Q. "...and the fears and a lot of psychological, emotional issues go away. They get healed, really.

A. "That's true, that's true. It works. I, as a non-doctor, was studying this. It works. By bringing up any hidden things in your subconscious, bring them up, and at that, in new light you can take care of them. But very often when you go into the regression by questioning about what happened earlier, what happened earlier, at a certain point, people start talking of things that were happening even when they were not born. And that's another proof. It's their own self remembering, "Yes, I remember I was there, and that happened," even before we were born. How could that happen? Not in this body. But the personal memories are coming back.

So, there are many ways to check out these things. And the thing is, if you have religious belief, it's very difficult to change it. Religion indoctrinates us. And religion is not mostly of our choosing. We are born into that. We are born into a family, they follow a certain religion, they follow a certain belief system, and we accept it. We accept it as ultimate truth. And people can keep on changing.

I... Where this happened in Hoshiarpur with my sister's case, another doctor, who was our neighbor, lived just next to us, was a Muslim. He is a Muslim doctor. He did not believe in reincarnation. He said, "My religion does not allow me to believe in reincarnation." When he heard the story, he verified every point of it. He says, "The evidence of reincarnation is overwhelming, but I still can't believe it. My religion won't let me believe it." Religion is very powerful! Religion, the indoctrination of religion is the most powerful indoctrination. And we all get indoctrinated so early in life. It becomes very difficult to get out of it. But marked souls somehow creep out of it. I have noticed that. Somehow, from the very beginning they feel, "What are we doing? This is not it." It's just a feeling that comes so early. And it can be one person in a whole family having that feeling. And the...all the rest are all following the religion, religiously, religiously following the religion. And one person is saying, "No, I can't accept it." And then comes up eventually to be initiated by a Perfect Living Master. I have seen hundreds of these cases.

So, there is something about reincarnation that one can discover. Another way is to meditate and go back. You can see your own past lives just by going one step up. It's not too far. You can see all your lives, past and future destined, at the akashic-record level. You chose it. You can see that the video tape, that the DVD that you picked up there, had programmed everything from the past to the future completely. When you play a DVD, you don't change it to the middle. You watch the whole show. If you want to change it, you cut it out and put a new DVD. But you can't say, "I am playing a DVD, I want to change one scene out of it." You can't.

There was a guy from an illiterate village, a villager in India. He went to see a movie in a town. In the movie there is one scene where a girl takes off her dresses to jump into the pool, but before he can see her nude, a train comes in front. And by the time the train has gone, she is already in the water. He wants to see her! He saw the movie twenty times, waiting the train will be late one day. That's our condition. Doesn't happen like that. You can change the whole reel. You can change the whole show, but you can't change it in the middle. It's predestined. We picked it up. Okay?

All right, thank you very much, and we'll have a break for lunch, and I'll see you at three o'clock again.