

## CHAPTER 2

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### Meditation – jumping board to your being

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*30 January 1985 pm in Lao Tzu Grove*

Question 1

OSHO,

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

IT is the most important question as far as my religion is concerned.

Meditation is the very center of my whole effort.

It is the very womb out of which the new religion is going to be born.

But it is very difficult to verbalize it. To say something about meditation is a contradiction in terms. It is something which you can have, which you can be, but by its very nature you cannot say what it is. Still, efforts have been made to convey it in some way. Even if only a fragmentary, partial understanding arises out of it, that is more than one can expect.

But even that partial understanding of meditation can become a seed. Much depends on how you listen. If you only hear, then even a fragment cannot be conveyed to you, but if you listen.... Try to understand the difference between the two.

Hearing is mechanical. You have ears, you can hear. If you are getting deaf then a mechanical aid can help you to hear. Your ears are nothing but a certain mechanism to receive sounds. Hearing is

very simple animals hear, anybody who has ears is capable of hearing – but listening is a far higher stage.

Listening means: when you are hearing you are only hearing and not doing anything else – no other thoughts in your mind, no clouds passing in your inner sky – so whatever is being said reaches as it is being said. It is not interfered with by your mind; not interpreted by you, by your prejudices; not clouded by anything that, right now, is passing within you – because all these are distortions.

Ordinarily it is not difficult; you go on managing just by hearing, because the things that you are hearing are common objects. If I say something about the house, the door, the tree, the bird, there is no problem. These are common objects; there is no need of listening. But there is a need to listen when we are talking about something like meditation, which is not an object at all; it is a subjective state. We can only indicate it; you have to be very attentive and alert – then there is a possibility that some meaning reaches you.

Even if a little understanding arises in you, it is more than enough, because understanding has its own way of growing. If just a little bit of understanding falls in the right place, in the heart, it starts growing of its own accord.

First try to understand the word "meditation." It is not the right word for the state about which any authentic seeker is bound to be concerned. So I would like to tell you something about a few words. In Sanskrit we have a special word for meditation, the word is dhyana. In no other language does a parallel word exist; that word is untranslatable. It has been recognized for two thousand years that this word is untranslatable, for the simple reason that in no other language people have tried it or experienced the state that it denotes; so those languages don't have that word.

A word is needed only when there is something to say, something to designate. In English there are three words: the first is concentration. I have seen many books written by very well-meaning people but not people who have experienced meditation. They go on using the word "concentration" for dhyana – dhyana is not concentration. Concentration simply means your mind focused on one point; it is a state of mind. Ordinarily the mind is continuously moving, but if it continuously moves you cannot work with the mind on a certain subject.

For example, in science concentration is needed; without concentration there is no possibility of science. It is not strange that science has not evolved in the East – I see these deep inner connections – because concentration was never valued. For religion something else is needed, not concentration.

Concentration is mind focused on one point. It has its utility, because then you can go deeper and deeper into a certain object.

That's what science goes on doing: finding more and more about the objective world. A man with a mind which is continuously roaming around cannot be a scientist. The whole art of the scientist is that he is capable of forgetting the whole world and putting his whole consciousness on one thing. And when the whole consciousness is poured into one thing then it is almost like concentrating sun rays through a lens: then you can create fire.

Those rays themselves cannot create fire because they are diffused; they are going farther away from each other. Their movement is just the opposite of concentration. Concentration means rays coming together, meeting on one point; and when so many rays meet on one point they have enough energy to create fire. Consciousness has the same quality: concentrate it and you can penetrate deeper into the mysteries of objects.

I am reminded of Thomas Alva Edison – one of the great scientists of this country. He was working on something so concentratedly that when his wife came with his breakfast she saw that he was so much involved that he had not even heard her coming. He had not even looked at her, he was not aware that she was there, and she knew that this was not the right time to disturb him. "Of course the breakfast will get cold but he will be really angry if I disturb him – one never knows where he is."

So she simply put the breakfast by his side so that whenever he came back from his journey of concentration he would see the breakfast and take it. But what happened? In the meantime a friend dropped by – he also saw him so concentrated. He looked at the breakfast getting cold and said, "Better let him do his work. I should finish the breakfast first, it is getting cold." He ate the breakfast and Edison was not even aware that this friend was there and had eaten his breakfast.

When he returned from his concentration, he looked around, saw the friend and saw the empty plates. He told the friend, "Please forgive me. You came a little late and I have already taken my breakfast." Obviously, because the plates were finished somebody had eaten, and who else could have eaten it? He must have! The poor friend could not understand what to do. He was thinking to give him a surprise but this man had given him a bigger surprise: he said, "You came a little late...."

But the wife was watching the whole thing. She came in and she said, "He has not come late, you have come late! He has finished your breakfast. I was watching, but I saw that it was getting cold anyway; at least somebody ate it. You are some scientist! How you manage your science I cannot understand." The wife said, "You don't even know who has eaten your breakfast, and you are asking his apology, 'You came a little late, I am sorry...'"

Concentration is always the narrowing of your consciousness. The narrower it becomes, the more powerful it is. It is like a sword that cuts into any secret of nature: you have to become oblivious of everything. But this is not religion. Many people have misunderstood – not only in the West, but in the East too. They think that concentration is religion. It gives you tremendous powers, but those powers are of the mind.

For example, the king of Varanasi in India went through an operation in 1920 – just in this century – and created news all over the world because of his operation. He refused to take any anesthetic. He said, "I have taken a vow not to take anything that makes me unconscious, so I cannot be put under chloroform; but you need not be worried."

It was a major operation – to remove his appendix. Now, to take out somebody's appendix without giving him anesthetics is really dangerous; you may kill the man. He may not be able to bear the pain, because the pain is going to be terrible. You have to cut his stomach; you have to cut out his appendix, you have to remove it. It will take one hour, two hours – one never knows in what condition his appendix is.

But he was no ordinary man either – otherwise they would have forced him – he was the king of Varanasi. He said to the doctors, "But don't be worried" – and the best doctors available in India were there; one expert from England was there. They all consulted: nobody was ready to do this operation, but the operation had to be done, otherwise any moment the appendix could kill the man. The state was serious, and both the alternatives seemed to be serious: if you left him without the operation he might die; if you did the operation without making him unconscious – which had never been done, there was no precedent....

But the king said, "You don't understand me. There has never been any precedent because you have never operated on a man like the man you are going to operate upon. Just give me my religious book, SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA. I will read it, and after five minutes you can start your work. Once I am involved in the GITA then you can cut any part of my body – I will not be even aware of it; there is no question of pain."

When he insisted – and anyway he was going to die so there was no harm in trying. Perhaps he was right – he was well-known for his religious practices. So this was done. He read the GITA for five minutes and closed his eyes; the GITA dropped from his hands, and they did the operation. It took one and a half hours. It was really serious: only a few hours more and the appendix may have exploded and killed the man. They removed the appendix, and the man was completely conscious, silent – not even a flicker of his eyes. He was somewhere else.

That was his life-long practice: just to read for five minutes, then he was on the track. He knew the GITA verbally, he could repeat it without the book. Once he started going into the GITA then he was really in the GITA; his mind was there – it left his body totally.

That operation made news all over the world; it was a rare operation. But the same mistake was committed again. Every newspaper had it that the rajah, the king of Varanasi, was a man of great meditation. He was a man of great concentration, not of meditation.

He also was in the same confusion; he also thought that he had reached to the state of meditation. It was not. It is just that your mind is so focused that everything else falls out of its focus; you are unaware of it. It is not a state of awareness, it is a state of narrowed consciousness – so narrowed that it becomes one-pointed and the rest of existence falls out of it.

So before I answer your question, What is meditation? you have to understand what it is not. First: it is not concentration. Second: it is not contemplation.

Concentration is one-pointed; contemplation has a wider field. You are contemplating about beauty... There are thousands of things which are beautiful; you can go on moving from one beautiful thing to another. You have many experiences of beauty; you can go on from one experience to another. You remained confined to the subject matter. Contemplation is a wider concentration, not one-pointed, but confined to one subject. You will be moving, your mind will be moving, but it will remain within the subject matter.

Philosophy uses contemplation as its method; science uses concentration as its method. In contemplation also you are forgetting everything else other than your subject matter. The subject matter is bigger, and you have more space to move; in concentration there is no space to move.

You can go deeper and deeper, narrower and narrower, you can become more pointed and more pointed, but you don't have space to move around. Hence scientists are very narrow-minded people. You will be surprised when I say this.

One would think that scientists would be very open-minded. That is not the case. As far as their subject is concerned, they are absolutely open-minded: they are ready to listen to anything contrary to their theory, and with absolute fairness. But except in that particular matter, they are more prejudiced, more bigoted than the ordinary, common man, for the simple reason that they have never bothered about anything else: they have simply accepted whatsoever society believes in.

Many religious people brag about it: "Look, he is such a great scientist, a Nobel prize-winner," and this and that, "and yet he comes to church every day." They forget completely that it is not the Nobel prize-winning scientist who comes to the church. It is not the scientist who comes to the church, it is the man without his scientific part who comes to the church. And that man, except for the scientific part, is far more gullible than anybody else – because everybody is open, available, thinks about things; compares, what religion is good; sometimes reads also about other religions, and has some common sense, which scientists don't have.

To be a scientist you have to sacrifice a few things – for example, common sense. Common sense is a common quality of common people. A scientist is an uncommon person, he has an uncommon sense. With common sense you cannot discover the theory of relativity or the law of gravitation. With common sense you can do everything else.

For example, Albert Einstein was perhaps the only man in history who dealt with such big figures that only one figure would take up the whole page – hundreds of zeros following it. But he became so involved with big figures – which is uncommon, but he was thinking only of stars, light-years, millions, billions, trillions of stars, and counting them – that about small things he became oblivious.

One day he entered a bus and gave the conductor the money. The conductor returned some change; Einstein counted it and said, "This is not right, you are cheating me. Give me the full change."

The conductor took the change, counted it again and said, "Mister, it seems you don't know figures."

Einstein remembers: "When he said to me, 'Mister, you don't know figures,' then I simply took the change. I said to myself, 'It is better to keep silent. If somebody else hears that I don't know figures, and that too from a conductor of a bus....' What have I been doing my whole life? Figures and figures – I don't dream about anything else. No women appear, no men appear – only figures. I think in figures, I dream in figures, and this idiot says to me, 'You don't know figures.'"

When he came back home, he told his wife, "Just count this change. How much is it?" She counted it and said, "It is the right change."

He said, "My God!. This means the conductor was right: perhaps I DON'T know figures. Perhaps I can only deal with immense figures; small figures have fallen out of my mind completely."

A scientist is bound to lose his common sense. The same happens to the philosopher. Contemplation is wider, but still confined to a certain subject. For example, one night Socrates

was thinking about something – one never knows what he was thinking about – standing by the side of a tree, and he became so absorbed in his contemplation that he became completely oblivious that snow was falling; and in the morning he was found almost frozen. Up to his knees there was snow, and he was standing there with closed eyes. He was almost on the verge of death; even his blood might have started freezing.

He was brought home; a massage was given to him, alcohol was given to him, and somehow he was brought to his common senses. They asked him, "What were you doing there, standing outside in the open?"

He said, "I had no idea whether I was standing or sitting, or where I was. The subject was so absorbing that I went totally with it. I don't know when the snow started falling or when the whole night passed. I would have died, but I would not have come to my senses because the subject was so absorbing. I was still unfinished it was a whole theory, and you have awakened me in the middle. Now I don't know whether I will be able to get hold of the unfinished theory."

It is just like you are dreaming and somebody wakes you up. Do you think you can catch hold of your dream again by just closing your eyes and trying to sleep? It is very difficult to get back into the same dream.

Contemplation is a kind of logical dreaming. It is a very rare thing. But philosophy depends on contemplation. Philosophy can use concentration for specific purposes, to help contemplation. If some smaller fragments in it need more concentrated effort, then concentration can be used; there is no problem. Philosophy is basically contemplation but it can use concentration as a tool, as an instrument, once in a while.

But religion cannot use concentration; religion cannot use contemplation either because it is not concerned with any object. Whether the object is in the outside world or the object is in your mind – a thought, a theory, a philosophy – it doesn't matter; it is an object.

Religious concern is with the one who concentrates, with the one who contemplates.

Who is this one?

Now, you cannot concentrate on it.

Who will concentrate on it? – you are it.

You cannot contemplate on it because who is going to contemplate on it? You cannot divide yourself into two parts so that you put one part in front of your mind, and the other part starts contemplating. There is no possibility of dividing your consciousness into two parts. And even if there were any possibility – there is none but just for argument's sake I am saying if there were any possibility to divide your consciousness in two – then the one that contemplates about the other is you; the other is not you.

The other is never you.

Or in other words: the object is never you.

You are irreducibly the subject.

There is no way to turn you into an object.

It is just like a mirror. The mirror can reflect you, the mirror can reflect everything in the world, but can you manage to make this mirror reflect itself? You cannot put this mirror in front of itself, by the time you put it in front of itself it is no longer there. The mirror itself cannot mirror itself. Consciousness is exactly a mirror. You can use it as concentration for some object. You can use it as contemplation for some subject matter.

The English word meditation is also not the right word, but because there is no other word we have to use it for the time being, the "dhyana" is accepted in the English language just as it has been accepted by the Chinese, by the Japanese – because the situation was the same in those countries. When, two thousand years ago, Buddhist monks entered China, they tried hard to find any word which could translate their word jhana.

Gautam the Buddha never used Sanskrit as his language, he used a language that was used by common people; his language was Pali. Sanskrit was the language of the priesthood, of the brahmins and it was one of the basic parts of his revolution that the priesthood should be thrown over; it had no business to exist.

Man can directly connect with existence.

It need not be through an agent.

In fact it cannot be through a mediator.

You can understand it very simply: you cannot love your girlfriend, your boyfriend, through a mediator. You cannot say to somebody, "I will give you ten dollars – just go and love my wife on my behalf" A servant cannot do that, nobody can do it on your behalf; only you can do it. Love cannot be done on your behalf by a servant – otherwise rich people would not get bothered with all this greasy affair. They have enough servants, enough money, they could just send the servants. They could find the best servants, but why should they bother themselves? But there are a few things which you have to do yourself. A servant cannot sleep for you, a servant cannot eat for you.

How is a priest, who is nothing but a servant, going to mediate between you and existence, or God, or nature, or truth? In the pope's latest message to the world this is counted as a sin, to try to have any direct contact with God – a sin!

You have to contact God through a properly initiated Catholic priest; everything should go through proper channels. There is a certain hierarchy, a bureaucracy; you cannot just bypass the bishop, the pope, the priest. If you simply bypass them, you are directly entering into God's house. This is not allowed, this is sin.

I was really surprised that this pope the polack has the nerve to call this a sin, to say that man has not the birthright to be in contact with existence or truth itself; for that too, he needs a proper agency! And who is to decide the proper agency? There are three hundred religions and all have their

bureaucracies, their proper channels; and they all say the remaining two hundred and ninety-nine are all bogus!

But the priesthood can exist only if it makes itself absolutely necessary. It is absolutely unnecessary, but it has to force itself upon you as something unavoidable.

Just now the polack pope is again on tour. Yesterday I saw his picture in some Catholic country. He was kissing the earth. He was asked by the news media,

”What do you think of the welcome?”

He said, ”It was warm but not overwhelming.”

Now this man must be expecting; he is not satisfied with the warm, he must have been expecting an overwhelming reception, welcome. And when he says ”warm” you can be absolutely certain it must have been lukewarm – he is trying to exaggerate it as much as he can. Otherwise a warm reception is overwhelming – what more do you want? Hot dogs? Then it will be overwhelming? A warm reception is enough. But I know what the problem is; it must have been lukewarm or perhaps even cold.

This year this man is going to call a synod – that is the Catholic senate – in which all the bishops and cardinals of the whole Catholic world will meet to decide certain urgent matters. And you can be sure what those urgent matters are: Birth control is a sin, abortion is a sin; and this new sin which has never been mentioned before – to make an effort to be in direct contact with God is a sin.

Now the thesis that he has propounded he is going to put before the synod to get their agreement; then it becomes an appendix, almost as holy as THE BIBLE. If it is unanimously accepted by the synod, then it has the same status. And it is going to be accepted because no priest will say that this is wrong, no cardinal will say that this is wrong. They will be immensely happy that he has a really original mind – even Jesus was not aware!

When I received the message that any effort to make direct contact with God is sin, I wondered what Moses was doing. It was a direct contact: there was no mediator, there was no one present. There was no eyewitness when Moses met God in the burning bush. He was committing a great sin according to pope the polack.

Who was Jesus’ agent? Some agency was needed. He was also trying to contact God directly, praying. And he was not paying somebody else to pray for him, he was praying himself And he was not a bishop, not a cardinal, not a pope; neither was Moses a bishop, nor a cardinal, nor a pope.

These are all sinners according to pope the polack. And the synod is going to sign it – I can say it before it is signed – because all over the world the priesthood is in a shaky condition.

And the truth is that it is your birthright to inquire into existence, into life, what it is all about.

Contemplation is theoretical, you can go on theorizing.... It also takes away your common sense. For example, Immanuel Kant was one of the greatest philosophers the world has produced.

He remained his whole life in one town, for the simple reason that any change disturbed his contemplation – new house, new people.... Everything had to be exactly the same so that he would be completely free to contemplate.

He never got married. One woman had even offered, but he said, "I will have to think over it." Perhaps that will be the only answer of its kind; ordinarily the man proposes. She must have waited long enough, and when she found that this man was not going to propose, she proposed. And what did he say? – "I will have to think over it." He contemplated for three years on all favorable points for marriage, on all unfavorable points against marriage; and the trouble was that they were all equal, balancing, canceling each other.

So after three years he went and knocked on the door of the woman's house to say, "It is difficult for me to come to a conclusion because both sides are equally valid, equally weighty, and I cannot do anything unless I find one alternative more logical, more scientific, more philosophical than the other. So please forgive me; and you can get married to somebody else."

The father opened the door – Kant asked about the daughter. The father said, "You have come too late; she got married, she has even got one child now. You are some philosopher – three years later you have come to give her your answer!"

Kant said, "Anyway the answer was not yes; but you can convey to your daughter my inability to find out. I tried hard to find out, but I have to be fair: I cannot cheat myself by putting up only favorable reasons and dropping unfavorable reasons. I cannot cheat myself "

Now this man used to go to the university to teach at the exact same time every day. People used to fix their clocks and watches on seeing him: you could be certain second to second – he moved like the hands of a clock. His servant used to declare, not "Master, your breakfast is ready," no, but "Master, it is seven-thirty"; "Master, it is twelve-thirty." There was no need to say that it was time for lunch; twelve-thirty... only the time had to be told.

Everything was fixed. He was so absorbed in his philosophizing that he became dependent – almost a servant to his own servant, because the servant would threaten him any moment saying, "I am going to leave." And the servant knew that Kant could not afford to let him go. For a few days it had happened that because he was threatening, Kant would say, "Yes, you can go. You are thinking yourself too important. You think I cannot live without you, that I cannot find another servant?"

The servant said, "You try."

But it did not work out with the other servant because he had no idea that the time had to be announced. He would say, "Master, lunch is ready" – and that was enough of a disturbance for Kant. He had to be awakened early in the morning, at five o'clock, and the instructions to the servant were, "Even if I beat you, scream, and say to you, 'Get lost, I want to sleep!' you are not to leave. Even if you have to beat me, beat me, but pull me out of bed.

"Five means five; if I am late getting out of bed you will be responsible. You have all the freedom to do whatsoever you want to do. And I cannot say anything, because sometimes it is too cold and I feel like sleeping... but that is a momentary thing – you need not bother about it. You have to follow

the clock and my orders, and at that moment when I am asleep you need not bother about what I am saying. I may say, 'Go away! – I will get up.' You are not to go away, you have to get me out of the bed at five o'clock."

Many times they used to fight, and the servant used to hit him and force him out of the bed. Now a new servant could not do that, beat the master; and the very order seemed to be absurd. "If you want to sleep, sleep; if you want to get up, get up. I can wake you up at five, but this seems to be strange, that there has to be this wrestling." So no servant survived. Kant had to go to the same servant again and ask him, "Come back! Just don't die before me, otherwise I will have to commit suicide." And each time this happened the servant would ask for more pay. And that's how it went on.

One day when Kant was going to the university, it was raining and one of his shoes got stuck in the mud. He left the shoe there because if he tried to take the shoe out he would be a few seconds late, and that was not possible. With only one shoe on he entered the class. The students looked at him; what had happened? They asked, "What happened?" He said, "Just one shoe got stuck in the mud, but I cannot be late: so many people fix their watches and clocks by me. My shoe is not that important. When I return home I will get it back because who is going to steal one shoe?"

Now these people have lost their common sense; they are living in a different world. And as far as his theoretical world is concerned, he is a topmost logician; you cannot find any flaw in his logic. But in his life... that is just insane. Somebody purchased a house next door, and Kant became sick, badly sick. The doctors could not find what the problem was because there seemed to be no sickness, but Kant was almost on the verge of death – for no reason at all.

One of his friends came by and he said, "There is no problem. As far as I see the house next door has been taken by somebody, and they have grown their trees so Kant's window is covered. And it was his absolute timetable, part of his absolute timetable, that he would stand in the window at the time of sunset and look at the sunset. Now the trees have grown too high, they have covered the window. That is the cause of his sickness and nothing else: his timetable is disturbed, his whole life is disturbed."

Kant stood up; he said, "I was also thinking something was wrong, why am I sick? – because doctors say there is no sickness and yet I am on the verge of death. You are right, it is those trees: since those trees have grown I have not seen the sunset. And I have been missing something but I could not figure it out, what it is that I am missing." Those neighbors were asked, and they were willing. If just because of those trees such a great philosopher is going to die.... They cut the trees, and the next day Kant was perfectly okay. His timetable, his schedule – or should I say skedule? I don't know what is right here.

The first American girl I met was some time in 1960. She asked me, "What is your skedule?"

I said, "My God! What is a skedule?" – because in Britain, in India, it is shedule. I could not figure out that it had something to do with schedule.

She said, "You don't understand what I am saying?"

I said, "This word I have never heard. Please try and explain to me some other way, use some other word." It is better to let me use shedule.

His schedule was disturbed. If it was perfect then he was absolutely free to contemplate. He wanted life to be almost robot-like so his mind would be absolutely free from ordinary mundane affairs.

But religion is not contemplation.

It is not concentration.

It is meditation.

But meditation has to be understood as meaning "dhyana," because the English word meditation again gives a wrong notion. First try to understand what it means in the English language itself, because whenever you say "meditation" you can be asked, "Upon what? upon what are you meditating?" There has to be an object: the very word has a reference towards an object, that I am meditating upon beauty, upon truth, upon God. But you can't simply say, "I am meditating"; the sentence is incomplete in the English language. You have to say upon what – what are you meditating upon? And that is the trouble.

Dhyana means "I am in meditation" – not even meditating. If you come even closer, then "I am meditation" – that is the meaning of dhyana. So when in China they could not find any word, they borrowed the word, the Buddhist word, jhana. Buddha used jhana; it is a Pali transformation of dhyana.

Buddha used people's language as part of his revolution because, he said, "Religion has to use the ordinary, common language, so that the priesthood can be simply dropped out; there is no need for it. People understand their scriptures, people understand their sutras, people understand what they are doing. There is no need for a priest."

The priest is needed because he uses a different language which people cannot use, and he goes on enforcing the idea that Sanskrit is the divine language and not everybody is allowed to read it. It is a special language, just like a doctor's. Have you ever thought about it? – why doctors go on prescribing in Latin and Greek words? What kind of foolishness is this? They don't know Greek, they don't know Latin, but their medicines and the names of their medicines are always in Greek and Latin. This is the same trick as the priesthood.

If they write in the common people's language they cannot charge you as much as they are charging, because you will say, "This prescription – you are charging me twenty dollars for this prescription?" And the chemist, the druggist, cannot charge much money either because they know that they can get the same thing from the market for just one dollar, and you are charging fifty dollars. But in Latin and Greek you don't know what it is. If they write "onion" then you will say, "Are you joking?" But if it is written in Greek and Latin, you don't know what it is; only he knows or the chemist knows.

And their way of writing is also important. It has to be written in such a way that you cannot read what it is. If you can read it perhaps you can consult a dictionary and find out what it means. It has to be quite unreadable so you cannot figure it out. In fact, most of the time the chemist knows nothing about what it is, but nobody wants to show his ignorance so he will give you something.

It happened once: A man received a letter from his family physician; it was an invitation to participate in his daughter's marriage. But the doctor wrote in his way, just habitually; the man could not read what this letter was. He thought the best way would be: "I can go to the chemist, because perhaps it is something important, and if I go to the doctor himself he will think that I cannot even read. It is better to go to the chemist."

He went to the chemist and gave him the letter. The chemist simply disappeared with the letter and after ten minutes he came back with two bottles. The man said, "What are you doing? That was not a prescription, that was a letter."

He said, "My God! It was a letter?" But he had figured out – the bride and bridegroom, he figured out were two bottles. So he prepared some mixtures and he brought those two bottles.

Buddha revolted against Sanskrit and used Pali. In Pali dhyana is jhana. Jhana reached China and became chan. They had no other word so they took the word – but in each language the pronunciation is bound to change; it became chan. When it reached Japan, it became zen; but it is the same word, dhyana. And we are using the word meditation in the sense of dhyana, so it is not something you meditate upon.

In English it is something between concentration and contemplation. Concentration is one-pointed; contemplation has a wide area, and meditation is a fragment of that area. When you are contemplating on a certain subject there are a few things which need more attention; then you meditate. That is what in English is meant by meditation: concentration and contemplation are two poles; exactly in the middle is meditation. But we are not using the word in the English sense, we are giving it a new meaning totally. I will tell you a story that I have always loved which will explain what meditation is.

Three men went for a morning walk. They saw a Buddhist monk standing on the hill, and having nothing to do they just started discussing what that fellow was doing. One said, "As far as I can see from here, he is expecting somebody and waiting for him. Perhaps a friend is left behind and he is waiting, expecting him."

The second man said, "Looking at him I cannot agree with you, because when somebody is waiting for a friend who is left behind, once in a while he will look back to see whether he has come yet or not, and how long he will have to wait. But this man never looks back he is just standing there. I don't think he is expecting anybody. My feeling is that these Buddhist monks have cows." In Japan they have a cow for milk for the morning tea; otherwise you have to go to beg for an early morning cup of tea. And Zen monks drink tea at least five, six times a day: it is almost a religious thing to do because tea keeps you awake, alert, more conscious; so they keep a cow in the monastery.

The second man said, "My feeling is that his cow is lost somewhere, must have gone to graze, and he is just searching for the cow."

The third man said, "I cannot agree, because when somebody searches for a cow he need not just stand like a statue. You have to move around, you have to go and look from this side and that side. He does not even move his face from side to side. What to say about his face – even his eyes are half-closed."

They were coming closer to the man, so they could see him more clearly. Then the third man said, "I don't think you are right; I think he is meditating. But how are we to decide who is right?"

They said, "There is no problem. We are just coming close to him, we can ask him."

The first man asked the monk, "Are you expecting a friend who is left behind, waiting for him?"

The Buddhist monk opened his eyes and said, "Expecting? I never expect anything. Expecting anything is against my religion."

The man said, "My God! Forget expecting; just tell me – are you waiting?"

He said, "My religion teaches that you cannot be certain even of the next second. How can I wait? Where is the time to wait? I am not waiting."

The man said, "Forget expecting, waiting – I don't know your language. Just tell me, have you left some friend behind?"

He said, "Again the same thing. I don't have any friends in the world, I don't have any enemy in the world – because they both come together. You cannot sort out one and leave the other. Can't you see that I am a Buddhist monk? I don't have any enemy, I don't have any friend. And you please get lost, don't disturb me."

The second man thought, "Now there is hope for me." He said, "This I had told him already, that 'You are talking nonsense. He is not waiting, not expecting – he is a Buddhist monk; he has no friends, no enemies.' You are right. My feeling is that your cow is lost."

The monk said, "You are even more stupid than the first man. My cow? A Buddhist monk possesses nothing. And why should I look for somebody else's cow? I don't possess any cow."

The man looked really embarrassed, what to do?

The third man thought, "Now, the only possibility is what I have said." He said, "I can see that you are meditating."

The monk said, "Nonsense! Meditation is not some activity. One does not meditate, one is meditation. To tell you the truth so that all you fellows don't get confused, I am simply doing nothing. Standing here, doing nothing – is it objectionable?" They said, "No, it is not objectionable, it just does not make sense to us – standing here, doing nothing."

"But," he said, "this is what meditation is: Sitting and doing nothing – not with your body, not with your mind."

Once you start doing something either you go into contemplation or you go into concentration or you go into action – but you move away from your center. When you are not doing anything at all – bodily, mentally, on no level – when all activity has ceased and you simply are, just being, that's what meditation is. You cannot do it, you cannot practice it; you have only to understand it.

Whenever you can find time for just being, drop all doing. Thinking is also doing, concentration is also doing, contemplation is also doing. Even if for a single moment you are not doing anything and you are just at your center, utterly relaxed – that is meditation. And once you have got the knack of it, you can remain in that state as long as you want; finally you can remain in that state for twenty-four hours a day.

Once you have become aware of the way your being can remain undisturbed, then slowly you can start doing things, keeping alert that your being is not stirred. That is the second part of meditation. First, learning how just to be, and then learning little actions: cleaning the floor, taking a shower, but keeping yourself centered. Then you can do complicated things.

For example, I am speaking to you, but my meditation is not disturbed. I can go on speaking, but at my very center there is not even a ripple; it is just silent, utterly silent.

So meditation is not against action.

It is not that you have to escape from life.

It simply teaches you a new way of life:

You become the center of the cyclone.

Your life goes on, it goes on really more intensely – with more joy, with more clarity, more vision, more creativity – yet you are aloof, just a watcher on the hills, simply seeing all that is happening around you.

You are not the doer, you are the watcher.

That's the whole secret of meditation, that you become the watcher. Doing continues on its own level, there is no problem: chopping wood, drawing water from the well. You can do all small and big things; only one thing is not allowed and that is, your centering should not be lost.

That awareness, that watchfulness, should remain absolutely unclouded, undisturbed.

Meditation is a very simple phenomenon.

Concentration is very complicated because you have to force yourself; it is tiring. Contemplation is a little better because you have a little more space to move. You are not moving through a narrow hole which is going to become more and more narrow.

Concentration has tunnel vision. Have you looked in a tunnel? From one side, where you are looking, it is big. But if the tunnel is two miles long, the other side is just a small round light, nothing else: the longer the tunnel, the smaller will be the other end. The greater the scientist, the longer the tunnel. He has to focus, and focusing is always a tense affair.

Concentration is not natural to the mind.

Mind is a vagabond. It enjoys moving from one thing to another.

It is always excited by the new.

In concentration mind is almost imprisoned.

In the second world war, I don't know why, they started calling the places where they were keeping the prisoners "concentration camps." They had their own meaning – they were bringing all kinds of prisoners and concentrating them there. But concentration is actually bringing all the energies of your mind and body and putting them into a narrowing hole. It is tiring. Contemplation has more space to play around, to move around, but still it is a bounded space, not unbounded.

Meditation, according to me and my religion, has all the space, the whole of existence available. You are the watcher, you can watch the whole scene. There is no effort to concentrate on anything, there is no effort to contemplate about anything. You are not doing all these things, you are simply there watching, just aware. It is a knack. It is not a science, it is not an art, it is not a craft; it is a knack.

So you have to just go on playing with the idea. Sitting in your bathroom, just play with the idea that you are not doing anything. And one day you will be surprised: just playing with the idea, it has happened – because it is your nature. Just the right moment.... You never know when the right moment is, when the right opportunity is, so you go on playing.

Somebody asked Henry Ford – because he had given a statement that: "My success is through nothing but catching the right opportunity at the right moment. People either think of opportunities which are in the future – you cannot catch hold of them – or they think of opportunities which are past. When they are gone and only dust is left on the road, then they become aware that the opportunity is passed."

Somebody asked, "But if you don't think of an opportunity in the future and you don't think of an opportunity which has passed, how suddenly can you get hold of it when it comes? You have to be ready."

He said, "Not ready – you have to be just jumping. One never knows when it comes. When it comes, just jump upon it!"

What Henry Ford said has tremendous meaning. He said, "You simply keep on jumping. You don't wait; don't bother whether an opportunity is there or not: just go on jumping. One never knows when it comes. When it comes jump upon it and be gone. If you go on looking into the future: 'When is the opportunity coming?...' The future is unpredictable. If you wait, thinking "When it comes I will catch hold of it," by the time you become aware that it is there, it is gone. Time is fleeting, so fast, only dust will be there.

"Rather, forget about opportunities, simply learn jumping, so whenever it comes...."

That's what I say to you: just go on playing with the idea. I am using the word playing, because I am a nonserious man and my religion is non-serious. Just go on playing – and you have enough time.

Anytime – lying in your bed, if sleep is not coming, play with the idea. Why bother about sleep? – it will come when it will come. You cannot do anything to bring it; it is not in your hands, so why bother

about it? Something which is not in your hands, forget about it. This time is in your hands, why not use it? Lying in your bed, on a cold night under your blanket, cozy and enjoying – just play with the idea. You need not sit in the lotus posture. In my meditation you need not torture yourself in any way.

If you love the lotus posture, good; you can sit in it. But Westerners go to India and it takes them six months to learn the lotus posture, and they are torturing themselves so much. And they think that when they have learned the lotus posture, they have gained something. The whole of India sits in the lotus posture – nobody has gained anything. It is just their natural way of sitting. In a cold country you need a chair to sit on, you can't sit on the ground. In a hot country, who bothers about a chair? You sit anywhere.

No special posture is needed, no special time is needed. There are people who think there are special times. No, not for meditation; any time is the right time – you just have to be relaxed and playful. And if it does not happen it does not matter; don't feel sad.... Because I am not telling you that it will happen today, or tomorrow, or within three months or six months. I am not giving you any expectation because that will become a tension in your mind. It can happen any day, it may not happen: it all depends on how playful you are.

Just start playing – in the bathtub, when you are not doing anything, why not play? Sitting under your shower, you are not doing anything; the shower is doing its work. You are simply standing there; for those few moments just be playful. Walking on the road, walking can be done by the body; you are not needed, the legs do it. Any moment where you can feel relaxed, non-tense, play with the idea of meditation the way I have explained to you. Just be silent, centered in yourself, and someday.... And there are only seven days – don't be worried!

So Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or by Sunday at least – within seven day – some day it is going to happen. Just enjoy yourself with the idea and play with the idea as many times as you can. If nothing happens – I am not promising you anything – if nothing happens that's perfectly good, you enjoyed yourself. You played with the idea, you gave it a chance.

Go on giving it a chance. Henry Ford said, "Go on jumping and when the chance, the opportunity comes, jump upon it." I say just the reverse. You just go on giving a chance to meditation, and when the right moment comes and you are really relaxed and open, it jumps upon you.

And once meditation jumps upon you it never leaves.

There is no way.

So think twice before you start playing!