

Already This World Gives You Your Job

BY ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

From a question-and-answer session at Cambridge Zen Center, 6th April 1989.

Zen Master Seung Sahn: Compassion mind means only help other people. Not thinking about me – only helping other people. Choice means great vow; great vow means “Sentient beings are numberless, we vow to save them all” That’s choice: “Sentient beings are numberless, we vow to save them all”. That’s the human being’s original job...

So, questions?

Question: Human beings’ job is to save all beings. How did we get this job?

ZMSS: So, what are you doing right now?

Q: Picking my fingernails.

ZMSS: Hah, picking my fingernails. Yes. Sitting on a cushion, talking with you, yes? That’s your job. Just do it! (Laughter) Very simple. Don’t make anything. Moment to moment just do it! When you drive, just drive. Don’t think of girlfriend, okay. If you have a girlfriend, then you have a problem. Policeman appears, gives you ticket, then you lose money.

So when you do something, just do it! Moment to moment to moment to moment, just do it, do it, do it. Do it means there is no subject, no object, no inside, no outside; outside, inside, BOOM! become one. Do-it mind means, if somebody is hungry, give them food, somebody is thirsty, give them drink, okay? Only help other people. There is no I-my-me. In do-it mind there is no I-my-me. Already this world gives you your job. When you are working in the office, just work in the office. Do you have a wife?

Q: My wife? Oh, yes.

ZMSS: Then if you have a wife, then one hundred per cent love your wife. “Oh, I love you!” Then your wife will be very happy: “Oh, my husband loves me!” (Laughter). Don’t make anything, okay? If you keep your opinion, your wife won’t like you. “I don’t like your idea!” Fighting, always fighting! So put it down, any opinion, any condition, any situation – only love your wife. Then your wife very happy, also happy you! You have children?

Q: Yes.

ZMSS: Good, then, if you are with your children, one hundred percent love your children. One hundred per cent father's mind. Very important. You have parents?

Q: Yes.

ZMSS: Every week, what do your parents like? Maybe drink or chocolate or cookies, then buy something, then visit your parents: "I love you! My mother, my father." They will be very happy – "Yaaah!" (Laughter) This your job, okay? You must understand that, it's very simple. Only if I-my-me appears, you cannot do that.

One hundred per cent father's mind, one hundred per cent husband's mind, one hundred per cent son's mind – you must do it! That's your job. Okay? Try it.

Okay, more questions. Over there.

Question: Here's a historical query. The other day you mentioned that you realized your Zen mastery at 22. How did that come to you, was it from meditation, or something, a realisation of the "I" at that point? Can you tell me that?

ZMSS: Someone asked this great Zen Master, "Before got enlightenment, what happened? After got enlightenment, what happened?" Then he said, "Before got enlightenment, when I see sky, sky is blue. After got enlightenment, sky also blue." (Laughter) That's all. "Before I got enlightenment, mountain is blue. After got enlightenment, also mountain is blue." That's all. Nothing at all. Only believe in my true self, one hundred per cent.

So ask, "What am I?" Don't know. Don't know. Do you understand "you"? Don't know, yes? You must believe in your true self one hundred per cent, you must attain don't know. That's all. If you attain don't-know, it means attain everything, because don't-know is everything, everything is don't-know. But don't-know is don't know – nothing at all.

So, more questions?

Question: Dogs don't think. Are they enlightened?

ZMSS: Of course. Dog has dog enlightenment. (Laughter) What is dog enlightenment? You understand that? Don't understand? You ask me, what is dog's enlightenment. You ask me...

Q: What is dog enlightenment?

ZMSS: Woof, woof! (Laughter) Okay? Do it, do it! Okay? Dogs only do it, woof woof, that's all. So your human job, what is your human job? You don't understand.

Q: Think.

ZMSS: Thinking? What kind of thinking?

Q: Think. That's what humans are supposed to do.

ZMSS: But what kind of thinking? So that's the problem. Just think. Not holding thinking. Just think. What kind of color is that wall? What color?

Q: Yellow.

ZMSS: Yellow – correct. That's “just think”. What kind of color is the sky?

Q: Blue.

ZMSS: Correct! Very good. You understand. You got enlightenment already.

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