

Giving Up

You have explored much. You have read books and heard lectures. You have pondered and discussed thoughts about God and the Universe. You have followed systems, even changed outward routines, temporarily. But you have not changed anything about your nature.

You have confessed your shortcomings and have acted the humble part. You have apologized and asked for the forgiveness of your fellow man. You have not, however, changed any of the things that caused your trouble in the first place.

As one knowing teacher describes it, you have walked to the shore of the river and inquired where you might find a bridge or a boat to the other side. When it was pointed out that swimming was the only way across, fear and laziness ended your journey. The intellect that you had relied upon to get you that far, however, soothed your mind by convincing you that it was farther than most had gone and that you should be proud of your effort. It also instilled doubt about what the other side really had to offer you.

And there you now stand on the shore of your current life. Still waiting for a boat or a bridge to appear that you might race across to see what is on the other side. Until the easy way appears, however, you will pace up and down the shore exchanging intellectual assumptions with others who are also too scared to swim. Reassuring each other that the ways across are many and with enough thinking and talking about it, you will soon be shown the easy and comfortable way across.

Until you drop these ideas, you will never leave that shore. The way across is to swim and you can begin to swim at any time. Prepared or not, knowledgeable or not. Scared or not. It is there before you now. Doubting this is simply a clever excuse; it gives you every reason in the world to not press on. Although it makes you *look* careful and contemplative, it keeps you right where you now stand.

It also allows you to keep your precious ideas and way of living. Ideas which, in-and-of themselves, keep you from going any farther. Here is the choice of every searching human being: to stay or to go. To go, you must leave much behind.

Attachments

You must give up your attachment to things and people. Attachments are anything you feel you need to be happy. Put in a different way, attachments are anything that if lost, would make you unhappy.

You must see that these attachments hold you hostage. That, which you think you own, owns you. As long as you bargain and deny the truth of this fact, you may as

well turn around and go back to where you came from. Where you came from is no different than where you are as long as you have these attachments.

It is not your involvement with these things and people that is your problem. It is the mere fact that you feel you would be less happy without them. And you willingly accept this idea that you will be less happy without these things. You convince yourself it is part of life, which it is—part of your *current* life. Stop accepting this false idea and you will know a new way to live and you will know true freedom.

What you also fail to see is that your attachment and dependence upon these things actually taints them as well. Where people are concerned, you do tremendous damage by insisting they remain loyal to you. Your insatiable need to own them creates unnatural tension and dysfunction.

When you can live without, you can truly live.

Identities

You must give up your phony identities. You think you *are* this or you *are* that. You are none of those things. You are nobody just like everybody. Your silly attempts to set yourself apart from the crowd just create pain because they are an illusion—a set of images and you cannot make an image come true. You perpetuate this illusion each time you say, “I am...” Anything that departs from the Truth is pain.

Your identities are not just limited to labels that you apply to yourself or groups to which you belong. They can also be found in false beliefs that you are superior to others in some way, no matter how cleverly you disguise them. You bring pain upon yourself every moment you attempt to be noticed.

Added pain ensues when you learn that the world doesn't buy your identity. You feel threatened, cheated, and insulted. You ask how dare they deny what you have proclaimed about yourself and what right they have to question you? I ask what right do you have to call yourself anything in the first place? You are nothing, it is only your Ego that thinks you are something and it will only be your Ego that is disappointed to learn otherwise.

Think for a moment as to why you would ever need to establish such identities with others in the first place. If you don't know, I can tell you. It is always because you want something from them. There is never an exception. You want their money, their praise or their recognition.

You have done much work to create these identities. Now after all of your efforts, please ask yourself in private—what have you gained from them? In the answer lies real truth.

Worship and Despise

You must give up your worship and despise of others. In your world of relative comparison, you cannot help but judge others as they relate to you. Your Ego needs this to survive. You can easily detect this in your life through conscious awareness.

Everyone you meet is placed upon this continuum, somewhere between worship and despise. Your assessment is relative to the current view you have of yourself, and this changes rapidly. Your Ego benefits in any case through some degree of grandiosity or self-pity. See how clever it is?

You worship false gods, entities and people. Anyone who can enhance your Ego by way of validating your ideas will be found in your good favor. Those who stand in opposition become your adversaries. Even within the false idea of seeing one as your equal, you employ nuance to set yourself apart. No one is truly your equal in your Ego's assessment. It would be impossible to be any other way, as your Ego exists only in the realm of comparison.

You make a serious mistake when you allow yourself to be lured by the praise of others. In your mind it is seen as good and helpful. You gladly return the favor with equally false praise of others. You are blind to the fact that this hurts you because at the moment it happens, it feels so good. The praise itself has blinded you and made you dependent upon it. You work to find more of it to keep you satisfied.

You wrongly call it self-esteem, as there is no such thing for the person who doesn't know who they really are. Each compliment is a new coat of paint over the old and cracked one. Just as a dog chases its tail, though it never catches it and only stops when it gets tired. Are you tired enough?

You love to hate others. You will know this for yourself by seeing when another person upsets you that you will not give up thinking about it. You employ one of your favorite tricks of calling this obsession human nature, which allows you to continue it. You can choose at any moment to stop it by seeing that you love it. Admit that and you can drop it. Resist it and the pain will continue.

See at last how you both worship and despise yourself. It is an unending cycle of back and forth thinking about what you are and what you are not—each creating a false sense of reality, one fueling the other. In the end you have nothing but fear and anxiety about your next move. You fear that one (worship) may not be enough and the other (despise) too much to take. This is Hell and you have an escape route before you.

Prejudice

Prejudice is an essential part of maintaining your current unspiritual state. You sort out the good from the bad in your mind before you've even opened your eyes.

Prejudice allows you to stay in the dark of your current view of life—the view that you are comfortable with and one that suits your Ego.

Give up your prejudice and see with brand new eyes.

Opinions

If you were to know your True Self, you would see that it has no opinions. It confidently knows what it knows and cheerfully investigates what it doesn't. It has no interest in the excitement of being right, or worse, showing others how they are wrong. It is free from the pressure of the outside world where ideas are concerned.

Opinions have no effect upon Reality. They are merely culminations of thoughts and ideas about how life is supposed to be. The problem is that they have originated from an entity that is not stable, and has no real knowledge of True Reality—that entity is you.

Giving them up is to lose nothing and gain the world, the Real World.

You will fight the giving up of these ideas and that is a good sign of real progress. In fact, if dropping any of these things is easy, I doubt that you have truly gotten to anything worth dropping. There will be sacrifice if there is to be progress. You will have to give up what you cherish, not just that which you are willing to give up.

It is only through the removal of the clutter that the True Light will finally shine upon your life. It is through giving up that one truly gains.