

JUDGMENT

Judgment means a stale state of mind. And mind always wants judgment, because to be in process is always hazardous and uncomfortable. Be very, very courageous, don't stop growing, live in the moment, stay in the flow of life.

There was an old man in a village, very poor, but even kings were jealous of him because he had a beautiful white horse. Kings offered fabulous prices for the horse, but the man would say, "This horse is not a horse to me, he is a person. And how can you sell a person, a friend?" The man was poor, but he never sold the horse. One morning he found that the horse was not in the stable. The whole village gathered and they said, "You foolish old man! We know that someday the horse would be stolen. It would have been better to sell it. What a misfortune!" The old man said, "Don't go so far as to say that. Simply say that the horse is not in the stable. This is the fact; everything else is a judgment. Whether it is a misfortune or a blessing I don't know, because this is just a fragment. Who knows what is going to follow it?"

People laughed at the old man. They had always known that he was a little crazy. But after two weeks, suddenly one night the horse returned. He had not been stolen, he had escaped into the wild. And not only that, he brought a dozen wild horses with him. Again the people gathered and they said, "Old man, you were right. This was not a misfortune, it has indeed proved to be a blessing." The old man said, "Again you are going too far. Just say that the horse is back... who knows whether it is a blessing or not? It is only a fragment. You read a single word in a sentence - how can you judge the whole book?"

This time the people could not say much but inside they knew he was wrong. Twelve beautiful horses had come... The old man had an only son who started to train the wild horses. Just a week later he fell from a horse and his legs were broken. They gathered again and again they judged. They said, "Again you proved right! It was a misfortune. Your only son has lost the use of his legs, and in your old age he was your only support. Now you are poorer than ever." The old man said, "You are obsessed with judgment. Don't go that far. Say only that my son has broken his legs. Nobody knows whether this is a misfortune or a blessing. Life comes in fragments and more is never given to you at once."

It happened that after a few weeks the country went to war, and all the young men of the town were forcibly taken for the military. Only the old man's son was left, because he was crippled. The whole town was crying and weeping, because it was a losing fight and they knew most of the young people would never come back. They came to the old man and they said, "You were right, old man - this has proved a blessing. Maybe your son is crippled, but he is still with you. Our sons are gone forever."

The old man said again, "You go on and on judging. Nobody knows! Only say this, that your sons have been forced to enter into the army and my son has not been forced. But only God, the total, knows whether this is a blessing or misfortune!"

Soon there was a reversal in the war and all the young men came home and...

ACCEPTANCE

Accept life as it is. Be joyful, without any reason.

In a village where the great Zen Master Hakuin was living, a girl became pregnant. Her father bullied her for the name of her lover, and, in the end, to escape punishment, she told him it was Hakuin. The father said no more, but when the time came and the child was born, he at once took the baby to Hakuin and threw it down. "It seems that this is your child," he said, and he pined on every insult and sneer at the disgrace of the affair. The Zen Master only said, "Oh is that so?" and took the baby in his arms. Wherever he went thereafter, he took the baby, wrapped in the sleeve of his ragged robe. During rainy days and stormy nights he would go out to beg milk from the neighboring houses. Many of his disciples, considering him fallen, turned against him and left. And Hakuin said not a word. Meantime the mother found she could not bear the agony of separation from her child. She confessed the name of the real father, and her own father rushed to Hakuin and prostrated himself, begging over and over for forgiveness.

Hakuin said only, "Oh is that so?" and gave him the child back.

This is acceptance. Whatsoever life brings is ok, absolutely okay. This is the mirrorlike quality - nothing is good, nothing is bad, all is divine. Accept life as it is. Accepting it as it is, one starts feeling very joyful and for no reason at all. When joy has a reason, it is not going to last long. When joy is without any reason, it is going to be there forever.

ZEN: THE PATH OF PARADOX, Vol. 3, pp. 175-176

UNDERSTANDING

Attachment--What you are attached to you must always carry around with you.

Two Zen monks were crossing a river. They came across a very young and beautiful woman who wanted to cross too, but she was afraid. So one monk took her on his shoulders and carried her across to the other side. The other monk was furious. He didn't say anything, but he was boiling inside. This was prohibited! A Buddhist monk should not touch a woman, and this monk had not only touched, he had carried the woman on his shoulders. Miles passed. When they reached the monastery, as they were entering the door, the angry monk turned to the first and said, "Look, I will have to talk to the Master about this, I will have to report it. It is prohibited!" The first monk said, "What are you talking about? What is prohibited?" "Have you forgotten?" asked the second. "You carried that young beautiful woman on your shoulders!"

The first monk laughed and he said, "Yes, I carried her. But I left her at the river, miles back. Are you still carrying her?"

Your inner-self--repressed, rejected, thrown into the basement--also goes on being reflected in your actions. Even sometimes when you avoid something, then, too, in your very avoidance your understanding is shown.

Understand that what you see in others is what you yourself are carrying. Your Judgments are actually reflections of what is repressed or rejected within yourself. THE DISCIPLINE OF TRANSCENDENCE, Vol. 4, p. 220

A CUP OF TEA

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868 - 1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full and then kept pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull, no more will go in." "Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

ZEN FLESH - ZEN BONES



OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.