

Death: Same as ENLIGHTENMENT

The moment of death can also become the moment of enlightenment, both are so similar. When someone becomes enlightened it is a death deeper than ordinary death; when someone becomes enlightened, he realises that he is not the body. The attachment, the identification, disappears. For the first time he can see an unbridgeable gap. He is here, the body is there; there is an abyss between. He has never been the body and the body has never been him. This death is deeper than ordinary death; when you die ordinarily, you are still identified with the body. This death is still deeper. Not only are you unidentified with the body, your identification with the mind, with the ego, also disappears. You are left simply as an emptiness, as an inner space, boundless, you are neither the body nor the mind. In ordinary death only the body dies; the mind continues to follow you like a shadow. The mind is the problem, not the body. Through the mind you have become one with the body, and unless the mind disappears you will go on getting into newer bodies, into newer vehicles, and the wheel of life will go on and on. When you become enlightened suddenly you are not the body, you are not the mind. Only then do you come to know who you are. The body is a seed, the mind is also a seed; hidden beyond them is you.

Sometimes it happens that a Zen master can synchronise the moment of your death with your enlightenment. In the right moment he can hit you: the body falls down -- everybody can see that -- but deep within the ego falls down also. Only you and the master know. It is not cruelty, it is the highest form of compassion, and only a very great master can do it. It is very subtle to feel the moment of your death, and to make it a point of inner transformation and transfiguration.

Look at this story and you may think-it is how the story appears-that the master killed his disciple. That is not the thing. The disciple was going to die anyhow; it

was the moment for his death. The master knew it; he simply used the moment of death for the disciple's enlightenment. But this is an inner secret, something esoteric, and I could not defend Ekido in a court with this. The court would say he is a murderer. Anyhow, there would be no way to prove he knew the disciple was going to die in that moment.

Why not use death? An ignorant person cannot use life; an enlightened person can even use death. That's how a master should be, using everything for enlightenment. Ekido was just standing behind the disciple; he was beating the gong of the temple and the master was watching. If this disciple can die in awareness, death will become the turning-point of the wheel. If he can die in awareness, if he can fall but remain conscious, if the body can fall, but deep down he can remain centred, alert, aware, this will be the last death; he will not need to be reborn again. Remember, if you can die with full awareness the wheel of life stops; you can enter a new body only if you are unaware, unconscious. When someone dies fully

conscious, this world disappears, there is no birth again.

That's why we say an enlightened person never comes again. A Buddha simply disappears; you will not be able to meet him again in the body. You can meet him in bodilessness -- he is everywhere then -- but not in the body. You cannot meet Buddha somewhere because only a body exists somewhere. When the body disappears, Buddha exists everywhere, or nowhere. You can meet him here, you can meet him there, you can meet him anywhere, but don't look for him in the body. The body exists somewhere; when the body disappears, the soul, the

consciousness exists everywhere. You can meet Buddha anywhere; wherever you go, you can meet him.

- *A Bird on the Wing, Chapter #7, The Severe Teacher*



A Buddha simply disappears