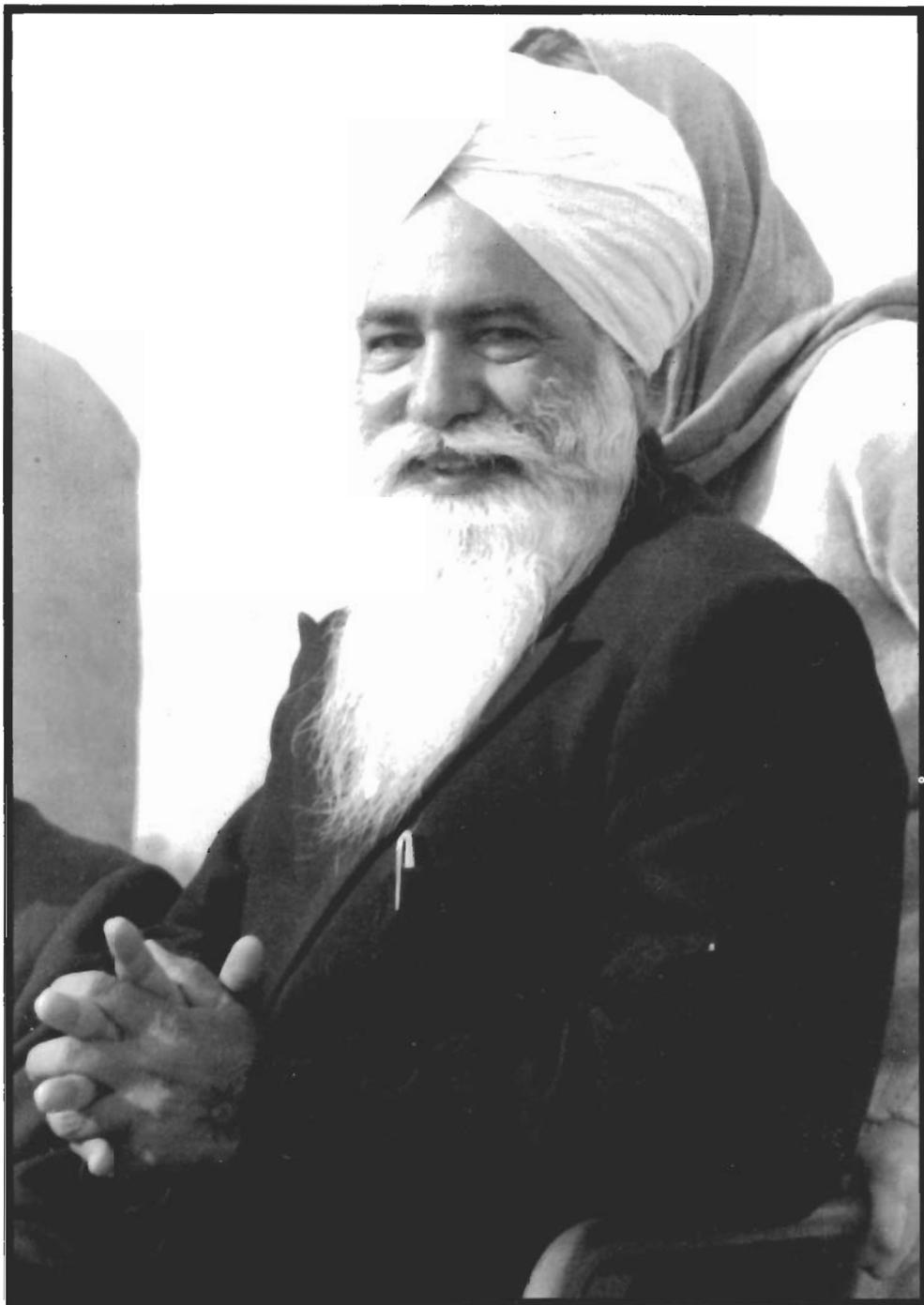


# SANT BANI

The Voice of the Saints

June 1979



Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

# The Message to the Graduates

*The Class of '79, Sant Bani Ashram School*

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

May 5, 1979

DEAR CHILDREN, I wish for all of you that you may succeed in your life. With this well-wishing I would like to give you some advice. There is a proverb in India that says, "The taste of *anvla* (a very bitter fruit) and the words of old people do not taste so good in the beginning; but later on, one realizes their goodness." So, dear children, always remember that if your teacher gives you any advice, take it to your heart. You will see some day that it will prove very useful.

The world into which you are going now is a different world from this one. You will meet many people, good and bad. You should pick up the good qualities of people and give no attention to their bad qualities. Always remember your goal. Hard work, discipline, and a firm will, will make you progress like anything.

I send you all my best wishes and I pray to Almighty God to help you in each and every work.

God bless you all,

With all His love,



AJAIB SINGH

# On Judging Others

## Maharaj Kirpal Singh Ji

*Notes of the Satsang of January 28, 1967,  
reprinted from the June 1970 Sat Sandesh*

**I**F WE REALIZE that death is certain, then there will be a change in our life. You must remain attentive in meditation. If not, the mind will think of others and judge their actions; criticizing, etc. Instead of the good actions of others, we take their bad actions to be our guiding factor. If you see the bad qualities of others, you will become those bad qualities. As you think, so you become.

God has said: "He is my loveliest child who sees me in others." Thoughts are very potent. You should see the good qualities of others rather than the bad qualities. You must have a sweet tongue; it should not injure the feelings of others. You want to love God, yet you curse others in whom God resides. Injuring the feelings of others is a great sin; it is a sin of the highest degree. If you have to face a person with such bad qualities, get on to one side rather than face him. Analyze yourself and see your own shortcomings instead of seeing the shortcomings of others. Who are you to take out the shortcomings of others? *It is easy to seek God, but very difficult to mend yourself.* If you realize that God resides in others, would you want to hurt them? One by one, you should give up your shortcomings. This is why I insist on all initiates keeping a diary.

If a man won't give up his evil ways of hurting others, why should you depart from your sweet ways of helping others? If you must observe others, then observe their virtuous qualities. There are shortcomings in all, but also good qualities.

Swami Ji says, "I will give you a tip: If you want to see shortcomings, then look into your own self; if you want to see virtues, then see them in others." Listen to what I say, and take heed; if not, you will be sorry and then it will be too late in the day. I have selected the best piece of advice for you. Now it is up to you to follow it. God has given us this tongue to remember Him and not to hurt the feelings of others.

# SANT BANI

The Voice of the Saints

volume three number twelve

June 1979

## FROM THE MASTERS

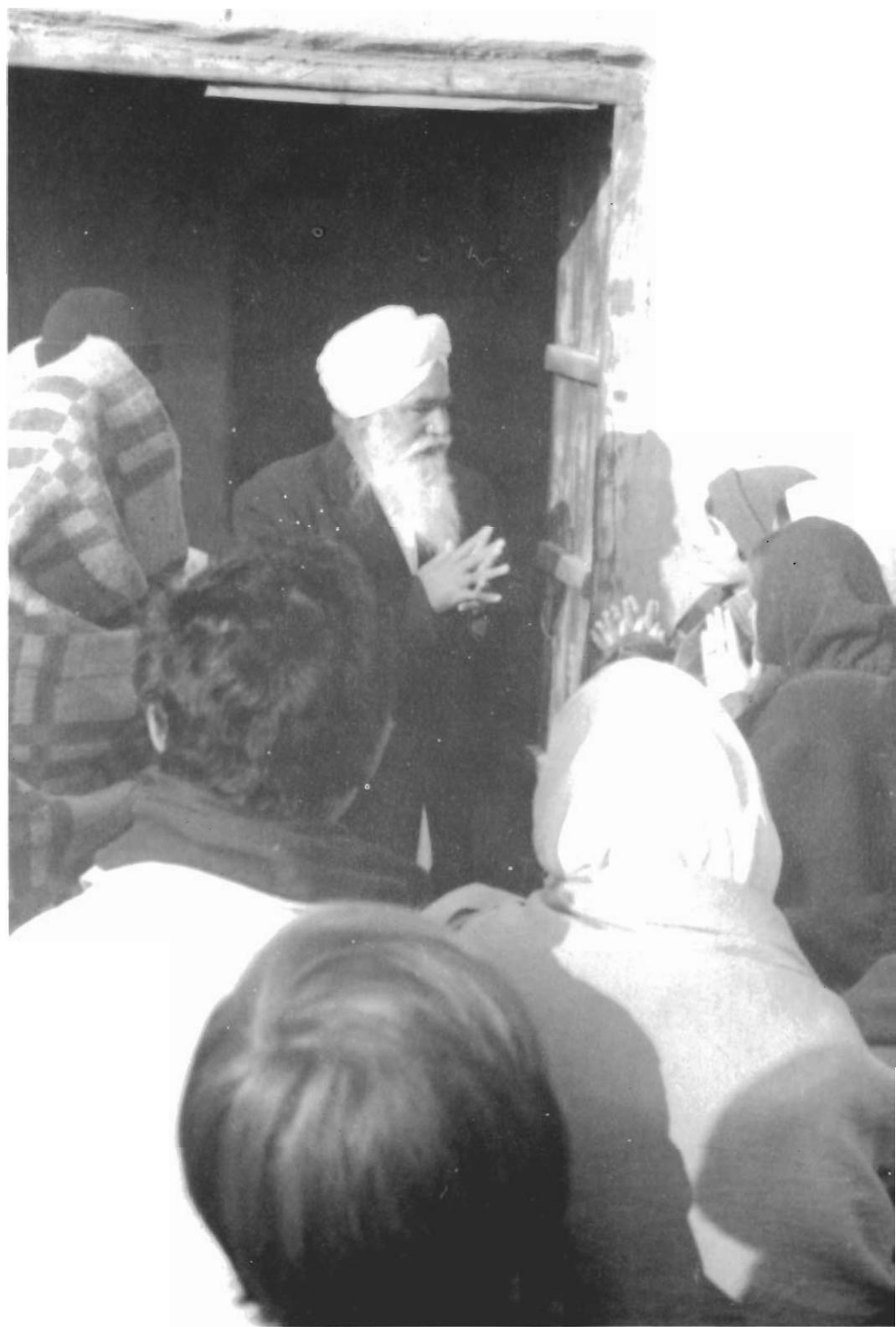
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# The Great Problem

## Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

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*Keep the critic nearby so your courtyard will look beautiful;  
Without water and soap he purifies the mind.*

SATSANG is held daily, but nothing new is talked about. The same things are repeated: those things which are obstacles in our meditations. Just as the problems of lust, anger, attachment, greed and egoism, which are hindering our spiritual progress, are discussed, in the same way, the great problem, criticism, which is cutting the root of our spirituality, is also talked about in Satsang. If it were not, we would never even have thought about stopping this evil.

Once a man came to Master in our ashram, complaining that he was not progressing well in his meditation. Master asked him whether he was maintaining chastity and whether he was free from anger and other passions. He said, "Yes, I am free from all these evils." Then Master asked him, "Are you involved in criticism? Are you criticizing anybody?" He said, "No, I don't have such habits." Then Master asked him, "Are you taking part in hearing criticism? When anybody else is criticizing anyone, are you present there? Are you hearing that criticism?" He said, "Yes, I have a habit of hearing criticism." Hazur used to say, "Whether you criticize or whether you hear criticism, it's the same." Master Sawan Singh Ji

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*This Satsang was given at Sant Bani Ashram in New Hampshire on May 13, 1977.*

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used to say, "If you criticize anyone, your good actions will go to his account, and his sins will come to your account, and in that way, he will get the blessing."

Mahatma Sheikh Saadi used to say, "If I want to criticize, I will criticize my mother, so that the good actions may remain in our home." Master Sawan Singh Ji used to put it this strongly: "There is no taste in speaking ill of others. There is taste or pleasure in sense enjoyments, but where is the pleasure in finding fault? But even so we do not stop it; we are always doing it." Guru Nanak says, "To criticize even your enemy is not good. To criticize anyone is very bad. We are the manmukh, and if we criticize others, the Negative Power punishes us." That's why, in this hymn, Kabir Sahib says, "If anyone is criticizing you, you should be grateful to him, because he is cleaning your dirt without using soap and water." And, further, "It would be better if you give him a place to dwell nearby you so he doesn't have to work hard while cleaning you."

*Never send the critic far away,  
always give him respect and fame.  
He purifies our body and mind and  
sings our glory only.*

Now Kabir Sahib says, "If you meet any critic, you should respect him, you should love him, because he is taking away your sins without taking anything from you." If any critic is welcomed and treated with love, then he understands in himself, "These people are afraid of me and that's why they are welcoming and loving me." Saints do not have any

faults within Them, but still, Their critics go to many places and say that this Saint is like this and this Saint is like that. I have seen this; but I have also seen that Saints do not respond to these things in kind. I have seen many people who came to Master Kirpal with the intention of criticizing Him, but Master always respected them, and welcomed them.

*Don't let my critic die! Long live my critic!*

*Kabir got the Satguru with the grace of His critics.*

Now Kabir Sahib prays to God, "Don't kill my critic, please—make his life longer, because if there were no critic, I would not have been able to do the devotion of God. I have many faults, but because I was afraid of critics and criticism, I left these faults and became successful in the devotion of God." Kabir Sahib also says, "Long live the critic, so that he may always do our work." Then He says, "Because of the critic, our work will be done without hiring a servant or paying anybody." Critics work very hard in all the three worlds, and they bring glory to our name. The critic is always thinking how to defame us, and consequently he is always remembering us.

Master Kirpal used to relate this incident: Once when Master Sawan Singh went to a town to conduct Satsang, the organizer asked Him if they should put up posters and do advertising. Master Sawan replied, "Don't worry about it." His critics at that time were Arya Somajis and Akalis.\* They wanted to criticize Master Sawan Singh; so they went all around the city with loud-speakers fitted on the jeep, saying, "The Radhasoami Master has come. Don't go to His Satsang, because He puts musical instruments in the heads of the people who are

\* Militant orthodox Hindus and Sikhs, respectively.

coming to Him, and, with His eyes, He makes people His own." Master Kirpal used to say, "Because of that negative publicity, people were curious to know what that person looked like who was doing all these things." Many new people came to the Satsang, and they got initiated by Master Sawan Singh, and they thanked the Akalis and Arya Somajis who had helped them to get such a perfect Master.

Swami Ji Marahaj used to say, "Everything needs a guard, and a critic is a guard of the Saint." Because of that criticism, only lovers are coming to Him; those who are not real lovers go back after hearing the criticism. That's why Saints do not allow their people to do publicity with posters and other means, because They know that there are many others who are assigned to do that work by God, and they will do it without fail.

*Kabir says, "Don't criticize my Sadhu."*

*The moon goes on growing and shining even when the people say, "He is defamed."*

Now Kabir Sahib says, "Don't criticize my Sadhu; you cannot hurt Him by criticizing Him. You cannot diminish Him. He might increase, but you cannot diminish Him." The moon grows and increases, and when it is full it shines very brightly; so while you are criticizing a Sadhu or Saint, He becomes more and more famous in this world. He shines completely like the moon. When the sun rises, it gives light to all the world; but the owls close their eyes during the daytime, and consider that it is always night. But that is not the fault of the sun.

Mahatma Chattar Das says, "Once all the owls called a meeting. They declared that there is no sun in this world. Everybody suggested their own views and it was concluded that there is no sun.

Among them there was one owl who was very old, and he said, 'If there were a sun, I would have seen it, because I am older than everybody. Anyone who says that there is a sun is mad.' One swan shouted from the top of the tree: 'Open your eyes and see how bright the sun is! Millions of its rays are shining on the earth.' Then they went to another elder owl and said, 'If he says it is so, we will believe him.' But he said, 'No, there is no sun. If there were a sun, I would have seen it.' Now, the swan was only one, and there were many owls. The swan kept telling them, 'Open your eyes and see the sunlight.' But they called the swan a fool and made a joke of him." So Mahatma Chattar Das said, "This is a strange court, O Chattar Das! Different from the three worlds."

Who are the owls? The *manmukhs*, the worldly people, those who are obeying their minds, who are not going within and not meditating; the elder owl is one who has only bookish knowledge, and has not gone within. We say that he has a lot of bookish knowledge and he has been initiated forty years back, and he has great knowledge about this Path. Such people say, "If the Guru is inside, I would have seen Him, because I am very holy." And, if he cannot solve the problem, he directs the people to another elder. But when nothing is solved, all the parties come to that swan. The swan is the Mahatma. He tells them, "Close your eyes, go within, and see how Hazur is waiting for you." But still their mind is not believing. That's why Mahatma Chattar Das says, "This court is different from the court of the three worlds." We criticize others, but we do not go within and realize the truth. When we go within, we can see who else has gone within and who has reached up to what place. We have to work very hard, we have to struggle with the mind. We

have to change the direction of the mind from the world towards God. It is not a matter of talking.

Many people were benefited by Master Sawan Singh, but the Akalis who were living very close to Master got no benefit at all from Him. The Akalis were always preaching that there can be no Guru, so Master Sawan Singh also said, "Don't call me Guru; I am not your Guru." He used to say, "The practices which I am showing you, which I am telling you to do, do them for one week. And after that, if you are satisfied, believe in me; otherwise no."

*If anyone criticizes a Sadhu, he gets many problems.*

*He dies and takes birth in hell, and does not get liberation.*

Now Kabir Sahib says, "The people who are criticizing the Sadhu have to face a very hard time, because they go into hell." I have seen in Ganganagar that, when Master Kirpal came there to hold Satsang, there was one initiate of Master Sawan Singh whose shop was right in front of the place where Satsang was held. The door of his shop was facing toward the dais where Master was going to sit and conduct Satsang. As long as the Satsang went on, he didn't open his shop; he kept that door closed. Hazur was not aware of this, but Nature didn't forgive that man, and he suffered a lot; he was lying on his bed for ten years suffering very much. He left the body only a few months back, and when his sister asked him, "Are you seeing anything?" he said, "Yes, Master Sawan Singh has come, but He has turned his back on me." Mahatmas do not curse anyone; but if we criticize Mahatmas, Who are pure and have no faults, Nature does not forgive us.

Guru Nanak says, "How can the critic of a Sadhu be liberated? He is carrying

the burden of hell on his head.”

*Don't even criticize a piece of hay,  
which comes under your foot.  
Sometime it might come and fall in  
your eyes and give you much  
pain.*

Now Kabir Sahib says, “What is the question of criticizing a Sadhu? If even a piece of hay comes under your feet, don't speak or think any ill of it! Who knows but that same piece of hay might come in your eyes and give you trouble?”

*I went to the seven continents on  
earth.  
I saw that only a few do not crit-  
icize others.*

Kabir Sahib came in all the four ages in this world, and in these four visits, He has been to almost all the continents, all the countries, all the islands, in this world. He says, “I have been to all the continents, countries and islands; but I have seen only a few people who are free from this disease. Except for them, everybody is suffering from this.”

*People laugh and become so happy  
looking at others' faults.  
But they don't remember their own,  
which have no limits.*

Now Kabir Sahib says, “We are laughing at others, and abusing others, but we never look at our own faults. We do not realize that somebody else is looking at us, and somebody also can laugh at us and abuse us.” We have such a disease that we look only at our good qualities, and point out other people's bad qualities.

*It is better to meet thousands of sin-  
ners than one critic;  
Because the critic carries the burden  
of millions of sins.*

Now Kabir Sahib says, “It is better to

meet thousands of sinners than to meet one critic.” Sinners do not know that they are doing sins, and if we explain to them, they will stop. But even if you explain to the critic, still he will not try to understand, and he will not stop criticizing.

Master used to say, “If a Satsangi criticizes other people, he will not be forgiven; but if a non-initiate, one who does not know about this Path, criticizes others, he may be forgiven. A Satsangi knows that this is bad, and a non-initiate does not.”

\* \* \*

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following comments are taken from the Satsang of August 10, 1977, also at Sant Bani Ashram in New Hampshire, on a hymn of Guru Arjan.*

What is criticism? To speak against anybody—not to his face, but to his back—when he is not present there: That is criticism. To exhibit our good qualities and point out others' faults is also criticism. And if we do not know about anyone, but still we speak against him, that also is included under criticism. . . .

There was a king whose name was Ajassar, and once he made a joke of a perfect Saint. He gave Him a donation of horse dung.

Saints are always gracious, and They are very humble. The Saint accepted that donation without question and without saying anything to the king.

But it is the Law of Nature that whatever you donate—if you have donated it with a whole heart—will go on increasing, and will be added to your account. So when the Saint opened that bag of horse dung, it began to increase, and, because the king had given that donation wholeheartedly, it went on increasing and increasing.

Once when the king was passing by the

place of that Saint, he saw that there were heaps of horse dung there, and he didn't see any horse. He asked the Saint, again to make a joke of Him: "Saint, I see that there is a lot of dung here, but I don't see any horse." He said, "Yes, that is true, I have no horse. But one of my disciples gave me a donation, and it is his gift which is increasing, because it is the law of Nature that if anyone gives a donation, he will get its fruit in greatly increased amount. So he gave me a little bit of dung, and now as a result of that law of Nature, it is increased, and here it is."

The king realized that he had made a great mistake, and asked, "What will happen to me, because I gave you this? What will happen to me?" The Saint said, "You will have to eat all this horse dung." The king asked, "Is there any way I can escape this punishment?" The Saint replied, "Yes, there is one way. If people start criticizing you, instead of you they will take this dung and they will eat it. If they criticize you, they will take your sins, and you will get their good qualities. So do something that will make people criticize you."

The king realized his mistake, and he didn't want to do another bad thing. But still, because the Saint had told him, he went to a pundit's house and requested the pundit to give his daughter to him. And he told him, "I will take your daughter into my palace, and there I will worship with her; but you please give me your daughter."

So when the pundit gave his daughter to the king, the king brought her into the palace, and everyone saw that an old king had brought a young woman to live with him. But he worshiped with her only, and told her to come to him daily for that purpose.

People did not know the truth about what was happening in the palace, so

they started making guesses, and many people criticized the king, saying, "Look at this king! He is an old man, and he has so many queens, but still he is fond of this young daughter of the pundit, and he is doing a very bad thing." People didn't know the truth, but still they criticized him.

So the horse dung which had increased started to diminish, because when the people criticized the king, his sins were counted as theirs, and their good qualities were counted as his. In this way, all the extra dung vanished. And then the king returned the pundit's daughter to her father.

But when the king came again to the place where the Saint was living, he saw the little bag of dung which he had originally donated to the Saint. He said, "I have finished off all the dung, but still this remains! What will happen to this? Will I have to eat it?" The Saint replied, "Definitely." But he added, "Go again and try to do something so that people should criticize you more—so that this will also be finished. I will tell you one thing: there is one oil merchant in your kingdom who has not criticized you; he is the only one who has not shared in this dung. Go to that oil merchant and do something so that he will speak against you."

So the king disguised himself and went to the oil merchant. He said to him, "What kind of people are you? You see your king—he is a great king, but still he has done this bad deed—he brought the daughter of the pundit to his palace, and who knows what he has done with her?" And in that way he started criticizing himself to the oil merchant. But the oil merchant was a meditator on Naam, and he knew what he would lose if he criticized—how low he would fall in his meditation—so he didn't criticize, but instead said this: "O gentleman, we

should not bother about him. Whatever the king has done, he will pay for it. You should not worry about him. It is not a good thing for you to criticize anyone in front of me because I do not want to hear it."

But still the king (in disguise) kept criticizing the king, so that the oil merchant would eat the dung. So the oil merchant took out one big stick and he said, "O man! If you will not go away from me—if you will not stop criticizing the king—I will give you a very good beating."

Then the king ran away and went back to the Saint, and said, "He is not ready to criticize me. So now what will happen to this remaining dung?" The Saint replied, "Find any means, but you have to eat it. If you will not eat this dung, or find any other way to finish it, again it will increase and again you will have to

do the same thing you just did."

So history records that King Ajassar had to eat that dung. He ate some by mixing it with sweets, but he finished it. *Whatever you sow, you will have to reap that.* If you have sown chilies, you will definitely have to harvest chilies.

Guru Nanak has also written about King Ajassar and how he criticized the Saint and made a joke of him. After telling the story, He says, "In the end he realized and he repented." So this is the disadvantage of criticizing others.

Maharaj Sawan Singh used to say, "If you are criticizing anyone, all your good qualities will go to his account, and all his sins—all the bad karmas which he is supposed to pay off—will come to your account."

So we should try to keep ourselves safe from this very dangerous weapon.

## NOTICE

The excursion fare from Boston to Delhi has gone up. The basic fare is now \$963.00, plus \$3 departure tax. Therefore the total amount of the check you should send for your fare, including the \$15 for the stay in Frankfurt, now comes to \$981.00. This is in addition to the \$60 for the bus from Delhi to Rajasthan, which should be sent in a separate check made out to K. R. Bagga (not Kulwant Rai Bagga as before), as explained in the general letter sent to those scheduled to go in the groups.

Sant Ji has set the limit for each group at forty, and requested that people go in the scheduled groups only, and not at other times. Groups go for two weeks, from September to February. The ashram there is not set up to accommodate guests at any other time, or in any other way. This limit has now been reached for all groups in the coming season, with long waiting lists. However, any initiate who is not presently scheduled in any of the groups but has a deep desire to go and has or will have the necessary funds, should not hesitate to express this wish. There are always cancellations, and for anyone who is meant to go, the Lord will find a way. For any further information on visiting Sant Ji in India, please write Judith Perkins, Sant Bani Ashram, Franklin, N.H. 03235.

# Quite Without Wings

## A Tale of the Homeward Journey

TRACY LEDDY

For Lee and Gary and the white rock in the field behind their house.

\* \* \*

*First . . . accept Him. Forget everything else, then you forget yourself. I think it is such a fire that consumes everything except God Almighty.*

KIRPAL SINGH

*To be happy is to stop.*

ALBERT CAMUS

\* \* \*

Joy had been sitting on a favorite flat rock out in the Master's garden for many hours that morning when the other, noisy ones came trooping through.

"Meditate," the Master had repeatedly told his disciples, "Meditate, and lead a good life. If you lead a good life, you prepare the ground, but only prolonged meditation will bring you close to God."

Joy loved the Master and wished to obey Him perfectly. She did lead a good life, as best she could, with all her heart, and now she wanted to do his meditation with the same degree of devotion. However, she was finding the process of emptying her mind much more difficult than that of leading a good life; so many forms and images were there, so many thoughts and sequences of thoughts. She struggled and struggled, to no avail.

The sacred words given by the Master which she spoke over and over in her heart were ultimate protection; Joy knew that. There had been so many, many occasions in her life when she had seen that protection at work. The night her best friend lost his bearings island-hopping in a small open boat with no compass was but one recent example. Her friend had

become completely disoriented and then quite frightened. He had requested Joy to stand right beside him at the wheel, trusting that her heartfelt chanting of the sacred words would guide them safely to home port, which it did. Yet during the hours of meditation, Joy's chant seemed curiously, frustratingly weakened. Certainly it was not strong enough to sweep away the mental clutter of lifetimes and leave her face to face with God. Not only that, sleep, distraction and pain attacked her constantly, wave upon wave.

So, because Joy was only struggling to meditate and not really meditating at all, the other disciples who came singing and dancing down through the Master's garden that bright morning disturbed her, made her loosen her shawl, pick up her cushion and seek another, quieter place to sit for a longer time.

Try as she might, Joy could not seem to separate herself from the other disciples. They swept her along in their midst, jostling and joking among themselves, even to the end of the garden and then beyond it. Misery was written all over Joy's face.

"Oh, if only I were a bird," she sighed, remembering summer days on windswept beaches by the sea and the happiness and the longing she felt watching the seagulls glide inches above the sand and then soar to ride the highest thermals. "But I'm not a bird," she muttered to herself as she walked along, "and the Master reminds us to be content with what we have been given and not to desire anything else. Besides, he says it is in meditation we will learn to fly like eagles, very high."

Desperate to be alone again, Joy

abruptly turned in at the gate of the huge cemetery which bordered one side of the Master's garden. She had no fear of ghosts or death, had spent much time in such places when she was younger and minded not at all the idea of sitting there to continue her struggle. But others followed her into the cemetery, too, singing and laughing, so Joy had no choice but to walk farther on.

Directly adjacent to the cemetery stood a series of large, rickety structures, a funeral home and its necessary out-buildings. As she approached, Joy noticed with a shock rows of bodies, old ones and young ones, bloated and hideous, with strange smiles on their faces, lying together outside in the sand awaiting burial. Sickened, she turned away and passed quickly up the wide wooden staircase which led from the cemetery and the funeral home onto a long, dreary and ramshackle boardwalk. Barefoot, clad only in old cotton pants and a loose shirt, with her shawl still around her shoulders and her cushion under one arm, Joy cut a curious figure indeed among the throngs of people sauntering to and fro.

Soon Joy was swept into a boisterous cafe on one side of the boardwalk. It was crowded with rough-looking folk: shifty-eyed men and bold-eyed women and hot-eyed members of both sexes. The disciples sat down at many tables and Joy sat among them, utterly bewildered, wanting nothing to eat or drink, wanting only to find a quiet spot where she could continue her labors in peace. As she watched the goings-on at the tables around her, the feeling of misery grew inside her. Here were people bent on hurting each other; she could feel the tension, the animosity. And she remembered the words of another dear friend, "People are cruel and the mind is cruelty itself." It was a most unpleasant awareness and

seeing some of the disciples cheerfully becoming waiters and waitresses in the squalid, smoke-filled room made her no happier.

Outside in a vacant lot near the cafe Joy glimpsed two young, well-matched ruffians battling each other with pick-axes. Their blows were hard; their groans were loud; blood flowed freely from horrible gashes and wounds. The two seemed to be killing each other, most brutally, and yet, not. At first, Joy had been horrified by the sight of such medieval violence. But as the fight continued, she found herself reacting as though she were in unwilling attendance at a bad play.

The group moved aimlessly on, in and out of the seemingly endless array of shops which lined both sides of the boardwalk. Joy soon observed that most of the shops were that in name only, being merely colorful or tawdry facades with little or nothing in the way of merchandise to sell. It disturbed her to find some of the disciples choosing to stay there, too.

Beyond the so-called shops a kind of train stood on a piece of railroad track. It was a series of old-fashioned open parlor cars filled with passengers in Victorian dress. Everyone was waiting quietly, some with eyes closed, obviously expecting to go somewhere, but it was clear to Joy at a glance that this train would never move. There was neither engine nor track in front of the cars. And yet more of the disciples stopped among these elegant travelers or floundered waist-deep in the soft sand which surrounded the cars as they tried to avoid the train or escape from it.

Joy watched it all from the boardwalk, overcome by feelings of dismay and helplessness. Everything here was so strange. People changed bodies while she looked at them. Men became women;

women became men. People were dressed, now in the clothing of their own time, now in that of her great-grandmother's time, now in that of centuries long passed. Even the buildings, even the landscape itself had no stability, no permanence, and were transformed frequently before her eyes. It was a kaleidoscope she was looking at; it was a merry-go-round she was on. In this place nothing was stationary, everything was in a state of perpetual motion and stillness seemed certain death. Joy wandered through this land for a very long time, realizing, after several attempts proved futile, that she could never retrace her steps back through the waiting train and the shops and cafe to the funeral home and the cemetery and thus regain entry to the peace and quiet and solitude of the Master's garden. Even though she could see no end to a journey along the boardwalk beyond the train, she had no choice but to wander on.

At last, quite without warning, a wonderful thing happened. In one dingy restaurant much farther along the boardwalk where all the people tried again, as usual, to give her food and force her to stay, there came a moment when the feelings of misery and bewilderment and helplessness which had afflicted Joy for so long fell away from her like moulting feathers. In that moment she was able to

see with the utmost clarity what it was she faced everywhere in this land. Summoning all her courage, she dropped her cushion and shawl, turned and looked full in the face of her chief tormentor and stood absolutely still. A tremendous wave of love for the Master washed over her, drenched her through and through.

"It's not real," she cried, "Nothing and no one here is real! It's all illusion, every bit and particle of it, and I don't have to pay attention to any of it ever again!" And then for the very first time in her life, Joy began to chant the sacred words over and over with all her heart and all her strength and all her mind. Instantly, the people recoiled away from her as though she had struck them.

As her courage and the strength of her chanting increased, she moved closer and closer to an open door above a steep wooden staircase at the side of the restaurant which overlooked a great, empty, sunlit desert. In a state of high exultation, Joy flung herself through that door out into the air and glided, quite without wings, still chanting, far, far out into the desert. There she began to hear her own chanting join up with another, greater chanting in the air surrounding her. And it was this sound which acted like an invisible highway drawing her steadily upward into brighter and brighter light until she was lost to this world entirely.

### NOTICE

All those scheduled to go to Rajasthan in Group IV (December 27 -January 10), who also wish to accompany Sant Ji to Bombay the following week, should please remit \$40 to cover accommodations in Bombay, as soon as possible. Checks for this should be made out to Christopher McMahon, and sent direct to him at 2425 Elendil Lane, Davis, California 95616.

# Toward "Coolness of Heart"

AMY HART

WITHOUT my saying He knew my pain and problems.—*You made me meditate on Naam. By singing Your praise my sorrows are ended and I get perfect Bliss. Holding my hand You have pulled me out of a big pit of attachment and Maya.*

Well, I can't really say that I did it, but it seems so much to the heart of things. I don't know—there are so many ways to talk of the experience. One was being a farmer's daughter and walking out on the first day; I was looking at the new wheat and feeling from the ashram waves of energy and love coming out among the young wheat plants; and just staring at them and wondering what it must be like to be a plant in the fields of Sant Ji, growing in that kind of atmosphere. And watching Him every night at the Satsang, watering His crop of initiates with such silent deep tenderness and love. I thought, "My God, what a Godman!"

One of the most joyful times for me was the evening when *He* did not say anything. People would sing or not sing; but He would be looking and dipping like a humming bird into the eyes of this one and that one, giving so much in silence.

Well . . . I have gone twice and each time there was one person in the group that I had sort of critical feelings about. They were doing something that was not my idea of what one should do if one was a good initiate. Each time that person became a key person in my life. You know, in some way it became very plain to me that that person had an enormous amount of love, that I didn't know how to judge at all, superficially, on the outside, and that that person had so much to teach me! That's always a humbling thing. You go through these spots in your mind and then at the end you find that

you were totally wrong. And I remember thinking this towards the middle—that gee, I didn't have any idea what was really going on for any person there. And that I had absolutely no right—you know, what was I doing having any ideas about anybody? And I felt—afterwards I really felt, in my mind or heart or somewhere, that Sant Ji just poured out much more love toward me.

Last year when we'd have our so-called free time there was a lot of talking and interacting between everyone. And I found it very very hard to work on Simran in that kind of atmosphere. I tried, but I was always falling on my face and even the periods set aside for meditation were noisy. People were out hanging the laundry—it just seemed to be a three-ring circus to me who had been raised in a Zen background before I came to the Path, in which things were very strict and you really followed along. This year I didn't even think about it; but Master put me in a dormitory of six in which there was constant meditation going on morning, noon and night. There was always somebody meditating in the dorm so it was impossible to talk. The Simran was going on so strongly that the last day I walked in—I thought I was alone—it was just before we were getting on the bus to go back to Delhi. I opened the door of the dorm and Janet was lying on the bed and everyone else had gone—it was five minutes before leaving—and the energy of the Simran was so powerful in that dorm, it almost knocked me for a loop. It was like electric energy just pouring in there. And it will be there for the next group! It's just so powerful! That was a terrific lesson for me. This year I never thought about it or worried about it, but at the last interview last year, I just

wept with frustration. So He plunked me this year into this absolutely dedicated, silent room that was just going to master this Simran even if it killed them! So each one of us would be re-inspired by the next one. And yet, at the same time, the room was a very *kind* one. It wasn't the kind of room where everyone is just clenching their teeth and disliking you if you drop your flashlight or something. If you weren't feeling well, or something was happening, people were aware of each other—but silently aware—very tuned in, very caring. What I realized is that since you're in your dorm a lot in the wintertime, you're doing all your meditating there—it's your meditation hall, your sleep room and your living room—that you are a team, like in a boat together. And there was real love, care and kindness and yet this absolute dedication of each one of us for what we had come to do. We hoped to find support from each other, and we got that support from each other in the group. That was just tremendous for me.

So in the last interview again, I went to Sant Ji, I think the only thing I said to Him was “I thank You so much for the gift You gave me, of being put in a room that remained completely silent and worked so hard.” And He said, in answer to this, “You have achieved coolness of heart while you have been here, and I want you to maintain that.”

I'd never heard that expression before; maybe it's been written but I'd never heard it. And I didn't really know what it meant. But I guess I'm learning more as

the journey goes on about what that might mean—“coolness of heart.” Perhaps an equanimity toward the difficult things that are happening to us all.

About the Simran, He said something that startled me. If we don't do Simran during the day, then when we sit down for meditation, we have to struggle so much with the mind just to do the meditation. If there were eighteen hours that we were up and we spent nine on the world's work and nine on meditation, we'd only have an equal balance and we could not make progress. It really shocked me. There's got to be more Simran going on or you'll never get any place no matter what you do. If there isn't, we can spend hours meditating but we're not going to get anywhere.

He had very very good things to say about meditation; because lots of us experienced difficult pain; it was kind of a boot camp in many ways. Last year we got so much parshad—in a way it was like kindergarten—we got candy all the time. This time we didn't get too much parshad. We got loads and loads of it from His eyes, and He was just living, breathing parshad. And we were told to work. That was the first message in the courtyard when we came in that night. He looked at us all briefly—maybe some people got those long lavish glances, but I think we just got a very quick look and we were told by Pappu that He recognized us. But the look that I got in the eyes was: “Work!” It was just as clear as can be—the message. So I don't know how I could possibly go there again without working very hard. Really!



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## The Beam and the Speck

### Jesus of Nazareth

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Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the speck that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull the speck out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the speck out of thy brother's eye . . .

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

MATTHEW 7:1-5, 12

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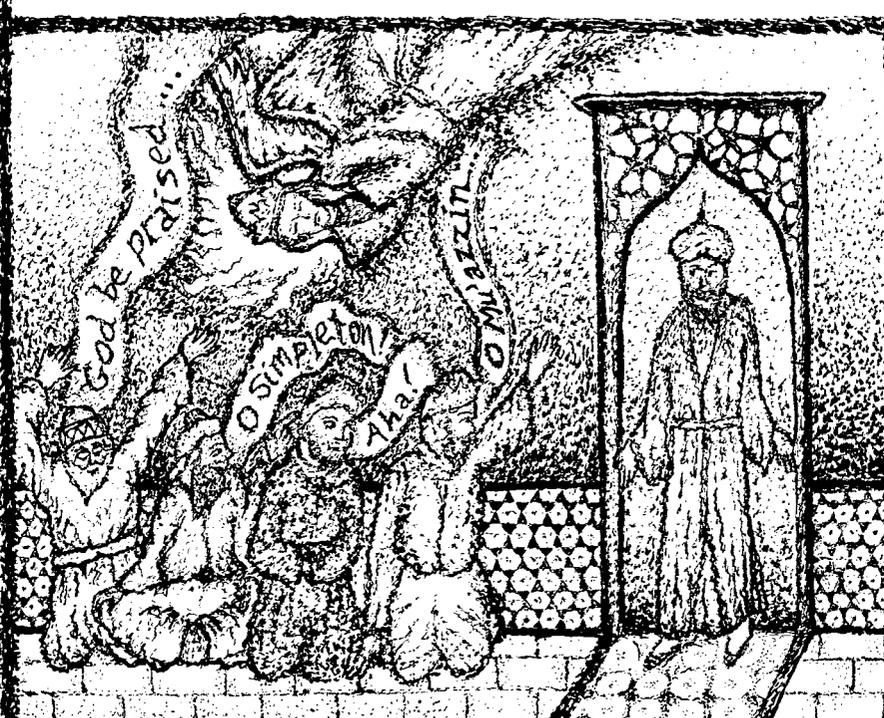
# The Four Judging Indians

Maulana Rumi

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Four Indians went to the mosque to say their prayers. Each one pronounced the invocation and was saying his prayers with great devotion when the *Mu'azzin* happened to come in. One of them immediately called out, "O *Mu'azzin*, have you yet called to prayer? It is time to do so." The the second said to the speaker, "Aha! You have spoken words unconnected with worship and therefore, according to tradition, you have spoiled your prayers!" Thereupon the third scolded the second one, saying, "O simpleton! Why do you rebuke him? Rather rebuke yourself!" Last of all the fourth said, "God be praised that I have not fallen into the same ditch as my three companions!"

THE MASNAVI, BOOK II



# A Matter of Time

RUSSELL PERKINS

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following paper was written as part of the requirements for an Environmental Biology class at Plymouth State College (New Hampshire) and is thus written according to academic specifications and from a different point of view than most of the articles that appear in these pages.*

\* \* \*

## ABSTRACT

The current environmental problems facing mankind are defined as the logical result of the decision on the part of humanity eight thousand years ago to abandon a primarily fruit-and-grain-centered agriculture and replace it with the breeding and raising of meat animals. This decision began the process of using up our resources faster than they could be replaced. A second decision made in the fifteenth century A.D.—to develop technology regardless of the cost in irreplaceable fuel—was a natural extension of the first. Consequently it was only a matter of time before the resources ran out.

Biological and archaeological evidence is cited to demonstrate that human beings were almost certainly horticulturists before becoming hunters and eventually cattlemen. Contemporary documents are cited to show the appalling waste of soil and water inherent in maintaining the present unnecessary feeding habits of American humanity, and what that waste means to the rest of the world. Finally, the personal experience of the author is drawn upon to show a possible solution to the difficulty: a) to personally reverse the decision made on our behalf thousands of years ago and revert to an herbivorous diet; and b) what life can be like if lived according to strict ecological principles, recognizing that we are not apart

and above the rest of life, but an integral part of it.

\* \* \*

The current collective nightmare of humanity—the so-called “population explosion” with all its ramifications—is the inevitable result of a decision made thousands of years ago and reaffirmed in a different form in the past five hundred years: that is, to make use of the resources available to us without making any effort to replace them; or, if they prove irreplaceable, to consider the consequences of developing a way of life totally and irrevocably dependent on resources that will inevitably disappear. “The chickens are coming home to roost,” and it is suddenly only too clear that humanity, under the impression that it has been living off interest, has been spending its capital instead; has indeed been spending it so wildly that it is on the verge of bankruptcy. “It is five minutes to twelve,” in the words of Professor Georg Borgstrom; and he likens our present situation to that of Charlie Chaplin in the film *Modern Times*, desperately but unsuccessfully struggling to run up an escalator going downward.<sup>1</sup>

All of our so-called “current problems”—the energy crisis, pollution, endangered species, nuclear power and whether to use it, the continuing threat of war (including the ultimate horror of nuclear war), and the basic problem of problems: “too many people” and the food needed to keep them alive—are best understood as parts of a closely connected whole: that original decision to habitually and as a matter of course live off our capital and make no provision to replace it. The forms that decision took, the almost incredible ubiquity of its rami-

fications, and what we can do about it now, at this late date, will be the subject of this inquiry.

## THE DECISIONS

The primal decision was the abandonment, about eight thousand years ago, of grain-and-fruit-oriented agriculture in favor of the breeding and raising of domestic animals primarily for the purpose of killing and eating them.<sup>2</sup>

The secondary decision was made when the results of technology began to be considered more important than the devastation of the forests required to bring them about. In Western Europe this occurred in the fifteenth century A.D. with the introduction of new, improved, and energy-intensive techniques for manufacturing bricks, glass, and small metal objects, immediately demanded by the new wealthy bourgeoisie for use in their homes.<sup>3</sup>

These two decisions (consciously or unconsciously arrived at by many or by few, they were equally binding on us all) set in motion forces that have continued to operate until the present day. Since the time we began to use our resources—food or fuel—at a faster rate than they could be replenished, we have been running—lately very rapidly—with a long rope that has just about come to its end.

## THE PRIMAL DECISION

It may seem strange to say that human beings “made a decision” to domesticate animals for the purpose of killing and eating them; “everyone knows” that the “cave man” was primarily a hunter and that humans were originally and essentially a violent, carnivorous species, whose superior intelligence enabled them to ensure that their favorite meals would stick around and wait to be eaten rather than run away at the first opportunity. That the domestication of meat animals was a natural corollary of man’s pri-

meval hunting habits and was the first form of his agriculture seems almost a truism, it appears in so many paintings of “early man,” elementary school textbooks, etc.; but while it may contain some truth, it is neither biologically nor, insofar as the somewhat scanty evidence shows, archaeologically sound.

## BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

It is often stated categorically, sometimes by people in authority, sometimes by the beef industry, that “man is not an herbivore.” If this statement means that man is able to learn to eat and enjoy flesh foods, and to apparently thrive on them, then it is obviously true. If however it means that the human body is built in such a way that it naturally prefers flesh food and that it cannot maintain optimum health on a solely herbivorous diet, then it is false.<sup>4</sup>

Let us examine some of the characteristics of carnivores and herbivores, and see which category man fits into better.<sup>5</sup>

Carnivorous mammals: 1) Have a relatively short bowel which allows the rapid expulsion of toxic food materials. 2) Have long teeth and (often retractable) claws specially adapted for killing and holding living prey. 3) Have jaws which only open and shut in an up-and-down motion. 4) Do not usually sweat through the skin but excrete excess moisture through the bladder, and control body heat by rapid breathing and extruding the tongue. 5) Have saliva without ptyalin, a chemical which digests starches. 6) Secrete perhaps ten times more hydrochloric acid than herbivores—enough to dissolve bones in the digestive tract.

Herbivorous or vegetarian mammals, however: 1) Have relatively long bowels, because their food gives up its nutrients slowly. An herbivore’s food breaks down by processes of fermentation favoring a different set of bacteria from the carnivore’s, so that what is bacteriologically

suitable for one is unsuitable for the other. 2) They are not equipped with teeth and claws suitable for fastening into living prey. 3) Their jaws not only open and shut but have a slight lateral motion for the purpose of chewing—pulping and salivating food as a preliminary digestive process. Their saliva contains the ferment ptyalin for the pre-digestion of starches. 4) Their teeth differ from the carnivores', in shape and in enamel. 5) They sweat through the skin.

Obviously human beings have much more in common with herbivores than carnivores. Still, we are capable of eating flesh; most of us in America eat a lot of it and would not have it otherwise. We must have learned how to do it somehow, despite the fact that we are physiologically ill-equipped for it.

Let us look at our closest relatives, the anthropoid (man-like) apes. "As the name implies, the anthropoid apes are man-like in their anatomical structure. . . . In their dentition, particularly in the molar teeth, anthropoid apes also show a close resemblance to the Hominidae. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether isolated fossil teeth belong to apes or hominids. . . . The disposition of the abdominal organs in apes corresponds quite closely with that of man, and even in their microscopic details some of the organs of the body show a remarkable resemblance. These examples of anatomical and physiological similarities between the large anthropoid apes and the Hominidae could well be multiplied."<sup>6</sup>

If it can be determined, then, what the anthropoid apes are in the habit of eating, perhaps it would give us a clue into the original diet of man. And it is a significant and often overlooked fact that in the natural state under ordinary conditions the anthropoid apes are predominantly and habitually vegetarian, although they can learn to eat and relish

flesh under extraordinary circumstances, e.g. captivity. Ivan Sanderson, writing of the gorilla, says:

"Gorillas are immensely powerful creatures; just how strong is not properly comprehended by any man. Two-inch, tempered steel bars have been bent by frightened gorillas. . . . It appears that this greatest of the Primates is, in fact, not the ravening ogre he has been depicted, but just a big, easily scared vegetarian, desiring nothing more than to be left alone in his forest fastnesses to raise his solemn quiet little kids, and be allowed the occasional privilege of marauding a human banana plantation."<sup>8</sup>

While the gorilla and orang-outan have been taught to eat flesh in captivity, there is no authenticated case of their eating it in the wild; the same is not true of the chimpanzee, however. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, "The diet is primarily vegetarian and includes fruits, leaves, seeds and other foods. Termites, ants, and occasionally meat are also eaten."<sup>9</sup>

Jane Goodall has recorded instances of the particular chimpanzees observed by her hunting and eating flesh. It appears, judging from all the evidence, that this is aberrant behavior, relatively recently acquired, although that cannot be stated with certainty.<sup>10</sup> The point of course is not that apes and hominids are incapable of eating flesh, but that their bodies are made in such a way that they need not, and under ordinary circumstances will not, eat it in order to ensure optimum health. If this be so, I think it is a fair and safe assumption that judging from the biological evidence, *Homo sapiens* was originally a vegetarian and learned to eat flesh under extraordinary circumstances at a relatively late date.

Professor Stevens suggests that this occurred during the Ice Ages, and that it originally affected only those humans

who lived in the northern part of the world directly affected by the glaciers. Such humans, in order to survive, adopted what we know as the "Eskimo culture"—i.e., they became hunters and eaters of flesh, living much as the Eskimos (the name literally means "eaters of raw flesh") live today for similar reasons.<sup>11</sup>

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Professor Day says, "It is a curious fact that, although evidence for the evolution of man is extensive, direct fossil evidence of the earliest members of the species *Homo sapiens* is relatively scarce."<sup>12</sup> Stone tools have been discovered dating back as far as 500,000 years. Two types of tools have been identified: Hand axes or primitive mattocks from the south, and flakes used as spears, harpoons, etc., in the north.<sup>13</sup> Professor Stevens says: "The significance of the handaxe culture is great. The presence of stone tools of this type five hundred thousand years ago suggests that man by that time was actually planting seeds.

"Just as modern culture could hardly be explained by the practices of the Eskimo, so our conception of early man is distorted when we see it only in terms of the cave man with spear, club, and a pile of gnawed bones. The illusion has been caused by the fact that most paleontological research has been done in the northern lands. . . .

"Summing up the botanical evidence, (Oakes) Ames concludes that 'man, evolving with his food plants, developed horticulture and agriculture in both hemispheres at a time which may well have reached far back into the Pleistocene.'"<sup>14</sup>

It is not possible within the confines of this paper to retrace each step of Professor Stevens' argument. His thesis, briefly, is that domestication of meat animals came about as a result of meeting or "cul-

ture-clash" between the settled horticulturists of the south and the nomad hunters of the north; that it occurred about eight thousand years ago; and that this preceded organized warfare among humans by about three thousand years. He cites a great deal of archaeological evidence, such as: "At Anau in Turkestan the Pumpelly expedition found remains of human cultures running back nine or ten thousand years. In the lower levels there are no traces of animal husbandry. Then, at a certain point, the nature of the artifacts changes; it is possible to say: Here people began to keep cattle and sheep."<sup>15</sup>

For our purposes, it is enough to recognize that the primal decision was not made when northern man became a hunter; the way of life of a nomad hunter is not necessarily ecologically destructive and the Eskimos and American Indians of recent history show that a very stable and harmonious relationship between man as hunter and the environment is not only possible but has been achieved for thousands of years. Man the predator can fit as easily into the environment as man the fruit-eater. The importance of that development lies in what it led to: the fruitful decision somewhere along the line *to domesticate animals for the primary purpose of killing them and eating them.*

#### THE RESULTS

With this decision the mining of our topsoil and waste of fertile land began in earnest. The figures are inexorable and they turn up over and over again. As long ago as 1947 the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council stated: "Even at present low extraction rates, an average acre of wheat in the United States provides 6 times as many calories if consumed as bread than if fed to poultry and consumed as eggs; 8 times as many as if fed to broilers, 19 times as

many as if fed to beef cattle to fatten them after they leave the ranges. . . . An acre of corn provides nearly 4 times as many calories, and 5 times as much protein if properly supplemented by other proteins, if consumed as human food than if fed to hogs first. . . .'<sup>16</sup>

Writing in 1971, Frances Moore Lappe in her best seller, *Diet for a Small Planet*, has even more startling figures with special reference to proteins: ". . . the protein production ratio for beef and veal in North America is 21 to 1. This means that a cow must be fed 21 pounds of protein in order to produce a pound of protein for human consumption. . . ."

"Considering all classes of livestock in the U.S., the average ratio of protein conversion is 8 to 1.

". . . An acre of cereals can produce *five times* more protein than an acre devoted to meat production; legumes (peas, beans, lentils) can produce *ten times* more; and leafy vegetables *fifteen times* more. . . . Spinach . . . can produce up to twenty-six times more protein per acre than can beef.

"Now let us put these two factors together: the large quantities of humanly edible protein being fed to animals, and their inefficient conversion into protein for human consumption. Some very startling statistics result. If we exclude dairy cows, the average ratio for protein conversion by livestock in North America is 10 to 1. Applying this ratio to the 20 million tons of protein fed to livestock in 1968 in the U.S., we realize that only 10 per cent (of the 20 million tons) was retrieved as protein for human consumption. Thus, in a single year through this consumption pattern, 18 million tons of protein becomes inaccessible to man. This amount is equivalent to *90 per cent of the yearly world protein deficit*—enough protein to provide 12 grams a day for every person in the world!"<sup>17</sup> It is not

just land that is wasted, but water too: "A person subsisting on a vegetarian diet of 2.5 pounds of bread a day is indirectly utilizing 300 gallons of water daily. Production of food for an affluent diet of two pounds of vegetable matter and one pound of beef and animal fat a day, by contrast, requires a total of about 2,500 gallons of water daily. The 'water cost' of a pound of beef—which includes that used to produce feed as well as that drunk by the animal—is about twenty-five times that of a pound of bread. . . ."<sup>18</sup> That the domestication of meat animals and subsequent overgrazing of land is at least one factor in the creation of deserts appears to be certain.<sup>19</sup> That it is a prime historical cause of war cannot be proven but may be so, nonetheless. Many references in ancient literature attest to the necessity of large amounts of land for owners of large herds and flocks. Modern biologists explain this by reference to the "food chain," consisting of "trophic levels": the higher the trophic level, the more land is required. We need not have a profound knowledge of either history or psychology to guess what the course of action would be of a group or tribe or nation that needed more land and thought that it could be had for the grabbing. To an amazing extent, the record of such grabs is history; and it may well be that man's non-flesh-eating days are prehistoric because until he became a cattle-keeper he did nothing exciting enough to record. Consider the following from Plato:

"Yes, I said, now I understand: the question which you would have me consider is, not only how a State, but how a luxurious State is created. . . . if you wish to see a State at fever-heat, I have no objection. For I suspect that many will not be satisfied with the simpler way of life. They will be for adding sofas, and tables, and other furniture; also dainties, and

perfumes, and incense, and courtesans, and cakes, all these not in one sort only, but in every variety; we must go beyond the necessities of which I was first speaking, such as houses and clothes, and shoes; . . . gold and ivory and all sorts of materials must be procured.

“True, he said.

“Then we must enlarge our borders; for the original healthy State is no longer sufficient. . . . And we shall want more servants . . . and swineherds, too, who were not needed and therefore had no place in the former edition of our State, but are needed now? They must not be forgotten: and there will be animals of many other kinds, if people eat them.

“Certainly . . .

“And the country which was enough to support the original inhabitants will be too small now, and not enough?

“Quite true.

“Then a slice of our neighbor’s land will be wanted by us for pasture and tillage, and they will want a slice of ours, if, like ourselves, they exceed the limit of necessity, and give up to the unlimited accumulation of wealth?

“That, Socrates, will be inevitable.

“And so we shall go to war, Glaucon. Shall we not?

“Most certainly, he replied.”<sup>21</sup>

## THE SECONDARY DECISION

Let us now briefly consider the consequences of the Secondary Decision: the decision to satisfy the demands of an energy-intensive technology at any cost. It should be clear that this is essentially and psychologically the same as the first decision, and is based on the same set of assumptions: that man can “conquer” nature and make her give him something for nothing; and that the day of reckoning is so far away that it will never come. Mining is mining, whether what is being mined is topsoil, wood, or fossil fuels.

Still it must rank as some sort of tre-

mendous cosmic joke that the human race could be so magnificently, so stupendously blind as to base its entire way of life on something that existed in limited quantities and *could not be replaced*, no matter how carefully it was husbanded! It would be gloriously funny if only no one were suffering and dying from it. For the phenomenon we call “Western civilization,” based squarely on the “profit motive” (i.e., the cultivation of greed) and dependent on finite fossil fuel for its very existence, has remade the world in its image and to its purpose, confident that it is doing the world a supreme act of benevolence; and in the process has condemned two-thirds of the world to starvation, “made” vast amounts of money for individual Westerners by manipulating whole populations to suit itself, moving vast amounts of food all over the world without regard for anything but “effective demand” (the ability to pay) and all at the cost of vast amounts of energy which we cannot replace! Anyone who thinks that this is an overstatement or in any way inaccurate should carefully study and digest the recent (1977) revolutionary book by Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins entitled *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*. Carefully, painstakingly, rationally they examine the reality of the world situation today and show, in instance after instance, that the so-called “population explosion” is not the problem: the problem is the unwillingness of the “have’s” to recognize that their vaunted way of life has been built squarely on the suffering of the “have-not’s” and to share with them that which is rightfully theirs. Far from feeding the hungry world, the West (especially the United States) is a net importer, often in fact making it impossible for hungry people to feed themselves:

“ ‘Haiti,’ comments environmentalist

Erik Eckholm, 'is among the few countries that already rival or perhaps surpass El Salvador in nationwide environmental destruction.' Not coincidentally, only a few people own the country's farmland. The best valley lands belong to a handful of elites and their foreign partners, who produce endless vistas of sugar cane, coffee trees, and cattle—all for export. We were particularly struck to see the miserable shacks of the landless along the edge of fertile irrigated fields growing feed for thousands of pigs that wind up as sausages for Chicago's Servbest Foods. Meanwhile the majority of Haitians are left to ravage the once-green mountain slopes in near futile efforts to grow food. In desperation thousands have fled to the United States, where they compete with the poorest paid Americans for minimum wage jobs."<sup>22</sup>—and where, as a matter of cold fact, they are often not allowed to enter at all.

From manipulating nature to suit ourselves, mining it, and assuring ourselves that neither the waste nor the cruelty of unnecessarily killing millions of highly-evolved fellow creatures outweighs the pleasure and well-being we derive from doing so, it is only a short step to manipulating nations full of fellow beings, exploiting them, and assuring ourselves that neither the waste nor the cruelty of unnecessarily starving millions of them to death justifies even the least change in our way of life—the way of life that makes it all worthwhile. This is what is called "imperialism"; it used to be practiced by governments; now it is practiced by private, immensely wealthy corporations more powerful than any government, who do not hesitate to topple governments whenever it suits them to do so.<sup>23</sup>

The United States is certainly leading the world—leading it in irresponsibility, in waste, in cynical manipulation of

others' hunger for political advantage; and as our culminating gift to the Third World which has served us so well, which sends us our coffee and bananas and rubber and steaks we love so well, we have the Lifeboat Ethic. "Lifeboat America"—serenely sailing on, worthy of being saved just because we are US, totally disconnected from the rest of the world—just as, of course, we are from nature and from the responsibility for any of our acts. As Thomas Jefferson said many years ago, speaking of another form of exploitation, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just. . ."

For it should be painfully obvious by now that:

"Far more to the point than the self-serving image of ourselves as a nutritional 'lifeboat,' able to decide whom and whom not to take aboard, is a long overdue recognition of the wastefulness of the West, led by America. Far from being the world's lifeboat, America and the West, lacking any new self-understanding, will turn out to be the world's *Titanic*, dragging down with us the remainder of our global society."<sup>24</sup>

#### ARE THERE ANY ANSWERS?

"It is five minutes to twelve," as we quoted Professor Borgstrom in the beginning; humanity is hanging onto the clock for dear life and losing its grip. The problem has turned out to be different than we anticipated: the solution does not appear to lie in forcing other people to do something, but rather in doing something ourselves. Political and activist solutions are beyond the scope of this paper; I am not opposed to those solutions, but my personal conviction is that until we have, each of us, done everything we can to eliminate our own personal support of, and dependence on, waste, greed, and exploitation, we have little right to preach to others. Responsibility begins at home. There are some

obvious courses of action which can at least serve as a beginning step.

One obvious step is to refuse to use food or other products that are marketed by corporations which exploit hungry people. Those corporations could not follow this course if we did not buy their products. It is our greed and self-complacency that support them.

Another obvious, and far more basic, step is to get off the top of the food chain and stop using ten times as much land and twenty-five times as much water as we need to survive. Is our one life really worth twenty-five Africans' lives—or Indians'—or Haitians'? Is that not what it means? The figures are stunning, and they are large enough so that there should be no doubt that one person's efforts *can* make a difference: it is only necessary that we face reality and accept responsibility for our actions.

"Some years ago, two young women were discussing how one of them would put her pet dog 'to sleep' in order to be free to take her vacation later in the year. Without wishing to seem overly sentimental I would contend that the true meaning of this benign little euphemism is well known. But the effect of its use is to permit statements and behavior that otherwise would seem monstrous. If the one woman had confessed to planning the murder of her dog for the sake of her own convenience, the moral force of such words might have caused her to re-examine her position."<sup>25</sup>

Yes, indeed. Nuclear power plants never have accidents; they have "events." People don't eat flesh; they eat "meat"—a harmless Anglo-Saxon word originally meaning "food." And very very few of the people who build their bodies on the flesh of others have even visited a slaughterhouse, let alone killed a mammal personally. Many of them may consider themselves morally superior to hunters.

But is it possible to get off the top of the food chain? Can we really survive without flesh food? Depending on one's bias, there is an awful lot of equivocation on this issue. Even Turk, Turk, Wittes, and Wittes, who in their *Environmental Science* (1978) recognize on page 44 that "It is obvious that humans, who can occupy primary, secondary, or tertiary positions in the food chain, use the Sun's energy most efficiently when they are primary consumers; that is, when they eat plants," still warn us on page 339 that ". . . even though meat represents an inefficient conversion of agricultural yields to food energy, animal protein is a valuable source of needed nutrients. Therefore, a healthy and efficient diet would consist mostly of vegetable matter with modest quantities of meat and fish." Certainly it is true that cutting down the amount of meat consumed is a step in the right direction; but I wonder what objectively is meant by "modest quantities of meat"? I suspect the average American would consider a pound of meat a week to be a "modest quantity," and that still means, for that week, 25 times the water and 10 times the land than if he ate no meat at all.

But we need not worry; the fact is that we can exist very well without eating flesh, or fish, or eggs either. Many people have done it, and it is not difficult. Let us see what is involved.

### EXAMPLES

In the twentieth century it is a fact that many productive creative people, including the very greatest, have been vegetarians. Bernard Shaw, who was a strict vegetarian all his adult life, wrote his masterpiece *Saint Joan* when he was in his seventies, and continued his amazing and productive writing career almost until his death from natural causes at the age of 94. Leo Tolstoy, another strict vegetarian for most of his adult life, wrote one of his

greatest novels, *Resurrection*, at the age of 71, and died, still productive, at 82. Mahatma Gandhi, strict vegetarian since birth, was shot dead at the age of 78 while at the height of his creative and spiritual powers. It would appear difficult to conclude that vegetarianism was necessarily harmful in the light of all this.<sup>24</sup>

Turning from these exalted personages to a homelier example, I would offer my own experience. I am 44 years old. I became a vegetarian in November 1957, and thus have not eaten flesh, fish, or eggs (with the exception of a few lapses between 1959 and 1961) for almost 22 years—just about half of my life. My wife, who is 42, has not eaten flesh for almost 24 years. My two children, a girl 19 and a boy 17, have been vegetarians from birth. I think therefore that my experience is sufficient to be meaningful.

My wife is, and always has been, very healthy. She is extremely resistant to infection and seldom gets sick.

My two children are now, and always have been, consistently and extremely healthy. My son has habitually done strenuous manual labor since boyhood—splitting wood, farm chores—and is very strong. Both he and my daughter are resistant to infections and have lost very little time from school due to absences.

As for myself, my only consistent health problem is severe migraine headaches, which I have frequently. My father (age 66) and his mother (age 92), neither of whom are vegetarians, are also subject to those headaches and they appear to be hereditary.

### CONCLUSION

The ramifications of the problems we have discussed are many, and some of them I had fully intended to explore. The relation of fossil fuel to modern corporate agriculture, for example, is a whole field in itself; as is the subject of direct population control to lower the birth rate.

Recognizing that this paper is already longer than optimum length, I would like to close with a description of a way of life of which I have had personal experience and which, I feel, points the way to a more complete solution than anything said so far.

No country suffers more than India in the population literature, and no country is blamed more for its ills. Garrett Hardin devotes six pages<sup>27</sup> to proving that India is incapable (and by implication, unworthy) of being helped. His famous aphorism, "Every life saved this year in a poor country diminishes the quality of life for subsequent generations,"<sup>28</sup> is probably more often applied to India than any other country. Therefore it is a source of satisfaction to me to describe a way of life, existing in India, which is ecologically sound, avoids even the semblance of waste, is almost entirely self-sufficient, depends on agriculture with but a minimum of cash, and is oriented around a spiritual view of life that is emotionally and intellectually satisfying.

I have visited India nine times since 1965. Until his death in 1974, my primary purpose was to visit my guru, Kirpal Singh, who had ashrams in Delhi and Dehra Dun. After his departure, it was my good fortune to come to know his leading disciple, Ajaib Singh, and to enjoy his company. Ajaib Singh is a simple man, of the kind who is spontaneously considered by his peers to be holy. Although a renunciate (he has never married nor does he own any personal property to speak of), he has always earned his own living working as a farmer. His current ashram is in the middle of the Thar Desert in Rajasthan, very near the Pakistan border. It is on the outskirts of a village which is totally vegetarian; the overwhelming majority of the villagers are disciples of Ajaib Singh. Other villages are scattered through the desert in the area, and

followers of Ajaib Singh are found in many of them.

Ajaib Singh cannot speak or write English, and most of the villagers are illiterate. They work ferociously hard, farming almost completely without machinery (there are occasional tractors, which double as automobiles or even buses). There is no electricity. Everything is recycled; nothing is wasted. There is no exception to this rule. There is literally no trash.

Water is provided via an elaborate canal system, begun by the British in the 1930's, at which time the inhabitants, most of whom immigrated from the Punjab, came there. The name of the village is 77 RB, which means that it is the 77th village served by the RB canal. The actual canal that the village is on is a small branch of the RB canal. The canal system works entirely by gravity and natural flow; a system of manual gates controls the flow. Each village has water one day a week. The fields seem amazingly fertile to me, used to New England. They are large and flat and seem to go on forever. Some crops are raised for cash—principally sugar cane and mustard. The proportion is small, however, and the amount of cash in these villages is necessarily minimal. Wheat, vegetables, fruit, and cotton are grown, and it is safe to say that no food, under ordinary circumstances, is imported into the area. Dairy cows are kept and milk is drunk; no cattle are killed, however. The males are kept as bullocks and provide most of the heavy work in the fields—along with camels. Since cotton sticks are available for fuel, the cow dung is composted and used for fertilizer.

The original landlord and owner of the village, who bought the land back in the 1930's, is alive and healthy, age 107, and still works in the fields (although not every day). He has long since ceased to be

the sole owner; and most, if not all, the villagers, now own their own fields. The original owner's son, in his 70's, is the only person in the village who knows English. He is a retired station-master.

Ajaib Singh's ashram is the spiritual focus of the community. While the villagers are uneducated, lack of education has a very different connotation in India. I once knew an illiterate driver who had memorized the entire *Ramayana* of Tulsidas—a feat comparable, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to an illiterate American memorizing the complete works of Shakespeare. Basic philosophical and spiritual questions are live and burning issues to the Indian peasant. An informal spiritual gathering, called "satsang," is held nightly, work schedule permitting. These meetings are centered around the singing of the Indian folk hymns called *bhajans*, which are liltily beautiful, artistically and emotionally satisfying on every level, and have no real counterpart in the West. Ajaib Singh may comment on one or more of the *bhajans*.

Once a month a large Satsang is held, attended by hundreds of villagers from the area. At these meetings Ajaib Singh will speak for two hours or more—a profound and thoughtful talk, touching on basic spiritual values. After the meetings everyone is fed free of charge.

Since my first trip to this village in 1976, a large number of Westerners have made the pilgrimage to see at first hand what a genuinely spiritual life and its attendant fruits are like. Ajaib Singh has also toured the West, speaking at the Oriental Philosophy class at Plymouth State College (through an interpreter) during his stay at Sant Bani Ashram here in New Hampshire.

I have now visited this saint and his ashram four different times, and I can state categorically that I have never



ABOVE: *Ajaib Singh, the spiritual leader of the ashram at 77 RB (in chair) with some of the villagers. The 107-year old landlord is standing at extreme left. BELOW: The ashram stove. Note the cotton stick fuel and the clay pots. Hundreds of visitors are served from this one stove at the time of the monthly gatherings.*





*ABOVE: Plowing with a camel. BELOW: The branch canal, coming from the large RB canal, that supplies the village with water.*



known such profound happiness and inner peace as at this community which has managed to avoid all the ills on every level to which our society is heir. It is most definitely a signboard pointing one direction in which the problems facing us can be dealt with. We at Sant Bani Ashram in New Hampshire have taken it this way, and are endeavoring to incorporate its principles as fully as possible into our own program. This way of dealing with these problems restores the focus to individual and collective responsibility and wise use of resources, both physical and spiritual; it produces beautiful fruit. I shudder to think of the alternatives.

#### NOTES

1. Georg Borgstrom, *The Hungry Planet*, pp. viii-ix.
2. Henry Bailey Stevens, *The Recovery of Culture*, p. 89. The late Professor Stevens was Dean of the Graduate School at the University of New Hampshire and Director of the University Extension Service, Durham. His book is a classic.
3. Hugh Nicol, *The Limits of Man*, pp. 155-156. The beginning of the Industrial Revolution is usually placed at around 1750, but Professor Nicol shows that the attitude toward nature and energy sources characteristic of that Revolution began 300 years earlier. In fact, the discovery of coal, the first of the fossil fuels, was first seen as an alternative to the rapidly disappearing wood of Western Europe.
4. Sometimes it is stated that we are not herbivores because "we cannot eat grass like the cow." This statement is both false (wheat and rice, etc., are domesticated grasses) and irrelevant: the cow is not the only herbivore, and it is not necessary to eat every kind of vegetation in existence to prove one's herbivorousness. Koalas, for example, eat only eucalyptus leaves.
5. The following table is adapted from Geoffrey Rudd, *Why Kill for Food?*, pp. 9-10.
6. Michael H. Day, "The Evolution of Man," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th edition, Macropedia Volume 11, p. 419.
7. Robert M. and Ada W. Yerkes, *The Great Apes: A Study of Anthropoid Life*, discuss this question thoroughly and independently for each species (pp. 122-127, the orang-outan; pp 231-235, the chimpanzee; pp. 416-419, the gorilla) and in each case arrived at this conclusion.

8. Ivan T. Sanderson, *Living Mammals of the World*, pp. 102-103.
9. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th edition, Micropedia Volume II, p. 847.
10. Jane Goodall, *In the Shadow of Man*, pp. 49-50. Ms. Goodall's latest observations—"Life and death at Gombe," *National Geographic Magazine*, Volume 155 (5),—published in May 1979, give evidence that the unusual behavior patterns of these flesh-eating chimpanzees is continuing to evolve. Late manifestations include murder (apparently premeditated), organized warfare, and cannibalism. That none of this behavior has ever been observed before, by Ms. Goodall or anyone else, suggests strongly that these particular apes are caught up in a basic, continuing change of lifestyle perhaps parallel to that of man in the Ice Ages. The connection between flesh-eating (killing members of species not one's own) and warfare, murder and cannibalism (killing members of one's own species) appears logical, and the human taboo on cannibalism but not on war is not objectively obvious. What better use to make of all those bodies? Lots of easily assimilable protein there.
11. Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.
12. Day, *op. cit.*, p.425.
13. Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27, 108.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. The quote is from Oakes Ames (1939), *Economic Annuals and Human Culture*, Botanical Museum of Harvard University, Cambridge, p. 143.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.
16. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 178.
17. Frances Moore Lappe, *Diet for a Small Planet*, pp. 6-9.
18. George R. Lucas, Jr., "Political and economic dimensions of hunger," *Lifeboat Ethics: The Moral Dilemma of World Hunger*, pp. 9-10.
19. Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-96, 180-181. See also, Turk, Turk, Wittes, and Wittes, *Environmental Science*, pp. 322-324.
20. E.g., Genesis 13: 1-12.
21. From *The Republic*, Jowett trans. Quoted in Stevens, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-147.
22. Frances Moore Lappe and Joseph Collins, *Food First*, p. 37.
23. Lappe and Collins, *op. cit.*, is one long documentation and explanation of this statement.
24. James Sellers, "Famine and interdependence: toward a new identity for America and the West," *Lifeboat Ethics*, p. 101.
25. Stuart W. Hinds, "On the relations of medical triage to world famine," *Lifeboat Ethics*, p. 49.
26. See also pp. 2-5 above.
27. *Lifeboat Ethics*, pp. 124-130.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

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waiting

*no matter  
if you don't go far  
soar high  
circle the sun*

*no matter  
if you falter, fall,  
lose for a time  
that first bright vision*

*no matter  
for on the other side of time  
He is waiting  
with such love*

*Lord of all  
yet loving all  
even the small  
even the falling*

*no matter on the other side  
of time  
with such love  
waiting*

*waiting*

LOUISE RIVARD