

ings, emotions, and ideas, you can realize freedom from suffering.

To do this, all you have to do is settle down on the ground of human life, depend on that sadness to be there, and accept it. Deal with sadness, or happiness, with patience, zealously, and understanding. In other words, try to deepen your experience of life again and again. If you talk, picking out one thing, your talk is already noise. Even if you talk about oneness, that talk is noisy. So just practice sitting right now, right here in silence. That is Buddha's full teaching.

As a human being, you have the profound desire to be free from suffering and know oneness. But real oneness is not something you can understand objectively; you must become one with it. Through your life you can touch the depth of existence. Zen teaching emphasizes right now, right here, because you always have the opportunity to touch silence right where you are this very moment.

When you are just sitting in zazen there is nothing to say, there is just silence. That silence is your life and also others' lives, which have become the contents of your life. All are interconnected and interpenetrated. When you taste this, very naturally your life becomes fully alive. Then you really understand your life, you express it, and you help others. The deep, disconsolate flavor will turn 180 degrees, and you will find joy.

PART THREE TIMELESS FREEDOM

We cannot ignore time. Time is something very conspicuous in our lives. We live in the realm of time, so we have to think about it from many different angles: intellectual, emotional, psychological, and empirical. The problem of time is important philosophically, but it is also important to consider time religiously. Dogen Zenji in particular constantly emphasized how important it is to think about time in a practical way and to understand how time influences human life. Dogen's view of time was quite different from a philosopher's point of view, because his understanding of time came from a very profound experience of Buddha's teaching.

Usually we think of time in the common sense, as a stream running from the past through the present to the future. We think that way because we base our idea of time on the law of cause and effect. If someone hits you, you feel pain, so your human consciousness creates an idea of time that connects the past, present, and future. Then you believe that time is passing quickly and is characterized by the continuous existence of separate beings.

But that is a narrow understanding of time, which creates lots of problems and lots of suffering, because when you think about time that way, you become egoistic. You

believe that another person's time is separate from yours and that you only have to take care of your own time. Then you feel isolated and cold. You don't feel a warm relationship with other people or beings and you can easily hurt them.

When we see human life only from that narrow view of time, we are blind to the total picture of time. This is a big problem. It is like always climbing a mountain and never seeing the mountain from a distance. Sometimes, to understand the life of the mountain, you have to see the beauty of the mountain as a whole, connected with the clouds and the sky. We cannot ignore or escape from the stream of time. We must be there. But we cannot be blind.

In *Shobogenzo*, "Uji" (Being-Time), Dogen Zenji says: Open your eyes and let's see time from a different angle! When you see your life from the broad view of time, you see that your life is not something separate from time—your life is time.

It is very important to see your life not only from the narrow view of your egoistic telescope but also from the broad view of the universal telescope called egolessness. This is why we have to practice. Right in the middle of the stream of time, we have to open our eyes there and see the total picture of time. Through spiritual practice we can go beyond our egoistic point of view. We can touch the core of time, see the whole world in a moment, and understand time in deep relationship with all beings. Then we cannot be isolated and cold people. We become beautiful and warm people, appreciating and helping all beings. That is why Dogen always emphasized seeing time in a deeper way.

Dogen Zenji's view of time is very difficult to understand. No one else has expressed the meaning of time exactly the way Dogen did. So when you read "Being-Time," probably you don't understand it. But even though it's difficult, try to get a taste of it. Try to understand, because through the words Dogen is expressing his deep experience of time. He is compassionately showing us how to make time alive in our lives. Dogen really wants us to understand how time influences human life so that we know how to live in the best possible way.

When you understand how the various aspects of human life unfold in a moment, you can live freely in the realm of time. You can face the moment and know what to do. Then, through conscious action, you can create your life, and your life really works.