

*When you can't move
an inch*

WE ARE SELFISH. We can't get away from it. At the same time, we can't say with conviction, "I must live with my selfishness." In other words, we can neither escape nor stay with our selfishness. Still, this doesn't mean we should think we can't be free of selfishness. The question we must ask is, How can we take care of our selfishness?

When we are driven into a corner and we can't move an inch—this is precisely where the Buddha Way helps us. When we are in this difficult place—which is where we spend our lives—we have to do something. This is what the Buddha's teaching is all about. But it is not about getting an *idea* of how to get out of this corner. This teaching is about letting us know just what our situation actually is. In the case of selfishness, it is about letting us know what selfishness is, how it works, and how we can best deal with it. *This* is our practice. This is why, in Buddhism, we study the human mind in great detail.

Our purpose is not to get some *idea* of how consciousness

functions. The ideas we come up with—whatever they are—are always limited. When we hit the limits of an idea, we want to dump it and move on to some other idea. If it begins to dawn on us how dismal this process is, we can get pretty depressed. This is where practice comes in. Practice allows us to go beyond such limitations. So we have to understand deeply just what practice is.

If we are to take care of it in the best way, we have to open our hearts completely to our selfishness. This means that if you see others as your enemy, you have to realize that *you* are the enemy, not them. You have to realize that as you look at them, so they look at you. You have to let them look at you until you become the object instead of the subject. You have to look at yourself until you see yourself as they do.

Usually we look at everything just from our own perspective. We just look at "them," and that's it. But in doing so, they are always separate from us, and we are cut off from them. With this understanding, we can't accept others at all.

When we see things only through our intellect, all relationships appear frozen. This makes all relationships into ideas. Very naturally, then, you and I appear as separate beings.

The relationship between you and me is not something static. It's in motion constantly. When we look deeply, we see that both subject and object are nothing but constant motion as well.

The Buddha's teaching is about accepting both subject and object as they appear together in dynamic movement. It's not merely an idea. It's Reality, and we can *see* it directly.