

# **The Everyday Sanyasan**

## **Chapter 6. The Strength of Gentleness**

### **Living in Gentleness**

B. We're here with Sean Thomas, in this continuing series on Ramananda, principal teacher and founder of the Sadhana Society. The last time we talked about the world tour and your visiting with Mother Theresa. And when I think of her, I think of what a gentle person she is and how she dealt with each situation with a certain firm gentleness, and then I think about Ghandi, who is someone that Ramananda actually spent time with, and of course, Ramananda has that quality, that transmission comes very strongly through him, so let's begin today talking about that quality and how that worked for you all in the Sadhana Society.

S. When one looks at their actions, especially as I did as young man when I first met Ramananda. I was a very strong, young man. I don't even think I was 150 pounds, and I was all muscle. And what I learned was that I could get things done through the force of my being. I could push them through. I could make them happen with force.

B. Are you talking about will power? Are you talking about being willful?

S. I'm talking about will power, very strong will power, but will power that organized my physical body and the energy of my physical body. And Ramananda would say, "Well, we need to get that stump out of the yard." And I was out there for hours with axes and shovels and vehicles, and we would get that stump out of the yard. Just sheer physical power. Of course, what happened to me is that I got older, and now doing something like that would exhaust me.

B. I see, so in the beginning you kind of had a "come hell or high water" attitude, get the job done, and then there was some sobering moments as you matured.

S. Yes, very much so. And part of the way in which Ramananda helped me with this, is the way in which he built the trails in Skull Valley. In Skull Valley, when we bought the land, away from the highway was

relatively level and then it went up into a foothill and then the foothill dropped down into a canyon that had the year-round stream that we talked about in the last interview. We ended up, especially Ramananda, building about six and a half miles of trails.

B. Six and a half miles.

S. Six and a half miles of trails, over 1,650 stone steps were put in.

B. Well that's over 30,000 feet.

S. So it's pretty dynamic to realize how much work that he did, how much work that we all put in on this property and a good example of him is at one point, we were at a particular place that was a pivotal place. It was a place that the path was about to go into a Y and there was a big stone there that was, oh let's say it was probably four feet by four feet by about three feet high and relatively flat on top, so it was just too big for us to move.

B. So it was massive and heavy.

S. Ramananda and I realized that we were going to have to get that stone out of there, and so I picked up a big, 16-pound sledgehammer and started banging away on the stone. After about 20 minutes, I was wringing wet with sweat and totally exhausted. He looks at me, and I stopped. Then he said, "I don't want to make you mad, but I can hit it in one place and it will break into three pieces."

B. Really, he said that.

S. He said that to me. He positioned his legs, picked up the sledge hammer, didn't raise the sledge hammer above his head, but just kind of picked it up and dropped the head of it, holding onto the shaft of it, so that it didn't change the place that it was going to hit. And it goes up and comes down, and goes smack, and that rock split into three pieces. And he looked at me and smiled; his eyes kind of gleamed, and he said, "I wish I could teach that to you, but I really don't know how to teach it to you."

B. So it's not about sledge hammers and rocks, it was something about the chi and the vector of force and his own atunement.

S. I think that's it, but as he was saying, it was an intuitive experience for him. He looked at the rock and he said, "Oh, it needs to be hit right here."

B. He just received that information.

S. Yes, and then — in the essence of gentleness, just dropped the sledge hammer that I had been swinging.

B. See, that reminds me of these karate expert who break things with their bare hands. It looks magical, but there's some kind of knowing there.

S. Well, I think what it is with Ramananda was that he lived in gentleness, he lived with a sense of harmony. If I were to idealize it, I would say, he's talking to the rock that he's moving and he's saying, "Okay, we're just going to move you over here just a little bit. Ah we moved you a little bit. Okay, we're going to move you a little more. Okay, now we're going to move you a little more." And so there was this rapport between him and his task, him and the object of his task.

B. So it's kind of like a total atunement to the physical plane.

S. I think so. It's an art form, a way of artistic expression.

B. So what you're saying is that was a central part of his transmission to you.

S. Very much so, but I want to say even more, it was — and your term about an atunement to physical reality begins to express it. It's almost magic, a magic that is not a deceptive magic. It is that quality of possibility that things can happen in an easy way, that things can happen without stress.

### **Ease in Creation of Being**

B. So is this equivalent to Ease of Being, or as my teacher says, complete relaxation?

S. Well, it's very equivalent to Ease of Being, and I back away from the term relax or relaxation, because so many people shut down when

they hear the term 'relax' or 'relaxation.' They think of it in terms of going to sleep.

B. Or sitting in front of the television with a beer in their hand.

S. Yes, something like that. It's really better said as Ease of Being, where being is a verb, not a noun. It is the manifestation. It is an ease in Creation of Being, creation of who I am. This is a wonderful analogy — here I am working so hard to move something, and I've got all this stress and all this sense of character and importance and even life or death — because that's what you do when you're mustering all your physical power to get something done.

You're literally pushing yourself to "I'm either going to do this or I'm going to die trying." It's the charge in me, that is so far beyond the task at hand. You can be very focused without making it a stressful situation. This is the difficulty of teaching gentleness, and this is why he said to me, "I can't teach it to you." What he was really saying was, "You have to learn it from living with me, from being with me, from feeling me do it and then you do it and you begin to see, you begin to experience it yourself."

B. But is it part of that feeling, actually finding the things that are not gentle and transforming them? In other words, seeing those parts of your personality, or your parts of your behaviors that are willful or not attuned to the natural way?

S. I would say that in the beginning, I do have to make that decision, "I want to do this. This is something I want to do." So there is a willfulness there. The complexity, the confusion, comes in when I begin to bring into it the emotional patterns that have nothing to do with the action.

B. So this is the additional jetsam and flotsam. This is ancillary content that has nothing to do with the objective.

S. Yes. And this is what, especially us in the West, we learn to get things done by creating highly stressful situations. As I begin to have to work with this, I thought I couldn't get something done if I didn't create a 'drop-dead' date.

B. For me, when a deadline is created, it seems to muster energy, because that's a line you can't cross. You have to have your task finished before that deadline.

S. Now the difficulty in doing something like that, especially in the fields that we're in today, is that when I have a deadline, the deadline begins to become what's important and not the quality of my creation.

### **Moving in the Creative Flow**

B. So what you're saying is that the concept of the objective itself becomes paramount over the process of getting there.

S. Yes. And I lose my gentleness, I lose my perception. To be very specific, I lose my creative flow, because what happens is, I'm getting it done, and I'm very good at getting it done, but in that focus, I've lost — I've stopped seeing the possibilities of how to get it done.

B. Yes, and that's something that Ramananda maintained in your example. He was seeing the possibility, he was seeing the architecture of the task, rather than the end point or the deadline.

S. I think so. Even further, and we're laughing about it, about how he almost was talking to the stone. He was in an intimate relationship with the stone as he was moving it out of the pathway. And we had these big steel bars, if you remember, you probably saw us with them sometimes. We'd be moving these things, these gigantic 400-, 500-, 600-pound stones out of the pathway.

B. And you were using these pry bars?

S. Yes, we were using pry bars and such things, and it worked when — and the best way I can say it is when we made love with the boulder, when I became intimate with the boulder and it moved, and let a silly little millimeter of movement be all I wanted to do.

B. Well, now that really reminds me of something my teacher Ram Dass said to me. He said, "You'll know you're on your way to enlightenment when you're in the grocery store checking how moist and juicy an orange is and you find that you're making love to that orange."

S. Yes, it is something like that. You mentioned that you spoke of it as an attunement to the physical reality of the boulder. I want that to be a less intellectual concept and a more tangible thing, because that's

what Ramananda was. He was very tangible. His hands were in the dirt. His hands were on the side of the stone. He was touching. His heart was touching the heart of the stone. He was very involved with it, and in that involvement, that stone moved.

B. It sounds to me like you're talking about a living presence. In other words, that contactfulness was Ramananda's living presence with the physical plane, and also his living presence with his intention in the physical plane.

S. Yes, so it did include a will, it did include an intention. "I really want to move this rock out of the pathway." Okay, so that was there, and yet, there was this presence that he would tap into, that he touched, that I learned to touch also. The best way to describe it is gentleness, because **gentleness is never rushed**.

B. Alright, now this brings up a big question for me that I've studied a lot and that my teachers have talked to me about. What's been said to me is that when you are doing something with your own intention, that is sometimes willful, but if you're doing the Will of the Universe, God's Will, God's Will is effortless, and I'm wondering if that type of effortlessness is what you're talking about when you say gentleness. And I know that's a very Christian thing, but we were all brought up that way, so that's why I ask.

S. This is — actually, it's a very highly complex question.

B. Oh dear.

S. And it is, because it's not nearly so simple, because I am God's Will. **I am God's Will**. Very important to understand. It's not that I'm not. Even when I'm lustful. Even when I'm stressed out and freaking because I've pushed myself so hard, I am touching God. I am touching the will of God. It's important to begin to really understand this. What happens is that I allow other things to become involved in my action that creates stress, that creates anxiety, that clouds my mind, that's getting in the way of me seeing the flow, which is the physical presence of our Divine Heritage in manifestation.

Now, what am I saying? The Bible talks about the devil and how one gets in league with the devil, and if you look at the seven deadly sins and really look at what they are, they're turning our back on God.

B. Absolutely, the seven deadly sins are ways we turn our back on God.

S. And so what happens is that, if I'm in Nature and I'm trying to move a stone, and sometimes, sometimes the magic doesn't work. And the stone doesn't move, and so we move the path.

B. In other words, we feel like the stone needs to be there because it won't move.

S. The stone says, "I'm not going to move." And at that point you go, "Oh, okay, I respect that. I guess we need to make a little curve here." You don't go out and bring a backhoe up there.

B. Or dynamite and blast it.

S. That's right, you don't. We only did one major tree cut on that six and a half miles of trails. We honored living things.

B. So you were actually following the Life Contour of the Land Itself.

S. Very well said, Bill, very well said. And that's why, that's why if you remember, in walking the trails, there was times that you might have gotten a little winded, and you might stop for a couple of minutes and breathe deeply and then continue on. There is a flow of your movement in the landscape. If instead you climbed an equivalent amount of stairs, you'd probably be sitting down after awhile with your heart pounding.

B. I never thought about that. Walking those trails seemed interesting and fairly effortless to me.

S. They did for me too, and the reason why, is even though there was some extreme movement in elevations, because we followed the Living Contour of the Land, because of that presence, because of that living presence, it was easier.

B. You're right about that because you know going down was pretty steep in some areas and that didn't bother me at all either.

## **Working in Harmony**

S. It was fascinating the way in which the stairways and the paths were built, and I'm so fortunate to have been able to be a part of their creation. Now going back to this idea of using will to get a task done. In the *Dancing with the Dakinis* series, we talk about establishing your intention in the beginning. Yes. You want to do that. You say, "I'm doing this to move the rock, but I'm doing this to move the rock in harmony with the land, in harmony with the stone itself." And in every step of the way, that's what I'm doing, I'm working in harmony. Now it may mean that I spend four hours moving the stone, and I don't get any more done on the path today but move that stone. That's okay, because this work that I'm doing is a labor of love. I'm doing this because it opens my heart.

B. So you're much more interested in the process than the result.

S. Yes, because the process makes the result.

B. The process changes you.

S. The process changes me and changes the result. In Skull Valley, the ridge on the property where we built all the trails was called Rattlesnake Ridge, and people were afraid to go up there because there were so many rattlesnakes up there.

B. Really, there were so many rattlesnakes.

S. In the 20 years that I was there, I saw two rattlesnakes there on the trail.

B. Where do you think they all went?

S. I think that the way in which we did it became a sign for them that this wasn't where they wanted to be.

B. I think you're absolutely right. I always felt very safe up there. I never thought about that.

S. No, it was never even a question. You and I have talked about it, and in an upcoming series, we're going to talk about working with the Wrathful Deities. One of the ways that the Native American worked with the powerful Wrathful Deities was that they worked with snakes.

B. So snakes represented Wrathful Deities to them.

S. Snakes can be a representation of the Wrathful Deities. Now what do we mean by that? Well, I'm sure you've been out on a nature walk with somebody from the city, and you came across a snake, and the person was deathly afraid. They were filled with fear, and they were picking up a big stone. They were going to kill the snake.

B. Right.

S. In fact, their reaction was way beyond any threat that the snake offered them. And that's really a good example of realizing that when we're confronted with something that has the potential of being frightening, we run amok. We're way back down into that life or death thing, and in that life or death thing, we're ready to destroy that living being, and it's because they're unpredictable. Okay, so let's go back and say, "We've got this and we're beginning to understand that basically each one of us loads a task with all kinds of emotional stuff."

B. Loading the task....

S. Yes, we load the task with all kinds of emotional things, and sometimes, we even go so far as to make it a life or death situation.

B. Like going to your boss to get a raise.

S. Sure, like going to your boss to get a raise, or making a decision in corporate America. Yes, I really feel bad about the people in the town, but we can't operate that thing and lose a dollar every year. We can only operate a plant if it makes money. So 40,000 people are out of work, well, yes. So? It's the life of the corporation. We have to make sure that the corporation survives. Or take it further, and we're dealing with this on an international level. The fanatics of a religious organization say that it's life or death. Either everybody's going to convert to my way, or I'm going to die making them convert, and so I strap a bunch of dynamite on myself and walk among a bunch of people in a shopping mall and let go the trigger. It is so far beyond what the teachers in that religious organization were saying. It's such a perversion, and yet it's the same thing that we do when we look at moving a stone out of the path.

B. We have that same black and white thinking.

## **Stepping Out of the Way**

S. We say, oh my gosh — and an analogy, if we look at this as an analogy, is a stone in my path. “I’ve got a stone in my path.” Or “I’ve got an errant motivation, a bad motivation that’s coming up every time that I try to kiss the Blarney Stone. Every time I try to bend down and pick up something, my back hurts. Okay. So I’m going to stop bending over. Instead of thinking that I need to find a new way to bend over, instead of saying, “there are a whole lot of different ways I can bend over, there may be 10,000 different ways that I can bend over.” But instead of saying that, I say, “Well, I’m going to stop bending over. I’m not going to trim my toenails anymore, because it’s just too hard to lean over and clip my toenails.”

B. That reminds me of when I had my audio-visual company. One day we had a very large, expensive TV on a stand, and it fell off the stand and fell on me and the TV was about \$1,200 but the physical therapy was about \$10,000. What I needed to do in that moment was step aside.

S. I have a story like that, too. Years ago, I was unloading a big radar unit out of a box, and as I picked it up out of the box, I realized it was a little too heavy for me. I didn’t have quite the right grip on it, and I started to drop it. Of course, instead of dropping it, I got myself underneath it. I threw my back out.

B. That’s what happened to me, and my physician told me, “Next time, just stand aside.”

S. Had I thought about it, I would have just let it fall, kind of like you’re saying, “get out of the way.” But there was something — a sense pride. There was a sense of “I can do this. I’m going to force myself to do this.”

B. Isn’t that pride the willfulness that I was talking about before?

S. And that’s why I was saying it’s a complex question, because willfulness can mean a very broad spectrum of motivation. It can include exactly what we just said. It can include an image of pride. It can include an image of selfishness, an image of harshness, an image of anger and going back to our analogy, all those things have actually very little to do with moving the stone. It’s better said that the beauty of it is getting into a relationship with your task.

Interestingly enough, all the emotional stuff that comes up, all the reasons why I'm doing this actually take me away from my task. They actually keep me from seeing the creative possibilities with my task, because I'm thinking about getting it done. I'm thinking "This is really hard. I have to really make this happen." I – I – I. There's your willfulness in the wrong way, where I could be saying, "Okay, Mr. Stone, you and I are doing this together, and I am doing my part and I'm sensitive to you. I'm sensitive to the edges on you and to the areas that I can move you so that you'll roll."

B. Isn't that what some teachers call the delusion of the independent doer, that we think we're these independent autonomous entities in an inimical or hostile universe and it's up to us to make things happen instead of realizing that we actually originate out of that universe? We're part of it, and so we're co-creating every moment.

S. I think there's a good teaching there. The confusion of a separate self is very difficult, because what happens is, is that the teaching may say there is no separate self. And people say, "Okay, I'm going to do away with my ego. I'm not going to have a self, because there's no separate self." But when we really think about it, we realize that self is both Separate and Engaged.

B. Yes, very well said. It's both, isn't it?

### **Acting in Harmony with All That Is**

S. Yes, as it is engaged, as I engage self more and more in creative activity, in harmony with my environment, in harmony respecting the aspects of things in my environment, not ignoring those things, not saying "I don't care what's happening. I'm going to get this done." As we look at that, and as we engage and get creative with things, we discover greater and greater dimensions of self, greater and greater dimensions of self-expression. And that's in harmony with greater and greater dimensions of perception of the world outside. In fact, if I have an impoverished sense of self, if I don't think much of myself, I'm not going to think much of what I perceive either. If I'm only interested in getting my car from the house to my office, and I'm in a rush to do it, I see very little on the way there. Everything that happens, every car that pulls in front of me, is a personal insult to me. I take it very

personally, because they're in the way of me achieving what I want to achieve.

B. So all I'm thinking about is achieving my goal. I've forgotten the process, which is actually the gentle, effortless will of the universe.

S. Which is acting in harmony, in gentleness, with all that is. So it is the will of the Universe, of course. And yet, it's more than that. It's me seeing that the person who just pulled in front of me is so busy talking on their phone that they didn't even know I was there. And it doesn't do anything for me to get mad at them, because they don't know I'm there anyway.

B. Right, in other words, that part of it, the anger and frustration of impediments to a goal are just projections from our own field of awareness. It's not even with them.

S. Yes, and we create that in the manner in which we cultivate our motivation to do the action.

B. I think that's an important step.

S. Yes, but it's also very important to realize that when I allow myself to get stressed out like that, I actually put blinders on. I actually stop being able to see creative options. I actually stop being able to act creatively. I become, as I'm sure you know, very reactionary. I become very trapped in what options I have and what I can do. In contrast, and it's a real contrast, when I have cultivated my motivation of gentleness, my motivation of being in harmony with things, it doesn't mean that if somebody comes up and gets in my way, I don't go around them. In fact, the beauty of it is that all I have to do is just go around them. I don't have to stand there and yell at them.

B. Because the ego is not engaged and the defenses are not active. Going around them is just as appealing as confrontation, is what you're saying.

S. In fact going around them may be more appealing, because it's very rare that a confrontation is anything but a swapping of exceedingly limited patterns.

B. That takes us back to this notion that sometimes it's not so great to be right, because being right places you — let's put it this way — being right places you in a position that you now have to defend.

S. Again, it's not so simple, because I better think I'm right. I better have a very strong belief in what I'm saying and the correctness of what I'm saying, because if I didn't, I shouldn't be doing it.

B. So that's the integrity of the intention itself.

S. That's right, that's the integrity of the intention itself. Now, that's different from me being right in a relative position with other people.

B. Isn't this whole business of being who's right and who's wrong, isn't that another definition of dualism? Doesn't that just keep us stuck there?

S. When you are determining 'rightness' in relation to somebody else, that entraps you.

B. Just the mere fact that you're doing it in relationship or by comparison, doing comparisons.

### **Ghandi's Great Salt Walk**

S. Rightness, righteousness for want of a better term, must come from within. Ghandi, again, is just this wonderful example of a tremendously simple, tremendously gentle man, who determined what right action was. Knowing that doing that right action was going to fly in the face of the authority of the British Empire. And he did it, and he did it without any sense of malice. See, again, going back to what we've been talking about, because if you or I were to do this, to do the Great Salt Walk, where Ghandi walked across the subcontinent of India and picked up a cup of sea water and then sat down in meditation and let the sun evaporate the water, so he then had a cup of salt that he didn't pay tax on to the British Empire. And he did that with absolutely no malice toward the British at all. He was teaching them. He was saying, "You can't stop us, you can't require of us to pay a tax on what happens naturally in our own backyard."

B. So it's basically like trying to tax the sun, or trying to tax the sea.

S. And in many cases, that's what governments try to do. In this particular case, it was Ghandi very simply, very directly showing that he could acquire this illegal substance, because it was only illegal

because the government hadn't put its tax on it. He was phenomenal. He would go to court and the judge would say to him, "You understand that what you've done is against the law." And he said, "Yes, I do understand that it's against your law." And the judge would say, "Okay, if I let you go, will you promise not to do that anymore?" And Gandhi would say, "I'm sorry, but if you let me go, I'll do it again."

B. The whole civil disobedience movement had that quality. It wasn't about being right. It was about seeing what was correct and authentic in the world.

S. Yes, what was, in a way, our Divine Heritage and living in that Divine Heritage.

B. Because that's there for every human being to claim.

S. Sure, it's like when they get around to trying to tax air. And they'll come to us and say, "Okay, you can breathe six times in the next hour." It sounds so absurd right now, and yet, in one particular movie I'm thinking of that was supposedly on Mars there was a tax on air, because somebody was in control of the air, and they figured out, "Oh, I'm going to tax everybody for breathing.

B. Because the air was rare, you couldn't breathe the Martian atmosphere, so it became like gold, or salt, or a restricted or limited resource.

S. Right, and this would have been a very good way for Gandhi to do some real strong nonviolent action, some satyagraha. It would have been one of the best ways to embarrass the authorities into saying, "Well, maybe air should be free here."

B. Remind me historically what happened with the Salt Tax. Was it repealed or did it just become a rallying point for Gandhi's movement for India to have autonomy from England?

S. Oh it was both of those things. It was repealed, and it became a rallying point. And basically, if we think about it, had Gandhi stepped on an airplane and flown to a beach community and gone out and gotten his cup of water that way, it would not have brought the Indian people together. He was probably in Delhi, or someplace like that. He was a long way from the ocean, and stood up and started walking, and as he walked, hundreds of thousands of people began walking with

him. So that when he got to the ocean, the whole country knew what he was doing.

B. And was joining his intention by walking with him.

S. And that's gentleness. See, it's a really interesting thing. The idea that I'm going to change your mind by beating you up, by taking a plane to your headquarters and sitting down with you and yelling at you — okay, you think about that and basically it means I think I'm very powerful and you're going to listen to me. And Gandhi was this little man. He was very simple. He said, "Well, I'm not a very powerful man, but the people of India are very powerful when they act together." This is really a wonderful understanding about us, about all the personalities in the psyche — that when my personalities work together, I'm very powerful.

B. Does that mean that the collective will, in that example, of all those folks going to the sea, that collective will is close to divine will, that that's when that starts. You know we had that wonderful chat last time about community, and how the collective has something going on that perhaps the individuals don't, or that there's some kind of reciprocation between the collective and individual. And it sounds like when Gandhi started his walk, what happened at the end, even he couldn't conceive of.

### **Walking in Harmony with Nature**

S. I think you're probably right. I think that walking in the Wholeness of Humanity created what you're calling the collective will. Doing a task in the wholeness of who I am is much more powerful than me trying to force myself on a stone to move it. I can walk in harmony, walking in harmony with the Wholeness of Humanity is a pretty fantastic thing.

B. I sure like the sound of it, Sean.

S. With Ramananda, it was walking in harmony with Nature.

B. So it didn't have to do with people, it was an attunement to everything, even inanimate objects like stones and rocks.

S. Yes, what we refer to inanimate.

B. What we think of as inanimate.

S. Yes, we're kind of arrogant that way. It's like the vegetarian who says, "You know I won't eat living things, but I'll eat lettuce."

B. Right, I won't eat anything with a face on it, which implies that lettuce is not a living thing.

S. Or that lettuce doesn't — the EEGs don't show the same reaction of fear that someone whose life is threatened. That's a very interesting study. *The Secret Life of Plants*, great book.

B. Was that Dr. Bowes?

S. Probably was.

B. I thought it was an Indian physician that wrote that book.

S. It was very curious, because to realize — to sit back and say, "Well, I'm not going to eat meat or fish, because those are alive, because those are higher...."

B. Higher beings that experience pain and distress from being eaten.

S. When you cut a tree, it screams, and it screams just the same way. In fact, it's really interesting, when a beetle attacks one tree in a forest, there's a communication that goes out to the other trees and they begin to produce an enzyme that will protect them from the beetle.

B. That's actually a scientifically documented fact. So what you're saying is that you and Ramananda — you were perceiving that directly?

S. Yes, that Ramananda's way of working, way of doing things was in harmony with the flow of Nature, not in some kind of dreamlike thing where he held himself aloft and said, "Okay, OM, I'm in the flow." But more wonderfully, in his action, of respect, of honoring, of actually saying to the stone, "I'm sorry that we have to break you up, but we can't move you, and we really need to do the pathway here."

B. So is that like aligning yourself with the will of the Universe, where your will and the intention of the Universe are aligned, so that not only do you feel an effortlessness in your actions, but you also feel support.

S. I think you feel support. I think that you become a Co-Creator with the Creation of the Universe. That's better said. I want to back away from somehow I'm going to align my will with God's will and I disappear and only God's Will will act through me. I think that if God's Will isn't acting through me right now, right now in this very instance, then it's not going to act through me at some later date.

B. So it's always God's Will, even when I'm pissed off at traffic, that's God's Will, and so is the traffic.

S. In a way, it is Creation creating. We can intellectualize the Will of God. It's a whole different ball game to actualize it.

B. When we actualize God, there's no concept there.

S. It's action. It's manifestation. So we have in the example of Mahatma Gandhi, in the example of Mother Theresa; people who worked in harmony with their perception of the Wholeness of Humanity. Now that's pretty heavy duty.

### **Filled with the Highest Motivation**

B. Let's get back to our gentleness theme. So here's Gandhi walking to the sea and each day more people are joining him, and so the force, power and impact of his intention is gently and gradually increasing over time.

S. Very much so. Or here's Mother Theresa, in Calcutta, as a 50-year-old or 53-year-old nun, who is realizing that in Calcutta, there are these people dying on the street and no one is comforting them. No one is doing anything for them at all. They're just ignoring them and letting them die on the street. And so she commandeers a cart and makes a deal with somebody for a portion of a warehouse, and she begins picking people up, so they can experience a sense of being loved before they die. She's not trying to save them. She's not trying to convert them to Catholicism. She's offering them love in their final moments, in their final days.

B. I think that's a very important distinction, because that is what she was doing and there's importance in that. I think in the West, we think, "Well, you're not helping them any, they're still going to die." But you're talking about quality of life and you're also talking about, again, some kind of alignment with what's happening in the outside world and what's happening in the interior world.

S. It's a very wonderful thing when you begin to realize that my reality, my world is colored by the intention that I infuse in my actions. I remember one time, someone who was a very strong environmentalist, and opposed to war, asked a Tibetan Rinpoche, "Should we not pay taxes, because they're going to use their taxes to make war machines and cut down trees and do all kinds of horrible things?" And the Rinpoche looked back at him and said, "Pay your taxes. Pay them filled with the highest motivation, the most peaceful motivation, the most loving motivation. Offer those taxes as an offering, as a divine offering to your yidam, to your image of God that you resonate with. Then, in that, they may just learn not to spend it on war."

B. That's a much more gentle approach, and yet, as we've seen in your examples throughout this interview, it can be very powerful. It can liberate a country. It can break apart an obstinate 600-pound stone.

S. A very large rock, yes. It can do all kinds of things, and that's the beauty of it. It's what coming from me. It's not the circumstance that creates me. It's me. I create me in the circumstance, and so I have the option of putting anger, frustration, exhaustion, of putting all kinds of yucky stuff into the circumstance. Or I have the option of putting love, beauty, openness, smiles and creativity into the actions. Believe me, the truth is that when I put gentleness, when I act in gentleness in a circumstance, options of action open up that I didn't even have a clue might be there. I am astounded. It's kind of like what you said, that the number of people that ended up being part of Ghandi's walk was probably a little surprising. I think that there were half a million people who were walking with him by the time he ended. Can you imagine that?

B. It seems to be a very slow and gentle progression.