

Tara Singh

by Patrick Harbula

*As this interview proceeds I get the definite sense that Tara Singh is not interested in teaching me/us something, but rather learning from our shared experience. His willingness to be here, present in the moment, beyond all preconceived ideas, conveys more than his word can ever – **the miracle***

Patrick: Tara Singh, you are well known for your work with A Course in Miracles. What is the state of being that is necessary for miracles to occur?

Tara Singh: That's a wonderful question. I think the Course makes certain things very clear. One is that relative knowledge with its duality cannot know truth, from the very outset, A Course In Miracles makes the distinction between the relative thought system of the brain- by which we live -and the Absolute Thought system of God. And it is clear that thought cannot be used as a means of coming to the absolute.

Patrick: If thought cannot know truth, what are we going to use?

Tara Singh: Instead of using thought as a means of arriving at truth (which is not possible) we have the miracle, which is just another name for awareness. It is an intensity of awareness that is no longer subject to thought but has its own independent reality. And that awareness allows the unknown to take place. The involuntary action that undoes thought is something supreme and sacred. It is called a miracle because it just happens; it is given. The given is made accessible to awareness, not to the knowing's of thought.

Patrick: And how do we know that, if it's not through thought?

Tara Singh: When I see that the given is accessible, then I have to question thought, and give it some space. But Patrick, this would require a totally different way of life. It doesn't fit if one still values self-centeredness, self-preservation, and "I know, you don't." That's been the error of mankind from the beginning: "I know, you don't." "A Course in Miracles eliminates that concept.

You see, the miracle takes place when I want to undo what I know and you know. The teacher is no longer someone who has authority over another. Yet all we have known is "I know, you don't." We have lived by authority and conformity so that whatever one does at the external, collective level has authority in it. Institutional religions, schools, the media -everything influences us.

What about outgrowing influence and giving the other person space? You would need miracles to be independent of thought. For in the miracle, something else takes place and for that instant, you understand. How much attention one has to give for that to take place.

What kind of life that person would have to live. We can talk all we want about lofty ideals, but, in fact, insecurity is still the motivating factor of our lives. I don't think thought can undo it. Miracles, insight, or awareness are needed.

Patrick: The state of grace is another term that's been used for it.

Tara Singh: Yes. But people use words, and terms that have lost their meaning. I want to meet a person who lives by the actual state of grace. I would know by how he ties his shoelaces,

how much space he gives to another. When you come to that intensity of awareness, you have undone your own deception and you will not accept deception in another.

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But you won't make a cause of it. If you make a cause, then you are still motivated by insecurity.

Patrick: So it's going beyond preconceived ideas and living in the moment.

Tara Singh: Yes, and there are very few who have succeeded in it. For to come to that transformation requires outgrowing everything - the world of punishment and reward, the world of authority and conformity, the world of I know, you don't. What integrity it re-quires.

Patrick: What are some ways that we can practice arriving at that?

Tara Singh: I would say the way is very simple, Patrick. Would you give yourself the gift of self-honesty? Just begin there.

Patrick: Interview over. (laughter)

Tara Singh: You must have a passion for that honesty, that integrity. But our passion is for things and ideas and achieving. Self-honesty is very difficult, because it's so easy to theorize and talk and even believe. We deceive ourselves. To deal with deceptions, you have to really know what thought is - where it is applicable, where it is necessary, and where the tomorrow's and yesterday's creep in.

It's so simple. But it must be total. Partial attention won't do it.

Patrick: So it takes a total commitment.

Tara Singh: Yes, and bringing all levels in one's self into alignment so that there is no inconsistency, so that I am not deceiving myself. If I'm deceived then I'll make it a goal. I don't want to make it a goal because that automatically brings the future into being.

We know so little about being in the present. The Course defines a miracle as a moment when you're totally present. There's no past, no future. Somebody might say that's an insight. But it's some other action, a creative moment that takes place.

Now talking about it doesn't necessarily mean that a creative moment is taking place. I'm describing it.

Patrick: There's such an extreme difference in experiencing the world in the way you're describing, compared to the way most people do. Could you elaborate on what the world feels like from that experience?

Tara Singh: This would be a shocking thing. A Course In Miracles points out the world's insanity and meaninglessness. The wise man would say first see "what is" as it is. Then, because you've seen it, you won't be part of it, so one sees the meaninglessness and the insanity of the manmade world that is projected and pursued. Then one sees the God-created world. The order in it is baffling. Just the vitality of one orange seed. And a crop of oranges produces over a million seeds. The wonder of it can silence thought. As you begin to recognize "what is," you don't run away from the world that you see is meaning-less. One didn't come to run away; one came to be part of the world because we only exist in relationship.

Somebody else's insanity is an offense to me only if I have insanity in me. In other words, I don't care what a person's nationality, belief system, or religion may be; to me, he's a human being first. So can we look at the world as human beings and not as citizens? Everywhere the citizen is being molded. Whether you're in Germany, Finland, or Tanganyika, it is all the same.

Patrick: The thought occurred to me that maybe people, in conforming, are searching for identity.

Tara Singh: Yes, certainly. Absolutely.

Patrick: And yet true identity lies in what you're talking about - that God presence.

Tara Singh: It's amazing that identity is one of the key words in *A Course In Miracles*. It raises the question, what are you identifying with - your body or your Self as God created you? The Course capitalizes Identity when it refers to the eternal Self.

I would rather not use words like love and peace - words that are absolute -that we don't know the truth of. Pretending to know blocks the actual knowing. One has to be very careful not to conclude. For then you need a miracle to undo the conclusion.

Can I undo my own conclusion? Would you question your own conclusion?

That is the beginning of wisdom. *A Course in Miracles* and Mr. J. Krishnamurti both question. The Course does it in one way, Mr. Krishnamurti does it in another way. Jesus did it in another way. Buddha questioned but he questioned according to the times and with whom he was talking. He brought it to a simplicity that took the gods' extra arms and legs off, to a level of wisdom where truth could be communicated.

Patrick: You talk about how the Course responds to the needs of man in this age - that it is different from what's come before. Why was there the need for another scripture?

Tara Singh: At the time my attention was brought to the Course, I had just spent three years in silence. I was not even reading anymore. Other people's thoughts and words had lost their meaning. But when the Course was given directly to me, I responded because other forces were at work. I didn't want to read, but why should I be fanatic about not wanting to read? Can one also live this way. With the awareness that the unasked-for is here all the time? It's involuntary. And grace is constantly flowing. So why do I want grace according to my images?

This nation has the highest standard of living...

The fact is, somebody brought it to attention. Attention might be something very impersonal. But we make it personal. In pure attention there is no time or personality. So if I'm going to give that kind of attention, the Course is going to hit me. It contains the most powerful words I have ever heard: "Nothing Real Can Be Threatened, Nothing Unreal Exists."

Who could have uttered those words? For months the vitality of it had its impact. It isn't something you like and then put away. It's a law, a force; those words are a force. Then you see that the Course has a curriculum of a lesson every day for three-hundred sixty-five days.

Patrick, I used to wonder what the prophets of old were doing, always talking about this thing and that thing? What about the individual, the human being; they never spoke to him. I felt that for centuries I had yearned for something that was step-by-step and would undo. I don't want to know about Jonah in the belly of the whale. Good luck that he came out. But it doesn't interest me. And that Moses parted the sea is wonderful; I don't have any reason to trust it or to doubt it. But it hasn't changed me. I'm still greedy. I'm still afraid.

But here is a curriculum that starts with, "Nothing I see means anything." That is astounding. And you have the whole day to discover the depth of it, to see that no, this chair means something. Then the next lesson says I give it the meaning. I see that is a fact. I can see my attachment, my insecurity. So the Course introduces man to who he is. As he moves in the direction of acknowledging "what is," miracles start to hap-pen. This really is the action of grace; it is not words. And then one becomes grateful, very grateful for everything.

Patrick: How do the values that we're talking about work in terms of communities? You have a group that works together here at the Foundation. And we have a community that has formed around our magazine. And we struggle to move above our personal attachments, our dislikes, and those ideas that we hold on to so tightly.

Tara Singh: Well, Patrick, there was no real plan; the Foundation just grew. When I came out of three years of silence, there was no desire to do my own thing. We started with some very definite principles: that we are not going to have a community, we will not accept charity and we won't ask for donations. The need was to come to self-reliance. For me, for you, for everyone. So it started that way. We don't own anything nor do we intend to own anything. We are willing to live with insecurity. And we don't pursue success. We don't deny it, but we won't pursue it. We want to know what in-security is and why we accept it. At one time, we were eating lentils and cabbage for a week when somebody brought a twenty-five thousand dollar check. We said, no thank you. That takes some-thing else; it's your own honesty, your own conviction, and you don't organize it.

And no one here has a boss. Each person is doing what he enjoys doing. All I do is try to tell them, for God's sake, don't work so hard. Or let's go to a concert or something like that. If one is going to be honest and remove attachment and self-deception, I think one starts where one is. So instead of running away to the country, we said we're in the city. I once lived in the city, in lonely New York City and found alone-ness and self-reliance. Forever that will be the most beautiful city to me, be-cause I grew up there. You see, I grew from loneliness to the glory of aloneness. So I know there are fruits in the city.

You can't find culture in the country. In Switzerland there are the most beautiful, inspiring mountains. But then you talk to the peasants and you find they're not much wiser than the cow. We find joy in what the city has to offer. And hopefully, if we do move to the country, the country, we will have something of our own inside. We are not peasants then.

...but, it also has the highest standard of tension.

Do you see how this integration takes place? You must first start right where you are. And then "what is" begins to become boundless. You can't start with needing something. First find out finding your own potentials. That is why we don't accept charity. I don't think there's another example like this on earth.

That is the way we became more in touch with miracles merely has a wanting. First, there would have to be a miracle to take away the wanting.

Patrick: that's really interesting, because most people are looking for fulfillment by getting away from insecurity. And you're finding in insecurity.

Tara Singh: we like uncertainty. But also anything we do is out of fulfillment. So it's very joyous. And we have a good time. It's a very festive group. And we don't want to organized it or make it bigger. The very fact that we were earning a thousand dollars a day when we did the one year non-commercialized Retreat shows that we have outgrown whatever anybody would want to achieve.

At the young age of twenty-six I had earned six million dollars in india. So you see that I was not going to get carried away by a fifteen-thousand dollar profit. So then you begin to see how much this supreme intelligence off of existence has trained one. So to come to the non-commercialized action has a background to it.

I have wondered many times how we would handle success. When I first came to America there was great talk about a four-day work week so people would have more leisure. But people are already bored - they're constantly chewing gum or smoking cigarettes. One of the largest industries in America begins after five-thirty when people try to fill the vacuum created by boredom. How much money is spent in running away from the emptiness.

Affluence has not made us any happier. If we really look at it without condemnation, we can see there is more and more isolation. And it will remain this way until we find the potentials within ourselves and make our work intrinsic. But that means outgrowing motives. Now we can make work intrinsic but who is going to say what motives are?

Patrick: This could apply to anyone, because there are many people who are not feeling fulfilled in their jobs. And they want to do something, else but they're not sure how to bring that creativity out of themselves and balance their economic situation with their will to serve or be creative.

Tara Singh: Patrick, we have to see in a broad; simple way that there was a time in India when Siddhartha wanted to know God or truth. With a fire burning in him, he stood all night before his parents without contradicting them, asking for their blessing. And they let him go. He didn't take a sleeping bag or blanket with him.

What a society that must be that would take care of people going toward the spirit. There was hospitality. What have we done in affluence? There were countries - China, Egypt, India and others - that never had a restaurant or hotel. People were hospitable. So one has to see what the society has done. Don't you see? On the dollar bill it says, "In God we trust," but who trusts in God? How difficult it becomes today for somebody to say, "I'm Siddhartha; I'm going to leave in search of God." There were such beautiful young people during the sixties. But the society could never really incorporate them or learn from them. This nation has the highest standard of living in the world, but it also has the highest standard of tension.

It is nearly impossible today for a person to say, "I'm not going to seek success. I'm going to be self-reliant; I'm not going to be led by motives." He may as well dig his grave. Because the issue of hunger can only be solved at the level of food.

Let's look at the person whose job is not satisfying. He has to see that he needs a job because he has to pay rent. It's not Siddhartha's time; society has changed. But within this society, you can find potentials within you. Other-wise you make a whole problem of society. For me the external is never a problem.

So then the person who sees that he has to pay rent must discover that man's intrinsic work is taken away and he is tied to a job. No matter how much he wants his own work, he must know something whole first. If he isn't wise then it's just a wish and it's not going to work. Some kind of disillusionment has to take place in a man. Without that, everything is just a wish for the holy.

The disillusionment must come first. Very few people have their own work today, almost everyone has a job. How did this happen? The corporations own you and the government can draft you to go and kill another human being. You have to see all, this. And then you will become disillusioned and will not want to be part of a society that is false. But you must 'be practical because you have to buy gas, and so forth.

In this way, you will outgrow your job and begin to discover what your real calling is, what is it you want to do with your life. If you find that real calling it may integrate everything within you. It is an internal issue that requires a great deal of wisdom. And no one can tell another what to do.

Patrick: Okay, I've decided I've become disillusioned with my present situation and I've now discovered my calling. How do I make that transition?

Tara Singh: The calling will have its own potential: The calling would never be pretentious. Yet we are trained from childhood to seek status. But peace is found in simplicity.

It takes courage because the fear of consequences rules mankind. That's what we conform to. I think the man who really finds his calling is no longer afraid of consequences. Then he moves from his own conviction. It's not for the weak. It's not for the scheming or the clever, either: If there is the fear of consequences, one would be dishonest. So it's for the few. But one person who has come to that conviction is a strength to others.

To give man back his dignity and see that his potentials are boundless is beautiful. Don't limit yourself. The Course talks about littleness versus magnitude. It says littleness will not content you because your function is not little.

One asks, what can I do in this society? We have to outgrow it. Society is not out there; it is in us too. We have the same jealousies and insecurities as the society. The prime ministers and presidents of society are projections of our own confusion. But one has to be very wise; it's not a simple thing.

Patrick: You mention in your book, *How To Raise a Child of God*, that in order to really be effective in raising a child, parents need to change themselves.

Tara Singh: You need a lot more space for children. But the child's whole space is taken away when, at the age of four, he is put in school. And when both the parents go to work, even younger children go to day care. So you see there's not the space. It's painful to see what we are doing. What is the new generation going to be like?

Before a child is born, the sound he becomes aware of in the womb is the mother's heartbeat. And the mother's breast is right over the heart. And the baby recognizes the heartbeat when he nurses; he feels secure and content. Now we put a bottle in the baby's mouth. Do you see that we have become a civilization of expediencies?

When the child asks a question, we give an expedient answer. But we can't explore with the child. At best, we tell them a story before going to bed. And that comes from a book, too. We need to undo the pressures that we have built up. We must find out what is essential and what we can do without. Simplify. Thoreau said, "Man is enriched in proportion to what he can do without."

That is the awakening of wisdom. To be with children, we need space and time and we need to simplify. I would start there. Not with what we're going to do to save the world.

Patrick: You were saying earlier - the individuals who become disillusioned create the vitality.

Tara Singh: Certain things are obvious. And when they become obvious to me, can I make that change within myself - that I won't be subject to it? Nor will I start a campaign against or for it; it's not a counter political program. And to the degree, that you come to disillusionment, you're waking up.

So, it is always intrinsic. And your words are real; they are not ideals, goals and aims. Because if you have ideals, goals and aims it's not intrinsic. You don't say your going to be fulfilled tomorrow. I don't trust tomorrow. I like today. That way, one is at peace with oneself.

Born in India, Tara Singh traveled extensively from an early age, living in Central America, Europe and the Himalayas before coming to the United States in 1947. His close association with Mr. Krishnamurti, Prime Minister Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and Aldous Huxley contribute greatly to the rich and varied background from which he shares. Mr. Singh's books and audiotapes are available from your bookstore or directly from Life Action Press, 902 South Burnside Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036, (213) 993-5591

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