

The Miracle of Ordinariness



Bankei was one of the superb Zen Masters...and he was really an ordinary man.

Once it happened that Bankei was working in his garden. A seeker came, a man in search of a master, and he asked Bankei, "Gardener, where is the master?"

Bankei laughed and said, "Go in from that door; inside you will find the master."

So the man went round and came inside. There he saw Bankei sitting in an armchair, the same man who had been the gardener outside. The seeker said, "Are you kidding? Get down from this chair! This is sacrilegious! You aren't paying respect to the master!"

Bankei got down, sat on the ground, and said, "Now then, it is difficult. Now you will not find the master in the chair, because I am the master."

It was difficult for the man to see that a great master would work in the garden, could be so ordinary. He left...and he missed.

Bankei was preaching quietly to his followers one day, when his talk was interrupted by a priest from another sect. This sect believed in the power of miracles.

Bankei stopped talking and asked the priest what he wanted to say. The priest boasted that the founder of his religion could stand on one bank of the river with a brush in his hand and write a holy name on a piece of paper held by an assistant on the opposite bank of the river. The priest asked, "What miracles can you do?"

Bankei replied: "Only one. When I am hungry I eat, and when I am thirsty I drink."

The only miracle, the impossible miracle, is to be just ordinary. The longing of the mind is to be extraordinary. The ego thirsts and hungers for the recognition that you are somebody. And this is a miracle -- when you accept your nobodiness, when you can be just as ordinary as anybody else, when you don't ask for any recognition, when you can exist as if you are not existing. Power is never spiritual. People who do miracles are magicians, not spiritual in any way. They are spreading magic in the name of religion, which is very dangerous.

Your mind will say, "What type of a miracle is this? -- when hungry, I eat, when sleepy, I sleep."

But I say to you, Bankei has said the real thing. When you feel hungry, the mind says, "No, I am on a fast." When you don't feel hungry, when the stomach is filled, the mind says, "Go on eating, the food is delicious." Your mind interferes.

What is Bankei saying?

He is saying: "My mind has stopped interfering."

Bankei is saying: "I flow with nature. Whatsoever my whole being feels, I do it. There is no fragmentary mind manipulating it."

I also know only one miracle, to let nature have its course, to allow it.

Osho, excerpted from *A Bird on the Wing* - chapter 6

