

# Human Kindness Foundation

a little good news

summer 1994

## LIVING IN TUNE WITH OUR BELIEFS

*Therefore I shall put this way of life into actual practice.*

*For what can be achieved by merely talking about it?*

*Will a sick man be benefitted*

*Merely by reading the medical texts?*

*— Shantideva (8th Century)*

Dear Family,

My Guru used to say, "Life is really very simple; you just keep making it complicated." One clear example of that is the connection between our beliefs (or values), and the way we live our everyday life. It's so simple — if our actions are in tune with our deepest beliefs, we'll feel good about ourselves and life will work as smoothly as it can. If we act contrary to what we believe in, we will gradually grow to hate ourselves, and life will be a constant and unfriendly struggle.

Of course, no one said it's easy; just simple. Just because you can see the top of a mountain from the ground, that doesn't mean you don't have to spend a tremendous amount of energy to reach it. Self-respect requires self-discipline. Decency requires conscience, and courage. Kindness requires patience, and forgiveness.

A good life happens to be a fair amount of work. It's not for the lazy. But it is a simple principle: We all have beliefs and values, and if we live by them we will thrive, if we don't we will wilt.

You may say, "I don't know what I believe in, I don't even know what you mean by my 'deepest values'." Being unaware that you've got a thousand dollars in your wallet doesn't mean you're broke, it just means you have to look through your wallet more thoroughly. Your heart is a wallet which holds deep values and vast riches; it isn't empty, I assure you. You may simply not have looked through it for a while. That's what meditation, prayer, spiritual reflection, and study are about.

### The Pit of Self-Hatred

If my heart believes it's wrong to steal, then in order to let myself steal something, I may close off a little part of the

way I receive messages from my heart. If I believe in kindness, then in order to be cruel, I may close off another little part of my heart. If I believe in courage, then cowardice may close off another little part of my heart. And so it goes. If I don't know what I believe, then every day I'm probably closing off at least a few more parts of my heart by doing things that are easiest or selfish instead of what I may think is right.

By the time we're adults, we've closed off our hearts in so many ways, it's like a garden hose that's all kinked up, and the water of life — which is Love — is hardly able to drip its way through. We lose all respect for ourselves because we don't feel our wonderful hearts, and eventually we become extremely stuck in self-hatred. We lose hope in real joy or happiness, and assume we have to settle for damage control and bare "gettin' by."

Does that sound familiar? Most of us pass through such a "dark night of the soul" at least once or twice; the trick is not to get stuck in it for our whole lives.

I was like that when I was a kid. The way I responded to a troubled family life was to withdraw and become sullen, closing off not only to everyone else, but to myself as well. I didn't have the slightest idea what I believed in or even what I felt. In fact, I thought I never felt a thing.

By the time I got into college, I was very screwed up and basically numb. I had no thoughts or feelings of my own, I was just running on what everyone else had been planning for my life. At the beginning of my third semester, my girlfriend — who was also very unhappy — said, "Bo, this world is such a horrible place, I'm going to kill myself. I'm serious. I'm going to do it on Saturday night. Will you do it with me?" And, numb as I was, my reply was, "Sure; I'm not busy Saturday night."



The day came, and we got nineteen bottles of over-the-counter sleeping pills and divided them by our body weight — I took twelve bottles and she took seven. We wrote suicide notes — pretty much the standard “It’s no one’s fault, we just don’t fit in here...” — and lay down in bed at the motel we had checked into on Ponchartrain Highway in New Orleans, and we both passed out.

Everything went black. The next thing I knew, I was sitting a couple of feet away from some guy, talking to him. I didn’t know who he was or who I was or what we were talking about. All I was aware of was how much I didn’t like him. The dislike got stronger and stronger as he droned on about something or other, and it turned into the most intense hatred and loathing I had ever experienced. I hated the way he looked, the way he talked, the way he held himself, his attitude, his expression, the way he dressed — there wasn’t a single thing about this guy that I didn’t detest. I hated anybody who could possibly like him! I hated his ancestors! I hated everything he might have stood for! Everything about him disgusted me.

Suddenly, there was a loud sound to my left, and the motel room door came crashing open with a bunch of cops rushing in saying, “There he is, get the stomach pump, get the stomach pump!” As it turned out, I had been sitting on the edge of the motel bed, and as I turned my head towards all the commotion, my eyes caught sight of the edge of the big mirror that I had been looking into. All in an instant my mind was reeling with “OH MY GOD, THAT’S ME I HATE SO MUCH! THAT OBNOXIOUS, ARROGANT, DESPICABLE GUY IS ME!!”

So there I was, having the deepest, most painful revelation of my life, and all these cops were trying to hold me down and shove a tube down my throat. I’m like, “Hey, guys, I’m having a *moment* here, can’t you see that?” (It’s really very funny thirty years afterward.)

I spent the night in a jail cell, screaming and hallucinating the scariest things imaginable. That’s how they handled 18-year-old suicidal kids in those days — throw ’em in jail. It took me many years to completely heal from that experience and put all that pain to good use. But it’s a powerful lesson of how far off we can go when we lose contact with the simple voice of our own hearts. (My girlfriend survived too, by the way, and is still a friend —

and a grandmother now — who receives these newsletters just like you.)

### Recognition Versus Choice

One of the deepest lessons I learned is that our beliefs and values are not simply a matter of conscious choice. I thought I had chosen not to have any values; maybe you think so too, because of all the pain you’ve experienced or the times you’ve been betrayed and let down. But we all do have very strong values in our hearts, and we can’t begin leading a happy, productive life until we recognize what they are and begin to live according to them.

Very often, our deepest values and beliefs are exactly opposite of our ego’s choices of values and beliefs. For example, most of us do deeply believe that stealing is wrong. But look at how many excuses the ego gives us for stealing — *it’s no big thing; they deserve it; it’s a big corporation; I need it more than they do; they’ve got plenty; no one will know*, etc.

Same thing with racism. In our deepest hearts, most of us truly believe that everyone is equal in the eyes of God. If we fall into racist language, thinking, and activity just because of who we hang out with or local pressures, we’re going to pay a serious price in our opinions of ourselves. The ego may shout, *They’re all alike, they’re all animals, they’re racist too....*

Well, the ego can shout anything it wants, but if we don’t find a way to recognize and live by our true values, we’re going to screw up our lives royally, as many of us have already. We can try to cover the screw-ups with anger, bitterness, all sorts of excuses, but we can never fool our own hearts — and frankly, no one else gives a damn about our excuses or grand

philosophies. How other people experience us has a lot more to do with our *vibe* than our words. And if we secretly hate ourselves, our *vibe* isn’t going to be too impressive, no matter how well our egos perform their endless dances of bullshit.

But the good news is we are all really good, decent human beings in our hearts. And as tough as it may be sometimes to discover

that goodness and live up to it, it’s a lot tougher not to. Take it from somebody who tried.

Love, Bo





# PRACTICE:

## “THE TWO BRIGHT GUARDIANS OF CIVILIZATION”

Reading excerpts from an ancient Buddhist text recently, I was surprised to come across what the Buddha called “the two bright guardians of civilization.” The Sanskrit words are “**Hri**” and “**Onappa**,” which translate roughly as “Shame of having done wrong” and “Fear of doing wrong in the future.” Boy, is that out of step with modern thinking! Aren’t those corny, outmoded, pre-psychology modes of repression and superstition?



But reading further, it became clear that the Buddha was not out of step at all. If you think about it, a truly bad person wouldn’t feel shame for anything, so feeling shame or remorse is a sign that we do indeed have a decent set of values which we have violated. The point of **Hri** is to rediscover those values, to reconnect with our goodness and decency, and allow ourselves to feel the full impact of how we blew it, so we can re-commit ourselves to a better life.

Likewise, a person with no wisdom, no understanding of *Karma*, or “what comes around goes around,” would feel no fear of doing wrong. He/she may feel fear of getting caught, but that’s not what **Onappa** is about; it’s more like the old Christian term, “Godfearing.” So it stands to reason that by being properly afraid of the moral/spiritual consequences of doing wrong, we are proving to ourselves that we do indeed understand the way life works: If we do wrong, we’re going to suffer from it; if we do right, a better life comes of it. In that sense, fear of wrongdoing is not at all superstitiousness, it’s an expression of faith and wisdom, an indication that we accept order in the universe instead of chaos.

The Buddha said that when masses of people forget or discard both *Hri* and *Onappa*, the entire civilization falls apart. A quick look around our modern world would seem to bear him out. A modern sage who expressed much the same point was the great American psychiatrist Dr. Karl Menninger. He spotted what he considered a very dangerous trend in popular psychology as far back as the 1940’s, and wrote a provocative little book, *Whatever Became of Sin?* The main point he raised was that our newfangled notion of “never feel guilt” was seriously misguided, because guilt/shame/remorse are extremely important feedback mechanisms from our consciences. That doesn’t mean we should become neurotic or obsessive, allowing guilt to take over our lives; but Dr. Menninger said that to dismiss it entirely would be a grave mistake in the evolution of human behavior. Unfortunately, it seems that his warnings went unheeded, and fifty years later, modern psychology still

seems to express to most people that all guilt is self-destructive or even old-fashioned.

So, here’s the practice (and make sure not to get neurotic or obsessed!): Sit straight, quietly, as if in meditation, breathing softly and evenly with the attention focused on your heart-center. Allow yourself to reflect on these two “Bright Guardians” of **Hri** (shame for past actions which have been selfish, unkind, cruel, greedy, or harmful) and **Onappa** (a humble sense of caution and dread if you were to get back into that kind of behavior again). Allow yourself to feel the fullest sense of guilt or shame you’ve ever felt, the fullest sense of fear over wasting your whole life in empty or immoral pursuits. Keep breathing steadily and gently into your heart, even as the old movies of your crimes or ill-deeds may play on the screen of your mind. Don’t jump into the screen; stay seated in your heart as you watch and accept responsibility for the choices you’ve made. This is the time for no excuses, no minimizing, no self-justification at all. Feel how much you hurt. And breathing in and out of your heart, occasionally remind yourself, “I feel this bad because I really am a good person, a decent person who knows right from wrong. If I weren’t a good person, I wouldn’t feel so bad at having done wrong.”

And at some point, speak to your heart, speak to your conscience, apologizing for ignoring it so many times, and asking it not to give up telling you right from wrong. That’s when you begin working with **Onappa**, the fear of doing wrong in the future. Take a few moments to feel how scary it would be if your conscience gave up on you, think of what sort of hell you would turn your life into. That’s **Onappa**. Pray to your own heart for help and support, and re-commit yourself to listening to your conscience and trying not to bring more pain into the world.

If you’ve committed violent crimes, this process may take many sittings over a period of weeks or even months. But it is important and necessary work for you to do — for all of us to do, if we really want to be spiritual seekers. Wisdom and humility go hand in hand, and neither of them are possible if we’re hiding from our own heart’s memories and injuries. Opening up to our shame and fear doesn’t have to destroy us — that idea itself is just fear. On the contrary, opening up allows us to recognize and accept the sum total of who we are. **We are holy**. But we have all done enough harm that none of us should ever be smug. That’s how these two ancient “bright guardians of civilization” can help us regain humility for ourselves and for our troubled society.



# LETTERS

Dear Bo,

I am 16 years old. I am in V— Jail and read some of your book "We're All Doing Time" through a friend. I'm young and love a lot of things in society, but the problem is that I might never see those things again as a result of spending the rest of my life in the state pen.

Bo, I am confused, and my mind's at a total loss concerning my purpose for being on this earth. My life has always been rough, and I grew up real violent. Born in New York, and for some reason I was brought into this world with a lot of rage and hate. At 5 years old, I would throw books at teachers and principals and would get suspended from school at kindergarten. A lot of anger came from the fact of my mother being white and my father being black. And as a result I was teased and picked on. My mother always told me I was from the best of both worlds. It was hard to see that when both worlds would look down on me.

As I grew up, the teasing was still there, and my life was falling apart. Trouble was every where I went. And I created most of it. It started when I moved to V—. I was living in G—, a place full of bad asses, so I fit right in cause I myself was a bad ass too. I was placed in a lot of placements because of my behavior and at 11 years old, I was placed in a correctional school for 2 years. I got out close to 14 and was still too violent for society. After being out for 9 months, I was placed again in B— learning center for assault and attempted robbery. I was high as a bitch after smoking some chronic (marijuana) and decided to rob a guy walking in my neighborhood. I beat him up, me and a friend, but didn't take nothing because it was so funny the way he acted when I put a 9 millimeter Beretta to his head. Plus I felt sorry for his ass. So I let him go and later was found guilty for that charge. I did a year.

I got out in the beginning of '93 in March, and was placed in a group home at 15. I was later kicked out for selling dope and a brandishing a firearm charge in May or June. From then to November 15, a lot of shit happened. To be honest, I shot over 15 people, robbed over 40 people, had sex with over 100 different girls and done more crazy things than anyone has ever done at the age of 16. Now I am facing over 4 life sentences without parole for over 10 felony charges.

I am being charged with 2 malicious wounding (one may turn into attempted murder) 3 armed robbery charges, possession of a sawed-off shotgun in public, attempted

malicious wounding, 4 possessions of a firearm in a commission of a felony. Possession of marijuana, grand larceny, 2 assaults, and they labeled me as one of the most dangerous people in the city of V—. And possibly a marijuana kingpin dealer. All at 16 years old. Most of these charges I had nothing to do with, but I guess it all comes back to you even if you're innocent. The past has its way of creeping up no matter what the circumstances are. I feel like there's no hope. I try to keep faith but at times I think of suicide, or just saying fuck it all. But usually reality kicks in to my sensitive side and I think I caused enough hurt, it's time to change, but I think that I can't.

I try to help people, I got into being a Muslim 5% to rely on almighty God Allah, but days I am in depression I feel like losing it completely. I talk to my best friend (my mother) and she helps me out a lot. And she's my heart. Her and God and my family. But I feel the love you give to people and it hits me hard. And I never knew a man can be so sensitive and intelligent like you. I just hope you can give me some of that love and faith to see a new meaning of my life. Please I ask for help and a sense of guidance from you. I ask God for it, but it seems he don't want to help me right now. But then again, if you help me, maybe this was his plan. Help me, Bo.

Lots of peace, L'il C



Dear L'il C,

Well, there's certainly good news and bad news, but I swear to you the good news is a lot better than the bad news is bad. The bad news is that you indeed have got yourself in a mess which is probably going to take up at least several years of your life in the joint. I wouldn't be worrying too much about four lives plus plus plus, but you're likely going to be there at least a few years. That's like the wreck I had when I was eighteen. I hit a semi head-on, and I didn't die but I sure did change things for a long time. What's done is done.

But the good news — ah, the good news is that you were headed into the sewer on the streets anyway; you probably would have been dead before you could vote; so again, like my wreck, you have the chance to turn your whole life around in a way you would never have dreamed of. You can actually be a happy, decent, generous, loving guy. Yes, you. Really. It's a lot of hard work,

but nowhere near as hard as what you've been feeling like for the past sixteen years. You're also going to have a lot of opportunity to screw yourself up even worse. You can continue down the dead-end street in prison by hanging out with the bad asses, doing drugs, getting in fights — basically taking the easy slide down to absolute hell. I hope you don't take that way, because you've got a good mind and heart. But it's up to you.

The books we're sending you have been sent to a lot of bad boys in a lot of trouble. And thousands of them decided to really change their lives around, and they've done it. You can be a twenty-five year-old with a wife and child, a good job, respect in your community, maybe even working with sixteen-year-old bad asses and telling them about how bad you used to be, and how you wised up when you were their age. Or you can be twenty-five years old sitting around the joint stoned, in for your third or fourth or fifth bit, hating your life and yourself, swapping war stories with other guys who wish they were dead and blame everyone but themselves for their troubles. Which makes more sense to you?

The first thing you need to do is focus all your attention on today. Study the books, try some of the practices very sincerely, start stepping out of the bad-old-C— bullshit a little more every day. Stop living in the future — how much time will I do, what's going to happen to me, etc? Work on yourself from the inside out starting right now. Stop doing drugs. Clear your mind. Stay away from prison games. Be a simple person. Try to help out. Be a good guy and don't jerk anyone around. Become a serious student of these books and of your own life. You can do this, I swear. You're in our family now, and we know lots of people doing the same thing. Try to feel all that support. You're never alone. Just work on today, one day at a time. You wake up in the morning, you take good care of body, mind and spirit, you help out in any way you can, and you go to sleep. Life can be simple if you don't get too far ahead of yourself. Be grateful for this time instead of scared of it. God is definitely answering your prayers. Definitely. Now you have to do your part.

Let me hear from you in a month or two after you've had time to put some of these things into practice, okay? And if your mother would like copies of the same books, so you can discuss them together, just let us know. Sita and I send you all our love and friendship, little brother.

Love, Bo



## Concerned about sexual aggression behind bars?

If you are or have ever been pressured or forced into an unwanted sexual situation, you don't have to feel alone. Studies of prisons indicate that nearly 300,000 male prisoners get raped or pressured into submission each year! STOP PRISONER RAPE (SPR), a national organization founded 15 years ago and led by ex-cons who have survived rape, is there to provide accurate and realistic information on a subject which is surrounded by false ideas, stereotypes, and denial.

It is important to know that anyone can be raped and that this does not really make the victim gay or less male—no matter what the ignorant tell you. Nonetheless, the psychological consequences of rape are severe, and every victim owes it to himself to try to learn as much as possible about them.

We urge cons to warn newcomers and to help protect the vulnerable without exploiting them, and we encourage punks to stand up and not feel ashamed about what they have to do to survive. SPR also stands ready to assist any staff members who want to

gain a clearer understanding of prisoner rape and its consequences.

### Stop Prisoner Rape offers:

- ♦ 14 free handouts for prisoners on a variety of topics
- ♦ A 90-minute audio tape of realistic advice and information. (This tape is sent in a transparent cassette but unsealed, so in many joints it is best to arrange for the tape to be sent to a sympathetic staff member, such as a chaplain or shrink, who can let you listen to it.)

### Stop Prisoner Rape needs:

- ♦ More prisoner members who want to do something about rape (regardless of whether you yourself have been victimized or not).
- ♦ Outside members/volunteers (especially in state capitals, Washington, New York, and around prisons)
- ♦ Financial contributions
- ♦ An accountant
- ♦ A woman to work with women survivors
- ♦ Lawyers
- ♦ Someone to work on juvenile cases.

After a very long silence, journalists and scholars are starting to look into the abuses of prisoner rape and asking us to put them in touch with rape survivors who are willing to describe their experiences (you can use an alias).

For more information, to request materials, or to share your experiences, write to us at:

**Stop Prisoner Rape**  
PO Box 2713  
Manhattanville Stn.  
New York, NY 10027-8871

Mail from SPR to prisoners does not contain the word "rape" on the envelope.

You can also write for information about the *Prisoner Rape Education Project*, a kit of materials which would be valuable to anyone concerned with this issue. Write to:

**Safer Society Press**  
PO Box 340  
Brandon, VT 05733  
(802) 247-3132

## A Visit To "Tihar Jail Ashram"

During their recent trip to India, Bo & Sita Lozoff met with a truly amazing administrator of one of the world's largest prisons, Tihar Jail, in Delhi, which houses almost 9,000 prisoners. The Inspector General, Dr. Kiran Bedi, is a courageous and dynamic woman who had no connection with the prison system just a couple of years ago, when a friend gave her a copy of Bo's book, *We're All Doing Time*.

At that time, Dr. Bedi was a very unusual narcotics officer who didn't just arrest drug addicts, she also created a whole treatment center for them as an alternative to prison. When she was suddenly appointed head of Tihar Jail, she knew immediately that her task was to convert the whole place to a living model of the prison-ashram idea.

Firing corrupt officers and bureaucrats and shaking up the administration, she soon began inviting meditation teachers and various religious leaders to conduct workshops throughout the prison's massive four units. Two ten-day Vipassana meditation courses have been conducted for over 1,000 inmates and staff at a time.

In March of '94, she personally gave Bo & Sita a tour of the prison, and then Bo did two workshops, two weeks apart, with the English-speaking prisoners. Bo & Sita also hand-delivered Dr. Bedi's invitation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit Tihar Jail, and he happily agreed to do so.



Bo reports that the most striking impression he was left with of Tihar Jail was that, "although the living conditions were pretty horrible by American standards, I was startled by the feeling of community between guards and inmates. There was no anger, no bitterness, none of that 'mortal

enemy' feeling that you feel in every American prison. Staff and inmates were encouraged to express any complaints they had toward each other on a daily basis. There was no concept of 'snitch,' nor of 'convict code' or 'officer's code.'

"There are just all these thousands of people, both staff and inmates, dumped into a dusty, sprawling place with high walls and iron gates all around, and they have finally recognized that they need to work together to make the best of their situation. With Dr. Bedi as their chief, they are actually doing it. She has actually changed some of the stationery to read, 'Tihar Jail Ashram.'

"Sita and I were deeply moved to know that *We're All Doing Time* played a role in the development of a peaceful, spiritual lifestyle in one of the biggest prisons in the world. It shows it's possible. It's possible here too. But we must all be willing to break down the accepted levels of hostility between staff and inmates, and all the misguided 'codes' which keep them hating and fearing each other."



# NEWS, NOTES, & OFFERINGS

## Bo's Upcoming Lectures & Workshops

Place	Date	Contact number for further information
Atlanta, GA	June 24th	Metro Corr. Center (prison workshop, staff workshop)
Atlanta, GA	June 24th	(404) 525-1333 (Life Enrichment Learning Center)
Black Mountain, NC	Aug. 18th-19th	(919) 968-1854 (Mid-Atlantic Unity Churches)
Seattle, WA	Aug. 21st-23rd	(206) 527-8801 (Church of Religious Science)
Leavenworth, KS	August 25th	U.S. Penitentiary (prison workshop, staff workshop)
Topeka, KS	August 26th	Topeka Youth Center (inmate workshop, staff workshop)
El Dorado, KS	August 27th	El Dorado Corr. Facility (prison workshop, staff workshop)
Carlisle, IN	August 29th	Wabash Valley Corr. Inst. (prison workshop, staff workshop)
Las Vegas, NM	Sept. 18th	(505) 454-0598 (S.W. Center for Spiritual Living)

### Los Angeles & surrounding areas (different types of workshops); For further info, contact:

Santa Monica	Sept. 25th	(310) 829-2780 (Agape Church, attn: Unity Imani-ImoJah)
L.A. & Laguna Beach	mid-Sept.	(714) 494-0249 (Shirley Leitch)
Pasadena	mid-Sept.	(818) 796-5633 (Robert Coronado)
L.A.	mid-Sept.	(213) 467-7223 (Rev. David Kurtz)
Ventura College	mid-Sept.	(805) 654-6485 (Dr. Barrett Culmbach)
Oakhurst, CA	mid-Sept.	(209) 966-1299 (Positive Living Center)
Chowchilla, CA	mid-Sept.	Central CA Women's Facility (prison workshop)

**East Coast (VA, DC, MD, NY, PA, NJ, MA) — November — Dates & contacts will be listed in our next newsletter.**

## GOOD WORKS

The work of **Stop Prisoner Rape** and Dr. Kiran Bedi seemed so important that we decided to give GoodWorks a page to itself this time. See page 6 for these two impressive prison efforts.

*GoodWorks describes activities, organizations & projects happening in prisons around the world. To share your project or idea with our readers, please send a brief (100 words or less) factual description.*

## Free Tibet

As we mentioned in the last newsletter, we are urging our readers to write letters encouraging the U.S. government to become more involved against the Chinese occupation of Tibet. For sample letters and addresses to write to, please contact:

**The International Campaign for Tibet**  
1518 K St., NW  
Washington, DC 20005

## Serving Through Meditation

Learn meditation as a form of world service with the Meditation Group for the New Age. Bi-monthly booklets in English, Spanish, or Portuguese (no fee). Write:

**MGNA**  
**BOX 566-PA**  
**OJAI CA 93024**

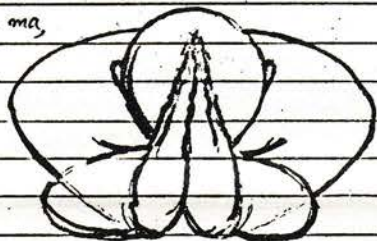
## a little good news

is a publication of The Human Kindness Foundation which is non-profit & tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. Donations and bequests are always welcomed and are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. All money goes to the Human Kindness Foundation, helping us to continue producing and distributing free copies for prisoners. Materials are offered free to prisoners, prison workers, and others who can't afford to pay for them, and are for sale to the general public.

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To,

Bo Lozoff and Sita ma,



Your Son

*K. Kalatharan*

(K KALATHARAN)

LARDYMO MEN'S PRISON

BANGKOK 10 900  
THAILAND

## LETTERS

### Continued from page 5

have you learned enough to start cooperating a little more with the process, or do you need to have your lessons keep whacking you upside the head?

Which brings me to your original questions about the "protection" offered by your mantras and practices. There are many protective mantras and prayers which people have used throughout the ages — Guru Gita, Gayatri mantra, Ram Nam, Hanuman Chaleesa, Jesus prayer, prayer to the Holy Mother etc., which promise to protect us from calamity and harm. But what is calamity? What is harm? We all have karma to experience from many lifetimes, and we don't know exactly what forms it must take. But no experience is a calamity by itself. Calamity and harm are the way we respond to these things. The mantras and prayers try to protect us by keeping our minds focused on God. You've been seeing them as a magic wand, which they're not. You and I must still work through our karma.

But the majority of our pain and suffering still comes from our own actions, from selfish choices. If your marriage wasn't going well, you and your wife should have practiced better birth control instead of becoming pregnant in the first place. Then you chose abortion, which you believe is a sin. These are all very avoidable sufferings! How could your mantras protect you if you're going to be irresponsible and shortsighted by choice? Your brother's wife cheated on him, creating a situation in which he could have developed insight, honesty, forgiveness, courage, etc. Instead he murdered her. She didn't put him in prison, his own responses did. Don't blame the practices! You need to strengthen them, not abandon them. Use any spiritual practice properly, and you'll see the genuine protection it offers — the reminder of our own humble divinity in the face of all the complex situations life may throw our way. I send you all my love and encouragement for your re-commitment to the journey.

Love, Bo



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### Stop Prisoner Rape needs:

- ♦ More prisoner members who want to do something about rape (regardless of whether you yourself have been victimized or not).
- ♦ Outside members/volunteers (especially in state capitals, Washington, New York, and around prisons)
- ♦ Financial contributions
- ♦ An accountant
- ♦ A woman to work with women survivors
- ♦ Lawyers
- ♦ Someone to work on juvenile cases.

After a very long silence, journalists and scholars are starting to look into the abuses of prisoner rape and asking us to put them in touch with rape survivors who are willing to describe their experiences (you can use an alias).

For more information, to request materials, or to share your experiences, write to us at:

**Stop Prisoner Rape**  
PO Box 2713  
Manhattanville Stn.  
New York, NY 10027-8871

Mail from SPR to prisoners does not contain the word "rape" on the envelope.

You can also write for information about the *Prisoner Rape Education Project*, a kit of materials which would be valuable to anyone concerned with this issue. Write to:

**Safer Society Press**  
PO Box 340  
Brandon, VT 05733  
(802) 247-3132

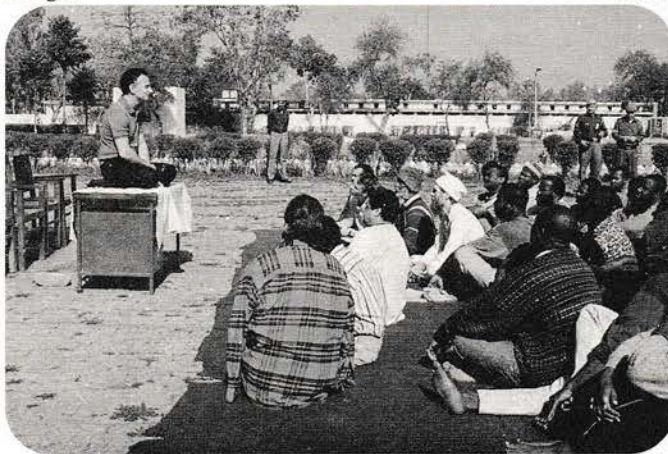
## A Visit To "Tihar Jail Ashram"

During their recent trip to India, Bo & Sita Lozoff met with a truly amazing administrator of one of the world's largest prisons, Tihar Jail, in Delhi, which houses almost 9,000 prisoners. The Inspector General, Dr. Kiran Bedi, is a courageous and dynamic woman who had no connection with the prison system just a couple of years ago, when a friend gave her a copy of Bo's book, *We're All Doing Time*.

At that time, Dr. Bedi was a very unusual narcotics officer who didn't just arrest drug addicts, she also created a whole treatment center for them as an alternative to prison. When she was suddenly appointed head of Tihar Jail, she knew immediately that her task was to convert the whole place to a living model of the prison-ashram idea.

Firing corrupt officers and bureaucrats and shaking up the administration, she soon began inviting meditation teachers and various religious leaders to conduct workshops throughout the prison's massive four units. Two ten-day Vipassana meditation courses have been conducted for over 1,000 inmates and staff at a time.

In March of '94, she personally gave Bo & Sita a tour of the prison, and then Bo did two workshops, two weeks apart, with the English-speaking prisoners. Bo & Sita also hand-delivered Dr. Bedi's invitation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit Tihar Jail, and he happily agreed to do so.



Bo reports that the most striking impression he was left with of Tihar Jail was that, "although the living conditions were pretty horrible by American standards, I was startled by the feeling of community between guards and inmates. There was no anger, no bitterness, none of that 'mortal

enemy' feeling that you feel in every American prison. Staff and inmates were encouraged to express any complaints they had toward each other on a daily basis. There was no concept of 'snitch,' nor of 'convict code' or 'officer's code.'

"There are just all these thousands of people, both staff and inmates, dumped into a dusty, sprawling place with high walls and iron gates all around, and they have finally recognized that they need to work together to make the best of their situation. With Dr. Bedi as their chief, they are actually doing it. She has actually changed some of the stationery to read, 'Tihar Jail Ashram.'

"Sita and I were deeply moved to know that *We're All Doing Time* played a role in the development of a peaceful, spiritual lifestyle in one of the biggest prisons in the world. It shows it's possible. It's possible here too. But we must all be willing to break down the accepted levels of hostility between staff and inmates, and all the misguided 'codes' which keep them hating and fearing each other."





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*Self-respect requires self-discipline.*

*Decency requires conscience, and courage.*

*Kindness requires patience, and forgiveness.*

*A good life happens to be a fair amount of work.*

*It's not for the lazy.*

— Bo Lozoff