

MYSTIC MARKETING:

Some Musings on Spiritual Predators

Why be a modest mystic,
if you can pose as a polished star?

Why sit in stillness with a small circle of seekers
if you can shout sermons to swaying souls afar?

Why offer truths, profound yet plain,
when many yearn for secrets with esoteric strains?

Why admit to ordinary frailties and flaws,
when the world aches for "perfect" ones free of faux pas,

Why permit critical debate,
if it's simpler to settle for supremacy—
crowned as a custodian of certainty,
above doubt in some "higher" conscious state?

All notions of human "holiness" are honeyed traps:
the power, the praise, and prayerful stares,
lure too many charlatans selling salvation
as if it was a gilded houseware.

Far finer to be an imperfect spirit who seeks
no silver or favor from the mild and the meek.

Yes, it's better to be an ordinary guy
than to spiritually predate and lie. Why be a modest mystic,
if you can pose as a polished star?

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An-Yi sat slumped against a wooden pillar, her eyes slightly glazed. She let out a sudden, sharp hiccup that startled others in the room. She gestured vaguely at the previous pictorial poem on the wall. "What good is it... all this talk?" she asked, her voice wavering with a playful cynicism. "What good is even talking about Zen? Zen is a awareness beyond words. Anything else is just more noise, isn't it?"

Bhāraté looked over at her, slowly shrugging her shoulders. She looked down at her empty glass, watching a single drop of liquid slide toward the rim. "How should I know?" he replied, his voice trailing off into a soft, philosophical sigh. "In the long run, what good is any human activity? We build sandcastles while the tides of time come in. Talking, sitting, breathing—it's all just dancing in the dark."

Chariya, who had remained uncharacteristically still, finally spoke. He adjusted his posture, pulling himself into a straighter, more mindful seat, though his expression remained gentle. "Without sustained practice," he noted, his tone cutting through the discourse with a sudden, quiet clarity, "talking about Zen is likely nothing more than a form of intellectual amusement. It's like reading a map and never taking a single step. It feels like movement, but we're still standing exactly where we started."

- T Newfields

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