

Give Up To The Cosmic Sheriff

An excerpt from Side 2 of the talk, 561 Why You Should Not Help Other People by Vernon Howard given on 09-27-80 at 9 AM at 24 minutes.

Imagine a speaker standing in front of an audience and he is giving a talk about spiritual development. And he begins to supply very solid, practical, worthwhile facts and methods for authentic inner transformation. And he goes on for a while. And at a certain point, he begins to talk about himself in the right way. That is, he begins to say something as follows: "I have a personal history of viciousness. I can look back," he is saying, "over my life and see how vicious I have been."

And he uses the word "vicious." And then he finds other words underneath that particular word such as, "I have been utterly selfish and deceitful and hypocritical with other people. Utterly concerned only with myself while pretending that I cared for others. I never loved anyone. I never loved my wife or children. I never cared for anyone." And he is saying throughout this first third of his talk, "I am very vicious."

The audience hears him saying that, and they sit back and listen with interest. Kind of biographical about the man. And they kind of like the honesty of it. And they sense that he is telling them the truth about his past life. So he goes on like that for a while. Then, about a third of the way through, he changes things a little bit. And he begins to use the word "we." And he emphasizes "viciousness" and "we." He says, "We are truly violent people inwardly. We hide it from ourselves. And at the moment of being emotionally internally violent, we don't see at all. We are essentially violent people – we."

Well, the audience senses a little bit of a change in his approach to them. First it was just he who was violent and vicious. And now he is including the audience in it.

Well, it's not too bad with the audience. The woman out there and the man over there can nod their head and say. "Yeah. You know, that's right. I guess we are a violent people. After all, look at the people over in those foreign countries, how they're bombing each other, killing each other. Yes, I guess that's right. We are violent. We human beings are."

That doesn't disturb him much. In the first place, the violent people they're talking about are on the other side of the world, right?

Two-thirds of the talk is over. They come to the last third, and the speaker changes the tone again. He begins to say, "you." Now he connects the words viciousness and violence with "you." And he looks at one of the men, and he looks at one of the ladies and pauses a little bit. And he goes real slow. And he looks around, and he says, "You are vicious. You are violent. You've got so much darkness in you, you don't begin to see any of it. All you do is walk around in your sleep, dreaming that you're nice, dreaming that you're accomplishing things, dreaming that you're on your own side, and you aren't. Any human being," the speaker continues to say, "who dreams his way through life, is a detestable, violent, vicious human being, and I am talking about you," he says.

Well, we've had experience with that sort of thing. Now I'm talking about our group here. We have had experience with that sort of thing. And we know what results it produces. And what it produces is a certain number of people getting up right in the middle of the talk and walking out. They can take the "I" when the

speaker is talking about himself, or the "we." But when you start to get close to them, to what they're hiding, they begin to get uncomfortable, resentful and hateful. And they get up and actually walk. Get up and walk out while the speaker is talking, which is rude, which is simply bad manners, which means they're lost. Or they wait until the break, and they just don't come back. And they never come back to any other meeting.

All right. Here's the point. How do you – I'm talking about you now. Not about me or about we. How do you react when the truth gets close to you? Everything depends on what you do when it starts to get close to your violence and your sourness. Look, I'm talking to you now, and your faces. What do you think – look, do you know what an open book is? That's your face. Your manner. Even now – I'm looking at you now, and I can read every one of you. Whether you put your eyes down like that or you're looking up at me, there's no way you can hide your interior condition. It shows. Right here in the front row. And in the back row.

What do you do, what do *you* do when we start talking about you and getting close to what is actually going on inside of you? Can you think of a more important question for you to ask yourself on the spiritual path? Because, look, you're getting the truth. You're getting it very, very personally. What happens to you at the moment something comes to you that hits where you're hiding out somewhere?

I'll tell you what we're all like. You know the western story on television, the movie on television where the sheriff goes out – rides out into the hills to catch the outlaw? And the outlaw sees the sheriff coming at a distance. And the whole movie – our whole lives – the whole movie is taken up with how the sheriff pursues the outlaw, and the little tricks that the outlaw plays to elude the sheriff: riding in circles, playing all kinds of fantastic little tricks to throw him off the trail. Until after ninety-minutes of the movie – and maybe years in the actual condition – the outlaw sits down somewhere, and he begins to think – he begins to think – and you had better begin to think, "It just isn't worth running anymore."

This is freedom? The physical body is free. Of course the outlaw is free physically. He can go north, east, south, west. He is free. But he isn't. Something is chasing him. Something that is relentless. Something that won't stop until he gets tired of running. And you know what happens next? He finally admits to himself the futility of depending upon his own tricky devices to elude and escape the sheriff. He can't escape. And neither can you.

Now, in the story, the outlaw finally sits down. And he sees that it's no life at all. So he just sits down by his campfire and wordlessly, between the two men – the sheriff comes riding down. He has his gun ready, but it isn't drawn. Because it's a wordless scene now. And the outlaw looks up at the sheriff on his horse, coming into the little campfire there. And the sheriff looks down, and they both understand. And the sheriff puts ropes around his hands and takes him on.

But the best is yet to come. This is a true – what I'm telling you is a true story, isn't it? Here is the best part of the true story. The sheriff finally takes the outlaw back into town, and when he gets there, they find out that the governor has pardoned him.

You don't know what a pardon is because you won't stop running in order to find it. You don't know, but I am telling you that you are pardoned now. Now, look, I said I know that. You don't know that. This is why you're running. This is why you're playing little tricks. This is why you're depending on your husband to be strong for you, you stupid women. They're not strong at all. You don't understand that the pardon has already been signed. It was signed millions of years ago, to use a time phrase. It was signed back in eternity. So that when you give up to the cosmic sheriff, and he puts you in handcuffs – and you're just worried about what's going to happen to you, aren't you?

We have to break the parallel. Of course the sheriff takes him back. But in our true life parallel – what we're talking about. When you stop running, you have admitted that you've run out of your own devices. You find out that you can't change your own nature. That you are an outlaw by nature. And no amount of covering it up, no amount of going around doing some good little deed while being an outlaw changes your nature at all. It's your nature we're talking about, not your deeds. Because you can – as I said in one of the little booklets there – you can do good while being bad, because you're doing the good for a bad purpose, for a self-serving purpose. To make people think that you're good when you're not, for example.

Well, the pardon is signed. It is clear. It is done now. But you have to go through the process. You have to get so tired of running around and eluding and trying – oh, how is this for a stupid and impossible task – you have to stop trying to be smarter than reality. Do you understand that you take your intelligence as being the only intelligence that exists? And this intelligence uses the word "elude" an awful lot. Elude – hide – evade – an awful lot.

The reason you don't give up and don't give up to the cosmic sheriff is because you're afraid of the punishment that will come to you as a result of being an outlaw.

Now, you have to understand something about time and punishment. You are all – I'm talking about you – you are all punished right now for being an outlaw. A spiritual outlaw. Because this is what you prefer, because it's the only thing your mind can comprehend. To give up to the cosmic sheriff means that you give up thinking in that way. Even thinking that you are an outlaw who does bad. And the collapsing of your own self-referencing – calling yourself an outlaw and a bad man or a bad woman – the collapsing of that is the collapsing of thought identification, which means the same thing as surrendering to truth, to the cosmic sheriff, so that you go back into town with him.

A long journey of worry of what's going to happen to you when you finally get in there. And lo and behold, when you get there, because you have done what is right, you have followed the spiritual rule of giving up, you get the reward of that which you didn't know existed and which you can't know exists until you receive it.

Now, I know how your minds work. And I know that dimly you understand the process. But doing – taking the action is another thing than surface understanding of what you must do. And what you must do – what you must do is be willing – remember last night – to be willing to endure the uncertainty of what's going to happen to you when you get into town. And I know – and let me tell you

something – I know what will go through your mind if you do give up to the sheriff and you take that long, long ride back to town.

You're afraid it's going to be the end of you and your freedom. And you think of all the dreadful things that are going to happen to you. And for a little bit you wish that you hadn't given up to the sheriff at all. But that soon vanishes. But I will tell you now, so that if any one of you in this room even gets to this point where you give up to the sheriff, I want you to know that all those fearful thoughts, all that anxiety that you have is wrong, false, unnecessary, needless, and it is a hoax which your old nature – outlaw nature – is playing on you in order to torment you further.

Now, I'll tell you further that if you go all the way into town, shaking, manacled – see, you understood that that freedom out there was not freedom at all. Even if you had freedom of the physical body, you weren't free up here. (Pointing to head.) When you go back in there, I'll guarantee you that there will be a piece of paper on the table inside the sheriff's office there which says that the Cosmic Governor has pardoned you.

Now you're not an outlaw anymore. Now you are not who you used to be. Now you do not think in the ways you used to think, which you thought was so necessary. You now think it's necessary to fight and evade and to find ways to hang onto yourself.

Question then: What do you do when the cosmic sheriff starts to close in on you? You know what you've been doing up till now. You've been getting on your horse and riding off in a dozen different directions, thinking that you're fleeing to safety when something inside of you tells you the exact opposite. That you're fleeing into even deeper despair over your life.

You see, you don't understand your life. You don't know what you're doing here. You don't understand anything at all. All you know – all you know for sure is a lot of things that connect with your phony dreams or your physical self. You know that you're going to have a nice lunch in a little bit from now. That you know. That you can predict accurately. But outside of that, what do you know? Well, you do sense one other thing which is your desperation in riding around and trying to think of some original little trick to put off the pain of being pursued. Do you know how to stop being pursued by the sheriff and being in the anxiety over it? Just give up. Now, I've told you how to get over the agony of false freedom. Give up to the sheriff. So you have to do that, don't you?

What is the first thing, then, in your life? What is the first thing, as far as your inner spirit is concerned? The first thing in your business might be to promote your product in advertising some other way or your business in your yard might be to plant a new rose garden or whatever. What is the first thing in your internal spiritual life? What is the first thing? Do you want it? Do you want it more than you want anything else? You had better check and see what you are placing first. And I'll tell you, as outlaws, you are placing the pleasure of fear above truth.