

Humour me

[Revised edition of fb171016 on Facebook]

In Buddhist art, the Buddha is often depicted as gently smiling. This reminds us of the joy of nirvana. Here, I would like to imagine that he is smiling also because is humoured by the world—its much ado about nothing, so to speak.

Let's stop to really think for a while about what really matters. Let's just put aside our mindless drive for enough money to have a comfortable life and retirement; our bodily intoxication with health and pleasure; our helpless goose-chase for answers about life where there is none; our inane puppet-dance on the strings pulled by some guru or idea—we will probably discover that life is really a big joke.

Yet, suffering is no joke: it's real all right! So we think. But we need not suffer, despite the pain—in that sense, suffering is a joke. We can laugh at it when we understand what it really is (like not putting our hand into the fire), and now we know how to put fire to safe wholesome use or just keep a safe distance from it or simply put it out.

The greatest joke of all is not knowing that the World itself is a joke, a prank our Self plays on us. This Self is the voice we keep hearing that we have the right idea or view, that we are safe and high with what we have.

We are so sure of it that we declare it publicly wherever we can. We even smile about it. Those who notice this propensity of ours—the lust to have—have created just the playpen for us—social media. The joke is that they do not really have to work, since we are slaving away even now for them, so that they can disrupt and change the world for their benefit.

My point is that our views are the greatest jokes of all the world. No matter how right we are, we are only right about *the view*, nothing else. Or worse, we are clearly wrong, but people just adore us, and think us right no matter what—so we keep feeding and fooling them with our fake Self—this is the great guru game.

Jokes are best told by a Fool—an enviable role in the mediaeval courts of kings. Indeed, the Joker or Court Jester was often the most intimate with the king, especially when everything else seemed to be a joke! The Joker, Jester or Fool is adept in rightly wording the worst for the best of us. So, kings laughed; we still laugh today at jokes. It's good to be able to laugh in this way—remember the Buddha-smile?

What is the lesson here? When we are still unawakened, whatever we express, even rightly, are views. They can be useful, of course, in solving problems, inspiring creativity, arousing happiness. But they are still views—they are only symptomatic cures, temporary stop-gaps, at best; the problems will return, always have.

What's worse: if we take our views seriously (only a Joker, Jester or Fool makes the best of views, remember?) then, we are just a Joker, Jester or Fool *ourselves*. In other words, people will laugh at US, I mean, at our views—because what they are really old jokes others have cracked. Once we notice that jokes are best when cracked, we laugh with those who laugh at us. Then, the joke is on us ALL. No one is blamed—all is well.

Perhaps, we see better now, how views are jokes really. Views are the humour with which life weans us off suffering. Humour is the opening in this crowded world of decay, disease and death masquerading as youth, health and life—that's real pain for us: these 3 D's.

If we see an opening in this 3-D world, or even go digging an opening through the walls of pain, but neither willing nor able to go through it into the space beyond, isn't that a joke? Our views are the holes we make in the walls of pain, but they are never really big enough for us to crawl through to freedom.

Often, our views are just small chinks in the great wall, just big enough for us to peep through and catch a glimpse of true reality. But what we see is only a tiny part of a whole. But to us, that's it—Eureka! I found it!

We have fallen in love with our first glance. We declare it to all who would listen that we have discovered Life! Then, we look again, and again. It doesn't seem right. Then, if we stop to think for a moment, we would realize that it was not the view that was right—we had made it all up! It's merely the viewing that was liberating.

Even when we see true reality, we may not understand it for what it is: we tend to rehash it in our heads, and spread it thin with our words. It is only when we can see true reality directly in the eye, that we are liberated from the view-creating Self. Only then, we see things as they really are—this is no joke.

How do I know all this? Well, I don't really—it's just my Self rehashing what I have learned from the suttas. I'm just a joker, jester, fool—and an idiot—with a tale of sound and fury, signifying nothing. But even a fool can see reality, to that extent, he is wise. We are wise because we make no big deal of it: we take it just as it is.

This moment is precious. We are a different kind of fool—one who sees and learns—a wise fool. Anyway, the bottom line: Being unawakened, we can only express views—reality jokes—if we are ready to laugh at them, and move on, then, they are helpful. They bring relief and happiness. Perhaps, then, we can say that we are only a fool for a moment; we are not fooled by the moment. Then, we are wise forever—at least in such matters.

Coming to think of it, this is no joke—we still need to think this one out. Or, perhaps, read this big joke again. Just to humour me, or just to humour.

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