

RIGHT LIVING IN MODERN SOCIETY

Naarden Lectures

International Theosophical Centre
in Naarden, Holland. Published by the
Theosophical Society in the Netherlands

1988

Joy Mills

Living in wisdom

1990

Radha Burnier

Human regeneration

1991

Joy Mills

From inner to outer transformation

1992/93

P. Krishna

Right living in modern society

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UITGEVERIJ DER
THEOSOFISCHE VERENIGING
IN NEDERLAND
AMSTERDAM, 1995

Cover-illustration: Bronze statue of Dhyani-Buddha Akshobhya (Eastern Tibet, middle of the 19th century). The Buddha figure sits in *bhumisparsamudra*, the posture of 'touching the earth'. (Museum of anthropology, Leiden, The Netherlands).

First edition 1995

CIP-GEGEVENS

(Royal Library, The Hague)

Krishna, P.

Right living in modern society / P. Krishna. – Amsterdam :

Uitgeverij der Theosofische Vereniging in Nederland

Uitg. naar aanleiding van het gelijknamige seminar, Naarden,

13-16 juli 1993

ISBN 90-6175-071-7

Trefw.: Krishnamurti

© 1995 UTVN, Amsterdam

Typesetting: UTVN, Amsterdam

Printing: Krips Repro, Meppel

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Foreword

This book is a verbatim account of the lectures delivered by me at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras and the International Theosophical Centre at Naarden in the Netherlands during 1992-93, in the course of Conventions/Seminars held there. The question and answer sessions that followed several of these lectures have not been included. Since the lectures were delivered at different places and times and cover overlapping topics, the readers will find some repetitions of thoughts for which I wish to be excused.

Much of what I have expressed in these lectures has been learnt at the feet of J. Krishnamurti, whom I regard as a World Teacher par excellence. However, this is not meant to be an authoritative interpretation or exposition of his teachings. The views expressed in these lectures are mine and I take full responsibility for them. These lectures were not meant to inform or instruct anybody, nor do they provide final answers to any questions. They were meant to be a religious inquiry into certain perennial questions that have concerned mankind from times immemorial. I have tried to conduct that inquiry from first principles, without assuming any prior knowledge of religious books or texts. Indeed I claim to have no such knowledge since my formal education has been in science. I wish to warn the reader not to expect a scholarly discourse on any topic. This book is for the

layman, by a layman, who claims only to be a fellow-inquirer into questions facing our life.

To me, the true value of any book lies only in the questions that it raises, not in the answers that it offers. Learning is a by-product of the inquiry we conduct in exploring those questions for ourselves. No learning takes place if we merely accept or reject the opinions or answers offered by another. Therefore, for a seeker of the truth, it is important to live always with questions and not with answers. We must base our inquiry on our own observations in life and I seriously doubt the value of coming to any firm conclusions.

Answers and opinions have an author and a copyright, questions do not. The questions are the real jewels – they are neither yours nor mine, they belong to all of humanity. If the reader finds in this book even a few questions he wishes to dwell on, I shall feel amply rewarded. That is the only purpose of this book.

In this, the centenary year of Krishnamurti's birth, I dedicate this little book to that Master of Religious Inquiry and Perception, as a humble offering of one of his innumerable students all over the world.

I am grateful to the Theosophical Society in the Netherlands for editing and publishing this book.

P. KRISHNA
Varanasi
1st July, 1995

1

Education for universal moral values

I WOULD LIKE TO consider in the first part of my talk whether it is possible to define certain universal moral values which don't change from society to society or place to place and are in a sense eternal, that is independent of time. And if it is possible to define such values, then in the second part of the talk I would like to consider how it is possible to inculcate those values in ourselves, which is mankind, through a process of self-education. When I talk about education it would be in the broad sense of learning for ourselves, which includes school, college and university education, but is not limited to what transpires in the class rooms. Let me begin with a review of what is the present state of education in moral values throughout the world. One finds that the sense of what is right and what is wrong, what is important and valuable and what is unimportant or trivial, is different in different societies and different cultures. In most of the world it would be considered a virtue if someone believed in God, but not so in the communist countries where belief in God and worship are regarded as superstitions. There are societies which would consider widow marriage as a normal thing; there are other societies which look down upon it as something immoral.

You can take any number of examples like that. Certain societies permit polygamy, other societies look down upon it. Certain societies deliberately cultivate respect for the elders in the

minds of the young, in other societies they don't regard it as a value to be inculcated in children. Thus, at the level of action, what is considered right in one society is not considered right in another. So, for an international society like the Theosophical Society, which thinks in terms of the universal brotherhood of man and in terms of educating for one-world, it becomes an important question how to define universal moral values and which values to inculcate in the children when there is not an agreement between one culture and another. Indeed each culture perpetuates the values which it has acquired, which it has defined in its social structures and in some sense the people belonging to that culture begin to feel that their values are superior to the values of another culture. And these values get crystallised. They are perpetuated from one generation to the next, because children grow up in a society in imitation of their elders. Therefore these differences in moral values have themselves become a cause for division between man and man. They have become barriers to understanding each other and therefore to the universal brotherhood of man.

I would like to examine today what one can do when there is so much contradiction, so much confusion because one culture would not accept the values proclaimed by another. Historically these different cultures have developed around different religions because in olden days man did not travel very far, the means of travel were not highly developed as they are today and groups of people lived in relative isolation. So each society developed its own norms within its own religion and prescribed what they thought was virtuous and what they thought was evil, what actions were right and what actions were to be regarded as wrong. So for historical reasons these differences in social values have developed; but differences by themselves don't lead to division if we perceive them only as differences. It is when an ele-

ment of judgement, an element of superiority or inferiority is attached to them that a division tends to occur.

This happens naturally in the case of moral values because one cannot say that what is immoral here should be regarded as moral somewhere else. Consequently it creates a certain amount of contempt, a certain separation or alienation between cultures. I am told that even a wise man like Gandhiji when he was asked: 'Sir, what do you think of Western culture?', remarked, perhaps jocularly, 'It would be a good idea to have one!' From the standpoint of traditional Indian values, if you judge the way the West lives, it does appear superficial and uncultured. The feeling is reciprocal because the values by which people live in the West are different from the values which have been taught in India, but these differences are on account of the subjective perceptions of each culture. There is no absolute moral value in all this. I am reminded of a similar situation in science. For many centuries there was a big dispute whether the earth goes round the sun or the sun goes round the earth and it could not be resolved for a very long time. At first people believed that it is the sun which goes round the earth, then people believed it is the earth which goes round the sun, until a man like Einstein came and asked deeper questions about what is motion and what is rest. When he tried to define that exactly he came upon the great truth that all motion is relative and there is no such thing as absolute rest. Whether a thing is moving or at rest depends on which other object you are considering to be at rest. We may be at rest relative to the earth but the earth is moving relative to the sun and the sun is moving relative to the stars and so on. Therefore the question cannot be answered whether we are moving or we are at rest, unless you specify relative to what. In the same way if you ask whether a particular action is right or wrong, the answer will depend on who answers it.

How do you get an absolute and universal definition of right and wrong when every mind is conditioned in its own culture and will look at the issue from the point of view of its own culture which is just an accident of birth? One happens to have been born in a particular culture and brought up with some values which one believes and maintains. But the man in another culture is attached to his values for the same reason for which we are attached to our values and then we fight over it. Only recently in India one has seen the tragedy of what this has led to. In Ayo-dhya, in the name of religion, devout Hindus broke down a place of worship which was regarded as a *masjid* by the people of the Islamic culture. People of neither side know what religion is, nor have they inquired into what God is. They are both accepting the values which were taught to them. Each group is arrogantly proclaiming the values which were taught to them as being superior and they are trying to settle scores. The whole thing becomes such a travesty of anything that can be called religious. So at this level of action, since right and wrong are subjective, one cannot arrive at universal values. One must look deeper and ask the more fundamental question: 'What is virtue?' Every religion has talked of virtues and vices in terms of action, but is there virtue which is not defined in terms of actions? Or are virtuous actions themselves the definition of virtue? Is virtue in the performance of what is laid down as virtuous action or is virtue something else, to be discovered in one's own consciousness? That is a question that must be asked, if we wish to discover in a fundamental sense what can be universal moral values, or a religious mind which is non-denominational, without labels, not belonging to a particular culture.

A little examination shows that virtue is really a state of mind. It is a state of one's consciousness. It cannot be defined in terms of certain righteous actions alone. I would like to illustrate this

with a few examples, taking as examples commonly known virtues which are accepted all over the world and have been promulgated by every religion. Is kindness a state of mind, a state of one's being, of one's consciousness, or is it something to be defined in terms of certain actions? No doubt religions have prescribed kind actions as virtues – you must give alms to the beggar, you must help the weak and the old. These are all actions which every religion has prescribed. Do they in themselves constitute kindness? To put the question differently, will the performance of kind actions, preconceived and defined, bring kindness into my consciousness? If so, then that is the right way to go about it, then virtue can be brought in from the outside, through deliberate effort.

But if it is not so, then the performance of those kind actions, though not objectionable in itself, does not lead to a state of virtue in one's mind, in one's consciousness. Therefore they should be regarded only as kind acts and not as a substitute for kindness; otherwise it creates an illusion. One finds that man has deluded himself in this respect all over the world. Instead of coming upon kindness in one's consciousness, one is satisfied with performing certain kind acts. You can therefore find vegetarians who will not kill and eat an animal but who are extremely cruel even to animals elsewhere. They don't eat meat because they have learnt vegetarianism as a habit. There are rich people who amass a lot of wealth through wrongful means, through the black-market, through hoarding, through domination and exploitation, and then give alms to beggars and it makes them feel that they are kind souls, when they are in actuality not kind. So whereas one doesn't object to kind actions being performed, one objects to the illusion that may be associated with it of being a kind human being. On the other hand if one has kindness within one's consciousness, if that is the quality of one's mind and heart, then it

will express itself in every relationship, it won't be that there is kindness in one relationship and cruelty in another. So we must distinguish between acts of virtue and virtue itself.

Let me take another example of the ideal of non-violence. If I am violent within, given to ambition, self-centredness and anger in my consciousness, from which comes hatred, is it possible to practice non-violence and will the practice of non-violence end the violence in my consciousness? What does the practice of non-violence imply? You would have to define what non-violence is. If you just define it as not hitting anybody else, it means I can feel very hateful of another person, I may abuse him either outwardly or inwardly, despise him, look down upon him, but I cannot hit him. As long as I don't hit him I am non-violent, which is a very convenient and rather trivial definition of non-violence. That is not non-violence. One can delude oneself that one is non-violent and that becomes a form of hypocrisy. I hate you but outwardly I behave towards you as if I love you, which is hypocrisy. It means not presenting oneself honestly as what one is, but projecting outwardly something different from what one is inwardly. So such a practice leads to other moral values being violated. Honesty is also a moral value. Truthfulness is also a moral value. Therefore it is not possible to practice non-violence while one is still violent inwardly. The practice of non-violence outwardly will not change the violence within oneself for the simple reason that you are dealing only with the symptoms, trying to prevent the symptoms without dealing with the cause of violence. Unless one has found out for oneself and discovered the causes for violence in one's psyche, in one's consciousness, and eliminated them, there will still be violence, and as long as there is violence there cannot be the practice of non-violence. There can be non-killing of animals, vegetarianism, certain habits which may be non-violent, but that is not

non-violence as a virtue. There is a state of non-violence as a virtue only with the ending of violence, not with the practice of non-violence.

In the same way you can form pairs of opposites and mankind has struggled with these opposites, trying to cultivate virtues as opposed to vice. If I have fear I try to cultivate courage. The very fact that I want to cultivate courage is an indication that there is fear. And that fear does not go away by cultivating courage. If there is the ending of fear there is no need to cultivate courage. So one is caught in this duality if one tries to practice virtue as the opposite of vice, because one is then dealing only with outer actions which are mere symptoms. Is it possible to come upon virtue in one's consciousness so that there is no need to cultivate virtue outwardly? That means if I posit violence, hatred, jealousy, anger, greed, as disorders in my consciousness, then all these disorders have got a cause and that cause can be understood and eliminated. You cannot get rid of this by practicing their opposite. This does not mean that self-control should not be exercised, I am not saying that. It does not mean that when you feel like hitting somebody you should go and hit him. It just means that self-control will not change the inner state of our being. Self-control does not bring in virtue. It is like the order that is created by the policeman on the road. As long as the policeman is there, out of the fear of the policeman, the drivers drive at the right speed and on the correct side of the road. It is an externally imposed discipline, it is not an order from within. But if there was an order from within, you don't need the policeman. Surely it is not virtue if I am tempted and being a coward I don't give in to that temptation! If you define virtue in that way it means temptation plus cowardice is virtue and temptation plus courage is vice! That is what it amounts to.

When one is virtuous in order to find certain social respect-

ability, when one is virtuous because one is afraid of public opinion, one is only virtuous outwardly in action. Every religion has tried to create a conscience. They try to define certain moral values and then drum them into the child as he grows up in that culture. Then you feel guilty if you don't practice those virtues and feel you have fallen into vice. This conscience acts like an inner policeman who sits inside you. It is still part of the conditioning. It makes you feel guilty and it is different in different cultures. The same action which can make an Indian feel guilty does not make a Westerner feel guilty because his conscience is developed differently from your conscience. Now the conscience is normally highly regarded in society but I want to pose this as a question to you whether that conscience is also not a form of discipline, an inner pressure instead of external pressure, which controls you and is therefore still a form of self-control which is needed because there is not the real understanding of virtue. So there is the external control of the laws, the police, the state, the theologians, the public opinion and there is this inner control of my conscience and in between these controls my consciousness is tied and I am asked to lead a moral life. This is the actual state in which we live. But we must ask if that is all there is to virtue, because this has led to a lot of hypocrisy. The conscience becomes something that bothers me and therefore I find a way of satisfying my conscience. I can therefore accept definitions that going to the temple and bathing in the Ganges is holy and once I perform these actions I feel I am a religious man, I am a holy person. Your conscience gets satisfied. You may not come upon what is virtue, you may never have discovered what is a religious mind, but you feel you are religious because you perform certain actions which you define as religious. So you are both the actor and the judge, you are the one who is seeking satisfaction and you are also the one who feels satisfied by them. It is a kind of illusion,

a trap that we lay for ourselves. This deception needs to be seen through if one wants to really come upon virtue.

So, in that sense one can regard virtue as order in one's consciousness and there is order in the consciousness only when disorder is eliminated, not by the imposition of order. Order cannot be imposed on top of disorder. Non-violence cannot be imposed on top of violence but you can handle violence, it is something we know, something we experience in our relationships. So what is it that causes disorder and how can one eliminate disorder? This requires a lot of investigation. This requires observation of oneself in relationship without condemnation or justification, without deluding oneself, observing the process in one's mind. Because as long as one is working with ambition you cannot eliminate violence. When you are going about it ambitiously and your personal ambition is not fulfilled, whoever comes in your way you will brush aside and violence arises. Therefore unless ambition is understood and set aside, unless desire is understood and ceases to be compulsive, it is not possible to be free from violence. That needs a deep understanding of the working of one's mind. But we want quick results. We go to a Guru and hope that he would give us some quick way to come upon this understanding. How can one come upon that understanding by just going to the temple, bathing in a river or touching somebody's feet?

It is not an understanding which one can get even from the books. There is no dearth of religious books, there is no dearth of religious teachers, but it is not something that can be accumulated like knowledge. It is not an accumulative process. It is a process of seeing the truth in one's everyday life, in what is happening inside oneself. It needs reflection, insight. Krishnaji remarked somewhere that truth enters the mind like a burglar. That means we set up mental barriers around us as walls behind which we live in isolation to get a false sense of security. The burglar enters

not because you pray for the burglar to enter. You cannot predict or ensure that he will enter. But he cannot enter if you have made the defences very strong. Therefore, it is our job to loosen those defences by looking at them and refusing to delude oneself. Then the burglar has a chance of entering! It is not an act of will. There are certain things which one can do by act of will through effort. For instance, you can learn something. You can decide whether to travel somewhere or not, but you cannot decide to love, you cannot decide to respect, you cannot decide to be non-violent. You may decide on certain non-violent actions, but we have already said that non-violent actions are not non-violence. So virtue is something that cannot be practised. It has to be discovered and come upon. In our education we have neglected this completely. Indeed I would go to the extent of saying that present day education, at least in most places, is so organised as to deliberately destroy virtue – virtue which we have defined as a state of mind or consciousness in which there is love, there is compassion, there is humility.

Look at the aims of our present-day education. The present aim of education, the vision of education, is to produce an ambitious, aggressive, successful man. We teach competition, we teach rivalry. The child originally is not like that. If you watch a young child, he is not like that at all. You find that he has affection for no reason. He loves the child of the servant just as much as he loves the child of the next-door neighbour. It is the adult who teaches him to discriminate and says, don't go to him, go to this person. He plays with things which don't cost very much, it is we who teach him otherwise. In school he feels happy when his friend has done very well but when he goes to the teacher, the teacher says you are stupid, why are you not able to do like him? That teaches him competition and rivalry. I am not saying that a child is all virtuous, I am saying the child is innocent and in

the process of education, as it stands in the world today, we corrupt the mind of the child because we have not understood the value of virtue, the value of having a religious mind. I wonder if you have noticed that the greatest destruction and the greatest tortures in the world are not the work of uneducated people. They are the work of highly educated people. They are the work of highly educated M Sc's, Ph D's, LLB's, MD's and so on. This is a fact. Look at history. It is not the rickshaw puller who created the problems in society. Who were the perpetrators of the holocaust in Germany? Highly educated, highly sophisticated, highly efficient, highly disciplined people! That is our ideal in education, isn't it? To produce a highly efficient capable man who can work ambitiously, work hard. Hitler foots the bill! Where in our education would you find fault with him?

We have only cultivated power through education, because we have looked upon education as essentially a means for economic development. I do not know, may be if we did not need bridges and aeroplanes and motor cars and all these gadgets whether we would have given education at all. That is how it appears sometimes because the whole purpose of education, at present, is to produce that bright computer scientist, that is our aim, that is our vision. I am not objecting to the production of computer scientists. I am objecting to this being the primary aim of education. We have completely neglected the religious side in the process of education as we have totally neglected virtue in modern education. There is no humility, there is no cooperation, there is no harmony. There is competition, there is rivalry, there is the ambition and the race for success from which violence arises in order to dominate and to be at the top. That is the kind of man we are producing and then we complain that there is too much violence in the society and governments are not able to control it and we need a better police force and the army should

be sent in there to control this and so on. But what is it that we are doing at the source from where all this originates?

All religions, all societies would accept these virtues as virtues in the consciousness, and once there is virtue in the consciousness, the action that comes from that state of mind is right action, but if you define right action and you practice it according to your definition, it doesn't bring in virtue. So right action has to be defined as that action which comes from a virtuous state of mind, otherwise one doesn't know right action. There is a talk which Krishnaji gave at the United Nations in 1984. It's on video. He explains about violence between nations and so on. At the end of the talk someone in the audience asked him: 'You have talked about non-violence but what should you do if a robber attacks you?', and his answer was: 'Sir, first learn to live peacefully, not for one day or two days but for 20 years, then when a robber attacks you, you will know what is the right thing to do!' It is not an evasive answer. We want quick results. We want somebody to tell us what is the right thing to do. It is not possible to come upon virtue like that. There is no prescription for virtue. Maybe for certain virtuous actions there is, but not for virtue itself. There is no short-cut to it. Virtue is a by-product of understanding and understanding comes not through books. The books, the guru, the teachers, these lectures, they can only serve to create the question in our mind. How you relate to that question, what you learn from that question, how you deal with that question, is all a process of learning for which each of us is personally responsible. But we think we can learn it like we can learn something in a coaching class. It is not like that. You don't have to believe this. Just watch it in your own life. Try it if you can come upon it in that way. You can delude yourself. There are thousands of ways of deluding oneself but there is only one way to come upon understanding and then to act out of that understanding. Can we

ask fundamental questions, without looking for shortcuts, as we must, since the Theosophical Society stands for the Love of Truth? If we are seeking the Truth, then there is no short-cut.

Each one of us is responsible for that inquiry within oneself. It does not help to condemn oneself if one is not capable of doing it. One must also be a friend to oneself, because we are like other people. It is not that Theosophists, because they are members of the Theosophical Society, are in some way superior. The moment you think so you make the same mistake which that man makes who thinks that bathing in the Ganges and going to the temple makes him religious. It is not so simple that just by becoming a member of a society you can have a religious mind. That is just an expression of an intention. So even the membership of a society can be with a wrong motive and then it becomes wrong action, or it can be with understanding, with the right motive, and then it is right action. Therefore the rightness or the wrongness of an action cannot be determined from the action itself. It can only be determined by the state of mind in which that action is performed. Normally we think actions which are beneficial are right actions. That means the results determine the rightness of an action. But we see only certain results, the outer results, we don't see other results arising out of the state of mind from which that action comes about.

You can construct a beautiful, useful building with terrific personal ambition, because you want to be the best architect in town and you want to leave something for posterity and make a permanent name for yourself. When you define virtue in the way I have just mentioned, it becomes wrong action although you may have created a beautiful building outwardly which may be beneficial to people. But the same building can also be built selflessly, out of love, with a different state of mind and then it is right action. Similarly you can study physics in order to rise in life

and make a success of yourself and get the Nobel prize. You would have no doubt produced a certain amount of scientific work which the world regards as beneficial activity and good action but if you have a religious mind, you need to look at the state of mind in which that is produced. A man may be working daily 20 hours in the laboratory just for the love of it, just to find out the truth of what he is investigating. Or he may be doing it with a lot of personal ambition for name and fame. If you watch the outer results you will say, what difference does it make? It makes a hell of a lot difference because you must also be aware that our life and world are not composed only of physical things around us. The ambitious mind is destructive, it destroys the religious quality in life, in society. That same man is also a father, is also a husband, is also a friend to others. From this ambitious, violent and greedy state of mind he perhaps does more damage than the good he has produced in the laboratory. In fact you cannot compare it because the good is in the physical world and the damage is in the world of the psyche. But the inner world of our psyche is constantly overcoming the outer. Man has been brilliant with the outer world. He has developed machines, he has built hospitals, he has done so much and yet if he fails in the inner world and he does not come upon virtue, he himself will destroy all that he has built, and that is what we see today. We see man himself destroying what with great labours he has built. This is partly because we have completely neglected this side in education.

So if an organisation like the Theosophical Society or the Krishnamurti Foundation runs educational institutions and we are aware of this problem, then what kind of education should we create? What should be the vision, what should be the agenda? Whether we can succeed or not is not the question. What is it that one must attempt to do? Let me enunciate briefly some points for you to ponder. First of all not to look upon the

primary purpose of education as economic welfare and development. The primary purpose of education is right development of the human being which means it is not linked to productivity. You may have productivity, but that is a by-product, it is not the aim of education. The purpose of education then would be to reveal to a human being, child or adult, all that is beautiful in life. There is great beauty in life – there is beauty in friendship, there is beauty in arts, dance and music, there is also beauty in mathematics and physics. Teach him that not because you want him to be an engineer, but because you want him to see the beauty of mathematics and physics, so that he loves that. We must produce a mind that is inquiring, that is learning, that is growing inwardly, which means it should be aware of the religious dimensions of our being, something we have totally neglected in our education. We spend 20 years training a child, how to build a motor-car or how to manage a computer, how to do something in the physical world. Teaching comprises of 8 hours a day. Every day, doing experiments, laboratory work, lectures and classes to produce that ability at the end of it, and we want that this thing called virtue or religious quality must just come on the side by going to the temple or reading two books? It is something equally arduous and if one doesn't learn that, one doesn't learn the art of living, and without the art of living education is incomplete. So it should be as important a part of our agenda, of education, to create in the child these questions that we have talked about, to create in him a sense of the mystery of life and of nature, as it is to make him a professional. He is a part of Nature, as all of us are. To be students of this mystery in which we live, of which we are often not aware, may be the true purpose of our consciousness, both the mystery of the outer environment and of our inner being. Instead of that we spend all our time for a narrow limited ambition dictated by society and we never expose the child to the

vastness of life. So we create a lop-sided, narrow human being.

I would also say that we should teach democracy as a moral value, because democracy is connected with humility. I don't mean the kind of democracy that is going on out there in society, that is not democracy. One must ask oneself what is real democracy in a fundamental sense. It really means no one of us has all the answers and we really do not know what is the best way to run society and to govern. Therefore we sit together, we confer, we discuss, we listen to each other in respect, to find out what is best, and after we have discussed we may vote or take a consensus and try what the majority feels would be the right thing to do. We try it in humility, we observe its consequences; if it doesn't work, we have a mechanism by which we can change that. We can sit together again to reconsider it and not say because it was so and so's scheme, therefore I won't cooperate in it. That is real democracy, not putting pressure, wielding the stick and saying if you don't listen to me, I will arm-twist, I will black mail, that is not democracy at all. So we must teach the child what democracy is all about; it is a certain attitude of mind, not merely a system of voting. Unless we accept that responsibility in society we are guilty of giving tremendous power in the hands of a child in the name of education without giving him the intelligence to use it rightly. It is like giving a gun in the hands of a child, you don't do it. But we are doing that indirectly in society when we are producing a person who is an expert at working in one narrow area without any understanding of the whole of life. So if we are educating children we must accept the responsibility of creating these religious questions in his mind. We cannot give him the answers. If we give him the answers we are back into the same trap of moral values which has been laid down by all orthodox religions and that doesn't bring the right understanding. If we can intellectually create questions in the child's mind in mathematics

and physics, why not in this? Isn't his life concerned with this? Is not this far more important than the knowledge of physics and mathematics? Our values have been very wrong and we are today suffering the consequences of that. It is the responsibility especially of a society like this, which wants to work towards one world, brotherhood and universal moral values, to create such educational places. We cannot do that unless we accept that challenge in our own life in all seriousness.

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The individual, society and transformation

WE ARE GOING to explore this morning the relationship of the individual to society and how a true transformation in society can come about. Unless we have a deep understanding of our relationship to society it is difficult to know what our real responsibility is as a member of that society. We tend, in our ignorance, to pick up on something as our main responsibility and pursue that. Therefore it is important that we should explore this question deeply and arrive at an understanding out of which the sense of responsibility would emanate as a by-product. In order to understand any complex phenomenon or situation it is essential first to begin with an objective observation of facts, not begin with opinions but with facts. So let me do that this morning. In order to be objective it helps if one is looking from outside and not from within so that the opinion and what you observe is not witnessed subjectively and there is greater objectivity. So let me begin with a thought-experiment. A thought-experiment is an experiment which is not done in the laboratory, but which is done in imagination. Consider somebody out there in space, let us say on Mars, having a big telescope with which he can look down on our earth. He is not part of our earth, but he is just observing it and studying what is going on here. What would he see and how would he feel about the society that we have created on earth?

He will notice that man has built enormous cities, developed a

lot of technology which has brought about advanced systems of transport, communication, electricity and health care. These have increased his efficiency and provided him with protection against various diseases which afflict mankind. He can now talk to people across the continents in a matter of minutes, and also travel rapidly, all of which has made the world shrink. In olden days it was not possible for a person like me to come here and be with all of you, now it is a routine matter. He would also see all the knowledge that man has amassed, a tremendous lot. But then as he turns his telescope around he would also see on this planet groups of people with guns, arraigned against another group of similar people on the opposite side intent on killing each other. He would wonder, what is going on? He does not know our internal situation, he's looking from outside and he wonders what is going on, why are these people killing their own kind? Not just in one place, but at least in twenty different places on earth. That is the state of our society as it would appear to the man who sees it from outside, who doesn't have all the explanations and justifications as to why it has to be so and so on and so forth. When he looks more closely he will see acts of terrorism in Ireland, Sri Lanka, in Kashmir, in Punjab. People who want a certain idea to be fulfilled, their plans to be achieved, using force and modern technology to push other people in bringing that about. He would notice what is happening in former Yugoslavia. People divided and killing each other uncontrollably. He would see that there are some countries which are extremely affluent where they are dumping their excess produce into the sea because they have to preserve their economy and other countries in Asia and Africa where there is starvation, thousands of people are undernourished and die for want of food. And he would indeed wonder what a strange world this is! Then he would see the tremendous brutality and violence between

man and man, within the family, within a nation – out of greed, out of personal ambition, out of personal desires and self-interest, which is all over the world and is not just a problem of one nation. He would see domination over women, the strong dominating the weak, the exploiting of the poor and aggressiveness of all kinds. That is unfortunately the factual state of the society which man has created on earth.

The scientists tell us that man evolved some 60-70 million years ago from the apes. Before that, the planet existed for millions of years without our presence and we must ask ourselves whether we can really claim that evolution went in the right direction when we evolved out of the apes. If we ask ourselves that question seriously, can we honestly say that the additional faculties of reason, imagination, memory and so on, which have been given to us by Nature over those of the animals, whether we have really used them for the betterment of the world as a whole, which includes everything, human beings, animals, plants, the whole earth? As I said, in some respects man has done phenomenal things on the constructive side; but all that comes to very little because in another sense he has remained extremely primitive. Are we really all that different, inwardly, psychologically from the primitive, tribal man about whom we read in the books of history or anthropology or biology? A million years ago also man was divided into tribes, grouped and protecting his own group and attacking other groups, he was loving to his own people and hating others. Psychologically aren't we still the same? Those groups may now be larger, may be around certain ideas instead of just being geographical groups, but when the Arabs and the Jews fight with each other, or the Hindus and the Muslims fight with each other, when different nations fight with each other, isn't it still another form of tribalism? So we may have acquired the ability to go to the moon and we may have amassed a lot of

knowledge which is all there and available to us in the libraries of the world, but inwardly we have not learnt to love our neighbour. We still find it very difficult and this has created a kind of lopsided development of the human being – extreme progress in one direction which has released tremendous amounts of power in our hands, but which is not coupled with the necessary intelligence and wisdom that must go with it in order to ensure that the power is used rightly.

It seems to me that modern man is in the condition of a child who has been let loose on the roads where there is tremendous traffic and it cannot cope with that traffic. We wouldn't let a child go on the road without an escort, but that is the condition of modern man, since he is on the one hand primitive in his understanding of his own self and his relationship to nature, to other human beings, to ideas and to things, and on the other hand he has tremendous power, acquisitions and knowledge at his disposal. That has created a dangerous situation and one is not sure if mankind will survive this state. We cannot be sure, because with all that nuclear power, the ability to make bombs and on the other hand a growing hatred between nations and peoples, it is a very volatile situation, it is no longer a question of a local war between two peoples. Any war is now a global war and can turn into destruction of the entire planet. So there is an urgency to resolve this issue which was not there before. We are now upon the edge of the precipice. Any moment one can fall off. Indeed the recent war against Iraq came very close to turning into a world war and mankind narrowly escaped that disaster. I wonder if we can really claim, even from a purely biological point of view, whether we deserve survival because Darwin postulated the principle of survival of the fittest and that may not mean the cleverest and the most intelligent. For survival what is needed is cooperation, not the cleverness and the intelligence of the kind which we have

cultivated. The ants have a much greater chance of survival than we have because they live cooperatively. So we cannot be sure whether, like the dinosaurs and so on who could not adapt themselves to the environment and therefore perished, we might not just be relegated in the history of the universe, to a species that came for 60 or 70 million years, became too intelligent and clever for survival, destroyed itself and was therefore eliminated. That is a real possibility.

What is our responsibility when we find that we are in a world that is divided like this? We must examine why we are in that state at the end of so many millions of years of evolution. What has gone wrong? And why are we still going on in the direction of so called 'progress' and what is the right direction to go? Let us look at the kind of individual that we are creating, because after all society is built up of individuals like you and me. So what kind of individuals are we producing in our society? We send children to school, they are educated there. We send them to the church, they are instructed there in whichever religion happens to be the religion which that particular family adopts. The hold of religion has anyway become quite weak now and there is this tremendous commercialisation in society. People using propaganda, making all kinds of violent films, obscenity, trying to titillate in order to make a fast buck, so called free enterprise, freedom that is interpreted to mean you can do what you like, all of which has a tremendous effect on children, influencing their minds. In the schools we teach them to be ambitious. We admire the child who has capacity, who is talented, we look down upon the child who is dull. This is the pattern right through the world. We train people through the use of reward and punishment. We have all been trained and brought up that way. If you look carefully you will see that in the essence it is not very different from the way the police train dogs. When they do the right thing they give

them a biscuit and when they do the wrong thing they hit them with a stick. We may not be hitting children with a stick but we punish them with a look or a snide remark. It is the same thing, we are using punishment. We are offering rewards for what we consider is right conduct, going in the right direction. We are pushing the individual in that way. So we are exploiting his ego in order to promote what we think or we want promoted in society. If we want bridges to be built and we need engineers in society, we say we will offer big rewards for anybody who takes up this profession and the students all want to go for that because they get higher salaries, bigger positions. That is the normal pattern. So we are shaping them through reward and punishment and we are teaching the individual to work towards reward. We are not teaching him to do that which he loves to do but we are teaching him to do that which will get him the highest job, highest reward, the highest appreciation in society. So he learns to pursue not what is his own natural urge or talent, but that which society demands of him, a society which is utilitarian, which values people according to the return which they would give to society at that given time. That is what is going on. No wonder the individual has become very egoistic, ruthless, ambitious. Anything that comes in the way of what he is wanting to do he pushes aside, therefore he has become violent, because that is the kind of human being we are producing. Then we desire that our society should be non-violent, peaceful, orderly. On the one hand we create an individual who is self-centred, who is taught to be ambitious, to pursue his own aims, who has very little understanding of himself but who knows how a man goes to the moon, and on the other we want a society that would be non-violent, that would be peaceful, that would be orderly, where there will be politeness, consideration and so on. Is that possible? Is that a sensible way of setting up society? We have to ask ourselves that

question. Can we make a peaceful, non-violent society out of millions of individuals who are self-centered, violent, aggressive?

Whatever kind of society you may make, whether it is capitalistic, whether it is a communist society, whether you make one set of regulations or another set of regulations, if the individuals themselves in that society are self-centred, violent, aggressive, how can you have a society which is peaceful, non-violent? So can we change society through legislation or does legislation only control these things in society? You first of all have these propensities which we create in the way we bring up the individual and then we have all the laws to contain them, control violence, and therefore there is a constant battle, constant conflict. The individual is going his own way and society is trying to curb him. As I see it, this is what is going on with each one of us and society is built up of people like you and me. That is why whether it is America or India or Russia, whether you have one form of government or another form of government, democratic or totalitarian, there is still tremendous tyranny, cruelty within that society. The communist experiment in Russia is nearly over. Their philosophy was that by controlling things from the outside they can change man. They said by giving the same salary, nearly the same kind of house, the same kind of food, they will create equality among men; by destroying the temples and the churches they will get rid of religious feelings. The experiment has failed, because you can change all the temples in the world into museums, but if I have the desire to worship, I will light a little lamp in my house and worship. How are you going to manage to stop it?

The outer control does not change us inwardly. External discipline may be necessary as a temporary measure but it does not solve the problem. It is like aspirin which you take when you have a headache. It does not cure the disease. If you are getting

repeated headaches you need to find a permanent cure, discover the root-cause of that headache and eliminate that cause. It is not intelligent to go on taking aspirin. In the same way, if we produce criminals in our society, it may be necessary to put them behind bars in order to contain them and protect the people in the society from their outbursts of violence. But we must find out why our society is producing criminals and eliminate those causes. If we don't accept the responsibility of doing that we will keep on producing criminals on the one hand and controlling them on the other, which is what is going on at present. We are producing self-centred, violent, aggressive, competitive human beings and then trying to control the evil through law, through legislation. This is the state of our society at the end of millions of years of our existence. It is not that people have not been concerned about this. It is not that people have not attempted to solve this. We have had prophets, we have had various religions instructing the people what to do, what not to do, what is good, what is evil – all that we have tried. We have witnessed scientific development, we have amassed a lot of knowledge, but that has not solved the problem either. So what are we to do? Should we look for another religion? Is it that the previous religions were not adequate? Should we wait for another Messiah, somebody who would be greater than Buddha or Christ, to come and save us? Or is it that we have had all the instruction that we need, but so long as we refuse to learn, a Messiah cannot do anything. So, either we think that a saviour or somebody else has to come and protect mankind or we accept the responsibility that we have to learn. Obviously it is not because of the deficiency of teachers that we have not learnt, it is due to our own incapacity to learn. We have to accept that responsibility.

One is not saying that there should not be efficient organisation, that there should not be talk about disarmament at the Uni-

ted Nations or other political things that people do. One is only saying that these are all temporary solutions. We are creating problems on the one hand and solving them with the other. That is what is going on. If we are not increasing our understanding, if we are not producing better human beings, then this is an endless process. Look at the war with Iraq which took place recently. It may have been necessary in the political sense because the situation there was becoming volatile and one person was becoming very powerful, possibly endangering all the people in the neighbourhood, so he had to be put down by force. That is the argument which is given for that war. I don't know if the argument is completely correct, but that was the argument that was given. But we have to look at the consequences. If we think that we have solved an enormous problem there, I think that is an illusion because in solving that problem thousands of people have been killed, millions of people have been hurt and more division has been created, more hatred has been created among people and this hatred lives in the hearts and minds of men and it has its own consequences. It produces the next war. You sow the seeds for the next war in creating that division and that hatred which inevitably comes from any war. Therefore it is only a temporary solution, not a permanent solution.

It appears to me that through legislation, through prisons, through force, you will never come to a permanent solution. Then what is the permanent solution and what is our responsibility? If we have a long vision and we want to live rightly and do what is right at this point of history, what is our responsibility? As Theosophists, as people who are interested in examining all these issues with great humility, with great sincerity and with respect for facts, not with arrogance, we must ask what is the long term solution? Krishnaji said: 'You are the world'. The world is that way because we are that way. So long as we are vio-

lent, competitive, ambitious, all this is inevitable. What is happening in the world is a consequence of what is happening in the psyche of the individual. Therefore each one of us is responsible for the division that manifests between nations, between Hindus and the Muslims, between the Arabs and the Jews and so on. Society can transform in a fundamental sense only if the individual can transform, therefore it is important to find out how the individual is able to transform. All other transformations based on economic considerations, political considerations etc. are temporary. They may solve some problems for sometime, but new problems will be generated which is why at the end of millions of years we are still having all these problems.

Religions have tried to change the individual. The communists have tried to change the individual, but they did not succeed. If they had succeeded, things would not be what they are now in society. By changing the circumstances, by changing things outside, you cannot change the consciousness of man. But the religious people have been addressing themselves to the inner state of man and to the individual's conduct. Why has that not succeeded either? Essentially all religions give a code of conduct. They have said 'do this, don't do this, this is good for you, this is bad for you, this is right, this is wrong' and those instructions are then propagated among people. The instructions may be a little different for Christians from what they are for Buddhists. One religion may say, eat meat, another may say don't eat meat and so on, but essentially each religion has a code of conduct and man has struggled to follow the code of conduct of his religion. But he has not succeeded. It has produced in him a tremendous sense of guilt, tremendous conflict. Always man has felt small, that he has been asked to do something which he is not doing or he has been forbidden to do certain things and he's still doing them. The majority feels humiliated, feels frustrated, feels small

and a few who are lucky, who are able to conform to all those rules, or appear to, become proud and arrogant 'moralists' looking down on the others and saying this is the way you should live. That has created its own problems. Some human beings look down on other human beings as weaklings and condemn them. So the tyranny of man, the hatred between man and man just assumes another form.

So we must ask ourselves more deeply, what is virtue? Can virtue be defined in terms of conduct and then be practised? If I perform a certain number of pre-defined acts of kindness, if I become a vegetarian, everyday do charity and help old people cross the road, will that bring kindness in my consciousness or does it just become an easy way to feel virtuous? Man has found these codes an easy way to feel virtuous without actually coming upon virtue. Therefore conventional religion instead of transforming man has made him more hypocritical. You find many men in India who visit the temple every morning, go and bathe in the Ganges and feel that they are very religious. Then they go to the office and function ruthlessly competitively because they have no deeper understanding of virtue. To them religion is going to the temple early in the morning and bathing in the Ganges. So unless there is a deep understanding of our thought processes, of how violence arises in us, of our relationship with other human beings, with nature, with society, the virtue that we may have is very fragile. One may be thoroughly vulnerable to temptations and still be moral since by chance one did not come across any. Virtue is entirely dependent on circumstances when it is not rooted in the understanding of oneself. Yet we have totally ignored that aspect in bringing up the child, in education, we have nowhere bothered about his understanding of himself. We have only given him a set of instructions to live by, what to do and what not to do, drawn from our religion or our particular culture.

We spend an enormous length of time in turning him into a doctor or engineer, artist or whatever, because then he has a profession to earn a living by. But what kind of life does he live? This is a miserable kind of life in spite of all the affluence and comfort of being rich. Misery is not the special prerogative of the poor. Comforts may be distributed unevenly but happiness has not been so unjustly distributed among people. It is not easy to come upon happiness except through a deep understanding of oneself and one's relationships.

So if one sees that, then what is one's responsibility? First of all do we realize that we have not been educated and brought up properly, that our ego has been increased, we have been taught to be proud of ourselves in the name of self-esteem and our ego has been exploited by society to make us do what they want us to do? If I do, then I don't want my child to fall into the same trap, I don't want to educate him the same way as I was educated. I want him to be intelligent, and to understand life rightly and from the very beginning be sensitive and aware of all these problems. The other thing one realizes is that education is not limited only to childhood. One is learning all the time. If one discovers that one has a limited understanding of oneself and sees the importance of this in one's own life, one begins now, today. The day one discovers the importance of this, one begins from that day, to learn for oneself through observation, through a listening ear and an observing eye and you cannot have these two unless you have an open mind, a mind that is not already filled up with conclusions, but which knows that it does not know. Then it looks and learns through observing itself and through that learning, with humility, there comes an understanding within, the by-product of which is virtue. Virtue is not something you can directly practice. It is a by-product of selfknowledge. Selfknowledge not in the sense of knowledge of the self based on reading

about the self. You can read all about Buddhism and the best that you will get to is to become a professor of Buddhist philosophy but he is not the Buddha. So one must distinguish between knowledge and actuality. Though one is not against knowledge, it is necessary to be aware that it is like the acquisition of property. It does not transform one inwardly. Like one has a house, money, furniture and so on, we have knowledge as mental property, but it doesn't by itself alter our consciousness.

I wonder if we realize that the world is in a sad state today not because of the ignorant villager in India or Africa. It is the highly educated, efficient, top politicians, scientists and lawyers, who are leaders of this society, that have made things the way they are. So what is so great about being educated? At the end of all that education and all that knowledge this is what we have created. What is there to be so proud of in that knowledge? Society is based on a wrong sense of values, all the time admiring ability and ignoring respect for life, respect for a human being, even if he is dull or unintelligent. The so-called intelligence of society is not true intelligence if it has brought us to the brink of disaster. So why do we still admire and worship ability? All this business of admiring people who play tennis better or jump higher in order to get a prize and compete? What is so laudable about being the best tennis player in the world? Is it not more laudable to enjoy your tennis? So it seems to me that we have built the entire fabric of society on a wrong basis of promoting a kind of egoistic achievement of the individual. We don't teach people to work creatively, but to receive applause. It is more important that the individual works creatively and loves the work he is doing. Then he does not work for a reward, he works for the joy of doing whatever he is doing. Even the highly educated scientists and so on are caught in the same trap. Most of them are not really interested in what they are doing in the laboratory. They are doing it

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because they want recognition by the Academy or a promotion or the Nobel prize. Most of the society works five days a week to get a salary with which it hopes to enjoy the two days over the weekend. We have not asked ourselves if that is the right way to live. Is it wise to separate out our work from pleasure in that way? Similarly we must ask if it is wise to separate out our everyday living from religion and virtue. We talk of religion and virtue in the church in our office, but in our work, our daily life, we continue to be ruthless, competitive and so on. That is what we have done in society. Unless we learn from seeing ourselves, and unless we prevent our children from entering the same traps and pitfalls in which we have been caught, it will go on this way. It won't change. So that seems to be our first responsibility.

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What is it that divides us?

ONE OF THE MAJOR concerns of Mrs. Annie Besant, as a Theosophist, was the creation of a universal brotherhood of man. She tried all through her life to teach that all life is sacred, that all human beings are equal, that different religions are merely different approaches to the same truth, that all life and the entire environment around the earth constitute a whole of which man is an intrinsic part. The greatest threat to the creation of one-world and a universal brotherhood of man is his tendency to identify himself with those who appear to be similar to him. This has divided mankind into a large number of groups – religious groups, national groups, ethnic groups, linguistic groups, caste groups, professional groups, political and ideological groups and family groups – all of which from time to time become antagonistic to other groups when they perceive that their self-interest needs to be protected. The desire of an individual to belong to a group is born out of a sense of security he feels in belonging to it. Yet, it is obvious that this very division into groups has created the greatest insecurity for all human beings on earth, through war, riots, infighting and competition. In spite of all the ideals of unity, one-world and universal brotherhood, it is clear that mankind is moving in the opposite direction. One has witnessed in recent years the splitting up of countries like USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia with much associated violence and cruelty. In

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India too there are similar separatist tendencies in Kashmir, in Punjab, in Assam and the Hindu-Muslim division is growing more acute day by day. We must therefore ask ourselves, why after thousands of years of so called culture and civilization, mankind is still so brutal, so badly divided? What is it that divides us?

If one examines that seriously, one finds that the division among people arises from a feeling that 'we' are separate from 'them', which in turn arises from the feeling of being 'different'. But are we really different or do we only imagine that we are different? I would like to examine that very scientifically, objectively and precisely, without taking sides or becoming emotional about religion or culture. Let us look at human beings who appear to be divided. We could take Hindus and Muslims or Arabs and Jews or any other set of people, and ask ourselves whether their differences are real or imaginary. By imaginary I mean something which is not factually existing but has been simply constructed by the imagination of the mind. A human being has a body and a consciousness. So, are we really different in our bodies and are we very different in our consciousness? If we go to a doctor or a biologist and ask him whether there are significant differences in the body, he will tell us that they are very superficial, the colour of the skin may be different, the colour of the hair may be different, but inside the skin the blood is the same, the heart, the liver, the lungs, everything is the same. You can exchange the blood of one person with that of another person from any nation, any religion, anywhere. Therefore, obviously, in our bodies we are really not different except in the outer shape and features.

Next, let us consider whether we are really different from each other in our consciousness or we merely differ in our ideas, which are things which we acquire from our particular culture, and therefore feel we are different from each other when in reali-

ty we may not be. If you strip a human being of all his possessions, his house, his property, his knowledge and look at the content of his consciousness, is he really very different from another human being? Is the consciousness very different for the poor man and the rich man, for the Hindu, the Muslim or the Jew, for the American or the Indian? I am referring to what we really are, not our collections, not what we have accumulated. If we look beyond the superficial we find that every human being has the same feelings, the sense of fear, the sense of insecurity, the sense of loneliness, the desire to succeed in life, to be somebody. Every human being has attachments and consequent suffering when that attachment is broken. Every human being has desires and is struggling to fulfil them or cope with them. In what way do we really differ? One man may desire this, another man may desire that. One human being may worship in one way, the other human being may worship in a different way, but the need to worship, the psychological needs of the human being, the instincts are all the same.

So I question whether we are really different or we just imagine that we are different. Is it not like one wave on the surface of the ocean telling another wave, 'I am different from you', because it is a little different in height, in shape, in the speed with which it is moving? If it were aware of the depth of that ocean, it would see that these differences are trivial, are not of any great significance. So it seems to me that because we have given tremendous importance to the superficial, therefore we feel and think we are different from each other. If we were aware of the depths of our consciousness, of what we are as human beings, not just the superficial ideas of knowledge in the conscious mind but the whole of our being, it would be exactly like the wave in an ocean. It is made up of water, it has seven miles depth of ocean, in common with all other waves, but it feels different just be-

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cause on the surface it is a little different.

So it seems to me that whenever we see division, whenever we feel division in ourselves, because we are part of that wave of human consciousness, we must examine whether that difference is not arising because one is looking at the whole thing in a very fragmentary, narrow, limited or superficial manner. The division between science and religion also arises because we have given to those quests rather narrow meanings. In actual fact science is man's quest for the discovery of the order which manifests itself in the external world of matter and energy and the religious quest is for the discovery of order in the inner world of our consciousness. There is really no division or antagonism between them. So is it everywhere else. Facts and reality do not divide, but illusions which our minds build up around them divide. Division is created by our own mind because it does not see things factually, it has conjectures about it, it has opinions about it, it has a whole lot of prejudices, predilections associated with what it observes. What they do in society to overcome this is to create a new illusion in order to unite people. You find that in India when the internal situation is bad and people are fighting with each other and are divided, one way of uniting them is to talk about nationalism and to say that Pakistan is our greatest enemy and then out of that common hatred the people feel united; but among themselves they are divided on the basis of caste, on the basis of religion, on the basis of all kinds of superficial differences to which they have given tremendous importance. When you have all these divisions you need another illusion to bring people together and then we say that is unity, that is integration. It is not. It is only another illusion. Temporarily it may excite you into unity but that is not real unity.

If one were to look at life and have a deep understanding of life and of oneself then there is no division because the facts don't

divide. The fact that I go to a temple and you go to a synagogue or a church doesn't divide. It just says that this man goes to this building and the other goes elsewhere. This man kneels, that man stands. This man takes off his shoes, that man does it with shoes on. Does that divide? It doesn't. So facts don't divide and if there is really no division, there is no need for integration. You want to integrate that which is divided. But we must first examine whether the division itself is not an illusion. If that division is out of illusion, when that illusion ends, the division will end. Then there is no need for integration because there is no division. So it becomes a wrong question how to integrate the peoples of Russia. They are not divided. They think they are divided which is out of ignorance. That ignorance has to be dispelled so that we see the fact that we are not divided. It is a fallacy to think that we need to make propaganda to unite. If you end all propaganda and all illusion, then there is no division. Therefore the most important thing, which the sages have pointed out and we need to realize for ourselves, is to dispel ignorance and superficial views of each other and of life.

At present, unfortunately, we are first educated into our prejudices. I am using the word 'education' not only in the sense of what we do in school but also the other influences in the bringing up of a child in society, which includes the influence of the family, of television etc. We are educated into our prejudices and these are perpetuated by the tremendous inertia in human society. Take the example of casteism in India. It started 5000 or more years back. The society was then divided into four different castes. We do not quite know why they did it, and what was their intention at that time. What we know is what we see now. The government is trying to eliminate discrimination between castes, it says all people should have equal opportunity, it says professions are not to go along caste lines. That is the law, there is legislation

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against casteism, but still it goes on because in each family the child grows up seeing discrimination going on around him. The person of lower caste is treated in a particular way, you don't sit and eat food with him, and he sees this discrimination going on. He sees that people don't marry outside their caste and that is what he picks up from the environment. You may say anything in the classroom but what he is seeing in the society has a much greater influence on his mind, so he grows up with it and acquires that prejudice without being aware that it is a prejudice. To him that is a fact, it is a reality. I just took that as an example. You can see that it is the same in every society, in every place. That is why Americans continue to be Americans and Indians continue to be Indians and Christians continue to be Christians.

We create the younger generation in our own image. There may be a little change in ideas here and there but by and large you will see that the younger generation is created in the image of the older generation which means we successfully transmit all our prejudices to our children! We are not aware of it. We think we love them and we are doing good to them, but we need to examine that, we need to question that. That is what questioning means, not to accept anything that we have assumed till now unquestioningly. Our intention may be good but if education is based on ignorance it is false and we may really be damaging our children when we are educating them as we consider proper. In this world, if the Jews are going to leave children behind that are Jews, and the Arabs are going to produce children who are Arabs, and the Hindus leave behind Hindus, the old people all die but the young people grow up in the image of the old people, how will the world change? The same divisions will continue because the prejudice continues from the older generation to the newer generation through a lack of awareness. One is not even aware that it is prejudice.

So if I see that, then I don't want to pass on my prejudices to my children, which means I don't want to create them in my own image. But this is difficult because we don't know into what else to create them. What shall we teach them if we don't teach them what we have learnt? So that is a problem. Can we make them aware of this problem? While we educate them, while we pass on to them our traditions, which we have learnt in our family and not discarded after our questioning, can we at the same time encourage them to question it? Ask them not to conform but to inquire, to find out whether that is the right way, whether that is true, not accept it blindly. I don't see any other way in which mankind can change in a fundamental sense. It may change politically or economically and it has, but that is all so trivial. Instead of three countries you may become ten countries, but it will not end the divisions because the division arises from the mind when the mind is filled with ignorance. Until that ignorance is dispelled it lives with illusions and the illusions will divide. So fundamentally that is the source of division. It may manifest itself in a more cruel way somewhere and in a less cruel way somewhere else, but the division between countries arises out of this, the division between a man and his wife in the family also arises out of this. At present we are not only passing on our prejudices but we are creating groups around a common prejudice. As a Hindu I may have a certain notion of God which I acquired during my childhood but that notion about God may be an illusion. Around that illusion we collect a whole lot of people who all believe in the same illusion. Similarly there is another group around another illusion. Then this group feels separate from that group. The whole division is based on illusion. Then we talk about tolerance. You must respect the other fellow for his illusion, his illusions are not inferior to your illusions and so on! Tolerance means I don't love you, but I will put up with you, and we consider it a virtue because

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se we are not willing to live with facts and eliminate the divisions because we are too attached to our illusions!

So, can we refuse to belong to any group around any illusion? You will ask me, whether as Theosophists, we are not also a group? What is the difference? If we consider Theosophy to be a number of answers, conclusions, to which we all agree to hold, then we do indeed create a new group, a new religion, and therefore a new division in mankind. But if we look upon Theosophy not as a body of answers or as instructions to be obeyed, but as an approach to life, an approach which says I want to find out what is true, I want to find out what is right, I want to look at things not fragmentarily, but holistically, then we are all students of life and that is not a group which divides. We do not have the answers, therefore there is nothing to propagate. One is only pointing out that that is the right way to approach life, to approach a problem or an issue like a student and such an approach is central to Theosophy. Because how does one know the answers? The Christians have their own answers, the Jews have their own answers, somebody else has his own answers and they all fight over the answers. Therefore let us not give importance to answers but to questions. It is not important to live with conclusions, it is important to live with inquiry, with a sense of mystery, with the humility which comes from knowing that we do not know. We must accept that we do not know and have the willingness to inquire.

Is it at all necessary to arrive at an answer? Is it not enough to live with an inquiring mind right through life? Does inquiry have to end in a conclusion or is it possible to love inquiry itself and therefore live with inquiry? Why does one need a conclusion? We must ask ourselves why we always want an answer. Is that also something we have been conditioned into? Then the inquiry becomes a process of fulfilment of the desire to get the answer. One may call it a noble desire but it is also a desire and it is see-

king fulfilment in an answer. And how will you ever know that you have arrived? When we feel that way, it may just be that we are satisfied with a particular prejudice since we don't know whether it is really true. So often things have appeared to be true when they are not true. I am sure all of us, if we look back, will find that our ideas have changed, our opinions have changed, so how can we be sure they will not change again? So why should I be attached to my particular opinions now and of what value is that opinion?

This does not mean that we must not have opinions, one is not saying that. But opinions are not important things, only facts are important. Therefore let us keep looking for facts and doubting all opinions, holding them tentatively, knowing that they may be born of ignorance, knowing also that if we get attached to our opinions, our particular answers or conclusions, our beliefs, we create a new division in the world. Universal brotherhood of man is not an ideal, a motto, but a *fact*. Not that as Theosophists we believe in universal brotherhood of man, the other man is your brother. Indeed Krishnamurti went a step further. He said the other man is yourself – not your brother but yourself! Because, what is the difference? To the extent one wave of the ocean is different from another wave of the ocean, to that extent we are different from each other. The Buddha expressed it with another analogy. He said that one human being differs from another only as much as one candle differs from another candle and that difference is not more than the difference between what that candle is now and what it was earlier. Because, with time and experience my ideas keep changing, my conditioning is changing and the difference between me and you is also just a difference in conditioning and your conditioning is also changing.

So if as an individual, knowing that I am a part of that whole mysterious phenomenon of life, knowing that I have come into

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this world not by choice, been bestowed with these faculties which the human mind possesses, the question arises: What is the right use of these faculties? If we use these faculties to understand our relationship to the whole world, to our fellow man, to understand who we are, what our life is, then life is an exploration for which we use these faculties. Take one of the faculties, take thought.

What is the right use of thought? I can use thought as a help in exploration. The entire intellectual exploration is all based on thought. It is limited because it functions within the field of the known. Reason has its limitations, thought has its limitations; but it also has a field within which it can explore. Someone gave the analogy that thought is like the pole of the pole-vaulter. In the game of pole-vaulting a man uses the pole to push himself up in order to climb and go over the bar. Reason and thought are like that, like the pole. At the right moment you must be willing to leave the pole if you want to cross over to the other side. It won't take you all the way. But it is a faculty, a very important faculty, which will take you in your inquiry upto a point. You have to find out what that point is at which you must leave that pole. But we are not using thought in that way. We are not using it for exploration. We first choose from the answers that are offered, then align ourselves with one particular answer, form a group around it and then use thought all our life like a lawyer, defending the particular view which we have chosen. Please see the truth of this. This is what is creating division in the world – the wrong use of thought. We must ask ourselves whether that is the true function of thought. Is the purpose of the faculty to think, to reason, to imagine meant to build walls around oneself? Should I first say that I am a Hindu, I believe in these things, and then use thought to propagate what I believe in, or should thought be used to inquire into what is true? Which way are we going to use thought?

Are we going to posit what is true as the unknown and inquire into it or are we going to align ourselves with some view which, someone, great or small, says is true. If I join a particular group and make propaganda for what they maintain as the truth, then what I spread is illusion. What I spread is only the word because I have not got the truth, I have not inquired and found out if it is true. If you have simply assumed it, then all your abilities and all your intelligence is being used like that of a lawyer. This is precisely what a lawyer does and he accepts money for it. The payment that we receive is the illusory security of that group – illusory because such group formation has created the greatest insecurity in the world.

The lawyer says I will argue only for my client, my client is right because he paid me the money. He is not using the intelligence to find out who committed the crime, who was wrong. He only uses his intelligence to argue that his client was correct. We do a similar thing when we invest our happiness in a particular group, around our particular belief, and that creates division. So it is our illusions, our ignorance that divides us. In actual fact there is no division and if we dispell our ignorance there is no need to integrate or to propagate universal brotherhood.

4

Right living in modern society: introduction

OVER THE NEXT THREE DAYS we are going to deliberate on the question of right living in modern society. It is quite clear from just reading the newspapers that in spite of all the progress which man has made, in spite of all the knowledge that we have acquired, in spite of all the educational institutions, universities and schools that we have opened, in spite of all the great religions that we have founded and all the great spiritual teachers whose teachings are available to us through the books, inspite of all this, mankind is not in a state which can be described as a happy one. It is an age old question, but it is a deep question and I think we need to go into it, in all its different aspects. Why is it that in spite of all this progress and in spite of all this culture and civilization man has not really come upon what can be called right living, has not come upon happiness. What is it that we are doing wrong? Is it just due to some people who are doing wrong, or is each one of us responsible? This is something that needs to be really gone into in great depth. If it was something very easy, surely people would have solved it. Nobody wants all these killings and tortures and everybody complains about it and yet nobody seems to be able to get over the situations such as in Bosnia or Somalia or what I saw in Los Angeles last year or what is going on in India or in Ireland.

If you ask me to list the major problems that modern society,

or mankind, in its present state is facing, I would say that the tendency in human beings to form groups, either national groups or religious groups or caste groups or racial groups and create division of mankind, then feel not for the whole of mankind but only for the particular group to which one belongs, is by far the greatest problem facing us because it does give us some sort of a feeling of security to belong to a group. We must examine whether it is real security to belong to a group. We must examine whether it is real security or some kind of illusory feeling of security which comes because we are not farsighted enough, we are not looking deeply enough. I would say this division in mankind is perhaps the most major problem and the greatest cause of violence and torture and suffering in modern society.

The other problems which are also quite major have come about through the industrial revolution, through the progress in science and technology, because they have unleashed tremendous power in the hands of man, but we have not discovered what is our right relationship to nature and therefore mankind seems to be faced with enormous problems of environmental or ecological catastrophes about which we read in the newspapers every day. I am sure all of you are aware of the depletion of the ozone layer, the problems of global warming, the problems of nuclear fall outs and disposal of nuclear wastes, the problems of deforestation, those of oil spills and pollution, all of which are problems of modern society. So we need to ask also what is right relationship to nature and where have we gone wrong so as to create problems which are of relatively recent origin. They did not exist before but they are quite serious problems. Now the third serious problem which comes to my mind is the fact that most governments in the world today are dictatorships, not democracies, especially the governments in the Third World countries. It is under dictatorships that the greatest tortures and cruel-

ties have been committed in the past. We know that from history and we have not yet got rid of dictatorship whether they are kingships or military dictatorships or communist dictatorships, stifling the voice of dissent, with a few people in charge of the state dominating the rest. That is still a serious problem. Only a little while ago, when Russia was a strong dictatorial communist state, there was a joke which said that in the Western world it is difficult to predict the future and in Russia it is difficult to predict the past! That is true of most dictatorships. They suppress facts and information so much that we don't know what the past was and what was the extent of false propaganda. In the free world also certain groups in modern society are using propaganda, not only religious propaganda but also commercial propaganda, for making profits and through films and television affecting impressionable young children for their own gains, without caring what it might do to their lives.

So, all those problems are also problems of modern society and we must go to the source of them. Because it is not sufficient to deal only with the outer organisation and the containment of these problems, which is already being done by governments through legislation. But so long as these problems are being generated, so long as violence and crime and greed exist, the law may try to contain them but we shall go on having problems and creating more and more stringent ways of suppressing them outwardly. That is not a solution. What we are interested in is not just the containment of the problems which the governments are interested in. We are interested in resolving the problems at the source. That is what right living is about, so that there is no conflict. The very existence of conflict shows that one is not living rightly. It is an indication of our lack of understanding. One cannot posit what right living is and then try to enforce it. You can give dictates 'do this and don't do this'. Religions have done it ad

nauseam, but it has not worked. Life is not so simple that you can have a formula and live by that formula. There is no simple answer for right living without coming upon a certain deep understanding of oneself and one's relationship to the world, to the people around oneself. So that is something we will go into in detail.

What else would you say is a major problem that faces mankind? I would say that the inertia in society, the tendency for problems to recur and persist is also a problem in society. If you have a division it perpetuates because the older people create the younger people in their own image and pass on their prejudices to the younger people. Therefore if there is a problem between the Arabs and the Jews, the Hindus and the Muslims, or the Catholics and the Protestants, the problem never ends. The problem of casteism in India is 5000 years old or more, but it does not end. This fact that there is this tremendous replication in society, the handing down of the problem from one generation to the next generation is a serious challenge in society. We may be divided but is it possible for us to arrange that our children will not suffer from the same division? Only then can there be change in mankind; but the change does not come about because we are not giving the right kind of education. So that is also something that we need to go into.

What is the right way to educate children so that they can come upon right living even if we ourselves have not succeeded in coming upon right living? I am just positing the questions which we need to deliberate upon which arise out of this larger question of what is right living in modern society. Also, we might take up the question of right relationship, not only relationship to other people, but relationships to things, relationship to ideas, relationship to oneself. As Krishnamurti said: life is relationship. From the day one is born, one is in relationship until one dies and

then all relationship probably comes to an end. So life is relationship and one must discover what is the right way to relate so that in life there is harmony in relationship. We have not discovered that. Let us dwell upon it in the next two or three days and try our best to come upon whatever understanding we can in this seminar on these questions and perhaps the day after tomorrow we can take up the question of right education or education for right living, how to bring about that kind of understanding in children. Right now education is not geared for that. Education is geared for promoting the existing requirements of society and those requirements of society are being viewed very narrowly in terms of economic development of the country. So it is not human development which is given priority but economic development. Whatever will increase the GNP (Gross National Product) of a nation determines what kind of training and education one is going to give to the children. In a sense we use our children to do the work which we want to be done in society so that we may all have a certain measure of luxury. If we look at it closely, that is the way it is. That is a form of exploitation of our own children by not caring for what is right for them, for their happiness. We are doing it without understanding it, so we must go into that. What is education for right living? We will do that the day after tomorrow. Then the last day has been kept open. We will see what issues arise and we will decide on some topic which is of interest to all of us, which all of us want to take up and try to have a dialogue around that question or around that topic. So that is more or less the agenda for the next three days.

I want to say a few words about how we should approach this whole question. You know there are a number of different ways in which a seminar can be conducted and we have been trained normally, at least in universities and colleges and so on, to go to a seminar to enhance our knowledge, to get new ideas, new con-

cepts, to have debates over different points of view such as capitalism versus socialism and so on. We are all used to debates, we are all used to dialectical discussions, comparisons between various philosophies and concepts. This is not intended to be a seminar of that kind. Perhaps we will not gain any new information or knowledge at the end of it, but if you really consider seriously, are the problems facing mankind really due to a lack of knowledge? Is that what we need today? Have our problems been created by the man who is ignorant in knowledge? Is the poor illiterate rickshaw puller in India or the farmer in Africa the source of our problems? Or is it the highly educated, technically proficient, Ph D's and LLB's, business magnates and lawyers, who have created the problems? So we are going to question that too. This conditioning that we have been given right from childhood, that somehow more knowledge is the way to find out what is right living or to find the solution to all our problems. I question it – all of us should question it. Not that one needs to be against knowledge, not that knowledge in itself is evil, but that it is something very limited because knowledge is like power, like property. It gives you power and unless one has the intelligence to use power rightly, power is dangerous. So is more power what we need? Do we need more knowledge, more power or do we need more goodness, more understanding of ourselves and our relationships? If that is so, it doesn't come through knowledge. It does not come through dialectical discussion, there is no short cut to it. Therefore I would like that we should conduct this inquiry in the next days or so, in the form which Krishnamurti termed a dialogue. It is something akin to what in science we call examining an issue from first principles, which means you don't take anything for granted, there is nothing that cannot be questioned. From first principles let us examine and learn about the issues, learn about the questions for ourselves, without quoting from ex-

perts, without evaluating contradictory viewpoints, but like two friends talking over seriously together the problems of life. Can we do that, without assuming anything, without going to the experts, looking at the issue afresh by ourselves, speaking from our own understanding, our own observations and talking things over? Because, really, the truth is that we don't know. Let us face the fact. It is not as if I know what right living is and I can communicate it to you and you can all note down what is right living and from tomorrow we will all start living rightly! That is not possible.

In not knowing we are united. If you begin with not knowing you start from the same ground. We all do not know, that is common to all of us, but knowledge divides. If you are addicted to your knowledge which is really your opinion, your particular conditioning, it divides because it is different for me, different for you, different for him, but the fact really is that we don't know what right living is. So why not start from that fact? Why not have the humility to say that we don't know, we want to find out, we want to investigate this question together? In that process of investigation there is a chance that the truth is revealed to the mind, which is another thing which we must be aware of. That there is a kind of learning which is not the accumulation of knowledge. The accumulation of knowledge has gone on and what you are seeing is the result of a great accumulation of knowledge; but there is another kind of learning which is not accumulative. You cannot collect it. It is a kind of understanding that is born while the mind is investigating, while it is reflecting on various issues. The issues don't have to be new, the information does not have to be new. It may simply be deliberating upon something which we are quite familiar with. But in that process it comes upon a direct perception of the truth of something which is what creates real understanding and that understanding alters

one's life, alters one's attitude, one's outlook, that is how a fundamental change takes place. This understanding is, so to say, between the lines, it doesn't happen because of arguments. It is not necessarily prevented by the arguments either, if you are aware that thought and knowledge are not everything, that there is something more subtle, more real than that. The motto of the Theosophical Society says that Truth is beyond all religions. I would also say that Truth is also beyond all knowledge, because knowledge is a limited thing. Thought is also a limited thing. All that we know in life is very limited. If you take a person like me who has done a Ph D and studied a lot in universities and all that, what do I really know? If I answer that question very honestly, all that my university education and research made me really know constitutes just one chapter in one book in that whole library which contains millions of books. That is what our present day education does to us. In mathematics and in physics they define something called a 'Dirac delta function'. A Dirac delta function is something which is infinite at one point and everywhere else it is zero. It is like a singularity at one point, everywhere else it has no value. Our university education makes us like that. You know a hell of a lot about a very, very small area and you know very little about everything else. So education is producing human beings who can be represented by Dirac delta functions!

What do we really know? The man who brags about his knowledge is really one who does not know that he does not know! It is out of ignorance that he talks like that. So knowledge is always incomplete, very deficient. You can never complete it. It does not bring you the truth either, though it may give you a hint of it. We know for instance that the Buddha said that ignorance is the cause of sorrow. After a lot of meditation, after a lot of inquiry he came upon a great truth which he tried to reveal to the world and the crux of it was this: There are three basic statements of the

Buddha. First that sorrow exists. It is not an imaginary thing. It is a real thing. The second statement is that sorrow has a cause and the third that the cause can be eliminated. The Buddha further said that ignorance is the cause of sorrow. Now we can go on repeating this statement as knowledge but it won't bring you the understanding which the Buddha had when he spoke those words. Therefore the knowledge does not take you to the truth. It is only a description of the truth. One has to come upon that truth for oneself and perceive it directly. Only then does one have the understanding which is born out of a direct perception of that truth. That truth acts, not our will, our efforts, our wishes, they don't act, but the truth acts on our consciousness and changes our outlook. After all, we can only live according to our understanding. You can't live beyond your understanding. That understanding doesn't grow in proportion to the knowledge. If we want to come upon the truth we need not discard knowledge, but this other learning is the aim of this seminar. We want to come upon this understanding, we want to come upon the direct perception of the truth.

I can give you another example. In order to know that if you put your finger in the fire it will burn, you don't need all the knowledge which the scientists have. It is true that my finger is made up of carbon which, when the temperature is high enough, combines with oxygen and burns. This sensation is carried by the neurons to the brain, and that is what causes pain. All that is true, what they have found out, but you don't need to know all that in order to know that it burns! There is a direct perception of the fact. Now that is simple. When you know the danger of something directly like that, then you have understood it. The knowledge can come afterwards. Even in science it is like that. We teach Newton's laws and we teach the law of conservation of energy. But afterwards we make the boys and girls do experiments in the

laboratory. For years they keep on doing experiments in the laboratory where they make use of these laws. And somewhere along the line, one day they say: 'Ah, that is what it means!' When that happens they have understood. Until then they only repeat the words of Newton. They only tell what they have been told, and they know the logic of it. But one day when they are doing their experiments they suddenly come upon the truth of it and that flash which comes from their own experimentation reveals the truth to them. The rest was only a description which was held in memory. So you can memorize all that the Buddha said, all that Christ said and it does not become your understanding but the day you discover the truth of that in your own life, through your own exploration, through your own experiencing, that day the truth becomes yours. And it is that process which we need to trigger and that is the way I would like to approach this seminar.

You might go away without adding anything to your knowledge! I want to warn you now, so that you may not be disappointed later, but we want to give ourselves an opportunity to do this experimentation together in this inquiry. All of us are inquiring, as we don't know the truth. So we are going to inquire together. In that process of inquiry, maybe the truth is sighted, maybe it is not, one cannot be sure beforehand but one is aware that it is beyond knowledge, beyond words and it is that which matters, not the knowledge. The very learned professors and scientists, they are all ordinary people. They have all the weaknesses which the ordinary man has. They have a lot of words to hide their weaknesses behind, that is all. I am also one of them. So we shall begin with not knowing. We shall start with observation in a simple way and talk things over in this seminar. There will be sessions where we can have a lot of interaction, we will try to have dialogues in this way. Krishnaji described it as something akin to a tennis match. He said a tennis player hits the ball on the other

side, the other player hits it back on this side, and it goes on like that. So also with two friends talking over together in dialogue. One of them mentions: 'It seems to me it is like this' and the other person considers the question and says: 'But what about that?' and the ball is back into this fellow's court and he responds with how he sees it and the question begins to unfold more and more until, he says, both the players disappear and the ball is suspended in mid-air! It is the question that matters, not the players, and when they disappear, their ego, their self, all the prejudices, all the past knowledge which they bring to bear upon the question, disappears. There are no observers, only observation, no opinions, no viewpoints, no conclusions.

It is living with the question that is important, not living with the conclusions or with the answers. All that is only knowledge, and that is not important. The inquiring mind which is living with questions, observing and not quickly coming to conclusions, is the learning mind. It is also the religious mind because it is the mind that is in quest of truth. It is not willing to quickly say 'I have found it', because it has learnt that very often it has considered something to be true when it was not true. It has very often changed opinions and therefore it is no longer sure that the opinion which it maintains today is the truth. It can change and it should change. All opinions should be held tentatively, because opinions don't matter, neither yours nor mine. Only facts matter, only the truth matters and when you are after the truth, you hold opinions very lightly, you know that they are not important. So we shall go into all these questions in this way, in the spirit of humility and inquiry, doing it together.

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Right living in modern society: right relationship to the world

I WILL, IF I MAY, sort of till the soil before you sow the seed during this hour and as I ramble along with whatever thoughts come to my mind if you would please go along with me without either accepting what I am saying or rejecting what I am saying, just listening to it, and let the questions arise in your mind. Those questions are the seeds which we must sow into the soil and then let them flower. It is necessary to have some sort of a context in which the question arises in the mind and it is in the exploration of that question that learning takes place. We were saying yesterday that life is relationship and if one is to discover what right living is, one must discover what right relationship is. And I am using that word relationship in a very broad sense. One has a relationship with everything around oneself because whenever there is an interaction there is a response from my consciousness, whether it is to people, whether it is to nature, whether it is to an idea. If it evokes a response from within me, then I have a relationship with it. And we said that we don't really know what right relationship is but we are going to explore like a student who wants to find out, who wants to inquire, who is curious to know. Not eager to take sides, to come to firm conclusions or views, but to sort of view it as a concerned observer with a consciousness which one might call a witness consciousness, which is not interested in taking sides but is interested in understanding. That

brings us to the question: 'What is the right use of the faculties which nature has endowed us with?' It is important because after all it is with those faculties that I am going to explore, so I must use those faculties themselves in a right way.

What differentiates us from plants and animals is the ability to be self-conscious, to be aware, to be able to imagine, to think out for ourselves, all that and more are faculties which the human mind possesses in great measure. We are after all a product of a long evolutionary process of life, so we must know what is the right way to use these faculties which we possess. Let me enunciate some of them. The human consciousness has several capacities. It has the capacity for perception, for awareness, both outwardly and what is going on within ourselves, just being aware of everything. It has the capacity to pay attention, to observe. All these capacities are not thought-based, they don't involve thinking. So though thought may be a very dominant and important capacity in the human mind it is by no means the only capacity. Then there are the thought-based capacities which are imagination, reason, planning, the entire field of knowledge, memory and a certain amount of intelligence which goes with thought, sort of clever management of thought. This has been responsible for all the scientific and other progress which man has made, which is also the entire field of his deliberate, planned efforts. All those very vast fields represent the capacities related to thought. Then there is the capacity to feel. The entire range of feelings and emotions, that is also a capacity in the human mind. By no means am I saying that this is totally separate from the capacity for thought because they interact very closely, but just for the sake of description we divide them. So the feeling of fear, the feeling of hatred, of anger, the feeling of love, sympathy, sentiment are examples of the whole range of emotions that we are capable of. The sense of beauty is also a capacity in the human mind and beyond all

these are also capacities which are not so easily perceived. For instance the capacity for intuition. Many scientific discoveries were arrived at not through a thought process, not through a logical process, but some kind of a mysterious process which one calls an intuitive process, or an insight into something that was not known before. The perception of something totally new. This capacity for an insight is also there in the human consciousness. It can make forays into the unknown and then describe that perception of the unknown in words so that it becomes part of the known. The description becomes new knowledge. But that knowledge in itself is not the insight.

What I am trying to say is that even in the world of science, if a man like Einstein could have a deep insight into the questions of space, time, matter and energy and come upon something that is totally new, which was not known in classical science, then it needed a leap outside the known. If his mind was very rigidly held within the known, caught up in what he had read and studied, he could have manipulated the known and invented something new within the known but not had a foray into something that is totally unknown. That needs an insight, a leap, that is only possible when there is a certain amount of freedom from the known. And therefore that capacity also exists in our consciousness and one should be aware of this. The human consciousness has the capacity to perceive the unknown if it is not totally tethered and tightly held within the known. In society we have given tremendous importance to the thought based capacities and cultivated them. We worship knowledge and scholarship and the ability to use thought cleverly. The field of thought is an enormous field and one is not denying that field, but one is just noticing that the other capacities of our consciousness have been dominated out of our life by the thought process. The thought process is a limited process, since it can only function within the

known, and it limits us if we allow our consciousness to be totally occupied with it.

What then is the right use of thought? If I am a student, I want to use all of these capacities for exploration. I find that I am born into this world which I don't fully understand. It is all a great mystery, this whole cycle of birth, life and death and I notice that it is going on all around me in the plants and animals and in ourselves, that I did not decide about my birth and I don't go by my own volition either. There is this mysterious process of life, at least on this planet, which I am trying to understand and for this purpose I use all these faculties. I have this consciousness which enables me to understand my relationship to my environment, to my fellow beings and to everything around me. So I want to explore it like a student and in doing so I would like to use thought also, but I must be aware of the limitations of thought. So long as thought is used as an exploratory tool, I feel that it is the right use of thought. Please do not accept it; I am just suggesting it as I go along. We must question everything and thrash it out, not accept it, because in doing so one learns. We will do that in the next hour but just now let us go along, as I said, just to plough the ground.

If I use thought to evaluate and measure and choose so that I like some things and I dislike other things, then I am no longer just a student, I am not just exploring, I am introducing my own likes and dislikes and views into the situation, and then I begin to cultivate one and denigrate another. So is it possible for us not to take sides with any view, not to call any view as 'my view' because when one is in quest of truth, one is interested in exploring every view without attaching oneself to it. So I listen to all views, I look at them, I neither reject them nor accept them and I don't attach myself to any view and then defend it, because I see the danger of it. I see the danger of attaching myself to a

view and then because it becomes my view defending it, barricading it and for the rest of my life I may end up using thought only like a lawyer who has already taken sides with a particular position. Then it becomes a wrong use of thought. You can see what devastation that has caused, people aligning themselves with a belief, with a view, labelling themselves as Communists, Christians, Hindus or Muslims. If I align myself first, then all my capacity, all my intelligence, all my thinking is geared to defending that which is mine and one has usually arrived at it just by the accident of birth. We are born with a particular culture, into a particular religion, we accept it from our surroundings and having accepted and aligned ourselves to it we spend the rest of our life using our capacities to defend it. Then one cannot say that one is seeking the truth. When you are trying to defend a particular position which you have arrived at before exploration, then exploration has no meaning.

So there has to be freedom at the very beginning, freedom from a view, freedom from an idea, freedom from a fixed position. If we can free ourselves from any kind of fixation in our mind and then look and find out, maybe we can together find the truth. If one is seeking the truth, it is important, right at the beginning, to free one's mind from all this which we call culture, but somebody else may call prejudice. And knowing this one must explore hesitantly not readily accept, neither readily agree or disagree because neither agreement, nor disagreement has great value. Your opinions and my opinions have no value. The truth has value because it is what is, it exists, therefore it has value. Your opinion and my opinion are imaginary things. They have value only because our mind imagines it, so it begins to have value for us. It does not have value in the same sense in which that wall has value because it is something out there which exists, it is not an illusion. An illusory thing, a concept, is

just in imagination, it is not a real thing out there. It is not part of reality and when you are exploring into that illusion, into an imaginary world of your own creation, you are not exploring into the actual world and one can get lost in these forays into the illusory world of concepts and imagination.

Therefore it is important for observation and awareness of what is taking place both outside and within, to look without coming to judgements and formulations and establishing values. Hold opinions tentatively like the scientists do. The scientist always maintains a particular opinion tentatively. He is willing to revise it because he says a particular theory is not important, the facts are important. It appears that this is the most likely explanation, therefore it has value, but the day I find that it is not true, it has no value. It doesn't matter who gave it, how great that man was and so on. It is not important. The greatest mind may also have been mistaken. So something doesn't become true just because some great man said it. Nor does a man cease to be a great man just because he happens to have said something where he was mistaken. One is not trying to evaluate people, one is not trying to build up authorities or to denigrate anybody because the value lies in the exploration, not in the conclusion. So if there was a great explorer who explored deeply, he may be mistaken in a few things, it does not mean he was not a great explorer. So one can respect human beings for their exploration without accepting their answers or rejecting them, until one has found them to be false, then of course the false has to be rejected. So that is the way in which I am hoping to relate, that is the way in which I am going to examine the issues and the questions, with an open mind, without any conclusions prior to beginning the inquiry. I would even go to the extent of saying: inquire without a strong desire to come to a conclusion. We all have been taught that a question must be explored in order to find an answer. I would

question that. What is the great value of an answer in this field? There may be, in the field of engineering and in the field of constructing roads or treating a disease. There the answer has value because you do something with it but in this field of understanding of ourselves, is there any great value of coming to a conclusion?

After all, the conclusion ends the inquiry and we are saying it is the inquiry itself that is of value, so what is the value of a conclusion? The conclusion ends an inquiry and how do you know that that conclusion is true or right? So many times one has come to a conclusion and then found it was not true. So one must always have this capacity to change one's mind, the willingness to change one's mind, never holding on to anything as 'mine', never getting attached to a particular point of view. Only then it is possible to really explore far and wide. We know the story of the Buddha. Certain experiences triggered questions in his mind and triggered inquiry. He saw death, he saw disease and he saw old age and he saw the suffering of mankind and that triggered in him the question: What is the cause of sorrow and is it possible to go beyond suffering? Is that possible or is sorrow inevitable? Is life necessarily suffering or is it possible to go beyond that? That was the question that was triggered in his mind. Surely there were answers in his time. Hinduism had explored all this and given explanations and he was learned in all of them as we know from his life story. But he was not satisfied with those answers, he wanted to find out the answers for himself and so he left his kingdom and he went out in quest of an answer and he joined those yogis in Sarnath near Banaras and he did hatha yoga with them and went along that path for a time but he could not find the answer, so he left it. He said this cannot be the way, I have become so weak, I cannot even think clearly, therefore this cannot be the way. So he left them though they looked down upon him.

But his inquiry continued. It did not end until he came upon the answers for himself through his own meditation, through his own questioning, inquiring. Then he came upon enlightenment and became the Buddha.

Now the question which I would like to ask is that we also see death, we also see suffering, we also see sorrow around us in our own life. It also triggers a question like it did in him and we have the same human consciousness which the Buddha had too. Why does our inquiry end, whereas his inquiry went all the way until he came upon enlightenment? If you just watch you will see that is what happens, because every human being comes up with this question but his inquiry terminates and ends somewhere. If he is a poet it ends in a beautiful poem about the sorrow of mankind. If he is a philosopher, a thinker, he analyses the causes of the sorrow and writes a paper on it. He comes to a conclusion and then the inquiry ends. His response to that situation is over. If he is a social worker he goes about helping the sick man and tries to build a hospital and so on, all of which is noble activity. One does not deny that the social worker is helping people get over their physical suffering and pain but because he is caught in that activity the inquiry ends. He has found his answer. His answer is that when there is sorrow one must do social work and try to remedy illness and disease. He does not go on with the inquiry at the same time. It ends there. We may say it comes to a noble end in one case and it comes to an ignoble end in another case, but that is our value judgement. What I am saying is that it ends in both cases, whether it is a noble end or an ignoble end. The alcoholic represents an ignoble end. He says there is such sorrow in life that it is important to get rid of it by getting drunk and forget all about it and leave it to those other fellows to keep on arguing! We call it an ignoble end, but he has found his own answer to the problem. The point is that none of these people come upon the

truth. One is not saying that social work should not be done, that poems should not be written, that analysis and writing a paper is wrong. One is only saying that, in itself, it doesn't take one to the truth. That is all that one is saying. If you can do all that and not let the inquiry end it is allright. But if you end the inquiry, then you don't go very far. Therefore the importance of not quickly coming to conclusions or looking for answers.

Let me examine in that way this question of relationship and ask myself why there is so much conflict in man's relationship to everything? I want to get to the root of it. Not in order to do something about it out there but just to understand this question. Let us examine each aspect of his relationship. Why are there problems in man's relationship with nature? Personally you will find there are not too many problems in relating with nature. The garden out there, those trees, they don't create any problem for me, they don't have a mind of their own. They don't have an ego. They don't interfere with my life and therefore there is no reaction from me against them and therefore they don't constitute a problem in themselves. That is why, you see, it is so easy for a human being to relate to a pet, a dog. It is very difficult to relate to your wife, it is easier to relate to the dog because it does not oppose you. See the truth of that. The tree doesn't oppose you. On the other hand it looks beautiful. If I look at the sky and I look at the world around me there is something in our consciousness which makes me feel that nature looks beautiful. Whenever you look out in nature you will find that the colours are matching; that is the definition of beauty to the human mind. When a man wears a dress you may find that a green shirt and a yellow trouser or something like that may look ugly to your mind but not in nature, in the colours of the sky. The sunlight, the various shades of yellow and green and the flowers, they never look unpleasant to your mind. That is because we have grown up with nature and

that is the very definition of beauty for the human mind. So what causes these ecological problems, about which we spoke yesterday, if man's relationship with nature only affords great beauty? I find that I use nature for relaxation. When I am very tense and so on I want to sit in silence, I find I go to nature and I sit there – we go for picnics. We go to see beautiful sights in nature. All that nature does for us. Then where is the problem with nature? Surely the problem is not out there. There is no problem with nature. It does not take too much to see that the problems have originated from the greed in man.

If you see the history of man, for a very long time man lived with nature, worshipped nature, worshipped the tree, the sun, the sky, the rain, and he lived in harmony with them, adjusted to nature, like the animals live. We are not the only ones who live with nature, the birds, the animals, the plants, they all live in great harmony. It has been going on for millions of years before man ever entered the scene and even after man entered the scene it went on the same way. He lived in harmony with nature for millions of years. Somewhere along the line instead of being part of nature and a friend of nature, man started feeling important, he started feeling he was master of nature and he could exploit nature for his own benefit. With the Industrial Revolution you could cut down large numbers of trees in order to make paper, in order to increase the prosperity of your own country, you could use rivers and the water to make electricity and the whole attitude of looking upon nature not as a friend, but as a resource, as raw material for increasing the Gross National Product, that kind of outlook came into the human mind. This is a recent phenomenon. Even now if you look at the tribal people you find that their attitude towards nature is one of friendship. If you go to the villager in India you find that he worships the cow, he has great respect for the river and the sunrise and the rain. He does not com-

plain about the rain saying it makes his dress dirty, that he cannot move so far when it is raining and so on. He doesn't have that kind of feeling. He feels a sense of joy when it rains. To him that is part of nature and he has always related with it that way, but we educated and scientific minds have lost that quality of feeling for our surroundings. Instead we have started looking upon a river as a resource. How can I utilize this – how can I use the tree? We value the tree for what it gives us. If a tree doesn't give fruit you want to cut it down, and there starts the mischief.

Please don't accept any of this. I am just looking around and putting before you what thoughts come to my mind. Look at them very critically whether that is so or it is not so. I may be completely mistaken.

There is no end to human greed. There is no end to human desires. You can go on exploiting more and more. But is it really a resource for all times to come? Even if you view it as a resource, when you are trying to use tremendous amounts of it, are you not going to deprive the future generations? Because you are going to pollute the air, you are going to pollute the waters and in doing so you might have a comfortable life now but what happens to the future generations? So after all even when you view it as a resource it is not intelligent to use that entire resource immediately. It is like spending all your money today and tomorrow you would be a beggar. One doesn't do that, but in modern society, out of this competition between nations, to have economic gains, one has started exploiting nature more and more. And now they are discovering that nature has started reacting because it is all one complete whole. The earth and all its environment is like one single biological organism, like our body is. If you cut my hand it affects the whole body. In the same way if you play with the trees it affects other aspects, it causes floods, it causes global warming, if you pollute the air it causes ozone layer deple-

tion, it changes the amount of heat that comes to the snow which causes the floods in the rivers and so on. All those facts the scientists are now discovering. There is an intricate balance in nature. Even when you use fertilizers in the soil to get a lot of produce now, you create desertification of the soil because the normal process of revival of the soil through the insects is prevented by the use of pesticides and fertilizers. So they are beginning to discover that their desire to progress very rapidly is also creating a lot of depletion of resources and proving disadvantageous. Nature is telling man that he is exceeding his bounds, going too fast.

In coming upon the right relationship with nature we must examine whether it is more sensible to go on exploiting nature to fulfil these infinite desires arising from man's greed, or is it more sensible to manage our greed and our desires to fit into a finite planet? After all the planet is finite but our desires and our greed are infinite. It seems to me that is the change in outlook that is necessary. It is necessary to approach nature as a friend and not as an exploiter, not as the master of nature. Look upon ourselves as part of nature, which factually we are and have been, otherwise from here originate all the conflicts and the disasters. So the real problems are not out there, the problems are in our outlook, and right living requires coming upon the right outlook and learning from the ignorant villager in India! Forget all your knowledge and all your books, learn from that simple man, who relates more intelligently with nature than we do with all our scientific knowledge!

In our relationship with ideas why is there conflict and what is the right relationship with ideas? Do ideas in themselves create problems? After all there is the idea of communism and there is the idea of capitalism. Somebody has an idea of what God is and he formulates a religion around it. All those ideas, they exist out there. Different people are saying different things. There are pe-

ople who believe in marriage. There are people who believe in free love. There are people who believe one should be vegetarian, there are others who believe one should not be a vegetarian. So there are all these ideas and ideas are in a way common things. They arise in the minds of men. What is our right relationship to ideas – all ideas – the Buddhist and Christian ideas, the idea of nationalism? When does an idea become a problem? And why does an idea become a problem when it is something imaginary? It is only a particular view, it is not necessarily the truth. It is somebody's view. Why does it become a problem? It is after all expressing something. You can regard it as a view. So long as you consider it, look at it and say I don't know, if it is true, one would have to find out, it is alright, there is no problem with that idea; but we attach ourselves to the idea, then begin to say 'this is my idea, my opinion' and the trouble begins. The problem begins to arise because around that idea we form a group. The group owes allegiance to that idea and wants to propagate that idea. They don't want an exploration into that idea, they want to convert you to that idea. Whether it is the idea of Islam or Communism, Christianity or Hinduism it does not matter. The man wants to convert you to that point of view. Then what is my right relationship in that situation to the idea?

If I take sides with an idea I must be aware of all the consequences that might follow. You form a new group. That is a new division in mankind and we said the other day that that is probably the greatest challenge facing modern society. Today mankind is divided into groups, whether national groups, religious groups, ethnic groups, those groups all are based on an idea. The fact that I was born in India in a particular town does not create a group. But the idea of being an Indian and therefore always aligning myself with Indians and somehow being more concerned with the security and the well being of that group of people turns

me into an Indian. Otherwise it is just a geographical fact that I was born in that particular town, which is known as Madras and is located in India. That fact doesn't create a division. But the idea of belonging to those people, that creates the division. I may have been born in a Hindu family, therefore by birth I may be a Hindu. But if I align myself with Hindus and find security in that alignment and I group myself with them and say these are great people, these are my views and so on, then I create a division. So the question arises: is it possible not to align oneself with any group whatsoever, any idea whatsoever? Consider all ideas, be willing and open to look at them, neither accept nor reject them, but examine them, consider them. Is that not the right relationship to an idea? Because an idea is not the truth. An idea is something in the mind, it has its advantages, its disadvantages, and you can analyse all that. Advantages of capitalism over communism and the disadvantages, you can study all that. But to align yourself with one group and say I belong to this group creates a division in mankind and that division has created greater insecurity for the whole of mankind than any other single factor. Therefore it is important to understand what is our right relationship to ideas and whether it is possible to remain as an individual, unattached, and not belong to any group whatsoever, not even your own nation, your own culture, your own religion, except as I said in a factual sense.

That raises the question whether as Theosophists we are creating a new religion, a new separate group, a new division in mankind. If we view Theosophy as a whole set of answers, conclusions to be propagated, to be believed in, then indeed we also form a separate cult, we also believe in conversion to our cult and we are in opposition to other cults of people who don't believe in those ideas. But if we regard Theosophy as an approach, as a quest for truth, then it is not a cult. This quest for truth is not a

cult, it is only an interest. It is like a scientific group. If they are all saying I am interested in exploring why the sun shines, it is fine. All of you are interested in exploring why the sun shines, you form a solar group to study the sun. That is not a psychological group. There is no security attached to it. It is a functional group. So in that way, if we say we are Theosophists, in the sense that we all are interested in going beyond all religion, beyond all knowledge and finding out what is true and that is what we are interested in, then we constitute a functional group, like a hospital or a post office, which does not create division in mankind. But if we say 'we are all believers in Blavatsky's ideas, Blavatsky was our leader and all truth is contained in *The Secret Doctrine* and I am going to convert you to this', then there is no difference between a Theosophist and a Christian or a Hindu who is trying to convert people to his view. All that activity is not related to seeking the truth, it is the wrong use of thought as I explained a little while ago. Therefore, whether joining the Theosophical Society is right or wrong depends upon how one views it, how one relates to it, what is one's motivation in joining the Society. If one is joining a group to feel a sense of security, to have a sense of belonging, to feel an exclusive comradeship among that group, then you are creating a new division in mankind, otherwise it is a purely functional thing and all those people who are interested in the quest for truth are welcome. The very purpose of Theosophy is to search for the truth, not necessarily accept the truths laid down by anybody else. That is why the Society proclaims full freedom to hold opinions and views while your inquiry is going along.

What about our relationship to things, our relationship to houses, to property, to money? There are many things around us. Why does and when does a relationship to things become a problem? If it becomes a problem, then it is a wrong relationship.

A wrong relationship is one which brings about conflict. So the question is, how does one relate in such a way as not to have conflict? Is it possible not to have conflict in any relationship whatsoever? That is the art of living and since we are all living we must learn this art, just as we study the art of painting, we study the art of music and so on. This is our life and therefore it should be compulsory to come upon the art of living! The other arts may be optional, but not the art of living. The art of living is to find out how to relate, how to live in society without a single conflict, to inquire if that is possible. Neither to say yes, nor to say no but to ask that question and stay with that question in order to find out, neither easily give up nor give in. Does the house I live in, in itself create a problem? Or do I create a problem in relationship to the house? I have seen that I create the problem in relationship to an idea, I create the problem in relationship to nature, so I am trying to examine whether in relationship to things also it is I who create the problem or it is the things that create the problem? It is an important question because if the problem is out there then we should manage things out there so that the problem may go away which is all the effort that society is making and mankind is making, all the time trying to put things right outside. Better roads, better bridges, better laws, more control, all that is being done because we somehow have a feeling that problems are being created externally. Not that that should not be done. Of course it is nice to have a nice road and a nice bridge but if we think that that road was the only problem you are in an illusion. The real problem is within.

We need to examine whether we are not really responsible for all the problems and all the violence and the conflicts that are going on in the world because we are contributing to them if we are not relating rightly. We will come to that. How does a problem arise in my relationship with things, with money? They cre-

ate desires, don't they? I go out and look at somebody else's house and see that he has a big house and a nice garden, which I don't have, it creates a desire, I wish I had a house and a garden like that. Then the problem starts. The comparison produces a feeling of greed. I go and visit somebody by the seaside and his house has a beautiful view of the sea. I can look at that sea in his house and it thrills me, and that is fine, there is no problem in that. But then comes the idea I wish I could have it everyday, I wish I also could live here and look at the sea everyday, and that desire creates the problem. Then you want a bigger house and a bigger car and a swimmingpool in your backyard and so on and then you are caught in this business of keeping up with the Joneses. Then money becomes terribly important because money has only as much value in our life as the value we attach to things which money can buy. And I must examine why things which money can buy have become so important in my life? It may be important for the man in India living in the slum because he is hungry, or diseased or he has not the money to get medicine for his child, to cure his child. At that level of course it is important. For survival it is important. But for all of us in this room I think that has long since been ensured. We are not living at the brink of survival. And yet the problem is there for all of us and we are sort of trained into it because we grow up in a society where everybody is valuing money in that way and we catch it from there like you catch on your Christianity and I catch on my Hinduism. We get caught in this business of going after money and valuing money the way everybody else is valuing it without ever sitting back and seriously examining it, without having the capacity to be independent enough to say: 'I am clear in my mind, I don't need this, I don't want this'. And society is throwing it at you. On television they are showing you all those perfumes and new gadgets which they are making because they want to make money. So

they exploit the desire in us. When they show you something new, a new gadget, you are attracted and they exploit your desire to make business and make money. We are aware of all that.

So the problem is why does it create this desire in me? Why does my mind always seek something more, something new, something different? That is at the root of it. You know why? It is because we are constantly living in boredom. When you are living with boredom it becomes terribly important to escape from it with some new toy, some new gadget, because temporarily when you get a new house, a new car, a new something, you forget your boredom, it excites you. So the problem is not the new gadget. It can be there. If I have joy, if I lead a full life, I can take it or not take it, then it is not a problem. The other fellow is just offering it in the shop. I do not have to take it. But why does it create this irresistible desire and then to get it I need money and for the money I need to do extra work and the whole game of conflict and struggle starts because we have divided our life into working for the sake of earning money and then using that money to buy pleasure. We must question whether that is the right way to live, whether it is possible to live totally differently, to enjoy your work, not separate your work from the pleasure. That means I must choose that work which gives me joy, and not necessarily the one that gets me maximum money. But what we are doing right now is to train an individual in a university or college, cultivate a certain capacity and ability in his brain and then encourage him to sell his brain in the market to the highest bidder. He goes and works for the man who gives him the highest salary. Because he thinks with that salary he is going to have vacations, he is going to have a big home and so on and that determines what work he is going to do, not what he loves to do. That is not the basis on which the work is chosen. So conflict is inevitable if you are doing work which gets you a lot of money but you

are not interested in that work. Because eight hours a day, day after day, it is drudgery, monotony, boredom, and then you seek release in pleasure over the weekends. It all starts with this outlook in life of buying more and more pleasure and that has become important because there is boredom and there is a boredom because there is insensitivity.

So the real question boils down to this: `Why have I become insensitive to everything around me? If you live by the seaside you become insensitive to the sea. After sometime that view out of the window means nothing. You say I have already seen it, it is the same damn view! I have already seen the Eiffel Tower, I do not have to go there again. I have seen that museum. That means one is just ticking a list. So long as it is new it has value. When it is not new it has no value, it is boring. When that is happening it is telling you that you have lost your sensitivity because everyday that tree out there and this park are new if only you have the eyes to see. Every day is different and one can relate to one's surroundings with an ecstasy, with a joy, but because the mind is all the time seeking pleasure, seeking certain types of escapes, it doesn't pay attention to this. So it is a kind of vicious circle. One is bored, therefore one is seeking the new, and because the mind is all the time seeking the new it's attention is not directed at what is. In actual fact what we have in life is an infinity, and when you are adding that new pleasure to your life it is just an illusion. To infinity you are adding plus one and the moment you have added it you will get bored of it for the same reason you got bored of all the rest of the things.

Therefore the problem is not how to get another new gadget to entertain you, the problem is to find out whether it is possible not to be bored ever. To look into boredom and free the mind of this disease of boredom, not run away from it. If you can live happily with your simple, small little flat and your small car or bi-

cycle and your health and the sky and the trees and whatever you are living with, then in that itself there can be tremendous joy. Then it is alright if you don't get more, because you live with great joy. Is it possible to live like that? It is a question into which each one of us must inquire deeply, not only today, not only in this seminar, but right through life because it is our life. So long as one is living with boredom, one is living miserably. It has little value to live with boredom and constantly seek an escape from it. So it is our addiction to things, it is our possessiveness, it is our inner desire, the greed for more, for the new, which creates the problem. The thing in itself, that dear little house does not create the problem. The way I look upon it creates the problem.

Why do we have problems in our relationship with other people? They are human beings like me. This has become a great problem in the world. The family is breaking down, friendships are breaking down, cooperation is breaking down in modern society. If you are working in a department it is very rare to find people working cooperatively. That does not mean always agreeing, that is not the meaning of cooperation. One has to find out what it means to cooperate. Is it necessary that we must agree in order to cooperate? Or can you disagree and cooperate? Does it mean I can be friends only when we agree or can we have friendship in which it makes no difference whether we agree or disagree? If you look at that you will again find that so long as I give importance to my own desires, my own opinions, and insist that my wife and my son and everybody else must have the same opinion as me, I create conflict in relationship. If I put a lot of demands on people – my wife must do this for me, be like this, only then I will love her, otherwise not – then conflict is inevitable.

The assumption that other people are there to fulfil my needs, needs to be questioned. Is it possible, like we said, not to exploit nature, not to exploit any human being for my fulfilment? Which

does not mean that fulfilment should not take place, but I don't insist on fulfilment of my desires. It does not matter if some desire is not fulfilled. It is alright too if it is fulfilled. But if I insist that it must be fulfilled and this person must fulfil it, then it creates addiction to that person. So then you are lonely if you don't have that person around because you use that person to run away from loneliness. When you use people in that way it creates attachment, it creates dependence and that creates conflict, creates the fear of losing that person and the whole problem starts. So for right living we must ask ourselves: is it possible to be friends without asking anything of your friend? To be friends for no reason. To love somebody for no reason. Not to love your wife because she is beautiful, because she does this, because she does that, but independently of that. For this we must find out what love really is. Is there love at all or is all relationship based on a mutual gratification? Then so long as you fulfil me and I fulfil you we have a ball of a relationship, but the day you don't it ends, then it is like a business contract, not really a relationship of love or of friendship. In all the relationships we have examined so far – whether with nature, or with ideas, or with people, or with things – we find that it is our outlook, our attitude which creates the problems and therefore the question arises: can one come upon the right attitude so that these problems don't arise?

The problem is not out there, the problem is inside me, that is the first thing to understand. Is it that we are approaching life wrongly, approaching it like a beggar, seeking something out of everything? Seeking something from your wife, from your friend, from nature, from your religion, is all relationship based on some kind of gain, some kind of a return? So long as that is the basis of relationship I am really approaching life like a beggar because that is what the relationship of a beggar is. At least he is honest enough to put his hat there and say `give me money, I need

money'; but we carry these invisible bowls around us and as we relate to people you find that, without expressing it, you are saying 'give me appreciation, give me comfort, give me sex' – all of which are invisible bowls we carry around us unannounced. If somebody puts something in it, we say, he is a good man, my friend. That is exactly what we do. And so long as you approach life like that there will inevitably be conflict. That is a law, there has to be a conflict if we approach life like that. We have to find out if it is possible to live without a single bowl, to relate to others purely as a friend, without seeking anything from anybody. That may be true love. So it all boils down to the fact that the centre of all problems is the 'me', the 'self'. All conflict originates from there. Therefore the question which we must examine for arriving at right relationship is: is it possible to end all self-centered activity?

So long as all activity is self-centered, seeking fulfilment for itself, then all relationship is based on that in subtle or gross ways and there will inevitably be conflict, likes and dislikes, divisions, groups, domination, arm-twisting. Somebody does it with a gun, others do it psychologically – that is the only difference. But everybody does it as long as one is living for maximising one's own pleasure, one's own benefits, one's own gains. If that is the main purpose and attitude in life, then I am afraid one cannot come upon right relationship or right living. So one must ask this question seriously, earnestly – whether it is possible to end all self-centred activity, not let life become an incessant self-centered activity.

6

Right living in modern society: our relationship to ourselves

WE HAVE TALKED so far about man's relationship to nature, about his relationship to ideas, his relation to other people and discussed why there arise problems and conflicts in all these relationships. We came to the central fact that the real problem does not lie out there, but it lies within the individual and that the real mischief maker is the self or the ego which is not something, like the organs in our body, but just something imaginary, a mental construct, which makes us feel separate from our environment and divides. It is also the centre of all motivation, all desire, all effort. And this brings me to an important relationship which is our relationship to ourselves. Just as we have said that the relationship with nature, the relationship with society, or religion and the relationship to other people should not be exploitative, that it should be based on love and friendship and not be self-centered, in the same way it is also important, I think, to be a friend to oneself. We are not what we want to be, we are the result of a long process of evolution and a lot of influences over which we had little control. So one must also be a little kind in viewing oneself, just as one must not judge and condemn others. I would extend it to say that one must not judge and condemn oneself. There is always a tendency to be a little harsh on oneself. Is it possible to observe oneself as another person? That means a lot because it also means that just as I don't feel that I am the master of Nature

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in the same way I don't consider myself to be the owner of my body and mind, but as someone who is in charge of it. There is a tremendous difference between ownership and being the custodian.

When we live in somebody's house we don't own that house but we are careful with it. We keep the room clean, we don't make noise, we don't spoil things there, we behave correctly, though we don't own that room. Can we treat our body and our mind in the same way? Not use them and exploit them for the purpose of our ego or the fulfilment of our desires, but be responsible for them? If I am the consciousness associated within this body, then that consciousness is responsible for this body. The moment I say it is my body, the feeling of ownership comes in and just as we feel we can do what we like with our own house or with our car and it is nobody else's business, we begin to think that way about our body and our own mind too. So we begin to neglect our body – not give it the right kind of food, not take the right kind of exercise, not keep it healthy, energetic, active – because we say: it is nobody else's business, it is my own body, I can neglect it because it is mine. In ownership somehow there comes in this feeling that I can neglect what is mine since it is meant for my use. If I own a notebook I can dirty it, I can tear it apart, it is nobody else's business. Is it possible to respect that notebook, not to defile anything, not to regard it as something meant just for my pleasure? Similarly to regard one's own body and mind also as parts of this process of Nature, their purpose is not the fulfilment of my desires and my pleasures. It is a totally different outlook on oneself, if I feel I am in charge of myself, myself being my body and my mind. Then I must do everything that is right for this body and this mind. You may call it my body and my mind so long as you understand that the relationship is not one of a proprietor or an owner but that of a caretaker. After all as the

principal of a school, I don't own that school, I am responsible to look after that school, to take care for it, to see that it runs along the right lines, so that the children get the right kind of education. That is my concern. Why doesn't that apply to my own body and mind also? If I am responsible for that school in that way, am I not responsible for my own home in that way, my own family in that way and in turn for myself in that way?

Because ultimately if one does not keep one's own mind and body healthy, alert, energetic, alive, nothing else is possible, no religious life is possible, if one wastes away the energies of one's own body and mind. You don't have to look after your own body and mind with a terrible lot of self-concern, that should not itself become a self-centered activity. So it is a difficult thing. You have to decide how much care is needed and what is right for the body and mind, then do it without calling it your body and your mind and making it into an egoistic activity. Do it not for the sake of profit, not for the sake of gain and benefit, but because it is one's responsibility. So, find out the right kind of food, the right kind of exercise, which includes not having too much of intoxicants, not defiling the body with all kinds of foods which are not right for the body but taking care of it. In the same way it includes not exposing the mind to all kinds of temptations, influences which are not healthy, and not neglecting yourself, because the traditional concept of altruism has been to ignore oneself, not care about oneself, to only care about others. But that also creates a division between oneself and others. So it is important right through all our relationships to approach them like a friend and the best definition of friendship I have come across is in Khalil Gibran's book *The Prophet*. He says, 'Let there be no purpose in friendship save the deepening of the spirit. For love that seeks aught but the disclosure of its own mystery, is not love but a net that is cast forth; and only the unprofitable is caught!' I would extend that statement

about friendship to include all our relationships whether it be to nature, to society, or to oneself. To relate in that way without any motive or purpose in that relationship, without approaching it like a beggar. When you do that then there is a greater possibility of viewing oneself objectively, without either relapsing into self-congratulation or into denunciation or condemnation – just observing what one is and becoming aware what one is without rejecting it or accepting it – becoming just aware of it.

When you become aware of all your own tendencies and habits and the way your mind works, somehow that awareness, that understanding brings about a certain quality of virtue. In fact virtue cannot perhaps be acquired in any other way. It is a by-product of self-knowledge which is not knowledge about the self but familiarity with the ways of the self. Watch how the self interferes and functions, the motivations that enter into our relationships. The constant awareness of all this brings a certain understanding in our relationships and love and compassion which are the very root of virtue. Through effort, through decision, you cannot become humble. Either you are humble or you are not humble. If you are not humble it means that you have not understood and if that understanding does not bring humility your decision to be humble will only be a pretence. You cannot decide to be non-violent. So long as you are violent there is ignorance in you and that ignorance is responsible for the violence. Unless that ignorance is dispelled, unless you come upon the understanding whereby that ignorance is dispelled, you cannot become non-violent by taking vows and deciding to be non-violent. So the greatest qualities, the greatest virtues, the most worthwhile things in life are those which one cannot go directly after. You can go after money, you can go after pleasure, you can go after excitement, but you cannot go after love, you cannot go after humility, you cannot go after respect – you cannot get these things

by trying for them. They are more subtle, they come as by-products of self-knowledge. You can seek pleasure, but you cannot seek happiness. You cannot seek peace of mind, it won't come by seeking. It will come if there is the understanding of the thought process, so that the thought process becomes silent. Then there is peace; peace is not something positive that has to be created. If disturbance is not there, if reactions are not there, there is automatically peace.

The next question is that the society influences the individual. And the individual, in turn, creates society, so which one is going to change first? Are we going to say that society must change in order that the individual will change, or is the society going to change only if I as the individual change? You know the big communist experiment in Russia was that they thought they could change the individual by arranging things externally in society, eliminate the concept of God, create equality by giving the same house, the same clothes, same amount of work and salary and this in turn would influence the minds of people and they will become nobler. This is what they thought. It has failed. You cannot get it through influence. You cannot be influenced into becoming good. There is no way in which society can create goodness in the individual by conditioning you. Religions have tried that, to condition human beings into goodness. You can create a conscience about something. That becomes an inner policeman which you put inside that man to control and discipline him. It is still a form of control, whether that control is exercised externally by the laws of the state or it is exercised by something which you cultivate as a conscience which is your inner policeman. It is still disciplining and controlling you. It is still a process of conflict. Instead of a conflict between you and the state, it becomes a conflict between you and yourself, between what you are and what your conscience says you should be. And that is also a way of

conflict and there is no peace in that. There is also such a thing as being violent with oneself and violence with oneself is also cruelty, is also aggression. When you suppress yourself, your desires, your tendencies, you are being violent with yourself. That is why I said it is necessary also to be a friend to oneself and one must be very clear that no fundamental change is possible in society unless the individual changes and the individual, which is you and me, doesn't change through effort, through a decision to change. Indeed this illusion that we can change through effort is responsible for a lot of postponement. It is also responsible for the creation of the ego, because it creates a feeling that it will take time for me to change and that it is a gradual process. I think I can go on trying and slowly I will become virtuous. I am angry but I will slowly become non-angry. I am violent, I will gradually acquire the quality of non-violence.

We get this feeling by extrapolating from our experience in everyday life through school and college because the acquisition of knowledge is a gradual process, the acquisition of technique is a gradual process, the learning of a language is a gradual process. You can learn to drive a car, you can learn to read and write by practising and so our experience is that I can decide, I can put in effort and slowly with time I can arrive where I decided to come and it is a valid process in the field of science and technology, in the field of knowledge, but it is totally an invalid process in the field of the psyche. Understanding is not a gradual process. You cannot come to it gradually. Either you see the truth of something or you don't see the truth. It is not that you see 10% of the truth today and after 5 years of labour and hard work you have 50% of the truth and then you have 90% and then you will gradually come upon the full truth. It is not like that. Until you have seen the truth, you are in illusion and there is no gradation in illusions, you don't have the truth until you see the truth of somet-

hing for yourself. The direct perception of the truth is not like knowledge. It cannot be acquired through knowledge, through a gradual process of time. This idea that I am not happy now, but slowly I will become happy in the future, that I will work for my happiness is false. That is the time interval in which all the mischief is played. That is what the businessman is saying too – that I am not happy with this, that I must make another factory and get there and then I will be happy. The man who is making efforts for scholarship at university is also saying: ‘I am dissatisfied, I am not happy, if I get that Ph D degree I am going to become happy’. And the religious man is saying this too: ‘I am doing this practice and this meditation, I am not happy with it but eventually I am going to do it successfully and then I will become happy’. It is all the same process of desire, of acquisition, whether of money, of noble thoughts, of knowledge or whatever, and understanding is not an acquisitive process. Knowledge can be gained with time, like climbing a spiral hill. You can go up the hill gradually with time and you can reach at the top of the hill. Insight is not like that. You cannot come upon wisdom or understanding gradually by a spiral process.

If you ask me as a physicist to explain this in scientific terms I would say if you plot space along the x-axis, time along the y-axis and wisdom or understanding along the z-axis, then all your efforts move you only in the horizontal plane. You move in space and you move in time but you don’t move in wisdom. Through effort you don’t move in wisdom. But when there is a cessation of effort and a direct perception of a truth, the realization of a truth, then that understanding brings you to a higher plane and you move along the z-axis. That is how it takes place, and that jump is not like a gradual spiral climb, it is like a quantum jump. Either you have seen the truth, so that an illusion has dropped away, or you have not seen it. There is no difference between one illusion

and a modified illusion. You are not closer to the truth with a modified illusion. The illusion of the businessman and the illusion of a religious man with belief and all that, both are illusions and that is not truth. We often consider that one illusion is superior to another illusion, because the outer effects, the social effects of one illusion may be more devastating, more visible than that of another but from the point of view of coming upon the truth all illusion is illusion. There is no gradation in illusion. It is not as if you go from one illusion to the next illusion to a higher illusion and then on to the truth. It is not like that. It is not a gradual process. It is a process that does not take time. It comes in a flash. That flash may occur any time but it does not occur because of time. Krishnamurti put this in a more drastic way. He said: the future is now. You think the future is far away. In psychological terms the future is now. That statement to me means if you are violent, if you are aggressive, if you are jealous today you will be the same ten years hence unless there is a mutation in your psyche which changes that. That mutation requires an insight, it is not a process of knowledge, it is not something you can gradually work towards. It comes as a by-product of understanding, because the understanding dissolves the illusion. It is the illusions which create the ego and the problems of all ego-centered activity are born out of that illusion.

This is the same statement as Buddha's statement that ignorance is the cause of sorrow. Not the ignorance that goes away with knowledge but the ignorance which goes away through wisdom. In Sanskrit they have the word *prajna* which includes discrimination. The ability to discriminate what is true from what is false. That ability comes through a lot of observation. You have to be continually alertly watchful and be passively aware and sort out what is true from what is false. Then you come upon the understanding of yourself and then there is the

possibility of insight into one's own consciousness, a deeper understanding of one's being. Then virtue comes as a by-product of that – the feeling of love and compassion and affection which is all the religious quality. There is no religious quality without love and compassion. It does not matter whether you mumble words in a church or in an Islamic temple or in a Hindu temple or you sit at home and do something. It does not matter how you come upon that. But unless the mind has got the quality of love and compassion, which means energy which is without motivation, unless it functions like that, there is no religious quality in that mind. You cannot just become religious by going to a temple, that is a way of deceiving oneself. Mankind has evolved a lot of ways of deceiving oneself. You can feel virtuous without coming upon virtue and those are shortcuts and many such shortcuts have been provided. You can temporarily feel the peace of mind and feel virtuous but there is really no shortcut. Only by coming upon an understanding of oneself there is virtue; you cannot acquire it through effort and without coming upon virtue there is no freedom from self-centered activity. There cannot be.

Normally in society if you ask an individual he will say: 'I do not know what I would do if I did not have ambition, I do not know what I would do if I was not motivated by desire', because he knows only the energy that comes from ambition. He values that because there is a reward at the end of it, it energizes him and he goes about it with great passion and great ambition and the ambitious man has tremendous energy to fulfil himself. So he says: 'If I don't have ambition I would just stagnate. There would be no reason for me to go even for a walk. Why should I go out for a walk? What do I gain from it?' That is the psyche into which the ego leads us. Unless there is a profit, unless there is some gain, either psychological or material or emotional, unless there is a pleasure to be obtained, there is no point in making any

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effort in any direction and therefore all motivation emanates from the self. If one has only that energy, then one does not have love and compassion because if you go about something ambitiously you must know the consequence of that. If you go about anything, however noble it may be, in the sense however good it may appear in its effects outwardly, if you are doing it ambitiously it means you are working at it feverishly, directing all your energies and focussing on going in that direction. So if anybody or anything comes in the way, you are going to brush it aside. You are not going to have the time or the patience or the tolerance to consider that intervention. That is how violence is born as a by-product of ambition, as a by-product of a very narrow self-centered energy, which may be expended in the direction of making a temple or a hospital. It may be a very noble cause but so long as you are going at it egoistically there is violence in the very process of doing it. You have no time for your neighbour. You have no time for your own children because you are going on about your own ambitions feverishly. It doesn't matter what that ambition is about. That is not important.

So it is not what activity one is engaged in which determines whether it is right or wrong, but the way one goes about it. If you go about it egoistically, in it there is the seed of destruction, even if you are doing social work. If you are doing it in order to get name and fame for yourself, in order to be successful, get a big position and be admired, if you are giving lectures like this in order to become popular, to become an important person and a guru, you are caught in the same ego game. But you can also be doing this as part of learning together and then it is right activity. So what is right and what is not right, is not determined by the external appearance, but it is dependent on the motivation within and nobody knows the motivation except yourself. Therefore nobody else can teach you and nobody else can control you and

make you virtuous. You alone know what the motivation is and when you see that the motivation is self-centered, if you are familiar with the ways of the self you can eliminate it, the moment that motivation enters. But when you are not aware of it you get carried away. When you are not aware, you think you are very virtuous, you think you are acting very nobly when actually your own motivation is self-centered. And your ego is building up and you discover it much later when there is a big crisis or a disaster, when your wife leaves you, and so on. Suddenly there is a crisis, and then you wake up to ask: 'Why did this happen, I thought I am such a noble person doing such a good thing'. That means sorrow comes to tell me that I am living in a make-believe world of my own without being aware of the actuality of what is. So can I observe what is, be aware of everything factually as it is, not be dissatisfied about it and yet act and do what is the right thing to do in that situation?

You know there are two ways of going about it, like I am in charge of a school and if things are not alright in the school I can get very dissatisfied and get very unhappy about my own school and then out of that dissatisfaction and unhappiness I can do things in order to become happy and get satisfaction. That is still all egoistic activity. On the other hand if I don't tie up my happiness with it, if I am aware of everything that is happening, it does not dissatisfy me, it does not make me unhappy, then happily I go and do what needs to be done, then it is quite a different thing. That is a totally different way of relating to your work and your own institution. Then you are not using your office and your work to sustain you, to get psychological fulfilment. In the same way, not to use your wife for your fulfilment, but treat her as a friend, not to use your office for your fulfilment, that means to be happy and then act out of happiness because that misery, that unhappiness, that dissatisfaction, which is born of the ego

drains away our energy. It is a form of violence within oneself. It makes us bitter. If you are not a happy person you cannot be kind, you cannot be generous. I would even go to the extent of saying that it is the duty of each one of us to be happy because there is enough unhappiness in the world, and it is not right for us to add to it. You must live with a smile, a genuine smile, not a put on smile, acquired through effort. Wake up everyday with a smile. It does not matter what the circumstances are. Can you make the smile on your face independent of all circumstances and then deal with the circumstances? Or do the circumstances make me miserable and because I am miserable I go and deal with them? Then you will deal only when you are miserable. So the motivation is very different. That is why in the Gita it says, that it may appear that an enlightened man is doing all those things which a normal man does, but it is not the same. It is totally different because he does not do it for the same reason and his attitude is not the same.

So the problem in right living, is not one of what you are doing, whether you are working in a bank or you are working in a garden or you are a school teacher, it doesn't matter. So long as you can cleanse yourself from within and your motivations are right and you do it with joy it is right. It is not a question that that is higher and this is lower. Tilling the soil and doing gardening is not lower than reading Shakespeare and giving lectures on literature. Nor is it higher, it is just different. This idea of high and low is again another value judgement which our mind introduces and we must examine that. You will find that it is something we pick up from society. It is often related to the amount of salary they pay you or the amount of status they give you in society, because you are a professor or you are a doctor or something like that. That is not a true measure. One is still measuring in terms of benefits, in materialistic terms. It is an arduous process and man

has not learnt this, which is a great tragedy, because that is the only way to live creatively. To do something in life for the love of it. There is another consequence of that. You will often find that a person is very efficient and works very hard in a particular area but there are other areas which he totally neglects. That is another narrowing which takes place when there is directed energy, ambitious working or egoistic activity. Because when you do something with joy, when you live creatively when one has come upon the art of living then nothing is high or low, then whatever you do you do with great awareness, with great attention and do it well, not because of the reward, but for its own sake and that means in everyday life whatever one is doing – whether you are taking a bath, whether you are talking to your neighbour, whether you are cleaning your dog, it doesn't matter what you are doing – you are doing it with your full attention, giving your heart to that. That is right living.

To come upon that will not be possible by making just a decision. Therefore we must not postulate it like an ideal to be practised. It is not possible to work that way, we must get interested in understanding ourselves and our life, and become a student of ourselves and life and go along like a student does – learning, learning and learning. Then all these things happen as by-products. Don't measure and evaluate and get dissatisfied about it, because there is no other way, there is no other short cut to come upon right living.

7

Right living in modern society: our responsibility towards children

YESTERDAY WE considered what was right relationship and we said that life is relationship and unless there is right relationship there cannot be right living. We also found that it is not possible to come upon right relationship either with nature or with ideas or with fellow-men or even with oneself if the mind is caught up in self-centered activity. We also said that society is what the individual is and unless the individuals live rightly the problems of society would continue. There cannot be a radical change in society unless there is a radical change in the individual, which is you and me. That means whatever is happening in society out there, we are responsible for that. We may feel that we are not directly involved in it but whatever violence and cruelty is there in society is the outer manifestation of the violence which is in each one of us. That is an undeniable fact; therefore as long as we are what we are, society will be what it is and in that sense each one of us is responsible. Because if each one of us is violent from within, we create an atmosphere in which there is violence. It is a matter of chance then if it comes out in a big way in a particular place in the form of war, in the form of a concentration camp and so on. It is just a matter of chance because first we have created the atmosphere in which these eruptions take place, then we keep dealing with those eruptions, not seeing that we are all contributing to it because somehow when we are distant from it, it appears as if we

are not directly involved, only 'those people' are responsible for it. We saw yesterday that 'those people' are not fundamentally different from 'these people'. We all share the same human consciousness. We also said that there is no formula for coming upon right living. You cannot just define certain right actions, perform them and thereby come upon right living. It becomes hypocritical. Right living can only be a by-product of our understanding of ourselves, because we cannot live beyond our understanding. Each one of us lives according to his own understanding. Therefore it is imperative for right living that we pay attention to learn about ourselves and enhance our understanding of ourselves and our relationship to others and to the environment. The rest will follow in a natural way, you can't force it.

So if all this is true then what is our responsibility towards our children, what is our responsibility towards the next generation? After all, we decide how to educate them – you may say the state decides, but the state is us. The understanding in the state, the people who manage the state, is the understanding which individuals possess collectively. That is the understanding which determines what kind of education we are going to impart. I am using the word education not merely to refer to what transpires in the classrooms in a school or a college, but in the broader sense of bringing up a child to become a grown up individual. Let us begin with examining what is taking place now in the present day education and I would like to devote this morning to discussing not so much the nitty gritty details of schooling and education, but first look at our vision of education as a whole. You know it is important in all these matters, both to look at something from a distance so that you see it in a perspective and then also to go close and examine it in detail. If you only examine closely you lose the perspective. It is like looking at the mountains from a distance. You see the whole mountain only when you see it from a

distance. When you come very close to it you see the trees, the rocks, the insects there and all that, but you don't see the whole mountain. It is important to first look at issues and problems in that way and then go close and look at them in detail. That is what I would like to do with this question of education. And as we said the other day we would like to examine it from first principles, without assumption, starting with our own observations, without quoting experts and opinions and so on, in order to come to our own understanding about it.

Consider our present vision of education in society. What kind of individuals are we really creating in our schools and colleges today? What is our aim, what is our vision, what kind of human being is society interested in producing, because that is where you form the individual, in the process of education, including the parents and the home of course. Mostly you will find that the aim is to produce someone who is smart, highly trained, efficient, who would be successful in society, hard working, disciplined, devoted to his work and hopefully a leader of men, one who can lead other people. That is the vision. That is what we are attempting to produce in our school and college education. That is what education is geared to do today. Now I want to put it to you that all these qualities were present in Adolf Hitler. He was efficient, he was highly trained, he was devoted, hard working, a leader of men, efficient. All these qualities were present in the man whom many consider to be the most evil person of this century. I am not trying to judge him, but I am saying many people hold that opinion. The only thing that was lacking was goodness. He did not have a religious mind, he did not come upon love and compassion, but he had all the cleverness and the ability which we are trying to cultivate in the process of education. If we have produced only one Hitler and one Stalin in this century it is because we have not succeeded sufficiently in the aims of our edu-

cation! There is nothing in our education system to prevent the production of such individuals, because that is what our society looks upto. The man who is smart, who can dominate, who can get his work done, who is successful, who rises to the top and climbs the ladder, who impresses other people, and forms a big support group. That is the aim of life, we want that our children should grow up in that way. A few of us may not want it that way, but by and large I am saying that is what our education is geared to do. There are a few classes on moral education in some of the better schools where they do some religious propaganda, give some sermons, pay lip service to what is goodness, thinking it can be transmitted like knowledge. There is no serious attempt to bring about an understanding of life. They don't even consider that it is necessary that the child must come upon the art of living. You teach him all the other arts and skills and teach him ballet, dance and music and painting and so on, cultivate various skills, but the art of living is not part of the education process, it is simply ignored. So if that is the kind of vision we have and if that is the kind of individual we are forming, then what else do we expect in society? Why should there not be problems in modern society? We examined yesterday that so long as you are having a self-centered, egoistic, aggressive individual, which is the kind of individual our education is geared to produce, then naturally there won't be right relationship. There won't be right living, then all the problems that we see around us are only to be expected. So it seems to me that we have organised education in a very unintelligent way.

It is not as if this has not been pointed out to us. Two thousand years ago Socrates said: 'You must know yourself'. We respect him. We teach him in the philosophy courses but we have not listened to him. We have not given importance to what that man has told us. We have not worked for it because somehow

the entire education system is only geared towards economic development. I am not against economic development. It is a useful thing, but it has become the first and primary aim in every country. We want to have the best engineers, doctors, computer scientists and so on, so that we can produce goods, we can export them, and be the top country in the world and get maximum money and this attitude has affected the entire philosophy of education. The educational institution is interested in producing a computer scientist and a technologist who can put a man on the moon, but they are not interested in a human being who would live creatively, who would live a full rich life, who would have a religious mind, a mind which is religious and scientific at the same time. They are not interested. They are only interested in the scientific mind. They have divorced religion from science. And that is what has created the lopsided development of the individual about which we talked the other day and which is responsible for so many of our problems because we have come upon tremendous power unleashed by science and technology and our knowledge but we have not come upon the requisite understanding and intelligence to use that power rightly or wisely. So, seeing all this, we must inquire what the vision of education should be. If we find that the very vision of our education itself is wrong then we must think of an alternative. What should be the vision of education for right living? Because if right living is important and without right living you cannot have the right kind of society, then your education must be geared towards right living. We must help the child to come upon the kind of right living which we discussed yesterday. Let us look at it from first principles.

If you observe Nature, of which we are a part, you will see that all life begins as a single cell, whether it is that big oak tree or banyan tree, it is the dog round the corner or it is you and I. We

all started off as a single cell containing a programme for its development. Biologically that is what life is: from the seed to the big tree. What kind of tree it will be, what kind of leaves it will have, how tall it will grow, how it lives is all contained in that programme. How long it will live is also, by and large, contained in that tiny little seed. So is it for you and me, we are also developing in this process of life, according to that programme as the tree and the cat and the dog are developing. We all know this but because I am doing this from first principles I am telling you something which we normally take for granted, because it is necessary to have that perspective. The tree, dog or cat grow on their own, when they receive food and some protection so that they don't get killed. If it is a tree you have to ensure that it gets sunshine, gets water, nourishment and it grows. So does the human child. It grows – you don't make the human child grow. But there is an essential difference. The cat or the dog does not need to be trained. It lives by its instincts. Nature has arranged it in such a way that the young one grows and it instinctively follows a certain path and lives by that. We do tend to train dogs and cats when we make them pets to suit our own needs but perhaps the animal is better off without that training. It is not so with the human child. There is a fundamental difference. The human child is born with a consciousness which is partially an empty slate. I say partially because the instincts and so on are already written into it. That is also a part of conditioning of the mind or brain of the human child. But quite a lot of it is blank and there is a long period of mental development, a process of mental growth, which is not there in the case of the animals and the plants. So in addition to what we do for animals and plants, the question arises for the human child: what should we feed into that empty slate? And it matters terribly what you feed into that empty slate in the process of growth of the child because if you bring him up in

Russia he becomes a Russian and a communist. If you bring him up as a Catholic Christian he becomes a Catholic Christian. If you bring him up in America with those values, he acquires those values and he becomes American. So he is going to be conditioned by his environment, by his surrounding, by the way I bring him up, by the ideas which I put there and that is going to determine, to a large extent, his future life. So it is a tremendous responsibility. I want us to realize that.

It is a tremendous responsibility to find out what is the right thing to give to that child. If I care for that child, for his life, then I must find out what is the right thing to write in its consciousness. The Islamic people write something different on it and condition him differently from the Hindus and Christians. Is it possible that the child grows up without conditioning? If not, what conditioning will you write into his consciousness? If you bring up a child without love and affection, maybe you permanently impair his capacity to feel love and affection later in life. And how do you put a price on that? If a human being grows up as a child in such a way that later on in life he can never respond, never feel love and affection, it is a tremendous handicap, a tremendous damage that has been done to the child. Therefore it is a tremendous responsibility in education to ensure that we don't hamper the child in coming upon the understanding which is necessary for right living. To decide what we should write on that slate, I must first have a vision of what kind of human being I want to produce. At present they want to produce a human being who would improve the economy of the state, so we have the kind of education system that we have developed in society. So we must first have a vision of what kind of human being we want to produce. If I say I want to create a human being who lives a full rich life, a high quality of life, I must define what I mean by a high quality of life. What is our concept of a high quality of life? The

concept in society is one of the successful man who has a big position, car, a big house and lots of power and importance and all that, that is regarded as a high quality of life. We must examine if that is really a high quality of life or we have just assumed that it is and therefore you regard that as the aim in life. Suppose I say that life has a high quality if a person lives with joy, creatively, with a sense of love, not being an egocentric, narrow individual, caught up in self-centered activity, how would you measure that?

How do you define a high quality of life? Surely the quality of my life is not determined by the quality of the clothes I wear, the house I live in as much as it is determined by the quality of my mind. May I suggest a measure for you to consider? Look at the life of an individual, ignore all his possessions and so on, and just consider how many days in his life he lived with a song in his heart and a smile on his face. Count that many days as plus and leave out the rest. So out of the total span of whatever 70-90 years of life, you multiply that out by 365, you have the total number of days a human being lives, I count the number of days he lived with a smile on his face and a song in his heart, those are the days when he was happy, and I divide that by the total number of days he has lived. I get a mathematical quotient which is a measure of the quality of life! If you do that you will find that a high quality of life is not the special prerogative of either the rich or the poor, either the learned and educated or the uneducated, either one part of the world or another part of the world. That high quality of life is not the special prerogative of any particular class of people. It is a totally different thing. It has something to do with the quality of mind and the heart with which one lives in life. Not the possessions you have, not the knowledge that you have, not what you have acquired, that is all only a process of the refinement of the ego, it is not a process of the dissolution of the

ego. So if I define a high quality of life in that way and I want this child in front of me to live that way with joy, with happiness, then how should education be organised and what would you teach him? First of all, if you listened to the video yesterday, Krishnaji was saying that we have all accepted that conflict is a way of life, that it is inevitable, that you have to struggle and we have never asked ourselves the question whether it is possible not to have any conflict whatsoever. Therefore we gear our education to help the children to successfully cope with conflict, to be so clever and intelligent that you can solve every problem. Since we view life as a series of problems we educate the child also in that way. Right through school the way he is brought up, passing the examinations is a problem, learning mathematics is a problem, learning language is a problem and he must struggle against these problems, succeed and overcome them. That is our conditioning, that is the way we have grown up, we have accepted that and we are training our children to do the same because that is all what we know and that is what we consider in life.

A man like Krishnamurti comes along and questions it; he says you have lived stupidly, you have accepted that and you are just transmitting to the child all your own prejudices, your own lack of understanding, and that is what you are writing on his empty slate and programming him to think like-wise about life. So is it possible to educate a child in such a way that his schooling and education are not a problem? That means, basically, the child must be happy at school and college, happy and doing things in which he is interested and learning about himself, about life, it does not mean he cannot become a lawyer or an engineer. It just means that he must learn about himself and life and his relationships, learn the art of living and at the same time specialise. He must of course specialise and have a particular vocation, but we must also educate him to find out what is the right vocation for

him. It means that I am not going to dictate the growth and development of that child. I am not going to look upon him as raw material to be moulded and fashioned to fit into society and I am not also going to pass on to him all my conditioning and my prejudices in the process of bringing him up. I mean we must look upon the child as a unique individual. There is no other person like him. No two things, no two leaves, no two trees are alike in this universe and no two children are alike in this universe. And I must not have a design or a plan and mould him to fit into that design or plan.

Can we bring up children the way we allow a tree or plant to grow in our garden? We don't cut its branches and decide what kind of shape a tree must have beforehand. We let it develop and watch it in full bloom and beauty. The purpose of education I would say is to reveal the beauty in life in all its aspects to the child. What he will become, his vocations are all secondary issues. They will come up later. As we observe the child grow, we will help him to discover his right vocation. To train him for a vocation is not the main aim and purpose of education, it is a secondary aim, a by-product of his growth and development. The primary aim is to cultivate all the capacities the human consciousness is capable of. We talked about that the other day, that the human consciousness has several capacities: the capacity for observation, for attention, for awareness, all the thought based capacities, all the aesthetic capacities and then things like vision and insight and so on which are beyond thought and emotion. I am aware of all that as an educationist and I want this child to grow and develop all his capacities because only when all the capacities are fully developed in a balanced, harmonious way, is he capable of leading a full rich life and understanding himself and his surroundings. If you create a person who is highly intellectual and not developed emotionally you create a monster. If you cre-

ate a person who is emotionally over-developed and intellectually a dwarf again you create a neurotic imbalanced person. If you create a person who is very clever with thought and his mind is totally filled up with thought but he has little capacity for awareness and observation, you again create a peculiar human being, who cannot come upon right living. So the very vision of education has to be different. Education must be geared not for economic development but for human development which means the full development of the potential in that child and we don't know what that potential in that child is.

So I am just going to help him develop and cultivate every capacity. I am not going to pick and choose and say this is the way he should go. I am not going to sit in judgement on him and say he is a weak child, inferior fellow, because he cannot do mathematics as well as the strong child. It is not a question of achievement. I want him to play games, I want him to learn art and dance and music. I want him to be exposed to nature. I want to reveal to him the beauty of all this. And I am not sitting and measuring whether he is succeeding, that is not the purpose and aim of education because I am not trying to exploit his abilities to get something done in society, that is a wrong way of looking at another human being – we have already said that yesterday. That is a self-centered way of looking at my own child, to think in terms of what he can produce, what name and fame he can bring to the family, how he can be successful, that is all a narrow, egoistic way of viewing it. View him from the point of view of his life, his happiness, and help him to have freedom from conflict, the capacity to face life and have the intelligence which is not merely cleverness in a particular domain. As I pointed out yesterday, in present day education we are producing specialists who are like Dirac delta functions knowing an infinite amount in a very narrow region and totally ignorant elsewhere. The top scientist, the

computer man or the historian has very little understanding of himself, his understanding of life is so poor. He may come upon it by chance, but the education system does not ensure that he will have a wide understanding of life, of his relationships and then specialise. Right from the beginning we specialise and we are geared towards achievement and production.

Our vision of education must ensure that we create an inquiring mind, not a conforming mind as we are doing today. We want that he must obey, he must follow, he must accept the norms of society. We are not interested in having him question it because that is inconvenient for us. It is very convenient if he accepts and obeys us, but is our convenience more important or is his life more important? So it is important for right living to ensure that the child grows up with an inquiring mind. I don't say that it is possible for a child to grow up without any conditioning, because everything conditions the mind of the child. Every experience conditions the mind. When he sees a television programme it is conditioning his mind. When he sees you quarreling with your wife it conditions his mind. When he gets hurt, it conditions the mind. He reads a book or a newspaper or a story, that conditions his mind. It is not possible that a human being grows up without any conditioning whatsoever. But you can ensure that you don't condition his mind into a particular belief – whether religious or political or social or moral – because you can encourage him to question everything, you can expose him to everything, talk to him about everything and ask him to question it and not align himself with any viewpoint. We should not condition the mind of the child strongly in any particular belief, so that his mind is free to ask fundamental questions and inquire for himself. This has to be a very important aspect of education and the bringing up of the child, however inconvenient it may be for us. If I also live with an inquiring mind I welcome questions be-

cause the questions of the child enable me to look at myself. I may not have raised that question because I might have assumed it. I may not have understood it correctly, so I will learn now.

In the video we saw yesterday prof. Anderson asked if it is not necessary that the teacher must be free before he can teach the child, and Krishnamurti said it is not necessary, it is only necessary to be completely honest. It is not necessary to be free yourself because you can say to him that you also have conflict. We are not postulating freedom from conflict as an achievement or a virtue to be practised, a goal to be arrived at. We are viewing conflict as something that is a problem, that is a corrupting factor in life, a distorting factor in life and if it is so in my life I also want to protect my child from it, so I inquire along with him, as a friend. If he asks me about it I say, yes, I also have conflict. All human beings have it, but we must find out why there is conflict and whether it is possible to live in such a way as not to have conflict as it strengthens the ego. Since right action is not merely determined by the consequences or the effects of that action but also by the state of mind in which that action is performed, it is not possible to define right actions beforehand. It is necessary to watch the motive, to watch the state of mind in which that action is performed and that is only possible when there is deep understanding of oneself, and understanding comes out of inquiry, not out of conformity. Conformity can make the child acquire certain habits which you consider to be good but the mechanical performance of good actions is not right living, because in mechanical living there is no awareness.

For right living, for creative living, it is necessary to teach a child that whatever we do needs to be done well. Not that certain works and certain things alone are important and we need to pay a lot of attention to them, while other things can be ignored. That value system which we have in our life we must not transmit to

the child. Similarly it is necessary for him to work and do the best that he is capable of but it is not necessary that his best should be better than that of another child. Right now that is what we do. We force the child in certain directions because in those we consider achievement is important. We don't watch that child and study him in order to do what is right for that child's growth, because we do not look at the whole process of education holistically. We are postulating what that human being should be and then pushing him into that alley. Obviously if you do that there is going to be conflict. If you watch children you will find that one is very good at mathematics, another is very good at literature, someone else is very good at music, another child may be a fine sportsman. There may be one who is not good at any of these, but he may be a very fine chap, very gentle, a nice friend. Who are we to decide what that child should be? Do you decide about that tree? You don't because you don't feel that the tree exists for a certain purpose. But we want to use the child for success for name and fame and that causes us to push him around. It is egoistic. It may also be out of lack of understanding. I don't say that all parents do this only for their own sake. They think that is good for the child therefore they do it, and that is part of a lack of understanding. So in a very well meaning way, out of great concern and love, we damage our child because we are not intelligent, we ourselves do not have the understanding of what is right education and what is right for him. In such situations you will find that we just do what we have been told by our parents, or what was done with us. Whenever our mind is confused and we don't know what to do, it goes back to the past. If he finds that in the same situation his father had spanked him, he in turn spanks his child because there is no clarity, no originality in the mind. There is no clarity because we have not really cultivated the understanding of ourselves, we have not really cultivated the

art of living and understood our relationships. So I would consider all these to be important aims in the education process, to help the child to have an inquiring mind, to cultivate all his capacities in a balanced way, to expose him to all the beauty in life.

There is beauty in everything in life, there is beauty in gardening, there is beauty in music, there is beauty in playing games, there is beauty in mathematics and science, there is beauty in literature and I want to reveal that beauty to him. That is all. There is no purpose to it except to make his life inwardly rich and beautiful, so that he can relate rightly with nature, he can relate with art and with other human beings. I do not judge and dictate what his life should be, instead I study him, watch his development and help him find the right vocation. Our capacities are different and there are certain things which come naturally to us. It is the right vocation for me to do what is natural to me. I must find out what is natural to me – it may be music, it may be gardening, it may be philosophy, it may be mathematics, I do not know. I have to watch, I have to expose that child to everything, help him with everything and then watch where does his natural talent lie and let him cultivate and develop that and let that be his vocation. Then that vocation is also his hobby, he enjoys the work that he is doing. That is right living, that is creative living. We said the other day that to do a vocation merely in order to earn a living and then have enjoyment on the side is to divide life, fragment it. I am sorry if it all sounds like a dream because it is so different from what is going on in society, what we have been subjected to. Our mind resists it, says it is not possible, but it has never been tried.

I asked Krishnaji once: ‘Sir, if we did bring up a child this way, are you sure that he will grow up to be a creative free human being?’ His answer was: ‘That question cannot be answered because it has never been tried!’ He did not lay out a hope. He

did not say, yes, if you do all this he will grow up free. That would have been a falsehood. It has never been tried. But if that is the right thing to do then that is what we should be doing. Whether we succeed or not is not our concern. Something doesn't become right because it is successful and something doesn't become wrong because it fails. That is the businessman's definition of right and wrong. We are saying that the right means are right, because the ends are not different from the means. If you are going to use violent means, if you are going to be aggressive, the end cannot be non-violent, non-aggressive. If you have understood that then the very first step has to be right, there must be no ego motivation. I must not exploit the child, I must not use him, I must not pressurise him, that is aggression. I must help him to grow in love. That is why it is so difficult to create a Krishnamurti school. There is no Krishnamurti school in existence today, there are many schools which are trying to be. There is no Krishnamurti school because it is not easy to get educators who are so deeply concerned about this that they would create such a school. That is the tragedy. Such a big population, so much humanity and it is difficult to find half a dozen people who have the commitment, the passion to do this. It is an enormous difficulty. The teacher feels it is a good idea, but it is all philosophic, it is meant for the Buddha, not for us ordinary beings. We cannot produce Buddhas out of a school so we come back to the usual rut and carry on the same old way.

8

Right living in modern society: creating the right learning environment

NOW THAT WE have defined what the objectives and aims of education ought to be for right living, I would like to examine more closely the details of the organisation of a school along such lines and for such purpose. There are several issues of a practical kind that come up in education which have to be answered in the light of what we have just said in the morning session. One such issue is how we are going to motivate the students. The children have to do all the work that is planned and all the study that has to be performed in the school. Children don't naturally take to all of it as there are a number of things which are not interesting for them in the beginning and if you just leave it to them they will not do it. Traditionally in education fear and punishment have been used. You can coerce a child to study physics and mathematics out of fear and indeed he will end up devoting more hours to his studies because he's afraid you will punish him. He will also behave as you want him to behave but, as stated before, we are interested in the development of the child as a whole and fear obviously destroys intelligence. It destroys initiative. It destroys love and affection in the relationship. Therefore, in any kind of education which is aiming at a holistic development of all the faculties of the child one cannot use a motivation which promotes the development of faculties in one direction but at the same time obstructs them in another.

Psychologically it cripples a child if one uses fear and punishment, it makes him hard and insensitive. Therefore, in a school of this kind one would not use fear and punishment as a means of motivating a child. If one creates the right kind of atmosphere it should not be necessary, except in a rare emergency when you have a very difficult child. It should not be the norm and a child in the school should not be working constantly under fear. That is what is important, not that you never scold him or reprimand him if he behaves badly. The child knows when there is a relationship of care and affection and he will take the admonishment well, provided it is just and fair without developing fear. It is the same in our homes. Parents do have to occasionally admonish a child, scold him or shout at him if he is too unruly. It sort of jolts him into thinking about an issue; otherwise he might be going on in unawareness being inconsiderate to others. It is constant fear which creates a complex and harms the child, not the occasional occurrence. In fact the child has also to understand that different people are different and he needs to put up occasionally with people who get angry. He has to learn to deal with that, but there must always be avenues wherein he can be counselled, where he can ask, and discuss these matters. He must never have to obey only out of fear of punishment.

The second mode of motivation that is normally used in society is to offer rewards. You know society sometimes trains children like they police train dogs. They reward the dog when he does the right thing and they spank him when he does the wrong thing. That is a very primitive way of educating children, but unfortunately it is widely used. So as they want him to study the subjects hard the school rewards him when he does well. They announce in the assembly the names of the boys who have done well so that everybody praises them, looks up to them or they give them a prize. Parents also do this. They tell the child, `if

you do well at school and you get a first division or A grade, I will get you a bicycle' or something. Poor little dear works at his mathematics and language not because he is interested in it but because he wants the bicycle. Thereby one sows in the mind of the child the seeds of corruption. We said that we are going to bring up the child and educate him to live creatively. We said we want him to do something for the love of it, not for the reward. When we offer a reward we teach him that there must be a gain or a motive in life for doing anything, which is contrary to living creatively, contrary to right living. All the time to be energised only by the profit motive, by a benefit, is something which we are taught right from school. Therefore very often in an office or at work a man will say: 'Why should I do this work, what will I get in return for this?' Such questions arise from the same mentality. Why should I do my work well is a wrong question. There is no reason except that that is the right thing to do. For doing the right thing you don't need a reward. But if I will do the right thing only when I get a reward it is corruption; so rewards distort the psyche. They distract the child away from doing something creatively for the love of it.

Another motivation which is common is to compare children and make them compete with each other. A child is told you must do better than your class-mate and you must stand first in your class and then he receives all the appreciation. I have seen the tragic consequences of this. Children struggle very hard, do very well but just because some other child does a little better than them, they are in tears and heart-broken. Often the parents are also in tears and heart-broken because they want their child to be on top of the class. If I ask you why we should train a child to feel unhappy when his friend does better than him, what would be your answer? Suppose a child turns around and asks: 'He's my friend, why should I not feel happy since he did better?' They

don't ask us, therefore we get away with it; but if they did ask us what would be our answer? Actually there is no answer. You are teaching him rivalry instead of love. In our home when we love our brother, when something nice happens to him, we feel happy for our brother. That is normal in a relationship of friendship, in a relationship of love. So why should I be trained to feel sad if something good happens to you and why should I mind if another person does better than me? We are just training the children wrongly.

Just look at what happens in the Olympic Games – the rivalry between nations, the competition, players cursing because they want to win and all the egoistic energy of ambitiously working towards victory, to get recognition and world applause. For them it is like a war going on and the one who loses is in tears. The ego is being promoted by all kinds of rewards being offered, all the attention being paid to the winner. Is that the way to play a game? Is it not something we ought to enjoy? Is victory or defeat important, or is enjoying the game more important? Is it not possible that I play my best and you also play your best and if your best happens to be better than mine, I feel happy to concede the match? What is the objection to that? Why should you not win? Why should not I be happy that you win, if that is the right thing, because you are a better player? Why are we not educated to be happy when the right thing happens but only when we win? There is so much emphasis on winning that the children begin to cheat because they are not interested in the right evaluation. They are interested in coming on top by hook or crook. For the same reason they also cheat at the examination. They want to get more marks than the other person because then their parents will applaud them, their teachers will praise them and that reward becomes such a desirable thing that they are willing to tell lies; they are willing to cheat. We are responsible for teaching them

that in the name of education. Therefore, there is no question of using competition or comparison as the motivating factor in a school which wants to impart the right kind of education.

The purpose of evaluation is to decide on the further education required by the child. It is not in order to compare him with another student and feel superior or inferior. Comparison psychologically destroys the child. Each child is unique, each child is what he is and we must respect that child for what he is. There is no child who is superior or inferior to another child. One child may have greater ability at something and another child may have a greater ability at something else. This comparison and this feeling of superiority or inferiority is a disease which we, the adults, inculcate into the children. We should in fact discuss it with them so they begin to understand that there is no such thing as superiority and inferiority. It is a very deep rooted illusion which we communicate to the child in the process of education. If I ask you whether the oak tree is superior or the eucalyptus tree is superior, what would be your answer? They are also two living things growing out there, very different from each other. Which one is superior? Your mind flounders when I put that question because you will ask me what I mean by superior and in what respect? What is the measure? If you want shade the oak tree is superior and if you want oil the eucalyptus tree is superior. But if I don't want anything, I am just a friend to both the trees, then which one is superior? So if you don't want anything from that child and you have no fixed goal towards which you are pushing him, there is no such thing as superiority or inferiority. Each child is what he is and you are helping him to grow in all respects. He should not be compared with another child.

There is no ideal into which we are trying to push him, which is also an important factor to understand. We all tend to place before the child an ideal so that he is constantly adjusting himself to

fit into that ideal. What does that do to the child? We then become like orthodox religious people, who say 'this is sin, that is virtue, you must not think like this, you must not do that' and so on. They put an ideal before you which you are not able to live up to, you are constantly feeling guilty, feeling small. So that adds another problem in life. You already have the difficulty of doing the work and now you also have this guilt. So instead of one problem you have two problems! When you do it that way it engenders conflict in the individual between what he is and what he is expected to be, and that conflict is destructive. So let the child be what he is without this constant pressure of what he should be. So don't push the child towards a so-called ideal. The problems and difficulties of a teacher in such a school are more complex, since you have to create interest in what you are teaching so that the child, as a student, pays attention out of interest.

The other way is very easy but it offers very poor education. You, as the teacher, keep doing something on the board which is boring and when the student does not want to attend he looks out of the window because that is more interesting! So you ask him to stand up on the bench. The poor fellow obeys you and indeed looks at the board but his mind is still outside. He has switched off. That is what you achieve by such means. You can't get his attention but you are able to get his eyes focussed upon the board, when you threaten him. He is already learning to deceive you, to cheat you when you do that. It is counter-productive because, after all, education is a process of communication and I want to communicate to him the beauty of a certain language, the beauty of mathematics and you cannot communicate by forcing his attention. As a teacher you must draw his attention, you must face this challenge. Can I bring the subject matter which I have to teach into the mind of the child in such a way that he himself feels interested and enjoys acquiring it? For this the te-

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acher, the educator must really have a great affection and concern for the child and a great passion for his own work, otherwise he wants to take the easy course. The easy course is to put all these rewards and punishments and honours, so that you can then control him.

For such education there must be a small number of children for each teacher to manage so that there is an individual relationship between the teacher and the student and the teacher does not have to handle them on a mass scale, because some child may take longer time and some child may take less time to learn. Not all of them are equally bright, nor do they all learn uniformly in all directions. Those who have dealt with children, especially small children, must have noticed that they learn in spurts. Suddenly he gets a craze for the language and day in and day out he is reading fairy tales and so on and picking up the language. At another time he gets interested in mathematics and he wants to do only that. But we all think he should learn every day one hour of literature, then one hour of this and one hour of that, which is an artificial thing we impose on the child. Again if you have a small number of children it is possible to accommodate to this fact and people are trying new experiments to tackle this. They have subject rooms instead of class rooms. So the mathematics teacher is in the mathematics room and all the required material is available there. He hands out the work sheets which he has prepared beforehand and the children do the learning. If they have difficulties they can come into this room, consult the teacher and he helps the child at whatever level that child is having difficulties. The same is done for all the other subjects. By doing so the emphasis shifts from teaching to learning. There is a legitimate place for a certain amount of appreciation, not false appreciation but genuine appreciation as an encouragement for a child. We permit it in our schools. When a boy is painting and he has put in

a lot of work to finish the picture, you as a teacher, when he approaches you, will tell him that it is a good picture, and show him how he could improve it somewhat. That encourages him. I would not call that a reward because that is an evaluation. That is part of telling him whether he is going right or he is going wrong in his work. You can't make it a rule that irrespective of what he does you are not going to tell him anything because if we praise his work it becomes a reward. So none of these things is like a rule to be applied by the teacher. You have to use your intelligence but if you have understood the spirit of it, that you are not going to use reward and punishment as the motivation in education, then automatically you do what your intelligence tells you is the right thing to do for the child. None of these factors can be reduced to merely a policy of the school and applied like a formula. There is no human relationship in which problems can be solved by a formula telling what is to be done and what is not to be done.

Since one is interested in developing all aspects of the personality of the child, developing all his faculties, Krishnamurti schools aim at being residential schools so that the child lives with the teacher. He is not there only for 6 hours of the day and he does not come to you only for his academic education. You have a closer relationship with him, like in a home, and you are also responsible for his education in art and music, his games, his behaviour, the way he dresses and the way he relates with nature. You have time to play with him in the evening, so that there's a much closer relationship between the teacher and the students. In olden days in India and perhaps also in the West, a few hundred years ago, that was the way education was imparted. Children used to go off to the Ashram of a Guru and lived there. In that Ashram he learnt everything there was to learn. He learnt manners, he learnt behaviour, he learnt values and skills as

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taught in those days. Life in the Ashram was education and that included everything. We have now replaced that with modern education and it has got commercialised. The aim has become to produce professionals on a mass scale, musicians, doctors, engineers. In many cases in private schools it also becomes a money making proposition to run the school. It was not like that before. Though a residential school is not quite like an Ashram, it certainly entails a more holistic relationship between the teacher and the taught. You can create within the school community a certain atmosphere, a certain way of life which itself educates the child.

A child is educated not so much by what you tell him in the classroom. He is educated more by what he actually sees going on around him. You can go on giving sermons in the classroom but if he sees all the time that the way you are living is different, then what he picks up is the hypocrisy of the adults. He learns that this is what you should say, but that is what you should do. Therefore it is important that the school should be a community where we live honestly with certain values, but where there is also constant inquiry into all these questions about life, about beauty, about right living, and where different people are encouraged to express their views and the children also involve themselves in this process. That is the way to inculcate inquiry without doing any kind of propaganda for their own culture. Normally in many schools you will find they do propaganda for their own culture, for their own nationality. Children are taught that their country is the greatest country and their culture is the greatest culture, which is all falsehood! They have not even examined the other cultures. They just repeat this so that the children acquire that opinion and get conditioned into thinking that they are superior people to other people, which ultimately creates division in the world. So no propaganda of any kind. In order to ensure a close relationship with nature the whole school and its surround-

dings must be like the surroundings in the campus here so that one lives constantly with other forms of life and in close contact with nature. All Krishnamurti schools are built either near mountains or rivers and they are full of trees and foliage just like the Theosophical Societies and the Theosophical Schools. There is a deliberate reason for that. It is not just that it is more pleasurable to live like this but it inculcates a certain sensitivity, a certain outlook towards nature, a sense of coexistence with other forms of life. All that must come about indirectly, naturally.

You have to have, of course, certain norms and values which you would teach to the child, which does not mean that he is not free to question them. As I bring him up in the school, I have to decide whether I am going to bring him up as a vegetarian or as a non-vegetarian. Now we have decided for our schools to bring up the children as vegetarians, though not blindly. We explain to them the reason why we are vegetarian and we give the freedom, so that when he grows up, if he wishes, he may discard that and become a non-vegetarian. We are not going to condemn him for it, look down on him. It is not being inculcated as a virtue whereby we will approve of him when he adopts it and disapprove of him when he does not. You give him the reasons and give him also the freedom that when he is grown up he can discard it; but in the beginning he has to accept it because he is too young to understand for himself. I would say this about everything else as well. So you need to have an outlook of respect for all life inculcated in the child right from the beginning.

You may say that this is conditioning the child, and it is, but if you don't do it he is still going to get conditioned anyway. It's of the utmost importance that this is understood well. A lot of people think conditioning is evil and therefore we should not condition the child into anything. But if you take a child out for a walk with you and when you happen to see two birds sitting on a

tree, you look at them and say: 'Don't disturb them, just watch, come away quietly, see how beautiful they are!', you are teaching him to respect and to care for other forms of life. On the other hand, you could also have said: 'Bring the gun... what a splendid shot' and by so doing you would have conditioned him to think that birds and animals are meant for us to shoot. What conditioning would you rather give him? Of course you opt for the conditioning which enhances the sensitivity of a child towards nature, towards other people. You must use your intelligence to decide which part of conditioning is normal, healthy, a part of sensitivity and which part is just opinion, propaganda or belief. There is no formula, there is no rule about it. You may have to come up with that understanding together with the other teachers in that school and permit a discussion of it, have an open debate about it in school. Permit it to be questioned but whatever you decide together you then incorporate into the process of education.

We must also permit dissent, not only permit it but respect it at the same time. In fact Krishnamurti was one of the greatest dissenters. He dissented from the whole of society, about the way society was organised, being run, our attitude towards life. He dissented and said he did not agree with it. He was one of the greatest dissenters in society. We must recognize the importance of dissent – intelligent dissent, not obstinacy, arrogance, violent revolution and all that, which is silly. We must respect disagreement and that has also to be taught as a value to the children.

Another value which is important to teach for right living is cooperation and respect for democracy. Democracy means respect for various views. Freedom to hold different opinions is based on the fact that all the intelligence does not repose in any one mind. So collectively, all of us together, should deliberate on an issue, to determine what is the right thing to do. The collective in-

telligence is greater than what any one mind would have. It is also based on the fact that nothing significant can be accomplished in life all alone. Ultimately if you want to do any work you need a number of people to work together, whether it is running a centre, running a school or running a hospital. You will always have to work with other people and manage disagreements without bickering, without fights, without falling apart. Therefore it is important to teach children that. The attitude 'if you don't do it my way I won't associate with the work' is an irresponsible attitude. It implies that what I say alone is right and it does not respect the intelligence of one's colleagues. They also have certain views and each one of us has the right to speak what he thinks and also have a right to be heard with respect, but none of us has the right to prevail.

Children understand it well when you explain to them in terms of a team game since they are playing that all the time. In a good team when you are playing cricket or football there is a captain of the team and it is his responsibility to take certain decisions. If he is a good captain he consults with his players and deliberates with them before taking important decisions for the team. He listens to them and discusses with them their reasons and so on, and ultimately, after he has listened to all of them thereby educating himself, becoming more intelligent in his understanding of all that is involved, it is his role to take the decision. Then when he takes the decision the others must accept. You cannot say the decision was not according to my wishes, therefore I'm walking out. That is not cooperation. That is disrespect. The child must be helped to understand what is cooperation, when one should cooperate and also when it may be right not to cooperate. That needs a lot of intelligence, a lot of understanding to decide when it is right to go along and when it is not right to go along. One must discuss all this with the children. They un-

derstand when you take examples from their own life and then make them discuss it in the class. Make them work cooperatively and give them the responsibility to take certain decisions together. They will discover very soon that there are differences of opinion and what happens in their class is not different from what happens in our parliament because adults are nothing but grown up children!

In our school, once a week we have a staff meeting for one and a half hours where either we read from Krishnamurti a small passage on education or see one of his videos and then we deliberate upon it in relation to our daily work and life in school. That is one of our ways of keeping in constant touch with this approach and this philosophy, because the teachers who come to us come from the normal university where they have seen reward and punishment, they have seen competition, they have gone through all the normal processes that are operating in society. They have been trained in that. They come as teachers because they have the knowledge of physics or mathematics. When they are to be introduced to this approach it is a good exercise for us because a new man questions us about it and asks us for our reasons. It challenges us to explain to him how it can be done and we teach him to educate children in this way. Many of them have never heard of Krishnamurti and never known about this, but they talk to us afterwards, and tell us they never knew that it is possible to educate children in this way. They had always assumed that you would have to give punishment and threaten children, offer rewards or make them competitive, otherwise one can't make them study. It is not that the teachers in a Krishnamurti school are some specially transformed individuals, of course not, they are ordinary people like anywhere else. It is just that if you are never told there is another way to educate you continue whichever way you were brought up thinking it was right.

One has to be willing to question that and learn for oneself. Learning does not end with the school. One's whole life is a process of learning by observing and interacting with each other.

In the field of academics the teachers may know more than the students and they can transfer their knowledge. But in this field, as human beings struggling to discover the art of living rightly, we grown ups are not different from the children. Knowledge does not help us to live rightly. Therefore we must inquire together and learn together, as friends, not as instructors and trainees. Only a school that cares both for the academic development and for the art of right living, can impart right education to children and fulfil our responsibility towards the next generation.

Lectures

Lecture 1 was delivered on 28 December 1992 at the Theosophical Convention, Adyar-Madras, India

Lecture 2 was delivered on 20 July 1992 at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Holland

Lecture 3 was delivered on 23 July 1992 at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Holland

Lecture 4 was delivered on 13 July 1993 at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Holland

Lecture 5 was delivered on 14 July 1993 at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Holland

Lecture 6 was delivered on 14 July 1993 at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Holland

Lecture 7 was delivered on 15 July 1993 at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Holland

Lecture 8 was delivered on 16 July 1993 at the International Theosophical Centre, Naarden, Holland

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