

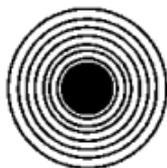
# *Silence*

Vimala Thakar



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Vimal Prakashan Trust

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(A collection of talks in English by Vimala Thakar)

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### Note on the first edition

In 1989, from 31 July till August 4th, in Hoeven (Holland), preceding the Seminar a SILENCE-CAMP took place. About 100 participants were in silence together except during the evening meal after Vimala Thakar had given a Talk, due to the questions about silence.

You will find those 3 Talks published in this booklet.

- Bookfund Vimala Thakar  
November, 1989

### Publisher's Note on the second edition

The small booklet 'Silence' was published as special issue No. 26 of "Contact" in November 1989 by Bookfund Vimala Thakar Blaricum (Holland). It was out of print for many years. Friends have taken this opportunity to reprint. We hope this book will help its readers in journey inwards.

Vimal Prakashan Trust  
November, 2012

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# 1. The Meaning of Silence

Have you ever been into the mountains ? They do not speak, do they ? They live. The mountains live and breathe peace; peace is the perfume of their being and they charge you with that peace if you really go to them and be with them in a friendly way. Peace is the content of the being of mountains and silence is that peace. Have you been to the woods on a bright summer days with the body exhausted by the warmth of the heat of the sun, and you enter the woods, the green, cool, shady woods and they transmit into your being, the peace of their being. Peace is the language of the universe. Silence is that peace of the woods, silence is the peacefulness of the placid waters running towards the oceans and the seas.

Instead of asking "what is silence" shouldn't we ask ourselves : "what is speech ?" The skies are silent, the earth is silent, the sun shines peacefully, gracefully, in the magnificence of silence. It's the human race that has manipulated the sound-energy contained in them and created words. Verbalization is the creation of the human race. It is an intentional, purposeful manipulation of sound-energy, needed for communication with fellow human beings. So speech is not the natural state of life, but silence is the spontaneous breath of the wholeness of life.

In order to learn and find out if we, the children of the human race, conditioned by our immense inheritance of thousands of centuries, can discover that perfume of silence or peace, discover the spontaneous wholeness of our being; so what do we do when we want to learn and discover that peace, that silence ? We find out a quiet corner or a room and we sit down quietly, persuade the body and the intelligence contained in the body, to be steady. Steadiness is a dynamo of energy. So the body is steady and you move away from the process of verbalization, that typical human activity, deeply embedded in the human psyche.

So when you do not speak, you are moving away from the process of verbalization. This steadying of the body and abstaining from speech are not the essence of silence. Sitting down in a posture, closing the eyes, steadying the body, they are like the skin of a fruit. You take an apple and you peel the skin, because you are concerned with the marrow of the apple, which you are going to eat. But the marrow of the apple cannot grow without the skin; the skin protects. In the same way, this finding out of a quiet room, steadying of the body, abstaining from speech, moving away from noise, all these external symptoms, they are just external aids. They are not the substance, but they are as necessary to learning and finding out what silence is, as the skin of a fruit or a vegetable is necessary for the growth and the flowering of the essence of the vegetable or the fruit.

All this clarification has become necessary because the questioners have gone into details : "what is the relation

between non-speaking and speech; what is the difference between silence and non-silence" and so on and so on. So we have to begin from the very beginning and go into all possible details. So consider for a moment that a learner has satisfied all the prerequisites and he comes face to face with the inner movement of soundless verbalization going on within him. He comes face to face with the movement of thought-structure, the movement of knowledge, the movement of experience, the movement of inheritance within him or her. He cannot compel that movement to stop; he could steady the body, put it into a posture, could abstain from speaking, which were all voluntary movements. But an honest learner discovers in a short while, in a day or two, that the movement of thought-structure is not a voluntary movement at all; it has nothing to do with his will, nothing to do with his desire, it has its own independent movement.

So the only option left to him is to look at that movement without touching it. It is easily said than done. We have been trained to touch everything with our thought. As soon as we come across a sound, a word, an object, an individual, a challenge, a difficulty, as soon as we notice these things we are in a hurry to touch it, to do something about it, within, to change it, to mould it, to crush it, to accept it, to reject it. And now the learning begins not to establish any relationship, any identification with the inner movement, but just to look at it.

This pure cognition, or pure preception, is the first step towards the dimension of silence. You do not stare at the

movement of the thought-structure, you do not make an effort to evaluate it, you're not going to judge it. So there is the space of innocency between the exposure of the thought-movement and your sensitivity or your perception.

Please, do see this. It's not the do-er who is seeing it, it's not the experiencer wanting to suck out a new experience, neither a knower who wants to know about it : why the movement is there, how it is there, how to stop it, get free of it, nothing of that. You are with it because the movement of thought is within you, you are with it because you are it. To notice that the movement of thought-structure is within me, it is independent of my volition, it is independent of the movement of the ego, could be the first discovery.

This innocent looking may create and does create an illusion of a division between you and that which is exposed to your sensitivity as thought-movement. We are now going deeper : while you were looking at it, you felt as if the movement of thought and you, are two different entities, because it has nothing to do with your volition. You felt, that it is a separate entity and If the looking is sustained, you realize that you are it, it is you. The I, the me, the ego, has no separate existence apart from the stream of wishes, ideas, thoughts, pieces of information that are called knowledge and so on. You realize that what you were looking at, was your own reflection : the looker and that which was looked at are just one phenomenon; the observer and that which was observed are one and not two. And that is the ending of looking or observation. Observation had a

relevance till you had not realized that the thought-structure was your own content. It was the substance of what you call your own mind, your self, your ego.

Every inner movement is the movement of the inheritance, the past, every inner movement is conditioned by the past and there is no freedom in the dimension of that movement. Thought-structure knows no freedom, whether the thought is from the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Dhammapada*, the *Koran*, the *Bible*. An idea, a thought, an abstraction of what was perceived by the ancient people, has no dynamism you realize and therefore enquiring with the help of words, enquiring through the cerebral movement, terminates.

A participant has asked : "what is the relationship between silence and enquiry, can they co-exist ?" Enquiry as a cerebral movement, enquiry through the movement of knowledge, through the books or speeches of so-called enlightened persons, liberated persons and whatever, that enquiry terminates as soon as one realizes that the word is an abstraction. Information about reality is not an encounter with reality. So the process of gathering information, acquiring new information, new diction, new versions, comes to an end. Silence is the termination of enquiry as a cerebral movement. As long as one feels that words can help, one travels around the world, moving from one religion to another, from one teacher to another, gathering new ideas, ideologies, patterns of thinking, codes of conduct, conforming to various disciplines and so on.

But the moment you realize that the word is never the thing, an abstraction cannot provide what a direct perception can, a concept cannot replace the majesty of an intimate perception, cerebral movement becomes irrelevant to learning. It had a relevance when you began the enquiry and there comes a period when that movement loses its relevance. That which was helpful becomes an obstacle.

Termination of the process of verbalization, termination of the cerebral movement is a very significant point in the life of a person. The learner who had become an enquirer, transcends again into the state of learning, but now the learning would be without words, now the learning would not be tethered to the past of the total human race.

So free of the past, free of the words, free of the cerebral movement, you find yourself in solitude, psychic solitude that is silence. The thought-structure does not move and therefore the concept of time is no more there and you are left with the emptiness of the eternal present. Silence brings you to the timeless present. The inner division is no more there as me and the not-me, the I and the world, the me and the cosmos; the divisions, the clashes, the tensions, are gone. So there is the relaxation as if you are back into your wholeness, like those mountains who live in the wholeness of their being and therefore there is peace. Your consciousness becomes like the immense skies and their emptiness. So the suspension or termination of the thought-movement allows the emptiness to manifest itself, allows the nothingness to manifest itself. So silence is getting back

to the source of being where you are nobody and no-thing; you are just being or beingness. "Does the thought-structure remain dissolved permanently ?" asks a participant.

What is permanency ? And what is dissolution of a thought-structure ? Is it a structure made of bricks or stones, something solid, visible tangible, which yields to dissolution ? Has thought any factual existence ? Or has it only a conceptual existence ? It exists in the word and the words are a manipulation of sounds. You have attributed certain meaning to certain combinations of letters. The meanings has been attributed to these combinations of letters and organizing of sounds by the human race and that may be as necessary for human society as the structures, the buildings in which you live. These structures of brick and stone and mortar provide you with an enclosure and keep the body protected. May be what you call thought-structure, containing the total knowledge and experience of the human race, is an invisible, intangible, conceptual structure, creating an enclosure in which you believe you are safe. Thought is a security-measure, isn't it ?

So when we use the term thought-structure, please let us be aware that it has no solidity, it has no factual content. The sun, the moon, have factual content; they exist as physical facts, in quotes. But when you talk about time which is a measurement and you measure it by your watch or clock, it has no factual content at all. Time is in the brain, it's a measurement useful for the brain and the

collective activities in human society, but it has no reality. The concepts, the symbols, you may call them a structure; because you want to describe the inner movement you have to use some word, so you call it a thought-structure, you may call it a time-structure : seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, centuries. But nothing exists like a century, there is nothing like a year or an hour or a month. It's all measurement. So it has only a conceptual existence, but not a perceptible, factual content. Please, do see this.

So how are you going to dissolve time ? Can you say that you have dissolved time-structure ? That which does not exist cannot be dissolved, obviously. So thought or the word has no reality outside the human brain. It's a figurative way of saying that the thought-structure is dissolved. Please let us be very clear about each word that we use. We can look at the concepts and symbols and measurements that we have created; we can look at what we call our knowledge and description of the events that have taken place in life, calling them experiences, we can look at that as we look at ourselves in a mirror at our reflection, with the help of memory, recollection, contemplation, reflection; you can look at it, but you are looking at something invisible, intangible, non-factual.

You look at the mechanism of thought, the movement of thought, and where is that movement of thought ? It is within you, it is in your neurological systems, it is in your chemical system, it's a neurochemical movement within you, because the sound-energy, manipulated as words,

has affected the biological structure. Inheritance is nothing but the knowledge being imprinted in the neurological and the chemical system : the bonestructure, the composition of the blood, plasma, the muscles, the nerves, the chemicals. They contain the total human past. You and I, we are the human past, condensed, imprinted in our being, embeded in our being.

You look at it, you observe it, you understand what it is, you understand its limitations and therefore the sense of authority about the thought, about the past, disappears. It is the authority about the thought that disappears. It is the sense of identification with the past knowledge, that disappears and the disappearance of the sense of authority and identification is figuratively called as the dissolution of thought. Nothing was created and nothing is dissolved, the conditionings are still there because the body is there and in the biological structure the conditionings are there, but they have lost relevance to your perception, your responses, your relationships, because you have understood how mechanical they are, how repetitive they are and how they prevent your first-hand, personal relationship with the present.

We talk about dissolution of ignorance through understanding. Had ignorance any existence, had it any structure ? But you may use the term; when I understood the reality, the ignorance disappeared or got dissolved. You may use those terms for communication. That which is, does not get dissolved, the form gets changed, the composition changes. The utility after the change in the

form, the ingredients, the components changes. There is neither creation nor destruction, there is emergence and merging back, there is individuation and going back to non-individuation. There is the activity of formulating concepts and ideas, coining words, using them, understanding their limitations and getting out of their clutches. Knowledge relieves you of ignorance and understanding relieves you of knowledge, words that brought the knowledge.

Thought-structure is not dissolved, but we understand and appreciate its limitations. If the thought-structure, the memory, the experience, the inheritance, is completely wiped out, will you be able to live in the society? You have to work as a house-wife, as a teacher, as a doctor, as a lawyer, as a businessman, or somewhere in the government, at the United Nations and what have you. You have to function, you have to use brain. After all, thought or knowledge is a cerebral movement, it's a neuro-chemical movement. So if the thought-structure is completely dissolved, then there will be no memory and you'll not be able to function at all. The word, the knowledge in relation to the material surroundings has relevance, so you use it there in order to regulate that taperecorder, regulating the microphone according to the volume and the pitch with which the speaker speaks. So the factual information, which also takes the form of a thought, has a relevance and there you use it competently whenever it is needed. Without the movement of the thought-structure there won't be any fine arts, music, dance, drama, literature, poetry, transportation, communication, cooking your meals,

they all require the psycho-physical activity. So you know where the factual memory is necessary and the knowledge is necessary and you know where it is irrelevant. It has no relevance whatsoever when you would like to learn and discover for yourself what is the essence of reality, what is death, when you want to discover what is divinity, what is sacredness, discover what is peace, innocency, beauty. You may read hundreds of books on beauty, that doesn't help; you may read dozen of books on love, it doesn't help. So when it comes to learning and discovering the meaning of life, the nature of reality, the content of divinity, the past has to be left behind. The movement of thought has no relevance whatsoever and therefore you say : "I do not know what is divinity, I do not know what is reality; let me find out."

There are descriptions coming to me from the past, but the description is never that which is described. The word is not the thing. So let me put the words aside, otherwise the words will condition and inhibit my perception. I will see what the past has told me. That will be second-hand, third-hand perception. So the vast, immense knowledge and inheritance has no relevance whatsoever when I'm concerned with finding out the meaning of reality. The consciousness has to be emptied of all that and one has to be in that emptiness, one has to be that emptiness for the discovery to take place.

But we have used the crutches of knowledge and experience of our ancestors for thousands of years, we feel that if we throw away those crutches, we'll not be able to walk. We

are afraid to be alone with life, to be alone with reality. So do what you will, we carry on with the inner, subtle verbalization.

I do hope that your looking with me at the question if thought-structure can be dissolved permanently, If we have seen that thought-structure has conceptual reality and not factual substance, if we have seen the field of relevance and the field where thought-movement is not relevant and if we have seen that it is understanding of the relevance and the irrelevance that sets you free of the authority, the shackles of authority, if we have seen all that, then let us turn to the term "permanently."

What is permanency ? Do you call that permanent which is static ? And is not the word permanent or impermanent related to the concept of time ? Please do see this. If time is only a measurement created by the human brain for the purpose of using it at certain levels, while living in society, if it is only a measurement, then what will happen to the term permanency or impermanency ? Permanency, continuity, sequence, all these terms are related to the concept of time as a psychological process. First you create it as a measurement and then you believe it to be a fact and then you want to base theories upon it.

You know, that which is eternal has no permanency at all; it has a dynamism. Eternity is born every moment and dies every moment. That which has the capacity to be born and to die is eternal. So it emerges into a form and merges

back into a nonform. That is eternity. Billions of years and on this planet, life has been manifesting itself into innumerable forms, each form having its own unique beauty and relevance to the wholeness of life. So eternity is a flux of change, it's not that static permanence, it has no continuity. You feel that there is a continuity in your breathing in and breathing out, but every inhalation that you take in is a new one and with the exhalation you are throwing out what you had inhaled a moment ago.

So with the realization, with the understanding of the mechanism of thought, its limitations, its fields of relevance and irrelevance, the authority is gone. The authority of the idea of me, the ego, the self, is gone. You discover the wholeness of your being and you remain in that wholeness, you live in that wholeness as a tree lives in its wholeness, a mountain lives in its wholeness. A tree has a trunk, the branches, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits; it's the wholeness of that tree that travels through the trunk, going to the branches, the twigs, the leaves, the flowers and the fruit. The fruit, the juices, the fragrance, the taste, the flavour of the fruit, is really the manifestation of the wholeness of the tree. The tree is its wholeness. It lives in its wholeness. Its every movement, even an expression in a tiny leaf and the shiny greenness of that leaf and that tenderness is an expression of the whole tree. In the same way you remain in the wholeness of your being and every gesture of yours, every word of yours, every glance of yours, every movement of yours, becomes an expression of that wholeness.

Liberated from the clutches of identification with the past, you are in the majestic freedom of your wholeness and silence is the perfume of that wholeness. It's not only sealing your lips, non-speaking, abstaining from speech, sitting down in a posture, closing your eyes.

Silence is a way of living. It's an alternative way of living where there is no addiction to verbalization, no denial of verbalization, no acceptance of the authority of concepts and symbols and no running away from the conceptual world or the world of thought and knowledge. It is seeing life as it is and it's being with life. So silence is the perfume of the wholeness of your being. No movement within you divides you then, as thoughts divide you and emotions fragment you now and ambitions isolate you; all that juvenile fragmentation comes to an end.

## 2. Question - Answer-1

One of the 50 new-comers has asked a very pertinent question.

**Question :** "Silence is a personal way of exploration. Then why do we sit here collectively and why is there a collective process ?" And the questioner very humbly proceeds to say, that having come here for the first time the question may sound absurd, but the clarification is needed. And I appreciate the difficulty.

**Answer :** The first thing is; when we gather here together we do not become a collective. When members of a family gather together to spend some days together, do they become a collective ? When friends come together once in a year or a couple of years to discuss things, to share experiences, to be together for the joy of togetherness, they do not become collective. Unless there is a regimentation and standardization of the pattern of thinking, a collective does not get produced. So please, do see the difference between togetherness of friends and a collectivity, where persons are invited or collected with a specific aim to organize, standardize their behaviour at home and in society.

But we are a family of enquirers spread over the planet. We are a family of enquirers who dare to enquire in a non-authoritarian way. The person sitting here does not pretend

to be your guru or master. She does help the verbal investigation because intellectual ignorance is dispelled by verbal understanding. As a friend, as a person who has dedicated life to the exploration of the meaning of life and dedicated it to the living of truth one has understood, the person dares to communicate, to discuss, to clarify if there are doubts to explain; if there are questions.

This non-authoritarian friendly communication in spiritual matters is relevantly something new to the human psyche. The questioning about the divinity, the exploration of the ultimate reality has been looked upon by the human race as a realm where authority of the experience or knowledge of a person is a prerequisite for the enquirer to enter the field. This is the tradition, this has been the tradition, an unwritten convention all over the world. And here we are a few of us, a handful of us in each country, who have dared to brush aside the authority of persons, personalities, scriptures, theories, rigid conclusions and who have dared to explore.

This is supposed to be a silence camp. Persons have come here to examine individually their relationship to the process of verbalization that goes on within them day after day, for 30, 40, 50, 70 years, to explore if they can be with themselves and with fellow human beings without articulation, without verbalization, without the movement of thoughts, feelings, emotions. We are here to examine how reactions crop up throughout the day and they create inner compulsions, neurological and chemical. The compulsion is to express in words, in gestures.

So we are here to observe, to examine the whole process of verbalization, the movement of thought and we come here together in this room and spend say about 4 or 5 hours together throughout the day, learning to put ourselves physically in a non-movement situation, to persuade the body to be steady. Then we persuade the eyes to close themselves in a relaxed way, so they are not in relation to any object outside of them, apart from them. It is the perception of objects and the process of naming and identifying them which provokes memory, stimulates reactions. So we learn to close the eyes in a relaxed way and move away from the world of objects to the orbit of inner space, where naming, identifying, looking, knowing has no relevance whatsoever. We do it individually. We come here to learn to put ourselves in a state of cerebral non-motion.

When you go to a school or a college, attend the class say of 20, 30 or 50 students, you are learning together, aren't you ? It does not become a collective process then. The modern way of living, specially in the Western hemisphere and it seems to me also in the Eastern hemisphere, is not supportive of such non-cerebral explorations to spend some time with oneself without doing anything outwardly or inwardly; to be with oneself without words, without ideas. Living is equated to the movement of knowing, acquiring, gathering, accepting, rejecting, moving; all the time moving and moving.

Here we come together to taste the flavour of non-movement and non-action; the other dimension of life.

Though we may be over a hundred persons in this room, we are in fact in solitude; the presence of like-minded enquirers enriches your solitude, you are a solitary person sitting here in this hall, at least the speaker is. There are many, many questions, so one has to take up each question rather briefly. We will have to proceed to the next one.

**Question** : I sit down quietly, but the mind does not become quite. It brings up a number of ideas, it compares itself with others and says : "Ah, the other person has achieved certain things I have not achieved. The mind says : why am I not enlightened, when shall I become enlightened ?  
So there is no silence.

**Answer** : You come here and you sit down and the mind starts chattering. One understands that's rather a stupid business, but it does not stop", says the questioner. Not me.

Isn't constant verbalization the way of our living ? Unless there is the noise of thoughts within, we feel lonely. The absence of the movement of thought frightens us. Even the word "emptiness" terrifies us. So we create an inner company for ourselves of thoughts, ideas, memories, ambitions, aspirations and we feel rather safe and protected, don't we ? We go on thinking, imagining, wishing, calculating inner conceptual manipulations; how to manipulate the behaviour of your husband, wife, girl-friend, boy-friend, your children, your parents, friends; how to get things done by them skillfully. So maintaining inner divisions

and fragmentations, organizing compartments within the psyche and wandering through those compartments is looked upon as the movement of life. This is what we do. So when we come here or for that matter at home in our own place, village, town or whatever, we sit down, the mind gets an opportunity to bring up the whole mess and expose it to your attention. Because otherwise you are extremely busy. The modern way of living keeps the individual psychologically extremely busy, working on various levels of an intricate economic system and a complicated political system. Naturally, here when you are little relaxed, the thoughts and ideas, the ambitions, the feelings, the attachments, etc., which were ignored by us, which were not lived fully, because we were too busy, crop up. Isn't that natural ?

Among the so many ideas there is the idea of enlightenment. I have read books about enlightened or liberated persons; the *Buddhas*, the *Christs*, the *Confucius*, the Indian saints, galore. I have been fascinated by the description of the state of enlightenment. Those who communicated their own experiences or inner happenings might have done so for the joy of sharing or on being asked what is was, they verbalized about it. But when we read about it, we reduce their communications, the descriptions of their happenings to a static state, to a rigid idea. We can even get worked up with that idea, get excited about it and then we want to have that state, acquire it as you acquire money, as you acquire prestige, you build a house, you go to a university, become a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, an

industrialist. So you imagine either you can acquire enlightenment, or you can become enlightened. So we reduce the communications to an object of acquisition and a particular state of consciousness. Please, do see this, whether you call it enlightenment or transformation; we have reduced something living to a dead idea.

For those who have never been in '*Vimala Gatherings*', may I say that there is nothing to acquire in spirituality. Spirituality is a realm for understanding life as it is and living what you understand is the essence of spirituality. There is no scope for any acquisition, no scope for any renunciation. Renunciation breeds in the shadow of acquisition. Neither is it acquisition nor is it a process of becoming. You can study, you can get a degree, a diploma and you can become a teacher or a doctor. But there is no process of becoming in spirituality. You wake up in the morning, open the window, the sunlight floods your room, you see the light and you say : "There is light."

Gone is the darkness; life is flooded with light, That's exactly what happens in what you call enlightenment. One opens the windows of one's being, one gets out of the enclosures created by the sense of I-consciousness, the "me", the ego, all its cerebral property of knowledge, experience, values, criteria. One comes out of all the enclosures of man-made divisions of religion, nationality and one says : "Ah, life is one. Life is indivisible. Life cannot be fragmented. The fragmentation was man-made."

So you see the organic wholeness of life. Not the artificially created totality by integrating ideas and theories. Life is not a totality, it is not built upon theories, it's an organic wholeness having the divinity of a magnificent interrelatedness. Not the inter connectedness of machines that human beings create. There is interconnectedness in computers, in your cars, motorcars, space rockets, marvellous interconnectedness; the parts are interconnected.

But here the beings are interrelated. Even a drop of water contains the mystery of the wholeness of life, it represents the wholeness of cosmic life, a drop of water, a blade of grass. So one sees the organic wholeness and the sacred interrelatedness of everything that is, every being that is, and the self-centred perception. Perception based on the division of life into the "me" and the "not-me" the "I" and the "thou" disappears. Gone is the darkness of that ignorance of division, of fragmentation, and there is the light of the wholeness, the organicness, the interrelatedness and the awareness of the interrelatedness awakens the tenderness of love and compassion.

Enlightenment is not something mysterious. It is perception of life as it is and the courage to live the truth of your own perception, come what may; that's all. Liberation is understanding the nature of I-consciousness, which goes on weaving bondages and when you perceive the nature of bondage, the network of bondages, shackles or chains isolating you from the wholeness of life created by the I-

consciousness, that perception sets you free of the clutches of the I-consciousness.

The ego, the me, the self is not an entity to be destroyed, but the equation of life with the movement of that idea comes to an end, so you say : the person is liberated.

So my friend, whoever the questioner is and who has come here for the first time, there is no process of becoming in spirituality. It is the simplicity of spirituality that baffles the people. And why should one compare oneself to others ? How can you judge whether another person has reached or not reached (I'm using the terms used in the question).

I envy because I imagine that the others have reached and I have not reached.

Is divinity, is truth, is reality something away from you, that you have to reach towards it ? Is it something static in space and time, that you are going to crawl towards it or fly over towards it ? It's nothing to be searched, nothing to be acquired and nothing to become, to obtain or to arrive.

It's a question of purifying perception, purging it of all the conditionings, of all the ideas, theories, washing out all the toxins of theories and ideologies and when the perception is purified there is a communion with that which is. It's an effortless communion, it has the elegance of spontaneity.

**Question :** "Yesterday you talked about the wholeness and peace of mountains and trees and you compared human beings to them. It's a false comparison. Human beings are capable of

thinking, analyzing. So there is bound to be a different process for the human beings of growing into wholeness. Please clarify", says the questioner.

**Answer :** I hope the questioner had accompanied the speaker right through the discourse to the end of it. Because at the end of it, it was said that as a flower or a fruit does not derive its existence, its beauty, its flavour from the tiny tender stem or the twig or the branch, but it derives its existence and essence from the wholeness of the tree.

So every gesture, every movement, every word should derive its essence from the wholeness of human being. One has not denied the relevance of thought and its movement. Wasn't it said yesterday that thought-movement is necessary to live in society ? Wasn't it said that you have to acquire knowledge about science, technology, politics, economics, all the man-made structures in which you have to dwell and in which you have to operate ? So the knowing, the acquisition of information, organizing it, having a sharp brain that can handle the complicated knowledge-systems and disciplines efficiently. It's a relevance there.

But what is necessary is to see, that this movement of thought with the help of words, measurements, symbols, concepts, is a man-made contrivance. The words have no life in themselves. The word is not the thing, the word is not the life. You go for a walk in the woods and you see different signboards. The signboard is not the path, it

shows the direction, it may give you a name of the path, show you the direction, might even point out the distance in kilometres, miles or whatever. But the signboard is not the path. And you do not cling to the signboard, if you are interested in a walk; you read it and you walk ahead.

What the speaker was trying to share with you yesterday was the tragedy of human race which lost the elegance of remaining in the wholeness while moving through thought-structure, while moving physically or psychologically. The tragedy, the pathetic condition is due to attributing finality to the word, to the idea, to the structure of measurements created by us to symbols, concepts, attributing reality to them. They represent reality, they by themselves do not constitute the reality. The word "god" is not the divinity, obviously. The word "god" indicates that divinity exists; that's all. You may worship the word "god" with flowers or you may create symbols according to your taste to represent that idea of god. But the images and the idols that we have built, the temples, the churches, the synagoges that we have built, they do not constitute divinity.

So one was trying to say that as the mountains live in their wholeness, their very breath is peace. I hope you do not look at mountains as things or objects. They are beings like you and me. The whole planet is a being. The cosmos is a being, it has a beingness. They are not matter. Because matter is solidified energy. So mountains are energy, trees are energy. I hope we are not under the illusion that we are superior to them and they are here, subservient to the

pleasure of mankind. The devastating ecological imbalance and the loss of health that we are going through today is due to the illusion that the human race is superior to other non-human beings, with whom they have to live, inhabit and share the planet.

**Question :** "Why can't I catch images at the moment they appear ? How can one remedy the lack of vigilance ?"

**Answer :** When I sit in silence various images come before me. Surely, the images do not get built up when you notice them. They must have been existing, they must have been imprinted in your neurological and chemical system. So they are not built up when you notice them. That's one point.

Now, you are asking : "why don't I notice them as they appear ? They appear, I float with them; after some time I become aware that I was with the images or ideas."

It's very simple, very, very simple. We have been trained since childhood to buildup an image about ourselves and about others. For example : we move around say in school or college or in society and somebody behaves in a stupid way or a crooked way. The way of behaviour was unintelligent, stupid; the way of behaviour, verbal behaviour, physical behaviour, psychological behaviour thought reactions was crooked, not straight, not correct. You notice it, you dodge it or you try to correct it, if there is a friendship, if there is a receptivity on the part of the other person or if you have a responsibility of taking care of the person, you

persuade the person to correct it. The matter should end there, shouldn't it ? You came across it, you pointed out, you persuaded; either the person corrected or did not correct it, your responsibility is over; the matter should end there.

You should die to that whole event. It does not happen. From the crookedness of the behaviour there is an inference : the person is stupid. I have equated the whole person with that particular event and behaviour or expression. So I say : the person is stupid, the person is evil, the person is crooked.

Somebody pleases you and immediately you build up an image, that you like that person. An agreeable experience stimulates an attitude of liking. A disagreeable experience stimulates an attitude of dislike. Preference - prejudice, likes - dislikes, and then you have your judgement. You come across twenty persons in a day and you have twenty different images. Please do see this. This is what we do. And we sow the seeds of our own misery. Life does not confirm misery upon us, it is self inflicted psychological misery, that's one part of the image-making business. But the other persons accept you, recognize you, praise you, flatter you, and you build up an image about yourself. You might have done something good, you did deserve the praise and you felt happy about it. The matter should end there but the whole experience leaves the residue that I am a religious person, I am a saintly person, I am a generous person.

Generosity was expressed at a particular time, but you build up a rigid idea about yourself, an image about yourself. So next time when we meet I try to present that aspect of my behaviour which you had liked and you try to project the same image which I had liked, so our relationships become a movement of projecting images. Movement of relationship becomes a movement of preferences and prejudices, attractions and repulsions, acceptance and rejection based on the images built upon the experience, the event is gone, but we do not let it end.

If the event has terminated on the physical or material plane, we feed life into it, we pump life into it by reducing or converting it to an image, to an idea. So this is what we do from childhood and such images are looked upon as defence mechanism, they are safeguards, so if you come across the person tomorrow, you know how to behave with him or her, and manipulate her or your behaviour. As if life is a battlefield and living is a question of victory or defeat, the ghastly thing we have made of life !

So when you sit down quietly, the images that have cluttered your consciousness built up since childhood by others, by yourself, they come up, they are your life-long companions, so they don't desert you. "Is there a way to set oneself free of all this ?" asks the questioner.

There is a two-pronged way, because we are learners, we are educating ourselves, we can learn in two ways. One, not attaching any authority to the images that are existing already within you, the image comes and you just ignore it,

you don't attribute any value, any validity to it. That's one way of doing it. If images come to regulate your perception and to control your responses, you become aware of them, and you learn to ignore, to brush them aside.

If a person is very intense and there is a depth to the enquiry, maybe once the image-making business has been seen, the very perception causes immediate dropping of the whole business. In cases of extraordinarily sensitive intense and dedicated enquirers, this can happen, does happen. But, if there is no dedication, if the whole life is not geared to this exploration, not dedicated to it, then one has to go step by step, hour by hour, minute by minute, moment by moment, the image comes, tries to poison the perception and inhibit the response, you become aware of it and you ignore it. That's how you begin to learn.

If you dare to ignore it, then every moment of ignoring and brushing it aside intensifies the sensitivity. And when you have thus worked hard upon yourself, arduously, then you grow into a sensitivity, the appearing of the image, recognition and its getting brushed aside effortlessly happens, no strain and no stress. So sensitivity has taken one step and it might happen, it can happen that you feel the surging up of the ideas or images even before they have appeared, because the sensitivity has become intense, it has now a new momentum, it's there all the time.

Excuse my expression 'all the time', otherwise tomorrow you will ask me the question "time is a measurement, why

did you say 'all the time ?' While communicating you have to use some words, if I say it is there, then what is the difference between permanency and it being there, you know then we try to argue about words. I am groping for words after having spent one year in that land India, and not touching English language at all, I come back to you and the communication starts, so there is a groping for words which would be appreciated by a different cultural context in which you live.

So that's one way of learning and learning sets you free. There is no methodology or technique, a *Japam*, a *Tantram* or *Mantram*, to set oneself free, it's only learning that liberates, learning intensifies sensitivity, sensitivity expresses itself as alertness, so you grow into a state of alert attentiveness. There is nothing like inattention in your life any more. Learning culminates into that.

We were talking about a two-pronged way, let us turn to the second prong. On one hand you handle the existing images and ideas in your psyche, you have a different relationship with them, and on the other you learn not to convert any experience into an image or an idea. You pass through the event, the pain or the pleasure is registered, the aesthetic sensitivity registers the beauty or the ugliness of it, the moral sharpness records the correctness or the incorrectness of it. All this happens, and yet no image is built up, no idea is coined or structured. You feel it, it's registered by the neurological-chemical system, you pass through it and you have died to it, so that no image gets

built up in you at all, no residue is left as memory, except the factual memory... of where you have kept the keys of your car, or the keys to the door of your apartment. That kind of memory has got to be there. But there is nothing like psychological memory.

So we learn to live without building up psychological memory and we have a qualitatively different relationship with the memory that is existing in our system. Then the images, the ideas may flash across the consciousness as the clouds float in the skies, without harming the emptiness of the space. So the thoughts or the ideas might float in the inner space without causing any damage to it. You live from moment to moment, you live and you die, and out of the death you get reborn as virgin and as fresh as the supreme intelligence of the cosmos. The virginity of the vitality does not get affected though you might have to pass through innumerable experiences.

**Question :** "In spite of reading books and attending talks, one is still a prisoner of anger and jealousy. How can one set oneself free of them ?"

**Question :** "We depend upon others to give answers to our questions, because we do not have enough trust in ourselves and there is fear to take the responsibility. What can one do about this ?"

**Answer :** We should be grateful to the participants who have presented these questions to us for group exploration.

I read books, I attend talks, and I go on asking questions to other people, not here only in the camp, but even at home and I feel secure when ready-made answers are provided to me. Why do I do that ?

The questioner has spoken for you and me, the questioner says I do not trust my own self. Isn't that the crux of the whole thing ? I do not trust myself, my understanding, if and when it takes place and I have no courage to take the responsibility of living that understanding, I would rather look around and see what others are doing and join them. I feel secure in joining the crowd. That's what the human society is today.

Why shouldn't I trust myself, why shouldn't I trust my own perception ? It is the only light that I have at my disposal, you cannot borrow the light of another person's understanding. You may graft the words on your psyche, you may try to imitate the physical, the verbal and the psychological way of that person's living, but you cannot penetrate any further and get to the source of the light. I do it, my friends, because through innumerable centuries we have been told that Religion (with capital R) or spirituality is something for the privileged few, the chosen few; every human being cannot grow into a state of unconditional freedom. We have believed the religious priests, we have believed the scriptures : of course I am born in sin, how can I redeem myself.

How can I find out the mystery of life and the meaning of life; I must have a guru, because the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gitas have said so. We have accepted the authority of

the convention, the tradition, and therefore there is no strength to trust oneself. We trust what has been written ten thousand years ago, we trust what has been written three thousand, two thousand years ago, or if somebody comes around we trust the other person, because if we go wrong then we can comfortably blame the other person or the scriptures, or the ancient wise people and we feel absolved of all responsibility. That's one reason.

The second reason is : we have become accustomed to welfare states or totalitarian states where everything is provided ready-made to you. The nuclear age in which we are living, the post-industrial revolution world that we are living in, we get everything prepared, ready-made, we don't have to exert ourselves intellectually, physically. Even exercising the intellect is looked upon as drudgery, working out logically, flawlessly, sharpening the brain is felt as druggery. Accept a belief, follow it, confirm to it.

There is this psychological passivity, not only acceptance of religions authority, we accept the authority of industrialists, businessmen, patent-medicines, so we are reduced to a mere consumer, consumer of spiritual goods, religious goods, capital goods and what have you. That has benumbed our creativity my friends; not that we do not have it.

As there is the sight in the eyes, there is an inner sight to feel the truth, and discriminate it from the untruth. Every human being is blessed with that, the capacity of inner sight of discrimination. But we have given up using it and

there is an atrophy of that inner sight, that perception. That's one thing.

So one has to convert oneself from a passive consumer to an active creative human being. You know, stand alone in this neurotic society, where inertia is glorified, where passivity of the citizens is appreciated by the state, which has widened the horizons of its power and encompassed the society in the embrace of centralized power. We have to move away from the clutches of that and live in a creative way throughout the day, then only there will be a sense of inner strength and an inclination to trust yourself.

Another person cannot live for me, a *Rama*, or a *Krishna*, or a *Ramana*, or a *Krishnamurti*, or a *Buddha*, or a *Christ*. They have lived their lives. I have to live the life present in me.

So the responsibility of living, moving in the movement of relationships has to be accepted, but this passivity has made cowards of us. So my friends, we have to be aware that you cannot live if there is a fear of life, you cannot live first-hand, you cannot have that joy of personal living, if you are borrowing ideas, theories, conclusions, experiences, grafting them upon yourself, and repeating them endlessly. Repetition is lifeless.

Living is responsibility, if you like to use that word, and when there is no fear of life, then one can live. It is the fear that makes me turn to other people and depend upon them. We may come together and discuss, in such big groups or small groups I can discuss with my particular friend,

exchange, share, questions can be taken up, there is nothing wrong in it. But when I depend upon the judgement of other person, when I depend upon the experience of another person, when I carve an authority out of the other person, then this vicious game of dependency and domination begins.

Let me begin in a very humble way, looking within and living attentively, whether I am brushing my teeth, or I take a bath, or I cook a meal, or I drive a car, or work in the office. I do nothing that I do not understand, I do not do anything based on beliefs borrowed from others. I respect everyone but I do not go by the authority of other people.

Let me begin to educate myself and reconcile to the insecurity of vulnerability, I might commit mistakes and those mistakes will teach me how to correct them. Committing a mistake is not failure; failure is a psychological attitude towards the mistakes and their consequences. What has life to do with success or failure, life is concerned with the quality that you bring to the act of living, the quality of clarity, the quality of alertness, the quality of sensitivity, the quality of concern, care and tenderness, that's life, it's for living.

### 3.

### Question - Answer - 2

With your co-operation we will be taking up nearly ten questions this afternoon.

**Question :** "Why do you call the mountains, the rivers, the trees, beings ? What is a being ?" asks a participant.

**Answer :** You know what a thing is : that which is constructed by human hand, constructed by human thought. A thing has parts which can be separated and which can be re-assembled. The structures that you build, and call them houses, the cars, the buses, the aeroplanes, the space rockets that you build up, are things constituted of various parts. There was a time when they did not exist, and after being with you for some time, by the wear and the tear they deteriorate, they have a beginning and they have an end, there is a life-duration for machines, for buildings, for all the things that mankind constructs or builds up.

Life was not created by mankind. It's a beginningless and endless phenomenon. The cosmos composed of innumerable universes, is not a creation of human thought or human hand. It is self-generated, selfsustained and the inter-relatedness among all the expressions of life is not something manipulated by the human brain, based upon certain theories or ideas, the inter-relatedness is the

essence of existence. So the mountains were not created by us, were they ? You may plant a seed and help the seed to sprout, and help the sprout to grow into a sapling, and the sapling into a tree, by watering it, by caring for it, but the creative energy concealed in that tiny pit or seed is not your or my creation. The mountains, the rivers have a beingness, they have a quality of beingness. And what is that quality : inexhaustible creative energy. Life is inexhaustibility of creative energy. The forms may change but there is nothing like destruction, there is emergence of forms and the merging back of forms into its own source. The streamlets dash out of the mountain rocks and grow into rivers and the rivers pour their waters into the oceans and the heat of the sun converts the salty waters into desalinated vapours and clouds, and the clouds pour the sweet nectar, the water, back to the earth. You see the cycle ? You will see that cycle whether you refer to the mineral world, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human species. A car or a computer does not create another computer or a car. But a bird, an animal, a tree, a human animal can procreate its likeness.

So life is inexhaustibility of creative energy and the expressions of that inexhaustible creative energy in the form of mountains, or rivers, or oceans, or trees can be called beings. They are our fellow companions, fellow beings with whom we have to share the cosmos; we have to share the skies with them, the oceans with them, the earth with them, but that is not the theme this afternoon. Those of you who will be with us for the next few days,

when we shall deal with psychic mutation and world peace, we might elaborate upon this point. I hope the difference between beings and things is clear to you by now.

**Question :** "What is the relationship between language and silence ?"

**Answer :** Words are born of sound, sound already existing in the cosmos. Have you ever listened to the sound of the running rivers, sound contained in the oceans, sound contained in the woods, sound of the earth ? So words are born of sound. You engineer and you manipulate sound and you build up, you construct words, letters and co-ordinating the sound vibrations of those letters you construct words, you arrange words and you build up a sentence, and so on. And sound is an explosion of silence. One is not being poetic. But the scientists have now discovered that the whole cosmos is an explosion of emptiness, which is born of emptiness. And it seems to me that silence explodes and takes the form of sound, it has a vibrational existence, sound is a tremendous energy, and the human genius utilized that sound energy and constructed languages, literature, poetry, novels, fiction, essays, music and all the fine arts. This creation of languages was necessary for communication. Instead of living as wandering tribes, the human race wanted to settle down, invented agriculture, horticulture, wanted to build up what is called a society curtailing individual freedom and relegating responsibility and power to an agency which they called state and they wanted to regulate their relations.

That is how economy, politics, culture, religion, education must have been constructed step by step.

So language is a means of communication, language is a means of self-expression and it has a relevance to our life in as much as we are born in society and not in forests or jungles. Being born as a member of human society we have the responsibility for self-expression, for communication, for exchange, sharing information, organizing information which is called knowledge. Verbalization and a sensitive and sane exercise of languages is a necessity. One is not derogating the movement of verbalization at all, but the word is used to indicate an object; the word 'horse' is not a horse, it indicates an animal to whom you have attributed the name horse or a cow or a dog. The word is not the cow, the dog, the horse. So words are indicators, that is all they can do. As you have codified the terms and nomenclature about the external objective world, you the mankind turned inwards and tried to identify and name the neuro-chemical movements in the body. So when there was or when there is a certain neuro-chemical disturbance, you call it anger and it has its symptoms. You have another kind of chemical disturbance upsetting the balance and you call it jealousy. So the inner subjective world also and the movement was analysed, named and identified. So languages are useful in order to refer to the inner happenings which you call experiences and also for sharing knowledge about the objective, the external.

But the word cannot describe or define what silence is. It may describe what sound is and even evaluate the sound because sound has a material existence, it has a vibrational existence, vibrations can be measured, their tone. their velocity, the direction in which they move, all can be measured. But once you allow the sound to subside and you are in silence, words become irrelevant, silence cannot be measured, evaluated, described, defined; how can you describe emptiness ? A thing can be described, or even defined, evaluated, how can nothingness be described ? Some-bodyness can be described, nobodyness cannot be described.

In the same way, the source of life which is that divine absolute ground of existence, the source of life which is the supreme intelligence, which has caused the emergence of an orderly inner-related magnificent cosmos, cannot be described or defined by words. So language has a relevance but the source of verbalization, silence, has a sacredness. The speech, containing words and sounds, has an energy. The meaning that has been attributed to words by grammarians, by traditions, by different fields of social action, have added an energy to the word which is conditioned. But the energy contained in the emptiness of silence is not qualified, modified, it's not conditioned in any way. Sacredness exists wherever there is unconditionness. Therefore we say thought is not sacred, it is a useful instrument, a handy instrument, whether it is the word of a Krishna or a Buddha, or a Jesus of Nazareth, once it has taken the shape of a word it gets limited, conditioned.

Silence is sacred, thought is not sacred. But as we have many other questions, let us proceed to the third question.

**Question :** "If time is a measurement, what is past and what is the relationship between time and the past ?"

**Answer :** Would you call yesterday past ? It happened. We got together here, but may be overnight the persons who had got together yesterday have inwardly changed, not biochemically, but psychologically; we do not know, we may not be the same persons that we were here yesterday. This is a religious gathering, I hope this does not frighten you when I say that we may not be the same persons that we had gathered yesterday, gathering what we call yesterday was a happening, it is no more there. What transpired between you and me is no more there, it was a happening.

In order to communicate about the happening you use the term past, and what is happening now, here you call it present, and anticipation about what is going to happen, you use the term future. This is a terminology the human race has coined. So the past has no existence except in memory; and what is memory ? What happened yesterday might have left certain imprints on the mind, on the neurological system : you like certain things, you dislike certain things, you were disturbed by hearing certain things, you were annoyed by certain other things. Memory is the collected residue of the happenings of life. So past has no existence as an entity. The present, the past, the future,

are the divisions made by the human brain, which wants to create enclosures around it. When it becomes aware of the infinity of life, the inexhaustible creative energy or the divinity of life, the eternity of life, it feels naked before that eternity and infinity, it wants to clothe itself with ideas. In order to build up a relationship with that infinity and eternity, you begin to measure it today, tomorrow, hours, days, months, this is all human calculation. Life is an is-ness, emergence and merging back, it has a cyclic movement, it has a circular movement, no beginning and no end, no creation and no destruction, and infinite. I hesitate to use the word but let us use it for the sake of communication, an ocean of infinity or eternity, beginningless, endless is-ness of life, out of which forms emerge, float around and merge back. The past, the present, the future as ideas, as concepts, exist only in the human brain.

Secondly, what has happened, or what the human race has done unto itself by conditioning the physical the verbal and the psychological layers of its being, is contained within you and me. What the first human being did unto himself or herself, those activities, the movement of relationship with nature, the movement of relationship with animals, with birds, with human species, themselves, the mode of relationship, all that gets transmitted into your and my body which is called inheritance.

So what has happened, which you call past, has a continuity on the physical and psychological level, because we are the products of the total human evolution, civilization,

culture, that is what we meant by saying that we are born in human society. Different races, having different designs of conditionings, cultures, languages, patterns of reactions, patterns of defence mechanism, you see on this globe, on this planet a huge garden where different designs of conditionings have flowered, blossomed and added to the wealth of human life. So the conditioned physical structure, biological structure, the conditioned psychological structure indicates what has happened, what has happened before.

Time as an idea has no factual content but what the human race has done to itself has existence in the form of human body and brain. Look at the brain that has evolved through billions of years, the magnificance of the human brain and the way it functions. Nearly instantaneously it converts an electric impulse into an interpretation and a reaction to that interpretation. No sooner than the sensual system brings in a sensation, the whole body converts the sensation into an electro-magnetic impulse, it travels through the body, it goes upwards to the brain and the interpretation takes place, the reaction takes place. Have you ever observed the tremendous, the frightening speed of what happens ? The complex biological organism in which we live ? This complexity of the biological organism and the psychological structure indicates that there has been the process of conditioning.

Chronological time cannot be denied, now you have the sunshine, you call it the day and you'll call it the night when darkness descends upon the Earth. You will call the child

one day old or one year old or fifty years old according to your calculations, but the life contained in the child which manifests itself through the body, is neither male nor female, it is not one year old or fifty years old; the brain is, but the life energy contained in the brain is ageless.

**Question :** "What is the purpose and meaning of all the methods and teachings that have been invented through ages ?

**Question :** Is the question 'who am I ?' relevant to the state of silence ?"

**Answer :** What is the purpose and meaning of all the methods and teachings that have been invented through ages ? Methods and teachings about spirituality perhaps and many of them, perhaps most of them come from the East. I wonder if the questioner is referring to them; the *Tantra Shastra*, the *Tantra Yoga*, *Mantra Yoga*, *Hatha Yoga*, *Raja Yoga* and dozens of different sciences, techniques that have come to the West from the East. The East has been, or rather was, tremendously interested in finding out the meaning of life and discovering what this I, the sense of I-ness, the sense of me-ness is, what is divinity if at all there is any god or goddess, and they developed a very complex system of educating themselves, equipping themselves for the discovery to take place.

*Hatha Yoga* does not say to you that if you practice you will be liberated; *Hatha Yoga* tells you, as a science, how to purify your various systems in your body. It's a science of purifying the biological structure, the verbal structure,

the mental structure, so you do the *Yama* and *Niyama*, *Pranayama*, *Asana*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dyana* etc., there are ways and ways of equipping yourself with the sensibility, with the intensity, with the purity.

And so is the path of *Mantra Yoga*, they use the sound energy and organise mantras or utilize the existing sound through *Beeja Mantras* and that is for stimulating your latent powers. That also is used really and basically for purification.

So it is up to you to use any method for your self-education, You may learn *Yoga*, *Hathayoga*, you may use *Mantras* for concentration and strengthen your mind, you may use *Tantrayoga* and sublimate the sexual energy, thereby washing out all the toxins of lust and purifying the whole being. This is not the time to go into all the details but they are educative processes. But the technique, the method, the repetition of the technique or the method has nothing to do with silence or meditation. Meditation is the ending of all voluntary movement, all psycho-physical activities. Somebody else has asked me : "Can there be any psycho-physical activity that helps silence or meditation."

Psycho-physical activities can help a person to build up a healthy body, to take care of the diet and the body is supple and healthy, energetic, you provide it with necessary exercises, and all the muscular, the glandular, the neurological systems are ever fresh, ever energetic, there is no lethargy, no sluggishness, no inertia, but meditation has no method, and no technique.

**"Has the question 'who am I' any relevance to silence ?"**

**Why question only 'who am I ?' question everything, doubt everything, never accept anything on belief or authority of any person whatsoever. Why don't we question everything ? Obviously you may ask yourself 'What am I ?' 'Who am I ?' Ramana, that precocious boy at the age of twelve, ran away from his home place, went to Arunachalam, sat in a cave, that was his way of probing into the psyche, so he started asking 'Who am I ?'**

**But if you presume that the question 'Who am I ?' will lead to silence, may be we are presuming too much, because there may not be any 'Who' inside. We have a body, it has a name, so you can ask 'Who opened the door ?' x, y, z opened the door. The body has a name, but there is no necessity to presume that inside the body there is some identity called the 'me' as if there is some subtle body, an identity, there is no need to presume that there is an individual mind. This assumption or presumption of an individual ego, individual mind, seems to have been a fundamental wrong turn in the investigation of what religion is. The body has a name, a form, a shape, a colour, qualities, the brain has certain qualities, and you identify for the sake of social life. You identify yourself with the name, you identify yourself even with the attributes, the excellences, the weaknesses of the body and the brain, you identify with what has been fed into the brain and the body by the society, by the parents, and so on. So there is an incessant movement of what has been fed into us, there is that incessant playback of what has been fed into us, so**

there is a movement of inheritance, movement of knowledge, movement of experience, movement of trends, inclinations.

Why should we presuppose that there is a knower because knowledge moves inside us. Because the experiences happen, there is the need to presume that there is an experiencer. As the happenings take place in the cosmos, they take place here too. So there may not be a 'Who' at all. There may be just a simple, pure sheer nothingness, and nobodyness. But coming back to the question, I would like to submit to the questioner that not only questioning 'Who am I', but questioning everything that you see, you hear, is the way of growing into a personal, intimate contact with life. Question, explore, experiment, and when you find yourself in the light of clarity, in the light of understanding, you live it. While living it, we may falter, there may be incorrect steps and those falterings, and incorrectness would be our teachers persuading us to change our ways and grow into an inner balance or equipoise.

You know learning requires questioning and learning requires humility, never to convert an experience taking place within oneself as an authority, even for oneself. Otherwise you will get tethered to the experience and you'll begin to measure the fresh happenings, evaluate them according to the authority of the previous experience and you would crave for the repetition of that experience, or cook up a hallucination or illusion that the experience is getting repeated. So learning requires humility not to

convert anything into authority. Questioning sharpens the brain and intensifies the sensitivity. Well, let us proceed to another question.

**Question :** "There seems to be a paradox or a contradiction when on one hand it is said no effort is necessary for the transformation or mutation to happen, and on the other there is a talk of being alert, sensitive or attentive." This is what a questioner says.

**Answer :** Education requires effort, if we are addicted to habits, to patterns, and our so-called daily living is only repetition of patterns day after day, year after year, and the repetitive activity of habit patterns benumbs the sensitivity and one lives in a state of in-attention.

When you are repeating certain things you don't have to be alert, you don't have to be attentive, automatically, mechanically you do things. You can cook meals mechanically, you can talk mechanically, you can react to situations and persons mechanically. If this is our way of living and somebody comes and says 'by Jove, your life is only mechanistic repetitive movement, there is no quality of that attentiveness, attention, there is no vitality of alertness, you are just passively, mechanistically moving, you have reduced yourself to a robot. You say then what do I do, and the person says from now, from this moment, be aware of what you are doing and why you are doing it. See that no habits grow around you, no patterns, a network of patterns, grows around you, meel

life as it comes, see it and based on that perception and understanding, respond to it. So one has to work hard upon oneself, hasn't one to work ? One has to observe while one is moving, while one is living, while one is talking, this is the period of education.

In order to eliminate the imbalances that have gathered into the system, the purifying educative effort seems to be necessary; it equips the biological and psychological structure, that's all effort can do. You investigate with words, you read books, you attend talks, you participate in discussions, all that is a jolly well cerebral effort, tremendous intellectual work to take one idea, or one thought to its logical end. To sit here and to listen for one hour and a half while that lady is bla... bla... bla... you know it takes great energy, she goes on talking for an hour and a half. You have to work hard, focus all your energies, gather all your energies and enter into the total act of listening, the whole being listens. That's effort.

If one has so listened, if one has so read the books, if one has worked upon oneself and eliminated the impurity of imbalances, then one has arrived at a point where no further effort is necessary, is warranted or is possible. Intellectual enquiry cannot be a lifelong procession, it cannot be a lifelong profession, it has to end somewhere.

So when the effort has served the purpose, when the knowledge has served the purpose of eliminating ignorance and confusion and has given a clarity even at a verbal level of understanding, then you are at a marvellous point of putting yourself into an effortless state. You live whatever

you have understood without an anxiety whether the transformation or transmutation is taking place or not. If the seeds are sown and if the field was ready, ploughed properly, the sprouting takes place.

When one says attentiveness or alertness is necessary, the alertness is a state of the neurological systems. Attentiveness is the steadiness of perception, when you are not distracted, absent-minded, disturbed. Like a steady flame when there is a steadiness in the perception, you call it attentiveness. When there is that sensitivity, vitality, not tethered to any theory, ideology or personality, then you call it alertness. It is a state and not an effort : 'come on I am going to be alert, I am going to be attentive', it's not an effort of the will there, the effort is necessary for education and equipping, that is the first and the last step.

**Question :** "After having listened to the talks, insight into the nature of time and the ego has taken place, but transformation has not happened. Something fundamental must be missing ?"

**Answer :** Was listening to the talks a means to an end ? Was the end apart from and outside of the means ? Please do see this with me. If I am listening to you with a deep clandestine motivation that this listening is going to give me transformation, this is going to give me mutation, what have I done ? I am at the bargaining counter, utilising the action of listening for acquiring something. Can transformation be acquired ? Can love be acquired, can it

be obtained, can it be purchased, love, beauty, compassion, truth ?

When I was listening to the talks, what was happening within me ? I went into the room, or the tent, or whatever, and I listened because I wanted transformation, I wanted mutation, liberation, enlightenment, call it by any name, or I wanted god, realization of the god. When I say transformation has not happened, or when I say I wanted transformation or mutation by listening to talks or reading books, what do I imply ? Don't I imply that I have an idea about what transformation is, a neatly carved out idea, a clear - cut idea : this is transformation. Where did I get it ? Or I have an idea about god, who he or she or it is, what do they look like, what will they do with me when I meet them, the gods, the goddesses of the East, or the liberations or enlightenments of the West.

So the second thing that I was busy with when I listened to the talks was reducing the communications to which I had exposed myself, they were the living breath of a person's life, they had life and the communication, the communion between the speaker and the listeners was something living.

But I listened to the words, I had already read so much, I evaluated the words, and I said : Ah I like this, that seems to be right, that seems... Academically, theoretically, I was weighing the communications. And then I concluded, when I stepped out of the room, I had a conclusion that this is transformation. Something living has been reduced to an

idea. I am going to run after that... as people go to *temples*, to *mosques*, to *synagogues*, now I have an inner *synagogue* or a *temple*, that idea, and everyday I am busy comparing my behaviour to that idea of transmutation and transformation. What have I done with myself, sir ? A modern sophisticated struggle, a division of what ought to be and what is.

So after having listened to the talks for twenty or twenty five years, can I be with what I am, and never run away from what is there to what ought to be, in the name of transformation, or mutation. Can I be with the fact as it is ? Not to run away, understanding what it is, with the agony and the pain for what it is, with a tremendous and deep sorrow for what it is. I'll live with that sorrow, not run after the idea of mutation. Can that happen to me ?

My friends, it is being with facts as they are, being with life as it is, being with what you are without condemnation, criticism, acceptance, rejection, frustration, the austerity of being with what you are liberates.

So the fundamental thing missing might be my attitude towards listening. What I did with myself while I was listening to someone or reading somebody's books. To walk out of the room empty handed, with no ideas at all. We have listened, we have talked, we have been together. If the communication has happened, if there has been an emanation and reception, the meeting together, because listening is as important as the speaking, if that has happened then the meeting has served its purpose. It is a

sacred communion that takes place and it has been received by the whole of my being. I could not do more, I was totally there, I was listening, not comparing, evaluating, saying I must have this and what happened in his life or her life must happen in my life. You know the ego was not out there seeking, searching, eager to acquire, to obtain, to become. But there was the calmness, the composure of receiving.

When you take a meal, you are quite trustful, you trust the body : I have taken the meal, it is going to nourish me. And the intake, whatever it has been, will get analysed within, get converted into various chemicals, plasma, grow into tissues, sinews, muscles, etc. on its own. The creative energy will analyse the chemicals, convert them and it will become a part of my life, it will become the substance of my life, the meal that I have taken.

Do we trust the meeting and the reception, the communion the same way as we trust the meal ? After having had a meal you do not sit there, at the table, or relax in an easy chair and say : goodness me, now I have to digest whatever I have eaten. What an ordeal ! Yes sir, it is precisely that. The creative intelligence contained in you and me, the creative energy contained in us will do the rest. But we want to manipulate it, we want to accelerate the speed, we want to shape it, regulate it, control it. That's one aspect of it.

And the other aspect seems to be while listening to talks or participating in camps, supposing one has come across

a jewel, truth of life, one has understood it, and one has seen in the light of that truth the untruth that is in one's life. Then what do I do ? At least the untruth should be allowed to drop away. Listening to the talks there is an understanding of the truth but while living at home, in family, with friends, in the society, doing the business, the job or whatever, the untruth, the lies, the hypocrisies, the rigid dogmas by which I have been living, would I allow them to continue in my life ? Can we be nationalists after having understood that we are a global human family. Can we have exclusive loyalties to theories and dogmas and evaluations in the name of organised religions after having seen the divinity of whole life ? But we cling to the untruth, we say that was religion, we listened to the talks, went to the camp for three days; that was enough. Now when we come back we must be practical, fall in line with the society. May be the society is neurotic, may be it's based on violence, exploitation, but then what, I have to live in it. So I cannot let the lies, the falsehoods, the exclusive loyalties, the fragmentations drop away from my life. So in the name of practical life I carry on with the untruths, and it is the carrying on of those untruths that covers up the understanding that has taken place during the talks or camps or gatherings. Every untruth throws the dust and then we are surprised, having listened to the talks for twenty or twenty five years, how is it that transformation doesn't take place.

**Question :** "How can I stimulate self-love in others without making them dependence on me ?"

**Answer :** Why should I stimulate self-love in others ? Do I love myself, not self, the ego etc.; the body, the life that I have, do I love it, or have I a grudge against myself, do I hate myself and I say that part of me is ignoble, detestable, I wish I had not that and I wish I had that.

It is very difficult to come across human beings who love themselves, who have respect for themselves, who have care and concern for their being. And why is it so difficult ? Because we are constantly comparing ourselves with others. If we would love ourselves, would we ever compare ourselves with others ? We would allow the potentiality in us to flower, to blossom, to manifest, but we are comparing, living in a competitive society not only economically or financially, but we compare ourselves psychologically. Economically you can compete, psychologically you can't. So you inflict suffering on yourself by that comparison.

So first of all let me see if I have understood, I have observed and understood what I am; the mechanism of the body, its weaknesses, distortions, excellences, inheritance, angularities, peculiarities; the psychological structure, born in a Hindu family, Indian family, Catholic family, as a Dutchman, as an Englishman, the whole structure and the chemistry of that structure, so one gets acquainted with oneself, learns to respect what is there, eliminate the impurities so that there is no imbalance at any level.

Then such a person who is relaxed in the love and respect for oneself, has the vitality to live in love and compassion with others. When you are living with other people, look

friends, if we are living together and you do not expect anything of me, you do what is needed, you ignore my absurdities or stupidities and you respond to the situation. When I turn to you for advice, you share your understanding. Then the other person, for example if you do this to me, then my harshness, my hardness, my crookedness begins to diminish without my knowing, because you have become a living cell of love and compassion, you don't condemn. You point out the mistakes and faults, but you do not condemn and we have a sense of belonging that love gives. So if you do this to me, for example, naturally it will stimulate the same kind of attitude in me, without your asking me to do it. It is attachment that makes other people dependent upon you. Love liberates, it never binds, because it respects the freedom. So if love has dawned on my heart and it flows in relationships then it touches the hearts of the other people. I do not have to make any conscious efforts to stimulate the self-respect and self-love in others.

Unfortunately, the present way of living that we have at the end of the twentieth century is not at all supportive to a genuinely religious way of living. It is such a harsh, brutal, neurotic society in which we live. So people have a nameless fear, a nameless grudge, not directed against someone individually, but a grudge against life, a bitterness. The stress and strain of living in cities keeps you in a state of constant discontent, not directed towards individuals, but directed towards life and perhaps directed towards

yourself. It gets directed towards yourself.

So it seems to me that if one never compares oneself with others, one does not want to become like anyone but allow the potential in oneself to manifest and to flower; and one is not a beggar at the counter of relationship, begging for acceptance, acknowledgment, but one feels fulfilled in expressing what one is, uncovering the contents of one's being, then the act of living becomes its own fulfilment, it becomes its own reward and you live in the relaxation of love and compassion.

As those who go to the seashore feel the cool breeze and those who climb up to the top of the mountain feel the vast skies and the space, the same way those who live or go near the person living in a non-comparative, non-competitive, expectation-free state of consciousness, and for whom the act of living is the worship of divine, they will feel the love and that might stimulate. The touch of the love in you might stimulate without your moving a finger, the love and respect in them also.

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Silence is very shy.  
She hides herself far away –  
in the depth of human heart.  
Thought cannot reach her.  
Emotion cannot touch her.

Silence is very shy.  
She eludes devilish time.  
She evades cunning memory.  
She is beyond human search.  
She is beyond imagination.

Silence is very shy.  
She will never open up –  
if you demand it of her.  
She will never blossom out –  
if you command it of her

Yes—Silence is very shy.  
She smiles on those who love her;  
She speaks to those who wait on her.

Silence is very shy.  
She is eloquent –  
when mind speaks not.  
She is yours –  
when you are not.  
Yes— Silence is very shy.

Dt. 26-07-1962  
Sanen

Vimala Thakar

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