

Vimala Thakar

life
as teacher



Bookfund Vimala Thakar
Holland

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life as teacher

BIOGRAPHY

VIMALA THAKAR is no ordinary teacher, she herself would say that she is not a teacher at all, but a friend who comes to share her perception of life as she understands it, with whoever wishes to be present. In her opening words at the last seminar held outside India, in Holland in 1991, she said:

"You will find out for yourselves my friends that these gatherings become festivals of friendship. They are informal and intimate get-togethers of those interested in enquiring into what this mystery of life and living is... We will be enquiring together, it will be a joyous enquiry, joyous and serious simultaneously, deep and yet vibrating with vitality at the same time..."

These words express perhaps better than any the personality of Vimala Thakar, vital, passionate about life, full of compassion for her fellow beings. Her total dedication to the search for ever deeper and subtler truths began at the very early age of five, and has never stopped. She says: "the day I stop learning I will stop speaking."

Vimala Thakar was born in India and spent her childhood amidst the deeply spiritual atmosphere of her family and their friends. Her father soon noticed his daughter's

aspirations. He made her promise not to depend on the authority of teachers past or present, but to rely on her own inner understanding as her guide in life. She met many spiritual leaders of her day, read eastern and western philosophy at university and joined Vinoba Bhave, a renown scholar and saintly man, in his Land Gift Movement, for a period of ten years during which she walked the length and breadth of India, sometimes alone, sometimes in the company of Vinoba and his friends.

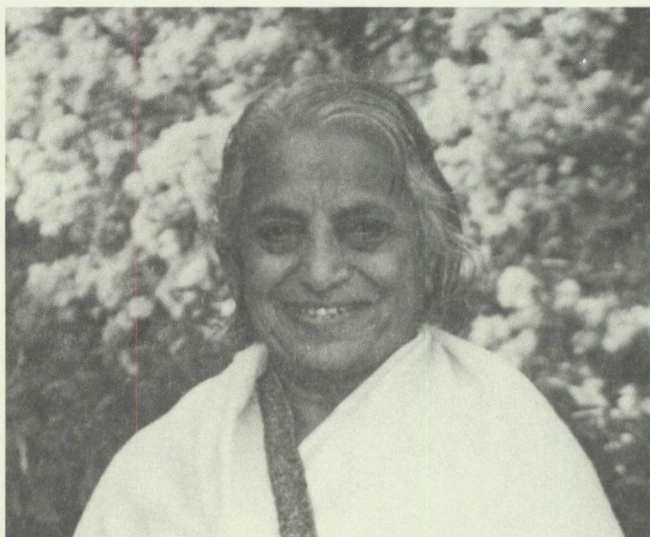
After a forced retirement due to illness, she realized that only inner transformation could overcome violence and aggression, the source of so much misery in the world.

Thus she began, at the request of a few friends, to share her deeply felt realization. Invitations to other places began coming in. And so gradually during the next thirty years Vimala undertook an ever increasing schedule of travel, to such place as North and South America, Australia, Japan, many countries in Europe, New Zealand. However having to adjust to such widely different climates and foods, to such different cultures, began slowly to tax her health, so that in 1991 she had to tell her audiences abroad that this was to be her last visit. She now lives in India, her home base.

Here she continues seeing friends, who come to her from all over the world, to be with her and listen to her talks. Her exceptional ability to put into words that which is in

fact beyond words, makes her especially qualified to share what she has directly experienced. And those of us who had the privilege of being present at such gatherings, have felt the purity and compassion which fills not only her words but also her very presence.

"Life is divinity, there is no divinity apart, outside or independent of life. And divinity is creativity... It seems to me, my friends, that to live is to perceive divinity, to be aware of the creativity of divine life, partaking of



that creative energy, receiving it, assimilating it and sharing it with all the fellow beings that inhabit the planet... The act of living implies an interaction with that sanctity of life, with that creativity of life."

Vimala Thakar gave these two week's talks in Hoeven, Holland, in september 1991, during her last trip outside India.

CONTENTS

FIRST WEEK

1. Growing into wholeness	2
2. Purifying perception	22
3. Questions and answers:	39
– What is the purpose of the silence sessions?	
– How can we enter into silence, when we cannot control our thoughts?	
– How do we deal with time?	
4. Questions and answers:	63
– How can we move out of fear and violence?	
– Are we aware of the sounds around us when we are in deep meditation? Is it possible to be aware of the inner and the outer simultaneously?	
5. Questions and answers:	83
– You seem to be very optimistic about the development of the human mind, and yet the world has not changed in spite of Buddha and Christ?	

- What you say is very absorbing. But by the end of the session one feels exhausted. Is it due to the lack of purification you talk of?
- How can we deal with suffering in and around us, without getting lost?

SECOND WEEK

1. Are we really living?	106
2. The dimension of observation	123
3. Innocency, the perfume of creativity	139
4. Questions and answers:	159
- When a person, in the state of meditation, uses words for explaining things, where do the words come from?	
- Who observes in the action of observation, if not the ego?	
- After having read books and listened to talks, one is still a slave of thought. What would you say to such a person who understands the necessity of freedom from thought, and yet finds he is still a slave?	

5. Questions and answers:	177
– What is faith, is it self abandonment?	
– What is right perception when we are looking within ourselves? There is the content of the unconscious part of our consciousness, will it not colour and condition our perception about ourselves? How is one to know that our perception is not inhibited or conditioned by the unconscious?	
– I have a desire to be liberated. What do I do? Do I spend more time sitting in silence?	
6. Questions and answers:	200
– I have realized that it is necessary to die to the image of self, but the dying does not take place. I keep on thinking about dying, but it does not occur.	
– Is it possible to be in a state of complete attention to an object or situation and along with it retain a sense of self?	
– Is ignorance an aspect of the process of life? Are we responsible for ignorance? What is ignorance?	
– In our daily living, if we want to be happy we have to go through compromises. Compromises and freedom cannot coexist. So, how to be happy without compromise?	
7. A new human culture	221

FIRST WEEK

1 september 1991

GROWING INTO WHOLENESS

It is rather difficult for me to find words to express my joy that I could come back to the Netherlands. Ten months ago it had appeared incredible, and physically nearly impossible to undertake not only the journey, but the responsibility of international gatherings. Yet, by the grace of life it has been possible to come back here to be with you. Though India is a home country because one was born there, the Netherlands is equally a home country for your friend Vimala.

You will find out for yourselves, my friends, that these gatherings become festivals of friendship. They are informal and intimate get-togethers of those interested in enquiring into what this mystery of life and living is. What this whole business of getting related with nature,

with human beings, with the man-made structures is. What this business of meditation, of religious or spiritual life is.

We will be enquiring together, it will be a joyous enquiry, not a strenuous or a tedious one. Joyous and serious simultaneously, deep and yet vibrating with vitality at the same time. We will go through spontaneous communication on the verbal level, and through non-verbal communion with one another during the periods of silence. We are going to share life together for the next few days. Sharing life through presence, sharing life on the verbal level, sharing life through silence.

You must be aware of the grim situation permeating the global human family, the shadow of which surrounds us on all sides, in all the directions of the horizon. Much has happened since we met a couple of years ago. It appears as if the whole civilization, the way of living that mankind had developed in the last twenty centuries, is getting dismantled systematically, piece by piece, step by step. Socio-economic structures, political ideologies, national boundaries, states, everything is changing, getting dismantled. There is a big turmoil in the global human consciousness.

We are fortunate enough to live in these turbulent times, because it is our responsibility to emanate out of

our being a new civilization, before everything is dismantled and destroyed, and a vacuum is created in the human psyche. Our lives have to become the cradle for a new human culture, a new dynamics of human relationships. It is our responsibility to let a dimensional transformation occur within ourselves, may I say, the responsibility to be reborn of ourselves.

So, we are going to share our perception and understanding about life, and how to relate to that life as the supreme teacher or master. These two terms life and teacher are of equal importance. We will have to learn to look at life perhaps in an entirely new way, a perspective of life not based on knowledge inherited by us, not based on philosophies, theologies, theories, etc.. We will have to learn to look at life in a fresh way, a perception born of silence and not based upon knowledge. We will have to look anew, learn to look out of emptiness.

The knowledge, the inheritance, the human thought, the philosophies and theologies that are at our disposal have nearly failed the human race, because in spite of them it has not been possible to live in peace with ourselves, in harmony with one another, with reverence towards the cosmic life, with reverence towards nature or the self-generated dimension of life. So, with courage and humility we will explore together whether it is possible to learn with the help of life, not with the help

of knowledge, not with the help of books, traditions, authorities, old or new, whether it is possible to begin completely from scratch, as it were.

We are not here to acquire new ideas, new pieces of knowledge about life. I wonder if you have noticed that knowledge, which is organized, systematized, standardized information, feeds into you an indirect relationship with the facts. It is always knowledge about life, theories and interpretations about god. That indirect contact with reality, that second hand contact with reality will be kept aside tentatively, and we will explore if we can look at life in a qualitatively different way.

Now, what does the word life say to you or me? Is not life that which surrounds us, such as light, warmth, energy, the innumerable varieties of shapes, colours, sizes, flavours, scents, tastes? It has an 'is'ness, when the word life is pronounced it indicates an 'is'ness which human beings have not created. The cosmic life, the innumerable universes, the solar systems and their interrelations, the earth, the mountains, the oceans, the life force or vital energy permeating the air, nothing has been created by human thought, nothing has been shaped by human hand. So, life is an 'is'ness that is self-generated, and self-sustained and it has an energy, it has a movement, it has light and warmth. Don't you call all these factors indications of life?

We shall begin very simply. That which is self-generated, self-sustained, is called life. Now, this innumerable variety of objects by which we are surrounded appear to be separate, but the youth living at the end of the twentieth century knows jolly well that they are all interrelated. We did not know that in our childhood, but we are living in the age of science and technology, and advances in physics have revealed that things which appear to be separate and independent, are interconnected and interrelated. There is an invisible relationship between the oceans and the skies, the oceans and the sun and the moon, a marvellous relationship between the fertility contained in the earth and the rays of the sun, the sunlight, the sunshine. A relationship between the rain and the cycle of seasons. There is nothing that is not related to everything else.

So, this 'is'ness, which is self-generated and self-sustained, has a mysterious way of keeping its expressions alive through a very deep, intricate and mysterious relationship. That interrelatedness of earth and skies, mountains and trees, oceans and space, rains and forests, birds, animals, and so on, constitutes the wholeness of life, my friends.

When you and I build a machine, a car, an aeroplane, a computer, or whatever, we assemble the parts and then there is a totality in that structure, be they machines, buildings, space-crafts or space-stations. So totality

implies assembling of parts, that may be dissembled as well. But this 'is'ness, the cosmic 'is'ness, the multi-versal 'is'ness of life, through the interrelatedness of its expressions, has an organic wholeness which is indivisible, which is non-fragmentable. You may try to analyze it, for the sake of study at university, identify it, give it a name, convert it into categories, and so on, that is for the convenience of the cerebral grasp. But life cannot be divided and interrelatedness cannot be destroyed. It is self-generated, and it is a wholeness.

Life is the supreme master or teacher, whose help we can receive if we want to learn and discover the truth for ourselves. You know, teacher or master is a very interesting term. Teachers at schools, colleges or universities are there to provide information about human thought, about the human past. That knowledge is necessary to acquire a job, to earn a livelihood.

We are referring to life as the teacher, life which does not assert, which does not verbalize or feed anything into us due to any compulsion. This teacher helps us to open up towards the essence of life, helps us to be receptive, to become more and more sensitive. Sensitivity is the sight which can perhaps perceive the secrets of life.

So the term teacher will have to be looked at in two ways. One way we have been acquainted with: the schools, the colleges, the academic, theoretical,

verbalized teaching necessary to relate to the man-made structures, the social economic, technological structures, the national and international structures. It is necessary to acquire that knowledge and be able to handle and use it properly.

The other is that one cannot have any knowledge about the nature of the supreme reality, one cannot have any knowledge about godhood, one cannot have any knowledge about wholeness. The supreme reality has defied verbalization, it cannot be described or defined. The more we use the process of verbalization and the method of description and definition, trying to build structures of concepts and ideas around the essence of life, the more we move away from that reality. The word separates us from the actual, the thought, the concept, takes us away from the essence of reality. Learning will have to be in a non-verbal way here, learning will perhaps have to be a non-cerebral exploration. And who can teach without words but life itself? Are we interested in such learning? That is the question.

We have perhaps inhabited the globe acquiring knowledge, grabbing concepts and ideas, grasping theories, and trying to approximate our behaviour to those theories and ideas, very proud and vain of our knowledge. We have thus spent millions of years on the globe. But knowing is not learning, and knowledge does not necessarily result in understanding, so we are going

to distinguish learning from knowing, understanding from knowledge, and first hand personal intimate encounter with reality from the very erudite, scholarly knowledge about reality. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Zendavesta, the Old and New Testaments, the Judaic scriptures, the Koran, that is all knowledge, and such knowledge leads to building up patterns and conditionings. Having knowledge, scholarship or erudition is a relationship of acquisition, of owning, possessing, keeping safe in memory, and then trying to relate it to life on the basis of that. Please do see this.

Because we have been busy with this acquisitive activity of knowing and experiencing according to that knowledge, we haven't had time to learn, to listen to the sound of silence or to look at the dance of the innumerable energies taking place around us. We never had time to look and find out the secret of harmony that keeps so many universes together, making them cooperate with one another harmoniously. Is that not our plight, that we do not know how to live in cooperative psychology, in friendship and peace with one another? Have our efforts not failed in the last five thousand years, in creating a world without wars, a world without violence, without bloodshed, failed to resolve our problems without violence, hatred or bitterness.

The arrogance of knowledge, the pride and vanity of conditioning, the intoxication of exclusive loyalties

towards religious, political or economic ideologies have not allowed us this privilege of being completely simple, open and receptive, in order to look at life, in order to be with it, to listen to it, letting it operate upon us and reveal its mysteries unto us. We have had no time. So it seems to me, at the end of the twentieth century, a new perspective of life is urgently needed.

That perspective of life will be the foundation for a new human culture. Not those worn out theories that life is a struggle for the survival of the fittest and the mightiest, that the natural instinct is for ownership and possession, that violence is natural to human nature and so on. If we do not want to go round in a vicious circle, repeating the mistakes, committing the same crimes that have been committed in history, even in the twentieth century, the most violent in human history, if we do not want to repeat all that, then a new dynamics of human relationships, a new perspective of life, a new science of living, a new human culture has to be evolved and developed.

I think that wherever I have moved around the globe I have seen, in the eyes of the young, the urge to look for the new. The old is getting dismantled, it will collapse under the pressure of contradictions built into it, we do not have to destroy anything. The inner contradictions are causing the crumbling and collapse of the old ways, in the East and the West. If the capitalist society, with its

consumerist culture, feels that it is only the philosophies of Marx and Engels that have collapsed, only the communist empire that has tumbled down or been dismantled, they are under a great illusion. There are signs, I think, that the built-in contradictions in the consumerist culture, obsessed with materialism and sensual pleasure, nourished on illusions of prosperity which are kept alive with bank loans, there are signs that this structure also is on the verge of getting dismantled soon. Neither materialism as a philosophy of life, nor the old organized, institutionalized religions and their theologies, nor the deities of states, nations, national sovereignty and political ideologies are going to help us any more. Please do see this.

It is a marvellous time to live in. Challenges wherever you turn, challenge to creative energy, challenge to the urge of living, challenge to the urge to learn. It is a very thrilling period, a very romantic period to live in. Blessed are they who are young today, because they are the builders, the architects of a global human family which will learn to share, not only the physical resources of the planet, but who will share the pleasures and pains, the sorrows and joys of one another, like members of a family, not carrying any identification with nationalities, races, religions, and the rest of it.

Where do we begin our learning? Don't we begin at the sensual level? We are conscious of our physical body, we

are acquainted with the sense organs, we have been educated to use them. So the first step towards getting related to the 'is'-ness of life, that marvellous, magnificent, self-generated mysterious phenomenon which we call life, would be to relate to it with the senses.

Perception is the foundation of relationship. We have to look at that which surrounds us, not through a theory, not through a foregone conclusion, calling it impermanent or permanent, mortal or immortal. A perception free of value judgement. See, the learning begins! We have to look at life around us with the help of the senses, but that perception will not be inhibited by any identifications, by any foregone conclusions or theories. I will not look at life as a Hindu, a Moslem, a Christian, or a socialist, to be able to touch the 'is'-ness of life. That which is tangible, that which is visible, has to be touched and reached with the help of the sense organs, which is something very beautiful. I wonder if you have thus looked and listened and touched.

Then if you look at a tree, that which we call tree, you will not only look at the trunk of the tree, the branches and twigs of the tree, in your perception will be included the roots of the tree beneath the ground, they are the most important part of the tree. One will be aware of the wholeness of the tree, the branches rising high up, towards the skies and the space, and the roots going

deep into the earth, assimilating the various vitamins, minerals, juices and nectar contained in the earth. The tree will not be perceived then as just an object standing on the ground, but it will be seen as an expression of life, related as much to the emptiness of space as to the solidity of earth, the warmth of the sun, and so on.

How does the tree live? That will be the question coming up in the mind. How does it live? Where does it get its life from? It gets life from the air, from space, from the earth, from water, from the fire or heat principle. Then I no longer look at the tree as an object, but as a being, a fellow being. We are uprooted from the source of our lives, but the tree is rooted and also interrelated. Look at the river, then you do not only see a curvature in the earth with water flowing through it, you don't only measure the velocity of the water etc., but you are aware of the source of the river in the mountains and the source of that mountain stream in the rain, and the source of the rain in the clouds, and the clouds in the ocean, you know you come back to the circular movement of life. Then you see in the dance of the waters of the river, the dance of cosmic energies which are here, there and everywhere at the same time.

Not only the rivers, or the trees, or the mountains, my friends, but this whole planet will become a being. You will see it charged with life, vibrating with so many energies, as you have energies. The earth is a being, the

planet is a being, the cosmos is a being. Then the language of objects and things being subservient to our needs and greed, and we, the master race born to control them, conquer them, own them, convert them into wealth and property, all that nonsense disappears.

The psyche gets purged of many an attitude and approach if the perception is purified. If the perception can see not only the separateness of the object, but the interrelatedness of things, this will change our terminology altogether. Then the material world will not be merely a material world of objects, it will be a material world containing the dance of innumerable energies. You know, as the cosmos is a dance of harmonious energies cooperating with one another, living will be the harmonizing of those energies within us and outside of us. The art of living, the science of living is really the science of harmonizing energies. Harmony as the secret of life.

Looking at life surrounding us at the sensory level, not as something to be owned, possessed or exploited for our greed, but with a new respect, we turn to the material world with gratitude. We did not create it, it is a gift from the mysterious divine life. Life is divinity, my friends, there is no divinity apart from life. Life is divine and life is divinity, in its wholeness, in its organic nature, in its interrelatedness. It is free of thought, of words, of human hands. It is so sacred, so pure. Is this perspective

of the so called material, tangible, visible dimension of life, not necessary today?

What are all the environmentalists and ecologists talking about? Correcting the ecological imbalances. You cannot correct the ecological imbalance by giving a new theory. It is the perception that has to be purged of all rigid theories, ideologies, patterns and conditions. It is a new perception which will lead to a new perspective. The 'is'ness of life, through its interrelatedness and indivisibility, is teaching us, is it not? Is it not persuading us by its very presence to turn inwards, and find out about the energies within us, the secret of their harmony and their cooperativeness?

The teacher teaches by presence. The language of presence is more powerful than all the verbalizations from all the languages from the world put together. It is the eloquence of existence. If you allow life to become your teacher, it teaches. But if you turn to books and want to know whether it be duality or non-duality, one god or many, one creator, or two, etc., if you turn to books and theories, if you want to dig into the past and base your perception on that, then the opportunity to live first hand would be missed.

How do we harmonize the energies contained in us? That will be the question presented to us by this relationship with life through perception. Perception is a

kind of contact and that contact opens the door to learning. Before the atomic explosion, we had learned to explode the atom and arrive at the quantum of energy. We had uncovered the mystery of the existence of that quantum of energy in that minutest particle of matter. We didn't know that there was anything called nuclear energy, atomic energy, and so on. We were not aware that solar energy can be captured, and that we can relate to it. Just as that was not learned by us, so we have not learned and discovered the energies contained in the body, the organs, the tissues, the muscles, the glands, the plasma, they all have tremendous potential energies.

As we look towards life outside, our learning will have the corollary of turning inwards and exploring the energies contained in us. Electricity in water was not an evident visible energy, but we related to water, explored, experimented, and then found out how to convert the water's energy into electricity. In the same way there may be many energies contained in us, waiting to be explored and used.

We have to explore these unconditioned, unknown, unused energies within us, because the energy of thought and knowledge has failed, it has proved incomplete. It has given us many good things like science and technology, literature, music, etc., but it has proved insufficient and incomplete as far as human relationships

are concerned. It has not helped us to grow into the dimension of love, peace, cooperative psychology. We are assertive, aggressive, violent at the core of our hearts, yearning for love, yet violent in relationships, talking about humility of love and wanting to assert, own and possess one another. It is a contradiction. So it seems to me, that the time has come to explore new energies contained in the human organs, as well as in the emptiness of space, within the body and within the consciousness, and harmonizing those energies.

If and when this is done, we will have to learn about what is mind, thought, feelings, etc. From life, the material visible perceptual self-generated dimension, we are turning to a conceptual dimension, a man-made world. From life as it is on the visible level, to a man-made world on the conceptual level, in which we have to live. We will have to turn to this man-made conceptual world, leaving aside books and authorities. We will have to sit down with ourselves.

Mind is a word for us, thought is a word for us, feelings, sentiments, emotions, reactions, all these are words we have been fed on, we have been using. We have been living by knowledge, but knowing is not learning, and knowing is not understanding. If we had understood the secret of mind then there would not be so many neurotic people in modern society, there would not be victims of stress and strain, of depressions or violence, etc..

We know jolly well about the mind, but we have not learned, we have not discovered it, and unless we understand, I do not think energies can be harmonized. The inner energies cannot be harmonized on the basis of knowledge. We have to perceive them, feel them, be in touch with them. It seems to me that in order to learn we will have to sit down, in a quiet place, a quiet corner, by ourselves. No verbalization, no movement away from the body. And as we looked at life outside of us, we will have to learn to look at life within us, at whatever movement takes place there. This looking, this art of perception, this value judgement free cognition, seems to be the secret foundation of a new perspective of life. So we will have to sit down and look at the movements, whatever comes up in the form of words, in the form of pictures, in the form of upsurge of trends and inclinations, impulses, whatever that movement, to watch it moving within us.

I wonder if you have ever looked at that movement when an emotion stirs in the heart, how it travels, what it does to the different organs, how it relates to your blood pressure, your circulation, to the rhythm of breathing, and so on? Without giving a name to the energy, without judging it in any way, simply look at the movement of the different energies, the inner map, the inner roots of energies.

We will talk about this man-made world and the conditioned human psyche, which is in between the

visible, perceptual, material world not created by us, and the transpsychological reality, beyond thoughts and words, again not created by us. We seem to have a multi-dimensional existence, we the human species. We have the perceptual level, we have the conceptual level, and there seems to be some dimension beyond the conceptual, we can't give it a name, so we call it transconceptual, where thought does not reach, where time does not move, where the brain is not active. It is better not to use the words soul, spirit, higher self, etc. But in between the material and the transpsychological is the man-made world, the human structures, in which we have to live.

We have to live with nature, with the man-made world, and we have to be aware of that which is beyond the man-made world. I am sorry I have to use words for this communication. Verbal communication is a very dangerous game, one is trying to keep it at as simple a level as is possible. So, we have the presence of mysterious life at two levels, the so called material, and the so called non-material. And in between, is our daily routine of living, dealing with words, knowledge, having a job, going to the factory, the office, the family responsibilities, having an apartment, a room; it is sandwiched between the two.

And that which is in between the two has become so very important, that both the others have become

neglected. The perceptual, gets neglected, as well as that which cannot be perceived, that which is beyond perception. The conceptual, the ideational, the structures built by man, take up most of our time and become the content of our consciousness. Therefore the divinity of life, the mystery of life, the essence of life, is neither felt nor perceived by us.

We are not in touch with the divinity of life through the senses which we could be. Nor are we aware of it without words. Life becomes very narrow. It is such a tiring business to use thoughts, their patterns, building up defence mechanisms to go through the battle of relationships, beginning and ending the day with it. The mind becomes a fertile soil for inflicting upon itself innumerable miseries and suffering. The human race today lives in misery and suffering, most of it being self inflicted. That is why to understand the limited nature, the conditioned nature of the conceptual, to learn to handle it in a sane way, in a competent way, sharpening our sensitivity at the sensual level on one hand, and sharpening the sensitivity through meditation, the energy of emptiness within us, on the other, the energy of sensitivity at the sensual level and at the non-sensual level, may vitalize our being to such an extent, that we will not be uprooted by thought.

Today we are uprooted, we are not interrelated with our roots, either at the material level of the body, or at the

level of consciousness. We are torn away from the source of our being, and from the source of cosmic life, suspended between the two. It seems to me that a new perspective may enable us to vitalize ourselves through the energies available in both the dimensions, and develop a new human culture, a new ethos or morality for the nuclear age, and a new perspective, and perhaps even a new language about spirituality for the twenty first century.

My friends, I shall end the introductory talk by saying that a holistic way of living, a holistic perception of life, seems to be the nature of psychic mutation awaiting all of us. The fragmented, the divided, the partial, the compartmental way of living has become outdated. So we will have to grow into our wholeness, so that holistic living becomes an extension of that holiness, or wholeness of our inner being.



2 September 1991

PURIFYING PERCEPTION

I wonder if you have noticed, as I have done, that we are living in a decaying civilization, in a disintegrating culture, based on thought and knowledge. The activity of thinking was looked upon as the proof of our existence: I think therefore I am. Thinking and knowing, with the help of words, concepts, ideas, measurements, value structures, created an illusion that knowing is living, that knowing is understanding. Thus we became prisoners of knowledge, addicted to the activities of knowing, memorising, using patterns of thinking, patterns of conditioning, patterns of reactions, codes of conduct, defence mechanisms. We became addicted to the movements of all these and we equated them with the act of living.

Now, at the end of the twentieth century, we realize that knowledge may enable us to co-exist with reality, but it does not necessarily result in a contact with reality, it does not lead to an interaction with the essence of reality, and therefore it does not enable us to live together with the essence of life by which we are surrounded.

Many civilizations visited the cosmos, many cultures flowered in the abundance of cosmic life, then disintegrated, decayed and disappeared. It seems to me that civilization based on thought and knowledge is, in its turn, on the verge of progressive disintegration. It will perhaps be replaced by a holistic culture which is not based on division, on fragmentation and dissection of life.

I hope you know that I come to you not as a teacher, but as a friend, to share with you the perceptions and understanding that have taken place. Sharing is the only purpose behind the communication, there is no expectation that you should agree with me, and there is no intention of converting you to any particular pattern of living. Whatever one could learn from life, the supreme master, whatever life has allowed us to learn from it, is being shared with you in the spirit of friendship.

So, may we explore the possibility of purging the act of perception of all knowledge and thought? May we

explore the possibility of freedom from knowledge, freedom from addiction to conceptualization and ideation, freedom from the clutches of symbols and measurements, which have been systematically developed, organised, standardized and sanctioned by the human race? It may sound rather drastic to some of you, if not all of you, that knowledge imprisons, and that freedom from knowledge is the beginning of meditation.

Freedom from knowledge is the foundation of a new perception, of a new culture. Is it possible for us to learn to look at life without words, names, or ideas being attached to perception? While dealing with the man-made world, the socio-economic and political structures created by mankind, we will need thought, we will need all the niceties of thinking.

We are talking about getting related to life. We are living in a cosmos, are we not? Cosmos is our abode and we are surrounded by life, the cosmic companion. We are surrounded by numerous expressions of life. Can we look at those expressions of life, can we look at the companion 'life', without a word, idea, definition or description as provided by books on religion, history, anthropology, geology, biology and so on? If we cannot be in the abode, our house, this planet, in utter freedom from naming, identifying and evaluating, we might miss perceiving the beauty and the sacredness of life itself.

You know, knowledge deprives us of the sense of sacredness. Knowing about a thing creates an illusion, as if we are in contact, as if we are interacting with it. Unfortunately knowledge prevents interaction. It provides coexistence, it does not enable us to live or share. Except for the man-made structures which are necessary, except for handling them, using them, being with them, knowledge has no value whatsoever.

Life is divine, life is divinity, it is something sacred. It is a mystery that cannot be dissected by thought, which cannot be analyzed and put into categories. It cannot be evaluated, because it is a wholeness, it is inter-relatedness, it is a dance of the interaction of energies which cannot be separated. Life does not yield to any intellectual post mortem. The act of living is an act of worship, the act of living is interaction with the holiness, the sacredness of that which is.

It seems to me that in the name of knowledge, of science and technology, of computerization, of civilization, mechanization, we have deprived ourselves of that privilege of living with sacredness and being sacred ourselves. We, who are expressions of the wholeness of life, we who are organically related to the wholeness of life, have come to look upon ourselves as separate, limited, conditioned, divided, petty little creatures going round and round that imaginary centre of the ego, struggling to cater to its whims, wishes and obsessions.

Can we learn to look without a name or a word, through a non-verbal perception? Nobody is going to teach us, no religious institutions are going to teach us. We are going to have to learn it by ourselves, with the help of life, the help of that which is, which has been and ever shall be. If the perception is purified, if it is not infected with words, with ideas, measurements, evaluations etc. , if the perception is disinfected of knowledge, what will happen? It is worth experimenting.

My friends who have come here for the first time, are requested to experiment with this act of perception, without a word, without a name. The idea that you are surrounded by things, and you refer to those things as objects, isolates you, knowledge isolates. Then you look at the earth as something to dig into when you need to, you use the soil for agriculture, using machines to produce more and more, converting the bountiful produce of the earth into marketable commodities to gratify the sense of profiteering. The earth is a thing, is an object, for us. That is our idea of the earth.

Supposing that all these relationships, based on the idea that they are things to be used, disappear from your perception. Then what would happen? Maybe the earth will then be a being, just as you are a being and not a thing, not an object. You are not the subject looking at an object, but you are with a being, as alive as you are. If one can look at rivers and lakes and streams and

mountain currents, without using the words lake or river, then there can be a contact with the energy of the water, the energy of the earth, the energy of the space, unconditioned by an idea, unconditioned and uninhibited by a motivation.

The prisoners of knowledge cannot move without a motive. We are inhibited by this storehouse of motivations, crude, sophisticated, or cultured. So our contact with life is inhibited by motives, limited by ideation, and the information about life, which is an indirect contact, isolates us from the essence of reality. We go sunbathing because it helps our health, we go boating on the lakes because it gives us some pleasure. Nature, or reality, is subservient to our activity of seeking pleasure, no reverence, no sense of companionship, no living together.

We are interested in channelling the energies and utilizing them. We may do so, if we need them for our physical survival. But that cannot be the foundation of our relationship with life. And because there is no reverence, no feel of the sacredness or holiness, we have to build churches, mosques and temples. We cannot feel that the whole cosmos is a cathedral, we cannot feel that divinity.

Our very touch through perception is contaminated by knowledge, by thought. We want to install idols, icons

and deities, build up patterns of rituals we call prayers, create artificial ethics, 'oughts and ought nots', 'must and must nots', and so on, trying to graft these tiny petty exclusive divisions on the wholeness of life. Please do see this with me.

I was communicating in Ireland last month, and someone hearing the talk said; "Ah, you are an atheist." I said; "No, I am neither a theist nor an atheist, I am a 'lifeist'!" Life is divinity for me, not only that it is divine, it is divinity. It is sacred. Can we move out of the clutches of knowledge, from the isolation that knowledge has created, from the prisons of knowledge, and learn to perceive non-verbally? We have to lay the foundation for a new culture. Perception is the foundation of relationship, of understanding and of responses.

Do we realize that our act of perception is contaminated and polluted? We are concerned about ecological pollution, sound pollution, the entire world is busy with anti-pollution committees, with ecological research. What about the pollution at the level of perception itself? For example; when we look at life are we not haunted with the idea of time, psychological time? Are we not haunted with the idea of minutes, hours, days, yesterdays and tomorrows? Psychological time is a contrivance that we have built up for the sake of living together. It is like a paper note currency, guilders,

dollars, rupees, whatever. They are not wealth, having them in your pocket, or on an account, does not imply the essence of prosperity, but they are required for living in a society, for buying or selling your commodities. They are not wealth, they do not constitute prosperity. Do they? They are symbols.

In the same way psychological time is a symbol. Baffled and puzzled by the infinity of 'is'ness, mankind wants to measure it. At the conceptual level you attribute artificial divisions to eternity. But life is time free, is timeless, it just is. Is not the 'is'ness of life number free, enumeration free? We have invented numerical figures, from one to a hundred, a thousand, a million, or whatever. It is our enumeration. But there is neither 'oneness' nor 'manyness' in life. The 'oneness' and 'manyness' is in your brain and my brain. Time is within the human brain. It is in thought, it is in memory, but it is not the essence of life.

Are we not haunted by the idea of time, even when it is not warranted? Can we be with living and with life in our waking hours, without the idea of time at all? It is worth experimenting to find out the extent of our slavery to knowledge, the degree of addiction to these measurements, symbols, ideas. The consciousness is cluttered with them and it is well nigh impossible to be with life, to be with yourself, without the inner movement of these ideas.

We have lost the elegance of being in that nudity of consciousness which is not touched by naming, identifying, evaluating, except when necessary. Perception without verbalization, perception without words is something that we have to learn. Then as there will be that sense of being surrounded by and being with the eternity of life, with the 'is'ness of life, not fragmented by concepts of space and time, perhaps we will have a taste of sacredness or holiness.

If there is a perception of ourselves and of life around us without the pollution of ideas or concepts, will we look upon ourselves as English, American, Dutch, Indian, Hindu, Christian or Jew? Will we imprison our wholeness in the tiny jails of Hinduism, Indianness, Dutchness, Christianity, capitalism or socialism? We cannot even look at ourselves, the wholeness of our being, let alone the wholeness of cosmic life, we cannot feel our wholeness because we have been brought up as Indians, or Dutchmen or Englishmen. These nations and nationalities are human creations, the planet is not limited by them. It is a division free wholeness. But our consciousness is contaminated by identification with man-made divisions, racial consciousness, national consciousness, ideological consciousness, layer after layer of identifications. Do we not look upon ourselves with these identifications?

We are never in touch with our wholeness of being, which knows no divisions, no exclusive loyalties to any

concepts at all. My friends, planetary consciousness will not emerge unless it is purged of these artificial divisions. If somebody worships an idol, you say: "Ah, it's superstition, or you may call the person a pagan." What of us?

We are worshipping the idea of nation, of national sovereignty, when it has become a political and economic myth. When science and technology have caused the intermingling and blending of races, we still talk of belonging to a race or a country. When all ideologies have been put into the melting pot by the advances of science and technology, we still have addictions to Hinduism, to Buddhism, to Judaism, or whatever.

In Russia they will try to popularize the Russian orthodox church, Moslem fundamentalism in the Middle East, Hindu fundamentalism in the subcontinent of India. Why do we require this activity of identifying ourselves with divisions and fragments, why do we feel secure in divisions and fragmentations?

As long as division free life, the vastness of life, the wholeness of life frightens us, as long as we are afraid of life and living, which is an interaction with the wholeness, I think there will not be any sacredness of love and compassion in our lives. Perception not inhibited by the idea of oneself as subject and the rest of

life as object, perception that flows from you as the waters flow in the rivers, as the breeze flows through the emptiness of space, as the rays of the sun travel through the ether, can such perception flow from our being? That is the crucial question.

Unconditional freedom has to be at the very source of perception. Can we learn that? Perhaps that perception is what they call meditation, because it is an extension of your wholeness, it is a movement flowing from the being, as the rays of light emanate from the sun without depriving it of the potential of light. Can there be perception without causing any stress and strain, any consumption of vital energy?

The movement of knowledge, the movement of thought, is quite a stress and strain, it's an exertion, it's a movement of memory traveling through your neurological system, through your chemical system. Thinking can tire a person, exhaust a person. Can we limit the activity of thinking to the realm of living in the man-made world, restrict it there, in the beginning, and be free of it, entirely free of it, when it is not necessary? It will be a tremendous relief for the waking consciousness if it can be unloaded of the burden of ideas, theories, measurements and values. Then it might enable us to look at one another as human beings, respecting one another's freedom. Though we may be working functionally in an office, as a boss or colleague,

or due to the compulsion of biological impulses we may be related as man and wife, as children and parents, can we look at one another as human beings full of wholeness, not limited by our ideas of husband or wife, son or daughter, but as a human being, as an emanation of cosmic life?

You see, when the perception is purged of the clutches of knowledge and thought, it will not only revolutionize our relationship with nature as it is around us, with the planet, but it will revolutionize our relationship with fellow human beings also. Is there a willingness to launch upon an adventure of dimensional transformation, an adventure of learning by ourselves the contact and the interaction of energies, teaching us, revealing to us the secret, uncovering the mystery for us?

If it has been possible for me to convey to you the urgency of purifying perception, let us proceed to look at this issue of learning while living, from a different angle. We are pouring out our heart, it is a heart to heart communication, a friendly sharing.

Life is for living, and to live is to be related, to be capable of receiving the action of energies upon us and to interact with those energies. Living is harmonizing the energies. If there is disorder, if there is chaos or anarchy, then living becomes impossible. It is order and

orderliness that result in peace. It is harmony that allows the energy of love to become activated amongst human beings, individually and collectively.

Has it not been a tradition or a convention to turn to religion, to religious organizations, and hope to be educated by them in the art and science of life and living? As the physical sciences have given us knowledge about the tangible, the visible physical world, we turn to religion in the hope of getting knowledge about the non-physical, non-material, to know about god, about godhood, hoping for a technique or method, a pattern of behaviour, which will put us in contact with the divinity. Do we not turn to religious teachers, to the so-called spiritual teachers, masters coming from the East? Has not this civilization, for the last two thousand years, encouraged the institution of religion, of temples, monasteries, ashrams, and so on?

Has it not been a psychological tradition that we exercise ambition, competition, aggression, even exploitation and violence, as far as life in cities and towns is concerned, both economically and politically? Assert yourselves, even in family situations, get things done through assertion, verbal assertion, physical assertion. Compete with others from the moment you step out of your house, to dominate, to own, to possess. And then you get tired, because it is quite an exertion to assert.

To be is effortless. Assertion requires effort, a conscious effort of the ego. "I am a learned person", "I am a gentle person", "I am a rich person", "I am a religious person", you identify with an idea, you cannot assert unless there is an image of yourself that you have identified with. You go on building up images for yourself, identifying with them. Assertion is declaring an identification with an image. Please do see this, assertion, aggression, competition, violence, all sanctioned in the name of our competitive industrial society, in the name of progress, all that is sanctioned.

When you get tired and worn out, you move out of the city or the town, to a monastery, to an ashram, to find peace. Has that not been the tradition? It is an integral part of our decaying civilization. You build a network of escapes, escape from boredom, from stress and strain. Some people retire from life, withdraw from life, become monks, nuns, sannyasins, or whatever, to provide an opportunity to relax and experience peace. First we create psychic slums, depersonalized cultures, dehumanized relationships, and simultaneously, coexisting with them, we build places to relax, to experience peace. Is that necessary?

Should we not explore the possibility of creating a civilization where relationships, in the name of economics or politics, will not cause the necessity of assertion, of aggression, competition and violence? Do

we not want to create a civilization free of violence , an aggression free interaction amongst human beings, an exploitation free economic system, a domination free political set up, do we not want that? If relationships at home, at our office and factory, will no longer cause stress and strain, because they will be non-competitive and non-comparative, then perhaps the factories, the offices and homes will become places as sacred and as peaceful and quiet as ashrams and monasteries. Then you need not create a class of sannyasins, of monks and nuns, relegating to them the responsibility of giving information about the supernatural, superphysical, supraconscious or supra-mental. I wonder if you have questioned the validity of the continuity of these sects, whether they are parasitical? Is it not an artificial division? That is why I said the cosmos is like a cathedral. Life itself is divinity.

Why should homes be places to indulge in lust, greed, jealousy, pettiness, conflicts and tensions, why? Why should relationships be haunted by fear? We have built up a civilization where to be psychologically healthy seems to be a problem. We must have psychologists, psychoanalysts, and psychiatrists, we need priests and sannyasins, we feel it is natural, do we not? I am questioning the validity of such a fragmentation, such a division. You are sitting with a rebel, an incorrigible rebel!

It is not just accepting or rejecting, but an action of questioning the validity, of exploring if there can be an

alternative civilization, an alternative way of living, a holistic way of living, where human beings will not be psychologically divided and fragmented within, as an economic or a political man, but will remain whole in the waking consciousness. And relationships would be the movement of that wholeness. A holistic culture, a holistic civilization, may I call it a meditative way of living, for to be in your wholeness is to be in meditation, to move into relationships in your wholeness is a meditative way of living.

To be able to handle this whole conceptual inheritance we carry within us without any chaos and anarchy, without any disorder whatsoever, knowing it for what it is, knowing that it is only a contrivance to be used, not something to identify oneself with, knowing the built-in limitations of knowledge and thought and using them, as you use currency in the market place.

It seems to me that planetary consciousness or cosmic awareness, being rooted in the wholeness of your being while operating on the physical level, is the crux of the revolution that is awaiting us. A new language for spirituality of the twenty first century, where cosmic awareness will not be the privilege of the chosen few, but the consummation of human growth. To be in tune with the supreme intelligence, that is what has been called samadhi, satori, liberation, enlightenment. Cosmic awareness, planetary consciousness, for dealing with the

man-made world of ideas and structures, and the wholeness of your being when you operate through the sense organs, when you relate to fellow beings. A dimensional transformation is the challenge with which we are confronted and I do hope that young people everywhere will respond to this challenge.



3 September 1991

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

It is my sincere desire to convert the camp into a participatory enquiry, by requesting the organizers to find out if the participants would like to suggest themes, make observations or hand over questions. I am very thankful that you have responded in a remarkable way. In a participatory enquiry the speaker can respond to the needs of the listener, anyway I'm not here to preach or teach.

The needs of the participants can be at different levels. There can be an intellectual curiosity, wanting to know what a person coming to conduct the camp has got to say about the crucial questions of life, the challenges of life. The system of our education has, in the last few

centuries, sharpened the brain. It is academic, theoretical, verbalized knowledge that is fed into the brains of students at schools and colleges. It has created an illusion that to learn is to enquire intellectually in order to know about life, death, god, about sex, love and so on. This intellectual, theoretical, academic curiosity gets satisfied by collecting thoughts and ideas from books and persons

The relevance of the knowledge acquired is not for the act of living, it gets stored in memory. And one feels satisfied that one has known about Hinduism, Buddhism, Theosophy, about Islam, Judaism and so on. The knowledge satisfies and there curiosity ends. It is not an enquiry, it is curiosity with a definite, specific motivation which gets satisfied, and there the relevance ends.

There can be a psychological or emotional need. One feels a bit apprehensive about the whole panorama of social life, about the variety of temperaments, this whole phenomenon of cosmic life, and one would like to find a nest of security for oneself. The emotional curiosity is looking for methods and techniques of experience and seeks security in experiencing. It is not gathering knowledge, thoughts or ideologies, it is looking for methods and techniques for experiences. What are the secure ways for sensual experiences, for extrasensory, transcendental, occult experiences, which will give you security, which will protect you, and so on? The emotional

curiosity that brings people to camps or conferences gets gratified by acquiring skills in methods and techniques for experiences. That has happened through the centuries in the East and the West, and there are many sciences and also arts, that can teach one methods for acquiring experiences, cultivating experiences, developing mental powers through these experiences, and so on. That is a kind of emotional curiosity.

Then there can be a need which is neither intellectual, nor emotional, but which is the vital breath of life. As the biological organism requires air and oxygen for its survival, as the psychological structure requires a sense of security for its survival, there seems to be a deeper dimension to our being which requires a sense of freedom. Freedom is to the transpsychological part of our being, what oxygen is to the body. That is not curiosity, but an enquiry to find truth, to find out what is truth.

You don't gain anything, or acquire anything by finding out truth, but you feel free when you understand what the nature of reality is. With the understanding of the nature of reality you have a sense of inner freedom which enables you to move with life, to move in the gigantic space of life, in the variety of life.

So there are three levels of need. There is an intellectual need for knowledge, an emotional need for security, and

a transpsychological need for freedom, and even for love, if I may use the term. I don't know what kinds of needs are existing in our minds, but to some extent questions do reflect the inner needs.

QUESTION:

What is the purpose of the silence sessions?

VIMALA:

Quite an interesting question. It must be from those who have come here for the first time. Look my friends, as we were talking about the three levels of our needs, it seems to me that there is a threefold movement, a threefold motion, or activity that we, the human beings, are capable of.

One is physical activity, you move physically with the hands, the feet, the other limbs, and there is motion. Activity implies movement or motion. There is a verbal movement when you use the sound energy, and verbalize your inner happenings, describe or define the facts that you notice around you. It is not only the sound that travels within your body, but there is also the path along which the sound energy travels. I do hope that you will observe the movement of speech within the body someday. How the thought gets clothed in sound. How the sound energy travels with the help of the breathing system, how the sound and the thought travelling along

with the inhalation and exhalation of breath, affects the blood system and blood circulation, how it affects the blood pressure, affects the whole neurochemical system. It is a marvellous thing. So there is a verbal movement which you call speech. And there is a mental movement, a psychological movement.

Physical, verbal and psychological, they are not watertight compartments. We are describing them in order to learn about them, but they are so closely interrelated, they are nearly blended into one holistic organic movement. Now, at the three levels, the physical, the verbal and the mental, there is motion. So movement, or motion, is a dimension of our life. And every movement releases energy, stimulates energy. Life is a dance of energies, and living is harmonizing those energies, creating an inner order, a harmonious order in the functioning of those energies. Is that not the meaning of living?

Movement is a dimension of our life with which we are acquainted: since childhood we move on the physical and the verbal level. And when you go to school, and reach the age of twelve, thirteen, fourteen or even as early as seven or eight, you begin to think for yourself, to play around with the inheritance, with the memory. Movement or motion, and the energy generated by movement is something we are acquainted with. If we are careful enough to look at it, to watch it, we can even

get acquainted with the secrets of the energies contained in the movement.

Each movement generates a different kind of energy and that energy travels in your body, right from the crown of your head to the big toe, and the interaction of those energies in the body, causing either health or sickness, is a marvellous and interesting phenomenon to watch. Sometimes we shrink away from movement, we are inactive. Activity on the physical level and then a state of being inactive. One feels lazy, sluggish, depressed, and one doesn't move. It is a shrinking away, or a withdrawing from movement. One is afraid and one doesn't speak, that is to say, one shrinks away from verbal movement. One is afraid to displease someone, one is afraid that the person might get angry, some inhibition or other makes you withdraw or shrink away, so you don't speak. Or you withdraw from thinking. There is movement and then withdrawal, or shrinking away from movement.

Refusing to move is not non-motion, is not freedom from movement. Shrinking away, withdrawing, is an inhibition from movement. So in activity on the physical, the verbal, the mental level is a passivity. It is a negativity.

If you are tired because of overwork, you rest and relax. That is not inactivity. I hope you notice the difference

sensitively. If you watch you will notice the difference between resting, and being inactive due to laziness, sluggishness, uninterestedness, the "who cares" syndrome.

You know, very few people are interested in the phenomenon of life, in the movement of living. They are interested in money, in securing a job, in having an apartment, a room, in sensual and sexual pleasures. They are interested in those things, in cashable things, visible, tangible things. But this phenomenon of life: the visible, the invisible and that which is beyond the invisible; the nameable and that which cannot be named; the measurable and that which cannot be measured; this magnificent complex phenomenon of life, and the movement of living in relation to life, is something that does not interest everyone. We have been brought up in a way to feel interested in money, in the accumulation of wealth, in social prestige, in being so-called respectable, in securing means of sensual pleasure, in domination, and so on.

If you watch you will see that there is a difference between being active, resting, and being inactive. If the difference between these three is observed and understood, then you will come with me, we are taking a verbal voyage, you will come with me and look at the fourth thing, a different dimension, which is neither activity nor withdrawing from activity, nor inactivity, but

which is non-motion. It is not inaction, it is non-action, as positive and creative as action or activity.

Action, inaction and non-action or no movement, freedom from physical movement. Speech, withdrawing from speech, abstaining from speech, and silence. When you are not withdrawing from verbalization due to any inhibition whatsoever, when there is no fear, no inhibition, no hypocrisy, nothing, but you are free of the process of verbalization, that is called silence. Speech, sound, silence. Speech, abstaining from verbalization, silence. Silence is non-motion on the verbal level.

Psychologically there is a movement in relationship: husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, partners of life, parents/children, brothers/sisters, friends, doctor/patient, lawyer/client, and so on. There is a psychological movement of relationship. Then you shrink a way from relationship, you keep away, you withdraw. Maybe you go into psychological isolation. Isolation is not aloneness, it is not solitude, it is like the inactivity on the physical level, it is like abstaining from speaking due to hypocrisy, or fear on the verbal level. Then, if it is not so, there is aloneness. Movement of relationship, functional, organizational, social, economic, political etc., and aloneness, solitude. There is once again a dimension of non-motion. Aloneness or solitude where all the sense of relationship has dropped away, like autumn leaves.

Silence, where the whole process of verbalization has spontaneously gone into abeyance, stillness, or non-motion on the physical level, where all the restlessness of activity has gone into abeyance, it is a dimension of life. Please do see that when we sit here quietly, for half an hour in the morning and in the afternoon, we are getting acquainted with the dimension of silence, of aloneness, of physical non-motion, exploring the energies contained in that dimension.

If you are active all the time, then the toxins that this incessant activity creates in the body, the tensions, the pressures - because every activity generates an experience, every verbalization builds up a new memory - the incessant indulgence in relationship causes you to get exhausted, worn out. Life goes out of balance, tortured all the time by the movement of thought and knowledge, exhausted by the physical activity throughout the waking hours, tired and worn out by the stress and strain of relationships, functional, psychological, socio-economic, and so on. We get neurotic.

You know what neurosis is? It is losing the inner spontaneous equipoise. Life has a spontaneous equipoise, a balance which is not arrived at through any method, technique, or effort. It is effortlessly there, spontaneously there. So my friends, the purpose of the silence sessions is to introduce newcomers to another

dimension of life which is there, but which is ignored. And because it is ignored, we have not been introduced to it, we have no access to the unconditioned energies contained in the dimensions of solitude, of aloneness, marvellous energies! This is not a theory.

Is wholeness an ideal, is it a theory? What is the difference between you and a motor car? A motor car has no wholeness, it has parts prepared in a factory separately, by engineers, and assembled. They can be disassembled. It's a totality. We have not been put together limb by limb, sewn together, we have grown organically out of drops of fluid, it's an organic growth. The wholeness of our life is a fact. In the same way, this cosmos has not been put together, some earth, some water, some air, some fire put together! It is not an amalgamated, assembled totality, it is a wholeness. Even in a blade of grass, in an ant, in a tiny little bird, the wholeness of life radiates.

When we talk about an alternative way of living, which we call holistic - because I don't have any other word, if we come across a better word we shall use it - it is not a theory, it is not an ideology. A holistic way of living is relating to the wholeness of life, relating to the physical, the verbal and the mental simultaneously, relating to the physical, the psychological, and the transpsychological simultaneously. Not one by one in sequence, not fragmentarily, compartmentally, but as a blended

beautiful whole. To live in the inner wholeness and to relate to the so-called outer wholeness is an alternative way of life and living.

Because we are living fragmentarily, compartmentally, we are torn apart within. Silence sessions are not a new ritual. They are away of introducing those who are turning to the enquiry of life - call it a religious enquiry, call it a spiritual enquiry, call it a scientific enquiry, - to this dimension which contains unconditioned energy. The energy of thought and knowledge has been tapped, utilized, channelized, it is nearly a spent force now. Even computers have brains, they receive information, retain it in the computerized memory and reproduce it.

Knowledge and its mechanical activity is an outdated dimension of life. A new dimension has to emerge and become operative. A new dimension as the source of perception, and responses has to come about in our life. Otherwise how are we going to live with so many computers and robots around us? Is there not something more to us than those? So it seems to me, that the dimensions of silence, of non-motion and solitude are worth exploring.

QUESTION:

How can we enter into silence, when we cannot control our thoughts?

VIMALA:

A lovely question. Listening is a complex action, you listen to the words and you perceive the facts indicated by the words. It is a dual function. You are not hearing words to gather ideas, compare them with Vedanta, Zen Buddhism, psychoanalysis, and so on, you have not come here for academic purposes. I am not an academic, I have done nothing except living and loving life, with all its ugliness, pleasure, pain, and you know what people living in third world countries like India have to go through. In spite of all that one feels it is a benediction to be alive, it is a privilege to be alive.

To look, to listen, to interact with human beings, with non human beings, with cosmic energies, is marvellous. These interactions may bring you pain, agonies, tears, so what? The salty tears, like the salty waters of the ocean, have their own beauty, make their own contribution to the richness of life. When pain and agony pierce your heart, when sorrow permeates through every nerve and permeates your being, it confers something upon you as joy, the bliss of joy.

Life is worth living, life is for living, for interaction, for communication, for communion, for enriching one another, for manifesting the dance of energies without exploiting one another, in a non aggressive way, free of violence. This we have not yet learned. We will have to learn, we are here on this planet to learn how to live

without exploitation, without violence. If in twenty centuries we have not learned this, we will have to learn it in the twenty-first century.

We are dynamo's of inexhaustible potential, because we are organic limbs of life, expressions of life. Now, you have asked: "If we cannot control our thoughts, how can we enter into silence?" Please, we have to be careful about each word: "we cannot control our thoughts." Are thoughts separate from us? Or are we mentally, psychologically, neurochemically, a movement of thought and knowledge? Do we contain thoughts, do we own and possess them, like we possess a house, or a dog, or a car? Are they the substance of what we call mind, or are they separate from us?

When you say, "our thoughts" and "we control", could it be that this is a psychological myth? I am the thought. The movement of thought, the movement of knowledge, has been fed into the human organism. You have seen how information fed into a computer, can be reproduced by it. Permutation, combination of that information is possible, even for the electronic brain. But with us, thought or knowledge, - systematized, organized, standardized information, - is not only fed into the brain, but into the whole organism. Within this body of flesh and bone, muscles and tissues, sinews and glands, there seems to be an inner body constituted of vibrations which we call mind.

See how the mind works. You open your eyes in the morning and you see something, maybe a flower in a vase near your bed, or a bird outside the window on the branch of a tree, you see something. The eyes notice the object, the being. As soon as there is a contact through the sight with the thing or being, what happens? Doesn't the word bird come up, or the word flower come up? Where has it come from?

There was a sensual contact, that contact created a sensation, the sensation was interpreted according to education and you called it an orchid, a rosebud, or a bird. It is a play of memory. You call it good or evil, it is the replaying of the norms and criteria that have been fed into you. You have been told about it, you have read about it, you have heard about it, you have accepted it, you have identified yourself with it, and then the memory begins to play.

Is there a thought which is not a part of memory, which is not a part of knowledge, which is not based on personal or collective knowledge? Please observe: not that I have thoughts and I am going to control them, they are the very substance of 'I'ness. Thought, knowledge, emotions, sentiments, conditioned reflexes, patterns of reactions, defence mechanisms, all that has been cultivated by me, or for me by the society, it is the substance of what you call the self, the me, the ego.

The I cannot control, the 'I' is the thought structure. The human race has played around with dividing the 'I'consciousness, fragmenting the 'I'consciousness into the controller and that which is controlled. I take a vow, I will do this, I won't do that. I impose upon myself a pattern of discipline; Buddhist, Hindu, Judaic, Christian, Roman Catholic and so on. First I identify with that, I accept the necessity of that pattern, and then I divide myself. I control the behaviour, but then the part that is being controlled does not like to be controlled. It rebels and says: "I won't do it!" There is a revolt, a rejection, a rebellion.

It seems to me that this game of fragmenting consciousness into the controller and that which is controlled, a dictator and that which is being dictated upon, has not really succeeded. It generates hypocrisy, it generates mechanical repetitive movements. Day after day, year after year, we go on repeating the pattern and then we lose interest in it. Mechanical repetitive activity has no charm, has no joy. It gives me pleasure when it is a new pattern that I have cultivated, but then the charm fades away. Then you run around the world and find another pattern, acquire that, cultivate that. It loses the newness. Then you get tired of acquiring new patterns and you say: "Oh, I have gone around the world, done so many things all my life and yet my hands are empty."

Obviously, acquisition of patterns, cultivating those

patterns, imposing them on the spontaneous intelligence, the intelligence feels suffocated with such imposition. So my friends, what I am trying to say is that the I cannot control. This division of controller and controlled has proved unscientific, ineffective, incompetent. If at all it succeeds, it reduces the human being to a living robot projecting the past, continuing the past, repeating it. This psychological totalitarianism in the name of religion or spirituality or ethics, has suffocated the human psyche. Thanks to life, those days are over! Then what do I do?

I cannot control, I cannot suppress, I cannot repress. Do I have to indulge then, accept everything that thought brings up and succumb to it, give into it, yield to its dictates? People move from one extreme of suppression, repression, control, etc., to the other extreme of licentiousness, succumbing, giving in, yielding. Indulgence in whatever the mind asks for, pampering its demands, its whims and wishes, gives a sense of freedom for some time, because it is a reaction. Like the marxist communist philosophy, as a reaction to capitalist philosophy. It gives a sense of freedom for some time, and then that sensual pleasure, that sexual pleasure, that psychological pleasure also becomes repetitive. It has no life of its own. That which needs repetition has no creativity, obviously. Indulgence does not seem to be the way. Then what do I do?

I neither control nor give in. The third alternative could be that I look at the mental movement, understand its mechanism, the mechanism of mind, the anatomy of thought and emotion, its chemistry, its biology. I watch the movement of thought within me. When you sit down quietly and the thoughts come up, there is no silence yet. Physically you have become steady, verbally you are not speaking, but the mind moves and the thoughts come up. If I am not to control, what do I do? I look at the movement. What am I looking at? I am looking at the reflection of my inner being.

Don't you look in the mirror when you sit in front of it? Who are you looking at? Are you not looking at yourself. There is the looker and that which is looked at. It is only a reflection, there is no one in the mirror. You move away and there is no reflection. You are looking at yourself. The looker and that which is looked at are one and the same. In the same way, when we sit quietly and look at the movement of thought, look at the movement of mind, we are looking at ourselves, our inner being. Please do see this.

Then I notice there is so much jealousy, so much violence, so much aggressiveness, so much generosity, so much tenderness. I look at everything without identifying, without acting upon it. A new relationship with thought, my own past, or the human past, has

come about. Neither controlling nor indulging, neither accepting nor rejecting, but being with the fact, being in unconditional communion with the fact. Such encounter, such contact with the facts through perception, has a multi-dimensional effect upon us.

First of all, my looking becomes steady, it is not jumping from one idea to the other, the attentiveness, the capacity to perceive becomes like a steady flame. It is a new sharpness and new vitality in perception.

Secondly, I had ideas about myself: "I am a cultured person, a gentle person, I am a person with humility, a non violent person, a religious person," you know I had many ideas, and that exposure while I was looking at the movement of the mind, has exposed to me the dark corners. I become aware that I have darkness within me, I have distortions and perversions within me, which I had not been cognizant of before, which I had not seen before. So, if I am an honest person then the psychological arrogance melts away as a result of this perception.

Then, when I move with people, there is a new quality of inner humility, no self deception. You know, self-deception is a game which we play with ourselves and nobody can help a person who deceives himself or herself. Self-deception is a self-inflicted torture from which no one else can liberate us.

I become aware of what I am, and my images about myself that I had believed in credulously, or I had accepted naively, get broken to pieces. It is beautiful this freedom from images. Yesterday, we were talking about freedom from knowledge, this morning we are talking about freedom from images. The inner bondage. The bondage of knowledge was welcomed from outside. This is an inner bondage that we have been weaving together all our life. So, an inner liberation takes place.

Thirdly, in the movement of relationship, when these thoughts and ideas come up, you know that they are from the past, maybe a part of inheritance, maybe a part that has been imposed upon you, grafted upon you. You are aware of that, and therefore you do not allow the past, the memory, the thoughts to colour your perception, to distort your perception. So, perception gets liberated from the clutches of memory.

When we sit quietly, first we learn to look at the movement of the mind, we understand it for what it is, we grow into a new relationship with it of non-acceptance, non-identification, non-rejection. That new relationship liberates the perception. Then there is silence.

When we sit here quietly, we do not get transported immediately into the dimension of silence. From

unsteadiness we grow into steadiness, from outward attentiveness we grow into inward attentiveness, the sensitivity that was moving away from the body has moved inward. There is no indulgence in sound energy, in speech, and so on. It is non-action. When we have educated ourselves to be in that state, then silence is the by-product of the psychological non-action. Silence is a by-product of the ending of the movement of thought.

Silence doesn't come about by controlling thoughts. Controlling thoughts can create tension. Have you not noticed an inner stiffness in people who control, who suppress, or repress? Every aggression against our inner being results in scratches on the consciousness, stiffness in the consciousness, and the person moves very stiffly.

Living is not an ordeal, relationships are not battlegrounds where you equip yourself with defence mechanisms and take up the weapons of anger, aggressiveness, or ambition. Life would not be worth living if relationships were reduced to the battlegrounds of ego's. They are for interaction, for enrichment, reciprocal enrichment of life. Then my friends, the confrontation psychology which is playing havoc with us, from family life to global life, will be replaced by a psychology of cooperation, a psychology of friendship and peace.

QUESTION:

How do we deal with time?

VIMALA:

When does time move? It moves in your waking hours, doesn't it? You are awake, so-called awake. Then you measure the expanse of life by time. You live in a society where watches are necessary.

In school you are taught how time gets constituted, it is something that human ingenuity has built up piece by piece. First the function of enumeration, and then the idea of a second, the minutest fragment of eternity, and you say sixty seconds make a minute, you teach that to the child. Sixty minutes make an hour, and twenty-four hours make a day. This activity of enumeration is necessary when people live together. But these figures, these numbers are human creations. They are not a factual content of life.

Life is neither one nor many, it is immeasurable. Life is not ten kilometres, or a hundred miles. Life is infinity of space. Life is eternity of existence. But we want to measure it so that we can relate to it. Time, a second, a minute, an hour, a day, or a century is an idea. Numerical figures are ideas that convert a concrete experience into verbal description. The word is an idea, the verbal description is ideational, a conceptual activity.

The word is not the thing, the word is not the actual fact, it is an abstraction, it is necessary. This is the content of civilization and for living together, for exchanging, communicating, for sharing, you need words. For organizing collective behaviour you need measurements. For building your houses, schools, buildings, you require the art of engineering, geometry, algebra, arithmetics and so on. They have ideational reality, they have a conceptual content and conceptual reality, not a factual reality. Time is not like an apple that you can cut and eat. It is an idea to be used, an idea you have to use.

You are asking me how do we deal with time? You deal with it as you deal with machines. You handle the machine physically, you handle the idea mentally, when needed. We have built cars and airoplanes and space-crafts, we don't spend all our life in them, do we? "I love my car, it's so beautiful, I won't get out of it", do we do that? Lovely houseboats for sailing, you use them as for the need, as for the relevance, and then you get out of them. In the same way the idea of time is necessary. When we come together here, at nine twenty-five, nine twenty-five in Holland is not nine twenty-five in England. When I boarded the plane at Heathrow, the captain told us within minutes that according to Amsterdam, the time is one hour later. So you have to change the time. You play around with it, it is a cultural toy. It may be eleven o'clock here, in India it will be four

o'clock in the afternoon. What does that mean? Four o'clock has no absolute reality, nor is eleven o'clock absolutely real, it has no real factual content.

We live in a conceptual world, our socio-economic and political structures are based on this enumeration, these measurements, these symbols, and we have to deal with them. But when you are alone in your room, the idea of what happens tomorrow and the day after tomorrow does not exist, it is in the brain. But when the idea of tomorrow, the idea of next week begins to darken the horizons of consciousness, and you lose contact with the present, the timeless present in your room, then the idea of time becomes a monster that terrifies you. It is an illusory monster. Or when you play with the memory of yesterdays, ten yesterdays or ten thousand yesterdays, and you try to suck pleasure out of that dead yesterday, then again you have lost contact with that which is.

What you call the present, the timeless present, is the only reality. But when we run away from the content of life into the idea of past, or the idea of future, then we are isolated from life. So, when you ask me how to deal with time I would say deal with it like a psychological currency, to be used when necessary, and be entirely free of the idea of time as you step out of your house into the garden under the vast skies, let it be a stepping out of the idea of time, and be with the timelessness of eternity. Otherwise the idea of time will suffocate you.

The ideational, the conceptual, the world of knowledge, the structure of thought, is to be used as an instrument of operation, as a conveyance, as a means of communication. Apart from that, thought, knowledge, ideas, have no relevance and no value whatsoever.



4 September 1991

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

We are not here for entertainment or intellectual stimulation. We are ploughing our psyche, and through the ploughing of our psyche we are in fact ploughing the human psyche, in order to sow the seeds of a new perception, to explore the possibility of an alternative civilization, an alternative culture, a way of living.

QUESTION:

How can we move out of fear and violence?

VIMALA:

We are going to look at the fact of fear and see what happens. I hope we are not implying by the word fear

an irreversible pathological condition of paranoia. There is a kind of genetic fear which is a direct result of the state of mind of the parents at the moment of the sexual act. The state of the mind can influence, can damage the quality of the child's consciousness. If a person is suffering from genetic fear, a pathological condition, that fear is not related to any specific object, being, situation or challenge, it is not related to anything in life. It is just there, a permanent state of reluctance, of hesitation, embarrassment, absence of self-trust and so on. But if it is not a pathological condition, then what is it?

Does fear exist without being related to anything? Fear by itself, can it exist? Or does it exist in relation to the act of living? Supposing we are not acquainted with the physical conditions of Antarctica, we have no information and it becomes necessary to go to those parts. Then I would say I am afraid to go. There is a fear of going to those distant lands about which we have no information whatsoever, we don't know anything about the climatic conditions, the available food, the kind of people living there, their culture, their conditioned reflexes. When there is ignorance or lack of information, then the psycho-physical structure is not willing to expose itself to those situations, and we say; "I am afraid to go." This fear, this hesitation, this resistance to exposure can be eliminated by equipping ourselves with the necessary information, through

books, through individuals, or through other means.
Fear due to ignorance can be eliminated.

There can be a resistance to the act of living, of moving in relationship. If I have accepted certain theories about life, certain norms and criteria of success and failure in relationships, that acceptance of theories, of norms, of criteria, of value structures obviously creates an inhibition within me. Unless I am confident that I am going to succeed according to those theories, be up to the mark according to the norms and criteria, there is no inner willingness to move. Then I will say; "I am afraid to meet the people, or to do the job. I am afraid I will not be adequate enough, my response will not be adequate enough." This inadequacy is related to the acceptance of certain criteria, is it not? It is related to the acceptance of certain theories and ideologies.

Can you visualize a state of consciousness, a state of mind, which has not accepted any theories about life, any standards, any criteria, except for the work in the society we live in? When I have to function as a mathematician, an engineer, a doctor, a lawyer or whatever, I have to acquire knowledge, competence, skill and I have to prove my adequacy, that is a different matter. But in human relationships, besides these functional responsibilities which are compulsions of the socio-economic structure in an industrialized civilization, is it necessary to base our relationship with

one another, and even with oneself, on some theories, norms or criteria?

If I have not done this, if I have not indulged in the acceptance of the past, then I don't measure my responses in terms of adequacy or inadequacy. I say this is what I am, this is what I can do, and I do it! Then I do not compare myself with others, then I do not judge myself according to a foregone value structure. I pour the content of my being without any inhibition or reservation, that's all I can do. Where is the question of fear then? Fear is an artificially stimulated attitude towards challenges, as an approach to life.

There can be another kind of fear. Living implies on the physical, as well as the psychological level, exposure to pleasure and pain , it cannot be avoided. Pleasure is an agreeable sensation to your physical organism, it can be an agreeable sensation to the psychological structure, and pain is perhaps a disagreeable sensation. So the exposures to these agreeable or disagreeable sensations cannot be avoided in life. The recording of sensations into agreeable, pleasurable, or painful is something that cannot be avoided both on the physical and the psychological level. But that is not the issue, and that is not the problem.

The problem is created when there is a desire to repeat that pleasurable sensation, or to withdraw from life

because of the unwillingness to expose oneself to disagreeable, or painful sensations. The desire to repeat the pleasurable experience, or sensation crystallizes into "this is what I like." A like is a crystallized attitude towards pleasure. And again, a dislike is a crystallized or rigid attitude towards the occurrence of pain. Misery begins with the formation of likes and dislikes. Then you verbalise: "I like this , I hate or dislike that." And repeated verbalization, audibly or inaudibly, leads to the formation of a preference or a prejudice. So when one knows that there is going to be an exposure which could be painful, or which might not be pleasurable, then there is a resistance to that exposure, which you call fear.

If life is allowed to remain simple, at the level of registering pain and pleasure as sensations and not forming any likes and dislikes or crystallized preferences and prejudices, would there be any manner of fear in relationship? You go through the exposure, pleasant people, unpleasant people, aggressive people, people with gentleness, care and concern, those who behave in a decent way towards you, those who are undignified, indecent, you go through all that, taking it all as a part of the game. Do you see then that fear is not there?

Fear based on ignorance can be eliminated. Fear based on the acceptance of theories and criteria can be eliminated, and fear based on preferences and

prejudices can also be eliminated, if we really want to move out of fear.

There is another variety of fear and that fear is resistance to facts that cannot be dodged or avoided. One is going to die, death or dying is a part of human life and living. I don't like the fact that the connection will be snapped completely with whatever I have acquired, owned, possessed, taken care of with great affection, with whatever I have cultivated physically, verbally, psychologically, I don't like the fact that I will never be able to come back to it. As I understand the implications of dying and death, there is an inner, un verbalized resistance to the fact of dying, to the fact of death, and I say: "I am afraid of death."

My friends, what I am trying to share with you is that fear is nothing but an inner resistance, it has no content apart from this resistance, this unwillingness which gets reflected into the nervous system in the form of hesitation, embarrassment, being perplexed, being passive, going slow etcetera, etcetera. Perception of life as it is, and the willingness to go through the odds of life: the pleasure, the pain, the sorrow, the joy, the meeting of and parting from people, the glory of birth and the majesty of death, if it is a natural death, sailing away from the visible, the tangible, the physical, a transportation into the unknown and the unknowable, into the mysterious depths of life. Obviously death is not

the end of life nor is birth the beginning, it is a dance of energies that emerge from emptiness at one point and merge back into the same emptiness at another point.

It is vitally necessary to look at fear, it is a word, a name given to a movement of energy within us. But if we utter the word fear, and then get bogged down by its meaning and try to run away from it, then it will not be possible to set ourselves free from it. To the newcomers who have come for the first time, one would say look at fear. When there is a movement of energy within you, and you have been conditioned to give the movement the name of fear, please do not try to cover it up with any theories at all, do not try to escape. Life is for living and not for escaping from it.

Life is both for living and dying, and not for escaping from either of them. So one looks at it, one looks at the movement taking place within, be it fear, jealousy, anger, or violence. Let me be with the fact of that movement and observe rather carefully what that movement is doing to my whole organism. There is a tremendous beauty in being with the fact without wanting to mould, shape, or change it, just being with it, looking into it piercingly and penetratingly. It is worth experimenting.

The penetration of perception may change the very nature of the fact, and the fear may disappear into a marvellous relaxation. It may result in an unconditional

relaxation which will remove the burden of inhibitions, reservations etc. This perception, free of words, names and value judgements, leads to a communion with the fact. Then the dynamism of the fact and the dynamism of the act of perception mingle together. There is an interaction between the energy of fact and the energy of perception which eliminates instantaneously what you call the problem, without you doing anything at all.

Enquiry involves the whole of life, the whole of you. When you conduct such experiments of perception, of observation, you are educating your psychophysical organism into sensitivity. It is not knowledge that makes you sensitive, it is learning that makes you sensitive.

Perception free of verbalization sharpens sensitivity, it deepens perception itself. Let us not be bogged down by the word fear and say that fear is second nature, that fear is incurable. It is just a resistance. We have been conditioned to resist certain facts. If this conditioning is understood properly and completely, that understanding deconditions the consciousness.

Now, may we turn to the other word, violence. Can we move out of violence? We have seen how action free of fear is possible. Living in freedom from fear is possible. Let us now proceed and look at something a little more complex which you call violence. The culture which we live in is a violent culture. A competitive society cannot

escape the culture of violence. When competition and the habit of comparison, of comparing oneself with others, is not restricted to the political and economic fields of action, but is extended to every psychological relationship, it is impossible to avoid violence.

Please do see with me that when I compare myself with another, I am trying to escape from the fact of my being. I don't like myself as I am, why? I am comparing myself with someone more beautiful, more brilliant, richer than me, popular with other people, respected and so on, I am comparing myself, doesn't that imply an escape from what I am? And is that not the beginning of violence against myself? When I try to manipulate my behaviour and appear to be different from what I am inwardly, am I not committing violence against myself? Comparison leading to manipulation, pretensions, hypocrisy, it is all violence and we commit that violence. It is not only when you put your finger on the trigger that you become violent in a fraction of a second, we are violent all the time.

So, if I want to move out of violence I will have to find out the roots of violence within me and purge my psyche of those roots of violence. If I want to make my husband or wife agree with me, whether it is a question of food, the nature of the dishes that I prepare for a meal, the choice of clothes, or going to a movie, a holiday or a vacation, if there is an assertion on my part and I insist that my way of thinking is more correct, is better than

yours, and you do the same with me, then there is what you call a clash. A clash is a subdued violence. Supposing my partner wants something different and it's not a question of something fundamental, and I say, in a very relaxed way, without feeling a martyr complex, let us do it your way, what happens?

The tensions, clashes, conflicts in family situations, related to the details of life, don't they smell of violence? Even the four walls of the house stink of violence, because that is the way we live. The psychology of confrontation, an assertive psychology indulging in aggression intentionally or unintentionally, in obstinacy, in infatuation, you know, followed by discussions at the dinner table, or in the living room, are not for sharing or exchanges, they are clashes of the ego. Relationships become quite a burden, a stress and strain on the neurochemical system. And what about the secret conspiracies that we go through without verbalization, trying to carry them out on one another, in organizations, in institutions, in family situations, in political parties, in governments!

We are the world, what we do in the privacy of our rooms and in family life is exactly what is done by politicians at the level of the nation state, or internationally. The quality is not different, only the scale is different, the intensity and the brutality is greater, that's all.

Do we really want to set ourselves free from violence? Are we interested in action free of violence, in living free of violence altogether? Then we will have to face the centre of the me, of the I, the ego, the self, understand its mechanism, how its movement is acquisitive and assertive and explore another source of perception and responses.

You cannot change the nature of the I, the me, the self, it is a conditioned energy, trained through millions of years to behave in a particular way, the I, the me, dividing itself from the not me, cluttered with the urge for security, stimulating what you call fear, is going to behave in this way. Its acquisitiveness, its faculty of memory, retaining what has been acquired, is useful at the level of thought and knowledge which have to be exercised in society, in discharging responsibilities as an economic man, as a political man, as a social woman, it is relevant there. That training, that conditioning has its own utility and relevance in life. But if that is the centre or the source of perception and response in all human relationships, in all the measurements and evaluations of one another, then I think there is no possibility of setting ourselves free from what we call violence.

If you are interested in fighting against the external manifestations of violence, you can join some antinuclear group, carry on demonstrations, join peace

movements, be one of the demonstrators, work with the United Nations, Peace Committees, you know, that is also one level of feeling satisfied that one is working towards creating a world without war, a world without violence. One is not belittling the movements and their work. It is done in the external world, on the intellectual level, it is related to minimizing the possibility of wars, economically or politically speaking. It is preventing war, not eliminating violence. Please do see the difference between the two. That prevention at the economic, or political level is important. Those who are satisfied with that and do not feel concerned about rooting out violence completely from the human psyche itself, beginning with oneself, they can join these groups and movements and contribute towards the propagation of a peaceful way of living.

Sitting here with you and talking about this problem, one is reminded of the old days, thirty years ago, when one was working in the World Peace Brigade, with the Reverend Michael Scott, with Mr. Kaunda the President of Zambia, with Martin Luther King who was shot dead. But freedom from violence as a part of daily living cannot result only from preventive measures used for the prevention of wars. Is there peace in the Middle East? There may not be war, but is there peace? Is there peace between India and Pakistan, in Yugoslavia, and in so many other parts of the world?

What is our concern? Is it a concern for preventing wars? I wonder if any of you listened yesterday to a very important interview that took place with the Russian President Yeltzin, in which he made a very basic, fundamental point. He said he appreciated the treaty between President Gorbachov and President Bush for minimizing the nuclear arsenal, but he asked what is the use of minimizing by fifty percent the nuclear arsenal when only five percent can destroy the entire world? If we want a world without war, he said, we'll have to work for a hundred percent elimination of the nuclear arsenal, and he promised the people of Russia, and the rest of the world to work towards that. That has an importance.

But here, in a religious gathering where we are ploughing the psyche for the exploration of a new culture and a new civilization - because the old civilization is getting dismantled day by day, piece by piece - we have to probe deeper and I was, therefore, sharing with you the possibility of eliminating the roots of violence by exploring an alternative source of perception, an alternative source of responses which will result in a different texture in our mutual relationships that will not have the odour of violence, that will not stink with any concealed desire for assertion or aggression.

You must have seen that we are tackling the questions together, not just by giving answers. Answers can be

given in a couple of minutes, but that is not the purpose. This is not an academic gathering where someone is asking the question and someone else is supplying the answer. We are digging into the questions together, we are probing together and that requires time and unadulterated attentiveness. Let us turn to one more question.

QUESTION:

Are we aware of the sounds around us when we are in deep meditation? Is it possible to be aware of the inner and the outer simultaneously?

VIMALA:

We are moving away from fear and violence to look at this issue of meditation and awareness of the inner and the outer. Let us be very careful with each word, because if a wrong word is used, our enquiry will go astray. "Are we aware of the sounds existing around us when we are in deep meditation?" That is the first part of the question.

What do we mean by aware? What is awareness? Are we acquainted with that energy of awareness? And what do we mean by the word meditation, when we are in deep meditation? Can the we, the I, the you, be in meditation? The we or the I, that crystallized centre of consciousness, that conceptual ideational centre which

gets crystallized by our identification with it, can the I, the we, be in a state of meditation?

What do we mean then by meditation? Is it a psychophysical activity; that I manipulate some postures of the body, manipulate chemicals and minerals in the body, take expanding drugs or whatever, chant certain mantras and with the help of that sound energy stimulate a chemical state in my physical organism? Is that what we call meditation? Is it an artificially, chemically manipulated state? Is it something manipulated with the help of Tantra Yoga, Mantra Yoga, concentration, stimulation of certain vital nerve centres in the body? Is that what we call meditation?

My friends, as far as the speaker is concerned, meditation is neither a psychophysical activity, nor is it a consequence of any such activity. It is a state of consciousness percolating all the layers of being; the psychological, the physical, the sensual, etc.. It is a state of being, of organic being, a state that permeates all the layers of the being.

We cannot be in a state of meditation here when we sit quietly, when there is abstinence from speech and we feel a kind of peacefulness. That quietness, that peacefulness, or the touch of inner space and quietness, creates an illusion of silence, and I say I was in silence. It only implies that I had felt a kind of

peacefulness, of quietness, as the inner space was absolutely uncluttered.

Silence can never be an experience of the mind. It cannot be an attribute of the mind. Quietness, peacefulness, steadiness, being undisturbed concentration, these can be experiences of the mind, attributes or qualities of the psychophysical organism. Silence, as we have seen yesterday, is a different dimension altogether where conditioned energies of movement, physical, verbal, psychological, discontinue, and the movement of unconditioned energies gets activated.

When we sit quietly, what happens is that the quality of consciousness gets influenced by it. Let us differentiate consciousness from awareness. Consciousness is a conditioned energy. I am conscious of fifty people sitting in this room. The consciousness is a conditioned energy which can relate itself to the things and objects outside the skin. It can relate to one particular or many particulars. It requires an object to relate to. You are conscious of the tree, you are conscious of the sunshine, you are conscious of the doors in this hall, of its windows. Consciousness is a conditioned energy which gets related to particulars, one or many. It is a psychophysical energy. If you train it specially, then it can work in a multi-dimensional way, it can be related to the outer and simultaneously to the inner, but usually it does not operate in this way.

If you are engrossed with your thoughts, your memories, then the relation between the consciousness and the outer gets snapped away, you may be sitting in the room and not notice anything; books, shelves, windows, lights, curtains, carpets, nothing will be noticed if you are engrossed in the inner. But it is possible to train and equip this consciousness, which is capable of multi-dimensional movement, to be conscious both of the outer and the inner.

So, you may sit quietly and be conscious of the sounds surrounding you and conscious of the sounds operating within your body, that consciousness can be simultaneous if it is trained. Otherwise there will be a sequence, a sequential relationship. At this moment, a fraction of a moment, you are conscious of the sound existing outside, at the next moment, immediately, you are aware of the sound of your breathing inside. It is a question of educating, training and equipping that conditioned energy. Have you not seen people working in the circus, how their bodies, the same human bodies as ours, are trained to develop specific powers. Those powers exist potentially in your and my body but we have not developed them. In the same way consciousness functioning in the inner and the outer simultaneously is possible.

Awareness has nothing to do with the mental movement, it is not of the mind, it is not a conditioned energy

touched by human ingenuity, trained, conditioned, etc. It seems to be the perfume of creativity that we share with the cosmos. It seems to be the perfume of the energy of intelligence. Creativity is expressed in our lives in the form of intelligence, a non-cerebral, non-glandular, non-muscular energy, a marvellously subtle energy that seems to permeate the whole cosmos. It is permeating the emptiness of space between you and me right now and here! So awareness is not of the mind. It is an all permeating, subtle energy, and it being all permeating, it moves holistically. The I is not aware, it is not capable of containing that energy, which is velocity, which is depth, which is intensity.

The I deals with words, thought, knowledge. It is gifted with consciousness which is cultivated, enriched, developed, etc., as the biological structure is gifted with the impulses of appetite, thirst, sex, sleep - marvellous instincts moving in the form of impulses in the body, creating their own compulsions, enriching our lives. If there was no appetite, there would be no possibility of a relationship with the outer world, the vegetable kingdom. If there was no thirst, there would be no scope, no inclination in the whole organism to get related to water. The biological organism is endowed with instincts and impulses.

The psychological structure is conditioned and trained by human civilization and development to have

consciousness, or conditioned energy capable of relating to the particular with a specific motivation, etc.. And there is awareness which is the energy of un-individuated, non-divided, non-fragmented wholeness of life. When the I consciousness discontinues its movement, when the me, the self, the ego moves not, when there is no movement of thought inside, then in the emptiness of that silence the energy of intelligence, the energy of creativity, becomes operative.

For that awareness, that energy, there is no division of inner and outer, please do see this. Perception through intelligence is not a physical perception, it is a kind of perception always related to the whole, to wholeness, to indivisibility. It is related to that which is in its magnificent emptiness, whether you call it wholeness, emptiness or the absolute ground of existence, it is just the same. We may use different terms to indicate the same fact.

So my friends, awareness is not inhibited by a subject/object relationship. One cannot say "I was aware of this." Colloquially, for the sake of dialogue, we use the term "I". But we do not use the term with care and concern, we are not even conscious of the etymological meaning! So we use the word loosely, "I was aware of this", "I am aware of that." But for an enquirer of the meaning of life, the distinction between awareness as an energy permeating the whole human being, and

consciousness as a conditioned energy operating neurochemically in the human body, is very vital.

Only when the thought-structure does not move, when the mind or the conditioned energies have discontinued their motion, does the state of meditation or the dimension of meditation come about. In that state there is only glorious creativity or intelligence which permeates and vibrates in your whole being, from the crown of your head to the tip of your toes. You become a fountain of that energy . And as there is no division of inner and outer for it, no division of mine and thine in it, the question of simultaneity does not arise.



5 September 1991

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION:

You seem to be very optimistic about the development of the human mind, and yet the world has not changed in spite of Buddha and Christ?

VIMALA:

The world has changed due to Buddha and Christ, in spite of the churches and in spite of the Buddhist organizations. When one is intimately and directly involved with life, related to life, there is no scope for forming an attitude towards life. Optimism is an attitude towards life, it is an approach to life which connects you with life indirectly. You do not need any optimism, pessimism, enthusiasm, or indifference towards life, when at every moment of your waking consciousness

you are already in the stream itself, in the movement of life itself. Those who are afraid to swim stand on the banks of the river of life, of the river of relationships, and measure the depth, speed, momentum, coolness, hotness, etc. of the water. But, one who plunges into life does not require any measurements at all, any attitudes, any approaches.

Could it be that the world did not change in spite of Buddha and Christ, because the human mind was in the habit of looking for a saviour, waiting for someone to work for their redemption. When you wait for a saviour to save you, to work for your redemption and set you free of your sins, you become a passive consumer of ideas, of doctrines, of theories. You accept their authority, you swallow their words without digesting them. I think the spiritual consumerism that the human race has lived by through untold centuries, accepting authority, imitating words, waiting to be saved, has caused a psychic lethargy, a psychic laziness and passivity.

Now we have seen that we cannot be saved that way. We have to work for our own salvation, for our own liberation or enlightenment. Psychic or spiritual acceptance of authority has lost its relevance. That is one factor in our favour, it has created a compulsion to exercise our brains, to exercise our sensitivity, and understand life.

Secondly, it seems to me that in the East as well as in the West it was considered necessary to retire from life, to withdraw from responsibilities, withdraw from relationships, in order to live a religious life. You joined an order of monks or nuns, you became a renunciate or a disciple, and then you enquired about the meaning of life, the mystery of godhood, the secret of eternity. It was done in isolation. Every culture, every society, maintained a class of religious teachers, preachers and enquirers, and looked after them, just as you maintain an army, a militia, to save you from foreign invasion. People used to join religious orders and the rest of the society was happy to pay a weekly, or a bi-weekly visit to a temple, church, or mosque, feeling assured that they were going to be saved. This enquiry, this exploration of the divinity in isolation has become irrelevant.

We are talking about self-discovery that takes place in the midst of relationships. Do you see the change? First, no authority of individuals, one has to become one's own saviour or redeemer. And secondly, the enquiry, the exploration, the experimentation has to be conducted in the midst of relationships, where you are, in your own home, family situation, job situation, political life, economic life. Relationships are the occasions for self-discovery. They are the occasions for the exploration of peace and love and freedom .

Thirdly, it seems to me that at the end of the twentieth

century, mankind has discovered that there is nothing like an individual mind, an individual ego, an individual self or me, for whose liberation one has to work. This psychological myth has been exploded in the second half of this century. It has been discovered and accepted by the human race that there is one global human consciousness, which has been conditioned in various ways.

The movement of the mind is the movement of the conditioned neurochemical system in the body. Conditionings are fed into the human organism with the help of words, ideas, symbols and measurements, they are all imprinted on the human organism. And the mental movement is nothing but a replay of these conditionings. So the fear of mind and mental movement is disappearing from the human consciousness. The global human consciousness realizes the built-in limitations of the mechanism and anatomy of the mind, and is learning to handle this neurochemical conditioned energy in a competent way.

I think the invention of the electronic brain, the computer, the calculator, has helped the human race. Science and technology have confronted us with a new context, that was not available in the days of Buddha, Christ, Rama, or Krishna. The repetitive mechanistic nature of the mental movement has been exposed and it feels so childish to worship the movement of mind, to worship its reactions, to make a big fuss about its

anxieties, worries and brooding, which are just cerebral habit patterns, neurochemical habit patterns.

So whether the world has changed or not due to Buddha or Christ, the world is changing now, right before our eyes. It is not a political or an economic change, but the quality of the human consciousness is changing rapidly. The friend who is talking to you has wandered over the globe for the last thirty years, she has seen how the young are free from hypocrisy and pretensions. They are more honest with themselves and others, they are not so tortured by the fear of what others may say.

We are living in a transitory period of human culture, the old norms, criteria and values have collapsed and the new ones have not yet emerged. The youth all over the world are struggling to form a new ethos for the nuclear age. Having seen how thought is nothing but memory, how mental movement is nothing but a conditioned energy contained in the neurochemical system, the human race has no time to waste on pampering and worshipping the movement of mind and thought. It will learn to use it in its relevant field of action. This it has to do choicelessly, there is no alternative.

Have you seen the intermingling of races and cultures taking place, due to jet aircraft? People now travel from one end of the globe to the other. This intermingling of races, cultures, religions and temperaments, due to the

economic interweaving and intertwining of the trends of life, of political interaction, has loosened the grip of identification with a nation, a race or a religion. Without our conscious effort to do so, we are no longer in the grip of those ideas. We look upon ourselves as global human citizens.

I do not know if you have noticed the emergence of a planetary consciousness? This consciousness has not yet found a language to express itself in an organized systematic way, but it is manifesting itself in a hundred and one different ways in every part of the globe. There seem to be particular efforts conducted by youth groups, not connected with one another, indicating that a change in the quality of human consciousness is taking place due to the compulsions that the human race has created for itself through science, technology, means of transport and communication, the electronic media and so on.

The events that took place in the Middle East one year ago, would have exploded into a world war twenty-five years ago. Even the events taking place in the Soviet Union would have exploded into a huge civil war, chaos and anarchy. Have you not noticed the intervention of the United Nations Security Council? What is this concern? To avoid nuclear explosions? What is this environmental consciousness doing? Yes, there are signs of growing neurosis, violence, terrorism and militancy,

these are the remnants of the decaying civilization, the hangovers which are going to be extinguished under their own burden and weight.

I only wanted to say that the relationship with spirituality, the methodologies of self-discovery have changed. You don't need a Christ or a Buddha any more, it is the human beings themselves who, with their individual and collective initiatives, in utter freedom, are going to find out what is beyond thought, beyond time and space, and live related to them in an unprecedented way.

QUESTION:

What you say is very absorbing. But by the end of the session one feels exhausted. Is it due to the lack of purification you talk of?

VIMALA:

Could it be that we are not used to live deeply, exerting ourselves at every moment to find out whether we are living in freedom or passively out of a habit pattern, relying on authority? And here, when you come to a camp and we spend the mornings together, the speaker throws you completely on yourself and makes each one of you work hard.

It is not a dishing out of mantras, techniques or methods. We are working together, looking at the psychological

facts of life, listening to words, looking at the facts indicated by them, grasping the truth which exists behind the facts. It is hard work if one is not used to living attentively, alertly, but just passing the days and nights following the patterns of habits, norms and criteria passively. Then this intellectual exertion, this exertion of intense alertness tires you.

Here one is not asked to accept any theory, one is not given any spiritual fast-food or precooked food, though we are used to them, not only on the physical level but also intellectually. In the consumerist culture in which we live, we are used to being given precooked entertainment, precooked ideologies, doctrines, theories. All we have to do is swallow, consume, no responsibility to think for ourselves, to observe, to watch or to understand for ourselves.

My friends, this consumerist culture, extending from physical to spiritual life, has deprived us of the charm of living, of the fun of living, of the touch of sanctity and holiness in our lives.

Maybe what we do here is tiring: looking jointly step by step, logically, at the facts of our life, understanding them, and correlating that understanding with our daily living, so that the perfume of sacredness, which is the breath of understanding, which is the light of clarity, permeates our lives.

When one talks about purification one does not use the term in a moral sense of pure or impure. One uses the term in a scientific way: a system is impure when there are toxins in it. In our physical, verbal and psychological way of living there are impurities, there are imbalances. Impurity does result in an imbalance, doesn't it? So we re-educate ourselves, by sitting down and saying: "Let me find out what kind of food agrees with the body?" Not what I like to eat, but what agrees with the body! Then whatever agrees with the body will be prepared in an aesthetic and healthy way, and given to the body. The relationship with food will not be based on habit, on consumerism, it will be a creative relationship with diet, a creative relationship with the movements of the body, the exercising and sleeping of the body.

So you re-educate yourself in every relationship, leading to the elimination of imbalances, and when the impurity of imbalance is eliminated there is purification. Maturity is a kind of purification. Clarity of understanding is a kind of purification. If we have never looked at our relationship with food, with clothes, with sleep, the kind of bed that we use, then naturally there is not that vitality or there is not the strength required for the exploration into that which is beyond thought, beyond time and space. We are accustomed to move with the conditioned energies in the realm of the known.

If you turn to meditation, which allows the conditioned

energies to discontinue their movement, we enter the realm of vulnerability, of exposure to the unknown, unconditioned energies contained in our own bodies. We require some neurological strength and vitality for this. This self-discovery, this self-understanding, beginning with verbal enquiry, and non-verbal observation, proceeding to unconditional relaxation, is something we have not done before, and therefore maybe one gets tired.

It seems necessary to shed all passivity to become aware of how much one lives out of habits, the habit of conforming to authority, to conform to existing patterns, to find out the amount of slavery, the amount of time spent in living mechanically, repetitively. Then perhaps the encounter with the amount of slavery will create a pain, an agony. It is the contact with the content of bondage, the encounter with the nature of bondage that will create the sorrow that I have been living inattentively, I have been living with the past. I have never been in contact with the timeless present or eternity. I was living second hand, third hand, and I think that sorrow, that agony of having spent perhaps twenty, thirty, forty or even fifty years in passivity, in inattention, will give an edge to the enquiry and generate a momentum with a sense of urgency.

If such communications as you have gone through here can induce a sense of energy, then the speaker would be

satisfied. You see, when we go to religious gatherings or camps, we look for ready-made things, prepared things to be swallowed, to be absorbed and taken home. We are looking for new authorities, please do see this.

Once there was a person who went around the world and communicated, in his style, that self-discovery does not require any authority, no authority, no guru. People listened to that person and said no guru outwardly, but inwardly, inaudibly they said no guru except you! He said no authority, they said no authority, but inwardly no authority except you! You see we are so afraid of freedom, we are so afraid of life and living. We want to save ourselves from taking a plunge into the stream of relationships without defense mechanisms. We are afraid of spontaneity, we are afraid of our own intelligence. And my friends, to be religious is to be able to live directly, personally, first hand, to be vulnerable to the pains and pleasures, the honours and humiliations, the sorrows and joys of life.

We may make mistakes, we may have to wade through failures, so what! We will discover the correct way of living, the failures and mistakes will teach us, you know, there is much fun in learning without being taught. To be religious is to learn without being taught. You hear the talks, you read the books, you discuss with friends. But ultimately it is you who learns?

It is not acquiring knowledge. Acquiring knowledge is necessary for having a job and earning a livelihood, that we shall do. But when it comes to living, the relationship with your body, with nature, with non human species, with human beings, that has to be learned by oneself. So being accustomed to acquiring knowledge, this procedure of learning, this movement of learning, when you are thrown back on yourself, is going to tire in the beginning. I hope you do not mind getting exhausted and sweating a bit, intellectually.

When we learn, we discover the meaning, we understand it and we live our own understanding. There is dignity in this, then you become an individual, not a personality developed by society. Rooted in your own understanding, in the freedom of the clarity of understanding, your life has a new glow of freshness. You become a real individual, one who will not be divided and fragmented by any compulsion whatsoever. Then your relationship with life will be unique.

It will not be the relationship with life that your parents had, your leaders had, or your religious teachers had, it will be your own. To be religious is to be able to live, and to live implies getting related to everything and every being that comes your way, that is thrown your way, as a challenge by the cosmic intelligence. You respond. We could have gone on with this, yet we have to turn to one more question.

QUESTION:

How can we deal with suffering in and around us, without getting lost?

VIMALA:

Do we know what suffering is, or do we confuse it with sorrow? There is sorrow in life which cannot be eliminated or wiped away. For example life has death built into it, you can't imagine life without death. Getting born, growing, decaying, dying, that is the dance of life. Like individuals, races and cultures also visit the planet and disappear when they have lost their dynamism. Species also visit the planet, inhabit the planet, and get extinguished when the potential is exhausted.

Now this death which is an irreversible separation, is painful and there is sorrow. You live together for ten, twenty or fifty years and in a fraction of time death snaps that relationship, removes the person completely from your life, you cannot do a thing. There is sorrow. That the beauty of life should have in it this tearful, irreversible separation, and yet one has to go through it. If you get lost in self-pity, depressive psychosis or melancholia because someone dies, then you have not seen what life is, how death is a part of life. You have not seen it or you are not willing to face the facts of life. This phenomenon of dying and death is going to be there, so sorrow cannot be eliminated. It has

relevance to the whole human species, to the dance of life.

It is not related to any particular individual, it is not a reaction, it is an experience like the heat, the coldness, the wetness, the humidity of the climate. Sorrow is an experience, it is a marvellous experience. You realize the charm of living together when you become aware that living together can be ended at any moment, in an unpredictable way. Living becomes more beautiful, more fascinating because of this unpredictability of death and dying. Isn't that so? If there were no death and we were going to live with one another endlessly, what would be the plight? My friends, there is charm and fun in living, there is grandeur in living because there is dying.

Now let us turn to the word suffering that has been used in the question. Supposing you are travelling in some tropical country in Africa. You have gone for a walk, and something pricks your hand or foot. There is pain. It is a physical fact that takes place at a given moment in time, at a given location, very limited by nature, it has a momentary existence. Or, a sickness visits you, it may be a congenital sickness or an occasional sickness, a virus infection, or whatever, and there is pain in the body. It is a fact to be lived with. But then how do I react to the fact?

Please do see with me that suffering is a self-generated

reaction towards a fact which is painful. I say: "Poor me, why should I be sick when I wanted to go for a vacation?" And then I nurse that feeling of 'poor me', hour after hour, day after day, and stimulate a continuity which is not there. Continuity given to the reactions by ruminating over them is a self-generated misfortune.

All psychological suffering is generated by us through our reactions to the facts of life. I say: "Poor me! we were friends, or lovers, we lived together and my beloved turns away." It is a painful fact. It is going to pierce the heart like an arrow, oh yes. But then why did she turn away, why did he turn away? I did so much for him, I did so much for her! We go on recollecting what we did for the partner, and how he or she was, or is, ungrateful. We dwell on that. We don't accept the fact, inwardly there is a resistance to the fact, a wishing away of the fact, wanting the person to come back and that doesn't happen. The person has turned away. In my mind I imagine that he or she has come back. I go on wishing for it, and go into the past, digging for the dead, bringing back the memory, increasing the suffering.

If the thought or memory does not provide continuity to a reaction that has taken place at one moment, in relation to one fact, there will not be suffering. Psychological suffering is self-generated. To be religious is to end all psychological suffering whilst you are in the

midst of life and relationships. I can't help anyone else in ending their suffering, if suffering is not ended here. If you do not know how to swim, you cannot help a person who is drowning. You may plunge into the water, and in your efforts to help a friend you will drown yourself. This habit of suffering, this addiction to suffering, this glorification of suffering has to end before one can help those suffering around oneself.

We have discriminated between sorrow and suffering. Sorrow cannot be ended. As long as there is love in the human heart, sorrow shall be there as the converse of love. As long as there is a non-rational, non-logical sensitivity, a sense of unity with life, a sense of belonging to the whole of life, sorrow shall be there. Love and sorrow go together. Life and death go together. Living together and the possibility of separation always coexist. But suffering can be ended. When we learn to accept life, to fight against injustice without creating a martyr complex within ourselves, then it is possible to walk through the duality of pleasure and pain, the duality of acceptance and rejection without ever being contaminated by what is called psychological suffering.

Let us look at this occurrence of suffering from a slightly different angle. If you and I have no images about ourselves which we try to project in our behaviour, images that we want others to recognise and respect, if

we have no images whatsoever about ourselves - as a learned person, a cultured person, a gentle person, a religious person, an intelligent person, or whatever - will there be a possibility of getting hurt? Will there be a possibility of suffering in a consciousness which is not touched at all by this image building occupation?

Whenever I say I am hurt, it is the ego that gets hurt, because the ego had imagined itself to be of a certain status, stature, class or caste. If the myth of the ego having any factual content is exploded, and its existence as a conceptual contrivance is understood, will there be suffering? There might be a momentary hurt when somebody behaves in an unpleasant, undignified way or tries to humiliate you, there will be a hurt, a prick, but then it ends. You live through the pain of that occurrence of hurt completely, at that moment, and then it ends. We are talking about an alternative culture, an alternative way of living, an alternative dynamics in human relationships, a new dimension of consciousness. Instead of nursing the memory, instead of transferring the hurt to memory in the form of pain, if one lives through it at that moment and ends it completely so that it leaves no residue or scar behind, will there be suffering? Human beings who aspire to travel to mars, neptune or the moon and have colonies there, should not be afraid of exploring new dimensions of consciousness within themselves, exploring a new culture, a new way of living altogether.

Is suffering not related to identification with the ego, which is just an idea? Has suffering any basis? Hurt has a basis, pain has a basis, they are physical sensations. The psychological aesthetic sense gets hurt, that is understandable. But is it not memory that gives it continuity? If we learn the science of living in which we do not create new memories at all, learning to deal with the old memories, the human past contained in us, in a sane and healthy way, it is possible to end suffering.

As far as physical suffering is concerned, there are millions and millions starving on the planet, they are suffering. If the questioner is referring to that kind of suffering, of course that can be helped. We have to learn to share the planet's resources, we have to learn to share the resources that we produce, the product of human labour and work, not out of charity, not as relief work, but recognising the rights of human beings to share the resources. That suffering can be helped. If you learn the art of helping people by becoming a nurse, then medically, clinically, you can help lessen the suffering of physically and psychologically sick people.

Shall we now turn to the last part of the question? How can we deal with suffering without getting lost? What does that mean? What does the phrase "getting lost" say to you? Does it say without losing your balance, without losing your sanity, without losing your peace?

Have we not seen very competent nurses at work in hospitals, helping serious patients going through acute conditions of fatal diseases? Have you watched their behaviour? They are composed, they radiate peace and comfort, they soothe the patients with their presence, by their looks, their glances, with their words. They do not sit there, next to the patient, and start crying, do they? Oh, poor you, how you are suffering! They don't make the patient put his or her head on their shoulder and cry. They give assurance. Firemen trying to extinguish a fire, have you watched them? They can do their work because they are composed. They do not get overwhelmed by what they see. It is possible to feel sorrow for the suffering of another person, feel it deeply, intensely, and yet retain your cool, your balance, your equipoise.

And as the lighthouse removes the darkness, pierces through the surrounding darkness, helping ships to navigate the vast oceans, in the same way a person in whose life psychological suffering has ended completely and whose consciousness has become a lighthouse, emanating the light of love, the clarity of understanding and the peace of relaxation, can be of tremendous help to the suffering of humanity. But if one has any contradictions within oneself, suppressed conflicts, repressed tensions or ignored contradictions, if one is not whole, if one is divided or fragmented inside, then I think one would get lost. Whenever one has to witness

physical, psychological or transpsychological suffering, if one is swept off one's feet it is because one has not got the vitality to stand one's own ground.

To be religious is to live, and to live is to be free of psychological suffering altogether. Otherwise living would be a constant or deal. We have looked at fear, how the inhibition of fear stimulates suffering, just as the desire to dominate provokes suffering. A consciousness free of fear, an action free of the burden and weight of fear, an action born of your understanding, a choiceless action, is the source of fulfilment. My friends, living is its own fulfilment. The act of living is the only worship which we can offer to the divine, when it does not stink of inner suffering. The ending of psychological suffering is the emergence of love and compassion.

With these words let us conclude the verbal dialogues. I thank every one of you for the cooperation you have given to the speaker. It is only when there are listeners that a dialogue takes place. Listening is as creative an activity as speaking. So the dialogues have been possible because of your active participation. With sincere thanks to each one of you.



SECOND WEEK

8 September 1991

ARE WE REALLY LIVING?

It is going to be with a great sense of hesitation that one would embark upon verbal communication. One has been addressing gatherings, conducting conferences and camps in different parts of the world for the last thirty years or so, but this is going to be the last conference or seminar, not only in Europe, but probably in all the countries in the world. So a great sense of responsibility and hesitation surges up as one embarks upon this verbal voyage.

For the benefit of those who have come for the first time, one would like to point out that these gatherings are verbal explorations, joint explorations for the speaker and the listener, for discovering the meaning of life, the mystery of living, the essence of relationship, and other such significant aspects of life on this planet.

So, please do not treat the communications as discourses, as a relationship between an active speaker and passive listeners. They will be a joint adventure. The speaker will look at facts and share perceptions with the help of words, and the listener, while listening to the words, shall look at the facts indicated by them. Unless there is this creative participation on the part of the speaker and the listener, there will not be a dialogue, there will not be a communication, and there will not be a joint exploration. We shall use the verbal channel to look at the psychological facts that they indicate. So, I do hope that you will join me in this exploration. We have not come here for intellectual stimulation or emotional entertainment.

There was a period in the life of the global human family, perhaps between 1945 and 1980, when people could indulge in the luxury of academic or theoretical study of theology, philosophy, oriental sciences, spiritual practices, and so on, but the world we live in, the context with which we are confronted, is quite a serious one. We have no time to indulge in abstraction, as the socio-political and economic situation is changing practically by the hour. The context of our life, the style of our living, also changes every day due to the fantastic developments in the physical sciences, social sciences, and technological advances. The daily schedule changes with every new gadget that enters your house. The electronic media which keep you company in your

waking hours affect the chemistry and neurology of human beings.

When one has to work for hours together with computers and other electronic gadgets, they do affect and influence not only the biological organism, but also the psychological organism and its functioning. So, together, we will be looking at the facts of our daily living, we will question, with the austerity and mercilessness of a scientist, the validity of our beliefs, not only religious, political or economic, but also our psychological beliefs, our superstitions etc.. This is the implication of the word exploration, and let us not get startled if we deal with the basics of life, the fundamentals of life.

Our questioning might begin by asking ourselves if we are alive, if we are awake, if we are really living, or are we under an illusion of being awake, and alive and living? I hope you do not mind my starting with these fundamental questions. We have hardly five or six days at our disposal, and we will be covering the life of the global human family, the life of the world which is contained in us, in you and me.

Are we really living? What is it to live? Where does living begin? Does it begin with the consciousness of that which surrounds us? Does it begin with the consciousness of the body, the sense organs, their movement? How do

we contact the life around us if we are conscious of it? When we utter the word life, what does it mean for us? Does it mean the house, the apartment, the cottage, the room I live in, the town, the city I live in, the country I live in, the economic, political structures in which I operate? When we utter the word life does it mean the man-made world? Does it mean the material world on the biological and physical level which we can contact with the help of sense organs?

What is life, and what is living? Does life mean the knowledge, the ideas, the theories that we have inherited, acquired or cultivated, and with which we go on playing in our minds, verbally or non-verbally, all the time? What is life? What are we conscious of? And are the physical, the material, the visible, the tangible, and the man-made world of knowledge, ideas and theories separate? Are they compartmental entities, or units? Do the sensual and the psychological constitute the wholeness of life? Or is there something more to life of which we are conscious, of which we are aware? I wonder if we ask ourselves such questions at all?

Presuming, for the sake of our dialogue, that we are conscious of the material world around us, we are conscious of the earth, the skies, the solar systems, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, we are conscious of life with its innumerable forms, shapes, colours and qualities which have not been created by

mankind. It has existed before the human species emerged on this planet, so it has nothing to do with human thought, human philosophy, theology, doctrines but is self-generated. It seems to have its own source of intelligence which keeps the innumerable variety of expressions behave in harmony and orderliness with one another. Are we conscious of that?

How do we reach out towards this world which is not created by man? How do we perceive that self-generated, self-sustained, self-regulated phenomenon of life? It is before us, demonstrating various energies, demonstrating a dance of those energies, their interactions which go on every second of life. How do we perceive that? Because perception seems to be the foundation of contact and interaction.

Do we perceive this phenomenon of life around us, which is accessible to our sense organs? Does the act of perception carry with it the whole paraphernalia of words, names, adjectives, criteria, norms, value structures and measurements? Are we then looking at names, symbols, measurements and ideas, and not at life?

In order to have a first hand personal contact with that which is, is it not necessary for our perception to be purged of knowledge? Otherwise our perception and our contact, our reaction, our use of the so-called material things will be inhibited by theories, descriptions,

definitions and values attached to perception. There will not be an immediacy of contact and therefore, there cannot be an interaction between that which is and ourselves. We are plunging into the deep waters of fundamental questioning which may startle some, but which seems to be extremely important, in order to meet the challenges that await us in daily life.

Perception, carrying with it the word, the name, the measurement, the value, brings back a sensation inhibited by knowledge, and generates a reaction conditioned by the culture and the upbringing. Where then is the contact with life? Where is the essence of living ? Are we not then repeating, propagating, perpetuating human knowledge that has been there for thousands of years?

I hope you will see that no word is uttered in a derogatory sense here. The process of naming and identifying, recognizing, measuring, evaluating, all of which is the essence of human civilization, development and culture, is respected as much by the speaker, as by you. But like a scientist working in a laboratory, we are questioning the validity of relying upon perception, which itself is polluted by knowledge, which is limited, even after looking at it with your eyes. What you derive through that perception is a piece of information as per the inheritance or the acquired knowledge. So, our contact with the self-generated, self-sustained,

marvellous phenomenon of life, on the material level, on the physical level, is indirect, second hand, inhibited by knowledge and experience of our forefathers.

If the foundation of relationship, the foundation of interaction between that which is and ourselves is not corrected, then I wonder if we shall ever meet the phenomenon called life. We will be satisfied calling a tree a tree, and not meeting the 'being' that the tree is. We will be satisfied calling the earth earth, not realizing that earth is a 'being' like you and me, having organic life and intelligence as we seem to have. Then the rivers, the oceans, the mountains, the birds, the animals will be looked upon as objects which have to be subservient to our physical needs and psychological wants, to our ambitions, our desire to dominate, own and possess and the relationship of mankind with nature will get poisoned by these motivations.

Have we not seen it in the industrial civilization that we have built up in the last fifty or seventy five years, how we have disturbed both the environmental and ecological balance, the harmony? How we have polluted the oceans, the rivers, the atmosphere, the ozone layer? They are not ecological, or environmental problems, they indicate the crisis in the human culture. They indicate that perhaps this whole civilization will have to be dismantled. The foundation of relationship with nature, or the phenomenon of life, will have to go through a

drastic qualitative transformation if the planet is to survive and the human species is to survive, leaving aside the question of living in the harmony of friendship.

So, my friends, maybe our perceptions are fragmentary when we look at a so-called object, which is not an object, but a fellow companion of life. Whatever exists on the planet, or perhaps on other planets, are our companions, they are there to share life with us, and we are here to share life with them, not exploit them, not treat them in an indecent, inhuman, cruel way. We have reduced ourselves to a race of planetary plunderers. How can we talk of religion and spirituality unless we transform the quality of our perception and the texture of our contact with that which is around us.

I would like to share with you in this introductory talk, the necessity of purification, of purifying perception, purging perception of words, purging perception of knowledge which divides and fragments. And therefore perception of the wholeness, the interrelatedness, may I use the word the divinity of life, escapes us, the sanctity of life escapes us. Perception is the foundation of contact, the foundation of each relationship which implies interaction of energies. We will enquire and explore, whether it is possible to set perception free of this fragmentary activity, and release it into such a quality that even through the sense organs reaching out towards a particular, the perception makes you conscious

of the interrelatedness of that particular to the whole of life, the wholeness of life, to the indivisibility of life, to the unity of life.

Now, what we call the material, the sensual, the visible, is really speaking energy. Physical sciences have verified for us that matter is nothing but solidified energy. So, when we contact the material, the physical, the sensual, we are contacting energies, and these energies are the perfume of divinity or the ultimate reality of life. Bountiful energies expressing themselves through the fertility of the earth, the electricity of the waters, the solar energy of the sun, and so on, and so on.

Are we conscious of those energies today? I am afraid we are not. We are not conscious of those energies, that gift of life which is so precious, so indispensable for our living. That is why one asked: "Are we living?" If to live is to be related, and if in order to be related it is vitally necessary to perceive, to be conscious of, to have contact with, and then interact, then obviously we have missed something. In the pursuit of knowledge about life, in the pursuit of knowledge about the so-called material world, we have missed this living contact with the essence of life.

Energy is the essence of matter, an energy which is ever changing, which is never static. We might come to that point later on. From morning till night we are

surrounded by innumerable energies appearing before us in various forms, colours, flavours etc., but we are not aware of their proximity. We seek pleasure from the contact, and this pleasure mongering, this search for pleasure has handicapped us psychologically, because life around us is a means to an end to provide us with pleasure. We may go for walks through the woods for the sake of pleasure, or perhaps for the sake of health, but not for the companionship of the wood, the companionship of the birds, the trees, the grass. Unless there is consciousness, there cannot be interaction, and unless there is interaction my friends, there cannot be living together. We coexist on this planet with innumerable beings, but coexistence is not living together. Coexistence does not necessarily lead to the sharing of life.

If our concern is for living, if we are interested in being alive, if we feel it a benediction to have eyes to see and ears to hear, then I think we will have to probe into the secret of purging the perception of knowledge. It does not mean that when I am thirsty I shall not turn to a glass of water. I will deal with the particular in the sense of the particular, but I will be conscious that it is as much an expression of life as I look upon myself as an expression of life. My friends, what I am trying to say is the whole cosmos is our abode, not the house, the city, the town, the Netherlands, England, Poland, Finland, not even the planet, but the whole cosmos! We are

organically related to the interrelated energies, we are organically related to every being that surrounds us, with compassion.

The second dimension of life around us is the man-made world. Society, nations, governments, states, socio-economic, political structures, institutions, human relationships, families, ideologies, theories, organizations etc., it is all a man-made world. It begins with an idea, a concept, it begins with a word and it culminates in the building of structures: a thought structure, a social structure, an economic structure, technological structures. The man-made world is a structured world.

The so-called physical, the material, had no structure. There are beings, there are interactions, there is a wholeness, an interrelatedness. But in the man-made world everything is structured. Please do see, because society, a global human society has been possible due to this exercise of building up structures, arranging them, organizing them with the help of legislation, with the help of militias and so on, and so on.

On the physical level we are with life which is unstructured, we may try to impose or graft upon it the structure of our ideas and concepts, but it does not yield to it. You cannot imprison or capture free nature, self-generated nature, into the framework of your ideas and concepts. It has its own source of intelligence, it has its

own inner order and harmony, and it defies all human efforts towards imprisoning it.

The man-made world is a world of structures which may be an inevitability, but it is a beautiful aspect of human development. We will explore together where this business of structuring began. How did mankind arrive at this activity of ideation or conceptualization, reducing a concrete experience into an abstract idea, weaving those ideas together and building up a thought, organizing the thoughts and developing an ideology, finding a code of conduct to implement the ideology, and so on. Systematically, through untold centuries, this structured human society has been developed. How do we deal with that?

Are we conscious of all those intricacies? Are we conscious of what a thought is, how it functions and operates within us? Where is all the knowledge and human experience contained? Is it in some particular organ, or is it something imprinted on the whole being? Is the whole organism conditioned by human thought, knowledge and experience? If it is imprinted on our whole being then will it not imply that what we call our mental movement, what we call thinking, feeling, willing, reacting, is nothing but a repetitive game. That which has been fed into us gets provoked by the sensual contact and then begins its replay. Is thought then, is mental movement then only a mechanistic replay of the

inheritance? Is that all there is to knowledge? Is knowledge then the past? What has the authority of this knowledge, what has the authority of this conditioning done to our lives?

As we relate to the self-generated physical life with the help of words and ideas, do we relate with each other on the authority of words, ideas and concepts, of definitions, descriptions and frameworks: what a husband should do, what a wife should do, or a girlfriend should do! And what is sexuality? Are we relying upon the authority of the thought structure, the values, the criteria of good and evil, sin and virtue, the description of jealousy, of hatred, of anger? Are we relying on words? Do we identify the movement of energies in our body according to the words we have picked up? Please do work with me, we are here in this beautiful retreat for a few days to work together, because it is a question of human relationship.

After having inhabited the globe for twenty centuries, it has not been possible for us to live in peace and harmony with ourselves, that is to say in peace and harmony with the energies operating within us, nor has it been possible to live in friendship and cooperation with other human beings, even in the family, in society. Why is it that it has not been possible for the human race to set itself free of violence? Are we not surrounded by violence, by militancy, terrorism, guerilla warfare?

Wherever we turn there is violence. More and more violence in daily life, more and more demonstration of irritation, annoyance, anger, bitterness etc. in our daily lives. Why have human relationships gone sour, in spite of so many religions, so many philosophies. What is lacking?

If knowledge could enable us to relate with one another properly, why have we not found the secret of relating with one another in harmony, with a psychology of friendship and cooperation? Why is there always that desire to assert, to be aggressive, to dominate or to depend? It seems to me that in spite of all the knowledge, the vast knowledge in all fields of culture as regard to human relationships, the human race has failed.

Do we want to change the quality of our relationship? Do we want to move from the psychology of confrontation, mistrust, distrust, fear, hypocrisy or pretensions, do we want to move from all that psychological dirt, to a clean dimension of relationship? That is the question. The crisis the human race is facing is a cultural crisis. It is a crisis of the credibility of knowledge and thought. It is a crisis of the credibility of all the theories about godhood. If there is no fear of looking at this psychological dimension, we shall explore together if our relationship can be purged of this bondage of knowledge, so that we can grow into

spontaneity, which is the perfume of innocence and friendship, which is the perfume of cooperative psychology, and so on.

We will have to find out what more there is to us, besides the capacity to think, while co-existing with computers, while living with them. The era of robotism is not far away. What more is there to man? Where is the secret of living? We do not say that computers are alive. Various parts, the software, the hardware of electronic brains, the silicon chips and other materials assembled together, after you feed information into them, they interpret, they can decode the information, they can draw conclusions. But would you say they are living? Then what is more to us that enables us to claim that we are living and they are not?

Lastly, my friends, though we begin with sensual perception, contact with the physical, and we proceed to the man-made world, and interact with the structures, there seems to be a dimension of life which is neither physical nor psychological. The yearning for freedom in every human heart, the yearning for love, for peace in every human heart is not related to any biological instinct, it is not related to any human thought, it is not a part of knowledge. So, it seems to be a transpsychological dimension. One is using the term transpsychological until such time as another expression presents itself.

In spite of witnessing the event of death, witnessing people dying, knowing full well that one has to die some day in some way, some where, why is there a non-verbalized feeling of immortality, of eternity? Why is there something in each human heart that defies the idea of dying? One feels a 'oneness' with something which does not die, a feeling of agelessness. The yearning for perfection, the yearning for purity, for love and peace which is inaccessible to every obstruction, these yearnings are neither born of thought, nor are they born of biological instincts. They seem to be flowers of some dimension which is unnamable for us.

Why does beauty generate a joy different to pleasure? On a moonlit night if you have gone for a walk and you see the beauty of the moon, it gives you joy. You are not going to take the moon home with you in your pocket. On a wintry day sitting outside in the garden, bathing in the warmth and light of the sun, gives you joy. A sensation of pleasure is there, but more than that, there is a kind of joy. So, it seems to me that the possibility of joy and sorrow, love and compassion, unconditional freedom etc., indicate that there is a dimension that is neither physical nor psychological.

In order to live it seems necessary to be aware of these dimensions, to be conscious of their interrelationship, and to deal with the particular on the sensual or psychological level with that awareness. Do you see how

living is a beautifully complex thing? It requires the simultaneity of this three-dimensional awareness. There may be more, but for the sake of dialogue we are enumerating the three, the physical, the psychological and the non-psychological. Only when there is an awareness of the three and their interrelatedness, when there is a consciousness of the particular and an awareness of the whole, then I think it becomes possible to perceive the particular in the light of the whole, to touch the particular with the awareness of the whole and enrich that relationship.

We have asked ourselves the question: "Are we living, what is life, how do we perceive life, how do we contact life, is there an interaction between life and ourselves?" In this introductory dialogue or communication, one has tried to spread the canvass on which we are going to work, starting tomorrow morning.



9 September 1991

THE DIMENSION OF OBSERVATION

We have seen yesterday that our contact with reality begins with seeing. I wonder if we have looked at this occurrence of seeing carefully and grasped the mystery behind it.

We are born with the energy which operates through the eyes, and we call it sight. It operates through the ears and we call it hearing, it operates through the nose and we call it smelling, it operates through the lungs and we call it breathing, and so on. Seeing, hearing, smelling, breathing do not depend upon our volition or choice, they are holistic organic movements. I do hope you have seen this interesting phenomenon.

The moment you are awake and the eyes open, seeing takes place. What a fantastic phenomenon, the organic

energy reaching out through the eyes towards that which surrounds it! It is the organism that sees, it is the organism that hears, that feeds, that moves, whether it is the movement of breathing in or breathing out, the movement you call walking, or the movement of hands, etc., it is an organic movement, a holistic movement, it is not a movement of parts.

If one part of a machine does not function properly, you repair that part. Does it happen that way with us? The limbs of the body are not parts of the body. The body is not a totality, it is a mysterious indivisible wholeness, a non-fragmentable wholeness of life manifested in human form.

The energy, the sensitivity, or the intelligence contained in this human organism functions through the sense organs. So, seeing is an involuntary, organic, holistic movement. Is there a division involved in the movement of seeing? Is that movement born of duality, as subject and object? Or is it a natural, spontaneous interaction between different expressions of life? It is vitally necessary to look at the so-called sensual movements and understand the essence of their functioning.

If something goes wrong with the body the energy of seeing gets affected, does it not? If a person is suffering from chronic constipation, or some stomach trouble, the

quality of the sight is affected. If the organism is suffering from diabetes, or high blood pressure, the quality of hearing and the quality of seeing, not only get affected, they could even get damaged. If one is suffering from chronic anger, the heat generated by that anger affects the sight. If a person suffers from jealousy or fear, the inhibition of fear affects the operation of energy, whether it functions through the eyes or the ears, or other parts. The creativity of that energy gets blocked if there is any disorder in any of the sense organs of the body.

I do not know if I will succeed in sharing with you that the movements of the energy through the various sense organs, that we are born with, are holistic movements. The interaction between that which surrounds us, the life at the physical level, and that which exists in us, can take place spontaneously, enriching each other without consciousness intervening at any level whatsoever. Such is the occurrence of seeing. When does seeing become looking? Perhaps, with the beginning of civilization, the idea of an entity monitoring these energies, controlling them, regulating them, exploiting them, struck the human brain, the idea of a monitor which you call the 'I' consciousness, the me, the self, the ego. So, though the organ sees holistically, the 'I' looks. The I, the me, the self, utilizes the sight for some motivation. The water is seen, but the 'I' looks for a glass of water. Sounds are heard, but the 'I' listens to music.

When the idea of monitoring the energies was introduced, in the process of developing civilization, the interaction became limited, limited by the need. And the need creates a compulsion to relate to a particular. Seeing may not be related to particulars. Particularization of the wholeness of life which surrounds us becomes a necessity, because of our physical needs and compulsions. My need makes me look for a piece of bread, a glass of water, or a particular person. The interaction of energies among beings, among the various expressions of life, is now limited by needs, which is the destiny of the human species.

We have to live in the framework of limitations, and they have their beauty. When the I wants to relate to a particular form of life , to a particular object of life, then seeing gets converted into looking. It is a sustained seeing born of a need or compulsion. You look for a person, you look for a thing, and when the need is satisfied that looking comes to an end. It has a beginning and it has an end. It is circumscribed by the needs and compulsions or the motivations. If that is clear will you proceed with me. We are taking a verbal voyage. We are explorers of reality, we have to navigate through the inheritance of knowledge and learn to look at the facts, so that they reveal the truth concealed behind them, beneath them, or within them.

Looking is sustained seeing, born of a need, or a compulsion or a motivation. When does looking become watching? This morning we are studying together the nuances of perception, the various aspects of perception. If perception is to be set free of knowledge, if it is to be purged of thought and word, we'll have to understand first what perception is, or at least what it means to us. When one watches, it is sustained looking for a purpose, which may be an individual purpose or a group purpose, a collective purpose. For conducting research in the physical sciences, or in the social sciences, you watch. You are registering and recording the movement of that which is being watched without reacting emotionally to it, without accepting or rejecting. Watching, which is sustained looking, is also conditioned and limited, not necessarily by a personal motivation, but by a human motivation. The need may not be a physical need, it could be an intellectual need, it could be a need of wanting to know about the object, to know about the thing or the expression of life and so on.

If we have seen clearly though briefly the difference between seeing, looking and watching, we will have noticed that in the act of looking and watching, thought plays a very important role. In the occurrence of seeing naming is not inevitable. Identification or cognition, comparison or evaluation, is not inevitable in seeing. The sight embraces life in its 'all'ness, in its wholeness, in its interrelatedness. But when I look at

something, I am looking at a particular expression, I have not isolated it from the rest of life, but still I am looking at its particularity. When I watch I am looking at the particularity with the purpose of studying it, analyzing it, dissecting it, in order to use it for human benefit. So the process of naming, identifying, evaluating, assessing comes in to play when the looking and the watching begins. That is how human civilization has flowered.

Languages, fine arts and social sciences could not have been developed if the human ingenuity had not come upon this process of naming, cognizing, identifying, evaluating. These abstract activities, these marvellous ways of relating to the particulars, are the essence, the substance of human civilization. That is how technology and science must have developed. Now, let us proceed to observation.

From looking and watching, we proceed towards observation which is a perception without any reaction whatsoever. The looking and the watching required the division of subject and object, the me and the not me, the I and the thou. In the act of observation one sheds the load of names, evaluations, descriptions and definitions, one lets them drop away completely. In seeing there was no choice. Now there is a choice to set the perception free of division, to set the perception free of the movement of thought.

In observation the movement of organic energy, seeing, is involved. In observation seeing takes place in a renewed way, a revitalized way. That which was involuntary, that which was passive becomes active. The division that was voluntarily accepted and utilized is brushed aside. So there is an alertness that may not be present in the occurrence of seeing, a new sensitivity generated by the alertness. And so the perception taking place in the state of observation is purged of thought, word and evaluations.

We are looking for an alternative source of perception. Our perceptions today, throughout our waking hours, are inhibited by motivations, evaluations, judgements, preferences and prejudices. It is an inhibited conditioned movement. It has lost its elegance and purity. Is it possible to use the division of the me and the not me, and the movement of thought, while moving in the man-made world and relating to the man-made structures, and be completely free of that division when we are living with that which is self-generated, living with nature, living with the cosmos?

Though we are living on the planet earth, cosmos is our abode because life is interrelatedness. The word wholeness, which frightens some people, is used to indicate the spontaneous interrelatedness of all expressions. Parts are interconnected, but the expressions of life are interrelated. Please, do see the difference between the two.

Parts are interconnected and the interconnection, the inner structure is based on a system. Also in knowledge the parts are interconnected as major premise, minor premise and your conclusion; inductive logic, deductive logic, philosophy, and the presumptions, assumptions and conclusions derived from them. But in life, which is a non-structured wholeness, which is an organic, indivisible, non-fragmentable phenomenon, a perception based on a system of thought may not generate a contact and may not lead to sharing of life. I am sorry for taking you into these deep waters, yet it seems so necessary because the cultural crisis that we are facing demands nothing less than a revolution in the quality of consciousness, a revolution in the quality of cognition and perception, a revolution in the quality of our responses.

The demand, the challenge, is for a dimensional transformation and not a patchwork of reforms, of modifications and qualifications in the patterns of behaviour. We are sharing the quest of the whole human race. What we are going through in these seminars is a quest, undertaken on behalf of the whole human family. Our quest, our enquiries, our explorations are not for petty little egocentred desires and ambitions, or for arousing some transcendental powers or experiences, or for acquiring samadhi or satori. We are responding to the challenge which humanity is facing today.

If a mutation or a revolution in consciousness has to take place, it has to begin at the very beginning of perception, the foundation of our contact. Could the state of observation be an alternative source for a new contact, in which the systems of thought have gone into non-action, when words and their meanings have withdrawn completely, gone into abeyance and the organic energies get enriched by the urge to discover the meaning of life, by the urge for a creative interaction between life and ourselves.

You know, this will require learning to observe. Even in a meditative way of living one has to learn to observe, because we are trained to look, to watch, to introspect, to reflect, contemplate, analyze, all activities based on some system of thought, related to some ideology, related to some value structure, related to judgements about life, theories about life, about godhood, divinity. We are trained to look and watch and judge. Can we set ourselves free of this habit of judging, of evaluating, and grow into innocency which is the perfume of emptiness?

Observation is a state of being in which the consciousness is emptied of all conditioning, emptied of all knowledge, emptied of all inherited, acquired and cultivated habits and addictions. We might have to educate ourselves in this new perception purged of thought and knowledge. We might have to spend time with ourselves, as we spend time for cooking a meal,

bathing or exercising our bodies, reading books, getting information from electronic media, etc.. Is there a willingness to expose ourselves to a state where the movement of thought, the movement of conditioning, the movement of habit patterns, is allowed to go into abeyance?

Unless an opportunity is given to the whole organism to let these cultivated movements subside of their own, there is no way of learning. These movements cannot be suppressed or repressed, they cannot be wished away. They cannot be tortured into suppression by adopting some new method or conditioning. We have played with that game of adopting new habit patterns, with the wish of getting rid of the old ones! The new ones become old and the interest fades away, the stimulation withers away, we are back again in the psychological rigidity of a pattern, a framework, a dependency, and so on. We don't want to continue with that game, do we?

An alternative source of perception will have to be probed, explored, within ourselves. We cannot go back to primitive, naive seeing . Seeing is enriched with the urge to learn, the urge to relate, to live. If there is no love for life, if there is no interest in the quality of the act of living, no concern for the quality of our behaviour, the quality of consciousness while we are moving in various relationships, if there is no interest in life and love for life, spirituality has no meaning for such a

person, then eat, drink and be merry, repeat the patterns, project the past, it does not matter if life becomes second hand, and when bored find new stimulants, and so on.

But if there is reverence for life, interest in life, an urge to live, to get related to that which is, to reality, to the wholeness of life, then I think explorations become unavoidable. So is there a willingness to spend some time with myself and with life around me in my daily schedule, and learn observation, grow into the state of observation?

The conditioned energies bring up thoughts and memories, they bring up names and associations, interpretations and descriptions, we are exposed to them, we are exposed to the content of our consciousness, we sit quietly with ourselves and this exposure takes place . We are not there to sit down and introspect, we are not going to analyze or interpret that which is exposed according to some psychological theory of Freud, Adler or Jung, or some Eastern or Western psychologist. But if there is exposure, we go through that exposure, we are not even watching, we are not looking at particulars, but we go through the exposure.

When you are on the seashore, sitting on the sand in a relaxed way, you are in the presence of the mighty

ocean, the vast skies, you may not look at the water, you may not look at the skies, you are simply in their presence. Or you have climbed a mountain top and you are exposed to the freedom of light and winds that exist there, you don't do a thing, you are in the presence of the sun and the sunlight. The exposure results in an interaction of energies and what you call joy takes place as a by-product, what you call peace happens as a by-product of the exposure, which is effortless. This interaction is the nature of energy.

When we spend time with ourselves, sitting in whatever posture that is comfortable, in a way that the breathing can function rhythmically without getting obstructed, (if our posture, sitting, standing or reclining obstructs the movement of inhaling and exhaling of breath, then maybe the alertness, the sensitivity and its operation get affected) so we sit the body in a relaxed comfortable way and go through the exposure. Whatever takes place, there will be a new relationship of being with that which is exposed, without touching it emotionally, without touching it intellectually, with your logic and philosophies, or your preferences or prejudices. Seeing gets steady, the alertness is steady, there is an attentiveness unrelated to particulars, an attentiveness which is not a part of the defence mechanism of the ego, but which is a spontaneous expression of intelligence. So the state of observation is a state of reaction free perception, a state of relaxed spontaneous attentiveness.

To grow into that dimension of perception purged of thought and knowledge is vitally necessary. We may use thought and knowledge if and when necessary, but if we do not remain prisoners of our knowledge and inheritance for twenty-four hours, then our preferences and prejudices, our theories, ideologies and judgements do not interfere with our perception and responses. The state of observation washes the consciousness clean of all addictions to thought and its movement.

You know, it is freedom of perception which is the foundation of contact, which is the genesis of relationship. So, when we spend half an hour in the morning in silence every day, it is not a new ritual. This is a way of learning to be in a state of unconditional, uninhibited exposure to the contents of our being. We are learning this together, so that all fear of being with oneself, with the contents of one's consciousness, gets dispelled.

In the industrialized civilization in which we live, the atmosphere, the conventions, the way of living, is not supportive of such non-verbal explorations. They don't mind conferences, seminars, discussions, where physical and intellectual movements are prescribed and adopted, and discussions about new techniques and methods take place. But the lifestyle is not supportive of non-verbal exploration which is allowed to take place by remaining in a beautiful psychological stillness, being in utter

freedom from the clutches of the I, the me, the ego, which is a monitor regulating and controlling the movement of our energies.

The self, the me, the ego, has been trained to build, thought by thought, brick by brick, an enclosure around itself where it feels safe. What is knowledge if not an enclosure? What is experience if not interpretation of knowledge, interpretation of events of life according to knowledge, according to the inheritance? While relating to the man-made world such enclosures have relevance and we will turn to the man-made world, the enclosures, the systems, the structures, tomorrow morning. We shall look at them squarely to find out how far they are relevant or valid today, or whether they have lost their relevance, and if so what is the alternative..

But this morning one was interested in attracting the attention of fellow explorers towards the phenomenon of organic energy, or intelligence, operating through the various sense organs. I do hope that we have never imagined that the eyes, or the sight, is a different energy from the energy functioning and operating in the ears or the nose. They are not different energies, they are different expressions of the same holistic organic energy. This is the beauty of it, the subtleness of it. So one wanted to attract the attention of friends towards what is called seeing, hearing, smelling, moving etc., as

organic movements, unrelated to the monitor, the ego , the me, not of its choice or volition.

Life is a dance of innumerable energies taking place in innumerable expressions. There is nothing like matter or a material world, they are solidified energies appearing to be stable and static, but moving inwardly all the time. Our bodies also are fields of innumerable energies operating harmoniously in an orderly way.

From the passivity of the occurrence of seeing, from the conditions and limitations of looking and watching, to grow into the dimension of observation, which is purified perception, which is perception purged of thought, word, names, identifications, enriched by the love of life which manifests itself in the urge to find out the meaning of life, to discover the nature of reality. Not to know about it. We have had enough of knowing about nature, knowing about life, knowing about god, all these vast storehouses of knowledge. You may travel to any country of the world and you will come across the verbalized storehouses of knowledge, of theories, dogmas, doctrines, right from god to nature, to the atom, the electron.

Now our quest is not to know about life indirectly, with the help of a word; our concern is direct immediate contact and interaction with reality. In the East, in India, China, Japan, Tibet, etc., they call it meditation, living

meditatively, an alternative way of living, an alternative dimension of consciousness. So, the revolution in consciousness will begin with the humility to expose ourselves to the state of observation.



10 September 1991

INNOCENCY, THE PERFUME OF CREATIVITY

Life is divine, there is no divinity apart from, outside of, or independent of life. Life is divinity. And divinity is creativity where repetition is not possible. Every expression of that creativity, that divinity, is fresh and new. The virginity of the expression does not get damaged by the recurrence of those expressions. It seems to me my friends that to live is to perceive that divinity, to be aware of the creativity of divine life. And to be religious implies partaking of that creative energy, receiving it, assimilating it and sharing it with all the fellow beings that inhabit the planet. To be religious implies perception and reception of the creativity of life.

Creativity is sacred, it is holy. The act of living implies an interaction with that sanctity of life, with that creativity

of life. As explorers of reality, explorers of religion, of spirituality, we are learning together to perceive the creative nature of life by which we are surrounded. We are learning to grow into a dimension where perception becomes reception, and reception results in assimilation of that energy.

Yesterday we were looking at the physical reality, the physical world which we can reach with our sense organs. The senses reach out towards the forms of expression, and the sensitivity, the energy contained in the sense organs, penetrates the forms and contacts the creative energy contained or concealed in the form. The sensual contact with physical reality is a dual contact: touching the form, the colour, the shape, the size, by the eyes, the nose, the ears, the skin etc., and reaching the energies with the sensitivity. May we take an example or two lest what I share appears to be poetical or utopian?

The Netherlands used to be a land of woods, I don't know how it is now? Lovely woods, dark green, shady woods, where one could go for walks. You must have been through those woods. Have you ever sat down under a tree and felt the company of the tree, not only the shade, the coolness etc., but the company of the energy which has clothed itself in the form of a tree? When we walk upon the earth, is it only the feet that touch the earth, the softness, the hardness, the evenness, the unevenness? Or does the sensitivity contact a variety

of energies contained in the earth? The same with water, with the breeze that caresses you, with the sunshine that bathes you in clean warmth and light. Is there not an interaction between your sensitivity and the energies contained in the earth, the sky, the sun, the trees, the mountains, the rivers?

Don't you partake of those creative energies, those healing, divine energies that surround you? Because living is an interaction through perception, through sensual contact, through cognition, through awareness. These are the ways we can worship the divine by receiving it, by assimilating its energies. You know the act of living is the act of worship, dedicated to the awareness of surrounding divinity. Independent of the act of living, separate from the movement of relationships, there is no religion, or religiousness as far as one has perceived and understood life.

And what does that supreme teacher, life divine, teach you at the sensual level, at the so-called physical level? This beauty, this sanctity of the physical world, called the material world, has been ignored. In the eastern hemisphere where I was born and brought up, the material world was looked upon as an illusion. They even called it maya, and one had to keep away from it, not attach any importance to it. There is no reverence for life unless its beauty is perceived, unless its sanctity is appreciated.

In the occidental world, matter was recognized, but the material world was looked upon as a means to an end for making human life more comfortable, more luxurious if you like. So recognition of matter led to a philosophy of life called materialism, with more comfort and more conveniences, through science and technology, through the industrial revolution. And the use of earth, of skies, of oceans and rivers was only there for securing more convenience, drawing upon their energies to gratify our ambitions.

In the East the physical reality was ignored, in the West its existence was recognized, but it has been abused. Materialism as a philosophy of life ignored the divine aspect of life. It deprived us of the sense of sanctity and holiness about the earth and the skies, about the oceans and the rivers, and their bountiful energies which they shower upon us.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century we are talking about a revolution in consciousness, where the very perception of the physical reality and the so-called material world shall go through a qualitative radical transformation. The sanctity, the divinity, shall be perceived here and now in every atom, electron, neutron, in every minutest particle of earth. We have tried to convert the earth into a factory, forcing upon it chemical fertilizers, we have dumped nuclear waste into oceans, we have polluted our rivers, we have not

allowed even nature surrounding us to retain its pristine purity.

One has been talking about purging perception, purification of perception, as the foundation of a religious life. So what does nature, this so-called physical or material reality, what does it teach us, if we can expose ourselves to its presence without any self-centred motivation?

It seems to me, and I wonder if you have not noticed it as well, that life at the physical level is an ocean of change, everything goes on changing constantly, continuously, it is a flux of change: change in form, change in the qualities, change in the expressions . This ever changing aspect of the physical reality teaches us by that very flux of change that, though we are here to partake of its energies, to take what we need for our survival, decently, aesthetically, with reverence and gratitude, if we develop a relationship of attachment with the objects, then we sow the seeds of misery and suffering.

The beauty, the elegance, the variety of expressions on the physical level is something to be enjoyed, and also to be shared with other non human species and fellow beings. But it cannot be converted into commodities of wealth, ownership and possession, getting addicted to them. Conquering earth, conquering oceans, owning skies and space, is that not going to be a source of new conflicts?

The dismantling of the soviet empire, whether done in the name of ethnic entities or in the name of judaism, christianity or islam, is immaterial, the very perception is poisoned and polluted. We have conditioned ourselves by looking at nature as if it is something that can be owned and possessed if not by an individual, then by a group, a community, a nation state. Do you think wars can be ended and violence wiped off the face of the planet as long as these attitudes remain?

One is not talking about attachment in individual life to a house, a place, a garden, but one is talking about the relationship with nature in general, individual and global. What is needed is an inner revolution in the quality of consciousness in its functioning in daily relationships. It seems to me that physical reality, the material level of existence as a supreme teacher is giving us a lesson in non-attachment: contact, interaction, sharing, enjoying, fulfilling the needs, but never extending the needs into psychological greed, lust, ambition to dominate, and so on.

Do you see how life is a teacher? We do not have to go anywhere to learn how to live without attachment or without detachment, there is this duality of attachment and detachment. We are talking about a new relationship with the physical reality of non-attachment, of friendship, of companionship, of sharing, of partaking.

The sensual level is the first level in which we get related to life. The recognition of the sacredness and divinity of life has to be that first step. One cannot divide life into spiritual and material, religious and mundane, and say that the physical, the material has nothing to do with spirituality.

And when one speaks about physical reality one is also implying one's own body, the sense organs, the relationship with them, interaction of consciousness with these physical energies operating within our bodies. The biological impulses, the instincts, to perceive them, to watch their movement and to relate to them in a harmonious way, in a healthy sane way. Without elaborating further about the physical reality, suffice it to say it can teach us a lot.

Let us proceed, as we had promised ourselves yesterday, to another reality, which is that of the man-made world, the man-made reality. The physical is not man-made, it is self-generated, self-sustained, it recycles itself, it refuels and revitalizes itself, if stupid mankind does not interfere. Let us now proceed to the man-made world in which we have to live. We are concerned with life and living. As we have to live at the physical, the sensual, the material, the biological level, we have to live at the psychological level. A very complex, intricate, and vast inheritance.

The human being is a product of millions of years,

culturally and psychologically speaking. As there has been refinement and sophistication on the biological level, there has been much refinement and sophistication on the psychological level as well. We are going to look at the so-called psychological aspect of our being, the psychological dimension of our life, very slowly and carefully, as it is not visible, not tangible, like the sensual level or the physical level. We are going to deal with the invisible, the intangible, where only sensitivity can reach, where only alertness can reach. It cannot be perceived by any of the senses. So we have to be very alert and attentive as we proceed.

Our ancestors must have been great scientists, tremendously interested in understanding the phenomenon of life and the mystery of life. In their exploration they must have come upon the art of converting sound energy into a word, the greatest invention. The foundation of human civilization is based on the invention of engineering sound energy and formulating a word out of it. The science of speech, the science of ideation, conceptualization, the science of measurements, the science of inventing symbols, all this is what we call human civilization. As the interaction with physical nature was going on, the desire, the urge to share that experience of interaction with one another must have helped to create this world of language; coining words, joining words together to formulate ideas.

It is so easy today because we have inherited it, but it must have been extremely difficult to launch upon this adventure of verbalization, ideation, abstraction, conceptualization, this fantastic, marvellous phenomenon. So the word god must have come about to indicate the presence of divinity. This process of naming the reality, naming and through the naming identifying various expressions of reality, must have set into motion what we call human civilization. You and me today are products of these sciences of verbalization, ideation, measurement etc.

We cannot deny our bodies. It is no use looking in a derogatory way upon the human body, calling it bondage. We have now discovered that the physical body is not bondage, it's an opportunity for self-discovery, it's a companion in the discovery of truth and reality: As there is a physical body, a biological structure conditioned by inheritance, so we have an inner structure, which consists perhaps of vibrations generated by verbalization inside our neurological and chemical systems.

All the words that together constitute knowledge are imprinted on you and me. The drops of blood, the muscles, the glands, the bone marrow, they contain the experience, the knowledge, the thought of the whole human race. This is a conceptual reality. The first was a physical and sensual reality. Along with it, interwoven

with it, is this second dimension of our life, which is a conceptual reality. Please do watch the words rather carefully, because a concept is not a fact, a word is not a thing. The word god by itself is not divine, it is not divinity.

The psychological time which we have created and use on our watches, calendars, in history, is just a measurement. We have built up a variety of measurements, measuring space, measuring time, measuring virtue, sin, crimes, that was the way we could live together and form societies. Rules, regulations, norms, criteria, all that became necessary because we did not want to live in chaos, we had to organize things.

Whether they are words of the Vedas or the Upanishads, the Old or New Testament, the Judaic scriptures, the scriptures of Islam or any other religion for that matter, the words by themselves are not sacred, they represent the cognition of the human race of the presence of divinity. They by themselves are neither sacred nor divine. They have a relevance, they have served the purpose of making man aware, if at all mankind has paid attention to those words, but more than that they cannot teach.

Knowledge can never teach. That which has been put together has no sacredness, has no sanctity, has no creativity. It has been structured, systemized, put

together. I hope we are aware of the difference between that which is organized, and that which is spontaneous orderly and rhythmic by itself. I am trying to share a fundamental point: nature, life around us, has no structure, no system, it has a rhythm, it has a cycle, it has a built-in order.

Suppose I build a house, god forbid that I ever do, and I buy pieces of furniture for the living room. I bring them home and organise them. A semblance of order, an appearance of order has to be built by organizing them in relation to my needs, my requirements, my taste, my cultural standard, etc., etc.. Imagine that the room's windows and doors are open and the sunshine comes in, the breeze comes in, they do not have to be organized, they permeate the whole room, because it is the nature of energy to permeate the emptiness, to fill the emptiness. The emptiness in the room was not organized by me, it can never be organized, it is self-existent, it was there before the room was built, and even when the house is dismantled the space, the emptiness will be there.

When the sunshine, the air, the breeze come in, they find their way of creating a harmonious relationship by permeating the room. Do you see that in the very movement of the natural energies there is a built-in intelligence, a built-in order. Wherever they go they carry the intelligence of creativity and radiate their essence. But man-made things have to be organized. In the same

way thought is a man-made thing. Languages are man-made things, all the philosophies are man-made things, and therefore they have to be organized into systems of philosophy, schools of philosophy, schools of sciences. Man-made constructions require systematization, organization etc. They only have a conceptual reality. Time has no factual substance, it is not real in the sense that light is, it has a conceptual reality and we live as much on the conceptual level as we live on the physical level.

Through civilization we have interwoven the biological and the psychological, they are no longer two separate things for us. Biology and psychology have been woven together in a very beautiful way, and a complex structure has been created. Please do see with me that just as the physical reality cannot be ignored, so the conceptual reality of thought and knowledge cannot be ignored, cannot be discarded, wished away, explained away. We have to look at it, understand how it has been put together by mankind and learn to use it competently, efficiently according to the requirements of our social life. Thought, words are instruments to be used.

The difficulty lies in the fact that the conceptual has become tremendously more important to us than the physical. The word has become more important than the real. The symbol which was created to help us to be aware of the real, that symbol has become more

important, we have become symbol worshippers, worshippers of thoughts, of words, of measurements. On the all pervading, all permeating, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient divinity or creativity of life, we have imposed hindu gods, the allah of islam, the father in heaven, and so on. These were means to make us aware of the divinity, but they became more important, the dwelling houses for those symbols became more important than the interaction with divinity.

Therefore, in spite of all the religions existing in the world, our lives are deprived of the sense of sanctity. Our act of living has no perfume of holiness, of love, of intelligence. Living has become piecemeal: a challenge then a reaction to it according to some idea. A difficulty, react to it with another idea. Our movement of relationships becomes a patchwork of thoughts and ideas, selectively collected, elegantly organized, a patchwork of ideologies, of dogmas and theories.

It seems to me that the fatal mistake, or the fatal wrong turn that we as a human species took was not in creating languages, was not in building up the conceptual, or ideational reality, but in confusing it with the real. We have inflicted upon ourselves a psychological confusion. Knowledge in itself is not a bondage, as the physical reality itself is not a bondage. We do not know how to use knowledge. Ignorance of a fact is bondage, incapacity to handle ideas, concepts, thoughts or words

is bondage. Thought by itself is not to be thrown away. It has been created out of hard work, out of inventiveness, out of scientific research and explorations.

You know there is nothing worth discarding in life, nothing to renounce, nothing to acquire, but there is everything to perceive, to assimilate and to share. The man-made world consists of thoughts, ideas and theories, and within us is the movement of this tremendous inheritance. We contain the whole human experience and knowledge within us.

In that thought structure, in that system of thinking, there is a fantastic idea of the I, the me, the self, the ego, the monitor as we called it yesterday. It is an idea, as time is an idea, as space is an idea. Ask any physicist and he will tell you that time and space are mental constructions, they have no reality outside the human brain, they are within the brain. Within us is this movement of thought, all our waking hours we notice that movement going on. How do we relate to that movement? How do we handle that movement? That is the question.

We have to learn to be with this thought structure that is imprinted on our whole being. To live with it without getting contaminated by it, without getting damaged or mutilated by it must be a marvellous art. Could we perhaps learn first to look at the movement of this vast

gigantic inheritance going on within us? Could we look at it first hand?

We may read about it in books on human psychology, on the anatomy of mind, or the mechanism of the thought chemistry, you know, we may read about all those things. The investigation begins obviously at the verbal level, there is nothing wrong with that, it has to begin that way, because we are brought up that way, conditioned that way. After having read or heard about the mind and the mental movement, about thought, can we sit down with ourselves and watch that movement so that the knowledge gets converted into understanding.

You can receive a word or a thought from a book, you can receive it by listening to talks, but knowledge is not understanding. Understanding requires a perception, either at the sensual level or at the level of sensitivity. It seems to me that those who are interested in living religiously, living with the perfume of sanctity and holiness in every act and every movement, will have to begin at the very beginning. Sit down and say; "what is this mind? Let me look at it. What is this, moving in me? How does it move? And what does that movement do to me?"

Not looking at anger, or greed, or jealousy, or pettiness, or generosity, one by one in sequence, but to look at the

whole movement of mind. "How does thought move? If it moves through my waking hours, does it repeat itself? What kind of energy does it have? When the thought moves what does it do to my breathing, to my blood pressure, to my health? As the exposure to the physical reality relaxes me and fills me with some energy that was not there five minutes ago, or an hour ago, what does this contact with the mental movement do to me?" So one exposes quietly to this inner movement, as one had exposed to the movement outside one's body, at the sensual level.

This is not an outgoing movement, it's an ingoing movement, you are looking at yourself. So, again the question of learning to observe without comparing the thoughts, without naming them, without evaluating them, without trying to accept or reject them, to look at whatever comes.

When one has grown into the dimension of observation, then it may not be necessary to sit down and watch. Throughout the day, while the mind is moving, the state of observation indicates, intimates to you the quality of the happening. Let there be an intimate first hand contact with the movement of thought. Unless the repetitiveness, the mechanical movement of knowledge is observed first hand it will not even become a conceptual fact for me, it will just remain a description, a verbal description, which is knowledge.

Knowledge becomes understanding when there is observation, and there is perception through sensitivity of observation. That is the contact, even with the conceptual fact. You cannot say it is a conceptual reality and discard it. You can't, because it is you, it is the substance of you and me, and whenever the mind moves, all that ideational, conceptual paraphernalia is bound to jump back again , pounce upon you.

So my friends, it seems to me that exposure to the physical reality and exposure to the conceptual reality, are our areas of exploration. That exposure, that contact, that understanding of the movement of the mind may teach us a very important lesson: that which has been organized, standardized, sanctioned by the whole human race, fed into my system, is there as the content of consciousness. But, it is all limited, it is limited by its very nature: it is the past, the word is the past, the thought is the past, that which is described, defined, is from the past. One appreciates the efforts of the ancestors, respects them for that, but one realizes that it is the past.

Can I learn to perceive human beings with whom I have to live, in an alternative way? Not in the way the past wants me to look or relate to them. Is there an alternative source of perception in human relationships, so that the past judgements, value structures, norms and criteria do not dilute my perception, do not contaminate my perception?

After having observed the mechanism of mind and the nature of the mental movement, can one look at fellow human beings with whom one has to live functionally, be it wife, husband, son, daughter, brother, friend, whatever, with a quality of perception which is purged completely of the past? That is the cultural crisis that we are facing today.

A new dynamic of human relationship purged of addiction to past dogmas, doctrines, ideologies, norms and criteria, is waiting to be faced by us. The whole planet has become a small village where communities are face to face, geographical distances are no longer obstructions of importance, not even the distance of psychological time has relevance due to electronic media, we live in a face to face global village.

If our perceptions are inhibited by the sense that you are a Jew and I am a Christian, I am a Moslem and you are a Hindu, or I am Chinese and you are a communist, you know... if perceptions are inhibited by racial, by national, by cultural, by ideological addictions, then obviously it will not be possible for us to live in harmony and cooperation. When we suffer from exclusive loyalty to certain dogmas and theories, ideologies and criteria, we can at best coexist, but we will not live together. We will go on measuring one another with the help of our ideologies, religious dogmas or doctrines, aesthetic or moral criteria, and this exclusive loyalty to those

patterns, those standards, will function as a divisive force, that will divide us psychologically. When divided psychologically, how can one expect to live together physically?

Conceptual reality is a dimension of life in which we have to live, appreciating its limitations, its imperfections as well as its artificiality. It has been systematized, structured, organized and standardized by man. It has no factual substance and therefore it is quite risky to handle it, to live at that level.

We have not been able to use thought properly, and this has resulted in a generation of psychological misery and suffering. We then abuse memory and go on reliving the pains and the hurts that have been caused by someone's stupid behaviour. We create self-pity, the 'poor me' complexes, we worship memory, we worship the dead and we generate further suffering for ourselves. Please do see this. It is misuse of memory, it is abuse of thought as a means of living together in a social framework that has caused tremendous psychological suffering. Our human relationships have become sources of suffering, misery, clashes and tension.

We don't know how to use the ego, the I, the me, where to use its acquisitiveness, and where to let it go into non-action, and have an alternative source of relationship. We have looked upon it as the ultimate authority, the

ultimate controller. The totalitarianism of the ego consciousness, the I consciousness has been the source of endless misery for untold centuries.

We are here to explore if that suffering can be ended. Religion is ending psychological misery and suffering, understanding life as it is, relating to it in its dimension without getting mutilated, damaged or polluted by it, living forty, fifty, eighty, one hundred years, without any inner contamination, inner distortion or perversion, retaining innocence which is the perfume of divinity, the perfume of creativity, retaining that innocence while relating to the physical and psychological, the sensual and the conceptual reality... Thank you for your cooperation.



11 September 1991

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

It will be an adventure to respond to your questions.

QUESTION :

When a person, in the state of meditation, uses words for explaining things, where do the words come from?

VIMALA:

First of all we will have to ask ourselves whether all of us understand the same thing by the term meditation?

One is glad to see that the questioner has used the phrase: the state of meditation. I wonder if you see the state of meditation as the state of majestic emptiness in consciousness?

Let us not look at the word emptiness as if it were some

mysterious thing. We call it emptiness as there is no centre, centre in the sense of there being an entity having knowledge, there being a knower or a thinker. There is no centre, and therefore no identification, no judgement or images. It is an emptiness like the emptiness of space above the skies where the organic intelligence, the creativity of life permeates and vibrates.

The state of meditation is not a state of trance where one is lost. A person is not dazed or in a trance, there is not that vacancy, the emptiness within is not a lifeless, lightless void. We call it emptiness when it is full of organic intelligence, full of creativity, or may I use the term divinity. It is a state of organic creativity. And what does that imply? Does it not imply that that emptiness, or creativity is the source of perception and response.

For the sake of verbal communication words have to be used. But do the words of a person living in a state of meditation come from memory, from thought, or do they come from some other source? That is the question we are going to ask ourselves.

Memory is a storehouse, where words, thoughts and pieces of knowledge, borrowed, obtained, acquired and absorbed, are stored. They lie there, they may be organised into systems, or as different pieces unrelated to one another. There may be words that were not even

understood verbally, they may just have been fascinating words that were collected and then thrown into memory. I may not be acquainted with their meaning. I may know the meaning verbally, the dictionary meaning, the conventional association, the traditional interpretation, but I may not have tasted those words in the heat of relationships, I may not have tried out their meaning, so they could be undigested, unassimilated words.

Supposing a person has learned never to rely on the authority of knowledge. Such a person will never collect words and put them together, unless acquainted with the nuances of their meaning. Such a person looks at the meaning, bites into the words, chews them properly, crushing and grinding them, in the midst of relationships, till knowledge gets converted into understanding.

Understanding is not a part of memory, it is the substance of life. Words coming up in the state of meditation are born of understanding. They have gone through the alchemy of interaction with life and therefore they are not the product of thought, they are not the product of knowledge or pieces from memory, they are from life itself. They have the energy of creativity within them. I do hope we will discriminate understanding from knowledge, understanding from knowing.

Knowing can be very superficial, at a verbal or intellectual level. As you can collect pieces of furniture, cars, gadgets, books and so on, you can also collect pieces of knowledge, theories, dogmas, ideologies, words and phrases from teachers, and repeat them. You know, that which is the product of memory is a repeated word, it is a second hand word.

That which has been cooked in the flesh and blood of life, no more remains memory, it becomes the living substance of your life, it gets converted into the magnificent energy of understanding. The energy of understanding and the energy of awareness are qualitatively different from the energy of thought, which can have addiction, which can have intoxication, which can be repetitive, mechanistic . Understanding never repeats itself. That which comes to life as the result of interaction with human beings, with nature, and so on, has the elegance and perfume of life.

It seems to me that when a person living in the state of meditation has to explain things, just as the waters of a mountain stream rush spontaneously from the crevices of rocks, so verbalization, words digested, assimilated and lived, not interpreted according to theories, not judged according to religious upbringing, but lived first hand, come about. So, whenever there is a need for verbalization the whole being becomes the words. I do not know if I can convey this to you? It is the movement

of the whole being, not a repetitive, mechanistic movement of memory at the intellectual level.

QUESTION:

Who observes in the action of observation, if not the ego?

VIMALA:

You must have played with small children in your life. You must have listened to music. You must have been to the seashore or in a small garden full of flowers. When you are with flowers, children or music, is it the ego that looks through the eyes, listens through the ears or touches through the hands? Are those movements not ego free? Are they not motivation free? When you spend even a few minutes with small children, listening to them, looking at them, responding to them, do you act out of knowledge and theories ? Or is there an energy of love that stimulates intelligence in your response towards the children, towards the infants? An intelligence of love springs from that energy. The ego does not come there.

The ego comes in, the sense of self, of me comes in and pollutes the perception, the observation, if one wants to introspect, analyze, reflect, contemplate, when it is necessary to interpret, to make a judgement or an assessment. Then you require all the knowledge , the

capacity, the talents, the acquisitions, the qualifications that you have cultivated, and it can be a movement from the ego. When you do not have to introspect and interpret what is exposed in the moments of observation, then you do not have to make a choice , you do not have to accept or reject, you do not have to form a judgement. Then obviously the movement of the ego, that is the movement of the past - of human thought and knowledge - gets suspended, it is a simple innocent perception.

One has to use all the knowledge when one is dealing with technology, with machines, when one has to work as an engineer, a lawyer, a doctor, an administrator, and so on, then the knowing, the interpreting, the comparing and the evaluating, all these activities are inevitable and they have to be used very efficiently, with competence.

But in observation, when you sit quietly, the movement of the past - thought and knowledge - become totally irrelevant, does it not? Because you do not want to have a relationship with that which is your own reflection. What we call knowledge, thought, memory are not different from us, they are our inner content. Just as the organs of the body are the content of the body, so these organs of knowledge are the content of consciousness. When one sits quietly and the attention is steadied and observation emerges, one is looking at one's own reflection.

It seems to me that the ego, the self, the me and its activity are irrelevant to the state of observation, to the action of observation. As soon as the attention, the perception is steadied, a different kind of energy takes over. For the sake of verbal communication we may call it the energy of intelligence or the energy of sensitivity.

Look, when I begin to learn how to observe, then surely I am looking at my own reflection. There you begin. Then one learns to look without reacting, without judging. This nonjudgemental perception, non-evaluatory perception is a dimension into which one grows. One sat down and looked, or whilst moving throughout the day, one was observant and therefore the learning culminated into the emergence of a new dimension: observation without the observer, the state of non-evaluatory perception without a centre making an effort to perceive.

When you play with a child you are not making an effort to play, or when you look at the waves on the ocean, or the ripples on a river, you are not making an effort. When you go to a concert there is an effort until you sit down and take cognition of what the musicians are going to play, but then the state of effort gets replaced by an effortless relaxation: along with the musicians you become the movement of the music. And just so you become the movement of the waves, or the smile of the child with whom you play.

We are not one-dimensional creatures who have only the energy of thought at our disposal. As there is the energy of impulses in the biological structure, and the energy of thought and knowledge at the psychological level, there are other energies also with which we may not be acquainted, we may not have looked at. But unconditioned energy, like the energy of love, can never be conditioned. The moment motivation touches love, love withers away. If there is a motive for seeking pleasure from a joyous situation, the moment the motivation for repeating that touches the state of joy, joy melts away. They are like very delicate and tender flowers, very subtle energies, not born in the soil of thought and knowledge. They are born in the soil of innocence, of emptiness, the organic creativity which we share with the whole universe.

So, we must distinguish the state of learning from the state where learning has culminated into growth, into the emergence of a different dimension. In the first case, the ego or the I consciousness has divided itself into the looker and that which is looked at, the observer and that which is observed. You begin with that division for steadying the perception. Then in the steadying of the perception that division vanishes. In the learning of any art there is first a conscious effort. When you learn to sing it is a conscious effort, and once you have learned music it becomes the organic substance of your life. Then singing is like breathing,

breathing in and breathing out. There is physical exertion, but it can be an effortless, relaxed movement. So, there is observation as an effort, and observation as a state of consciousness, these are two different things.

QUESTION:

After having read books and listened to talks, one is still a slave of thought. What would you say to such a person who understands the necessity of freedom from thought, and yet finds he is still a slave?

VIMALA:

A very significant question. Perhaps the person has verbalized a question experienced by ninety nine per cent of all enquirers of religion and explorers of truth, so it is taken up as if raised by the whole human race. The reply is therefore not directed towards anyone person, it is an impersonal way of treating a question which has been kindly formulated for our dialogue.

When you enquire, when you explore, probe, dig, you have to be very straightforward, very logical and sometimes truth requires of you to be merciless, like a surgeon who has to cut open the portion of the body that has concealed within it some illness. It is very difficult for us to stand that merciless penetrating dissection of a challenge or difficulty. We get hurt. But

let us presume that we are fearless enquirers and explorers. So let us look at the question.

Suppose for a moment that I am the questioner, that I have read books, and listened to talks, naturally talks or books dealing with the issue of thought, what thought is, its limitations, its mechanism, the nature of the movement of thought, the complexity of the thought structure and so on. I have read about all this, and I feel the need to set myself free from that movement. Obviously, other wise I would not have read those books or attended those talks in the first place.

What was I doing when I read the books? What was I busy with while listening to the talks? Was I acquiring knowledge or information about thought, saying I will collect all this and find out how to apply it to my thought structure, and then get rid of it?. Was my listening to the talks an acquisitive activity? Was my reading of books an acquisitive activity? Was it for learning or was it for acquiring?

If it was for learning, when having listened to a talk or read a page from a book, I would pause for a minute and ask myself if I had understood it. Learning is related to understanding. But when reading or listening is not related to learning, not related to understanding, it can be quite a burden in the memory. It seems to me that we, who have been brought up on the authority of

thought and knowledge, acquire thought, store it as knowledge and use it when necessary. Knowledge, by itself, is the authority. "I do so because XYZ has said it must be so or because the scriptures have said so."

You know, once you accept authority, understanding gets blocked. Learning becomes obstructed at the very moment it gets based on authority. In India parents take their children to the temple and introduce them to the idols saying; "This is God." They want the child to accept the authority of that idol as God, bow down to it, go through the whole ritual.

In the West, ideologies, theories and dogmas are the idols that are worshipped, intellectually and psychologically. Authority of knowledge is inculcated in us, and living has been equated with the movement of thinking: "I think therefore I am." We may have to reverse the whole thing saying; "I am therefore I can think!" We may have to turn topsyturvy many metaphysical concepts and ideas: the communications of the scriptures, the theologies and philosophies of the East and West, without exception, if we are to explore reality.

Could it be that I have been brought up not only on knowledge and thought, but on the authority of that knowledge and thought? Please do see that knowledge by itself cannot do any harm, but if the sense of

authority is inculcated in me, ingrained in my very blood, that what the knowledge says is right, what tradition says is right, and living is equated to approximating my actions with that, then there will be a real fear of letting thought go, an unverbaised fear.

I may not even be conscious that I have such a fear. There could be an in-built resistance to let the movement of thinking or thought go into non-action, into abeyance, even for an hour. So, when I say I am still a slave of thought, do I recognise that I am a slave of the authority of thought, looking upon words as truth itself? Could it be fear of losing the authority, losing the security that that thought gives, that if the movement of thought should go into abeyance, what will be there then in its place?

When the question comes up: "What will be there?", is that question not a reaction to the presumption that there must be something else to replace thought, something that I know, that I can conceive of, that I can imagine and handle? Give me something that I can control, handle and regulate, then I will let thought go! The authority of thought, of the known, the authority of knowledge, provokes the fear of the unknown, the unacquainted.

Human knowledge has touched only the fringes of life, in spite of all the natural and social sciences, in spite of

all the philosophies and theologies. Life is still a mystery. We are playing around on the fringes of life. On the shores of the oceans of life we are playing with pebbles, to share the expression of Newton. Is it the fear of the unknown, of the unacquainted, of the unconditioned energies that keeps me clinging to thought? Is it fear of freedom? Is it fear of life?

There was life before mankind inhabited the planet and started thinking and verbalizing. Timeless life is much vaster and deeper than all human knowledge put together. Are we afraid of that? Do we want to keep moving in human thought and knowledge to feel secure? The question that every explorer would benefit from by asking is: "Am I afraid to be in the presence of life without putting words, thoughts or ideologies on my consciousness? What will life do to me? Am I afraid of freedom?"

If there is such a fear, then one should turn back from the path of meditation which is a revolution in consciousness itself, where the status quo of consciousness structured, systematized and categorized, in which we are living today, may not be there. If all these enclosures of knowledge make us feel stable, sure, secure, certain of ourselves, if we want terms of reference to look at life and interpret it, then it is better not to turn towards the meditative way of living.

One can study philosophy, which is an academic, theoretical, verbalized study, and become a philosopher, a scholar, being satisfied in knowing that there is a beyond. But in that case you only study the map. An exploration of truth is not studying the map of life, it is taking the voyage oneself. You may study the map of the whole world, know all the routes by sea, air and land, yet you may never take the journey. Where do I stand?

Supposing that I am really genuinely interested in eliminating this slavery, this psychological dependency upon thought. What would I do? Daily living is where we have to begin. From morning till night, whether I brush my teeth, bathe or feed the body, talk with members of the family, at all times I will watch my actions, I will watch, to find out if I am relating to the activity, to the movement, alertly. Am I attentive, am I alert, or am I doing it out of habit, or because it is expected of me? Or do I enter into these activities because that is the only opportunity I have to live?

The movement of life, the act of living is the only evidence that one is living. I enjoy brushing my teeth, bathing the body, scrubbing the floor, washing clothes. I enjoy talking to my wife, to my husband, to the children, to friends, because while I am talking to them, I am expressing life within me. So I would watch and learn to be attentive and alert, to be sensitively there, in every movement, at every moment.

And when the past, that is to say the judgements, the evaluations, the norms, the criteria, the prejudices, the preferences, individual, family, racial, religious, national preferences, come up and want to contaminate my perception, want to distort my responses, I will be aware of that. Before they overwhelm me, my alertness, my attentiveness will enable me to look at them. Before they take charge of my perception and responses, I will have seen them, I will have seen that the authority of thought is coming up.

It does not matter if I have to wait for a few minutes, because when I see them, when I perceive them, I am aware of them, and in the light of that awareness the authority disappears. At the moment that they were going to overwhelm me chemically, neurologically or create a compulsion for me to react in a particular way, I saw the culprit, I looked at it, and it lost its momentum.

In the beginning it might take a moment. I was overwhelmed, but in the moment of getting overwhelmed, I noticed. That is the time of learning. But when my sensitivity, when my alertness increase, then perhaps before they could take over, I have already looked at them. You know the austerity of a simple perception, what it does to a fact, is something to be experimented with. When you can look at a fact without a judgement, without an image, then the

interaction between such a perception and the fact generates results which cannot even be imagined by us.

Such a bare cognition, such a pure perception, without an idea, without a theory, without a preference, without a judgement, is a tremendously explosive interaction. And the fact is the dead past. My friends, such an austere perception can be the source of freedom . The thoughts will be contained in the body, the neuro-chemical system will remain where it is, but they will have no authority over us. That is all that happens. No identification with them.

Then the thoughts flow in your body without creating a thinker, and all the knowledge that has been inherited, acquired, or absorbed , is floating inside, without creating an image of a knower, of a thinker. It is the image, arising from identification, that creates the mischief, not the knowledge by itself. We are the product of human culture and civilization, we cannot run away from that.

It seems to me that learning has to take place in the movement of relationships. One has to sit down and learn to look, observe, and relax, so that the fear of aloneness gets dispelled to some extent, the fear of emptiness gets dispelled to some extent. Once that is learned, then silence becomes a dimension of living.

Sitting in silence for a period every day is not a lifelong occupation. Living in silence, living in meditation, living meditatively, that is what we are talking about, not meditation as a psychophysical activity to be carried on. If the learning to be meditative does not result in living meditatively, then it will become a new convention, a new ritual. I hope we are not interested in creating, in formulating new rituals, new conventions.

We are concerned with exploring reality and interacting with that reality. Living is an interaction with the creativity of life, at every moment and in every movement. Thought and memory keep you stuck in them and they let life pass you by, slip away. Therefore we say that it is necessary not to be imprisoned by the thought structure, but to use it. Life is too precious to let it slip away because of inattention, because of habits, because of fear. Not a single day, not a single hour can be repeated.

Every so-called present moment, which one would like to call the timeless present, is an expression of that infinity, that eternity or divinity of life. It is here and now. I begin to live with alertness and attention. And when the authority of thought comes up, as I have observed its movement previously, I am aware of it surging up, and I take a deep breath, creating a space between the onslaught of the past and my self. This

sharpens the sensitivity, it intensifies the sensitivity and the alertness, as nothing else can do.

Unless I like the slavery that gives me stability, the repetitive mechanistic activity which gives me a sense of security, unless I want that, there is no difficulty in coming upon freedom. It is the illusion of security and stability within the enclosure of thought and knowledge, which keeps us clinging to them, even when we sit down quietly to learn observation.



12 september 1991

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION:

What is faith, is it self-abandonment?

VIMALA:

We will have to be extremely careful when dealing with the word faith. It is one of those unfortunate words which have been confused with something else, as meditation is confused with concentration and love is confused with attachment. It seems to me that the word faith has been mistaken for beliefs and credulity.

When you accept the authority of another person's perception, understanding or experience, you build up a belief or a credulity. It is the acceptance of someone else's interaction with life and verbalization of that

interaction, maybe of a living person or persons who are no more. Belief is related to knowledge, which is borrowed, which is from the past and which can be static.

It seems to me that faith is related to one's own interaction with life. You have to look at life, you have to perceive it, understand it, correlate the understanding to interactions in different situations, and when the interactions confirm and verify the understanding that had taken place, there arises an awareness of truth which the interaction has caused. That awareness is then beyond doubt, beyond suspicion, beyond the argumentation of other people, beyond theories, dogma's and doctrines. Perhaps the word faith indicates the substance of that awareness.

It has nothing to do with the I consciousness and its activity of knowing, accepting etc., it is a direct immediate encounter with life, it is something which flowers in the movement of living. You perceive, you understand, you get confirmation of that understanding in the movement of living and it blossoms like a thousand petalled lotus emanating its own perfume.

"Is there self-abandonment?", asks the questioner. I wonder what the questioner implies by that term. Is it expressing yourself with out reservations? Does that word imply living without inhibitions, without

reservations, without fear? Does it imply spontaneity and the relaxation of spontaneity?

It seems that once you grow into that dimension of faith, which is the content of awareness, which is non-logical, non-rational, beyond the reach of argumentation, when you grow into that dimension, obviously there is effortlessness in every movement of the person, and when efforts do not intervene, we call it spontaneity. When there is no manipulation, no manoeuvring due to fear, due to anxiety or due to assertiveness, when there is no such intervention of effort, there is spontaneity, the grace of unconditional relaxation, a kind of inner freedom.

But when the person accepts the authority of someone else's knowledge, someone else's experience, conclusions, theories, accepts the authority of that particular definition, description, narration, version, etc., that acceptance stimulates inner rigidity. I wonder if you have noticed, as your friend has done, that acceptance and rejection result in inner stiffness and rigidity. In the moment of acceptance of authority, authority of scriptures, of religious books, of the communications of so called religious persons, once I accept that which has taken place in another person's life, I am running away from direct contact and interaction with life, I am then looking at life through another person's perception, I am borrowing that person's words, experience conditioned

by his or her body's chemistry, and therefore I am living second hand, it is not my life any more.

Acceptance is a sophisticated term used for borrowing. In the acceptance of knowledge, modern or ancient, regarding the nature of ultimate reality, there is no vitality, no vigour. Faith is a dynamic force, it is a fountain of inexhaustible energy.

Faith and passion go together, because one has perceived, one has understood, one has verified. So, the energy of awareness, the energy of understanding gets accepted by the emotional aspect, the sensual structure has the vitality to live the truth, to live the faith. You know, faith is not an intellectual conviction, it is not an emotional belief or credulity, it is not slavery. Faith is freedom and it can be related to that which is, not to that which was or to that which will, or might be. It is always related to life and living, the timeless present, which is eternity, divinity. It is not in relation to particularity, it is in relation to the wholeness of life.

You drink a glass of water, you do not have to travel to China or Japan to verify if a glass of water will quench your thirst. In drinking a glass of water, watching its interaction on your body, its consequences, you have arrived at the truth that water has the energy of quenching thirst, it has coolness, it has liquidity. So, the

doubt never enters your mind as to whether or not a glass of water in South America, North America or Australia will satisfy your thirst. The understanding creates an awareness and what you call faith is the perfume of that awareness. You never doubt that if you walk anywhere on earth, there will be gravity.

I hope we have discriminated faith from belief, and I hope we have looked at the fact that in the dimension of faith there is neither the self nor the effort for abandonment, but spontaneity, uninhibited relaxation, which is both the nature and essence of life.

QUESTION:

What is right perception when we are looking within ourselves? There is the content of the unconscious part of our consciousness, will it not colour and condition our perception about ourselves? How is one to know that our perception is not inhibited or conditioned by the unconscious?

VIMALA:

This is the language of psychology. Consciousness, for the sake of study, has been analyzed and categorized into the conscious, subconscious and unconscious.

It is not difficult to cognize the subconscious. It is the immediate inheritance from the parents or the family up

to some generations back. The content of the subconscious, which is perhaps the deeper layer of consciousness, throws up intimations of its presence through our non-rational trends and inclinations, our beliefs, our tendencies, our likes and dislikes, which have not been formed or organized consciously.

So, the content of the subconscious, which is the immediate inheritance, is felt by us in such invasions as trends, inclinations, likes and preferences, and we become conscious of them in the midst of challenges, of situations, relationships, etc..

The science of psychology says that deeper down is the racial unconscious, the collective unconscious. Human beings are the product of millions and millions of years of human civilization and culture. Therefore every human being contains the total experience and knowledge of the race. Maybe this is so.

Let us now proceed with the question. When I am perceiving within, looking at myself, the movement of the mind, the behaviour of the thought structure within myself, I do not know the content of the unconscious. The very term unconscious indicates, does it not, that we are not conscious of it. We have not seen it, there has been no cognition of it, and therefore it is very difficult for us to recognise it, if it comes up at all. We now come to the words, perceiving ourselves, perceiving within.

Why do we want to perceive ourselves, why do I want to watch and observe the movement of the mind, the movement of thought? Obviously I would like to understand it. Will I understand it if I accept it as good or reject it as evil? Will I understand it if I judge it as it comes up, as being likeable or not likeable? I hope you are taking the journey with me.

Any value judgement about the movement will obstruct perception. And if the value judgement is not to be indulged in, what will it matter whether the content of the subconscious or the content of the unconscious comes up? I am not going to compare, I am not going to choose, I am not going to form any judgement.

Perception, to be worthy of the term perceiving, has to be nonjudgemental. I am perceiving in order to learn, to discover, to observe and to understand. Rightness or wrongness are perceived as irrelevant terms. Perception that results in learning and discovering could be called right, if you wish to use that word, if it puts me in direct contact with the fact.

If it creates a screen between the reality and myself, if it creates gaps, dimensional gaps, horizontal gaps between the reality and myself, due to dogmas, ideologies, theories, doctrines, then that perception is of no use to me, of no relevance to my learning and understanding.

If I am not interested at arriving at any value judgement, but interested in going through the exposure, in order to understand the mechanism of the thought structure, how it moves and what it does, then the contents of the mind, the subconscious, the conscious, or the unconscious, do not create any difficulty.

Secondly, do I start looking at the movement of the mind with the illusion that there is something called my mind? Once you settle down in perception, is it the I which is perceiving, is there an illusion that I am looking at my mind?

I am sorry for pushing you into deep waters, but it seems to me that we are victims of a psychological myth, a psychological illusion, a belief, which has existed for a number of centuries perhaps, that there is an individual mind.

I am looking at my thoughts, my weaknesses, my excellences, my thought structure. If I use the term I and mine, in relation to the physical body, it is both understandable and forgivable. There is a physical body separate and independent from other bodies, moving around, so the words I and mine have some utility, some relevance at the physical level. Is there any entity within the body which could be called I, and its movement mine?

We are questioning the validity of every belief and every piece of knowledge, that is the way of learning, that is the

way to discover truth, without following the convenient, comfortable pattern of accepting, conforming, imitating, you know... We become very vulnerable when we dare to learn, dare to explore. So, could it be that there is only an ancient conditioning of the neuro-chemical system in the body, the conditioning through verbal impressions, through patterns of thinking, codes of conduct, norms and criteria, of ethics and morality, compulsions of organized religions and institutions, all of which have been fed into the system. So, the neuro-chemical system reacts to certain words and their meanings in certain ways. It is not only a cerebral way, but a neuro-chemical way.

The chemical reaction to a word, the neurological reaction to certain other words. The human race has conditioned itself, in the name of civilization and culture, to react to words and their meanings, physical gesticulations and their associations, in certain specific ways, which was necessary for the process of so-called education. Conditioning was the essence of education. The human race behaves that way. The mental movement could be the movement of conditioning, the playback, the replay.

When there is an effort to observe, there is learning to observe, it is observing the behaviour of the human mind expressing itself in its body, watching the human behaviour, the human neuro-chemical behaviour taking

place in this body, not my mind, my thought, my lust or my greed. So, could it be that what you call right perception requires the explosion of this psychological myth of there being an ego, an individual mind, which is to be observed?

As we require an alternative source of perception and responses, perhaps we require alternative attitudes and approaches to our inheritance, which contains a variety of different kinds of conditioning that were necessary for civilizing and culturing the human animal. If I have to work as an engineer and build a bridge across a river, I will require all the knowledge that I have acquired and all the skill in using that knowledge. Suppose I have to function as a surgeon in an operating theatre, I will require a very sharp memory, a very alert brain, very pliable sense organs and a tremendous skill while operating upon a patient.

See, there are fields of relevance for conditionings, and fields of utter freedom from them. The rightness of perception will require discrimination between the fields where thought and knowledge are relevant and where thought and knowledge are absolutely irrelevant.

It seems to me that right perception is a nonjudgemental perception. No judgement about oneself, no evaluation, no image building about oneself such as: I am a knowledgeable person, I am a very learned scholar, etc..

Can we look at the movement of the mind without calling it an Italian mind, an Indian mind, a Dutch mind or an English mind? Can we look at ourselves as human beings observing the human conditioning? If I call myself a Hindu, an Indian, an Italian or an American, I have already inhibited the perception.

So, right perception will require an inner freedom, won't it? It will require the freedom of seeing the facts as they are, not as a Christian, a Moslem, a Jew or a Hindu. Perception for learning has to take place in the freedom of being a human expression of life . Do you see the revolution in the very perception?

Because if I look as a Hindu, I say: "Ah, that is a Hindu doctrine, it is written in the Vedas therefore it must be true. Or this is what the old or the new testament tells me, this is what is taught in the synagogue, therefore it must be true." It is impossible to have the freedom of perception if there is the acceptance of the authority and presumption to attach truth to that authority.

The questioner proceeds and asks: "Where does the revolution in consciousness begin?" It begins with the inner freedom. To look upon yourself as a human being, as a human expression of the whole of life, as a human expression of universal life, cosmic life, or whatever you like to call it, without accepting or rejecting the conditioning of culture, community, race or nationality.

Can we brush them aside and look in freedom? Rejection does not lead you towards revolution. If you have already rejected, what are you going to revolutionize?

Secondly, revolution cannot be limited to intellectual seriousness only. When people turn to religion, to spirituality, to transformation, enlightenment, liberation and what have you, they start with intellectual, theoretical, academic investigation, verbal investigation.

But if the enquiry and the exploration remain prisoners of that cerebral exercise, if the seriousness is limited to the intellectual exercise only, what would happen? Intellectually one would grasp the truth, but except for that intellectual exercise of listening, reading, hearing and reflecting etc., the rest of life will be lived quite differently, on the authority of emotions, on the authority of reactions, habits, conventions, traditions, do we not do that?

Intellectually we are tremendously serious, that fragmentary, partial seriousness, and we say: "Ah, I have got it", never correlating it to the way we live, to our relationship to food, to diet, to exercises, to sleep, to clothes, to man/woman relationship, to religious rituals, national celebrations etc.. We follow all that, and without our knowing we create a division amongst ourselves, imagining that transformation will only take place by intellectual acceptance of certain new ways and

new approaches, without bothering to live those approaches in daily life.

You know, revolution takes place in the movement of living, not in the brain. It may start there, that may be the first step, but the first step is not the total journey. You can take the first step and get stuck there... So, we remain identified to the concept of nation, to the concept of race, to our likes and dislikes on a racial basis, to the preferences and prejudices on a national basis, and then hoping that a transformation will take place or occur in our lives.

That which has been intellectually, verbally and theoretically understood has to be accepted by the emotional aspect of our being and has to be lived at the sensual level. We cannot divide the sensual, the psychological and then the cerebral or the intellectual. When the truth is understood it has to be immediately, instantaneously lived at the sensual level.

I do not accept the authority of gods and goddesses, churches, temples, but I accept the authority of my reactions: I hate a person, I dislike a person, I judge a person permanently as an evil person, and I cherish the authority of all the racial and national prejudices etc., do you see the inconsistencies in our exploration?

The revolution in consciousness is a holistic adventure, not an intellectual adventure, not an emotional obsession. Is

there a willingness to involve the whole of my life in that exploration? Is there a willingness to dedicate to the truth that I understand? Understanding truth is not very difficult my friends, but even after understanding truth, the clinging to that which is false is the real difficulty. That which is false does not cling to us, we cling to it by identifying ourselves with it, we cling to it because there is an illusion of stability, security, continuity: because this has been so for hundred or thousands of years, will therefore still be so, let me perpetuate it.

The illusion that there is such a thing as psychological security creates resistance to the unknown. The unknown has not an iota of security to offer me. Even after having appreciated that what is known about life, what is experienced by the human race, is a negligible fragment of the wholeness, still that fragment of knowledge and inheritance is much more important to us than the remaining un known or unknowable, thus we cling to that.

That is why the revolution does not occur, the qualitative, holistic, radical transformation does not occur, because of our inner inhibitions, non-verbalized inhibitions, inhibitions that we keep covered up, otherwise our intelligence will see them and a discontentment about ourselves might arise, an uncomfortable discontentment that we do not want, so we cover up those inhibitions, we do not allow them to

come to the level of verbalization, the inhibitions or divisions that we have allowed to grow, have nourished, cherished, and then we say to ourselves: "I have read for twenty-five years, listened for forty years and yet the liberation does not take place".

When you go for a walk do you not step out of your house? A person who wants to go to the moon must go beyond the orbit of the earth, beyond the law of gravitation, for you cannot be within the earth's orbit and simultaneously on the moon. In the same way if we want to remain rooted in knowledge, in the thought structure, the past, and also want to be beyond that, simultaneously, then we are creating an unending struggle. Wanting to be rooted in the thought structure, yet wanting to be free of it.

The spiritual and the religious field has been looked upon as the field of intellectual convictions. Changing the convictions, changing the patterns of behaviour, changing the norms and criteria, the judgements, or in the name of religion manipulating emotions, sentiments, arousing them through certain conditionings, rituals, prayers, chanting of mantras, stimulating of chakras, manipulating certain neuro-chemical states of your being and get crystallized there, I think the human race has spent century after century in this intellectual exercise of knowing about god, religions have spent centuries in the meaningless pursuit of experiencing god.

The godhood, the divinity cannot be known and can never be experienced by the mind and the senses. That which is wholeness, that of which you are an organic aspect of, not merely a part, how can that be experienced? How can the whole be experienced by a part? How can a drop of water experience the ocean's wholeness? It can realize the essence of its being and be aware of ocean-ness.

It seems to me that a revolution in consciousness requires the humility and willingness to be embraced by the unknown and the unknowable. The humility and fearlessness of letting the false drop away and live the truth that one has understood oneself, without measuring what it is going to cost you in terms of social security, economic stability, psychological certainty, and so on, and so on, the willingness to involve the whole of your life, the sensual, the verbal, the psychological, the willingness to learn at all these levels simultaneously.

Learning at all levels simultaneously, is holistic learning. You learn, you understand, you live and the living enriches learning, and that learning enriches living in its turn. One may commit mistakes, one may falter, there may be moments of hesitation, embarrassment, there may be so called failures, there may be pain, so what? If I fail I will learn through that failure. Failure is not as devastating as success. Success tempts me to build up an image of myself, I am a successful person, not that success

has occurred, but I immediately create a conclusion, an image, identify with it, and suddenly I am a successful person and therefore must succeed in every venture.

I have become a harsh task master for myself. So, I learn from failures, from mistakes, from taking incorrect steps. I learn from living, I learn from life.

QUESTION:

I have a desire to be liberated. What do I do? Do I spend more time sitting in silence?

VIMALA:

Shall we recast the question, shall we amend it a little, putting it in this way; I have a desire to live in liberation. Not to be liberated. Liberation may not be related to the process of becoming. We can wait for ten lives and the 'I' shall not be liberated. You see, the I does not have the potential, poor thing, it is but an idea. It has to be used in its limitations for the purpose of which it was created.

The ideas, the concepts are created for certain functional necessities. They are beautiful things to be used in their relative fields, but if they are stretched too far, if they are extended to dimensions where they have no relevance whatsoever, then they cut a very sorry figure, or they may lead to the illusion of misery and suffering.

So shall we say: "I have a desire to live in liberation, what do I do? What do I do with life? What do I do with myself?" Sitting in silence is not the end of life, the aim or goal of life. It is just a way of learning. Learn and be finished with it. It is not a new ritual, but just a help to be used in the beginning in order that we may learn to steady our bodies, learn to abstain from verbalization, learn to relax physically, verbally and mentally, learn to sit together.

When we sit together, the presence of fellow enquirers and explorers provides energy. When the attention of a number of people gets focussed in one direction, it charges the atmosphere with a quality of energy. So, when we come together we say: let us learn, for it is living in the dimension of silence that has to be learned, not sitting in silence, or standing in silence, not sitting meditations, standing meditations, or walking meditations, you know.

So, I have a desire to be liberated, what do I do? First if I were the questioner I would try to understand the meaning of the word liberation. Where there are no restrictions, no restraints, no fear, no inhibitions, no compulsions, is that not what we mean by the word liberation or freedom? No compulsions from either outside or inside, no fear, no inhibitions which make me shrink within the skin. That is the meaning of freedom or liberation. There will be no one to tell me what to do, no

terms of reference, no authority from the past. I will be left with life within me and surrounding me. Is that what I want?

No pattern of thinking to fall back upon, to refer to. Nothing to tell me what is right or wrong, what is sin or virtue, I will have to find this out for myself. Do I want to live in liberation? That is the first thing I will have to discover, because freedom is total vulnerability. If I suffer from emotional susceptibility to what people think of me or tell me, then that emotional susceptibility will not allow me to live in the exposure of liberation.

Do I feel secure in accepting beliefs, authorities and traditions? Please, I must find out. If there is emotional susceptibility, an intellectual habit of theorizing about life which has made me collect theories and dogmas, intellectual susceptibility to knowing, emotional susceptibility to beliefs, then obviously I cannot venture to find out what liberation is. I will first have to find out where the susceptibility is in me, what it has done to me.

You see liberation is always from the known, freedom is always from the known. The unknown does not bind you, there is no bondage, there are no systems, structures, or patterns in the unknown, in the wholeness of life. The patterns, the habits, the conditionings, that which binds me is in the known. So, freedom from the

known, liberation from the known, that is the meaning of liberation.

It is nothing mysterious or mystical, it is a science. Spirituality is a science of life and living. Living without beliefs and credulity, living without the authority of knowledge which is sterile, which is the past. Living in the present, with your own perception and understanding that occurs in you, and so on. So, now I understand that liberation is always from the past, the known, the conditionings, so what do I do?

I look at the movement that is taking place here, in this body, and find out how that movement takes place. Is it a movement of seeing, looking or interpreting, according to certain habits? I will have to find out. You see I am not studying a theory, I am not reading a book, I will brush aside all the books, I will say that I will learn from life, I will learn from the creativity of life by which I am surrounded, and the creativity of life which abides in me. I am as much an abode of that creativity as the cosmos at large is. So, I have brushed aside the books, I am not going to ask anyone, I am going to learn from life itself.

Life is the teacher and the movement of living is the opportunity to learn, they are my classes, they are my opportunities for self-discovery. So, the second thing is that I am going to learn from life itself, and not from

books and individuals. Freedom has to begin with the first step. It is not something I will arrive at with the last step, it is something I have to begin with. So I begin to live with myself, with the life within me. You will ask: "Do we not live with ourselves?" I doubt if we do. We live with knowledge, with theories, with beliefs, with criteria, with reactions that are the habit patterns of the brain and neuro-chemical systems. We do not live with life within us.

Now, what have I got for learning, which assets have I got? I have the sense organs which are my colleagues in perception, my companions, so I will look at those sense organs, the sensual system, and see if it is capable of perception. I will find out whether or not I am providing them with a proper diet, thus keeping the senses at their best. If I overfeed or underfeed, undersleep or oversleep, naturally the body and the sense organs will not be at their best. They have to relate to the objects outside of them, they have to look, they have to listen, so they have to be kept free of all manner of toxins, impurities and imbalances.

I have started learning now, I start learning at the physical level, at the sensual level. So, it is not only sitting in silence that is going to provide the solution, but when you remove yourself from the authority of knowledge you are in silence. Please, do see that the discontinuity of the movement of knowledge,

discontinuity of the movement of thought, is the beginning of silence. Once I have brushed aside all the books and all the great teachers of the world, and in all humility, taking the lamp of my own understanding, my own perception, I start on the adventure of liberation, every step becomes the teacher and a step towards the discovery of truth. Religion is personal discovery of truth. It is a first hand encounter with reality.

Religion is interaction with life, not through ideas, not with theories, but with your sensual system, the sensitivity that vibrates in your physical system and in the organic intelligence at your disposal. We have magnificent companions that can work with us on this adventure of liberation. So wherever I notice the toxins, impurities, imbalances, obstructions and unscientific ways, I correct them, I correct them with my perception. If this is not the kind of diet that agrees with the body, not keeping it vital and supple, then I change it. If there is too much sleep which the body does not need, I reduce the amount, if the body requires more sleep, I provide that to the body. Verbalization gets looked at too. Am I using words that I understand or am I using borrowed words, words that have not been probed or understood? If so I stop using these words as per my perception and understanding.

Do you see the austerity? Liberation is very austere. The essence of liberation is renunciation, not of the world, not of religion or responsibilities, but renunciation of

identification, of image building, of drawing conclusions and formulating judgements. Is renunciation not a nonjudgemental state of consciousness? And when there is no judgement there is no attachment, obviously.

There is so much to say, so much to share, but we must go by the clock. We will stop for this morning. So, what do I do? I rely upon my sensual system, I rely upon the sensitivity that is available to me, I rely upon the interaction with life, with that interaction as the teacher and guide. I rely upon the alertness and attentiveness that is at my disposal and I go on learning, so that every relationship becomes an opportunity for self-discovery, every movement becomes an opportunity for liberation.

Thank you for working so hard with me on this bright sunny day. Thank you for your cooperation.



13 September 1991

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION:

I have realized that it is necessary to die to the image of self, but the dying does not take place. I keep on thinking about dying, but it does not occur.

VIMALA:

I realize the necessity of dying to the image or images of self... what does that imply? Dying is not destruction, is it? Why is it necessary to die to the images?

When my house is on fire, do I have to think about getting out, or jumping out? Does thought, ideas about methods or techniques enter my consciousness when I see that the house is on fire? Is there an intervention of

thought at all? Is there a time lag between perception and action? When the house is flooded there is no time lag either between perception and action, because perception at the sensual level of the flooded house results instantaneously in the mobilization of organic intelligence. Perception instantaneously gets converted into understanding and understanding leads to spontaneous action. Is that not what happens?

Do I realize that the images that I have, or that people have about me and which I have accepted, prevent me from living? Have I realized that images isolate me from life? Living is relating to that which is, interaction with life is living. Images prevent me from perceiving the facts, leaving aside interacting with life.

Could it be that the perception of a psychological fact does not activate, does not mobilize intelligence in us, as it does at the sensual level?

Is it because of our defective upbringing through untold centuries, having been drugged by thought and knowledge, by the gathering of ideas, the thinking about how to use them, bargaining with them to such an extent that we have lost that spontaneous movement of organic intelligence? That is the question. Not why dying does not take place, but why perception of a psychological fact, perception not at the sensual level, but perception through sensitivity at the psychological level does not activate intelligence?

Should we ask the question how to bring up children, how to bring ourselves up so that the same activation of intelligence that takes place at the sensual level will take place at the psychological level also? And is this activation at all dependent on the realization that images will not allow me to live, just as the fire does not allow me to live in the house? Please do see that it is the urge to live that makes me jump out of the window, even break the window, if the house is on fire, I jump out instantaneously.

So I have to realize that images will not allow me to live. The jumping out of the images, the enclosures, the isolation that the images have built up, could occur if we perceive actually, not as a piece of knowledge, not as an idea, but as a fact that we are not living. I wonder if you recollect that we had asked this question of ourselves on the very first day: "Are we alive, are we living, or are we under the illusion that we are living?"

Could it be that the word dying, the use of the term dying stimulates a un-verbalized resistance, and the intelligence gets blocked by that resistance, because death is something negative for us, because dying and death are mistaken for destruction.

When the form of a flower has exhausted the potential of manifesting its creativity, the petals of the flower dry up and drop away. In autumn the leaves of a tree dry up, they become a beautiful yellow, like ripe old age in a

human body, having its own glory, you know the smile that shines through the wrinkles in ripe old age, it has as much beauty and ecstasy as the smile on an infant or a child's face. So, the leaves drop away. They do not die away, they fall to the earth and get converted into manure, revitalizing the earth. Though the form disintegrates, the energy is recycled and converted into another form and continues. Life knows no death.

The human form disintegrates, either having exhausted the biological potential it withers away, or having been contaminated by sickness, the movement of energy gets terminated. That is not the end of life, maybe the discontinuity of a particular form, a particular expression.

Could it be that the word dying to self, dying to ego, sends a shiver down the spine, and provokes a un-verbalised resistance or fear within us? If this is so, let us put away the word dying. Religious exploration is not an ordeal in which we must torture ourselves with words, fears and resistances. The investigation or exploration is a joyous adventure involving the seriousness of the whole of life. Seriousness can be joyous, it need not be depressive, sad, cynical or fearful. So, let us put away the word dying.

Let us say the discontinuity of this occupation with image building. Shall we now reword the question? I realize that the discontinuity of building images is vitally necessary, and that does not happen.

It does not happen because I have not been trained for that. Shall I begin with myself, this moment, here and now to go through relationships and experiences without building up images about myself and others? It is possible, learning is possible until the last breath, that is the beauty of being born in a human form. It is quite a benediction to be born a human being.

How can we move through events and incidents of daily living, of relationships, without building images? An image is built upon a value judgement, is it not? It is based on a conclusion, a categorical conclusion, an irreversible conclusion. Supposing I learn to register and record facts without converting my understanding into rigid conclusions.

I understand the facts, I respond to them as for the requirements of the situation, as for the work that I have to do. I act on the understanding of the challenge, the understanding of the situation. I do not move naively, ignorantly or casually, there is no time in life for being casual. If I am casual, absent-minded or distracted, then I will miss the opportunity of meeting life, of partaking of its intelligence, I will miss the opportunity of living.

Sensually I perceive, sensitively I understand, verbally I grasp the implications. I respond to the situation, and there is a full stop. There is no conclusion, theory or dogma to be deduced and transferred to memory. I do

not want any defence mechanism against tomorrow, because tomorrow does not exist, it is only in the mind. In the present I do not need any defence mechanism, I need spontaneity, I need intelligence, I need the willingness to expose myself.

Why should I take the trouble of drawing conclusions, of making value judgements, of building up ideas, introducing rigidity in my consciousness? You see, there is a way to learn with no memory to be added. And in this way I learn to move through relationships without drawing rigid conclusions or building images about other people against the tomorrows: if I know how that person is, then I will know how to deal with that person!

When I have learned to live without creating new memory, I find that without drawing conclusions, without building images it is possible to live, to share life, to communicate, to move through relationships. And there is a freshness about it. Referring to memory and behaving on the basis of that memory makes me stale, there is no vitality, there is no freshness. So, I learn to be fresh at every moment, I do not refer to the past.

If I learn to live that way, and it becomes an enjoyable way of living, then the old images lying stored in memory become irrelevant and defunct without any conscious effort on my part at all. Please do see this. If you like to call that dying of the images, you may. But

why use a term that stinks of negativity to the conditioned consciousness?

You know, spirituality is a science of life and living, and there is so much to learn. Knowledge creates the illusion that there is wisdom in us, that there is understanding in us, and that we need not move a finger, just use the knowledge stored in memory, and that is all to living.

If one can get disillusioned about the role of knowledge, about the efficacy of knowledge, then I think learning becomes possible. Sadhana or self-education is learning, discovering, and living from moment to moment in the light of your own understanding.

There are two things to learn. One is sharpening the sensitivity, so that perception of a psychological fact activates intelligence, as it does at the sensual level. And secondly to live without drawing conclusions or formulating value judgements about people and about ourselves. Is that not an alternative civilization, an alternative human culture?

If the basis of culture, which today is knowledge, thought and thinking, gets replaced by learning and understanding, the very complexion of human relationships will go through a qualitative change. Then I will not keep thinking about dying, because thinking is

not going to bring about dying, thinking is not committing suicide is it? Setting ourselves free of the habit of building up images is not committing suicide. As this is a very basic and fundamental question, we are going into it rather deeply.

Thirdly, when the perception, the understanding of the mental movement enables me to see that there is nothing like an individual mind, an individual ego, that it is only a cultural contrivance of the human race, that this verbalization, this ideation and conceptualization is only a cultural contrivance for social living, then the importance we attach to the movement of thought will no longer be there. It will be like any other means to be used. Thinking will no longer be equated with the act of living.

Preoccupation with the mental movement will terminate the moment we realize that though this idea, this concept, this thought structure is needed to deal with the man-made world, with the man-made structures, if and when necessary, we need not be imprisoned in it, so that a sense of freedom, not only from images, but from the whole thought movement emerges out of that understanding.

Could it be that if I am preoccupied with the movement of thought and I want to get rid of the image-making occupation, it may not be possible?

Let me take one step further and see the limitations built into the thought structure, see its limited utility, so that the importance of the constant movement of thought is not there any more, the necessity to interpret and build a value judgement on the behaviour of other people, or on my own behaviour, is no longer there. This sharpens the sensitivity, gives it a depth and intensity which it did not have before, because it was entangled in the movement of thought. Now that sensitivity is free from the strain and stress of the thought movement.

Therefore as soon as there is perception, the organic intelligence, the creativity contained in the human body, gets activated. There is no longer a difference between sensual and psychological perception. You see the beauty of it. Liberation is holistic maturity, it is a holistic growth into another dimension of consciousness, a transformation in the total way of living, physical, verbal, psychological, individual and social. That is called a revolution. It is not bringing about a patchwork of changes here and there, as per the need of the hour.

QUESTION:

Is it possible to be in a state of complete attention to an object or situation and along with it retain a sense of self?

VIMALA:

Of course it is. What does a judge do, what does a

surgeon do in the operating theatre, what does a lawyer do arguing his client's case, or an engineer do when constructing a bridge? The quality of attention that they have is the same as the quality of attention a yogi has, a person in the state of meditation has. It is an all inclusive attention and yet there is a sense of self at that moment, because there is a sense of responsibility that one is dealing with the life and death of the person standing in the witness box, life and death of a person lying on the operating table, life and death of people who are going to use the bridge, a tremendous sense of responsibility.

When it comes to dealing with material facts at the sensual level, or discharging professional responsibilities, it seems to be quite possible to have complete attention and a sense of self, without the tinge of ego-centredness. It is not an isolating sense of self, there is not the sting of pride, or vanity, or assertiveness or ambition at that particular moment. It is a sense of self without any limitation, without any sting of isolation.

The moment the work is over, the sense of self might go back into pride or ambition. But when the person is discharging the responsibility, during those crucial moments of actual action, I think the sense of self remains as a sense of responsibility to handle the skill that one has acquired and the care and concern for one's fellow human beings.

To have that sense of responsibility and that deep sense of concern for the lives of fellow human beings when one is not busy discharging professional responsibilities, but throughout the day in all relationships, could be an alternative way of living. The austerity of that attentiveness, the depth, the intensity of that concern, if it is there throughout the day, could be called a meditative way of living where the sense of self remains as a pure and sheer repository of knowledge, experience and skill which are necessary , inevitable, indispensable for human interaction.

In India they call it the yogic way of living, the science of yoga is concerned with creative living. Your attentiveness then, with that sense of self without the sting of assertiveness, ambition or aggressiveness, releases all the creative energies. The science of yoga is not limited to hatha yoga only, though it is the introduction to the science of yoga. That science is concerned with activating the creative and healing energies within the body, as well as the art of relating to the creative energies outside of you, relating to that which surrounds you.

QUESTION:

Is ignorance an aspect of the process of life?

Are we responsible for ignorance?

What is ignorance?

VIMALA:

In the English language the word ignorance implies absence of organized, standardized information, absence of knowledge, does it not? But the questioner seems to be referring not to this kind of ignorance, but ignorance about one's own nature, ignorance about the reality behind the ego. Socrates used to say; "Self-knowing is virtue. Self-discovery is virtue." Perhaps the questioner is referring to ignorance about the reality of one's self behind the screen of ego, that kind of ignorance, and asking if we are responsible for that ignorance.

I think the human race is learning to get acquainted with itself. The civilization and culture in which we are living is not the consummation of human growth, we have yet to learn. Ignorance about the reality in ourselves and in that which surrounds us seems to be a part of life, a part of the upbringing up till now. We, the human species, have made it our concern to analyze matter and find out about the material world outside ourselves, but we did not turn the searchlight of our exploration inward, at any rate not sufficiently.

We have probed into the biological structure, we are probing into the psychological structure, the parapsychological structure, but it is necessary to go deeper than that, to probe into the sense of isness. Everybody is born with a non-verbalized awareness of isness, an isness of life within. Nobody questions whether

one is living or not, questions the sense of being alive, of the body being a live, of the I being alive if you like to put it that way. That sense is there. It is not even instinctive, it is deeper than that.

The body grows through childhood, through youth, through adulthood into old age, and yet the sense of life inside does not become contaminated by age, it does not feel that it has become old, it says the body has become old, there is a sense of agelessness, a sense of all permeating isness. That sense with which a child is born has not been tackled yet, therefore there is ignorance about the nature of reality, about the nature of ultimate reality outside of us and within us.

Outside of us we have probed matter, arrived at the dance of energies. We have discovered which energies are conditioned. We are confronted by many unconditioned energies. As physicists, we have probed beyond the energies and discovered emptiness. We are on the threshold of probing into the secret of emptiness, out of which the cosmos seems to have exploded. We may call it the absolute ground of existence, the ultimate isness of life etc., but yet the secret of that which is concealed in the emptiness of space has yet to be revealed to mankind.

The sensual and the psychological have been looked upon as the abode of human consciousness. There is

perhaps still time for the human race to realize that the emptiness beyond the dance of all the energies could be the abode, could be the roots of life, could be the source of life and creativity. The emptiness of silence within, and the emptiness of space without may contain the secret of life, may be concealing the mystery of life.

We are responsible for ignorance in the sense that our exploration of the nature of reality is incomplete. We will have to continue with the exploration, neither looking upon religious scriptures, nor upon the inventions of physicists or scientists as the ultimate word. You know, the ultimate word in the exploration of reality has not yet been uttered, and perhaps cannot ever be uttered. Life seems to be infinity. That is one angle of looking at the question.

Let us look at it from a different angle. If the word ignorance indicates absence of knowledge, and if the questioner presumes that knowing is the way of relating to reality, then perhaps we will have to correct our enquiry. Knowing about the nature of ultimate reality within me and around me may not be the scientific or the correct way at all, because knowing is with the help of words, and words are the tools of language, they are a creation of the past.

Words put you in an indirect relation with reality, in fact they prevent a direct perception of reality, creating the

illusion that words are matter. Knowledge imprisons you, isolates you. Ignorance and knowledge, both words could be brushed aside. Investigating, exploring, discovering and understanding, such terms could be introduced in the language of spirituality, into a religious or spiritual enquiry.

Knowledge could be nearly banished for the exploration of reality. So, when the movement of thought and experience is allowed to discontinue within us, there is an emptiness in the consciousness. Then further learning does not take place through verbalization at all. We are capable of non-verbal, non-cerebral movements, that take place in the dimension of silence. Discontinuity of the movement of knowledge, emergence of the dimension of silence, or completely empty consciousness, may be the pathless path towards the fulfilment of life and living.

Ignorance about knowledge, about physical sciences, social sciences, about literacy, illiteracy has of course to be eliminated. I hope the questioner is not implying this aspect. Verbalized knowledge is the birthright of every human being in all corners of the earth. The brain has to be sharpened, it has to be kept well informed because we are living in an era of science and technology, of high technology.

We coexist with computers, with electronic brains, and technology is not going to stop. Human beings are

making every generation of new computers ever sharper and more sensitive. The seventh generation of computers that is being prepared and built in Japan is a fantastic thing, they have nearly introduced emotions into those computers.

So, the brains have to be well informed, verbal knowledge is an indispensable part of human life. Just as houses and buildings in which we live are indispensable as enclosures for the physical body - we have to see to it that the place we live in does not become a jail, this is up to us - so knowledge, the psychological structure is an enclosure in the brain, remains an enclosure.

I hope you have noticed that these communications are outpourings of a friendly heart, they are not propagating a philosophy or dishing out ready-made solutions. They are communications with the participants, sharing their questions, looking at the questions from different angles, and stimulating more questions in the participants' minds. It is the questioning, the probing, the digging and the going around of questions that helps the question to open up and reveal the answer.

QUESTION:

In our daily living, if we want to be happy we have to go through compromises. Compromises and freedom cannot coexist. So, how to be happy without compromise?

VIMALA:

I wonder what has made the questioner use the term compromise. Do you know when a compromise becomes necessary? When you take a rigid stand because you have a vested interest in that stand. You may be taking it on behalf of a firm, a company, a political party, a government... Taking a stand becomes necessary when there is a vested interest in maintaining a status quo of the social situation, the economic structure, the political set up, and the other person comes equipped with the same attitudes of vested interest, of competence in bargaining, and then both parties argue and arrive at a compromise, a consensual compromise if you like. Is that the content of our relationships at home?

Why should a compromise become necessary for the happiness of a family, unless I have a vested interest in my reactions and I am convinced that my reactions are the right reactions and the other person's reactions are wrong, or my view or judgement of life is the only supremely correct one, and those of the other person are not. Do we relate to one another in the family on that basis?

It is understandable that there are reactions, that there are attitudes, trends, inclinations etc., but unless there is a vested interest in maintaining them as they are, a vested interest in their security, there continuity,

argumentation, bargaining, compromises would not be necessary.

There may be differences in approaches, temperamental differences, attitudes etc., and when such people get together through marriage, outside marriage or whatever, and decide to live together, what happens then? We do not expect the partners to be carbon copies of one another, do we? If that were so there would be no charm, no fun in living. If this was the case then it would be better if you sat in front of a mirror, looked at it, and lived with it. Differences are the spice of life, they make life a little pungent, you know, tasty delicious differences. There can even be incompatibilities that you had not imagined before.

To live in relationship requires not only intelligence, but a tremendous skill of being able to dodge the differences, discovering the areas of agreement and cooperation, and persuading the other person to come to those areas and going through cooperation there. When the areas of agreement, temperamental, ideological, intellectual or emotional are discovered and stimulated and you live in spontaneous cooperation with each other, the angularities and peculiarities get softer.

But supposing I have to give in. If we do not become obstinate and assertive in all the details of life - intellectually equipped human beings become

hypersensitive about their wishes, whims, idiosyncrasies - but if in living together I do not remain obstinate and adamant about details, I will adjust and adapt, not compromise. I am as firm as a rock regarding fundamental values or truths that are indispensable to me, but in the details I adjust or adapt. Adaptability and adjustability are not compromises.

If and when there is love, when there is affection and concern, intelligence or sensitivity finds out ways of adapting or adjusting without losing your own fundamental approach to life. So, why should compromise be inevitable for happiness?

It seems to me that if the faculties of give and take, of sharing, of adaptability, adjustability, receptivity are developed in the period of education, one does not grow up with a personality which looks upon its thoughts, its likes and dislikes, preferences and prejudices, as the ultimate authority or ultimate source of creating the quality of living.

You know knowledge creates rigidity, it blocks one's receptiveness, it produces the "I know best" attitude! If children right from the prenursery age are helped not to rely too much on knowledge, but to keep learning to be open and receptive, a psychology of cooperation instead of assertive confrontation, if we revolutionize the very essence of education, then I think compromises will no

longer be necessary for happiness in life, happiness in daily relationships.

Obviously compromise and freedom cannot coexist, you feel you have given up something: "I have surrendered something, sacrificed something for the compromise, I have done it for the family, for my husband, my wife, my children, but I did not get anything back, it was not compensated!" It inhibits the whole perspective of life.

Living is manifesting the essence of your being, it is unfolding, uncovering the contents of your being, the essence of your being. And that act of uncovering, of pouring out, of manifesting or revealing is its own fulfilment. As flowers are fulfilled in opening up, as the sun is fulfilled in emanating light and warmth, and rivers are fulfilled in flowing and quenching the thirst of unnamable millions, in the same way our acts of relating with other people will result in permeating us with a sense of fulfilment. Life is fulfilled by living.

Living is sharing, partaking and sharing, receiving and expressing. Then such ideas as "how much I have sacrificed and what I did get back?", this acquisitive terminology, this assertive psychology, this habit of constant comparison with others and the anxiety to become acceptable, acknowledged, respectable, all this vanishes away.

My friends, we have been exploring together, on behalf of ourselves and the human race at large, if it is possible for us to take a quantum jump into a different dimension of consciousness, which will be entirely free of knowledge and thought, developing a new dynamic of human relationship so that while the old civilization gets dismantled day by day, and all the social and individual inner and outer structures are collapsing by the hour, there will not be a vacuum, there will be a new culture, a new human race. A religious enquiry or exploration is concerned with this crucial question. We are passing through a crisis, not only the east and west european countries, but the whole human civilization.



14 September 1991

A NEW HUMAN CULTURE

We came here to explore jointly how we can learn from life which is the supreme master, the supreme teacher. In Sanskrit there is only one word for teaching and learning, but in English we have two words. It seems necessary to look rather carefully at the words teaching and learning for our religious exploration of reality.

To be religious is to feel concerned about the nature and discovery of reality. Imparting theoretical, academic, verbalized information can be called teaching as regards knowledge required for living in the man-made world. But the essence of teaching is transmission of wisdom which may not and does not necessarily take place through feeding information. The transmission of wisdom, transmission of love, transmission of freedom

can take place through presence, through the existential essence of life.

We called life the supreme teacher or master because life creates opportunities for us to learn. It confers opportunities to learn without being taught verbally, without being taught assertively or dealt with aggressively, to learn without being imposed upon by any external agency. Isn't he or she a good teacher who employs indirect and suggestive methods even in your academic schools and colleges? The direct method of education, instigating a subtle imposition, has been discarded the world over by pedagogical psychologists. So a teacher is that presence which creates and stimulates opportunities for enquirers to learn by themselves, in unconditional freedom.

Life gives this freedom to us. It is present wherever we go, in whichever direction we turn, individually or collectively, outside of us, or inside us, that creative life, that energy of creativity, that energy of intelligence is there. So we call life the supreme teacher.

The question is, do we feel responsible towards life? We are taught, trained, conditioned to feel responsible towards families, towards communities, towards nations, towards the man-made world. Is it ever suggested to us by parents, or at schools and colleges, that our basic fundamental responsibility is towards life? That we are

accountable to life, answerable to the intelligence of life? Religiosity is being aware of the responsibility towards life, and that responsibility can be discharged through the movement of living .

The act of living is the act of worshipping the divine. The divinity of life can be worshipped through our acts of living, through our responses in relationship towards nature, towards the man-made world, and towards that which is beyond the physical and the psychological. Living is being aware of the three dimensions and moving physically, verbally, psychologically in such a way, that our behaviour arouses the energy of harmony and friendship, rather than the energy of conflict and confrontation. Living is enriching the harmony that is existing in life. And I think mankind has yet to learn that art of living, the art of sharing the inner energies, of sharing understanding, of sharing emotions, feelings, intelligence with nature and with the man-made structures in such a way, that a global atmosphere of harmony, which is the essence of love and friendship, which is the essence of compassion, gets manifested.

So it seems to me that a person who is interested in living realizes that we are responsible towards life, accountable to it, answerable to it. And what is the implication of that responsibility? To be alert and attentive in every movement, so that we do not miss the message that life wants to communicate at the moment

of our interaction with it. Not to waste the days and nights in negativity, in depression, laziness, passivity, you know all these are crimes against life.

When one feels responsible, one is alert, sensitive, attentive, are we not? Whenever we have to discharge a specific responsibility we feel terribly concerned about it, be it earning money, or concern for the family, or whatever, concern not to miss a single moment, a single opportunity for living. For a moment never gets repeated, there is no repetition in life. That which is here and now can not be here after an hour or so. It's like the flowing waters of a powerful river, they are never stagnant, never static, so even though you may dip your hand in the water and keep it steady, the water that was there is no longer there the next moment, it is flowing towards the ocean. In the same way life appears to be the same, but the quality of intelligence, the quality of dynamism flows a way, if we are static or stagnant due to negativity, absent-mindedness, distractedness, or inattention. Our living gets suspended when we indulge in any of these psychological negativities.

Our life and living get suspended when we repeat mechanically what has been fed into us by human society, in the name of knowledge, of patterns of behaviour, value structures, norms, criteria, racial preferences or prejudices. Are we not trained to repeat all those, to react as a Dutchman, Englishman, American,

Indian, catholic, protestant, presbyterian, methodist, hindu, buddhist. So instead of responding to the challenges of life as an intelligent human being, we accept the authority of that which has been fed into us and we can spend sixty, seventy, ninety years in just repeating those patterns. We accept being reduced to computers. Living gets suspended when there is repetition. Living is an interaction of creative energies in me and that which is around me.

It is only when I have to deal with the man-made structures, with society, when I have to function as an economic man, a political woman, function as a teacher at a school or university, that I voluntarily accept the job of propagating the past. It's a means to my livelihood. So I teach history, social sciences, languages. There the use of knowledge, memory, thought, a very efficient, competent repetition of that which has been prescribed in books is warranted. That is my responsibility towards the society in which I live and enjoy.

Except for those professional responsibilities, which one has to go through, because one doesn't want to beg or borrow or steal - we are not going to create a class of parasites in society in the name of a religious or spiritual enquiry - so except for discharging the responsibility towards the man-made world where the cerebral function is tremendously important, it seems necessary for our interaction with life with one another as human

beings, with ourselves, that living is not suspended by repetitive, mechanical activities or is not suspended because of negativity, inactivity, laziness, because we are rotting in bed when we are not sleepy, stretching ourself in idleness when the body is not physically exhausted and does not need any such stretching. We commit so many crimes every day against life.

It seems to me, my friends, that religion begins with reverence for life, recognition of its proximity around us, recognition of the energies contained in life around us, within us, awareness of those energies. Please do see with me that reverence for life is the beginning of religiosity. When there is this reverence you do not ignore its presence, you do not misbehave, you do not behave casually, chaotically, in a disorderly manner. There is a spontaneous sense of restraint, you could use the term respect, but not the kind of compartmental respect which has been cultivated by human society, reducing it to social etiquette. Therefore one is using the word reverence intentionally, though it seems to have an odour of organized religion. When there is reverence for a person, you do not behave in a disorderly way, in a chaotic way. So the sense of reverence stimulates a kind of restraint which would not have been there otherwise.

I hope you are all acquainted with the term restraint. It's a marvellous word. There is no outer or inner compulsion, no imposition. It is not even voluntarily

accepted or chosen, but a spontaneous sense of propriety, of equipoise, which is elegance. It is a non-rational occurrence of sensitivity. Religion begins with reverence and expresses itself in restraint in physical, verbal, and psychological behaviour. Then reverence for the body, our physical structure, helps us to learn how to feed it properly. Not to dump food in it when not hungry, not to starve it in the name of religion, when there is appetite. Reverence awakens restraint, whether in your diet, whether in clothes, whether in exercise, sleep, whether in the use of verbalization or at the non-verbal level.

Our behaviour with ourselves, with nature and also in human relationships, suffers chronically from underdoing or overdoing. If I feel that my motivation will be exposed, I try to conceal it behind a screen of so-called silence: I don't utter a word because the word will expose the state of my consciousness, the nature of my motivation, I abstain from speaking. I call it silence, but that silence is a screen manipulated by me. When I feel frightened, I use verbalization excessively, I go on talking to hide the fear, to conceal the fear, lest somebody sees through me, sees through the skin as it were and sees my frightened state. So I try to hide the fear in over-verbalization.

Say I have had a pleasurable experience with someone, so when we meet again, there is a state of excitement,

and that excitement gets manifested through gesticulations or through unnecessary verbalization. In other words I don't know what to do with the excitement. Haven't you watched small children, they don't know what to do with their surplus energy, they get excited, they dance around or chatter or do something. In the same way, we, the grown-ups, also get excited. It's the memory of pleasure, the expectation of pleasure. So I'm excited and then I talk and talk and talk. Verbalization takes place, because the excitement cannot be contained.

We indulge in excessiveness, in overdoing and underdoing. I'm anxious, I'm worried, so I don't feed the body properly, as if taking the anger out on the body. Because of some disappointment or frustration, my ambition has not been fulfilled, I take the revenge as it were on the body and don't feed it properly. If I'm excited I overfeed it and if I'm worried or anxious then I don't feed it at all. The body cannot argue with me and say: "you are unfair my dear." But it does say it later, through psychosomatic symptoms. That is the language of the body.

When there is reverence there is a sense of restraint, of spontaneous restraint which is not a discipline, which has no pattern, which cannot be reduced to a structure and which cannot be awakened by any outer or inner compulsions. It's something beautiful. It's only in the soil of reverence that the flower of restraint blooms.

I want to live. Life is for learning to live and enjoying living. I say to myself I have reverence for life and I would like to learn living, interacting with that which is around me, with the energies within me. I will not start hunting for masters and teachers in my country or in any other country. Teachers are necessary when one wants to study specific sciences, or learn about certain practices which involve psychophysical activity.

If you want to know about mantra yoga, you have to go to an expert of that science and become his or her student. If you want to learn tai chi you will have to find a teacher who will teach tai chi. You want to study the chakras of hatha yoga, the important nerve centres in the body pointed out by the science of yoga, treating human anatomy on a different level, or you want to learn acupressure and acupuncture with its seven hundred critical nerve centres and the meridian line of energy, or reflexology, for all these you may have to find a teacher.

But there is no teacher who can teach living. Living is to be learnt without being taught. Living is to be learnt from life itself. It's only your personal direct intimate interaction with life that can teach living. So what do I do? I'm an ordinary person interested in exploring reality, exploring the mystery of life and living, exploring if there is divinity, if life is divine. How do I begin?

First of all I take care of my relationship with the man-made world. The material level has to be taken care of. I go to school, have a degree or diploma, find some work to earn a livelihood, find a place to live, all that has to be taken care of so that it does not become a problem when I'm conducting the investigation and exploration in the field of religion or spirituality. I have to exercise my physical and cerebral talents, acquire knowledge and use it properly.

And at the same time as I get acquainted with physics, biology, chemistry, engineering etcetera, I get acquainted with the mechanism of mind, I watch how it functions in my life; the role of knowledge and that of its built-in limitations. I go through all that personally, in the privacy of my life, so that knowledge does not become a curse or a bondage, so that I do not get addicted to knowledge.

The addiction to knowledge, to the movement of thought, is more devastating than the addiction to liquor, alcohol or drugs. The imbalances triggered off by the addiction to thought are innumerable. First we teach children to get addicted to the authority of thought and its movement, and then we provide them with psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychotherapists! We help children to sit glued to the television screen and see all sorts of movies and then we complain that they become violent, disorderly, that they become sexy, that they are

not interested in learning. The games we are playing with ourselves!

So I want to get out of this vicious circle in which we are trapped in the name of civilization. I say to myself I will relate to the needs of the body. I may have to read books on diet, on exercise, I'll read them to understand and not to acquire knowledge or ideas. I'll read the book to learn, and then the need for the book, in my life, is finished. I read in such a way that I don't have to go back to the book, because I have learnt what it has to say. I read about mind, about diet, I read about everything, but I read in order to learn and then I experiment in my daily living.

I discover within weeks the kind of food, the frequency of intake, the quantity, the quality that agrees with my body. Within a few weeks I have investigated through experimentation, through trial and error and elimination. Marvellous way! Then I become sensitive to what kind of food has to be taken in summer, when the days are warm or hot, what is the correct ratio of minerals, salts, and vitamins, what kind of food has to be taken in rainy days when carbohydrates cannot be digested, what kind of food has to be taken in winter, when the body requires a high protein diet.

You know, I arrive at a sensitivity in relation to food, according to the cycle of seasons, the climatic changes,

according to the metabolic changes in my body. And that interaction with food, and the energies contained in food, become a marvellously interesting phenomenon.

Then cooking meals or taking meals does not become a repetitive or mechanical activity. Gulping down the morsels, swallowing them hurriedly, that uncouth way of relating to food, disappears. If this is not religion I don't know what religion is. Because through cereals, wheat, rice, vegetables, minerals contained in vegetables, fruit, milk etc., we are interacting with the energies of nature. Religiosity begins at the sensual level. I respect the energy contained in my muscular system, glandular system, nervous system, and I relate to them in such a way that they remain elastic, pliable, flexible and healthy.

The speaker had not learnt this when she was working in the Landgift Movement in India. Right after her university education she spent ten years marching through the villages of India, collecting land and distributing it. She was so overwhelmed by the nature of the movement, that she was very unfair to her body, nearly criminal towards the body. She is paying the price now. So it seems very necessary to have reverence for the body.

Then we turn to reverence towards speech, towards the faculty of speech. It is something beautiful to be able to

communicate with the help of speech, this manoeuvring, engineering of sound energy. You know, sound is an energy. The metaphysics of sound is known to physicists acquainted with the natural sciences. And those acquainted with semantics, the science of language, with phonetics, etc., will see along with me that when you utter even a letter, it has a range of sound vibrations which emanate from you. And whatever you utter affects your neurochemical system as well as the system of other people, the pitch of the sound, the tone, the depth, the velocity, because you are dealing with sound energy which is perhaps the primary principle of creation.

Sound and light are the primary principles of which the cosmos seems to have been composed; sound consists of light and light consists of sound. When I speak I'm consuming the energy of light, consuming the energy of heat in my body and I'm affecting the atmosphere. Besides the correct meaning, the precise, the accurate meaning of words, as given in dictionaries and sanctioned by tradition, speech has this aspect also. So when I speak I use the capacity with reverence and responsibility.

I don't go bla bla bla the whole day, gossiping, blackmailing, talking for the sake of talking, talking because I am bored, because I don't know what to do with myself, it is all abuse and misuse. And every sound

that you utter, every word that you utter gets imprinted within, without your knowing. So one learns the austerity of using verbalization, if and when necessary, using it with precision and accuracy, using it elegantly, aesthetically. You may not speak audibly, but as long as you are chattering inaudibly inwardly, the movement of thought goes on affecting the chemistry of the body and the nervous system. So one learns to use this movement of verbalization scientifically, aesthetically, not allowing the atmosphere in our bodies and brains to suffer from excessive, abusive, unscientific verbalization.

Do you see what is implied in a revolution in consciousness, what is implied in the way of living? This one has to be learn oneself, by oneself. I wanted to share with you how a simple person can begin learning by him or herself, in complete freedom, with one's initiative intact. When we go to someone and accept him or her as the guru, the master, and begin to follow the words, the thought-system, the way of living, the way of clothing, the diction of the person, when we begin to imitate, we have forsaken our freedom and our initiative. What is more precious in life than inner psychic freedom?

The political and economic freedoms are nowhere near the sanctity of this inner psychic freedom which cannot be mortgaged in the name of meditation or transformation. In the last fifty years, in the name of religion, spirituality, meditation, yoga and what have

you, people in the world have been victimized, have voluntarily accepted surrendering their initiative and forsaking their freedom. I' m sharing with you my deep sorrow, having been to New Zealand, Australia, Hawai, the western and eastern coast of America, Canada, to the Scandinavian countries, to South America, having witnessed this. Europeans need not get Indianized for getting religious!

The beginning of religion is the ending of the process of becoming. So I begin to learn, without looking for an authority whom I will imitate, a pattern to which I will conform, a corner where I will feel psychologically secure. A sense of belonging to anything else than the wholeness of life takes you astray. You are born in a family, you belong there and discharge the responsibilities. But primarily we belong to life, as organic expressions of the divinity of life. We belong to life and our responsibility is towards life , primarily and ultimately. So I learn, retaining my freedom and retaining my initiative.

If I get stranded, life, the energy of intelligence, will somehow create opportunities and bring me across individuals whose experience, whose observations, whose understanding could be a help. Life has a mysterious way of bringing people together. It is enough for me that I get consumed by the urge to learn, to discover, to enquire, to explore and that I coordinate

and correlate my enquiry to everything, from morning till night. Then the rest can be left to the intelligence of life, to the creativity of life. It will throw across my path, or take me across the path of individuals, situations, challenges, that will set me free at the very point I was getting stuck, I was getting bogged down, stranded. It seems to be sufficient that one enquires and explores, involving one's whole life, not only intellectually, not only with the help of words and patterns of thinking, but with the whole of living. Nothing is excluded from the act, from the field of learning.

So we learn, we live. Life being infinite, inmeasurable, inexhaustible, learning has no end, for the individual as well as for the human race. Nobody can claim to have the last word on the nature of reality, the last word on the mystery of relationship. Life is worth living because its essence is enclosed in mystery.

I may go on thus communicating and yet perhaps neither you nor the speaker will feel that that is enough. At this moment one feels that not even one tenth has been communicated, so much remains unsaid because words are weak, words are a feeble medium for communication.

Spirituality, the religiosity of the twenty first century, will be scientific, holistic, perhaps with new terminologies, a new language, perhaps with a new

ethos for the nuclear era, causing the emergence of a new human culture, where the uniqueness of each race and ethnic community, its way of living, would survive, without any particular culture becoming dogmatic or dominating. A new human culture, where the uniquenesses of various styles of living will not be steamrolled into uniformity. The diversity of all cultures will enrich the all-inclusive human culture.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to each one of you. I have been communicating with hundred and forty, yet I have been communicating with everyone of you. It has been an interpersonal communication, though it appeared to be an impersonal communication. I feel grateful because you have come to this gathering in spite of the most turbulent times in European life. You have come from so many countries, some friends have come even from Brasil and Chile, some from the East coast of the USA, many from European countries.

Europe is going through a very turbulent period. The happenings in the ex-Soviet Union and the East European countries have generated and are going to generate a cultural turmoil throughout Europe. On the other hand the European Economic Community, visualizing the possibility of common currency, common defence, even visualizing the possibility of a United States of Europe, is causing another cultural turmoil; whether to have a confederation of nation states in

Europe or to have a United States of Europe, including Great Britain.

Do you see that spirituality excludes nothing? That which is exclusive of any field of life cannot be religion. It embraces everything and that embrace of perception and awareness brings about a qualitative change in the nature of action. So Europe is going through a very turbulent period. It's going to change the political and economic map of Europe. In spite of all that turbulence you cared and you came here for the seminars. So I express my thanks and gratefulness to all of you.

Life only knows whether we will meet again physically or not. But those who have really met and communicated never go through a parting, because they have met in consciousness. And that which is shared at the level of consciousness remains with us. You remain with me, within me, and I remain with you, within you. The interaction that has gone between the listeners and the speaker has enriched the lives of both. I'm not the same person that came here two weeks ago, I have learnt quite a lot, through your questions, through the way you have been together in silence. The quality of silence has been so fresh this year, so unlike what we had before.

If life does not bring us together physically here again, may I take this opportunity of expressing my special gratefulness to Mr. and Mrs. Frankena. It is in their home

in Hilversum in 1962 that our work began. But for the dedication and exceptional skillfulness of Mr. Frankena, the work would not have been spread to all the corners of the world. It has pleased me immensely that they were in sufficient good health to come here and be with us, amongst us, throughout these two weeks. I'm not going to take your time in mentioning the names of many others who have enriched the work, shared the responsibility. I see Nora Houtman, I see Mr. Jaap Terreehorst, Mieke, many others, many also who are not with us physically now.

The Netherlands has been my second home during all those thirty years of my wanderings over the globe. I would like to take your leave, expressing my special gratefulness to the people of the Netherlands, for the love, affection and friendship this land and its people have given unto me.



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"Life is for
living, for interaction,
for communication, it is for
communion, for enriching one
another, for manifesting the dance
of energies, without exploiting one
another, in a non aggressive way,
free of violence. We are here on
this planet to learn to live
without violence".

Vimala Thakar