

towards
total transformation



VIMALA THAKAR

Mukund Sawani 13/2

Towards total transformation

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NEW ORDER PUBLISHING CO.

AHMEDABAD 6

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Published by Dinkar Trivedi
for Vimala Prakashan Trust, Ahmedabad-6
and Printed by S. M. Balsaver at Usha Printers,
6 Tulloch Road, Bombay 1*

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Introduction

VIMALA THAKAR

Vimala Thakar spent many years as a close associate of Vinobe Bhave in the Land-Gift Movement in India, and travelled to every part of that country explaining his program. Then she met and heard Krishnamurti and through that contact her life was changed at its foundations. She felt she could no longer represent any organization, but must speak as an individual. In the last few years she has been addressing groups throughout Europe and India. The present volume is a selection from talks given in California in 1968.

Vimala develops an inquiry into the possibility of total transformation of the psyche. She begins by analyzing the factors which cause fragmentation of human consciousness. She examines with care and clarity the ongoing phenomenon of mind as a repetitive mechanism which negates capacity for clear perception. She explores the psychological structure of the ego in which man imprisons himself. She states that man must allow a new dimension of consciousness to be born in him before he can know the meaning of freedom.

Talk at Stiles Hall

University of California

October 22, 1968

As one wanders through various part of the world, one finds that the whole human life is in a state of turmoil. Politically, socially, economically, and even culturally, human life seems to be going through a very grave crisis. Long-cherished ideas, theories, concepts, and notions in every field of activity are collapsing — one after another. The values of life are getting unrelated to the day-to-day facts of life. The symbols that man has evolved through many centuries for communication are also being reduced to fictitious symbols and the context of life is changing practically every day.

This seems to be a very congenial and favorable situation for the young generation. They may turn in any direction and they are faced with innumerable challenges. To be faced with challenges is a favorable condition, because every challenge probes into the depth of the psyche, does not allow anyone to relapse into laziness or sluggishness, and brings out all the hidden and latent energies, talents, and gifts. If there are no challenges, life will become meaningless, tasteless and flavorless. So living in these explosive times seems to be a great blessing for the young people.

Particularly in the last twenty years we find that the context of human life has changed with tremendous speed. Politically, the great part of humanity which was not liberated in Asia and Africa became free after 1945. One after another the Asian and African countries won

their independence. That fact by itself caused a very rude shaking of the power pressures in the world. People in Europe and America could no longer determine the destinies of the people in Africa and Asia. Even in international institutions the voice of the colored started to be counted, to be listened to, with a kind of awe—and, if not respect, a kind of compulsion which the sheer number, the majority of the people there, created in the minds of the alert statesmen of the world.

Economically, science and technology brought about tremendous material and economic progress in the Occidental world; and the starvation and poverty of the underdeveloped countries which had recently become free, contrasted with the affluence in the other part of the world, became a very big economic factor. How this factor caused trade and commerce throughout the world to change its nature, how that determined the foreign policy of big countries like Russia, America, China, and so on—is something very interesting—the competition in providing aid to these countries, the motivating forces working behind that, and so on.

In the field of religion and spirituality also we are going through explosive times. Man has seen the cultural starvation in affluent society; man has seen the limitations of sensual pleasure, has seen that even after providing all of the needs of the body and the mind there is something missing. So the material progress, the physical comfort which was being worshiped even a decade ago, is not being worshiped by the young people today. They have seen the limitations of the sensual pleasures, they have seen the limitations of money, power, prestige. So, on the one hand, they do not have—and rightly so—faith in the organized churches and religions of the world, and on the other hand the myth and illusion, the fiction of economic and material prog-

ress providing peace to the human mind, love to the human heart, and a society based on equality and fraternity coming into existence on that—has been exploded. The young man of today does not know where to turn; He is groping; He is searching with all the enthusiasm, the vehemence and the passionate nature of youth. He wants to find out the truth.

There was a phase for taking drugs, trying to expand consciousness, and indulging in transcendental experiences, and visions. There was a phase for some ten or fifteen years in the Western world when people thought: "Ah, this is the way out of the boredom, this is the way out of the industrial and mechanized life!" But now, now in the late 60's, they discover that heightening the sensitivity and enriching the capacity for acquiring experiences is not the essence of religion. It does not constitute the discovery of truth and it does not lead one to the total transformation of life. In religion and spirituality the whole world is passing through a very grave crisis.

The revolt that we come across in the student world in various countries would seem to be set off by some small fragmentary or partial causes, some immediate problems; but if one studies the psychology of young people in the East and the West, one would not look upon these revolts as the fancies and whims of irresponsible, immature young minds. One would see behind it deep-rooted causes in the total way of life which man has been pursuing for some centuries. These student revolts are coming up not only in Europe and America, but even in India one witnesses these revolts whenever the youth find an opportunity to express their discontent, dissatisfaction, and the lack of faith in the older generation: lack of faith in the statesmen and religious leaders which is manifested through strong protest.

These revolts are localized eruptions of a deep-rooted malady which is limited not only to the young people but seems to be permeating the total way that man has been living. It will be beneficial for all of us to find out for ourselves where the malady lies, how it is related to the total way of life and ask ourselves how it can be uprooted completely from the psyche. It is necessary to go into this. A person who feels concerned about life, both the individual and the collective life, feels the urgency of going into basic issues. If he does not do so, it is quite likely that localized revolts may in the end prevent a total revolution. Time seems to be ripe for a total revolution, a total revolution in the individual psyche as well as in the texture of collective relationships.

Revolution cannot be related only to the inner life of an individual or to the outer life of people as expressed socially, economically, or politically. There is no dichotomy between the inner and the outer. We do use these words but they are only tentative. The inner and the outer are complementary to each other. If we try to bring about revolution in the inner, the psychological or psychic world, neglecting the so-called outer—the social, the economic or political—we may isolate ourselves from the mainstream of life and may create certain escapes; even weave a whole network of escapes, comfortable for us.

That has been done in the East. If you want to transform the psyche, you retire from life, go to some monastery, some ashram, and then dive deep into your thoughts, feelings, sentiments, your involuntary reflexes and try to transform them. If the mind listens to you, succumbs to your persuasion and gives up the old patterns, well and good. If the mind does not yield to your persuasion, you even use violence in the name of asceticism and austerity. It doesn't matter if you have to muti-

late the mind. In the name of suppressing and repressing desires and urges all that has been done. In the name of discovery of truth, man has used violence against his own body and mind. Man has used suppression and repression, dictatorship of ideas and theories, standards and values; and thus you get a cult of people, a privileged class of monks and sannyasis. When you retire from life, you have no social responsibility, no civic responsibility. That has been tried—it doesn't work. I could go into all the details how the East has suffered from this fragmentary approach and what it has done to the life of the multitude in those countries.

Suffice it to say, this fragmentation of life into inner and outer, this division of life into individual and collective, thinking them to be entirely independent of each other, is the fertile soil in which all suffering and misery breeds. People in the Occidental world have focused their attention on the so-called outer, engaging themselves in providing better and still better means of physical and psychological comfort, raising the standard of living, changing the social, economic and political patterns both in the so-called free and democratic countries as well as the communist countries. They have been focusing all attention and energy on this. And yet we find that in all these communist and non-communist countries, man is not at peace with himself individually, nor is he at peace with his fellow men.

So it seems that the time is now ripe to see the vital necessity of perceiving life as one indivisible whole, not fragmenting it, not dividing it, not creating different patterns of behavior and codes of conduct for the individual and the collective, but looking upon life as one indivisible whole, trying to discover what can be done to live in that totality of life, sanely, scientifically, with peace in one's heart and peace in mutual relationships. That seems to be the basic issue today. That is why I

say the basic need is of a total revolution. Nothing less than a total revolution would really satisfy hungry humanity—the hunger of the body, as well as of the heart. So revolution will have to be total.

As far as the collective relationships are concerned, they are extensions—as well as to some extent even projections—of what we are inside. What a person is in his inner life, without his being aware of it, gets reflected into his relationships. You may build any social, economic or political setup but the human relationships between individuals are determined by the quality of mind that each man has. You may have the best ideologies, you may have the best of theories, ideas, and yet, when man is driven by ambition, jealousy, envy, greed, anger, his behavior is dictated by these. The drives and passions stored in the subconscious capture the surface consciousness, brush aside all the ideologies and evaluations, distort and twist the perception of the individual, create compulsions for him, psychological compulsions which force him to behave in certain ways.

So I do feel that one will have to begin with this human psyche as it is today and discover if something can be done to the total psyche—find out if man can transcend the content of this psyche through which he is living and functioning today or whether he is doomed to live as its prisoner.

Now, what do we mean by the word “psyche”? The human consciousness, for the convenience of verbal communication and intellectual study, is generally divided into the conscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious. Not that there are three such divisions in the consciousness; not that these are watertight compartments in the consciousness; not that they exist by themselves independent of one another. They seem to be layers of one indivisible whole. Man has been studying it. His analysis of consciousness into conscious, sub-

conscious and unconscious mind does not indicate in any way that the totality of consciousness is exhausted by these three layers. For all we know, there may be other layers of consciousness. There may be an area or field of human consciousness which has not been explored by man as yet. The part of consciousness which we are using, through which we are functioning, may be but a tiny fragment of the total human consciousness. There may be much more to our life and awareness than these three layers which have, up to now, been tapped and explored and mapped by man in bygone centuries. So, when we say "psyche" or we refer to human consciousness, we imply—do we not?—the so-called conscious, subconscious and the unconscious.

The surface consciousness, or the conscious mind, is that part which is cultivated by the individual. His parents help him to cultivate it, his education helps him, and all of society helps him. From childhood on, the surface consciousness is cultivated and enriched. So man knows how to acquire information with the help of memory on the one hand, and the help of his senses on the other: how to acquire information, how to store it in the memory, and how to use it when necessary. Thus, the surface consciousness seems to be full of information and experiences stored by the individual.

Deeper still, in the subconscious, are the experiences, the knowledge, the memory perhaps of the family, the community in which the person has been born, the religious denomination into which he may have been born, the country in which one might have been brought up, the race to which one belongs—all these experiences get stored into the subconscious.

And deeper still, in the unconscious, are the experiences of the total humanity. The visions and experiences, the intimations thrown out by the unconscious cannot be analyzed by the surface consciousness. It has

no access and it does not understand what the intimations are, as the conscious mind is simply incapable of analyzing the experience of the total humanity. As a Hindu, if you get an intimation which can be explained and interpreted in the Hindu terminology, then the mind, the brain tries to analyze it, tries to interpret it. But if a Hindu gets some intimation from his unconscious which has nothing whatsoever to do with the Hindu religion or the Aryan race, but has something to do with the Mongolian race or with people living in South America, then he says: "I do not understand. I have such and such an intimation, but I do not know what it is." And there are certain visions and experiences which cannot even be communicated in any language.

This is the stuff of our consciousness through which we are living: acquiring information; obtaining experiences; interpreting them according to our conditioning; according to the memories stored up in the subconscious; reacting on the basis of all that. That is how we live today. We talk of ourselves as rational human beings, but we have little balance between reason and feeling.

Let us look at another aspect of the mind. Through centuries man has been developing what is called the mind, the brain, the memory. He has been trying to sharpen the intellect. He has been trying very hard to make the emotions more and more sensitive; and he has been using the capacity at the disposal of the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious mind, to the best of his ability. You know, man has the capacity to communicate—to create symbols. That is how man created languages. That is how man developed music, art and sculpture—creating symbols, using them for communication. He has the capacity to be self-conscious. He knows that he knows. When he acts, he can simultaneously understand why he is acting in a specific way,

recognize the motives behind his action, and know what the roots of those motives are. If man wants to utilize this capacity for self-consciousness, and is alert, he can do it.

Now, man has been using this capacity of self-consciousness and the talent for creating symbols throughout these bygone centuries, and where have we arrived today? We have arrived at a saturation point. We have been using this human consciousness, this cerebral activity at our disposal; we have arrived at a point where it no longer gives us any happiness or peace. This is not a dogmatic statement, please. Man, through the use of his capacities, has come to a point where he sees very clearly that all the movement of this structure, this psychological edifice, is owned and possessed by the ego, the self, the me, the I. The I-consciousness sits at the center, creates a defense mechanism around itself out of the information and experiences that it acquires, then identifies itself with those experiences, tries to own them and impose them on others.

That is how the I-consciousness works. Some people may have very little knowledge and very little experience. It means that the I-consciousness has a very short rope with which to move about. Those who have a wider range of experiences, their I-consciousness has a longer rope which permits a greater movement. But the content of consciousness—the knowledge and experience—becomes by itself the frontier of this structure. Mind moves from the center to the periphery and from the periphery to the center. Mind cannot move in any other way. Mind cannot move without a motive. Mind cannot move without a direction. Mind cannot move except to gain something out of the experience, either to avoid pain or to gain pleasure. Man has seen this limitation of action, very clearly.

Secondly, man has seen—has he not—that all knowl-

edge and experience that we acquire, gets reduced to certain chemicals which are stored in the brain cells, and we respond to situations and challenges according to that conditioning in the brain cells. No thought is my original thought. No emotion is my personal emotion. It is the production of collective human activity through centuries. These feelings, thoughts and patterns of action have been fed into my brain, like into an electronic brain, and I respond mechanically. So we discover that mental action is a mechanistic action. Although the mind is a very beautiful, very complex and intricate instrument at our disposal, it is nevertheless a machine, nothing more, nothing less. It has its own utility, it has its own field of relevance. But mind is a machine which acquires impressions through the senses; the nervous system carries the sensation to the brain, and the brain interprets it according to the conditioning in which it has been brought up. Otherwise, why should the word "God" evoke one set of feelings and thoughts in a person brought up in a Catholic family or an orthodox Hindu family and the same word "God"—G-O-D—evoke quite a different set of feelings in a person brought up in a communist family or a communist country. The associations of ideas and emotions fed into these two brains, one belonging to an individual brought up in a so-called religious family, the other to an individual brought up in a so-called atheistic society, are absolutely different; and therefore their responses are diametrically opposed. Whether one believes or whether one disbelieves, the quality of the mind in the believer and the disbeliever is just the same. There is no bravery in saying, "I do not believe in God." Believing in God and not believing in God, they are the obverse and converse of the same process.

When man sees that all mental action is a mechanistic action, then all the glory and glamor of thoughts

and ideas which are organized thought, ideologies, conclusions and values—all the glamour and glory around this—fades away in no time. One feels no satisfaction in identifying oneself with one ideology and trying to oppose another ideology. One sees the futility of indulging in the mechanistic activity of thinking.

Our relationships today are based on our identifications with our thought and feelings. I say I am related to you, but all the while I am trying to judge you on the basis of my likes and dislikes, my opinions, preferences, and prejudices. I judge you on the basis of that. I react to you on the basis of that. We react on the basis of our acquisition of certain patterns of thinking, feeling and reacting. It is these patterns that come into relationship with one another, not human beings. As soon as I look at you, all the likes, dislikes, opinions and conclusions stored in me, surge up. Before you have spent ten minutes with me I have placed a label on you: This person is moral or immoral—I like him; I don't like him—ugly, beautiful, cultured, uncouth—you know, we have judged the whole human being by outer manifestations and then our judgments dictate our response. So these responses come from the judgments and images that two persons have created about one another. Persons do not get related. Images meet. If there is friction, the images shatter and we say the relationship is broken. There *was* no relationship to be broken! (Laughter.)

It sounds strange and unusual, but this image-making factory—Lord Ego and Lady Vanity—carry on inside our consciousness all the time. It's a constant image-making factory. That's what it is. As we are busy creating images and judging others, we are not able to live totally any one moment of life. We pass through moments half-lived; we pass through actions half-heartedly done; we come across people whom we have absent-mindedly met. The segment of every experience trans-

mitted by the conscious mind to the subconscious mind becomes the burden of the subconscious.

You know, when you live totally and pass through an experience totally, it does not leave the scar of memory behind. You have lived, and that is the end of it. If there was a joyful situation, you enjoyed it, and that's the end of it. Thought does not give it continuity and say "Oh, it was beautiful, I must find another opportunity to experience it again!" The acquisitive part of the ego is not functioning. The moment you allow that distraction to work—enjoying the experience and at the same time a part of the consciousness saying, "Oh, how wonderful, I must come back!"—you are away from the fact of experience, you cannot enjoy it totally, your experience is only half-lived. The other half goes back to the subconscious, and adding one segment after another, day and night, we are making the subconscious very heavy. No wonder at night we cannot sleep, because all those segments crop up and come in the form of dreams and intimations.

If man only knew how to learn the greatest art of living! If he only knew how to live; to pass through various experiences without allowing any experience, pleasurable or painful, to leave a scratch on the consciousness! After all, every memory is a scratch on the consciousness. Consciousness gets mutilated. It's a bleeding and mutilated consciousness that we are carrying. There are scratches and scars of pleasurable and painful experiences, the memory of which we are carrying from one day to another. Through untold centuries, man has been carrying this burden. Now is the time to throw it off.

If we want real relationship as far as human beings are concerned, if man wants to learn the art of getting related to his fellows he will have to leave the prison house that ego has created for him. He will have to step

out of this vicious circle of responding through memory. That, for me, is the crux of the whole issue. That is the nature of the challenge. When we say that we have to find out if there is anything beyond the present consciousness, that we must step out of the psyche, it is nothing mysterious or mystical. There is nothing very difficult or extraordinary about it. A scientific approach to the human mind tells me very vividly that this is a mechanistic activity. So if anger comes up, jealousy, envy, or greed come up, ambition comes up, I do not identify myself with the ambition and say "I am ambitious," or I am angry, I am jealous." I do not act out of that identification, but I take a distance from the reaction that is coming up, knowing that it is the product of collective humanity. We have to fight not only the outer symptoms of vested interests and structures; the real structure to be fought is inside.

It seems to me that one has to realize it as a fact of life that mental action is not going to help us in creating a new society. I wonder if you have noticed how people in the communist world tried to create a classless society, a society without exploitation. There was a noble dream of wiping out the state boundaries, and so on. And, very frankly, what does one find? One finds that the petty human mind is just the same there, as it is here. The relationship to money is the same. The ambition to acquire more and more money and store it is the same. Not for providing the basic needs—for providing the needs money is necessary—but one earns much more, out of greed than for the need. Thus the relationship to money, property, the lust for ownership, the competition for power, fame, prestige, social emulation—everything is just the same as it is in other countries.

So altering the old structure cannot logically or naturally bring about a real change. One has to work

on both fronts simultaneously. And in order to work simultaneously on both fronts, one has to begin with one's own psyche and try to explore a totally new dimension where the touch of the past will not pollute the living present. Each one must see this as the nature of the challenge—not seeing it while sitting in a quiet corner of the house, but seeing it while one is moving and working in the office, traveling in a bus, cooking a meal at home or talking to children in the school. One has to observe the movement of one's psyche in day-to-day life, see the mechanistic nature *there*, not treating the mechanistic nature as a new acquisition and storing it in the memory again—not that! One has to see it as a fact in daily relationships. That's the beauty of human relationships—they are the mirrors in which we can find out the quality of our inner life. We may indulge in wishful thinking and have very noble images of ourselves, but when we are exposed to a variety of temperamental idiosyncracies, the vagaries of the human mind, we will see very clearly for ourselves how our actions are regulated, controlled and directed by the impulses, the passions—you know, the whole momentum of the subconscious.

So meditation for such a revolutionary person, is the most revolutionary action in life. It is the only total action. Everything else is fragmentary. Meditation is a way of life and not an act of the will. Not that one sits down and meditates in a corner! The revolutionary person will live the meditative way. He will watch and observe the movement of the psyche in him and try to find out how one can step out of it now and here. Not in isolation. There is no life in isolation. Life is in relationship. Relationships are inevitable for human beings. When the momentum comes up, one does not identify with it, but allows it to be exposed to the light of awareness. We have not done it. As soon as anger, or jealousy

comes up, we either identify ourselves with it and act out of that identification, or we try to condemn it, suppress it, push it back, hide it or cover it up. These are the two ways we live. And then outwardly we try to be so-called courteous, polite with one another. Politeness becomes the mask—concealing the hypocrisy. Of course we do not like to call it hypocrisy; we are civilized people. We do not like to confess it even to ourselves. That is how it goes. Either people condemn it outright and try to suppress and mutilate the mind and thereby become hypocrites; or we identify ourselves with it and in the name of so-called spontaneity, act out of that.

To me, meditation is the third way out. The other two are only escapes from the fact. The meditative way is the way to understand the nature of mental action, i.e., the movement of the ego, and not to identify oneself with it. You and I cannot do away with this psyche, the conscious, the subconscious, the unconscious—you know, the whole of it. We cannot destroy it; we cannot wish it away. We cannot fight it out. It is going to be there. If we allow it to be exposed to the light of awareness, that momentum loses its grip on our consciousness; it loses its grip on us. It loses its hold because we see the objective and the subjective simultaneously, and in that perception of totality the consciousness has already taken off to a different plane altogether.

Thus we do not have to make an effort to transcend the content of the psyche. The very understanding, the very perception, results in an effortless transcendence. This has been witnessed in the lives of even ordinary human beings. This is not being advocated as a theory to you. It would be presumptuous on my part to waste your time in advocating or propagating theories. Transcendence of the psyche is a by-product of the understanding of the nature of the psyche. The understand-

ing of its nature is the real action, if it is not theoretical. You know what academic knowledge does, don't you? When I was at the university, I must have read and studied books on so many subjects—philosophy, psychology, logic, ethics and metaphysics, and what not. But all my acquisition was related to the motive of passing the examination. And as soon as the examination was over I forgot everything. After a few weeks when I was asked a question about my studies, I said: "Oh? That's all over!" (Laughter) It just fell through the sieve of my memory because my acquisition of the knowledge was riding on the motive. The motive was providing the momentum to my acquisition. The motive was to pass an examination. So, if we know, if we understand the mechanistic nature of brain and cerebral activity as a fact, then obviously there is no more identification with anything that mind brings up, except for the realm of engineering, science, or technology, where you are dealing with certain static data. My information about a chair is valid today, it will be valid tomorrow, it will be valid after a year. But my knowledge about you or my experience with you may not be valid even after a week, because you may have changed in that week, you may have even changed in twenty-four hours. Human beings are extremely unpredictable. So if I try to store into memory my experience with you today and regard it valid for my relationship with you tomorrow, I have an unscientific, outmoded method of functioning in human relationship. Meditation is the way of getting free of memory in human relationships and having a consciousness which is ever innocent, ever fresh, i.e., of living in a dimension of humility.

I know this is going to be very difficult, as then there will be no scope for the luxury of gossiping. There will be no indulgence in scandalizing. Human beings are ever-changing. And, yet, the time we waste in gossip-

ing, in scandalizing, formulating opinions, and passing them on to others! Of course, newspapers will lose many of their sensational and thrilling items, because man will not pay attention to all that! If we see the implications of setting oneself free from this infatuation with the mind, getting beyond this phase of worshipping the mind, the implications are going to be very far-reaching. They are going to be far-reaching not only in space and time, but they will go deeper and deeper and percolate to the deepest layer of being. So transcendence of the psyche is not a result of human effort. It is a logical and natural consequence of undertsanding the truth.

After all, what is liberation? Understanding the nature of bondage results in liberation. If someone says that you have to understand what bondage is and then make an independent effort to get free, that person is talking in a rather light vein. He has not experimented. Spirituality is an experimental science. It is not a speculative game. If a person experiments and sees the movement, understands the nature of bondage as a fact, all the identification with it drops away gracefully like an autumn leaf falling down from a tree without causing any injury or damage to the tree—just floating down, giving place to the new leaf to come up. I really fail to understand why people treat meditation as something extremely difficult; why they think this transcending the human psyche is some extraordinarily complicated business. It's as simple as simplicity can be.

In the last fifty minutes we have covered a vast area. We began by saying that humanity is passing through a grave crisis and that man is living in the most explosive times when all symbols are irrelevant to the facts of life today. They no longer have any relevance in a time when all ideologies and theories are proving to be outmoded; when social, economic, political pressures are

moving and changing; when religious and spiritual theories are also tumbling down, collapsing like a house of cards.

And, on the other hand, man has seen the limitations of sensual pleasures. He wants to be released from the burden of the repetitive action of mind and brain. So he tries to experience transcendental states, he tries to enter the occult world. He wants to find an escape, but he is cornered. There is no scope for escaping now. We have to look the problem squarely in the face and meet it adequately. The problem is: What does one do with this mind which is the creation of illusion and mischief which is the breeding ground for misery, sorrow, conflict and contradictions—what does one do with it?

We went into the mechanistic nature of mind and brain, how the content of knowledge becomes the periphery and frontier of mental movement. How understanding its nature and observing it results in an instantaneous freedom from the slavery of the ego. We went into all this as far as it was verbally possible to go.

When I was told there would be a talk in Berkeley, I had not anticipated that so many would grace the occasion and would come to listen to an absolutely anonymous stranger who comes to talk to you. Not out of any authority; not as a Yogi or a Sannyasi; not as a spiritual teacher or preacher; but who comes to you in a very friendly way, to share with you the concerns about the need of a total revolution. I feel very honored by your presence. I would like to thank you and the friends who have arranged this meeting.

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First Talk Before Students
International Students Center
Stanford University

October 14, 1968

As one looks around the world, in the East and in the West, at the countries which are known to be the haves or rich countries of the world, and the have-nots or the poor countries, the developing countries of the world, as one looks to the young and the old, one sees that there is a great disturbance, a kind of commotion going on in the minds of all the people. There is a kind of restlessness. Added to the restlessness, there is a storm raging over the horizons of human life. A storm of very intense passion, bitterness, anger, violence, envy, jealousy—a huge storm breaking on the shores of human consciousness.

This is such a self-evident fact that it is not necessary to go into the details of these symptoms. There is a wave of discontent and dissatisfaction, individually and collectively. One wonders why it is so. Politically, economically, socially, humanity is passing through such critical times in every field of activity! It's really a crisis through which we are passing. It seems to me that the crisis is not entirely political, or economic, or social; it cannot be put under any fragmentary label of human activity. It seems to be a crisis in the total human psyche. So, if the few of us who are in this room would like to go into the whole issue, we could take it up, point by point, in the three meetings that we will be having here together.

The first thing to realize, especially for the young people, who are not committed to any ideologies and patterns, who do not have any vested interests in present patterns of life, but who would like to understand the problem, face it, and meet it adequately is this: if you have a vested interest in an economic order or a political setup, the very perception of a fact becomes inhibited by the interest. If I am committed to an ideology, that very commitment to an ideology twists and distorts my perception of a fact. The young people of today, are either the hope or the despair of the world. I do not see any possibility of a revolution being brought about by any other class of society.

You might have noted the summer revolution of students in Paris. I was in the very midst of that in Paris, last May. The students were struggling, the labor class was helping them—we won't go into all the aspects of the revolution. We might go into it later on, if you would like. But in the beginning, the labor class, the working class, the dissatisfied middle class of France, were with the students, up to a certain degree. As the elections were drawing nearer and nearer, the politician, President DeGaulle played his trump card. He released the socialist leaders. He gave certain concessions to the working class; increased their wages. The dissatisfied middle class which was inclined toward socialism, the labor class which had increased wages and salaries, backed out. The students were left alone.

I was watching the movement very carefully, and I realized beyond doubt that the working class, the labor class, which has been the hope of revolutionary processes in the world, has been converted into a bourgeois-minded, money-minded class, and there are very slight chances that the proletarian in any country would go in for a total revolution. Whether it is France, or it is England, West Germany, India or America. So out-

ward political or economic revolutions, even those fragmentary and partial revolutions, cannot be brought about by any other class. Somehow, the urge for revolution and the fire for revolution do not seem to operate as a motivating force in other classes. That is why a person like myself, who wanders over countries in the Occident and the Orient, gets this feeling very clearly that only if the young people, uncommitted as they are, equip themselves for creating a better world and a better society, there is hope for the world.

Let us now take up the political issues, or the issue of war and peace. It doesn't seem possible that the nation states, their administrators and the political parties all over the world, are capable of creating peace—world peace. Not because they do not want to bring it about—they may want it with all their hearts, but they are simply incapable of it. If I am committed to the concept of a sovereign national state, and if I am elected by the people to safeguard their national interests, then I will go to the United Nations and see how best I can compromise the interests of other people to the welfare of my country. So I go to an international organization with the conditioning of a nationalist mind.

Besides the power pressures in political life are moving and shifting very fast. Until 1945, the fate of millions and millions of Asians and Africans was being determined in America, England and France. But after 1945, country after country in Asia and Africa was becoming liberated and becoming members of the United Nations. We find that the majority of the votes in the U. N. today are in the hands of the Africans, the so-called Non-Allied Third Block of the Middle East and the Asian countries. The nationalists of the European countries, and even the United States, Canada, etc., were previously controlling, shaping, directing the peace or war of the world. Now the African and the

Asian representatives control and regulate. It is the nationalism of the newly liberated countries now, which operates as a force.

So, even though we talk about internationalism, even though we have international laws and the Court of International Justice in The Hague in Holland, and we have the United Nations, they become intellectual decorations. Such institutions become the platform for postponing wars. Postponing war is not creating peace. Trying to adjust the limited national interests to avoid war, is not the way to peace. That's why I said that the politicians of today, the administrators of today, be they of Europe and America, or of Africa and India-Pakistan, or of any other country in the world, are committed to the theory and concept (which is really an outmoded concept) of a sovereign national state and hence cannot create peace.

I could go on like this. There are many other institutions which are trying to create a better quality of human life, trying to create peace and brotherhood, and what not. It seems to me, however, that their days are also numbered. The religious ideals—the theologies, are collapsing. Their gods, their notions, their theories are all tumbling down. Look at the younger generation which is growing into a kind of repulsion to all this. Whether it is justified, whether it is warranted or not, is not the issue for this evening. These heads of different religions sit at the center, guarding the periphery of their ideologies, trying to shake hands with other persons who are also bound by the periphery of their own theories and ideologies. One global family cannot be created this way. It may create tolerance for other people, but it cannot create an uncommitted, unlabeled human being who can grow into the dimension of belonging to the whole human family—not a person committed to a nation, a race, or a religion, but committed

to the whole of humanity, Truth and Beauty—I dare not utter the word “God.” That word has been misused in so many ways that we have to first disinfect the word before we can even use it. God is something which is indescribable, immeasurable by the human mind. Unless such human beings emerge, I do not see any hope for peace or brotherhood, or for a better human society.

I turn to the young people to discover if they would like to shoulder the responsibility of creating an entirely new world. Whether the youth of today wants to shoulder this responsibility and go through the revolution, first inwardly, and then become a living nucleus of tremendous revolutionary momentum wherever he moves—that is really the question.

You know, the war in Vietnam or the tensions in the Middle East, or what is happening in Nigeria, in Biafra, the tensions that we see between Russia and Czechoslovakia, or the tensions between China and Russia, all these are extensions and projections of one basic challenge; man is committed to ideologies and theories which are outmoded, which have lived their day. He has lost contact with the reality of life. He has lost contact with the facts of life. He is indulging in various myths, and illusions. The challenge is to grow out of these myths, to explode these myths, to grow out of the illusions.

So I call this a crisis in consciousness; a crisis in the psyche; and not a political crisis, or an economic crisis.

I would like to take up one more instance before we proceed. Coming from the East, I have seen starvation. Unless you go to Africa and Asia, you may not understand even the content of the word starvation. It is not poverty, it is stark starvation. When we say two-thirds of humanity is starving, I do not know how much and what it denotes and connotes to you. But I have traveled around India—every State—every District. There

are about 316 Districts. I have gone around these Districts, not only once, but twice or thrice, collecting land for the landless, distributing it; I have gone through it for six years. You will not believe it if I tell you that there are mothers who sell their children. If you sell a male child, you get 50 rupees. That is roughly about two English pounds and 10 shillings. If you sell a girl, a female child, you get 25 rupees. That is one pound and about 5 or 10 shillings.

I have seen people—a farmer who had no money to buy an ox or a bull, who had an ox on one side of the plough and on the other his wife, along with the ox. Thus he was ploughing the land. I could go into greater detail, but it is of no use.

Look what this commitment to ideologies and theories does; what a great harm it is doing to the East! They are trying to copy and imitate all the economic, political and social institutions of Europe and America.

I can speak out of my experience in India. As soon as they became free they were crazy about bringing about an industrial revolution of the pattern through which Europe had gone two centuries ago, or America has gone. That was a capital intensive economic planning; not a labor intensive planning, not based on mobilizing the surplus manpower and the animal power that they had, but basing everything on money—and they had no money. After slavery of 150 years, the country becomes free and starts taking the hat around, begging from all the countries of the world. In political jargon it is called “foreign aid” without any strings. From Russia to the United States, from Australia, Japan, to England, Norway, Sweden, taking the hat around. If there is a famine, go around begging; if there is economic planning, if you want to have another plan, go begging. With 500 million people at their disposal, they could have mobilized their manpower. Instead of hav-

ing huge units of mass production in industry, they could have used science and technology for smaller units of production with less investment. Then they would have needed less money for employment. You see, instead, they went around begging. Brought up in the British system of education, the people in Ghana, Tanzania and in Zambia, did the same. They based their economy completely on foreign aid, all the planning on borrowed money. So the dynamism of their so-called neutrality and the Third Block, Unallied Block, became meaningless. If you take money from all the countries, presuming that you are a decent country, you have to take care that you do not offend Russia and that you do not offend America and that you do not offend this country and you do not offend Tom, Dick and Harry. So, the foreign policy of neutrality lost its dynamism and the tremendous part these unaligned countries could have played in creating peace could not be played.

I am just taking you along the way to see what has happened in the last twenty years and how all the world over, the older generation has lost the capacity to create a new world. Now they are in a very miserable corner—these countries. If there is inflation in America, God forbid! but if tomorrow there is inflation in America, and you can't give more money to these countries, the economic plan of India and Pakistan will collapse. Like a pack of cards! And the same thing is going to happen to U. A. R. and other countries in the Middle East if Russia can't give them help.

I am not trying to flatter the young people. These are very simple facts of the social, economic and political life all over the world. That is why the responsibility on the younger generation is tremendous, if we are sensitive enough to observe it, and are willing to face it. If we are not, if we want to escape from it, then we can just say that this is a sick civilization and

run away to the Himalayas or some caves in Greece, or find some Ashrams, you know, and simply escape. There is a big network of escapes. We can escape into drugs, we can escape into monasteries, we can escape into the caves, and so on. It seems to me that it would be an insult to your intelligence to presume that the young generation will ever be satisfied by escaping. I think the enthusiasm in the youth will create inner compulsions to face the problems and go beyond them. With that hope, I talk to you. Even if one person listens carefully, the effort is worthwhile. So this is the situation in which we are today.

On the other hand, we look to the advances of science and technology which has changed the context of our lives altogether. With radio and television, with the electronic brains, with spacecraft, with new inventions, and discoveries in biology and medicine, with the capacity to transmit knowledge and memory not only to human beings but also into machines, we are really living in a very thrilling and romantic age.

So we have to begin anew. The young people of today must begin anew. They must break new paths and find out new ways of creating a society based on love, friendship and equality. This is your mission. I mean the mission of the young people all over the world.

How does one do it? How does one set about it?

Firstly, we will have to discover for ourselves how each one of us is living—you and I as ordinary individuals—how do we live? What is the content of our lives? Not what I would like to be or what I should be, but what is the fact of my life?

Now, as a human being, you and I have two capacities which perhaps the rest of the species existing on the globe do not have. One is the capacity to communicate. We communicate through symbols. We communicate through words, through languages, we communicate

through paintings with beautiful lines and colors and shapes, and we communicate through music, and so on. So creation of symbols and communicating through them is one capacity.

And the other capacity is that of self-consciousness. You know, the plants and animals and birds can feel. They can even think. But it is given unto man to think, and at the same time to be aware of what he is thinking. To do something and simultaneously to be aware of what he is doing. Not only that, but why he is doing it. So, to do and to know the roots of action and the motives of action, to think and know the nature of our thoughts and feelings, this self-consciousness is something peculiar to man. But for self-consciousness, we could not have had sciences like psychology or philosophy or theology. So we have these two capacities—and man has been developing them. The whole history of civilization and culture is a history of the development and flowering of these two capacities.

Man has these two capacities and for the last thousands of years, 10,000 years perhaps, man has been developing them. Now what happens? The symbols that man has created for the last 5,000 or 10,000 years, the languages he has created, the words, the heavy association of ideas and emotions, they are not relevant to the reality or to the fact today. The crux of the issue is—the basic challenge is there: the symbols that we have created have lost their relevance to the facts of life. And it is also becoming clearer to us that the sciences that we have created, psychology, theology, philosophy and metaphysics are also, in the light of new developments, only partial and fragmentary, not total.

Now, we have been developing these two capacities through our mind, through our brain. When we talk about a new human being and a new human society, we must know that we are living today through this mind.

And if we continue to live through the mind and function through it, then obviously creation of a new society will not be possible. So the challenge is to find out how we are living and functioning through the mind, what happens when we live through the mind, what is the anatomy of the mind, what is the chemistry of emotions and thoughts; and if there is any other way of living at all.

After all, a revolution is an adventure to find out a new dimension of living. Is there any other dimension of life? Is it possible to live in a realm, in an awareness which is not touched by this mind, touched by these brain cells, touched by the memory? You cannot destroy the memory. And if we are going to live through the mind, it's no use expecting the mind to find out new avenues, a new way of life. The mind is bound by the past. The mind is committed to the symbols. It does not know any other way of living but through acquiring sensations, interpreting them according to education and responding on the basis of these reactions.

So you see, the vested interests that we find around us in the world are really vested interests created by the mind, and the challenge of revolution is to go beyond the mind, find out a new dimension of living. When I say "go beyond the mind," please let me tell you, we don't want to go beyond the mind by running away from society. That's not going beyond the mind at all. Living where we are, discharging the responsibilities and duties that we have and facing life as it comes, is it possible to go beyond and grow into a different dimension of consciousness? Then only will there be a new quality of consciousness, and rooted in that new dimension of consciousness we might find out new ways of living. But I don't think we can go into the whole thing today.

We began by saying that the whole of humanity is

passing through very critical times. The dimensions of the crisis are staggering, they are global dimensions. The nature of the challenge or the crisis is not political, or economic, or social. The nature of the crisis is related to the whole human psyche. We went into the attempts of revolution in economic and political spheres by different sections of people in Europe, India, and Africa. We discovered that political leaders, the proletariat in the economic terminology, the religious leaders, none of them is capable today, of creating a total revolution and going beyond the situation existing today, whether it is creating a better human society, or it is having world peace, or it is eliminating starvation and poverty from the globe. All of this seems to be impossible through the leadership which we have today. So the responsibility of the uncommitted young people, is tremendous, if we are sensitive enough. Those who are young today are really fortunate. We are surrounded by challenges on every side. And a challenge is an invitation to the depth of your being. It somehow stimulates and awakens the depth of your being. If there are no challenges, life becomes saltless. It is a tasteless life. These challenges are challenges for widening the horizons and deepening the consciousness. That's the beauty of being young today.

The responsibility of the young people is to break through. How does one break through? First, one has to find out how one lives. How do we live? We live through the mind. How does the mind function? Mind uses these two capacities of creating symbols and communicating through them, and, being self-conscious, it theorizes, deduces conclusions from concrete experiences, and organizes thought into theories and ideas. This is the function of the mind. And these two capacities do not seem to help us any more. How do we go beyond the mind, grow into a new dimension and, be-

ing rooted there, contribute to the social life of the world around us?

Well, if you are interested, concerned about going into this, we may go into it next week. For this evening this should suffice.

I would like to thank you for coming here this evening. It is a beautiful and very quiet place. One could sit here and communicate with complete relaxation. I thank you all, especially the head of the International Students Center who has been kind enough to extend to us the privilege of meeting here.

Thank you.

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Questioner:

When you say, “going beyond the mind,” are you implying that we should not base any of our decisions or judgments on the past?

Vimala:

We haven’t come to that. Are you interested in taking it up?

Questioner:

Yes.

Vimala:

“Going beyond the mind” is a very inadequate expression. The word “beyond” does not imply relationship in space. It’s not like beyond this wall, not in that sense. It’s not a temporal or a special relationship. It is growing out of mind into a new dimension of consciousness. To me, human consciousness is not exhausted by the conscious, the unconscious and subconscious. There is much more to it. That more has not been tapped. That has not been explored. We are relying completely on that part of the human consciousness which has been tapped, explored, mapped out by psy-

chologists. They talk about the conscious, the unconscious, the subconscious.

But it seems to me that there is another dimension to the human consciousness. How does one go beyond? Does it imply that we paralyze the mental capacities? Is it a paralysis of mental action? Are we going to destroy the mind and memory, such a beautiful, richly complex instrument at our disposal, without which we couldn't have achieved the scientific and technological advances? Do we mean that? Or do we imply something else.

We will go into it next week if any of you are interested. Today, I am analyzing the background and the objective compulsion in the situation which makes this psychological revolution a basic challenge—how it becomes a must. That is all I have done today.

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Second Meeting
International Students Center
Stanford University

October 21, 1968

It seems to me that most of those who have come here this evening have not been present at the previous meeting that we had. At the first meeting in this University, we talked about fundamental challenges with which the young generation is faced today. We went into the political, the economic and the social challenges in the developed and the under-developed countries. We analyzed how the leadership the world over, in every field of life, is not capable of bringing about a radical change in the social, economic or political structure of society.

It is not possible to go into all those details. One point I would like to put across to you, however, if I may: and that is if any revolution is to come, it will come through the uncommitted young people who haven't got any vested interests in any of the structures existing today. We went somewhat into details why this should be so. It was one of the favorite ideas of the communist revolutionaries of the last century and also of this century that the inner contradictions in the capitalist, social, economic and political structure would develop to such an extent that the whole system would collapse; that the proletariat in each country would have the fervor of bringing about a revolution and creating a society without classes and exploitation. A world would emerge in which the state boundaries would be wiped away. The ruthless reality of today makes it very clear

to each one of us that what is called the working class has been victimized and is already bourgeois-minded. There is nothing like a proletarian mind, or proletarian class. It has been "embourgeoisized" by the capitalist society. The so-called inner contradictions, their development and eruption of the whole system thereby was clearly a fiction.

The uncommitted youth of today has to shoulder the responsibility of bringing about a revolution. I would like to spell out what I mean by revolution. Revolution is a total change in the individual, as well as the texture of his relationship with society. Fragmentary revolutions are no revolutions at all. In the East and in the West, there emerged two different spheres of revolution: inner revolution and outer revolution. Inner revolution in the psyche. They went very deeply; they went into it with mathematical precision, especially people in China, India and Tibet. They went into it step by step, and studied the psychological structure of man, the anatomy of the body, and the various patterns of behavior in the biological organism. They evolved various patterns of disciplines. It was claimed—it is claimed even today—that a person who goes through such disciplines and changes the patterns of thinking, feeling and reacting, is transformed into a free individual, and only such free individuals can bring about peace and love and a new human society.

That has been their approach for bringing about this inner revolution. A person can turn away from society, live in isolation. It has been sanctified in the name of religion and spirituality. So, retirement from the world, finding a quiet place, creating a set of conditions and situations which would be favorable to evolve new patterns of thinking and feeling and reacting—ashrams and mutts and monasteries and what not—all came into existence. Not out of the whims of some people, but they

thought that it was the way. And in the process of disciplining the cerebral activity, in the process of disciplining the biological organism, if they had to suppress certain things, repress them, if they had to use violence against themselves, they used it in the name of ascetism and austerity. The violence of these disciplines! And how they negated and rejected and denied, trying to suppress the urges, the sensual, the sexual, and so on. Even if they had to mutilate the human consciousness, they thought that the price must be paid for truth and freedom. And you know, as the communists say, if you wish to eliminate classes and exploitation, and if to that end you have to use class conflict as a motivating force, if for that purpose you are compelled to use violence, that is excusable. . . . In the interest of the greater humanity.

In the same way, most of the Orientals did not hesitate to use violence against themselves. They did not hesitate to use suppression, and repression, and the dictatorship of ideologies and theories. The privileged class of Sannyasis and monks and ascetics grew—away from the social and civic life; they felt no responsibilities for the civic life. A Sannyasi is one who really announces his death to civic life—takes a new name. He has no responsibilities and he owes allegiance to none. He steps out of the social rhythm, out of the economic responsibilities, out of the political challenges and creates his own conditioning, to live therein. So the split between the so-called secular life and the spiritual life has been sanctified this way, and the damage that is done to the human consciousness, as well as to the societies in the East, is not hidden from the eyes of any sensitive, alert person. They talk of spirituality, make tall claims about various philosophies, theologies and metaphysics, and they go about with a begging bowl. They cannot exist without the financial help of the same

people whom they condemn as materialists. That is the serious contradiction in which the East is living today.

Let us now come to the Occident. According to the West, if you want to change the inner quality of consciousness, you have to conquer the surroundings. You must know nature. You must be able to control nature. You must be acquainted with the oceans and even be able to live in the depths of the ocean. You must be acquainted with the skies and space and must be able to travel there and conquer space—conquer time. If man is a feeble animal and there are other powerful animals existing on the globe, let him use his intelligence, create weapons, arms and ammunition. So science and technology provide devices for individual and collective security, in the name of nation, race, religion or ideology. All this has been evolving in the West.

So in the revolutionary movements which occurred here, whether it was the industrial revolution a couple of centuries ago in Europe, or the great Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, or other revolutions, we find that man has been concentrating on the social, economic and the political pattern and the administrative setup, thinking that through changing these systems he could change the quality of man's inner nature. If poverty is eliminated, if man gets more leisure, if his elementary basic needs are provided for decently, esthetically, then man will turn to truth and goodness and beauty by himself.

To a certain degree, man in the West has succeeded. If he wants to eliminate poverty from the entire globe, he could do it. The resources at his disposal through the advances in science and technology are there. He has been able to create leisure for man. And yet, individually, man is not at peace with himself, and collectively he is not at peace. There are tensions between races, classes, and nations. All the international organizations are busy balancing, counterbalancing; shifting, adjust-

ing the power pressures and postponing wars. Postponing wars and trying to adjust the resistances of various countries, is what goes on in the name of peace. Yet we find that man is not at peace, in any way.

It seems to me that these two are fragmentary and partial approaches. You cannot isolate an individual from society and neglect the manifestation of his inner being in his relationship with others. Nor can we ignore the inner quality of man in the name of social, economic or political theories or ideologies. So a revolution will be a total revolution when man is aware of both these dimensions of life and he will try to go through a radical change in himself while he is still living in this society—not running away from it—not isolating himself. He will use such a means, if there are any means at all, to go through a psychological mutation which will not imply using violence against himself, which will not cause mutilation of the consciousness, which will not use any unscientific methods and techniques. If a person today can understand in a very simple way the limitations of mental action; if he can find out that mental action is a mechanistic action, and that no thought or emotion really belongs to him, that the thoughts and emotions, feelings and sentiments are all fed into his brain cells by the family, the communities, the society in which he is living; if he can see this today, why would he isolate himself and go to a place where he has to live and chant mantras or take drugs in an effort to go beyond the mind? In the past, man had not yet discovered the mechanistic nature of mental activity. All these disciplines might have been necessary then. But now, just as the splitting of the atom was a revolutionary discovery, so also is the discovery of the mechanical nature of cerebral activity, discovery that all knowledge and experience gets reduced to certain chemicals which are stored in the brain cells. There is Ribo-

Nucleic Acid, RNA, which can be extracted from a brain and injected into another brain, making possible the transmission of knowledge and experience from one person to another.

If one can see the truth of the mechanical quality of thinking in this second half of the 20th century, surely going back to those old disciplines to discover the limitations of mental activity becomes unwarranted and unscientific. The youth of today is fortunate enough to live in an age when the myth of time has been exploded; when space is shrinking before their eyes; when the mechanistic nature of thought, feelings, sentiments and reactions has been more or less exposed before them. They are very fortunate in being born and living in this tremendously exciting century. We are living indeed in most explosive times!

For an inner revolution, we will have to brush aside all the unscientific ways—unscientific, unwarranted in the context of today. The context of life is changing very rapidly, especially since 1960. The discoveries in all the branches of science, natural as well as the social sciences, have been tremendous in the last seven or eight years.

Now you do not have to fight against the mind; you do not have to curb the instincts; you do not have to discipline the ego. It is an outmoded approach—irrelevant today. When I say that those disciplines are not necessary, it is no reflection on the people who might have created them 2000 to 5000 years ago.

Today, in order to understand the nature of sound vibration and its influence on the chemistry of the body, it is not necessary for us to retire to a cave and go on chanting mantras or a series of words for months and months without end. It's not necessary. You know how sound comes into existence, how it can be converted into electricity, and how those electric vibrations can

again be converted into sound vibrations. There is television before you, there is the radio before you, and in this fantastic, scientific age, when young people try to go back to those outmoded methods and techniques of bringing about inner revolution, one feels that somehow it is not in harmony with the times in which they are living.

So, revolution includes the inner and the outer simultaneously. A person who is anxious to see that there is peace in the world will never cooperate with the efforts of society to project and stimulate wars. If he is punished by that society, he will go through that punishment—that is part of the game. If he cannot find a job and has to suffer and starve, that starvation will be regarded as part of the game. But he will in no case compromise with this society and take up a job which will in any way, directly or indirectly, contribute to the stimulation, provocation, or actual operation of war. That's what I mean by the integrity of a revolutionary approach. In the inner world he will not employ unscientific, outmoded methods and techniques; and in the social relationships he will not cooperate with exploitation, with efforts to create war, with efforts to isolate or divide humanity in the name of race, religion and country.

So the inner and the outer will not be two divisions of life. There will be no dichotomy between the individual and the social life. There is none in fact. It is a myth and an illusion that the individual life needs one mode of conduct, one set of values; and the so-called social life needs another set of values, another code of conduct. I should like to emphasize, time and again, with all the humility at my command, that inner and outer are like the waves coming in and going back; inner and outer are the two sides of the same coin.

So, firstly, a revolutionary young man will not in-

dulge in any fragmentary approaches, will not indulge in any efforts, in any movements, organizations or institutions which are based on the dichotomy between the individual and the collective. He will see the fact, that life is one indivisible whole. Life is one whole which cannot be divided; which cannot be fragmented. It is only the fragmentary approach which is the soil for breeding sorrow and misery. Fragmentary perception, fragmentary approach and fragmentary methods and techniques—all these are bound to lead to suffering, to misery. So the perspective of total life and the perspective of total revolution will be the foundation.

Secondly, no unscientific or no out-of-date, out-moded concepts and theories, methods and techniques will be indulged in.

Thirdly, he will meet the challenge of finding out a dimension, a dimension of awareness, which is not polluted, by the touch of mind. After all, as long as we will live and function through the mind which is capable only of a mechanistic action, obviously we cannot bring about peace; nor can we bring about a new human society. We may cultivate the mind, we may enrich the memory, we may sharpen the intellect, we may try to refine the sensitivity of emotions; but all this will be on the mental level. We may enter into the occult and transcendental experiences, but still there will be the ego, to take those experiences, to derive sustenance from those experiences and continue to live as a center of consciousness, creating the frontiers of experience and memory and imprison us there.

Is there anything beyond the cerebral activity? Is there a dimension in which society will not be able to condition us and where we will be able to live as individuals, free to perceive and respond originally? No thought can be original. No emotion can be original. These are fed into the brain by the society in which one

is brought up. There are instincts, drives and passions, memories of the experiences of the family, the community, the religious community, of the race and perhaps the whole of humanity. All that is stored in the conscious, the subconscious, the unconscious, but it is all the past, and that past determines the nature of our responses to the challenges. That is why I said no thought can be pure. Thought by its very nature is rooted in the past, which is the product of collective activity. So originality, which is creative action, will have some meaning only if one can transcend this conditioned psyche, get into another dimension of awareness where society has no access. The crux of the issue is here, and the nature of challenge consists in transcending the psyche.

How does one do it? How is it done? When I realize that no thought or emotion really belongs to me. When I realize it as a fact of life, that my thinking, feeling, willing and reacting is not my creation; when one perceives this as a simple truth of life, what will happen? If we only acquire it as a new idea, take it home and say, "I have heard something new, that thoughts and emotions are only reactions," then this new idea will again be stored into memory. When one sees this as a fact, the vanity, the attachment, the commitment to thoughts and feelings, to ideas and ideologies, will start dropping away from the consciousness as the autumn leaves drop away from the tree. One doesn't have to make an effort. When one sees this as a truth, then the perception of truth has very explosive power. Perception of truth operates upon the total being, and without one's efforts to do anything about it, the attachment to and identification with thoughts and feelings vanishes.

This seems to be the most difficult point for most of us. We have been taught from childhood that we have to approximate our life to an idea, or ideal. We fail in

doing so, or we succeed. That has been our life; acquisition of information and approximation of life to that acquired idea or notion. Shortcomings and failures in the approximation, or success in that approximation, is the stuff of our life.

But what happens when one really perceives something? Perceiving is a movement of intelligence. Acquiring information is the activity of the intellect. Perception of a fact is the movement of intelligence. So, after that moment of perception, one's approach and attitude to fellow human beings gets transformed without one's knowing it. When you come across a person with a different approach, a different pattern of behavior, you are not tempted to judge him according to your values. You do not try to impose your likes and dislikes upon the behavior of other people. You are not tempted to compare him or her. You know, we are always doing this. Everything we come into contact with, we judge. You compare it. You either like it or you dislike it. You want it, you don't want it. You want to accept it, or you want to reject it. That's how we live.

But perception of the nature of mental action will transport one's awareness into a dimension where one does not sit in judgment over other human beings. A dimension of humility envelops the consciousness—if one is a serious and earnest inquirer of truth. A humility comes up. And when I move about and talk to people, be it my husband, my wife, my friends, my boss, my assistant, my students or my teachers, there is a fresh outlook. My perception is not colored, distorted, or twisted by my likes and dislikes or by my ambitions. I see it all as a game of the psyche, conditioned by society. And I just step out of it. This daring step has to be taken by the young people of today. Stepping out of the conditioned psyche and standing exposed to

humility, to innocence, and getting related to people out of that is vitally needed. It is urgently needed! Today there is a pattern of getting related to people either through sensual attraction; sexual infatuation; intellectual similarities or temperamental idiosyncracies. These are no relationships. You may visit families, you may talk to people, East and West: man has not learned the art of really getting related to other fellow human beings. He is so busy with his ego, the self, the me, the I-consciousness, without knowing what it is, without knowing that it is the greatest illusion. It is a myth. The I is a social convenience for distinguishing one person from another.

So when people ask, how do you get beyond mind, they feel that getting beyond mind is an independent step to be taken away from the mind. Let me assure you there is no geographical beyond, away from the mind. Understanding the nature of the bondage results in transcending its limitations. If one really sees that, then the commitments really drop away. I am no more a Hindu, or an Indian, a capitalist or a communist, but I am a human being, unlabeled, uncommitted, vulnerable to every touch of reality, every contact of life.

So this dimension of humility—humility not as a virtue, or attribute of the mind, but as a dimension of consciousness—comes about. It comes to life. And if it does not come to life, then one has not understood the fact that mental activity is a mechanical activity. In this humility one starts learning about situations and individuals rather than judging them. Thus the point of contact with my fellow human beings is not one of ambition, competition, jealousy, envy, anger or violence, but rather of learning about the other person, discovering the mystery of his nature.

Equality will never come as a social value or economic value as long as we are worshipping our egos.

We may write many theories about equality and fraternity; we may write about societies without exploitation, i.e., classless society. It's not going to come as long as man is worshipping the ego and getting imprisoned in the psychological structure created by the ego, wanting to live in that prison house, decorating it all his life. Outwardly, he decorates his houses, and inwardly he decorates the inner prison house with theories and ideologies. So understanding of this fact creates humility as a dimension.

Secondly, the understanding of the mechanistic nature of mentation does something tremendous to you. As long as one is ego-centered, one really does not listen to the other person. He hears the word, but before the word has unfolded its meaning, he has already referred it to the memory, compared it, and by the time the sentence is finished, he has already made his opinion and has even a conclusion about it. We are not capable of the simple act of listening or the simple act of observing. When you understand the mechanical nature of mental action, simple observation comes upon you. Simple observation is an all-inclusive attention. One perceives the objective, one is aware of the subjective reaction and is aware how the subjective reaction comes up. One does not identify oneself with the reactions. It is not necessary to sit down in a corner and say: I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am the Soul, I am the Brahman, and to repeat all that. That is not necessary. What is necessary is to be aware of the limitation of subjective reactions and not to identify with them; to arrive at a state of non-identification in actual movement, in actual relationships.

It is very easy to go to some mountain and repeat to oneself: I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am the Soul, or the Spirit, or God knows what! But when such people come down to practical day-to-day life, if the

meal is late by five minutes, they get angry. If someone uses a word which displeases them, they are simmering and boiling inside. Everything disturbs their hard-acquired peace. I do not see the value of any peace which is attained in isolation and which gets disturbed at every slight touch of harsh reality. Only that peace and that silence is living which cannot be disturbed and destroyed by the rudest shock of relationships.

Relationships are the mirrors. You can look into them and understand the nature of your reality in those mirrors. You don't have to create images of yourself and cherish them in the heart, but in every relationship, whether it is with your clothes, or food, with neighbor, or your friends, you are on your toes, alert and sensitive, all-attentive. You are watching the interplay between the subjective and the objective. When one so watches the interplay of the objective and the subjective, the consciousness has already taken off to a different plane which can look at both, simultaneously, and act out of understanding of the totality and not out of identification with one.

This is meditation in day-to-day life. This is humility and silence in action, not in isolation.

Thus, getting beyond psyche is not something to be done in the privacy or solitude of a corner or a monastery. You cannot learn to swim, however much you may practice it, in your room on the mattress or on the thickest carpet possible. If you want to learn to swim, you have to take a plunge in the pool.

In the same way, in day-to-day life, one enters with this awareness of the limitations and the mechanistic nature of mental activity. Then one does not succumb to the passions, drives, jealousies, envies, the frictions, and the irritations which come up. You cannot stop the momentum of that subconscious as it has been created through centuries. You and I are not the creators of it

entirely. We may have added our bit to the store, but it is a thing which has been in momentum for centuries and all efforts are going to be futile to suppress it or to do anything about it. What one can do is not to identify oneself with that momentum.

We began by saying that we are living in explosive times when a total revolution is very urgently needed. It is necessary to find out what we mean by the words revolution and total revolution. Revolutions have been in relation to the inner life and to the outer life, the individual life and the collective life. We went into the efforts of revolutionizing the inner quality through techniques and methods provided by various religions in different parts of the world. And we went further and said that today it is not necessary to go into all the outmoded, out-of-date methods and techniques when science and scientific discoveries are providing very fantastic revelations to us about the biological as well as the psychological structure.

We went further and said that those who concentrated their attention on the collective and tried to revolutionize the collective with the hope that the revolution will do the needful about the inner have also failed. Both these efforts seem to have failed.

So, in the East, people claim spiritual revolutions and talk about it. And meanwhile their collective life is ridden with petty problems; with poverty and starvation, illiteracy and population explosion and what not.

And in the West where they have concentrated on the outer, the collective, the social, the economic and the political, there is a cultural starvation, there is a spiritual starvation. You may see a well-fed, well-clothed man, but peep into his eyes and you will see that he is starving for love, peace and relaxation. That he is living in chronic anxiety and chronic tension.

Something must be discovered. Something must be

done simultaneously in both these dimensions. And we said, in order to begin we will have to understand the mind through which we are functioning, the nature of mental action. The very understanding explodes into a new dimension. Then you will see a new quality of human awareness being extended to collective relationships and a new texture of society can be brought about.

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Third Meeting
International Students Center
Stanford University

October 28, 1968

As this is going to be the last meeting in the University premises, I was wondering if anyone who has attended the previous meetings would like to ask questions based on the previous two talks or would like to suggest a theme to be taken up for this evening.

Questioner:

Last time, you spoke of being beyond a certain consciousness and I am puzzled as to how one attains this. It seems to me as if it were a stripping or denudation of the past, and I don't know how this is possible.

Vimala:

Any other suggestions, please?

Questioner:

Would it be appropriate to suggest that you give us a two or three-minute review of what was taken up at the last meetings for those of us who were not present?

Vimala:

During the last three weeks I must have addressed about 18 or 19 meetings, so it is difficult for me to remember exactly what I had taken up at each meeting. But it must have had something to do with the limited scope of action as far as mind is concerned. Please correct me if I am wrong. Perhaps it was about the mechanistic nature of mental action. How every movement of the mind is a mechanical movement—whether it's

thought, feeling or sentiment. How all our patterns of behavior, physical and psychological, have been fed into us; how the human mind has been conditioned by various patterns of thinking, feeling and reacting; how there is no originality and no creativity in any mental activity whatsoever. That could have been what I had covered in the previous meetings.

And as this was supposed to be the University students meeting, I might have taken up the challenge of a total revolution. I might have taken up how the emphasis on changing the pattern of collective behavior, as socio-economic reforms or political revolutions, prove to be only fragmentary; how those who isolate themselves from the mainstream of day-to-day life by going to some monastery or ashram, retiring from the responsibilities of day-to-day life, to transform the quality of their inner life, indulge in a fragmentary action; and how the time is now ripe to have an integrated approach in which there will be equal emphasis on both, the inward and outward transformation.

Was it this? I don't remember.

The challenge today the world over seems to be that of a total revolution, a revolution in the inner quality of consciousness which will be reflected into and extended to the social, economic and political relationships. It's no use trying to bring about changes in fragments or factions of life. Such fragmentary revolts may affect the momentum of a total revolution instead of accelerating the speed. They may provoke only reforms and not lead to a total revolution. That's what one feels afraid of, when one sees a variety of revolts erupting in every field of life, in every Oriental as well as Occidental country.

Questioner:

I would like to know what is the relationship between

the states of consciousness you have attained in meditation and the deep states of psychedelic experience?

Vimala:

What is the relationship between the state of consciousness one attains in meditation and the psychedelic experiences achieved through chemical action on the whole body—that's the question? Is it not?

Questioner:

That is right.

Vimala:

I think that's enough for the evening. (Laughter)

Now, as there are many persons here who might not have attended any of the talks throughout the whole of October, let me state in the very beginning that these talks have not been meant for propagating any philosophy, advocating any ideology, or trying to convert people to any particular view of life.

The speaker has come to your country for friendly verbal communication on matters which she feels gravely concerned about. To tell you how I look at the challenges that man is facing all over the world, what can be the way out—if at all there is a way out. What can you and I as individuals do to convert the darkness by which we are surrounded—convert the darkness in the little corner in which we may be living into light and live in that light of personal discovery of truth, reality, God—of what you will. These are not talks given by a teacher or a preacher. Please believe that I have no claims to Yoga or any authenticity in the spiritual matters of any sect, Occidental or Oriental. This is just an anonymous person, one of you. I would like to emphasize this point for every audience, as this subject of individual transformation, liberty, freedom, has been shrouded in mystery. All of this has been looked upon as something extraordinary, and persons

who live in freedom are given a pedestal to stand upon. They are condemned to authority and their words are taken to be authentic guide-lights for others. To me, truth is simple. Freedom is simplicity and humility, freedom is the privilege of every human being. Not the privilege of a chosen few who have to follow a special way of life.

This is the unusual approach of the person who has come to converse with you. Not to speak to you, but to have a verbal communication with all of you. I am aware of the limitations of words as a medium of exchange and communication. The verbal communication is ridden with so many limitations. The first limitation is the burden of association of ideas and emotions that every word carries for every person. You, as well as I, have some association of ideas, emotional responses and intellectual responses to every word that is uttered. Also, the language I am using is a language that I am only acquainted with, but have not studied as a language. I may use terms, and words in all simplicity, without their having any overtones or undertones. And yet the same words may stimulate certain associations in your minds. It is really very difficult to establish a point of contact between the speaker and the listener through words. More than that, words create gaps between the speaker and the listener rather than bridge the gap that may be existing. Every word is heavily loaded and, yet, we have to use words. I'm not oblivious of this fact of the burden that every word carries. No human consciousness is free of these associations of ideas and emotions. We have to get over those hurdles and obstacles and meet one another. We have to meet one another in spite of the words to be used which may create distances, which may create gaps.

Now, we were talking about the mechanistic nature of mentation. Mentation is mental action—mental

movement. Every mental movement is passive. It is repetitive and mechanistic. Let us go into this mechanistic nature for a few minutes. Unless we know the content of bondage, we cannot transcend it. Understanding the nature of bondage is really the beginning of freedom or liberty. Mental activity, like thinking, feeling, willing, reacting—indicates, does it not, that an external compulsion, stimulates the response within us. It can be an impression received through the senses which stimulates the nervous system carrying over those impressions to the brain, stimulating and tickling certain brain cells which interpret the sensations according to the education, the culture, the pattern of behavior in which one has been brought up. The brain cells are also conditioned in specific ways and they react to the stimuli according to the conditioning. This is the first limitation of mental action. The compulsion may be through a sensual experience. The compulsion can be through memory—the past experiences. When a person is placed in a certain situation or set of surroundings, it brings the memory of past experience to life and that memory twists and distorts the perception of the present situation and dictates the reaction. Thus there can be a compulsion created by memory. Just as a compulsion can be created by a sensual experience, a compulsion can be created inside the person by memory.

Compulsions can be created by the subconscious which is a storehouse of personal knowledge and experience, as well as the knowledge and experience of the family in which one is born; the community in which one is brought up; the religious denomination to which one belongs by birth, and so on. Subconscious is the storehouse of all that. Sometimes it's not the surface consciousness or the conscious mind which creates the compulsion to react, but something in the subconscious

coming to life suddenly—an urge, a drive, a passion which brushes aside every rational consideration and makes a person act in certain ways. And then one says to oneself: “Oh, I don’t know why I did that, but I did it!” I am talking about something which goes deeper than impulses. Impulses can be on the surface consciousness also.

Well, that is the layer of subconscious. Deeper than that still, is a layer of consciousness, the psyche, which has been explored by man in by-gone centuries. It is the unconscious, the experiences of the whole human race—experiences from the first human being perhaps who inhabited the globe. The residue of collective human experience and knowledge is stored there. The visions and extra-sensory experiences which cannot be analyzed by the conscious mind, sometimes create compulsions and man reacts out of them.

The conscious, the subconscious, the unconscious—all these are names that we are using for verbal communication. In reality there is only one indivisible whole consciousness. There are not watertight compartments as conscious, subconscious and unconscious. For the sake of study or verbal communication one uses these words tentatively. They haven’t any absolute reality.

As long as any compulsion is created by the outside world or by the conditioned psyche inside ourselves, it is no action at all. It is a compulsion stimulating a reaction. That is why one says that all that you think and feel is predetermined for you by society, by the collective humanity. There is nothing original, nothing creative in any mental activity whatsoever, whether it is composing verses; whether it is sculpture, art or music. One has to fall back upon the symbols which man created centuries ago. The arbitrary relationship between those symbols and the association of ideas and emotions with which these symbols are loaded func-

tion in every field of mental activity. You cannot think a thought without words. Just imagine, the mind cannot move without words! Feelings, emotions and sentiments have been defined. They have been labeled—put under certain categories: esthetical, ethical, religious, or spiritual category—everything has been categorized. They have been measured for us—the weight, the color—you know, everything! And we have been brought up in that.

Those who have been brought up in the non-religious, communist countries, have evolved through the last half-century a different conditioning pattern. Words have a different meaning for the people living in those parts of the world than the meaning given to them by a religious community.

These symbols and their arbitrary relationships, which have been predetermined for us, determine the nature of our reception. How we receive a sensation—even that is predetermined for us. The responses are dictated by these symbols—these words. Nothing that man does through the mind is really original.

Is man doomed to live in the bondage of his own knowledge and experience? The content of man's knowledge and experience is really the only objective bondage. There is no other bondage from which one has to set oneself free. People feel that for attaining freedom, for becoming liberated, living in Nirvana, or Satori, or what you will, one has to run away from the house and away from the family and go to some cave, forest, monastery, ashram or what not! Go where you will, you will carry the mind with you. You will carry the content of your knowledge and experience with you. That knowledge and experience will color your perception. It will dictate the nature of your response. The mind which is the product of the collective human-

ity, the product of society – will accompany you to the cave. It will be there.

It seems to me that this giving up of things in the so-called objective world, or this running away from the situations in which one is born, is really an unscientific and outmoded way for discovering truth. It is unwarranted in this age of science. What is warranted is something quite different. What is warranted is trying to transcend the content of psyche and finding out if there is any other dimension to our consciousness. Is all of our consciousness exhausted by the conscious, the subconscious and the unconscious which has been explored, mapped and charted out for us? Is that the only consciousness for us? Is there anything beyond? That is the basic challenge.

Now, as long as one is looking for experiences, one is on the mental plane. Whether I am looking for an experience through the senses, or I am looking for an extra-sensory experience; whether I am looking for an occult experience, or I am looking for a transcendental experience, *I* as an entity, the ego, the self, the me, wants to continue and sustain himself through experiencing. The ego, the self, the me, the I-consciousness, is really sustained only through experiencing. The moment there are no new experiences for the I, the ego – the I feels bored. So the ego is always hunting for experiences, if not in the material world, at least, in the intellectual world. And if ideas, ideologies and theories do not attract the mind, then it goes to the extra-sensory, the occult and transcendental world. But the ego always hunts for experiences. He lives through experiencing.

Experiencing is acquiring a new sensation, acquiring a new way of adjusting that experience, to the whole being, to the totality of my life. So long as I want to have an experience, it is really an ego-centered activity.

I may stimulate the whole being through some biochemical action of drugs, I may pacify and soothe certain brain cells through chanting certain words. I am trying to create an impact on the brain or I am trying to stimulate the brain cells to get a new variety of experience. Psychedelic experiences are experiences which people may arrive at through expanding the scope of consciousness for receiving sensations, through heightening the sensitivity so that the intensity of experience is a hundred times more than in the ordinary state of consciousness.

I have not taken the drug, so I do not know—I may be wrong. But I have understood that these drugs, these chemicals, heighten the sensitivity. Generally we live in a very dull state of our being and we pass through experiences half-heartedly, absent-mindedly, with a distracted mind. We do not live with a deep passion to go through every experience, through every moment of life, intensively. We live perhaps intensively in the rare moments of love. Otherwise we are floating on the surface consciousness, passing through experiences without living totally through any of them.

So psychedelic experiences may be a state of heightened sensitivity. Whenever sensitivity is heightened and intensified, it has a quality of perceiving, it has a quality of intelligence. You know, intelligence is the highest sensitivity. So it widens the scope of consciousness for receiving impressions and sensations. Secondly, it heightens the sensitivity. And, thirdly, you are set free for some time from the ordinary ego consciousness so that one feels elated, intoxicated, for a certain time. Maybe that is what and how it is.

I would like to say that in the state of meditation there is no scope for any experiences or any experiencing. The state of meditation is a state of consciousness in which every mental action ceases to be. The mind is

completely silent. It is not moving in any direction. The ego, the self, is in complete abeyance. He is not eliminated. You cannot eliminate the past—the memory. You cannot destroy the ego. People who have tried to kill the memory, benumb the ego, paralyze the action of the ego—mutilate their consciousness. They do not arrive at transcendence of the psyche. The mind has all the talents and capacities intact, everything is there—and yet the mind is not moving, there is a total cessation of mental activity—that is real meditation.

What does that mean? The mind does not move. The mind does not think, feel, or react—what does that mean? Does it not mean that the energy which was running in different directions, which was divided into contradictory desires, conflicting intentions and ambitions, which was scattered in all directions—comes back to its origin? This is something which one can really experiment with. All the vital energy which was scattered in reacting emotionally or intellectually, every thought verbalized or un verbalized, every emotion manifest or unmanifest, the slightest movement of the mind causes expenditure of vital energy. Every thought, every feeling, disturbs the rhythm of breathing and the rhythm of blood circulation. Every thought, noble or ignoble, every feeling, virtuous or otherwise, disturbs or gives a jerk to the whole chemistry of the body. But when the mental action ceases to be, there is perfect rhythm. There is a harmony in the rhythm of blood circulation. The digestive process, the glandular, the muscular, the nervous system—all are in a harmonious state of silence. We do not know what that is. We do not know how our whole being is when there is a complete harmony between the nervous, the muscular and the glandular systems.

So the biological and psychological are in harmony as the mind is not functioning. In that cessation of

mental activity, silence—not as an experience of the mind, but as a dimension of consciousness—comes to life! Energy gathered unto its original source or fountainhead in all the intensity and depth starts functioning then. At present, the energy in its totality has no opportunity to function since all the time the ego is dividing it, pulling it, pushing it, attracting it in so many directions. We do not know how the totality of energy can move and what happens when it moves in its totality. That's what happens when mental action ceases to be.

When there is a thought floating on the consciousness, it not only divides energy but distracts your attention. In the state of meditation, when mind ceases to function, there is no distraction. Your attention is not focused on any particular point, so there is a state of all-inclusive attention. Wherever you may be, you are capable of perceiving the totality of a fact without any conscious effort. At present, we are not capable of perceiving the totality of any fact because the mind has chosen. The moment the eyes perceive, the likes and dislikes come up; the preferences and prejudices come up. Before the intelligence has perceived the totality of a fact, the ego has made his choice; compared the given fact with something else; arrived at a decision, and either selected it or rejected it.

Thus the experience cannot be a total experience. The perception cannot be a total perception as long as the ego moves. There is no simple observation of a total fact. We have to learn that art of simple, total observation of a whole fact. We see only the fragment of a fact. Mind is eager, craving to react, so before the totality is taken notice of, mind has already reacted. That reaction becomes the inhibition of perception. It inhibits the perception. It inhibits the response. In both ways you cannot move. You are carried on the momentum of the reaction of the ego. Thus the re-

action of the ego distorts the perception, and inhibits the response.

In the silence of the mind, in the silence of the ego, you are in an all-inclusive state. There is a simple observation of a total fact. The response does not become one-sided. The response is not inhibited by your past knowledge and memory. It is spontaneous. So the fourth point is: spontaneity of response is possible only in the silence of mind, not before.

Then you may travel in various countries—absolutely new conditions and new ways of life for you—and yet you are not in a hurry to judge them. At present the mind comes up and says: “Oh, he is an American!” “He is a Russian!” “We know, he’s German!” So before you have understood the person, your mind has judged him. The word “Russian,” the word “German,” according to the knowledge and experience, has a limited content, and that content of knowledge becomes the frontier beyond which I cannot move. So my response is not to the human being, but to a Russian, to a German, to a communist, to a Catholic, and so on. I do not really meet any human being as long as my perceptions are colored by the conditionings in which I have been brought up.

That’s why we are living side by side but not together. All the countries live side by side. Space is shrinking and time is reduced to really nothingness by the advances in science and technology; but the human mind is tethered to worn-out theories and concepts about one another’s cultures and to the patterns of reactions to those cultures. So we do not meet one another—we are merely coexisting. In the international organizations—we sit around the tables, trying to protect the vested interests of our nations—whether it’s the colored people or the white people. They may create compulsions on the basis of majority and try to

create political and economic compulsions for the rest of the world. That's not going to solve the problem. The racial consciousness, the commitment to ideologies, the commitment to the theory of national sovereignty — we owe allegiance to all such worn-out, out-moded theories, concepts and notions. And we are living in an age of space travel, an age of computers, and electronics. What's the use of my traveling from here to Japan in ten hours while the mind is somewhere in the 19th century?

So I really do not see anything and I do not really meet anyone. And it seems to me that man cannot have peace as long as he is living with this worn-out mind, individually and collectively; living in and through the symbols which have lost relevance to the facts of life in this devastatingly new context of life.

Now, the lady asks: "How do you do it, how do you do it in practice?"

One does not practice anything. When one realizes that whatever the mind does is not really something original, that it is only a reaction and not an action, this very understanding will do something to me. If I only take it as an idea newly brought up, then I will fall back in the trap of the mind. I will bring home a new idea, store it in the memory and try to approximate my action to it. But if one sees in one's own life the truth of this — that every mental action is a mechanistic action, cerebral activity is a fragment of human life, not the totality of it, and that there is much more to the human psyche than these hitherto explored parts — the first result will be, will it not, that one is set free of all the vanity and pride of one's thoughts and emotions, norms and standards and valuations of life. These are closer to us than our skins, this psychological structure, this defense mechanism that the ego has constructed of thoughts and emotions. It's a thick thing,

closer to us than the skin. The identification with that layer will come to an end when one sees the real nature of mentation, one is no longer proud of thoughts, one does not brag about thoughts, standards and norms.

So there is a freedom. A kind of new energy comes up with this realization, if it is not an academic or intellectual appreciation, but a real understanding that in whichever direction the mind moves, it is a reaction. Mind cannot act without compulsion, outward or inward, so mental action is a reaction. When one sees that, then you look at your wife or your husband at the beginning of the day in humility. You don't have the vanity to say—"Oh, I know him. He has done this yesterday; he has done that a week before, so I know how he is going to act day after tomorrow." You do not have the screen of your experience before you. You do not have the image of your husband or your wife that you have created out of memory and project that image on him, put a mask of your evaluation on his face and then look at that mask. That's what we do when we look at one another. We have images. This mind, this image-making factory, is busy the whole day long, creating images of others and of ourselves. All those masks fall away—without your conscious effort. They do fall away if you are interested in discovering the truth of life, the meaning of life and in living. Not living second-hand, passively following the patterns of behavior created for you by others, but discovering the way to live firsthand, originally, creatively.

So when the day begins, at the dawn, when you look at your son, your daughter, your husband, your wife, you will feel that you have never met that person before. There is a freshness about the feeling. There is a freshness in the very glance. There is a humility to look at the other person and to listen to him. We don't look at each other, we don't listen to each other, because the

moment the other person opens his mouth and utters a word, we are busy with the word and the association that the word brings up. The person is brushed aside. He is out of our focus, you see! The focus is somewhere else. But when we have the humility to say: "Perhaps I do not understand what he says, let me find out." Then relationships will have real meaning. Then relationships will have some charm, grace and beauty.

Thus a new quality of humility is experienced by us. You know, in the state of all-inclusive attention, the very perception of a total fact, awakens humility. It's not an ego-centered activity. Look how these are radically different dimensions. One is an ego-centered activity, and the other is silence. Humility is the flame of that silence which has come to life. In the light of that humility your steps move. You look to one another afresh. Supposing the other person says something which is silly, which is stupid. Immediately the ego will bring up anger—that's the only way. All the knowledge and experience reduced to certain chemicals, stored in your brain cells, is bound to bring up that emotion of anger, jealousy, or greed. It will come up, but instead of fighting against that, instead of trying to suppress or repress that, hide or cover it up or destroy it, instead of wasting energy in any of these directions, the revolutionary person who is trying to discover a new dimension of awareness, says, "Now I see; I see the word that was spoken by the other person and I see the emotion being brought up by the ego." He has seen now the totality. The fact and the reaction, the subjective and the objective are seen. So the perspective is neither objective nor subjective, exclusively, but it is a perspective in which both the subjective and the objective are blended together. It's an all-comprehensive perspective.

He sees the anger. He sees the jealousy. He had not

seen these things before. The moment anger comes up, I say: "I'm angry!" and I act out of that anger. Or, "I'm jealous" and act out of jealousy. We see it, we identify with it, and we act out of it. That is the way we have been living up until now. But when you look at it, your anger exposed to the light of all-inclusive attention loses its hold on you. It gets a grip on you the moment you identify yourself with the anger and say, "I'm angry." Then anger creates chemical compulsions in your body: tenseness of the nerves, generating heat in the body, which rushes up to your head—so many things! But when you are not identifying, it cannot have its grip on the totality of your being. It cannot have any chemical action on you. If one is not in the state of meditation it will immediately change the whole chemistry of the body temporarily. Don't you know how persons who get angry can become temporarily insane? If you take the words of an angry man to be truly representative of his nature, you will be doing injustice to the man, or the woman, whoever it is. Because the person loses the poise, the balance, and anyway the margin line; the boundary line between sanity and insanity in all of us is so unsteady. We can very easily move from one to the other. Under anger, one lives and moves as if under the pressure of temporary insanity. Not only emotional imbalance, it's a chemical imbalance in the whole body and it has its aftermath. The grip of jealousy, the grip of envy, the grip of anger—these affect the chemistry of the whole body. But let us not go into that.

When you are meeting people, when you are working in the office, cooking a meal at home, talking to your friends, everything that the mind brings up gets exposed to that silence; to the humility, to the all-inclusive attention; and the quality of your response changes. It gets transformed without your conscious

effort to change it. That is the beauty of freedom. All the inhibitions drop away. Freedom is the nature of man. All the complications that the ego weaves around you, the network of complexities and complications drop away. Simplicity is the nature of man. All the inhibitions, the layers of complications around us wither away in meditation.

So when you ask me, how does one do it? I say it needs alertness. To be on our toes all the time. To watch what the mind brings up and how we identify ourselves with it, and how every movement of ours becomes a movement out of slavery to that momentum. We don't have to create freedom; we don't have to create silence. It is there. One has only to observe.

Well, one could go into such details for hours. It's not only in being related to people that it happens. When you take your meals, for example, your relationship to every morsel of food changes. You are trying to understand the relationship of that food—the quantity, the quality—to the whole being. When you are eating, you are eating. You are not gulping things down or nibbling them and thinking about something else, neither doing justice to the food or justice to the memory.

But man has lost the charm and beauty of living totally every moment of his life. We pass through half-lived experiences; half-hearted movements. The challenges of life are half-met and half-resolved. So challenges unmet or tensions unresolved go down to the subconscious and torture you at night in the form of dreams and intimations. Every experience which is not lived totally leaves a segment which goes to the subconscious. It may either project itself into dreams, through some intimations, or, if the pressure is tremendous, it will create drives and passions which are inexplicable to any rational mind.

This fragmentation of attention is the real curse. Fragmentation of attention which is caused by the ego is the breeding ground for all misery and sorrow in life. Transcendence from psyche is the by-product of understanding the real nature of mental action.

Questioner:

I would like to say that the psychedelic experience is very similar to what you are describing and I feel that although there is a great increase in perception, with all these thoughts and ideas which are streaming in, there is a freshness and a new quality in it. You feel like you're one with this life, and you watch yourself react in this transcendent point of view. You have emotions and you see things, but you see them in this detached pattern. So you are not just flooded with sensations as you are in your same ordinary state. Your state actually does transcend ego and move into a meditative state, just exactly as you are describing.

Vimala:

Well, sir, I wonder if there is a difference between a person having an experience of heightened sensitivity and clear perception and a person growing totally and being in that state all the time. Meditation is growing into a new dimension. It's like a child growing into a young man, a little girl, growing into the beauty of youth. It's a total growth from which there is no turning back. Then you don't have to guard that experience. After all, heightened sensitivity is a capacity of the mind, and I am conscious that I am having that experience. And I say, in the state of meditation there is no experiencing—it's only perception and understanding.

Questioner:

That is what this experience is like. It's just streaming

in, you are not batted around by the experience, you are part of it, and you are kind of beyond it. It's just like you describe it!

Vimala:

Sir, if you insist on saying that it is just like what the speaker says, then the speaker has nothing more to say. But, to me, experiencing is a mental state. As long as it is possible for me to take an experience, I am tethered to the ego consciousness.

Questioner:

Then would you say that you are not in a state of meditation when your mind is active?

Vimala:

That's right. And this mind which has been evolved, this beautiful psychological structure which has been cultivated, refined and enriched in untold by-gone centuries—man needs to use this. In science, in technology, in engineering, in medicine, one is using it and the talents of the mind which have given so many things to human life—culture and civilization. I mean, science and technology would have been impossible if man had not evolved the capacity of creating symbols and using them for communication; creating those beautiful symbols—the numbers, you see? The mathematical numbers, for example: 1-2-3-4. They are symbols. And the relationship, thousands of years ago, was arbitrarily decided between 1 and 1. 1 plus 1 is equal to 2; 2 plus 3 is equal to 5—all of these arbitrarily decided by man. But the whole of mathematics: algebra, geometry, trigonometry—all of these would have been impossible without symbols. And so are these symbols, the words through which we are communicating with one another, they too are necessary. But man mistakes the symbols to be the reality. The symbol, the word, is not the thing. That's what I am trying to say. And now

man is getting stuck up with the symbols to such an extent that he is forgetting that there is life, the reality, which is to be lived; which should not be forgotten. He's busy with symbols, forgetting life and living.

This mind will have to be used in its own limited sphere, intelligently, sanely, and we will have to keep it in a healthy condition to use. But in human relationship to use mind which is only capable of mechanistic action; in human relationship to rely on knowledge and memory, to rely on the past and the known, which is again limited by the geographical territory, the religious denominations, the race and so on—to rely on that seems to be unrelated to the facts today. It's a global human family, a new way of living with one another.

Questioner:

Yes, but can you communicate with another person in this state of meditation if, as you say, your mind must be completely empty in order to attain a state of meditation. Can you be in a state of meditation all the time in your everyday life?

Vimala:

Can you be in youth all the time? When one grows into youth, he's there! In the same way, meditation which is a state of all-inclusive attention, meditation which is a state of spontaneity—it becomes a dimension of your life, you see? So when you perceive the mental action coming up, when you perceive the momentum of the subconscious, you do not identify with it. Man becomes limited when he identifies himself with the ego, with the structure. When he does not identify, then the nature of the quality of the response will be transformed.

Questioner:

Yes, but I say that a psychedelic experience has that

quality in it. You are beyond your response, and you see your total response. In other words, you see yourself in a somewhat separate . . .

Vimala:

But you have to take the help of the chemical, don't you? It's not growth. You have to use the chemicals and create an inner compulsion, stimulate a state. That's what they are doing in the Orient. They have been doing it for thousands of years.

Another Questioner:

With discipline or with chemicals?

Vimala:

With chemicals too. Oh, yes, in India, in Tibet they have been using these chemicals, a variety of them, since 563 B.C. They have classified them—and they do processing from herbs, the juice and extracts of herbs and flowers. There are floral chemicals and there are herbal chemicals, and there are chemicals prepared from the bark of certain trees and—well, they have been experimenting with it.

Yes, Madam?

Questioner:

I don't want to sidetrack, but I am interested in what you said about relationship without using the mind.

Vimala:

The mind is the only barrier in getting related with others because the mind does not allow you to look at another person or to listen to another person. It creates its own screens of likes and dislikes. To look at a person without the like or the dislike coming in, to look at a person without your prejudice or preference getting ahead of you is real relationship. We live through the mind. There are only norms, standards and evaluations getting related to one another, and not the real

living concrete human beings. There is really no relationship as long as I am busy with my thoughts, theories and feelings and you are busy with yours, and we try to adjust only when the resistance comes up.

Questioner:

Would you say that the manifestations of meditation is really living?

Vimala:

I think one begins to live only when one is visited by that living silence. It is really the beginning of life and living, both. Today we are not living. We are passively following certain patterns. That is all we are doing today.

Yes, Sir—please?

Questioner:

In my knowledge of, or my experience of thinking about meditation, the journey toward that seemed always to be a discipline, and I hear you describing it more as an attitude or . . . am I misunderstanding you.

Vimala:

What is a discipline, Sir?

Questioner:

A control of the mind. And I think I hear you saying something about another dimension, and what I think I hear you saying is that man must somehow or other rise above the mode of thinking that he has now, and find a new way of looking at himself.

Vimala:

It surely is not controlling the mind. Controlling the mind becomes necessary in concentration. Concentration is a discipline. You try to focus your attention on one point which you choose. You exclude the rest of reality and the world from the focus of your attention

and you concentrate it on one point. That concentration is not meditation. Concentration surely needs that kind of discipline because the mind wants to run away to various objects and you are trying to pin it down to one point. That is what discipline is. The word "discipline" implies, does it not, existence of distraction. Concentration implies distraction. Mind wants to hop over many subjects and I want to pin it down to one point. I want to concentrate. And this concentration has been practiced in the East and the West. It is mistaken for meditation. It's not meditation. Concentration develops the powers of the mind. It sharpens the intellect. It enriches the memory. It gives the capacity to manifest many occult powers, many hidden powers which are latent and dormant in the psyche. That's a mental activity. I feel that meditation as an all-inclusive state of awareness, an all-inclusive state of attention, is really growing into a different dimension. Concentration is a mental activity. Meditation is a state of being.

Questioner:

In the beginning, you have to start with meditation completely by yourself in complete silence to keep the stimulus away from yourself. How long would it take before you could move out of a room alone in silence to be able to use meditation in your relationships with people and carry it a little bit further. Now, I'm completely inexperienced with meditation. If somebody starts completely inexperienced with meditation, the question is, how long does it normally take to achieve this having the mind completely relaxed and get right down to the point where you are in the state of meditation?

Vimala:

Well, this is a uniquely personal question, is it not? It depends upon, first, the state of biological organism

in which a person is living, the occupation or profession in which he or she is working, the climate in which one is living, the surroundings in which one is living. In this personal discovery of truth, one experiments with one's own life. It is so personal. One has to take into consideration all these facts and then the habit pattern in which the person has been brought up. . . . Unless you know all this, how can you say this much time will be necessary or that much time will be necessary. I could say, "Oh, the time factor depends upon the intensity that one has." I mean I could give a sweeping reply like that, but it serves no purpose. It is true and at the same time it may not serve the purpose of communication. So one has to find that out first—the biological habit pattern, the psychological habit pattern.

If one has to rush through the whole day and has to go through terrible nervous tension, then one will begin with trying to relax the body first. We don't know how to relax the body. Relaxing the body also becomes an effort of the mind for many people in the beginning. But then the person will become alert and he will watch how he sits or stands, how he walks. Is the body relaxed when he walks and sits and talks? or are the ways of sitting and standing up and walking defective—you know, to carry the body about in such a way that it will not become rigid in any part—the muscular rigidity or the glandular rigidity created by defective ways of sitting and standing up, or defective ways of eating.

Meditation as a state or as a growth is related to everything that we do, you see? Not only the quantity and quality of the food that we eat, but the way we eat it, the way we walk, the way we sleep. So people will have to go into all that first and learn the art of doing everything in a relaxed way. That could be the beginning.

And people have to learn the art of observation. We

do not know how to observe. If we try to observe something, it becomes an introspective activity. If anger is coming up, before I can watch and understand anger my mind says, "Oh, anger is bad. It must be suppressed, it must be hidden. I have to fight against anger." If jealousy comes up, if a sexual urge comes up, I immediately either condemn it or identify myself with it, reject it or accept it. Observation is watching the movement of mind without accepting or rejecting, without identifying oneself with it or condemning it. This art also has to be learned. First, one may look at things in nature and find out if one can look at something in its totality, or does the emotional or intellectual response inhibit the perception. When I look at a tree, do I look at the totality of a tree? or am I consumed, am I absorbed by the beauty of a flower, or the beauty of the leaves and the design of the branches that have come out. Do I look at the tree in its totality, implying manifestation of energy right from the roots to the fruit? This taking everything in one sweep of attention—that also is an art that one has to learn, and one has to learn it because it has not been included in education.

I do hope that all over the world there will be entirely new systems of education, not only new orientations to education, but the very approach to education will have to go through a radical revolution where the acquaintance with the biological and the psychological organism, the rhythm in which the body and the mind moves, will be incorporated in the syllabus of the students. We are teaching physics, chemistry, biology and traveling in space, but nobody talks about the inner space and how to travel there, how to take the inward journey. Those of us who have not had the privilege of going through such education will have to educate ourselves.

Questioner:

Would you say that meditation is a more natural state which we have forgotten and may have known when we were very young and had not yet been conditioned-

Vimala:

We will have to go into the word "natural," Sir. What do we mean by that? The word "natural" has been misused. For example, in the history of philosophy you will find that the Hedonists had misused the term "natural." When the instincts and the impulses dictate the behavior, it is not a natural behavior, you see? Just as thoughts and feelings are part of the collective pattern, instincts and impulses are also fed into our system. So what is natural, what do we mean by the word "natural"? Secondly, in our younger days or in childhood, we are not innocent, we are ignorant. The body has not developed completely, the beauty of complete growth of the biological organism and the complexity that comes about with that growth, and that complexity creating many compulsions, has not yet taken place. Innocence is the perfume of maturity. They do say "Ignorance is bliss" and "Children are innocent," and all that, but that's like primitive communism about which people talk loosely in all the countries. We cannot turn our backs on the complexity that science and technology has created for us today. We have to go through this complexity and arrive at the mature simplicity, not the primitive simplicity. I wonder if I am saying it. Am I saying something relevant to your question?

Questioner:

I think you said many things, but it is hard to communicate that. I think from your talk I understand much more about meditation, really. As you said in the

beginning, you use words which for me have many connotations and I bring up responses . . .

Vimala:

Yes, they are there for all of us, not only for you. That's the difficulty really with words.

Questioner:

How does one exclude thought to get into a state of complete stillness of the mind?

Vimala:

The mind does not get silenced. The mind can never get it. By its very nature the mind is restless. The mind cannot have it as an experience. People are trying hard, and they have tried hard to stimulate an experience of silence. You see, if I go to a cave, I sit there for hours, or for weeks and months, and I have cut myself off from every manner of activity, and the senses are not in touch with the objective reality, the mind has no scope to move outward and it may experience a silence. But it is a dead silence. There is no life in silence which is experienced in isolation from human relationships. Silence comes to life as a dimension only when you are living with people. Now, thoughts cannot be excluded. We were not talking about excluding the thoughts. When you watch the thoughts without identifying yourself with them, the thought comes up and wanders about for some time; finding that there is no one to reject or accept it, the mind hops over to another thought. There also, it finds that there is no one to select and reject, and the mind goes to the third. But the momentum of the thinking process lies in the act of identification.

So in the beginning, when you sit down to watch, you will find that in ten minutes the mind has been hopping over twenty subjects, fifty subjects, and you just watch it. It is going to the subject, coming back,

going to another subject, coming back. You watch it as you watch a child playing. You don't condemn. You don't try to discipline. You don't try to control. Every attempt to control the mind gives double momentum to the mind to run away from you. (Laughter) Every acceptance of the thought or feeling takes the thinking process deeper. The roots of that process go deeper, to the totality of your being. Every act of condemnation creates an inhibition. The more you try to condemn or hate a thing, the more it takes hold of your being and comes up in another way.

When you see the thoughts coming up, you will see that the momentum is exhausted by itself. Even in your daily relationships you are not identifying with the responses, you only respond to the challenge, to the situation, and not to the compulsion of the ego. So it is working both ways. When you are alone by yourself, you watch the momentum, and when you are related you are watching the momentum. So the subconscious exhausts its momentum when there is no one to commit himself to it. Do I make it clear? You cannot exclude thought because then you have to divide the thinking process in two. You divide the energy: one force is running in your subconscious and you create a parallel force in the conscious. They go throughout your life parallel, the subconscious and the conscious. So you live a fragmented life. Most of us today are really split personalities. The split is not on the surface; it is sometimes hidden even from our own eyes. It is hidden especially from the eyes of society. But, inside, we are fragments of human beings. We are not whole. This curse of fragmentation is upon the human consciousness.

Questioner:

I think you have already explained it, but I don't seem to have a hold on it. If one could operate without

the mind, can you describe a little bit about what happens, or on what level? Is it feeling? or intuition? or just observation. I am sure you said it, but I still am lost. . . .

Vimala:

No! One does not “operate.” In the silence of mental activity, there is not one, no person to operate. The me, the I-consciousness is not there. Even the word “I” and the whole “I-consciousness” is a social convenience to distinguish one person from another. A name is given and a pattern of behavior is fed into that person. Now that person identifies himself or herself with a name and a pattern of behavior. The I, the ego, is really a myth. It’s like the unit of time. You have a minute, an hour, a day, or a week. Weeks do not exist, nor do years exist, minutes do not exist nor do hours exist. It is an invention of the human mind, dividing time into seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks and years. It is the yardstick with which we are measuring eternity. And those who mistake the yardstick for eternity are again victims of this psychological time. They carry the burden of yesterdays and the burden of tomorrows which do not exist. Neither yesterdays nor tomorrows exist. but they carry the burden of both: the burden of dreams and the burden of memories.

So time, the unit of time, is really a social convenience for collective relationships. In the same way, what you call “I,” “you,” “she,” “he,” these are man made symbols for social convenience, for collective relationships. They are not reality.

So, in meditation, one does not operate. If one operates, if the I operates, it will have to operate through the psychological defense mechanism. The animal has the instinct for self-preservation and it acts; the instinct for self-preservation carried over to the psychological structure becomes the ego, and you act through there. That’s what we have been doing—individually and

collectively. Now, when that whole thing is in abeyance, the totality of mind ceases to function, then freedom becomes alive. A mature human being is born. A human being worth the name. He has no hang-over of the animal instincts and drives. Mind is a great mischief-maker.

It is better that each one arrives there and discovers for himself what is the content, rather than one person trying to describe it for others. It would be too presumptuous for me to do so. It's not easy, but it is not impossible; you may describe outer fringes of the thing. But it does damage both to the speaker and the listener: the speaker feels that he can describe it for others and tell others what is there, so the ego gets tickled (Laughter) — and the listener feels, "Ah, here I know, it is so!" And that is how out of the simple words of liberated persons authority is created by masses of people. You have your Guru and I have mine. The quality of my Master's life and of your Master's life is compared adding more misery to the already existing misery. It is enough for all of us—the misery in which we are living, isn't it? One thing I have taken care of: never to try to describe what happens in the state of freedom.

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French Publication:

“... un éternel voyage’

Translation of ‘On an eternal Voyage’ together
with 20 poems from ‘The Flame of Life’ and
‘The Eloquent Ecstasy’.

Translated by René Fouéré

Published by ‘Le Courrier du Livre’, Paris (6e).

Fr.frs. 7.—

