



The World Within

You Are the Story of Humanity

J. Krishnamurti

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FOREWORD

Truth is not something that is mysterious; truth is where you are. From there you can begin. The truth is that I am angry, I am jealous, I am aggressive, I quarrel. That is a fact. So one must begin, if one may most respectfully point out, from where one is. That is why it is important to know yourself, to have complete knowledge of yourself, not from others, not from psychologists, brain specialists and so on, but to know what you are. Because, you are the story of mankind. If you know how to read that book which is yourself, then you know all the activities and brutalities and stupidities of mankind because you are the rest of the world.

—J. Krishnamurti, 1st Question and Answer Meeting at Brockwood Park 1983

Reading the teachings of J. Krishnamurti, one is immediately struck by how personal the words are to one's own thinking and what a close mirror they are of our human psychological activity. His language is not bound by time, place, or circumstance, and so readers in any era or on any continent can find themselves clearly and compassionately made plain.

Krishnamurti's heuristic approach was typical not only of his dialogues or interviews, but also of his public talks where an attendee in an audience of thousands felt in direct contact with the speaker. His language was simple, without jargon or without any assumptions about the audience by the speaker. Krishnamurti helped the interviewees, without intending to, to see for themselves the intricacies of their thinking and of their problems.

During the Second World War (1939-1945) Krishnamurti did not speak publicly in the United States, but lived quietly in Ojai, California. People sought him out and came to dialogue with him on many issues of the times or their own personal dilemmas. Their problems were universal human problems, and each made true his statement that 'You are the world.' As Krishnamurti unwound the tight threads of their thinking and feeling, the core or source of a concern was revealed, unadorned and without blame or guilt.

After the Second World War years, there was a set of three volumes of interviews with Krishnamurti that appeared worldwide, titled *Commentaries on Living*. This new book, *The World Within*, out of the Krishnamurti Archives, is a compendium of additional perennial questions with their timeless answers. The inquiry is still fresh, after seventy years, and readers will find themselves in both the questions and the responses.

Mark Lee

Chapter 1

ANGER AND INTOLERANCE

E. came to ask how to overcome anger, as he was particularly incensed with his colleague, irritated with his ways and behaviour.

After some further talk, we pointed out that such anger arose as E. wished to make his colleague conform to a pattern of behaviour that E. had, which bred in him intolerance; and intolerance is thoughtlessness. If he left his present colleague and sought another job, the same problem would arise, for he was the problem and not his colleague. E. must understand the circumstances and not merely change them. If he depended on the environment to free him from anger, then he would be a slave to it. If he depended on the environment, then he would become thoughtless. It is like those who seek constant change in their relationship—being disillusioned or tired of the one or of the group, they seek friendship or love in another. Because they have not fully comprehended relationship, mere change of environment will again produce the same conflicts, disillusionment, and satiety under different forms.

So E. must become aware of his own thoughtlessness and its cause.

Chapter 2

THE VOICE OF REALITY?

S. came from a long distance to find out whether the voice which she heard was her own intuitive voice or the voice, or the thought, of tradition.

After questioning her, we found that this voice has been beneficent, leading her away from the sensate world to more and more nobility of thought and service to others. But now she was doubtful, questioning the voice, becoming anxious. The voice had asked her to obey and not question, and now it was indifferent after a number of years. What was she to do? Was the voice the voice of reality?

After talking the matter over considerably, we went into the question of desire, want: how it arises—perception, sensation, desire, identification, I want and I do not want—and expresses itself, fulfils itself through sensuousness, craving for immortality, and worldliness.

S. said she now meditated regularly, sitting on the floor.

Without understanding the course of desire, meditation will not lead to enlightenment.

She was meditating on the oneness of God and so on, as she was a student of Vedanta.

Meditation must be based on right thinking, not on mere formulations, however noble. Right thinking proceeds from the comprehension of desire as the 'me' and the 'mine'. This selfishness is the selfishness of everyone, whether one lives in India, China, Europe, or here. The world is the projection of oneself. To understand the problems of the world, one must first understand oneself, not in self-enclosing comprehension but through that disinterested and kindly awareness of oneself. Self-knowledge is the beginning of right thinking, which is the true beginning of meditation.

She said her problem was taking on a new meaning: how, through her own craving, she was giving a significance to the voice, which might perhaps be her own intuitive perception.

Chapter 3

THE JOYOUS AND ACHING PROBLEM OF BIRTH AND DEATH

R. was greatly and grievously upset over the loss of her son in the war. Does he continue? Is reincarnation true?

It is difficult to consider wisely the problem of death when one is almost paralysed with sorrow. What is your chief consideration: your son or your own loss? Every person in the world is faced with this problem: the universality of birth and death, of joy and sorrow. None can escape from it; one may escape from it in fantasy, in some theory or belief, in some self-forgetfulness; but birth and death remain, a mystery to be solved not through rationalization, but through the experience of that which is eternal and which has no beginning and no ending.

Hatred of those who helped in bringing about your son's death does not create the necessary state of mind which alone can experience reality. On the contrary, hate, grief, and possessiveness prevent the comprehension and experience of timelessness. In transcending hate, resentment, and anger, there is the dawning of compassion, which will purify the tortured mind. If you are concerned about the dead, you will create more death, but if you are concerned about the living, you will know of life's eternity.

She said she did not understand what I was talking about. Mustn't she love her son? Must she not hate those who killed him, must she forgive, must she embrace evil? Was not war necessary in purifying the world?

Evil means do not produce good ends, violent means do not result in peace. Each one of us has brought about this spectacular chaos through our daily so-called peaceful days, which are made up of envy, greed, ill will, antagonism, and suspicion. The other mother is also crying for her son, the other mother whom you hate. She is also tortured by grief. To her too there is the joyous and aching problem of birth and death. Hate does not solve this problem; hate only perpetuates the cruelty of man to man.

Gradually, I led her to her first question of continuity. She was too shaken to go into it, but came back again another day.

Chapter 4

THE ‘ME’ AND THE ‘MINE’

We must understand the creator of time—the past, present, and future—for time is birth and death. The consciousness of time creates continuity, everlastingness, but it is not the eternal, it is not timelessness.

The creator of time is the self, the consciousness of the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’: my property, my son, my power, my success, my experience, my immortality. The concern of the self over its own state creates time. The self is the cause of ignorance and sorrow, and its cause and effect is desire, the craving for power, wealth, fame. This self is unified by the will of desire, with its past memories, present resolutions, and future determinations. The future then becomes a form of lust, the present a passage to the future, and the past the driving motive. The self is a wheel within a wheel of pleasure and pain, enjoyment and grief, love and hate, ruthlessness and gentleness. These opposites are created for its own advantage, for its own gain, out of its own uncertainty. It is the cause of my birth, my death. Thought is held by the will of desire, by the will of self, but sorrow and pain begin their work of awakening thought; and if this awakening is not maintained, thought slips into comforting beliefs, into personal fantasies and hopes.

But if the slowly awakening thought begins to gently and patiently study the cause of sorrow and so begins to comprehend it, it will find that there is another will: the will of understanding. This will of understanding is not personal; it is of no country, of no people, of no religion. It is this will that opens the door to the eternal, to the timeless.

The study of the self is the beginning of right thinking—the self that is held in the will of desire. This self creates continuity by craving for immortality, but with it comes the everlastingness of sorrow, pain, and the conflict of the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’. There is no end to this save in the will of understanding, which alone dissolves the cause of sorrow.

Become aware of the course of desire; out of that awareness, there is born right thinking. Virtue is freeing thought from the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’ for compassion for the uncertainty that self-desire creates.

Chapter 5

PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE

C. asked how it was that she was so tired; though she had plenty of energy for general work, deep in herself she was tired.

After some talk, we discovered that she was greatly dependent on her husband and her environment. This dependence, which was not financial, made her nervous, exhausted, anxious, impatient, and quick tempered.

Some psychological need must inevitably create dependence, which prevents coordination and integration.

She said she was aware of this need, but somehow she could not overcome it. She had determined not to be dependent, yet she could not be free from it. Dependence, we agreed, was not lack of love, but it confused love. It brought in other elements which were not of love; it created uncertainty and estrangement.

Dependence sets going the movement of aloofness and attachment, a constant conflict without comprehension, without a release. She must become aware of this process of attachment and detachment, become aware without condemnation, without judgement, and then she will perceive the significance of this conflict of opposites.

If she becomes deeply aware and so consciously directs thought towards comprehending the full meaning of dependence and need, then when her conscious mind is open and clear about it, the unconscious with its hidden motives, pursuits, intentions will project itself into the conscious. When this happens, she must study and understand each intimation of the subconscious. If she does this many times, becoming aware of the projections of the subconscious after the conscious has thought out the problem as clearly as possible, then even though she may give her attention to other matters, the conscious and the unconscious will be working out the problem of dependence or any other problem. Thus there is a constant awareness established which will patiently and gently bring about integration. This will, if her health and diet are all right, bring about fullness of being.

Chapter 6

MAN AND MACHINE

B. came from a long distance, and his problem was how to build the spirit of love into the aeroplane, for he was working in an aeroplane factory. He said he was seriously concerned about the state of the world, and since the aeroplane was here to stay, could not the spirit of love be built into it? Could he not, by being himself without hate, without the desire to kill, and with goodwill, build something of that quality into the machine of terror and destruction?

He was a seriously intentioned man, and so we discussed ignorance and the right means of livelihood. A machine, an inanimate thing put together by man, is not in itself either good or bad; it depends on the use man puts it to. So it is not the machine but man that must be considered. Does not ignorance lie in giving false values, in putting emphasis on things that have little significance, in giving importance to things that are unimportant? Till one changes one's values, the machine will be used for mischievous and destructive ends.

The thoughts and feelings of man have to be changed from their present limited values to those that are transcendental. If man is pursuing sensation, power, and wealth, he is bound to create a world in which conflict, antagonism, and ruthlessness must prevail, and also the means to express them: machine, money, and so on. He must look into his heart to find out what he is seeking. If he is seeking the good of himself and so the good of the other, then kindness and intelligence will dictate what his occupation and means of livelihood shall be.

First he must cleanse his heart and mind, and then alone will he be capable of being content with little.

Chapter 7

LUST IS IN THE MIND

B. said he was a slave to his sexual appetite; he had tried different ways of suppressing it, had joined different cults in the hope of transforming it, and had gone to an analyst on whom he found he was becoming more and more dependent—another form of pain. What was he to do?

First we talked of love and said it is not a sensuous enticement, or a sensation akin to emotion, or a stimulation of the intellect. It is a quality by itself, felt in those moments when there is no awareness of the self, in those rare moments when the self is forgotten. It is not a sacrificial reward but an end in itself. Love is of charity and mercy, of forgiveness and service, of creative unity and peace. Without these, love does not exist. It is a great creative force.

Without comprehending and releasing creativeness, sexual release must inevitably become an ovenwhelming burden and a problem. This creativeness is not the mere capacity for invention or merely changing technical capacities; it is not mere materialistic, sensate expansion or a mere intellectual pursuit. These do not put a stop to sexual appetite; they may temporarily assuage it, but it returns with more fierce hunger, often expressing itself not sexually but in different forms of violence, of cruelties, in various superficial social activities, and so on.

The creative release does come when desire, craving, is understood and transformed. Desire creates deep memories whose momentum becomes lust; each desire has its own will, and the many wills go to make up the will of the self.

If he would free himself lastingly from lust, he must become aware of the way, the course of desire. Each time he has a lustful thought—lust is in the mind—he must become aware of it, not only analytically but aware, at the same time, of the deeper significance of desire. Each time he becomes aware, he will comprehend more of his problem till the light of self-knowledge dispels the self-enclosing pursuits of desire. This awareness must become a constant process, not only with regard to one particular thought but with all thoughts and feelings. This awareness brings self-knowledge, from which arises right thinking. Right thinking will liberate thought imperceptibly from the sense of the ‘me’ and the mine’, and there is realized that love which is of the highest.

Chapter 8

CHARITY WITHOUT BARRIERS

V. came to me perplexed over charity, to give or not to give, and over killing little animals that destroy bushes, trees, and so on.

How difficult it is to convey to certain types of mind that in concerning themselves with the larger the little things will come right, but in concerning themselves with little things—an endless affair—the greater things are lost, in which alone are the solutions to be found for the problems of life. Free intelligence is required, and not calculated thought or logical thought, to comprehend life; generosity of the heart and not the calculated and thought-out gift.

H. asked if it was right for him to be the medium of charity, for he had inherited a large sum.

Charity should be direct. The giver and the receiver must feel no sense of obligation, nor the sense of superior giving to the inferior, nor a sense of shame. It must be given out of the fullness of heart. He who gives and he who receives, both are responsible for not erecting the barrier of separation. Charity ceases when there is no love; without love there is no charity.

Chapter 9

DEVOTIONS NULLIFIED BY ANTAGONISM

S. said, during a talk, that she went to church to offer her devotions, but she went on to add that she could not tolerate the coloured people—oh, of course she did not mean the Indians, like myself!

She came to see me to find out how to get over her fears, which were imaginary and self-created. She was unaware that these fears were self-created. To be free of them, each time there is an occurrence of fear, she should consciously examine that fear by thinking it out and feeling it out, understand it thoroughly and leave her conscious mind open. Then the secret fears, the unconscious, hidden fears will assert themselves, and because her conscious mind is clear, open, and unconfused, she will be able to take these hidden fears and fully comprehend them. Thus the unconscious fears will empty themselves into the conscious mind, and so she will, through constant awareness, watchfulness, be free from these fears, which are mostly self-created.

Then I gently pointed out to her that her devotions were nullified by her racial antagonism, for what she was mattered more than her devotions. If she hates, her love is merely an opposite, a reaction, but if she understands her hatred and transcends it, then her love will be complete. Without freeing thought from antagonism, resentment, and ill will, her devotions are superficial, and churches offer a means of escape from reality.

How difficult it is to convey the sublimity of love to people who are entrenched in their own petitionary prayers! How difficult it is for those who seek reality to comprehend that they are the whole! They are so eager to grasp that they pass reality by.

Chapter 10

A DIFFERENT STANDARD OF LIVING

Dr A. said he had his practice and was making a lot of money, but was convinced he was not really curing. Little pills and coloured water were not the real cures, though they gave temporary relief. He wanted to go in for the true healing. That would involve a different standard of living, to which he was indifferent, but his wife and family would object; and the breaking-up of the family would ensue if he followed what he thought was right. Was it selfish on his part to yield to the demands of the family? What was his responsibility?

In building up and yielding to sensate values, are we not creating social catastrophes, wars, ruthlessness, and misery? By having a high standard of living and giving emphasis to it, are we not creating a mechanistic, barbarous world of cruelty, competition, and pride?

This the doctor saw clearly—at least for the moment.

In yielding to the environment, whether of the family or of the civilization, he was responsible for the general misery and for his own particular misery. Realizing this, should he yield to the sensate demands of the family for more and more comfort, bigger and better cars, and all the rest of it? To what was he responsible? Was it selfishness to truly heal people, which would involve earning considerably less? This may bring about dissension in the family, but to what was he responsible?

Was he himself capable of living a simple life, stripped of the outer paraphernalia and show, content with little, because inwardly he was at peace, rich in his understanding, full in his love?

How, he asked, was he to arrive at these things?

By right thinking through self-awareness. Without self-knowledge there is no right thinking, and without right thinking there can be no peace, no love.

I explained what was involved in this arduous task.

Chapter 11

YOU HAVE CREATED THE WORLD'S PROBLEM

Two people came and presently explained that they were Christians, and so they wanted to bring about peace in the world.

Do not these very labels—Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and so on—keep people separate? As national and economic barriers divide people, so religions with their symbolism, their darkening altars, and their chanting priests keep people apart. Beliefs and dogmas, creeds and ritualism build an insurmountable barrier. It is over these that there have been, and there still are, vain controversies. It is these that create intolerance and antagonism. It is these that corrupt the mind and the heart. It is the spirit of sectarianism, exclusiveness, and privileges that destroys the unity of man, goodwill, and love.

Religion is the way of love in life, not belief. It is action without the self and its private motives, and not ritualism. It is the search for the highest without corrupting dogma.

When one asserts that one is a Christian or a Hindu, an American or an Englishman, there goes with it a certain pride and power, which inevitably create barriers between people. And when they say they are Christians, are they not aware of all its implications? Are they not aware of the insignificance of the label and the greatness of reality? The more they are concerned with the petty, is there not the less of the real?

Love, compassion, goodwill—these do not need a label, and it is these that will bring peace to the world. Neither mere economic adjustment, nor the domination of one or two peoples, nor technical advancement can bring peace. On the contrary, without a change of heart, these can bring about only greater and more destructive catastrophes.

To bring peace to the world, you must begin with yourself, for you are the world. What you are, the world is. If you are greedy, competitive, seeking privilege and profit, attached to this or that label, jealous and passionate, then you will have a world in which hate and wars will exist, a world of increasing chaos and tyranny, of ruthlessness and fear.

You have created the world's problem, and you are the only person who can solve it. Do not leave it to specialists, to the politicians, to the leaders, for what you are the world is.

Chapter 12

HEALING ONESELF

Dr. D. said that he was curing others when he was not able to cure himself; the same problems which confounded his patients confounded him also. He was able to deal with others, help them and so on, but with himself... He had no peace within himself.

How easy it is, with words, to help others to cure, to heal themselves! But how much more difficult it is to cure oneself! To heal oneself, to have peace within oneself, one has to pull down the barriers that one has sedulously built round oneself, such as prestige, the trappings of wealth and all that it gives: friends, companions, reputation, the brilliancy of learning. These, I pointed out, the doctor had, which he himself acknowledged. These superficial attributes—the layers of refined egotism—prevented him from realizing that peace for which he was longing.

He saw what I was saying was true, but he found these things very difficult to put aside: they had become part of his nature.

Either he must go on, I pointed out, strengthening that nature, suffering more and more, or he must set about weakening it, dissolving it. What he is creating is a lull in sorrow, an interim between two conflicts, a peace or rather a weariness of struggle. Being a psychiatrist, he understood well that inward peace must come through the awareness of self-knowledge, not through suppression but through integration. This awareness produces meditation.

Of course he has never meditated; he knew concentration but not meditation.

Meditation and concentration are two different things. Concentration is upon something, but meditation is awareness of the self, of the 'me' and the 'mine' with all its implications and contents, which brings understanding born of right thinking. This awareness has a quality of concentration different from the concentration upon something, however lofty. The one brings about deep inward integration, the transcending of the opposites, whereas the other creates duality and deeply maintains the cause of conflict.

Let him become aware of his thoughts and feelings, not pick and choose, but be aware of them, however trivial and ignoble, lofty and serene. As each thought or feeling arises, let him think out, feel out that thought or feeling, follow it through. In following it through, he will be constantly interrupted by other thoughts-feelings, and so will begin to discover the lack of true concentration. In following it through, he will become aware that he is judging, condemning, and will thus discover his biases, his prejudices, his secret reservations and motives. In following it through, he will discover himself, and this discovery is liberating and creative. Thus he is consciously freeing the mind, and into that free and open mind, however limited it may be at the beginning, the contents of the unconscious, the hidden, will be projected. Each projection must be thought out and felt out and so understood and dissolved and transcended. Out of this deep

self-knowledge there is the quiescence of wisdom, a love that is not measurable, and the realization of the highest.

All this is a patient and gentle process, needing strenuous alertness, a deep and significant awareness.

Chapter 13

SOCIETY'S BARBAROUS GAME

M., a schoolteacher, said that the children, not during their class hours, were playing soldiers with wooden machineguns, swords, tanks, and so on. How is one to prevent them?

When the whole society is engaged in this barbarous game, stopping a few children, who will be encouraged again by their elders, is of little importance unless the teacher is with them constantly and helps them in other forms of amusement, sane and harmless. She may be able to supervise constantly one or two children, but unless through intelligent instruction and guidance the children are helped to perceive the calamities that follow in the wake of their barbarity, society soon absorbs them.

Society after all is the individual or a collection of individuals, and unless the individual removes the causes that breed war and so on, mere outward patching, re-forming the same causes in a different order is of little significance.

So she must begin with herself; she must understand herself, for out of self-knowledge there is right thinking.

Chapter 14

A PEACEFUL INTERVAL OR TRUE PEACE?

Mrs C. is a very wealthy lady. She is unhappy and wretched in her present relationship. She wants peace and happiness.

There is no peace and happiness in this world; there is constant conflict and suffering and an interval which again leads to pain and misery. What does she want—this so-called peaceful interval or true peace?

True peace comes about with the understanding of sensuality, worldliness, and personal immortality, and transcending them. To understand them and so transcend them, she must become aware of her thoughts and feelings. This demands conscious endeavour and time for reflection.

She said she was a busy lady, organizing charity, belonging to many clubs, and so on.

These had become, I pointed out, distractions and were of little significance, to which she reluctantly agreed. She may be forced to give up these to create time to reflect; from this reflective awareness there will come the dawn of understanding, of right thinking and meditation.

To all this she willingly agreed, for she said she had somewhat thought about these things. But, she added, all this implied the putting aside of her present life, her activities, amusements, entertainments, and doing good.

Her doing good, her social activities, her superficial activities are activities of little significance—like the poor animals in cages. These activities bring about eventually more harm than good—the blind leading the blind.

To this again she hesitantly agreed, and I pointed out the catastrophic mess of this world: the wars, the absurdity of nationalism, class and colour prejudice and economic barriers, and the utter lack of goodwill and love. All this can be lastingly transformed only if she begins with herself, for she is the world. She recognized all this, but she said she was afraid to change life, for even though she might begin in a little way, it would lead to tremendous changes, and she was not willing, but she added she would see.

Chapter 15

THE PROBLEM OF SEX

R. said he was frightened of sex; from childhood he had been irritated by it and attracted to it. When in a group he resisted it and so created antagonism among his friends. He had prayed, repeated *mantras*, chants, tried analysis, and yet it pursued him and he pursued it.

After some further talk, I pointed out that habit must be understood before we can hope to solve sensory and emotional problems. These problems are not to be overcome by mere resolution or by mere will, but one has to become thoughtful. Habit, custom, is in its very nature thoughtless, and thoughtlessness is not productive of freedom. We do something thoughtlessly in our youth, like smoking, which gradually becomes a habit. If we say to ourselves that we must not, the constant determination not to smoke merely creates another habit. It is only in understanding habit, that is by becoming aware of it, by becoming thoughtful, can habit be broken down.

Our life is a series of thoughtless actions, which have become habits, in our relationships, in our religions, in our political and social life. We think in formulas, in slogans, dull and weary. Egotism is the very essence of thoughtlessness, with all its petty, limited, wearisome actions and problems. Sex becomes a great problem as it is an escape from the binding, narrow ego. It is a release and becomes a habit. Habit is thoughtlessness.

One has to become thoughtful by becoming aware. Through awareness, one begins to perceive the many habits of thoughts and feelings. These habits should be fully thought out and felt out and their implications seen. Thus when the conscious mind has fully comprehended and is open and free, the contents of the unconscious—the hidden mind—can project themselves into the conscious mind, which is prepared to receive them, as it is open and alert. When these come out, each projection must be taken up and understood. Thus, through intense awareness, the ever-narrow, petty activities of the ego are broken down, and right thinking comes into being.

The more you fight a habit, and the more resistance you create against it, the more thoughtless you become. Through right awareness, thinking with regard to all our activities and habits of thought and feeling are revealed and transcended. To develop the opposite of fear is to create another habit, but in becoming aware of fear and thinking it out, feeling it out fully, thoughtlessness is not developed in the opposites, as there is no freedom in the opposites. You should become aware of your habits of thought and feeling with regard to your relationships, to your political and social activities, to your religion.

To become aware, you must give time to it, you must have patience and alertness. Meditation is the cleansing of the mind and heart of egotism. Through this purification, there comes into being right thinking, which alone is capable of freeing man from sorrow.

Chapter 16

WRITING DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS

O. said he could not meditate; his thoughts wandered all over the place, and he could not keep his mind still. He felt it was about time he gave thought to this. He was an active person and was ever involved in some activity or the other.

Activity without deep comprehension leads to confusion, to the present state of the world. Without self-knowledge, activity must lead inevitably to conflict. Meditation is the beginning of discovery in self-knowledge. Discovery is liberating and creative, but to merely concentrate on a virtue, in becoming something, now or in the future, is not discovery in self-knowledge. Such a cultivated virtue is never liberating, creative, and so remains within the boundaries of thoughtlessness. So concentration on something—on a picture, on an image, a symbol, an idea—is not meditation. To force the mind to dwell on something prevents discovery; it only shapes the mind to a pattern, however noble, but it does not release, free the mind. Freeing the mind is meditation.

Let him become aware of his thoughts and feelings and follow each thought-feeling, however trivial or absurd. These thoughts-feelings arise because of interest or laziness or habit. Let him discover what it is. In thinking out, feeling out a thought or a feeling, other thoughts and other feelings will project themselves, and so he will become distracted. In discovering that he is distracted, he begins to awaken interest and enthusiasm, which will naturally bring about concentration. When a child is interested in something, he is wholly concentrated, but force him to be concentrated and he loses interest and his mind wanders. To be so aware needs constant application.

He said it was difficult for him to be so aware to think out, feel out as fully as possible each thought, each feeling; he was not used to it. It might come about through practice.

He must be alert to the whole question of practice lest it become a habit. Mere habit destroys or prevents receptiveness, discovery, understanding. Alertness of mind comes through constant thoughtfulness, and thoughtfulness is not habit. If he finds it difficult to become aware, then let him write down every thought and feeling throughout the day; let him write down the intention behind his words, his reactions of jealousy, envy, vanity, sensuality, and so on.

He could not, he replied, write down every thought and feeling as he had to earn a livelihood, he had to see many people, and he had but little time.

Then let him spend some time before breakfast in writing down, which necessitates going to bed earlier, putting aside some social affair. If he writes it down, whenever he can, then in the evening before sleeping, he can look over all that he had written during the day. Let him study this, examine it, without judgement, without condemnation, and in studying it, he will discover the causes of his thoughts and feelings, desires, and words. If he does this regularly, he will notice that whenever he is not able to write during the day, because his attention

is given to something else, he is nevertheless registering unconsciously his thoughts, feelings, reactions, which he will be able to write down later, at his own convenience.

Now, what is important in this is that he should examine, study with free intelligence what he had written down, and in studying it he will become aware of his own state. In the flame of self-awareness, of self-knowledge, the causes are discovered and consumed. He should write down not once or twice but for a considerable number of days, till he is able to be aware instantly of his thoughts and feelings, of his reactions and intentions. Thus through self-knowledge there is right thinking, from which follows everything else.

Meditation is not only constant self-awareness but constant abandonment of the self.

Out of right thinking there is meditation, from which there comes into being the tranquillity of wisdom. In that serenity the highest is realized.

Writing down what one thinks and feels, one's desires and reactions brings about an inward awareness, the cooperation of the unconscious with the conscious, bringing about integration and understanding. The effort lies in becoming thoughtful, not in thought concentrating upon something, which only prevents the comprehension of the whole.

Chapter 17

RIGHT THINKING, NOT RIGHT THOUGHTS

Dr J., from a hospital of wounded and maimed soldiers, said it was terrible to see young fellows utterly crippled for life, mentally and physically. If some of them recovered, they were sent off to the front to be maimed or wounded again. He himself did not see the benefits of war and was utterly opposed to it—destroying civilization in the name of civilization, but...

He was deeply moved and was weary of stemming physical pain. What was the good of it all? You healed, but only for them to be wounded again, to be maimed again or killed. What for?

The more questions one asks the more hopeless and desperate the situation becomes if there is no intelligent and true answer. The intelligent and true answer does not lie in putting together the many parts and drawing a neat and satisfying conclusion. The many parts do not make the whole, but when the whole is understood and felt, the parts fit in and have significance. To understand the whole, the worship of the part—the country, the race, the class, the family, the ‘me’—must cease. When the mind is occupied and becomes a slave to the part, then ruthlessness, competition, pursuit of wealth, fame, and sensory values become all-important. Then peace is only another means of war, with all the consequences of great catastrophes, hunger, crippling of body and mind, confusion, sorrow, and so on.

Until each one realizes this, what worldliness, sensuality, and personal immortality in their many different forms lead to, there will be catastrophes, revolutions, wars, and misery. Each one must comprehend this and abandon the cause of misery. Thus there will be intelligent and ‘spiritual’ groups which will bring about lasting peace.

But, the doctor said, this would take a very long time and, in the meantime, suffering would go on with greater confusion.

To have created the present stupidity and cruelty took time and cunning thought, centuries of ignorance and superstition; naturally it will require patience and study to bring about a different comprehension. In this matter time must not be considered, but what is important is for each one to strive for self-knowledge, which alone brings about completeness and so peace and compassion. Self-knowledge brings about right thinking, which is not according to a pattern, a standard. Nor is right thinking having good thoughts or right thoughts, which are but limited, incomplete. But through self-awareness of what one thinks and feels, and by thinking and feeling them out as fully and completely as one can, one begins to perceive, perhaps dimly at first, what is right thinking. Right thinking frees thought from craving, which is morality, virtue; it lays the foundation for all action and relationship with the one or with the many. From this arises fearlessness and so love and compassion. Upon this foundation, all meditation

must be based, for meditation is also freeing thought from craving, which is virtue. The realization of the supreme is the end of all life.

Chapter 18

THE SELF-ENCLOSING WALLS

M. said that though she met many people and knew many, she lacked human contact. How was she to set about getting it?

By not asking for it. The more you ask, the less you will have; the less you ask, the more you will have.

The cause that prevents human contact is the self-enclosing wall that each one of us has built around oneself. The superficial contacts that one has are merely social, with little significance. The more one breaks down the self-enclosing walls, the greater the contact.

Is the desire for human contact born out of loneliness, an inward void that demands satisfaction, an escape from one's own misery? If it is, then these escapes harden the self-enclosing walls. Without understanding the cause of self-enclosure, every form of escape must become a distraction, whether it be cinema, drink, lust, rituals or religion, social work or war. These distractions create further conflict and confusion.

How is one to break down the self-enclosing walls? Most of us are not aware of them. Even if we are, we justify them or blame someone else or the environment; in so doing we find excuses for the narrowing process of egotism.

These justifications hinder the comprehension of the cause and the freedom from it. To break down these self-enclosing walls, one must first become aware of them. To understand, one must study, examine, not condemn, judge, or justify. Awareness is this study and examination, gently and patiently, of these limiting walls of thought. They come into being either through education, tendencies, environmental influences, or through craving or through instinct, and generally through all these causes. The cause is selfishness, craving expressing itself through sensuality, worldliness, and personal craving for fame or immortality.

These she must study, examine, and understand and so go above and beyond them through awareness of self-knowledge, which engenders right thinking. Through right thinking she will be able to free thought from craving—a strenuous task. Through this awareness of pursuing craving, a self-cleansing factor or faculty is established in oneself: being honest. It is difficult to be honest when we are torn this way and that way by desire. Through this awareness we begin to comprehend the nature of love, of mercy, generosity, and so on.

And right action frees the mind from fear, giving confidence to the heart. Virtue is the liberation of thought from craving, from distractions, envy, ill will, laziness, and so on.

Then there is the awareness of building up memory, the consciousness of the 'me' and the 'mine', of the past and its influence, for one is the result of the past. Our thoughts spring from the past, and without understanding it, the mind cannot be free. To the past, the present is the gateway.

Through self-knowledge there is right thinking and right endeavour. Right thinking is the foundation for right living, from which, through meditation, there comes the quiescence of wisdom. Wisdom is simplicity of the heart. In this simplicity the supreme is realized.

Chapter 19

BEYOND ALL RELIGIONS

O. asked if I was a Christian or a Hindu or whether I taught what he considered to be a confused mixture of all the religions. I told him I was neither a Christian nor a Hindu, nor did I belong to any particular religion.

What is a Christian or a Hindu? Do they not represent certain formulas, certain superstitions, beliefs, and so on? Are not the fundamental teachings of Buddhism, Hinduism or Christianity the same: not to be sensuous, not to be worldly, not to possess, to love, to put aside selfishness in every form, to seek the supreme, and so on? If so, why call ourselves this or that which, like nationalism, only separates people, creating antagonism and confusion. The accretions of centuries, the rituals, the beliefs, the darkening altars, and the chanting priests have become more important than loving, being merciful, not killing. For, it is easier to get lost in contending beliefs and impressive ceremonies than to seek reality within oneself.

The world is broken up, separated by nationalism, by racial prejudice, by innumerable sects and religions, never coalescing but absorbing and breaking up, dominating and exploiting, which cause ceaseless conflict and antagonism. This is one of the causes of war.

There is only reality, the supreme without a second. There is only one humanity and one righteousness, and the way to its realization does not lie through any other path, through any other person save through yourself. Seek your own deliverance, and then you will deliver the world from its confusion and conflict, its sorrow and antagonism. For you are the world, and your problem is the world's problem. If you are clinging to your beliefs, to your petty gods, to your nationality, to your possessions, to your leaders, then you will create a world of confusion and conflict, of sects, of racial and religious prejudices, of economic and ideological frontiers, ever leading to separation, breeding ill will, multiplying catastrophes.

One has to put aside these superficial things, these distractions, these self-deluding indulgences, and cultivate right thinking. Right thinking comes through self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is not based on any formula; but through constant awareness of our thoughts and feelings, of actions and reactions, and of all the opposites that lie within us, comes self-knowledge, from which arises right thinking, right understanding. Right thinking demands right occupation, and action that is not exclusive, for self-knowledge is not intellectual knowledge, which is separative, limited, narrow. In understanding oneself, there is the comprehension of the whole.

To realize the supreme, begin to comprehend yourself. This comprehension is not to be gained through another, through a church, through any organization, but through your own awareness of craving. The craving for sensuality, worldliness, personal immortality, wealth, power, fame, authority, miracle, and mystery cause

sorrow, and none can free you save yourself. Through the freedom from these bondages comes wisdom, which opens the door to the highest.

Chapter 20

WHAT IS THE LABEL, WHAT IS THE ACTUAL?

B., who came from some distance, was greatly disillusioned, very lonely, and miserable. He had worked in various social reforms, had belonged to many religious groups, played with politics, and tried to earn money as well as he could. He was at a loss and did not know where to begin anew. The war wouldn't have him, and he was glad to be relieved of killing. He had found his work dull, and people were ambitious, ruthless, and out for themselves or for their group or for their ideology, which rendered them brutal and intolerant. Where was he to begin, and with what was he to begin? He wanted to do something creative.

We talked of social reforms—reforms that only need further reforms. Though reforms are necessary and good, they do not get to the bottom of things, the deep causes. And violent revolts and crises, though they promise great changes, end up in appalling bloodshed and oppression. In religious groups and religious thought there is authoritarianism, blind following, romanticism, gradual bigotry. We discussed these things from different points of view.

To be truly and lastingly creative, one must begin with oneself. For the world is oneself, and without understanding oneself, merely to be creative is to bring about strife, competition, and the peculiar ruthlessness of civilization. Through self-knowledge the self-enclosing processes are discovered; this discovery is liberating and creative, for what is discovered is truth, and truth will set one free. This discovery is prevented when there is identification. By becoming self-aware, the causes of identification, limitation are discovered. To be self-aware is extremely difficult—to be self-aware without judgement, without identification of dogma, creed, race, and so on. But as most of us are identified, judging, choosing, we have to become aware of these judgements, identifications, of putting labels—words first and facts, or reality, afterwards. In becoming aware of them, we begin to comprehend their cause, and through constant awareness the cause is dissolved. Through self-knowledge our self-enclosing limitations are discovered, and this discovery is not only revealing but liberating and creative.

To become so aware is difficult, but if you begin to write down all your thoughts and feelings, reactions and actions, you will begin to be aware of the state of your being. Of course you have no time to write down all your thoughts and feelings, but if you write down or jot down with interest every day, then you will see that your unconscious is making note while your attention is being given to other matters, so that when you have time to write down again, your actions and reactions are remembered. This will bring about the discernment of what is the label, the word, and what is the actual, the real—the identification with dogma, creed, belief and so judgement, and that which is. This will bring about great honesty of thought and that alert and eager concentration that is essential to the discovery of the real. This concentration is wholly different from the concentration that is enforced, which becomes a matter of habit, leading to the

slothfulness of self-satisfaction and gratification. This concentration will aid in bringing into the conscious the contents of the unconscious, the motives, the delusory factors, the hidden thoughts, and identifications, thus bringing to an end the self-enclosing, singularistic craving. It is this craving with its bondages and limitations that binds, making thought-feeling petty and narrow, dependent and possessive. These barriers prevent true creativeness. It is these self-created bondages that hinder the realization of the uncreated.

To free thought-feeling from these bondages is the beginning of meditation. It is not a question of time but of an alert, patient, and kindly understanding of the waves of craving. Out of this come self-knowledge and the highest wisdom.

Chapter 21

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

H. said his religion was socialism, for without bread first there was neither God nor man. To get bread for all, there must be drastic action, a certain amount of unavoidable liquidation of the people who stand in the way. In this world, violence, though regrettable, was necessary to bring about the necessary changes for human welfare, for the unity of man. Violence did produce unity; it must be used to bring about peace. In the past, violence did produce more violence, more bloodshed, but now things were different: we were more educated, more controllable, more advanced in evolution. If we could sweep away the wrong people and put the right people in high places, then we would have a happy people. The right people would then help the people to educate themselves, to withstand exploitation, to be brotherly, for then there would be no economic frontiers, no nationality, no racial differences. The end justified the means. The means might be bloody, but the end would be good. Look at this war; yet we would have a better world after this, a more prosperous, happier generation.

We talked, and presently I asked him gently if he himself gave bread the first place. He answered that he did not and looked surprised.

We do not live by bread alone, and if we give primary value to the secondary, then confusion will follow. Without bread we cannot live, but because each one follows the lustful appetites of sensuality, of worldliness, of personal immortality; or power, fame, wealth; or authority, mystery, miracle, there will be conflict, ruthlessness, and bloodshed. Because sensate values have assumed primary importance, for that very reason they betray and lead to utter confusion. For sensate values, there is war, bloodshed, revolt, privation, class and national hatreds. These sensate values are not to be overthrown through violence of any kind, for the very nature of the sensate is to create conflict; and to meet it with violence is to produce more conflict, more antagonism, more confusion. The very desire to be prosperous causes depression, starvation, misery. Opposites produce their own opposites, and in the opposites there is no solution. Only by going beyond and above the opposites is there happiness and hope for man.

Peace is not the opposite of violence, but it is the outcome of the understanding of the futility of violence, its inevitable dangers and implications. Peace, love, is integral. It has no opposite; it is complete. Sensate values and singularistic craving result in the ever-expanding demand for fulfilment and so the need for wealth and power. This craving for power, for fame (personal immortality) is not to be transformed through compulsion, through substitution, through violence or liquidation. Wrong and evil methods, for ends however noble, produce wrong and evil ends. In the beginning is the end. Through bloodshed, through wars, through oppression you cannot create love, goodwill, brotherliness, and freedom. Hatred begets hatred, as violence begets violence.

Only by using the right means—love and peace—will you have a sane, peaceful, and creative world.

Chapter 22

WAS IT HIS KARMA TO DIE IN THIS WAY?

M. said that his brother whom he loved greatly, more than his own children, had died very suddenly. He was very upset and confused by the event; though he was very religiously inclined, he found no comfort in his religious beliefs, for this death had shattered all the religious structure he had built up. He had read many oriental sacred books. Was it his brother's karma to die in this way, unfulfilled, shattered in the battlefield? Would he get another chance? Was he not missing the enormous opportunities of life? Why should he be killed, while he [M] himself was fulfilling, living, existing? Was his brother living on the other side, as some have said they do?

This is an enormously complex problem, not easily understood. Mere beliefs or assertions or presuppositions are of little avail. When one suffers deeply, one must put aside superficial remedies and devices and not be tempted to take comfort in them, for they are destructive of real understanding. It is the cultivation of this understanding that will bring freedom from sorrow.

Are we individuals? Or, are we a product of many causes whose effect is individuality? Are we not the mass, with an occasional thought-feeling which can be said to be not of the many, of the mass? Though the human world has divided itself into nations, races, classes, economic and religious groups, are not all human beings fundamentally similar—hating and loving, greedy and envious, fearful and assertive, and so on? As long as thought-emotion identifies itself with the group, with the nation, with the religion, and so on, surely it is not separate but belongs to the mass, to tradition, to the unenlightened past, and so is drawn into the hate, greed, conventionalities, and barbarities of the group, of the nation, of the race. Though there are separate senses-intellect, though you live in a separate house with little or many possessions, with a name, with a label, isolating yourself, does this make for individuality? Are you not still the mass? For, you are a result of many components, made up of many influences. As long as you are the mass, you inevitably create its opposite reaction—individuality, with all its separative, singularistic hopes, cravings, beliefs, actions, and sorrows.

Thus you become the centre of contradiction, and this centre is the self, the 'me' and the 'mine', the consciousness of the 'I'. Has this centre any true and lasting existence? Does it not change from day to day, from hour to hour? There is nothing stable, permanent in it. And yet we cling to it, to this self-contradictory state, which has no existence. The self is a delusion brought into being through craving. The torments of craving intensify the illusion, and it is this that must be deeply understood and transcended to experience the eternal, the immortal. To experience that is our whole concern, for outside of it there is conflict, confusion, sorrow.

Is the brother fulfilling, living? Is this kind of life—of worry, anxiety, greed, conflict, the pleasures and pains of love, of enormous uncertainty—fulfilling? Is

this existence? Is he not sorry for the brother and, being sorry, is he not himself in the same predicament? Does he think he is fulfilling, and does he call this life of conflict, confusion, and sorrow a life that is complete? Is not such existence a thoughtless state, which must inevitably bring about pain and misery? If he becomes aware of the many causes of this suffering, ponders over them, and frees himself from them, then he will find a treasure that does not corrode with time, that is not destroyed.

The past in conjunction with the present creates the consciousness of the 'I', the sense of individuality. This individuality has its own becoming, its own existence of conflict and sorrows, for its very nature is self-enclosing, self-limiting. Its very existence is an opposition, and however much this illusory self may try to perfect itself in time-space, it will still remain what it is: a centre of craving and hence the cause of illusion. As long as craving exists, the delusion of separate existence continues, with its problems of birth and death, love and hate, progress and failure, the present and the hereafter, and so on. Any questions arising out of this illusion must be illusory as well as the answers to them. Only when thought-emotion frees itself from the illusion of the self, which thought-emotion, senses-intellect have created, is there a reality, a bliss that is not to be understood by a mind-emotion caught up in craving. In observing, studying, and understanding craving, in becoming aware of it, there comes into being a new faculty, a new will, a new understanding. It is this new understanding that brings about the experience of the supreme.

Chapter 26

ASCETICISM AND THE OTHER WAYS OF POWER

Dr B. said he wanted to get over his sexual appetites so that he could be more concentrated in his work.

One must deeply understand power and its very complex problems. To give up sexual appetites is comparatively easy, but the power that it releases creates innumerable problems. To give up one kind of personal power for other forms of personal power is thoughtlessness, leading to ignorance and misery. Power in its different forms must be understood.

Asceticism, a determined abstinence, a calculated and controlled denial, yields great personal power, and however significant it may be, it is self-enclosing; however extensive it may be, it is narrow and limiting. Such power is exclusive, singularistic, separative, and therefore it will not bring that comprehension of the whole, without the understanding of which there is conflict, sorrow, and antagonism. This craving for power is a form of security, and it is only in insecurity, which is not the opposite of security, that there is understanding.

This power the intellect seeks through devious ways—through cleverness, brilliancy, sharpness; through the dominance of reason and thought; through theories and formulations; through prestige, political and social; through organizations, religious and economic. Intellect seeks power through knowledge and the dominance it gives. Intellect is ever seeking security, openly or surreptitiously, and security means personal power. It is the seat of personal aggrandizement and personal cessation. It is the source of self-contradiction and all its problems, and its answers are its own creation in its search for security, for power. This search, hidden, subtle, and cunningly devious, creates in its wake the complex human problems in relationship, of greed, envy, fear, and so on. Without understanding the ways of power, merely to abstain from sexual and other forms of power only gives greater strength to the hidden cravings.

Again, there is extraordinary power in emotion, in sentimentalism, in romanticism, in imagination. These take various forms of activities—religious and social, individual and collective, national and racial, and so on. When power is concentrated in emotionalism, it becomes extremely vicious and dangerous, leading to all kinds of catastrophes and miseries.

Again, abstinence, in its search for power and security, gives to the bodily organism great strength and emphasizes sensual value.

All these have their own peculiar problems, and their answers must inevitably be partial and incomplete and so untrue.

Now, by becoming aware of the complex problem of power, and by not identifying and judging but through silent observation and thus negatively comprehending, the cause-effect of power is understood and transcended. Thus, with the defences which the intellect has built being broken down and with

Chapter 23

THE POISON OF HATE

W. asked how she was to be free from hate. She recognized that it was poisonous both to herself and to the hated. She had tried different methods to be rid of the ugly thing—prayer, assertion, substitution, activity, and so on—but she found that it returned, sometimes more strongly; and at other times she was weakly aware of it. She was afraid that it was becoming a fixation and was getting quite frightened of it.

We talked awhile, and presently we agreed that hate, ill will, was rampant in the world, that it was being sedulously encouraged through different forms of propaganda. Hate and ill will are inevitable in a social environment which encourages and honours successful greed and envy. A society which sets up success, personal ambition, and competition as an ideal is bound to bring about ruthlessness, a form of hate. A civilization, highly advanced in technique, must lose pity, compassion, and must be hopelessly caught in material, sensate values, which inevitably lead to antagonisms, conflicts, and wars. In a society in which hunting and other forms of barbarities become an entertaining game, a pleasurable distraction, it is only a next step to turn the same instinct to kill a fellow man, in the name of God or country or for an ideology.

We are the result of the past, and without understanding the many ways in which hate, ill will, and other forms of antagonism are cultivated consciously or unconsciously, merely to overcome them not only becomes a futile waste of effort, but strengthens the wrong kind of thinking which causes other disasters. The substitution of love for hate leads not only to concealment and hypocrisy, but promotes the wrong kind of thinking-feeling. These and other superficial devices prevent the positive discovery of the cause of conflict, hate, greed, and so on. A disciplinary habit that will resist hate can be set up, but that very habit breeds thoughtlessness, which will bring about ill will, hate, and so on in another form, under different circumstances. Neither suppression nor substitution nor a self-imposed discipline will eradicate hate. Hate is an effect, a reaction, a result, and the causes of this must be sought out, searched out.

In searching out, in becoming aware, in discovering the causes, right thinking comes into being. It is this right knowledge that completely destroys the cause and the effect of hate. To search out, emotion-thought must be free from all bias, for any tendency prevents discovery. So tendencies, inclinations, and instincts must be observed, studied, and understood. Thus one begins to perceive the past and present environmental influences and one's own active part in them. This does not lessen the conflict but may increase it, and out of the very acuteness of conflict there is the dawning of right comprehension.

Hate, as with all other psychological problems, must be understood in relationship, for there is not a thing, not a problem that is wholly isolated. Right knowledge, right thinking, alone can free us from sorrow.

Chapter 24

AT THE CROSSROADS OF LIFE

H. came, in rather an excited state of perplexity, explaining that he was faced with the choice of two or three actions; he had come to the crossroads of his life, and he was uncertain of what course he should follow. He could marry, follow an artistic impulse which he has been developing for a number of years, or he could go away somewhere, to be quiet, to study, and to meditate. What was he to do, what was the right thing for him, which should he choose?

After further talk, he soon realized that no one could choose for him or help him in his decision. If another persuaded him to any particular action, it would not only cease to be his responsibility, but also later he might regret, feeling that what he had been persuaded to choose had led him to a state of lack of fulfilment and so on. He must realize the importance of this for himself.

Why had he put himself in a position of choice? Was it a question of choice? What does choice mean? To select, to discriminate between different alternatives. What is the motive, the power that makes you decide on one and reject the other? Your prejudice, inclination, experience, environmental influence, and so on. That is, choice depends on your like and dislike, on satisfaction, on gain and profit, on your ultimate or changing desire, and so on. Does this conflict of choice-desire lead to understanding, to clear and unbiased perception? In this discriminative process, will not the confusion and the conflict of choice always exist? For, is there not in choice an opposition, a sense of duality? Is it possible to perceive what is true in a state of conflict and confusion and antagonism? Must not the conflict of choice cease in order to have clear perception, to understand? Is not choice still within the self-enclosing limitation of craving and so can never become the means of liberating emotion-thought? Does it not on the contrary strengthen obstinacy, the will of craving, the identification of the 'me' and the 'mine', leading to isolation and exclusion and to the pain and sorrow, to the illusion and ignorance that arise from it?

By feeling out-thinking out what is involved in choice, by becoming aware of its process, the confusion and uncertainty of craving, with its conflicting and antagonistic wills or choices, is understood and dissolved. This understanding is meditation, for without right thinking the conflict of the opposites will continue.

Chapter 25

SEEKING ENCOURAGEMENT FROM OUTSIDE

R. M. said: 'I want to understand, and I want to be understood. I am an artist, a painter. I create and I want my creations to be appreciated.' He went on to explain that he needed encouragement, not constant criticism from the papers and the public; the artist lived not only for himself but also for others. 'I want to understand, but also I want to be understood' was the import of his whole conversation.

We talked for a while; he was telling me of his life, troubles, and uncertainties; and presently I pointed out that to lay equal emphasis, as he was doing, on understanding and wanting to be understood was a grave mistake, for the one was creative and the other merely satisfying. The one, the most important, comes in moments of creation, and when those moments are few and far between, then thought turns to environmental encouragement. The more it seeks encouragement and satisfaction from the outside, the rarer becomes the ecstatic moments of creation. The more we are distracted by people, by amusement, by drink, by the many means of inducing self-forgetfulness, the weaker grows the concentrated creative moment in which there is understanding. This moment is not to be revived through the distraction of change of country, scene, or environment, which may very temporarily and superficially exhilarate. Only when all distractions, inner and outer, are comprehended and so transcended is there the undiminishing reality, the ecstasy of creation. This moment is the height of negative understanding, for the uncreated is ever new, ever living; but the mind is ever seeking, surreptitiously, cunningly, the satisfaction of security, an anchorage, a resting place. It is only in the moment of great, unquestioning uncertainty that, in deep stillness, there is understanding.

It is extremely difficult and arduous to become aware of these inner and outer distractions. It is not in the denial of them, but in the understanding of their nature and their ways, that there is expansive concentration.

Self-knowledge or self-awareness brings right thinking, and without right thinking, which is utterly different from right thought, it is not possible to come upon that creative concentration freed from all distractions.

understanding and dissolving of the defences as they arise, there comes, imperceptibly and unknowingly, love. Without love, the many forms of power with their conflicts, confusion, and antagonism can never be transcended. In this flame of love, the complex craving for power is dissolved. All other solutions and answers to the problem of power only increase greed, fear, and ignorance, and there is no way out of this confusion save through understanding and love.

This understanding is much more arduous and strenuous than disciplining power, and such disciplining is ultimately self-enclosing, narrowing, limiting. The immeasurable, the unknowable, is realized in love and not in the deep, subtle defences of the intellect. With the silence of the intellect, when reason has exhausted itself, in that super-rational state, this love that dissolves all problems is known. It is this love that must be felt and understood.

Chapter 27

WHAT IS AWARENESS?

B., who came from a long distance, asked, ‘What is awareness and how does one become aware?’

In answering a question of this kind, it is necessary to find out how the questioner thinks, his background generally; so we talked of his life, the complexities of existence and its sorrows, and the beauty of the mountains.

Awareness comes through clarification and understanding. It is not a thing that you blindly accept, nor is it the product of any authority. It is inherently the outcome and the beginning of self-knowledge; through self-knowledge the intensity of the flame of awareness comes into being. Right thinking comes through self-knowledge, and right thinking is the fuel for the intensity and depth of awareness. Without right thinking there is no clarification, which is not brought about through determination or through the mere exertion of will. For, mere will strengthens tendencies, habits, and ignorance; but understanding, clarification, comes through right thinking born of self-knowledge.

As there is confusion, contradiction in our thought-feeling, caused by greed, fear, and ignorance, we must bring clarity and understanding through self-awareness. This clarity is denied, obscured when there is mere judgement or denial or acceptance, instead of following the thought-feeling, instead of thinking-feeling out as extensively and deeply as possible. To think out, feel out, there must be self-awareness, and this awareness is cut short through judgement.

To bring about clarity of understanding, there must be order, the comprehension of consciousness at its different levels—the sensate, the emotional, the intellectual, the physical, the ideal, the rational. Though each level of consciousness is ‘separate’, each is interrelated. To each, clarification must be brought, and as each thought-feeling arises, follow it out, think-feel it out. With each clarification of thought-feeling, awareness becomes more acute and heightened. Thus with each thought-feeling, when extensively thought out, felt out, awareness becomes expansive, inclusive. With experience, what are the important clues of thought-feeling to follow up and what are not will come. When attention is given to something else, you will find that unconsciously the flutterings of thought-feeling are registered, which will project themselves when your attention is focused again.

Through extensive clarification and understanding, the mind becomes still in deep awareness. In this silent awareness, feeling arises without cause, a feeling that is not the product of any influence, of any craving. As this feeling, joy, ecstasy arises, the mind leaps upon it, to store it up, to be enjoyed. Or it says to itself, ‘How pleasant this new joy is’, and thus, in the very tasting of it, in the very enjoyment of it, this ecstasy is stored up in memory, to be enjoyed. So the living reality of this immense feeling is lost, while the mind clings to its memory, dead and empty. Once again clarification and understanding of this craving to

hold fast to an experience, making of it into a habit, an anchorage, a security, must be brought by following it out widely and so bringing still deeper and greater awareness of immeasurable silence, in which there is the immeasurable love of reality. This awareness, this consciousness, is super-sensory and super-rational.

Chapter 28

DISTURBING DREAMS

R. said he was disturbed by a variety of dreams, these disturbances increasing and decreasing according to his mental states. The disturbing dreams had been continuing for some years, and though he had been to psychoanalysts, these had continued with varying degrees of intensity. How could he put a stop to them, and what were the necessary steps to have dreamless sleep?

We talked easily of his life, his relationships, his distractions. He was a kindly and intelligent man, versed in many philosophies.

The more one is aware during the waking hours, following out each thought-feeling as fully, extensively as possible, the less there will be dreams. Because one is not aware, not awake during the day, the significance and the evaluations of incidents and reactions escape, through indolence, through the lack of alertness at the right time. But the events and the responses have been recorded, if they are important, by the inner mind. When there is so-called sleep, these recordings assume the form of dreams, important or trivial. These dreams have then to be interpreted by oneself or by a professional analyst, and both have their dangers. To interpret the dreams oneself, there must be freedom from bias, from anxiety, from any distorting wish, from any judgement, which is extraordinarily difficult. Any false interpretation only confuses, giving a new form to the dream. To prevent this interpretative confusion, with its worries and questionings, it is wiser and saner to be alert and aware during the waking hours, following out each thought-feeling, each reaction as completely and as widely as possible, which demands seriousness and attention. If you turn to an analyst, you will not only not become aware of the immense riches hidden within you, but you will inevitably make of him into a dependence, which is far worse than all the dreams. For dependence creates security, and in security there is no understanding.

Through becoming aware of every thought-emotion, every response, by feeling them out as deeply and fully as possible, you will find order, clarity, and understanding coming, with greater intensity of expansive awareness. And so dreams, during the waking and sleeping period, lessen and dissolve, and sleep then becomes as important as the waking hours. For, sleep is then the intensification of the wakeful state, and corresponding to the wakeful state is sleep, and as in the wakeful state so in sleep there are different levels of consciousness. The more one consciously touches the deeper levels in the wakeful state, the more one realizes in sleep of those states that lie beyond the most profound of the conscious. If one can experience that, then it will be seen that it has a deep effect on the waking, conscious mind.

To experience that state that lies above and beyond the reaches of the conscious mind is most difficult, for the unconscious must empty itself of its

content through the awareness, through the opening, of the conscious mind. Thus when there is deep stillness, there is the realization of that which has no name.

Chapter 29

THE GREATNESS OF RELATIONSHIP IS ITS VERY INSECURITY

H. said he found relationship most trying and conflicting; it began with a certain joyousness, but soon there crept into it dissension and pain. He asked how he was to get out of this conflict.

To be is to be related, and all relationship is painful. It is the very nature of relationship to cause disturbance. You can mentally formulate a pattern of ideal relationship, but that is only escaping from the factual. Such an intellectual ideal prevents adjustment and the possibility of going beyond conflict. Then pattern becomes more important than understanding. Identification prevents right thinking.

Relationship is inevitably painful, which is shown in our everyday existence. If in relationship there is no tension, it ceases to be relationship and becomes merely a comfortable, sleepy state, an opiate, which most people want and prefer. Conflict is between this craving for comfort and what is factual, between illusion and actuality. If you recognize the illusion, then you can, by putting it aside, give your attention to the understanding of relationship. If you seek security in relationship, then it is an investment in comfort, in illusion, and the greatness of relationship is its very insecurity. If you seek security in relationship, you are hindering its function, which brings its own actions and misfortunes.

Surely, the function of relationship is to reveal the state of one's whole being. Relationship is a process of self-revelation, of self-knowledge. This self-revelation is painful, demanding constant adjustment, pliability of thought-emotion. It is a painful struggle, with periods of enlightened peace. To uproot habits, prohibitions, philosophies, and doctrines is very disturbing and very strenuous. But the function of relationship is to bring about understanding; and to understand, conflict seems necessary. In complete self-knowledge there is freedom from pain, conflict, and confusion; and relationship is the way towards that freedom. There is no isolation even for the man who withdraws from the distractions of the world. In exclusiveness there is ignorance. Everything is related, and in understanding this relationship, with its strains and mirth, in that aloneness of understanding, the tensions and the struggles, the pains and joys cleanse the mind and the heart of their self-enclosing barriers and so bring about a realization of the bliss of the supreme.

But most of us avoid, put aside, the tension in relationship, preferring the ease and comfort of satisfying dependency, an unchallenged security, a safe anchorage. Then the family, the relationship becomes a refuge. It is the refuge of the thoughtless. When insecurity inevitably creeps into that dependency, then that particular relationship is cast aside, and a new one is taken on, hoping for greater security in it. In relationship there is no security, and dependency only breeds fear. Without understanding the process of security and fear, relationship

becomes a binding hindrance, a way of ignorance. All existence is a struggle and a pain. There is no way out of it save in right thinking, which comes through self-knowledge. Through self-knowledge the bliss of the eternal is realized.

Chapter 30

TO AFFECT THE WHOLE, THE PART MUST TRANSFORM ITSELF

P. said he found, in trying to follow what I had said about awareness, that he had a prejudice against the darker race in this country (America). How was he to get rid of this prejudice? He was brought up in the South, he explained after some further talk; though he had not lived there for some time, he found this prejudice, though latent, ready to be awakened.

One cannot 'get rid' of a prejudice without understanding its causes-effects, and in understanding them, the problem is shifted to a deeper and more fundamental level. In considering this more profound level, the immediate cause-effect loses its significance and importance.

One can perceive fairly easily how this particular form of prejudice has arisen: the problem of shortage of labour, slavers, the domination of the white, and the desire to keep political and economic superiority over the darker and more populous people of the South. Fear, prejudice, cruelty, contempt, and exclusiveness are some of the evils that multiply by allowing the one evil of slavery and all the barbarous horrors connected with it.

By admitting one great evil, such as war, you open the door to a host of minor misfortunes and catastrophes. You were educated into this prejudice, you acquired it, inherited it through tradition, and this inheritance is maintained and inflamed by your own inborn desire to dominate, to be powerful, to be superior. It is this inborn urge that feeds and sustains the prejudice, and to attempt to be rid of it—the superficial, the effect—will be futile so long as it is being fed by a deeper and more potent cause. In understanding this deeper and potent cause, that which is of secondary importance fades away of its own accord. By placing emphasis on that which is basic, of primary importance, that which is secondary loses its weight and significance. If you lay emphasis on the minor, on the secondary, then it leads to all kinds of confusion and pain and becomes insoluble.

Without understanding and so transcending the desire to dominate, to be powerful, and to be superior, fear, cruelty, envy, and other blockages come into being. One can perceive what domination, power, and so on over others inevitably lead to—revolt, antagonism, tyranny, and ultimately war.

You cannot reform others, bring good to others till you reform yourself, till you are good. You are part of the society, and to affect the whole, the part must transform itself. To bring about this essential and beneficial change, domination and the desire for power in its many forms—nationality, racial superiority, competitiveness, self-expansion, and so on—must be studied and observed with kindly tolerance. You must become aware of it first in yourself, not in another, for you cannot change another, but you can transform yourself. Being aware, you begin to discover the many ways of domination and power. Each time you are aware of their expression, think them out, feel them out, as extensively, as widely

as possible. This process of thinking out, feeling out brings about greater and greater intensity of awareness, and through this awareness the many blockages and hindrances are discovered and dissolved, and liberation takes place.

If you merely try to get rid of prejudice or another barrier, in that very process you will be developing another hindrance, and so through this way there is no release from ignorance and sorrow. It lies through right awareness and right thinking. Right thinking comes into being through self-awareness, through self-knowledge. With deeper and deeper penetration, the immeasurable is realized.

Chapter 31

RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

S. came from a long distance after many nights' journey. He was an electrical engineer, working in one of the aeroplane factories. He had come primarily to talk over the religious life and how difficult he found his family life, the wild distractions of his family, the difficulties of educating his children properly, without inculcating in them barbarity and ruthlessness and the appalling trash of the radios and the cinemas.

We talked about these matters at some length, and we pointed out that he must begin with himself, for that is the only ground, with any surety, that could be highly cultivated and transformed, and this consideration was not egocentrism but the only possible basis on which to build the right foundation. We went into this, and presently we came to the problem of right livelihood.

When we began to discuss the right means of earning money, he was acutely disturbed, though doing his best to conceal it. Gradually we got his cooperation, and he actually got interested, without defence. We said there were obvious occupations that were harmful to our fellow human beings: killing in any form, the manufacturing of the means of killing, and other forms of obvious cruelty and oppression. Tradition, greed, and the desire for power dictate the means of livelihood, and to merely prohibit certain occupations as being unethical is to create further confusion. But if one understands the implication, the cost of tradition, of greed and of power and thus free thought-feeling from them, there will come the contentment with little; our needs will not then correspond to our greed, to our pretensions. In freeing thought-feeling from tradition, from greed, from the will for power, we shall find right occupation. Without understanding and so transforming the deeper implications of our problems, to pursue the problem as though it is not related to anything else is to bring further sorrow and confusion. Right occupation is a by-product and not an end in itself. In seeking the highest, we shall find that our active life corresponds to our inward realization. Through the outer we may find the inner, but it is the inner that shapes the outer, and to fix the outer in a definite pattern without regard to the inner is to bring confusion, conflict, and antagonism.

Chapter 32

DECISION OR UNDERSTANDING?

I. S. said he was a businessman of considerable experience. He had seen the seamy and difficult side of life for these many years, and now he wanted to lead a spiritual life, and so he wanted, he said, to give up his sexual life. He was deciding to give it up. He said he could easily give it up if he made up his mind, for he had sufficient will to overcome it.

After some further talk, we said that in such matters the mere use of will, though it may produce the desired result, is like a surgical operation that may produce disastrous effects. Is not his decision based on some personal motive of gain, to become, to achieve a certain end? If it is, then the power that sex yields will be directed to more self-enclosing ends and so will remain sensuous. So it is not a matter of surgical decision but of deep understanding. If it is a mental or an emotional decision, then such a decision will banish love. But in understanding the problem and its many implications, love will be made greater and will not become a plaything of the intellect.

When power in any form is used for personal ends—political, religious, economic, or sexual—it will inevitably bring about appalling disasters to the individual and so to the mass. If we are seeking self-forgetfulness through sexual appetites, then these appetites, like all appetites, will become far more important with their many problems than the cause itself. Through appetites, however noble or ignoble, the conflict and the pain of the self are not to be transcended.

The self is to be understood through self-knowledge. The sorrow that the self brings is not to be denied, forgotten, or substituted. It must be comprehended. To comprehend the complex subtleties of the self, there must be benevolent and detached observation. Through self-awareness the roots of sensuality, ill will, ignorance and so on, buried in the conscious and the subconscious, are exposed. The manner of digging deeply is of the highest importance, for in the means, in the beginning is the end. There must be no violent decisions, conclusions, judgements, but an ever-widening understanding, whose very gentleness dissolves the conflicts, the confusions, the sorrows of the self. For, self-knowledge brings with it right thinking, and self-knowledge comes with constant self-awareness.

Chapter 33

TURNING EVERYTHING TO ONE'S BENEFIT

L. M. explained that she ever found herself grasping, wanting to be loved, turning every conversation, every meeting with another to her own account. Before the event, she was already drawing out of it benefits and advantages to herself. She was occupied with these thoughts, with pretensions. She had been playing this game for many years, and she was sick of it. She wanted to be serious, but she found that the mind was ever calculating, pretending, ever greedy. How should she set about to free thought from this enclosing vanity?

Why do we seek power, why do we accumulate, why do we gather money, positions, titles, loves? Why have we burdened ourselves with pretensions? Is it not to satisfy a burning craving? Craving to be, craving not to be left out, to achieve, and for the delight in strong battle. If these pretensions, titles, positions, and wealth are taken away, what is left? Nothing. A vast emptiness, poverty. To fill this void, this aching loneliness, becomes our one constant demand. We try to fill this well with riches, with sexuality, with ill will, with pretensions, with art, with activities, with politics, with knowledge, with every worldly means possible. Those who have not become completely stupid through this vain effort turn to the spiritual life, to God. They seek the spiritual life. God becomes the means to fill this bottomless pit. So God becomes another means of escape from the pain and fear of that inward poverty. Escapes, however noble, lead to confusion, to sorrow, to stupidity.

Can this emptiness be filled? You have tried different ways, and have you been able to fill it? You may cover it up momentarily, or you may think you have filled it, but you are soon aware of its aching sorrow. Fortunately, you are not one of those who are so self-deluded, self-convinced that they have found the right filler or that their methods of filling will ultimately bring fullness.

Now you want to fill that emptiness with God. Again, can you fill it with intellectual formulations? When you have tried different systems of spiritual training, with different dogmas, creeds and beliefs, with different teachings, will you be able to fill this emptiness?

You do not give a true answer because the mind thinks that it is not so poor, that it has certain capacities, that it has not tried the many ways of filling this void and so perhaps it will find one.

Now, can this well be ever filled? Is it not such a bottomless pit that all attempts to fill it are utterly vain? Is it not the very nature of craving that the more it is satisfied the more is its demand? Intelligence is the quick adjustment to this fact, and stupidity is the inability to adjust oneself. Yet the mind refuses to perceive the inevitable and refuses to face the truth. Yet in this discovery of truth lies the creative freedom from this incessant craving.

The resolutions, the answers of the intellect will not enrich this immense poverty. Nothing will enrich it, nothing will fill this bottomless pit, this empty

loneliness. The very perception of its cause brings its understanding, freedom. With this understanding, with this new instrument, the accumulated habit of grasping, of turning everything to one's benefit, of pretensions, and so on begins to be destroyed. Without this understanding, habits of thought-feeling give place to other habits of thought-feeling. All habits prevent this creative freedom.

Chapter 34

PRAYER, A COMPLEX AFFAIR

N. demanded rather aggressively why I did not concern myself with prayer but only with meditation. He was peculiarly assertive, insisting that prayer, especially the Christian prayer, was the way to salvation, for there was only one saviour.

To penetrate this aggressiveness took some time and trouble, but slowly he began to thaw, and we were able to talk without foolish assertions. Behind this assertive screen, he was intelligent enough to have the desire to find out. He was not completely swallowed up in his narrow conditioning.

He said he had been praying for some years, though he did not belong to any organized religions; nor was he a church-goer. Though he had had certain benefits out of prayer, he was dissatisfied, and as he was advancing in age, he felt he must make deeper advances into prayer.

Like all deep human problems, prayer is a complex affair and needs careful and tolerant probing and patience, not to be rushed at demanding definite conclusions and decisions. Without understanding himself, he who prays might through his very prayer be led to self-delusion. If one indulges in petitionary prayer, it brings its own reward, the thing asked for is often granted, and this only strengthens the prayers of supplication. Then there is the prayer not for things or for people, but to comprehend, to experience reality, God, which prayer also is often answered. There are other forms of petitionary prayer more subtle, more devious, but nevertheless demanding and supplicating, begging and offering, openly or roundabout. All such prayers have their own reward, they bring their own experiences, but do such methods bring the realization of the ultimate reality? Let us inquire into this kind of prayer.

We have often heard, and several people have told me, that they had prayed to what they called God for worldly things and that their prayers had been granted. What they asked for they would eventually get if they had faith in what they call God; this prayer for health, comfort, and worldly possessions was often answered, depending upon the intensity of the prayer.

Are we not the result of the past, and are we not related to the enormous reservoirs of greed, hate, and so on, and their opposites? When we appeal or make a petitionary prayer, are we not calling upon this reservoir, upon this accumulated greed and so on, which does bring its own reward, with its price? Again, when we pray to comprehend, to experience reality, God, do we not call upon the accumulated tradition of centuries, which does bring its own experience, but is that the real? Does this supplication to another, to something outside, bring about the understanding of truth? Is this not a 'wrong' approach? Through wrong means you do have results, experiences, but are they of the real?

We must understand, from the very beginning, this dual process that is operating in us: the one who prays and that to which the prayer is made. To

understand this dualism, we must comprehend ourselves, our mind-feeling. Without understanding this, without self-knowledge, prayer with its results may become a hindrance, leading to delusion. Why create illusion, from which it is extremely difficult to extricate oneself? Is it not wiser to understand the thinker and his thoughts-feelings than to cultivate this dualism, which leads to conflict, confusion, sorrow?

To understand, then, there must be self-awareness, for out of self-awareness there is self-knowledge. There is no self-knowledge without meditation, and meditation is not possible without self-knowledge. Self-knowledge comes through alert watchfulness of all our thoughts-feelings; this awareness is dulled if there is identification. Realizing that we do identify and so prevent understanding, we must perceive the necessity of kindly, tolerant detachment, suspending judgement. We must observe the conflicts of our thoughts-feelings, their contradictions, their appetites, their hidden pursuits. If we attempt to do this earnestly and alertly all day, we will find that we will need, naturally without any artificial enforcement, during the day, periods for intense self-awareness, self-observation. Out this self-knowledge, right thinking comes.

Meditation is to free thought-feeling so that it can discover, for that which is discovered, being truth, is liberating and creative. When there is the cessation of becoming, of craving in its many forms, there is the falling away of dualism—the ‘me’ and the ‘not me’, he who prays and that which is prayed to. And then we shall experience true being. Our happiness lies in its discovery and not in the delusions of craving, however noble.

Chapter 35

CRYING FOR THE LIVING OR FOR THE DEAD?

M. N. came in an intense emotional state, and presently she calmed down and said she was sorry to be in this state, for her son had been recently killed in the war. She explained that she hopefully believed in reincarnation and that she had attended several séances, where there was the manifestation of her son in the form of a message, and she had ‘fooled’ around with automatic handwriting too. Yet she was in despair, she said, and was there no way out of this chaotic misery? Is there immortality?

This is an enormously complex question to be carefully and wisely thought over, not to be believed or disbelieved in, but to be discovered, and so let us discover its reality.

This may sound harsh, but is she sorrowing over her son, or is she sorrowing over herself? Is she crying for the living or for the dead? If it is for the dead, then we must inquire into who it is that is dead, how he came into being, what is there for him. If it is over oneself, which is self-pity, the sense of devastating loneliness, the attachment to another as hope, as the fulfilment of oneself, as the continuity of oneself, then these must be searched out and understood. For, these are the very things that prevent the clarity of discerning understanding. These create obscurity, and when these veils are pulled aside, there is clarity. Is she not concerned more about herself, her remorse, her ambitions, her desires?

She was good enough to acknowledge them.

It is these self-enclosing thoughts and feelings that prevent wider and deeper comprehension. So she must become aware of them, for through self-knowledge there is true discovery. This is her first task, the most essential, for in understanding herself she will comprehend what is immortality.

Who is it that is dead? Your son and the son of a thousand mothers and fathers. He was unique because he was your son and because he had certain qualities, certain tendencies. Outwardly he was unique, and inwardly one psychological trait or traits dominated over others. He was separate entities, all making up your son.

These entities are always in a flux, one or the other coming to the surface. Is there something enduring, is there a spiritual essence that continues behind and beyond this constant change? To assert that there is, is as foolish as to assert that there is not; one has to discover it. But when we cling to these different and changing entities as my son, my mother, my love, then this very impermanency prevents the discovery and the understanding of that which is. The name, the form, the associations are—and are not—your son, and when you deeply inquire into who your son was, and in passing beyond these changing and dying things, you will discover that which is. But to formulate that which is, or to believe in that which is, or to accept from others that which is, is foolish; for such acceptance, such belief, such formulation and speculation hinder the

understanding of the real. To comprehend the immeasurable, the mind must cease to measure.

The past with the present creates the you and the me. We are the result of the past, our being is founded on the past; the past is about us. When this past comes into contact with the present, then there is the manifestation of individuality. The father and the mother are the present giving birth, occasion, to the past, which becomes the child. The two elements must exist to produce the third, and without the present there is no past, no future. Consciousness is the past plus the present, and the inquiry into that consciousness lies through the door of the present. Through the present, the dark past and the eluding future are to be studied and understood. The present is of the highest importance, for it is the path to the eternal. The religion of the future is illusion, and the worship of the past hinders the eternal now.

There is the continuity of the past in ever seeking birth through the present, and this birth is the oft-repeated incarnation. The past and the present have in them causes-effects which govern existence, the outer and the inner, the sensual and the psychological. If these causes-effects, with their restrictions and freedoms, are not understood and so transcended, there is continuity of the activity of the past, which is ever seeking, with the present, to bring forth existence with which there is identification as my son, my husband. The past is as alive as the present.

It is hoped and believed that through this continuity of the 'me' and the 'mine', through a series of births and deaths, through the duration of time, perfection is reached, the supreme is realized. It is believed that each birth, each time-period is an opportunity to become—to become more perfect, more virtuous, more wise. It is hoped and believed that through this horizontal evolution, through continuity in time, the timeless is realized. Will thought-feeling nurtured in time realize the timeless? Identification, the cultivation of endless memory, is time-binding, and how can there be the realization of the timeless if thought is a slave to time? On the horizontal plane all thought-feeling, all existence is of time, and only when this process is abandoned is there the realization of the eternal. Without this abandonment there is sorrow and all existence is pain. Because one seeks security, an anchorage, a refuge, there is insecurity—the insecurity created by fear—but if one understands the very nature of existence, which is insecure, sorrowful, then that very insecurity brings the highest wisdom. There is then no attachment, which is protective security with its fears, frustrations, and miseries, but a constant flowering of understanding.

To abandon the activity of the horizontal is most difficult and strenuous. Without self-knowledge there is no abandonment, and self-knowledge comes with self-awareness of every thought-feeling. In thinking out and feeling out every responsive thought-feeling, self-knowledge is nurtured, and from this arises right thinking—right thinking with regard to occupation, relationship, immortality. Through constant watchful self-awareness, there is self-knowledge. Love without self-knowledge follows the way of sorrow. Without self-knowledge, that which is immortal is not to be realized.

Chapter 36

THE UNSPIRITUAL CLOSED CIRCLE

S. I. came to explain that she felt a certain unfriendliness, a certain reserve, a lack of response on my part.

This was said in a roundabout way, and we had to do a great deal of spadework to bring to the surface her hidden complaints. By slow and patient digging of several hours these aggrieved statements came out—that we must be loyal in work when people are working together, that there must be encouragement and easy flow of friendship between workers, that I must not have a closed circle about me, nor encourage the circle to power and so on.

I explained that there was no closed circle, and that this very idea was unethical and utterly unspiritual and that those who thought there was a monopolizing circle only wanted to enter it, feeling themselves excluded. It was in them that this exclusive, possessive spirit existed.

This she denied, pointing out that where there was smoke there was fire and that I was unaware of my exclusiveness.

I pointed out that in the different countries I had been, staying with different people, these very people had become the closed circle, the group, for those who felt that they had been left out and who wanted to ‘belong’. I explained that this exclusive spirit was utterly detrimental to the understanding of the whole and that I was not unaware of it; it was one of the reasons why one did not belong to any organized religious group, why one had left such an exclusive body.

She again insisted that I was unaware of this exclusive, separative spirit which was in me and so encouraged the circle, the group. I thanked her for pointing out to me this, of which I had thought about and examined for many years, but one must always be watchful so that love was not exclusive.

A few minutes later she again came to the attack in a roundabout manner. Was it not necessary to recognize fellow workers, people who had worked on the same plane? For, this recognition strengthened the work in spreading it.

I felt this was the crux of the matter. So I said that reality belongs to everyone, like the earth and the sky, and nobody, fortunately, can monopolize it; that the very spirit of owning it, possessing it shows the lack of it; that no one can save another, deliver another from sorrow; that each one must discover this highest wisdom; that one cannot invite or exclude another in the partaking of it; that there is no guru or teacher who can reveal its beauty, its immensity. To seek recognition in one’s understanding is to accept authority in matters where the spirit of authority and its encouragement are the utter denial of the understanding of the real. He who is seeking truth must comprehend and shun authority. To realize the supreme, the complete, there must be humility, and humility is not consistent with the desire to be recognized. In the realization of that which is, there is neither the small nor the great, neither the clever nor the stupid, for that is both the small and the great.

Chapter 37

THE PAGES OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

A soldier has been here several times. When he came the first time, he was very confused and greatly disturbed; he did not know why he was in the army, and he wanted to get out of it. He was not sure whether he was a conscientious objector because of some religious orthodoxy, or he felt deeply and instinctively that to kill was wrong, or he was frightened of the whole affair. He said he was not exactly frightened of getting killed, but in this painfully confused state he was not sure of anything, least of all of what he thought and felt. He had been to a good psychiatrist who, after a talk or two, had more or less pointed out that he, the soldier, wanted to save his neck by getting out of the show. The soldier was in no way satisfied with this explanation, for he felt it was very superficial and too arbitrary. He did not think he was concerned only with saving his own life, but there were other things of which he was vaguely aware, causing uncertainty and confusion. He wanted to go before his commanding officer and declare that he was unfit and so on.

Before he takes any step or before he identifies himself with any mood, tendency or conviction, is it not necessary first to understand himself and the confusion he is in? In understanding himself and his self-contradictory state, he will find the right course of action, not dependent on changing responses, or on the dictates of his family or society, or on religious authority. To discover such a course of action, must he not study himself, get to know himself? Without this self-knowledge he will always be at the mercy of others, in a state of self-contradiction and confusion and sorrow.

Self-knowledge is not easy; it requires persistency, detached and kindly observation, subtle sensitiveness. It is a volume of many, many pages. Each page must be read with care and understanding; you cannot skip a page, for each page gives a hint towards discovery and experience. The more you read between the lines, the sharper, clearer grows the capacity of awareness. The very eagerness, the impatient greed to reach the end prevents the comprehension of each page and chapter. Nor can there be theories and formulations concerning the ultimate end. You might as well give a complex and delicate machine to a child; the machine is soon destroyed. Even if you are capable of reading the descriptions of the end, you will not understand it; you must experience it, and to experience it there must be self-knowledge, the knowledge of many pages.

Self-knowledge begins with the present, with the data that you have. In analysing this data, you will unravel the past and the nature of time, its binding quality. Through this awareness, right thinking is cultivated, right thinking with regard to sensuality, worldliness, ill will, means of livelihood, power, and personal continuity. Through this awareness of right thinking, the mind is freed from the identifying weight of memory, which brings about deep serenity and wisdom. In this stillness the timeless is realized.

Chapter 38

YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS DEMANDS

Mrs L. came to explain a dream she had. It was a dream in which I appeared to her and taught her. She said she was happy over it and asked hesitantly if I remembered it, if it was true, and what significance it had.

It is really important, we said, to discover for ourselves the true significance of any event, experience, or dream. To rely on another for an interpretation not only makes the events and so on to take place in different forms, but also makes the mind dull and confused. To understand an experience, a certain detached, tolerant analysis is necessary, and this is far more important than the eagerness to understand an event or a dream.

Each one has so many responses and actions, experiences, impressions, and stimulations that each one has to discern those that are worthwhile and let the others go by. Now, is this dream of any value? Apparently to you it is. Let's see if it has any significance. Your own desire to understand may have produced the dream. It might have been the outcome of your own subconscious demands that created the dream. It might have been the result of an exclusive, separative urge. It might have come out of hidden pride and so on. These things matter, not the shape and the symbol, and to lose oneself in them is vanity and unedifying. Through constant awareness, through watchful alertness, you will have to unearth the cause of your dream; and what significance, important or trivial, you give it depends on your clarity of thought-feeling.

Chapter 39

BELIEF IN THE MASTERS

M. R. said he was an ardent believer in the Masters, the gurus who exist beyond our immediate, physical perception. They were our elder brothers, more evolved than us and so worthy of being followed. They had a plan for humanity and showed us the means, the technique for its fulfilment. Why was I opposed to them? Was I not reacting violently against my earlier upbringing, and would I not eventually join the group that was acting as their representative and their outward helpers?

To deal with ignorance is most difficult, for it is often clothed with goodwill. One must accept the goodwill with eagerness, but ignorance eventually destroys goodwill. To dispel delusion is far more important than any belief, than to accept any plan, any technique. It is insidious and extremely subtle, and without first understanding its causes and ways, all thought-feeling becomes a plaything of illusion. How can you discern what is true if there is ignorance? How can you discern the truth of a falsehood, or the falsehood in a truth, when the mind is distorted by illusion? To see the truth as truth, and the falsehood as false, demands freedom from ignorance, from stupidity. It is the greatest gift.

Prejudice, credulity, relying on mere opinion, ill will, fear, greed, sensate values, and craving breed ignorance and illusion. And thought must be concerned with transcending the causes of ignorance. This being of primary importance, we can give only secondary consideration to the question of Masters.

How extremely difficult it is to find a teacher, a guru, in this physical world! Have you sought one? If you have sought one, wide-eyed, intelligently, then you will know what an arduous task it is. Your choice depends on your conditioning and its reactions, on your moods, hopes, and opinions, and a choice based on prejudice can lead only to confusion. Knowing how difficult it is to find a teacher, who is merely a signpost to the real, can you trust and accept a teacher whom you do not see with your physical eyes, whom you recognize on the hearsay of another? When you have the greatest difficulty in finding a teacher here on this plane, how can you be so sure of one who has been created or discovered by another? Is this not superstition? Is not the acceptance of authority, of the one or of the many with their opinions, the beginning of ignorance, stupidity?

To follow another, in ignorance, does not lead to the comprehension of the real, and ignorance is not to be broken down in the acceptance of another, however great. Ignorance is self-caused, and only you yourself can destroy it. This hope that another can lead you to reality, to happiness, is the result of thoughtlessness. You do not become thoughtful through the acceptance of authority of another. Another may point out the way, but you yourself have to discern, you yourself must walk. There is none to save you but yourself.

What does he mean when he asserts that they are more evolved? Is the realization of truth a matter of time and growth, or is it to be experienced when thought-feeling is freed from time and growth? Does this freedom lie along the path of time? Is it not another form of ignorance to think that time will give understanding? Strenuous application brings understanding, and it is a form of slothfulness to think in terms of time and growth. Besides, what is it that evolves? (Greed, however much it may evolve, will remain, perhaps more refined, more subtle, under a different name.) Is there not a continual change, a constant becoming and dying, and an identification that gives a continuity to the 'I am'? The 'I am' is different from yesterday, and thought clings to the 'I am' in fear of the unknown, of being insecure. Does not the highest thought spring from insecurity, from non-identification? Is there a permanent entity that continues? Or is there only that which is real, immortal, which is to be realized only when all grasping has ceased? This craving to be breeds ignorance and sorrow, and time will not free thought from sorrow. Sorrow is to be transcended by understanding its cause in the present, and a postponement, under a dignified name, will not bring happiness. Lust, worldliness, and clinging to personal continuity bring pain, and these must be transcended through awareness and right thinking.

Do you think a plan, a glorified blueprint, can liberate man from his bondages, making him happy? Must he not exert himself to extricate himself from his own self-enclosing limitations and hindrances? He has created his own sorrow, and he alone can transcend his own creation. The means, the technique, to realize the eternal is to comprehend and master himself. Self-knowledge cultivates right thinking, and this knowledge is not to be bought through the worship of another, or through the authority of another, or through any ritual or prayer; nor does it lie in any book or in any church. It is to be discovered and nurtured through self-awareness of your thoughts-feelings. It is a strenuous 'path' to walk, and though there be many signposts, yet each one must discern, with heightened intelligence and watchfulness.

It is the particular fancy of each group to consider itself the most favoured, and by this method it gathers to itself those who are seeking favours and so flatter themselves. It is a trick of the propagandist and unworthy of those seeking truth. For, truth does not belong to any group, to any organization, to any individual; the bigger and more powerful the organization, religious or otherwise, the further is it from reality, and so is it with the group and with the individual. Humility, which comes with candour, with that freedom from pretentiousness, is essential to discover that which is the ultimate solution of all our problems.

Do you not think that to lose oneself in wayside shrines, to decorate and collect around signposts is a waste of time and unworthy of him who seeks truth? Professional mediators, beautifying externalities, and repetition of rituals are vain to him who is seeking the eternal. Earnestness, which is so rare, is dissipated in the things of ignorance, and the mind-heart is made dull. Sensitivity and pliability of mind-heart are lost if there is no understanding of the ways of illusion. Stupidity breaks down the exquisite elasticity of the mind-heart, and it becomes a prey to delusion. Gather that earnestness to dispel ignorance and to

understand and transcend ill will and sensory values. You seem earnest, and let us employ it for right means, which will uncover the right end.

Chapter 40

LONELINESS, WITH ITS PANICKY FEARS

A. L. explained that she was being pursued by a man, with whom she was friendly but with whom she was not in love. She wanted to be amused and friendly, but he took it all seriously, and it had become quite a problem.

In the course of our talk we uncovered many things. We discovered that it was not he but she herself who was the cause.

In our loneliness, with its panicky fears, we want to run away from it, to depend on another, to enrich ourselves with companionship and so on. We are the prime movers and the others pawns in our game. When the pawn turns and demands something in return, we are shocked and grieved. If our own fortress is strong, without a weak spot in it, the battering from the outside is of little consequence. Old age and the peculiar tendencies that arise with it must be understood and 'corrected' while we are still capable of detached and tolerant self-observation and study. These fears must be observed and understood now, and our energies must be directed not merely against the outward pressures and demands, for which we are responsible, but to comprehend ourselves, our loneliness, fears, demands, and frailties. Loneliness is not to be covered up by any means; even if you cover it up, it is still there, waiting to show itself again. There is no escape from it save in understanding its cause and going beyond and above it. Grasping, craving, accumulating are in their very nature empty, and however little you yield to craving, the more, like a child, it grows. Craving is inexhaustible for in itself it is negative, though its actions appear to be positive. By this positiveness we are deceived, and so craving grows and multiplies. If through self-awareness we observe our own craving, we shall soon discover its emptiness and, also, at the same time the rich quietness of understanding comes into being. It is this understanding that dispels loneliness and fear. This understanding brings its own richness and joy.

Relationship is painful, and to live alone demands high intelligence. Relationship is a self-revealing process, which is almost never pleasant, and so there is conflict, not only in oneself but with the other. This tension in relationship is as a mirror in which each is being disclosed. This exposure is painful, and the thoughtful neither repulse it nor welcome it, but consider the cause of friction and pain. The thoughtless try to escape into a relationship that is satisfactory and unrevealing.

There is no such thing as living alone, for all living is a relationship, but to live alone without direct relationship demands swifter and greater awareness for self-discovery. A lone existence, without this keen and flowing awareness, strengthens the already dominant tendencies, thus causing imbalance, distortion. It is this that one is afraid of: the set and peculiar habits of thought-feelings that come with age. It is now that one has to become aware of them and, by

understanding them, make away with them. Inward riches alone bring peace and joy.

Chapter 41

NATIONALISM, A POISON

R. J. said he was working in politics to free his country from terrible, murderous oppression. Though he was religiously inclined and had studied theology, he had given up all that, for the need of his country was greater. He was not a mere politician, but his work lay in the field of education. He had no time for meditation, he said, as he was working night and day for the liberation of his country. Was it not important to first alter the environment, the condition, so as to help man find the inner? And that was the reason a whole State was committed to the amelioration of the condition.

With the enrichment, the spread of sensate values, will there be the inner richness of peace and joy? Will the multiplication of things bring creative happiness? Will worldly possessions free thought-feeling from its bondages and pain? By emphasizing the material, will we not create disasters, ruthless brutality, appalling misery, as it is happening now?

The outer never conquers the inner; it may modify it, but it is the inner—greed, passion, the craving for power—that overcomes the outer. In freeing thought-feeling from sensuality, worldliness, personal fame, and immortality, there is found an inner richness, an indestructible happiness, an immortality that is not personal continuation. It is this imperishable richness which will bring order, clarity to this world. This does not mean that we must not alter fundamentally the conditions of man, but that is not an end in itself. The change of environment, the change of the appalling conditions will not necessarily produce that inward richness in which alone there is creative ecstasy; but in the cultivation of this inner freedom from lust, ill will, ignorance, there is a definite and fundamental change in the outward condition. The more there is a yielding to greed, the more it grows; and however much sensate values may be changed for higher sensate values, the action of greed will bring about conflict, confusion, and sorrow. But in transcending greed—because of which there is inward richness—there will be no necessity for psychological release through competition, racial antagonism, social and national prestige, through wars and the inanities of distractions. Intelligence is the capacity to give emphasis to that which is of primary importance. Man does not live by bread alone.

Politics is concerned with the rearrangement of sensate values, and so politics, though helping to focus thought, will never bring order, clarity, and happiness to man. As thought is focused in the wrong direction, it becomes a distraction with all its absurdities and fearful stupidities. Then commercialism and country become of the highest importance, for they represent power, of the individual as well as of the group; and to maintain this power, the country, the flag is worshipped, for which man destroys man. As long as power and sensual value dominate thought, people will be against people, country against country, ideologies against ideologies. As long as there is power, there will be oppression,

there will be wars, there will be chaos. As long as one is working for one's country, one is breeding hatred, competition, and future wars. Every politician, of whatever colour, says he is working for the good, for the glory of his country, and in that very fact lies the seed of confusion and misery. Nationalism is self-glory through the country, through the race, through the group, and it is a destructive poison. The thoughtful avoid it as a disease. The worship of the part prevents the understanding of the whole; there will be oppression, cruelty, and wars so long as the part dominates the whole.

Meditation is the highest form of thinking-feeling, and without that how can there be education? Then education becomes secular and technical and therefore separative and tyrannical. Because of this so-called education, the world at present is in this appalling state. Should not the thoughtful man, by first liberating himself from those causes that create ignorance, try to help to educate those who are confused and in sorrow? Otherwise, the learned person becomes a tool in the hands of the oppressor.

The larger a nation and its power, the more brutal and tyrannical it is; the larger an organization, religious or otherwise, the greater is its power to do harm.

There is a possibility of deeply transforming ourselves, but this possibility is very remote if we are concerned with the change of others. We must begin with ourselves first, not with our country or with our neighbours and institutions. What we are the world is.

Chapter 42

THE DULL AND THE SENSITIVE AREAS

M. L. K. explained that he found himself becoming more and more dead. His interests were waning, business and politics had become empty shells, pleasures were withering, and the family had become a matter of routine. He was weary and despondent and was fed up with all religious institutions and sects. He was not obliged to earn a livelihood, for he had a little and his family was taken care of. He wanted to talk the matter over.

So we talked, and he explained more of his life. In the course of our conversation, we discovered that he was not wholly dead, but that there were one or two areas not entirely dull. It is in vivifying these areas that sensitiveness, keenness will spread to the entire surface of the mind. The mind is like a sensitive plate, and it is 'useful' only when the whole of it is sensitive and responsive. As he was aware, there were one or two areas that were still capable of vivifying, and in bringing these to greater intensity the dull areas will begin to be illumined. So our problem is not how to revive the dull, but rather how to heighten the sensitivity of those regions that are not entirely dead. It is important to realize this. To directly attack the dead spaces of the mind may appear to be a positive approach, but it really is a wastage of energy, for the dull must be approached indirectly, negatively. The more you work directly upon the dull, the more it becomes confused and dense. The more you try to understand without deviation the past, the more it becomes bewildering and disturbing, but if you approach it through the present, then it yields its meaning. Negative or oblique approach yields understanding.

Similarly, through intensifying and deepening that which is already sensitive, the other areas which are dense begin to be vivified. So our problem then is how to stimulate and widen the area that is not dull—by becoming aware of it and so thinking it out, feeling it out as extensively and profoundly as possible. An event happens, and we give one or two interpretations to it and stick to those. We want to go through only one gate of a lovely garden, becoming blind to its loveliness and beauty, for it is our determined fancy to go through that particular gate; there may be others, but we are obstinate. This obstinacy breeds dullness, expanding and withering. An event has many interpretations, and the more of them you try to discover, the greater the expansion of the mind.

By becoming aware of that area of thought-feeling which is somewhat sensitive, alive, that very awareness brings illuminating and spreading responsiveness. The persistency of awareness, before and after, is essential; casual and intermittent awareness will not bring clarity and understanding.

Chapter 43

HOW THE MIND REPRODUCES ITSELF

S. R. said she found it extremely difficult to combat distractions. These distractions made the mind so petty, so trivial that she wanted to be free from them. There seemed to be so many of them and were confusing, and the more she battled with them the more distractions seemed to arise. She could not find a way out of it.

Was she putting the problem correctly? Do the distractions make the mind petty and trivial, or does the mind being petty and trivial become distracted?

What the mind is the distractions are. If the mind is petty, small, what is the good of fighting its distractions? The more you struggle against them, the more the mind reproduces itself, and so the problem becomes insoluble. A problem cannot be solved on its own plane.

The mind being petty, narrow becomes distracted by inanities. So the problem is not the distractions but how to deepen and widen the mind. Mere knowledge becomes an addiction, another, perhaps a subtler, form of distraction; reading and acquiring information are also distractions. By these methods you may widen and deepen the superficial layers of the mind, but these methods themselves will become distractions on which the mind depends. Dependence and attachment are distractions. These distractions may be noble or trivial, but they help to draw thought away from the central problem—the self, with its sorrows, fears, conflicts, passing joys. These relieving occupations gradually dull the mind, making it petty, narrow, obstinate. Outward applications to sharpen and deepen the mind help, but they can never go very far, as these applications become the means of dependence and attachment. Only through self-awareness, and the revealing self-knowledge it brings, can the mind escape from its own bondages and limitations. Self-knowledge nurtures right thinking.

Similarly with attachment. To fight attachment is vain. Attachment is merely a symptom—pleasurable only as long as its real burden is not perceived—whose cause lies much deeper. You may overcome the attachment for another, for in it there has been pain, and it is pain that is ‘freeing’ you, driving you away from that particular attachment, but soon another attachment grows.

Pain does not give understanding; it is but a warning. Attachment arises out of multiple causes: loneliness, the strength and the power that it yields, fear, and what we call love. In the love of another we feel strangely fortified, creative, joyous, and the other becomes necessary for our happiness, and dependence and attachment grow. It is this dependence and attachment, with its fears, jealousies, suspicions, and disappointments, that ultimately destroy love. Love itself has lost its meaning, and the idea, the person has taken its place.

To fight against attachment is not to understand its cause. To understand it, first stop battling against it and, so being calm, become aware of the significance, the inward nature and implication of attachment. Let that awareness flower and

bring out the hidden causes. Awareness will not flower if you are dishonest and decisive in your thought-feeling. Mere decision puts an end to the discovery of the contents of the subconscious, which alone frees thought-feeling from dependence, attachment.

Through self-awareness, which brings self-knowledge and right thinking, the mind-heart is deepened and widened. This self-awareness, with its self-knowledge and right thinking, flows into deeper and wider pools of meditation.

Chapter 44

ON SMOKING AND THE MUCH LARGER PROBLEM

M. N. described his difficulty in giving up smoking. He had tried several ways to break with the habit, but it persisted. He had given it up at one time after a great struggle, but it returned with greater craving for it.

What is the cause of his desire to give up smoking? Is it that he thinks smoking is unspiritual, unethical, or is it affecting his health, or is it the money that it involves? If he wants to give up because of another reason, not for the habit itself, then mere substitution has its own converging difficulties, and substitution is a postponement of the main problem. And when attention is drawn away from the substitution, then the original problem comes to the surface again. The desire for substitutes is subtle, but when one recognizes its fallacy and is aware of it, it will lose its appeal. One can then grapple with the problem itself. The conflict that arises between the desire to give up and the habit of smoking, and the energy spent in battling, become utterly useless, for instead of the problem itself you have now another added problem—that of giving it up. So thought gets worn out in this struggle between these two problems, and the habit of smoking continues.

If you do not condemn it but consider why you smoke, how the habit comes into being, then you will be dealing with a problem much larger than smoking—habit and thoughtlessness. In comprehending the larger, the lesser fades away. Thoughtlessness breeds habit, to which one becomes a slave. Let's see how this habit of smoking grows. As a boy, one experiments with smoking as the other boys are smoking; it is the thing to do even though it makes one sick. Presently, the body getting used to the poison, smoking becomes a pleasurable sensation. It also bridges that shy, nervous state before companionship is established; it gives something to do for one's hands; everybody smokes, and one does not want to be a crank. And there is the constant reminder of the advertisements and so on. All these indicate thoughtlessness, and thoughtlessness breeds habits, from which it is difficult to disentangle.

So the problem is thoughtlessness with its corroding habits. By becoming aware of thoughtlessness in one direction, you are soon aware of it in many other directions. Through becoming aware that you are thoughtless, there is already thoughtfulness which, through constant self-awareness, becomes widened and deepened. In this process you will see that the automatic demand and response of smoking diminishes and fades away, for your thoughtful attention is becoming more and more comprehensively aware, and habits wither in the flame of awareness.

So habit is not to be overcome by the substitution of another habit. All substitutions tend to encourage thoughtlessness. The more you fight thoughtlessness the more it conquers—like all evil. But by becoming aware of it,

watching its ways and expressions, the intensity of thoughtfulness, of awareness is awakened, and its clarity dispels the confused darkness.

Chapter 45

THE PROFESSION OF ACTING

T. Y., a soldier, a young man, explained that a friend of his had been here, and he would like to talk over something that was important to him. He said he wanted to help people in a true way, and he felt he could do this best through the theatre, for he had a talent for acting, to which his family objected.

We talked for some time, and he told us of his life. He was very alert and keen and discontented. He said the whole show was rotten, and he felt he must help.

To help another, one must understand, and understanding must begin with oneself. Self-knowledge must be the first step in the helping of others. Was he not really interested first in helping others, not in the theatre as a profession but as a means for his interest? So acting was of secondary importance to which he should not be completely bound; being a soldier, there was no immediate necessity for a decision.

If he really wanted to 'help' people in a fundamental manner, was the theatre the best means to do so? Did not people go mostly to be entertained, to be amused and not to be serious? For the few that were serious, was the theatre the best means to attract them?

But he explained that he would have nothing to do with organized religion and that he would not even like to talk about it.

Besides, what effect did acting have upon the actor? The better he was, was there not a danger of his becoming more egocentric, always playing a part even in private life, which certainly was detrimental to self-knowledge and understanding? Did it not inflame ambition, conceit, and utter superficiality? In such circumstances, how could there be true seriousness?

Before he made up his mind, would it not be better to consider if he may not have a dormant faculty other than acting, better for his intentions? If he determined upon the theatre, then the discovery perhaps of another faculty would not be possible, but if he were open, deeply inquiring, then he would know. In that deep inquiry, he would find other factors that were vaguely stirring at present which, upon examination, might alter the course of his present thoughts. The discontent, which might be canalized and fixed in the theatre, must be allowed to develop, and out of it would come fullness and that which every man seeks.

Chapter 46

ON HOMOSEXUALITY

S. R. was a young man, hesitant and confused, and after some talk about the stupidities of war he said he was a homosexual. He was struggling against it, condemning it as a sin, for his priests told him so; condemning it as some terrible evil and shame, for his family considered it so. He was depressed and confused, and what was he to do?

The conflict between two opposing desires, to give up and to be, must be first thoroughly understood. This conflict did not produce the desired results, as he himself acknowledged, and therefore it was a waste of time and energy. When the urge was upon him, he accepted it and later denied it; this denial and acceptance only created mental and emotional exhaustion and the lack of responsiveness, leading to lack of self-confidence, and dullness. This conflict did not help him to understand the problem itself and only created its opposite, with its condemnatory attitude; so he had two problems instead of one.

To understand any problem you must give your whole, undivided attention to it. When you accept it or condemn it, you are not giving your full, complete attention to it; your thought-feeling is broken up, and so it is incapable of understanding the problem. In accepting a fact no problem can arise, but when you deny it, then there is an exhausting conflict. If one accepts one is a liar and if one is interested in that fact, then one can deal with it, but if one denies it or condemns it, then one brings in further useless and confusing issues. This he was doing. So he must become aware of dragging in a secondary issue and so drop it.

He said he could not stop condemning it, and he did not know why he was doing it.

Was he not condemning because it acted as a brake on his desire? Without condemning, was he not afraid that he might get worse? If he didn't condemn, he might accept it and live with it. He was driven by fear to condemn it.

He asked whether then I approved of his accepting it.

Was he asking because he could then continue with his war of life, with my approval?

Then, he replied, he must condemn it.

Condemnation or acceptance does not help him to solve the problem he is faced with. It is this condemnation, and the desire to accept, that he must thoroughly and deeply understand. Condemnation and its opposite prevent the flow of understanding, and it is understanding that is going to solve his problem. This flowering of understanding is denied if he judges. If he would understand another, he must not judge him by his race, colour, name, and so on; he must put aside his prejudices and regard him with kindly and open consideration. Similarly, if he would understand his problem, he must cease judging it or welcoming it, and that is precisely where his difficulty lies. To condemn is easy,

and to accept is easier, but neither creates understanding. In the flame of understanding, his problem will be consumed.

So he must become aware of his attitude of condemnation and try to discover why he has nurtured it. By calling it a name, he has not and cannot solve his problem. In understanding this attitude of condemnation and its opposite, he will be grappling with a much bigger question which, as he comprehends, will develop right thinking, and then he will know what is the right action he should take with regard to his problem. Even if he is able to solve his problem, there will still be the greater—that of right thinking and right acting—but if he tries to understand the greater, the lesser will be included in it. The solution of a problem on its own plane leaves thought-feeling small, petty, and confused; but in becoming aware of the greater issues involved in it, there is clarity and heightened comprehension.

Fear of what others think and say may act as a deterrent, but the problem still remains. Only with the understanding which comes with undivided interest and attention can the problem be solved and transcended. To give this undivided interest and attention to the problem is far more difficult than the problem itself. The lesser disappears in the greater issues.

Chapter 47

THE FLOW OF SELF-AWARENESS INTO POOLS OF MEDITATION

S. L. explained that he used to belong to certain institutions in which there were confessions, or sharing as it was also called. He had left them not because of this but for their pettiness and other reasons. He had found confession to be helpful at certain times, but was there not another means of deriving benefit than by confessing to a priest, to a group, or by going to a psychoanalyst? He felt there must be, and for that reason he had come to talk things over.

One must be ever watchful not to waste mental-emotional expansive elasticity on wasteful ends. We turn to others for help in our confusion and sorrow. If there is no understanding, this must inevitably become a dependence, with all its pains. This understanding comes not through others but by developing self-awareness—that awareness in which every thought-feeling is reflected as in a mirror. This reflection is distorted when there is condemnation or acceptance, when there is judgement of the thing perceived. Such judgement prevents the flow of deeper and wider comprehension.

In self-awareness there is no need for confession, for self-awareness creates the mirror in which all things are reflected without distortion, for every thought-feeling is thrown, as it were, on the screen of awareness to be observed, studied, and understood. But this flow of understanding is denied when there is condemnation or acceptance, judgement or identification. The more the screen is watched and understood, not as a duty or as an enforced practice, but when pain and sorrow create that insatiable interest which brings its own discipline, the greater is the intensity of awareness and heightened understanding.

This understanding is not dependent on anyone, on any outside authority or on any inner resolution, but on the constant flow of self-awareness. Through dependence thought becomes a slave, and slavish thought can be organized and used, and thus institutionalism grows, and thinking begins and ends in collectivism, which prevents the creative discovery of reality.

To be aware of every thought and feeling and to follow it out is extremely difficult. Our mind is revolving too fast with too many thoughts and feelings; it is scattered and wasteful. To merely control the speed of the mind by putting on the brake of one thought called concentration becomes a wasteful pursuit, for thought is more concerned with putting on the brake, in not allowing the mind to scatter. In that way you cannot go far. This must be understood from the very beginning—that a thought to which a brake is applied ceases to flow, ceases to bring understanding. And since thought is occupied with controlling the wandering thoughts-feelings, the mind soon wearies, and concentration becomes a series of compulsions, in which there is no understanding whatsoever. This must be thoroughly grasped.

To be aware of every thought-feeling, it is necessary that the mind itself should realize that to think out and feel out every thought-feeling, it must work with less scattered speed. You can follow a thing if it moves slowly; a rapid machine must be made to go slow in order to study it. Similarly, thoughts-feelings can be studied and understood if the mind is capable of producing slowly; when it has learnt this capacity, it can increase to a high velocity, which makes it extremely calm. A fan of several blades revolving at high speed appears as one solid blade. Our difficulty is to make the mind revolve slowly so that each thought-feeling can be followed and understood. What is deeply and thoroughly understood will not repeat itself.

Write down every thought-feeling, not the specially chosen thoughts-feelings, at a determined and happy moment, for then the mind is thinking only what is desired. Write down every thought-feeling, the trivial, the stupid and the good, say, when you get up in the morning. You cannot write down everything as you are thinking too many things, but write down as many as you can, not a selection. You have to do other things, your attention is given elsewhere. After you have attempted several times to write down, you will notice that though you have to pay attention to other things, your subconscious is taking note of your inward thoughts-feelings, for when you begin to write again, these thoughts-feelings will come out. Look over what you have written, without condemnation or justification, acceptance, judgement or identification, which is an extremely difficult thing to do. You will find that instinctively you are condemning or justifying, and this will prevent the flow of understanding of the deeper significance of what you have written down. Don't write down as though it were a duty, but if you would understand you must be aware of what you think-feel; it is interest and not a painful duty.

If you persist in writing down for some time and try to think out, feel out each thought-feeling, you will find that you can, without other thoughts-feelings coming in. So there is awakened self-awareness, from which there arises self-knowledge and right thinking. Of course, one need not write down if one is sensitive, responsive to, aware of, every thought-feeling. Soon you will find what thoughts-feelings to pursue and what not to, and those that are not soon wither away and do not come back.

Through this constant process of self-awareness, confession becomes unnecessary, for awareness acts as a tolerant and understanding corrective, and the dependence on another becomes foolish and unnecessary. You will also find that from this process there is a deeper and more sensitive candour; also you are discovering the inner springs of your thoughts-feelings. That very discovery brings clarity and understanding, and so the conflict between the many layers of consciousness diminishes. Also, there is from this process an extensional, not narrowing, concentration. From this self-awareness there comes self-knowledge and right thinking. The flow of self-awareness enters into deep, quiet pools of meditation.

Chapter 48

WHEN YOUR INNER LIGHT GOES OUT

C. A. said, in great sorrow, that she had been able to bear the many trials of her life with comparative ease, for she has had from childhood an abiding inner light. Only the other day, this light suddenly went out—a thing which had never happened before. A sudden loneliness, a devastating emptiness had descended on her, so frightening that for several days she did not know what she was doing; it was becoming unbearable. She said she must have done something, allowed herself to be negative, let in ugly things into her mind. Perhaps she had been too active and wasteful, she has had so much to do. Why should it leave her? How could she get it back?

In our childhood and youth we often have with us this extraordinary luminosity, a song in the heart that follows us through life, but with some it soon fades away. It comes uninvited, it is with us simply. We take it for granted, and unknowingly we exist around it. Unless we do something deliberately vicious and lose ourselves in some utterly foolish thing, it continues with us benignly, uninterfering but ever there. But as we grow in our weariness, in our incomprehension, in our worldliness, we become dependent on it, we grasp it, we treasure it, we begin to use it. Then one day it leaves, and as it came it leaves without asking our permission. We are left with an agonizing emptiness, with a devastating loneliness, and we weep for the thing that is lost.

Then memory wakes up and finds ways and means to resuscitate it. Why was it lost? What have I done to lose it? What must I do to gain it? What hope is there? Back and forth thought wanders, in circles, in despair and in hope, trying every means to recapture it, like a mother with her dead child.

Is she not doing the same, doing her very best to recapture it, by giving herself explanations, justifications, by trying to find out the causes for its disappearance? This whirl of the mind is preventing her from understanding her real situation. She can never recapture it, for it is not a thing of the mind, and however pleasant and inspiring its continued experience was, now it is over.

If she does not think it harsh, she ought to be strangely thankful, for this is an awakening. Before, she accepted it, lived with it, and went along with the usual trials of life. But now she has had a rude awakening, the shock of deep loneliness, emptiness, without anything to lean on. She ought to thank heaven for this. In this highly susceptible state, she ought to be keenly alert, so as not to get lost in dome secondary issues, in some beliefs, explanations, substitutions, for the search for comfort will utterly destroy understanding. This search for comfort is exceedingly subtle, its ways are deceitful, surreptitious, and it leads nowhere except to decay and dullness. If she does not seek dull comfort, then now is the beginning of true resurrection. Completely denuded, without any sustaining force, she can, if she will, begin to dig deep down within herself, understanding the impediments, the blockages. The more she becomes aware, the greater and

wider her capacity to dig, to understand. Through self-knowledge lies wisdom and the imperishable.

Chapter 49

BECOME AWARE OF THE PAST THROUGH THE PRESENT

T. R., a soldier, explained that he had rabbinical blood in him, and youthfully and enthusiastically he had joined the army like so many of his friends. He had worked, polished, and striven eagerly, marched and practised enthusiastically. A friend of his had shown him some published talks, and though he did not know why, he was compelled to come. He had been forced to leave college to enlist, and he had various kinds of ambitions, but probably he would have become an architect, a creative artist of some kind. He was quite young, in his early twenties. He was quick and very responsive.

After one or two sentences, one quickly gathered that he was very disturbed inwardly; he himself was hardly aware of it. Outwardly he appeared to be calm and easygoing, but was deeply ill at ease. He made one or two remarks which conveyed his unexpressed and unconscious anxiety. He talked about a series of repeating nightmares. He was not particularly afraid of being killed, nor had he the gangplank fever, which some had when they were going to be sent to the front. Only, he added in passing, that it seemed a pity to get killed, for he felt that he would have made a very good architect or some kind of a really creative artist. He found release through drink and other forms. He was not cynical as yet but, he added, he could see himself becoming one.

Did he want to talk seriously, to go more deeply into what he had been telling? Of course, he replied; and for that reason he must have come. Perhaps in going into all this more deeply, he might find himself in an extremely difficult position. He said he had been feeling this all along, vaguely of course, but he felt something inwardly urging him and perhaps, he added, his nightmares might have something to do with it all.

He can wipe out the past only by understanding it; otherwise it repeats itself, just as an unfinished experience will repeat itself over and over again; its memory continues, causing conflict and disturbance. He cannot brush aside his past; he must become aware of it through the present, not as a thing of the past to be dragged into the present and examined; but in trying to understand the present, its relation to the past is found. Thus the past is to be studied through the present.

His present is his environment both inwardly and outwardly; he must become aware of it, thus analysing it and understanding it. This self-awareness will inevitably bring about discontent. If this discontent is already smouldering, it will be inflamed. There will be no peace till the causes of discontent are dissolved; he will find greater difficulties, not less. Through this self-awareness, his rabbinical instincts and prejudices, which have lain dormant, will be awakened, which is already beginning. He must understand them, not by accepting or rejecting them but by kindly and tolerantly observing them, their ways and their intentions. This rabbinical past with its religious background will not leave him in peace, however much he may try to suppress it. The present and the past will

increasingly be in conflict. Unless he really understands it, once he has awakened it, it will naturally produce greater and greater disturbances. The outward compulsion and regimentation which one thoughtlessly and perhaps eagerly accepts must come into conflict with the inner and deeper traditions and patterns. Merely accepting or denying one or the other does not bring intelligence or peace to the mind. Both the inner and the outer conditioning must be thought out, felt out, and deeply understood; otherwise, they will be causes of disturbance in different forms, nightmares, and so on. Mere revolt against the present and so against the past can bring about the highest degree of intelligence only when he understands the process by which thought-feeling conforms itself, limits itself, creating hindrance for itself. Greed, lust, and fame are the causes of this self-enclosing process; and through self-awareness, which nurtures self-knowledge and right thinking, thought-feeling liberates itself from them.

Discontent finds insensibility in self-expression, but self-expression is not creativeness. Most people are lost in seeking self-expression, and they will find it according to the quality of discontent. But it leads nowhere, only perhaps to greater misery for themselves and so for others, for the world. Self-expression is the expansiveness of self-limitation, and in that there is no happiness. Creativeness comes into being when the craving of the self is understood, which naturally dissolves it. The noise of the self prevents the stillness of truth.

We create a society, an environment, from which we must find a release. Every form of sensuality, entertainment, distraction, and organized religion with its rituals become a means of approved and honoured escape. These distractions and escapes become more and more important and necessary to a society whose values are sensate. Instead of fundamentally altering these values, finer and better distractions and escapes are created, which result in ruthlessness, catastrophes, wars. The society, the environment, is what we have made it to be. We are responsible for what it is, without us it has no existence; we cannot blame it. It does not wholly make us; we give it power, and it runs away with us. It then becomes the master and we the slaves. As long as the State, the society, the environment is the moulding, shaping factor of man, then man becomes a slave, a machine. From its mechanical and dictated action man must and does find a release, an escape, and so he is caught in a vicious circle. To break through this vicious circle, he must become self-aware and responsible. The State, the society cannot save him. He alone can save himself, not by isolating himself but through freeing himself from those factors that bind him: sensuality, worldliness, personal fame, and immortality.

In freeing himself from these, there will be nurtured a thought-feeling that is deathless. It is this thought-feeling that must be discovered. It lies in himself, not in any orthodoxy, not in rituals, not in churches or synagogues, but in himself. To discover it, there must be strenuous earnestness and pliability. It is a journey where the reward lies in the very beginning.

THE SEEDS OF CORRUPTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

M. O. said she was the head of a rapidly growing organization; it may be called, she said, a spiritual organization, though it used in a limited manner the technique of worldly organization. She had come, she continued, to ask if it was right for her to be the head of it, for she had felt a dangerous craving for power and domination in increasing measure, and yet her people wanted her to go on with acting as the head of the organization. If she gave it up it might—and she was pretty sure it would—fall into hands that would use the organization for selfish ends. She would herself have to decide what she was going to do, but she would like to talk the matter over.

Large, organized groups have in themselves the seeds of corruption. They become the means of power to be used by the heads or by each individual who feels the power of the organization which gratifies him, sharing in it according to his capacity. This sharing of power helps to maintain the organizations, whether spiritual or temporal, and it further strengthens narrowness of thought, encouraging exclusiveness and intolerance. The bigger the organization, spiritual or worldly, the more tyrannical and exploiting it becomes.

The so-called spiritual organizations lose their intention when they become mechanical organizations for propagating ideas and theories. Why should anyone join a group, large or small, to be told or to read about theories? One joins because it is advantageous, one may get something out of it. Acquisitiveness is devious and subtle. Why should there be large, powerful spiritual organizations, with properties and investments, to discover reality, which can be uncovered only through individual awareness and right effort? Organizations become in themselves more important—how many members they have, the concern over dues, and so on—and the search for the real becomes lost in their noisy meetings. Organizations become fixed, rigid as the thoughts of those who belong to them. Life is a constant change, a continual becoming, a revolution, and an organization can never be pliable, and so it stands in the way of change. It becomes reactionary to protect itself. The search for truth is individual, not congregational. To communicate with the real, there must be aloneness, not isolation but the freedom from all influence and opinion. Organization of thought must inevitably become a hindrance to thought.

As she herself was aware, the greed for power is almost inexhaustible in an organization. This greed is covered over by all kinds of sweet and official-sounding words, but the canker of avariciousness, pride, and antagonism is nourished, shared, and encouraged. From this grows conflict, intolerance, sectarianism, and other ugly manifestations.

Would it not be wiser to have small groups, say twenty or twenty-five, informal, without dues and membership, meeting where it is convenient, to discuss gently the approach to reality? To prevent the group from becoming

exclusive, each one of the small groups would encourage and perhaps join another small group; thus it would be extensive, not narrow and parochial.

To climb high, one must begin low. Perhaps, out of this small beginning, one may help to create a more sane and happy world.

We saw her again several times, and she said she was beginning to disentangle herself from her greed for power and to encourage small and independent groups.

Chapter 51

TO LIVE ALONE OR IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIP?

R. L. said hesitantly that he had come to talk over a very personal matter and hoped that I didn't mind. He found difficulty talking about himself and his problem, so we talked of general matters and after a while lapsed into silence. Presently he began slowly, telling us of his life and his difficulties. He explained that he had been married twice before, and his third marriage was going on the rocks, and there might be a third divorce. He was deeply chagrined, for he felt it was his fault, but he did not know where the cause of his misfortunes lay. If he did not find the cause he would, he thought, be ever in difficulty in all relationships. He did not want a divorce, but somehow it was going in that direction as the two previous marriages.

To live alone demands a high degree of intelligence. It demands keen, alert watchfulness, a deep awareness and understanding to avoid the slow rigidity of the mind-heart, the self-enclosing process of those peculiar tendencies which make for inward poverty and fruitless sorrow. To live alone is very difficult, needing quick pliability and adjustment and the wisdom of self-knowledge. There is none to act as a revealing mirror; in the walls of isolation there is no reflection, but they give back, in echo, the voice of the self. It is harder, more strenuous to live alone; there are greater pitfalls in it than in the life of constant close relationship.

Relationship is conflict, pain, with passing joys, domination, and yielding. It is a thing to be understood, not to be shaped and directed but to be understood, not inclusive but expanding. To exist is to be related, and existence is painful. We want to avoid this pain by any means, but if we understand it, there is a possibility of transcending it. Is not relationship a process of self-discovery? You may not like what is being shown, and the thoughtful man considers it, does not avoid it, does not cover it up. Most of us dislike and resent being shown up as we are, and as the very nature of relationship is to expose, it inevitably brings pain and discomfort. We try to avoid this painful exposure, and when it gets too threatening and painful, we change our relationship. We seek comfort in relationship, which is non-exposure; we do not want to discover ourselves. All living is a tension, and it is in tension that the true note comes. We want relationship to be peaceful, to dull us, to anaesthetize us to face our daily occupations, which are uncreative, boring, and useless. In relationship we crave to be safe, secure, in which there is no understanding, no love.

R. L. replied that he wanted peace, not conflict, of which he had enough outside the family. His business world was competitive—get on or get out—each one trying to put over something, and it was one constant struggle not to go under. He wanted quiet and happiness in his intimate relationships.

Perhaps wrong occupation was creating unnecessary struggle and worry from which he tried to escape into a peaceful relationship. He did not want a

relationship with its tensions and frictions, demanding adjustment and pliability, but rather an easy and drugged existence at home, to which his wife might object. If both the wife and the husband wanted to escape from the reality of relationship, then perhaps existence at home could be made pleasant and enjoyable, but that did not solve anything. Either he had to change his profession, earning a livelihood through right means, which he would find if he was willing to put aside his acquisitiveness and the desire for power. Or if he was not capable of it, his profession would take up all his thought energy, and he would have no time and thought to consider the deeper implications of relationship.

All existence is relationship, and relationship is the way of self-knowledge and the release from sorrow. If he does not want to understand the meaning of relationship, then he must pay the price for it. There is no escape from sorrow; if he does, it will soon catch him up.

In relationship the way of the self is disclosed, to be studied, understood, and transcended. Without transcending the self, there will always be ignorance and suffering. To understand, there must be patience, not impetuous conclusions but thoughtful suspension of judgement. Until he understands the full meaning of relationship, merely to establish a new relationship is to continue suffering under different circumstances. That which is not understood and completed will repeat itself again and again till it is; there is no escape from this, do what you will.

He looked puzzled and worried when he left, but in spite of that there was a faint glimmer of understanding. Sometime later he came again; he said he was changing his means of livelihood after considerable difficulty and trouble at home, for he would earn much less, sufficient for their needs. Also, he explained that he was beginning to understand what we meant by relationship, and he hoped something would come out of it. He added that he was taking his life seriously and, curiously enough, though he did not talk about it, on his previous visit, he had taken it into his head to stop drinking—in which he was succeeding.

Chapter 52

AREN'T YOU WASTING YOUR LIFE?

A. B. explained that he found himself going from one attachment to another, and each time, according to the person, the pattern somewhat varied, but in essentials it was the same—the same confusion and pain, the same waste of energy, and futility. He did not know how to get out of this useless rut of attachment.

We asked him whether he did not waste his life, to which he readily agreed. Then why was he bothered by the greater wastage in attachment? If his whole life was a waste, why was he concerned if he wasted more of his life in the worry, confusion, and pain of attachment? Was he wasting his life, or was it that his interest, which was dormant, had found no worthwhile outlet?

He said he had always felt that there was in him a latent interest which somehow had never been roused. It was smouldering, but it had never burst into a flame. Politics, business, family, and religion had no interest for him for, he said, they led nowhere. He said he was not cynical, but somehow the world and its ways had never greatly roused him or his buried interest. Yet this constant attachment, which was not the flame of love, had bothered him, and he wanted to get over it.

Was it not important to find out why his interest had not been roused, why he had allowed it to remain dormant? Perhaps if he understood it, he might solve his problem of attachment. Was he waiting for circumstances to rouse his interest? Was he hoping that with the help of another he would pierce through the fog of inertia? Can another help? Apparently he had been looking, consciously or unconsciously, for an outside factor to awaken this interest. Seeing the utter uselessness of his life and being deeply shocked by it, perhaps he was looking to another, to circumstances to pull him out of his fog of laziness. How can anyone rouse his interest for him? Or must he do it himself? Seeing that no one or no circumstance has so far roused his vital interest, must he not apply himself to it? Why did he not apply himself? Was he afraid? Afraid that if he did, his present way of life and thought might have to be changed?

No, he replied, that didn't bother him; he would be glad to have an inward revolution and an outer change. No, he felt that was not the reason why he was afraid. He admitted he was afraid, but he did not know of anything definite that caused him fear. He had thought about this fear, but he was not able to trace the cause of it.

If he could rouse his vital interest, then his life would not be wasted, and his greater wastage—attachment—would also cease. A greater and more important problem—interest—would supersede the lesser—attachment. In understanding the wastefulness of his life, he would come upon a much bigger issue, which would then solve the lesser.

So why was he afraid and of what? Was it lack of self-confidence?

‘Yes, that was it’, he said, ‘and how foolish of me not to have discovered that for myself.’

If you know how to drive a motor car, there is no fear, but if you are not familiar with the gears, with the brake, and so on, you will be afraid to drive. Of that which you know there is no fear; fear comes into being when there is ignorance. Since you are ignorant of yourself, there is lack of confidence, there is fear.

With self-knowledge fear disappears. Lack of self-confidence makes you dependent, attached, with all its vexations. There is no escape from it save in self-knowledge. The more you are aware of yourself, the more you will discover the impediments that block your vital interest and waste your life.

‘Do you mean that through self-knowledge my real interest will be discovered and there will be a meaning to existence?’ he asked.

Self-knowledge is extremely difficult, and if you give your time and patience to discover what is hidden, then there comes the true and ultimate interest, which transcends all temporary attractions. Through constant awareness of every thought-feeling, in thinking it out, feeling it out, suspending your judgement, withholding your choice—choice and judgement prevent the full flowering of thought-feeling—there comes an understanding of the many layers of consciousness. Through this choiceless awareness, craving, the cause of the self, of ignorance and sorrow and time, is transcended. It is an arduous task. Life will then have a meaning, for in it is discovered creation itself.

Chapter 53

REPETITIVE, TRIVIAL, UNFINISHED THOUGHTS

B. C. said she found in her meditation certain thoughts constantly repeating themselves. She had, she thought, examined them, as we had suggested; but in spite of that, they returned with a peculiar persistency. They were so trivial, and yet she could not shake herself free from them.

Self-awareness flows into deep and extensive pools of meditation. Every thought-feeling, however trivial, has a significance, and till she discovers it, it will continue to repeat itself. The trivial thoughts may come out of interest or habit or laziness. If they come out of interest, then they must be traced out, revalued, and thereby they will lose their grip on the mind. If they come out of habit, she must examine the cause of habit—thoughtlessness—in all its multiple expressions, thus awakening thought. If they come out of laziness, then she must become aware of laziness. Laziness of which there is no awareness is indeed laziness, but to be aware of laziness is the beginning of activity.

She said that as I had suggested these possibilities in the talks, she had earnestly examined these trivial thoughts to see if they belonged to any of these categories, but though she had spent some time over these thoughts, yet they invariably returned and were so distracting.

She told me she was the mother of three young children—a typical American family. Lately, she had become interested in spiritual life and had attended some of the talks. She wanted to go more deeply into these ideas, and she had been trying to meditate regularly, under great difficulties. She seemed alert and intelligent.

There may be yet another reason for repetitive thoughts. Has she not noticed that a thought, an action completed, fulfilled, is not retained in memory; it is forgotten, put aside, but an unfulfilled, uncompleted thought or action digs itself into memory? A finished letter is soon forgotten, but an unfinished one becomes an irritant, a constant reminder. A piece of work left over teases the mind; thought is spent over it till it is completed. Thoughts, relationships, actions which are not completed will continue to act as an irritant reminder till they are fulfilled. An enclosed mind is filled with these unfulfilled thoughts, and they continue to haunt till they are completed, till the enclosure is broken down.

Yes, she replied, she had noticed this and would try to complete these unfinished thoughts and actions. But, she went on, how can one complete a relationship or an action which lay in the past, spoilt, misunderstood, confused?

Remorse and resentment, which are so similar and which, nourishing and giving strength to the self, encourage the bondage of time, must be first set aside, for they prevent clarification. The intention is of the highest importance. Though your relationship or your action is in the past, what does matter is your present attitude and purpose towards them. The present will wipe out the past, and what

you make of the present is in your hands. The past is to be understood through the present.

Chapter 54

DIGGING DEEPLY AND LYING FALLOW

C. D. had been here several times; when he first came, he had been spiritually window-shopping, as he said, and after one or two talks he saw the importance of self-knowledge. We discussed how to cultivate it, how to dig into oneself for it. When he came this time, he explained that he had been trying for these several months to cultivate self-awareness, analysing, examining, observing. He thought he had been working hard at it, but of late he had found that he could get nowhere and that he seemed rather lost and wasted.

If he had been earnestly cultivating self-awareness and right thinking, then now was the time to reap; but he must be utterly sure that he had been cultivating. During the spring, summer, and autumn the soil is cultivated, rocks and weeds are removed and seeds sown and harvested; then during the winter the soil is allowed to lie fallow, nourished by the heavens. During that period the earth is renovated, it renews itself. Similarly, we must, through constant awareness, cultivate and dig for self-knowledge, removing the rocks and weeds, the hindrances and self-created blockages; we must dig and dig and discover new treasures. What would you think of a man who cultivates his garden, removes the rocks and weeds, but yet keeps on cultivating without allowing what he had sown to grow? If you have strenuously cultivated self-awareness and tried to discover as much as possible, would you not stop and take a watchful rest? Just as you would allow the earth to lie fallow but watch over it, so would you not, after your toil, seek a creative rest? How creative the rest, the stillness will be will depend upon how deeply you have been self-aware.

This rest is not a compensation, but a necessary factor in the cultivation of self-knowledge. During that restful stillness there is no slumbering, but a heightened watchfulness; there is no inquiry, digging or cultivation, but a passive stillness. There is no effort of any kind, but choiceless awareness. There is no identification or its opposite, but a fruitful emptiness. If there has been deep cultivation of self-awareness, then this period of non-effort is as essential as for the soil to lie fallow. For, in this period of stillness, there are discovered, perceived, those states and factors that lie beyond the intellect which, having been experienced, reason may come to support; but they are not the product of reason or craving. What each one discovers in that stillness will depend entirely on how deeply he has cultivated self-awareness. Without deep self-knowledge and right thinking, he will discover what he wants to, but it will not be the real, which alone is liberating and creative.

There must be periods of cultivation and periods of stillness from cultivation. Each period will act upon the other; the periods are interrelated: one cannot be without the other. What the quality of the one is, on that will depend the quality of the other. The wise man does not seek stillness, nor crave for it, nor speculate

upon it. But in cultivating the flow of self-awareness, which leads into deeper and wider pools of meditation, there comes the creative tranquillity of the eternal.

UNDERSTAND A PROBLEM NOT ON ITS OWN LEVEL

D. E. was employed by the government, and his work, he explained, took most of his time. His job, which at one time was interesting, had now become almost mechanical. But, all the same, he had very little time for himself to keep up with the world events or to read extensively. He said he had been married for many years, but of late he had developed a sexual habit. A psychiatrist had treated him for some time, but he was still a slave to it; he would like to overcome it, and how was he to set about it? He mentioned that he belonged to a religious group, of which he spoke in some detail. He said his life was dull, bound to a routine and wholly uncreative. He spoke of his sorrows, the pettiness of his official life, the intrigues and jealousies, and the continual struggle to keep above water. He was unconsciously aware of some of the layers of consciousness; he needed a little prodding and stimulation to become aware consciously and directly.

Habit is the result of thoughtlessness. The good and the bad habit, having different ends, are both binding. The difficulty is not how to overcome a habit, but how to become thoughtful. One can get rid of a habit by establishing another habit, perhaps a better one, but this does not solve the problem of habit, which is thoughtlessness. How rapidly habits are developed when there is no thought, when there is no awareness! Take, for example, smoking: it begins in thoughtlessness, and through craving the habit is established. As a boy one begins, for it is a manly thing to do, or the other boys are smoking; it makes one sick, but it is the thing to do. Soon a habit is formed. A good habit is as a bad habit: both are the outcome of thoughtlessness.

‘But’, he asked, ‘is it not important to get rid of a bad habit, even though it is the result of thoughtlessness?’

Is it not more important to keep awake, to become thoughtful, which will prevent habit-formation rather than to be concerned merely with getting rid of a habit, pleasant or unpleasant? So if he concerns himself with the greater problem, then the lesser difficulty will give way. But to grapple with the lesser, without understanding the greater, is to keep the mind on the same level as the problem itself, which brings no solution at all. Any problem must be understood not on its own plane or level, but on a higher level of abstraction.

So how was he to become thoughtful, which would dissolve his thoughtlessness, habit?

Was not his existence thoughtless? Did not his environment, religion, politics, education, amusements, and distractions go to create a state in which to think-feel was to be sorrowful? Conform or you do not succeed, and to conform is to cultivate ignorance.

Yes, he agreed, but if he became thoughtful he might revolt, he might lose his job. Then he would act definitely against the war, but he was afraid; so, he added, he must conform.

You must pay the price for non-conformity, for being thoughtful. And as each one leaves the other fellow to pay the price, the world is reduced to this terrible and chaotic state.

Must he not extricate thought from the environment, not merely accept and be authority-bound, but gently consider the conditions that surround him? Out of this tolerant consideration and watchfulness, creative thought-feeling will arise, which will burn away his habit.

But, as he said, fear prevented thoughtful observation.

Fear breeds thoughtlessness, and out of it comes good and bad habits. By constantly stretching his thought-feeling, by persistent watchfulness and self-awareness, the causes of thoughtlessness will be discovered and dissolved. To discover them is important, not theoretical, intellectual conclusions, for what is discovered out of self-awareness, being the truth, is creative and liberating. If he would pass beyond his disturbing habit, he must not merely think of getting rid of it or condemning it or justifying it; by understanding what lies behind this and other habits, he will begin to break down the machinery that produces thoughtlessness. This is not an easy task, for it will bring up many conflicting and confusing problems which, as they are understood and dissolved, will bring happiness and peace.

Chapter 56

ATTACHMENT AND DETACHMENT ARE BOTH GRATIFYING

E. F. said she was a woman with a large family and many responsibilities. She loved her family; they were dependent on her and she was, somewhat, on them. It was not an oppressive dependency, but it could become one. She wondered what detachment was and, as she was getting on in age, shouldn't she cultivate it?

For what reason did she want to cultivate detachment?

'I suppose—to be honest—not to suffer', she said.

There lies the whole question: to avoid suffering let's cultivate detachment. Being forewarned that attachment entails sorrow, we want to become detached. Attachment is gratifying, but perceiving pain in it, we want to be gratified in another manner—through detachment. Attachment and detachment are the same as long as they yield gratification. So what we are seeking is gratification, craving to be satisfied by any means.

We are dependent or attached because it gives us pleasure, power, and a sense of being, though in it are sorrow and fear. We seek detachment for pleasure also—not to be hurt, not to be wounded in our being. Pleasure, gratification, is our search. We are not condemning or justifying, but we are trying to understand. For, without understanding there is no way out of this confusion and contradiction. Can craving ever be satisfied, or is it a bottomless pit? Craving for the low or for the high is still a craving, a burning, and what can be consumed soon becomes ashes. And craving for gratification still remains, ever burning, ever consuming, and there is no end to it. Attachment and detachment are both binding; both must be transcended.

What then is our question? Not how to cultivate detachment, but how to free the mind from craving, from the search for deeper and wider gratifications, from the consciousness of being or becoming. To transcend the observer and the observed. It is very strenuous to free the mind, the whole being from craving, from desire, from want. We are the result of craving, and to go beyond ourselves is extremely difficult. But this we must first understand: the necessity of freeing thought-feeling from craving. The intention is of the highest importance. If this is clearly perceived and understood, then the subtle ways of the self can be traced out and rooted out. That is the work of constant awareness. With deeper and wider awareness, there comes, almost imperceptibly, the liberation from craving, from want. This liberation is not the effort of will but of understanding.

This understanding, born of awareness and meditation, has its own momentum, its own activity which, if allowed to flow, unhindered by greed and memory, enters into the bliss of the eternal. Only in that, all conflict, all ignorance, and all sorrow cease.

Does all this mean, she asked, that she will have to withdraw from the world, which she couldn't do as she had young children and other responsibilities?

In becoming aware of the implications of craving, of which she is but intellectually, superficially aware inwardly, and if that awareness is not distorted, dissipated, but allowed to flow into ever deeper and wider comprehension, that very awareness will bring the answer. It is not a matter of decision of what she should do, but of heightened awareness and of deep self-knowledge. A decision, a conclusion without self-knowledge will only bring further conflict and confusion, but with self-knowledge comes right thinking, which alone brings its own true action.

‘I came’, she said presently, ‘to learn how to cultivate detachment but, as I see it now, a much greater problem has arisen, and perhaps there will be joy in it.’

THEORIES AND EXPLANATIONS ARE HINDRANCES

F. G. explained that she had belonged to a great many religious cults and societies; in each of them she had found something and had been stirred into deep feelings, for which she was thankful. But now she was finding herself exhausted and had got nowhere with herself. She had, she said, a bagful of theories, explanations, rituals, and phrases, but she was confused, uncertain, and rather lost.

Is it not important first to comprehend what she has done to herself and then proceed, with this understanding, to reeducate herself? For without understanding the past, she is likely to repeat or fall into these profitless thoughts and actions. To understand the past, she must begin with the present, from the state in which she now finds herself. This is important to grasp: from the present knowledge of herself, however little or much it may be, she must become aware, following the movements of the past. Thus, understanding them, she will not be caught up again in them. Man moves from cage to cage, from hindrance to hindrance, from the known to the known, and so there is constant conflict and no release from sorrow. Are these emotional orgies and tears, romanticism and gratifications the way of discovering truth, the highest? Do they not in stretching the emotions let them down again? This constant expansion and contraction, does it not wear out, vainly, the pliability of thought-feeling? Is it not essential to cultivate the highest degree of pliability of thought-feeling to comprehend the real? When this exquisite flexibility is used up, wasted in romantic tears and gratifications, then how can it feel, understand the real, which needs a heightened constancy? Having dissipated herself, like so many others, she must now gently and thoughtfully set about to revive the wasted sensibility, through self-awareness. In this awareness, she must cultivate kindly and tolerant observation of her thoughts-feelings, without identifying herself with them. From this will come the restoration of pliability, understanding.

Theories and explanations, rituals and phrases are vain: they prevent self-knowledge, they are hindrances and do not aid. They dissipate rather than focus thought-feeling on that which is essential. They bring disunity and not integration. They cause narrow, sectarian spirit and bring division among people. Along that way lie confusion, conflict, and antagonism.

One indulges in them as an escape from oneself, but there is no escape from oneself, deliverance from oneself, save in oneself. Without self-knowledge there is ignorance, and ignorance breeds sorrow and confusion, uncertainty, and weariness. One's mind is filled with theories and explanations, and one fashions the living with the dead. One forces thought-feeling to conform to a pattern. The good and the bad are both binding, instead of alertly and watchfully allowing thought-feeling to flow into deeper and wider understanding. This hindrance, through fear, greed, and ill will, again causes conflict and confusion.

She must become self-aware and discover why she has collected these theories, explanations, and so on. Mere intellectual, superficial, reasoned causes for their accumulation are of little value; they will not free her thought-feeling, but through awareness she must discover them. It is this discovery, being the truth, that will be liberating and creative. Out of this discovery in self-knowledge comes right thinking. Craving is dissolved through right thinking; freedom from craving is virtue. And as the mind approaches the eternal, there is the extinction of all desire.

Chapter 58

TO KILL OR NOT TO KILL

G. H. was a professor at a university, and he came with a friend of his. They talked of the war and its revolutionary benefits, how it was going to change the world, for the better of course. There was a certain jubilation in their voices over the world's catastrophe, for it promised them a happier world. They talked excitedly between themselves, throwing answers at each other, encouraging each other. Then the professor turned and explained that they had come at the insistence of a friend and that though he had been a pacifist during the last war, this war being different demanded quite a different attitude and action. This time killing the enemy was justified, as they were utterly ruthless, and if they were not put down, there would be centuries of barbarism. This time Europe must be rid of the terror. And though he had advocated peaceful methods, now he was all for destroying the enemy. There was fanaticism in his voice, cruelty of gesture, and a fund of scholarly language.

As we remained silent, he asked, 'Is it not right to destroy the enemy? Even the Bhagavad Gita advocates it. This war is justified because the enemy is evil.'

Why did you, sir, come here, we asked. As you appear to be certain in your attitude towards those whom you call the enemy, why then, if we may ask, have you come? Is it because you wish to spend an hour in argumentative discussion or because you are not wholly certain of your attitude? If you wish merely to discuss, then it would be profitless, but if we wish to clarify our attitude, then it is another matter.

He said he had not come to waste my time in futile discussion, and perhaps in talking the matter over, there might be modifications in his point of view.

If to overcome evil we adopt evil methods, we ourselves become evil and so perpetuate evil. To fight wrong with wrong means gives strength to that which is wrong. So we must find the right means to overcome the evil, the wrong. Right means alone will create the right ends. Is not killing wrong at any time? Is it an absolute, final value—not to kill—or a value to be modified, changed according to the changing circumstances? Is it to be regarded as a sensory value, based on gratification, pleasure or fear, in which case there is no permanent, essential value and therefore productive of evil and confusion? If a value is constantly changing, then it ceases to be a value, and sensory values are ever in flux, and any structure built on those values has no permanency and therefore breeds much confusion and wrong. You do not approve of killing, at one time, and at another you are determined to kill; and thus your action, being valueless, is productive of ignorance and sorrow.

Is to kill or not to kill determined by reason, by ideologies, by principles? Are not the values of our reason shaped through our passions, through our immediate needs and fears, through our conditionings? Is not reason itself unreliable, contradictory, and can there be any permanent value in the things of the mind?

When the mind is guided by a principle, then it becomes a slave of its own creation, and in this slavery there is no peace, there is no creative understanding and joy.

Reason is excellent, but it must transcend itself. It must become still to know love, and love has no value. When there is love, all violence ceases; being without value, it is infinite. In it there is neither the enemy nor the friend, but it brings its own order and clarity. It is its own eternity.

The professor said, 'You are asking the impossible.'

Therefore you will have wars, strife, and misery. It is not impossible; you have made the most hideous thing possible—this mass murder. If you give your whole being to the other, which you call the impossible, as wholeheartedly as you do to war, then you will find that through goodwill and love the tremendously complex problems can be solved.

'Do you think', he asked, 'that everyone is capable of this great transformation?'

Who is this whom you call everyone? You and I, surely. If you apply your mind and heart, do you think you cannot bring about a transformation in yourself? Is there not a greater certainty of this transformation in yourself than in trying to bring about a fundamental change in another? You can keep your own house clean instead of being concerned with another's. In transforming yourself you will affect another, for you are the other. To go far we must begin near. You are the nearest.

We sat very still for some time without talking.

Chapter 59

RE-EDUCATING THE PARENTS

H. S. was a young man who said he had two children, and he wanted to talk over the way of bringing them up. He said he was utterly dissatisfied with the present system of education, and he could not afford to send his children to a good modern school, if there was one. His wife too wanted to bring them up rightly.

When whole masses of children are educated together, the level of education cannot be high. It must inevitably tend to standardize thought, opinion, and action, which the more powerful States demand. The citizen becomes a mere cog in the machinery of the State, with all its appalling results. The family becomes a greater factor in the education of children when the State and organized religion go hand in hand, but the family is not prepared to take this responsibility. Some parents may, but they have to contend not only with public opinion, the radio, the newspaper, the cinema, and so on, but also with their own relations. So the children have very little chance unless the parents are extremely aware and capable.

So the problem is not how to bring up children but how to re-educate the parents. They must voluntarily perceive or become aware of their relationship to the world, of their private thoughts and actions; how they create by their thoughts and actions a world of strife, confusion, and antagonism; how by their lust, ill will, and ignorance they bring about vast misery and suffering.

He explained that he was willing, and even trying, to break away from the stupidities of life, but his wife was not helpful—not that he was complaining, he added. One may be willing, he went on, to go far, breaking through the barriers of everyday existence, but one's responsibilities prevented one from taking the long journey. He explained that his wife might say the same thing of him. It was extremely difficult to break through the clutches of the world, for he himself wanted some of the things of the world.

We are on a long journey, and we undertake responsibilities. One may walk far ahead of the other. To whom is he responsible—to the one that is coming behind him or to that towards which he is journeying? If he is truly responsible to that which is eternal, then in that search, on that journey, the separative division of the 'me' and the 'mine' begins to be broken down; there is greater love, greater understanding, deeper gentleness, and deeper forgiveness. But existence is strife, a pain till the end of the journey. There is an ecstasy, a freedom from desire as one approaches the end, the infinite.

But, he asked, what was he to do, in the meantime?

There is no 'between times': his wife, the education of their children, his means of livelihood, his private thoughts-feelings, all these are the burden of his journey. He cannot put them off, any more than he can put off his thoughts-feelings. He must understand them, for they are a part of himself. In understanding himself he will understand them. Without self-knowledge there is

no understanding. To educate another he must re-educate himself—a strenuous task. Through self-awareness the infinite is discovered. In everything else there is confusion and strife. One must seek the permanent, the timeless, in the impermanent, in time.

‘I came here to find out how to educate my children, and you have given me a far greater problem’, he said.

In understanding the greater, the lesser ceases.

Chapter 60

THE OBSERVER AND THE OBSERVED

S. J. explained that though he had practised meditation for some years, he was getting nowhere. He could, just perhaps for a few minutes, hold his concentration, but somehow lately even that seemed so trivial. He said he had heard me this summer explain something about meditation, and may we talk more about it?

Is it not important to understand the process of the observer and the observed? Are they not a joint phenomenon? Without understanding the observer or the giver of attention, the observed, the thing that is concentrated upon, must ever create dualism, and in dualism there is no hope.

Has he not found in his meditations the maker of images who clings to his images, the formulator and his formulations? It is this creator and his creation that must be thoroughly understood and transcended. Without understanding the maker, the formulator, the creator, meditation only strengthens the builder, the self.

Meditation of the heart is understanding, and there is no understanding without self-knowledge. If you do not comprehend yourself, your private thoughts, motives, intentions, and instincts, on what shall you base your thought-feeling? If you do not understand yourself, how do you know if your thought-feeling is true or false? If there is no self-knowledge, what other knowledge can you have? You are the focus of all life, in you is the beginning and the end, you are the whole of existence, and to understand the complex life, where are you to begin save with yourself? The understanding of the self is its own reward, and wisdom is gathered in the discovery of the true in the process of the self. Constant self-awareness of every thought-feeling flows into deep, still pools of meditation. This flow, this flowering, stops when thought-feeling condemns or accepts, justifies or denies, or when there is identification. Identification cultivates thoughtlessness and sorrow, Through this constant awareness there is choiceless re-education of all thought-feeling-action and so of all values. Without this choiceless re-education, thought-feeling cannot enter into the deeper realms of meditation.

Thought must climb the ladder of morality, and its steps must be worn out in usage. For, to be conscious of the steps is to be without morality, without virtue. Freedom from craving is virtue; this craving expresses itself principally as sensuality, worldliness, personal immortality, and fame, or as power, mystery, and miracle. For thought to free itself from craving, it must be candid, honest. It must know compassion, love, and there is no love when there is attachment and fear. There must be simplicity of life, right means of livelihood, and freedom from distractions, addictions, and so on. And as thought climbs the ladder, it will enter into the field of memory. Most of our thinking-feeling is incomplete, is not thought out-felt out to the end; there is no fulfilment, and that which is

incomplete, unfulfilled has continuation. It is this continuation that is time-binding. That which has a continuation cannot comprehend the timeless, the eternal.

Through constant awareness and through its intensification during the waking hours, the many layers of consciousness yield their contents, their hidden understanding. Then dreams become rarer and their interpretation wider and simpler. As the layers of consciousness are penetrated as they reveal themselves, the state of sleep becomes as important as the wakeful state. Then the awareness of the wakeful hours flows into the awareness of sleep, as that of sleep flows into the awareness of the day.

Thus through constant self-awareness there is the flowering of self-knowledge, from which there comes right thinking. Right thinking is the basis of meditation. There is no meditation without self-knowledge, and without meditative awareness there is no self-knowledge. When thought-feeling is still and unfathomable when it is creatively empty, when the observer and the observed have wholly ceased, then there is the nameless, the immeasurable.

‘I have listened very attentively, and I think I understand. I have been practising concentration, and I notice that you never mention concentration. Would you please go into it a little?’ he said.

For most people, concentration consists in bringing attention upon something: work, cultivating virtue, on a symbol, on an image, and so on—he who concentrates and the thing concentrated upon. In this there is ever a dual process at work—the ‘me’ and the ‘not me’, in which there is friction, tension, opposition. The thinker is separate from the thought, the thinker tries to shape his thought; the observer studies, examines the observed. Thus there is ever the conflict of dualism, in which to concentrate is to widen the gap of separation, to disintegrate, to cultivate the part, to wander away from the whole, the real.

Is the thinker separate from his thought? Are they not a joint phenomenon? When the thinker tries to fashion his thought to shape it to a pattern without understanding himself, the thinker, then thought leads to illusion. To concentrate on thought without understanding the thinker can never bring about the comprehension of the real. Without understanding the thinker, the end is ignorance and sorrow. To understand the thinker, his thought must be studied, not for itself but to discover the thinker. By becoming aware of every thought-feeling, its creator, the source is revealed. Then the creator and the created are one. Then concentration is not upon something, which only creates illusion, but it is concentration itself. The thinker ceases to create, and so there is complete, utter stillness. It is the stillness of completion. It is being, it is timeless, eternal.

Chapter 61

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN INSTINCT AND CONDITIONING

K. J. wanted to know why from a certain period of her life she had been guided by an inner voice. Over many years this voice had completely altered and shaped the course of her life. The voice had told her to come to see us. She had become dependent on it for all her thoughts and actions, and she had obeyed it. The voice had told her that it would stop after she had seen us, and she had been here before; the voice was now silent. What was the voice? Was it real? Was it some superior entity that had taken possession of her? Why was there this dualism in her?

Is there not this dualism in almost everybody? They may employ different terms, different labels—the higher and the lower self, the good and the bad, the real and the false, and so on—but in essence it is the conflict of the opposites. This conflict takes different forms and creates different peculiarities and tendencies—the conflict between instinct and conditioning, between the inborn and the acquired, between the inner and the outer. This conflict is painful, disintegrating, and must be resolved, for otherwise there is no peace, no creative happiness. The inner gives intimation through dreams, through warnings, through voices, depending on the intensity of the crisis. The voices, the dreams, the intimations are out of ourselves. We are the opposites: we are the outer and the inner, the conditioning and the instinct, and so on. We like to delude ourselves into thinking that the voice is that of a superior entity. It flatters us, gives us importance, but the central problem of conflict still remains. We must concern ourselves with that and not cling to any gratifying illusion. There must be no dependence on it, for it breeds fear, the lack of true self-confidence, which is not aggressiveness or competitive ambition.

Most of us, if we are at all alert, are aware of the good from the ugly. ‘Instinctively’ we know, ‘something’ tells us, but the conditioning, the outer, is too much, too clamouring and demanding. We yield to it. The outer—the conditioning—we have created through our lust, ill will, and ignorance, as we have also created the inner—the instinct. We are both the thinker and the thought. We like to identify ourselves with the one and disown the other. This identification and this denial prevent the understanding of the conflict. We must understand the complex machinery of the thinker and his thought. Are they separate? By studying the thought, is not the thinker revealed? Is not this complex machinery both the thinker and his thought? Without the one, the other is not. The whole machinery is the self, the thinker and his thought, the higher and the lower self, the innumerable divisions and subdivisions. Just as long as the self, the result of craving in the past and in the present, exists, there must be dualism, the ‘I’ and the ‘not I’, the conflict of the opposites. This craving takes

many forms, subtle and gross: sensuality, worldliness or prosperity, and personal continuity.

Through constant awareness of every thought-feeling, through thinking it out and feeling it out, craving and its ever-burning conflict are brought to an end. Identification—approbation or denial—prevents the completeness of thought-feeling. It is only in the completeness of thought-feeling that there is freedom from craving. Only then is there joy and peace.

Chapter 62

BETWEEN AWARENESS AND DISTRACTION

K. L. deplored his weak condition. He said he could not stick to his intention of being aware; he would be aware for a period, and then he would allow himself to be distracted, to be dissipated. He was disgusted with himself, he said, for he had been going on like this for some time. Each time he was aware he also knew there would be a period of distraction, disintegration. There must be some deficiency in him somewhere, he added sadly.

This constant contraction and expansion, integration and disintegration are wasteful, bringing about insensitivity to the mind-heart. Effort and then dissipation weaken the structure of sustained understanding; in this wasteful process the necessary pliability of the mind is lost. Just as those who go from one excitement to another, from one gratification to another, from one so-called spiritual uplift to another lose their flexible capacity, so the constant conflict, with its wastage between periods of awareness and distraction, brings about weary dullness and confusion, of which he knew. This blunts perception and the faculty of understanding.

Awareness is not a habit to be cultivated; it comes into being through understanding the causes that make the mind-heart dull, ignorant. Habit merely gives continuity to thoughtlessness, and a mere resolution to be aware is of little value. Just as you cannot be healthy if you are eating wrong food, so there is no intelligence if the mind is crowded with stupid thoughts. In understanding and so eliminating these petty, stupid thoughts-feelings, keen intelligence is awakened. By studying, observing his distractions, by becoming aware of them, he will discover that they begin to lose their attraction, not through the process of exclusion or denial but through understanding. Understanding is its own reward. To depend on another or on circumstances for the stimulation of becoming aware soon becomes useless, for awareness is brought into being not by any outward conditions or stimulations but by awakened interest.

He said he was keenly interested when he was aware, but so often it lagged.

It is during these periods of sluggishness, of dissipation, that he must gather himself to be aware; it is during these periods that intelligence is to be awakened. Most people live in undulation, up and down. When one is at the heights, there is clarity and order; only when one is in the depths is there confusion and strife, and it is in these depths that there must be awareness, which brings understanding and freedom. To escape from the depths is to increase distractions, but to observe and discover the causes of the depths, of the valleys, of the confusion is to bring the clarity of the heights. You cannot discover if you condemn or wish to rid yourself of the depths; identification breeds confusion and sorrow. Only through choiceless awareness is understanding cultivated.

Indifference—being neither hot nor cold—is the price of dissipation.

Chapter 63

THE MIND BECOMES WHAT IT POSSESSES

L. and M. were a newly married couple, and he explained that his wife was inordinately fond of worldly things. He himself was not bothered by them, yet he could not persuade her not to be burdened with things. She explained that she could find nothing wrong with possessions, and they made her happy. Surely, it was not wrong to be happy, was it?

The mind becomes what it possesses. If we are made happy with things, with furniture, with houses, by depending for our happiness on them, the things, furniture, and houses soon become part of us. Thus we *are* the possessions. What deep significance, meaning have furniture, houses, and things? Very little, is it not? When little values fill our minds, our minds become petty, little, shallow. Some fill their minds-hearts with things, others with the experiences of relationship with people, and yet others with reasons, ideas, beliefs, theories, and so on. Each fills his mind with something, and so the mind-heart is never free to be. A cup is useful because it is empty. A mind-heart that is filled must ever be shallow, superficial; there is no space for creative being, no freedom for discovery. This very fullness of the mind-heart breeds its own poverty. Being aware of poverty, superficially or inwardly, each one tries to enrich it, fill it with things, or with relationship and its varied activities, or with reason, principles, ideologies, and so on. The more you fill this poverty, this emptiness, the more superficial, the more shallow, the more useless the mind-heart becomes. Can a broken vessel be filled?

‘But’, she said sadly, ‘one dreams of having a nice little house, not big, of one’s own; one dreams of it from childhood. Must one give it up?’

If you renounce without understanding, your mind, being still superficial, shallow, will fill itself with other matters and so remain dull and enclosed. You are afraid to set aside your dream, for what have you in its place? Aching emptiness or the fear of being empty. But if you observe that emptiness, that poverty, without anxiety, then out of it comes untold riches. It is the fear of the unknown that makes us cling to the known, and that which is known soon turns to ashes. If your dream is fulfilled, then what? Mind seeks further gratification, and is there an end to gratification, to craving? The more you yield to it, the greater its demand; like as a child it grows, but it brings ignorance and misery. Do not ask yourself whether you must give it up, but consider the price you pay for it. Greed breeds enmity and ill will, conflict and antagonism, wars and ruthlessness.

There is passing happiness in things, in relationship, in knowledge. What is transient is sorrowful, and only in the discovery of that which is without a beginning and an end is there imperishable ecstasy.

Chapter 64

AGGRESSIVENESS IN RELATIONSHIPS

M. N. said he found in his relationships, thoughts, and activities that he was aggressive, almost violent. He tried to curb it, but it cropped up again and again in different forms. Was it not natural for man to be aggressive, biologically and in other ways? Was he not fighting something inherent in man?

Aggressiveness of any kind must lead inevitably to strife, to brutality, to misery. We see this in our relationships and in the world about us. Aggressiveness and submission are the two sides of the same coin. The desire for power, for domination brings conflict and confusion, wars and untold misery. As the individual, so the group, the nation. All this is fairly obvious. We are vaguely aware of its misery and the price each one of us pays for it, but all the same we continue to be aggressive, to dominate, to submit, to seek power. It may be inherent in man to be aggressive, to dominate, but knowing its appalling results, must he not abandon it, re-educate himself to be gentle, to be compassionate? Must he not, knowing the calamities and disasters it brings, root out the causes that breed violence, ill will, and ignorance? Aggressiveness and dominance lead to stupid and vicious activities; there is no peace and creative happiness.

The desire to become is to be aggressive, and aggressiveness in its very nature is blinding, uncomprehending, singularistic, which leads to misery. The desire to become is the height of folly, and without becoming aware of this desire in all its multiple forms and thus transcending it, there will be the constant activity of ignorance and sorrow. Does not the desire to become breed strife, ill will, envy? Does not aggressiveness lead to unintelligent activities? So what we consider positive action is stupid action. There is no modification of aggressiveness, there is no way out of it save through negative comprehension. What we consider positive, dominant, aggressive thinking-feeling leads to disorder, confusion in our relationship and its varied activities, and so this so-called positive thought-feeling has brought us misery and pain. Now become aware of aggressiveness, of becoming, in all its many aspects. Comprehend its process without the desire to find substitutes for it or to overcome it. Observe and examine its effects in daily life, dispassionately. And if you intelligently follow the implications of becoming, of dominance—and you cannot follow if you are not choicelessly aware—then there is negative understanding. Negative understanding is the height of thought.

So, he asked, aggressiveness is not to be overcome immediately; it must be studied and gradually dissolved, isn't it?

Now, why are you asking that question? What lies behind it? Is it prompted by the desire to 'enjoy' being aggressive and to prolong that 'enjoyment,' eventually to be given up? Surely it is not a question of time, of postponement. If you are dangerously poisoned, you do not linger in finding an antidote. Again, it is the deep intention to become aware of aggressiveness and its effects that is of

the highest importance and not the gradualness of its dissolution. If you plant the seed of awareness, voluntarily comprehending its necessity, then it brings forth its own fruit, which does not mean that having sown you may neglect it. The seed of awareness must penetrate the many layers of consciousness, so that the whole being understands the significance of becoming, of dominance, of the craving for power. When this desire is deeply comprehended through all the layers of consciousness and so transcended, then there is peace.

THOUGHT POINTS OUT THE THINKER

N. O. explained that for many years he had been studying psychology and the sacred books of the many religions and had meditated. He found himself becoming more and more confused and was examining, as we had suggested, the picture that he was painting—the picture of greed, of power, of superiority, the picture which was so complex and contradictory. He was trying to change it, bring to it a different depth and rhythm, but somehow he found that he was more than ever confused, physically being affected. As he was advancing in years, he hoped there would be some clarification.

We listened to him without interrupting him till he finished. We were both silent for some time. The workings of his mind were clear; one was aware of his struggles.

Before he brought about a change in the picture, is it not necessary to understand the painter? Is he not concerned with the modification, with the embellishment of the picture and not with the painter? Does not the picture reveal the painter? Through the picture, is not the painter discovered? Is the picture different from the painter? Are not the picture and the painter the same? Without understanding the painter, how can there be the transformation of the painting?

‘But’, he replied, ‘that is what I have been trying to do.’

He had been trying to change the picture, we said; he was more concerned with the picture than with the painter. If he was concerned with the painter, then his confusion would not have arisen. Being confused, he was trying to resolve the confusion itself and not its creator.

He looked confused and worried, struggling hard to understand.

So we said: consider what we are saying, without identifying yourself with it. Look upon it, as you would that mountain, with gentle dispassion.

To which he replied that it was one of his difficulties—not to identify, not to judge.

If you would understand another, you must put aside all your prejudices, opinions, conclusions. Similarly, listen without judgement to what we are saying, which does not mean that you must accept it. Listen silently, without agreement or denial. To transform thought, the thinker must be studied and understood. Thought points out the thinker, thought leads to the thinker. Your actions are you: you are not separate from your actions. The thinker and his thought are one. Without understanding the thinker, you bring only more confusion, more strife in thought. From the outer you must go to the inner. The signpost indicates, and it would be foolish to waste a second on it; pass on to what it indicates. You have spent all your time with the product and not with the producer. In understanding the maker you will transform the product, but not the other way round.

Again he was applying it to himself, recriminating, judging.

Listen with a quiet mind; feel out what we are saying to find the truth of the matter. Do not merely intellectualize, which is of no value, but be still to discover the truth. You cannot discover without ploughing, but since you have ploughed and are confused, be still and silently observe. How difficult it is! Your mind is not still to observe, to discover. It is moving at a great speed, and the noise of it is filling the mind-heart. There is no corner of it which is not crowded. Understand the machine and not its noise.

Without self-knowledge all action leads to confusion and ignorance. Without self-knowledge there is strife and sorrow. Without self-knowledge there is no right thinking, and without right thinking there is no foundation for the discovery of truth.

The thinker and his thoughts must come to an end for the timeless to be.

Chapter 66

FEEL OUT RATHER THAN BE CLEVER

O. and P. were mother and daughter. They said they were miserable, confused, and utterly dependent on each other. The daughter explained that she just followed the mother in whatever she thought and did; she had never struggled against it, but had accepted it, and now since the mother was confused and utterly bewildered, she too was. How could they get out of this confusing misery?

They told of their life and struggles, and they were certainly very confused.

Is it not necessary to think-feel clearly about our everyday existence? If we do not, how can we understand the greater, the simpler? Our life is hedged about with so many difficulties; we are told so many contradictory and confusing things. If we depend on them, we shall be like a leaf blown hither and thither, a plaything of circumstances. It is difficult to think-feel things out. No one will help us; on the contrary they will hinder us, for he who thinks-feels clearly is very disturbing. We ourselves do not wish to be disturbed.

Yes, the daughter said, that is why she supposed she followed her mother blindly, thoughtlessly.

Thoughtlessness leads to confusion and misery, does it not? To become thoughtful is necessary, but not to worry over the effects of thoughtlessness. To become thoughtful, consider widely and deeply any problem that confronts you. Do not take sides, but go into it as much as you can; discover what motives, what tendencies, what patterns and opinions prevent you from thinking it out, feeling it out as extensively and profoundly as possible. Thus you bring order and clarity.

‘Please take killing and help us to think it out. We gave up eating meat, and now we eat meat. We were against war, and now we seem to be for war.’

To think-feel clearly we must be very honest with ourselves; we must not hide anything from ourselves. There must be no pretensions. As you seem to have honesty of thought, it is a right beginning. We kill animals to eat, mostly because we are bound by tradition; tradition dictates and we follow. You may have a taste for meat, but that too has been cultivated. You are used to it, and you demand it. Your religion and your society condone it, and your own appetites welcome it. To a man brought up differently, meat is an abhorrence. To kill animals implies cruelty, and if the cruelty is cultivated, it is the next step to be cruel to man, to kill man. If you admit cruelty in one form, you will approve of or justify it in other forms. You may say that we must live, and to live we have to kill in some form or another. But if we cultivate non-cruelty, then we shall find our answer; we will not kill for the pleasure of eating or for the sake of health. There is right nutriment in vegetable, milk, and other matter.

Cruelty is the central problem; cruelty dulls the mind-heart, makes for insensitivity. It breeds hate and stupidity. It tramples upon love and gentleness, which are the only true purifying factors in life. If you understand the problem of

cruelty, you will then not give up meat for a period and take it up again, as your fancy or your doctor tells you, for the sake of health.

Again, are you justified in killing another human being at any time? To kill another is considered murder and is punished by law. But to kill for your country, for your king, for your ideology, for your God is honoured. Is killing your brother wrong, evil at one period and right, honourable at another? Is not killing evil, unrighteous at all times? Does the end justify the means? Does not the means create the end? Have you not to use the right means to right ends? Is mass murder, war, the right means for a peaceful, happy world? If you and I are to be friends and have goodwill, will we insult each other, deceive each other, oppress each other, exploit each other? We will eliminate all those causes that breed enmity between us, if we are to be friends. Goodwill, compassion is essential, not bombs and flame throwers. Yet we use fearful machines of destruction, hoping to bring order, peace, and happiness to man. Are these the right means, or love, compassion, and goodwill? Is violence in any form a forerunner of peace?

Do not be browbeaten by propaganda, by the cleverness of the intellectuals, by mass ignorance and opinion, but think out, feel out for yourself if right means must not be used for right ends. Do not be trapped by suppositions, theories, and by so-called facts. Feel out rather than be clever, think out rather than be superficial.

We are all one though we have different colours, customs, and gods. If you are cruel and greedy, envious and lustful, you affect the whole. If you are gentle and generous, forgiving and compassionate, then you bring order and peace. What you are the world is. Do not think that because you are not prominent, powerful, you cannot do anything; if you are prominent and powerful, you will create misery and mischief. It is humility, not power, that transforms. It is love, not craving, that brings order and clarity.

The acceptance of authority leads to confusion and misery. Authority breeds fear, and with fear there is dependence. Dependence destroys love.

Chapter 67

LEARNING THROUGH WAR GAMES THE LANGUAGE OF KILLING

P. R. said he would like to talk over the effects of environment. He had two children, he explained, who, through the cinema, newspaper, radio, and school, were learning the language of hate and killing. Their toys were machineguns and tanks, their play was war. His wife and he tried to counteract it by talking to them about affection and responsibility. Were not human beings the product of the environment? Must not the environment be changed to bring about a happy and sane world?

Is it possible to counteract evil, or must evil be understood and eradicated? Can evil be counterbalanced by the good? The terminology of hate and killing, the war games and its jargon, are they not sinking into the hidden layers of consciousness? Having taken root there, can they be rooted out by introducing the roots of affection, responsibility? The roots of affection and hate lie together, contending with each other, responding according to circumstances. When people are called upon to fight, there is a response from the stored-up layers of their childhood plays and impressions of war, hate, and excitement; it is this that responds with other factors of escape. Each layer of consciousness responds according to its contents. What they have learnt in childhood is embedded in one of the layers of consciousness, and that responds when it is appealed to. Another layer of affection and responsibility may overlay it, may cover it, but the layer of hate, of the games of war, and so on is still there. It cannot be counteracted; it must be eradicated or never introduced at all into consciousness. To eradicate it requires conscious understanding, deep awareness. Not to be contaminated is better.

‘But’, the father replied, ‘to talk to the children about the absurdities and cruelties of war will make them peculiar. They will not get on with other children; they will be ostracized.’

If you are not willing to pay the price of sending them to a school where war and its games are not intelligently tolerated, or to take the risk of making them peculiar, then you are preparing for and abetting the next war. There are no two ways about it: either you want the appalling catastrophes of war or you don’t. If you don’t, you must be willing wholeheartedly to educate them to live with compassion, with tolerance, without competition, without greed, and not educate them to die, to kill.

What is the end of man? The end will decide how far the environment is useful and necessary. If the end of man is to make of him into a docile, social, well-behaved entity, a ‘good’ citizen of the world, to make him conform to a pattern and so on, then ‘right’ environment becomes a necessity. Then it is put together by the authorities, by the experts, and man becomes merely a cog in a

perfect machine. Will he be content with that, or is there a greater factor at work which will destroy the perfect machine?

Till we discover what the true end of man is, environment must take secondary importance, for the end will shape the means. The end of man is to find the eternal, the real, to be timelessly creative. For without that, to become a 'good', not antisocial citizen is mere convenience, merely utilitarian, and that which is useful in itself has no meaning. A machine is useful not in itself but for what it is used. Can the environment be used to shape man? What shall he be shaped into? If man is shaped into a 'good' citizen, with all its implications, the end is not the ultimate but the immediate, and the immediate has no meaning.

The immediate is related to the past, and the past is conditioning itself by that towards which it is going. The immediate has no value without the end; and if the end is made up by man, then it ceases to be the eternal, for man is seeking that which is useful to himself. That which is useful is not the timeless. He will be caught in the turmoil of birth and death, of existence.

Existence is not an end in itself: it is a means to an end. Is this end to be discovered or shaped by man? If it is shaped by man it is not real, for man himself is not an end but a means. The means contains the end, but it is not the end. The end is to be discovered by each one. To discover, there must be freedom, not a conditioning, good or bad. Consciousness can adjust itself to any conditioning, but only when it is free can it discover what the real is. Does not freedom lie at the very beginning and not merely at the end? Is conditioning necessary for freedom? Must not thought liberate itself from conditioning to be free to discover the real? The conditioning factor is the environment, which is self-created, and it is the self which ever imprisons consciousness, thought-feeling. The self creates the bondage, the environment in which it is held, and must it not voluntarily cease to create so that there is freedom in which there is the real?

Is the cessation of the self a result of its own enforcement, of its own craving or commandment, which only brings a change, a modification of itself? Or is it the outcome of deep awareness and understanding of the cause of the self? Does this awareness, understanding depend on circumstances? Circumstances may help, but it does not depend on the outer. To depend on the outer is to enslave thought-feeling, the inner. Being enslaved, being dependent, thought-feeling demands the transformation of the outer, the circumstances, and so ever remains enclosed, a prisoner. The wise man, knowing this, is indifferent to circumstances; he does not depend on them for his liberation, for his awareness, for his understanding. He seeks freedom from craving from the very beginning, for craving in its multiple forms brings ignorance and sorrow; it is the origin of all bondage. Craving, which expresses itself through sensuality, worldliness, personal fame, and immortality, must be dissolved, not through outer circumstances but through self-awareness and self-knowledge, through right thinking and understanding. In the freedom from craving is the eternal.

Chapter 68

ESCAPING THROUGH THE IDEAL AND THROUGH INSENSITIVITY

Q. R. explained that ten years ago he was an idealist, in conflict, withdrawn, uncomfortable, in a shell of his own, anxious and afraid; and now he was in the midst of life, adjusting himself, stimulated, in a friction that kept him alive. He may be losing his sensibilities, but now he was unafraid and dependable. Was it bad for him to be in this state?

Was not the state of ten years ago more worthwhile than the present? Then he was discontent, searching perhaps unprofitably, but nevertheless he was seeking out. Was he not then more sensitive, alert than he was now? Is not sensitivity, alertness essential to discover the real? Must not the heart and mind be eager, strenuous, and pliable? Does friction, conflict, keep the mind-heart flexible? Without understanding, conflict wears down the mind-heart; it may stimulate momentarily, giving a sense of being alive, but it dulls the mind-heart. All stimulation must eventually make the mind sluggish, thoughtless, creating habit.

The world and its conflict, of which we are the makers, must be comprehended through ourselves. The actor and his action are not separate; they are one: action indicates the actor. We are the world, and the world is made of us. Without understanding ourselves, there will be fear, escapes, idealistic shells of exclusiveness, confusion. Without understanding ourselves, the stimulation of conflict, though alluring, becomes a narcotic; in it there is no deep adjustment but superficial agreement of convenience. To depend on the environment for the cultivation of the mind-heart is to make of it insensitive, shallow, and worthless.

Thought must cease to escape through the ideal and through insensitivity. Both are bondages, and they can be transcended only by becoming aware of the process and the causes of blockages. Through constant awareness, there is knowledge of the ways of the self; this knowledge nourishes right thinking. Right thinking is not to be bought: it comes with wider and deeper awareness. It is the foundation for the structure of morality, for the freedom from craving. The flow of awareness leads to deep and still pools of wisdom.

YOUR OVERCROWDED MIND

R. S. said she was torn between so many contradictory wants, blown hither and thither. She thought she was capable of quiet stillness, but was not sure. She was disturbed by the pettiness of her life and by the constant weight of the greatest stupidity: war. She would like to talk over her state of distraction.

We talked for a considerable time; she explained her difficulties and trials. We asked presently: is not your problem that of confusion? You are distracted, drawn away, for there is no order and clarity. Are you not in conflict, and is not this endless conflict making you weary and petty?

‘Yes’, she replied, ‘I am afraid it is.’

Conflict becomes wearisome and confusing without understanding it. Till you clear up confusion, conflict brings only further confusion. Confusion exists because we do not know how to bring order. Our problem then is how to bring order and not how to clear up confusion; in bringing order, confusion ceases. That is, to revalue your relationship to each conflict as it arises, to find out your response to each conflict. To study your responses is far more important than to study the incidents of the conflict, for these responses will indicate the capacity for true valuation. Thus become aware of your relationship, of your inward response to each conflict, however trivial, and thus rediscover the value you give to each conflict. The complete valuation is not made at once, but as you observe and become deeply aware, you will begin to discover the full significance of each conflict. Thus you will bring order out of confusion.

Suppose you have a drawer full of letters. You bring order to it by reading each letter and by finding your reaction to it; you either tear it up or keep it. Thus you go through all the letters, keeping some and destroying others. After a time you again examine what you have kept, and of that again you destroy some. Thus there is space and order in the drawer. A drawer is useful because it is empty. Similarly, a mind is ‘useful’ because there are empty spaces in it; it is not crowded and disordered.

If we may point out, your mind is overcrowded; there is no space, no stillness in any part of it. Hence confusion, distractions, and weariness. Your mind becomes ‘useful’ only when there are deep and wide spaces of stillness, for then only can there be timeless creation. Order brings space, and you cannot have order without the true valuation of each conflict. The conflict will recur if true valuation is not made and thus maintain disorder and confusion. Just as when you have written and posted a letter your mind does not dwell on it, so you make true valuation of a conflict, and it will not return again. Just as when you have not completed a letter, your mind will revert to it over and over again, so an unfulfilled thought or falsely, incompletely valued conflict will come back again and again. It is these uncompleted thoughts, these repetitive memories that clutter the mind, obscuring and crowding. Do not try to force them out of the mind-

heart, but as each uncompleted thought-feeling arises, as each repetitive memory surges up, however trivial and stupid it is, become aware of it, examine it, study it, understand it. This understanding is prevented if you identify yourself with it, if you judge it. Become choicelessly aware of it, and as you become more and more aware of it significantly and deeply, the thought-feeling becomes completed, the memory widened and inclusive, not singularistic but extensional. Thus through continual and extensional revaluation, the mind-heart becomes tranquil; there is the highest wisdom, there is creative emptiness.

Chapter 70

TO THINK IS TO BE AFRAID

S. T. explained that he had been reading something we had said and had been pondering over them, but he had found within himself a barrier, a rock against which he could do nothing. He had battered his head against it for some time, and he could neither break it down nor go beyond it. He despaired of it. He would like to talk it over, and perhaps we could find a way to break down this self-enclosing wall.

He was an earnest man, a so-called intellectual with his conceits and self-satisfied conclusions, which revealed themselves at odd moments. He was unaware of them, but gradually as we talked he became aware of them, and on the instant he wanted to rationalize them away. He was impatient for a result, and we pointed out that wisdom lies not in the end, but is gathered on the way. To gather wisdom, one must set aside the end, the result. Patience is necessary, not the greed of attaining a result. If there is passive awareness, it helps to discover the contributing causes that go to make up the self-enclosing walls. Patience is not a virtue to be cultivated, but without it understanding will be difficult. Patience is not to be gained eventually, but rather is to be perceived deeply in the present. Without rationalizing it, without justifying impatience, be still now for a while to experience patience. Once one has experienced the necessity of patience, it will ever be implanted in the mind.

Is it not necessary to understand the thinker, the doer, the actor? For, his thoughts, his deeds, and his acts cannot be separated and studied. The thinker is the thought, the doer is the deed, the actor is the act. From the thought the thinker is revealed. The thinker through his actions creates the good and the bad and is enchained by them. The thinker creates his misery, his ignorance, his strife. The painter paints the picture, this picture of passing happiness, of sorrow, of confusion. Why does he paint this painful picture? This is the problem that must be studied, understood, and dissolved. Why does the thinker think his thoughts, from which flow all actions? This, surely, is the rock wall against which he has been battering his head. If the thinker can transcend himself, then all conflict will cease. To transcend, he must know himself. What is known and understood, what is fulfilled and completed, does not repeat itself. It is repetition that gives continuity to the thinker. Why does the painter paint this painful picture? There are a few main causes, and one of them is habit.

Through habit, through repetition, through copy, the thinker thinks his thoughts, which bring ignorance and sorrow. Is not habit thoughtlessness? Awareness brings order, but not habit. Settled tendencies bring about thoughtlessness. Why is he thoughtless? To think is painful; it causes disturbance, it brings opposition, it may change the course of one's actions, which may go contrary to the established pattern. To think-feel, to become aware may lead to unknown depths, and the mind rebels against the unknown. So it

moves from the known to the known, from habit to habit, from pattern to pattern. Such a mind never abandons the known to discover the unknown. Realizing the pain of thought, through copy, through habit, the thinker becomes thoughtless. To think is to be afraid, so he creates patterns of thoughtlessness. If the thinker is afraid, then his actions are of fear. He regards his actions and tries to change them; he is afraid of his own creations, but the deed is the doer. So the thinker is afraid of himself. The thinker is fear itself, the thinker is the cause of ignorance, of sorrow. The thinker may divide himself into many categories of thought, but the thought is the thinker. The thinker and his efforts to be, to become, is the very cause of conflict and confusion. The thinker himself is ignorance and sorrow.

‘Then’, he asked, ‘how am I to transcend it, to go beyond myself?’

Sir, your mind is not silent enough to appreciate the problem, and yet you want to go beyond it before you have even understood it. The problem, if read rightly, thoughtfully, contains the answer. Again, if we may say so, there is impatience, and the greed for a result is not the answer.

As we said, the thinker is ignorance itself, is sorrow itself, is fear itself. Does this mean anything to you, sir? Apparently it does not, for you are concerned only with going beyond it. How can the thinker go beyond himself if he himself is ignorant? He must cease to be. Ignorance and hate cannot become enlightenment and love at any time. Ignorance and sorrow must cease to be.

‘How shall I set about it, to destroy them?’

Again, your thought is on a result, on achievement, on getting rid to gain something. Now please listen. You have not felt the shock of the realization that the thinker, the ‘you’, is in himself the poison; whatever he wishes and does will be poisonous. Why is it that you do not feel the shock of this realization? Either because you do not think that the thinker, the ‘you’, is poison, or you are numbed. You have agreed all along that the thinker is the thought, that they are not separate, that they exist together. If on seeing that mountain, you do not respond to its beauty and you realize that you do not, then such a realization will give you a shock, will it not? Similarly, when you realize that the thinker himself is ignorance, you are not startled by it: you pass on to other things. You have made yourself shockproof by your reasons, explanations, decisions, conclusions. Your intellect has built walls of self-protection against all discovery and spontaneity, against freedom and understanding. The intellect will never find the answer. But if you allow yourself to inquire into why you are not startled by the thought that the thinker is sorrow, then you will break down the self-enclosing walls. If you live with this dead numbness of the intellect and do not escape from it, then you will find that the rock against which you have been beating your head will melt away. You have become numb, and you do not allow yourself to realize it, to feel it. And only when you are shaken by its reality—the reality of numbness—is there the beginning of the cessation of the thinker and his thought. Then only is there the intimation of the eternal.

Chapter 71

THE TWO WAYS OF ACCEPTING SORROW

T. U. explained that she was not satisfied by the explanations they had given her about her son. Her son was killed in this war; when she was informed of the fact, she became desperate. In her despair she went to some clairvoyants, who gave her a word picture of her son, how happy he was and so on. Then she went to séances, where the son seemed to manifest himself, but in it she found no happiness. Then she went from one religious group to another. Then she studied reincarnation and belonged to a society which was promulgating this theory. But in all this she found no comfort. And she added rather sadly that the politicians were concerned only with votes and cannon fodder. She said she was utterly weary of this sorrow, and was there a way of understanding death?

In comfort, which she was seeking, is there understanding? Does not the desire for comfort make shallow the suffering? Comfort, consolation, dissipates suffering and leaves in its place empty ashes. Her wanderings in search of comfort were wasting the potency of suffering. Suffering is an indication and not something to be got rid of. She had wandered in search of explanation, from one group to another, and so was wasting the mental and emotional energy necessary for the understanding of sorrow.

That which is made up comes to an end. We are a result and not the end. That which is a result must ever be caught in flux, in the impermanent. There is nothing permanent in the made-up, and that which is indestructible lies beyond the transient. Death and birth is an endless chain to be broken when we will; it is in our power to cast them off at any time and realize the eternal, the timeless.

To that realization all our thoughts and energies are necessary. They must not be dissipated. The search for comfort dulls and dissipates thought-feeling in empty explanations and opinions. Has she not lessened her suffering through this wastage? If her desire is to suffer less, then she is seeking a narcotic, and she will inevitably find it in one form or another, in one escape or another. But that brings no solution to the problem of her sorrow, the sorrow of everyone who knows death. Explanations, theories, beliefs, and opinions give temporary satisfaction, which distract thought-feeling from the riches which suffering reveals. Without seeking comfort, without seeking passing gratification, living with and 'accepting' sorrow, putting aside the easy temptation of the intellect—that very suffering, that very aching emptiness will bring its own indestructible riches.

There are surely two ways of 'accepting': the 'acceptance' that leads to degeneration and the 'acceptance' that leads to transformation. To accept without thought, with the intellect, with mere rationalization—such acceptance is to succumb, to degenerate. To accept because there is understanding of the empty explanations of the intellect, of the singleness of all sorrow, of allowing sorrow itself to indicate, to give the significance of its own existence—such acceptance transforms sorrow into incalculable riches. Just as a prisoner accepts his position

for his own transformation—or thoughtlessly rebels, bringing about his own degeneration—so right acceptance of sorrow brings its own reward. You must live with it, not morbidly, not in self-pity, not in isolation, not in resentment. You must live with it as you would with a dangerous pet, ever watching it, trying to understand its ways, its intentions, following it with alert awareness, being open to its intimations. Great pliability is needed, which is denied when thought-feeling is anchored to a belief, to a theory, to an experience, to a memory. It is this simple and uncontending pliability of the mind and heart that brings peace and joy, love and understanding.

She replied that she had lived with her sorrow now for many months and that she was getting tired and numb.

Did not this weariness and numbness indicate her desire to be free from sorrow, to get rid of it? She was exhausting her thought-feeling in seeking comfort, which brought about thoughtlessness, deadening her feelings. Comfort is a subtle poison to be avoided by him who would understand and transcend sorrow.

She was silent for a long period, and she broke it by saying that she had caught a glimpse of hope, not comfort, in what we had been talking about, and perhaps she would come out of this confusing sorrow.

Suffering, when allowed to mature, finds its own release.

Chapter 72

THE CLEVER, FOREWARNED INTELLECT

U. V. said she found herself doing or saying something which she knew was not her true thought. She knew why she responded falsely, and yet it happened over and over again. She was well aware of the causes that made her react contrary to her own thoughts and feelings, but circumstances drew opposition to herself.

She told us a little of her life.

All existence is painful. Like so many, had she not overdeveloped her intellect? She lived and moved in its shadow. Was it not always watching, grasping, shaping, calculating? She knew the explanations to her own questionings, the intellect was well guarded. As she said, she knew why she reacted falsely; she had explanations for her own shortcomings. She had analysed herself and knew herself. This knowledge of herself was stored up by the intellect. It was the intellect that had developed and gathered.

This over-education of the part makes for shallowness, for cleverness, and when the part is strengthened and upheld, there is contention, opposition, antagonism. The part can give only a partial answer and so not a complete, true answer. The part is not the whole, the part does not lead to the whole. Only when the part loses its importance is the whole seen. The worship of the part destroys the whole, the worship of the part is idolatrous. The over-stimulation and over-education of the intellect make for clever numbness, for a self-protective shell, which must be broken if there is to be understanding. It is this clever, forewarned intellect, with its conclusions, analyses, and foreknowledge, that prevents her from her own release. She has become numb, insensitive through constant intellectual analysis of her contrariness—all analysis is only partial and so intellectual. So when there is a false reaction, it is analysed away without giving her a startled realization. Having become insensitive, dull, she must now become silently aware of the chatterings of the intellect. This silent awareness of every whisper of the intellect will cause to bring about the alertness of the intellect without its chatterings. Thus sensitivity is established, and with it comes the shock, the realization of the futility, the wasteful conflict of contrariness.

Just as weariness and apathy set in after continual appreciation of beauty, so the over-educated and stimulated intellect makes dull the faculty of understanding. So your problem, if we may point out, is not how to put an end to the self-contradiction of your thoughts-feelings, but how to become sensitive, alert to the wastefulness of a life that is spent in contradiction. Reason has wearied itself; then give the intellect a rest. Feel rather than explain away contrariness; live with it intelligently, with feeling. Silently observe the contradiction; do not identify, justify, but become aware of it wholly. In this silent awareness, understanding and integration come about. Let the seed of awareness bring forth its own fruit.

Chapter 73

A FAMILY TO FILL YOUR EMPTINESS

V. W. said she had an immediate problem to solve. She was attached to her family, she was somewhat possessive, not of their life and thought, but of their companionship. She was, she explained, seeking the freedom of reality. Religious teachers had said you must sever all ties with the family. She had been attempting to detach herself from her family, but had found it extremely hard. Must she not be completely detached to find God?

Why was she seeking detachment, we asked. Was it because it had been taught? Was she seeking detachment for a promised reward? What was the reason for her struggle to be non-attached? Was it the authority of another that was persuading her?

She supposed so, she replied.

She was then not seeking detachment from understanding, but the authority of tradition was forcing her into an act in which she had no fundamental interest. She was more interested in a result than in the means. Did not the means create the end? If she did not understand the significance of detachment for herself, then what value had it? Surely, none whatever. If she was blindly following, then the blind would lead her.

No, she replied, she was not blindly following, but she felt she must be detached. Her present teacher insisted on it, but she did not know what its deeper significance was. 'Yes', she continued after a thought, 'I suppose I am somewhat blindly following.' Why did she feel that she must be detached from her family? Why was she attached to her family? Was it not because she felt desperately alone in a strange and comfortless world?

'Yes', she said, 'I thought I was attached because of the one spirit in us all, but I see why I am attached.'

You feel that the family will understand you better than the others, that you can be with them as you are, without deep opposition, without pretence and its futile struggles. You are attached because you need them. This need you call happiness.

'Yes', she added, 'this need arises because of our incompleteness.'

You are merely quoting, if we may point out, what we had said, but that does not lead us to the understanding of attachment. This need for another exists, and we deeply cling to it. We are attached with aching fear. Why is there this need? Is it not because, being empty, poor, incomplete, alone, you try to fill that loneliness with your family? To fill that aching void you need your family, so you are attached to your family. If you do not have a family, you will try to fill it with something else, won't you?

'Yes, I suppose so.'

So your problem then is not how to be detached but to find something that will fill. You are seeking a means of escape, and you want to find a filler that is

permanent. You try to fill your loneliness with the family, another tries with activity, another with distractions, another with addictions, another with knowledge, another with the idea of God or liberation.

‘But is there not such a thing as the grace of God? Will that not fill the emptiness?’

Not so long as your emptiness is there. Only when your particular identified space ceases is there the infinite. Each one seeks to fill that void according to his tendency. You may fill it with the family, another with lustful thoughts, another with the desire for power, another with a noble idea, but each one is concerned with a satisfying, permanent cover. The one is not superior to the other. So your quest then is: is it right to fill that emptiness with the family? But possessiveness of every kind causes pain, and to escape from that pain, one cultivates detachment. Detachment becomes another means of covering, filling the agonizing void. Now, can this void, this emptiness ever be filled? Is there any method of enriching this poverty?

‘Surely, there must be’, she asserted.

Please let’s think about it more closely. However much that self-enclosed space, that feeling of utter loneliness may be filled, it is still empty. You may cover it by any means: it is still there. You may crowd it with every device of the mind, but that void is still there. That which we think is capable of occupying that void, to that we become desperately attached. For, if the thing, the filler is taken away from us we are miserable, sorrow-laden; for, that emptiness, that aching loneliness reveals itself once again. Is not this void like a broken vessel, a bottomless pit which nothing can fill?

‘But’, she said, ‘there must be something that can fill the emptiness.’

There is nothing that can fill it, however much you may try. You may for a time forget it, cover it up, deny it, but under that cover it is still there. This is obvious, surely. Unless you remove the cause, the symptom is always there. If the mind is convinced of the impossibility of filling the emptiness, the loneliness, then it is capable of bringing in itself a transformation, a revolution. But the difficulty lies in perceiving irrevocably that all attempts to fill that void are sorrowful and wholly vain. To perceive this, to experience this ignorant action, is essential. From this understanding there is order and clarity.

When thought-feeling realizes that this emptiness cannot be filled by any means, then it is in a position to discover that it cannot do anything about it, that its thoughts and actions concerning it have no essential importance; whatever it thinks and does is an impediment. Then the mind becomes still, and in that stillness the self-enclosing walls, which create the separate identified space, the emptiness, and the loneliness, are broken down.

Then there is neither attachment nor detachment. Then the family, the work, the things made by the hand and by the mind are no longer important in themselves; they are a means, not the end. They are a means of self-knowledge, of right thinking, of the highest wisdom. But for a mind that is in bondage to them, there is gathering and renunciation, but this bondage is not broken by the cultivation of non-attachment.

Do not be concerned with the product but with the maker, not with the thought but with the thinker. What the thinker is the thought is; they are not separate but a joint phenomenon. So long as the thinker is self-enclosed, his thoughts and his activities are limiting, binding. Do not merely break away from these bondages, but let the thinker cease to propagate. The thinker and his thought must cease to be. As long as there is the thinker, his thoughts must produce ignorance and sorrow, for the thinker continues himself in the family, in things, in work, in ideas. The thinker establishes himself in his creations; the father becomes the slave to his son, for the son is himself. The identity of the thinker and his thought must wholly cease. When the thinker is silent, when he has ceased his chatterings, then in that silence is the immeasurable.

Chapter 74

THE MAKER OF EFFORT, OF CHOICE

W. X. explained that for many years now he had been meditating fairly regularly. He had studied the various systems of meditation and somewhat practised them. He had also prayed regularly, he had followed the path of devotion. His meditations had consisted of various forms of self-discipline, or rather he had disciplined himself in order to meditate. But after these many years it seemed that he could not break through to reality, to God.

The various forms of what he calls meditation, if we may ask, are they not concerned with fashioning thought after a pattern? The becoming of the ideal, the flowing into the formulated, the cultivation of the necessary qualities, are they not all in the direction of self-becoming or not becoming? Is not our attempt in meditation to be, to become, or not to be, not to become? Our effort is directed to achieve, and without understanding this effort to become, it may in itself, may it not, become the means of preventing that which is. Without understanding him who prays, his prayer may lead, may it not, to delusion. So is it not essential to understand the maker of effort, him who prays? Prayer and effort bring their own reward, but is the reward commensurate with the real? The reward is according to the effort, and unless the maker of effort understands himself, his effort, his prayers have no right foundation. Effort and prayer are answered, but may it not be fear calling to fear, greed to greed? An answer is not necessarily the true answer, and so without understanding the maker of effort and him who prays, his thoughts and activities have no basis for right thinking and action.

If you do not understand yourself, you have no foundation upon which to build. If there is no self-knowledge, what you build today will be destroyed tomorrow. There is no surety; there is contradiction, misery, ignorance. If you understand yourself, you understand the whole. Without you the world is not. Without you I am not. You are the result of the past, of all the fathers and mothers just as I am also the result of all the fathers and mothers. Your father is my father, you are me. You are the world. What you are, the world is. Without understanding yourself, without self-knowledge, all knowledge is ignorance and leads to sorrow.

‘Yes’, he replied, ‘I see that very clearly. I see what you mean by I am my father. It is very revealing.’

So without self-knowledge, self-awareness, right meditation is not possible. Without becoming aware of the thinker, merely to reshape thought is of little significance. Awareness, meditation, then, is self-discovery. To discover, there must be freedom from identification, from judgement, which is a very difficult task. Judgement and identification prevent the understanding of every thought-feeling. This freedom must be established from the very beginning. A wrong means will produce a wrong end; through a wrong means the true cannot be found. From the very beginning, awareness must be choiceless. If the maker of

choice continues, then there will ever be duality, the 'I' and the 'not I', merit and demerit, and so on. Through duality, the one is not. The maker of effort, the maker of choice must be understood and dissolved. The maker of effort is the centre of accumulation, and what is accumulated is not the real. The elimination of this centre, of this thinker, of experience and memory must be resolved. The whole process of awareness or meditation is to reduce the maker of choice, the thinker, to silence.

'How is this to be done?' he asked.

Before we seek a result, we must understand the problem itself; in itself is the solution. Becoming aware of the problem itself is the flowering of the answer. To seek an answer outside of the problem is to bring about confusion.

'You mean I mustn't seek a result in my meditation?' he asked.

If thought is seeking a result, then it is not concerned with the means. If the thinker is concerned with his achievement, then he is cultivating duality. If the maker of effort is seeking an end, he is nourishing craving, and craving leads to illusion and sorrow. If you are seeking a result, you are strengthening self-enclosing memory. The thinker expands himself into the result. If you are seeking a result, is not your thought concerned with gain, achievement, the strengthening of the centre of accumulation? Is there not the strengthening of the experiencer and his experience? If you are seeking a result, are you not fabricating time? Through the process of time, is the timeless, the eternal, to be discovered? Time must cease for the timeless to be.

So what is our problem? To understand the thinker and not merely to transform or modify his thoughts. His thoughts and his actions indicate the thinker. Through the awareness of his thoughts-feelings the maker of them is known. You cannot come upon the maker if there is mere judgement of his thoughts-feelings-actions; in following them up, the thinker is discovered. In thinking-feeling through every thought-feeling, the thinker in all his different forms, in different guises, in different poses is discovered. All the threads of his thoughts-feelings lead to him; they must be followed up, however trivial or stupid, and understood. If all the cunning expressions of the thinker are observed, studied and understood, revalued again and again, then the thinker ceases to be. If the leaves and branches are cut down over and over again, the tree dies. If every thought-feeling-action is thought out-felt out and so understood, completed, then the centre, the thinker, the becomer, ceases to be. The thinker is no longer the experiencer with his uncreative accumulations, memories. Then the thinker, being utterly silent, is no longer gathering or rejecting; in that deep wisdom of silence is the timeless creation of the eternal. Do not speculate upon it, do not formulate it, but become aware of every thought-feeling-action. The flame of awareness burns away all hindrances, blockages, and in that flame the real is. Then that flame, when it has burnt away all bondages, is self-illuminated, causeless, deathless.

CAPACITIES AND GIFTS ARE DANGEROUS FRIENDS

C. Y., in the course of what he was saying, explained the difficulty he found in understanding himself. He could only flit along very cleverly on the surface, and it was very wearying and depressing. He could not delve deeply.

As he was explaining, we suddenly saw him as through a glass we see different-coloured layers of sand. And as he went on, he was revealing himself more and more. He became silent, and we sat undisturbed by words for some time. One could read him like a clearly printed page.

You cannot dig deeply, for you are too active on the surface. You are too occupied with your cleverness, with the gift of your verbal activity and explanations, with your ease and comfortable life. You are in a gratifying and comfortable hole, if we may say so, and each time you dig you get deeper into it, for it gets more agreeable, more pleasantly lethargic. Your family, your friends, and your environment help you to make that hole bearable. Since they are satisfied with theirs, they want to keep you in yours. You are encased in your own capacities and gifts, and they are dangerous friends. They become the end in themselves and lead to much misery and sorrow. Your food, your clothes, your postures, and your pleasures are making you weary and dull; your mind is becoming insensitive and losing its quickness of understanding. In this state, how can you dig deeply?

He was startled, and looking up quickly he said, 'Tell me more about myself.'

You have to discover for yourself about yourself, and our telling you has little significance. You have to shake off all those causes that are making you weary, depressed. The superficial layer of the mind, being so sharp, so adroit, is preventing the deeper layers of consciousness, of the inner mind, from coming to the front. It is hindering, for it may be forced into a deeper and wider action; it may be harassed to pursue a new course of action, bringing disturbance and stirring up anxious fears. To escape from awakening, it is active superficially, making itself dull and comfortable. Till the superficial, the now-active layer of the mind, realizes that it must voluntarily lay off its activities to bring into the open the inner mind, it will be a persistent impediment. If you become aware of the many activities of the superficial mind, watch its chatterings, its dances, its reasons, and conclusions, through this awareness there comes peace and clarity. This may mean that you may have to abandon your comfortable surroundings, your enervating, mechanical thoughts, the mode of your present life. Deep disturbances are necessary for clarity and understanding. To understand reality there must be inward strenuousness, not the superficial, consuming activity.

Through this constant awareness, dreams give place to restful and creative sleep.

'I am glad', he said, 'that you are talking about dreams. I am bothered by them.'

The state of alert awareness during the waking hours gives an opportunity during the sleeping hours for deeper understanding. At first as one begins to be aware, which is not as yet continuous, sleep is disturbed by many dreams, for awareness causes disturbances. There are important and unimportant dreams, and their interpretations depend on the fancy, prejudice, and tendency of the dreamer. But as you become more and more aware during the waking hours, thinking out, feeling out every thought-feeling, there will not only be fewer dreams, but those dreams will need no interpretation, for they will be understood and assimilated in the fullness of awareness. The importance lies not in the interpretation of dreams but rather in rich awareness.

It would be a pity to waste a life that has promise. Instead of dissipating it in outward activities, in foolish cleverness, in verbal exercise, would it not be better, more edifying, to turn those capable energies to the clarification of those inward activities which either mar or bring understanding and happiness? The outward treasures are soon wasted, corrupted, and conflict and sorrow follow. The inward treasures are imperishable; they lead to the bliss of the eternal.

Chapter 76

IN SEEKING THE REAL, BREAD WILL BE SUPPLIED

Y. Z. asked why we said that there is no path to truth, that truth is a pathless land. Does not truth give certainty? Is there not lasting surety in it?

All rivers flow into the sea; on the volume of water depends the swiftness of the stream. The thin streams soon waste themselves. There is surety in the course of the river: it goes over or around every obstacle or makes a new way for itself. But it is swiftly moving towards the sea. When these waters enter the sea, in its vastness, in its boundlessness, the river that has known the limiting shores is lost, is absorbed.

There is certainty and uncertainty, surety and insecurity in the struggle of existence. Here we seek and create certainty; here we are sure; here we are caught in the conflict of the good and the bad; here we know pleasure and pain, birth and death. On the shores there are paths and bypaths, each path breaking up and multiplying. On the shores are the many gods and their contending followers. There is confusion and the noise of many assertions. All existence on these shores is a strife and a pain.

The sea is not far away. It is made far away, for we have fixed the end. It is the end that makes the distance. There is no end and a beginning; this greed of achievement, of success makes for constant becoming.

‘Do you mean we should not have an end, a goal?’

The goal is inspiring only when the present does not yield its immensity, its understanding; the end becomes an attraction, an escape from the present. The present is the eternal, and if you do not understand its significance now, there is little possibility of comprehending it in the future. The ignorance of the present only becomes the ignorance of the future. Ignorance does not transform itself into wisdom through the process of time, through the inspiration of a goal. It must be dissolved in the ever-present. As it arises, it must be observed, understood and so dissolved, which is the ever-present action. Just as a tree dies if its leaves and branches are cut again and again, so ignorance and sorrow must be cut down as they appear, through constant awareness and understanding.

This understanding is not to be gained eventually, in the distant end. That which is not understood continues, and that which is understood ceases to be. Understanding is not accumulative; there is no experiencer who understands. What is incomplete remains as memory, giving continuance to identity, to the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’. That which is understood, completed ceases to be, as it does not leave traces, memory. Understanding can exist only where there is freedom, not where there is bondage, not when the mind is crowded with memory. The end, the goal makes for and strengthens memory, and memory or accumulated experience does not bring about understanding. Accumulation creates a self-enclosing centre, separative, exclusive, and what is enclosed is never free, and so the experiencer can never understand. The experiencer is ever experiencing, and

so the experiencer is ever incomplete. He can never understand, for understanding lies in freedom.

How can there be surety, certainty, in freedom? That which is free, the immeasurable, is beyond all comparison; it is beyond and above all opposites. He who is uncertain craves for certainty, but is not all existence uncertain, insecure? Death, disease, old age is upon us, which creates impermanency; yet we seek certainty in the impermanent. In death, in decay, in the transient we seek surety. How blind we are!

‘But we must surely live in this world. Who will give us our daily bread?’

In seeking the real, bread will be supplied; but if we seek only bread, then even that will be destroyed. Bread is not the ultimate value; when we make of it into the ultimate, there is disaster, there is murder, there is starvation.

Through the transient seek the eternal. There is no path to it, for it is the ever-present.

MEMORY MUST BECOME AS AN EMPTY SHELL

Z. A. explained that he had been trying to write down, as was suggested, every thought-feeling during the waking hours. It had produced very interesting results and brought considerable understanding. He had also been trying to write down, upon waking of course, his dreams and thoughts during the sleeping hours, but they were very fragmentary, disjointed, and few. His dreams were concerned with time, in different forms, but time had become important to him. Could he talk it over?

He told us of some of his dreams, and he had found that in trying to write down every thought-feeling the problem of time had become urgently important. He had time to write down, but there was another time involved; it was this that was creating disturbance and anxiety.

Is he not referring, if we may so call it, to psychological time? Chronological time, the succession of events, is not difficult to understand, to regulate, modify, or change. Psychological time is more complex, more difficult to understand. The wandering of consciousness between the past, present, and future may be called psychological time. This wandering occupies most of our interest. Thought-feeling weaves through them, creating fresh patterns, fresh incidents, new hopes; it is concerned more with the future. With some it is the past, and yet with others the immediate. Consciousness permeates time; it is the result of time, it is time itself, so it can foresee its future or look into its past. If you are in an aeroplane, high over a curving river, you will observe both the boat and the man hidden by the bend. From the boat the man round the bend, on the shore, cannot be seen, but you in the aeroplane see both of them. To you the future—the boat that is coming round the bend towards the man—and the past—the boat that has passed the man but is hidden by another curve—are one event. You see the whole. Similarly, is it not possible for you to transcend the cycle of time? You can transcend it only when consciousness, thought-feeling, frees itself from the bondage of time.

Psychological time is memory: the 'I was', the 'I am', the 'I will be'. Memory is uncompleted thought-feeling and action. It is this unfulfilled thought-feeling that gives continuity, identity; and this self-enclosing memory strengthens itself by its own incessant demands and activities. It is never still to understand itself; it is occupied in understanding outside of itself and not itself.

Through the door of the present the past is seen, and the past reveals the future. The past is conditioning the present, but through the present the past is comprehended. The many layers of memory, the weaving of consciousness through time bind it to the past, present, and future. Thought-feeling is occupied with time; the dreams and the activities reveal its bondage. Thought-feeling cannot go beyond the limits of time. The dreamer and his dreams are one; to interpret his dreams the dreamer must comprehend himself. To comprehend he

must cease to identify, for identification brings sorrow and confusion. Memory, the accumulation of experience, must be emptied of its content. Memory must become as an empty shell. For thought-feeling to free itself from time and memory, each memory, pleasant or unpleasant, must be examined and completed, for the contents of memory make the thinker, the dreamer.

‘From what you say, it seems to me that you do not give importance to the future, and my dreams seem to be concerned in a vague way with the future.’

Like so many, you are probably interested in knowing what is ahead of you; the future is more enticing than the past. Dreams indicate the dreamer. The future becomes an escape. To sacrifice the present for the future is to invite disaster and misery. Without understanding the past through the present, the future is of little value, for the future is the continuity of the past through the doorway of the present, which modifies it.

You are concerned, are you not, with the wandering of consciousness through time, with the shuttle of thought-feeling moving back and forth within the frame of time. However much the frame may be expanded, thought-feeling is still within bounds. You may know your future, you may foretell certain incidents and so on, but thought-feeling is still held in bondage to time. The everlastingness of memory, of time, is not the timeless, the eternal. The forger of the chain of identifying memory, of the past, present, and future, must cease to create; he must cease to be. Only then is there the timeless, the eternal.

Through constant awareness of every thought-feeling, the many layers of consciousness are penetrated. In this process of disturbance and understanding, there are unimportant and important dreams, thoughts-feelings. What is unimportant is soon found out and discarded; that which is important need not necessarily be interpreted, but through the intensity of awareness it is understood and assimilated. Interpretation is useless without understanding the interpreter. In this process of awareness, as each layer of consciousness is discovered and understood, during the so-called hours of sleep greater depths are touched, which begin to be revealed during the waking hours. Thus the separation that exists between the different layers is dissolved. Conflict ceases, not arbitrarily, but because all craving, the cause of conflict, ignorance and sorrow, has come to an end. In the fullness of self-knowledge there is peace and sublime wisdom.

Chapter 78

THE HELPER AND THE HELPED

A. was a social worker of considerable efficiency, and she explained that as the world was getting worse and worse, there ought to be greater reforms. She said she was concerned with helping people, and the urgency of social reformation was great. How could she help best, and what were her responsibilities? This dreadful war was making everything worse and not better. She came into contact with so many people, and she was able to do so little.

She had come from a long distance. She was eager and intelligent, and she told us of her life and the inevitable pettiness of all organizations, some more than the others. She had spent many years in them.

If the helper and the helped are going in the same direction, towards the same end, then her help will bring about the right response. But if she is seeking an end which is not that of the helped, then her help will be misused. If she is seeking to establish peace, and those whom she helps are seeking something else, then her good intentions will be exploited. If she is trying to help society to be non-greedy, must she be not sure that it also wants to go in the same direction? Otherwise, her efforts will not only be in vain, but also society will use her for its own ends. To help another, you must be sure that he wants to be helped in the same direction; otherwise, he will strengthen himself with your help in the direction he wants to go, which may be opposite to that of yours.

‘Then you mean that we cannot fundamentally help another till he also desires the same end?’

Between a man of peace and a soldier, can there be any relationship of help? They belong to different levels of thought, to different levels of society; they may meet in the market, but they have different friends, different languages. The man of peace may understand the soldier and may want to help him only to urge him to come out of his world of violence. The soldier will accept such help only when he himself is convinced of the folly of violence; otherwise, he will wish to lock up the man of peace as a social danger.

Similarly, if you want to reform society, you must be sure that it also wants that; otherwise, your help, your enthusiasm is used for its own ends. The collective end is not dissimilar to the individual end. If you want to help me, you must find out what I am seeking; otherwise, in what way are you helping me? If you and I agree, then we will help each other and not hinder. But if you do not know what I want and are trying to help me, you are acting either out of conceit, which puts a limit to understanding, or you are merely carried away by your own activity. To help another truly is impossible if there is the conceit of knowledge, of experience, of authority, of any pretension; nor is it possible if you are merely escaping into activity, social service. To help me, you must know yourself; otherwise, you are as the helped. Is it not important to know before you help? Otherwise, your ignorance will strengthen my ignorance.

‘Yes, that is true. I have studied sociology and am more than ordinarily educated. So I think I know enough to be of some use.’

You think then that a thin layer of superficial knowledge, out of books, out of learned professors, will solve our problems? You think then that if everyone acquired your book knowledge and information, society will improve? Will literacy cure the ills of the world? Is there not a deeper cause for the misery of man?

‘Of course there is’, she agreed.

In understanding and resolving the deeper cause, man can free himself from his sorrow. To understand and dissolve this cause, where will your starting point be? With yourself or with your neighbour? Even to understand your neighbour, you must understand yourself. The dissolution of the cause of misery is then our chief concern; to dissolve it you must comprehend yourself. If this is the intention of society, then it also being your intention, you and the society you wish to help and serve will mutually benefit each other. Then your help, your service has a significance. Then reform will not create further confusion and will not need further reform. Then service is not a marketable commodity, but is given out of love and self-forgetfulness.

She came back the next day and asked why she did not see all this for herself. She thoroughly agreed, she explained, with all that we said; but why was it that she did not think it out for herself, and why was she so slow in her comprehension?

Is it not because she is unaware of her conditioning, her prejudices, and her identifications? Without being aware of her conditioning, however much she may try to think clearly, her thoughts will be obscured, limited. Just as a person who wears coloured glasses must remove them to see without hindrance, so he who wishes to think rightly and clearly must become aware of his conditioning, his hindrances. In understanding them his thought-feeling is quickened, and there comes deeper and wider comprehension. Right thinking is not possible without thought freeing itself from prejudice and identification. Prejudice is a form of conceit, which places a limit on understanding. Mind must free itself from all valuation and comparison to understand the real.

THE SCARS THAT EXPERIENCE LEAVES

B. explained that he was a businessman, not a great success in that world of ruthlessness, for he was satisfied with what he earned; it supported his family according to the American standard. He told us of his daily life, but he hadn't come to tell me about the weary routine of his life, but rather to find out why certain incidents occurred over and over again. They were of an emotional nature, and they repeated themselves at different intervals.

Has he not noticed that certain thoughts and feelings repeat themselves again and again? Why do these thoughts return over and over again? Is it not because they are not completed, followed through, thought out, and felt out to their fullest and deepest extent? Just as an unfinished work teases the mind till it is finished, so till each thought-feeling is completed, it is bound to repeat itself again and again. To suppress these repetitive thoughts-feelings is comparatively easy, but that does not free thought from repetition.

Yes, he agreed, he had tried to suppress them, but they returned.

If he thinks out, feels out each repetitive thought-feeling, completes it, as far as he can, he will find that it ceases to return. For, in understanding there is freedom. So incidents of a similar nature occur because they are not thoroughly and deeply understood and assimilated. Experience leaves traces, scars on consciousness, and sends its roots deep into it, and consciousness becomes the soil for the roots of experience, for memory. From this soil there is action and response, and consciousness becomes merely a storehouse in which things are kept, preserved. Thus consciousness loses its function—to be, to renew. Experience, when it leaves traces, prevents timeless becoming. Most of our experiences create time through memory, through traces, through scars, and so experience becomes a hindrance to understanding, to timeless creation. It is these traces that build up the consciousness of the 'me' and the 'mine', the time-binding factor. Just as long as thought-feeling is bound by experience, so long will there be repetitive experiences or incidents that occur again and again. As each experience arises, think it out, feel it out as deeply and extensively as possible, which will be rapid or gradual depending on the contents of the consciousness, making awareness dull or keen.

If, sir, you do this with all your thoughts-feelings, not only with those choice thoughts-feelings but with each one, then the repetitive incidents and experiences yield place to a life without beginning and without end. Fear of death ceases, for there is eternal life, timeless becoming.

Attachment to experience and the scars of experience bind thought-feeling to time, which creates the self, the 'I'. The thought-feeling of the self brings an end, brings death.

As he left, he explained that he had listened very carefully and, as he noticed at the talks, what we have said now would be understood. Though he could not

understand all of it now, he had gathered its significance, which would act as a leaven.

TO REFORM POLITICS IS TO WASTE THOUGHT

C. asked why it was that we took no part in politics; he himself was taking a part in it somewhat, as he felt that politics was a medium through which to help. He was not as yet deeply involved in it, and having come to one of the talks, he was intrigued as to why we did not take an interest in politics. Was it not an important medium through which to bring order to this confused world?

He told us of what he hoped to do in the political world, how deplorably corrupt it was, but as he felt very strongly that he could do something in it, he hoped to bring about better social conditions. He was an alert man and awake to certain things and was eager to know more. He told us somewhat of his life.

Politics is only one branch of life, and to focus one's whole attention on it, as is being done, is to worship the part, and in the development of the part there is conflict, confusion, and antagonism. The part can never contribute to the comprehension of the whole. Politics helps to focus thought but in the wrong direction. When thought is directed rightly, politics has its own right place, but otherwise it becomes a source of grave danger. Without right thinking, politics becomes a game in itself and a disastrous game for the rest of humanity. Then the few manipulate the many; then its affairs are made to appear as infallible as that of any church. Then corruption is an inherent part of it, as it lives not on the good but on power, authority, oppression. The affairs of the State are as the affairs of the individual. The State and the individual are not different: what the individual is the State is. The State is not higher than the individual, for he creates it; it is born out of his own pattern. And as most individuals are confused, envious, seeking power, violent, the State then is organized violence, organized power, organized confusion, and so on, which we know it to be, with deadly results. To reform politics, the affairs of the State, is to waste, dissipate thought. To be occupied with the symptom, with the result, is to bring further confusion; and only with the eradication of the cause is there clarity and order.

So the truly religious man, the wise man, will not be occupied with the result, with the product, but will be concerned with the maker, the producer. To such a man, occupation with the State, with the government, with politics becomes a hindrance to the necessary and fundamental transformation of himself and a hindrance to the discovery of reality.

'But', he said with impatience, 'it will take an infernally long time for each individual to become a saint, and in the meantime the world will go to pieces.'

Of course it will destroy itself, slowly or rapidly, according to its mounting greed, violence, and lust. It will have no peace or happiness till each individual realizes the imperative necessity of putting aside ill will, lust, and ignorance. Will it take a long time if you who are asking this question deeply perceive that you are contributing to the confusion and misery by your thought-feeling-action? If you are wholly convinced that you are utterly responsible for the world's sorrow,

you will not be concerned about the time element. You will be concerned with the eradication of those causes in yourself which bring about the outward conflict, confusion, and antagonism. You will not only be putting an end to greed, ill will, and lust in yourself, but you will be spreading your understanding. You think in terms of time because you are used to gradualism, which is a form of laziness and ignorance. Why can't you think-feel directly and simply?

'Yes, but in the meantime what am I to do?'

There is no 'between times': it is a constant process. If you are convinced about what we have been talking about this afternoon, then there is no 'meantime'; you will set to work strenuously to understand yourself. Through self-awareness and self-knowledge comes right thinking, and it is right thinking that will bring peace and joy. No politician, no government can give them; they have to be discovered within oneself. Without them, to be occupied with the affairs of the government is to create confusion and hinder the understanding of reality.

Chapter 81

SPECULATION ABOUT REALITY OR DIRECT EXPERIENCE?

D. said he had written a book on metaphysics, he had studied comparative religions, and his book showed the way to God. He himself has had no deep, inner experiences, but having read a great deal of religious literature, he was convinced that there must be a reality transcending the physical. He then began to speculate on the nature of reality, for he must have indulged in speculation considerably.

Is it not important, we asked, to experience directly and not speculate about that which is to be experienced? Does not this speculation hinder experience? That which is experienceable is not thinkable, and since you have thought about it, pondered over it, the mind has created patterns and formulations in which it is caught, and so it is no longer free to experience. The necessary requirement for experience is freedom, which is denied through formulation, speculation. Not being free you speculate—like a prisoner: he is free to speculate about freedom, but he is not free. A citizen in a tyrannical government is free only to obey, but he is not free. You are free to speculate about reality, but since you are not free, your speculation will not be that of the real. If you are free, there will be no need for speculation; being free you will experience. So the speculative faculty becomes unimportant, or rather a definite hindrance, to the experience of the real. Now, if we may ask, is it not your task to set about freeing the mind from its self-created hindrances? Why do you not set about it, instead of wasting your energies in speculation?

He was rather surprised and sat silently for a while.

‘Yes, you are perfectly right. I have dissipated my thought in speculation for a simple reason, as far as I can see at present. I am afraid to look at my hindrances because I may be forced to take a definite action which would lead me to all kinds of conflicts and disturbances. Let sleeping dogs lie, and I suppose that is the reason I escape into speculation. I never saw this till now; and how is one to overcome the conflict?’

You are crossing the bridge before coming to it, are you not? You are not in actual conflict; your mind is anticipating it and safeguarding itself, is it not? Therefore it is avoiding conflict, which it did through speculation, and it is playing the same trick in another form. Is it not more important to understand the mind than the conflict it creates? Through the conflict, the working of the mind is discovered. Through the thought, the ways of the thinker are known. We are concerned mostly with the thoughts, how to mould them, how to change them, to reform them, to modify them and so on and not with the maker of them, the thinker. As a tree soon dies if its branches are continually cut down, so the thinker withers if every thought is observed, studied, and understood.

Chapter 82

WILL YOU ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE KILLED BY THE ENEMY?

E. expressed his opinions freely, and for each of his opinions he wanted a categorical answer. He was a man tethered to certain political and religious beliefs, and he went only as far as the rope allowed, and the rope was not very long. He weaved in and out of these beliefs, making patterns which apparently satisfied him. He was enclosed in these patterns, clear and bright in them; there was no crack, no opening in the walls of his enclosure. He asked questions, but did not listen to the answers, for his own answers gratified him.

He explained that he was in the flow of life and did not understand those who were not in the midst of this changing, creative catastrophe. Why had they isolated themselves from this stream of full life?

Is it not possible that those who do not partake of this fullness may consider that this expression of life is utterly unintelligent and barbarous? Human beings are supposed to be more thoughtful and intelligent than the beasts of the field and the jungle; and if they use their intelligence, the course of this civilization, which has led to this mass murder, may be changed.

‘But is it not natural’, he asked, ‘for the stronger to push aside the weaker, and is not war the brutal expression of this fact?’

Violent methods have never brought peace to the world; only peaceful means bring about peaceful results. Goodwill is not brought about by bayoneting your fellow man, even though he may destroy you.

‘We can have peace in the world only when one or two nations are thoroughly armed with all the latest instrument of destruction; then the other nations will not dare to attack. Peace by force is the only realistic remedy in this brutal world.’

This is the rule of gangsterism, which has been tried for centuries, and wars have followed wars. Perhaps there may be another way, that of love and intelligence, but that needs individual awakening. And as each one wants to achieve, and is mesmerized by an immediate result, he becomes a slave to slogans and to propaganda.

‘Will you allow yourself to be killed by the enemy, without resisting?’

Yes, perhaps. It depends on how far one has journeyed on the way of compassion and detachment. Attachment to immediate sensate responses must set aside, which requires constant awareness and pliability of understanding. You have been educated to kill, but not to live. Your religion—not the organized church—says do not kill, and your State trains you to kill, and without thought you follow the easiest way, which you call the full life.

‘If we do not protect ourselves, our enemy will destroy us, our freedom will disappear.’

You have created the enemy by your daily thoughts and activities, by the ways of your livelihood and by your greed. There is no enemy but your greed

and wrong ways of thought. Be free from these, and you will have no enemy. Be detached, and you will know compassion, which is the only factor that will bring peace. You talk of freedom; are you free? Can this freedom be given or taken away by another, by any government? If it can be, then it is not freedom, and a government that promises it becomes a hindrance to freedom. When thought liberates itself from lust, ill will, and ignorance, then there is freedom. This liberation is not the result of environment, good or bad, but is the outcome of self-awareness and self-knowledge.

‘But we have not time for all this; there is a war on and it must be finished.’

War within and without is the result of greed, antagonism, and thoughtlessness, and you will have wars if you do not free yourself from these hindrances. By a wrong means the right end is not possible; through violence there will be more violence but not peace.

‘First get rid of those who cause disturbance, who are aggressive, then we will have peace.’

Each individual is responsible for war, for aggression, for disturbance, and can you get rid of each one? Who are you to get rid of the aggressor when you yourself are aggressive, when you by your thoughts and actions cause aggression? Conceit puts an end to understanding. If each one of us thinks about these matters, then perhaps we will find an answer, for kindly detachment brings great understanding and love. Without compassion there is no way out of this confusion and misery. The schemes and plans of the intellect, being partial and incomplete, can never be true, and therefore they are ever impractical and become hindrances to the unity of man. Superficial devices to unify man through one language, through economic and social legislation and so on do not eradicate the inward causes that bring about antagonism and conflict between man and man. With self-knowledge comes right thinking, which alone will put an end to conflict and sorrow.

‘But all this will isolate you, and I want to be in the full stream of life.’

What you call the full stream of life is unintelligent and leads to ever-increasing confusion and bloodshed. Through awareness of ignorance understanding comes, and in it there is no isolation. Love is not isolation, but the attachment to property, people, and formulations is isolation. Though you may want to be with the full stream, in your heart you have isolated yourself, for you are bound, attached to the schemes and formulations of your own mind. Though you are plunging into the so-called stream of life, your heart is empty. The noise of the mind is distracting, as the noisy stream of life. You are merely escaping from your own emptiness. The fear of emptiness causes isolation. Fear breeds distractions, and the multiplication of distractions does not lead to peace and joy.

Chapter 83

A TEACHER'S DILEMMAS

F. was concerned about the war. She did not want to condone it or support it in any possible way, neither profiteering during its duration nor benefiting from it when it was over. (Her son was in the army.) She had come to this conclusion after reading some of the talks and attending the last Ojai talks. She did not desire to compromise with war and its causes.

‘My problems are the small, everyday conflicts. Should I, being a teacher, encourage in my class competition? If I do, it leads to all kinds of psychological conflicts, ambition, success, and ruthlessness. I try to avoid it, but being in a competitive system it is difficult to avoid it altogether. I may skilfully avoid it in my class, but the other teachers encourage competition, which produces results. The parents like results and so do children, and the school is proud of them.’

Competitive thought leads to antagonism, and as the whole structure of society is based on it, supported by religion in which also there is the comparative and competitive spirit, either one has to abandon the ways of society or go with it, compromising, reforming, modifying. On you depends which path you follow, and your earnestness and understanding will open the way for your action. The highest form of thinking is non-comparative, non-competitive, and in cultivating that, you will find that it produces its own effects without your being concerned with results. Right thinking brings about its own action, and it is more important, isn't it, to be concerned with right thinking than with the reform of effects?

When the educational system of a society is based on what to think, not on how to think, then right thinking has no place in it, and he who is concerned with right thinking will find the right means of livelihood and expression. We may not wish to support war, but indirectly we are supporting it by our acquisitiveness, ill will, and thoughtlessness. To be is to be related, and as it is impossible to isolate oneself, existence becomes painful. Unless we find the real through self-knowledge and right thinking, there is no way out of this pain of existence. Mere reason and logical conclusions become barriers to the discovery of truth, and yet reason must be heightened to transcend itself, for the path of mere reason leads to disillusionment.

‘There is also another difficulty. How far must one be concerned with the details of life? I find myself worrying over the rightness of detail. By nature I am meticulous, and that seems to occupy a great part of my mind.’

When the mind is fussily occupied with detail, with the small, it may tend to lose the perception of the whole. It is one of the characteristics of the mind, is it not, to lose itself in the petty, in the trivial, to give importance to that which is secondary. A mind that is constantly creating values is never free to experience the real. Surely, it is difficult to find the middle path between the confusion of detail and the vagueness of vision. In becoming aware of truth, it will bring about

simplicity. In this simplicity there is realism. Without becoming aware of truth, to be occupied with detail is an indication of the triviality of the mind. It is difficult for a mind that is petty to become aware of its own pettiness; it is ever finding excuses for its trivial occupations. When it ceases to rationalize and so becomes purely aware, without comparing, then its pettiness will drop off as a dead leaf from a living tree.

‘There is another point I would like to talk over: must one avoid altogether social activities, I mean parties and all the rest of it?’

Distractions of any kind, politics and parties, are a dissipation of intelligence. Social and political gossip, though they focus attention, is wastage of thought; it is a focus in the wrong direction. If one gives importance to social parties and so on, it is an indication, is it not, of a desire to escape from oneself, from one’s own poverty of being. How can one be alert, meditatively aware if one keeps late nights? Such dissipations bring about lethargy, dullness of mind, and nervous irritability. Concentrated energy is required, is it not, to discover and experience the real. Distractions of any kind become a hindrance.

Chapter 84

CAN I FIND GOD IN A FOX-HOLE?

G. was a very young soldier. He had been religiously conditioned and was very keen, eager, and anxious to find out. He was not overenthusiastic to be in the army, but had been drafted into it. He said he had been reading extensively and he was confused. He had been talking with several prominent 'leaders of thought' in his town, and they had told him that war was an unfortunate necessity, that he must fight for democracy, and so on. He himself was uncertain about the whole matter.

What was he uncertain about? Was it the question of killing and non-killing?

'Yes', he replied.

Religion has taught you to love your neighbour, not to kill, but the State demands that you must kill for your country, for your ideology, and so on. You are caught in this contradiction. Is this contradiction disturbing?

'Yes, very, and that is one of the problems.'

Let's take that first. If it is acutely disturbing, you will have to give your thought to it earnestly. No one can or must settle this contradictory problem for you except yourself. You will have no peace until you have cleared this contradiction. Circumstances, friends, and opinions may prevent your understanding of the problem. But if you cover it up—now that you are aware of it—through circumstances, through rationalization, or through fear of opinion, then it will create more confusion, more pain. Think about it very simply and very directly: through a wrong means can a right end be achieved? Must not right means be employed for right ends? Is killing the means for peace?

'But even if we are attacked?'

Think about it very simply, though it may appear that this—killing and non-killing, the attacker and the attacked, the friend and the foe—is a very complex problem. If we can think very directly, simply, we shall bring peace in ourselves and so in the world. Direct understanding is the highest form of intelligence. If you would have the so-called attacker a friend, you must again employ right means. If you are concerned with the right means, there is then neither the friend nor the enemy. If you and I would have peace between us, we must use the right means to eradicate the causes: enmity, violence, thoughtlessness. Think about all this quite disinterestedly so that you discover that which is true. Do not depend on others nor be overwhelmed by facts and mere knowledge. Beyond and above facts and knowledge is understanding, which comes with right thinking, and right thinking comes with self-knowledge. Begin very simply; begin to be aware of your thoughts-feelings, try to understand them, try to go behind them, evermore deeply and widely. Understanding is prevented if you judge or compare, accept or deny, and since the mind is ever doing this, try to find out why it is so conditioned. Break through this conditioning. There is no resting place till the real comes into being.

‘Do you think’, he asked, ‘I can find God in a fox-hole?’
If you are seeking Him, then you will not be in a fox-hole.

IN THE IMMEDIATE DOES NOT LIE THE ANSWER

H. explained that he was a revolutionary; he wanted to bring about immediate results, for the demands were urgent and immediate. He had suffered for his ideas, and it was not merely theoretical—to rid the country of the foreigner; not because he was prejudiced against him, but because the foreigner oppressed and exploited the people and prevented their economic well-being. Like so many people, he said, he had been religious, but now he had thrown all that aside, and politics had become his religion.

We asked him why politics had taken the place of religion.

‘I have not entirely abandoned it; religion has its place, but it does not produce immediate results. To a starving man, God is not his immediate concern. Compassion, brotherliness is all very well, but the capitalist, the landlord still remains, exploiting and enslaving people. This system must be rooted out, and political action and organization, with their expediency, are the way out of the present chaos.’

Of course oppression and exploitation must come to an end, but merely to change one exploiter and oppressor for another, of whatever colour and nationality, is utter waste of thought and energy.

‘Yes, but we use everyone for our purpose. We use poison to get rid of poison. The end justifies the means.’

Will not the means transform the end?

‘Probably, but we cannot have a perfect world. But our result is sure to be better than this present disaster.’

For a supposed betterment you are willing to sacrifice thousands, liquidating them, and your ends are uncertain and uncreative. Verbally you may give assurance, but in the employment of wrong means the hoped-for right ends will be distorted, and hence more suffering, more disillusionment for man.

‘That may be, but you are not for things as they are, are you?’

Only the most ignorant will be, don’t you think? There must be a fundamental and radical change in the ways of our thinking and conduct, for man will never be satisfied by political action alone; the immediate soon passes away. Without understanding the immediate in relation to something that is timeless, the immediate becomes meaningless. Man does not live only in the immediate; he does not live in the infinite present, and it is because he is hoping, planning, plotting to become, to succeed that he brings about disaster. You are planning for the immediate, a structure which is temporary, however satisfactory; but is that enough? Must not one seek, use the highest intelligence to go beyond the immediate? Which does not mean the denial of the immediate. On the contrary, it has significance only in relation to something greater than itself. In itself it has little significance.

‘Bread has plenty of significance to a starving man, and without it you can’t be.’

So this is: bread the first requirement, and everything else will follow. The difficulty is you are not a revolutionary; revolt isn’t in you. If it is, then you will understand.

‘We want immediate action, and at present political, economic action is urgently imperative. One must give all energy and thought to this action.’

You are making, are you not, politics into the new religion. And as it is not an end in itself, you are inviting greater disasters. Politics and economic devices certainly focus attention but in the wrong direction.

‘What would you have us do? Let exploitation and oppression go on and retire into the dark caves of our mind? Become a *yogi*? You do not suggest inactivity, do you? Do you mean political and economic actions are not enough?’

Yes, partly, and more than that. When all thought and action is subjugated to the immediate, when power through political and economic means becomes the end, when bread and things are given primary importance, when happiness is sought in sensory values, what will be the result? Greater insecurity, greater misery, greater catastrophes like wars, revolutions, depressions, and so on. You want to avoid these, and yet by the consideration of the immediate you are paving the way for future disasters. By confining your thought to social and political devices, however good, are you not putting away from you a far greater thing by which men live? By discovering and establishing that, our human relationship, political and social, will not be conflicting and antagonistic.

‘It is a political and industrial age; the politician and the social engineer and the economist are in the saddle, and the people are with them. It is their world, and ideas like yours have no place in it now.’

Since the politicians and the economists are in power, and since they have become the leaders of the people, it is a guarantee of further wars and disasters. Is this what you are striving for?

‘Of course not, but what is one to do? As you said, industrialization may bring on further wars, but without it we shall ever remain poor.’

Death through machine or poverty; but is there not a different approach? To live in this world without being worldly? To give industry its proper place and not let it assume supreme importance? This can be done only when reality is sought not in the things made by the hand or by the mind. As long as politicians and economic industrialists are the leaders and teachers of the people, through churches, through advertisements, through propaganda of various kinds, there will be a succession of catastrophes and miseries. In the immediate does not lie the answer, but in the eternal present.

‘We are concerned with survival, and we can survive only if the oppressor and the exploiter are removed, and revolution with a plan is a definite way of getting rid of them.’

It is not revolution that concerns itself with the immediate. Such consideration only brings about different groups of exploiters and oppressors, but we begin again without understanding. If you can abandon the religion of power and blood, with their dogmas and creeds, then you will find a lasting solution to

our human misery, but otherwise you will be manipulating in the world of conflict and misery.

‘You mean that we must love and all that kind of thing? But I am afraid all that is not practical. It has never succeeded and never will in a hard and brutal world. Peace is possible only by force, for we are untamed beasts.’

That is just it. You want to bring about peace by violence. How impossible this is! Love and goodwill are not mere sentiment; their ways are simple and extraordinarily far-reaching, which the cunning intellect cannot possibly understand. Intellect demands a price—blood and power and retribution—and love does not.

THE EDUCATED SHELL OF OUR CONDITIONING

J. said he would like to talk over his dreams. He dreamt a great deal; some were very stupid, some interesting and significant, some very disturbing, and others pacifying and clear. He was young, imaginative, and sensitive. He had been through college, he said, but it was most unsatisfactory, for he was not content with the routine of a university life. He was doing odd jobs, and he hoped to write, though it was not a burning flame as yet. External activities, he continued, did not diminish his dreams, though they blurred their clarity. Would you kindly talk about it?

Living is a study in consciousness. Living without self-knowledge is pain. Most of us are acquainted, confusedly, with the external layer of consciousness; of the deeper layers we are either ignorant, or we deliberately turn a deaf ear to their intimations or misinterpret their hints. Within this shell of consciousness we live and function, dreaming, formulating, enjoying, sorrowing. This consciousness, with its many layers, the immediate and the profound, is the result of education, of conditioning, the outcome of the past. Within this educated conditioning, some are aware of its superficial layers and others of its depths; with some there is maintained a constant flow of relationship between the multiple layers of consciousness through constant awareness.

‘Do you imply’, he asked, that there is something, some other state beyond the educated shell of our consciousness, as you call it?’

It must be experienced and not verbalized. Within this educated shell is the wave of time, the past, present, and future, the dreamer and his dreams, the dualistic process with its conflicts of acceptance and negation. Within the shell the dreamer is ever conditioning, for the dreamer is the shell. He is ever adjusting, manipulating within the created, educated shell. His significant dreams are hints of the necessity of adjustment in relationship, in the clarification of a problem, or in the furthering of ideation.

‘I can understand that’, he said, ‘but how is one to break this educated shell?’

Let’s find out why you are putting that question. Are you not eager and, if I may say so, greedy to experience that which is beyond the shell? You are accepting, from what has been said, a state of which you are not aware, and this very acceptance is its denial. But if there is an awareness of the conditioning shell and its process, then there is a possibility of breaking it.

‘You mean that one should analyse one’s conditioning and so break it down?’

Through analysis you will not break it down, but only through awareness, for in analysis there is always the observer and the observed, the dreamer and his dreams. So the dualistic phenomenon goes on, which prevents the educated shell from cracking.

‘Then what do you mean by awareness?’ he asked.

Awareness is understanding without identification. When thought accepts or rejects, compares or judges, then the analytical process begins—the thinker watching his thought. In analysis, the thinker and his thought are separate. Awareness is silent and choiceless, in which comparison and judgement have ceased. Though we have separated the thought from the thinker, through constant awareness the thinker and his thought are integrated, experienced as one. As you cannot separate heat from fire, so the thinker and his thought are inseparable. Awareness is the understanding of cause and effect and of the dualistic process. When there is a choiceless awareness of these two processes, then the thinker and his thought are experienced as one. In this experience the educated shell of conditioning is being broken. So through constant awareness of every thought-feeling-action, there takes place integration of all the layers of consciousness; this integrated understanding shatters the shell. In this process of integration or meditative awareness, dreams have an altogether different significance. This awareness during waking hours makes dreams unnecessary, and as this awareness becomes clear and pure, there comes a state of being which is supreme bliss and wisdom. It is beyond all verbal significance.

‘In all this’, he asked, ‘what significance has memory?’

With most of us memory is a living organism; we feed it and cherish it. By thought-feeling and action, we weave through memory the thread of identification. It is this memory that is the educated shell of conditioning.

‘But surely you are not saying that we must get rid of memory?’

Memory must be as a shell without a living organism within it, the identifier.

‘But that is impossible’, he exclaimed.

You are asserting without experimenting and experiencing. We are thinking within the educated shell, within the created. Only when this conditioning shell is broken is there the uncreated.

‘What you have been saying seems to open up great possibilities, and I must think much more about it.’

Chapter 87

TO BE SUCCESSFUL IS MISERY TO OTHERS AND FOR ONESELF

J. explained that he wanted to be more integrated; he could not concentrate very easily, even in the things he was interested in. He was flying off at tangents, and he found it extremely difficult to be focused. He had worked at various things, he said, but they had gone through his fingers. He could work with simple and straightforward people, but he found it difficult with the so-called intellectuals, the highbrow individuals. And as they, with their intrigues and conceits, were on the increase, he found that he had to be focused and integrated. He had been told to go to a group where meditation was talked about and practised. He went and was told to meditate on love; it all sounded so silly that he did not go back there again. It was becoming imperative that he should be integrated. He had spent, he explained, countless hours discussing these things with some psychologists. He could not do his work effectually; he wanted to do something quite different from what he was doing now, which was only a means of his livelihood.

I wonder if you really want to be integrated. Do you?

‘Of course I do’, he replied.

You said that in certain activities, with certain people, and in concentration on some thoughts you found that integration was possible, but why is it not possible all round? So there must be a resistance to integration. What do you think it is?

‘I think there is some kind of resistance, but I have not been able to locate it.’

Is it fear, with its reluctance, that prevents integration? Is it that through full integration you might be forced to change the mode of your present life, which causes fear or the reluctance or resistance to being deeply focused?

‘I think there is something in that, but I have always been rather uncertain about myself, incapable, and that is why I have wandered from one type of work to another, and my friends have despaired of me. Now I am doing something which brings me to the top, but I want to do something much more creative.’

Why do you wish to be integrated? To fit better into this monstrous society? To become a success in blood and money?

‘I don’t want to be a success in that sense, and I have a horror of it, but if I am not integrated, I am afraid I might escape into some ghastly illusion. I don’t want to escape, so I must be integrated.’

Why shouldn’t you escape?

‘I don’t want to build around myself an ivory tower, which would be utter destruction!’

You want to achieve something, so you don’t want to escape. You wish to be integrated in order to achieve a certain result?

‘Yes, I think that is it.’

You want to be a success, only on a different level, more refined, more subtle. Success on any level entails blood and money, or blood and power, which really means the enlargement of the pettiness of the self.

‘Heavens, I see that, but I want to be focused and be real, not distracted, wasted.’

Again, why do you long to be integrated? Surely, integration is something far greater and much more profound than what we superficially deem it to be. We think of it in terms of mere social relationship or of success—which is blood and power—or of fulfilment. To be integrated in order to be able to adjust oneself rapidly in relationship is of little significance. To be successful is misery to others and for oneself, though momentarily it may be very gratifying. To fulfil, one may have to be utterly alone without any recognition, without any support, in some unfrequented spot. As integration is something of immense significance and reality, you want to be integrated, and how far are you willing to yield to its demands? You may have to utterly abandon the present mode of existence with its conceits, pleasures, superficialities. As the implications of integration are vast, on you depends how you approach it. The approach to integration is far more important than integration itself. If you approach it superficially, with the hope of a comfortable relationship, or of making a success and so on, your integration will be according to your demand and perception. In desire itself lies the answer to desire. So it is a matter of how superficially or how profoundly you approach integration, and according to how truly you approach it, you will have your answer. The approach is far more important than the end itself. In the means is the end. One must be utterly vulnerable and open to be integrated.

UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

K. said he wanted to talk over certain aspects of duality. 'Without duality there is no existence. In it is life; the constant struggle of the opposites is the very nature of life—political, social, and personal relationship. In this very struggle is creativeness, not outside of it. Thesis and antithesis will ever exist, and out of their conflict a result will be produced, which will have its own antithesis. Thus there is constant progress; feudalism produced capitalism, and capitalism has produced communism. There is no retrogression, for in the conflict of duality there is always a forward revolutionary movement.'

There is friction, struggle in the opposites, but is there creativeness in this conflict? Is creativeness the outcome of duality, or is it something beyond all conflict? Conflict exists in all relationship, and is the end of conflict death or the beginning of another existence, of another state of being? In understanding conflict, we shall comprehend the significance of duality; in relation to conflict duality has a meaning. Is life to be lived in the endless corridor of duality? Is there a forward movement within duality? Within the bounds of duality, can there be deep revolution? Apart from theory, let's talk about it more directly. In the actual moment of conflict, are we aware of creativeness? When the noise of struggle is over, when we are no longer torn between the opposites, when we are at peace with ourselves, when the self is in abeyance, then there is creativeness. With most of us, conflict takes the place of creativeness, and so conflict becomes the essential expression of life.

'Existence is conflict', he asserted.

Existence is pain, and should we not go beyond it? If life is an endless conflict of duality, then there is no end to pain, then there is no forward revolutionary movement, but only different forms of pain. So reform within duality becomes retrogression, and there is creative revolution only outside duality. Society is the expression of ourselves, and if our thought-feeling is confined to thesis and antithesis, then there will be division and confusion in all relationship.

'Is it possible for thought', he asked, 'to go beyond thought? If it cannot be experienced, then it is not real; then it becomes the unknowable, which is mere superstition.'

If there is no experiencing without delusion, then existence is meaningless. It is possible for thought to free itself from duality only through understanding the maker of division—the becomer and the becoming. It is possible when the thinker and his thoughts are experienced as one. As you cannot separate heat from fire, the thinker is inseparable from his thoughts. We have brought about this separation, and only through meditative awareness can there be integrated experience—to become aware of every thought-feeling, to be aware of its cause and effect and its dual process, then to experience the thinker and his thought as

one. This brings about true inward creative revolution. Since there is no attachment, infinite pliability is possible.

PATTERNS COMFORT US INTO DULLNESS

L. explained that she had been following a certain, religious mode of thought for some time. She had not intended to follow any pattern, but she had drifted into it without realizing it. She said she must not follow anyone but herself, and it might clear up some of her confusion if we could talk it over together.

Why is it that we need patterns, imposed or self-created? Is it not because of fear? We are afraid of not achieving, gaining, becoming. By following a pattern, we need not deeply exert ourselves to think, to feel; others have thought out a course of action, and we have but to follow. Patterns, we think, act as safeguards against failure, pain, and confusion; but they only make us thoughtless, comforting us into dullness. Following patterns maintains the division between the thinker and his thought, between the observer and the observed; thus there is no possibility of transcending the thinker and his thought. In following patterns, thought-feeling moves within the sphere of the known, the created, and so is ever conditioning itself. Thought is never free to experience, to discover the real. Besides, in the pursuit of a pattern there is ever the constant struggle of becoming and never understanding and so being.

With the freedom from patterns there is creativeness. So if we can understand the deep significance of patterns, then we shall not reject one and accept another, whether created by another or self-developed. Once one grasps the fundamental nature of patterns, then through constant awareness they are broken down within oneself. You may not canalize through a narrow pattern the immeasurable flow of life, and since we are constantly attempting to do that, we are enchained to conflict and pain, never free, never open, never vulnerable to reality.

‘If one thinks this way’, she added, ‘it is not such a lonely affair. I was confused, and so I went to a psychologist to talk things over, and do you think it was wise?’

Instead of allowing all relationship to act as a mirror for a self-revealing process, which alone can clear up confusion, we choose a particular mirror which we hope will dissolve our confusion. Now, can any particular authority bring clarity, or must it be sought out by ourselves? The expert or a formula can bring about a result, but it will not be self-knowledge. Only self-knowledge brings clarification, dispelling confusion. Self-knowledge is gathered through every relationship, with the humblest or with the most learned, but when we look to authority in order to learn, we shut out the infinite riches of life. Then we do not learn, then we are not open, vulnerable to the riches of reality.

‘Yes’, she replied, ‘I understand what you mean. We are all prone to giving importance to authority, and so we shut ourselves from experience. One should welcome experience and try to understand it.’

You will not be able to understand experience without understanding the experiencer. The experiencer is not to be separated from the experience: they are

a joint phenomenon. In comprehending the experiencer, the whole phenomenon is grasped.

‘There is another difficulty which seems to be arising—that of objectifying. Is there not a danger of objectifying, externalizing to such an extent that one loses all sensitivity, that one becomes inwardly dead?’

If we objectify, examine our inward reactions in order to understand them, then we shall not become insensitive; on the contrary, there will be greater integration and so simplicity and vulnerability to reality. But if we objectify to escape from pain, from understanding, then insensibility will creep upon us; we shall be self-enclosed, and death follows. To objectify and yet to be subjectively, inwardly, aware is difficult. This process is also a kind of meditation.

‘I have been trying out’, she explained, ‘the kind of meditation you have been advocating, thinking out, feeling out each thought-feeling, and it seems to bring more freedom and understanding. I have tried for several years various types of meditation, prayer and so on, but this has been very revealing and clarifying. One touches greater depths of thought and affection.’

We know love for or towards an object, in which there is dependence, possessiveness, fear, and so on. Is there not love which in itself is complete? It has its being in itself. It toils not.

Chapter 90

RIGHT MEDITATION

M. came from some distance to explain and to ask about his dreams and meditation. He said he had attended some of the talks and had listened attentively to what was said about meditation. He had practised one or two systems, fixing his mind on an object, developing certain qualities, praying, forcing his mind to be still, and so on. They had all entailed tremendous struggle and strain; occasionally it had brought peace, but even that was hazardous. While he was practising the different systems of meditation, he had found that he had violent and disturbing dreams. Why was that? Lately he had tried, as was suggested, to follow out, feel out each thought and feeling. His dreams had been different, and could we talk it over?

He was a schoolteacher, and he liked fairly well his job. He had purposely abstained from too many activities and had given a great deal of time to religious thought.

The right kind of meditation will solve many of our difficulties; in it is the key to most of our problems. Right meditation is for thought to free itself from all compulsion, from coercion, from wrong effort. We must understand the motive, the compulsion that lies behind the becoming, the desire to reach out, to attain. Without fundamentally understanding this urge, right meditation is not possible. The desire to fit into a pattern, however noble and idealistic, is not right meditation.

‘I think I am beginning to understand’, he replied, ‘why you lay stress on this point. It is difficult, but is it not an end-process rather than what one should begin with?’

Why indulge in drunkenness to discover sobriety? Why go south when you have to go north? It is difficult, but is it not more complex and difficult to cultivate wrong views and practices and then to break them down? Is it not a waste of effort? So right meditation is to be discovered from the very beginning. The maker of effort must understand himself. He must become aware first. He must then be aware of cause and effect and of the dual process of thought-feeling; then the thinker and his thought must be experienced as one. In all this, there may not be any compulsion. Compulsion, wrong effort, does not bring understanding. And, if I may point out, because you have been forcing your thought-feeling to fit into a form, into a preconceived formula, you have had violent and disturbing dreams. Wrong effort produces wrong results. To understand profoundly and widely, there must be the cessation of all effort, which is a difficult art. Your dreams are the continuation of your conscious determination to gain an end, to achieve. Such resolutions are not right meditation. Dreams are indications whose interpretations depend on the dreamer, and if the dreamer is concerned with patterns, formulas, and compulsions and not understanding, then his dreams will be disturbing and confusing. But if the

dreamer, the thinker, begins to be aware of his thoughts-feelings and so thinks them out, feels them out as expansively and deeply as possible—which is the beginning of right meditation through self-knowledge and right thinking—then the freedom of reality and understanding come into being.

Force or compulsion of any kind prevents the open vulnerability to reality. The more you are aware of your thoughts-feelings, aware of the many layers of your educated consciousness, and the greater the intensity of awareness, the less the dreamer dreams. Then sleep as meditation brings an awareness of that which is beyond the educated, conditioned consciousness. This again is extremely arduous. Thought, as memory, carries over from day to day incidents, experiences, and intentions, which give continuity to the educated consciousness, strengthening it widely or narrowly. If each day we know death, if each day we complete our thoughts-feelings and not carry them over to the next, unburdening the mind and the heart every minute of the day and not allowing any residue or scars to form, then there will be deathless ecstasy.

The World Within

You Are the Story of Humanity



During the Second World War (1939-1945) Krishnamurti did not speak publicly in the United States but lived quietly in Ojai, CA. People sought him out and came to dialogue with him on many issues of the times or their own personal dilemmas. Their problems were universal human problems and each made true his statement that "You are the world". As Krishnamurti unwound the

tight threads of their thinking and feeling the core or source of a concern was revealed unadorned and without blame or guilt.

There is only reality, the supreme without a second. There is only one humanity and one righteousness, and the way to its realization does not lie through any other path, through any other person save through yourself. Seek your own deliverance, and then you will deliver the world from its confusion and conflict, its sorrow and antagonism. For you are the world, and your problem is the world's problem. If you are clinging to your beliefs, to your petty gods, to your nationality, to your possessions, to your leaders, then you will create a world of confusion and conflict, of sects, of racial and religious prejudices, of economic and ideological frontiers, ever leading to separation, breeding ill will, multiplying catastrophes.

One has to put aside these superficial things, these distractions, these self-deluding indulgences, and cultivate right thinking. Right thinking comes through self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is not based on any formula; but through constant awareness of our thoughts and feelings, of actions and reactions, and of all the opposites that lie within us, comes self-knowledge, from which arises right thinking, right understanding[...] In understanding oneself, there is the comprehension of the whole.

J. Krishnamurti

