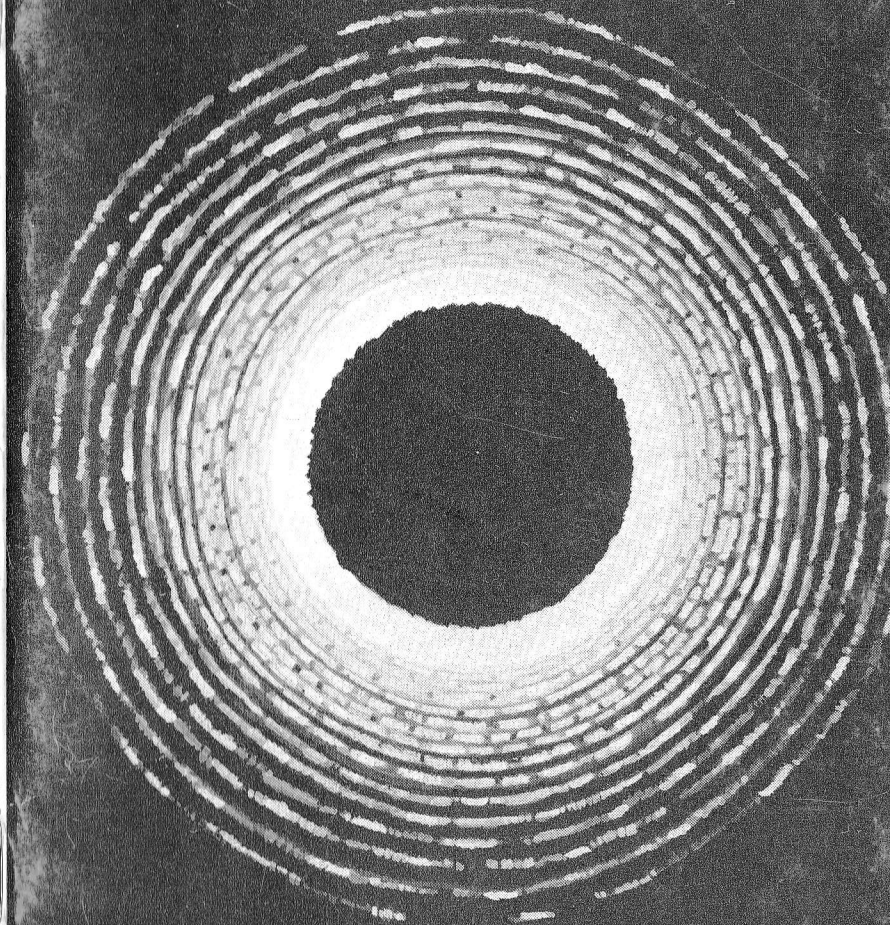


CONTACT

with Vimala Thakur



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CONTACT with Vimala Thakar

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We are on the eve of the gatherings in Holland. A good reason to publish the following:

INTRODUCTORY TALK by Vimala Thakar at the
DEVON CAMP in England on April 24th, 1976

We will be meeting together in this beautiful and exceedingly quiet place. We will be living under the same roof, partaking of the same meals at the same table, seeing the same surroundings, learning from one another's presence; learning a little through verbal communications that might take place, but learning much more from the nature around us: the mountains, the trees, the stream, the ocean, the birds, the intensely quiet nights and surprisingly peaceful days. There is so much to learn. To live is to learn; a person lives only in those moments in which he is learning. When there is no movement of learning there is a staticness, a passivity, a lapsing into inertia which is worse than death. So we will be together for the next five days and such opportunities are rare to come by, to come upon. So I do hope we will make the most of it and the best of it.

For making the most of such a rare opportunity one has to be absolutely simple, and I hope we know what simplicity is; carrying no tensions of creating one's image in the minds of people around oneself - that is simplicity. Not wanting to create one's image of being religious, of being spiritual, of being something special, of being sacred, holy. When there is the tension, when there is the desire to show to other people, to create one's image in the minds of other people by one's behaviour, gestures, words - then there is no simplicity. Simplicity requires the humility to be what we are. So let us be very simple and not carry the tensions of showing one another, or of feeling ourselves that we have come here to do something very special.

We have come together perhaps to learn about meditation, to learn about life; but learning is not an ordeal. It is not something like a burden that you and I are going to carry for the next five days. Learning is something through which one has to move easily, gracefully, and in a very relaxed way. So let us be simple and let us relax! In relaxation there will be the energy of attention, and you know how one relaxes - as you put your clothes in a cupboard or a wardrobe, one can put away one's problems for the next five days, put them away. There will be no human being living in the modern society who has no problems, immediate, urgent, no complications in his life: no challenges to meet or face, a job to find, a house to live in, somebody's sickness or illness, somebody's death; that's the travail of human life, and we live in relationship with other human beings and such relationships throw up challenges every day, every minute. So there are bound to be such problems, challenges, demanding your and my attention, but let us put them away for five days - the so-called personal and family responsibilities - as you put away your overcoat, your hat, your umbrella in a corner; you don't throw them away, you keep them very carefully. The name, the feeling of identity; being a Christian, being an Englishman, being a Hindu, being an Indian, a Buddhist, having certain judgments, values, theories, this whole conceptual acquisition that one has gathered as one grew in life; if one can put that away conveniently, knowingly, with great care and concern when one comes to such a retreat to live in silence, then one can relax; and when knowingly you put them away with great tenderness, care, then in the hours of wakefulness and in the hours of sleep there are no ten-

sions in the mind. The mind knows that you will take the problems back, the responsibilities, the concerns, the issues, you will take them back the day you are leaving and going back to your places. So there is no misplacement of things, no indifference to them, but to denude one's psyche, to denude the mind of all sense of identity, and the responsibilities and challenges that come with it, the past and the future of that identity; if one can denude oneself of all that, then there is relaxation.

There is great fun in such denudation; such a naked mind then, such a naked consciousness has an opportunity to get clean, go through a cleansing process. To enter into silence, to plunge into silence, is to bathe the troubled psyche, the wounded, the mutilated psyche which has gone through a hundred and one stresses and strains - to bathe it with the waters of wholeness, with the waters of totality, to bathe it in the unity of life, in the wholeness of life. So with the denuded psyche one crosses the threshold of verbalization and enters the realm of silence as we are going to do it for the next five days.

To cross the threshold of verbalization and plunge into silence implies entering into a dimension where there are no words, concepts and ideas. Man as he lives today, lives in a state of hypnosis; we are under the hypnosis of ideation and conceptualization. When a person is hypnotized you can make him see water where there is earth and no water, make him see fire where there is none, you can make him feel night when it is day, and so on. So the human race has lived under, and is living under the hypnosis of ideation and conceptualization; words organized into ideas, ideas organized into ideologies, theories deduced from certain ideologies and so on. Intoxicated by the meaning of these ideas, intoxicated by the sound of the word, the feel of the word, the traditional meaning of the word, the dictionary meaning of the word, the association of ideas and emotions attached to the word, we live. We have absolutely no feeling of that state which is entirely free from verbalization, from words; that innocence of silence where there is unconditional freedom from words and ideas - the grandeur of emptiness. So when one is relaxed one crosses the threshold of verbalization and plunges into non-verbalization. We will go into all these issues one by one; this evening one is trying to introduce the approach to one's friends.

Silence implies non-verbalization, not only physically ob-serving verbal silence, that is a very secondary part of it, a very insignificant part of it; if I do not speak outwardly with anyone and go on chattering to myself throughout the day, go on verbalizing inwardly, then there is only the partial, outward, physical, mechanistic behaviour of ab- staining from words. Even that will help a person to soothe the nerves, relax the nerves a little, even verbal silence has its limited value, but that is not the essence of silence. Outwardly I keep away from words and therefore with a vengeance inwardly I go on chattering to myself. If the process of verbalization is going on, then obviously there is no silence. Silence is taking a holiday from that whole process of verbalization; where you see things but you don't look at them from a certain point of view, with a certain motivation to derive something from them, to compare them, to judge them. A non-verbalized percep- tion has a majesty, if only I could share it with you! So through silence, non-verbalized perception, or pure perception becomes possible.

This purity of perception is the foundation of transfor- mation or mutation, or inner revolution, or foundation of meditation - what you will - words are not the important thing. So in such gatherings, together one lays the founda- tion within oneself. We shall be sitting together in silence in the morning and there will be a talk. In the evening we will gather together and if anyone would like to ask a question or suggest a theme to be taken up, I would request that they be given to me in writing by 6 o'clock in the evening; so that, when we gather together in the evenings after spending some time in silence, - if there is a need - we could take up those issues, questions or sug- gestions.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOLLOWING TWO TALKS AT HUIZEN, NETHERLANDS, 1976

3rd of June, 1976

Q. You speak about the unconditional, timeless and egoless state. For me it is a very serious question if there are, in the astral world and the occult world, of which so many initia- tes speak, states of consciousness which falsely look time- less and egoless and form for us a trap. The confusion is so great because often occult teachers and gurus tell us about a perfect state, but I am very unwilling to accept that when I see their message. I believe they speak from a world dif- ferent from the world you speak of.

V. In the occult, in the astral, there are so many things or ex- periences which could look like the consciousness free from time and the centre of the me. The questioner says that for him it is a very serious thing. There are occultists or gurus who talk about these things, of a perfect state - and he would like to know if I imply the same?

What do we understand by the term time? Do we under- stand that there is a reality full of time here, and there is a reality free of time there? Are we dividing life into a reality with time and a reality that is timeless? As the questioner has used the term let us first clarify that whenever the word time is used it implies the psychological time, the concept, the idea of time, time as a measurement by which we measure the eternity. Man has constructed the concept of time. Whether it is a question of measuring it with seconds or minutes or hours or days or centuries, whether it is a question of dividing life into past, present or future, these are concepts.

The civilized man lives in a perceptual world as well as a conceptual world. Rather, he looks at what is perceived through the senses and the sense-organs, he looks at those percepts through the concept. He always measures that which is seen, that which is heard, that which is touched, by the concepts and ideas that he has. Civilization or culture have provided us with an innumerable variety of yard-sticks and measurements. We measure the infinity of life, we measure the infinity of space by dividing it into kilometers, miles, we measure the infinity of space by a line, divide it

into triangles, squares, we divide the infinity by numbers, and we measure by numbers from one to nine and we call that number nine a perfect number and then the whole science of arithmetic is based on it. The same with music, the same with sculpture, the same with poetry, the same with languages. This whole world of concepts, ideas and symbols representing the concepts is the product of civilization and culture, something very rich, something very beautiful, not to be thrown away, not to be blamed and condemned. It is only when one does not understand the symbol as a symbol that he gets bound by it. When we do not look upon time as a concept then only we get bound by it.

When you say that the other state is timeless we are only indicating that when the conditioned mind ceases to function time comes to a standstill. The concepts and the symbols carrying the concepts lose their relevance to the other and therefore they do not function. Time is not destroyed, the concept of time is not destroyed, it is not killed, but it only comes to a standstill. When the mind moves time moves with it; mind is time, thought is time. So that is about timelessness. Life is timelessness. Man constructs time, measures eternity by that yard-stick and creates symbols like watches and clocks, the toys of civilized man, and he plays around with them. Nothing to give up and nothing to throw away, but to use things as they are, in their relative field of utility, and not to equate the total life with those symbols, that's all. The totality of life has not been taken in the embrace of human knowledge and experience. The symbols cannot, measure the totality.

Now, the questioner says: you talk about a consciousness that is timeless and I-less, that is to say, free from the I-consciousness. Now what is the I-consciousness? As there are many concepts that have been constructed for the use of collective relationships we cannot live in a society, get together and share life if there are no symbols. There is a beauty about them. If we become prisoners of our concepts and ideas and get attached to the symbols, mistake them for the reality, which is far greater than the symbols, it is our mistake. Now what we call the I, the me, is a centre from which man has been trained to function. Like the point in geometry the concept of the me, the I, is also a creation of human society. You give the child a name; it is a name given to the body and what that body contains. You des-

cribe the body. You call that person by the name and the child is the person, a total person in that tiny, tender body, and that person is trained to believe that he is that name, he or she is that form. You describe the body, you watch the cerebral movement and begin to describe, evaluate, compare the cerebral movement, call it dull or brilliant, and the child, the person, believes that he or she is dull or brilliant. So amalgamation of identifications, layers after layers of identification gather inside and they crystallize around that name and the form, and that is how the identity of the ego, the me, the self comes into existence.

This centre is very useful for functioning, as the house in which I live. I may love the whole universe, but the house has a functional utility. It shelters me, it gives me room to cook my meals, enjoy my sleep and so on. In the same way, this I-consciousness attached to the biological organism has a role to play on the physical level for providing the necessities of the body, for communicating with other human beings and the other fellow animals and fellow trees and the universe. It has a role to play, but it is a point created conceptually by the society. Look at the ingeniousness of man, that he could create such a centre in the nebulous psychological world. Now when the observation comes to an end as the finite contents of the psyche are exposed to one's awareness, we said that the centre and its movement lose relevance for the further exploration. Moving from the centre of the I and the me with its knowledge and experience has a relevance when I have to deal with the world that has a form, a shape, a colour, something that is tangible, visible, audible, something that can be described, something upon which you can operate. Then the conditionings and the movement of the conditionings from the centre of the me has a meaning, has a relevance. When even this observation comes to an end that centre, with all its conditionings, loses its relevance to what is happening further. What happens further is a happening to the person, not the person operating upon that. You can operate upon the known, with the help of the past. In the realm of the unknown the unknown, the unconditioned, operates upon me, upon the whole of being, and not the me upon it.

So it loses its relevance, it goes into non-action, it goes into abeyance voluntarily, and therefore the consciousness that

is left, moving, vibrating, functioning, has no centre. We call it I-lessness, egolessness. Not that there are two consciousnesses. Have you ever watched a fisherman with his net in the river? A fisherman throws a huge net, say in the sea or a big river, and in the water the net is spread; there is water in the net also. The water seems to be divided by the net, while the fish are caught in it. You take away the net: there were not two different waters, one in the net and one outside the net; there was an illusion of division. As long as the centre of the me, the ego, was operating there was an illusion that here the consciousness was separate from the rest of the universal consciousness. The moment that entity goes into abeyance or non-action the illusion of the separation comes to an end. That is why one says: the energy, the unconditioned energy, the energy that is not owned by me, possessed by me, the energy that is not a part of my inheritance, it becomes operative - it has no centre and no circumference. It is intelligence. And at the end, did not the speaker say: we are not going to go into the nature of that intelligence this evening. We might take it up the next evening: what is the nature of that intelligence, is it a static entity again, is it a unit, has it its characteristics?

The astral, the occult, are a part of the mental, the conditioned part of the psyche. They are hidden today from me, but the astral and the occult belong to the realm of the mental, the conditioned mind. To feel the astral, to move into the astral, is possible. The hidden treasures of the occult can be probed into. Developing the powers there, in the astral and the occult, is possible. There is the knowing, the acquiring of experiences, the developing of power: all that can take place in the astral and the occult, but that is in the realm of the past, the known, the conditioned - not by me, but conditioned by the total human race. Some parts and some aspects of the occult have been gone into by the Hindus, the Indians, some have been gone into by the people in Tibet, some others by people in the Middle East, the Egyptians, Persians and so on. The human race has been busy with that for thousands of years. So the astral, the occult, and what happens there - the knowing, the experiencing and the developing of powers - should not be confused with what one was talking about where the total conditioned mind comes to a standstill and with it the time. There is no experience left, no door left. Experiencing, knowing is possible when the centre is

kept intact. But you move from the biological, the physical, the gross to the subtle. You move from the visible to the invisible, but yet you want to be in the realm of the known, you would like to see the astral, experience it and so on. So it is a movement from the I-consciousness, it is a movement of the known within the known. But when even the movement of a non-reactional attention, the innocent looking, listening or observation, comes to an end no further experiencing is possible. So this is something very different from the movements in the astral or the occult. And I agree that if one plays around rather casually and in an irresponsible way with the astral or the occult one might be inviting many dangers and land into imbalances.

Q. How can one live with pain?

Vimala:

How to live with pain. This must be the question of ninety nine out of hundred of us. It's your question, my question. Pain is such a comprehensive term that is used: physical pain, psychological pain - not that they are two different watertight compartments, they are woven together, closely interrelated.

Now I experience pain in some part of the body. It takes quite a long time for the modern man to notice what is happening in his body, to listen to the voice of the physical organism. One is so busy with the so-called life and its responsibilities and commitments that one hardly listens to the whispers of the body, which the body brings up when you are alone. So first of all, by the time the modern person, individual, notices the pain it has already been there in the body, expressing itself or talking with you in various forms. Maybe a slight constipation, a slight indigestion, a slight lack of sleep, a slight stiffness here and there - one neglects it in the beginning. Not that one has to make a fuss about it, not that one has to be so self-centred that one goes on pampering the body; that's not the way. But the moment it is noticed, to find out why it has taken place and to put it right. The sensitivity to listen to the voice of the intelligence contained in the body, to respond to it in a healthy way, we have no time for that. What I am trying to say is: it has already been with me, neglected, ignored, suppressed, pushed into the background. I'll look at it when I have more time, I'll

look at it when I have vacation, I'm too busy, now I take a pill, some medicine, a drug here and there, and carry on with it, there is no time for it yet, that is the way.

With the body I have to live, but I haven't got a direct, immediate, simple relationship of affection and respect for it. Either I use it for too much sensual indulgence or suppress it in the name of discipline, religion, morality and so on. — Either denial or indulgence.

If that has not been done, or supposing it has been done and the pain is there, the first thing would be to spend some time and find out by oneself: why is the pain there and when did it begin, how did it begin, what is it like? Can it be put right by myself, by changing the diet, fasting a bit, doing something to it - can I do it myself? So the first thing is: I get related to the pain, try to understand the cause, the reason, and put it right by myself.

I do not know about these parts of the world, but in the parts where I live, in the Orient, they say: food is the best medicine. One begins there by changing the diet, trying to find out if something is lacking in the diet, minerals or vitamins, calcium, iron and so on, to find it out and provide it there, so that naturally helping the healing forces of the body one eliminates the pain. If I try to suppress it with the medicine from outside then I am denying the dynamism of the healing forces contained in me. So I try to understand the reason and help the healing forces within the body and the healing forces in the herbs, the plants, the vegetables, the fruits, the cereals; everything has got a healing force. One only has to learn to relate oneself to the healing force in nature or the healing force that is contained within oneself. So one does that.

Now supposing one has done that, it does not work, one has taken the help of specialists and still the pain does not get cured, it has gone so deep, it has gone into the bones or it has gone into the blood, and the experts tell me: nothing can be done, you cannot be helped - supposing I arrive at that state, what do I do then? By the time I have worked upon the pain and tried to put it right and the pain does not get cured, do I lapse into self-pity and depression? ("Goodness me, why did it happen to me, why should it happen to me?") Have I lapsed into or landed into, have I got bogged into self-pity? The moment you allow the self-pity to get rooted in your mind it will lead to depressive psychosis. Self-pity is such a negative attitude, it leads to depression, melancholia, and depression and melancholia inhibit the

healing forces. You may take the best of the medicines in the world, but if the mind is depressed and melancholic the medicine cannot stimulate the healing power that is already existing in the body. So, do I get depressed? Am I afraid that it is not getting cured, I'll die? Is the fear of death preventing me from living with the pain?

I have tried everything. The specialists have told me it cannot be helped any more. Then there are two ways. Either I land into self-pity, go on begging for sympathy from everyone, isolate myself in the negative darkness of melancholia and rot there, sit down and say: poor me, somehow I have to drag the nights after the days and the days after the nights, there I go. That is one way, then you become cynic, you cannot see people around you enjoying health; even that hurts you. So one can lead oneself to that darkness of isolation, bitterness, cynicism and so on, and this happens, to some degree, less or more. One has seen this happening in the human beings and their lives. Or there is another approach. One has tried one's level best, nothing can be done more; to reconcile to the fact of one's helplessness, the limitation of human knowledge, the limitation of medicine, the experts and so on. One says: nothing can be done, now the pain is my companion. Not that one glorifies the pain, worships it, having a sadist attitude, not that way. But one says: it cannot be done, nothing can be done. So one has to live with it.

The moment you reconcile to the fact of its incurability the living with it does not become a problem. But it is the resistance to the fact of the pain that creates the problem, not the pain itself, because one is tackling it and one is helping it; but psychologically one resists the fact that it is there, one does not like it, one hates it, one does not understand it. You know how one goes on arguing? So after having tried whatever is possible one has to let go. There are limitations on human knowledge. The human being, the total human race is a tiny negligible part of the whole universe, the whole drama that is going on, the dance that is going on in the cosmos. So one says: now here is a point, nothing can be done, let go. So one lives with it, does whatever one can to minimize it, but there is no grudge, there is no friction of annoyance, irritation against it, there is no heaviness of self-pity behind it.

You know, to live requires energy and fearlessness, but we are brought up in a pleasure-hunting human race, and pain

is something to be afraid of, to be driven away completely, to protect oneself from. My dear friends, it is the pain and the pleasure - the duality - together that make the whole, the wholeness of life. As long as there is pleasure there is pain. In the shadow of pleasure the pain blossoms. In the physical body it is well nigh impossible to avoid pain.

If it is a psychological pain not based on any physical sickness or illness, but it is a hurt, it is a wound that some relationship has caused me, then that pain is more subtle than the physical pain. It has happened, it is irreparable, cannot be changed. So either one nurses the wound and goes on living with that tone of complaining against the whole of life, or one sees very clearly that one was expecting permanency, continuity in relationships, one was expecting something in those relationships. There is no permanency in human relationships, there is no permanency, security in inner life.

Even in your own life, watch one day, and you see how many moods you changed throughout the day. The mood comes and goes, it changes in half an hour, in ten minutes, five minutes. Somebody's mood lasts for days and somebody's for months or years - it is a question of gradation - but even in our own inner condition there is no permanency. If we watch how many feelings, sentiments, emotions, reactions have visited us in one day, and if we write them down we will be flabbergasted, stunned.

So the psychological pain might be due to the illusion that one had nursed about continuity, security and permanency in relationships which is not there. With the biological and the psychological together there is nothing like permanency, nothing like security.

It does not mean that the relationships or the physical life has no beauty because it is not permanent. A tiny flower blossoms by the roadside, it does not last more than twenty four hours or a couple of hours, but the whole eternity gets condensed in those couple of hours while that tiny tender flower is emanating its beauty and scent to the world around it. The beauty of life cannot be measured by transitoriness or permanency. The beauty consists in the is-ness of life. So if one realizes that there was a beauty in the relationship that one lived, the friendship that one had, if one looks at the beauty that one has lived, then the discontinuation of that or the change in that or the twisting of that does not become an issue. Psychological pain is a crea-

tion of the mind while physical pain is a fact associated with the body.

And may I say one more word? The more sensitive you are and the more you live from the depth of your being, the more vulnerable you are to life. The more sensitive you are and the more capable of loving human beings, the more you will be hurt; there is more sorrow, there is more pain. So psychological hurts, pain and sorrow accompany the sensitivity, intelligence and love. Love and sorrow go together. So I live with it, not out of despair, not out of self-pity, not out of any weakness, but I live with it because that is part of life, that is an expression of life.

10th of June, 1976

Reality is the totality, all-inclusiveness of existence.

In that all-inclusiveness of total life there is that which does not stink of any duality, as it has not been touched by the human mind, has not been defiled by verbalization; and we mentioned some of the aspects like love, or innocence, or humility, joy or sorrow. The all-inclusiveness of reality also includes the world created by man; that which has not been touched by man's mind and hand, and that which has been constructed by the human mind and hands; put together; both are there.

One was saying that in the state of freedom there is no duality as such; but one has to move in the world that is created by the human mind. As you are with the skies, the earth, the sun, the moon, nature, as you are with the soundlessness, the silence, as you are with beauty, you are also with the world created by man. The world created by man has the subtle structure of thought, which is time, and therefore duality. Thought imagines pain and pleasure, birth and death, as having an opposition or contradiction; thought can take in the particular and relate that particular to other particulars with the help of some idea or ideology. So in the inner structure there are the concepts, the ideas, and the tension between them. Thought divides life into good and evil, virtue and vice, moral, immoral, ugliness, beauty; these distinctions, discriminations, evaluations, are the constructions of the human mind, and your mind being a part of it, your body being a manifestation of that mind, contains all these divisions, all these identifications; you have to live and move in it. Once there is the state of freedom, you are aware of the infinity and you are conscious of the ac-

tuality of the psychological structure and its reflection into social-collective patterns; so you move in the limited with the awareness of the limitlessness. Even when you move in the world of symbols, ideas and concepts, you are not a prisoner anymore of those concepts, you are all the time aware of that which is beyond the symbol, beyond the concept, beyond the mind; the awareness of the total and the grip upon the particular.

There is a balance between the movement, the relationship and solitude, the speech and the silence, the pain and pleasure, and the joy untouched by pleasure and pain, the suffering and the sorrow; one is aware of all that. There is no dichotomy anymore. I didn't say that one is either in this or that, one said that one has to live simultaneously in both - the man-made world and that which has not been made by man. Today we are not educated for being with the world free of thought, our growth is one-sided. We are obsessed with the verbalized structure, we are obsessed with the man-made things, made by hand and made by the mind, and we think that is the total life. What meditation points out is: that is only one part, there is the other, and observation educates the consciousness and leads it towards silence, so that you live your relationship with the other. You have been living in the man-made only imagining the other, but through meditation you are enabled to live your relationship with the infinity, with the eternity, with the measureless, with the unnamable, and so on. So freedom implies living with the other, capable of handling the limited. Does that make it clear?

Q. Do you say that there is no freedom in relationship?

V. Yes, I did. I said there is no absolute freedom in relationship. In relationship there is a movement between the I and the you, the me and the not-me. That relationship can be either born of fragmentation, tension, conflict, or that relationship can be born of awareness of the whole, but there is the I-consciousness. In relationship you have the movement from the I, the me, the ego with the help of thought, with the help of symbols, so in the world of symbols, movement, rooted in the I-consciousness knows no freedom; as we are talking about freedom, the ultimate dimension and the essence of life.

Q. Is there any democracy anywhere in the world, and if not, why is it not there?

V. The voyage into oneself, the inward journey, is to find out the source of being from where you can move without conflict, without tension. Yes, we talk about democracy, social structures; based on the concept of togetherness and so on. Is that a reality? Are we together? Are we not self-centred, isolated people, somehow coming together and trying to resist mutual idiosyncrasies and make arrangements? We are adjusting, managing, compromising and so on, but I won't go into it, it will take lots of time, whether there is any democracy anywhere in the world, and if it is not why it is not there?

The thing is human beings are suffering from fear, neurosis. They look upon relationships as ordeals, cannot move into relationship with others - human beings, animals or nature - easily, fearlessly, spontaneously. We suffer from fear, aggression and violence; we have seen it last Thursday. Now is that going to be the way, is the human race always going to be a prisoner of fear, comparison, competitiveness, aggression and violence? We have been doing it thousands of years, the wars on a big scale or the conflicts on a small scale in the family, or the tensions in the privacy of your own personal life - there have been fear, aggression and violence.

Now is there a way of freedom? and one says yes, there is a way of freedom if you turn inward, get acquainted with the known, that is to say the mind. The mind has been mapped out by psychologists, biologists, they described, defined so much about the body and the mind. But we know about it through the books, we have not looked at ourselves, watched. So one says, get acquainted with the known, so that the known becomes your discovery and leads to understanding. We can see how fear distorts one's responses, how aggression makes the relations ugly, and how there is violence and pettiness in each one of us, so that we don't blame the other, put all the blame upon others for wars and violences in the world. We become aware that we also are contributing to it. Selfinvestigation leads to the awareness of one's role in the problems of the world, otherwise we sit at home comfortably and put the blame upon "they", the others, never realizing how one contributes. That is one part of it.

Secondly when one investigates how one goes beyond the limited, the circumscribed, the known, then one arrives at joy, the source of joy, peace and freedom, which will re-

juvenile. We are tired and worn-out mentally, we repeat theories and ideologies and talk about religions and United Nations and democracies and socialisms, but we individually are not equipped to live as members of a socialist, or a democratic, or a free society.

The trouble is with the individual psyche, the malady is there. So voyage into oneself, and discovering the source of freedom is not an isolatory activity, but it sets you free of fear and this desire to compare and compete with others. It takes away the game of self-deception, pretensions and hypocrisy. That's why I said a few minutes ago, if religion does not enable a person to change the texture of his being and the texture of his behaviour with others it has no value for the tortured humanity. But one has to take time and educate oneself, conduct the investigation verbally as far as words can carry, conduct the investigation through intelligence, the movement of awareness, and then arrive at the frontiers of verbalization, plunge into the non-verbal area, be there with the existence free of word and time, live there. Then only the new strength, the new fearlessness or the new depth and intensity can be there, it cannot come through words. So the voyage into oneself can lead to the birth of a new human being, capable of relating with others without exploiting them, without using them, so on the footing of equality, fraternity and so on. That's how one looks at it, one may be wrong but that's how one sees the challenge.

Q. (On the tape the question was inaudible.)

V. The point from where the voyage will begin is an entirely personal thing. For example, a person who has a very tender and intimate relationship with the word, will go from word to sound, and from sound to soundless, another person may have a very intimate relationship with form, such a person may go from the form to the formless through sculpture; one may have a very intimate relationship with colours. So the point of contact or the point of plunging into the voyage could be from the painting, the colours, from there you go to the colours in nature, and from there to the source of the being. The point of contact with the infinity is really determined by the nature of conditioning and the make-up of personality, how it is. One may come to it through music, another through poetry, someone through sculpture, someone through movement to motionlessness, and so on.

I am not trying to belittle the importance of words, concepts, verbalization. One only points out their limitations, because so many years now, last twenty five or thirty years all the world over people have become very anxious and eager to find out that which is beyond the brain, beyond the time. People talk about meditation and they begin to think about new methods and techniques to be followed by the mind. That's why one was pointing out that no mental activity with the known or the unknown is going to help. It is only the understanding of the mechanism of the mind and its limitations that could set one free of the contents of the mind, and bring one to the threshold of the other. Of course words have their beauty

and so have all the symbols. Because we understand that which is beyond the symbols, one does not throw away the symbols, the ideas, the concepts - we wouldn't be sitting together, we wouldn't be talking with one another - they have their relative utility and they have their own beauty and grandeur. But they cannot be equated with the totality, and we are related to the totality. We are living only in one part and we are not acquainted with the other. Meditation says that if one gets acquainted with the other and lives the fact of one's relationship to it then there will be a new balance to life.

What makes one ask that question? So many times it's difficult to discriminate between one's reaction to what has been said and a genuine question or inquiry. When one listens to talks there are bound to be reactions; one has heard so much, one has read so much. A reaction is not a question. There is a difference between questions that grow in the soil of one's life, and an emotional reaction that springs up as soon as you listen to something. So instead of verbally answering the question I would like to conclude the meeting with due apologies to the persons, with a passage that a friend has asked me to sing for all of us. The meaning of the passage is: One who awakens to the presence of Life around oneself, is helped by the Life Eternal. One who is not awake and is not aware of Life, upon such a person the Life Universal waits with Love and Compassion, so that one day that person also might wake up. This is a kind of free rendering of the passage.

PROGRAMME OF THE GATHERINGS IN THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM WITH VIMALA THAKAR IN 1978.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Please do not smoke during the gatherings and meals!
 - Meals are vegetarian.
 - Domestic animals are not permitted
 - Those who want to participate in the yoga exercises are requested to bring their own mat or rug to lie on.
 - Please mention in your letter: male or female, age, address and phone-number, if you want to participate in the yoga exercises in the morning, which musical instrument you could bring with you (gathering VI).
 - The registration has to reach us as soon as possible, but in any case together with the payment of registration charges: the payment for the board and lodging has to reach us before April 1st, 1978.
- We would like to receive the payment from foreign countries via a postal money order.
- From America you can only send the money in \$, so payment by Bank International Money order will be the most convenient. According to the currency at the moment of your payment, the bank knows how many \$ are needed for the amount in D. guilders.

THE GATHERINGS

- I. Three gatherings will be held at the home of fam. Frankena, Huizerweg 46, Blaricum. phone 02153-83478 (35 participants only)
- You can register only for one of the 3 gatherings, in order to offer more friends the opportunity to hear Vimala, Please, mention not only 1 date, but which dates you eventually could come. You will then receive an admission ticket for one of the gatherings. Ia: Friday 5th of May; Ib: Saturday 6th of May, and Ic: Sunday 7th of May.
- The talks will begin at 11.00 o'clock, so please come between 10.30 and 10.45. Busstop "Huizer Hoogt" is nearby and can be reached by bus 35 Hilversum, Laren, Blaricum, Huizen, Bussum.
- Bus 34 stops only in the village Blaricum (12 minutes walking distance).

- II. Long Whitsun week-end for Self-education in Belgium Saturday, May 13th, Sunday, May 14th and Monday, May 15th. It will be held in the Provinciaal Vormingscentrum, Smeckenstraat 59, Oostmalle. It can be reached by car: follow the (national) highway (rijksweg) Antwerp-Oostmalle-Turnhout. Highway E 3, leave the road at Zoersel. Highway E 39, leave the road at Massenhoven. From the centre of Oostmalle circa 1 km direction Turnhout and then to the left about 200 m.
- Bus: 41 N.M.B.V. via Antwerp or Turnhout.
Bus stop "Vormingscentrum".

Day-schedules

- saturday, May 13th: till 15.00 o'clock Please contact the administration 16.00 o'clock Coffee etc. ("vieruurte") in the restaurant
- 16.30 o'clock Please be seated in the room upstairs
- 16.45 o'clock Talk by Vimala Thakar
- 18.30 o'clock Bread-meal in the restaurant
- 20.30 o'clock Gathering with half an hour Silence
- Sunday, May 14th and Monday, 15th:
- 7.00-8.00 o'clock Yoga exercises
- 8.30 o'clock Breakfast in the restaurant
- 9.45 o'clock Coffee in the restaurant
- 10.20 o'clock Gathering; after half an hour Silence at 11.00 o'clock talk or discussion
- 12.30 o'clock Warm meal in the restaurant
- 16.00 o'clock Coffee etc. ("vieruurte") in the restaurant
- 18.30 o'clock Bread-meal in the restaurant
- 20.30 o'clock Gathering with half an hour Silence
- Monday, May 15th departure after warm meal around 14.00 o'clock. You can choose between a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian meal. There are rooms available for 1, 2 and 6 persons. Registration as soon as possible, but in any case together with payment of BF (Belgian Francs) 100,— for registration charges and BF 900,— for the board and lodging, before April 1st, 1978. At the office of the Centre sheets and a pillow-case are available for use for the price of BF 80.—. Please bring your own towels. Registration address: fam. H. Helsen, Vrouwensblok 2, 2310 Rijkevorsel Belgium.
- postsequenumber 000-0092937-11. Also people out of Holland and other countries are welcome.

III. Week-end at Zeist

Saturday, May 20th and Sunday, May 21st. Address: "Woudschoten", Woudenbergweg 54, Zeist, Holland.

You can find all details about "Woudschoten" under gathering VI, also for the Day-schedule with the following exception for Sunday:

14.45 o'clock Gathering for half an hour Silence

15.30 o'clock Tea and then departure

Registration for this week-end by Mrs. Joke Groot, Wagenaarlaan 60, Ede; phone-number 08380-13700, postgiro (postal transfer account) 2557893 (misprinted in Contact 21). Registration charges f. 7,— per person. Lodging with full board, including coffee and tea, f. 41,— There is accommodation for more than 100 participants. Also people out of Belgium and other countries are welcome.

IV. Course A in "De Tiltenberg" has been fully booked.

V. Course B in "De Hoorneboeg" is also fully booked. Rectification: only NBM bus 34 stops now for "De Hoorneboeg" (bus: Utrecht-Hilversum).

VI. International gathering at Zeist.

Saturday, June 17th - Saturday, July 1st. It is held in the conference centre "Woudschoten", Woudenbergweg 54, Zeist (near Utrecht), in the centre of the Netherlands. "Woudschoten" has a ground of 45 ha with several signed walking routes. Here you can hear the silence and meet deer and other animals. It can be reached by buses from the railway stations Utrecht or Amersfoort (bus stop "Woudschoten"). There is a large parking-place near the house.

Day-Schedule:

First day:

till 15.00 o'clock Please contact the administration
15.00 o'clock Tea
16.15 o'clock Gathering with talk by Vimala Thakar
18.00 o'clock Meal
19.30 o'clock Tea
20.30 o'clock Gathering with half an hour Silence

Other days:

7.00-8.00 o'clock Yoga exercises
8.30- o'clock Breakfast
9.45 o'clock Coffee
10.20 o'clock Gathering; after half an hour Silence at 11.00 o'clock talk or discussion
12.30 o'clock Meal
15.30 o'clock Tea
16.00 o'clock Dutch translation of yesterday's talk
18.00 o'clock Meal
19.30 o'clock Tea
20.30 o'clock Gathering with half an hour Silence.

Day-Schedule Saturday, July 1st, departure after the warm midday meal. Tea and coffee is served in the hall with the bar. Gatherings, also yoga exercises in the big room number 3. Vegetarian warm meal in the evening, but during the week-ends at noon. All meals in the dining-rooms 9 and 7. After the midday meal: sale of books and cassettes (possibly with the talk of the day before) in room 6, where you can also read quietly.

We do the washing of dishes etc., laying the table, preparing for next meals, also tea and coffee, together. So we will ask at each meal volunteers to form a duty party of 6 or 8 friends (half an hour work). Each participant has to make his own bed. We hope that beautiful weather will allow us to have the gathering in the open-air theatre, to take walks together, or go on a picnic. We hope to organize some excursions, have an afternoon or evening with Indian music, etc. Please inform us which musical instrument you play and could bring along with you. Each year participants of the weekgatherings have asked for a longer gathering of 2 weeks. It is very important to grow together and come to a sustained attention out of which may flow a deeper understanding. Registration by Mrs. Joke Groot, Wagenaarlaan 60, Ede; phone-number 08380-13700, postgiro (postal transfer account) 2557893 (misprinted in Contact 21) Registration charges for these 15 days: f. 50,— Lodging and full board, including coffee and tea, for 15 days: f. 560,— You can hire sheets, a pillow-case and a towel for f. 8,50 a week, in case you can't bring your own with you.

There are rooms with warm and cold water for 2 and for 3 persons, and some for 1 person (very limited). Showers and toilets near by in the corridors.

The international gathering in Zeist is of course also for Dutch and Belgian participants. Accommodation for more than 100 participants. If for some reason it is impossible for you to participate for 2 weeks and if it is not fully booked, we then can register you for the 1st. or 2nd week only. Registration charges for one week f. 35,—. Lodging etc. for one week f. 300,—.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The Foundation is responsible for more than f. 60.000 by hiring the conference halls, including board and lodging. It is clear that every reservation according to your subscription has to be fulfilled by the subscriber as the Foundation is responsible also for the rooms which are not occupied. This implies that every subscriber is responsible for the full amount even if he is not able to participate at that time (unless we are able to fill up this vacancy). It is clear that we can only accept those subscriptions which include board and lodging and for the stay of the total duration of the course for which he or she has subscribed.

New publications by Vimala Thakar

One of the most beautiful booklets "Meditation - A way of life" has not been available for some time. In May we expect to receive a new supply, but there has been a change: In the new edition Part I and Part II have been combined in one booklet (Part I is the same as the former one and Part II is new and consists of 2 new Talks). The former Part I is not available as a separate booklet but Part II can be ordered separately which is convenient for the many who already have Part I.

The German and the French translation consist of Part I only. In May we expect to receive "Talks in Australia" cloth bound. See the last page with booklist for information.

Vimala Thakar's publications	price in Dutch f	total price (dispatch costs incl.)
Mutation of Mind (7 talks and 7 discussions) 3rd printing	12,—	14,65
On an eternal voyage, 4th printing	6,75	8,45
Silence in action, 3rd printing	6,75	8,45
Voyage into oneself, 1970, 8 talks in U.S.A. 2nd printing	8,50	10,20
Towards Total Transformation, 1970, 76 pages with talks in U.S.A.	8,25	9,95
Nijmegen University Talks, 1970	3,50	5,20
2nd Nijmegen University Talks, 1972	6,50	8,20
Banaras University Talks, 1972	2,75	4,45
NEW: Meditation - A way of life, Part II	5,—	6,70
NEW: Meditation - A way of life, Part I and II combined	8,—	9,80
NEW: Talks in Australia (cloth bound) 12 talks, 180 pages	12,—	14,65
NEW STOCK: Totality in Essence	7,95	9,75

A Challenge to Youth (Youth Camp-Holland 1972)	12,—	14,65
Blossoms of Friendship (Mt. Abu-India talks 1973)	6,90	8,60
From Intellect to Intelligence (Huizen-Holland talks 1974)	12,—	14,65
Five Talks given at Claremont, California 1974	6,90	8,60
Beyond Awareness (Bilthoven-Holland 1974)	3,90	4,90
NEW: The urgency of self-discovery (De Hoorneboeg 1974)	7,75	9,45
NEW: The Mystery of Silence (De Hoorneboeg 1976)	7,75	9,45
NEW: Life as Yoga, 13 discourses and 7 discussions at Chorwad, India, 286 pages	Paperback Clothbound	25,— 35,—
Toespraken Nijmeegse Universiteit (Dutch language) 1970	3,50	5,20
Toespraken Nijmeegse Universiteit II (Dutch language) 1972	4,50	6,20
Dynamische Stilte (Dutch language) 1974	8,75	10,45
La Méditation, un mode de vie (French language)	6,—	8,—

Un éternel voyage (French language)	6,50	8,50
Die Kraft der Stille (German language)	9,75	11,45
Méditation, eine Lebensweise (German language)	6,—	8,—

We have been asked during the last years to produce cassettes with the talks of Vimala Thakar. We have now purchased a high speed cassette desktop Duplicator: a big investment, but due to the great demand for cassettes we have taken this step.
Available are:

Two cassettes of the evening talks given in the Annie Besant Hall of the International Theosophical Centre at Huizen/Naarden (Holland) 3rd June 1976 and 10th June 1976 à f 15,—. Both f 28,50.

Six cassettes of the talks and discussions given during the Study-week 1976 also in Huizen/Naarden (Holland) 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th of May 1976 à f 15,—. Six f 80,—.

Four cassettes of the talks given during the two week-ends in the Yoga and Vedanta Centre in Baarn (Holland) 12th, 13th, 19th and 20th of June 1976 à f 15,—. Four f 40,—.

Please order by payment on: Postal Money Order - or Postgiro number 134788 - or AMRO-Bank no. 40.10.75.419, Blaricum, Holland; from "Travel and Book Fund Vimala Thakar", Huizerweg 46, Blaricum, Holland.

Note: As Bank charges are high, we prefer - if possible - payment by Postal Money Order or by Postgiro.