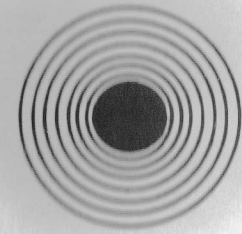


**Contact
with
Vimala Thakar**



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10.10.68

Drunk with the nectar
 of solitude -
I live alone.
Exposed to the wilderness
 of multitude -
I move alone.

Vimala

11.10.68

In the sanctuary of silence
 Beauty comes to life
On the altar of silent beauty
 humility plays with life
In the light of dancing humility
 Innocence opens itself
Freedom is the blossom
 Love is the perfume
Compassion its graceful gait

Vimala

FIRST TALK in ZEIST-HOLLAND ON 17-6-1978

We are indeed very lucky to get an opportunity of coming together in such a beautiful, peaceful and comfortable place to spend a couple of weeks together. And we have come together not for entertainment or acquiring information, but to conduct a deep religious enquiry on the verbal level, through discourses and discussions, and on non verbal level through the communion that can take place in the hour of silence when we get together and share the silence.

It is an evident simple fact for those who are serious minded, that the world is getting torn to pieces. Politically, economically or culturally the global human life is in a melting-pot, and as far as the individual is concerned the human being is also torn to pieces inwardly. There is a semblance, an appearance of peace, law and order on the international level, but how feeble the peace and stability is is not a secret. The fear of war, the fear of new tension, conflict among the nations is in the air. As one travels around and feels the atmosphere in Europe, one notices a faceless fear and a nameless tension that might have been there in the thirties. Not only the economic inflation which is looming large on the horizons of each country in Europe, but there is a fear and a tension because the word democracy, the respect for democratic institutions and the maturity that is demanded of every citizen to maintain the democratical form of society has been withering away rather fast in the last decades. There were days and decades that democracy was looked upon as something rather sacred. The idea of adult universal franchise, the civic liberties, the "government of the people, for the people and by the people" was something sacred politically, and governments that could rule with the consent of the people and the moral support of the people, were looked upon as responsible, mature governments. But if you look eastwards or westwards, in rich countries or poor countries, you notice a new trend of a very explicit disrespect for democracy, and all the implications of that word. There were days in the first half of this century when people used to feel thrilled by the words socialism, communism. Revolution on the socialist or communist line-a big dream that the people used to experience and in the last quarter of the twentieth century the human mind seems to be disillusioned about socialism and communism.

In spite of so many grants and so many patterns of

socialist states and governments, there is a kind of disillusionment, despair and even frustration about that. There is a vacuum, a kind of emptiness in the minds of the intelligentsia right from Russia to France, Great Britain, Scotland, Wales or USA and Canada. You can't look in the direction of democracy, and you can't look with hope to the socialist or the communist countries.

So a kind of heavy dead suspense about the political future of the global human family is worrying and causing anxiety to the serious minded people; those who can look behind the events that are taking place, those who can read between the trends in the eastern and western European countries, in the Middle East, in the African countries, in South East Asia, in China, India and so on. There is no feeling of sacredness left either for democracy or for socialism.

Religion which had a kind of authority on the minds of the people - and one is not talking about the organized religions like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, but religion into the implications of which we shall go during our stay here slowly and rather cautiously - but religion as a way of living has been crushed, crumpled under the heels of science and technology.

The love of inner freedom, the love of indivisibility of an individual being, has been pushed to the back-ground by the race for hunting pleasure and security. And this race for hunting pleasure and security, this craze for money and power that money brings, has created a dependency on things outside of man. They have created a psychological dependency upon things and objects, so inwardly human beings feel rather empty, helpless and live in a kind of self-pity.

If we turn to the relational part of our life, we who are born in society and have to relate ourselves to other human beings, the relational aspects of our life have become like a nightmare. Inwardly we feel empty, more and more dependency upon objects of comfort and security, or objects that have become symbols of status, prestige in society.

And when it comes to living with one another, being with one another, relating with one another, we are terrified. Why are we terrified? Maybe because the criteria, the norms and the standards by which we used to measure our relationships, are no more there. Industrialization changed the conduct of life, science and technology changed the style of living.

So along with old institutions and structures, the ancient values, norms, symbols of criteria, have also faded away,

they have melted away. There is nothing to tell a human being what is good, what is bad. The definitions of sin and virtue have been wiped out callously, mercilessly. The discriminating point between good or bad, beautiful and ugly, social and antisocial, have been wiped away from the very psyche as it were in the last 25 or 30 years.

So while meeting one another human beings do not know how to respond. Ideologies have lost their spice, taste and flavour, religious moral, ethical cultural patterns have been mutilated, the capacity and the sensitivity to feel inwardly what one would love to do and like to do, have been benumbed. The human species inhabiting the globe, finds itself in a rather sad plight at the end of the twentieth century.

There are many achievements, the external glamour is there of science and technology and their glorious record of achievements and attainments. Man can even land on the moon, live in space, travel around in the orbit of the earth or the moon, transplant organs of the body from one human being to the other; prolongation of life has become very easy. So on one hand there is a glorious record of intellectual achievements and on the other hand there is a lamentable pathetic plight on the emotional, psychological side.

I wonder if the enquirers who have come here notice this plight, notice this condition in which we, as a human race, are living. When there is an inward vacuum - morally, religiously, culturally, politically - then out of despair and frustration, out of the heaviness of tensions, battles, scrimmages and wars are produced. Knowing full well the implications of what that violence and those wars could mean for the human race, the very frustration and despair push the human beings, their governments and the masses towards bloodshed, killing one another.

That's why I said after having spent six weeks in Europe, one notices that there is a kind of suspense and a tension, a faceless fear and a nameless tension which could have been or might have been there in the thirties before the second world war broke out. Whether the war breaks out on the continent of Europe, or in the Middle East between Israel and the Arab countries, or in Africa, or again in the poor Vietnam, one doesn't know, it is immaterial.

What is important is, we as a race, are slow to learn and we have not yet discovered a way of living where we could inhabit the globe in a non conflicting, non chaotic way, where we could live with one another peacefully, sanely

and harmoniously. The concern of any and every serious minded person would be to see these drastic and painful facts which are the context of our life. If there is no awareness of this sad condition as the global context of our life, the religious enquiry that we will be conducting within our hearts will only be a self-centred, exclusive, selfish activity.

As this is the last camp in the Netherlands for the year 1978, and as by the dedication of a handful of very close friends, we have this opportunity to rest, to relax, and to probe within ourselves, to find out what is it that has dragged us away from the source of life, what is it that has caused this degradation.

If you can find out the roots of war and violence within our psyche, if you and I could find out why there is a craze to depend upon objects and things outside of us, if we could find out why there is so much intellectual chaos and emotional anarchy that causes imbalance in our behaviour, and difficulties in relationships, if the 25 or 35 of us living in this conference centre for the next two weeks can arrive at a clarity, if we can understand what the issue is, what the real crisis is within the human psyche, then the clarity of that perception and the awareness of that problem will contribute quite a lot on the level of consciousness to the whole of humanity.

Even if one human being understands the facts as they are, becomes aware, and through that awareness his psyche is cleansed completely of all the weeds of violence, strife, conflict and tension within, then that human being takes the human race one step forward.

We are enquiring on behalf of humanity, otherwise religious enquiries become the luxury for those who can spend money for going to retreat in such lovely places and gratifying their ego that they are doing something holy to themselves and to others. We do not wish to enter into any self-deception, we are not there to acquire new information or to acquire new experiences - sensual or non sensual, astral, occult, or transcendental.

We are here to come to grips with the facts as they are. We will see looking inward to find out why there is no love of life within us. We will find out whether we feel it a benediction to be alive, to be alive in the human form with all its complexity, to be alive in the mind that has a tremendous heritage of knowledge, experience and memory, to be alive to all the conditionings and their patterns which have been transmitted into us systematically in untold centuries by collective human efforts. We will probe within and find

out if we have love of freedom.

Love of life implies the love for being alive, and being alive implies, as far as I can say, the love to be free. To be free for what? To be free for being what we are.

It is only the understanding of our own being that will create clarity. To be free, is to be free for being what we are, not in comparison with others, not for any extraneous purpose, not for achieving, attaining something, but to be what we are in its own simplicity.

We might be getting acquainted with our being, the "beingness", cluttered with the process of becoming we have been trained to become something, to know something, to experience something - we will seek them, thrash all the layers, peeling as it were the layers of becoming, experiences and knowledge, and we will fearlessly, through a verbal investigation, enter into the naked reality of our being. We'll have to get acquainted with the nudity of our being because the source of freedom is in the being, the source of freedom can never be in the thought which is something put together with the help of words and evaluations. The source of freedom could not be in experiences or the activity of experiencing which is a movement of thought in relation to objects. Obviously the source of freedom could not be in the process of becoming which is something like a compulsion, which is a demand of society.

Society demands that we become a doctor, an engineer, a philosopher, a politician, etc. Society has created structures, and for the maintenance of the structures it requires experts who can handle those structures. So the process of becoming is of tremendous importance for every society. For maintaining the pattern of collective relationships and for maintaining the structures, society encourages the citizens to become, and the process of becoming is always a comparative, competitive process.

So the source of freedom could not be in the process of becoming, which is a comparative and a competitive process, encouraged by society with the specific purpose of creating functional roles and experts out of human beings. As you create currency, you create experts and technologists, professors, engineers and doctors who will help the governments, the states, and society to keep those structures alive.

The "being" is not honoured, but the process of becoming that tries to imprison the being and put it in different cages, that is valued. Whatever we know about ourselves is only about what we have become. Our acquaintance with

ourselves is only with that part which is concerned with becoming, experiencing or knowing. We know our thoughts, we remember our experiences, and we are conscious of what we have become.

The being, the essence, the substance upon which all these superstructures have been grafted, that is neglected, it is heavily burdened, if not crushed, under all this, and it is required of us as members of society to get concerned with knowing, acquiring experiences, and becoming. That is the movement for the most part of our life: most of us go to school, take a degree, get a job, fit in somewhere in the social structure, earn money, acquire all the needs of physical and mental comfort, compare with others, follow the organized cultural entertainment program, raise a family, measure our success or failure according to the scales that society has prepared, and finish our journey on this earth.

That is what goes under the name of living. Travel around if you like to different parts of the earth, get to know other patterns of conditioning, select from them, change your patterns if you like, but be within the periphery, within the boundaries of conditioning of knowing, experiencing and becoming. Whether we become a Hindu, a Christian or a Zen Buddhist, a scientist, a doctor or an engineer, here we have the freedom to choose.

Whatever freedom we have is to choose what kind of knowledge, what kind of experience we can cultivate, and what process of becoming. This is the freedom within the boundary, the frontiers, the periphery that has been created for us. It's a movement of freedom from a centre towards the periphery. If you have ever visited farms and seen an animal tied to some pole grazing in a field, you see that the animal is free to go according to the length of the rope, but there is still a pole to which the rope is tied. The longer the rope of democracy or the shorter the rope of a communist authoritarian government, we are still tied ideologically, paternalistically to the rope of our so-called freedom, free movement. The rope of choice is tied to some pole, we can't totally move away from there.

We have to find out what is the substance of our being, because if at all freedom can be a dimension of life, freedom will be in the substance of being. It is no use looking for freedom on the level of thought, experience and becoming. This is a very simple, objective fact that these processes as necessities for maintaining society are cultivated century after century to limit the human being and to give him a functional role. These are ways of conditioning man, and when man is being conditioned it is

his physiology, it is his brain, it is his psychological structure that gets conditioned, and these conditionings have given the human race the content of culture and civilization. We can't look there.

If we would like to find out what freedom is, and if we would like to learn to be free at the source of our being, we might have to probe deeper and deeper and penetrate through becoming, experiences and thought. How that can be done is something that we shall take up gradually and slowly, but today let us look at the whole thing that we are going to do in the next two weeks together.

I don't know if you feel concerned about it as I feel but the love of life is the essence of religion, the love to be what we are, the love of freedom is the essence of religion, the inner freedom to be what we are, to be able to look at things and objects as they are without any distortion coming in.

Today we are not free to look at anything, because the very process of perception is a contaminated process. We are free to open up, but the moment we open our eyes and look at a thing, the names and the words rush out of the brain, and along with them the associations. Before we have looked at a person, at an object, at a thing, those associations attached to the name given to the object, stimulate our chemical and neurological system, and there is an emotional or intellectual tension.

We are just looking at the object, looking at the individual, we are trying to get related with our eyes to the whole, but we are not free to do it because the brain registers the colour, the shape, the size, etc. brings out the name, and the name brings out the associations of ideas, feelings, and the patterns of reactions in which we have been trained. Before the perception has taken place the reaction jumps and we mistaken our reaction for the perception of a fact. It goes so quickly - the more educated we are, the more well-read and the more well-informed we are the quicker is the process.

Perception does not remain a pure and simple perception, it's the reaction that travels towards the object. The fact of the object, of the situation, of the person gets covered with our emotional reactions and then we imagine that the reaction is the fact. Not because I want to impose it, but this has become the way of looking. Before we have listened to something, the very sound, the tone, the pitch stimulates the emotions. So reaction is to relate it before the listening is finished, listening is half-way, and there jumps the reaction, gets mixed up with listening, and then

in the rest of the time when the listening is taking place in relation to something, the reaction has got interwoven into it, and many a time we mistaken our emotional reaction for the act of listening. The choosing, the acceptance, the rejection, the condemnation, the criticism, the judgement, all that has taken place before the act of listening has happened totally, It gets mutilated half-way, and if we are a terribly excitable and emotional, temperamental person, it is not even half-way, already in the very first half it gets contaminated. We are not free to perceive, and if we are not free to look, to listen, to see, obviously there is no freedom of response.

Because credulously we believe the emotion that has been objectified through that looking and listening, the emotion, the reaction has been mistaken for perception or for listening. We look at that reaction as a fact, and we are responding to that reaction. The fact is already covered you know. The fact is gone, it's not before us any more, it is our reaction, our criticism, our condemnation, our acceptance or rejection, and we react then, we respond, we move into a relationship, but we are moving towards the reaction, not towards the fact.

It is only the translating of the reaction that is considered as a relationship, the perception, the fact has gone out of the window but we are moving in relation to other individuals as we have judged them, as we have condemned them, or we are attached to them, we are fascinated by them. We are moving in relation to either our attraction, attachment, infatuation, obsession or our criticism, condemnation and justification, or whatever it is. We are not free to move.

We are under the illusion that we are moving towards others, but in fact we are moving with the help of the external objects and situations towards our own reactions, our own judgements. It's a psychological movement no doubt, but it is a movement from the centre towards the periphery, so we are together and yet we are isolated in our own shell.

We are together, but we are unrelated with one another except for the relationships that are compulsions of the situation. We respond to those compulsions either politely, courteously, or indifferently and callously. We respond to those compulsions willingly or unwillingly with friction and resistance, or giving in, submitting, surrendering. But there is no freedom to move, it is only the centre that imagines that it is moving towards the circumference, that is already rigid, crystallized, it is like moving in our own house from one room to the other, so there is no relation-

ship. Neither the perception as a total action, nor the response of the total action takes place; and the being can be unfolded in a spontaneous total action.

The content of the substance, the being can be uncovered and unfolded in a real movement, in a real relationship. We would like to find out if really we are free to be what we are, if there is a freedom to see, to look, to perceive, to act in perception, free to respond and to get related with others.

Because if individuals are isolated islands, living, existing side by side, if we are islands even without bridges, then such isolated individuals, obviously cannot create a society where there would be love, compassion, peace or a relationship with one another. If we are living in our shells which we open and close according to our wishes, whims, preferences or prejudices, then there will be only closed shells put together by the necessity of physical life. Are we islands divided by the oceans of life, floating on the breath of the ocean, are we shells closed in our I-consciousness, always closed, and occasionally we open because we have to respond to the compulsions of survival?

Unless there are free individuals, how can there be any talk of love, cooperation or peace? Love is a movement that takes place between two free individuals, it is the freedom, it is the flavour of freedom.

It seems to me that there is violence, strife, tensions and fears in our life; it could be that we have lost our moorings as a human species on the earth, or if we have not lost them we yet have not found them.

We will be together for two weeks getting closer to one another through this verbal investigation, communing with one another by presence and by sharing silence.

If confusion, tension and contradictions could be understood and therefore dropped completely by the end of the camp, then we can leave the place with a freshness, vigour and vitality that shall reenergize.

If the enquiry is not a verbal academic game, not a dry theoretical entertainment, but if it is really something serious that is happening within us, then a religious enquiry energizes and vitalizes the human being.

I am doing the verbalization on your behalf, nothing more than that. I'm doing it on your behalf and I travel with you, with the help of the words. Let us travel together, let us take the journey together. And as the words come out, as the investigation takes place, let us use those words that will be spoken, to get related to the facts inside us.

Because these words that shall be spoken here will not be

spoken out of knowledge, they are not for propagating anything, just believe me. This is sharing life together with you, and every time the verbal investigation takes place, I, who shoulder this very difficult and arduous responsibility of verbalizing on behalf of my audiences, I feel something. Every time verbalization introduces me to a different aspect of human psyche, and to a different aspect of human life. We will be looking at the facts inside.

If the word does not enable me to relate to a fact inside me, the word will be stored into memory, and carried over as an idea. It is no use wasting your time because there are no new ideas that I could share with you. I have no claims to any spectacular or extraordinary ideas. I can share what I have, and I have only life. I can look at it with you because life moving here does not belong to me. Life is life. Moving there in so many forms it does not belong to your names. Names belong to the form, but what it contains and what is moving in those forms there, or this form here, has no name. Through us life moves, the names and the forms perish, but life shall never, because life is both living and dying, and we are that!

For the next two weeks we shall take the journey together on a verbal level with a great responsibility, with a seriousness, but not sadness, because it is a benediction to be in such a beautiful place with so many serious minded enquirers, and to go through this investigation is a marvellous opportunity and also during the discussion meetings we will go through the questions or the problems that come up; which question, which problem visits whose consciousness is immaterial, but the question that visits somebody's mind during the investigation is something beautiful. It is a gift of that individual to the rest of the enquirers.

We shall take up as and when the questions come, as gifts from our fellow human beings and their lives, go round the questions, look at them, try to understand them and see if the questions uncover their own answers to us.

We will do it together, not as a speaker or as a person sitting here giving the answers. That would be rather cheap, but we can look at the questions together.

As the first important basical thing of living together we have to be careful about the time, and the watch says the time is over.

SECOND TALK in ZEIST - HOLLAND ON 18-6-1978

It seems to me that the species which becomes incapable of relating itself to the movement of life becomes extinct. A species that cannot relate itself to the life existing, living and moving in the cosmos, loses its relevance to the universal life.

And we, the human race, in spite of our remarkable achievements on the physical and cerebral level in the fields of science and technology, are becoming more and more incapable of relating to the life around us. I wonder if you have noticed this.

Obviously the race that cannot relate, cannot look, listen, cannot understand and move in a relationship with life around it, is of no use to the evolution of life, and therefore it loses its relevance, its right to survive as it were.

And having inhabited the globe for millions of years, we, as a race, seem to be growing into a state of total incapacity, total insensitivity to the life around us. This is really the fundamental problem. The crisis in the human psyche is this incapacity for perception, response and relationship. It's quite a serious problem. The problems that appear on the fringes of collective life with which we recognize political, economic international problems, are only symptoms of this basic and fundamental crisis. I wonder if you have noticed that.

What we will be doing here for this week and the next is not only a cerebral relationship, though we have to conduct these investigations on the verbal level, which has become a necessity. That's not the all, the whole of it. Verbal communication which seems to be related to the brain is a minor part of what is happening here, the sharing of life through the words.

The words are means, the words and their dictionary meaning that enable communication are only feeble means, and as we are used to those means only, all of us willingly, enter into the level of verbalization and listen to one another.

But this is not a narrative, descriptive talk. These talks are not for expounding or explaining any philosophy. With all the humility, let me say again, this is sharing of life for those who feel concerned for that, and for gatherers of information and experiences this has no value whatsoever. Now, we as a race are becoming more and more incapable of free perception, spontaneous responses and uninhibited relationships. We are prisoners of the content of our

psyche, we are prisoners compelled to look at anything and everything through an idea, associated ideas.

So our perception is an extension of the words, the names and the ideas that are contained in our memory. Our perception is a continuity of the thought process. Our experiences are movements of the memory. It is an idea and reaction together - that is what we call experience. We are prisoners of the content of our own psyche as a race, so we open our eyes and look at everything through the word, and we are conditioned in such a way that the awakening of the word stimulates associations, and those associations begin to move, which we call reaction. Our reactions are factually the movement of associations attached to those words. This is what we were trying to look at yesterday.

Do we realize the fundamental, serious situation in which the totality of the human race is caught? Do we see this as a fact? Do we see that running from one talk to another, one ideology to another, one pattern of behaviour to another, is not going to help solve the situation, solve the problem? There is no escape from this fundamental problem through ideologies, through theories.

Do we see that the basic human problem will not be solved through knowledge? This incapacity for perception, pure, simple, free perception, spontaneous response, and fearless, uninhibited relationships - this is not going to be solved through knowledge. Do we see this as a fact, not as an idea being conveyed by someone?

If we see this with the help of the words, then all our efforts and struggles in the direction of knowledge, philosophy, ideologies, theories will come to an end. We accept this as an idea, we don't see the fact, and we don't see the truth behind the fact. We don't see the falsity of all our efforts and struggles in the direction of knowledge.

Seeing the fact is really seeing the falseness of all struggle in the direction of knowledge for solving human problems. That doesn't happen with us. If we see how knowledge conditions our behaviour, if we see how our perceptions are responses of the memory, a continuity of the thought process, and therefore they are not free, therefore they are imbalanced at the very source - if we see as a fact how the perceptions are imbalanced, tilted by the knowledge, then all the subtle, hidden, and concealed desires and ambitions to give up one thought and one after another - that struggle, that futile fighting, acquisitive activity will come to an end.

We run all over the world from Christianity to Hinduism,

from Hinduism to Zen Buddhism, from Zen Buddhism to god knows what, we are running in search of ideas, in search of a solution on the ideational level, wasting our energy - we as a human race, all of us, you and I individually. We can't say that we see truth behind this fact that man is conditioned by knowledge, that knowledge pollutes the perception and therefore there is no free perception, and if the perception is not free the responses can't be free, and therefore there is no freedom in relationship - if we say we see all this while sitting in this room and if we go home and start running after different books and ideas - then either there is a split personality or we don't see the false as false.

The perception of the false as false is the beginning of freedom. Perception and freedom, bondage and freedom, these two are not separate things, where else can freedom reside than in the bondage, where else can action take place than in the moment of perception. If we see through a logical, verbal investigation the futility of acquisitive intellectual activity of gathering knowledge, ideologies - noble or ignoble, pure or impure thoughts - then this concealed and hidden desire and ambition to acquire from the Vedas, the Upanishads, the teachings of Buddha, of Jesus, of prophets living or dead, that ambition for directional acquisitive activity comes to an end.

We can't say that we see there is fire and in the next moment jump into it. If we see the danger and implications, then obviously we don't say that we see there is a fire, rush in that direction, and jump into it. The organic intelligence contained in the body, prevents us that very moment.

There is no attraction, no effort, no conflict and ambition towards that direction. These three things happen simultaneously at the moment of understanding the false as the false.

You know, religion is not playing around with life. Religion as a serious enquiry, implies seeing the fact - even if we see it on the verbal level through verbal investigation - and the fact discloses the truth behind it, and that truth results into an immediate action. So, we have seen that there is no solution in this direction of knowing, knowledge, thought, ideologies as organized thought, patterns of behaviour based on thought; we see all that and we are free of it. What is it that prevents us from that freedom? What is it that keeps us clinging to the false when we see the false as the false?

If we can see that and be free of that, then we will get a clue of why the human race sees the futility of violence and clings to it. This is what is happening today: we see

the futility of violence, and we cling to it. We see the futility of security, and we get entangled in it, get terribly dependent upon it. We see the futility of conflicts and tensions, and we create tensions and conflicts out of everything that we touch: with a glance, with a word, with a movement.

So somewhere in this meditative way of verbal enquiry, we have to find out how the words are bringing us nearer to the facts, and the fact discloses the truth. The word is not the thing, but the words help you like a transport, like a conveyance, that carries you from where you are towards the fact. This is what verbal communication is meant for.

If the verbal communication and the words do not carry us towards the fact that they indicate, if they do not carry us towards the thing indicated by them, then your and my coming together, spending money and time on such glorious days will be wasted. It will be a meaningless intellectual luxury and emotional entertainment, and I for one am not interested in entertainments and luxuries because the situation in which the human race finds itself is grave, and you and I are the human race.

We have seen that the source of freedom is not in thought, the activity of knowing, acquiring thoughts, acquiring ideologies, does not take us towards freedom as a dimension, towards life and the love of life. The process of becoming and experiencing do not provide any clue to that total, unconditional freedom, because becoming is a process where the I, the me, the centre - that is the condensed human past functioning in me - is moving towards the periphery, it is the movement of the past experiencing or becoming, so it is a movement away from what is.

Experiencing or becoming is a movement away from our being, from the centre of our being. We are moving away from there in order to gather something from sensual pleasure. Every experience brings a kind of pleasure; not that all pleasure is to be denied, and not that pleasure is irreligious or anything of that sort - we are probing and enquiring for the fundamental issue of how to live in freedom, how to be free to look, to respond, and to relate, because we are concerned about living. Now, we have seen that freedom is not in knowledge, as no thought is ever free, and no thought shall ever set us free because it gives us an idea, it gives us a word; that we have seen.

Now we are turning towards experiencing and becoming. We move from the me, the self, the ego - sometimes the whole, sometimes a part of me - we move with an idea, a wish or a hope to derive some pleasure through our

senses: the eyes, the ears, the nose, the skin, the palate, the body. The sex for the physical survival, the senses and their activities are inevitable and we go through those activities. But the me says "I want more and I don't want it the way it is given to me, I would like to have it in a different way". The search for sensual pleasure, physical pleasure, has been one of the terribly important concerns of human civilization.

Then we went on constructing means for psychological pleasure also - pleasures of the mind. We cultivated this faculty of sensitivity for experiencing, sensitivity in the senses, sensitivity in the mind. Our life is a movement of searching objects, individuals, situations, surroundings where we could get pleasure, when we want it, as we want it, as long as we want it, and avoid pain. Searching not only objects of pleasure but the ways and means of owning those objects, owning those individuals, creating a guarantee of continuity, so that the pleasure will be available. What does that indicate?

Please, what is being investigated is not being investigated in a derogatory sense. There is no derogatory sense in the whole of a religious investigation, we are only out to see the facts as they are. Now, except the pleasure that is derived and that is inevitable in this act of survival: you have to eat food, drink water, you need a shelter, you require clothes, you require good sound, good colours, good forms, aesthetic beauty and so on - these things that are involved in the act of surviving - why do we seek pleasure besides these? I'm hungry, I need a good meal and I eat it - a nutritious, sumptuous good meal, good to look at, good for the body, good in the sense without harming or killing anyone or anything. But then why does my mind go back and forth the whole day from this idea of food, deriving pleasure out of the idea what it will do in the evening, the next day, and so on?

The natural, biological sex urge and sex impulse and its satisfaction as a part of life, has a role to play. Having gone through that, and having enjoyed it, why does the mind go back to the image of that sexual pleasure, back and back again, and wants to repeat it?

Why do we want repetition of activities that would give pleasure besides the healthy activities of physical, psycho physical survival? Why this constant playing around with the image of pleasure, competition for gathering more pleasure and more experience, and then the dependency upon the object that gives me pleasure, dependency upon individuals that provide some psychological pleasure to

me, security to me, and then getting attached to them - either dominating over them or depending upon them - and then the envy, the jealousy, the conflicts? We see the whole game that we go through, we are fully aware of that. Why is there this desire of experiencing?

Why doesn't life, the act of living, why doesn't the "being" part of our life provide us with the joy, with the peace, with the satisfaction? Why must we move all the time from the centre in search of some experience or the other?

You see, we have come to believe that without the movement of seeking pleasure, life will be boring. Constantly we must engage ourselves in experiencing something; through the senses, if we are filled with the sensual pleasure then we turn to the mind, books and books and books: tired of prose then we take up poetry, tired of that then we take up a fiction, or suspense fiction, read something, tired of that then we take "noble, religious" books, take them, read them and experience them. Go somewhere, move away from yourself and your being, and indulge in the activity of experiencing; sensual, extra sensual, extra sensory, non sensual, occult, transcendental, mystical, and so on. But experience!

Why is it that without the activity of experience and experiencing life has no meaning for us? From a healthy relationship with the outer objects and with their co-operation and sensual experiences living a sane, healthy, normal life - why have we developed this dependency upon the activity of experiencing? We feel bored if there is no experience. We must be rushing around, knowing, meeting someone, talking, discussing, experiencing, mantra, tantra, hatha yoga. We build lovely houses, apartments, flats, rooms, we work hard to gather lovely furniture, gadgets in the house. But the moment the week-end comes, we can't be at home, we must rush to the beach where thousands are gathered and be in the crowd as a part of the crowd.

We are trying to see why there is no joy at the being, at the centre, at the fountain. To be there doesn't give us a joy, we must be moving in the direction of knowledge or experiencing. Why is there an emptiness within, why is this movement equated with living and all the travail of dependencies, envies, jealousies, conflicts, tensions and contradictions? Why doesn't "being" imply joy, peace, relaxation? If we have no tension we feel dull, We are seeking energy through tensions. Experiencing takes me away from the source of my being in the direction of an object, of an individual to derive some pleasure, to escape

from myself, from the fact of aloneness of life, from the peace and relaxation of life.

Do we see this, that experience maundering is moving away from the source of life? If we see that it is a movement away from what we are, it's a movement really of an escape, it's an escapist mentality, pleasure hunting is an escapist activity. We are running away from the fact of our being, and freedom is not in the process of experiencing because every experience conditions us still further. It takes us away from ourselves, then there is an effort, a struggle, a comparison, a competition and there is the fear that we might lose the person, the object, the surroundings, the circumstances that give pleasure and security.

Pleasure and fear always go together, because pleasure and fear are the creations of thought. See what happens: I run away from myself in order to acquire experience, in it is involved an effort, a struggle, and while enjoying the pleasure at that very moment there is fear: "I might lose it". Instead of deriving pleasure we cling to the object: we went there to acquire pleasure, while we were moving for that pleasurable experience fear gripped us "what if I won't have it, what if I don't get it tomorrow?" The inhibition of fear did not allow us to go into it with full abundance. So we were not satisfied with it - may be it is sex, may be it is food, or may be it's a picnic or whatever. We could not have the whole of it, we come back half satisfied and then we run back to it again - so it keeps us busy running away from what we are and creating an illusion that we are living, and we develop more and more dependency upon the other: the other may be an object, an individual, but it takes away the charm of being what we are and it is only the "being" that can be free.

So experiencing, and all experience whatsoever conditions us with fear, with struggle, with conflict, with comparison: looking round the corner if the other has a better car than we have, then we lose all the charm, beauty and pleasure of driving our own car. Look the pleasure takes us to comparative perception: somebody has millions, so our thousands become meaningless to us. Acquisition, fear of losing it, and comparison, that is how experience conditions us. And if there has been pain in the activity: we went out to seek pleasure and we came back with the agony of pain - then also the memory becomes heavy with that pain, agony, wounds and humiliations. If we have the pleasure, there is the fear of losing it, if we did not have it, then the frustration, the humiliation is there, that is how we keep ourselves busy.

So, experiences and experiencing do not seem to be the door to freedom, and the same with the process of becoming. So what do we do if we see this as a fact? I'm a doctor, I'm an engineer, I'm a teacher, I'm a politician, I have earned money, I have a family, and suddenly it dawns upon me that this process of money, fame, prestige, security, knowledge, doesn't help. Life has no charm, no meaning with this.

We get bored, so we turn to religion, and we think instead of becoming a doctor if we had become a yogi, a mantra yogi, a tantra yogi, if we get some transcendental, occult experiences, if we become that then perhaps life would have more meaning. Now we are this which doesn't give us any joy, love nor freedom, so let us become something else. Turning away from the process of becoming something in the wordly sense we turn to religions of the east and west, we take some ideology - Vedas, Upanishads, Hinduism, Islam, Sufism, Vedanta, Zen Buddhism, and there we have an ambition with the same process of becoming, "I" want to become something. We feel we're free to select, so we have a choice; and choice is the soil of all contradiction. We select the pattern and get busy. It is a movement away from what we are, whether we want to become a millionaire, or a yogi, it is a movement away from what we are. And freedom, if there is any, can be in what we are and not in any movement away from us, because we will be busy on the periphery and never at the centre, if there is any freedom it shall be at the centre where we are.

We turn away from the so-called wordly to the religious; that stupid division and fragmentation of life into worldly and other worldly, secular and religious. Life is one indivisible, homogeneous whole. If we are religious, we are religious in taking a walk, talking with people, taking our meals, taking a bath. The quality of religion expresses itself in any and every activity.

Life cannot be divided, but that is a classical tradition, so we follow the classical tradition, turning away from this, and finding out some pattern, some guru, some teacher, and we get busy becoming something.

So we keep away from the burning issue of freedom. We are so afraid of freedom, of life, so afraid to be that we get busy becoming. This is our life - your and my life. We have spent 30, 40, 50, 80 years doing this, and then we say "we have done everything, but freedom is not there, it must be for the chosen, selected few, it's not for us the ordinary mortals". If freedom is not the liberation, the vitality of love, the depth of love, if it is not for ordinary mortals like you and me - we are the majority in the world,

we make the society, not the exceptional ones, so the crisis is in the ordinary mortals and not in the exceptionals. So we can't run away, life has cornered us now at the last quarter of this century with this issue of inner freedom, this inner unity, this quality of religion - either we get there, or as a species we rush towards extinction. No technologies and sciences are going to help the survival of the species and the race that cannot relate, cannot respond to life.

So here we are, you and me, we don't want to be prisoners in the house of thought, we have seen that. We don't want to get entangled in this struggle for experiencing and condition us more and more, and we can't get busy in the process of becoming, changing fields from the sensual to the non sensual. Do we see where we are?

We are with our backs against the wall - please do see this. And this is not being spoken out of despair or frustration. If you feel the intensity behind the words it is because of the depth of concern, it is not frustration or despair, but we have to put our teeth into this crucial issue, bite into it, understand what it is, and get free of it once and for all. We can't continue year after year, day in and day out, with the same issue, then the urge will not have depth any more. Then even the words will lose their warmth, and there will be a dead weight of knowledge which will make us more and more insensitive.

So this is a question of life and death for you and me, we want to live, we don't want to become like stuffed animals, stuffed with knowledge, ideas, theories, decorating the earth. We want to live on this earth, with the earth, the sun, the moon, the planets, the mountains, the oceans, the animals, the birds, and the fellow human beings. We want to live, and to live is to be together, to live is to get related with one another.

Up till now all our efforts of getting related with one another have ended in jealousy, envy, anger, bloodshed, fear. We have not yet grown into the dimension of an inner equipoise and peace, an inner freedom from where we can look at one another, get related with one another, and therefore live with one another. There will be a variety of temperaments, there will be innumerable varieties of temperamental, physical, psychological idiosyncrasies, tendencies. The human race cannot be regimented and steam-rolled into one pattern and we have to live in this variety of bitter, sharp, irritable, short-tempered - you know all kinds of people - temperaments cannot be organized and standardized, so we have to live in the midst of an innumerable variety and diversity of people.

Now we are, if you see, with our backs to the wall that knowing, experiencing and becoming will take us away from the issue of freedom, will take us away from the issue of inner religious revolution. Whether we experience according to Zen Buddhism, the Vedanta, the Vedas, Theosophy, Krishnamurti, to X, Y, Z, whether we gather ideas of the living or dead, it's not going to help. There is something missing in what we are doing and in what we have been doing that we as a race, collectively and individually, are not yet free.

And if I mention the names of others, including Krishnamurti, and I don't mention the name of the speaker, it is only because I'm not a teacher, I'm a friend. Otherwise you will say she mentioned everyone else's name and she excludes herself; and if unfortunately someone does consider the speaker as a teacher, include her name also.

Somehow we are out of it, we have seen the futility of these three directions, so there is no movement in any of these directions for us - no movement that will be relevant to our enquiry. If this happens, easily, without any resistance, then the enquiry that we have been conducting since yesterday has some life in it - not only a verbal and academic enquiry, but something is happening then, that these three directions are over for us. Once you see and read a sign-board and realize that the direction you have taken is wrong, you don't linger there and don't walk in the same direction because the sign-board is beautiful or the letters have a good colour, but there right about turn and you walk away.

You know, seeing the irrelevance of the direction and the futility of those activities and how they condition us, is a tremendous event, it sets us free of all the struggle and effort in those directions. No movement away from what I am is relevant to the enquiry.

I am now obliged to look at myself - what I am. Up till now my enquiry was a movement away from "me" towards what "should be" and what "can be", now I am left with myself, so I have to find out what is this "I"? What is this "I", this me, this self, that has wanted to become free, that had wanted experiences, that was lured by knowledge, what is this I? Who is enquiring, who is going to look, what is going to look? So we are left now with the fact of the me, the I.

We have not looked at ourselves, we had no time because we were busy trying to fit in society, so we had to run away: school, college, diploma, degree, jobs. We were

seeking security and pleasure - so marriage, family, recognition in society, and so on. We were running away all the time. We were under the illusion that the more we acquired the happier, and now we have discovered that every movement away from ourselves adds to our conditioning, adds to our burden of memory, so we can't move now. All action, all movement, in any direction, has stopped.

See the depth of a religious enquiry. Not only the struggle, the effort has stopped, but all movement, all action of the "I", now has stopped, so we are in a directionless state of perception. Our perception has no direction away from where we are and what we are. If at all we look we're going to look at ourselves, if at all we move, we're moving towards ourselves.

So what am I? Am I the name given to me, am I the form which I have seen changing from that of a child to a boy, to a girl, to youth, to adulthood, to old age? I have seen the form changing, and with the change of the form I have seen the emotions changing, the likes, the dislikes changing, ideas, habits changing, I have seen so many things changing with the growth and changes in the body.

So am I the form, am I this constant flux and change taking place in the body? Is that going to be free?

Is the name given to me, this form of identification, this limitation going to be free? I am a Dutchman, an Englishman, an Indian - according to the country I was born in.

The body was born there so it is called a Dutch body, an English body, an Indian body, but the identification of the body with the name of the territory where it was born is surely not my identification. If I am going to enquire as the Hindu, as the Christian, as the American, as a Dutchman, my perception is going to be conditioned by the conditionings of the body, then obviously I cannot enquire what freedom is.

So I am not the name, the conditioning of the body, the associations with the body, I have seen them, I become conscious of them. Am I the thoughts and ideas, the I, the me, am I the thought process? We will have to look at ourselves and find out the constituents of this I consciousness, we'll have to find out the nature of the ego, the factors of which the ego, the self, the me is composed, we'll have to see how it operates. We are looking at ourselves now, How that looking can take place we shall see tomorrow, as the time seems to be over.

THIRD TALK in ZEIST - HOLLAND ON 19-6-1978

We have seen yesterday and the day before, that knowledge, experience and the process of becoming do not help us in dealing with a radical revolution or a total change in the present state of human life. As sensitive and alert human beings we feel concerned about the state in which we are living as a race, constantly in conflict, disharmony, disorder, tensions and so on.

We have seen through the verbal investigation the futility of running away from the facts of our life, in search of some better knowledge, better experiences, or better patterns of becoming. If with this verbal investigation and perception the authority of knowledge, experience and becoming drops from the psyche, then the investigation has resulted in a lightness, in a clarity, and also in a freshness, because this dropping of the authority of knowledge and experience leaves us free to look and discover if there is any other way out.

As long as there was the authority of knowledge and experience we were trying to conform to some ideology, to some pattern of thinking, or pattern of behaving.

Acceptance of authority leads to conformity and we struggle in our daily lives to approximate our motivations, our actions, our words to some ideology. We judge ourselves and others according to our accepted ideology.

Authority does not leave us free to look, to listen, or to respond, because we are busy comparing whatever we do, we feel, and what the others do, according to the criteria of that ideology. We struggle, we make an effort, and even if there is resistance within the body or the mind, we suppress the resistance because we have accepted an ideology, we want to conform to it, so as the people who have gone before us have done. The movements are away from the facts and the content of our being, towards an ideology. Authority, acceptance of authority leads to conformity - and then we carry on in our lives a lifelong battle with our own bodies and minds, trying to suppress, repress, torture, stretch, adjust, cut down whatever we are physically and psychologically, to fit into an ideology or a pattern.

This effort-set-conformity implies repetition. Intellectually one accepts the authority, psychologically one struggles to conform to the pattern, and for that one has to repeat physically and psychologically certain methods, systems, formula, and so on. So we indulge in repetitive, mechanis-

tic activity in actual human relationships. When we have to deal with a finite object like a car, like an aeroplane, when we have to acquire information, train ourselves to handle the machine and then repeat what we have been trained for, then the relationship with that finite object - the car, the aeroplane or any other machine - doesn't give us any trouble, there we repeat what we have learned about those machines.

But human beings are not finite objects. All about human beings has not been discovered by civilization and culture. Human beings, you and I, are still to a great part a mystery in our lives. We are not finite.

There is so much potential that has not been mapped out or tapped, explored or experimented with. Our life, in the dimension of profound sleep, is still a mystery. What happens to us when love visits us and abruptly, suddenly, instantaneously transports us into a dimension where the ego, the self, the me, the operative centre of our life becomes completely non important, is a mystery. How does love lift you up from the I-centred, self-centred activity into an egoless state of being, and give you the strength to operate in that egoless state. There is surely life, and a movement of life, but that movement hasn't got the centre. All our movements otherwise are from the centre of the me towards the not me, with the tension of a motive, and the direction that the motivation gives towards a point of destination, that is our desire or ambition.

But in the moment of love all that has disappeared completely, and you are a different human being with a different content of psyche, with a terrific intelligence and sensitivity, and a communion takes place with the person whose presence has awakened the love in you. So physically it is the same form, and yet the content of the psyche is different. The self-centred activities and the ego, the me, as the controller of the movements, they become utterly meaningless and you are not even surprised that there is a movement without a centre and without a direction, and that you do not want anything back because you feel fulfilled in living the love. Love is its own fulfilment, then there is no bargaining at the counter of relationships. The very act of living the love is its own fulfilment, so the tension of duality disappears. This does happen to you and me. May be it happens for a very short time, may be it does not happen in relation to all, but in relation to one, but the event does take place and the happening of the event is important in the history of the human race, in the

evolution of the human psyche; that this can happen to all in a sundry is important.

So much of us is a mystery state; what happens to us in silence where there is no tension of thought, no pressure on the chemical system of the body, a complete relaxation, the immeasurable depths of silence as a dimension of our life, are still a mystery. The dynamism of love, the depth of silence, the majesty of humility, have not been measured, designed, described by thought, the thought process cannot touch them.

When we deal with human beings that are so unpredictable, owing to the potential contained in them, then knowledge which is organized information acquired by us, giving us some symbols, norms and criteria, cannot be the authority.

We have seen, if we have taken the journey together, that acceptance of authority leads to conformity - conformity implies repetitive, mechanistic action which conditions us, which dulls us, which benumbs the sensitivity, which does not activate the intelligence because intelligence is not required in repetitive activity. You function like an automaton, like a machine, and that is what we are doing.

Living in the modern civilization, coexisting with an innumerable variety of machines and gadgets, we acquire information about them, acquire skill in handling them, and go on operating on that repetitive, mechanistic level, where sensitivity, alertness is not required, where intelligence apart from the movement of the thought process is not required. Memory is required, and quick responses of the memory is required, and we get training for that. So we have seen this whole field of authority, conformity and repetition - that is our life. This is not going to help.

If we have seen this then we are left to ourselves, to our lives, the daily life, the facts of our life and the facts of our relationships - what we do from morning till night - that is the mirror in which we are going to find out the content, the factual content of our being.

But we will be interested in investigating how we live in our daily life, if some illusions about religion melt away or fade away. We have been heavily conditioned to believe that a religious inquiry is about the unknown, is about something that is away from us, is something mysterious. In running away from the known, or dodging the known, escaping from the known, we seek the unknown, God, Divinity, Reality, Samadhi, Meditation, Satori and what not. Religion and the religious inquiry has been mistaken for a search for the unknown.

And we will indulge in a search with the help of the mind that is confused, that functions repetitively, mechanistically, which cannot move without a word, without an idea, which only brings responses from the past. With the help of that mind, whose movement is rooted in the past, and which has to take the crutches of time and word, we are going to find out the unknown - that which is beyond the measure of human mind, beyond the tensions of duality, beyond life and death.

Religion and a religious life, have been mistaken, for running away from what is towards that what is the unknown. A religious inquirer tries to run towards some mysterious unknown by escaping, suppressing, denying the known, wishing it away. In search of God a Guru, a Saviour, in search of some reality which one will acquire and will experience. Is that religion?

We are very credulous when it comes to religion.

Thousands of years of propaganda in the East and the West, have so deeply and heavily conditioned us that our daily life, what happens to us, and what we bring to our movements from morning till night, is of no importance at all. It doesn't matter if we tell lies ten times a day, cheat ourselves and others, get angry, hurt others. It doesn't matter if we go and sit down in silence for two hours, meditate for four hours, conform to some pattern, accept someone as a guru, a master, if we exploit others in earning money, if we are violent, this is not important. What we do in the name of religion or yoga - the psycho-physical activity, and the new experiences that we acquire through that new conditioning - that is important. That is what people understand by the term a "religious", or a "spiritual" inquiry.

But the known is the only thing that we have before us here, daily life is the only life, and if we cannot meet eternity here, in the now, in the present, in whatever we do - the way we breathe, we sit and stand, we eat, drink, look at others, the way we look at the birds, the animals, the human beings, the way we talk to them and also what happens to us while we are talking, looking and listening; if there is no communion with reality or divinity there, it cannot be anywhere, because this is what we have - our body, our mind, our movement, the quality that we bring to the movement, store into it, the interaction between life outside and inside us. If freedom has to happen, it is to happen in daily life - what we do when we polish our shoes or brush our teeth, cook a meal, or drive a car.

Are our minds disinfected of credulity, or are they heavily

conditioned so that we believe we can acquire liberation or samadhi as some mysterious experience, something new that happens to us there, apart from daily life, independent of our psycho-physical way of living? Are our minds disinfected of this credulity that life can be divided into religion and secular life, disinfected of this curse of fragmentation that has been upon the psyche for so many centuries? Life is one indivisible, homogeneous whole, and the investigation of the essence of religion has to take place where we are. Religion is a total way of living. To be religious is to live and to move fearlessly with the movement of life. To be religious is to live in love, the vitality of love.

So we have to find out for ourselves if religion still means a God somewhere in the seventh heaven, and we have to run towards Him to find out, or we have to run towards someone who will become the Saviour for us and who will liberate us. Whether we run towards a God, a Guru, a pattern, or an ideology, we are running away from what we are, and may be the God, the Guru, the Saviour is within ourselves.

To be religious is to get acquainted with the known, to begin there, and to find out what we are in the mirror of our daily activity. To find out what we are, if the authority of these concepts and theories about Gods and Saviours is dropped, then only we can turn towards ourselves and look at ourselves. You know, freedom is required to look, and if our eyes are clouded with the belief that liberation or freedom or transformation will come through some mysterious unknown, if that credulity darkens our perception then we will not be able to look at ourselves. If there is clarity on this issue, that running away from what and where we are, from the known towards some theoretical unknown, is just a mental and psychological movement. Like any other movement of knowing, experiencing, and becoming, running in the name of some new experience, the pleasure of it, has nothing religious about it.

To be religious is to be with what is there, to penetrate through what is. If this has happened, then we will turn to look at ourselves and our daily life. Now we are left with ourselves, completely by ourselves and with ourselves, and we are going to look, to watch, to observe.

But can I look, look in a simple, uncomplicated way, have I the space, the inner space, to look at myself, or does my look, glance or perception become comparative, evaluating and get mixed up with judgement? And even before we proceed to this point, does the realization that there is no

one who is going to help me out of the situation, stimulate any fear? Supposing the authority is dropped, then what is the state of the mind with which we are going to look? Let us go back one step. If the authority is dropped and there is no running away from ourselves to the unknown, the so-called unknown, which is believed to be somewhere outside of us and away from us, what happens to the quality of my mind when that authority is dropped, when I see the simple truth that I am left alone with life to look, to inquire, to discover? Does that stimulate fear? Does this aloneness with life stimulate fear? There is the phenomenon of life; inside me, outside me, around me, whichever words we like to use. Most often with 99 out of a 100 times we feel afraid. The moment we realize the simple truth that a religious inquiry is to be conducted in aloneness by oneself we get frightened, and you know this fear is a very interesting thing. Why are we frightened? Why are we frightened of being alone with life, why do we always want something or someone by our side when we are meeting life?

Either we want a theory of God, the belief in the man-made concepts of God, that He is by our side holding our hand, so that we are not alone with life; or there is our Guru who holds our hand and then we look at life; or there is at least an ideology, some norms and criteria which tell us how to judge what we are saying. We want something by our side - thoughts, concepts, theories, ideas, persons, gods created by man, man-made measures - we want something with the help of which we are going to perceive. And through verbal investigation when we see the futility of the movement of thought, ideas, and we see the futility of this credulity or disbelieves, then we are left in our nudity now, we are nakedly alone with life. At the first moment of a religious inquiry, the first moment of looking at ourselves, we are alone. Do you see the beauty of it?

Up till now our looking at life was second-hand, through someone, through somebody's eyes: through the eyes of Krishna, Buddha, Christ, if we had expected the authority of a person or through the authority of Gita, Veda, Islam, some ideology, philosophy; then we were looking second-hand. On the authority of someone else we were measuring reality according to their experience, according to their norms and criteria. Now all that is dropped - we have nothing, we are alone.

Does the verbal investigation, does the encounter with the fact that knowledge, experience, becoming, and the truth

behind those facts, leave you alone? Does that aloneness stimulate fear?

Why does it stimulate fear? Is it because we have never looked at anything alone without holding somebody's invisible hand, and feeling that somebody was there to protect us?

Do we want God to protect us from the act of living, to save us from living? Do we require God to save us from the solitary act of dying?

Then there is no love of life, surely. One who loves life doesn't want God between life, living and himself. Are we really interested in life and living? If we are not, then we will invent something. Either we invent God or we invent a state, a political ideology, or a religious ideology, but to keep life at a safe distance from us, we want to be saved from living. Do we want to be saved from dying, so that death occurs without our knowing and without being aware on the actual event of departure from the body, do we want that?

If there is no love of life, and if there is no urge to discover what it is to live, then all these investigations and meditations and you know talk of spirituality has no relevance. There is nothing wrong if we are not interested in it, but then religion has no meaning for a person who is not passionately in love with life and the phenomenon, including all the opposites of duality like darkness and light, birth and death, pleasure and pain, sorrow and joy; a phenomenon that takes in its embrace all the opposites of duality, contains them.

What a tremendous phenomenon life must be to contain birth and death both in the fold of its embrace, to contain pleasure and pain both in it. May be they are not really opposites of each other and that we have imagined an opposition between them.

I hope we don't require Gods and Gurus to save us from this adventure of living. Adventure is something through which you go personally, first-hand and we don't want to live second-hand, therefore we are concerned with finding out what the meaning of life is.

To live second-hand is very easy; accept somebody's interpretations, theories, ideologies, conform to them, go on repeating the formula, getting the sensation of experience that the formula stimulates in us, and then we die one day. We go on comparing in the psychic sphere - stimulating powers like clair-audience, clair-voyance or thought-reading - carrying the competition, comparison, ambition and the whole game of violent living into the psychic field. That surely is not religion.

We have been doing this and when I say "we" - it includes the whole human race - not keeping the Indians somewhere on a pedestal apart from what is happening in the rest of the world. They may have a different heritage from what you have, but we are human beings as corrupt and as violent as people living in any other part of the world. Their conditionings are different and the burden of heritage is heavier - they don't know what to do with it. So I hope we are going to look at ourselves, but I hope that we are not frightened. If we are frightened then the further investigation will be inhibited. When we are frightened we can't even look at anything, can we? If we are frightened we can't even listen to someone - fear causes shrinking of the braincells and shrinking of the nerves - temporary shrinking. Fear results in withdrawal, an inner shrinking. So the perception is distorted, and in order to be free to look, there should be no such inner strain, tension, shrinking, and withdrawal. We are out to meet life.

If there is no willingness to meet life as it is, and to meet ourselves as we are, we can discontinue the inner voyage of religion. Then we can be with the people who are not concerned, who are very happy with meals, drinking, sex and pleasure. They don't feel the need, they don't feel the inner urge to find out what is beyond pleasure and so on. But if we really feel concerned then I hope there is no fear of being alone with life as it is, because in reality you and I are alone. We can share things on the physical level, we can share things on the psychological level, because our cerebral ways of behaviour are the same, as the physical organism is the same the world over: the impulses, the appetites. All the cerebral ways of behaviour: thinking, feeling, sentiments, emotions, conditioned reflexes, jealousies, greed, are the same for man the world over. Expressions are different according to the conditionings, but the mind functions the same way, so there we can share the physical and psychological level, but that which happens to us beyond the psychophysical realm, and happens quite a lot I say, that cannot be shared. Can we share joy, the quality of joy which happens to us in love, can that be shared? What happens to us in sorrow, suffering and misery can be communicated, and we can help each other, but if we really stumble across deep, genuine, integral sorrow, it is something that cannot even be verbalized. We have to go through it alone. That's the beauty of life.

We go through life alone. On the psycho-physical level we live with others, because we are born in a complex human

society and we do our best to live in a non conflicting, non chaotic, harmonious way with others, but the inner content, the inner quality, and what happens to us at the depth of our being is beyond verbalization. When the tenderness of humility visits us, opens the gates of our ego-centred prison-house of thought, and suddenly our whole being is flooded with a receptivity, and openness, can that humility be measured, can it be verbalized, can we share that? Sound can be shared through music, through poetry, through elocution, but can silence be shared?

There is a vast area to our lives which we have to go through alone - dreams we can communicate about, talk about, and even going around interpreting them, but profound sleep is something we go through alone; dying is something we have to go through alone.

We are in reality, in essence, left alone with life and because as a classical tradition we are trained to be afraid of this aloneness we begin to feel lonely. It is the fear of aloneness that creates the illusion of loneliness. That we are alone, and we have to be alone with life, is a fact.

Man has tried to drown and cover up this fact of aloneness by creating illusions; but it doesn't help.

So if we are afraid of being left alone with life, let us face it at the very beginning so that fear does not jump upon us when we are a little further in our inquiry. Let us see that jolly well we have to be alone with life, life the mystery, life that has up till now remained unfathomable, unnameable and immeasurable, and you know what that is - the totality, the complexity, the totality of interrelationships between everything that exists, lives and moves. Life is interrelatedness - the earth and the skies, the earth and the solar system, the planets, the earth and the waters, water and fire, there is interrelatedness. This interrelatedness on a gigantic scale of the cosmos, and the interrelationship that man has right from the mineral to the vegetable, to the plant, to the animal world - this complexity of the nature of interrelationship is known by the term "totality". Totality or wholeness of life is not an abstract idea. We are alone with this totality, this wholeness of life. We would like to cut life into fragments and parts, give them names, keep them apart, deal with each one separately, in sequence. We have tried to do it, but life cannot be fragmented.

If we try to create outer fragmentation and organize watertight compartments such as: this is economic, this is political or religious life, this is individual, social, and we create sets of values for those separated compartments of life, and develop codes of conduct for all these, and the codes of conduct mutually exclusive of one another, then we

have fragmented and divided life in and outside ourselves. Then we can never function as a whole human being, because we function as a member of an acquisitive, competitive society, for four hours we function as a Hindu, or a Christian, giving exclusive loyalty to some theology or organized religion, or we belong to some party or nation. You know, we fragment ourselves and make an effort to behave partially - one fragment of me functioning in one fragment of life trying to keep the rest of life out of it; but that doesn't work. Trying to approximate what we do to such mutually exclusive codes of conduct and values, have made the global man neurotic today.

Life is the totality. Life is a whole. And if there is a fear to get into an intimate, immediate encounter with that totality, and if there is a fear to be whole within ourselves, then there is no use talking about freedom, love, religion, etc. or hoping that there will be a new society where man will one day live sanely and peacefully. We are alone, individually, with the wholeness and totality of life, with the complexity that is the wealth of life. We are not afraid because life is so complex, an indivisible homogeneous whole, but we are afraid because we have been trained to function second- or third-hand, by mechanistically, absent-mindedly repeating somebody's ideas and formulas; and we believed that was living. Please see, that it is not the fact that we are left alone with life, but the fact that we have been living second-hand that stimulates fear. Let us be very clear.

We don't know, we are not arriving at conclusions, but could it be that the second reason that may be causing fear is that whenever we move into relationships, whenever we do anything, we are trying to measure ourselves also: will I succeed, will I fail, will I be accepted, will I not be accepted, will the other person like it, what will be the consequence of what I do, will my response be adequate? Before the perception and the response takes place we want to be assured, we want to assure ourselves rather than our responses will be adequate, and "adequate" - equal to success, and success implies acceptance of the authority of the norms and criteria of society, which we call neurotic, sick and so on. But we have accepted their criteria of succeeding and failing, their norms of prestige and respectability. Are we afraid to meet life because we have been on one hand repeating somebody's ideas and thoughts, and on the other hand very much concerned measuring ourselves: will I be up to the mark, will it be "adequate"?

Our perception was inhibited and now our response is also inhibited; fear is because of our concern to succeed. In communion with life, in being with life, we want to succeed, but we are afraid, we don't know how to be there. We knew how to drive a car, we got licence, we were assured that we would succeed, so there was self-confidence. There was the car as the finite object, there was the information, there was the training, the rules, the regulations; and now we are left with the wholeness.

There are no rules and regulations, and we have no terms of reference, we are not briefed, but we want to be briefed for the act of living. Could it be that fear is there because we are calculating, measuring? We are terribly concerned that our image about ourselves - I'm a "successful, skilful, clever person" - doesn't get shattered. Are we used and are we trained to meet life with a ready-made image about ourselves?

What is success and failure in living? That you have lived or that you live is the most important thing, and the act of living gives joy, a sense of fulfilment or brings you across the deep valley of sorrow. As you see the mountain-top in joy, you see the dark deep valley in sorrow and what is wrong there; why not sorrow and the wealth of tears that rushes out?

So is fear really a reaction of the ego which has been willing to move into a situation only when it has something to calculate, some assurance of success? This habit of manipulating ourselves, so that the calculated results may take place, is causing the sensation which is called fear.

If there is no resistance to what we are, and no resistance to a movement of just simply, innocently looking or being with life, then there would be no fear. The more sophisticated I am, the more fearful I become. The vaster the area of the known, the deeper is the intimidation in the subconscious.

When the authority of knowledge, of experience, of becoming, when the authority of that which is unknown - far away and separate from us - is dropped, what remains now? What is the quality and what is the state of the mind that is going to look at itself?

We are going to look at ourselves; the source of our life, the content of our being, and we are going to see if freedom happens there. Are we free to look? Do we realize if we are not free to look and if there is fear, do we understand the implications of fear, or are we frightened by the very word "fear" - you know, the authority that words have upon us, whether it is the word fear, the word sex or the word God.

The word itself stimulates the associated ideas and feelings, and we get carried away in that stimulation and are terribly afraid of the word - either we get intoxicated with words, that is to say intoxicated with the feeling that the word stimulates, or we get depressed and shrink in fear because of an other association with the word. How will a mind that is not free of the word be able to perceive, to look, or to listen?

If we see the contents of fear, the implications of fear, may be the mind will be left completely free of the authority of the word - then we shall look, watch and observe. Watching, observing or looking is a non reactional attention. It is a perception uncontaminated by any comparative, evaluatory process. It is a perception without a motivation to judge. It is a perception without a motive to get back something from the looking. The looking there is its own end, not a means to an end. And when the looking can become a total action, an end in itself, without any motivation, and without any bargaining with reality to get back something, then the eyes get filled with innocence, and the vitality of that innocence rejuvenates our whole being. This is not poetry, it is so, one has seen it happening.

If the aloneness does not stimulate fear, if we see that choicelessly we are alone with life and that we try to run away from the aloneness, getting busy with the process of knowing, experiencing, or becoming, we are avoiding the opportunity to live, we already have created a social structure that keeps us away from nature, keeps us from ourselves, from silence, peace and solitude. That social structure demands so much from us. The society that we have created demands that we go through knowing, experiencing, for the very simple reason of survival. But besides that, what we create voluntarily is absurd and brutal. So today we leave one another having seen one important truth that life is to be lived alone. And aloneness means the opportunity to live it first-hand, not imitating someone else, not repeating what someone else has said or done, but to look at life first-hand; you know the virgin communion with life as it is, the virginity. We have seen that this is the truth. In religious life there is no repetition, imitation, conformity - virginity of perception is required.

We are alone, and the habit of getting afraid when we are alone is due to the habit of living second-hand, and always comparing, judging, calculating and measuring ourselves. Fear is not a separate thing existing by itself, but it is only the by-product of these habit-patterns. The habits are the truth and fear is only a by-product. Please let us not create

a problem of fear and say "oh, I am afraid when I am alone", as if that word fear indicates "some reality existing by itself". It's a movement of the ego.

We leave one another today with the beautiful discovery that there is an opportunity for everyone living amongst the millions to meet life in the holiness of solitude, to meet it alone, to be with it first-hand, to respond to it out of one's virginity, originality. This is something beautiful, you know. And unless we look at life firsthand, will there ever be love for life?

But if we can't look at someone, surely there cannot be the relationship of love, if we are not willing to be exposed to the other. It's like saying "I love living, but I want so many safeguards". Unless we look there is no scope for love dawning upon us, and it is only love that will release us from all the inhibitions and set us free.

The Saviour is within us, not without - anyway "within" and "without" are relative terms, but I don't want to go into that. The Saviour, the God, the Divine, if any, is within us. If Divinity is not in a blade of grass, it cannot be in an elephant or a mountain. Divinity, the ultimate Reality is within you and me. So, we are turning towards ourselves and we will see as we proceed how difficult it is to be with ourselves and to look at ourselves in a non comparative and a non evaluatory way.

We have so many images about ourselves. The moment we look, the image jumps and the comparison comes and we either justify, defend, or condemn ourselves. We just can't be with ourselves without judging. We will see this as we proceed.

To be religious is to be with life in the dignity of aloneness, and with the opportunity to meet it intimately, first-hand, out of our own virginity of intelligence, which is not a part of inheritance, which has nothing whatsoever to do with the thought process. Intelligence is virtue.

FOURTH TALK IN ZEIST - HOLLAND ON 20 - 6 - 1978

This is the fourth day of our cooperative, verbal investigation. It is an inward voyage taken together due to our primal concern that humanity cannot continue living in constant conflict, chaotic relationships, disorder and violence. And as religious inquirers we are trying to find out if within our psyche a radical revolution can take place which will set the psyche free of all the disorder, conflicts, tensions, violence, and so on.

If that can happen in the consciousness of one person, then the human consciousness has taken one step upwards or forward. We are carrying the total human consciousness within us, we contain in ourselves the total human knowledge and experience, we are the condensed human consciousness, the condensed cosmos, as it were.

So if it happens here, it is an event that has taken place in the totality of human consciousness. It may take place in one human form, but the whole human consciousness has moved in that one form through the revolution taking place in that individual. Then that person really becomes an individual - meaning indivisible, unfragmented. We are persons, but we are not individuals because we are fragmented, we are torn apart, and our perceptions are also fragmented. So reality for us is innumerable fragments put together and sewn together by the thread and needle of ideologies, philosophies, theories, experiences of other people, and so on. Neither the life outside of us is whole nor are we whole, and therefore life has lost the quality of holiness or sacredness - nothing remains sacred for us, in us, or around us.

We are out to discover, to probe, to observe together. And what we did in the last three days brought us to the point that we are left as individuals alone with life, to look at it, and to look at ourselves who are interested in looking. And we had gone into the issue of fear that inhibits our looking.

We had gone into the issue rather elaborately, in the second half of the discourse yesterday, that fear does not exist by itself as an independent entity, but it is the hang-over of our habit patterns, it is the reaction of the thought process. A thought process that lives through me and functions in me, which wants to look at everything comparatively, so that it can evaluate it, it can judge, accept, or reject it. Either it can absorb it and convert it into its own wealth, or it can discard and reject it. So the thought pro-

cess wants to continue, and fear is the reaction of that thought process when it finds that it cannot continue. Life as we live today is a movement of continuity, and we feel safe in that continuity. We have equated the whole of life with this process of continuity, where we can repeat patterns of physical or psychological behaviour. Is it not so that for us life is a continuity?

We never question the validity of this presumption whether there is anything like continuity, anything like a sequence in life. We have presumed that there is a dimension called time - the fourth dimension, if you like - and time as a dimension is something that we have created.

It is a measure by which man has been trying to measure the infinity and the eternity of this vast "isness" that we call life. Time is a measure, like any other measures that human culture and civilization has created. We measure it by our watch, a watch is the symbol of the theory of time, it is the symbol representing the concept of time that we have, and of which we are prisoners. We know time such as yesterday, today and tomorrow, as past, present and future, and we measure life by seconds, minutes, hours, days, and centuries. There is no harm in measuring for the convenience of collective living, when we wish to come together and be together some time. These measures are the tricks of collective living.

We like to enclose the space and create a shelter, so we build a house. We have enclosed the infinity of space by four walls and a roof. We are trying to measure the infinity in order to create an enclosure, because the body requires a shelter. It is a purposeful movement towards infinity, creating a measure so that we can enclose ourselves. There is nothing wrong in it. This is the genius of man that has invented measurements. We measure the infinity of space and we enclose it in a building, we call it a school, a factory, a temple, a mosque, a church, but they are really efforts to enclose infinity.

There is a beauty about it when we manipulate space aesthetically as an engineer, break the space into different angles and build lovely structures. It's a joy to look at the buildings, but after all what we measure of the infinity, the way we measure the space is an effort on our part to get related to infinity.

Infinity is that which cannot be measured; and we require a shelter for physical survival.

So physical survival is the purpose, there is an effort and the infinity is something we cannot remain exposed to all the time - so we create measures like currency and money.

The currency that we create is not wealth, but the money structure is an invention in order to create convenience for collective living, so that there can be exchange; even this verbal currency - the word, the language.

The languages and the words - manipulations of sound - is an effort to measure the depth of silence. We manipulate the sound in different ways and we arrive at prose, poetry or music. But these are all movements with an effort into the depth of silence, which is unfathomable.

Of course sound is born of silence, isn't it - as a movement is born of the stability of being; a movement is from the peace, stability and steadiness. If there is constant unsteadiness which makes us shaky and jerky we can't move.

Time is measure invented by man for the convenience of collective living, but the concept of time is not the reality of life. The reality of life is time free; even the word "timeless" gives a negative content - but the positive, the creative, the "isness" of life is time free, it is a concept-free-reality. Concepts are in our mind, they are our creations, they are our constructions and there is a beauty about it, if we are aware that they are concepts.

There is a beauty in living with the symbols and enjoying the beauty of symbology, if we are aware while using them that they are symbols, and if we can handle them without any distortion. You know what distortion is: the moment we get attached to something our movement becomes distorted. Attachment results in an emotional imbalance which creates a distortion in our movement and it does not leave us free to move.

There is nothing wrong in the content of human culture and civilization, nothing that one has to throw away, if we are aware that they are conditionings - if we are aware of the content of conditionings and of the nature of symbols, how they limit reality, and how the human race living in the world of forms, shapes and science, requires enclosures visible and invisible.

A thought is an invisible enclosure as this house is an external visible structure and an enclosure inside. Man has created this movement of thinking, feeling, willing, dealing with abstractions and ideas. There is nothing ugly in an idea if we know that it is an idea, and that we live and move on the ideational level.

The art of verbalization, the art of abstracting an idea out of a concrete experience, is something marvellous. It's only the human race that is able to do it. But the abstraction is not the reality, the concept is not the content of reality,

measures are not a reflection on the nature of reality.

Time is a measure and the authority of this measure upon the consciousness, the authority, the acceptance of time leads us to an illusion that there is really something like continuity in reality. We see continuity by the watch, and we have psychologically created a sense of sequence between 10 and 11 o'clock. We have forgotten that it is the cultural torque that we need. We forget all that and we imagine that there is really a continuity between 10 and 11, 11 and 12 o'clock, and that there is a sequence.

The measurement is trying to imprison the reality. That is where I think we go wrong. This authority of the concept of time leads to an illusion that there is a sequence. Eternity is not a continuity, it is not an extension of a point becoming a line joined by two points. May be there is emanation, expression or manifestation of that reality every moment. It may have an explosive or manifestational existence. What you call a moment, this moment, is manifested, and what you call the next is again a new manifestation. It's not an extension of the first, it's not the repetition of the first, it is new, ever new.

Eternity is something that is ever new, ever fresh, ever vital, ever vigorous. In continuity there is no vitality, no vigour, and no freshness. In continuity, that which is continuing, is something finite, final, it has a shape, it has a size, it has a staticness, it has a finiteness, and it goes on either rolling or gliding and it continues. But here, life has a content which is infinite by nature, there is no repetition. I wonder if I'm equipped really to communicate what I see, and what I would like to put into words. But if you have patience with me, we can go slowly. Time, the authority of the concept of time creates an illusion that there is a continuity and sequence, and therefore the thought process would like to continue. And when it is alone, the authority of knowledge is gone, experiencing and the process of becoming is gone, then the thought process with the centre as the me, the I, does not know what to do with itself, it cannot continue anymore, and it had imagined that continuity is life.

As soon as the authority of knowledge, experience and becoming is really dropped, the the me, the self, the ego, feels helpless - it has no way to move, and it wants to move. Without movement it feels it will die. So there is one illusion of continuity, and there is another that is a fear of dying, intellectually, theoretically, academically. Everyone of us knows that one day we will die. The body has to end some day. It is a law of nature; birth, growth,

decay and death. If one has come to grips with this law of nature that one day the body is going to die, one reconciles to it, if one does at all. If we do not, and if the fear of death or dying grips us, then we become neurotic because in everything that we do there is the fear of dying in the subconscious. But what about the psychological death, which means the me, the I, cannot continue. Is there an assurance that the I, the me, the ego, will continue when it is alone with life? Is there a guarantee of the survival of the I? The physical survival we have taken care of and when it is going to die we are reconciled and willing to meet it, let us suppose so, but what about the psychological part?

So the I, the me, the ego, would like to have an assurance that it will survive in the event of this intimate encounter with the wholeness of life. Fear is this effort of the I consciousness to secure, to calculate, to get an assurance, and find out if there are chances of its survival in this communion with life.

There is the body which is taken care of - provided for with clothes, food, shelter, everything. And there is the I that is taken care of - provided with thoughts, feelings, patterns of behaviour, ideologies; all this has been built together. The I, the me, was in a hurry since childhood, and it has been taught and trained to gather thoughts, select theories, ideologies, accumulate patterns, select from them, conform to them, go on repeating them, and so we will survive. The I, the me, was trained for this and now we have taken all this for granted and we sit down to look at ourselves without the authority of knowledge, experience, and becoming.

Do you see the difficulty now? The difficulty is the moment the I looks, there is a comparison that springs in the mind. The movement of looking is the movement of the I, the me, and it wants to open its eyes, receive life, look at it, but the moment it tries to look there comes a word, the associated idea, and evaluation takes place - evaluation being comparison: you see a sunset and immediately the mind says "it is not as beautiful as yesterday's", you say: "it's glorious, can it be there tomorrow?"

In the subconscious mind an evaluation takes place, and then comes the judgement "I like it, I don't like it". The moment the I, the me, tries to look, there is a recognition with the help of the word, comparison and evaluation, and then the judgement "I like it, I don't like it". Recognition, comparison, judgement are blended together, and we call this mixture perception. Our perception is not non compa-

rative, non evaluational and not judgement free. If we observe we see that whatever we do, whatever we look at, and listen to, whatever we think of, is always comparative, evaluational. If we observe one day of our daily life what we do from morning till night, we can finish with the whole thing, because daily living is the only living we are going to have.

There is no such a separate thing as holy, as sacred life, apart from what we have here and now. Religious life shall no more be imprisoned in churches, mosques, in Sundays, Saturdays, Sabbath days, in the holy fasting days of the Hindus. Religion will be here, with the two feet solid on the earth, in whatever we are and whatever we do - not somewhere locked in the churches, temples, mosques and in books; that has no value. We have done it for centuries and we are living in constant misery, conflict and tension in our daily life. We recite the Gitas, and the Quorans, the Bibles, we can quote profusely but our daily relationships, the daily living is miserable.

If the individual living was not so miserable then there would not be so much misery on the collective level. Collective relationships are the extensions of what we are. So we are coming to what we are, and what we are is: this comparative, evaluatory, judgement-obsessed-perception. See the tragedy of it.

We would like to look at what we are, the movement of the mind, and the moment we sit down to look we notice that we can't look. We are looking at the image of a norm that we have gathered in the past, we are looking at an image of a value, of a theory, of an idea: it is either good or bad, moral or immoral, sinful or virtuous. At the very source our perception is contaminated by a preference or prejudice, by comparison and evaluation, so we don't know how to look. We thought as soon as the authority of knowing, experiencing and becoming has gone we will be free, but we find that the bondage is within the content of our consciousness.

The bondage was not only in the activity of running away from the centre, but the very content of the centre is the bondage, the content of consciousness is thought, is knowledge. We thought there was an outward movement running from the centre towards the periphery, and we denied all that, brushed it aside and that authority stopped. We turned to ourselves to look within, and within is the bondage again because the content of consciousness is thought. Even though we do not want to acquire information or experience, we just want to look in a simple

way, we realize that we can't look. Do we realize that we do not know how to observe, how to look? Our looking becomes a clandestine effort of knowing, our looking becomes a very skilful underground effort of experiencing, judging, Do we see that?

If we see that, then obviously the me, the I, the ego cannot look. Please see that the I could acquire knowledge, the I sitting at the centre of all the content of human civilization and culture, it could know, it could experience, it could become, but it, the me, the ego cannot observe. If it begins to look or it begins to watch and observe, it becomes the censor, it becomes the judge. So when we want to enter the state of observation, in that state of observation, the I consciousness creeps in as the observer, it says "all right, you wish to observe, I will come and sit at the centre as the observer, and I will become the censor". So when we watch the movement of the mind, and the mind brings up its content as thoughts, memories, intimations, tendencies, drives, and obsessions, etc., when it brings up the past, the I has taken now the mask of the observer, it says "never mind, if you are not interested in knowing, becoming, experiencing, I am capable of coming with you, but I will sit at the centre, become the censor, you must look through me".

The communion does not take place because there is a division as the observer and the observed. We thought looking, watching and observing would be the easiest thing to do, but this means the whole movement of knowledge and experience comes to an end, it is suspended - the past does not move, because if the past moves perception in the present does not take place. We wanted to look and perceive without this movement of the past overwhelming us and compelling us to compare and judge.

We thought it would be easy and it is the most difficult thing now because the ego, the me, becomes the observer. It wants to observe so that it can say "I sat down in observation for two hours and I had a wonderful experience". It would like to convert this state of observation into an experience and then only it will be able to survive, it will be able to console itself by saying "I was continuing in the act of observation, and I have brought back such a romantic experience". It would like to be present in silence and after two hours it would like to console itself by saying "I had a marvellous experience of silence". It would like to reduce even the dimension of silence into a specific, experientiable commodity or entity. You know, it would like to reduce the wholeness of life, the Divinity, it would like even to reduce God to an experientiable entity. So it says

"I will sit there as the observer". Will there be observation if there is an observer, will there be innocent, total perception which has to be non comparative and judgement free if there is an observer, the censor at the centre?

I hope we are sharing together a rather drastic fact that the observation cannot take place through the I consciousness. The total movement of the I consciousness, the total movement of the me, the self, the ego has voluntarily to go into abeyance before observation or simple perception can take place.

Are we willing to let go the me, the I, the centre to which we have been used, the censor, the judge who has been sitting beside us comparing, judging, accepting, rejecting for us? Are we willing to let that censor, that judge go away completely? Not the external movement, but now the inner content of consciousness is at stake. Do we see we were used to live in the prison-house of thought, we were used to live in the illusion of continuity?

Now things are dropping. Investigation of a religious nature is not something to play around with casually, or lightly, it puts things at stake: what we have been building day by day, building and putting together. Not the external houses, wealth and empires - that can be left, but it is the content of the I consciousness that is at stake at the moment of observation. It is the content of our I-ness, me-ness, it's the content of me, the ego that is becoming irrelevant to observation.

See what is happening. If we see the fact that the me, the ego continues only through the images of the past and it can survive only through the continuity and projection of the past, we see immediately that the movement of the me is irrelevant to the act of observation. It cannot continue its movement.

Does our investigation bring us to the point where the very movement of the I becomes irrelevant? It has gone into abeyance, seeing its own limitations, seeing that the content of consciousness as thought has no relevance left, and therefore it voluntarily ceases to function. So there is no centre, there is no circumference or periphery, there is no centre to move, to experience anything. Observation is a perception without a centre, without the past functioning in us as the centre. It is the past that functions through us, looks at the present, shapes the present for the convenience of the future, and it is terribly important to do that and to learn to do that on the physical level for technology, for being with the man-made structures, and so on.

But when it comes to looking at the wholeness of life,

when it comes to religion, when it comes to finding out what freedom is, love is, whether there is anything like Divinity or God or not, that movement is absolutely irrelevant. So there is no observer left. We cannot have the luxury of allowing the I consciousness to come back by the back-door and sit at the centre and become a censor of observation. It would like to divide this in: I'm the observer and that something is separate from me, it is the observed.

Have we not done it by becoming witnesses and sakshis of the Vedanta, or by introspection, or by psycho-analysis? We analyse, the I becomes the analyser, we let the I consciousness in us analyse, or we go to an expert who has a degree, whose profession it is, and we allow him to analyse as the censor, as the judge. So one fragment of the I consciousness is judging other fragments.

Perception is a total action, it's not a movement of the centre towards the frontiers, it's not a movement of one fragment comparing and judging the other fragments. We have done it. We sit down and observe and we say "I have anger, I have lust, I have violence", so what shall this "I" do? The observer creates a space, a distance between the observed and itself and it doesn't say "I am this", because it feels itself a separate entity from the content of consciousness. But this I is a part of the content of consciousness, this I is the thought process really, creating the thinker and the division of thinker and thinking - and feeling very pious saying "now I have seen all this, what shall I do?"

It creates a problem out of the fact. As long as we allow the I to sit at the centre and continue its activity of looking at things, creating a division of the observed and the observer, the distance between that which is looked at and the looker, is going to create a problem and then it will go out and say "I have a problem, I want to become a celibate and I am lustful, what shall I do?" So it will borrow some pattern, technique, formula. The fact of lust was created into a problem. It had created a separate entity from the fact and enabled itself to be a separate entity from the fact of lust, or violence. It goes out to consult the psychological or religious experts, or professional saints or yogis, and it comes back "here is a method, now here is the solution: if I do this then that lust over there will disappear".

It doesn't realize that lust is its own content, it is the substance of its own being. The I, the me, is not separate from the violence, it has seen. What has happened is, it has seen its own reflection in the mirror of observation. When I sit

before the mirror and look at the reflection, what is seen in the mirror is not separate from me. I am that. I divided myself into the looker and that which is looked at, but the reflection is not a separate entity with the looker as an independent entity. The two are one: that which is looked at is the looker, the observed is the observer.

But we forget that and we have created problems in the name of religion, of God and spirituality because of this illusive fragmentation of the totality.

So if we allow the I to come back and sit at the centre, become the censor or the observer there will be this division and there will be proliferations of methods, techniques and formulas of how to change ourselves: I am violent I would like to become non violent, I am angry I would like to become peaceful. So there is the division of imagining the separation between the two, and by asking the question "how shall I do it", the I very skilfully brings back the concept of time. Then the concept of progressive change - that you can change a bit here today and a bit there tomorrow, and you can cultivate meanwhile doing what you are doing - it's a movement away from the facts of life, and every movement away from the facts of life is sinful.

To be with the facts as they are, to see them as they are, to live with them, to penetrate through them, seems to be the only way to go beyond. But if we keep ourselves busy running away from the facts somehow or other as we have been doing for centuries, we indulge in the misery, in suffering where we are as a race.

And our problem is how to live together on this earth, sharing the resources and the abundance of the earth, sharing together in a non chaotic, non conflicting, harmonious way. We have to learn to live together.

Science has created a context where choicelessly we shall be living together - either we fight against one another or we live in love - but there is no other choice. Science and technology have created a global context, a beautiful challenge at the end of this century: that either we shall live together, or we shall perish together.

So we have to learn how to live, and for learning to live we have to learn to look. We have not been conditioned and trained to look, to watch, to observe, which is to be open without any inhibition and reservation, and to receive what is without a comparison, evaluation or a judgement; to be what we are. So observation is attention and a sensitivity which has no centre, which is being attentive. It is a perception without a centre, it is a sensitivity of the whole being without a centre.

So now where am I? I thought, alright, I'll give up everything: knowing, experiencing, and I'll go and observe my occupations, I'll sit down and I shall observe and then there I find that the I cannot observe because the I is the past and the movement of the I is the movement of time, of thought, so that it voluntarily can go into abeyance. The most creative and the most positive cooperation that the me, the self, the ego can give is to voluntarily gather its activity and go in a relaxed way into non action. It says "I don't move, because my movement will inhibit observation, it will contaminate perception - therefore I do not move". The me, the ego, this I, the whole past, realizing its own limitations can go into a voluntary, graceful, relaxed non action, that is the contribution that the I can make, so that in the cessation of its movement, in the total unconditional relaxation of the conditioned mind, in the total relaxation of the conditioned energy, cerebral energy, the other, if there is any, will get an opportunity to become activized. So the I, the centre, the censor, is no more there.

Do you see how beautifully the consciousness is getting naked? There is nothing to come between life and this energy that we have. Even the conditioned energy which was represented by the I, is going into non action. So there is no centre and there is no movement inwardly in any direction. If all the outward movements cease to be and we get busy with inward movements, with the thought process, we will end up in occultism, transcendentalism, theories about Divinity, we will end up in ideations and abstractions in the inner world and romantically go away from the facts of life.

We set out to find if there can be freedom at the source of our being so that we can live with life as it is. So, in order to learn to look at life as it is, the censor, the centre, the division, the divisive perception is no more there - there is only an emptiness without any enclosure, there is an inner space without a centre and without an enclosure, where we never had been before. We have always been in an enclosed space.... inside. Thought is the enclosed space.

Now we are exposed to the infinite space within ourselves. We are coming nearer and nearer to the infinity within us, and infinity is not a word, it is something, it is the substance of life - we are coming nearer to it. So there is now an emptiness, no word, no thought, no time, no centre, no movement. A dignified and a majestic emptiness within comes about as a fact. For us thought is a fact, sound is a fact, but silence for us is a word. Relationship is a fact

because we have been trained, conditioned for that, but solitude is a word, it's not a fact.

Now we are coming to the fact, the substance, solitude as a substance, inner emptiness, not as an idea, a word, or a fact. This is an encounter with the substance of inner life. Inner and outer are terms which we might have to use tentatively for one or two more sessions. When once we have altogether finished with this division then the words "inner" and "outer" also might become irrelevant to our inquiry, but till then we have to carry them.

So there is an inner emptiness. I wonder if this happens to you as we are taking the journey together riding on the words and their dictionary meaning, we are taking a voyage together. Does the investigation bring this to you, to the inner fact, the inner substance of emptiness? You can call it silence, you can call it inner infinite space, you can call it emptiness, void, any words that you like you may use.

Whichever word you use all words are impure anyway because they have associations: Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Theosophist, or whatever you have, there is no word free of associations. Verbal communication is a defective communication, but we have to use that. That is the only way we can communicate with one another.

But if we are aware that no word by itself is a holy or totally pure word - words are sound manipulated for the sake of communication - as long as we can understand one another through these words then we can use any word we like: space, emptiness, void, silence.

We meet one another this morning with a beautiful majestic emptiness if we can live in that space where there is no censor, no centre and there is no enclosure created by thoughts, ideologies, theories or abstractions. The I has gone into non action, no judgement, no comparison, no verbalization. That is over. If we can be in that inner space, then perhaps tomorrow morning we shall see what happens when we are here together. Thank you.

Dialogue at Woudschoten, Zeist-Holland June 29th, 1978

Q. What does the speaker indicate with friendship?

V. The word 'friendship' most probably might have been used in two different contexts. One - that friendship is a dimension in which the human race has to live together on this earth - and two - a new dimension of relationship and a new dynamic sub-relationship.

So, no race is superior to any other race, no racial superiority, no religious superiority: that one religion is superior to the other, no colour superiority that the white are better than the black, or that the black are better than the yellow or the red. So, the human race has to live together in friendship which presumes the footing of equality. Really, to accept emotionally and psychologically that men are equal is quite a big thing because we are conditioned by prejudices: racial, religious, national, communal, prejudice or preference based on sex consciousness. Somewhere the sense of superiority and the sense of authority lingers in the mind, though intellectually one pays loyalty to the equality, fraternity, and freedom of man. Within us there is not an unconditional acceptance of the fact, the understanding is verbal that all men are equal in the eyes of God, equal in the eyes of society, and therefore we should meet one another in a friendliness.

Today the relationships among the nations, among the communities and among the individuals are inhibited by such complexes. There can be an ideological superiority: a Communist may feel very much superior to the Catholic, and a Catholic might feel himself to be much superior to the Communist, the Atheist, the Hindus might feel themselves superior to the Muslims and the same with the Muslims - they might find themselves superior. Ideological, racial or religious superiority is deep down in the blood. There is also the superiority complex with the nations: "We the English, we the Dutch, we the Indians, we the Swiss."

Layers and layers of such complexes are there which prevents the human beings collectively from living with one another: one group with the other group, one nation with the other, in friendship. Even in the United Nations we see this play of superiority complexes working underhand.

Individually, friendship becomes difficult as a dimension as we are conditioned to be with another out of fear. We are afraid to be alone, so we require one another's,

presence and interaction. Out of fear people come together, and when we come together then we choose according to our conditioning, according to our likes and dislikes, according to our aesthetic educational standards, intellectual standards. We are afraid to be alone, but we would like to be with those, but only with those who are agreeable to us psychologically or intellectually. It is quite natural a thing that happens. So, our relationships become selective, and the selection, the choice takes place. After that the trouble begins: I am afraid to be alone, I like to be with you but I would like you to want to be with me - so a kind of exclusiveness is wanted. A need for exclusive relationships comes up: so that you don't look to another, if you are more friendly with another than you are with me, then I don't feel fulfilled in friendship with you. Because I like you, I depend upon you.

Whenever I am alone or afraid, I can turn to you; you should be available to me when and as much as I need you, as long as I need you and you feel the same about me. Out of fear we come together. Then the coming together is selective, after the selection this coming together we develop. This is our way of living. We develop dependency and dependency becomes exclusive. So I am always afraid now that I might lose your friendship, that if you are more friendly with others then you will drop me. You are afraid that I will drop you and I am afraid that you will drop me. From selectiveness to dependency and from dependency to a subtle way of demanding. Instead of the need now - the need has become a demand - compulsive demanding me and I do it in the name of friendship. You do it religiously, believing that you are also doing it out of friendship. This is a very quick process. The process of selection, then of attachment, then of dependency - and we feel it quite natural. This is the way we live - in families, outside of families - and the speaker indicates that in friendship there is no dependency. There cannot be dependency or attachment in friendship. Both the individuals are free to live their life. When life brings them together, they enjoy. If there is a difficulty the one turns to the other - and the other helps out of spontaneity, out of affection, not with any expectation but with affection - one feels fulfilled. In helping, in being with you I feel fulfilled.

If I do not feel fulfilled in being with you and there lingers in the mind some expectation, then it is something else than friendship. It is attachment. I might have been investigating the possibility of the human race growing into the maturity of being friendly with one another;

affectionate, considerate, having a concern, being available when needed, responding out of the wholeness, responding out of spontaneity, but not having a compulsive need inside me that you should need me all the time, or a compulsive demand that I should need you all the time. This compulsive demand for the continuity, continuity for the same nature of the attachment, the same nature of dependency - then that leads to fear, jealousy, doubting, comparison. That comparative conception, that relationship inhibited with fear or dependency does not remain friendship. The conflicts, the tensions, the jealousy - they begin.

Friendship has a beginning but no end because individuals are free to live their own lives and to turn to one another when they are really in need, and needs are innumerable. You may be intellectually advanced, so when I feel a difficulty I cannot thrash out issues, I come to you and say "let us sit together, you do it better than me, let us sit together and thrash out issues." I know cooking much better than you do, so sometimes if you feel like enjoying delicate dishes you turn to me and say "come on, let us now cook together, I enjoy the dishes you make." Whether it is cooking a dish, sewing a piece of cloth, washing and ironing the clothes, or thrashing out intellectual difficulties, or probing together religious issues, it is done in freedom. We are together in deepest investigation, probings, but we are together without losing our freedom. There is mutuality, reciprocity, but no dependency. In attachment there cannot be reciprocity, can there? But in freedom there is the urge for being cooperative, affectionate, taking care of each other. So freedom is implicit - freedom to live the way you like to live and all human beings have different conditionings, so there will be different expressions in the way of living. Because we are friends you don't begin to wear a sari and I don't begin to wear trousers. You see, we are looking at friendship in all layers, in all aspects. To the speaker friendship is a new dimension without the inner inhibition of racial, religious, national, cultural superiorities and then the willingness to go into a relationship, allowing the other individual to be entirely free of you. You don't like to cast your shadow on the face of your friend. You may share life, you may share perceptions, understandings, entering into deep discussions, but after the discussions are over, there is no expectation that I have convinced you and that you have convinced me and hence you follow me or I follow you.

You know: to leave each other after having been together in the cleanliness of freedom and beauty. This meaning, this implication of friendship is not acceptable to the most human beings. So, I do not hope that you would agree with me or accept it. Even in the land where I am born and brought up, people find it difficult to look at this new dimension in which man has to grow.

So there will be a new dynamics - the present dynamics of owning each other, possessing each other, depending upon each other as the basis of family, as the basis of human relationship is so deep rooted in the blood that this sounds Utopian. But as science and technology have converted the whole globe into one large human family, whether we like it or not, we will have to shed our unscientific psychological attitudes, shed the preferences and prejudices, the senses of authority about religion or race, or sex. Otherwise there cannot be a human society living together in freedom, in cooperation.

The second sense in which the speaker might have used the word friendship is a rather personal one. Many a time I say to people while I travel and speak "I come to you as a friend, and not as a teacher or a master." It is an open secret that the speaker's life is dedicated to religion since childhood.

There has been more than interest diverting the energy since the age of five. So it is a life of dedication to Truth, to the meaning of reality, whatever and as much as the person has understood it. And the understanding grows, and there occurs the simultaneous growth and maturity in the individual's life. A religious person specially travelling from the Orient - because I have not lived in the West - the European, the American, the British ways of living are something new to me. Till 15 years ago I had not even known the pattern of your reactions. It is all new. Now - a person comes from the Orient, has to speak about religion, about meditation, about inner transformation and it has been and still is, a classical tradition that such a person speaks as an authority.

There is authenticity behind what ever has been spoken. Authenticity means that which has been lived, has been shared as a song of my life. I have been singing to my audiences, but there has been no sense of authority "that I am your teacher or master." I come as a friend. I do not condition the audiences in an exclusive relationship with me: that "here I am, the Teacher, the Master, whether you understand it or not, follow me, organize for me, have an institution for me, become a member of it, become my follower or disciple." I have never expected anything

from my audiences except their affection, and they have showered it on me wherever I went. So, I come as a friend, but not the kind of friend that you understand, generally - a personal friend, you know, in the game of envy, jealousy, fear, doubt, dependency. I don't depend upon you and herewith I don't only mean "depend upon the people in this room." This is exactly what I say in India, or America. There is no sense of dependency. If tomorrow nobody invites, and there are no travellings and speakings, my life will be as much fulfilled as it is today.

When I say that I come as a friend, it is not as a friend that you imagine - a personal friend, entering into the petty little game of attachment and dependency. I am out of that game.

I use that term "I come as a friend", but friendly to all, not having special friends. Life has brought some persons together in my life, or life has brought me into the lives of some people, like the Frankena's in your country, the Netherlands, Mrs Erna Heims in California, Mme Roquette in Switzerland. Working together began, years and years ago, and out of friendship began these gatherings and travellings. The basis is friendship.

A very tiny unit for legal management had to be done - so the Foundation came. It is not an organization.

I came as a friend without expecting anything from my audiences in return, no subscription in money or membership of an organization, or the desire that they would follow, because I have no way of living. What would they follow? I have no pattern, I live from day to day, from moment to moment, responding to the situations without ever preparing for the tomorrow, psychologically. So there is nothing to follow and no one to follow. There is no center. I come as a friend in the sense that I don't carry with me the authority of representing an ideology or an organized religion, or philosophy, or my own way of living.

And those who have not seen silence or emptiness within as the substance of reality, may find it hard to believe and I won't expect them to believe. Silence or inner space without a center, without a rigid "me", is a reality for the speaker - not an idea. It is a fact, and that is being verbalized.

As the question came, it became necessary to go into this aspect. What are you - a friend? I am friendly towards all, friend of all, but a special friend of none. You know, belonging to all, or belonging to no one but Life, in Life.

Friendship, universally as a new dimension in which human beings could grow, and have a new society is one aspect and the personal aspect of the individual whom you call Vimala, moving about, giving talks about meditation, spirituality, transformation, a.s.o., but in a friendly way.

TRUTH VERSUS UNTRUTH

Untruth is the breeding ground of all sin. There is nothing more unclean than untruth. Untruth has a wonderful capacity to vitiate all your life. Before you know it, untruth brings you face to face with fear. Untruth is very proficient in giving rise to endless complexes, evils and diseases without your even knowing anything about its processes. Untruth lands you in folly, fear, hypocrisy and false pride. Anyone who gives quarter to untruth even once will find that all sorts of impurities will enter into him by the back door. So the foundation stone of the spiritual endeavour is purity of life and purity means truthful behaviour. If you are truthful in speech the heart too tends to behave truthfully. Truthfulness of the heart means that you do not hide your motives, purposes or aims. Do not say that it is not possible to follow truth in society and the wordly transactions of every day life. Truth is not followed in society and it is exactly because truth is not followed in society that we need men who are keen to establish truth in society. He is no seeker who does not strive to awaken and establish the truth all round him, at home and outside, in the course of his activities as a businessman, in the performance of his duties as a public servant. The spiritual endeavour is co-extensive with life. It envelopes the whole of a man's life. What is needed is complete transformation of life. You cannot speak and practice a little truth at home and a lot of untruth outside. You cannot indulge in untruth in the name of politics and economics. There can be no compromises in the spiritual field.

VISIT
VIMALA THAKAR CALIFORNIA
October and November 1979

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We give you now the details of the cassettes with the talks held in the "Hoorneboeg", near Hilversum, Holland in 1978. Q and A means Question and Answer.

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Cassette H2 C 90 6-6-1978 morning Talk 2 Perception of inner movement.

Cassette H3 C 90 6-6-1978 evening Q & A Vulnerability and Fear. Relationship.

Cassette H4 C 90 7-6-1978 morning Talk 3 I-consciousness.

Cassette H5 C 90 7-6-1978 evening Q & A Health of body and nerves. Known and Unknown.

Cassette H6 C 90 8-6-1978 morning Q & A Agression, Guilt, Thinking, Feeling.

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Cassette H13 C 90 12-6-1978 morning Talk 7 Investigation.

Cassette H14 C 90 12-6-1978 evening Q and A

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