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FIVE CONVERSATIONS 1ST CONVERSATION

Meditation is the way of total transformation of man's mania. Man is caught in principles and ideologies which prevent him from putting an end to the conflict between himself and another. The ideology of nationality and religion and the obstinacy of his own vanity is destroying man. This destructive process goes on throughout the world. Man has tried to end it through tolerance, conciliation, through the exchange of words, and face-saving devices - but he remains entrenched in his own conditioning.

Goodness does not lie in dogma, nor in the vanity of principle and formula. These deny love, and meditation is the flowering of that love.

The valley was very still that early morning. Even the owl had stopped calling his mate; his deep hoot had ceased an hour earlier. The sun wasn't up yet and the stars were still brilliant. One star was just setting over the western hills and the light from the east was slowly spreading. As the sun rose, the rocks, with dew on them, were shining, and the cactus and the leaves became silver, highly polished. And the beauty of the land began to awaken.

The monkeys were on the veranda now, two of them, red-faced, with brown coats, and tails not too long. One was scratching the other looking for insects, and when he found them he picked them out carefully and swallowed them. They were restless, and they jumped off the veranda on to the branch of a large rain tree and wandered off into the gully.

Even though the village had awakened there was still the stillness of the night. It was a peculiar stillness. It was not the

absence of noise. It was not that the mind brought about the stillness or conceived it out of its own endless chattering. It was a stillness that came without asking, without any cause. And the hills, the trees, the people, the monkeys, the crows which were calling, were all in it. And it would go on until the evening. Only man was not aware of it. It would be there again when the night came, and the rocks would know it, and the newly planted banyan tree, and the lizard between the rocks. There were four or five people in the room. Some were students, others college graduates with jobs. One of the students said:

"I listened to you last year, and again this year. I know we are all conditioned. I am aware of society's brutalities, and of my own envy and anger. I know also the history of the church and its wars and its unprincipled activities. I have studied history and the endless wars of the entrenched beliefs and ideologies which are creating so much conflict in the world. This mania of man - which is me also - seems to hold us and we seem to be doomed forever, unless, of course, we can bring about a change in ourselves. It's the small minority that really matters, that really having changed itself can do something in this murderous world. And a few of us have come, representing others, to discuss this matter with you. I think some of us are serious, and I don't know how far this seriousness will carry us. So, first of all, taking us as we are, half-serious, somewhat hysterical, unreasonable, carried away by our assumptions and vanities - taking us as we are, can we really change? If not, we're going to destroy each other; our own species will disappear. There may be a reconciliation in all this terror but there is always the danger of some maniacal group letting loose the

atom bomb, and then we shall all be engulfed in it. So seeing all this, which is fairly obvious, which is being described endlessly by authors, professors, sociologists, politicians and so on - is it possible to change radically?"

Some of us are not quite sure that we want to change, for we enjoy this violence. For some of us it is even profitable. And for others, all they desire is to remain in their entrenched positions. There are still others who through change seek some form of super excitement, over-rated emotional expression. Most of us want power in some form or another. The power over oneself, the power over another, the power which comes with new and brilliant ideas, the power of leadership, fame, and so on. Political power is as evil as religious power. The power of the world and the power of an ideology do not change man. Nor does the volition to change, the will to transform oneself, bring about this change.

"I can understand that," said the student. "Then what is the way of change if will, if principles and ideologies are not the way? Then what is the motive power? And change - to what?"

The older people in the room listened to this rather seriously. They were all attentive, and not one of them looked out of the window to see the green-yellow bird sitting on a branch sunning himself that early morning, preening himself, grooming his feathers and looking at the world from the height of that tall tree.

One of the older men said: I am not at all sure that I want any change at all. It might be for the worse. It's better, this orderly disorder, than an order which may mean uncertainty, total insecurity and chaos. So when you talk of how to change, and the necessity of change, I am not at all sure I agree with you, my

friend. As a speculative idea I enjoy it. but a revolution which will deprive me of my job, my house, my family and so on, is a most unpleasant idea and I don't think I want it. You're young, and you can play with these ideas. All the same, I will listen and see what the outcome of this discussion will be."

The students looked at him with that superiority of freedom, with that sense of not being committed to a family, to a group, or to a political or religious party. They had said they were neither capitalist nor communists; they were not concerned with political activity at all. They smiled with tolerance and a certain feeling of awkwardness. There is that gap which exists between the older and the younger generations, and they were not going to try to bridge it.

"We are the uncommitted," the student went on, "and therefore we are not hypocrites. Of course we don't know what we want to do, but we know what is not right. We don't want social, racial differences, we're not concerned with all these silly religious beliefs and superstitions, nor do we want political leaders - though there must be a totally different kind of politics which will prevent wars. So we are really concerned, and we want to be involved in the possibilities of man's total transformation. So, to put the question again: firstly, what is this thing that is going to make us change? And secondly - change to what?"

Surely, the second question is involved in the first, isn't it? If you already know what you are changing to, is that change at all? If one knows what one will be tomorrow, then 'what will be' is already in the present. The future is the present; the known future is the known present. The future is the projection, modified, of what is known now.

"Yes, I see that very clearly. So there is only, then, the question of change, not the verbal definition of what we change to. So we'll limit ourselves to the first question. How do we change? What is the drive, the motive, the force that will make us break down all barriers?"

Only complete inaction, only the complete negation of 'what is'. We do not see the great force that is in negation. If you reject the whole structure of principle and formula, and hence the power derived from it, the authority, that very rejection gives you the force necessary to reject all other structures of thought - and so you have the energy to change! The rejection is that energy.

"Is this what you call 'dying' to the historical accumulation which is the present?"

Yes. That very dying is to be born anew. There you have the whole movement of change - the dying to the known.

"Is this rejection a positive, definite act?"

When the students revolt it is a positive, definite act, but such action is only very partial and fragmentary. It is not a total rejection. When you ask: "Is it a positive act, this dying, this rejection?" - it is and it isn't. When you positively leave a house and enter into another house your positive action ceases to be positive action at all because you have abandoned one power structure for another, which you will again have to leave. So this constant repetition which appears to be a positive action, is really inaction. But if you reject the desire and the search for all inward security, then it is a total negation which is a most positive action. It is this action only which transforms man. If you reject hate and envy, in every form, you are rejecting the whole structure of what

man has created in himself and outside himself. It is very simple. One problem is related to every other problem.

"So, is this what you call 'seeing the problem'?"

This seeing reveals the whole structure and nature of the problem. The "seeing" is not the analyzing of the problem; it is not the revealing of the cause and the effect. It is all there, laid out, as it were, on a map. It is there for you to see, and you can see it only if you have no stand from which to look, and this is our difficulty. We are committed, and inwardly it gives us great pleasure to "belong". When we belong, then it is not possible to see; when we belong, we become irrational, violent, and then we want to end violence by belonging to something else. And so we are caught in a vicious circle. And this is what man has done for millions of years and he vaguely calls this "evolution." Love is not at the end of time. Either it is now, or it isn't. And hell is when it is not, and the reformation of hell is the decoration of the same hell.

FIVE CONVERSATIONS 2ND CONVERSATION

In Europe spring was slipping into summer. It began in the warm south with mimosa, and then came the flowering fruit trees and the lilac, and the blue sky deepened; and you followed it north where spring was late. The chestnuts were just putting out their leaves and there were no blossoms on them yet. And the lilac was still in bud. And as you watched, the chestnut leaves became bigger, thicker, and covered the road and the view across the meadow. They were now in full bloom along the avenues in the woods, and the lilac, which had already faded in the south, was in bloom. There was a white lilac in a little yard; there were few leaves, but the white bloom seemed to cover the horizon. And as you went up north, spring was just beginning. The tulips, whole fields of them, were in bloom, and the ducks had their yellow little chicks who paddled rapidly after the mother in the still water of the canal. The lilac was still in bloom and the trees were still bare, and as the days went by spring was ripening. And the flat earth, with its vast horizon and clouds so low you felt you could touch them, stretched from side to side.

Spring was in full glory here; there was no separateness. The tree and you and those ducks with their little chicks, the tulips and the vast expanse of the sky - there was no separation. The intensity of it made the colour of the tulip, the lily and the tender green leaf, so vivid, so close, that the senses were the flowers, the man and the woman who went by on their bicycles, and the crow high up in the air. There is really no separateness between the new grass, the child and yourself: we do not know how to look, and the looking is

the meditation.

He was a young man, bright, clear-eyed and urgent. He said he was thirty-five or so, and had a good job. He was not bothered by nationalism, racial disturbances or the conflicts of religious beliefs. He said he had a problem and hoped he could discuss it without being vulgar, without slipping into crude expressions. He said he was married and had a child, and the child was lovely, and he hoped she would grow up into a different world. His problem was, he said, sex. It was not the adjustment to his wife, nor was there another woman in his life. He said it was becoming a problem because he seemed to be consumed by it. His job, which he did fairly well, was wrapped up with his sexual thoughts. He wanted more and more of it - the pleasure and the enjoyment, the beauty and the tenderness of it. He didn't want to make it into a problem, as it was with most people who were either frigid or made the whole of life a sexual issue. He loved his wife and he felt he was beginning to use her for his own personal pleasure; and now his appetite was growing and not lessening with the years, and it was becoming a great burden.

Before we go into this problem I think we should understand what love and chastity are. The vow of chastity is not chastity at all, for below the words the craving goes on, and trying to suppress it in different ways, religious and otherwise, is a form of ugliness which, in its very essence, is unchaste. The chastity of the monk, with his vows and denials, is essentially worldliness, which is unchaste. All forms of resistance build a wall of separateness which turns life into a battlefield; and so life becomes not chaste at all. Therefore one has to understand the nature of resistance. Why

do we resist at all? Is it the outcome of tradition, fear - fear of going wrong, of stepping out of line?

Society has imprinted its respectability so deeply on us that we want to conform. If we had no resistance at all, would we become unbalanced? Would our appetites increase? Or, is this very resistance breeding the conflict and the neurosis?

To walk through life without resistance is to be free, and freedom, whatever it does, will always be chaste. The word "chastity" and the word "sex" are brutal words; they do not represent reality. Words are false, and love is not a word. When love is pleasure, there is pain and fear in it, and so love goes out of the window, and life becomes a problem. Why is it that we have made sex into such an enormous issue - not only in our personal lives but also in the magazines, the films, the pictures, the religious which have condemned it? Why has man given such extraordinary importance to this fact of life, and not to the other facts of life, like power and cruelty?

To deny sex is another form of brutality; it is there, it is a fact. When we are intellectual slaves, endlessly repeating what others have said, when we are following, obeying, imitating, then a whole avenue of life is closed; when action is merely a mechanical repetition and not a free movement, then there is no release; when there is this incessant urge to fulfil, to be, then we are emotionally thwarted, there is a blockage. So sex becomes the one issue which is our very own, which is not second-hand. And in the act of sex there is a forgetting of oneself, one's problems and one's fears. In that act there is no self at all. This self-forgetfulness is not only in sex, but comes also with drink, or drugs, or in watching some

game. It is this self-forgetfulness that we are seeking, identifying ourselves with certain acts or with certain ideologies and images, and so sex becomes a problem. Then chastity becomes a thing of great importance, or the enjoyment of sex, the chewing over it, the endless images, become equally important.

When we see this whole thing, what we make of love, of sex, of self-indulgence, of taking vows against it - when we see this whole picture, not as an idea but as an actual fact, then love, sex and chastity are one. They are not separate. It is the separation in relationship that corrupts. Sex can be as chaste as the blue sky without a cloud; but the cloud comes and darkens, with thought. Thought says: "This is chaste, and this is indulgence", "This must be controlled," and "In this I will let myself go". So thought is the poison, not love, not chastity, not sex.

That which is innocent, whatever it does, is always chaste; but innocence is not the product of thought.

FIVE CONVERSATIONS 3RD CONVERSATION

"What is action?" he asked. "And what is love? Is there a link between them, or are they two different things?"

He was a big man and had long hair, almost touching his shoulders, which emphasized the squareness of his face. He wore corduroy trousers and had an air of roughness. He was soft-spoken, with a ready smile and a quick mind. He wasn't particularly interested in himself but was keen to ask questions and to find the right answers.

Love and action are not separate; they are made separate by thought. Where there is love, action is part of it. Action by itself has very little meaning. Action is the response to challenge, and the response is from the background of culture, social influences and tradition, so it is always old. Challenge is always new, otherwise you wouldn't call it challenge. Unless response is adequate to challenge there must be conflict, and therefore decay. Our actions, springing from the past, must ever lead to disorder and decay.

"So, is there an action which is not in itself the cause of decay? And is such action possible in this world?" he asked.

It is possible only when we understand the nature of challenge. Is there only one challenge, or are there multiple challenges? Or, do we translate this one challenge into diversified and fragmentary challenges? Surely there is only one, but our mind, being fragmentary, translates that one challenge into many and tries to respond to these multiple fragments. And so our actions become contradictory and conflicting, causing misery and confusion in all our relationships.

"That I see," he said, "our minds are fragmentary; I see that very clearly, but what is this one challenge?"

It is that man should be completely, totally, free. Not free from any one particular issue or from one particular bondage, but from all bondages and from all issues. When you accept the challenge - and this challenge has always been there for man to accept from the most ancient of times until now - when you accept the challenge you cannot possibly interpret it according to any condition of culture or society. To deny freedom is to retrogress. Can you accept this challenge, not intellectually, but with the impact, with the intensity, of some acute and dangerous disease? If you do not accept it then you are merely acting according to your own personal pleasure and idiosyncrasy, which make for bondage, slavery, to a particular pattern of thought. If you do not accept this challenge - that man be completely free - then you deny love. Then action is a series of adjustments to social and environmental demands, with its agonies, despairs and fears.

"But can one be so completely free, living in this murderous world?"

That is a wrong question. That is merely an intellectual inquiry which has very little validity. Be free, and then you will love, in whatever society or culture it be. Without freedom man withers away, however great his work, whether in art, science, politics or religion. Freedom and action are not separate. Being free is action; it isn't that there is action to be free, doing in order to be free. Love: and hate ceases. But to deny hate in order to love is part of that pleasure which thought establishes. So freedom, love and action are interrelated, not to be separated, not to be cut up into

political or social activity and so on. The mind, being established in freedom, acts. And this action is love.

FIVE CONVERSATIONS 4TH CONVERSATION

We went past the well-known village which had become fashionable both in winter and in summer, along a stream; and the car turned to the right and went through a valley with steep hills on both sides, covered with pine trees. And occasionally we saw the chamois playing about high up in the opening of the pine trees. The road went along a stream, and then we climbed, not too steeply. One could have walked up the slope very easily. And then we entered an unpaved road which was very dusty and rough, with big pot-holes, and a lovely stream full of green-blue water was by its side. The car couldn't go any further and the path went on through a thin pine wood where many of the trees had been uprooted by the recent storm. This path through the silent wood became more and more quiet and lonely. There were no birds here, there was only the song of the water as it rushed down over the rocks and fallen trees, over the big boulders. That was the only sound; and here and there the water was very quiet in deep pools where one could have bathed if the water hadn't been too cold. Here there were many wild flowers, yellow, violet and pink. It was really a beautiful place, full of the sound of the river, cascading down. But over it all there was that strange silence that exists where man has not been. There was moss under foot and a leaning tree was covered with it, and in the sunlight it was very brilliant, green and yellow. On the other side of the ravine one could see the evening light of the sun and the brilliant green of a meadow that stretched upward to the sky, which was intensely blue.

This silence enveloped you, and you remained there quietly,

watching the light, listening to the water and to the intense silence which no breeze disturbed. It was a lovely evening, and it seemed a pity to return.

He was a youngish man and had probably studied human nature a little not only from books but from observation, from talking to many people. He had travelled extensively and said that he had met many people and was interested in this whole business of man's relationship to himself. He had witnessed the recent students' riots in different parts of the world, this spontaneous outburst against the established order, and apparently he knew some of the leaders, both in the south and in the north. He was concerned with the uncovering of the self that is hidden both in the subconscious as well as in the upper layers of consciousness.

He said: I see the necessity of exploring this whole field and dying to it, so that a new thing can come into being, but I can't die to something I don't know - the subconscious, the deeper layers which lie so secretly hidden, which are a fathomless storehouse of things unknown or half-forgotten, which respond and contract from a source which remains covered. Though you have said the subconscious is as trivial as the conscious, and that therefore it is of very little importance; though you have compared it to a computer and have pointed out that it is mechanical yet this subconscious is responsible for all our behaviour, all our relationships. How can you call it trivial? Do you realize what you are saying?"

To understand all this, which is quite a complex problem, it is important to look at the whole structure of consciousness and not break it up into the conscious and the hidden. We accept this

division as natural, but is it natural, or is it an observation from a fragment? Our difficulty is going to be to see the whole and not the fragment. Then the problem arises as to who is the observer who sees the whole? Is he not also a fragment who can therefore only look fragmentarily?

"Are we ever the whole, or only fragments acting separately in contradiction?"

We must be clear on this question of the whole and the fragment. Can we ever see the whole, or have a feeling of the whole, through this fragment? Do you see the whole tree or only a branch of the tree? You can see the whole of the tree if you are at a certain distance - not too far and yet not too close. If you are too close, you see only the various separate branches. So to see the whole of anything there must be - not the space that the word creates - but the space of freedom. Only in freedom can you see the whole. We are, as you said, sir, always acting in fragments which are in opposition to each other, or in a fragment which is in harmony with one other fragment.

"Our whole life is broken up into the family, the businessman, the citizen, the artist, the sensualist, the good man, and so on. We know only this fragmentary action with its terrible tensions and delights."

These fragments have their own hidden motives opposed to other hidden motives which are different and contradictory, and the upper layers of consciousness respond according to these underground opposing elements of conditioning. So we are a bundle of contradictory motives and drives which respond to environmental challenge.

"The everyday mind is these responses in actual action, and in conflict which is actually visible."

So then what is the problem? What do you want to resolve or understand?

"The problem is that I must see the totality of all these hidden motives and conditionings which are responsible for the visible conflict. In other words, I must see the so-called subconscious. Even if I were not in conflict - and I am in conflict - even if I weren't then I'd still have to know all this subconscious in order to know myself at all. And can I ever know myself?"

Either you know what has happened or what is actually taking place. To know what is actually taking place you are looking with the eyes of the past, and therefore you don't know what is happening. Looking with the eyes of the past at the living present means not seeing it. So the word "know" is a dangerous word, as all words are dangerous and false. When you say, "I want to know myself," there are two things involved. Who is the entity who says, "I must know myself," and what is there, apart from himself, to know? And so it becomes an absurd question! So the observer is the observed. The observer is the entity who dreams, who is in conflict, who wants to know, and wants to be known, the illusion and the demand to end the illusion, the dream which he interprets on waking, and the interpretation which depends on conditioning. He is the whole, the analyzed and the analyser, the experiencer and the experience. He is the whole. He is the maker of god and its worshipper. All this is a fact which actually is, which anybody with a little observation can see. Then, what is the question? The question is this, isn't it, sir: Is there any action within this

framework which will not create more conflict, more misery, more confusion, more chaos? Or is there an action outside this historical accumulation?

"Are you asking if there is a part of me which can operate on this accumulation which is not of it?"

You mean, am I positing some Atman, soul, divinity, etc., within myself which is untouched?

"It looks like it."

Certainly not, sir. Nothing of the kind. When you put this question you are really repeating an old tradition of escape. We have to think out this anew, not repeat a time-worn superstition. Within this framework of the 'me', the ego, the self, obviously there is no freedom, and therefore it is always breeding its own misery, social, personal and so on. Is it ever possible to be free from this? We spend our energies discussing political, religious, social freedom, freedom from poverty and inequality, etc.

"I agree with you, sir. We spend our time asking if we can be free to act, to change the social structure, to break down social disorder, poverty, inequality, and so on, and I not at all sure we want freedom at all."

Does freedom lie within the structure of this accumulated past or outside the structure? Freedom is necessary, and freedom cannot be within this structure. So you are asking, really, is it possible for man to go beyond this structure, to be free - that is, to act not from this structure? To be, to act and to live outside this framework? There is such a freedom and it comes into being only when there is the total denial - not resistance - the total denial of what actually is, without having a secret longing for freedom. So the negation of

what is, is freedom.

"How do you deny it?"

You can't deny it! If you say, "I will deny it," you are back again within the framework. But the very seeing of what is, is the freedom from it, and this may be called "denial" or any other word you care to use. So the seeing becomes all-important, not all this rigmarole of words, cunning subtleties and devious explanations. The word is not the thing, but we are concerned with the word and not with the seeing.

"But we are right back where we started! How can I see the totality of myself, and who is there to see it, since the observer is the observed?"

As we said previously, sir, you can't see. There is only seeing, not "you" seeing. The "what is" is before your eyes. This is seeing, this is the truth.

"Is it important to see the structure which operates, or the content of that structure?"

What is important is to see the whole, not as structure and content, but to see that the structure is the content and the content is the structure, the one cannot exist without the other. So what is important is to see.

FIVE CONVERSATIONS 5TH CONVERSATION

Thought can never penetrate very deeply into any problem of human relationship. Thought is superficial and old and is the outcome of the past. The past cannot enter into something that is totally new. It can explain the new, organize it, communicate it, but the "word" is not the new. Thought is the word, the symbol, the image. Without this symbol is there thought? We have used thought to reconstruct, to change the social structure. Thought, being old, reforms that structure into a new pattern, based upon the old. And basically, thought is divisive, fragmentary, and whatever it does will be separative and contradictory. However much it may explain philosophically or religiously the new and necessary social structure, in it there will always be the seed of destruction, of war and of violence. Thought is not the way to the new. Only meditation opens the door to that which is everlastingly new. Meditation is not a trick of thought. It is the seeing of the futility of thought and the ways of the intellect. Intellect and thought are necessary in the operation of anything mechanical, but the intellect is a fragmentary perception of the whole and meditation is the seeing of the whole. Intellect can operate only in the field of the known and that is why life becomes a monotonous routine from which we try to escape through revolts and revolutions - merely to fall back once again into another field of the known. This change is no change at all as it is the product of thought which is always old. Meditation is the flight from the known. There is only one freedom: it is, from the known. And beauty and love lie in this freedom.

It was a small room overlooking a lovely valley. It was early in the morning, the sun breaking through the clouds and giving light here and there to the hills, to the meadows, and to the flashing stream. Probably later it would rain; there would be wind, but now the valley was still and undisturbed. The mountains seemed very close, almost as if you could touch them, though they were far and hard to reach. They had snow upon them, and it was melting in the early summer sun. When the sun was out the hills cast deep shadows on the valley, and the dandelions and the bright wild flowers in the field would be out. It was not a very wide valley and a stream ran through it swiftly, with the noise of the mountains. The water was clear now, a grey-blue, and as the snow melted would become muddy and fast-moving. There was a red-coated squirrel who sat on the grass and looked at us, full of curiosity, but always on guard, ready to scurry up the tree on to a higher branch. When it did, it stopped and looked down to see if we were still there. It soon lost its curiosity and went on with its own business.

The room was small, with uncomfortable chairs and a cheap carpet on the floor. He sat on the most comfortable chair, a big man and an important man, a high bureaucrat, very high indeed. And there were others, students, the hostess and some guests. The official sat quietly, but he was tired. He had come a long way, many hours in the air, and was glad to sit in a more or less comfortable chair.

The student said: You people have made a terrible world of blood and tears. You have had every chance to make a different world. You are highly educated, hold an important position - and you can't do anything. You really support the established order

with its brutalities, inequalities, and all the ugly mess of the present social world. We, the younger generation, despise all this, we're in revolt against it. We know that you're all hypocrites. We are not of any group or of any political or religious body. We have no race, we have no gods, for you have deprived us of what might have been a reality. You have divided the world into nationalities. We are against all this, but we don't know what we want. We don't know where we're going, but we know very well that what you offer us, we don't want. And the gap between you and us is very wide indeed; and probably it can never be bridged. We are new, and we are wary of falling into the trap of the old."

"You will fall into it," he said, "only it will be a new trap. You may not kill each other, and I hope you won't, but you'll kill each other at a different level, perhaps not physically but intellectually, with words, cynicism and bitterness. This has been the age-old cry against the older generation, but now it is more articulate, more effective. You may call me a bourgeois, and I am. I have worked hard to bring about a better world, helped to allay antagonism and opposition, but it isn't easy: when two opposing beliefs, ideologies, meet, there is bound to be hatred, war and concentration camps. We're also against it, and we think we can do something but there really is very little we can do." He wasn't defending himself. He was just stating simple facts as he saw them. But the student, being very bright, saw this and smiled unyieldingly.

"We're not accusing you. We have nothing to do with you; and that is the trouble. We want a different world, of love; we want matters of government decided by computers, not by personal interests and ambitions, not by power groups, religious or political.

So there is this gulf. We have taken a stand, and some of us at least won't yield on this matter."

The important man must have been young once, full of zeal and brightly curious, but now it was over. What makes the mind dull? The clamorous demands of the younger generation will soon calm down when they get married, settle down and have children and responsibilities. Their minds which were once so sharp will become dull. They, too, will become bourgeois. Perhaps a few escape from this agony - if they don't become specialized and astonishingly capable.

"I suppose," he said, "my mind has lost its elasticity, its flame, because I really have nothing to live for. I used to be religious but I've seen too many priests in high positions and they have dispelled all my hopes. I've studied hard, worked hard, and I'm trying to bring opposite elements together, but it's all part of a routine now, and I'm well aware that I'm fading away."

"Yes," said the student, "there are some of us who are very bright, sharp as needles, brilliantly articulate, but I can see the danger of their becoming successful leaders. There is the hero worship and gradually the brilliance of youth and brightness of perception fade. I, too, have often asked myself why it is that everything becomes dull, worn out, and meaningless - sex, love and the beauty of the morning. The artist wants to express something new, but it is still the same old mind and body behind the paintings."

This is one of the common factors of the relationship between the old and the young - the slow contagion of time and sorrow, the anxieties, and the bitter pill of self-pity. What makes the mind

dull? The mind, which is so extraordinarily capable of inventing new things, of going to the moon, of building computers - of so many things that are really extraordinary, almost magical? Of course, it is the collective mind that has produced the computer or composed a sonata. The collective, the group, is a common thought which is both in the many and in the one. Therefore there is not the collective or the one - only thought. The individual fights the collective and the collective fights the individual, but what is common to both is thought. And it is thought that makes the mind dull, whether the thought be in the interests of the one or of the many, the thought of self-improvement or the social upheaval."Thought is always in search of the secure - the security that is in the house, in the family, in the belief, or the security that denies all this. Thought is security, and the security is not only in the past from which the future security is built, but also the security that it tries to establish beyond time."

There was a silence. And a sparrow came on to the balcony where there were a few crumbs of bread and was pecking at them. Soon its young came too, fluttering their wings, and the mother began to feed them, one after the other. And a patch of blue sky, so intense, appeared over the green hill.

"But we can't do without thought," said the student."All our books, everything that's written, put down on paper, is the result of thought. And do you mean to say all this is unnecessary? There would be no education at all if you had your way. Is this so? It seems rather strange and fantastic. You appeared a few moments ago quite intelligent. Are you going back into primitivism?',

Not at all. What are you educated for, anyway? You may be a

sociologist, an anthropologist or a scientist, with your specialized mind working away at a fragment of the whole field of life. You are filled with knowledge and words, with capable explanations and rationalizations. And perhaps in the future the computer will be able to do all this infinitely better than you can.

So education may have a different meaning altogether - not merely transferring what is printed on a page to your brain. Education may mean opening the doors of perception on to the vast movement of life. It may mean learning how to live happily, freely, without hate and confusion, but in beatitude. Modern education is blinding us; we learn to fight each other more and more, to compete, to struggle with each other. Right education is surely finding a different way of life, setting the mind free from its own conditioning. And perhaps then there can be love which in its action will bring about true relationship between man and man.