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LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2

These letters are not meant to be read casually when you have a little time from other things, nor are they to be treated as entertainment. These letters are written seriously and if you care to read them, read them with intent to study what is said as you would study a flower by looking at the flower very carefully its petals, its stem, its colours, its fragrance and its beauty. These letters should be studied in the same manner, not read one morning and forgotten in the rest of the day. One must give time to it, play with it, question it, enquire into it without acceptance; live with it for some time; digest it so that it is yours and not the writer's.

J. Krishnamurti

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH NOVEMBER 1981

Every profession has its discipline, every action has its direction and every thought has its end. This is the cycle in which the human mind is caught. Being a slave to the known, the mind is always trying to expand its knowledge, its action within that field, its thought seeking its own end. In all schools, discipline is regarded as a framework for the mind and its action, and in recent years there has been revolt against any form of control, restraint or moderation. This has led to every form of permissiveness, immodesty and the pursuit of pleasure at any cost. Nobody has any respect for anyone. It appears they have lost all form of personal dignity and deep integrity. Billions are spent on drugs, on destroying their own bodies and minds. This all-permissiveness has become respectable and accepted as the norm of life.

To cultivate a good mind, a mind that is capable of perceiving the whole of life as one unit unbroken, and so a good mind, it is necessary that in all our schools a certain kind of discipline must exist. We must together understand the hated and perhaps despised words 'discipline' and 'rules'.

To learn, you need to have attention, to learn there must be hearing not only with the ear, but an inward grasp of what is being said. To learn it is necessary to observe. When you hear or read these statements you have to pay an attention which is not compelled, not be under any pressure or expectation of reward or punishment. Discipline means to learn not to conform. If you want to be a good carpenter you must learn the proper tools to use with

different kinds of wood and learn from a master carpenter. If you wish to be a good doctor you must study for many years, learn all the facts of the body and its many ways, cures, and so on. Every profession demands that you learn as much about it as you possibly can. This learning is to accumulate knowledge about it and act as skilfully as you can. Learning is the nature of discipline. Learning why one should be punctual to meals, the proper time for rest and so on, is learning about order in life. In a disorderly world where there is much confusion politically, socially, and even in religion, our schools must be centres of order and the education of intelligence. A school is a sacred place where all are learning about the complexity of life and its simplicity.

So learning demands application and order. Discipline is never conformity, so don't be afraid of the word and rebel against it. Words have become very important in our life. The word god has become extraordinarily important to most people; or the word nation, or the name of a politician and so on.

The word is the image of the politician; the image of god is built by thousands of years of thought and fear. We live with images created by the mind or by a skilful hand. To learn about these images, which one has accepted or self-created, demands self-awareness.

Education is not only learning about academic subjects but to educate oneself.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH DECEMBER 1981

A school is a place of learning and so it is sacred. The temples, churches and mosques are not sacred for they have stopped learning. They believe; they have faith and that denies entirely the great art of learning, whereas a school like those to which this letter is sent, must be entirely devoted to learning, not only about the world around us, but essentially about what we human beings are, why we behave the way we do, and the complexity of thought. Learning has been the ancient tradition of man, not only from books, but about the nature and structure of the psychology of a human being. As we have neglected this entirely, there is disorder in the world, terror, violence and all the cruel things that are taking place. We have put the world`s affairs first and not the inner. The inner, if it is not understood, educated and transformed, will always overcome the outer, however well organized it may be politically, economically and socially. This is a truth which many seem to forget. We are trying politically, legally and socially to bring order in the outer world in which we are living, and inwardly we are confused, uncertain, anxious and in conflict. Without inward order there will always be danger to human life.

What do we mean by order? The universe in the supreme sense has known no disorder. Nature, however terrifying to man, is always in order. It becomes disordered only when human beings interfere with it and it is only man who seems to be from the beginning of time in constant struggle and conflict. The universe has its own movement of time. Only when man has ordered his

life, will he realize the eternal order.

Why has man accepted and tolerated disorder? Why does whatever he touches decay, become corrupt and confused? Why has man turned from the order of nature, the clouds, the winds, the animals and the rivers? We must learn what is disorder and what is order. Disorder is essentially conflict, self-contradiction and division between becoming and being. Order is a state in which disorder has never existed.

Disorder is the bondage to time. Time to us is very important. We live in the past, in past memories, past hurts and pleasures. Our thought is the past. It is always modifying itself as a reaction to the present, projecting itself into the future, but the deep-rooted past is always with us and this is the binding quality of time. We must observe this fact in ourselves and be aware of its limiting process. That which is limited must be ever in conflict. The past is knowledge derived from experience, action and psychological responses. This knowledge, of which one may be conscious or not aware, is the very nature of man's existence. So the past becomes all-important, whether it be tradition, experience or remembrance with its many images. But all knowledge, whether in the future or the past, is limited. There can be no complete knowledge. Knowledge and ignorance go together.

In learning about this, that very learning is order. Order is not something planned and adhered to. In a school, routine is necessary but this is not order. A machine that is well put together functions effectively. The efficient organization of a school is absolutely necessary but this efficiency is not an end in itself to be confused with the freedom from conflict which is order.

How will an educator, if he has deeply learned all this, convey to the student the nature of order? If his own inward life is in disorder and he talks about order, he will not only be a hypocrite, which in itself is a conflict, but the student will realize this is double talk and so will not pay the least attention to what is being said. When the educator is immovable in his understanding, that very quality the student will grasp. When one is completely honest, that very honesty is transmitted to another.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH JANUARY 1982

I think it is important to learn the art of thinking together. The scientists and the most uneducated human beings think. They think according to their profession, specialization, and according to their belief and experience. We all think objectively or according to our own particular inclination, but we never seem to think together, to observe together. We may think about something, a particular problem or a similar experience, but this thinking does not go beyond its own limitation. Thinking together not about a particular subject but the capacity to think together is entirely different. To think together is necessary when you are facing the great crisis that is taking place in the world, the danger, the terror, the ultimate brutality of war. To observe this, not as a capitalist, socialist, the extreme left or extreme right, but to observe it together demands that we comprehend not only how we have come to this rotten state, but also that we together perceive a way out. The business man or the politician looks at this problem from a limited point of view, whereas we are saying we must look at life as a whole not as British, French or Chinese.

What does it mean to look at life as a whole? It means to observe the human being, ourselves, without any division of nationality, to see life as one single movement without a beginning and without an end, without time, without death. This is a difficult thing to understand because we think of the part not the totality. We divide, hoping to understand the whole from its part.

The art of thinking together needs to be studied carefully,

examined to see whether it is at all possible. Each one clings to his own way of thinking according to his own particular reactions, experience, prejudice. This is how we are conditioned, which prevents the capacity to think together. Thinking together does not mean to be of one mind. Our minds can come together about an ideal, an historical conclusion or some philosophic concept and work for that but this is essentially based on authority.

Freedom is the essence of thinking together. You must be free from your concept, prejudice and so on. I also must be free and we come together in this freedom. It means dropping all our conditioning. It implies complete attention without any past. The present world crisis demands that we totally abandon our tribal instincts that have become our glorified nationalisms. Thinking together implies that we totally abandon self-interest identified as the British, the Arab, the Russian and so on.

Then what is a human being to do facing this danger of separatism, of self-interest? There is the expansionist movement of one power or another, economically, politically, or of one or two bigoted, neurotic leaders. What is a human being to do confronted with this? Either you turn away from it and withdraw into indifference, or you join some political activity, or take refuge in some religious group. You cannot escape from this. It is there. What do I do? I refuse the present pattern of social structures, the nonsensical irreligious ways. I refuse all that. So I am totally isolated. This isolation is not an escape nor some form of ivory tower, some romantic illusion. Because I see the futility, the divisiveness, the pursuit of self-interest of nationalism, of expansionism, of the irreligious life, I reject the total

destructiveness of this society. So I stand alone. As I am not contributing psychologically to the destructive consciousness of man, I am in the stream of that which is goodness, compassion and intelligence. That intelligence is acting, confronting the madness of the present world. That intelligence will be acting wherever the ugly is.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH FEBRUARY 1982

We ought to consider together what we mean by attention. Most of us learn what concentration is; from childhood we are compelled to concentrate on something which generally we don't like. This breeds a kind of rebellion from being forced to do something we dislike. Education has become a funnelling of many subjects into our brain, conditioning us to conform. Millions and millions throughout the world are being educated and are finding no jobs. The whole pattern of society in which we live has become so abnormal, so dangerous, that we must find a new way of living together. This requires sensitivity and very objective observation and thinking. One questions whether this concentration, which is the narrowing down of perception, will help to bring about a different quality of mind.

For what are you being educated? What are you going to become as a human being? Mediocrity prevails from the highest political structure to the highest religious establishment. Are you being educated to fit into this pattern? Are you going to become a mediocre human being without any passion, in conflict with yourself and with the world? This is really a serious question you have to ask yourself. Can this concentrated, aggressive, competitive human being bring about a different order in our existence?

As we said, we ought to consider what it means to be attentive. This may be the clue to a harmonious existence. As things are, the intellect, the whole activity of the brain, which is thinking,

dominates our existence. This naturally brings about contradiction in ourselves, peculiar behaviour. When only one part of our whole being is in dominance, it will inevitably bring about neurotic behaviour. Attention is the awareness of this dominance of intellect, without the instinctive urge to control it, or allowing emotion to take its place. This awareness brings about subtlety, clarity of mind.

There is a difference between concentration and attention. Concentration is to bring all your energy to focus on a particular point. In attention there is no point of focus. We are very familiar with one and not with the other. When you pay attention to your body, the body becomes quiet, which has its own discipline; it is relaxed but not slack and it has the energy of harmony. When there is attention, there is no contradiction and therefore no conflict. When you read this pay attention to the way you are sitting, the way you are listening, how you are receiving what the letter is saying to you, how you are reacting to what is being said and why you are finding it difficult to attend. You are not learning how to attend. If you are learning the how of attending, then it becomes a system, which is what the brain is accustomed to, and so you make attention something mechanical and repetitive, whereas attention is not mechanical or repetitive. It is the way of looking at your whole life without the centre of self-interest.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 1ST OCTOBER 1982

The future for every human being, including the young and the old, appears to be bleak and frightening. Society itself has become dangerous and utterly immoral. When a young person faces the world he is concerned and rather frightened of what will happen to him in the course of his life. His parents send him to school and, if they have money, to university and they are concerned that he should settle down to a job, marriage, children and so on. The parents, it appears all over the world, have very little time for their own children. After a few years from birth the parents have lost them; they have very little relationship with their children. They worry about their own problems, ambitions and so on and the children are at the mercy of their educators, who themselves need education. They may be academically excellent and they too are concerned that their students should reach the highest grades (again academically), that the school should have the best reputation, but the educators have their own problems. Their salaries, except in a few countries, are rather low and socially they are not highly regarded.

So those who are being educated have rather a difficult time with their parents, their educators and their fellow students. Already the tide of struggle, of anxiety, fear and competition has set in. This is the world they have to face: a world that is overpopulated, under-nourished, a world of war, increasing terrorism, inefficient governments, corruption and the threat of poverty. This threat is less evident in affluent and fairly well-

organized societies but it is felt in those parts of the world where there is tremendous poverty, overpopulation and the indifference of inefficient rulers. This is the world the young people have to face and naturally they are really frightened. They have an idea that they should be free, independent of routine, should not be dominated by their elders and they shy away from all authority. Freedom to them means to choose what they want to do, but they are confused, uncertain and want to be shown what they should do.

In the eastern world the family, the parents, play a strong part in their lives. The family unit is still there. Though its young may earn a livelihood in different parts of the world, the family is the centre of their lives. This is fast disappearing in the Western world. So the student is caught between his own desire for freedom to do what he wants and the society which demands conformity to its own necessities that one become an engineer, a scientist, a soldier, or a specialist of some kind. This is the world they have to face and become a part of in their education. It is a frightening world.

We all want security physically as well as emotionally and this is becoming more and more difficult and painful. So we of the older generation, if we at all care for our children, must ask what then is education? If the present education, as it is now universally, is to prepare them to live in perpetual striving, conflict and fear, we must ask what is the meaning of it all? Is life a movement, a flow of pain and anxiety with occasional flares of joy and happiness, and the shedding of unshed tears? Unfortunately we, the older generation, do not ask these questions and neither does the educator. So education, as it is now, is a process of facing a dreary, narrow and meaningless existence, but we want to give a meaning

to life. Life has no meaning in itself, apparently, but we want to give it meaning and so invent gods, various forms of religion and other entertainments including nationalism and ways to kill each other to escape from our monotonous life. This is the life of the older generation and will be the life of the young.

Now we the parents and educators have to face this fact and not escape into theories, seek further forms of education and structure. If your minds are not clear about what we are facing, we shall inevitably, consciously or unconsciously, slip into the inaction of what to do about it. There are a thousand people who will tell us what to do: the specialists and the cranks. Before we understand the vast complexity of the problem we want to operate upon it. We are more concerned to act than to see the whole issue.

The real issue is the quality of our mind: not its knowledge but the depth of the mind that meets knowledge. Mind is infinite, is the nature of the universe which has its own order, has its own immense energy. It is everlastingly free. The brain, as it is now, is the slave of knowledge and so is limited, finite, fragmentary. When the brain frees itself from its conditioning, then the brain is infinite, then only there is no division between the mind and the brain. Education then is freedom from conditioning, from its vast accumulated knowledge as tradition. This does not deny the academic disciplines which have their own proper place in life.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH OCTOBER 1982

As we said, education must not only be efficient in academic disciplines but must also explore the conditioning of human conduct. This conduct is the result of many, many centuries of fear, anxiety, conflict and the search for security both inwardly and outwardly, both biologically and psychologically. The brain is conditioned by these processes. The brain is the result of evolution which is time. We are the result of this accumulated past both religiously and in our daily life. It is based on reward and punishment as an animal, a dog, is trained. Our brain is an extraordinary instrument of great energy and capacities. Look at what it has done in the outward world, in the world that surrounds us, It has divided into various races, religions and nationalities. It has done this to have security. It has sought this security in isolation religiously, politically, economically, in the unit of the family, in small communities and associations. It has sought this protective reaction in organizations and establishments.

Nationalism has been one of the major causes of war. Our politicians are concerned with maintaining nationalism with its economy, thus isolating itself. Where there is isolation there must be opposition, aggression, and good relationship with other nations appears to be trade, exchange of arma- ments, the balance of power and maintaining power in the hands of the few. This is our government, whether totalitarian or democratic. We have sought to bring about order in our society through political action and so we have become dependent upon the politicians. Why have politicians

become so extraordinarily important, like gurus, like the religious leaders? Is it because we have always depended on outside agencies to put our house in order, always depended on external forces to control and shape our lives? The external authority of a government, of parents, of every form of specialized leader seems to give us some hope for the future. This is part of our tradition of dependence and acceptance. This has been the long accumulated tradition which has conditioned our brain. Education has accepted its ways and so the brain has become mechanical and repetitive.

Is not then the function of the educator to understand the tremendous accumulated energy of the past, though not denying its necessity in certain areas of our life? We are concerned, are we not, as educators, to bring about the flowering of a good human being? This is not possible when the past, however modified, continues. What then are the factors of our conditioning? What is it that is being conditioned and who is it that does the conditioning? When we ask this question are we aware of our own actual conditioning and from that awareness ask this question, which has great vitality, or are we asking a theoretical, problematical question? We are not concerned in any way with hypothetical questions: we are dealing with actualities the actual being, what is. We are asking what is the cause of this state of human beings. There may be one cause or many causes. Many little streams give their waters to a great river. The depth, the volume and the beauty are all-important, not tracing each little stream to its source. So we are concerned in our investigation with the totality of our existence, not a particular part of it. When we comprehend the vastness of life with its complexities, then only can we ask what is the cause of our

conditioning.

One feels it is important to understand first, not verbally or intellectually, but to perceive that life is the woman, the man, the child, the animals, the river, the sky and the forest all of it. To feel this, not the idea of it, but to see the immensity and beauty of it. If we do not grasp the significance of this that all the vast movement of life is one when we ask what is the cause of conditioning we bring about the fragmentation of life.

So first realize that this movement of the skies, the earth, the human existence, is indivisible. Then only we come to the particular. When the heavens, the earth and human beings are one vast unitary process, then enquiry as to the cause of our conditioning will not be fragmentary, divisive. Then we can ask what is the cause: then the question has depth and beauty. To find the cause we must go together and enquire into the nature and structure of a human being. Apart from the biological, the organic, which left to itself has its own natural intelligence, its self-protective reactions, there is the whole psychological field the inward responses, inward hurts, the fears, the contradictions, the drive of desire, the passing pleasures and the weight of sorrow. This psyche when it is disorderly, confused and messy naturally affects the biologic existence. Then disease is psychosomatic. We are concerned, are we not, with the exploration of our inward nature which is very complex. This investigation is really self-education not to change what is, but to understand what is. Again this is important to grasp, important to live with this question. What is, is far more important than what should be. The understanding of what we actually are is far more essential than to

transcend what we are. We are the content of our consciousness. Our consciousness is a complexity but its very substance is movement. This must be clearly understood that we are not dealing with theories, hypotheses, ideals, but with our own actual daily existence.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 1ST NOVEMBER 1982

As we have pointed out, we are deeply involved in our daily life as educators and human beings. We are first human beings and then educators: not the other way around. As a human being, with a special profession of education, the teacher's life is not only in the classroom but is involved with the whole outer world as well as inner struggles, ambitions and relationships. He is as conditioned as the student. Though their conditioning may vary, it is still a conditioning. If you accept it as inevitable and abide by it, then you are further conditioning others. There are many who accept this, trying to modify their limitations, but as educators you are concerned are you not? with bringing about a different social entity; a future generation which perceives the futility of wars and organized murder; a generation which is concerned with global interrelationship, without nationalistic isolation; a generation which is involved with truth. Surely this is the function of a true educator.

The human consciousness is conditioned. Any thoughtful man would accept this fact but many of us are not aware of this and perhaps neither is the educator. To become aware of his conditioning and investigate whether it is possible to be free of its limitation, is one of the functions of a teacher. So we have to go into the question of what it is to be aware, to concentrate, to give total attention. It is very important to understand the meaning of these.

Awareness implies sensitivity: to be sensitive to nature, to the

hills, rivers and the trees around one; to be aware of that poor man walking down the road; to be sensitive to his feelings, his reactions, to his appalling and degrading poverty; to be sensitive to the man who is sitting next to you, or to the nervousness of your friend or sister. This sensitivity has in it no choice; it is not critical. There is no judgemental evaluation. You are sensitive to the cloud about which you can do nothing. Is this sensitivity the result of time and practice? If you allow thought and practice, then that very thought and practice kill sensitivity. Learn to observe sensitively; learn what sensitivity implies; capture it rather than cultivate it. Don't ask how to capture it: grasp it. In the very perception you are sensitive. There is no resistance in sensitivity. Sensitivity is to the immediate and limitless.

Concentration is the process of resistance. Every educator knows what it means to concentrate. The educator is concerned with stuffing the brain with knowledge of various subjects so that the student will pass examinations and get a job. The student also has this in his mind. The educator and the student are encouraging each other in the form of resistance which is concentration. So one is building the capacity to resist, to exclude and gradually one becomes isolated. Concentration is the focussing of one's energy on the blackboard or a book and avoiding distraction. The very word distraction implies concentration. Actually there is no distraction. There is only resistance which is called concentration and any movement away from that is considered distraction. So in this there is conflict, struggle and resistance. This resistance will inevitably bring about the limitation of the brain, which is our conditioning. To perceive this whole movement with sensitivity is to move into a

different area which is to be attentive.

What is it to be attentive? If we really grasp the significance of sensitivity, of awareness, the limitation of concentration not intellectually or verbally, but the actuality of such states, then we can ask what it is to be attentive. Attention involves seeing and hearing. We hear not only with our ears but also we are sensitive to the tones, the voice, to the implication of words, to hear without interference, to capture instantly the depth of a sound. Sound plays an extraordinary part in our lives: the sound of thunder, a flute playing in the distance, the unheard sound of the universe; the sound of silence, the sound of one's own heart beating; the sound of a bird and the noise of a man walking on the pavement; the waterfall. The universe is filled with sound. This sound has its own silence; all living things are involved in this sound of silence. To be attentive is to hear this silence and move with it.

Seeing is a very complex affair. One sees casually with one's eyes and swiftly passes by, never seeing the details of a leaf, its form and structure, its colours, the variety of greens. To observe a cloud with all the light of the world in it, to follow a stream chattering down the hill; to look at your friend with the sensitivity in which there is no resistance and to see yourself as you are without the shades of denial or easy acceptance; to see yourself as part of the whole; to see the immensity of the universe this is observation: to see without the shadow of yourself.

Attention is this hearing and this seeing, and this attention has no limitation, no resistance, so it is limitless. To attend implies this vast energy: it is not pinned down to a point. In this attention there is no repetitive movement; it is not mechanical. There is no

question of how to maintain this attention, and when one has learned the art of seeing and hearing, this attention can focus itself on a page, a word. In this there is no resistance which is the activity of concentration. Inattention cannot be refined into attention. To be aware of inattention is the ending of it: not that it becomes attentive. The ending has no continuity. The past modifying itself is the future a continuity of what has been and we find security in continuity, not in endings. So attention has no quality of continuity. Anything that continues is mechanical. The becoming is mechanical and implies time. Attention has no quality of time. All this is a tremendously complicated issue. One must gently, deeply go into it.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH NOVEMBER 1982

We seem to think that education stops when we leave school or college. We don't seem to treat the whole of human existence as a process of self-education which is constant and perhaps neverending. So most of us limit education to a very short period and for the rest of our lives carry on in rather a muddle, learning only a few things that are absolutely necessary, falling into a routine and of course there is always death waiting. This is really our life marriage, children, work, passing pleasures, pain and death. If this is all our life, which apparently it is, then what really is the meaning of education? We never ask these fundamental questions; probably they are too disturbing. But as we are teachers in colleges and schools we must ask what is the purpose of education and learning. We know it gives us some sort of job but apart from the physical occupation with its responsibilities, what do we mean by teaching and the teacher?

As it is generally understood, a teacher, having already studied certain subjects, informs the student about them. Does this constitute being a teacher just to pass on knowledge? So we are enquiring into the nature of the teacher and the taught. Who is a teacher? What are the implications of teaching apart from the curricula? Very few are dedicated teachers. They are dedicated to helping the students in their studies, but surely a teacher has far greater significance.

Knowledge must inevitably be superficial. It is the cultivation of memory and employing that memory efficiently and so on.

Knowledge being always limited, is it the function of the teacher to help the student to live all his life only within the limitations of knowledge? We must first realize that knowledge is always limited, as are all experiences. This employment of knowledge with its limitations can be very destructive. It is destructive in human relationships. In relationship knowledge, which is the accumulation of various incidents, experiences, reactions, cultivates the image of the other person and obscures the reality of that person and the relationship.

When there is a continuity, a tradition, put together by knowledge and handed down from generation to generation, then the past, which is the accumulation of knowledge, obscures the actual living present. When knowledge becomes routine, mechanical, it makes the brain limited, rigid and insensitive. When knowledge is used for the support of nationalism through wars, then it becomes bestial, appallingly cruel and utterly immoral. Knowledge is not beauty, but knowledge is necessary to bore a well. The whole technological world is based on knowledge and that world is taking over our lives. If we allow knowledge to be the sole authority, and hope through knowledge to ascend, then we are living in a fatal illusion. We are saying that knowledge has its place in everyday life but when knowledge is the only substance of our life, then our life must be confined to mechanical activity.

Is the communication of knowledge the only function of the teacher as it is now passing on information, ideas, theories and expanding these theories, discussing various aspects of them? Is this the only function of a teacher? If this is all a teacher is concerned with, then he is merely a living computer. But surely a

teacher has far greater responsibility than this. He must be concerned with behaviour, with the human complexity of action, with a way of life which is the flowering of goodness. Surely he must be concerned with the future of his students and what is the future for these students? What is the future of man? What is the future of our consciousness which is so confused, disturbed, messy, in conflict? Must we perpetually live in conflict, sorrow and pain? When the teacher is not in communication with the student about all these matters, then he is merely a lively, clever machine perpetuating other machines.

So we are asking a very fundamental question which is: what is a teacher? It is the greatest profession in the world, though the least respected, for if he is deeply and seriously concerned, the teacher is bringing about the unconditioning of the human brain not only his own but that of the student. He is conditioned and the student is conditioned. Whether he admits it or not this is a fact, and in relationship with the student he is helping both the student and himself to free consciousness from limitation.

A relationship is a process of learning. A relationship is not a static affair but a living movement and so it is never the same. What it was yesterday it is not today. When yesterday dominates in relationship, then relationship is what it was, not a living thing. Love is not what it was. When the relationship between the teacher and the student has this element of companionship, of mutual unconditioning and humility, sensitivity and affection are natural. A teacher might say all this is impossible. When school authorities demand that there be fifty students in a class of every kind of idiocy, then what is a teacher to do? Obviously he cannot do

anything. But we are talking about schools where this does not take place. There the teacher can establish this relationship and there he is deeply involved with the flowering of human beings.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 1ST DECEMBER 1982

It appears that very few teachers are aware of their great responsibility, not only to the parents, but also in their relationship to the students. What is this relationship? How does one regard this relationship? Is it communication of information? Is it the verbal statement of certain facts, and is the relationship superficial, casual and passing? Is the teacher an example? Am I as a teacher an influence? If I am an example that some of my students should follow, then I become a tyrant; then discipline becomes conformity. They imitate me, my ways, my gestures and so on. But I do not want them to follow me, to influence them. I want them to understand how all of us are influenced, moulded to conform to a pattern. My perception, my intention is to help my students to be free of every kind of influence, good or bad, so that they see for themselves what is right action. Not to be told what is right action but to have the capacity and drive to see the false and the true. That is, my concern is primarily to cultivate their intelligence so that they can meet life with all its complexities intelligently. I see this not as a goal but as an immediate reality. I know they are influenced by their parents, by their fellow students and by the world around them. Young people are easily influenced. They may rebel against it but consciously or unconsciously there is pressure and the strain of this pressure. So I ask my self as a teacher, and as a human being, in what manner can I bring about the character and energy of that intelligence?

I begin to see that I must be both introvert and extrovert, in the

world of action, and inwardly not be self-centred but turn my eyes and my hearing to the subtleties of life. That is, I must be able to protect and at the same time cultivate generosity, be both the receiver and the giver. I feel all this if I am a really dedicated teacher in the true sense of that word. To me it is not a profession; it is something that has to be done. So I become very much more aware of the world, what is happening there, and inwardly comprehend the necessity to go beyond and above self-centred interest. I see this as a whole movement, the outward and the inner, indivisible like the waters of the sea that come in and go out. Now my question is: how am I to help the student to be aware of this?

Sensitivity implies being vulnerable. One is sensitive to one's reactions, to one's hurts, one's beleaguered existence: that is, one is sensitive about oneself and in this vulnerable state there is really self-interest and therefore the capability of being hurt, of becoming neurotic. It is a form of resistance which is essentially concentrated on the self. The strength of vulnerability is not self-centred. It is like the young spring leaf that can withstand strong winds and flourish. This vulnerability is incapable of being hurt, whatever the circumstances. Vulnerability is without centre as the self. It has an extraordinary strength, vitality and beauty.

As a human being, in myself and as a teacher, I see all this as clearly as possible, but as a teacher I am not all this. I am studying this, learning. As a teacher I am in relationship with my students and in that relation I am learning. In what manner am I to convey all this to my students who are conditioned, thoughtless, full of play, mischievous as normal children are? I teach subjects and am wondering if I can convey all this through mathematics, biology,

physics. Or are they apart, something to be memorized? I see the other as not the cultivation of memory, so I have this problem: on the one hand the cultivation of memory in history and so on to pass examinations and ultimately for an occupation, and on the other I have a glimmer that intelligence is not mechanical, is not the cultivation of memory. This is my problem. I am asking myself if these two are separate? Or if intelligence, if it is awakened from the very beginning of one's life, can include memory and not be a slave to it? The greater includes the lesser. The universe contains the particular. But the particular cannot remain in its own narrow sphere.

I am beginning to comprehend this important factor for I am a dedicated teacher who is using teaching as a steppingstone to something else. So I am wondering what to do with these children in front of me. They are not interested in all this. They are ready to bully each other, to compete with each other, are envious and so on. Now you who are the outsider, do you understand my problem? You have to because you are also a teacher in your own way at home, in the playing fields or in business. We are all teachers in some way or other, so don't just leave me with my problem. It is your problem too, so let us talk about it.

We both see, I hope, that we are in this predicament: that the primary and greatest importance is to bring about this intelligence in all children and in the students for whom we are responsible. Don't leave me alone to solve this problem, so let us talk about it. First of all I want you and me to understand the problem. Leave the children and the student alone for the moment. Do we see that the student must eventually have an occupation and so he must

understand the world, the necessities of the world, its implicit disorder and its increasing destruction and decline? He has to face this world not as a specialized entity, which makes him incapable of meeting the world. All this implies the acquisition of knowledge and the careful discipline of knowledge. As long as the world is what it is, he has to act in a certain direction and he is occupied most of the time with that, perhaps eight or ten hours a day. Also he has to study and learn about the whole psychological world which has not been explored by anyone. Those who have explored somewhat tell what they have discovered: this becomes knowledge and the student merely follows. This is not an accurate exploration into oneself. So you and I have this issue. You may be casually interested but I as a teacher am really concerned. I too am conditioned; I am not quite vulnerable in the definition which has been given here. I have my family problems etc, but my dedication supercedes them all. What am I to do or not to do? Does it demand no action but to create with other teachers the atmosphere of intent? The intent is not a goal to be achieved sometime later. The intent is the everpresent activity in which time is not involved at all.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH DECEMBER 1982

Intent is far more important than to achieve a goal, an end. Intent is not just an intellectual and ideologic conclusion but rather an active, living present. It is the wick that is burning in a bowl of oil. It cannot be extinguished, no breeze can blow it out. The wick is stout and the oil is not fed by any external influence or source. It has no cause and so the flame, the wick and the oil are everenduring. This is my intent as a dedicated teacher and it should be yours too as parents and of all humanity, for we are all concerned. The vital flame of intent is to bring about a good, intelligent, extremely capable, free human being. You cannot escape from this intention. You are involved in it as much as I am. You may shy away from it, disregard it, neglect it, but you are as much responsible as I am. The future is our responsibility so this is our immediate problem. My problem and yours is to cultivate the comprehensive intelligence from which all other things flow. I can see this in my mind's eye as the central factor, for no intelligent person, in the sense we are using that word, would ever want to hurt another intentionally. Such a person would treat all humanity as he would treat himself, without this terrible destructive division. I can also feel in some vague way, not sentimentally, that this intelligence is totally impersonal, neither yours nor mine. I can feel its tremendous attraction and its truth.

Now in what manner can I cultivate this in my students and myself? I am using the wrong word cultivate: cultivation implies the activity of thought, it implies an achievement, a labour. So I am

beginning to perceive that intelligence is totally different from the activity of thought. Thought has no relation to it. It cannot be born out of thought, for thought is always limited.

Now having stated this, which is not a vague apprehension but a burning intention, I ask myself is it possible for me to convey to the student the quality of this intention? Can I do this through mathematics or biology, or any other subject? Knowing the students' brains are conditioned, limited, conforming, let us say I am a teacher of mathematics. Mathematics is order, infinite order. Order is the universe, is intelligence. Order is not static; it is a living movement. Our life is movement but we have brought about disorder in our life. So I am going to talk to the students not just about mathematics but about order in their and my life. Negation of disorder is order. A human being confused, disorderly, uncertain, in trying to establish order only creates more disorder. I see this very, very clearly so I am going to help them and in helping them I am helping myself. That order cannot be pursued as you can pursue mathematics step by step. So the first thing to realize is that thought can never bring about order, do what it will, through legislation, administration or compulsion. Mathematics is not disorder. Mathematics in itself is basically order. Order is independent of thought. Thought cannot put together order: the more it attempts it the greater the confusion. Thought is capable of seeing the order of mathematics but this order is not the product of thought. One can see the great majesty and beauty of a mountain but the human being who sees it may have no dignity, no majesty, no beauty.

Now with all this I myself must study this order and disorder

before I can convey it to my pupils. The study of a book on any particular subject is very different from the study of myself, who is disorderly, confused. The book reveals phrase by phrase, chapter by chapter, coming to some conclusion or other. The book is visible and one can spend perhaps years on the subject of the book. But I am not studying a book, I am studying a book that has not print on it, which cannot be read through another's eye. So I must find out how to study it. You are doing this with me too, so don't step aside. I am studying for my own interest and also to convey it to the student. It is not that I am studying for myself only. The book and the subject in itself are palpable, tangible. The words convey a certain definite meaning but to study this tenuous, living, changing subject which is my own quality of brain, which has lived and still lives in disorder, confusion and fear is far more difficult than reading a book. It requires swiftness, subtlety, moving without leaving an imprint. Do I have such a quality? In asking that question of myself I am not only studying who puts that question but also the intent behind the question?

So I am studying the whole phenomenon very cautiously, never coming to a definite conclusion. This constant watchfulness, never allowing any shadow to slip by without careful observation, is making the brain, the whole activity of thought, quieten down without becoming dull. I take a rest and pick it up again. The rest is as important as the renewal of observation. I am capturing the perfume of that intelligence, the extraordinary subtlety of it, and so the whole physical organism is becoming more alive, aware, and is beginning to have a different rhythm. It is creating its own atmosphere. Now I can go to the class under a tree or in a room

where I am supposed to teach mathematics, knowing that the students have to qualify in it, and for the first five or ten minutes I talk to them explaining very clearly what I have been studying how it is possible for them to study it too. I am teaching them the art of studying. I am really deeply interested in conveying to them my deep intention and they are enveloped in my ardour. I explain to them how I approach this question of intelligence step by step. I point out to them the order and beauty of a tree, which is not put together by thought. I insist that they see this clearly that nature and the heavens and the wild animals of the forest are not the product of thought, though thought may use them for its own convenience or destruction. Thought in its activity has brought about great destruction and also great passing beauty.

During every opportunity, without boring myself and the students, I talk about these matters with humour and seriousness. This is my life for this intelligence is supreme. Order has no cause, therefore it is everlasting; but disorder has a cause and that which has a cause can end.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 1ST JANUARY 1983

Discontent does not necessarily lead to intelligence. Most of us have some kind of dissatisfaction and are not satisfied with most things. We may have money, position and some kind of prestige in the world, but there is always this worm of discontent. The more you have the more you want. Satisfaction is never satisfied.

Discontent is like a flame: however much you feed it, it absorbs more. It is curious how easily satisfaction finds its temporary fulfilment and one holds onto it, though it soon fades and the wanting more comes back again. It appears this is the constant swing from one object of satisfaction to another, physically as well as inwardly. The 'more' is the root of discontent. The flame of measurement leads either to satiety, indifference and neglect, or to a wider and deeper enquiry.

In enquiry satisfaction is not the goal. Enquiry is its own source which is never emptied. It is like the spring well and it can never forget itself through any kind of satisfaction. This flame can never be smothered by any outward or inward activity of achievement. Most of us have this tiny flame which is generally smothered by some form of gain, but in order to allow this tiny flame to burn furiously, the measurement of the more must totally end. Then only the flame burns away all sense of gratification. As an educator I have been concerned with another problem. I cannot have a school all to myself. In a school I have many colleagues. Some are extremely bright I am not being patronizing. Others are of varying dullness, though all are what is called well-educated, having

degrees and so on. perhaps one or two of us are trying to help the students to understand the nature of intelligence, but I feel that unless all of us are together cooperatively helping the student in this direction, those teachers who are not concerned with the cultivation of it will naturally act as an impediment. This is the problem of a few of us; this goes on most of the time in educational centres. So my problem is and again let me repeat this is not being said in any patronizing way how are we, the few, to deal with the many? What is our response to them? It is a challenge that must be met at all levels of our life. In all forms of government there is the division between the few and the many. The few may be concerned with the whole population and the many concerned with their own particular little interests. This happens all over the world and it is happening in the field of education. So how are we to establish a relationship with those of us who are not totally committed to the flowering of intelligence and goodness? Or is it all one problem to awaken the flame in the whole of the school?

Of course the authoritarian attitude destroys all intelligence. The sense of obedience breeds only fear which in itself inevitably drives away the understanding of the true nature of intelligence. So what place has authority in a school? We have to study authority and not merely assert that there should be no authority but only freedom and so on. We have to study it as we study the atom. The structure of the atom is orderly. Obedience, following, accepting authority, whether it is blind or clear-eyed, must inevitably bring about disorder.

What is the root of obedience which breeds authority? When one is in disorder, confusion, society becomes utterly chaotic; then

that very disorder creates authority, as has happened so often historically. Is the root of accepting authority fear, being in oneself uncertain, without clarity? Then each human being helps to bring about the authority that will tell us what to do, as has happened in all religions, all sects and communities: the everlasting problem of the guru and the disciple, each destroying the other. The follower then becomes the leader. This cycle is forever repeating itself.

We are studying together, in the real sense of the word, what is the causation of authority. If each one of us sees that it is fear, muddle-headedness, or some deeper factor, then the mutual study of it, verbal or non-verbal, has significance. In studying there may be an exchange of thought and the silent observation of the causation of authority. Then that very study uncovers the light of intelligence, for intelligence has no authority. It is not your intelligence or my intelligence. A few of us may see this deeply and really without any deception and it is our responsibility that this flame be spread wherever we are, either in school, at home or in bureaucratic government. Wherever you are, it has no abiding place.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH JANUARY 1983

Our brains are very old. They have evolved through countless experiences, accidents, death, and the continuity of the flowering of the brain has been going on for millennia. It has varieties of capacities, is ever active, moving and living in its own memories and anxieties, full of fear, uncertainty and sorrow. This is the everlasting cycle it has lived the passing pleasures and incessant activity. In this long process it has been conditioning itself, shaping its own way of life, adjusting itself to its own environment as few species have, combining hatred and affection, killing others and at the same time trying to find a peaceful life. It is shaped by the infinite activity of the past, always modifying itself, but the basic structure of reward and pain remains almost the same. This conditioning attempts to shape the outward world but inwardly it is following the same pattern, always dividing the me and the you, we and they, being hurt and trying to hurt: a pattern in which passing affection and its pleasure is the way of our life.

To observe all this without value judgement it becomes necessary, if there is to be any deep, living change, to perceive the complexity of our life without choice: just to see exactly what is. 'What is' is far more important than what should be. There is only what is and never what should be. What is can only end. It cannot become something else. The ending has greater significance than what is beyond ending. To search for what is beyond is to cultivate fear; to search for what lies beyond is to avoid, to turn away from what is. We are always chasing that which is not, something other

than the actual. If we could see this and remain with what is, however unpleasant or fearful it may be, or however pleasurable, then observation which is pure attention, dissipates that which is. One of our difficulties is that we want to get on and one says to oneself, 'I understand this then what?' The 'what' is slipping away from what is. The 'what is' is the movement of thought. If it is painful, thought tries to avoid it, but if it is pleasurable, thought holds it and prolongs it, so this is one of the aspects of conflict.

There is no opposite but only what actually is. As there is no opposite in the psychological sense, the observation of what is does not entail conflict. But our brains are conditioned to the illusion of the opposite. Of course there are opposites: light and dark, man and woman, black and white, tall and short and so on. But here we are trying to study the psychological field of conflict. The ideal breeds conflict. But we are conditioned by centuries of idealism, the ideal state, the ideal man, the prototype, the god. It is this division between the prototype and the actual which breeds conflict. To see the truth of this is not a judgemental evaluation.

I have studied carefully what has been said in this letter. I understand the logic of it, the common sense of it, but the weight of the past is so heavy that the persistent, constant intrusion of cultivated illusion, of the ideal of what should be, is always interfering. I am asking myself whether this illusion can be totally dispelled, or should I accept it as an illusion and let it wither away? I can see that the more I struggle against it, the more I am giving life to it, and it is very difficult to remain with what is.

Now as an educator, as both parent and teacher, can I convey this subtle and complex problem of conflict in human beings?

What a wonderful life it would be without conflict, without problems. Or rather, as problems arise which seems to be inevitable to deal with them immediately and not live with them. The way of education so far has been to cultivate competition and thereby sustain conflict. So I see one problem after another piling up in my responsibility to the student. The difficulties drown me and so I begin to lose the vision of a good human being. I am using the word `vision' not as some ideal, not a goal in the future, but as the actual deep reality of goodness and beauty. It is not some fanciful dream, a thing to be achieved, but the very truth of it is a liberating factor. This perception is logical, reasonable and utterly sane. It has no overtones of sentimentality or romantic froth.

Now I am faced with the total acceptance of what is and I see my students caught in the avoidance of the actual. So there is a contradiction here and if I am not careful and watchful in my relation with them I will bring about conflict, a struggle between them and me. I see, but they do not which is a fact. I want to help them to see. It is not my perception of truth, but for each one of them to see the truth which belongs to nobody. Any form of pressure is a distorting factor, as in giving or being an example, so I have to go at this very gently and interest them in investigating the ending of conflict whether it is possible or not. It has now taken me perhaps a week or more to understand this, to grasp the significance of it. I may not actually be living this but I have grasped the delicate device of it and it must not slip away from me. If they grasp even the perfume of this, it is as a living seed.

I am discovering that patience has no element of time, whereas impatience is in the nature of time. I am not trying to achieve a

result or come to a certain conclusion. I am not engulfed by all this;
there is a regenerating factor.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 1ST FEBRUARY 1983

Freedom is very necessary in our life. Freedom is obviously not to do whatever you like, though this has been considered freedom and has been the way of our life. We feel thwarted, inhibited when our desires are denied. From this arises our resentments, our feeling that we are sat upon and so a continuous revolt. We have followed this course of life and we can see, if we are at all thoughtful, what it has brought to the world: utter chaos. Some of the psychologists have encouraged us to pursue our impulses without any restraint, to do what we like immediately, rationalizing such activity as necessary for each one's growth. This was actually the cry for many generations, though there was outward restraint, and now they call it freedom to allow the child to do what he wants, and so on up the ladder of his life, which is society. And perhaps now there will be an opposite swing: control, inhibit, discipline and the psychological restraint. This appears to be the story of mankind.

Added to this is the computer and the robot: the technology that is developing in this direction, hoping to produce and probably will produce a computer with a human brain which may think faster and more accurately and thus give freedom from long hours of labour. The computer too is gradually taking over the education of our children. Highly qualified teachers and professors in their various subjects can inform the student without the actual presence of the teacher. This too will give us a certain freedom. Except in the totalitarian States, greater freedom is going to come to man and so perhaps allow him to do what he likes. Thus greater conflict

may arise, greater misery and wars for man. When technology and computers with robots dominate and become part of our daily life, then what is to happen to the human brain which has been active so far in outward and physical struggle? Will the brain then become atrophied, working only a couple of hours or more? When relationship is between machine and machine, what is to happen to the quality and vitality of the brain? Will it seek some form of entertainment, religious or otherwise, or will it allow itself to explore the vast recesses of one's being? The industry of entertainment is gathering more and more strength and very little human energy and capacity is turned inwardly, so if we are not aware, the entertainment world is going to conquer us.

So we must ask what is freedom? It is often said that freedom is at the end of drastic discipline and civilized control civilized in the sense of literature, art, museums and good food. This is merely the outward coating of a confused, declining human being. Is freedom a choice of entertainment? Is freedom choice at all? We always consider freedom as being from something: from bondage, anxiety, loneliness, despair and so on. Such consideration only leads to further and perhaps more refined states of misery, sorrow and the ugliness of hatred. Freedom is not choosing a leader, political or religious, to follow which obviously denies freedom. Freedom is not the opposite of slavery. Freedom is the ending: not giving continuity to what has been. Freedom in itself has no opposite.

After having read this and studied it, what is my relationship not to the student and to my wife and children, but to the world? Really to understand the depth of freedom one needs a great deal of intelligence and perhaps love. But the activities of the world are

not intelligent and neither is my group of children. I spend most of my day with them: have I this quality of freedom, with its intelligence and love? If I have this, my problem is very simple. That very quality will operate and what I thought to be a problem will cease to be one. But I really do not have this. I can pretend, put on a show of friendliness, but that is very shallow. My responsibility is immediate. I cannot say to myself that I will wait until I will achieve freedom and this affection, love. I literally have no time because my students are in front of me. I cannot become a hermit: that will not solve any problem, mine or the world's. I need lightning from heaven to break up this incrustation, this conditioning, to have this freedom and love; but there is no thunderbolt, no heaven. I can allow myself to come to an impasse and get depressed over the matter but that is an escape from the problem to completely enclose myself and thus be incapable of facing the actuality. As when I actually see the truth that there is no outside agent to help me in this dilemma, that no outside influence, no grace, no prayer will help in this matter, then perhaps I will have an uncontaminated energy. That energy may then be freedom and love.

But have I the energy of intelligence to dismantle the things which human beings all over the world, of whom I am one, have built psychologically around themselves? Have I the persistence to go through all this? I am asking these questions of myself and I shall be asking my students in a more gentle and benevolent manner. I see the implications of all this quite clearly and I must tread very softly. The true answer lies in intelligence and love. If you have these qualities you will know what to do. One must

realize the truth of this very deeply, otherwise we shall all be perpetuating in one form or another the confusion between man and man.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH FEBRUARY 1983

Intelligence is not the consequence of discipline. It is not a by-product of thought. Thought is the result of knowledge and ignorance. There can be no discipline without love. The discipline of thought, though it has certain values, leads to conformity.

Conformity is the way of discipline as it is generally understood to imitate and follow a pattern. Discipline really means to learn, not to bow down to a standard; from childhood we are told to mould ourselves according to a religious or social structure, to control ourselves, to obey. Discipline is based on reward and punishment. Discipline is inherent in every subject: If you want to be a good golfer or tennis player, it demands that you pay attention to every stroke, to respond quickly and gracefully. The very game has its intrinsic natural order. This instructive order has gone out of our life, which has become chaotic, ruthless, competitive, seeking power with all its pleasures.

Discipline implies, does it not, learning the whole complex movement of life social, personal and beyond personal? Our life is fragmented and we try to understand each fragment or integrate the fragments. Recognizing all this, the mere imposition of discipline and certain concepts becomes rather meaningless, but without some form of control most of us go berserk. Certainly inhibitions hold us, compel us to follow tradition.

One realizes that there must be a certain order in our life and is it possible to have order without any form of compulsion, without any pressure and essentially without reward or punishment? The

social order is chaotic; there is injustice, the rich and poor and so on. Every reformer tries to bring about social equality, and apparently not one of them has succeeded. Governments try to impose order by force, by law, by subtle propaganda. Though we may put a lid on all this, the pot is still boiling.

So we must approach the problem differently. We have tried in every sort of way to civilize, to tame man and this too has not been very successful. Every war indicates barbarism, whether it is a holy war or a political war. So we must come back to the question: can there be order that is not the result of contriving thought?

Discipline means the art of learning. For most of us learning means storing up memory, reading a great many books, being able to quote from various authors, collecting words so as to write, speak or convey other people's ideas or one's own. It is to act efficiently as an engineer or a scientist, a musician or a good mechanic. One may excel in the knowledge of these things and thus make oneself more and more capable of having money, power and position. This is generally accepted as learning: to accumulate knowledge and to act from that; or, through action, to accumulate knowledge, which comes to the same. This has been our tradition, our custom, and so we are always living and learning in the field of the known. We are not suggesting there is something unknown but to have an insight into the activities of the known, its limitations, its dangers and its endless continuity. The story of man is this. We do not learn from wars: we repeat wars, and brutality and bestiality continue with their corruption.

Only if we actually see the limitation of knowledge that the more we pile up, the more barbarous we are becoming can we

begin to enquire into what is order that is not imposed externally or self-imposed, for both imply conformity and so endless conflict. Conflict is disorder. The apprehension of all this is attention, not concentration, and attention is the essence of intelligence and love. This naturally brings the order which has no compulsion.

Now as educators, as parents which is the same is it not possible for us to convey this to our students and children? They may be too young to understand all that we have just read. We see the difficulties and these very difficulties will prevent us from grasping the greater issue. So I am not making this into a problem: I am just very much aware of what is chaos and what is order. These two have no relation to each other. One is not born out of the other. And I am not denying one or accepting the other. But the flowering seed of perception will bring right, correct action.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 1ST OCTOBER 1983

In every civilization there have been a few who were concerned and desirous of bringing about good human beings; a few who would not be involved in sacred structures or reform, but who would not harm another human being; who would be concerned with the whole of human life, who would be gentle, unaggressive and so would be truly religious entities. In modern civilization throughout the world, the cultivation of goodness has almost disappeared. The world is becoming more brutal, harmful, full of violence and deception. Surely it is our function as educators to bring about a quality of mind that is fundamentally religious. We do not mean belonging to some orthodox religion with all its fantastic beliefs, its repetitive rituals. Man has always tried to find something beyond this world of anxiety, suffering and endless conflict. In his search for that which is not of the world, he has invented, probably unconsciously, god and many forms of divinity, and the interpreters between himself and that which he has projected. There have been many interpreters, highly sophisticated, talented, learned. Historically from ancient of times this cycle has continued: god, the interpreter and the man. This is the real trinity in which human gullibility has been held. The world has been too much and each human being wants some comfort, security and peace. So humans have projected the essence of all this into an outside agency and that too we are discovering to be an illusion. Not being able to go beyond and above all the limitations of human struggle, we are returning to barbarism, destroying each other

inwardly and outwardly.

Can we as a small group begin to think upon these things and, freeing ourselves from all the invented superstitions of religion, discover what is a religious life and thus prepare the soil for the flowering of goodness? Without the religious mind there can be no goodness. There are three factors in understanding the nature of religion: austerity, humility and diligence.

Austerity does not mean reducing all of life to ashes by severe discipline, suppressing every instinct, every desire and even beauty. Outward expression of this in the Asiatic world is the saffron robe and a loincloth. In the Western world it is taking vows of celibacy, utter obedience and becoming a monk. Simplicity of life was expressed in outer garments and a restricted, narrow cellular life, but inwardly the flame of desire and its conflict was burning steadily. That flame was to be put out by strict adherence to a concept, to an image. The book and the image became the symbols of a simple life. Austerity is not the outward expression of a conclusion based on faith but to understand the inward complexity, the confusion and the agony of life. This understanding, not verbal or intellectual, requires a very careful, watchful perception, a perception which is not the complexity of thought but clarity this clarity brings about its own austerity.

Humility is not the opposite of vanity, is not bowing one's head to some abstract authority or to the high priest. It is not the act of surrender to a guru or to an image, which are both the same. It is not the total denial, a sacrifice, of oneself to some imaginary or physical being. Humility is not associated with arrogance. Humility has no sense of possessiveness inwardly. Humility is the essence of

love and intelligence, it is not an achievement.

And the other factor is diligence: it is for thought to be aware of its activities, its deceptions, its illusions; it is to discern the actual and the false in which what is actual is transformed into what it should be. It is to be aware of reactions to the world outside and to the inner whispering responses. It is not self-centred watchfulness, but to be sensitive to all relationship. Above and beyond all this is intelligence and love. When these exist all the other qualities will follow. It is like opening the gate to beauty.

Now I come back as an educator and a parent to my stumbling question. My students and my children have to face the world which is everything other than intelligence and love. This is not a cynical statement but it is so, palpable and evident. They have to face corruption, brutality and utter callousness. They are frightened. Being responsible (I am using that word very carefully, and with deep intention), how are we to help them to face all this? I am not asking the question of anyone but I am putting it to myself so that in questioning I become clear. I am greatly troubled by this and I certainly do not want a comforting answer. In questioning myself, sensitivity and clarity are showing their beginnings. I feel very strongly about the future of these students and children, and by helping them to use words, intelligence and love, I am gathering strength. To help one boy or one girl to be like this is sufficient for me, for the river begins in the high mountains as a very small stream, lonely and far away, but it gathers momentum into a huge river. So one must begin with the very few.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH OCTOBER 1983

What we are the world is. In the family, in society, we have made this world with its brutality, cruelty and coarseness, its vulgarity and destruction of each other. We also destroy each other psychologically, exploiting one another for our desires and gratifications. We never seem to realize, unless each one of us undergoes a radical change, that the world will continue as it has for thousands of years, maiming each other, killing each other and despoiling the earth. If our house is not in order we cannot possibly expect society and our relationships to one another to be in order. It is all so obvious that we neglect it. We discard it as being not only simple but too arduous, so we accept things as they are, fall into the habit of acceptance and carry on. This is the essence of mediocrity. One may have a literary gift, recognised by the few, and work towards popularity; one may be a painter, a poet or a great musician, but in our daily lives we are not concerned with the whole of existence. We may perhaps be adding to the great confusion and misery of man. Each one wants to express his own little talent and be satisfied with it, forgetting or neglecting the whole complexity of man's trouble and sorrow. This again we accept and this has become the normal way of life. We are never an outsider and remain outside. We feel ourselves incapable of remaining outside or are afraid not to be in the current of the commonplace.

As parents and educators, we make the family and the school of what we are. Mediocrity really means going only half-way up the

mountain and never reaching the top. We want to be like everybody else and of course if we want to be slightly different we keep it carefully hidden. We are not talking of eccentricity: that is another form of self-expression, which is what everyone is doing in his own little way. Eccentricity is tolerated only if you are well-to-do or gifted, but if you are poor and act peculiarly you are snubbed and ignored. But few of us are talented; we are workers carrying on with our particular profession.

The world is becoming more and more mediocre. Our education, our occupation, our superficial acceptance of traditional religion are making us mediocre and rather sloppy. We are concerned here with our daily life, not with the expression of talent or some capacity. As educators, which includes parents, can we break away from this plodding, mechanical way of living? Is it the unconscious fear of loneliness that makes us fall into habits: habit of work, habit of thought, the habit of general acceptance of things as they are? We establish a routine for ourselves and live as closely as possible to that habit, so gradually the brain becomes mechanical and this mechanical way of living is mediocrity. The countries that live on established traditions are generally mediocre. So we are asking ourselves in what way can mechanical mediocrity end and not form another pattern which will gradually become mediocre too? The mechanical usage of thought is the issue: not how to step out of mediocrity, but how man has given complete importance to thought. All our activities and aspirations, our relationships and longings, are based on thought. Thought is common to all mankind, whether the highly talented or the villager without any kind of education. Thought is common to all of us. It

is neither of the East nor of the West, the lowlands or the highlands. It is not yours or mine. This is important to understand. We have made it personal and hence still further limited the nature of thought. Thought is limited but when we make it our own we make it still shallower. When we see the truth of this there will be no competition between the ideal thought and everyday thought. The ideal has become all-important and not the thought of action. It is this division which breeds conflict, and to accept conflict is mediocre. It is the politicians and the gurus who nourish and sustain this conflict and so mediocrity.

Again we come to the basic issue: what is the response of the teacher and the parent, which includes all of us, to the coming generation? We may perceive the logic and the sanity of what is said in these letters, but the intellectual comprehension of it does not seem to give us the vital energy to propel us out of our mediocrity. What is that energy which will make us move now, not eventually, out of the commonplace? Surely it is not enthusiasm or the sentimental grasp of some vague perception, but an energy that sustains itself under all circumstances. What is that energy which must be independent of all outside influence? This is a serious question each is asking himself: is there such energy, totally free from all causation?

Now let us examine it together. Dimension has always an end. Thought is the outcome of cause which is knowledge. That which has a dimension has an end. When we say we understand, it generally means an intellectual or verbal comprehension, but comprehending is to perceive sensitively that which is, and that very perception is the withering away of what is. Perception is this

attention that is focussing all energy to watch the movement of that which is. This energy of perception has no cause, as intelligence and love have no cause.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 1ST NOVEMBER 1983

One is quite sure that the educators are aware what is actually happening in the world. People are divided racially, religiously, politically, economically, and this division is fragmentation. It is bringing about great chaos in the world wars, every kind of deception politically and so on. There is the spreading of violence and man against man. This is the actual state of confusion in the world, in the society in which we live, and this society is created by all human beings with their culture, their linguistic divisions, their regional separation. All this is breeding not only confusion but hatred, a great deal of antagonism and further linguistic differences. This is what is happening and the responsibility of the educator is really very great. He is concerned in all these schools to bring about a good human being who has a feeling of global relationship, who is not nationalistic, regional, separate, religiously clinging to the old dead traditions which have really no value at all. His responsibility as an educator becomes more and more serious, more and more committed, more and more concerned with the education of his students.

What is this education doing actually? Is it really helping man, his children, to become more concerned, more gentle, generous, not to go back to the old pattern, the old ugliness and naughtiness of this world? If he is really concerned, as he must be, then he has to help the student to find out his relationship to the world, the world not of imagination or romantic sentimentality, but to the actual world in which all things are taking place. And also to the

world of nature, to the desert, the jungle or the few trees that surround him, and to the animals of the world. Animals fortunately are not nationalistic; they hunt only to survive. If the educator and the student lose their relationship to nature, to the trees, to the rolling sea, each will certainly lose his relationship with man.

What is nature? There is a great deal of talk and endeavour to protect nature, the animals, the birds, the whales and dolphins, to clean the polluted rivers, the lakes, the green fields and so on. Nature is not put together by thought, as religion is, as belief is. Nature is the tiger that extraordinary animal with its energy, its great sense of power. Nature is the solitary tree in the field, the meadows and the grove; it is that squirrel shyly hiding behind a bough. Nature is the ant and the bee and all the living things of the earth. Nature is the river, not a particular river, whether the Ganga, the Thames or the Mississippi. Nature is all those mountains, snowclad, with the dark blue valleys and range of hills meeting the sea. The universe is part of this world. One must have a feeling for all this, not destroy it, not kill for one's pleasure, not kill animals for one's table. We do kill the cabbage, the vegetables that we eat, but one must draw the line somewhere. If you do not eat vegetables, then how will you live? So one must intelligently discern.

Nature is part of our life. We grew out of the seed, the earth, and we are part of all that but we are rapidly losing the sense that we are animals like the others. Can you have a feeling for that tree, look at it, see the beauty of it, listen to the sound it makes; be sensitive to the little plant, to the little weed, to that creeper that is growing up the wall, to the light on the leaves and the many

shadows? One must be aware of all this and have that sense of communion with nature around you. You may live in a town but you do have trees here and there. A flower in the next garden may be ill-kept, crowded with weeds, but look at it, feel that you are part of all that, part of all living things. If you hurt nature you are hurting yourself.

One knows all this has been said before in different ways but we don't seem to pay much attention. Is it that we are so caught up in our own network of problems, our own desires, our own urges of pleasure and pain that we never look around, never watch the moon? Watch it. Watch with all your eyes and ears, your sense of smell. Watch. Look as though you are looking for the first time. If you can do that, that tree, that bush, that blade of grass you are seeing for the first time. Then you can see your teacher, your mother and father, your brother and sister, for the first time. There is an extraordinary feeling about that: the wonder, the strangeness, the miracle of a fresh morning that has never been before, never will be. Be really in communion with nature, not verbally caught in the description of it, but be a part of it, be aware, feel that you belong to all that, be able to have love for all that, to admire a deer, the lizard on the wall, that broken branch lying on the ground. Look at the evening star or the new moon, without the word, without merely saying how beautiful it is and turning your back on it, attracted by something else, but watch that single star and new delicate moon as though for the first time. If there is such communion between you and nature then you can commune with man, with the boy sitting next to you, with your educator, or with your parents. We have lost all sense of relationship in which there

is not only a verbal statement of affection and concern but also this sense of communion which is not verbal. It is a sense that we are all together, that we are all human beings, not divided, not broken up, not belonging to any particular group or race, or to some idealistic concepts, but that we are all human beings, we are all living on this extraordinary, beautiful earth.

Have you ever woken up in the morning and looked out of the window, or gone out on the terrace and looked at the trees and the spring dawn? Live with it. Listen to all the sounds, to the whisper, the slight breeze among the leaves. See the light on that leaf and watch the sun coming over the hill, over the meadow. And the dry river, or that animal grazing and those sheep across the hill watch them. Look at them with a sense of affection, care, that you do not want to hurt a thing. When you have such communion with nature, then your relationship with another becomes simple, clear, without conflict.

This is one of the responsibilities of the educator, not merely to teach mathematics or how to run a computer. Far more important is to have communion with other human beings who suffer, struggle, and have great pain and the sorrow of poverty, and with those people who go by in a rich car. If the educator is concerned with this he is helping the student to become sensitive, sensitive to other people's sorrows, other people's struggles, anxieties and worries, and the rows that one has in the family. It should be the responsibility of the teacher to educate the children, the students, to have such communion with the world. The world may be too large but the world is where he is; that is his world. And this brings about a natural consideration, affection for others, courtesy and

behaviour that is not rough, cruel, vulgar.

The educator should talk about all these things, not just verbally but he himself must feel it the world, the world of nature and the world of man. They are interrelated. Man cannot escape from that. When he destroys nature he is destroying himself. When he kills another he is killing himself. The enemy is not the other but you. To live in such harmony with nature, with the world, naturally brings about a different world.

LETTERS TO THE SCHOOLS VOLUME 2 15TH NOVEMBER 1983

By watching perhaps you learn more than from books. Books are necessary to learn a subject whether it be mathematics, geography, history, physics or chemistry. The books have printed on a page the accumulated knowledge of scientists, of philosophers, of archaeologists and so on. This accumulated knowledge, which one learns in school and then through college or university, if one is lucky enough to go to university, has been gathered through the ages, from the very ancient of days. There is great accumulated knowledge from India, from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Greeks, the Romans and of course the Persians. In the Western world as well as in the Eastern world this knowledge is necessary to have a career, to do any job, whether mechanical or theoretical, practical or something that you have to think out, invent. This knowledge has brought about a great deal of technology, especially within this century. There is the knowledge of the so-called sacred books, the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bible, the Koran and the Hebrew Scriptures. So there are the religious books and pragmatic books, books that will help you to have knowledge, to act skilfully, whether you are an engineer, a biologist or a carpenter.

Most of us in any school, and particularly in these schools, gather knowledge, information, and that is what schools have existed for so far: to gather a great deal of information about the world outside, about the heavens, why the sea is salty, why the trees grow, about human beings, their anatomy, the structure of the brain and so on. And also about the world around you, nature, the

social environment, economics and so much else. Such knowledge is absolutely necessary but knowledge is always limited. However much it may evolve, the gathering of knowledge is always limited. Learning is part of acquiring this knowledge of various subjects so that you can have a career, a job that might please you, or one that circumstances, social demands may have forced you to accept though you may not like very much to do that kind of work.

But as we said, you learn a great deal by watching, watching the things about you, watching the birds, the tree, watching the heavens, the stars, the constellation of Orion, the Dipper, the Evening star. You learn just by watching not only the things around you but also by watching people, how they walk, their gestures, the words they use, how they are dressed. You not only watch that which is outside but also you watch yourself, why you think this or that, your behaviour, the conduct of your daily life, why parents want you to do this or that. You are watching, not resisting. If you resist you don't learn. Or if you come to some kind of conclusion, some opinion you think is right and hold on to that, then naturally you will never learn. Freedom is necessary to learn, and curiosity, a sense of wanting to know why you or others behave in a certain way, why people are angry, why you get annoyed.

Learning is extraordinarily important because learning is endless. Learning why human beings kill each other for instance. Of course there are explanations in books, all the psychological reasons why human beings behave in their own particular manner, why human beings are violent. All this has been explained in books of various kinds by eminent authors, psychologists and so on. But

what you read is not what you are. What you are, how you behave, why you get angry, envious, why you get depressed, if you watch yourself you learn much more than from a book that tells you what you are. But you see it is easier to read a book about yourself than to watch yourself. The brain is accustomed to gather information from all external actions and reactions. Don't you find it much more comforting to be directed, for others to tell you what you should do? Your parents, especially in the East, tell you whom you should marry and arrange the marriage, tell you what your career should be. So the brain accepts the easy way and the easy way is not always the right way. I wonder if you have noticed that nobody loves their work any more, except perhaps a few scientists, artists, archaeologists. But the ordinary, average man seldom loves what he is doing. He is compelled by society, by his parents or by the urge to have more money. So learn by watching very, very carefully the external world, the world outside you, and the inner world; that is, the world of yourself.

There appear to be two ways of learning: one is acquiring a great deal of knowledge, first through study and then by acting from that knowledge. That is what most of us do. The second is to act, to do something and learn through doing, and that also becomes the accumulation of knowledge. Really both are the same: learning from a book or acquiring knowledge through action. Both are based upon knowledge, experience, and as we have said, experience and knowledge are always limited.

So both the educator and the student should find out what actually learning is. For example you learn from a guru if he is at all the right kind, a sane guru, not the moneymaking guru, not one

of those who want to be famous and trot off to different countries to gather a fortune through their rather unbalanced theories. Find out what it is to learn. Today learning is becoming more and more a form of entertainment. In some Western schools when they have passed high school, secondary school, the students do not even know how to read and write. And when you do know how to read and write and learn various subjects you are all such mediocre people. Do you know what the word mediocrity means? The root meaning is to go half way up the hill, never reaching the top. That is mediocrity: never demanding the excellent, the very highest thing of yourself. And learning is infinite, it really has no end. So from whom are you learning? From the books? From the educator? And perhaps, if your mind is bright, by watching? So far it appears you are learning from the outside: learning, accumulating knowledge and from that knowledge acting, establishing your career and so on. If you are learning from yourself or rather if you are learning by watching yourself, your prejudices, your definite conclusions, your beliefs, if you are watching the subtleties of your thought, your vulgarity, your sensitivity, then you become yourself the teacher and the taught. Then you do not depend inwardly on anybody, not on any book, not on the specialist though of course if you are ill and have some sort of disease you have to go to a specialist, that is natural, that is necessary. But to depend on somebody, however excellent he may be, prevents you from learning about yourself and what you are. And it is very, very important to learn what you are because what you are brings about this society which is so corrupt, immoral, where there is such enormous spreading of violence, this society which is so

aggressive, each one seeking his own particular success, his own form of fulfilment. Learn what you are not through another but by watching yourself, not condemning, not saying 'This is all right, I am that, I can't change' and carrying on. When you watch yourself without any form of reaction, resistance, then that very watching acts; like a flame it burns away the stupidities, the illusions that one has.

So learning becomes important. A brain that ceases to learn becomes mechanical. It is like an animal tied to a stick; it can move only according to the length of the rope, the tether that is tied to the stick. Most of us are tied to a peculiar stake of our own, an invisible stake and rope. You keep wandering within the dimensions of that rope and it is very limited. It is like a man who is thinking about himself all day, about his problems, his desires, his pleasures and what he would like to do. You know this constant occupation with oneself. It is very, very limited. And that very limitation breeds various forms of conflict and unhappiness.

The great poets, painters, composers are never satisfied with what they have done. They are always learning. It isn't after you have passed your exams and gone to work that you stop learning. There is a great strength and vitality in learning, especially about yourself. Learn, watch so that there is no spot that is not uncovered, looked at in yourself. This really is to be free from your own particular conditioning. The world is divided through its conditioning: you as an Indian, you as an American, you as a British, Russian, Chinese and so on. Out of this conditioning there are wars, the killing of thousands of people, the unhappiness and the brutality.

So both the educator and the educated are learning in the deeper sense of that word. When both are learning there is no educator or one to be educated. There is only learning. Learning frees the brain and thought of prestige, position, status. Learning brings about equality among human beings.