

Krishnamurti Foundation India Bulletin

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FROM THE EDITOR

The present issue of the *Bulletin* consists of Krishnamurti's reflections on attention, a mysterious many-faceted feature of our minds that allows us to connect with the world. Krishnamurti often alludes to these varied forms as concentrated attention, total attention, partial and fragmented attention. Added to these are honorific titles, such as, 'eight-attentioned' (*astavadhani*), 'hundred-attentioned' (*satavadhani*) conferred in ancient times by kings on individuals with the capacity to pay attention to several disparate activities simultaneously. These examples show that attention is not uniform and minds connect to the world in very different ways.

'Pay attention' is, perhaps, the most frequent command children hear in classrooms. It is the voice of authority commanding students to shut out the world and to concentrate or narrowly focus on the subject at hand. In its most benign form it is meant to re-direct the focus of the child's mind. In Krishnamurti's exposition teachers' desire to 'influence', to direct, or command students is at the root of what is basically their coercive struggle to get students to attend. It is why students either obey, disobey or struggle to pay attention.

'What is your relationship with the students?' Krishnamurti asks in the first selection addressed to teachers' in 1984. He suggests that the teacher-student relationship, even in its most benign form, is marked by division and struggle. At the core is the assumption that teachers 'know' and that students 'do not know'.

The second selection deals with attention of a very different kind. It is spontaneously generated in an environment or space where students are not ordered around, where their fears are addressed and they feel secure. Attention, he says, arises spontaneously when there is an atmosphere of well-being around the student, when the student 'has the feeling of being secure, of being at ease, and is aware of the disinterested action that comes with love'.

The third selection is a long talk – it could also be described as a meditation – on listening or attending to Krishnamurti, a speaker who requests his audiences to bring a different kind of attention to his words. Here Krishnamurti directs his audience to listen with the gaze turned inward: 'In listening to what is being said, please do not take the attitude of a listener at a talk, but observe your own mind'. A listening-to-yourself as you listen to his words, reveals connected aspects of the motives driving attention. Among the aspects he lists in the talk are the goal-directed energy, for instance, the craving for power, which drives desire, and attention driven by self-interest. 'Can the mind', listening inwardly to the impact of these words, 'having grasped the significance of this craving, having understood that to change with a motive is a form of power-seeking, with all its nuances, its struggles, its pains, its fulfilments and frustrations – being aware of all that – can the mind knowingly, consciously, without any motive, let go?' If the question is properly posed, without motive, there is a change that is revolutionary. Krishnamurti says that it is 'a state in which all virtue is, and that is the state of attention. To be totally attentive is to be totally virtuous and, therefore, to flower in goodness, in beauty.'

The last passage speaks about the plenitude that lies at the heart of 'total attention'. He does not use the phrase 'right attention' but, together with the three selections presented in the *Bulletin*, it helps the reader explore the implications of what Krishnaji means by the term 'attention', (and, for Krishnamurti, terms like 'listening', 'watching', 'observing', 'looking', 'attending' are synonymous).

— RH

BECAUSE YOU ASSUME, THE STUDENTS DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION

J KRISHNAMURTI (JK): Are you, the educator, sitting higher up and feeling superior? Are you, in your relationship, saying, 'O, those poor kids; they know nothing; I am going to tell them what to do'? In your relationship is there a sense of love, affection, care: care about how they walk, how they dress, how they look, how they talk to each other? Is there a care for them – love? Love means protection; love means watching; love means you are not separate from them. If I love somebody, I am not separate. It is love. Therefore I am asking you, sir – most politely and respectfully – what is your relationship with the students?

(Long pause)

All of you: What is your relationship with the students? – You know and they don't know? Of course, you know mathematics, geography, history. (Just a minute, sir; don't jump on me, yet.) You know science, physics and chemistry, and all the rest of it. But you know nothing else. Do you? You don't know anything about yourself – what you are, what you think, what you feel, why you are unhappy – all that. You don't know yourself, so how can you help that child? You may assume a lot of things. And that is why – because you assume – they don't pay any attention at all. Right, sir?

If you are my yoga teacher, sir, you teach me; I am learning. There is no gap between teaching and learning. When you are teaching me, I do it instantly. I wonder if you understand that. I have been taught by Mr Iyengar, by Mr Deshikachari, by several other

teachers. The moment they say, 'Do that', you do it. You may do it badly; you may not do it correctly – your muscles aren't right yet – but there is no gap between what is said and the action. When there is a gap, then there is a doubt. Because I accept you as a yoga teacher – you know more about it than I do – I listen to you very carefully.

Rishi Valley

December 11, 1984

THE ELIMINATION OF FEAR IS THE BEGINNING OF ATTENTION

How is the state of attention to be brought about? It cannot be cultivated through persuasion, comparison, reward or punishment, all of which are forms of coercion. The elimination of fear is the beginning of attention. Fear must exist as long as there is an urge to be or to become, which is the pursuit of success, with all its frustrations and tortuous contradictions. You can teach concentration, but attention cannot be taught, just as you cannot possibly teach freedom from fear, and in understanding these causes there is the elimination of fear. So attention arises spontaneously when around the student there is an atmosphere of well-being, when he has the feeling of being secure, of being at ease, and is aware of the disinterested action that comes with love. Love does not compare, and so the envy and torture of 'becoming' cease.

The Book of Life, June 13

THERE IS A STATE IN WHICH ALL VIRTUE IS AND THAT IS THE STATE OF ATTENTION

I would like, if I may, to talk this evening about the unfoldment of energy as desire, fulfilment and frustration; and perhaps, if our minds can extend so far, we may be able to go into the question of what is beyond the mind. But before we go into all that, I think it is important to be concerned with the problem of change.

For most of us, change in any form is a very disturbing factor. We like the well-worn path of habit and custom, and to bring ourselves to depart from that path we find almost impossible. For any change in habit and custom, we depend on influence; we think we have to be compelled to change. Circumstances play an important part in bringing about a change in our attitudes, in our values, as well as in outward things. I think we should go into this matter fairly carefully, so as to uncover for ourselves the ways of our own thinking.

We do change under the influence of propaganda, do we not? Influence in various forms is a very important factor in our lives. The influence of the newspapers; the influence of the books we read (whether sacred or profane); the influence of neighbours, of the family, of the wife over the husband, and the husband over the wife, of tradition and public opinion, of diet and climate – these and many other influences are continually shaping our minds. We are never free of the innumerable influences, of which we are the result. There is no denying that we are the creatures of environment: You are a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, or whatever it is you are, because you have been brought up in a certain culture, with its particular traditions and ways of thinking.

So, influence plays an extraordinarily important part in our lives. We are not discussing: 'What is good influence?' or 'What is bad influence?' To me, all influence is evil, because it conditions and enslaves the mind. If the mind changes under any influence, it is changing only within its own circumference, whether that circumference is large or small.

In listening to what is being said, please do not take the attitude of a listener at a talk, but observe your own mind. Observe yourself and your environmental influences, and you will see an extraordinary phenomenon going on within the so-called free mind. I do not think the mind is free; but the mind can be aware of its conditioning, and of the innumerable influences by which it is conditioned. You know, certain words have a profound influence on us. Words like 'God', 'Communism', 'Chinese', 'Catholic', 'Jesus', 'the Buddha', and so on, have an extraordinarily penetrating influence on our minds, and I think most of us are unaware of it. And unless we really grapple with and understand these influences, any change – whether it be an economic revolution, or a change in the outlook of the mind itself – has very little meaning, because we are then slaves to propaganda.

You are all listening to me. Why? It would be very interesting to find out. Why do you come here on a hot Sunday afternoon? If you come to be persuaded, to be influenced, to be directed, to be told what to do, then what you hear will be reduced to mere propaganda. And propaganda – whether it be that of the politicians, of the organised religious people, or of the sacred books – has a most destructive effect on the human mind.

So, without understanding the influences to which most of us are such slaves, we shall never find out how to awaken energy; and energy is obviously necessary. I do not mean the energy of a well-

read mind or the energy of a well-fed body – although physical energy is part of it. A neurotic may have tremendous energy, just as a hysterical person may sometimes be very strong. In the same way, a man who is devoted to an ideal, often has extraordinary vitality. These are all manifestations of that energy which is the outcome of influence and, if you go into it very deeply, you will find it leads to power. Power in any form is evil, whether it be the absolute power of a dictator, or the power of a wife over her husband, or a husband over his wife, or the power of society over the individual. But before we go into all this, it seems to me that, as human beings living in this mad, monstrous, competitive world, we have to understand the whole question of being influenced.

Why is the mind influenced? And is it possible for the mind to be free of all influences? Surely, a mind held within the field of influence is very limited, though it may be very active. All propagandists are very active, are they not? Yet such a mind is limited, conditioned and, therefore, there is bound to be a constant battle within the limitations of itself.

Please observe your own conditioning and see how you are influenced. If you watch this whole process in yourself, you will perceive that everything you think, as well as your actions, your profession, your verbal exchanges, your ideals and beliefs, are all the result of the innumerable influences to which you are consciously or unconsciously exposed. The mind is taking in everything, whether you are aware of it or not. The noise of the crows, of the tramcar, the words of the speaker, the movements of the person next to you, and so on – they are all being absorbed by the mind, either consciously or unconsciously.

So, is it not very important to ask ourselves whether the mind can be free of influences? I do not think it can be [free] without first

becoming aware of the influences by which it is swayed. Awareness of these influences is part of self-knowledge, is it not? And it is extremely difficult to be so aware, because influence is often very subtle. In advertising, they have tried subliminal propaganda: repeatedly flashing an idea on the cinema or television screen so rapidly that the viewer is unaware of it; yet it is absorbed by the unconscious. Similarly, you have been constantly told – it is the tradition of a thousand years – that you are a Hindu. You have been brought up in that tradition, and your job, your profession further conditions the mind; you are influenced, your thought is shaped by what you do, and so on. To be aware of all these influences is not easy. But once you begin consciously, deliberately, incessantly to ask the right question, which is to uncover in yourself these various influences, then the mind becomes extraordinarily alert. So it is necessary, it seems to me, to ask oneself that question.

The past – not only the recent past, but the past of centuries, with all its memories, its psychological wounds, its accumulated experience and knowledge – is influencing the present, the now. The now becomes the passage of the past to the future; so tomorrow is already shaped by yesterday. The present responds to challenge according to the past, and that response shapes the future. This is a very simple process, sirs, if you will observe it in your own life. If you feel that I have insulted you today, when you meet me tomorrow, which is the future, the memory of that insult strengthens your feeling of resentment; and so it goes on and on. Don't translate it as *karma*. *Karma* is something entirely different – at least as I see it. For the moment we are just uncovering the problem of influence and change.

When we do change, it is generally through compulsion, through misery, through ambition, or some other form of influence. We

change with motives of profit, we change through pain, we change through slavery to some ideology or system of thought. You can see this mechanical process of change operating in the mind; but such 'change', which is the result of influence, is no change at all – though it gives energy to the mind. The man who has a good job, who is secure in his family, who is building up a large bank account, has an extraordinary sense of energy. The man who has the capacity to talk or to write, to do this or to do that, the man who is gifted in some art or craft, the man who is trying to fulfil himself, to become something – such people have a great deal of energy; but when sooner or later that energy is blocked, there is frustration, a feeling of despair.

Do please follow this, sirs, not just as a talk to which you are listening, but as a description of your own mind, a description of yourself, of your daily existence. In your pursuit of profit, you generate energy; but that energy, however cunning, however capable and efficient, always functions from the centre towards the circumference. And is that a change? When you change through compulsion, through fear, through motive, through the pursuit of a goal, is there a change?

Take the question of social or economic revolution, with its promised benefits, its plan to create a classless society, and all the rest of it. Is such a revolution a real revolution? Or is it merely a reaction and, therefore, a modified continuation of the past? These so-called revolutions have always been only a reaction, and there has always been a reversion to the former state, only modified. So a person who is concerned with total change, with real revolution – which is a transformation in the quality of the mind itself, and not merely a continuation of the modified past – such a person must ask himself, surely, whether it is possible to change without influence, without motive. Change based on motive, on influence,

is merely a form of compulsion or imitation; therefore it is no change at all. Do you understand?

Look, sirs: to restrain oneself from violence by practicing non-violence, is no change at all (though in this country, it is glibly talked about every day). Non-violence with a motive is still violence. The motive is the ideal, which is a projection of the mind; and a mind that conforms to the ideal, is imitative, it is still within the field of violence. I wonder if you see this!

Being violent, you say, 'I must practise the ideal of non-violence'. Non-violence is then the projection of your mind as a reaction to violence. Having adopted the ideal of non-violence, you proceed to discipline yourself, you struggle to conform to that ideal, you go through the painful process of constant adjustment to it – a process which is always superficial, but which is recognized by people as a form of 'virtue'. And that is the strange part of it: we want people to recognize that we are virtuous, that we have become non-violent, or that we are on the way to non-violence. Recognition plays an extraordinary part in our lives, does it not? So you see how subtle is the desire for power!

If you examine this whole process very closely and objectively, you will see that the violent mind which has non-violence as a goal, which is motivated by the desire to change itself and become non-violent, is still caught in violence. So the question naturally arises: Can the mind which is violent change itself without any motive? Or is it inevitable that all change must come from a motive, from some form of influence? You see the problem, don't you?

We must all change radically, deeply, fundamentally, because, as we are, we are not real human beings; we are slaves to various

forms of influence. And to discover human dignity, to awaken a real sense of freedom, one must surely ask oneself whether it is possible to bring about a radical transformation in the mind without any motive, without any compulsion, without any fear, demand, or influence. If you say that such a thing is not possible, that it is human nature to change with a motive, that for centuries it has been going on, then this is not a problem to you. But the moment you really begin to inquire into the whole question of revolution, of change at any level, you must inevitably ask this question – otherwise you are thinking very superficially. And it is superficial thinking that has produced this ruthless society with its wars, its so-called revolutions, its concentration camps, its dictatorships, and all the horrors of the police state.

So, if you are deeply concerned with the total transformation of man, then you must be aware of this problem of influence, in which is included seeking inspiration, going to the temple, reading sacred books, repeating *mantrams* – all the monstrously ugly disciplines you go through in order to be free, and which are a denial of real freedom! But if you are merely responding to this talk intellectually, you will go away as empty as you came. The intellect is very superficial. It can invent clever theories, it can argue or counter-argue, and go on playing that game indefinitely; but it cannot produce change, it cannot bring about a real transformation in the quality of the mind itself.

We are now concerned with real transformation; we are making a real inquiry into the problem of change and revolution. What is revolution? That is the question we are asking ourselves, because our times demand it. But this is a perennial problem, it is not just the problem of our times, because the human mind is constantly deteriorating. This deterioration is like a wave that is always pounding at our doorstep, and a person who is really serious has to

go into the question of whether change can only come about through influence, through fear, through compulsion, or whether there is a totally different kind of change.

The change that is brought about through influence, leads to power, does it not? It leads to power, to position – and that is what most of us want. Most of us want to be recognized as being somebody, either in this world or in the so-called spiritual world. Don't you all want that? From the lowest clerk to the highest politician, from the humblest disciple to the greatest guru, each wants to be recognized as a somebody – which is the desire for power. We all want to be important in one way or another: as a stamp-collector, as a scientist, as a bureaucrat, as a prime minister, as a good wife, as a good father, or what you will. We want to be recognized, we want to be important; and the moment you want to be important, you have tremendous energy. Look at your own daily existence, Sirs, see how this demand to be recognized, this struggle to be important, is always going on. A little flattery from a big man, and you purr like a cat. You want to bask in glory, and you say, 'He is my friend, I knew him when he was a boy' – you know all that childish stuff we play about with!

So, when there is change with a motive, that is, when change is brought about by compulsion, by influence, such a change is always towards power, towards being important – important not only in this world, but important as a man of God, as a man who has control of his mind, of his body, as a man who is respectable in his virtue, and all the rest of it.

Do please follow this deeply, because we are concerned with our lives, not with words. All of us want power, all of us want to be important in some way – even if it is only in the little way of a

schoolteacher with ten boys in his class. That is why we have degrees, titles, and all that nonsense.

One can see that where there is a compulsive change, either outwardly or inwardly, there is a sense of power which, ultimately, leads to some form of dictatorship; and that this sense of power creates energy. I do not know if you have ever experimented with controlling your mind and your body, but if you have, you will know that it gives you an extraordinary delight to be completely their master. It gives you a great sense of power – much greater than the feeling of power that goes with any worldly position. (We are not talking about electric power, and all that. We are discussing the psychological demand for power.)

Now, energy as the sense of power, seeks its own fulfilment, does it not? That is, I want to fulfil myself through action; I want to be or become something. I want to become the manager, or the chief disciple; I want to understand, to change; I want to become the most famous politician in town; I want to be the ruler, or to have a degree, or to get a better job so as to earn more money – you know this acquisitive game we play with ourselves, and through which there is fulfilment.

If you observe, you will see that fulfilment is really the demand of a mind which is craving for power. When it is not able to achieve power and is therefore deprived of that fulfilment, it feels frustrated; and to escape from the misery of its frustration, it turns to something else through which it again strives to fulfil itself. If I cannot succeed in this world, I struggle to become a saint; or if I see it is unprofitable to become a saint, I pursue worldly success – and so it goes on and on. The urge to conform to a pattern of change creates energy, which gives a sense of power, and that sense of power seeks to heighten itself through fulfilment.

Watch yourselves, sirs; I am not saying something extraordinary, but am merely describing the process of your daily existence. In that process there is immense sorrow, because a man who wants to fulfil himself lives inevitably in fear of non-fulfilment; and so the misery begins.

You see, we never ask ourselves whether there really is such a thing as fulfilment at all. A man may see, of an evening, a beautiful formation of clouds, and then wish to paint it; but if in painting it he is fulfilling himself, in that very act he has ceased to be a painter. Similarly, you may wish to fulfil yourself through your family, to carry on your name through your son, and you may call it 'love'; but it is not love at all. However much it is recognized as 'love' by respectable society, it is merely the perpetuation of yourself. Sirs, you may laugh it away, but this is a fact.

So, unless the mind is totally dull, utterly insensitive, completely enclosed within itself, it must inevitably inquire to find out whether it is possible to change without motive; because to change with a motive leads only to power and further misery. Is there a way to change – [a change] which has no motive, which is not based on comparison, which is not a reaction to one's present state? Do let us be very clear on this issue, because we are always thinking in terms of duality: good and bad, rich and poor, heaven and hell, and so on. Seeing that change with a motive generates an intense feeling of power, which is a form of fulfilment with all its frustrations, limitations and sorrow, we want to escape from that by seeking the other; but the other is not to be sought, it is not a reaction, it is not the opposite of our craving for power. To change without a motive is something entirely different; it comes unsought, like the change from morning to evening, from darkness to light. The mind sees the destructive and corrupting nature of the desire for power, with its frustration and misery, and its immediate

reaction is to try to escape from all that into what is called 'Cosmic Consciousness', 'Truth', 'God' – you know all those high-sounding words we use. But that is no change at all. It is merely a continuity of what-has-been towards the *result* of what-has-been, which is, what-will-be.

So: Is there a way of inquiry which will help the mind to be in that state of energy, of understanding, which is perpetual change, an eternal movement with no beginning and no end? Do you understand the question, sirs? Please understand the question first, and do not ask how to get it, how to capture that eternity for your own use in your petty little house.

The question is this. You are all familiar with the craving for power, for recognition, for a position of importance, with its fulfilments and frustrations, its sorrows, agonies and fears. You know how that craving gives an extraordinary energy, without which you could not carry on day after day for fifty years with your jobs, your quarrels, your struggles and miseries. And the greater your capacity is, the wider is your field for the exercise of that energy and, therefore, the more evil you create around you. Now, if you see the destructive nature of this craving for power, if you are aware of the whole anatomy of it, then surely you are bound to ask yourself if there is a way for the mind to change which is not an outcome of the craving for power. Do you understand?

We see that this craving for power, with the energy it awakens, is destructive, and that the ambitious mind is ceaselessly being pushed by the wave of deterioration, decay. If you say that all this is natural, inevitable, that human beings can live no other way, then for you it is not a problem. You accept corruption, decay. You are content to live within that framework with your sorrows and

passing joys, with your imitated virtues and your invented gods. But if you begin to question, to explore, to discover, not because Shankara or the Buddha said so, but through your own endeavour, your own awareness, your own intelligence, then you will find you are unconsciously moving away from all that in a totally new direction. Then there is a change which is not a reaction, not fabricated by the mind.

Sirs, there is a state in which all virtue is, and that is the state of attention. To be totally attentive is to be totally virtuous and, therefore, to flower in goodness, in beauty. But what do you do now? You find for yourselves a little haven, a placid backwater in the river of life, and there you move, you function, you 'change'. So, perhaps, you don't intend to be very serious about these things; but it does not matter. If you have heard only words, what you have heard may remain in your mind [and], because your mind is prone to propaganda, these talks will then be merely one more noise among many other noises. Whereas, the man who really begins to inquire into all this noise, into the chattering of the mind, must inevitably come to that state of energy which is moving endlessly, and which is not caught in the backwater of his own desires.

So the problem of change, of transformation, is not to be thought of in terms of environmental influences. It is obvious that we need a revolution – an economic revolution, a world revolution – so that there will be one government, for the earth is ours. It is not the rich man's earth, or the poor man's earth; it does not belong to Russia or America, to India or China. It is our earth, yours and mine, to be lived on, to be enjoyed, to be cherished, to be loved. But that outward revolution can be brought about only when there is a revolution in your consciousness, a crisis in your own mind – that is, when you have ceased to be a nationalist, when you are no

longer an Indian, a Parsi, a Communist, or any of those things, and when you are a total human being. We do need a world revolution, because only such a revolution will solve our economic problem, the problem of starvation. But politicians are concerned not with the problem of starvation but with a particular system, and they quarrel over which system is going to solve the problem. To bring about a revolution outwardly, you have to change inwardly. If you don't change, the challenge destroys you. You have to respond rightly to the challenge, otherwise you – you as a man, as a culture, as a race – are thrown away.

To inquire into the problem of inward change – which is much more difficult – one must be totally aware of this craving for power which we have. And can the mind, having grasped the significance of this craving, having understood that to change with a motive is a form of power-seeking, with all its nuances, its struggles, its pains, its fulfilments and frustrations – being aware of all that – can the mind knowingly, consciously, without any motive, let go? Do you understand, sirs? That is the real renunciation of the world – not changing gods, or becoming a hermit, or joining a monastery, or putting on different clothes! Real renunciation, which is revolution, is the complete abandonment of power-seeking, of wanting to be important, to have recognition – which means, really, entering a world of which we know nothing. To enter a world of which we already know is not renunciation. There is renunciation, revolution, only when we enter a world where the mind has never gone before, where it has not projected itself, where it has no future, no past, but only a sense of attention, of inquiry and perception. Perception has no past; perception is not accumulative; and it is only with the awakening of perception that there is an energy which is not a product of the mind. Don't translate it as 'God' – it has nothing to do with your ugly notions of God. There is an energy which is in itself creative, eternal; and without understanding that, without

tasting it, embracing it, knowing the beauty of it, merely to think about God has no value. But it comes darkly, mysteriously, without your asking.

Our lives are not beautiful. Our lives are tawdry, shallow, empty. Our energy is limited, and it dies. We know hate, jealousy, envy – these are the things with which we are intimate. It is obvious that we have to abandon all that. To be kind without any motive, to be generous without calculation, to share the little that one has, to give with one's heart and mind and hand without asking something in return – that we must do, it is only civilized, decent, but it is not the other. It is like keeping the house in order, polished, spotlessly clean. To keep the house clean and in order is obviously necessary; but if we do it hoping to receive the other, it will never come. Keep the mind clean, alert, watchful; observe every movement of thought, see the significance of every word, but without any motive, without any urge or compulsion. *Then* you will find that an extraordinary thing takes place: there comes an energy which is not your own, which descends upon you. In that energy there is a timeless being, and that energy is Reality.

Bombay
January 3, 1960

THERE IS GOODNESS ONLY WHEN THERE IS TOTAL ATTENTION

If I have a motive to be good, does that bring about goodness? Or is goodness something entirely devoid of this urge to be good, which is ever based on a motive? Is good the opposite of bad, the opposite of evil? Every opposite contains the seed of its own

opposite, does it not? There is greed, and there is the ideal of non-greed. When the mind pursues non-greed, when it tries to be non-greedy, it is still greedy because it wants to be something. Greed implies desiring, acquiring, expanding; and when the mind sees that it does not pay to be greedy, it wants to be non-greedy, so the motive is still the same, which is to be or to acquire something. When the mind wants not to want, the root of want, of desire, is still there. So goodness is not the opposite of evil; it is a totally different state. And what is that state?

Obviously, goodness has no motive because all motive is based on the self; it is the egocentric movement of the mind. So what do we mean by goodness? Surely, there is goodness only when there is total attention. Attention has no motive. When there is a motive for attention, is there attention? If I pay attention in order to acquire something, the acquisition, whether it be good or bad, is not attention; it is a distraction, a division. There can be goodness only when there is a totality of attention in which there is no effort to be or not to be.

The Book of Life, February 25

IF I WERE A HOUSEMASTER

KABIR JAYATHIRTA (KJ): Sir, the last time we met, we had come to the point where we had said, 'All thinking is divisive'. Now, that left many of us extremely confused, because, you see, all our action is from thinking. And if all thinking is divisive, then what am I to do?

G NARAYAN (GN): I don't think you said that 'All thinking is divisive'. I think you said, '*Thinking* is divisive'.

J. KRISHNAMURTI (JK): Thinking is divisive.

GN: The other thing I want to ask you, sir, is, you use the expression 'Flowering in goodness'. Flowering.

JK: Flowering in goodness ...

GN: We know growth; we know practice. What is 'flowering' as different from 'growing'?

JK: Good Lord! Isn't it a bit early in the morning to start all this?
(*Laughs gently*)

Is this what we are concerned with really, seriously? Here we are, a group of educators from different parts of India, what are we really concerned about? What is our problem or problems? Is it the understanding and [the] delving deeply into the statement which K made the other day that 'Thinking is divisive'? And Narayan asked the question, 'What is the difference between "flowering" and "growing" in goodness?' Is that really what you are concerned about?

Do you want to discuss those two, or ...?

I would like to bring up something, if I may. Aren't you concerned with what is 'discipline' and what is 'order' in a school? Would you mind taking that up, sir – Narayan? Would you really like to take [the] trouble to go into it? Let's think it out together, and go into it very deeply – shall we? Would that interest you?

RAJESH DALAL (RD): Yes, sir; absolutely.

JK: Does it really interest you?

RD: Yes, sir.

JK: (*Addressing someone who comes in late: Come and sit down, sir.*)

So, shall we go into it very deeply?

TEACHER (T): Yes, sir.

JK: What do you consider 'discipline'? The very word discipline – what does that word evoke in you? What is your reaction to that word? In your mind, what does that word 'discipline' convey?

T: That it has something to do with order.

JK: Order. What do you mean by 'order' and what do you mean by 'discipline'?

JAYAPRAKASH RAO (JP): The moment we think of 'discipline' and 'order', something that strikes us is that there are certain norms that people will have to follow.

JK: Sir, just listen ... Does the word discipline, in your imagination, in your thinking, mean conformity?

JP: It does; yes.

JK: Does it mean following a pattern?

JP: Yes.

JK: Does it mean obeying or conforming or imitating or accepting certain order: that you must be get up at 5 o' clock or 6 o'clock or

whatever [time], that you must be punctual for your classes, punctual for your meals, bed, and so on? Does the word discipline – the word itself – evoke all that?

(I wish you would discuss with me.)

T: Sir, it also evokes something which has to do with right action: doing the right thing at the right time.

JK: The word discipline, etymologically, means ‘a disciple; a disciple who is learning’. I don’t know if you [get it] ...

RADHIKA HERZBERGER (RH): But, sir, in the vernacular it, also, has a sense of ‘control’: self-control or control imposed by others.

K: No, Radhika-ji, I am just trying, first, to define the meaning of that word.

RH: Yes, sir.

JK: The true meaning of that word discipline comes from a root word disciple, a disciple who is *learning*. That is the content of that word. You can look it up in a good dictionary. I am not saying something contrary to a dictionary. The dictionary meaning [of] a disciple is one who is learning: from his professor, from his guru, from his whatever ... Are we clear that a ‘disciple’ means that?

T: Yes, sir.

JK: Now, from that we have drawn ‘discipline’. When you have rules, you are not learning; you are just conforming. Are we [meeting]?

T: Yes, sir.

JK: Right, sir?

JP: It's obvious; yes, sir.

K: Now: What does 'order' mean? You must have order if you have twenty-five children in a house with a house-mother. Little children are monkeys: full of mischief, curiosity, teasing each other, playing, talking endlessly, restless, full of energy. Right?

T: Yes, sir.

JK: And the house-mother or the housemaster or you want to bring order there. Right, sir?

(Are you following what I am saying? You are all so silent.)

Now, how do you bring order – knowing that the word discipline means to learn? This is really a serious problem, sir; don't just brush it off. Discipline really means an act of learning. Learning is infinite. There is no limit to learning.

There was a very great painter called Goya. [He was] Spanish. He was ninety-five years and [still] painting and he said, 'I am still learning'. He was one of the great painters of the Western world.

So: Where do learning and order meet? Do you understand? To most of us order means conformity: getting up every morning at six or half past five, breakfast at a certain time, going to classes at

a certain time, and so on, and so on, and so on – all regulated.
Right?

T: Yes, sir.

JK: And, when you have so regulated your life, where is the act of learning – learning in regulations? Do you understand? Could we, just for fun, wipe out the word ‘discipline’ from our brain altogether? Let’s look at it differently. Shall we?

That is, we are conditioned to the word ‘discipline’.

KJ: Which is control ...

JK: Control, accept, obey, follow, imitate ...

KJ: Suppress ...

JK: All that, and more, is implied in that word. Do we agree? Do we see? Right, sir?

KJ: Yes, sir.

JK: Could we, for this morning, wipe out that word ‘discipline’ altogether from our brain and approach it differently? Will you experiment with this? Gosh!

Look, if I am a surgeon, I have to follow certain accepted, processes [based on] experience. I have to. [There is] anaesthesia ... you know all the rest of it. Here we are dealing with a group of children. Twenty-five to house, or twenty to a house – or more

generally. There they are: three-hundred-and-fifty children, full of energy, mischief, wanting to do exactly what they want. They don't want to attend classes, they don't want to listen to you. [But] they are forced to listen to you because their parents urge them, there is the examination, and the terrible world they have to face: they have to get a job. There is tremendous weight on them. Right?

RH: Yes.

JK: And they come here and you add another weight: they must attend, they must listen, they must not look out of the window when you are telling them something, they must respect you. All that is a tremendous constraint.

Are we meeting, or am I talking to myself?

I am asking myself, I was a housemaster – and I would like to try it one day, if you will allow me – if I was a housemaster and I have in my mind no (really, I mean it) sense of discipline – the word doesn't exist for me, then

T: Do you mean you don't accept any pattern of behaviour?

JK: No, no; the concept of 'discipline' ... The soldier is disciplined. Right? The surgeon is skilled in his discipline. Right, sir, you understand? For me, for K, that word discipline, with all the complications of that word, doesn't exist at all – except for one thing: learning; nothing else. Are you meeting me?

REBECCA THOMAS (RT): In that process of learning itself there is a discipline.

JK: We are going to find out. I won't use the word 'discipline' at all. That has no meaning [at all] to me except as learning.

Now: I am a housemaster; I have got twenty-five children: young – up to fifteen years – full of energy, mischievous, teasing each other, some of them bullying, wanting to play, listening to me only half ... (*Laughs*) Do you follow? And I am, also, a human being. I get irritated, I want to kick them, beat them up, and so on, and so on. Now, how am I, *not* having that word 'discipline' – it's out of my blood; I mean it – but only learning, to bring order into this mess?

RD: No, sir, this is not our exact position.

JK: Why not? What is your exact position?

RD: I will say what my exact position is. Having thought over the issue of discipline, there is a deep feeling that discipline in the sense of control has no validity.

JK: Sir, I said to you at the beginning, 'Wipe out that word and all that out of your mind'.

RD: Sir, but what does it mean to wipe it out completely, to wipe it, as you said, out of your blood?

JK: Listen; listen to what the other fellow is saying, first.

RD: Sir, I am asking ... You said, 'Wipe it out of your blood'.

JK: I said, 'I', not you.

RD: That's what I am saying. It is not our ...

JK: I am saying that I [have] – K has – no sense of discipline as it is generally accepted – except one word, which is 'to learn'. Apart from that, the whole concept of discipline, like that of the soldier, etc., doesn't exist for K. But K is the housemaster for twenty-five children. Now, follow what *he* is saying, not what *you* think.

RD: Right.

JK: I may be wrong. Be skeptical; question afterwards. After listening carefully, question. I have got twenty-five children. You know what monkeys they are! How am I to bring order there? That's all that is my concern. And that order must imply learning, not control, not beating them up.

RD: Of course.

JK: Now what shall I do? I am putting you this question. Answer me.

HARSHED PAREKH (HP): Sir, your personality plays a great role: how you look at the students, how you talk to them ...

JK: Sir, I don't want my personality to enter into this at all. Do you understand what you have said? If they like my personality, then it becomes a personal affair. They like me and, therefore, do something I want. It is again a pressure of affection. I don't know if you see all this.

RD: That is what it becomes, generally.

JK: Therefore, I won't ... Sir, it's not a personal thing at all.

HP: Sir, if it is not personal, it will not touch.

JK: Sir, I am going to find out, but you have already made the statement. I am going to find out. You're not listening to what I am saying. K doesn't exist at all, and I mean it. K has a responsibility for twenty-five children, and says, 'There must be order, and that order cannot be brought about by personal influence, personal example, personal affection, by saying, "Boys, I love you; let's all be ..."'. It becomes sissy. Do you understand what I am saying? So there is no personal attraction or personal favourites.

HP: For you it may true, but ...

JK: Sir, I am talking about me. *For me*, I am saying.

HP: But your students, they will be affected by you.

JK: Sir, just let me finish. You don't listen to what I am saying. Let me finish. If you don't mind – I am saying this respectfully – let me explain and, then, you can criticize, kick it around, tear it to pieces. I must first paint the picture before you tear it. I am in the middle of the first few strokes in the painting, and you are already jumping on it – not that you shouldn't. But I am saying most respectfully – and I mean respectfully – let me finish the painting, and *then* you can tread on it, tear it. Now what am I, what is K, to do? He has only one thing in mind: learning. Now how am I to bring order in those twenty-five children?

Now, I must find out what I mean by 'order'. Right? In a room, if I scattered my socks over there, and my trousers over there, and my kurtas over here, it is not only disorder but it is a wastage of energy

because next time I won't know where I put my socks or my shirts or my kurtas or my trousers or saris or whatever it is. Right? So I have to put things in their place so that I don't have to waste energy in looking for them.

Right? Am I explaining myself? Are you quite clear?

T: Yes, sir.

JK: So, I have put things in their place – not 'right' place, but in their place. I must go into this. It is rather fun, if you will listen to all this. That gives me freedom – right? I don't have to search where my socks are or where my kurta is; they have their places in the small cupboard I have. So in placing them where they should be there is freedom for me. There is no wastage of energy in looking for things.

Is it clear? Right, sir? Somebody, please ... (*Laughs*)

RD: Yes, sir.

JK: And I see that freedom and order must go together. The word 'freedom' etymologically means not only to be free, but also in that word is implied 'love'. Freedom and love are together in that word. I put things in their place – not 'right' place. I may put it up there and you may put it – your socks – down there. Don't tell me, 'That is the right place'. (I wonder if you are capturing what I am saying.) There is no 'right' and 'wrong' in putting things in their places. Right?

RH: But there is a certain conventional rightness. There is rightness, there is true ... there is convention ...

JK: Wait, wait, wait, wait. Don't tell me, 'Put those socks in the *right* place'. That's all I am wanting ...

RH: Right.

RD: But, sir, at the same time ...

JK: Wait, now I am talking. (*Laughs and laughter*)

RD: Right ... But, sir, may I complete what I was saying?

JK: (*Gestures 'Wait'*)

RD: Right.

JK: Don't tell me, 'The right place for you to put the socks is in that drawer'. You have already restrained my freedom. Freedom – not *my* freedom, [but] freedom. Are you following this?

T: Yes, sir.

JK: So I talk to them about freedom. The content of that word [freedom], also, means love. To me that means that. To K freedom implies love and not to do what you want to do.

So I have got twenty-five children, and I have already established [something]: seeing that putting things in their places has order, and is not wastage of energy. Searching for where my socks are – [is a wastage of energy]. And not wasting energy gives me a certain greater energy and there is freedom in it – freedom in that limited space. And freedom implies love.

So, I have got twenty-five children – monkeys of the first order. Now I am to ... not *help* them. Do you understand?

Sir, the first thing I must go into is that one of the fundamental things in a religious life is not to seek help. I can seek help from a doctor, from the postman, etc. But psychologically not to seek help from anybody! We were discussing this the other day at Rajghat, in Benares, with Sanskrit scholars who are Buddhists. And there was also a Tibetan Lama, of the highest type, and I said, 'This is fundamental in religious life – not to seek psychological help from anybody'. And he said that that is what the Buddha said, and so on. But they promptly go and organise how to help people. (*Laughs*) Do you understand? So leave all that.

So I am not – K is not – out to help them. Right, sir?

T: There seems to be a ...

JK: No, just listen; listen to the content of these words. I have got these twenty-five children. I am not helping them; I am not telling them, 'Put things in their *right* place'. I remove the word, 'right'.

Right? Can we go on?

T: What do you do if a child thinks that freedom and a 'good time'...

JK: I don't know anything about the child. I said, 'This is *my* way of approaching the child'.

T: Well, supposing a child listens to that, and says, 'Freedom, to me, is to drop my things on the floor ...'

JK: No, no, no. Don't let's go off to ... I am still continuing.

T: But how do you deal with children in such a ..?

JK: I will come back – presently – to how to deal with those children, but first I must be very clear in myself: what is freedom?, what is learning?, and that there is no right place to put things. 'Right' place. Do you understand, sir? I start with that. And I have got these twenty-five children. What am I going to do?

My approach – K's approach – is *entirely* different from yours. That is where the battle is beginning. I have no sense of compulsion, no personality interfering with perception. And the word 'discipline' with all its traditional meaning has no meaning at all for K – except as learning. So he is like that. Then, what is K to do with twenty-five children? K is immovable about this; he doesn't vary. (I wonder if I am making myself clear.)

RH: But, sir, how can we pull this [off]?

JK: You haven't understood.

Freedom in its depth, its deeper meaning – etymologically – is also love and learning. There is no personal influence, no trying to help them, no saying, 'This is right' or 'This is wrong' – not that there is not right and wrong, good and bad, but all that is in abeyance because he is learning. Right?

So, I have got twenty-five children, what shall I do? K, realizing all this as a grown-up person – we are all grown-up people – is adamant about this; there is no movement, no vacillating about

this. (I wonder if I have made myself clear. Don't be hypnotized by what I am saying. Do you understand what I am saying?) This is a law for him, an irrevocable law: not to help, and freedom implying love. Therefore, there is no compulsion, no control, no threats, no punishment; that is out of his way of life. That is like a solid, tremendous rock; immovable – for K. I am not saying that you should be ...

Now what has happened between K and the twenty-five children? Do you understand my question? What is the relationship between K who is all this – not just words but in *actuality* – and them? What is their relationship to him and what is his relationship to them? They know exactly – because I have talked to them – what I mean. They know I am not going to help them.

JP: How is this communicated to the students?

JK: I am doing it, sir. *You* are my students.

JP: No, but what I wanted to ...

JK: You are my students. Forgive me; you are not.

JP: Yes, sir. Here the meaning is the word. But isn't there something more than just the word?

JK: I told you, sir. Freedom means love. Love is not just a word, and that's where our difficulty is going to come in. Let me go on ...

What has happened? What is the relationship of K to the students and of those twenty-five monkeys with K? What is the relationship? (*Long pause*)

(Where are the clever ones or the intellectual ones or the bright ones? Come on, sirs.) I'll go on, but unless you and I establish this, our communication stops – you understand?

RH: Sir, are you, in effect, asking what is our relationship with you?

K: Yes; you are my student. Now, wait a minute, wait a minute. Let's come down, and take it from there ... Forgive me, you are not my students.

Now, [let's say], you are my twenty-five students; you are like those boys, I assure you. (*Laughter*) And K does not want to help you. That is a sacred thing to him. He won't move from that. And discipline only means learning – to him. And love is inherent in freedom. Those things are absolute for him. And putting away things gives greater energy – right? – so that you don't have to search for your socks, and all that. Now what is our relationship? You are my students – forgive me. What is your relationship with me and my relationship with you? Do you understand my question? What is your relationship to K? Take this as an irrevocable fact for him. Then, what is your relationship to K?

KJ: Either I move away from K, this whole thing ...

K: (*Quickly*) You can't, because you are in a school. You are acting as a grown-up man; don't. You see, that's what is wrong. Those poor kids can't run away. They are under my thumb; they are stuck there. So I explain to them very, very carefully – it may take a week. I explain to them very carefully this thing that I have said in much more detail, because they are children. They have got to understand *not* me but what K stands for. So I explain to them; I take infinite trouble in explaining so that each one understands, in

their own language, in their English. It is my job to explain. So they know exactly what K is: his position – not that he has taken a stand; I don't mean that. They know exactly what he means. So what has happened when I have explained? They know exactly what K means. It may take a month – I don't mind – or it may take a week. So what has happened then in that relationship? Do you understand, sir? What has happened? (*Despairingly*) You don't ...

T: The students feel responsible for themselves. They no longer depend on you. They feel responsible.

JK: They don't know that word.

T: But they know that they can't depend on you for help.

JK: No; no. Find out; you are answering too quickly. What do you mean: 'responsible'?

T: The fact: I have to think for myself.

JK: No; they are *too* young. You are looking at it as an ... They are eight, nine, ten, twelve, fifteen. They need security. They don't say, 'My God! I must be responsible'. At that age, how can they say such a thing? They must have security.

JP: I want to know how far the 'security' which you want to give them is different from the 'help' which you deny them.

JK: I am going to show you in a minute. What takes place, sir, when you are very clear about something – not confused, muddled? [If you are] very clear in mathematics, suppose ... What do you teach?

JP: English.

JK: English. You are very clear, precise in your language; you don't vary your meanings from day to day. When you vary your meaning from day to day, the students feel insecure. But when you are very clear and precise in your language, they say, 'By Jove! I can't move from ...' You have given him a feeling of security. (I wonder if you understand this.)

RH: Security again is impersonal; it has nothing to do with your personality or ...

JK: (*Emphatic*) Absolutely not. I said that. First of all, those twenty-five kids need security. Right? The school *is* a place of security for them. (*Tapping his chest*) For me. I think they must have complete security.

KJ: And may I add that authority denies security?

JK: Absolutely, while learning does not. In learning there is no authority, because we both are learning. (I wonder if you follow all this ...)

So, I have talked to them for a week. They know – exactly – my position as their housemaster. Right? Exactly. I am not going to scold them; I am not going to control them; I am not going to 'discipline' them – in the usual sense of the word. I say: All that you [have to] do is to learn. Learn. And [there's] this sense of freedom with love. So in their relationship to me, after I have explained this very carefully, they feel secure. It is so. They feel secure. They know that you are not going to contradict, tomorrow;

they know that you mean exactly what you say. When you say 'freedom', you mean 'freedom *with* love'. They are learning.

NARASIMHAN (N): So, you mean that there is security in clarity.

JK: Of course. You are a scientist, sir.

RH: But, sir, you mean more than just clarity and consistency.

JK: There is no consistency. I don't want to be consistent. That is a terrible mechanical attitude.

RH: So then what is this clarity?

JK: I said freedom; all that. It is so.

T: Can I make a point, sir?

JK: Yes, sir.

T: The child is secure in this clarity and not in you.

JK: Yes, that is right. I show them what clarity is so that they themselves become clear. And, of course, I have to protect them. They can't climb trees and ...you know, all that business. So, I say: Look, I am watching but I am not helping. Do you see the difference, sir? I am watching. I am like a hawk watching. And they know I am watching. There is no condemnation, no judgement, no evaluation; just watching. You see what has happened between those children – students – and myself, between K and those students? I am watching how they walk, how they

dress, how they eat, how they speak. I don't tell them 'Not to ...' anything; but I am watching – *from this*.

Do you understand, sir?

JP: I don't understand this word 'watching', sir. You say, 'I am watching like a hawk' ...

JK: I'll tell you; I'll tell you.

First, I have spent a week with them, explaining all this. And I want *every* one of them to understand what I am saying. I take infinite trouble explaining this I'll tell you – which I am doing to you now – and they know exactly what I mean at the end of a week or a fortnight, or whatever time it takes. It may take two days – if they are quick. But at the end of ten days or two days, they know exactly what I mean. And I say: I am watching. I am watching how they behave. Watching, and not telling them to behave properly or rightly. Do you understand what I am saying?

JP: But, sir, you have already explained ...

JK: Yes, I have explained to them.

JP: Then are we not looking at them through this explanation?

JK: (*Emphatic*) No ... What do you mean by that?

JP: Because we have told them – this is what I understand – 'This is what I expect of you'.

JK: (*Very emphatic*) No.

JP: Then, what did I talk to them about?

JK: No, I am not expecting *anything* from them.

JP: What have you talked to me, then, about?

JK: I say: I am your housemaster, and this is what I am – or what K is. Right? And I have explained to them all this that I have explained just now: freedom, love, learning, putting things in their places. There is no ‘right’ place, ‘wrong’ place; they’ll find out. And, I say: I am not helping you at all. Also, I say to them that they must have security. To them – what does security mean? To them; not to you. Security to them – not to you grown-up people – what does it mean? It means somebody on whom they can rely, somebody whom they can trust, somebody who will not frighten them, who will not change his mind from day to day according to his mood, (*Laughs*) [due] to a lack of sleep, this or that. Do you understand? I wonder if you are meeting me. This is revolution. Unless *you* are revolutionary, they ...

JP: But, sir, what we say should percolate down to the details.

JK: I am coming to the details, sir. *It is not what you say, but what you are.* Right? It’s what you are. If you are muddled, they will become muddled. You say: This is freedom and explain, go into it – as I am doing now (*Laughs*) ... And I tell them, also: I am watching; I won’t correct you, I won’t tell you what to do ... *I am watching.* In that watching they know that there is no condemnation. That is very important. There is no judgement. I

don't tell them: This is right; this is wrong. I am just watching. They know K is watching with all that he has told them.

Do you understand, sir? Do you understand what I am saying? ... He is still not clear ...

JP: Because I am still looking into the details.

JK: I am going into the details, sir. *I am watching* ... Now, wait a minute, sir. Why do you want the details?

JP: Because I think that in our consciousness 'detail' is what matters much more than the principle.

JK: Does it?

JP: It does, yes.

JK: Wait, sir. When you build a house, the architect asks you what kind of a house you want. So many windows, so many bathrooms, so many toilets, so many bedrooms, so many sitting-rooms; you tell him. And he designs it. He makes a model of it and shows it to you. And you say, 'I don't like it there, I like it here'. Right? But, first, the architect has a concept of the whole – you understand, sir? – the whole of the building. He doesn't start with details.

JP: I see that, Krishnaji; but what I am trying to say is that when it comes to the psychological field (and sometimes, even, the physical field), the child relates himself to the teacher – or to anybody for that matter – through details. If he is behaving in a certain way and I am watching with a certain mind, he is watching me or the teacher – the elder – only through that particular action in which he is involved.

K: No, sir; you are missing my whole point.

JP: I know, sir; but this is what I have felt and seen. Let us say that the child comes late to class. The child thinks: I don't come to class on time and my teacher 'allows' me to come late; he only looks at me. So I can come late tomorrow, too, and the day after, and the day after. That maybe only a detail, but it is such and such things, such 'details' which create confusion.

RH: But, JP, your assumption is that it is only in meeting the details that you can solve the problems.

JP: No, I am not saying that. What I am saying is that a child relates that way.

RH: Perhaps there is a way of meeting it that leaves that and takes – you know – a certain wideness of approach, a wider approach which will encompass that. There are always problems that you can solve by not looking at the details but by looking at them in a wider perspective ...

JK: He hasn't got it.

JP: I only get it verbally.

JK: Just a minute, sir; just a minute. Are you – *you* (forgive me, I am not being personal) – are you clear about freedom?

JP: No, sir; no.

JK: No. Are you clear what love is *in* freedom? Are you clear that helping another is a crime – psychologically?

JP: That's what you told us; yes.

JK: No. Are *you* clear? Then, we can discuss it. I may be wrong and you, also, must admit that you may be wrong.

JP: I see the dangers of helping and being helped.

JK: You won't help ... Ah! That's where it is. So you are not clear in yourself.

JP: Yes, that's very true; yes.

JK: Therefore, how can you help a student about details when you are not clear? I am sorry; I am not being personal, sir.

JP: No; we are learning all these things.

JK: Learning. Therefore don't stick to your point; move, move.

T: I think we should go into the question of how one gets clarity. That is very important because we know that there is security only in clarity.

JK: Sir, just a minute. Verbally, first, we must understand each other. Then, behind the word, we must capture the meaning, the significance of the word. When I use the word 'freedom', are we both clear what that word means – not only verbally but the depth of that? Freedom from all attachment, freedom from all commitments, freedom from any kind of sectarian outlook; sir, freedom implies much more: [freedom from] the recording of the brain. (I won't go into all that This is a tremendous, complex question.)

You haven't given time to the inquiry of freedom. You haven't gone into it; you haven't studied it. You haven't looked at yourself – whether you are free inwardly, whether you are committed, whether you are a Hindu, Buddhist, whatever it is. How many years [do] you spend to become a mathematics teacher? – Five, ten, fifteen years? You don't spend even ten days to look at all this!

So, I am suggesting, sir, while you are listening to K, capture it quickly. You will capture it if you are like a man who is thirsty: wanting water. If you say, 'Well, it is just a talk, let him ...' But if you are thirsty, wanting to find out, wanting to inquire, then you delve, you don't accept, you are skeptical – all that – then you give your energy to find out.

KJ: Sir, I am in sorrow – let us say. I come to you. You don't help me.

JK: I won't.

KJ: Then, what do we do with it?

JK: You come to me with sorrow.

KJ: Yes.

JK: If you are really in sorrow, I hold your hand. I hold your hand because words for the moment mean nothing. When you are really in sorrow, you are in a state of shock. Right? You are absolutely in a state of misery, self-pity, having lost something tremendous, [something] which you wanted. At that time you don't want words,

you don't want explanations. All that you want is for somebody to be with you who just listens. So I hold your hand. I have done this a dozen times, sir. And when your misery is somewhat subsided, then one begins to go into it.

RH: We have lost the thread of our discussion somewhat.

JK: Yes, we've gone off to something else.

T: Sir, you are the housemaster ...

JK: Yes, I am still the housemaster, the bloody housemaster!

T: Yes, sir. And you said that you are not going to help ...

JK: I am going, sir ...

T: And at the same time you are saying, 'I am watching – as a hawk'. I have two questions. Why are you watching me? That is one. The other question is – well, it is not a question, really – you are watching me like a hawk, and I am uncomfortable.

JK: No, sir. You will *never* ask that question because I have explained my whole ... I have explained everything to you.

RD: So there is no pressure in the watching.

JK: None at all. I am just watching. You are missing the whole point. I am watching. Where there is freedom and love [that] *is* watching. Have you understood what I have said?

RH: Yes, sir.

K: No, wait a minute. Have you really understood? Freedom implies love; love is watching, observing, holding hands. It is not sexual. It has nothing to do with sensation. Freedom, love, implies watching. If I love you, I am watching over you: that you don't ... you know. I am watching. Unless you have this feeling, watching has no meaning. Then it becomes critical, condemnatory, compulsive. And he knows that you are watching in order to ...

RH: Pounce on ...

RD: Correct ...

JK: ... correct him or scold him. I have none of that. I am just watching. (*Despairing*) Sir, you don't understand the...

RD: One feels the beauty of what you are saying, but our starting point is so different.

JK: So change it. Move.

RD: That is the whole issue.

JK: Move. Don't say that that is the whole issue and stick; you are doing this. You say, 'That is the whole issue', but you go back to it. You don't say, 'Right ...'

So, I have got those twenty-five children, still (*Laughs gently*), and I am watching. Please understand the meaning – my meaning – of watching. Don't you watch over those people whom you love? What are you people talking about?! Probably you don't know what that love is. So I [have], K has twenty-five kids:

mischievous. And he has explained *everything* to them – everything in the sense of the context which I have explained. And I am watching. Sir, do you understand what has happened between those students and myself, K? There is no fear. There is no fear on their part.

KJ: And there is freedom and learning.

JK: Yes. And affection, love. Don't miss *that*. I said to you, the root meaning of the word freedom, also, means 'love'. If you haven't got that, then give up the whole circus; then you are mere machines.

So I have got those twenty-five children. And I said, I'll tell them, 'I am watching, old boys. In that watching, I am not going to correct you. I am watching, but don't create fear for yourselves'. Do you understand? I am not creating fear for them, but they have misunderstood the word 'watching'; *therefore* I correct that. Do you understand what is going on between us? Both of us are learning.

So, the details are that I say: Look, for the convenience of everybody and, also, for the care of everybody, you must go to bed at 10 o'clock or at ... When do the children go to bed here – 6 o'clock?

RH: At 9 o'clock.

JK: At 9 o'clock? My Lord!

RH: The younger ones go to bed by 8 or 8.30.

JK: I switch off lights at 9 ... for myself. (*Laughs*)

JP: Switching off the lights goes on from 8.30 to 10.30, depending upon the age groups.

JK: I say to them: For the convenience of everybody, one must go to bed ... For the convenience of *everybody*, for the care of everybody – do you understand? Because you *care* for everybody, you must go to bed at 8.30. Not to keep the cooks, the people waiting, you must turn up at 9 o'clock – *because* you care. You can't keep the teacher waiting, the educator waiting, for you to turn up. You have to *care* for the teacher. You have to be there at 9 o'clock or at whatever time the class begins.

So, do you understand, sir? The whole thing is a movement of consideration for others, consideration for the whole way of living. (I wonder if you understand all this!) Cleanliness is tremendously important, when you see the implications of being clean physically. If you don't take a bath properly, you smell; it affects others. When you eat, don't make a noise. If all of you eat making noises, nobody can hear what the other fellow is saying.

(I wonder if you understand all this? Kabir, sir?)

So I, as a housemaster – because I am also learning – I say to them: I must have leisure between 2 or 3 or 4 o'clock — or whatever it is. I insist on that. Don't disturb me then, because I won't disturb you when you are lying down. So don't *you* disturb me. Do you understand? I must have leisure to meditate, to think, to watch, to learn. Sir, do you understand the whole? Can you do all this?

T: I would like to ask a question, please. When there is an immediate effect which I can explain to the students ... when I explain to him and he understands, he accepts.

JK: Do you feel it? Do you live it?

T: But, even when we feel it, even when we live it ... Let us assume that ...

JK: (*Quickly*) No, not assume.

T: All right; let us not assume. When there is a long-term physical effect, like the cleanliness that you spoke of – I take a bath; therefore I don't smell. I run every day in the morning and, therefore, keep fit. But when there is an alternative, when one can be comfortable in the immediate present and when there is some pain involved in getting to the 'goal', then they choose the immediate comfort. Very often, even after we are quite clear that this is advantageous in the long run – since it involves 'pain' – they, the students, cannot get themselves to do it. It is under these circumstances, and this is quite often, that 'discipline' (in the traditional sense of compulsion, force, and so on) is enforced – even in a school of this sort.

JK: Yes, sir.

T: What do you do under these circumstances?

JK: I don't admit that. I don't admit that *you* have a long-term view and that the kid has not.

T: He has a long term view, also. He understands perfectly what I am saying. I do the same thing myself.

JK: Wait a minute. Just look at what you have said, sir. Forgive me. First of all: What is your relationship with the student – actually, not theoretically? *Actually* what is your relationship to the student and his relationship to you? If you are really honest: What is your relationship with the student?

T: Very honestly, it will be like the relationship I have with those close friends with whom I often talk. This means that sometimes I seriously wonder whether what we are doing is right or wrong.

JK: No, sir! I am asking: What is your relationship? Are you – the grown-up person – telling the child what to do?

T: No, not at all.

JK: Just a minute. Wait, wait, sir. Are you, the educator, sitting higher up and feeling superior? Are you, in your relationship, saying, ‘O, those poor kids; they know nothing; I am going to tell them what to do’? In your relationship is there a sense of love, affection, care: care about how they walk, how they dress, how they look, how they talk to each other? Is there a care for them – love? Love means protection; love means watching; love means you are not separate from them. If I love somebody, I am not separate. It is love. Therefore I am asking you, sir – most politely and respectfully – what is your relationship with the students?

(Long pause)

All of you: What is your relationship with the students? – You know and they don’t know? Of course, you know mathematics, geography, history. (Just a minute, sir; don’t jump on me, yet.)

You know science, physics and chemistry, and all the rest of it. But you know nothing else. Do you? You don't know anything about yourself – do you? [You don't know] what you are, what you think, what you feel, why you are unhappy – all that. You don't know yourself, so how can you help that child? You may assume a lot of things. And that is why – because you assume – they don't pay any attention at all.

Right, sir?

If you are my yoga teacher, sir, you teach me; I am learning. There is no gap between teaching and learning. When you are teaching me, I do it instantly. I wonder if you understand that. I have been taught by Mr Iyengar, by Mr Deshikachari, by several other teachers. The moment they say, 'Do that', you do it. You may do it badly; you may not do it correctly – your muscles aren't right yet – but there is no gap between what is said and the action. When there is a gap, then there is a doubt. Because I accept you as a yoga teacher – you know more about it than I do – I listen to you very carefully.

That is why I am asking you, sirs: What is your relationship with these students? Have you any relationship at all? Relationship implies care, consideration, love, freedom, independence. (For God's sake!)

(Long pause)

So, sir, I am the housemaster for twenty-five children. And I, also, bear in mind that I am responsible for the future generation. They are the future generation. Agreed, sir?

T: Yes, sir.

JK: So, to them the future is: getting a good job, money, a position like their fathers, mothers. And I don't belong to that crowd, because it means nothing to me. So I point this out to them, too. I take them into complete confidence. I tell them everything about myself. (Not my private life – I am not talking about that.) Everything I say, I mean. There is no double talk. I don't say one thing and do something quite the opposite. They know; instinctively they know – don't they, sir? I have established a relationship with them in which there is trust. I won't do a thing to hurt them. They know that. So I say to those twenty-five kids – I meet them every morning at 5.30 or 6, whatever it is – I say: Look, I am watching you; I've love for [you] – all that – so that they really grasp this thing with their hearts and minds.

The details follow when they know that I am with them. Do you understand, sir? They will come and tell me, 'My shirt is torn'. I don't have to tell them. Do you understand, sir? Because I have their confidence, they will tell me *everything*. And in the telling to me of their troubles, their mischief, they are, also, learning.

I wonder if you see all this ... It's time to go.

Will any one of the housemasters and house-mothers listen to me? Who was there yesterday at lunch?

RH: Nivedita.

NIVEDITA SCUDDER (NS): I was there, sir.

K: Will you listen to me?

NS: Yes, sir.

K: Come over here; I can't see you. Come over here, Lady. I am going to tread on her! Stick to the thing; move. Have you understood what I said – not verbally, but really understood? Freedom is so immensely important.

*Rishi Valley
December 11, 1984*

OBITUARY
KABIR JAITHIRTHA (1949- 2018)

Kabir Jaithirtha passed on, shortly after his 69th birthday on Sept 18th, leaving behind a rich legacy; not just for the education community, but for all who were impacted by their interactions with him. His wife Viju, children Anuruddha and Karuna, and the many, many students and teachers whose lives he touched, deeply grieve this loss.

As a young man Kabir came across K's writings, and after his stint in IIM Calcutta, he heard there was an opening for a K school in Bangalore. During the interim period he worked in Delhi for an NGO. It was here that he met Krishnamurti, and in his own words 'During that meeting, and others later, I was shivering'. The meeting changed the course of his life irrevocably, starting an exploration which continued until his last breath. Kabir's search for truth became inextricably entwined with his vision for holistic education – the outcome of which was the schools he founded.

1978 was the year he married Viju and joined The Valley School (TVS). Then it was a fledgling school, directed by a small committee after working out plans with the teaching staff, and it set out to make radical changes in the way students were being educated. In 1982 Kabir became a trustee of the KFI and gave the foundation his energy until the very end. In 1990 KFI brought sweeping changes that did not go well with some in the group. At this juncture, Kabir, Viju and a few others left The Valley School to start a new venture which became the Centre For Learning (CFL).

In some ways CFL allowed for Kabir and his colleagues to test some of the learnings from The Valley School experience. Again, a small group of teachers with no hierarchy implemented creative ideas that came after intense and sometimes heated dialogues. Sometimes Kabir's impatience was difficult for the others, but he would quickly

recognise the impasse and take the initiative to move past it. His ability to go beyond past hurts and disappointments was best illustrated when he tried to bring CFL into the KFI fold. The rest of the group opposed it and he would gracefully relent when they turned down his repeated attempts at this.

In 2003 Kabir returned to The Valley School to run a post-school programme. Viju and he were also instrumental in running the pilot mixed-age group experiment for middle schoolers, later adopted by TVS. However, it seemed that the urge to start something fresh, incorporating many of the missing elements from TVS and CFL, was strong in this remarkable man. So, with young energy from his former students, he began a series of weekly dialogues, in the same home where CFL began two decades earlier. The group spanned in age from 20 to 70, and out of these meetings over three to four years, Shibumi was born.

Often Shibumi-teacher-dialogues would revert to K's original question to the schools: 'What do you think will happen, Sirs, to children in a space where a group of adults is seriously engaging with questions of deep spiritual significance?'

To Kabir it was clear by now that parents and teachers would need to walk this journey together. The intent was carefully articulated; for Kabir the central core was in the awakening of the reflective mind, in whose wake the development of knowledge and skills must come. But long-time friends report that Kabir had mellowed by now. Early dialogues in the Shibumi group showed a gentler man; while the focus was still on asking the 'right' question, there was a more patient listening of the other, a sense of shared enquiry.

Meanwhile, Rajghat Besant School in Varanasi was in need of a principal, and when KFI reached out, Kabir responded positively. The stay in Rajghat was one of the happiest times for him, Viju and

Karuna. The school welcomed him and the place came alive with daily teacher dialogues and discussions with the older students. As always, he plunged in whole heartedly for the space of three years, even as Shibumi took its first baby steps in Bangalore. Although Rajghat did not want to let him go, he returned to Shibumi, to help build the team, the space and look at the all-important task of how to choose parents for the school. During this period, he gave much attention to the nuts and bolts of the operation, but he felt he had not given himself wholly to self-enquiry. So he took a year off on a solitary retreat in Kausani in the Himalayas. Later a few close friends joined him and he came back to Bangalore infusing fresh energy and insights into the dialogues. He constantly exhorted the Shibumi team to both examine their lives in the light of the Teachings, as well learn to anchor dialogues with parents.

In May 2008 Kabir had a third setback in health, this time more serious. He underwent two major operations and long hospital stays, unwaveringly continuing to 'watch' the mind, and touching the lives of all his care givers. After a miraculous recovery he was back home, but on the morning of September 18th he succumbed to a massive cardiac arrest.

Kabir was like fire – he constantly directed energy to the exploration of the self – and determined to light a spark in others. He was concerned with schools engaging with K's Teachings in the field of education to bring about a 'flowering' in the child. His founding of CFL and Shibumi are a living testimony to his commitment to translating the teachings to indeed make it education for life.

Roopa (Shibumi)

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