



*Education and the Significance of Life*

mysteriously; they are transformed when there is a fundamental change in ourselves. The individual is of first importance, not the system; and as long as the individual does not understand the total process of himself, no system, whether of the left or of the right, can bring order and peace to the world.

 CHAPTER I 

THE RIGHT KIND OF EDUCATION

THE ignorant man is not the unlearned, but he who does not know himself, and the learned man is stupid when he relies on books, on knowledge and on authority to give him understanding. Understanding comes only through self-knowledge, which is awareness of one's total psychological process. Thus education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered.

What we now call education is a matter of accumulating information and knowledge from books, which anyone can do who can read. Such education offers a subtle form of escape from ourselves and, like all escapes, it inevitably creates increasing misery. Conflict and confusion result from our own wrong relationship with people, things and ideas, and until we understand that relationship and alter it, mere learning, the gathering of facts and the acquiring of various skills, can only lead us to engulfing chaos and destruction.

As society is now organized, we send our children to

## *Education and the Significance of Life*

school to learn some technique by which they can eventually earn a livelihood. We want to make the child first and foremost a specialist, hoping thus to give him a secure economic position. But does the cultivation of a technique enable us to understand ourselves?

While it is obviously necessary to know how to read and write, and to learn engineering or some other profession, will technique give us the capacity to understand life? Surely, technique is secondary; and if technique is the only thing we are striving for, we are obviously denying what is by far the greater part of life.

Life is pain, joy, beauty, ugliness, love, and when we understand it as a whole, at every level, that understanding creates its own technique. But the contrary is not true: technique can never bring about creative understanding.

Present-day education is a complete failure because it has over-emphasized technique. In over-emphasizing technique we destroy man. To cultivate capacity and efficiency without understanding life, without having a comprehensive perception of the ways of thought and desire, will only make us increasingly ruthless, which is to engender wars and jeopardize our physical security. The exclusive cultivation of technique has produced scientists, mathematicians, bridge builders, space conquerors; but do they understand the total process of life? Can any specialist experience life as a whole? Only when he ceases to be a specialist.

Technological progress does solve certain kinds of problems for some people at one level, but it introduces wider and deeper issues too. To live at one level, disregarding the

## *The Right Kind of Education*

total process of life, is to invite misery and destruction. The greatest need and most pressing problem for every individual is to have an integrated comprehension of life, which will enable him to meet its ever-increasing complexities.

Technical knowledge, however necessary, will in no way resolve our inner, psychological pressures and conflicts; and it is because we have acquired technical knowledge without understanding the total process of life that technology has become a means of destroying ourselves. The man who knows how to split the atom but has no love in his heart becomes a monster.

We choose a vocation according to our capacities; but will the following of a vocation lead us out of conflict and confusion? Some form of technical training seems necessary; but when we have become engineers, physicians, accountants—then what? Is the practice of a profession the fulfilment of life? Apparently with most of us it is. Our various professions may keep us busy for the greater part of our existence; but the very things that we produce and are so entranced with are causing destruction and misery. Our attitudes and values make of things and occupations the instruments of envy, bitterness and hate.

Without understanding ourselves, mere occupation leads to frustration, with its inevitable escapes through all kinds of mischievous activities. Technique without understanding leads to enmity and ruthlessness, which we cover up with pleasant-sounding phrases. Of what value is it to emphasize technique and become efficient entities if the result is mutual destruction? Our technical progress is fantastic, but it

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

has only increased our powers of destroying one another, and there is starvation and misery in every land. We are not peaceful and happy people.

When function is all-important, life becomes dull and boring, a mechanical and sterile routine from which we escape into every kind of distraction. The accumulation of facts and the development of capacity, which we call education, has deprived us of the fulness of integrated life and action. It is because we do not understand the total process of life that we cling to capacity and efficiency, which thus assume overwhelming importance. But the whole cannot be understood through the part; it can be understood only through action and experience.

Another factor in the cultivation of technique is that it gives us a sense of security, not only economic, but psychological as well. It is reassuring to know that we are capable and efficient. To know that we can play the piano or build a house gives us a feeling of vitality, of aggressive independence; but to emphasize capacity because of a desire for psychological security is to deny the fulness of life. The whole content of life can never be foreseen, it must be experienced anew from moment to moment; but we are afraid of the unknown, and so we establish for ourselves psychological zones of safety in the form of systems, techniques and beliefs. As long as we are seeking inward security, the total process of life cannot be understood.

The right kind of education, while encouraging the learning of a technique, should accomplish something which is of far greater importance: it should help man to experience

### *The Right Kind of Education*

the integrated process of life. It is this experiencing that will put capacity and technique in their right place. If one really has something to say, the very saying of it creates its own style; but learning a style without inward experiencing can only lead to superficiality.

Throughout the world, engineers are frantically designing machines which do not need men to operate them. In a life run almost entirely by machines, what is to become of human beings? We shall have more and more leisure without knowing wisely how to employ it, and we shall seek escape through knowledge, through enfeebling amusements, or through ideals.

I believe volumes have been written about educational ideals, yet we are in greater confusion than ever before. There is no method by which to educate a child to be integrated and free. As long as we are concerned with principles, ideals and methods, we are not helping the individual to be free from his own self-centered activity with all its fears and conflicts.

Ideals and blue-prints for a perfect Utopia will never bring about the radical change of heart which is essential if there is to be an end to war and universal destruction. Ideals cannot change our present values: they can be changed only by the right kind of education, which is to foster the understanding of what is.

When we are working together for an ideal, for the future, we shape individuals according to our conception of that future; we are not concerned with human beings at all, but with our idea of what they should be. The what *should*

## *Education and the Significance of Life*

*be* becomes far more important to us than what *is*, namely, the individual with his complexities. If we begin to understand the individual directly instead of looking at him through the screen of what we think he should be, then we are concerned with what *is*. Then we no longer want to transform the individual into something else; our only concern is to help him to understand himself, and in this there is no personal motive or gain. If we are fully aware of what *is*, we shall understand it and so be free of it; but to be aware of what we are, we must stop struggling after something which we are not.

Ideals have no place in education for they prevent the comprehension of the present. Surely, we can be aware of what *is* only when we do not escape into the future. To look to the future, to strain after an ideal, indicates sluggishness of mind and a desire to avoid the present.

Is not the pursuit of a ready-made Utopia a denial of the freedom and integration of the individual? When one follows an ideal, a pattern, when one has a formula for what should be, does one not live a very superficial, automatic life? We need, not idealists or entities with mechanical minds, but integrated human beings who are intelligent and free. Merely to have a design for a perfect society is to wrangle and shed blood for what should be while ignoring what *is*.

If human beings were mechanical entities, automatic machines, then the future would be predictable and the plans for a perfect Utopia could be drawn up; then we would be able to plan carefully a future society and work towards it.

## *The Right Kind of Education*

But human beings are not machines to be established according to a definite pattern.

Between now and the future there is an immense gap in which many influences are at work upon each one of us, and in sacrificing the present for the future we are pursuing wrong means to a probable right end. But the means determine the end; and besides, who are we to decide what man should be? By what right do we seek to mould him according to a particular pattern, learnt from some book or determined by our own ambitions, hopes and fears?

The right kind of education is not concerned with any ideology, however much it may promise a future Utopia: it is not based on any system, however carefully thought out; nor is it a means of conditioning the individual in some special manner. Education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free, to flower greatly in love and goodness. That is what we should be interested in, and not in shaping the child according to some idealistic pattern.

Any method which classifies children according to temperament and aptitude merely emphasizes their differences; it breeds antagonism, encourages divisions in society and does not help to develop integrated human beings. It is obvious that no method or system can provide the right kind of education, and strict adherence to a particular method indicates sluggishness on the part of the educator. As long as education is based on cut-and-dried principles, it can turn out men and women who are efficient, but it cannot produce creative human beings.

Only love can bring about the understanding of another.

Where there is love there is instantaneous communion with the other, on the same level and at the same time. It is because we ourselves are so dry, empty and without love that we have allowed governments and systems to take over the education of our children and the direction of our lives; but governments want efficient technicians, not human beings, because human beings become dangerous to governments—and to organized religions as well. That is why governments and religious organizations seek to control education.

Life cannot be made to conform to a system, it cannot be forced into a framework, however nobly conceived; and a mind that has merely been trained in factual knowledge is incapable of meeting life with its variety, its subtlety, its depths and great heights. When we train our children according to a system of thought or a particular discipline, when we teach them to think within departmental divisions, we prevent them from growing into integrated men and women, and therefore they are incapable of thinking intelligently, which is to meet life as a whole.

The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole. The idealist, like the specialist, is not concerned with the whole, but only with a part. There can be no integration as long as one is pursuing an ideal pattern of action; and most teachers who are idealists have put away love, they have dry minds and hard hearts. To study a child, one has to be alert, watchful, self-aware, and this demands far greater intelligence and affection than to encourage him to follow an ideal.

Another function of education is to create new values. Merely to implant existing values in the mind of the child, to make him conform to ideals, is to condition him without awakening his intelligence. Education is intimately related to the present world crisis, and the educator who sees the causes of this universal chaos should ask himself how to awaken intelligence in the student, thus helping the coming generation not to bring about further conflict and disaster. He must give all his thought, all his care and affection to the creation of right environment and to the development of understanding, so that when the child grows into maturity he will be capable of dealing intelligently with the human problems that confront him. But in order to do this, the educator must understand himself instead of relying on ideologies, systems and beliefs.

Let us not think in terms of principles and ideals, but be concerned with things as they are; for it is the consideration of what is that awakens intelligence, and the intelligence of the educator is far more important than his knowledge of a new method of education. When one follows a method, even if it has been worked out by a thoughtful and intelligent person, the method becomes very important, and the children are important only as they fit into it. One measures and classifies the child, and then proceeds to educate him according to some chart. This process of education may be convenient for the teacher, but neither the practice of a system nor the tyranny of opinion and learning can bring about an integrated human being.

The right kind of education consists in understanding the

## *Education and the Significance of Life*

child as he is without imposing upon him an ideal of what we think he should be. To enclose him in the framework of an ideal is to encourage him to conform, which breeds fear and produces in him a constant conflict between what he is and what he should be; and all inward conflicts have their outward manifestations in society. Ideals are an actual hindrance to our understanding of the child and to the child's understanding of himself.

A parent who really desires to understand his child does not look at him through the screen of an ideal. If he loves the child, he observes him, he studies his tendencies, his moods and peculiarities. It is only when one feels no love for the child that one imposes upon him an ideal, for then one's ambitions are trying to fulfil themselves in him, wanting him to become this or that. If one loves, not the ideal, but the child, then there is a possibility of helping him to understand himself as he is.

If a child tells lies, for example, of what value is it to put before him the ideal of truth? One has to find out why he is telling lies. To help the child, one has to take time to study and observe him, which demands patience, love and care; but when one has no love, no understanding, then one forces the child into a pattern of action which we call an ideal.

Ideals are a convenient escape, and the teacher who follows them is incapable of understanding his students and dealing with them intelligently; for him, the future ideal, the what should be, is far more important than the present

## *The Right Kind of Education*

child. The pursuit of an ideal excludes love, and without love no human problem can be solved.

If the teacher is of the right kind, he will not depend on a method, but will study each individual pupil. In our relationship with children and young people, we are not dealing with mechanical devices that can be quickly repaired, but with living beings who are impressionable, volatile, sensitive, afraid, affectionate; and to deal with them, we have to have great understanding, the strength of patience and love. When we lack these, we look to quick and easy remedies and hope for marvellous and automatic results. If we are unaware, mechanical in our attitudes and actions, we fight shy of any demand upon us that is disturbing and that cannot be met by an automatic response, and this is one of our major difficulties in education.

The child is the result of both the past and the present and is therefore already conditioned. If we transmit our background to the child, we perpetuate both his and our own conditioning. There is radical transformation only when we understand our own conditioning and are free of it. To discuss what should be the right kind of education while we ourselves are conditioned is utterly futile.

While the children are young, we must of course protect them from physical harm and prevent them from feeling physically insecure. But unfortunately we do not stop there; we want to shape their ways of thinking and feeling, we want to mould them in accordance with our own cravings and intentions. We seek to fulfil ourselves in our children, to perpetuate ourselves through them. We build



### *Education and the Significance of Life*

walls around them, condition them by our beliefs and ideologies, fears and hopes—and then we cry and pray when they are killed or maimed in wars, or otherwise made to suffer by the experiences of life.

Such experiences do not bring about freedom; on the contrary, they strengthen the will of the self. The self is made up of a series of defensive and expansive reactions, and its fulfilment is always in its own projections and gratifying identifications. As long as we translate experience in terms of the self, of the "me" and the "mine," as long as the "I," the ego, maintains itself through its reactions, experience cannot be freed from conflict, confusion and pain. Freedom comes only when one understands the ways of the self, the experiencer. It is only when the self, with its accumulated reactions, is not the experiencer, that experience takes on an entirely different significance and becomes creation.

If we would help the child to be free from the ways of the self, which cause so much suffering, then each one of us should set about altering deeply his attitude and relationship to the child. Parents and educators, by their own thought and conduct, can help the child to be free and to flower in love and goodness.

Education as it is at present in no way encourages the understanding of the inherited tendencies and environmental influences which condition the mind and heart and sustain fear, and therefore it does not help us to break through these conditionings and bring about an integrated human being. Any form of education that concerns itself

### *The Right Kind of Education*

with a part and not with the whole of man inevitably leads to increasing conflict and suffering.

It is only in individual freedom that love and goodness can flower; and the right kind of education alone can offer this freedom. Neither conformity to the present society nor the promise of a future Utopia can ever give to the individual that insight without which he is constantly creating problems.

The right kind of educator, seeing the inward nature of freedom, helps each individual student to observe and understand his own self-projected values and impositions; he helps him to become aware of the conditioning influences about him, and of his own desires, both of which limit his mind and breed fear; he helps him, as he grows to manhood, to observe and understand himself in relation to all things, for it is the craving for self-fulfilment that brings endless conflict and sorrow.

Surely, it is possible to help the individual to perceive the enduring values of life, without conditioning. Some may say that this full development of the individual will lead to chaos; but will it? There is already confusion in the world, and it has arisen because the individual has not been educated to understand himself. While he has been given some superficial freedom, he has also been taught to conform, to accept the existing values.

Against this regimentation, many are revolting; but unfortunately their revolt is a mere self-seeking reaction, which only further darkens our existence. The right kind of educator, aware of the mind's tendency to reaction, helps

## *Education and the Significance of Life*

the student to alter present values, not out of reaction against them, but through understanding the total process of life. Full co-operation between man and man is not possible without the integration which right education can help to awaken in the individual.

Why are we so sure that neither we nor the coming generation, through the right kind of education, can bring about a fundamental alteration in human relationship? We have never tried it; and as most of us seem to be fearful of the right kind of education, we are disinclined to try it. Without really inquiring into this whole question, we assert that human nature cannot be changed, we accept things as they are and encourage the child to fit into the present society; we condition him to our present ways of life, and hope for the best. But can such conformity to present values, which lead to war and starvation, be considered education?

Let us not deceive ourselves that this conditioning is going to make for intelligence and happiness. If we remain fearful, devoid of affection, hopelessly apathetic, it means that we are really not interested in encouraging the individual to flower greatly in love and goodness, but prefer that he carry on the miseries with which we have burdened ourselves and of which he also is a part.

To condition the student to accept the present environment is quite obviously stupid. Unless we voluntarily bring about a radical change in education, we are directly responsible for the perpetuation of chaos and misery; and when some monstrous and brutal revolution finally comes, it will

## *The Right Kind of Education*

only give opportunity to another group of people to exploit and to be ruthless. Each group in power develops its own means of oppression, whether through psychological persuasion or brute force.

For political and industrial reasons, discipline has become an important factor in the present social structure, and it is because of our desire to be psychologically secure that we accept and practise various forms of discipline. Discipline guarantees a result, and to us the end is more important than the means; but the means determine the end.

One of the dangers of discipline is that the system becomes more important than the human beings who are enclosed in it. Discipline then becomes a substitute for love, and it is because our hearts are empty that we cling to discipline. Freedom can never come through discipline, through resistance; freedom is not a goal, an end to be achieved. Freedom is at the beginning, not at the end, it is not to be found in some distant ideal.

Freedom does not mean the opportunity for self-gratification or the setting aside of consideration for others. The teacher who is sincere will protect the children and help them in every possible way to grow towards the right kind of freedom; but it will be impossible for him to do this if he himself is addicted to an ideology, if he is in any way dogmatic or self-seeking.

Sensitivity can never be awakened through compulsion. One may compel a child to be outwardly quiet, but one has not come face to face with that which is making him obstinate, impudent, and so on. Compulsion breeds antago-



### *Education and the Significance of Life*

nism and fear. Reward and punishment in any form only make the mind subservient and dull; and if this is what we desire, then education through compulsion is an excellent way to proceed.

But such education cannot help us to understand the child, nor can it build a right social environment in which separatism and hatred will cease to exist. In the love of the child, right education is implied. But most of us do not love our children; we are ambitious for them—which means that we are ambitious for ourselves. Unfortunately, we are so busy with the occupations of the mind that we have little time for the promptings of the heart. After all, discipline implies resistance; and will resistance ever bring love? Discipline can only build walls about us; it is always exclusive, ever making for conflict. Discipline is not conducive to understanding; for understanding comes with observation, with inquiry in which all prejudice is set aside.

Discipline is an easy way to control a child, but it does not help him to understand the problems involved in living. Some form of compulsion, the discipline of punishment and reward, may be necessary to maintain order and seeming quietness among a large number of students herded together in a classroom; but with the right kind of educator and a small number of students, would any repression, politely called discipline, be required? If the classes are small and the teacher can give his full attention to each child, observing and helping him, then compulsion or domination in any form is obviously unnecessary. If, in such a group, a student persists in disorderliness or is unreasonably

### *The Right Kind of Education*

mischievous, the educator must inquire into the cause of his misbehaviour, which may be wrong diet, lack of rest, family wrangles, or some hidden fear.

Implicit in right education is the cultivation of freedom and intelligence, which is not possible if there is any form of compulsion, with its fears. After all, the concern of the educator is to help the student to understand the complexities of his whole being. To require him to suppress one part of his nature for the benefit of some other part is to create in him an endless conflict which results in social antagonisms. It is intelligence that brings order, not discipline.

Conformity and obedience have no place in the right kind of education. Co-operation between teacher and student is impossible if there is no mutual affection, mutual respect. When the showing of respect to elders is required of children, it generally becomes a habit, a mere outward performance, and fear assumes the form of veneration. Without respect and consideration, no vital relationship is possible, especially when the teacher is merely an instrument of his knowledge.

If the teacher demands respect from his pupils and has very little for them, it will obviously cause indifference and disrespect on their part. Without respect for human life, knowledge only leads to destruction and misery. The cultivation of respect for others is an essential part of right education, but if the educator himself has not this quality, he cannot help his students to an integrated life.

Intelligence is discernment of the essential, and to discern the essential there must be freedom from those

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

hindrances which the mind projects in the search for its own security and comfort. Fear is inevitable as long as the mind is seeking security; and when human beings are regimented in any way, keen awareness and intelligence are destroyed.

The purpose of education is to cultivate right relationship, not only between individuals, but also between the individual and society; and that is why it is essential that education should, above all, help the individual to understand his own psychological process. Intelligence lies in understanding oneself and going above and beyond oneself; but there cannot be intelligence as long as there is fear. Fear perverts intelligence and is one of the causes of self-centered action. Discipline may suppress fear but does not eradicate it, and the superficial knowledge which we receive in modern education only further conceals it.

When we are young, fear is instilled into most of us both at home and at school. Neither parents nor teachers have the patience, the time or the wisdom to dispel the instinctive fears of childhood, which, as we grow up, dominate our attitudes and judgment and create a great many problems. The right kind of education must take into consideration this question of fear, because fear warps our whole outlook on life. To be without fear is the beginning of wisdom, and only the right kind of education can bring about the freedom from fear in which alone there is deep and creative intelligence.

Reward or punishment for any action merely strengthens self-centeredness. Action for the sake of another, in the name of the country or of God, leads to fear, and fear can-

### *The Right Kind of Education*

not be the basis for right action. If we would help a child to be considerate of others, we should not use love as a bribe, but take the time and have the patience to explain the ways of consideration.

There is no respect for another when there is a reward for it, for the bribe or the punishment becomes far more significant than the feeling of respect. If we have no respect for the child but merely offer him a reward or threaten him with punishment, we are encouraging acquisitiveness and fear. Because we ourselves have been brought up to act for the sake of a result, we do not see that there can be action free of the desire to gain.

The right kind of education will encourage thoughtfulness and consideration for others without enticements or threats of any kind. If we no longer seek immediate results, we shall begin to see how important it is that both the educator and the child should be free from the fear of punishment and the hope of reward, and from every other form of compulsion; but compulsion will continue as long as authority is part of relationship.

To follow authority has many advantages if one thinks in terms of personal motive and gain; but education based on individual advancement and profit can only build a social structure which is competitive, antagonistic and ruthless. This is the kind of society in which we have been brought up, and our animosity and confusion are obvious.

We have been taught to conform to the authority of a teacher, of a book, of a party, because it is profitable to do so. The specialists in every department of life, from the

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

priest to the bureaucrat, wield authority and dominate us; but any government or teacher that uses compulsion can never bring about the co-operation in relationship which is essential for the welfare of society.

If we are to have right relationship between human beings, there should be no compulsion nor even persuasion. How can there be affection and genuine co-operation between those who are in power and those who are subject to power? By dispassionately considering this question of authority and its many implications, by seeing that the very desire for power is in itself destructive, there comes a spontaneous understanding of the whole process of authority. The moment we discard authority we are in partnership, and only then is there co-operation and affection.

The real problem in education is the educator. Even a small group of students becomes the instrument of his personal importance if he uses authority as a means of his own release, if teaching is for him a self-expansive fulfilment. But mere intellectual or verbal agreement concerning the crippling effects of authority is stupid and vain.

There must be deep insight into the hidden motivations of authority and domination. If we see that intelligence can never be awakened through compulsion, the very awareness of that fact will burn away our fears, and then we shall begin to cultivate a new environment which will be contrary to and far transcend the present social order.

To understand the significance of life with its conflicts and pain, we must think independently of any authority, including the authority of organized religion; but if in our

### *The Right Kind of Education*

desire to help the child we set before him authoritative examples, we shall only be encouraging fear, imitation and various forms of superstition.

Those who are religiously inclined try to impose upon the child the beliefs, hopes and fears which they in turn have acquired from their parents; and those who are anti-religious are equally keen to influence the child to accept the particular way of thinking which they happen to follow. We all want our children to accept our form of worship or take to heart our chosen ideology. It is so easy to get entangled in images and formulations, whether invented by ourselves or by others, and therefore it is necessary to be ever watchful and alert.

What we call religion is merely organized belief, with its dogmas, rituals, mysteries and superstitions. Each religion has its own sacred book, its mediator, its priests and its ways of threatening and holding people. Most of us have been conditioned to all this, which is considered religious education; but this conditioning sets man against man, it creates antagonism, not only among the believers, but also against those of other beliefs. Though all religions assert that they worship God and say that we must love one another, they instill fear through their doctrines of reward and punishment, and through their competitive dogmas they perpetuate suspicion and antagonism.

Dogmas, mysteries and rituals are not conducive to a spiritual life. Religious education in the true sense is to encourage the child to understand his own relationship to people, to things and to nature. There is no existence without

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

relationship; and without self-knowledge, all relationship, with the one and with the many, brings conflict and sorrow. Of course, to explain this fully to a child is impossible; but if the educator and the parents deeply grasp the full significance of relationship, then by their attitude, conduct and speech they will surely be able to convey to the child, without too many words and explanations, the meaning of a spiritual life.

Our so-called religious training discourages questioning and doubt, yet it is only when we inquire into the significance of the values which society and religion have placed about us that we begin to find out what is true. It is the function of the educator to examine deeply his own thoughts and feelings and to put aside those values which have given him security and comfort, for only then can he help his students to be self-aware and to understand their own urges and fears.

The time to grow straight and clear is when one is young; and those of us who are older can, if we have understanding, help the young to free themselves from the hindrances which society has imposed upon them, as well as from those which they themselves are projecting. If the child's mind and heart are not moulded by religious preconceptions and prejudices, then he will be free to discover through self-knowledge what is above and beyond himself.

True religion is not a set of beliefs and rituals, hopes and fears; and if we can allow the child to grow up without these hindering influences, then perhaps, as he matures, he will begin to inquire into the nature of reality, of God.

### *The Right Kind of Education*

That is why, in educating a child, deep insight and understanding are necessary.

Most people who are religiously inclined, who talk about God and immortality, do not fundamentally believe in individual freedom and integration; yet religion is the cultivation of freedom in the search for truth. There can be no compromise with freedom. Partial freedom for the individual is no freedom at all. Conditioning of any kind, whether political or religious, is not freedom and it will never bring peace.

Religion is not a form of conditioning. It is a state of tranquillity in which there is reality, God; but that creative state can come into being only when there is self-knowledge and freedom. Freedom brings virtue, and without virtue there can be no tranquillity. The still mind is not a conditioned mind, it is not disciplined or trained to be still. Stillness comes only when the mind understands its own ways, which are the ways of the self.

Organized religion is the frozen thought of man, out of which he builds temples and churches; it has become a solace for the fearful, an opiate for those who are in sorrow. But God or truth is far beyond thought and emotional demands. Parents and teachers who recognize the psychological processes which build up fear and sorrow should be able to help the young to observe and understand their own conflicts and trials.

If we who are older can help the children, as they grow up, to think clearly and dispassionately, to love and not to breed animosity, what more is there to do? But if we are

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

constantly at one another's throats, if we are incapable of bringing about order and peace in the world by deeply changing ourselves, of what value are the sacred books and the myths of the various religions?

True religious education is to help the child to be intelligently aware, to discern for himself the temporary and the real, and to have a disinterested approach to life; and would it not have more meaning to begin each day at home or at school with a serious thought, or with a reading that has depth and significance, rather than mumble some oft-repeated words or phrases?

Past generations, with their ambitions, traditions and ideals, have brought misery and destruction to the world; perhaps the coming generations, with the right kind of education, can put an end to this chaos and build a happier social order. If those who are young have the spirit of inquiry, if they are constantly searching out the truth of all things, political and religious, personal and environmental, then youth will have great significance and there is hope for a better world.

Most children are curious, they want to know; but their eager inquiry is dulled by our pontifical assertions, our superior impatience and our casual brushing aside of their curiosity. We do not encourage their inquiry, for we are rather apprehensive of what may be asked of us; we do not foster their discontent, for we ourselves have ceased to question.

Most parents and teachers are afraid of discontent because it is disturbing to all forms of security, and so they

### *The Right Kind of Education*

encourage the young to overcome it through safe jobs, inheritance, marriage and the consolation of religious dogmas. Elders, knowing only too well the many ways of blunting the mind and the heart, proceed to make the child as dull as they are by impressing upon him the authorities, traditions and beliefs which they themselves have accepted.

Only by encouraging the child to question the book, whatever it be, to inquire into the validity of the existing social values, traditions, forms of government, religious beliefs and so on, can the educator and the parents hope to awaken and sustain his critical alertness and keen insight.

The young, if they are at all alive, are full of hope and discontent; they must be, otherwise they are already old and dead. And the old are those who were once discontented, but who have successfully smothered that flame and have found security and comfort in various ways. They crave permanency for themselves and their families, they ardently desire certainty in ideas, in relationships, in possessions; so the moment they feel discontented, they become absorbed in their responsibilities, in their jobs, or in anything else, in order to escape from that disturbing feeling of discontent.

While we are young is the time to be discontented, not only with ourselves, but also with the things about us. We should learn to think clearly and without bias, so as not to be inwardly dependent and fearful. Independence is not for that coloured section of the map which we call our country, but for ourselves as individuals; and though outwardly we are dependent on one another, this mutual dependence



### *Education and the Significance of Life*

does not become cruel or oppressive if inwardly we are free of the craving for power, position and authority.

We must understand discontent, of which most of us are afraid. Discontent may bring what appears to be disorder; but if it leads, as it should, to self-knowledge and self-abnegation, then it will create a new social order and enduring peace. With self-abnegation comes immeasurable joy.

Discontent is the means to freedom; but in order to inquire without bias, there must be none of the emotional dissipation which often takes the form of political gatherings, the shouting of slogans, the search for a *guru* or spiritual teacher, and religious orgies of different kinds. This dissipation dulls the mind and heart, making them incapable of insight and therefore easily moulded by circumstances and fear. It is the burning desire to inquire, and not the easy imitation of the multitude, that will bring about a new understanding of the ways of life.

The young are so easily persuaded by the priest or the politician, by the rich or the poor, to think in a particular way; but the right kind of education should help them to be watchful of these influences so that they do not repeat slogans like parrots or fall into any cunning trap of greed, whether their own or that of another. They must not allow authority to stifle their minds and hearts. To follow another, however great, or to give one's adherence to a gratifying ideology, will not bring about a peaceful world.

When we leave school or college, many of us put away books and seem to feel that we are done with learning;

### *The Right Kind of Education*

and there are those who are stimulated to think further afield, who keep on reading and absorbing what others have said, and become addicted to knowledge. As long as there is the worship of knowledge or technique as a means to success and dominance, there must be ruthless competition, antagonism and the ceaseless struggle for bread.

As long as success is our goal we cannot be rid of fear, for the desire to succeed inevitably breeds the fear of failure. That is why the young should not be taught to worship success. Most people seek success in one form or another, whether on the tennis court, in the business world, or in politics. We all want to be on top, and this desire creates constant conflict within ourselves and with our neighbours; it leads to competition, envy, animosity and finally to war.

Like the older generation, the young also seek success and security; though at first they may be discontented, they soon become respectable and are afraid to say no to society. The walls of their own desires begin to enclose them, and they fall in line and assume the reins of authority. Their discontent, which is the very flame of inquiry, of search, of understanding, grows dull and dies away, and in its place there comes the desire for a better job, a rich marriage, a successful career, all of which is the craving for more security.

There is no essential difference between the old and the young, for both are slaves to their own desires and gratifications. Maturity is not a matter of age, it comes with understanding. The ardent spirit of inquiry is perhaps easier for



### *Education and the Significance of Life*

the young, because those who are older have been battered about by life, conflicts have worn them out and death in different forms awaits them. This does not mean that they are incapable of purposive inquiry, but only that it is more difficult for them.

Many adults are immature and rather childish, and this is a contributing cause of the confusion and misery in the world. It is the older people who are responsible for the prevailing economic and moral crisis; and one of our unfortunate weaknesses is that we want someone else to act for us and change the course of our lives. We wait for others to revolt and build anew, and we remain inactive until we are assured of the outcome.

It is security and success that most of us are after; and a mind that is seeking security, that craves success, is not intelligent, and is therefore incapable of integrated action. There can be integrated action only if one is aware of one's own conditioning, of one's racial, national, political and religious prejudices; that is, only if one realizes that the ways of the self are ever separative.

Life is a well of deep waters. One can come to it with small buckets and draw only a little water, or one can come with large vessels, drawing plentiful waters that will nourish and sustain. While one is young is the time to investigate, to experiment with everything. The school should help its young people to discover their vocations and responsibilities, and not merely cram their minds with facts and technical knowledge; it should be the soil in which they can grow without fear, happily and integrally.

### *The Right Kind of Education*

To educate a child is to help him to understand freedom and integration. To have freedom there must be order, which virtue alone can give; and integration can take place only when there is great simplicity. From innumerable complexities we must grow to simplicity; we must become simple in our inward life and in our outward needs.

Education is at present concerned with outward efficiency, and it utterly disregards, or deliberately perverts, the inward nature of man; it develops only one part of him and leaves the rest to drag along as best it can. Our inner confusion, antagonism and fear ever overcome the outer structure of society, however nobly conceived and cunningly built. When there is not the right kind of education we destroy one another, and physical security for every individual is denied. To educate the student rightly is to help him to understand the total process of himself; for it is only when there is integration of the mind and heart in everyday action that there can be intelligence and inward transformation.

While offering information and technical training, education should above all encourage an integrated outlook on life; it should help the student to recognize and break down in himself all social distinctions and prejudices, and discourage the acquisitive pursuit of power and domination. It should encourage the right kind of self-observation and the experiencing of life as a whole, which is not to give significance to the part, to the "me" and the "mine," but to help the mind to go above and beyond itself to discover the real.

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

Freedom comes into being only through self-knowledge in one's daily occupations, that is, in one's relationship with people, with things, with ideas and with nature. If the educator is helping the student to be integrated, there can be no fanatical or unreasonable emphasis on any particular phase of life. It is the understanding of the total process of existence that brings integration. When there is self-knowledge, the power of creating illusions ceases, and only then is it possible for reality or God to be.

Human beings must be integrated if they are to come out of any crisis, and especially the present world crisis, without being broken; therefore, to parents and teachers who are really interested in education, the main problem is how to develop an integrated individual. To do this, the educator himself must obviously be integrated; so the right kind of education is of the highest importance, not only for the young, but also for the older generation if they are willing to learn and are not too set in their ways. What we are in ourselves is much more important than the traditional question of what to teach the child, and if we love our children we will see to it that they have the right kind of educators.

Teaching should not become a specialist's profession. When it does, as is so often the case, love fades away; and love is essential to the process of integration. To be integrated there must be freedom from fear. Fearlessness brings independence without ruthlessness, without contempt for another, and this is the most essential factor in life. Without love we cannot work out our many conflicting

### *The Right Kind of Education*

problems; without love the acquisition of knowledge only increases confusion and leads to self-destruction.

The integrated human being will come to technique through experiencing, for the creative impulse makes its own technique—and that is the greatest art. When a child has the creative impulse to paint, he paints, he does not bother about technique. Likewise people who are experiencing, and *therefore* teaching, are the only real teachers, and they too will create their own technique.

This sounds very simple, but it is really a deep revolution. If we think about it we can see the extraordinary effect it will have on society. At present most of us are washed out at the age of forty-five or fifty by slavery to routine; through compliance, through fear and acceptance, we are finished, though we struggle on in a society that has very little meaning except for those who dominate it and are secure. If the teacher sees this and is himself really experiencing, then whatever his temperament and capacities may be, his teaching will not be a matter of routine but will become an instrument of help.

To understand a child we have to watch him at play, study him in his different moods; we cannot project upon him our own prejudices, hopes and fears, or mould him to fit the pattern of our desires. If we are constantly judging the child according to our personal likes and dislikes, we are bound to create barriers and hindrances in our relationship with him and in his relationships with the world. Unfortunately, most of us desire to shape the child in a way that is gratifying to our own vanities and idiosyncrasies; we

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

find varying degrees of comfort and satisfaction in exclusive ownership and domination.

Surely, this process is not relationship, but mere imposition, and it is therefore essential to understand the difficult and complex desire to dominate. It takes many subtle forms; and in its self-righteous aspect, it is very obstinate. The desire to "serve" with the unconscious longing to dominate is difficult to understand. Can there be love where there is possessiveness? Can we be in communion with those whom we seek to control? To dominate is to use another for self-gratification, and where there is the use of another there is no love.

When there is love there is consideration, not only for the children but for every human being. Unless we are deeply touched by the problem, we will never find the right way of education. Mere technical training inevitably makes for ruthlessness, and to educate our children we must be sensitive to the whole movement of life. What we think, what we do, what we say matters infinitely, because it creates the environment, and the environment either helps or hinders the child.

Obviously, then, those of us who are deeply interested in this problem will have to begin to understand ourselves and thereby help to transform society; we will make it our direct responsibility to bring about a new approach to education. If we love our children, will we not find a way of putting an end to war? But if we are merely using the word "love" without substance, then the whole complex problem of human misery will remain. The way out of this

### *The Right Kind of Education*

problem lies through ourselves. We must begin to understand our relationship with our fellow-men, with nature, with ideas and with things, for without that understanding there is no hope, there is no way out of conflict and suffering.

The bringing up of a child requires intelligent observation and care. Experts and their knowledge can never replace the parents' love, but most parents corrupt that love by their own fears and ambitions, which condition and distort the outlook of the child. So few of us are concerned with love, but we are vastly taken up with the appearance of love.

The present educational and social structure does not help the individual towards freedom and integration; and if the parents are at all in earnest and desire that the child shall grow to his fullest integral capacity, they must begin to alter the influence of the home and set about creating schools with the right kind of educators.

The influence of the home and that of the school must not be in any way contradictory, so both parents and teachers must re-educate themselves. The contradiction which so often exists between the private life of the individual and his life as a member of the group creates an endless battle within himself and in his relationships.

This conflict is encouraged and sustained through the wrong kind of education, and both governments and organized religions add to the confusion by their contradictory doctrines. The child is divided within himself from the very start, which results in personal and social disasters.

### *Education and the Significance of Life*

If those of us who love our children and see the urgency of this problem will set our minds and hearts to it, then, however few we may be, through right education and an intelligent home environment, we can help to bring about integrated human beings; but if, like so many others, we fill our hearts with the cunning things of the mind, then we shall continue to see our children destroyed in wars, in famines, and by their own psychological conflicts.

Right education comes with the transformation of ourselves. We must re-educate ourselves not to kill one another for any cause, however righteous, for any ideology, however promising it may appear to be for the future happiness of the world. We must learn to be compassionate, to be content with little, and to seek the Supreme, for only then can there be the true salvation of mankind.

## CHAPTER III

### INTELLECT, AUTHORITY AND INTELLIGENCE

MANY of us seem to think that by teaching every human being to read and write, we shall solve our human problems; but this idea has proved to be false. The so-called educated are not peace-loving, integrated people, and they too are responsible for the confusion and misery of the world.

The right kind of education means the awakening of intelligence, the fostering of an integrated life, and only such education can create a new culture and a peaceful world; but to bring about this new kind of education, we must make a fresh start on an entirely different basis.

With the world falling into ruin about us, we discuss theories and vain political questions, and play with superficial reforms. Does this not indicate utter thoughtlessness on our part? Some may agree that it does, but they will go on doing exactly as they have always done—and that is the sadness of existence. When we hear a truth and do not act upon it, it becomes a poison within ourselves, and that