

## Education and Integration

IT WAS A beautiful evening. The sun was setting behind huge, black clouds, and against them stood a clump of tall, slender palms. The river had become golden, and the distant hills were aglow with the setting sun. There was thunder, but towards the mountains the sky was clear and blue. The cattle were coming back from pasture, and a little boy was driving them home. He couldn't have been more than ten or twelve, and though he had spent the whole day by himself, he was singing away and occasionally flicking the cattle that wandered off or were too slow. He smiled, and his dark face lit up. Stopping out of curiosity, and distantly eager, he began to ask questions. He was a village boy and would have no education; he would never be able to read and write, but he already knew what it was to be alone with himself. He did not know that he was alone; it probably never even occurred to him, nor was he depressed by it. He was just alone and contented. He was not contented with something, he was just contented. To be contented with something is to be discontented. To seek contentment through relationship is to be in fear. Contentment that depends on relationship is only gratification. Contentment is a state of non-dependency. Dependency always brings conflict and opposition. There must be freedom to be content. Freedom is and must always be at the beginning; it is not an end, a goal to be achieved. One can never be free in the future. Future freedom has no reality, it is only an idea. Reality is what is; and passive awareness of what is is contentment.

The professor said he had been teaching for many years, ever since he graduated from college, and had a large number of boys under him in one of the governmental institutions. He turned out students who could pass examinations, which was what the government and the parents wanted. Of course, there were exceptional boys who were given special opportunities, granted scholarships, and so on, but the vast majority were indifferent, dull, lazy, and somewhat mischievous. There were those who made something of themselves in whatever field they entered, but only very few had the creative flame. During all the years he had taught, the exceptional boys had been very rare; now and then there would be one who perhaps had the quality of genius, but it generally happened that he too was soon smothered by his environment. As a teacher he had visited many parts of the world to study this question of the exceptional boy, and everywhere it was the same. He was now withdrawing from the teaching profession, for after all these years he was rather saddened by the whole thing. However well boys were educated, on the whole they turned out to be a stupid lot. Some were clever or assertive and attained high positions, but behind the screen of their prestige and domination they were as petty and anxiety-ridden as the rest.

"The modern educational system is a failure, as it has produced two devastating wars and appalling misery. Learning to read and write and acquiring various techniques, which is the cultivation of memory, is obviously not enough, for it has produced unspeakable sorrow. What do you consider to be the end purpose of education?"

Is it not to bring about an integrated individual? If that is the purpose' of education, then we must be clear as to whether the individual exists for society or whether society exists for the individual. If society needs and uses the individual for its own purposes, then it is not concerned with the cultivation of an integrated human being; what it wants is an efficient machine, a conforming and respectable citizen, and this requires only a very superficial integration. As long as the individual obeys and is willing to be thoroughly conditioned, society will find him useful and will spend time and money on him. But if society exists for the individual, then it must help in freeing him from its own conditioning influence. It must educate him to be an integrated human being.

"What do you mean by an integrated human being?"

To answer that question one must approach it negatively, obliquely; one cannot consider its positive aspect.

"I don't understand what you mean."

Positively to state what an integrated human being is, only creates a pattern, a mould, an example which we try to imitate; and is not the imitation of a pattern, an indication of disintegration? When we try to copy an example, can there be integration? Surely, imitation is a process of disintegration; and is this not what is happening in the world? We are all becoming very good gramophone records; we repeat what so-called religions have taught us, or what the latest political, economic, or religious leader has said. We adhere to ideologies and attend political mass-meetings; there is mass-enjoyment of sport, mass-worship, mass-hypnosis. Is this a sign of integration? Conformity is not integration, is it?

"This leads to the very fundamental question of discipline. Are you opposed to discipline?"

What do you mean by discipline? "There are many forms of discipline: the discipline in a school, the discipline of citizenship the party discipline the social and religious disciplines and self-imposed discipline. Discipline may be according to an inner or an outer authority."

Fundamentally, discipline implies some kind of conformity, does it not? It is conformity to an ideal, to an authority; it is the cultivation of resistance, which of necessity breeds opposition. Resistance is opposition. Discipline is a process of isolation, whether it is isolation with a particular group, or the isolation of individual resistance. Imitation is a form of resistance, is it not?

"Do you mean that discipline destroys integration? What would happen if you had no discipline in a school?"

Is it not important to understand the essential significance of discipline, and not jump to conclusions or take examples? We are trying to see what are the factors of disintegration, or what hinders integration. Is not discipline in the sense of conformity, resistance, opposition, conflict, one of the factors of disintegration? Why do we conform? Not only for physical security, but also for psychological comfort, safety. Consciously or unconsciously, the fear of being insecure makes for conformity both outwardly and inwardly. We must all have some kind of physical security; but it is the fear of being psychologically insecure that makes physical security impossible except for the few. Fear is the basis of all discipline: the fear of not being successful, of being punished, of not gaining, and so on. Discipline is imitation, suppression, resistance, and whether it is conscious or unconscious, it is the result of fear. Is not fear one of the factors of disintegration?

"With what would you replace discipline? Without discipline there would be even greater chaos than now. Is not some form of discipline necessary for action?"

Understanding the false as the false, seeing the true in the false, and seeing the true as the true, is the beginning of intelligence. It is not a question of replacement. You cannot replace fear with something else; if you do, fear is still there. You may successfully cover it up or run away from it, but fear remains. It is the elimination of fear, and not the finding of a substitute for it, that is important. Discipline in any form whatsoever can never bring freedom from fear. Fear has to be observed, studied, understood. Fear is not an abstraction; it comes into being only in relation to something, and it is this relationship that has to be understood. To understand is not to resist or oppose. Is not discipline, then, in its wider and deeper sense, a factor of disintegration? Is not fear, with its consequent imitation and suppression, a disintegrating force?

"But how is one to be free from fear? In a class of many students, unless there is some kind of discipline - or, if you prefer, fear - how can there be order?"

By having very few students and the right kind of education. This, of course, is not possible as long as the State is interested in mass-produced citizens. The State prefers mass-education; the rulers do not want the encouragement of discontent, for their position would soon be untenable. The State controls education, it steps in and conditions the human entity for its own purposes; and the easiest way to do this is through fear, through discipline, through punishment and reward, Freedom from fear is another matter; fear has to be understood and not resisted, suppressed, or sublimated.

The problem of disintegration is quite complex, like every other human problem. Is not conflict another factor of disintegration?

"But conflict is essential, otherwise we would stagnate. Without striving there would be no progress no advancement, no culture. Without effort, conflict, we would still be savages."

Perhaps we still are. Why do we always jump to conclusions or oppose when something new is suggested? We are obviously savages when we kill thousands for some cause or other, for our country; killing another human being is the height of savagery. But let us get on with what we were talking about. Is not conflict a sign of disintegration?

"What do you mean by conflict?"

Conflict in every form: between husband and wife, between two groups of people with conflicting ideas, between what is and tradition, between what is and the ideal, the should be, the future. Conflict is inner and outer strife. At present there is conflict at all the various levels of our existence, the conscious as well as the unconscious. Our life is a series of conflicts, a battleground - and for what? Do we understand through strife? Can I understand you if I am in conflict with you? To understand there must be a certain amount of peace. Creation can take place only in peace, in happiness, not

when there is conflict, strife. Our constant struggle is between what is and what should be, between thesis and antithesis; we have accepted this conflict as inevitable, and the inevitable has become the norm, the true - though it maybe false. Can what is be transformed by the conflict with its opposite? I am this, and by struggling to be that, which is the opposite, have I changed this? Is not the opposite, the antithesis, a modified projection of what is? Has not the opposite always the elements of its own opposite? Through comparison is there understanding of what is? Is not any conclusion about what is a hindrance to the understanding of what is? If you would understand something, must you not observe it, study it? Can you study it freely if you are prejudiced in favour of or against it? If you would understand your son must you not study him, neither identifying yourself with nor condemning him? Surely, if you are in conflict with your son, there is no understanding of him. So, is conflict essential to understanding?

"Is there not another kind of conflict, the conflict of learning how to do a thing, acquiring a technique? One may have an intuitive vision of something, but it has to be made manifest, and carrying it out is strife, it involves a great deal of trouble and pain."

A certain amount, it is true; but is not creation itself the means? The means is not separate from the end; the end is according to the means. The expression is according to creation; the style is according to what you have to say. If you have something to say, that very thing creates its own style. But if one is merely a technician, then there is no vital problem.

Is conflict in any field productive of understanding? Is there not a continuous chain of conflict in the effort, the will to be, to become, whether positive or negative? Does not the cause of conflict become the effect, which in its turn becomes the cause? There is no release from conflict until there is an understanding of what is. The what is can never be understood through the screen of idea; it must be approached afresh. As the what is is never static, the mind must not be bound to knowledge, to an ideology, to a belief, to a conclusion. In its very nature, conflict is separative as all opposition is; and is not exclusion, separation, a factor of disintegration? Any form of power, whether individual or of the State, any effort to become more or to become less, is a process of disintegration. All ideas, beliefs, systems of thought, are separative, exclusive. Effort, conflict, cannot under any circumstances bring understanding, and so it is a degenerating factor in the individual as well as in society.

"What, then, is integration? I more or less understand what are the factors of disintegration, but that is only a negation. Through negation one cannot come to integration. I may know what is wrong, which does not mean that I know what is right."

Surely, when the false is seen as the false, the true is. When one is aware of the factors of degeneration, not merely verbally but deeply, then is there not integration? Is integration static, something to be gained and finished with? Integration cannot be arrived at; arrival is death. It is not a goal, an end, but a state of being; it is a living thing, and how can a living thing be a goal, a purpose? The desire to be integrated is not different from another desire, and all desire is a cause of conflict. When there is no conflict, there is integration. Integration is a state of complete attention. There cannot be complete attention if there is effort, conflict, resistance, concentration. Concentration is a fixation; concentration is a process of separation, exclusion, and complete attention is not possible when there is exclusion. To exclude is to narrow down, and the narrow can never be aware of the complete. Complete, full attention is not possible when there is condemnation, justification or identification, or when the mind is clouded by conclusions, speculations, theories. When we understand the hindrances, then only is there freedom. Freedom is an abstraction to the man in prison; but passive watchfulness uncovers the hindrances, and with freedom from these, integration comes into being.