Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools

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JOURNAL OF THE KRISHNAMURTI SCHOOLS

Goodness cannot flower in the field of fear

In all our schools the educator and those responsible for the students, whether in the classroom, on the playing field or in their rooms, have the responsibility to see that fear in any form does not arise. The educator must not arouse fear in the student. This is not conceptual, because the educator himself understands, not only verbally, that fear in any form cripples the mind, destroys sensitivity, shrinks the senses. Fear is the heavy burden which man has always carried. From this fear arise various forms of superstition—religious, scientific and imaginary. One lives in a make-believe world, and the essence of the conceptual world is born of fear. We said previously that man cannot live without relationship, and this relationship is not only his own private life but, if he is an educator, he has a direct relationship with the student. If there is any kind of fear in this, then the teacher cannot possibly help the student to be free of it. The student comes from a background of fear, of authority, of all kinds of fanciful and actual impressions and pressures. The educator too has his own pressures, fears. He will not be able to bring about understanding of the nature of fear if he has not uncovered the root of his own fears. It is not that he must first be free of his own fears in order to help the student to be free, but rather that in their daily relationship, in conversation, in class, the teacher will point out that he himself is afraid, as the student is too, and so together they can explore the whole nature and structure of fear.

J Krishnamurti, *The Whole Movement of Life is Learning*

Contents

This issue of the Journal also contains a separate resource pack which includes:

1. Poster: What Fear Does to Me
2. Four Booklets on Tests, Exams and My Future; People; Insects and Animals; Loss and Death
3. Ten Activity Cards

This is available on request.

Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools

No. 15, January 2011

An Educational Journal

This is a journal on education that is brought out annually. It is an anthology of writings by educators, teachers and thinkers exploring a new vision of education in its many dimensions—philosophy, psychology, classroom experience, curriculum, nature and environment and contemporary issues. It lays special emphasis on J.Krishnamurti's principles of education. It will be of use to teachers, parents, educational administrators, teacher-educators and to any individual interested in education.

Please note: The Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools No. 15 will be published in January 2011. The Order Form is included in this journal.

Editorial

True to its eclectic character, this fifteenth issue of the Journal of Krishnamurti Schools has a collection of articles on diverse subjects and topics.

The fate of the earth is a constant source of anxiety to mankind. While we all seem to agree that we have done harm to the earth in which we live, we do not know how to educate ourselves as to what is exactly happening to us and the earth, let alone as to what is to be done about it. Gary Primrose points out the limits of environmental education and shows us how to learn from nature by taking up one specific activity, gardening, and doing it with all our hearts and minds. Shailesh Shirali asks the intriguing question: 'Is man part of, or is he different from, nature?' For him, nature is a metaphor for life itself, hence one can indeed learn a great deal from it.

Four pieces talk about the school as such. Mark Lee movingly evokes the golden first decade of the Oak Grove School and how much of a moving force Krishnamurti was during this period and beyond, in helping the school find its feet. Anant Mahajan gives a charming little primer on setting up an astronomy kit in the school. While Gurvinder (Neetu) Singh gives an account of the programme of the Bangalore Study Centre in integrating its activities with the children of the school, Shagufta Siddhi reveals the inward life of a high school teacher through the format of diary entries stretching over an academic year and more, in her role as a teacher of History.

Raji Swaminathan examines a facet of education that is rarely explored by educators—the role of the parent in the education of the child. Gerard Bayle tries to evoke, in his interview, his work in the theatre. Acting is essentially movement and communication and, the best way to go about teaching it 'would be to develop in children an aesthetic sense, a sense of what is beautiful'. Lionel Claris takes us through the thicket of twentieth century models of learning, essentially the behaviorist and the constructivist ones. He shows us the need go beyond them if we are ever to get to the 'total insight' that Krishnamurti spoke about. The general section winds up with a piece by OR Rao written

on the larger canvas. It explores the very depths of human consciousness, what distinguishes us humans from the animals, the origins of fear and the essential condition of modern man—truly a psychological panorama, if one may be permitted to call it.

This issue contains a special feature: a section in the main Journal on the theme of **Fear**, as also a separate 'resource pack' that accompanies it. This part of the Journal, together with the contents of the pack, is introduced at the beginning of the section.

Fear is a dominant factor in the life of the schoolgoing child, and we decided to examine for ourselves its various contours. The material in the pack is based on responses received from children to a questionnaire that was sent to a range of schools. It was fascinating to come upon the true voices of children on what they are really afraid of and how they meet their fears.

Our intention in including a special feature in this issue on a significant emotion such as Fear was to sensitize teachers and parents as to what is actually happening *within* children, so as to enable them to establish a rapport with them both at school and home, talk to them, draw them out and create an ambience of trust and openness. Learning can take place only when there is no fear.

P Ramesh

Can One Learn the Art of Living from Nature?

Shailesh Shirali

'Is man a part of nature, or apart from nature?' It seems paradoxical to ask such a question. Man is so obviously a product of nature; he has evolved from and with the apes, and is connected in a myriad ways to the natural world; his DNA is virtually the same as that of his closest cousin, the chimpanzee. And yet as he has evolved, he has drawn away from nature, and is moving steadily away. Of course, 'nature' is not just the forests and the birds and animals, but also the sky, the stars, the desert, the sea, the sunset, the wind. What does it mean to be 'related to nature' and yet to be 'moving away'? The analogy must be that of belonging to a family or community yet being alienated from it.

There is another aspect to this question that is more paradoxical and harder to answer: inside our heads, there resides another wilderness, as savage as the forest, untamed, mysterious, and possessed of awesome power. How did such a miracle come about? And how are these two related?

NATURE AS TEACHER

I think it is appropriate to talk about Nature in the context of *learning.* As Krishnamurti emphasized, learning is sacred—not all learning, perhaps, but certainly learning about the ways of the self, about how to live with intelligence; hence I ask: w*hat can one learn from Nature, the supreme teacher?*

When I used this phrase the other day, 'Nature as teacher', I was asked, *how can nature possibly be a teacher? Nature just is; it is neither a teacher, nor isn't*. But do we need to animate nature, or give it a human persona? I feel we can learn a great deal about life simply by watching nature, by being with it, feeling with it. I have noticed that virtually every aspect of Krishnamurti's teaching has an echo in the rhythms of Nature. Whatever I have written here has arisen as a result of this observation.

Understanding Oneself

The trees were so stately and strangely impervious to man's tarred roads and traffic. Their roots were deep down, deep in the earth, and their tops stretched to the skies.

[Krishnamurti, 'Letters to a Young Friend']

What does it mean 'to educate the senses'? Krishnamurti said, 'start with the outer, look at nature'. What is implied in this? In educating the senses one necessarily starts with 'the outer'; the focus is on sensitivity *per se*—not merely on 'sensitivity to beauty'. There is so much richness in nature with which to educate the senses, whether it be the sense of sight, or sound, or smell, or touch: to observe the footprints of a line of ants, to hear the faint rustle of sound the ants make when they scatter, to feel the pads of an animal, soft and rough at the same time, or to simply be alive to the mood of an evening.

Once Krishnamurti asked a teacher not to stop his student from watching a lizard, even if it meant that he was 'not paying attention to the lesson'. Is this because in such a watching one begins to educate the senses and so learns about the nature of attention itself (which goes beyond learning about the object of attention)? This has relevance to self understanding, because observing oneself in the living present needs just that kind of attention; it is rather like 'following a butterfly through a dense forest'—but here it is the world within us which is the forest, the wilderness.

But nature can also be an intoxicant. There is so much in nature to beguile the senses, to intoxicate and overpower us with luxuriant beauty. Perhaps it is only in a state of innocent learning that one can have a right relationship with nature.

Natural Law

When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

John Muir

The complexity of nature is almost beyond understanding. Today that fact is coming home to us in the form of the ecological crisis.

One of the most extraordinary aspects of nature is its ability to maintain a dynamic living balance; its internal mechanism of checks and balances. We humans have long since lost that capacity (maybe the ancients had it); hence the many occurrences of the 'tragedy of the commons'. It would appear that

there is a sort of 'natural law' which operates invisibly and powerfully, a law with its own rhythm and time scale, which cannot be hurried; a law that has no mercy: one cannot break a natural law, any more than one can break the law of gravity. In facing nature, one faces absolute, unalterable fact.

But to say that nature has 'no mercy' may seem an overly extravagant use of words, for natural law is how nature operates; it just *is*. Here is how Emily Dickinson expresses it:

Apparently with no surprise,
To any happy flower,
The frost beheads it at its play,
In accidental power.
The blond assassin passes on.
The sun proceeds unmoved,
To measure off another day,
For an approving God.

So nature knows neither morality nor justice; it is neither just nor unjust, neither moral nor amoral; it is completely unsentimental. Alongside the 24 x 7 care which an animal mother bestows on its young, it will not hesitate to discard the little one which appears too weak to make it to adult life—an action which seems cruel and inconceivable by human standards. But that is the way it is. Nature is not to be combed; to impose sentimentality upon nature is to invite illusion.

Vital to human society though they may be, morality and justice are human constructs, and nature does not lie within the compass of human thought. This is an important point which connects with Krishnamurti's observation about justice: that there is no justice in the world. Natural law is the only morality, and the only foundation for existence. Perhaps it is what one may call *dharma*.

Many examples of natural law can be given, relating to human life; some are as old as the hills, others are recent in origin, yet others have been stated by Krishamurti. Indeed, it seems to me that most proverbs are statements of natural law, in some form. For example:

- *Where there is division, there is conflict.* [Krishnamurti, Saanen, 1974]
- *Inner disorder inevitably overcomes outer order—no matter how well established is that outer order.*

- *There is no path to truth.* [Krishnamurti, Saanen, 1968] (And, in consequence: *The first step is the last step*.)
- *War is the spectacular and bloody projection of our daily lives.* [Krishnamurti, 'The First and Last Freedom']
- *The more one asks of life, the more fearful and painful it becomes . . . Happy is the man who is nothing.* [Krishnamurti, 'Letters to a Young Friend']
- *When you are in love, you have no time for anything else.*
- *As ye sow, so shall ye reap.* [The Bible]
- *The truth will set you free.* [The Bible] (to which the modern amendment is: *The truth may set you free, but first it will make you miserable.*)
- *If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you.* [Jesus, in 'The Gospel According to Thomas' from 'The Gnostic Gospels']
- *Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.* [Lord Acton]

Probably the most fundamental of natural laws are those relating to *balance* and *conservation*. Nature is extraordinarily frugal and ingenious when it comes to recycling things. Without such a strategy, life would not have survived for three billion years. Human beings seem bent on rejecting this basic law.

Krishnamurti used a variety of metaphors from nature—*the tide moving in and out, the flow of a river, the leaf falling from its tree* . . . These are rhythms which flow from natural law, and may be thought of as expressions of natural law.

Here is another aspect of natural law: the tension between *change* and *constancy*. Change exists at every moment in nature; death is part of life, across all possible time scales, and across space. Yet, there is such an astonishing strength in the constancy of pattern—night following day, the sun rising each morning, the arrival of the monsoon, and the lengthening days as winter draws close. In the mango grove close by, each evening I see the fruits bats come out in droves and do what they are best at: attacking the fruit trees with gusto. The enduring nature of pattern is staggering.

I recall seeing a film showing how large groups of male penguins survive the long, harsh Antarctic winter in each other's company. When terrible

blizzards blow, they huddle together tightly but at the same time move about in such a way that each one gets to spend a certain amount of time at the centre of the group, where it is better protected than at the periphery. What an extraordinary expression of natural law!

But surely the most remarkable thing about natural law is its *regenerative quality*—it is *life enabling*, at even its minutest level. In this it is quite unlike human law. In the act of maintaining balance, there arises regeneration and new life, as in the aftermath of a destructive forest fire: new growth springing up from the ashes of the old. Life does not wait; the creative force is too strong.

What gives natural law its regenerative quality is a mystery. But we do know some *consequences* of natural law; one of them is that *in nature all flow is cyclic in character*. Everything, from the tiniest particle upward, is part of a cycle; it feeds from one cycle into another. Nothing is ever lost, nothing can escape that cycle. The ubiquity of cyclical movement is absolute.

Can we allow natural law to play such a role in our lives? This demands the ability to move with the flow of nature, to not resist. It demands inward quietness and maturity. Can we live this way? We have been violating this principle for centuries. Is it possible to reverse the trend, at least individually?

But I must not make the mistake of looking at the entirety of life through the ideology of natural law; there may be aspects of life that cannot be subsumed under such ideology. How does nature look at a transgression of natural law? Is there any parallel to the human act of doing wrong and atoning for it? Or is it that it is *not* possible to atone for a wrong doing?

Krishnamurti mentions a friend who had helped kill a tiger in his youth, and had regretted the act ever since. Surely, we have all done wrong things; I know I have. Does nature forgive such an act? Can it at all? Or is forgiveness a wholly human construct, with no meaning in nature? And what of compassion? Is this too a purely human phenomenon? I do not know.

Living Without A Single Problem

> *A river when it meets an obstruction is never still; the river breaks down the obstruction by its weight or goes over it or works its way under it or around it; the river is never still; it cannot but act. It revolts, if we can so put it, intelligently.*
>
> [Krishnamurti, 'Letters to a Young Friend']

No religious teacher has denied so emphatically and so completely the place of the 'how' questions in religious inquiry as has Krishnamurti—the relevance of 'how' in facing the problems of living. One wonders what brought him to this simple yet astonishingly fresh insight, from which flow vital consequences like 'The first step is the last step'.

Is Krishnamurti giving us a hint in the above lines? Can one so revolt, intelligently, accept *what is* intelligently? One sees, all around, how life intelligently revolts to the conditions imposed on it. Either it cheerfully accepts its lot, without a murmur, or it *acts*; in any case it does not make a problem of it. I remember seeing a tree which appeared to have a heavy spiral groove running all around its trunk to a height of several feet. When I looked more closely at this strange sight, I found it was a thick metal wire around which the tree had wrapped itself while growing. And we have all seen the blade of grass pushing its way through a tarred or cemented surface. Nature appears to have worked out long back how to revolt intelligently.

When natural rhythm is allowed free expression, time seems not to exist—'psychological time' in the sense that Krishnamurti used that phrase. Perhaps therein lies a clue for us.

Living In Anonymity

> *The tree is nothing to itself. It exists. And in its very existence it is the most beautiful thing … You see, a lily or a rose never pretends, and its beauty is that it is what it is.*
>
> [Krishnamurti, Ojai, 1983]

Can one learn about trust from nature, accepting 'what is' without any resistance whatever? Watch a handicapped animal move about; it asks for nothing. We think of it as something 'less' than a healthy animal *but it does not*. Nature, it seems, does not ask for concessions or favours; it does not even ask to be noticed. Sometimes I see tiny flowers growing by the roadside, anonymously, and I wonder to myself: Can I live like that? Is *that* the secret of life?

All these are related: living anonymously, being nothing to oneself, living without a single problem.

The Art Of Dying

> *When death comes, it does not ask your permission; it comes and takes you. It destroys you on the spot.*
>
> [Krishnamurti, Madras, 1959]

And then there is death, which never bothers about permissions; that is its essential nature. And in this lies potential for great sorrow, unless one lives with death inwardly. Can the understanding of natural law help us to understand this most subtle and mysterious of all phenomena? Perhaps not. But it may, perhaps, help in learning the art of dying. And in the final analysis this may well be the most important of all arts.

'*The long habit of living indisposeth us to dying.*' [Thomas Browne, quoted by Lewis Thomas in 'The Lives of a Cell'] Can one, as Thomas puts it, 'give up the idea that death is an abomination, or avoidable, or strange'?

When you deal with animals you see how brief, how transient their fear, how physical it is; it has no persistence. The other day I held a dying creature. To the end it responded to touch and affection. There was an innocent dignity about how it went. Thomas offers this poignant thought: think of the various gardens in which one has walked, the various wild trails—there must be *hundreds* of squirrels scampering about, yet how hard it is to come across a dead squirrel! So, can one learn the art of dying unseen? The art of dying unnoticed, with quiet dignity? Nature has long since mastered these arts; can we learn them too?

In doing so we may also learn about incorruptibility; for the incorruptibility of a flower lies in its fragility and its readiness to die—with dignity, with quietness, with no regret.

NATURE AS A RESOURCE

If you lose touch with nature you lose touch with humanity.

[Krishnamurti, 'Krishnamurti's Journal']

It is one of the ironies of life that some of the keenest nature writings are those written by hunters. But there is a parallel in society—some of the keenest observers of human nature are those who intend to exploit it (and know how to): those in the advertising industry, those in the business of propaganda. But is nature there only for the purpose of soothing us, to help bring about quietness, to give us a sense of space and leisure; something available just for our benefit? Is it a backdrop against which we operate? Is it simply a resource, to be exploited till it can yield nothing more?

Today, the ecological crisis looms large: global warming, destruction of the rain forests, melting of the polar ice caps etc. The central problem really is our attitude to nature. If nature is merely a resource, a supplier of coal,

of oil and natural gas, of granite, of rare medicinal herbs, then sooner or later such a crisis must come; it is inevitable.

In a neat turn of symmetry, our relationship with nature mirrors with exceeding accuracy the way we relate to our fellow human beings.

At the outset I asked, 'Is man part of nature?' The answer, surely, is 'yes'. But just as obviously, life (or God or call it what one may) has created something within us which seems not to be part of nature, something with great power and the potential for great destruction. It seems that we hold in our hands the power to destroy not just many varieties of life but ourselves as well. Why we have this power is a mystery. But as 'power tends to corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,' our destiny lies in our relationship with that power, and in the role we allow it to play in our lives.

What man needs is that contentment that is in the earth when it has given birth to a tree. In a bush when it has produced a flower.

[Krishnamurti, in Pupul Jayakar's *Krishnamurti*]

I believe that one of the best antidotes to the toxin of power is to tell people the story of your love and your contentment. Surely, nature offers one of the purest environments for telling that story.

I close with an ode to diversity and constancy from 'Pied Beauty', by Gerald Manley Hopkins.

GLORY be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

Environmental Education in Our Schools

Gary Primrose

As it is the United Nations' Year of Biodiversity, it seems an appropriate time to stand back and take stock of the way we teach environmental education in Krishnamurti Schools. Over the past two decades many students and staff in our schools have become aware of global environmental issues. Governments and the media too are raising the profile of these issues as are educational institutions the world over. Despite this awareness and increased knowledge the environmental crisis is worsening. Climate change, resource depletion, loss of biodiversity, pollution and other dire warnings of impending doom are often portrayed by environmentalists and the media as being caused by our hubris. This sends a depressing message especially to the young and can often turn people off. It can instil a fatalistic and apathetic view of the future of the planet. Except in the case of the committed environmental activist, negative messages rarely inspire action in the public at large. Rather, we feel helpless for the sorry state of the world. Is it not, therefore, one of the main goals of environmental education to address this contradiction and enquire more deeply into the complex relationship we humans have with nature and in so doing actually change it?

The Present Utilitarian Outlook

In this human-centred and increasingly narcissistic world, our relationship with nature is largely utilitarian. That is, we view it in terms of what benefit it will give us materially or in terms of fun or adventure. Some environmentalists are therefore arguing that to save nature we should start putting a price tag on it. They suggest that the ecological services nature provides should be appropriately valued and legislation be brought in by governments to enforce this valuation. For example, forests and wetlands create clean air and water, store carbon and recycle nutrients, and the value of this should be factored into any use we wish to make of these natural resources. Imagine the legal minefield that would create. Needless to say, lawyers and not necessarily nature would be the beneficiaries. Even getting governments to agree on a minimum levy for a carbon tax

is proving well nigh impossible. Unless we address our environmental crisis at a deeper level we shall always be tinkering at the edges. So what can be done in our schools to address the human to nature relationship?

'Place-Based' Education About Nature

There is an area of environmental education that, I feel, should be given more importance and that is 'place-based' education. This is simply a study of the relationships between people, other non-human species, and the places where they live. I would like to focus in this essay on the virtues of two aspects of a 'place-based' education: exploring the wild nature around our schools and the practice of gardening.

It is well documented that in our increasingly urbanized and computerized world many children have what is now termed as a 'nature deficit'. Virtual experience of nature cannot be substituted for authentic experience, even if it is a David Attenborough documentary, fascinating though it may be. For our students to learn to appreciate and care for the natural world they have to have direct contact with it, and ideally this should begin as early as possible. A 'place-based' education brings awareness to what is around us—'nearby nature'—and takes us into the rich experience of our sensory world and its interconnectedness. Invariably those who are the defenders and protectors of the natural world are people who have had such direct experience of nature in their childhood. They had special places where they, often without adult supervision, played games, built huts or tree houses, made gardens. Or else they were taken to wild places of great beauty and given the freedom to wander and wonder about the otherness there.

Most teachers and parents would, I am sure, love to see more contact with nature happen in our schools; but there are health and safety issues, time pressures and curriculum commitments. Rather than trying to fit contact with nature into an already tight timetable, can teachers creatively bring it into the existing curriculum? I think we educate as much by what we leave out of the curriculum as what we include in it. Such teaching that can relate the global to the local, with close to home examples, is usually the most convincing and rewarding for students.

Environmental education, therefore, not only needs to inform students of the rationality of living within our means on this planet but also to encourage an emotional connection with places and their inhabitants closer to home. For we act as much from our emotions as we do from reason. So what will activate our emotions, make us more sensitized to our surroundings and connect us to that deep biophilic side of our nature? Exposure to nature, especially wild nature, as early as possible, will plant the seed. Feeling at home in the outdoors, with plants, insects, animals and wild and beautiful places ought to become a normal part of our daily experience and affections.

Krishnamurti made a point of establishing his schools in naturally beautiful places and stressed that that beauty be looked after by those who lived there. He knew the power of beauty and its place in education. Such places inspire us by their natural splendour and bounty and elicit feelings of love, awe, wonder and a healthy concern and attachment to place. If such a seed is planted in the young during their time in school, then I am convinced it will germinate into a continuing and constructive relationship with nature in their later lives, not because they have to but because they want to.

The Interconnectedness Of Humans With Nature

What would a constructive relationship with nature mean practically? Firstly the notion that everything is connected (especially ecology and economy!) must inform the educator's approach. They must themselves be informed and enthusiastic about the nature and locality around them so that they can bring living, hands-on examples and interesting stories into the classroom. Even the more abstract subjects for the older students such as philosophy or mathematics can use questions relating to environmental ethics, for example, or studying the Fibonacci series in the arrangement of stamens in daisy type flowers. Another approach at teaching connectedness is using theme-based studies. For example, could a whole school experiment for a week trying to eat food grown within a 100 km or a 50 km radius? It is important when using such experiments that deeper issues related to food are brought in, at whatever level is appropriate for the age group. Such projects could fall flat because not enough time is given to examining the implications and connections inherent in the issue. Such a drip-feed of interest, enthusiasm and fascination with the locality around them by the educators will non-verbally infect the students as well as help them see real life connections in normally abstract, academic human-centred disciplines.

The Place Of Gardening In Nature Education

As well as providing opportunities for free play outdoors for younger students and integrating nature-based examples into the existing curriculum, there are other activities, I would imagine, that most of our schools already provide. Local camping trips, nature walks, conservation work and bird-watching will always capture the hearts of a devoted minority. But I would like to concentrate on one outdoor activity that should be introduced more widely and for all age groups, for it seamlessly integrates so many aspects of environmental education. And that is gardening.

Usually students connect to a place through plants and these person-plant-place relationships are often forged either in childhood or through long association. It is by engaging with plants first hand—planting seeds, nurturing growth and

learning about the plant's needs that students learn to care for and have affection for a place. And it is particularly spaces that can be adapted or created by a young person that fire their imaginations. Gardens are such places.

Gardening improves both the land and the student. The land is improved by good husbandry of the soil, by the daily care of plants and by creating a habitat for other creatures. But more importantly it can be a moral force for strengthening character in the student. It teaches patience— it takes time between planting and reaping the fruits of that planting; it requires humility—all successful gardening is a collaboration with nature and a check on our hubris; it demands a respect for reality—we must face the garden as it is, not as we imagine it, and as such it is an 'unselfing' activity; it encourages care and openheartedness for other species, a sort of making space for the other to thrive; it integrates the brain, the heart and skill with one's hands and tools; it has the potential to stimulate all the senses in ways that few other activities can. Although such human virtues can be learned from contact with nature in general, they are brought together in a unique way between garden and gardener. Gardens are our most immediate contact with nature and it is where our relationship with the natural world can begin and be fostered.

Moving Beyond Knowledge-Based Education About Nature

At this point in our ecological history our species is at a crossroads. Conventional environmental education has made us aware of the necessity of learning to live in a sustainable manner in a world of finite resources, but it is usually a tag-on or niche subject in the curriculum. However, the issue is too big and important for that. The challenge of sustainability facing the coming generations is on a par with revolutions in agriculture, industrialisation and democracy. Current modes of environmental education are not equipped to transform human culture in its present form. It is still too knowledge-based and negative in its message. It has not engaged the heart to love nature and thus inspire the young to action. Contact with wild nature and gardening are two ways to develop this relationship and both can inform the other. The seed, if you will pardon the repeated use of this gardening metaphor, is ideally planted at an early age, whether at school or at home. In our schools we have the perfect soil for such a seed to germinate. We have the places, the schools' landscapes and their beauty, and we have the ethos. Krishnamurti insisted on right relationship not only with humans but also with nature. In this Year of Biodiversity let us reassess our approach to environmental education and make it more responsive to the challenge we all must face.

A Love of Theatre: Interview with Gerard Bayle

Kamala V Mukunda

The following is an interview with Gerard Bayle, a professional theatre actor who has been working with students in the UK and India for many years. This interview was conducted by Kamala V Mukunda earlier this year.

Editors

What excites you about theatre?

It was and probably still is a way to express myself. Even if it is artificial, I express more deeply than in real life. It is also a way to communicate with people (I mean when you are on stage you somehow communicate with the audience). This expressing oneself surely has something to do with what we call the ego: people will listen to me, I will not be interrupted, I may have a sense of power in front of all these people listening to me.

On the other hand, the art of acting may be in its best sense a way to know oneself; that is in acting you may get in touch with, and thereby discover something deeper (and perhaps hidden) about, yourself.

Now, like every art, acting implies technique, preparation, exercises etc. …

Suppose there is a sequence in a play about a mother who has lost her child. The actress has to perform something very dramatic, she must **feel** something very dramatic, she may shed real tears, but the difference with real life is that through technique and training she knows how to master the feeling, she knows the right moment to cry, the right moment to be silent, when to make a gesture and what kind of gesture to make. Another example: suppose somebody has to play Hitler, the actor must through study understand that man, so that he can feel what that man felt … and, ultimately, the actor may discover in himself some hidden feelings he hadn't discovered in daily life (some feelings he was not aware of).

We must remember that in ancient Greece the Tragedies (of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides) were for the audience a catharsis. That catharsis aspect and the opportunity in acting of knowing oneself may be why some directors (like Jerzy Grotowski or Peter Brook) seem to consider the art of acting as a 'spiritual path'.

What are your educational goals?

In education, through the device of theatre, first of all there must be a sense of play, enjoyment. This is quite important. Especially in the body work that I do, we learn to work with other people. We are aware of the body. We realize that even if we don't know dance or yoga, there are a lot of ways for the body to express itself—any movement is good.

When I was in drama school, I had a very, very good teacher. He stood on a little platform, and we were a hundred of us students watching him explain and act. Suddenly he said, 'Have you noticed how each one of you has his own posture, his own way of watching me?' There were one hundred different ways we were standing … so I learned that the body has an infinite capacity to express itself.

But is there no such thing as a 'good movement'?

Yes there is, but don't tell anyone … The best would be to develop in children an aesthetic sense, a sense of what is beautiful. In living pictures, the exercise that I do with the children a lot, I say that the aesthetics come from the beautiful Renaissance paintings; the 'whole' is harmonious.

But how do we, who are in the picture, know whether the whole looks beautiful or not?

In that kind of work it is good to develop the capacity to watch and to appreciate (that is when you join the picture, to add something to what is already there). We work at attention and awareness of oneself, the others and the space. The nonverbal way of learning is the best. An ambience, an atmosphere is created. For this we also use slow movement. If you move very, very slowly, you are not the same person as if you walk quickly, or normally. It can develop in oneself, this quality of attention.

It is a bit like music, very difficult to explain *why* we are moved by Mozart. So also sometimes the children, they invent something so funny, so marvelous, they enter something very deep; so that the watcher has a feeling something is happening in front of him. That is why I say that, if even for a minute, they

are in touch with something deeper. And this could be one of the goals.

This is especially so with the little ones, so full of energy … They learn about seemingly doing what you like, but knowing just what you want to do. Often I give very precise instructions to start something. After that, I say, 'Go one after another. Watch first. Suppose there is a story here, join the story. Put yourself into it. Develop a sense of something happening between the people'. It is like choreography—the ambience—like the Renaissance painting.

What is the difference for you between teaching body exercises, and directing a play with a script?

The deep feeling is a goal in both situations. Whether it is pain in the heart, sadness, laughing … feeling is the goal. In body work, the atmosphere plays a stronger part than in a play. With a script, the words are very strong, and feeling comes through those. You emphasize pauses; silence is very important. Also slow speaking, not slow movement, since it should appear natural.

In directing a play, there are some simple goals. We work to produce the right tone (not sing song). And the audience must believe it; the whole body must be expressive in a believable way. The aim is to make yourself understood by the audience.

Stanislavski said, that to feel something as an actor, try to remember that feeling in yourself. For young people, this may be difficult to ask for. I don't ask them to remember bad feelings, so my short cut is to have them imitate me!

What about nervousness and stage fright?

Practice helps you overcome nervousness. You have to think, 'I feel nervous but I still do the part'. But in a school there is much less rehearsal. And only one performance! This is not like in the professional world.

You are also interested in Krishnamurti's teachings. Does this form a part of your love of theatre?

It *might* be true that acting itself is a way to emphasize the ego. It can be debated … whether it strengthens the self. I try to be aware of this. Do I *need* the applause? Do congratulations and praise have an effect on me? I try not to be too much interested.

Stage people do need to be loved, adored. If you know there is this tendency in you, you can manage it, watch it. Or you can teach, not perform. I am aware of this need to be the centre of attention to some degree! It is

part of the drive to act, but some, not all, are like this. Krishnamurti said to Bohm, you can be very, very good at something, but what about your daily life? These two often don't match.

Learning to be a Teacher of History: Excerpts from the Journal of a Beginner

Shagufta Siddhi

I joined Rajghat Besant School, Varanasi, in July 2009 as a resource person to teach Class XII students. The understanding at that time was that if the school and I felt comfortable with each other, 'we could look at a long term arrangement.' But I was not focused on the long-term at that stage. My career path until I came to Varanasi was constantly shifting direction: museum docent,[1] research assistant, freelance journalist, restoration artist. Not unlike many of my generation, I believed that each job was an opportunity to learn whatever I felt was valuable and then move on. Teaching history would prove to be the catalyst for a transformation in this conviction.

I would like to share some of my explorations as a student of history, a new teacher, and a co-learner with my students. I began as a teacher with the age-old, all-encompassing question, 'What is History?', also the title of Professor EH Carr's influential book. Carr's critics—of whom there are many—would say that he was outdated even as he was delivering his renowned lectures at Cambridge in 1961. But, like the teachers who taught me, I began as a new teacher of history with Carr's classifications, 'facts of the past' and 'historical facts', in mind. Why do certain facts form the content of 'history,' while others are forgotten?

1 Educators trained to further the public's understanding of the cultural and historical collections of an institution, including local and national museums, zoos, historical landmarks, and parks.

My diary records:

July 6, 2009 *The students, after a pleasant round of introductions, looked rather unhappy when we 'wasted' a class on reading three paragraphs from the preface of the course book that was not even in the syllabus! I reacted by asking them why they had opted for History. In my mind, I was asking, 'If this bores you, why bother choosing it?' Apart from answers like 'not much choice here at the school' and 'board exam pattern', some students said, 'Obviously we study History to learn from the mistakes of the past.'*

I pressed them. 'How many people have you heard say that?'

'Countless,' they replied defiantly. 'And we also wrote this in middle school as the definition of History.' I had a class full of eighteen-year-olds who seemed to have never questioned what they learned in middle school. I also realized that these students were about to form an opinion of me as a complete odd-ball and that opinion may travel through the corridors, swiftly turning into a fixed assessment. But I still held my ground, intent on challenging their notions of history. I was hoping to hear more voices of dissent.

'Maybe we do not always learn from our mistakes,' I argued. 'Perhaps history can only help us to be more intelligent about the present.' I extended our class into the recess, though the expected groans of complaint were subdued. Murmurs of a discussion had begun about why a reader of any kind of text, especially a historical text, must be full of speculation. How is it that certain events become the facts of history? Before we finished for the day, I declared: 'We cannot learn unless we all participate in a dialogue to question what we are learning in class.' The only way we could do so was by being participative, open and honest, I said. 'I hope in the next class, you will all have more sceptical responses to share. I want a class full of Doubting Thomases.'

I realized much later that it was only my beginner's luck that this declaration had not unleashed a surge of unbridled questioning. It could have been impossible to control such a group of argumentative eighteen-year-olds! In retrospect, I feel the class ultimately held together because we were all treading into the unknown. In a way, we transcended that formal barrier of a teacher perceived as knowing it all. We were learning together.

July 8, 2009 *Today we used objects our eyes spotted in the classroom as case studies for historical analysis.We discussed why we believe the history of certain objects or events to be more important than the history of a ball-point pen, for instance, or a salwar kameez. Could the same objects whose histories we deem unimportant be seen in a completely different light by another person? Could they reveal stories and experiences integral to all of our lives? I daresay the class has adjusted to my quirkiness and we have started*

to open doors for each other to a cognitive understanding of our subject. We started Chapter One of the wonderful NCERT textbook.

August 10, 2009 *Today was a rather strange day with my students. They were interested, but I was not with them in how we were examining the topic 'Rebels and Raj,' the events surrounding 1857. I have no reasons to complain about the discussion. By now we have graduated to examining 'isms' and, understandably, colonialism was the most debated 'ism'. The students debated with gusto. They have started to critically examine the psychology of a historian. But I realized that though we had initiated a process of intellectual discussion, it was limited to questioning, rejecting, enquiring and unlearning. Where would all this lead? Was it possible to go deeper? The students will do the exam; I will finish the course, but are we asking the right questions through this critical thinking or are we stuck in a superficial analysis? Will these classroom discussions help us in making intelligent decisions?*

August 12, 2009 *We finished the chapter 'Rebels and Raj' today with an interesting classroom discussion. But I am still wrestling with how to most effectively analyze this momentous period. The events of 1857 are usually called the turning point in modern Indian history. I wonder whether it was also a turning point in the so-called rebels' consciousness. Were they struggling in some way with the question of how to build a 'new society'? Perhaps we are swimming in the topic's superficialities and failing to recognize their ongoing relevance. Have the power structures that the actors of 1857 were rebelling against actually changed today? I struggle with how to encourage the student to consider whether we still face similar oppressions and disharmonies. How can we debate this question effectively while remaining true to the unique historical circumstances of 1857? As Toon Zweers has written, 'History can be mirror in which we see ourselves and the world we live in, but it is only through hard work that we get to see an accurate picture.' If there is confusion within me about the nature of hard work to arrive at that accurate picture, then how can I possibly be a teacher to students of history? I do not have the answer to that yet.*

September 30, 2009 *Today, we interrogated the broadly accepted image of Gandhiji and why he came to be seen as a messiah. Slowly, the students began to examine what it means to categorize certain events and emotions as based on 'fact' and others on 'fiction,' such as the competing characterizations of Gandhiji as either a healer and miracle worker or a shrewd politician. We spoke about discipline and austerity, and what they mean for our understanding of a religious mind. I hope that this topic will bring us closer together as budding historians.*

November 16, 2009 *We spoke about Partition. I could have chosen to read graphic accounts of the worst violence of the period, as a way to present the horrors and engage the students emotionally. But instead I read out a short story by Ismat Chugtai that explored how members of rival communities supported each other in spite of the communal conflict. I wanted to avoid accounts that only stressed the impact of violence on one community or another. Through this I hoped we could examine claims and counter-claims about who is most affected by violence. One of the students felt we should be asking whether history demonstrates that humans overall are inherently violent. Another questioned, to my great surprise, why we seem to not consider the burning of a Dalit's home in eastern Uttar Pradesh as historically important. After all, she wondered, don't these instances also constitute 'facts of the past'?*

November 17, 2009 *Today we read the published letters and correspondence of early Congress leaders as primary sources. Each student had a different source at hand and we sat together to discuss whether we could find whatever may be unsaid and unwritten but still conveyed in the letters. We exchanged the sources after presenting our thoughts and found that the next person doing the interpreting could not help but be influenced by the first person's view, even if it was a contrary one. We realized that the bulk of historical interpretation is either derived or reactionary. It is difficult to remain uninfluenced by an earlier trend or prevailing stream of thought.*

November 20, 2009 *We have finished our course and are reviewing the chapters from the point of view of the exam. I can feel the relationship between me and the students growing. We miss our class discussions. The quality of our interactions has changed now; they have grown much deeper. The students and I reflect upon our earlier discussions in our free time and think together about the figures and thinkers we studied. I discovered that their library check-out lists include heavyweights like Collingwood, Toynbee and Foucault. I am a little worried about the exam results. They will sit for their board exam in less than 80 days and they want to go on discussing!*

December 14, 2009 *Two of my students came over to talk about their future plans. A world of opportunities is open to them and they must make a careful selection. We spoke about various options and analyzed the information they had about these options just as we would historical sources. The colleges' or institutes' websites state their objectives and intent, providing background about their programs. Reviews from current and former students are also available. So we examined these 'primary sources' the way a historian would. We approached them with clarity of mind, corroborating facts, interpreting assertions, and relating the information with individual priorities and interests. I believe the experience was a rich and enlightening one for the students.*

I continue to question and reflect on my first year as a teacher. I wonder whether the students are conscious of how far they have travelled in thinking more deeply. The students performed well in their exams, but I also observed that for many of them the exam results were secondary to a newly discovered passion for learning. In retrospect, I have come to see our classes as a way to develop a frame on which a lifetime of learning can be built. At the beginning of class many students showed reluctance to even begin that process of learning. I remember telling them that many of us may have an image of the historian as a bespectacled eccentric, surrounded by a sea of books and possessed of that singular skill we all seem to see as vital to any student of history: a sharp memory. Yet for the modern historian, I explained, dates, names, and other such information is a click away. A critical, analytical mind is in fact the most fundamental tool for any historian. The study of history unravels accepted notions of societies about the past and reconstructs them based on careful weighing of perception and fact. My students discovered that these methods of the historian provide important insights that not only improve their marks, but also clarify their own lives' paths.

This learning with the students has also clarified my life's path. The experiences of the past year have challenged and inspired me in ways I had never found in other professional pursuits. Whereas earlier I had felt as if I was performing a job with limited scope for new learning, now I am in awe of the profound and seemingly infinite possibilities before me. Once I had felt an urge to move from place to place, but now, for the first time in my life, I am eager and excited to evolve within one pursuit. Simply put, teaching history has become my vocation.

The current batch at the Rajghat Besant School has brought fresh challenges. Occasionally it has been a struggle to bring calm to the noise in their young minds. Carr notes that historians must have an imaginative understanding of their students' minds, developing a style of teaching that builds on their thoughts. Considering this, there was no way I could simply dictate notes and flag important questions. My learning for this year has been the value in teaching of simply slowing down. Each mind requires its own duration of time, its own space to explore; thriving when learning is in sync with its unique rhythm. Six months into their coursework now, I can see growing clarity and critical thinking in the students' arguments. We have still been working on writing answers that are faithful to the format and structure

of the board exam. But even within that constraint the independence of their young minds is shining through. I have discovered this year that just as each student learns differently, each batch also moves at its own pace. Some may discuss less, yet absorb more. Each perceives the past differently and reaches conclusions along distinct pathways. I must analyze their understandings, adapting our discussions to their unique perspectives. Thus, as I continue learning how to teach the study of history, I keep the tools of a historian close at hand.

Astronomy in School

Anant Mahajan

Outdoor activities form an integral part of school education. These include nature study, bird-watching, trekking, mountaineering, and so on. Astronomical observations are a natural extension of such activities. In particular, when students are taken for trips to remote and hilly places, they can be given some idea about the advantages of low levels of pollution (due to dust and light) in being able to watch the night sky. The conditions for night-time observation are very good in some places and it is possible to see, sometimes even without any optical instruments, objects in the sky like the Milky Way, the Andromeda galaxy, and the beehive star cluster in Cancer which are not visible easily from cities.

Introducing astronomy as a regular activity at school level has now become possible in India as a consequence of the availability of good optical instruments and components. Children are always excited to see cosmic objects starting from the planets to constellations, star clusters and galaxies.

Our closest neighbour, the moon, offers clear views and the possibility of comparing your sketches with detailed moon maps.

Preparatory Observations

Before putting your eye to a telescope, it is advisable to become familiar with the sky and the motion of stellar objects. An umbrella with diagrams of a few familiar constellations stuck on the inside at appropriate places can be a valuable tool for this purpose. Such an aid can be used also to explain the advantages of an equatorial mount for a telescope as compared to an altaz (altitude–azimuth) mount.

The first familiarization exercises are best carried out without optical aids. The large field of view of the naked eye is an advantage. The movement of the stars across the sky from sunset to sunrise and the annual variation in this pattern can be explained.

Many students these days have a pair of binoculars. The full potential of this instrument can be exploited. Binoculars have a comparatively wide field of view and are easier on the eyes. For viewing objects near the zenith, it is best to lie down on one's back. It is worth noting that a large number of comets have been detected first by binocular observers working from their backyards. They can easily spot a new object straying in their field of view and track its motion night after night. Binoculars with objective diameter larger than 50 mm are too heavy to be held in hand. Also binoculars with magnification greater than 10 require a stand to get a steady image. Thus 10×50 seems to be the highest specification which can be used without a stand.

For those who prefer to keep their glasses on, binoculars with adequate accommodation are necessary. [Accommodation is the distance at which the eye must be placed behind the eyepiece to get a clear image.] Binoculars always give an erect image since they are designed for terrestrial use. Binoculars with individual focusing for each eyepiece are not convenient for bird-watching. However for astronomical observations they do not pose serious problems.

Selecting and Using A Telescope

The choice of a telescope for use in an educational institution is dictated by the following factors:

a) Number of students to be handled in one observation session.

b) Number of volunteers (teachers/students) available for adjusting the instrument from time to time.

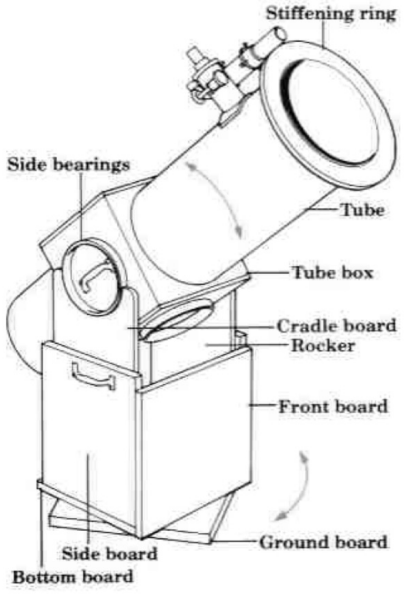
c) How much portability is needed for the instrument.

d) Whether photography is intended.

e) Budget available.

On Building A Telescope

We can examine the relative merits of two basic designs of telescopes for their use in a school. For a given budget, a Dobsonian reflector can give you maximum light gathering power, which is proportional to the square of the diameter of the primary mirror (for a reflector) or of the objective lens (for a refractor). Readymade Dobsonians (Dobs for short) are not too expensive: about Rs 18,000 for a 6' Dob to about Rs 80,000 for a 12' Dob *(www.Skywatcher-india.com; www.tejraj.com; audoviso@rediffmail.com)*. Note that the light gathering power of a 12' mirror is four times that of a 6' mirror. Higher light gathering power enables one to see fainter objects in the sky. Most of these instruments are made in China under license from reputed manufacturers.



Schematic diagram of a Dobsonian telescope

It is possible to build a Dob from a kit which includes the primary mirror, diagonal mirror, spider, two or three eyepieces, one Barlow lens and perhaps a solar filter. These components can be assembled using simple carpentry tools, plywood, and a few pieces of Teflon sheet. Such a homemade Dob may not have the sleek appearance of a ready made instrument but you can get valuable experience while making it and can 'fix' it if anything goes wrong. Also the total cost works about to about half of a ready made one. Dobsonian kits are available at $230 for a 6' f/6 kit and $240 for a 8' f/6 kit (www.e-scopes.com).

The major drawback of a home made Dob is that it needs to be adjusted repeatedly during observations not only because the object moves out of the field of view but also, more often, because new observers, while adjusting the eyepiece, disturb the alignment of the telescope. It is possible to construct a tracking mechanism on a Dob but this is a project involving stepper motors and computer programmes. This takes considerable expertise.

It is possible to mount a reflector telescope on an equatorial mount. However for mirror diameter larger than about 6' the weight of the telescope makes it an unsatisfactory arrangement which tends to vibrate due to small disturbances. The portability of such a telescope is low. A smaller reflector of about 130 mm diameter mirror on an equatorial mount may be a good starting telescope for a school. This can be augmented later, by a larger telescope after some experience has been gained. A small telescope is always handy for beginners. A refractor with an equatorial mount is also a possible choice if the budget permits it because a refractor is more expensive than a reflector of the same size of objective.

Some models with an equatorial mount come with a drive motor. Often this motor does not make the instrument a self-tracking one. It only enables you to turn the appropriate knob by pressing switches. This is a help to avoid inadvertent disturbances of the alignment while turning knobs.

A basic choice that needs to be made is between a reflector telescope and a refractor telescope.

The position coordinates of an astronomical object in the sky is denoted by two numbers called the right ascension (abbreviated RA) and declination (dec). These are equivalent to the longitude and latitude respectively of a point on the surface of the earth. The RA is always indicated in time units using the equivalence of 360^{o} in RA to a time interval of 24 hours. This is

possible because we can imagine all the astronomical objects to be stuck on the inside of a large sphere with ourselves, that is, the earth, at its centre. This imaginary sphere is called the celestial sphere. The distance of all these objects from us is so large that the motion of the earth around the sun and of the sun in our galaxy has no significant effect on our view of the celestial sphere.[1]

A 'Go To' telescope refers to a telescope which is computer controlled and which has, in its memory, the coordinates of a large number (several thousand) of astronomical objects. Initially the location of the telescope (geographical longitude and latitude of the place of observation) and the local time have to be entered in the memory of the telescope. After that when the RA and dec coordinates of any astronomical object are entered on the keyboard, the telescope turns about the appropriate axes and points toward that object. Such an instrument, with the ability to track the given object, would be ideal for an educational institution. However, Go To telescopes are much more expensive than conventional instruments. Another factor to be kept in mind, particularly for educational institutions located far away from big cities (where the telescope dealers have their showrooms) is the possibility of electronic failure of the system. Even within the warranty period, it may take quite some time to get spare parts and repair services.

Building or selecting a refractor telescope also has its own special considerations that need to be kept in mind. Among these is the need to eliminate an optical phenomenon known as 'chromatic aberration'. The focal length of an ordinary lens is slightly longer for red light than for violet light. This has an effect on the quality of the image which shows slight colours at its edges. This effect is known as chromatic aberration.[2]

Shifting a telescope from its storage room to the place for observation can be a time consuming and somewhat risky operation. One could keep the telescope on a wheeled platform which can be rolled out of the storage room onto an open space for observations. This arrangement will reduce the time required for shifting the instrument and for the initial setting.

World Wide Telescope (WWT)

Recently the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune, in collaboration with Microsoft, have introduced an astronomy software called the World Wide Telescope (WWT) which is designed primarily for science and astronomy educators. This free software enables one to access the astronomical pictures recorded by the Hubble Space Telescope and also

other major telescopes around the world. One can scan any part of the sky on one's computer monitor with the high resolution that these instruments are capable of. Images taken at different wavelengths can be scanned. Even X-ray, gamma-ray and radio emission images (rendered visible) can be seen on the screen. Terra bytes of data are available waiting to be examined and interpreted by anyone who wants to explore this field. In the seminar on WWT held at Pune in September 2010 Prof. S George Djorgovski of the Centre for Advanced Computing Research, California Institute of Technology, USA, spoke about a paper on the optical discovery of an apparent galactic supernova remnant by Robert Fesen and Dan Milsisavljevic in *The Journal of Astrophysics*. Within weeks of the paper's publication, someone used the WWT to scan the indicated part of the sky and saw the ring of smoke which looks like the signature of the supernova. This picture was projected on the screen during the seminar.[3]

Personally I believe that astronomy can trigger an expansion of awareness as no other subject can. To be able to see that a wisp of light waves, a mere disturbance in space, which left its source millions of years ago, was travelling for aeons through interstellar space, past galaxies and star clusters, to enter your eye tonight to give you information about its source, is nothing short of a miracle. A glance at the gigantic interplay of matter and energy going on perpetually in interstellar clouds of gas fills the heart with humility and gratitude—for having received the gift of a body and a mind which enables you to understand, in a small measure, the workings of the universe. It looks like a speck of creation getting enamoured with its own larger image.

Suggested reading

1 Patrick Moore and Wil Tirion, *Cambridge Guide to Stars and Planets*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

2 Sam Brown, *Homebuilt Reflector Telescopes*, Edmund Scientific Series no. 9066, Edmund Scientific Co., 1979.

3 *How to Use Your Telescope,* Popular Optics Library, Edmund Scientific Co., 1975.

4 Jack Newton, Philip Teece, Helen Sawyer, *The Guide to Amateur Astronomy,* Cambridge University Press, 1995.

5 JM Pasachoff and ML Kutner, *University Astronomy,* WB Saunders Co., 1978.

Notes

1 The position of the brightest star in the sky, Sirius, has the coordinates: RA = 6h 45min 8.9 sec; dec. = –16° 42′ 58″. The negative sign of the declination angle indicates that Sirius is in the southern (celestial) hemisphere. Catalogues containing the RA and dec coordinates

of thousands of astronomical objects are available. Two of the best known are the Messier Catalogue and the New General Catalogue (NGC).

2 The focal length of an ordinary lens is slightly longer for red light than for violet light. This has an effect on the quality of the image which shows slight colours at its edges. This effect is known as chromatic aberration. The objective of a refracting telescope is a convex lens which is made of two lenses often called an achromatic doublet. This is an arrangement of two lenses, one convex and the other concave, which are either cemented together with transparent glue or mounted on the same axis with a small separation. The combination acts as a converging lens with the desired focal length. The two lenses are made from different kinds of glasses in such a manner that the resultant focal length of the combination is the same for red and for violet rays. Thus chromatic aberration can be eliminated by using an achromatic doublet.

Just as the starting point for making a reflector is to acquire the primary mirror of the desired diameter and focal length, the starting element for a refractor is its achromatic objective. Unfortunately buying such a lens having a diameter greater than about 50 mm is not so easy in India. Some lens makers like Lawrence and Mayo do not seem to make these. If a search is made on the internet, though, one can find suppliers of these items *(www.surplushed.com).* For example one can get a 80 mm dia, 900 mm FL achromat for about USD 70.00 and a 127 mm dia. 700 mm FL achromat for about USD 140.00. Most of these objectives have an anti reflection coating. Apart from objectives, some of these dealers offer many other components like eyepieces, diagonal mirrors and eyepiece holders which can simplify the construction of a telescope. A suitable mount for a reflecting telescope can be purchased ready made or designed in a carpentry shop.

3 Using WWT it is possible to make presentations in the form of 'tours' of different features in the sky like the solar system, different constellations, star clusters, variable stars, and so on. WWT is planned to be an evolving system. It was pointed out in the seminar that in the near future it should be possible to juxtapose images of the same object taken at regular intervals to demonstrate, for example, the intensity variation of Algol with time. The period of 2.7 days could then be compressed to 20 or 30 seconds. Such demonstrations, combined with sessions of telescopic observations could generate a lot of interest among students.

Glimpses of the Children's Programme at the Study Centre, Bangalore

Gurvinder (Neetu) Singh

The Study Centre at Bangalore has been conducting programs for the school children of The Valley School since 1993. The Valley School and the Study Centre are located on the same campus. As the Valley School is divided into small learning groups of fifteen to twenty children, the children come with their learning groups for half-day sessions. The sessions aim to bring about sensitivity of children to nature and to human problems, and create the space to observe and inquire. The program is designed keeping in mind the age group of the students. For younger ones, we have many sensory activities, some observations, and sharing. For middle school students we may take up themes such as friendship and with the older ones we may take up themes such as responsibility, freedom, justice, religion, and so on.

The teachers need to be sensitive to the kind of questions to raise with a group of children. One can ask a question and wait for a response and meet the children at the level the children are able to take up the question. Once a relationship is established then a challenging question could be posed or a suggestion could be made.

The following are two vignettes from recent Children's Programmes conducted for different age groups.

Junior School Mixed Age Group: Class II–IV (age 7–9 years)

We began with an activity in which the children were asked to walk alone in a scenic part of the campus. A suggestion was made that they should try walking at a normal pace looking ahead. Without turning their head or moving their eyeballs side to side, they could exercise their peripheral vision to see as much as possible by de-focusing the gaze. They were also asked to listen at the same time to natural sounds, including that of birds. The purpose of the exercise is to bring a sense of alertness and quietness while walking and attempt to

see as much as possible. When one looks straight ahead while walking and not focusing on one particular thing, the brain becomes alert and observes the surrounding without words and recognition. One can look without the associations of memory and thought.

Then we watched a cartoon episode from Clifford (The Big Red Dog). In this episode the dogs get influenced by a commercial where a dog called Rexington can jump higher and run faster after eating the 'Mighty Snacky' dog food, full of 'fireworks of flavor.' Clifford and his friends now want to have this new dog food. After much imagining and anxious waiting they are given the new 'Mighty Snacky' dog food. But soon they realize that this new dog food is very much like 'regular' dog food. Their hopes of running faster and jumping higher come to a crashing end.

After watching this episode, there was a dialogue with the children. A number of questions were raised. We pointed out the use of language such as 'mighty snacky', 'fireworks of flavor' and so on, which were used to captivate the listeners.

The children too expressed the disappointments they had experienced, for instance, due to promises of 'free offers' such as toys when a particular product is purchased. Most of the time they did not get what the commercial had promised and even when they got the free toys they were either of poor quality or did not meet the children's expectations. Most children could recall examples of how TV commercials keep advertising new products with a slight variation in flavour, such as, flavoured milk or juice to make a sales impact on children.

Then a question was asked: **Why do companies make false promises and false claims about their products?**

Child 1: They want to sell more and make money.

Teacher: What do they do with all the money they get?

Child 2: They want bigger and fancier houses.

Child 3: They want more and more.

Teacher: Why?

Child 4: They are greedy.

Teacher: Why are they greedy?

Child 1: They are lonely.

Child 5: They are bored.

For a child to perceive loneliness and boredom as a root cause of greed was revealing. As teachers, we wondered how we could keep this inquiry going, so that the child begins to discover the causes of loneliness. What are the escapes from loneliness? What are the implications of loneliness in our lives? We felt that these questions could be sustained as the child grows up in a nurturing environment.

A suggestion was made to the children not to be passive listeners when they are watching TV commercials. One can 'talk back' at the commercial by asking questions such as: what makes them claim that the product XYZ will give 'mighty power.' Is it really true? Why are they making such claims? One can check with a parent or teacher if the claims of commercials are true or false.

The answers to such questions may not be apparent immediately. However, the act of asking questions makes the mind alert.

Class IX Program: Dialogue on Living with Discontent

We were discussing rebellion and discontent. We read a passage written by an ex-student of Brockwood Park School. Some of the statements made in the article were discussed.

'There is conformism, an act of accepting the world as it is offered, and there is rebelliousness. And what is worse, there is conformism in the disguise of rebelliousness.'

The article ends with the statement:

'A rebel is, finally, the one who is not stuck in his or her own concept of rebelliousness.'

This was followed by a passage from J Krishnamurti speaking to students on discontent: 'Don't be afraid of discontent, but give it nourishment until the spark becomes a flame and you are everlastingly discontented with everything—with your jobs, with your families, with the traditional pursuit of money, position, power—so that you really begin to think, to discover.'

The students found this statement too radical. They were troubled with the analogy—'spark becomes a flame'.

Student 1: If we are discontented with everything, then we will come across as ungrateful.

Student 2: People will think we are unhappy because we are complaining all the time.

Teacher: Perhaps when Krishnamurti is speaking of discontent it is not a permanent state. One can never remain in one state all the time. When one sees some good things happening one could be appreciative and not find fault with it just for the sake of being discontented.

Student 3: If we are totally discontented with everything, then we will not be able to do anything because we cannot change everything.

Teacher: One can be discontented with many issues. However, one has to find out where one can contribute. Some people are good with working with hands. Others can write well. Some can speak well. One may take up an issue one feels is important and contribute by bringing a creative response.

Student: Are you saying all this because Krishnamurti said so?

Teacher: I am exploring what is involved with discontent. I may be right or wrong. You can challenge whatever is being said.

Student 1: Discontent means dissatisfaction and therefore unhappiness. Why should one be totally unhappy?

Teacher: Generally when one considers 'discontent' then one is considering a particular issue. Then one wants to change a particular thing and get a result. When one does not get a result, one becomes unhappy. Whereas, I think Krishnamurti is using 'discontent' in the sense of complete dissatisfaction with the whole structure of thought and what thought has brought about in the world—the wars, corruption, ecological destruction and so on. Not to be easily satisfied with the various political, social, economic, justice systems that further complicate the problems of existence.

Happiness is a byproduct of something that one loves to do. When one is discontented one can still be happy by discovering what one loves to do.

Let's not imagine a completely discontented state and imagine unhappiness or happiness. Most of us are never completely discontented. We are partially satisfied and find comforts, and partially we remain discontented. Is it possible to be completely discontented and see whether one can be happy?

The students remained unconvinced. As a teacher, one could allow for the lack of seeing together of discontent and its implications. However, one may come back to this issue later and start the inquiry afresh.

The dialogues that we have with these students suggest that they are quite open to learning in a format where a question is used in order to probe and

the response comes out of the background of one's thinking, which can then be observed. As teachers, we have to create the right learning environment for this to happen more frequently and as the student progresses through the school, the dialogues could take place at greater depth and subtlety.

Oak Grove School: The Growth of a Learning Centre[1]

R E Mark Lee

Oak Grove School began with the following intention and mandates from Krishnamurti. It was to involve parents so there would be no separation for the child between home, school, and the world. The school would also learn from the other Krishnamurti schools but not repeat their traditions or create new ones.

After a year of preparations and dialogues with Krishnamurti the school opened in 1975 with two students and three faculty members. I was one of the teachers and Head of School for the first ten years. We met in our ranch house home, currently the Pepper Tree Retreat which was Krishnamurti's original home. Later it moved to the campus next to the Oak Grove where Krishnamurti gave his public talks from 1922 to 1985 to hundreds of thousands of people from around the world. There classes met out of doors under the California Oak trees surrounded by wildflowers and warm breezes until permanent buildings came up.

Today it has a full enrollment of 200 children from age three to seventeen years and thirty-five staff. The campus atmosphere is pastoral and peaceful, cultivated but not manicured, and we care for the land and the six principal buildings because it all has to last 500 years or more. 'Care for the land' means the whole earth, and every part of life in this beautiful world.

1 Excerpts from a talk given at the International Symposium on **'Being Alive to Responsible Citizenship: J. Krishnamurti and the Challenge for Education'** February 4, 5, 6, 2010 Delhi University

Starting a school with a large and long vision, little money, and worldwide interest was no small undertaking. Architects were mindful of light and space and breeze, and plans were drawn up. Several hundred prospective teachers were interviewed; several dozen families interviewed; and throughout the one year of preparation Krishnamurti met with everyone involved and asked fundamental questions that required a great deal of probing and discussion: Why have a school, and what is education? Can one educate without reward and punishment? How does one educate a young mind? How would the school deal with smoking, alcohol, drugs and pornography? When the psychological aspects of education are as important as the intellectual, how was rigor to be brought about to enable students to enter good learning institutions later on?

Asking the question over and over, 'What is education?' had a sobering effect on us all. Resisting the habit of immediately answering the question made it go deeper and deeper—it became the fulcrum of all aspects of learning and living. This kind of exchange became then the modus for all issues; educational philosophy, school policy; the mechanics of administration; and most issues of behaviour and discipline.

Soon we learned that it was easy to talk around, and through issues. This led to confusion that resulted in inaction. Also we saw that it was impossible to bring the whole school community to the same point of understanding. Over the years the concepts of *dialogue-on-everything* and *mandatory-consensus-for decision-making* were seen as idealistic and impossible ways to run a school. This kind of practical learning-from-experience coupled with Krishnamurti's radical educational philosophy resulted in constant challenges to the deeply held ideas and beliefs of all of us.

An example of this was the challenge by Krishnamurti to find out why children don't respect learning, don't respect their teachers, parents and each other. This was distilled to 'What is respect' and two years of staff meetings, parent conferences, trustee meetings, one-on-one sessions with Krishnamurti resulted in a tentative unsure feeling—the issue was very clear to all but there was no direct action to be taken. Krishnamurti said to the faculty, 'I am putting you in a corner and forcing you to face things, you can't experiment on children, and you have to be clear.'

In the course of the first year of the school Krishnamurti said something that deeply affected the school community. He said that the children were not the only important factors. That the teachers were critical to creating the right atmosphere—that if we had competent teachers they would take care of the academic side of learning; so the focus should be on the larger life issues for teachers and students, such as learning based on listening and looking with awareness, self-knowledge

and understanding the movement of fear. Then there was the possibility of exploring relationship without conflict by observing the movement of jealousy and comparison in ourselves. Learning to be alone was as important as learning to ask the right question.

I constantly emphasized how the atmosphere of the school was critically conducive to real learning; including the buildings, the environment, and how they were maintained. The campus had many wild and unkempt acres, trails through the woods, minimal landscaping. Buildings were made of local wood and glass, with light and air, and disappeared into the trees. Wild coyotes, lynxes, deer, possums, skunks, squirrels, and raccoons roamed the campus, as we did, making for a natural biology laboratory for the students. There were birds everywhere; hawks, egrets, owls, hummingbirds, sparrows, vultures, blue herons, and red-headed woodpeckers thrived on the campus.

Children learned to respect the land and the creatures that inhabited it. They planted thousands of acorns in milk cartons, then put saplings in the ground and watched them grow, when the old trees fell over. They helped conserve a neighbourhood wetland preserve. They planted a large kitchen garden, several dozen fruit trees and built a straw bale greenhouse nursery to keep the vegetable seedlings ready for the two growing seasons. The students put together a guide book for other schools on how to 'green' a campus that was distributed widely.

The other 'atmosphere' we stressed was the living psychological and psychic tone of the school. Children learn about themselves and life around them when the atmosphere at home, school, and in their circle of friends is safe and not threatening—hence they are unafraid. 'It takes a whole village to create,' to borrow a phrase from Hillary Clinton. So security is a fundamental prerequisite for a school, allowing for care and respect for each other. Krishnamurti told the parents how whales and dolphins raise their young in total security and went on to equate the awakening of intelligence with unequivocal security of the brain which is essential to learning. Field trips to Baja California to watch the birthing of whales confirmed his stories.

Children grow up understanding order, civility, manners, all leading to a civic code in balance with nature, animals, and fellow human beings.

How did these practical and penetrating ten winters of Krishnamurti's counsel reach the children? A palpable atmosphere was created on the campus of real physical and psychological security which supports open and free relationships between children and teachers, which lead to serious inquiry, and self-revealing investigation, with no question being off-limits. Guests and visitors comment on this feeling of security and freedom—so palpable in the school even today.

Partial and Total Insight: Constructivism and Krishnamurti's Pedagogy

Lionel Claris

'What I am trying to say is that insight is never partial; I am talking of total, not partial, insight … An artist can have a partial insight. A scientist can have a partial insight. But we are talking about total insight.'

(J Krishnamurti, The Ending of Time, Chapter 6, 15th April 1980, Conversation with Prof. David Bohm: 'Can Insight Bring About a Mutation of the Brain Cells?')

What is Krishnamurti's pedagogy? How is it distinct from standard practices as well as alternative pedagogies? What might a pedagogy grounded in total insight look like?

The constructivist revolution clarified and explored decades ago the old[1] idea that students are not blank slates, that they bring their own experiences and knowledge into the learning environment and build new knowledge based on this. Such an innovative way of thinking about learning gave validity to *experiential learning*, a stated key feature in many of today's traditional schools as well as alternative models such as the Montessori and Steiner schools. Even though the manner in which different traditions practice such insight varies, constructivism scientifically justified the importance of learner-centred experience in teaching: students need to *do* and not just be *told*. For all the good it brings, the main shortcoming I see with this so-called revolution is that it is partial at two levels: in its application and in its depth.

Talking from first-hand experience in both public[2] and private schools, it is evident that the constructivist model has had a hard time making it into the classroom. I take this to be the result of its partial insight into how people learn. Acknowledging students' own thinking is a step forward, but it is not the education of the whole child. A telling feature is that while it is true that constructivism allows greater freedom than behaviorism[3], this freedom is more theoretical than applied. Namely, it conceptually acknowledges that

if students are encouraged to engage with the world they will also be more active in their learning and not be mere passive recipients of information, as in the behaviorist approach. However, when it comes to the classroom, a contradiction emerges. Because teachers do not know how to deal with the freedom they promote, it tends to turn to license and then antiquated behaviorist practices are invoked to restore order. A deeper revolution would have been if constructivism had fundamentally changed what goes on in classrooms by creating an approach that actively relates to such freedom, so that thinking and knowledge themselves are engaged with and questioned. In a very real sense, while not demarcating his approach from either constructivism or behaviorism as such, that is what Krishnamurti implicitly proposes.

While constructivist approaches take into account the obvious fact that the minds of students are not empty vessels, they tend to ignore students' hearts – the motivational aspect of learning (aspects such as the emotional brain, the social nature of learning). As a result, constructivist teachers invariably have to resort again to behaviorist tools. Motivation takes the form of rewards and punishments, because the *relational* aspect of learning, perhaps one of the most important aspects Krishnamurti talked about in education, is absent. (It may appear that rewards and punishments, central to the behaviorist model, indicate a relational aspect, but they tap into it in a coercive way.) Krishnamurti points out the need to fundamentally change the way the teacher and the taught relate to one another, which by implication changes the way they relate to the world and to knowledge. Here, learning to relate in a different way is the very motivation for a kind of learning that includes knowledge but transcends it.

Krishnamurti talks of partial and total insight; while they may be distinct, it does not mean they are opposed. Rather, they may be said to be interwoven. When Krishnamurti says that an artist or a scientist can have a partial insight, he clearly seems to mean that total insight is different. What did he really mean? It is for each of us to ask and explore the question. Having explored the essential nature of both kinds of insights, I would suggest that both are based on the art of questioning. I also find that while both have questioning at their core, it is with a markedly different emphasis, giving different effects. What distinguishes partial and total insight is twofold, their primary field of application as well as the qualitative effects that ensue from each.

Krishnamurti's far-reaching insight is to extend the questioning from *the content of knowledge* (partial insight) to *the movement of knowledge* (total insight). For example, there is a difference between having an insight into a mathematical concept, which improves one's understanding, and having an insight into the dangerous implications of becoming identified with knowledge. Partial insight accepts knowledge and thus works within it. Here the observer tends to still see himself or herself as separated from the observed (knowledge in this case) because questioning knowledge does not necessarily lead to questioning the identification of the ego with knowledge.

If on the other hand, we begin to question the identification as part of the movement of knowledge, this must necessarily lead to new knowledge. We may say that knowledge revolutions, not just innovations within knowledge, are made possible to the extent that the movement of questioning knowledge takes place. What happens is that when total insight occurs, we perceive the assumption of the existence of the self to be groundless; by the same token we see knowledge to be like ourselves: constructed and in critical need to be doubted and questioned. Total insight, thus, is total in the sense that it does not see the observer as separate from the knowledge of partial insight. By negating the separation this positively affects knowledge. Hence there is a qualitative difference in results between partial and total insight. Let us explore the implications of this for Krishnamurti's pedagogy.

To quote Krishnamurti: 'Can that 'me' end? It is only when that ends that there is total insight . . . We say that something is total emptiness, which is energy and silence.'[4] Total insight, then, may be said to be total emptiness. Such insight stands in contrast to something identifiable and something to be identified with. It has no identity and yet it exists. Emptiness as the practice of insight within a school curriculum is perhaps one of the ways in which we can refer to Krishnamurti's pedagogy. The emphasis needs to be on the notion of insight as emptiness. Otherwise insight tends to refer to learned knowledge: content and skills. Emptiness, while perhaps not as pretty a word as insight, seems to accord more with what Krishnamurti is ultimately after. The pedagogy of emptiness would be a questioning practice in which the point is not to accumulate but to empty consciousness of not only misconceptions but of attachments and identifications thereby addressing the emotional brain that constructivism does not. This is not to say that nothing is learned and remembered, but what is studied is internalized critically, intelligently, as something constructed

and, therefore, subject to doubt. Characteristically, this implies that students are guided to look within and learn to establish caring critical relations with themselves, with others and with knowledge. They become noticeably sensitive, independent actors in a changing world they help reinvent.

In other words, knowledge needs to be critically engaged with in the way Krishnamurti talked about when speaking of the 'questioning mind.' There really is no such thing as true or value-free knowledge. In its transmission and use, even technical knowledge is corrupted by the ghosts of psychological knowledge. Scientific knowledge, of course, does produce results that work and make a difference. That science works, however, does not necessarily mean it is right, true, or value-free. The danger here is that power, the 'me', determines what is so-called true and right in the name of what works. Questions such as for whom, to what benefit, the question of side effects on nature and such become secondary. The growing environmental crisis is increasingly making us pose such questions. Will we be able to answer such questions adequately if we do not empty our minds of yesterday's answers? Are not the answers for tomorrow to be found today?

We live in an era where science has essentially replaced God; but what does that mean? Even if science gives the impression that it proves things, we ought to be careful with such a notion of, and attachment to, proof. For just about every scientific study, there is a counter-study that shows different results. Therefore, scientific results should not be taught as being eternal truths. For if we do so, we are teaching our students to be followers, not questioners or innovators. It is helpful, together with Professor Bohm, to call attention to Krishnamurti's pedagogy as 'permeated by what may be called the essence of the scientific approach, when this is considered in its very highest and purest form.'[5] Rather than a position of acceptance towards scientific results, then, it is a scientific attitude towards thought, science itself, and the academy in general that must be cultivated.

This essay is not meant to demean constructivist approaches, but to build on them in a certain sense. When emotions and behaviors are under control, constructivist approaches do very well at teaching the material. Since it actively acknowledges students' thinking, it can address their misconceptions and help them toward making conceptual shifts aligned with what is believed must be known. One of the assumptions at work today in many classrooms is that scientific knowledge is fundamentally different and truer than the one the students have

constructed for themselves and bring to the classroom. In Krishnamurti's pedagogy all knowledge, whether scientific or student-centred, is something constructed and, therefore, 'knowledge is limited.'[6] Science itself needs to be questioned. For that matter, Krishnamurti himself must be questioned, and not because he encouraged his readers to do so. If we ask ourselves whether finding out for oneself is actually liberating and empowering, we very well may find that it indeed is. The point is that such questioning is the key.

How is emptiness or insight to be incorporated into a school curriculum? Can it be taught and practiced? It must, but surely it will not be a matter of confining it to a set of courses with pre-determined insights to learn. That would go precisely against the freshness of an insight. The process of insight is to clear misconceptions *and* identifications. Emptiness is like the soil where insight might take place; the mind must be quiet or empty in order for something new to occur. This implies that insight comes uninvited. As we introduce insight and include emptiness in the pedagogy of a school, it should not be just a part of the curriculum but it must pervade all aspects of the school. This is because insight is not content-based, it is not a subject, nor is it something that can be committed to memory. It can, on the contrary, be approached by something resembling an emptying process.

To conclude, the beauty of the questioning mind is that while we are questioning thought and knowledge, we cannot control what or exactly how we will learn. The learning unfolds quite spontaneously as the questioning and emptying goes on. This process should not be separated from academic learning; on the contrary, it is the healthy ground on which the intellect must stand. The union of the two may quite possibly be Krishnamurti's pedagogy.

References

1 Many constructivists acknowledge Immanuel Kant and John Dewey as inspirations.

2 In England, a public school, one that is free and open to the public, is called a state school. What gets called a public school there is reserved for a certain élite and is thus very much private. Many private schools in England have a history of helping the disadvantaged, thus those are in some ways more open to the 'public', hence the name it seems.

3 A behaviorist model of teaching sees learning as being the result of rewards and punishments: basic outer stimulus. The student's mind is seen as a blank slate.

4 J Krishnamurti, *The Ending of Time*, Fourth Dialogue with David Bohm in Ojai, April 1980.

5 Bohm, David, A Brief Introduction to the work of Krishnamurti, ©1982 Krishnamurti Foundation of America.

6 J Krishnamurti, *Questioning Krishnamurti*, First Conversation With David Bohm at Brockwood Park, 11 June 1983.

The Art of Parenting

Raji Swaminathan

The razzle-dazzle of technology and media has captured the hearts and minds of teenagers, far outpacing parents' and teachers' ability to hold the attention of youth. If parents are worried about how to raise children and provide for them in a fast changing technologically savvy world, teachers in schools are equally concerned with what to teach children, how to engage them while competing with iPhones and how to help them distinguish between information and knowledge. The automatic response to any question 'I'll look it up on the internet' is a case in point of taking information to be knowledge.

If schools look to parents for support, parents in turn trust that schools and teachers will educate their child and provide the best environment for their growth. However, the two groups are positioned differently. Parents are focussed on their child while teachers teach an entire group of similar age students. If we accept as truth that the child is at the centre of the inquiry for both parents and teachers, it is important that we not wait for a problem to surface to put out fires. We need to find out now – how can we as parents or teachers communicate better with each other and with teenagers? How can schools support parents and vice versa? What do parents need from schools and what do schools and teachers need from parents? One way to begin this inquiry is by examining parenting and its pressures in light of what it means to be young in the twenty-first century.

While it is true that the challenges teachers face at school may in some respects be similar to what parents face, in this essay I focus on parents. I lay out the new pressures of parenting, discuss the relationship between parent, child and peers and end with laying out what parenting might look like in the context of holistic philosophies, in particular the teachings of J. Krishnamurti.

The Generation Gap: Chasing a Mirage

The term 'generation gap' is just one among all the gaps we hear about today, information gap, technological gap, knowledge gap, you name it. The 'gap'

appears as a yawning chasm that everyone, especially the older generation, is racing to leap across as we play an everlasting game of 'catch up.' Like chasing a mirage, just as we think we are nearing our objective or capturing the meaning of some mutual experience, in the blink of an eye, it disappears, eluding our grasp and leaving us once more on this side of the gap—breathless, anxious and feeling just a little left behind. Instead of chasing this mirage in our quest to communicate with youth, perhaps we should take issue with the whole approach, and certainly with the media for characterizing an entire generation as different from previous generations—Gen-Y for example.

The 'generation gap' approach casts adolescence as separate from adults, and ignores the many commonalities youth share with adults and parents in particular, for example, culture, language, family ties and shared experiences. Further, this approach conveys the impression that adolescence is a dangerous time for youth.

The generation gap approach fixes youth in the present while a second approach, the 'social change' perspective, casts youth as paving the way for the future. From this perspective youth are seen as whiz kids, tech-savvy and citizens of the future. However, while the two perspectives cast adolescence differently, both paint two-dimensional pictures of youth and leave parents anxious about not knowing what to provide for their offspring so that their children are not left behind in the race for meeting the future.

Parents: Facing the Pressure to be the Best

Parents often succumb to the tremendous social pressure to ensure that their kids are not just being the best they can be but are on par with or palpably better than their peers. Parents struggle with the fact that they are very invested in making sure that their kids get all the right experiences and into the right classes. Tutors, extra classes and enrichment lessons are all part of the plan—even if it means scheduling every minute of the child's life. In addition, for those times children are at home, there are educational toys and games.

Corporate firms have capitalized on parental fears to market toys that claim to teach. Child enrichment themes are used as selling points an example of which is the 'interactive' toy promising to counter 'passive entertainment.' Educators on their part want children to interact *with* toys or other objects in their environment, not for toys to become interactive. Along with the pressure of figuring out how to give their children the best learning environment at home, parents also face the strain of balancing family and employment demands.

Spending Time, Spending Money

Parents face a growing conflict between the demands of home life and their careers.

The language they use to describe daily life reveal the stresses they face. Terms like

the 'juggling act' or 'crunch time' illustrate time as a source of anxiety for parents. Market forces favor parents who spend longer hours at work. Employees who are willing to give up weekends and evenings with little notice are referred to as having 'zero drag'—a compliment that puts them at the top of the favored list by employers. Some parents are increasingly finding balancing work and home life hectic and want to escape back into the office, thereby exacerbating the problem.

The phrase 'quality time,' has misled parents into thinking that the amount of time spent with their children matters less than what they do with that time. Studies show that the amount of time spent does matter. Moreover, the less time parents spend with their children, the more money they tend to spend on them. Parental guilt acquiesces to the child's demands for the latest in gadgets, clothes, music, toys or gaming videos. Buying the latest gadget or fashion accessory for their children reinforces the hype created over things and plays a role in adolescent peer relationships.

Peers and Parents: Tug of War

Peer relationships are often cast in opposition to family relationships or adult-child relationships. Peer pressure is defined as pressure from peers to do something or keep from doing something whether one personally wants to or not. Peer pressure is a construct often used by adults or youth to explain their behavior. It is natural for young people to try to define their identities as distinct from adults. During this process, youth experience a sense of separation that produces anxiety, and they cling to their group of peers. The influence of peers has changed in structure over time to go beyond a small group of teens around the neighborhood or school to a whole host of teens across the world and the media savvy adults who market to them.

However, despite what seems like a large group with a strong influence, it would be a mistake to assume that peer influence and pressure are one-sided, leaving the individual with little or no agency to assert their own judgment. While at the beginning stages of asserting their identities, youth may try out different labels and characteristics, as they develop they exercise more choice. Indeed, youth development research argues that as young people develop a strong and stable identity, they may adopt the behavior and appearance of peers as a conscious strategy to enhance personal and social power. They may also choose to reject one group in favor of another to reflect the activities in which they decide to participate. In other words, we need to put back on the table social processes other than peer pressure to explain why youth adopt certain habits or styles. We need to examine individual motivation, choices and the way like-minded people group together and then develop a style, which may or may not include certain habits (for example, smoking).

Teenagers become adept at arguing their case with parents. Usually this involves invoking the power of the group or a comparison with other parents. Teenagers complain: 'Everyone is allowed to go out and stay late.' Or 'everyone in my group of friends owns an iphone except me.' When children try to wrest authority from the parent by citing the peer group, parents are often bewildered or resigned. It is at this stage they wonder if the rebellion of their children is a signal for a change in relationship. They think about moving from being a parent to the status of a 'friend' for their child. Parents wonder 'am I being authoritarian, old fashioned or worse am I depriving my child of valuable opportunities?' Parents consider soft-pedaling the parent role in favor of the 'friend' role. Parents who make this decision often argue that it gives them an edge, a way to communicate, and prevents them from losing their son or daughter altogether to the peer group.

Chances are that children on their part are happy to have the parent as a friend because it means they have more freedom. However, it is important for parents to realize that the relationship between parent and child can never be that of equal friends until the children are adults. Youth need and have many friends their own age. They only have two parents and in many cases, only one. Most young people are looking to parents for guidance based on their greater experience. They also expect parents to be responsible. While youth may find it fun to wrestle with the authority of the parent, they also feel rudderless and uncertain under the weight of added responsibility if it is conceded to them.

Another reason for parents to refrain from abdicating their parent role is the lack of adult mentors for youth. Parents can represent an alternative to the adult models widely watched by teenagers on the media who emphasize commercialism, sexuality, substance abuse and violence. It is important for parents to model standards of behavior and thoughtfulness, representing adulthood that stands outside media stereotypes, and reflecting a value system that is a stabilizing factor.

Teenagers' interactions with peers go beyond face to face interaction to the networked world of Facebook and MySpace. In the next section I briefly discuss the new challenges that parents face in this context.

Peer Interaction and Networking

Thirty years ago, experts assured us that technology would bring more time for leisure and more time for our families. The opposite has occurred. Technology has created a change in peer interaction so that while years ago, kids would go out in groups, nowadays they are likely to stay home alone to socialize.

Peer interaction no longer requires the physical presence of a group of kids. Social networking sites present the opportunity

for interaction with large numbers of peers across the world, while also increasing the vulnerability of the user. A computer or a cell phone is enough to create a situation of harassment or bullying. Even with security settings in place, the temptation for teenagers is to have as many 'friends' as possible via such networking sites.

Aside from the worries of parents regarding the safety of their child in online interactions, there are now some other documented dangers of constant internet use.

It is possible that the internet may be providing a potentially ever-present addictive medium. Unlike other forms of addiction that work on the principle of constant reinforcement, online gaming, especially popular with young boys, works on the principle of partial reinforcement. In other words the attraction for online gaming depends on the possibility of another win being just around the corner.

Perhaps for parents, it is most important to consider the effect of decreased social 'face time'. 'Face time' or 'face to face interaction' allows us to understand and absorb non-verbal cues and moderate or adapt our communication with each other. The lack of practice in this arena may cause teenagers to be less developed in this skill. What is acceptable in the online environment as polite is often not enough in the face to face world. At least some of what is recognized as 'disrespect' from youth has to do with this lack of learning about non-verbal communication.

The question is, what can parents do? What wisdom can they draw on that goes beyond the plethora of confusing and contradictory information? In the next section, I lay out what we can learn from holistic philosophers.

PARENTS' EDUCATION

According to J. Krishnamurti, 'parents need to be willing to educate themselves.' Apart from Krishnamurti, I draw on other holistic philosophers including Rudolf Steiner and Sri Aurobindo to examine what it means for parents to educate themselves.

Learning the Art of Looking Inward

Parent education involves looking inward, at one's own image as a parent. It means questioning oneself. For example, what are the expectations that parents have of children? What are the pressures that parents face that they in turn impose on children? Looking inward also means examining our own thought processes and limitations. It includes looking at our inward psychological, emotional and spiritual states of being. The welfare of the child is therefore connected to the well-being of the parent.

Learning the Art of Co-operation

Educating oneself includes learning about and understanding the relationship between oneself and the child, between oneself and society. For this to occur, the adults

in the child's life—primarily the parent and the teacher—need to co-operate and develop a relationship of mutuality. In such a relationship, neither is above the other and they meet as equals to learn from each other for the welfare of the child. Parents and teachers can awaken confidence in each other and themselves, so that they can stand outside or as an alternative to the messages of the mainstream. They can work together to find a quality of wisdom that endures.

Learning to Inquire Together

Inquiry entails dialogue between the parent and the teacher so that the school and the home do not contradict each other in spirit or intention. Parents and teachers must take care to facilitate such dialogues so that the meetings do not devolve into digressing, details or a 'blame game'. In other words, the big picture of the welfare of the child needs to be central to the inquiry.

More important than inquiry and dialogue between adults is the communication with children and teenagers. Inquiry necessitates inquiry with the child. Parents and schools need to centralize their communications with youth in their inquiry together about the best ways to serve their needs. Teenagers are the best experts to consult regarding their own experiences and what affects them well or adversely. In the next section of this essay, I lay out a few practical strategies for communicating with teenagers that emerge from holistic educators and from research with teenagers.

COMMUNICATING WITH TEENAGERS: A FEW PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Parallel communication: One way to put teenagers at ease while discussing important issues relating to their everyday life is to communicate while engaging in a parallel activity. This could be cooking together or playing a game. An activity allows a parent to move between conversations regarding the activity as well as the problem she or he might want to raise with the child. It keeps the conversation from devolving into an argument and eases the tensions that might surface when there is disagreement between the two. Additionally, it prevents the teenager from feeling attacked when potentially contentious issues are raised. Questions such as 'How do you feel about that' or 'Can you give me an example' stimulate discussion and allow the teenager to take the lead in a dialogue.

Focusing on the right thing, not on being right: Focusing on the right thing at any given moment may be as simple as listening to one's teen child and moving away from the temptation of feeling righteous or wanting to 'win' an argument.

Listening: The most important aspect of communicating and having a dialogue with teenagers involves listening. Parents can try a 60-second challenge by timing themselves to see if they can listen to their child for 60 seconds without interrupting them. Listening requires parents to value the perceptions and experiences of the

teenager and not try to talk them out of it.

Teaching Life Skills: Since much of the angst of being a teen originates from wanting to please peers and parents while retaining a positive self-image, parents can teach their children how to negotiate these multiple demands on their lives. This involves learning to figure out what works in a particular context and perhaps modeling and making transparent to teenagers the process of such decision making in one's own life.

Conclusion: The Wonder of Parenting

Parenting requires a multivariate and dynamic stance. It requires a non-routine, attentive response to children's needs. Parenting is an opportunity for personal growth. What parents do matters—in talk, behavior and actions. Their day to day interactions impact their children—their attention, expressed pleasure, listening and interest, as well as limit-setting—all nourish a child's growing sense of self just as food nourishes a growing body.

Therefore, the qualities of the parent affect the child the most. The art of parenting is to unfold the potential of the child to evolve not only as an individual but also as a member of the community. To do this, parents need to be willing to step back from the frenetic pace of life. In the words of Krishnamurti, 'if you want to understand a child, you must love and not condemn him.' For understanding, there must be 'complete unity of mind and heart in action.'

Anxiety, Openness and Freedom

O R Rao

Do animals feel fear? On the face of it, this seems to be an absurd question, for of course, animals do feel fear. The antelope flees from the panther and the leopard, the mouse from the cat and the rabbit from the wolf.

However, if we pause and give the question a little thought, another aspect of the matter emerges. Do animals experience the same sensations

and feelings which human beings call 'fear'? Are we anthropomorphizing, here, attributing to other sentient beings the feeling which we call fear? It is extremely doubtful whether animals when they experience something which we interpret as their fear, experience the same gamut of sensations feelings, volitional impulses and thoughts that human fears entail.

What then is the difference? The crucial difference becomes clear when we look at consciousness as it is manifested in different forms of life. When we look at the 'ascending ladder of evolution' from the single celled amoeba, through the various forms of insect life and other more and more complex forms up to the largest mammals like the whale and the elephant, we seem to discern a gradual increase in the degree of consciousness. While the beetle and the glow-worm do not seem to be conscious to a significant degree, we are quite sure that a dog or an elephant, and quite certainly a chimpanzee, does have consciousness.

However, and here we come to the critical point in the 'ascending scale of consciousness', with the arrival of the human species on the scene, there is an abrupt break. For human beings are not only conscious, but are conscious of being conscious. This is self-awareness, self-reflective consciousness, and with it comes a whole trail of fateful consequences. For, from now onwards I am a split being, as my self-awareness makes me think of myself as being separate from the world. I have split the world into object and subject. The object is the 'external' world and all that is contained therein, including other human beings, and the subject is my 'inner' world, where 'I am I', and in which my consciousness resides. However, there is more to come. I have not only split my experience into the objective external world and my subjective inner world, but I can split this inner world itself into 'subject' and 'object'. I can make an object of what I am conscious of now, that is, the act of writing, and look at it again, receding from it into a further 'deeper' consciousness.

Human beings are thus, as Niels Bohr the great physicist put it, 'both actors and spectators in the great drama of life'. And with the birth of such a reflexive consciousness the great drama of human life unfolds for us. For, this new kind of consciousness brings with it all that is fateful in the human condition—the consciousness of the passage of time and with it awareness of the presence of death as the 'fellow traveller' with life. Now is also born awareness of the inner human psychic complex of sensations, feelings, volitional impulses and thoughts, that complex which we call the 'ego'.

All this is the merest sketch, a caricature, of the entire range of questions which have been investigated by the greatest religious and philosophical minds of mankind down the ages. It is the great poets, artists, writers, and above all the great seers who give us glimpses of what it means to look directly into the heart of the human condition, which all these questions are directed towards.

Be that as it may, the immediate truth that emerges for us from this sketchy survey of the primordial human condition is that at the heart of it is the state of 'not knowing'. St Augustine, one of the earliest of the Christian philosophers, put it dramatically when he exclaimed, 'A question have I become to myself'. The questions have arisen, 'What is the world and all that therein is?' 'What are time and death?' and 'Who or what am I?' Alexis Carrel, a physician and psychologist who wrote in the middle of the twentieth century, did well when he titled a book 'Man the Unknown'. We are beings unknown to ourselves. We seek to know, to define ourselves and the world, but we cannot.

It is our undefined nature that sets us off from other living sentient beings. We are part of Nature but we have no given nature. As Jean-Paul Sartre, the existentialist philosopher put it, 'Man is free and there is no human nature which I can take as foundational'. Other beings are embedded in Nature which prescribes their behaviour in detail. The bird knows exactly when to fly from the nest after hatching, when to court, when to build the nest, when to brood, and above all when and how to die. But every one of these actions is a problem for human beings, it would seem! Nature does not prescribe to us how and when to act. We are left to ourselves to choose and decide. Human consciousness thus brings with it the burden of choice. We are now apparently free to choose what course of action we should take in the face of problems facing us. But this apparent freedom brings with it the burden of reckoning with the consequences of any course of action chosen—consequences which could be fearful or favorable or ambiguous (as they usually are). The future is forever an uncertain realm—a realm of insecurity.

The nature of the freedom which we, as distinct from other sentient beings enjoy, now begins to become clear. Freedom of choice implies consciousness of the passage of time, past, present and future. And time means *anxiety*, which is distinct from the immediate 'fear' which animals seem to feel. 'Time' also means awareness of the presence of death, which is in-built into human consciousness though our daily 'overt' consciousness is in permanent denial of this fact.

Human fear thus has the distinct dimension of an ever-present anxiety which has been called '*anxiety without an object*' or 'angst'. Individual fears come and go, but anxiety is an ever-present undertone.

The condition of being part of Nature but not having any 'given' nature, and being undefined, thus giving rise to the condition of 'anxiety without an object' is a fraught one pregnant with tension. This is the tension between the pull towards defining and 'knowing' once and for all, what and who we are and what the world and its entities are, and the awareness of our originary undefined condition of 'not knowing' which is a 'given' in the basic human condition, not to be escaped ultimately. Try as we might, the condition of not knowing who we are and the anxiety that goes with it, will never leave us. We also sense that there is a tension between these two forces which may be called that between 'closure' and 'openness'. Staying with 'anxiety without an object', and thus being open and not closed beings is what makes us distinctively human, and has the potentiality of freedom in it. But more of this later.

Before we come to examine that aspect of the matter, we need to remember that we are not only part of Nature and emergent from it, but are also part of Society and are also emergent from it. Just as Nature provides us with the biological and physical frameworks of our existence in the form of the repertoire of our senses, the impulses that ensure survival, and the psychosomatic contents that accompany them, Society provides us with the language which enables us to make sense of and arrive at some understanding of the world. We do not look at or 'understand' the world and life directly in an unmediated way, but through the lens of language that gives us the meanings and definitions of entities in the world and of ourselves. Thus I understand Nature through whatever I have learnt of the modern physical sciences, or if I have not received a modern education, through the concepts provided by more traditional frameworks. I provide myself with answers for my existential metaphysical and religious probing through the religious and philosophical doctrines and theories available in society, and through the insights of its great writers, artists and seers. I am provided with certain positions, functions and roles in Society's familial, economic, legal and other processes and structures. I am spouse, parent, sibling, a professional, farmer, skilled or unskilled worker and so on. Thus I take my place in Society and try to fulfil the tasks and responsibilities that go with it, as do other members of Society.

The complex web of relationships of all kinds produced by these functions, roles and processes, creates its own tensions, oppositions and anxieties in each of us. So do the meanings and definitions we have given to ourselves and others and other entities, through language and its manifestations in science, philosophy, religion and so on. In short, I am thoroughly conditioned by Society, and so are others. ('You are the world' as Krishnamurti often pointed out). These conditionings clash and produce the tensions and conflicts endemic in all social contexts. This endemic state of tensions releases the flood of emotions, volitional impulses and thoughts, the nexus of which we call the 'ego complex'. This is the storage space for all these impulses collected through the mechanism of memory—the space in which we create our identities, and give ourselves an answer to the unanswerable question 'Who or what am I?' We identify with our social roles and functions in varying degrees as a way of defining ourselves. The pressure built up by memory in our 'storage space' of the ego is released in floods of emotions and impulses which carry us away. We are 'paralyzed by anxiety' 'besides ourselves with rage', 'stung by envy or jealousy'. These 'floods' carry us away from our originary state of unknowing which is now far away and forgotten.

We cannot set limits to the forms which this flood of conditioning could take—it could vary from self images of extreme guilt to total amoralism, of masochistic asceticism to uninhibited hedonism, from the extreme depression to unrealistic self-inflation and so on endlessly. There is also the area of body images, so central to the ways in which we relate to people. These images have to do with matters of weight, height, shape, color etc. These are ways in which we freeze ourselves into rigid self images which prevent the free flow of the spirit.

There are also forms of conditioning which are of a wider social scope. These are a myriad in number, each specific to different societies, and Krishnamurti's teachings have depicted those which are endemic in our age—identification with collectivities such as nations, or race or ideologies such as Communism or Capitalism, religious fundamentalism and so on. Rigid adherence to philosophical doctrines is the specific form of identification for intellectuals. For the 'masses', there are always the drugs of entertainment and sports, magnified in scope by the resources of modern technology.

Thus, through the varied forms of identification we are caught in—with roles, functions, collectivities, doctrines, ideologies and so on—and by

allowing ourselves to be carried away by the floods of sensations, memories, emotions and impulses, we hope to forget the tension inherent in the state of not knowing and openness. But such closure only intensifies the tensions both large and small. And eventually it is the 'small' tensions in personal lives, and in the various sub-groups of society, that build up in an avalanche effect into large-scale conflicts. 'War is the spectacular and bloody outward projection of our inner conflicts,' Krishnamurti said. It has been estimated that the deaths in the wars of the twentieth century far exceed in number the total war deaths in the entire history of mankind before that.

'Human kind', said TS Eliot, 'cannot bear very much reality'. And the reality is that we are beings in a state of unknowing which we cannot bear. But it is only the state of unknowing, of 'freedom from the known', that is open to fresh unknown possibilities entering us. Normally we are in a state of closure. Fearful of the unknown, we cling to what we know which becomes the impermeable core of our being, thus shutting off the possibility of newness, creativity and growth.

This truth is graphically illustrated in the history of Science. The scientific attitude is one in which the scientist, in formulating theories, is open to follow wherever the evidence leads. Only in this attitude lies the possibility of making new discoveries and being creative. However, the beginnings of modern science tell a different story. In the sixteenth century, when Copernicus formulated his hypothesis of a sun-centred universe as better able to account for the motions of the planets than the Ptolemaic earth-centred universe which had been accepted for more than 1500 years, it was met with a sense of outrage and alarm. The new theory challenged the accepted known verities. It flew in the face of the 'accepted known truth' that a moving earth would be very unstable and would result in all objects on the earth being in a permanent state of displacement and instability. Also, it was heresy to say that the earth was not the centre of the Universe, as it denied the Biblical doctrine that God created man in his image and placed man's dwelling place, the earth, at the centre of the Universe. All these dogmas took a long time to be displaced, in spite of the fact that the new hypothesis accounted for the motions of the planets in a much more elegant and simple way than did the entrenched Ptolemaic theory with its clumsy epicyclical motions.

Similarly, Newton's mind was open enough to discard the two-thousand-year-old assumption of the distinction between the celestial realm of the

planets, where all motions took place in the 'perfect' regular form of circles, and the terrestrial realm where motions could be linear and irregular and thus 'imperfect.' It was this openness that made possible his grand synthesis that explained all motions including the planetary ones and those on the surface of the earth by the postulates of linear inertial motion, universal gravitation and impressed forces. His adoption of linear inertial motion as the 'natural' one in place of the old perfect circular motion too was a revolutionary step, which discarded the 'common-sense' known truth enunciated by Aristotle that a continuous applied force is required to keep a body in motion.

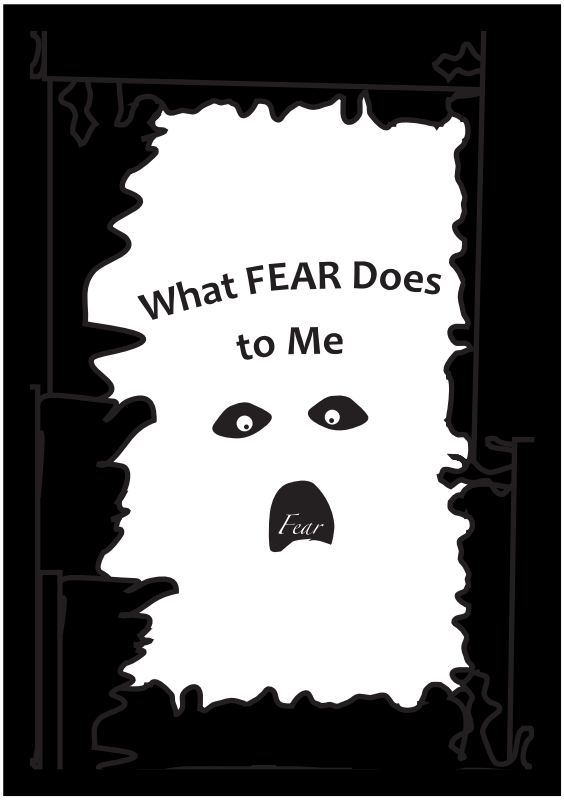
If 'openness' and 'closure' are relevant in the restricted field of Science, how much more so are they in the field of our relationships, which life itself is! All our relationships, whether with material things such as property and money or with other people, are fraught in different degrees. The most fraught are the ones with those who are closest to us—spouse, parents, children, siblings. Precisely because of our closeness to them, we have the almost inescapable conviction that we know them, and that we know ourselves in relationship to them. Needless to say, this is as close to total closure as possible. The relationship then freezes into rigidities that prevents all free flow of spirit, inhibits all freedom and creativity in the relationship. It falls into familiar repetitive patterns that are deadening, or it explodes into conflict.

However, if the relationships are open, as they need to be, they allow a free flow of the spirit. Openness is the creative leaven in our lives. Our vision of openness means not only that persons have the potentiality of being open, but also that the world too is an incurably and radically open place. This is because the 'world' consists of situations and contexts, and these are ever changing and new. In such a vision, action is always situation-based and context-based, innovative and marked by virtuosity. We are thus able to act skilfully in each context according to its needs and the needs of the persons involved at that moment. Action is marked by responsibility and relevance as the free flow of the spirit is not impeded.

However, lest we be tempted to underestimate the extent of our conditioning, we need to remember its overwhelming force which can carry us away in an instant. The almost automatic response to the force of the flood which threatens to submerge us is to resist it. But all resistance inevitably only increases the force. Here we remember a saying of the nineteenth century maverick philosopher Nietzsche who said, 'He who constantly fights the devils

becomes a devil himself'. So we cannot fight the forces of conditioning. We need instead to think of ourselves as open valleys through which the floods and hurricanes of conditioning are allowed to flow freely. This is of course far easier said than done and we often fail in the doing. But the vision of openness is not lost and therein lies our permanent gain.

It is said that the ideograph in the Chinese language for both 'opportunity' and 'danger' is the same. This is an apt metaphor for the primordial human condition in which human beings are undefined and open. Non-definition and openness give rise both to all pervasive 'anxiety without an object' (from which arises the urge to define and freeze, with all its destructive consequences) and also to the possibility of freedom and a creative flow of the spirit. It is up to us to decide which alternative we choose.


What FEAR Does
to Me
Fear

Fear: An Introduction to the Section

When the editors' team met in July 2010 to discuss the content of the new edition the discussion turned to the number of suicides by young people reported daily in newspapers. After the fever of annual examinations for schools and colleges which are held in April and May across the country results start coming in by June. Local media and television channels now begin to chase the success stories of those students who make it to the top ten, or fifteen or fifty. One reads about their hopes and ambitions, the parental pride, the recognition and rewards. Within a couple of days the other stories begin to appear, the report of number of suicides across the country by young people who fail examinations or fail to achieve the high level of marks needed for further education.

The editors felt a strong need to sensitize parents, teachers and administrators to the palpable reality of fear experienced by young people, their helplessness, their suffering and strategies for survival. Consequently, this issue of the Journal of Krishnamurti Schools (No. 15) has a special section on Fear.

Four articles in the journal examine fear—children's fear, the fear felt by children on leaving school, the fear that teachers experience, and dealing with emotions that are part of our 'inner landscape', as it were.

As part of this exploration, a questionnaire was sent to several schools, government, private, urban, rural across states requesting that students between the ages of twelve and sixteen respond to the following questions:

- What are the things that you are afraid of?
- Recall one or two situations that have made you worried, nervous or afraid.
- How did you feel when you were experiencing the above? Do you remember what happened in your body and in your mind? (Try to recollect and describe these here.)
- What did you do when you were afraid?

The response received to this questionnaire was overwhelming, detailed and often graphic.

We have used this data to put together a resource package containing the following:

A Poster

A poster where we can see and hear the objects of children's fears and how they feel when they experience them.

A Series of Four Booklets

These relate to four different sets of fears which troubled children the most: the first which is almost universal has to do with exams and tests and the future, the second to people-related fears—parents, teachers and peers, the third deals with the fear of insects and animals and the fourth with death and loneliness. In each one the student describes the object of his or her fears in certain situations, followed by physical and psychological changes which could be recalled. Finally there is an account of how each student dealt with a particular fear. The voices and the language are those of the children with minor editing for clarity.

At the end of each booklet we have put together a set of questions which we hope will help teachers, students, parents and administrators to look at a situation together with sensitivity and affection for each other. We hope that the questions will help to open up and sensitize all of us to this difficult area in our relationship with each other. They are merely a starting point and we are sure that different groups will bring their own energy, creativity and imagination to the discussion.

Finally there are brief quotations from J Krishnamurti which uncover the various layers under which our fears lurk to reveal what lies underneath.

A Set of Cards

Each card describes on one side a situation of fear experienced by a child. These can be used to create empathy and understanding among the students and adults. On the flip side are possible activities that children, parents and teachers could do, ponder over and talk about in groups. We are sure that this interaction will result in many more such activities which will encourage these groups to keep these questions alive.

Editors

Children's Fears

Kamala V Mukunda and P Ramesh

Suppose you were to ask a young child, 13 years old, to write down her answer to the question: *what are you afraid of*? Suppose she writes, in this order: *Exams, death, losing parents*. You might think this one child was unusually afraid of examinations. Now suppose you ask the same question of 300 children. What would you expect to find?

Earlier this year, the editors of the journal sent out a short survey to a handful of Indian schools. An attempt was made to select a range of schools, such as rural and urban, formal and non-formal, day school and residential, government and private. The questions were to be answered anonymously by students of Class 6 to Class 10, and were simple and straightforward, to do with specific situations in which they had felt fear (for example, *Do you remember what happened in your body and in your mind?*).

The children wrote so evocatively, so directly, touching the heart of what it is to be afraid. They expressed palpable, intense feelings: minds going blank, numbness, sweating, shaking, heart beating and, as one colourfully put it, 'It felt like all the bones and muscles were outside my body.'

Most important for us to realize was that a large proportion of the children listed exams, tests, failure or poor performance, and various adults among their chief fears. Perhaps the juxtapositions were an accident of the format of the questionnaire, but there was something darkly comic about these responses—'homework, tests and dangerous animals,' 'the dark, math teachers and the deep parts of the swimming pool,' 'natural disasters, Dad, teachers and tests' and 'God, snakes, some teachers'.

While children expressed many fears of a primordial nature, such as of darkness and death, it was clear that adults' actions and adult-made structures constituted a large part of the list. It seems that we have injected a culture of fault-finding, judging and evaluation in almost whatever we do at home and in school. The child is constantly made to feel inadequate, not 'measuring up', and so on.

Is this inevitable? Though we cannot dispel darkness or banish death, we certainly can do something about punishment, failure in tests, humiliation, comparison, gratuitous criticism, and holding strong expectations. These powerful forces breed a pervasive insecurity that lingers with the young person, affecting her learning and decision making.

Many readers at this point may protest: 'Isn't some element of fear or pressure a natural and necessary part of life? Doesn't the child need a bit of pressure to perform and progress?' This is indeed a complex question, one that deserves close examination, both of the child and ourselves.

Fear is a primary emotion, one that we share with many creatures. Like other emotions, it serves an adaptive function, that of motivating us to move away from danger or avoid harm. From this point of view, fear seems to be a sensible and intelligent capacity of the organism. Indeed, one of the reasons that parents can begin to let a young child out of their sight for short periods is that the child will be afraid enough not to do foolishly risky things!

Many sources of fear for the young child are in the physical world, of darkness, heights, strangers, stuffed toys, loud sounds, physical pain, dogs, cows and insects. In addition to experiencing fear *in the presence of* these stimuli, children often feel fear *in anticipation of* the fearful stimulus—fear of the evening time when I will be homesick [in a residential school], fear of lunch time when I will have to eat those vegetables, fear of the walk home where I will encounter that dog. We could call this worry; it preoccupies the mind and impairs functioning outside the situation. This 'ability' to be afraid of something in anticipation develops slowly over childhood.

If we can speak, as psychologists do, of the childhood development of 'normal fear', what general patterns emerge from a century of research? First, that fear decreases in prevalence and intensity with age. Second, that specific fears (of specific situations or people) are transitory in nature. Third, there are changes in fear content, so that while infant fears are related to immediate, concrete stimuli, fears of late childhood and adolescence are related to anticipatory, abstract, and more global stimuli and events.

As children grow older, and begin school, more and more things in their world become potentially fearful. Many of these threaten injury to the ego, not to the body. The new fears seem to have a social origin, that is, they arise in relationship with other human beings. Abandonment, rejection, humiliation, loneliness, disapproval, failure, all provoke painful emotions such as sadness and shame. We saw a profusion of such fears in our survey. Perhaps children are afraid of painful emotions in the same way that one is afraid of a painful injection. But unlike

the injection that lurks only in the doctor's clinic, social threats are everywhere for the school-going child.

Several other factors account for the changes in children's fears. Their cognitive abilities mature and they become more able to verbalize fears. Their ability to take the viewpoint of other people (parents, teachers, and peers) increases, and at the same time the importance of peer relations increases too, so that they are caught between conflicting peer and adult evaluation. The demands on school performance increase, raising fears of achievement evaluation among many adolescents.

Anticipatory fears or anxieties have a peculiar effect on the body. Unlike the smooth operation of the body's reaction to imminent or present physical danger, the side effects of anxiety remain in the blood stream for long periods of time. Over time, this can lead to the phenomenon of stress. Sadly, young students nowadays are as stressed as the harried executive! Just as the executive feels that his boss is making unreasonable demands on him, with the threat of loss of job or demotion always hanging above, the student feels that if she cannot meet the adults' expectations, she will lose their respect and even affection. This is, of course, an intolerable pressure on a child.

There are two reasons why the mechanical or deliberate use of fear and pressure are unacceptable. First there is the humanitarian reason. We are harming the psyche of a growing child—a powerful adult and a vulnerable child do not make a balanced equation. Second, there is ample evidence that a child in fear cannot learn or perform as well as a child who feels secure. Fear can cripple the growing mind, hence it is unable to flower and realize its full potential.

It's time we took a hard and close look at our structures, both physical and psychological, and really face our children's fears. From our survey, it seems that we have left them to fend for themselves in grappling with their fears. Thus they end up retreating, isolated, alone, crying their heart out. On the contrary, *we* should be helping them get out of this 'universe of fear'.

Again, the reader may ask, won't we become indulgent and pamper our children into mediocrity? Of course, we need to help the student build rigor, in academic and other areas. To this end, it is essential to make firm and clear demands on a student; but these have to be made in a relationship of affection and trust between the adult and child. Fear of our rejection and disapproval does not play a role here.

This is a fine line the adult needs to walk, more easily said than done. It calls for the creation of a different ethos at home and at school, beginning with an honest attempt at understanding *our* own compulsions and anxieties.

Being and Becoming: Some Thoughts on Adolescence and Fear

Aarti Kawlra

Adolescence is marked in every culture by what anthropologists have called 'rites of passage' involving the social recognition of entry into puberty, usually through a formal ritual or ceremony. These states of being are also associated with what has been called the 'danger' of being betwixt and between childhood and adulthood. The experience of being in this state is often linked with the fear of becoming (*or not becoming*) something. This paper explores the ontology of fear among young adults who, as they leave their teenage years behind, must face a world filled with randomness and responsibility.

Instead of positing a moral framework of analysis of fear, where fear is adjudged a vice and fortitude a virtue, in K's writings we see a more dialogic approach to the question of fear. To problematize fear then would be to view it as a response to something such as a threat. In the world of the teenager this threat is of having to give up established habits and comforts that are known and predictable. It is the potential of loss of the reassurance of past routines in the future of becoming a responsible adult.

Immediately after high school board exams there is a euphoria followed by a dull pain that begins to grow slowly and insidiously. It is the fear grounded in the loss of structures of time—of moving out of the daily rhythm of going to school and back. There is an uncanny reassurance in the weekly time-table and the inevitability of the weekend. It is not just the comfort of a structured curriculum that is at peril but also the stable orientation of one's body on a day to day level that is at risk. One post-school student even remarked that her daily diet had gone awry after having left school and the condition had indeed contributed to her failing health.

Leaving the comfort of home and school is also related to the threat of the loss of multiple witnesses of one's life on a daily basis. The need to interact and relate over various media such as phone, chat, sms or Skype are only ways of 'filling up' this emptiness with the 'haven of security' provided by one's friends and relatives. The sociality associated with the contemporary global world further lends itself to the restructuring of time as both instantaneous

and simultaneous, where one can be in many places, no place, or virtual space all at the same time. In this scenario, empty or momentary (meditative?) time recedes as does being attentive to one's own thoughts, feelings and actions, and along with it, the possibility of addressing and engaging with one's fears.

If there is reassurance of routine and fear of the loss thereof then, the becoming of an adult and its related loss of permitted irresponsibility as a teenager is equally fear worthy. The fear of having to 'fend for oneself' or becoming responsible means moving out of the car pool and taking public transportation; meeting and socialising with new people and from whom you may not receive unconditional love or acceptance; taking care of one's own bodily hygiene, health and safety. Likewise there is the fear of having to adopt and adapt to new thought patterns and paradigms outside of the known and the familiar. It is akin to having to jump across a deep chasm (of thought patterns) in a single big leap of faith. Parental beliefs are safe but having one's own version of reality, or attempting to forge one, means having to lose existing beliefs and values.

Fear of the unknown or of becoming an adult is not only about acquiring new thought patterns but also abdicating habituated thoughts which in turn influence behaviour among young adults. The dominant paradigm of adulthood is socio-economic success. But challenging that is dangerous. Doing so would not only raise the wrath of authority figures such as parents and mentors but also make one 'different' and even a possible social misfit in the future. The imperative to conform is not coincidental but part of this habitus of fear.

We have seen that both structures of time and structures of thought are the two anchors of fear among adolescents. In K's words:

'Thought is the origin of fear; time gives soil to fear. So one has to understand fear and be free of fear—not the fear of the snake, but the deep down fear which gives sorrow, the fear which prevents affection, the fear which clouds the mind, the fear which creates conflict, and the fear which brings about darkness …'

Fear is the anxiety of being and becoming or not being or not becoming something sometime in the future. Escape from the complexities of this dynamic passage or a flight from fear is the desire to maintain security of structures of both time and thought. Young adults are entangled not so much in fear but in the structures that maintain and promote fear. Can we look at fear outside of both the past and the future? Can we see it and comprehend it; acknowledge it and experience it for what it is without reference to a desirable past or a threatening future?

Teachers' Fears: Some Scenarios

Alok Mathur

Teachers are human beings too. And being human, they share in the fears that human beings live with. But what specific kinds of fears might colour the lives of teachers? The following 'imagined' first person vignettes attempt to portray an interior view of situations that could give rise to anxieties, worries and fears among teachers.

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'Why did I become a teacher?' is a question that haunts me every now and then. I am told that it is a 'noble profession', and that I would be contributing to building the future generation. I know that for me the impulse to teach came from a simpler feeling: I wanted to share in the life of growing young people. And I must admit that after a few years of teaching I do still enjoy much of the daily interactions I have with my students. However, when I look around me, and hear what people actually have to say about schools and teachers, I worry that I may be in the wrong place. The pace of life is so fast today. Many people I know are moving from job to job, gathering experiences, getting quantum jumps in their pay-packets, building their careers. Am I getting 'left behind'? Am I stagnating? What will my future be? With a few more years of teaching the same subject in the same school, will I be typecast as the 'school master' who never 'progressed' in life? Will I be seen as a failure? Perhaps even by my parents and relatives? I know that they worry about my marriage prospects. Whenever such thoughts come to my mind, I try to push them away, just put my head down and try to think of the next day with my students. It is they who keep me going.

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I have completed one more round of revision with my students for the upcoming terminal exams. But some of them still seem worried. I can see it in their faces, and in the way they ask me, 'Sir, will such and such come for the exam', 'Can you show me how to do this once again' etc. And this in turn worries me. I have often grappled with this problem: how to teach the subject well and yet meet the demands of an overloaded syllabus, and

also prepare them for the types of questions that are expected to come in the exam. It seems nearly impossible in the limited time available. When I have tried to have a fuller discussion and explore the topic at hand, a few students become impatient and request me to 'stick to the syllabus'. They seem mainly keen on increasing their exam scores. I enjoy my subject and through my teaching I have wanted to share my own interest in it with students. But given the type of syllabus and exams, and the attitude of these students (I know I cannot blame them; the parents and the school administrators are also pushing them with their expectations) I feel that I am caught between the devil and the deep sea. Often I have had to call my weaker students home to help them catch up with topics that I have had to rush through in class. During this pre-exam phase, along with some of my students, I too end up having sleepless nights. I am also worried about their exam results, about what their parents will think, and how the administrators will judge me.

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I had my first class with a new batch of Class X students. It was unnerving. I know that these are young adolescents. I have known several previous batches of adolescents, and there were always some who were a little wayward or naughty. I would figure them out soon enough and manage to befriend them, or at least handle them adequately. But this group was 'something else'! I could sense a kind of hostility behind their impassive faces and refusal to be drawn into a 'friendly discussion'. There seems to be a 'gang' among them which calls the shots and for some reason they had decided that they were not going to cooperate with me. I have known of chits being passed among students in class, but here I could sense that mobile phones in silent mode were being used to communicate messages. They seemed to be very clever and practised at this. I was hardly prepared for something like this. Since I could not penetrate their stony silence, I was left with no choice but to adopt a lecture mode for most of my class, and ended by asking them to copy instructions I wrote on the board. I am left with a queasy feeling in the pit of my stomach. Should I discuss this with my colleagues (who I know have always spoken negatively of this batch!)? Or should I wait a while and make my own efforts at establishing some kind of a relationship first? Will I be able to reach out to them? When I think of that blur of faces in front of me, it makes me nervous even now.

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Last week I had an upsetting encounter with a parent and my principal, which made me want to quit my job! Yes, I know that I was angry with Suresh for his behaviour in the class. He is one of our bright students and generally comes first in most tests and examinations. Having been made much of by many teachers, he had become rather cocky and sometimes even rude. I was concerned that not only was he making his

own personality rather offensive, but also affecting the atmosphere of the group. I had it in mind that he needed to be toned down and made to feel more responsible. On that particular day, I noticed ripples of disturbance suppressed giggles and annoyed glances—emanating from him. I realized that he was surreptitiously playing with a mobile and passing around some jokes or comments. I walked over to him and took his mobile away (these are not allowed in our school and are meant to be confiscated). He turned on me and rudely demanded to have it back. I told him to see the principal if he wanted it back, and asked him to leave the class. He left fuming. Later in the day, when I went to speak to the principal, I saw Suresh's father in his office. The man looked accusingly at me, and told me that Suresh had special permission to bring a mobile to school since he was going for IIT coaching classes soon after school and had to travel alone by bus. When I tried to explain what Suresh had been up to, the principal cut me short and asked me to restore the mobile to the father. He also told me that I should have first checked with Suresh why he had a mobile, before taking action. I felt unheard, humiliated, and deeply sad that Suresh would now become even more unresponsive to correction. I did not know how I would face him or this class ever again. If it had not been for a repentant Suresh, who later came quietly and sincerely apologized to me, I would probably have been forced to give in my resignation letter. I feel severely let down by the authorities. They seem to view parents as 'clients' who are not to be displeased.

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I was passing by the staff room when I overheard these comment, 'He is a bit too sincere … or maybe just a workaholic … I don't know why he spends *all* his time with his books or with students.' Someone responded, 'I think he is just anti-social … thinks he is a bit superior … does not like to chat or gossip with us. What would be the harm if he could let his hair down once in a while?' Another added, 'I think he is just adding up 'brownie points' with the administration … has ambitions of becoming an HOD perhaps.' They all laughed and the conversation moved on. But I was left wondering, 'Who are they referring to? Could it be me? But don't I talk to most of my colleagues … though I do prefer the company of students … I know I am perhaps a bit shy with some of my colleagues, especially those who go on endlessly complaining about this or that.' I was now certain that they meant me. But what did they mean by the ambition of becoming an HOD? I was disturbed and uneasy by what seemed to me as ungracious images that these colleagues held about me. Again I asked myself, 'Why did I become a teacher?'

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On the bus going home, it was raining and darkness was descending early. A lot of disconnected images and emotions were

going through my mind. All around me was the chatter and occasional squeals of students, glad to be going home after a long day at school. I too had had a busy day: five teaching periods, a staff meeting, one meeting with a parent, supervision of the after-school games period. Images of various students, a sheaf of test papers to be corrected, a worksheet half completed, flashed through my mind. I looked out of the window, seeing streaks of neon and yellow sodium lights flash by, briefly illuminating hurrying figures under umbrellas and huddled shapes under shelters. My thoughts shot forward home, and images of my father lying sick in bed floated in … my mother fussing by his side, waiting for me to return and relieve her … I was anxious now to reach. But the bus, with the students and me ensconced within, whined and jerked at its own pace through the wet streets. Looking out at the jangling jigsaw of this urban world, my mind suddenly wondered about the disconnected meanings of our lives together. Though we held by same the structure and shared some daily communication in school … what were they and I learning? What was the purpose of this education? How did it relate to our lives outside of school? How did it make a difference to the social world which they and I are part of? Did we care about living our lives well? Did we consider these other people out in the rain and wind? What connection did we have with wider world? What is our own place in the scheme of things? The sorrow of unanswered questions welled up inside, as I wondered 'Was this the way a future generation would come into being?' My world suddenly seemed a dark and lonely place.

Our Inner Landscape

Venkatesh Onkar

Over the centuries, the theories we have devised have gradually changed our image of ourselves, and in so doing they have subtly altered the contents of consciousness. True, consciousness is a robust phenomenon; it doesn't change simply because of the opinions we have about it. But it does change through practice (think of wine connoisseurs, perfume designers, musical geniuses). Human beings in other historical epochs—during the Vedic period of ancient India, say, or during the European Middle Ages, when God was still perceived as a real and constant presence—likely knew kinds of subjective experience almost inaccessible to us today … Meaning does change structure, though slowly. And the structure in turn determines our inner lives, the flow of conscious experience.

Thomas Metzinger, *The Ego Tunnel*

We haven't really paid much attention to thought as a process. We have engaged in thoughts, but we have only paid attention to the content, not to the process. Why does thought require attention? Everything requires attention, really. If we ran machines without paying attention to them, they would break down. Our thought, too, is a process, and it requires attention, otherwise it's going to go wrong.

David Bohm, *On Dialogue*

One of Krishnamurti's key concerns in setting up his schools was the possibility of learning about ourselves—the complex, dynamic inner emotional and cognitive landscape that is our daily life. He stressed that this 'learning' has some basic properties: it is not a cumulative, linear process; it is based on a continuing living awareness of the processes of everyday life;

and that for it to happen, there must be an environment of security, not an environment based on fear, reward and punishment and authority. Of course, he also went on to state that 'learning' can have a profound and shattering impact on the consciousness of the individual and, by implication, on social and global structures and processes.

It seems possible, in order to facilitate this learning in schools, to remove some of the grosser frameworks that bring about fear and insecurity in the child. Removing the obvious pressures of reward and punishment reassures the student that she can approach adults and peers in her life with a broad feeling of trust and acceptance. Doing away with competitive structures such as exams can promote a basic sense of pleasure in learning academics and other life skills. The benefits of such a humane approach to education, one that emphasizes the child's well-being rather than humiliation and fear as the key to motivation, are very real and apparent.

However, even if you explicitly set out to create an environment that is focussed on self-understanding in a non-punitive environment, there is still fear and insecurity in both adults and children. Removing 'external' forces such as exams and seeking to fix the environment may be only a partial step. For example, children still look upon adults as authority figures, with all the subtle undercurrents that this implies! They compare themselves with each other in different dimensions: looks, ability, popularity. There are very tangible pressures regarding their peers, how they will fit into their peer group, whether they will find acceptance. There is the inevitable sense of loneliness, of being an outcast. The bonds of friendship and companionship can be both enabling and tremendously fragile. Life without exams can bring about a sense of drift, of complacency. And finally, particularly among the older ones, there is worry about the future, about livelihood and identity. All of these emotional currents are of course very much a part of the adult's life as well, albeit in a modulated form.

So we are not looking to 'fix' the environment to address these powerful emotions; they just don't seem to go away, but rather assume subtler and finer forms. The attempt, rather, is to nurture, in a cooperative manner, some questions and approaches, necessarily tentative and sometimes tenuous, connected to our inner lives, against a broadly sceptical and investigative backdrop.

In the Krishnamurti schools, there is often a deliberate attempt to create dialogue spaces every week, in which children and adults look together at the complexities (and sometimes the simplicity!) of our shared emotional lives together in a manner that tries to be investigative rather than prescriptive. A deep insight into our psychological lives and patterns carries the possibility of a radical change that moral prescriptions, rules and punishments simply do not. A brief flash of insight in my brain carries far more authenticity and weight than a dreary system of dos and don't s, poorly understood, vaguely resented.

Many simple aspects of daily life lend themselves to creating this atmosphere of reflection and questioning. Among younger children, daily incidents are often focal points for creating a reflective atmosphere (why do we like to hide each others' shoes? Why are we in such a rush to be first in the queue?) With slightly older children, in the Middle School, the questions in the dialogue space can become slightly more abstract: for example, do we see that our relationships are fraught? In what ways are they problematic? What does it feel like to be jealous? With the seniors, we try together to be aware of our inner landscape on an ongoing basis, in a dynamic fashion. We try to be aware of the fact that this inner world has a life and complexity and structure of its own that may be (to some extent at least, or a large extent?) quite independent of 'external' events. This is quite an abstract jump and it is a still question to us whether it is appropriate to pursue such lines of enquiry with this age group.

The format for such dialogues is simple: we sit together, adults and students, and we can take up any question that anybody brings up. There are no 'rules' regarding these questions. The idea is to investigate in a non-hierarchical, non-prescriptive and open manner. In reality, of course, there are many snags! Adults are quick to jump in and direct the flow of meaning, interpret the children to each other and clarify problems. Children often seem stuck in a web of intense self-consciousness, brought on more by the complexities of the peer dynamics rather than 'fear' of the adult. The beauty of the structure is that these very blocks can become part of the fuel for dialogue! There are no static, perfect answers that we aspire to. We would like to open up psychological questions that as a group we can understand together in a simple and non-judgemental fashion.

One 'experiment' we tried with the senior students over a term was to sit quietly for about twenty minutes in a session, and spend the remaining

hour looking at what we went through during those twenty minutes. Another exercise we try (with almost the entire school, except the very youngest ones) is to spend half an hour every evening in school quietly, being outdoors and not occupied with any specific activity (reading, sketching etc). Apart from these, we can as educational institutions build brief yet quite deliberate moments during the day in which there is a pause, a slowing down of both the inner and outer sense of rush, a pause during which a sense of scepticism and wonder can take hold.

It is important to us that the adults are excited by these questions and experiments, independent of their impact upon children, and that the teachers have regular dialogues fuelled by our own curiosity and discoveries about our psychological lives, the process of identity formation, the ways in which emotion guides our perceptions, and all the other subtle and fascinating processes of our inner landscapes.

It is also important to us that this questioning spirit is not just restricted to specific times of the week, but rather that the energy of the questions spills over into the most mundane and everyday events. Unwashed plates, dripping taps, the huge sense of rush that is evident in our lives, our incapacity to be sensitive to the needs of others in so many areas: any of these issues, so obvious in daily living, can be the focus of our investigation and can quite naturally lead into deep areas of questioning.

Trying to do all of the above is like walking a tightrope: balancing seriousness with humour, deep emotional currents with lightness. We would like to emphasize a broadly scientific approach to self-enquiry, one that recognizes that individual opinions and feelings, however deeply held, must give way in the face of collective, abstract insights. There are of course many traps for the unwary: our tendency to use our life histories and anecdotes as 'evidence,' our very deeply rooted biases that lead us to very partial outlooks, the sketchy details revealed by our observations. In spite of the pitfalls, we would like to communicate to young people, and to rediscover for ourselves, that this process of self observation and learning is immensely valuable and enriching, and that it has repercussions that stretch far beyond our personal lives and immediate circumstances.

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