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Interest in Everything

continued from last month

In going a little deeper into the discipline of the mind in continuously being interested in everything, we should not lose sight of the fact that in this illusionary existence in which purpose is not really separate from life, everything man does is done either in vain or in vanity. The mystic chooses, rather than to do things in vanity, to act in vain, chooses rather than to be interested in nothing, to be interested in everything, while knowing that there is nothing to be known. This is a very important and powerful point, that life, existence, purpose, meaning, reality, logic, progress, evolution, all these and many other things, exist only subjectively in our mind, in our life experience, in our value structure. Although there is nothing to be known, although the greatest purity is in not knowing, the mystic attempts to know everything. This may seem contradictory, but it is the first concrete, meaningful key to our attitude in life.

Living in vain is a new kind of attitude; it has to do with what we really realize out of the experiences that life has brought us, or what we have made out of it. When a candle burns, it emanates heat and light, it gives of itself. Its very existence is transmitted as it burns, and after the candle has gone it is soon forgotten. We might say that in its burning it is accomplishing a purpose, but if the sun was shining or the light was on, the candle would be burning in vain. It would bring us light, but the light is always there, just as the darkness, to enable us to see. But should we see? Should there really be light when there is light? Should there be light when we make it to counter the darkness? If you think in a subtle way, accepting that everything happens which is supposed to happen, you begin to wonder whether you should light the candle, take this action, live your life.

To all these questions there are as many answers as there are minds and people. There are as many answers in every person as there are moods and attitudes, yet that person who has sufficient interest to look at everything, to look at the inter-relationship of himself with all that is around, will find and uncover continually more and more meaning.

The average farmer, about to sow some seeds, will not be thinking strenuously of anything, or if he is he will be wondering whether the seeds will grow properly, if the weather will be favourable and whether the market will offer the right price. Most of us with everything we do, do not think very far ahead, and very few think far behind. What farmer will be interested in whether or not the seeds should be sown, or in the meaning behind his sowing the seeds? The present and the future inter-relate. The seed he sows will grow into a plant which will take up an empty peaceful space. Few will think that this plant will give the chance for different insects to come to it and to suffer by being trapped or captured by others. Few will think of the incredible

suffering, life and survival beyond the little plant that they sow. Few will be interested in whether the people who eat the grain will receive healing from it. Few will think that it might be better not to grow food, so that the earth could return to peace and the long drawn-out emptiness of the lives of millions of people might be altered in another way. Very few people are interested in what they are actually doing, therefore they live a very superficial life. Generally we do what is easiest, what we like to do, which means that we confine ourselves to what we know and do not open ourselves to new things, which we might like far more. It seems that we often do not open ourselves to the experience, the satisfaction, the crucifixion of having done what we do not like doing. Because we are not really interested in the inter-relationship, in the meaning, in the function of our existence in the universe, it has no meaning. Meaning comes into the consciousness which is aware, which can see: meaning comes to the heart that has bled, that has given: meaning comes to the mind that has thought, that has questioned: and to most of us it comes very little.

One could ask in which way the increase of our interest in everything would help us to develop greater knowledge, greater wisdom. It is important to understand the meaning of the word, 'development'. Grass was developed, through man's interest, into wheat, and the only way to see that wheat was developed is by comparing it, not to wheat, but to grass. Thus you can understand that development has no meaning in an isolated cell, it has meaning in a scale of existence, albeit illusory.

I once met an old lady, a very wise, but very average American. She had met and worked for many saints and sages who came to America, people who, in their way of thinking, were masters. All of them had lived in monasteries and followed rigorous practices and disciplines and had developed strong magnetism and influence. When they visited America, however, all of them fell sooner or later, either through sudden wealth, sudden sexual freedom, the incredible power they had over people, never having understood the real need of a search, never having seen what American culture was all about. The conclusion this old lady reached was that it was easy to be a saint in the Himalayas. To a certain degree these people had developed because they were extremely interested, they focused their whole mind, thought, concentration, life energy, in one or two points, in total disregard and isolation from the real illusory world. When they transplanted themselves from Kashmir or Rishi Kesh to Los Angeles or New York City, they were faced with people, with thoughts, emotions and ideas which they had never met, never been tested with, and never developed within themselves. In the end she saw that a good person living in the world is more developed and has more meaning and depth than all those 'masters'. It is true that up to a point you can develop by isolating yourself and meditating, but it is living without any comparison. It is not developing to that height, that level of thought, that ability to conceive which, as a world-wide evolution, is taking place. Many people are interested in meditation, but not so many are interested in computer programming, yet computer programming is so similar that you could call it meditation. But most people would think that it would seem artificial, few would understand the incredible wonder that we have been able to capture consciousness, at least in part, functioning separately from ourselves. We are all interested in mantras, but few of us realize that the words with extremely powerful logarithmic and other functional effects used by

programmers are exactly the same as mantrams. We are all interested in meditation, but few of us realize that the simple exercises of the Canadian Air Force perform the same physiological and psychological tuning on the mechanism of our psyche. Very few of us have realized that as we move on from culture to culture, from specialization to specialization, gradually more and more normal functions of our life need to be replaced by artificial things. Few of us see that although we may know more, although we can arrive at a higher scale of abstract thinking, at the same time the interest, the passion, the experience of being at one with things with which we need to be at one, is being diminished.

We do not know how most of the things in our life work. We flick on the radio or the television and they work, we turn on the tap and it works. A typical example is the birth-control pill. Less than half of the people using the pill knows how it works. Thousands of people in the world are searching for somebody to give them meaning in their life, while all that really needs to happen is for them to take an interest in all that comes to them. When a car passes you, do you ever look at the licence plate and wonder why it has that number? If someone cuts in on you on the road, do you wonder why? Do you look at him? There are three kinds of people who cut in: those who cut in hard and look the other way, those who look and look away, look and look away again, and there are those who cut in and look straight at you. What is the difference? When you cut in on them, which category do you fall into?

The whole crux of development is that no-one can do it for you, you have to do it yourself, but there are certain rules which will help you to be more able to function with interest in life. The first rule is that everything is equally meaningless, therefore you can be interested in everything. If there was one thing which in and of itself was absolutely meaningful, then that is the only thing in which you should be interested, but if everything is meaningless you can easily and with complete indifference be interested in everything. If you are so interested in something that you can no longer be interested in something else, the beginning of conservatism sets in, the beginning of closing the mind to the only permanency, which is change. Everything is like a cloud of thousands of butterflies flying along your path; look at it, dance with it and let it go on its way. Otherwise you will become a butterfly collector.

The second rule is that in the initiatic experience of trying to be interested, there must be passion. If you are going to hate someone, hate him passionately, because the meaninglessness which you will experience will be far greater. If you are going to love someone, let your heart break, bleed to death, because the totality of the experience, in the end, is going to give a far greater experience than if you give yourself conditionally.

The third rule is that everyone has a sleep cycle. Life is a dance and every person has a particular rhythm in which he or she fits best. Every day we go through cycles of activity or passivity, we go through cycles in which we should be reading a book or discussing philosophy, and other cycles in which we should be playing soccer or digging graves. We go through cycles of strong expression and strong impression. There seem to be four basic cycles: one is to rise at about five-thirty and go to bed at about eight-thirty, one is to rise at about seven and go to bed at about ten, one is to get up at

about eight-thirty to ten o'clock and go to bed at about midnight, and there are many who are at their most strong after midnight, about two o'clock. In fact, it is a tradition, whatever master you follow, that the best time for meditation is two o'clock in the morning. If you can learn to be more in harmony with these cycles as they flow in yourself, all sorts of things will suddenly become soft and transparent, new beauty and subtlety will appear. We all want to feel high and good. We can take drugs or meditate, but one of the best ways to feel high is to be tired, a certain satisfied tiredness, when there is not too much food in the stomach and not too much activity left to do; a physical rather than a mental tiredness. You must be able to have enough chemical reaction in your life cycle, so that twice a week you have been really, wonderfully tired; not over-worked or depressed, just satisfied, feeling in your bones that you have lived.

The fourth rule is that there is nothing that cannot be learned. When we stop learning we are no longer children; there is not really any period between being a child and being an old man or woman. A child always learns practically, not theoretically; language, muscle co-ordination, psychology, how to get his way, how to do things, how to behave. Suddenly we reach a point when we can no longer learn, primarily because we have no interest and do not make an effort, but also because the methods of education through which we have gone, have forced us to learn with the mind active and the body still. The body should sit still when it is tired, so there is a dissociation in our education, an alienation, and eventually learning stops. Being interested really means wondering, being ready to learn, and life is the greatest teacher. We can learn to a certain extent from books, depending upon how we read and how we learn, but the real learning is in doing it, in the direct contact with it. There is nothing which cannot be learned. There is not one person who could not learn and understand anything. All of life is a game of learning and unlearning. Learning is establishing knots of relationships, and unlearning is unravelling these knots and seeing what they have bound together. Learning and unlearning are both spiritual development; the more you must have to unlearn, the more you must have to learn.

The last rule is to be interested in the things you see that inter-relate to you. You cannot be interested in everything, but if you follow the rule to have a questioning attitude, why you are here, what your relationship is to what you do, this continuous researching and evaluating will always bring some answer. It is when you become interested in things which do not relate to you that there is no answer, simply because there is not yet any relationship to you. The answer is what you can see, and therefore, for every person the answer is different.

There are all simple but important points. Accept the freedom to see that nothing matters, approach everything that does not matter with passion. The matter becomes the passion that you give to it, but this can only work when you remember that nothing matters, otherwise it is not passion but possession. Examine your rhythm, your life cycle. Most people sleep too much because they sleep at the wrong time, if you could sleep exactly when you should sleep, you would not have to sleep for so long. If you cannot do enough to be healthily tired, then your life is unhealthy at its very base. People with no vitality, which comes from lack of exercise, are not alive, they are hanging around, and they are the ones who are searching for something fantastic outside - but where?

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