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FROM INDIA WITH PEACE

When I saw the announcement of the "Universal Peace Conference" organised by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University on Mount Abu in Rajasthan in India, I thought I would like to organize such a conference in London. Its "agenda" contained: Resources of the Mind, Health and the Brain/Mind Connection, the Role of Women, Human Rights and the Philosophy of Religion. This approach to peace appealed to me. My contact with this University had been Sister Jayanti whom I had invited as a speaker on "Peace is Possible" and in the "Turning Points" series of talks at St. James's Church right next to Piccadilly Circus in the heart of London. I was led to this church on my search for the right framework from within which I could make a contribution to world peace by setting up "Peace Network", a local information service provided by a micro-computer which should become connected to a world-wide network of peace computers.

I needed to settle into a new working and living environment after having left my past in Geneva and moved around London as a peace gypsy. Thus it turned out to be impossible for me to organize such a peace conference but I did not feel entitled to attend the one in India. That is what I explained to Sister Jayanti when she invited me personally at the beginning of the year. However, she suggested that the power of thought could make it possible for me to be there . . . I therefore acted on my thinking and wrote three letters. One to my mother (she sent me the money, but I need hers for survival and not for extravagancies like these, I feel) and one to a Dutchman who is spending his time and money on letting the world know of Japan's article 9 of their constitution which says "The right of belligerence (leading wars) OF THE STATE will not be recognized". In spite of this constitutional intent not to maintain military forces, Japan is military power No. 9 today . . . My third letter went to a lady who is like a guardian angel for many of us who try to bring a change of consciousness and attitude into this world. I had never asked her for money before, but here she sent me the cheque and thus I was on the plane to Bombay 10 days later . . .

I had been to India as an ordinary tourist "on search of religion" in 1970, so I was expecting the cultural shock of feeling guilty about my material wealth. But I was to experience the cultural shock of spiritual wealth on Mount Abu among these Brahma Kumaris (Brothers and Sisters in God) practising Raj Yoga, the royal yoga of meditation remembering that we are a peaceful soul in connection with the ocean of peace and bliss where we come from. Om Shanti (I am a peaceful soul) is the password to this family of mankind whose spiritual wealth is expressed in the ashram as well. "Baba", God-Father, provides for everything: food, shelter, conference registration were free. We only had to pay for our travel. And even when I lost my jacket, I was given another one, not on loan, but for good, from Baba. So much generosity, so much care, so much concern, so much love in order to make it possible that we Westerners and non-Raj Yogis had everything we possibly could ask for - we have a lot to learn from them! Imagine 3000 people meditating in an auditorium which had barely been finished, which has simultaneous translation equipment and which was decorated with flowers and petals and love and devotion.

There were many "stars" of the conference: Robert Muller, the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, the past Prime Minister of Costa Rica who is now setting up a Peace University in his country, the past prime minister of Nepal, Swami Satchidananda, an Indian who has become famous as a "guru" in America and who got us to sing "Om Shanti" when the electricity broke down for the umpteenth time . . .

However, stars don't make a conference. It always boils down to you and me. The contacts we make, the relationships we form, the experiences we have in a large group, away from our normal environment, our regular ways of thinking and acting. I came back feeling inspired, empowered and connected. Inspired from dreams which clarified what I had to do once I was back in London. Empowered to do what I believe in: Networking for Peace, i.e. putting people in touch with each other so that they support each other in what they are doing to build a more peaceful society and what peace means to them. And connected with many, many peaceminded people all over the world. It helps to know that one is not alone in one's thinking and approach to doing. I had two occasions to speak in public about what we are doing at St. James's, I called in one meeting for global networking and one with Germans (my nationality and hence my strong commitment to peace) and I established a wonderful relationship with an Indian journalist who has made the Peace Network newsworthy by putting my concept and project into journalistic language and by sending it to all Indian newspapers through his press agency.

And I have built relationships which means cooperation for the future: with the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University which has some 600 centres world-wide and close working relationships with the United Nations, with "Transformation 2000: a Peace Network" from San Diego, California, with Carl and Jena Shapley whose "First World Congress for the New Age" I had attended in Florence in 1978 and with others who have already sent me their papers when they got home from India.

You would have to ask the organisers in order to know what the conference has achieved for them. I know that one of its results was a Universal Peace Charter which is spiritually based and appeals to peace in personal, professional and international life. The conference has furthermore created the energy necessary to for Brahma Kumaris to contribute to the Conference of non-aligned Countries which was held in New-Delhi shortly afterwards. I wish that Mount Abu's Universal Peace Hall could once unite all world leaders. If they do not respond to the call of the United Nations, they might respond to the call of gentle peaceful souls who call for love, peace and enlightenment not only among "ordinary" people but above all among those who find themselves in "unordinary" positions.

I have come home with Robert Muller's "we have to accelerate our forces" in my heart knowing that I have to continue walking along my path and dancing my dance. And when things become difficult among Western peaceless minds, I can remember Eastern peacefulness: all 3000 conference participants dotted over a rock above a wide plane in the sunset, with music and sweets provided by Raj Yogis - no words. Everybody was meditating, contemplating, breathing.

Om Shanti !
