Chapter 6

Initiative

We have been talking about fear, and I think if we can go more deeply into it, perhaps we shall awaken to initiative. Do you know what that word initiative means? To initiate means to begin. I will explain further as I go along.

Don’t you think that in old countries like India—because of various things like climate, overpopulation, and poverty—tradition and authority control thinking? Have you not noticed in yourself how you want to obey your teacher, obey your parents or your guardians, to follow an ideal, follow a guru? The spirit of obedience, the following, the being told what to do—that creates an authority, does it not? You know what ‘authority’ is? It implies someone to whom you look up, someone whom you want to obey, to follow. Because you yourself are afraid, because you yourself are uncertain, you create an authority. And by the creation of authority, you not only follow but you want others to follow; you take a delight in following and in forcing others to follow.

I do not know if you have noticed in yourself that behind this desire to obey, to follow, to imitate, to comply with somebody else’s wishes, is fear—fear of not doing the right thing, fear of going wrong. So, authority

पहल

हम लोग भय के बारे में चर्चा करते रहे हैं और मेरा विचार है कि यदि हम इसमें और गहराई तक जा सकें, तब शायद हमें पहल के बारे में समझ उजागर हो पाएं। क्या आप जानते हैं कि पहल करने का अर्थ क्या होता है? पहल करना यादी अपनी ओर से शूरूआत करना। जैसे—जैसे इस पर बातचीत करता, मैं इसे और भी सप्तर करता चलूँगा।

क्या आपको ऐसा नहीं लगता कि भारत जैसे प्राचीन देशों में—जलवायु, जनसंख्या, बसी आदि कारणों से—परंपरा और सत्ता-प्रामाण्य का सोच-विचार पर निर्भरर होता है? क्या आपने खुद ही इस बात पर ध्यान नहीं दिया कि कैसे आप अपने विश्वास, माता—पिता और अभिभावक की आज़ा के आनुसार चलना चाहते हैं, किसी आदेश, किसी गुरु का अनुशंसण करना चाहते हैं? आज़ापालन करने की यह गहरी भावना, अनुकरण की यह प्रकृति, इस बात की ज़रूरत महसूस करना कि कोई हमें बताए कि हमें क्या करना है—क्या यही सत्ता को जम्म नहीं देता है? क्या आप जानते हैं कि ‘सत्ता’ क्या है? इसका तार्किक है कोई ऐसा जिससे आप दिशा-निर्देश पाने की उम्मीद करते हों, जिसकी आज़ा को पूरा करना चाहते हों, जिसका अनुशंसण करना चाहते हों। चूँकि आप खुद ही भयभीत हैं, क्योंकि आप खुद दुःखित में हैं, इसलिए आप किसी सत्ता का निर्माण कर लेते हैं। और एक बार इस प्रकार की कोई सत्ता खड़ी कर लेने के बाद आप केवल उसका अनुकरण ही नहीं करते बल्कि आप यह चाहते लगते हैं कि अन्य लोग भी वैसा ही करें, यथायोग्य अनुकरण करने में तथा दूसरों को भी अनुकरण करने के लिए बायक करने में आपको एक तरह का आनंद आने लगता है।
gradually kills any kind of initiative—which is, to know how to do something easily, spontaneously, freely, out of yourself. Most of us lack that because the sense of creativity is being destroyed in us. For instance, you may initiate some mischief of your own, you may tear up, destroy, create some mischief, but that feeling of doing something for yourself, out of yourself, without being asked, without being told what to do, that spirit of initiative is lost because you are always surrounded by authority, by the older generation who seem to think they know what they are about—although they do not—and who control you. So gradually, the sense of doing things because you love to do them goes out of yourself and is destroyed.

Have you ever walked down the road and picked up a stone that is in the way, picked up a piece of paper or torn rag, or planted a tree which you will care for? When you have not been told to do these things, you do them yourself, naturally; that is the beginning of initiative. When you see something to be mended, you mend it; when you see something that has to be done, without being told what to do, you do it, either in the kitchen or in the garden or in the house or on the road. Your mind gradually becomes free from fear, from authority, so you begin to do things yourself. I think it is very important to
do that in life; otherwise, you become mere gramophones, playing over and over again the same tune, and so you lose all sense of freedom.

But the older generation, the past generation, because of their nervous desires, their fears, their apprehensions of insecurity, want to protect you; they want to guide you; they want to hold you in fear, and through fear they gradually destroy in you the freedom to do things, to make mistakes, to find out, so that you begin to lose this extraordinary thing called initiative. Please ask your teachers about all this. You see how very few of us have that freedom—freedom not merely to do things but freedom out of which we want to do things. When you see somebody carrying a great weight, you want to help him, don’t you? When you see the dishes being washed, you want to do it yourself sometimes. You want to wash your own clothes, you want to do things out of freedom. Do you know what that means? If one goes into it very deeply, you will find an extraordinary creativity coming into being.

Truth is not something very far away, to be sought after, to be struggled and searched for. If you have freedom from the very beginning, from childhood, you will find as you mature and grow that there is initiative to do things spontaneously, easily, naturally, without being told
what to do. It is creative to write a poem, to be unafraid, to look at the stars, to let your mind wonder, to look at the beauty of the earth and the astonishing things that the earth holds. To feel all this is really an extraordinary activity, and you cannot feel it without that freedom, without that sense of initiative in which there is no authority, in which you do not obey merely because you are told what to do but do things naturally, freely, easily, happily.

As you go into it, you will see that you begin to take a tremendous interest in everything, in the way you walk, in the way you talk, in the way you look at people, in the feelings you have—because all these things matter very much. If you have cultivated intelligence, this sense of freedom, all the time while at school, then a few months of intense study will be sufficient for you to pass your examinations. But now, what you are doing is to be concerned all the time with studies, with books, and you do not know what is happening all around you.

Have you watched those village women carrying weights on their heads—cow-dung cakes, wood, hay, or fodder? How extraordinarily beautiful is their walk! Have you watched the so-called well-to-do people? Do you notice how heavy they grow and how dull, because they do not look at anything? They
are concerned only with their petty worries and their desires and with how to control their fears and their appetites, so they live in fear, and living in fear, they have to follow somebody, to obey, so that they create authority—the authority at one level of the policeman, of the lawyer, of the government, and also the spiritual authority of books, of leaders, of gurus—so that, in themselves, they lose the beauty of living, of suffering, of understanding.

That is why it is very important that while you are at this school, you should understand all these things. Go out one day and plant a tree and look after it all the time you are here. Find out what kind of tree to plant, what kind of manure to give it, and look after it. Then you will see something happening to you; you are close to the earth and not merely close to books. You will not be interested in books after you get a job; after you pass your examination you will never look at another book. But there are trees, numerous flowers, living animals all around. If you do not have sensitivity to all these, you lose initiative and your minds become very small, petty, trivial, jealous, envious. It is very important while you are at this school to consider all these things, so that your minds become awakened to them.

You know, scientists say that we are only functioning 15
percent. Our capacity to think is only 15 percent; probably, if we learned to function 50 percent we would do much more mischief. But without cultivating sensitivity, understanding, affection, kindliness, even with the 15 percent capacity we do a great deal of damage and mischief, and with 50 percent capacity but no kindliness, we would do monstrous things.

If you understand all this, there comes a feeling of freedom from fear. How can you understand if you just listen to these talks and forget them? Do not listen to them that way. Listen so that you can live without fear, without following somebody: listen to be free, not when you are old, but now.

To be free requires a great deal of intelligence. You cannot be free if you are a stupid person. Therefore, it is very important to awaken your intelligence while you are very young, and that intelligence cannot be when you are frightened, when you are following, when you want somebody to obey you or when you yourself obey somebody. All this requires a great deal of thinking over, and that is real education. The education that most of us now get is only superficial.