



From Teaching to Facilitation

Inwardising the Consciousness

(After a guided meditation on inwardising the consciousness and contacting Inner Peace. There was absolute quietude in the environment and the words travelled in silence.....)

Ordinarily we are so used to living on the surface of our being, externalised, all the time outwardised. Our 5 senses constantly take us away from our own centre, that is why when we get these few minutes to be with ourselves, to concentrate, to experience that inner peace that is there within us, we almost don't want to let go, we wish it could continue, but we lose the habit of its continuity, because we haven't built the bridge – the bridge between the outer consciousness and the inner consciousness. Psychic education is precisely this attempt to build this bridge between what we feel and we know that we are essentially and what we outwardly sometimes have to be. If we can work, if we can think, if we can teach with this inner poise, you can see how much of energy you would save, how much of time one would save. If one could teach our children to listen with this poise, to study with this poise, naturally, not just in moments of concentration, but as a regular, ordinary routine, how much of difficulty would be absolved. All the confusion, all the tension, all that would not be. You notice when you are centred within, your mind becomes clear, there is a clarity in your thought and you say only what you need to say; you don't waste your energy in useless things. When you are in a state of concentration and inner poise, this state will become contagious. It will spread to the entire classroom. Your students will feel this peace, this quiet energy and they will respond to it. Especially children – they are very open, open like little flowers, and a little bit of sunlight, a little bit of true consciousness, and they immediately open up, like the flowers do to the morning sun. And this thing is what is so important.

Yesterday, Sraddhalu spoke of love – the importance of love and compassion. How does one

begin to be in a state of love? It is not something emotional. It is an impersonal love. Again, one has to be poised within. The answer to every question is to learn this inner poise; to practise it and to let this become a way of life for you. In the beginning, there will be times when we lose it, very, very often. But that doesn't matter. Don't let that dishearten you. At least understand first how important it is. The Mother says, one true vibration of consciousness can change the course of events, can change the course and destiny of the individual, can change and create the right environment for learning. One true vibration of consciousness. The question comes, 'how to keep this state'. In the beginning, every time you find yourself getting dispersed, getting tense, step back. Learn to step back. What does this mean 'step back'? It means exactly what we did just now. Go within. Step back into yourself, into the centre of yourself. The moment you centre yourself, you are able once again to meet any situation in the right way. And do not be afraid of silence. Sometimes we feel that we have to keep on talking. If we keep quiet then it is not right. Not at all. If it takes a few minutes for you to centre, keep quiet for those few moments. You are not going to lose anything. When you come back and speak, you will speak with greater clarity, and depth, and consciousness. The whole business of education, the whole art of education, the whole science of teaching, is to intensify and heighten your consciousness. Do you know why? Because when we do it, we allow that space and time and opportunity and example for the child to do it. When he or she sees us with such poise, he feels within him, yes it is something worth acquiring, something that is worth doing, something that has a benefit and a value. This is one aspect of psychic education, I will take up the other aspects tomorrow, because it is too much to take up in one day. But in the meanwhile, what I would like to do is to take the many steps that are required for all of us to be able to truly practise this. There are 4 requirements to become a facilitator, a true guide - actually many more, but one has to focus first on the most important ones.

Selective transcript of 'From Teaching to Facilitation', a Talk by Ameeta Mehra, for school teachers, on the 3rd day of the conference (4th Nov'2000): A New Education for a New India: Integral Education.



To Be a Visionary

The first requirement is to have a Vision, an aim, a high ideal. This is very, very important. Unless you know where you want to go you won't reach there. The question is where do we want to go as teachers? What is our aim? You remember the story of the 3 teachers? And you remember that the 3rd teacher said: 'I am shaping the destiny of my nation, I am teaching children how to make history.' Now this is what distinguished her from the other teachers, and gave her a larger purpose. The Mother, in 'The Science of Living', begins by saying – the first and most important thing..... something very simple..... she says, 'an aimless life is a miserable life; everyone of you should have an aim but do not forget that on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life. So, make your aim high and wide, disinterested.' Disinterested means not uninterested, but not just based on one's personal desires, not only for oneself, but something bigger and greater than oneself. Because it is this aim - when we feel disheartened, when we feel 'what are we doing here, what is our true purpose, when I go to school year in and year out, day in and day out, what am I really doing' - it is this that you can constantly refer to. This will guide you. Even if it is unachievable, even if you feel today I am not able to do it, it doesn't matter. At least you have something to work towards, to look forward to, to grow, to progress, something worth doing and living for.

To Be a Reflective Practitioner

The 2nd most important requirement to become a true teacher and facilitator is to become more and more a reflective practitioner. To become conscious of yourself. To become conscious of what you do, why you do it, why you get angry, why you get depressed. This is being conscious of yourself as a person first. And then, secondly, in your teaching to always reflect each day and when you reflect, reflect first on your state of being, on your state of consciousness. Were you able to keep your inner centredness? Were you able to keep your poise? Firstly, on that, because as we said, it is this that creates the atmosphere for learning. Were you able to keep to your aim, your vision? Were you able to plan properly and teach properly? I know all of you must be doing that, because you are all experienced teachers, that's why I want to stress more on the other

component. It doesn't mean that this is not important, but I think you do it already.

To be a reflective practitioner – what does it mean? If you take your sheets, there is a passage here from The Mother, that says: "The school must be an occasion of progress for the teacher as well as for the student. Each must have the freedom to develop himself freely. One never applies a method well unless one has discovered it oneself. Otherwise it is as boring for the teacher as for the student."

"It is not so much the details of organisation as the attitude that must change. It seems that unless the teachers themselves get above the usual intellectual level, it will be difficult for them to fulfil their duty and accomplish their task."

If the school has to be an occasion of progress for the teacher, for you, as well as for the student, well, we will have to view everything quite differently, won't we? Each day when we return back from school, in the bus, whenever we find time, we will need to ask ourselves this question – Have I grown today? Have I done something new today? Have I progressed one tiny step towards my goal, towards my aim? Do I feel I have accomplished something worthwhile today? Do I feel that this day spent in the school with my students whom I love very dearly, has added something, has given something? What have I learnt? Do I feel full of joy on my way home? Do I feel full of enthusiasm, full of love, because something beautiful has been created? Do I look forward to the next day, to see the beautiful faces of my students? These are important questions, and the answers to these will give you an idea of what you need to concentrate on, and where you need to make that added effort. This is true education. It is not a mere principle or intellectual edict. It is a living experience. So, in your special page where you have written your aim and your vision, add something down about this. Put down some questions that you would like to ask yourself each day. Create a reflective diary for yourself and make it beautiful. We are so used to seeing things so drab and ordinary and yet we feel so happy when we see beauty. When we see beautiful flowers, candles, anything beautiful, the exhibition... it touches us, doesn't it? Well, why not make it a beautiful reflective diary? Write beautifully, draw, make this a present and a gift to yourself. Do you know as we grow up, we don't give time to ourselves, especially mothers and parents and all of us who have families. We get so busy with always giving of ourselves to everyone and everything around us. And I know



that's necessary, but it's very important to give something to yourselves, because that is how you are going to build something which you can share. Create that inner treasure because it is there, you just have to touch it. So, reflective questions... what did I do? What did I achieve today? Why did I do it? What was its impact? What were the consequences? How else could I have done it? And most importantly, what progress did I make today?

There is an exercise that The Mother has given, called Self-observation and Self-organisation. Because, when we say, observe yourself, become conscious of yourself, become reflective, very often, we don't really know how to do it and what to do. There is a very particular process of doing it, very scientific and very non-judgmental. It is important not to be too critical about oneself, because after all, one has to grow, and if we constantly see what all our faults are, we can get depressed and we won't want to do anything. So how do we observe ourselves without judgment, with love and compassion? This is the way.

"If in your mind you go over the various movements and reactions of the day like one repeating indefinitely the same thing, you will not progress. If this reviewing is to make you progress, you must find something within you in whose light you can be yourself your own judge, something which represents for you the best part of yourself, which has some light, some goodwill and which precisely is in love with progress. Place that before you and first pass across it as in a cinema all that you have done, all that you have felt,..." Try and practice it now. You imagine as though your thoughts, your emotions, your impulses, everything were projected on a cinema screen. And you just see it pass by you. But, you see it pass by you with something that you hold as an ideal, as the central point of your being, your love for progress. And your entire day passes by you or your entire week passes by you on the screen and you watch it. You look at the luminous screen that is before you and you see "certain things pass by well, without throwing a shadow; others, on the contrary, throw a little shadow; others yet cast a shadow altogether black and disagreeable. You must do this very sincerely, as though you were playing a game: under such circumstances I did such and such a thing, feeling like this and thinking in this way; I have before me my ideal of knowledge and self-mastery, well, was this act in keeping with my ideal or not? If it was, it would not leave any shadow on the screen, which would remain transparent, and

one would not have to worry about it. If it is not in conformity, it casts a shadow. Why has it left this shadow? What was there in this act that was contrary to the will to self-knowledge and self-mastery? Most often you will find that it corresponds to unconsciousness - then you file it among unconscious things and resolve that next time you will try to be conscious before doing anything. But in other cases you will see that it was a nasty little egoism, quite black, which had come to distort your action or your thought. Then you place this egoism before your "light" and ask yourself: "Why has it the right to make me act like that, think like that?..." And instead of accepting any odd explanation you must search and you will find in a corner of your being something which thinks and says, "Ah, no, I shall accept everything but that." You will see that it is a petty vanity, a movement of self-love, an egoistic feeling hidden somewhere, a hundred things. Then you take a good look at these things in the light of your ideal: "Is cherishing this movement in conformity with my seeking and the realisation of my ideal or not? I put this little dark corner in front of the light until the light enters into it and it disappears." Then the comedy is over. ... if you continue this game - for truly it is a game, if you do this sincerely - I assure you that in six months you will not recognise yourself, you will say to yourself, "What? I was like that! It is impossible!"

Well, try this exercise for yourself, you can make your own variation of it. But you understand the principle of it? This is what is called self-reflection, self-observation, self-organisation, not what we pass for it. This is the right way to do it. This will really help us to grow and to change and to become something we know we are within us but find it difficult to express outwardly always.

To Awaken Interest

The third requirement to be a true teacher is to awaken the interest of the child, to make it a living teaching. Do you know what it means to make something a living teaching? It means essentially that what you teach, even if you say one sentence and nothing else, it has to be said from your heart. It has to be said from something that you believe in and something you are engaged with, not something that you have read, not something that you know, not something that you are repeating for the 100th time. Of course, we all have to repeat our lessons. We have to teach the



same history, the same chapter in geography each time. But, how do we make it interesting for ourselves and for the student? It becomes a living teaching when we are interested and engaged in it. So, that's the 3rd requirement. Make it interesting for yourself, the students will automatically become interested, you don't have to try and interest them. Just interest yourself, that is the key. If you are interested, they will automatically be interested. I have sometimes to give the same talk in many schools. I think to myself, 'Not again!' And then, I tell myself, 'No, wait, if I don't change this talk, if I don't make it interesting and alive for myself, I know it is going to be of no value to anybody listening to it.' And so there are about 25 to 30 versions of the same talk. None are the same but all have the same principles behind them. And that is what is interesting, that we can create so many ways of expressing it, so many different ideas, so many different methods, but the principles remain the same. No matter what it is that you have to teach and no matter how often you have taught it, there is a way of recreating it, so that it becomes interesting for yourself.

Sometimes, because the content is so familiar, we need not concentrate on the content, because the content is clear as crystal. Then we should concentrate on something more interesting – your state of consciousness, what attitude you should teach with. If the content is clear, it cannot change, focus on your state of being, how are you delivering this content. What is your state? What kind of qualities do you want? There are so many ways of doing things, so many ways of creating interest for yourself and that's when you grow.

To Be a Living Example

And the last, I think we have spoken a lot about this in the last days, the 4th requirement is to be a living example. The Mother says, 'Teachers who are not perfectly calm, who do not have an endurance that never fails, and a quietude which nothing can disturb, who have no self-respect, those who are like that will get nowhere.' A tall order. Teachers who are not perfectly calm. One must be a great yogi to be a good teacher. And that is why the teaching profession is the best and the most beautiful profession to grow in, because it gives you the opportunity to progress. And you know, I have always noticed that people who have taught for years, they become very refined as compared to other people. And some-

thing in them is calm, quiet, composed. Why? Because they have to go every day in front of their class, and set the example! They can't behave in their old way, the ordinary way – what example would they set to their students? So, take this profession as a very sacred gift that has been given you for your progress. And you will see that if you can practise some of these things, the growth in consciousness that you will undergo as a person and the joy that you will experience in that growth will be the greatest recompense that you can get. Not your salary. It is this that is what you really earn. The love and respect of your students, the growth in yourself as a person, the joy that you feel in the effort that you put, because it is only in effort that you gain joy. Have you noticed that if you don't make an effort, you don't gain that extra special joy. It is only when you push yourself, when you can each exceed yourself, that you gain that special vibration of energy and joy. And you know why? Because you connect with universal forces, you connect with the larger forces that are in the universe and you gain energy from them and you enlarge your being, your mind, your consciousness. So, to experience joy you have to make an extra effort.

You may have noticed that when you have finished writing an essay or a book or anything that you have done, a painting... don't you feel a sense of fulfilment, of joy? Why is that? But, truly, is not the most beautiful painting, that you could create, yourself? - and that is far, far, far more worth creating than anything on paper. And that is what the true purpose of education is, to create that. And only when you begin to create it for yourself, automatically, spontaneously, you will begin to do the same with your children, with your students. Help each child to create the most beautiful painting - 'himself'. And that is why constantly, if you see, we are constantly going back to creating and building not the student, but you. Because you are the greatest resource of the nation and you are the most important in the learning process. Because it is when you grow that the child grows.

So ask yourself when you go back every day after your class, 'what example did I set today'. It is a very, very simple question, but it will take you very far. 'What example did I set today?'

🏠 **Ameeta Mehra**