

12/29/79 retreat darshan

Q: Cultural anthropology doesn't show us universals. Is there a being in kaivalya who could tell us what the absolutes are?

A: What is absolute?

Q: Some truth on the level of morality, such as good or bad, that is always true for everyone at all times.

A: Non-violence. Yamas and niyamas. Those are universal rules.

Q: But they're open to interpretation.

A: In some tribes, human sacrifice is allowed. It doesn't make violence permissible.

R: That we find the yamas and niyamas open to interpretation is to some extent a function of our own impurities. As we go on, we see them more clearly and sense their universality more and more, hopefully.

Q: It's also possible that that's like the catch-22 of the whole thing. Someone can always say, "Well, when you get absolutely pure and enlightened, you'll understand the universals."

R: Not black and white, and not when, but as you go along, step by step.

A: Then you will understand what?

R: The absolutes, not just one person's interpretation, but what non-violence means for everyone, in its universal mode.

A: Absolute in different levels, like arithmetic for fourth grade, tenth grade, sixteenth, are different, but all arithmetic.

R: The reality that anthropologists are talking about that is so different is about five percent, whereas we share in common about ninety-five percent. People differ in a very small part.

Q: I feel the world is moving toward another war. Is that a necessary thing to relieve the tensions in the world? How does that relate to the Universal Mind?

A: It is within the Universal Mind.

Q: Do we have to have war?

A: Mental tension. War is created by the mind. If you see animals, you will find if rat population increases, they go crazy.

Q: Is there any way to escape it?

A: Individually, yes.

Q: But not collectively?

A: Never happened.

Q: Is the world fated to always being at war with each other?

A: It always happened. If there is no war in the USA, it doesn't mean there is no war in the world. Always there is some kind of tension in some part of the world.

Q: What causes the mental tension?

A: Several reasons: hunger, wealth, intellectual games, overpopulation.

Q: I feel one can't really understand the meaning of yamas and niyamas until one reaches the end result of yoga.

A: You start understanding when you practically do it. Mahatma Gandhi of India did it. He understood it and he preached it.

Q: Is there any society in which one could practice yamas and niyamas and also be a good citizen?

A: Individually.

Q: That leads to persecution.

A: A percentage of individuals can be higher in one place. Still it is not collective.

Q: It is still individual?

A: Our mind from the day it started functioning has become expert, like a cyclist who is not aware of cycling. The cycle is balanced, but he goes on. We are doing things like that. The mind is acting due to this expertness in that ignorance.

R: It's functioning on automatic.

A: Ninety percent of the mind is automatic. Ten percent is aware. But for us, one hundred percent is [seems] aware. Yoga makes that ninety percent aware of your actions.

Q: Mahatma Gandhi practiced various austerities regularly. How does that relate to his non-violence?

A: He was celibate.

R: Diet, whole life style fairly austere too.

A: He was on a fruit diet. He was not wearing more than one cloth.

R: He once had surgery too without anesthetic.

A: He had his appendix removed. Because of his faith in non-violence, he could do these things. His will power was so strong.

Q: Did he do them to increase his non-violent nature?

A: Non-violence is the base of all yamas and niyamas.

Q: To really practice the yamas and niyamas, do you need to be a hermit or sadhu? It's hard in society to avoid being harmed.

A: Gandhi lived in a society.

Q: Non-violence seems to depend on awareness of the truth that is appropriate at the moment.

A: Yes, we have to see values of lives in social levels. In the tundra, if they don't kill animals, then they are killing themselves. Human life has more value.

Q: Are there circumstances where violence is appropriate toward human life?

A: In social level. Violence is permissible to protect a larger number of human lives. A hundred are killed to protect ten thousand.

Q: Please comment on [Herbert] Marcuse's statement that consciousness can be so polluted as to lose all touch with mahat. Can a whole society do that so that it can actually become lost, with no possibility of return?

A: In mahat there is all purity. The sattva is predominant, and rajas simply acts, while tamas simply blocks action so there is no activity. Equilibrium. Pollution means increase of rajas. When rajas is increased, then sattva will naturally decrease. It gives rise to ego. When ego is increased, it is more pollution. Then again matter is formed. From matter, two matters. The more it breaks down, the more it is polluted.

Q: I understand that on the social level, violence is permissible. Is it ever permissible in God's eyes to kill? If someone is threatening you or your family, is it better to kill or to have him kill you?

A: To protect your family is your duty. You can do it [in] two ways. 1) to get killed, 2) to kill. You go in the front and give chance to your family to run away.

Q: Is it right to kill to protect material objects that may be necessary to your survival? A: Human life has more value than a tool.

Q: Certain things in my life are supportive of processes that are destructive to the planet, such as riding in a car that supports the oil extraction and the ore extraction. Can that be considered violence?

A: As I said, the more it breaks down, the more it pollutes. 1) You are in a cave. 2) You start living in a house. 3) You make a cement house. Breaking down. From bullock cart to car to airplane.