Habit

For several days we have been talking about fear and the various causes that bring about fear. I think one of the most difficult things, which most of us do not seem to apprehend, is the problem of habit. You know, most of us think that when we are young, we should cultivate good habits as opposed to bad habits, and we are told all the time what bad habits are and what good habits are; we are always told of habits that are worthwhile cultivating, and the habits which we should resist or put away. When we are told that, what happens? We have so-called bad habits, and we want to have good habits. So, there is a struggle going on between what we have and what we should have. What we have are supposed to be bad habits, and we think we should cultivate good habits. So, there is a conflict, a struggle, a constant push towards good habits, towards changing from bad habits into good habits.

Now, what do you think is important? Good habits? If you cultivate good habits, what happens? Is your mind any more alert, any more pliable, any more sensitive? After all, habits imply, do they not, a continuous state in which the mind is no longer disturbed. If I have good habits, my mind need not be bothered about them, and I can think about other things. So, we say, we should have good habits. But, in the process of cultivating good habits, does not the mind become dull? If you have so-called good habits, what happens? When we have bad habits, and we think we should have good habits, there is a struggle going on between what we have and what we should have. What we have are supposed to be bad habits, and we think we should cultivate good habits. So, there is a conflict, a struggle, a constant push towards good habits, towards changing from bad habits into good habits.

अब आपके विचार से अधिक महत्वपूर्ण क्या है?
अच्छी आदतें? यदि आप अच्छी आदतें का संरचना करते हैं तो इसका क्या परिणाम होता है?
क्या आपका मन अधिक सजग, अधिक वचील, पढ़ने से अधिक संवेदनशील होता है?
क्योंकि आदतें होने का मलबा ही है एक ऐसी निरंतरता की स्थिति जिसमें मन अपनी शाति बंग नहीं होते देखा जाता है?
आपका मन अच्छी आदतें हैं तो मेरे मन की अब उस बारे में विचार करने की जुकता नहीं रहती, और मैं अब अन्य चीजों के बारे में सोच सकता हूँ। इसलिए हम कहते हैं कि हमें अच्छी आदतें होनी चाहिए। किंतु अच्छी आदतें अनिवार्य करने की प्रक्रिया में क्या हमारा मन असंवेदनशील नहीं होने लगता? यदि आपके अच्छी आदतें हों और यदि आप अपने मन को इनके
habits and let your mind function, move along these rails called good habits, your mind is not pliable, is it? It is fixed. So, what is important is not good habits or bad habits but to be thoughtful, and to be thoughtful is much more difficult. The moment you are thoughtful, alert, aware, then it is no longer a matter of cultivating good habits. The thoughtful mind is sensitive and therefore capable of adjustment; whereas, a mind that is functioning in habit is not sensitive, is not pliable, is not thoughtful. One of the difficulties of a mind that is mediocre, small, petty, is that it functions in habit, and once the mind is caught in habit, it is extremely difficult to free itself from it. So, what is important is not cultivation of habits, good or bad, but to be thoughtful—not along a particular direction, but all round. Because, habit is thoughtlessness in a particular direction.

I hope you are following all this. Perhaps it may be a little difficult; if it is, do please ask your teachers, and when they talk next time of cultivating good habits, discuss with them, not to catch them in argument, but to understand what they mean by good habits.

Even good habits are also thoughtless. A mind that is caught in habit is not capable of quick adjustment, quick thought, or alertness. To be thoughtful, not merely superficially, but inwardly, is far more important than the cultivation of good habits. The mind is a living thing, but it is bound, held, hedged about, controlled, shaped, pushed by

अनुसार गति करने दें, इन तथाकथित अच्छी आदतों को याद रखने पर चलने दें, तो क्या आपका मन लचीला रह पाएगा है? तब आपका मन अपनी लोच, नम्मला खो देता है और जड़ हो जाता है। इसलिए अच्छी आदतों या बुरी आदतों का होना नहीं बल्कि विचारशील होना अतिक्षण सत्यपूर्ण बात है, और विचारशील होना कहीं अधिक कठिन है। जैसे ही आप विचारशील, सजग, सत्यक होते हैं अच्छी आदतों के संचरण का प्रथम ही नहीं रहता। विचारशील मन संवेदनशील होता है अतएव यह सामंजस्य करने में सक्षम होता है। जबकि आदत के अनुसार चलने वाला मन संवेदनशील नहीं रह जाता, वह प्रसंग के अनुसार लचीला नहीं होता, विचारशील नहीं होता। समान्य कोई के, \textbf{उद्देश्य, तुच्छ मन की एक कदम} यह भी होती है कि आदत से बंधक कार्य करता है, और जब मन एक बार आदत से बंध जाता है तो उसे इससे लुप्त करना सर्वाधिक कठिन होता है। अन्-आदतों का, अच्छी बुरी आदतों को सीखें लेना उतना महत्वपूर्ण नहीं है जितना यह कि विचारशील कैसे हों—किसी विशेष दिशा में नहीं बल्कि समस्त रूप से। यही कि किसी विशेष दिशा में विचारहीनता ही आदत है।

मुझे उम्मीद है कि आप इसे ठीक से समझ रहें गंगों। शायद यह बोड़ा कदम लग रहा होगा और यदि यह आपकी कदम प्रस्तीत हो रहा हो तो अपने शिक्षकों से इस बारे में अवकाश पूछिए, और अगली बार जब दे अच्छी आदत किरकिरिक करने के बारे में कहें तो उससे चुना क्रिया, उन्हें विवाद में उलझाने की दृष्टि से नहीं बल्कि यह समझने हेतु कि अच्छी आदत से उनका यह अभिप्रयास है।

विचारशील भी विचारहीनता ही दशरत है। आदत से बंध जाता है यह मन त्यागत तालामेल करने में सक्षम नहीं होता है, त्यागत विचार करने में, सजग हो पाने में सक्षम नहीं होता है। केवल सीधी तीर पर नहीं बल्कि आत्मस्वेठ हि तर पर भी विचारशील होना अच्छी आदत सीखने की अपेक्षा भविष्य की अधिक महत्व रखता है। मन एक चेतन वस्तु है परंतु तमाम तरह की आदतों के दबाव में आकर यह हर बार जाता है, अटक-सा जाता है, पिछ-सा जाता है, नियंत्रित और विशिष्ट आकार में सीमित
Chapter 5

Various forms of habit. Belief, tradition, is habit. My father believes in something, and he insists that I also believe. He does not put it that way, but he creates an environment, an atmosphere, in which I have got to follow. He does puja which is a habit, and I naturally imitate him and thus cultivate the same habit.

Your mind is always trying to live in habit so that it won’t be disturbed, so that it has not got to think anew or afresh, to look at problems differently. So, the mind likes to live in a half-awakened state, and habits come in very useful, like tradition, because you do not have to think, you do not have to be sensitive. Tradition says something and you follow—such as the tradition of putting something on your forehead, the tradition of wearing turbans, the tradition of growing beards. When you accept and follow a tradition, you are not disturbed; your mind is dull, and likes to be dull. That is our education. We learn mathematics, geography, or science in order to get a job and settle down in that job for the rest of our life. You are a Christian or a Hindu or a Muslim or whatever you call yourself, and in that you function like a machine without any disturbance. You have disturbances, but you explain them away by your habitual thinking, so that your mind is never thoughtful, never alert, never questioning, never uncertain, always half asleep—put to sleep by tradition, by habits, by customs. That is why, if you notice, when you are in a school, you just disappear in the mass of people. You are just like anybody else. You are educated, you are a

हो जाता है। मत-विश्वास, परंपरा आदत है। मेरे पिता का कोई मत-विश्वास होता है और वे मुझ पर जीर डालते हैं कि मैं भी उस मत-विश्वास को मान लूं। वे यह बात प्रत्यक्षत: नहीं कहते परंतु इस प्रकार का परिवेश, ऐसा वातावरण निमित्त कर देते हैं कि मुझे उनका अनुसरण करना ही पड़ता है। वे पूजा करते हैं जो एक आदत है और स्वाभाविक रूप से मैं भी उनकी नकल करने लगता हूं और इस आदत की पाल लेता हूं। आपका मन सदैव आदत के सहारे जीते रहने की चेता करता है ताकि उसे असुविधा न हो, ताकि उसे नये निर्णय से, नये ढंग से सोचने की सुगीत क न क्षेत्रफल पड़े, समस्याओं का बिना बुद्धि से न देखना पड़े। इसलिए मन को अर्ध-जागरूक अवस्था में रहना अच्छा लगता है, और इसमें परंपरा की ही तरह आदतें भी बहुत सहयोगी हुआ करती हैं, क्योंकि तब आपको विचार करने की जरूरत नहीं होती, तब आपको संवेदनशील होने की आवश्यकता नहीं होती। परंपरा आपसे कुछ कहती है और आप तदनुसार चलते हैं—जैसे कि मत्तक पर तिलक या चंदन आदि लगाने की परंपरा, सिर पर पन्द्रह या साफ बांधने की रूढ़ि, या दाढ़ी रखने की परंपरा। जब आप किसी परंपरा को स्वीकार कर उसका पालन करने लगते हैं तो आपको कोई चोट नहीं प्रतीत होती है, आपका मन संवेदनशील होता है और वैसा ही बना रहना चाहता है। हमारी विश्वा यही है। हम गणित, भूगोल या विज्ञान आदि इसलिए सीखते हैं ताकि हमें कोई नींवी मिल जाए और उस नींवी को करने हुए हमारे श्रेष्ठ जीवन आराम से बीत। आप ईसाई हैं या हिंदू हैं, या मुसलमान हैं या जो कुछ भी आप अपने को कहते हैं, आप उसी ढंग से किसी यंत्र की भावी निर्वाचन स्रोत से कार्य करते रहते हैं। हालाँकि आपाएँ आती हैं परंतु अपनी आध्यात्मिक सौच के द्वारा उनकी व्याख्या कर आप उनसे पलन कर जाते हैं, इसलिए आपका मन कभी विचारशील नहीं होता, सत्तर कभी ही, कभी प्रश्न नहीं उठाता, कभी अनिश्चित नहीं होता, सदैव अर्थ-सुपुर्ज रहता है—परंपराओं, आदतों, रियाजों के द्वारा सुना दिया जाता है। इसलिए यदि आप ध्यान दें तो आप पाएँगे कि जब आप विचारलय में होते हैं तो लोगों की भीड़ में आसानी से खो जाते हैं। आप भी ऐसे ही हो जाते हैं जैसे बाकी सब। फिर चाहे आप शिक्षित हो, आप बी.एस.सी. या एम.ए. हो। आपके बच्चे
B.Sc. or an M.A. You have children, a husband, a car, or you have no car and want a car. Thus you function, thus you live and gradually die and are burned on the ghats. That is your life, is it not? You are trained to be thoughtless, not to revolt, not to question. Any little occasional quiver of anxiety you may have is soon explained away. This you consider to be a process of education.

Surely, it is very important, is it not, that while you are at this school, you try and experiment with all this so that when the time comes for you to leave this place, you do so, not with a mind that is functioning in habits, in tradition, in fear, but with a mind that is thoughtful. This thoughtfulness is not to be along any particular direction, communist, congress, or socialist thoughtfulness; the moment it is labeled, it is no longer thoughtfulness. The chief concern of a school of this kind must be to create an atmosphere in which there is no fear, in which students are not compelled or coerced or compared with one another—so that there is freedom. This does not mean that the students are free to do what they want to do, but they have the freedom to grow, to understand, to think, to live, so that the mind never functions in habit, so that the mind becomes very active—not with the activity of gossip, not with the activity of mere reading, but with the activity of inquiry, of finding out, of wondering if your life is as you want it to be.

You have a husband, you have children, you have a car, or you have no car and want a car. Thus you function, thus you live and gradually die and are burned on the ghats. That is your life, is it not? You are trained to be thoughtless, not to revolt, not to question. Any little occasional quiver of anxiety you may have is soon explained away. This you consider to be a process of education.
searching for what is real, for what is true. Then the mind becomes an astonishing thing, a creative thing.

Surely, that is the function of education, is it not?—not to give you good or bad habits, not to let your mind live in tradition, but to help you to break away from all habits and traditions so that your mind is free from the very beginning to the very end, very active, alive, seeing things anew. You know, when you watch the river of a morning or of an evening, after you have watched for about a week, you lose all appreciation of its beauty because you are used to it. Your mind becomes habituated to it, your mind is no longer sensitive to the green fields and the moving trees; you see them and you pass them by. You are no longer sensitive, no longer thoughtful. You see those poor women go by, day after day, and you do not even know that they wear torn clothes and carry so much weight. You do not even notice them because you are used to them. Getting used to something is to grow insensitive to it. This process is destructive, as such a mind is a dull mind, a stupid mind. So, the function of education is to help the mind to be sensitive, thoughtful, so that it does not function in habit or tradition, so that it does not get used to anything, so that it is always fresh, alive. That requires a great deal of insight, a great deal of understanding.