Fear

I would like to talk this morning on a topic which may be rather difficult, but we will try and make it as simple and direct as possible. You know most of us have some kind of fear, have we not? Do you know your particular fear? You may be afraid of your teacher, of your guardian, of your parents, of the older people, or of a snake or a buffalo or of what somebody says or of death, and so on. Each one has fear, but for young people, the fears are fairly simple. As we grow older the fears become more complex, more difficult, more subtle. I want to fulfil myself in a particular direction. You know what ‘fulfilment’ means. I want to become a great writer. I feel if I could write, my life would be happy. So, I want to write. But anything may happen to me, I may get paralysed for the rest of my life, and that becomes my fear. So, as we grow older, various forms of fear come into being—fears of being left alone, not having a friend, losing property, having no position, and various other types of fear. But we won’t go now into the very difficult and subtle types of fear because they require much more thought.

It is very important that we—you young people and I—should consider this question of fear because society and the
older people think fear is necessary to keep you in right behaviour. If you are afraid of your teacher or of your parents, they can control you better, can they not? They can say, ‘Do this and do not do that,’ and you will jolly well have to obey them. So fear is used as a moral pressure. The teachers use fear, say, in a large class, as a means of controlling the students. Is it not so? Society says fear is necessary. Otherwise, the citizens, the people, will just burst out and do things wildly. Fear has thus become a necessity for the control of man.

You know fear is also used to civilize man. Religions throughout the world have used fear as a means of controlling man, have they not? They say that if you do not do certain things in this life, you will pay for it in the next. Though all religions preach love, though they preach brotherhood, though they talk about the unity of man, they all subtly or very brutally, grossly, maintain this sense of fear.

If you have a large number of students in one class, how can the teacher control you? He cannot. He has to invent ways and means of controlling you. So, he says, ‘Compete. Become like that other boy who is much cleverer than you.’ So, you struggle, you are afraid; your fear is generally used as a means of controlling you. Do you understand? Is it not very important that education should eradicate fear, should help the students to get rid of fear,

आचारण को ठीक रखने के लिए भय का होना जरूरी है। यदि आपको अपने शिक्षक अथवा अपने माता-पिता से डर लगता है तो वे आप पर बेहतर ढंग से नियंत्रण कर सकते हैं। वे आपसे यह कह सकते हैं “यह करो और वह मत करो” और आपको उनकी बात खुशी-खुशी माननी होगी। इस प्रकार नैतिक रूप से द्वार डालने के लिए भय का प्रयोग किया जाता है। उदाहरण के लिए बड़ी कक्षा में छात्रों को नियंत्रित करने के लिए शिक्षक भय का सहारा लेते हैं। ऐसा होता है न? समाज कहता है भय का होना आवश्यक है नहीं तो नागरिक, जनता नियंत्रण से बाहर हो जाएंगी और उसमें हो उठेगी। इस प्रकार भय मनुष्य को नियंत्रण में रखने के लिए आवश्यक सा बन गया है।

आप जानते हैं कि मनुष्य को सम्मति बनाने के लिए भी भय का उपयोग किया जाता है। संसार भर के धर्मों ने मनुष्य को नियंत्रित करने के लिए भय को हथियार के रूप में उपयोग किया है, किया है कि नहीं? वे कहते हैं कि यदि इस मन के तुम अमूक-अमूक चीज़ें नहीं करते हो तो अगले जन्म में तुम्हें इसका परिणाम भुलतान पड़ेगा। हालांकि सारे धर्म प्रेम का उपदेश देते हैं, मनुष्यों के बीच भाईचारे और एकता की वात करते हैं फिर भी सुकृत रूप से अथवा अनुकूल तरीकों से भय को बनाए रखते हैं।

यदि किसी कक्षा में छात्रों की संख्या बहुत अधिक हो तो शिक्षक आपको कैसे नियंत्रित करेंगे? नहीं कर सकेंगे। आपको नियंत्रित करने के लिए उन्हें अनेक उपाय एवं तरीके खोजने होंगे। इसलिए वे कहते हैं, “प्रतिस्पर्धा करो, उस क्रांति जैसे बनो जो तुम्हें बहुत अधिक चुरू रहे हैं।” इस तरह आप संघर्ष करते हैं, आप दूर जाते हैं, आपके भय का उपयोग प्राप्त: आपको नियंत्रित करने के लिए एक साधन के रूप में किया जाता है। क्या आप इसे समझते हैं? क्या यह अलंक महत्वपूर्ण नहीं है कि शिक्षा भय का समूल नाश करने और छात्रों को भय से मुक्त होने में उनकी सहायता करे,
because fear corrupts the mind? I think it is very important in a school of this kind that every form of fear should be understood and dispelled, got rid of. Otherwise, if you have any kind of fear, it twists your mind, and you can never be intelligent. Fear is like a dark cloud, and when you have fear, it is like walking in sunshine with a dark cloud in your mind, always frightened.

So, is not the function of true education to help you to understand fear and be free of it? For instance, suppose you go off without telling your housemaster or teacher, and you come back and invent stories, saying that you have been with some people, while you have been to a cinema—it means that you are frightened, does it not? You may think that if you are not frightened of the teacher, you will do what you like, and the teachers think the same. But to understand fear implies a great deal more than doing exactly what you want to do. You know, there are natural reactions of the body, are there not? When you see a snake, you jump. That is not fear because that is the natural reaction of the body. In front of danger, the body reacts, it jumps. When you see a precipice, you do not just walk blindly along. That is not fear. When you see danger, a car coming very fast, you get out of the way. It is not an indication of fear. Those are the body's responses to protect itself against danger; such
Fear comes in, does it not, when you want to do something and you are prevented from doing it. That is one type of fear. You want to go to a cinema, you would like to go out of Banaras for the day, and the teacher says, ‘No, there are regulations.’ And you do not like these regulations, you want to go. So you go on some excuse. The teacher finds out that you have gone, and you are afraid of punishment. So, fear comes in when there is a feeling that you are going to be punished. But if the teacher talks over quietly why you should not go to town, explains to you the dangers, eating food which is not clean, and so on, you understand. Even if he has not the time to explain to you and go into the whole problem of why you should not go, you also can think, your intelligence can be awakened to find out why you should not go. Then, there is no problem, you do not go. If you want to go, you talk it over and find out.

To do just what you like in order to show that you are free from fear is not intelligence. Courage is not the opposite of fear. You know, in the battlefields they are very courageous. For various reasons they take drinks or do all kinds of things to feel courageous, but
That is not freedom from fear.

Should not education help the student to be free from fear of every kind?—which means from now on to understand all the problems of life, problems of sex, problems of death, of public opinion, of authority. We are going to discuss all these things so that when you leave this place, though there are fears in the world, though you have your own ambitions, your own desires, you will understand them, and so be free from fear. Because, you know, fear is very dangerous. All people are afraid of something or other. Most people do not want to make a mistake, do not want to go wrong, especially when they are young. So they think that if they could follow somebody, if they could listen to somebody, they would be told what to do, and by doing that, they would achieve an end, a purpose.

Most of us are very conservative. You know what that word means, you know what it is 'to conserve'?—to hold, to guard. Most of us want to remain respectable, and so we want to do the right thing, we want to follow the right conduct—which you will see, if you go into it very deeply, is an indication of fear. Why not make a mistake? Why not find out? But the man who is afraid is always thinking, 'I must do the right thing, I must look respectable, I must not let the public know what I really am.' Such a man is fundamentally, basically, afraid. A man who is ambitious is really a frightened

क्या शिक्षा का काम विद्यार्थियों को हर प्रकार के भय से मुक्त करने में सहायता देना नहीं है?

हमें से अधिकांश बहुत ही रूढ़िवादी हैं। आप जानते हैं कि इस शब्द का क्या अर्थ है, ‘रूढ़िवादी’ होना क्या है? इसका अर्थ है पूर्वांगी चीजों को पकड़े रहना, उनकी पहलेवारी करना। हमें से अधिकांश लोग सम्प्रभुत बने रहना चाहते हैं और इसलिए हम सही चीज़ करना चाहते हैं, हम सही आचरण का अनुकरण करना चाहते हैं। यदि आप बहुत गहराई में जाएं तो आप यह देख पाएंगे कि वह भी भय की उपस्थिति का साक्षा है। हम गलती क्यों न करे? हम इसका पता क्यों न लगा लें कि हमें गलती क्यों नहीं करनी है? किंतु जो भयमात्मा होता है वह सब सोचता है कि मुझे सही कार्य ही करना चाहिए, मुझे सम्प्रभुत दिखाई पड़ना चाहिए, मुझे इस बात के लिए लोगों को मीक की ही नहीं मिलने देना चाहिए कि मैं क्या हूँ। इसे वे जान पाएं।
person, and a man who is frightened has no love, has no sympathy. He is like a person imprisoned behind a wall. It is very important, while we are young, to understand this thing, to understand fear. It is fear that makes me obey, but if we can talk it over, reason together, discuss and think together, then I may understand and do what I am asked. But to compel me, to force me to do a thing which I do not understand because I am frightened of you, is it not?

So, I feel it is very important in a place like this that both the educator and the educated should understand this problem. Creativity, to be creative—do you know what it means? To write a poem is partly creative, to paint a picture, to look at a tree, to love the tree, the river, the birds, the people, the earth, to have the feeling that the earth is ours—that is partly creative. But that feeling is destroyed when you have fear, when you say, 'This is mine—my country, my class, my group, my philosophy, my religion.' When you have that kind of feeling, you are not creative because it is the instinct of fear that is dictating this feeling of 'mine,' 'my country.' After all, the earth is not yours or mine—it is ours. And if we can think in those terms, we will create quite a different world—not an American world or a Russian

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world or an Indian world, but it will be our world, yours and mine, the rich man’s and the poor man’s. But the difficulty is, when there is fear we cannot create. A person who is afraid can never find truth or God. Behind all our worship, all our images, all our rituals, there is fear, and therefore your gods are not gods, they are stones.

So, it is very important while we are young to understand this thing, and you can only understand it when you know that you are afraid, when you can look at your own fears. But that requires a great deal of insight, which we won’t discuss now. Because it is a much deeper problem which the older people can discuss—so we will discuss that with the teachers. But it is the function of the educator to help the educated to understand fear. It is for the teachers to help you to understand your fears and not to suppress them, not to hold them down, so that when you leave this place, your mind is very clear, sharp, unspoiled by fear. As I was saying yesterday, the old people have not created a beautiful world; they are full of darkness, fear, corruption, competition; they have not created a good world. If you going out of this place, can really be free from fear of every kind or understand how to meet fear in yourself and in others, then perhaps you will create quite a different world, not a world of the communist, or of the congressite, and so on, but a totally different world; truly that is the function of education.

हम सबकी अपनी दुनिया होगी—आपकी होगी, मेरी होगी, अमीर की होगी, गरीब की भी होगी, जो सबकी होगी। परंतु कठिनाई यह है कि जब हम भयभीत होते हैं तो सुजनशील नहीं रह जाते। भयभीत व्यक्ति सत्य या ईश्वर को भभी नहीं पा सकता। हमारी सारी पूजाएं, हमारी सारी प्रतिमाओं और हमारे सारे अनुष्ठानों के पीछे भय ही होता है—यद्यपि कारण है कि आपके देवता, देवता नहीं पाश्चात्य होते हैं।

अतः जब हम युवा हैं तब ही इसे समझ लेना अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है और आप इसे तब ही समझ सकते हैं जब आप यह जानें कि आप भयभीत हैं और आपने भय को ध्यान से देख सकें। परंतु इसके लिए गहरी अंतर्दृष्टि का होना आवश्यक है जिस पर फिलहाल हम कुछ नहीं कहेंगे। क्योंकि यह अति गंभीर समस्या है, जिस पर बड़े लोग चर्चा कर सकते हैं, हम शिक्षकों के साथ मिल कर इसकी चर्चा करेंगे। परंतु यह शिक्षक का कार्य है कि वह भय को समझने में शिक्षार्थियों की सहायता करे। अध्यापक को चाहिए कि वह भयों को समझने में आपकी सहायता करे—भयों का दमन करने में, उन्हें नियंत्रित करने में नहीं। ताकि जब आप इस स्थान को छोड़ कर जाएं तो आपका मन बहुत सपन्तर तथा प्रश्नों हो और भय से बिलकुल बिखर न हो। जैसा कि मैं कहा रहा था कि पुराने लोगों ने झुंडर विश्व नहीं बनाया; वे अंधकार, भय, भ्रस्टिकार और प्रतिस्पर्धा से भरे रहे, उन्होंने कोई झुंडर विश्व निर्मित नहीं किया। जब आप लोग यहां से निकल कर बाहरी दुनिया में जाएंगे, उस समय यदि आप हर प्रकार के भय से मुक्त रहेंगे या वह समझ सकेंगे कि अपने तथा दूसरों के भयों को सामना कैसे किया जाता है, तब शायद आप पूर्णतः भिन्न संसार का निर्माण कर पाएंगे, जो साम्यवादियों या कांग्रेसियों का, या ऐसे अन्य किन्हीं लोगों का संसार नहीं होगा, अपितु वह यह पूर्णतः भिन्न संसार होगा। सही मानने में शिक्षा का यही कार्य है।