

THE FOUR CONFLICTS OF LIFE

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We are in an academy, which is supposed to be not merely a place of teaching and listening, but a venue of enlightenment concerning the facts and problems of life. One can speak anything, and we can listen to anything, but our problems will remain the same. It is necessary to find a solution to our difficulties.

What are our difficulties? This question takes us to the roots of what generally goes by the name of philosophy. The attempt at the discovery of the ultimate reason behind anything is what is called philosophy – not an immediate, tentative answer to a question, but a final answer. Why are things what they are? And, why should they not be something other than what they appear to be

In our own case, when we try to discuss matters of importance and great consequence, we generally come face to face every day with a kind of conflict. You would have noticed that the whole of your life is a procession of several adjustments and alignments that you are making within yourself as well as outside yourself, so that you may not clash with anything in this world

There should be no opposition between yourself and what you consider as other than what you are. There are only two things in this world – yourself, and what is not yourself. Here is a mute question. Do you realise that there are things in this world which you cannot regard as yourself? “It is not me; this person is not me; this thing is not me; nothing is me. What I am is something distinct from the whole panorama of existence spread before me as the vast universe. I cannot reconcile myself with anything in the world because nothing is me. Everything is other than what I am

Well, this question bring a tentative answer: “I can adjust myself with my own self, but not with another, on account of contrary characteristics that I observe in what is not myself.”

Is it true that we are in harmony with our own selves? Forget for the time being the necessity to be in harmony with other persons and things. Is there a composite integrated aligned totality of our personality, and do we feel that we are whole, complete, self-sufficient, and strong in our own selves? Or, do we feel that we are weaklings?

We cannot bring about a rapprochement among our feelings, which go rampant hither and thither – feelings which are unpredictable in their nature. We rationalise intellectually, philosophically, something that the feelings will not accept. And, what the feelings are demanding may not really be philosophically or rationally acceptable. We have unscientific feelings many a time in our own hearts. They are irrational impulses, as we call them – irrational because we cannot justify them by logic or reason, or scientific argument. “Something is not okay with me.” Do

we not feel like that, oftentimes? “I am not happy.” Who made us unhappy?

We will always say somebody else is making us unhappy. This answer is a puerile, childish answer, arising from one who does not know one’s own self. A dissipated, dismembered personality, which looks like an integrated composite individuality, cannot be regarded as a healthy individuality. If there are torn emotions, unfulfilled desires, agonising anxieties and fears of every kind, one cannot say that one’s psyche is in a healthy condition. Health is freedom from any kind of torture, internally or externally.

Over the centuries, people who have thought over these issues deeply have come to the conclusion that there are a variety of conflicts in this world. The basic conflict is within one’s own self. Reason and feeling clash with each other; emotions and understanding do not go hand in hand. We may be highly qualified intellectuals, but we may be poor, emotionally torn individuals in our own houses. Highly learned stalwarts in public life may be making poor adjustments in their own family life. There is a dichotomy between personal life and public life. We are one thing in the open, and another thing in ourselves. This is psychological conflict, internal non-alignment of personality, which does not permit anyone to be sure that one is happy and everything is fine with oneself.

No one would confidently say, “Everything is well with me.” There is always a ‘but’ behind it. “I am all right, but there is something.” Inasmuch as human society is made up of individuals of this kind, what is human society? It is a large mass of persons like me, like yourself, like anybody. If there is a non-alignment and a conflict within the psychic

personality of every individual, it would mean the whole of human society is torn with the same difficulty. So, if there is no individual peace, there cannot be social peace, but we generally try for social peace. We hold roundtable conferences, create organisations, and have various types of celebrations to bring people together into a state of harmony of thought and feeling. But, individually, none is in that particular state of harmony.

Inasmuch as society is made up of individuals, we cannot have social peace when there is no individual peace. So, there are two varieties of conflict – personal, psychological, or we may even say psychoanalytical conflict within one's own self, engendering social conflict, also. As everyone is like anyone else, we cannot have external peace when there is internal conflict. This is the reason why the world is what it is.

People try to galvanise and whitewash the structure of outer life by decorating it by setting up systems of organisations. But what are these organisations? They are made up of the very same individuals. There is internal conflict, and external conflict. We cannot reconcile ourselves with our own selves, and we cannot reconcile ourselves with human society. We are often afraid of our own selves, and afraid of everyone else in the world. People consider themselves as brothers and sisters, but to protect us from our brothers and sisters we require a court of law, an army, and a police force.

Social conflict and individual conflict are the ostensible types of conflict that are before us, but there is a greater conflict which always misses our attention, which is more crucial than psychological conflict and social conflict – that

is, conflict with nature itself. We are not living according to the laws of nature. First of all, we cannot know what nature is made of. Briefly, nature may be said to be a large inclusive organisation of completeness and perfection in operation, so that nothing is left out and everything is included.

In nature, everything happens in the manner it ought to happen, and it will happen at the time when it is supposed to happen. Nature has no accidents. Nature does not work with chance, and whim and fancy. We many a time say, "Oh, an accident took place." An accident is an occurrence whose cause we cannot understand. Nature does not have any kind of erratic movements within itself. It is a total, internally organised system of vitality, intelligence and purposiveness.

Are we inside nature, or are we outside nature? This is again a conflict before us. Are we sitting inside the bosom of nature, which is so perfect and so clear and beautiful, or are we standing outside nature, and behaving as we like? For all practical purposes, it appears that we care a hoot for nature's operations: "Let the sun shine; let it rain; let the wind blow; what does it matter to me?" We take for granted that everything will take place according to our requirements. We cannot organically relate ourselves to nature, which we consider as something spread out around ourselves.

Please remember, nature is not spread out around us. It is the sum and substance of our very personality itself. The very building bricks of our psychophysical individuality are the very building bricks of this nature. The wood and substance and all the structural material of this universe are

the very materials out of which we are composed. If it rains outside, it rains inside. The Chhandogya Upanishad is a masterpiece of this kind of illumination. When there is thunder outside, there is thunder inside, also. When it rains outside, it rains inside, psychologically. When there is a tremor outside, there is a tremor inside, also. Everything that happens in nature happens inside the individual also, because an individual is only a name for a cross-section of the whole of nature.

We are a mini-universe. Whatever we can find in the stars, in the skies and the heavens, in the Sun and the Moon and the stars, we will find within our own selves. In a potential, incipient and ready-to-manifest form, the world is present within ourselves. It is not proper to say that the world is within ourselves. We are the universe. To say that we are within the universe would imply that the world is outside us, and that we have no relationship to it. Whatever vital connection we have with the universe outside is so clear, so obvious every day, that we cannot say that we are inside, in the sense of it being outside. There is no insideness and outsideness in nature.

If that is the case, where are we actually living in this world? Are we in Rishikesh? Are we in India? Where are we actually sitting? Where are you sitting just now? Do not tell me, like a child, "I am here, in Sivananda Ashram." You are on the surface of the Earth. This is a better answer, and a more proper answer than to say, "I am in Rishikesh." For the Earth, there is no Rishikesh. There are no nationalities and countries for the Earth. It is just what it is. We are living on the surface of the Earth.

Do you believe that you are on the Earth below, and the sky is above you? “Oh, the sky is so high, and the Sun is so far away in the skies.” But, remember this Earth is like a spaceship. It is rattling around space, and not resting in one place. A perpetual movement of a dual nature is taking place on Earth. We are in mid-space now, not on Earth. Is it not astounding to hear that we are now in mid-space, in a moving spaceship which is this Earth?

The childlike question may arise: “Oh, we are in a rocket, in an spaceship! Will it fall down somewhere?” Anything that shuttles up into the skies has also the possibility of falling down and breaking into pieces. But why does the Earth not fall down when it is moving in space? Why does the Sun not fall on our heads when it is hanging without any support?

The answer I am trying to bring before you is arising out of the question, “Where are you actually sitting now?” We are in mid-space, rotating and rattling through certain orbits chalked out by nature for the purpose of maintaining this organism of planetary system. Because of this well-planned system of orbit, planets do not clash with each other. The Earth does not dash against the Sun. A tremendously organised internal arrangement of gravitational system is keeping us alive and breathing, and giving us the satisfaction of comfort.

We are feeling a little comfortable here. From where does this comfort come? It comes from this tremendous universal organisation of the Solar System, where everything is brilliantly active, and nothing is static. Everything is cooperating with everything else with such

mathematical precision that even the greatest scientist cannot imagine what is actually taking place.

So, where are you sitting now? Do not say, "I am in Rishikesh." You are in the middle of the Solar System. Where is the Solar System? Science tells us that there are countless solar systems, spread out in vast interstellar space, not accessible even to the most powerful of telescopes. The Milky Way contains millions of solar systems, and we are sitting inside one of them, under the impression that we are walking on the road in Rishikesh. It is far from the truth.

These solar systems are countless in number, spread out through space and time. The organisational setup of what is called space, time and cause is an incredible thing to hear. Space, time and cause keep the organism of the whole of nature in perfect order, and we are living in the centre of this universe.

Where are you sitting now? You are sitting in the centre of the universe! Is it not a happy thing to hear this, instead of saying you are in a bathroom, a dining hall, or a marketplace? Why do you have these kinds of little definitions of yourself, when you are a great citizen, protected by the law of the whole universe? You are guarded perpetually by the laws of nature. So, you are not inside nature; you are not outside nature. You, yourself are nature.

I mentioned three aspects of conflict: the internal, psychological conflict of our own selves, which is a clash between emotion and understanding; the external conflict with human society, which is constituted of individuals of the same type; and the conflict with nature, which we do

not understand. Three types of conflict seem to be obvious before us: personal, social and natural.

But there is a fourth conflict, which will be stunning to hear – namely, the necessity to answer a question: “Who keeps all these things in perfect position? Why does space-time work in this systematic manner? Where is the cementing factor which keeps these apparently dismembered aspects of the universe in a cohesive whole, moving in a purposive manner?” Chaotic activity does not take place in nature. Everything has a purpose and a reason. This reason is at the back of the entire operation of the cosmical space-time order; and reason is inseparable from Pure Consciousness.

There is a Universal Reason operating everywhere. It is sometimes called Logos, or God Almighty. With that, also, we are in conflict, because we cannot accommodate our little puny reason with this Universal Reason. We cannot accommodate ourselves with anybody. We are at war with everything. A very nice situation we have created! “I do not like anything.” We can say that, but we have no right to say that. We cannot say we do not like anything, nor can we say we like so many things.

The liking and not liking are statements which are absurd to the core. We are in a wonderful heaven of Universal Existence ruled by Universal Reason, which is designated by various names in religious parlance, in philosophies, and schools of thinking. We are safe if we know this. This is sufficient for us. The world is not going to desert us, if we will not desert the world. But, we have deserted the world. We have kicked it outside, as a totally

alien interference, and we do not want the world. We want only our own selves, this little “whatever I am”.

With whatever you are united in your heart and soul, that will guard and protect you. If I am your friend, you will help me with my needs and requirements. If you are friendly with nature, nature will guard you. If you are friendly with the social setup, society will guard you. If you are friendly with the governmental system, the nation will protect you. If you are one with the Universal Reason, you will become superhuman. You will not be a human being, afterwards.

This is the so-called evolutionary process, which is supposed to be bringing up higher and higher species of beings until it has now reached the state of what are called *Homo sapiens*, or human beings. In this evolutionary process, we, the so-called *Homo sapiens*, or human beings, are hanging in the middle. We are not subhuman; we are not superhuman; we are human. Just as we have arisen from the levels of the subhuman species in the process of universal evolution and reached up to this pedestal of *Homo sapiens*, human perfection, we have to rise further, higher up. That no human being is complete in himself or herself, and no human being is satisfied with himself or herself, shows there is something yet to be achieved.

We feel finitude everywhere, limitation everywhere, restrictions everywhere, which we want to break. The idea behind this desire to break all limitations and finitudes of every kind is an indication of there being something which is infinite in its nature, unbounded, and perpetual. If that unlimited freedom were not to exist, we would not be miserable in the life here, or want it at all. If freedom did

not exist, we would not be asking for it. If that which is not finite does not exist, we would not be feeling misery in our finitude. If deathlessness did not exist, we would not be afraid of death.

These are indications of there being levels of being beyond human life, and we have many, many stages to ascend further, beyond the human level. Man is not the apex of creation, as it is generally believed. God made man in His own image. If God looks like a man, He must be a very poor God. We cannot conceive what God is. He is not a large human being. It is an inconceivable perfection of perpetuity, deathlessness, infinity, intelligence, comprehensiveness, freedom, perfection and bliss, which the mortal mind cannot imagine. That is the aim of life.

I began by saying that the academy of teaching should also become an academy of enlightenment for people. You have all come from long distances, spending a lot of money, energy and time, hoping for something which, perhaps, you thought is not available somewhere else. What is it that you are actually seeking? You are seeking that which is hidden within your own self, in a potential infinite form, a perfection that is to be brought out to the surface of your conscious level, from the buried state of its subconscious and unconscious levels.

Here is an occasion for you, in this little campus of the academy where thoughts of this kind pervade the whole atmosphere, to speak on this subject, think on this subject, and inundate yourself on this great subject of internal security and peace. We bathe here, in whatever modicum it is possible, in the satisfaction of a light that is shining

before us, and you take this light with you when you return home.

Here is the endeavor made by this little campus of the academy, through the cooperation of learned people – swamis, sannyasins, mahatmas, brahmacharis, and professors from universities – to cater to you higher knowledge, far above the ken of ordinary human comprehension, so that you may feel happy wherever you are, because wherever you are, you are inside nature. You are in the world of space, time and cause. Therefore, wherever you are, you have to be secure, provided you are in union with the laws that operate through space-time and nature as a whole. There is no conflict within yourself, no conflict with people outside generated because of individual conflict, and no conflict with nature, outside which you do not exist. In the same way as you are not outside society, you are not outside nature, and you are not outside God Himself.

I raised the question to you in the beginning: “Where are you sitting, just now?” You are sitting in the midst of a great wonder, a marvel, a miracle, a great treasure trove, which is going to open before you one day or the other, which is the sum and substance of all knowledge, and the great goal of life as a whole.