

18 February 1973

A: *Tonight, I am going to read you a letter from X. She gave us a letter about her class. You know that this year she has started working with the young children.*

Oh!

A: *So this is what she writes: "We would like to make it possible for each child to develop integrally and above all we want his desire to learn to remain spontaneous." (The letter goes on to describe the games suggested to the children, the material prepared for them and various group activities, and continues:) "But because all the tendencies of the children come into play when they are given enough free scope, several difficulties arise, especially in controlling the noise and movements they make. A few days ago, they began to make swords and pistols out of meccano."*

Oh!

A (continuing to read the letter): *"We have tried giving them a play to act in the hope that it will calm down after a while. But what should we do with this desire for violence, this preference for war — or even detective-stories?"*

Do you have something to write with?

A: Yes.

Violence is necessary so long as men are dominated by their ego and its desires.... Is that all right?

*A: Yes, Mother.*

But violence should be used only as a means of self-defence if one is attacked. The ideal towards which humanity is moving and which we want to realise, is a state of luminous understanding in which the needs of each one and of the overall harmony are taken into account.

*A: Yes, Mother.*

The future will have no need of violence, for it will be ruled by the divine Consciousness in which everything harmonises with and completes everything else.

Is that enough?

*A: Yes. I shall read out what you have just said, Mother.  
(A reads out the note.)*

Is that all right?

*A: Yes, Mother. Quite all right.*

*So, in a general way, when these things come up, when the children are engaged in this kind of activity, X was asking: "Should we intervene, or wait until the movement dies down and disappears?"*

You should... you should question the children and ask them in an off-hand way, "Oh, you have enemies? Who are these enemies?"... That is what you should say... You should make them talk a little.... It is because they see that... There is a strength and a beauty in the army which children feel strongly. But that should be preserved. Only, armies should be used not to attack and capture but to defend and...

## On Education

*A: Protect.*

... and protect. That's it.

First she must understand properly: for the moment, we are in a condition where weapons are still necessary. We have to understand that this is a passing condition, not final, but that we must move towards that.

Peace — peace, harmony — should be the natural result of a change of consciousness.

*A: And so, she has a second question, Mother. She says — I remind you that she has children aged eight to ten — she says: “As this is the age when the mental approach is beginning to appear in several children, how can we make use of this mental movement and enrich it without hampering the inner spontaneity?”*

That depends so much on the case, and the child!

You see, there is this idea of non-violence about India, which has replaced material violence by moral violence — but that is far worse!

You should make them understand this.... You can say this, explain to the children that to replace physical violence, material violence, by moral violence, is no better.

Lying down in front of a train to prevent it from passing is a moral violence which can create more disturbances than physical violence. You... can you hear me?

But it depends on the child, it depends on the case. You must not give any names, say what this or that person has said. We must make them understand ideas and reactions.

You should... That is a good example: you should make them understand that lying down in front of a train to prevent it from passing is as great a violence... even greater than attacking it with weapons. You understand, there are many, many things that could be said. It depends on the case.

I myself encouraged fencing a great deal because it gives a skill, a control of one's movements and a discipline in violence. At one time I encouraged fencing a great deal, and then too, I learned to shoot. I used to shoot with a pistol, I used to shoot with a rifle because that gives you a steadiness and skill and a sure-sightedness that is excellent, and it obliges you to stay calm in the midst of danger. I don't see why all these things... One must not be hopelessly non-violent — that makes characters that are... soft!

If she sees children... What was it? They were making swords?

*A: Yes, Mother, they made swords out of meccano.*

She should have taken the opportunity to tell them, "Oh, you should learn fencing!"

And a pistol too?

*A: Yes, Mother.*

And tell them... teach them to shoot... make it into an *art*, into an art and into a training of calm and self-controlled skill. One should never... never raise a hue and cry.... That will not do at all, at all, at all. I am not at all in favour of that. The methods of self-defence should be mastered, and for that they must be practised.

At this point A mentioned archery as it is practised in Flanders in the North of France, but for lack of a precise explanation, Mother thought that he was referring to toy bows and arrows.

They will start killing birds....

*A: But we do not have the facilities here, Mother, for archery, and that is the difficulty.*

## On Education

They would start damaging things. I am not very... Of course if there is... But when they have thoroughly grasped that it should be a means of self-defence, not anything else....

No, we would have accidents. I don't think that it is prudent. You can teach them fencing and shooting if they show that they are interested, that is, like that, like what I am writing to X.... If she sees a child doing that, she must not... (*Mother raises her arms as if in horror*). She should tell him, she must know how to explain to him, "It gives you control over your muscles, it obliges you to be strong and calm and self-controlled." On the contrary, it is an opportunity to give them a very good lesson. But you must be able to understand yourself, and above all, above all, make them understand... make them understand that moral violence is just as bad as physical violence. It can even be worse; that is, at least physical violence obliges you to become strong, self-controlled, whereas moral violence... You can be like this (*Mother demonstrates an apparent calm*) and yet have a terrible moral violence.