

Silo

The Healing of Suffering

Punta de Vacas, Mendoza, Argentina

May 4, 1969

“If you have come to listen to a man who it is thought transmits wisdom, you have mistaken your way, for true wisdom is not communicated through books or speeches—true wisdom is in the depths of your consciousness, just as true love is in the depths of your heart.

If you have come at the urging of slanderers and hypocrites to listen to this man so that what you hear today may later be used against him, you have mistaken your way, because this man has not come here to ask anything of you or to use you, because he does not need you.

You are listening to a man who does not know the laws that rule the Universe, who is not privy to the laws of History, who is ignorant of the relationships that govern people. Far from the cities and their sick ambitions, this man speaks to your conscience. There in the cities, where each day is a struggle cut short by death, where love is followed by hate, where forgiveness is followed by revenge; there, over the cities of the people rich and poor; over the vast fields of humanity, a mantle of suffering and sorrow has settled.

You suffer when pain bites your body. You suffer when hunger seizes your body. But you suffer not only because of the immediate pain of your body, and the hunger of your body—you also suffer from the consequences of the diseases that afflict it.

You must distinguish between two types of suffering. There is the suffering that occurs during illness and that suffering can recede with the advance of science, just as hunger can recede but thanks to the reign of justice. There is also suffering that does not depend on the illness of your body yet derives from it: if you are disabled, if you cannot see or hear, you suffer. But though such suffering arises from your body, or from your body's infirmities, that suffering is of your mind.

There is another kind of suffering that recedes neither with the advance of science, nor with the advance of justice. This type of suffering, which is strictly of your mind, retreats before faith, before the joy of living, before love. You must understand that this suffering is always rooted in the violence that exists in your own consciousness. You suffer because you fear losing what you have, or because of what you have already lost, or because of what you despair of attaining. You suffer because of what you do not have, or because you fear in general.

These, then, are the great enemies of humanity: the fear of illness, the fear of poverty, the fear of death, the fear of loneliness. All these forms of suffering pertain to your mind, and all of them reveal your inner violence, the violence that exists in your mind. Notice how that violence always stems from desire. The more violent a person, the more base that person's desires.

I would like to tell you a story that took place long ago.

There was once a traveler who had to undertake a long journey within a fixed amount of time. He harnessed his animal to a cart and set out on this lengthy trek toward his faraway destination. He called the animal *Necessity* and the cart *Desire*; one wheel of the cart he called *Pleasure*, and the other he called *Pain*. Our traveler turned his cart sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left, yet he never ceased moving toward his destiny. The faster the cart traveled, the faster turned the wheels of Pleasure and Pain, carrying as they did the cart of Desire and connected as they were by the same axle. But the journey was very long, and after a time our traveler grew bored. So, he decided to decorate his cart, and began to adorn it with all manner of beautiful things. But the more he embellished the cart of Desire, the heavier it became for Necessity to pull. On the curves and steep hills of the road, the poor animal grew too exhausted to pull the cart of Desire. And where the road was soft, the wheels of Pleasure and Suffering became mired in the earth.

One day, because the road was long and he was still very far from his destination, our traveler grew desperate. That night he decided to meditate on the problem, and in the midst of his meditation he heard the neighing of his old friend. Comprehending the message, he arose very early the next morning and began to lighten the cart of its burden, stripping it of all its adornments. Then he set off once more toward his destination, with the animal pulling the cart at a brisk trot. Nevertheless, he had lost time that was now irrecoverable. The next night he sat down again to meditate, and he realized, thanks to another warning from his friend, that now he had to undertake a task that was doubly difficult because it involved his letting go. At daybreak, he sacrificed the cart of Desire. It is true that when he did so he lost the wheel of Pleasure, but with it he also lost the wheel of Suffering. And so, he mounted the animal Necessity and galloped on its back across the green fields until he reached his destiny.

See how desire can trap you. But there are desires of different qualities. There are cruder desires, and there are more elevated desires. Elevate desire, surpass desire, purify desire! In doing so, surely you will have to sacrifice the wheel of Pleasure—but you will also become free of the wheel of Suffering.

Spurred by desire, the violence in a person does not simply remain like a sickness in the consciousness of that person—it acts in the world of other people and is exercised upon them. And do not think that when I talk of violence I am speaking only about the armed act of war, where some men destroy others. That is only one form of physical violence.

There is also economic violence. Economic violence is the violence through which you exploit other people; economic violence occurs when you steal from another, when you are no longer a brother or sister to others but a bird of prey feeding upon them.

There is also racial violence. Or do you think that you are not being violent when you persecute someone because that person is not of your own race? Do you think that you are not engaging in violence when you malign that person for being of a race different from your own?

And there is religious violence: Do you think that you are not engaging in violence when you refuse work to, close your doors to, or dismiss a person, because that person does not share your religious beliefs? Do you believe it is not violence to defame and exclude someone who does not share your principles—isolating them within their families, segregating them and their loved ones—because they do not share your religion?

There are other forms of violence that are imposed by Philistine morality. You wish to impose your way of life upon another; you wish to impose your vocation upon another. But who has told you that you are an example that must be followed? Who has told you that you can impose a way of life because it pleases you? Where is the mold and where the model that you would impose? This is another form of violence.

Only inner faith and inner meditation can end the violence in you, in others, and in the world around you. All the other doors are false and do not lead away from this violence. This world is on the verge of exploding with no way to end the violence! Do not look for false doors. There are no politics that can solve this mad urge for violence. There is no political party or movement on the planet that can end the violence. Do not look for false doors that promise to lead away from the violence in the world . . . I have heard that all over the world young people are searching for false doors to try to escape the violence and inner suffering. They turn to drugs as a solution. Do not look for false doors to try to end the violence.

My brother, my sister—keep these simple commandments, as simple as these rocks, this snow, and this sun that blesses us. Carry peace within you and carry it to others. My brother, my sister—back in history there is the human being bearing the face of suffering. Look at that face of suffering... but remember that it is necessary to keep moving forward, that it is necessary to learn to laugh, and that it is necessary to learn to love.

To you, my brother and sister, I cast this hope—this hope of joy, this hope of love—so that you lift up your heart and lift up your spirit, and so that you do not forget to elevate your body."