



The Situation Today and Bhavya

The world-view that dominates today is intensely competitive, materialistic, mechanistic and ecologically violent, based on an assumption that the human power to know, manipulate and reconfigure is absolute and infinite. This egocentric world-view is reflected in the **child-rearing and** schooling methods that are popularly in practice, inculcating children into this doxa while still very young. Through the ages, schools have been a reflection of the wider society, reinforcing these dominant attitudes. While societal attitudes have created the prevailing system of child-rearing and education, these very attitudes, in turn, reinforce the same world view. There is no escape. The vicious circle continues.

Consequently, children are taught not to rock the boat, to maintain the status quo at any cost, and they are rewarded when they do so. They grow up convinced that they may never question adult authority, or offer opinions of their own which



might challenge those in authority. Often, by the time they are adults, they have been socialized so completely into these attitudes that they become the next generation of adults who will reinforce the same world view. They have never known another way. Thus, a whole society is created which will not question authority. There is grave danger in creating masses of people who do not think for themselves, but are quick to obey blindly. Adolf Hitler once said, “What good fortune for those in power that people do not think.”

We are concerned that educated adults on an average, seem unable to live cooperatively with one another. Attempts to resolve problems are often made through violent means, leading to much destruction of life and property, creating more anger and distress. If after all the “education” that people receive, society is left in such a state of confusion and destruction, what is one to deduce? How many more Godhra-Gujarat or September 11-Afghanistan-Iraq disasters do we need to wake us up? From where did this



violence really originate and from where would sensitivity, love and empathy come? We feel that, as a society, we need to reflect upon this, seriously, before considering any form of education for our children. This widely prevalent system has undoubtedly failed.

We recognize that our children are growing into a world which is alarmingly complex and challenging. In order to be able to survive as well as to halt, in a constructive way, the forces which are so steadily destroying the thread of our society, our children are going to need to apply all their creative abilities, their critical thinking skills and their problem-solving skills. Our children need to grow up as kind, caring human beings, who can co-exist in harmonious, productive relationships with one another.

In *our* work with children, we did not feel justified in *training* them to adjust to the society described above. We were convinced that we may not teach

our children, directly or indirectly, that to succeed they have to be competitive, materialistic, and aggressive – to win at all costs. A redefining of “success” in more productive and positive terms had opened the door to a completely different set of possibilities for us. We felt that the answer lay in a serious consideration of these questions:

- What is the purpose of education?
- What is the relationship between our educational practices, learning, the growth of the individual and the growth of society?
- What is the root cause of the extreme anger, violence and mindlessness we face in today’s world?
- What would help us make this world a place which nurtures Life?

