

Tangents . . . by Thane

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Dear Student-Friend,

We need to fear what is happening to the world's children -- to the millions of them who will be adult contemporaries of our own children in tomorrow's world.-- to say nothing of the generations yet unborn.

People often ask me, "what do you mean -- I should live a portion of my life for generations yet unborn?" (Releasing the Hidden Splendor, Closed Class.) To arrive at this answer, let's view the world ahead in two or three perspectives, and maybe you can draw your own conclusions as to what you should be doing.

For instance, Walter Winchell, when asked the question, "What is the major international problem?" replied:

"Surprisingly it is not communism. It is malnutrition. Half the world's population is close to starvation. The other serious problem is the population explosion. One problem intensifies the other."

How serious is the population explosion?

"Let us be mad a moment. Let us imagine that the entire population of the world were herded into the area of the United States. Every political problem would grow immensely more complicated, and there would be larger traffic jams, too. With affluence added, such an American population of upwards of three billion would expect to be just as well fed, housed, televised, and automobilized as the present American population of 190 million.

"...this means that Britain will

have a population of more than 70 million by the turn of the century. But Britain is far smaller than America; a United States with the same density of population as a Britain with 70 million people would have 2.8 billion people. This is close enough to the three billion world population to give an idea of the problems..if the population explosion is not damped down.

"Britain's overcrowded hospitals are likely to become impossibly jammed: This year they have begun to throw mothers out of the maternity wards five or six days after giving birth instead of the usual ten days.

"...if you project the statistics to the year 2000, the figures say that a quarter of the British population will then be under fifteen years old." (1) (Can you hear those transistors?)

There is another view of the future that is more than shocking to some people:

"Let's pretend that you have not yet been born but will be born this year, somewhere on the planet, somewhere in this Mighty Neighborhood. And let's try to estimate your chances of living a happy, healthy, decent and useful life.

"If you are born this year, then on the same day more than 200,000 other babies will be born, all over the world." These figures were compiled in 1951.

"You will have less than one chance in 20 of being born in the United States. Your chance of being

born in the Soviet Union will not be much better.

You will probably be colored." (That's a shocker, isn't it? -- but wait!) "Remember that you and the 200,000 other squawking brats that will be the day's baby crop are going to be born all over the planet and that there are just not many openings in the places where the white race lives. You must take your chances with the other babies. And the chances are, you will be colored -- colored black, or colored brown, or colored yellow.

"Your chances of being born white this year are not more than one in three. Your chances of being Chinese are one in four; of being born in India, better than one in nine.

"If you are born colored, you will probably be born either among people who have recently revolted and thrown out the white folks who used to govern them or else in a country that is still trying to throw the white folks out.

You have only about one chance in four of being a Christian. It is far more likely that you will be born a Confucian or a Buddhist, a Mohamadan or a Taoist.

If you are born in the United States you will probably live longer than a year. But if you are born in India, which is more likely, you have only a little better than a one-to-four chance of living more than a year. But cheer up! Your chances in some places could be worse; and besides, even if you survive babyhood in India, you have only a 50-50 chance of growing to maturity.

"If you are born colored, the chances are overwhelming that you will be chronically sick all your life--from malaria or intestinal parasites or tuberculosis or maybe leprosy. And even if you are not chronically sick, you are likely to be weak from hunger. You have about a two-to-one chance of suffering from malnutrition.

"Again, if you are born colored, you have only a one-to-four chance of learning to read. And since you almost certainly will not own a radio, you will be pretty well cut off from that part of the human family that has enough to eat and that is reasonably healthy. You will most likely live in a mud hut, with a dirt floor and no chimney, its roof thatched with straw. You will almost certainly work on the land, and most of what you raise will go to the landlord. In addition, you are likely to be deeply in debt to the local moneylender, and you may have to pay him annual interest of anywhere from 30 to 100 per cent.

"What I am describing is the actual condition of mankind in the middle of the 20th Century. To explain how it got there would involve a good deal of history for which we have no time here. The point is, that is where it got. Many millions of these sick, hungry, illiterate and oppressed people belong to the "free nations" we propose to lead in a crusade against communism. We had better take a good look at the world we live in...

When we Americans look at Russia, all that we see is tyranny. When millions of these wretched outcasts look at her, what they see is liberation from the landlord and the moneylender, and the planned reconstruction of their country on the basis of modern machinery. They see a possible end to a kind of misery and despair which most Americans have never seen. Tyranny does not frighten them; they have never known anything else. We had better stop shouting slogans at them long enough to try with all our might to imagine their misery, and offer a better solution to their real problems than communism offers." (2)

Now, re-read the first paragraph of this letter. Think in terms of your children, and their's growing up in a world where masses of hungry people are going to become more violent about their hunger. We need to be not mildly pained but deeply appalled by the facts that most of the

children of this generation have known more of privation and threat than of sufficiency and confidence. We need to feel at once a cold fear and a passionate resolve, when we take stock of the infants and children who by the violence of nations have been deprived of that intimate reassurance on which human nature begins its thriving, and those cultural institutional contacts through which the young are initiated into the human condition.

Nothing in the world today is more fearful than the fact that children everywhere are growing up with little reason to believe in human rationality and goodness, and much reason to accept antagonism and violence as the laws of life.

A greater depth of empathy is needed. More than most of us have hoped for, let alone achieved. We certainly need to try with all our might to understand the misery that abounds. It may be an exaggeration but the following story indicates how our children should be as compared to the young vandals that terrorize neighborhoods.

Beatrice Lieber recalls an incident in her kindergarten class. She told the story "The Three Little Pigs" to the children. "As she concluded with the wolf's demise in the pot of boiling water, she noticed a little boy on the verge of tears. When the teacher asked him what was wrong, he replied:

"I'm thinking of the wolf's family!"

Everything we have learned about psychological health and illness underscores the importance of childhood experience. We have learned that if we want a sound society we must do unto children not only as we would have them do unto us, but as we would have them do unto all people with whom they associate all their lives. We need greatly to fear the fact that in spite of this precept,

if it were practiced, children everywhere are being starved for food and love.

This can only produce a generation with nothing but hatred for those who do have these things. Why else is the Cold War prolonged? What actually continues to feed its senseless life?

Ponder this lesson. Think back upon what child psychology you have learned beginning with your own childhood, through observation and study. Think about the future generation that is being born and what kind of adults they will become in these "free nations." Consider what spiritual equipment you have given your children, or those youths with whom you come in contact, with which to meet their future contemporaries, other than what stinking small-mindedness and snobbery they may have gained by being exposed to a so-called Christian Sunday School and being told about the heathens in foreign lands.

Or worse; maybe they have been exposed to a good old-fashioned religious revival. And if they think they've been saved! -- there's nothing more blind than "spiritual pride" -- they're ready for the slaughter ahead. They're unprepared to understand or offer anything else. These children of other lands will certainly be their neighbors, for I was told recently that we have manned aircraft that will go six times the speed of sound. That will make the world a mighty small place and we already have surprising "across-the-alley" neighbors. Yes, our children will certainly have to rub elbows and make a living, either with or competing against these poor devils that unfortunately got born someplace else.

Man no longer fears nature. The only things he really fears are the social, economic and spiritual institutions of the past, false tenets and folklore of caste, superiority and

sovereignty that he has made out of himself.

"Human beings have suffered from three kinds of maladjustments: in their relations with nature, with other men and with themselves." (3) Their adjustments with nature are a matter of physical science and we have only to look about us and see that that is a snap as compared to other problems. The adjustments with their fellowmen are a matter of economics and politics that can't come about until adjustments within are complete, or much further along the way.

Our relations with others cannot be satisfactory while we are, consciously or unconsciously haunted by feelings of uncertainty and disgust within. Bertrand Russell says what every great mystic, seer and saviour of all times has said over and over, "Harmony with other men is only possible as a reflection of harmony within." Harmony within reflects a freely creative existence, an existence in which men's feelings are expansive rather than restrictive.

Most men are filled with fears in the depths of their unconscious which they have inherited from an age when man had less mastery over nature and therefore, more reason for hostility toward other men. This makes for the obtuseness I mentioned in previous lessons. This is dangerous

because these fears were not gained in range of our conscious memory, but are deep-rooted in our inherited nature. This fear is akin to that which besets superstitious people in a cemetery at midnight. This kind of fear plays a far greater part in daily life than most imagine, and is a much greater cause of public and private tragedy than is generally realized or estimated.

The program and effort we must make is bound, in most instances, to provoke resistance, both within self and with others but is the crucial action necessary, just the same. The real test is your willingness to risk exposure to ideas which for one reason or another are frightening to you. For the process of how man can change urges into precisely those areas where the fears inculcated in the buried past cause evasion or only superficial attempts at change.

I don't intend, nor do I suggest a kind of utopianism but education in the largest sense, as well as persistent practice of Releasing the Hidden Splendour techniques in depth, contains a real solution for future generations. Only as we improve our sense of identity can we impart anything but continuation of the laws of the jungle for future generations.

The time has come for man to step into self-directed evolution.

Aloha blessings,

Thane

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(more)

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- (1) Joe Rogaly of The Economist
- (2) "Let's Join the Human Race"
-Stringfellow Barr
- (3) Bertrand Russell

ERRATA: Vol. II, Issue 36, page 4, last line of paragraph 3--ness to say, 'we can do nothing.'