

I

NOW IN THE DAWN

On a winter evening early in the month of January, 1974, I watched rain laden clouds move slowly across an almost full moon. Beyond the clouds, somewhere in the southwestern sky, the comet Kohoutek was threading its way through our destiny. The earth was suffering another war and the energy crisis, which was to become a lifestyle, was announced. I was aware of humanity moving swiftly through the cataclysm; some, perhaps, moving toward and beginning to collide with the past.

A polluted environment, food that is depleted of nutrients, and the reckless waste of our natural resources now appear like lost reflections of mankind's blindness. Illness and want are stealing into once comfortable settings. Yet there are others who are mysteriously protected, who move through this strange death drama unharmed. I believe these are the people who have faith in the birth of a new age. They have given their allegiance to the planet, to humankind, and to the dawning of consciousness.

Let me be clear from the beginning: this book is about revolution. It must be, for it is essentially about that which can heal us. I can no longer find the division between revolution and healing. The cry to change is being heard because the world is sick. If we do not heal the disease, we will die. In order to become well, we must change, and so revolution and healing flow together into a single act.

When I speak of revolution, I do not mean fighting in the streets, blood spilt, or violence done. This is the way we have sought change in the past. Out of desperation, because people were not heard by those in power, the people have taken to arms and seized power. But now we are entering a new era. It is violence that we must leave behind. To maim and kill one another in order to bring change will only give us an illusion of change, while continuing in the same senseless patterns that have brought us to misery. No, this is not a bloody revolution. This must be an inner change—a revolution of the mind.

This revolution of the mind and healing are intertwined because we cannot separate that which needs to be healed from that which is the cause of disease. Although our problems appear multiple, and disease seems to strike in a hundred different guises, there is only one basic cause at the source of all our ailments. The human race is suffering from a spiritual malaise. We have for too long neglected

our souls. We have disobeyed the natural laws of the universe. We have ignored the intelligence and interrelationship of all beings and all species of life. Those whom we have entrusted with power have supported war, proliferated ignorance, and encouraged physical and spiritual laxity. Now we are reaping the bitter fruit of these dark seeds. Many people are sick, and the number of those who are ill continues to climb. Hearts are empty. Souls are hungry for meaning.

Some years back, I heard a Hopi medicine man say that we must stay on the path of the Great Father, or suffer the consequences. We are at last understanding that heaven and hell exist in the here and now, and that we have polluted paradise.

I begin this book in a dark mood, for all around me are indications of more misery to come. At the beginning of the energy crisis, America's leaders made decisions which seem irreversible in their consequences. At a time when the whole ecological system was crying out for our loving attention, environmentalist and their concerns were pushed back, stalled and delayed. The excuse was that there were more immediate problems—a war, and an energy crisis. The real war is the one which mankind is waging against nature—through neglect, carelessness, ignorance and waste. And it is this war, this separation from the earth which is our home, that is bringing on the true crisis. It is inevitable that such divisive actions against nature will bring suffering.

Yet I am led on by a vision. Humanity has been promised an age of peace. In the midst of rubble and civilizations toppling, we are witnessing the dawning of an expanded consciousness. There is light on the horizon. I have unshakable faith in this light. I know that we must move through the darkness—helping one another to the best of our ability—without ever losing sight of the clear vision that is calling us forward.

It is not unusual for me to hear people saying it is impossible: we have made too many mistakes. Disaster is inevitable. Especially in our cities, one hears these voices of despair—people who feel they are worthless, who think that their lives do not mean very much. “Of course there are terrible things happening,” they say. “I can see that. But what can *I* do?” There are so many who feel helpless against the mountain of corruption and ignorance. Each person feels alone against the tidal wave of darkness, their actions reduced to a futile and petty scrambling on a vast beach where there is no safety, and no possibility of escape.

We must first of all remember that we are not alone. The illusion that we are separate from one another is at the root of our troubled time. As soon as we begin to share our concerns, to voice

our needs and express our dreams, we find ourselves linked to a thousand other beings with the same concerns, the same needs and the same dreams. There is no one person with the whole solution, or all the strength. The solution comes from each and all of us contributing what we know and what we love. In joining together, we begin to puzzle out ways to act, to move, to change—and in this joining we find our strength and our power.

We must also begin with ourselves, and in very simple ways. What can you do to make yourself healthier, stronger? In what ways can you make peace with yourself? Americans have come out of a tradition of striving and materiality. More often than not, happiness—for us—is always in the future. But happiness springs from within us, in this moment. It is not so much in external conditions, but in our perception of those conditions that the answer lies.

I am not saying that external conditions do not matter, for this book is greatly concerned with external conditions. Our environment always influences us. It may, at times, be the determining factor in our lives. Yet true happiness remains a blend of internal and external factors. There is a marriage that takes place in the moment of joy—harmony is composed of a union between thought and materiality.

If our external conditions are unpleasant, then hope lies in our belief in ourselves—in our capacity to change, affect, and enhance our environment. If you are among those who feel trapped, who feels alone and unimportant, I urge you to try introducing into your own life the inner and outer environmental changes discussed in this book. If, on the other hand, you feel strong, solid, and secure in yourself, I urge you to find ways in which you can help make the healing environment a reality for those in your community. In taking these actions, we can help create the healing environment for each person near and around us, and ultimately, for all of us.