

Jiddu Krishnamurti

***Eighteen Public Meetings in
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Knowledge and the Transformation of Man

First Conversation with Dr Allen W. Anderson in San Diego, California 18 February 1974

Monday, February 18, 1974

A: Mr Krishnamurti, I was very taken with a recent statement of yours in which you said that it's the responsibility of each human being to bring about his own transformation, which is not dependent on knowledge or time. And if it's agreeable with you I thought it would be a splendid thing if we explored together the general area of transformation itself and after we have done that perhaps the other related areas would begin to fall into place and we could bring about in conversation a relationship among them.

K: Don't you think, sir, considering what's happening in the world, in India, in Europe and in America, the general degeneration in literature, in art, and specially in the deep cultural sense, in the sense religion...

A: Yes

K: ...there is a traditional approach, a mere acceptance of authority, belief which is not really the religious spirit. Seeing all this, the confusion, the great misery, the sense of infinite sorrow, any observant and most serious people would say that this society cannot possibly be changed except only when the individual, the human being, really transforms himself radically, that is regenerates himself fundamentally. And the responsibility of that depends on the human being, not on the mass or on the priests or on a church or a temple or mosque or whatever, but on a human being who is aware of this enormous confusion, politically, religiously, economically, in every direction there is such misery, such unhappiness. And when you see that, it is a very serious thing to ask oneself whether a human being like oneself or another, whether he can really deeply undergo a radical transformation. And when that question is put to him, and when he sees his responsibility in relation to the whole then perhaps we can discuss what relationship has knowledge and time in the transformation of man.

A: I quite follow. We need then to lay some groundwork in order to move into the question itself.

K: Yes. Because most people are not concerned with the world at all. Most people are not concerned seriously with the events, with the chaos, with the mess in the world at present. They are only concerned very superficially. The problem of energy, problem of pollution and so on - such superficial things. But they are really not deeply concerned with the human mind - the mind that is destroying the world.

A: Yes - I quite follow. What you have said places in a very cardinal way the radical responsibility on the individual as such, if I've understood you correctly.

K: Yes.

A: There are no five years plans that we can expect to help us out.

K: You see, the word 'individual' is really not a correct word because individual, as you know sir, means undivided, indivisible in himself. But human beings are totally fragmented, therefore they are not individuals. They may have a bank account, a name, a house, but they are not really individuals in the sense, a total complete harmonious whole, unfragmented. That is really what it means to be an individual.

A: Well, would you say then that to move or make passage or perhaps a better word simply would be change, since we are not talking about time, from this fragmented state to one of wholeness which could be

regarded as a change in the level of the being of the person.

K: Yes

A: Could we say that?

K: Yes, but you see again the word 'whole' implies not only sanity, health and also the word 'whole' means holy, h-o-l-y. All that's implied in that one word 'whole'. And human beings are never whole. They are fragmented, they are contradictory, they are torn apart by various desires. So, when we talk of an individual, the individual is really a human being who is totally completely whole, sane, healthy and therefore holy. And to bring about such a human being is our responsibility in education, politically, religiously, in every way. And therefore it is the responsibility of the educator, of everybody, not just myself, my responsibility, it is your responsibility as well as mine, as well as his.

A: It's everyone's responsibility...

K: Absolutely - because we have created this awful mess in the world.

A: But the individual is the one who must make the start.

K: A human being, each human being. It does not matter whether he is a politician or a businessman or just an ordinary person like me in the street, it's our business as a human being to realise the enormous suffering, misery, confusion there is in the world. And it's our responsibility to change all that, not the politicians, not the businessman, not the scientist. It's our responsibility.

A: When we say our responsibility, and we have two uses of the word 'individual' now. There is the general use of it meaning a quantitative measure...

K: Yes - quantitative measure.

A: ...and then this qualitative reference that we simply needed, it seems to me, to discern as a possibility. I am reminded again of the statement that you made that I quoted earlier, that it is the responsibility of each, each human person.

K: Human being, yes.

A: Right.

K: Whether he is in India or in England or in America or wherever he is.

A: So we can't slip out of this by saying, we have created this therefore we must change it.

K: No, no, no.

A: We get back to, well if the change is going to start at all, it's going to be with each.

K: Yes, sir.

A: With each.

K: With each human being. Therefore the question arises from that: does a human being realise with all seriousness his responsibility not only to himself but to the whole of mankind?

A: It wouldn't appear so from the way things go on.

K: Obviously not, each one is concerned with his own petty little selfish desires. So, responsibility implies tremendous attention, care, diligence - not negligence as now it is going on.

A: Yes I do follow that. The word 'we' that we used in relation to Each, brings about the suggestion of a relationship which perhaps we could pursue here a moment. There seems to be something indivisible apparently between what we refer to by each or the individual person as the usage is usually construed. It seems to be an indivisible relation between that and what we call the whole, which the individual doesn't sense.

K: Sir, as you know, I have been all over the world, except behind the Iron Curtain and China - Bamboo Curtain. I have been all over and I have talked to and seen dozens and thousands of people. I have been doing this for 50 years and more. Human beings, wherever they live, are more or less the same. They have their problems of sorrow, problems of fear, problems of livelihood, problems of personal relationship, problems of survival, overpopulation and this enormous problem of death - it is a common problem to all of us. There is no eastern problem and western problem. The West has its particular civilisation and the East has its own. And human beings are caught in this trap.

A: Yes, I follow that.

K: They don't seem to be able to get out of it. They are going on and on and on, for millennia.

A: Therefore the question is: how does he bring this about, as an each, as a one? The word 'individual' as you have just described, seems to me to have a relationship to the word 'transform' in itself, and I would like to ask you whether you would agree in this. It seems that many persons have the notion that to transform a thing means to change it utterly without any relationship whatsoever to what it is as such. That would seem to ignore that we are talking about form that undergoes a change, which form itself still abides.

K: Yes sir, I understand.

A: Otherwise the change would involve a loss, a total loss.

K: So are we asking this question, sir: what place has knowledge in the regeneration of man, in the transformation of man, in the fundamental, radical movement in man? What place has knowledge and therefore time? Is that what you are asking?

A: Yes, yes, I am. Because either we accept that a change that is a genuine change means the annihilation of what preceded it, or we are talking about a total transformation of something that abides.

K: Yes. So let us look at that word for a minute.

A: Good.

K: Revolution in the ordinary sense of that word means, doesn't it, not an evolution, gradual evolution, it's a revolution.

A: It doesn't mean that then - right. I agree.

K: By revolution is generally meant, if you talk to a communist, he wants to overthrow the government, if you talk to a bourgeois he is frightened, if you talk to an intellectual he has various criticisms about revolution. Now, revolution is either bloody, or...

A: Yes.

K: Or revolution in the psyche.

A: Yes.

K: Outward or inner.

A: Outward, or inner.

K: The outward is the inner. The inner is the outward. There is not the difference between the outward and the inner. They are totally related to each other,

A: Then this goes back to what you mentioned earlier that there is no division even though intellectually you make a distinction, between the I and the we.

K: That's right.

A: Yes, of course.

K: So, when we talk about change, we mean not the mere bloody revolution, physical revolution, but rather the revolution in the makeup of the mind.

A: Of each.

K: Of human beings.

A: Right.

K: The way he thinks, the way he behaves, the way he conducts himself, the way he operates, he functions, the whole of that. Now, whether that psychological revolution - not evolution in the sense gradualness...

A: No.

K: What place has knowledge in that?

A: What place has knowledge in something...

K: In the regeneration of man which is the inward revolution which will affect the outer.

A: Yes, which is not a gradual progress.

K: No, obviously. Gradual process is endless.

A: Exactly. So we are talking an instant qualitative change.

K: Again when you use the word 'instant', it seems as though, oh, suddenly it is to happen. That's why I am rather hesitant in using the word 'instant'. We will go into it in a minute. First of all, sir, let's be clear what you and I are talking about if we may. We see objectively the appalling mess the world is in. Right?

A: Yes.

K: The misery, the confusion, the deep sorrow of man.

A: Oh, yes.

K: I can't tell you what I feel when I go round the world. The pettiness, the shallowness, the emptiness of all this, of the so-called western civilisation, if I may use that word; into which the eastern civilisation is being dragged. And we are just scratching on the surface all the time. And we think the mere change on the surface - change in the structure is going to do something enormous to human beings. On the contrary it has done nothing. It polishes a little bit here and there but deeply fundamentally it does not change man. So, when we are discussing change we must be, I think, fairly clear that we mean the change in the psyche, in the very being of human beings. That is, in the very structure and nature of his thought.

A: The change at the root.

K: At the root - yes.

A: At the root itself.

K: At the root. And therefore when there is that change he will naturally bring about a change in society. It isn't society first, or individual first, it is the human change which will transform the society. They are not two separate things.

A: Now I must be very careful that I understand this precisely. I think I discern now why in the statement you said, 'which is not dependent on knowledge or time'. Because when this person changes, this each human being changes, the change which begins in society is a change that is in a non-temporal relationship with the change in each human being.

K: That's right. After all human beings have created this society. By their greed, by their anger, by their violence, by their brutality, by their pettiness, they have created this society.

A: Precisely.

K: And they think by changing the structure you are going to change the human being. This has been the communist problem, this has been the eternal problem: that is change the environment then you change man. They have tried that in ten different ways and they haven't done it, succeeded in changing man. On the contrary man conquers the environment as such.

So, if we are clear that the outer is the inner - the inner is the outer, that there is not the division, the society and the individual, the collective and the separate human being, but the human being is the whole, he is the society, he is the separate human individual, he is the factor which brings about this chaos.

A: Yes, I am following that very closely.

K: Therefore he is the world and the world is him.

A: Yes. Therefore if he changes everything changes. If he doesn't change nothing changes.

K: I think this is very important because we don't realise, I think, this basic factor that we are the world and the world is us, that the world is not something separate from me and me separate from the world. You are born in a culture, Christian or Hindu or whatever culture you are born in. You are the result of that culture. And that culture has produced this world. The materialistic world of the West, if one can call it, which is spreading all over the world, destroying their own culture, their own traditions - everything is being swept aside in the wake of the western culture, and this culture has produced this human being, and the human being has created this culture.

A: Exactly.

K: I mean he has created the paintings, the marvellous cathedrals, the marvellous technological things, going to the moon and so on and so on, the human beings have produced it. It is the human beings that have created the rotten society in which we live. It is the immoral society in which we live which human beings have created.

A: Oh yes, there is no doubt about that.

K: And therefore the world is you, you are the world, there is no other thing. If we accept that, if we see that not intellectually, but feel it in your heart, in your mind, in your blood that you are that, then the question is: is it possible for a human being to transform himself inwardly and therefore outwardly?

A: I am very concerned to see this as clearly as I can in terms of two texts that come to my mind, which we

could say possess an inner meaning, and because of this inner outer thing that we have spoken about in the divided approach that is made to scripture - there is a tremendous irony here - I am thinking of that, to me, wonderful text in St Johns gospel, in the third chapter, which says - and I will try to translate this as the Greek has it - 'The one who is doing the truth is coming to the light'. It isn't that he does the truth and then later he comes to the light.

K: Quite.

A: And it isn't that we could say from the pulpit, I will tell you what the truth is, if you do it then you will see the light. Because we are back again to what you mentioned earlier, the non-temporal relationship between the action which itself is the transformation.

K: Quite.

A: And the marvellous vista of understanding, which is not an 'if then' thing, but is truly concurrent. And the other one that I thought of, I was hoping you might agree is saying the same thing, so that I understand it well in terms of what you have said, is, and again I will try to translate it as literally as I can: God is love and the one abiding in love is abiding in God and God is abiding in him.

K: Quite, quite.

A: I put the '-ing' on all those words because of the character of the language itself. One wouldn't want to translate that for pulpit reading perhaps - but that's the real sense of it. And this 'ing-ing' along gives the feeling that there is an activity here that is not bound temporally.

K: Of course, it isn't a static state. It isn't something you intellectually accept, and leave it like that. Then it is death, there is nothing in it.

A: Yes.

K: That's why you see, sir, we have divided the physical world as the East and the West. We have divided religions, Christian religion and Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist. And we have divided the world into nationalities; the capitalist and the socialist, the communist and the other people and so on. We have divided the world, and we have divided ourselves as Christians, non-Christians, we have divided ourselves into fragments, opposing each other, so, where there is a division there is conflict.

A: Precisely.

K: I think that is a basic law.

A: Where there is a division there is conflict. But in terms of that word knowledge it appears that people believe to start with that that division is there, and they operate on that radical belief.

K: That's why I am saying it's so important to understand from the beginning in our talk, in our dialogue, that the world is not different from me and that I am the world. It may sound rather, very simplified, simplistic, but it has got very deep fundamental meaning if you realise what it means, not intellectually, but inwardly, the understanding of it, therefore there is no division. The moment I say to myself, and I realise that I am the world and the world is me, I am not a Christian, nor a Hindu, nor a Buddhist - nothing, I am a human being.

A: I was just thinking when you were saying how certain kinds of philosophical analysis would approach that, and in terms of the spirit of what you have said, this really is almost a cosmic joke because on the one hand as you said, it might sound simplistic. Some would say it is, therefore we don't have to pay attention to it; others would say, well, it's probably so much in want of clarity even though it's profound that it is some kind of mysticism. And we are back and forth, with the division again, as soon as that happens.

K: I know, I have been...

A: So I do follow you.

K: So, if that is clear that human mind has divided the world in order to find its own security, which brings about its own insecurity, when one is aware of that then one must inwardly as well as outwardly deny this division, as we and they, I and you, the Indian and the European and the Communist. You cut at the very root of this division. Therefore from that arises the question, can the human mind which has been so conditioned for millennia, can that human mind which has acquired so much knowledge in so many directions, can that human mind change, bring about a regeneration in itself and be free to reincarnate now?

A: Now?

K: Now.

A: Yes.

K: That is the question.

A: That is the question - exactly - reincarnate now. It would appear from what you have said that one could say that the vast amount of represented knowledge, an accretion of centuries, is a discussion we have been having with ourselves regardless of which culture we are speaking about as a commentary on this division.

K: Absolutely.

A: Without really grasping the division itself. And of course since the division is infinitely divisible...

K: Of course, (laughs) the moment you divide...

A: Then we can have tome after tome, after tome, libraries after libraries, mausoleums of books without end because we are continually dividing the division. Yes, I follow you.

K: And you see that's why culture is different from civilisation. Culture implies growth.

A: Oh yes, oh yes.

K: Now growth in the flowering of goodness.

A: A lovely phrase, lovely phrase.

K: That is culture - real culture - the flowering in goodness - you understand sir? - and that doesn't exist. We have civilisation, you can travel from India to America in a few hours - you have better bathrooms - better this and better that and so on with all the complications that it involves. That has been the western culture which is absorbing the East now. So goodness is the very essence of culture. Religion is the transformation of man. Not all the beliefs, churches and the idolatry of the Christians or the Hindus. That's not religion.

So we come back to the point: if one sees all this in this world - observes it, not condemn it or justify it - just to observe it, then from that one asks: man has collected such enormous information, knowledge, and has that knowledge changed him into goodness? You follow sir?

A: Oh yes, I follow.

K: Into a culture that will make him flower in this beauty of goodness. It has not.

A: No, it has not.

K: Therefore it has no meaning.

A: Excursions into defining goodness is not going to help us.

K: You can give explanations, definitions, but definitions are not the reality.

A: No, of course not.

K: The word isn't the thing. The description isn't the described.

A: Precisely.

K: So we come back again.

A: Yes, let's do.

K: Because personally I am tremendously concerned with this question: how to change man. Because I go to India every year for three months or five months and I see what is happening there, and I see what is happening in Europe, and I see what is happening in this country, in America, and it's something... I can't tell you what shock it gives me each time I come to these countries - the degeneration, the superficiality, the intellectual concepts galore without any substance, without any basis or ground in which the beauty of goodness, of reality can grow. So saying all that, what place has knowledge in the regeneration of man? That is the basic question.

A: That's our point of departure.

K: Departure.

A: Good. And the knowledge that we have pointed to so far that has emerged in our discussion is a knowledge which in itself has no power to effect this transformation.

K: No sir, but knowledge has a place.

A: Yes I didn't mean that. I mean what is expected of this knowledge that we pointed to, that is accumulated in libraries, is an expectation which it in itself cannot fulfil.

K: No, no. Now we must now go back to the word again - the word 'knowledge', what does it mean 'to know'?

A: Well, I have understood the word in a strict sense this way: knowledge is the apprehension of 'what is', but what passes for knowledge might not be that.

K: No. What is generally accepted as knowledge is experience.

A: Yes, what is generally accepted.

K: We will begin with that because that's what...

A: Yes, let's begin with what's generally accepted.

K: It's generally accepted - the experience which yields, or leaves a mark which is knowledge. That accumulated knowledge whether in the scientific world or in the biological world or in the business world or in the world of the mind, the being, is the known. The known is the past, therefore knowledge is the past. Knowledge cannot be in the present. I can use knowledge in the present.

A: But it's funded from the past.

K: Yes. But it has its roots in the past. Which means - that's very interesting - whether this knowledge which we have acquired about everything...

A: Yes.

K: I personally don't read any of these books, neither the Gita, the Bhagavad-Gita or the Upanishads, none of the psychological books, nothing. I am not a reader. I have observed tremendously all my life. Now, knowledge has its place.

A: Oh yes, yes, in the practical order.

K: Let's be clear on this. In the practical, technological - I must know where I am going, physically, and so on. Now, what place has that, which is human experience as well as scientific knowledge, what place has that in changing the quality of a mind that has become brutal, violent, petty, selfish, greedy, ambitious and all the rest of that? What place has knowledge in that?

A: We are going back to the statement we began with - namely that this transformation is not dependent on knowledge, then the answer would have to be, it doesn't have a place.

K: Therefore let's find out what are the limits of knowledge.

A: Yes, yes, of course.

K: Where is the demarcation, freedom from the known - where does that freedom begin?

A: Good. Yes, now I know precisely the point at which we are going to move from. Where does that freedom begin, which is not dependent on this funded accretion from the past.

K: That's right. So, the human mind is constructed on knowledge. It has evolved through millennia on this accretion, on tradition, on knowledge.

A: Yes.

K: It is there, and all our actions are based on that knowledge.

A: Which by definition must be repetitious.

K: Obviously, and it is a repetition. So, what is the beginning of freedom in relation to knowledge? May I put it this way to make myself clear?

A: Yes, yes.

K: I have experienced something yesterday that has left a mark. That is knowledge and with that knowledge I meet the next experience. So the next experience is translated in terms of the old and therefore that experience is never new.

A: So in a way if I understand you correctly, you are saying that the experience that I had yesterday, that I recall...

K: The recollection.

A: ...the recollection upon my meeting something new that appears to have some relationship to it, I approach on the basis of holding my previous knowledge up as a mirror in which to determine the nature of this new thing that I...

K: Quite, quite.

A: And this could be a rather crazy mirror.

K: Generally it is. (both laugh) You see that's what I mean. Where is freedom in relation to knowledge? Or is

freedom something other than the continuity of knowledge?

A: Must be something other.

K: Which means if one goes into it very, very deeply, it means the ending of knowledge.

A: Yes.

K: And what does that mean, what does it mean to end knowledge, whereas I have lived entirely on knowledge.

A: It means that immediately.

K: Ah wait, wait. See what is involved in it, sir. I met you yesterday and there is the image of you in my mind and that image meets you next day.

A: Yes.

K: The image meets you.

A: The image meets me.

K: And there are a dozen images or hundred images. So the image is the knowledge. The image is the tradition. The image is the past. Now can there be freedom from that?

A: If this transformation that you speak of is to happen, is to come to pass, there must be.

K: Of course. Therefore, we can state it, but how is the mind which strives, acts, functions on image, on knowledge, on the known - how is it to end that? Take this very simple fact, you insult me, or you praise me, that remains a knowledge, with that image, with that knowledge I meet you. I never meet you. The image meets you.

A: Exactly.

K: Therefore there is no relationship between you and me.

A: Yes, because between us this has been interposed.

K: Of course, obviously. Therefore, how is that image to end - never to register - you follow, sir?

A: I can't depend on someone else to handle it for me.

K: Therefore what am I to do? How is this mind which is registering, recording all the time - the function of the brain is to record, all the time - how is it to be free of knowledge? When you have done some harm to me personally, or collectively, whatever it be; you have insulted me, flattered me, how is the brain not to register that? If it registers it is already an image, it's a memory - and the past then meets the present, And therefore there is no solution to it.

A: Exactly.

K: I was looking at that word the other day in a very good dictionary - tradition. It means and of course the ordinary word - tradere - is to give, hand over, to give across. But it also has another peculiar meaning - not peculiar - from the same word, betrayal.

A: Oh yes, traduce.

K: Traduce. And in discussing in India this came out: betrayal of the present. If I live in tradition I betray the present.

A: Yes, I do see that.

K: Which is knowledge betrays the present.

A: Which is in fact a self-betrayal.

K: Yes, that's right.

A: Yes, certainly.

K: So how is the mind which functions on knowledge - how is the brain which is recording all the time...

A: Yes.

K: ...to end, to see the importance of recording and not let it move in any other direction? That is, sir, let me to put it this way, very simply: you insult me, you hurt me, by word, gesture, by an actual act, that leaves a mark on the brain which is memory.

A: Yes.

K: That memory is knowledge, that knowledge is going to interfere in my meeting you next time - obviously. Now how is the brain and also the mind, to record and not let it interfere with the present?

A: The person must, it seems to me, take pains to negate.

K: No, no. See what is implied, I know, but how am I to negate it. How is the brain whose function is to record, like a computer it is recording...

A: I didn't mean to suggest that it negates the recording. But it's the association, the translation of the recording into an emotional complex.

K: How is it - that's just the point - how is it to end this emotional response when I meet you next time, you who have hurt me? That's a problem.

A: That's the place from which we in the practical order in our relation to ourselves must then begin.

K: Yes.

A: Exactly. There is an aspect of this that interests me very much in terms of the relation between the theoretical and the practical.

K: Sir, to me theory has no reality. Theories have no importance to a man who is actually living.

A: May I say what I mean by theory. I don't think I mean what you think I mean by it. I mean theory in the sense of the Greek word *theoria* - spectacle, what is out there that I see. And the word is therefore very closely related to what you have been talking about in terms of knowledge. And yet it is the case that if we see something, that something is registered to us in the mind in terms of a likeness of it, otherwise we should have to become it in order to receive it, which in a material order would annihilate us. It seems to me, if I followed you correctly, that there is a profound confusion in one's relationship to that necessity for the finite being and what he makes of it. And in so far he is making the wrong thing of it he is in desperate trouble and can only go on repeating himself, and in such a repetition increasing despair. Have I distinguished this correctly?

K: You see religion is based on tradition. Religion is vast propaganda, as it is now. In India, here, anywhere, propaganda of theories, of beliefs, of idolatry, worship, essentially based on the acceptance of a theory.

A: Yes, yes.

K: Essentially based on an idea.

A: A statement, a postulate.

K: Ideas, put out by thought.

A: Right.

K: And obviously that's not religion. So religion as it exists now is the very denial of truth.

A: Yes. I am sure I understand you.

K: And if a man like me or... wants to find out, discover what that truth is he must deny the whole structure of religion, as it is - which is idolatry, propaganda, fear, division: you are a Christian I am a Hindu - all that nonsense, and be a light to oneself. Not in the vain sense of that word. Light, because the world is in darkness and a human being has to transform himself, has to be a light to himself. And light is not lit by somebody else.

A: So there is a point at which he must stop repeating himself. Is that correct?

K: Correct, sir.

A: In a sense we could use the analogy perhaps from surgery: something that has been continuous is now cut.

K: Yes.

A: And cut radically - not just fooled around with.

K: We haven't time to fool around any more - the house is on fire. At least I feel this enormously - things are coming to such a pass we must do something - each human being. Not in terms of better housing, better security, more this and that - but basically to regenerate himself.

A: But if the person believes that in cutting himself from this accretion that he is killing himself, he is going to resist that idea.

K: Of course, of course. Therefore he has to understand what his mind has created, therefore he has to understand himself.

A: So he starts observing himself.

K: Himself - which is the world.

A: Yes. Not learning five languages to be able to...

K: Oh, for God's sake, no, no. Attending schools where you learn sensitivity and all that rubbish.

A: The point that you are making, it seems to me, is made also by the great Danish thinker, Kirkegaard, who lived a very trying life in his own community because he was asking them, it seems to me, to undertake what you are saying. He was saying: Look, if I go to seminary and I try to understand what Christianity is by studying it myself then what I am doing is appropriating something here, but then when do I know when I have appropriated it fully. I shall never know that point therefore I shall forever appropriate it and never do anything about it, as such, as a subject. The person who must risk the deed, not the utterance.

K: Of course, I understand.

A: As I said before, or not simply thinking through what someone has thought before but actually

embodying the meaning through the observation of myself in relation to that.

K: Quite, quite.

A: And that has always seemed to me a very profound insight. But one of the ironies of that is, of course, in the Academy we have an endless proliferation of studies in which scholars have learned Danish in order to understand Kirkegaard.

K: Oh, no.

A: And what they are doing is to a large extent - if I haven't misjudged the spirit of much that I have read - is simply perpetuate the very thing he said should be cut. I do have this very strong feeling that profound change would take place in the academy of which you know I am a member, (laughs) if the teacher were not only to grasp this that you have said, but take the risk of acting on it. Since if it isn't acted on, if I've understood you correctly, we are back again where we were. We have toyed with the idea of being valiant and courageous, but then we have to think about what is involved before we do, and then we don't do.

K: Quite, quite.

A: We think and don't do.

K: Therefore sir, the word is not the thing. The description is not the described, and if you are not concerned with the description but only with the thing, 'what is', then we have to do something. When you are confronted with 'what is' you act, but when you are concerned with theories and speculations and beliefs you never act.

A: So there isn't any hope for this transformation, if I have understood you correctly, if I should think to myself that this just sounds marvellous: I am the world and the world is me, but while I go on thinking that the description is the described. There is no hope. So we are speaking about a disease over here, and we are speaking about something that has been stated as the case, and if I take what has been stated as the case, as 'the case', then I am thinking that the description is the described.

K: Of course.

A: And I never get out.

K: Sir, it is like a man who is hungry. Any amount of description of the right kind of food will never satisfy him. He is hungry, he wants food. So, all this implies, doesn't it, sir, several things. First can there be freedom from knowledge - and knowledge has its place - can there be freedom from the tradition as knowledge...

A: From the tradition as knowledge, yes.

K: ...can there be freedom from this separative outlook - me and you? We and they, Christian - and all this divisive attitude or activity in life. Those are the problems we have to...

A: That's what we must attend to as we move through our dialogues.

K: So first can the mind be free from the known, not verbally but actually?

A: But actually.

K: I can speculate about the body's freedom and all the rest of it, but see the necessity, the importance, that there must be freedom from the known, otherwise life becomes repetitive, a continuous superficial scratching. It has no meaning.

A: Of course. In our next conversation together I hope we can begin where we have just left off.

First Conversation with Dr Allen W. Anderson in San Diego, California 18 February 1974

Monday, February 18, 1974

Knowledge and Conflict in Human Relationships

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A: Mr Krishnamurti, in our previous conversation I was extremely delighted, for myself at least, that we had made the distinction in terms of relation between knowledge and self transformation, between on the one hand, the relationship that I sustain with the world, as the world is me, and I am the world, and on the other hand this dysfunctional condition which indicates in your phrase, that a person is involved in thinking, that the description is the described. It would appear then that something must be done to bring about a change in the individual, and going back to our use of the word individual, we could say, and you used the word earlier, that we are dealing with an observer. So if the individual is not to make the mistake of taking the description for the described, then he must as an observer relate to the observed in a particular way that is totally different from the way he has been in his confusion. I thought that perhaps in this particular conversation, if we pursued that it would be a link directly with what we had said prior.

K: What we previously, wasn't it surely that there must be a quality of freedom from the known, otherwise the known is merely the repetition of the past, the tradition, the image, and so on. The past, sir, is the observer. The past is the accumulated knowledge as the 'me' and the 'we', 'they' and 'us'. The observer is put together by thought as the past. Thought is the past. Thought is never free. Thought is never new, because thought is the response of the past, as knowledge, as experience, as memory.

A: Yes I follow that.

K: And the observer, when he observes, is observing with the memories, experiences, knowledge, hurts, despairs, hope - all that, with all that background he looks at the observed. So the observer then becomes separate from the observed. Is the observer different from the observed? Which we will go into presently later on. That leads to all kinds of other things. So when we are talking of freedom from the known we are talking about the freedom from the observer.

A: The observer, yes.

K: And the observer is tradition, the past, the conditioned mind that looks at things, looks at itself, looks at the world, looks at me and so on. So the observer is always dividing. The observer is the past and therefore it cannot observe wholly.

A: If the person uses the first person pronoun, 'I', while he is taking the description for the described, this is the observer he refers to when he says, 'I'.

K: 'I' is the past.

A: I see

K: 'I' is the whole structure of what has been, the remembrances, the memories, the hurts, the various demands, all that is put together in the word, 'the I', who is the observer, and therefore division: the observer and the observed. The observer who thinks he is a Christian and observes a non-Christian or a Communist, this division, this attitude of mind which observes with conditioned responses, with memories and so on. So that is the known.

A: I see.

K: I mean I think that is logically so.

A: Oh, no, it follows precisely from what you have said.

K: So, we are asking, can the mind or the whole structure, can the mind be free from the known? Otherwise the repetitious action, repetitious attitudes, repetitious ideologies, will go on, modified, changed, but it will be the same direction.

A: Do go ahead, I was going to say something but I think I'll let it wait until you have finished what you have said.

K: So, what is this freedom from the known? I think that is very important to understand because, any creative action - I am using the word creative in its original sense, not in the sense creative writing, creative...

A: I know

K: ...bakery, creative essay, creative pictures. I am not talking in that sense. In the deeper sense of that word, creation means something totally new being born. It is not creative, it is merely repetitive, modified, changed, the past. So unless there is a freedom from the known there is no creative action at all. Which is freedom implies not the negation of the known but the understanding of the known and that understanding brings about an intelligence which is the very essence of freedom.

A: I'd like to make sure that I've understood your use of this word creative. It seems to me very important. People who use the word creative in the sense that you described, creative this that or the other...

K: That's a horror. That is a dreadful way of using that word.

A: ...because what the issue is of their activity is something merely novel.

K: Novel, novel, that's right.

A: Not radically new, but novel.

K: It's like creative writing, teaching creative writing. It's so absurd.

A: Exactly. Yes, now I do, I think, grasp precisely the distinction you have made. And I must say I fully agree with that.

K: Unless you feel new you cannot create anything new.

A: That's right. And the person who imagines that he is creative in this other sense that we pointed to is a person whose reference for his activity is this observer that we mentioned that is tied to the past.

K: Yes, that's right.

A: So even if something does appear that is really extraordinarily novel, merely novel, but still extraordinarily novel, they are kidding themselves.

K: The novel is not the creative.

A: Exactly.

K: The novel is just the...

A: And today especially, it seems to me in our culture, we have become hysterical about this because in

order to be creative one must simply wrack his brains in order to produce something, which in itself is bizarre enough to get attention.

K: That's all. Attention, success.

A: Yes. It has to be novel to the degree that I feel knocked on the head by it.

K: Eccentric, and all the rest.

A: Exactly. But if that tension is increased, then with each succeeding generation the person is put to tremendous stress not to repeat the past, which he can't help repeating.

K: Repeating quite.

A: Exactly.

K: That's why I say freedom is one thing and knowledge is another. We must relate the two to see whether the mind can be free from knowledge. We won't go into it now. This is real meditation for me. You follow, sir?

A: Yes I do.

K: Because when we talk about meditation - we will go into it - but to see whether the brain can record and be free not to record, the brain to record and operate when necessary in the recording, in the memory, in knowledge, and be free to observe without the observer.

A: Oh yes, yes. I see, that distinction seems to me to be absolutely necessary, otherwise it wouldn't be intelligible.

K: So knowledge is necessary to act in the sense, my going home from here to the place I live; I must have knowledge. I must have knowledge to speak English. I must have knowledge to write a letter, and so on, everything. The knowledge as function, mechanical function, is necessary. Now if I use that knowledge in my relationship with you, another human being I am bringing about a barrier, a division between you and me, who is the observer. Am I making myself clear?

A: I am the observed in that case.

K: Yes.

A: Right in that context.

K: That is, knowledge in a relationship, in human relationship, is destructive,

A: Yes.

K: That is, knowledge which is the tradition, the memory, the image, which the mind has built about you when we are related together, that knowledge is separative and therefore creates conflict in that relationship. As we said earlier, where there is division there must be conflict. Division between India and Pakistan, India and America, Russia and all that, this divisive activity politically, religiously, economically, socially, in every way must inevitably bring conflict and therefore violence. That's obvious.

A: Exactly.

K: Now, when in relationship, in human relationship, knowledge comes between then in that relationship there must be conflict - between husband and wife, boy and girl, wherever there is the operation as the observer who is the past, who is knowledge, in that activity there is division, and therefore conflict in relationship.

A: So now the question that comes up next is the one of freedom from, being subject to this repetitive round.

K: Yes, that's right,

A: Good, good,

K: Now is that possible? It is an immense question because human beings live in relationship.

A: Yes.

K: There is no life without relationship. Life means to be related.

A: Exactly.

K: People who retire into a monastery and all that, they are still related, however they might like to think they are alone, they are actually related, related to the past.

A: Oh yes, very much so.

K: To their saviour, to their Christ, to their Buddha, you follow, all that, they are related to the past.

A: And their rules.

K: And their rules, everything.

A: Yes.

K: They live in the past and therefore they are the most destructive people because they are not creative in the deeper sense of that word.

A: No, and they also, in so far as they are involved in this confusion that you have been talking about, are not even producing anything novel. Not that that means anything, but perhaps that would rather radically...

K: The novel would be for a man who is talkative to enter a monastery where they don't talk.

A: Yes.

K: That's a novel to him and he says that's a miracle!

A: Right.

K: So our problem then is, what place has knowledge in human relationship?

A: Yes, that's the problem.

K: That's one problem.

A: Yes.

K: Because relationship with human beings is the highest importance, obviously, because out of that relationship we create the society in which we live. Out of that relationship all our existence comes.

A: This would take us back again to the earlier statement: I am the world and the world is me. That is a statement about relationship. It's a statement about many other things too, but that is a statement about relationship. The statement: the description is not the described, is the statement of the rupture of this relationship...

K: That's right.

A: ...in terms of everyday activity.

K: Sir, everyday activity is my life, is our life.

A: Is everything. Yes precisely.

K: Whether I go to the office, the factory, or drive a bus or whatever it is, it is life, living.

A: But it is interesting, isn't it, that even when that rupture is undergone, at a very destructive level, what we call thought in the context of our description of it and image becomes itself, even distorted.

K: Of course, of course,

A: So that the distortion that we've been calling knowledge in terms of its application - not as you described as, 'I need to know how to get from here to there', no of course - can itself suffer an even worse condition than we are presently related to; and we have tomes upon tomes about that pathology in itself don't we? Please, please do go on.

K: So knowledge and freedom: they must both exist together, not freedom and knowledge. It's the harmony between the two. The two operating all the time in relationship.

A: The knowledge and freedom in harmony.

K: In harmony. It's like they can never be divorced. If I want to live with you in great harmony, which is love - which we will discuss that later on - there must be this absolute sense of freedom from you, not dependency, and so on, and so on, and so on, this absolute sense of freedom and operating at the same time in the field of knowledge.

A: Exactly. So somehow this knowledge, if I may use a theological word here without prejudicing what we are talking about, if in correct relationship with this freedom is somehow continuously redeemed, it is somehow operating no longer destructively but in co-ordination with the freedom in which I may live, because we haven't got to that freedom yet, we are just positing freedom.

K: We have somewhat analysed, or discussed, or opened the question of knowledge.

A: Yes.

K: And we haven't gone into the question of freedom, what it means.

A: No, but we have established something, I think this conversation so far has revealed, which is terribly important, at least I'd say for my students in terms of helping them not to misunderstand what you are saying.

K: Quite.

A: I have the feeling that many persons because they are not sufficiently attentive to what you say simply dismiss many statements you say out of hand as...

K: ...impossible.

A: ...impossible, or if they like the aesthetics of it it still doesn't apply to them. It's a lovely thing out there, wouldn't it be great if somehow we could do this. But you see you haven't said that. You haven't said what they think you have said. You've said something about knowledge with respect to pathology and you've said something about knowledge in which knowledge itself is no longer destructive.

K: No.

A: So we're not saying that knowledge as such is the bad guy and something else is the good guy.

K: No.

A: No, I think it is terribly important that that's seen, and I wouldn't mind it being repeated over and over again, because I do heartily feel that it's easy to misunderstand.

K: That's very important because religion, at least the meaning of word is to gather together to be attentive. That is the true meaning of that word, religion, I have looked it up in a dictionary.

A: Oh yes, I agree.

K: Gathering together all energy to be attentive; to be attentive, otherwise it's not religion. Religion is all the things - we'll discuss that when we come to it. So freedom means the sense of complete austerity and a sense of total negation of the observer.

A: Exactly.

K: Out of that comes austerity, everything else. We'll go into that later on.

A: But austerity in itself doesn't produce it.

K: No. Upside down.

A: So we've turned that upside down.

K: Austere means really, the word itself means ash, dry, brittle. But the austerity of which we are talking about is something entirely different.

A: Yes.

K: It is the freedom that brings about this austerity inwardly.

A: There is a beautiful Biblical phrase that points to this, just three words, 'beauty for ashes' when the transformation takes place. And in English we have the phrase ashes in the mouth when the whole thing has come to ashes. But there is a change from ashes to beauty.

K: So freedom in action in the field of knowledge and in the field of human relationship, because that is the highest importance, human relationship.

A: Oh yes, yes. Oh yes, particularly if I am the world and the world is me.

K: Obviously.

A: Yes.

K: So what place has knowledge in human relationship? Knowledge in the sense of past experience, tradition, image.

A: Yes.

K: What has the observer, who is the observer, all that is the observer, what place has the observer in human relationship?

A: What place has knowledge on the one hand, what place has the observer.

K: Observer is the knowledge

A: Is the knowledge. But there is the possibility of seeing knowledge, not simply negatively, but in

co-ordination, in true creative relationship.

K: I have said that.

A: Right. Exactly.

K: I am related to you let's say, to make it very simple. I'm related to you, You are my brother, husband or wife, whatever it is, and what place has knowledge as the observer, which is the past, and knowledge is the past, what place has that in our relationship?

A: If our relationship is creative...

K: It is not. Not 'if', we must take it actually as it is. I am related to you, I am married to you, I am your wife or husband whatever it is. Now what is the actuality in that relationship? The actuality, not theoretical actuality, but the actuality is that I am separate from you.

A: The actuality must be that we are not divided.

K: But we are. I may call you my husband, my wife, but I am concerned with my success, I am concerned with my money, I am concerned with my ambitions, my envy, I am full of me.

A: Yes I see that, but I want to make sure now that we haven't reached a confusion here.

K: Yes we have.

A: When I say that the actuality is that we are not separate, I do not mean to say that at the phenomenal level that a dysfunction is occurring. I am fully aware of that. But if we are going to say that the world is me and I am the world...

K: We say it theoretically we don't feel it.

A: Precisely. But if that is the case, that the world is me and I am the world and this is actual, this is actual...

K: This is actual only when I have no division in myself.

A: Exactly. Exactly.

K: But I have a division.

A: If I have a division then there is no relationship between one and the other.

K: Therefore I accept, one accepts the idea that the world is me and me is the world. That is just an idea. Look sir.

A: Yes, I understand.

K: But if...

A: But if and when it happens...

K: Wait. Just see what takes place in my mind. I make a statement of that kind, the world is you and you are the world. The mind then translates it into an idea, into a concept and tries to live according to that concept.

A: Exactly.

K: It has abstracted from reality.

A: This is knowledge in the destructive sense.

K: I won't call it destructive or positive. This is what is going on.

A: Well let's say the issue from it is hell.

K: Yes. So in my relationship with you what place has knowledge, the past, the image which is the observer, all that is the observer, what place has the observer in our relationship? Actually the observer is the factor of division.

A: Right.

K: And therefore the conflict between you and me, this is what is going on in the world everyday.

A: Then one would have to say, it seems to me, following the conversation point by point, that the place of this observer, understood as you have pointed out, is the point of dysrelationship.

K: Is the point where there is really actually no relationship at all. I may sleep with my wife, and so on and so on but actually there is no relationship because I have my own pursuits, my own ambitions, all the idiosyncrasies, and so on and she has hers, so we are always separate and therefore always in battle with each other. Which means the observer as the past is the factor of division.

A: Yes, I was just wanting to be sure that the phrase is the place, of what is the place of the observer was understood in the context of what we are saying. We have made the statement that there is such a thing.

K: Yes.

A: Well its place as such would seem to me not to be what we usually mean by its occupying a place.

K: Yes.

A: We are talking rather about an activity here that is profoundly disordered.

K: Sir, as long as there is the observer, there must be conflict in relationship.

A: Yes, I follow that.

K: Wait, wait, see what happens. I make a statement of that kind, someone will translate that into an idea, into a concept and say, 'How am I to live that concept?' The fact is he doesn't observe himself as the observer.

A: That's right. That's right. He is the observer looking out there making a distinction between himself and the...

K: ...and the statement.

A: Right. Making a division.

K: Has the observer any place at all in relationship? I say, the moment he comes into existence in relationship there is no relationship.

A: The relationship is not.

K: Is not.

A: It is not something that is in dysrelationship.

K: Yes that's right.

A: We are talking about something, that in fact doesn't even exist.

K: Exist. Therefore we have to go into the question why human beings in their relationship with other human beings are so violent, because that is spreading throughout the world. I was told the other day in India, a mother came to see me, very Brahmanical family, very cultured and all the rest of it, her son who is six, when she asked him to do something he took up a stick and began to hit her. A thing unknown. You follow, sir?

A: Yes.

K: The idea that you should hit your mother is traditionally something incredible. And this boy did it. And I said, 'See what is the fact', we went into it, she understood. So to understand violence one has to understand division.

A: The division was already there.

K: Yes.

A: Otherwise he would not have picked up the stick.

K: Division between nations, you follow sir?

A: Yes.

K: This race for armaments is one of the factors of violence. Which is, I am calling myself American and he is calling himself Russian or Hindu or whatever it is, this division is the factor of real violence and hatred. If a mind, not 'if', when mind sees that it cuts away all division in himself. He is no longer a Hindu, American, Russian. He is a human being with his problems which he is then trying to solve, not in terms of India, or America or Russia. So we come to the point, can the mind be free in relationship, which means orderly, not chaotic, orderly?

A: It has to be otherwise you couldn't use the word relationship.

K: No. No. So can the mind be free of that? Free of the observer?

A: If not, there is no hope.

K: That's the whole point.

A: If not, we've had it.

K: Yes. And all the escapes and going off into other religions, doing all kinds of tricks, has no meaning. Now, this demands a great deal of perception, insight into the fact of your life: how one lives one's life. After all philosophy means the love of truth, love of wisdom, not the love of some abstraction.

A: Oh no, no, no. Wisdom is supremely practical.

K: Practical. Therefore here it is. That is, can a human being live in relationship in freedom and yet operate in the field of knowledge?

A: And yet operate in the field of knowledge, yes.

K: And be absolutely orderly. Otherwise it is not freedom. Because order means virtue.

A: Yes, yes.

K: Which doesn't exist in the world at the present time. There is no sense of virtue in anything. Then we repeat. Virtue is a creative thing, is a living thing, is a moving thing.

A: I am thinking as you are saying this about virtue, which is really power, which is really the ability to act; and if I am following you correctly what you are really saying, and please correct me if I am way off here, what you are really saying is that the ability to act in the strict sense, which must be creative, otherwise it's not an action but is simply a reaction.

K: A repetition.

A: A repetition. That the ability to act, or virtue, as you put it, bears with it necessarily the implication of order. It must. It seems to me no way out of that.

K: Yes.

A: I just wanted to recover that a step at a time.

K: So can I come back. In human relationship as it exists now, we are looking at that, what actually is, in that human relationship there is conflict, sexual violence and so on and so on, every kind of violence. Now, can man live at total peace - otherwise he is not creative - in human relationship, because that is the basis of all life.

A: I'm very taken with the way you have pursued this. I notice that when we asked this question, 'is it possible that', the reference for it is always a totality.

K: Yes.

A: And the reference over here is a fragment, or a fragmentation, or a division. Never once have you said that the passage from the one to the other is a movement that even exists.

K: No. It can't exist.

A: You see.

K: Absolutely.

A: I think Mr Krishnamurti, that nothing is so difficult to grasp as this statement that you have made. There is nothing that we are taught, from childhood up to render such a possibility, a matter for taking seriously, because when - well of course, one doesn't like to make sweeping statements about the way everyone has been educated but I'm thinking of myself, from a child upward, all the way through graduate school, accumulating a lot of this knowledge that you have been talking about. I don't remember anybody saying to me, or even pointing me to a literature that so categorically makes this distinction between one and the other as in terms of each other, not accessible to each other through passage.

K: No. No, no, quite, quite.

A: Now, I'm correct in understanding you there, aren't I?

K: Quite right.

A: Maybe I could just say this as an aside.

K: The fragment can not become the whole.

A: No. The fragment cannot become the whole, in and of itself.

K: But the fragment is always trying to become the whole.

A: Exactly. Exactly. Now of course, in the years of very serious and devoted contemplation and exploration of this which quite clearly you have undertaken with great passion, I suppose it must have occurred to you

that the first sight of this, while one is in the condition of the observer, must be very frightening in the condition of the observer, the thought that there is no passage.

K: No. But you see I never looked at it that way.

A: Please tell me how you looked at it. Please.

K: From childhood I never thought I was a Hindu.

A: I see.

K: I never thought, when I was educated in England and all the rest of it, that I was European. I never was caught in that trap. I don't know how it happened, I was never caught in that trap.

A: Well, when you were quite little then and your playmates said to you, well now look, you are a Hindu, what did you say?

K: I probably put on Hinduism and all the trappings of Brahmin, tradition, but it never penetrated deeply.

A: As we say in the vernacular, it never got to you.

K: It never got to me, that's right.

A: I see. That's very remarkable. That's extraordinary. The vast number of people in the world seem to have been got to in respect this.

K: That's why I think, you see, propaganda has become the means of change.

A: Yes. Yes.

K: Propaganda is not truth. Repetition is not truth.

A: It's a form of violence too.

K: That's just it. So a mind that merely observes doesn't react to what it observes according to its conditioning. Which means there is no observer at anytime, therefore no division. It happened to me, I don't know how it happened, but it has happened. And in observing all this I've seen in every human relationship, every kind of human relationship, there is this division and therefore violence. And to me the very essence of non-relationship is the factor of me and you.

A: I was just trying to go back in my own personal history and think of when I was a child. I did, while accepting that I was different - I did believe that, I did come to accept that - there was something else however that always held me very, very hard to centre in terms of making an ultimate issue of that, and that was an experience I had when I was rowing a boat. I spent some time in Scandinavia as a child and I used to take a boat out on the fjord everyday, and when I would row I was profoundly moved by the action of the water when I moved the oar, because I lifted the oar out of the water, and there was a separation in substance between the water and the oar, but the water which was necessary for support and for purchase so that I could propel myself, never lost touch with itself, it always turned into itself without ever having left itself in the beginning. And once in awhile I would laugh at myself and say, if anyone catches you looking at this water any longer than you are doing they will think that you are clear out of your mind. This is the observer talking to himself, of course. But that made such a profound impression on me that I think, it was what you might call a little salvation for me, and I never lost that. So maybe there is some relationship between that apprehension which I think changed my being, and what it is you are talking about as one who never ever suffered this sense of separation at all. Please go ahead.

K: This brings us to the point sir, doesn't it, can the human mind which has evolved in separation, in

fragmentation...

A: This is where evolution is. Yes.

K: ...can such a mind transform, undergo a regeneration which is not produced by influence, by propaganda, by threat and punishment, because if it changes because it is going to get a reward then...

A: It hasn't changed.

K: ...it hasn't changed.

A: No.

K: So that is one of the fundamental things which one has to ask and answer it in action, not in words.

A: In action. Oh yes.

K: Which is, my mind, the human mind has evolved in contradiction, in duality. The 'me' and the 'not me' has evolved in this traditional cleavage, division, fragmentation. Now can that mind observe this fact, observe without the observer, and only then there is a regeneration. As long as there is an observer observing this then there is a conflict. I don't know if I make myself clear.

A: Yes, you do. You make yourself very clear on two levels. On the level of discourse alone, which I know is not your major concern, on a level of discourse alone it necessarily follows that it must be the case that this possibility exists, otherwise we would be talking nonsense. But then the agony of the situation at large that we have been describing is simply that whether this can be done or not never occurs to a person and in the absence of it even occurring the repetition is going to continue indefinitely and things are going to get worse and worse.

K: Sir, the difficulty is most people won't even listen.

A: I'm sighing. I know that.

K: Won't listen. If they do listen they listen with their conclusions. If I am a Communist I will listen to you up to a point. After that I won't listen to you. And if I am slightly demented I will listen to you and translate what I hear according to my dementia.

A: Exactly

K: So one has to be extraordinarily serious to listen. Serious in the sense put aside my peculiar prejudices and idiosyncrasies and listen to what you are saying, because the listening is the miracle: not what shall I do with what you have said.

A: Not what shall I listen to...

K: But the act of listening.

A: But the act of listening itself.

K: Yes.

A: We are back to 'ing', where there's listening itself.

K: That requires that you are good enough to listen to me because you want to find out. But the vast majority say what are you talking about, I want to go on enjoying myself so go and talk to somebody else. So to create an atmosphere, to create an ambience, a feeling that life is dreadfully serious, my friend, do listen. It's your life, don't waste it, do listen. To bring about a human being that will listen is the greatest

importance, because we don't want to listen. It's too disturbing.

A: I understand. I have tried sometimes in class to make this very point. And sometimes I suggest that we should watch the animal, especially the wild animal, because if it's not listening it's likely dead.

K: Dead, yes sir.

A: There is this extraordinary attention that it makes and every instant of its life is a crisis.

K: Absolutely.

A: And you know what happens, the eyes out there show in the main that they think I am talking about animal psychology. I'm not talking about psychology at all, I'm talking about what is the case which is either or, and there isn't any way to get from either to or. That's what I mean. So I think I understand you.

K: In America what is happening how, as I observe it, I may be mistaken, they are not serious. They are playing with new things, something entertaining, go from one thing to the other. And they think this is searching.

A: Searching!

K: Searching, asking, but they get trapped in each one of them.

A: Yes.

K: And at the end of it they have nothing but ashes. So it is becoming more and more difficult for human beings to be serious, to listen, to see what they are, not what they should be.

A: No. What is the case.

K: What is.

A: Exactly.

K: That means you please do listen for 5 minutes.

A: Yes.

K: In this conversation you are listening because you are interested, you want to find out. But the vast majority of people say, for god's sake, leave me alone, I have my little house, my wife, my car, my yacht, or whatever it is, for god's sake don't change anything as long as I live.

A: You know, going back to what I do know something about, namely the Academy, because I am situated there in terms of day to day activity. I've often remarked to myself in attending conferences where papers are read that nobody is listening. It's one long monologue. And after a while you get the feeling that it really is a shocking waste of time. And even to sit down and have coffee the discussion say between classes usually runs on the basis of babble, we are just talking about things in which we are not genuinely interested in, in order to fill up space. This, however, is far more serious a matter than simply a description of what's going on.

K: It's a matter, I feel, of life and death.

A: Exactly.

K: If the house is burning I've got to do something. It isn't, I am going to discuss who burned the house.

A: No. No.

K: What colour his hair was, whether it was black or white or purple, I want to put that fire out.

A: Or if such and such had not happened the house would not be burning. I know, I know.

K: And I feel it is so urgent because I see it in India, I see in Europe and America, everywhere I go this sense of slackness, sense of, you know, sense of despair, sense of hopeless activity that is going on.

So to come back to what we are saying, relationship is the highest importance. When in that relationship there is conflict, we produce a society which will further that conflict, through education, through national sovereignties, through all the rest of it that is going on in the world. So a serious man, serious in the sense who is really concerned, committed, must give his total attention to this question of relationship, freedom and knowledge.

A: If I've heard you correctly, and I don't mean by that words that have passed between us, but if I have truly heard you, I've heard something very terrifying, that this disorder that we have in part described, has a built in necessity in it. As long as it persists it can never change. It can never change.

K: Obviously.

A: Any modification of it is...

K: Further disorder.

A: ...is more of the same.

K: More of the same.

A: More of the same. I have the feeling and I hope I have understood you correctly, that there is a relationship between the starkness of this necessity and the fact that there cannot be a gradual progress, or, as a philosopher would put it, something like essential progress, but nevertheless there is some demonic progress that takes place within this disorder that is not so much a progress as it is a proliferation of the same. Necessarily so. Is that what you have been saying?

K: Yes, yes.

A: Necessarily so.

K: You know that word progress, I was told the other day meant, entering into enemy's country fully armed.

A: Really! Progress is entering into an enemy's country fully armed. Dear me.

K: Sir. This is what is happening.

A: I know. Next time we converse, next time, I would like very much if you would be good enough to pursue precisely what we have just come to: namely this necessity and the necessity that produced that statement.

K: Yes, quite.

Second Conversation with Dr Allen W. Anderson in San Diego, California 18 February 1974

Monday, February 18, 1974

What Is Communication with Others?

Third Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Tuesday, February 19, 1974

A: Mr Krishnamurti, in this series of conversations we have been exploring the general question of the transformation of man. A transformation, which as you say, is not dependent on knowledge or time. And, as I recall, we arrived at a point that was very crucial, namely the one concerned with relationship and communication. I remember one point in our conversation together that was extremely instructive for me, a point at which, when you asked me a question I began to answer it and you interrupted me and reminded the viewers and me, that the important thing here is, not to finish out a theoretical construction but rather to attain to the right beginning point so that we do not go beyond where we haven't yet begun. This, as I repeat, was extremely instructive for me and I was thinking, if it is agreeable with you, it would be helpful today if we could begin at the point of concern for communication and relationship to go into that question and begin to unravel it.

K: Unravel it, quite. I wonder sir, what that word communication means. To communicate implies not only verbally but also listening in which there is a sharing, a thinking together, not accepting something that you or I say, but sharing together, thinking together, creating together, all that is involved in that word 'communicate'. And in that word is implied also the art of listening. The art of listening demands a quality of attention in which there is real listening, real sense of having an insight as we go along, each second, not at the end, but at the beginning.

A: So that we are...

K: ...together...

A: So that we are both - yes, yes!

K: Walking together all the time.

A: There is a concurrent activity. Not one making a statement, the other thinking about it and then saying, 'Well, I agree, I don't agree, I accept, I don't accept. These are the reasons I don't accept. These are the reasons I do', but we are walking together.

K: Journeying together, walking together on the same path.

A: Side by side. Yes.

K: On the same road, with the same attention, with the same intensity, at the same time, otherwise there is no communication.

A: Exactly. Exactly.

K: Communication implies there must be at the same level, at the same time, with the same intensity, we are walking together, we are thinking together, we are observing together, sharing together.

A: Would you say that this requires an activity that underlies the speaking together, or does one come to the activity after one has started to speak together?

K: No sir. We are not saying that. What is the art of listening, aren't we? The art of listening implies, doesn't

it, that there is not only the verbal understanding between you and me, because we are both speaking English, and we know the meaning of each word, more or less, and at the same time we are sharing the problem together, sharing the issue together.

A: Because, as you say, it's a matter of life and death.

K: Also if you and I are both serious, we are sharing the thing. So, in communication there is not only a verbal communication, but there is a non-verbal communication, really which comes into being, or which happens when one has the art of really listening to somebody, in which there is no acceptance, no denial, or comparison, or judgement, just the act of listening.

A: I wonder whether I am on the right track here, if I suggest that there is a relation that is very deep here between communication and what we call in English, 'communion'.

K: Communion, yes.

A: So that if we are in communion, our chance of communicating...

K: ...becomes simpler.

A: Right!

K: Now, to be in communion with each other, we must be, both of us must be, serious about the same problem at the same time with the same passion. Otherwise there is no communication.

A: Exactly!

K: If you are not interested in what is being said, well, you will think of something else and communication stops. So there is a verbal communication and a non-verbal communication. They are both operating at the same time.

A: One does not precede the other. Or follow upon the other. Yes, they move together.

K: Which means that each of us, being serious, gives our attention completely to the issue.

A: That act of seriousness that takes place then requires the utmost devoted attention.

K: Sir, but a man who is really serious lives, not the man who is flippant, or merely wanting to be entertained. He does not live.

A: The general notion of being serious about something generally suggests either undergoing some pain, or I'm serious about something in order to get something else. These two things, as a rule, are what persons imagine by seriousness. As a matter of fact, we often hear this expression, 'Don't look so serious', don't we.

K: Yes.

A: It's as though we fear something about the serious.

K: Sir, look! As we said yesterday, the world is in a mess and it's my responsibility living in this world as a human being who has created this mess, it's my responsibility to be serious in the resolution of this problem. I am serious. It doesn't mean I am long faced, I am miserable, unhappy, or I want something out of it. It has got to be solved. It's like if one has cancer, one is serious about it. You don't play around with it.

A: Action in relation to this seriousness then is instantaneous.

K: Obviously!

A: This raises not an additional question, I don't mean to go beyond where we haven't begun in that sense, but time assumes for the serious person something very different for his undergoing than it would seem to be for the unserious person. One would not have then the feeling of something being dragged out. Or as we may say in English, time that has to be put in.

K: Put in, quite.

A: As a matter of fact, in this concurrent communication in which communion is abidingly present time as such would not in any way oppress.

K: No, sir, no, sir.

A: Am I...

K: Quite right. Like we see sir, I am trying to see what it means to be serious. The intent, the urge, the feeling of total responsibility, the feeling of action, the doing, not, I will do. All that is implied in that word seriousness. At least I'll put all those things into that word.

A: Could we look for a moment at one of them that you put into them? Responsibility, able to be responsive.

K: That's right. To respond adequately.

A: Yes. To respond adequately.

K: To any challenge. The challenge now is that the world is in a mess, confusion, sorrow and everything, violence and all that. I must, as a human being who has created this thing, I must respond adequately. The adequacy depends on my seriousness, in that sense on my observation of the chaos and responding, not according to my prejudices, my inclination, or tendencies, or pleasures, or fears, but responding to the problem, not according to my translation of the problem. Right?

A: Yes. I am just thinking as you are speaking about how difficult it is to communicate this to the person who is thinking that the way adequately to respond to this chaos is to have a plan for it which one superimposes on it. And that's exactly what we assume, and if the plan doesn't work out, we blame ourselves...

K: Or change the plan.

A: Or we change the plan, yes.

K: But we don't respond to the challenge.

A: No.

K: We respond according to our conclusion about the problem.

A: Exactly.

K: Therefore, it means really sir, if we can explore it a little more, the observer is the observed.

A: Therefore the change, if it comes, is total, not partial. One is no longer outside what he is operating upon.

K: That's right.

A: And what he is operating upon is not outside himself.

K: Of course. As we said yesterday, it's very interesting if we go into it rather deeply, the world is me and I am the world. That is not intellectual or emotional, but a fact. Now, when I approach the problem, the chaos,

the misery, the suffering, the violence, all that, I approach it with my conclusions, with my fears, with my despairs. I don't look at the problem.

A: Would you think it possible to put it this way, that one doesn't make room for the problem.

K: Yes. Yes, put it any way.

A: Would that be all right?

K: Yes. Sir, let's look at this. As a human being one has created this, this misery which is called the society in which we live, an immoral society.

A: Oh yes!

K: Completely immoral! As a human being one has created that. But that human being looking at it separates himself and says, 'I must do something about it.' The 'it' is me.

A: Some people respond to that this way. They say, 'Well look, if I am truly serious, I am truly responsible, I make this act and there comes between me and the world this confluent relationship, which is total. All the things that are going on out there that are atrocious, let's say, 2,500 miles away from where I am, don't stop. Therefore, how can I say that the whole world is me and I am the whole world?' This objection comes up again and again. I am interested to know what your reply to that would be.

K: Sir, Look. We are human beings irrespective of our labels, English, French, German, all the rest of it. A human being living in America or in India has the problems of relationship, of suffering, of jealousy, envy, greed, ambition, imitation, conformity, and all that are our problems, common to both of us.

A: Yes.

K: And when I say, the world is me and me is the world and the world I am, I see that as a reality, not as a concept. Now, my responsibility to the challenge to be adequate must not be in terms of what I think, but what the problem is.

A: Yes. I follow you I'm sure here. I was thinking while you were saying that, that it might have been possible to answer the question that I posed, and I am posing the question simply because I know some persons who might very well view this, who would raise that and who would want to participate with us in this conversation. I wondered whether you might have said that as soon as one puts it that way, one has already divorced himself from the issue.

K: That's right.

A: That in the practical order that, that question is an interposition that simply does not have a place in the activity you are talking about.

K: Yes, that's right.

A: Now this is very interesting, because it means that the person must suspend his disbelief.

K: Or his belief.

A: Or his belief...

K: ...and observe the thing.

A: And observe the thing.

K: Which is not possible if the observer is different from the observed.

A: Now, would you explore the practical aspect of this with me for a moment? People will say, who up to this point are listening, it would seem people at this point will say, 'Well, yes, but I can't stop it, I think I have an intuition of what you mean,' they will say, 'But the minute that I open myself, or begin to open myself, all these things seem to rush in on me. What I had hoped doesn't seem to take place.' If I understand you correctly, they are really not doing what they claim that they are trying to do.

K: That's right. Sir, can we put it, this question differently? What is a human being to do confronted with this problem of suffering, chaos, all that is going on all around us? What is he to do? He approaches it generally with a conclusion - what he should do about it.

A: And this conclusion is interposed between him...

K: Yes, the conclusion is the factor of separation.

A: Right.

K: Now, can he observe the fact of this confusion without any conclusions, without any planning, without any predetermined way of getting out of this chaos? Because his predetermined conclusions, ideas and so on are all derived from the past, and the past is trying to resolve the problem and therefore he is translating it and acting according to his previous conclusions, whereas the fact demands that you look at it; the fact demands that you observe it, you listen to it. The fact itself will have the answer, you don't have to bring the answer to it. I wonder if I am making myself clear?

A: Yes, I'm listening very, very hard. I really am. I'm afraid if I am not going beyond where I shouldn't, having yet begun, the next question that would naturally arise here - well, perhaps you might feel when I raise the question that it is the wrong question - but can one communicate in the sense that we have been unravelling this? One says, I don't know. It doesn't seem to me that I have done this. I haven't done this yet. I can recognise all the things that have been described, that are terrible. I don't recognise all the things that appear to be promised without suggesting that I am imagining them or projecting them out there. Clearly, if there is to be a change, it has to be a change that is altogether radical. Now, I must start. What do I do?

K: There are two things involved in that. First, I must learn from the problem, which means I must have a mind that has a quality of humility. He does not come to it, and say, 'I know all about it.' What he knows is merely explanations, rational or irrational. He comes to the problem with rational or irrational solutions. Therefore he is not learning from the problem. The problem will reveal an infinite lot of things, if I'm capable of looking at it and learning about it. And for that I must have a sense of humility, and say, 'I don't know. This is a tremendous problem. Let me look at it, let me learn about it.' Not I come to it with my conclusions, therefore I have stopped learning about the problem.

A: Are you suggesting that this act is a waiting on the problem to reveal itself?

K: To reveal. That's right! Therefore, I must be capable of looking at it. I cannot look at it if I've come to it with ideas, with ideations, with mentations, of every kind of conclusion. I must come to it, say, 'Look, what is it?' I must learn from it, not learn according to some professor or some psychologist, some philosopher.

A: That one has the capacity for this, some persons would...

K: I think everybody has. Sir, we are so vain.

A: But this doesn't mean anything for the doing, of what must be done, that there is a capacity.

K: Look, the learning is the doing.

A: Exactly. Yes, yes. I wanted to make that clear because we comfort ourselves with the curious notion, if I have been following you, that we possess a possibility and because we possess the possibility we think that

someday it will actualise itself perhaps.

K: Quite right.

A: But if I'm correct, both ways no possibility can actualise itself, and in the practical order that never occurs, but somehow it is believed, isn't it?

K: I'm afraid it is.

A: It is believed.

K: Sir, it is really quite simple. There is this misery, confusion, immense sorrow in the world, violence, all that. Human beings have created it. Human beings have built a structure of society which sustains this chaos. That's a fact. Now, I come to it, a human being comes to it, trying to resolve it according to his plan, according to his prejudices, his idiosyncrasies, or knowledge, which means he has already understood the problem, whereas the problem is always new. So I must come to it afresh.

A: One of the things that has concerned me for many, many years as a reader, as a student, as one whose daily work involves the study of scriptures, is the recurrent statement that one comes upon, sometimes in a very dramatic form. For instance, take the prophetic ministry of Jesus where he speaks, and he says that they are hearing but they are not listening, they are observing but they are not seeing.

K: And doing.

A: But then it seems he does not say, 'In order to attain to that, do this'. No. The closest he comes to it is, through the analogy with the child, to have faith as a little child. I don't want to talk about words here because that would be disastrous, so what is meant by the word 'faith' here is not something that would be proper to go into, but the analogy with the child suggests that the child is doing something that is lost somewhere along the way in some respect. I'm sure he didn't mean that there is a perfect continuity between the adult and the child. But why is it that over the centuries that men have said this over and over again, namely you are not listening, you are not seeing, and then they don't point to an operation, they point to an analogy. Some of them don't even point to an analogy. They just hold up a flower.

K: Sir, look! We live on words. Most people live on words. They don't go beyond the word. And what we are talking about is not only the word, the meaning of the word, the communication that exists in using words, but the non-verbal communication, which is having an insight. That is what we are talking about all the time so far.

A: Yes.

K: That is, I can, the mind can, only have an insight if it is capable of listening. And you do listen when the crisis is right at your doorstep.

A: Now, I think I'm at a point here that is solid. Is it that we don't allow ourselves access to the crisis that is there continuously, it isn't a crisis that is episodic?

K: No. The crisis is always there.

A: It is always. Right. Well, we are doing something to shut ourselves off from it, aren't we?

K: Or, we don't know how to meet it. Either we avoid it, or we don't know how to meet it, or we are indifferent. We have become so callous. All these things, all three are involved in not facing the crisis because I am frightened. One is frightened. One says, 'My lord! I don't know how to deal with it.' So one goes off to an analyst, or to a priest, or picks up a book to see how it can be translated. He becomes irresponsible.

A: Sometimes people will register the disappointment that things haven't worked out. So why try something new?

K: Yes. Of course.

A: And this would be a buffer.

K: Yes. That's what I mean. Avoidance. There are so many ways to avoid - clever, cunning, superficial and very subtle. All that is involved in avoiding an issue. So what we are trying to say, sir, isn't it, the observer is the past, as we said yesterday. The observer is trying to translate and act according to the past when the crisis arises. The crisis is always new. Otherwise it's not a crisis. A challenge must be new, is new, and always new. But he translates it according to the past. Now, can he look at that challenge, that crisis, without the response of the past?

A: May I read a sentence out of your book? I think that maybe this has a very direct relationship to what we are talking about. It's a sentence that arrested me when I read it. 'Through negation that thing which alone is the positive comes into being.' May I read it again? Through negation, something is done apparently.

K: Absolutely.

A: Right. So we are not leaving it at the point where we are saying, simply words are of no consequence. Therefore, I will do something non-verbal, or I will say something because I never communicate with the non-verbal. That has nothing to do with it. Something must be done. There is an act.

K: Absolutely. Life is action.

A: Exactly.

K: It isn't just...

A: Now here I suppose I should say for our listeners and viewers that this is from the 'Awakening of Intelligence', the most recent publication of yours, and it's on page 196 in the chapter on Freedom. 'Through negation' - I take it that's a word for this act.

K: Entirely.

A: 'That thing which alone is the positive' - the word alone came over to me with the force of something unique.

K: Yes sir.

A: Something that is not continuous with anything else. That thing which alone is the positive comes into being. There is no temporal hiatus here, so we are back to that thing we began with in our earlier conversations about not being dependent on knowledge and time. Could we look at this negation together for a moment? I have the feeling that, if I have understood this correctly, that unless whatever this is that's called negation is not an abiding activity, then communion and communication and the relationship that we are talking about just simply can never be reached. Is that correct?

K: Quite. May I put it this way? I must negate, I mean negate not intellectually or verbally, actually negate the society in which I live. The implication of immorality which exists in society, on which society is built, I must negate totally that immorality. That means that I live morally. In negating that the positive is the moral. I don't know if I am.?

A: Oh, yes. I am being quiet because I want to follow step by step. I don't want to go beyond where we have begun.

K: I negate totally the idea of success.

A: Yes, I negate totally.

K: Totally. Not only in the mundane world, not only in the sense of achievement in a world of money, position, authority, I negate that completely, and I also negate success in the so-called spiritual world.

A: Oh, yes. Quite, the temptation.

K: Both are the same. Only I call that spiritual and I call that physical, moral, mundane. So in negating success, achievement, there comes an energy. Through negation there is a tremendous energy to act totally differently which is not in the field of success, in the field of imitation, conformity and all that. So through negation, I mean actual negation, not just ideal negation, through actual negation of that which is immoral, morality comes into being.

A: Which is altogether different from trying to be moral.

K: Yes, yes. Of course, trying to be moral is immoral.

A: Yes. May I try to go into this another step? At least it would be a step for me. There is something that I intuit here as a double aspect to this negation. I'd like very much to see whether this is concurrent with your own feeling about this. I was going to say a statement and I stopped myself. My desire for success in itself is a withholding myself from the problem that we talked about, and that itself is a form of negation. I have negated access to myself. I've negated, in other words, I have done violence to what it is that wishes to reveal itself. So I am going to negate then my negation as the observer. This I wanted to make sure.

K: You are quite right. When we use the word 'negate', as it is generally understood, it is an act of violence.

A: Yes. That's what I was hoping.

K: It's an act of violence. I negate.

A: That's what I thought. Yes. Yes.

K: I brush it aside. And we are using the word 'negate' not in the violent sense, but the understanding of what success implies. The understanding of what success implies. The 'me', who is separate from you, wanting or desiring success which will put me in a position of authority, power, prestige. So I am, in negating success, I am negating my desire to be powerful which I negate only when I have understood the whole process which is involved in achieving success. In achieving success is employed ruthlessness, lack of love, lack of immense consideration for others, lack of a sense of conformity, imitation, acceptance of the social structure, all that is involved and the understanding of all that when I negate success. It is not an act of violence. On the contrary, it is an act of tremendous attention.

A: I've negated something in my person.

K: I've negated myself.

A: Right. I've negated myself.

K: The 'me' which is separate from you.

A: Exactly.

K: And therefore I am negating violence which comes about when there is separation.

A: Would you use the term self-denial here, not in the sense of how it has been received down the line, but that if there is anything to what has been stated in the past, could a person who saw that word self-denial

read that word in this context that you are using?

K: I'm afraid he wouldn't. Self-denial means sacrifice, pain, lack of understanding.

A: But if he heard what you are saying.

K: Ah, then why use another word when you have understood this thing?

A: Well, maybe he'd want to communicate with someone.

K: But change the word so that we both understand the meaning of self-denial. I mean all religions have based their action on self-denial, sacrifice, deny your desire, deny your looking at a woman, or deny riches, take a vow to poverty. You know all of them: vow of poverty, vow of celibacy and so on. All these are a kind of punishment, a distorting of a clear perception. If I see something clearly, the action is immediate. So, sir, to negate implies diligence. The word called diligence means giving complete attention to the fact of success - we are taking that word. Giving my whole attention to success, in that attention, the whole map of success is revealed.

A: With all its horrors.

K: With all the things involved in it and it is only then the seeing is the doing. Then it is finished. And the mind can never revert to success and therefore become bitter and all the things that follow.

A: What you are saying, I take it, is that once this happens, there is no reversion.

K: It is finished. Of course not. Say for instance sir...

A: It's not something that one has to keep up.

K: Of course not.

A: Well, fine. I'm delighted we've established that.

K: Now take for instance what happened. In 1928 I happened to be the head of a tremendous organisation, a religious organisation, and I saw around me various religious organisations, sects, Catholic, Protestant, and I saw all trying to find truth. So I said, 'No organisation can lead man to truth.' So I dissolved it. Property, an enormous business. I can never go back to it. When you see something as poison you won't take it again. It isn't that you say, 'By Jove, I've made a mistake. I should go back and...' It is sir, like seeing danger. When you see danger you never go near it again.

A: I hope I won't annoy you by...

K: No, no.

A: ...by talking about words here again. But you know so many of the things that you say cast a light on common terms which for me at least illuminate them. They sound altogether different from the way they used to be heard. For instance, we say in English, don't we, practice makes perfect. Now obviously this can't be the case if we mean by practice we are repeating something. But if you mean by practice the Greek praxis, which is concerned directly with act, not repetition, with act, then to say, makes perfect, doesn't refer to time at all. It's that upon the instance the act is performed, perfection is. Now I'm sorry I used the word instant again and I understand why that's awkward, but I think in our communication the concern for the word here is one that surely is productive, because one can open himself to words and if one sees the word that way, then it appears there is a whole host of phenomena which suddenly acquire very magical significance. Not magical in the sense of enchantment, but they open a door, which, when walked into immediately situates him in the crisis in such a way that he attains to this that you call the one alone, the

unique which comes into being.

K: Yes.

A: Which comes into being.

K: Sir, can we now go back, or go forward to the question of freedom and responsibility in relationship? That's where we left off yesterday.

A: Right. That was quoted from the chapter on freedom. Yes.

K: First of all, can we go into this question of what it is to be responsible?

A: I should like that.

K: Because I think that is what we are missing in this world, in what is happening now. We don't feel responsible. We don't feel we are responsible because the people in position, in authority politically, religiously are responsible. We are not. That is the general feeling that is all over the world.

A: Because those over there have been delegated to do a job by me.

K: Yes. And scientists, politicians, the educational people, the religious people, they are responsible, but I know nothing about it, I just follow. That's the general attitude right through the world.

A: Oh yes, oh yes.

K: So, you follow the whole thing.

A: One feels he gets off scot-free that way because its the other one's fault.

K: Yes. So, I make myself irresponsible. By delegating a responsibility to you I become irresponsible. Whereas now we are saying, nobody is responsible except you, because you are the world and the world is you. You have created this mess. You alone can bring about clarity, and therefore you are totally, utterly, completely responsible. And nobody else. Now, that means you have to be a light to yourself, not the light of a professor, or an analyst, or a psychologist, or the light of Jesus, or the light of the Buddha. You have to be a light to yourself in a world that is utterly becoming dark. That means you have to be responsible. Now, what does that word mean? It means really, to respond totally, adequately to every challenge. You cannot possibly respond adequately if you are rooted in the past, because the challenge is new, otherwise it is not a challenge. A crisis is new, otherwise it is not a crisis. If I respond to a crisis in terms of a preconceived plan, which the Communists are doing, or the Catholics, or the Protestants and so on and so on, then they are not responding totally and adequately to the challenge.

A: This takes me back to something I think that is very germane in the dramatic situation of confrontation between the soldier and the Lord Krishna in the Gita. Arjuna, the general of the army says to Krishna, 'Tell me definitely what to do and I will do it.' Now Krishna does not turn around and say to him in the next verse, 'I am not going to tell you what to do', But, of course, at that point he simply doesn't tell him what to do, and one of the great Sanskrit scholars has pointed out that that's an irresponsible reaction on the part of the teacher. But am I understanding you correctly, he couldn't have done otherwise?

K: When that man put the question, he is putting the question out of irresponsibility.

A: Of course, a refusal to be responsible. Exactly! A refusal to be responsible.

K: That's why, that's why sir, responsibility means total commitment.

A: Total commitment.

K: Total commitment to the challenge. Responding adequately, completely to a crisis. That is, the word 'responsibility' means that, to respond. I cannot respond completely if I am frightened. Or I cannot respond completely if I am seeking pleasure. I cannot respond totally if my action is routine, is repetitive, is traditional, is conditioned. So, to respond adequately to a challenge means that the 'me', which is the past, must end.

A: And at this point Arjuna just wants it continued right down the line.

K: That's what everybody wants, sir. Politically, look at what is happening in this country, and elsewhere. We don't feel responsible. We don't feel responsible to how we bring our children up.

A: I understand. I really do, I think. In our next conversation I'd really like to continue this in terms of the phrase we sometimes use 'being responsible for my action'. But that does not seem to be saying exactly what you are saying at all. As a matter of fact, it seems to be quite wide of the mark.

K: No.

A: Good, let's do that.

Third Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Tuesday, February 19, 1974

What Is a Responsible Human Being?

Fourth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Tuesday, February 19, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti, just at the point where we left last time in our conversation we had raised the question of the distinction between the notion that I must be responsible for my action and just being responsible.

Krishnamurti: Right, sir.

A: I was sitting here thinking to myself, oh why can't we go on (laughs), so perhaps we could start at that point. Would that be agreeable?

K: I think, sir, there is a very definite distinction between responsible for and being responsible. Being responsible for implies a direction, a directed will. But the feeling of responsibility implies responsibility for everything, not in a direction, in any one particular direction. Responsible for education, responsible for politics, responsible the way I live, to be responsible for my behaviour. It's a total feeling of complete responsibility which is the ground in which action takes place.

A: I think then this takes us back to this business of crisis we were talking about. If the crisis is continuous then it's misleading to say, I'm responsible for my action, because I've put the thing out there again and it becomes an occasion for my confusing what is at hand that requires to be done and the concept of this notion of my action because I am my action.

K: Yes, that's just it, that's it.

A: I am it.

K: That means, the feeling of responsibility expresses itself politically, religiously, educationally, in business, in the whole of life, responsible for the total behaviour, not in a particular direction. I think there is great deal of difference when I say, when one says I am responsible for my action. That means you are responsible for your action according to the idea that you have preconceived about action.

A: Exactly. Yes. People sometimes will say that the child is free because it's not responsible.

K: Oh, child is... You can't take a child into...

A: No, of course not. But I think sometimes when we say this we have this nostalgia for the past as though our freedom would be freedom from constraint, whereas if one is his action genuinely absolutely...

K: There is no restraint, there is no restraint.

A: ...there isn't any restraint at all.

K: Not at all.

A: Right. Right.

K: Because sir, look. Take, if one has this total feeling of responsibility then what is your responsibility with regard to your children? It means education. Are you educating them to bring about a mind that conforms

to the pattern which the society has established, which means you accept the immorality of the society that is. If you feel totally responsible you are responsible from the moment it's born till the moment it dies. The right kind of education, not the education of making the child conform, the worship of success and the division of nationalities which brings about war - you follow? - all that you are responsible for, not just in a particular direction. Even if you are in a particular direction, I'm responsible for my act, what is your action based on? How can you be responsible, when you, when your action is the result of a formula that has been handed down to you?

A: Yes, I quite follow what you mean.

K: Like communists, they say, the state is responsible. The state - worship the state, the state is the god and you are responsible to the state. Which means they have conceived what the state should be, formulated ideationally and according to that you act. That is not a responsible action. That's irresponsible action. Whereas action means the doing now. The active present of the verb to do, which is to do now, the acting now. The acting now must be free from the past. Otherwise you are just repeating, repetition, traditionally carrying on. That's not...

A: I'm reminded of something in the I Ching that I think is a reflection of this principle that you pointed to. I don't mean principle in the abstract. If I am quoting it correctly from one of the standard translations, it goes like this, 'The superior man' by which it means the free man, not hierarchically structured 'does not let his thoughts go beyond his situation'. Which would mean that he simply would be present as he is, not being responsible to something out there that is going to tell him how to be responsible or what he should do, but upon the instant that he is, he is always...

K: Responsible

A: ...responsible.

K: Always.

A: He simply does not let his thoughts go beyond his situation. That goes back to that word 'negation'. Because if he won't let his thoughts go beyond his situation he has negated the possibility for their doing so, hasn't he?

K: Yes. Quite.

A: Yes. Oh yes, yes, yes, I see that. The reason that I'm referring to these other quotations is because if what you are saying is true and if what they say is true, quite without respect to how they are understood or not understood, then there must be something in common here, and I realise that your emphasis is practical, eminently practical - upon the act. But it does seem to me to be of great value if one could converse, commune with the great literatures which have so many statements and the complaint about the fact that they are not understood. (Laughs) I see that as a great gain.

K: Sir, I have not read any books, any literature in the sense...

A: Yes, I understand.

K: ...in that sense. Suppose there is no book in the world.

A: The problem is the same.

K: The problem is the same.

A: (Laughs) Of course, of course.

K: There is no leader, no teacher, nobody to tell you do this, do that, don't do this, don't do that. You are there. You feel totally, completely responsible.

A: Right. Yes.

K: Then you have to, you have to have an astonishingly active, clear brain, not befuddled, not puzzled, not bewildered. You must have a mind that thinks clearly. And you cannot think clearly if you are rooted in the past. You are merely continuing, modified perhaps, through the present to the future. That's all. So from that arises the question, what is the responsibility in human relationship?

A: Yes. Now we are back to relationships.

K: Relationship, because that is the basic foundation of life: relationship. That is, to be related, to be in contact with.

A: We are presently related.

K: Related.

A: This is what is.

K: Yes. Now what is human relationship? If I feel totally responsible, how does that responsibility express in relationship to my children, if I have children, to my family, to my neighbour, whether the neighbour is next door or ten thousand miles away - he is still my neighbour! So what is my responsibility? What is the responsibility of a man who feels totally, completely involved in this feeling of being a light to himself and totally responsible? I think this is a question, sir, that has to be investigated.

A: Yes, you know what I'm thinking? I'm thinking that only a person responsible, as you have said it, can make what we call, in our tongue, a clean decision.

K: Of course. Of course.

A: So many decisions are frayed.

K: Sir, I would like to ask this. Is there decision at all? Decision implies choice.

A: Yes

K: Choice implies a mind that's confused between this and that.

A: It means, I think radically to make a cut, to cut off.

K: Yes, but a mind that sees clearly has no choice. It doesn't decide. It acts.

A: Yes. Doesn't this take us back to this word 'negation' again?

K: Yes, of course.

A: Might it not be that a clean decision could be interpreted in terms of what takes place at this point of negation from which flows a different action.

K: But I don't like to use that word 'decision' because deciding between this and that.

A: You don't want to use it because of the implications in it of conflict?

K: Conflict, choice, we think we are free because we choose. We can choose, right?

A: Yes.

K: Is a mind free that is capable of choice? Or is a mind that is not free, that chooses? Because choice implies between this and that. Obviously. Now which means the mind doesn't see clearly and therefore there is choice. The choice exists when there is confusion. A mind that sees clearly, there is no choice. It is doing. I think this is where we have got into rather trouble when we say we are free to choose. Choice implies freedom. I say on the contrary: choice implies a mind that is confused, and therefore not free.

A: What occurs to me now is the difference between regarding freedom as a property or quality of action rather than a state. Yes. But we have the notion that freedom is a state, a condition which is, which is quite different from the emphasis you are leading me into.

K: Yes, that's right.

A: Yes, yes, yes.

K: So let's come back to this, sir, which is, what is the responsibility of a human being who feels this sense of responsibility in relationship? Because relationship is life, relationship is the foundation of existence. Relationship is absolutely necessary, otherwise you can't exist. Relationship means co-operation. Everything is involved in that one word. Relation means love, generosity, and, you know all that's implied. Now what is a human responsibility in relationship?

A: If we were genuinely and completely sharing then responsibility would be present fully, is it not?

K: Yes, but how does it express itself in relationship? Not only between you and me now, but between man and woman, between my neighbour, relationship, sir, to everything, to nature. What's my relationship to nature? Would I go and kill the baby seals?

A: No, no.

K: Would I go and destroy human beings calling them enemies? Would I destroy nature, everything which man is doing now? He is destroying the earth, the air, the sea, everything. Because he feels totally irresponsible.

A: He sees what is out there as something to operate on.

K: Yes. Which is, he kills the baby seal, which I saw the other day on a film, it's an appalling thing. And a Christian, they call themselves Christian, going and killing a little thing for some lady to put on the fur. And - you follow? - totally immoral, the whole thing is. So to come back: I say how does this responsibility show itself in my life? I am married, I am not, but suppose I am married, what is my responsibility? Am I related to my wife?

A: The record doesn't seem very good.

K: No, not only record, actuality.

A: Right.

K: Am I related to my wife? Or am I related to my wife according to the image I have built about her? And I am responsible for that image. Do you follow, sir? (Laughs)

A: Yes, because my input has been continuous with respect to that image.

K: Yes. So I have no relationship with my wife if I have an image about her. Or if I have an image about myself when I want to be successful, and all the rest of that business.

A: Since we were talking about 'now', being now, there is a point of contact, I take it, between what you are saying and the phrase that you used in one of our earlier conversations, 'the betrayal of the present'.

K: Absolutely. You see that is the whole point, sir. If I am related to you, I have no image about you, or you have no image about me, then we have relationship. We have no relationship if I have an image about myself or about you. Our images have a relationship, when in actuality we have no relationship. I might sleep with my wife or some... but it is not a relationship. It is a physical contact, sensory excitement, nothing else. My responsibility is not to have an image.

A: This brings to mind, I think one of the loveliest statements in the English language, which I should like to understand in terms of what we have been sharing. These lines from Keats' poem 'Endymion', there is something miraculous, marvellous in this statement, it seems to me that is immediately related to what you have been saying: 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.' And then he says, as though that's not enough, he says 'Its loveliness increases!' And then as though that's not enough he says 'It will never pass into nothingness'. Now when the present is not betrayed, it's full with a fullness that keeps on abounding.

K: Yes, quite, I understand.

A: Would I be correct in that?

K: Yes, I think so.

A: I think that's truly what he must be saying, and one of the things too that passed my mind was, he calls it a thing of beauty. He doesn't call it a beautiful thing. It's a thing of beauty as though it's a child of beauty. A marvellous continuity between this. Not it's beautiful because I think it's beautiful and therefore it's outside. Yes, yes, yes.

K: We come back, I must stick to this because this is really quite important. Because go where you will, there is no relationship between human beings, and that is the tragedy, and from that arises all our conflict, violence, the whole business. So if, not if, when there is this responsibility, the feeling of this responsibility it translates itself in relationship. It doesn't matter with whom it is. A freedom from the known which is the image. And therefore in that freedom, goodness flowers.

A: Goodness flowers.

K: And that is the beauty. And that is beauty. Beauty is not an abstract thing, but it goes with goodness. Goodness in behaviour, goodness in conduct, goodness in action.

A: Sometimes while we have been talking I have started a sentence with 'if', and I have looked into your eyes and immediately I got it out. I knew I had said the wrong thing. It's just like a minute ago you said 'if', and you said no, 'when'. We are always 'if-ing' it up.

K: I know. 'If-ing' it up!

A: It is awful.

K: I know sir. We are always dealing with abstractions rather than with reality.

A: Immediately we 'if', a construction is out there which we endlessly talk about.

K: That's right.

A: And we get cleverer and cleverer about it and it has nothing to do with anything. (Laughs) Yes, yes, yes.

K: So how does this responsibility translate itself in human behaviour? You follow, sir?

A: Yes. There would be an end to violence.

K: Absolutely.

A: Wouldn't taper off.

K: You see what we have done sir. We are violent human beings, sexually, morally, in every way we are violent human beings, and not being able to resolve it we have created an ideal of not being violent which is the fact, an abstraction of the fact, which is non-fact and try to live the non-fact.

A: Yes. Immediately that produces conflict because it cannot be done.

K: That produces conflict, misery, confusion, all the rest of it. Why does the mind do it? The mind does it because it doesn't know what to do with this fact of violence. Therefore in abstracting the idea of not being violent, postpones action. I am trying not to be violent and in the mean time I am jolly well violent.

A: Yes.

K: And it is an escape from the fact. All abstractions are escape from the fact. So the mind does it because it is incapable of dealing with the fact, or it doesn't want to deal with the fact, or it is lazy and says, 'Well, I will try and do it some other day'. All those are involved when it withdraws from the fact. Now in the same way the fact is, our relationship is non-existent. I may say to my wife, I love you, etc., etc., but it's non-existent. Because I have an image about her and she has an image about me. So on abstractions we have lived.

A: It just occurred to me that the word 'fact' itself, which there have been no end of disquisitions about...

K: Oh, yes, of course, of course. The fact, 'what is'. Let's call it, 'what is'.

A: But actually it means something done.

K: Done, yes.

A: Not the record of something, but actually something done, performed, act, act. And it's that sense of 'fact' that with our use of the word 'fact'. Give me facts and figures, we'd say in English, give me facts, we don't mean that when we say it.

K: No, no.

A: No. No. One probably wouldn't need facts and figures in that abstract sense.

K: You see, sir, this reveals a tremendous lot.

A: I follow.

K: When you feel responsible, you feel responsible for education of your children, not only your children - children. Are you educating them to conform to a society, are you educating them to merely acquire a job? Are you educating them to the continuity of what has been? Are you educating them to live in abstractions, as we are doing now? So what is your responsibility as a father, mother, it doesn't matter who you are, responsible in education, for the education of a human being. That's one problem. What is your responsibility, if you feel responsible, for human growth, human culture, human goodness? What's your responsibility to the earth, to nature - you follow? It is a tremendous thing to feel responsible.

A: This just came to mind which I must ask you about. The word 'negation' in the book that we looked at earlier which is continuous with what we are saying, I think is itself rather endangered by the usual notion that we have of negation, which is simply a prohibition, which is not meant.

K: No. No.

A: Which is not meant.

K: Of course not.

A: When we reviewed that incident in the Gita between the general and his charioteer, the lord Krishna, the lord's response was a negation without it being a prohibition, wasn't it?

K: Quite, quite. I don't know. I am...

A: No, no. I mean in terms of what we just got through to saying.

K: Yes, of course, of course.

A: There is a difference then between rearing a child in terms of relating to the child radically in the present, in which negation as is mentioned in the book here that we went through, is continuously and immediately and actively present. And simply walking around saying to oneself, 'Now I am rearing a child therefore I mustn't do these things and I mustn't do those things, I must do that.' Exactly. An entirely different thing. But, one has to break the habit of seeing negation as prohibition.

K: Of course. And also, you see, with responsibility goes love, care, attention.

A: Yes. Earlier I was going to ask you about care in relation to responsibility. Something that would flow immediately.

K: Naturally, sir.

A: Naturally, yes. Not something that I would have to project, that I needed to care for later and so I won't forget, but I would be with it.

K: You see that involves a great deal too because the mother depends on the child, and the child depends on the mother, or the father, whatever it is. So that dependence is cultivated: not only between the father and the mother but depend on a teacher, depend on somebody to tell you what to do, depend on your guru. You follow?

A: Yes, yes, I follow.

K: Gradually the child, the man is incapable of standing alone and therefore he says I must depend on my wife for my comfort, for my sex, for my this or that, and the other thing, I am lost without her. And I am lost without my guru (laughs), without my teacher. It becomes so ridiculous. So when the feeling of responsibility exists all this disappears. You are responsible for your behaviour, for the way you bring up you children, for the way you treat a dog, a neighbour, nature, everything is in your hands. Therefore you have to become astonishingly careful what you do. Careful, not, 'I must not do this, and I must do that'. Care, that means affection, that means consideration, diligence. All that goes with responsibility, which present society totally denies. When we begin to discuss the various gurus that are imported in this country, that's what they are doing, creating such mischief making those people - unfortunate, thoughtless people - who want excitement join them, do all kinds of ridiculous nonsensical things.

So, we come back: freedom implies responsibility. And therefore freedom, responsibility means care, diligence, not negligence. Not doing what you want to do, which is what is happening in America. Do what you want to do, this permissiveness is just doing what you want to do, which is not freedom, which breeds irresponsibility. I met the other day in Delhi, New Delhi, a girl and she's become a Tibetan. You follow, sir? Born in America, being a Christian, brought up in all that, throws all that aside, goes, becomes a Tibetan, which is the same thing in different words.

A: Yes. As a Tibetan coming over here and doing it. (Laughter)

K: It's all ridiculous!

A: Yes.

K: And I've known her some years, I said, 'Where is your child?' - who was six. She said, 'Oh, I've left him with other liberated Tibetans'. I said, 'At six, you are the mother'. She said, 'Yes, he is in very good hands'. I come back next year and I ask, 'Where is your child?' 'Oh, he has become a Tibetan monk.' - who is seven. He is seven years old and has become a Tibetan monk! You understand sir?

A: Oh yes, I do.

K: The irresponsibility of it, because the mother feels, 'They know better than I do, I am Tibetan and the lamas will help me to become...'

A: It puts a rather sinister cast on that Biblical statement: train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it. There is a sinister note in there, isn't there?

K: Absolutely. So this is going on in the world all the time. And a man who is really serious negates that because he understands the implications, the inwardness of all that. So he has to deny it. It isn't a question of will or choice, he says that's too silly, too absurd. So freedom means responsibility and infinite care.

A: The phrase that you just spoke, 'infinite care'...

K: Yes sir.

A: ...it would be totally impossible to what we mean by a finite being, unless the finite being did not betray the present.

K: I know, sir.

A: 'With not betraying the present' is a negative again. It is a negation again. With not betraying the present. Which is not to say what will happen if it is not.

K: Sir, the word 'present', the now, is rather difficult.

A: Oh yes. Philosophers love to call it the specious present. (Laughs)

K: I don't know what philosophers say. I don't want to enter into all that speculative thinking. But the fact, what is the 'now'? What is the act of now, the present? To understand the present I must understand the past - not history, I don't mean that.

A: Oh no, no, no.

K: Understand myself as the past. I am the past.

A: In terms of what we said earlier about knowledge.

K: Yes. I am that. Therefore I must understand the past, which is me, the 'me' is the known. The 'me' is not the unknown. I can imagine it is the unknown. But the fact is, the 'what is' is the known. That's me. I must understand myself. If I don't, the now is merely a continuation in modified form of the past. Therefore it is not the now, not the present. Therefore the 'me' is the tradition, the knowledge, in all the complicated manoeuvres, cunning - you follow? - all that, the despairs, the anxieties, the desire for success, fear, pleasure, all that is me.

A: Since we are still involved in a discussion about relationship here, might we return a moment to where we were with respect to education and relationship. I want to be sure that I have understood you here. Let us say that one were fortunate enough to have a school where what you are pointing to was going on.

K: We are going to do, we are doing it. We have got seven schools.

A: Marvellous. Well, we'll have a chance to talk about that, won't we?

K: Yes.

A: Good, good. (Laughs) If I'm current here, it would seem that if the teacher is totally present to the child the child will feel this. The child won't have to be instructed in what this means then. Is that right?

K: Yes, but one has to find out what is the relationship of the teacher to the student.

A: Yes, yes. I quite see that. Of course.

K: What is the relationship? Is he merely an informer, giving information to the child? Any machine can do that.

A: Oh yes, the library is filled with it.

K: Any machine can do that. Or what is his relationship? Does he put himself on a pedestal, up there and his student down there. Or is the relationship between the teacher and the student, is it a relationship in which there is learning on the part of the teacher as well as the student. Learning.

A: Yes.

K: Not I have learnt and I am going to teach you. Therefore in that there is a division between the teacher and the student. But when there is learning on the part of the teacher as well as on the part of the student there is no division. Both are learning.

A: Yes.

K: And therefore that relationship brings about a companionship.

A: A sharing.

K: A sharing.

A: A sharing. Yes.

K: Taking a journey together. And therefore an infinite care on both sides. So it means how is the teacher to teach mathematics, or whatever it is, to the student and yet teach it in such a way that you awaken the intelligence in the child - not about mathematics.

A: No, no of course not, no. Yes.

K: And how do you bring this act of teaching in which there is order, because mathematics means order, the highest form of order is mathematics - now how will you convey to the student in teaching mathematics that there should be order in his life? Not order according to a blueprint. That's not order. You follow?

A: Yes, yes.

K: Therefore it brings... it's a creative teaching - not creative - it's an act of learning all the time. So it's a living thing. Not something I have learnt and I am going to impart it to you.

A: This reminds me of a little essay I read many years ago by Simone Weil which she called 'On Academic Studies' or some title like that and she said, that every one who teaches a subject is responsible for teaching the student the relation between what they are studying and the students making a pure act of attention.

K: I know, of course, of course.

A: And that if this doesn't take place she says the whole thing doesn't mean a thing.

K: Sir, that's just it.

A: And when one stops to think what would a teacher say if a student walked up and looked at him and said, 'Fine, we're studying calculus right now. Now you tell me how I am to see this that I am pursuing, in relation to my making a pure act of attention.' It would be likely a little embarrassing, except for the most unusual person, who had a grasp of the present.

K: Quite. So sir, that's just it. What is the relationship of the teacher to the student in education? Is he training him merely to conform, is he training him to cultivate mere memory, like a machine? Is he training, or is he helping him to learn about life - not just about sex, the life, the whole immensity of living, the complexity of it - which we not are doing.

A: No. No, even in our language we refer students to subject matters. They take this, they take that, they take the other and in fact there are prerequisites for taking these other things. And this builds a notion of education which has absolutely no relationship to what...

K: None at all.

A: And yet, and yet amazingly in the catalogues of colleges and universities across the country there is in the first page or so a rather pious remark about the relation between their going to school and the values of civilisation. And that turns out to be learning a series of ideas. Well, I don't know if they do it any more but they used to put the word 'character' in there. They probably decided that's unpopular, and might very well have dropped that out by now, I'm not sure.

K: Yes, yes.

A: Yes, I'm following what you are saying.

K: So, sir, when you feel responsible there is a flowering of real affection - you understand, sir? - a flowering of care for a child, and you don't train him, or condition him to go and kill another for the sake of your country. You follow? All that is involved in it. So, we come to a point where a human being, as he is now so conditioned to be irresponsible, what are the serious people going to do with the irresponsible people? You understand? Education, politics, religion everything is making human beings irresponsible. I am not exaggerating. This is so.

A: Oh no, you are not exaggerating. Yes.

K: Now, I see this, as a human being, I say what am I to do? You follow, sir? What is my responsibility in face of the irresponsible?

A: Well if it's to start anywhere, as we say in English, it must start at home. It would have to start with me.

K: Yes, at home. So I say, that's the whole point. I have to start with me.

A: Right.

K: Then from that the question arises: then you can't do anything about the irresponsible.

A: No. Exactly.

K: Ah, no, sir. Something strange takes place.

A: Oh, I misunderstood you. I'm sorry. What I meant by replying there is that I don't attack the irresponsible.

K: No. No.

A: No, no. Yes, go ahead, yes.

K: Something strange takes place. Which is, consciousness, the irresponsible consciousness is one thing, and the consciousness of responsibility is another. Now when the human being is totally responsible that responsibility unconsciously enters into the irresponsible mind. I don't know if I'm conveying anything.

A: Yes, yes. No, no, go ahead.

K: Sir, look. I'm irresponsible. Suppose I'm irresponsible, you are responsible. You can't do anything consciously with me. Because the more you actively operate on me, I resist.

A: That's right, that's right. That's what I meant by no attacking.

K: No attacking. I react violently to you. I build a wall against you. I hurt you. I do all kinds of things. But you see that you cannot do anything consciously, actively, let's put it that way.

A: Designedly.

K: Designedly, planned, which is what they are all trying to do. But if you can talk to me, to my unconscious, because the unconscious is much more active, much more alert, much more, sees the danger much quicker than the conscious. So it is much more sensitive. So if you can talk to me, to the unconscious, that operates. So you don't actively, designedly attack the irresponsible. They have done it. And they have made a mess of it.

A: Oh yes, it compounds, complicates the thing further.

K: Whereas if you talk to him, I talk, you talk to me but your whole inward intention is to show how irresponsible I am, what responsibility means, you follow, you care. In other words you care for me

A: Yes, yes. I was chuckling because the complete and total opposite crossed my mind and it just seemed so absolutely absurd. Yes.

K: You care for me.

A: I do.

K: Because I am irresponsible. You follow?

A: Exactly.

K: Therefore you care for me. And therefore you are watching not to hurt me, not to, you follow? In that way you penetrate very, very deeply into my unconscious. And that operates unknowingly when suddenly I say, 'By Jove, how irresponsible I am' - you follow? - that operates. I have seen this, sir, in operation because I've talked for 50 years, unfortunately or fortunately to large audiences, tremendous resistance to anything new. Say, if I said, 'Don't read sacred books' - which I say all the time - because you are just conforming, obeying. You are not living. You are living according to some book that you have read. Immediately there is resistance: 'Who are you to tell us?'

A: Not to do something.

K: Not to do this or to do that. So I say, all right. I go on pointing out, pointing out. I'm not trying to change them. I'm not doing propaganda because I don't believe in propaganda. It's a lie. So I say, look, look what you do when you are irresponsible. You are destroying your children. You send them to war, to be killed and to be maimed, and to kill and to maim. Is that an act of love, is that affection, is that care? Why do you do it? And I go into it. They get bewildered. They don't know what to do. (Laughs) You follow, sir? So it begins to slowly seep in.

A: Well, at first it's such a shock. It sounds positively Subversive to some.

K: Oh, absolutely, absolutely, subversive.

A: Of, course, of course. Yes.

K: So we enter into now something, which is, my relationship to another, when there is total responsibility in which freedom and care go together, the mind has no image in relationship at all. Because the image is the division. Where there is care there is no image, imagination, no image.

A: This would lead us into what perhaps later we could pursue, love.

K: Ah, that's a tremendous thing.

A: Yes, yes.

K: We have to go into it.

A: Could we lay a few words before that, I don't know necessarily that next time we would do that, but it would come naturally.

K: Yes.

A: I've been listening to what you have been saying and it's occurred to me that if one is responsible, and care is continuous with that, one would not fear. One could not fear. Not, 'would not', 'could not', could not fear.

K: 'Could not, you're not capable'. You see that means really, one must understand fear.

A: One must understand fear, yes.

K: And also the pursuit of pleasure. Those two go together. They are not two separate things.

A: What I have learned here in our discussion is that what it is, if I have followed you correctly, that we should turn ourselves toward understanding, is not what are called values.

K: Oh no!

A: We don't understand love. We understand all those things which we catch ourselves into that militate against any possibility whatsoever. This is what's so hard to hear, that to be told that there just is no possibility. This produces immense terror. Do you think next time when we converse together we could begin at that point where we could discuss fear?

K: Oh, yes.

A: Good, good.

K: But sir, before we enter fear there is something which we should discuss very carefully: what is order in freedom?

A: Fine, fine, yes, yes.

Fourth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Tuesday, February 19, 1974

The Nature and Total Eradication of Fear

Sixth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Wednesday, February 20, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti, if I recall correctly I think we had begun to talk together last time, just at the point where the question of fear arose, and I think we both, perhaps, could explore that together a little.

Krishnamurti: Yes, I think so. I wonder how we can approach this problem, because it is a common problem in the world. Everyone, or I can say, almost everyone is frightened of something. It may be the fear of death, fear of loneliness, fear of not being loved, fear of not becoming famous, successful and also fear of not having physical security, and the fear of not having psychological security. There are so many multiple forms of fears. Now to go into this problem really very deeply, can the mind, which includes the brain, really fundamentally be free of fear? Because fear, as I have observed, is a dreadful thing.

A: Oh yes.

K: It darkens the world, it destroys everything. And I don't think we can discuss fear, which is one of the principles in life, without also discussing, or going into the pursuit of pleasure. The two sides of the same coin.

A: Fear and pleasure, two sides of the same coin. Yes, yes.

K: So as we are going to first take fear there is conscious as well as unconscious fears. Fears that are observable, that can be remedied and fears that are deep rooted, deep in the recesses of one's mind.

A: At the unconscious level.

K: At the deeper levels. Now, we must be concerned with both, not only the obvious external fears, but also the deep seated undiscovered fears. The fears that have been handed down, traditional fears.

A: Being told what to fear.

K: What to fear and also fears that the mind itself has produced, has cultivated.

A: In one's personal history.

K: Personal. And also in relation to others; fears of physical insecurity, losing a job, losing a position, losing something, and all the positive, not having something, and so on and on. So, if we are going to talk about this question how should we, you and I, approach this? First take the outer, the obvious physical fears, and then from there move to the inner, and so cover the whole field, not just one little fear of an old lady, or an old man, or a young man, take the whole problem of fear.

A: Good.

K: Not just take one leaf of fear, or one branch of it but the whole movement of fear.

A: Yes. We are back to that word 'movement' again.

K: Movement.

A: Good, good. The whole movement of fear.

K: Now, outwardly, physically it is becoming obvious that we must have security, physical security. That is, food, clothes, and shelter are absolutely necessary. Not only for the Americans for the whole humanity.

A: Yes, of course.

K: It's no good saying, 'We are secure and to hell with the rest of the world.' The world is you. And you are the world. You can't isolate yourself and say, 'I am going to be secure' and not bother about the others.

A: Secure myself against them.

K: It becomes a division, conflict, war, all that it produces. So that physical security is necessary for the brain. The brain can only function, as I have observed it in myself, in others, not that I am an expert on brain, or neurology and all that but I have observed it. The brain can function only in complete security. Then it functions efficiently, healthily, not neurotically. And its actions won't be lopsided. The brain needs security, as a child needs security. That security is denied when we separate ourselves - the Americans, the Russians, the Indians, the Chinese. National division has destroyed that security, because wars.

A: Yes, that is a physical barrier.

K: Physical fact. And yet we don't see that. Sovereign governments, with their armies, their navies and all the rest of it, are destroying security.

A: In the name of providing it.

K: So, you see what we are trying to get at is how stupid the mind is. It wants security. And it must have security, and yet it is doing everything to destroy that security.

A: Oh yes, yes. I see that.

K: So that's one factor. And the factor of security is in jobs. Either in a factory, in a business, or as a priest in his job. So occupation becomes very important.

A: Indeed it does, yes.

K: So, see what is involved. If I lose my job I am frightened, and that job depends on the environment, on the production, business, factory, all that commercialism, consumerism, and therefore competition with other countries. France isolating itself because it wants to... which is happening. So we need physical security and we are doing everything to destroy it. If we all of us said, look let's all get together, not with plans, not with my plan, your plan, or the communist plan or Mao plan, let's as human beings sit together and solve this problem. They could do it. Science has the means of feeding people. But they won't because they are conditioned to function so as to destroy security which they are seeking. So that's one of the major factors in physical security. Then there is the fear of physical pain. Is physical pain in the sense, one has had pain, let's say last week. The mind is afraid that it should happen again. So there is that kind of fear.

A: That's very interesting with respect to the phenomenon of physical pain, because what is remembered is not the neurological reaction but the emotion that attends what occurred.

K: Yes, that's it. So there is that fear.

A: Right, right.

K: Then there is the fear of outward opinion, what people say, public opinion.

A: Reputation.

K: Reputation. You see, sir, all this is born out of disorder. I don't know if I'm...?

A: Oh yes, yes.

K: Which we discussed.

A: Which we looked into previously.

K: So, can the mind bring about security, physical security, which means food, clothes and shelter for everybody. Not as a communist, as a capitalist, as a socialist, or as a Mao, but meet together as human beings to resolve this problem. It can be done. But nobody wants to do it, because they don't feel responsible for it. I don't know if you have been to India; if you have gone from town to town to village as I have done, you see the appalling poverty, the degradation of poverty, the sense of hopelessness of it.

A: Yes, I have been to India and it was the first time in my life that I sensed poverty, not simply as a privation, but it seemed to have a positive character about it. It was so stark.

K: I know sir. Personally we have been through all that. So, physical survival is only possible when human beings get together. Not as communists, socialists, all the rest, as human beings who say, look this is our problem, for god's sake let's solve it. But they won't because they are burdened with problems, with planning. How to solve that. I don't know if I am...?

A: Yes, yes, you are.

K: You have your plan, I have my plan, he has his plan, so planning becomes most important, plans become most important rather than the starvation. And we fight each other. And common sense, affection, care, love can change all this. Sir, I won't go into that. Then the fear of public opinion. Do you understand, sir? What my neighbour will say.

A: My image, the national image, yes.

K: And I depend on my neighbour.

A: Oh yes, necessarily.

K: If I am a Catholic living in Italy, I have to depend on my neighbour because I would lose my job if I were a Protestant there. So I accept it. I will go and salute the pope or whatever, it has no meaning. So I am afraid of public opinion. See what a human mind has reduced itself to. I don't mind, say, 'To blaze with public opinion', because that's stupid. They are conditioned, they are frightened as much as I am. So there is that fear. And there is the fear, physical fear of death, which is an immense fear. That fear one has to tackle differently when we come to it, when we talk about death and all that.

A: Yes.

K: So there is the outward form of fear; fear of darkness, fear of public opinion, fear of losing a job, fear of survival, not being able to survive. Sir, I have lived with people with one meal a day and that's not enough even. I have walked behind a woman with a girl, and the girl said, in India, 'Mother, I'm hungry.' And the mother says, 'You have already eaten for the day.' So there is all that, those physical fears, pain, and the fear of recurring pain, and that. And the other fears are much more complicated, fears of dependency, inwardly, I depend on my wife, I depend on my guru, I depend on the priest, I depend on the - so many dependants. And I am afraid to lose them, to be left alone.

A: To be rejected.

K: To be rejected. If that woman turns away from me I'm lost. I get angry, brutal, violent, jealous, because I have depended on her. So dependency is one of the factors of fear. And inwardly I am afraid. I am afraid of loneliness. The other day I saw on the television a woman saying, 'The only fear I have in life is my

loneliness'. And therefore being afraid of loneliness I do all kinds of neurotic activities. Being lonely I attach myself to you or to a belief, or to a saviour, to a guru. And I protect the guru, the saviour, the belief and that soon becomes neurotic.

A: Yes. I fill up the hole with this new image.

K: With this rubbish. There is that fear. Then there is the fear of not being able to arrive, succeed, succeed in this world of disorder, and succeed in the so-called spiritual world. That's what they are all doing now.

A: Spiritual achievement.

K: Achievement, which they call enlightenment.

A: Expanding consciousness. I know what you mean. It's very interesting that you just got through describing fear of being left behind. Now we are fearing that we'll never arrive.

K: Arrive.

A: Please go on.

K: Same thing. Then there is the fear of not being, which translates itself in identification with. I must identify myself.

A: In order to be.

K: To be. Identify myself with my country, and I say to myself, that's too stupid. Then I say, 'I must identify myself with god', which I have invented. God has not made man in his image, man has made god in his image. You follow this?

A: Oh, I follow you.

K: So, not being, not achieving, not arriving, brings about tremendous sense of uncertainty, tremendous sense of not being able to fulfil, not being able to be with, and the cry, 'I must be myself'.

A: Do my own thing.

K: My own thing. Which is rubbish! So there are all these fears, both logical fears, irrational fears, neurotic fears, and fears of survival, physical survival. So now how do you deal with all these fears - and many more fears which we can't go into, which we will presently - how do you deal with them all? One by one?

A: Well you just be in the mournful round of fragmentation if you did that.

K: And also there are the hidden fears, which are much more active.

A: The continual bubbling up from below.

K: Bubbling up, when I'm not conscious they take over.

A: That's right.

K: So, how am I to deal first with the obvious fears which we have described? Shall I deal with it one by one, first secure myself? You follow?

A: Yes.

K: Or, take loneliness and tackle that, come to grips with it, go beyond it and so on. Or is there a way of dealing with fear, not with the branches of it but with the root of it? Because if I take each leaf, each branch it will take all my lifetime. And if I begin to analyse my fears, analyse, then that very analysis becomes a

paralysis.

A: Yes. And then I even fear that I might not have analysed correctly.

K: Correctly. And I am caught in it over and over again. So how shall I deal with this problem, as a whole, not just parts of it, fragments of it?

A: Isn't there a hint about how it might be dealt with - of course, when I say hint here, I mean terribly, terribly slight. I don't think I would call it a pointer, but fear, no matter how many varieties one imagines he knows, fear does have a common taste, you might say, there is something there that...

K: Yes, sir, but what shall I do with it?

A. Oh, yes, of course, I quite understand. But it interested me while you were speaking, to observe that already when we think of many fears we haven't even paid attention to how we fear, when we fear. Yes, I was interested to have that flash because it seems to be altogether consonant with what you are talking about. And I said to myself, now in our conversations we've been pointing to movement. The movement of fear is one.

K: Yes, a tremendous one.

A: And it is a unified field of destruction.

K: It is the common factor of every human being.

A: The whole field, yes, exactly.

K: Whether I live... whether a man lives in Moscow or India, or in any place, it is the common thing of this fear, and how shall we deal with it? Because unless the mind is free of fear, really, not verbally or ideologically, absolutely be free of fear. And it is possible to be free, completely of fear, and I'm saying this not as a theory, but I know it, I've gone into it.

A: Actual.

K: Actual. Now how shall I deal with this? So I ask myself, what is fear? Not the objects of fear, or the expressions of fear.

A: No, or the instant reaction to danger, no.

K: What is fear?

A: It's an idea in my mind in part.

K: What is fear, sir?

A: If we have said it's an abiding...

K: No, no. Behind the words, behind the descriptions, the explanations, the way out and the way in, and all the rest of it, what is fear? How does it come?

A: If I have followed you through our conversations up until now, I'd be inclined to say that it is another expression of the observer's disordered relation to the observed.

K: What does that mean? What is the observer... what you say. Look, the problem is this - I am only making the problem clearer so that we can... We have, man has tried to lop off or prune one fear after the other, through analysis, through escape, through identifying himself with something which he calls courage. Or saying, well I don't care, I rationalise my fears and remain in a state of rationalising, intellectual, verbal

explanation. But the thing is boiling. So what shall I do? What is fear? Unless I find this out, not because you tell me, unless I find it out for myself as I find from myself that I am hungry, nobody has to tell me I am hungry, I have to find this out.

A: Yes, now there is a difference here in terms of what you have just said. And in so saying pointing to something, and my earlier reply when you asked me what is fear, I did the usual academic thing - 'If I have followed you up until now then it seems clear that...' Whereas let's forget about the following, let's zero in on it right now and then I must say, not I might say, but I must say that I can't tell anybody else what fear is with respect to what it is I am going to discover in me as such. And all my continual descriptions about it are simply a deflection from my immediate issue which is here.

K: Yes. So, I'm not escaping.

A: No.

K: I'm not rationalising. I am not analysing, because analysis is real paralysis.

A: Yes indeed.

K: When you are confronted with a problem like this merely spinning or analysing, and the fear of not being able to analyse perfectly and therefore go to a professional, who needs also an analysis. So I'm caught. So I will not analyse because I see the absurdity of it. You follow sir.

A: Yes I do.

K: I won't run.

A: No backing off.

K: Backing off.

A: Flight.

K: No explanations, no rationalisation, no analysis. I am faced with this thing. And what is fear? Wait, wait. Leave that. Then there are the unconscious fears of which don't know. They express themselves occasionally when I am alert, when I see the thing coming out of me.

A: When I am alert.

K: Alert. When I am watching. Or when I'm looking at something this comes up, uninvited. Now, it is important for the mind to be completely free of fear. It's essential, as food is essential. It's essential for the mind to be free of fear. So I see outwardly what we have discussed. Now I say, what is this, what are the hidden fears, can I consciously invite them come to the surface? You follow?

A: Yes I do.

K: Or, the conscious cannot touch that. You follow?

A: Yes, yes, I do, yes.

K: Conscious can only deal with the things it knows. But it cannot observe the things it doesn't know.

A: Or have access to.

K: So, what am I to do? Dreams? Dreams are merely continuation of what I have lived during the day, they continue in a different form, and so on. We won't go into that for the moment. So how is all that to be awakened and exposed? The racial fears, the fears that society has taught me, the fears that the family has

imposed, the neighbour, you know all those crawling, ugly, brutal things that are hidden, how shall they all come up naturally, and be exposed so that the mind sees them completely? You understand?

A: Yes, I do. I was just thinking about what we are doing in relation to what you are saying. Here we are in a university situation where hardly any listening goes on at all, if any. Why? Well, if we were to relate to each other in terms of my sitting back here saying to myself, every time you make a statement, well what do I have to say back, even if my reaction were benign and I say to myself as a professor, I'd say, now that's a very interesting concept. Perhaps we could clear that up a little bit, you know. That nonsense - nonsense in terms of what is immediate here. That's what I mean.

K: I understand.

A: I don't mean demonstrating something on the board. We should never have begun to be together, never started, and yet we might have given ourselves the idea that we were trying very hard to be sincere. Yes I understand.

K: I know, I know.

A: But fear is at the base of that too, because the professor is thinking to himself...

K: ...his position, his...

A: He's got his reputation at stake here. He better not keep quiet too long, because someone might get the idea that, either he doesn't understand a thing that is going on, or he doesn't have anything to contribute to what's going on. All of which has nothing to do with anything. Please go on.

K: Absolutely. Look, sir, what I have found: I cannot... the conscious mind, conscious thought cannot invite and expose the hidden fears. It cannot analyse it, because analysis, we said, is inaction, and there is no escape, I shan't run off to a church, or Jesus, or Buddha, or somebody, or identify myself with some other thing. I have pushed all those aside because I've understood their use, their futility. So I am left with this. This is my baby. So, what shall I do? Some action has to take place. I can't just say, 'Well I've pushed all that aside, I'll just sit'. Now just see what happens sir, because I've pushed all this aside through observation, not through resistance, not through violence, because I have negated all those, escape, analysis, running off to something, and all the rest of all that, I have energy, haven't I. The mind has energy now.

A: Now it has, yes. Yes it floods up.

K: Because I have pushed away all the things that are dissipating energy.

A: Energy leaks.

K: Therefore I have now this thing. I am confronted with that, confronted with fear. Now, what can I do? Listen to this, sir, what can I do? I can't do anything, because it is I who have created the fear - public opinion...

A: Yes, yes, yes.

K: Right, so I cannot do a thing about fear.

A: Precisely.

K: But there is the energy which has been gathered, which has come into being when all dissipation of energy has ended. There's energy.

A: Yes. Exactly, virtue - right, right - manifested.

K: Energy, energy. Now, what happens? This is not some hocus-pocus, some kind of mystical experience. There is actual fear and I have tremendous energy which has come because there is no dissipation of energy. So what takes place? So, wait, wait, wait.

A: Oh, I'm waiting, I'm waiting. There was something going through my mind.

K: What takes place? So I say, so what has created fear? What has brought it about? Because if I have the energy, you follow, sir, to put that question and find the answer for that question. I've got energy now. I don't know if you are following?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

K: So, what has brought it about? You, my neighbour, my country, my culture?

A: Myself.

K: What has brought it about?

A: I've done it.

K: Who is I?

A: I don't mean 'I' as the fragmented observer off from me. It is this... I am thinking what you said earlier about the mind as disordered, which requires to empty itself of the disorder, does it require another mind to do it, yes.

K: I'm asking, what has brought this fear into me, into my consciousness? I won't use that word because we'll have to go into that in a different way. What has brought this fear? And I won't leave it till I find it. You understand, sir? Because I've got the energy to do it. I don't depend on anybody, on any book, on any philosopher, nobody.

A: Would it be the case that once that energy begins to flood, that the question itself disappears?

K: And I'll begin to find the answer.

A: Yes.

K: I don't put the question.

A: No, no.

K: But I find the answer.

A: Right, right.

K: Now, what is the answer?

A: The answer couldn't be academic, a description of something.

K: No, no, no.

A: A change has occurred in the being.

K: What is the answer to this fact of fear which has been sustained, which has been nourished, which has carried on from generation to generation? So, can the mind observe this fear, the movement of it...

A: The movement of it.

K: ...not just a piece of fear.

A: Or a succession of fears...

K: But the movement of this, the whole movement.

A: The movement of fear itself.

K: Yes, observe it without the thought that has created the observer. I don't know if you follow?

A: Oh yes, yes.

K: So, can there be observation of this fact, which I've called fear because I have recognised it, the mind has recognised it, because it has had fear before. So through recognition and association it says, 'This is fear'.

A: Yes, that never stops. Yes.

K: So, can the mind observe without the observer, who is the thinker, observe this fact only? Because the observer, which is thought, the observer as thought has produced this. I don't know...

A: Yes, yes.

K: So thought has produced this, right?

A: Yes, yes.

K: I am afraid of my neighbour, what he may say because I want to be respectable. That is part of the thought. I have divided... thought has divided the world into America, Russia, India, China and all the rest of it, and that destroys security. That is the result of thought. I am lonely and therefore I act neurotically, which is also the fact of thought. So I see very clearly that thought is responsible for that. Right? Right, sir?

A: Yes.

K: So, what will happen with thought? Thought is responsible for this. It has nourished it, has sustained it, it has encouraged it, it has done everything to sustain it. I am afraid of the pain that I had yesterday happening again tomorrow. Which is the movement of thought. So can thought, which can only function within the field of knowledge - that's its ground - and fear is something new each time. Fear isn't old.

A: No, no.

K: It is made old when I recognise it.

A: Yes, yes.

K: But when the process of recognition, which is the association of words and so on, can the mind observe that without the interference of thought? If it does fear is not.

A: Right. The thing that was hitting me while I was sitting here intently, the thing that was hitting me was that the moment that occurs, the thought and the fear immediately disappear.

K: So, fear then can be put away completely. If I was living as a human being in Russia and they threaten me to be put into prison I would probably be afraid. It is natural self preservation.

A: Of course.

K: That's a natural fear like a bus coming rushing towards you, you step aside, you run away from a dangerous animal, that's a natural self-protective reaction. But that's not fear. It's a response of intelligence operating saying, for god's sake move away from the rushing bus. But the other factors are factors of thought.

A: Exactly.

K: So, can thought understand itself and know its place and not project itself? Not control, which is an abomination. You can't... if you control thought, who is the controller? Another fragment of thought.

A: Another thought.

K: It is a circle, a vicious game you are playing with yourself. So can the mind observe without a movement of thought? It will only do that when you have understood the whole movement of fear. Understood that, not analysed, looking at it. It is a living thing, therefore you have to look at it. It is only a dead thing you can dissect and analyse, kick it around. But a living thing you have to watch.

A: This is very shocking because in our last conversation, just towards the end we came to the place where we raised the question of someone saying to himself, 'I think I understand what I have heard, now I am going to try that'. And then fear holds up a mirror to itself.

K: Of course.

A: And one is suddenly ringed about by a world of mirrors.

K: You don't say, sir, when you see a dangerous animal, 'I will think about it'. You move. You act. Because there is tremendous destruction waiting there. That is a self-protective reaction which is intelligence says, get out. Here we are not using intelligence. And intelligence operates when we have looked at all these fears, the movements of it, the inwardness of it, the subtlety of it, the whole movement. Then out of that comes intelligence and says, I have understood it.

A: It's marvellous. Yes, that's very beautiful, very beautiful. We were going to say something about pleasure.

K: Ah, that must be dealt with.

A: Right, exactly.

K: So, sir, look, we said there is the physical fears, and psychological fears, both are interrelated, we can't say, that's one and this is the other. They are all interrelated. And the interrelationship and the understanding of that relationship brings this intelligence which will operate physically. It will say, let's then work together, co-operate together to feed man. You follow, sir?

A: Yes.

K: Let's not be national, religious, sectarian. What is important is to feed man, to clothe him, to make him live happily. But you see unfortunately we are so disorderly in our ways of life that we have no time for anything else. Our disorder is consuming us.

A: It's interesting in relation to tradition, I don't mean to start an entirely new conversation now, but just to see what is immediately suggested, among many other things that would be, but just this one. What we could say about the misuses of tradition would be that we are actually taught what to fear. In our language we have an expression, don't we, that expresses part of this, old wives tales we say, an accumulation of warnings about things that, that are simply imaginary. Not in the creative sense of imagination, and I'm using the word creative there very loosely, very loosely, but fantasia, phantasmagoria, from the little ones' earliest years, gets this stuff with the bottle. And then when we get into adolescence we reflect on these things we have learned and if things go wrong we feel that perhaps it's because we haven't sufficiently grasped what we have been told. And then some young people will say at that point, 'I'm going to junk the whole thing'. But then immediately the loneliness question arises. Yes, yes.

K: They can't, sir, it is life, this is life, you can't reject one part and accept the other part.

A: Exactly.

K: Life means all this. Freedom, order, disorder, communication, relationship, it's the whole thing is living. If we don't understand, say, 'Well, I don't want to have anything to do with', then you are not living. You are dying.

A: Yes, of course. I wonder how much, I wonder - I keep saying I wonder, and the reason I wonder is because what we have been saying about this movement, as a unified field, is when stated, taken by thought and, you might say put in the refrigerator, and, that's the reality to the person.

K: Quite, sir.

A: And when we want to look at it, it's one of the ice cubes we break out and have a look. Don't we?

K: That's right, sir. What place has knowledge in the regeneration of man? Look, our knowledge is: you must be separate. You are an American, I am an Hindu, that's our knowledge. Our knowledge is you must rely on your neighbour because he knows, he is respectable. Society is respectability, society is moral, so you accept that. So knowledge has brought about all these factors. And you are telling me suddenly, asking me, what place has that, what place has tradition, what place has the accumulated knowledge of millennia? The accumulated knowledge of science, mathematics, that is essential. But what place has knowledge which I have gathered through experience, through generation after generation of human endeavour, what place has it in the transformation of fear? None, whatsoever.

A: None. Clear, clear.

K: You see.

A: Because of what we reached before that upon the instant that this is grasped, the thought that was operating as a fragment and the fear vanish; and it isn't that something takes its place in succession.

K: No nothing takes its place.

A: No, nothing takes its place. Nothing takes its place.

K: It doesn't mean there is emptiness.

A: Oh, no, no, no. But you see it's right there when you start thinking about that as a thought, you get scared.

K: That's why it's very important to find out, or to understand the function of knowledge and where knowledge becomes ignorance. We mix the two together. Knowledge is essential, to speak English, driving, and a dozen things, knowledge is essential. But when that knowledge becomes ignorance, when we are trying to understand actually 'what is', the 'what is' is this fear, this disorder, this irresponsibility. To understand it you don't have to have knowledge. All you have to do is to look. Look outside you, look inside you. And then you see clearly that knowledge is absolutely unnecessary, it has no value in the transformation or the regeneration of man. Because freedom is not born of knowledge; freedom is when all the burdens are not. You don't have to search for freedom. It comes when the other is not.

A: It isn't something in place of the horror that was there before.

K: Of course not. I think that is enough.

A: Yes, yes, I quite follow you. Maybe next time we could carry on into this with pleasure as such, the opposite side of that coin.

Sixth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Wednesday, February 20, 1974

Order Comes from the Understanding of Our Disorder

Fifth Dialogue with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Wednesday, February 20, 1974

A: Beginning from where we were, Mr Krishnamurti, when we were speaking last time it seemed to me that we had together reached the point where you were about to discuss order, converse about order and I thought perhaps we could begin with that today, if that's agreeable with you.

K: I think we were talking about freedom, responsibility and relationship. And before we go any further we thought we'd talk over together this question of order. What is order in freedom? As one observes all over the world, there is such extraordinary disorder.

A: Oh yes.

K: Outwardly and inwardly. One wonders why there is such disorder. You go to India and you see the streets filled with people, bursting with population. And you see also so many sects, so many gurus, so many teachers, so many contradictory lies, such misery. And you come to Europe: there is a little more order but you see when you penetrate the superficial order there is equal disorder. And you come to this country and you know what it is like, better than I do, there is complete disorder. You may drive very carefully, but go behind the facade of so-called order and you see chaos, not only in personal relationship but sexually, morally, so much corruption. All governments are corrupt, some more, some less. But this whole phenomenon of disorder, how has it come about? Is it the fault of the religions that have said: do this and don't do that? And now they are revolting against all that?

A: Yes.

K: Is it governments are so corrupt that nobody has any trust in governments? Is it there is such corruption in business, nobody wants to look at it even, any intelligent man, any man who is really serious. And you look at family life, and there is such disorder. So taking the whole phenomenon of disorder, why is there such disorder? What has brought it about?

A: Doesn't it appear that there is a sort of necessary, almost built in progression in terms of the way we have mentioned necessity earlier, once order so conceived is superimposed upon an existing situation, not only does it not effect what is hoped for but it creates a new situation which we think requires a new approach. And the new approach is still the super imposition.

K: Like the communists are doing in Russia and China. They have imposed order, what they call order, on a disordered mind. And therefore there is a revolt. So looking at all this, it's very interesting, looking at all this phenomenon of disorder, what is order then? Is order something imposed, order as in the military on the soldier, imposed order, a discipline which is a conformity, suppression, imitation? Is order conformity?

A: Not in the sense that it's artificially imposed, yes.

K: In any sense. If I conform to an order I am creating disorder.

A: Yes, yes, I understand what you mean. In our use of the word conform we sometimes mean by it a natural relation between the nature of a thing, and the activities that are proper to it or belong to it. But then that use of the word conform is not the use that is usual and the one that we are concerned with here.

K: No. no. So is order conformity? Is order imitation? Is order acceptance, obedience? Or because we have conformed, because we have obeyed, because we have accepted, we have created disorder. Because discipline, in the ordinary, accepted sense of that word, is to conform.

A: Yes, we say in English, don't we, to someone who appears to be undisciplined, or who in fact is undisciplined, we say, 'straighten up'.

K: Straighten up, yes.

A: The images that we use to refer to that correction are always rigid, aren't they?

K: Yes.

A: Yes, yes.

K: So that authority, whether the communist authority of the few, or the authority of the priest, or the authority of someone who says, 'I know and you don't know', that is one of the factors that has produced disorder. And one of the factors of this disorder is our lack of real culture. We are very sophisticated, very so-called civilised, in the sense we are clean, we have bathrooms, we have better food and all that, but inwardly we are not cultured. We are not healthy, whole human beings.

A: The inner fragmentation spills out into our operations externally.

K: So unless we understand disorder, the nature of disorder, the structure of disorder, we can never find out what is order. Out of the understanding of disorder comes order. Not first seek order, and then impose that order on disorder. I don't know if I make myself clear.

A: Yes, I do. I'm thinking as you are speaking of the phenomenon in the world of study and the world of teaching and learning as we understand them conventionally. I've noticed in our conversations that you always suggest that we study some dysfunction. We are never invited really to do that we are given the notion that the thing to study is the principle involved. The argument for that, of course, is that one refers to health in order to understand disease.

K: Quite, quite.

A: But then the reference to health, when that is said, is received purely conceptually.

K: Quite right.

A: So what we are studying now is a concept.

K: Is a concept rather than the actuality, than the 'what is'.

A: And we slip out of the true task. There is a difficulty in grasping the suggestion that we study the disorder simply because disorder by its own condition is without an ordering principle. Therefore it sounds when it comes out as though I am being asked to study something that is unstudyable. But to the contrary.

K: On the contrary.

A: Yes. Now I'll stop. You go ahead. On the contrary. You were about to say something.

K: On the contrary. There must be an understanding of disorder, why it has come about. One of the factors, sir, I think, is basically that thought is matter, and thought by its very nature is fragmentary. Thought divides, the 'me' and the 'not me', we and they, my country and your country, my ideas and your ideas, my religion and your religion and so on. The very movement of thought is divisive, because thought is the response of memory, response of experience, which is the past. And unless we really go into this question

very, very deeply the movement of thought and the movement of disorder...

A: That seems to me to be a key word, from my understanding, in listening to you, movement. To study the movement of disorder would seem to me to take it a step deeper than the phrase, to study disorder. With the word movement we are dealing with act.

K: Movement.

A: Exactly. The career of disorder.

K: The movement.

A: Yes, If that is what we are directed upon then I think the objection that the study of disorder is to undertake an impossible pursuit is not made with any foundation. That objection loses its force precisely at the point, when one says, no, no it's not disorder as a concept we are dealing with here, it's the movement of it, it's its own career, it's its passage, it's the whole corruption of the act as such. Yes, yes, exactly. I keep on saying this business about act all the time, and perhaps it seems repetitious.

K: Oh that's absolutely right.

A: But you know hardly, hardly ever is that taken seriously...

K: I know, sir.

A: ...by our species. Of course the animals are on to that from the beginning, but we don't.

K: No. You see we deal with concepts, not with 'what is', actually what is. Rather than discuss formulas, concepts and ideas, 'what is' is disorder. And that disorder is spreading all over the world, it's a movement, it's a living disorder. It isn't a disorder that is dead. It is a living thing, moving, corrupting, destroying.

A: Yes. Exactly, exactly.

K: So.

A: But it takes, as you pointed out so often, it takes an extreme concentration of attention to follow movement and there is a rebellion in us against following movement which perhaps lies in our disaffection with the intuition that we have. The transition is unintelligible.

K: Of course. Quite, quite.

A: And we don't want that. We can't stand the thought that there is something that is unintelligible. And so we just will not make that active attention.

K: It's like sitting on the bank of a river and watching the waters go by. You can't alter the water, you can't change the substance or the movement of the water. In the same way this movement of disorder is part of us and is flowing outside of us. So, one has look at it.

A: And there is no confusion in the act at all.

K: Obviously not. First of all, sir, let's go into it very, very carefully. What is the factor of disorder? Disorder means contradiction, right.

A: Yes. And conflict. Yes.

K: Contradiction. This opposed to that. Or the duality, this opposed to that.

A: The contention between two things to be mutually exclusive.

K: Yes. And what brings about this dual, duality and the conflict? Is there a duality at all?

A: Certainly not in act, there is not a duality. That simply couldn't be. There certainly could be said, not even with respect, don't you think, to thought itself and its operation that there is a dualism. But the duality, of course, is present in terms of distinction, but not in terms of division.

K: Division, that's right.

A: Not in terms of division.

K: Not in terms.

A: Yes, yes. I follow.

K: After all there is man, woman, black and white and so on, but is there an opposite to violence? You've understood?

A: Yes, yes, I'm listening very intently.

K: Or only violence. But we have created the opposite. Thought has created the opposite as non-violence, and then the conflict between the two. The non-violence is an abstraction of the 'what is'. And thought has done that.

A: Yesterday I had a difficult time in class over this. I made the remark that, vice is not the opposite of virtue. Virtue is not the opposite of vice, and somehow I just couldn't, it seems, communicate that because of the insistence on the part of the students to deal with the problem purely in terms of a conceptual structure.

K: You see sir, I don't know if you want to go into it now, or if it is the right occasion: from ancient Greece, you must know, measurement was necessary to them. Measurement. And the whole of western civilisation is based on measurement, which is thought.

A: This is certainly true in continuous practice. It is certainly true. And the irony of it is that an historian looking at the works of the great Greek thinkers would turn around and say at this point, well now just wait a minute. And we would say some things about Aristotle and Plato that would suggest that no, no, no, there's a much more organic grasp of things than simply approaching it in a slide rule way, but that doesn't come to terms with what you are saying. I think that's right.

K: Sir, you can see what is happening in the world, in the western world: technology, commercialism, and consumerism is the highest activity that is going on now.

A: Exactly.

K: Which is based on measurement.

A: Yes it is. Oh yes.

K: Which is thought. Now look at it a minute, hold that a minute and you will see something rather odd taking place. The East, especially India, India exploded over the east in a different sense, they said measurement is illusion. To find the immeasurable, the measurement must come to an end. I'm putting it very crudely and quickly.

A: No. But it seems to me that you are putting it precisely well with respect to this concern we have with act.

K: Yes.

A: It's not crude.

K: It's very interesting because I've watched it. In the West, technology, commercialism and consumerism, god, saviour, church, all that's outside. It is a plaything. And you just play with it on Saturday and Sunday but the rest of the week...

A: Yes.

K: And you go to India and you see this. The word 'ma' is to measure, Sanskrit, and they said, reality is immeasurable. Go into it, see the beauty of it.

A: Yes, oh yes, I follow.

K: The measurement can never find... a mind that is measuring, or a mind that is caught in measurement can never find truth. I'm putting it that way. They don't put it that way, but I'm putting it. So they said, to find the real, the immense, measurement must end. But they use thought as a means to add... thought must be controlled, they said.

A: Yes, yes.

K: You follow?

A: Yes, I do.

K: So, in order to find the immeasurable you must control thought. And to control, who is the controller of thought? Another fragment of thought. I don't know if you follow.

A: Oh, I follow you perfectly, yes I do.

K: So, they use measurement to go beyond measurement. And therefore they could never go beyond it. They were caught in an illusion of some other kind, but it is still the product of thought. I don't know if I'm conveying it?

A: Yes, yes. What flashed over my mind as you were speaking, was the incredible irony of their having right in front of them, I'm thinking now of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad this profound statement: 'That is full', meaning anything that I think is over there. 'That's full, this that I've divided off from that, this is full. From fullness to fullness issues forth'. And then the next line, 'If fullness is taken away from the full, fullness indeed still remains.' Now they are reading that, you see, but if they approach it in the manner in which you have so well described, they haven't read it in the sense of attended to what's being said, because it's the total rejection of that statement that would be involved in thought control.

K: Yes, of course, of course. You see that's what I've been trying to get at. You see, thought has divided the world physically: America, India, Russia, China, you follow, divided the world. Thought has fragmented the activities of man, the businessman, the artist, the politician, the beggar, you follow?

A: Yes.

K: Fragmented man. Thought has created a society based on this fragmentation. And thought has created the gods, the saviours, the Jesuses, the Christs, the Krishnas, the Buddhas - and those are all measurable, in a sense. You must become like the Christ, or you must be good. All sanctioned by a culture which is based on measurement.

A: Once you start with forecasts, as we have classically, then we are going to necessarily move to five six, seven, 400, 4000 an indefinite division. And all in the interest, it is claimed, of clarity. All in the interest of clarity.

K: So, unless, unless we understand the movement of thought, we cannot possibly understand disorder. It is

thought that has produced disorder. It sounds contradictory, but it is so - thought is fragmentary, thought is time, and as long as we are functioning within that field there must be disorder. Which is, each fragment is working for itself, in opposition to other fragments. I, a Christian, am in opposition to the Hindu, though I talk about love and goodness and all the rest of it.

A: I love him so much I want to see him saved so I will go out and bring him into the fold.

K: Saved. Come over to my camp!

A: Yes, yes.

K: One of the, probably the basic cause of disorder is the fragmentation of thought. I was told the other day, that in a certain culture, thought means the outside.

A: That's very interesting.

K: When they use the word outside, they use the word thought.

A: And we think it's inside.

K: That's the whole... you follow.

A: How marvellous. How marvellous.

K: So thought is always outside. You can say, I am inwardly thinking. Thought has divided the outer and the inner. So to understand this whole contradiction, measurement, time, the division, the fragmentation, the chaos, and the disorder, one must really go into this question of what is thought, what is thinking. Can the mind, which has been so conditioned in fragments, in fragmentation, can that mind observe this whole movement of disorder, not fragmentarily?

A: No, but the movement itself.

K: Movement itself.

A: Movement itself. Yes. But that's what's so terrifying - to look at that movement. It's interesting that you've asked this question in a way that keeps boring in because measure is, and I'm going to put something now in a very concise, elliptical way, is possibility, which is infinitely divisible. It only comes to an end with an act, with an act. And as long as I remain divided against act, I regard myself as a very deep thinker. I'm sitting back exploring alternatives which are completely imaginary, illusory. And in the business world men are paid extremely high salaries to come up with what is called a new concept.

K: Yes, new concept.

A: And it's called by its right name, of course, but it isn't regarded correctly as to its nature. It isn't understood as to what's being said when that happens.

K: That brings up the point, which is, measurement means comparison. Our society and our civilisation is based on comparison. From childhood, to school to college and university, it is comparative.

A: That's right.

K: And comparison between intelligence and dullness, between the tall and the black, white and purple and all the rest of it - comparison in success. And look at also our religions. The priest, the bishop, you follow, the hierarchical outlook, ultimately Pope or the archbishop. The whole structure is based on that. Compare, comparison, which is measurement, which is essentially thought.

A: Yes. The Protestants complain about the Catholic hierarchy, and yet their scripture, their Bible is what

some Catholics call their paper pope.

K: Of course.

A: Yes, of course. With the very rejection of something, something takes its place which becomes even more divisive.

K: So, is it possible to look without measurement, that is without comparison? Is it possible to live a life - life, living, acting, laughing, the whole life, living, crying, without a shadow of comparison coming into it? Sir, I'm not boasting, I'm just stating a fact. I have never compared myself with anybody.

A: That's a most remarkable thing. Most remarkable thing.

K: I never thought about it even - somebody much cleverer than me, somebody much more brilliant, so intelligent, somebody greater, spiritual - it didn't enter. Therefore, I say to myself, is measurement, comparison, imitation, are they not the major factors of disorder?

A: I've had a very long thought about what you said a few conversations ago, about when you were a boy, and you never accepted the distinctions that were employed in a dividing way...

K: Oh, of course, of course.

A: ...and within the social order. And I had to think about my own growing up, and accept the fact that I did accept this distinction in terms of division, but I didn't do it with nature. But that set up conflict in me, because I couldn't understand how it could be the case that I'm natural as a being in the world but I'm not somehow related to things the way things are, in what we call nature. Then it suddenly occurred to me later that in thinking that way I was already dividing myself off from nature, and I'd never get out of that problem.

K: No.

A: And the thing came to me some years ago with a tremendous flash, when I was in Bangkok in a temple garden. And of an early morning I was taking a walk and my eye was drawn to a globule of dew resting on a lotus leaf and it was perfectly circle. And I said, where's the base. How can it be stable. Why doesn't it roll off. By the time I got to the end of my 'whys' I was worn out, so I took a deep breath and, I said, now shut up and just keep quiet and look. And I saw that each maintained its own nature in this marvellous harmony without any confusion at all. And I was just still.

K: Good.

A: Just still. I think that's something of what you mean about the fact. That was a fact.

K: Just remain with the fact. Look at the fact.

A: That marvellous globule on that leaf is the fact, is what is the act, is what is done.

K: That is correct.

A: Right. Yes.

K: Sir, from this arises, can one educate a student to live a life of non comparison - bigger car, lesser car, you follow?

A: Yes.

K: Dull, you are clever, I am not clever. What happens if I don't compare at all? Will I become dull?

A: On the contrary.

K: I'm only dull, I know I'm dull only through comparison. If I don't compare, I don't know what I am. Then I begin from there.

A: Yes, yes. The world becomes infinitely accessible.

K: Oh, then the whole thing becomes extraordinarily different. There is no competition, there is no anxiety, there is no conflict with each other.

A: This is why you use the word total often, isn't it?

K: Yes.

A: In order to express that there's nothing drawn out from one condition to the other. There is no link there, there is no bridge there. Totally disordered. Totally order.

K: Absolutely.

A: Yes, and you use the word 'absolute' often, which terrifies many people today.

K: Sir, after all mathematics is order. The highest form of mathematical investigation, you must have a mind that is totally orderly.

A: The marvellous thing about maths too, is that whereas it's the study of quantity, you don't make passage from one integer to another by two getting larger. Two stops at two. Two and a half is no more two. Somehow that's the case.

K: Yes.

A: But a child when he is taught mathematics is never introduced to that - that I've ever heard of.

K: You see, sir, our teaching, our everything is so absurd. Is it possible, sir, to observe this movement of disorder, with a mind that is disorderly itself, and say, can this mind observe disorder, this mind which is already in a state of disorder. So disorder isn't out there but in here. Now can the mind observe that disorder without introducing a factor of an observer who is orderly?

A: Who will superimpose.

K: Yes. Therefore observe, perceive disorder without the perceiver. I don't know if I am making sense at all.

A: Yes, yes you are, yes you are making sense.

K: That is, sir, to understand disorder we think an orderly mind is necessary.

A: As over against the disorderly mind.

K: Disorderly mind. But the mind itself has created this disorder, which is thought and all the rest of it. So can the mind not look at disorder out there, but at the maker of disorder which is in here?

A: Which is itself the very mind as disorder.

K: Mind itself is disordered.

A: Yes. But as soon as that is stated conceptually...

K: No, no. Concepts are finished.

A: Yes. But we are using words.

K: We are using words to communicate.

A: Exactly. What I'm concerned with, just for a second, is what are we going to say when we hear the statement that it is the disordered mind that keeps proliferating disorder, but it is that disordered mind that must see, it must see.

K: I'm going to show you, you will see in a minute what takes place. Disorder is not outside of me, disorder is inside of me. That's a fact. Because the mind is disorderly all its activities must be disorderly. And the activities of disorder is proliferating or is moving in the world. Now can this mind observe itself without introducing the factor of an orderly mind, which is the opposite?

A: Yes it is. Of course it is the opposite.

K: So can it observe without the observer who is the opposite?

A: That's the question.

K: Now watch it, sir, if you are really interested in it.

A: I am. I am deeply interested in it.

K: If you will see. The observer is the observed. The observer who says, I am orderly, and I must put order in disorder. That is generally what takes place. But the observer is the factor of disorder. Because the observer is the past, is the factor of division. Where there is division there is not only conflict but disorder. You can see, sir, it is happening actually in the world. I mean all this problem of energy, all this problem of law, peace, and all the rest, can be solved absolutely when there are not separate governments, sovereign armies, and say, look let's solve this problem all together, for god's sake. We are human beings. This earth is meant for us to live on - not Arabs and Israelis, and America and Russia - it is our earth.

A: And it's round.

K: But we will never do this because our minds are so conditioned to live in disorder, to live in conflict.

A: And vocation is given a religious description in terms of the task of cleaning up the disorder with my idea of order.

K: Your idea of order is the fact that has produced disorder.

A: Exactly.

K: So, it brings up a question, sir, which is very interesting: can the mind observe itself without the observer? Because the observer is the observed. The observer who says, 'I will bring order in disorder', that observer itself is a fragment of disorder, therefore it can never bring about order. So can the mind be aware of itself as a movement of disorder, not trying to correct it, not trying to justify it, not trying to shape it, just to observe? I said previously to observe, sitting on the banks of a river and watch the waters go by. You see, then you see much more. But if you are in the middle of it swimming you will see nothing.

A: I've never forgotten that it was when I stopped questioning, when I stood before that droplet of dew on the leaf, that everything changed totally, totally. And what you say is true. Once something like that happens there isn't a regression from it.

K: Sir, it is not once, it is...

A: ...forever. Yes.

K: It's not an incident that took place. My life is not an incident, it is a movement.

A: Exactly.

K: And in that movement I observe this movement of disorder. And therefore the mind itself is disorderly and how can that disorderly, chaotic, contradictory, absurd little mind bring about order? It can't. Therefore a new factor is necessary. And the new factor is to observe, to perceive, to see without the perceiver.

A: To perceive without the perceiver. To perceive without the perceiver.

K: Because the perceiver is the perceived.

A: Yes.

K: If you once grasp that then you see everything without the perceiver. You don't bring in your personality, your ego, your selfishness. You say, 'Disorder is the factor which is in me, not out there'. The politicians are trying to bring about order when they are themselves so corrupt. You follow, sir? How can they bring order?

A: It's impossible. It's impossible. It's one long series of...

K: That's what's happening in the world. The politicians are ruling the world - from Moscow, from New Delhi, from Washington, wherever it is - it's the same pattern being repeated. Living a chaotic, corrupt life, you try to bring order in the world. It's childish. So that's why transformation of the mind is not your mind or my mind, it's the mind, the human mind.

A: Or the mind trying to order itself, even. Not even that.

K: Now how can it, it is like a blind man trying to bring about colour. And he says, well that's grey. It has no meaning. So can the mind observe this disorder in itself without the observer who has created disorder? Sir, this brings up a very simple thing. To look at a tree, at a woman, at a mountain, at a bird, or a sheet of water with the light on it, the beauty of it, to look without the see-er. Because the moment the see-er comes in, the observer comes in, he divides. And division is all right as long as it's descriptive. But when you are living, living, that division is destructive. I don't know if you know what I mean...

A: Yes, what was running through my mind was this continuous propaganda that we hear about the techniques that are available to still the mind.

K: Oh, sir

A: But that requires a stiller to do the stilling.

K: No, I wouldn't...

A: And so that is absolutely, I'm using your words, absolutely and totally out, of any possibility of attaining.

K: But yet you see that's what the gurus are doing.

A: Yes, yes I do understand.

K: The imported gurus and the native gurus are doing this. They are really destroying people. You follow, sir. We'll talk about it when the occasion arises. What we are now concerned is, measurement which is the whole movement of commercialism, consumerism, technology, is now the pattern of the world. Begun in the West, and made more and more perfect in the West and that is spreading all over the world. Go to the smallest little town in India or anywhere, the same pattern being repeated. And the village you go and they are so miserable, unhappy, one-meal-a-day stuff. But it is still within that pattern. And the governments are trying to solve these problems separately, you follow. France by itself, Russia by itself. It's a human problem, therefore it has to be approached not with, with a Washington mind, or a London mind, or a Moscow mind,

with a mind that is human that says, 'Look this is our problem and for god's sake lets get together and solve it'. Which means care, which means accepting responsibility for every human being. So we come back: as we said, order comes only with the understanding of disorder. In that there is no superimposition. In that there is no conflict. In that there is no suppression. When you suppress you react. You know all that business. So it is totally a different kind of movement, order. And that order is real virtue. Because without virtue there is no order. There's gangsterism.

A: Oh yes.

K: Politically or any other way, religiously. But without virtue, virtue being conduct, the flowering in goodness everyday. It is not a theory, sir, it actually takes place, when you live that way.

A: You know, the hexagram in the I Ching called conduct is also translated treading.

K: Treading.

A: Treading. Meaning a movement.

K: Of course.

A: A movement. And that's a vastly different understanding of the usual notion of conduct. But I understand from what you have said that your use of the word conduct as virtue, as order is precisely oriented to act, movement.

K: Yes, sir. You see, a man who acts out of disorder is creating more disorder. The politician, look at his life, sir, ambitious, greedy, seeking power, position.

A: Running for election.

K: Election, all the rest of it. And he is the man who is going to create order in the world. The tragedy of it and we accept it. You follow?

A: Yes, we believe it's inevitable. We do.

K: And therefore we are irresponsible.

A: Because he did it and I didn't. Yes. Yes.

K: Because we accept disorder in our life. I don't accept disorder in my life. I want to live an orderly life, which means I must understand disorder, and where there is order the brain functions much better.

A: There is a miracle here, isn't there?

K: Absolutely, that's the miracle.

A: There is a miracle here. As soon as I grasp the movement of disorder...

K: The mind grasps it.

A: Yes, yes. Behold, there's order. That's truly miraculous. Perhaps it's the one and only miracle.

K: There are other miracles but...

A: I mean in the deepest sense of the word, all of them would have to be related to that or we wouldn't have any of them, is what I meant, the real heart, the real core.

K: That's why, sir, relationship, communication, responsibility, freedom and this freedom from disorder, has a great sense of beauty in it. A life that is beautiful, a life that's really flowering in goodness. Unless we

create, bring about such human beings the world will go to pot.

A: Yes.

K: This is what is happening. And I feel it's my responsibility. And to me I've a passion for it, it's my responsibility to see that when I talk to you, you understand it, you live it, you function, move in that way.

A: I come back to this attention thing, the enormous emphasis that you've made on staying totally attentive to this. I think I begin to understand something of the phenomenon of what happens when a person begins to think that they are taking seriously what you are saying. I didn't say, begins to take it seriously, they think they are beginning to. As a matter of fact, they begin to watch themselves lean in to it. Of course nothing has started yet. But something very strange happens in the mind when this notion that I am leaning in. I start to get terribly afraid. I become terribly fearful of something. Next time could we discuss fear?

Fifth Dialogue with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Wednesday, February 20, 1974

Does Pleasure Bring Happiness?

Eighth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Thursday, February 21, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti, I was wonderfully overjoyed in our last conversation, for myself, just as one who was trying and listening to you to learn something of this inwardness, to follow along the passage that we had made from fear through the points as we moved, until we came to pleasure. And as we left off we were still talking of pleasure and I hope we can begin now to move along.

Krishnamurti: Yes, we were saying, sir, weren't we, pleasure, enjoyment, delight and joy and happiness, and what relationship has pleasure with enjoyment, and with joy and with happiness? Is pleasure happiness? Is pleasure joy? Is pleasure enjoyment? Or is pleasure something entirely different from those two?

A: In English we think we make a distinction between pleasure and joy without necessarily knowing what we mean. But in our use, in our employment of the words we will discriminate sometimes, we think it odd to use the word pleasure rather than joy when we think that joy is appropriate. The relation between the word please and pleasure interests me very much. We will say to a person, 'Please sit down'. And usually that will be thought of as...

K: Have the pleasure to sit down.

A: Yes. It's not a request.

K: Please yourself to sit down.

A: It's an invitation, not a request.

K: Not - quite.

A: Be pleased to sit down.

K: Be pleased to sit down.

A: It's, be pleased to be seated.

K: Yes. In Italian, French, so on.

A: Right. So within pleasure itself, the word pleasure, there's the intimation of joy, intimation of it that is not strictly reduced to the word.

K: I would like to question whether pleasure has any relationship with joy.

A: Not in itself, I take it you mean.

K: Or even beyond the word. Is there a line or a continuity of pleasure to joy? Is there a connecting link? Because what is pleasure? I take pleasure in eating, I take pleasure in walking. I take pleasure in accumulating money. I take pleasure in - I don't know a dozen things, sex, hurting people, sadistic instincts, violence. They are all forms of pleasure. I enjoy - I won't use the word 'enjoy' - I take pleasure in and pursue that pleasure. One wants to hurt people. And that gives great pleasure. One wants to have power. It doesn't matter over the cook or over the wife, or of a thousand people, it is the same. The pleasure in something

which is sustained, nourished, kept going. And this pleasure, when it is thwarted becomes violence, anger, jealousy, fury, wanting to break, all kinds of neurotic activities and so on, so on, so on. So what is pleasure and what is it that keeps it going? What is the pursuit of it, the constant direction of it?

A: I think something in our first or second conversation, I think it was the first, is intimated here when we talked about the built in necessity that one observes in a progress that is never consummated. It's just nothing but a termination and then a new start. But no consummation at all, no totality, no fulfilment - feeling full is what I mean by that.

K: Yes, I understand sir, but what is it that's called pleasure? I see something, something which I enjoy and I want it. Pleasure. Pleasure in possession. Take that simple thing which the child, the grown up man, and the priest, they all have this feeling of pleasure in possession. A toy or a house or possessing knowledge or possessing the idea of God, or the pleasure the dictators have, the totalitarian brutalities. The pleasure. What is that pleasure? To make it very, very simple: what is that pleasure? Look, sir what happens: there is a single tree on the hill, green meadow, deer and there is the single tree standing on the hill. You see that and you say, 'How marvellous'. Not verbally, merely you say, 'How marvellous', to communicate to somebody. But when you are by yourself and see that it is really astonishingly beautiful. The whole movement of the earth, the flowers, the deer, the meadows, the water and the single tree, the shadow. You see that. And it's almost breathtaking. And you turn away and go away. Then thought says, 'How extraordinary that was'.

A: Compared with what now is.

K: How extraordinary.

A: Extraordinary.

K: I must have it again. I must get that same feeling which I had then, for two seconds or five minutes. So thought - see what has taken place - there was immediate response to that beauty, non-verbal, non-emotional, non-sentimental, non-romantic, then thought comes along and says, 'How extraordinary, what a delight that was'. And then the memory of it, the repetition, the demand, the desire for the repetition.

A: When we go to performances this happens with what we call the encore, doesn't it.

K: Of course.

A: And with encores there's a creeping embarrassment. Because with the first reappearance this is a sign of adulation, praise and everybody is happy. But then, of course, there's the problem of how many more encores can be made, maybe the last encore is a signal that we are fed up now. We don't want any more.

K: Quite, quite.

A: Yes, yes, I understand. I think I am following you.

K: So thought gives nourishment, sustains it and gives a direction to pleasure. There was no pleasure at the moment of perception, of that tree, the hill, the shadows, the deer, the water, the meadow. The whole thing was astonishing, there was real non-verbal, non-romantic, and so on, perception. It has nothing to do with me or you, it was there. Then thought comes along and says memory of it, the continuing of that memory tomorrow and the demand for that, and the pursuit of that. And when I come back to it tomorrow it is not the same. I feel a little bit shocked. I say, 'I was inspired, I must find a means of getting again inspired', therefore I take a drink, women, this or that. You follow?

A: Yes, yes. Do you think, in the history of culture, the establishment of festivals would be related to what you say?

K: Of course, of course. It's the whole thing, sir.

A: We live for - well in English we have this saying, to 'live it up'. The rest of the time we are living it down.

K: Down, yes. Mardi Gras, the whole business of it. So there it is. I see that. See what takes place, sir. Pleasure is sustained by thought - sexual pleasure, the image, the thinking over it, all that, and the repetition of it. And the pleasure of it and go on, keep on, keep on - routine. Now, in relationship, what is the place of pleasure, or relationship to the delight of the moment, not even the delight, it is something inexpressible. So is there any relationship between pleasure and enjoyment? Enjoyment becomes pleasure when thought says, 'I have enjoyed it, I must have more of it'.

A: It's actually a falling out of joy.

K: Yes. That's it, you see, sir. So pleasure has no relationship to ecstasy, to delight, to enjoyment, or to joy and happiness. Because pleasure is the movement of thought in direction. It doesn't matter what direction but in a direction. The others have no direction. Pleasure, enjoyment, you enjoy. Joy is something you cannot invite. Happiness you cannot invite. It happens and you do not know if you are happy at that moment. It is only the next moment you say, 'How marvellous that was'. So see what takes place, can the mind, the brain register the beauty of that hill and tree and the water and the meadows and end it? Not say, 'I want it again'.

A: Yes. This would take us back to that... what you've just said now, it would take us back to that word negation that we spoke of before, because there has to be a moment when we are about to fall out, we are about to fall out and what you are saying is the moment 'that about to fall out' appears something must be done.

K: You will see it in a minute, sir, you will see what an extraordinary thing takes place. I see pleasure, enjoyment, joy and happiness, see pleasure as not related to any of that, the other two, joy and enjoyment. So thought gives direction and sustains pleasure. Right? Now I ask myself... the mind asks can there be non-interference of thought, non-interference of thought in pleasure? I enjoy. Why should thought come into it at all?

A: There's no reason at all.

K: But it does.

A: It does, it does.

K: Therefore the question arises how is the mind, the brain to stop thought entering into that enjoyment? You follow?

A: Yes.

K: Not to interfere. Therefore they said, the ancients, and the religious, control thought. You follow? Don't let it creep in. Therefore control it.

A: The minute it raises its ugly head, whack it off. It's like a hydra.

K: It keeps on growing. Now, is it possible to enjoy, to take a delight in that lovely scene, and no thought creep in? Is this possible? I'll show you, it is possible, completely possible if you are attentive at that moment, completely attentive. You follow sir?

A: Which has nothing to do with screwing oneself up with muscular effort to focus in there.

K: Right. Just be wholly there. When you see the sunset see it completely. When you see a beautiful line of a car, see it. And don't let this thought begin. That means at that moment be supremely attentive, completely, with your mind, with your body, with your nerves, with your eyes, ears, everything attentive. Then thought

doesn't come into it at all. So pleasure is related to thought and thought in itself brings about fragmentation, pleasure and not pleasure. Therefore I haven't pleasure, I must pursue pleasure.

A: It makes a judgement.

K: Judgement.

A: A judgement.

K: Judgement. And the feeling of frustration, anger, violence - you follow, all that come into... when there is the denial of pleasure, which is what the religious people have done. They are very violent people. They have said no pleasure.

A: The irony of this is overwhelming. In classical thought you have that marvellous monument, the works of St. Thomas Aquinas who never tired of saying in his examination of thought, and the recognition of the judgement that one must distinguish in order to unite. His motive was very different from what seems to have been read. Because we manage to distinguish, but we never see the thing whole and get to the uniting, so the uniting just vanishes... it's terrible.

K: That's the whole point, sir. So unless I... unless the mind understands the nature of thinking, really very, very, very deeply, mere control means nothing. Personally I have never controlled a thing. This may sound rather absurd. But it is a fact.

A: Marvellous.

K: Never. But I've watched it. The watching is its own discipline and its own action. Discipline in the sense, not conformity, not suppression, not adjusting yourself to a pattern but the sense of correctness, the sense of excellence. When you see something why should you control? Why should you control when you see a poisonous bottle on the shelf? You don't control. You say, that's quite right, you don't drink. You don't touch it. It's only when I don't read the sign properly, when I see it and when I think it is a sweet then I take it. But if I read the label, if I know what it is I won't touch it. There's no control.

A: Of course not. It's self-evident. I'm thinking of that wonderful story in the Gospel about Peter who in the storm gets out to walk on the water because he sees his lord coming on the water and he's invited to walk on the water. And he actually makes it a few steps and then it says he loses faith. But it seems to me that one could see that in terms of what you've been saying, at the point where thought took over he started going down. That was the time when he started going down. But he was actually walking. The reason that I am referring to that is because I sense in what you are saying that there is something that supports, there is a support that's not a support that's fragmented from something else but there is an abiding something which must be sustaining the person.

K: I wouldn't put it that way, sir. That is, that leaves a door open, that opens a door to the idea in you there is God.

A: Yes, yes I see the trap.

K: In you there is the higher self, in you there is the Atman, the permanent.

A: Maybe we shouldn't say anything about that.

K: That's it. No, but we can say this though: to see - look what we have done this morning - to see appetite, desire, to see the implication, the structure of pleasure, and there is no relation to enjoyment, and to joy, to see all that, to see it, not verbally but actually, through observation, through attention, through care, through very careful seeing - that brings an extraordinary quality of intelligence. After all intelligence is sensitivity. To be utterly sensitive in seeing it - if you call that intelligence, the higher self, or whatever, it

has no meaning. You follow?

A: It's as though you are saying at that instant it's released.

K: Yes. That intelligence comes in observation.

A: Yes.

K: And that intelligence is operating all the time if you allow it - not if you allow it. If you are seeing. I mean, I see, I have seen all my life, people who have controlled, people who have denied, people who have negated, and who have sacrificed, who have controlled, suppressed, furiously, disciplined themselves, tortured themselves. And I say, for what? For God? For truth? A mind that has been tortured, crooked, brutalised, can such a mind see truth? Certainly not. You need a completely healthy mind, a mind that is whole, a mind that is holy in itself. Otherwise go and see something holy, unless the mind is sacred, you cannot see what is sacred. So, I say, sorry, I won't touch any of that. It has no meaning. So, I don't know how this happened that I never for a second control myself. I don't know what it means.

A: And yet, amazingly you know what it is in others.

K: Oh, obviously, you can see it.

A: So this is something that you are able to see without having...

K: ...gone through it.

A: Without having gone through it. Now this to me is profoundly mysterious. I don't mean in the sense of mystification.

K: No, no.

A: But I mean it's... I mean miraculous.

K: No, not necessarily, sir. I'll show you something, sir. Must I get drunk in order to find out what it is to be sober?

A: Oh no, no, no.

K: Because I see a man who is drunk, I say, for god's sake, see the whole movement of drunkenness, what lies behind it, what he goes through, see it, finished.

A: But it seems to me that in my listening to you that you are doing more than just observing that someone over there has fallen on his face therefore...

K: No, no.

A: Right, there's something that is very deep here...

K: Of course.

A: ...at least to me, that you've said. Control, in the very, very deep sense is an activity, not a product, and something that you haven't experienced that we would call normally intangible is nevertheless acutely present to you.

K: Yes, yes.

A: And I take it that what you've said is that intelligence reveals that. Intelligence, if intelligence is allowed to reveal it.

K: I think, sir, not allowed. That's a danger, to allow intelligence to operate. Which means you have intelligence then you allow it.

A: Yes, I see the trap of that construction. Yes, yes, I see what you mean. Yes, because now we've got an observer who's got a new gimmick. Yes, I see what you mean. Please go on, please.

K: So, you see that's why discipline has a different meaning. When you understand pleasure, when you understand its relationship to enjoyment and to the joy and happiness and the beauty of happiness, beauty of joy and so on, then you understand the utter necessity of a different kind of discipline that comes naturally. After all, sir, look at the word discipline in itself means to learn. To learn, not to conform, not to say, I must discipline myself to be like that, or not to be like that. The word discipline, as we both see, is to learn. To learn means I must be capable of hearing, of seeing, which means the capacity which is not cultivable. You can cultivate a capacity, but that is not the same as the act of listening. I don't know if I'm...

A: Oh, yes you are. Yes you are. Yes I follow; very clear, very clear.

K: The capacity to learn demands a certain discipline. I must concentrate, I must give my time to it. I must set aside my efforts in a certain direction and all that. That is, developing a certain capacity needs time.

A: Yes.

K: But perception has nothing to do with time. You see it and act, as you do when you see a danger. You act instantly. You act instantly because you are so conditioned to danger.

A: Exactly.

K: That conditioning is not intelligence. You are just conditioned. You see a snake and you recall it and you run away. You see a dangerous animal and you run. That's all self protective conditioned responses. That's very simple. But perception and action is not conditioned.

A: You know, we have in the history of the English language turned that word fear upside down in terms of its derivation because, if I remember correctly, 'fear' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word that means 'danger'. That means danger.

K: Danger, of course.

A: And now we've psychologised that word and now a fear means rather my emotional response to the danger...

K: Of course, of course.

A: ...and not what I ought to be doing.

K: Yes, not aware of the danger of fear, you follow?

A: Yes.

K: That means sir look: ordinary human beings are conditioned now as they are to, by the culture, by the civilisation they are living in. They accept nationalism, say for instance, I am taking that for example, they accept nationalism, the flag, the nationalism and all the rest of it; nationalism is one of the causes of war.

A: Oh yes, yes, indubitably.

K: As patriotism and all the rest of it. Now we don't see the danger of nationalism because we are conditioned to nationalism as being secure, security.

A: But we do see our fear of the enemy.

K: Of course.

A: Yes, right. And contemplating that fear of the enemy dulls our capacity to deal with the danger.

K: Danger. So, fear, pleasure, and discipline, you follow sir. Discipline means to learn; I am learning about pleasure. The mind is learning about pleasure. Learning brings its own order.

A: Its own.

K: It's own order.

A: Yes. That's what I've been calling 'miracle'. It just asks you to jolly well leave it alone.

K: It brings its own order, and that order says, don't be silly, control is out, finished. Now wait a minute. I talked to a monk once. He came to see me. He had a great many followers. And he was very well known. He is still very well known. And he said, I have taught my disciples, and he was very proud of having thousands of disciples, you follow? And it seemed rather absurd for a guru, to be proud.

A: He was a success.

K: Success. And success means Cadillacs or Rolls Royces, European, American followers, you follow, all that circus that goes on.

A: His gimmick works.

K: And he was saying, 'I have arrived because I have learned to control my senses, my body, my thoughts, my desires. I've held them as the Gita says: hold something, you are reigning, you are riding horse', you know, holding. He went on about it for some length, I said, 'Sir, what at the end of it? You have controlled. Where are you at the end of it?' He said, 'What are you asking, I have arrived'. Arrived at what? 'I have achieved enlightenment'. Just listen to it. Follow, follow the sequence of a human being who has a direction, which he calls truth. And to achieve that there are the traditional steps, the traditional path, the traditional approach. And he has done it. And therefore he says, 'I have got it. I have got it in my hand. I know what it is'. I said, 'All right sir'. He began to be very excited about it because he wanted to convince me about being a big man and all that. So I sat very quietly and listened to him and he quietened down. And then I said to him - we were sitting by the sea - and I said to him, 'You see that sea, sir'. He said, 'Of course'. Can you hold that water in your hand? When you hold that water in you hand it's no longer the sea.

A: Right.

K: He couldn't make out. I said, 'All right. And the wind was blowing from the north, slight breeze, cool. And he said, there is a breeze. Can you hold all that? No. Can you hold the earth? No. So what are you holding? Words? You know sir, he was so angry he said. 'I won't listen to you any more. You are an evil man'. And walked out.

A: I was thinking of the absurd irony of that. All the time he thought he was holding on to himself and he just let go as he got up and walked away.

K: So you see sir, that's what I mean. So learning about pleasure about fear, really frees you from the tortures of fear and the pursuit of pleasure. So there is a sense of real enjoyment in life. Living then becomes a great joy, you follow sir? It isn't just a monotonous routine, going to the office, sex and money.

A: I've always thought it's a great misfortune that in that splendid rhetoric of our Declaration of Independence, we have that phrase, 'the pursuit of pleasure'.

K: Pursuit of pleasure.

A: Because the child, the bright child is reared on that.

K: Oh, rather, sir.

A: And when you are very young you are not about to turn around and say, 'Everybody's daft'.

K: I know, I know. So from this you see, discipline in the orthodox sense has no place in a mind that's really wanting to learn about truth - not philosophise about truth, not theorise about truth, as you say, tie ribbons round it, but learn about it. Learn about pleasure. It is really out of that learning comes an extraordinary sense of order which we were talking of the other day. The order which comes with the observation in oneself of pleasure. The order. And there is pleasure - there is enjoyment. A marvellous sense of ending each enjoyment as you live each moment. You don't carry over the past enjoyment. Then that becomes pleasure. Then it has no meaning. Repetition of pleasure is monotony, is boredom. And they are bored in this country, and other countries. They are fed up with pleasure. But they want other pleasures in other directions. And that is why there is the proliferation of gurus in this country. Because they all want, you know, the circus kept going. So discipline is order. And discipline means to learn about pleasure, enjoyment, joy and the beauty of joy. When you learn - you follow sir? - it is always new.

A: I've just thought - well thought is not the right word - something flashed in the communication of what you have been pointing to, if you don't mind I'd rather say that you've been pointing to than to use the phrase that you've been saying, I hope I've understood you correctly here because in terms of the communication problem it seems that there's been a profound confusion between perception and practice.

K: Yes. Oh yes.

A: I have grasped that. It's as though we had the idea that perception is perfected at the end of practice.

K: Practise is routine, is death.

A: We do have that idea.

K: I know.

A: Yes.

K: You see, sir, they always say freedom is at the end. Not at the beginning. On the contrary, sir, the beginning is the first step that counts, not the last step. So if we understand this whole question of fear and pleasure, joy, the understanding can only come in freedom to observe. And in the observation learning and the acting. They all have the same meaning, at the same moment, not learn then act. It is the doing, the seeing all taking place at the same time. That is whole.

A: All these marvellous participles being in the infinite mood in themselves. In themselves. Yes, a little while back it occurred to me that if we paid attention to our language as well as to the flowers and the mountains and the clouds...

K: Oh yes.

A: ...the language not only in terms of individual words, but words in context so that we would refer then to what we call usage, would through perception, intelligence disclose themselves completely.

K: Quite.

A: We say don't we, that one is pleased, one is joyed, but if we ask somebody, if we ask somebody, 'What have you been doing?' and he said to us, 'I've been pleasing myself', we'd think that was a little odd. We wouldn't think it strange at all if he said, 'Well, I have been enjoying myself'. We don't mind that.

K: That's right.

A: But we don't pay attention to what we say, to even...

K: That's right, sir. I came back after lunch, after a meal and somebody said, 'Have you enjoyed your meal?' And there was a man there who said, 'We are not pigs to enjoy'.

A: Oh good lord.

K: Seriously.

A: Yes. Exactly. I suppose he must feel very righteous. What he denied himself during the meal.

K: It is a question of attention - isn't it really - a question of attention, whether you are eating, or whether you are observing pleasure. Attention, that's a thing we have to go into very, very deeply. I don't know if there is time now, what it means to attend. Whether we attend to anything at all, or is it only a superficial listening, hearing, seeing which we call attending; or the expression of knowledge in doing. Attention, I feel, has nothing to do with knowledge, or with action. In the very attending is action. I mean, one has to go into this question again of what is action. Perhaps we can do it another day.

A: Yes, I see a relation between what you've just said about action and what a few conversations ago we came to with the word movement.

K: Yes.

A: On-going-ness. And when you were talking about standing and looking at the tree on the mountain, I remembered when I was in Rishikesh I was staying at one of the ashrams there, actually the Vedanta Forest Academy, and when I got to my quarters a monkey came and sat on the window sill with her little baby, and she looked full into my face, and I looked full into hers, but I think she looked fuller into mine; I had that strange feeling that I was actually a human being being...

K: Investigated.

A: ...investigated, or as the students say today, being psyched out by this monkey. And it was a profound shock to me.

K: Talking of monkeys, sir, I was in Benares at the place I go to usually, I was doing yoga, exercises, half naked, and a big monkey, with black face and long tail, came and sat on the veranda. I closed my eyes. I looked and there was this big monkey. She looked at me and I looked at her. A big monkey, sir. They are powerful things. And it stretched out its hand, so I walked up and held her hand, like that, held it.

A: Held it.

K: And it was rough but very, very supple, extraordinarily supple. But rough. And we looked at each other. And it said it wanted to come into the room. I said, look, I am doing exercises, I have little time, would you come another day. I kind of talked to it. Come another day. So it looked at me and I withdrew, went back. She stayed there for two or three minutes and gradually went away.

A: Marvellous, just marvellous. Complete act of attention between you.

K: There was no sense of fear. It wasn't afraid. I wasn't afraid. A sense of, you know...

A: This reminds me of a story I read about Ramana Maharishi, how when he was a young man he went and lived in a tiger's cave. And it was occupied by the tiger. And the tiger would come back after the hunt in the early hours of the morning and sleep with him. To read that within the environs of our culture well it starts, well you feel undone when you read that if you think for a moment you could allow yourself to believe it.

But in the context of what we have been saying about the monkeys, and this marvellous story you told me, I wish I could have shaken the hand of that little mother with her baby. I wasn't ready to.

K: No, it was really - I don't know, there must have been a communication, there must have been a sense of friendship, you know, without any antagonism, without any fear of it. It looked at me, you know. And I think attention is something not to be practised, not to be cultivated, go to a school to learn how to be attentive. That's what they do in, in this country and in other places, say, I don't know what attention is, I'm going to learn from somebody who will tell me how to get it. Then it's not attention.

A: Speed reading, it's called.

K: Speed reading, yes.

A: A thousand words a minute.

K: Sir, that's why I see there is a great sense of care and affection in being attentive, which means diligently watching. That word 'diligent' comes from 'legere', you know, of course, to read. To read exactly what it is, what is there. Not interpret, not translate it, not contrive to do something with it, but to read what is there. There is an infinite lot to see. There is tremendous lot to see in pleasure, as we said. And to read it. And to read it, you must be watchful, attentive, diligent - care. We are negligent. What's wrong with pleasure?

A: There's a colloquial remark in our tongue when somebody wishes to secure attention, they will say, 'Do you read me?' That, of course, has been taken over in technology into a different aspect, but quite apart from what someone would be saying with ear phones on in a plane, just common ordinary practice, sometimes a person will say that.

K: So that what we have done is really read this whole map.

A: Yes.

K: From the beginning of responsibility, relationship, fear, pleasure. All that. Just to observe this extraordinary map of our life.

A: And the beauty of it is, we've been moving within the concern for the question of the transformation of man which is not dependent on knowledge or time without getting worried about whether we are getting off the track. It is happening naturally. That I take it is not a surprise to you, of course, but I'm sure it's shocking in terms of...

K: And that's why, also, sir, it is right to live with the company of the wise. Be with a man who is really wise. Not these phoney people - wise, but real wisdom. Not bought in books, not attending classes where you are taught wisdom. Wisdom is something that comes with self-knowing.

A: It reminds me of a hymn in the Veda that talks about the goddess of speech who never appears except among friends.

K: Yes. A: Marvellous. Actually that means that unless there is the care, the affection that you mentioned, that is continuous, concurrent with attention, there can be nothing but babble.

K: Of course.

A: There can be, verbal babble.

K: Which the modern world is encouraging, you see.

A: Yes.

K: Again which means the superficial pleasures, not enjoyment. You follow? Superficial pleasures have become the curse. And to go behind that is one of the most difficult things for people to do.

A: Because it goes faster and faster.

K: That's just it.

A: It goes faster and faster.

K: That's what is destroying the earth, the air. Everything they are destroying. There is a place I go to every year in India, where there is a school: the hills the oldest hills in the world.

A: What a beautiful thing.

K: Nothing has been changed, no bulldozers, no houses, it's an old place, with the old hills and in amongst there is a school with which I am connected and so on. And you feel the enormity of time, the feeling of absolute non-movement. Which is, civilisation, which is all this circus that is going on. And when you come there you feel this, utter quietness, in which time has not touched it. And when you leave it and come to civilisation you feel rather lost, a sense of what is all this about? Why is there so much noise about nothing? That's why it is so odd, and rather inviting, a great delight to see everything as is, including myself. To see what I am, not through the eyes of a professor, a psychologist, a guru, a book, just to see what I am and to read what I am. Because all history is in me. You follow?

A: Of course. There is something immensely beautiful about what you have said. Do you think in the next conversation we have we could talk about the relation of beauty to what you have said. Thank you so much.

Eighth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Thursday, February 21, 1974

Understanding, Not Controlling, Desire

Seventh Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Thursday, February 21, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti, last time we were speaking you made the remark that fear and pleasure are opposite sides of the same coin. And, as I remember, when we concluded our last conversation we were still talking about fear. And I was thinking perhaps we could move from fear into the discussion of pleasure. But perhaps there is something more about fear that we need still to look into, to explore.

Krishnamurti: Sir, I think for most of us, fear has created such misery, so many activities are born of fear, ideologies and gods, that we never seem to be free completely from fear. That's what we were saying.

A: That's what we were saying.

K: And so freedom from, and freedom, are two different things. Aren't they?

A: Yes.

K: Freedom from fear, and the feeling of being completely free.

A: Would you say that the notion even of freedom for is also a suggestion of conflict?

K: Yes.

A: Yes, yes, do go ahead.

K: Yes. Freedom for, and freedom from, has this contradiction in itself and therefore conflict and therefore a battle, violence, struggle. When one understands that rather deeply then one can see the meaning of what it means to be free. Not from or for, but intrinsically, deeply, by itself. Probably it's a non-verbal, non-ideational happening. A feeling that all the burden has fallen away from you. Not that you are struggling to throw them away. The burdens don't exist. Conflicts don't exist. As we were saying the other day, relationship then is in total freedom.

A: Your word intrinsic interested me. Sometimes I think in our tongue we will use the adverbial preposition 'in'. Would it be possible to say freedom in, or would you not even want to have 'in'.

K: Not 'in', no.

A: You don't want 'in'.

K: For, in, from.

A: They are all out. I see, yes, yes, go on. Please do.

K: So these two principles, pleasure and fear seem to be deeply rooted in us - these two principles of pleasure and fear. I don't think we can understand pleasure without understanding fear.

A: I see. I see.

K: You can't separate them, really. But for investigating one has to separate.

A: Yes, were it not for fear do you think we should ever have thought of pleasure?

K: We would never have thought of pleasure.

A: We would never have got the notion.

K: No.

A: I understand. I understand.

K: It's like punishment and reward. If there was no punishment at all nobody would talk about reward.

A: Yes, yes I see.

K: And when we are talking about pleasure I think we think we ought to be clear that we are not condemning pleasure. We are not trying to become puritanical or permissive. We are trying to investigate or examine, explore the whole structure and nature of pleasure, as we did fear.

A: As we did fear.

K: And to do that properly and deeply the attitude of condemnation or acceptance of pleasure must be set aside. You see it, naturally. I mean if I want to investigate something I must be free from my inclinations, prejudices.

A: The 'looking forward to' is, I see, beginning to emerge from what you are saying.

K: Yes.

A: We say we look forward to pleasure, we even ask a person - don't we? - what is your pleasure. We get nervous in thinking perhaps we won't meet it. Now I take it that what your saying suggests the anticipation of gratification here. Would that be right?

K: That's right. Gratification, satisfaction and sense of fulfilment. We will go into all that when we talk about pleasure. But we must be clear from the beginning, I think, that we are not condemning it. The priests throughout the world have condemned it.

A: Yes, the notion of freedom is associated with many religious approaches to this. One is free from desire.

K: Yes. So, one has to bear in mind that we are not justifying it, or sustaining it or condemning it but observing it. To really go into the question of pleasure I think one has to look into desire, first. The more commercial and the usage of things, the more desire grows. You can see it's commercialism, and consumerism. Through propaganda desire is, you know, sustained, is pushed forward, is - what is the word I am looking for - is nourished, expanded.

A: Nurtured.

K: Nurtured. Inflamed, that's the word, inflamed.

A: Inflamed, yes.

K: And you see this happening right through the world, now. In India, for example - not that I know India much better than I do America because I've not lived there very long, I go there every year - this desire and this instant fulfilment is beginning to take place. Before in the Brahmanical orthodox sense, there was a certain restraint, a certain traditional discipline which says, 'Don't be concerned with the world and things. They are not important'. What is important is the discovery of truth, of Brahman, reality and so on. But now, all that's gone, now desire is being inflamed, 'Buy more'. 'Don't be satisfied with two trousers but have a dozen trousers'. This feeling of excitement in possession is stimulated through commercialism, consumerism, and propaganda.

A: There's a lot of terror, isn't there, associated with commercialism on the part of those who are purveyors in this, because the pleasure fades off and this requires a stronger stimulus next time.

K: That's what the couturiers are doing, every year there is a new fashion, or every six months, or every month, I don't know what it is. Look, there is this stimulation of desire. It is really quite frightening in a sense, how people are using, are stimulating desire to acquire money, possession, the whole circle of a life that is utterly sophisticated, a life in which there is instant fulfilment of one's desire, and the feeling if you don't fulfil, if you don't act, there is frustration. So all that's involved in it.

A: Would you say, then that the approach to this on the part of what you have described, is on the basis of frustration. Frustration itself is regarded as the proper incentive.

K: Yes.

A: Yes, I see. Yes. And since frustration itself is a nullity we are trying to suggest that nullity is in itself interested in being filled. Whereas it couldn't be by its nature.

K: Like children - don't frustrate them. Let them do what they like.

A: Yes. Yes, that reminds me of something years ago in graduate school. I was brought up as a child in England, and in a rather strict way compared with the permissiveness of today. And one of my graduate colleagues told me that he had been brought up by his parents in a totally permissive way. This was at Columbia University. And he looked at me, and he said, 'I think you were better off, because at least you had some intelligible reference against which to find out who you are, even if what you found out wasn't right, there was something to find out. Whereas I had to do it entirely on my own and I still haven't done it.' And he talked about himself as being constantly in the world trying to hide the fact that he was a nervous wreck. We had a long conversation over dinner.

K: Sir, I think that before we enter into the complicated field of pleasure, we ought to go into this question of desire.

A: Yes, yes. I'd like to do that.

K: Desire seems to be a very active and demanding instinct, demanding activity that is going on in us all the time. Sir, what is desire?

A: I wonder if I could ask you to relate it to appetite as over against what one would call hunger that is natural. Sometimes I have found a confusion that seems to be a confusion to me, and that's why I am asking you. Someone will get the idea in class, talking about the question of appetite and desire, that if we look to nature, the lion desires to kill the antelope to satisfy his appetite. Whereas it has seemed to me the correct reply to that is, no that's not the case. The lion wants to incorporate the antelope into his own substance. He's not chasing his appetite.

K: I think they are both related, appetite and desire.

A: Yes.

K: Appetite, physical appetite and there is psychological appetite.

A: Yes, yes.

K: Which is much more complex. Sexual appetite, and the intellectual appetite, a sense of curiosity.

A: Even more furious.

K: More furious, that's right. So I think both desire and appetite are stimulated by commercialism, by

consumerism which is the present civilisation actively operating in the world at the present time - both in Russia, everywhere, this consumerism has to be fulfilled.

A: Right. We talk about planned obsolescence.

K: Planned obsolescence. Quite.

A: You have that in mind, yes I see.

K: So, what is appetite and what is desire? I have an appetite because I am hungry. It's a natural appetite. I see a car and I have read a great deal about it and I would like to possess it, drive it, feel the power of it, going fast, the excitement of all that. That is another form of appetite.

A: Yes.

K: Appetite, intellectual appetite of discussing with a clever intelligent, observing man or woman, to discuss, to stimulate each other in discussion.

A: Yes.

K: And comparing each other's knowledge, a kind of subtle fight.

A: Making points.

K: That's right. And that is very stimulating.

A: Oh yes, yes it is.

K: And there is the appetite, sexual appetite, the sexual appetite of constantly thinking about it, chewing the cud. All that, both psychological, and physical appetites, normal, abnormal. The feeling of fulfilment and frustration. All that's involved in appetite. And I'm not sure whether religions, organised religions and beliefs, whether they will not stimulate the peculiar appetite for rituals.

A: I have the notion they do. It seems to me that despite pious protestations that will be made against that, there is a theatrical display that occurs in this.

K: Go to a Roman Catholic Mass, and you see the beauty of it, the beauty of colour, the beauty of the setting, the whole structure is marvellously theatrical and beautiful.

A: And for the moment it appears that we have heaven on earth.

K: Tremendously stimulating.

A: But then we have to go out again.

K: Of course. And it's all stimulated through tradition, through usage of words, chants, certain association of words, symbols, images, flowers, incense, all that is very, very stimulating.

A: Yes.

K: And if one is used to that one misses it.

A: Oh yes. I was thinking as you were saying about, at least to my ear how extraordinarily beautiful a language is Sanskrit, and the chanting of the Gita, and the swaying back and forth and then one sits down to study what the words say, and one says to himself, now look, what on earth is going on when we are doing this as over against what the word itself could disclose. But the seduction that is available, of course its self-seduction, one can't blame the language for being beautiful, it's a self... And all this is encouraged. And

the notion I take it that you are suggesting that we look at here, is that there's a tremendously invested interest in keeping this up.

K: Of course. Commercially it is. And if it is not sustained by the priests then the whole thing will collapse. So is this a battle to hold the human being in his appetites - which is really very frightening when you look at it. Frightening in the sense, rather disgusting in one way, exploiting people and intrinsically destructive to the human mind.

A: Yes. Yes. I've had this problem in teaching, in my classes, in terms of my own discussion in class. Sometimes, it has seemed that maybe the first stanza of a poem that I will have known by heart would be appropriate. And so I'll begin to recite it and when I get to the end of it the expectation has arisen, the ears are there, the bodies are leaning forward and I have to stop, you see, and I have to say, well you see we can't go on, because you are not listening to what I am saying, you are listening to how it is being said. And if I read it terribly you would no more listen to what it is. Your disgust would dominate just as the pleasure is dominating now. And the students have got after me for not reciting more poetry. You see that you would be upset with that - is a perfect sign that you haven't started to do your work in class yet. And then we are up against the problem that they think I am being ascetical, and denying the goodies. That's part of what you mean.

K: Yes, of course.

A: Good, good. I'm glad you cleared that for me. Yes.

K: And there is this desire, appetite, we have a little bit gone into it, what is desire? Because I see something and immediately I must have it, a gown, a coat, a tie, the feeling of possession, the urge to acquire, the urge to experience, the urge of an act that will give me tremendous satisfaction. The satisfaction might be the acquisition, acquiring a tie, or a coat, or sleep with a woman, or - acquiring. Now behind that, isn't there, sir, this desire. I might desire a house and another might desire a car, another might desire to have intellectual knowledge. Another might desire god, or enlightenment. They are all the same. The objects vary, but the desire is the same. One I call the noble; the other I call the ignoble, worldly, stupid. But the desire behind it. So what is desire? How does it come about that this very strong desire is born, is cultured? You follow? What is desire? How does it take place in each one of us?

A: If I've understood you, you've made a distinction between on the one hand appetite associated with natural hunger, that sort of desire, and now we are talking about desire which sometimes gets the name artificial. I don't know whether you would want to call it that, but sometimes...

K: Desire. I might desire, but the objects vary, sir, don't they?

A: Yes, the objects vary.

K: The objects of desire vary according to each individual, each tendency and idiosyncrasy or conditioning and so on. Desire for that and that, and that. But I want to find out, what is desire? How does it come about? I think it's fairly clear, that. You see sir...

A: You mean a sense of absence?

K: No, no. I am asking what is desire? How does it come?

A: One would have to ask himself.

K: Yes, I'm asking, I'm asking you, how does it come about that there is this strong desire for, or against - desire itself. I think it's clear: perception, visual perception, then there is sensation, then there is contact, and desire comes out of it. That's the process isn't it?

A: Oh, yes, I'm quite clear now what you are saying. I've been listening very hard.

K: Perception, contact, sensation, desire.

A: And then if the desire is frustrated, anger.

K: All the rest of it, violence.

A: The whole thing goes down the line.

K: All the rest of it follows.

A: Follows, yes.

K: So desire. So the religious people, monks, throughout the world said, be without desire. Control desire. Suppress desire. Or if you cannot, transfer it to something that's worthwhile - God, or enlightenment or truth or this or that.

A: But then that's just another form of desire, not to desire.

K: Of course.

A: So we never get out of that.

K: Yes, but you see they said, 'Control'.

A: Power is brought into play.

K: Control desire. Because you need energy to serve God and if you are caught in desire you are caught in a tribulation, in trouble, which will dissipate your energy. Therefore hold it, control it, suppress it. You have seen this sir, I have seen it so often in Rome, the priests are walking along with the Bible and they daren't look at anything else, they keep on reading it because they are attracted, it doesn't matter, to a woman, or a nice house or a nice cloak, so keep looking at it, never expose yourself to tribulation, to temptation. So hold it because you need your energy to serve God. So desire comes about through perceptions, visual perception, contact, sensation, desire. That's the process of it.

A: Yes. And then there's the whole backlog of memory of that in the past to reinforce it.

K: Of course, yes.

A: Yes. I was taken with what you just said. Here's this book, that's already outside me, it's really no more than what they put on horses when they are in a race.

K: Blinkers!

A: Blinkers.

K: The Bible becomes blinkers!

A: Yes, the blinking Bible. Yes, I follow that. But the thing that caught me was, never, never quietly looking at it.

K: That's it, sir.

A: The desire itself.

K: I walked once behind a group of monks, in India. And they were very serious monks. The elderly monk, with his disciples around him, they were walking up a hill and I followed them. They never once looked at

the beauty of the sky, the blue, the extraordinary blue of the sky and the mountains, and the blue light of the grass and the trees and the birds and the water - never once looked around. They were concerned and they had bent their head down and they were repeating something, which I happen to know in Sanskrit, and going along totally unaware of nature, totally unaware of the passers-by. Because their whole life has been spent in controlling desire and concentrating on what they thought is the way to reality. So desire there acted as a repressive limiting process.

A: Of course, of course.

K: Because they are frightened. If I look there might be a woman, I might be tempted - and cut it. So we see what desire is and we see what appetite is; they are similar.

A: Yes. Would you say appetite was a specific focus of desire?

K: Yes, put it that way if you want. Yes.

A: All right

K: But they both go together.

A: Oh yes, yes

K: They are two different words for the same thing. Now the problem arises: need there be a control of desire at all? You follow, sir?

A: Yes, I'm asking myself, because in our conversations I've learned that every time you ask a question, if I take that question and construe it in terms of a syllogistical relation to things that have been stated as premises before, I am certainly not going to come to the answer, that is not the right answer as over against the wrong answer, I'm not going to come to the one answer that is needful. So that every time you've asked me this morning, I have asked myself inside. Yes, please go ahead.

K: Sir, you see, discipline is a form of suppression and control of desire - religious, sectarian, non-sectarian, it's all based on that, control. Control your appetite. Control your desires. Control your thought. And this control gradually squeezes out the flow of free energy.

A: Oh, yes. And yet, amazingly the Upanishads in particular have been interpreted in terms of tapas, as encouraging this control.

K: I know, I know. In India it is something fantastic, the monks who have come to see me, they are called sannyasis, they have come to see me. They are incredible. I mean, if I can tell you a monk who came to see me some years ago, quite a young man, he left his house and home at the age of 15 to find God. And he had renounced everything. Put on the robe. And as he began to grow older at 18, 19, 20 sexual appetite was something burning. He explained to me how it became intense. He had taken a vow of celibacy, as sannyasis do, monks do. And he said, day after day in my dreams, in my walk, in my going to a house and begging, this thing was becoming so like a fire. You know what he did to control it?

A: No, no what did he do?

K: He had it operated.

A: Oh for heaven's sake. Is that a fact?

K: Sir, his urge for God was so - you follow, sir? The idea, the idea, not the reality.

A: Not the reality.

K: So he came to see me, he had heard several talks which I had given in that place. He came to see me in tears. He said, what have I done? You follow, sir?

A: Oh, I'm sure. Yes.

K: What have I done to myself? I cannot repair it. I cannot grow a new organ. It is finished. That is the extreme. But all control is in that direction. I don't know if I am...

A: Yes, his is terribly dramatic. The one who is sometimes called the first Christian theologian, Origen, castrated himself out of, as I understand it, a misunderstanding of the words of Jesus, 'If your hand offends you cut it off'.

K: Sir, authority to me is criminal in this direction. It doesn't matter who says it.

A: And like the monk that you just described, Origen came later to repent of this in terms of seeing that it had nothing to do anything. A terrible thing. Was this monk, if I may ask, also saying to you in his tears, that he was absolutely no better off in any way shape or form?

K: No, on the contrary, sir, he said, 'I've committed a sin. I've committed an evil act.'

A: Yes, yes, of course.

K: He realised what he had done. That through that way there is nothing.

A: Nothing.

K: I've met so many, not such extreme forms of control and denial, but others. They have tortured themselves for an idea. You follow, sir? For a symbol, for a concept. And we have sat with them and discussed with them, and they begin to see what they have done to themselves. I met a man who is high up in bureaucracy and one morning he woke up and he said, 'I'm passing judgement in court over others, punishment, and I seem to say to them I know truth, you don't, you are punished'. So one morning he woke up and he said, 'This is all wrong. I must find out what truth is', so he resigned, left and went away for 25 years to find out what truth is. Sir, these people are dreadfully serious, you understand.

A: Oh yes.

K: They are not like cheap repeaters of some mantra, and such rubbish. So somebody brought him to the talks I was giving. He came to see me the next day. He said, 'You are perfectly right. I have been meditating on truth for 25 years. And it has been self hypnosis, as you pointed out. I've been caught in my own verbal, intellectual formula, structure. And I haven't been able to get out of it.' You understand, sir?

A: 25 years. That's a very moving story.

K: And to admit that he was wrong needs courage, needs perception.

A: Exactly.

K: Not courage, perception. So, now seeing all this, sir, the permissiveness on one side, the reaction to Victorian way of life, the reaction to the world with all its absurdities, trivialities and banality, all that absurdity and the reaction to that is to renounce it. To say, 'Well I won't touch it'. But desire is burning all the same, all the glands are working. You can't cut away your glands! So therefore they say, control, therefore they say, don't be attracted to a woman, don't look at the sky, because the sky is so marvellously beautiful and beauty then may become the beauty of a woman, the beauty of a house, the beauty of a chair in which you can sit comfortably. So don't look. Control it. You follow, sir?

A: I do.

K: The permissiveness, the reaction to restraint, control the pursuit of an idea as God, and for that control desire. And I met a man again he left his house at the age of 20. He was really quite an extraordinary chap. He was 75 when he came to see me. He had left home at the age of 20, renounced everything, all that, and went from teacher to teacher to teacher. He went to, I won't mention names because that wouldn't be right, and he came to me, talked to me. He said, 'I went to all these people asking if they could help me find God. I've spent from the age of till I'm 75, wandering all over India. I'm a very serious man and not one of them has told me the truth. I've been to the most famous, to the most socially active, the people who talk endlessly about God. After all these years I returned to my house and found nothing. And you come along', he said, 'you come along you never talk about God. You never talk about the path to God. You talk about perception. The seeing 'what is' and going beyond it. The beyond is the real, not the 'what is'. Now show me.' You understand? He was 75.

A: Yes, 55 years on the road.

K: They don't do that in Europe, on the road. He was literally on the road.

A: Yes. I'm sure he was. Because you said he was in India.

K: Begging from village to village to village. When he told me I was so moved, tears almost - to spend a whole lifetime, as they do in business world...

A: Yes

K: ...50 years to go day after day to the office and die at the end of it. It is the same thing.

A: The same thing.

K: Fulfilling of desire, money, money, money, more things, things, things; and the other, none of that but another substitute for that.

A: Yes, just another form.

K: So looking at all this sir, I know it is dreadful what human beings have done to themselves and to others, seeing all that one inevitably asks the question, how to live with desire? You can't help it, desire is there. The moment I see something - a beautiful flower, the admiration, the love of it, the smell of it, the beauty of the petal, the quality of the flower and so on, the enjoyment - one asks, is it possible to live without any control whatsoever?

A: The very question is terrifying in the context of these disorders that you are speaking about. I am taking the part now of the perspective that one is in, when out of frustration he comes to you, let us say, like the man did after 55 years on the road, the minute he walks in the door, he has come to get something he doesn't already have.

K: Obviously.

A: And as soon as you make that statement, if the answer that is coming up he starts 'if-ing' right now, if the answer is going to be something that completely negates this whole investment of 55 years on the road, it seems that most persons are going to freeze right there.

K: And it is a cruel thing too, sir. He has spent 55 years at it, and suddenly realises what he has done. The cruelty of deception. You follow?

A: Oh, yes.

K: Self deception, deception of tradition, you follow, of all the teachers who have said, control, control,

control. And he comes and you say to him, what place has control?

A: I think I am beginning to get a very keen sense of why you say go into it. Because there is a place there like dropping a stitch we might say. He doesn't get past that initial shock, then he is not going to go into it.

K: So we talked, I spent hours, we discussed, we went into it. Gradually he saw. He said, 'Quite right'. So, sir, unless we understand the nature and the structure of appetite and desire, which are more or less the same, we cannot understand very deeply pleasure.

A: Yes, yes. I see why you have been good enough to lay this foundation before we get to the opposite side of the coin.

K: Because pleasure and fear are the two principles that are active in most human beings, in all human beings. And it is reward and punishment. Don't bring up a child through punishment but reward him. You know the psychologists are advocating some of this.

A: Oh yes. They are encouraged by the experiments on Pavlov's dogs.

K: Dogs, or peoples or ducks, geese. Do this and don't do that. So unless we understand fear, understand in the sense, investigate, see the truth of it and if the mind is capable of going beyond it, to be totally free of fear, as we discussed it the other day; and also to understand the nature of pleasure. Because pleasure is an extraordinary thing, and to see a beautiful thing to enjoy it - what is wrong with it?

A: Nothing.

K: Nothing.

A: Nothing.

K: See what is involved in it.

A: Right. The mind plays a trick there. I say to myself, I can't find anything wrong with it, therefore nothing is wrong with it. I don't really believe that necessarily. And I was thinking a little while ago when you were speaking about the attempts through power to negate desire, through power.

K: Because search for power, negating desire is search for power.

A: Would you be saying that one searches for power in order to secure a pleasure that has not yet been realised?

K: Yes, yes.

A: I understood you well then?

K: Yes.

A: I see. It's a terrible thing.

K: But is a reality.

A: Oh, it's going on.

K: It's going on.

A: Oh, yes. But we are taught that from children.

K: That's just it, sir. So, pick up any magazine, the advertisements, the half-naked ladies, women and so on, and so on. So pleasure is a very active principle in man as fear.

A: Oh yes.

K: And again society, which is immoral, has said, control. One side, the religious side says, control and commercialism says, don't control, enjoy, buy, sell. You follow? And the human mind, says this is all right. My own instinct is to have pleasure I'll go after it. But Saturday, or Sunday or Monday or whatever the day it is I'll give it to God. You follow, sir?

A: Yes.

K: And this game goes on, forever it has been going on. So what is pleasure? You follow sir? Why should pleasure be controlled; why should - I'm not saying it's right or wrong, please let's be very clear from the beginning that we are not condemning pleasure. We are not saying you must give reign to it, let it run. Or that it must be suppressed, or justified. We are trying to understand why pleasure has become of such extraordinary importance in life. Pleasure of enlightenment. You follow, sir? Pleasure of sex. Pleasure of possession. Pleasure of knowledge. Pleasure of power.

A: Heaven which is regarded as the ultimate pleasure...

K: The ultimate, of course.

A: ...is usually spoken of theologically as the future state.

K: Yes.

A: This is to me very interesting in terms of what you have been saying and even at the level of gospel songs we hear, 'When the Roll is called up Yonder I'll be there'. When it's called up yonder, which means at the end of the line. And then there's the terror that I won't be good enough when...

K: When that...

A: Yes, so I'm tightening up my belt to pay my heavenly insurance policy on Saturday and Sunday, the two days of the weekend that you mentioned. What if you got caught from Monday through Friday. Yes.

K: So pleasure, enjoyment and joy. Follow, sir? There are three things involved.

A: Three things.

K: Pleasure.

A: Pleasure.

K: Enjoyment and joy.

A: Joy.

K: Happiness. You see joy is happiness, ecstasy, the delight, the sense of tremendous enjoyment. And what is the relationship of pleasure to enjoyment and to joy and happiness?

A: Yes, we have been moving a long way from fear.

K: Fear, that's right.

A: Yes, but I don't mean moving away...

K: No, no.

A: ...by turning our back on it.

K: No, we have gone into it, we see the movement from that to this, it's not away from it. Pleasure. There is a delight in seeing something very beautiful. Delight. If you are at all sensitive, if you are at all observant, if there is a feeling of relationship to nature, which very few people unfortunately have, they stimulate it, but the actual relationship to nature, that is when you see something really marvellously beautiful, like a mountain with all its shadows, valleys and the line and, you know it's something - a tremendous delight. Now see what happens: at that moment there is nothing but that. That is, beauty of the mountain, lake or the single tree on a hill, that beauty has knocked everything out of me.

A: Oh yes.

K: And at that moment there is no division between me and that. There is sense of great purity and enjoyment.

A: Exactly.

K: See what takes place.

A: I see we've reached a point where we are going to take a new step, I feel it coming on. It's amazing how this thing has moved so inevitably but not unjoyfully. Not unjoyfully. In our next conversation I would just love to pursue this.

Seventh Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Thursday, February 21, 1974

The Art of Listening

Tenth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego California

Friday, February 22, 1974

A: Mr Krishnamurti, last time we were speaking together, we were going into beauty, and just as we came to the end of our conversation the question of seeing and its relation to the transformation of man which is not dependent on knowledge or time, was something we promised ourselves we would take up next time we could come together.

K: Sir, what is seeing, and what is listening, and what is learning? I think the three are related to each other: learning, hearing and seeing. What is seeing, perceiving? Do we actually see, or do we see through a screen darkly? A screen of prejudice, a screen of our idiosyncrasies, experiences, our wishes, pleasures, fears, and obviously our images about that which we see and about ourselves? So we have this screen after screen between us and the object of perception. So do we ever see the thing at all? Or is it the seeing is coloured by our knowledge, mechanical, experience, and so on and so on, or our images which we have about that thing, or the beliefs in which the mind is conditioned, and therefore prevents the seeing, or the memories which the mind has cultivated prevents the seeing? So seeing may not take place at all. And is it possible for the mind not to have these images, conclusions, beliefs, memories, prejudices, fears, and without having those screens just to look? I think this becomes very important because when there is a seeing of the thing which I am talking about, when there is a seeing you can't help but acting. There is no question of postponement.

A: Or succession.

K: Succession.

A: Or interval.

K: Because when action is based on a belief, a conclusion, an idea, then that action is time-binding. And that action will inevitably bring conflict and so on, regrets, you know, all the rest of it. So it becomes very important to find out what it is to see, to perceive. What it is to hear. Do I ever hear? When one is married, as a wife or a husband, or a girl or a boy, do I ever hear her or him? Or I hear her, him, through the image I have built about her or him? Through the screen of irritations, screen of annoyance, domination, you know all that, the dreadful things that come in relationship. So do I ever hear directly what you say, without translating, without transforming it, without twisting it? Do I ever hear a bird cry, or a child weep, or a man crying in pain? You follow, sir? Do I ever hear anything?

A: In a conversation we had about a year ago, I was very struck by something you said which I regard, for myself, personally, immensely valuable. You said that hearing was doing nothing to stop, or interfere with seeing. Hearing is doing nothing to stop seeing. That is very remarkable because in conversation the notion of hearing is regarded as intimately associated with command. We will say, won't we, 'Now hear me, hear me out'. And the person thinks that they have to lean forward in the sense of do something voluntarily.

K: Quite, quite.

A: It's as though they have to screw themselves up into some sort of agonised twist here. Not only to please the one who is insisting that they are not hearing, but to get up some hearing on their own.

K: Quite. So does a human being, Y or X, listen at all? And what takes place when I do listen? Listen in the

sense without any interference, without any interpretation, conclusion, like and dislike, you know all that takes place, what happens when I actually listen? Sir, look, we said just now, we cannot possibly understand what beauty is if we don't understand suffering, passion. You hear that statement, what does the mind do? It draws a conclusion. It has formed an idea, verbal idea, hears the words, draws a conclusion, and an idea. A statement of that kind has become an idea. Then we say, 'How am I to carry out that idea?' And that becomes a problem.

A: Yes, of course it does. Because the idea doesn't conform to nature and other people have other ideas and they want to get theirs embodied. Now we are up against a clash.

K: Yes. So can I listen to that, can the mind listen to that statement without any forming an abstraction? Just listen. I neither agree nor disagree, just actually listen completely to that statement.

A: If I am following you, what you are saying is that were I to listen adequately, or just let's say listen - because it's not a question of more or less - I am absolutely listening or I am absolutely not listening.

K: That's right, sir.

A: Yes. I would not have to contrive an answer.

K: No. You are in it.

A: Yes. So like the cat, the action and the seeing are one.

K: Yes.

A: They are one act.

K: That's right.

A: They are one act.

K: That's right. So can I listen to a statement and see the truth of the statement or the falseness of the statement, not in comparison but in the very statement that you are making. I don't know if I am making myself clear.

A: Yes, you are making yourself very clear.

K: That is, I listen to the statement: beauty can never exist without passion, and passion comes from sorrow. I listen to that statement. I don't abstract an idea from it, or make an idea from it. I just listen. What takes place? You may be telling the truth, or you may be making a false statement. I don't know because I am not going to compare.

A: No. You are going to see.

K: I just listen. Which means I am giving my total attention - just listen to this, sir, you will see what is going to happen - I give my total attention to what you are saying. Then it doesn't matter what you say, or don't say. You see this thing?

A: Of course, of course.

K: What is important is my act of listening. And that act of listening has brought about a miracle of complete freedom from all your statements - whether true, false, real - my mind is completely attentive. Attention means no border. The moment I have a border I begin to fight you - agree, disagree. The moment attention has a frontier then concepts arise. But if I listen to you completely without a single interference of thought or ideation or mentation, just listen to that, the miracle has taken place. Which is my total attention

absolves me, my mind, from all the statement. Therefore my mind is extraordinarily free to act.

A: This has happened for me on this series of our conversations. With each one of these conversations, since this is being video-taped, one begins when one is given the sign and we're told when the time has elapsed; and one ordinarily, in terms of activity of this sort, is thinking about the production as such.

K: Of course.

A: But one of the things that I have learned is in our conversations, I've been listening very intensely, and yet I've not had to divide my mind.

K: No, sir, that's the...

A: And yet this is, if I'm responding correctly to what you have been teaching - well, I know you don't like that word, but to what you have been saying - I understand why 'teaching' was the wrong word here - there is that very first encounter that the mind engages itself in.

K: Yes.

A: How can I afford not to make the distinction between paying attention to the aspects of the programme, on the production aspect of it, and still engage our discussion?

K: Quite.

A: But the more intensely the discussion is engaged...

K: You can do it.

A: ...the more efficiently all the mechanism is accomplished.

K: Yes.

A: We don't believe that, in the sense that not only to start with we will not believe but we won't even try it out. There is no guarantee from anybody in advance. What we are told rather is this, well, you get used to it. And yet performers have stage-fright all their lives, so clearly they don't get used to it.

K: No, sir, it is because, sir, don't you think it is our minds are so commercial, unless I get a reward from it I won't do a thing. And my mind lives in the marketplace - one's mind: I give you this, you give me that.

A: And there's an interval in between.

K: You follow?

A: Right.

K: We are so used to commercialism, both spiritually and physically that we don't do anything without a reward, without gaining something, without a purpose. It all must be exchange, not a gift, but exchange: I give you this and you give me that; I torture myself religiously and God must come to me. It's all a matter of commerce.

A: Fundamentalists have a phrase that comes to mind with respect to their devotional life. They say, 'I am claiming the promises of God'. And this phrase in the context of what you are saying is, my goodness, what that couldn't lead to in the mind.

K: Oh, yes. So you see when one goes very deeply into this: when action is not based on an idea, formula, belief, then seeing is the doing. Then what is seeing and hearing - which we went into? Then the seeing is complete attention, and the doing is in that attention. And the difficulty is people will ask, 'How will you

maintain that attention?'

A: Yes, and they haven't even started.

K: No, how will you maintain it. Which means they are looking for a reward.

A: Exactly.

K: I'll practise it, I will do everything to maintain that attention in order to get something in return. Attention is not a result, attention has no cause. What has cause has an effect and the effect becomes the cause. It's a circle. But attention isn't that. Attention doesn't give you a reward. Attention, on the contrary, there is no reward or punishment because it has no frontier.

A: Yes, this calls up an earlier conversation we had when you mentioned the word 'virtue', and we explored it in relation to power.

K: Yes, exactly.

A: And we are told what is difficult for a thinking child to believe, given the way a child is brought up, but he's required somehow to make his way through it, that virtue is its own reward.

K: Oh, that.

A: And, of course, it is impossible to see what is sound about that under...

K: Yes, quite.

A: ...under the conditioned situation in which he lives.

K: That's just an idea, sir.

A: So now we cut that back and then later when we need to remind somebody that they are asking too much of a reward for something good that they did, we tell them, 'Well, have you forgotten that virtue is its own reward?' Yes, yes. It becomes a form of punishment.

K: Then, you see, seeing and hearing, then what is learning? Because they are all interrelated: learning seeing, hearing, and action, all that. It is all in one movement. They are not separate chapters, it's one chapter.

A: Distinction is no division.

K: No. So what is learning? Is learning a process of accumulation? And is learning non accumulative? We are putting both together. Let's look at it.

A: Let's look at it, yes.

K: I learn - one learns a language - Italian, French, whatever it is - and accumulate words and the irregular verbs and so on, and then one is able to speak. There is learning a language and being able to speak. Learning how to ride a bicycle, learning how to drive a car, learning how to put together a machine, electronics and so on. Those are all learning to acquire knowledge in action. And I am asking, is there any other form of learning? That we know, we are familiar with the acquisition of knowledge. Now is there any other kind of learning, learning which is not accumulated, and acting?

A: Yes, and when we have accumulated it all we haven't understood anything on that account.

K: Yes. And I learn in order to gain a reward, or in order to avoid punishment. I learn a particular job, or particular craft in order to earn a livelihood. That is absolutely necessary otherwise... Now I am asking, is

there any other kind of learning? That's routine, that's the cultivation of memory and the memory, which is the result of experience and knowledge that is stored in the brain, and that operates, when asked to ride a bicycle, drive a car, and so on. Now is there any other kind of learning? Or only that? When one says, 'I have learned from my experience', it means I have learned, stored up from that experience certain memories, and those memories either prevent, reward, or punish. So all such forms of learning are mechanical. And education is to train the brain to function in routine, mechanically. Because in that there is great security. Then it is safe. And so our mind becomes mechanical. My father did this, I do it - you follow? - the whole business is mechanical. Now, is there a non-mechanical brain at all? A non-utilitarian, in that sense, learning which has neither future nor past, therefore not time-binding. I don't know if I am making it clear.

A: Don't we sometimes say, 'I have learned from experience', when we wish to convey something that isn't well conveyed by that expression. We wish to convey an insight that we don't feel can be, in a strict sense, dated.

K: You see, sir, do we learn anything from experience? We have had, since history began, written history, five thousand wars. I read it somewhere. Five thousand wars. Killing, killing, killing, maiming. And have we learned anything? Have we learned anything from sorrow? Man has suffered, have we learned anything from the experience of the agony of uncertainty and all the rest of it? So when we say, we have learned, I question it. You follow? It seems such a terrible thing to say, 'I have learned from experience'. You have learned nothing, except in the field of knowledge.

A: Yes. May I say something here that just passed in recall. We were talking about sorrow before, and I was thinking of a statement of St Paul's in his letter to the Romans, where there is a very unusual sequence of words where he says, 'We rejoice in tribulations'. Now some people have thought he must have been a masochist, or something, in making such a statement; but that certainly seems to me bizarre. We rejoice in tribulations. And then he says, 'because tribulation works' - and in the Greek this means there is energy involved - 'works patience'. Patience, experience. Now that's a very unusual order because we usually think that if we have enough experience we'll learn to be patient. And he completely stands that on its head. And in the context of what you are saying that order of his words makes eminent sense. Please go on.

K: No, no.

A: Yes, that's really very remarkable.

K: You see, sir, that's why our education, our civilisation, all the things about us, has made our mind so mechanical, repetitive reactions, repetitive demands, repetitive pursuits. The same thing being repeated year after year, for thousands of years: my country, your country, I kill you and you kill me. You follow, sir, the whole thing is mechanical. Now that means the mind can never be free. Thought is never free, thought is always old. There's no new thought.

A: No. It is very curious in relation to a movement within the field of religion which called itself: 'New Thought'. Yes, I was laughing at the irony of it. Yes, goodness me. Some persons I imagine would object to the notion that we don't learn from experience in terms of the succession of wars, because wars tend to happen sequentially, generation to generation, and you have to grow up. But that is not true because more than one war will happen very often in the same generation and there hasn't been anything learned.

K: That is what we have been talking about, two wars.

A: There hasn't been anything learned at all. It's a terrifying thing to hear someone just come out and say: nobody learns anything from experience.

K: No, the word 'experience' also means to go through.

A: Yes, yes.

K: But you never go through.

A: That's exactly right.

K: You always stop in the middle. Or you never begin.

A: Right. It means, if I'm remembering correctly, in terms of its radical root it means to test, to put to the test, to, well, to put a thing to the test and behave correctly while that's going on, you certainly have to see, you just have to look, don't you.

K: Of course. So as our civilisation, our culture, our education has brought about a mind that is becoming more and more mechanical, and therefore time-binding, and therefore never a sense of freedom. Freedom then becomes an idea, you play around philosophically, but it has no meaning. But a man who says, 'Now I want to find out, I want to really go into this and discover if there is freedom'. Then he has to understand the limits of knowledge, where knowledge ends - or rather the ending of knowledge and the beginning of something totally new. I don't know if I am conveying anything?

A: You are. Oh yes, yes.

K: That is, sir, what is learning? If it is not mechanical then what is learning? Is there a learning at all, learning about what? I learn how to go to the moon, how to put up this, that and drive and so on. In that field there is only learning. Is there a learning in any other field, psychologically, spiritually? Can I learn - can the mind learn about what they call god?

A: If in learning, in the sense that you have asked this question - no, I must rephrase that. Stop this 'ifing'. When one does what I am about to say; when one learns about god, or going to the moon, in terms of the question you have asked, he can't be doing what you are pointing to if this is something added on to the list.

K: Sir, it is so clear.

A: Yes, it is.

K: I learn a language, ride a bicycle, drive a car, put a machine together. That's essential. Now I want to learn about god. Just listen to this. The god is my making. God hasn't made me in his image. I have made him in my image. Now I am going to learn about him.

A: Yes, I am going to talk to myself.

K: Learn about the image which I have built about Christ, Buddha, whatever it is. The image I have built. So I am learning what?

A: To talk about talk. Yes.

K: Learning about the image which I have built.

A: That's right.

K: Therefore is there any other kind of learning except mechanical learning? I don't know if you see? You understand my question?

A: Yes, I do. Yes, I do, I certainly do.

K: So there is only learning the mechanical process of life. There is no other learning. See what that means, sir.

A: It means freedom.

K: I can learn about myself. Myself is known. Known in the sense I may not know it, but I can know by looking at myself, I can know myself. So myself is the accumulated knowledge of the past. The 'me' who says I am greedy, I am envious, I am successful, I am frightened, I have betrayed, I have regret, all that is the 'me', including the soul which I have invented in the 'me' - or the Brahman, the Atman, it's all me still. The 'me' has created the image of god and I am going to learn about god. It has no meaning. So if there is - when there is - no, I am going to use the word 'if', if there is no other learning what takes place? You understand? The mind is used in the acquisition of knowledge in matter. We'll put it differently. In mechanical things. And when the mind is employed there, are there any other processes of learning? Which means psychologically, inwardly - is there? The inward is the invention of thought as opposed to the outer. I don't know if you see. If I have understood the outer I have understood the inner. Because the inner has created the outer. The outer in the sense the structure of society, the religious sanctions, all that is invented or put together by thought - the Jesus's, the Christ, the Buddhas, all that. And what is there to learn?

A: In listening to you...

K: See the beauty of what is coming out.

A: Oh yes, yes, it goes back to your remark about Vedanta as the end of knowledge.

K: That's what I was told.

A: Yes. The interesting thing to me about the Sanskrit construction is that unless I am mistaken, it doesn't mean the end of it as a terminus, as a term because that would simply start a new series. It is the consummation of it which is the total end in the sense that a totally new beginning is made at that very point.

K: That means, sir, I know - the mind knows the activity of the known.

A: That's right, yes. That's the consummation of knowledge.

K: Of knowledge. Now what is the state of the mind that is free from that, and yet functions in knowledge?

A: And yet functions in it.

K: You follow?

A: Yes, yes. It is seeing perfectly.

K: Do go into it, you will see very strange things take place. Is this possible first? You understand? Because the brain functions mechanically, it wants security, otherwise it can't function. If we hadn't security we wouldn't be here sitting together. Because we have security we can have a dialogue. The brain can only function in complete security. Whether that security is found in a neurotic belief - all beliefs and all ideas are neurotic in that sense. So he finds it somewhere, in accepting nationality as the highest form of good, success is the highest virtue. He finds belief, security there. Now you are asking the mind, the brain, which has become mechanical, trained for centuries to see the other field which is not mechanical. Is there another field?

A: No.

K: You follow the question?

A: Yes, I do. Yes, that's what so utterly devastating.

K: Is there - wait, wait - is there another field? Now unless the brain and the mind understands the whole

field - not field, understands the movement of knowledge, it is a movement.

A: It is a movement, yes.

K: It is not just static, you are adding, taking away, and so on. Unless it understands all that it cannot possibly ask that other question.

A: Exactly. Exactly.

K: And when it does ask that question, what takes place? Sir, this is real meditation, you know.

A: This is, yes, yes.

K: Which we will go into another time. So you see that's what it means. One is always listening with knowledge, seeing with knowledge.

A: This is the seeing through a glass darkly.

K: Darkly. Now is there a listening out of silence? And that is attention. And that is not time-binding, because in that silence I don't want anything. It isn't that I am going to learn about myself. It isn't that I am going to be punished, rewarded. In that absolute silence I listen.

A: The wonder of the whole thing is that it isn't something which is done, this meditation, in succession.

K: Sir, when we talk about meditation we will have to go very deeply into that because they have destroyed that word. These shoddy little men coming from India or anywhere, they have destroyed that thing.

A: I heard the other day about someone who was learning transcendental meditation.

K: Oh, learning.

A: They had to do it at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

K: Pay 35 dollars or 100 dollars to learn that. It's so sacrilegious.

A: That is, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon was judgement day. If you didn't do it according to your schedule then the world has obviously come to an end. But ostensibly you are doing it to get free of that. Do go ahead.

K: So you see, sir, that's what takes place. We began this morning about beauty, then passion, then suffering, then action. Action based on idea is inaction. It sounds monstrous, but there it is. And from that we said what is seeing, and what is hearing. The seeing and the listening has become mechanical. We never see anything new. Even the flower is never new which has blossomed over night. We say, 'That's the rose, I have been expecting it, it has come out now, beautiful'. It's always from the known to the known. A movement in time, and therefore time-binding, and therefore never free. And yet we are talking about freedom, you know philosophy, the lectures on freedom and so on and so on. And the communists call it a bourgeois thing, which it is, in the sense when you limit it to knowledge it is foolish to talk about freedom. But there is a freedom when you understand the whole movement of knowledge. So can you observe out of silence, and observe and act in the field of knowledge, so both together in harmony?

A: Seeing then is not scheduled. Yes, of course, of course. I was just thinking about, I suppose you would say the classical definition of freedom in terms of the career of knowledge would be that it is a property of action, a property or quality of action. For general uses either word would do, property or quality. And it occurred to me in the context of what we have been saying, what a horror that one could read that statement and not let it disclose itself to you.

K: Quite.

A: If it disclosed itself to you, you would be up against it, you'd have to be serious. If you were a philosophy student and you read that and that thing began to operate in you, you'd say, 'I've got to get this settled before I go on. Maybe I'll never graduate, that's not important'.

K: That's not important, quite right. And I was thinking, in the West as well as in the East you have to go to the factory, or the office, every day of your life. Get up at 8 o'clock, 6 o'clock, drive, walk, work, work, work for fifty years, routine, and get kicked about, insulted, worship success. Again repetition. And occasionally talk about god if it is convenient, and so on and so on. That is a monstrous life. And that is what we are educating our children for.

A: That's the real living death.

K: And nobody says, for god's sake let's look at all this anew. Let's wipe our eyes clear of the past and look at what we are doing, give attention, care what we are doing.

A: Now we have this question instead: what shall we do about it? Yes, that's the question. And then that becomes the next thing done that is added to the list.

K: It is a continuity of the past, in a different form.

A: And the chain is endlessly linked, linked, linked, linked.

K: The cause becoming the effect and the effect becoming the cause. So it's a very serious thing when we talk about all this, because life becomes dreadfully serious. And it's only this serious person that lives. Not those people who seek entertainment, religious or otherwise.

A: I had a very interesting occasion to understand what you are saying in class yesterday. I was trying to assist the students to see that the classical understanding of the four causes in operation is that they are non-temporarily related. And I said when the potter puts his hand to the clay, the hand touching the clay is not responded to by the clay after the hand has touched it. And one person who was visiting the class, this person was a well-educated person and a professor, and this struck him as maybe not so, and I could tell by the expression on the face that there was a little anguish here, so I said, 'Well, my radar says that there is some difficulty going on, what's the matter?' 'Well, it seems like there is a time interval'. So I asked him to pick something up that was on the desk. And I said, touch it with your finger and tell me at the moment of the touching with the finger whether the thing reacts to the finger after it is touched. Now do it. Well, even to ask somebody to apply a practical test like that with respect to a datum of knowledge like the four causes are... is to interrupt the process of education as we have known it. Because you teach a student about the four causes and he thinks about them, he never goes out and looks at things, or does anything about it. And so we were picking stuff up in class, and we were doing this until finally it seemed like a revelation that what has been said, in the classical teaching of it, which of course in modern society is rejected, happens to be the case. And I said, this has to be seen, watch. This is what you mean.

K: Seeing, of course.

A: Of course, of course. But we are back to that step there: why was that person and so many other students following suit, anguished at the point where the practical issue arose? There was a feeling, I suppose, that they were on a cliff.

K: Quite, quite.

A: That, and naturally alertness was required. But alertness registers that we are on a cliff, so therefore the best thing to do is to turn around and run back. Yes, yes.

K: Sir, I think, you see, we are so caught up in words. To me the word is not the thing. The description is not the described. To us the description is all that matters because we are slave to words.

A: And to ritual.

K: Ritual and all the rest of it. So when you say, look, the thing matters more than the word, and then they say, 'How am I to get rid of the word, how am I to communicate if I have no word?' You see how they have gone off? They are not concerned with the thing but with the word.

A: Yes.

K: And the door is not the word. So when we are caught up in words the word 'door' becomes extraordinarily important, and not the door.

A: And I don't really need to come to terms with the door, I say to myself, because I have the word. I have it all.

K: So education has done this. A great part of this education is the acceptance of words as an abstraction from the fact, from the 'what is'. All philosophies are based on that: theorise, theorise, theorise, endlessly, how one should live. And the philosopher himself doesn't live.

A: Yes, I know.

K: You see this all over.

A: Especially some philosophers that have seemed to me quite bizarre in this respect. I have asked my colleagues from time to time, if you believe that stuff why don't you do it? And they look at me as though I am out of my mind, as though nobody would really seriously ask that question.

K: Quite, quite.

A: But if you can't ask that question, what question is worth asking?

K: Quite right.

A: I was thinking about that marvellous story you told in our previous conversation about the monkey, while you were speaking about this, when she shook hands with you, nobody had told her how to shake hands.

K: No, it stretched out.

A: Yes.

K: And I took it.

A: It wasn't something that she was taught how to do through a verbal communication, it was the appropriate thing at the time.

K: At the time, yes.

A: Without anyone measuring its appropriateness.

K: Quite.

A: Isn't that something. Yes, I can't tell you how grateful I am to have been able to share this with you. I have seen in respect to my own activity as a teacher where I must perform therapy even on my language.

K: Quite, quite.

A: So that I don't give the student an occasion for thinking that I am simply adding to this endless chain, link after link after link. There are two therapies here then: there's the therapy that relates to words and that flows out naturally. It is not a contrivance, it flows out naturally, if I've understood you correctly, from the therapy within. Now this relates directly, as you were saying earlier, to meditation. Are we ready, do you think to...

K: I think that's too complicated.

A: I don't mean right now. But maybe in one of our next conversations.

K: Oh yes, we must discuss several things yet, sir.

A: Yes.

K: What is love, what is death, what is meditation, what is the whole movement of living. We've got a great deal to do.

A: Oh, I do look forward to that very much. Splendid. Right.

Tenth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego California

Friday, February 22, 1974

Sorrow, Passion and Beauty

Ninth Dialogue with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Friday, February 22, 1974

A: Mr Krishnamurti, in our last conversation together we had moved from speaking together concerning fear and the relation between that and the transformation of the individual person which is not dependent on knowledge or time, and from that we went to pleasure and just as we reached the end of that conversation the question of beauty arose. And if it's agreeable with you I should like very much for us to explore that together.

K: One often wonders why museums are so filled with pictures and statues. Is it because man has lost touch with nature and therefore has to go to museums to look at other people's paintings, famous paintings and some of them are really marvellously beautiful? Why do the museums exist at all? I'm just asking. I'm not saying they should or should not. And I've been to many museums all over the world, taken around by experts, and I've always felt as though I was being shown around and looking at things that were so, for me, artificial, other peoples' expression, what they considered beauty. And I wondered what is beauty? Because when you read a poem of Keats, or really a poem that a man writes with his heart and with very deep feeling, he wants to convey something to you of what he feels, what he considers to be the most exquisite essence of beauty.

And I have looked at a great many cathedrals, as you must have, over Europe and again this expression of their feelings, their devotion, their reverence, in masonry, in rocks, in buildings, in marvellous cathedrals. And looking at all this, I'm always surprised when people talk about beauty, or write about beauty, whether it is something created by man or something that you see in nature; or it has nothing to do with the stone or with the paint or with the word, but something deeply inward. And so often in discussing with so-called professionals, having a dialogue with them, it appears to me that it is always somewhere out there, the modern painting, modern music, the pop and so on, so on, it's always somehow so dreadfully artificial. I may be wrong.

But what is beauty? Must it be expressed? That's one question. Does it need the word, the stone, the colour, the paint? Or it is something that cannot possibly be expressed in words, in a building, in a statue? So if we could go into this question of what is beauty. I feel to really go into it very deeply one must know what is suffering. Or understand what is suffering, because without passion you can't have beauty - passion in the sense, not lust, not the passion that comes when there is immense suffering. And the remaining with that suffering, not escaping from it, brings this passion. Passion means the abandonment, the complete abandonment of the 'me', of the self, the ego. And therefore a great austerity, not the austerity of - the word means ash, severe, dry which the religious people have made it into - but rather the austerity of great beauty.

A: Yes, yes I'm following you, I really am.

K: A great sense of dignity, beauty, that is, essentially, austere. And to be austere, not verbally or ideologically, but being austere means total abandonment, letting go of the 'me'. And one cannot let that thing take place if one hasn't deeply understood what suffering is. Because passion comes from the word, 'sorrow'. I don't know if you have gone into it, looked into that word, the root meaning of that word 'passion' is sorrow, from suffering.

A: To feel.

K: To feel. You see, sir, people have escaped from suffering. I think it is very deeply related to beauty, not that you must suffer.

A: Not that you must suffer but - yes.

K: That is, no we must go a little more slowly. I am jumping too quickly. First of all, we assume we know what beauty is. We see a Picasso or a Rembrandt or a Michelangelo and we think how marvellous. We think we know. We have read it in books, the experts have written about it and so on. One reads it and say, yes. We absorb it through others. But if one was really enquiring into what is beauty there must be a great sense of humility. Now, I don't know what beauty is actually. I can imagine what beauty is. I've learned what beauty is. I have been taught in schools, in colleges, in reading books and going on tours, guided tours and all the rest, visiting thousands of museums, but actually to find out the depth of beauty, the depth of colour the depth of feeling, the mind must start with a great sense of humility. I don't know. You see, as one really wonders what meditation is. One thinks one knows. We will discuss meditation when we come to it. So one must start as feeling if one is enquiring into beauty with a great sense of humility, not knowing. That very 'not knowing' is beautiful.

A: Yes, Yes, I've been listening and I've been trying to open myself to this relation that you are making between beauty and passion.

K: You see, sir, let's start, right: man suffers, not only personally, but there is immense suffering of man. It is a thing that is pervading the universe. Man has suffered physically, psychologically, spiritually, in every way for centuries upon centuries. The mother cries because her son is killed, the wife cries because her husband is mutilated in a war, or accident - there is tremendous suffering in the world. And it is really a tremendous thing to be aware of this suffering.

A: Yes.

K: I don't think people are aware, or even feel this immense sorrow that is in the world. They are so concerned with their own personal sorrow, they overlook the sorrow that a poor man in a little village in India, or in China or in the Eastern world, where they never possibly have a full meal, clean clothes, comfortable bed. And there is this sorrow of thousands of people being killed in war. Or in the totalitarian world, millions being executed for ideologies, tyranny, the terror of all that. So there is all this sorrow in the world. And there is also the personal sorrow. And without really understanding it very, very deeply and resolving it, passion won't come out of sorrow. And without passion, how can you see beauty? You can intellectually appreciate a painting, or a poem, or a statue, but you need this great sense of inward bursting of passion, explosion of passion. You know, that creates in itself the sensitivity that can see beauty. So it is I think rather important to understand sorrow. I think it is related, beauty, passion, sorrow.

A: I'm interested in the order of those words. Beauty, passion, sorrow. If one is in relation to the transformation we have been speaking about, to come to beauty I take it, it's a passage from sorrow to passion to beauty.

K: That's right, sir.

A: Yes. Please do go on. I understand.

K: You see, in the Christian world, if I am not mistaken, sorrow is delegated to a person, and through that person we somehow escape from sorrow, that is, we hope we escape from sorrow. And in the Eastern world sorrow is rationalised through the statement of karma. You know the word 'karma' means to do. And they believe in karma. That is, what you have done in the past life you pay for in the present or reward in the

present, and so on, and so on. So that there are these two categories of escapes. And there are thousands of escapes - whiskey, drugs, sex, going off to attend a mass and so on, and so on. Man has never stayed with a thing. He has always either sought comfort in a belief, in an action, in identification with something greater than himself and so on, so on, but he has never said, 'Look, I must see what this is, I must penetrate it and not delegate it to somebody else. I must go into it, I must face it. I must look at it. I must know what it is.' So, when the mind doesn't escape from this sorrow, either personal or the sorrow of man, if you don't escape, if you don't rationalise, if you don't try to go beyond it, if you are not frightened of it, then you remain with it. Because any movement from 'what is', or any movement away from 'what is', is a dissipation of energy. It prevents you actually understanding 'what is'. The 'what is' is sorrow. And we have means and ways and cunning to escape. Now if there is no escape whatsoever then you remain with it. I do not know if you have ever done it. Because in everyone's life there is an incident that brings you tremendous sorrow, a happening. It might be an incident, a word, an accident, a shattering sense of absolute loneliness, and so on. These things happen and with that comes the sense of utter sorrow. Now when the mind can remain with that, not move away from it, out of that comes passion. Not the cultivated passion, not the artificial trying to be passionate, but the movement of passion is born out of this non-withdrawal from sorrow. It is the total completely remaining with that.

A: I am thinking that we also say when we speak of someone in sorrow that they are disconsolate.

K: Yes. Disconsolate.

A: Disconsolate and immediately we think that the antidote to that is to get rid of the 'dis', not to stay with the 'dis'. And in an earlier conversation we spoke about two things related to each other in terms of opposite sides of the same coin, and while you have been speaking I've been seeing the interrelation in a polar sense between action and passion. Passion being able to undergo, able to be changed. Whereas action is doing to effect change. And this would be the movement from sorrow to passion at the precise point, if I have understood you correctly, where I become able to undergo what is there.

K: So, if, when there is no escape, when there is no desire to seek comfort away from 'what is', then out of that absolute inescapable reality comes this flame of passion. And without that there is no beauty. You may write endless volumes about beauty, or be a marvellous painter, but without that inward quality of passion which is the outcome of great understanding of sorrow, I don't see how beauty can exist. Also one observes man has lost touch with nature.

A: Oh yes.

K: Completely, specially in big towns, and even in small villages, and hamlets man is always outwardly going, outward, pursued by his own thought, and so he has more or less lost touch with nature. Nature means nothing to him. It is very nice, very beautiful. Once I was standing with a few friends and my brother many years ago at the Grand Canyon, looking at the marvellous thing, incredible, the colours, the depth and the shadows; and a group of people came and one lady says, 'Yes isn't it marvellous', and the next says, 'Let's go and have tea'. And off they trotted. You follow? That is what is happening in the world. We have lost touch completely with nature. We don't know what it means. And also we kill. You follow me? We kill for food, we kill for amusement, we kill for sport. I won't go into all that. So there is this lack of intimate relationship with nature.

A: I remember a shock, a profound shock that I had in my college days, I was standing on the steps of the administration building and watching a very, very beautiful sunset and one of my college acquaintances asked me what I was doing, and I said, 'Well, I am not doing anything, I'm looking at the sunset'. And you know what he said to me? This so shocked me that it's one of those things that you never forget. He just said, 'Well there's nothing to prevent it, is there'.

K: Nothing?

A: Nothing to prevent it, is there? Yes, I know. I follow you.

K: So, sir, you see we are becoming more and more artificial, more and more superficial, more and more verbal, a linear direction, not vertical at all, but linear. And so naturally artificial things become more important - theatres, cinemas, you know the whole business of modern world. And very few have the sense of beauty in themselves, beauty in conduct. You understand, sir?

A: Oh yes.

K: Beauty in behaviour. Beauty in their usage of their language, the voice, the manner of walking, the sense of humility. With that humility everything becomes so gentle, quiet, full of beauty. We have none of that. And yet we go to museums, we are educated with museums, with pictures, and we have lost the delicacy, the sensitivity, of the mind, the heart, the body, and so when we have lost this sensitivity how can we know what beauty is? And when we haven't got sensitivity we go off to some place to learn to be sensitive. You know this.

A: Oh, I do.

K: Go to a college or some ashram or some rotten hole and there I am going to learn to be sensitive. Sensitive through touch, through you know. It becomes disgusting. So now how can we, as you are a professor and teacher, how can you, sir, educate, it becomes very, very important, the students to have this quality? Therefore one asks, what is it we are educating for? What are we being educated for? Everybody is being educated. Ninety per cent of the people probably in America, are being educated, know what to read and write and all the rest of it, what for?

A: And yet, it's a fact, at least in my experience of teaching class after class, year after year, that with all this proliferation of publishing and so-called educational techniques, students are without as much care to the written word and the spoken word as was the case that I can distinctly remember years ago. Now perhaps other teachers have had a different experience, but I have watched this in my classes, and the usual answer that I get when I speak to my colleagues about this is, well, the problem is in the high school. And then you talk to a poor high school teacher, he then puts it on the poor grade school. So we have poor grade school, poor high school, poor college, poor university because we are always picking up where we left off, which is a little lower next year that where it was before.

K: Sir, that's why when I have talked at various universities and so on, I've always felt what are we being educated for? To just become glorified clerks?

A: That's what it turns out to be.

K: Of course it is. Glorified business men and God knows what else. What for? I mean if I had a son that would be a tremendous problem for me. Fortunately, I haven't got a son, but it would be a burning question to me: what am I to do with the children that I have? To send to all these schools, where they are taught nothing but just how to read, and write a book, and how to memorise, and forget the whole field of life? They are taught about sex and reproduction and all that kind of stuff. But what? So I feel, sir, I mean to me this is a tremendously important question because I am concerned with seven schools in India and in England there is one, and we are going to form one here in California. It is a burning question: what is it that we are doing with our children? Making them into robots or into other clever, cunning clerks, great scientists who invent this or that and then be ordinary, cheap, little human beings, with shoddy minds. You follow, sir?

A: I am, I am.

K: So, when you talk about beauty, can we, can a human being tell another, educate another to grow in beauty, grow in goodness, to flower in great affection and care? Because if we don't do that we are destroying the earth, as it is happening now, polluting the air. We human beings are destroying everything we touch. So this becomes a very, very serious thing when we talk about beauty, when we talk about pleasure, fear, relationship, order and so on, all that, none of these things are being taught in any school.

A: No. I brought that up in my class yesterday and I asked them directly, that's very question. And they were very ready to agree that here we are, we are in an upper division course and we had never heard about this.

K: Tragic, you follow, sir.

A: And furthermore we don't know whether we are really hearing it for what it really is, because we haven't heard about it, we have got to go through that yet to find out whether we are really listening.

K: And whether the teacher or the man, who is a professor, is honest enough to say, 'I don't know. I am going to learn about all these things'. So sir, that is why western civilisation, I am not condemning it, just observing, western civilisation is mainly concerned with commercialism, consumerism, and a society that is immoral. And when we talk about the transformation of man, not in the field of knowledge or the field of time, but beyond that, who is interested in this? You follow, sir? Who really cares about it? Because the mother goes off to her job, earns a livelihood, the father goes off and the child is just an incident.

A: Now, as a matter of fact I know this will probably appear like an astonishingly extravagant statement for me to make, but I think it's getting to the place now where if anyone raises this question at the level that you have been raising it, as a young person who is growing up in his adolescent years, let's say, and he won't let it go, he hangs in there with it, as we say, the question is seriously raised whether he is normal.

K: Yes, quite, quite.

A: And it makes one think of Socrates, who was very clear that he knew only one thing, that he didn't know, and he didn't have to say that very often, but he said it even the few times enough to get him killed, but at least they took him seriously enough to kill him.

K: To kill him.

A: Today I think he would be put in some institution for study. The whole thing would have to be checked out.

K: That's what is happening in Russia. They send him off to an asylum...

A: That's right,

K: ...mental hospital and destroy him. Sir, here we neglect everything for some superficial gain, money. Money means power, position, authority, everything, money.

A: It goes back to this success thing that you mentioned before. Always later, always later. On a horizontal axis. Yes. I did want to share with you as you were speaking about nature, something that has a sort of wry humour about it in terms of the history of scholarship: I thought of those marvellous Vedic hymns to Dawn.

K: Oh yes.

A: The way Dawn comes, rosy fingered, and scholars have expressed surprise that the number of hymns to her are, by comparison, few compared with some other gods, but the attention is drawn in the study not to the quality of the hymn as revealing how it is that there is such consummately beautiful cadences associated with her, for which you would only need one, wouldn't you, you wouldn't need 25. The important thing is,

isn't it remarkable that we have so few hymns and yet they are so wonderfully beautiful. What has the number to do with it at all, is the thing that I could never get answered for myself in terms of the environment in which I studied Sanskrit and the Veda. The important thing is to find out which god, in this case Indra, is in the Rig Veda, is mentioned most often. Now, of course, I'm not trying to suggest that quantity should be overlooked, by no means, but if the question had been approached the way you have been enquiring into it, deeper, deeper, deeper, then, I think, scholarship would have had a very, very different career. We should have been taught how to sit and let that hymn disclose itself, and stop measuring it.

K: Yes sir.

A: Yes, yes, please do go on.

K: That's what I am going to say. You see when discussing beauty and passion and sorrow we ought to go into the question also of what is action? Because it is related to all that.

A: Yes, of course.

K: What is action? Because life is action. Living is action. Speaking is action. Everything is action, sitting here is an action. Talking, a dialogue, discussing, going into things, is a series of actions, a movement in action. So what is action? Action, obviously means, acting now. Not having acted or will act. It is the active present of the word act, to act, which is acting all the time. It is movement in time and out of time. We will go into that a little bit later. Now what is action that does not bring sorrow? You follow? One has to put that question because every action, as we do now, is either regret, contradiction, a sense of meaningless movement, repression, conformity and so on. So that is action for most people, the routine, the repetition, the remembrances of things past and act according to that remembrance. So unless one understands very deeply what is action, one will not be able to understand what is sorrow. So action, sorrow, passion and beauty. They are all together, not divorced, not something separate with beauty at the end, action at the beginning. It isn't like that at all, it is all one thing. But to look at it, what is action? As far as one knows now, action is according to a formula, according to a concept or according to an ideology. The communist ideology, the capitalist ideology, or the socialist ideology, or the ideology of a Christian, Jesus Christ, or the Hindu with his ideology. So action is the approximation of an idea. I act according to my concept. That concept is traditional, or put together by me, or put together by an expert. Lenin, Marx have formulated, and they conform according to what they think Lenin, Marx formulated. And action is according to a pattern. You follow?

A: Yes I do. What's occurring to me is that under the tyranny of that, one is literally driven.

K: Absolutely. Driven, conditioned, brutalised. You don't care for anything, except for ideas, and carry out ideas. See what is happening in China, you follow, in Russia.

A: Oh yes, yes, I do.

K: And here too, the same thing in a modified form. So action as we know it now is conformity to a pattern, either in the future or in the past, an idea which I carry out. A resolution, or a decision which I fulfil in acting. The past is acting, so, it is not action. I don't know if I am...?

A: Yes, yes, I'm aware of the fact that we suffer a radical conviction that if we don't generate a pattern there will be no order.

K: So you follow what is happening, sir? Order is in terms of a pattern.

A: Yes, preconceived, yes.

K: Therefore it is disorder, against which an intelligent man fights - fights in the sense revolts. So that's why it is very important if we are to understand what beauty is we must understand what action is. Can there be action without the idea? Idea means, you must know this from Greek, means to see. See what we have done, sir. The word is to see. That is seeing and the doing. Not the seeing, draw a conclusion from that and then act according to that conclusion. You see.

A: Oh yes, oh yes.

K: Perceiving, and from that perception draw a belief, an idea, a formula, and act according to that belief, idea, formula. So we are removed from perception. We are acting only according to a formula, therefore mechanical. You see, sir, how our minds have become mechanical.

A: Necessarily so.

K: Yes sir, obviously.

A: I just thought about Greek sculpture, and its different character from Roman sculpture, the finest of ancient Greece.

K: The Periclean age and so on.

A: Sculpture is extremely contemplative. It has sometimes been remarked that the Romans have a genius for portraiture in stone and, of course...

K: Law and order and all that.

A: Yes, and of course one would see their remarkable attention to personality. But what occurred to me while listening to this, something that had never occurred to me before, that the Greek statue with which one sometimes asks oneself, well the face doesn't disclose a personality. Perhaps the quiet eye recognised that you don't put onto the stone something that must come out of the act itself.

K: Quite, quite.

A: Because you're doing something that you must wait to come to pass. The Greeks were correct. It's an expression of that relation to form which is an interior form. Marvellous grasp of that. It's a grasp that allows for splendour to break out rather than the notion we must represent it. Yes, I am following you, aren't I?

K: You see sir, that's why one must ask this essential question: what is action? Is it a repetition? Is it imitation? Is it an adjustment between 'what is' and 'what should be' or 'what has been'? Or is it a conformity to a pattern? Or to a belief, or to a formula? If it is, then inevitably there must be conflict. Because idea, action, there is an interval, a lag of time between the two, and in that interval a great many things happen. A division in which other incidents take place and therefore there must be inevitably conflict. Therefore action is never complete, action is never total, it is never ending. Action means ending. You know, you used the word Vedanta the other day. It means the ending of knowledge, I was told. Not the continuation of knowledge, but the ending. So now, is there an action which is not tied to the past as time or to the future or to a formula, or to a belief or to an idea, but action? The seeing is the doing.

A: Yes.

K: Now, the seeing is the doing becomes an extraordinary movement in freedom. The other is not freedom. And therefore, sir, the communists say there is no such thing as freedom. That's a bourgeois idea. Of course it is, a bourgeois idea, because they live in ideas, concepts, not in action. They live according to ideas and carry those ideas out in action, which is not action, the doing. I don't know if...

A: Oh, yes, yes. I was just thinking.

K: This is what we do in the western world, the eastern world, all over the world, acting according to a formula, idea, belief, a concept, a conclusion, a decision; and never the seeing and the doing.

A: I was thinking about the cat, the marvellous animal the cat.

K: Oh, yes, the cat.

A: Its face is almost all eyes.

K: Yes.

A: I don't mean that by measure with callipers, of course not. And we don't train cats like we try to train dogs. I think we have corrupted dogs. Cats won't be corrupted. They simply won't be corrupted. And it seems to me great irony that in the middle ages we should have burned cats along with witches.

K: The ancient Egyptians worshipped cats.

A: Yes. The great eye of the cat, I read sometime ago that the cat's skeletal structure is among mammals the most perfectly adapted to its function.

K: Quite, quite.

A: And I think one of the most profound occasions for gratitude in my life was the living with a cat, and she taught me how to make an end. But I went through a lot of interior agony before I came to understand what she was doing. It's as though one would say of her that she was performing a mission, you might say, without, of course, being a missionary in the ordinary sense of that word.

K: Sir, you see one begins to see what freedom is in action.

A: That's right.

K: And it is the seeing in the doing is prevented by the observer who is the past, the formula, the concept, the belief. That observer comes in between perception and the doing. That observer is the factor of division. The idea and the conclusion in action. So can we act only when there is perception? We do this, sir, when we are at the edge of a precipice; the seeing danger is instant action.

A: If I remember correctly the word 'alert' comes from the Italian which points to standing at the edge of a cliff.

K: Cliff, that's right.

A: That's pretty serious.

K: You see, but it's very interesting, we are conditioned to the danger of a cliff, of a snake or a dangerous animal and so on, we are conditioned. But we are conditioned also to this idea you must act according to an idea, otherwise there is no action.

A: Yes, we are conditioned to that.

K: To that.

A: Oh, yes, terribly so.

K: Terribly. So we have this condition to danger. And conditioned to the fact that you cannot act without a formula, without a concept, belief and so on. So these two are the factors of our conditioning. And now,

someone comes along and says, look, that's not action. That is merely a repetition of what has been, modified, but it is not action. Action is when you see and do.

A: And the reaction to that is, oh, I see he has a new definition of action.

K: I'm not defining.

A: Yes, of course not.

K: And I've done this all my life. I see something and I do it.

A: Yes.

K: Say, for instance, as you may know, I am not being personal or anything, there is a great big organisation, spiritual organisation, thousand of followers with a great deal of land, 5000 acres, castles and money and so on were formed around me as a boy. And in 1928 I said this is all wrong. I dissolved it, returned the property and so on. I saw how wrong it was. The seeing; not the conclusions, comparison, see how religions have done it. I saw and acted. And therefore there has never been a regret.

A: Marvellous.

K: Never say, 'Oh, I have made a mistake because I shall have nobody to lean on'. You follow?

A: Yes, I do. Could we next time, in our next conversation relate beauty to seeing.

K: I was going there.

A: Oh, splendid. Yes, that's wonderful.

Ninth Dialogue with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Friday, February 22, 1974

Love, Sex and Pleasure

Twelfth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Monday, February 25, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti, in our last conversation we were talking about religion as a phenomenon in relation to our concern for enquiring into the transformation of each individual human being, a transformation that is not dependent on knowledge or time, and during our discussion of religion you were speaking about what you regarded to be religion in the true sense, its relation to the act of attention and how when the whole personal history of hurt is a reference, this act of attention simply is vitiated, it cannot come to pass. And through the discussion of hurt that we had we touched. towards the end of the discussion, on love, and if it's agreeable with you perhaps we could explore this question of love now.

Krishnamurti: Sir, when you use the word 'explore', are we using that word intellectually, exploring with the intellect, or exploring in relation to the word and seeing in that word the mirror which will reveal ourselves in that mirror?

A: I hope the latter.

K: Yes. That is, the word is the mirror in which I, as a human being, am observing. So the word 'explore' really means observing myself in the mirror of the word which you have used. So the word then becomes the thing. Not just a word by itself.

A: Right.

K: And therefore it's not intellectual exploration, a theoretical explanation.

A: It could be the beginning of a meditation.

K: That's what I want to make quite clear.

A: Yes. Well, that is where I would want to be in relationship to the subject.

K: Yes. And exploring also means the mind must be very serious. Not caught up in the mere desire to achieve something - to know how to love. I mean, how to acquire the neighbour's love. You follow, sir? (Laughter)

A: Yes. Become a successful lover.

K: Successful lover, yes. (Laughter) So I think when we explore that word and meaning and the significance of it one has to be very, very serious about this matter because they are using this word so loosely, it has become so corrupt - love of God, love of my wife, love of my property, love of my country, I love to read, I love to go to the cinema - you follow? And one of our difficulties is, modern education is not making us serious. We are becoming specialists: I am a first class doctor, first class surgeon, first class physician and so on, so on. But the specialist becomes a menace that way.

A: A learned ignoramus.

K: Yes. And education as we were saying previously, is to encourage, to see that the human mind is serious. Serious to find out what it means to live, not just become a specialist. So if that is all understood, and much more, what is love? Is love pleasure? Is love the expression of desire? Is love sexual appetite fulfilled? Is love

the pursuit of a desired end? The identification with a family, with a woman, with a man? Is love a thing that can be cultivated? That can be made to grow when I have no love, when I think about it, I do all kinds of things to it so that I will know how to love my neighbour?

A: We sometimes hear the admonition that one has to work at it. Yes. In terms of our conversations up to now, that would be a denial of it.

K: So, is love pleasure? And apparently it is, now.

A: It seems to have been debased to that.

K: I mean, not only, actually it is, that is what we call love. Love of God. I don't know what god is, and yet I am supposed to love him. And therefore I transfer my pleasures of the world, of things, of sex, to a higher level which I call God. It is still pleasure. So what is pleasure in relation to love? What is enjoyment in relation to love? What is joy, the unconscious feeling of joy? The moment I recognise joy it is gone. And what is the relationship of joy, enjoyment and pleasure to love, with love? Unless we understand that we shan't understand what love is.

A: Yes, yes, I have followed you.

K: And take what is happening. Love has been identified with sex, love-making, love sexually, you follow, sir?

A: The very construction: love-making, making love.

K: It's a horrible thing! I feel... It gives me a shock, 'love-making' as though that was love. You see, sir, I think this is very important, the western civilisation has put this over the whole of the earth, through cinemas, through books, through pornography, through every kind of advertisements, stories, this sense of love is identification with sex - which is pleasure, basically.

A: The whole glamour industry is based on that.

K: On that.

A: On that.

K: All the cinema, you know, the whole thing.

A: Yes.

K: So can the mind - again we must come back to the point - can the mind understand the nature of pleasure and its relationship to love. Can the mind that is pursuing pleasure, an ambitious mind, a competitive mind, a mind that says, I must get something out of life (laughs), I must reward myself and others, I must compete. Can such a mind love? It can love sexually. But is love of sex, is that the only thing? And why have we made sex such an enormous affair? Volumes are written on it. Unless really one goes into this very, very deeply, the other thing is not possible even to understand. We can talk endlessly about what love is, what love is not, theoretically. But if we use the word 'love' as a mirror to see what is happening inwardly, and I inevitably must ask the question whether it is pleasure in its multiple forms. Can a man who is top executive, got to that position through drive, through aggression, through deception through ruthlessness, can he know what love is? And can the priest who talks everlastingly of God, he is ambitious to become a bishop, archbishop or whatever his ambitions are - to sit next to Jesus.

A: Who will sit on the right hand.

K: Right hand. So can that priest who talks about it know what love means?

A: No, he thinks he can with reference to something called a higher love which is based on a denial of a lower one.

K: Yes, I mean that's just words.

A: So that's conflict. In that conflict there can be no love.

K: So, then our whole social, moral structure is immoral.

A: Oh, yes.

K: I mean, sir, this is a thing that is appalling. And nobody wants to change that. On the contrary, they say, yes, let's carry on, put on a lot of coating on it, different colours more pleasant, and let's carry on. So, I mean if a man is really concerned to come upon this thing called love he must negate this whole thing, which means he must understand the place of pleasure, whether intellectual pleasure, acquisition of knowledge as pleasure, acquisition of a position as power, you follow? The whole thing. And how is a mind that has been trained, conditioned, sustained in this rotten social conditioning, how can it free itself before it talks about love? It must first free itself of that. Otherwise your talk of love, it's just another word, it has no meaning!

A: We do seem, in western culture particularly, to be very sex-bound. On the one hand we are threatened with unhappiness if we don't succeed sexually.

K: Sexually, yes. That's right.

A: Yet on the other hand the whole history of clinical psychology focuses precisely on the pathology of sexuality.

K: Of course.

A: As somehow able in itself as a study to free us. The interrelationship between those two activities, the desire to succeed on the one hand and the necessity to study what's the matter with the drive on the other, brings about a paralysis.

K: Yes, so you see this thing - sex - has become, I don't know, of such enormous importance right through the world now. In Asia they cover it up. They don't talk about it. If you talk about sex it is something wrong. Here you talk endlessly about it. But there you don't, you know, certain things you don't talk about. You talk about it in the bedroom, or perhaps not even in the bedroom. But you never... I mean it's not done. And when I talk in India, I bring it out. (Laughs) They are a little bit shocked because a religious man is not supposed to deal with all that kind of stuff.

A: No, he is supposed to be beyond that.

K: He is supposed to be, but he mustn't talk about it. That's one of the things, sir, why has sex become so important? You see, love is, after all, a sense of total absence of the 'me', total absence of the me - my ego, my ambitions, my greed, all that, which is me, total negation of all that. Negation, not brutal denial or surgical operation but the understanding of all that. When the 'me' is not, the other is. Obviously. It's so simple! You know, sir, the Christian sign, the cross, I was told is a very, very ancient symbol, previous to Christian acceptance of that symbol.

A: Yes.

K: It meant, wipe out the I.

A: I had never heard of that. Wipe out...

K: Wipe out the I, the me. The I, wipe it out. (Laughs) You understand, sir?

A: Yes, in a non-canonical statement of Jesus, it's written that he remarked that unless you make your up down, and your down up, your right left, left right, the complete total turning of something upside down that one has been accustomed to do, a hundred and eighty degree turn, then one doesn't come to the kingdom of heaven which is of course in his language, is not over here to be expected. He said precisely it doesn't come by observations, it's not here, it's not there, it's within one. Or in the Greek it doesn't mean 'in', as a locus but it's a presence.

K: It's a presence.

A: Yes.

K: So when we are enquiring into this question of love we must enquire into pleasure, pleasure in all its varieties, and its relationship to love, enjoyment to love, real joy, this thing which can never be invited, and its relation to love. So we had better begin with pleasure. That is, the world has made sex into an immense thing. And the priests right through the world, have denied it. They won't look at a woman, though they are burning inside, with lust and all kinds of things. They shut their eyes. And they say, only a man who is a celibate can go to God. Think of the absurdity of such a statement! So anybody who has sex is damned for ever.

A: Then you have to invent some story as to how it was we so-called fell into it.

K: Fell into it, or, the Virgin Mary - you follow? - the whole idea.

A: Yes, the whole thing.

K: Which is a farce. So why have we made it such a fantastic, romantic, sentimental affair, sex? Is it because intellectually we are crippled? We are second-hand people. You follow, sir? I repeat what Plato, Aristotle, Buddha, somebody said, and therefore my mind intellectually is third rate.

A: Exactly.

K: So it is never free. So intellectually I am a slave. Emotionally I become romantic. I become sentimental. And the only escape is sex, where I am free, if the woman or the man agrees, if they are compatible and all the rest of it then it is the only road, only door through which I say, for god's sake, at least I am free here. In the office I am bullied - you follow, sir? - in the factory I just turn the wheels. So this is the only escape for me. The peasant in India, the poor villager in town or in villages, look at them, that is the only thing they have. And religion is something else: I agree we should be celibate, we should be all the rest of it but for god's sake, leave us alone with our pleasures, with our sex. So if that is so, and it looks like that, that we are intellectually, morally, spiritually crippled human beings, degenerate, and this is the only thing that gives us some release, some freedom.

In other fields I have no freedom. I have to go to the office everyday. I have to go to the factory every day. I have to - you follow? - cinema once, three times a week, or whatever it is you do, you've got... and here at last I am a man, woman. So I have made this thing into an enormous affair. And if I am not sexual I have to find out why I am not sexual. I spend years to find out. You follow, sir? Books are written. It has become a nauseating thing, a stupid thing. And we have to also in relation to that, discover, find out what is celibacy. Because they have all talked about it. Every religion has talked about it: that you must be celibate. And they said, Christian religion said, Jesus was born immaculate. You follow? And the Buddhists, I don't know if you ever heard of the story that the Buddha - the mother conceived because she - not out of human relationship, but out of - the same thing. They don't want sex to be associated with a religion. And yet every priest is burning with it. And they said you must be celibate. And they take a vow of celibacy. I told you the story of that poor monk.

A: Oh, yes, yes. A deeply moving story.

K: And what is celibacy? Is it in there, in your heart and your mind? Or just the act?

A: If I have been following you correctly, it seems to me that you pointed to sex here as undergone in a utilitarian way. It's a means to, and therefore, since...

K: A routine, an insistence, encouragement, you follow?

A: Yes. Always a goal that lies outside the activity. Therefore it can never be caught up to.

K: Quite right, quite right. Therefore conflict.

A: Therefore conflict and repetition.

K: And therefore what is celibacy? Is it the act or the mind that is chaste? You follow, sir?

A: It must be the mind.

K: Chaste - chaste mind. Which means a tremendously austere mind. Not the austerity of severity and ruthless acceptance of a principle and all the rest of it.

A: This goes back to the earlier conversation when we were talking about hurt.

K: That's right.

A: The chaste mind would never be hurt.

K: Never. And therefore an innocent mind. Which has no picture of the woman or the man or the act. None of that imagination.

A: This is very fundamental. I know in our conversations that I keep bringing up things that I've read and studied because that has largely been the occupation of my life. And the thing that moves me so deeply in listening to you is that so many of the things that have been said over the centuries, and written over the centuries, ought to have been understood in the way that you've been presenting them. We even have a tradition for instance in Christian theology that what is called the fall of man began at the point of imagination.

K: Right.

A: And yet that hasn't been properly understood, it seems to me. Otherwise had it been properly understood we would not be in this immense conflict that we are in.

K: Christians have first invented the sin and then all the rest of it. It's so...

A: It has been the cart before the horse. Yes, I do see what you are saying.

K: So, can the mind be chaste? Not, can the mind take a vow of celibacy and remain, and have burning desires, you follow? And we talked the other day, about desire. We are burning with desire. All our glands are full of it. So chastity means a mind that has no hurt, no image, no sense of pictures of itself, its appetites, all that. Can such a mind exist in this world? Otherwise love is not. I can talk endlessly about love of Jesus, love of this, love of that, but it becomes so shoddy.

A: Because it's love of.

K: Yes.

A: Yes. Love as an activity is not the same as love undertaken as a means.

K: Yes, sir. So is love pleasure? I can only answer it is not, when I have understood pleasure. And understand not verbally, but deeply, inwardly, see the nature of it, the brutality of it, the divisive process of it. Because pleasure is always divisive. Enjoyment is never divisive. Joy is never dividing. It is only pleasure that is dividing. When you listen to an Arab about the oil, the energy, it is his pride, his - you follow? You see it in his... And you see it in the ministers, in the politicians, this whole sense of arrogance, of power. And at the same time they talk about love.

A: That it's always love of.

K: Of course, love of, or love, I don't know what they mean anyhow. It has no meaning. They say love of my country, and my love is going to kill you.

A: (Laughs) Yes, yes.

K: So, you see sir, we have to understand this killing too. The western civilisation has made killing a perfect art. The war, science of war. They have taught the whole world this. And probably the Christians are the greatest killers, after Muslims, and I believe the real religious, the original Buddhists were really non-killers.

A: Yes.

K: They said don't kill, and keep it! I must tell you this lovely story. I was several years ago in Ceylon and a Buddhist couple came to see me. They said we have got one major problem. We are Buddhist by practice. And they said, we don't kill, but we eat meat. I said what do you mean? He said we change our butchers. (Laughter) We change our butchers, therefore we are not responsible.

A: (Laughs) Amazing.

K: And we like meat. I said, is that the problem? He said no, not at all. Our problem is, should we eat a fertilised egg because that contains life?

A: Oh dear me.

K: Just, sir, when we talk about love, we must also talk about violence and killing. We kill, we have destroyed the earth - you understand, sir? - polluted the earth. We have wiped away species of animals and birds, we are killing baby seals, you've seen them on television?

A: Oh, I have.

K: How a human being can do such a thing!

A: It's deeply shocking.

K: ...for some woman to put on that fur. And he will go back and say, 'I love my wife'. So. And we are trained to kill. All the Generals, they are preparing endlessly, means of killing others. That's our civilisation, you follow, sir? So, can a man who is ambitious, love?

A: No.

K: No. Therefore finish with ambition. They want, they want both. That means, don't kill under any circumstances, don't kill an animal to eat. I have never eaten meat in my life, never. I don't know what it tastes like even. Not that I am proud that I am vegetarian or anything, but I couldn't do it. And killing has become an industry, killing animals to feed human beings. You follow, sir?

A: Yes. It has, right. I was thinking as you were speaking, about chastity and it came to me that the chaste mind would have to be an undivided mind.

K: Yes sir. Killing and loving. (Laughs)

A: And trying to get them together. And then taking all manner of means to palliate my obvious failure to get them together.

K: Of course.

A: The enormity of what you have brought out is truly staggering, and this I would like to stay with, for a second, if you don't mind. I've been listening very intently. It's that your radical counsel to make this stop in oneself is so radical that it requires a kind of seriousness that is not a quantitative relationship to seriousness. In fact we don't really understand what that word means. The relationship between seriousness and love has been coming into my awareness here.

K: Yes, sir, if I am serious then I will never kill, and love then has become as something, it is really compassion. Passion for all, compassion means, passion for all.

A: When you say one will never kill if he loves, you mean within the context of this image-making activity where one kills by design.

K: Yes, not only... Sir, suppose, sir, my sister - I have no sister - but my sister is attacked, a man comes to rape her. I will act at that moment.

A: Precisely.

K: My intelligence, because I love, have compassion, that compassion creates that intelligence, that intelligence will operate at that moment. If you tell me, what will you do if your sister is attacked, I will say, I don't know. I will know then.

A: Yes, I quite follow that, I quite follow that. But we have made an industry of designing.

K: Designed killing.

A: On all levels, not only ourselves.

K: I don't know. I saw the other day on the television in the Red Square there was an enormous intercontinental missile, shot off to kill god knows, blind killing. And the Americans have it, the Indians have it, the French have it, you follow? (Laughs)

A: Have to have it. (Laughs)

K: Of course, of course, we must exist.

A: Yes.

K: So can the mind be free of this urge to kill? Which means can the mind be free of being hurt? So, when there is hurt it does all kinds of neurotic things. Is pleasure love? Is desire love? But we have made pleasure, desire into love. I desire god. (Laughs) You follow, sir? I must learn about god. You follow? - the whole thing. God is my invention, my image, out of my thought I have made that image, and so go around in circles. So I must know what enjoyment is. Is enjoyment pleasure? When I enjoy a good meal, or a good sunset, or see a beautiful tree or woman, whatever it is, at that moment if it doesn't end it becomes pleasure. You understand? If the mind, thought carries over that enjoyment and wants it to be repeated the next day it has become pleasure, it is no longer enjoyment. I enjoy and that's the end of it.

A: William Blake has very, very beautifully, it seems to me, pointed to this. And, of course, he was regarded as a madman (laughs), as you know. I might not remember the words precisely but I think part of his little stanza goes: 'he who kisses a joy as it flies, lives to see eternity's sunrise'.

K: Yes, yes.

A: It's the joy that he kisses as it flies, not the pleasure.

K: No, no.

A: And it's, as it flies. And what you said is, that if he won't let it fly, holds it, then we have fallen out of the act of joy into this...

K: ...pursuit of pleasure. A: ...endless, repetitive in the end mournfully boring thing.

K: And I think, sir, that is what is happening in this country, as well as in Europe and India, primarily in this country, the desire to fulfil instantly - the pleasure-seeking principle. Be entertained, football - you follow? - be entertained.

A: This goes back to what you were pointing out earlier in the last conversation we had, here somebody is, feels empty, needs to be filled.

K: Lonely...

A: Lonely, filled, looking for what we call fulfilment, filling up full.

K: (Laughs) Filling up full.

A: Filling up full. And yet if one undertakes to make this act of attention that you referred to in our discussion about religion, in order to fill up the hole, then we've had it. We're not going to do that. There has been an endless history of that attempt under the name of control of thought.

K: Of course.

A: It would seem that if one doesn't begin in love he will not make this act of attention in a non-utilitarian way. He simply will make it in a utilitarian way, if he doesn't begin in love.

K: It is not of the market place, quite.

A: And that's why in one of the very early conversations we had I take it, you said that the start is the end.

K: Yes. The beginning is the end

A: The beginning is the end.

K: The first step is the last step.

A: The first step is the last step.

K: Quite right.

A: What I've been thinking about all through our conversations so far is, what is involved in - the word 'involved' I don't like - what must one do - well, that's no good either - there is something. We are speaking about an act that is a radical end to all this nonsense that's been going on which is terrifyingly destructive nonsense.

K: I know, sir.

A: There is the doing of something.

K: That is the seeing of all this.

A: And you have said, the seeing is the doing, is the act.

K: Absolutely. As I see danger, I act. I see the danger of the continuity of thought in terms of pleasure, I see the danger of it, therefore end it instantly. If I don't see the danger I'll carry on. If I don't see the danger of nationality, I'm taking that as a very simple... I carry on, murdering, dividing - you follow? - seeking my own safety; but if I see the danger of it, it is finished.

A: May we relate here just for a moment, love to education?

K: Yes.

A: As a teacher I'm immensely concerned in this.

K: Sir, what we have been discussing in our dialogue this last week and now is part of education.

A: Of course it is.

K: It isn't education is there, it is educating the mind to a different thing.

A: I'm thinking of the student who sometimes comes to the teacher and says, I simply must change my way of life. That is, once in a while you will find a student who is up to here, really had it, as we say. The first question they will usually put to you is, what must I do. Now, of course, that's a trap. I've been following you, I've come to see that with much greater clarity than I observed it for myself before. Simply because they are looking for a means when they say that.

K: What must I do.

A: We are not talking about a means.

K: No. Means is the end. Quite.

A: I am thinking of the history of Christianity in this. You've got the question: what must I do to be saved. The answer is believe on.

K: On, yes.

A: And then the poor person is stuck with what this means and ends up believing in belief.

K: Yes, believing, quite.

A: And that of course is abortive. The student comes and says, what must I do? Now in our earlier conversation together we reached the point where the teacher and the student were talking together.

K: Yes. We are doing that now.

A: We are doing this now.

K: I am not your teacher, but we are doing that now.

A: Well, no, I understand in our conversations that is not your role, but I must confess that it has been working out in this order because I have learned immensely. There are two things here that I want to get clear and I need your help. On the one hand to make this pure act of attention, I need only myself. Is that correct?

K: No, not quite, sir.

A: Not quite.

K: Not quite. Sir, let's put the question first. The question is: what am I to do in this world?

A: Yes.

K: That is, what is my place in this world? First of all, the world is me. I am the world. That is an absolute fact. And what am I to do? The world is this - corrupt, immoral, killing, no lack of... there is no love. There is superstition, idol worship, of the mind and the hand. There is war. That is the world. What is my relationship to it? My relationship to it only is if I am that. If I am not that I have no relationship to it.

A: I understand that in terms of act.

K: That's it.

A: In terms of act. Not a notion that I have.

K: For me the world is corrupt, is geared to kill. And I won't kill. What is my relationship to the man who goes and kills a baby seal? I say, my god, how can you do such a thing! You follow, sir? I want to cry about it. I do. How can you educate that man, or the society which allows such a thing to happen?

A: Then perhaps I should rephrase the question and say, well when I do whatever is done in making this pure act of attention, I am not separated from the world in which I am, and the world is not separate from me.

K: I come to it from quite a different angle altogether.

A: Exactly. Fine.

K: I come to it, sir, because there is something different in me operating. Compassion, love, intelligence, all that is operating in me.

A: But it seems that, it seems that two possibilities are here. On the one hand, making this pure act of attention doesn't require that I be in the physical presence of another human being, but of course, I am always in relation whether I am there or not.

K: Of course.

A: Yes, I fully grasp that. But then the second possibility is that within conversation, as we are enjoying it together now, something occurs, something takes place. It's not that we must be together for it to take place. And it's not that we must be alone for it to take place.

K: No.

A: Therefore what we have established is that something occurs which is quite beyond all these distinctions of inner and outer, you are over there, I'm over here.

K: See what takes place, see what takes place. First of all we are serious, really serious. Second, the killing, the corruption, we've cut it. We have finished with it. So we stand alone, alone, not isolated. Because when the mind is not that, it is alone. It hasn't withdrawn. It hasn't cut itself off, it hasn't built an ivory tower for itself, it isn't living in illusion. It says, that is false, that is corrupt, I won't touch it, psychologically. I may put on trousers, etc., etc., but I won't touch inwardly, psychologically, that. Therefore it is completely alone.

A: And it is saying this amidst all this mournful round.

K: Round. Therefore, being alone it is pure.

A: Chaste.

K: Therefore purity can be cut into a million pieces and it will remain still pure. It is not my purity, or your purity, it is pure. Like pure water, it remains pure water.

A: Entirely full, too. Wholly full.

K: Wholly.

A: That takes us back to that Sanskrit: this is full, that is full. Fullness is issued forth from fullness. It's a pity that the English doesn't carry this, the melody that the Sanskrit does.

K: So you see sir, that's very interesting from this conversation what has come out. The thing is, we are frightened of being alone. Which is, we are frightened of being isolated. But every act a human being does is isolating himself. That is, his ambition is isolating himself. When he is nationalistic he is isolating himself. When he says, it is my family - isolating himself. I want to fulfil, isolating himself. When you negate all that, not violently, but see the stupidity of all that, then you are alone. And that has tremendous beauty in it. And therefore that beauty, you can spread it everywhere, but it still remains alone. So the quality of compassion is that. But compassion isn't a word. It happens, it comes with intelligence. This intelligence will dictate if my sister is attacked, at that moment. But it is not intelligence if you say, what will you do if - such a question and an answer to that is unintelligent. I don't know if you see.

A. Oh yes, I am following you precisely.

K: But it is unintelligence, to say well, I am going to prepare to kill all those people who are my enemies - you follow? - which is the army, the navy, the whole sovereign governments are doing it. So love is something, sir, that is really chaste. Chastity is the quality of aloneness and therefore never hurt. I don't know...

A: It's interesting that in this one act one neither hurts himself, nor another. It's a total abstention from hurt.

K: Sir, wait a minute. I have given you all my money because I trust you. And you won't give it to me; I say, please, give me a little of it. You won't. What shall I do? What is the act of intelligence? You follow, sir? Act of affection, act of compassion that says, what will it do? You follow my question? A friend of mine, during the second world war, he found himself in Switzerland. He had quantities of money, plenty of money. And he had a great friend from childhood. And to that friend he said, he had to leave the next minute because... something, you know, the war took place and he had to leave the country and all the rest of it. So he took all the money and he said, here my friend, keep it for me. I'll come back. I'll come back when the war is over. He comes back and says, please. He says, what money?

A: Goodness me.

K: You follow, sir? So, what should he do? Not theoretically. You are put in that position. You give me something. You entrust me with something. And I say, yes, quite right, you have given me, now whistle for it. What is your responsibility? Just walk away?

A: No. If there were a means to recover it then that would be done upon the instant.

K: Intelligence.

A: Intelligence would take over.

K: Therefore, that's what I am saying. Love is not forgiveness - you follow? - I forgive and walk away. Love is intelligence. And intelligence means sensitivity, to be sensitive to the situation. And the situation, if you are sensitive, will tell you what to do. But if you are insensitive, if you are already determined what to do, if you are hurt by what you have done, then insensitive action takes place. I don't know if I...

A: Yes, yes, of course. yes of course. This raises very, very interesting questions about what we mean about conscience.

K: Yes.

A: And the word 'conscience', it seems to me has invited an astonishing amount of...

K: ...rubbish.

A: ...miscomprehension of what's going on.

K: Therefore, sir, one has to investigate what is consciousness.

A: Yes.

K: I don't know if there is time now, but that requires - we'll do it tomorrow, another day: what is consciousness and what is conscience, and what is the thing which tells you to do or not to do?

A: Consciousness in its relation to relationship is something that when we have a chance, I should like to explore with you. I remember years ago in graduate school being very arrested by coming across the statement that was made by an American thinker, I think Montague was his name, when he said, consciousness has been very badly understood because it has been thought that there is something called 'ciousness'. But there is no such thing as 'ciousness'. We've got to get the 'con' in there, the together, the relationship. And without that we have had it. I do hope that next time when we have the opportunity in our next conversation we could explore that.

K: We have to discuss this question, living - living, love and this enormous thing called death. You follow? Are they interrelated or are they separate - living, existing, is it different from love?

Twelfth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Monday, February 25, 1974

Being Hurt and Hurting Others

J. Krishnamurti, Eleventh Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego California, 25 February 1974

Monday, February 25, 1974

A: Mr Krishnamurti, during our conversations one thing has emerged for me with, I'd say, an arresting force. That is, on the one hand we have been talking about thought and knowledge in terms of a dysfunctional relationship to it, but never once have you said that we should get rid of thought, and you have never said that knowledge, as such, in itself, has something profoundly the matter with it. Therefore the relationship between intelligence and thought arises, and the question of what seems to be that which maintains a creative relationship between intelligence and thought - perhaps some primordial activity which abides. And in thinking on this I wondered whether you would agree that perhaps in the history of human existence the concept of god has been generated out of a relationship to this abiding activity, which concept has been very badly abused. And it raises the whole question of the phenomenon of religion itself. I wondered if we might discuss that today?

K: Yes, sir. You know, a word like religion, love, or god, has almost lost all its meaning. They have abused these words so enormously, and religion has become a vast superstition, a great propaganda, incredible beliefs and superstitions, worship of images made by the hand or by the mind. So when we talk about religion I would like, if I may, to be quite clear that we are both of us using the word 'religion' in the real sense of that word, not either in the Christian, or the Hindu, or the Muslim, or the Buddhist, or all the stupid things that are going on in this country in the name of religion.

I think the word 'religion' means gathering together all energy, at all levels, physical, moral, spiritual, at all levels, gathering all this energy which will bring about a great attention. And in that attention there is no frontier, and then from there move. To me that is the meaning of that word: the gathering of total energy to understand what thought cannot possibly capture. Thought is never new, never free, and therefore it is always conditioned and fragmentary, and so on, which we discussed. So religion is not a thing put together by thought, or by fear, or by the pursuit of satisfaction and pleasure, but something totally beyond all this, which isn't romanticism, speculative belief, or sentimentality. And I think if we could keep to that, to the meaning of that word, putting aside all the superstitious nonsense that is going on in the world in the name of religion, which has become really quite a circus, however beautiful it is. Then I think we could from there start, if you will. If you agree to the meaning of that word.

A: Yes. I have been thinking as you have been speaking that in the biblical tradition there are actual statements from the prophets which seem to point to what you are saying. Such things come to mind as Isaiah's, taking the part of the divine, when he says, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways, as high as the heavens are above the earth so are my thoughts and your thoughts, so stop thinking about me in that sense'.

K: Yes, quite.

A: And don't try to find a means to me that you have contrived since my ways are higher than your ways. And then I was thinking while you were speaking concerning this act of attention, this gathering together of all energies of the whole man; the very simple, 'Be still and know that I am God'. Be still. It's amazing when one thinks of the history of religion, how little attention has been paid to that as compared with ritual.

K: But I think when we lost touch with nature, with the universe, with the clouds, lakes, birds, when we lost

touch with all that, then the priests came in. Then all the superstition, fears, exploitation, all that began. The priest became the mediator between the human and the so-called divine. And I believe, if you have read the Rig Veda - I was told about it because I don't read all this - that there, in the first Veda there is no mention of God at all. There is only this worship of something immense, expressed in nature, in the earth, in the clouds, in the trees, in the beauty of vision. But that being, very, very simple, the priests said, that is too simple.

A: (laughs) Let's mix it up.

K: Let's mix it up, let's confuse it a little bit. And then it began. I believe this is traceable from the ancient Vedas to the present time, where the priest became the interpreter, the mediator, the explainer, the exploiter; the man who said, this is right, this is wrong, you must believe this or you will go to perdition, and so on and so on and so on. He generated fear, not the adoration of beauty, not the adoration of life lived totally wholly without conflict, but something placed outside there, beyond and above what he considered to be God and made propaganda for that.

So I feel if we could from the beginning use the word 'religion' in the simplest way. That is, the gathering of all energy so that there is total attention, and in that quality of attention the immeasurable comes into being. Because as we said the other day, the measurable is the mechanical. Which the west has cultivated, made marvellous, technologically, physically - medicine, science, biology and so on and so on, which has made the world so superficial, mechanical, worldly, materialistic. And that is spreading all over the world. And in reaction to that - this materialistic attitude - there are all these superstitious, nonsensical, unreasoned religions that are going on. I don't know if you saw the other day the absurdity of these gurus coming from India and teaching the west how to meditate, how to hold breath, they say, 'I am god, worship me' and falling at their feet, you know - it has become so absurd, and childish, so utterly immature. All that indicates the degradation of the word 'religion', and the human mind that can accept this kind of circus and idiocy.

A: Yes. I was thinking of a remark of Sri Aurobindo's in a study that he made on the Veda, where he traced its decline in this sentence. He said it issues as language from sages, then it falls to the priests, and then after the priests it falls to the scholars or the academicians. But in that study there was no statement that I found as to how it ever fell to the priests. And I was wondering whether...

K: I think it is fairly simple, sir.

A: Yes, please.

K: I think it is fairly simple, sir, how the priests got hold of the whole business. Because man is so concerned with his own petty little affairs, petty little desires, and ambitions, superficiality, he wants something, a little more: he wants a little more romantic, a little more sentimental, more something other than the daily beastly routine of living. So he looks somewhere and the priests say, 'Hey, come over here, I've got the goods'. I think it is very simple how the priests have come in. You see it in India, you see it in the west. You see it everywhere where man begins to be concerned with daily living, the daily operation of bread and butter, house and all the rest of it, he demands something more than that. He says, after all I'll die but there must be something more.

A: So fundamentally it's a matter of securing for himself some...

K: ...heavenly grace.

A: ...some heavenly grace that will preserve him against falling into this mournful round of coming to be and passing away. Thinking of the past, on the one hand, anticipating the future on the other, you're saying he falls out of the present now.

K: Yes, that's right.

A: I understand.

K: So, if we could keep to that meaning of that word 'religion' then from there the question arises: can the mind be so attentive in the total sense that the unnameable comes into being? You see, personally I have never read any of these things, Vedas, Bhagavad-Gita, Upanishads, the Bible, all the rest of it, or any philosophy. But I questioned everything.

A: Yes.

K: Not questioned only, but observe. And I - one sees the absolute necessity of a mind that is completely quiet. Because it's only out of quietness you perceive what is happening. If I am chattering I won't listen to you. If my mind is constantly rattling away, to what you are saying I won't pay attention. To pay attention means to be quiet.

A: There have been some priests, apparently, who usually ended up in a great deal of trouble for it, there have been some priests who had, it seems, a grasp of this. I was thinking of Meister Eckhardt's remark that whoever is able to read the book of nature doesn't need any scriptures at all.

K: At all, that's just it, sir.

A: Of course, he ended up in very great trouble. Yes, he had a bad time toward the end of his life, and after he died the church denounced him.

K: Of course, of course. Organised belief as church, and all the rest of it, is too obvious. It isn't subtle, it hasn't got the quality of real depth and real spirituality. You know what it is.

A: Yes, I do.

K: So I'm asking: what is the quality of a mind, and therefore heart and brain, what is the quality of a mind that can perceive something beyond the measurement of thought? What is the quality of a mind? Because that quality is the religious mind. That quality of a mind that is capable, that has this feeling of being sacred in itself, and therefore is capable of seeing something immeasurably sacred.

A: The word 'devotion' seems to imply this when it is grasped in its proper sense. To use your earlier phrase, gathering together toward a one pointed, attentive...

K: Would you say attention is one pointed?

A: No, I didn't mean to imply focus when I said one pointed.

K: Yes, that's what I wondered.

A: I meant rather, integrated into itself as utterly quiet and unconcerned about taking thought for what is ahead, or what is behind. Simply being there. The word 'there' isn't good either because it suggests that there is a 'where' and 'here', and all the rest of it. It is very difficult to find, it seems to me, language to do justice to what you are saying, precisely because when we speak utterance is in time and it is progressive, it has a quality, doesn't it, more like music than we see in graphic art. You can stand before a picture, whereas to hear music and grasp its theme you virtually have to wait until you get to the end and gather it all up.

K: Quite.

A: And with language you have the same difficulty.

K: No, I think, sir, don't you, when we are enquiring into this Problem: what is the nature and the structure of a mind, and therefore the quality of a mind, that is not only sacred and holy in itself, but is capable of seeing something immense? As we were talking the other day about suffering, personal and the sorrow of

the world, it isn't that we must suffer, suffering is there. Every human being has a dreadful time with it. And there is the suffering of the world. And it isn't that one must go through it, but as it is there one must understand it and go beyond it. And that's one of the qualities of a religious mind, in the sense we are using that word, that is incapable of suffering. It has gone beyond it. Which doesn't mean that it becomes callous. On the contrary it is a passionate mind.

A: One of the things that I have thought much about during our conversations is language itself. On the one hand we say such a mind as you have been describing, is one that is present to suffering. It does nothing to push it away, on the one hand; and yet it is somehow able to contain it, not put it in a vase, or barrel, and contain it in that sense, and yet the very word itself, to suffer, means to under-carry. And it seems close to understand. Over and over again in our conversations I have been thinking about the customary way in which we use language as a use that deprives us of really seeing the glory of what the word points to itself, in itself. I was thinking about the word religion when we were speaking earlier. Scholars differ as to where that came from: on the one hand some say that it means to bind...

K: Bind - ligare.

A: ...the church fathers spoke about that. And then others say, no, no, it means the numinous or the splendour that cannot be exhausted by thought. It seems to me that, wouldn't you say, that there is another sense to 'bind' that is not a negative one, in the sense that if one is making this act of attention, one isn't bound as with cords of ropes. But one is there, or here.

K: Sir, now again let's be clear. When we use the word attention there is a difference between concentration and attention. Concentration is exclusion. I concentrate. That is, bring all my thinking to a certain point, and therefore it is excluding, building a barrier so that it can focus its whole concentration on that. Whereas attention is something entirely different from concentration. In that there is no exclusion. In that there is no resistance. In that there is no effort. And therefore no frontier, no limits.

A: How would you feel about the word 'receptive', in this respect?

K: Again, who is it that is to receive?

A: Already we have made a division.

K: A division.

A: With that word.

K: Yes. I think the word 'attention' is really a very good word. Because it not only understands concentration, not only sees the duality of reception, the receiver and the received, and also it sees the nature of duality and the conflict of the opposites; and attention means not only the brain giving its energy, but also the mind, the heart, the nerves, the total entity, the total human mind giving all its energy to perceive. I think that is the meaning of that word for me at least, to be attentive, attend. Not concentrate, attend. That means listen, see, give your heart to it, give your mind to it, give your whole being to attend, otherwise you can't attend. If I am thinking about something else I can't attend. If I am hearing my own voice, I can't attend.

A: There is a metaphorical use of the word 'waiting' in scripture. It's interesting that in English too we use the word attendant in terms of one who waits on. I'm trying to penetrate the notion of waiting, and patience in relation to this.

K: I think, sir, waiting again means one who is waiting for something. Again there is a duality in that. And when you wait you are expecting. Again a duality. One who is waiting, about to receive. So if we could for the moment hold ourselves to that word, 'attention', then we should enquire what is the quality of a mind

that is so attentive that it has understood, lives, acts, in relationship and responsibility as behaviour, and has no fear psychologically in that, we talked about, and therefore understands the movement of pleasure. Then we come to the point, what is such a mind? I think it would be worthwhile if we could discuss the nature of hurt.

A: Of hurt? Yes.

K: Why human beings are hurt. All people are hurt.

A: You mean both the physical and the psychological?

K: Psychological especially.

A: Especially the psychological one, yes.

K: Physically we can tolerate it. We can bear up with a pain and say I won't let it interfere with my thinking. I won't let it corrode my psychological quality of mind. The mind can watch over that. But the psychological hurts are much more important and difficult to grapple with and understand. I think it is necessary because a mind that is hurt is not an innocent mind. The very word 'innocent' comes from 'innocere', not to hurt. A mind that is incapable of being hurt. And there is a great beauty in that.

A: Yes, there is. It's a marvellous word. We have usually used it to indicate a lack of something.

K: I know.

A: Yes, and there it's turned upside down again.

K: And the Christians have made such an absurd thing of it.

A: Yes, I understand that.

K: So I think we ought to, in discussing religion, we ought to enquire very, very deeply into the nature of hurt, because a mind that is not hurt is an innocent mind. And you need this quality of innocency to be so totally attentive.

A: If I have been following you correctly I think may be you would say, wouldn't you, that one becomes hurt when he starts thinking about thinking that he is hurt.

K: Look sir, it's much deeper than that, isn't it? From childhood the parents compare the child with another child.

A: That's when that thought arises.

K: There it is. When you compare you are hurting.

A: Yes.

K: No, but we do it.

A: Oh yes, of course we do it.

K: Therefore is it possible to educate a child without comparison, without imitation? And therefore never get hurt in that way. And one is hurt because one has built an image about oneself. The image which one has built about oneself is a form of resistance, a wall between you and me. And when you touch that wall at its tender point I get hurt. So not to compare in education, not to have an image about oneself. That's one of the most important things in life, not to have an image about oneself. If you have you are inevitably going to be hurt. Suppose one has an image that one is very good, or that one should be a great success, or that

one has great capacities, gifts, you know the images that one builds, inevitably you are going to come and prick it. Inevitably accidents and incidents happen that's going to break that, and one gets hurt.

A: Doesn't this raise the question of name?

K: Oh, yes.

A: The use of name.

K: Name, form.

A: The child is given a name, the child identifies himself with the name.

K: Yes, the child can identify itself but without the image, just a name: Brown, Mr Brown. There is nothing to it! But the moment he builds an image that Mr Brown is socially, morally different, superior, or inferior, ancient or comes from a very old family, belongs to a certain higher class, aristocracy. The moment that begins, and when that is encouraged and sustained by thought, snobbism, you know the whole of it, how it is, then you are inevitably going to be hurt.

A: What you are saying, I take it, is that there is a radical confusion here involved in the imagining oneself to be his name.

K: Yes. Identification with the name, with the body, with the idea that you are socially different, that your parents, your grandparents were lords, or this or that. You know the whole snobbism of England, and all that, and the different kind of snobbism in this country.

A: We speak in language of preserving our name.

K: Yes. And in India it is the Brahmin, the non Brahmin, the whole business of that. So through education, through tradition, through propaganda we have built an image about ourselves.

A: Is there a relation here in terms of religion, would you say, to the refusal, for instance in the Hebraic tradition, to pronounce the name of God.

K: The word is not the thing anyhow. So you can pronounce it or not pronounce it. If you know the word is never the thing, the description is never the described, then it doesn't matter.

A: No. One of the reasons I've always been over the years deeply drawn to the study of the roots of words is simply because for the most part they point to something very concrete.

K: Very.

A: It's either a thing or it's a gesture, more often than not it's some act.

K: Quite, quite.

A: Some act. When I use the phrase, thinking about thinking, before, I should have been more careful of my words and referred to mulling over the image, which would have been a much better way to put it, wouldn't it?

K: Yes, yes. So can a child be educated never to get hurt? And I have heard professors, scholars, say, a child must be hurt in order to live in the world. And when I asked him, 'Do you want your child to be hurt?' he kept absolutely quiet. It was just talking theoretically. Now unfortunately, through education, through social structure and the nature of our society in which we live, we have been hurt, we have images about ourselves which are going to be hurt, and is it possible not to create images at all? I don't know if I am making myself clear.

A: You are.

K: That is, suppose I have an image about myself - which I haven't fortunately - if I have an image, is it possible to wipe it away, to understand it and therefore dissolve it, and never to create a new image about myself? You understand? Living in a society, being educated, I have built an image, inevitably. Now can that image be wiped away?

A: Wouldn't it disappear with this complete act of attention?

K: That's what I'm coming to gradually. It would totally disappear. But I must understand how this image is born. I can't just say, 'Well, I'll wipe it out'.

A: Yes, we have to...

K: Use attention as a means of wiping it out - it doesn't work that way. In understanding the image, in understanding the hurts, in understanding the education in which one has been brought up, in the family, the society, all that, in the understanding of that, out of that understanding comes attention; not the attention first and then wipe it out. You can't attend if you're hurt. If I am hurt how can I attend? Because that hurt is going to keep me, consciously or unconsciously, from this total attention.

A: The amazing thing, if I'm understanding you correctly, is that even in the study of the dysfunctional history, provided I bring total attention to that, there's going to be a non-temporal relationship between the act of attention and the healing that takes place.

K: Absolutely, that's right.

A: While I am attending the thing is leaving.

K: The thing is leaving, yes, that's it.

A: We've got 'thinging' along here throughout. Yes, exactly.

K: So, there are two questions involved: can the hurts be healed so that not a mark is left; and can future hurts be prevented completely, without any resistance. You follow? Those are two problems. And they can be understood only and resolved when I give attention to the understanding of my hurts. When I look at it, not translate it, not wish to wipe them away, just to look at it - as we went into that question of perception. Just to see my hurts. The hurts I have received: the insults, the negligence, the casual word, the gesture - all those hurt. And the language one uses, specially in this country.

A: Oh yes, yes. There seems to be a relationship between what you are saying and one of the meanings of the word, 'salvation'.

K: 'Salvare', to save.

A: To save.

K: To save.

A: To make whole.

K: To make whole. How can you be whole, sir, if you are hurt?

A: Impossible.

K: Therefore it is tremendously important to understand this question.

A: Yes, it is. But I am thinking of a child who comes to school who has already got a freight car filled with

hurts.

K: I know - hurts.

A: We are not dealing with a little one in the crib now, but we're already...

K: We are already hurt.

A: Already hurt. And hurt because it is hurt. It multiplies endlessly.

K: Of course. From that hurt he's violent. From that hurt he is frightened and therefore withdrawing. From that hurt he will do neurotic things. From that hurt he will accept anything that gives him safety - god, his idea of god is a god who will never hurt. (laughs)

A: Sometimes a distinction is made between ourselves and animals with respect to this problem. An animal, for instance, that has been badly hurt will be disposed toward everyone in terms of emergency and attack.

K: Attack, I know.

A: But over a period of time, it might take three or four years, if the animal is loved and...

K: So, sir, you see, you said, loved. We haven't got that thing.

A: No.

K: And parents haven't got love for their children. They may talk about love. Because the moment they compare the younger to the older they have hurt the child. 'Your father was so clever, you are such a stupid boy.' There you have begun. In schools when they give you marks it is a hurt - not marks - it is a deliberate hurt. And that is stored, and from that there is violence, there is every kind of aggression, you know all that takes place. So a mind cannot be made whole, or is whole, unless this is understood very, very deeply.

A: The question that I had in mind before regarding what we have been saying is that this animal, if loved, will, provided we are not dealing with brain damage or something, will in time love in return. But the thought is that with the human person love cannot be in that sense coerced. It isn't that one would coerce the animal to love, but that the animal, because innocent, does in time simply respond, accept.

K: Accept, of course.

A: But then a human person is doing something we don't think the animal is.

K: No. The human being is being hurt and is hurting all the time.

A: Exactly. Exactly. While he is mulling over his hurt then he is likely to misinterpret the very act of generosity of love that is made toward him. So we are involved in something very frightful here: by the time the child comes into school, seven years old...

K: He is already gone, finished, tortured. There is the tragedy of it, sir, that is what I mean.

A: Yes, I know. And when you ask the question, as you have: is there a way to educate the child so that the child...

K: ...is never hurt. That is part of education, that is part of culture. Civilisation is hurting. Sir, look, you see this everywhere all over the world, this constant comparison, constant imitation, constant saying, you are that, I must be like you. I must be like Krishna, like Buddha, like Jesus - you follow? That's a hurt. Religions have hurt people.

A: The child is born to a hurt parent, sent to a school where it is taught by a hurt teacher. Now you are

asking: is there a way to educate this child so that the child recovers.

K: I say it is possible, sir.

A: Yes, please.

K: That is, when the teacher realises, when the educator realises he is hurt and the child is hurt, he is aware of his hurt and he is aware also of the child's hurt then the relationship changes. Then he will in the very act of teaching, mathematics, whatever it is, he is not only freeing himself from his hurt but also helping the child to be free of his hurt. After all that is education: to see that I, who am the teacher, I am hurt, I have gone through agonies of hurt, and I want to help that child not to be hurt, and he has come to the school being hurt. So I say, 'All right, we both are hurt, my friends, let us see, let's help each other to wipe it out'. That is the act of love.

A: Comparing the human organism with the animal, I return to the question whether it is the case that this relationship to another human being must bring about this healing.

K: Obviously, sir, if relationship exists, we said relationship can only exist when there is no image between you and me.

A: Let us say that there is a teacher who has come to grips with this in himself, very, very deeply, has, as you put it, gone into the question deeper, deeper and deeper, has come to a place where he no longer is hurt-bound. The child that he meets or the young student that he meets, or even a student his own age, because we have adult education, is a person who is hurt-bound and will he not...

K: Transmit that hurt to another?

A: No, will he not, because he is hurt-bound, be prone to misinterpret the activity of the one who is not hurt-bound?

K: But there is no person who is not hurt-bound, except very, very few. Look, sir, lots of things have happened to me personally, I have never been hurt. I say this in all humility, in the real sense, I don't know what it means to be hurt. Things have happened to me, people have done every kind of thing to me, praised me, flattered me, kicked me around, everything. It is possible. And as a teacher, as educator, to see the child, and it is my responsibility as an educator to see he is never hurt, not just teach some beastly subject. This is far more important.

A: I think I have some grasp of what you are talking about. I don't think I could ever in my wildest dreams say that I have never been hurt. Though I do have difficulty, and have since a child - I have even been taken to task for it - of dwelling on it. I remember a colleague of mine once saying to me with some testiness when we were discussing a situation in which there was conflict in the faculty: 'Well, the trouble with you is you see, you can't hate.' And it was looked upon as a disorder in terms of being unable to make a focus towards the enemy in such a way as to devote total attention to that.

K: Sanity is taken for insanity.

A: Yes, so my reply to him was simply, 'Well that's right and, we might as well face it, and I don't intend to do anything about that'.

K: Quite, quite, quite.

A: But it didn't help the situation in terms of the interrelationship.

K: So the question is then: in education can a teacher, educator, observe his hurts, become aware of them, and in his relationship with the student resolve his hurt and the student's? That's one problem. It is possible

if the teacher is really, in the deep sense of the word, educator, that is, cultivated. And the next question, sir, from that arises: is the mind capable of not being hurt, knowing it has been hurt? Not add more hurts. Right?

A: Yes.

K: I have these two problems: one, being hurt, that is the past; and never to be hurt again. Which doesn't mean I build a wall of resistance, that I withdraw, that I go off into a monastery, or become a drug addict, or some silly thing like that, but no hurt. Is that possible? You see the two questions? Now, what is hurt? What is the thing that is hurt? You follow?

A: Yes.

K: We said the physical hurt is not the same as the psychological.

A: No.

K: So we are dealing with psychological hurt. What is the thing that is hurt? The psyche? The image which I have about myself?

A: It is an investment that I have in it.

K: Yes, it's my investment in myself.

A: Yes. I've divided myself off from myself.

K: Yes, in myself. That means, why should I invest in myself. What is 'myself'? You follow?

A: Yes, I do.

K: In which I have to invest something. What is myself? All the words, the names, the qualities, the education, the bank account, the furniture, the house, the hurts, all that is me.

A: In an attempt to answer the question: what is myself, I immediately must resort to all this stuff.

K: Obviously.

A: There isn't any other way. And then I haven't got it. Then I praise myself because I must be so marvellous as somehow to slip out.

K: Quite, quite. (both laugh)

A: I see what you mean. I was thinking just a moment back when you were saying it is possible for the teacher to come into relationship with the student so that a work of healing, or an act of healing happens.

K: See sir, this is what I would do if I were in a class, that's the first thing I would begin with, not some subject. I would say, 'Look, you are hurt and I am hurt, we are both of us hurt'. And point out what hurt does, how it kills people, how it destroys people; out of that there is violence, out of that there is brutality, out of that I want to hurt people. You follow? All that comes in. I would spend ten minutes talking about that, every day, in different ways, till both of us see it. Then as an educator I will use the right word and the student will use the right word, there will be no gesture, there'll be no irritation, we are both involved in it. But we don't do that. The moment we come into class we pick up a book and there it goes off. If I was an educator, whether with the older people, or with the younger people, I would establish this relationship. That's my duty, that's my job, that's my function, not just to transmit some information.

A: Yes, that's really very profound. I think one of the reasons that what you have said is so difficult for an educator reared within the whole academic...

K: Yes, because we are so vain!

A: Exactly. We want not only to hear that it is possible for this transformation to take place, but we want it to be regarded as demonstrably proved and therefore not merely possible but predictably certain.

K: Certain, yes, we want a guarantee.

A: And then we are back into the whole thing.

K: Of course we are back into the old rotten stuff. Quite right.

A: Next time could we take up the relationship of love to this?

K: Yes, we will.

A: I would very much enjoy that, and it would seem to me...

K: ...it will all come together.

A: Come together, in the gathering together.

J. Krishnamurti, Eleventh Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego California 1974

Monday, February 25, 1974

A Different Way of Living

Thirteenth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Tuesday, February 26, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti, at the end of our last conversation, if I remember correctly, we were looking into the relationships among living, and love and death. That is we had just begun to, when we had to bring our discussion to an end. I was hoping today that we might pursue this in terms of our continuing concern for the transformation of man.

Krishnamurti: As usual, sir, this is such a complex question, this living, what it means and what it actually is; and love, which we talked about the other day fairly in detail and rather closely; and also this enormous problem of death. Every religion has offered a comforting belief, comforting ideas, hoping there would be a solution for the fear, sorrow and all the things that are involved in it. So we ought, I think perhaps we should begin with what is living and then go from there to love and death.

A: Good.

K: Shouldn't we actually look at what we call living now, what is taking place.

A: Yes.

K: What actually is going on which we call existence, living, those two words to cover this whole field of man's endeavour to better himself, not only in the technological world but also psychologically, he wants to be different, he wants to be more than what he is, and so on. So when we look at it in whatever country, and whatever race, or whatever religion they belong to, it is a matter of constant struggle from the moment you are born to the moment you die, it is one battle. Not only in relationship with other human beings, however intimate or not intimate, but also economically, socially, morally, it is a vast battle. I think everyone agrees to that. And that's obvious. The conflict, the struggle, the suffering, the pain, the frustrations, the agony, the despair, the violence, the brutality, killing each other, all that is what is actually going on. Spending forty, fifty years in an office, in a factory, occasional holidays for a month, and wild kind of holidays because the holidays are a reaction to their monotonous life.

A: Time out.

K: Time out or whatever it is called. You see them all over Europe - Americans - going from museum to museum, looking at this, that, rushing about and that is an escape from the monotony of their daily routine. And they go off to India, and there are I believe about fifteen thousand so-called hippies in various dresses and various monasteries, and various cities doing the most fantastic things - selling drugs, some of them, and putting on Indian clothes, dressing up as monks and all that. It is a kind of vast romantic sentimental escape from their daily monotonous routine life. That is what we call living: the battle in relationship, the battle in business, in economic environment. It is a constant struggle.

A: What you've said seems to be ingrained into the grasp of this living itself. We have a saying, life is a battle. We interpret it in terms of what you have said.

K: And nobody seems to say, why should it be that way? And we have all accepted it. We say, yes, it is part of our existence. If we don't struggle we are destroyed. It is a part of our natural inheritance. From the animal, we see how it struggles so we are part of the animal, part of the ape and we must go on struggling,

struggling, struggling. We have never said, is this right? Is this the way to live? Is this the way to behave, to appreciate the beauty of living?

A: The usual question turns on how to engage the battle more effectively.

K: Effectively, successfully, with least harm, with least strain, with least heart failure (laughs) and so on, so on, so on. But the ground is prepared for struggle. The monks do it - you follow, sir? - the religious people do it, the business, the artist, the painter, every human being, however compartmentalised he is, he is in battle. And that we call living. And a man looks at it - an intelligent man, he says, for god's sake, that's not the way to live. Let's find out if there is a different way of living. And nobody asks. I have talked to a great many politicians all over the world and to a great many gurus. We will come to that, it's very interesting, that word, what it means. We'll go into that. And I've talked to artists, to businessmen, to artisans, to labourers, very, very, very poor people, it is one constant battle. The rich, the poor, the middle class, the scientist, you follow, sir?

A: Oh yes, I'm following.

K: And nobody says, this is wrong, this isn't living. It's Bleeding! (Laughs)

A: I was thinking about the literatures of the world of a visionary nature that tend to be divided into three basic statements in terms of their form and content. On the one hand we have epics that deal precisely with the representation of the battle of life.

K: We have got the Odyssey, we have got the Mahabharata, we have got so many other books, all praising this thing.

A: And then others deal with what we call the journey of life, the Odyssey would be specifically related to that, there are many battles concerned within it, in terms of confrontations between individuals. And then there's the notion of life as a fulfilment. But we hardly ever get to the question of the fulfilment. And when these are studied they are studied in terms of a literary form and the question that you've raised, which it seems to me would be a question that should be presented to the student in general.

K: And it is an authentic question, it's a question that must be put.

A: I was reflecting as you were speaking that in the class room itself it's taken for granted that this battle is what it is. It is to be related to with fortitude, and so forth, but the question concerning it doesn't arise.

K: No, to some young people it has arisen but they go off at a tangent.

A: Exactly.

K: Either a commune, or become a Hindu - you follow? - go off to some ancient country and just disintegrate, do nothing, think nothing, just live.

A: Which is really a lateral movement.

K: Yes, lateral.

A: Not a vertical one.

K: That's right.

A: Into the question. Yes.

K: So it is a valid question and it must have a valid answer, not theoretical but say, well, I will live that way. I will live without conflict. See what it means. I may be smothered. I question whether you will be wiped out

by society if you don't struggle. I've never struggled personally. I have never thought of battling with myself or with somebody else. So I think a question of that kind must not only be put verbally, but in the expression of that word one must see if it is possible for each one of us to live that way, to live without a single conflict. That means without division. Conflict means division. Conflict means the battle of the opposites. Conflict means you and me, we and they, Americans, Russians, you know, the division, division, division. Fragmentation not only inwardly but outwardly. Where there is fragmentation there must be battle. One fragment assuming the power and dominating the other fragments. So, an intelligent man, if there is such a person (laughs), has to find out a way of living which is not going to sleep, which is not just vegetating, which is not just escaping to some fanciful, mystical visions and all that stuff, but a way of living in daily life, in which conflict of any kind has come to an end. It is possible. I have watched it all around me for the last oh, 50 years, the battle going on around me, spiritually, economically, socially, one class battling the other class, and the dictatorships, the fascists, the communists, the nazis - you follow, sir?

A: Yes, I do.

K: All of them have their roots in this: encouraging obedience, discouraging obedience (laughs), imitating, conforming, obeying - all battle. So life has become a battle. And to me personally, to live that way is the most destructive, uncreative way of living. I won't live that way. I would rather disappear.

A: I think perhaps, and I wonder if you would agree, that some sort of confusion has arisen here in our minds when we identify ourselves with this battle in terms of your description of it. When we begin to think about the question, 'ought this to continue' and we have the image of battle before us, we tend to imagine to ourselves that what we are really talking about is the human equivalent of what is called, 'nature red in tooth and claw'.

K: 'Tooth and claw'. Quite.

A: But if I am following you correctly this is a cardinal mistake because in our previous conversations you have, at least for me, very, very clearly indicated that we must distinguish between fear and danger; and the animals, in their own environment, act with clean and immediate dispatch in the presence of danger whereas it seems we are making a mistake if we attempt to study what we call human conflict on the level of this analogy because analogy, if I have understood you correctly, simply doesn't apply.

K: Doesn't, no.

A: Don't you agree that this tends to be done?

K: Oh rather, sir, rather. We study the animal or the birds in order to understand man.

A: Right.

K: Whereas you can study man, which is yourself. You don't have to go to the animal to know man. So that is, sir, really a very important question, because I have, if I may talk a little about myself, I've watched it all.

A: Please do.

K: I've watched it in India. The sannyasis, the monks, the gurus, the disciples, the politicians all over the world. I've happened to have, somehow I have met them all - the writers, the famous people, the painters who are very well-known, most of them have come to see me. And it is a sense of deep anxiety that if they don't struggle they will be nothing. They will be failures, that is, that way of living is the only and the righteous way of living.

A: To drive oneself to be what is called productive.

K: Productive, progressive.

A: Progressive.

K: And we are taught this from childhood.

A: Oh, yes.

K: Our education is that. To battle, not only with yourself, with your neighbour, and yet love the neighbour, you follow? (Laughs) It becomes too ridiculous. So, having stated that, is there a way of living without conflict? I say there is, obviously. Which is to understand the division, to understand the conflict, to see how fragmented we are, not try to integrate the fragments, which is impossible, but out of that perception the action is entirely different from integration. Seeing the fragmentations which bring about conflict, which bring about division, which bring about this constant battle, anxiety, strain, heart failure. You follow, sir? That is what is happening. To see it, to perceive it, and that very perception brings an action which is totally different from the action of conflict. Because the action of conflict has its own energy, brings its own energy, which is divisive, which is destructive, violent. But the energy of perception and acting is entirely different. And that energy is the energy of creation. Anything that is created cannot be in conflict. An artist who is in conflict with his colours, he is not a creative human being. He may have perfect craft, perfect technique, a gift for painting, but that's...

A: It interests me very much that you've used the word 'energy' here in relation to both activities.

K: Both activities, yes.

A: And you haven't said that the energy at root is different.

K: No, no.

A: The phenomenon is different.

K: Yes.

A: It would appear that when one makes success, prosperity, victory, the object of his activity and engages this conflict, which he interprets as engaging him, he always tends to think that things are coming at me. When he undertakes this, if I have understood you correctly, energy is released, but it is released in fragmentary patterns.

K: The other way, yes.

A: Yes. Whereas the energy that's released with perception is the same energy is always whole.

K: Is whole. Yes, sir, that's right.

A: Isn't that what you are...

K: Yes sir. That's right. Therefore sane, therefore healthy, therefore holy - H-O-L-Y.

A: Yes. I have the feeling that this release of energy which shatters out into patterns of energy as fragmentation, is really what we mean by the word 'demonic'.

K: Demonic, that's right.

A: That's giving it a hard name.

K: But it is a good name.

A: But, you are really saying this, aren't you?

K: It's an excellent name.

A: I am saying this.

K: But I agree, I totally see that with you. I see it is demonic. It is the very destructive thing.

A: Exactly.

K: And that's what our society is, our culture is.

A: What we've done to that word 'demonic'! I was just thinking about Socrates, who refers to his 'daimon', meaning the energy that operates in wholeness.

K: That's right, sir.

A: And we have taken that word from the Greek clear out of the context of the apology and turned it upside down and now it means...

K: The devil.

A: Right. And the same thing happened with the use of the word, 'asuras'. Originally in the Veda this was not a reference to the demonic, there was no radical polarisation.

K: No, no, no, quite.

A: And finally we end up with the gods and the demons.

K: Quite.

A: Which I take it you are suggesting is nothing other than the sheerest projection of our own demonic behaviour which we have generated ourselves.

K: That's right.

A: You see, this makes tremendous sense to me. Yes, please go on.

K: Now, so, the way we live is the most impractical, insane way of living. And we want the insane way of living made more practical.

A: (Laughs) Yes, and there isn't a prayer for it.

K: But that is what we are demanding all the time. We never say, let's find a way of living which is whole, and therefore healthy, sane and holy. And through that, through perceiving, acting, is the release of total energy, which is non-fragmentary, which isn't the artist, the business man, the politician, the priest, the layman, all that doesn't exist at all. Now, to bring about such a mind, such a way of living, one has to observe what actually is taking place outside and inside, in us, inside and outside. And look at it, not try to change it, not try to transform it, not try to bring about different adjustment, see actually what it is. I look at a mountain, I can't change it. Even with a bulldozer I can't change it. But we want to change what we see. The observer is the observed, you understand, sir? Therefore, there is no change in that. Whereas in perception there is no observer. There is only seeing, and therefore acting.

A: This holds a mirror up to an earlier conversation we had, when you referred to beauty, passion, suffering.

K: Yes, suffering, and action, yes.

A: And I remember asking you the question in order to recover the correct relationship among them we must begin with the suffering which, if perceived as it ought to be perceived, generates passion.

K: That's right.

A: One doesn't have to work it out. It happens. And behold, upon the same instant beauty breaks out, and love. So the passion in itself is compassion. The 'com' comes in exactly with the passion.

K: With passion, that's right.

A: Yes.

K: Now, sir, if you could as a professor or as a teacher, or as a parent point this out, the impracticality of the way we are living, the destructiveness of it, the utter indifference to the earth. We are destroying everything we touch. And to point out a way of living in which there is no conflict. That seems to me is the function of the highest form of education.

A: Yes, it has a requirement in it though that seems to me very clear, namely the teacher himself must be without conflict. This is a very, very different point of departure from what occurs in our general educational structure, particularly in professional educational activities where one gets a degree in professional education rather than in an academic subject as such. We are taught, for instance, and I am speaking about this somewhat as an outsider because I don't have a degree in education but in an academic subject as such, but I have observed in what goes on with my colleagues in education that tremendous emphasis is placed on techniques of teaching.

K: Of course, of course.

A: And the question of the individual teacher as having undergone a transformation of the sort that you have been discussing is not a factor of radical concern. What is, of course, in an altruistic sense a matter of concern is that the teacher have the interests of the students at heart and that sort of thing, which, of course, is laudable in itself, but it's after the fact, it's after the fact of this first transformation.

K: Yes sir, but you see first I must transform myself so I can teach.

A: Precisely, precisely.

K: Wait, see that, there is a little bit, something in it that is not quite accurate. That means I have to wait till I change. Why can't I change, if I am an educator, in the very act of teaching? The boys, the students live in conflict. The educator lives in conflict. Now if I was an educator with a lot of students, I would begin with that and say, I am in conflict, and you are in conflict, let us see in discussing, in becoming aware of our relationship, in teaching, if it is not possible for me and for you to dissolve this conflict. Then it has action. But if I have to wait till I'm free of all conflict I can wait till doomsday.

A: I see now exactly what you are saying. What you are saying is literally this: the teacher, who is presently in conflict, simply just acknowledges this. Walks into the classroom...

K: That's right, sir,

A:...not as somebody who is free from conflict...

K: That's right.

A: No, but he walks into the classroom and here it is, we are facing it. And he looks at his students and he lays it out.

K: That's the first thing I would discuss, not the technical subjects. Because that's living. And then I discuss. And also in the very teaching of a technical subject I would say, all right, let us see how we approach, you know, I can learn from that so that both the student and the educator know their conflicts and are interested

in dissolving the conflict and therefore they are tremendously concerned. That produces an extraordinary relationship. Because I have watched it. I go to several schools in India and in England and it takes place.

A: In this taking place love breaks out.

K: Of course, of course. That is the very essence of it. Because I care, I feel responsible.

A: May I go into this just a little bit. One of the things that has concerned me in this series of our dialogues is that someone should have perhaps not seen as clearly as I think you have pointed out for me, that in our discussions of thought and of knowledge what we have been saying is that there is some dysfunction in thought and in knowledge which relates to its own nature, the nature of thought and the nature of knowledge, which could very well give the impression that thought is a disease or that knowledge is a disease, rather than giving the impression, as I have understood from you that thought and knowledge have their proper uses.

K: Of course.

A: Their natures are not corrupt as such.

K: Obviously not.

A: Exactly.

K: It is the usage of it. Quite.

A: Right. Therefore it becomes of utmost importance, I think in understanding what you are saying, to be aware of the corrective that we bring to bear when together we examine the uses of thought and the uses of knowledge. While at the same time, not assuming that the principle of thought, the principle of knowledge is in its own nature corrupt.

K: No. Quite right.

A: So that in a classroom we could study a text in which an assertion is made, a positive statement is made without thinking that name and form are in themselves...

K: Corrupt.

A:...corrupt.

K: Obviously not. A microphone is a microphone. There is nothing corrupt about it.

A: Exactly, but you know the thing comes home to me with tremendous force that one must begin in his relationship to his students with doing this. I must tell a little story on myself here. Years ago I went to hear a lecture of yours, and I listened, I thought, very, very carefully. And, of course, one lecture is not in itself, perhaps at least for someone like me, it was not enough. Or another way to put it more honestly would be, I was not enough (laughs) at the time for the lecture because it seems as I recall it now, that the principles that we have been discussing you stated very, very clearly. I went away from that lecture with the impression that there was a very close relationship between what you are saying and Buddhism, and I was thinking about this whole label thing as scholars are wont to do, you know how we divide the world up into species. And in our series of conversations now, I've come to see that I was profoundly mistaken. Profoundly mistaken. And I pinch myself to think, you know, I might have gone on thinking what I thought before, which had nothing to do with anything that you were concerned in. It is a revelation to face it that one doesn't have to have a credential to start with before he walks into the room. (Laughs) He just has to start looking at the very thing that he believes is going to bring him into a hostile relationship with his class in order... because we believe that there are things that we must avoid talking about because they create

dissension, disruption and put us off. And therefore let's not talk about conflict. Or if we are going to talk about it let's talk about it in terms of our being the ones who have the light over against these others who don't, and we have to take the good news to them.

K: It's like a guru.

A: Right, but simply to come into the room and say, let's have a look without any presuppositions, without my thinking that I have this in hand and you don't, or you have it and I don't. We're going to just hold it together.

K: Right, sir. Share together.

A: Share it together, and behold... (Laughs) Am I following you?

K: Perfectly.

A: Oh, that's wonderful. I'm going to do this, after our conversation comes to an end, I will walk into that room. (Laughs) Do go on.

K: So, sir, the energy that is created through conflict is destructive. The energy that is created through conflict, struggle, battle produces violence, hysteria, neurotic actions and so on. Whereas the action of perception is total, non-fragmentary, and therefore it is healthy, sane and brings about such intense care and responsibility. Now that is the way to live: seeing, acting, seeing, acting, all the time. I cannot see if there is an observer different from the observed. The observer is the observed.

A: This does a very marvellous thing to what we call our confrontation with death.

K: We'll come to that, yes.

A: I see I have made a...

K: ...jump.

A: I didn't mean to get ahead.

K: No, no, sir, that's right. So you see, our whole content of consciousness is the battle, is the ground of battle, is the battleground, and this battle we call living. And, in that battle how can love exist? If I am hitting you, if I am competing with you, if I am trying to go beyond you, successful, ruthless, where does the flame of love or compassion, tenderness, gentleness, come into all that? It doesn't. And that's why our society as it is now has no sense of moral responsibility with regard to action or with regard to love. It doesn't exist.

A: I'm going back into the context of my own experience in the classroom again. It has always seemed to me that the first stanza of the Gita, the first stanza, the first chapter of the Gita, which begins dharmaksettre Kuruksettre - in the field of Dharma, in the Kuru field, that 'in the Kuru field' is a statement in apposition and that the field is one. I have walked into class when we started to do the Gita and I've tried to show both linguistically, as it seemed to me was capable from the text, and in terms of the spirit of the whole that this was really what was being said, that it's one field, it's not two fields, though we have one army over here and the other over here but they don't occupy two fields. Somehow it is one field.

K: It is our earth.

A: Right. It's the whole.

K: Yes, sir.

A: But you see I think I would have done better, now that I've listened to you, if I had gone into class and instead of making that statement and inviting them to look carefully at the text, and to bear that in mind as we proceed through the teaching and watch for any misinterpretations of that that will have occurred in commentary after commentary; it would have been better if I had started the other way. It would have been better if I had started by saying, let's have a look and see together whether it is one field or whether it's a field with conflict. We are not going to read the book at all at this point, we are just going to start here. This is the field. The classroom is the field. Now, let's take a look. That would have been the better way.

K: If you have understood that, sir, the classroom is the field and if you understand that, you have understood the whole thing.

A: Exactly. But I went in with the notion, that, though I had grasped that, so I thought, it was enough, simply to show that verbally. But it's patently not. And this is terrifying. Because even though, if you say in the classroom what ostensibly passes for what we call the right thing, it still will not prevail in terms of this act...

K: Act, yes.

A: ...that we've been talking about.

K: Quite right. Can we go sir, from there. We've discussed life, living, in which love does not exist at all. Love can only exist when the perceiver is the perceived and acts, as we said. Then that flame, that compassion, that sense of holding the earth in your arms as it were, if that is understood and from that, behaviour, because that is the foundation, if there is no behaviour in the sense of non-conflicting behaviour, then after establishing that in ourselves, or in observing it we can proceed next to the question of death. Because the question of death is an immense thing. To me living, love and death are not separate. They are one movement. It isn't death over there which I am going to meet in twenty years or the next day. It is there. It is there with love and with living. It is a continuous movement, non-divisive. This is the way I live, think, feel. That's my life. I mean this. These are not just words to me.

So, before we enter into the question of death we have to go into the question of what is consciousness? Because if one doesn't understand what is consciousness - not the explanation, not the description, not the word, but the reality of consciousness. Am I as a human ever conscious? And what is it to be conscious? What is it to be aware? Am I aware totally, or just occasionally I am aware when a crisis arises, otherwise I am dormant. So that's why it becomes very important to find out what is consciousness. Right sir?

A: Yes, what you have just said seems to me to indicate that we are making a distinction between consciousness which is a continuing movement, utterly situated in act as over against these blips, these eruptions virtually, within the sleepy course of nature.

K: Nature. That's right.

A: Yes, I see that. Please go ahead.

K: So what is consciousness? Consciousness is its content. I am putting it very simply. I prefer to talk about these things very simply, not elaborate, linguistic descriptions and theories and suppositions, and all the rest of it. That has no meaning to me personally.

A: If it is true it will be simple.

K: Simple.

A: Yes, of course.

K: Consciousness is its content. The content is consciousness. The two are not separate. That is, the

thoughts, the anxieties, the identifications, the conflicts, the anxiety, the attachments, detachments, the fears, the pleasures, the agony, the suffering, the beliefs, the neurotic actions, all that is my consciousness. Because that is the content.

A: This is an equivalent statement to, the world is me and I am the world.

K: That's right.

A: So there's a continuity there.

K: Yes, that's right. So the content which says, that is my furniture, that's my god, that's my belief, with all its nuances and subtleties, and all that, is part of my consciousness, is part of the consciousness which says, I am. I am that, I am the furniture. When I identify myself, saying, that's my furniture, I must keep it - you follow? - when I am attached to it. I am that. I am that knowledge which says, I have acquired knowledge, I have grown in it, I have been successful in it, it has given me great comfort, it has given me a house, a position, power. That house is me. The battle which I have been through, suffering, agony, that's me, that's my consciousness. So the content of consciousness is its content, therefore there is no division as consciousness separate from its content. I can extend or widen the consciousness, laterally or horizontally, I mean horizontally or vertically, but it is still within that field. I can extend it saying, God is immense. That's my belief. And I've extended my consciousness by imagining that it is extended. Whatever thought has created in the world, and inside me is the content. The whole world, especially in the west, is based on thought. Its activities, its explorations, its achievements, its religions and so on is fundamentally the result of thought, with its images and so on, so on, so on. So that is the content of consciousness. Right?

A: Right.

K: Now from that rises, what is death? Is death the ending of consciousness, with its content, or is death a continuity of that consciousness? Your consciousness is not different from mine. It may have little variations, little modifications, little more expansion, little contraction, and so on but essentially consciousness is yours as well as mine, because I am attached to my house. So are you. I am attached to my knowledge, I am attached to my family, I am in despair whether I live in India or in England or in America, wherever it is. So that consciousness is common. It is irrefutable. You follow, sir?

A: Oh, it is, yes. I do follow closely.

K: So, see what happens. I never have examined this content. I have never looked at it closely and I am frightened, frightened of something which I call death, the unknown. Let us call it for the moment, the unknown. So, I'm frightened. There is no answer to it. Somebody comes along and says, yes my friend, there is life after death. I have proof for it. I know it exists because I have met my brother, my son - we will go into that presently. So I, frightened, anxious, fearful, diseased - you follow? - I accept that tremendously, instantly say, yes there is reincarnation. I am going to be born next life. And that life is related to karma. The word 'karma' means to act. Not all the rigmarole involved in it, just to act. See what is involved. That is, if I believe in reincarnation, that is this consciousness, with its content, which is the 'me', my ego, my self, my activities, my hopes, pleasures, all that is my consciousness, that consciousness is going to be born next life, which is the common consciousness of you and me, and him and her. That's going to be born next life. And they say if you behave properly now you'll be rewarded next life. That's part of the causation.

A: That's part of the content of consciousness.

K: Causation and the effect.

A: Yes.

K: So behave because you are going to be punished next life. You will be rewarded next life. That is, the

whole of the Eastern world is based on it, believes in reincarnation. So what happens? I have taken comfort in a belief but actually I don't carry it out: which says behave now, be good now, don't hurt another now.

A: Actually the idea is that I should behave now - we've been through this 'ought' stuff. I should this, I should that, I should the other because of what will take place later. But then I take comfort in the thought that it's an endless process and it's somehow built into it that I'll get another chance. So I can sort of stall, I can stall.

K: I can stall. I can postpone, I can misbehave.

A: Yes. Because we are all destined to make it in the end.

K: Eventually. Yes.

A: Which shows that there's no grasp of what, throughout these conversations, you've been talking about, the immediacy and urgency of act.

K: Act. That's right.

A: Yes, yes, I follow.

K: So you see the Hindus probably were the originators of this idea - cause, effect. The effect will be modified by next causation. So there is this endless chain. And they say it's endless we'll break it sometime. Therefore doesn't matter what you do now. Belief gives you great comfort in believing that you will continue, you will be with your brother, wife, husband, whatever it is. But in the meantime don't bother too seriously, don't take life too seriously.

A: Exactly, yes, yes.

K: Have a good time in fact. Enjoy yourself. Or do whatever you want to do, pay a little next life, but carry on.

A: I was speaking to a well-known Hindu teacher about this and I made this very remark that you have just stated, and I thought it would have some force. And I said, you see there's no hope of stopping repeating, if an act is not made immediately with respect to this, therefore in terms of the content of the consciousness of a whole people that bask in this notion, there can be nothing but an endless repetition and no true concern.

K: What did he say?

A: All he did was laugh as though I had somehow perceived something which most people apparently are not really bothering their heads to look at. But the extraordinary thing to me was that he showed no concern for what he discerned intellectually.

K. Sir, that's what... they are hypocrites - you follow, sir? They are hypocrites when they believe that and do something quite contrary.

A: Precisely, I understand what you mean. What you are saying there is the usage of the Biblical notion of hypocrite in that strict sense.

K: Sir, in the strict sense, of course.

A: Yes, in the very strict sense. In our next conversation could we continue with this because it seems to me...

K: Oh, there is a great deal involved in this.

A: Splendid. I do so look forward to that.

K: Yes. We'll go into it.

Thirteenth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Tuesday, February 26, 1974

Death, Life and Love Are Indivisible The Nature of Immortality

Fourteenth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Tuesday, February 26, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti in our last conversation we were beginning to talk about consciousness and its relation to death in the context of living as a total movement.

Krishnamurti: Yes.

A: And we even touched on the word reincarnation toward the end when we had to draw our conversation to its conclusion. I do hope that we can begin to continue there.

K: You see one of the factors in death is the mind is so frightened. We are so frightened of that very word and nobody talks about it. I mean it isn't a daily conversation. It is something to be avoided, something that is inevitable, for god's sake keep it as far away as possible.

A: We even paint corpses to make them look as if they are not dead.

K: That's the most absurd thing. Now what we are discussing, sir, is, isn't it, the understanding of death, its relation to living and this thing called love. One cannot possibly understand the immensity, and it is immense, this thing called death, unless there is a real freedom from fear. That's why we talked sometime ago about the problem of fear. Without really freeing the mind, unless the mind frees itself from fear there is no possibility of understanding the extraordinary beauty, strength and the vitality of death.

A: That's a very, very, remarkable way to put it - the vitality of death. And yet normally we regard it as the total negation of life.

K: The negation of life. That's right. So if we are enquiring into this question of death, fear must be completely non-existent in us. Then I can proceed. Then I can find out what death means. We have touched a little bit on reincarnation, the belief that is maintained throughout the East which has no reality in daily life. It is like going to church every Sunday and being mischievous for the rest of the six days. So - you follow? - a person who is really serious, really attentive, goes into this question of death, he must understand what it means, the quality of it, not the ending of it. That's what we are going to a little bit discuss.

The ancient Egyptians, the pharaohs and all the first dynasty till the eighteenth and so on, they prepared for death. They said we will cross that river with all our goods, with all our chariots, with all our belongings, with all our property; and therefore their caves, their tombs were filled with all the things of their daily life, corn, you know all that. So living was only a means to an ending, dying. That's one way of looking at it. The other is reincarnation, which is the Indian, Asiatic outlook. And there is this whole idea of resurrection, of the Christians. Reborn, carried, by the Gabriel Angel, and all that, to heaven and you will be rewarded. Now, what is the fact? These are all theories, suppositions, beliefs and non-facts. I mean, supposed to be born Jesus comes out of the grave, resurrected physically. That is just a belief. There were no cameras there, there were no ten people to say, yes I saw it. It is only somebody imagined. We will go into that a little bit a little later.

So there is this living and preparing for death as the ancient Egyptians did. Then there is the reincarnation. Then there is resurrection. Now, if one isn't frightened - you follow, sir - deeply, then what is death? What

is it that dies, apart from the organism? The organism may continue if you look after it very carefully for eighty or ninety, or one hundred years. If you have no disease, if you have no accidents, if there is a way of living sanely, healthily, perhaps you will last one hundred years or 110 years. And then what? You follow, sir? You will live one hundred years, for what! For this kind of life? - fighting, quarrelling, bickering, bitterness, anger, jealousy, futility, a meaningless existence. It is a meaningless existence as we are living now.

A: And in terms of our previous remarks, this is all the content of our consciousness.

K: Our consciousness. That's right. So what is it that dies? And what is it I am frightened of, one is frightened of? You follow? What is it one is frightened of in death? Losing the known? Losing my wife? Losing my house? Losing all the things I have acquired? Losing this content of consciousness? You follow? So, can the content of consciousness be totally emptied? You follow, sir?

A: Yes, I do.

K: Which is the living. The dying is the living, when the content is totally emptied. That means no attachment. It isn't a brutal cutting off, but the understanding of attachment, the understanding of dependency, the understanding of acquisition, power, position, anxiety, all that. The emptying of that is the real death. And therefore the emptying of consciousness means the consciousness which has created its own limitation by its content, comes to an end. I wonder if... have I?

A: Yes, you have. I was following you very carefully and it occurred to me that there is a radical relation between birth and death, that the two, when they are looked upon as moments in a total cycle are not grasped at the depth level that you are beginning to speak about.

K: Yes sir.

A: Am I correct?

K: Correct.

A: Good, please do go on.

K: So, death becomes a living when the content of consciousness, which makes its own frontier, its own limitation, comes to an end. And this is not a theory, not a speculative, intellectual grasp, but the actual perception of attachment. I am taking that as an example, being attached to something - property, man, woman, the book I have written, or the knowledge I have acquired. The attachment. And the battle to be detached. Because attachment brings pain. Therefore I say to myself, I must be detached. And the battle begins. And the whole content of my consciousness is this - the battle which we described previously. Now can that content be emptied - empty itself? Not emptied by an act of perception - you understand? - empty itself. Which means can this whole content be observed, with its unconscious content? You follow, sir?

A: Yes, I do. I'm thinking.

K: I can be consciously aware of the content of my consciousness - my house, my property, my wife, my children, my job, the things I have acquired, the things I have learned. I can be consciously aware of all that. But also there is a deeper content in the very recesses of my mind which is racial, collective, acquired, the things that unconsciously I have gathered, the influences, the pressures, the strains of living in a world that is corrupt. All that has seeped in, all that has gathered in there.

A: Both personal and impersonal.

K: Impersonal, yes, that's right.

A: This includes then what the depth psychologists are calling 'collective unconscious'.

K: I don't know what they call it.

A: As well as the personal consciousness.

K: Collective as well as... So there is that. Now can all that be exposed? Because this is very important. Because if I really want to go, if the mind really wants to understand and grasp the full meaning of death, the vastness of it, the great quality of a mind that says, yes that's empty - you follow? - it gives a tremendous vitality, energy. So, my question is: can the mind be aware totally of all the content, hidden as well as the open, the collective, the personal, the racial, the transitory? You follow? The whole of that. Now, we say it is possible through analysis.

A: Yes, we do.

K: I said, analysis is paralysis. Because every analysis must be perfect, complete. And you are frightened that it might not be complete. And if you have not completed it you carry it over as a memory which will then analyse the next incident. So each analysis brings its own incompleteness.

A: Oh, certainly, yes.

K: Therefore it is a total paralysis.

A: In following what you are saying, I'm very taken with what we usually regard as death which has a very clear relationship to what you've said about the endless series of analytical acts.

K: Acts. Yes, sir.

A: We regard death as terminus in terms of a line.

K: Quite, because we think laterally.

A: We think laterally, exactly. But what you're saying is, on the contrary, we must regard this vertically.

K: Yes.

A: And in the regarding of it vertically we no longer see, please check me if I am off here, we no longer see death as simply a moment of termination to a certain trajectory of repetition. But there is a total qualitative change here which is not the cessation of something that we have to regret as though we had lost something valuable.

K: Yes, I am leaving my wife and children.

A: Right.

K: And my property, my blasted bank account.

A: Yes, yes.

K: You see, sir, if one can go very deeply into this: there is this content which is my consciousness, acquired, inherited imposed, influenced, propaganda, attachment, detachment, anxiety, fear, pleasure, all that, and also the hidden things. I'm asking myself, since analysis is really paralysis, not an intellectual supposition, but actually it is not a complete act, analysis can never produce a complete act, the very word analysis means to break up, you know, the breaking up.

A: To loosen up.

K: Loosen up, break it up. Therefore I reject that totally. I won't analyse because I see the stupidity, the paralytic process of it. Then what am I to do? You are following? Because that's the tradition, introspective, or analysis by myself or by a professional, which is now the fashion and so on, so on, so on. So if the mind sees the truth of it, and therefore analysis falls away, then what is the mind to do with the content? You...

A: Yes, I do see that.

K: We know what the content is. We don't have every time really describe. Now, what is it to do? It has to be emptied. Otherwise it is mere continuity.

A: No, there is no use analysing what is already there because that will not change what is there in any way shape or form. That seems to be very, very plain. Perhaps you would for a moment explain why we simply refuse to see that. We do believe that an analytical enquiry is ordered through a revelation. We do believe that.

K: No sir. You can see it in a minute. Analysis implies the analyser and the analysed.

A: Yes.

K: The analyser is the analysed.

A: Yes, we are back to the observer and the observed.

K: I am analysing my anger. Who is the analyser? Part of the fragment which is anger. So the analyser pretends to be different from the analysed. But when I see the truth that the analyser is the analysed then a totally different action takes place. Then there is no conflict between the analyser and the analysed. There is instant action, a perception, which is the ending and going beyond the 'what is'.

A: The reason I asked for the explanation was because of the concern raised earlier about knowledge.

K: Yes. After all the observer is knowledge.

A: Yes, I was concerned that study, in its proper form was not regarded in the context of our discussion as unprofitable as such.

K: No, no, of course not.

A: We don't mean that.

K: We didn't even discuss it. That's so obvious.

A: Yes, fine, do go. Well it is obvious in terms of our discussion, but the thing that concerns me is that so ingrained is the notion that, for instance, in the story I told about when I came to hear you years ago, I began doing analysis while I was listening to your words and consequently I could hardly end up with anything qualitatively differently from what I came in with. But you see I didn't see that at the time. And in our videotaping our conversations here, this will be listened to, and when we say yes, about knowledge this is obvious, in the context of our conversation it is. But then I'm thinking of...

K: Not only in the context of our conversation, it is so.

A: It is as such.

K: It is.

A: Exactly, I couldn't agree, but immediately I flashed back to my own behaviour, and I know that I was not alone in that because I listened to other conversations regarding it at the time. But, yes, I see what you mean now about analysis as such. It seems to me very clear.

K: Analysis implies, sir, the analyser and the analysed.

A: Precisely.

K: The analyser is the analysed. And also analysis implies time, duration. I must take time to unearth, to uncover, and it will take me rest of my life.

A: This is a confusion we have about death too, death's relation to time.

K: That's right. I'm coming to that.

A: Yes, of course, yes, please do, please.

K: So, the mind perceiving, discards analysis completely. Not because it's not profitable, not because it doesn't get me where I want, but I see the impossibility of emptying the consciousness of its content, if I approach - if the mind approaches through that channel: analyser, time, and the utter futility at the end of 40 years I am still analysing.

A: And the content of my consciousness has not qualitatively changed at all.

K: Changed at all.

A: No, it's become intensified in its corruption. (Laughs)

K: That's right. That's right. So. But the mind must see its content, must be totally aware of it, not fragments of it. How is that to be done? You follow, sir?

A: Yes I do.

K: Because that's very important in relation to death. Because the content of my consciousness is consciousness. That consciousness is me, my ego, my saying I and you, we and they - whether they the communists, they the Catholic, they the Protestant or they the Hindu - they and we. So it is very important to find out whether it is possible to empty consciousness of its content. Which means the dying to the me. You follow?

A: Yes I do.

K: Because that is the me.

A: This is where the terror starts.

K: That's where the terror starts.

A: Precisely. There's the intuition that if I die to the content of this consciousness that I am wiped out.

K: Yes, so I, who have worked, who have lived a righteous life or unrighteous life, who have done so much, mischief or good, I have struggled to better myself, I've been so kind, so gentle, so angry, so bitter - you follow? - and when you say, empty your consciousness, it means you are asking me to die to all that! So, you are touching at the very root of fear.

A: Yes, exactly.

K: At the root of terror of not being. Oh yes, that's it, sir. And I want to immortalise that me. I do it through books, writing a book and say, famous book. Or I paint. Or through paint, through works, through good acts, through building this or that, I immortalise myself.

A: This has very pernicious effects within the family, because we must have a son in order to...

K: ...carry on

A: ...immortalise the name in time.

K: Therefore the family becomes a danger.

A: Exactly.

K: So, look what we have done, sir: the ancient Egyptians immortalised themselves, made their life immortal by thinking, carrying on.

A: Perpetuity.

K: Perpetuity. And the robbers come and tear it all to pieces. Tutankhamen is merely a mask now, a golden mask with a mummy, and so on. So man has sought immortality through works, through every way to find that which is immortal, that is, beyond mortality. Right?

A: It's a very remarkable thing that the word 'immortal' is a negative.

K: Yes, not mortal.

A. Yes, it's not saying what it is. (Laughs) Yes.

K: We are going to find out what it is.

A: Good.

K: You follow, sir? This is a very, very serious thing. It isn't a plaything between two people who are enjoying a discussion. It is a tremendously important thing.

A: Yes, I was laughing at the irony of it. That inherent in the structure of that word there is a warning, and we just go right through the red light.

K: Right.

A: Yes, please do go on.

K: So, what is immortality? Not the book.

A: Oh no.

K: Not the painting which I have done, not going to the moon and putting some idiotic flag up there. Not living a righteous life, or not living a righteous life. So what is immortality? The cathedrals are beautiful, marvellous cathedrals, in stone - an earthquake comes, gone. You build, you carve out of marble a marvellous thing of Michelangelo, an earthquake, fire - destroyed. Some lunatic comes along with a hammer and breaks it up. So it is in none of those. Right?

A: Right.

K: Because that is capable of being destroyed. Every statue becomes a dead thing, every poem, every painting. So then one asks, what is immortality? It's not in the building, just see it, sir. It's not in the cathedral. It's not in the Saviour which you have invented, which thought has invented. Not in the gods that man has created out of his own image. Then what is immortality? Because that is related to consciousness and to death. Unless I find that out, death is a terror.

A: Of course, of course.

K: I have tried to immortalise myself, become immortal by the thought that there is a Brahman, there is a

god, there is eternity, there is a nameless one, and I will do everything to approach him. Therefore I'll lead a righteous life. Therefore I will pray, I will beg, I will obey, I will live a life of poverty, chastity, and so on, so on, so on - in order to have that immortal reality with me. But I know all that is born of thought. Right, sir?

A: Yes, as soon as...

K: Wait a minute, sir, see what happens.

A: Yes.

K: So I see thought and its products are the children of barren women.

A: Precisely.

K: See what's taken place. Then what is immortality? The beauty in the church - not I built the church - the beauty in the cathedral, the beauty in the poem, the beauty in the sculpture - the beauty, not the object of beauty. I wonder...

A: The beauty itself.

K: Itself. That is immortal. And I cannot grasp that, the mind cannot grasp it because beauty is not in the field of consciousness.

A: Yes. You see what you have said again stands it all on its head. We think when something dies that we have cherished, that is beautiful, that beauty dies in some sense with that which has passed away.

K: Passed away, yes.

A: Actually it's the feeling of being bereft of that beauty that I regarded as my privilege to have personal access to. The belief that that has perished, not simply being lost because what is lost is by its nature predisposed to be found. But to perish is to be wiped out utterly, isn't it? And so the belief is deep.

K: Oh, very, very.

A: Extremely deep with respect to what we mean by perish. In fact the word isn't used very often, it's frightening, it's a very frightening word. We always talk about losing things, hardly ever do we say something perishes. Now back to what I mentioned about standing it on its head. The image came to my mind as a metaphor. I hope not one of those images (laughs) we've been talking about. That beauty, rather than being imprisoned, and therefore taken down to the utter depths of nullity, when the thing perishes, has simply let it go. In some sense beauty has let this expression go. That is upside down from what is usually thought.

K: I know, I know.

A: And it has probably let it go precisely on time. (Laughs)

K: That's right.

A: That's what's so marvellous, yes, yes.

K: So, immortality, we have said, is within the field of time.

A: In the one field.

K: Right?

A: Yes.

K: The field of time.

A: Yes.

K: And death is also then in the field of time. Because I have created, through thought, the things of time. And death is the ending or the beginning of a state which is timeless. Of that I am frightened. So I want everything preserved in the field of time. You follow, sir?

A: Yes, yes we think it could...

K: And that is what we call immortal - the statue, the poem, the church, the cathedral. And I see also all that is corruptible, destroyed by one accident, or by an earthquake, everything is gone. So immortality is not within the field of time. And time is thought - of course.

A: Of course, yes, that follows.

K: Of course. So anything that thought creates must be within the field of time. And yet thought is trying to seek immortality, which is immortality of itself, and the things it has created. You...

A: Yes.

K: So, then the problem is, can the mind see all this, see it? Not imagine that it is seeing it.

A: No, actually see it.

K: Actually see it.

A: Yes, the remark I made before when you began saying the field of time, and I said, the one field, I didn't mean that the field of time, as you've described it, is the one field, but that we could be so appallingly...

K: ...blind.

A: ...mistaken and blind...

K: Ignorant.

A: ...that the field of time is another fragment.

K: That's right.

A: And it's the only field. And what really struck me was this misuse of thought generates the most appalling avarice.

K: Yes, sir.

A: I'm walling myself up in stone. Yes, please.

K: So, the mind, perceiving all this, if it is alert, if it has been watchful all the time that we have been discussing, must inevitably see the whole content exposed, without any effort. It's like reading a map. You spread it out and look. But if you want to go in a direction, then you don't look at the whole map. Then you say, I want to go from here to there, the direction is there, so many miles, and you do - you don't look at the rest. What we are asking is, no direction but just look. Look at the content of your consciousness without direction, without choice. Be aware of it without any exertion of discernment. Be choicelessly aware of this extraordinary map. Then that choiceless awareness gives you that tremendous energy to go beyond it. But you need energy to go beyond it.

A: This leads me to the notion of reincarnation that we began to touch on a little earlier: that I see the demonic root in that.

K: Yes, sir. You see, reincarnate next life. Nobody says, incarnate now.

A: Yes, exactly.

K: You follow, sir?

A: Yes, I do, I do.

K: You can only incarnate now when you die to the content.

A: And there is...

K: You can be reborn, regenerated totally if you die to the content.

A: Yes. Yes. Yes. And there is a terrible truth on the dark side, the demonic side, to this doctrine of reincarnation, because if that content of consciousness is not emptied out then it must prevail!

K: So what happens?

A: Then it really does, yes!

K: It prevails. So what happens? I do not know, as a human being, how to empty this thing. I'm not even interested. I'm only frightened.

A: Only scared to death.

K: Scared to death. And I preserve something, and I die, am burned or buried under ground. The content goes on. As we said, the content of me is your content also, it's not so very different.

A: No, no, no.

K: Slightly modified, slightly exaggerated, given certain tendencies which depend on your conditioning of environment and so on, so on, but it is essentially same consciousness. Unless a human being empties that consciousness, that consciousness goes on like a river - collecting, accumulating all that's going on. And out of that river comes the expression, or the manifestation of the one that is lost. When the mediums, seances, all those say, your brother, your uncle, your wife is here, what has happened is they have manifested themselves out of that stream which is the continuous consciousness of struggle, pain, unhappiness, misery, all that. And a man who has observed and has looked at the consciousness and empties it, he doesn't belong to that stream at all. Then he is living each moment anew because he is dying each moment. You understand, sir?

A: Oh, yes I do, yes I do.

K: There is no accumulation of the me which has to be expressed. He is dying every minute; living every minute, and dying every minute. Therefore in that there is - what shall I say - there is no content. You follow, sir?

A: Yes.

K: It is like a tremendous energy in action.

A: This gives a totally different understanding of what we mean by the phrase, 'in the after life'. On the one hand there is this continuity in disordered content of consciousness...

K: It is totally disordered, that's right.

A: ...which is not radically affected qualitatively with respect to its nature, simply because somebody has stopped breathing for good. No. It's on its way.

K: On its way.

A: And therefore the attempt that is often made on the part of persons to contact this stream of consciousness after the death of a person, when made within the same quality of consciousness, attains nothing but a reinforcement...

K: Yes, that's right.

A: ...within their own personal life.

K: That's right.

A: And it does a terrible thing to their content of consciousness, which has gone on, since it also feeds that some more.

K: That's right.

A: Yes, I do see that.

K: A person came to see me and his wife was dead. And he really thought he loved her. So he said, I must see my wife again. Can you help me? I said, which wife do you want to see? The one that cooked? The one that bore the children? The one that gave you sex? The one that quarrelled with you? The one that dominated you, frightened you? He said, I don't want to meet any of those. I want to meet the good of her. You follow, sir?

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

K: The image of the good he has built out of her. None of the ugly things, or what he considered ugly things, but the idea of the good which he had culled out of her, and that is the image he wants to meet. I said, don't be infantile. You are so utterly immature. When you have slept with her, and got angry with her, all that you don't want, you want just the image which you have about her goodness. I said... And you know, sir, he began to cry, really cry for the first time. He said, afterwards, I have cried when she died, but the tears were of self-pity, my loneliness, my sense of - you follow? - lack of things. Now I am crying, I have cried because I see what I have done. You understand, sir?

A: Yes, I do.

K: So to understand death there must be no fear. The fear exists and the terror of it exists only when the content is not understood. And the content is the 'me'. And the 'me' is the chair, you follow, sir?

A: Yes.

K: The thing I am attached to. It is so stupid! And I am frightened of that, the bank account, the family, you follow?

A: Oh, yes, yes I do.

K: So unless one is really, deeply serious in this matter, you can't incarnate now, in the deep sense of that word; and therefore immortality is in the book, in the statue, in the cathedral, in the things I have put together, the things I have put together by thought. That's all the field of time.

A: Right. It just occurred to me what a terrible thing we have been doing so often over and over again to

Plato by this perennial attempt at academic analysis of the text, when he plainly said that the business of the philosopher, by which he didn't mean the analyser in this mad way that we have been observing it goes on - the business of the philosopher, namely the one who is concerned with a radical change and rebirth, which he associates with wisdom; the business of the philosopher is to practise dying, to practise dying.

K: Not practice.

A: I don't think he meant routine, repetition, die, die, die, die, die. I think he puts it with an 'ing', because he doesn't want to fall out of act. I know I use this phrase all the time but it came to me early in our conversations and it seems to say, for me, what I want to say. I have to say I learned it from you, though I don't want to put the words in your mouth. But it's possible to fall out of act into the terror and the demonic stream of time, but when one is in act the whole thing is an ongoing move.

K: So, sir, time has a stop.

A: Precisely.

K: See the beauty of it, sir. And it is that beauty which is immortal, not the things which thought has created.

A: Right.

K: So living is dying.

A: Right.

K: And love is essentially dying to the me. Not the things which thought has said this is love - love-sex, love-pleasure. You follow? All that.

A: Yes.

K: It is the dying to time, is love. So living, love and death are one thing, not divisive, not separated, not divorced, not in the field of time but it is completely a living, moving thing, indivisible. And that is immortal.

A: Yes.

K: So. Now, most of us are educated wrongly.

A: How true that is!

K: From childhood we are never taught to be serious. From childhood we are taught the cultivation of thought, the cultivation of thought and the expression and the marvels of thought. All our philosophies, books, everything is based on that. And when you say, die to all that, you really awaken the terror of not knowing. This gives me security in knowing.

A: Yes.

K: Then knowledge becomes the field of my safety. And you ask me, give all that up, die to all that. And I say, you are insane. How can I die to that, that's part of me.

A: There's a very, very beautiful, Zen saying that seems to relate to this when it's understood correctly. It speaks of jumping off the cliff with hands free. Jumping off the cliff with hands free. The hands...

K: ...that hold.

A: ...that hold, always grasping the past or reaching out towards the future, and we never get off that

horizontal track. It's like a Lionel train, it forever goes on.

K: So then comes the question, what is living in the present? Death is the future. And I've lived for 40 years, all the Accumulated memories. What is the present? The present is the death of the content. You follow, sir?

A: Yes.

K: I don't know, it has got immense beauty in that. Because that means no conflict - you follow sir? - no tomorrow. If you tell a man who loves, who is going to enjoy that man or woman tomorrow, when you say, there is no tomorrow, he says, what are you talking about?

A: Yes, I know. Sometimes you will say when you have said something, it sounds absurd.

K: Of course.

A: And, of course, in relation to the way we have been taught to do analysis it sounds absurd.

K: Therefore, sir, can we educate children, students, to live totally differently? Live and understand and act with this sense of understanding the content and the beauty of it all.

A: If I've understood you correctly there's only one answer to that question: yes, yes. It sounds - I think the word here wouldn't be, 'absurd' - it would be something like, 'wild'. (Laughs) Yes, I see now what you mean about death and birth as non-temporally related in terms of the question that we raised about their relation earlier, because when you say there is this incarnation...

K: ...now.

A: ...now, upon the instant...

K: Yes, sir.

A: ...then...

K: No, if you see the beauty of it, sir, the thing takes place.

A: Then it's happened.

K: It is not the result of mentation.

A: No.

K: It is not the result of immense thinking, thinking, thinking. It is actual perception of 'what is'.

A: And the amazement that it is the same energy at root.

K: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

A: It doesn't take something over here that's a different energy called god.

K: No, that's an outside agency brought in here.

A: No.

K: It is the same wasted energy, dissipated energy which is no longer dissipated.

A: Exactly.

K: Therefore, it is...

A: Exactly. This throws a totally - I'm beginning now to use the words, absolutely and totally, which in the Academy, you know, we're, advised to be very careful of. (Laughs)

K: I know, I know.

A: But, I'm sorry about all that. The fact remains that it is total. It is total.

K: Yes.

A: There is a total change. And the transformation of each individual is a total one.

K: It is not within the field of time and knowledge.

A: Is not within the field of time and knowledge.

K: You see now the relation.

A: Yes, and then the profound seriousness of it that attends when one sees the rest of that sentence of yours: it is the responsibility of each. And if I may add just one other thing here because it seems to me that it is coming together. That it isn't the responsibility of one over against the other to do something. It is to come with and to, as the other is coming to and with, and we begin together...

K: Yes, sir. Share together.

A: ...to have a look.

K: Learn together.

A: Just quietly having a look. And in that activity, which is not planned - one of the amazing things about this conversation is that it, to use your beautiful word, 'flowers'. K: It flowers, yes.

A: It doesn't require an imposition without, of a contrivance.

K: No. No contrivance.

A: Of a management.

K: Or management, quite.

A: Somehow it grows out of itself. It's this thing of growing out of itself that relates to this thing that you've been talking about in consciousness. By pointing to the head I don't mean consciousness is not here, but it's the 'out of itself', it's like that water that turns in on itself.

K: But it remains water.

A: It remains water. Exactly. This has been a wonderful revelation, the whole thing about death, living and love. I do hope when we have our next conversation that we could begin to pursue this in relation to education even further.

K: Further, yes, sir.

Fourteenth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Tuesday, February 26, 1974

Religion, Authority and Education Part One

Fifteenth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Wednesday, February 27, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti, we were talking last time together about death in the context of living, and love. And as I remember just as we came to the close of what we were discussing we thought it would be good to pursue this in terms of a further enquiry into education, what really goes on between teacher and student when they begin looking together. And what are the traps that immediately appear, and shock? You mentioned the terror of death, not simply externally, but internally in relation to thought. And it seemed to me perhaps it would be a splendid thing if we just continued that and went deeper into it.

Krishnamurti: Sir, I would like to ask why we are educated at all. What is the meaning of this education that people receive? Apparently they don't understand a thing of life, they don't understand fear, pleasure, the whole thing that we have discussed, and the ultimate fear of death and the terror of not being. Is it that we have become so utterly materialistic that we are only concerned with good jobs, money, pleasure and superficial amusements, entertainments, whether they be religious or football. Is it that our whole nature and structure has become so utterly meaningless? And when we are educated to that, and to suddenly face something real is terrifying.

And as we were saying yesterday, we are not educated to look at ourselves, we are not educated to understand the whole business of living, we are not educated to look and see what happens if we face death. So I was wondering as we came along this morning, religion, which we were going to discuss anyhow, has become merely not only a divisive process but also utterly meaningless. Maybe 2,000 years as Christianity, or 3,000, 5,000 as Hinduism, Buddhism and so on, it has lost its substance. And we never enquire into what is religion, what is education, what is living, what is dying, you know, the whole business of it. We never ask, what is it all about. And when we do ask, we say, well, life has very little meaning. And it has very little meaning, as we live, and so we escape into all kinds of fantastic, romantic nonsense, which has no reason, which we can't discuss, or logically enquire, but it is mere escape from this utter emptiness of the life that one leads. I don't know if you saw the other day, a group of people adoring a human being, and they were doing the most fantastic things, and that's what they call religion, that's what they call God. They seem to have lost all reason. Reason apparently has no meaning any more, either.

A: I did see a documentary that was actually put on by this station, in which the whole meeting operation was being portrayed between the public and this individual in this young 15 year old guru, Maharajji. It was extraordinary.

K: ...disgusting.

A: Amazing. It was in many respects revolting.

K: And that's what they call religion. So shall we begin with religion and go on?

A: Yes, I think that would be a splendid thing to do.

K: All right, sir. You know man has always wanted or tried to find out something beyond the everyday living, everyday routine, everyday pleasures, every activity of thought, he wanted something much more. I don't know whether you have been to India, I do not know if you have been to villages. They put a little stone under a tree, put some marking on it, the next day they have flowers, and for all the people that are

there it has become divinity, it has become something religious. That same principle is continued in the cathedrals. Exactly the same thing when you have mass and all the rituals in India, all that, it begins there: the desire for human beings to find something more than what thought has put together. Not being able to find it they romanticise it, they create symbols, or somebody who has got a little bit of this, they worship. And round that they do all kinds of rituals, Indian puja, you know all that business goes on. And that is called religion. Which has absolutely nothing to do with behaviour, with our daily life.

So seeing all this, both in the west and the east, in the world of Islam, in the world of Buddhism and all this, it is the same principle going on: worshipping an image which they have created, whether it is the Buddha, or Jesus or Christ, it is the human mind that has created the image.

A: Oh yes, oh, certainly.

K: And they worship the image which is their own. In other words they are worshipping themselves.

A: And the division, the split, grows wider.

K: Wider. So religion, when one asks what is religion, obviously one must negate in the sense not brutally cut off, understand all this. And so negate all the religions: negate the religion of India and the multiple gods and goddesses; and here the religion of Christianity, which is an image which they have created, which is idolatry. They might not like to call it idolatry but it is. It is an idolatry of the mind. The mind has created the ideal, and the mind through the hand created the statue, the cross and so on, so on. So if one really puts all that aside, the belief, the superstition, the worship of the person, the worship of an idea, and the rituals and the tradition, all that, if one can do it, and one must do it to find out.

A: Exactly. There is a point of terror here that is many, many faceted it seems to me, it has so many different mirrors that it holds up to one's own dysfunction. To reach the place where one is willing to begin at the point where he makes this negation in order to find out, he thinks very often that he is being required to assume something in advance in order to make the negation.

K: Oh, of course.

A: Therefore he balks at that, and he won't do it.

K: No, because sir the brain needs security, otherwise it can't function.

A: That's right.

K: So it finds security in a belief, in an image, in rituals, in the propaganda of 2,000 or 5,000 years. And there, there is a sense of safety, comfort, security, well-being, somebody is looking after, the image of somebody greater than me who is looking after me, inwardly he is responsible. All that. When you are asking a human being to negate all that, he is faced with an immense sense of danger, an immense sense - he becomes panicked.

A: Exactly.

K: So to see all that, to see the absurdity of all the present religions, the utter meaninglessness of it all, and to face being totally insecure, and not be frightened.

A: I sense a trick that one can play on himself right here. Again I am very grateful to you that we are exploring together this pathology in its various facets. One can begin with the notion that he is going to make this negation in order to attain to something better.

K: Oh no, that's not negation.

A: And that's not negation at all.

K: No. Negation is to deny what is false not knowing what is, what is truth. To see the false in the false and to see the truth in the false, and it is the truth that denies the false. You don't deny the false, but you see what is false, and the very seeing of what is false is the truth. I don't know...

A: Yes, of course, of course.

K: And that denies, that sweeps away all this. I don't know if I am making myself clear.

A: Well, I had a very interesting experience in class yesterday. I had given the class an assignment. I think I mentioned this in a conversation we had yesterday, that I had given the class an assignment to go and look at the tree. So in fact I am making a report as to what happened after they came back. Well, one young woman described what happened to her; and she described it in such a way that the class was convinced, and I was convinced that there was no blockage of her looking between herself and this tree. She was calmly ecstatic in her report. That sounds like a curious juxtaposition of words, but it seems to me to be correct. But then I asked her a question. And I said, well, now were you thinking of yourself as looking at this tree? And she hesitated - mind you she had already gone through this whole statement, which was very beautifully undertaken - and I come along playing the role of the serpent in the garden (laughs) and I said, well now might it not have been the case that any time when you were doing this that you thought of yourself looking at the tree?

K: As the observer.

A: And with this hesitation she began to fall more and more out of her own act. Well, we had a look at that, she and I and the class, we all had a look at what she was doing. Finally she turned around and said, well, the reason that I stopped was not because of what went on between me and the tree - I am very clear about that - it's because I am in class now and I am thinking that I ought to say the right thing, and so I have gone and ruined the whole thing. (Laughs) It was a revelation not only to her but you could see with respect to the faces all around the room that we are all involved in this nonsense.

K: Yes, sir.

A: And her shock that she could so betray this relationship that she had had in doing her exercise in just a couple of words, was almost...

K: Very revealing.

A: Yes, extremely revealing, but at the same time desperately hard to believe that anybody would do such a thing to himself.

K: Quite.

A: Yes. Please, please do go on.

K: So, sir, that's it. Negation can only take place when the mind sees the false, the very perception of the false is the negation of the false. And when you see the religions based on miracles, based on personal worship, based on fear that you, yourself, your own life is so shoddy, empty, meaningless, and it is so transient, you will be gone in a few years, and then the mind creates the image which is eternal, which is marvellous, which is the beautiful, the heaven, and identifies with it and worships it. Because it needs a sense of security, deeply, and it has created all this superficial nonsense, a circus - it is a circus.

A: Oh, yes.

K: So can the mind observe this phenomenon, and see its own demand for security, comfort, safety,

permanency, and deny all that? Deny in the sense see how the brain, thought, creates the sense of permanency, eternity, or whatever you like to call it. And to see all that. Therefore one has to go much more deeply, I think, into the question of thought because both in the west and the east thought has become the most important movement in life. Right, sir?

A: Oh yes, oh yes.

K: Thought, which has created this marvellous world of technology, marvellous world of science, and all that, and thought which has created the religions, all the marvellous chants, both the Gregorian and the Sanskrit chants, thought which has built beautiful cathedrals, thought which has made images of the saviours, the masters, the gurus, the father - image. Unless one really understands thought, what is thinking, we will still play the same game in a different field.

A: Exactly.

K: Look what is happening in this country. These gurus come from India, they shave their head, put on the Indian dress, a little tuft of hair hanging down, and repeat endlessly what somebody has said. A new guru. They have had old gurus, the priests.

A: Oh yes.

K: The Catholic, the Protestant, and they have denied them but accept the others! (Laughs) You follow?

A: Yes.

K: The others are as dead as the old ones because they are just repeating tradition: traditionally repeating how to sit, how to shave, how to meditate, how to hold your head, breathe. And finally you obey what the old guru says, or the young guru says. Which is exactly what took place in the Catholic world, in the Protestant world. You follow? They deny that and yet accept the other. Because they want security, they want somebody to tell them what to do, what to think, never how to think.

A: No. This raises a question that I hope we can explore together, that concerns the word 'experience'.

K: Oh, yes, it's another word.

A: It's amazing how often in these times this word crops up to represent something that I desperately need, which somehow lies outside myself. I need the experience of an awakening. It isn't an awakening that I need, apparently, it's an experience of this awakening. The whole idea of religion as experience seems to me to need very, very careful thought, very, very careful penetration.

K: Quite right. Sir, if I may ask, why do we demand experience? Why is this craving for experience? We have sexual experience, experiences of every kind, don't we?

A: Yes.

K: As we live: insults, flattery, happenings, incidents, influences, what people say, don't say, we read a book, and so on, so on. We are experiencing all the time. We are bored with that. And we say we will go to somebody who will give me the experience of god.

A: Yes, that's precisely what is claimed.

K: Yes. Now what is involved in that? What is involved in the demand of our experience, and the experiencing of that demand? I experience what that guru or master, or somebody tells me, how do I know it is real? And I say, I recognise it, don't I, sir? Look, I experience something, and I can only know that I have experienced it only when I have recognised it. Right?

A: Right.

K: Recognition implies I have already known.

A: Re-cognise.

K: Re-cognise.

A: Yes.

K: So I am experiencing what I have already known, therefore it is nothing new. I don't know if I am making it clear.

A: Yes, you are making yourself very, very clear.

K: So all they are doing is a self-deception.

A: It is actually lusted after.

K: Oh, good lord, yes.

A: Yes, the drive for it is extraordinary. I have seen it in many, many students, who will go to extraordinary austerities - really.

K: I know all this.

A: We sometimes think that young people today are very loose in their behaviour. Well, some are, but what is so new about that, that has been going on since time out of mind. I think that what is rarely seen is that many young persons today are extremely serious about acquiring something that someone possesses that they don't have, and if someone claims to have it, naively they are on their way. And they'll go through any number of cartwheels, they'll stand on their head indefinitely for that.

K: Oh, yes, I have seen all that.

A: Which is called an experience, as such.

K: That's why one has to be very careful, as you pointed out, sir, to explore this word. And to see why the mind, why a human being demands more experience, when his whole life is a vast experience with which he is so bored. He thinks this is a new experience, but to experience the new how can the mind recognise it as the new, unless it has already known it? I don't know if I'm...

A: Yes. And there is something very remarkable here in terms of what you said earlier in other previous conversations that we have had: in the recognition of what is called the new, the linkage with old thought, old image establishes the notion that there is something gradual in the transition. That there really is some kind of genuine link here with where I am now, and where I was before. Now I become the next guru who goes out and teaches the person how gradually to undertake this discipline.

K: Yes, sir, yes, sir.

K: Yes, sir.

A: And somnolence takes over. But it is within the very same. And I said to myself, well maybe Mr Krishnamurti would say a word about the relation of beauty to this in terms of one's own relation to the beautiful, when that relation is not seen for what it is. Since there is a narcosis present that I can generate. It isn't in those words. And yet we think that the language must be at fault, there must be something demonically hypnotic about this, we do. And then religious groups will separate themselves totally from all this. We had a period in Europe when Protestants, Calvinists, wouldn't allow an organ, no music, because

music is seductive. I am not the self-seducer, it is the music's fault!

K: That's just it, sir.

A: Let's look at it.

K: As we were saying the other day, sir, beauty can only be when there is the total abandonment of the self. Complete emptying the consciousness of its content, which is the 'me'. Then there is a beauty which is something entirely different from the pictures, chants, all that. And probably most of these young people, and also the older people, seek beauty in that sense through the trappings of the church, through chants, through reading the Old Testament with all its beautiful words and images, and all that, and that gives them a sense of deep satisfaction. In other words, sir, what they are seeking is really gratification through beauty - beauty of words, beauty of chant, beauty of all the robes and the incense, and the light coming through those marvellous pieces of colour. You have seen it all in cathedrals, Notre Dame and Chartres, and all these places - marvellous. And it gives them a sense of sacredness, sense of feeling happy, relieved, at last there is a place where I can go and meditate, be quiet, get into contact with something. And then you come along and say, look, that's all rubbish, it has no meaning. What has meaning is how you live in your daily life.

A: Yes.

K: Then they throw a brick at you.

A: Of course, it is like taking food away from a starving dog.

K: Exactly. So this is the whole point, sir: experience is a trap, and all the people want this strange experience which the gurus think they have.

A: Which is always called the knowledge. Interesting.

K: Very, very.

A: Isn't it? It is always called the knowledge. Yes. Of course, I was thinking about previous conversations, about this self transformation that is not dependent on knowledge.

K: Of course not.

A: Not dependent on time.

K: No.

A: And eminently requires responsibility.

K: And also, sir, we don't want to work. We work very strenuously in earning a livelihood. Look what we do, year after year, year after year, day after day, day after day, the brutality, the ugliness of all that. But here, inwardly, psychologically, we don't want to work. We are too lazy. Let the other fellow work, perhaps he has worked, and perhaps he will give me something. But I don't say I am going to find out, deny the whole thing and find out.

A: No, the assumption is that the priest's business is to have worked in order to know, so that I am relieved of that task; or if I didn't come into the world with enough marbles then all I need do is simply follow his instructions and it's his fault if he gets it messed up.

K: Yes, and we never ask the man who says, 'I know, I have experienced', what do you know?

A: Exactly.

K: What have you experienced? What do you know? When you say, I know, you only know something

which is dead, which is gone, which is finished, which is the past. You can't know something that is living. You follow, sir?

A: Yes.

K: A living thing you can never know, it's moving. It is never the same. And so I can never say, I know my wife, or my husband, my children, because they are living human beings. But these fellows come along, from India specially, and they say, well, I know, I have experienced, I have knowledge, I will give it to you. And I say, what impudence. You follow sir?

A: Yes.

K: What callous indifference that you know and I don't know. And what do you know?

A: It's amazing what has been going on in terms of the relation between men on the one hand, and women on the other, or man and woman with respect to this, because a whole mythology has grown up about this. For instance we say, our sex says, woman is mysterious, and never is this understood in terms of the freshness of life, which includes everything not just woman. Now we have an idea that woman is mysterious. So we are talking about something in terms of an essence, which has nothing to do with existence. Isn't that so?

K: Yes, sir. Exactly.

A: Goodness me! And as you said earlier we are actually taught this, this is all in books, this is all in the conversations that go on in class rooms.

K: So that why, sir, I feel education is destroying people - as it is now. It has become a tragedy. If I had a son - which I haven't got, thank god - I would say, where am I to educate him? What am I to do with him? Make him like the rest of the group? Like the rest of the community? Taught, memories, accept, obey. You follow, sir? - all the things that are going on. And when you are faced with that, as many people are now, they are faced with this problem.

A: Oh, they are, yes, yes. There's no question about that.

K: So we say, look, let's start a school, which we have in India, which I am going to do in California, at Ojai. We are going to do that. Let's start a school where we think totally differently, where we are taught differently. Not just the routine, routine, routine, to accept, or to deny, react, you know, the whole thing.

So from that arises, sir, another question: why does the mind obey? I obey the laws of the country, I obey keeping to the left side of the road, or the right side of the road. I obey what the doctor tells me - obey. I am careful what he tells me - personally I don't go near doctors. If I do, I am very careful, I listen very carefully what they have to say, I am watchful. I don't accept immediately this or that. But politically in a so-called democratic world they won't accept a tyrant.

A: No, no, they won't accept a tyrant.

K: They say no authority, freedom. But spiritually, inwardly, they accept every Tom, Dick and Harry - specially when they come from India.

A: Oh, yes.

K: The other day I turned on the London BBC and there was a man interviewing a certain group of people. And the boy and the girl said, 'We obey entirely what our guru says.' And the interviewer said, 'Will he tell you to marry?' 'If he tells me I will marry. If he tells me I must starve, I will starve', fast. Just a slave. You understand sir? And yet the very same person will object to political tyranny.

A: Absurd. Yes.

K: There he will accept the tyranny of a petty little guru, with his fanciful ideas, and he will reject politically a tyranny or a dictatorship. So why does the mind divide life into accepting authority in one way, in one direction, and deny it in another? And what is the importance of authority? That is, sir, the word 'authority', as you know, means the one who originates.

A: Author, yes.

K: 'Author', yes of course. And these priests, gurus, leaders, spiritual preachers, what have they originated? They are repeating tradition, aren't they?

A: Oh, yes, precisely.

K: And tradition, whether it is from the Zen tradition, the Chinese tradition, or Hindu, is a dead thing. And these people are perpetuating the dead thing. The other day I saw a man, he was explaining how to meditate - put your hands here, and close your eyes.

A: Yes, that's the one I saw.

K: And do this, that and the other - I said good god.

A: Appalling. It was appalling.

K: And people accept it.

A: And on the same thing there was this woman who had run out of money and every blessed thing, and she had nowhere to go to sleep and so forth, and hysterically she was saying, 'I'm in line, I've got all these people ahead of me, but I must have this knowledge - I must have this knowledge.' The hysteria of it, the desperation of it.

K: (Laughs) That's why, sir, what is behind this acceptance of authority? You understand, sir? The authority of law, the authority of the policeman, the authority of the priests, the authority of these gurus, what is behind the acceptance of authority? Is it fear? Fear of going wrong spiritually, of not doing the right thing in order to gain enlightenment, knowledge, and the super-consciousness, whatever it is, is it fear? Or is it a sense of despair? A sense of utter loneliness, utter ignorance? I am using the word 'ignorance' in the deeper sense of the word.

A: Yes, yes, I follow.

K: Which makes me say, well, there is a man there who says he knows, I'll accept him. I don't reason. You follow, sir? I don't say, what do you know? What do you bring to us, give to me, your own tradition from India? Who cares! You are bringing something dead, nothing original - you follow, sir? - nothing real, but repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat what others have done - which in India they themselves are throwing out. (Laughs)

A: Yes. I was just thinking of Tennyson's lines that apropos of this, though in a different context when he wrote it: 'Theirs not to reason why, but to do and die'.

K: Yes, that's the good old thing. So what is behind this acceptance of authority?

A: It is interesting that the word 'authority' is radically related to the self - autos, the self. There is this sensed, gaping void, through the division.

K: Yes, sir, that's just it.

A: Through the division. And that immediately opens up a hunger, doesn't it? And my projection of my meal, I run madly to.

K: When you see this, you want to cry. You follow sir?

A: Yes.

K: All these young people going to these gurus, shaving their head, dressing in Indian dress, dancing in the streets. Fantastic things they are doing! All on a tradition which is dead. All tradition is dead. You follow? And when you see that you say, my god, what has happened? So I go back and ask, why do we accept? Why are we influenced by these people? Why are we influenced when there is a constant repetition in a commercial, 'Buy this, buy this, buy this'? It is the same as that. You follow sir?

A: Yes.

K: Why do we accept? The child accepts, I can understand that. Poor thing, he doesn't know anything, it needs security, it needs a mother, it needs care, it needs protection, it needs to sit on your lap and affection, kindness, gentle. It needs that. Is it they think the guru gives him all this? Through their words, through their rituals, through their repetition, through their absurd disciplines. You follow? A sense of acceptance as I accept my mother when a child, I accept that in order to be comfortable, in order to feel, at last something, somebody is looking after me.

A: This relates to what you said in a previous conversation, we looked into fear, the reaction of the infant is a reaction with no intermediary of any kind, of his own contrivance. He simply recognises that he has a need, and this is not an imagined want, it is a radical need. He needs to feed, he needs to be affectionately held.

K: Of course, sir.

A: The transition from that to the point where as he gets older he begins to think about the source of the meeting of that need, emerges as the image that is interposed between the sense of danger and the immediate action. So if I am understanding you correctly, there is a deflection here from the radical purity of act.

K: That's right, sir.

A: And I've done that myself. I have done that myself. It isn't because of anything that I was told, that actually coerced me to do it, even though what you say is true, we are continually invited, it's a kind of siren-like call that comes to us throughout the entire culture, in all cultures to start that stuff.

K: So sir, that's what I want to get at. Why is it that we accept authority? In a democratic world, politically, we shun any dictator. But yet religiously they are all dictators. And why do we accept it? Why do I accept the priest as an intermediary to something which he says he knows? And so it shows, sir, we stop reasoning. Politically we reason, we see how important it is to be free, free speech, everything free, as much as possible. We never think freedom is necessary here. Spiritually we don't feel the necessity of freedom. And therefore we accept it - any Tom, Dick and Harry. It is horrifying. I've seen intellectuals, professors, scientists, falling for all this trash. Because they have reasoned in their scientific world, and they are weary of reasoning, and here, at last I can sit back and not reason, be told, be comfortable, be happy, I'll do all the work for you, you don't have to do anything, I'll take you over the river. You follow?

A: Oh, yes.

K: And I'm delighted. So we accept where there is ignorance, where reason doesn't function, where intelligence is in abeyance, and you need all that: freedom, intelligence, reasoning, with regard to real

spiritual matters. Otherwise what? Some guru comes along and tells you what to do, and you repeat what he does? You follow, sir, how destructive it is?

A: Oh, yes.

K: How degenerate it is. That is what is happening. I don't think these gurus realise what they are doing. They are encouraging degeneracy.

A: Well, they represent a chain of the same.

K: Exactly. So can we - sir, this brings up a very important question - can there be an education in which there is no authority whatsoever?

A: I must say, yes, to that in terms of the experience that I had in class yesterday. It was a tremendous shock to the students when they suspended their disbelief for a moment, just to see whether I meant it when I said, now we must do this together, not your doing what I say to do.

K: You have to walk together.

A: We will do this together.

K: Share it together.

A: Right. You will question, and I will question, and we will try to grasp as we go along - without trying. And I went into the business, about let's not have this shoddy little thing 'trying'. (Laughter)

K: Quite right.

A: That took a little while. That increased the shock because the students who have been to their own great satisfaction what you would call devoted, those who do their work, who make effort, are suddenly finding out that this man has come into the room and he is giving 'trying' a bad press. This does seem to turn the thing completely upside down (laughs). But they showed courage in the sense that they gave it a little attention before beginning the true act of attention. That's why I was using 'courage' there because it is a preliminary to that. I've quite followed you when you have raised the question about the relation of courage to the pure act of attention. It seems to me that is not where it belongs.

K: No.

A: But they did get it up for this preliminary step. Then we ran into this what I think I called in an earlier conversation, dropping a stitch - where they really saw this abyss, they were alert enough to stand over the precipice. And that caused them to freeze. And it's that moment that seems to me absolutely decisive. It is almost like one sees in terms of events, objective events. I remember reading the Spanish philosopher, Ortega who spoke of events that trembled back and forth before the thing actually tumbles into itself. That was happening in the room. It was like water that moved up to the lip of the cup and couldn't quite spill over.

K: Quite, quite.

A: I have spoken about this at some length because I wanted to describe to you a real situation, what was actually happening.

K: I was going to say, sir, I have been connected with many schools, for forty years and more, and when one talks to the students about freedom and authority and acceptance, they are completely lost.

A: Yes.

K: They want to be slaves. My father says this, I must do this. Or, my father says, I won't do that. It is the same.

A: Exactly. Do you think in our next conversation we could look at that moment of hesitation?

K: Yes, sir.

A: It seems to me so terribly critical for education itself. Wonderful.

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Wednesday, February 27, 1974

Religion, Authority and Education Part Two

Sixteenth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Wednesday, February 27, 1974

Anderson: Mr Krishnamurti in our series of conversations we have reached, it seems to me, an especially critical place. In our last discussion together we touched on the question of authority, not only in relation to what is out there, that we project, and what is out there that faces us, literally, but also the question at the deeper level of my relationship within that. And the point where in the enquiry, in going deeply into myself, in self-examination, there is a point of boggling, when one boggles, one is hesitant, and trembles. It is a real fear and trembling that occurs at the brink of that enquiry. And I think you, at the conclusion of our former conversation, were moving toward a discussion of that in terms of its role in the religious life.

Krishnamurti: That's right.

A: Yes.

K: Sir, why do we hesitate? That's what it comes to, what you are saying. Why do we not take the plunge? That's what you are asking.

A: That's what I'm asking, yes.

K: Why is it always coming to the brink and withdrawing, running away? Why don't we see the thing as is and act? Is it, sir, part of our education, that has cultivated function, enormous function, we give tremendous importance to function - as an engineer, as a professor as a doctor, and so on, so on - functioning in a particular technique. And we have never cultivated, or encouraged or enquired into what is intelligence. Where there is intelligence there won't be this hesitation. There is action. I mean when one is very sensitive, you act. That sensitivity is intelligence. Now, in education, as I have observed it both here and in India and other parts of the world, education is merely training the mind to function to the dictates of society. So many engineers are wanted, so many doctors are wanted. (Laughs) If you get into a profession where there are few you might make more money.

A: You have to watch out for the glut. (Laughs)

K: Glut, yes. Don't become a scientist, there are enough scientists, or whatever it is.

A: Oh dear, dear, yes.

K: So we are encouraged and trained to function in the field of activity as functions, careers. Now we hesitate to enter or plunge into something that demands all your attention, not fragmentary, all your attention because we don't know the measure. We know how to measure function. Here we have no measure. Therefore I depend. Therefore I won't reason here because I don't know how to reason. I don't say to a man who says 'I know,' what? I say, 'What do you know? You only know something that's gone, finished, dead. You can't say I know something that's living. And so gradually, as I see it, the mind becomes dull, restless. Its curiosity is only in the direction of functioning. And it has no capacity to enquire. To enquire you must have freedom first. I can't enquire otherwise. If I come to enquire to something which I have to enquire about, if I have prejudices I can't enquire. If I have conclusions about that I can't enquire. Therefore there must be freedom to enquire. And that is denied, because I've laid, society and culture laid tremendous importance on function. And function has its own status.

A: Oh, yes, yes. It's exalted ultimately into process.

K: Yes. Into a status.

A: Right.

K: So status matters much more than function.

A: Yes.

K: And so I live in that field, live in that structure and if I want to enquire into religion, what is religion, what is God, what is immortality, what is beauty - I can't do it. I depend on an authority. And I have no basis for reasoning - you follow, sir? - in this vast field of religion. So it is partly the fault of our education, partly our incapacity to look at anything objectively. Our incapacity to look at a tree without all the rigmarole, knowledge, screen, blocks, that prevents me from looking at the tree. I never look at my wife, if I have a wife, or a girl, or whatever, I never look. I look at her or him through the image I have about him or her. So the image is the dead, dead thing. So I never look at a living thing. I never look at nature, with all the marvel of it, the beauty of it, the shape, the loveliness of it. But I am always translating it, trying to paint it, write about it or enjoy it, or - you follow?

A: Yes.

K: So from that arises the question, why do I, why do human beings accept authority, obey? Is it because they have been trained in the field of function where you must obey to learn, you follow? - you can't just...

A: Oh yes. No, it has its own laws built in.

K: Laws. It has its own disciplines.

A: Exactly.

K: It has its own laws, its own ways. Because I have been trained that way I bring that over here into the field of religion, into the field of something that demands freedom. Freedom not at the end, right from the beginning. The mind must be free from authority, from the beginning. If I want to find out what is God, not I believe in God, that has no meaning, if there is God, if there is no God, I really want to find out. I am terribly serious. And if I am really serious, I am really concerned to the understanding, learning about God, if there is God, I must push aside completely all the beliefs, all the structure, all the churches, all the priests, all the books, all the things that thought has put together about religion. You follow?

A: Yes, I do. I've been thinking very hard about your word 'intelligence' and the word 'truth' in relation to what you have been saying. And the passage from the gospel came to my mind which would end up, I think, with a very different exegesis in terms of what you've been saying, if one applied what you've been pointing to, to this text. 'When he, the spirit of truth is come he will guide you into all truth and the truth shall make you free.' The truth is called a spirit here. And in the very same St. John's gospel, God is also called spirit. A radical act, not this spirit over there, out there somewhere that I have projected. If one takes seriously, the terrible thing is that it hasn't been taken seriously.

K: Because we are not allowed to be serious, sir.

A: We can't even be serious about the thing that is claimed that we must be the most serious about.

K: Serious about. That's just it.

A: Yes, I know. I know what you mean.

K: I mean we are not serious about our children. We don't feel responsible for them, right through life. Only

till they are four, five, six, we are responsible, you know. After that they can do what they want. So freedom and authority cannot possibly exist together. Freedom and intelligence go together. And intelligence has its own innate, natural, easy discipline, discipline in the sense of, not of suppression, control, imitation and all that, but discipline which is the act of learning all the time.

A: In attention.

K: Yes, in attention.

A: In attention. This intelligence that you speak of is associated with splendour, isn't it?

K: Yes.

A: Its advent is immediate, not gradual.

K: No, of course not. The perception is intelligence.

A: The perception is intelligence.

K: And therefore acting.

A: And perception is the act.

K: Of course.

A: So the act, intelligence, beauty...

K: All these.

A: ...love, truth, freedom...

K: Death, all those are one.

A: ...order, they form a complete, total, integral movement in act.

K: That's right.

A: That in itself looked at positively is even, once it's translated into a concept...

K: Oh, then there is no longer that.

A: ...becomes in itself an occasion for terror again.

K: Of course,

A: Because it seems that it runs away too fast from you.

K: Yes.

A: As soon as you... Yes I see. Isn't that marvellous. It's as though these that you've mentioned, beauty, intelligence, love, freedom...

K: ...and death,

A: ...have, so to speak, secured themselves against all tom-foolery.

K: Yes, sir. Absolutely. Quite right.

A: They are so radically pure, that any foolery...

K: So, sir, that means can the mind put aside totally all the structure of thought with regard to religion? It can't put away the function of thought in the field of knowledge. That we have understood. That's very clear. But here there is something, I don't know, we don't know - you follow, sir? We pretend we know. When a man says, Jesus is Saviour or whatever, it is a pretension. It is saying, 'I know and you don't know.' What do you know, in the name of heaven, you know nothing! You just repeat what you have learned from somebody else. So can the mind, in the field of religion, because religion is, as we said at the beginning, the gathering of all energy in that quality of attention. And it is that quality of attention that regenerates man, that brings about real transformation in man with regard to his conduct, his behaviour, his whole way of relationship. Religion is that factor. Not all this foolery that is going on. Now, to enquire, the mind must put aside all the structure of thought built around that word. You follow, sir?

A: Yes I do.

K: Can one do it? If not, we are pretending, talking about god, no god, yes god. (Laughs) You follow? All that nonsense that is going on. So that is the first question. Can the mind be free of the authority of another, however great, however sublime, however divine or no divine, you follow?

A: And because an act is required in order to answer this question...

K: Absolutely.

A: ...the individual must do this on his own.

K: Otherwise he merely lives in a routine of function, which he has, which he is still doing and therefore he escapes into all these circuses which he calls religion.

A: This came home to me with great dramatic force yesterday in class. On the one hand we have textbooks; textbooks which have survived the centuries because of their classical value in that sense. And the usual way in which this material is taught, is that one learns, let us say something about the Chinese vision of life. Then we have the Hindu vision of life and so we accumulate over a long period of time through school, clear through graduate school, if you hang in there long enough, if you can stand it, you come into possession of...

K: ...what other people have said.

A: ...what other people have said.

K: But you know nothing about it.

A: Exactly. You acquire certain skills in the order of function, as you have mentioned. Now the teacher has a problem. I am thinking of these schools that you have referred to in India and the one that will be in Ojai. There is a body of material here, clearly the teacher must be in possession of knowledge in the order of functional operation, procedural techniques and so forth. He simply has to know. The child is going to read books.

K: Of course.

A: In these schools that you've mentioned he is going...

K: Oh they do, they do.

A: ...to read. They read books. Books. And all of them haven't been written necessarily by somebody who is undertaking to do the thing that goes on between the students and the teachers in these schools. Now the teacher must handle this written material in books in a way to indicate to the child, the younger student, the older student that it is possible to read this material without being self-divided in doing it.

K: And also what would you do if there was no book?

A: You'd be in the same position.

K: No, if there was no book, nobody saying tradition, you have to find out for yourself.

A: But that's what we are asking him to do with his book, aren't we?

K: Are we?

A: No, no. Not in general. But in this new approach.

K: Ah, of course, of course.

A: In this new approach we must somehow...

K: ...bring the book and the other.

A: ...bring the book and the other together.

K: ...and the freedom. Book and freedom.

A: Yes. This is what hit me with such shock yesterday in class. And I immediately felt radically responsible for doing this, n so far as I could. And I was surprised to see that though the students were extremely hesitant, there was a lot of anxiety there, real fear and trembling. What of health they possessed did assert itself and there was tremendous interest in the possibility. But then there was the hesitation that somehow wasn't passed.

K: Passed, quite.

A: The hesitation is there. I have this feeling that this has happened through the centuries with persons who have seriously studied scripture - since we were talking about religion. Sometimes you can detect it in their very commentaries, in their very writing. They come right up to it...

K: And miss it.

A: ...and then they can't...

K: ...make it.

A: ...push it over. They can't go...

K: I understand.

A: ...beyond the point.

K: That is, sir, it has been my fortune or misfortune to talk a great deal. And everybody comes to that point. They say, please what am I to, I've reached that point I can't go beyond. Sir, look at it this way, if I may suggest: if I had a class, I wouldn't talk about the book first. I'd say freedom. You're second-hand people. Don't pretend you're not. You're second-hand, sloppy, shoddy people. And you are trying to find something that is original - god is, the reality is original. It's not coloured by all the priests in the world. It's original. Therefore you must have an original mind. Which means a free mind. Not original in painting a new picture, or a new this, that's all tommyrot. But a free mind. A free mind that can function in the field of knowledge, and a free mind that can look, observe, learn. Now, how do you help another, or is it not possible to be free? You understand? Look, I never belonged to anything. I have no church, or no belief, all that. A man who really wants to find out if there is eternal, the nameless, something beyond all thought, he must naturally set aside everything built on thought: the saviour, the masters, the gurus, the knowledge -

you follow? - all that. Are there people to do that? You follow? Will anybody undertake that journey? Or will they say, well, you tell me all about it, old boy. I'll sit comfortably, and then you tell me.

A: Yes, yes, that's what goes on.

K: I say, I won't describe that. I won't tell you a thing about it. To put it into words is to destroy it. So, let us see if you cannot be free. What are you frightened about? Frightened of authority? Frightened of going wrong? But you are completely wrong the way you live, completely stupid the way you are carrying on, it has no meaning. You follow, sir? Deny the spiritual authority of every kind. What are you frightened of? Going wrong spiritually? They are wrong. Not you are wrong because you are just learning. They are the established in unrighteousness.

A: (Laughs) That's beautiful. Yes.

K: And so, why do you follow them? Why do you accept them? They are degenerate. And can you be free from all that, so that your mind through meditation, which we will discuss, perhaps another time, what it means to be free, what it means to wipe away all the things that people have put on you. You understand? So that you are innocent. Your mind is never hurt, is incapable of being hurt. That is what innocency means. And from that enquire, let's take a journey from there. You follow, sir? From this sense of negation of everything that thought has put together. Because thought is time, thought is matter. And if you are living in the field of thought, there will be never freedom. You are living in the past. You may think you are living in the present, but actually you are living in the past when thought is in operation, because thought is memory, response of memory, knowledge, experience stored up in the brain. And that knowledge, experience is the expression of thought. Unless you understand that and know the limitation of thought you can't enter into the field of that which you call religion. You follow, sir? Unless this is told, repeated, shown to them, they can talk endlessly about books. This comes first. Then you can read the books.

A: Yes.

K: Sir, the Buddha never read a book. He listened, watched, looked, observed, fasted; said, all that's rubbish, and threw it out.

A: I just thought of something that you said: one must keep on repeating this again.

K: In different ways.

A: In different ways, and again. I'm speaking now about teaching. This point of hesitation is the point where something will or will not get born.

K: That's right, sir.

A: That beautiful expression in earlier conversation about it that you used, 'incarnate now'.

K: Now, yes.

A: So we're on the brink. We're, in the words of Ortega I mentioned earlier, rocking back and forth on the brink of a new event. And we're not over the line. There is nothing that any of us can do at that point with respect to the terror of the one who hears this, including my own, I'm not dividing myself from this doing together with the student, since I'm a student in this activity. So here we are, student among students. And there is this boggling, this fear and trembling, and nothing can be done other than simply encourage.

K: And tell them, wait, stay there.

A: Hold.

K: Hold. Doesn't matter if you wobble, but keep on wobbling.

A: Don't bolt.

K: Don't run away.

A: And so this is said in different ways over and over again. Now I understand what you meant by saying, now let's start the class ten minutes...

K: ...with this.

A: ...with this. We don't open the book.

K: That's right, sir.

A: We don't open the book, we start with this. And then when the book is opened perhaps the word, for a change, will disclose itself.

K: That's right.

A: (Laughs) Because intelligence has broken out.

K: That's right.

A: And behold it's all splendid. Yes, yes, yes I, please, I didn't mean to interrupt you. I just wanted to make sure that I have - it's terribly important that I understand this.

K: Because, you see, sir, students rush from one class to the other, because the period is short, run, from mathematics to geography, from geography to history, chemistry, biology - you follow? - run, run. And if I was one of the professors, teachers I would say, 'Look, sit down. Be quiet for five minutes. Be quiet. Look out of the window if you want to. See the beauty of light on the water or the leaf and look at this and that, but be quiet.'

A: We teach in classes that don't have windows now. (Laughs)

K: Of course, naturally.

A: Yes, I was just being facetious.

K: Of course, sir.

A: But not only facetious. It's a horror.

K: Horror, that's what... You are trained to be functional. You follow, sir?

A: I know.

K: Don't look at anything else but be monkeys. And my child is brought up that way.

A: Yes.

K: It is appalling.

A: The classroom is a tomb. Yes.

K: So, I say, 'sit quietly.' Then after sitting quietly I talk about this first. I have done this in schools. Talk about this, freedom, authority, beauty, love, you know, all that we have been discussing. Then pick up your book. But you have learned much more here than in the book.

A: Oh, yes. Oh, sure.

K: Therefore the book shows what you're - you follow?

A: Yes. Exactly. Exactly. The book is seen...

K: Book becomes a second-hand thing.

A: Yes. It's seen with a clean eye.

K: That's why, sir, I personally have never read a single book of all this, neither the Gita, the Upanishads, all that, what the Buddha has said. It somehow bored me. Sorry. It meant nothing to me. What has meant anything was to observe: observe the very poor in India; observe the rich, the dictators, the Mussolinis, the Hitlers, the Krushchevs and Brezhnevs, all that - watch them, and the politician. And you learn an awful lot. Because the real book is you. Do you understand, sir? If you can read your book which is yourself you have learned everything, except the functional knowledge. So when there is self-knowing, authority has no meaning. I won't accept. Why should I accept these people that bring truth from India? That's not truth they are bringing! They are bringing a tradition, what they believe. So, can the mind put away everything that man has taught or invented, imagined about religion, God, this and that? That means, can this mind, which is the mind of the world, which is the mind of common consciousness, can that consciousness empty itself of all the things man has said about reality? Otherwise I can't - you follow, sir?

A: Can't begin.

K: Not only begin, what do I discover? What other people have said? What Buddha, Christ, why should I accept that?

A: Well, the terrible thing is, I'm not in a position to grasp whatever they said that was worthwhile until this occurs. This is...

K: So freedom, sir, is an absolute necessity.

A: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

K: But none of them say this. On the contrary they say, freedom will come to you much later. Be in the prison for the rest of your life. When you die you'll have freedom. That's what they are preaching, essentially. So, can the mind, the heart, and all the storehouse in the brain be free of the things that man has said about reality? Sir, that's a marvellous question. You understand, sir?

A: Oh I do, I do. One of the things that seems to me of remarkable cogency in our discussions, in our conversations, has been how continually you have returned to a question.

K: Yes.

A: Return to the question. And the notion of return in its depth, has, it seems, if I've followed you correctly, been quite erroneously presented. The return has been presented as a movement to an answer.

K: Quite, quite.

A: But that is not a re-turn.

K: (Laughs) No, of course, not.

A: No. Because the turn is toward that original that you mentioned. Therefore it is to the question, not to the answer at all. Is it...

K: Quite, quite. Quite right, sir. You know I was staying once in Kashmir right among the hills, mountains.

And a group of sannyasis, monks, came to see me, freshly bathed and everything, done all the ceremony, and all that. They had come to see me. And they told me, they said they had just come from a group of unworldly people, who are super-monks, who were very high up in the mountains. And they said they are totally unworldly. I said, 'What do you mean by that word, sirs?' They said, 'They have just left the world. They are no longer tempted by the world. And they have this great knowledge of the world.' And, I said, 'When they have left the world, have they left the memory of the world?' The memory, the knowledge which the world has made - you follow? - which the gurus have put together, the teachers. He said, 'That's wisdom. How can you leave wisdom?' I said, 'You mean wisdom is bought through a book, through a teacher, from another, through sacrifice, torture, renunciation?' You follow, sir, their idea? That is, wisdom is something you can buy from somebody else.

A: They went up the mountain with all this baggage.

K: Baggage, that's right. That's exactly what I said. All the baggage which you have put away - the world, you've probably, but you've carried their baggage. You follow, sir?

A: Oh goodness me.

K: So that is really an important thing if a mind is really very serious to find out what religion means. Not all this rubbish. I keep on repeating because that seems to be mounting, you know, growing. But to free the mind from all the growth, accretions, and therefore which means see the accretions, see all the absurdities.

A: This throws a very, very different cast on our word 'worldly'.

K: Yes, That's just it.

A: They are going up the mountain in order to leave the world. But they are taking immense pains to take it with them.

K: That's right, sir. That's what they are doing when they go into the monastery.

A: Of course, of course, of course. Goodness. Accretions, encrustations.

K: So now, I come back: can the mind be completely alone? Not isolated, not withdrawn, not build a wall around itself, say, 'And then I'm alone'. But alone in the sense, that aloneness that comes when you put away all this, all the things of thought. You understand, sir? Because thought is so clever, cunning. It can build a marvellous structure and call that reality. But thought is the response of the past, so it is of time. Thought being of time, cannot create something which has no time. Thought can function in that field of knowledge. It is necessary, but not in the other. And this doesn't need bravery. It doesn't need sacrifice. It doesn't need torture. Just perception of the false. To see the false is to see the truth in the false. I don't know...

A: To see the false is to see the truth in the false.

K: Of course.

A: I must repeat that again. To see the false is to see the truth in the false.

K: And see what is considered truth as the false.

A: Yes, yes.

K: So my eyes are stripped of all the false, so that there is no inward deception whatsoever, because there is no desire to see something, to achieve something. Because the moment there is a desire to experience, to achieve, to arrive at enlightenment, all that, there is going to be illusion, something desire has created.

Therefore the mind must be free of this pursuit of desire and its fulfilment, which we discussed previously. Understand what the structure of desire is. We went into, talked a great deal about that. So it comes to this point, can the mind be free and free of all the things which are born of fear, and desire and pleasure? That means one has to understand oneself at great depth.

A: The thing that keeps popping up is that one can repeat those questions...

K: Yes, sir.

A: ...and start to think that he has grasped them.

K: You grasp the words.

A: Exactly. There is something which you have to come out the other side of.

K: Quite right.

A: But the repetition of the question does have a functional value.

K: I know.

A: It seems to me.

K: Yes, sir, it does. That is if the person is willing to listen.

A: If he is willing to listen, because thought is incredibly deceitful.

K: Very.

A: As you have pointed out. Goodness! I was just thinking of poor old Jeremiah's words: the heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things. Surely he must have...

K: ...tasted something.

A: Yes, and of course, as with the whole line... But I was asking myself this question concerning why I went on to continue my formal education. And in following this deeply, it seems to me to go back to something that is going to sound very absurd, but it has something to do with everything you've said, you've been talking about. When I was very small, growing up in England, I was put to school rather earlier than many American children were put to school, and I always read a great deal of poetry. I don't know what has happened to us in this country, but poetry doesn't really exist for the populace at all.

K: No, sir, I know.

A: But, thank God, I was brought up on it daily.

K: Yes, in England of course everybody reads poetry, Greek, Latin, we all went through it.

A: And I was always read poetry by the young woman employed by my parents to look after me and my little sister, and so forth. I never went to sleep without hearing it. One day when I was very small, at school, the teacher read 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat went to sea in a beautiful pea green boat', that mad thing, marvellously mad thing, Edward Lear wrote.

K: Edward Lear, yes. (Laughs)

A: Yes, and you know I was never the same again. And I know now why - it sounds absolutely absurd - I came to experience in language a splendour that I never lost touch with, despite all the struggles I had with my teachers. I had a bad time in school to get to the end of formal education and I have to say that doesn't

sound very good, but I did. I had a pretty grim time. And one of the reasons for the grim time was my refusal to give this up, this...

K: Quite, the Pussy Cat in the boat.

A: The fact that there's a bird and a cat in the same boat. And the man is describing what you called act, movement in which truth and beauty and so on move along. Oh, goodness.

K: Sir, I think we ought to, after coming up to this point, we ought to go very deeply again into the question of meditation.

A: Yes.

K: Because religion, in the sense we are talking about, and meditation go together. That means religion isn't just an idea but is actual conduct in daily life. Your thoughts, your speech, your behaviour is the very essence of religion. You understand, sir? If that doesn't exist religion can't exist.

A: Exactly.

K: It's just words, you can go around spinning a lot of words, go to various circus tents. But that's not religion. So after establishing that deeply in oneself, and the understanding of religion, then the next thing is: what is meditation? That is of tremendous importance, because meditation is something that is really, if it is understood properly, is the most extraordinary thing that man can have. Meditation is not divorced from daily life.

A: What was running through my mind was, not mistaken, that the root relation to the word 'medesti', 'medeo'.

K: 'Medeo' is to think, to ponder, to go into.

A: In Homer, it actually carries the idea of 'to provide for' in the sense of to care for. Very beautiful. It brings up the question that you raised earlier of true care.

K: Yes, sir.

A: That one is not meditating unless he is...

K: ...careful.

A: ...careful and caring.

K: Caring rather than careful, yes.

A: Yes. It's all there in the word, but we don't look, won't have a look. Yes, yes please go on, please.

K: You see when we have divorced conduct from religion, which we have, divorced relationship from religion, which we have, divorced death from religion, which we have, divorced love from religion, when we have made love into something sensuous, something that is pleasurable, then religion, which is the factor of regeneration, disappears in man. And that's why we are so degenerate. And if I may be very emphatic, unless you have this quality of a mind that is really religious, degeneracy is inevitable. You follow, sir? Look at the politicians who are supposed to be the rulers, the guides, the helpers of the people: they are degenerate. You see what is happening in this country and everywhere. They are so corrupt. And they want to bring order. They are so irreligious. They may go to church, Baptists or whatever they are, and yet they are really irreligious, because they don't behave. And so man is becoming more and more degenerate. You can see it, sir. Because religion is the factor that brings a new quality of energy. It is the same old energy but it has become a new quality. So the brain doesn't degenerate. As we get older we tend to degenerate. But it

doesn't, because it is the freedom from every kind of security of the 'me' has no place.

A: I noticed this in class yesterday with this business about energy that you are just talking about. There was a quickening...

K: Yes, sir.

A: ...that took place. There was at the end of the class, and it was strenuous, because of this terrible hesitation. But even so there was a release of energy which has nothing to do with entertainment at all, people running to get their minds off themselves, as they say, which, of course, is nonsense, because they are just grinding themselves into themselves some more with it. But in this particular case there was empirical demonstration of what you are saying. Something that is out there. It's to be seen. It's observable.

K: That's right, sir.

A: And behold, it sprung up like a green bay tree. Yes, please, please go on.

K: You see, sir, that's why the priests throughout the world have made religion into something profitable, both the worshipper and the intermediary. It has become a business affair, intellectually business, or it has become really commercial, not only physically but inwardly, deeply: do this and you will reach that.

A: Utilitarian to the core.

K: Which is commercial.

A: Yes.

K: And so, unless this is put an end to we are going to degenerate more and more and more. And that's why I feel so immensely responsible, personally. Tremendously responsible to the audience when I talk to, when I talk, when I go to the various schools in India, I feel I am responsible for those children. You follow, sir?

A: Yes, of course. I do. I certainly do.

K: I say, 'For god's sake, be different. Don't grow up like that. Look.' I go into it very, very, you know, talk a great deal. And they begin to see. But the world is too strong for them. They have to earn a livelihood. They have to resist their parents who want them to settle down and have a good job, and marry, a house. You know, all that business.

A: Well, surely.

K: And the public opinion, and overpopulation, is much too strong.

A: The tremendous weight of that tradition of the four stages of life.

K: Yes.

A: Of course.

K: So I say, let us find out if there are a few 'elite' - quote the word elite, if I may use that word without any snobbery - let's create a few, who really are concerned, a few teachers, few students. Even that becomes very difficult because most teachers are not good at this or that and therefore become teachers. You know what they are?

A: Yes. Oh dear, dear, dear, yes.

K: So everything, sir, is against you. Everything. The gurus are against you, the priests are against you, business people, the teachers, the politicians, everybody is against you. Take that for granted. They won't

help you an inch. They want you to go their way. They've got their vested interest in all that.

A: Yes, I do see that. I do see that with clarity. In our next conversation do you think we could explore the activity of meditation within the context of all this horror...

K: Oh yes, sir, we will do it, we'll do it.

A: ...that we have described. Oh that's wonderful, yes.

Sixteenth Conversation with Dr. Allan W. Anderson in San Diego

Wednesday, February 27, 1974

Meditation, a Quality of Attention that Pervades All of One's Life

Seventeenth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Thursday, February 28, 1974

A: Mr Krishnamurti, in our last conversation we came almost up to the point where we were about to begin another, on the subject of meditation. And I was hoping that today we could share that together.

K: Right, sir. Sir, I don't know if you are aware of the many schools of meditation - in India, in Japan, in China, the Zen, and the various Christian contemplative orders, those who pray endlessly, keep going day after day; and those who wait to receive the grace of God - or whatever they call it. I think, if I may suggest, we should begin, not with what is the right kind of meditation, but what is meditation.

A: Yes. Yes.

K: Then we can proceed and investigate together, and therefore share together this question of meditation, the word meaning ponder, hold together, embrace, consider very, very deeply. The meaning of all that is involved in that one word meditation. If we could start with saying that we really do not know what meditation is.

A: Very well.

K: If we accept the orthodox, traditional Christian or Hindu or Buddhist meditation, and there is, of course, the meditation among the Muslims as the Sufis. If we accept that then it's all based on tradition.

A: Yes.

K: What some others have experienced and they lay down the method or the system to practise what they have achieved. And so there are probably thousands of schools of meditation. And they are proliferating in this country: meditate three times a day; think on a word, a slogan, a mantra. And for that you pay \$35 or \$100 and then you get some Sanskrit word or some other Greek word and you repeat, repeat, repeat. Then there are all those people who practise various forms of breathing. And the practise of Zen. And all that is a form of establishing a routine, a practice that will essentially make the mind dull. Because if you practise, practise, practise, you will become a mechanical mind. So, I have never done any of those things because personally, if I may talk a little about myself..

A: Please do.

K: ...I have watched, attended, went into certain groups of various types, just to look. And I said, 'This isn't it.' I discarded it instantly. So if we could discard all that: discard the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Christian, and the various importations of meditation by the gurus from India, and the contemplative, all that as a continuance of a tradition, which is the carrying over of what others have said, and other's experiences, other's illuminations, other's enlightenment, and so on. If we could totally discard all of that, their methods, their systems, their practices, their disciplines. Because they are all saying, truth, or God, or whatever they like to call it, is something over there. You practise in order to get there. That is a fixed thing - according to them. Of course, it must be fixed. If I keep practising in order to get there, that must be static.

A: Yes, of course. Yes, I quite follow.

K: Therefore truth isn't static, isn't a dead thing.

A: No, no, I quite see that.

K: So, if we could honestly put away all that and ask what is meditation.

A: Good.

K: Not how to meditate. In asking that question, what is meditation, we'll begin to find out, we'll begin to meditate ourselves. I don't know if I-?

A: Yes, you do. You make yourself very clear. We're back again to, to the distinction between an activity, the goal of which lies outside the activity, in contrast to the activity...

K: ...itself.

A: ...the end of which is intrinsic to itself.

K: Yes, sir.

A: Yes.

K: So, could we start with saying I do not know what meditation is?

A: Yes, yes. I'm willing to start there.

K: It's really marvellous if you start from there.

A: It certainly is.

K: It brings a great sense of humility.

A: Also one intuits even from afar a freedom.

K: Yes. Yes that's right. I don't know. That is a tremendous acknowledgement of a freedom from the established known, the established traditions, the established methods, the established schools and practices.

A: Exactly.

K: I start with something I don't know. That has, for me that has great beauty. Then I am free to move.

A: Exactly.

K: I'm free to flow, or swim with, in the enquiry. So, I don't know. Now then, from that we can start. First of all, is meditation divorced from daily living? The daily conduct, the daily desires of fulfilment, ambition, greed, envy, the daily competitive, imitative, conforming spirit, the daily appetites, sensual, sexual, other forms, intellectual and so on. Is meditation divorced from all that? Or does meditation flow through all that, covers all that, includes all that? Otherwise meditation has no meaning. You follow?

A: Yes, I do. This raises an interesting question I'd like to ask you. Perhaps you'd be good enough to help me clarify this. Now, I've never personally undertaken meditation with respect to its ritual character in some traditions or its...

K: ...monastic.

A: ...its monastic and radically methodical approach. I've read rather deeply in the literatures that have emanated from those practices. And I'm thinking for instance of what I've understood from my study of, what is called the hesychast tradition, where, what is called the Jesus prayer is uttered by the monks, particularly on Mount Athos, 'Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me a sinner.' This is repeated over and over with, as I understand it, the hope that someday it will become so automatic that, perhaps as a modern

day depth psychologist would put it, the unconscious comes into possession of it, so that what I am doing, whatever that may be, is itself focused entirely on that prayer. The claim being that when this is achieved, when I no longer have to utter the prayer, in that sense, the prayer is uttering itself in me.

K: The same thing, sir, is expressed in India in a different way, which is mantra. You know that?

A: Yes.

K: Repetition of a sentence or a word. And the repeating loudly first, then silently. Then it has entered into your being and the very sound of it is going on.

A: Yes.

K: And from that sound you act, you live. But it's all self-imposed in order to arrive at a certain point. I, say for instance when you said the prayer which you just now repeated, sin - I don't accept sin. I don't know what sin is.

A: I can just imagine the horror on the faces of those whose ears catch those words.

K: That means they are conditioned according to a belief, that there is a Jesus, that there is a sin, that they must be forgiving - all that. It just carrying on a tradition.

A: This speaks to me very personally. The basis for the decision that I made years ago not to do one of these things was embodied in your statement a little earlier, namely that it is expected that out of this word, or out of these words...

K: ...out of breathing, all that.

A: ...will come somehow this permeation of my total being. And the question that arose for me at the time was, and I'd like you to clarify whether you think this question was correct, what arose in my mind was, that statement itself whether the mantram or the Jesus prayer is itself a finite expression.

K: Absolutely.

A: Therefore, aren't I doing something strange here.

K: Yes.

A: And if I somehow attain to anything that's worth attaining to it would probably be in spite of that rather than because of it. That perhaps was thinking about thought. But I didn't feel it at the time. I thought that I was making an intuitive response to it.

K: Quite.

A: And therefore I simply wouldn't go ahead.

K: You wouldn't go ahead.

A: Yes. Please go on.

K: Quite, quite right sir. So you see, all that implies that there is a path to truth - the Christian path, the Hindu path, the Zen, the various gurus and systems, there is a path to that enlightenment or to that truth or to that immeasurable something or other. And it is there, all you have to do is keep on keep on walking, walking, walking toward a saint. That means that thing is established, fixed, static, is not moving, is not living.

A: It flashed into my mind the Biblical text in which God is described as the lamp unto my feet, and the light

unto my path. It doesn't say he is the path. But rather he's the lamp...

K: ...to the path, quite.

A: Right. As a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path. But it doesn't say that God is the path. That's very interesting.

K: Very.

A: But maybe nobody really looks at those words closely.

K: You see, sir, how you are looking at it already. You see the truth of that statement. The feeling of it.

A: Yes, yes.

K: So, that's one thing. Does meditation cover the whole field of existence? Or is it something totally apart from life? Life being business, politics, sex, pleasure, ambition, greed, envy, the anxiety, death, fear, all that is my life, life, living. Is meditation apart from that or does it embrace all that? If it doesn't embrace all that meditation has no meaning.

A: Something just came to me that I'm sure would be regarded as incredibly heretical. But you know that the words of Jesus himself, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life', when understood in the context of what has been revealed through these discussions we've had, takes on, in relation to something else he said an incredibly different meaning from what we've been taught. For instance, when he asks Peter who he is, that is, 'Who am I, Jesus?', and Peter says, 'Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God', he immediately turns to him and says, 'Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.' Nothing to do with flesh and blood, 'But my father which is in heaven', which he says elsewhere, is one with him. And he's one with the father. And then he prays in his prayer that the disciples be one with him as he and his father are one. That they all may be one. So if you look at that, I'm almost stuttering over myself because this, what I'm about to say, I'm aware of, theologically speaking would be, looked on as fantastical, when he says, 'I am the way, the truth and the life', if it's seen in the context of that one as act, as act, then the whole business utterly is transformed. Isn't it?

K: Quite, quite.

A: I'm going to be swallowing hard about that for a long time. Please go on.

K: So if it is divorced from life then meditation has no meaning. It's just an escape from life, escape from all our travails and miseries, sorrows, confusions. And therefore it's not worth even touching.

A: Yes. Right.

K: If it is not, and it is not for me, then what is meditation? You follow? Is it an achievement, an attainment of a goal? Or is it a perfume, a beauty that pervades all my activities, therefore it has tremendous significance? Meditation has tremendous significance.

Then the next question is: is it the result of a search? Joining Zen group, then another group, one after the other, one after the other, practise this, practise that, don't practise, take a vow of celibacy, poverty, or don't speak at all, fast, in order to get there. For me all those are totally unnecessary. Because what is important is the seeing, as we said yesterday, the false, not I judge the false as true or false, but the very perception reveals the truth or the falseness of it. I must look at it. My eyes must look at it without any prejudices, without any reactions. Then I can say this is false, I won't touch it. That's what happens. I won't. People have come to me and said, 'Oh, you have no idea of all the things', they have said, 'You must', I have said, 'Nothing doing.' To me this is false because it doesn't include your life.

A: Yes.

K: You haven't changed. You may say, 'I'm full of love. I'm full of truth. I'm full of knowledge. I'm full of wisdom.' I say, 'That's all nonsense. Do you behave? Are you free of fear? Are you free of ambition, greed, envy and the desire to achieve success in every field? If not, you are just playing a game. You are not serious.' So, from that we can proceed.

A: Yes.

K: That meditation includes the whole field of existence, whether in the artistic field, or the business field. Because, to me, the division as the artist, business, the politician, the priest, the scholar, and the scientist, you know, how we have fragmented all these as careers, to me, as human beings are fragmented, the expression of this fragmentation is this, business, scientist, the scholar, the artist. You follow?

A: Yes, yes, yes. I'm thinking of what goes on in the academy with respect to this. We are always saying to each other as academicians, 'For heaven's sake let's, let's find an ordering principle by which to bring all this into some kind of integration, so the student can really feel that he's doing something meaningful. And not just adding another freight car to the long train of what he doesn't even see.'

K: Quite, quite.

A: Yes.

K: And meditation must be, or is, when you deny all this - systems, methods, gurus, authorities - a religious question.

A: Yes, profoundly religious.

K: Profoundly religious.

A: Oh, yes.

K: Now, what place has an artist in not only the social structure, in its expression of the religious? You understand? What is an artist, sir? Is he something apart from our daily living? The beauty of living. The quality of the mind that is really religious. You follow? Is he part of that? Or is he a freak, outside that? Because he has certain talents? And the expression of that talent becomes extraordinarily important to him and to the people.

A: In our culture it often seems that the expression of that talent brings him into conflict with certain conventions.

K: And also expressing that conflict in himself.

A: Of course. Yes, we have a long tradition in western civilisation of the artist as an outsider, don't we.

K: Yes. Something outside. But he is much more sensitive, much more alert to beauty, to nature, but apart from that he is just an ordinary man.

A: Yes, of course. Yes.

K: To me, that is a contradiction. First be a total human being. And then whatever you create, whatever you do will be beautiful.

A: Of course.

K: Whether you paint, or whatever you do. Don't, let's divide the artist into something extraordinary. Or the business man into something ugly. Let's call it just living in the world of the intellect, or the scientist in the

world of physics, and so on, so on. But first there must be human being. You follow, sir? Human being in the sense, the total understanding of life, death, love, beauty, relationship, responsibility, not to kill. All that's implied in living. Therefore he establishes a relationship with nature. And the expression of that relationship, if it is whole, healthy is creative.

A: This is very, very different from what many artists conceive of as their task. Especially in modern times artists have this notion that they are in some sense reflectors of the fragmentation of their times.

K: Absolutely.

A: And so they make a statement which holds up the fragmentation as a mirror to us, and what has this got to do with anything else but reinforcing the fragmentation.

K: Absolutely.

A: Yes. Yes I quite understand what you are saying.

K: You see that meditation covers the whole field of existence. Meditation implies freedom from the method, the system, because I don't know what meditation is. I start from that.

A: Yes.

K: Therefore I start with freedom. Not with their burden.

A: That's marvellous. Start with freedom and not with their burden. This business of holding up fragmentation to us from that perspective is really nothing more than a species of journalism.

K: Journalism, absolutely.

A: Isn't it. Yes, yes.

K: Propaganda.

A: Of course, yes.

K: Therefore, lie. So I discard all that. So I have no burden. Therefore the mind is free to enquire what is meditation?

A: Marvellous.

K: I have done this. You follow, sir? It is not verbal expressions. I don't say anything which I haven't lived.

A: Oh that's very, very obvious to me as one sitting here conversing with you. Yes.

K: I won't. That is hypocrisy. I am not interested in all that. I'm really interested in seeing what is meditation. So I start - one starts with this freedom. And freedom means freeing the mind, emptying itself of the burdens of others, their methods, their systems, their acceptance of authority, their beliefs, their hope, because its part of me, all that. Therefore I discard all that. And, now I start by saying, I don't know what meditation is. I start. That means the mind is free, has this sense of great humility. Not knowing I'm not asking. Then somebody will fill it.

A: Exactly.

K: Some book, some scholar, some professor, some psychologist comes along and says, 'You don't know. Here, I know. I'll give it to you.' I say, 'Please don't.' I know nothing. You know nothing either. Because you are repeating what others have said. So I discard all that. Now I begin to enquire. I'm in a position to enquire. Not to achieve a result, not to arrive at what they call enlightenment. Nothing. I don't know if there

is enlightenment or not. I start with this feeling of great humility, not knowing, therefore my mind, the mind is capable of real enquiry. So I enquire. First of all I look at my life, because I said in the beginning meditation implies covering the whole field of my life, of life. My life, our life, is first the daily conscious living. I've examined it. I have looked at it. There is contradiction and so on, as we've been taking about. And also there is the question of sleep. I go to sleep, eight, nine, ten hours. What is sleep? I start not knowing. Not what others have said. You follow, sir?

A: Yes, I do.

K: I'm enquiring in relation to meditation which is the real spirit of religion. That is, gathering all the energy to move from one dimension to a totally different dimension. Which doesn't mean divorce from this dimension.

A: No, it's not like those monks going up the hill, no.

K: I've been up those hills.

A: Yes.

K: So, what is sleep? And what is waking? Am I awake? Or, I am only awake when there is a crisis, when there is a shock, when there is a challenge, when there is an incident, death, discard, failure. You follow? Or am I awake all the time, in waking during the daytime. So what is it to be awake? You follow, me sir?

A: Yes, I am, I am. Since you are saying that meditation must permeate, obviously, to be awake cannot be episodic.

K: That's it. Cannot be episodic. Cannot be something stimulating.

A: Can't be described as peak experiences.

K: No, no. Any form of stimulation, external or internal only implies that you are asleep and you need a stimulant, whether it is coffee, sex, or a tranquilliser. All keep you awake.

A: Have a shot to go to sleep and have a shock to wake up.

K: So, in my enquiry I am asking, am I awake? What does it mean to be awake? Not awake to what is happening politically, economically, socially, that is obvious. But awake. What does it mean? I am not awake if I have any burden. You follow, sir? There is no sense of being awake when there is any kind of fear. If I live with an illusion, if my actions are neurotic, there is no state of being awake. So I'm enquiring and I can only enquire by becoming very sensitive to what is happening in me, outside me. So is the mind aware during the day completely to what is happening inside, outside of me.

A: Upon every instant.

K: That's it. Otherwise I am not awake.

A: I was just thinking about something that has always given me a great sense of wonder. At home we have some birds and, of all things, a cat too.

K: Of course.

A: But they love one another. That is to say, the birds don't run around in the room with the cat, but the cat supervises the birds. When the birds are put to bed in the evening the cat goes into that room and stays with them, maybe an hour or two, watches. Just seems to have the feeling that it must look after the birds. And in the day time, I've often watched the cat sit and look at the birds with an immense intensity, and the ordinary reaction is, 'Well for heaven's sake, haven't you seen them before?' What is this everlasting intensity, but

she's looking.

K: That's right, sir.

A: And her eyes are always with that jewel-like...

K: ...clarity.

A: ...intensity and clarity. Cleaner than flame. And it never stops. And when she sleeps, she really - yes. When you asked me what is sleep, there must be a relation between the wonder that we feel for the cat's ability completely to sleep. And when she awakes she's completely awake.

K. That's right, sir. So in asking and enquiring what is sleep, I must also ask what is to be awake.

A: Of course.

K: Of course. Am I awake? Or is the past so alive that it is dictating my life in the present? Therefore I am asleep.

A: Would you say that again? It's very important.

K: I don't know how, I'll put it differently. Am I awake? Is my mind burdened with the past? And therefore bearing a burden I'm not awake to the present.

A: Not awake in the present, exactly.

K: Not awake as I am talking.

A: That's right.

K: Because I'm talking from the background of my past, of my experience, of my failures, my hurts, my depressions, therefore the past is dominating and putting me to sleep now.

A: To sleep. It's a narcotic.

K: Narcotic. Therefore what am I to do with the past? You follow, sir?

A: Yes, I do. Yes, yes, yes.

K: Past is necessary.

A: Of course, yes, the whole field of knowledge.

K: Knowledge. Past is necessary. But when the past covers the present, then I am asleep. So is it possible to know what the past is and not let it overflow into the present? That question and the reality of it brings its own discipline. Therefore I say, yes, I know what it means. I can live, I can keep awake totally and widely and yet operate in the field of knowledge. So there is no contradiction. I don't know if I am conveying it?

A: Oh you are. You are, you are.

K: So both are moving in harmony. One doesn't lag behind the other. One doesn't contradict the other. There's balance.

A: Well, what I am seeing here, if I am following correctly is, on the one hand we have knowledge and the grasp of its necessity with respect to know-how in practical affairs.

K: Of course.

A: On the other hand we have seeing, understanding. And the act of meditation is the nexus...

K: That's right, sir.

A: ...between them so that there is no interruption of flow in the activity...

K: That's right.

A: ...of understanding and knowing.

K: That is part of meditation.

A: Of course.

K: You follow?

A: Yes.

K: See what is taking place. Then what is sleep? I have understood now what it means to be awake. That means I am watching. I am aware. I am aware without any choice, choiceless awareness, watching, looking, observing, hearing, what is going on and what is going outside, what people tell me, whether they flatter me, or they insult me. I am watching. So I am very aware. Now, what is sleep? I know what is sleep: resting, shutting your eyes, going to bed at 9 or 10 or later. What is sleep? And in sleep, dreams. What are dreams? I don't know what the others say. I am not interested in what the others say. You follow, sir? Because my enquiry is to find out whether meditation covers the whole field of life, not just one segment.

A: My enquiry is from the point where I say, 'I don't know'.

K: I don't know. That is right. So I'll proceed. I dream. There are dreams. What are dreams? Why should I dream? So I have to find out why I dream. What are dreams? Dreams are the continuation of my daily sleep. Which is, I haven't understood - see what is taking place, sir - I have not understood my daily life. I watch my daily life. My daily life is in disorder; so I go to sleep and the disorder continues. And the brain says, 'I must have order otherwise I can't function'. So if the mind doesn't put order during the day, the brain tries to bring order during the night.

A: Through the dream.

K: Through the dreams, through intimations. When I awake I say, 'Yes I have a certain feeling this must be done'. So, see what takes place. When the mind is awake during the day it has order, it establishes order, in the sense we have discussed previously.

A: Yes. In that sense of order.

K: Order which comes out of the understanding of disorder. The negation of disorder is order, not the following of a blueprint.

A: No.

K: Or a pattern, all that's disorder. So during the day, the mind, the brain has established order. So when I sleep the brain isn't working out how to establish order in itself in order to be secure. Therefore the brain becomes rested.

A: I see.

K: Therefore the brain becomes quiet, sleeps without dreams. It may have superficial dreams when you eat wrongly, you know, all that kind of thing. That I am not talking about. So, sleep means regeneration of the brain. I don't know if you follow?

A: Yes, I do. I wonder if I could ask you a question about dreams here, that might introduce a distinction

between dreams in terms of their nature. Sometimes we report that we've had a dream which points to future event.

K: That's another thing.

A: That's entirely different from what you are talking about.

K: Yes, yes.

A: So we could say that...

K: Sir, that, I think we can understand that very simply. You know the other day we were walking high up in the hills in India and there was a river flowing down below. And two boats were coming in the opposite direction and you knew where they were going to meet.

A: Of course.

K: When you go high enough you see the boats coming together at a precise point.

A: But that's very objective. That has nothing to do with my subjective unfinished business.

K: No.

A: Which is the other thing you were talking about.

K: That's right.

A: Yes, I quite see, I quite see. Right. What an amazing thing it would be to have all your business done and go to sleep. And if order should present you with...

K: Yes, sir.

A: ...an understanding.

K: Of course.

A: Then the understanding never stops from waking through sleeping.

K: That's right.

A: Yes! Of course. Of course. Marvellous. Marvellous.

K: So you see, that way the brain is regenerated, keeps young. No conflict. Conflict wears out the brain.

A: Yes.

K: So, sleep means not only order, rejuvenation, innocence, but also in sleep there are states in which there is absolutely freedom to enquire, to see into something which you have never seen with your eyes, physical eyes.

A: Yes.

K: Of course.

A: Yes

K: So we have described sufficiently into that. I see that. So do I - does the mind live that kind of life during the day?

A: That would be rare.

K: Otherwise it is not meditation.

A: Otherwise it is not meditation, of course, of course, of course.

K: And I don't want to play a game, a hypocritical game, because I am deceiving nobody. I am deceiving myself and I don't want to deceive myself. I don't see the point of deceiving myself because I don't want to be a great man, little man, big man, success. That's all too infantile. So I say, am I living that? If not, what is happening? And it gives me energy to live that way because I have no burden of the others. I don't know?

A: This is very remarkable. It reminds me of a story that is told about a swordsman and his three sons. And he was an old, old swordsman in old Japan and he wanted to pass on the responsibility for his art to his sons. And he asked the sons each to come into his room and he would speak to them and he would decide.

K: Quite, quite.

A: He was a man of knowledge in terms of the sword, but he also was a man of understanding. And unbeknown to them he put a ball on top of the lintel and as they passed in, they, of course, were quite unaware of that. The youngest was called in first, and when the youngest walked in his father had arranged for this ball to drop, you see, and the ball dropped and the son, in a flash, cut it in two with his sword when it fell down. And his father said, 'Please wait in the other room.' The second son came in, ball fell on his head but precisely as it touched his head he reached up and he took it in his hands and the father said, 'Please wait in the other room.' Eldest son came in. He opened the door, and as he opened the door he reached up and he took the ball. And the father called them in and he read out the youngest son and he said, 'Very brilliant. You've mastered the technique. You don't understand anything.' He said to the second one, 'Well, you're almost there. Just, just keep on, keep on.' And he said to the eldest son, 'Well, now you can begin.' And it seemed to me that's just exactly - imagine! It's like the word 'prajna' which means 'pra' - ahead, 'jna' to, to know, to know beforehand, in the sense, not of some work of prediction that we do based on the study of rats in the lab or something but understanding is...

K: Yes, sir,

A: ...ahead and behind in the total movement of that one act.

K: Yes, sir.

A: Oh yes of course.

K: So I see this, because I do not separate meditation from daily living. Otherwise it has no meaning. So I see the importance of order during the waking hours. And therefore freeing the mind - the brain from conflict, all that, during sleep, so there is total rest to the brain. That's one thing. Then, what is control? Why should I control? They have all said control. All religions have said control. Control. Be without desire. Don't think about yourself. You follow? All that. I say to myself - this is what they say - can I live without control? You follow, sir?

A: Oh yes, yes. One has to start that question too at the very beginning.

K: I am doing it. That's what we are doing.

A: Yes. My statement is a reflection. Just a mirror to that, yes.

K: Yes.

A: Yes.

K: Is it possible to live without control? Because what is the control? And who is controller? The controller is the controlled. When I say, ' I must control my thought', the controller is the creation of thought. And thought controls thought. It has no meaning. One fragment controls another fragment, and yet therefore remain fragments. So I say, is there a way of living without control? Therefore no conflict. Therefore no opposites. Not one desire against another desire. One thought opposed to another thought. One achievement opposed to another achievement. So, no control. Is that possible? Because I must find out. You follow, sir? It's not just ask a question, just leaving it alone. I've got energy now because I am not carrying their burden anymore. Nor am I carrying my own burden. Because their burden is my burden. When I have discarded that I have discarded this. So I have got energy when I say is it possible to live without control. And so it is a tremendous thing. I must find out. Because the people who have control, they have said through control you arrive at Nirvana, heaven - to me that's wrong, totally absurd. So I say, can I live a life of meditation in which there is no control?

A: When intelligence breaks out, as we looked at before, then with it comes order and that order...

K: Intelligence is order.

A: And intelligence is that order. The seeing is the doing.

K: The doing, yes.

A: Therefore there is no conflict at all.

K: You see, therefore do I live a life, not only is it possible, do I live it? I've got desires: I see a car, a woman, a house, a lovely garden, beautiful clothes, or whatever it is, instantly all the desires arise. And not to have a conflict. And yet not yield. If I have money I go and buy it. Which is obvious. That's no answer. If I have no money I say, 'Well, I'm so sorry. I have no money. And I will get sometime, someday. Then I'll come back and buy it.' It's the same problem. But the desire is aroused. The seeing, contact, sensation and desire. Now that desire is there, and to cut it off is to suppress it. To control it is to suppress it. To yield to it is another form of fragmenting life into getting and losing. I don't know if I...?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

K: So to allow for the flowering of desire without control. You understand, sir?

A: Yes, I do.

K: So the very flowering is the very ending of that desire. But if you chop it off it'll come back again. I don't know?

A: Yes, yes. It's the difference between a terminus and a consummation.

K: Quite, yes. So I let the desire come, flower, watch it. Watch it, not yield or resist. Just let it flower. And be fully aware of what is happening. Then there is no control.

A: And no disorder.

K: No, of course. The moment you control there is disorder. Because you are suppressing or accepting - you know, all the rest of it. So that is disorder. But when you allow the thing to flower and watch it, watch it in the sense be totally aware of it - the petals, the subtle forms of desire to possess, not to possess, to possess is a pleasure, not to possess is a pleasure, you follow? - the whole of that movement of desire.

A: Exactly.

K: And that you to be very sensitive, watchful, very sensitive, choiceless watching.

A: This image that you have referred to metaphorically with the plant itself, could we pursue that in our next conversation through the continuation of concern to look further into meditation.

K: We have not finished meditation.

A: We haven't, no

K: There's lots more involved.

A: Good, good.

Seventeenth Conversation with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Thursday, February 28, 1974

Meditation and the Sacred Mind

Eighteenth Dialogue with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Thursday, February 28, 1974

A: Mr Krishnamurti, we were discussing in our conversation last time meditation. And just as we concluded you brought up the very beautiful analogy from the flowering of a plant, and it struck me that the order that is intrinsic to the movement of the plant as it flowers is a revelatory image of order that you have been discussing. And we were talking also about the relation of meditation to understanding on the one hand and knowledge on the other, a distinction that's very, very rarely made.

K: Yes.

A: Though in ordinary language we make the distinction perhaps unwittingly. It's there.

K: It's there.

A: We have the two words.

K: Quite.

A: But then to go into what the distinction is was something you were beginning to do. And perhaps we could...

K: We could on from there.

A: Yes.

K: Sir, we were talking, if I remember rightly about control.

A: Yes.

K: And we said the controller is the controlled. And we went into that sufficiently. And when there is control there is direction. Direction implies will. Control implies will. And in the desire to control there is established a goal and a direction. Which means to carry out the decision made by will, and the carrying out is the duration of time; and therefore direction means time, control, will, and an end. All that's implied in the word control. Isn't it?

A: Yes.

K: So what place has will in meditation and therefore in life?

A: Yes, yes.

K: Or it has no place at all. That means there is no place for decision at all. Only seeing, doing. And that doesn't demand will, nor direction. You follow?

A: Yes, I do, yes I do.

K: The beauty of this, sir, how it works out. When the mind sees the futility of control because it has understood the controller is the controlled, one fragment trying to dominate other fragments, and the dominant fragment is a part of other fragments, and therefore it is like going around in circles, vicious

circle, never getting out of it. So can there be a living without control? Just listen to it sir. Without will, and without direction? There must be direction in the field of knowledge. Agreed. Otherwise I couldn't get home, to the place I live. I would lose the capacity to drive a car, ride a cycle, speak a language, all the technological things necessary in life. There, direction, calculation, decision in that field is necessary. Choice is necessary between this and that. Here where there is choice there is confusion, because there is no perception. Where there is perception there is no choice. Choice exists because the mind is confused between this and that. So, can a life be led without control, without will, without direction, that means time? And that is meditation. Not just a question, an interesting, perhaps, a stimulating question, but a question however stimulating has no meaning by itself. It has a meaning in living.

A: I was thinking about ordinary language usage again, as you were speaking. It's interesting isn't it, that when we regard that somebody has performed an action, that we call wilful that this is an action that has been undertaken without understanding.

K: Of course.

A: So in the very distinction between will as a word and wilful as an adjective, we have a hint of this distinction. But I'd like to ask you, if I could, about the relationship of will, for the moment, even though we are talking about meditation, we did regard that knowledge, in its own right, does have a proper career.

K: Of course.

A: And we say that decision is referred to that. Choice is referred to that and therefore will is operative there.

K: And a direction and everything.

A: And a direction and so on. And so we are, we are making a distinction here between will and its role in relation to the whole field of what we call loosely know-how.

K: Know-how, knowledge.

A: Yes. And the confusion that occurs when that activity, so necessary in its own right is brought over into this.

K: That's right.

A: And then we can't do either of them, really.

K: Then, that's just it. Therefore we become inefficient.

A: Yes.

K: Personal.

A: But you see we don't think that. What we think is that we can be terribly efficient in knowledge and be what is called unspiritual. And be a success here and not be a success here. Whereas, if I understand you correctly, you don't fail in one or the other, you just fail period. It's a total failure if this confusion is made. You simply can't operate even well here no matter what it might look like in the short run.

K: As long as you are not completely in order inside yourself.

A: Right. Exactly. So the very division that we make between inner and outer is itself a symptom of this terrible...

K: ...of thought which has divided the outer and the inner.

A: Yes, yes. I hope you'll bear with me in going through that...

K: Yes, actually you are quite right.

A: ...because I know in religious thought, my academic discipline, in religious thought this confusion, well, the weight of it.

K: I know.

A: You feel...

K: ...oppressed.

A: And as soon as you begin to make a comment of any kind about it that is simply raising the question. The extreme rigidity and nervousness that occurs...

K: Quite, quite.

A: ...is dramatic. Yes. Yes.

K: You see, sir. So I'm asking, meditation covers the whole field of living, not one segment of it. Therefore living a life without control, without the action of will, decision, direction, achievement. Is that possible? If it is not possible it is not meditation. Therefore life becomes superficial, meaningless. And to escape from that meaningless life we chase all the gurus, the religious entertainment, circuses, you follow? All the practices of meditation. It has no meaning.

A: You know, well, of course you do, it's a rhetorical question: in the classical tradition we have a definition of will. We say that it's desire made reasonable. Desire made reasonable.

K: Desire made reasonable.

A: Desire made reasonable. Now, of course, we've long since lost the idea of what the ancients meant, against their contemplative background, by the word reason. We think it means calculation. But of course that's not what the classical tradition means when it says reasonable. It points rather to that order which isn't defined. And it occurs to me that if we understood that statement correctly we'd be saying, will is the focus of desire without my focusing self-consciously.

K: Yes, that's right. And watching desire to flower.

A: Yes.

K: And therefore watching the will in operation and let it flower and as it flowers as you are watching it dies, it withers away. After all it's like a flower you allow it to bloom and it withers.

A: It comes to be and passes away in its own time.

K: Therefore if you are choicelessly aware of this movement of desire, control, will, focusing that will in action, and so on, so on, so on, let it, watch it. And as you watch it you will see how it loses its vitality. So there is no control. So from that arises the next question which is, direction means space.

A: Yes, of course.

K: It's very interesting what comes.

A: Yes it is, it is.

K: What is space? Space which thought has created is one thing. Space that exists in heaven, in our, what is

it, in the universe, space. There must be space for a mountain to exist. There must be space for a tree to grow. There must be space for a flower to bloom. So what is space? And have we space? Or are we all so limited physically to living in a little apartment, little houses, no space at all outwardly, and therefore having no space we become more and more violent.

A: Yes.

K: I don't know if you have watched of an evening when all the swallows are lined up on a wire.

A: Oh, yes.

K: And how exact spaces they have in between, you follow, sir? Have you?

A: Yes I have. It's marvellous.

K: It's marvellous to see this space. And space is necessary. And we have no space physically with more and more population and all the rest of it. And therefore more and more violence, more and more living together in a small flat, thousand people, you know, crowded.

A: Oh yes.

K: Breathing the same air, thinking the same thing, seeing the same television, seeing the same, reading the same book, going to the same church, believing the same thing. You follow?

A: Yes.

K: The same sorrow. The same anxiety. The same fears. My country - all that. So mind, and so the brain, has very little space. And space is necessary, otherwise I stifle. So can the mind have space? And there will be no space if there is a direction.

A: Clearly, yes.

K: You see, sir?

A: Of course, of course. Yes I do. Yes.

K: There is no space if direction means time. And when mind is occupied with family, with business, with God, with drink, with sex, with experience, occupied, filled, there is no space.

A: That's right. Exactly.

K: So when knowledge occupies the whole field of the mind as thought there is no space. And thought creates a space around itself as the 'me' enclosed, and you enclosed, we and they. So the self, the 'me', which is the very essence of thought has its own little space. And to move out of that space is terror, is fear, is anxiety because I am only used to that little space.

A: Yes, exactly. That brings us back to an earlier conversation we had when we touched on the point of terror.

K: Yes, that's right.

A: Amazing...

K: Not being and the being is in the little space which thought has created. So thought can never give space.

A: Of course not.

K: So, meditation is the freeing of the mind of its content as consciousness which creates its own little space.

You follow, sir?

A: Yes, I do.

K: So from that says, is that possible. Because I'm occupied with my wife, my children, my responsibilities, I care for the tree, I care for the cat, I care for this and that and I'm occupied, occupied, occupied.

A: This throws a marvellous light on that saying of Jesus which people have pondered and wondered about and thought it was very strange: foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head. He doesn't, man as such who grasps himself understands, is not inventing a space for himself. It fits perfectly. It fits perfectly. That's marvellous.

K: I don't know.

A: No, I understand. But I was thinking in the context of the whole discourse. It just flashed over me. And our conversations have been such a revelation to me with respect to the literatures that I've soaked myself in for so many years. And it's a demonstration to me of what you've said. For instance, in so far as I ask these questions of myself personally, precisely as they become answered...

K: Quite, sir.

A: ...so all these things out here become answered. And what could be more empirically demonstrable to an individual that I am the world and the world is me than that.

K: That's right, sir.

A: All I am doing is giving a report of the journey without direction.

K: So, sir, look. The world is getting more and more overpopulated. Cities are growing more and more, spreading, spreading, spreading, suburbs, and so on. Man is getting less and less space and therefore driving out animals, killing. You follow?

A: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

K: Killing the red Indians, the American Indians, killing the Indians in Brazil, and so on. They are doing this, actually it is going on.

A: Oh yes.

K: And, having no space out there, outwardly, except on occasions I go off into the country and say to myself, 'My god, I wish I could live here'. But I can't because I've got... and so on. So, can there be space inwardly? When there is space inwardly there is space outwardly.

A: Exactly.

K: But the outward space is not going to give the inner space. The inner space of mind that is free from occupation, though it is occupied at the moment with what it has to do, it is occupied, but free, the moment it is finished it is over. I don't carry the office to my home. It is over. So space in the mind means the emptying of consciousness of all its content and therefore the consciousness which thought as the 'me' has created ends and therefore there is space. And that space isn't yours or mine. It is space. You follow?

A: Yes, yes I was thinking of the creation story in Genesis. The appearance of space occurs when the waters are separated from the waters and we have vault now over which the birds fly and this space is called heaven.

K: It is heaven.

A: It is heaven.

K: That's right.

A: Yes, yes. Of course, of course. But then we read that you, see and we don't...

K: Fortunately I don't read any of those things.

A: Goodness.

K: So space, direction, time, will, choice, control - you understand, sir. Now, all that has importance in my living, in the daily living of my life, of every human being. If he doesn't know the meaning of meditation, he merely lives in that field of knowledge and therefore that becomes a prison. And therefore being in prison he says, I must escape through entertainment, through Gods, through this and through that, through amusement. You know, that is what is actually taking place.

A: The word vacation...

K: Vacation that's right.

A: ...says it all.

K: Yes.

A: Doesn't it.

K: Absolutely.

A: To vacate is to exit into space.

K: Space.

A: But then we go from one hole to another.

K: To another hole.

A: Yes.

K: If that is clearly perceived in myself, I see the thing operating in my daily life, then what takes place? Space means silence. If there is no silence there is direction, it is the operation of will, 'I must do, I must not do, I must practise this, I must get this', you follow? The should be, should not be, what has been, what should not be, I regret. All that operates. Therefore space means silence inwardly.

A: That's very deep. Very, very deep. Archetypally we associate manifestation as over against latency with sound.

K: Yes, sound.

A: And what you have said puts the whole thing into astonishing...

K: Silence isn't the space between two noises. Silence isn't the cessation of noise. Silence isn't something that thought has created. It comes naturally, inevitably as you open, as you observe, as you examine, as you investigate. So then the question arises, silence, without a movement. Movement of direction. Movement of thought, Movement of time. All silence. Now, that silence, can that operate in my daily life? I live in the field of noise as knowledge. That I have to do. And is there a living with silence and at the same time the other? The two moving together, two rivers flowing in balance. Not division. You follow? In harmony. There is no division. Is that possible? Because otherwise, if that's not possible to be deeply honest I can only live there in

the field of knowledge. I don't know if you see?

A: Oh yes, yes.

K: So, for me it is possible, therefore, I am not saying that out of vanity, I say this in great humility. I say that is possible. It is so. Then what takes place? Then what is creation? Is creation something to be expressed - in paint, in poem, in statue, in writing, in bringing about a baby? Is that creation? Does creation need, or must it be expressed? To us it must be expressed - to most people. Otherwise one feels frustrated, anxious, I am not living. You follow? All that. So what is creation? One can only answer that if one has really gone through all this. You understand, sir? Otherwise creation becomes a rather cheap thing.

A: Yes, it becomes, in terms of the word expressed, simply something pressed out.

K: Pressed out, of course.

A: That's all.

K: That's all.

A: Yes.

K: Like the literary people who - some of them - are everlastingly in battle in themselves, tension and all that, and out of that they write a book, become famous.

A: Yes, the psychological theory that works of art are based on neurosis, which means I am driven.

K: Yes, so what is creation? Is it something, a flowering in which the flower does not know that it is flowering.

A: Exactly, exactly.

K: Have I made it clear?

A: Yes, you've made it very, very clear. All through our conversations the one word that has, for me, been like the clean blade of a two edged sword has been this word 'act'.

K: Yes, sir.

A: But not act over against inaction.

K: No, no, no, no.

A: No, not action as over against the philosophical term of its opposite, passion, which is a different use from the one you were using in our conversations. But sheerly act.

K: Act.

A: Sheerly act.

K: So, sir, see what takes place. Creation in my living. You follow, sir? Not expressing, creating a beautiful chair, this or that may come, that will come, but in living. And from that arises another question which is really much more important: thought is measure. And as long as we cultivate thought, and all our actions are based on thought as it is now, the search for the immeasurable has no meaning. I can give a meaning to it, say there is the immeasurable, there is the unnameable, there is the eternal. Don't let us talk about it. It is there. It has no meaning. That is just a supposition, a speculation, or the assertion of a few who think they know. One has discarded all that. Therefore one asks, when the mind is utterly silent what is the immeasurable? You follow, sir? What is the everlasting? What is the eternal? Not in terms of God, and you

know all these things man has invented. Actually to be that. Now silence in that deep sense of that word opens the door. Because you've got there all your energy. Not a thing is wasted. There is no dissipation of energy at all. Therefore in that silence there is summation of energy.

A: Precisely.

K: Not stimulated energy, not self-projected energy, and so on, sir, that's all too childish. There is, because there is no conflict, no control, no reaching out or not reaching, searching, asking, questioning, demanding, waiting, praying, none of that. Therefore there is all that energy which has been wasted is now gathered in that silence. You follow? That silence has become sacred. Because obviously...

A: Of course it has.

K: It has, not the sacred thing which thought has invented.

A: No, not the sacred over against the profane.

K: No, no, no not all that.

A: No, no, no.

K: So it is only such a sacred mind can see this the most supreme sacred, the essence of all that is sacred, which is beauty. You follow, sir?

A: I do.

K: So there it is. God isn't something that man has invented, or created it out of his image and longing and failure. But when the mind itself becomes sacred then it opens the door to something that is immeasurably sacred. That is religion. And that affects the daily living, the way I talk, the way I treat people, the conduct, behaviour - all that. That is the religious life. If that doesn't exist then every other kind of mischief will exist, however clever, however intelligent, however - all that.

A: And meditation does not occur in the context of all this disorder.

K: No.

A: Absolutely not. But in its ongoingness, the way you have mentioned it, one is precisely in that, where what your word religious is pointing to.

K: That is the most profound religious way of living. You see sir what takes place, another thing. You see as this thing is happening, because your energy is being gathered - energy is being gathered, not yours - energy is being gathered, you have other kind of powers, extra sensory power, can do miracles, which has happened all this to me, exorcise, and all that kind of stuff, and healing. But they become totally irrelevant. Not that you don't love people. On the contrary religion is the essence of it. But they are all second issues. And people get caught in the second issues. I mean, look at what has happened, man who really can heal he becomes - people worship him, a little healing.

A: It reminds me of a story you told me once. It was a year ago: it was about the old man sitting on the banks of a river and the young man came to him, after the older man had sent him away to undertake whatever he needed to learn all this. And he came back with a marvellous announcement that he could now walk on water. And then you said that the older man looked at him and said, 'What's all that about? So you can walk on water. And you have taken all these years to learn how to walk on water. Didn't you see the boat over there?'

K: Oh yes, that's right, sir. That's right.

A: Of course, of course.

K: You see, sir, that's very important. Religion is as we said, is the gathering of all energy, which is attention. In that attention many things happen. Some of them have this gift of healing, miracles. I've had it and I know of which I'm speaking about. And the religious man never touches it. You follow? He may occasionally do this or that but it is a thing to be put away, like a gift, like a talent. It is to be put away, because it is a danger.

A: Exactly.

K: But the more you are talented, the more me, I am important, I have this talent, worship me. With that talent I'll get money, position, power. So this too is a most dangerous thing. So a mind that is religious is aware of all this and lives a life...

A: ...in this space, in this marvellous space. Something occurred to me about our discussion earlier concerning energy and your remark that energy, when it patterns itself - I've forgotten what you used to designate what the patterned energy was, but I suspect it's what we often call matter.

K: Matter, yes.

A: Wouldn't that be correct? Right. In terms of this pointing to act that you have mentioned, it throws a very, very different light on the character of patterned energy and draws our gaze away from the pattern and reminds us...

K: Quite.

A: ...that the substance, or rather the substantive element - I don't want to use the word substance there for philosophical reasons - the substantive element that we point to is not the pattern but the energy.

K: Energy, quite. You see sir, that is love, isn't it sir?

A: Precisely.

K: When there is this sense of religious summation of energy that is love, that is compassion, and care. That operates in daily life.

A: In love the pattern never resists change.

K: So, you see, sir, that love you can do what you like, it will be still love. But there the love becomes sensation. You follow?

A: Yes, the whole track of knowledge.

K: And therefore there is no love there.

A: Yes, that image of the Lionel train, the toy that goes round and round and round. Isn't that extraordinary?

K: You see, sir, that means, can the mind, I'm using the word mind in the sense mind, the brain, the body, the whole thing, can the mind be really silent? Not induced silence, silence, not silence put together, not silence that thought imagines is silence. Not the silence of a church or the temple. They have their own silence when you enter a temple or a...

A: Oh yes.

K: ...old cathedrals. They have an extraordinary sense of silence. Thousands of people chanted or talked, prayed and all that. But it is above all that. It is not that either. So this silence isn't contrived and therefore it is real. It isn't, I have brought about through practice a silence.

A: No, it's not what you mentioned earlier, that space between two noises...

K: Oh, yes, that's right.

A: ...because that would become an interval.

K: That's right.

A: And as an interval it simply becomes successive.

K: Successive. That's right.

A: This is extraordinary in terms of the continuing return to question. It seems to me that it's only in the attitude of the question that there's any possibility even intuiting from afar the possibility of the silence, since already the answer is a noise.

K: Ah, yes. So, sir, just a minute, there is something very interesting. Does this come up through questioning?

A: No. I didn't mean to suggest that questioning generates it. I meant that simply to take a step back from the enthrallment and enchantment with answers is in itself a necessary step.

K: Of course.

A: And that in itself has its own terror.

K: Of course, of course. So I'm asking, is silence, is the sense of the immeasurable, does that come about by my questioning?

A: No.

K: No.

A: No.

K: No. Perception sees the false and discards the false. There is no question, it sees, and finished. But if I keep on questioning I keep on doubting. Doubt has its place but it must be kept on a leash.

A: Now, let me ask you a question here, if I may. The act of perceiving is, as you have said, the doing.

K: Doing.

A: There's absolutely no interval between one...

K: I see danger and I act.

A: And I act. Exactly. Now, in this perceiving, the act is totally free...

K: Yes, sir.

A: ...and then every energy pattern is free to become changed.

K: Yes, quite, sir.

A: Yes, exactly. No more hoarding to itself...

K: No regrets.

A: ...all that its worked for all its life. And amazingly though, it seems to me, there's, if I have understood

you correctly, there's a corollary to this. Not only is the pattern free to be changed, but the energy is free to pattern itself.

K: Or not to pattern.

A: Or not to pattern. Yes.

K: There it is. The knowledge has to pattern.

A: Of course.

K: But here it can't pattern, pattern for what? If it patterns it has become thought again. And therefore thought, if it is divisive, thought is superficial. I don't know if I told you the other day, somebody was telling me, he was saying that in Eskimo language thought means the outside. Very interesting. The outside. When they say, go outside, the world is thought. So thought has created the outer and the inner. If thought is not then there is neither the outer nor the inner. That is space. It isn't, I've got inner space.

A: No. We've been talking about meditation in relation to religion and I simply feel I must ask you to speak about the interrelationship of prayer to meditation, with meditation, because conventionally we always refer to prayer and meditation.

K: No. I don't, to repeat a prayer has no place in meditation. To whom am I praying? Whom am I supplicating? Begging? Asking?

A: A prayer as petition has no place in it.

K: Petition, right.

A: Is there any use of the word prayer that would be consonant with what we we've been talking about?

K: If there is no petition, you understand, deeply, inwardly, there is no petition...

A: No grabbing, grasping.

K: ...because the grabber is the grabbed.

A: Exactly.

K: If there is no petition what takes place? I petition only when I don't understand. When I'm in conflict, when I'm in sorrow, when I'm in - you follow? When I say, 'Oh, God, I've lost everything. I'm finished. I can't arrive. I can't achieve.'

A: When there's no petition I can look. Yes. Exactly. Exactly.

K: A woman came to me once, some time ago. She said, 'I have prayed, enormously, for years. And I have prayed for my refrigerator. And I got it.' Yes, sir! I pray for peace. And I live a life of violence all the time. I say, 'I pray for my country', and I have divided the country opposed to another country. And I pray for my country. It becomes so childish.

A: In conventional prayers there is usually both petition and praise, both are there.

K: Of course. Praising, and receiving.

A: Praise.

K: You must know in Sanskrit it always begins, some parts of it, praising and then begging. There's a marvellous chant which is asking protection of the gods. Protection. And it says, 'May you protect my steps.'

A: Yes, yes.

K: Praising God, then saying, please protect my steps. So if there is no petition, because the petitioner is the petition, the beggar is the begged, is the receiver, then what takes place in the mind. No asking.

A: An immense quietude. Immense quietude. The proper sense of whatever the word tranquillity points to.

K: That's right, sir. That is real peace, not the phoney peace they are all talking about - politicians and the religious people. There is no asking a thing.

A: There is a very beautiful Biblical phrase, 'The peace that passeth understanding.'

K: I've heard that phrase when I was a small boy.

A: I've always asked myself since a child, how it's the case that there is so much talk about such a thing and there's so little evidence of it.

K: Sir, I think you know, books have become tremendously important. What they have written. What they have said. And so the human mind has become second-hand. Or the mind that has acquired so much knowledge about what other people have experienced about reality, how can such a mind experience or find, or come up on that thing which is original?

A: Not that route.

K: No. No, no. And can the mind empty itself of its content? If it cannot, it cannot acquire, then reject, then receive. You follow?

A: Yes.

K: Why should I go through all those things? But I'll look. There is no book in the world that is going to teach me. There is no teacher that is going to teach me. Because the teacher is the taught. The disciple is the teacher. I don't know?

A: That is in itself, as a statement, if one will, as we said in an earlier conversation at the inception of looking, if one will hold that very statement, 'I am the world and the world is me', is an occasion for healing.

K: Yes, sir.

A: But that very statement, 'I am the world and the world is me' sounds, as you have said so often, so absurd that at that point one starts to bolt again.

K: I know.

A: Panic again. Meditation, when undertaken, as it must be, continuously, because we talked about that movement...

K: That means one has to be very, very serious. It isn't a thing we play with.

A: No. It's not what's called these days a fun thing.

K: No sir!

A: In no sense. No, no, no. The discussion that you have undertaken concerning it is so total. A meditation isn't a thing that you do among other things.

K: Meditation means attention, care. That's part of it, care for my children, for my neighbour, for my country, for the earth, for the earth, for the trees, for the animals. Don't kill animals. You follow? Don't kill

them to eat. It's so unnecessary. It's part of the tradition which says, you must eat meat. Therefore, sir, all this comes to a sense of deep, inward seriousness, and that seriousness itself brings about attention, caring and responsibility and all that we have discussed. It isn't that one has gone through all this. One sees it. And the very perception is action which is wisdom. Because wisdom is the ending of suffering. It isn't callous, callousness, the ending of it. And the ending of it means the observation, the seeing of suffering. Not to go beyond it, to refuse it, rationalise it or run away from it. Just to see it. Let it flower. And as you are choicelessly aware of this flowering, it comes naturally to wither away. I don't have to do something about it.

A: Marvellous. Marvellous how energy can be free to pattern itself or not pattern itself. The pattern is free to be energised or the whole thing is simply all round.

K: Yes, sir. It covers the whole of man's endeavour, his thoughts, his anxieties, everything it covers.

A: So, in our conversations, all through, we have reached the point of consummation here where it is round. I wonder if Shakespeare had some intimation of this when he said, 'Ripeness is all.' He must have been thinking of that, not simply as setting a term to the career of fruit.

K: No sir, time comes to an end, time stops. In silence, time stops.

A: In silence time stops. Immensely beautiful. I must express to you my gratitude from the bottom of my heart. I hope you will let me. Because throughout the whole career of our discussions I have been undergoing a transformation.

K: Quite. Because you are willing enough to listen, good enough to listen. Most people are not, they won't listen. They won't take the time, the trouble, the care to listen.

A: I've already seen, in my relation to my classes, in the activity my students and I share, the beginning of a flowering.

K: Flowering, quite.

A: The beginning of a flowering.

K: Quite.

A: Thank you, so much again.

Eighteenth Dialogue with Dr Allan W. Anderson in San Diego, California

Thursday, February 28, 1974

