

*Jiddu Krishnamurti*

*Five Public Meetings in*

*Colombo - 1950*

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## ***First Public Talk in Colombo***

First Public Talk in Colombo

Sunday, December 25, 1949

I think it is important to know how to listen. Most of us do not really listen at all; we are so accustomed to putting away the things we don't want to hear that we have almost become deaf to the problems that concern us. It is important, is it not, how we listen to everything that is going on about us - how we listen not only to the song of the birds, the sounds in nature, but to each other's voices - that is, how extensively we are aware of the problems of the day at different levels. Because, it is only in hearing rightly, and not as we want to hear, that we begin to understand the many problems, whether economic, social, or religious. Life itself is a complex problem which cannot be solved at any one particular level. So we must be able to listen completely and fully, particularly to what is being said. This evening, at least, we might try to listen, so that we understand each other as fully as we can. The difficulty is that most of us listen with prejudice to what is being said; we come to a conclusion about what is being said based on our own ideas, and our minds are already made up. We compare what is being said with the words of some other teacher, and naturally our reaction is conditioned and not a direct response to what is being said. So, if I may suggest it this evening, please listen fully without any prejudice, without any conclusion, without comparing; listen to find out what is actually being said. Because, the world is in a very terrible state; and whether you have riches, own several cars, a comfortable house, a good bank account, or have barely enough to live; whether you belong to a particular religious or political party or to none, these problems have to be understood. I shall be dealing with these problems during the next five weeks, not only here, but also at the discussions to be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and we must first learn the art of listening - which is quite a difficult task - so that we get the full significance of what is being said. You cannot get the full significance of what is being said if you listen through the screen of your own prejudice, and the art of listening consists in removing that prejudice, if only for the time being, and trying to understand the problem completely. Thus we shall be able to deal with the problems that arise every day in our lives.

Now, we all have problems, have we not, and we cannot shut our eyes to them or approach them with a pattern of action, either of the left or of the right, with a prejudice which we have formed out of our own knowledge or the knowledge of experts. Surely, the problem is always new; any problem is always new at any level, and if we approach the problem with a pattern of action, whether of the left, the right, or the center, then our response is obviously conditioned, which creates a barrier in understanding the problem itself. That is our difficulty. Life is a process of challenge and response - otherwise, there is no life. Life is a response, a reaction to a demand, to a challenge, to a stimulus, and if our response is conditioned, obviously that creates conflict, which is a problem. Consciously or unconsciously, whether we are aware of it or not, most of us are in conflict, in turmoil; and to understand this inward confusion, which has brought about confusion outwardly - whether political, religious, or economic - we must know how to approach the problem, how to approach this enormous and increasing confusion and misery. There is no decrease, no lessening of sorrow - politically, religiously, socially, or in any other way. Whatever we do, whatever religious or political leaders we follow, creates further disaster, and our problem is how to act so that that very action does not create a new problem, does not produce a further catastrophe, so that reformation does not need further reform. That is the situation each one of us has to face.

Surely, this increasing confusion arises because we approach the problem with a pattern of action, with an ideology, whether political or religious. Organized religion obviously prevents the understanding of the

problem because the mind is conditioned by dogma and belief. Our difficulty is how to understand the problem directly, not through any particular religious or political conditioning; how to understand the problem so that the conflict may cease, not temporarily but completely, so that man can live fully, without the misery of tomorrow or the burden of yesterday. Surely, that is what we must find out: how to meet the problem anew, because every problem, whether political, economic, religious, social, or personal, is ever new, and it cannot be met with the old. Perhaps this is putting it in a way different from that to which you are accustomed, but it is actually the issue. After all, life is a constantly changing environment. We would like to sit back and be comfortable; we would like to shelter ourselves in religion and belief, or in knowledge based on particular facts. We would like to be comfortable, we would like to be gratified, we would like not to be disturbed; but life, which is ever changing, ever new, is always disturbing to the old. So, our question is how to meet the challenge afresh. We are the result of the past; our thought is the outcome of yesterday, and with yesterday we obviously cannot meet today because today is new. When we approach the new with yesterday, we are continuing the conditioning of yesterday in understanding today. So our problem in approaching the new is how to understand the old and therefore be free of the old. The old cannot understand the new - you cannot put new wine in old bottles. So, it is important to understand the old, which is the past, which is the mind based on thinking. Thought, idea, is the outcome of the past; whether it is historical or scientific knowledge, or mere prejudice and superstition, idea is obviously the outcome of the past. We would not be able to think if we had no memory; memory is the residue of experience; memory is the response of thought. To understand the challenge, which is new, we have to understand the total process of the self, which is the outcome of our past, the outcome of our conditioning - environmentally, socially, climatically, politically, economically - the whole structure of ourselves. Therefore, to understand the problem is to understand ourselves; the understanding of the world begins with the understanding of ourselves. The problem is not the world but you in relationship with another, which creates a problem, and that problem extended becomes the world problem. So, to understand this enormous, complex machine, this conflict, pain, confusion, misery, we must begin with ourselves - but not individualistically, in opposition to the mass. There is no such thing as that abstraction called the mass, but when you and I do not understand ourselves, when we follow a leader and are hypnotized by words, then we become the mass and are exploited. So, the solution to the problem is not to be found in isolation, in withdrawal to a monastery, to a mountain or a cave, but in understanding the whole problem of ourselves in relationship. You cannot live in isolation; to be is to be related. So, our problem is relationship, which causes conflict, which brings misery, constant trouble. As long as we do not understand that relationship, it will be a source of endless pain and struggle. Understanding ourselves, which is self-knowledge, is the beginning of wisdom, and for self-knowledge you cannot go to a book - there is no book that can teach it to you. Know yourself, and once you understand yourself, you can deal with the problems that confront each one of us every day. Self-knowledge brings tranquillity to the mind, and then only can truth come into being. Truth cannot be sought after. Truth is the unknown, and that which you seek is already known. Truth comes into being unsought when the mind is without prejudice, when there is the understanding of the whole process of ourselves.

Several questions have been sent in, and I am going to answer some of them. It is very easy to ask questions. Anybody can ask a flippant or stupid question, but to ask the right question is much more difficult. Only in asking a right question is there a right answer because only then is the problem of the questioner revealed.

Question: You say that you are not going to act as a guru to anyone. Cannot one who has understood the truth convey his understanding to another to help him also to understand?

Krishnamurti: Surely, whether a guru is necessary or not is not important; the problem is why we want a guru, why we seek a guru. That is the problem, isn't it? If we can understand that, then we will find out whether truth can be conveyed to another. Why do you need a guru, a teacher, a leader, a guide? Obviously, you will say, "I need him because I am confused, I do not know what to do, and I am seeking truth." Let us

not deceive ourselves about it. You don't know what truth is; therefore, you go to a teacher, asking him to teach you what truth is. You want someone to help you, to guide you out of your confusion; you are unhappy, and you want to be happy; you are dissatisfied, and you want to be satisfied. So, you choose your guru according to your satisfaction. (Laughter) May I suggest something? When you laugh at something serious, it indicates a very superficial state of mind. By laughing, you pass off the disturbing idea; so, if I may suggest, let us be a little more serious. Because, our problems are very serious, and we cannot approach them like flighty schoolboys - which is the way we are behaving, though we may have gray beards.

So, the question is not whether a guru is necessary but why do we want one? We want someone to give us a comforting hand - that is what we want. We don't want the truth because the truth can be extraordinarily disturbing. We really don't want to understand what truth is, so we go to a guru to give us the satisfaction we want, and as we are confused, obviously we choose a guru or a leader who is also confused. When we choose a guru out of our confusion, that guru must also be confused, otherwise we wouldn't choose him. To understand yourself is essential, and a guru who is worthy of that name must obviously tell you that. But to most of us, this is, a tiresome business; we want quick relief, a panacea, so we turn to a guru who will give us a satisfactory pill. We are searching not for truth but for comfort, and the man who gives us comfort enslaves us.

Can truth be conveyed to another? I can give you a description of something which is over, which is past, and therefore not real; I can tell you about the past, and we can communicate with each other on the verbal level about what is known, but we cannot communicate with each other about something which we are not experiencing. Description is always of the past, not the present; therefore, the present cannot be described, and reality is only in the present. So, when you go to another to be told what truth is, he can only tell you of the experience which is over, and the experience which is over is not truth - it is merely knowledge. Knowledge is not wisdom; there can be description on the verbal level of knowledge and facts, but to describe something which is in constant movement is impossible. That which is described is not truth. Truth must be experienced from moment to moment, and if you meet today with the measure of yesterday, you will not understand truth.

So, a guru is not essential. On the contrary, a guru is an impediment. Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. No guru can give you self-knowledge; and without self-knowledge, do what you will, act in any manner you like, follow any leader, any social or religious pattern - you are only creating further misery. But when through self-knowledge the mind is free of impediments and limitations, then truth comes into being.

Question: You are reported as having said that ideas are not going to bring people together. Please explain how, according to you, people can be brought together to create a better world

Krishnamurti: Let us find out what we mean by ideas, and as I have said, please listen, not with prejudice, not with a conclusion, but listen as you would to someone whom you really like. What do you mean by ideas, what do you mean by belief, what do you mean by ideology? Let us think this out, investigate together. Do ideas bring people together, or separate people? Idea is obviously the verbal version of thought. Thought is response to conditioning, is it not? You are Sinhalese, Buddhists, Christians, or what you will, and your thought is conditioned according to your background. Background is memory, obviously; memory responds to stimulus, to challenge, and the response of memory to challenge is called thinking. Surely, you think according to the pattern in which you have been brought up - as Buddhists, as Christians, according to the left or the right, or God knows what. You are conditioned to believe certain things, and not to believe other things. That conditioning is memory, and the response of memory is thought. Thought examines ideas and, being conditioned, responds according to that conditioning, going either to the left or to the right. So, ideas gather people according to the particular pattern in which they have been brought up, and obviously ideas can oppose ideas.

As it is perhaps a little too abstract, let us put it differently. Suppose you are a real Buddhist, not a verbal Buddhist, but an active one - what does it mean? You believe in certain things and act according to that belief, and a Christian or a communist will act according to a different ideology. How can these two ideas ever meet? Each idea, each thought, is the result of its own conditioning, and how can one idea meet another? All one idea can do is to expand and gather people around itself, as also does any other idea. So, ideas can never bring about unity. On the contrary, they divide people. You are a Christian, I am a Buddhist, another is a Hindu or a Muslim; I believe, you don't believe, so we are at loggerheads. Why? Why are we so divided by ideas? Because that is the only thing we have - the word is the only thing we have; therefore, ideas have become extraordinarily important, and we gather around ideas to act - the Christian in opposition to the communist, labor in opposition to capitalism, capitalism in opposition to socialism. Idea is not action; idea prevents action. We will have to think it out; we will go into it at another discussion. Action based upon idea divides people. That is why there is starvation in the world, there is hunger, there is misery, there is war. We have ideas about it, but idea prevents our understanding of the problem because the problem is not an idea. The problem is pain and conflict. It is very comforting to have an idea about pain, suffering, trouble, exploitation; then you can talk about it and not act. Think it out and you will see, if you are really going into the problem and not merely reacting according to a certain pattern, that ideas are dividing people. Have you not noticed? You Sinhalese are fighting for nationalism, which is just an idea; Hindus are against Europeans, Germans and Americans against Russians. All over the world nationalism, which is an idea, prevents people from coming together, and because nationalism is elementarily gratifying and stupid, you are satisfied with it. Everywhere the word nationalism arises like a wall and keeps people apart. So, throughout the world, ideas are separating people, setting man against man. The ideas which we worship are the very denial of love; they have no significance; they cannot bring about a radical transformation. To bring about this fundamental revolution, you must begin to understand yourself; it is only then that you can bring about unity, and not through ideas.

Question: I feel uncertain about everything and consequently find it difficult to act well, as I fear that my action will only lead to further confusion. Is there a way I can act to avoid confusion?

Krishnamurti: Obviously, without knowing yourself, whatever you do is bound to increase confusion; if you don't know the whole structure of your being, your action will inevitably create mischief, though you may have a perfect pattern of conduct. That is why reformation, revolution according to a pattern, is a disintegrating factor in society - it merely carries on the past in a modified way. Self-knowledge, which you cannot buy in a book or get from any teacher, is to be discovered in relationship with people, with ideas. Relationship is a mirror in which you see yourself as you are. Nothing can live in isolation. One must understand relationship and not merely condemn it, justify it, or identify oneself with it. We condemn because that is the easiest way to get rid of something, like putting a child in the corner. If I want to understand my child, my neighbor, my wife, I must study that person, I must be aware in my relationship with that person, mustn't I? So, to act without increasing confusion is possible only through self-knowledge.

Question: You are reported as having said that religion cannot provide a solution to the problems of humanity. Is that correct?

Krishnamurti: Now, what do we mean by religion? As we know it, it is organized belief, dogma, action according to a particular pattern, is it not? Organized belief is the experience of someone else, arranged according to a pattern of yesterday, and you are conditioned by that belief. Is that religion? The pattern may be of the left, of the right, or of the center, or it may be a so-called divine plan - there is not much difference between them - all have their ideals, all have their utopia or heaven, so all may be called religion, each perpetuating exploitation. Now, is that religion? Obviously, belief with its authority and dogmas, with its pageantry and sensation, is not religion. So, what is religion? That is our question. It is simply a word. The word door is not a door but only the symbol of something else. Similarly, religion is something behind the conditioned response evoked by that word, which means that we have to discover the thing behind the

word. That thing is the unknown, isn't it? What you know has already receded into the past. There must be direct experiencing of what is, and for this the first requirement is freedom, which means you must be free of the false, which is belief, not at the end but at the beginning. You must have the freedom to discover what is false - surely that is religion. The whole process of yourself must be understood, for without understanding yourself, there is no wisdom. The beginning of wisdom is the understanding of yourself, and that is meditation.

***First Public Talk in Colombo***

***Sunday, December 25, 1949***

## ***Second Public Talk in Colombo***

Second Public Talk in Colombo

Sunday, January 1, 1950

We were saying how important it is, before we ask what to do or how to act, to discover what is right thinking because without right thinking, obviously there cannot be right action. Action according to a pattern, according to a belief, has set man against man, as we discussed last Sunday. There can be no right thinking as long as there is no self-knowledge because without self-knowledge, how can one know what one is actually thinking? We do a great deal of thinking, and there is a great deal of activity; but such thought and action produce conflict and antagonism, which we see not only in ourselves but also about us in the world. So, our problem is, is it not, how to think rightly, which will produce right action, thereby eliminating the conflict and confusion which we find, not only in ourselves, but in the world about us.

Now, to find out what is right thinking, we must inquire into what is self-knowledge because if we don't know what we think, or if our thought is based on the background which is our conditioning, whatever we think is obviously merely a reaction and therefore leads to further conflict. So, before we can find out what is right thinking, we have to know what is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge, surely, is not mere learning a particular kind of thinking. Self-knowledge is not based on ideas, belief, or conclusion. It must be a living thing; otherwise, it ceases to be self-knowledge and becomes mere information. There is a difference between information - which is knowledge, and wisdom - which is knowing the processes of our thoughts and feelings. But most of us are caught up in information, superficial knowledge, and so we are incapable of going much deeper into the problem. To discover the whole process of self-knowledge, we have to be aware in relationship. Relationship is the only mirror we have, a mirror that will not distort, a mirror in which we can exactly and precisely see our thought unfolding itself. Isolation, which many people seek, is the surreptitious building up of resistance against relationship. Isolation obviously prevents the understanding of relationship - relationship with people, with ideas, with things. As long as we don't know our relationship, actually what is, between ourselves and our property, ourselves and people, ourselves and ideas, obviously there must be confusion and conflict.

So, we can find out what is right thinking only in relationship. That is, we can discover in relationship how we think from moment to moment, what are our reactions, and thereby proceed step by step to the unfoldment of right thinking. This is not an abstract or difficult thing to do - to watch exactly what is taking place in our relationship, what are our reactions, and thus discover the truth of each thought, each feeling. But if we bring to it an idea or a preconception of what relationship should be, then obviously that prevents the uncovering, the unfoldment of what is. That is our difficulty: we have already made up our minds as to what relationship should be. To most of us, relationship is a term for comfort, for gratification, for security; and in that relationship we use property, ideas, and persons for our gratification. We use belief as a means of security. Relationship is not merely a mechanical adjustment. When we use people, it necessitates possession, physical or psychological; and in possessing someone, we create all the problems of jealousy, envy, loneliness, and conflict. Because, if we examine it a little more closely and deeply, we will see that using a person or property for gratification is a process of isolation. This process of isolation is not actual relationship at all. So our difficulty and our mounting problems come with the lack of understanding of relationship, which is essentially self-knowledge. If we do not know how we are related to people, to property, to ideas, then our relationship will inevitably bring about conflict. That is our whole problem at the present time, is it not? - relationship, not only between people, but between groups of people, between

nations, between ideologies, either of the left or of the right, religious or secular. Therefore, it is important to understand fundamentally your relationship with your wife, with your husband, with your neighbor, for relationship is a door through which we can discover ourselves, and through that discovery we understand what is right thinking. Right thinking, surely, is entirely different from right thought. Right thought is static. You can learn about right thought, but you cannot learn about right thinking because right thinking is movement; it is not static. Right thought you can learn from a book, from a teacher, or gather information about, but you cannot have right thinking by following a pattern or a mold. Right thinking is the understanding of relationship from moment to moment, which uncovers the whole process of the self.

At whatever level you live, there is conflict, not only individual conflict, but also world conflict. The world is you; it is not separate from you. What you are, the world is. There must be a fundamental revolution in your relationship with people, with ideas; there must be a fundamental change, and that change must begin, not outside you, but in your relationships. Therefore, it is essential for a man of peace, for a man of thought, to understand himself, for without self-knowledge his efforts only create further confusion and further misery. Be aware of the total process of yourself. You need no guru, no book, to understand from moment to moment your relationship with all things.

Question: Why do you waste your time preaching instead of helping the world in a practical way?

Krishnamurti: Now, what do you mean by "practical"? You mean bringing about a change in the world, a better economic adjustment, a better distribution of wealth, a better relationship - or, to put it more brutally, helping you to find a better job. You want to see a change in this world - every intelligent man does - and you want a method to bring about that change, and therefore you ask me why I waste my time preaching instead of doing something about it. Now, is what I am actually doing a waste of time? It would be a waste of time, would it not, if I introduced a new set of ideas to replace the old ideology, the old pattern. Perhaps that is what you want me to do. But instead of pointing out a so-called practical way to act, to live, to get a better job, to create a better world, is it not important to find out what are the impediments which actually prevent a real revolution - not a revolution of the left or the right, but a fundamental, radical revolution, not based on ideas? Because, as we have discussed it, ideals, beliefs, ideologies, dogmas, prevent action. There cannot be a world transformation, a revolution, as long as action is based on ideas because action then is merely reaction; therefore, ideas become much more important than action, and that is precisely what is taking place in the world, isn't it? To act, we must discover the impediments that prevent action. But most of us don't want to act - that is our difficulty. We prefer to discuss, we prefer to substitute one ideology for another, and so we escape from action through ideology. Surely, that is very simple, is it not? The world at the present time is facing many problems: overpopulation, starvation, division of people into nationalities and classes, and so on. Why isn't there a group of people sitting together trying to solve the problems of nationalism? But if we try to become international while clinging to our nationality, we create another problem, and that is what most of us do. So, you see that ideals are really preventing action. A statesman, an eminent authority, has said the world can be organized and all the people fed. Then why is it not done? Because of conflicting ideas, beliefs, and nationalisms. Therefore, ideas are actually preventing the feeding of people, and most of us play with ideas and think we are tremendous revolutionaries, hypnotizing ourselves with such words as practical. What is important is to free ourselves from ideas, from nationalisms, from all religious beliefs and dogmas, so that we can act, not according to a pattern or an ideology, but as needs demand; and, surely, to point out the hindrances and impediments that prevent such action is not a waste of time, is not a lot of hot air. What you are doing is obviously nonsense. Your ideas and beliefs, your political, economic, and religious panaceas, are actually dividing people and leading to war. It is only when the mind is free of idea and belief that it can act rightly. A man who is patriotic, nationalistic, can never know what it is to be brotherly, though he may talk about it; on the contrary, his actions, economically and in every direction, are conducive to war. So, there can be right action and therefore radical, lasting transformation, only when the mind is free of ideas, not superficially, but fundamentally, and freedom from

ideas can take place only through self-awareness and self-knowledge.

Question: I am a teacher, and after studying what you say, I see that most of the present education is harmful or futile. What can I do about it?

Krishnamurti: Surely, the question is what we mean by education and why we are educating people. We see throughout the world that education has failed because it is producing more and more destruction and war. Education so far has furthered industrialism and war; that has been the process for the last century or so. What is actually taking place is war, conflict, unceasing waste of one's own effort, everything leading to more conflict, greater confusion and antagonism - and is that the end of education? So, to find out how to educate, not only must the educator be educated, but there must be an understanding of what it is all about and what we are living for, the end and purpose of life. When we seek the purpose of life, we can find it only as a self-projection. The end and purpose of life, obviously, is living. But living is not a goal; happiness is not a goal. It is only when we are unhappy that we seek the goal of happiness. Similarly, when life is confused, then we want a purpose, an end. So, we have to find out what living means. Is it merely a technique, a capacity to earn money mechanically, or is it a process of understanding the total way of our whole existence? What is happiness? Is it to be educated, to pass the B.A. or M.A., or God knows what? Apart from profession, what are you actually? What is your state of being apart from your social status, so many rupees earned from such and such a job - strip yourselves of these, and what are you? Hardly anything; nothing very great, but something shallow and empty.

Knowledge is what we call education. You can get information from any book as long as you can read; so education so far has actually been an escape from ourselves; and, as with all escapes, it must inevitably create further confusion and further misery. Without understanding the total process of yourself, which is understanding relationship, mere gathering of information and mere memorizing of books in order to pass examinations is utterly futile. Surely I am not exaggerating. Education is understanding, and helping others to understand, the total process of our existence. The teacher must understand the whole significance of his action in relationship with society, with the world; so it is essential that the educator be educated. To bring about revolution in the world, transformation must take place in you, but we avoid radical revolution in ourselves and try to bring about revolution in the state, in the economic world. Therefore, education must begin with you, with the guru. When you give your background to the child, the mind of the child responds to that conditioning, and it is only through freedom from conditioning that there can be the true salvation of the world.

Question: I am a smoker, and I am trying to break myself of the habit of smoking. Can you help me?  
(Laughter)

Krishnamurti: I do not know why you are laughing. The questioner wants to know how to stop smoking. It is a problem to him, and by merely laughing it away, you have not solved it. Perhaps you also smoke or have some other habit. Let us find out how to understand this whole process of habit forming and habit breaking. We can take the example of smoking, and you can substitute your own habit, your own particular problem, and experiment with your own problem directly as I am experimenting with the problem of smoking. It is a problem, it becomes a problem, when I want to give it up; as long as I am satisfied with it, it is not a problem. The problem arises when I have to do something about a particular habit, when the habit becomes a disturbance. Smoking has created a disturbance, so I want to be free of it. I want to stop smoking; I want to be rid of it, to put it aside, so my approach to smoking is one of resistance or condemnation. That is, I don't want to smoke, so my approach is either to suppress it, condemn it, or to find a substitute for it - instead of smoking, to chew. Now, can I look at the problem free of condemnation, justification, or suppression? Can I look at my smoking without any sense of rejection? Try to experiment with it now as I am talking, and you will see how extraordinarily difficult it is not to reject or accept. Because, our whole tradition, our whole background, is urging us to reject or to justify rather than to be curious about it. Instead

of being passively watchful, the mind always operates on the problem. So, the problem is not smoking but our approach to smoking, which creates the problem. Because, if you find smoking rather stupid, a waste of money, and so on - if you really see that, you will drop it, there will be no problem. Smoking, drinking, or any other habit is an escape from something else; it makes you feel socially at ease. It is an escape from your own nervousness or from a disturbed state, and the habit becomes a means of your conditioning. So, smoking is not the problem. When you approach smoking with your memory, your recollection of previous trials and failures, you approach it with a conclusion already made. Therefore, the problem is not in the fact but in your approach to the fact. You have tried by discipline, control, denial, and you have not succeeded. So you say, "I shall go on smoking; I cannot stop" - which is, after all, an attempt to justify yourself, which means your approach is not very intelligent. So, smoking or any other habit is not a problem. The problem is thought, which is your approach to the fact. You are the problem, not the habit which you have created; and thus you will see, if you really try, how difficult it is for the mind to be free from the sense of condemnation and justification. When your mind is free, the problem of smoking - or any other problem - is nonexistent.

Question: Is continence or chastity necessary for the attainment of liberation?

Krishnamurti: The question is wrongly put. For the attainment of liberation, nothing is necessary. You cannot attain it through bargaining, through sacrifice, through elimination; it is not a thing that you can buy. If you do these things, you will get a thing of the marketplace, therefore not real. Truth cannot be bought, there is no means to truth; if there were a means, the end would not be truth, because means and end are one, they are not separate. Chastity as a means to liberation, to truth, is a denial of truth. Chastity is not a coin with which you buy it. You cannot buy truth with any coin, and you cannot buy chastity with any coin. You can buy only those things which you know, but you cannot buy truth because you don't know it. Truth comes into being only when the mind is quiet, still; so the problem is entirely different, is it not?

Why do we think chastity is essential? Why has sex become a problem? That is really the question, isn't it? We shall understand what it is to be chaste when we understand this corroding problem of sex. Let us find out why sex has become such an extremely important factor in our life, more of a problem than property, money, and so on. What do we mean by sex? Not merely the act but thinking about it, feeling about it, anticipating it, escaping from it - that is our problem. Our problem is sensation, wanting more and more. Watch yourself, don't watch your neighbor. Why are your thoughts so occupied with sex? Chastity can exist only when there is love, and without love there is no chastity. Without love, chastity is merely lust in a different form. To become chaste is to become something else; it is like a man becoming powerful, succeeding as a prominent lawyer, politician, or whatever else - the change is on the same level. That is not chastity but merely the end result of a dream, the outcome of the continual resistance to a particular desire. So, our problem is not how to become chaste or to find out what are the things necessary for liberation but to understand this problem which we call sex. Because, it is an enormous problem, and you cannot approach it with condemnation or justification. Of course, you can easily isolate yourself from it, but then you will be creating another problem. This all-important, engrossing, and destructive problem of sex can be understood only when the mind liberates itself from its own anchorage. Please think it out, don't brush it aside. As long as you are bound through fear, through tradition, to any particular job, activity, belief, idea, as long as you are conditioned by and attached to all that, you will have this problem of sex. Only when the mind is free of fear is there the fathomless, the inexhaustible, and only then does this problem take its ordinary place. Then you can deal with it simply and effectively; then it is not a problem. So, chastity ceases to be a problem where there is love. Then life is not a problem; life is to be lived completely in the fullness of love, and that revolution will bring about a new world.

Question: The idea of death terrifies me. Can you help me to overcome the dread of my own death and that of my loved ones?

Krishnamurti: Let us think this problem out together and go to the end of it, because we must find the truth of it, and not merely an opinion. Opinions are not truth. Death is a fact. You may like to dodge it, to escape from it through belief in reincarnation, continuity, growth, but it is a fact. Why are we terrified of it? What do we mean by death? Surely, we mean the end of something - of the body and of our experiences which we have gathered throughout life - the psychological ending of accumulated experiences. Innumerable books are written about death, about the hereafter. But we are afraid of death. So, we try to find immortality, continuity, through property, through title, through name, through achievement, so that desire, memory, can be immortalized. Why do you want to continue? What is there to continue? Your memories? Memories are but accumulated experiences. Only in ending is there creation, not in continuity; therefore, there must be death. In death only is there renewal, not in continuing. Incompleteness of action in the present creates fear of death, and as long as there is the desire for continuity, there must be fear. That which continues must decay; it cannot be renewed, but in dying there is creation of the new.

***Second Public Talk in Colombo***

***Sunday, January 1, 1950***

## *Third Public Talk in Colombo*

Third Public Talk in Colombo

Sunday, January 8, 1950

One of our major problems is this question of creative living. Obviously, most of us have dull lives; we have only a very superficial reaction. After all, most of our responses are superficial and thereby create innumerable problems. Creative living does not necessarily mean becoming a big architect or a great writer. This is merely capacity, and capacity is entirely different from creative living. No one need know that you are creative, but you yourself can know that state of extraordinary happiness, a quality of indestructibility, but that is not easily realized because most of us have innumerable problems - political, social, economic, religious, family - which we try to solve according to certain explanations, certain rules, traditions, any sociological or religious pattern with which we are familiar. But our solution of one problem seems inevitably to create other problems, and we set up a net of problems ever multiplying and increasing in their destructiveness. When we try to find the answer, a way out of this mess, this confusion, we seek the answer at one particular level. One must have the capacity to go beyond all levels because the creative way of living cannot be found at any particular level. That creative action comes into being only in understanding relationship, and relationship is communion with another. So, it is not really a selfish outlook to be concerned with individual action. We seem to think that we can do very little in this world, that only the big politicians, the famous writers, the great religious leaders are capable of extraordinary action. Actually, you and I are infinitely more capable of bringing about a radical transformation than the professional politicians and economists. If we are concerned with our own lives, if we understand our relationship with others, we will have created a new society; otherwise, we will but perpetuate the present chaotic mess and confusion.

So, it is not out of selfishness, not because of a desire for power, that one is concerned with individual action; and if we can find a way of living which is creative, not merely conforming to religious, social, political, or economic standards as we are doing at the present time, then I think we will be able to solve our many problems. At present we are merely repetitive gramophones, perhaps changing records occasionally under pressure, but most of us always play the same tunes for every occasion. It is this constant repetition, this perpetuation of tradition, that is the source of the problem with all its complexities. We seem to be incapable of breaking away from conformity, though we may substitute a new conformity for the present one or try to modify the present pattern. It is a constant process of repetition, imitation. We are Buddhists, Christians, or Hindus; we belong to the left or to the right. By quoting from the various sacred books, by mere repetition, we think we shall solve our innumerable problems. Surely, repetition is not going to solve human problems. What has the "revolutionary" done for the so-called masses? Actually, the problems are still there. What happens is that this constant repetition of an idea prevents the understanding of the problem itself. Through self-knowledge one has the capacity to free oneself from this repetition. Then it is possible to be in that creative state, which is always new, and therefore one is always ready to meet each problem afresh.

After all, our difficulty is that having these immense problems, we meet them with previous conclusions, with the record of experience, either our own or acquired through others; and so we meet the new with the old, which creates a further problem. Creative living is being without that background; the new is met as the new; therefore, it does not create further problems. Therefore, it is necessary to meet the new with the new until we can understand the total process, the whole problem of mounting disaster, misery, starvation, war, unemployment, inequality, the battle between conflicting ideologies. That struggle and confusion is not to

be solved by repetition of old ways. If you will really look a little more closely without prejudice, without religious bias, you will see much bigger problems; and being free from conformity, from belief, you will be able to meet the new. This capacity to meet the new with the new is called the creative state, and that surely is the highest form of religion. Religion is not merely belief; it is not the following of certain rituals, dogmas, the calling yourself this or that. Religion is really experiencing a state in which there is creation. This is not an idea, a process. It can be realized when there is freedom from self. There can be freedom from self only through understanding the self in relationship - but there can be no understanding in isolation.

As I suggested in answering the questions last Sunday, it is important that we experience each question as it arises, and not merely listen to my answers; that we discover together the truth of the matter, which is much more difficult. Most of us would like to be apart from the problem, watching others; but if we can discover together, take the journey together, so that it is your experience and not mine, though you are listening to my words - if we can go together, then it will be of lasting value and importance.

Question: Do you advocate vegetarianism? Would you object to the inclusion of an egg in your diet?

Krishnamurti: Is that really a very great problem, whether we should have an egg or not? Perhaps most of you are concerned with nonkilling. That is really the crux of the matter, is it not? Perhaps most of you eat meat or fish. You avoid killing by going to a butcher, or you put the blame on the killer, the butcher - that is only dodging the problem. If you like to eat eggs, you may get infertile eggs to avoid killing. But this is a very superficial question - the problem is much deeper. You don't want to kill animals for your stomach, but you do not mind supporting governments that are organized to kill. All sovereign governments are based on violence; they must have armies, navies, and air forces. You don't mind supporting them, but you object to the terrible calamity of eating an egg! (Laughter) See how ridiculous the whole thing is; investigate the mentality of the gentleman who is nationalistic, who does not mind the exploitation and the ruthless destruction of people, to whom wholesale massacre is nothing - but who has scruples as to what goes into his mouth. (Laughter) So, there is much more involved in this problem - not only the whole question of killing, but the right employment of the mind. The mind may be used narrowly, or it is capable of extraordinary activity; and most of us are satisfied with superficial activity, with security, sexual satisfaction, amusement, religious belief - with that we are satisfied and discard entirely the deeper response and wider significance of life. Even the religious leaders have become petty in their response to life. After all, the problem is not only killing animals but human beings, which is more important. You may refrain from using animals and degrading them, you may be compassionate about killing them, but what is important in this question is the whole problem of exploitation and killing - not only the slaughter of human beings in wartime, but the way you exploit people, the way you treat your servants and look down on them as inferiors. Probably you are not paying attention to this because it is near home. You would rather discuss God, reincarnation - but nothing requiring immediate action and responsibility.

So, if you are really concerned with not killing, you should not be a nationalist, you should not call yourself Sinhalese, German, or Russian. Also you must have right employment, make right use of machinery. It is very important in modern society to have right employment because today every action leads to war, the whole thing is geared for war; but at least we can find out the wrong professions and avoid them intelligently. Obviously, the army, the navy, are wrong professions; so is the profession of law which encourages litigation; and the police, especially the secret police. So, right employment must be found and exercised by each one, and only then can there be the cessation of killing, which will bring about peace among men. But the economic pressure is so great in the modern world that very few can withstand it. Almost no one is concerned with seeking right profession, and if you are concerned not to kill, then you have to do far more than merely avoid the killing of animals, which means you have to go into this whole problem of right employment. Though the question may appear very petty, if you go into it a little more carefully, you will see that it is a very great question because what you are, you make the world to be. If you are greedy, angry, dominating, possessive, you will inevitably create a social structure that will bring about

further conflict, misery, further destruction. But unfortunately, most of us are not concerned with any of these things. Most of us are concerned with immediate pleasures, with everyday living; and if we can get them, we are satisfied. We do not want to look into the deeper and wider problems; though we know they exist, we want to avoid them. By avoiding these problems, they are increased, you have not solved them. To solve them, they cannot be approached through any particular ideology, either of the left or of the right. Look at these problems more closely and effectively, and you will begin to understand the total process of yourself in relation to others, which is society.

But you will tell me that I have not answered the question about the egg, whether to eat an egg or not. Surely, intelligence is the important thing - not what goes into your mouth, but what comes out of it; and most of us have filled our hearts with the things of the mind, and our minds are very small, shallow. Our problem is to find out how to bring about a transformation in that which is shallow and small, and this transformation can come about only through understanding the shallow. Those of you who want to go into the question more deeply will have to find out whether you are contributing to war and how to avoid it, whether indirectly you are the cause of destruction. If you can really solve that question, then you can easily settle the superficial matter of whether you should be a vegetarian or not. Tackle the problem at a much deeper level, and you will find the answer.

Question: You say that reality or understanding exists in the interval between two thoughts. Will you please explain.

Krishnamurti: This is really a different way of asking the question, "What is meditation?" As I answer this question, please experiment with it, discover how your own mind works, which is after all a process of meditation. I am thinking aloud with you, not superficially - I have not studied. I am just thinking aloud with you about the question, so that we can all journey together and find the truth of this question.

The questioner asks about the interval between two thoughts, in which there can be understanding. Before we can inquire into that, we must find out what we mean by thought. What do you mean by thinking? Is this getting a little too serious? You must have patience to listen to it. When you think something - thought being an idea - what do you mean by that? Is not thought a response to influence, the outcome of social, environmental influence? Is not thought the summation of all experience reacting? Say, for example, you have a problem, and you are trying to think about it, to analyze it, to study it. How do you do that? Are you not looking at the present problem with the experience of yesterday - yesterday being the past - with past knowledge, past history, past experience? So, that is the past, which is memory, responding to the present; and this response of memory to the present you call thinking. Thought is merely the response of the past in conjunction with the present, is it not, and for most of us thought is a continuous process. Even when we are asleep, there is constant activity in the form of dreams; there is never a moment when the mind is really still. We project a picture and live either in the past or the future, like many old and some young people do, or like the political leaders who are always promising a marvelous utopia. (Laughter) And we accept it because we all want the future, so we sacrifice the present for the future, but we cannot know what is going to happen tomorrow or in fifty years' time.

So, thought is the response of the past in conjunction with the present; that is, thought is experience responding to challenge, which is reaction. There is no thought if there is no reaction. Response is the past background - you respond as a Buddhist, a Christian, according to the left or to the right. That is the background, and that is the constant response to challenge - and that response of the past to the present is called thinking. There is never a moment when thought is not. Have you not noticed that your mind is incessantly occupied with something or other - personal, religious, or political worries? It is constantly occupied; and what happens to your mind, what happens to any machinery that is in constant use? It wears away. The very nature of the mind is to be occupied with something, to be in constant agitation, and we try to control it, to dominate it, to suppress it; and if we can succeed, we think we have become great saints and

religious people, and then we stop thinking.

Now, you will see that in the process of thinking there is always an interval, a gap, between two thoughts. As you are listening to me, what exactly is happening in your mind? You are listening, perhaps experiencing what we are talking about, waiting for information, the experience of the next moment. You are watchful, so there is passive watching, alert awareness. There is no response; there is a state of passiveness in which the mind is strongly aware, yet there is no thought - that is, you are really experiencing what I am talking about. Such passive watchfulness is the interval between two thoughts.

Suppose you have a new problem - and problems are always new - how do you approach it? It is a new problem, not an old one. You may recognize it as old, but as long as it is a problem, it is always new. It is like one of those modern pictures to which you are entirely unaccustomed. What happens if you want to understand it? If you approach it with your classical training, your response to that challenge, which is that picture, is rejection; so if you want to understand the picture, your classical training will have to be put aside - just as, if you want to understand what I am talking about, you have to forget you are a Buddhist, a Christian, or whatnot. You must look at the picture free of your classical training, with passive awareness and watchfulness of mind, and then the picture begins to unfold itself and tell its story. That is possible only when the mind is in a state of watchfulness, without trying to condemn or justify the picture; it comes only when thought is not, when the mind is still. You can experiment with that and see how extraordinarily true is a still mind. Only then is it possible to understand. But the constant activity of the mind prevents the understanding of the problem.

To put it around the other way, what do you do when you have a problem, an acute problem? You think about it, don't you? What do you mean by "think about it"? You mean working for an answer, searching for an answer, according to your previous conclusions. That is, you try to shape the problem to fit certain conclusions which you have, and if you can make it fit, you think you have solved it. But problems are not solved by being put into the pigeonholes of the mind. You think about the problem with the memory of past conclusions and try to find out what Christ, Buddha, X, Y, or Z has said, and then apply those conclusions to the problem. Thereby you do not solve the problem but cover it up with the residue of previous problems. When you have a really big and difficult problem, that process will not work. You say you have tried everything and you cannot solve it. That means you are not waiting for the problem to tell its story. But when the mind is relaxed, no longer making an effort, when it is quiet for just a few seconds, then the problem reveals itself and it is solved. That happens when the mind is still, in the interval between two thoughts, between two responses. In that state of mind understanding comes, but it requires extraordinary watchfulness of every movement of thought. When the mind is aware of its own activity, its own process, then there is quietness. After all, self-knowledge is the beginning of meditation, and if you do not know the whole, total process of yourself, you cannot know the importance of meditation. Merely sitting in front of a picture or repeating phrases is not meditation. Meditation is a part of relationship; it is seeing the process of thought in the mirror of relationship. Meditation is not subjugation but understanding the whole process of thinking. Then thought comes to an end, and only in that ending is there the beginning of understanding.

Question: What happens to an individual at death? Does he continue, or does he go to annihilation?

Krishnamurti: Now, it is very interesting to find out from what point of view we are approaching this question. Please put this question to yourself and find out how you as an individual approach it. Why do you put this question? What is the motive that makes you ask about total annihilation? Either you are approaching the question because you want to know the truth of it, and are therefore not seeking self-gratification, or you want a solution because you are afraid. If you approach it with the idea that you are afraid of death and want to continue, then your question will have a gratifying answer because you are merely seeking consolation. Then you may just as well adopt a new belief that will satisfy you or take a

drug that will make you dull. When you suffer, you want to be made dull. Suffering is the response of sensitiveness; that is, sensitiveness makes for pain, and when there is pain you want a drug. So, either you want to find the truth of this question or you are merely seeking a means to lull yourself to sleep - only you don't put it so crudely. You want to be comforted; you ask because you are afraid of death, and you want to be sure of continuity. According to your approach, you will find the answer, obviously. If you are seeking consolation, then you are not seeking truth; if you are afraid, then you are not trying to find out what is real. So, first you have to be very earnest in your thinking. Most of us are afraid of seeking the truth. Most of us are scared of there being no continuity, and we want to be assured that we will continue. Let us find out whether there is continuity - you may want it, but it may not be there.

What do you mean by continuity and coming to an end? What is it that continues? We are trying to find the truth of continuity and the truth of noncontinuity, so we have to examine what it is that continues in your daily life. Have you noticed yourself in continuation - in relation to your property, your family, your ideas? You say a hundred times, "This is my property, my reputation," and it becomes continuity. You say, "This is my name, my wife, my work, my job, these are my ambitions, my characteristics or tendencies; I am a big entity, or a little entity trying to become a big entity" - and that is what you are in daily life, not spiritually, but actually. Obviously, those are all memories, and you want to know if that bundle of memories, identified as yourself, will continue. You are not separate from the bundle. There is no 'you' as an entity different from memory. The 'you' may be placed at a higher level, but even at that level it is within the whole field of memory, of thought; and you want to know whether it will continue. Memory is word, symbol, picture, image; without the word there is no memory. The symbol, the image, the past picture, the memory of certain relationships - all that is 'you', which is the word. You want to know whether that word, which is identified with memory, will continue. In other words, you are seeking immortality through memory identified as 'you'. You are not different from the various qualities which go toward making the 'you'. So, you are the house, the memory, the experience, the family; you are not separate from the idea. And you want to know whether that 'you' continues. Now, why do you want to know? What is the motive, what is the urge? You say, "I am finished, I must have space in which to grow, to become; life is too short, I must have another chance." Now, have you noticed that idea, thought, can continue? You can experience it for yourself - it is simple. Thought as memory, as idea, continues. So you have the question answered. The 'you' that continues is merely a bundle of memories; that is, when there is identification of thought as 'I am,' this superficial thing in some form or other continues, as thought did before. The 'you' as an idea, as thought, continues, but that is not very satisfactory because you have an idea that you are something more than thought, and you want to know if that something more continues. There is nothing more - 'you' are merely the result of social, environmental influences; that is, 'you' are the result of conditioning. You may say, "What nonsense it is to talk of a future life - it is superstitious rot"; others, who are differently conditioned, believe there is something more. Surely, there is not much difference between the two. Both are conditioned, one to believe and the other not to believe. Belief in any form is detrimental to the discovery of truth. Belief in continuity and belief in noncontinuity are both detrimental to the discovery of truth. To find out what truth is, there can be no fear and no belief - which fetter the mind. Only when continuity ends can you know the truth of what is beyond continuity.

To put it differently, death is the unknown, it is ever new, and to understand it, you must go to it with a fresh mind, a mind that is new, not merely a continuation of the past. In that state you are capable of knowing the significance of death. At present we know neither life nor death, and we are anxious to know what death is. Thought must end for life to be. There must be death in order for life to flourish. When life is only the continuation of thought, such continuity can never know reality. If you are seeking continuity, you have it in your house, in your work, in your children, in your name, in your property, in certain qualities - all that is 'you', it is thought continued. Immortality can be known only when thinking ceases, when, through understanding, the process of thought comes to an end. You can only think about something that you know. So when you think of yourself as a spiritual entity, it is your own projection, something born out

of the past; therefore, it is not spiritual. It is only when you understand continuity that thought comes to an end - which is an extraordinary process requiring a great deal of alertness, not discipline, vows, dogmas, creeds, beliefs, and all the rest of it. There is immortality only when the mind is completely still, and that stillness comes when thought is wholly understood.

Question: I pray to God, and my prayers are answered Is this not proof of the existence of God?

Krishnamurti: If you have proof of the existence of God, then it is not God (Laughter) because proof is of the mind. How can the mind prove or disprove God? Therefore, your god is a projection of the mind according to your satisfaction, appetite, happiness, pleasure, or fear. Such a thing is not God but merely a creation of thought, a projection of the known, which is past. What is known is not God, though the mind may look for it, may be active in the search for God.

The questioner says that his prayers are answered and asks if this is not proof of the existence of God. Do you want proof of love? When you love somebody, do you seek proof? If you demand proof of love, is that love? If you love your wife, your child, and you want proof, then love is surely a bargain. So your prayer to God is merely bargaining. (Laughter) Don't laugh it off, look at it seriously, as a fact. The questioner approaches what he calls God through supplication and petition. You cannot find reality through sacrifice, through duty, through responsibility, because these are means to an end, and the end is not different from the means. The means are the end.

The other part of the question is, "I pray to God, and my prayers are answered." Let us examine that. What do you mean by prayer? Do you pray when you are joyous, when you are happy, when there is no confusion, no misery? You pray when there is misery, when there is disturbance, fear, turmoil, and your prayer is supplication, petition. When you are in misery, you want somebody to help you out, a higher entity to give you a helping hand, and that process of supplication in different forms is called prayer. So, what happens? You put out your begging bowl to someone; it does not matter who it is - an angel, or your own projection whom you call God. The moment you beg, you have something - but whether that something is real or not is a different question. You want your confusion, your miseries solved, so you get out your traditional phrases, you turn on your devotion, and the constant repetition obviously makes the mind quiet. But that is not quietness - the mind is merely dulled and put to sleep. In that induced quiet, when there is supplication, there is an answer. But it is not at all an answer from God - it is from your own ornamental projection. Here is the answer to the question. But you do not want to inquire into all this, that is why the question is put. Your prayer is supplication - you are only concerned to get a response to your prayer because you want to be free from trouble. Something is gnawing at your heart, and by praying, you make yourself dull and quiet. In that artificial quietness there is a response - obviously satisfying, otherwise you would reject it. Your prayer is satisfying, and therefore it is what you yourself have created. It is your own projection that helps you out - that is one type of prayer. Then there is the deliberative type of prayer to make the mind quiet, receptive, and open. How can the mind be open when it is conditioned by tradition, the background of the past? Openness implies understanding, the capacity to follow the imponderable. When the mind is held, tethered to a belief, it cannot be open. When it is deliberately opened, obviously any answer it receives is a projection of itself. Only when the mind is unconditioned, when it knows how to deal with each problem as it arises - only then is there no longer a problem. As long as the background continues, it must create a problem; as long as there is continuity, there must be everincreasing turmoil and misery. Receptivity is the capacity to be open, without condemnation or justification, to what is; and it is that from which you try to escape through prayer.

*Third Public Talk in Colombo*

*Sunday, January 8, 1950*

## ***Fourth Public Talk in Colombo***

Fourth Public Talk in Colombo

Sunday, January 15, 1950

Surely, there is great confusion everywhere, not only within ourselves individually, but also in the world and among our so-called leaders. When there is confusion, there is a desire to find someone who will lead us out of our difficulties, and we turn to some kind of authority. We turn the responsibility over to our leaders, or seek a pattern of action, or look to the past or to the future to try to find out what ought to be done. Our morality is based on the pattern of yesterday or the ideal of tomorrow, and when tradition and the ideal of the future both fail, we turn to some authority. Because, most of us want security, we want some kind of refuge from all this turmoil, and we seek it in morality according to a pattern of the past, or in some sort of ideal; we cling to an example, hoping to see our way out of our confusion, out of our uncertainty. Our ideal is a projection of ourselves, created by the interpretation of various books, and our whole intention and purpose is to find something - a person, an idea, or a system - that will lead us out of this confusion. So, being confused, being uncertain, we seek external or inward authority and spend our energies in trying to conform ourselves either to the pattern of tradition or the ideal of what should be. Obviously, conformity at any level denies intelligence, which is the capacity to adjust, the capacity of quick response to challenge; and when that intelligence is not functioning, then we conform to a pattern, to authority. That is what is happening in the world at present, is it not? We are confused individually, and being confused, being insecure in ourselves, we turn to somebody. To find out, is it not necessary to be insecure, to be uncertain? Can you find anything if you are certain? Is it not essential to be uncertain to discover reality, or what you will? There must be this state of uncertainty, this state of constant inquiry - not to find a result, but to inquire into each incident, each thought and feeling as it arises, which is to understand experience from moment to moment.

So, being confused, being uncertain, is not the following of a pattern detrimental to intelligence, to real inward integrity? Because, the pattern, the system, eventually leads to security, and how can a person who is psychologically secure ever find anything? Obviously, you must be physically secure, but physical security is destroyed as long as we are seeking psychological security. Surely, the desire for psychological security prevents creative response to life, which is intelligence. So, our problem is obviously not the substitution of one pattern for another, but how to be free of patterns, so that we can respond to every challenge anew. This is reality, is it not? Reality is to understand every moment of life as it is, without interpreting it according to our past experience. A mind that is bound by authority, whether its own or that of another, a mind that is conforming, imitating, following a particular pattern of action - how can such a mind be capable of understanding the real, of understanding what is at every moment of thought and feeling? The mind that is burdened with authority, with confusion, with discipline, obviously cannot find that which is free. Can a mind that is disciplined, controlled, subjugated, ever be free? Can a wrong means lead to a right end? To discover the real, the mind must be free at the beginning, not at some ultimate end. How can there be freedom for the mind that is conforming, that is merely imitating, following a certain course of action? And the mind will follow patterns of action, it will discipline itself, it will conform, as long as there is fear of psychological uncertainty. Physically you must have clothes, food, shelter; but when there is psychological certainty, does it not exclude inquiry and so discovery? Surely, discovery is possible only in freedom, not in a course of action disciplined according to a pattern.

So, our inquiry is about not what is discipline, or what system or course of action to follow, but how to free

the mind from the fear of being insecure. Is it not essential for the mind to be insecure? Obviously, only in insecurity can there be understanding of what is false. It requires a certain alertness, the nonacceptance of any authority. So, a mind that desires to understand reality must be free at the very beginning from all compulsion, inward or outward; that is, it must be in a state of uncertainty, not tethered to any particular belief or ideal, which is merely a refuge. Only then, surely, is the mind carefree, aloof, happy, and only such a mind is capable of understanding that which is true. The capacity to understand requires freedom from conformity, which is freedom from fear. After all, we conform because we do not know, and we are afraid, but is it not a fact that not-knowing is essential for the unknown to be? If you observe, you will see how the mind is constantly moving from the known to the known, but only when the mind is free from the known is it possible to receive the unknown, which means it must be entirely free from all sense of conformity, authority, or imitation. The major calamity of modern civilization is that we are like so many gramophone records repeating what is said in the books, whether it is the Koran, the Bible, or what you will. Surely, a mind that repeats is not really in search of understanding, for it is incapable of being uncertain, and uncertainty is essential in order to find.

Question: Why don't you participate in politics or in social reform?

Krishnamurti: Have you noticed how politics and social reform have become extraordinarily predominant in our lives at the present time? All our newspapers and most of the magazines, except the purely escapist ones, are full of politics, economics, and other problems. Have you ever asked yourself why they are that way, why human beings are giving such extraordinary importance to politics, economics, and social reform? Reforms are obviously necessary because of the economic, social, and political confusion and the general deterioration of the state of man following the two wars. So, crowds gather round political leaders; people line the streets, watching them as though they were strange animals trying to solve the problem on the economic, social, or political level, independent of the total process of man. Are these problems to be tackled separately, unrelated to the whole psychological problem of man? You may have a perfect system that you think will solve the economic problems of the world, but another will also have a perfect system, and the two systems, representing two different ideologies, will fight each other. As long as you are fighting over ideas, systems, there cannot be a true, radical revolution, there cannot be fundamental social transformation. Ideas do not transform people. What brings about transformation is freedom from ideas. Revolution based on ideas is no longer revolution but merely a continuation of the past in a modified state. Obviously, that is not revolution.

The questioner wants to know why I don't take part in politics or in social reform. Surely, if you can understand the total process of man, then you are dealing with the fundamental issues, not merely trimming particular branches of the tree. But most of us are not interested in the entire problem. We are concerned merely with reconciliation, superficial adjustment, not with the fundamental understanding of man as a total process. It is very much easier to be an expert on one particular level. The experts on the economic or political level leave the psychological level to other experts, and so we become slaves to experts; we are sacrificed by experts for an idea. So, there can be fundamental revolution only in understanding the total process of yourself, not as an individual opposed to the mass, to society, but as an individual interrelated with society; because without you there is no society, without you there is no relationship with another. There is no revolution, no fundamental transformation, as long as we do not understand ourselves. Reformers and so-called revolutionists are really factors of retrogression in society. A reformer tries to patch up the present society, or create a new one, on the basis of an ideology, and his idea is the conditioned response to a pattern; and such revolution, based on an ideology, can never produce a fundamental, radical transformation in social relationships. What we are concerned with is not reformation or modified continuity, which you call revolution, but the fundamental transformation of man in his relationship with man; and as long as that basic change does not take place in the individual, we cannot produce a new social order. That fundamental transformation does not depend on belief, on religious organizations, or on any

political or economic system - it depends on your understanding of yourself in relationship with another. That is the real revolution that must take place, and then you as an individual will have an extraordinary influence in society. But without that transformation, merely to talk about revolution or to sacrifice yourself for a so-called practical idea - which is not really sacrifice at all - is obviously mere repetition, which is retrogression.

Question: Do you believe in reincarnation and karma?

Krishnamurti: Now I suppose you will settle back in your seats and feel comfortable. What do you mean by "believe," and why do you want to believe? Is belief necessary to find out what is true? To find out what is true, you must approach life afresh, you must have the capacity to see things anew, but the mind that is cradled in belief is obviously incapable of discovering what is new. So, before you can discover whether there is reincarnation or not, you must find out if your mind is free from belief. Most of us believe because it is convenient, because it is satisfying; in it there is a great deal of hope. It is like taking some drug or narcotic and feeling pacified. Such a belief is a projection of our own desire. So, to find out the truth of any matter, obviously there must be freedom from hypothesis, from belief, from any form of conclusion - whether of Buddha, Christ, yourself, or your grandmother. You must approach it afresh, and only then are you capable of discovering what is true. Belief is an impediment to reality, and that is a very difficult pill to swallow for most of us. We are not seeking reality; we want gratification, and belief gives us gratification, it pacifies us. So, we are essentially seeking gratification, escaping from the problem, from pain and suffering. Therefore we are not really seeking the truth. To find the truth, there must be the direct experiencing of sorrow, pain, and pleasure, but not through a screen of belief.

So, similarly, let us find out what you mean by reincarnation - the truth of it, not what you like to believe, not what someone has told you, or what your teacher has said. Surely, it is the truth that liberates, not your own conclusion, your own opinion. Now, what do you mean by reincarnation? To reincarnate, to be reborn - what do you mean by that? What is it that actually comes into birth again? - not what you believe or do not believe. Please put all that aside, it is only childish stuff. Let us find out what it is that comes back again or reincarnates. To find that out, you must first know what it is that you are. When you say, "I shall be reborn," you must know what the 'I' is. That is the question, is it not? I am not dodging it. Don't think this is a clever move of mine. You will see the problem clearly as we proceed, as we explore. You say, "I shall be reborn." What is the 'I' that is to be reborn? Is the 'I' a spiritual entity, is the 'I' something continuous, is the 'I' something independent of memory, experience, knowledge? Either the 'I' is a spiritual entity or it is merely a thought process. Either it is something out of time which we call spiritual, not measurable in terms of time, or it is within the field of time, the field of memory, thought. It cannot be something else. Let us find out if it is beyond the measurement of time. I hope you are following all this. Let us find out if the 'I' is in essence something spiritual. Now, by "spiritual" we mean, do we not, something not capable of being conditioned, something that is not the projection of the human mind, something that is not within the field of thought, something that does not die. When we talk of a spiritual entity, we mean by that something which is not within the field of the mind, obviously. Now, is the 'I' such a spiritual entity? If it is a spiritual entity, it must be beyond all time; therefore it cannot be reborn or continued. Thought cannot think about it because thought comes within the measure of time, thought is from yesterday, thought is a continuous movement, the response of the past; so thought is essentially a product of time. If thought can think about the 'I', then it is part of time; therefore that 'I' is not free of time, therefore it is not spiritual - which is obvious. So, the 'I', the 'you' is only a process of thought; and you want to know whether that process of thought, continuing apart from the physical body, is born again, is reincarnated in a physical form. Now go a little further. That which continues - can it ever discover the real, which is beyond time and measurement? We are experimenting to discover truth, not exchanging opinions. That 'I', that entity which is a thought process - can it ever be new? If it cannot, then there must be an ending to thought. Is not anything that continues inherently destructive? That which has continuity can never renew itself. As long

as thought continues through memory, through desire, through experience, it can never renew itself; therefore, that which is continued cannot know the real. You may be reborn a thousand times, but you can never know the real, for only that which dies, that which comes to an end, can renew itself.

The other part of the question is whether I believe in karma. What do you mean by the word karma? To do, to act, to be. Let us try to find out in spite of old women's tales. Karma implies, does it not, cause and effect - action based on cause, producing a certain effect; action born out of conditioning, producing further results. So karma implies cause and effect. And are cause and effect static, are cause and effect ever fixed? Does not effect become cause also? So there is no fixed cause or fixed effect. Today is a result of yesterday, is it not? Today is the outcome of yesterday, chronologically as well as psychologically; and today is the cause of tomorrow. So cause is effect, and effect becomes cause - it is one continuous movement; there is no fixed cause or fixed effect. If there were a fixed cause and a fixed effect, there would be specialization, and is not specialization death? Any species that specializes obviously comes to an end. The greatness of man is that he cannot specialize. He may specialize technically, but in structure he cannot specialize. An acorn seed is specialized - it cannot be anything but what it is. But the human being does not end completely. There is the possibility of constant renewal; he is not limited by specialization. As long as we regard the cause, the background, the conditioning, as unrelated to the effect, there must be conflict between thought and the background. So the problem is much more complex than whether to believe in reincarnation or not, because the question is how to act, not whether you believe in reincarnation or in karma. That is absolutely irrelevant. Your action is merely the outcome of certain causes, and that action modifies future action - therefore there is no escape from conditioning.

So, to put our problem differently, can action ever bring about freedom from this chain of cause-effect? I have done something in the past; I have had experience, which obviously conditions my response today, and today's response conditions tomorrow. That is the whole process of karma, cause and effect; and obviously, though it may temporarily give pleasure, such a process of cause and effect ultimately leads to pain. That is the real crux of the matter: Can thought be free? Thought, action, that is free does not produce pain, does not bring about conditioning. That is the vital point of this whole question. So, can there be action unrelated to the past? Can there be action not based on idea? Idea is the continuation of yesterday in a modified form, and that continuation will condition tomorrow, which means action based on idea can never be free. As long as action is based on idea, it will inevitably produce further conflict. Can there be action unrelated to the past? Can there be action without the burden of experience, the knowledge of yesterday? As long as action is the outcome of the past, action can never be free, and only in freedom can you discover what is true. What happens is that as the mind is not free, it cannot act; it can only react, and reaction is the basis of our action. Our action is not action but merely the continuation of reaction because it is the outcome of memory, of experience, of yesterday's response.

So, the question is, Can the mind be free from its conditioning? Surely, that is implied in this question of karma and reincarnation. As long as there is continuity of thought, action must be limited; and such action creates opposition, conflict, and karma - the response of the past in conjunction with the present, creating a modified continuity. So, a mind which has continuity, which is based on continuity - can such a mind be free? If it cannot be free, is it possible for continuity to cease? This is a most important question. To discover whether the mind can ever be free from the background implies a tremendous inquiry. Is not the mind based on the background? Is not thought founded upon the past? So, can thought ever free itself from the past? All that thought can do is to come to an end - but obviously not through compulsion, not through effort, not through any form of discipline, control, or subjugation. As an observer, see the truth of what it means for thought to come to an end. See the truth, the significance of it, and the false response is removed. That is what we are trying to do in answering this particular question. When there is action not based on idea or on the past, then the mind is silent, absolutely silent. In that silence, action is free from idea. But you will want an answer to your question: whether I believe or not in reincarnation. Do you know, are you any wiser, if I

say I believe in it or do not believe in it? I hope you are confused about it. To be satisfied by words of explanation indicates a petty mind, a stupid mind. Examine the whole process of yourself. That examination can take place only in relationship, and to discover the truth in any relationship, there must be a state of constant watchfulness, constant, passive alertness. That will show you the truth, for which you need no confirmation from anybody. As long as thought continues, there can be no reality; as long as thought continues as the yesterday, there must be confusion and conflict. Only when the mind is still, passively watchful, is it possible for the real to be.

Question: Why are you against nationalism?

KRISHNAMURTI: Aren't you against nationalism? Why are you a nationalist? Is not nationalism, calling yourself English, Tamil, or God knows what else, one of the fundamental reasons for war, for the appalling destruction and misery in the world? What is this process of identifying yourself with a group, with a particular country, whether economically, socially, or politically? What is the reason for calling yourself a man of Ceylon, an Indian, a German, an American, a Russian, or whatever it is? Social conditioning and economic pressure make you identify yourself with a group. That is one factor. But why do you identify yourself with something? That is the problem. You identify yourself with the family, with an idea, or with what you call God. Why do you identify yourself with something that you consider great? I live in a little village; I am nobody, but if I call myself a Hindu, if I identify myself with a certain class or caste, then I am somebody. Psychologically, I am nobody - empty, insufficient, lonely, poor; but if I identify myself with something great, I become great. (Laughter) Don't laugh it off, this is what you are actually doing - you call it nationalism, for which you sacrifice everything. A sovereign government must always be on the defensive against attack by some enemy, but you are willing to destroy yourself for an idea, which is your desire to be something great. Actually, you are not great, you are still what you were, only you call yourself a big man. Nationalism is false; like belief, it divides people, and as long as you are nationalistic, you cannot have physical security.

Question: What do you mean when you say that the thinker and the thought are one?

Krishnamurti: This is a serious question, and you will have to be a little attentive. Now, are we not aware that there is the thinker apart from the thought, that the thinker is an entity separate from the process of thought? Because, the thinker is operating on thought, trying to control, subjugate, modify, or even find a substitute for thought. So, we say there is the thinker separate from thought. Now, is that so? Is the thinker separate from thought? If he is, why is he separate; what has brought about this separation? Is it so in reality, or is it an illusion? Is there actually a thinker separate from thought, or only thought separating itself as the thinker? Surely, thought has created the thinker; the thinker is not beyond thought, the thinker is the product of thought. So, the idea that the thinker is separate from thought is false. It is thought that makes the thinker, and if there were no capacity to think at all, there would be no thinker. The thinker comes into being through thought, and why has this separation taken place? Obviously, for the simple reason that thought is constantly changing; that is, recognizing itself to be in transformation, in change, in constant flux, thought creates an entity, the thinker, to give itself permanency. So desire for permanency creates the thinker. Obviously, thoughts are impermanent, but the entity, the thinker, feels himself to be permanent. Actually, there is no thinker at all; there is only thought creating a permanent entity because there is fear of impermanency. Therefore, it is an illusion. Most of us think this false process is a real process, and because there is the thinker and the thought, because there is the experiencer who is always experiencing, there is no integration. There is integration only when thought does not create the thinker, which means that thought does not identify itself as "my" thought, "my" achievement, "my" experience - for it is this "my" that separates the thought from the thinker. When there is the experience of integration between thought and the thinker, there is a fundamental revolution in thinking. Then there is no entity dominating or controlling thought, there is no longer the idea of a 'me' becoming something, growing more perfect, more virtuous. The complete integration is when there is only the thought to be understood through

right meditation. There is no time now to discuss what is right meditation, we will do it next Sunday - it requires a great deal of time; but integration, that complete revolution in thinking, can be understood only in relationship.

Question: Is belief in God necessary or helpful?

Krishnamurti: As I said, belief in any form is a hindrance. A man who believes in God can never find God. If you are open to reality, there can be no belief in reality. If you are open to the unknown, there can be no belief in it. After all, belief is a form of self-protection, and only a petty mind can believe in God. Look at the belief of the aviators during the war who said God was their companion as they were dropping bombs! So you believe in God when you kill, when you are exploiting people. You worship God and go on ruthlessly extorting money, supporting the army - yet you say you believe in mercy, compassion, kindness. Obviously, such belief is a hindrance to the understanding of reality. All belief in any form is a hindrance, including your belief in God. Your belief is a hindrance to the discovery of the real because it is based on an idea or patterned after a tradition. As long as belief exists, there can never be the unknown; you cannot think about the unknown; thought cannot measure it. The mind is the product of the past; it is the result of yesterday, and can such a mind be open to the unknown? It can only project an image, but that projection is not real; so your god is not God - it is an image of your own making, an image of your own gratification. There can be reality only when the mind understands the total process of itself and comes to an end. When the mind is completely empty - only then is it capable of receiving the unknown. The mind is not purged until it understands the content of relationship - its relationship with property, with people - until it has established the right relationship with everything. Until it understands the whole process of conflict in relationship, the mind cannot be free. Only when the mind is wholly silent, completely inactive, not projecting, when it is not seeking and is utterly still - only then that which is eternal and timeless comes into being. This is not speculation, something which you can learn from another; it is not sentiment or sensation - it is a thing that has to be experienced. You cannot experience it as long as the mind is active. Silence of the mind is not achieved by action; it is not a thing to be gone after; it comes only when conflict ceases. To understand one's conflict in relationship is the beginning of wisdom, and when the mind is tranquil, that which is eternal comes into being.

***Fourth Public Talk in Colombo***

***Sunday, January 15, 1950***

## ***Fifth Public Talk in Colombo***

Fifth Public Talk in Colombo

Sunday, January 22, 1950

This is the last talk, and it will be more or less a summary of what we have been discussing here for the last four or five weeks.

It must seem very odd to most of us that life has become such a struggle at all levels of existence - not only physically, but psychologically as well; inwardly as well as outwardly. We seem to be on a battlefield of the world, and we have accepted, we have taken for granted, that conflict is the natural state of man. This conflict, this struggle, is the picture of man which so-called philosophers seem to have created; and we have accepted that as our normal life in relationship, not only with regard to property, but also in our relationship with people. There is this constant battle, individual and collective, between men and women, between man and man, between man and society; and there is also conflict between ideas, between the ideology of the left and of the right, between various beliefs, whether religious or secular, whether economic, social, or political. So, there is constant division going on between man and man, not only outwardly, but inwardly.

Can we understand, can we actually create anything, in a state of conflict? Can you write a book, paint a picture, can you appreciate another human being, feel with him or love him, if there is conflict? Surely, conflict is the antithesis of understanding, and through conflict there can be no understanding at any time, at any level. We have philosophically accepted that conflict is inevitable, and perhaps we are entirely wrong to accept such a thesis, such an idea. Can understanding come from conflict, from warfare, from a proletarian revolution? To understand the structure of society and bring about a radical revolution, must you not understand what is actual, and not create the opposite and thus bring about conflict? Does conflict bring about a synthesis? To understand, surely, we must see, examine, what is actually, and not bring in other ideas about it; obviously, only then is it possible to solve the problem. As long as we approach the problem with ideas, with a conclusion, with opinions, with belief, with schemes, with systems of any kind, surely it prevents understanding. There are the problems of starvation, of unemployment, of war, to be solved. What is actually happening? The systems, based on left or right ideologies, are setting man against man; and in the meantime, there is still starvation. So, systems, ideologies, obviously do not solve the problem, yet we are fighting each other over ideas and particular systems. Surely, we must approach the problem without any conclusions of the past, for it is obvious that conclusions prevent understanding of the problem.

So, we can see that conflict at any level indicates deterioration - it is a sign of the disintegration of society as well as of the individual. If we see, not theoretically but actually, that conflict invariably prevents understanding, that through conflict you can never bring about harmony, surely then our approach to the problem is entirely different, is it not? Then our attitude undergoes a fundamental change. Up to now, our approach to the problem has created other problems, mounting sorrow and pain, which are ever the result of conflict and lack of understanding of the problem, and understanding can come only when there is no conflict. If I want to understand you, there must not be any conflict; on the contrary, I must look at you, I must observe you, I must study you, not with previous conclusions, schemes, or systems. Those are all prejudices, and prejudice prevents understanding. I must have a very clear mind, undimmed by any prejudice, any previous knowledge. Only such a mind is capable of understanding the problem, and in that approach lies the solution. The purgation of the mind, surely, is the first requirement in understanding the

problem. The mind which is constantly in conflict, grappling, must be free from its own conditioning to meet the problem, whether economic, personal, or social.

So, what is important is how we approach any problem. It is essential that we see very clearly the relationship which creates conflict. It is the lack of right relationship that brings about conflict; and it is therefore essential that we understand conflict in relationship, the whole process of our thought and action. Obviously, if we do not understand ourselves in relationship, whatever society we create, whatever ideas, opinions we may have, will only bring about further mischief and further misery. Therefore, the understanding of the whole process of oneself in relationship with society is the first step in understanding the problem of conflict. Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, because you are the world, you are not separate from the world. Society is your relationship with another; you have created it, and the solution lies through your own understanding of that relationship, the interaction between you and society. Without understanding yourself, to seek for a solution is utterly useless - it is merely an escape. Therefore, what is important is understanding relationship. It is relationship which causes conflict, and that relationship cannot be understood unless we have the capacity to be passively watchful; then, in that passive alertness, in that awareness, there comes understanding.

Question: What is the simple life, and how can I live a simple life in the modern world?

Krishnamurti: The simple life has to be discovered, is it not so? There is no pattern for a simple life. Having few clothes, a loincloth, and a begging bowl does not indicate a simple life. It must be discovered. Surely, to make a pattern for a simple life does not bring about simplicity; on the contrary, it creates complexity. What do we mean by the simple life? Having but few clothes, going about half-naked, possessing little - does that indicate the simple life? Is not life much more complex than that? Obviously, one must have but few things. It is silly, foolish, stupid, to have many things and depend on them. Man has many possessions, and he clings to them - his property, his title, and so on. But is it the simple life for a man to have innumerable beliefs, or even one belief? Dependence on systems, authority, the urge to become, to attain, to acquire, to imitate, to conform, to discipline oneself according to a particular pattern - is that the simple life? Does that indicate simplicity? Surely, simplicity must begin, not merely in the expression of outward things, but much deeper. The man who is simple has no conflict. Conflict indicates an escape towards the more or towards the less. That is, conflict indicates acquisitiveness, the desire to become something more or something less, and a man who wants to become something, is he a simple entity? You despise the man who is trying to acquire wealth, possessions, and you appreciate the man who is supposed not to be interested in worldly things but who is striving to become virtuous, or to become like Buddha, Christ, or to follow a certain pattern - you will say he is a marvelous entity. Surely, the man who is striving to become something in the world is the same as the man who wants to be spiritual. Both are united in one desire - to become someone or something, either respectable or so-called spiritual.

Surely, the simple life is not something theatrical. It can be discovered in daily life; in this rotten world, which after two dreadful wars is perhaps preparing for a third, we can live simply, not only outwardly but inwardly. Why do we give such importance to the outward manifestations of simplicity? Why do we inevitably begin at the wrong end? Why don't we begin at the right end, which is the psychological? Surely, we must begin at the psychological end to find what is the simple life because it is the inner that creates the outer. It is inward insufficiency that makes people cling to property, to beliefs; it is this sense of inward insufficiency that forces us to accumulate goods, clothes, knowledge, virtue. Surely, in that way we can only create much more mischief, much more harm. It is extraordinarily difficult to have a simple mind - not the so-called intellectual mind of the educated, but the simplicity that comes when we understand something, that simplicity that perceives the problem of what is. Surely, we cannot understand anything when our mind is complex. I don't know if you have noticed that when you are worried over a problem, when you are concerned about something, you do not see anything very clearly; it is all out of focus. Only when the mind is simple and vulnerable is it possible to see things clearly, in their true proportion. So simplicity of the mind

is essential for simplicity of life. The monastery is not the solution. Simplicity comes when the mind is not attached, when the mind is not acquiring, when the mind accepts what is. It really means freedom from the background, from the known, from the experience it has acquired. Only then is the mind simple, and then only is it possible to be free. There cannot be simplicity as long as one belongs to any particular religion, to any particular class or society, to any dogma, either of the left or of the right. To be simple inwardly, to be clear, to be vulnerable, is to be like a flame without smoke, and therefore you cannot be simple without love. Love is not an idea; love is not thought. It is only in the cessation of thinking that there is the possibility to know that simplicity which is vulnerable.

Question: I find that loneliness is the underlying cause of many of my problems. How can I deal with it?

Krishnamurti: What do you mean by loneliness? Are you actually aware that you are lonely? Surely, loneliness is not a state of aloneness. Very few of us are alone; we don't want to be alone. It is essential to understand that aloneness is not isolation. Surely, there is a difference between being alone and isolation. Isolation is the sense of being enclosed, the sense of having no relationships, a feeling that you have been cut off from everything. That is entirely different from being alone, which is to be extraordinarily vulnerable. When we are lonely, a feeling of fear, anxiety, the ache of finding oneself in isolation, comes over one. You love somebody, you feel that without that somebody you are lost, so that person becomes essential to you in order for you not to feel the sense of isolation. So, you use the person in order to escape from what you are. That is why we try to establish relationship, a communion with another, or establish a contact with things, property - just so that we feel alive; we acquire furniture, dresses, cars, we seek to accumulate knowledge or become addicted to love. By loneliness we mean that state which comes upon the mind, a state of isolation, a state in which there is no contact, no relationship, no communion with anything. We are afraid of it; we call it painful, and being afraid of what we are, of our actual state, we run away from it, using so many ways of escape - God, drink, the radio, amusements - anything to get away from that sense of isolation. And are not our actions, both in individual relationship and in relationship with society, an isolating process? Is not the relationship of father, mother, wife, husband, an isolating process for us at the present time? Is not that relationship almost always a relationship based on mutual need? So, the process of self-isolation is simple - you are all the time seeking, in your relationships, an advantage for yourself. This isolating process is going on continually, and when awareness of isolation comes upon us through our own activities, we want to run away from it; so we go to the temple, or back to a book, or turn on the radio, or sit in front of a picture and meditate - anything to get away from what is.

So, we come to the actual question which is the desire to escape. What do you fear, why are you afraid of the unknown, that insufficiency in yourself, that emptiness? If you are afraid, why do you not look into it? Why should you be afraid of losing what you have, of losing association, contact? What exactly do you know, with your pretensions of knowledge? Your knowledge is but memory; you don't know the living; you know the past - the dead things, the decadent things. So, is it not our trouble that we never find what is? We never face the conflict of our insufficiency - we keep smothering it down and suppressing it, running away from it, and we don't know what is. Surely, when we approach it without any fear or condemnation, then we come to find the truth of it, and it may be extraordinarily more significant than the significance we give it through fear. Through fear of insufficiency, the mind is operating upon thought - the mind never looks at it, and it is only when we have the capacity to look at thought that there is the possibility of understanding what has made that thought, and thus is revealed to us the whole process of escape from what is. Then loneliness is transformed; it becomes aloneness, and that aloneness is a state of vulnerability which is capable of receiving the unknown, the imponderable, the measureless. Therefore, to understand that state of vulnerability, we must understand the whole process of thinking, which means that we must look at it and see its extraordinary qualities. That state cannot be accepted verbally - it must be experienced.

Question: You lay great emphasis on being aware of our conditioning. How can I understand my mind?

KRISHNAMURTI: Is not conditioning inevitable - inevitable in the sense that it is actually taking place all the time? You condition your children as Buddhists, Sinhalese, Tamil, Englishmen, Chinese, communists, and so on. There is a constant impingement of influences - economic, climatic, social, political, religious - acting all the time. Look at yourself: you are either a Buddhist, Sinhalese, Hindu, Christian, or capitalist. That is the whole process - the mind is constantly being conditioned, which means the mind is a result of the past, is founded upon the past. Thought is the response of the past. Mind is the past, mind is part of the past, and the past is tradition, morality. So, action is patterned on the past, or on the future as the ideal. This is the actual state of all who are conditioned. We are the product of the environment - social, economic, or what you will. What you believe is the product of what your father and society have put into you. If they had not put into you the idea of Buddhism, surely you would be something else - Roman Catholic, Protestant, or communist. Your beliefs are the result of your environment, and these beliefs are also created by you because you are the product of the past, and the past in conjunction with the present creates the present social entity. So, your mind is conditioned; that conditioned mind meets the challenge, the stimulus, and invariably responds according to its conditioning, and this is what creates a problem. So, a conditioned mind meeting the challenge creates a problem, which brings on conflict.

Now, if you ask, "Can I be free from conditioning?" your question has validity, not otherwise. As long as the mind is conditioned according to a pattern, it will always respond according to that pattern. There are those who say that the mind cannot be unconditioned, that it is an impossibility; therefore, they substitute a new form of conditioning for the old. Instead of the capitalist, there is the communist; instead of the Roman Catholic, the Protestant or the Buddhist. That is what is actually happening now all over the world. They speak of revolution; it is not revolution, but merely substitution of ideas. Ideas don't produce revolution; they only produce a modified continuity, not revolution. So, there are those who say the mind cannot be unconditioned but can only be reconditioned in a different way. The very assertion implies conditioning. If you say that it can, or that it cannot, you are already conditioned. Therefore, what is important is to find out if the mind can be unconditioned - completely, not superficially or momentarily. How can we do it?

Now, why do you call yourselves Buddhists? You have been told from childhood that you are Buddhists - and why do you accept it and hold on to it? If you can understand that, you will be free of it. What would happen if you didn't hold on to it? If you didn't call yourself a Buddhist, you would feel that you were left out and isolated. So, you do it for economic reasons - that is one factor. Another factor is that you identify yourself with something larger, otherwise you feel lost. You are nobody, but when you say you are a Buddhist, you are somebody; it gives you coloration. So, your desire to be somebody, your desire to be identified with something great, conditions you. The desire to be somebody is the very essence of conditioning. If you had no desire to be somebody, you would not be conditioned in the deeper sense. Surely, being what is is the beginning of virtue; contentment is the understanding of what is. The desire to be something invariably conditions thought and therefore creates a problem ever deeper and wider, increasing conflict and misery. To be free from conditioning is very simple - experiment with it. When you don't want to be an artist, a Master, a minister, a great, wise, or learned person, then you are nobody. That is the fact, but we don't like to accept it; so we cling to possessions, furniture, books, property. Instead of indulging in pretensions, why not just be small? Then you will see that the mind is extraordinarily pliable, capable of quickly responding to challenge. Such a mind is capable of responding anew to the challenge. Surely, that is clear. Conditioning is not only superficial, in the upper layer of the mind - it is also in the deeper layers; in both the hidden as well as the upper content of the mind there is the desire to be somebody. It is the desire to be somebody, to seek a result, that brings about conditioning, and a conditioned mind can never be revolutionary; it is merely acting according to a pattern - it is somnambulant, not revolutionary. Revolution comes into being when the mind is free, when it does not act according to the past and is aware of its conditioning. Only when the mind is quiet can it be free.

Question: What is right meditation?

Krishnamurti: This is a very complex subject, and it requires a great deal of understanding. Let us go into the question. You and I are going to find out what is right meditation, which means that you and I are going to meditate. How do we understand anything? What is the state of mind for understanding? We are going to find out the many implications of what is meditation. To understand something, you must have communion with it - there must be no barriers. There must be complete integration if you want to understand something new. How would you approach it? You will have to look at it, not condemn or justify it. To understand the problem, the mind must be passively watchful. Meditation is the process of understanding; it is the passive state which brings about discovery of truth. I have discussed meditation before, but now we are discussing it anew. The mind must be extremely quiet to understand deeply. If I want to understand something, my mind must be silent. If I have a problem and want really to understand it, I must not go to it with a worried and agitated mind. I must go with a free mind, for only a passive, alert mind can understand. A mind that is capable of being silent is in a position to receive the truth. Because, you don't know what truth is; if you know the truth, it is not truth. Truth is utterly new, free. It cannot be approached through preconceptions; it is not the experience of another. So, to discover truth, reality, the mind must be absolutely still. That is a requisite for the understanding of any problem, political, economic, or mathematical.

So, it is essential for the mind to be quiet in order to understand. The mind is new only when it is quiet; it is free, tranquil, only when it is not conditioned by the past. It is only then that the unknown is instinctively discovered. So, there must be freedom, and a mind that is disciplined, regimented, is not a free mind - it is not still. Its function is conditioned when it is under discipline. Such a mind is made still by discipline; it is controlled, shaped to be still. For the mind to be really still, there must be freedom, not at the end, but at the beginning. A mind that is overburdened, or a disciplined mind, is incapable of understanding a problem. What brings about freedom? - not a qualified freedom prompted by desire. How does freedom come into being so that the mind may receive the truth? Such freedom can be only when there is virtue. At present, you are striving to become virtuous, and to become something obviously means another form of conditioning. When you strive to become nonviolent, the actual process of striving is violence. That is, in trying to become nonviolent, you are imitating the ideal of nonviolence, which is your own projection. So, the ideal is homemade; it is the outcome of your own violence. Being violent, you create the opposite, but the opposite always contains its own opposite; therefore, the ideal of nonviolence must inevitably contain the element of violence - they are not different. So, the mind that is trying to become merciful, to become humble, is conditioned and therefore can never see the truth. Virtue is the understanding of what is without escape. You cannot understand what is if you resist it, because understanding requires freedom from conditioned response to what is; it not only requires freedom from condemnation and justification, but also from the whole process of terming, or giving a name. Virtue is a state of freedom because virtue brings order and clarity. Virtue is free from becoming; it is the understanding of what is. Understanding is not a matter of time, but time is required to escape through the process of acquiring virtue. So, only the mind that is silent can receive the unknown because the unknown is immeasurable. That which is measured is not the unknown; it is known; therefore, it is not true, not real. Freedom comes from virtue, not through discipline. A disciplined mind is an exclusive mind, and there is freedom only when each thought is completely understood without exclusion or distraction. What is called concentration is merely a process of exclusion, and the mind that knows how to exclude, to resist, is not a free mind. You cannot understand thought if you resist it. The mind must be free to meet each thought and understand it fully, and then you will see that thought as an accumulative process comes to an end.

There is also the question of making the mind still through various practices. Is not the thinker, the observer, the same as the thought which he observes? They are not two different processes but one process. As long as there is the thinker as an observer apart from thought, there is no freedom. Meditation is the process of understanding the thinker; meditation is the process of understanding the meditator - that is, understanding oneself at all levels as "my house," "my property," "my wife," "my beliefs," "my knowledge,"

"my acquisition," "my work." As long as the thinker is separate from thought, there must be conflict, there cannot be freedom. So, understanding the meditator is self-knowledge, which is what we have been doing this evening. The beginning of meditation is the beginning of self-knowledge, because we cannot be free without self-knowledge. Understanding yourself requires passive alertness. There must be freedom at the beginning, not at the end. Truth is not an ultimate end to be personally achieved; it is to be experienced, lived at every minute in relationship. The mind that is silent - not made silent - alone can perceive the immeasurable. The solution to the problem of bringing about quietness without compulsion lies in understanding relationship; therefore, meditation is the beginning of self-knowledge, and self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is not the accumulation of knowledge and experience; wisdom is not acquired from books, from ceremonies, or by compulsion. Wisdom comes into being only when there is freedom of the mind, and a still mind will find the timeless, which is the immeasurable come into being. That state is not a state of experience; it is not a state to be remembered. What you remember, you will repeat, and the immeasurable is not repeatable, it cannot be cultivated. The mind must be moved to receive it afresh each time, and a mind that accumulates knowledge, virtue, is incapable of receiving the eternal.

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