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First Public Talk in Bombay

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I think it is right that we should establish what we mean by "communication." We - both of us - must understand this question, because it is one of the most difficult things to communicate with another.

Most of us do not listen at all; we naturally have ideas - our own opinions, prejudices, conclusions - and these become a barrier and prevent us from listening. After all, if one is to listen, one must be attentive. And there is no attention if one is occupied with one's own thoughts, conclusions, opinions, and evaluations - then all communication ceases. This is an obvious fact, but unfortunately, though it is a fact, we rarely are aware of this fact. One has to put aside one's own thoughts, conclusions, and opinions, and listen - only then is communication possible.

Communication implies responsibility - responsibility on the part of the listener as well as on the part of the speaker. The speaker wishes to convey something, and the listener must partake, share, in what is being said. It is not a one-sided affair. Both you and the speaker must be in communication with each other; that is, the words the speaker uses must have the same meaning for you also. There must be not only a verbal communication but also an intellectual understanding of the words and also of the nature and significance of the words and the sentences. There must also be an emotional contact. You may be intellectually very aware of agreeing or disagreeing, rejecting or accepting; but that will not lead us far. Whereas if there were an intellectual awareness of what is being said, of what is implied, and also an emotional contact, then communication with each other would be possible.

Merely to listen to a talk of this kind intellectually has very little meaning. But if you could listen intellectually, emotionally, and physically - that is, if you could give your own total attention to what is being said - then communication would become an extraordinarily interesting affair. We rarely communicate anything to another directly. You have your conclusions, your experiences, your knowledge, your information, your tradition, the society, the culture in which you have been brought up; and if the

speaker does not belong to the same category, the same tradition, the same culture, and if the speaker denies the whole structure of that culture, of that narrow, limited conditioning of mind, then communication between you and the speaker will be nil. So to communicate with each other, there must be not only an intellectual, rational, clear thought but also an open attention; and then only is it possible to understand very deeply what is being said - not agreeing or disagreeing but seeing the validity and the truth of what is being said. Therefore, it is responsibility on your part as well as on the part of the speaker.

We are going to share together, and sharing essentially is communication. If you merely hear what is being said and do not partake in what is being stated, then communication is not possible. Therefore, communication has significance only when both of us are in relationship, sharing the same problem and trying to find out not only the solution but also the full implications of the problem that one has. Then only, it seems to me, will "communication" and these talks have some meaning - which means really that one has to listen.

To listen, several things are required. First, one's own mind must be quiet; otherwise, it cannot listen. If your mind is chattering, opposing, agreeing or disagreeing, then you are not listening. But if you are quiet, if you are silent, and if in that silence there is attention, then there is the act of learning. And all communication is learning - not a repetition of what has been said - to a person who would understand, who would listen, who would really grapple with the many problems of life into which we are going.

One has to listen, one has to be in communion with the problem. And you cannot be in communication with the problem if you do not listen to it, if you do not learn the whole significance of that problem; and you cannot learn if there is no quietness, if there is no attention. And you have more or less to establish a relationship between the speaker and yourself: not a relationship which is based on words, on ideological conclusions, but a relationship that intends to investigate together the problem of existence - investigate together - not that you listen and the speaker investigates or explains, but both you and the speaker are going to take a journey together, a journey of exploration, a journey of investigation, a journey to understand this extraordinary thing called life. This means an active sharing on your part, not a dull, indifferent attention, but an active sharing on the part of the listener who is taking the journey with the speaker.

One sees right throughout the world a general decline, a deterioration. Technologically there may be very tremendous advancement - electronic brains, computers, automation, going to the moon, and all the rest of the technological knowledge. There is also the so-called progress in science. And man has looked to science, to politics, to the so-called religions, to the organized beliefs, and so on to help him solve his many problems; and the problems have not been solved. Man has remained more or less as he has been for over two million years: miserable, unhappy, in conflict, in confusion, living in a state of despair, anxiety, guilt, not attaching any significance to existence, or giving significance to life according to his temperament, knowledge, despair, and so on. But man - you and I, as human beings - has not essentially changed; he is still greedy, envious, confused, miserable, at war. We all know this. A man who reads current history, the newspapers and the magazines, who listens to the radio, and so on, knows quite well what is taking place in his own city, in his own neighborhood, in his own country, and in other countries. He also knows that there is a deterioration, more or less, intellectually and so-called spiritually. Religion has no meaning any more except for old ladies and old men because they have to face death, and religion gives them some kind of hope. Religion has no meaning to a man who is active, thoughtful, rational, clear. There is a moral decline, as one can see in this country. There is a religious decline - not that there are not more swamis, yogis, and sects; that is an indication of decline because they are establishing that which is past - dead tradition that has no meaning whatsoever.

To a man who has observed the world, the misery, the wars, the endless sorrow of the human being - to him the scriptures, authority, beliefs, the rituals, the innumerable political speeches, the ideological and political

commitments such as the communist, the socialist, the congress, the democrat, and the republican have no meaning any more. And it would be absurd, childish, immature, to look to those to bring about a change in the world, to bring about a good society - not a great society; a great society is not necessarily a good society.

Seeing all this, as you must, one demands naturally: Can human beings change? Can you and I change? Can you and I bring about in ourselves a mutation so profound that, as human beings, our relationship is not based on temporary, convenient, self-centered activity? Because what is most important is relationship. Unless there is a radical revolution in that relationship between two human beings, talking about God or about the scriptures, or going back to the Vedas, the Bible, and the rest of it, is sheer nonsense. It has no meaning whatsoever unless we establish right relationship between human beings.

And that will be the subject of our talk - how to bring about a fundamental revolution in our relationship so that there will be no war, so that countries are not divided by nationalities, by frontiers, by class differences, and so on. Unless we, you and I, establish such a relationship, not theoretically, not ideologically, not hypothetically, but actually, factually, there is bound to be a greater and greater decline and deterioration.

What do we mean by relationship? What does it mean to be related? First of all, are we related? Relationship means contact: to be together, to be related, to be in contact, to be in immediate contact with another human being, to know all his difficulties, his problems, his misery, his anxiety which is your own. And in understanding yourself you understand the human being and, therefore, bring about a radical transformation in society. The "individual" has very little meaning, but the "human being" has a tremendous significance. The individual may change according to pressures, strains, circumstances; but his change will not radically affect society. But the problems of man, not as an individual but as a human being who has lived for two million years and much more, with his conflicts, with his anxieties, with his fears, with his coming face to face with death - the whole of that is the human issue. Unless we understand that - not as an individual, but as a human being - there is no possibility of bringing about a different culture, a different society.

So a radical transformation of the human being is absolutely essential. Because most of us are still animals. If you have observed animals, you will know how closely related we are! You observe the dog, a pet you know! How jealous he is! How he loves to be praised, to be petted, and so on, like human beings! So there is a very close relationship between the animal and the human being. Unless that animal in us is completely transformed, do what you will - have the most extravagant ideologies, commit yourself to any political, religious, or economic group - you are not going to solve the problem at all.

So we have to understand what relationship is first. Are we related? Is one human being related to another? We mean by relationship, don't we, to be in contact intellectually, emotionally, psychologically. Are we in such contact? Or, is there contact, relationship, between the image that you have about yourself and the image you have about another? You have an image about yourself, ideas about yourself, concepts, experiences, and so on. You have your particular idiosyncrasies, tendencies - all that has built an image about yourself. Please listen to it; observe it in yourself. Do not, as I said, merely listen to words - they have little meaning. But, in hearing the words, if the words reveal your own consciousness, your own state, then the words have meaning. If you observe, you have an image about yourself - that you are this, you are that; that you had this experience and that experience; that you are ugly or you are beautiful; that you want to be this or you want to be that. You have an image, an idea, a conclusion about yourself - that you are spiritual, that you are the atma, that you are the soul, or whatever it is. You have an image carved by the mind, or carved through your experience, through tradition, through circumstances, through strange pressures. There is that image of yourself, and the other person also has an image about himself. So these two images come into contact, and that is what we call relationship. Whether it is the most intimate relationship between a husband and wife or the image that you have created about Russia, about America, about

Vietnam, about this or that, the contact between the two images is what we call relationship. Please do follow this. That is all the relationship we know.

You have an image about yourself, and you have created an image about another - whether he is an American or a Russian or a Chinese or this or that. You have an image about the Pakistani; you have an image about the Hindu, the Indian, with a line called the frontier - and you are willing to kill each other for the sake of that image. And that image is strengthened through a flag, through the national spirit, through hatred, and so on. So you are willing - please listen - to kill each other for the sake of a word, of an idea, of an image. The Chinese have an image about themselves, and they are willing to destroy anybody else for the sake of that image. There have been in the history of man, I believe, something like two and a half wars every year.

Man has not solved the problem of war. The first woman or the father must have cried out at the first battle. We are still crying. For us who are living in Bombay, far away from the frontier, war has very little meaning. But to everyone, as a human being, war is a problem, whether it is fought in Vietnam, in Russia, in Pakistan, or in India. It is a problem of relationship. This country which has talked about nonviolence, which has preached "ahimsa," "don't kill," for millennia, forgets it overnight and is willing to kill because it has an image about the other, and the other has an image about this country. And it is very strange, if you come to think of it, if you observe, that in this country which has talked about peace, nonviolence, morality, so-called spirituality, there has not been one human being who has said, "I will not fight" - not whisper among friends but shout it aloud as other people have done.

So all this shows what a terrible decline there is. Unless there is a radical revolution in our relationship, we will not have peace. And peace is absolutely necessary - not the peace of the politician, not the peace between two wars, not the peace between two quarrels, not the peace somewhere in faraway heaven, but peace here on this earth between you and me. We must have it. Because, unless you have peace, unless there is this extraordinary thing in your heart and in your mind, you cannot possibly blossom in goodness, you cannot flower in beauty, you cannot see the sky, you cannot see the beauty of the earth. If there is conflict in you, you cannot see anything. So peace, the thing that man has sought - not through some meditation, books and all that; we will come to all that later - is peace in relationship, so that two human beings can work together, think together, solve the problems together. We may stop wars because of the atom bombs or the new kind of bombs that may be developed, but that does not insure this peace.

This peace can only come about when there is in each one of us the understanding of relationship and the complete transformation in that relationship. So we must understand what this relationship means as it is, factually and not theoretically. It is the relationship of two images, and nothing else; and therefore there is no love between two images. How can I love you and you love me if you have an image about me, if you have ideas about me? If I have hurt you, if I have pushed you, if I have been ambitious, clever, and gone ahead of you, how can you love me? How can I love you if you threaten my position, my job, if you run away with my wife? If you belong to one country and I to another, if you belong to one sect - Hinduism or Buddhism or Catholicism and the rest of it - and I am a Muslim, how can we love each other? So unless there is a radical transformation in relationship, there cannot possibly be peace. By becoming a monk or a sannyasi and running away to the hills, you are not going to solve your problems. Because wherever you live, whether in a monastery or in a cave or in a mountain, you are related. You cannot possibly isolate yourself either from your own image which you have created about God, about truth, or from your own image about your own self and all the rest of it.

So to establish right relationship is to destroy the image. Do you understand what it means to destroy the image? It means to destroy the image about yourself - that you are a Hindu, that I am a Pakistani, a Muslim, a Catholic, a Jew, or a communist, and so on. You have to destroy the machinery that creates the image - the machinery that is in you and the machinery that is in the other. Otherwise you may destroy one image, and

the machinery will create another image. So one has not only to find out the existence of the image - that is, to be aware of your particular image - but also to be aware of what the machinery is that creates the image.

Now let us see what that machinery is. You understand my question? That is, first one has to be conscious, to be aware, to know - not verbally, not intellectually, but actually know as a fact - the existence of this image. It is one of the most difficult things because to know the image implies a great deal. You can know, you can observe that microphone - that is a fact. You may call it by different names, but if we understand what you call by these names, then we see the fact of it. So there is no interpretation there; we both know it is a microphone. But it is a different thing to understand the image without interpretation, to see the fact of that image without the observer, because the observer is the image-maker, and the image is part of the observer. This is a very complex thing. You cannot just say, "I will destroy the image," and meditate about it, or do some kind of trick, or hypnotize yourself so that you can destroy the image - it is not possible. It requires tremendous understanding. It requires great attention and exploration, not a conclusion at any time; a man that is exploring can never come to a conclusion. And life is an immense river that is flowing, moving incessantly. Unless you follow it freely, with delight, with sensitivity, with great joy, you cannot see the full beauty, the volume, the quality of that river. So we must understand this problem.

When we use the word understand, we mean by that word, don't we, not intellectually. Perhaps you have understood the word image, how it is created by knowledge, by experience, by tradition, by the various strains and stresses in family life, work in the office, the insults - all that makes up the image. What is the machinery that makes that image? You understand? The image must be put together. The image must be maintained; otherwise, it will collapse. So you must find out for yourself how this machinery works. And when you understand the nature of the machinery and the significance of that machinery, then the image itself ceases to be - the image - not only the conscious image, the image that you have of yourself consciously and are aware of superficially, but also the image deep down, the whole of it. I hope I am making this thing clear.

One has to go into it and find out how the image comes into being and if it is possible to stop the machinery that creates it. Then only is there a relationship between human beings - it will not be between two images, which are dead entities. It is very simple. You flatter me, you respect me; and I have an image about you, through insult, through flattery. I have experience - pain, death, misery, conflict, hunger, loneliness. All that creates an image in me; I am that image. Not that I am the image, not that the image and I are different; but the 'me' is that image; the thinker is that image. It is the thinker that creates the image. Through his responses, through his reactions - physical, psychological, intellectual, and so on - the thinker, the observer, the experiencer, creates that image through memory, through thought. So the machinery is thinking, the machinery comes into existence through thought. And thought is necessary; otherwise, you cannot exist.

So, first see the problem. Thought creates the thinker. The thinker begins to create the image about himself: he is the atma, he is God, he is the soul, he is a Brahmin, he is a non-Brahmin, he is a Muslim, he is a Hindu, and the rest of it. He creates the image and he lives in it. So thinking is the beginning of this machinery. And you will say, "How can I stop thinking?" You cannot. But one can think and not create the image. One can observe that one is a communist or a Muslim. You can observe this, but why should you create an image about yourself? You only create an image about me as a Muslim, as a communist, or whatever it is because you have an image about yourself which judges me. But if you had no image about yourself, then you would look at me, observe me, without creating the image about me. That is why this requires a great deal of attention, a great deal of observation of your own thoughts, feelings.

So one begins to see that most of our relationship is actually based on this image-formation, and having formed the image, one establishes or hopes to establish relationship between two images. And naturally there is no relationship between images. If you have an opinion about me and if I have an opinion about you, how can we have any relationship? Relationship exists only when it is free, when there is freedom

from this image-formation - we will go into this during the talks that come. Only when this image is broken up and the image-formation ceases will there be the ending of conflict, the total ending of conflict. Then only will there be peace, not only inwardly, but also outwardly. It is only when you have established that peace inwardly that the mind, being free, can go very far.

You know, sir, freedom can only exist when the mind is not in conflict. Most of us are in conflict, unless we are dead. You hypnotize yourself, or identify yourself with some cause, some commitment, some philosophy, some sect, or some belief - you are so identified that you are just mesmerized, and you live in a state of sleep. Most of us are in conflict; the ending of that conflict is freedom. With conflict you cannot have freedom. You may seek, you may want it; but you can never have it.

So relationship means the ending of the machinery which puts together the image, and with the ending of that machinery, right relationship is established. Therefore there is the ending of conflict. And when there is the end of conflict, there is freedom, obviously - actual freedom, not as an idea, but the actual state as a fact. Then in that state of freedom, the mind, which is no longer twisted, no longer tortured, which is not biased, which is not given to any fancy, any illusion, any mystical conception, or vision - that mind can go very far. Far, not in time or space, because there is no space and time when there is freedom. I am using the words very far in the sense that then we can discover - these are words which really have no meaning - then in that freedom there is a state of emptiness, a state of joy, a bliss which no God, no religion, no book can give you.

That is why unless this relationship is established between you and your wife, your neighbor, your society, between you and other people, you will never have peace and therefore no freedom. And as a human being, not as an individual, you can then transform society. Not the socialist, not the communist - nobody will do it. Only the man that has understood what right relationship is - only such a man can bring about a society in which a human being can live without conflict.