

Jiddu Krishnamurti

First Public Talk in San Francisco

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I can't see you but I hope you see me. I think most of us are used to being entertained, through literature, through cinema, poetry, and various forms of expression in the arts, and unfortunately we also want to be entertained religiously. We look to somebody to tell us what to do, to give us greater experiences, to help us to touch something that is beyond time. All these forms of entertainment are mere stimulation leading nowhere. And if we may point out, this is not a gathering either intellectual or sentimental, but rather a gathering where we are going to work together, share together, think together, and find out for ourselves what is true and what is false. And see the truth in the false and remain, if we can, with that which is. So this is not any form of entertainment whatsoever. We are serious. And together we are going to investigate - and I mean together - and therefore it is very important to find out for ourselves not only why we are here but also what is it that we are seeking.

And we must establish between you and the speaker the relationship in which communication is possible. I mean by that word 'communication' not only a verbal explanation, verbal communication, but also a non-verbal, perhaps which is much more important than the verbal understanding of words. So communication means sharing together, thinking together and perhaps transforming ourselves as we are now into something totally psychologically different. And that is the intention, serious intention of the speaker, that together we are going to understand this mad idiotic world, the horrors that are going on, the brutality, the violence, the national divisions, wars, and the religious divisions. Together we are going to investigate these problems: violence, fear, pleasure, what it means to be religious, and what are the implications of meditation.

So from the beginning I think we should understand that we are not dealing with any philosophical system. Philosophy, if one looks up a dictionary, means the love of truth, not an abstract truth invented by the intellectuals and the philosophers but the truth that is expressed in daily living. So we are concerned not with exotic or oriental mysticism, religion, but rather be totally committed to find a different way of living,

a way that is true, that is harmonious, that has in it the quality of a mind that is truly religious.

So all this implies, doesn't it, that one must be astonishingly serious. Which means that every form of entertainment, every form of being told what to do, or given a new system, or try to find out through the speaker some reality beyond time and so on - if you are expecting any such form of entertainment I am afraid you will be disappointed because we are going to concern ourselves with 'what is' actually, what is now, and see if it is possible to transform totally, psychologically, inwardly, the whole structure of our conditioning. If that is clear, I think every serious person is concerned with this problem; how to bring about a psychological revolution in the very structure of the psyche, in the very structure of our thinking, in the whole process of our acquiring knowledge, and whether the human mind, that is, your mind, the human, the every day mind, not a mind that is super conscious and all the rest of that business, but the mind that is working, struggling, is in battle inwardly, in sorrow, in pain, in fear, and a great sense of insecurity and anxiety, whether that mind can be transformed, not through time, not through a period but transformed without the process of time altogether.

I hope all this is not too serious and if it is, I am sorry. Because you see I have been to India, Europe, here, for the last forty years or so, perhaps more, and one sees if one is observant how everything is deteriorating, not in the technological world but in the world of human relationship. One sees over-population, starvation, war, the appalling destructiveness of politicians, the economic inequality and so on, and the spreading of violence right through the world. There are many explanations; every philosopher, every intellectual person is trying to find out why this exists, why human beings not only in this beautiful land, and it is a beautiful country, this America, every country is beautiful, but the people in it are rather strange. The people in it are violent, superstitious, full of their own prejudices, opinions, inventing new systems of government and philosophies and religions, battling with each other, competitively, ambitiously, destructively. Wherever one goes this is a fact of daily conflict inwardly and outwardly, daily suffering, pain, anxiety, insecurity. And from this insecurity violence, and so on. And observing all this, our education only conditions the human mind to conform to the pattern that already exists, to the structure which the past has established.

And religions throughout the world have lost their meaning totally. And trying to escape from all this, there are the innumerable gurus from India with their fanciful dictatorial regimes. You know what is happening in this country perhaps better than I do.

Now these are facts. What can the human mind, your mind, do with all this? The confusion, the misery, the appalling selfishness of people, the narrowness, pettiness of a mind that is full of knowledge, that has been educated technologically to function in a pattern, in a structure of the present society, how can that mind transform itself so that a different kind of culture is born. Because we are not cultured people at all: you may know many languages, you may have read a great deal, you may be a great scientist, or trying to become a great scientist, you may be religious for the weekend, go to the church, but in daily life, in the life of every day we are totally uncultured. And observing what is going on in the world, a new culture must come into being, not European or American or the Asiatic culture but a world, global culture. And that culture can only come into being when there is totally a different kind of religion. Without religion there is no culture, for religion is the unifying factor, not belief, not a personal worship, but a religion that is based on behaviour, relationship, a mind that is totally free of fear and not incessantly pursuing pleasure, a mind that is capable of perceiving, living, a quality of mind that is totally attentive of what is true. We will go into all that during these four talks, if you will.

So let us begin to understand relationship because it seems to me that it is one of the most fundamental issues because if we don't understand, live in a right kind of relationship there must be conflict between man and woman, or between man and his neighbour and so on. So relationship is of the highest importance because this relationship creates a society. If our relationship is based on conflict, as it is now, if our relationship is based on pleasure, as it is now; if our relationship is based on mere duty, or mere

responsibility, then in that relationship there must be incessant conflict both outwardly and inwardly. Conflict exists only when there is division.

Please, as I said at the beginning, we are sharing this together. You are not merely just listening to what is being said, agreeing or disagreeing, we are not dealing with ideas, with organised thinking, we are dealing with actually 'what is' and see whether that which is can be transformed. So we are together investigating and therefore taking a journey together, investigating through the verbal explanation of the speaker, yourself. So we are actually tracing out the actual state of our being, of our daily life, and if that is not totally changed your investigation into that which is beyond time, or to try to meditate, has no meaning whatsoever.

So please listen, not merely to the words, to the verbal explanation, but also learn to look and observe between the lines. We said that wherever there is division there must be conflict. There is division nationally - the Americans, the South Americans, the communists, the Russians, the whole gamut of political, national divisions, and also there are the economic divisions; the injustice, the unfairness, the appalling poverty of this present social order. Wherever there is division there must be conflict. And you observe this in the religious field. So this is a basic factor that where there is division there must be conflict not only outwardly but also inwardly, inside the skin as it were. Where there is division between you and me, between us and they, we and them, there must be conflict.

In our relationship of daily life there is this division between the two images that you have created for yourself and for another. Please, look at it dispassionately, look at it as though for the first time you are trying to learn about yourself. We are not indulging in analysis. Through analysis perhaps you become paralysed, but we are merely observing 'what is', and if you observe, see 'what is' then analysis is not necessary.

So one has to also find out what it means to observe. To observe your relationship with another however intimate, however close, or however distant. Observation implies total attention. Please, do this as we are talking, not as a group therapy which is a horror, or some kind of group entertainment which is absurd, but to observe actually 'what is' so that there is no distortion, so that prejudice, tendencies, various forms of inclinations doesn't enter into it. Pure observation without distortion, and that means attention. This attention comes naturally, you don't have to go to college, or practise or all the rest of that absurdity that is going on, this attention comes when you are really deeply interested. If you are not then there is something radically wrong. When the house is burning, when there is so much catastrophe going on, not to be interested, not to be totally concerned or totally committed to the resolution of the problem indicates a mind that is totally dead. And to observe this relationship and to transform it. Transformation takes place in relationship - in which there is division and hence conflict, jealousy, anxiety, insecurity, violence and all the rest of those things that are born out of division - to observe that. To observe what goes on.

If you observe you will see that your relationship with another is based on knowledge - knowledge which is the past, knowledge which becomes the image about another. You, listening to the speaker, have an image about the speaker, which is obvious otherwise you wouldn't be here. Your image of the speaker is based on reputation, propaganda, books and all the rest of it, but you actually don't know the speaker at all, but you have an image about the speaker. Therefore that image divides. You have an image about your wife, your girl friend, boy friend, all the rest of it. That image is built on knowledge of past events, happenings. And this image which is born out of knowledge in relationship brings about division. That's a fact, we don't have to go into it, argue or analyse - it is so. And these images, verbal, structural, romantic, intellectual, emotional and so on, all this brings about a basic fundamental division. You have an image about yourself, that you must be this or that, and you have an image about the other; so your relationship is between these two images and therefore there is no actual relationship, and hence conflict.

Now can that structure of relationship be totally changed, radically transformed, then we will create a totally different society. And it is only possible when we are sharing, thinking, creating together. Therefore in this there is no authority whatsoever because you are observing your own self, your own image of yourself and the image which you have created about another which creates division.

Then the question arises: how is it possible not to create images at all? You understand? I hope we are following each other, are we? Tant pis, if you don't I am sorry, my time is limited, so we must go on. Is it possible for the mind which has been cultivated, which has acquired tremendous knowledge through experience, which is the past, this mind which has so many images, so many conclusions, which is so heavily conditioned, can this mind be free of all images? If it is not then life becomes a constant battle. Right? Is this question clear?

Knowledge in relationship creates division. That is, when you have a relationship with your husband or a girl or whatever it is, in that relationship gradually knowledge enters - knowledge being what you have acquired, remembered, experienced in that relationship. So knowledge becomes a barrier in relationship. Right? Are we taking a journey together?

Audience: Yes.

K: Good! Or am I walking by myself? You know this is really very important because to take a journey together with somebody we must have that quality of affection which shares, which isn't merely listening to a verbal description. The description is not the described, the word is not the thing. And if you are merely following it verbally then we are not journeying together, then we are not walking clearly in the investigation that is so essential. So you are not following the speaker. If you are following the speaker then the speaker becomes the authority and you have got sufficient authority in the world already, don't add another. It is freedom from authority that is necessary. An authority that means the authority of someone to tell you what to do, and therefore you depend on somebody. And then in that all the problems of authority arise. Whereas if you learn how to observe, how to be completely committed to attention in relationship and this you cannot learn from another, and this is to be learnt as you go along. And you cannot learn this from a book. So if I may suggest, use the speaker as a mirror in which you see yourself. And when you learn to see yourself in that mirror then break the mirror so that you are free from the speaker, so that you observe yourself what actually is going on.

As we said, we have got a great many images, conclusions and so the mind is never free to observe. Having accumulated these conclusions through education, through relationship, through propaganda, a thousand different ways, can the mind which functions with conclusions, therefore mechanically - and relationship is not mechanical though we have reduced relationship to a routine, to a mechanical process - we have to understand very deeply the meaning of that word 'knowledge' and the freedom from knowledge in relationship. Knowledge is necessary, otherwise you and I could not possibly communicate verbally, because you know English and the speaker knows English. To do anything functionally knowledge is necessary - how to ride a bicycle and all the rest of it, technologically - to function efficiently, objectively, rationally, knowledge is necessary, but we use function to achieve status. And when there is the pursuit of status in function there is division and hence conflict between function and status, which is part of our relationship with each other. When you are seeking in function status, then to you status is far more important than function, and hence in that there is conflict inwardly as well as outwardly. And to observe this, to observe how the mind works in relationship, that through function it is seeking status and therefore in relationship there is conflict, as well as there is conflict where there is division between you and another, between you who have knowledge about your husband, about your boyfriend, girlfriend, all the rest of it, then that knowledge acts as division.

Therefore it is only when the mind is free, or rather, is aware of the function in knowledge and the necessity

of knowledge, and sees the danger, the poison of knowledge in relationship. I hope this is clear. Look, if I am married to you - I am not, thank God! - if I am married to you and I have lived with you, I have accumulated a great deal of knowledge about you in that relationship. That knowledge has become the image of you: you have given me pleasure, sex, insulted me, nagged me, bullied me, dominated me, saying 'Women are more important than men' - you know all that is going on in the world. How childish all this is! How utterly immature! I have built an image about you, it may be of one day old or ten years old, that image divides me from you, and you have an image about me. So our relationship is between these two images and therefore there is no relationship at all. And realising this, is it possible to live in a world, in this world, with knowledge which is absolutely necessary, and the freedom from that knowledge in relationship? Because when there is freedom from that knowledge in relationship division ceases and therefore conflict in relationship comes to an end. Because as one observes in the world more and more, conflict is increasing, misery, confusion, sorrow, is everywhere. And then the mind is in anxiety in relationship, when the mind is only concerned with knowledge and not with wisdom. And wisdom comes into being only when there is an understanding of knowledge and the freedom from the known.

So our question is: can the mind which functions with conclusions, with images, can that mind be free, not tomorrow, not within a given period of time but be out of this conflict altogether? And that is only possible - please listen to this - that is only possible when you can learn how to observe, how to observe yourself and another. It is far more important to observe yourself and not the other, because what you are the other is, you are the world and the world is you, the two are not separate. The society which you have created is you. This society, the ugliness, the brutality, the extravagance, the pollution, all the things that are going on are the result of your daily activity, so you are the society, you are the world and the world is you. This is not a mere verbal statement but an actual fact. And when you want to observe this - and to observe the mind must be free to look, and to observe so that there is no distortion, and distortion exists because you have opinions, conclusions - so that the mind is always fresh to look, to learn.

You know there is a difference between learning and acquiring knowledge. Most of us through college, university and so on, are very good at acquiring knowledge, to us that is learning. That is, to accumulate facts, correlate with other facts, data, our minds, our brains are full of knowledge, of the past - knowledge is the past - and we are all the time adding to that knowledge. And it is necessary when you function, as an engineer, or a scientist, when you drive a car, or speak a language. But learning, it seems to me, is something entirely different. Learning is a constant movement, a constant movement in learning so that there is never an accumulation. For the accumulation is the 'me', the 'me' that separates you, and hence conflict. Wherever there is 'me' there must be conflict because it is the very core of division.

And love cannot be learnt; knowledge cannot acquire, neither wisdom nor love. And therefore it is very important to understand this whole structure of relationship because that is the basis of our life. From that all action takes place. If action is merely the continuation of knowledge then it becomes mechanical. And our relationship becomes mechanical when it is based on routine and knowledge. Therefore when there is freedom from the known, then relationship changes totally.

We have talked more or less for an hour and perhaps you would like to ask questions. To ask a question, or any question relevant, is important, but to put the right question is still more important. And when you put the right question who is going to answer it? And do you when you put a question wait for an answer from the speaker? Or you put the question in order to investigate together so that together we understand the question? For in the question is the answer. All this doesn't mean that the speaker is trying to prevent you from asking questions. And please, if I may ask, don't clap, don't applaud. If you must applaud do it when the speaker is not here. Yes, sir?

Questioner: Krishnamurti, the awareness that you speak of seems to be a direct awareness, which seems to be the most sensible, intelligent way of being aware. I have encountered many other forms of indirect

approaches to awareness and possibly these also arrive at direct awareness. I have in mind particularly Zen, which uses a heavy discipline, it lays great emphasis on this, and yet many people seem to break through...

K: I understand, sir.

Q: ... in this discipline and this self anguish and suffering, they seem to break through into direct awareness. Is this at all the same awareness that you are speaking of?

K: I'll tell you, sir, I'll tell you. You know the word 'discipline' means to learn, not the meaning that we give generally to it - which is conformity, imitation, suppression and various forms of control and conflict. That's generally what is implied in discipline. That is so. Awareness, attention has nothing whatsoever to do with discipline, with practice, or with the intention to be aware. Either you are aware of those flowers or you are not aware of those flowers. But why aren't you aware of those flowers? If you put your mind to it, give your mind, your heart, your whole being to observe those flowers then you have total attention. That needs no discipline, only that you have to look. But if you look with a verbal statement, 'How beautiful those flowers are', or 'Is it a chrysanthemum', 'I like others flowers rather than that flower' - those are all verbal descriptions and escapes from the actual fact of observing. If you observe without a verbal statement then you are completely attentive, and that attention perhaps you can maintain for a couple of minutes or a few seconds, but when that attention wears off, moves away, then you become aware that you are not attentive. And then you proceed to be attentive. Then you say, 'How am I to acquire continuous attention?' - that's a wrong question. There is no such thing as continuous awareness, a continuous attention. Please listen, sir, do listen and then you can question. When your attention wanders off, be attentive to that wandering off. You understand? Be attentive to the state when you are not giving attention, then you are attentive. But when you say, 'I must be constantly attentive' then you are introducing a factor of time. And when there is attention there is no centre as the 'me' or time, there is only a state of attention. Have you understood this? It's fairly simple.

Q: Well...

K: Wait, sir, wait. Just a minute. There are a great many schools in Asia and here, most unfortunately, that are teaching you how to be sensitive, how to be attentive, how to be aware. They are making awareness, attention, sensitivity into a system. When you have a system it is no longer possible to be attentive. Be attentive why the mind wants a system. You understand? When you are free of systems you are attentive.

Q: My question was that the system is seen as absurd, and if seeing the absurdity of the system is clear, non-verbal awareness becomes - it is; and yet they go to it by indirect methods of varying disciplines and when they see through that, then they have attention.

K: That's right, sir, that's right.

Q: It is the same awareness.

K: Look, sir, do look at that flower. Do look at that flower. And can you look at it non-verbally, non-botanically, without having an image, just to observe without the centre as the knowledge, the 'me' who is looking as the observer, just to look. Look at your wife, or your girl friend or boy friend, look at the mountains, the rivers, the streams, the trees, without the verbal description. Then that state is attention, and when the mind wanders off, know that it is wandering off and be attentive to the wandering. Be attentive to inattention. That's all. It's so simple when you see this. You don't have to go to schools, you don't have to go to gurus and all the rest of that business.

Q: (Inaudible)

K: Sir, look, sir. Is one attentive to our relationship? That's what we have been talking about, not about

flowers and the clouds. Are you aware deeply, non-verbally, without a conclusion, aware of your relationship? Or are you afraid to face your relationship, or afraid to look, because when you do look it will bring up all kinds of things, therefore one would rather avoid it. So attention is not something specifically given to a particular problem. Attention is a state of mind that is totally committed to find a way of living in which conflict of any kind has come to an end. Because if that conflict in human relationship ceases then we will bring about a totally different kind of culture.

Q: Sir, I wanted to ask you about the relationship of pain. I mean if I observe, my observation is distorted by pain. And..

K: I understand, sir. Are you asking, sir, if I may interrupt you, are you asking how can I be attentive when I have physical disorder, when I have physical pain - is that it?

Q: No, sir. How do I relate to that state?

K: Yes, yes, sir. You are asking - please, we are sharing this together, you are not merely listening to that person who is putting that question, or to the answer of the speaker, but this is our human problem, your problem, not his particular problem - when there is pain, physical suffering, how can the mind be attentive and what is the relationship of attention to pain - isn't it, sir?

Q: It helps.

K: Yes, sir, that's what I'm saying. What is the relationship of attention to pain so that pain is understood. Let's put it that way. That's it.

Q: Sir, when I hear you say that pain is something to be avoided, I have the great and humble heart of the Saviour who to bring himself to be that perfect instrument of God, said, 'Oh, lord, send me more pain'.

K: Sir, look, sir, not more pain, good lord! It's quite funny. What is the place of pain in life? Right? What is pain, physical pain, we are not talking of psychological pain, we'll do it another day, what is the place of pain in life? That is, how can the mind meet pain in life? We have all got pain of different kinds, serious suffering, serious pain, or superficial pain; serious disease with all its pain and superficial pain - what is the place of pain in life and how to meet it. Right, sir? Wait, sir, let me finish the question, sir. You see first of all we lead such unhealthy lives, that's obvious. Air is polluted, water is polluted, and we eat dead animals, yes sir, wait a minute, you laugh but you go out and eat meat afterwards. I am not saying you must become a vegetarian but see all the implications of it. We live such unhealthy lives, over-eat, over-indulge, so our body which has its own intelligence is destroyed by the pleasure of taste. It's so obvious.

So pain is one of the results, disease is one of those results. And how to meet pain in life. And is it possible to observe pain without identifying ourselves with pain? You understand what I am saying? If one has a toothache, to observe it, to be attentive without the centre of 'me' who has pain and therefore create anxiety. You follow this? Do you understand this, sir, what I am saying? Can you observe, be attentive of your physical pain without the 'me' as the centre which doesn't want pain, or is afraid of having pain when the pain has come to an end again? You are following all this? What is the place of pain in life? Is it a reminder that you are living unhealthily? And if it is a reminder then we don't accept what it calls your attention to, but rather suppress it, escape from it, go on with our pleasure of eating or drinking or whatever it is, and when you have again pain take some pill to get rid of it.

Therefore pain has an importance in telling you how to live more correctly. And pain also indicates that it has value in reminding you that there must be harmony between the mind, the heart and the body, a total harmony, which we have not. And pain, physical pain, has also its importance, not as a punishment and therefore 'give us more punishment so as to become more pure' which is absurd, but it is an indication that we are preventing the normal intelligence of the body from functioning. And to be attentive of all that and

not come to any conclusions, just to be attentive.

Q: Sir, how do we...

K: Sir, look, if I may point out - we will have to stop because I believe we must clear out of the hall by half past twelve, it is nearly that so we must stop - look, sir, there is no 'how', there is no system, please see this. We will go into it another time, but see this. Don't ever ask of anybody 'how' - how am I to become intelligent, how am I to become aware, how am I to become attentive, because the 'how' implies a system, when you have a system the mind which practises that system becomes mechanical. What we are trying to point out is, intelligence is not mechanical, where there is freedom intelligence operates. And when one has physical pain it indicates so many things, as we have tried to point out, some of them, and to be aware of all this. Then you will see for yourself if you have gone into this, that pain, unfortunately, because we live so wrongly and also one is getting older, pain is part of existence. And to see it without allowing that pain to distort the mind. I must stop.