What shall we talk about this morning?

Questioner: Of being and becoming.

K: If I may I would like to talk about something that perhaps might be of value and significance. And then after I have talked a little, we can then ask questions and go over them.

Considering what the world is, the violence, the extraordinary indifference to what happens to other countries, to other people, the continuing wars, the utter immorality of society, the divisions which religions have created between man and man, the nationalities, the left and the right and all the rest of it, I wonder what our response is to all that. What is our responsibility? What is our action to the world around us, of which we are a part? We are the world and the world is us, the world is not separate from us. And looking at all this, not merely intellectually, verbally but observing it with care, with attention, with that sense of quality of a mind that really wants to solve all these problems, not superficially, but profoundly, what is our responsibility to all this? What are we to do in the world of chaos, this appalling suffering that is going on? People killing in the name of ideologies, in the name of a revolution, what is a human being to do and what is his responsibility? What is your responsibility? The word ‘responsibility’ - I looked it up in the dictionary just now - means to respond, to respond either totally or respond according to the immediate demands - political, personal, nationalistic, respond fragmentarily, or respond totally. Our responsibility in face of all this is either to act according to our temperament, to our conditioning, to our particular idiosyncrasy or to a particular belief - religious, political, or otherwise, and if we do respond fragmentarily that action obviously, as one observes, leads to more and more chaos, more and more mischief, more and more complications. I am sure we are all aware of this. And so one asks, at least one must ask, faced with all this appalling misery, what is total action so that politically, religiously, economically, in our personal relationship there will be an adequate response, a total response? Can we go into that? Would that be of interest?
One can observe quite objectively how fragmentary responses, responses at different levels, does breed not only contradiction in action but it brings with it inefficiency, contradiction and confusion. And if one is aware of all this, not intellectually or verbally, but actually feel all this, aware in the sense not only our own particular fragmentary activity, our own temperament and idiosyncrasies and characteristics, but also aware of our deeper levels of our conditioning, in that awareness what is the right action? What is the adequate, total response to a society that is so immoral, to morality that has no meaning whatsoever as it is, to a religion that has ceased to be really religious at all? And a response in our personal relationship to each other. Many people, being aware of all this, try to answer it by forming a community. I do not know if you have not noticed, young people all over the world saying, 'This is all so ugly we are going to form a little community by ourselves'. That community is soon broken because it is based on some ideology, or it is the denial of authority, which is associated with the establishment, and they themselves have to have an authority in the community, and when you reject authority without understanding it the community soon breaks up. Or you join some political party. Or you join the latest guru with extraordinary ideas. Or you take to drugs. Surely none of these are adequate responses - joining a revolution, which is a physical expression of violence to bring about a different kind of society and so on. We know all this. Again being aware of all this, what is one to do, you and I? Not belonging to any particular organisation, not believing in the religious doctrines, beliefs and saviours and gurus, not being nationalistic except perhaps carry a passport, what is your direct response to this challenge? How can you respond totally with your mind, with your heart, with your intelligence totally so that in the action there is no contradiction ever? I think this question is important to ask and to find out, or to learn what the answer is. Not come to any conclusion because the moment you come to a conclusion - how to act, then that very conclusion breeds contradiction between you who have one kind of conclusion and another who has a different kind of conclusion or opinion.

So how is one to act, being responsible, because freedom implies responsibility? When you put aside the religious doctrines, beliefs, political chicanery, political ideologies, communism or socialism - you know what they are leading up to - how do you, as a human being, respond to this? And to find that out, what to do, one has to learn, it seems to me, the whole process of living - what is implied in living, in existence, in our daily activity. Without understanding that, to try to answer a vaster question has no meaning. One has to begin very near to go very far. Right? One has to begin with oneself to go very far. Unless one has this deep psychological revolution in oneself, to answer that question will inevitably be fragmentary and therefore mischievous.

So one has to understand psychologically, beginning with the psyche, the mind, and from there moving outwards. I don't know if we are communicating with each other. Communication means, as we said the other day, learning together, sharing together, observing together, creating together. That is, really, that means communication. So we must, you and I, must both move together step by step, and not wait for somebody to teach you. We are learning together. That is real co-operation, that is real community, this understanding together, travelling together, sharing together, learning together and therefore creating together. That demands, naturally, affection, love, care, attention.

So to answer this question, which everybody is asking, whether you go to India, or to America, or those people who are under tyranny, secretly they too are asking: what is this action that will be a total response to a world that is so insane, where freedom is denied and yet man is seeking absolute freedom? So absolute freedom implies absolute responsibility, that means absolute response totally to the problem. And one cannot possibly respond totally if one has not understood - not verbally - one has not learnt to live a life in which love, death, everyday living is understood, is learnt. Right?

Now let's proceed. Having laid the foundation of that, that is you are laying it as well as I am laying it, together we are laying it. It is not I am laying it and therefore you build on that foundation your house, but we are together laying the foundation, it is our house. It is our earth to live in, to be happy, to enjoy life.
without sorrow, pain, anxiety.

So we have to understand our life, the life that we lead, the life that has become meaningless, the life that is full of travail, sorrow, conflict, competition, dishonesty. And in learning about that we shall also learn what love is. And in learning what love is we shall learn also what death is, because life is all that - death, love and everyday living. And to merely concentrate on everyday living, that is, bread and butter, position, more things and so on, so on, so on, and neglect the rest of it, which is what the world is doing, therefore it is imbalance, therefore it is contradictory, and therefore it is mischievous. So we have to learn about the whole thing - death, love and daily living.

First we must see clearly for ourself what our daily living is. What is our living? What is the thing that we call living? Do we live, or do we tolerate living? Do we live according to an idea, according to a conclusion based on a belief, a dogma, a memory? Because the mind is always concerned with remembering, imagining, contriving. I do not know if... Please we are moving together. If you have observed your mind you will see imagination plays a tremendous part, remembering and calculating, contriving. On that is based our life, the daily existence, the images which we have built about each other in our relationship with each other. And these images have their relationship and so we lose direct relationship. If I have an image about you because I have lived with you for ten years, or five days, and you have your image about me because you have lived with me for ten days or five years, our relationship is essentially based on that image. The images have relationship, not you and I, there is no direct response between each other. And therefore relationship comes to an end. I don't know if you...

So our problem is - one of our problems unfortunately! - is how to end these images and how not to create these images in relationship, because all images are a kind of knowledge. And one must have knowledge but in relationship when there is this image between you and me which is the knowledge of you and me, then that image, that knowledge becomes an impediment in our relationship. I don’t know if you see this. I hope you see this. See it in the sense as you feel hungry, as you feel so many things so strongly. So when you realise in our daily living, whether it is in the office, at home, with a neighbour, playing golf, or whatever you do, how extraordinarily important these images are, which is part of remembering, imagining, contriving. So how can the mind be free of this image which it has built up, and how to prevent further images being formed. I don't know if you... Are you asking all these questions or am I asking you these questions? Well, it doesn't matter, I am asking you therefore you have to reply.

To understand this one has to go into the question of attention: to attend. We rarely attend to anything because we are lazy, accept so many things for granted and we do not want to disturb the pattern of habit, what it might reveal and we are frightened of it, therefore we are never totally attentive. You are not totally attentive now when you are listening. You are listening, comparing, judging, wasting your capacity of attention by distraction. So you are actually not listening. Now to find out, to go into this and learn how to end the formation of images and what to do with the images that you have already, one has to understand this question of attention. That means when you are attending - listen to this, please - when you are attending no image is formed - do you understand? It is only in the state of inattention, when there is no attention, images are formed. Are we meeting each other? That is, when you, in our relationship with each other, when you insult me, I react instantly. That reaction is the habit. In that habit all kinds of other responses come into being. So when you insult me or nag me or whatever you do in our relationship, when there is attention, when I am listening to you totally, there is no necessity of image at all because I am listening to what you are saying.

We are learning this, please; you are not memorising this and practising it. Because the moment you practise, it becomes mechanical, then it is a remembrance, and when you remember something and then put it into action it is the past that is operating and therefore it is inattention. I don't know if we meet all this! We are meeting each other? And what do you do with all the images that you have about a dozen things?
What will you do? Will you get rid of them one by one, becoming aware of each image and saying, 'I must not, I'm, you know, I'll...' and so on? Or is there an action which dissipates all images, whether the past or the present - the images that one has formed and the images that one is forming? Attention means energy, energy in which there is no wastage - please see this. When you form an image it is a wastage of energy. And when you give complete attention there is no waste at all. So you have this energy operating and therefore the past images have no value. I wonder if you meet this. Because we are talking about relationship between human beings, and if that relationship is not harmonious, real, truthful, honest, and it cannot be honest, truthful, if our relationship is based on images, which it is now. And to be totally completely free of the formation of images, the machinery that forms images, is attention. And in that attention you have energy to observe the images taking place and therefore dissipating them. You understand this? Can we go on?

Are you listening and learning, which means learning as we go along, which is observing yourself and in the observation of yourself you are learning?

So in relationship, which is life, unless we live in relation there is no living. Isolation which is the forming of images is non-living. The non-living is living according to a conclusion, to a remembrance, to a memory.

So from that one goes and asks: what is this relationship in which there is no image? Is that love? And we don't know what it is. We are going to learn. You understand? We are going to learn together, to learn together and come upon what is called love. We depend on each other, and it is necessary to depend at a certain level - I depend on the postman, the milkman, the builder. But when we psychologically depend on each other, because I am lonely, isolated, in my loneliness I need somebody to lean on, somebody through whom I can escape. Haven't you noticed all this? So I am attached to you. I am attached to you because you give me comfort, you give me companionship, you offer me sex, you give me a dozen things, and therefore I cling to you because you are my security, my hope, my pleasure, my escape from my isolation. And all the time the mind is isolating itself. See what is happening. I want to escape from isolation because I see where there is dependence there is pain, fear, and yet my activity is self-centred and therefore isolating. I wonder if you see all this!

So freedom means responsibility. Freedom implies absolute responsibility. That means absolute order, not order of calculation but order that comes when I understand disorder. And disorder is the image in relationship, disorder comes when there is dependency and attachment, which means the mind needs security in companionship, in you - you are following? And when that security is threatened, as it is all the time being threatened, then I become violent, vicious, all the rest of it follows. So one asks: is love dependency? Please we are learning together, not saying yes or no. And is love pleasure? Pleasure is the response of memory and the pursuit of that memory in daily life. Watch, learn this, sirs, you will see it for yourself. And so one sees love is not pleasure - not that there is not pleasure, not that there is not a sense of joy and real enjoyment of life, but when there is the pursuit of pleasure you deny joy, you deny really love.

So to understand what love is one has to understand the machinery of thinking. And thinking is the response of memory and in relationship when memory plays a part then that relationship ceases, therefore there is no love in that relationship. All right? Are we learning together as we go along, not merely accepting a lot of words that have no meaning? Because we see in the world the utter absence of that love, though religions, churches, human beings have talked about it. When they say to each other, 'We love you', it is the love of that image which they have about themselves and about the other and hence endless conflict between each other. Though they may live together in the same house, in the same bed, they are always living apart, and therefore in that relationship there is no sense of real love, affection, care.

And we also have to learn about death because life includes death. Death isn't something apart from living. Death isn't something at the end of our life - old age, disease, accident, pain and then die. And we have
separated death from living, from love, from the whole of our existence. Please see this. People are frightened even to talk about it. So we have to learn about it, as we have to learn about living, how to live without conflict, to live without images in our relationship, to live in the movement of learning all the time, which includes death. And to understand the movement or to learn about death, fear must be understood. Because most of us, young or old, diseased or not, old age with all its difficulties, we are always avoiding that inevitable thing. And that inevitable thing is treated as something sorrowful, something to be avoided at any price. So we are going to learn together about it. It sounds funny on a lovely morning with clouds and blue sky and the pattern of leaves on the tent, to talk about death. But it is part of our life, you cannot deny it and only live in a secluded thing called living, you have to take the whole of it. And when you understand the whole of it then your responsibility, your action to the world is entirely different.

Why is man so frightened of death? Or, not being frightened, rationalises it, says that it is inevitable, that it is natural, like the tree that falls in the forest feeds the new tree, there are dozens and dozens of explanations but at the end of it there is that thing called death waiting. And man wants comfort because he says, ‘I have lived twenty, forty, eighty years; I have accumulated tremendous experience, knowledge; I have suffered untold agonies; I have fulfilled in this and that, and frustrated in this and that; I have never reached the end of things which I wanted to do; I have always lived with great burden and great sorrow.’ And the mind wants comfort. Because if living is to die and the ending of the whole thing, it is rather an appalling thing to realise that. Therefore we say, ‘I must have comfort’. And the man who seeks comfort will find comfort in an illusion, not in reality. For him what is important is to be comfortable, not to be disturbed, not to break down the habits which he has built for so many centuries. Therefore he invents a belief that there is a living after death, or that there is a resurrection after death, or that you are absorbed in the light of truth and so on and on. Right?

Now, to learn about death fear must end. Learning about fear is the ending of fear, and the mind that seeks comfort can never find the truth of death. Right? Are you meeting all this? Are we putting too much in one talk? Ah, no, we are but it doesn’t matter. It is up to you.

So we are learning about something which we don’t know, about something of which we are afraid. And when one dies look what happens. You die with disease, unconscious, a burden on the rest of the family, or on the society - we don’t die like wild animals, naturally, easily, we are always dying with fear and pain - haven’t you noticed all this? In a hospital bed, and the little money that you have collected is dissipated on nurses and doctors. We have lived wrongly; we have never learned to live rightly and end up in a bed in a hospital, or in an accident, or in disease. Right, sirs?

So to learn about death is to find out if death is at the end or at the beginning; if death is something to be avoided - or rather to live with it, knowing the inevitability of the mechanism of the body, the organism wearing out. It will wear out naturally if you live a natural life. If you live an unnatural life you will naturally end unnaturally. I do not know if you not have noticed in the autumn a leaf turning yellow, how beautiful it is, full of colour and it falls to the ground, its pattern is so clear and so beautiful, so alive. And we never die that way.

So one has to learn how to live with death, which doesn’t mean you commit suicide, or morbid or any of that silly nonsense, but to live with death. You understand sir? Now what does that mean? To live with no image - we understand it very well, that is fairly clear, both intellectually and verbally and perhaps some of you see it very clearly because you are attentive and you have seen the truth of it in your relationship. And also perhaps you see, learn, what love is. And you see that it is not pleasure. Pleasure is the pursuit of thought in things that have happened before and the demand for pleasure. One sees that very clearly. And also one sees that where love is, will is not. But to learn what death is in living, to live with death is quite another matter. So we are going together to learn about it. What it means to live with death. You understand? I don’t know if you have ever put that question. I’m afraid you have never put it. You have
either put it in a morbid mood, depressed, or feeling utterly inferior because you have compared yourself
with somebody whom you think is superior; depressed, agonised about some silly thing, then you say, 'How
am I to die' - which is the invitation to death. That is not what we are doing. What we are trying to learn is
how to live with that thing which we call death, to learn about it. To learn about it is not to be afraid. You
understand sirs? Therefore to be afraid implies that mind, thought, foreseeing its own end, and is frightened
of the unknown, and therefore clings to the known, which is my family, my house, my property, my beastly
little mind, my quarrels, my memories and all the absurdities which I have built up during, forty, fifty, sixty
years. And the known is familiar, and what is familiar I am used to, I accept it. The known is my home, my
abode, my sense of security; the unknown I am uncertain of and therefore I am frightened. The unknown in
comparison with the known, otherwise I don't know the unknown. I don't know if you understand this.
Because I compare the known with the unknown, I am frightened of the unknown. If I don't compare, the
unknown has no meaning. And to find out I learn, but when I compare I am comparing the known with
something I do not know - I don't know if you see it - and therefore there is fear.

So what does it mean to learn about death and living? It is really rather a lovely question, isn't it? I don't
know if you see the beauty of it. Why is the mind so attached to the known, to the familiar, to the habits, to
all the memories which it has accumulated, the remembrances of things past? Why is it? And the things past
are words. When I remember the joyful afternoon in the bright clear sunlight, and the shadows, that is a
remembrance known, accepted. And I live with that memory because that is the most pleasant memory I
have had during the whole of this summer, in the whole of that year. And in that memory the mind seeks,
finds security. And so you can expand that, complicate it, put it in various forms. That is, the past is the
mind - it may project from the past to the future, or operate from the past in the present, but it is always
living in the past - the known, whether that known is conscious, or unconscious. And the unknown is death.
As long as the mind holds on to the known it will always be frightened of the unknown. We are learning,
please go on.

So can the mind free itself from the known? That is, the known is knowledge, whether personal knowledge
or the accumulated knowledge of the race, of the culture, the known. And can the mind be free of it and yet
use it? It can use it only when it is free intelligently. When it is not free it will misuse that knowledge,
which is what is happening in the world. You have marvellous technology, go to the moon, and the
extraordinary things they have invented. And also they have invented extraordinary instruments to kill
each other, from all the accumulated knowledge of centuries. Knowledge is necessary, not to kill each other,
knowledge is necessary, and when it is misused, as it will invariably be misused when there is no freedom
from the accumulation of memory, which is the mind. I wonder if you meet all this!

So dying is the ending of knowledge. Are you meeting this? No, sir, don't agree, you don't know what it
means. The knowledge which I have accumulated about myself, the knowledge which I have gathered
through experience during my life time of forty, fifty, ten years. The knowledge which I have invited, which
has become my habit, the very structure of my being, and that is the 'me', and that is the 'you'. And that
knowledge is always within the field of the known and I won't let it go because I don't know what the other
is. I would rather have my furniture - or rather not have furniture and have an empty house.

So from that arises the question: whether the mind can ever be free from the known, and the freedom from
the known and the known moving together? You understand this? Not keeping one in a watertight
compartment and the other in another compartment, divorced from each other, but married together, living
together, moving together. That is dying to the known, and that is to learn to live with death all the time, to
the end of our daily existence. You understand? Move together in this freedom from knowledge and
freedom. When you understand the whole of it - the living, the sense of love and death, when you
understand the whole of it then your responsibility to society will be an adequate response, it will be a total
response of a human mind that is really cultured, of a mind that has depth, meaning.
So without understanding the totality of existence, but only a part of it, must inevitably lead to utter chaos. So when we see this it becomes extraordinarily important for each one of us to learn to live totally differently. Right?

Perhaps you can ask questions from this. Or is that enough for this morning? What sir?

Q: What is the place of literature in our daily life?

K: What is the place of literature with all its images in our daily life? Is that it? Is that it sir? 'What is the place of literature with all its images, in our life'. You see I don't read books, thank God! I read occasionally detective stories. (laughter) What place has literature in your life? What Shakespeare has written, what Aldous Huxley has said about Doors of Perception? Durrell, Graves, what place has... T.S. Eliot - what place has all that in your life? The images, the poetry, the use of words, the beauty of the description - is that your life, or the life of the author who wrote them? Or through literature you enjoy life, through literature you see the beautiful tree, the mountain, the river, the description of the author of relationship between man and woman and all the tortures they go through, the boy everlastingly meeting the girl, in a thousand different ways. (laughter) Is that your life? Which means you have no life of your own. Not what life I want. We are not doing propaganda here at all. If we live on literature you are a second-hand human being. If we live on what the churches have said you are a second-hand being. If we live according to the Bible, or to the Bhagavad Gita, or to the Koran, we don't live at all, we are living according to what the prophets have said, or what the psychologists have said.

So to find out sirs what place literature, art, beauty, museum, all the things man has put together, has, the truth of them, or the falseness of them, or their relationship to your daily life - you have to begin with yourself. You have to find out what your relationship is to literature, what your relationship is to that thing which they call god, if there is god. Perhaps we will go into it tomorrow morning, that question. So unless you, as a human being, find out for yourself and learn what your relationship to the whole of the world is, if you don't find out, if you don't learn about it, you are bound to create the horrors that are going on, increase them.

Yes sir?

Q: (Inaudible)

K: Right sir. The question is - may I repeat it and if I don't repeat it please correct it properly.

In 1928, the questioner says, you dissolved the organisation called the Order of the Star, of which you were the head, with thousands of members, property and so on - you renounced all that, put aside all that - I don't use the word 'renounce' - put aside all that. As you were brought up to believe, or you were conditioned by the Masters - I don't know why you bring all that in now but it doesn't matter (laughter) - and the essential teaching of a Master is to know yourself - isn't that it sir?

Q: (Inaudible)

K: No sir. What I have said was, oh Lord, what I said was - you see we are talking how to live without conditioning. And you are bringing in something which you think is conditioned response from me. Sir, I have said Truth is a pathless land. You cannot come to it by any path, there is no path to Truth. And you can only come to it when the mind is free from all conditioning, and the conditioning takes place when there is an end in view, when there is fear, when there is pleasure, when you have not understood the whole meaning and the living of life, love and death. That is all we are concerned with. You see that needs no Masters, no gurus, no paths. All that it needs is your attention. If you are willing to learn, if you are willing to learn together that is all that is needed. If you don't, don't bother. Don't make your life more complicated than it is by introducing somebody else's teaching, including mine.
Q: Sir, may I ask you when you see a person in distress, or they come to you in trouble, it is very difficult to help them without relying on thought and memory to help.

K: I understand sir. When people come to you and you want to help them it is very difficult not to introduce images, conclusions, thought. When people come to you with their problem, are you trying to help them? If you are trying to help them, you will prevent their understanding of themselves. So don't - please don't misunderstand what I am saying - don't help them. Right? That sounds terrible, but who are you to help them? It is like the analysts who are analysing others, when they themselves need analysis! And they have analysis every year if they are good analysts, by another analyst who needs... (laughter) I'm sorry. No, please just listen to it, listen. I come to you with my problems. My wife has run away, I feel despair, I am lonely, I am in great sorrow over many things. My brother, son is dead, I am exhausted with all the tortures of my mind. I come to you. And you feel you can help me. I come to you to talk things over with you, I want you to listen to my problem. And in talking over, and you are listening to me, something takes place. That is if you know how to listen. But if you say, 'Well, I must help you, my dear friend', then our relationship is entirely different. You are the helper - I am the helpee! Whereas if I come to you with real problems, and I have, you have - and I come to you and I talk it over with you and you are listening, if you listen without the image, without conclusion, without the supposition that you can help me, then in that listening and my exposing myself to you, in that relationship the understanding, the learning takes place. There is the fertile soil in which a new thing can take place. Isn't that enough for today?

Q: (Inaudible)

K: I don't quite understand the question, sir.

Q: (Inaudible)

K: Can we go into it tomorrow morning sir?

Q: (Inaudible question continues)

K: Are you asking, sir, if I understand rightly your question: what is the relationship of thought which is not based on memory, is that it? I don't quite understand your question. What do I mean by thought, is that it?

Q: (Inaudible)

K: Yes, I understand sir: what do you mean by thought, the questioner says. What does the speaker mean by thought.

Q: What do you mean by thought? Thought doesn't lead to violence.

K: Ah, how thought doesn't lead to violence, right. Sir you are not understanding what I mean by thought. That will be another literature, but you are trying to understand what thought is for yourself, aren't you? What is thought? You are trying to learn about it, aren't you? Therefore it is not mine, what I think thought is. But you can see it for yourself very simply, what thought is, which is the response of memory. I ask you what's your name and you say, 'Yes, my name is so and so'. Or you have memories, knowledge and from that you respond. And the response may have an interval between the question and the answer. In that interval, in that gap of time, in that lag your mind is searching for the answer in memory, or in a book, or in whatever it is. So thought is always the response of memory, therefore thought can never be free, thought can never be new. Only when thought comes to an end something new can take place. That is quite a different matter.