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Remaining With the Challenge of Sorrow

From the series:

Six Public Meetings in Madras - 1983

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Fourth Public Talk in Madras

Why are there so many people here?

This is the last talk. Yesterday evening we talked about fear, the nature of fear and what brings about fear. We said, time, desire, thought are the contributory causes of fear. And man has lived with fear. And we live with fear now: fear of the future, the past, fear of the future of man, what is going to happen to man. Surely the future of man is what he is now. It is so obvious. If he does not radically change, not society, not the various forms of governments, but if he doesn't radically change psychologically, inwardly, the future is what he is now. That is guaranteed because there will be more wars, more instruments of war, more destruction, more violence, more fragmentation of human beings into nationalities and so on. Because the future is what we are now. And we said during all these talks, that it is so urgently necessary to bring about this psychological revolution, what it is to bring about a change, not move from one form, one system, one idea to another but whether it is possible for human beings who have lived on this lovely earth for so many millennia, whether it is possible for them to change.

And this evening I think we ought to talk over together whether sorrow can ever end, the sorrow of man. And what is love, what is compassion, and what is intelligence. We ought to talk over together also the significance of death. And if we have time, we ought to talk over the whole question of meditation.

We have lived with sorrow generation upon generation: the grief, the sorrow of loneliness, the sorrow of great anxiety, the sorrow of having no proper relationship with another, the sorrow of a mother, a father, a wife whose husband has been killed in war, decorated as a hero with lots of medals on his chest. And also there is the sorrow of ignorance. Sorrow has many forms. It isn't just one incident called death, it isn't just one happening in one's life, but a series of incidents, a series of accidents and experiences which both contain pleasure and pain, the sorrow of this movement of reward and punishment, the sorrow of old age, the sorrow of illness, blindness, deformed children. Man has carried a great weight of sorrow and we try to

escape from it. We invent all kinds of theories, all kinds of possibilities, romantic concepts, and flowering in ideations. But sorrow remains with man. I wonder if one has looked at what wars have done to man. How many women, fathers, brothers, sisters have shed tears because one holds on to nationalism, racial prejudices, linguistic differences. And all this is causing enormous sorrow in the world. There is not only personal sorrow, the loss of something, the loss of someone whom you loved - if you love at all - the loss of never having a single, happy, original day, the pain of seeing poverty in this land and people doing nothing about it. So man has carried this sorrow from time beyond measure. And we still are burdened, tearful, anxious, lonely, aching with deep inward pain, of lack of success, lack of opportunity, lack of the things we all want.

So we ought to together this evening consider whether it is possible to end this enormous burden carried by humanity and by those who are still in sorrow. What is sorrow? As we said yesterday, what is the cause of sorrow? Where there is a cause, there is an end. If I have cancer, the cause, the pain, then perhaps the cause can be removed. So where there is a cause for anything, there is an end to that. A causation is a movement, it is not a fixed point. And if you can understand and discover the cause of this burden of sorrow, then perhaps we shall understand the nature of love; not love of god, not the love of the guru, not the love of some book or a poem, but the love of human beings, the love of your wife, the husband, your children. To find that extraordinary perfume that is really the light of the world, one must understand the nature of suffering, the structure of suffering.

I hope we are together, you and the speaker, going into this. Please, together we are investigating, not the speaker investigates and you listen, agree or disagree, accept or deny, but together to explore a very, very profound problem of humanity. One requires an unemotional approach to it, not sentiment, not a conclusion that sorrow will end, or that sorrow will always remain with mankind. So we must together, if you will, consider this question deeply. You can only consider this question when the mind is in the heart. We use our intellect to comprehend, to discern, to argue. We use the intellect to choose, to measure. And so intellect is one of the faculties of the brain. And if we are going to examine this extraordinary, profound problem, mere intellection has very little place, and most of us are highly intellectual, highly educated, have extraordinary - especially in India - have extraordinary quality of analysis. You can analyse anything on earth. You have got fairly subtle minds - not all, naturally. And to comprehend sorrow, mere intellection has very little... cannot go very far. You understand sirs, what we are saying? That all of us have the capacity to use our intellect, which is to understand, to discern, to argue, to choose, to weigh one against the other. This is the function of the intellect. And most of us have that capacity. And if you are merely approaching this question of sorrow, then your mind, your intellect dominates the process of investigation, therefore it distorts. Whereas is it possible to approach it with a holistic movement? You understand?

We never approach anything as a whole. We never look at life as a whole. We have fragmented life, broken up as the intellect, the emotions, love and so on, broken it up, and so we can never look at a problem wholly. The word 'whole' means not only complete, not only the feeling that parts are included in it, but the parts don't make the whole. 'Whole' also means healthy, a healthy mind, not a crippled mind, not a stagnant mind, a mind which is whole, a sense of covering the earth and the skies and the beauty of all that. And also the word 'whole' means also 'holy' - H.O.L.Y. So we never approach with that quality of mind. And in investigating, exploring this question, one needs to have that quality of a mind in the heart, which is not romantic, idealistic, imaginative, but a very factual mind, tempered with the quality of love. When we use the word 'heart' we mean by that - mind in the heart, mind in the quality of love, which has nothing whatsoever to do with any ideas, with any ideals, with any obedience. There is no guru. There must be freedom to observe.

So together, let us look at this question. Together. What is sorrow, and why has man put up with sorrow, why has he accepted it as he has accepted fear, as he has accepted pleasure, desire, all the things that man is surrounded with, both outwardly and inwardly. We are not talking over together, not having a dialogue

about the various types of sorrow. I might have lost my son and you might have lost your bank account, suddenly discover that all your belief in god has no meaning, all the temples contain nothing but words and stones, and probably dirty. So you have to have a very clear, direct, uncluttered observation of this. Are we together in this? If we are, which I am rather sceptical about, I hope you don't mind, if we are, then what is sorrow? What is the nature of it? In that thing called sorrow there is pain, there is grief, there is a sense of isolation, a sense of loneliness in which there is no relationship. It is not only a physical shock but it is a great crisis in the consciousness, in the psyche. I have lost my son. I am only taking that example. I have lost my son to whom I am attached. And I wanted him to grow up into some beastly business man - right? - to have some kind of good substantial income, a house and so on. In him I have immolated myself - you understand this word? You are following what I am saying? - and suddenly he is gone. What is that quality of suddenness? The sudden ending of something which has given me great joy, great pain, great anxiety, concern about his future. And all that movement: my affection, my concern, my care, my sense of helping him to have good taste, to live aesthetically because where there is deep aesthetic sensitivity, that is the highest moral, highest ethics, and suddenly he is gone. Don't you know all these feelings? I hope not your son, or your wife or your father or your mother dead, but in every house there is this shadow of sorrow. There is sudden ending, sudden ending of my attachment - you are following all this? - a sudden ending of all my hope, which I have invested in him, a sudden sense of not only deep shock. And life becomes empty, either become very cynical or find a rational explanation, or plunge myself into some form of entertainment, drugs, drinks and all the rest of it, or believe in some future life. This is the lot of all human beings.

So what is this ending? You are following this? Are we together in this a little bit? What does it mean to end? Have we ever ended something without a motive, without a reward or punishment - to end? Because where there is an ending there is a totally new beginning. But we never end. We end things if it is profitable or painful. Our life is based on reward and punishment, both outwardly and much more inwardly, but we never end something without a cause.

So grief, loneliness and a sense of separation, which is essentially time, which we went into yesterday: time, identification, investment, and all the things one has cultivated in another, all that ends and there is a shock, and that shock I call sorrow. Now can one remain with that, not escape, not seek comfort, because that is the most silliest thing to do, not go off to a temple or run off to some guru, but to remain with that tremendous challenge without a single movement of thought? Because sorrow is perhaps one of the greatest challenges, greatest demand on the human mind, on the human quality, and if you merely escape from it, run away, rationalize, then that which has a tremendous depth to it... then sorrow is your shadow. But with the ending of that there is passion, not lust but the passion that is the very essence of energy. But very few of us have that passion, very few of us have that passion which is living, not occasionally, but that passion which moves the universe.

So we ought to look into what is love. That word has been so spoilt. A romantic woman calls the love of god, the love of my guru, the love of my painting, my book. You understand? We have given to that word such shallow meaning. You may say, 'I love my wife'. One questions that love. That love is... may be attachment, that love may be seeking comfort, pleasure sexually, pleasure of companionship and so on. So we are going to consider what is love. Because in trying to see the depth of it, the beauty and the extraordinary quality of it, love may be related to death. So we are going together to look at it. Please, this is not a lecture in view of instruction, but it's together, as two human beings facing a world which is becoming so dangerous, one must ask this question.

Surely to find something true, one must negate that which is not true - right? - negate the false. You might then say, to each person the false is different. To each person that which is illusory, that is which is not objective, rational, sane. So to discover what is false and what is true, and what is true in the false, one requires not the capacity to think clearly only, but the demand, the asking, questioning. So what is love? Would you say, love is desire? Would you say love is pleasure? Don't shake your heads, it's meaningless.

Would you say love is attachment? Please, the speaker is asking these questions for you to answer to yourself, answer it, not deceive yourself. It is so easy to deceive oneself. You may think you are a marvellous human being, you are out of all this. But to find out that which is not love, that is, negation is the most positive action.

We are asking is desire love? Is it? We went into the question of desire yesterday. We won't go into it again now, if you don't mind. Is desire love? Desire is a wandering movement, and is love wandering, unstable, weak, or is it something as strong, as vital as death? Is love pleasure? Sexual pleasure, the pleasure of owning, dominating, possessing a person. Is that love? Is attachment to the person - my wife, my husband, my family - attached, which means, Latin 'attacher', which means to hold on, cling to. Is that love? Or in attachment there is fear, jealousy, anxiety, hate. Where there is jealousy, there is hate. Is that love? Has hate any relationship with love? Is love the opposite of hate? Is the good the opposite of that which is not good? Ask these questions, sir, don't... When an opposite like hate... if hate is the opposite of love, then hate has its root in love. All opposites have their root in their own opposites.

Are you getting tired? God, what a crowd. So please examine your own life, not listen to what the speaker is saying. Examine, each one of you, your own life honestly and ask these questions. Desire, pleasure, attachment, jealousy, anxiety, fear of losing, is all that love? So can you be free of attachment, not at the last moment when death is there? Can you end attachment to another? See the implications of attachment, the consequences of attachment. Fear, anxiety, jealousy - where there is jealousy there is hate, anger, and more, when there is attachment, and is all that love? And what is compassion? Not the definition, you can look it up in a dictionary. What is compassion? What is the relationship between love and compassion, or they are the same movement? When we use the word 'relationship', it implies a duality, a separation, but we are asking what place has love in compassion, or love is the highest expression of compassion.

How can one be compassionate if you belong to any religion, follow any guru, believe in something, believe in your scriptures, in your guru and so on, attached to a conclusion? When you accept your guru, you have come to a conclusion, or when you strongly believe in god or in a saviour or in this or that, can there be compassion? You may do social work, help the poor, out of pity, out of sympathy, out of charity, but is all that love and compassion? So in understanding the nature of love, having that quality - you understand? - which is mind in the heart. That is, intelligence, which is a very complex question, intelligence is the understanding or the discovering of what love is. Intelligence has nothing whatsoever to do with thought, with cleverness, with knowledge. You may be very clever in your studies, in your job, in being able to argue very cleverly, intelligently... very cleverly, reasonably, but that is not intelligence. Intelligence goes with love and compassion. And with that intelligence, if there is, if you have come upon it, and you cannot come upon it as an individual; compassion is not yours or mine, like thought is not yours or mine. Where there is intelligence, there is no me and you. And intelligence doesn't abide in your heart or in your mind. That intelligence, which is supreme is everywhere. It is that intelligence that moves the earth and the heavens and the stars, because that is compassion.

We ought to talk over together what is death. Are you interested in all this? - not interested, that is a stupid word. Are you concerned about all this, or you have grown too old? The young are already old, some of them. And hearing all this, what will you do with it? Just as you leave forget all this and fall back to your daily monotonous, mediocre life? Ask these questions, sirs and ladies.

And also we are going to talk over together this question of death - death being the ending: the ending of our memories, of our attachments, your bank account if you have one. You can't carry it with you but you like to have it till the last moment. Right? So what is death, and who is it that dies? And what is life? You understand? Life: who is it that dies, and what does it mean to die. We are not talking of the ending of the physical organism, but we are enquiring into life, the ending of life, and the great significance of what death means. What is life which we have separated from death? There is a gap of forty, fifty or a hundred years.

We want to prolong our lives as long as possible. Modern medicine, surgery, health and all that helps to prolong one's life. I don't know for what, but one wants to prolong it.

So what is life; your life or the life of the universe, life of the earth, life of nature, life which is the vast movement without a beginning and without an end? This is not... please, don't fall back into the trap of your tradition. That is dead, as dead as a door nail. And when you follow tradition you are already dying, or perhaps you are already dead. So we must examine when we talk about living, life, what does that mean? The life of a tree, the life of the fish in the water, the life of the beauty of a tiger, the life of the universe, this life that is... seems so extraordinarily vast, immense, without measureless depth. Are we talking about that or your life, yours? If we are talking about your life, what is that life? Going to the office from morning till night for fifty, sixty years, breeding children - your life, belonging to some sect, following some guru? And of course, you believe in that guru so tremendously, you follow him. And conflict from morning till night: conflict as pleasure, conflict as fear and the pursuit of pleasure and desire. This is your life. Is that what we are talking about, the ending of that life? What is important: what lies beyond death, or long incidents of life in your life? You understand my question? What is important: before or after death? If living, life, the beauty of it, the energy of it, the passion of it, the immensity of it, which you have reduced to such a shallow little 'me'. Are we concerned about that, the 'me' that is going to die? I would like to prolong this living. One would like, and this living, we never look, question, ask, doubt, find out, but we mechanically carry on and we are concerned about that 'me', you, dying.

What is the 'me', what is the 'you'? Is it a series of words? Examine it, sir, for god's sake, look at it! Is it your name, your form, how you look, your bank account, your ideas, your beliefs, your experiences? You believe in god, and that belief is you, who have created god. So what are you? Please look, question it, doubt it, ask it! Is that what you are frightened of - dying? Knowing your body which is the most extraordinary instrument, badly treated, tortured, drugged, unhealthy - that body, that organism is going to die. You may prolong it for a long time but it is going to come to an end. Or you can say if you are very successful in any field, you can say, I have had a jolly good life, I don't mind dying. So we are asking what is it that dies, and what is it that clings to life? By life, I mean office, sex, pain, pleasure, fighting each other, quarrelling, destroying each other. This is your life, whether you are young or old. Is that what you are afraid of ending? Or are you considering life as a whole, life of the universe, which is so immense, so vast, so incalculable? That is, that life is there, as well as here, as well as this little life you have - this torture, this anxiety, this conflict, this misery, occasional spurts of joy and clarity.

So please, enquire what you are, to which thought clings, to the image you have built about yourself. You see, sirs, it is not the immortality of one's soul, of yourself. 'Yourself' is built through time. You have evolved as 'me' from the moment you are born till now. And you accept that 'me' as a reality, and is it real at all, or is it a series of words, a series of memories, accident and experiences which are all put together by thought, and is that 'me' holding on to all this travail of life? If you are not holding it, then life has something totally different: it is a vast incalculable movement. But that can only be seen when the self is not.

Now we ought to turn to, to ask the question, what is meditation. May we go on? You are not too tired? If you are tired just get up, please, and go quietly, without disturbing others, because we are going to enquire into something that demands all your attention, that demands your care, your profound consideration. So we are together going to examine what is meditation, not how to meditate, that is the most silliest question, but what is the nature, the quality, the structure, and the beauty of meditation. The word 'meditation' means to ponder over, to think over, to consider, to probe, to investigate, to look - according to the dictionary. And the word 'meditation' also means measurement, to measure. I believe in Sanskrit, 'm?' is to measure. And also it has another meaning, that's not my business. So meditation, as it is said in the dictionary, a good dictionary, is to ponder over, think over, consider, weigh, look, observe, feel, move, and also it means to measure. Measurement means comparison. Have you ever considered that Greece, the ancient Greece 450 BC exploded all over Europe. Greece was responsible for measurement. It's not my... I do not know history

but you can observe. They invented measurement. And without measurement there can be no technology. And the western world is par excellence, highest, capable of great technology, which has moved to Japan.

India, the ancient Indians said that measurement is illusion because - this is now, I am saying, is the speaker is saying - all measurement is limited. Right? If there was complete measurement, then there would be instant perfection of all technology. You understand what I am saying? So India exploded all over Asia. Don't be proud of it, it is all gone. You have lost the one thing that was so precious. You have lost the greatest jewel that you ever had.

So meditation means to think, to ponder, to weigh, and also it means to measure. That is, measurement: I am this, I must be that. I am comparing myself with you, who are clever, beautiful, lovely, and I am not, that is measurement. Following an example is a measurement. Following the ideal is a measurement. Wherever there is comparison psychologically, meditation cannot be. You understand all this? Where there is no comparison, where there is no measurement, that I will achieve one day peace or god or illumination or all that stuff - the word you use here is self-realization. I do not know what it means, whatever that may mean: realizing the self - you invent a lot of words and stick to it. So where there is measurement, comparison, there cannot be meditation. You can compare between two cars, between two materials, of cloth, better paper, better house, better food, but where the mind thinks in terms psychologically of better, meditation is not possible. You can sit cross-legged, do all kinds of yoga, all kinds of control, where there is control there is measurement. Right? I wonder if you see all this.

Are you getting tired? Sorry, allow me another five minutes, it's all over for you then.

So to meditate: in meditation there must be no effort. What you call meditation is to repeat some words, repeat a mantra. I have been told the meaning of that word is to ponder over not becoming, which is, not measuring. And also it means to absolutely deny all self-centred activity. I believe that is the root meaning of that word: not becoming, and totally not living in a self-centred way. You can repeat all the words, mantras, breathe properly, you know, follow system after system, if one system does not suit you, take another system, methods, go off to Japan to learn Zen - right? - or the latest guru who will tell you how to meditate. All that implies control. Where there is control, there must be conflict and there must be measurement and that is not meditation. We are going to go into it a little bit.

Meditation is to live a diligent life. Meditation is not separate from daily living, going off into a little corner, meditating for twenty minutes every day or every afternoon, every evening; that is just going to sleep, having a siesta - you know what a siesta is? Having a sleep in the afternoon. So there is no system. System implies practice. Practice means measurement from what you are to what you want to be. And you may be practising the wrong note. And probably you are. And you call that meditation. And that meditation is so totally separate from your daily living. So find out whether it is possible to live a daily life of meditation, which means no measurement at any time. You know, this is a dangerous... what the speaker is saying, so please understand it very carefully. In meditation there is no control, because the controller is the controlled. I went into it the other day, I won't go into it again now. In meditation there is no will because will is desire. The essence of desire is will - 'I will meditate, I will practice this day after day' - discipline. In meditation there is no effort at all because there is no controller. No, you don't know anything.

And meditation implies awareness: awareness of the earth, the beauty of the earth, the dead leaf, the dying dog, the dog that is diseased, not just awareness of something or the other, to be aware of your environment; to be aware of your neighbour; to be aware of the colours you carry, wear, why you wear that colour and those beads, to be aware of that; to be aware of the beauty of the wind among the leaves; to be aware of your thoughts, your feelings. That means to be aware without choice - just to observe, just to be aware. That heightens your sensitivity. To observe diligently everything. When you say, I will do something, do it, never forgetting what you have said. Don't say something you don't mean. That is part of

meditation. That is, to be aware of your feelings, your conditioning, your opinions, judgments, and your beliefs, so that in that awareness, there is no choice - just to be aware of the beauty of the earth, the skies and the lovely waters. And when you are so aware, then there is attention. To attend: to attend to what the speaker is saying - not only to the speaker, to attend to what your wife is telling you, or your husband is telling you or your children are telling you, what the politicians are telling you - their trickery, their search for power, position; to attend. When you so profoundly attend, there is no centre as the 'me' to attend. That is also meditation.

Then if you have gone that far, if your mind - not your mind - if you have moved that far, if the mind has moved that far, then what is religion? Religion is none of these things that you have: the temples, and the content of the temples, the puja, the tirupatis, the churches, and all that is not religion. The rituals, the beliefs that are put together by thought, which is a material process and you worship that which thought has created, which is what you have created. Have you ever realized, all the gods, you have created them out of your fear, out of your wanting security, and the rituals, day after day, puja, the mass is another form of entertainment. I know you don't agree, but listen to it. You will go on doing it because your mind is conditioned, afraid, wants some kind of security, it's not here but perhaps somewhere else. So a religious man doesn't belong to any group, to any religion, has no belief, because his mind is free, unafraid, because intelligence is the highest supreme form of ultimate security, not the intelligence of cunning thought. Intelligence of compassion. And that intelligence has no doubt, no uncertainty, no fear, which is something immense and universal.

And where there is attention there is silence - if you attend. If you attend now to what the speaker is saying, attend with your ears, with your eyes, with your nerves, with your whole body attend, then in that quality of attention there is great silence, unfathomable silence. That silence has never been touched by thought. And only then, for which man has searched from time immemorial, something sacred, something nameless, supreme. It is only that mind that is so utterly free from all the travails of life, it is only such a mind that can find the supreme. That means meditation, which is the expression of daily activity.