

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Second Public Talk in Paris

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Perhaps after I have talked a little you might like to ask questions concerning what we have talked about.

I think it must be the concern of every human being, whether he lives in the Orient or in the Occident, to resolve radically the human misery, the confusion, and the strife in which we are caught. Every other issue becomes secondary - books, music, painting, the various things that we do with deliberation or because we have some kind of talent - all these seem to me to be secondary issues which will be answered rightly if we can understand, and resolve the human confusion, the travail in which we are caught, the useless waste of energy, which breeds so much sorrow. Only then can we really find out - when we are free from this confusion and misery. It is only then that we can ask if there is something beyond the human mind, beyond thought, if there is something sublime, something unknowable. But such inquiry becomes utterly meaningless, without any significance at all, if we haven't resolved fear, the agony of uncertainty, the despair in which most human beings are held.

Inquiry from a confused mind, from a mind that is in great trouble, from a human heart that is agonizing, from such a field any inquiry after truth - asking oneself if there is or if there is not God, if there is something that is really beyond time - is utterly useless, a waste of energy. A confused mind, though it may appear very clever, write books, do all kinds of things, when it is seeking anything beyond itself, will still be confused, and what it discovers will be the result of confusion. It won't be something that is born out of clarity; it will be the outcome of confusion, misery, strife, despair. The first thing one has to realize is that the confusion that exists with most people cannot be resolved by escaping from it or trying to clear it up. Whatever a confused mind does is confused. I think we don't realize that. Anything it does, whether it paints, sings, or writes poems, will still be the outcome of its own confusion, and this confusion, as we were saying the last time we met here, is the result of our thinking.

I hope you are not listening to me, to the speaker, merely verbally, intellectually, because there will be no

end to words, to books, to explanations. A clever mind can invent dozens of explanations, bring forth a philosophy, a system, but those do not answer or face the real issue. I hope you are not listening verbally or intellectually but observing, which is also listening, observing an actual fact, actually what is, not 'what should be'. Can you face actually the everyday conflict, the everyday misery, loneliness, despair that is in your heart, in your mind? Can you listen that way, not listening to a theory, to an explanation, to someone who has perhaps a little more or a little less, but actually listen to your own conditioning, your own travail, your own anxiety? There is a difference between your own awareness of your own state and what happens when someone points it out to you. No one needs to point out to you that you are hungry. You know it very well, and you do something about it, or not, as the case may be. But if you are told of the problem, of the issue, and you look at it, agreeing or disagreeing, then it is not your problem, it is not the issue that you are facing actually. What we are trying to do is not only to point out the fact of which you may be unconscious, but in the very statement to have you, yourself, discover the fact. Then it is yours, your problem; then you have to do something about it, not talk everlastingly.

If you will listen, not only to what is being said, but actually listen to find out the fact for yourself, the actuality, the what is, then together we shall be able to resolve it. But if the speaker is merely giving an explanation, a series of words to point out the fact, then it's not your fact, and then the relationship between the listener and the speaker has no value at all.

Human problems, not technical problems, not how to go to the moon, write a book, or learn a language, but human problems, the problem of our confusion, the problem of our utter lack of affection, the sense of loneliness, the contradictions, the everlasting urge to fulfill and with it the endless frustrations[^] - these are our problems, and these problems are all created by thought. We have built a society, a structure, a psychological state of the society which is the result of our greed, envy, comparison, competition, ambition, desire for power, position, prestige, fame. All that has been built by thought, and we are the result of that thought, caught in the structure, in the psychological structure of society of which we are part. Again that's obvious; we are not different from society. Society is you and I, the society which we have created through thought, conscious or unconscious, which we accept or revolt against, but it is still within the framework of a particular society. Thought through centuries has built up this society, with its gods, its teachers, its religions, its nationalities, all the terrible mess that we live in. Thought cannot free itself from what it has built. If it does, or if it thinks it does, it will still be a reaction, a modified continuity of what has been. Thought to us is tremendously important - thought being the word, thought being the idea, thought being the past, the present, and the future, thought creating the idiotic ideologies which we so easily accept. Whether the ideologies are noble or ignoble is irrelevant. Man lives by thought, as some animals do, and we see the confusion, the misery we are in and exercise thought to bring about a change, through determination, through time, through the assertion of will, saying, "I am this, and I must be that." What the future will be has been created by thought, the ideology, the ideal, the example. Though we want to change - and every intelligent human being does want to bring about a change in the world and in himself - we use the instrument of thought to bring about a modification, and we think thought will resolve all these problems, don't we? Aren't you listening with your thought functioning? Of course, obviously! And we don't see clearly that thought cannot possibly create a new world, bring about a total revolution in human consciousness. What are we to do? Thought has created this confusion, and thought, we hope, will bring about clarity. We are quite sure that thought will bring it - clever, cunning, ideological thought, thought that is selfish or thought that is unselfish, thought that is not functioning egocentrically, thought that has dedicated itself to social reform, to revolution, to new sets of ideas, to Utopias.

If we catch the significance of it, if we realize even verbally or intellectually that thought cannot bring about a radical change, and that radical revolution in the human consciousness is essential, we see that it is idiotic to go on the way we are going, struggling day after day with ourselves, in misery, in confusion, waiting for death and sorrow. We have looked to thought to resolve this, and thought has not resolved it. If we

understand this even verbally, then what are we to do?

If we ask that question we are asking it to be told what to do - please listen carefully - and therefore responding through thought to find out. Isn't that true? We have stated the problem clearly and are waiting to find an answer. What is waiting? Who is the entity that is waiting to find an answer? It is still thought! Then thought wants to find out whether what you say is true or false, agreeing or disagreeing, going back to its conditioning, then saying, "How am I to live in this world if I don't think?" We are not saying we must not think. That would be too immature a statement.

You know the problem. Then when you ask, "What am I to do next?" you have to find out who is asking the question. Please, this is very serious; it's not just an afternoon amusement. If you're not serious, then it's of no value, but if you are at all serious and want to go into this tremendously earnestly, you have to find out who is asking this question. Is it still the function of thought? Then we can go into the question of the origin of thinking.

We are not saying that thought must stop; thought has a definite function. Without thought we couldn't go to the office, we wouldn't know where we live, we wouldn't be able to function at all. But if we would bring about a radical revolution in the whole of consciousness, in the very structure of thinking, we must realize that thought, having built this society, with all its mess, cannot possibly resolve it. The communists have broken through revolution, through thought. They have rejected one ideology and accepted another, but they are coming back to the same issue.

Thought is essentially bourgeois. Thought, whether it thinks of the future or of the present, functions always from the past, from its memories, from its conditioning, from its knowledge. Thought is the very essence of security, and that is what the most bourgeois mind wants - security, security at every level! To bring about a total change of the human consciousness, thought must function at one level and must not function at another level. Thought must function naturally, normally at one level, the everyday level - physically, technologically - with knowledge, but must not overflow into another field where thought has no reality at all. If I had no thought I wouldn't be able to speak. But a radical change within myself as a human being cannot be brought about through an idea, through thought, because thought can only function in relation to conflict. Thought can only breed conflict.

Having stated all that, if you are at all serious, and I hope some of you are, you must ask yourself what the origin, the beginning of all thinking is. You must be quite sure of that, not agreeing with the speaker. That's why it matters tremendously how you listen, not to the speaker only, but to your own state of mind - which is also listening. I do not know if you have ever asked this question of yourself, and if you do ask the question seriously, at what level are you asking it? Are you asking the question at the verbal, intellectual level and waiting for someone to tell you what the origin of thinking is? If you are, the answer will always be superficial. Or are you asking the question without expecting an answer? You know, it's like seeing something very clearly. When you see something very clearly, there's no answer; there it is.

It matters greatly how you ask the question. It's like a man asking if there is God. If you are really serious, you are neither a believer nor a nonbeliever. If you believe that there is God, then you will discover what you believe. And if you do not believe, you cease to investigate. To investigate, you must put the question with all your energy, with your mind, with your heart, with your nerves, with your whole capacity, with your complete attention and not expect an answer, because the answer - if you do answer it - will be in terms of thought. I do not know if you see the complexity of the problem itself. You've asked the question, and a mind that has asked this question is not waiting for an answer, not expecting an answer, for who is going to answer it? The speaker may be able to explain it, to point it out - and we are going to go into it presently - but it is you who have asked the question, and therefore your mind is tremendously active, not in terms of receiving an answer, not in terms of trying to find out. When you have asked the question, then

you're completely aware and sensitive.

In that state of attention, awareness, sensitivity, whatever is said, true or false, that state of awareness will know, but it is not intuition. Don't let's fool ourselves with words. It's not your higher self and all that nonsense. It's the mind that has asked the question and therefore has become tremendously sensitive. In that field whatever is false comes to an end; whatever is true flourishes. You can find that out for yourself; it's very simple. It's important how you ask this question, really tremendously important, because it depends upon the state of mind that has put this question whether such a mind can find the truth or the falseness of what is going to be said. It is not according to your temperament, your conditioning, or your particular idiosyncrasies.

What is the origin of thinking? This is a most complex question, and it requires a very subtle, unafraid mind to determine it. The moment one actually discovers the origin of thinking, thought has its place; then thought will not overflow into the other field, into the other dimension where thought has no place at all. Only in that dimension can a radical change take place. Only in that dimension is a new thing born which is not the product of thought.

Let's go into it. Please listen and not take notes. Don't bother about notes because you are investigating into yourself; you are observing yourself. When you are observing yourself you have no time to take notes; you're there, attentive.

One can see very simply that all thinking is a reaction to the past - the past being memory, knowledge, experience. All thinking is the result of the past. The past - which is time, yesterday and that yesterday stretching out indefinitely into the past - is what is considered time: time as the past, time as the present, time as the future. Time has been divided into these three parts, and time is like a river, flowing. We have divided it into these fragments, and in these fragments thought is caught.

Please, you are not agreeing with me; you're watching it; you're watching it in yourself. I'm not giving a new idea, a new ideology for you to accept and practice or to which you can say, "No, this is right; this is wrong." We're just seeing what is. Thought has its origin in pleasure. We're not condemning or extolling pleasure; we're just watching it. We're not trying to become puritanical, saying that you must not have pleasure, which would be absurd. We'll go into that. Love is not pleasure. If it is, then it becomes thought, a picture, an image. I've had pleasure, sexually; or visually, of the sunset, of a beautiful face, of a building, of a picture. I've listened to music; that memory is there and thought thinks about it. Thinking about it, it derives greater pleasure, creating the image, the picture, sensuous or idealistic. What we think of is always pleasurable, not painful. We want to avoid pain, put it aside. Anything that is painful we put away, but it is there! Anything which gives to the nerves, to the brain, to our physical and psychological entity a feeling of pleasure, such as sex, we think about. The more we think, the more pleasure we derive from it.

Thought - please listen carefully - thought thinks about something. Thought divides itself into the observer, the feeler, the experiencer, and the thing to be experienced. Thought, having divided itself into the observer and the thing observed, obviously brings about a conflict. Then thought says, "I must get over the conflict," and invents disciplines, resistances, various forms of cunning escapes. We see that the origin of thinking is pleasure. All our activities, all our values, moral, ethical, and religious are based on pleasure. As long as there is this dual existence which thought has created, as the observer who is going to derive pleasure from the observed, as long as thought is functioning that way, there will always be conflict, and therefore no radical revolution at all.

Is this fairly clear? No, not my explanation! Someone can probably give you a better explanation; we're not concerned with explanations. We're concerned with seeing what is, the fact. I've had a beautiful experience of a sunset yesterday in the country, the trees against the sun, the loveliness of shadow, the depth, the beauty, from which I have derived tremendous pleasure. Thought thinks about it; I must go back there

tomorrow, or keep the memory. I keep it because my life is so shoddy, so dull, so boring, so routine that I'm caught in that beauty which I saw yesterday. I've listened to a sound, to music, to a poem; I've looked at a painting. I think about it. I'm caught in it, and I want more of it. I see a beautiful face. I want to live with it. Again thought is functioning with pleasure. There is the observer, the thinker, and there is the thought, which is pleasure. The thinker has been built on the basis of pleasure: "I want this and I don't want that." "This is good," which means essentially that there is pleasure! As long as this division between the observer and the observed exists, there can be no radical mutation of consciousness.

Is it possible to observe without the thinker? I look at everything with an image, with a symbol, with memory, with knowledge. I look at my friend, at my wife, at my neighbor, at the boss, with the image which thought has built. I look at my wife with the image I have about her, and she looks at me with the image she has about me. The relationship is between these two images. This is a fact. It's not an invention on my part; it's a fact! Thought has built these symbols, images, ideas. Can I look, at first, at a tree, at a flower, at the sky, at the cloud, without an image? The image of the tree is the word I have learned which gives a certain name to the tree, tells its species and recalls its beauty. Can I look at the tree, at that cloud, at that flower, without thought, without the image? That's fairly easy to do, if you have done it. But can I look, without the image, at a human being with whom I am intimate, whom I consider as wife, husband, child? If I can't, there is no real relationship. The only relationship is between the images that we both have. So, can I look at life - the clouds, the stars, the trees, the river, the bird on the wing, my wife, my child, my neighbor, this whole earth - can I look at it all without the image? Though you have insulted me, though you have hurt me, though you have said nasty things about me or praised me, can I look at you without the image or the memory of what you have done and said to me?

Do see the importance of this, because it's only a mind that has retained the memories of hurt, of insult, that is ready to forgive, if it is at all inclined that way. A mind that is not storing up its insults, the flatteries that it receives, has nothing to forgive or not forgive; therefore, there is no conflict. Thought has created these images, both inwardly and outwardly. Can the images come to an end, and thought look at everything in life afresh? If you can do this, you will find that without your conscious, deliberate effort to change, change has taken place, a radical change! Most people are ambitious; they want to be somebody: authors, painters, businessmen, or politicians. Priests want to become archbishops. Thought has created this society and sees the advantage of becoming powerful, dominant, an important person, which happens only through ambition. Thought has created the image through observation of the man in power and wants the pleasure of owning a big house, having a picture appear in the papers, and all the rest of it.

Can one live in this world without ambition, without the image of pleasure, which thought has created? Can one function technologically, outwardly, without this poison of ambition? It can be done, but it is possible only when we understand the origin of thinking and understand actually, factually, the unreality of the division between the observer and the observed. Then we can proceed because then virtue has a totally different meaning. It is not the moral virtue of an ugly, corrupt society, but virtue which is order. Virtue, like humility, is not something to be cultivated by thought. Thought is not virtuous; it is bourgeois, petty, and thought cannot possibly understand either love or virtue or humility.

Comment: We had a reaction to your use of the word bourgeois. For us the word is the opposite of "anti-bourgeois." According to the communists it is the prototype of one who is in error, and we are in the right. That reaction was an example that we were not truly listening to the meaning but only to the words. It emphasizes the fact that we need to listen with all our being to what you say.

Krishnamurti: Let us talk it over together.

Comment: I cannot come to the realization that thought cannot resolve my confusion unless there is a radical change.

Krishnamurti: It's very easy to say, "Well, one sees that thought doesn't solve the problem." That's very easy, but actually, does it? That's why it is very important to understand what we mean by "understanding," what we mean by "seeing something very clearly." Because if you see something very clearly, it's finished! But one has to be tremendously careful that one is not deceiving oneself. You're not deceiving yourself when you're in front of a precipice. There you understand the immense danger and you act; there is action. Without action there is no understanding. If you understand or you see very clearly, the very clarity is action. You do not see and then act. If you see and then act, what has actually taken place is that you see the idea, you understand the idea, and then you act according to that idea. Comment: Yes, but if I am aware that I cannot act by thought, or I see my reaction to something, and I am aware that even in seeing that, I believe. . . .

Krishnamurti: Is there belief, madame? It is not a belief.

Comment: No, but even if I feel that I react in such a fashion, I am aware that I cannot react in any other way, and that changes nothing.

KRISHNAMURTI: Exactly, right!

Comment: Even in believing that, even in feeling that, I feel myself incapable. I feel that perhaps I do not see clearly enough. Yet that does not seem immediately to make a change.

Krishnamurti: Look, nationalism is a poison. You may not agree, but it is so for me! I see what nationalism has done throughout the world. It has divided people and brought on wars. One of the reasons for war is nationalism, and it is a poison. People know it. When you divide the world into French, Russian, American, Hindu, and so on, that division breeds conflict and it's poison. You see it, you understand it; but in your hearts, due to your conditioning, you are still French, English, or whatever it is. The moment you see, understand, that nationalism is poison, at that moment the whole thing drops.

Comment: It drops but it continues afterwards.

Krishnamurti: Do we do that with regard to a precipice? We are conscious of the precipice, and we never go near it. It's only when we are not clear about patriotism, nationalism, and all the rest that we play with it. When we see something poisonous like a snake, or a dangerous animal, like a bus coming at full speed, we don't step in the way; we move away from it. But we don't see, and we don't see because we are afraid that we may have to change. What prevents us is this fear, conscious or unconscious, of losing the things we have decided have real value and security. As long as that fear exists we may talk about seeing, understanding, how to act, and all the rest of it, but there is no possibility of immediate action, which is really instant mutation because you see the truth of it.

Question: How can we see instantly?

Krishnamurti: How do you see the danger of the precipice?

Comment: It is not my thought.

Krishnamurti: No, madame. What has told you? Listen; this is very important. Go into it, please. What has told you that the precipice, a snake, the bus running at full speed, is dangerous? Have your newspapers told you? Have your political leaders told you? Your priests? Who has told you?

Comment: Instinct.

Krishnamurti: What is instinct?

Comment: Reality.

Krishnamurti: Madame, don't translate "instinct" as reality. Instinct is what has been nurtured carefully through centuries by thought. You have seen a friend killed by a bus and you say, "By Jove, how dangerous it is!" You've seen it. You have actually experienced the fact of a precipice, how dangerous it is. When you meet a tiger, not in Paris, but in India, you know the tremendous danger of an animal like that. Why don't you know nationalism equally? I'm taking that as an example, for it is also poisonous. Why is it poisonous? Because it has brought war after war. One of the reasons for war is nationalism. War is deadly! People have been killed, your neighbors, your friends, your people, your own kin, and yet you go on with it. Why?

Comment: We have been told that it is necessary.

Krishnamurti: You have been told. That means you are being influenced by propaganda. You accept because belonging to a nation gives you a great pleasure.

Comment: Not necessarily.

Krishnamurti: Of course, not necessarily. Everything is not necessarily.

Question: Your statement about nationalism has meaning only in the countries that are not threatened by enemies. How would a country like India that has so much danger from China and communist. . . .

Krishnamurti: There is the reply! An Indian is talking about India. Yes, sir. Frenchmen and Germans have talked about their countries. This has been talked about for ten thousand years, each country defending itself against the other. Historically it will go on because that's how we are brought up, conditioned. People accept it; they love the flags and all the rest of it; they are willing to kill and be killed. But we are talking not about India or France or Russia but about people, human beings who are serious, who are confronted with these problems.

Question: When one looks without thought, as you have explained, without preconceived ideas, but with a fresh mind, suppose that one is like that in one's contacts with human beings. . . .

Krishnamurti: There is no "suppose," madame. It does not exist.

Question: You may have come to this state of mind, this state of being, of consciousness, freshness, and awareness, but what about the other person?

Krishnamurti: The lady says, "One may be free; one can observe without the image, but what about the other person who still keeps his image and is looking at me, being related to me through the image? I've dropped my image, about India, about America, dropped all my images, and someone else hasn't; my wife hasn't. What's my relationship with her?"

What's my relationship? Actually it is what the gentleman pointed out. India is attacked; we must defend. My wife says, "You don't love me anymore." No, don't laugh, sirs. Please do listen to all this. So what am I to do? Should I bring back my image because I want to conform to society, because I might lose my job, because I mightn't be popular?

Question: Does attention arise from thought or from energy?

Krishnamurti: Thought and energy are the same. Energy is the same, only it is used in the wrong direction, and when it is used wrongly, all the mischief is brought into being. Is it possible to have, not various energies, but total energy that is not the result of resistance, conflict, and all the rest of it?