

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Sixth Public Talk in Bombay

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This is going to be rather difficult, and I hope those who understand English will have the patience to listen to Marathi.

It must be fairly obvious to most of us that a different kind of thinking and action must be brought about in the world, and that requires very careful observation of ourselves, not mere analysis, but deep penetration into the activities of each one of us. The problems of our daily existence are numerous, and we have not the means or the capacity to deal with them; and as our lives are so drab, dull, and stupid, we try to escape from them, either intellectually or mystically. Intellectually we become cynical, clever, and very learned, or mystically we try to develop some powers or follow some guru, hoping to make our hearts more lovely and give our life more zest. Or, seeing the drabness of our life and the implication of our problems, and seeing that the problems are always on the increase, always multiplying, we think that to bring about a fundamental change, we cannot act as individuals, but must act in a mass, collectively. I think it is a great mistake to say that our problems are to be solved through collective or mass action. We believe that individual action is of very little importance and has no place when the problems are so vast, so complex, so demanding; therefore, we turn to collective or mass action. We think that if you and I acted individually, it would have very little result, so we join mass movements and take part in collective action. But if we examine collective action very closely, we will see that it is really based on you and me. We seem to regard mass action as the only effective action because it can produce a result, but we forget that individual action is much more effective, because the mass is composed of many individuals, the mass is not an independent entity, it is not different or separate from you and me.

So, what is important is to understand that any creative, any definitely effective action can be brought about only by individuals, that is, by you and me. Mass action is really an invention of the politician, is it not? It is a fictitious action in which there is no independent thought and action on the part of the individual. If you look at history, all great movements which resulted in collective action began with individuals like you and

me, individuals who are capable of thinking very clearly and seeing things as they are; those individuals, through their understanding, invite others, and then there is collective action. After all, the collective is composed of individuals, and it is only the response of the individual, of you and me, that can bring about a fundamental alteration in the world; but when the individual does not see his responsibility, he throws the responsibility onto the collective, and the collective is then used by the clever politician, or by the clever religious leader. Whereas, if you see that you and I are responsible for the alteration of the conditions in the world, then the individual becomes extraordinarily important and not merely an instrument, a tool, in the hands of another.

So, you, the individual, are part of society; you are not separate from society; what you are, society is. Though society may be an entity apart from you, you have created it, and therefore you alone can change it. But instead of realizing our responsibility as individuals in the collective, we as individuals become cynical, intellectual, or mystical; we avoid our responsibility towards definite action, which must be revolutionary in the fundamental sense; and as long as the individual, which is you and I, does not take responsibility for the complete transformation of society, society will remain as it is.

We seem to forget that the world problem is the individual problem, that the problems of the world are created by you and me as individuals. The problems of war, starvation, exploitation, and all the other innumerable problems that confront each one of us are created by you and me, and as long as we do not understand ourselves at every level, we will maintain the rottenness of the present society. So, before you can alter society, you have to understand what your whole structure is: the manner of your thinking, the manner of your action, the ways of your relationship with people, ideas, and things. Revolution in society must begin with revolution in your own thinking and acting. The understanding of yourself is of primary importance if you would bring about a radical transformation in society, and the understanding of yourself is self-knowledge. Now, we have made self-knowledge into something extraordinarily difficult and remote. Religions have made self-knowledge very mystical, abstract, and far away, but if you look at it more closely, you will see that self-knowledge is very simple and demands simple attention in relationship - and it is essential if there is to be a fundamental revolution in the structure of society. If you, the individual, do not understand the ways of your own thought and activities, merely to bring about a superficial revolution in the outer structure of society is to create further confusion and misery. If you do not know yourself, if you follow another without knowing the whole process of your own thinking and feeling, you will obviously be led to further confusion, to further disaster.

After all, life is relationship, and without relationship there is no possibility of life. There is no living in isolation, because living is a process of relationship, and relationship is not with abstractions; it is your relationship to property, to people, and to ideas. In relationship you see yourself as you are, whatever you are, ugly or beautiful, subtle or gross; in the mirror of relationship you see precisely every new problem, the whole structure of yourself as you are. Because you think that you cannot alter your relationship fundamentally, you try to escape intellectually or mystically, and this escape only creates more problems, more confusion, and more disaster. But if, instead of escaping, you look at your life in relationship and understand the whole structure of that relationship, then there is a possibility of going beyond that which is very close. Surely, to go very far, you must begin very near, but to begin near is very difficult for most of us because we want to escape from what is, from the fact of what we are. Without understanding ourselves, we cannot go far, and we are in constant relationship; there is no existence at all without relationship. So, relationship is the immediate, and to go beyond the immediate, there must be the understanding of relationship. But we would much rather examine that which is very far away, that which we call God or truth, than bring about a fundamental revolution in our relationship, and this escape to God or to truth is utterly fictitious, unreal. Relationship is the only thing that we have, and without understanding that relationship, we can never find out what reality is or God is. So, to bring about a complete change in the social structure, in society, the individual must cleanse his relationship, and the cleansing of relationship is

the beginning of his own transformation.

I am going to answer some questions which have been handed to me. Now, in considering these questions, I shall not give any definite conclusion or final answer because what is important is to find out the truth of the problem, and the truth is not in the answer but in the problem itself. Most of us are accustomed to repeat what we have been told, to recite something that we have learned from a book, and so, in putting questions, we expect answers which will fit into our particular ways of thinking. We think we understand the problems of life by quoting some sacred book, which merely makes us into gramophone records, and if the song is not the same, we get lost. The so-called religious person and the so-called nonbeliever are both repeating machines. They are neither religious nor revolutionary; they merely repeat a formula, and repetition does not make one a religious or a revolutionary person. So, in considering these questions, let us travel together and go into the problem fully and extensively, not merely look at it from outside.

Question: Political freedom has not yet brought a new faith and joy. We find everywhere cynicism, communal and linguistic antagonism, and class hatred. What is your diagnosis and remedy for this tragic situation?

Krishnamurti: Sir, this is not a problem only in India but a problem all over the world. It is a world problem, not merely an Indian problem. Now, one of the factors of disintegration is when people divide themselves into communal, linguistic, or sectional groups. We seem to think that through nationalism we shall be able to solve our problems, but nationalism, however widely extended, is an exclusion; it is still separatism, and where there is separatism, there is disintegration. Though full of promise at the beginning, full of hope, joy, and expectation, nationalism becomes a poison as you can see in this country - and that is exactly what is happening in every country. How can there be unity when there is exclusion? Unity implies no separation into Hindu and Muslim. Unity is destroyed when it becomes exclusive, when it is limited to a particular group. Unity is not the opposite of exclusion; it is the inner integration of the whole being of the individual in himself, not mere identification with a particular group or society. Why are you a nationalist; why do you belong to a particular class? Why this emphasis on a name? Let us examine this process of identification with a country, with a people, with a linguistic group, and so on. Why is it that you call yourself a Hindu? Why is it that you call yourself an Indian, a Gujarathi, or by some other name? Is it not because through identification with something greater, you feel yourself to be greater? In yourself you are nobody - you are dry, empty, hollow - and by identifying yourself with something greater called India, England, or some other country, you think you become important. So, your calling yourself a nationalist, your identifying yourself with a particular country, obviously indicates that in yourself you are empty, dull, dry, ugly; and in identifying yourself with something greater, you are merely escaping from what you are. Now, such identification must lead to disintegration because you as an individual are the basis of all society, and if you are dishonest in your own thinking, the society you produce or project outside of yourself will be founded on dishonesty, without any fundamental reality. And the clever politicians or religious leaders use nationalism as a means of producing a result which is merely artificial, because it is without the understanding of the whole structure of human thought and feeling. We seem to think that by gaining independence we have achieved freedom. Freedom is not achieved; it does not come through mere political independence. Freedom comes when there is happiness. By merely exchanging a white bureaucracy for a brown bureaucracy, you are not free, are you? You are still the exploiter and the exploited; you are still saddled with the clever politicians and the innumerable leaders who are trying to lead you to God knows what. Nationalism is like a poison that is working subtly - and before you know what is happening, you are in the middle of a war. Sovereign governments with their nationalism and armed forces must lead to war, and to avoid war is not to become a mere pacifist or to join an antiwar movement but to understand the whole structure of ourselves as human entities, as individuals in relationship with each other, which is society.

So, to understand yourself is much more important than to call yourself by a name. A name is readily

exploited, but if you understand yourself, no one can exploit you. Nationalism always produces war, and the problem is not to be solved by bringing about further nationalism, which is only an avoidance of the fact and an extension of the same poison, but by being free of nationalism, of the sense of belonging to a particular group, to a particular class or society.

Question: Can the starving and ignorant people of this land understand your message? How can it have any meaning or significance for them ?

Krishnamurti: The problem of starvation and unemployment is not only in this country, though it is much more aggravated here, but it exists all over the world. It has definite causes, and until we understand those causes, merely to scratch on the surface will have no result. Nationalism is one of the causes, separate sovereign governments is another. There is enough scientific knowledge to bring about conditions so that people all over the world can have food, clothing, and shelter. Why is it not done? Is it not because we are quarreling over systems? Realizing that there is starvation and unemployment in the world, we turn to systems and formulas which promise a better future, and have you ever noticed that those who have a system for the solution of unemployment and starvation are always fighting another system? So, systems become much more important than the solution of the problem of starvation itself. The fact of starvation can never be solved by an idea because ideas will only produce more conflict, more opposition, but facts can never produce opposition. There is starvation and unemployment in this country and throughout the world, and seeing the problem, we approach it with an idea about the problem. So idea, theory, system, becomes much more important than the fact. That is, we turn from the fact to a theory, an idea, a belief about the fact, and around the belief, groups are being formed, and these groups battle and liquidate each other, and the fact remains. (Laughter) What is important is the understanding of the fact, not an idea about the fact, and that understanding does not depend on idea. Idea is merely a fabrication of the mind, but understanding is not a result of the mind. We have enough intelligence and capacity and knowledge to solve the fact of starvation and unemployment, but what prevents us from solving it is our idea about the solution. The fact is there, and we have created several approaches to the fact: there is the approach of the yogi, of the commissar, of the capitalist, of the socialist, and so on. Now, can the fact be grasped through a particular approach? A particular approach must obviously prevent the understanding of the fact. So, the fact of starvation and unemployment can be solved only when idea, belief, does not interfere with the understanding of the fact. That means, does it not, that you, who are part of society, must be free of nationalism, free of belief in a particular religion, free of identification with a particular idea or group. So, the solution of this problem is not in the hands of the commissar or the yogi but in your hands, because it is what you are that prevents the solution of all these problems. If you are a nationalist, if you belong to a particular class or caste, if you have narrow religious traditions, obviously you are hindering the welfare of man.

Question: Are you not against institutional marriage?

Krishnamurti: Please listen carefully and hear intelligently; do not merely oppose or resist. It is so easy to be against something; it is so stupid to resist without understanding. Now, the family is exclusive, is it not? The family is a process of identification with the particular, and when society is based on this idea of family as an exclusive unit in opposition to other exclusive units, such a society must inevitably produce violence. We use family as a means of security for ourselves, for the individual, and where there is search for individual security, for individual happiness, there must be exclusion. This exclusion is called "love," and in that so-called family or married state, is there really love? Now, let us examine what the family actually is and not cling to a theory about it. We are not considering the ideal of what it should be, but let us examine exactly what the family is as you know it. You mean by family your wife and children, do you not? It is a unit in opposition to other units, and in that unit it is you who are important - not your wife, not your children or society, but you who are seeking security, name, position, power, both in the family and outside the family. You dominate your wife; she is subservient to you; you are the maker and the dispenser of

money, and she is your cook and the bearer of your children. (Laughter) So, you create the family which is an exclusive unit in opposition to other units; you multiply by millions and produce a society in which the family is an exclusive, self-isolating, separative entity, antagonistic and opposed to another. All revolutions try to do away with the family, but invariably they fail because the individual is constantly seeking his own security through isolation, exclusion, ambition, and domination. So, the family, which you have created as a separative unit, becomes a danger to the collective, which is also the result of the individual; therefore, there can be no reform in the collective as long as you, the individual, are exclusive and self-isolating in every action, narrowing down your interest to yourself.

Now, this process of exclusion is surely not love. Love is not a creation of the mind. Love is not personal, impersonal, or universal - those words are merely of the mind. Love is something that cannot be understood as long as thought, which is exclusive, remains. Thought, which is the reaction of the mind, can never understand what love is; thought is invariably exclusive, separative, and when thought tries to describe love, it must of necessity enclose it in words, which are also exclusive. The family as we know it is the invention of the mind, and therefore it is exclusive; it is a process of the enlargement of the self, of the 'me', which is the result of thought; and in the family, to which we cling so constantly, so desperately, surely there is no love, is there? We use that word love; we think we love, but actually we do not, do we? We say that we love truth, that we love the wife, the husband, the children; but that word is surrounded by the smoke of jealousy, envy, oppression, domination, and constant battle. So, family becomes a nightmare; it becomes a battlefield between the two sexes, and therefore family invariably becomes opposed to society. The solution lies not in legislation to destroy the family but in your own understanding of the problem, and the problem is understood and therefore comes to an end only when there is real love. When the things of the mind do not fill the heart, when individual ambition, personal success and achievement do not predominate, when they have no place in your heart, then you will know love.

Question: Why are you trying to shake our belief in God and religion? Is not some faith necessary for spiritual endeavor, both individual and collective?

Krishnamurti: Why do we need faith, why do we need belief? If you observe, is not belief one of the factors that separate man from man? You believe in God, and another does not believe in God, so your beliefs separate you from each other. Belief throughout the world is organized as Hinduism, Buddhism, or Christianity, and so it divides man from man. We are confused, and we think that through belief we shall clear the confusion; that is, belief is superimposed on the confusion, and we hope that confusion will thereby be cleared away. But belief is merely an escape from the fact of confusion; it does not help us to face and to understand the fact but to run away from the confusion in which we are. To understand the confusion, belief is not necessary, and belief only acts as a screen between ourselves and our problems. So, religion, which is organized belief, becomes a means of escape from what is, from the fact of confusion. The man who believes in God, the man who believes in the hereafter, or who has any other form of belief, is escaping from the fact of what he is. Do you not know those who believe in God, who do puja, who repeat certain chants and words, and who in their daily life are dominating, cruel, ambitious, cheating, dishonest? Shall they find God? Are they really seeking God? Is God to be found through repetition of words, through belief? But such people believe in God, they worship God, they go to the temple every day, they do everything to avoid the fact of what they are - and such people you consider respectable because they are yourself.

So, your religion, your belief in God, is an escape from actuality, and therefore it is no religion at all. The rich man who accumulates money through cruelty, through dishonesty, through cunning exploitation, believes in God; and you also believe in God, you also are cunning, cruel, suspicious, envious. Is God to be found through dishonesty, through deceit, through cunning tricks of the mind? Because you collect all the sacred books and the various symbols of God, does that indicate that you are a religious person? So, religion is not escape from the fact; religion is the understanding of the fact of what you are in your everyday

relationships; religion is the manner of your speech, the way you talk, the way you address your servants, the way you treat your wife, your children, and neighbors. As long as you do not understand your relationship with your neighbor, with society, with your wife and children, there must be confusion; and whatever it does, the mind that is confused will only create more confusion, more problems and conflict. A mind that escapes from the actual, from the facts of relationship, shall never find God; a mind that is agitated by belief shall not know truth. But the mind that understands its relationship with property, with people, with ideas, the mind which no longer struggles with the problems which relationship creates, and for which the solution is not withdrawal but the understanding of love - such a mind alone can understand reality. Truth cannot be known by a mind that is confused in relationship, or that escapes from relationship into isolation, but by the mind that understands itself in action, and only such a mind shall know the truth. A quiet mind, a silent mind, cannot come into being through any form of compulsion, through any form of discipline, because the mind is quiet only when it understands its relationship to property, to people, and to ideas, and, do what it will, the mind is not quiet when it is disturbed by the fact of its relationship to these. The mind that is made quiet without understanding its relationships is a dead mind, but the mind that has no belief, that is quiet because it understands relationship - such a mind is silent, creative, and it shall know reality.