

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Sixth Public Talk in The Oak Grove

From the series:

Ten Public Meetings in Ojai, California - 1945

Sunday, July 1, 1945

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This morning I shall answer as many questions as possible.

Questioner: If we had not destroyed the evil that was in Central Europe, it would have conquered us. Do you mean to say that we should not have defended ourselves? Aggression must be met. How would you meet it?

Krishnamurti: This wave of aggression, of blood, of organized criminality, seems to arise periodically in one group and pass over to another. This is recurrent in history. No country is free from this aggression. We are all, each in his way, responsible for this wave of mass aggression and destruction.

Is it possible to live without aggression and so without defense? Is all effort a series of attacks and defenses? Can life be lived without this destructive effort? Each one should be aware of his responses to this problem. Does not all effort to become necessitate the self-assertiveness and self-expansion of the individual and so of the group or nation, and lead to conflict, antagonism, and war?

Is it possible to solve this problem of aggression along the lines of defense? Defense implies self-protection, opposition, and conflict, and is antagonism to be dissolved by opposition? Is it possible to live in this world and yet be free from this constant battle between yours and mine, with its ruthless attack and defense? Because we desire to protect our name, our property, our nationality, our religion, our ideals, we cultivate the spirit of attack and defense. We are possessive, acquisitive, and so we have created a social structure which necessitates progressively ruthless exploitation and aggression. This acquisitive becoming breeds its own opposition, and so defense and attack become part of our daily existence. No solution can be found as long as we are thinking-feeling in terms of defense and attack, which only maintain confusion and strife.

Is it possible to think-feel without defense and attack? It is possible only when there is love, when each one abandons greed, ill will, and ignorance, which express themselves through nationalism, craving for power,

and other forms of criminality and cruelty. If one wishes to solve this problem permanently, surely thought-feeling must free itself from all acquisitiveness and fear. This attitude of attack and defense is cultivated in our daily life and ends ultimately in war and other catastrophes. The difficulty lies in our own contradictory nature; we want peace and yet we cultivate those causes that bring about war and destruction. We want happiness and freedom and yet we indulge in lust, ill will, and thoughtlessness; we pray for understanding and yet deny it in our daily life; we want to enjoy both opposites and so we are confused and lost.

If you want to put an end to this wave of ruthlessness, of appalling destruction and misery, if you wish to save your son, your husband, your neighbor, you must pay the price. This misery is not the creation of one group or race but of each one of us; each one must thoughtfully abandon the causes that produce these calamities and untold misery. You must completely set aside your nationalism, your greed and ill will, your craving for power and wealth, and your adherence to organized religious prejudices which, while asserting the unity of man, set man against man. Only then will there be peace and joy.

Why is it that we seem to be incapable of living creatively and happily without destroying each other? Is it not because we so condition ourselves through our own passion, ill will, and stupidity that we are incapable of living joyously and serenely? We must break through our own conditioning and be as nothing. We are afraid of being nothing, so we escape and thus feed our fear with greed, hate, ambition.

The problem is not how to defend but how to transcend the desire for self-expansion, the craving to become. Only those individuals who abandon their passions, their craving for fame and personal immortality, can help to bring about creative peace and joy.

Questioner: In one's growth is there not a continuous and recurring process of the death of one's cherished hopes and desires, of cruel disillusionment in regard to the past, of transmutation of those negative phenomena into a more positive and vitalizing life - until the same stage is reached again on a higher spiral? Are not conflict and pain therefore indispensable to all growth and at all stages?

Krishnamurti: Are conflict and pain necessary for creative being? Is sorrow necessary for understanding? Is not conflict inevitable in becoming, in self-expanding? Is not the creative state of being the freedom from conflict, from accumulated existence? Does accumulation at any stage on the spiral of becoming bring about the creative being? There is becoming and growth along the horizontal path of existence, but does it lead to the timeless? It is to be experienced only when the horizontal is abandoned. Is the experience of being related to the conflict of the horizontal, the conflict of becoming? Through time the timeless cannot be realized.

What happens when we are in conflict? In the struggle to overcome conflict, we become disillusioned, we enter into darkness or, being in conflict, we try to find escapes in various forms. If thought-feeling is caught neither in disillusionment nor in comforting refuge, then conflict will find the means of its own ending. Conflict produces disillusionment or the desire to escape, for we are unwilling to think out, feel out all the implications involved in it; we are lazy, too conditioned to change, accepting authority and the easy way of life. To understand conflict and to be able to examine it with freedom, there must be a certain disinterested tranquillity. But when we are in conflict or in sorrow, our instinctive response is to escape from it, to run away from its cause, not to face its hidden significance; so we seek various channels of escape - activity, amusement, gods, war. So distractions multiply; they become more important than the cause of sorrow itself; we then become intolerant of the means of escape of others and try to modify or reform them, but conflict and sorrow continue.

Now, is conflict necessary for understanding? Is understanding the result of growth? Do we not mean by growth the constant becoming of the self, accumulating and renouncing, being greedy and becoming nongreedy, the endless process of becoming? The very nature of the self is to create contradiction. Is conflict

between the opposites growth, bringing with it understanding? Does the struggle in the endless corridor of the opposites lead anywhere except to further conflict and sorrow?

There is no end to conflict and sorrow in becoming. This becoming leads to the conflict of contradiction in which most of us are caught; being caught in it, we think struggle and pain are inevitable, a necessary and evolutionary process. So time becomes an indispensable factor for growth, for further becoming. In this spiral of becoming there is no end to strife and pain. So our problem is how to put an end to them. Thought-feeling must go beyond and above the pattern of duality; that is, when there is conflict and pain, live with it unconditionally without escaping; to escape is to compare, to justify, to condemn; to be aware of sorrow is not to seek a refuge, an alleviation, but to be aware of the ways of thought-feeling. So when there is understanding of the futility of refuge, of escape, then that very sorrow creates the necessary flame that will consume it. Tranquillity of understanding is needed to transcend sorrow, not the conflict and pain of becoming. When the self is not occupied with its own becoming, there is an unpremeditated clarity, a deep ecstasy. This intensity of joy is the outcome of the abandonment of the self.

Questioner: I have struggled for many, many years with a personal problem. I am still struggling. What am I to do?

Krishnamurti: What is the process of understanding a problem? To understand, mind-heart must unburden itself of its accumulation so that it is capable of right perception. If you would understand a modern painting you must, if you can, put aside your classical training, your prejudices, your trained responses. Similarly, if we want to understand a complex psychological problem, we must be capable of examining it without any condemnatory or favorable bias; we must be capable of approaching it with dispassion and freshness.

The questioner says that he has been struggling for many years with his problem. In his struggle he has accumulated what he would call experience, knowledge, and with this increasing burden he tries to solve the problem; thus he has never come face to face with it openly, anew, but has always approached it with the accumulation of many years. It is the accumulated memory that confronts the problem, and so there is no understanding of it. The dead past darkens the ever-living present.

Most of us are driven by some passion and are unaware of it, but if we are, we generally justify or condone it. But if it is a passion which we desire to transcend, we generally struggle with it, try to conquer or suppress it. In trying to overcome it we have not understood it, in trying to suppress it we have not transcended it. The passion still remains or it has taken another form, which is still the cause of conflict and sorrow. This constant and continuous struggle does not bring understanding, but only strengthens conflict, burdening the mind-heart with accumulated memory. But if we can delve deeply into it and die to it, or come anew to it without the burden of yesterday, then we can comprehend it. Because our mind-heart is alert and keen, deeply aware and still, the problem is transcended.

If we can approach our problem without judging, without identifying, then the causes that lie behind it are revealed. If we would understand a problem we must set aside our desires, our accumulated experiences, our patterns of thought. The difficulty is not in the problem itself but in our approach to it. The scars of yesterday prevent the right approach. Conditioning translates the problem according to its own pattern, which in no way liberates thought-feeling from the struggle and pain of the problem. To translate the problem is not to understand it; to understand it and so transcend it, interpretation must cease. What is fully, completely understood leaves no trace as memory.

Questioner: I am intensely lonely. I seem to be in constant conflict in my relationships on account of this loneliness. It is a disease and must be healed. Can you help me, please, to heal it?

Krishnamurti: The present chaos, misery, is a product of this aching loneliness, void, for thought itself has become empty, without significance. Wars and increasing confusion are the outcome of our empty lives and

activities.

Whether we are conscious of it or not, most of us are lonely; the more we are aware of it, the more intense, burning, and painful it becomes. The immature are easily satisfied in their emptiness, but the more one is aware, the greater is this problem. There is no escape from aching loneliness, nor is it to be overcome by thoughtlessness, by ignorance; ignorance, like superstition, yields a certain gratification, but this only furthers conflict and sorrow. Most of us are intensely lonely, and the anguish is penetrating and dulls the mind-heart. Its engulfing sorrow seems to spread endlessly, and we seek constantly to escape from it, to cover it up, to fill this aching void consciously or unconsciously with hope and faith, with amusement and distraction. We try to cover up its anguish through activity, through the pleasure of knowledge, of belief, and of every form of addiction, religious and worldly. Our search for a refuge, for a comfort from this pain is endless; things, relationships, and knowledge are means of escape from the persistent anguish of loneliness. The movement from one escape to another is considered advancement; we condemn the man who fills this void with drink and amusement, but the man who seeks a permanent escape, calling it noble, we consider worthy, spiritual.

Is there any enduring escape from this emptiness? We try various ways to fill the void, but again and again we become aware of it. Do not all remedies, however noble and gratifying, merely avoid the problem? You may find temporary relief but anguish soon returns.

To find the right and lasting answer to loneliness, we must first cease to run away from it, and this is very difficult, for thought is ever seeking a refuge, an escape. It is only when the mind-heart can accept this void unconditionally, yielding to it without any motive, without any hope or fear, that there can be its transformation.

If you would truly understand the problem of loneliness and its greatness, the values of the world must be set aside, for they are distractions from the real. These distractions and their values are the outcome of your desire to escape from your own emptiness and so they, too, are empty. Only when the mind-heart is stripped of all its pretensions and formulations can this aching emptiness be transcended.

Questioner: I have had what might be called a spiritual experience, a guidance, or a certain realization. How am I to deal with it?

Krishnamurti: Most of us have had deep experiences, call them by what name you will; we have had experiences of great ecstasy, of great vision, of great love. The experience fills our being with its light, with its breath; but it is not abiding, it passes away, leaving its perfume.

With most of us the mind-heart is not capable of being open to that ecstasy. The experience was accidental, uninvited, too great for the mind-heart. The experience is greater than the experiencer, and so the experiencer sets about to reduce it to his own level, to his sphere of comprehension. His mind is not still; it is active, noisy, rearranging; it must deal with the experience; it must organize it; it must spread it; it must tell others of its beauty. So the mind reduces the inexpressible into a pattern of authority or a direction for conduct. It interprets and translates the experience and so enmeshes it in its own triviality. Because the mind-heart does not know how to sing, it pursues instead the singer.

The interpreter, the translator of the experience, must be as deep and wide as the experience itself if he would understand it; since he is not, he must cease to interpret it; to cease, he must be mature, wise in his understanding. You may have a significant experience, but how you understand it, how you interpret it depends on you, the interpreter; if your mind-heart is small, limited, then you translate the experience according to your own conditioning. It is this conditioning that must be understood and broken down before you can hope to grasp the full significance of the experience.

The maturity of mind-heart comes as it frees itself from its own limitations, and not through clinging to the

memory of a spiritual experience. If it clings to memory it abides with death, not with life. Deep experience may open the door to understanding, to self-knowledge and right thinking, but with many it becomes only a stirring stimulation, a memory, and soon loses its vital significance, preventing further experience.

We translate all experience in terms of our own conditioning - the deeper it is, the more alertly aware must we be not to misread it. Deep and spiritual experiences are rare, and if we have such experiences we reduce them to the petty level of our own mind and heart. If you are a Christian or a Hindu or a nonbeliever, you accordingly translate such experiences, reducing them to the level of your own conditioning. If your mind-heart is given over to nationalism and greed, to passion and ill will, then such experiences will be used to further the slaughter of your neighbor; then you seek guidance to bomb your brother; then to worship is to destroy or torture those who are not of your country, of your faith.

It is essential to be aware of your conditioning rather than to try to do something about the experience itself, but mind-heart clings to the experiences of yesterday and so becomes incapable of understanding the living present.