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Third Public Talk in Bombay

From the series:

Six Public Meetings in Bombay - 1966

Sunday, February 20, 1966

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As we were saying the last time that we met here, learning is an important factor in life. Learning can only take place as an action, when there is silence as well as attention - in that state the mind learns. But that word learning generally implies, doesn't it, acquiring knowledge based on experience or study, committing certain ideas or principles or concepts to memory, and acting from that memory, from that knowledge. That is generally implied in that word learning. But we do not mean that at all. We mean something entirely different: learning as we go along, learning in doing - not "having learned and then doing."

The learning which we are talking about needs attention. And when you attend seriously, there is a quality of silence in that. If you would attend to the noise that is going on about here - the noise of the crows, the buses, the people sitting around you - if you attend to the various colors, the expressions, and so on, when you attend, in that attention, if you will observe for yourself, you will see that there is a certain state of silence. And, in that silence and attention there is a process of learning. This implies naturally a certain serious, earnest mind.

Again, we have to explain what we mean by that word serious. Most of us think one to be very serious when one is following a certain principle, a belief, an idea, or a formula; committing oneself to a particular course of action and pursuing it; or having an ideal and trying to live according to that ideal or principle, or according to a purpose or an objective. When a person does all these things, we consider him a serious person, an earnest person. I do not think such people are earnest. Because earnestness implies application, not according to an idea or a formula, but application to learning, to apply one's whole attention to learning - learning not only a particular subject, a particular part of life, but the whole of life, which is a vast field. If one commits oneself to a particular part of that life and devotes one's attention to that particular part, such activity obviously is not a very serious action. Whereas learning about the whole of life - that is, the whole of consciousness - means a great deal of attention. A person who takes just one part of that great field, which we call consciousness, and applies his whole mind to that particular part - I do not consider such a

person at all serious. Whereas a person is serious, earnest, passionate, intense, when he tries to comprehend or learn about the whole process of consciousness, that is, the whole of life.

So what we are going to do this evening, if we may, is to learn about this particular thing called "consciousness," to learn about consciousness, obviously, you must come to it afresh. You may have read books, you may have ideas, opinions; but what you have read, your opinions, your knowledge according to somebody - all that is not what is, is not the fact. To understand a fact, opinions are not necessary; on the contrary, they are a hindrance. And to inquire into this consciousness, one must be free, not bound to any particular theory or knowledge.

So the first requirement of a serious human being who wants to learn is that he must be free to inquire - that means, not to be afraid; to be free to look, to observe, to criticize; to be intelligently skeptical, and not to accept opinions. We are going to inquire into something that demands all your attention, and you cannot attend if you have an opinion, an idea, a formula, or knowledge of what other people have said. As we said the other day, if you walk in the light of another, that light will lead you to darkness - it does not matter who it is that offers you light. But to walk in the light of one's own understanding - that can only come about when there is attention and silence, and that demands a great deal of seriousness. As we were saying the other day, great changes are taking place in the world, in the scientific field, and in the field of medicine. There is the computer, there is automation; these are going to give man a great deal of leisure. That leisure has probably not come yet, but it is coming. Man is going to have great freedom and leisure to do what he will. Science also is probing into the question of prolonging life indefinitely, and bringing about children through different methods, and so on. All this is taking place, and that is going to revolutionize the whole of society. The family, the relationship between husband and wife - all that is going to be revolutionized. A great change is going on in the world at the present time, economically, socially, scientifically, and medically.

What is going to happen to man - that is, to you and to me - in this tremendous revolution that is taking place? What is the purpose of man? Why does he exist at all? When machinery, technology, and medicine are going to give great leisure, to prolong life indefinitely, why does man exist, what for? Drudgery and work are going to be taken away from him. There is already talk of giving man a certain sum of money when he is born, and letting him be free. That is coming. Everything is possible now. What is man to do? This is a very serious question. What are we as human beings going to do in this world when the whole idea of soul, reincarnation, and the continued existence of a particular individual is all gone?

So we have to learn anew about a new way of living. To find that out, one has to inquire into this state of mind, into this consciousness, whether it is possible fundamentally - at the very basis, at the very root - to change the totality of this consciousness. We mean by consciousness, don't we, the thought, the feeling, and the action, conscious or unconscious. That is what we generally mean by consciousness - the whole process of thinking. The senses that create the feeling, the formulas, the concepts, the ideas, the opinion, the belief that there is or that there is not - all that is within the field of consciousness. And that consciousness is the result of time - time as duration, as years, as a process of evolution. From the thoughtless to the most profound thinking, from the superficial feeling to the great depths of feeling - all that implies a great stretch of time, not only time by the watch, but also time psychologically, that is, inwardly. Thought is consciousness, thought is time. And this thinking process has taken centuries of experience, knowledge, pain, suffering, and all the rest of it, so that we are able to think.

There is thinking consciously or thinking unconsciously. And the unconscious, as well as the conscious, is still within consciousness, and we divide it for convenience; in fact, there is no such division. Now all that is the result of centuries of experience, knowledge, information, tradition - the tradition of the enormous past, or the tradition of a few years or a few days - the technological influence, the technological knowledge. All that is within that field of consciousness, both the conscious as well as the unconscious. Within that field we

act. And within that field there is sorrow, pleasure, pain - there is the conscious sorrow, or the deep, undiscovered, brooding sorrow.

And to bring about a radical change - that must lie beyond this consciousness; that is beyond time. But any thought within this field of consciousness is still of time. Therefore we say that to bring about a change radically, we need time, we need a gradual process. Either we say we will change immediately - still within the field of consciousness - or we say there will be change in our next life or future life, which also is still within the field of consciousness. So, as long as thought is functioning within that field, thought being time, thought cannot produce a change at all. It can only bring about a modification, a continued modified activity, an adjustment. But within that field there is no possibility of radical change at all. I think this must be very clearly understood between us. Because in that field every action is the result of thought, conscious or unconscious; and that thought creates certain values, and those values are based on pleasure. All our values are based on pleasure. The moral, ethical, so-called noble values are essentially based on pleasure. And as long as we are functioning and bringing about, or trying to bring about, a change within that field through thought, there is no change at all because thought can only create conflict.

Please do not accept or disagree or deny what is being said. Examine, look at it as though you are looking at it for the first time, if you can. After all, that is the art of listening, isn't it? Most of us do not listen at all. You hear, but to listen implies attention. And to attend, every value, opinion, judgment, evaluation, interpretation must be set aside; and then only can you listen to your friend, to your wife, or to anything. So in the same way, we have to find out how to bring about in the human mind, in the human heart, a total revolution - not in terms of time, not in terms of evolution.

Thought is the whole machinery of accumulating memory through experience, through knowledge, through various forms of pressures and stresses and influences. That thought cannot under any circumstances bring about a radical revolution. Why can't it? Because that thought is essentially based on pleasure, and where there is pleasure, there is always pain. All our social, moral, and ethical values are based on pleasure. And our belief - which is a process of thinking - in God or no-God, is still the search for comfort, for security, psychologically, which is still based on pleasure. And therefore there is always conflict and effort. When there is action in the field of consciousness, as the consciousness is of time, any action within that field is bound to breed conflict and sorrow. So to bring about a radical revolution in a human being, the radical revolution is to be outside the field of consciousness.

Man has lived for two million years or more, but he has not solved the problem of sorrow. He is always sorrow-ridden: he has sorrow as his shadow or as his companion. Sorrow of losing somebody; sorrow in not being able to fulfill his ambitions, his greed, his energy; sorrow of physical pain; sorrow of psychological anxiety; sorrow of guilt; sorrow of hope and despair - that has been the lot of man; that has been the lot of every human being. And he has always tried to solve this problem - to end sorrow within the field of consciousness - by trying to avoid it, by running away from sorrow, by suppressing it, by identifying himself with something greater than himself, by taking to drink, to women, by doing everything in order to avoid this anxiety, this pain, this despair, this immense loneliness and boredom of life - which is always within this field of consciousness, which is the result of time.

So man has always exercised thought as a means to get rid of sorrow by right effort, by right thinking, by living morally, and so on. The exercise of thought has been his guide - thought with intellect, and all the rest of it. But thought is the result of time, and time is this consciousness. Whatever you do within the field of this consciousness, sorrow can never end. Whether you go to the temple, or you take to drink, both are the same. So, if there is learning, one sees that through thought there is no possibility of a radical change, but there will be continuity of sorrow. If one sees that, then one can move in a different dimension. I am using the word see in the sense not intellectually, not verbally, but with a total understanding of this fact - the fact that sorrow cannot be ended through thought. This does not mean that you suppress thought. By negating

thought, thought merely negates thought, but thought still remains.

To see a fact is one of the most difficult things. It is very simple to see the fact of this microphone. There it is; you and I have given a particular name to this object, and we say that we both see this microphone, whether it is a good microphone or a bad microphone. But to look at that tree becomes a little more" complex. Because when you look at that tree, thought looks at that tree, not your eyes. Observe it, you will see it yourself. Look at a flower! Who is looking? Your eyes? Seeing with eyes means there is no opinion, no thought, no judgment, no naming but looking. When you say you are looking at a flower, your mind is looking; that is, thought is looking, thought is operating; so you never see the flower. The flower is an objective thing. But if you go inwardly to look at a fact - the inward fact, the true fact of something - it is almost impossible because of all your prejudices, your memories, your experiences, your pleasure, your pain - all that interferes with your observation. So sorrow cannot end at any time through thought - thought being the totality of thought and feeling; in that area of consciousness, do what you will, there is no end to sorrow. That is a fact, because man has never been free from that sorrow.

So time, thought, cannot bring about a change. And change in the most profound sense is absolutely necessary because we cannot go on as we are, with our separatist, narrow, nationalistic, and all the other stupidities we have accumulated through centuries, with our gods, with our beliefs, with our rituals, and all that sheer nonsense. Because we do not know what love means. How can we love if there is sorrow in our hearts, in our minds? How can we love if there is competition, greed, envy? We have lived with violence, and we shall go on living with violence unless there is a radical, timeless change. So if you see the fact that time does not bring about a radical revolution, either outwardly or inwardly, then what takes place?

We need social change, a complete revolution in our relationship between man and man, which has bred this monstrous society. There is violence in our heart, in our relationship. Each person is concerned about himself and not about another. And action invariably breeds conflict; all our life, whatever we are doing, only brings confusion, misery, conflict. Again this is a fact. Whether that action is a conscious action or an unconscious action, it breeds conflict in all our being - whatever we do. Because the unconscious is much stronger than the conscious reasoning, conscious, deliberate activity. Please look into yourself deeply, not according to Freud or anybody else, but actually. And to look at yourself you must be free to look. If you say, "This is right or this is wrong; this is good or this is bad; I must do this or I must not do this," then you are not free to look, to observe, to wander in this extraordinary field of consciousness. So the unconscious is very strong. It is the racial, communal repository, and that guides much more than the conscious mind. And it has its own motives, its own drives, its own purposes. It gives intimation through dreams and all the rest of it - I am not going into it now. So, unless there is a radically fundamental revolution, the human conflict will endure forever. Though we may prolong our physical organism indefinitely, though we may have leisure through automation and electronic brains, sorrow and conflict will always exist.

So what is one to do? Do you understand my question? Is man to live forever in conflict, in sorrow, never knowing what it is to be totally free, and therefore perhaps never knowing what it is to love? When you realize that time, thought, is not the way to end sorrow, then what takes place? Realize - do you know what we mean by "realizing"? When you realize that a particular road does not lead to your home, you turn your back on that road and take another road. You do not insist on pursuing that road. If you insist on going on that road which does not lead to your home, mentally there is some imbalance; you are not sane, you are deaf, you are blind, insisting that road will lead to your home. That is exactly what we are doing. We insist that thought, time, evolution, will bring us out of this chaos, misery.

So knowing that action does inevitably breed sorrow - as it does in our life - and that inaction also breeds ugliness and all the rest of it, what is the human being to do? Or is there anything to be done? You understand my question? We have gone to temples, we have meditated, we have found new ways of prolonging life, and so on, we have done everything we can, we have applied our intelligence, we have

committed ourselves to a course of action - communist, religious, or any other kind of action. And yet there is no freedom, there is no end to sorrow; there is conflict, there is constant effort. Seeing all that, a sane, rational man would say, "That is not the way, I will not pursue that way any more." It is only when you see very clearly that the road does not lead to your home that you do not go along that road. But to see that is to learn about the totality of thought and feeling, which is consciousness. That is, through thinking, through thought which creates activity of various kinds, through those activities, through those thoughts and feelings, there is no end to conflict, and therefore no end to sorrow. To see that fact, as you would see the fact of this microphone, as you would see the fact of those trees - it requires attention. And when you attend, your whole consciousness is silent; there is no interference of thought. And that is the way to find out, to learn.

So is there a dimension beyond and above this consciousness? Don't jump to the conclusion that it is God; that is silly. A conscious mind thinking about God is still within the limitation of its own consciousness. You understand? If you think about God, your God is the creation of your thinking; and your thinking being the result of time, your God is of time; it has no meaning. Yet we believe, we want to be sane, we want to find truth - all this through the process of thinking. One can ask the question whether there is a different dimension. It is not a theoretical question but a valid question, a fundamental question, only when one has understood the nature of time. You understand?

Look, sir! The world is exploding in population. Go down the street and watch the millions - uneducated, backward, superstitious, and all the rest of it. And compassion, sympathy, says, "They will have another chance, next life; they will evolve as you evolve." We all believe in that. We do not want to think that our life has been lived in confusion, and that we would go down the gutter as so many people have done, like so many fish thrown away. We say only a few can realize this extraordinary freedom outside consciousness. So, we invent, or we hope that there is, evolution - that is, gradually man will become more and more free, more and more loving, kind, nonviolent, and all the rest of it. The moment you admit time, you admit the continuity of sorrow. If you do not have time, then what hope have you, knowing that you are old? You are so heavily conditioned that you can hardly break your habits - even the most trivial habit. We have to break our habits instantly - not tomorrow - not only the superficial habits, but the deeper habits, the ways of thinking, the ways of our beliefs, dogmas. We have to break deep-rooted habits. Therefore we say, "They cannot be broken immediately; we must have time." Therefore we say that we will do it next life or next week - which is the same thing, which is to admit time.

So from this one inevitably asks: Is there an action which is not of time - an action in this world, living in today, without all this confusion, chaos, miseries, quarrels, dirt, superstition and the ugly gods? Can I, can you, caught in time, break through the net of time? And it must be done immediately, instantly. Otherwise you have the hope of evolution, gradualness, and therefore you will gradually get rid of sorrow. And sorrow can never be got rid of, put aside, through time. So there must be an instant action, and there is an instant action which breaks this net of time. You will say, "What am I to do? Tell me what to do. What practice? What method? How am I to think, to break this tremendous burden of time?" These questions indicate that you are still thinking in terms of time. Practice implies time. Method implies time. To wait for somebody to tell you what to do implies time. And your doing it according to what has been said is within the field of time. Therefore within that field of time there is no hope; there is only despair and mounting sorrow.

So, you have to see the truth of it. Seeing the truth of it is meditation - which we will discuss another time. You can see the truth of it only when you are completely attentive with all your being. And you cannot be attentive if there is no silence. It is only in that silence - which is not to be achieved through time - and through that attention that there is the end of sorrow. Then one sees that there is a different dimension altogether - not the dimension of gods or all the stupid nonsense which man has invented out of his fear, out of his despair. There is a dimension of action which does not create conflict and contradiction and therefore effort. But the mind cannot come to it, do what it will, unless it understands the whole field of

consciousness, which is time. And that can be understood, not through time, not through thought, but by instant awareness, by instant perception.

Sirs, you have to be serious enough, earnest enough, to watch the whole movement of thought as consciousness, the whole movement of thought as a river that is flowing, the great weight of knowledge, tradition, hope, despair, anxiety, and the misery behind thought; and you have to watch all this completely - not as the watcher and the thing watched. The thinker is the thought; the observer is the observed. If you look at a tree, if you look at the beauty of the sky and the loveliness of a still night, you - the center - remain, and therefore you are the observer. The observer creates round himself space, and in that space he experiences that which is experienceable. That is, if you observe as an observer, then you are always creating the thing which is observed. If there is no observer as the center from which he is looking, there is only the fact.

Listen to those crows. Do listen. If you listen completely, is there a center from which you are listening? Your ears are listening. There is the noise, there is the vibration and all the rest of it, but there is no center from which you are listening. There is attention. Therefore, if you listen completely, there is no listener; there is only the fact of that noise. To listen completely you must be silent, and that silence is not something in thought, created by thought. When you listen to that crow that is making the noise before it goes to sleep, so completely that there is no listener, you will see that there is no entity that says, "I am listening."

So the thinker and the thought are one; without thought there is no thinker. And when there is no thinker and only thought, then there is an awareness of thinking without thought, and thought comes to an end. Please do not practice all this. Do not sit in posture, breathe right, hold your nose, stand on your head, or do whatever you do. It is all so infantile, so immature. This requires great maturity. Maturity means sensitivity, intelligence. And you cannot be attentive if you are not completely sensitive; your body, your nerves, your mind, your heart, every sense is completely alert, not made dull. Then, you will - not that you will find it, you will never find it - the thinker, which is you, will never find reality.

This fact has to be seen - that there is a dimension of action which does not breed conflict or sorrow. And to find it, to come upon it darkly, mysteriously, without thinking, there must be freedom right from the beginning, not at the end - freedom to investigate, to look, to observe; freedom from fear.