

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Third Public Talk in The Oak Grove

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Is it not important to understand and so transcend conflict? Most of us live in a state of inner conflict which produces outer turmoil and confusion; many escape from conflict into illusion, into various activities, into knowledge and ideation, or become cynical and depressed. There are some who, understanding conflict, go beyond its limitations. Without understanding the inward nature of conflict, the warring field which we are, there can be no peace, no joy. Most of us are caught up in an endless series of inward conflicts, and without resolving them life is utterly wasteful and empty. We are aware of two opposing poles of desire, the wanting and the not-wanting. The conflict between comprehension and ignorance we accept as part of our nature; we do not see that it is impossible to resolve this conflict within the pattern of duality, and so we accept it, making a virtue of conflict. We have come to regard it as essential for growth, for the perfecting of man. Do we not say that through conflict we shall learn, we shall understand? We give a religious significance to this conflict of opposites, but does it lead to virtue, to clarification, or does it lead to ignorance, to insensitivity, to death? Have you never noticed that in the midst of conflict there is no understanding at all, only a blind struggle? Conflict is not productive of understanding. Conflict leads, as we have said, to apathy, to delusion. We must go outside the pattern of duality for creative, revolutionary understanding.

Does not conflict, the struggle to become and not to become, make for a self-enclosing process? Does it not create self-consciousness? Is not the very nature of the self one of conflict and pain? When are you conscious of yourself? When there is opposition, when there is friction, when there is antagonism. In the moment of joy, self-consciousness is non-existent; when there is happiness you do not say, "I am happy"; only when it is absent, when there is conflict, do you become self-conscious. Conflict is a recall to oneself, an awareness of one's own limitation; it is this which causes self-consciousness. This constant struggle leads to many forms of escape, to illusion; without understanding the nature of conflict, the acceptance of authority, belief, or ideology only leads to ignorance and further sorrow. With the understanding of conflict,

these become impotent and worthless.

Choice between opposing desires merely continues conflict; choice implies duality; through choice there is no freedom, for will is still productive of conflict. Then how is it possible for thought to go beyond and above the pattern of duality? Only when we understand the ways of craving and of self-gratification is it possible to transcend the endless conflict of opposites. We are ever seeking pleasure and avoiding sorrow; the constant desire to become hardens the mind-heart, causing strife and pain. Have you not noticed how ruthless a man is in his desire to become? To become something in this world is relatively the same as becoming something in what is considered the spiritual world; in each, man is driven by the desire to become, and this craving leads to incessant conflict, to peculiar ruthlessness and antagonism. Then to renounce is to acquire, and acquisition is the seed of conflict. This process of renouncing and acquiring, of becoming and not becoming, is an endless chain of sorrow.

How to go beyond and above this conflict is our problem. This is not a theoretical question, but one that confronts us almost all of the time. We can escape into some fancy which can be rationalized and made to seem real, but nevertheless it is delusion; it is not made real by cunning explanations nor by the number of its adherents. To transcend conflict the craving to become must be experienced and understood. The desire to become is complex and subtle, but as with all complex things it must be approached simply. Be intensely aware of the desire to become. Be aware of the feeling of becoming; with feeling there comes sensitivity, which begins to reveal the many implications of becoming. Feeling is hardened by the intellect and by its many cunning rationalizations, and however much the intellect may unravel the complexity of becoming, it is incapable of experiencing. You may verbally grasp all this but it will be of little consequence; only experience and feeling can bring the creative flame of understanding.

Do not condemn becoming but be aware of its cause and effect in yourself. Condemnation, judgment, and comparison do not bring the experience of understanding; on the contrary, they will stop experience. Be aware of identification and condemnation, justification and comparison; be aware of them and they will come to an end. Be silently aware of becoming; experience this silent awareness. Being still and becoming still are two different states. The becoming still can never experience the state of being still. It is only in being still that all conflict is transcended.

Questioner: Will you please talk about death? I do not mean the fear of death, but rather the promise and hope which the thought of death must always hold for those who are aware throughout life that they do not belong.

Krishnamurti: Why are we concerned more with death than with living? Why do we look to death as a release, as a promise of hope? Why should there be more happiness, more joy, in death than in life? Why need we look to death as a renewal, rather than to life? We want to escape from the pain of existence into a promise and hope that the unknown holds. Living is conflict and misery and, as we educate ourselves to inevitable death, we look to death for reward. Death is glorified or shunned depending on the travail of life; life is a thing to be endured and death to be welcomed. Again we are caught in the conflict of the opposites. There is no truth in the opposites. We do not understand life, the present, so we look to the future, to death. Will tomorrow, the future, death, bring understanding? Will time open the door to reality? We are ever concerned with time, the past weaving itself into the present, and into the future; we are the product of time, the past; we escape into the future, into death.

The present is the eternal. Through time the timeless is not experienced. The now is ever existent; even if you escape into the future, the now is ever present. The present is the doorway to the past. If you do not understand the present now, will you understand it in the future? What you are now you will be, if the present is not understood. Understanding comes only through the present; postponement does not yield comprehension. Time is transcended only in the stillness of the present. This tranquillity is not to be gained

through time, through becoming tranquil; there must be stillness, not the becoming still. We look to time as a means to become; this becoming is endless, it is not the eternal, the timeless. The becoming is endless conflict, leading to illusion. In the stillness of the present is the eternal.

But thought-feeling is weaving back and forth, like a shuttle, between the past, the present, and the future; it is ever rearranging its memories, ever maneuvering itself into a better position, more advantageous and comforting to itself. It is forever dissipating and formulating, and how can such a mind be still, creatively empty? It is continually causing its own becoming by endless effort, and how can such a mind understand the still being of the present? Right thinking and meditation only can bring about the clarity of understanding, and in this alone is there tranquillity.

The death of someone whom you love brings sorrow. The shock of that sorrow is benumbing, paralyzing, and as you come out of it you seek an escape from that sorrow. The lack of companionship, the habits that are revealed, the void and the loneliness that are uncovered through death cause pain, and you instinctively want to run away from it. You want comfort, a palliative to ease the suffering. Suffering is an indication of ignorance, but in seeking an escape from suffering you are only nourishing ignorance. Instead of blunting the mind-heart in sorrow through escapes, comforts, rationalizations, beliefs, be intensely aware of its cunning defense and comforting demands, and then there will be the transformation of that emptiness and sorrow. Because you seek to escape, sorrow pursues; because you seek comfort and dependence, loneliness is intensified. Not to escape, not to seek comfort, is extremely difficult, and only intense self-awareness can eradicate the cause of sorrow.

In death we seek immortality; in the movement of birth and death we long for permanency; caught in the flux of time we crave for the timeless; being in shadow we believe in light. Death does not lead to immortality; there is immortality only in life without death. In life we know death, for we cling to life. We gather, we become; because we gather, death comes, and knowing death, we cling to life.

The hope and belief in immortality is not the experiencing of immortality. Belief and hope must cease for the immortal to be. You the believer, the maker of desire, must cease for the immortal to be. Your very belief and hope strengthen the self, and you will know only birth and death. With the cessation of craving, the cause of conflict, there comes creative stillness, and in this silence there is that which is birthless and deathless. Then life and death are one.

Questioner: It is easier to be free from sexual cravings than from subtle ambitions; for individuality wants self-expression with every breath. To be free from one's egotism means complete revolution in thinking. How can one remain in the world with such a reversal of mind?

Krishnamurti: Why do we want to remain in the world, the world that is so ruthless, ignorant, and lustful? We may have to live in it, but existence becomes painful only when we are of it. When we are ambitious, when there is enmity, when sensory values become all-important, then we are lost and then the world holds us. Can we not live without greed among the greedy, content with little? Among the unhealthy can we not live in health? The world is not apart from us, we are the world; we have made it what it is. It has acquired its worldliness because of us, and to leave it we must put away from us worldliness. Then only can we live with the world and not be of it.

Freedom from sex and ambition has no meaning without love. Chastity is not the product of the intellect; if the mind plans and plots to be chaste, it is no longer chaste. Love alone is chaste. Without love, the mere freedom from lust is barren and so the cause of endless strife and sorrow.

Once again, the desire to be free from ambition is a conflict within the pattern of duality. If in this pattern you have trained yourself not to be ambitious, you are still in the opposites, and so there is no freedom. You have only substituted one label for another and so conflict continues. Cannot we experience directly that

state beyond the pattern of duality? Do not let us think in terms of becoming, which indicate, do they not, the conflict of opposites. "I am this and I want to become that" only strengthens conflict and so blunts the mind-heart.

We are accustomed to think in terms of the future, to be or to become. Is it not possible to be aware of what is? When we think-feel what is without comparison, without judgment, with that complete integration of the thinker with his thought, then that which is is utterly transformed; but this transformation can never take place within the field of duality. So let us be aware, not become aware, of ambition. When we are so aware we are conscious of all its implications; this feeling is important, not the mere intellectual analysis of the cause and effect of ambition. When you are aware of ambition, you are conscious of its assertiveness, of its competitive ruthlessness, of its pleasures and pain; you are also conscious of its effect on society and relationship; of its social and business moralities, which are immoral; of its cunning and hidden ways which ultimately lead to strife. Ambition breeds envy and ill will, the power to dominate and to oppress. Be aware of yourself as you are and of the world which you have created, and without condemnation or justification be silently aware of your feeling ambitious.

If you are silently aware, as we explained, then the thinker and his thought are one, they are not separate but indivisible; then only is there complete transformation of ambition. But most of us, if we are aware at all, are conscious of the cause and effect of ambition and unfortunately we stop there; but if we looked more closely into this process of choice, we would abandon it, for conflict is not productive of understanding. In abandoning it we would come upon the thinker and his thought. Just as the qualities cannot be separated from the self, so the thinker cannot be separated from his thought. When such integration takes place there is complete transformation of the thinker. This is an arduous task demanding alert pliability and choiceless awareness. Meditation comes from right thinking, and right thinking from self-knowledge. Without self-knowledge there is no understanding.

Questioner: I understand you to say that creativeness is an intoxication from which it is hard to free oneself. Yet you often speak of the creative person. Who is he if he is not the artist, the poet, the builder?

Krishnamurti: Is the artist, the poet, the builder necessarily the creative person? Is he not also lustful, worldly, seeking personal success? So, is he not contributing to the chaos and misery in the world? Is he not responsible for its catastrophes and sorrows? He is responsible when he is seeking fame, is envious, when he is worldly, when his values are sensate, when he is passionate. Because he has a certain talent, does that make the artist a creative person?

Creativeness is something infinitely greater than the mere capacity to express; mere successful expression and its recognition surely does not constitute creativeness. Success in this world implies, does it not, being of this world, the world of oppression and cruelty, ignorance and ill will? Ambition does produce results, but does it not bring with it misery and confusion for him who is successful and for his fellow man? The scientist, the builder may have brought certain benefits, but have they not brought also destruction and untold misery? Is this creativeness? Is it creativeness to set man against man as the politicians, the rulers, the priests are doing?

Creativeness comes into being when there is freedom from the bondage of craving with its conflict and sorrow. With the abandonment of the self with its assertiveness and ruthlessness and its endless struggles to become, there comes creative reality. In the beauty of a sunset or a still night, have you not felt intense, creative joy? At that moment, the self being temporarily absent, you are vulnerable, open to reality. This is a rare and unsought event, out of your control, but having once felt its intensity, the self demands further enjoyment of it, and so conflict begins.

We all have experienced the temporary absence of the self and have felt at that moment the extraordinary creative ecstasy, but instead of its being rare and accidental, is it not possible to bring about the right state

in which reality is eternal being? If you seek that ecstasy, then it will be the activity of the self, which will produce certain results, but it will not be that state which comes through right thinking and right meditation. The subtle ways of the self must be known and understood, for with self-knowledge comes right thinking and meditation.

Right thinking comes with the constant flow of self-awareness - awareness of worldly actions as well as of the activities in meditation. Creativeness with its ecstasy comes with the freedom from craving, which is virtue.

Questioner: During the last few years you seem to have concentrated in your talks, more and more, on the development of right thinking. Formerly you used to speak more about mystic experiences. Are you deliberately avoiding this aspect now?

Krishnamurti: Is it not necessary to lay right foundation for right experience? Without right thinking, is not experience illusory? If you would have a well-built and lasting house, must you not lay it on a firm and right foundation? To experience is comparatively easy, and depending on our conditioning, we experience. We experience according to our beliefs and ideals, but do all such experiences bring freedom? Have you not noticed that according to one's tradition and belief experience comes? Tradition and creed mold experience, but to experience reality which is not of any tradition or ideology, must not thought go above and beyond its own conditioning? Is not reality ever the uncreated? And must not the mind cease to create, to formulate, if it would experience the uncreated? Must not the mind-heart be utterly still and silent for the being of the real?

As any experience can be misinterpreted, so any experience can be made to appear as the real. On the interpreter depends the translation and if the translator is biased, ignorant, molded in a pattern of thought, then his understanding will conform to his conditioning. If he is so-called religious, his experiences will be according to his tradition and belief; if he is nonreligious, then his experiences will shape themselves according to his background. On the instrument depends its capacity; the mind-heart must make itself capable. It is capable of either experiencing the real or creating for itself illusion. To experience the real is arduous, for it demands infinite pliability and deep, basic stillness. This pliability, this stillness is not the result of desire or of an act of will, for desire and will are the outcome of craving, the dual drive to be and not to be. Pliability and tranquillity are not the outcome of conflict; they come into being with understanding and understanding comes with self-knowledge.

Without self-knowledge you merely live in a state of contradiction and uncertainty; without self-knowledge what you think-feel has no basis; without self-knowledge enlightenment is not possible. You are the world, the neighbor, the friend, the so-called enemy. If you would understand, you must first understand yourself, for in you is the root of all understanding. In you is the beginning and the end. To understand this vast complex entity, mind-heart must be simple.

To understand the past, mind-heart must be aware of its activities in the present, for through the present alone the past may be understood, but you will not understand the present if there is self-identification.

So, through the present the past is revealed; through the immediate consciousness the many hidden layers are discovered and understood. Thus, through constant awareness there comes deep and wide self-knowledge.