

# Jiddu Krishnamurti

## Unconditioning the Brain Cells

*From the series:*

### ***Why has the brain got caught in the narrow circle of the self?***

---

*Tuesday, July 19, 1983*

#### ***Fifth Public Talk in Saanen***

May we go on where we left off on Sunday? We were talking about intelligence and security, and we came to the point that the past, the present and the future were contained in the now. That is, all time is now. And in the now there is no time at all. I don't know if we have understood that, if we have gone into it fairly sufficiently. And as we have got only today and Thursday we have a lot of ground to cover so we will not go back and repeat what we have already talked about.

We ought to consider what is the future of mankind. Through various successions of events, vast experience and collective memories, through evolution, that is, the whole process of time from the past, infinite past, to the present is called evolution. The successive events, memories, experiences, and so on. And we have arrived at this present stage of human evolution. And what is our future? Not only the future of each one, which I question whether each one is separate from mankind, but what lies ahead of us? Do we proceed along the same path as we have been going for the last million years, or more or less, slowly developing, slowly accumulating vast memories, not only in the technological world but also in the psychological area, in the inward area - if we can so put it that way. And considering what evolution has brought us to now, and what are the successive events, experiences, that lie ahead of us? We have evolved and we are almost primitive psychologically, angry, violent, innumerable illusions, dogmas, beliefs, faiths of various religions and various groups and societies and cultures, all that is inherited by us. We are all that. And there is no question about that. Nobody can argue or theoretically oppose all that. We are the result of vast successive experiences, incidents and so on. That is our consciousness. That is what we are. And from the beginning of time we have not changed very much. Biologically we have reached a certain point and I don't think we can develop a third arm or two heads or something of that kind. And when we look at ourselves, and our society - the society which we have created, the divisions which we have brought about, religious, national, tribal

and all the rest of it, one wonders what is the future of all human beings.

This is a very serious question, we ought to consider, investigate together. Not that the speaker is exploring or pointing out, but we, you and the speaker together are walking along the same road, at the same speed, with the same intention, with the same commitment to find out what is the future of man. Not only the future of our grandchildren, and their grandchildren and so on, but the whole of human kind, not one's own particular future. And our consciousness, which is what we are - our reactions, our responses psychologically and physically, all the beliefs of various cultures, of various people, all the faiths, the dogmas, the environmental conditioning, our fears, our anxieties, loneliness, depression, sorrow, and the constant pain of conflict. This is the common ground on which all human beings stand. That is a fact. When you suffer, when you are lonely, depressed, anxious, in conflict with your own friend, with your wife or husband, this is the lot of all human beings throughout the world, whether they live in Russia, China, India, Asia and so on, in America or in Europe, every human being goes through this - may express it differently, may put it into words that are not familiar to you but the feeling, the pain, the anxiety, the sorrow, the uncertainty, the insecurity, faith in something that has no reality but an illusion, vast network of superstition. This is the common lot of all human beings. That is our consciousness.

Our consciousness, your consciousness is not something private, personal, exclusively one's own. It is shared by all human beings. Whether you go to the most primitive part of Africa or the most sophisticated people in New York or Tokyo, or even in Moscow, they all share this. So it is not our personal consciousness. It is not your private, individual belief in something or other. This belief is shared by everybody. They may believe in something and you may believe in something else, but belief is common to all of us. Pain, tears, laughter, humour, the sense of desperate loneliness, anxiety is shared by every human being on this beautiful earth. So it is not yours. And this consciousness is the self, the me, the person, the ego. And this ego is the common ego of mankind. This is very difficult for most people to accept and see the truth of it because all of us are conditioned to believe that we are separate human beings, separate souls, which religions have encouraged - separate. When we think, we think as though we were separate from all other people who think. Thinking is common to all of us, whether the highly educated, sophisticated thinker, philosopher, or the person, the most primitive person in a small, little withered hamlet or a village, or a hut, he also thinks. Thinking is common to all of us and therefore it is not your individual private thinking. This is very difficult for people who have been brought up from childhood to think that they are separate. That is a marvellous illusion, cultivated sedulously, through literature, through talent, through religions, through national worship and all the rest of it. And this common consciousness, the common self, not your self, the self which everybody clings to, that is the common self, collective self. And what is the future of mankind? That mankind has evolved collectively through millennia upon millennia.

Please we are thinking together, unemotionally, non-romantically, but without any bias or prejudice, if that is possible. We have to investigate this question.

We were talking yesterday with a person who has excellent credentials about computers. He is building one of them, meeting all the top computer people, and their extraordinary activity. In our discussion yesterday the big organisations in America and Japan especially are pouring billions of dollars or yen, not only to cure cancer but also to create a computer - the fifth generation - the ultra intelligent mechanical mind - brain that will, with the robot (Noise of aeroplane) - this is modern civilisation, noise, including that of the speaker - they are creating or working to bring about, the top people, not the local inventors, they act too, to bring about a computer with a robot that will outstrip man. You understand all this? That machine can think faster, create more, almost everything that the human brain has done and can do. This is a fact. They are working at it twenty four hours a day, competing with each other, America and Japan. They are producing machines which will control us, human beings - which is actually going on now. Machines, computers and other mechanical devices that will control our human activity. We will be shaped by the machines. You understand? We are being shaped now but that is very slow, casual. But the big industries are producing

machines that will control us. In the factories the robot and the computer will build the car and so on and so on and so on. They do operations. That is one side of it. The other side is also, they are trying to - genetic engineering - to change the genes of the human beings.

And also a certain country is more interested - Russia - in understanding the activity of the brain. That is, thought transference. You understand? To read other people's thoughts. To find out what Mr Reagan is thinking and Mr Reagan is trying to find out what Andropov is thinking. And presently, they succeed, probably they will because they are putting all their best science and thousands and millions of dollars in all this, governments as well as big companies, to find out what makes the brain function in a certain way and whether it is possible to change that, and to read other people's thoughts. They are working on all this. Perhaps some of you already know that Duke University in America, at one time extra sensory perception, reading people's thought, thought controlling matter - they just touched the peripheral ESP - extra sensory perception. But now they are spending all the scientists, and the top people are working at this. Please these are facts. I am not exaggerating.

So what is the future of mankind? What is going to happen to our brain when the computer and robot take over, and when the great industries invent all these machineries of ultra intelligent machines, and you, what is your future as a human being? You understand my question? This is happening. It is not something in the future. It may take ten years. And they say, 'We will do it in ten years' - right? And they are going to do it in ten years, for commercial reasons. So they are acting from the outside on the human brain - you understand? Through bio-chemistry, through electric currents and so on. From the outside. And they may change our conditioning - from the outside. And probably they will. They will invent better gurus than any other guru in the world. (Laughter) Don't laugh please. This is very, very serious. It sounds funny, humorous but it is a fact. The computer will invent the best god on earth, will bring about a society that will function mechanically - you understand? Face all this.

And what is the future of man if we as human beings don't change from the inner, from the inside - you understand? They are going to change you from the outside. This is inevitable. It is in the cards. We laymen know nothing about all this, what they are doing. And perhaps we don't want to know. And what is going to happen to our brain, human brain, not the mechanical brain invented by top computer experts and the bio-chemists and the genetic engineers, acting from the outside to control the brain - you understand all this? We are not painting a dark picture, it is a fact, it is happening. And what is going to happen to the human brain when we have vast leisure, because the computer, the robot will do all the dirty work? They will build cars, they will sweep the roads, perhaps establish a better relationship between you and your wife. Please this is serious what we are saying. It may give you all the sexual experience through computers - yes sir, swallow that also.

So what is the future of man? Your theories, your particular guru, your doctrines, your churches, will have no place at all because the computer brain is much more active, much clearer, in the millionth of a second it will answer a question. Taking all this in, not being frightened, not being depressed by it, but seeing the actual fact of what is going on. And this friend of ours, who is building a computer, meeting all the top people, in discussing we saw what is the future of man.

Our brain is now conditioned by experience, successive incidents which bring about experiences, the fears, the pleasures, the aches and the anxieties and the pain of sorrow, the death. We are conditioned linguistically, climatically. That is our conditioning. And if we admit that during the successive years or periods of evolution we will gradually inwardly change - which means continue what we are almost indefinitely, which is evolution. Or sudden jump - which is psychologically impossible.

So what we are asking is - as two friends we are talking together, as two friends we talked yesterday with this person, we have known him for years, and also some of you, we have known each other for years - and

we are talking over together amicably, in friendly spirit. These are facts. Irrefutable facts. And can we, even a few, change, bring about a mutation in the very brain cells of the brain? Does it take time? You understand my question? Does it take a series of incidents, successive memories to bring about a mutation in the conditioning? You are following all this? Realising that in investigating the conditioning, we are not investigating personal conditioning, it is the conditioning of the human brain. And that brain has evolved through time, it is not your brain. So we are not talking about your individual transformation, or individual mutation that you become more enlightened, more happy, more some kind of nonsense. We are talking about the human brain because you, as a human being, represent all humanity. You are all humanity because you suffer, they suffer - you understand? You are humanity, not just one person isolated, individual, secretive, concerned with your own beastly little self. Right?

Now we are going to find out, if we don't radically bring about psychological revolution in the sense of bringing about a mutation, our brains will wither because the computer and the robot, and other things that they are inventing, will make our brains inactive. You understand? I wonder if you understand all this. Now you have to think, you have to investigate, you have to work. That means your brain has to be active. But when the computer and the robot takes the things over, what is going to happen to your brain? Either it is going to wither, or go off into some kind of vast entertainment, which is also taking place - right? I do not know if you have not noticed what great importance they are giving to sports - the Olympics and all that business. So it will be caught in that. You are following? This is happening sir. Or then you have to investigate whether you can, as a human being who is the rest of humanity, if there is a radical mutation you affect the whole of consciousness of mankind. I do not know if you have not noticed if in America, or in Russia, or in some remote part of Japan, they invent something, the rest of the world picks it up much... it is there. You understand? It is happening. So if when one or two, or a dozen, or a hundred bring about a fundamental freedom of conditioning, they affect the whole consciousness of humanity - right? This is so. As Hitler has affected the whole consciousness of mankind, Napoleon, your religious leader, or the other religious leaders, they have affected humanity. So can we, after stating all this, can we bring about - not through gradual process of evolution, that is out, finished - can we bring about a mutation in our whole being, in our whole behaviour, in our way of looking at life?

So we have to investigate together the content of our consciousness - you understand? - of which you are, because the content makes up consciousness, without the content, consciousness - as we know it - doesn't exist - right? Are we clear on this matter? If I am a Hindu, with all that business, with all the superstitions, with their gods, with their rituals, with their... you know, with their circus as you as Christians with your circus, and our faith, our belief, our habits, you follow? - all that - can all that be radically changed - a total change? Right? Have you understood? Can we go on from there?

Please, this is very serious. This is not something to play at. See the danger on one side: what they are outwardly going to do to our brains; and also see actually what our brains are: conditioned nationally, linguistically, fear, pleasure, sorrow and all that, faith, I believe, I don't believe, my prejudice is better than your prejudice, and so on. That is what we are. Now one of the contents of our consciousness is fear, which is shared by all human beings, it is not your fear only, it is fear. What is fear? How does it arise? Please you are sharing this, thinking together, I am not exploring and you just listen and play with words. You are afraid. That is a fact. Afraid to die, afraid to lose, afraid not to become something, afraid of your wife or your husband, or somebody or other. Afraid of nature - you follow? - fear. Can that fear, which has conditioned our mind, our brain, can that fear completely end? Not through time, that means evolution, gradually - you follow? I wonder if you are following all this. Please, it is your life, it is not my life, it's not somebody else's life. It is the life of every human being.

Fear does terrible things. Fear makes you lie, fear makes you kill, fear makes you violent, fear makes one curl in oneself. All of us know what fear is. Is fear one of the causes... one of the causes of fear, is it to become something - you understand? Psychologically to become something. That is, I am this, I must be

that. The 'that' is the projection through comparison. Right? I compare myself with you - right? And I want to be like you, or I don't want to be like you but I like somebody else. To become. You understand? The comparison is to become.

So can we now, not tomorrow, end all comparison? Of course you have to compare between two cars. If you have the money you buy the better. When you are comparing one house, one architect, you know, and so on, there it is necessary to compare; to get the best of cloth, best of houses, if you have the money, and so on. But we are talking about psychological comparison. To see the consequences of comparison, which is to become - right? And one of the causes of fear is this - right? And seeing the truth of it end instantly all comparison. Are you doing it? Even a few of you, for god's sake. So that your mind, your brain is free of this burden, which means you are unconditioning the brain cells themselves. Those cells have been accustomed, trained, educated to compare. You understand? One day you will sit next to god - you know all that stuff. Or you compare what you are with what you should be. So that all sense of ideals, the future, completely ends. And so one of the causes of fear ends instantly.

There are other multiple causes of fear - fear of public opinion, fear what your friends might say about you - you know, a thousand fears. Fear of the dark, fear of your wife, or your husband, fear of this and fear of that. Fear of your guru because you want to be like him - right? He tells you how to meditate - you know all that stupid stuff. So you are always trying to become something. And what is it that is becoming? An idea, a memory, a thought - you understand? You follow? Is that what is becoming? And therefore it is an empty becoming, there is nothing in it but yet we cling to that. So what are the other causes of fear? Please we are investigating together. Is it time? Fear of the future? Or fear of the past - fear of having done - you know all the rest of it - past? Both biological fears and psychological fears based on the past, which is time. Fear of future as death? So time and thought are the root of fear - right? Of course. It is so obvious. Can we go on from there?

Do you and I see the fact: comparison, which is also part of time, the becoming, and the thought that says, 'I must become', 'I must be', both thought, time, are the basic factors of fear? If you say, 'How am I to stop thinking?', that is a wrong question. But if you see the fact - you understand? - if you see a dangerous snake in front of you, you act. You don't say, 'What am I to do with it? Please tell me how to run from it.' You don't ask somebody and say, 'What am I to do?' When there is danger there is instant response. And time and thought in relation to fear is a fact, is a tremendous danger - right? And do you actually see the danger? Or the idea of danger? You understand? The idea is stronger than the fact and so we play with it. The idea of a snake is different from the actual snake - right? The actual precipice. You can imagine that you are standing on a precipice and try to fall and play all around, but when you are in front of a deep chasm at your feet, you respond instantly. So if one is aware of the nature of fear and the danger of fear, how it corrupts the mind, the brain - the mind is different, sorry I used that word 'mind'. I will keep that word 'mind' away from the brain - so does one see the danger and therefore act?

And also one has to consider the whole pursuit of pleasure - sexual, the becoming, the achievement, being tied to something, attached to something, possessing something - you follow? Various forms of pleasure. When you are attached, when you are tied to something, then corruption begins. Right? I wonder if you see all this. When I am tied to my wife, or to my husband, or a to an ideal, or a series of logical, deductive conclusions, and I hold on to that, then corruption is inevitable. When I hold on, attached to my wife - you are following all this? - or to my girl friend because I get comfort, sex and all the rest of it, in that attachment, in that tie, there is the beginning, the seed of corruption. When you see the truth that wherever there is any kind of attachment to anything - to your furniture, to a person, to an ideal, to a system, whether it is the democratic, or social, or any attachment, tie, to anything, you have already the seed flowering into corruption. Yes sir. And pleasure is that corruption, if you are pursuing it. If pleasure happens, all right. But if you pursue it, as most human beings do, and are attached to pleasure, then you have all the corruptive process taking place which brings about deterioration of the brain. Corruption is the deterioration.

And also we ought to talk over together a much more complex problem: that of suffering. Mankind wherever they live have suffered enormously. Go to the poor countries where they have one meal a day and not enough to eat, they suffer infinitely. And all the wars of many centuries, how many people have been killed, how many tears! Aren't you aware of all these blasted things? The sorrow of not achieving, the sorrow of ignorance, not of books, not of accumulated, professorial knowledge, that is part of ignorance, we are talking of ignorance of the truth of reality, of what is going on inwardly. The sorrow of losing somebody whom you think you love. The sorrow of disease, the sorrow of a thousand things. And mankind throughout the world has borne this sorrow. And we are still going on with it. So what is wrong with us? We know the wars that are going on now - maimed - you follow sir? - those terrible tanks, the aeroplanes from thirty thousand feet dropping a bomb, not seeing the devastation it makes and saying at the end of it god was with me the day I dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki or Hiroshima.

So is it possible to end sorrow? Which is to face loneliness and end it - not take time, the causes of sorrow, seeking comfort. There is always a comforter: the priest, the psychoanalyst, the friend, the guru, someone will cry with you, hold your hand. That doesn't end sorrow. It is like having a deep wound: you may cover it up, you may escape from it, but it is always there, deep down in the dark recesses of one's own brain. And to end it, because where there is suffering there is no love. And without love and compassion there is no intelligence. And if we pursue our life, our daily life, as we are living now, year after year till we die, as vast millions and billions of people are doing, they are not contributing anything to the whole collective consciousness of man. But if you and a few of us basically, fundamentally bring about a mutation in the conditioning of the brain, which means in the very brain cells themselves and that is possible only when we are aware of our conditioning, meet it head on, fear, all the faiths and the dogmas, the stupid rituals, fears, pleasures, sorrow, of which we are. If there is no mutation we will be contributing to the ugliness of mankind.

So there is only one choice for us, only one direction for us: either we enter into the world of entertainment - you understand? - the football, the literature, the painting, the talk about pictures and the cinemas, you understand? - the whole world of entertainment, that vast industry which is gradually taking us over. And that industry includes all the rituals of the religious people - it is a form of entertainment. They don't change by going day after day, day after day, to mass, or to the Indian rituals. There is a temple in India near the school where we live, it is one of the most famous temples in India. They take vows to that image inside and they pour thousands of dollars a day. It has become a tremendous business affair, like all religions. You understand all this? The churches of the world. So when one actually sees all this spread out in front of you like a clear map: the computer, the robot, bio-chemistry, genetic engineering and the search into the activities of the brain to read other peoples' thoughts on one side. The other side, vast entertainment. Unless one is extraordinarily aware you are going to be caught in all this - probably you are already caught. And when there is a change, a radical mutation in the conditioning, which means freedom from all conditioning, and that freedom is love, it is not self-interest. That freedom is compassion, in which there is sympathy and all that, but compassion is not attached to any religion. It isn't because I love Jesus or Krishna or somebody that I am compassionate. I go and help the poor country. Compassion is born only out of total freedom. I've finished. May I get up, please?