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# **BULLETIN**

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**KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION  
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## KRISHNAMURTI IN CONVERSATION WITH IRIS MURDOCH

Iris Murdoch is both a philosopher and a prolific writer, with more than twenty novels and several philosophical works to her credit. Identified in the philosophical world (she taught Philosophy at St Anne's College, Oxford and was made an Honorary fellow of the College in 1963) as a Platonist, she shares this ancient philosopher's metaphysical dualism, the belief that the moral life requires a transcendental idea of the Good. In her words, 'We learn of perfection and imperfection through our ability to understand what we see as an image or shadow of something better which we cannot yet see. The idea of Good, perceived in our confused reality, also transcends it'.

Caught in intricate webs of their own constructions, the characters in an Iris Murdoch novel are either driven to bizarre actions out of their own confused and manipulative motives or find a way towards the Good. 'Words themselves', she says 'do not contain wisdom. Words said to particular individuals at particular times may occasion wisdom'.

The two dialogues between Iris Murdoch and Krishnamurti presented in this issue of the Bulletin were recorded at Brockwood Park in 1984. Though the academic philosopher Iris Murdoch and the self-illuminated Krishnamurti came from very different worlds and, in the course of the long conversation, they took up, examined and, then, discarded several themes, in the end a common area of discourse emerged, namely, a shared belief that the daily life of human beings must be transformed in order to experience the 'other'. However, for Iris Murdoch the religious life is a slow pilgrimage to the transcendental other; for Krishnamurti the first step of the spiritual journey is the last step.

-- Radhika Herzberger

DISCUSSION BETWEEN J.KRISHNAMURTI AND  
IRIS MURDOCH -- #1

**IRIS MURDOCH (I):** I have a lot of questions, but I will start with something that interests me, and we'll see where we go. It's about the word 'experience', which you sometimes use in your writings as representing something which you think we should in some sense overcome. You seem to connect the idea of experience with the notion of preconceived attitudes or dogmas or beliefs which impede a kind of being which you would connect with a creative present existence. I don't entirely understand this. It seems, to me, to be impossible to entirely...

**KRISHNAMURTI (K):** Wipe out experience.

**I:** Yes, to discount or escape from experience. I would like to stick to the term 'experience', because there is a particular sense you want to attach to it. It is such a very general word; it seems to describe the continuity of consciousness which is simply characteristic of being human. Perhaps you could say something about that.

**K:** I don't quite know what you mean by 'experience'. One can experience what one desires.

**I:** You mean *imagining* it.

**K:** Yes. One can also experience things according to one's conditioning. If I'm a Buddhist -- and a devout Buddhist at that -- I can experience the state of that consciousness which was supposed to be the Buddha's.

**I:** Well that is a rather special sort of experience, isn't it?

**K:** Yes. So I am just questioning what we mean by experience. I wonder, is there a difference between the experience and the experiencê?

**I:** This is a rather difficult question, because the word 'experience' in English describes something fairly vague. You see, we sometimes say, 'I had a strange experience yesterday'. It could mean that *happening* or occurrence. Or it could mean the continuity of one's conscious life and one's relationship to one's past. It could also mean something momentary. But I think what you mean by it is something which collects your past, as it were.

**K:** Yes, yes.

**I:** I think you describe desire as experience, whereas you say that love is not experience.

**K:** Love can not be experience.

**I:** Well, could you just explain what the distinction is?

**K:** Could we go into the question of *who* experiences the whole thing, anything -- whether it is the experience of something imagined or the experience of one's past tradition and images, and so on? Do you understand?

**I:** Who is -- you ask -- the experimenter?

**K:** Yes. *Who* is experiencing?

**I:** Well this is a difficult question too, isn't it? I mean, if one were to ask a passer-by on the street, he would say, 'The individual, the person'.

**K:** Yes. '*I'm* experiencing'.

**I:** Yes, these experiences belong to *me*. They are *my* experiences.

**K:** Yes. *I* experience. I experience so many things. I had this morning, for instance, an experience of an accident in a car.

**I:** Yes, but then, if one were to pursue the matter beyond that kind of answer, one might say, 'Well, of course, one must *distinguish* between different kinds of experience'.

**K:** Yes, that's what I would do.

**I:** I can think of three kinds immediately. There is the experience of my past life, for instance. One says of somebody, 'He's an experienced man', meaning that he has had a lot of experiences of a certain kind.

**K:** (Laughs.)

**I:** And one would also say that 'experience' is just the continuity of one's consciousness going away into the past or...

**K:** Madam, you speak of the continuity of your past, of your consciousness.

**I:** Yes.

**K:** What do you mean by the word 'consciousness'?

I: Well, let's pursue the matter this way. You see, the word 'experience', I think, would differ according to what one was talking about. You see, in ordinary life one is, as it were, partly 'imposing' one's self on the world, and saying, 'I'm doing this', 'I'm doing that'. And this would, perhaps, be experience.

K: Yes.

I: But there might also be an experience where *you* -- as the self -- aren't really present.

K: That's it, where the experiencer is not.

I: Yes.

K: Is there such an experience which can then be remembered? Can you remember such an experience, and say, 'This is it'?

I: Well I would think that people have, what I'd call, a self-less experience, when they are, for instance, looking at a great work of art.

K: Yes, yes.

I: I am not sure about whether one could say this if they're with somebody they love very much. I think these two cases are very different though.

K: Yes. I would like to go into the question, if I may, of who experiences all this. *Who* experiences both the ordinary things and the most complicated forms of experience, the so-called spiritual experiences? Who is it that's always experiencing? Is the experiencer different from the experience?

I: Well, we would normally say so, wouldn't we?

K: Yes, you would say so.

I: Because we believe in the continuity of an individual person.

K: Yes, that's what is commonly held. Now we are going to question that. Is the thinker different from his thoughts?

I: Well, again, we would usually say so. We say, 'I order my thoughts'. We have -- don't we? -- this phrase, namely, 'to collect one's thoughts'. This assumes an 'I'.

K: Yes, but is that 'I' who orders his thoughts, different from his thoughts? He may order them, he may discipline them, he may control them, he might say, 'This is right', 'That is wrong', 'This

must be done', 'That must not be done'. But is he -- the controller, the person who disciplines, who brings order -- different from the things which he is ordering about?

**I:** Well, let us make a distinction here between ordinary, empirical, language and...

**K:** Yes.

**I:** In a law court you are responsible for something you've done. You can't say, 'Well, I'm a different person now', or something like that.

**K:** Yes, yes.

**I:** There is an ordinary sense of the continuity of the individual and of somebody being the subject. But leaving that aside, one doesn't have to be a philosopher or hold a religious view to think that one is divided, that one is a divided being.

**K:** That's it.

**I:** And there are times when one part of you disapproves of another part.

**K:** Yes, this dualistic process...Is there a difference between -- we come back to the old question -- the good and the bad?

**I:** Well, nothing could be more fundamental. Yes, there is a difference. This seems to me the nature of the real world.

**K:** I know. The real world is division. We have divided the good from the bad, the thinker from the thought, the experiencer from the experience. 'I should not', 'I must', 'I will become', and all the rest of it. This means division in one's self.

**I:** Yes. If you condemn yourself for doing something, then you are divided.

**K:** I would like to ask, if I may, is the experiencer different from the thing he is experiencing? Is the thinker different from his thoughts?

**I:** Well if I consider how I think about myself, I would say -- leaving aside the common sense or ordinary language view -- 'Sometimes yes, and sometimes no'. I mean that sometimes one is consciously judging one's self, dividing one's self, while at others, there is nothing except a single...

**K:** Single mood.

I: Single being or something.

K: Yes. So I'd like to see whether or not the experiencer is the same as the experience.

I: Well it sometimes seems so.

K: Yes. So when I say, 'I am envious', there is a division between me and envy. Therefore I try to control or suppress or rationalize or justify my envy. But, you see, the 'I' is envy; it is not separate from it.

I: Well I would have thought that it is *and* it isn't. From what I have read, and also from what I have understood, there are two things that you say; and I don't quite understand how they connect or harmonize. One of the things you said -- and which I liked very much -- could be put in the following way: Let us say, for example, that I think that I am envious. Now, as the word 'envy' suggests something which is bad, I might want, perhaps, not to be envious. If I say this, namely, that I want to be un-envious, I must start not in a kind of ideal self, which doesn't exist, but in my real being, which is the envious person. I feel a great sympathy with this. But then you also say that there is no process. I mean, that I must be good, and not *become* good. That is, that the idea of *becoming* good is in some way an illusion.

K: Yes, yes; that's right.

I: Perhaps you could explain. I mean, it seems to me that in the one case you're suggesting that I must start from a goal which is a long way from my conclusion. My conclusion would be to become un-envious. The other way, you're saying that there is no process of becoming.

K: You see, for me, there is no psychological becoming at all.

I: Well, this is what I do not understand.

K: We'll have to go into it.

I: Yes, please, go on.

K: First of all, let's come to this point. We have divided the the good from the bad both in the world and in ourselves. Right?

I: But you don't dispute this. I mean, do you reject this?

K: I don't refute ... I am just looking at it.

I: Yes, yes, go on.

K: Is the bad related to the good, or is the good totally divorced from the bad, that is, they are not related at all? You see, if they are related, the good will still be a part of the bad.

I: Well, I am not quite sure whether I would agree with that. I feel that we think about good and bad in several different ways, don't we? We think of bad grading into good as if it were a spectrum; with good here, for example, and bad here. (Pointing to two different spots.)

K: Yes, and continuing into the bad.

I: Yes, a continuum. We also think of good as being -- if we think of it as perfection -- really *outside* the world.

K: I don't know perfection. I mean 'the good'. I am talking of being good, whole. Good health, a good man. You know the word 'good'.

I: Yes. Well, let's say, 'A good man' then.

K: Is that good part of the bad? Does the good know the bad? Is the good the outcome of the bad? If it is an outcome, it is still part of the bad. It's like a child being born; it's still part of the mother.

I: Well, yes. Some people would say that they are opposites which exist in relation to each other.

K: Yes. Now I ask: Are they opposite? Or, do they have no relation to each other?

I: Well, there is a very clear difference between a bad man and a good man. So in that sense they are very different.

K: Yes.

I: On the other hand, in a human being, good and bad grade into each other and, sometimes, you don't know which is which.

K: No, that is what I am questioning. I feel -- I mean to me -- the good is totally divorced from the bad, just like love is totally unrelated to hate.

I: But, you see, in the ordinary, fallen human condition love often occasions hate.

K: Of course, of course. (Laughs.) I understand.

I: Whereas you say that love is not related to hate, that it is an entirely different kind of concept.

K: Yes, it is totally different. Love has no feeling about hate. It has no relation to hate. It does not encompass or embrace hate.

I: Wait a minute. Let me ask you a supplementary question. Would you say the same about 'love' and 'desire' if we took those two words?

K: Yes, yes. *Love is.*

I: You regard desire as something connected with psychological becoming.

K: Yes.

I: Well all right, and love is...?

K: Something entirely different.

I: How does this different thing come to one? I mean, what am I to do about it? Of course, one might also say, 'Why should it concern me?'

K: It should concern you, because -- and this is simple enough -- there is conflict. Desire always brings conflict, whereas love can never bring conflict. Love has no conflict; it has no sense of conflict.

I: You are using the word 'love' in an ideal sense, which is unusual.

K: No, I am not. I don't know if you want to go into it.

I: Yes, I do. Please, please, continue.

K: The brain is the centre of desire, feeling, anxiety, pain, loneliness, and so on. Consciousness is all that.

I: Yes.

K: The belief, the fears, the sorrow, the loneliness, the anxiety, the confusion, the whole psychological structure; that is the brain.

I: Yes.

K: And therefore love is not part of the brain. It must be something outside.

I: Well, this comes back to your saying that you don't experience love...

K: You can't.

I: in the way in which you experience desire.

K: You can't experience 'something' which is so.

I: In ordinary parlance we speak of a 'jealous' love or something like that. But that is not what we are talking about here.

K: Of course not.

I: We are talking about some sort of absolute -- I can't think of the right word -- love. Now, let us say that I dearly love somebody in, one might say, not a 'bad' way but a 'good' way. Would you want to say that this is not a part of any psychological process in my mind?

K: No. Let us say I love you. But if, in that love, there is any tinge of attachment, any tinge of jealousy, any shadow of conflict, then it is not the real thing.

I: I was brought up as a Christian, so there is in me a lot of the Christian way of looking -- although I don't believe in God or the divinity of Christ. In Christianity there is the idea of divine love or perfect love which is something which we, perhaps, don't normally achieve at all.

K: I don't see why not. Because if I am not jealous -- and I won't be jealous -- there's no sense of attachment to another person. That is love.

I: Well, in what one would, in ordinary parlance, call 'virtuous' love -- where you are not hurting anybody else by loving a particular person and you're not possessive and unreasonable, and so on -- there is attachment. I mean there is, inevitably, if the person dies...

K: Wait, wait; that is a different question. I mean, why are we attached to anything?

I: I would, I think, take a different view of the notion of desire. I would think that *becoming* good -- to use this phrase which you would, perhaps, want to exclude -- is a matter of purifying one's desires, of having 'good' desires, that is, desiring something which is good. Now, in loving somebody, I would have felt that the element of desire was present.

**K:** Let us look at desire. What is desire?

**I:** Well, again, one would say that there are 'low' desires and there are 'high' desires.

**K:** No, I am asking: What is the origin, the beginning of desire? Why has desire become such an extraordinarily important part of our lives?

**I:** Desire is certainly connected with the future.

**K:** Of course.

**I:** It is connected with time because I desire something which is absent. But let us cite examples. I might desire to be frightfully rich or I might desire to study a subject and become good at it.

**K:** Yes, yes. Good at the piano.

**I:** Good, let us say, at mathematics. I might desire to acquire knowledge of a subject.

**K:** Yes, of course.

**I:** And I might say that I love my subject. I love what I am studying.

**K:** Yes, but I am asking: What is desire? How does it come about? Why does it control us so strongly? Take a monk or one of the Indian *sannyasis* -- their whole idea is to suppress desire or transmute desire.

**I:** Well, yes. Transmute. I'd rather use the word 'transmute'.

**K:** Right. Now, to *transmute*, there must be an entity which transmutes it.

**I:** Yes. And there must also be a *process* of transmuting: a discipline or training which is a form of education.

**K:** No, a training which is a subtle form of suppression, a subtle form of organizing desire by saying, for example, 'Desire for God is good, and the desire for possessions is bad'.

**I:** Yes, all right.

**K:** We are not discussing -- are we? -- the objects of desire -- whether it is God, whether it is power, whether it is to become a rich man or a Prime Minister -- but what desire is, and how it takes shape in us.

I: Well, I am not sure whether there can be love without desire. If one thinks, perhaps, of some kind of 'perfect' love, the notion of desire would have changed so much that one would, perhaps, have to exclude it. At a more ordinary, but 'good' level however -- as for instance, in the desire to become well educated -- there is a kind of tension between a condition which exists and a condition which does not exist.

K: Yes. But I am not asking about the desire to become a good human being or the desire to be a good scholar, and so on, but about desire itself.

I: Well, I would, I think, evade or reject this question, because I do not see how one could explain what desire was without thinking of different kinds of desire.

K: No. You see, we have a desire for a house, a desire for this and a desire for that. We have too many desires.

I: Yes.

K: I am not talking of the desire for a particular thing, but of the movement of desire, the origin of it. You see, we have either suppressed it, transmuted it, escaped from it or totally controlled it.

I: Yes.

K: Now, who is the controller who says, 'This is good desire', 'That is bad desire', 'This must be pursued because it is helpful, and the other is no good', and so on? You see, the desire for God or the desire for money is the same thing; they are both still desire.

I: So if someone says, 'No, one desire is "good" and the other is "bad" ', you would say, 'No, they are all the same, namely, desire'.

K: Yes. You see, what is important to understand is *desire*, and not whether it is 'good' or 'bad'.

I: Yes, but I am not quite sure that I would be able to understand it without using that distinction.

K: Now, you said, 'Desire involves time'.

I: Yes, but I am going to withdraw that now, and modify it by saying that I think that there might be some kind of desire which does not involve time, because one will be completely united

with the object of one's desire. There is, I think, something in Christian mysticism which says that if one desires God and if one is united with God, then one's desire is fulfilled and becomes perfect love.

**K:** Yes. But both -- the man who says, 'I must become a very rich and powerful man', and the man who says, 'I must reach God and have complete union with God' -- have desire.

**I:** Yes, but you speak of desire as if it were something which you want to overcome or set aside.

**K:** No, I want to understand the movement of it, the process of it, the intolerable burden or, even, the pleasure of it.

**I:** Yes, it's not always a burden, is it? I mean, if, for instance, you are hungry and you know that you are going to have a good meal shortly, then the tension of desire is pleasurable.

**K:** Of course, of course.

**Both :** (Laugh.)

**I:** But there is something behind what you say which I can't quite ...

**K:** I'll go into it.

**I:** Yes, please, go on.

**K:** Desire exists only when there is identification with sensation. I see a lovely house and I want it. There is the desire for it.

**I:** By sensation you don't mean that there is an actual physical concomitant, but that there is a kind of imagery.

**K:** No, there are both. First there is sensation, then there is thought that creates the image of my owning the house. Then desire begins. Right?

**I:** Well, all right, so there is a kind of sensory aspect to desire.

**K:** Yes. There is a sensory aspect to desire. Thought then gives that sensory aspect an image.

**I:** Yes, I mean, one says that one desires to be educated. It doesn't mean that one is thinking about it all the time or having sensations.

**K:** Of course.

**I:** It means that one is just carrying on one's ordinary life, but that there would be moments when one has, perhaps, a sensory experience of desire. One imagines what it will be like when one's education is better or something like that.

**K:** Yes. So when sensation has been given shape by thought it becomes desire. That's all I'm saying. I am not talking of 'good', or 'bad', desire, but of desire *per se*.

**I:** Well, yes, but then you also say that love is different from desire.

**K:** Oh yes, love is different. Love is not pleasure. Love is not desire.

**I:** I am sorry, but I am going to introduce another topic at this moment; I will just mention and put it aside, however. I am concerned with what you feel about motivation and energy. I think that desire is a source of energy.

**K:** It is.

**I:** And 'good' desire is a source of 'good' energy.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** But let us take this idea of love being different. I mean, it seems to me a contrast between a process and something which is not a process.

**K:** Love cannot be a process.

**I:** And you say that there is something like, I am using the word, a 'creative being', which has to do with the present.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** And you would connect this with the possibility of love and truth.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** Whereas desire is something restless; it is something which is outside.

**K:** It is restless, quite right. That love is, doesn't mean that it is static.

**I:** 'Static' is probably the wrong word here. What would you say it was?

**K:** It is alive.

**I:** It is creative and it is...

**K:** And it's not exclusive. I may love you, but I also have this *feeling* of love. Love is not just identified with one person.

**I:** Well, but the feeling of love is quite a different feeling from the feeling of desire.

**K:** Of course, naturally.

**I:** So you are not excluding the sensory aspect of thought?

**K:** No, wait a minute. Let us go into it slowly.

**I:** Yes.

**K:** The brain is part of the senses, part of reactions, action, responses, beliefs, faith, fear -- God, no God, *my* failure, *my* depression, *my* anxiety. The content of my consciousness is all that. Now, in that there is a great deal of confusion, contradiction, fear, and all the rest of it. Is love part of that?

**I:** I don't know. You tell me.

**K:** I say that to me, personally, it is not.

**I:** If there is sometimes, in a person, a state of being or a condition which is love or, in other words, a 'creative being' which is love, are you suggesting that at that moment all the psychological stuff which that person consists of and has collected is somehow absent?

**K:** Yes, it is absent.

**I:** But still, he must know what the object of his love is.

**K:** No, just a minute. I might love you. But that love is not exclusive; it is not limited.

**I:** Yes, though in a sense it is and it isn't, isn't it? Because, if you love a person, you love that person and not another one.

**K:** But you *love*. Love is not exclusive.

**I:** No, but it is selective -- if one could make the distinction -- for after all, I mean, one doesn't love everybody. Perhaps God does.

**K:** No, I don't want to attribute love to God or to some. . .

**I:** Well, I am just using God as a figure of speech here. What I mean is that an ideal love would, perhaps, embrace everything.

**K:** I have been thinking about the use of that word 'idea', and I would object, strongly, to 'ideas', to 'ideals', and all that kind of thing. I see -- definitely -- that love has no relationship to hate. Love has no relationship to jealousy. It is not attached. I see that love is not desire. It is not pleasure.

**I:** Well, let us say that you are interested in another person. I mean, after all, people come to you.

**K:** I care. I care.

**I:** Yes. But to ask a very, very simple-minded question: Do you think that there are certain times in one's life when one is -- it's difficult to find the word here -- expressing or being love?

**K:** Yes.

**I:** But should this be at every moment of one's life?

**K:** I'm not sure madam, I'm not at all sure that it cannot be all the time like that.

**I:** Yes, please, go on.

**K:** Can love exist where there is self-centered interest? That is the real question.

**I:** No, it would be imperfect love. But let us leave out imperfect love, for it is not love.

**K:** (Laughs.) When there is self-interest, can the other exist? Obviously it cannot, because self-interest is very, very small.

**I:** As you won't let me use the word 'perfect' or 'ideal', I'll use the word love in your sense then, and say, 'All right, love does exclude self-interest'.

**K:** Where there is self-interest, the other is not.

**I:** Yes, but something that I and, in fact, everybody wants to find out is *how* to change. Everybody wants to find out how to *become* un-envious or, to put it differently, how to move out of the situation of being envious.

**K:** I see what you mean. I'm envious. There is no difference between me and the envy. Envy is me. I cannot act on envy, because it is me.

**I:** Well, yes, but you could become less envious.

**K:** But it's still me. Right?

I: Yes, please, go on.

K: So there is no question of suppression, transmutation or escaping from it -- it's me.

I: What do I do next?

K: Now wait a minute, I'm going into it.

I: (Laughs.) Please, go on.

K: If it is me, I watch it very, very carefully. I watch it; I do not try to act upon it.

I: So there is a 'you' that is watching the envy.

K: No. In watching, there is no 'you'. When you are watching a bird, for instance, there is no 'you'.

I: Well, watching a bird is quite different from other kinds of watching.

K: That is just it. Is there a watching without the word? Is there a watching without condemnation, without agreement or rejection or resistance? Is there just watching?

I: Well, yes, there can be such watching, but it would be difficult. Now, we've got to this envious person or to one's self who is envious. One is also aware of the envy. One watches it. But is there just watching? Or, to put it in other words, is there a state when one is *consciously* being one's envy?

K: Not, 'consciously'. You are envy.

I: Yes, but one is *consciously* envious. You see, when you *thoughtlessly* do something enviously, you are not watching it.

K: No.

I: You are expressing yourself.

K: Yes, that is all. Yes.

I: But, then, there are moments, perhaps, when you are watching, when you are attending to it.

K: Look, you are watching a precious, intricate jewel.

I: Yes, yes.

K: And you are looking at its extraordinary delicacy. You are looking at the bright light and the the beauty of the jewel.

I: Yes, and in this case you are looking at envy.

K: Yes. I am doing exactly the same thing here. I see the whole movement of envy, which is comparison, and so on, and so on.

I: Yes, yes.

K: So I watch it without any interference of thought. That requires a great deal of attention. It requires not concentration, but real attention -- an attention in which the self is not.

I: But are you not making a judgement?

K: Oh no. I have no values, in that I don't either say that you *must* or *must not* have envy -- because it's immoral or anything of that kind. Human beings have lived with envy for thousands of years.

I: But, then, is not the result of this attention the fact that envy disappears?

K: Watching with attention...Watching is attention.

I: Well, I like the word 'attention'. You attend in, you would say, some non-evaluating way. You are not making a moral judgement. You are not saying, 'I ought not to be envious'.

K: (Laughs.) Oh no, I'm not.

I: All right. But is not the result of this attention the fact that the envy dissolves?

K: Yes, because in attention there is no self at all. You can watch it, you know. It's great fun. (Laughs.)

I: Yes, but is not this then -- to use old-fashioned language -- a 'spiritual' discipline? In fact, this connects with my question about *how* one changes.

K: No, no.

I: I know you don't like the word 'discipline' either.

K: You see, the word 'discipline' really means 'to learn'. It means not to compartmentalize, and to pursue. You have to *learn* watching and not memorize things about watching. You have to see the whole implication of envy, of comparison, and all the rest of it.

I: But does this happen only when you are, to use a word which you yourself use, meditating, or should it happen all the time?

K: All the time, if you are *watching*. That is, if you don't let a single thought slip by without knowing what it is.

I: Yes, and this would co-exist with one being a ticket collector or whatever one's job is in life.

K: (Nods.)

I: The idea of living at different levels or different states must come in.

K: Yes, yes.

I: There would be a state of one's being which was this constant attention.

K: Yes, but I would also introduce the word 'meditation'.

I: Yes, well, it is a word that you use yourself.

K: I know that I use that word but, you see, meditation is a very complex business. *In meditation there is no meditator at all.*

I: All right, yes.

K: But what we do is to say, '*I must meditate. I must follow a particular system of meditation. I must practice*', and so on. And all this is nothing more than desire, that is, wanting to *achieve* a certain state.

I: Well, this seems to me in a sense unavoidable. I mean, I have been taught a system of meditation a long time ago and I have practised, to some extent, something like meditation -- of course only in a very, very feeble way. But it does seem to me that there is 'something' which is trying to do it better.

K: Now, when you use the word better, it means 'more' -- right? Therefore measurement come in.

I: You say that *in meditation there is no duality*. That is, there is no subject.

K: Yes, absolutely.

I: And I would say that something like this happens in the experience of art.

K: Ah, the moment you say 'experience', you are already...

I: All right. If I am looking at a great picture -- if I am really looking -- I am not there. The picture is there.

K: Yes. That's all. When you are really looking at something, there is the absence of the self.

I: And this would be an image of love too -- wouldn't it? -- namely, that you wouldn't be there.

K: Of course not. There is no image in love. An image is put together by thought.

I: Yes. Well, that may be so in a certain way of loving, as, for instance, in 'unselfish' love... This is difficult to talk about, because love happens in time and one has to struggle and think and plan and do things for the person that one loves. But one would be really *selfless* in all that one was doing. In other words, the self would not be present, but the object of attention would be present.

K: Of course, of course, yes.

I: But, it seems to me that one has to try. You are giving me the end but not the means.

K: No, no. Wait, wait a minute, let us look at it.

I: Yes, please, go on.

K: Let us look at it. You see, the means is the end. The two are not different.

I: May I just refer to a remark made by Kafka? He said that there is no way, there is only the end. What we call the way is just messing about. Would you agree with this?

K: Yes. That's just it. Now, let's begin.

I: Yes, please, go on.

K: Let us try something else. You see, change implies the future, as you pointed out. Right? From this to that. Now, what is the future?

I: Please, go on.

K: The future is a continuity of the past, modified through the present. It is a movement. Right?

I: Yes, all right.

**K:** So, the future is in the present. Of course, if I am learning a language ...

**I:** Yes, that is a good example, I think.

**K:** If I am learning a language, I need the future. I need time. I need training, discipline, *et cetera, et cetera*. Now, there -- outwardly, in the technological realm -- it is all right.

**I:** Yes.

**K:** Psychologically, inwardly, subjectively, the past -- which is me, my memories, my experiences -- is being modified in the present and proceeds to the future. Right?

**I:** Right.

**K:** So, the present is in the future, because what I am now is what I will be tomorrow, unless I change *now*.

**I:** Yes.

**K:** So, the present contains the past, and the future is now. The future is the present; it is what I am now.

**I:** In a sense there isn't anything else; but, please, go on.

**K:** And there is no future unless I continue. Now, is there an end to that?

**I:** You mean, is there an alternate state of being?

**K:** Yes. Is there an ending to this whole movement of becoming, struggling, achieving?

**I:** Philosophers have always been worrying about the difference between being and becoming. And in Platonism and in Christian theology, being is real and becoming is unreal. And I feel something of this in what you say. But I don't want to mislead myself by thinking about anything else. I am trying to picture what you are speaking of would be like. Let us say that one is spending one's time learning a language, and that one does not know the irregular verbs to-day, but will know them the next week. And this is human life and unavoidable, and proper; it is quite right that one should learn the irregular verbs.

**K:** Yes, quite right.

**I:** However, during this time, one is also attending to everything that one does in a particular manner.

**K:** Of course, I am paying attention to everything I do now.

**I:** Yes.

**K:** So, the 'now' contains all time.

**I:** Yes, but, I mean, you are picturing a possible human state.

**K:** No, I am *not* picturing. I am merely asking you to see what has happened to the human psyche. It has moved in this direction always. The past, modified in the present, and moving to the future. This is the chain -- right? -- in which we are caught. I won't even use the word 'caught'. This is the chain which we are.

**I:** Yes, the word 'caught' though suggests that there is freedom. That is another word that you use.

**K:** Of course.

**I:** A freedom which is connected with truth and with love.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** Somebody comes to you and says, 'Well, I am in a trap. How do I get out of the trap?'

**K:** You see, if you are in a trap, you have to first look at what the trap is like, before you begin to talk about getting out of it.

**I:** Well, I do not want to -- this is in parenthesis -- get out of the trap, in the sense that I do not stop wanting to know the irregular verbs by the next week.

**K:** Of course, that goes on.

**I:** But what I also want is to achieve a state of being which is selfless. And, perhaps, this may be the most important thing of all.

**K:** You desire it. Be careful. You have a desire for it. You have a concept of the future.

**I:** Yes, well, I know that I am not selfless *now*...

**K:** No, but you have a concept...

**I:** But I'd like to become selfless.

**K:** Therefore let us understand what the self is. You cannot change or rather break down the self without understanding the movement of the self. You cannot just invent a goal.

**I:** But in the situation where one is looking at one's envy, for instance, we agreed that one result of this attention would be that the envy would disappear. So the self is changing.

**K:** So it is not the ending of envy, but attention that matters.

**I:** Yes. But supposing I just attended to my envy, that is, I went on behaving enviously, but with the complete consciousness of what I was doing -- would that be a good state? I can't help using the word 'good'.

**K:** You see, *you* being conscious -- that is still a part of the self.

**I:** Well, one's not, I think, postulating a condition which is totally unlike the human condition.

**K:** No, no. We are human beings, and we live in this constant conflict, pain, sorrow, and all that. This is our life. This is our condition. Right?

**I:** Yes.

**K:** One day somebody comes along, and tells you, 'Look, there is a different way of living. You do not have to be everlastingly in this business'. And you listen to him; you find out. You may say, 'Rubbish' and drop it. But there must be a relationship between the speaker and yourself.

**I:** Yes, like now. I'm asking you, and...

**K:** No, we're *talking*.

**I:** Yes. Please, go on.

**K:** He tells you, 'Envy is not love. Envy cannot be put aside. So, watch it. Look at it. See it and let it unfold. Do not condemn it, transmute it or renounce it. Do not escape from it; just watch it. Give your whole attention to it'.

**I:** But would this not actually result in my inhibiting it?

**K:** No. (Emphatic.)

**I:** Well why not? All right, let me put it this way. Would it not be good for me to inhibit my envy? That is, I feel envy, but do not express it.

**K:** No. If you inhibit your envy, it will come up again some other time.

**I:** Yes, all right. But just meanwhile, it might be better if I don't...

**K:** (Laughs). I do not want 'meanwhile'.

**I:** Ah, well yes, but you seem -- to me -- to exclude the element of training one's self. You do not like the word discipline, for instance.

**K:** Madam, 'discipline', as you know, comes from the word 'disciple' -- one who is learning. Learning; not memorizing. As I mentioned earlier, you are *learning* to see the beauty of that jewel. You have never looked at that jewel. You have always condemned it, rationalized it, etc. But now there is only the watching of that jewel.

**I:** No. You see, in that case I am watching something precious. Now, if I am looking at my envy, it is the opposite of a jewel. It is something bad.

**K:** No, do not condemn it. There should be no spirit of condemnation or judgement or evaluation; just watching. Say, for instance, I am watching my son. I will not say, 'By Jove, you shouldn't be this, you shouldn't be that'. I will just watch him. Madam, don't you watch, for instance, a picture? You watch it. You see all the light, the proportions, the dark...

**I:** Looking at a picture is a good example for me, at any rate, in trying to understand what your fundamental idea is here. But it still troubles me that you are suggesting a kind of ideal mode of being in which you are connected with reality.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** But there remains the fact that one is not in this state. One is sunk in illusion. One is full of illusion.

**K:** Yes. I am in illusion. I live in illusion. I *am* illusion.

**I:** Yes.

**K:** My thinking, my belief, my faith, and so on -- all illusion. Now, the word 'illusion', etymologically, is 'to play' -- *illudere*. I am playing with illusions.

**I:** But why should I bother? I mean, to put it another way: Why shouldn't I -- if I am a clever person -- just watch my envy and be amused by it, and continue to behave enviously?

**K:** All right, carry on. But there will be conflict in it. There will be a certain sense of agony in it. There will be pain.

I: So -- if you saw somebody that you loved in a state of illusion -- wouldn't you wish for that person's sake that that person changed?

K: I would go and talk to him.

I: Then you are suggesting that he should change. You are suggesting moral values.

K: (Emphatic.) No, no. I would only say to him, 'Look, why do you have these illusions?'

I: Well, to call them illusions is already to make a moral judgement.

K: All right. Don't even call it illusion.

I: Yes.

K: You believe in God, right? Somebody believes in God or in some other thing.

I: Well, let's stick to the case of envy, because that is fairly straight forward.

K: All right.

I: Let us say that somebody is consumed with envy, the way some people perhaps are.

K: I know them, I know them.

I: 'He's got that', 'He's better than me', and so on.

K: (Laughs.) Yes, consumed by envy.

I: And you watch that person, and you say, 'Look, why waste your energy and your anxiety on something which is not deeply, really, important? You shouldn't be doing it; it's unreal'.

K: That is if they are willing to listen. The moment they are willing to listen to you, you have already helped them.

I: Yes, but then you *have taught* them something.

K: (Laughs.) No, no. I said that I do not put any pressure; I do not *want* that person to change.

I: Well, I know that all good teachers refuse to call themselves teachers, so, please, go on.

K: Conflict is the real root of all this.

**I:** But supposing somebody was in a completely harmonious state, with lots and lots of vices -- what we call vices, that is. Supposing they are envious, jealous, violent, angry -- couldn't there be such a harmoniously connected person? Supposing they are very successful in everything that they do.

**K:** (Laughs.)

**I:** I mean, would you say that this was impossible?

**K:** (Amused.) There can't be harmony, when on the one hand -- your right -- you are violent, and on the other hand -- your left -- you are trying to be harmonious.

**I:** Well, I agree with you. And I think people assume -- rightly -- that an evil man is in a state of conflict, and that a good man is in a state of harmony.

**K:** A good man has no conflict.

**I:** Yes, and an evil man has conflict. Well, this then suggests that the evil man has made a kind of mistake, in that there is something unreal about what he believes about the world.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** So, in making the distinction between good and bad, one is making a distinction between...

**K:** No, no. Take, for instance, a man who is a terrorist -- a man who kills for the fun of killing. There is something wrong with the man. I do not call him either evil or good. I can see that there is some kind of aberration going on in the poor chap.

**I:** Well, so what you want to produce is a harmonious personality.

**K:** Yes. Is it possible to end all conflict within one's self? That is the real root of the question. Is it possible to end all conflict?

**I:** And you will be prepared to drop the words 'good' and 'bad' then, and use the words 'harmony' and 'disharmony'?

**K:** No, I would not even use the words 'harmony' or 'disharmony', because the moment there is no conflict, you will be whole. There will be a wholistic way of living.

**I:** Yes. But you are still talking about good and evil -- in the sense in which we normally understand them. You speak of, let us say, a terrorist. I mean, let us picture a very bad man -- not

just an envious man, but a very evil man -- somebody who is cruel.

**K:** Yes, somebody who kills.

**I:** Then one would want this person to...

**K:** If he will listen, if he will change, so much the better. But people generally do not listen. (Laughs.)

**DISCUSSION      BETWEEN      J.KRISHNAMURTI  
AND      IRIS MURDOCH -- # 2**

**I:** I am still trying to formulate some fundamental question, which I can't grip or entirely see at the moment. Perhaps I could sort of walk round it a bit and ask one or two different sorts of questions for the moment. The idea of duty, I think, is a fundamental one in most moral systems. I mean that philosophers argue about it, but there it is. People are taught duties when they are growing up. They ought to tell the truth, for instance. Well, you shy away from the idea of duty.

**K:** Yes. I feel 'responsibility' is better than 'duty'.

**I:** Well all right, but would not a sense of responsibility be a sense of duty?

**K:** No, because responsibility implies care, affection, a sense of communication with the other person. It means doing something for somebody because you are responsible and not merely because you are obliged to do it or disciplined to do it or told to do it. If I undertake to build a house, for instance, I will be responsible for building the house. If I am responsible for my children, I will be responsible completely -- not only until they pass out of my house. I would see that they lived properly, were brought up not to kill, and so on. You follow?

**I:** Yes, there would be no limit.

**K:** There are no limits to responsibility.

**I:** Yes, one connects, perhaps, duty with very definite things which have to be done. But, on the other hand, if you take something like a duty to tell the truth, that is something so fundamental...

**K:** Telling the truth is part of my responsibility. I wouldn't be dishonest to myself.

**I:** Yes. Well, let us not worry then about the word duty, but this is a case where one is dealing with an aspect of human life and which belongs to the continuity of life.

**K:** Yes, it does

**I:** And would you say that just by that being so, that it is an everyday notion which is part of the decent moral continuity of

a society's life, and would you regard it as being essentially different from what we are talking about this morning -- from the real thing and from love?

**K:** Yes, I would consider it different.

**I:** But I don't see quite where the division comes between ordinary -- what we would call -- goodness or moral behavior and this fundamental thing.

**K:** Could we start with: Why are we fragmented? Why do we look at life and all our actions and our business, whatever it is, in this fragmented way -- business, religion, love, hate?

**I:** Well, life has to be dealt with every day.

**K:** Yes, yes. But why should I accept life as having to be dealt with in this way?

**I:** You seem to feel that we should have some kind of completely unitary selflessness which then isn't divisible.

**K:** Yes, that's it.

**I:** But then, I mean, let us say that words like 'truth' and 'love' are...

**K:** Are one. If there is love, there is truth, there is beauty.

**I:** Yes, this is so if one is looking at it in a philosophical sense.

**K:** No, in an actual sense. I mean, if I really loved, there is beauty in it. Then I can't be dishonest.

**I:** Yes, but what worries me is the point of connection between the truth which is love -- the fundamental truth -- and ordinary conceptions of truth, as in, 'Tell the truth'.

**K:** Yes. Suppose I've lied and I acknowledge that I've lied, I acknowledge that I've been angry; that's honesty. That is the truth in the ordinary sense of the word. I don't cover up my lie with lots of phony stuff. I say, 'I've lied; I've been angry; I'm sorry, I've been brutal'. I think we are so trained to cover up all this, to escape from all this, and not to be terribly honest to one's self.

**I:** Yes. Well, one of the things which I think you are very much concerned with is overcoming conflict and overcoming separatist thinking, and so on.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** You make these distinctions between desire and love. And you then bring truth into the centre by saying that love is truth.

**K:** Yes, yes of course.

**I:** But this doesn't seem to me to connect very easily with ordinary moral life. And this is where the idea of purifying desire or something would come in. It looks as if one would have two judgements of morality, in that one would say, 'He is a good man' in the ordinary sense of the word but 'He is an imperfect man' in your sense of the word.

**K:** Yes.

**I:** And isn't it important for you -- I'm thinking of you as someone wishing well to men -- to make connections?

**K:** Yes, I see this. I would ask myself or I would ask my friend, 'Why are we fragmented?' first.

**I:** Well you want to go back to a metaphysical question right at the beginning.

**K:** Of course. From *there* you have to start.

**I:** Yes, this is your feeling: that we must be good not merely at the beginning but good all the time.

**K:** Yes. You must be good all the time.

**I:** All right. You use the word 'new'. I like this. I also like what you say about 'new', namely, that what you want is something new and not the acquired collection of what one is and what one has.

**K:** Yes. I have asked the students in our many discussions: Why is it that we are fragmented like this, so broken-up, what has gone wrong with us? After millions of years we are still fighting, we are killing each other, we are angry. What is wrong with us? Do you follow what I mean?

**I:** Well, there is a sense of conflict or fragmentation, which is bad -- which means we are fighting. But there is also ordinary discursive reason and how we set about getting to know things and acting.

**K:** Yes. Say, for example, I use my reason to see why the world is divided into these kinds of things, like nationality and religion. Why do we accept this way of living?

**I:** I think there is a kind of empirical, ordinary answer to this... We can try and stop it by doing all sorts of things.

**K:** But we don't. Madam, the fact is we have never done it. We haven't stopped this division. I mean, if I had a son with an Arab woman and a son with an Israeli woman, what would I do? They would be fighting.

**I:** Yes, but you wouldn't deny this -- would you? -- that part of what you want to communicate is something which would have practical effect in politics.

**K:** Yes, it has a practical effect in politics, in religion, in daily life. Look, don't let's start with theories, and all that. Let us start with why we human beings, right throughout the world, are so broken up, so divided in ourselves.

**I:** But this is partly, it seems to me, an empirical question, in that you could say why we can find out why a certain religion held certain views at a certain time. One could study Christianity in this way. But there is also a sort of metaphysical question which I would think is partly unanswerable. I mean, it's like asking: Why are there human beings?

**K:** No. (Laughs.)

**I:** I mean, one must say, 'Well I don't know'. I mean, people who believe in God would say, 'God created the world'.

**K:** Of course, and the scientists have different reasons.

**I:** Yes, yes. I mean, if you exclude the empirical answer, you are asking a kind of metaphysical question which in a way can't be answered.

**K:** No. I'd like to ask: Is it that thought itself is fragmented?

**I:** Well I think thought itself is fragmented and it seems to me in a sense unavoidably so. I mean, what we are doing now -- using a natural language and concepts and using words which we've learnt to understand, and so on -- is something which depends on a spreading out of interest to the world in many, many different ways. I mean, the word 'discursive' sort of covers this kind of notion. The intellect has to spread itself out, it has to emerge into language, and so on; it can't be compact.

**K:** No, no, of course not.

**I:** It can't be 'one' -- which many philosophers want. Now, you don't seem -- to me -- to allow, to put it this way, the redemption of the world, the bringing of the world into the centre, into goodness, into truth and love.

**K:** Yes, I have. I say, 'Yes, it must be'.

**I:** Well yes, but then one can't get rid of all fragmentation; one's got to redeem it, if you see what I mean.

**K:** Yes, redeem it. Let us redeem. Why are human beings like this? Let's redeem that. Let's redeem -- not intellectually explain -- the fact, the daily fact, that there is such conflict, such violence.

**I:** Well, again there are many historical reasons why there is a conflict in Ireland, for instance. But you're thinking of a much deeper thing.

**K:** Yes, a much deeper thing, naturally.

**I:** Oh well, if somebody asks me that I would say, 'I can't answer the metaphysical question but what I can say is: Why ought it not to be so?'. And this uses the word 'ought', which you don't want.

**K:** (Laughs.) Quite, quite.

**I:** As I said, we have a conception of goodness from which we spread, as it were, all kinds of thought and action into the world -- I'm putting it very badly -- hoping that gradually we can make the world better and remove conflict in the superficial sense and in the deeper sense too.

**K:** Madam, we've lived on this earth, according to the scientists, the biologists, and all the rest of them for at least two or three million years. We've evolved.

**I:** Yes, we are. And who can say what the future holds.

**K:** The future is what we are now. If we do not do something now we will be exactly the same tomorrow.

**I:** Yes, but what we *can* do now is really something very limited. We can do something to ourselves and we can do something to a small number of people.

**K:** Yes, to people; but, you see, 'ourselves' is the world.

**I:** And we can also take part in politics, which is the way it's happening in the world.

**K:** Yes, but I am the rest of the world because my consciousness is like the rest of mankind.

**I:** Yes, you mean that if you could do it, other people can do it.

**K:** I mean, if I change, I effect the...

**I:** Yes, well there is also the fact that one has a very limited amount of time in which to achieve this insight.

**K:** (Laughs.) That is why time should not interfere with this question. I am a human being. My way of life, my way of thinking, my actions are comparatively like the rest of mankind. They may have outward differences, but deeply, I am the rest of mankind. *I am mankind.*

**I:** Except that you are a very unusual person. But leaving that aside...

**K:** No, no. I am mankind because we all suffer; we all go through a hell of a time. I am the rest of mankind and, so, I am humanity. That is real love.

**I:** Yes. But how does this...

**K:** Therefore come and join me. Come, and let go your petty little nationalities and all the rest. Come and join me. Let us be free and look at the world differently, and not always be in conflict with each other. Madam, this pettiness is taking place every single day in one's existence.

**I:** Yes, but I can't help putting the problem in terms of: How much influence can one have? After all, if anybody wants to influence people in order to bring about the end of this period of conflict and so on, they have to involve themselves in persuasion, in politics, for instance. And many people would say, I mean, many people do say now, that to worry about your own soul and whether you are selfless or not is a waste of time. You must simply go and help other people; go and stop people from suffering, for instance.

**K:** Yes, but wait. See what has happened to those people who are helping and to those people who are helped; very little. Hitler wanted to, you follow? Buddha said, 'Mankind suffers, there must be an end to suffering', right? And look what they've done. Suffering is going on.

I: Yes. I am sorry, but I keep wanting to turn it around a bit so that I can get a bit more light. When you speak of overcoming conflict and overcoming suffering...

K: Not overcoming -- ending.

I: Ending, yes. Is this anything like what a Buddhist would think of as *nirvaṇa*?

K: Apparently *nirvāṇa* means (I've gathered this from discussions with people) a state in which the self is not -- the 'self' in the sense, all the turmoil, and all that. Come to that point; don't discuss what *nirvāṇa* is; you will find out.

I: I would understand something like this as meaning that one is in a selfless condition and the denial of the world is the meaninglessness of all these other things.

K: And that is what they have done: deny the world. But I do not say, 'Deny the world'. On the contrary, we have to live here.

I: Yes, I mean, if one thinks of Plato's image of the cave. . . that you are in darkness and then gradually you move out into the light...

K: I know.

I: He also speaks of coming back into the cave, by which I think he means that you find some kind of liberation for yourself, but then you have to liberate everybody else as well.

K: That's the point. You know the whole sense of *bodhisattva*, and all that. I won't go into that. So if you change fundamentally, won't it affect mankind?

I: It will affect a certain number of people.

K: No, you *will* affect mankind. Look, Christianity has affected so many millions.

I: Yes certainly; I was about to say that there are cases like the life of Christ -- whether Christ really existed as a historical man or not -- the image of Christ has changed people's lives.

K: Through propaganda they've changed. Right?

I: Yes.

K: Now, Buddhism has affected the whole of Asia.

**I:** Yes, yes. But, you would go on to say that nevertheless...

**K:** Yes, I say, 'Let's few of us work at this, then we'll change the world'.

**I:** I think we have had great teachers who have had a great deal of influence, and who have, as far as I can see, advocated a kind of selflessness which is not unlike what you are speaking of.

**K:** Yes, freedom. Freedom from the self.

**I:** What is one to do?

**K:** 'What is one to do?' requires sitting down and talking about it, going into it. Right? Naturally. It requires breaking down the barriers between us.

**I:** I think we have come upon a slightly different question. A question about influence.

**K:** I do not want to influence anybody. That is the worst thing that can happen. Because if I influence you, somebody else will come along and influence you too, in another direction. But if you see something for yourself, it will be clear.

**I:** Well, yes, that again is something which we agree about, namely, that you have to do the thing yourself; it is no good being told by somebody.

**K:** Yes. Therefore, no propaganda.

**I:** This is something which I think theologians are realizing now -- that you can't have God thrust upon you. I mean, whatever spiritual life is, it is something which you have to discover for yourself.

**K:** In the spiritual world there is no authority.

**I:** Yes, yes, I agree there.

**K:** But now everything is that. People want authority. They get some kind of security in authority.

**I:** Well, I don't myself see any answer to the problem of how the discovery of spiritual truth, or whatever this may be, can change the world. You, perhaps, have more hope for the world than I have.

**K:** (Laughs.) No, I am neither pessimistic nor optimistic. But I see that unless there are a few of us who radically change the whole psychological structure that we are now, we will be going down hill all the time. That's all.

**I:** Yes. Well I agree with that too. I mean, if the world lost people who are concerned with what you're concerned with, I think that it would lose its centre in some way.

**K:** Yes, that's what I mean. But there are very few people who are concerned, who are totally free from all this.

**I:** Yes. But then you want, to put it sort of bluntly as it were, that there be more of such people, but at the same time you reject traditional methods based on, for instance, ideas of duty, ideas of asceticism and so on, which have been, as it were, part of the training of people who achieve, perhaps, this state.

**K:** Why should I be trained? If I see something to be true, I stick to it. Why should I be trained?

**I:** Yes, but I think you've probably had a gift of -- what a Christian would call -- grace, and which a lot of people haven't had. That is, what you achieve easily would be very, very difficult to achieve for the majority of people.

**K:** Perhaps that may be. But I mean, after all, there must be... All right, if you use the word 'grace', be in a state to receive that. Which means: Do not be selfish, do not have conflict; have some kind of inward silence.

**I:** Yes, I agree entirely with this. Yes, let us not argue about the question of influence or politics, because I understand your position here.

**K:** Yes, that's right.

**I:** I would think, I mean, I would feel that it is perhaps important to try in certain ways to influence one's surroundings. But I know that this is full of difficulties. I would rather, in a way, stick to the question we were worrying at this morning -- though I don't quite see how to find the way of enlightening myself on this subject. It's partly to do with the question of time and fragmentation. That is, that time is fragmentation.

**K:** Yes, that's it. To be free of time. That means no movement forward.

**I:** Yes, to be free and in the truth and in love. And not to be acquiring and not to be planning.

**K:** Yes, that's right.

I: How would one, if one had this kind of insight -- or however you would put it -- know that one had it?

K: I think one wouldn't know. But it would show in one's actions, in one's daily life.

I: It seems to me that you are thinking in terms of two entirely different planes and I'm wanting to connect the two and you refuse this connection.

K: No. There's a physical plane, right?

I: Yes, well, then there's a psychological plane also, which is what we were speaking of.

K: Yes. Why should there be division in the psychological plane? Why should there be a superior psychology or an inferior psychology? It is a whole psychology.

I: Yes. I mean some kind of -- I introduce the word -- redemption.

K: Yes, I understand. You see, 'To be redeemed' -- by whom? If I looked to you to be redeemed, I would be lost.

I: Yes. I am not thinking of being redeemed in the Christian sense. I just mean by 'redeemed' that something which is fragmented is drawn in. I am using the image of a centre and of outlying parts.

K: Yes, I understand.

I: What I am all the time trying to discover is just where this divide is between say, the life of a very good man...

K: Ordinary sense -- 'good'?

I: Yes.. very virtuous man, who is being very unselfish in the ordinary sense and who is doing a lot of good to people, and so on -- between that life and the life of truth.

K: Ah... That is totally different.

I: Well, why is it totally different?

K: *Of course it is.* (Emphatic.)

I: This seems to be a metaphysical remark.

K: Yes, I know.

I: You don't mind? Yes. Go on.

**K:** After all, the self is a very subtle, cunning thing. It can hide under prayers.

**I:** Yes. Absolutely.

**K:** It can hide under every little action, thinking it is noble. 'I'm helping mankind.' 'I influence for the good.'

**I:** Yes, yes. 'I'm really a remarkable person, admired by everybody', in brackets as it were. Yes.

**K:** So, to understand what the self is requires observation. It requires looking at it daily. You can't look at it just for a moment, and say, 'I am free, that's it'. It requires such a tension.

**I:** So you would think that if somebody were entirely absorbed in outward action, as it were, he wouldn't be in the truth.

**K:** That's the most dangerous thing. (Laughs.)

**I:** A certain amount of fundamental quietness could be compatible with leading an active life, couldn't it?

**K:** Yes, yes. That silence is not the product of thought. It is not to be cultivated. Silence. Quiet. Inside there is no movement.

**I:** Yes, I think I believe in that silence too. And this would connect with what you say about living in the present and timelessness.

**K:** Yes. You know, meditation is an extraordinary thing. I have talked to people who 'practise' the various types of meditation: Tibetan and the Hindu, the Zen, and so on. It is all a conscious, deliberate effect. It isn't something you do for the love of it. Not meditate 'for the love of'. . . You can love and yet be selfish. But I mean in the sense, to meditate without conscious effort.

**I:** Yes, I think any means that one adopts towards goodness is likely to become a barrier.

**K:** Absolutely.

**I:** It is likely to, because one seeks idols. I mean, we are idol worshippers.

**K:** Oh yes, then that's finished. That's...(Shrugs.)

I: Yes. One seeks consolation in the feeling that one is doing something but, nevertheless, doing it could help.

K: No, no, I have talked to people who have spent years -- please, I mean it -- twenty-five years. The man who came to me was about seventy -- much older than I was -- and he said, 'I've spent twenty-five years in the jungle, wandering all over, begging, and I've deceived myself all along'.

I: Well, he's to be congratulated, I suppose. He was prepared to say something like that.

K: Yes, yes, that shows something. Real quietness is something you cannot cultivate. You cannot get it by practice and all the rest of it. You have to acquire it in your daily life.

I: It comes by a gift, perhaps.

K: No -- in your daily life, madam. What is the point of your quietness, if your daily life is not affected, if your daily life is not without conflict?

I: Well, this is why I am constantly wanting to say that the connection with one's daily life is a fundamental idea.

K: Yes.

I: I mean, if somebody claimed to have this quietness but behaved badly in ordinary life, I would be skeptical.

K: I know.

I: Yes, yes. My own thoughts on this subject are, I think, influenced by Plato and I feel that, perhaps, something that you are insisting on -- and which he also insisted on -- is the absolute separateness of this idea of the timeless and the eternal from what we ordinarily think of as goodness, which is a kind of idolatry.

K: Yes. Quite right.

I: Yes. And he -- Plato -- uses the image of destroying idols, in that you destroy images, you destroy idols, and you go on. But of course he does picture life as a pilgrimage in a way in which I think you do not.

K: Ah, no. If I have no images in myself about anything, there will be no self in that.

I: Yes. You are really picturing what many spiritual people have

thought of as the end of the journey. I mean, that you're at the end, except that you want to insist that of course one is already in a sense potentially at the end or that there is only...

**K:** One has to be careful of that too, because the Hindus believe that there is God, there is the *atman* inside, and that given a chance, all they have to do is peel off their ignorance, and they will be like that. That is an assumption. I do not want to assume anything.

**I:** Well, I think there is a metaphysical -- I wouldn't call it assumption, because it's something I agree with, so I wouldn't use the word assumption...

**K:** It is. It is an idea.

**I:** Well, all right. This is a metaphysical assertion or a religious one -- but you would not want to use the word 'religious' because that might be misleading.

**K:** This is just a concept which has been cultivated, which has been traditional, and that has no meaning. Because look, I have this concept that God is in me and then I go and kill somebody.

**I:** Well, yes. Anything involving the idea of God is, of course, already in a sense an idol.

**K:** That's all I'm saying. We are idol worshipers -- whether the idol be physical, hand made, or mental, made by the mind.

**I:** So there is the absoluteness of the division for you between the ordinary process of life and this being-in-the-truth which is something which lives in the present in the way in which something eternal must live in the present, if you see what I mean. That is, you must insist on it being quite separate from the world of the idols.

**K:** Yes, absolutely. After all, that has been man's search for eternity.

**I:** Yes, well, that is what people have always wanted.

**K:** And then they made an idea of it.

**I:** Which is not a continuation of time, but quite different from...

**K:** Of course, of course. (Laughs.) It is the end of time.

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