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Bulletin

KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA

FROM THE EDITOR

Krishnamurti's public talks constitute a unique form of communication with his audience that he described, as noted previously, with the help of several metaphors. His aim, he insisted, is neither to persuade nor to argue, but to take a journey with each individual listener while holding up a clear mirror, in which individuals find their true selves reflected.

Words by themselves clearly do not constitute a reflecting surface; they are overlaid with intentions — to communicate ideas, to persuade or coerce towards a goal, to promise or to trick people into certain types of beliefs. At the outset of the present talk Krishnamurti insists that his words are devoid of any intentionality; and because they are free of any intention, of any desire to shape, it is possible to look beyond the words into the silence from which the words emanate; the silence remains the true reflecting medium: 'To go much beyond the word is to have communion; it is where not only minds meet, but also hearts; it is where the whole of one's being meets another.' (*Madras, Dec.30, 1979*)

The journey that Krishnamurti offers to undertake with the audience cleanses the mind of its word and word-induced feelings — possessed though the mind by chattering, conflicting desires, by the influence of diverse ideas and its millennium-old memories. To be possessed in this way, Krishnamurti suggests, is to be imprisoned, to be sluggish, and insensitive. Freedom from content is a precondition of the journey that would end in clarity, where mind and heart meet under the canopy of a clear sky. The journey's end is a new beginning.

The gap between what-is and what-ought-to-be is the

mechanism that keeps the mind in a vicious cycle. Desire drives the cycle — of perception, contact, sensation, grasping, and finally the birth of the image and the resulting will — and yet need not turn around in a cycle, for ‘desire may be life’. (*ibid.*) The problem arises because of the framework humanity imposes on it: ‘Desire is wrong’ or ‘Desire is right’, ‘Should I yield’, ‘Should I not yield’. Perhaps unique among religious teachers, Krishnamurti did not condemn human desire; on the contrary he celebrated it, provided the desire is not trapped in the prison of the self:

Like steam, desire is energy. . . And as steam can be directed to run every kind of machinery, either beneficial or destructive, so desire can be dissipated, or it can be used for understanding without there being any user of that astonishing energy. If there’s a user of it, whether it be the one or the many, the individual or the collective, which is tradition, then the trouble begins; then there is the closed circle of pleasure and pain. (*Commentaries On Living, Series III*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1978, p 227.)

— R.H.

SELF-CENTRED ACTIVITY IS DESTROYING THE WORLD

It would be rather good if we could go into the question as to why you have all gathered here. Have you gathered here to listen to this speaker, or just to be amused, intellectually activated? Are you seeking a new excitement, a new experience? Or, perhaps, you have gathered here out of sheer curiosity to find out what the speaker has to say. Perhaps it is all of those. Of course, some might, also, be very serious and want to find out

If we may, we will go on with what we were talking about yesterday.

First of all, I think we should be very clear that we are not doing any propaganda. We are not propagating any ideas or doing a campaign like those fellows across the way. We are not trying to convince you of anything, and I really mean it. We are not persuading you to act in any particular direction, or to think in a certain way, towards a certain end. I think that should be very clear. We are trying or, rather, hoping that we can be concerned together. We are hoping that — together — we can inquire into the whole nature and the structure of the mind, because from that all actions, all desires, all beliefs spring. Unless we understand this very complex nature of the mind and the brain, we shall not be able to find out for ourselves what right action, under all circumstances, is. So I hope that we — you and the speaker — are together concerned, committed, at least for this evening, to the inquiry, the investigation, of our own minds. Our minds are the result of many, many, many years; they are the result of millions of years, with all the vast experience and knowledge that has been accumulated through those years. Our minds have not

only acquired knowledge recently, but also inherited knowledge genetically. Our minds have been under the great pressure of evolution. And, I hope, we can go into all this together.

One wonders for what length of period you can maintain a certain attention this evening. Can you attend continuously? Can you sustain attention for this whole hour? To do so, you must have the urge to listen attentively, carefully, precisely, and use the speaker as a mirror in which you are seeing yourself. And when you see yourself exactly as you are, you can break the mirror for, then, the mirror is not useful at all. Though the speaker is sitting on a platform, he has no authority. The platform is only for convenience. So, bearing all this in mind, we are — together — concerned to see exactly what we are.

I wonder if you have observed that our minds are always occupied. There is never a moment when our minds are quiet naturally, easily, without tremendous exertion, conflict. Our minds are chattering. Thought moves from one association to another, from one desire to another, from one longing to another. There is the contradiction of opposing energies. Our minds and our brains are never, never quiet. They are occupied. If you are an engineer or a surgeon or a lawyer, your mind is occupied with all those skills. You may have a few moments of leisure when you might read other things or go to your club or join some game and so on, but there is a constant movement — which is apparently endless — and, so, the mind is never free. The mind is possessed by ideas, by knowledge, by all the experiences that one has had. It is possessed by the pursuit of pleasure, by fear, by a great deal of tears, sorrow, and so on. Therefore, the mind being so occupied — both consciously as well as unconsciously — is

never free. And the word 'freedom', etymologically, has a very complex meaning; it, also, means 'love'.

So the mind, the brain, which has evolved through time has come to a point where it has discovered for itself that there is not one corner where it is free. Its freedom consists only of moving from one corner to another corner of the same ground. It imagines, thinks that it is free because it has moved from this to that, or because it is free to choose, to discriminate between this and that. It thinks that it is free because of choice: the freedom of will. This has been our movement: going from one group to another group, joining this sect or that sect, moving from one authority to another authority in pain, in anxiety, in grief, in sorrow. Jealousy, anxiety — that is the occupation of our minds. So, is there freedom at all? Do you understand my question?

Please inquire with me. We are taking a journey together. I am not taking a journey by myself. We are walking together as two friends; we are talking over things amicably, charitably, with a certain sense of care and affection. We are not trying to browbeat each other through argument, through superior knowledge, through having a great deal of experience. We are like two people who are really friends, who move together with a sense of great affection, who understand each other, who move beyond the words, who do not just stick to words, but find out what lies behind the words. So, if we can do that this evening, it will be marvellous. Then we can communicate really — not just verbally — with each other. To go much beyond the word is to have communion; it is where not only minds meet, but also hearts; it is where the whole of one's being meets another. We should walk with that care and attention, beginning from very near — which is where we are, for that is the only place where you can begin. Begin

very near and, then, you can walk very far. You can walk very far together, because you are never alone.

All our life is relationship, whether we like it or not. And if you, as a member of the audience, expect that you are going to be spoon-fed, expect that you are going to receive something extraordinary — some idea, some conclusion or belief — then we are not walking together, and we are not sharing together the same sky, the beauty of the land, the lovely tree in a field.

So, could we, this evening, without sentiment, without being romantic, exercise our brains and our minds and our hearts, to find out whether the mind — being enslaved as it is — can be free? Can we find out whether there is freedom at all for human beings — not in heaven, (and certainly not in hell)? — Because without freedom there is no love, without freedom there is no order, without freedom there can be no relationship between each other. You may be married, you may sleep together, you may share the same house, have the same children, but if in that relationship there is no absolute freedom, there cannot, possibly, be love.

The mind, the brain, is so crowded; every part of it is storing up the memories of a million years. That is, the mind, the brain lives in the known. Every part of the brain, every cell in it — because of its long journey of thousands and thousands of years — is carrying memory. Memory is the result of knowledge and experience, from which thought arises. That is the origin of thought. And within that area, within that ground, that field, there can never be freedom. You may choose, and you think that choice, the exercise of freewill, is freedom. Or you may determine that you are free by being permissive: sexually, morally, socially. By rejecting the

established order, you think that you are terribly free. I do not know if you have seen a cartoon in the *New Yorker*. (Perhaps you do not know that magazine; it is published in New York.) A boy and a girl are looking out of a window on Fifth Avenue, looking down from the 10th floor, and the boy says to the girl, 'Do you see those people down there: beards, uncombed hair, sloppy dress? Those are the new establishment'.

So, is there freedom beyond? Please, this is an inquiry; this is not a statement that there is or that there is not freedom. One has to see, very clearly, whether there can ever be freedom within the area of the brain, within the area of the mind. The senses with their neurological responses, the emotions, the various forms of sentiment — all that is the mind. And the mind is not separate from the brain; the brain is part of the mind. The question is: Can there ever be freedom within the whole area of the mind? If not, man is everlastingly a slave to the known. Please understand this. There have been scientists and professors who have said that man can ascend only through knowledge, that is, by gathering more and more and more knowledge. But knowledge is always within the time-limit of the past. Knowledge is the movement of the past through the present, modifying itself and proceeding as the future. Are you following all this? So, one has to question whether knowledge is the answer.

(Krishnamurti alludes to the noise — blaring through loud speakers — that is heard in the background.) This is a lovely country; here there is no respect for anybody! Everything is all right as long as you can do what you want to do — but it is great self-concern. Not to be concerned about anybody is immense selfishness. And you call that civilization. And out of that you hope to create a new culture

So, we are asking whether there is freedom at all within the area of knowledge which is the brain, the mind. It is very important for all of us to find out and not for just the speaker alone to find out. It is very important for all of us to find out, for if there is no freedom there, there cannot, possibly, be love. It is only a man who is completely, absolutely, free from the past that can fully comprehend or be in that state of mind where there is love, compassion, intelligence. So, as there is no freedom within the movement of the mind, within thought, there is no love. So, the question is: Is it possible to go beyond the process of time?

Time is movement from here to there, physically, and psychologically, from what-is to what-should-be, or what-might-be. Time is the constant movement of thought pursuing the ideal. For example, a man who is ambitious needs time to achieve his end. One needs time to achieve a certain result, to achieve a certain skill. For a seed to become a plant, you need time. There is time in the process of evolution. Man has, for a million years, acquired — through thousands and thousands of experiences — knowledge. And in that process he has come into this state of mind. All that needed time. And we think that time can bring about freedom; freedom from jealousy, freedom from anxiety, freedom from fear (of course, we do not seek freedom from pleasure). We expect time to be the means to achieve a result psychologically. Right? That is, I am jealous, greedy; I am full of discontent, full of being hurt, and to get over all that, psychologically, I think that I need time. Do you understand? That is, 'I will examine it, I will go into the cause of it, I will analyze it, introspect and, at the end of it, perhaps, I will be out of it'. All that means time. That is the tradition of the mind. The tradition handed down from generation to generation through thousands of years is that time is a means of changing, is a

means of conquering, is a means of achievement, both physically and psychologically. So the mind, the brain is conditioned to time. Examine it, please.

The speaker is not telling you what to think. That would be catastrophic. But we are examining, together, the nature of the mind — our mind. Our mind is the mind of man, of human beings. It is not 'your' mind or 'my' mind; it is the mind of man, because your mind is the result of many thousands of years. The instincts, the subtle intimations are the result of years. So, you are not an individual. You are the rest of mankind. So we are not, in this exploration, becoming more and more selfish, more and more self-centred; on the contrary. You see, it is self-centred activity that is destroying the world.

Now, the mind, which is the rest of humanity, has never been able to go beyond the limits of time. A little plant becomes a big tree — a banyan-tree — in a hundred years. That same sequential concept is carried over psychologically and, so, we say, 'Time is necessary'. That is our conditioning; that is our tradition. We say, 'You will *eventually*, if you do this, this, and this, achieve *nirvāṇa*, Heaven, illumination, God', or whatever you like. And that admits this destructive, corruptive nature of time. And, the question arises: Is it possible not to be caught in this time? Is it possible to act *not* in the tradition of time? I do not know if you are interested in all this. But it is your life, not my life.

The immediate is far more important than the future. We are full of unresolved problems. We have one problem after another in our relationships. In our business relationships as well as in our personal, intimate, relationships there are problems. Then, we have scientific problems, mathematical

problems; these have their own field. We are talking now about human problems. And these problems, when carried over day after day, day after day, corrupt the mind. By 'corrupt the mind', we mean 'make the mind insensitive'; the mind is, then, not quick, not active; it does not rapidly respond. Do you understand what happens to the mind that carries this heavy burden, this burden of problems? You are carrying these problems, and you say that 'time' will resolve these problems. But the mind, being caught in this tradition of time, becomes lazy, insensitive; it says, 'Well, it will be solved tomorrow'. The tomorrow is the movement of time. The tomorrow is postponement, and in that there is no immediacy; in that there is nothing immediate. Now, any problem — let's say of violence, for example — is to be met immediately in oneself, and not to be met with an idea of non-violence, which is again the tradition of time: eventually we will become non-violent. It is like the United Nations: all the nations together will *eventually* achieve brotherhood — which is tommyrot.

So, the mind has become accustomed, trained, conditioned to time. There is never any question of immediate action. And we are saying the immediate dissolves time — no, not 'dissolves' time, but breaks the tradition of time. If you are violent, you have to deal with it immediately, because there is no non-violence; that is a non-fact. Violence is a fact; that is what is actually going on. Your anger, your jealousy, your hatred, your competition — every sense of self-assertive aggressive movement — all that is violence in different forms. And the mind, being accustomed to time, has invented non-violence. Thought has invented non-violence — which is non-fact. You say, 'I will gradually become non-violent', but in the meantime you are violent. You are playing a game with yourself. Whereas violence is anger, hatred, all forms of

competition. And competition — individual and collective — is destroying the world. That is a fact. So, you have to deal with violence instantly, not allowing time, not saying, 'I will get over it tomorrow'. You have to deal with the fact immediately. Please see what happens to the mind which is faced with the immediacy of action. Are you doing it with me, or are you going to sleep? Come on, sirs.

You have your problems, haven't you? Unfortunately. You have problems of meditation, problems of love, problems of loneliness, problems of competition, problems of your wife and husband, problems of death and old age; you have every kind of problem. Now, if you take one of those problems and not think of the resolution of that problem — for in that, again, the element of time enters — but deal with it instantly, immediately, then you have denied time. When you deal with a problem instantly, immediately, it means that at that moment you set aside time as a means of achievement psychologically. The moment when it is clearly understood that this time-element — carried over from the physiological to the psychological realm — has made the mind insensitive, actually inactive, you deal with a problem instantly, immediately; at that moment you have denied time.

Do you understand what I am saying? No? I will go into this problem but, please, join me; please don't wait for me to explain; let us move together.

One of our great problems is desire. The word 'desire' means 'longing for something'; it means 'not having something', it means 'the want of' something and, so, longing for it. Desire directs most of our lives. Organized religions and the so-called religious people, right throughout the ages, have said, 'Desire must be stamped out. Desire — not just sexual desire,

but any form of longing — must be killed if you want to serve God. If you want to serve God, you must give all your energy to it'. Because we have not and we want, most of us are driven by desire: the desire to be wealthy, the desire to be famous, the desire to have a better life, the desire to marry a better man or woman, the desire for happiness, the desire for enlightenment. Desire is eating most of us. And we have never, never solved the problem. The *sannyāsis* put on robes, but they burn with desires. He — the *sannyāsi* — is just like us. He puts on a different robe, but he is just like us underneath that robe. The priests adorn themselves with all the extravagant robes, but they are just like the rest of humanity: ambitious, greedy, wanting position, wanting to become bishops, archbishops, wanting the whole hierarchical structure.

Desire is one of our great problems, and it brings great conflict to our lives — great conflict. You have one desire opposing another desire; you have the desire for one object, I! but that object is constantly changing. So, one has to understand the nature of desire, and not suppress it, not control it, not run away from it. One has to understand the problem now. It is our problem, and we have to face it. (I hope you are facing it now.)

What is desire? What is its nature? How does desire come into being? What do we do with desire? — All that is our problem, and we must deal with it immediately, and not say, 'I will get over desire; I will suppress desire; I will control desire; I will let desire run its course'. Do you understand all this? We are, first, inquiring into all this. Now, when we use words like 'inquiry', it means time. The very word 'inquire' implies time. But we are not allowing 'time' to enter; we are doing it in the sense of 'observing'. Let us use the word 'observe' rather than 'inquiry'. We are observing, and

observation is always immediate; it is now. Do you understand what I mean?

Desire causes innumerable problems, contradictory problems: conflict, misery. You know the gamut of desire. Now, we are looking, observing, desire: what it is, how it arises, and what its movement is. Are you following all this? Please, come with me. We are observing, not analyzing, not seeking the cause. We are just observing the movement of desire. We are not analyzing the object of desire — whether it is noble, ignoble, beautiful, ugly; none of that — but purely observing the movement of desire, and the observation of that is immediate. Is it clear? Are you coming, observing, with me? When two people watch a bird, they are both interested in what the bird is; they are actively watching.

What is desire? Desire comes through seeing, then contact, touch, then sensation. Now follow it. Stop there for a moment. I must go into it carefully for, otherwise, we will miss the point here. First there is the seeing. A woman or a man sees the flower, smells it, then wants it. That is, seeing, contact, sensation. Then what happens? Go slowly; observe precisely, carefully. Then what happens? You see a car and, then, what happens? Then thought comes in and says, 'How nice to be in it, driving it, to feel the power of it'. That is: seeing, contact, sensation, and thought creating the image. And the moment thought creates the image, desire comes into being. Is this clear — not just verbally? You see a man or a woman ... You know all the reactions that follow. So: seeing, contact, sensation. Then thought creates the image, a symbol, or whatever it is. Then from that image, which thought has created, bursts desire. Please look at it for yourselves. You can see it very clearly, only the movement is so rapid. It is accelerated by thought instantly responding. Now we are

saying: Watch it very carefully, and you will see the movement; you will see how it begins.

So, desire comes through the movement of thought creating the image. Thought pursuing the image becomes desire. So, the question is — if you have gone into it very carefully — why does thought create the image? Can thought not create the image? Because again it is the tradition of time — thought is time. Thought is the movement from the past, from knowledge, from memory. So thought which has been conditioned to create images instantly flows into sensation, and from that begins desire. Observe it in your heart; observe it very closely.

Now the question is: Can you look, have contact, have sensation, and can it end there? Can thought see itself, see what it is doing? Have you got it? Your minds are so slow because you have never exercised your eyes, your ears. You are not quick. You are too educated, that is what is wrong. You are all lawyers, engineers, scientists, businessmen, worried about your wives and children and, so, your minds have become dull. When something new is put in front of you, you don't grasp it quickly.

Sirs, I am not being impatient; I am just stating what is happening to your minds. I am just pointing out; we are observing together. Together. You are as active in your observation as the speaker. He says: Look at how desire arises. See that the moment thought enters into it, desire is created and we are lost. Then you have the contradictions, the conflicts, the urges, the competition, desire. So, we are not suppressing desire. We are not cutting out desire. We are not saying that it is right or that it is wrong. We are awake to the whole movement of desire. We are attentive to desire.

Attentive. When you attend, instantly a different activity comes into being. Right sir, are you doing it?

Now, look at the other aspect of desire, which is will. Will is energy directed in a particular direction. Will is the exertion of energy, and that energy is the movement of desire. 'I want to be better: a collector or an engineer or a lawyer' and, so, I exercise tremendous will to become all that because of thought. One has observed the people who have great will achieve: more money, more cars, better houses. One has observed this enormous energy driven in a certain direction with its consequent results. Conflicts, competition, ruthlessness, brutality, violence — all that is involved.

So, will — in which there is choice — is the movement of seeing, contact, sensation, thought taking over that sensation through an image, the movement of desire and the operation of will. You can see how this comes into being. So, the question then is not whether desire can be stopped ... Do you see how our minds have changed? Our minds have undergone change the moment we have realized the nature of desire. It has moved out of the tradition that desire must be suppressed, controlled, transformed, and so on. We are treating desire as an energy. Right, sir?

Now as long as energy creates conflict in any direction, that energy is wasted. Energy is wasted in conflict, struggle, competition, drive, wanting to be superior, and all the rest of it. So desire, which is the result of thought creating the image and pursuing that image, is energy. So, one realizes — if you are observing very closely as we are now — the nature of energy which has been caught up in desire and directed in a particular direction which creates conflict. The seeing — instantly — of that total process is the awakening of

intelligence, the awakening of intelligence which is going to direct that energy.

You see sirs, ladies, to live a life without a single control does not mean doing what you like. It does not mean permissiveness; it is to understand the nature of control instantly. You say, 'Well, why shouldn't I have control? — For if I don't, I will be sexual; I will be angry'. Understand why thought has brought about control, and find out whether it is possible to live a life without a single control. Think about it. See the beauty of it. Because when you control, one thought is controlling another thought, that is all. Thought is the response of memory, knowledge, time, and that thought has broken itself up. And one thought tries to control another, but it is still the movement of thought. Right? So, is it possible to observe instantly and act instantly? — for that needs no control. Do you understand?

Sir, we began by talking about freedom. A mind that lives in control, lives in conflict. It lives in constant desire: wanting, wanting, wanting. It is never free and, therefore, can never possibly love. And without that extraordinary thing called love, do what you will, you will create misery; you will destroy people. So, this observation of the mind is a freeing of the mind so that it has the extraordinary vitality of life, the energy of it.

— Madras, 30 December, 1979

DESIRE HAS TO BE UNDERSTOOD

Desire is important to understand, not good desire and bad desire ... Desire exists only when there is identification with sensation. ... The moment when sensation is given shape by thought, it becomes desire.

— *Questioning Krishnamurti: J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue*, San Francisco, California: Thorsons (An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers), 1996, pp. 106-108.

WHY DO THE SCRIPTURES CONDEMN DESIRE?

He had brought his friend, he said, so that with his help he could the better formulate his points. They were both rather reserved, and not given to many words, but they said they knew Sanskrit and some of its literature. Probably in their forties, they were slim and healthy-looking with good heads and thoughtful eyes.

‘Why do the Scriptures condemn desire?’ began the taller one. ‘Practically every teacher of old seems to have condemned it, especially sexual desire, saying that it must be controlled, subjugated. They evidently regarded desire as a hindrance to the higher life. The Buddha talked of desire as the cause of all sorrow and preached the ending of it. Śāṅkara, in his complex philosophy, said that desire and the sexual urge were to be suppressed, and all the other religious teachers have more or less maintained the same attitude. Some of the Christian saints castigated their bodies and tortured themselves in various ways, while others held that one’s body, like the ass or the horse must be well-treated but controlled. We have not read very much, but as far as we are familiar with it, all religious literature seems to insist that desire must be disciplined, subjugated, sublimated, and so on. We are just

beginners in the religious life, but somehow we feel there's something missing in all this, a flower with perfume. We may be entirely wrong, and we are not pitting ourselves against the great teachers, but we would like, if we may, to talk things over with you. As far as we can make out from our reading, you have never said that desire must be suppressed or sublimated, but that it must be understood with an awareness in which there's no condemnation or justification. Though you have explained this in different ways, we find it difficult to grasp the whole meaning of it, and our talking it over with you will be of considerable help to us.'

What exactly is the problem you want to discuss?

'Desire is natural, is it not, sir?' asked the other. 'Desire for food, desire for sleep, desire for some degree of comfort, sexual desire, the desire for truth — in all these forms, desire is perfectly natural, and why are we told that it must be eliminated?'

Putting aside what you have been told, can we inquire into the truth and the falseness of desire? What do you mean by desire? Not the dictionary definition, but what is the significance, the content of desire? And what importance do you give to it?

'I have many desires,' replied the taller one, 'and these desires change in their value and importance from time to time. There are permanent as well as passing desires. A desire which I have one day may, by the very next day, be gone, or have become intensified. Even if I no longer have sexual desire, I may still want power; I may have passed beyond the sexual phase, but my desire for power remains constant.'

That is so. Childish wants become mature desires with age, with habit, with repetition. The object of desire may change as we grow older, but desire remains. Fulfilment and the pain of frustration are always within the area of desire,

are they not?

Now, is there desire if there's no object of desire? Are desire and its object inseparable? Do I know desire only because of the object? Let us find out.

I see a new fountain-pen, and because mine is not as good, I want the new one; so a process of desire is set going, a chain of reactions, till I get, or fail to get, what I want. An object catches the eye, and then there comes a feeling of wanting or not wanting. At what point in this process does the 'I' come in?

'That's a good question.'

Does the 'I' exist before the feeling of wanting, or does it arise with that feeling? You see some object, such as a new type of fountain-pen, and a number of reactions are set going which are perfectly normal; but with them comes the desire to possess the object, and then begins another set of reactions which bring into being the 'I' who says, 'I must have it'. So the 'I' is put together by the feeling or desire which arises through the natural response of seeing. Without seeing, sensing desiring, is there an 'I' as a separate, isolated entity? Or does this whole process of seeing, having a sensation, desiring, constitute the 'I'?

'Do you mean to say, sir, that the 'I' is not there first? Isn't it the 'I' who perceives and then desires?' asked the shorter one.

What do *you* say? Doesn't the 'I' separate himself only in the process of perceiving and desiring? Before this process begins, is there an 'I' as a separate entity?

'It is difficult to think of the 'I' as merely the result of a certain physio-psychological process, for this sounds very materialistic, and it goes against our tradition and all our habits of thought, which say that the 'I', the watcher, is there first, and not that he has been 'put together'. But in spite of tradition and the sacred books, and my own wavering

inclination to believe them, I see what you say to be a fact.'

It's not what another may say that makes for perception of a fact, but your own direct observation and clarity of thinking; isn't that so?

'Of course,' replied the taller one. 'I may at first mistake a piece of rope for a snake, but the moment I see the thing clearly, there's no mistaking, no wishful thinking about it.'

If that point is clear, shall we get on with the question of suppressing or sublimating desire? Now, what's the problem?

'Desire is always there, sometimes burning furiously, and sometimes dormant but ready to spring to life; and the problem is, what's one to do with it? When desire is dormant, my whole being is fairly quiet, but when it's awake, I am very disturbed; I become restless, feverishly active, till that particular desire is satisfied. I then become relatively calm — only to have desire begin all over again, perhaps with a different object. It's like water under pressure, and however high you build the dam, it's forever seeping through the cracks, going round the end, or spilling over the top. I have all but tortured myself, trying to go beyond desire, but at the end of my best efforts, desire is still there, smiling or frowning. How am I to be free of it?'

Are you trying to suppress, sublimate desire? Do you want to tame it, drug it, make it respectable? Apart from the books, ideals and gurus, what do you feel about desire? What is your impulse? What do you think?

'Desire is natural, isn't it, sir?' asked the shorter one. What do you mean by natural?

'Hunger, sex, wanting comfort and security — all this is desire, and it seems so healthily sane and normal. After all, we are built like that.'

If it is so normal, why are you bothered by it?

'The trouble is, there's not just one desire, but many contradictory desires, all pulling in different directions; I am torn apart inside. Two or three desires are dominant, and they override the conflicting lesser ones; but even among the major desires, there's a contradiction. It's this contradiction, with its strains and tensions, that causes suffering.'

And to overcome this suffering, you are told you must control, suppress, or sublimate desire. Isn't that so? If the fulfilment of desire brought only pleasure and no suffering, you would go merrily along with it, wouldn't you?

'Obviously,' put in the taller one. 'But there's always some pain and fear as well, and this is what we want to eliminate.'

Yes, everyone does, and that is why the whole design and background of our thinking is to continue with the pleasures while avoiding the pain of desire. Isn't this what you also are striving after?

'I'm afraid it is.'

This struggle between the pleasures of desire and the suffering which also comes with it is the conflict of duality. There's nothing very puzzling about it. Desire seeks fulfilment, and the shadow of fulfilment is frustration. We don't admit that, so we all pursue fulfilment, hoping never to be frustrated; but the two are inseparable.

'Is it *never* possible to have fulfilment without the pain of frustration?'

Don't you know? Haven't you experienced the brief pleasure of fulfilment, and isn't it invariably followed by anxiety, pain?

'I have noticed that, but one tries in one way or another to keep ahead of the pain.'

And have you succeeded?

'Not yet, but one always hopes to.'

How to guard against such suffering is your chief

concern throughout life; so you begin to discipline desire; you say, 'This is the right desire, and the other is wrong, immoral.' You cultivate the ideal desire, the what *should* be, while caught in the what should *not* be. The what should *not* be is the actual fact, and the what *should* be has no reality except as an imaginary symbol. This is so, isn't it?

'But however imaginary, aren't ideals necessary?' asked the shorter one. 'They help us to get rid of the suffering.'

Do they? Have your ideals helped you to be free from suffering, or have they merely helped you to carry on with the pleasure while ideally saying to yourself that you shouldn't? So the pain and the pleasure of desire continue. Actually, you don't want to be free of either; you want to drift with the pain and the pleasure of desire, meanwhile talking about ideals and all that stuff.

'You are perfectly right, sir,' he admitted.

Let's proceed from there. Desire is not to be divided as pleasurable and painful, or as right and wrong desire. There's only desire, which appears under different forms, with different objectives. Unless you understand this, you will merely be struggling to overcome the contradictions which are the very nature of desire.

'Is there then a central desire which must be overcome, a desire from which all other desires spring?' asked the taller one.

Do you mean the desire for security?

'I was thinking of that; but there is also the desire for sex, and for so many other things.'

Is there one central desire from which other desires spring like so many children, or does desire merely change its object of fulfilment from time to time, from immaturity to maturity? There's the desire to possess, to be passionate, to succeed, to be secure both inwardly and outwardly, and so on. Desire weaves through thought and action, through the

so-called spiritual as well as the mundane life, does it not?

They were silent for some time.

‘We can’t think any further,’ said the shorter one. ‘We are stumped.’

If you suppress desire, it comes up again in another form, doesn’t it? To control desire is to narrow it down and be self-centred; to discipline it is to build a wall of resistance, which is always being broken down — unless, of course, you become neurotic, fixed in one pattern of desire. To sublimate desire is an act of will; but will is essentially the concentration of desire, and when one form of desire dominates another, you are back again in your old pattern of struggle.

Control, discipline, sublimation, suppression — it all involves effort of some kind, and such effort is still within the field of duality, of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ desire. Laziness may be overcome by an act of will, but the pettiness of the mind remains. A petty mind can be very active, and it generally is, thereby causing mischief and misery for itself and others. So, however much a petty mind may struggle to overcome desire, it will continue to be a petty mind. All this is clear, isn’t it?

They looked at each other.

‘I think so,’ replied the taller one. ‘But please go a little slower, sir, and don’t cram every sentence with ideas.’

Like steam, desire is energy, is it not? And as steam can be directed to run every kind of machinery, either beneficial or destructive, so desire can be dissipated, or it can be used for understanding without there being any user of that astonishing energy. If there’s a user of it, whether it be the one or the many, the individual or the collective, which is tradition, then the trouble begins; then there’s the closed circle of pain and pleasure.

‘If neither the individual nor the collective is to use

that energy, then *who* is to use it?’

Isn't that a wrong question you're asking? A wrong question will have a wrong answer, but a right one may open the door to understanding. There's only energy; there's no question of who will use it. It's not that energy, but the user of it, who sustains confusion and the contradiction of pain and pleasure. The user, as the one and as the many, says, 'This is right and that is wrong, this is good and that is bad', thereby perpetuating the conflict of duality. He is the real mischief maker, the author of sorrow. Can the user of that energy called desire cease to be? Can the watcher not be an operator, a separate entity embodying this or that tradition, and be that energy itself?

'Isn't that very difficult?'

It's the only problem, and not how to control, discipline, or sublimate desire. When you begin to understand this, desire has quite a different significance; it is then the purity of creation, the movement of truth. But merely to repeat that desire is the supreme, and so on, is not only useless, it is definitely harmful, because it acts as a soporific, a drug to quiet the petty mind.

'But how is the user of desire to come to an end?'

If the question 'How?' reflects the search for a method, then the user of desire will merely be put together in another form. What's important is the ending of the user, not how to put an end to the user. There is no 'how'. There is only understanding — the impulse that will shatter the old.

— *Commentaries On Living, Series III*, London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1978, pp. 222-227.

TO LIVE WITH DESIRE IS TO DISCOVER A STATE IN WHICH THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION AT ALL

Q: How is it possible, without destroying or suppressing desire, to give it freedom; and does looking at desire without condemnation make it disappear?

K: First of all, we have an idea that desire is wrong because it produces various forms of conflict and contradiction. There are many desires within one, tearing at each other in different directions. That is a fact; we have desires and they do create conflict. The question is: How to live with desire intensely without destroying it? If one yields to desire, when one fulfills a desire, in that very yielding there is also the pain of frustration. I do not want to take an example, because explaining through a particular example perverts the understanding of the totality of desire.

One has first to see very clearly that every form of condemnation of desire is merely an avoidance of the understanding of it. If that fact is seen clearly, then the question arises as to what one is to do with desire. There it is, burning. Up to now we have condemned it, or accepted it, or enjoyed it, and in the very enjoyment of it there is pain. In the suppression, in the control of it there is also pain. But if one does not condemn or evaluate, then it is there, burning; and what is one to do? Now, does one ever come to that state? Because in that state you are the desire; there is no longer 'you' and 'desire' as two separate things.

What always happens is — is it not? — that we want to make the painful desires disappear and to hold on to the pleasurable ones. I say that is an altogether wrong approach. I say, 'Can you look at desire without condemning, without judging, without choosing between the various desires?' Have

you ever done it? I doubt it.

To understand the significance of desire, to live with it, to understand it, to actually look at it without judgement of any kind — that needs immense patience, inwardly. I do not think you have ever done it. But if you will try it, you will find that then there is no contradiction, no conflict. Then desire has quite a different meaning. Then desire may be life.

But so long as we are saying, 'Desire is wrong' or 'Desire is right', 'Should I yield?' or 'Should I not yield?' — in that whole process you are creating a division between yourself and desire, and therefore there is bound to be conflict. What gives understanding is to go into yourself quietly, to go deeply into yourself inquiring, searching out why you are condemning what you are seeking. Then out of that inward inquiry, in which there is no choice at all, you will discover that you can live with desire and that it has quite a different meaning. To live with anything you need energy, vitality; and there is no energy left when you are all the time condemning and judging. To live with desire is to discover a state in which there is no contradiction at all. That means that then there is love, without jealousy, without hatred, without any form of corruption; and that is a really marvellous thing to find out for oneself.

— Paris, France, 10 September, 1961

THINGS ARE ESSENTIAL; LOVE IS ESSENTIAL THE UNDERSTANDING OF TRUTH IS ESSENTIAL

Q: Even after they have passed beyond the need of organized authority, most people are troubled with the inner conflict of choice between desire and fear. Can you explain how to distinguish, or what you consider true desire?

K: Is there such a thing as 'true' desire? Is there such a thing

as 'essential' desire and 'unessential' desire? One day you want a hat, another day a car, and so on, satisfying your cravings. Yet another day you want to attain the highest truth or God. You pass through a whole series of desires. What is the essential in all this? Things are essential; love is essential; the understanding of truth is essential. So why separate desire into false and true, important and unimportant? Can't you look at it differently? Can't you meet desire intelligently? Your minds are so crippled with contradictory values that you cannot discern truly.

I wonder if I am explaining this. Suppose you are possessive. Don't say to yourself, 'Well, I have heard this afternoon that I mustn't be possessive, so I will get rid of that desire.' Don't develop a contradictory resistance. If you are possessive, be completely and wholly aware of it; then you will see what happens. The mind must free itself from this contradictory desire, the comparative desire which is really a self-protective reaction against suffering; then you will discern the whole significance of acquisitiveness. You can only understand acquisitiveness, or any other problem, in its isolation, not by bringing it into comparison, into opposition. When there is no contradictory or opposite desire, then only is there the discernment of the true significance of desire. The continual contradiction in desire creates fear, and where there is fear, there must be escape. And, so, there ensues a ceaseless battle between desire, reason, the urge for fulfillment, and their opposites.

In this battle, intelligence, true fulfillment, is wholly lost. As long as the mind is caught up in the conflict of opposites, there can be only an escape, a substitution as the essential and the unessential, the false and the true. In this there is no creative happiness.

— *New York, 15 March, 1935*

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