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FROM THE EDITOR

In 1956, Krishnamurti gave three talks at Madanapalle, the small town in Andhra Pradesh where he was born, attended his first school, and where the Theosophical Society, under whose aegis he was educated, had a significant presence. Even though by 1956 Krishnaji had distanced himself from the past, he was addressing an audience of men and women who, though sharing his view that liberation as *moksha* gives ultimate meaning to life, came to him with a mind-set steeped in traditional ideas of the need for a guru as guide, of prayer as essential to religious practice, and of rebirth. Krishnaji's task in these talks is to uncover these presuppositions and to demonstrate that the search for liberation requires an autonomous and inquiring mind freed of spiritual assumptions.

Toward the end of his life, in November 1985, Krishnaji ended the last discussion with scholars of Banaras with a sentence perfumed with meaning. Referring to the spirit that attended the talks he said: 'It is very simple, sirs. I don't have the sense "I know, and you don't".' Freedom comes with the realization that the thought process is limited; as far as the individual is concerned, this means coming to terms with the limits of his or her own knowledge.

So, in 1956, when Krishnaji questions the role of the guru, for instance, we hear echoes of the same thought: 'When the guru says he knows, he ceases to be the guru; the man who says he knows does not know'.

The above statement is explored in the course of the talks we present in this issue of the *Bulletin*. 'What is the mind?' is the first question posed before Krishnaji, who, step by step, leads his

audience to 'listen' to the workings of their own mind and in the process free themselves.

The three selections constitute in Krishnamurti's own words a direct and very simple introduction to his teachings.

R. H.

**WHEN A MAN IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH THE PARTICULAR,
HIS STRUGGLES BECOME MUCH GREATER,
HIS MISERY INCREASES**

J KRISHNAMURTI (JK): When we are confronted with so many problems, when the world is at war or preparing for war, when there is so much production and at the same time starvation, I think the most important thing in all this human struggle is to understand the mind. Surely, the mind is the only instrument which can find the right answer to the many problems that exist, yet we very rarely give thought to or examine the process of the mind. We think that ready-made answers, or certain patterns of thinking, will solve our problems. As Hindus we have a certain way of thinking which we hope will resolve our complex problems, and if we are communists, Christians, or Buddhists, we have other ready-made answers. Very few of us give real consideration to the process of thinking, to the ways of the mind itself; and it seems to me that the solution lies there, not in approaching the problem with a mind that is already shaped or conditioned.

So, this evening I would like, if I may, to consider this question of ‘What is the mind?’, because it is obvious that without going very deeply into this whole problem, without understanding the composition and state of the mind, mere speculative thinking, or identification with a particular belief, is utterly futile. And in trying to understand the process of the mind, I think it is important to listen rightly. Most of us listen with a mind already made up or burdened with preconceptions, or we listen to find an opposing argument, and very few listen intently, with freedom; but it is only when we are inquiring freely, not tethered to any particular belief, that the mind can find the truth of any problem. So this talk will be of significance only if we can listen rightly, which is quite arduous,

and not merely treat it as a lecture to be casually listened to of an evening and set aside.

As I was saying, unless we understand the ways of the mind, we cannot possibly understand the complex problem of living. Now, what is the mind? We are trying to find out, not merely assert or accept. And to find out, you have to observe your own mind in operation as you are listening to the description of what the mind is. That is, though I am talking, describing the mind, be aware of the process of your own thinking and, thereby, find out for yourself what the mind is.

Let us be very clear why it is important to understand the mind. The mind is the only instrument we have, the instrument of perception, of understanding, of thought; and without clarification of the mind, our endeavor to find out what is reality, truth, God, or what you will, can have very little significance. So we are trying to inquire into the actual process of the mind; we are not merely accepting or rejecting what is said.

Surely, the mind is the conscious as well as the unconscious; it is a totality which includes both the open and the hidden processes of thought. Most of us are occupied exclusively with the conscious, with the everyday events, ambitions, struggles, greeds; and we are completely unaware of the content of the unconscious, that is, of the mind which lies below the daily activities of the conscious mind; and until we understand the totality, including what is in the unconscious, mere occupation with the conscious will have very little meaning.

We know that the conscious mind is occupied with daily events, with a job, earning a livelihood, with its reactions and constant adjustments to immediate problems. It is the conscious mind that is

educated in a certain technique, that accumulates knowledge and so-called culture. Below that superficial mind there are the many layers of the unconscious, in which are rooted the racial, cultural, and social urges, the religious beliefs and traditions, the instinctive responses based on the values of the particular society in which we have been brought up. Without going into many details, that is the totality of the mind, is it not? So, the totality of the mind is conditioned, shaped, limited by many influences – by our diet, by the climate and the culture in which we live, by social and economic values.

Now, with that conditioned mind, with which we are dissatisfied, we are trying to find something beyond the mind. We see that the mind is very small, confused, contradictory, and with that mind we are trying to understand the unknowable. After all, our minds are the result of time – time being the known, the past, the accumulation of knowledge – and with this instrument, which is still within the field of time, the so-called religious people are trying to find something which is beyond time. So the question inevitably arises: Can the conditioned mind understand or experience that which is not of its own fabrication? That is one of our great problems, is it not? And surely we shall never be able to solve our problems as long as we are thinking as Hindus, Christians, or communists because it is by thinking in these very terms that we have created the problems. It is only when the mind is free from all traditions, values, beliefs, superstitions, acceptances, that there is a possibility of solving our many human problems.

The question is, then: Can the mind which has been brought up, educated in a certain pattern, free itself from that pattern? That is, can the mind let go of the beliefs, traditions, and values which are based on authority, on mere acceptance? Can all this be set aside

so that the mind is free to investigate, to find out? That is our problem, is it not? Which means, really, is it possible for the mind to free itself from the securities to which it is tethered? Because, after all, what most of us are seeking, outwardly or inwardly, is some form of security. If I have the outward security of position, prestige, money, temporarily I may be satisfied, but a time comes when I begin to demand an inward security; I take psychological refuge in belief, in dogma, in tradition, in a certain patterned way of thinking. And can the mind which is seeking security, which demands to be safe, undisturbed, ever find reality, God, or whatever name you like to give it? Obviously not. The mind that desires to be secure will find what it is seeking, but not that which is true.

So, can the mind free itself from this urge to be secure? And surely, a mind which demands security inwardly, psychologically, will invariably create outward insecurity in the social structure. Nationalism, for example, is an idea to which the mind clings as a means of psychological security, and this worship of nationalism must inevitably create insecurity outwardly – which is precisely what is happening in the world.

Now, if you observe it very closely, you will see that the mind is constantly trying to find something permanent which it calls ‘Peace’, ‘Reality’, or what you will. And is there anything permanent? Yet the mind creates values which it assumes to be permanent and then believes in them; it establishes certain habits of thought which become permanent, and such a mind is never free to inquire. I think it is important to understand the significance of this because, after all, freedom is at the beginning, not at the end. It is only the free mind – [and] not a tethered mind, a mind that is held by belief, dogma, tradition – that can inquire; yet all our education is based on these things, not only at school, but as we go

through life – which is also part of education. We never inquire into the possibility of having freedom first, because inquiry of such a nature demands a thinking process which does not start with an assumption, or with accumulated experience – either its own or that of others.

So it seems to me that to find reality, the unknowable, which is not to be premeditated, or speculated upon, the mind must be free from everything it has known; it must die to all its many yesterdays. Only then is the mind innocent and therefore able to find out what is real.

There are some questions here, and I wonder why we ask questions. Is it with the intention of receiving an answer? And is there an answer or only a probing into the problem without looking for an answer? If I am looking for an answer, then my mind is entirely concentrated on the discovery of the answer, and not on the understanding of the problem. Most of us are concerned with the solution, with the answer, so we give divided attention to the problem; therefore, the problem is never understood, and so there is no answer. To inquire into the problem requires a mind that is not looking for an answer, but one that is capable of investigating without judging or condemning. Can we look at anything without comparing, judging, condemning? If you will experiment with it, you will see how extraordinarily difficult it is because the whole process of our thinking is based on comparison, judgment, condemnation. But if we can inquire into the problem and not wait for an answer, then the problem itself is resolved without our looking for an answer.

QUESTION (Q): *Can there be world peace without a world government to establish and maintain it? And how can that be brought about?*

JK: Is peace external or inward? Can any government bring peace, even though it be one government for the whole world? It may establish outward order without the constant threat of war, but even that can take place only when there is no nationalism, when there are no frontiers, either political or religious. So we must be clear as to what we mean by 'peace'.

Is peace a thing to be created by the authority of any government, whether communist, imperialist, capitalist, or what you will? Is peace to come about through legislation? One can see that a world government could bring about a certain type of peace. It could perhaps abolish sovereign governments with their armed forces, which are one of the causes of war, but surely that is not the entire meaning of peace. Peace is of the mind. And can the mind be at peace as long as it is ambitious, greedy, envious? It is the greedy, envious, acquisitive mind that has created this warring society in which we live, is it not? Our society is based on acquisitiveness, envy, greed, the driving ambition to be something; and so within our society there is constant battle, conflict.

So, peace is of the mind; it cannot be brought about through mere legislation. Tyranny may establish some sort of order in a confused and contradictory society, and order can also be brought about through the parliamentary action of a democratic government; but as long as there is the spirit of nationalism, which creates sovereign governments with their armed forces, as long as there are frontiers and racial divisions, there are bound to be wars. So the man who would be peaceful cannot belong to any country, nor can he belong to any religion, for religion at present is merely organized dogmatism.

This thing that we call 'peace' is something that has to be understood inwardly, and not merely sought through legislation or

through the coming together of many opinions. If you observe, you will see how we worship nationalism and uphold the flag of a particular country. We identify ourselves with the whole of what we call 'India' because, being petty, inwardly empty, and living in a little place like Madanapalle, it gives us a certain pride, it flatters our vanity, to call ourselves 'Indians'; and for that pride and vanity we are willing to kill, or be killed. This very complex psychological process, which goes on in every country, has to be understood by each one of us, and not merely legislated against. That is why the truly religious man is one who does not belong to any religion or to any particular country.

Q: *You are an Indian and an Andhra, born here in Madanapalle. We are proud of you and your good work in the world. Why don't you spend more time in your native country instead of living in America? You are needed here.*

JK: You know, a peculiar process that is going on in the world is this identification of oneself with a particular piece of land or with a so-called religion. Does it matter very much where you were born, or what language you speak, or what particular culture you were raised in? Look at what is happening in this country. We are breaking up into parts, calling ourselves 'Tamils', 'Telugus', 'Maharashtrians', and all the rest of it. This breaking-up process is maintained in Europe, too, with the Germans, the English, the French, the Italians, and so on. When a man worships and identifies himself with the particular, his struggles become much greater, his misery increases. As long as I remain an Andhra, belonging to a particular class and to a particular religion, my mind is very petty, small, narrow. It is surely the function of the mind to break through all these limitations and find the whole – but the whole is not made up of parts. By putting many parts together, the

whole is not to be found. It is only by not being entangled in the part that there is a possibility of seeing the whole immediately.

Q: *I have a son who is very dear to me, and I see that he is being subjected to many bad influences both at home and at school. What am I to do about it?*

JK: We are all the product, not of one particular influence, but of many contradictory influences, are we not? And the questioner wants to know how he is to prevent his son from being subjected to the bad influences, both at home and at school. But, surely, the problem is much more complex than merely to find a way of resisting bad influences. What we have to consider is the whole process of influence, is it not? After all, the student is inevitably exposed to many influences, both good and bad. There is not only the home influence and the influence of the school, but there is also the influence of what he reads, of the things he hears, of the climate, of the kind of food he eats, of the religion and the culture in which he is brought up. He is the sum total of these many influences, as you and I are, and we cannot reject some and hold on to others. All that we can do is to observe all these influences and find out if the mind can be free of them. But unfortunately, as it is now, our education is a process of imposing on the student the so-called 'good influences'. That is one part of it, and the other part is a process of cramming his mind with certain information so that he can pass some examination, put a few letters after his name and get a job. That is all we are concerned with in what we now call 'education'.

But right education is something entirely different, is it not? It is not merely a matter of giving the student technical knowledge which will enable him to hold a job, but it is to help him to be aware of all these influences and not be caught in any one of them.

To do this he must have a good mind, and a good mind is one that is learning, not one that has learned, because the mind that accumulates has ceased to learn. Learning then becomes something out of the past, and so there is no further inquiry.

So, what is right education? Is it merely a definition gathered from some book, or is it a constant process of understanding the many influences that impinge on the mind so that the mind is set free at the very beginning and is therefore capable of inquiry? Surely, a mind that is capable of real inquiry is always learning; it is not merely a repository of information. Anybody who knows how to read can look up information in an encyclopedia. While it is obviously necessary in education to impart technical knowledge so that the student can have a job, at present that is all most parents are concerned with. They want their child to be trained for a good position in the present social structure, to be helped to adjust himself to this society, which is based on greed, envy, and ambition. You want your child to fit into that framework; you don't want him to be a revolutionary, so you have this so-called education which merely helps him to conform, to imitate, to follow. But is it not possible for those who really love their children to help them to understand the many influences of society, of the culture in which they were born so that when they grow up, they will not conform to the pattern of a particular culture but will perhaps create their own society, free of envy, ambition, and greed? Surely, such people are the only truly religious people. Revolution is religious, not merely economic. Religion is not the acceptance of some dogma; tradition, or so-called sacred book. Religion is the inquiry to find the unknown.

February 12, 1956
First Public Talk in Madanapalle

**IT IS ALWAYS THE INDIVIDUAL,
AND NEVER THE GROUP OR THE COLLECTIVE,
THAT BRINGS ABOUT A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE WORLD**

J KRISHNAMURTI (JK): I am sure most of us feel that a fundamental revolution is necessary in a world where there is so much chaos, misery, starvation, and the constant threat of war. We feel there must be some kind of change, and each group has its own particular panacea or method for coping with the miseries of the world. The communists have one pattern, the capitalists another, and the so-called religious people still another. Being eager to bring about a change, which is so obviously necessary, we join one or another of these various groups, and I think it is important to find out what we mean by change – not the change of mere outward, legislative action, but a much more fundamental, more radical change. We can see that any change according to a preconceived plan involves an executive body to carry out that plan, and that the authority which must be vested in such a body invariably becomes tyrannical – which is what is actually happening in the world. There is the tyranny of well-organized authority in the hands of a few, or the tyranny of a particular religion, or the tyranny of authority vested in a particular section of society. Seeing all this, you and I, the ordinary people, are desirous to bring about a change for the better so that mankind everywhere will have adequate food, clothing, and shelter, a wider education, and so on.

Now, as I said, it is important to find out what we mean by change. For most of us, change implies a modified continuity of what has been, does it not? Though the so-called revolutionaries desire to bring about a radical transformation of society, their attitude, their values, their concepts and formulas are all based on the past, on the reaction of what they have known, and any change arising from

that source is merely a continuity of what has been, however modified. They may not begin that way, but eventually it comes to that, and to me that is no change at all. Change implies something entirely different, and I would like, if I may, to go into this whole issue.

We realize that there must be a fundamental change in our way of thinking, a radical transformation of the human mind and heart, but this extraordinary change cannot be brought about by merely continuing what has been in a modified form. Nor can this radical revolution in the mind be brought about through education as it now exists, for what we now call 'education' is merely the learning of a technique in order to earn a livelihood and conform to the pattern imposed by society.

So, seeing all this, where are we to begin? Where does one begin to bring about this fundamental change which is so obviously essential in the social order? Surely, the individual problem is the world problem. Society is what we have made it. There are those who have, and those who have not, those who know, and those who are ignorant, those who are fulfilling their ambition, and those who are frustrated; there are the various religions, with their ceremonies and dogmatic beliefs, and the ceaseless battle within society, this everlasting competition with each other to achieve, to become. All this is what you and I have created. Social reforms may be brought about through legislation or through tyranny, but unless the individual radically changes, he will always overcome the new pattern to suit his psychological demands – which is again what is happening in the world.

It seems to me very important, then, to understand the total process of individuality, because it is only when the individual changes radically that there can be a fundamental revolution in society. It is

always the individual, never the group or the collective, that brings about a radical change in the world, and this again is historically so.

Now, can the individual, that is, you and I, change radically? This transformation of the individual – but not according to a pattern – is what we are concerned with, and to me it is the highest form of education. It is this transformation of the individual that constitutes religion, not the mere acceptance of a dogma, a belief, which is not religion at all. The mind that is conditioned to a particular pattern which it calls religion, whether Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, or what you will, is not a religious mind, however much it may practice all the so-called religious ideals.

So, can you and I bring about a radical transformation in ourselves without compulsion, without motive? Any form of compulsion is an egocentric activity – it distorts the mind – and motive is always based on the process of the self, the ‘me’, the ego. And can there be a fundamental change in each one of us without motive, without compulsion? I think this is an issue which requires a great deal of thought, inquiry; it is not to be easily dismissed by saying that there can or cannot be such a change. A man who is really earnest must go deeply into this problem of bringing about a transformation within himself. Surely, this inward change is not according to a pattern or a religious concept, but it comes about only through self-knowledge. That is, without knowing the totality of my consciousness, the whole of my being, any ideal, formula, concept, or belief I may have is merely a wish, an idea; it has no basis, and therefore it is not a reality at all. Unless there is self-knowledge, that is, unless I am beginning to know myself completely, whatever activity I may enter will be destructive and only cause more mischief. So, if one is at all serious, if one is

really concerned about the chaos and the misery in the world, is it not vitally important to understand the process of oneself?

Now, what is self-knowledge? Self-knowledge is not according to any book; it cannot be had through the authority of any person. The ways of my thought must be discovered, and I can discover them only in relationship because relationship is a mirror in which I can see myself, not theoretically, but as I actually am. Surely, it is in relationship with my wife, my children, my neighbor, my servants, my boss, with the whole of society, that I discover myself as I am; for in that mirror of relationship I can see my superstitions, my judgments, my habits of thought, the traditions which I follow, the comparative values which I give to experiences and to things.

What generally happens is that we like or dislike what we see in the mirror of relationship, and therefore we either accept or condemn it. But it is possible to discover the ways of thought, the hidden motives and pursuits, the reactions of a mind conditioned by a particular society, only when we look into that mirror without any sense of condemnation or comparison, without judgment. Only then is the mind, the conscious as well as the unconscious, freed from its own bondage and so perhaps able to go beyond the limitation of itself. After all, that is meditation, is it not?

True religion is for the mind to understand its own processes – that is, its ambition, envy, greed, hatred – because the very understanding of those things puts an end to them without compulsion, and therefore the mind is free to explore. Then there is a possibility of finding that which is reality, truth, God, or what name you will. But without self-knowledge, merely to assert or deny that God or reality exists has no significance at all.

We can see that one part of the world is conditioned to accept the idea of God while another part is being conditioned not to believe in God but to believe in and sacrifice itself for the state. And is it possible for the mind to free itself from all conditioning? Surely, it is only the mind that is un-conditioning itself and is therefore able to act, it is only such a mind, that brings about a radical revolution. That is why it is very important for you and me, individually, to free ourselves from the collective; because, if one is not free, there is no possibility of exploring to find out what is true.

So the earnest must obviously inquire into this issue and not merely conform to a pattern of thought. Only the individual who is religious in the true sense of the word can bring about a new state, a new way of looking at life; and the truly religious individual is he who is freeing himself from the conditioning of a particular society and is therefore truly revolutionary.

QUESTION (Q): *Without believing in a planner of this universe, I feel that life is meaningless. What is wrong with this belief?*

JK: Surely, by ‘planner of this universe’, you mean God, only you use a different name. Now, what is belief? What do we mean by that word, not just the dictionary meaning, but what is its psychological content?

And what is the process of the mind that necessitates a belief? What makes you say, ‘I believe in God’ or ‘I don’t believe in God’? What is the psychological urge that makes the mind accept or reject belief in God, in a planner of the universe? Until we discover that, mere believing or disbelieving has very little meaning.

Obviously, if from childhood you are told to believe in God, you grow up believing, just as another child, who is told not to believe, grows up disbelieving. One is called a ‘believer’ and the other an ‘atheist’, but both are conditioned. When you believe in a planner of the universe, it is because you have been encouraged to believe from childhood, and your mind has been impregnated with this idea; or else you feel this life is so uncertain, in such a state of flux, that your mind clings to something as permanent, and that permanency you call God, or by some other name, giving it certain attributes, qualities. This is neither right nor wrong; it is the actual process of the mind. Because we see about us so much misery, chaos, such transiency, an utter lack of peace within and without, the mind creates and clings to something timeless, something everlastingly beautiful, peaceful. So in its uncertainty, the mind creates its own certainty. But a mind that believes or disbelieves, that accepts or rejects, can never find out what is God. God must be found, discovered, not believed in. To find, the mind must be free from both belief and disbelief. Surely, that state which we call God, that timeless reality, must be something totally new, unimagined, never experienced before; and only a free mind can discover it, not a mind that is tethered to a dogma, to a belief.

After all, if you observe, if you think about it at all, you will see that the mind is the result of time – time being memory, experience, knowledge. That is, the mind is the result of the known, of the past, of many thousands of years. Now, with that mind we are trying to find the unknown, that something which may be called God, truth, or what you will. But such a mind cannot find the unknown; it can only project what is known into the future. Any belief held by the mind is the result of its own conditioning; any speculative formula or concept is the result of the known; any movement of the mind to inquire into the unknown is utterly useless and vain because the mind can only think in terms of the

known. When it understands this total process and is therefore free of the known, the mind becomes very quiet, completely still; and only then is it possible for the unknown to be. Surely, this [and] not the projection of the known into the future and the worshipping of that projection is meditation.

Q: *In this world goodness does not pay. How can we create a society which will encourage goodness?*

JK: To the intellectuals, 'goodness' is a terrible word, and they generally want to avoid it, but now it is becoming the fashion even among the intellectuals to use that word. And is there goodness when there is a motive behind it? If I have a motive to be good, does that bring about goodness? Or is goodness something entirely devoid of this urge to be good, which is ever based on a motive? Is good the opposite of bad, the opposite of evil? Every opposite contains the seed of its own opposite, does it not? There is greed, and there is the ideal of non-greed. When the mind pursues non-greed, when it tries to be non-greedy, it is still greedy because it wants to be something. Greed implies desiring, acquiring, expanding; and when the mind sees that it does not pay to be greedy, it wants to be non-greedy, so the motive is still the same, which is to be or to acquire something. When the mind wants not to want, the root of want, of desire, is still there. So goodness is not the opposite of evil; it is a totally different state. And what is that state?

Obviously, goodness has no motive because all motive is based on the self; it is the egocentric movement of the mind. So what do we mean by goodness? Surely, there is goodness only when there is total attention. Attention has no motive. When there is a motive for attention, is there attention? If I pay attention in order to acquire something, the acquisition, whether it be called good or bad, is not

attention – it is a distraction, a division. There can be goodness only when there is a totality of attention in which there is no effort to be or not to be. Probably you are not used to all this.

To me, making an effort to be good is a process which in itself brings about evil. A man who tries to be humble, who practices humility, breeds evil – because the moment you are conscious that you are humble, you are no longer humble; you are arrogant. Sirs, don't laugh it away. Humility is not to be practiced, and a man who practices humility is fostering arrogance. Virtue is not a thing to be cultivated, because a man who cultivates virtue, cultivates the ego, the 'me', only in more respectable clothing. As humility is not to be practiced, so goodness is not to be practiced; it comes into being only when there is the complete attention which comes with the total understanding of yourself.

Think about it, and you will see that the very practice of non-violence creates violence. To be free of violence, you have to understand all the implications of violence, and for that you must give your whole attention, which you cannot do if you are pursuing the so-called ideal. When the mind is able to give its undivided attention to what-is, which is greed, then you will see that the mind is totally free from greed. It does not become non-greedy – it is free from greed, which is an entirely different state. You see, we use the ideal of non-greed as a means of getting rid of greed, but we can never get rid of greed through an ideal. We have practiced that ideal for centuries, and we are still greedy. But a man who really sees the necessity of being free from greed has no ideal; he is concerned only with greed, which means he is giving his whole attention to it. And when you give your whole attention to something, in that attention there is no comparison, no condemnation, no judgment. A mind that is comparing,

condemning greed is incapable of giving full attention because it is concerned with comparison and condemnation.

So goodness is not an opposite; it is not a virtue; it is a state of being without motive which comes through self-knowledge.

Q: *Do you accept the view that communism is the greatest menace to human progress? If not, what do you think about it?*

JK: Surely, any form of tyranny is evil. Any form of power over others is evil, whether it be the little power exercised by a bureaucrat in this town, or the widespread tyranny of a group of people who are planning the future of man according to an ideology and forcing everybody to conform for the so-called benefit of the whole. Such power is evil, but let us look at it very simply and see the difficulty involved in this issue.

A society must obviously be planned. But what happens in planning a society, and in executing that plan? There must be an administrative body vested with the authority to carry it out, which means that the few have power; and that very power becomes evil when exercised in the name of God, in the name of society, or in the name of a future utopia. And yet we need planning; otherwise, society becomes chaotic. There is, then, this problem of power vested in the few who become tyrannical, ruthless, who say, 'We know the future and you don't. We are planning for the welfare of man, so you must conform; otherwise, we will liquidate you'. So, can we plan a society without tyrannizing over man? That is the whole issue.

Communism is only a new word for a game that has been going on for centuries. The Roman Catholic Church has done it with its inquisition, excommunication, and torture to save souls; and

various forms of tyranny exist in the history of every religion. It is nothing new; it has only a new name, with a new group of people who claim to know the future. Organized tyranny, torture, destruction, were perpetrated in the past by priests in the name of God; and now it is done by dictators and commissars in the name of the state or the party. So our problem is not the word 'communism' but the whole question of whether man lives for the sake of society, or whether society exists for the well-being of man. Do religion and government exist to educate man to be free and find out for himself what is true, to help him to be good and to have the vision of greatness? Or do they exist to tyrannize over man, to brutalize and liquidate him because a few have the power to destroy?

So it is really a very complex question. What is important is not what you or I think about communism but to find out why society, whether communistic or democratic, compels the mind to conform, and why the individual submits himself to conformity. Surely, it is only the free mind that can explore – not a mind that is tethered to a book, to an organized religion, or to an ideology. A society that conditions the mind to worship the state and a society that conditions the mind to worship the idea called God are equally tyrannous.

Now, can there be a society which does help man, the individual, to be good, to be non-greedy, to be free from envy, from ambition? Surely, that is our concern. Man can be good only when he is free, not to do what he likes, but free to understand the whole movement of life. That requires a different kind of school, a different kind of education; it demands parents and teachers who understand all the implications of freedom. Otherwise, we shall have more tyranny, not less, because the state demands efficiency. You must be efficient to have an industrialized nation; you must be efficient to

fight, to kill, to destroy, and that is the whole pursuit of governments as they exist now. And governments are further separated by the so-called religions. No organized religion dares to break away and say to the government, 'You are wrong'; on the contrary, they bless the cannons and the battleships. During the last war, a book called *God Is My Co-Pilot* was written by a man who dropped bombs that killed thousands of people. Of course, here in Madanapalle you are not directly concerned with all that, but surely war is merely an exaggerated expression of our daily life. We are in constant battle with ourselves and with our neighbor; we are ambitious, we want more power, more prestige, the best position; and this acquisitiveness expresses itself through the group, through the nation. We want to be powerful to defend ourselves, or to be aggressive, and so it goes on.

What is important, then, is not what you or I think of communism or democracy but to find out how to set the mind free, for it is only the free mind that can realize what is truth, what is God; and without that realization, life has very little meaning. It is the realization of truth, or God – the actual experience of it, not the belief in it – that is of the highest importance, especially now when the world is in such chaos and misery.

February 19, 1956
Second Public Talk in Madanapalle

**WITHOUT THAT STATE OF OTHERNESS, LIFE BECOMES
EXTRAORDINARILY EMPTY
AND
THAT OTHERNESS MUST BE DISCOVERED
FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT**

J KRISHNAMURTI (JK): I think most of us find life very dull. To earn a livelihood we have to do a certain job, and it becomes very monotonous; a routine is set going which we follow year after year almost until our death. Whether we are rich or poor, and though we may be very erudite, have a philosophical bent, our lives are for the most part rather shallow, empty. There is obviously an insufficiency in ourselves, and being aware of this emptiness, we try to enrich it through knowledge or through some kind of social activity, or we escape through various kinds of amusement or cling to a religious belief. Even if we have a certain capacity and are very efficient, our lives are still pretty dull, and to get away from this dullness, this weary monotony of life, we seek some form of religious enrichment; we try to capture that unworldly state of being which is not routine and which for the moment may be called ‘otherness’. In seeking that otherness, we find there are many different systems, different ways or paths which are supposed to lead to it, and by disciplining ourselves, by practicing a particular system of meditation, by performing some ritual or repeating certain phrases, we hope to achieve that state. Because our daily life is an endless round of sorrow and pleasure, a variety of experiences without much significance, or a meaningless repetition of the same experience, living for most of us is a monotonous routine; therefore, the problem of enrichment, of capturing that otherness – call it God, truth, bliss, or what you will – becomes very urgent, does it not? You may be well-off and well-married, you may have children, you may be able to think

intelligently and sanely, but without that state of otherness, life becomes extraordinarily empty.

So, what is one to do? How is one to capture that state? Or is it not possible to capture it at all? As they are now, our minds are obviously very small, petty, limited, conditioned, and though a small mind may speculate about that otherness, its speculations will always be small. It may formulate an ideal state, conceive and describe that otherness, but its conception will still be within the limitations of the little mind, and I think that is where the clue lies – in seeing that the mind cannot possibly experience that otherness by living it, formulating it, or speculating about it. Surely, that is a tremendous realization: to see that because it is limited, petty, narrow, superficial, any movement of the mind towards that extraordinary state is a hindrance. To realize that fact, not speculatively, but actually, is the beginning of a different approach to the problem.

After all, our minds are the outcome of time, of many thousands of yesterdays; they are the result of experience based on the known, and such a mind is the continuity of the known. The mind of each one of us is the result of culture, of education, and however extensive its knowledge or its technical training, it is still the product of time; therefore, it is limited, conditioned. With that mind we try to discover the unknowable, and to realize that such a mind can never discover the unknowable is really an extraordinary experience. To realize that however cunning, however subtle, however erudite one's mind may be, it cannot possibly understand that otherness – this realization in itself brings about a certain factual comprehension, and I think it is the beginning of a way of looking at life which may open the door to that otherness.

To put the problem differently, the mind is ceaselessly active, chattering, planning; it is capable of extraordinary subtleties and inventions; and how can such a mind be quiet? One can see that any activity of the mind, any movement in any direction, is a reaction of the past; and how can such a mind be still? And if it is made still through discipline, such stillness is a state in which there is no inquiring, no searching, is it not? Therefore, there is no openness to the unknown, to that state of otherness.

I don't know if you have thought about this problem at all or have merely thought about it in terms of the traditional approach, which is to have an ideal and to move towards the ideal through a formula, through the practice of a certain discipline. Discipline invariably implies suppression and the conflict of duality, all of which is within the area of the mind, and we proceed along this line, hoping to capture that otherness; but we have never intelligently and sanely inquired whether the mind can ever capture it. We have had the hint that the mind must be still, but stillness has always been cultivated through discipline. That is, we have the ideal of a still mind, and we pursue it through control, through struggle, through effort.

Now, if you look at this whole process, you will see that it is all within the field of the known. Being aware of the monotony of its existence, realizing the weariness of its multiplying experiences, the mind is always trying to capture that otherness; but when one sees that the mind is the known, and that whatever movement it makes, it can never capture that otherness, which is the unknown, then our problem is not how to capture the unknown but whether the mind can free itself from the known. I think this problem must be considered by anyone who wants to find out if there is a possibility of the coming into being of that otherness, the unknown. So, how can the mind, which is the result of the past, of

the known, free itself from the known? I hope I am making myself clear.

As I said, the present mind, the conscious as well as the unconscious, is the outcome of the past; it is the accumulated result of racial, climatic, dietetic, traditional, and other influences. So the mind is conditioned – conditioned as a Christian, a Buddhist, a Hindu, or a communist – and it obviously projects what it considers to be the real. But whether its projection is that of the communist, who thinks he knows the future and wants to force all mankind into the pattern of his particular utopia, or that of the so-called religious man, who also thinks he knows the future and educates the child to think along his particular line, neither projection is the real. Without the real, life becomes very dull, as it is at present for most people; and our lives being dull, we become romantic, sentimental, about that otherness, the real.

Now, seeing this whole pattern of existence, without going into too many details, is it possible for the mind to free itself from the known – the known being the psychological accumulations of the past? There is also the known of everyday activity, but from this the mind obviously cannot be free, for if one forgot the way to one's house, or the knowledge which enables one to earn a livelihood, one would be bordering on insanity. But can the mind free itself from the psychological factors of the known, which give assurance through association and identification?

To inquire into this matter, we shall have to find out whether there is really a difference between the thinker and the thought, between the one who observes and the thing observed. At present there is a division between them, is there not? We think the 'I', the entity who experiences, is different from the experience, from the thought. There is a gap, a division between the thinker and the

thought, and that is why we say, ‘I must control thought’. But is the ‘I’, the thinker, different from thought? The thinker is always trying to control thought, mold it according to what he considers to be a good pattern, but is there a thinker if there is no thought? Obviously not. There is only thinking, which creates the thinker. You may put the thinker at any level; you may call him the Supreme, the *atman*, or whatever you like, but he is still the result of thinking. The thinker has not created thought; it is thought that has created the thinker. Realizing its own impermanency, thought creates the thinker as a separate entity in order to give itself permanency – which is after all what we all want. You may say that the entity which you call the *atman*, the soul, the thinker, is separate from thought, from experience; but you are only aware of a separate entity through thought, and also through your conditioning as a Hindu, a Christian, or whatever it is you happen to be. As long as this duality exists between the thinker and the thought, there must be conflict, effort, which implies will; and a mind that wills to free itself, that says, ‘I must be free from the past’, merely creates another pattern.

So, the mind can free itself – and thereby, perhaps, that otherness can come into being – only when there is the cessation of effort as the ‘I’ desiring to achieve a result. But you see, all our life is based on effort: the effort to be good, the effort to discipline ourselves, the effort to achieve a result in this world, or in the next. Everything we do is based on striving, ambition, success, achievement; and so we think that the realization of God, or truth, must also come about through effort. But such effort signifies the self-centered activity of achievement, does it not? It is not the abandonment of the self.

Now, if you are aware of this whole process of the mind, the conscious as well as the unconscious, if you really see and

understand it, then you will find that the mind becomes extraordinarily quiet without any effort. The stillness which is brought about by discipline, control, suppression, is the stillness of death, but the stillness of which I am speaking comes about effortlessly when one understands this whole process of the mind. Then only is there a possibility of the coming into being of that otherness which may be called truth, or God.

QUESTION (Q): *Do you not concede that guidance is necessary? If, as you say, there must be no tradition and no authority, then everybody will have to start laying down a new foundation for himself. As the physical body has had a beginning, is there not also a beginning for our spiritual and mental bodies, and should they not grow from each stage to the next higher stage? Just as our thought is kindled by listening to you, does it not need reawakening by getting into contact with the great minds of the past?*

JK: Sir, this is an age-old problem. We think that we need a guru, a teacher, to awaken our minds. Now, what is implied in all that? It implies the one who knows, and the other who does not. Let us proceed slowly, not in a prejudiced manner. The one who knows becomes the authority, and the one who does not know becomes the disciple; and the disciple is everlastingly following, hoping to overtake the other, to come up to the level of the Master. Now, please follow this. When the guru says he knows, he ceases to be the guru; the man who says he knows does not know. Please see why. Because truth, reality, or that otherness, has no fixed point; it obviously cannot be approached by a path, but must be discovered from moment to moment. If it has a fixed point, then that point is within the limits of time. To a fixed point there may be a path, as there is a path to your house; but to a thing that is living, that has no abode, that has neither a beginning nor an end, there can be no path.

Surely, a guru who says he will help you to realize can help you to realize only that which you already know, for what you realize, experience, must be recognizable, must it not? If you can recognize it, then you say, 'I have experienced', but what you can recognize is not that otherness. The otherness is not recognizable; it is not known; it is not something which you have experienced and are therefore able to recognize. That otherness is a thing that must be uncovered from moment to moment, and to discover it, the mind must be free. Sir, the mind must be free to discover anything, and a mind that is bound by tradition, whether ancient or modern, a mind that is burdened with belief, with dogma, with rituals, is obviously not free. To me, the idea that another can awaken you has no validity. This is not an opinion, it is a fact. If another awakens you, then you are under his influence, you are depending on him; therefore, you are not free, and it is only the free mind that can find.

So the problem is this, is it not? – we want that otherness, and since we don't know how to get it, we invariably depend on someone whom we call the teacher, the guru, or on a book, or on our own experience. So dependence is created, and where there is dependence, there is authority; therefore, the mind becomes a slave to authority, to tradition, and such a mind is obviously not free. It is only the free mind that can find, and to rely on another for the awakening of your mind is like relying on a drug. Of course, you can take a drug that will make you see things very sharply, clearly. There are drugs that can momentarily make life seem much more vital so that everything stands out brilliantly – the colors that you see every day, and pass by, become extraordinarily beautiful, and so on. That may be your 'awakening' of the mind, but then you will be depending on the drug, as now you depend on your guru or on some sacred book; and the moment the mind becomes dependent, it is made dull. Out of dependence, there is fear – fear

of not achieving, of not gaining. When you depend on another, whether it be the Savior or anyone else, it means that the mind is seeking success, a gratifying end. You may call it God, truth, or what you like, but it is still a thing to be gained; so the mind is caught, it becomes a slave, and do what it will – sacrifice, discipline, torture itself – such a mind can never find that otherness.

So the problem is not who is the right teacher but whether the mind can keep itself awake, and you will find it can keep itself awake only when all relationship is a mirror in which it sees itself as it is. But the mind cannot see itself as it is if there is condemnation or justification of that which it sees or any form of identification. All these things make the mind dull, and being dull, we want to be awakened, so we look to somebody else to awaken us. But by this very demand to be awakened, a dull mind is made still more dull because it does not see the cause of its dullness. It is only when the mind sees and understands this whole process and does not depend on the explanation of another that it is able to free itself.

But how easily we are satisfied with words, with explanations! Very few of us break through the barrier of explanations, go beyond words, and find out for ourselves what is true. Capacity comes with application, does it not? But we don't apply ourselves because we are satisfied with words, with speculations, with the traditional answers and explanations on which we have been brought up.

Q: *In all religions, prayer is advocated as necessary. What do you say about prayer?*

JK: It is not a matter of what I say about prayer, for then it merely becomes one opinion against another, and opinion has no validity; but what we can do is to find out what the facts are.

What do we mean by prayer? One part of prayer is supplication, petition, demand. Being in trouble, in sorrow, and wanting to be comforted, you pray. You are confused, and you want clarity. Books don't satisfy you, the guru does not give you what you want, so you pray; that is, you either silently supplicate, or you verbally repeat certain phrases.

Now, if you keep on repeating certain words or phrases, you will find that the mind becomes very quiet. It is an obvious psychological fact that quietness of the superficial mind is induced by repetition. And then what happens? The unconscious may have an answer to the problem which is agitating the superficial mind. When the superficial mind becomes quiet, the unconscious is able to intimate its solution, and then we say, "God has answered me." It is really fantastic, when you come to think of it, for the petty little mind, being caught in sorrow which it has brought upon itself, to expect an answer from that otherness, the immeasurable, the unknown. But our petition is answered; we have found a solution, and we are satisfied. That is one form of prayer, is it not?

Now, do you ever pray when you are happy? When you are aware of the smiles and the tears of those about you, when you see the lovely skies, the mountains, the rich fields, and the swift movement of the birds, when there is joy and delight in your heart – do you indulge in what you call prayer? Obviously not. And yet, to see the beauty of the earth, to be cognizant of starvation and misery, to be aware of everything that is happening about us – surely, this is also a form of prayer. Perhaps this has much more significance, a far greater value, for it may sweep away the

cobwebs of memory, of revenge, all the accumulated stupidities of the 'I'. But a mind that is preoccupied with itself and its designs, that is caught up in its beliefs, its dogmas, its fears and jealousies, its ambition, greed, envy – such a mind cannot possibly be aware of this extraordinary thing called life. It is bound by its own self-centered activity, and when such a mind prays, whether it be for a refrigerator or to have its problems solved, it is still petty, even though it may receive an answer.

All this brings up the question of what is meditation, does it not? Obviously, there must be meditation. Meditation is an extraordinary thing, but most of us don't know what it means to meditate; we are concerned only with how to meditate, with practicing a method or a system through which we hope to get something, to realize what we call peace, or God. We are never concerned to find out what is meditation and who is the meditator, but if we begin to inquire into what is meditation, then perhaps we shall find out how to meditate. The inquiry into meditation is meditation. But to inquire into meditation, you cannot be tethered to any system because then your inquiry is conditioned by the system. To really probe into this whole problem of what is meditation, all systems must go. Only a free mind can explore, and the very process of freeing the mind to explore is meditation.

Q: *The thought of death is bearable to me only if I can believe in a future life, but you say that belief is an obstacle to understanding. Please help me to see the truth of this.*

JK: Belief in a future life is the result of one's desire for comfort. Whether or not there is a future life in reality can be found out only when the mind is not desirous of being comforted by a belief. If I am in sorrow because my son has died, and to overcome that sorrow I believe in reincarnation, in eternal life, or what you will,

then belief becomes a necessity to me; and such a mind can obviously never find out what death is because all it is concerned with is to have a hope, a comfort, a reassurance.

Now, whether or not there is continuity after death is quite a different problem. One sees that the body comes to an end; through constant use, the physical organism wears out. Then what is it that continues? It is the accumulated experience, the knowledge, the name, the memories, the identification of thought as the 'me'. But you are not satisfied with that; you say there must be another form of continuance as the permanent soul, the *atman*. [And] this *atman* which continues is the creation of thought, and the thought which has created the *atman* is still part of time; therefore, it is not spiritual. If you really go into this matter, you will see there is only thought, identified as the 'me' – my house, my wife, my family, my virtue, my failure, my success, and all the rest of it – and you want that to continue. You say, 'I want to finish my book before I die', or, 'I want to perfect the qualities I have been trying to develop, and what is the point of my having struggled all these years to achieve something if in the end there is annihilation?' So the mind, which is the product of the known, wants to continue in the future, and because there is the uncertainty which we call death, we are frightened and want reassurance.

Now, I think the problem should be approached differently, which is to find out for oneself whether it is possible, while living, to experience that state of ending which we call death. This does not mean committing suicide, but it is to actually experience that astonishing state, that sacred moment of dying to everything of yesterday. After all, death is the unknown, and no amount of rationalization, no belief or disbelief will ever bring about that extraordinary experience. To have that inward fullness of life, which includes death, the mind must free itself from the known. The known must cease for the unknown to be.

February 26, 1956, Third Public Talk in Madanapalle

IDENTITY, VIOLENCE AND TRANSFORMATION KFI GATHERING 2019

The annual KFI Gathering was held at Rishi Valley in November. ‘Identity, Violence and Transformation’, was the theme around which the programme was arranged during the three-day event. Professor Samdong Rinpoche, Dr Shailesh Shirali and Professor P. Krishna examined, along with a participating audience, various aspects of the complex subject. Selected videos of Krishnaji’s prescient exploration of the connected facets of a theme so relevant to the divided and violent world today formed the background of the proceedings.

Professor Samdong Rinpocheji in his opening address described how all-pervasive violence, once confined to occasional wars between kings, has infected the fabric of contemporary society, its economic and political systems and the ideas that drive them; individuals find themselves woven into the social fabric. Describing this as structural violence, he suggested that there is a need for the individuals to free themselves from violent urges as well as the responsibility to unravel the threads out of which violence is woven into the social fabric.

Dr Shirali dwelt on the great violence that is part of Twentieth and Twenty-first Century history. While genocidal violence and violence against nature count high on the list of atrocities committed by the state, newer forms have emerged in the form of cyber bullying and stalking in the Twenty-first century. Violence, he suggested, is based on the idea that identity is fixed. In fact, individual identities are constituted by multiple identities, what Krishnaji deconstructed as ‘identification with’. Attachment to a single identity covers up multiple urges and leads to violence. On

the other hand, acts of identification can be perceived in a sweeping awareness.

Professor Krishna spoke of identity as a natural, even instinctive process; he termed it ‘functional identity’. Functional identity swerves away from its anchor when it becomes attached to ideas and objects, and when the sense of larger responsibility is lost.

Summing up the three-day programme Professor Meenakshi Thapan explicated the concepts of identity and violence, in the light of contemporary scholarship. She examined the third term, transformation, chiefly in an educational context, where ‘loyalty and patriotism in the context of a single nation’ are essential parts of the curriculum taught at school. She ended with an incisive challenge: How can a dialogue around education, engagement and transformation through young children reconfigure the way we understand a lot of what is happening in contemporary society?

* * * *

THE PROBLEM DEMANDS THAT WE LOSE OUR IDENTITY IN ORDER TO SOLVE IT

J KRISHNAMURTI: The [question is]: How to act immediately, what to do the next moment, so that man's needs can be solved? I am afraid there is no such answer. There is no immediate moral remedy, whatever politicians may promise. The immediate solution is the regeneration of the individual, not for himself, but regeneration which is the awakening of intelligence. Intelligence is not yours or mine; it is intelligence. I think it is important to see this deeply. Then our political and individual action, collective or otherwise, will be quite different. We shall lose our identity; we shall not identify ourselves with something – our country, our race, our group, our collective traditions, our prejudices. We shall lose all those things because the problem demands that we shall lose our identity in order to solve it. But that requires great, comprehensive understanding of the whole problem.

Our problem is not the bread-and-butter problem alone. Our problem is not feeding, clothing, and shelter alone, but it is more profound than that. Why man identifies himself is a psychological problem. And it is this identification with a party, with a religion, with knowledge, that is dividing us. And that identity can be resolved only when, psychologically, the whole process of identifying – the desire, the motive – is clearly understood.

So the problem of the collective or of the individual is non-existent when you are pursuing the solution of a particular problem. If you and I are both interested in something, vitally interested in the solution of the problem, we shall not identify ourselves with something else. But unfortunately, as we are not vitally interested, we have identified ourselves, and it is that identity that is preventing us from resolving this complex and vast problem. (*Madras, January 27, 1952*)

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