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FROM THE EDITOR

Krishnamurti broke away from the traditional framework of religious belief in 1929, declaring that organized belief, ritual, and priesthood do not pave the path to truth; famously announcing, ‘Truth is a pathless land’. Beginning in 1933, he spent the next five decades exploring the surprising notion that genuine exploration of Truth has its source in doubt, a profoundly radical stance. Doubt became the cornerstone of his religious philosophy and remained central to his thought throughout his life. Over the next fifty-three years he engaged with doubt in ways that evolved alongside the shifting social and intellectual landscapes of his time.

We present three contexts in which he illustrates the value of doubt.

The first selection is a question from 1935 originating in the traditional dichotomy between faith, which is the domain of religion versus open-ended investigation which is the sphere of worldly affairs. The question posed by a religiously conservative Argentinian aggressively accuses Krishnamurti of having led a ‘gay’ or frivolous life, of being a disruptive force, with basically having nothing to say. Doubt, in essence, is destructive, a harbinger of instability.

The second selection is from the 1980s, a time when the dichotomy between the traditional and the modern is fading, and modernity with its associated rationality and faith in progress through science is being supplanted by a different

ideology – that there is no absolute truth, that the promise of a just society based on rationality has been betrayed. Truth is relative, it is conditioned and depends on the framework of the observer.

The issue of the *Bulletin* ends with a talk summarizing the place of doubt in a life of freedom. ‘Truth’, he says, ‘demands a free mind, a mind that is completely free.’ Human individuals are the product of a culture embedded in fear, anxiety, and anger. Doubt enables one, ‘To discard all that completely and observe for ourselves why we human beings have become so deplorably unhealthy psychologically’; intelligent doubt ‘is a great purifier’.

The reasoning throughout the three selections is a nuanced and multi-faceted exploration of his notion of doubt.

To doubt requires sensitivity. If you doubt everything, (*laughs*) then it becomes rather stupid. But to doubt with a light hand, with a quick mind, with subtlety, then that doubt brings about clarity, energy. And we need energy to go into all these problems, to resolve them.

R.H.

DOUBT IS THE AWAKENER OF INTELLIGENCE

J. KRISHNAMURTI (JK): Friends, many questions have been handed in, and before I answer some of them I should like to give a brief introductory talk.

I do not think that any human problem can be solved isolatedly, by itself. Each one of us has many problems, many difficulties, and we try to deal with them exclusively and not as a part of an integral whole. If we have a political problem, we try to solve it apart, let us say, from religion. Or if there is an individual religious problem, we try to solve it apart from the social problem, and so on. That is, there are individual and at the same time collective problems, which we try to deal with separately. Because we do this, we only create further confusion and further misery. By merely solving one problem isolatedly, we create others and, so, the mind becomes entangled in a net of unsolved problems.

Now let us understand the problem which must be in the minds of most people: that of individual fulfilment and collective work. If collective work becomes compulsory, as it is becoming, and each individual is forcibly pulled into it, then individual fulfilment disappears and each one becomes merely a slave to a collective idea or a collective system of authority. So the point is: How can we bring about collective work and at the same time realize individual fulfilment? – for otherwise, as I said, we become mere machines, cogs that automatically function.

If we can understand the deep significance of individual fulfilment, then collective work will not be a destructive force or an impediment to intelligence. Each one must discover intelligence for himself, whose expression will then be true fulfilment. If he does not, if he merely follows a plan laid down, then it will not be a fulfilment, but only a conformity through fear. If I laid down a plan or gave you a system whereby you could, by imitating, arrive at fulfilment, it would not be a fulfilment at all; it would be merely an adjustment to a particular pattern. Please see this point very clearly, for otherwise you will think I am but destroying. If you merely imitate, there cannot be fulfilment. The constant conformity to a particular mould is the basis of our religious thought and moral action; and living is no longer a complete and deep fulfilment, an integrated understanding of life, but merely conformity to a certain system, through fear and compulsion. This is the very beginning of authority.

To fulfil, there must be the greatest intelligence. This intelligence is different from knowledge. You may read many books, but it will not give you intelligence. Intelligence can be awakened only through action, through the understanding of action as an integrated whole.

To discuss and intellectually discover what intelligence is would be, I feel, a waste of time and energy, for that would not lift the burden of ignorance and illusion. Instead of inquiring what is intelligence, let us discover for ourselves what are the hindrances placed upon the mind which prevent the full awakening of intelligence. If I were to give an

explanation of what is intelligence, and you agreed with my explanation, your mind would make of it a well-defined system, and through fear would twist itself to fit into that system. But if each one can discover for himself the many impediments placed on the mind, then, through awareness, not through self-analysis, the mind will begin to liberate itself, thus awakening true intelligence which is life itself.

Now one of the greatest impediments placed on the mind is authority. Please understand the whole significance of that word, and don't jump to the opposite conclusion. Please don't say, 'Must we be free of law; can we do what we like; how can we be free of morality, authority?' Authority is very subtle; its ways are many; its permeating influence is so delicate, so cunning, that it needs great discernment, not hasty and thoughtless conclusions, to realize its significance. When there is deep understanding there is no division of authority as the outer and the inner, as applicable to the mass or to the few, as the externally imposed or the inwardly cultivated. But unfortunately there exists this division of external and inward authority. The external is the imposition of standards, traditions, ideals, which merely act as an enclosure to restrain the individual, treating him as an animal to be trained according to certain demands and conditions. You see this happening all the time in the closed morality of religions, in the standards of systems and parties. As a reaction against this imposition of authority we develop an inner guide, a system, a discipline according to which we try to act, and thus force experience to fit itself into this groove of protected desires and hopes.

Where there is authority and a mere adjustment to it, there cannot be fulfilment. Each individual has created this authority, through fear and the desire for security. You have to understand your own desire, which is creating authority and to which you are a slave; you cannot merely disregard it. When the mind discerns the deep significance of authority, and frees itself from fear with its subtle influences, then there is the dawning of intelligence, which is true fulfilment. Where there is intelligence there is true co-operation, and not compulsion; but where there is no intelligence, collective work becomes mere slavery. True collective work is the natural outcome of fulfilment, which is intelligence. In awakening intelligence, each one helps to create the opportunity, the environment for others also to fulfil.

QUESTION (Q): *It is being said in some newspapers and elsewhere that you have led a gay and useless life: that you have no real message, but are merely repeating the gibberish of the Theosophists who educated you; that you are attacking all religions except your own; that you are destroying without building anything new; that your purpose is to create doubt, disturbance and confusion in the minds of the people. What have you to say to all this?*

JK: I think I had better answer this question point by point. (*Shouts from the audience: 'It is an infamy! The question is libellous!'*) Sirs, just a minute. Please don't feel that I am insulted, and that you have to defend me. (*Applause*)

Someone has said that I have led a gay and useless life. I am afraid he cannot judge. To judge another is entirely false, for to judge means that your mind is a slave to a particular standard. As a matter of fact, I have not led a so-called gay life, fortunately or unfortunately; but that doesn't make me an object of worship. I say that the tendency in people to worship another, no matter who it is, is destructive of intelligence; but to understand and love another cannot be included in worship which is born of subtle fear. Only a limited mind will judge another, and such a mind cannot understand the living quality of life.

It is said that I have no real message, but am merely repeating 'the gibberish of the Theosophists who educated me'. As a matter of fact I do not belong to the Theosophical Society, or to any other society. To belong to any religious organization is detrimental to intelligence. (*Objections from the audience*) Sirs, that is my opinion. You need not agree with it. But you have to find out whether or not what I say is true, and not merely object. It happens that when I talk in India, they tell me that I am teaching Hinduism, and when I talk in the Buddhist countries, they tell me that what I say is Buddhism, and the Theosophists and others say that I am explaining anew their own special doctrines. What matters is that you who are listening understand the significance of what I am saying, and not whether someone thinks that I am repeating the gibberish of a particular society. Out of your own suffering, through your own understanding of action, comes true intelligence, which is true fulfilment. So what is of great importance is not whether I belong to any society or am

merely rehashing old ideas, but that you deeply understand the significance of the ideas which I have put forward, thus completing them in action. Then you will discover for yourself whether what I am saying is true or false, whether it has any essential value in life. Unfortunately, we are very apt to believe anything that appears in print. If you can really think through one idea completely, then you will find the real beauty of action, of life. It is said that I am attacking all religions except my own. I do not belong to any religion. For me, all religions are but defensive reactions against life, against intelligence.

The questioner suggests that my purpose is to create doubt, disturbance and confusion in the minds of the people. Now, you must have the purifying balm of doubt in order to understand; otherwise you merely become slaves of vested interest, whether it be of organized religion or of money and social tradition. If you begin to question truly the values which now enclose and hold you – though it may cause confusion and disturbance – if you persist in deeply understanding them in action, there will be clarity and happiness. But clarity or comprehension does not come about superficially, artificially; there must be deep questioning.

Doubt is the awakener of intelligence, born of suffering. But the man whose mind is held in the vice of vested interest, of power and exploitation, declares doubt to be pernicious, a fetter which causes confusion and brings about destruction. If you would truly awaken intelligence, you must begin to understand the significance of values through doubt and

suffering. If you would realize the movement of life, of reality, mind must be denuded of all self-defensive values.

Q: *It is clear to me that you are determined to destroy all our cherished ideals. If these are destroyed, will not civilization collapse and man return to savagery?*

JK: First of all, I cannot destroy your ideals which you have created. If I could destroy them, you would create others in their place and so be prisoners to these. What we have to find out is, not whether by destruction of ideals there is going to be savagery, but whether ideals really help man to live completely, intelligently. Is there not savagery, chaos, misery, exploitation, war, in spite of your ideals, religions, and closed morality?

So let us find out whether ideals are a help or a hindrance. To understand this, your mind must not be prejudiced or on the defensive. When we talk about ideals, we mean those points of light by which we seek to guide ourselves across the confusion and mystery of life. That is what we mean by ideals: those future conceptions which will help man to direct himself across the chaos of present existence.

The subtle desire for ideals and their permanence indicates that you want to cross the ocean of life without suffering. As you do not fully comprehend the present, you desire to have guides in the form of ideals. So you say, 'As life is such a conflict, as there is so much misery and suffering in it, ideals will give me encouragement, hope'. Thus ideals become an

escape from the present. Your mind and heart are crippled and burdened by them, giving you a subtle means of escape from the ever-living present, thus covering up and dodging the conflict and the suffering of the now. So gradually you come to live in theories and cannot understand the actuality.

Let me take an example which I hope will make my meaning clear. As Christians you profess to love your neighbours: that is the ideal. Now what is happening in actuality? Love doesn't exist, but we have fear, domination, cruelty, and all the horrors and absurdities of nationalism and war. In theory it is one thing, and in fact it is quite the opposite. But if you put aside for the moment your ideals and really confront the actual, if instead of living in a romantic future, you face – without illusion – that which is ever taking place, giving your whole mind and heart to it, then you will act and know the movement of reality.

Now, you are confusing actuality with theories. You have to separate the actual from the theoretical, from hopes and longings. When you are confronted with the actual, there is action; but if you escape into ideals, into the security of illusion, then you will not act. The greater the ideal, the greater is its power to hold man in an illusion, in a prison. It is only in understanding life, with all its suffering, joy and deep movement that the mind can free itself from illusions and ideals. When the mind is crippled with hopes and longings which become ideals, it cannot understand the present. But when the mind begins to free itself from these future hopes

and illusions, then action will awaken that intelligence which is life itself, the ever-becoming.

Q: *I am deeply interested in your ideas, but I am opposed by my family and the priest. What should be my attitude towards them?*

JK: If you desire to understand truth, life, then family – as an influence, as a shelter – doesn't exist, and the priest – as an imposition with subtle exploitation – ceases to be a determining factor in life. So it is you yourself who have to answer this question. If you would understand the beauty of life and live deeply and ecstatically, without this continual creation of limitation, then you must be free from organized beliefs, as in religion with its exploitation, and from the possessiveness of family with its cunning and self-defensive shelters – which does not mean throwing away all things and becoming a licentious person. If you desire to understand profoundly and live intelligently with fulfilment, then family, priest, or public opinion cannot stand in the way.

What is public opinion, what are priests, what is family, when you really come to consider it? To discern, has not each one to stand alone, without support? This in no way means that you cannot love, that you cannot marry and have children. Because of your own desire for security and comfort you begin to create an environment which influences, limits and dominates your mind and heart through fear. A man who would understand truth must be free from the desire for security and comfort.

Q: *Some say you are the Christ, others that you are the Antichrist. What, in fact, are you?*

JK: I don't think it matters very much what I am. What matters is whether you intelligently understand what I say. If you have a deep appreciation of beauty, it is of little importance to know who painted the picture or wrote the poem. (*Applause and objections*) Sirs, I am not evading the question, because I don't think it matters in the least who I am. For if I began to assert or deny, I should become an authority. But if you, through your own discernment, understand and live what is true and vital in that which I am saying, then there will be fulfilment. This, after all, is of the greatest importance: that you shall live fully, completely – and not what I am.

*Buenos Aires
15th July, 1935*

PUTTING ASIDE OF THAT WHICH IS FALSE IS THE ONLY WAY TO PROCEED

QUESTION: *There is a prevalent assumption these days that everything is relative, a matter of personal opinion, that there is no such thing as ‘truth’ or ‘fact’ independent of personal perception. What is an intelligent response to this belief?*

J. KRISHNAMURTI: Is it that we are all so ‘personal’ that what I see, what you see, is the only truth, and that my opinion and your opinion are the only facts we have? That everything is relative is what the question implies. It implies that goodness is relative, evil is relative, love is relative. If everything is relative (that is, not the whole, complete, truth) then our actions, our affections, our personal relationships are relative, they can be ended whenever we like, whenever they do not please us.

Is there such a thing as truth apart from personal belief, apart from personal opinion? Is there such a thing as truth? This question was asked in the ancient days by the Greeks, by the Hindus and by the Buddhists. It is one of the strange facts in the Eastern religions that doubt was encouraged – to doubt, to question – and in religion in the West it is rather put down, it is called ‘heresy’.

One must find out for oneself, apart from personal opinions, perceptions, experiences, (which are always relative), whether there is a perception, a seeing, which is absolute truth, not relative. How is one going to find out? If one says that

personal opinions and perceptions are relative then there is no such thing as absolute truth, all is relative. Accordingly, our behaviour, our conduct, our way of life is relative, casual, not complete, not whole, fragmentary.

How would one find out if there is such a thing as truth which is absolute, which is complete, which is never changing in the climate of personal opinions? How does one's mind, the intellect, thought, find out?

One is enquiring into something that demands a great deal of investigation, an action in daily life, a putting aside of that which is false – that is the only way to proceed. If one has an illusion, a fantasy, an image, a romantic concept, of truth or love, then that is the very barrier that prevents one moving further. Can one honestly investigate what is an illusion? How does illusion come into being? What is the root of it? Does it not mean playing with something which is not actual?

The actual is that which is happening, whether it is what may be called good, bad or indifferent; it is that which is actually taking place. When one is incapable of facing that which is actually taking place in oneself, one creates illusions to escape from it. If one is unwilling or afraid to face what is actually going on, that very avoidance creates illusion, a fantasy, a romantic movement, away from that-which-is. That word 'illusion' implies the moving away from that-which-is.

Can one avoid this movement, this escape, from actuality? What is the actual? The actual is that which is happening,

including the responses, the ideas, the beliefs and opinions one has. To face them is not to create illusion. Illusions can take place only when there is a movement away from the fact, from that which is happening, that which actually is. In understanding that-which-is, it is not one's personal opinion that judges but the actual observation. One cannot observe what is actually going on if one's belief or conditioning qualifies the observation; then it is the avoidance of the understanding of that-which-is.

If one could look at what is actually taking place, then there would be complete avoidance of any form of illusion. Can one do this? Can one actually observe one's dependency – either the dependency on a person, on a belief, on an ideal, or on some experience which has given one a great deal of excitement? That dependence inevitably creates illusion.

So a mind that is no longer creating illusion, that has no hypotheses, that has no hallucinations, that does not want to grasp an experience of that which is called truth, has now brought order into itself. It has order. There is no confusion brought about by illusions, by delusions, hallucinations; the mind has lost its capacity to create illusions. Then what is truth? The astrophysicists, the scientists, are using thought to investigate the material world around them, they are going beyond physics, beyond, but always moving outward. But if one starts inwards one sees that the 'me' is also matter. And thought is matter. If one can go inwards, moving from fact to fact, then one begins to discover that which is beyond matter.

Then there is such a thing as absolute truth, if one goes through with it.

Ojai
8th May, 1980

DOUBT, SCEPTICISM, IS A GREAT PURIFIER

I do wonder why you have all come. Is it out of curiosity or, as it's a lovely morning, it's an outing for you? Or, are we serious enough to face all our problems, which are mounting, and find out for ourselves if we can resolve them? And as it is not possible to have a discussion with so many people or have a dialogue, we can have a conversation together, which is, that you and the speaker are walking along a shady lane full of shadows and running waters, and are talking about your own problems, problems which confront all humanity, not only each one of us, but also what every human being in the world is going through. And as we were pointing out yesterday, we have assumed that our consciousness is something separate, personal, individual. But as one observes deeply, this consciousness with its suffering, pain, anxiety, and loneliness is the common ground of all humanity; and the great uncertainty and the everlasting search for security is the problem of every human being in the world. It's not your particular problem, it's the problem which is the issue of all human beings – whether they be Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist.

So we are talking over together amicably, in a friendly spirit, the issues of our life. And as this is the last talk, we cannot go over all the things we have had a conversation about during the last five talks. But we can summarise the whole thing. Most of us are apt to take one special problem and try to resolve it, or we come here hoping that someone else will help us to overcome or resolve or transcend one's particular problem. But if one examines more acutely, critically, every problem is related to all problems. They are interrelated; they cannot possibly be separated and, if we have separated them, we cannot try to resolve them individually or separately.

We talked about various things during the last five talks: fear, the nature of human beings who have been hurt all their life, psychologically, inwardly, and the consequences of that hurt. We went into that very, very carefully. And, also, we talked about the relationship between human beings – between man, woman, and the neighbour – whether that neighbour be very, very, very far away [or close]. And in that relationship, however intimate, however personal, there is always conflict, there is always a certain sense of uneasiness, fear, domination, possessiveness, attachment. All these naturally breed struggle between two human beings. Conflict arises; and we went into the question whether that conflict can possibly end, whether it must everlastingly continue from generation to generation.

And, also, we talked about fear (which is a very, very, very complex problem), and the contributory causes of that fear: conformity, comparison, imitation, trying to be something

that you are not, and, also, the other factors that bring about fear. We went into that very deeply. And, also, we talked about the continuation and the demand for pleasure, whether it is religious pleasure or the ordinary pleasures of life: sexual, the form of achievement, success, possession, money, prestige, status, and all that.

And yesterday morning we went into the question: What is love? We talked yesterday morning about why human beings have destroyed that one perfume – the absolute necessity in life, and without which life has no meaning whatsoever. You may have lots of money, enjoy yourself on the sea, go to various churches, follow various gurus, accept various philosophies as the way of your life, but without that quality and that perfume, that passion – which is different from lust – that comes about when there is love, life has no meaning. We went into that sufficiently extensively yesterday morning.

And, also, we talked about the ending of suffering. We talked about why human beings, so highly educated in one direction, so extraordinarily intelligent in the technological world, why human beings who have lived on this marvellous earth millennia upon millennia, why they have not understood or ended suffering – not only personal suffering but the suffering of mankind. There is starvation in Africa and in the East, in India; poverty is destructive, degrading. And there are other economic problems which separate mankind. And we said without nationalism, a global interrelationship alone will solve all our outward economic social problems. We live on this earth together. It's our earth, not the American earth, or

the Russian earth, or the Hindu, or the Buddhist, or the Islamic earth. It's our earth, but we have divided it as the American, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, European, and Hindu and so on, and so on. Where there is division – racial, economic, religious – there must be conflict, there must be wars, and wars have been going on for millions of years. And our intelligence we give to the technological world; we have not applied that intelligence to solve this problem of suffering. And we have the capacity, we have the energy but, apparently, we are caught in a mechanistic world. Our culture is becoming more and more mechanical. A mechanistic culture is not only one where the machine becomes all-important but it is, also, one where a human being lives a life of repetitiveness: repeating over and over the same [thing], having the same problems, the same issues, the same conflict.

And we, also, talked yesterday (and we shall go into it more deeply this morning), why human beings have become what they are: shallow, superficial. They have learned a great deal of life, accumulated a great deal of knowledge, but that knowledge, apparently, has not solved the daily, human conflict. So, knowledge may be one of the factors of sorrow (as we talked about, yesterday morning).

And we shall go into some other subjects this morning. But first, please, this is not a lecture, as it is generally understood – a lecture being talking about a particular subject and being concerned with that subject, and concerned to transmit it as clearly as possible to another. So this is not a lecture but rather a conversation between you and the speaker in which

both of us are observing, thinking about the same problem, looking at the same mountain, the same trees, the blue sky. So we are together; the speaker means that honestly. We are together to observe these problems, and to find them out for ourselves and not according to some philosopher, not according to some priest, not according to authority of a guru, and so on, and so on. To discard all that completely and observe for ourselves why we human beings have become so deplorably unhealthy psychologically. So, please, though the speaker may put certain things into words, the words are not the actual, the explanation is not that which is explained. As we talked about the other day, too, we are caught in a network of words. And words become extraordinarily important: the word ‘American’ (or the word ‘Communist’, ‘Socialist’, ‘Capitalist’, ‘Baptist’, ‘Catholic’, and so on) has an extraordinary significance to the people who live in this part of the world. Please, words are not the actuality; the symbol is not the actual. So, please, if one may point out most respectfully, what we are doing, what we are going into, is merely explanation, a usage of certain words, but the words, the explanations, are not the real.

We ought to talk over together what is culture. The ordinary meaning of that word is ‘to cultivate’, as you cultivate vegetables, a garden, a rose bed. Culture implies not a repetitive, mechanical existence, but to be free. That is, we live always in the known, but to be free from the known and to act from that freedom – *that’s*, actually, ‘culture’.

Please, kindly follow all this if you are interested. It's a nice morning, and you may treat this gathering, as an entertainment, as a kind of mental stimulation, a drug, and that would be most unfortunate, for if you treat this as a form of stimulation, then you lose the reality of your own life of your own shallowness, your own emptiness, your own fears, anxieties, and all the travail of your life. So, please, as the speaker puts it into words, examine that which he says for yourself, because doubt, scepticism, is a great purifier. Most of us so easily accept things, especially in religious matters. In so-called spiritual matters, authority assumes it knows and that you don't know. They, 'authorities', act as interpreters. But it is necessary to discover what is truth, and [for that] there must be doubt. And doubt in the Eastern world, in the Eastern religions, has been emphasised. In the Christian world, doubt is an anathema, because if you doubt the whole structure of the church, whether it be local or from Rome or any other, if you doubt it then the whole thing collapses. So in the Western world doubt has been called heresy and condemned. Those who doubted have been burnt, they have been tortured just as they are doing now to political prisoners in various parts of the world; it is the same phenomena. So, please don't accept a thing that the speaker is saying but try to find out for yourself by carefully listening – *if* you are interested. If you don't treat this as an entertainment, then please listen and doubt and question and ask. You are doubting that which you have created yourself, you are doubting your own ideas, your own conclusions, your own experiences, your beliefs, your faiths. You are doubting so that you find out for yourself what is truth.

And that is very important, because truth demands a free mind, a mind that is completely free. And there is no path to truth, so please, as we are going into this very complex problem, let us listen carefully, with a certain quality of doubt. To doubt requires sensitivity. If you doubt everything, (*Laughs*) then it becomes rather stupid. But to doubt with a light hand, with a quick mind, with subtlety, then that doubt brings about clarity, energy. And we need energy to go into all these problems, to resolve them.

So we are asking: what is culture? Is it merely the mechanical repetition of the known? Which is, we live in the past; the past is our memory; the past is our knowledge through experience. And we live, always, in the past, in the known. And when we act from the known, it is repetitive. Of course, we must act in certain areas with knowledge – like a scientist does. A scientist has to have a great deal of knowledge; a great surgeon must have experience as he must have operated upon many, and accumulated knowledge, skill, and a sensitivity of hand. There knowledge is necessary. And knowledge, which is all our remembrances, all the past incidents, the hurts, the fears, the longings, the despairs, the desperate loneliness – all that's part of our past knowledge. And when we are acting from the past, it must be repetitive and, therefore, the mind becomes mechanical. The computer is a repetitive machine, maybe quicker, faster than the human brain, but that machine is repetitive, as we human beings are.

And so we are questioning any culture born from the past, from the known; obviously it's mechanical, repetitive. And so

we are going to find out what is it that brings about a culture which is totally different from the mechanistic culture which we have accepted for thousands of years. Most of our minds – with some rare exceptions – are mediocre (forgive me for using that word). One may think one is extraordinarily, out of that class, but to think that you are out of that class is also a form of mediocrity. (*Laughter*) This is not an insult. We are examining together.

What is it to be mediocre? The word ‘mediocre’ comes from Greek, from Latin; it means ‘climbing halfway up the mountain’. The real meaning of the word ‘mediocre’ is to never climb all the way up, but being satisfied to climb halfway or one-third of the way. And our education, however wide, whatever the knowledge one acquires through a particular subject, is limiting the mind. Have you noticed, especially in this country, how specialists, doctors, surgeons, philosophers, psychologists, and so on, are ruling each one of us? And this fact is spreading all over the rest of the world.

They, the specialists, are the authority to tell you what to do. They are the experts: how to bring up a baby, how to have sexual relationship properly, how to make up your face. There are these authorities, and we all obey them. Our obedience has at certain times a revolt, but that revolt is merely a reaction and so it’s not complete comprehension of the understanding that all specialized knowledge is limited, as all knowledge is limited. And a culture born out of this limitation is no culture at all. There’s no American culture, or European culture (they can go back to the Renaissance, to the past

history), but a deep culture of the mind can only come about through freedom from the known. Can there be such freedom?

We are going to talk about it together because only from a religion a new culture can come into being. Religion is not the authoritarian, the accepted form of religion. The state religion, the religion of belief, of faith, of dogma, of rituals, of worship a symbol, that is not religion – obviously. So we are going to enquire into what is religion. Do you understand? We've enquired into fear, into the nature of that extraordinary thing called love, whether human beings can ever end their suffering, their misery, their anxiety. And also we should enquire together into what is religion.

Man worships; there are still those people in the East who worship a tree, who worship a mountain. They give, in India, to the Himalayas a special peace, a special name. And they worshipped at one time the earth, the trees, the heavens, the sun – as the Egyptians did. But we consider all that illusion, nonsense. And as we are so terribly sophisticated, we worship a symbol, pray to that symbol, to that saviour and it's another form of the same thing that's in India. Worship has been part of human life from the ancient of days. You may not worship a tree, but you go to the church or to a temple or a mosque and there you pray, you worship. There is not much difference between the worship of a tree, which is alone in a marvellous field of green earth, and the symbol that thought has created in the church, in the temple, or in a mosque. There is not much difference between the two because man suffers,

he is in trouble, he doesn't know to whom to turn to, so he invents a comforting god, which is, thought invents a god, and then worships that which he has invented. These are facts, whether you like it or not. You invent the whole rituals of Christianity, as in India, there are complicated rituals. And it is the invention of thought. And then thought says, that is divine revelation. I do not know if you have not noticed, in Asia, which includes India, and here, divine revelation plays an extraordinary part. But that divinity is brought about by thought. The interpreter of that divinity is the priest. He thinks and his thought has created various forms of rituals. So we are asking, is religion all this? Is religion based upon books, the printed word? Where religion is based on a book – whether it is the Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or the Buddhist – then there is dogma; the authority of the book becomes all-important; there is bigotry, narrowness of mind. Both the Muslim world and the Christian world are based on books: the *Koran* and the *Bible*. In India, fortunately for them, they have got a hundred books, hundred gods – no, more than that, three-hundred-thousand gods. (*Laughter*) Don't please laugh. This is very serious. It sounds funny. And there they are tolerant, which means they put up with anything: false gods, true gods, any kind of illusion, any kind of assertions of any so-called religious man. Here in the West, as in the Muslim world, the book plays an extraordinarily important part. And therefore those who believe in the book, deeply convinced by every word in that book, they become bigoted, dogmatic, assertive, aggressive, and if they are not semi-civilised, they'll kill. This is happening in the world, in religion. The word 'religion', the etymological meaning of that word, is

unknown. It arises from certain Latin words, which we'll not go into, but it actually means, according to certain dictionaries, the capacity to gather all your energy to discover, to come upon that which is true. That is the root meaning of that word. So we are gathering our energy – not a specialised energy but all our energy: the energy of thought, the energy of emotions, passionate energy – to enquire into what is truth. And to go into it deeply, we must enquire also into what is thought, which has invented all the religions in the world. All the rituals, all the dogmas, the beliefs, the faiths are the result of thought. There is nothing divine about anything. Thought can say what I have invented is divine, but thought is not sacred, is not holy. So it is important to go into this question of what is thought. We have gone into it previously but the more you look at it, the more you enquire into the very nature of thought, the more complicated, the more it demands a subtle mind. It demands a quickness of mind, not a mechanical mind, not a mind that accepts, not a mind that acquiesces, but a mind that is doubtful, questioning, demanding, has this great energy. And when you go into this because you are interested in some form of entertainment, or in some form of relief, in some form of comfort, then it is all partial energy. Whereas if you demand, totally, to understand the nature of the human mind, why we live the way we are living, destroying the earth, destroying ourselves, wars, misery, then you have to give all your energy. And there is total energy where there is the complete passion to understand, to find out a way of living which is totally different from the mechanistic, repetitive way.

So we have to go into this question deeply once again: What is thought, and why does thought play such an extraordinarily important part in our life, in our relationship? Is thought love?

Please enquire with the speaker. Really, the speaker is putting your question; it is not his question. You are putting this question for yourself. Thought has created the marvellous cathedrals, the magnificent structures in Europe; and some of them here, too. And thought has, also, put all those things inside the cathedrals and the churches and the temples and the mosques. So one asks: Is thought sacred? – because it has put all this in these buildings and then you worship it. I wonder if one sees the illusion of this, the ironic, actual deception of it. Thought has invented the symbol, the ritual, the host, and the different things in India and Asia; thought has been responsible for all this, some of it being copied from the ancient Egyptians, from India, and so on. And then thought, having created this marvellous structure in stone, then inside it is all the symbols, the agony, and in the Asiatic world a different symbol; then thought says, you must worship that. So we are asking, is thought sacred in itself? Or, it is merely – please listen to it, you may not agree; do not agree but enquire – is thought a material process? If it is not sacred, then it is a material process. But thought has invented these: heaven and hell, the saviours of the world according to different religions, their rituals – it is all the result of thought. And then thought turns around and says, you must worship it. So we must find out for ourselves, not according to any authority in spiritual, religious matters. There is authority of the surgeon, that's a totally different matter. But to discover, to come upon that

which is eternal, if there is such thing as eternity, your mind must be free in all spiritual matters, in all psychic matters; that is, in the psychological realm, which is you, there must be total freedom to find out.

So we are going to enquire together into the nature of thought. If you have no thought at all, you live in a state of amnesia, blankness, but that is a rare form of disease. But for most human beings throughout the world, whether they are Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Communists, and so on, the common factor is thought. They all think, whether they are extremely poor, uneducated, or the highly sophisticated, accumulated professor, or the cunning politician, or the highest authority of the church, and so on – they all think, as each one of us does, in our daily life. And that thought dominates our life. So it is very, very important, if one may point out, to understand the whole movement of thought. It has created great poetry, great painting, great sculpture, literature, and thought is necessary to do business, to drive a car and so on. What is thought? What is its origin, the beginning of thought? You are asking the question, not the speaker. Please, apply your own minds, brain, to enquire into this question. Because thought dominates every action in our life. Thought is the determining factor in relationship. So what is that thing called thought, the thinking machinery and the origin of it?

Is not thought born out of memory? You remember where you live, the distance to be covered from here to where you are going; that's knowledge, and that knowledge has been

acquired through experience. So the beginning of thought is experience, knowledge, memory, stored up in the brain. Right? This is a fact, not exotic or absurd illusion. You remember something that happened yesterday, pleasurable or not, and that remembrance is stored in the brain, recorded in the brain, and from that record thought comes into being. So thought, whatever it does, is not sacred. It's a material process. Some of the scientists even agree to what the speaker has been saying for many years. They have experimented on rats, pigeons, and guinea pigs, dogs but they don't experiment upon themselves. We are also matter, and science is concerned with matter. And if thought is a material process and thought, whatever it does, whether in the religious field or in the business field or in preparing for wars through a gathering of armaments, is the result of thought. Thought has divided people into this type of religious person, this type of human being who lives in certain part of the world, and so on. It's thought that has divided human beings. And thought, because of its divisive nature, because thought is never complete, because born of knowledge, and knowledge is never total about anything, therefore thought is always limited, and separative. Thought is separative. Where there is separative action, there must be conflict: between the communists and the socialists and the capitalists, between the Arab and the Jew, between the Hindu and the Muslim, and so on. These are all the divisive processes of thought, and where there is division there must be conflict. That's a law. So nothing that thought has put together, whether in a book, in the church, in the cathedrals, in the temples or in the mosques, is sacred. No symbol is sacred. And that is not

religion; it's merely a form of thoughtful, superficial reaction to that which is called sacred.

So we are going to find out, if we can this morning, giving our attention, our whole attention to enquire what is sacred, and if there is anything sacred at all. The intellectuals throughout the world deny all this. They are fed up with the religions, with their illusions and all that. They discard; they are rather cynical about the whole affair, because religious organisations throughout the world have great property, enormous wealth, great power – but all that is not spiritual; all that is not religious. So, as we said, the word 'religion', the etymological meaning is unknown, but the dictionary also makes it clear that to enquire into what is truth one must gather all energy, and have the capacity to be diligent, to act, not according to a certain pattern. One must diligently observe one's thoughts, one's feelings, one's antagonisms, one's fears and to go far beyond them, so that the mind is completely free.

Now we are asking, is there anything sacred in life – something not invented by thought? Because man, from time immeasurable, has always asked this question: is there something beyond all this confusion, misery, darkness, illusions, beyond the institutions and reforms; is there something really true, something beyond time, something so immense that thought cannot come to it? Man has enquired into this. And, apparently, only very, very, very few people have been free to enter into that world. And the priest from ancient of times comes in between the seeker and that which

he is hoping to find. He interprets, he becomes the man who knows, or thinks he knows. And man is side-tracked, diverted; lost.

So if we want to enquire into that which is most holy, which is nameless, timeless, one must obviously belong to no group, no religion, have no belief, no faith, because belief and faith is accepting as true something which does not or may not exist. That is the nature of belief: taking for granted, accepting something to be true. When your own enquiry, your own vitality, energy has not found out, you believe. Because in belief there is some form of security, comfort. But a man who is seeking merely psychological comfort, such a man will never come upon that which is beyond time. So there must be total freedom. Is it possible to be free from all our conditioning, not biological conditioning, which is natural, but from the psychological conditioning: the hates, the antagonisms, the pride, all the things that bring about confusion, which is the very nature of the self which is thought? And to find out if it is possible there must be attention – not concentration.

The word meditation has been introduced into the Western world quite recently by some of those people who have accepted certain norms, certain patterns of meditation. There is the Zen meditation, the Tibetan form of meditation which is different from the southern form of Buddhist meditation, there is the meditation of the Hindus, with their special gurus, who again have their own forms of meditation. Then there is the Christian form, which is contemplation. And the word

meditation implies, the meaning of that word is ‘to ponder over, to think over’. (Please don’t go to sleep if you are interested, that is!) And a meditative mind, the mind that’s in meditation, first of all must be free of measurement. (We’ll go into that a little later, if we have time.)

So all those people who have brought this word with their systems, methods and practices, are again put together by careful thought. Perhaps one guru or two (those Asiatic birds) have some kind of experience; immediately that’s translated into some kind of a spiritual status, and they have their meditation. And they come here and you are gullible enough to swallow all that – paying for it, and the more you pay, the greater the meditation! (*Laughter*)

So we ought to enquire into what meditation, to meditate, is. It’s really important, because a mind that’s merely mechanistic, as thought is, can never come upon that which is total, supreme order and, therefore, completely free. The universe is in total order; it’s only the human mind that is in disorder. And one has to have an extraordinarily orderly mind, a mind that has understood disorder and is free completely from disorder – which is contradiction, imitation, conformity, and all the rest of it – for such a mind is an attentive mind, it is completely attentive to all its actions, in its relationship, and so on and so on. Attention is not concentration. Concentration is restricted, narrow, limited, whereas attention is limitless. And in that attention there is that quality of silence – not the silence invented by thought, not the silence that comes about after noise, not the silence of

one thought waiting for another thought. There must be that silence which is not put together by desire, by will, by thought. And in that meditation there is no controller. And this is one of the factors in all the so-called meditative groups and the systems they have invented: there is always effort, control, discipline. Discipline means to learn – not to conform – to learn so that your mind becomes more and more subtle, not based on knowledge, learning is a constant movement. So meditation is freedom from the known, which is the measure. And in that meditation, there is absolute silence. Then in that silence alone, that which is nameless is.

Ojai
16th May, 1982

REPORT OF THE GATHERING AT RAJGHAT, VARANASI NOVEMBER, 2024

The Annual Gathering 2024, the second Gathering to take place after the disruption caused by Covid 19, was held at the Rajghat Education Centre, KFI in Varanasi from the 9th to the 12th of November. The purpose was to create an atmosphere of serious enquiry in which every participant had the occasion to halt the daily humdrum to engage in these questions. There were about 250 participants from many different states, as well as a smattering of participants from outside India. It was particularly heartening that a significant proportion of the attendees were quite young, between 25 and 35, many of whom were attending their first Krishnamurti Gathering.

The mornings opened with the teachers of the Rajghat School and the Vasanta College for Women singing and chanting works that form a part of the 'Assemblies' of the Rajghat Educational Centre (and which are affectionately referred to as 'School Songs').

The theme taken up for the 2024 Gathering was *Meeting Life: An Enquiry into the Fragmented Self*. Keynote Speakers of the Gathering were Sri Samdhong Rinpoche, Mr S. Jayaram, and Prof. P. Krishna; each examined different strands of the central theme in their talks. Fragmentation and man's increasing alienation from the natural order of the world and its implications was a thread that was held and deepened through the three days of the talks.

Sri Samdhong Rinpoche reminded us that despite the Buddha and Krishnamurti having lived two millennia apart and having been witness to vastly different times and issues, the fundamental questions raised by them are similar and have endured. This seemed to point to the fact that human consciousness has remained

fundamentally unchanged. The Rinpoche centred his talk on the central Buddhist tenet of the ‘interdependently arising self’, which explains the nature of reality and the interconnectedness of all phenomena.

He then probed into how one’s notion of an independent self is attributed through one’s identification with body, mind and speech thereby being the basis of a fragmented consciousness. He then linked the process of enquiry to two oft asked questions by K – ‘Are you flowering?’ and ‘Are you learning?’ – to the Buddhist process of learning in three stages: *śruta-mayī-prajñā* (from listening and reading), *cintā-mayī-prajñā* (reflection and analysis), *bhāvana-mayī-prajñā* (flowering in one’s own examination). He concluded his talk by stressing the inherent interdependence of arising and existence of/in nature.

Mr S. Jayaram emphasized the fragmentation that plays out in the daily lives of each one of us, and how this is reflected and magnified in man’s relationship with Nature, and which comes in the way of his relationship with Nature. He focused on the fragmented approach of teaching and the method of learning in school and asked whether real learning could happen in a curriculum that’s broken up into parts.

Prof. P. Krishna began his talk with pointing out the tremendous order that exists in nature and, also, pointed out that nature has given man certain facilities such as the ability to think and to make choices. The basis of disorder is deliberate, intentional action. He asked why natural differences lead to comparison which then lead to ‘illusory’ differences. He stated that as comparison and perceiving differences is a peculiar trait of the human mind, he asked how is, therefore, a mind to discover what is true and what is false. He also spoke of the true meaning of ‘freedom from’

something as not being the ‘absence from’ something but as a relationship, a ‘relationship of responsibility’.

Small-group Discussions: The talks were followed by small-group discussions on the first and third day of the Gathering. These groups were composed of participants that were new to the Teachings and those who were familiar with them, who then, along with a couple of facilitators, helped to hold and deepen the discussions.

Panel Discussion: On the fourth morning, a panel discussion between Mr Sanjay Mathur, Mr Milind More, and Ms Sumitra M Gautama discussed the theme. Mr Mathur, during the discussion, showed that if pride in one’s heritage becomes the focus of learning history, then history will be distorted, and he asked whether we could be free from our personal and national history while learning history. Mr More highlighted aspects of life that play out both in society and a school; he asked whether we can get a sense of wholeness. And Ms Sumitra Gautama showed that there was fragmentation not just in the larger society outside but, also, within the schools and between the adults working in them.

Informal Interactions: There were spontaneous interactions between participants which happened during pleasantly warm evenings under trees. And walks during both the mornings and evenings provided further opportunity to engage with one another and to take in the beautiful campus of Rajghat and its surroundings.

Cultural Evening: On the evening of the third day, the guests gathered together to listen to the Sitar exponent Ms Supriya Shah; she captivated the audience with her rendition of Raag Bihaag. Her performance was followed by the Dhrupad exponent, Sri Ritwik

Sanyal who touched upon the concept of Dhruva Pada which has in it the essence of the eternal; it is, he said, ‘a journey into the realm of sound, into the unseen (the *adṛṣṭa*), and is a journey into self-realization’. The evening ended with a sense of quietness which the slow and sonorous unfolding of the notes of the Raags Sri and Purvi evoked; the stillness lingered after the performance.

There was a book stall which sold the works of J. Krishnamurti and also an exhibition of work done by the Unit for Women Empowerment. Both were well visited by the participants.

KFI, GATHERING: RISHI VALLEY

The annual KFI Gathering will be held this year at the Rishi Valley Education Centre in the month of November. Those interested in attending the Gathering could please check with the RVEC Office (gathering@rishivalley.org) after the month of August, 2025.

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