

The Core of the Teachings

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The following statement was written by Krishnamurti himself on October 21, 1980 in which he summarises the teachings. It may be copied and used provided this is done in its entirety. No editing or change of any kind is permitted. No extracts may be used. ([picture of the cover of the leaflet](#))

"The core of Krishnamurti's teaching is contained in the statement he made in 1929 when he said: 'Truth is a pathless land'. Man cannot come to it through any organisation, through any creed, through any dogma, priest or ritual, not through any philosophic knowledge or psychological technique. He has to find it through the mirror of relationship, through the understanding of the contents of his own mind, through observation and not through intellectual analysis or introspective dissection. Man has built in himself images as a fence of security - religious, political, personal. These manifest as symbols, ideas, beliefs. The burden of these images dominates man's thinking, his relationships and his daily life. These images are the causes of our problems for they divide man from man. His perception of life is shaped by the concepts already established in his mind. The content of his consciousness is his entire existence. This content is common to all humanity. The individuality is the name, the form and superficial culture he acquires from tradition and environment. The uniqueness of man does not lie in the superficial but in complete freedom from the content of his consciousness, which is common to all mankind. So he is not an individual.

Freedom is not a reaction; freedom is not a choice. It is man's pretence that because he has choice he is free. Freedom is pure observation without direction, without fear of punishment and reward. Freedom is without motive; freedom is not at the end of the evolution of man but lies in the first step of his existence. In observation one begins to discover the lack of freedom. Freedom is found in the choiceless awareness of our daily existence and activity. Thought is time. Thought is born of experience and knowledge which are inseparable from time and the past. Time is the psychological enemy of man. Our action is based on knowledge and therefore time, so man is always a slave to the past. Thought is ever-limited and so we live in constant conflict and struggle. There is no psychological evolution.

When man becomes aware of the movement of his own thoughts he will see the division between the thinker and thought, the observer and the observed, the experiencer and the experience. He will discover that this division is an illusion. Then only is there pure observation which is insight without any shadow of the past or of time. This timeless insight brings about a deep radical mutation in the mind.

Total negation is the essence of the positive. When there is negation of all those things that thought has brought about psychologically, only then is there love, which is compassion and intelligence."

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from Chapter VIII of "The First and Last Freedom" by J. Krishnamurti

We see contradiction in us and about us; because we are in contradiction, there is lack of peace in us and therefore outside us. There is in us a constant state of denial and assertion - what we want to be and what we are. The state of contradiction creates conflict and this conflict does not bring about peace - which is a simple, obvious fact. This inward contradiction should not be translated into some kind of philosophical dualism, because that is a very easy escape. That is by saying that contradiction is a state of dualism we think we have solved it - which is obviously a mere convention, a contributory escape from actuality. Now what do we mean by conflict, by contradiction? Why is there a contradiction in me? - this constant struggle to be something apart from what I am. I am this, and I want to be that. This contradiction in us is a fact, not a metaphysical dualism. Metaphysics has no significance in understanding what is. We may discuss, say, dualism, what it is, if it exists, and so on; but of what value is it if we don't know that there is contradiction in us, opposing desires, opposing interests, opposing pursuits? I want to be good and I am not able to be. This contradiction, this opposition in us, must be understood because it creates conflict; and in conflict, in struggle, we cannot create individually. Let us be clear on the state we are in. There is contradiction, so there must be struggle; and struggle is destruction, waste. In that state we can produce nothing but antagonism, strife, more bitterness and sorrow. If we can understand this fully and hence be free of contradiction, then there can be inward peace, which will bring understanding of each other.

The problem is this. Seeing that conflict is destructive, wasteful, why is it that in each of us there is contradiction? To understand that, we must go a little further. Why is there the sense of opposing desires? I do not know if we are aware of it in ourselves - this contradiction, this sense of wanting and not wanting, remembering something and trying to forget it in order to find something new. Just watch it. It is very simple and very normal. It is not something extraordinary. The fact is, there is contradiction. Then why does this contradiction arise? What do we mean by contradiction? Does it not imply an impermanent state which is being opposed by another impermanent state? I think I have a permanent desire, I posit in myself a permanent desire and another desire arises which contradicts it; this contradiction brings about conflict, which is waste. That is to say there is a constant denial of one desire by another desire, one pursuit overcoming another pursuit. Now, is there such a thing as a permanent desire? Surely, all desire is impermanent - not metaphysically, but actually. I want a job. That is I look to a certain job as a means of happiness; and when I get it, I am dissatisfied. I want to become the manager, then the owner, and so on and on, not only in this world, but in the so-called spiritual world - the teacher becoming the principal, the priest becoming the bishop, the pupil becoming the master.

This constant becoming, arriving at one state after another, brings about contradiction, does it not? Therefore, why not look at life not as one permanent desire but as a series of fleeting desires always in opposition to each other? Hence the mind need not be in a state of contradiction. If I regard life not as a permanent desire but as a series of temporary desires which are constantly changing, then there is no contradiction.

Contradiction arises only when the mind has a fixed point of desire; that is when the mind does not regard all desire as moving, transient, but seizes upon one desire and makes that into a permanency - only then, when other desires arise, is there contradiction. But all desires are in constant movement, there is no fixation of desire. There is no fixed point in desire; but the mind establishes a fixed point because it treats everything as a means to arrive, to gain; and

there must be contradiction, conflict, as long as one is arriving. You want to arrive, you want to succeed, you want to find an ultimate God or truth which will be your permanent satisfaction. Therefore you are not seeking truth, you are not seeking God. You are seeking lasting gratification, and that gratification you clothe with an idea, a respectable-sounding word such as God, truth; but actually we are all seeking gratification, and we place that gratification, that satisfaction, at the highest point, calling it God, and the lowest point is drink. So long as the mind is seeking gratification, there is not much difference between God and drink. Socially, drink may be bad; but the inward desire for gratification, for gain, is even more harmful, is it not? If you really want to find truth, you must be extremely honest, not merely at the verbal level but altogether; you must be extraordinarily clear, and you cannot be clear if you are unwilling to face facts.

Now what brings about contradiction in each one of us? Surely it is the desire to become something, is it not? We all want to become something: to become successful in the world and, inwardly, to achieve a result. So long as we think in terms of time, in terms of achievement, in terms of position, there must be contradiction. After all, the mind is the product of time. Thought is based on yesterday, on the past; and so long as thought is functioning within the field of time, thinking in terms of the future, of becoming, gaining, achieving, there must be contradiction, because then we are incapable of facing exactly what is. Only in realizing, in understanding, in being choicelessly aware of what is, is there a possibility of freedom from that disintegrating factor which is contradiction.

Therefore it is essential, is it not?, to understand the whole process of our thinking, for it is there that we find contradiction. Thought itself has become a contradiction because we have not understood the total process of ourselves; and that understanding is possible only when we are fully aware of our thought, not as an observer operating upon his thought, but integrally and without choice - which is extremely arduous. Then only is there the dissolution of that contradiction which is so detrimental, so painful.

So long as we are trying to achieve a psychological result, so long as we want inward security, there must be a contradiction in our life. I do not think that most of us are aware of this contradiction; or, if we are, we do not see its real significance. On the contrary, contradiction gives us an impetus to live; the very element of friction makes us feel that we are alive. The effort, the struggle of contradiction, gives us a sense of vitality. That is why we love wars, that is why we enjoy the battle of frustrations. So long as there is the desire to achieve a result, which is the desire to be psychologically secure, there must be a contradiction; and where there is contradiction, there cannot be a quiet mind. Quietness of mind is essential to understand the whole significance of life. Thought can never be tranquil; thought, which is the product of time, can never find that which is timeless, can never know that which is beyond time. The very nature of our thinking is a contradiction, because we are always thinking in terms of the past or of the future; therefore we are never fully cognizant, fully aware of the present.

To be fully aware of the present is an extraordinarily difficult task because the mind is incapable of facing a fact directly without deception. Thought is the product of the past and therefore it can only think in terms of the past or of the future; it cannot be completely aware of a fact in the present. So long as thought, which is the product of the past, tries to eliminate contradiction and all the problems that it creates, it is merely pursuing a result, trying to achieve an end, and such thinking only creates more contradiction and hence conflict, misery and confusion in us and, therefore, about us.

To be free of contradiction, one must be aware of the present without choice. How can there be choice when you are confronted with a fact? Surely the understanding of the fact is made impossible so long as thought is trying to operate upon the fact in terms of becoming, changing, altering. Therefore self-knowledge is the beginning of understanding; without self-knowledge, contradiction and conflict will continue. To know the whole process, the totality of oneself, does not require any expert, any authority. The pursuit of authority only breeds fear. No expert, no specialist, can show us how to understand the process of the self. One has to study it for oneself. You and I can help each other by talking about it, but none can unfold it for us, no specialist, no teacher, can explore it for us. We can be aware of it only in our relationship - in our relationship to things, to property, to people and to ideas. In relationship we shall discover that contradiction arises when action is approximating itself to an idea. The idea is merely the crystallization of thought as a symbol, and the effort to live up to the symbol brings about a contradiction.

Thus, so long as there is a pattern of thought, contradiction will continue; to put an end to the pattern, and so to contradiction, there must be self-knowledge. This understanding of the self is not a process reserved for the few. The self is to be understood in our everyday speech, in the way we think and feel, in the way we look at another. If we can be aware of every thought, of every feeling, from moment to moment, then we shall see that in relationship the ways of the self are understood. Then only is there a possibility of that tranquillity of mind in which alone the ultimate reality can come into being.

The Moon was just coming out of the sea into a valley of clouds. The waters were still blue, and Orion was faintly visible in the pale silver sky. The white waves were all along the shore, and the fishermen's huts, square, neat and dark against the white sands, were close to the water. The walls of these huts were made of bamboo, and the roofs were thatched with palm leaves laid one on top of another, sloping downward so that the heavy rains couldn't come inside. Completely round and full, the moon was making a path of light on the moving waters, and it was huge - you couldn't have held it in your arms. Rising above the valley of clouds, it had the heavens to itself. The sound of the sea was unceasing, and yet there was great silence. You never remain with any feeling, pure and simple, but always surround it with the paraphernalia of words. The word distorts it; thought, whirling around it, throws it into shadow, overpowers it with mountainous fears and longings. You never remain with a feeling, and with nothing else: with hate, or with that strange feeling of beauty. When the feeling of hate arises, you say how bad it is; there is the compulsion, the struggle to overcome it, the turmoil of thought about it. You want to remain with love; but you break it up, calling it personal or impersonal; you cover it with words, giving it the ordinary meaning, or by saying that it is universal; you think of someone whom you love, or who loves you. There is every kind of verbal movement.

Try remaining with the feeling of hate, with the feeling of envy, jealousy, with the venom of ambition; for after all, that's what you have in daily life, though you may want to live with love, or with the WORD 'love'. Since you have the feeling of hate, of wanting to hurt somebody with a gesture or a burning word, see if you can stay with that feeling. Can you? Have you ever tried? Try to remain with a feeling and see what happens. You will find it amazingly difficult. Your mind will not leave the feeling alone; it comes rushing in with its remembrances, its associations, its do's and don'ts, its everlasting chatter. Pick up a piece of shell. Can you look at it, wonder at its delicate beauty, without saying how pretty it is, or what

animal made it? Can you look without the movement of the mind? Can you live with the feeling without the word, without the feeling that the word brings up? If you can, then you will discover an extraordinary thing, a movement beyond the measure of time, a spring that knows no summer.

She was a small, elderly lady, with white hair and a face that was heavily lined, for she had borne many children; but there was nothing weak or feeble about her, and her smile conveyed the depth of her feeling. Her hands were wrinkled but strong, and they had evidently prepared many vegetables, for the right thumb and forefinger were covered with tiny cuts, which had become darkened. But they were fine hands - hands that had worked hard and wiped away many tears. She spoke quietly and hesitantly, with the voice of one who had suffered much; and she was very orthodox; for she belonged to an ancient caste that held itself high, and whose tradition it was to have no dealings with other groups, either through marriage or through commerce. They were people who were supposed to cultivate the intellect as a means to something other than the mere acquisition of things.

For a while neither of us spoke; she was gathering herself, and was not sure how to begin. She looked around the room, and seemed to approve of its bareness. There wasn't even a chair, or a flower, except for the one that could be seen just outside the window.

"I am now seventy-five," she began, "and you could be my son. How proud I would be of such a son! It would be a blessing. But most of us have no such happiness. We produce children who grow up and become men of the world, trying to be great in their little work. Though they may occupy high positions, they have no greatness in them. One of my sons is in the capitol, and he has a great deal of power, but I know his heart as only a mother can. Speaking for myself, I don't want anything from anybody; I don't want more money, or a bigger house. I mean to live a simple life to the very end. My children laugh at my orthodoxy, but I mean to continue in it. They smoke, drink and often eat meat, thinking nothing of it. Though I love them, I will not eat with them, for they have become unclean; and why should I, in my old age, pander to all their nonsense? They want to marry outside of caste, and they don't perform the religious rites or practice meditation, as their father did. He was a religious man, but . . ." She stopped talking, and considered what she was going to say.

"I didn't come here to talk about my family," she continued, "but I am glad to have said what I did. My sons will go their way, and I cannot hold them, though it saddens me to see what they are coming to. They are losing and not gaining, even though they have money and position. When their names appear in the papers, as often happens, they show me the papers proudly; but they will be like the common run of men, and the quality of our forefathers is fast disappearing. They are all becoming merchants, selling their talents, and I can't do anything to stem the tide. But that's enough about my children."

Again she stopped talking, and this time it was going to be more difficult to speak of what was within her heart. With lowered head she was thinking how to put the words together, but they wouldn't come. She refused to be helped, and was not embarrassed to remain silent for a time. Presently she began.

"It's difficult to speak of things that are very deep isn't it? One can talk of matters that do not lie too deeply, but it requires a certain confidence in oneself and the listener to broach a problem, the very existence of which one has hardly admitted even to oneself for fear of awakening the echo of darker things that have been asleep for so long. In this case it isn't that I don't trust the listener," she added quickly. "I have more than confidence in you. But to put certain feelings into words is not easy, especially when one has never before expressed them in

words. The feelings are familiar, but the words to describe them are not. Words are terrible things, aren't they? But I know you are not impatient, and I shall go at my own pace."

"You know how young people marry in the country, not by their own choice. My husband and I were married in that way many years ago. He was not a kindly man; he had a quick temper and was given to sharp words. Once he beat me; but I became used to many things in the course of my married life. Though as a child I used to play with my brothers and sisters, I spent a great deal of time by myself, and I have always felt apart, alone. In living with my husband, that feeling was pushed into the background; there were so many things to do. I was kept very busy with housekeeping, and with the joy and the pain of bearing and raising children. Nevertheless, the feeling of being alone would still creep over me, and I would want to think about it, but there wasn't time; so it would pass over me like a wave, and I would go on with what I had to do."

"When the children had grown up, educated, and were out on their own - my husband and I lived quietly until he died five years ago. Since his death, this feeling of being alone has come over me more often; it has gradually increased until now, and I am fully immersed in it. I have tried to get away from it by doing puja, by talking to some friend, but it's always there; and it's an agony, a fearsome thing. My son has a radio, but I can't escape from this feeling through such means, and I don't like all that noise. I go to the temple; but this sense of being utterly alone is with me on the way, while I am there, and coming back. I am not exaggerating, but only describing this thing as it is." She paused for a moment, and then continued.

"The other day my son brought me along to your talk. I couldn't follow all that you were saying, but you mentioned something about aloneness, and the purity of it; so perhaps you will understand." There were tears in her eyes.

To find out if there is something deeper, something beyond the feeling that comes upon you, and in which you are caught, you must first understand this feeling, must you not?

"Will this agonizing feeling of being alone lead me to God?" she inquired anxiously.

What do you mean by being alone?

"It is difficult to put that feeling into words, but I will try. It is a fear that comes when one feels to be completely alone, entirely by oneself, utterly cut off from everything. Though my husband and children were there, this wave would come upon me, and I would feel as if I were a dead tree in a wasted land: lonely, unloved and unloving. The agony of it was much more intense than that of bearing a child. It was fearful and breathtaking; I didn't belong to anyone; there was a sense of complete isolation. You understand, don't you?"

Most people have this feeling of loneliness, this sense of isolation, with its fear, only they smother it, run away from it, get themselves lost in some form of activity, religious or otherwise. The activity in which they indulge is their escape, they can get lost in it, and that's why they defend it so aggressively.

"But I have tried my best to run away from this feeling of isolation, with its fear, and I have never been able to. Going to the temple doesn't help; and even if it did, one can't be there all the time, any more than one can spend one's life performing rituals."

Not to have found an escape may be your salvation. In their fear of being lonely, of feeling cut off, some take to drink, others take drugs, while many turn to politics, or find some other way of escape. So you see, you are fortunate in not having found a means of avoiding this thing. Those who avoid it do a great deal of mischief in the world; they are really harmful people, for they give importance to things that are not of the highest significance. Often, being very clever and capable, such people mislead others by their devotion to the activity which is their escape;

if it isn't religion, it's politics, or social reform - anything to get away from themselves. They may seem to be selfless, but they are actually concerned with themselves, only in a different way. They become leaders, or the followers of some teacher; they always belong to something, or practice some method, or pursue an ideal. They are never just themselves; they are not human beings, but labels. So you see how fortunate you are to not have found an escape? "You mean it's dangerous to escape?" she asked, somewhat bewildered.

Isn't it? A deep wound must be examined, treated, healed; it's no good covering it up, or refusing to look at it.

"That's true. And this feeling of isolation is such a wound?"

It's something you don't understand, and in that sense it's like a disease that will keep on recurring; so it's meaningless to run away from it. You have tried running away, but it keeps overtaking you, doesn't it?

"It does. Then you are glad that I haven't found an escape?"

Aren't you? Which is more important?

"I think I understand what you have explained, and I am relieved that there's some hope."

Now let's both examine the wound. To examine something, you mustn't be afraid of the thing you're going to see, must you? If you are afraid, you won't look; you will turn your head away. When you had babies, you looked at them as soon as possible after they were born. You weren't concerned with whether they were ugly or beautiful; you looked at them with love, didn't you?

"That's exactly what I did. I looked at each new baby with love, with care, and pressed it to my heart."

In the same way, with affection, we must examine this feeling of being cut off, this sense of isolation, of loneliness, mustn't we? If we are fearful, anxious, we shall be incapable of examining it at all.

"Yes, I see the difficulty. I haven't really looked at it before, because I was fearful of what I might see. But now I think I can look."

Surely, this ache of loneliness is only the final exaggeration of what we all feel in a minor way every day, isn't it? Every day you are isolating yourself, cutting yourself off, aren't you?

"How?" she asked, rather horrified.

In so many ways. You belong to a certain family, to a special caste; they are your children, your grandchildren; it is your belief, your God, your property; you are more virtuous than somebody else; you know, and the other does not. All this is a way of cutting yourself off, a way of isolation, isn't it?

"But we are brought up that way, and one has to live. We can't cut ourselves off from society, can we?"

Is this not what you are already doing? In this relationship called society, every human being is cutting himself off from another by his position, by his ambition, by his desires for fame, power, and so on; but he has to live in this brutal relationship with others like himself, so the whole thing is glossed over and made respectable by pleasant sounding words. In everyday life, each one is devoted to his own interests, though it may be in the name of country, in the name of peace, or God, and so this isolating process goes on. One becomes aware of this whole process in the form of intense loneliness, a feeling of complete isolation. Thought, which has been giving all importance to itself, isolating itself as the 'me', the ego, has finally come to the point of realizing that it's held in the prison of its own making.

"I'm afraid all this is a bit difficult to follow at my age, and I'm not too well educated either."

This has nothing to do with being educated. It needs thinking through, that's all. You feel lonely, isolated, and if you could, you would run away from that feeling; but fortunately for yourself, you have been unable to find a means of doing so. Since you have found no way out, you are now in a position to look at that from which you have been trying to escape; but you can't look at it if you are afraid of it, can you?

"I see that."

Doesn't your difficulty lie in the fact that the word itself makes trouble?

"I don't understand what you mean."

You have associated certain words with this feeling that comes over you, words like 'loneliness', 'isolation', 'fear', 'being cut off'. Isn't that so?

"Yes."

Now, just as your son's name doesn't prevent you from perceiving and understanding his real qualities and make-up, so you must not let such words as 'isolation', 'loneliness', 'fear', 'being cut off', interfere with your examination of the feeling they have come to represent.

"I see what you mean. I have always looked at my children in that direct way."

And when you look at this feeling in this same direct way, what happens? Don't you find that the feeling itself isn't frightening, but only what you think about the feeling? It is the mind, thought that brings fear to the feeling, isn't it?

"Yes, that's right; at this moment I understand that very well. But will I be capable of understanding it when I leave here, and you are not there to explain?"

Of course. It is like seeing a cobra. Having once seen it you can never mistake it; you don't have to depend on anybody to tell you what a cobra is. Similarly, when once you have understood this feeling, that understanding is always with you; when once you have learned to look, you have the capacity to see. But one must go through and beyond this feeling, for there is much more to be discovered. There is an aloneness which is not this loneliness, this sense of isolation. That state of aloneness is not a remembrance or a recognition; it is untouched by the mind, by the word, by the society, by tradition. It is a benediction.

"In this one hour I have learned more than in all my seventy-five years. May this benediction be with you and me."

This quotation is taken from ["The Ending Of Time"](#), J. Krishnamurti & [Dr. David Bohm](#), copyright 1985 by Krishnamurti Foundation of America, P.O. Box 1560, Ojai, California 93023.

"This book has been prepared from Dialogues that took place between J. Krishnamurti and Professor David Bohm in America and in England between April and September, 1980. On certain occasions other people were present, and their occasional contributions to the discussions, unless otherwise stated, are attributed to 'Questioner' rather than to individuals by name."

"Can Personal Problems be Solved, and Fragmentation End?"

K: We have cultivated a mind that can solve almost any technological problem. But apparently human problems have never been solved. Human beings are drowned by their problems; the problems of communication, knowledge, of relationships, the problems of heaven and hell; the whole human existence, has become a vast, complex problem. And apparently throughout history it has been like this. In spite of his knowledge, in spite of his centuries of evolution, man has never been free of problems.

David Bohm: Yes, of insoluble problems.

K: I question if human problems are insoluble.

DB: I mean, as they are put now.

K: As they are now, of course, these problems have become incredibly complex and insoluble. No politician, scientist, or philosopher is going to solve them, even through wars and so on! So why have human beings throughout the world not been able to resolve the daily problems of life? What are the things that prevent the complete solution of these problems? Is it that we have never turned our minds to it? Is it because we spend all our days, and probably half the night, in thinking about technological problems so that we have no time for the other?

DB: That is partly so. Many people feel that the other should take care of itself.

K: But why? I am asking in this dialogue whether it is possible to have no human problems at all -- only technological problems, which can be solved. But human problems seem insoluble.

Is it because of our education, our deep-rooted traditions, that we accept things as they are?

DB: Well, that is certainly part of it. These problems accumulate as civilization gets older, and people keep on accepting things which make problems. For example, there are now far more nations in the world than there used to be, and each one creates new problems.

K: Of course.

DB: If you go back in time...

K: ...a tribe becomes a nation...

DB: And then the group must fight its neighbour.

K: Men use this marvelous technology to kill each other. But we are talking about problems of relationships, problems of lack of freedom, this sense of constant uncertainty and fear, the struggle to work for a livelihood for the rest of constant uncertainty and fear, the struggle to work for a livelihood for the rest of one's life. The whole thing seems so extraordinarily wrong.

DB: I think people have lost sight of that. Generally speaking they accept the situation in which they find themselves, and try to make the best of it, trying to solve some small problems to alleviate their circumstances. They wouldn't even look at this whole situation seriously.

K: But the religious people have created a tremendous problem for man.

DB: Yes. They are trying to solve problems too. I mean everybody is caught up in his own little fragment, solving whatever he thinks he can solve, but it all adds up to chaos.

K: To chaos and wars! That is what we are saying. We live in chaos. But I want to find out if I can live without a single problem for the rest of my life. Is that possible?

DB: Well, I wonder if we should even call these things problems, you see. A problem would be something that is reasonably solvable. If you put the problem of how to achieve a certain result, then that presupposes that you can reasonably find a way to do it technologically. But psychologically, the problem cannot be looked at in that way; to propose a result you have to achieve, and then find a way to do it.

K: What is the root of all this? What is the cause of all this human chaos? I am trying to come to it from a different angle, to discover whether there is an ending to problems. You see, personally, I refuse to have problems.

DB: Somebody might argue with you about that and say that maybe you are not challenged with something.

K: I was challenged the other day about something very, very serious. That is not a problem.

DB: Then it is a matter of clarification. Part of the difficulty is clarification of the language.

K: Clarification, not only of language, but of relationship and action. A problem arose the other day which involved lots of people, and a certain action had to be taken. But to me personally it was not a problem.

DB: We have to make it clear what you mean, because without an example, I don't know.

K: I mean by a problem something that has to be resolved, something you worry about; something you are questioning, and endlessly concerned with. Also doubts and uncertainties, and having to take some kind of action which you will regret at the end.

DB: Let's begin with the technical problem where the idea first arose. You have a challenge, something which needs to be done, and you say that is a problem.

K: Yes, that is generally called a problem.

DB: Now the word problem is based on the idea of putting forth something--a possible solution--and then trying to achieve it.

K: Or, I have a problem but I don't know how to deal with it.

DB: If you have a problem and you have no idea how to deal with it...

K: ...then I go round asking people for advice, and getting more and more confused.

DB: This would already be a change from the simple idea of a technical problem, where you usually have some notion of what to do.

K: I wonder if we do? Surely technical problems are fairly simple.

DB: They often bring challenges requiring us to go very deeply and change our ideas. With a technical problem, we generally know what we have to do to solve it. For example, if there is lack of food, what we have to do is to find ways and means of producing more. But with a psychological problem, can we do the same?

K: The is the point. How do we deal with this thing?

DB: Well, what kind of problem shall we discuss?

K: Any problem which arises in human relationships.

DB: Let's say that people cannot agree; they fight each other constantly.

K: Yes, let's take that for a simple thing. It seems to be almost impossible for a group of people to think together, to have the same out-look and attitude. I don't mean copying each other, of course. But each person puts his opinion forward and is contradicted by another--which goes on all the time, everywhere.

DB: All right. So can we say that our problem is to work together, to think together?

K: Work together, think together, co-operate without the involvement of monetary issues.

DB: That is another question, whether people will work together if they are highly paid.

K: So how do we solve this problem? In a group, all of us are offering different opinions, and we don't meet each other at all. And it seems almost impossible to give up one's opinions.

DB: Yes, that is one of the difficulties, but I am not sure that you can regard it as a problem, and ask, what shall we do to give up opinions.

K: No, of course. But that is a fact. So observing that, and seeing the necessity that we should all come together, people still cannot give up their opinions, their ideas, their own experiences and conclusions.

DB: Often it may not seem to them like an opinion, but the truth.

K: Yes, they would call it fact. But what can man do about these divisions? We see the necessity of working together--not for some ideal, belief, some principle or some god. In various countries throughout the world, and even in the United Nations they are not working together.

DB: Some people might say that we not only have opinions, but self-interest. If two people have conflicting self-interests, there is no way, as long as they maintain their attachment to these, that they can work together. So how do we break into this?

K: If you point out to me that we must work together, and show me the importance of it, then I also see that it is important. But I can't do it!

DB: That's the point. It is not enough even to see that cooperation is important, and to have the intention of achieving this. With this inability there is a new factor coming in. Why is it that we cannot carry out our intentions.?

K: One can give many reasons for that, but those causes and reasons and explanations don't solve the problem. We come back to the same -- what will make a human mind change? We see that change is necessary, and yet are incapable or unwilling to change. What factor -- what new factor -- is necessary for this?

DB: Well, I feel it is the ability to observe deeply whatever it is that is holding the person and preventing him from changing.

K: So is the new factor attention?

DB: Yes, that is what I meant. But also, we have to consider what kind of attention.

DB: It may have many meanings to different people.

K: Of course, as usual, there are so many opinions!

Where there is attention, there is no problem. Where there is inattention, every difficulty arises. Now without making attention itself into a problem, what do we mean by it? Can we understand it, not verbally, not intellectually, but deeply, in our blood? Obviously attention is not concentration. It is not an endeavour, an experience, a struggle to be attentive. You must show me the nature of attention, which is that when there is attention, there is no centre from which 'I' attend.

DB: Yes, but that is the difficult thing.

K: Don't let's make a problem of it.

DB: I mean that people have been trying this for a long time. I think that there is first of all some difficulty in understanding what is meant by attention, because of the content of thought itself. When a person is looking at it, he may think he is attending.

K: No, in that state of attention there is no thought.

DB: But how do you stop thought then? You see, while thinking is going on, there is an impression of attention -- which is not attention. But one thinks, one supposes that one is paying attention.

K: When one supposes one is paying attention, that is not it.

DB: So how do we communicate the true meaning of attention?

K: Or would you say rather that to find out what is attention, we should discuss what is inattention?

DB: Yes.

K: And through negation come to the positive. When I am inattentive, what takes place? In my inattentiveness, I feel lonely, depressed, anxious, and so on.

DB: The mind begins to break up and go into confusion.

K: Fragmentation takes place. And in my lack of attention, I identify myself with many other things.

DB: Yes, and it may be pleasant -- but it can be painful too.

K: I find, later on, that what was pleasing becomes pain.

So all that is a movement in which there is no attention. Right? Are we getting anywhere?

DB: I don't know.

K: I feel that attention is the real solution to all this -- a mind which is really attentive, which has understood the nature of inattention and moves away from it!

DB: But first, what is the nature of inattention?

K: Indolence, negligence, self-concern, self-contradiction -- all that is the nature of inattention.

DB: Yes. You see, a person who has self-concern may feel that he is attending but he is simply concerned with himself.

K: Yes. If there is self-contradiction in me, and I pay attention to it in order not to be self-contradictory, that is not attention.

DB: But can we make this clear, because ordinarily one might think that this is attention.

K: No, it is not. It is merely a process of thought, which says, 'I am this, I must not be that'.

DB: So you are saying that this attempt to become, is not attention.

K: Yes, that's right. Because the psychological becoming breeds inattention.

DB: Yes.

K: Isn't it very difficult, Sir, to be free of becoming? That is the root of it. To end becoming.

DB: Yes. There is no attention, and that is why these problems are there.

K: Yes, and when you point that out, the paying attention also becomes a problem.

DB: The difficulty is that the mind plays tricks, and in trying to deal with this, it does the very same thing again.

K: Of course. Can the mind, which is so full of knowledge, self-importance, self-contradiction, and all the rest of it, come to a point where it finds itself psychologically unable to move?

DB: There is nowhere for it to move.

K: What would I say to a person who has come to that point? I come to you. I am full of this confusion, anxiety, and sense of despair, not only for myself but for the world. I come to that point, and I want to break through it. So it becomes a problem to me.

DB: Then we are back; there is again an attempt to become, you see.

K: Yes. That is what I want to get at. So is that the root of all this? The desire to become?

DB: Well, it must be close to it.

K: So how do I look, without the movement of becoming, at this whole complex issue of myself?

DB: It seems that one hasn't looked at the whole. We did not look at the whole of becoming, when you said, 'How can I pay attention?' Part of it seemed to slip out, and became the observer. Right?

K: Psychological becoming has been the curse of all this. A poor man want to be rich, and a rich man wants to be richer, it is all the time this movement of becoming, both outwardly and inwardly. And though it brings a great deal of pain and sometimes pleasure, this sense of becoming, fulfilling, achieving psychologically, has made my life into all that it is. Now I realize that, but I can't stop it.

DB: Why can't I stop it?

K: Let's go into that. Partly I am concerned in becoming because there is a reward at the end of it; also I am avoiding pain or punishment. And in that cycle I am caught. That is probably one of the reasons why the mind keeps on trying to become something. And the other perhaps is deep rooted anxiety or fear that if I don't become something, I am lost. I am uncertain and insecure, so the mind has accepted these illusions and says, I cannot end that process of becoming.

DB: But why doesn't the mind end it? Also we have to go into the question of being trapped by these illusions.

K: How do you convince me that I am caught in an illusion? You can't, unless I see it myself. I cannot see it because my illusion is so strong. That illusion has been nurtured, cultivated by religion, by the family, and so on. It is so deeply rooted that I refuse to let it go. That is what is taking place with a large number of people. They say, 'I want to do this but I cannot'. Now given that situation, what are they to do? Will explanations, logic and all the various contradictions, theories, help them? Obviously not.

DB: Because it all gets absorbed into the structure.

K: So what is the next thing?

DB: You see, if they say, 'I want to change', there is also the wish not to change.

K: Of course. The man who says, 'I want to change', has also at the back of his mind, 'Really, why should I change?' They go together.

DB: So we have a contradiction.

K: I have lived in this contradiction, I have accepted it.

DB: But why should I have accepted it?

K: Because it is a habit.

DB: But when the mind is healthy, it will not accept a contradiction

K: But our mind isn't healthy. The mind is so diseased, so corrupt, so confused, that even though you point out all the dangers of this, it refuses to see them.

So how do we help a man who is caught in this to see clearly the danger of psychological becoming? Let's put it that way. Psychological becoming implies identification with a nation, a group and all that business.

DB: Yes, holding to opinions.

K: Opinions and beliefs; I have had an experience, it gives me satisfaction, I am going to hold on to it. How do you help me to be free of all this? I hear your words -- they seem quite right, but I can't move out of all that.

I wonder if there is another factor, another way of communication, which isn't based on words, knowledge, explanations and reward and punishment. Is there another way of communicating? You see, in that too there is danger. I am sure there is a way which is not verbal, analytical or logical, which doesn't mean lack of sanity.

DB: Perhaps there is.

K: My mind has always communicated with another with words, explanations and logic, or with suggestion. There must be another element which breaks through all that.

DB: It will break through the inability to listen.

K: Yes, the inability to listen, the inability to observe, to hear, and so on. There must be a different method. I have met several men who have been to a certain saint, and in his company they say all problems are resolved. But when they go back to their daily life, they are back in the old game.

DB: There was no intelligence in it, you see.

K: That is the danger. That man, that saint, being quiet and non-verbal in the presence of that saint they feel quiet, and think that their problems are resolved.

DB: But this is still from the outside.

K: Of course. It is like going to church. In an ancient church, or cathedral, you feel extraordinarily quiet. It is the atmosphere, the structure -- you know; the very atmosphere makes you feel quiet.

DB: Yes, it communicates what is meant by quietness, non-verbally.

K: That is nothing. It is like incense!

DB: It is superficial.

K: Utterly superficial; like incense, it evaporates! So we push all that aside, and then what have we left? Not an outside agency, a god, or some saviour. What have I left? What is there that can be communicated, which will break through the wall that human beings have built for themselves?

Is it love? That word has become corrupted, loaded, dirty. But cleansing that word, is love the factor that will break through this clever analytical approach? Is love the element that is lacking?

DB: Well, we have to discuss it; perhaps people are somewhat chary of that word.

K: I am chary beyond words!

DB: And, therefore, as people resist listening, they will resist love too.

K: That is why I said it is rather a risky word.

DB: We were saying the other day that love contains intelligence.

K: Of course.

DB: Which is care as well; we mean by love that energy which also contains intelligence and care; all that...

K: Now wait a minute: you have that quality and I am caught in my misery, anxiety, etc., and you are trying to penetrate with that intelligence this mass of darkness. How will you do it? Will that act? If not, we human beings are lost. You follow, Sir? Therefore we have invented Jesus, Buddha, Krishna -- images which have become meaningless, superficial and nonsensical.

So what shall I do? I think that is the other factor. Attention, perception, intelligence and love -- you bring all this to me, and I am incapable of receiving it. I say, 'It sounds nice; I feel it, but I can't hold it'. I can't hold it, because the moment I go outside this room, I am lost!

DB: That really is the problem.

K: Yes, that is the real problem. Is love something outside, as heaven -- and all that stuff is outside. Is love something outside, which you bring to me, which you awaken in me, which you give me as a gift -- or, in my darkness, illusion and suffering, is there that quality? Obviously not, there can't be.

DB: Then where is it?

K: That's just it. Love is not yours or mine; it is not personal, not something that belongs to anyone; love is not that.

DB: Then where is it?

K: That's just it. Love is not yours or mine; it is not personal, not something that belongs to anyone; love is not that.

DB: That is an important point. Similarly you were saying that isolation does not belong to any one person, although we tend to think of isolation as a personal problem.

K: Of course. It is common ground for all of us. Also intelligence is not personal.

DB: But again, that goes contrary to the whole of our thinking, you see.

K: I know.

DB: Everybody says this person is intelligent, and that one is not. So this may be one of the barriers to the whole thing, that behind the ordinary everyday thought there is deeper thought of mankind, but we generally feel divided, and say these various qualities either belong to us, or they don't belong to us.

K: Quite. It is the fragmentary mind that invents all this.

DB: It has been invented, but we have picked it up verbally and non-verbally, by implication, from childhood. Therefore it pervades, it is the ground of our thoughts, of all our perceptions. So this has to be questioned.

K: We have questioned it -- that grief is not my grief, grief is human, and so on.

DB: But how are people to see that, because a person who is experiencing grief feels that it is his personal grief?

K: I think it is partly because of our education, partly our society and traditions.

DB: But it is implicit in our whole way of thinking. Then we have to jump out of that, you see.

K: Yes. To jump out of that becomes a problem, and then what am I to do?

DB: Perhaps we can see that love is not personal.

K: Earth is not English earth, or French earth, earth is earth!

DB: I was thinking of an example in physics: if the scientist or chemist is studying an element such as sodium, he does not say it is his sodium, or that somebody else studies his sodium. And of course they compare notes, etc.

K: Quite. Sodium is sodium.

DB: Sodium is sodium, universally. So we have to say that love is love, universally.

K: Yes. But you see my mind refuses to see that, because I am so terribly personal, terribly concerned with 'me and my problems'. I refuse to let that go. When you say sodium is sodium, it is very simple; I can see that. But when you say to me that grief is common to all of us, this is difficult.

DB: This can't be done with time, but it took quite a while for mankind to realize that sodium is sodium, you see.

K: Is love something that is common to all of us?

DB: Well, in so far as it exists, it has to be common.

K: Of course.

DB: It may not exist, but if it does, it has to be common.

K: I am not sure it does not exist. Compassion is not 'I am compassionate'. Compassion is there, is something that is not 'me'.

DB: If we say compassion is the same as sodium, it is universal. Then every person's compassion is the same.

K: Compassion, love, and intelligence. You can't have compassion without intelligence.

DB: So we say intelligence is universal too!

K: Obviously.

DB: But we have methods of testing intelligence in particular people, you see.

K: Oh, no.

DB: But perhaps that is all part of the thing that is getting in the way?

K: Part of this divisive, fragmentary way of thinking.

DB: Well, there may be holistic think, although we are not in it yet.

K: Then holistic thinking is not thinking; it is some other factor.

DB: Some other factor that we haven't gone into yet.

K: If love is common to all of us, why am I blind to it?

DB: I think partly because the mind boggles; it just refuses to consider such a fantastic change of concept in a way of looking.

K: But you said just now that sodium is sodium.

DB: You see, we have a lot of evidence for that in all sorts of experiments, built up through a lot of work and experience. Now we can't do that with love. You can't go into a laboratory and prove that love is love.

K: Oh, no. Love isn't knowledge. Why does one's mind refuse to accept a very obvious factor? Is it the fear of letting go my old values, standards and opinions?

DB: I think it is probably something deeper. It is hard to pin down, but it isn't a simple thing, although what you suggest is a partial explanation.

K: That is a superficial explanation, I know. Is it the deep rooted anxiety, the longing to be totally secure?

DB: But that again is based on fragmentation

K: Of course.

DB: If we accept that we are fragmented, we will inevitably want to be totally secure, because being fragmented we are always in danger.

K: Is that the root of it? This urge, this demand, this longing to be totally secure in our relationship with everything? To be certain?

Of course, there is complete security only in nothingness!

DB: It is not the demand for security which is wrong, but the fragmentations. The fragment cannot possibly be secure.

K: That is right. Like each country trying to be secure, it is not secure.

DB: But complete security could be achieved if all the countries got together. The way you have put it sounds as if we should live eternally in insecurity, you see.

K: No, we have made that very clear.

DB: It makes sense to ask for security, but we are going about it the wrong way. How do we convey that love is universal, not personal, to a man who has lived completely in the narrow groove of personal achievement? It seems the first point is, will he question his narrow, 'unique' personality?

K: People question it; they see the logic of what we are discussing, yet, curiously, people who are very serious in these matters, have tried to find the wholeness of life through starvation, through torture -- you know, every kind of way. But you can't apprehend or perceive or be the whole through torture. So what shall we do? Let's say I have a brother who refuses to see all this. And as I have great affection for him, I want him to move out of fragmentation. And I have tried to communicate with him verbally, and sometimes non-verbally, by a gesture or by a look; but all this is still from the outside. And perhaps that is the reason why he resists. Can I point out to my brother that in himself this flame can be awakened? It means he must listen to me, but my brother refuses to listen.

DB: It seems that there are some actions which are not possible. If a person is caught in a certain thought such as fragmentation, then he can't change it, because there are a lot of other thoughts behind it.

K: Of course.

DB: Thoughts he doesn't know. He is not actually free to take this action because of the whole structure of thought that holds him.

K: So how do I help -- I use that word with great caution -- my brother? What is the root of all this? We talk of his becoming aware -- but all that is verbal; it can be explained in different ways -- the cause, the effect, and all the rest of it. After I explain all this, he says, 'You have left me where I am'. And my intelligence, my affection, says 'I can't let him go'. Which means, am I putting pressure on him?

I am not using any kind of pressure, or reward; my responsibility is that I can't let another human being go. It is not the responsibility of duty and all that dreadful stuff. But it is the responsibility of intelligence to say all that to him. There is a tradition in India that one who is called the Maitreya Buddha took a vow that he would not become the ultimate Buddha until he had liberated other human beings too.

DB: Altogether?

K: Yes. You see, the tradition hasn't changed anything. How can one, if one has that intelligence, that compassion, that love, which is not of a country, a person, an ideal or a saviour, transmit that purity to another? By living with him, talking to him? You see it can all become mechanical.

DB: Would you say that this question has never really been solved.?

K: I think so. But we must solve it, you follow? It has not been solved, but our intelligence says, solve it. No, I think intelligence doesn't say solve it; intelligence says these are the facts, and perhaps some will capture it.

DB: Well, it seems to me that there are really two factors: one is the preparation by reason to show that it all makes sense; and from there possibly some will capture it.

K: We have done that, Sir. The map has been laid out, and he has seen it very clearly; the conflicts, the misery, the confusion, the insecurity, the becoming. All that is extremely clear. But at the end of the chapter he is back at the beginning. Or perhaps he has a glimpse of it, and his craving to capture that glimpse and hold on to it becomes a memory. You follow? And all the nightmare begins!

In showing him the map very clearly, can we also point out to him something much deeper than that, which is love? He is groping after all this. But the weight of body, brain, tradition -- all that draws him back. So it is a constant battle -- and I think the whole thing is so wrong.

DB: What is wrong?

K: The way we are living.

DB: Many people must see that by now.

K: We have asked whether man has taken a wrong turning, and entered into a valley where there is no escape. That can't be so; that is too depressing, too appalling.

DB: I think some people might object to that. The very fact that it is appalling does not make it untrue. I think you would have to give some stronger reason why you feel that to be untrue.

K: Oh, yes.

DB: Do you perceive in human nature some possibility of a real change?

K: Of course. Otherwise everything would be meaningless; we'd be monkeys, machines. You see, the faculty for radical change is attributed to some outside agency, and therefore we look to that and get lost in that. If we don't look to anybody, and are completely free from dependence, then solitude is common to all of us. It is not an isolation. It is an obvious fact that when you see all this -- the stupidity and unreality of fragmentation and division -- you are naturally alone. That sense of aloneness is common, and not personal.

DB: Yes, but the ordinary sense of loneliness is personal in the sense that each person feels it is his own.

K: Loneliness is not solitude; it is not aloneness.

DB: I think all the fundamental things are universal, and therefore you are saying that when the mind goes deep, it comes into something universal.

K: That's right.

DB: Whether or not you call it absolute.

K: The problem is to make the mind go very, very deeply into itself.

DB: Yes. Now there is something that has occurred to me. When we start with a particular problem our mind is very shallow, then we go to something more general. The word 'general' has the same root as 'to generate'; the genus is the common generation...

K: To generate, of course.

DB: When we go to something more general, a depth is generated. But going on, still further, the general is still limited because it is thought.

K: Quite right. But to go profoundly, requires not only tremendous courage, but the sense of constantly pursuing the same stream.

DB: Well, that is not quite diligence; that is still too limited, right?

K: Yes, diligence is too limited. It goes with a religious mind in a sense that it is diligence in its action, its thoughts and so on, but it is still limited. If the mind can go from the particular to the general and from the general...

DB: ...to the absolute, to the universal. But many people would say that is very abstract, and has nothing to do with daily

K: I know. Yet it is the most practical thing, and not an abstraction.

DB: In fact, it is the particular that is the abstraction.

K: Absolutely. The particular is the most dangerous.

DB: It is also the most abstract, because you only get to the particular by abstracting.

K: Of course, of course.

DB: I think that this may be part of the problem. People feel they want something that really affects us in daily life; they don't just want to get themselves lost in talking, therefore, they say, 'All these vapid generalities don't interest us'.

It is true that what we are discussing must work in daily life, but daily life does not contain the solution of its problems.

K: No. The daily life is the general and the particular.

DB: The human problems which arise in daily life cannot be solved there.

K: From the particular, it is necessary to move to the general; from the general to move still deeper, and there perhaps is the purity of what is called compassion, love and intelligence. But that means giving your mind, your heart, your whole being to this enquiry.

We have talked now for a long time, I think we have reached somewhere.

[27 September 1980, Brockwood Park, Hampshire]

This quotation is from Krishnamurti's book ["Meeting Life"](#). It was taken from the Bulletin of the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust in England. The talk took place at Brockwood Park on September 5, 1976.

Is There a Meaning To Life?

"I think we ought to talk over together something that is of fundamental importance, which every human being should be involved in, because it concerns our life, our daily activity, the way we waste our days and years. What is it all about? What is it all for? We are born and we die, and during those years of pain and sorrow, joy and pleasure, there is the everlasting struggle and effort, going to the office or the factory for forty or fifty years, trying to climb the ladder of success, accumulating money, pleasure, experience, knowledge, and at the end death. Some scientists say that through knowledge comes the ascent of man. Is that so? We have an infinite amount of knowledge about many things -- biological, archaeological,

historical and so on -- but apparently knowledge has not changed man radically, deeply; the same conflict, struggle, pain, pleasure, the everlasting battle for existence goes on. Seeing all that continuing in every country and in every climate, what is it all about? It's very easy to reply with an emotional, romantic, neurotic explanation, or with an intellectual, rational explanation. But if you put all these aside as obviously being rather superficial, however intellectual, I think this is a very important question to ask -- important to ask and to find an answer for oneself, not depending on some priest, some guru, or some philosophical concept, not asserting anything, not believing in anything, not having any ideal, but merely observing very deeply. Otherwise we lead a very mechanistic life; part of this brain must be mechanical, necessarily so, in the acquisition of knowledge and the skillful use of that knowledge in every way of life, in every action outwardly, technologically. But this knowledge that one has acquired -- and we can pile up knowledge more and more -- does not answer the fundamental question: what is the meaning, the depth of our life?

One sees that there must be complete unity of mankind, because that is the only way the human race will survive physically, biologically. Politicians are not going to solve that problem -- ever! On the contrary, they will maintain the divisions -- it's very profitable. There must be unity of all mankind, it is essential for existence, but it cannot be brought about through legislation, through bureaucratic dogmas, laws and all the rest of it. So when one observes all this as a human being living in the chaos of a world that has almost gone mad -- the selling of armaments for profit, killing people in the name of ideas, countries, God and so on -- what is one to do? And what is it all for?

Religions have tried to offer the meaning of life -- that is, organized, propagandistic, ritualistic religions. But, in spite of 2,000 or 10,000 years, man has merely asserted certain principles, certain ideals, certain conclusions, all verbal, superficial, non-realistic. So I think it becomes very important to discover a meaning for oneself, if one is at all serious -- and one must be serious, otherwise one does not really live at all, which doesn't mean one never laughs or smiles -- serious in the sense of a total commitment to the whole issue of life. So when we ask what is the meaning of life, we are faced with the fact that our brain is caught in a groove, caught in habit, in tradition, in the conditioning of our education, cultivating only knowledge, information, and so making it more and more mechanical.

If we are to inquire into this very deeply, there must be great doubt. Doubt, scepticism are essential, because they bring a certain quality of freedom of mind through negation of everything that man has put together -- his religions, rituals, dogmas, beliefs which are all the movements of thought. Thought is a material process, as even the scientists accept. But thought has not solved our problems, it has not been able to delve deeply into itself; it has merely, being itself a fragment, broken up all existence into fragments. So there is this quality of the brain which is mechanistic, and necessarily so in certain areas, but inwardly, in the psychological structure of the human mind, there is no freedom. It is conditioned, it is bound by belief, by so-called ideals, by faith. So when one doubts all that, sets all that aside -- not theoretically but factually, meticulously -- then what is left? One is afraid to do that because one says to oneself, 'If I deny everything that thought has put together what is left?' When you realize the nature of thought -- which is a mechanical process of time, measure, the response to memory, a process which brings more and more suffering, agony, anxiety and fear to mankind -- and go beyond, negate it, then what is there?

To find out what there is we must begin with freedom, because freedom is the first and last step. Without freedom -- not the freedom to choose -- man is merely a machine. We think that

through choice we are free, but choice exists only when the mind is confused. There is no choice when the mind is clear. When you see things very clearly without any distortion, without any illusions, then there is no choice. A mind that is choiceless is a free mind, but a mind that chooses and therefore establishes a series of conflicts and contradictions is never free because it is in itself confused, divided, broken up.

So to explore in any field there must be freedom, freedom to examine so that in that very examination there is no distortion. When there is distortion there is a motive behind that distortion, a motive to find an answer, a motive to achieve a desire, a solution to our problems, a motive which may be based on past experience, past knowledge -- and all knowledge is the past. Wherever there is a motive there must be distortion. So can our mind be free of distortion. So can our mind be free of distortion? And to examine our mind is to examine our common mind, because the content of our consciousness is the same as that of all human beings, who, wherever they live, go through the same process of fear, agony, torture, anxiety and endless conflict inwardly and outwardly. That's the common consciousness of mankind. So when you examine your own consciousness, you are looking into the consciousness of man, and therefore it's not a personal, individualistic examination. On the contrary you are looking into the consciousness of the world -- which is you. And this is a fact when you go into it very deeply. To have a mind that is free makes a tremendous demand; it demands that you as a human being are totally committed to the transformation of the content of consciousness, because the content makes the consciousness. And we are concerned with the transformation, with the total psychological revolution of this consciousness. To explore this you need great energy, an energy which comes into being when there is no dissipation of energy. One dissipates energy through trying to overcome 'what is', or to analyse 'what is', because the analyser is the analysed, the analyser is not different from that which he analyses. As we have said during these many talks for many years, this is a fundamental reality.

We are asking what is the meaning and the significance of life, and if there is any meaning at all. If you say there is, you have already committed yourself to something, therefore you cannot examine, you have already started with distortion. In the same way if you say there is no meaning to life, that is another form of distortion. So one must be completely free of both, the positive and the negative assertions. And this is the real beginning of meditation. The mushroom growth of gurus from India who are springing up all over the world has provided a great many meanings to that word. There is the transcendental meditation -- and I wish they hadn't used that lovely word -- which is the repetition of certain words -- given at a certain price! -- three times a day for twenty minutes. Constant repetition of any words will certainly give you a quality of quiet, because you have reduced the brain to a mechanical quietness. But that's no more transcendental than anything else. And through this we think we'll experience something that is beyond the material process of thought.

Man seeks experience other than the ordinary daily experience. We are bored, or fed up with all the experience we have had of life, and we hope to capture some experience which is not the product of thought. The word 'experience' means 'to go through', to go through with anything and end it, not remember it and carry it on. But we don't do that. To recognize an experience you must have already known it; it's not anything new. So a mind that demands experience, other than the mere physical, psychological experience, demands something far greater and above all this, will experience its own projection, and therefore it will still be mechanistic, materialistic, the product of thought. When you do not demand any experience, when you have understood the whole meaning of desire, which, as we have gone into many

times, is sensation, plus thought and its image -- then there is no distortion and illusion. Only then can the mind, the whole structure of consciousness being free, be capable of looking at itself without any distorting movement, without effort? Distortion takes place when there is effort -- right? Effort implies 'me' and something I am going to achieve, division between me and that. Division invariably brings conflict. Meditation comes only when there is the complete ending of conflict. Therefore every form of meditation where there is effort, practice, control, has no meaning. Please don't accept what the speaker is saying. We are examining together, therefore it is important not to accept what is being said but to examine it for yourself.

So we must go into the question of control. We are educated from childhood to control -- the whole process of controlling our feelings. In control there is the controller and the controlled, the controller who thinks he is different from that which he desires to control. So he has already divided himself, hence there is always conflict. That is, one fragment of thought says to itself, 'I must control other fragments of thought,' but the thought which says that is itself a part of thought. The controller is the controlled, the experiencer is the experienced, they are not two different entities or movements. The thinker is the thought; there is no thinker if there is no thought. This is very important because when this is realized completely, deeply, not verbally, not theoretically, but actually, then conflict comes to an end. When one realizes this profoundly as the truth, as a law, then all effort comes to an end, and meditation can only come into being when there is no effort of any kind.

It is necessary to meditate to find out if there is any meaning to life. And meditation is also laying the foundation of right conduct, right in the sense of accurate, not according to an ideal, not according to a pattern, not according to any formula, but action which takes place when there is complete observation of that which is going on in oneself. And through meditation we must establish right relationship between human beings, which means relationship without conflict. Conflict exists when there is division between the two images, which we have discussed a great deal, the image which you have of another and another has of you. And in meditation there must be no psychological fear whatsoever, and therefore the ending of sorrow, and there must be what we have previously talked about: compassion and love. That is the basis, the foundation of meditation. Without that you can sit cross-legged under a tree for the rest of your life, breathe properly -- you know all the tricks one plays -- none of these is going to help.

So when you have really, deeply, established a way of life -- which in itself is not an end, but only the beginning -- then we can proceed to find out whether the mind, which is the totality, the brain, the entire consciousness, is quiet without any distortion. It is only when the mind is quiet, still, that you can hear properly. There are different kinds of silence: the silence between two noises, the silence between two thoughts, the silence after a long battle with oneself, the silence between two wars, which you call peace. All those silences are the product of noise. That is not silence. There is a silence which is not produced or cultivated, so that there is no 'me' to observe that silence, but only silence, quietness.

We began with the question: is there any meaning to life or none at all? In that silence you really don't ask that question; we have prepared the field of the mind that is capable of finding out. Yet we must find an answer. Where do we find the answer, and who is going to answer it? Am I, a human being, going to answer it? Or in that very silence is the answer? That is, when there is no distortion through motive, through effort, through a demand for experience, through the division between the observer and the observed, the thinker and the thought, there

is no wastage of energy. Now in that silence there is that greater strength to see beyond words. Because the word is not the thing, the description is not the described. To go to the moon, to create an instrument of a million parts, demands tremendous energy and the co-operation of 300,000 people to put the thing together. But that energy is totally different from the energy which we are talking about.

You see, the speaker is very serious about all this. He has spoken for fifty years and more on this, and as most minds are caught in grooves, deep or shallow, one is constantly watching to see if the brain forms a groove and feels secure in that groove and remains there, for if one stays in a groove, however beautiful, however pleasant, however comforting, then the mind becomes mechanical, repetitive, and so loses its depth, its beauty. So we are asking: is the silence mechanistic, a product of thought which says, 'There must be something beyond me, and to find that out I must be silent, I must control myself, I must subjugate everything to find out'? That is still the movement of thought, right? So we must understand the difference between concentration, awareness and attention.

Concentration implies the focusing of one's energy in a particular direction excluding all other directions, building a wall against all other things, resisting. Awareness is fairly simple - if you don't make it complicated. To be aware of everything around you, just to observe. Then there is attention. Attention implies that there is no centre from which you are attending. The centre is the 'me', and if you are aware from that centre, then your attention is limited. The centre exists when there is choice, and where there is choice there is always the 'me', my experience, my knowledge - me separate from you.

Now, what we are talking about is attention in which there is no centre at all. If you attend in that way now, as you are sitting there, you will see that your attention is vast, there is no boundary, so that your whole mind, everything, is completely attentive, without choice and therefore no centre, no 'me' who says, 'I am attentive.' In that attention there is silence which contains the energy which is no longer dissipated. It is only such a mind that can find the answer, that can discover -- unfortunately, if I describe it, it becomes unreal -- something beyond all this travail, all this misery. If you give your whole energy, time, capacity to this, you no longer lead a shallow, meaningless life. And the whole of this is meditation, from the beginning to the end."