

Excerpts from: Public Talks by J. Krishnamurti

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Jiddu Krishnamurti was born in Madanapalle, South India on May 12, 1895. For more than sixty years he traveled the world giving public talks and private interviews to millions of people of all ages and backgrounds, saying that only through a complete change in the hearts and minds of individuals can there come about a change in society and peace in the world. He died on February 17, 1986 in Ojai, California, at the age of ninety and his talks, dialogues, journals and letters have been preserved in seventy books and in hundreds of audio and video recordings.

The century in which Krishnamurti lived saw two world wars, continuous political, ethnic and religious violence, mass murder on an unprecedented scale and the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world. In addition, overpopulation, environmental degradation and the collapse of social institutions have bred fear and cynicism about people's ability to solve their ever-multiplying problems. In virtually every public talk he gave, Krishnamurti addressed this global crisis, calling on his listeners to give serious attention to the psychological structures that breed violence and sorrow in their lives.

Throughout his lifetime, Krishnamurti insisted that he wanted no followers. "To follow another is evil," he said, "it does not matter who it is." He created no organization of believers and disciples, authorized no one to become an interpreter of his work and asked only that, after his death, those who shared his concerns preserve for posterity an authentic record of his talks, dialogues and writings and make them widely available to the public. This book contains excerpts from Krishnamurti's published work.

Because of the very serious nature of the issues that Krishnamurti raised, he felt it was of primary importance that those interested in inquiring with him begin their investigation in the right spirit. He reminded his audiences that he was not trying to convince them of anything, nor was he an instructor. In a public talk in Varanasi, India, in 1981, he described his approach this way: "This is a conversation between two friends, two friends who have a certain affection for each other, a certain care for each other, who will not betray each other and have certain deep common

interests. So they are conversing amicably, with a sense of deep communication with each other, sitting under a tree on a lovely cool morning with dew on the grass, talking over together the complexities of life."

Krishnamurti frequently met with smaller groups of people to discuss the problems of everyday living and to go deeply into the nature of existence. These groups were most often comprised of teachers, students and parents associated with the schools which Krishnamurti helped bring into being, and they often included scientists, psychologists and scholars. Krishnamurti set no criteria for those who could attend these small dialogues. The active participants at a single session sometimes ranged from internationally renowned figures to the housecleaners at the homes Krishnamurti visited.

Is it possible to be responsible for the whole of mankind, and therefore responsible for nature? That is, is it possible to answer adequately, totally to your children, to your neighbour, for all the movement that man has created in his endeavour to live rightly. And to feel that immense responsibility, not only intellectually, verbally, but very deeply, to be able to answer to the whole human struggle of pain, brutality, violence and despair? To respond totally to that, one must know what it means to love.

That word *love* has been so misused, so spoilt, so trodden upon, but we will have to use that word and give to it a totally different kind of meaning. To be able to answer to the whole there must be love. And to understand that quality, that compassion, that extraordinary sense of energy, which is not created by thought, we must understand suffering. When we use the word *understand*, it is not a verbal or intellectual communication of words, but the communication or communion that lies behind the word. We must understand and be able to go beyond suffering, otherwise we cannot possibly understand the responsibility for the whole, which is real love.

So, to understand this responsibility for the whole, and therefore that strange quality of love, one must go beyond suffering. What is suffering? Why do human beings suffer? This has been one of the great problems of life for millions of years. Apparently very few have gone beyond suffering, and they become either heroes or saviours, or some kind of neurotic leaders, and there they remain. But ordinary human beings like you and me never seem to go beyond it. We seem to be caught in it. And we are asking now whether it is possible for you to be really free of suffering.

Talks in Saanen 1974

Do you have a sense of beauty in your life, or is it mediocre, meaningless, an everlasting struggle from morning until night? What is beauty? It isn't a sensual question, nor a sexual question. It is a very serious question because without beauty in your heart, you cannot flower in goodness. Have you ever looked at a mountain or the blue sea without chattering, without making noise, really paying attention to the blue sea, the beauty of the water, the beauty of light on a sheet of water? When you see the extraordinary beauty of the earth, its rivers, lakes, mountains, what actually takes place? What takes place when you look at something which is actually marvellously beautiful: a statue, a poem, a lily in the pond, or a well-kept lawn? At that moment, the very majesty of a mountain makes you forget yourself. Have you ever been in that position?

If you have, you have seen that then you don't exist, only that grandeur exists. But a few seconds later or a minute later, the whole cycle begins, the confusion, the chatter. So beauty is, where you are not. It is a tragedy if you don't see this. Truth is, where you are not. Beauty is, love is, where you are not. We are not capable of looking at this extraordinary thing called truth.

Mumbai 4th Public Talk, January 31, 1982

So what will make you change? Please ask yourself, burn with that question, because we have fallen into habit. Your house is burning, and apparently you do not pay attention. So, if you don't change, society remains as it is. And clever people are coming along saying that society must change, we need a new structure — and the structure then becomes more important than man, as all revolutions have shown.

After considering all this, is there a learning, is there an awakening of intelligence, is there a sense of order in our lives? Or are we going back to the same routine? If you have that intelligence, that goodness, that sense of great love, then you will create a marvellous new society where we can all live happily. It's our earth — not Indian earth, or English earth, Russian earth; it's our earth where we can live happily, intelligently, not at each others' throats. So, please give your heart and mind to find out why you don't change — even in little things. Please pay attention to your own life. You have extraordinary capacities. It is all waiting for you to open the door.

Chennai 3rd Public Talk, December 29, 1979