

You Can Be Light Unto Yourself

Text from The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti

Vol. 13

To be aware is to watch your bodily activity, the way you walk, the way you sit, the movements of your hands; it is to hear the words you use, to observe all your thoughts, all your emotions, all your reactions. It includes awareness of the unconscious, with its traditions, its instinctual knowledge, and the immense sorrow it has accumulated—not only personal sorrow, but the sorrow of man. You have to be aware of all that; and you cannot be aware of it if you are merely judging, evaluating, saying, "This is good and that is bad, this I will keep and that I will reject," all of which only makes the mind dull, insensitive.

From awareness comes attention. Attention flows from awareness when in that awareness there is no choice, no personal choosing, no experiencing . . . but merely observing. And, to observe, you must have in the mind a great deal of space. A mind that is caught in ambition, greed, envy, in the pursuit of pleasure and self-fulfillment, with its inevitable sorrow, pain, despair, and anguish—such a mind has no space in which to observe, to attend. It is crowded with its own desires, going round and round in its own backwaters of reaction. You cannot attend if your mind is not highly sensitive, sharp, reasonable, logical, sane, healthy, without the slightest shadow of neuroticism. The mind has to explore every corner of itself, leaving no spot uncovered, because if there is a single dark corner of one's mind which one is afraid to explore, from that springs illusion...

It is only in the state of attention that you can be a light unto yourself, and then every action of your daily life springs from that light—every action—whether you are doing your job, cooking, going for a walk, mending clothes, or what you will. This whole process is meditation....

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