

35. ON THE STILLNESS OF THE MIND

Question: Why do you speak of the stillness of the mind, and what is this stillness?

Krishnamurti: Is it not necessary, if we would understand anything, that the mind should be still? If we have a problem, we worry over it, don't we? We go into it, we analyse it, we tear it to pieces, in the hope of understanding it. Now, do we understand through effort, through analysis, through comparison, through any form of mental struggle? Surely, understanding comes only when the mind is very quiet. We say that the more we struggle with the question of starvation, of war, or any other human problem, the more we come into conflict with it, the better we shall understand it. Now, is that true? Wars have been going on for centuries, the conflict between individuals, between societies; war, inward and outward, is constantly there. Do we resolve that war, that conflict, by further conflict, by further struggle, by cunning endeavour? Or do we understand the problem only when we are directly in front of it, when we are faced with the fact? We can face the fact only when there is no interfering agitation between the mind and the fact; so is it not important, if we are to understand, that the mind be quiet?

You will inevitably ask, "How can the mind be made still?" That is the immediate response, is it not? You say, "My mind is agitated and how can I keep it quiet?" Can any system make the mind quiet? Can a formula, a discipline, make the mind still? It can; but when the mind is *made* still, is that quietness, is that stillness? Or is the mind only enclosed within an idea, within a formula, within a phrase? Such a mind is a dead mind, is it not? That is why most people who try to be spiritual, so-called spiritual, are dead—because they have trained their minds to be quiet, they have enclosed themselves within a formula for being quiet. Obviously, such a mind is never quiet; it is only suppressed, held down.

The mind is quiet when it sees the truth that understanding comes only when it is quiet; that if I would understand you, I must be quiet, I cannot have reactions against you, I must not be prejudiced, I must put away all my conclusions, my experiences and meet you face to face. Only then, when the mind is free from my conditioning, do I understand. When I see the truth of that, then the mind is quiet—and then there is no question of how to *make* the mind quiet. Only the truth can liberate the mind from its own ideation; to see the truth, the mind must realize the fact that so long as it is agitated it can have no understanding. Quietness of mind, tranquillity of mind, is not a thing to be produced by will-power, by any action of desire; if it is, then such a mind is enclosed, isolated, it is a dead mind and therefore incapable of adaptability, of pliability, of swiftness. Such a mind is not creative.

Our question, then, is not how to make the mind still but to see the truth of every problem as it presents itself to us. It is like the pool that becomes quiet when the wind stops. Our mind is agitated because we have problems; and to avoid the problems, we make the mind still. Now the mind has projected these problems and there are no problems apart from the mind; and so long as the mind projects any conception of sensitivity, practises any form of stillness, it can never be still. When the mind realizes that only by being still is there understanding—then it becomes very quiet. That quietness is not imposed, not disciplined, it is a quietness that cannot be understood by an agitated mind.

Many who seek quietness of mind withdraw from active life to a village, to a monastery, to the mountains, or they withdraw into ideas, enclose themselves in a belief or avoid people who give them trouble. Such isolation is not stillness of mind. The enclosure of the mind in an idea or the avoidance of people who make life complicated does not bring about stillness of mind. Stillness of mind comes only when there is no process of isolation through accumulation but complete understanding of the whole process of relationship. Accumulation makes the mind old; only when the mind is new, when the mind is fresh, without the process of accumulation—only then is there

a possibility of having tranquillity of mind. Such a mind is not dead, it is most active. The still mind is the most active mind but if you will experiment with it, go into it deeply, you will see that in stillness there is no projection of thought. Thought, at all levels, is obviously the reaction of memory and thought can never be in a state of creation. It may express creativeness but thought in itself can never be creative. When there is silence, that tranquillity of the mind which is not a result, then we shall see that in that quietness there is extraordinary activity, an extraordinary action which a mind agitated by thought can never know. In that stillness, there no formulation, there is no idea, there is no memory; that stillness is a state of creation that can be experienced only when there is complete understanding of the whole process of the 'me'. Otherwise, stillness has no meaning. Only in that stillness, which is not a result, is the eternal discovered, which is beyond time.