

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Eight Conversations

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1st Conversation

Questioner: I should like, suddenly, to find myself in a totally different world, supremely intelligent, happy, with a great sense of love. I'd like to be on the other bank of the river, not to have to struggle across, asking the experts the way. I have wandered in many different parts of the world and looked at man's endeavours in different fields of life. Nothing has attracted me except religion. I would do anything to get to the other shore, to enter into a different dimension and see everything as though for the first time with clear eyes. I feel very strongly that there must be a sudden break through from all this tawdriness of life. There must be!

Recently when I was in India I heard a temple bell ringing and it had a very strange effect on me. I suddenly felt an extraordinary sensation of unity and beauty such as I had never felt before. It happened so suddenly that I was rather dazed by it, and it was real, not a fancy or an illusion. Then a guide came along and asked me if he could show me the temples, and on that instant I was back again in the world of noise and vulgarity. I want to recapture it but of course, as you say, it is only a dead memory and therefore valueless. What can I do, or not do, to get to the other shore?

Krishnamurti: There is no way to the other shore. There is no action, no behaviour, no prescription that will open the door to the other. It is not an evolutionary process; it is not the end of a discipline; it cannot be bought or given or invited. If this is clear, if the mind has forgotten itself and no longer says - the other bank or this bank - if the mind has stopped groping and searching, if there is total emptiness and space in the mind itself - then and only then is it there.

Questioner: I understand what you say verbally, but I can't stop groping and longing, for deep within me I do not believe that there is no way, no discipline, no action that will bring me to the other shore.

Krishnamurti: What do you mean by "I do not believe there is no way"? Do you mean a teacher will take you by the hand and carry you over?

Questioner: No. I do hope, though, that someone who understands will directly point to it, for it must actually be there all the time since it is real.

Krishnamurti Surely all this is supposition. You had that sudden feeling of reality when you heard the temple bell, but that is a memory, as you said, and from that you are drawing a conclusion that it must be there always for it is real. Reality is a peculiar thing; it is there when you are not looking, but when you do look, with greed, what you capture is the sediment of your greed, not reality. Reality is a living thing and cannot be captured, and you cannot say it is always there. There is a path only to something which is stationary, to a fixed, static point. To a living thing which is constantly in movement, which has no resting place how can there be a guide, a path? The mind is so eager to attain it, to grasp it, that it makes it into a dead thing. So, can you put aside the memory of that state which you had? Can you put aside the teacher, the path, the end - put it aside so completely that your mind is empty of all this seeking? At present your mind is so occupied with this overwhelming demand that the very occupation becomes a barrier. You are seeking, asking, longing, to walk on the other shore. The other shore implies that there is this shore, and from this shore to get to the other shore there is space and time. That is what is holding you and bringing about this ache for the other shore. That is the real problem - time that divides, space that separates, the time necessary to get there and the space that is the distance between this and that. This wants to become that, and finds it is not possible because of the distance and the time it takes to cover that distance. In this there is not only comparison but also measurement, and a mind that is capable of measuring is capable also of illusion. This division of space and time between this and that is the way of the mind, which is thought. Do you know, when there is love space disappears and time disappears? It is only when thought and desire come in that there is a gap of time to be bridged. When you

see this, this is that. Questioner: But I don't see it. I feel that what you say is true, but it eludes me.

Krishnamurti: Sir, you are so impatient, and that very impatience is its own aggressiveness. You are attacking, asserting. You are not quiet to look, to listen, to feel deeply. You want to get to the other shore at any cost and you are swimming frantically, not knowing where the other shore is. The other shore may be this shore, and so you are swimming away from it. If I may suggest it: stop swimming. This doesn't mean that you should become dull, vegetate and do nothing, but rather that you should be passively aware without any choice whatsoever and no measurement - then see what happens. Nothing may happen, but if you are expecting that bell to ring again, if you are expecting all that feeling and delight to come back, then you are swimming in the opposite direction. To be quiet requires great energy; swimming dissipates that energy. You need all your energy for silence of the mind, and it is only in emptiness, in complete emptiness, that a new thing can be.

2nd Conversation

Questioner: All so-called religious people have something in common and I see this same thing in most of the people who come to hear you. They are all looking for something which they variously call nirvana, liberation, enlightenment, self-realization, eternity or God. Their goal is defined and held before them in various teachings, and each of these teachings, these systems, has its set of sacred books, its disciplines, its teachers, its morality, its philosophy, its promises and threats - a straight and narrow path excluding the rest of the world and promising at its end some heaven or other. Most of these seekers move from one system to another, substituting the latest teaching for the one they have recently dropped. They move from one emotional orgy to another, not thinking that the same process is at work in all this seeking. Some of them remain in one system with one group and refuse to budge. Others eventually believe that they have realized whatever it is they wanted to realize, and then they spend their days in some withdrawn beatitude attracting in their turn a group of disciples who start the whole cycle over again. In all this there is the compulsive greed to attain some realization and, usually, the bitter disappointment and frustration of failure. All this seems to me very unhealthy. These people sacrifice ordinary living for some imaginary goal and a most unpleasant feeling emanates from this kind of milieu: fanaticism, hysteria, violence and stupidity. One is surprised to find among them certain good writers who otherwise seem quite sane. All this is called religion. The whole thing stinks to high heaven. This is the incense of piety. I have observed it everywhere. This search for enlightenment causes great havoc, and people are sacrificed in its wake. Now I would like to ask you, is there in fact any such thing as enlightenment, and if so, what is it?

Krishnamurti: If it is an escape from everyday living, everyday living being the extraordinary movement of relationship, then this so-called realization, this so-called enlightenment, or whatever name you like to give it, is illusion and

hypocrisy. Anything that denies love and the understanding of life and action is bound to create a great deal of mischief. It distorts the mind, and life is made a horrible affair. So if we take that to be axiomatic then perhaps we may proceed to find out if enlightenment - whatever that may mean - can be found in the very act of living. After all, living is more important than any idea, ideal goal or principle. It is because we don't know what living is that we invent these visionary, unrealistic concepts which offer escape. The real question is, can one find enlightenment in living, in the everyday activities of life, or is it only for the few who are endowed with some extraordinary capacity to discover this beatitude? Enlightenment means to be a light unto oneself, but a light which is not self-projected or imagined, which is not some personal idiosyncrasy. After all, this has always been the teaching of true religion, though not of organized belief and fear.

Questioner: You say the teaching of true religion! This immediately creates the camp of the professionals and specialists versus the rest of the world. Do you mean, then, that religion is separate from life? Krishnamurti: Religion is not separate from life; on the contrary it is life itself. It is this division between religion and life which has bred all the misery you are talking about. So we come back to the basic question of whether it is possible in daily life to live in a state which, for the moment, let us call enlightenment?

Questioner: I still don't know what you mean by enlightenment?

Krishnamurti: A state of negation. Negation is the most positive action, not positive assertion. This is a very important thing to understand. Most of us so easily accept positive dogma, a positive creed, because we want to be secure, to belong, to be attached, to depend. The positive attitude divides and brings about duality. The conflict then begins between this attitude and others. But the negation of all values, of all morality, of all beliefs, having no frontiers, cannot be in opposition to anything. A positive statement in its very definition separates, and separation is resistance. To this we are accustomed, this is our conditioning. To

deny all this is not immoral; on the contrary to deny all division and resistance is the highest morality. To negate everything that man has invented, to negate all his values, ethics and gods, is to be in a state of mind in which there is no duality, therefore no resistance or conflict between opposites. In this state there are no opposites, and this state is not the opposite of something else.

Questioner: Then how do you know what is good and what is bad? Or is there no good and bad? What is to prevent me from crime or even murder? If I have no standards what is to prevent me from God knows what aberrations?

Krishnamurti: To deny all this is to deny oneself, and oneself is the conditioned entity who continually pursues a conditioned good. To most of us negation appears as a vacuum because we know activity only in the prison of our conditioning, fear and misery. From that we look at negation and imagine it to be some terrible state of oblivion or emptiness. To the man who has negated all the assertions of society, religion, culture and morality, the man who is still in the prison of social conformity is a man of sorrow. Negation is the state of enlightenment which functions in all the activities of a man who is free of the past. It is the past, with its tradition and its authority, that has to be negated. Negation is freedom, and it is the free man who lives, loves, and knows what it means to die.

Questioner: That much is clear; but you say nothing about any intimation of the transcendental, the divine, or whatever you like to call it.

Krishnamurti: The intimation of that can be found only in freedom, and any statement about it is the denial of freedom; any statement about it becomes a verbal communication without meaning. It is there, but it cannot be found or invited, least of all imprisoned in any system, or ambushed by any clever tricks of the mind. It is not in the churches or the temples or the mosques. There is no path to it, no guru, no system that can reveal its beauty; its ecstasy comes only when there is love. This is enlightenment.

Questioner: Does it bring any new understanding of the nature of the universe or of consciousness or being? All the religious texts are full of that sort of thing.

Krishnamurti: It is like asking questions about the other shore while living and suffering on this shore. When you are on the other shore you are everything and nothing, and you never ask such questions. All such questions are of this shore and really have no meaning at all. Begin to live and you will be there without asking, without seeking, without fear.

3rd Conversation

Questioner: I see the importance of ending fear, sorrow, anger and all the travail of man. I see that one must lay the foundations of good behaviour, which is generally called righteousness, and that in that there is no hatred or envy and none of the brutality in which man exists. I see also that there must be freedom - not from any particular thing but freedom in itself - and that one must not be always in the prison of one's own demands and desires. I see all this very clearly and I try - though perhaps you may not like the word try - to live in the light of this understanding. I have to some extent gone deeply into myself. I am not held by any of the things of this world, nor by any religion. Now I would like to ask: granted that one is free, not only outwardly but inwardly, of all the misery and confusion of life, what is there beyond the wall? When I say the wall, I mean fear, sorrow and the constant pressure of thought. What is there that can be seen when the mind is quiet, not committed to any particular activity?

Krishnamurti: What do you mean when you say: what is there? Do you mean something to be perceived, to be felt, to be experienced, or to be understood? Are you asking by any chance what is enlightenment? Or are you asking what is there when the mind has stopped all its wanderings and has come to quietness? Are you asking what there is on the other side when the mind is really still?

Questioner: I'm asking all these things. When the mind is still there seems to be nothing. There must be something tremendously important to discover behind all thought. The Buddha and one or two others have talked about something so immense that they can't put it into words. The Buddha said, "Don't measure with words the immeasurable." Everyone has known moments when the mind was perfectly still, and there was really nothing so very great about it; it was just emptiness. And yet one has a feeling that there is something just around the corner which, once discovered transforms the whole of life. It would seem, from what people have said, that a still mind is necessary to discover this. Also, I see

that only an uncluttered, still mind can be efficient and truly perceptive. But there must be something much more than simply an uncluttered, still mind - something much more than a fresh mind, an innocent mind, more even than a loving mind.

Krishnamurti: So what is the question now? You have stated that a quiet, sensitive, alert mind is necessary, not only to be efficient, but also to perceive things around you and in yourself. Questioner: All the philosophers and scientists are perceiving something all the time. Some of them are remarkably bright, many of them are even righteous. But when you've looked through everything they've perceived or created or expressed, it's really not very much, and there is certainly no intimation of anything divine.

Krishnamurti: Are you asking if there is something sacred beyond all this? Are you asking if there is a different dimension in which the mind can live and perceive something that is not merely the intellectual formulation of cunning? Are you asking in a roundabout way if there is or is not something supreme?

Questioner: A great many people have said in the most convincing way that there is a tremendous treasure which is the source of consciousness. They all agree that it cannot be described. They disagree about how to perceive it. They all seem to think that thought must stop before it can manifest itself. Some say it is the very matter from which thought is made, and so on and so on. All agree that you are not really living unless you have discovered it. Apparently you yourself say more or less the same thing. Now I'm not following any system or discipline or guru or belief. I don't need any of these things to tell me there is something transcendental. When you look at a leaf or at a face, you realize that there is something far greater than the scientific or biological explanations of existence. It seems that you have drunk at this source. We listen to what you say. You carefully show the triviality and the limitation of thought. We listen, we reflect, and we do come upon a new stillness. Conflict does end. But what then?

Krishnamurti: Why are you asking this?

Questioner: You're asking a blind man why he wants to see.

Krishnamurti: The question wasn't asked as a clever gambit, or in order to point out that a silent mind doesn't ask anything at all, but to find out whether you are really searching for something transcendental. If you are, what is the motive behind that search - curiosity, an urgency to discover, or the desire to see such beauty as you have never seen before? Isn't it important for you to find out for yourself whether you are asking for the more, or whether you are trying to see exactly what is? The two are incompatible. If you can put aside the more, then we are concerned only with what is when the mind is silent. What actually takes place when the mind is really quiet? That is the real question, isn't it - not what is transcendental or what lies beyond?

Questioner: What lies beyond is my question.

Krishnamurti: What lies beyond can be found only if the mind is still. There may be something or there may be nothing at all. So the only thing that is important is for the mind to be still. Again, if you are concerned with what lies beyond, then you are not looking at what the state of actual stillness is. If stillness to you is only a door to that which lies beyond, then you are not concerned with that door, whereas what is important is the very door itself, the very stillness itself. Therefore you cannot ask what lies beyond. The only thing that is important is for the mind to be still. Then what takes place? That is all we are concerned with, not with what lies beyond silence.

Questioner: You are right. The silence has no importance to me except as a doorway.

Krishnamurti: How do you know it is a doorway and not the thing itself? The means is the end, they are not two separate things. Silence is the only fact, not what you discover through it. Let us remain with the fact and see what that fact is. It is of great importance, perhaps of the greatest importance, that this silence be

silence in itself and not something induced as a means to an end, not something induced through drugs, discipline or the repetition of words.

Questioner: The silence comes of its own, without a motive and without a cause.

Krishnamurti: But you are using it as a means.

Questioner: No, I have known silence and I see that nothing happens.

Krishnamurti: That is the whole point. There is no other fact but silence which has not been invited, induced, sought after, but which is the natural outcome of observation and of understanding oneself and the world about one. In this there has been no motive which has brought silence. If there is any shadow or suspicion of a motive, then that silence is directed and deliberate, so it is not silence at all. If you can honestly say that that silence is free, then what actually takes place in that silence is our only concern. What is the quality and the texture of that silence? Is it superficial, passing, measurable? Are you aware of it after it is over, or during the silence? If you are aware that you have been silent, then it is only a memory, and therefore dead. If you are aware of the silence while it is happening, then is it silence? If there is no observer - that is, no bundle of memories - then is it silence? Is it something intermittent which comes and goes according to your body chemistry? Does it come when you are alone, or with people, or when you are trying to meditate? What we are trying to find out is the nature of this silence. Is it rich or poor? (I don't mean rich with experience, or poor because it is uneducated.) Is it full or shallow? Is it innocent or is it put together? A mind can look at a fact and not see the beauty, the depth, the quality of that fact. Is it possible to observe silence without the observer? When there is silence, there is only silence, and nothing else. Then in that silence what takes place? Is this what you are asking?

Questioner: Yes.

Krishnamurti: Is there an observation of silence by silence in silence?

Questioner: That's a new question.

Krishnamurti: It is not a new question if you have been following. The whole brain, the mind, the feelings, the body, everything is quiet. Can this quietness, stillness, look at itself, not as an observer who is still? Can the totality of this silence watch its own totality? The silence becomes aware of itself - in this there is no division between an observer and an observed. That is the main point. The silence does not use itself to discover something beyond itself. There is only that silence. Now see what happens.

4th Conversation

Questioner: I have got one predominating habit; I have other habits, but they are of less importance. I have been fighting this one habit as long as I can remember. It must have been formed in early childhood. Nobody seemed to care enough to correct it then and gradually as I grew older it became more and more deep-rooted. It disappears sometimes only to come back again. I don't seem able to get rid of it. I would like to be completely master of it. It has become a mania with me to overcome it. What am I to do?

Krishnamurti: From what you say you have fallen into a habit for many, many years and you have cultivated another habit, the habit of fighting it. So you want to get rid of one habit by cultivating another which is the denial of the first. You are fighting one habit with another. When you can't get rid of the first habit you feel guilty, ashamed, depressed, perhaps angry with yourself for your weakness. The one habit and the other are the two sides of the same coin: without the first, the second wouldn't be, so the second is really a continuation of the first as a reaction. So now you have two problems whereas in the beginning you had only one.

Questioner: I know what you are going to say because I know what you say about awareness, but I can't be aware all the time.

Krishnamurti: So now you have several things going on at the same time: first of all the original habit, then, the desire to get rid of it, then the frustration of having failed, then the resolve to be aware all the time. This network has arisen because deeply you want to get rid of that one habit; that is your one drive, and you are all the time balancing between the habit and the fighting of it. You don't see that the real problem is having habits, good or bad, not just one particular habit. So the question really is, is it possible to break a habit without any effort, without cultivating its opposite, without suppressing it through uninterrupted

vigilance which is resistance? Uninterrupted vigilance is simply another habit since it is generated by the habit it is trying to overcome. Questioner: You mean, can I get rid of the habit without generating this complicated network of reactions to it?

Krishnamurti: So long as you want to get rid of it, that complicated network of reactions is actually in operation. The wanting to get rid of it is that reactionary network. So really you have not stopped this futile reaction to the habit.

Questioner: But all the same, I must do something about it!

Krishnamurti: That indicates that you are dominated by this one desire. This desire and its reactions are not different from the habit, and they feed on each other. The desire to be superior is not different from being inferior, so the superior is the inferior. The saint is the sinner. Questioner: Should I, then, just do nothing about it at all?

Krishnamurti: What you are doing about it is to cultivate another habit in opposition to the old one.

Questioner: So if I do nothing, I am left with the habit, and we are back where we started.

Krishnamurti: Are we though? Knowing that what you do to break the habit is the cultivation of another habit, there can be only one action, which is to do nothing at all against that habit. Whatever you do is in the pattern of habits, so to do nothing, to have the feeling that you don't have to fight it, is the greatest action of intelligence. If you do anything positive you are back in the field of habits. Seeing this very clearly there is immediately a feeling of great relief and great lightness. You now see that fighting one habit by cultivating another does not end the first habit so you stop fighting it.

Questioner: Then only the habit remains, and there is no resistance to it.

Krishnamurti: Any form of resistance feeds the habit, which does not mean that you go on with the habit. You become aware of the habit and of the cultivation of its opposite, which is also a habit, and this awareness shows you that whatever you do with regard to the habit is the formation of another habit. So now, after having observed this whole process, your intelligence says, don't do anything about the habit. Don't give any attention to it. Don't be concerned with it because the more you are concerned with it the more active it becomes. Now intelligence is in operation and is watching. This watching is entirely different from the vigilance of resisting the habit, reacting to it. If you get the feeling of this intelligence watching, then this feeling will operate and deal with the habit, and not the vigilance of resolution and will. So what is important is not habit but the understanding of habit which brings about intelligence. This intelligence keeps awake without the fuel of desire, which is will. In the first instance the habit is confronted with resistance, in the second it is not confronted at all, and that is intelligence. The action of intelligence has withered the resistance to the habit on which the habit feeds.

Questioner: Do you mean to say that I have got rid of my habit?

Krishnamurti: Go slowly, don't be too hasty in your assumption of having got rid of it. What is more important than habit is this understanding, which is intelligence. This intelligence is sacred and therefore must be touched with clean hands, not exploited for trivial little games. Your little habit is utterly unimportant. If intelligence is there the habit is trivial; if intelligence is not there, then the wheel of habit is all you have got.

5th Conversation

Questioner: I find I get dreadfully attached to people and dependent on them. In my relationships this attachment develops into a sort of possessive demand which brings about a feeling of domination. Being dependent, and seeing the discomfort and pain of it, I try to be detached. Then I feel terribly lonely, and unable to face the loneliness I escape from it through drink and in other ways. Yet I don't want to have merely superficial and casual relationships. Krishnamurti: There is attachment, then the struggle to be detached, then out of this comes deeper conflict, the fear of loneliness. So what is your problem, what is it you are trying to find out, to learn? Whether all relationship is a matter of dependence? You are dependent on environment and people. Is it possible to be free, not only of environment and people, but to be free in yourself, so that you don't depend on anything or anyone? Can there be joy which is not the outcome of environment or of people? The environment changes, people change, and if you depend on them you are caught by them, or else you become indifferent, callous, cynical, hard. So is it not a matter of whether you can live a life of freedom and joy which is not the result of environment, human or otherwise? This is a very important question. Most human beings are slaves to their family or to their circumstances, and they want to change the circumstances and the people, hoping thereby to find joy, to live freely and more openly. But even if they do create their own environment or choose their own relationships, they soon come to depend again on the new environment and the new friends. Does dependence in any form bring joy? This dependence is also the urge to express, the urge to be something. The man who has a certain gift or capacity depends on it, and when it diminishes or goes altogether he is at a loss and becomes miserable and ugly. So to depend psychologically on anything - people, possessions, ideas, talent - is to invite sorrow. Therefore one asks: Is there a joy that is not dependent on anything? Is there a light that is not lit by another?

Questioner: My joy so far has always been lit by something or someone external to myself so I can't answer that question. Perhaps I don't even dare to ask it because then I may have to change my way of life. I certainly depend on drink, books, sex and companionship.

Krishnamurti: But when you see for yourself, clearly, that this dependence breeds various forms of fear and misery, don't you inevitably ask the other question, which is not how to be free of environment and people but, rather, whether there is a joy, a bliss, that is its own light?

Questioner: I may ask it but it has no value. Being caught in all this, this is all that actually exists for me. Krishnamurti: What you are concerned with is dependence, with all its implications, which is a fact. Then there is a deeper fact, which is loneliness, the feeling of being isolated. Feeling lonely, we attach ourselves to people, drink, and all sorts of other escapes. Attachment is an escape from loneliness. Can this loneliness be understood and can one find out for oneself what is beyond it? That is the real question, not what to do about attachment to people or environment. Can this deep sense of loneliness, emptiness, be transcended? Any movement at all away from loneliness strengthens the loneliness, and so there is more need than ever before to get away from it. This makes for attachment which brings its own problems. The problems of attachment occupy the mind so much that one loses sight of the loneliness and disregards it. So we disregard the cause and occupy ourselves with the effect. But the loneliness is acting all the time because there is no difference between cause and effect. There is only what is. It becomes a cause only when it moves away from itself. It is important to understand that this movement away from itself is itself, and therefore it is its own effect. There is, therefore, no cause and effect at all, no movement anywhere at all, but only what is. You don't see what is because you cling to the effect. There is loneliness, and apparent movement away from this loneliness to attachment; then this attachment with all its complications becomes so important, so dominating, that it

prevents one from looking at what is. Movement away from what is, is fear, and we try to resolve it by another escape. This is perpetual motion, apparently away from what is, but in actuality there is no movement at all. So it is only the mind which sees what is and doesn't move away from it in any direction that is free of what is. Since this chain of cause and effect is the action of loneliness, it is clear that the only ending of loneliness is the ending of this action.

Questioner: I shall have to go into this very, very deeply.

Krishnamurti: But this also can become an occupation which becomes an escape. If you see all this with complete clarity it is like the flight of the eagle that leaves no mark in the air.

6th Conversation

Questioner: I have come to you to find out why there is a division, a separation, between oneself and everything else, even between one's wife and children and oneself. Wherever one goes, one finds this separation - not only in oneself but in everyone else. People talk a great deal about unity and brotherhood but I wonder if it is ever possible to be really free of this division, this aching separation? I can pretend, intellectually, that there is no real separation; I can explain to myself the causes of these divisions - not only between man and man but between theories, theologies and governments - but I know, actually in myself, that there is this insoluble division, this wide gulf that separates me from another. I always feel I'm standing on this bank and that everybody else is on the other bank, and there are these deep waters between us. That's my problem - why is there this gap of separation?

Krishnamurti: You have forgotten to mention the difference, the contradiction, the gap, between one thought and another, between one feeling and another, the contradiction between actions, the division between life and death, the endless corridor of opposites. After stating all this, our question is: why is there this division, this cleavage between what is and what has been or what should be? We are asking why man has lived in this dualistic state, why he has broken life into various fragments? Are we asking to find the cause or are we trying to go beyond the cause and the effect? Is it an analytical process or a perception, an understanding of a state of mind in which division no longer exists? To understand such a state of mind we must look at the beginning of thought. We must be aware of thought as it arises and must also be aware of that which it comes out of. Thought arises from the past. The past is thought. When we say we must be aware of thought as it arises, we mean we must be aware of the actual meaning of thought, not simply the fact that thinking is taking place. It is the meaning of thought which is the past. There is no thought without its

meaning. A thought is like a thread in a piece of cloth. Most of us are unaware of the whole cloth, which is the whole mind, and are trying to control, or shape, or understand, the meaning of one thread, which is a thought. On what is the whole cloth of thoughts resting? Is it lying on any substance? If so, what is that substance? Is it lying on deeper thought or on nothing at all? And what is the material of this cloth?

Questioner: You are asking too many questions. None of this has ever occurred to me before, so I must go rather slowly.

Krishnamurti: Is thought the cause of all division, of all fragmentation in life? What is thought made of? What is the substance of those pieces of thread woven into that complex cloth we call the mind? Thought is matter, probably measurable. And it comes from the accumulated memory, which is matter, stored in the brain. Thought has its origin in the past, recent or remote. Can one be aware of thought as it arises out of the past - the recollections of the past, the action of the past? And can one be aware beyond the past, behind the wall of the past? This doesn't mean still further back in time, it means the space that is not touched by time or memory. Until we discover this the mind cannot see itself in terms of anything other than thought, which is time. You cannot look at thought with thought, and you cannot look at time with time. So whatever thought does, or whatever it negates, is still within its own measurable boundaries.

To answer all the questions we have put, we must put yet a further question: what is the thinker? Is the thinker separate from thought? Is the experiencer different from the thing he experiences? Is the observer different from the thing he observes? If the observer is different from the thing he observes, then there will always be division, separation, and therefore conflict. To go beyond this cleavage we must understand what the observer is. Obviously he makes this division. You who are observing make this division, whether it be between you and your wife, or the tree, or anything else. Now what is this observer, or thinker,

or experiencer? The observer is the living entity who is always moving, acting, who is aware of things, and aware of his own existence. This existence he is aware of is his relationship to things, to people and to ideas. This observer is the whole machinery of thought, he is also observation, he is also a nervous system and sensory perception. The observer is his name, his conditioning, and the relationship between that conditioning and life. All this is the observer. He is also his own idea of himself - an image again built from conditioning, from the past, from tradition. The observer thinks and acts. His action is always according to his image about himself and his image of the world. This action of the observer in relationship breeds division. This action is the only relationship we know. This action is not separate from the observer, it is the observer himself. It is the observer who talks about the world and himself in relationship, and fails to see that his relationship is his own action, therefore himself. So the cause of all the division is the action of the observer. The observer himself is the action which divides life into the thing observed and himself separate from it. Here is the basic cause of division, and hence conflict.

The division in our lives is the structure of thought, which is the action of the observer who thinks himself separate. He further thinks of himself as the thinker, as something different from his thought. But there can be no thought without the thinker and no thinker without the thought. So the two are really one. He is also the experiencer and, again, he separates himself from the thing he experiences. The observer, the thinker, the experiencer, are not different from the observed, the thought, the experienced. This is not a verbal conclusion. If it is a conclusion then it is another thought which again makes the division between the conclusion and the action which is supposed to follow that conclusion. When the mind sees the reality of this, the division can no longer exist. This is the whole point of what we are saying. All conflict is this battle between the observer and the observed. This is the greatest thing to understand. Only now can we answer our questions; only now can we go beyond the wall of time and memory, which is thought,

because only now has thought come to an end. It is only now that thought cannot breed division. Thought which can function to communicate, to act, to work, is another kind of thought which does not breed division in relationship. Righteousness is living without the separative action of the observer.

Questioner: What then, where then, is that thing on which the cloth of thought exists?

Krishnamurti: It is that which is not the action of the observer. The realizing of this is great love. This realization is possible only when you understand that the observer himself is the observed: and that is meditation.

7th Conversation

Questioner: I am in conflict over so many things, not only outwardly but also inwardly. I can somehow deal with the outward conflicts but I want to know how I can end the conflict, the battle, which is going on within myself most of the time. I want to be finished with it. I want somehow to be free from all this strife. What am I to do? Sometimes it seems to me that conflict is inevitable. I see it in the struggle for survival, the big living on the little, the great intellect dominating smaller intellects, one belief suppressing, supplanting another, one nation ruling another, and so on, endlessly. I see this and accept it, but it doesn't somehow seem right; it doesn't seem to have any quality of love, and I feel that if I could end this strife in myself, out of that ending might come love. But I'm so uncertain, so confused, about the whole thing. All the great teachers have maintained that one must strive, that the way to find truth, or God, is through discipline, control and sacrifice. In one form or another this battle is sanctified. And now you say that conflict is the very root of disorder. How am I to know what is the truth about conflict?

Krishnamurti: Conflict in any form distorts the mind. This is a fact, not some opinion or judgment given thoughtlessly. Any conflict between two people prevents their understanding each other. Conflict prevents perception. The understanding of what is, is the only important thing, not the formulating of what should be. This division between what is and what should be is the origin of conflict. And the interval between idea and action also breeds conflict. The fact and the image are two different things: the pursuit of the image leads to every form of conflict, illusion and hypocrisy whereas the understanding of what is, which is the only thing we really have, leads to quite a different state of mind.

Contradictory drives bring about conflict; one will opposing another form of desire is conflict. Memory of what has been, opposed to what is, is conflict; and this is time. Becoming, achieving, is conflict, and this is time. Imitation,

conformity, obedience, taking a vow, regretting, suppressing - all this brings more or less conflict. The very structure of the brain which demands security, safety which is aware of danger, is the source of conflict. There is no such thing as security or permanency. So our whole being, our relationships, activities, thoughts, our way of life, engender struggle, conflict, strife. And now you ask me how this is to end. The saint, the monk and the sannyasi try to escape from conflict, but they are still in conflict. As we know, all relationship is conflict - conflict between the image and the reality. There is no relationship between two people, not even between the two images they have of each other. Each lives in his own isolation, and the relationship is merely looking over the wall. So wherever one looks, superficially or very, very deeply, there is this agony of strife and pain. The whole field of the mind - in its aspirations, in its desire to change, in its acceptance of what is and its wanting to go beyond it; all this is itself conflict. So the mind itself is conflict, thought is conflict, and when thought says, "I will not think", this also is conflict. All activity of the mind and of the feelings, which are part of the mind, is conflict. When you ask how you can end conflict you are really asking how you can stop thinking, how your mind can be drugged to be quiet?

Questioner: But I don't want a drugged, stupid mind. I want it to be highly active energetic and passionate must it be either drugged or in conflict?

Krishnamurti: You want it to be active, energetic, passionate, and yet you want to end conflict?

Questioner: Precisely, for when there is conflict it is neither active nor passionate. When there is conflict it is as if the mind were wounded by its own activity and loses sensitivity.

Krishnamurti: So it becomes clear that conflict destroys passion, energy and sensitivity.

Questioner: You don't have to convince me. I know it, but it doesn't get me any further.

Krishnamurti: What do you mean by knowing?

Questioner: I mean that the truth of what you have said is apparent. But this gets one no further. Krishnamurti: Do you see the truth of it, or do you see the verbal structure of it - the actual fact or the explanation? We must be very clear about this because the explanation is not the fact, the description is not the described; and when you say "I know" it may be that you perceive only the description.

Questioner: No.

Krishnamurti: Please don't be so quick and impatient. If the description is not the described, then there is only the described. The described is the fact, this fact: passion, sensitivity and energy are lost when there is conflict. And conflict is all thinking and feeling, which is all the mind. The mind is all like and dislike, judgment, prejudice, condemnation, justification and so on. And one very important activity of the mind is description, in which it gets caught. The mind sees its own description and gets caught in it and thinks it sees the fact whereas in reality it is caught up in its own movement. So where are we now, when there is only what is and not the description?

Questioner: You were saying there is conflict, which is all the actions of the mind, and this conflict destroys the sensitivity and the energy and the passion of the mind itself. So the mind dulls itself by conflict, by working against itself.

Krishnamurti: So your question becomes: how can the mind stop working against itself?

Questioner: Yes.

Krishnamurti: Is this question one more condemnation, justification, escape, one more of these interfering activities of the mind which makes it work against itself? If it is, then it breeds conflict. Is this question trying to get rid of conflict? If it is, it is more conflict, and you are forever in this vicious circle. So the right question is not how to end conflict but to see the truth that where passion and sensitivity are, conflict is absent. Do you see this?

Questioner: Yes.

Krishnamurti: So you can no longer be concerned with the ending of conflict; it will wither away. But it will never wither so long as thought is nourishing it. What is important is the passion and the sensitivity, not the ending of conflict.

Questioner: I see this, but that doesn't mean I've got the passion; it doesn't mean I've ended the conflict.

Krishnamurti: If you really see this, that very act of seeing is passion, sensitivity, energy. And in this seeing there is no conflict.

8th Conversation

Questioner: I left the world, my world of professional writing, because I wanted to lead a spiritual life. I abandoned all my appetites and ambitions to be famous, although I had the necessary talent, and came to you hoping to find, to realize, the ultimate. I have been under this great banyan tree for five years now and I find myself all of a sudden dull, washed out, inwardly lonely and rather miserable. I wake up in the morning to find that I have not realized anything at all, that I was perhaps better off a couple of years ago when I still had some strong religious fervour. Now there is no fervour left and, having sacrificed the things of the world to find God, I am without either. I feel like a sucked orange. What is to blame - the teachings, you, your environment - or is it that I have no capacity for this thing, that I have not found the crack in the wall that will reveal the sky? Or is it simply that this whole quest, from beginning to end, is a mirage and that I would have been better off never to have thought of religion but to have stuck to the tangible, everybody fulfilments of my former life? What is wrong, and what am I to do now? Shall I leave all this? If so, for what?

Krishnamurti: Do you feel that living under this banyan tree, or any other tree, is destroying you, preventing you from understanding, seeing? Is this environment destroying you? If you leave this world and go back to what you did before - the world of writing and all the everyday things of life - will you not be destroyed, dulled and sucked dry there also by the things of that life? You see this destructive process going on everywhere in people who pursue success, whatever they are doing and for whatever they are doing and for whatever reason. You see it in the doctor, in the politician, in the scientist, in the artist. Does anyone anywhere ever escape this destruction?

Questioner: Yes, I see that everyone is sucked dry. They may have fame and wealth, but if they look at themselves objectively they have to admit that they are actually nothing more than a showy facade of actions, words, formulas, concepts,

attitudes, platitudes, hopes and fears. Underneath there is emptiness and confusion, age and the bitterness of failure.

Krishnamurti: Do you also see that the religious people who have supposedly abandoned the world are still really in it because their conduct is governed by the same ambitions, the same drive to fulfil, to become, to realize, to attain, to grasp and to keep? The objects of this drive are called spiritual and seem to be different from the objects of the drive in the world, but they are not different at all because the drive is exactly the same movement. These religious people also are caught in formulas, ideals, imagination, hopes, vague certainties, which are only beliefs - and they also become old, ugly and hollow. So the world A which they have left is exactly the same as the world B of the so-called spiritual life. A is B, and B is A. In this so-called spiritual world you are destroyed just as you were destroyed in that other everyday world.

Do you think that this dying, this destruction, comes from your environment, or from yourself? Does it come from another or from you? Is it something that is done to you or something that you are doing?

Questioner: I thought that this dying, this destruction, was the result of my environment, but now that you have pointed out how it takes place in all environments, everywhere and continues even when you change the environment from A to B, or back again from B to A, I am beginning to see that this destruction is not the result of environment. This dying is self-destruction. It is something which I do to myself. It is I who do it, I who am responsible, and it has nothing to do with people or environment.

Krishnamurti: This is the most important point to realize. This destruction comes from yourself and from nobody and nothing else, not from your environment, not from people, not from events or circumstances. You are responsible for your own destruction and misery, your own loneliness, your own moods, your own empty hollowness. When you realize this you either become

bitter or insensitive to it all, pretending that all is well; or you become neurotic, vacillating between A and B, thinking that there is some difference between them, or you take to drink or drugs like so many people have done.

Questioner: I understand this now.

Krishnamurti: In that case you will abandon all hope of finding a solution by simply changing the outer environment of your life, by simply changing from B back to A, for you will know that A and B are the same; in both of them is the desire to achieve, to attain, to gain the ultimate pleasure, whether in so-called enlightenment, God, truth, love, a fat banking account or any other form of security.

Questioner: I see this, but what am I to do? I am still dying, still destroying myself. I feel sucked dry, empty, useless. I have lost all I had and gained nothing in return.

Krishnamurti: You have not understood then. When you feel and say that, you are still walking the same road we have been talking about - that road of self-fulfilment in either A or B. That road is the self-killing, that road is the factor of dying. Your feeling that you have lost all and gained nothing in return is to walk that road; that road is the destruction; the road itself is its own destination which is self-destruction, frustration, loneliness, immaturity. So the question now is, have you really turned your back on that road?

Questioner: How do I know whether I have turned my back on it or not?

Krishnamurti: You don't know, but if you see what that road actually is, not only its end but its beginning, which is the same as its end, then it is impossible for you to walk on it. You may, knowing the danger of it, occasionally stray on to it in a moment of inattention and then catch yourself on it suddenly - but seeing the road and its desolation is the ending of that road, and this is the only act. Don't say, "I don't understand it, I must think about it, I must work at it, I must

practice awareness, I must find out what it is to be attentive, I must meditate and go into it," but see that every movement of fulfilment, achievement or dependence in life is that road. Seeing this is the abandonment of that road. When you see danger you don't make a great fuss trying to make up your mind what to do about it. If, in the face of danger, you say, "I must meditate about it, become aware of it, go into it, understand it," you are lost, it is too late. So what you have to do is simply to see this road, what it is, where it leads and how it feels - and already you will be walking in a different direction.

This is what we mean when we speak of awareness. We mean to be aware of the road and all the significance of that road, to be aware of the thou, and different movements in life which are on the same road. If you try to see or walk on the "other road" you are still on the same old road.

Questioner: How can I be sure that I am seeing what to do?

Krishnamurti: You can't see what to do, you can see only what not to do. The total negation of that road is the new beginning, the other road. This other road is not on the map, nor can it ever be put on any map. Every map is a map of the wrong road, the old road.