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On Nature
and the Environment

J. Krishnamurti

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Dedication

If you lose touch with nature you lose touch with humanity. If there's no relationship with nature then you become a killer; then you kill baby seals, whales, dolphins, and man, either for gain, for "sport" for food, or for knowledge. Then nature is frightened of you, withdrawing its beauty. You may take long walks in the woods or camp in lovely places, but you are a killer and so lose their friendship. You probably are not related to anything, to your wife or your husband.

Krishnamurti's Journal, 4 April 1975

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Foreword

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI was born in India in 1895 and, at the age of thirteen, taken up by the Theosophical Society, which considered him to be the vehicle for the “world teacher” whose advent had been proclaiming. Krishnamurti was soon to emerge as a powerful, uncompromising and unclassifiable teacher, whose talks and writings were not linked to any specific religion and were neither of the East nor the West but for the whole world. Firmly repudiating the messianic image, in 1929 he dramatically dissolved the large and monied organization that had been built around him, and declared truth to be “a pathless land,” which could not be approached by any formalized religious philosophy, or sect.

For the rest of his life he insistently rejected the guru-status that others tried to foist upon him. He continued to attract large audiences throughout the world but claimed no authority, wanted no disciples, and spoke always as one individual to another. At the core of his teaching was the realization that fundamental changes in society can be brought about only by a transformation of individual consciousness. The need for self-knowledge and an understanding of the restrictive and separative influences of religious and nationalistic conditionings, was constantly stressed. Krishnamurti pointed always to the urgent need for openness, for that “vast space in the brain in which there is unimaginable energy.” This seems to have been the wellspring of his own creativity and the key to his catalytic impact on such a wide variety of people.

He continued to speak all over the world until he died in 1986 at the age of ninety. His talks and dialogues, journals and letters have been collected into more than sixty books. From that vast body of teachings this series of theme books has been compiled. Each book in the series focuses on an issue that has particular relevance and urgency in our daily lives.

Questioner: What is the meaning of right relationship with nature?

Krishnamurti: I do not know if you have discovered your relationship with nature. There is no “right relationship, there is only the understanding of relationship. Right relationship implies the mere acceptance of a formula, as does right thought. Right thought and right thinking are two different things. Right thought is merely conforming to what is right, what is respectable, whereas right thinking is movement; it is the product of understanding, and understanding is constantly undergoing modification, change. Similarly, there is a difference between right relationship, and understanding our relationship with nature. What is your relationship with nature (nature being the rivers, the trees, the swift-flying birds, the fish in the water, the minerals under the earth, the waterfalls and shallow pools)? What is your relationship to them? Most of us are not aware of that relationship. We never look at a tree, or if we do, it is with a view to using that tree, either to sit in its shade, or to cut it down for lumber. In other words, we look at trees with utilitarian purpose; we never look at a tree without projecting ourselves and utilizing it for our own convenience. We treat the earth and its products in the same way. There is no love of earth, there is only usage of earth. If one really loved the earth, there would be frugality in using the things of the earth. That is, if we were to understand our relationship with the earth, we should be very careful in the use we made of the things of the earth. The understanding of one’s relationship with nature is as difficult as understanding one’s relationship with one’s neighbour, wife, and children. But we have not given a thought to it, we have never sat down to look at the stars, the moon, or the trees. We are too busy with social or political activities. Obviously, these activities are escapes from ourselves, and to worship nature is also an escape from ourselves. We are always using nature, either as an escape or for utilitarian ends—we never actually stop and love the earth or the things of the earth. We never enjoy the rich fields, though we utilize them to feed and clothe ourselves. We never like to till the earth with our hands—we are ashamed to work with our hands. There is an extraordinary thing that takes place when you work the earth with your hands. But this work is done only by the lower castes; we upper classes are much too important apparently to use our own hands! So, we have lost our relationship with nature.

If once we understood that relationship, its real significance, then we would not divide property into yours and mine; though one might own a piece of land and build a house on it, it would not be “mine” or “yours” in the exclusive sense—it would be more a means of taking shelter. Because we do not love the earth and the things of the earth but merely utilize them, we are insensitive to the beauty of a waterfall, we have lost the touch of life, we have never sat with our backs against the trunk of a tree. And since we do not love nature, we do not know how to love human beings and animals. Come down the street and watch how the bullocks are treated, their tails all out of shape. You shake your head and say, “Very sad.” But we have lost the sense of tenderness, that sensitivity, that response to things of beauty, and it is only in the renewal of that sensitivity that we can have understanding of what is true relationship. That sensitivity does not come in the mere hanging of a few pictures, or painting a tree, or putting a few flowers in your hair; sensitivity comes only when this utilitarian outlook is put aside. It does not mean that you cannot use the earth; but you must use the earth as it is meant to be used. Earth is there to be loved, to be cared for, not to be divided as yours and mine. It

foolish to plant a tree in a compound and call it “mine.” It is only when one is free of exclusiveness that there is a possibility of having sensitivity, not only to nature, but to human beings and to the ceaseless challenges of life.

WE SEE IN the world about us confusion, misery, and conflicting desires, and, realizing this world is chaos, most thoughtful and earnest people—not the people who are playing at make believe, but the people who are really concerned—will naturally see the importance of thinking out the problem of mass action. There is mass action and individual action; and mass action has become an abstraction, a convenient escape for the individual. By thinking that this chaos, this misery, this disaster that is constantly arising can somehow be transformed or brought to order by mass action, the individual becomes irresponsible. The mass is surely a fictitious entity; the mass is you and I. It is only when you and I do not understand the relationship of true action that we turn to the abstraction called the mass—action—and thereby become irresponsible in our action. For reform in action, we look either to a leader or to an organized, collective action, which again is mass action. When we turn to a leader for direction in action, we invariably choose a person we think will help us to go beyond our own problems, our own misery. But, because we choose a leader out of our confusion, the leader himself is also confused. We do not choose a leader unlike ourselves; we cannot. We can only choose a leader who, like ourselves, is confused; therefore, such leaders, such guides and so-called spiritual gurus, invariably lead us to further confusion, to further misery. Since what we choose must be out of our own confusion, when we follow a leader we are only following our own confused self-projection. Therefore, such action, though it may produce an immediate result, invariably leads to further disaster.

So, we see that mass action—though in certain cases worthwhile—is bound to lead to disaster, to confusion, and bring about irresponsibility on the part of the individual, and that the following of a leader must also increase confusion. And yet we have to live. To live, is to act; to be, is to be related. There is no action without relationship, and we cannot live in isolation. There is no such thing as isolation. Life is to act and to be related. So, to understand the action that does not create further misery, further confusion, we have to understand ourselves, with all our contradictions, our opposing elements, our many facets that are constantly in battle with each other. Till we understand ourselves, action must inevitably lead to further conflict, to further misery.

So, our problem is to act with understanding, and that understanding can come about only through self-knowledge. After all, the world is the projection of myself. What I am, the world is; the world is not different from me, the world is not opposed to me. The world and I are not separate entities. Society is myself; there are not two different processes. The world is my own extension, and to understand the world I have to understand myself. The individual is not in opposition to the mass or to society, because society is the individual. Society is the relationship between you and me and another. There is opposition between the individual and society only when the individual becomes irresponsible. So, our problem is considerable. There is an extraordinary crisis that faces every country, every person, every group. What relationship have we, you and I, to that crisis, and how shall we act? Where shall we begin so as to bring about a transformation? As I said, if we look to the mass there is no way out, because the mass implies a leader, and the mass is always exploited by the politician, the priest, and the expert. And since you and I make up the mass, we have to assume the responsibility for our own action, that is, we have to understand our own nature, we have to understand ourselves. To understand ourselves is not to withdraw from the world, because to withdraw implies isolation, and we cannot live in isolation. So, we have to understand action in relationship, and the

understanding depends on awareness of our own conflicting and contradictory nature. I think it foolish to conceive of a state in which there is peace and to which we can look. There can be peace and tranquillity only when we understand the nature of ourselves and not presuppose a state that we do not know. There may be a state of peace, but mere speculation about it is useless.

In order to act rightly, there must be right thinking; to think rightly, there must be self-knowledge; and self-knowledge can come about only through relationship, not through isolation. Right thinking can come only in understanding ourselves, from which there springs right action. Right action is that which comes out of the understanding of ourselves, not one part of ourselves, but the whole content of ourselves, our contradictory natures, all that we are. As we understand ourselves there is right action, and from that action there is happiness. After all, it is happiness that we want that most of us are seeking through various forms, through various escapes—the escapes of social activity, of the bureaucratic world, of amusement, of worship and the repetition of phrases, of sex, and innumerable other escapes. But we see these escapes do not bring lasting happiness, they give only temporary alleviation. Fundamentally, there is nothing true in them, no lasting delight. I think we will find that delight, that ecstasy, that real joy of creative being, only when we understand ourselves. The understanding of ourselves is not easy, it needs a certain alertness, awareness. That alertness, that awareness, can come only when we do not condemn, when we do not justify, because the moment there is condemnation or justification, there is a putting an end to the process of understanding. When we condemn someone, we cease to understand that person, and when we identify ourselves with that person, we again cease to understand him. It is the same with ourselves. To observe, to be passively aware of what you are, is most difficult, but out of that passive awareness there comes a true understanding, there comes a transformation of what is, and it is only that transformation that opens the door to reality.

Our problem, then, is action, understanding, and happiness. There is no foundation for true thinking unless we know ourselves. Without knowing myself, I have no foundation for thought—I can only live in a state of contradiction, as most of us do. To bring about a transformation in the world in which is the world of my relationship, I must begin with myself. You may say, “To bring about a transformation in the world that way will take an infinitely long time.” If we are seeking immediate results, naturally we will think it takes too long. The immediate results are promised by the politicians, but I am afraid for the man seeking truth there is no immediate result. It is truth that transforms, not the immediate action; it is only the discovery of truth by each one that will bring about happiness and peace in the world. To live in the world and yet not be of the world is our problem, and it is a problem of earnest pursuit because we cannot withdraw, we cannot renounce, but we have to understand ourselves. The understanding of oneself is the beginning of wisdom. To understand oneself is to understand one’s relationship with things, people, and ideas. Until we understand the full significance and meaning of our relationship with things, people, and ideas, action, which is our relationship, will inevitably bring about conflict and strife. So a man who is really earnest must begin with himself; he must be passively aware of all his thoughts, feelings, and actions. Again, this is not a matter of time. There is no end to self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is only from moment to moment, and therefore there is a creative happiness from moment to moment.



WHEN I DEAL with your questions, please do not wait for an answer; because you and I are going to think out the problem together and find the answer in the problem. If you merely wait for an answer,

am afraid you will be disappointed. Life has no categorical “yes” or “no” although that is what we would like. Life is more complex than that, more subtle. So, to find the answer we must study the problem, which means we must have the patience and intelligence to go into it.

Questioner: What place has organized religion in modern society?

Krishnamurti: Let us find out what we mean by religion and what we mean by modern society. What do we mean by religion? What does religion mean to you? It means, does it not, a set of beliefs; rituals; dogmas; many superstitions; puja; the repetition of words; vague, unfulfilled, frustrated hopes; reading certain books; pursuing gurus; going to the temple occasionally; and so on. Surely, all that is religion to most of our people. But is that religion? Is religion a custom, a habit, a tradition? Surely religion is something far beyond all that, is it not? Religion implies the search for reality, which has nothing whatever to do with organized belief, temples, dogmas, or rituals, and yet our thinking, the very fabric of our being, is enmeshed, caught up in beliefs, superstitions, and so on. Obviously modern man is not religious; therefore, his society is not a sane, balanced society. We may follow certain doctrines, worship certain pictures, or create a new religion of the State, but obviously, all these things are not religion. I said that religion is the search for reality, but that reality is unknown; it is not the reality of the books; it is not the experience of others. To find that reality, to uncover it, to invite it, the known must stop; the significance of all the traditions and beliefs must be gone into, understood, and discarded. For this, the repetition of rituals has no meaning. So a man who is religious obviously does not belong to any religion, to any organization; he is neither Hindu nor Moslem; he does not belong to any class.

Now, what is the modern world? The modern world is made up of technique and efficiency, mass organizations. There is an extraordinary advancement in technology and a maldistribution of mass needs; the means of production are in the hands of a few. There are conflicting nationalities, constantly recurring wars because of sovereign governments, and so on. That is the modern world, is it not? There is technical advancement without an equally vital psychological advancement, and so there is a state of unbalance; there are extraordinary scientific achievements, and at the same time human misery, empty hearts, and empty minds. Many of the techniques we have learned have to do with building airplanes, killing each other, and so on. So that is the modern world, which is yourself. The world is not different from you. Your world, which is yourself, is a world of the cultivated intellect and the empty heart. If you look into yourselves, you will see that you are the very product of modern civilization. You know how to do a few tricks, technical, physical tricks, but you are not creative human beings. You produce children, but that is not creative. To be able to create, one needs extraordinary inward richness, and that richness can come about only when we understand truth, when we are capable of receiving truth.

So organized religion and the modern world go together; they both cultivate the empty heart, and that is the unfortunate part of our existence. We are superficial, intellectually brilliant, capable of great inventions and of producing the most destructive means of liquidating each other, and creating more and more division between ourselves. But we do not know what it means to love; we have no song in our hearts. We play music, listen to the radio, but there is no singing, because our hearts are empty. We have created a world that is utterly confused, miserable, and our relationships are flimsy, superficial. Yes, organized religion and the modern world go together, because both lead to confusion, and this confusion of organized religion and the modern world is the outcome of ourselves. They are the self-projected expressions of ourselves. So there can be no transformation in the world outside

unless there is a transformation within the skin of each one of us, and to bring about the transformation is not the problem of the expert, of the specialist, of the leader, or the priest. It is the problem of each one of us. If we leave it to others, we become irresponsible, and therefore our hearts become empty. An empty heart with a technical mind is not a creative human being, and because we have lost that creative state, we have produced a world that is utterly miserable, confused, broken by wars, torn by class and racial distinctions. It is our responsibility to bring about a radical transformation within ourselves.

From From Darkness to Light

Listen!

Life is one.

It has no beginning, no end.

The source and the goal live in your heart.

You are caught up

In the darkness of its wide chasm.

Life has no creed, no belief,

It is of no nation, of no sanctuary,

Not bound by birth or by death,

Neither male nor female.

Can you bind the “waters in a garment”

Or “gather the wind in your fists?”

Answer, O friend.

Drink at the fountain of Life.

Come,

I will show the way.

The mantle of Life covers all things.

IT IS NOT that extraordinary blue of the Mediterranean; the Pacific has an ethereal blue, especially when there is a gentle breeze from the west as you drive north along the coast road. It is so tender, dazzling, clear, and full of mirth. Occasionally you would see whales blowing on their way north and rarely, their enormous heads as they threw themselves out of the water. There was a whole pod of them, blowing; they must be very powerful animals. That day the sea was a lake, still and utterly quiet, without a single wave; there was not that clear dancing blue. The sea was asleep and you watched it with wonder. The house overlooked the sea. [This is the house where he was staying in Malibu.] It is a beautiful house, with a quiet garden, a green lawn, and flowers. It's a spacious house with the light of the California sun. And rabbits loved it too; they would come early in the morning and late in the evening; they would eat up flowers and the newly planted pansies, marigolds, and the small flowering plants. You couldn't keep them out though there was a wire netting all around, and to kill them would be a crime. But a cat and a barn owl brought order to the garden; the black cat wandered about the garden; the owl perched itself during the day among the thick eucalyptus. You could see it, motionless, eyes closed, round and big. The rabbits disappeared and the garden flourished and the blue Pacific flowed effortlessly.

It is only man that brings disorder to the universe. He's ruthless and extremely violent. Wherever he is he brings misery and confusion in himself and in the world about him. He lays waste and destroys, and he has no compassion. In himself there is no order, and so what he touches becomes soiled and chaotic. His politics have become a refined gangsterism of power, deceit, personal ambition, national, group against group. His economy is restricted and so not universal. His society is immoral, in freedom and under tyranny. He is not religious though he believes, worships, and goes through endless, meaningless rituals. Why has he become like this—cruel, irresponsible, and so utterly self-centred? Why? There are a hundred explanations and those who explain, subtly with words that are born out of knowledge of many books and experiments on animals, are caught in the net of human sorrow, ambition, pride, and agony. The description is not the described; the word is not the thing. Is it because he is looking for outward causes, the environment conditioning man, hoping the outer change transforms the inner man? Is it because he's so attached to his senses, dominated by their immediate demands? Is it because he lives so entirely in the movement of thought and knowledge? Or is it because he's so romantic, sentimental, that he becomes ruthless with his ideals, make-beliefs, and pretensions? Is it because he is always led, a follower, or becomes a leader, a guru?

This division as the outer and inner is the beginning of his conflict and misery; he is caught in this contradiction, in this ageless tradition. Caught in this meaningless division, he is lost and becomes a slave to others. The outer and the inner are imagination and the invention of thought; thought is fragmentary, it makes for disorder and conflict, which is division. Thought cannot bring about order, an effortless flow of virtue. Virtue is not the continuous repetition of memory, practice. Thought-knowledge is time binding. Thought by its very nature and structure cannot grasp the whole flow of life, as a total movement. Thought-knowledge cannot have an insight into this wholeness; it cannot be aware of this choicelessly as long as it remains as the perceiver, the outsider looking in. Thought-knowledge has no place in perception. The thinker is the thought; the perceiver is the thought perceived. Only then is there an effortless movement in our daily life.

IT SEEMS TO ME that it is important to understand that conflict of any kind does not produce creative thinking. Until we understand conflict and the nature of conflict, and what it is that one is in conflict with, merely to struggle with a problem, or with a particular background or environment, is utterly useless. Just as all wars create deterioration and inevitably produce further wars, further misery, so to struggle with conflict leads to further confusion. So, conflict within oneself, projected outwardly, creates confusion in the world. It is therefore necessary, is it not, to understand conflict and to see that conflict of any kind is not productive of creative thinking, of sane human beings. And yet all our life is spent in struggle, and we think that struggle is a necessary part of existence. There is conflict with oneself and with the environment, environment being society, which in turn is our relationship with people, with things, and with ideas. This struggle is considered as inevitable, and we think that struggle is essential for the process of existence. Now, is that so? Is there any way of living that excludes struggle, in which there is a possibility of understanding without the usual conflict? I do not know whether you have noticed that the more you struggle with a psychological problem, the more confused and entangled you get, and that it is only when there is cessation of struggle, of all thought process, that understanding comes. So, we will have to inquire if conflict is essential, and if conflict is productive.

Now, we are talking about conflict in ourselves and with the environment. The environment is what one is in oneself. You and the environment are not two different processes; you are the environment, and the environment is you—which is an obvious fact. You are born into a particular group of people, whether in India, America, Russia, or England, and that very environment with its influences of climate, tradition, social and religious custom, creates you—and you are the environment. To find out if there is something more than merely the result of environment, you have to be free of the environment, free of its conditioning. That is obvious, is it not? If you look carefully into yourself, you will see that, being born in this country, you are climatically, socially, religiously, and economically its product or result. That is, you are conditioned. To find out if there is something more, something greater than the mere result of a condition, you have to be free of that condition. Being conditioned, merely to inquire if there is something more, something greater than the mere product of environment, has no meaning. Obviously, we must be free of the condition, of the environment, and then only can we find out if there is something more. To assert that there is or is not something more, is surely a wrong way of thinking. One has to discover, and to discover, one has to experiment.



SO, IN CONSIDERING these questions, please let us bear in mind that we are undertaking a journey together to discover things together; therefore, there is no danger of the relationship of pupil and teacher. You are not here as the spectator to watch me play; we are both playing, therefore neither of us is exploiting the other.

IF YOU ARE NOT in communion with anything, you are a dead human being. You have to be in communion with the river, with the birds, with the trees, with the extraordinary light of the evening, with the light of the morning on the water; you have to be in communion with your neighbour, with your wife, with your children, with your husband. I mean by *communion* non-interference of the past, so that you look at everything afresh, anew—and that's the only way to be in communion with something, so that you die to everything of yesterday. And is it possible? One has to find this out, not ask "How am I to do it?"—that is such an idiotic question. People always ask, "How am I to do this?" This shows their mentality; they have not understood, but they only want to achieve a result.

So I am asking you if you are ever in contact with anything, and if you are ever in contact with yourself—not with your higher self and lower self and all the innumerable divisions that man has created to escape from the fact. And you have to find out—not be told how to come to this total action. There is no "how," there is no method, there is no system; you cannot be told. You have to work for it. I am sorry. I don't mean that word *work*; people love to work; that is one of our fantasies—that we must work to achieve something. You can't work; when you are in a state of communion, there is no working, it is there; the perfume is there, you don't have to work.

So ask yourself, if I may request you, to find out for yourself whether you are in communion with anything—whether you are in communion with a tree. Have you ever been in communion with a tree? Do you know what it means to look at a tree, to have no thought, no memory interfering with your observation, with your feeling, with your sensibility, with your nervous state of attention, so that there is only the tree, not you who are looking at that tree? Probably you have never done this, because for you a tree has no meaning. The beauty of a tree has no significance at all, for to you beauty means sexuality. So you have shut out the tree, nature, the river, the people. And you are not in contact with anything, even with yourself. You are in contact with your own ideas, with your own words, like a human being in contact with ashes. You know what happens when you are in contact with ashes? You are dead; you are burnt out.

So the first thing you have to realize is that you must find out what the total action is that will not create contradiction at any level of your existence, what it is to be in communion, communion with yourself, not with the higher self, not with the Atman, god, and all that, but to be actually in contact with yourself, with your greed, envy, ambition, brutality, deception, and then from there move on. Then you will find out for yourself—find out, not be told, which has no meaning—that there is a total action only when there is complete silence of the mind from which there is action.

You know, in the case of most of us, the mind is noisy, everlastingly chattering to itself, soliloquizing or chattering about something, or trying to talk to itself, to convince itself of something; it is always moving, noisy. And from that noise, we act. Any action born of noise produces more noise, more confusion. But if you have observed and learned what it means to communicate, the difficulty of communication, the non-verbalization of the mind—that it is that which communicates and receives communication—then, as life is a movement, you will, in your action, move on naturally, freely, easily, without any effort, to that state of communion. And in that state of communion—if you inquire more deeply—you will find that you are not only in communion with nature, with the world, with everything about you, but also in communion with yourself.

To be in communion with yourself means complete silence, so that the mind can be silently in communion with itself about everything. And from there, there is a total action. It is only out of emptiness that there is the action that is total and creative.

ACCORDING TO RECENT discoveries of the anthropologists, man has apparently been living on this earth for about two million years. And man has left in caves, for about seventeen thousand years, records of the struggle, the battle, the unending sorrow of existence—the battle between good and evil, between brutality and the thing he seeks everlastingly: love. And apparently man has not solved his problems—*not* mathematical problems, *not* scientific or engineering problems, but human problems—relationship, how to live in this world peaceably, how to be in intimate contact with nature and see the beauty of a bird on a naked branch.

Coming down to modern times, our problems, human problems, are increasing more and more. In these problems we try to resolve, according to certain patterns of morality, behaviour, and according to the various commitments that we have given our minds to. According to our commitments, patterns of behaviour, religious formulas and sanctions, we try to solve our problems, our agonies, our despair, our inconstancy, and the contradictions of our lives. We take up a certain attitude as a Communist, Socialist, this or that; and from that attitude, from that platform as it were, we try to solve our problems piecemeal, one after the other—this is what we do in our lives.

One may be a great scientist, but that very scientist in his laboratory is entirely different from the scientist at home, who is a national, who is bitter, angry, jealous, envious, competitive with his fellow-scientists for a greater name, for greater popularity, and for more money. He is not concerned with human problems at all; he is concerned with the discovery of various forms of matter and the truth of all that.

And we too, being ordinary human beings, not experts, not specialists along any particular line, are committed to a certain pattern of behaviour, to certain religious concepts, or to national policies, and from that we strive to solve the ever increasing, multiplying problems.

You know there is no end to talking, no end to reading. Words can be piled upon words, and the phrasing, the beauty of the language, the reason or the illogicality of what is being said either persuades you or dissuades you. But what is important is not the piling up of words, listening to talks and discourses and reading, but rather resolving the problem—the human problem, your problem—*not* piecemeal, *not* as it arises, *not* according to circumstances, *not* according to the pressures and strains of modern existence, but from a totally different activity. There are the human problems of greed, envy, the dull spirit of the mind, the aching heart, the appalling insensitivity of man, the brutality, the violence, the deep despair and agony. And during the two million years we have lived, we have tried to solve these problems according to different formulas, different systems, different methods, different gurus, different ways of looking, asking, questioning. And yet we are where we are, caught in the endless process of agony, confusion, and endless despair.

Is there a way of resolving the problems entirely, completely, so that they never arise, and if they do arise, we can meet them instantly and resolve them, dissipate them, put them away? Is there a total way of life that gives no soil to problems; is there a way of living—not the pattern of a way, of a method, of a system, but a total way of living—so that no problem at any time will arise, and if it does arise, can be resolved instantly? A mind that carries the burden of problems becomes a dull, heavy, stupid mind. I do not know if you have watched your own mind and the minds of your wives, husbands, and neighbours. When the mind has problems of any kind, those very problems—ev-

mathematical problems, however complex, however painful, however intriguing, intellectual—make the mind dull. By the word *problem* I mean a difficult question, a difficult relationship, a difficult issue that remains unresolved, and that is carried from day to day. So we are asking if there is a way of living, if there is a state of mind that, because it understands the totality of existence, has no problems and that, when a problem does arise, can resolve it immediately. Because the moment a problem is carried over even for a day, even for a minute, it makes the mind heavy, dull, and the mind has no sensitivity to look, to observe.

Is there a total action, a state of mind that resolves every problem as it arises, and has no problem in itself, at whatever depth, conscious or unconscious? I do not know if you have ever asked that question of yourself. Probably not, because most of us are so sunk, so held in the problems of everyday existence—earning a livelihood and responding to the demands of a society that psychologically builds a structure of ambition, greed, acquisitiveness—that we have no time to inquire. This morning we are going to inquire into this, and it depends upon you how deeply you inquire, how earnestly you demand, with what clarity and intensity you observe.

We have apparently lived for two million years—a terrible idea! And probably, as human beings are, we shall live another two million years, caught in the everlasting pain of existence. Is there a way, is there something that will free man from this, entirely, so that he will not live even a second in agony, will not invent a philosophy that satisfies him in his agony, will not have a formula that he applies to all the problems that arise, thereby increasing those problems? There is! There is a state of mind that can resolve problems immediately, and therefore, the mind, itself, has no problems, conscious or unconscious.

And we are going to inquire into that. And though the speaker is going to use words and cannot penetrate as far as possible through the communication of words you have to listen and understand. You are a human being, not an individual, because you are still the world, the mass; you are part of this terrible structure of society. There is individuality only when there is a state of mind when the mind has no problems, when it has completely extricated itself from the social structure of acquisitiveness, greed, ambition.

We say that there is a state of mind that can live without any problem and can resolve instantly any problem that arises. You have to see how important it is not to carry a problem over, even for a day or for a second. Because the more you have a problem unresolved, the more you give it soil in which it can take root, the more the mind, the heart, the nervous sensitivity, is destroyed. So it is imperative that the problem should be resolved immediately.

Is it possible, after having lived for two million years with the conflicts, the misery, the remembrance of many yesterdays—is it possible for the mind to free itself from that, so that it is complete, whole, not broken up? And to find that out, one has to inquire into time, because problems and time are closely related.

So we are going to inquire into time. That is, after having lived for two million years, must we go on living another two million years, in sorrow, pain, anxiety, everlasting struggle, death? Is that inevitable? Society is progressing, is evolving that way—evolving through war, through pressure, through this battle of East and West, through the various contentions of nationality, the Communist Market, the blocks of this power and that power. Society is moving, moving, moving—slowly, in a sense asleep, but it is moving. Well, perhaps in two million years, society will come to some kind of state where it can live with another human being without competition, with love, with gentleness, with quiet, with an exquisite sense of beauty. But must one wait two million years to come to that? Must one not be impatient? I am using the word *impatient* in the right sense: being impatient, having no

patience with time. That is, can we not resolve everything, not in terms of time but immediately?

~~Do think about this. Do not say it is not possible or it is possible. What is time? There is chronological time, time by the watch—that is obvious, that is necessary; when you have to build a bridge, you have to have time. But every other form of time—that is, “I will be,” “I will do,” “I must not”—is not true; it is just an invention of a mind that says, “I will do it.” If there is no tomorrow—and there is no tomorrow—then your whole attitude is different. And actually there is no such time—when you are hungry, sexual, or lustful, you have no time; you want that thing immediately. So the understanding of time is the resolution of problems.~~

Please see the intimate relationship between the problem and time. For instance, there is sorrow. You know what sorrow is— not the supreme sorrow, but the sorrow of being lonely, the sorrow of not achieving something you want, the sorrow of not seeing clearly, the sorrow of frustration, the sorrow of having lost somebody whom you think you love, the sorrow of seeing something very clearly, intellectually, and not being able to do it. And beyond this sorrow, there is still greater sorrow: the sorrow of time. Because it is time that breeds sorrow. Do please listen to this. We have accepted time, which is the gradual process of life, the gradual way of evolving, the gradual change from this to that, from anger to a state of non-anger gradually. We have accepted the gradual process of evolution, and we say that is part of existence, that is part of life, that is god’s plan, or the Communist plan, or some other plan. We have accepted it, and we live with that not ideationally, but actually.

Now, for me, that is the greatest sorrow: to allow time to dictate the change, the mutation. Have I to wait ten thousand years and more, have I to go through this misery, conflict, for another ten thousand years, and slowly, gradually change little bit by little bit, take my time, move slowly? To accept that and to live in that state is the greatest sorrow.



IS IT POSSIBLE to end that sorrow immediately? That is the real crux of the matter. Because once you resolve sorrow—sorrow in the deeper sense of that word—everything is over. Because a mind that has sorrow can never know what it means to love.



SO I HAVE to learn about sorrow immediately, and the very act of learning is the complete cutting away of time. To see something immediately, to see the false immediately—that very seeing of the false is the action of truth that frees you from time.

I am going a little bit into this question of seeing. As we came in just now, there was a parrot, green, bright, with its red beak, on a dead branch against the blue sky. We do not see it at all; we are too occupied, we are too concentrated, we are disturbed, so we never see the beauty of that bird on the dead branch against the blue sky. The act of seeing is immediate—not “I will learn how to see.” If you say, “I will learn,” you have already introduced time. So, not only to see that bird but also to hear the train, to hear the coughing, this nervous coughing that is going on all the time here—to hear the noise, to listen to it is an immediate act. And it is an immediate act to see very clearly, without the thinker—to see that bird, to see what one is, actually, not the theories about Super Atman and all the rest of it, but to see actually what one is.

To see implies a mind that has no opinion, that has no formula. If you have a formula in your

mind, you will never see that bird—that parrot on that branch against the sky—you will never see the total beauty of it. You will say, “Yes, that is a parrot of such and such a species, and the dead branch is of such and such a tree, and the blue of the sky is blue because of light, specks of dirt,” but you will never see the totality of that extraordinary thing. And to perceive the totality of that beauty, there is no time. In the same way, to see the totality of sorrow, time must not come in at all.



PLEASE LOOK AT it in another way. You know, actually we have no love—that is a terrible thing to realize. Actually we have no love; we have sentiment; we have emotionality, sensuality, sexuality; we have remembrances of something that we have thought of as love. But actually, brutally, we have no love. Because to have love means no violence, no fear, no competition, no ambition. If you had love you would never say, “This is my family.” You may have a family and give them the best you can, but it will not be “your family,” which is opposed to the world. If you love, if there is love, there is peace. If you loved, you would educate your child not to be a nationalist, not to have only a technical job and to look after his own petty little affairs; you would have no nationality. There would be no divisions of religion, if you loved. But as these things actually exist—not theoretically, but brutally—in this ugly world, it shows that you have no love. Even the love of a mother for her child is not love. If the mother really loved her child, do you think the world would be like this? She would see that he had the right food, the right education, that he was sensitive, that he appreciated beauty, that he was not ambitious, greedy, envious. So the mother, however much she may think she loves her child, does not love the child.

So we have not that love.



SO WHAT WILL you do? If you say, “Please tell me what to do,” then you are missing the bus entirely. But you have to see the importance, the immensity, the urgency of that question—not tomorrow, not the next day or the next hour, but see it now. And to see that, you must have energy. So just see immediately—the catalyst that makes the liquid into solid or vaporizes it immediately does not take place if you allow time, even a second. All our existence, all our books, all our hope is tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow. This admittance of time is the greatest sorrow.

So the issue is with you, not with the speaker from whom you are expecting to get the answer. There is no answer. That is the beauty of it. You can sit cross-legged, breathe rightly, or stand on your head for the next ten thousand years. Unless you have put this question to yourself—not superficially, not verbally, not intellectually, but with your whole being—you will live with it for two million years. Those two million years may be only tomorrow. So problems and time are intimately related—do you see it now?



A MIND THAT demands an answer to this question has not only to understand that it is the result of time, but also to deny itself, so that it can be outside the structure of time, of society. If you have listened, really listened with urgency, with intensity, you will have come into this—not only verbally, but actually—that you are no longer held in the clutches of time. The mind, though it is the result

two million or more years, is out, because it has seen the whole process and understood immediately. Up to this one can come—that is fairly obvious. When one sees this thing, that is child play. Though you are all grown-up people, the moment you see it, you say, “What have I been doing with my life!” Then the mind has no deception, has no pressures.

When the mind has no problems, no tensions, no direction, then such a mind has space, an infinite space both in the mind and in the heart, and it is only in that infinite space that there can be creation. Because sorrow, love, death, and creation are the substance of this mind, this mind is free of sorrow, is free of time. And so this mind is in a state of love, and when there is love, there is beauty. In that sense of beauty, in that sense of vast, infinite space, there is creation. And still further—further not in the sense of time—there is a sense of vast movement.

Now you are all listening to it, hoping to capture it verbally, but you won't—any more than you can capture love by listening to a talk about love. To understand love, you must begin very near which is yourself. And then when you understand, when you take the first step—and that very first step is also the last step—then you can go very far, much further than the rockets to the moon or to Venus or to Mars. The whole of this is the religious mind.

THE PLANE WAS crowded. It was flying at twenty-odd thousand feet over the Atlantic and there was a thick carpet of clouds below. The sky above was intensely blue, the sun was behind us, and we were flying due west. The children had been playing, running up and down the aisle, and now, tired out, they were sleeping. After the long night everyone else was awake, smoking and drinking. A man in front was telling another about his business, and a woman in the seat behind was describing in a pleased voice the things she had bought and speculating on the amount of duty she would have to pay. At that altitude the flight was smooth, there wasn't a bump, though there were rough winds below us. The wings of the plane were bright in the clear sunlight and the propellers were turning over smoothly, biting into the air at fantastic speed; the wind was behind us and we were doing over three hundred miles an hour.

Two men just across the narrow aisle were talking rather loudly, and it was difficult not to overhear what they were saying. They were big men, and one had a red, weather-beaten face. He was explaining the business of killing whales, how risky it was, what profits there were in it, and how frightfully rough the seas were. Some whales weighed hundreds of tons. The mothers with calves were not supposed to be killed, nor were they permitted to kill more than a certain number of whales within a specified time. Killing these great monsters had apparently been worked out most scientifically, each group having a special job to do for which it was technically trained. The smell of the factory ship was almost unbearable, but one got used to it, as one can to almost anything. But there was lots of money in it if all went well. He began to explain the strange fascination of killing, but at that moment drinks were brought and the subject of conversation changed.

Human beings like to kill, whether it be each other, or a harmless, bright-eyed deer in the deep forest, or a tiger that has preyed upon cattle. A snake is deliberately run over on the road; a trap is set and a wolf or a coyote is caught. Well dressed, laughing people go out with their precious guns and kill birds that were lately calling to each other. A boy kills a chattering blue jay with his air gun, and the elders around him say never a word of pity, or scold him; on the contrary, they say what a good shot he is. Killing for so-called sport, for food, for one's country, for peace—there is not much difference in all this. Justification is not the answer. There is only: do not kill. In the West we think that animals exist for the sake of our stomachs, or for the pleasure of killing, or for their fur. In the East it has been taught for centuries and repeated by every parent: do not kill, be pitiful, be compassionate. Here, animals have no souls, so they can be killed with impunity; there, animals have souls, so consider and let your heart know love. To eat animals, birds, is regarded here as a normal, natural thing, sanctioned by church and advertisements; there, it is not, and the thoughtful, the religious, by tradition and culture, never do. But this too is rapidly breaking down. Here, we have always killed in the name of god and country, and now it is everywhere. Killing is spreading; almost overnight the ancient cultures are being swept aside, and efficiency, ruthlessness, and the means of destruction are being carefully nurtured and strengthened.

Peace is not with the politician or the priest, neither is it with the lawyer or the policeman. Peace is a state of mind when there is love.

From The First and Last Freedom, Chapter 3

WHAT IS THE relationship between yourself and the misery, the confusion, in and around you? Surely this confusion, this misery, did not come into being by itself. You and I, not a capitalist nor a communist nor a fascist society have created it, but you and I have created it in our relationship with each other. What you are within has been projected without, onto the world; what you are, what you think and what you feel, what you do in your everyday existence, is projected outwardly, and that constitutes the world. If we are miserable, confused, chaotic within, by projection that becomes the world, that becomes society, because the relationship between yourself and myself, between myself and another, is society—society is the product of our relationship—and if our relationship is confused, egocentric, narrow, limited, national, we project that and bring chaos into the world.

What you are, the world is. So your problem is the world's problem. Surely, this is a simple and basic fact, is it not?



WHY IS SOCIETY crumbling, collapsing, as it surely is? One of the fundamental reasons is that the individual, you, has ceased to be creative. I will explain what I mean. You and I have become imitative; we are copying, outwardly and inwardly. Outwardly, when learning a technique, when communicating with each other on the verbal level, naturally there must be some imitation, copying, copy words. To become an engineer, I must first learn the technique, then use the technique to build a bridge. There must be a certain amount of imitation, copying, in outward technique, but when there is inward, psychological imitation, surely we cease to be creative. Our education, our social structure, our so-called religious life, are all based on imitation; that is, I fit into a particular social or religious formula. I have ceased to be a real individual. Psychologically, I have become a mere repetitive machine with certain conditioned responses, whether those of the Hindu, the Christian, the Buddhist, the German, or the Englishman. Our responses are conditioned according to the pattern of society, whether it is eastern or western, religious or materialistic. So one of the fundamental causes of the disintegration of society is imitation, and one of the disintegrating factors is the leader, whose very essence is imitation.

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